THE EMPEROR MAURICE AND HIS HISTORIAN:

Theophylact Simocatta on Persian and Balkan Warfare

MICHAEL WHITBY

CLARENDON PRESS · OXFORD
1988

This book has been printed digitally and produced in a standard specification in order to ensure its continuing availability

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Great Clarendon Street, Oxford OX2 6DP

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford.
It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship, and education by publishing worldwide in

Oxford New York

Auckland Bangkok Buenos Aires Cape Town Chennai
Dar es Salaam Delhi Hong Kong Istanbul Karachi Kolkata
Kuala Lumpur Madrid Melbourne Mexico City Mumbai Nairobi
São Paulo Shanghai Singapore Taipei Tokyo Toronto

with an associated company in Berlin

Oxford is a registered trade mark of Oxford University Press in the UK and in certain other countries

Published in the United States
by Oxford University Press Inc., New York

© Michael Whitby 1988

The moral rights of the author have been asserted
Database right Oxford University Press (maker)

Reprinted 2002

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior permission in writing of Oxford University Press, or as expressly permitted by law, or under terms agreed with the appropriate reprographics rights organization. Enquiries concerning reproduction outside the scope of the above should be sent to the Rights Department, Oxford University Press, at the address above

You must not circulate this book in any other binding or cover and you must impose this same condition on any acquirer

ISBN 0-19-822945-3

Jacket illustration: Gold Consular medallion of the emperor Maurice, AD 583, (X2). Maurice *in quadriga* distributing largesse. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of J. Pierpont Morgan

Preface

There have been intermittent calls for the publication of a monograph devoted to the emperor Maurice, for example by Higgins in the 1930s and by Kaegi in the 1980s. In the 1940s, Goubert set out to write a definitive history of Maurice's reign, entitled *Byzance avant l'Islam*, a tripartite work that was projected to fill numerous volumes. Only three volumes were completed; these dealt with the empire's relations with Persia, Africa, Italy, and Merovingian Gaul. The present investigation of Maurice's reign has a much more limited objective than Goubert espoused. My focus is the information provided by the *History* of Theophylact Simocatta, by far the most important extant source for Maurice's reign; the core of this study is a detailed source-analysis of the *History*, of a type that Goubert did not contemplate. The greater part of the *History* is occupied by narratives of Rome's conflicts with the tribes that were attempting to invade the Balkans and with the Persian empire, and this concentration is reflected in the balance of this book. Both conflicts are set in historical and geographical perspective, and Theophylact's evidence is assessed in conjunction with that of other relevant sources so that the considerable problems and successes of Maurice's reign can be properly evaluated: in previous studies of this period, Theophylact's account has too often been taken as the basis against which other information can be assessed, but this is to prejudge the vital questions of his own reliability and knowledge of events. The two central sections on the Balkans and Persia are preceded by surveys of the limited evidence for Maurice's life and other aspects of his reign, and for the career and literary output of Theophylact Simocatta. The book ends with a consideration of Theophylact as a historian, drawing on the conclusions reached in the central sections about his methods and attitudes: Theophylact is not an original historical thinker, but his very mediocrity may be revealing; his famous literary style merits a slightly less hostile reception than usual when it is set in the context of ecclesiastical as well as classical literature.

Some may feel that aspects of the Roman empire in the late sixth

century have been passed over too lightly, for instance the state of the urban fabric of the empire on the eve of the destructive Persian and Arab invasions of the early seventh century, or the social changes occasioned by the increased religious dominance of every facet of existence. A proper investigation of all such major topics would have taken me a long way from the twin foci of my study, namely Maurice and Theophylact. In recent years these subjects have been ably studied by several scholars, and they will be tackled again, more appropriately, within the broader framework offered by the projected volume of the *Cambridge Ancient History* (xiv) that is to be devoted to the later empire.

This study is an adaptation of my D.Phil. thesis, 'The *Historiae* of Theophylact Simocatta' (Oxford, 1981), a process that has taken longer than I would have wished. One reason was that I decided it would be advantageous to provide an English translation of the *History*, to make its complexities more easily accessible to a wide audience; this has now appeared (Michael and Mary Whitby, *The* History *of Theophylact Simocatta*, Oxford, 1986). Pressures of short-term employment have been a further cause of delay. In view of the long gestation of this revision, it has inevitably been difficult to incorporate all new research. My acquaintance with recent scholarly literature is haphazard, especially for work published after mid-1985, when I completed the majority of rewriting: to have attempted to rectify this fault would have entailed further long delay, and instead I have tried to take account of the most important recent work in footnotes. The bibliography at the end of the book is deliberately select, and contains only major works and those referred to on several occasions; other works are cited in the notes at the relevant points. I subscribe to the view that bibliographical excess is a distraction, for both author and reader. Proper names are always problematic: I have tried to use comprehensible forms rather than to impose a single system of transliteration at the expense of clarity.

Major thanks are due to James Howard-Johnston, who supervised my thesis, providing inspiration, encouragement, and criticism at suitable moments, and who lately has acted as sub-editor for this volume. I am most grateful to Dr J. F. Matthews and Professor A. M. Cameron, examiners of the thesis, for recommending its publication as an Oxford Historical Monograph, and to Dr H. Mayr-Harting for persuading the editorial committee to accept this recommendation and for waiting with sympathetic patience over the past four years.

Much of my basic research on Theophylact was conducted during a Junior Research Fellowship at Merton, to whose generosity both then and subsequently I am greatly indebted; Corpus Christi too has been generous with lectureships, and numerous colleagues and friends, in particular Ewen Bowie, John Matthews, and Robin Lane Fox, have been unstinting in their support and advice; Peter Heather has kindly read various chapters and shared with me his knowledge of Balkan affairs. Greater than all of these debts is that to my wife Mary, who has advised and assisted at every stage.

Since Theophylact was not well informed on matters of geography, I have tried to visit as many as possible of the theatres of action that he describes. These expeditions have been greatly assisted by grants from Merton College, the British Academy, and the Craven Committee and Interfaculty Committee for Slavonic Studies of Oxford University; thanks are due to all these bodies and to the people who supported my requests.

This work, like its predecessor the translation of Theophylact's *History*, has been copy-edited by Leofranc Holford-Strevens, to whose precision and erudition I am greatly indebted.

Contents

List of Maps xii
List of Abbreviations xiii

PART I. EMPEROR AND AUTHOR

1. Maurice the Emperor 3
(i) Character and Accession 3
(ii) The State of the Empire: Maurice's Achievements 9
(iii) Maurice's Entourage 14
(iv) Internal Events: Finance, Buildings, Religion 17
(v) The Overthrow of Maurice 24

2. Theophylact the Author 28
(i) Education and Career 28
(ii) Minor Works 33
(iii) The *History* 39
(*a*) Date of composition 39
(*b*) The introductory sequence 40
(*c*) The end of the *History* 46

PART II. THE BALKAN WARS

Introduction 55

3. The Balkans before 582 59
(i) Geographical Setting: Routes and Cities 59
(ii) Fourth- and Fifth-century Destruction 66
(iii) The Restoration of Roman Defences: Justinian and Procopius 69
(iv) Slavs and Avars 80
(v) The Situation at Maurice's Accession 86

Chronological Table: Balkan Events of Maurice's Reign (582–602) 90

4. The Sources 92
(i) Theophylact 92
(*a*) The military source 94

(*b*) Chronicle and hagiography 105
(*c*) Conclusion 107
(ii) Other Literary Sources 109
(*a*) Evagrius 109
(*b*) John of Ephesus 110
(*c*) Pope Gregory 112
(*d*) *Miracula S. Demetrii* 115
(*e*) Byzantine chroniclers 121
(*f*) Western chroniclers 126
(*g*) Eastern sources: Sebeos and Michael the Syrian 127
(*h*) The *Strategicon* of Maurice 130
(iii) Archaeological Evidence 132

5. The Balkans in Maurice's Reign 138
(i) Theophylact's Narrative 138
(*a*) The first campaigns, 582–6 (i. 3. 1–7. 6) 140
(*b*) Avar invasion of 586–7 (i. 8; ii. 10. 8–17. 13) 145
(*c*) Priscus' first campaign (vi. 3. 9–6. 1) 151
(*d*) The Roman recovery; campaigns of 593–5 (v. 16; vi. 3. 5; vi. 6. 2–vii. 12.9) 156
(*e*) Campaigns of 597–602 (vii. 13–15; viii. 1. 9–6 .1) 161
(*f*) The mutiny of 602 (viii. 6. 2–8. 1) 165
(ii) Avar Invasions 169
(iii) Slav Attacks 174
(iv) Roman Countermeasures; Conditions in the Balkans 176

6. The Balkans after 602 184

PART III. THE PERSIAN WAR

Introduction 195

7. Geographical and Historical Setting 197
(i) Geography 197
(ii) Historical Background 202
(iii) Roman Defences 209
(iv) Monophysite Loyalties 213
(v) Diplomacy 215

Chronological Table of Eastern Events (572–591) 219

8. The Sources 222
(i) Theophylact 222
(*a*) Theophylact and John of Epiphania 222
(*b*) Theophylact, John, and Menander 227

(*c*) The 'Heraclius source' 230
(*d*) Other possible sources 233
(*e*) Summary 241
(ii) Other Sources 242
(*a*) Theophanes Byzantinus 243
(*b*) Menander Protector 243
(*c*) Evagrius 244
(*d*) John of Ephesus 245
(*e*) Later eastern sources 248

9. The War under Justin II and Tiberius (572–582) 250
(i) The Outbreak of War (Th. Sim. iii. 9. 3–11) 250
(ii) The Campaigns of 572–3 (Th. Sim. iii. 10. 1–11. 2) 254
(iii) The Mesopotamian Truces of 574–8 (Th. Sim. iii. 11. 3–12. 10) 258
(iv) The Armenian Campaigns of 576–7 (Th. Sim. iii. 12. 11–15. 10) 262
(v) Maurice's Campaigns, 578–82 (Th. Sim. iii. 15. 10–18. 3) 268

10. The War in Maurice's Reign 276
(i) The Campaigns of 582–7 (Th. Sim. i. 9. 4–ii. 10. 7; ii 18. 1–26) 276
(ii) The Campaigns of 588–9 (Th. Sim. iii. i. 1–8. 8) 286
(iii) The Persian Civil War (Th. Sim. iii. 18. 12–iv. 10. 7) 292
(iv) The Restoration of Khusro (Th. Sim. iv. 10. 8–v. 15. 2) 297

11. Aftermath 305

PART IV. HISTORIOGRAPHY

12. Theophylact the Historian 311
(i) 'Ineptitude of Organization' 311
(ii) 'Feebleness of Ideas' 322
(iii) 'Ignobility of Diction' 336
(iv) Conclusion 347

13. The End of Traditions 353

Select Bibliography 359

Index 371

List of Maps

1. The Mediterranean world in the late sixth century 10
2. The Balkans: relief map with cities 56
3. Thrace: relief map with cities 65
4. The Balkans: coin-hoards, mid and late-sixth century 134
5. The Balkans: campaigns of 582–6 141
6. The Balkans: campaigns of 586–8 146
7. The Balkans: campaigns of 593–5 157
8. The Balkans: campaigns of 597–602 163
9. The Balkans: invasion routes 170
10. The Balkans in the seventh century 188
11. The eastern frontier: relief map 198
12. Upper Mesopotamia 255
13. Persia: the 591 campaign 301

List of Abbreviations

SOURCES

Agath.	Agathias
Am. Marc.	Ammianus Marcellinus
Chr. Pasch.	*Chronicon Paschale*
Chron. 819	*Chronicon Anonymum ad Annum Christi 819 pertinens*
Chron. 1234	*Chronicon Anonymum ad Annum Christi 1234 pertinens*
Chron. Mon.	*Chronicle of Monemvasia*
CJ	*Corpus Iuris Civilis*
Cod. Theod.	*Codex Theodosianus*
Ep. Aust.	*Epistolae Austrasicae*
Evag.	Evagrius
Fred.	Fredegarius
G. Mon.	Georgius Monachus
Greg.	Pope Gregory
Greg. T.	Gregory of Tours
J. Eph.	John of Ephesus
J. Epi.	John of Epiphania
J. Lydus	John Lydus
J. Nik.	John of Nikiu
Leo Gr.	Leo Grammaticus
Mal.	Malalas
Marc. Com.	Marcellinus Comes
Men.	Menander Protector
Mirac. SD	*Miracula S Demetrii*
M. Syr.	Michael the Syrian
Patr.	*Patria Constantinopoleos*
PLRE	*Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*
Proc.	Procopius (*Bld.* = *Buildings*; *SH* = *Secret History*)
Paul D.	Paul the Deacon
Rav. Cos.	*Ravennatis Anonymi Cosmographia*
Strat.	Maurice, *Strategicon*
Tab. Peut.	*Tabula Peutingeriana*
Theoph.	Theophanes
Th. Sim.	Theophylact
Zach.	Ps.-Zachariah

OTHER

AB	*Analecta Bollandiana*
ABSA	*Annual of the British School at Athens*
AJA	*American Journal of Archaeology*
BAR	*British Archaeological Reports*
BB	*Byzantinobulgarica*
BHR	*Bulgarian Historical Review*
BMGS	*Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*
BNJ	*Byzantinisch-neugriechische Jahrbücher*
BS	*Byzantinoslavica*
Byz.	*Byzantion*
BZ	*Byzantinische Zeitschrift*
CIL	*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*
CRAI	*Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*
CSCO	*Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*
CSHB	*Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*
DOP	*Dumbarton Oaks Papers*
EHR	*English Historical Review*
FGrH	F. Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*
FHG	*Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*
GRBS	*Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*
ILS	H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*
JA	*Journal asiatique*
JHS	*Journal of Hellenic Studies*
JÖB	*Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik*
JRS	*Journal of Roman Studies*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
MEFRA	*Mélanges de l'école française de Rome*
PG	*Patrologia Graeca*
PO	*Patrologia Orientalis*
REA	*Revue des études arméniennes*
REB	*Revue des études byzantines*
REG	*Revue des études grecques*
TM	*Travaux et mémoires*
Villes	*Villes et peuplement dans l'Illyricum protobyzantin* (Collection de l'école française de Rome LXXVII, 1984).

PART I

Emperor and Author

I

Maurice the Emperor

(i) CHARACTER AND ACCESSION

'In addition to the emperor Maurice's numerous virtues and the strictness of his life, he increased his labours by performing the duty of *hyparchus*, that is to say of judge; he was in truth afraid lest there should be any defect in any one of the actions of his reign, lest justice should be debased, judgements bent, the rich spared, or the guilty acquitted. Furthermore, he had divided the hours of the day and of the night: he devoted the first three hours to judgements, the next two to imperial business, then two hours to hearing requests and giving orders, two hours, that is the eighth and ninth, to eating food, three hours to prayer, and four hours to sleep; as for the remaining eight hours, he devoutly celebrated the holy liturgy and recited the psalms of David. For the different seasons and lengths of day and night, everything was arranged thus and the various affairs regulated.' This idealized portrait of a dutiful and pious emperor forms the opening of the brief Syriac hagiography of the emperor Maurice, a work that was probably composed about a decade after his death in 602. Its description of Maurice's daily routine need not be taken as the literal truth, but neither is it much more unrealistic or less helpful than assessments of Maurice in works with greater pretensions to historical accuracy. The middle-Byzantine chronicler Leo Grammaticus (139. 1–4) informs us that 'this Maurice originated from the territory of the Cappadocians; he was of medium build, strong, pale-skinned, round-faced, red-haired balding at the front, shapely-nosed, and beardless since he shaved his chin in accordance with Roman fashion'. This serves as the prelude to an account of Maurice's reign in which the considerable Roman successes in the Persian and Balkan wars are ignored while attention is concentrated on the drama of Maurice's overthrow. From the perspective of Leo, writing in the tenth century, an unverifiable physical description and the eternal truths revealed by the sin, repentance, punishment, and divine reward of Maurice were of far greater import than ephemeral military victories that were

soon to be overtaken by the disasters of Phocas' and Heraclius' reigns.

Assessments by contemporary observers are slightly more instructive. The church historian Evagrius, who terminated his work in 594, the twelfth year of Maurice's reign, introduces the future emperor as follows: 'He (Tiberius) appointed as commander in the east Maurice, who derived his lineage and name from the elder Rome, but who from his immediate parents inscribed as his fatherland Arabissus in Cappadocia; a prudent and shrewd man, very precise in all matters, and unperturbed . . .'. Evagrius' description extends to a considerable length, praising Maurice's steadfastness, moderate life-style, and good sense in regulating those admitted to audience with him, when he could identify and ignore both flattery and slander; 'so much did he thrust away ignorance, the mother of audacity, and cowardice, a foreigner and neighbour to ignorance, that daring was sound judgement and hesitation prudence'. Evagrius continues this eulogy in the account of Maurice's eastern campaigns, where the general's piety rather than Roman valour brings victory, and in the rhetorically ornate report of his marriage to Constantina, where he is praised as the embodiment of a unique blend of piety and good fortune, the only one among recent emperors who was truly master of himself.[1] Evagrius concluded this particularly extravagant description with the assertion that his encomium was not flattery since there was no prospect that Maurice would read what he had written, an assertion undermined by his subsequent statement that Maurice rewarded him for a work celebrating the birth of Theodosius (vi. 24, p. 241. 1–5). This encomium is paralleled by another brief description, preserved in the *Suda* but most probably derived from the contemporary historian Menander Protector: 'he had not been trained in battles and conflicts, but was still a prudent and serious and precise man, mixing in his own person the two naturally opposed qualities, seriousness of purpose and gentleness free of all arrogance and affectation' (Men. 23. 2).

These eulogistic judgements offer some indication of the type of image that Maurice hoped to project as a pious, thoughtful, compassionate, moderate ruler, but such a catalogue of imperial virtues provides no more insight into Maurice's nature than the formal

[1] Evag. v. 19, pp. 214. 24–215. 12; v. 20, p. 216. 2–3; vi. 1, p. 223. 2–13; and for the attitude to imperial trappings, cf. Agapetus 15, 18, and the speeches of Justin to Tiberius and Tiberius to Maurice (Th. Sim. iii. 11. 10; i. 1. 18).

salutation at the head of an imperial missive: 'Imperator Caesar Flavius Mauricius Tiberius, faithful in Christ, serene, greatest, generous, peaceable, Alamannicus, Gothicus, Antiticus, Alanicus, Vindalicus, Erullicus, Gypedicus, Africus, pious, fortunate, illustrious, victor and triumphator, perpetual Augustus, to Childebert the *gloriosus* king of the Franks' (*Ep.Aust.* 42). The truth about Maurice remains elusive, and it is difficult to penetrate the topoi of panegyrical presentations:[2] a picture has to be pieced together from scraps of evidence. Relatively little is known about his early career, and of the events of his reign the best-documented are the Persian and Balkan campaigns, whereas affairs in Constantinople that might have thrown some light on Maurice and his court are treated much more sketchily.

At his accession in 582 Maurice was aged 43, which places his birth in 539, the year which marked the high point of Justinian's reign, with Africa, Sicily, and Rome recaptured, the Gothic forces in northern Italy under pressure, the new St Sophia constructed and consecrated, and the Endless Peace of 532 guaranteeing the security of the eastern frontier. His home town of Arabissus in eastern Cappadocia (near modern Elbistan in Turkey), a place of no distinction in earlier centuries of Roman rule, may now have become more significant as a recruiting-centre and staging-post on the military route from Caesarea via Comana to Melitene. From conversations with Maurice's parents, Evagrius learnt that dreams and prodigies had predicted his future greatness (v. 21, pp. 216. 28–217. 3), but he does not record anything of more solid interest about his youth.[3] His father was called Paul, and he had at least one brother, Peter, and two sisters, Gordia the wife of Philippicus, and the widowed Theoctista (J. Eph. v. 18). Maurice's early career was apparently not in the army (Men. 23. 2), and according to John of Ephesus, a well-placed contemporary source, he was a notary before his promotion to be count of the excubitors (vi. 27).[4] Notaries had formerly served as secretaries, but by the sixth century their main connection with this work was supervisory, although Maurice at least could act as secretary for Tiberius in secret

[2] Cf. Allen, *Evagrius* 14–15.

[3] Baldwin, 'Menander' 103, suggested that Maurice came to the throne as a reformed sinner. Such speculation is unfounded: its origin is Evagrius' reference to Maurice's control of the 'mob rule of the passions' (vi. i, p. 223. 9–10), but this is no more than a development of a stock theme of imperial panegyric (e.g. Sozomen, *HE*, dedication to Theodosius 5. 19ff.). Other attempts to find hidden meanings in Evagrius' phraseology are no more convincing (e.g. Finlay, cited with approval by Bury, *HLRE* (i) ii. 93).

[4] Cf. Greg. *Reg.* iii. 61, and *Life* of Theodore of Sykeon 54.

negotiations with Persia (Men. 20. 2. 120–5); they were men of importance, who might be used as imperial emissaries on sensitive business and who could reasonably hope for promotion.[5] Maurice's elevation was predicted both by Simeon Stylites the younger at Antioch (Evag. v. 21, p. 217. 3–7) and Theodore of Sykeon (*Life* 54). His career in fact parallels that of his patron, the future emperor Tiberius, who was also a notary when Eutychius, the patriarch of Constantinople, introduced him to Justin, nephew of Justinian and emperor-to-be: in the last years of Justinian's reign Tiberius was elevated to be count of the excubitors, the commander of the palace guards, a position whose proximity to the emperor gave its holder great influence, and which enabled Tiberius to smooth Justin's accession in 565.[6] We do not know how Maurice attracted the patronage of Tiberius, but the bond between them must have been formed before December 574, when Tiberius was elevated to the rank of Caesar to share the imperial burden with Justin, whose mind had become deranged. Justin had various relatives, Marcian, Baduarius, and Justinian son of Germanus, who perhaps entertained hopes of the succession: thus it was essential for the ailing emperor, as well as his domineering wife Sophia, that the Caesar should be personally loyal to the emperor, and it was equally advisable for the new Caesar to select a reliable protégé to take over command of the excubitors and assume responsibility for the security of emperor and palace (cf. Marcellus' actions in 548, Proc. *Wars* vii. 32. 22 ff.).

Maurice was chosen, and, as count of the excubitors and with patrician rank, he resided in the Maurianus region of Constantinople, to the north of the Theodosian forum.[7] His career continued to follow the pattern of Tiberius' advance: Tiberius had commanded expeditions against the Avars in the early 570s, while in the winter of 577/8 Maurice took over command of the Persian war after the death of Justinian son of Germanus and the failure of peace negotiations with the Persian king Khusro. He was given the additional title of count of the federates, i.e. commander of the foreign mercenaries in Roman service (Theoph. 251. 27). In view of his non-military back-

[5] Jones, LRE 572–5.

[6] Corippus, *Laud. Iust.* i. 212–25. At Anastasius' death in 518 the count of the excubitors, Justin, had managed to secure the succession for himself. On excubitors, see Mary Whitby, 'On the Omission of a Ceremony in Mid-sixth Century Constantinople', *Historia* forthcoming.

[7] *Patr.* iii. 42 (with a fanciful etymology), and Janin, *Constantinople* 386–7.

ground Maurice probably relied heavily on more professional subordinates, men like Romanus, Narses, and John Mystacon, a practice common in the Roman republic and early empire but less usual after the third century. Maurice's role may have been to co-ordinate the actions of specialist generals who would otherwise dissipate their energies in mutual quarrelling (J. Eph. vi. 27). He achieved some spectacular successes in 578 and 580, but was forced to abandon an ambitious invasion of Lower Mesopotamia in 581; in June 582 the Roman army gained a major victory at Constantina (Th. Sim. iii. 15. 10–18. 2), but it is not certain that Maurice was present since he may already have been summoned to Constantinople for more urgent matters.[8]

Tiberius had acceded to the throne in October 578 on the death of Justin II, but by summer 582 ill health was already forcing him to select his own successor. In a dual ceremony on 5 August Germanus, the patrician and governor of Africa, and Maurice were elevated to the rank of Caesar and betrothed to Tiberius' two daughters, Charito and Constantina (*Chr. Pasch.* 690. 8–9; Theoph. 252. 1–13). This dual arrangement suggests that Tiberius did not at this stage intend to make Maurice his sole successor, and it is possible that he was planning to divide the empire, with Maurice commanding the east and Germanus the west: Germanus, son of the Goth princess Matasuntha and the elder Germanus, hence scion of the Ostrogoth royal house and of the Anician family which had provided western emperors, might appear to have had a strong claim to rule in Italy and Africa. One source indeed, the Coptic chronicler John of Nikiu (94. 26), records that Germanus was Tiberius' preference as successor but declined the task out of humility; there is, however, good reason to distrust this version as John hated Maurice for religious reasons and bitterly criticized him for being a pagan. Gregory of Tours (*Hist.* vi. 30) preserves the story that Tiberius consulted the dowager empress Sophia, who proposed Maurice as heir, ostensibly as a strong and wise man who had been successful in battle but in reality as an eligible bachelor whom she could marry in order to recover a hold on imperial power. However, since Sophia's matrimonial ambitions had embarrassed Tiberius at his own accession, it seems improbable that he would have sought such advice, and the story resembles other items of

[8] At the very latest, Maurice will have left the eastern frontier in early July to be able to reach Constantinople by 5 Aug.

imperial gossip in Gregory.[9] Whatever plans Tiberius may have had were overtaken by a sudden illness, allegedly brought on by the consumption of a bowl of mulberries; Maurice was on hand to press his claims to the succession, and an assembly of civilian, military, and ecclesiastical dignitaries was hurriedly summoned to the palace at the Hebdomon where Tiberius lay on his deathbed. Tiberius was too weak to speak, but he used the *quaestor* John to deliver a speech in which Maurice was designated Augustus and successor; Tiberius died on the following day, 14 August, and his body was solemnly brought back to Constantinople by boat for burial in the church of the Holy Apostles (*Chr. Pasch.* 690. 12–16).[10]

Tiberius' death provoked great grief: 'the whole city felt an intense sorrow on account of the death of this compassionate and beloved father, and in addition because of his youthful beauty; according to many authors, no other emperor has had a funeral like his: there was such mourning because he was a benefactor of the whole world—may his memory be preserved!' This account in the twelfth-century chronicle of Michael the Syrian is corroborated by western sources as well as by Theophylact, who describes how the grief-stricken populace rushed to the palace and mourned extravagantly until their despair was gradually assuaged by their relief and joy at Maurice's accession.[11]

The initial chapters of Theophylact's *History* deliberately present a weighty and sombre opening to the work: Tiberius' deathbed speech places before the reader the issues of imperial leadership and government, and hints that major problems will tax the new ruler; next a vision is recorded in which Tiberius receives a prophecy that the impious days of tyranny will not come during his lifetime, an anticipation of the eventual overthrow and murder of Maurice by the 'tyrant' Phocas; this is followed by the intense popular grief demonstrated at Tiberius' funeral, after which Theophylact starts his narration of the extensive attacks on the Balkans in Maurice's early years (582–6). A different presentation was possible, as shown by Evagrius' account of

[9] On the inaccuracy of Gregory's eastern information, cf. chs. 4(ii)(*f*) and 9 n. 34; also Allen, *Evagrius* 19. Cameron, 'Gregory', is inclined to rate his reliability more highly, but Gregory's evidence for the late 6th c. is little more than popular gossip about the imperial family.

[10] J. Eph. v. 13 confirms the location of Tiberius' death, against the implication of Th. Sim. i. 1.

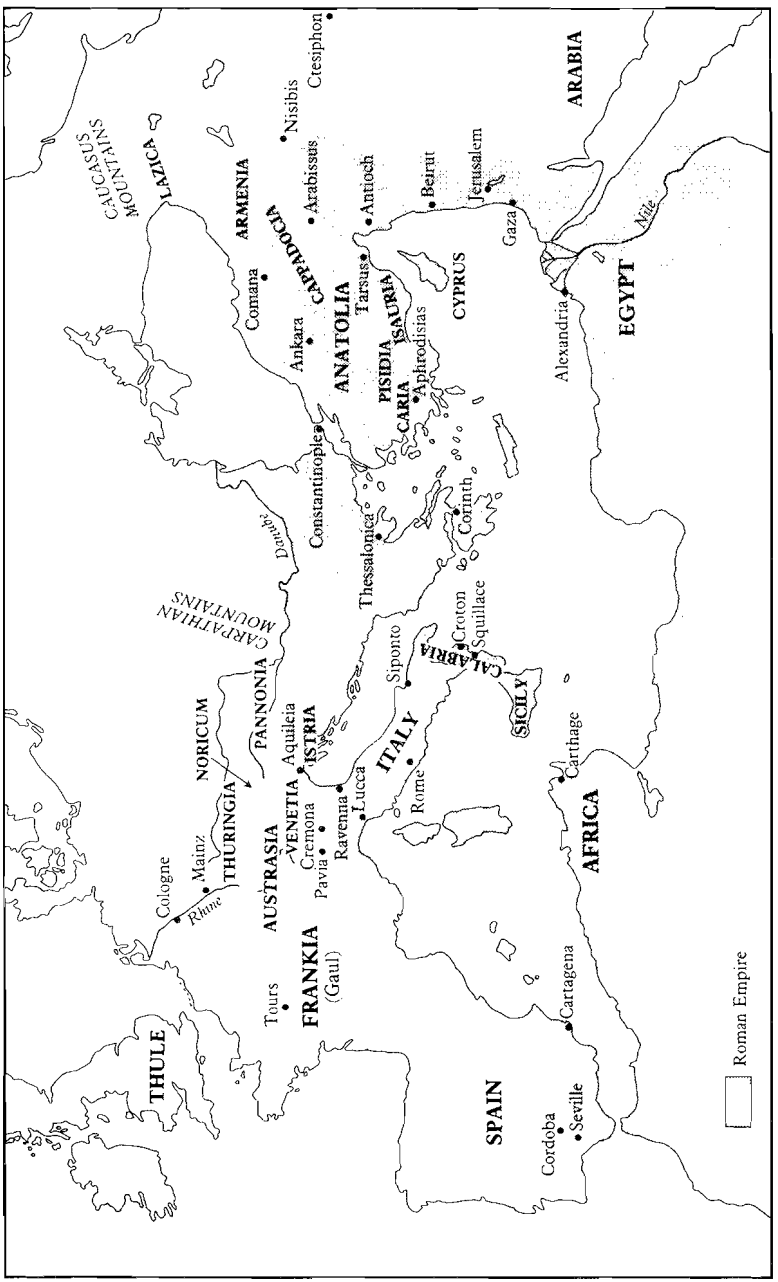
[11] M. Syr. x. 20, p. 354; Paul D. iii. 15; Th. Sim. i. 2. 3–7.

Maurice's accession. Evagrius' only comment on Tiberius' death was that his finest bequest to the empire was the proclamation of Maurice as successor (v. 22, p. 217. 15–16), and Tiberius' funeral is not mentioned; the first event in Maurice's reign to be recorded is the joyous festival of his marriage to Constantina in autumn (vi. 1), and the description captures some of the grand ceremony of this occasion. In Theophylact, by contrast, the account of the marriage (i. 10) is deferred until after the start of both Balkan and Persian military narratives.

(ii) THE STATE OF THE EMPIRE: MAURICE'S ACHIEVEMENTS

The empire which Maurice inherited was still 'Roman' or 'late Roman' in extent and character. To the east Maurice's authority stretched into the Armenian highlands and to the fringes of the Syrian and Arabian deserts, to the west it extended beyond the Balkans to reconquered Africa, parts of Italy, and even a small enclave in southern Spain. Influence naturally reached further than authority, and Maurice could intervene in Merovingian and Lombard affairs, organize support among the principalities of the sub-Caucasian region, and sway the leadership of the tribes in the Syrian desert. Through Pope Gregory, the godfather to Maurice's eldest son, he would doubtless have received news of the progress of Augustine's mission to convert the Saxon kingdoms of southern Britain, while ambassadors from the Turks brought information about central-Asian and Chinese affairs. The emperor at Constantinople remained an important actor on the world stage.

Internally the empire still preserved its traditional civilized appearance, an image created by the numerous cities that survived, albeit depopulated by plague, disfigured perhaps by ruined or abandoned public buildings that were now too expensive to maintain, and dominated by ecclesiastical hierarchies that provided a more effective administration than secular officials. But such features were merely an intensification of existing trends, not a new crisis. In the Balkans, tribal invasions did terminate urban life in some areas, but in the eastern provinces—the empire's economic, intellectual, and religious heartland—cities continued to exist and possibly even to recover some prosperity after the Persian peace of 591, since seventh-century invaders found in them very considerable booty. The remains of the



Map 1. The Mediterranean world in the late sixth century

large villages or townships on the limestone massif behind Antioch or along the south coast of Asia Minor, and references in the *Life* of St Theodore of Sykeon to villages in central Anatolia, suggest that some districts were still flourishing.

At his accession Maurice faced substantial problems. The image and achievements of the great Justinian cast a shadow that fell darkly on his successors: in 565 he had left an empire that was in a state of precarious security, with peace on the frontiers but with internal difficulties that arose from conflicting Christian doctrines and from an economy strained by natural disasters and by heavy expenditure both on his works of reconstruction and on the peace payments to Persians and Balkan tribes. The fragile balance inherited by Justin II might have been preserved by cautious measures and steady control, but this was not Justin's style: he attempted to project the glorious image of an empire powerfully renewed by his accession. To his credit, Justin mitigated many of Justinian's religious policies, made strenuous efforts to devise a formula that should reconcile Monophysite and Chalcedonian Christians, and paid attention to increasing the empire's revenues and building up a financial reserve.[12] But these beneficial measures were outweighed by Justin's aggressive foreign policy and short-sighted diplomacy: this embroiled the Romans in another war with Persia and paid insufficient attention to the Avars, whose increasing power was becoming a serious threat to the Danube frontier, while the Lombards, more perceptive in assessing the Avar threat, overran much of northern and central Italy. Tiberius managed to stabilize the position on the eastern frontier after the disastrous loss of Dara had sent Justin mad, but only by weakening Roman defences in the Balkans, where Slavs and Avars were quick to exploit their opportunity; Italy had to be left to fend for itself. The high cost of this warfare, coupled with Tiberius' extravagant generosity, which won him popular affection but dismayed the empress Sophia, soon depleted the reserves built up by Justin.

In essence, Maurice had to tackle the military problems which had beset the empire since Justin II's reign without the major asset of the financial reserves that Justin had created. The fact that Maurice achieved considerable success in overcoming these problems justifies Ostrogorsky's assessment of him as 'one of the most outstanding of

[12] New image and finances, A. M. Cameron, 'Early Byzantine *Kaiserkritik*: Two Case Histories', *BMGS* 3 (1977), 1–17; religious reconciliation, Allen, *Evagrius* 21–7.

Byzantine rulers'.[13] On the eastern frontier the conflict with Persia was brought to a conclusion, after twenty years of fighting, on terms that were favourable to the Romans: the border cities of Dara and Martyropolis were restored, the Romans gained control of Arzanene, Iberia, and much of Persarmenia, and the young king of Persia, Khusro II, maintained good terms with his benefactor Maurice, who had reinstated him on the throne. In the Balkans slow but steady progress was made in re-establishing the Danube as a secure frontier and reasserting Roman authority over the interior. These two areas of conflict occupied most of Maurice's attention—and are reported most fully by the extant sources—but Maurice also consolidated the empire's hold on its western territories, at least as far as the shortage of resources permitted. In Italy and Africa, new military commanders appear, the exarchs, and although speculation about associated administrative reorganization or the militarization of society has been sensibly scotched,[14] the exarchs improved or stabilized the military position in their respective territories: Gennadius in Africa defeated Moorish raiders (Th. Sim. vii. 6. 6–7), and ushered in a generation of peace for the province; from Ravenna, Romanus conducted a vigorous offensive in the Po valley and extended Roman control in the Apennines, although Maurice's inability to devote adequate men and money to Italian campaigns and the fragmentation of the Lombard kingdom meant that secure progress was difficult. In Spain, in spite of the loss of Córdoba to the Visigoths, the Romans controlled a small territory based on Seville and Cartagena. Maurice maintained some influence with the Merovingian kingdoms in Gaul, particularly with the Austrasian court through his retention as hostages of the princess Ingund and her son Athanagild, who had fallen into Roman hands in Spain in 582/3. Thus although his support for Gundovald's seizure of the throne of Burgundy in 584 was fruitless, he could purchase Frankish intervention against the Lombards in Italy and then insist on a second invasion in 585 because the first had not been an adequate reward for his financial outlay: possession of the royal hostages meant that the traditional policy of bribes could be reinforced by threats which the unreliable Franks took seriously.[15]

[13] *History*, 80.

[14] See the good discussion by T. S. Brown, *Gentlemen* 46ff.

[15] For studies of Byzantine intervention in the west in these years, see W. Goffart, 'Byzantine Policy in the West under Tiberius II and Maurice: The Pretenders Hermenegild and Gundovald (579–85)', *Traditio* 13 (1957), 73–118, and Goubert, *Byzance* ii/1–2.

In part Maurice's successes were due to luck, since civil war in Persia allowed him to establish peace in the east, although it is to Maurice's credit that he responded to Khusro II's plea for help and tried to achieve a long-term balance of power with Persia when others were advocating larger but short-term gains. However, success was also the result of concern for fairness in administration, effective use of the available military resources, and appointment of generals and advisers who were both competent and prepared to implement Maurice's own policies. These assertions require some justification. Although we have little information about imperial administration under Maurice, it can be noted that he appointed the *consularis* Leontius to investigate affairs in Italy and Sicily, and that Leontius persisted in his enquiries against senior officials in spite of Pope Gregory's attempts to protect certain favourites (*Reg.* ix. 4; 55–7; 130);[16] furthermore, Maurice enacted a minor improvement in the organization of the grain-supply of Constantinople, whereby the state took over from individual ships' captains the responsibility for wrecked cargoes (J. Nik. 103. 1–3); finally it is in Maurice's reign that there is first mention of a logothete (*Chr. Pasch.* 694. 9), a new senior official probably in charge of a reorganized system of military finances,[17] and the holder of the post, Constantine Lardys, was identified closely enough with Maurice's policies to flee with him in 602 and to be killed at Phocas' accession (Th. Sim. viii. 13. 3). Maurice's concern for military efficiency is reflected in the association of his name with the military handbook known as the *Strategicon* of Maurice, a work compiled in the latter half of his reign which made prescriptions on military training and on the optimum tactics for use against different enemies. Various generals in the 570s and 580s are credited with trying to improve the quality and discipline of their troops, Justinian son of Germanus in 574/5, Maurice himself in 578, and Maurice's brother-in-law Philippicus in 584/5;[18] it is likely that together these measures helped to transform the Roman army into an effective fighting force that could even rival the mighty Avars by the end of Maurice's reign.

[16] Cf. Richards, *Consul* 92–3.
[17] Haldon, 'Recruitment' 33–4.
[18] Th. Sim. iii. 12. 7; Men. 23. 3; Evag. vi. 3, p. 224. 11–14.

(iii) MAURICE'S ENTOURAGE

The quality of Maurice's advisers and generals is a more debatable issue: the impression conveyed by Theophylact's *History* is that many of Maurice's commanders were incompetent, but there is good reason to believe that this presentation is unwittingly distorted by serious bias, particularly since Maurice had proved his own military competence.[19] Like most emperors, Maurice naturally promoted his relatives, for whom his accession provided an opportunity for considerable enrichment (J. Eph. v. 18); such patronage excited jealous comment, but it did not undermine the social structure of the eastern empire, which had always been sufficiently flexible to permit civilian or military success to be rewarded with greatly enhanced status for the family concerned.[20] Among advisers at Maurice's court by far the most influential was his cousin or nephew Domitian, for whom he had obtained the post of bishop of Melitene soon after his appointment as eastern commander in 577/8. Domitian was summoned to Constantinople at Maurice's accession; he served as ambassador to Hormizd, supervised Khusro II's activities during his stay in Roman territory in an unsuccessful attempt to convert the young king to Christianity, and under the provisions of Maurice's will in 597 was appointed guardian of his young children.[21] Pope Gregory was careful to maintain contact with Domitian, as well as with the imperial ladies Theoctista (Maurice's widowed sister) and Constantina. When he wished to sway Maurice, Gregory would try to win the support of this close family circle, and the only outsiders of comparable influence in Gregory's estimation were the patriarch and the royal doctor Theodore: to the latter, Gregory wrote 'you who are in the familiar service of the emperor, can speak to him more freely and openly for the benefit of his soul, since he is much occupied with business and his mind is rarely free from greater cares' (*Reg.* iii. 64).[22]

[19] Cf. below, pp. 98–104.

[20] For the comparable advancement of the families of Anastasius, Justin, and Theodora, see Alan Cameron, 'The House of Anastasius', *GRBS* 19 (1978), 259–76; cf. also Valentinian I's Pannonian supporters and Theodosius' Spaniards, J. F. Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court* A.D. 364–425 (Oxford, 1975), ch. 2, 5.1.

[21] J. Eph. v. 19; Eustratius, *Life of Golinduch*, 17; Th. Sim. iv. 14. 5; Evag. vi. 18, p. 234. 19–23; Greg. *Reg.* iii. 62; Th. Sim. viii. 11. 10.

[22] *Reg.* iii. 62; v. 43; ix. 4 (Domitian); i. 5; vii. 23; xi. 27 (Theoctista); iv. 30; v. 38–9 (Constantina); i. 4, 24; iii. 52; v. 44; vi. 15 (John Nesteutes); iii. 64; v. 46; vii. 25 (Theodore).

The same impression is given in the *Epistolae Austrasicae*, which contain several letters from the court of Childebert II to Constantinople: in addition to Maurice, the recipients include Maurice's infant son Theodosius, his father Paul, an unnamed empress (probably Constantina), Maurice's mother-in-law the empress Anastasia, Domitian, the Patriarch John, and the papal *apocrisarius*.[23] The only notable absentee from this inner family circle is the Caesar Germanus, but his marriage to Tiberius' daughter Charito, reinforced by his distinguished Anician and Amal ancestry, created a strong claim to the imperial throne which perhaps made Maurice reluctant to trust him: he appears to have remained a powerful independent force throughout the reign, a person whose allegiance Maurice tried to secure by the marriage of his son Theodosius to a daughter of Germanus but whose loyalty he was quick to suspect in a crisis (Th. Sim. viii. 4. 10; 8. 7–10).

Among Maurice's military appointments, his brother-in-law Philippicus replaced him as count of the excubitors and in due course assumed command of the eastern armies, while his brother Peter was granted the posts of *magister* and *curopalatus* and given command of armies in the Balkans in the second half of Maurice's reign.[24] As generals two men from beyond the family network also stand out, Comentiolus and Priscus: Comentiolus, frequently commander in the Balkans as well as in the east for one year, had been one of the *scribones* (probably to be identified with the officers of the excubitors)[25] during Tiberius' reign, and this early association with Maurice helps to explain the trust accorded to him; Priscus briefly held command in the east, where he attempted to implement Maurice's reforms in military payment, and he regularly commanded in the Balkans even though for a time in the early 590s he lost Maurice's favour. Of these four commanders, Comentiolus and Peter were killed in Phocas' massacre of Maurice's closest supporters, while Philippicus escaped by retiring to a monastery (*Chr. Pasch.* 694. 5, 10; 695. 3).[26] Only Priscus survived and flourished under the new regime, to be appointed count of the excubitors in 602/3 and betrothed to Phocas' daughter in 606/7 (Theoph. 294. 11–13): two factors helped this successful transfer of allegiance, first that he had probably been less rigorous than Peter or

[23] *Ep. Aust.* 29–33, 37, 43–5.

[24] For full source-references to Philippicus and other officers, see *PLRE* iii.

[25] Jones, *LRE* 658–9.

[26] Philippicus' second in command, George, and Praesentinus the *domesticus* or assistant of Peter, were also killed (Th. Sim. viii. 13. 2).

Comentiolus in the implementation of Maurice's military policies in the Balkans, and second that in 602 he was recruiting troops in Armenia and so was safely distant from Constantinople when Maurice fell (Sebeos 20).

Although our sources do not provide us with comprehensive information about Maurice's appointments, these four military commanders appear to have been more influential at court than others who received Maurice's trust but whose power was usually exercised in distant provinces. Among these second-ranking military commanders were the elder Heraclius, father of the future emperor, second in command to Philippicus and Comentiolus on the eastern front, and appointed exarch of Africa probably towards the end of Maurice's reign. The patrician Romanus, one of Maurice's subordinates in the east in 578 and 580, was subsequently commander in Lazica in 589 during preparations for a grand attack on north-east Persia, and then an aggressively anti-Lombard exarch at Ravenna from 590 until his death in 595/6. John Mystacon, second in command to Maurice in the east in 582 and his successor as overall commander in 582/3, became general in Thrace during the crisis of the Avar invasion of 587, and then *magister militum per Armeniam*. Narses, perhaps Maurice's second in command in 578, commanded the expedition to restore Khusro II in 591, and was an important military official on the eastern frontier until Maurice's last year. Even further from the imperial circle were the middle-ranking military officers, the division and company commanders; many of these came from the Germanic tribes which provided substantial portions of the Roman army, men like Ansimuth, Ariulph, Godwin, or Curs.

Maurice remained loyal to those commanders who were prepared to implement his policies, but this did not mean that he condoned inefficiency or failure. On the eastern frontier, John Mystacon was replaced in 583 partly because he had failed to maintain the momentum of Maurice's campaigns, although Maurice was probably also anxious to promote one of his own relatives. In 587/8 Philippicus was relieved of command, probably because he was slow to implement Maurice's financial reforms, though recurrent ill health may also have been a factor, and in 589 he was again removed, this time after a serious defeat. In 591 Comentiolus was demoted to second in command because of a failure to co-operate with Khusro II. In 602 Narses was replaced as commander at Dara after complaints from Khusro about his actions. In the Balkans, Priscus, who had retained

Maurice's confidence throughout the eastern mutiny of 588, was replaced after the extensive Avar invasion of that year, and again in 593/4, when he appeared unenthusiastic about Maurice's policy of winter campaigns: in 594 Peter was relieved of office after his attempt to follow Maurice's strategic advice had only resulted in partial success.[27] Maurice's leading generals were decidedly his men, appointees whose authority stemmed from the distant emperor, not independent grandees who might contemplate military usurpation: on the two occasions when Maurice's armies mutinied, they chose as leaders lesser men, in 588 Germanus the *dux* of Phoenice Libanensis, and in 602 the middle-ranking officer Phocas.

Very little is known of civilian aspects of Maurice's administration and appointments. A new financial controller, the logothete, appears (*Chr. Pasch.* 694. 9), but there is no evidence for his interrelationship with the praetorian prefects and other important officials. Bury speculated that Maurice attempted to bolster imperial power by forging an alliance with leading aristocrats whose increasing independence had supposedly undermined the emperor's control,[28] but the evidence does not support the theory. Like his predecessors, Maurice relied on a combination of relations, whom he raised to prominence, and non-relations, whose talents he purchased and utilized, and if there was any significant development during his reign it was perhaps through a closer identification of interest between emperor and circus factions, the organizers and articulators of 'popular' expression: in 602 there is first mention of official controllers of the Blues and Greens, as well as of lists of partisans (Th. Sim. viii. 7. 10–11), whom Maurice expected to defend his rule in spite of his lack of popularity among the broader mass of the people.

(iv) INTERNAL EVENTS: FINANCE, BUILDINGS, RELIGION

Foreign events provided the greatest triumphs of Maurice's reign, their narration occupies the majority of Theophylact's *History*,[29] and

[27] Th. Sim. i. 13. 1 (John); iii. 5. 15–16 (Philippicus in 589); v. 2. 7 (Comentiolus); viii. 15. 4 (Narses); vi. 6. 2 with Whitby, *Theophylact* 167 n. 35 (Priscus in 588); vi. 10. 2–3, 11. 2 (Priscus in 593/4); vii. 5. 10 (Peter). Stratos, *Byzantium* 42, suggested that Maurice was suspicious of successful generals, but the evidence does not support this.

[28] Bury, *HLRE* (i) ii. 92–4.

[29] Cf. Cameron, *Procopius* 142, *Agathias*, ch. 11, for similar concentration on foreign affairs.

the detailed investigation of them will occupy much of this book, but as prelude I shall briefly review what little is known about internal history. Our information is inevitably focused on Constantinople. Maurice assumed the consulship twice, on 25 December 583 (Theoph. 253. 24–5) and 6 July 602 (*Chr. Pasch.* 693. 5–9); it is not clear why Maurice did not follow imperial precedent and start his consulships on 1 January, but on each occasion he may have been trying to avoid some of the heavy expenditure of the post, in 583 by entering office after the various annual games when special distributions would have been expected,[30] and in 602 by combining the consulship with his *vicennalia*. On 4 August 583, Constantina gave birth to Maurice's first child,[31] a son, the first to be born to a reigning emperor since the birth of Theodosius II in 401; appropriately he was named Theodosius, with the papal *apocrisarius* Gregory (the future pope) as godfather; on Easter Sunday, 26 March 590, he was crowned as emperor, although his name was not yet used on official documents (*Chr. Pasch.* 691. 14–17). Seven other children followed, Tiberius, Peter, Paul, Justin, Justinian, Anastasia, Theoctista, and Cleopatra (*Chr. Pasch.* 693. 12–15), of whom the sons were killed on Phocas' orders in 602; the daughters, along with their mother, were placed in the imperial monastery of St Mamas, or the Nea Metanoia, until their execution in 604/5.[32]

At his accession, Maurice is said by John of Ephesus (v. 20) to have found the treasuries empty, as if swept by a broom, so that he was forced to adopt a policy of severe restraint. John, a favourable observer, could present this as necessary prudence: 'so that if any gold was discovered or any came to him from the treasury, he was forced to retain it and close his fist, to cut back part of military expenditure and to retrench, saying: "I do not scatter and disperse, but amass and store away so that I may pay for the peace of the state." And so with this intention he tightened his fist and abolished many customary expenses to such an extent that he was fiercely mocked and ridiculed by the multitude, loaded with abuse, and called greedy, mean, and ungenerous, a man who could only elevate, exalt, and enrich his

[30] Hendy, *Economy* 193.

[31] For the date see P. Grierson, *DOP* 15 (1961), 222 n. 11; *contra* Stratos, *Byzantium* 59.

[32] *Patr.* iii. 185; Phocas imprisoned Heraclius' female relatives in the same monastery in 610 (Theoph. 298. 23–6); Theophylact (viii. 15. 1) calls the place of confinement the 'house of Leo', which suggests that the monastery was founded on the property of an unidentifiable Leo.

relatives—and much else of the same type.' The hostile view of the multitude was reiterated by the mutineers in the eastern Roman army in 588 who, incensed at an attempt to reorganize or reduce military pay, overturned the icons of Maurice, chanting that they would not endure to be ruled by a shopkeeper (Th. Sim. iii. 2. 8). The attitude of John of Nikiu is similar: 'Now Maurice, who became emperor in succession to the God-loving Tiberius, was very avaricious'; 'Now the emperor Maurice welcomed many false, turbulent persons owing to his greed for money. And he sold all the grain of Egypt and converted it into gold, and likewise the grain for Byzantium he sold for gold' (95. 1, 21). Shortage of money was a recurrent problem during Maurice's reign: it was impossible for Maurice to acquire the easy popularity that Tiberius had irresponsibly purchased,[33] the empire could not afford to maintain a major army on more than one frontier, and years of difficult campaigning and thrift stored up reservoirs of ill will that were eventually released in Phocas' coup. However, Maurice himself may also have become infected by the parsimonious attitude he had been forced to adopt for so long, with the result that he was slow to avail himself of opportunities for generosity that may have arisen towards the end of his reign. He did give thirty 'talents' for the repair of Constantinople's aqueducts and granted a one-third remission of taxes (Th. Sim. viii. 13. 17), but in spite of this the Constantinopolitan mob chose to insult Maurice in 602 with the chant 'Maurice the Marcianist' (Th. Sim. viii. 9. 3; Theoph. 288. 17–18), an allusion to a current Christian heresy that was known for its rejection of normal standards of charity: Marcianists argued against almsgiving to beggars, widows, or victims of barbarian attack.[34]

Maurice and his entourage continued the extensive building programme of Justin II, although, whereas Justin's works had primarily been concerned with the glorification of the imperial family, it is possible to attribute to Maurice a greater concern for the welfare of the population. The rate of construction seems to have slowed, not surprisingly in view of the financial problems, since two projects initiated by Tiberius, a public bath at Blachernae and the church of the Forty Martyrs, were only finished in Maurice's fifth and eighth years respectively (Theoph. 261. 15–16; 267. 29–31); he was also

[33] For Tiberius, see Stein, *Studien* 57.

[34] M. Graebner, '"MAURIKIE MARKIANISTA", A Note', *Byzantina* 11 (1982), 181–8. This corrects the theory of Grégoire which I had accepted at *Theophylact* 223 n. 45.

involved in Tiberius' constructions at the palaces of Bryas and Damatry, though it is not known when these were completed (*Patr.* iii. 170–1). Maurice's own constructions were mainly religious or charitable: the rebuilding of a fire-damaged part of the church of St Theodore known as that of Sphoracius, the construction of a church to St George, and of a church, almshouse, and colonnade in the Carianus region near Blachernae (*Patr.* iii. 30; 73), repairs to the leper hospital in Galata (Cedrenus 698. 24), and probably the foundation of the monastery of Myroceraton (*Patr.* iii. 194). In addition it is possible, but not provable, that Maurice was responsible for commissioning the famous icon of Christ which was erected on the façade of the Chalce, the ceremonial entrance to the Great Palace.[35] Maurice also carried out various secular constructions: repairs to the old palace of Sophiae to provide a residence for his mother-in-law Anastasia, an arsenal outside the city walls towards the top of the Golden Horn (*Patr.* iii. 125; 155), a circular terrace at the Magnaura (Theoph. 274. 22–4), and repairs to aqueducts (Th. Sim. viii. 13. 17). To emphasize the prestige of the imperial family, a representation of Maurice's early life and achievements was depicted in the colonnade in the Carianus region (Leo Gr. 138. 17–18), and statues of himself, the empress Constantina, and their children were probably placed on the façade of the Chalce above the icon of Christ (*Patr.* ii. 28; 89). Constructions by other members of the imperial circle included a monastery to the Virgin at Chalcedon by Philippicus (Leo Gr. 138. 12–13), a monastery to St Mamas at the Xerocircus by Maurice's sister Gordia, a church to the Virgin in the Areobindus region by Peter, the Cistern of the Ram, and an almshouse and bath in the Armatus region by Stephen, chief eunuch of the bedchamber, and the Diaconissa by the Patriarch Cyriacus, who installed his sister there as deaconess (*Patr.* iii. 185; 59; 62; 102). Outside Constantinople, Maurice gave money for the reconstruction by the Patriarch Gregory of a hippodrome at Antioch, adorned his birthplace Arabissus with a lavish set of public buildings, a magnificent church with costly furnishings, a hospice, an audience-hall,

[35] The earliest reference to the icon occurs in accounts of Maurice's vision in which his overthrow is predicted (Theoph. 285. 6–7; G. Mon. 660. 2–3; Leo Gr. 140. 23). Mango, *Brazen House* 108–12, argued that the icon was set up rather later, since it is not mentioned in John of Antioch's account of the same vision (fr. 218*d*); such doubt is reasonable, but the concurrence of the chronographic tradition should probably be trusted in preference to excerpts, possibly abbreviated, from John. This icon would have contributed to the perception of the emperor as Christ on earth, an image that Justin II at least had wished to project (Cameron, 'Patronage', 76).

porticoes, basilicas, a palace, and a city wall, which soon had to be rebuilt after they had been damaged by an earthquake (J. Eph. v. 17; 22–3), provided funds for the restoration of the church of Glyceria at Heracleia, which the Avars had burnt, and constructed a church to St Paul at Tarsus (Th. Sim. vi. 1. 3; viii. 13. 16). In addition to these building-works, Maurice is credited with the destruction of certain monuments at Constantinople: various statues at the Exokionion, an image of the city's Tyche, and probably also a statue of an ox at the harbour of Neorion (*Patr.* ii. 54; iii. 131; ii. 88); if these reports are true, the statues presumably still had pagan overtones.[36]

Maurice gained a reputation as a patron of literature: Menander asserts that he was particularly keen on poetry and history, devoting much of the night to their study, and confesses that his own historical enterprise was inspired by the rewards Maurice offered to potential writers (1. 18–28). Evagrius was another beneficiary, receiving the rank of consul in return for a work celebrating the birth of Maurice's son Theodosius in 583 (vi. 24, p. 241. 1–5). Theophylact echoes Menander's praise for Maurice's generosity to 'those who had striven for the beauties of learning' (viii. 13. 16).

Maurice's religious activities have received as varied a press as his financial policies. John of Ephesus (v. 21) praised him for resisting the accusations of people attempting to stir up trouble for the Monophysites, and in this he was supported by the Patriarch John. However, in 598/9 Maurice apparently gave Domitian permission to punish Monophysites, and 400 are said to have been slain outside the walls of Edessa.[37] Charges of paganism were levelled against several prominent people during Maurice's reign. Maurice was inclined to be lenient to those who confessed their error, an attitude which incurred for him the reputation in hostile sources of being a pagan himself and which greatly distressed the Patriarch John, who wanted to root out any pagan remnant in the upper echelons of Constantinopolitan society (J. Nik. 98). On one occasion, however, Maurice was constrained to agree to the public execution of a distinguished

[36] The wealth of information in patriographic texts about late 6th-c. Constantinople suggests that the authors had access to a contemporary source (Mango, *Brazen House* 102; cf. *Parastaseis* 43 for a possibility).

[37] M. Syr. x. 23, pp. 372–3. Maurice is sometimes referred to as a Monophysite saint (e.g. Allen, *Evagrius* 27), but this error originated from confusion about the provenance of the Syriac *Life* of Maurice (which in fact came from a Nestorian manuscript, Brock, 'Sources' 29).

Constantinopolitan called Paulinus (Th. Sim. i. 11), and towards the end of his reign he is said to have ordered Stephen, bishop of Carrhae (probably the strongest bastion of pagan worship in the empire), to initiate a persecution of local pagans.[38] Maurice's treatment of both pagans and Monophysites suggests that his attitude to religious matters hardened late in life. It is possible that his tolerance or pragmatism was eroded by the serious illness which he suffered in 596/7 (Th. Sim. viii. 11. 8), and he was reputed to have begun to show concern for his wordly misdeeds and how they could be defended before the heavenly throne of judgement (viii. 11. 6). He will undoubtedly have heard, perhaps also read, the extant homily of John Nesteutes on repentance, and his instructions for the reception of penitents, which proclaimed that even the man who wore the crown must come bareheaded to obtain forgiveness for misdeeds, and that sins were worse when committed by people over the age of thirty (*PG* 88. 1892 D; 1928 D): as a gouty (Th. Sim. viii. 9. 10) and ageing man, about sixty years old, Maurice would have found little comfort in this teaching. Uncertainty about his prospects in the afterlife might have prompted him to take more aggressive action to promote religious orthodoxy; it certainly encouraged him to send gifts to the patriarchal sees and to monasteries at Jerusalem and in the desert to obtain absolution from his sins (Theoph. 284. 25–9).

There is ample testimony to Maurice's religiosity even if the claim in the Syriac hagiography that he spent eleven hours each day in prayer or worship is discounted. When besieging the Persian fortress of Chlomaron in 578 he refused to accept the Christian community's sacred vessels as ransom (Men. 23. 7); before undertaking a military expedition he sought divine assistance, and gave due thanks for successes (Th. Sim. v. 16. 7–8; vi. 8. 8); at the death of John Nesteutes in 595, he appropriated the patriarch's meagre bedding and used it during Lent (vii. 6. 4–5); when facing death he naturally presented himself in the role of the suffering sinner Job (viii. 11. 3). Apart from his various ecclesiastical constructions, he organized, or perhaps merely reorganized, the weekly feast to the Virgin that was celebrated on Friday at Blachernae with an associated procession to the church of the Virgin in the Chalcoprateia, and instituted the feast on

[38] M. Syr. x. 24, p. 375, and S. Brock, 'A Syriac Collection of Prophecies of the Pagan Philosophers', *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 14 (1983), 203–46.

15 August commemorating the Assumption of the Virgin.[39] If, as is likely, the icon of Christ was already in place on the Chalce (cf. n. 35 above), it would have been viewed in connection with the statues of the imperial family that Maurice placed there, a visual reminder of the emperor's special relationship with Christ. Maurice granted benefactions to the monastery of Theodore of Sykeon, who had foretold his accession and who was later summoned to Constantinople, where he blessed Maurice, the Patriarch Cyriacus, and the senate (*Life* 54; 82). He was a collector of relics, being unsuccessful in attempts to obtain the body of Daniel from Khusro II (Sebeos 5) and a relic of St Demetrius from Thessalonica (*Mirac. SD* i. 51) but managing to acquire the cap of the Nestorian Catholicus Sabrisho (*Chron. Seert* 67). This interest in relics probably explains his wish to investigate the authenticity of the miraculous effusions from the body of St Euphemia at Chalcedon, an investigation which Theophylact regarded as virtual sacrilege (viii. 14). Maurice was a devout Christian, but his piety was not blindly credulous: if emperor and people were placing increasing trust in relics and icons, it was also necessary to establish the efficacy of these supernatural supporters as well as to build up an impressive collection.

Maurice's reign witnessed the development of a dispute between pope and patriarch about the use by the latter of the title Oecumenical Patriarch. The argument, supposedly conducted in 'reasonable and sweet terms' (*Reg.* v. 45), in fact generated considerable heat in Gregory's letters (e.g. *Reg.* v. 44), which was not fully understood in the east: Anastasius of Antioch declared the matter to be of no importance, and Maurice thought the quarrel was about a 'frivolous name' and should not be pursued (*Reg.* vii. 24; 30). Gregory and Maurice also disagreed about an imperial edict which banned public officials and soldiers from entering ecclesiastical office or a monastery until after the end of their term of service (*Reg.* iii. 61), and about aspects of ecclesiastical administration in the Balkans and Spain.[40] Gregory managed to obtain modifications to the edict, but in general found Maurice intransigent. There was further discord about how the Lombards in north Italy should be treated, with Maurice favouring an aggressive policy whenever practical whereas Gregory tried to build

[39] Theoph. 265. 29–266. 2, with Theodore Lector 140. 16–17 and Nicephorus Callistus xvii. 28 (*PG* 147, col. 292A); see further Cameron, 'Theotokos', esp. 95ff.

[40] See Richards, *Consul*, ch. 13.

up peaceful contacts. By 602 Gregory, although superficially subservient to Maurice's wishes (e.g. *Reg.* xi. 29), was thoroughly disenchanted and welcomed the news of Phocas' accession with embarrassing warmth (*Reg.* xiii. 41–2).

Other information about Maurice's reign is scarce: Constantinople was affected by an earthquake and fire in 583 (Th. Sim. i. 11. 1–2; 12. 8–11), Arabissus was struck by an earthquake in 586/7 (M. Syr. x. 21, p. 359), and Antioch was severely damaged in 588 (Evag. vi. 8, pp. 227. 1–228. 10). In Egypt there were serious disturbances which led to the destruction of towns, interference with the Constantinopolitan grain-supply and imperial tax-revenues, and piratical attacks on Cyprus, but apart from John of Nikiu (97. 1–33) no source mentions these events, although they were surely of more than local importance.[41] At Constantinople there were bouts of popular unrest and hostility towards Maurice provoked by the Avar invasions of 587 and 598 and by the famine of 601/2.[42] However, on the basis of such limited information it is not possible to reconstruct even a shadowy outline of the internal history, whether social or political, of the empire under Maurice. His reign has been identified, by Ostrogorsky and Cameron among others, as a time of important changes in the transition from the late Roman to the medieval Byzantine world,[43] but most of the details of these changes must remain unclear.

(v) THE OVERTHROW OF MAURICE

With hindsight, people thought that Maurice's bloody overthrow should have been predicted, and so the necessary stories naturally emerged: prodigies were born in Thrace, a monk rushed through Constantinople sword in hand, strange creatures appeared in the Nile, and crocodiles ate the crowds of spectators.[44] Maurice was certainly unpopular with many sections of society in Constantinople and outside. There were riots in the capital in February 602, the direct cause being a famine that perhaps had its origin in civil unrest in Egypt,[45] but the result, as with any major popular disturbance, a

[41] A fragmentary letter published by M. Maehler, 'Trouble in Alexandria in a Letter of the Sixth Century', *GRBS* 17 (1976), 197–203, might be linked with this unrest.

[42] Th. Sim. ii. 17. 5; vii. 15. 4–6; viii. 4. 11–5. 4 with Theoph. 283. 12–24.

[43] Ostrogorsky, *History* 80ff.; Cameron, 'Elites'.

[44] Th. Sim. vi. 11. 1; vii. 12. 11; 16. 1–9; G. Mon. 657–8.

[45] Th. Sim. viii. 4. 11–5. 4; Theoph. 283. 12–24; J. Nik. 97. 7.

public—and hence potentially political—test of the emperor's authority: Maurice's half-hearted punishment of the rioters may have been interpreted as a sign of weakness. The administration of the praetorian prefect and logothete, Constantine Lardys, was also unpopular with sections of the populace (Theoph. 287. 12–16). The monks in Theodore of Sykeon's monastery in Galatia greeted an advance warning of Maurice's death with the comment, 'He deserves his fate, for he has in many things governed badly, especially in the things which he is now doing' (*Life* 119). Further, there was discord within the imperial family: at Easter 601 Maurice had quarrelled with the empresses Constantina and Sophia; the death on 11 January 602 of Maurice's closest adviser Domitian may have left the emperor isolated and created tensions among those eager to acquire Domitian's influence; in 602 there were stories of a rift between Maurice and his brother-in-law Philippicus, count of the excubitors (Theoph. 281. 13–20; 284. 3–6; 285. 17–286. 8); even the marriage of Theodosius to Germanus' daughter, an act which appeared to unite the two branches of the emperor Tiberius' family, may have been counter-productive, since it provided a reason to suspect the loyalty of the heir apparent Theodosius (Th. Sim. viii. 8. 15). Most importantly there was also dissatisfaction in the Balkan army: even discounting the stories about Maurice's refusal to ransom captured soldiers, his continued support for the unpopular general Comentiolus will have caused resentment, which then broke out into open mutiny over the order to winter north of the Danube (viii. 1. 9–10; 4. 8; 6. 2–10).

There was, however, less inevitability about the sequence of events than the various predictions and the signs of widespread antipathy might indicate. The mutiny on the Danube began with the limited objective of obtaining improvements in military service (J. Nik. 102. 10–11), and only gradually developed into a coup against the emperor as other opponents of Maurice tried to exploit the unrest. The mutinous soldiers were at first indecisive, and at one point seemed to be willing to cross back to the north bank of the Danube in accordance with Maurice's order (Th. Sim. viii. 6. 7–8); even when they had resolved to replace the emperor, their first inclination was to promote another member of the imperial family (viii. 8. 5), and it was only when the obvious alternative, Germanus, failed to obtain the support of the Green faction that the army confirmed their leader Phocas as emperor (viii. 9. 13–10. 5). Theophylact chose to blame the circus factions for the extreme troubles that came upon the Roman world (viii. 7. 11), and

his judgement, although strongly influenced by upper-class hostility, is not without justification: the Greens had tried to take advantage of Maurice's weakness to press their grievance against Constantine Lardys, Germanus might have succeeded Maurice if he had not been known as an over-enthusiastic supporter of the Blues, and Maurice himself and his family might have survived the coup if the Blues had not had an argument with Phocas' leading supporter Alexander.[46] Under Phocas the Blue and Green factions were to emerge as powerful groups that could be used to articulate support for, and opposition to, the emperor both in Constantinople and in provincial settings far removed from a hippodrome; some of these developments may have begun during Maurice's reign, when the Constantinopolitan factions at least seem to have acquired a more formal organization;[47] at any rate the demonstrations and disturbances which they helped to create in the capital will have given wide publicity to the emperor's uncertain reputation.

Maurice's overthrow was rapid; Theophylact's narrative is clear, even vivid, although on details it has to be corrected by evidence in Theophanes (285–91) and the *Chronicon Paschale* (693–4). On 20 November he ordered Comentiolus to take command of the circus factions, who were guarding the Theodosian walls; the next day Maurice accused Germanus of collusion with the mutineers, and the ensuing quarrel threw the city into confusion as Germanus sought sanctuary first in a church to the Virgin in the western part of the city and then in St Sophia; after a day of rioting on the 22nd Maurice fled by night across the Bosporus. On 23 November Phocas was proclaimed emperor at the Hebdomon, he entered the city in ceremonial procession on Sunday the 25th, and on 27 November made arrangements for the coronation of his wife Leontia. On the same day Phocas had Maurice and his younger sons killed at the harbour of Eutropius at Chalcedon, to which they had been conveyed following their arrest at the shrine of Autonomus at Praeneste; soon after, Theodosius was also captured and executed. Maurice's body was thrown into the Bosporus, while his head was exhibited to the army at the Hebdomon. With the help of Maurice's sister Gordia, the empress Constantina gathered the remains of her husband and sons for burial at the

[46] Theoph. 287. 12–16; Th. Sim. viii. 9. 15; 10. 13.

[47] Alan Cameron, *Factions* 251–61, 280–5, although he perhaps underestimates the power of the factions under Phocas.

monastery of St Mamas, also known as the Nea Metanoia (*Patr.* iii. 185), but few others will have mourned the passing of the parsimonious Maurice: his triumphant solution to the Persian war was now a decade in the past; the more recent successes in the Balkans had been gained by a policy which many thought was unnecessarily demanding. The worth of Maurice and his achievements could only be appreciated in retrospect, when compared with the misfortunes of Phocas' reign: as Theodore of Sykeon warned his monks, over-quick to exult at Maurice's death, 'This man, children, will shortly be removed, and after him worse things will happen, such as this generation does not expect' (*Life* 119).

2

Theophylact the Author

(i) EDUCATION AND CAREER

We possess less evidence about Theophylact Simocatta, the source for most of our information about Maurice's reign, than we do about any of his immediate predecessors in the tradition of classicizing historiography. Theophylact chose not to reveal the personal details which Agathias, Menander, and John of Epiphania included in their prefaces.[1] As a result, the following discussion of his career must be speculative. He came from Egypt, where one of his relations had been *Augustalis* at the end of Maurice's reign,[2] the family were clearly members of the Graeco-Egyptian administrative class. His religious views appear to have been orthodox,[3] and so it is likely that he was a native of Alexandria, the outpost of Chalcedonian orthodoxy in Monophysite Egypt. His date of birth is unknown, though I would suggest *c.* 585–90 as the most plausible guess.

Theophylact would have received his early education at Alexandria, where students could gain a general rhetorical training of a literary and philosophical character that served as the basis of specialized study of law.[4] He may have attended the university of Alexandria, where the traditions of Aristotelian scholarship, albeit with a Christian flavour, were maintained throughout the sixth century.[5] In the early seventh century, Stephen of Alexandria was the leading figure at the university, until he was summoned to Constantinople by Heraclius.[6] In the sixth century, Alexandria had drawn students, such

[1] Of late-antique historians, only Malchus and Theophanes Byzantinus provide as little information.

[2] Th. Sim. vii. 16. 10; viii. 13. 12.

[3] Veh, *Untersuchungen* 29–31. Olajos, 'Théophylacte' 168, claims that Theophylact subscribed to the monergism or monotheletism propounded by Sergius, but I can see no explicit references to this Christological theory in the *History*.

[4] Cameron, *Agathias* 140–1, as qualified by R. C. McCail, '"The Education Preliminary to Law"; Agathias *Historiae* II. 15. 7', *Byz.* 47 (1977), 364–7.

[5] H. D. Saffrey, 'Le chrétien Jean Philopon et la survivance de l'école d'Alexandrie au VIe siècle', *REG* 67 (1954), 396–410.

[6] H. Usener, *De Stephano Alexandrino Commentatio* (Bonn, 1880), in *Kleine Schriften* iii (Leipzig, 1914), 247ff.

as Agathias, from the cities of the eastern Mediterranean, and its attractions continued into the seventh century: in *c.* 618 the city was to be betrayed to the Persians by a philosophy student called Peter, who had come from Qatar on the Persian Gulf (*Anon. Guidi* 22), and philosophers were recorded among the Alexandrian captives present at Khusro II's court (Sebeos 33). By the end of the sixth century it may have been difficult to acquire an advanced education outside Constantinople and Alexandria (and Nisibis for theological studies), so that it was advantageous to be brought up in or near one of the surviving educational centres. Allusions in Theophylact's works to earlier writers, both imitations of specific phrases and more general references to scenes or incidents, reveal some knowledge not only of standard classical texts such as Homer, Hesiod, Euripides, the comedians Aristophanes and Menander, and Plato, but also of later writers including Lucian, Aelian, Libanius, Aristaenetus, and Aeneas and Procopius of Gaza.[7] The extent and depth of this knowledge is difficult to determine, because individual allusions may have been drawn from collections of excerpts, but allusions to more recent writers such as Aelian or the Gaza authors should indicate personal acquaintance; they suggest that Theophylact was quite widely read, at least in a few categories of literature such as epistolography.

Alexandria provided the initial stimulus for Theophylact's intellectual development, but it could not offer all the education that ambitious and wealthy parents would wish their son to receive, and, at about the age of twenty, Theophylact would have had to leave Egypt to pursue the expensive five-year course of specialist legal education that equipped him for his subsequent career: in the early sixth century unofficial legal tuition had been available at Alexandria, but this had been banned in 533 by Justinian (*Digest, Const. Omnem* 7, *CJ* i. 11), who restricted the teaching of law to Rome, Beirut, and Constantinople. There is no evidence that the Beirut school survived the earthquake of 551, and Theophylact's works show no interest in the western part of the empire such as might have been aroused by residence at Rome: thus there can be little doubt that legal studies will have taken him to Constantinople. The date of the move is unknown, but it is unlikely that he had arrived in the capital before Maurice's overthrow in 602, since there is nothing in the *History* to suggest that he had witnessed

[7] Leanza, 'Citazioni' 586–90, tabulates some allusions, a list that can be very considerably extended, particularly for post-classical authors: see now the excellent apparatus to Zanetto's edition of Theophylact's *Epistles*.

any of the events of Maurice's reign: in particular, his account of Phocas' coup does not appear to have been based on personal observation, but on an existing written version preserved by a chronicler.[8]

Theophylact was certainly present in Constantinople soon after the start of Heraclius' reign in 610, and it is possible, as suggested by Veh,[9] that he accompanied Heraclius on his expedition against Phocas, or that he arrived in the retinue of Heraclius' cousin Nicetas, who had defeated the supporters of Phocas in Egypt. Theophylact records that he delivered an emotional address in commemoration of Maurice and his family after the overthrow of Phocas' tyranny (viii. 12. 3–7). The precise occasion for this speech is not known, but it is likely that Heraclius organized a public ceremony in honour of Maurice's memory, as it was in Heraclius' interests to legitimize his coup by presenting himself as Maurice's avenger. Such a ceremony would have provided an opportunity for learned orators to display their talents and to attract the attention of the new regime in the same way as, half a century earlier, the accession and consulship of Justin II had provided material for hopeful panegyrists.[10] Theophylact, now perhaps aged between twenty and twenty-five would have been well equipped by his rhetorical training at Alexandria to compose and deliver an effective address. Only the opening of this speech, presented in Theophylact's grandest style, survives; the majority has disappeared through the loss of one page from the archetype of the manuscript tradition.

After completing his legal education, Theophylact embarked on a successful career resulting in appointment to high public office, unlike his predecessors Agathias, who complained of lack of preferment, and Menander, who declined to utilize his legal training although he did obtain the post of *protector*.[11] In the title to his *Ethical Epistles*, Theophylact is described as *scholastikos*, which suggests that he practised as a barrister at one of the main lawcourts of Constantinople. Agathias had found the busy life of a *scholastikos* a distraction from his preferred literary pursuits, since he was prevented from reading as

[8] Whitby, 'Chronicle Source' 335–7, for resemblances between Theophylact and the chronicles, and *Theophylact*, p. xiv n. 3, for the lack of evidence to support the theory that Theophylact was employed in the service of Probus, bishop of Chalcedon in the latter part of Maurice's reign.

[9] *Untersuchungen* 7.

[10] Corippus, *Laud. Iust.* iv. 154ff.

[11] Agath. *Hist.* iii. 1, with Cameron, *Agathias* 5–6; Men. 1. 5–12.

much classical literature as he wanted. Theophylact does not complain of such problems: he may have been a more efficient lawyer than Agathias, although he was also less determined to achieve a perfect façade of literary classicism. He may at some stage have been chosen as one of the *referendarii*, a select group of eight officials drawn from the notaries and tribunes, who were used by the emperor as judicial assistants and important messengers; at least, there survives the lead seal of a Theophylact *rhepherendarios*, datable to this period, and the identification is attractive since Theophylact is not a common name at this time and the post fits in well with the rest of the historian's career.[12] Further advancement was to follow. In the title to the *History*, Theophylact is described as *apo eparchon* and *antigrapheus*.[13] The rank of *apo eparchon* or *expraefectus* could have been honorary, but in view of his legal training and the likelihood that he was subsequently appointed to be *theios dikastes*, i.e. sacred or imperial judge, it probably resulted from a period of office as *praefectus urbi* at Constantinople.[14] As *antigrapheus* or *magister scriniorum*, a post which was often occupied by distinguished lawyers, Theophylact would have been head of one of the major bureaux of the administration, the *memoriales*, the *epistulares*, or the *libellenses*.[15] The evidence for Theophylact as imperial judge is a fragmentary inscription (now lost) from Aphrodisias in Caria, datable to the sixth or seventh century, which records the settlement of a dispute under the supervision of Theophylact, the *endoxotatos apo eparchon* and *theios dikastes*.[16] These imperial judges had been instituted by Justinian in 539 as a panel of twelve high-ranking

[12] D. Zacos and A. Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals* i–ii (Basle, 1972), no. 559, datable to 550–650, with Jones, *LRE* 575, and Stein, *Bas-Empire* ii. 736–7; for other Theophylacts, cf. below, n. 18.

[13] In the titles to *Natural Questions* and *Terms of Life*, only the rank of *apo eparchon* is recorded.

[14] Hunger, *Literatur* 313; on the office, see R. Guilland, 'Études sur l'histoire administrative de l'empire byzantin: l'éparque', *BS* 41 (1980), 17–32. The lead seal of Theophylact *apo eparchon* (Zacos and Veglery 1105), datable to 550×650, could be assigned to the historian. Parallels for this hypothetical reconstruction of Theophylact's career are offered by Julianus, the former *antigrapheus* appointed city prefect in 565 (Stein, *Bas-Empire* 779 n. 4), and perhaps also by Procopius, city prefect in 562, if he is to be identified with the historian (still a possibility in spite of Cameron, *Procopius* 15).

[15] Jones, *LRE* 549, 575–6; J. B. Bury, *The Imperial Administrative System in the Ninth Century* (London, 1911), 75–6.

[16] H. Grégoire, *Recueil des Inscriptions grecques d'Asie Mineure* i (Paris, 1922), no. 247 (p. 88); I am most grateful to Mrs C. Roueché for pointing out this inscription to me, and for letting me see an advance copy of the discussion in her forthcoming edition of the Aphrodisias inscriptions.

legal experts. Of the first board of twelve, two were former city prefects of Constantinople, while an inscription from Sardis records the activities of Hyperechius, *rhepherendarios* and *theios dikastes*, so that Theophylact the historian would have been a most suitable appointment to this distinguished post.[17] In discussing this inscription, Grégoire claimed that the name Theophylact was otherwise unknown in the sixth century, and although subsequent publication of lead seals has shown this assumption to be wrong,[18] it remains unlikely that two different Theophylacts reached the rank of *apo eparchon* in Heraclius' reign. This inscription is dated to September of the 15th indiction, which is of some interest: in the first half of the seventh century the possible years are 611, 626, and 641; September 611 is too early for Theophylact the historian to have held the lofty position of imperial judge;[19] it is improbable that an imperial judge would have been sent from Constantinople to try a provincial case in September 626, since this was only one month after the Avar attack on the capital and the Persian army of Shahvaraz would still have been disrupting administration in Asia Minor. By elimination, September 641 is the probable date of the trial recorded in the inscription: by now Theophylact would have been a very experienced lawyer, a little over fifty years old, a person with the appropriate qualifications for the exalted position of imperial judge.

Part of Theophylact's legal work may have been in the service of the Patriarch Sergius, so that his career would parallel those of the cousins Evagrius and John of Epiphania, the lawyer-historians of the late sixth century employed by Gregory, patriarch of Antioch. At least, in the ornate Dialogue that precedes the *History* Theophylact indirectly states that Sergius was the patron who had encouraged him to write history, and that Sergius had provided 'a benevolently

[17] Justinian, *Novel* 82 (*CJ* iii. 402); Grégoire, op. cit., no. 324 (pp. 114–16); Jones *LRE* 501–2.

[18] Other Theophylacts recorded in Zacos and Veglery are: Theophylact *scribo* (1072; 6th c.); Theophylact *hypatos* (557–8; AD 550×650); Theophylact *scholarios* (1071; AD 550×650); Theophylact *stratelates* (1074; AD 550×650); Theophylact (556, with name in Latin, 717, 1221*a*, 1390; all 6th or 7th c.). Some of these seals may represent different stages in the career of the same Theophylact, and some may have belonged to the historian, but they indicate that there was more than one Theophylact in public life between 550 and 650 (the historian is most unlikely to have been a *stratelates*).

[19] To be judge in 611, Theophylact would have had to have begun his legal career early in Maurice's reign, which is most unlikely in view of his personal ignorance of the history of the late 6th c.

founded rostrum and unthreatened freedom of speech'.[20] But such vague language may not refer to direct legal employment. While Heraclius was absent on campaign against the Persians, Sergius was the dominant figure in the civil administration of Constantinople, a suitable patron for any aspiring writer, and the most likely person to commission an established author to produce a particular work. In the sixth century Justinian had requested works from John Lydus (an account of war against Persia), Paul the Silentiary (the *Ecphrasis* of St Sophia), and probably Procopius (*Buildings*); in the 620s, if Theophylact was known to be one of the very few people to possess even a modest literary culture, he might well have been invited by Sergius to compose a classicizing history.

(ii) MINOR WORKS

There are four extant literary compositions by Theophylact which have to be fitted into the framework of this successful legal career. In addition to his major work, the *History*, three shorter pieces survive: two, the *Natural Questions* and *Ethical Epistles*, are well known, but the

[20] Dialogue 8, 10; Wilson, *Scholars*, 59–60, is tempted to see here a reference to a teaching post created for the historian by Sergius, but I prefer the scepticism of Lemerle, *Humanisme* 79. Dialogue 8–12 is sometimes taken to refer to Heraclius rather than Sergius (e.g. Hunger, *Literatur* 315, Pertusi, *Giorgio* 12, Frendo, 'George' 173 n. 55, P. Speck, *Klio* 68 (1986) 619ff.), but the Dialogue draws a distinction between the Heracleidae (i.e. Heraclius), who restored Philosophy to the royal courts, and 'the great high priest and prelate of the inhabited world' who resurrected History (History is even uncertain whether Philosophy knows this priest, Dialogue 8, so that it can hardly be the same person as Philosophy's saviour). The application to the 'priest' of the Alcestis comparison does not prove that he must be Heraclius (cf. n. 44 below for other transfers of imagery). Further, it is wrong to suppose that ἀρχιερεύς, 'great high priest' was regularly applied to emperors: only one instance is cited, from the acclamations to Theodosius II at the Council of Constantinople in 448 (see L. Bréhier, *Byz.* 4 (1927/8), following Mgr. Battifol, *Bulletin de la Société nationale des Antiquaires de France* 1926, 222–7). Battifol also produces a handful of instances of *pontifex maximus* (the Latin equivalent) applied to emperors or incorporated in imperial titulature, but this seems to be a deliberate archaism (e.g. in the salutation of a letter from Anastasius to the senate at Rome in 516: *Collectio Avellana* 113, ed. O. Guenther, *Corpus Script. Eccl. Lat.* 35/2 (Prague etc. 1898)), and the latest example mentioned by Battifol is an inscription of Justin I. The inadequacy of this evidence has not been realized by scholars who merely cite Bréhier's confident assertion about the use of ἀρχιερεύς: it is quite insufficient to prove that a reader of Theophylact's Dialogue might, contrary to the sense of the passage, have imagined that the high priest was any other than Sergius. Further, the imagery used of the high priest in Dialogue 11 is comparable to that applied to other priests or patriarchs: cf. Mary Whitby, 'Eutychius' 300).

third, a theological debate on *Predestined Terms of Life*, which is of greater interest for Theophylact's outlook and literary style in the *History*, has only recently been edited and discussed. *Natural Questions* is composed in the form of a Platonic dialogue that investigates nineteen wonders of nature and their explanations, issues such as why goat's blood softens adamant, ravens do not drink in summer, stone curlews cure jaundice, or the frogs of Seriphos are mute. It is obviously not intended as a serious work of scientific scholarship, but is a literary reworking of a brief selection of topics from the paradoxographic genre of pseudo-scientific literature that discussed such matters. One of the most extensive examples of the genre is the seventeen-book work *De Natura Animalium* by the early third-century-AD author Aelian. Theophylact certainly knew another of Aelian's writings, the *Varia Historia*, whose *locus amoenus* description of Tempe was adapted by Theophylact in his portrayal of Sabulente Canalion (ii. 11. 4–8), and he had most probably also read *De Natura Animalium*: many of Theophylact's wonders are mentioned by Aelian, and his treatment of one particular topic, why elephants stir up the water before drinking, was perhaps influenced by the organization of *Nat. An.* 17. 7, since he garbles the material in this chapter.[21] However, he must have known other paradoxographic literature, and the whole composition is more ornately literary than is usual in this genre, with the two interlocutors, Antisthenes and Polycrates, exchanging polite small talk and assessing the merits of different explanations for the problems. Although *Natural Questions* is a work composed within a well-established genre, the material has nevertheless been handled in a fresh (but not entirely accurate) manner, and the formal structure of the dialogue has been used to increase the interest of the piece.

The *Ethical Epistles*, a collection of eighty-five letters subdivided into the categories of moral, rustic, and amatory present a fictitious correspondence between various historical and mythical characters on a range of topics. They belong to the genre of fictitious epistolography best represented by the collection of Alciphron, four books of letters of fishermen, farmers, parasites, and courtesans. The genre

[21] *Nat. An.* 17.7 is a composite chapter that begins with the eating-habits of elephants and then continues with the observation that camels stir up water before drinking because they prefer muddy water: in Theophylact the two elements are conflated, so that it is the elephants who stir up the water, and an explanation is added that the elephant is frightened by its reflection in calm water. This material is also adjacent in Aelian's source, Aristotle, *Historia Animalium* $595^{b}30$–$596^{a}5$, but cf. below for other knowledge of *De Natura Animalium*.

seems to have been popular towards the end of the second century AD, the probable *floruit* of Alciphron, since his contemporaries Aelian and Philostratus composed collections of rustic and amatory letters respectively. A later example is the two-book collection of amatory letters by Aristaenetus, who probably flourished *c.* 500 AD. Theophylact's collection is clearly influenced by the traditions of this genre, but recent investigations have noted his free and creative use of these traditions, the greater individual characterization which is imparted to the correspondents,[22] and the fact that several of the examples in the moral letters were derived from Aelian's *De Natura Animalium*.[23] By adapting his reading to new uses Theophylact could stretch his knowledge to serve as many purposes as possible. Neither *Natural Questions* nor *Ethical Epistles* is a particularly substantial work (about 460 and 780 lines respectively), and it is probably correct to regard both as juvenilia, literary exercises intended to entertain the reader while also displaying the author's cultural erudition, his ability to compose competent Atticizing Greek, and his skill in recasting traditional material in new arrangements.

Theophylact's third minor work, *On Predestined Terms of Life*, deals with the theological question of whether human existence has a definite limit established in advance or whether there is some scope for the length of life to be altered in accordance with individual conduct or as a result of natural calamities. All the participants in the discussion uphold their views with extensive citations from the Scriptures, particularly the Old Testament (over half from the Psalter and Pentateuch). Two set speeches delivered by Theognostus and Theophrastus present the opposing arguments. The former, who champions predestination, is presented as a proud, aggressive cleric 'with a throat like an open grave and a tongue like a sharpened razor' (*Terms* ii, p. 10. 19–20), who alleges that his opponent's doctrine deserves excommunication and must be cast from the church, like money-changers from the temple, with the whip of the Gospels. Theophrastus, opposing predestination, is a less extreme character, but the relish with which he picks on the excesses of his adversary detracts from the force of his own argument, so that his concluding assumption of success strikes an over-confident note (ii, p. 22. 3–9).

[22] G. Zanetto, 'Alcuni aspetti dello stile delle epistole di Teofilatto', *JÖB* 32/3 (1982), 165–74.

[23] A. Pignani, 'Strutture compositive delle epistole "morali" di Teofilatto Simocata', *Univ. di Napoli, Annali Fac. lett. e filos.* 22 (NS 10) (1979–80), 51–9.

Judgement is then delivered by two adjudicators, Evangelus and Theopemptus, who cautiously adopt a middle course between rigid predestination, which is called an un-Christian concept, and random fate, which would infringe the incomprehensible superiority of God: humanity has the freedom to choose between virtue and vice, but this free choice has an inevitable effect on the length of human life (iii, p. 24. 1–15). Equally important is the advice given to the disputants about their behaviour: humility rather than arrogance, mildness rather than wrath, should be their ideal; human knowledge is necessarily limited, and, since men cannot reach certainty, their disputes, indeed their lives, should be governed by moderation and caution (iii, p. 30. 6ff.).

The arrangement of *Predestined Terms* follows the pattern of the *controversiae*, the rhetorical disputes which constituted a standard element of literary education, and in which speech and counter-speech might be followed by a concluding judgement, but the subject-matter is less easy to parallel exactly. *Predestined Terms* touches on general philosophical questions, such as human free will, divine foreknowledge, time, and eternity, that were considered by philosophers in the fifth and sixth centuries: thus Aeneas and Zacharias of Gaza, who had received a Christian philosophical education at Alexandria, composed Platonic dialogues which, in discussing the questions of the eternity of the world and of individual souls, dealt with divine providence and emphasized the transcendent superiority of God (cf. *Terms* iii, p. 24. 1–15).[24] The closest analogy is provided by Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, which is concluded by a long investigation of providence. Boethius was expert in Greek philosophy, as well as versed in contemporary Christian doctrinal disputes between East and West; it has even been claimed, though perhaps extravagantly, that he was in 'intimate contact with Alexandrian thought and learning'.[25] It is possible that this question was debated in the Alexandria university during the sixth century, but the religious presentation of the argument in *Predestined Terms* has nothing in

[24] I. P. Sheldon-Williams, 'The Reaction against Proclus: Gaza', in *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, ed. A. H. Armstrong (Cambridge, 1967), ch. 31(*c*), pp. 483–8.

[25] H. Liebeschütz, 'Boethius and the Legacy of Antiquity', ibid., ch. 35, pp. 546–64, at 553. It is, however, very difficult to pin down Boethius' precise debt to Ammonius of Alexandria, and it is safer to regard him as an eclectic, with Alexandria as one among many sources of influence.

common with these earlier philosophical discussions,[26] which did not in any case deal with the detailed question of whether the length of human life was foreordained. In the fourth century Basil of Caesarea had alluded to 'the terms of life which were affixed for each one in the beginning by the just judgement of God, who foresees from afar what is of benefit to each of us' (*PG* 31. 333 B), but he did not investigate the question further. Theophylact's is the earliest explicit discussion devoted to this topic, and, having chosen to present the argument in wholly Christian terms, he may have had to rely on his own biblical knowledge to furnish the 177 scriptural citations which form the backbone of the debate.[27] The question of 'the terms of life', or analogous issues, may have been discussed in contemporary theological circles,[28] but the most likely stimulus to Theophylact's interest in the topic was the traditions, not of Alexandrian philosophy, but of classicizing historiography.

Fate and necessity were traditional elements in the intellectual framework of the classicizing historian, but were not entirely compatible with Christian notions about mankind's responsibility for its actions and God's interventions in human affairs: Agathias had thought that the relationship between providence and free will merited consideration in the opening chapter of his *History*, where he upheld human free will but conceded that God could intervene in the world on the side of good, by encouraging mankind to good deeds, though never on the side of evil; in particular God could never be credited with responsibility for natural disasters.[29] In *Predestined Terms*, Theophylact's attitude to free will and divine intervention, as represented by the opinions of the adjudicators, is rather different from Agathias': for Theophylact, mankind deserves credit for

[26] In particular, Boethius' approach is very different, in that he regarded philosophical method as a means that permitted humanity to approach the mysteries of divinity, though without being able to rival its understanding: cf. Boethius, *De Trinitate*, pr. 23ff., 'we should of course press our enquiry only so far as man's insight is allowed to climb to the height of heavenly knowledge'.

[27] Garton–Westerink, *Predestined Terms*, introd., pp. x–xi.

[28] In the 7th-c. collection of *Questions and Answers* attributed to Anastasius of Sinai, one query (18) is whether people who suffer in natural disasters do so as a result of divine orders and threats, or through the operation of the Devil. The response emphasizes God's supremacy and asserts that one should not even ask if a victim of misfortune has anticipated his time; the Emperor Maurice is then cited as an example of someone whose terrible death was fully in accord with God's providential plan (col. 501 A–D).

[29] Agath. *Hist.* i. 1. 2–5, v. 4. 3–6, with discussion in Cameron, *Agathias* 95–7; cf. also ead., *Procopius* 117–19.

choosing good as well as censure for preferring evil, while God's supreme discernment is capable of providing explanations for events that transcend human understanding, for example the Massacre of the Innocents (iii, p. 28. 28ff.);[30] he could invoke the concept of inherited sin to explain such unpleasant actions as the slaying of the first-born of Egypt (iii, p. 28. 2ff.), whereas Agathias had firmly denied that God could be held responsible for massacres and natural catastrophes. In the *History*, Theophylact did not include any explicit discussion of free will and fatalism, nor resort to the inconclusive speculation about fate and God's purpose to which Procopius occasionally had recourse (e.g. *Wars* iii. 18. 2); it is possible that Theophylact sated his interest in such topics by this separate investigation, but some of the conclusions of *Predestined Terms* are of relevance to the *History*, especially the emphasis on the limitations of human knowledge, which is reinforced by allusion to St Paul's statement that we see in a glass darkly (1 Cor. 13: 12) and by quotation of Sophocles, *Ajax* 23, 'We know nothing distinctly, but wander around': the inevitability of human ignorance entails that behaviour must be cautious, whether within the narrow confines of a theological debate or in the wider arena of historical events, and it is not surprising that the advice of Evangelus and Theopemptus about correct behaviour is frequently echoed in Theophylact's assessment of individuals in the *History*.[31] Furthermore, a writer who believed that human beings are incapable of understanding events was unlikely to devote himself to detailed investigation of specific causes in the classical manner, but might prefer to view events as part of the ordered progress of Christian history which God alone could fully comprehend: thus it is not surprising that Theophylact was less interested in causation than his predecessors Procopius and Agathias had been.[32] This resigned attitude towards human understanding may even be relevant to Theophylact's technique as a historian, in that he appears less resolute than his predecessors in the search for, and analysis of, information, so that his *History* is largely a patchwork of identifiable source-material which has not been integrated into a homogeneous whole. In terms of literary presentation, *Predestined Terms*, like *Natural Questions* and *Ethical Epistles*, reveals that Theophylact was not just a

[30] Cf. Anastasius, *Questions* 18 (see above, n. 28).
[31] Cf. below, ch. 12(ii).
[32] Although causation had not been their forte either; see Cameron, *Procopius* 40–1.

slavish follower of the 'rules' of a particular genre: thus his discussion of a theological topic concludes with advice on human conduct, not with a neat solution to the specific question.

Although these minor works cannot be dated precisely, it is traditional to place *Natural Questions* and *Ethical Epistles* early in Theophylact's literary development on grounds of brevity and simplicity.[33] This may well be correct. If it were safe to use the information in the titles to the works to establish the stage of Theophylact's career at which each was composed, then one could conclude that his first work was *Ethical Epistles*, since in this he is only accorded the status of *scholastikos*; *Natural Questions* and *Predestined Terms* both describe Theophylact as *apo eparchon*, and so may have been written after Theophylact's career had begun to bring success; in the *History* Theophylact is described as both *apo eparchon* and *antigrapheus*, which could indicate that a further appointment had preceded its composition. There is no mention of Theophylact's postulated service as imperial judge in 641, which probably followed some time after his various literary enterprises.

(iii) THE *HISTORY*

(*a*) *Date of composition*

Although such indications cannot be pressed, this reconstruction is at least plausible, and is consistent with the occasional references in the *History* that allow the composition of certain passages to be dated within broad limits. The work was written some time after the death of Phocas in 610 (Dialogue 3–7), but before that of the Patriarch Sergius in 638, since this man who resurrected History is still alive as an 'incorporeal philosopher on earth . . . the incarnation of contemplation dwelling as a man among men' (Dialogue 8–12). The latest events explicitly mentioned are Heraclius' victory over Rhazates in December 627, and the death of Khusro II and the conclusion of peace with Persia in the following year (viii. 12. 12–14); but the same triumph is also foreshadowed in the astrological prophecy attributed to Khusro (v. 15. 3–7) and is reflected in the mood of the speech composed for Domitian's celebration of the return of Martyropolis to the Romans (iv. 16). It is a plausible inference that Theophylact composed

[33] Veh, *Untersuchungen* 7.

substantial parts of his narrative in the optimistic mood of the late 620s, and indeed Heraclius' triumph may well have been the major stimulus that reawakened interest in different types of historical writing: in the late 620s George of Pisidia composed several epic celebrations of recent Roman successes, and Heraclius' overthrow of Phocas could now proudly take its place alongside his conquest of the world-destroying Khusro (*Heraclias* i–ii); a member of the Constantinopolitan clergy was inspired to extend the account of Malalas' chronicle from 533 down to 630 with a narrative (the *Chronicon Paschale*) that focused on the divine rescue of Constantinople from the Avar siege in 626 and Heraclius' victory over Persia in 628, with the restoration of the Holy Cross to Jerusalem and Heraclius' return to Constantinople as its probable climax.[34] Theophylact's *History* was brought to a conclusion in the same intellectual and emotional milieu as these other works; the date at which the project was conceived remains to be considered.

(*b*) *The introductory sequence*

In the introductory Dialogue between the personifications of Philosophy and History, Theophylact claims that History has been long dead, ever since the murderous accession of Phocas; Philosophy had already been re-established in Constantinople after Heraclius' deposition of Phocas, an indirect allusion to Heraclius' patronage of the Alexandrian philosopher Stephen, but History was only now being resurrected through the patronage of Theophylact's current work by an unnamed high priest (i.e. the Patriarch Sergius). Thus at one level the Dialogue is an allegorical presentation of a discussion between Stephen, who had received Heraclius' patronage, and Theophylact, who had been favoured by Sergius. However, the impersonality and indirectness of the discussion are also important features which reflect Theophylact's own conception of his role as a historian: his enterprise may resurrect History, but his personal function is that of narrator rather than creator. It is no surprise that the Dialogue's vague indications do not tie the *History* to a specific date.

This introductory Dialogue is without parallel in classical or Byzantine historiography, and indeed the only obvious parallel for a discussion involving personified Philosophy is Boethius' *De Consola-*

[34] Although the end of *Chr. Pasch.* is lost, the terminal date is provided in the title (p. 32).

tione Philosophiae, to which it would be inappropriate to compare Theophylact's brief *jeu d'esprit*.[35] The unique character of the Dialogue led Olajos to suggest that it was not intended by Theophylact as an organic part of the *History*, but that it was a separate, and earlier, composition, a declaration of historiographical intent, which was only attached to the main work much later, perhaps by a medieval copyist.[36] This theory, however, is undermined by the conclusion of the Dialogue, which contains a specific instruction by Philosophy that History should begin her tale, 'Lead on then, my child, and insert a proem like a starting line to your argument . . .'; in obedience to this command History undertakes to 'stir the lyre of history' (Dialogue 14–15). Thus the Dialogue explicitly anticipates a historical narrative that will be preceded by a proem. None of the three arguments advanced in favour of the Dialogue's independence is compelling, namely the impossibility that Theophylact could use an element without precedent in the historiographical tradition, the placing of the Dialogue in front of both the formal title to the *History* and the Table of Contents, and the fresh tone of the Dialogue, which is alleged to reflect recent events.

In his minor works Theophylact demonstrates that he was not a slave to the expectations of a given genre, for example by using a theological discussion to present advice on human behaviour; in the *History* his willingness to include more specifically Christian material than any of his predecessors shows the flexibility with which he was prepared to treat this genre. Classicizing historiography, indeed, was not strictly governed by a set of regulations or prescriptions: certain things were expected, major military and diplomatic events would be narrated with an adornment of speeches and digressions, but the extant histories and fragments of lost works from the fifth and sixth centuries reveal considerable differences of approach. Historical introductions were expected to convey some standard information about the writer (which Theophylact in fact omits), but these are also sections which reveal much diversity, as if each author felt a special obligation to demonstrate his difference from his predecessors: thus Eunapius' introduction contains a long explanation for his disregard

[35] Lack of parallels, H. Lieberich, *Studien zu den Proömien in griech. und byz. Geschichtsschreibung* (Munich, 1900), ii. 16; allegorical Philosophy in Boethius, J. Wiseman, *Allegory: The Dynamics of an Ancient and Medieval Tradition* (Oxford, 1987), 112–21.

[36] 'Contributions' 417, 424.

of chronology and a critique of Dexippus (fr. 1), Procopius justified the importance of the events he was to describe with an extended comparison between Homeric and contemporary archers (*Wars* i. 1. 6–16), Agathias explained the similarity of poetry and history and summarized the themes of Procopius' histories (Proem), Menander reviewed his unenthusiastic involvement with the law and the importance of Maurice's patronage of literature (1),[37] John of Epiphania boasted of the inside knowledge which allowed him to undertake the narration of the important events of his life (§ 1); although many of the individual themes in these introductions are drawn from the same classical exemplars, notably Thucydides and Diodorus Siculus, each is an individual production that reflects the particular interests of the author. Thus there was no set prescription for a historiographical introduction, and nothing to prevent Theophylact from devising a new form. In *Natural Questions* he had innovated by using the Platonic dialogue form to handle paradoxographic topics, and so it is not surprising that he should present a dialogue as the first element in his historical introduction.

The location of the Dialogue before the formal title contributes to Theophylact's deliberately indirect and impersonal approach to history. Agathias had claimed (Proem 14) that it was customary for historians to record their name and origin, a claim that is corroborated by extant prefaces of secular historians (with the exception of Zosimus), even if no historian matches the detail of Agathias' account of himself. By contrast, the only place at which Theophylact's name and rank are recorded is in the formal title at the start of the Table of Contents, 'Book One of the Universal History of Theophylact, *expraefectus* and *antigrapheus*', and he makes no statement about his personal qualifications for writing history, his connection with his historiographical predecessors, or the importance of the events he will record.[38] Rather, Theophylact's intention is to present History as a supra-human personification, an independent being who will narrate her own story to the audience, so that the role of the individual historian is relegated towards that of a passive mouthpiece. This approach to history is closer to that of ecclesiastical historians, for whom the narration of the pattern of Christian history needed no

[37] I am not convinced by the suggestion of Baldwin, 'Menander' 102, that Menander was parodying the traditional contents of a historiographical preface.

[38] Contrast Proc. *Wars* i. 1, and John of Epiphania 1.

justification and the supreme quality for a historian was trust in God; like Theophylact, most ecclesiastical historians refer to themselves by name only in the formal title to their accounts.

The parallel of ecclesiastical historiography is relevant to the status of the Table of Contents. Secular historians were expected to provide a brief outline of their subject-matter;[39] thus Procopius states that he will record Justinian's wars against the barbarians in east and west, or John of Epiphania the events surrounding Khusro's flight and restoration; Theophylact's apparent disregard for this convention has been noted; however, if he was responsible for the wording of the title, the assertion that the *History* was 'Universal' made a general statement about its coverage to which a detailed Table could give precision.[40] Eusebius, however, had prefaced his church history with indexes to each book (and possibly also chapter-headings), which established a precedent for his continuators;[41] it is likely that the sixth-century ecclesiastical historians Evagrius and John of Ephesus both provided Tables of Contents for their works. Theophylact may, therefore, have decided to follow the practice of ecclesiastical historiography and compose a Table of Contents for the eight books, each of which is separately entitled 'Universal History'; the occasional touch of pompous or unusual language (e.g. 1. 33; 2. 22, 26; 3. 23; 4. 18) points to Theophylactean authorship, although certain discrepancies between the Table and the actual text may occasion doubt.[42] Support for authenticity is provided by *Natural Questions*, in which the conversation between Antisthenes and Polycrates is preceded first by a brief high-flown statement of Theophylact's literary abilities, and second

[39] Lucian, *On Writing History* 53, with Cameron, *Agathias* 59.

[40] Convention disregarded: Lieberich, loc. cit. in n. 35; Hunger, *Literatur* i. 316. There is no obvious antecedent for the title *Οἰκουμενικὴ Ἱστορία* or 'Universal History', though the contemporary practice of patriarch and emperor may be relevant: Constantinopolitan patriarchs had styled themselves 'Oecumenical' for a century or more, and Heraclius was praised by George of Pisidia as the Noah of the new Oecumene (*Heraclias* i. 84).

[41] On Eusebius' practice, see T. D. Barnes, 'The Emperor Constantine's Good Friday Sermon', *JTS* NS 27 (1976), 418–21; authenticity is a problem with such Tables of Contents, but those attached to Eusebius' works are either by Eusebius himself or by a well-informed contemporary. Polybius had set an example by prefacing most of the books of his *History* with a summary of events (xi. 1*a*), and in his final book provided a chronological résumé and list of contents (xxxix. 8. 8, with F. W. Walbank, *Polybius* (Berkeley, 1972) 16–17).

[42] Cf. Whitby, *Theophylact* 7 n. 1.Olajos, loc. cit. in n. 36, believed that the Table must have been composed by a medieval copyist, but it should be noted that the formal title to the *History* in fact introduces the Table (rather than follows it as Olajos implies).

by a Table of Contents that lists the twenty topics of the Dialogue (16–17); it is not clear why Theophylact declined to place this list at the very start of the work, but the basic arrangement is the same in both *Natural Questions* and *History*.[43]

The precise tone, or degree of freshness, of the Dialogue is obviously a matter for subjective judgement. Mythological allusions to Phocas as a 'steel-encircled Calydonian tyrant ... a barbarian mongrel of the Cyclopean breed, the Centaur ... for whom monarchy was a feat of wine-swilling' (Dialogue 4), to the new imperial family as the saving and purifying Heracleidae (6), or to Sergius as an 'evil-averting Heracles' who resurrects a new Alcestis (9), seem stylized rather than fresh, part of the tradition of classical invective. There are close parallels in the literature of the 620s: in George of Pisidia's poems to Heraclius, composed after the triumph over Persia in 628, the emperor is presented as 'the Heracles who is the one genuine saviour among men', whose good deeds include the raising up of 'the universal Alcestis' (*Heraclias* i. 65ff.); Phocas is described as 'the hurricane, the orgy ... who thought that the blood-ridden effusions over us contributed to his thrice-unfortunate power, the terrestial leviathan, the manifestation of a Gorgon', his drunkenness is criticized, and the unruly citizens who helped him to the throne are likened to Centaurs (*Heraclias* ii. 5ff., 34ff.). In the concluding chapters of his *History*, in a narrative sequence that contains a specific allusion to events of 628 (viii. 12. 12–14), Theophylact used imagery similar to that in both the Dialogue and George of Pisidia to describe Phocas as 'the Calydonian tyrant, the Centaur ... the mongrel barbarian tyrant' (viii. 10. 4). Thus the imagery and tone of the Dialogue are quite compatible with a date of composition in the late 620s; indeed, it is possible that Theophylact's choice of language and mythological examples was influenced by George, whose range of comparisons is both wider and more accurately applied.[44] It is most

[43] John Lydus' *De Magistratibus* has a Table of Contents in a similar place, between a brief preface and the main text. Dr L. A. Holford-Strevens has pointed out to me that Pliny and Gellius also placed their prefaces before their lists of contents.

[44] It is more straightforward to have Heraclius (George, *Heraclias* i. 73), rather than Sergius, raise up an Alcestis; perhaps also to use the Centaurs to describe Phocas' supporters (*Heraclias* ii. 37–8), rather than Phocas himself. Theophylact may have been following the example of George (*In Bonum patricium*) in extending elements of the Heracles/Heraclius imagery to apply to Heraclius' close supporters. Cf. ch. 12 n. 47 for another example of language used of Heraclius by George in the same passage of *Heraclias* (l. 77) being transferred to other purposes by Theophylact, and ch. 10 n. 6 for

reasonable to assume that the Dialgoue was composed *c.*629–30, probably as one of the last parts of the *History* to be written, at about the same time as the passage in book viii noted above. The presentation to the public of Theophylact's *History* was the event which signalled the resurrection of History and occasioned the amazement of Philosophy.

The Proem, which Philosophy had requested from History as preface to the narrative, is the most traditional part of Theophylact's introductory sequence, a show-piece for his rhetoric, but it also serves to underline his individual conception of the humble role of the historian in relation to the narrative he is presenting. In the Dialogue, Philosophy had likened the story of History to the songs of the Sirens, a comparison which points to its compulsive charm,[45] and the beneficial power of history, the greatest of advantages conferred on mankind by reason, is amplified in the Proem. The attractions of history to enquiring minds are illustrated by an extended comparison with Homer's account of the Phaeacians' attentive reception for Odysseus' narration of his wanderings (Proem 6–10).[46] The allusion to Homer leads to consideration of the reputation of poets as teachers (11–12), and although Theophylact recognizes certain similarities between poetry and history in their powers of entertainment he stresses their difference by contrasting their subject-matter: poetry deals with fictions and falsehoods, which are beautified with the charming embroideries of metre, so that poets do not deserve their reputation as teachers or as theologians in close contact with (pagan) gods; history by contrast is praised as the teacher of all mankind, since everyone can benefit from its subject-matter. The criticism of poetry may have been intended as a reference to Agathias, who had, in his

the Scipio image appropriately used by George for Heraclius but less appositely applied by Theophylact to Philippicus. Pertusi, *Giorgio* 42 n. 3, sees unspecified echoes of George in Theophylact.

[45] Cf. Hunger, 'Imitation' 29; the comparison is not meant to suggest that History is a seductive distraction from more important intellectual matters.

[46] The point of the comparison is the effect of the narrative on the audience. T. Nissen, 'Das Prooemium zu Theophylakts Historien und die Sophistik', *BNJ* 15 (1939), 3–13, an article that usefully collects literary antecedents to Theophylact's sentiments in the Proem, suggested (p. 7) that the freedom of speech which Odysseus found among the Phaeacians paralleled the rebirth of History under Heraclius, but this is over-subtle. Cf. also R. Maisano, 'Il problema della forma letteraria nei proemi storiografici bizantini', *BZ* 78 (1985), 329–43; and for earlier Christian interpretations of the Sirens, J. Pépin, 'The Platonic and Christian Ulysses', in D. J. O'Meara (ed.), *Neoplatonism and Christian Thought* (Norfolk, Va., 1982), 10–14.

proem, emphasized the similarities between poetry and history: both were concerned with the inculcation of virtue in mankind, and Agathias regarded attractive presentation as important for the effectiveness of history's instruction.[47] For Theophylact it is 'the extensive experience of history' (Proem 6), not any embellishments added by the historian, which is responsible for its charms,[48] and the emphasis on history's role as a teacher might call to mind the personified figure of the Dialogue, to whose narrative the audience is supposed to be attending. This praise of history is expressed in traditional formulae paraphrased directly from Diodorus Siculus (i. 1. 1–5), but it also expresses Theophylact's individual views in reaction to the very different attitude of Agathias. The Proem concludes with a statement of the author's unworthiness for the task he is undertaking (16). This catalogue of his failings is more extensive than the traditional apology for the historian's shortcomings;[49] as author Theophylact was to be the servant of History rather than the creator of the historical narrative.

(*c*) *The end of the* History

There is no evidence how long it would have taken to compose the *History*: my own feeling is that, in view of Theophylact's very extensive reliance on earlier written sources for his historical information (cf. below, ch. 4(i), 8(i)), it could have been put together quite quickly—three or four years or so, rather than the two decades postulated by Olajos.[50] A work composed over a period of twenty years, as for example Procopius' *Wars*, is likely to show signs of changes in the author's historical focus and attitudes, but it is not possible to detect any in Theophylact's *History*.

The conclusion of the *History* presents several problems. Theophylact refers to his purpose of recording 'in greater detail the events connected with the tyranny',[51] and he might also have intended to

[47] Agathias, proem 5; cf. *History* i. 7. 6–7; iii. 1. 1–7; Agathias did distinguish history from the 'mythology' of poetry (proem 11), but, unlike Theophylact, he did not choose to emphasize this deceitful aspect of poetry.

[48] Similarly Menander (i. 2) had expected that description of events rather than nobility of diction would bring him success.

[49] Cf. Agathias, proem 12–13; Menander 1. 2; John of Epiphania 1; Evagrius, proem, p. 5. 16–20.

[50] 'Contributions' 420. Cf. Cassius Dio, who devoted 10 years to note-taking and 12 to composition of his world history in 80 books (lxxii. 23. 5, with F. Millar, *A Study of Cassius Dio* (Oxford, 1964), ch. 2).

[51] viii. 14. 10; cf. viii. 12. 14, 'let us revert in regular order to the deeds of the tyranny'.

describe Heraclius' campaigns against the Persians, but these projects were never carried out; the work terminates with the renewal of war with Persia and the death of Phocas' collaborator Alexander. The insignificance of this concluding reference to Alexander and the disjointed organization of the final chapters led Veh to suggest that Theophylact originally intended the *History* to conclude with the funeral oration for Maurice (viii. 12. 5–6), and that the last three chapters (viii. 13–15) were a later addition by Theophylact himself.[52] A medieval scribe also had doubts about the status of the last chapters, since the Vatican manuscript contains a marginal note 'History ix' at the start of viii. 12.[53] The last chapters are a miscellany, but it is Theophylact's practice elsewhere to append such information to a long block of narrative: the account of Khusro's restoration in books iv–v concludes with isolated notices (Khusro's astrological prophecy, and Probus' embassy; v. 15. 3–11), which Theophylact simply tacked on at a suitable place,[54] while the final chapter (v. 16) introduces the start of Maurice's Balkan campaign, whose narration then continues in the first three chapters of book vi.[55] The miscellaneous and transitional nature of the end of book viii can be paralleled, and it is possible to see a certain logic in Theophylact's account: after describing the death of Maurice and his younger sons and the provisions of Maurice's will (viii. 11), he turns to the fate of the corpses, whose pitiful treatment introduces his own epitaph on Maurice and the disquisition on the punishment of those polluted by Maurice's death (viii. 12); he then returns to the execution of Maurice's relatives and closest supporters, and in particular the

[52] *Untersuchungen* 10–12.

[53] Olajos, 'Contributions' 423, claimed that Theophylact himself intended to start book ix at this point, but Veh correctly noted that the eulogy for Maurice, at the very least, belongs with the narrative of his saintly death in book viii. Book-divisions would have been indicated by Theophylact, and had been established by the time the Table of Contents was compiled (chapter-divisions are a different matter).

[54] Cf. also the conclusion to the digression on the early history of the Persian war (iii. 18), where Theophylact appends information about the seven noble Persian families and Vahram's career (iii. 18. 4–12) before returning to the progress of Vahram's revolt (iii. 18. 13–14), which is then continued in the next book.

[55] Cf. also the end of book i, where the last chapter introduces the eastern campaign of 586, which then occupies the first half of book ii; at the end of book vii the aftermath of the 598 Balkan campaign is left to be reported at viii. 1. 9–10 (and indeed the subsequent military events are treated, wrongly, by Theophylact as if they belonged to the same year as the narrative of vii. 13–15); Theophylact's transitions from Balkan to Persian events at i. 8. 11–9. 1, and back again at ii. 10. 6–8, leave both western and eastern narratives in the middle of a sequence of action.

murder by Alexander of Maurice's eldest son Theodosius (viii. 13. 1–6); the extinction of Maurice's male relatives affords an opportunity for the insertion of three stories that are relevant to Maurice's piety, the miraculous announcement of his death at Alexandria, his benefactions, and his acceptance of proof of St Euphemia's miraculous powers (viii. 13. 7–14. 9); Theophylact then returns to the fate of Maurice's wife and daughters (viii. 15. 1), and ends the book with the introduction of the Persian war and the unfortunate fates of two of Phocas' closest supporters, Lilius and Alexander, who had respectively effected the murders of Maurice and Theodosius (viii. 15. 2–9). In these concluding chapters, space is found for some interesting anecdotes about Maurice, and the scene is set for the narration of the Persian war, which will bring punishment on numerous Romans.

The projected continuation of the *History* was not completed, but this does not prove that the existing eight books, which come to a suitable conclusion at the end of Maurice's reign, were not regarded by Theophylact as a work that was ready for presentation to his literary audience. It has, however, been claimed by Olajos that Theophylact only had time to write up the account of Maurice's first decade as emperor (books i–v) and of his overthrow (part of viii), whereas the treatment of Maurice's second decade in books vi–viii is noticeably less stylish and organized;[56] Olajos pointed to gaps in the coverage of events, lapses in the chronological order, and the lack of speeches and Theophylactean phraseology in these latter books as indications that Theophylact had insufficient time for collecting detailed information and for leisurely composition in his normal stylized rhetorical discourse. However, detailed examination of Theophylact's treatment of the Balkan and Persian wars suggests that he was not an assiduous collector of information: it was not shortage of time but limited historical interests and the contents of a restricted range of written sources which largely determined the extent of Theophylact's historical knowledge; the best parts of books i–v are the Persian narratives, which were derived from John of Epiphania, whereas the Balkan narrative of the same years omits the Slav attack on Thessalonica and misplaces the campaign of 589 (cf. below ch. 5(i)). The two chronological lapses noted by Olajos (vii. 6. 1; 12. 10–11) were probably caused by Theophylact's imperfect control of his different sources: in each case the misplaced information originated in the

[56] 'Contributions' 421–3, 'Remarques' 158.

chronicle source (cf. below ch. 4(i)(*b*)) which Theophylact found hard to combine with his military narrative, although he had enough time to rewrite this chronicle material in elevated style (e.g vii. 6. 8–9; 12. 10). The presence of speeches is not a sure guide to the completeness of a particular part of the *History*: the account of Maurice's overthrow in book viii, which Olajos regarded as 'complete', contains no speeches, probably because Theophylact did not want to interrupt the narrative,[57] while the 'incomplete' book vi has a higher percentage of direct speech than the 'complete' books ii, iii, or v; although book vii has little direct speech, it contains the longest two ethnographic and geographic digressions (the Central Asian Turks, and the Nile flooding) which fulfilled the same function of diversifying the flow and pace of the narrative. The quantity and nature of direct speech in each book is directly related to the subject-matter. Book iv, which has by far the highest percentage of speech, records the trial of the Persian king Hormizd and Persian–Roman diplomacy, both topics being treated in a grand rhetorical manner. In books vi–vii, four of the five speeches are connected with Roman–Avar diplomacy, a context in which blunt speaking and simple parables would be more effective than extravagant rhetoric: thus, far from being 'unsuccessful',[58] these short, less elaborate speeches may be intended to reflect the character of these negotiations.[59] As for the phraseology of the later books, it is not noticeably less Theophylactean than in the earlier ones:[60] in these books Theophylact regularly uses the affected 'parasang' for a more

[57] Theophylact's funeral oration for Maurice (viii. 12. 5), the only formal speech in book viii, stands outside this narrative (as indeed Olajos acknowledged by assigning it to book ix).

[58] 'Contributions' 421 n. 27.

[59] Cf. Blockley, *Menander* 10ff., for comparable characterization in speeches in Menander.

[60] Olajos, 'Remarques' 158, singled out viii. 1–2, where *εἰς* is used for *ἐν* on three occasions, as the most striking example of non-Theophylactean usage. However, *γίγνεσθαι εἰς* (viii. 1. 10) is common throughout the *History* (cf. ii. 10. 12; 16. 3; iii. 3. 6, etc); *ποιεῖσθαι τὰς διατριβὰς εἰς* (viii. 2. 5) was perhaps constructed by analogy with *διατρίβω/ἐνδιατρίβω κατὰ* +accusative (iv. 1. 6; 10. 9; though contrast iv. 3. 3 for *ἐν*); *σκληραγωγεῖσθαι εἰς* (viii. 1. 4) might have been regarded as a verb of motion. Although unusual, these latter two usages of *εἰς* are not less Theophylactean than *ἀγαθὸς ἐς παράταξιν* (ii. 16. 1), and these two chapters do contain several characteristic Theophylactean touches, e.g. 'his exposition of the conversation did not gain a beneficial outcome' (viii. 1. 7), or 'at the outflow of blood his cowardly non-combatance became respectable, as it were' (viii. 2. 5). Throughout the *History* Theophylact's usage of prepositions is not strictly classical, so that it is an unreliable guide to 'completeness' of composition.

comprehensible unit of measurement (e.g. vi. 1. 4),[61] records the effect of a speech by the general Priscus, 'a Roman speaking the Attic of Themistocles', in a very characteristic sequence of verbs (vi. 8. 1–2), and describes the problem of Romans drinking from a stream under enemy attack in a typically bombastic way (vii. 5. 7–9); there are numerous such Theophylactean passages, which provide a surer sign of studied composition than the occasional incorrect prepositional usage.[62]

With regard to the homogeneity of style in the *History*, it is my subjective impression that there is a change towards the end of book ii, after which Theophylact's Greek is generally less convoluted than at the start. This change does not indicate that Theophylact was already pressed for time at such an early stage in the *History*: in book i, Theophylact had self-consciously provided an ornate opening for the *History*, with grand speeches, descriptions of ceremonial, and a digression on Paulinus the magician; this was naturally the most elaborated part of the work, but as the proportion of military narrative increased, and in particular of eastern military narrative adapted from the drier prose of John of Epiphania (cf. below, ch. 8(i)(*a*)), so Theophylact's style became less extravagant and the rhetorical flourishes are confined to relatively brief passages.

This examination of the beginning and end of the *History* upholds the integrity and completeness of the eight books as they stand. All the chronological indicators that they contain point towards the late 620s as the probable period of composition, and it is possible to imagine how the dramatic restoration of Roman affairs between 626 and 628 inspired the Patriarch Sergius to encourage one of the few talented literary men in the capital to undertake the updating of secular historiography in the classical manner. The resurrection of History from 'a tomb of neglect' reflected a feeling of confidence in the security and stability of the empire, but this confidence was soon to be quashed in the 630s, when Arab invasions quickly negated the achievements of Heraclius' eastern campaigns and religious controversies compounded the empire's difficulties. The uncertainties

[61] By contrast, Theophylact only uses 'parasang' once of a distance on the eastern frontier (v. 3. 1). A parallel for this oddity is offered by Arrian's *Anabasis*, where parasangs are used for a distance beyond the Danube (i. 4. 4), but never of distances in Persia.

[62] Olajos, 'Remarques' 159ff., although criticizing the stylistic level of books vi and vii, draws several of her examples of Theophylactean usage from these books.

and misfortunes of the 630s may well have been responsible for Theophylact's failure to continue the *History* beyond Maurice's death. It is now time to turn to examination of the events, Balkan and eastern, which Theophylact's personified History was narrating to Philosophy and so to a wider audience.

PART II

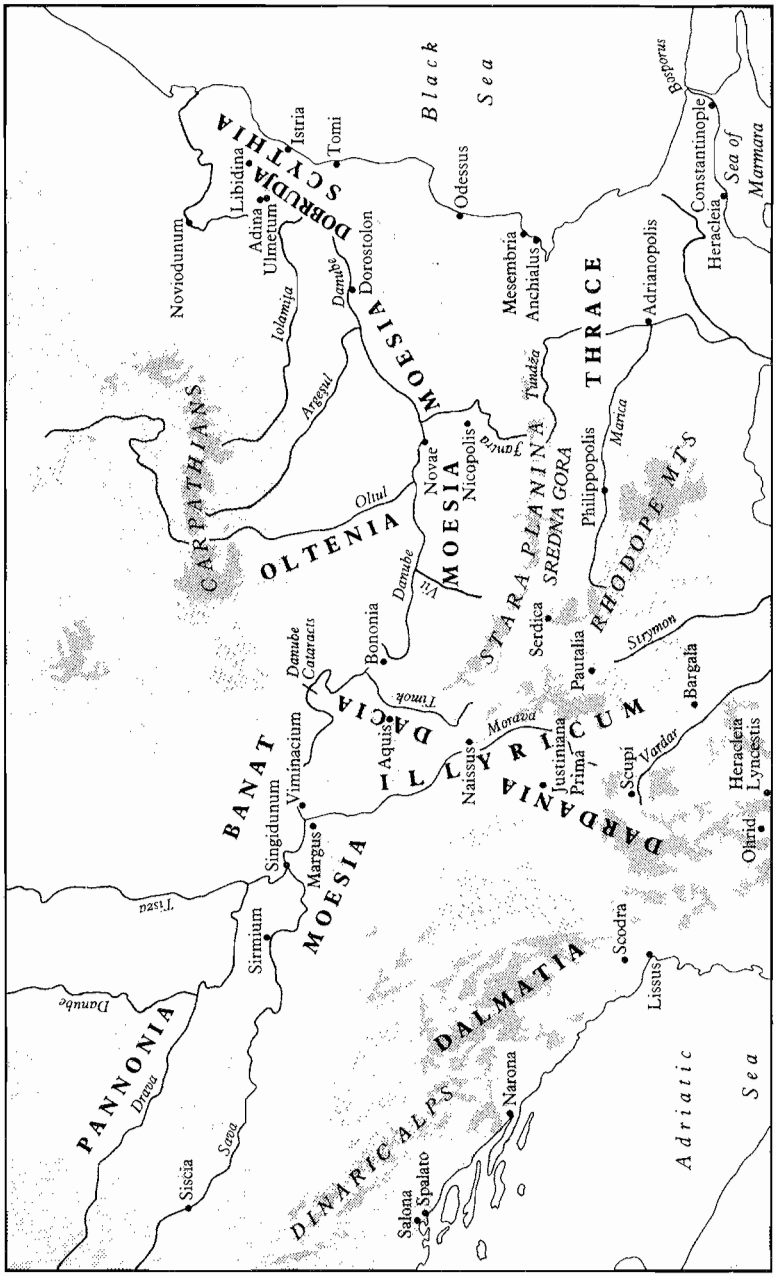
The Balkan Wars

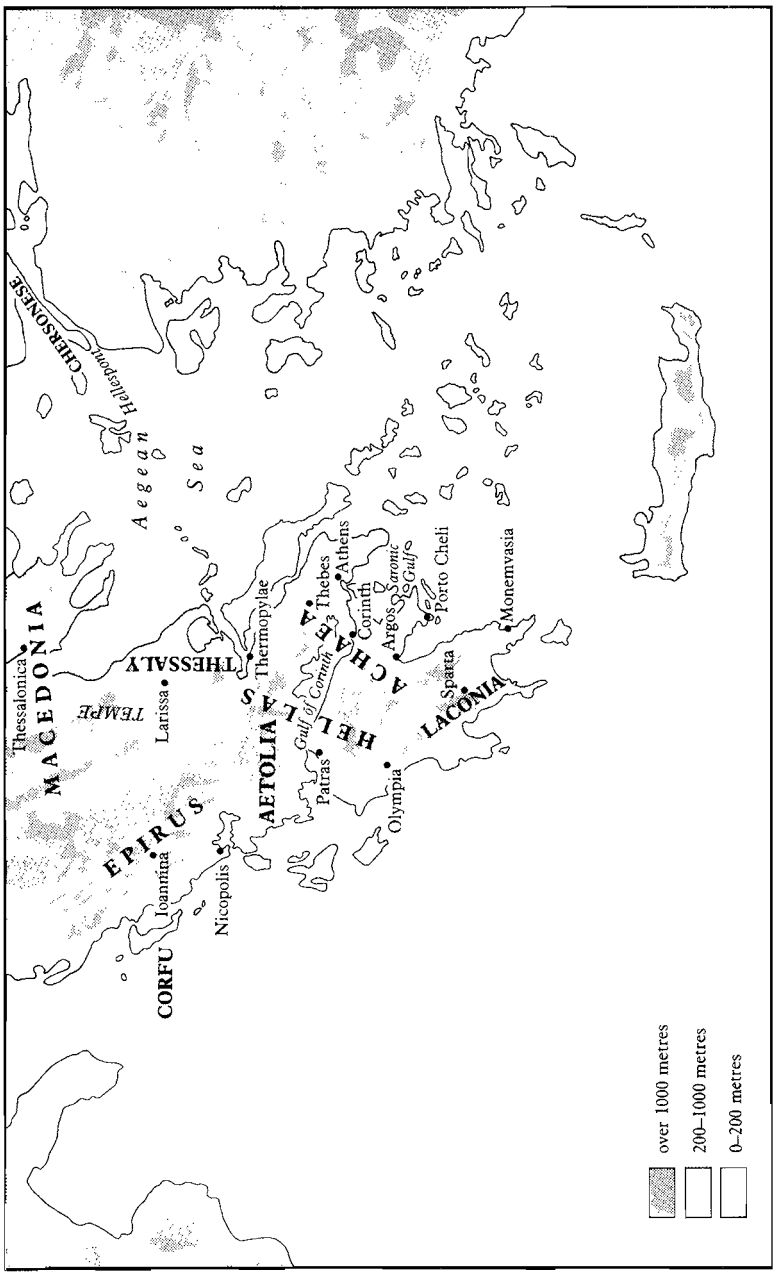
Introduction

The Balkan wars of Maurice's reign are a brief, though important period within the protracted struggle of the Roman empire to retain control of its Balkan provinces, a struggle which began in earnest during the Goth invasions of the fourth century, and which continued long after the establishment of a Bulgar state in Lower Moesia in the seventh century had formally removed one area of the Balkans from Roman authority. The main outlines of this struggle are clear: throughout the fifth and sixth centuries the Romans attempted to maintain the Danube as a firm barrier against the northern tribes, and to control the interior of the Balkans by means of fortified towns and cities. These attempts were increasingly undermined by military weakness on the frontier, by the destruction of Roman fortified centres, by the massacre or deportation of the rural population, and by the gradual settlement of unassimilated tribal groups in the countryside. In the reign of Justinian, Roman control over the Balkans appeared to have been restored more completely and securely than at any time since the Hun invasions of the fifth century: the Huns had forced the Romans to agree to withdraw from the Danube frontier, but Justinian could claim that even the north bank of the river was now held by towns subject to the empire.[1] However, the Slav and Avar invasions of the late sixth and early seventh centuries shattered Justinian's system. By the mid-seventh century, the Balkans could no longer be considered a political unity dependent upon Constantinople; the Romans could not pretend to control all the tribes which had settled south of the Danube, and the empire had in the long run either to reassert its control through military, diplomatic, and missionary activity, or to admit the existence of rival states in the Balkans.

Within this general outline, however, it is difficult to reconstruct precisely how Roman authority contracted, and was finally destroyed, in large areas of the Balkans since the available evidence is insufficient.

[1] *Novel* 11 (*CJ* iii. 94) of 535; cf. Proc. *Bld.* iv. 1. 1–10 for a rosy account (contrast *SH* 21. 26–9 for the opposite extreme).


Black Sea
Bosporus
Constantinople
Sea of Marmara
Heracleia
Adrianopolis
THRACE
Mesembria
Anchialus
Odessus
Tomi
Istria
SCYTHIA
DOBRUDJA
Libidina
Adina
Ulmetum
Noviodunum
Dorostolon
Danube
Iolamija
MOESIA
Argeşul
CARPATHIANS
Oltul
OLTENIA
Novae
Nicopolis
Jantra
Tundža
Marica
Philippopolis
STARA PLANINA
SREDNA GORA
RHODOPE MTS
Serdica
Pautalia
Strymon
Bargala
Danube
Cataracts
Bononia
Timok
DACIA
Aquis
Morava
ILLYRICUM
Naissus
Justiniana Prima
Scupi
Vardar
Heracleia Lyncestis
Ohrid
DARDANIA
Viminacium
BANAT
Singidunum
Margus
MOESIA
Tisza
Sirmium
Danube
PANNONIA
Drava
Sava
Siscia
DALMATIA
Scodra
Lissus
Narona
DINARIC ALPS
Salona
Spalato
Adriatic Sea



Map 2. The Balkans: relief map with cities

Our literary sources do not provide a continuous narrative of Balkan history, and the loss of some important histories is only partly to blame for this deficiency: we should know more about the Balkans in the fifth and sixth centuries if the works of Priscus, Malchus, and Menander Protector had survived intact, but there would still be a significant break in our knowledge because of the failure of Procopius to devote sufficient attention to the Balkans in his *Wars*. Archaeological material cannot fill all the gaps in the literary evidence, since many important sites have not been, or cannot be, excavated, and it is dangerous to generalize from the evidence of individual, or partially excavated, sites. There are also problems in the nature of the evidence: the archaeological evidence is frequently inconclusive because of difficulties in the precise dating of construction or destruction and in distinguishing 'Roman' from 'non-Roman' material, so that it can sometimes only be interpreted with the help of the literary sources, while the literary evidence may be affected by the bias or ignorance of its authors.

The two decades of Maurice's reign constitute a significant stage in the gradual erosion of Roman control and the appearance of Slav and other peoples in the Balkans. These years witnessed both the first peak of Avar–Slav invasions, which contemporaries believed had destroyed Roman control in large areas of the peninsula, and the last sustained counter-offensive of Roman armies, which in 602 seemed poised to subdue the northern menace. Maurice's reign is also important because of the extent and variety of the surviving evidence. Theophylact records in some detail the sequence of invasion and counter-attack, and, though his coverage is incomplete and frequently obscure, he provides some evidence for conditions in the Balkans as Roman control was being shaken. His account can be supplemented by a range of literary and archaeological material. The following chapters examine Theophylact's account of the Balkan events of Maurice's reign against the background of the longer-term erosion of Roman authority, using other available information to establish chronology, understand the course of events, and assess the quality of Theophylact's narrative.

3

The Balkans before 582

(i) GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING: ROUTES AND CITIES

The Roman struggle to retain control of the Balkans in late antiquity involved a conflict between the imperial administration which reached out from Constantinople and tribal pressure encroaching from beyond the Danube. From the Roman side, the ability or failure of the imperial centre to maintain communications with the provincial cities, towns, and villages determined the strength of Roman authority and, when successful, created the appearance of unified control throughout the geographically diverse areas of the Balkans. On the other hand, the ability of the tribes to move into an area, hampering communications, destroying the rural infrastructure of urban civilization, and eventually settling in the countryside, determined how quickly and completely an area slipped below the horizons of imperial vision. The cities and towns were the essential links in the chain of Roman authority, but with the weakening of central authority these towns were left isolated and were forced to protect their own interests, which might not be identical with those of the imperial administration. The strength of Roman settlement and the ease of communications with Constantinople were major factors that influenced how an area resisted and recovered from the persistent invasions from the north, whether it could assimilate a new influx of non-Roman settlers, or whether the tribes swamped the remnants of the Romanized population.

In the late sixth century, administrative communications moved outward from Constantinople, and to a lesser extent from Thessalonica, cities situated on the south-eastern periphery of the Balkans. Their position presented certain administrative disadvantages, since the Balkan provinces of the Roman empire had never formed a natural geographical unit revolving around an obvious administrative centre.[1] Its mountainous backbone tended to split the peninsula into regions

[1] On Balkan geography, see J. Cvijić, *La Péninsule balkanique* (Paris, 1918), Obolensky, *Commonwealth*, ch. 1, and Hendy, *Economy*, chs. 1–2.

which looked towards Italy and the Adriatic or towards the Aegean and Black Seas. This split can be traced back to the Roman conquest of the Balkan provinces: the military threat of the Macedonian kingdom and the lure of Greek liberty had drawn the Romans into the Balkans in the second century BC; interest had been consolidated by construction of the Via Egnatia, which became the main link between Italy and prosperous possessions in Asia Minor. The north-western provinces, Dalmatia, Noricum, and Pannonia, had been incorporated into the empire in order to protect Italy from the threat of invasion; the north-eastern provinces, the area subsequently divided into Moesia Prima and Secunda (Upper and Lower), were of less immediate interest to an Italian-based administration and had been annexed rather later, during the first century AD, as much to maintain or improve communications by safeguarding the Via Egnatia and opening up the Danube for river traffic as to protect the plains of Macedonia and Thrace. The gradual development in the mid first century of a defensive frontier in the west that was based on, but extended beyond, the Rhine probably encouraged the Romans to use the Danube as part of another frontier system founded on a river but reinforced by a transriparian buffer zone. It was not until the early second century that the eastern section of the *limes* in the Dobrudja salient was finally consolidated, by which time Trajan had annexed the trans-Danubian province of Dacia. In the fourth century, the establishment of Constantinople greatly increased the importance of the eastern Balkan provinces, which now served as a defensive barrier and source of food-supplies for the new capital, but the different orientation of the parts of the peninsula was still recognized in the normal partition of the Balkans between eastern and western rulers: the eastern diocese of Thrace was controlled from Constantinople, while the western diocese of Illyricum was subject to Rome.[2] Although the collapse of the western empire during the fifth century transferred control of Illyricum to the eastern emperor, the division was preserved in the organization of the church: thus in Maurice's reign, Illyrian bishops were under Pope Gregory's authority, although in practice they often appealed to Constantinople for imperial judgement.

In the Roman empire the Balkans were important both as a defensive zone and as the region crossed by the main military

[2] See V. Grumel, 'L'Illyricum de la mort de Valentinien Ier (375) à la mort de Stilicon (408)', *REB* 9 (1951), 5–46.

highways linking eastern and western centres of wealth and power. The mountainous heart of the peninsula offered a reserve of manpower for the armies, but it was an area to be skirted or crossed as directly as possible, and was always a potential barrier to communications. Their directions were determined by the east–west mountain ranges of the Stara Planina and Rhodopes, volcanic formations that respectively separate the Danube and Thracian plains and the Thracian plain from the Aegean, and by the sharper and newer rocks of the Dinaric Alps folded against the older volcanic structures into parallel north-west–south-east ranges extending south through Dalmatia into Macedonia and Epirus. In the Dinaric Alps, in particular, the deep canyons formed by river erosion hamper north–south as well as east–west movement. The peninsula was traversed by three main east–west routes. To the south, the Via Egnatia skirted the Rhodopes on its route from Constantinople to Thessalonica, after which it rose into the uplands of Macedonia before emerging at Dyrrachium on the Adriatic. In the centre, the main military highway from Constantinople to north Italy crossed the Thracian plain via Adrianopolis and Philippopolis, climbed over the passes between the Rhodopes and Stara Planina, and then descended the Morava valley via Naissus to Singidunum on the Danube; from there it followed the course of the Sava, via Sirmium and Siscia, towards Aquileia. The third route was a variation on the second, striking north from Adrianopolis over the low eastern end of the Stara Planina, then following the Danube upstream as far as Bononia, from where it ascended the Timok valley to cross the mountains of Dardania and so rejoin the central route at Viminacium. River communications provided an important supplement to these last two routes, and the Danube and its major tributaries, notably the Sava and Drava, were defended by naval units based at Sirmium, Mursa, Singidunum, and Viminacium as well as sites further downstream. These routes and the fleet provided the major links between Constantinople and the frontier region, supplemented by a further route that ran south–north from Thessalonica up the Vardar valley and then down the Morava to Viminacium. The three major trans-Balkan highways were among the most important routes in the Roman empire, but each had a serious bottleneck where communications could be disrupted or cut: Ammianus Marcellinus (xxvi. 7. 12) records how in 365 Aequitius, the governor of Illyricum, blocked these three routes to prevent the usurper Procopius from sending agents into his diocese, and earlier

(xxi. 10. 2–4) he provides a more detailed description of the narrow pass of Succi on the central route which Julian blockaded during his coup against Constantius. Defiles which could be closed by detachments of imperial troops were also liable to be cut by the empire's enemies, as Justinian II found when returning along the Via Egnatia from Thessalonica to Constantinople in 689, or Nicephorus I when he tried to retreat across the Stara Planina from the Bulgar capital of Pliska in 811.[3]

In the eastern Balkans, the framework of major roads was supplemented by several routes across the Stara Planina, so that the cities on the central trans-Balkan route were directly connected with the Danube frontier: one route followed the Iskăr valley to Serdica, from where it could be continued towards the Aegean along the Strymon valley, others crossed the Trojan and Šipka passes towards Philippopolis, or the Kotel and Riš passes towards Adrianopolis. In the north-western Balkans there were fewer cross-routes over the Dalmatian mountains, although Naissus was linked to the Adriatic at Lissus, and there were routes from the coastal cities of Salona and Narona to the Sava valley.

Looking at the Balkans from the perspective of Constantinople, the areas in sharpest focus were the Thracian plain and the Aegean and Black Sea coastlands: these included the richest and most productive areas of the Balkan provinces in the estimation of the fourth-century *Expositio Totius Mundi* (50–2), Thrace, Macedonia, and Thessaly. Beyond these areas, the navy maintained contacts up the Danube and its tributaries and along the Adriatic coastline, and the major trans-Balkan routes ensured that the central cities, Naissus, Serdica, and Justiniana Prima usually remained within administrative horizons. However, between the Danube and the Thracian plains, the Stara Planina tended to block this vision, particularly if communications across the central passes were disrupted, and in the western and north-western Balkans the barrier of the Dalmatian mountains produced a large shadowy area. In periods of extreme crisis, as in the 680s, even Thessalonica might be cut off from Constantinople by land and hence be in danger of slipping from imperial attention.

[3] Theoph. 364. 11–18, 490–1. For a clear description of the major trans-Balkan routes, see Obolensky, *Commonwealth* 35 ff.; also Jireček, *Heerstraße*, for the passes over the Stara Planina, and N. G. L. Hammond, *A History of Macedonia* i (Oxford, 1972), 19–58, on the western section of the Via Egnatia (esp. 31–6 on the difficult mountain section west of Lake Ohrid).

The direction of communications determined the spread and strength of Roman civilization, in that areas nearest the main roads were most accessible to new influences, and it was along these routes that major military settlements were located, places which peaceful prosperity or the political prominence of individual inhabitants might in due course enhance with the status and institutions of a city. As far as possible, the roads avoided the mountains of the central Balkans, so that in these areas pre-Roman tribal life long remained outside the influence of civilization, while peninsular Greece declined to the status of a provincial backwater, apart from the administrative centre of Corinth and the intellectual attraction of Athens. Administration and culture spread from the cities to the countryside, and so the diffusion of cities, 'the universal unit of government' in the later empire,[4] is a useful indication of the probable strength of Roman control in any particular area.

For the late Roman empire, the *Synecdemus* of Hierocles provides lists of cities for all Balkan provinces apart from Dalmatia. The date of the *Synecdemus* is disputed: dating has to be determined mainly by the inclusion or omission of dynastic names for new or refounded cities, and this indicates that most of the information relates to the fifth century, although the work was partly revised early in Justinian's reign.[5] For the present purpose an exact date is not essential, and the *Synecdemus* can be used to create an impression of urban distribution in the Balkans before the major waves of barbarian destruction. In the north-east, in the provinces of Scythia and Moesia II, the *Synecdemus* lists twenty cities, most situated along the Black Sea and the Danube, the only exceptions being Nicopolis and Marcianopolis, located near the northern exits of passes over the Stara Planina, which had both originally been attached to the province of Thrace, south of the mountains. Further west, in the provinces of Moesia I, Parapotamia Dacia (i.e. Ripensis), and Pannonia, there were twelve cities, sited by the Danube or its major tributaries. To the south in the Thracian plain, there were twenty-four cities in the provinces of Europe, Thrace, and Haemimontus. Further west, in the central Balkan highlands, in Dardania and Dacia, there were only eight cities strung along the main roads. In the southern Balkans, the Greek and

[4] Jones, *City*, ch. 5 (quotation from p. 94); cf. Braudel, *Mediterranean* 664–5, on the role of Turkish towns in the Balkans in diffusing Turkish culture after the land had been pacified by the construction of roads and forts.

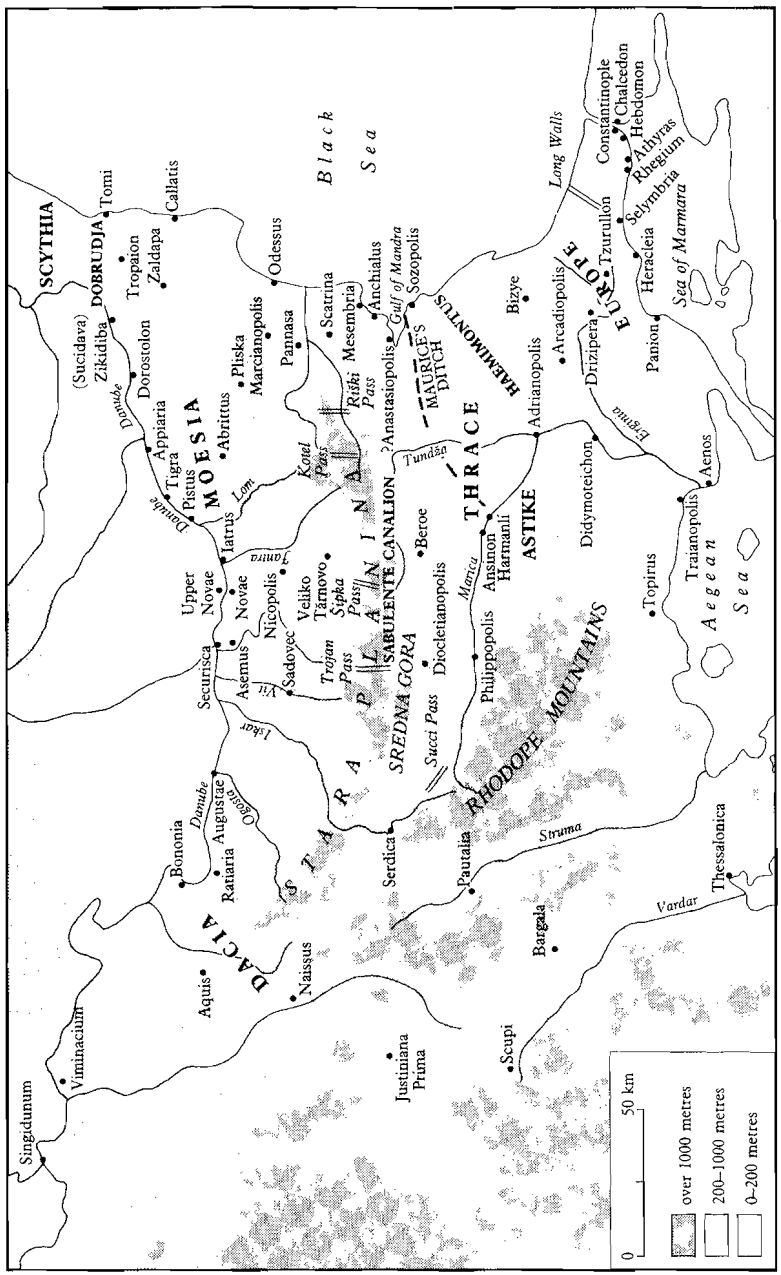
[5] Jones, *LRE* 712–13.

Macedonian cities clustered on the Aegean and Adriatic coasts, the lower Macedonian river valleys, and the plains of Thessaly, over twenty in the Adriatic provinces of Epirus and Praebasis, over fifty in Macedonia, and even more in Achaea. In Dalmatia, outside the scope of the *Synecdemus*, the prosperous cities were confined to the narrow coastal strip. However, in contrast to the *Synecdemus*, which lists all cities, the author of the *Expositio Totius Mundi* only regarded five Balkan cities as notable: Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth, Salona, and Naissus.

The distribution of cities does not by itself provide evidence on the relative prosperity of different areas, since most of the older Greek cities were much smaller and less important than the later Roman foundations, but it does highlight the relative emptiness of the north and central Balkans, where large areas of countryside remained beyond the influence of urban civilization and tribal traditions were slow to be assimilated. The Danubian cities only began to develop in the aftermath of Trajan's annexation of (trans-Danubian) Dacia, which provided the security needed for significant Romanization, but even so the pre-Roman pattern of rural settlement appears to have persisted in much of Moesia, which may indicate the limited penetration of Roman influence in this area.[6] In the fragmented countryside of the central Balkans, where several mountain chains intersect, the widely scattered cities could only have a small impact on the native population in advertising the material and intellectual benefits of Romanization: in these areas the territory of each city was too large to be dominated by a single economic or political centre, with the result that villages remained the important unit of settlement, and security was provided by local forts rather than city walls.[7] For the population of these upland regions, military service must have provided the main access to Roman civilization, but only a minority of military recruits will have returned to settle in, and so to influence, their homeland. In the second century the Balkan provinces flourished, and some cities will briefly have outgrown their military origins, but this period of prosperity was checked by the third-century Goth invasions.

[6] Poulter, 'Town' 84ff., and 'Communities' 733ff.; by contrast, the rural communities of the Dobrudja show a marked Roman character, an indication perhaps that in this region the Romans reshaped the countryside by forced resettlement. For the limited spread and effect of Roman civilization, see Jones, *City* 82–4 and *Cities* 27, Browning, *Bulgaria* 23, and Obolensky, *Commonwealth* 41.

[7] Jones, *Cities* 27.



Map 3. Thrace: relief map with cities

Barbarian destruction and the encroaching settlement of tribal groups, even if they were prisoners of war like the Goths settled by Claudius Gothicus in 269/70, might increase the isolation of the northern cities from each other and from the surrounding countryside, thereby threatening to undermine the social and economic organization of areas that were least able to reassert their Roman identity.

(ii) FOURTH- AND FIFTH-CENTURY DESTRUCTION

The invaders of the late third century were probably slowly assimilated by the empire, since groups such as the Bastarnae and Carpi disappear from the historical record, a possible indication of the dissolution of their tribal structure. One reason was the substantial programme of reconstruction at Danubian and inland sites by Diocletian and his tetrarchic colleagues, as they vigorously reasserted their control over the whole empire. Many Danubian sites might now have appeared more like military bases than cities, but this was merely a reversion to their original nature. Cities such as Sirmium and Naissus, however, reached new heights of prosperity as administrative and military centres whose favourable locations on east–west communication routes made them suitable sites for imperial residences: Naissus, in particular, benefited from its fortunate status as birthplace of Constantine, but the importance of military recruits and officers from this whole region ensured that Roman wealth and influence helped in the general recovery and assimilation of the third-century invaders.

The Goth incursions of the late fourth century, prompted by the movement of the Huns into their former territories, terminated the peaceful development of Roman civilization in city and country. Many recently fortified sites were now abandoned, and the rural villas which had formed the basis for the exploitation of much of the countryside were destroyed, not only along the Danube, where there were extensive tracts of deserted land on which Valens had hoped to settle the Goths in 376/7, but even in the more sheltered Thracian plains (Am. Marc. xxxi. 6. 4–6): indeed, a generation earlier, the vicinity of Nicopolis was already occupied in 347/8 by Goths under Ulfila. Even if the Balkans were among the poorer areas of the Roman empire, for the tribesmen they were a land of plenty—of corn, wine, and all sorts of luxuries including baths, gold ornaments, and fine clothes (Proc.

Wars viii. 19. 16–17). Although the major cities survived, since the Goths were not skilled at siege-operations, and were advised by their leader Fritigern not to attack fortifications (Am. Marc. xxxi. 6. 4; 15. 15; 16. 3), the general insecurity of the countryside disrupted links between surviving settlements. The threatened cities were forced to look inwards, defending themselves and upholding local interests, a development sometimes characterized as a militarization of the towns, though urbanization of the military would in many cases be equally appropriate: thus the inhabitants of Nicopolis attended to their own security and laughed at those who waited for help to come from the emperor Theodosius II. It was harder for the cities to function efficiently as administrative centres: the superintendents of the mines and the local *curiales* could present fear of enemy invasions as an excuse for failing to deliver taxes owed to the state (which they had appropriated for their own benefit).[8]

The departure to the west of the Visigoths provided a brief respite, in which imperial authority could gradually be reasserted from the cities. It was, however, much harder to repopulate the countryside, and the fourth-century ravages began the progressive emptying of the Balkans as the rural population, threatened by possible massacre or slavery, was forced to flee to the cities or hills for safety: the upper classes will have departed first, from the cities as well as the country, whereas the less mobile and less Romanized lower classes will have had to await their fate. The appearance of the Huns on the Danube posed an even more serious threat in the fifth century. Whereas the Goths had sought land for settlement, the Hun federation under the leadership of Attila wanted dominion, and the Huns had the military skills to defeat the Romans and capture well-fortified and stoutly defended cities (Priscus 6. 2).[9] Many of the major Balkan cities were sacked: Singidunum, Viminacium, Margus, Ratiaria, Naissus, Serdica, Philippopolis, Arcadiopolis—indeed, only Adrianopolis and Heracleia are said to have survived the onslaught (Theoph. 102–3); Illyricum and Thrace were depopulated, and the Hun ravaging extended as far south as Thermopylae (Marc. Com. ad ann. 441, 442,

[8] *Cod. Theod.* i. 32. 5 (AD 386); Eunapius 47, with Blockley's n.; Poulter, 'Town' 114 n. 102. On Balkan history in the 4th and 5th cc., I have benefited greatly from discussions with Peter Heather, whose thesis, 'The Goths in the Balkans A.D. 350–500' (D.Phil. Oxford, 1986), contains more extended examination of this period.

[9] Blockley, *Historians* 54, correctly defends Priscus' evidence against various doubters.

447). The effect of these invasions was most severe in the Danube valley and along the main routes to the wealthy cities of the south, particularly to Constantinople from Sirmium and the Pannonian plain, where the Hun federation was based. When Priscus of Panium passed through the once great city of Naissus in 449, seven years after its sack by Attila, it was still empty: there were only a few sick people in the hostels, while the bones of those killed in the earlier fighting still covered the ground near the river banks (Priscus 11. 2. 51–5). Attila laid claim to a strip of land to a width of five days' journey all along the south bank of the Danube from Pannonia to Novae in Moesia, and ordered that the frontier market for Illyricum should be located at Naissus, which now became a border town (Priscus 11. 1. 7–14). Roman defences on the middle Danube between Novae and Singidunum were shattered: the forts near the Cataracts, and the outpost of Sucidava on the north bank were abandoned in the first half of the fifth century, not to be reoccupied until Justin I's reign. Attila penetrated as far as the fort of Athyras (Büyük Çekmece), about forty miles from Constantinople, and the threat to the capital was such that Theodosius II organized the construction of a new set of outer defences, the Long Walls, which ran from the Black Sea to Selymbria on the Sea of Marmara, protecting the immediate hinterland of the capital.[10]

The Balkans were saved when Attila was defeated in Gaul after switching the main thrust of his attacks to the west. At his death in 453 the Hun federation dissolved into its constituent units, and the Goths once more came to the fore as the scourge of the Balkans. For several years the Balkan provinces had to endure the presence, and often the ravages, of two large groups of Goths which the emperors Leo and Zeno unsuccessfully tried to play off against each other (Malchus 2; 18; 20; Marc. Com. ad ann. 479–87). For much of the time the Goths were settled to the north of the Stara Planina near Novae and Marcianopolis, on land which they came to regard as their own territory, but they also ravaged Greece and the fertile Thracian plains, depopulated Macedonia and Thessaly, and raided as far as the suburbs of Constantinople. In 479 Zeno could offer Theodoric the Ostrogoth land on which to settle his people in the vicinity of Pautalia,

[10] See L. M. Whitby, 'The Long Walls of Constantinople', *Byz.* 55 (1985), 560–83. Theodosius was probably responsible for the construction of a wall at the Isthmus of Corinth at about the same time (Hohlfelder, 'Walls' 176–7), and for improvements to the Thermopylae walls (N. J. Cherf, 'Procopius, Lime-mortar C^{14} Dating and the Late Roman Fortifications of Thermopylae', *AJA* 88 (1984), 594–8 at 597).

in the spacious, beautiful, fertile, but deserted region of Dardania. On their travels and ravages the Goths were often short of food, a reflection both of the dislocation caused to agriculture and of the empire's success in controlling most of the available supplies from its fortified centres: when Theodoric captured Arcadiopolis through starvation, his own followers were also beset by famine. Although the Goths did not have a good record at sieges, some cities were abandoned by their inhabitants: the people of Heracleia Lyncestis in Macedonia retired to a strong fortress, from which they could withstand Theodoric while their deserted city was burnt; at Epidamnus the inhabitants were tricked into leaving by the false rumour that the emperor had granted Theodoric permission to settle in the vicinity; at Thessalonica the extent of local distrust of the emperor and his policies was revealed when the citizens overthrew Zeno's statues and took charge of the defence of their city, depriving the prefect of the gate-keys, which they entrusted to their bishop.[11] Once more Roman authority was reprieved when the Ostrogoths departed to Italy in 489, but the cumulative effects of the fifth-century invasions were to condition the pattern of settlement and of Roman control in the sixth, when Slav and Bulgar tribes raided, sometimes with the participation of Gepids or Lombards. The *Life* of St Severinus of Noricum, although it describes an upper-Danube province removed from the main thrust of tribal invasions, may be used to illustrate the exhausting effect of decades of attacks on the lower Danube provinces: local populations might survive behind town walls, but constant insecurity would eventually persuade them to withdraw to safer locations so that town defences might in the end be abandoned without a struggle (*Life* 27–8); the widely scattered military garrisons would become disenchanted with their hopeless and unpaid task (*Life* 20. 1, where the disgruntled garrison from Pessau sets off to Italy to collect arrears of pay but is ambushed *en route*).

(iii) THE RESTORATION OF ROMAN DEFENCES: JUSTINIAN AND PROCOPIUS

Anastasius (491–518) began the slow task of re-establishing the Danube as a firm frontier, an essential precondition for the revitalization

[11] Malchus 20. 48–9, 201–4 (Dardania); 2. 20–1; 18. 3. 5–7; 20. 54–8, 95–7 (food shortages); 20. 94–100, 77–87, 5–19 (the cities).

of the interior. The process naturally started in the north-east, at the most accessible part of the frontier from the viewpoint of Constantinople, and there is considerable evidence for Anastasian reconstruction at sites in the Dobrudja, but progress will have been undermined by the unrest associated with the revolt of Vitalian which was based in this area, and it was not until Justin I's reign that the Romans began to reoccupy forts along the middle Danube. It has been suggested that Anastasius also began a comprehensive administrative reorganization in Thrace, which was intended to solve the problems caused by the inability of the revenues of the region to meet its military expenditure, but that these problems were not satisfactorily resolved until Justinian created the new administrative district known as the *quaestura exercitus*: this combined the Danube provinces of Scythia and Moesia II with the maritime provinces of the Aegean Islands, Caria, and Cyprus, apparently so that the latter could contribute to the expenses of the former.[12] However, it must be noted that the real motives for Justinian's provincial rearrangement are unknown.

Throughout the sixth century the Danube remained the theoretical frontier of the empire, as far upstream as Singidunum, and it was defended, often successfully, by the Roman fleet and garrisons. But invasion was a constant threat, and the resulting sense of insecurity is reflected in the archaeological remains at north-eastern Balkan sites. In the main cities of the Danube valley buildings are crammed together behind strong fortifications, reinforced by extra towers, with the gates narrowed or blocked up. These northern cities,[13] much smaller but more heavily fortified than those south of the Stara Planina, have a pronounced military character: they had returned to

[12] Anastasian work, I. Barnea, 'Contributions to Dobrudja History under Anastasius I', *Dacia* 4 (1960), 363–74, and Popescu, *Inscripţile*, nos. 112–13, 246; Cataract forts, Bošković, 'Limes', 432, 437, and V. Kondić, 'Les formes des fortifications protobyzantines dans la région des Portes de Fer', *Villes* 131–61; administrative reform, Hendy, *Economy* 397–404. It is sometimes assumed that evidence for Anastasian work in the Dobrudja indicates that he must be given credit for much of the fortification work elsewhere in the Balkans, but this is to ignore the scale and duration of the problems. The limited evidence from sites further up the Danube suggests a more gradual reassertion of control, and, to be most effective, physical reconstruction had to be linked with administrative reforms: for the comparable situation in the east, see Whitby, 'Mesopotamia' 728.

[13] I use the term 'city' for the sake of convenience: there is no precise categorization in the language of contemporaries (e.g. Procopius in the *Buildings*; cf. Dagron, 'Villes' 8), that allows the distinction of different types of urban or quasi-urban settlement. Theophylact uses the terms πόλις, ἄστυ, and πόλισμα interchangeably of Singidunum (i. 4. 1–2; vi. 4. 3).

the role which they performed before the brief peaceful efflorescence of the mid second century, although, given favourable circumstances, they could once again have formed the basis for the reconstruction of civilian administration and a less militarized society. The hilltop sites, often pre-Roman fortified settlements, to which the rural population had retired during the fifth century, continued in use, if not in regular occupation. Although their locations were less convenient, they provided safer bases for the exploitation of the countryside: only areas that were within easy reach of a refuge fortress could be cultivated in reasonable security. The nature of life is well illustrated in the *Life* of St Gregentius, the missionary to the Homerites, a fictitious composition that reflects conditions in the Balkans in the sixth century: Gregentius was born in a village near the 'Avar' frontier; during a raid, those inhabitants who did not flee to a nearby town were captured or slaughtered; Gregentius himself avoided capture by taking refuge in a fort until the raiders departed and life returned to normal (*Life* 1–2, pp. 39–47). Although invading tribes were not the only threat to rural existence, since Justinian's *Novel* 33 (*CJ* iii. 240) refers ominously to the oppression of Illyrian and Thracian peasants by avaricious creditors, they were the main challenge to imperial control. In the interior of the Balkans, local communications might be threatened, as when recurrent Slav ambushes rendered part of Moesia impassable for travellers until Justinian built a fort at Adina (Proc. *Bld*. iv. 7. 13), and even official travel along the main highways could be disrupted: Menander records how an Avar embassy was robbed by Scamareis, and an Avar ambassador was murdered by Slavs in Illyricum, incidents which both probably occurred on the trans-Balkan highway (15. 6; 25. 2. 32–6). The resulting isolation made it harder to counteract the development of an insular mentality in surviving settlements. Further south, in the Thracian plain, cities were more spacious and the survival of undefended churches in the countryside suggests a greater prosperity and more widely based economy, although even here there was also a recognizable move towards the foothills.[14]

The new pattern of settlement was solidified and strengthened by the building-works recorded by Procopius in book iv of the *Buildings*. The Danube towns were repaired and refortified, so that a combination of defences and garrisons could restrict the movement of tribes across the river (iv. 1. 33), but Justinian also took precautions to

[14] For a summary of the archaeological evidence, see Hoddinott, *Bulgaria* 291–300.

protect the interior against raids that could not be checked at the frontier. Some work was carried out at most of the major sites in the Balkans, although cities in the Peloponnese were thought to be adequately protected by the reconstructed wall at the Isthmus of Corinth. Smaller settlements along the major roads were also repaired, but many of the places at which Procopius records building activity are unknown and unidentifiable: the etymology of the names is disputed, but some at least are Latinized forms of Thracian or Illyrian words.[15] It is tempting to associate this mass of names with the reoccupied hilltop settlements, the late antique refuge-sites whose location and distribution is only gradually emerging:[16] local initiative will have prompted the move to such places, but some were perhaps then strengthened with the assistance of imperial funds. However, it would be unduly optimistic to hope that reliable evidence for the names and the dates of occupation of these sites will be produced. At the moment it is only possible to note that Procopius preserves a large number of names, often non-Roman, of unidentified fortifications, and that archaeological surveys indicate the emergence in late antiquity of numerous fortified refuge-sites in areas where pre-Roman traditions may have persisted. A tentative identification of the two groups does not seem unreasonable, particularly since Justinian is said to have been concerned to provide forts for rural areas (*Bld.* iv. 1. 34–5).

In the *Buildings* Procopius attributes these various works to Justinian, and, although it is not essential for the present purpose to establish beyond doubt that Justinian himself, rather than Anastasius or Justin I, organized this refortification, it is necessary to assess briefly the accuracy of the information in *Buildings* iv. The reliability of the *Buildings*, particularly for the eastern frontier, has recently been severely criticized, but on closer examination many of the alleged faults are without substance, so that in this area Procopius remains an important source for the historical geography of Justinian's reign.[17] However, individual sections of the *Buildings* have to be treated on their own merits, since Procopius' knowledge about different sites varied, as did the opportunities for panegyric presented by Justinian's various constructions: thus conclusions reached about one part of the

[15] Beševliev, *Kastellnamen.*
[16] See Hoddinott, *Bulgaria* 261–4, and Poulter, 'Town' 97ff.
[17] Whitby, 'Mesopotamia'.

Buildings, for example the chapters on Africa or Mesopotamia, may not be generally applicable.

The specific criticisms that have been levelled at book iv are that it was 'written quickly, perhaps to order, and often without access to solid material (the lack has to be made up with panegyrical in-fill)', that it is not composed at the same high literary level as, for example, books i or vi, and that the long lists of fortifications (iv. 4 and 11), whose inclusion is taken as a sign of incompleteness, 'are hard to evaluate, since they are repetitive and inaccurate'.[18] Assessment of the literary level and completeness of a particular part of the *Buildings* is largely a matter for subjective interpretation. Apart from the lists, however, I can detect no significant difference in terms of composition or literary polish between book iv and other parts described as 'highly finished': book iv opens in a more grandly panegyrical manner than any other book, except book i; when describing Balkan constructions of which he is likely to have had personal experience,[19] Procopius is as detailed as for any of the African buildings; book vi has a considerable amount of 'in-fill' in the form of excursuses on geography, religious beliefs, and miraculous events.[20] There is no objective evidence to show that the *Buildings* as a whole is unfinished,[21] and the incorporation of the lists in book iv is not sufficient to prove that this book was left incomplete. It is very likely that Procopius derived the information in these lists from a written source, quite possibly from some official record, since it appears that he may have been transcribing a Latin original.[22] Procopius' problem was how to make use of this mass of information that could contribute substantially to Justinian's prestige: elsewhere in the *Buildings* he subsumes short lists into his narrative (ii. 4. 14; vi. 7. 8–11), but this was less practical for lists that ran to several

[18] Cameron, *Procopius* 94, 85 with n. 5 (cf. also 221).

[19] i.e. those in the vicinity of Constantinople (iv. 8); Thermopylae (iv. 2) and the Chersonese (iv. 10) are other places where personal knowledge *may* have contributed to a more extended and detailed description; cf. M. Perrin-Henry, 'La place des listes toponymiques dans l'organisation du livre IV des *Édifices* de Procope', *Geographica Byzantina, Byzantina Sorboniensia* 3 (1980), 93–106 at 95 f.

[20] e.g. vi. 2. 15–17; 3. 1–8; 4. 6–10, 14–23; 6. 8–16.

[21] Cf. L. M. Whitby, 'Justinian's Bridge over the Sangarius and the Date of Procopius' *de Aedificiis*', *JHS* 105 (1985), 129–48, at 145; ancient writers may not have shared modern views about a work's 'completeness'. One must be prepared to examine all possible alternatives before resorting to the easy option of 'incompleteness' as explanation for inconsistencies, idiosyncracies, or weaknesses that any work of literature is likely to display.

[22] Beševliev, *Kastellnamen* 74–7; Cameron, *Procopius* 221, ultimately accepts that the lists probably had an official origin.

hundred names; the simplest, and yet most effective, way to present the information was in list form, and this was Procopius' choice, with the first list prefaced by a suitably florid rhetorical introduction (iv. 4. 1–3).[23] The lists do contain some repetitions,[24] but, because of the difficulty of identifying and locating most of the places, there is as yet no evidence to prove major inaccuracies. In contrast to the reservations quoted above, my own view is that book iv both contains much solid information (in the lists), and overall reveals the same type of literary decoration as the other five books. Justinian may be criticized as the creator of the Byzantine middle ages, but without him there might not have been a middle age for Byzantium.

Nevertheless, because of the lack of archaeological confirmation, doubts will persist about how far Procopius' evidence can be used to convey a general impression of the state of Balkan defences in the mid sixth century. Exaggerated rhetorical claims about the effectiveness of Justinian's works must not be taken at face value, for example the repeated assertion that Justinian had rendered the Balkans inaccessible to tribal invaders (e.g. iv. 1. 14; 2. 28; 11. 20). Such hyperbole was the stuff of panegyric, and can be closely paralleled in fourth-century texts;[25] in particular, the inevitable extravagance of building inscriptions, which regularly presented repairs or alterations as new constructions and extolled the beauty or effectiveness of the honorand's work, affected the style of literary panegyric of buildings. However, it is not difficult to discount such rhetoric, and in the case of *Buildings* iv we are left with the names of about 600 places at which Justinian is said to have carried out some building work. Justinian is likely to have been concerned with the physical defences of the Balkans even though (or possibly because) other theatres of war—the eastern frontier and the reconquest of the west—took priority in the allocation of mobile military forces. He was a native of the Balkans, and used the opportunity of his accession to adorn his birthplace with the grand city of Justiniana Prima, whose considerable remains are at Caričin Grad. It seems improbable that he would thereafter forget his homeland

[23] The second list required briefer introduction (iv. 11. 20). Inclusion of the lists was probably not an afterthought or late revision of the original text (*contra* Downey, 'Composition' 176–81) since the first list is referred to in the main narrative (iv. 3. 15); cf. Perrin-Henry, art. cit. in n. 19, 99–100 (although the attempt to distinguish the character of the two lists is unconvincing).

[24] Downey, op. cit. 173; cf. Perrin-Henry, art. cit. 102f., who is more cautious.

[25] e.g. *ILS* 724; Themistius, *Or.* x. 136 D–138 B; Am. Marc. xxviii. 2. 1–4; cf. Whitby, 'Mesopotamia' 722–3.

completely, and Bulgar and Slav raids would frequently remind him of its perils, particularly if these raids penetrated to the vicinity of Constantinople and provoked disturbances in the city. After the Bulgar invasion in 540, Justinian improved the defences at Thermopylae and Gallipoli so that in 559 the Bulgars were thwarted at these points; after the 559 invasion Justinian personally supervised the restoration of the Constantinopolitan Long Walls, and probably other constructions in the region, and was absent from the capital for so long that he was rumoured to be dead; in 535 the newly created Justinianic *praetor* of Thrace, a region whose very name is said to be synonymous with wars and fighting, was ordered to pay attention to construction-works in his province and to report to Justinian any projects requiring significant expenditure.[26] Finally, there is limited archaeological evidence for Justinianic work at a few sites.[27]

Whoever was responsible for the constructions recorded in *Buildings* iv, the events of the late sixth century indicate that Roman defences were in a fairly good state of repair, since Slav and Avar invaders did not take over the Balkans unopposed. This reflects the success of the re-establishment of Roman control in the peninsula, a process begun by Anastasius and extended by Justinian. These claims must be justified by examining the effect and purpose of the 'Justinianic' works, as well as the other essentials for the defence of the Balkans, and the nature and extent of tribal invasion in the period 550–82.

In his introductory chapter (iv. 1. 33–5) Procopius suggests that Justinian's Balkan works had two distinct purposes: some forts constituted a strong rampart around the whole of Europe, preventing the tribes from crossing the Danube by the strength of their garrisons and defences, while other forts were built to provide security in the interior for occasions when the frontier was penetrated. Procopius' account implies that the interior forts did not constitute a second

[26] Proc. *Wars* ii. 4. 1–12; *Bld.* iv. 2. 2–15; 10. 4–23; Agath. *Hist.* v. 23. 5–6; Theoph. 234. 3–7, 20–1, with *Bld.* iv. 8–9. Justinian, *Novel* 26, pr., 4 (*CJ* iii. 203, 207–8); such reports from the *praetor* could have formed the basis for official lists of constructions in the Balkans.

[27] Popescu, *Inscripţiile*, nos. 87, 211, for probable Justinianic work at Callatis and Ulmetum (where the earlier settlement had been razed); Bošković, 'Limes' 432, 437, for the Danube Cataracts; Tudor, *Sucidava* 105–6, for the reoccupation of this fort on the north bank during Justin I's reign. Cherf's useful dating-work (art. cit. in n. 10) on the Thermopylae walls confirms an obvious inference from Procopius (*Wars* ii. 4. 10 and *Bld.* iv. 2. 3–6), namely that there were significant fortifications at the defile before Justinian's additions (whose extent Procopius will naturally have maximized).

barrier to movement, but were intended as local refuge-centres. It is wrong to think in terms of successive lines of defence, or of parallel zones of defence in depth. Major road-junctions and passes were defended by forts, but it was often possible for invaders to bypass these positions by abandoning the main highways: thus the eastern passes of the Stara Planina are sufficiently gentle, at least when approached from the north, to allow defensive positions to be outflanked, while in the central Balkans side-valleys offered alternative routes to invaders. A few bottlenecks, for example Thermopylae, the Isthmus of Corinth, or the Gallipoli peninsula, could be walled off and garrisoned to prevent the passage of raiders, but elsewhere fortifications could only restrict movement if there were forces ready to stop tribes bypassing the structural defences. According to Procopius (iv. 1. 35), the interior fortifications were constructed so close together that each estate appeared to be properly equipped as a fort or to be adjacent to a fortification, praise that reflects their role as local refuges. Justinian had realized the impossibility of preventing all invasions, as well as the need to ensure the survival of Roman control in the countryside through the preservation of the local population.

Although, as has been said, it is impossible to identify the majority of forts in *Buildings* iv, or to discover an obvious geographical arrangement within the lists of provincial fortifications, the mere fact that the lists are divided into provinces and districts means that some impression can be gained of the distribution of these forts across the Balkans. For the sake of clarity the peninsula can be divided into two main areas of defence, roughly corresponding to the Thracian and Illyrian dioceses, and reflecting the twin threats posed by the tribes on the lower Danube and in Pannonia along the two main routes from the Danube to Constantinople. In the first area, opposing the lower Danube threat, defences were strengthened at the main sites along the south bank of the river and throughout the provinces of Moesia and Scythia (iv. 6–7; 11). The list of forts at iv. 11 includes various sites on the Danube (e.g. Exantaprista, Tigra, Novae), major towns along the Black Sea (Odessus, Callatis, Tomi), and places on the main roads of the interior (Marcianopolis, Abrittus, Scatrina). It also reveals the tendency of the population in this region to withdraw south from the exposed Danube plains to the sheltered valleys of the Stara Planina: thus the people of Nicopolis had probably by now abandoned the exposed classical city and retired seventeen miles south to the Carevec hill at Veliko Tărnovo, where the city and its bishop survived under its

old name into the mid seventh century. Like Nicopolis, some of the unidentified places in Procopius' list were probably located in these mountain valleys at a safe remove from the main highways. Further to the south in Thrace and Haemimontus there is a marked preponderance of unlocated sites in the lists: Anchialus on the Black Sea, and some of the road stations on the Serdica–Constantinople highway can be identified, but the mass of unknown names may well reflect Justinian's wish to provide security for all the rural settlements of the fertile but accessible Thracian plain, and for the people who had migrated into the foothills of the Stara Planina and Rhodopes.

The second main defensive area was directed against the threat from the upper Danube and the Pannonian plain, from where the tribes could move across the mountains towards Dalmatia and Epirus, down the Timok valley towards the Danube, or along the main highways towards Constantinople or Thessalonica. In this area the Danube cities were also fortified (e.g. Singidunum, Viminacium), but the main concentrations of forts were in the province of Dardania, and in the territories of Serdica and Naissus, two key defensive positions which controlled more forts within their individual territories than most Balkan provinces.[28] Few of these fortresses can be identified (which is not surprising in this under-Romanized area), but they probably followed the main highways and river valleys which afforded the easiest access: thus the forts of Scupion, Stenes, and Marcipetra were sited on the Serdica–Constantinople highway, while the territory of Aquis extended down the Timok valley.[29] Those who had migrated away from the major roads to remote settlements in the upland plains of the central Balkans will also have been protected. To the south and west, Macedonia, Thessaly, and Epirus were also heavily fortified, another indication that the northern fortifications were not expected to stop all invasions. Little is known about Justinian's actions in Dalmatia, recovered from the Ostrogoths in 533–7 and described as 'only loosely attached to the empire at the best of times':[30] during the reconquest the defences of Salona were strengthened (*Wars* v. 7. 36), but there is no information in *Buildings* iv about any further constructions

[28] Proc. *Bld.* iv. 4, pp. 119. 40–120. 54, 121. 1–122. 5, 122. 27–124. 31; Dagron, 'Villes' 9, took the prominence of Serdica and Naissus as a sign that provincial organization had broken down in this area, but this is not proved.

[29] *Bld.* iv. 4, pp. 121. 2–4, 123. 44–124. 31; cf. *Novel* 11. 5 (*CJ* iii. 94) for *castella* in the territory of Aquis.

[30] Hendy, *Economy* 84.

that might have been organized after the province was returned to the administration of the praetorian prefect of Illyricum.

The fact that later raids frequently reached Constantinople, Thessalonica, or the Isthmus of Corinth without meeting significant opposition or having to assault these fortifications might seem surprising,[31] or even suggest to some that the fortifications recorded in Procopius' lists were never carried out. The extent of subsequent raids may, however, be one sign of the effectiveness of much of Justinian's work. Fortifications by themselves could not prevent movement across the Balkans, and rapidly moving tribal groups could surprise or anticipate Roman defenders at key passes (e.g. Malchus, 20. 99–109), but the provision of refuges for local populations limited the availability of easy plunder and forced the tribes, unless they undertook laborious sieges, to extend their ravaging to the southern Balkans. The constant threat of invasion accustomed the inhabitants of the northern Balkans, like those of St Gregentius' village, to living within easy reach of a refuge; the southern Balkans were slower to adapt to this existence, and the unprotected wealth in the suburbs of Constantinople (*Bld.* iv. 9. 3–5), for example, drew raiders towards the interior of the empire. The Balkans could only be effectively defended when adequate garrisons, a strong mobile army, and a naval force on the Danube provided an active deterrent to supplement the passive security afforded by fortifications. The Danube remained an important barrier to tribal movement in the late sixth century, and when they had warning of an intended raid the Romans could attempt to thwart the passage across the river by watching the known crossing-points (Proc. *Wars* vii. 14. 2; viii. 18. 17; Men. 15. 1). During Justinian's reign, however, the Gepids held Sirmium, and this posed a constant threat to the flank of the Roman river defences: in the 550s the Gepids, though nominally Roman allies, ferried both Cotrigurs and Slavs across the Danube to ravage Roman territory, gaining great profit from their services as ferrymen and apparently causing Justinian to despair (*Wars* viii. 18. 17; 25. 1–6). During Justin II's reign the Avars schemed to annex Gepid territory precisely in order to gain easy access to the empire (Men. 12. 1. 18–20), and after they had captured Sirmium in 581/2 they had an unhindered approach to the empire as long as the bridges across the Sava were standing. The Danube could also easily be crossed when frozen, as the Cotrigurs demonstrated in

[31] e.g. Browning, *Bulgaria* 34–5; Obolensky, *Commonwealth* 69–70.

winter 558/9 (Agathias, *Hist.* v. 11. 6). Once the tribes had crossed the river individual garrisons were too weak to oppose their movement through open country, and the land appeared deserted as soldiers and civilians took refuge in the forts.

Although notional figures can be calculated for the defence forces of the Balkan provinces,[32] the actual number of troops present is unknown, but must have been small. With reference to the 558/9 invasion, Agathias complained (*Hist.* v. 13. 7–14. 4) that the soldiers were demoralized since imperial officials had cheated them of their pay, that troop numbers had been drastically reduced, and that many of the remaining forces had been transferred to other provinces. Although Agathias tends to exaggerate the troubles of Justinian's reign, his last complaint is substantiated by Procopius' account of events in 549/50 (*Wars* vii. 39–40): in response to a crisis in Italy, Artabanes, newly appointed as *magister militum per Thraciam*, was dispatched to Sicily, while Germanus was ordered to raise troops in Thrace and Illyricum and proceed to Italy; while collecting his forces (which included some of the cavalry detachments of Thrace) at Serdica, he prevented a large Slav band from attacking Thessalonica but then ignored the Slavs after they had turned aside into Dalmatia.[33] Only a large army could deter these raids, but large armies, such as that of Germanus, were usually required elsewhere: in 551 Narses and his army were forced to wait at Philippopolis since the road towards Italy was cut by raiders, but continued their journey once the invaders had advanced towards Constantinople and Thessalonica (*Wars* viii. 21. 21–2). When armies were sent specifically to operate in the Balkans, they might well find themselves outnumbered and able only to harry the invaders (*Wars* viii. 25. 1–6; cf. vii. 40. 36–45). Most troops stationed in the Balkans had garrison or local frontier duties, so that moderate-sized groups of tribesmen, 1,000 or 2,000 strong, could easily defy the Romans once they had penetrated to the interior (*Wars* vii. 38. 1–8). It appears to have been difficult to organize scattered units into an effective and united defence force (Malchus 20. 131–6): thus a Lombard prince named Ildigisal, whom Justinian had appointed as an

[32] Jones, *LRE* 682–3.

[33] Cf. *Wars* viii. 26. 1–2, where the Thermopylae garrison is ordered to sail to relieve Croton, Agath. *Hist.* i. 19. 1 for the *quaestor* of Moesia commanding troops at Lucca in Italy, and Priscus 10. 10–17 for the order of priorities in the 5th c. (Theodosius II makes payments to Attila so that the Romans can fight the Persians, Vandals, Saracens, and Ethiopians).

officer in the *scholae* while 300 of his followers were settled in Thrace, fled from Constantinople, raided the imperial herds of horses, defeated a contingent of Cotrigurs settled in Thrace who tried to oppose him, and made his escape to the Gepids in Pannonia after surprising and killing the commanders of some Roman troops who had been hurriedly assembled in Illyricum (*Wars* viii. 27. 1–18). The fate of the defenders of Topirus, who were lured from their city and then massacred (*Wars* vii. 38. 9–19), showed the folly of individual garrisons operating outside their fortifications since Topirus was then captured in spite of desperate resistance by its civilian inhabitants.[34] During the Persian and Italian wars of Justinian's reign there were never enough troops to defend the Balkans adequately, so that the inhabitants had to rely on the passive protection of their city walls and on the emperor's traditional diplomatic strategy of persuading tribes to fight each other. There were mixed feelings about such reliance on diplomacy. In his *Secret History* (19. 13–17) Procopius naturally disapproved, and the letter which he composed for the Utigur chief Sandil probably also expresses his personal reservations (*Wars* viii. 19. 9–21); Agathias (*Hist.* v. 14. 1–5) also thought Justinian's preference for peaceful policies in his old age was a sign of weakness, but Menander was confident that Justinian could have brought the diplomacy to a successful conclusion (5. 1).

(iv) SLAVS AND AVARS

The efficacy of Roman defences in the Balkans varied according to the different nature of invaders. In the late sixth century the Balkans were threatened by two distinct groups, the increasingly powerful federation of the Avars, and the less organized, but ubiquitous, Slavs. The Cotrigurs, who had threatened so prominently during Justinian's reign, had first been weakened by the Utigurs (Agathias, *Hist.* v. 25. 1–6) and then reduced to the status of subject members of the Avar federation (Men. 5. 3; 12. 5. 88–93); the Gepids suffered the same fate, while the Lombards migrated away from the Avars to Italy.

The early history and migrations of the Slavs are much disputed. In the fourth and fifth centuries they had been subject to the tribes that

[34] Cf. Zosimus iv. 25 for garrisons not daring to fight outside their walls.

dominated the south Russian steppe.[35] The fragmentation of the Hun federation allowed the Slavs to settle in the plains north of the Danube, where they had probably appeared by the beginning of the sixth century, since they ravaged the Roman empire in conjunction with the Bulgars in the latter part of Anastasius' reign. The nature of their settlement varied, since the relatively backward Slavs adapted themselves to the culture of the people occupying a particular area, and this adaptability makes it difficult to identify Slavs in the archaeological record. In the Olt valley, Slav incomers appear to have integrated peacefully into existing Daco–Roman settlements, whose inhabitants maintained trade links with the Roman empire throughout the sixth century. They seem to have been equally, or even more, at home in the marshes of the lower Danube basin and the thick forests of the hinterland, safer areas where it was hard for Roman or barbarian overlords to penetrate. Our best source of information on the Slavs is Maurice's *Strategicon* xi. 4, which can be supplemented by a brief ethnographic excursus in Procopius (*Wars* vii. 14. 21–30) and by scattered references in other historians. These writers looked down on the Slavs because of their primitive level of civilization, but might also idealize them as simple savages, so that there is inevitably a problem whether the descriptions are distorted by literary preconceptions and ethnographic type-casting. However, there is limited archaeological confirmation for the literary picture, and it should be possible to construct a reasonably accurate image of the Slavs,[36] or at least to identify certain Slav characteristics which determined their impact on

[35] Slav 'pre-history', I. Sorlin, in Lemerle, *S. Démétrius* ii. 219ff., and D. G. Teodor, 'Origines et voies de pénétration des Slaves au sud du Bas-Danube (VIe–VIIe siècles)', in *Villes* 63–84; early Slav habitations, V. Popović, 'Note sur l'habitat paléoslave', in Lemerle, *S. Démétrius* ii. 235–41.

[36] B. Zástěrová, *Les Avares et les Slaves dans la Tactique de Maurice* (Rozpravy Československé akademie věd, ř. spol. v. 81/3 (1971); R. Benedicty, 'Prokopios' Bericht über die slavische Vorzeit: Beiträge zur historiographischen Methode des Prokopios von Kaisareia', *JÖB* 14 (1965), 51–78; P. S. Koledarov, 'Settlement Structure of the Bulgarian Slavs in their Transition from a Class to a Territorial Community', *BB* 3 (1969), 125–32 for archaeological evidence. Cameron, *Procopius* 218–19, is more negative but overstates the traditional elements in Procopius' excursus: he explicitly says that Slavs are red-haired (vii. 14. 27: contrast the fair-haired Goths iii. 2. 4); there is ample confirmation for the Slav tendency to fight on foot; it is not implausible that the Slavs revered a great sky-god (like the Bulgars) or that they worshipped the rivers beside which they tended to dwell, and there is very little overlap between the description of Slav religion (vii. 14. 23–4) and that of the inhabitants of Thule (vi. 15. 23–6); the Slav lack of unified political organization is confirmed by *Strat.* xi. 4. 128ff. Procopius' information cannot be dismissed as a compilation of stock themes culled from traditional ethnographic texts.

the Balkans. First, the Slavs frequently operated in relatively small groups, perhaps as an extended family group or as a group of families; these bands moved independently across the Balkans looking for plunder or for opportunities to settle, the search for land becoming more important as pressure from the Avars and other tribes encouraged the Slavs to abandon their trans-Danube homes.[37] In addition, however, although the Slavs did not possess a unified social or political structure (Proc. *Wars* vii. 14. 22; *Strat.* xi. 4. 128), they had some military organization that could unite these smaller groups into bands of thousands of men for specific expeditions, with recognized leaders who, in spite of their temporary authority, might be called *rex* by a Greek historian.[38] Second, the lack of established peacetime leaders made it difficult for the Romans to build normal diplomatic links and to bribe the Slavs not to invade: monetary diplomacy could only operate in a society that valued the accumulation of personal wealth and that had some mechanism for distributing the money among its members.[39] Third, although civilized writers might express surprise about the Slavs' military ability (Proc. *Wars* vii. 38. 7–8; J. Eph. vi. 25), they were skilful fighters on favourable terrain, particularly in wooded or marshy country, they often defeated Roman troops, and were even capable of storming a city wall once its professional defenders had been lured away (Proc. *Wars* vii. 38. 17). Individual Slavs like Chilbuldius, a successful commander for the Romans on the Danube during Justinian's reign, could have transmitted military knowledge to their fellow tribesmen.[40] Although the destruction of Roman defences by other invaders facilitated Slav incursions, this was not the sole explanation for their military success: the Slav raids of 578–82 preceded the major destruction of defences by the Avars, and previously the Cotrigurs had not been proficient in attacking fortifications. Fourth, the Slav standard of living was generally primitive, and they were capable of flourishing on the margins of society, being accustomed to life in woods and swamps beyond the limits of Roman life (*Strat.* xi. 4. 23–9). These Slavs would

[37] Cf. M. Syr. x. 21, p. 362, for the effect on the Slavs of an attack by Antes.

[38] Cf. Thompson, *Germans* 10–16, for similar conditions among 1st-c.-BC Germans; individual Slav leaders: Daurentius (Men. 21. 36–9), Ardagastus and Musocius (Th. Sim. i. 7. 5; vi. 7. 1; 9. 1).

[39] Cf. Thompson, *Germans* 93, 97, 106, for the operation of Roman diplomacy and money in early German society.

[40] Cf. the proud boast of the Slav Daurentius about their conquests, Men. 21. 39–43.

find suitable conditions for settlement in the heavily wooded mountains of the central Balkans, whereas the drier Mediterranean climate of peninsular Greece would have been less favourable.

However, Slav society was not uniform, and above all was adaptable. Many Slavs (for example those in the Olt valley settlements) are likely to have been influenced by the more skilled agricultural practices of their neighbours and by trade with the Roman empire, and some Slavs possessed considerable wealth from their invasions. The Slavs exploited slave labour, although their slaves enjoyed favourable conditions in keeping with the Slavs' normal humane treatment of captives (*Strat.* xi. 4. 8–16).[41] Within the Balkans there were groups of Slavs who took over the corn-producing lands of Thessaly and were able to export food to Thessalonica by the late seventh century (showing no community of interest with the Slav tribes who were blockading the city), and Slav leaders such as Perbundus soon emerged who were attracted by the benefits of urban civilization (*Mirac. SD* 235). The Antes offer an illustration of how a Slav tribe might be influenced by contacts with a more developed people. The Antes are treated as similar to the Slavs by both Procopius and the *Strategicon*, and they were probably a Slav tribe which had fallen under the leadership of a Germanic élite. They resembled the more advanced Slavs, with a money and slave-owning society, and the Romans were able to negotiate and reach agreements with them.[42] It was relatively easy for groups of less civilized Slavs to move into and across the Balkans, causing localized but widely scattered disruption, and relatively difficult for the Romans to dislodge them once they had arrived. Although Slav raiders might use wagons (Th. Sim. vii. 2. 4; M. Syr. x. 21, p. 362), which would restrict their choice of routes, they were also capable of traversing forests or mountains to bypass Roman defences and reach less strongly fortified areas (Proc. *Wars* vii. 40. 7). They could settle beyond the reach of Roman control and disrupt civilized life by constant local raids (*Bld.* iv. 7. 13, 17). The security of the towns and cities was undermined as their links with the countryside were weakened, so that they became more vulnerable to the occasional direct attack.

[41] Exceptions to this humanity are occasions when there was no chance of using the captives: Proc. *Wars* vii. 38. 18–23; Th. Sim. vii. 2. 3; cf. Thompson, *Germans* 16.

[42] Proc. *Wars* vii. 14. 31–4; M. Syr. x. 21, p. 362; Th. Sim. viii. 5. 13; cf. Thompson, *Germans* 17f. and ch. 2, for similar developments among early Germans. Parallels between Slavs and Germans do not prove that the evidence about the Slavs merely represents a stock Roman view of an uncivilized nation.

The Avar threat was very different. The Avar federation was dominated, indeed preserved, by the personality of their ruler the Chagan, who alone united the various tribal groups that were attached to the small nucleus of Avars.[43] It was imperative for the Chagan to maintain face in front of his subjects: thus, after an unsuccessful attack on Sirmium in 568, Baian the Chagan asked the garrison commander Bonus to give him a small gift to prevent him being shamed in the eyes of his followers (Men. 12. 5. 56–63), and the Chagan's massacre of his Slav troops after the disastrous attack on Constantinople in 626 (*Chr. Pasch.* 724. 15–18) was an attempt to surmount this humiliation and terrorize his subjects. Avar military organization and equipment were envied by the Romans. Their flexible battle-array was regarded as superior to the single line traditionally favoured by the Romans, and their bows, tents, and armour for horse and body were esteemed (*Strat.* ii. 1; i. 2). Their pre-battle howling, intended to demoralize or confuse their opponents, became famous (Men. 12. 3; cf. Greg. T. iv. 29). They were a cavalry nation who were accompanied on their raids by enormous herds of animals. In Pannonia their settlements appear to have spread following the old Roman roads,[44] and when invading they were also constrained to use the Roman roads, which provided the easiest passage for their cavalry. Like the Romans they were at a disadvantage in woods, where the Slavs could take refuge from their attacks (Men. 21. 29–30). Whereas the Slavs threatened civilization from its margins, the Avars attacked its centres, the cities, either destroying them or incorporating them into their own empire. Like the Huns, they had grand ambitions to extend their dominion and establish themselves as direct competitors with the Romans for mastery in the Balkans.[45] However, although they were regarded as innately greedy and treacherous, they had a recognized leader and a definite homeland where their wealth was stored, and so were an enemy with whom the Romans could negotiate, using bribes or threats

[43] Archaeological evidence for burials within Avar territory (see G. László, 'Études archéologiques sur l'histoire de la societé des Avars', *Archaeologica Hungarica* 34 (1955); also A. Alföldi, 'Zur historischen Bestimmung der Avarenfunde', *Eurasia Septentrionalis Antiqua* 9 (1934), 285–307) suggests that there were at least two distinct groups in the federation, one characterized by 'nomadic' features, and the other by greater Roman influence; *Mirac. SD* 284–6 attests the presence of a partly Roman unit.

[44] See I. Kovrig, 'Contribution au problème de l'occupation de la Hongroie par les Avares', *Acta Archaeologica* 6 (1955), 163–91.

[45] M. Syr. x. 21, pp. 361, 363; cf. Th. Sim. vii. 10. 5. Attila's ambitions: Priscus 11. 2. 620–36; 20. 1; *Chr. Pasch.* 587. 7–14.

to dissuade them from invading. They were capable of obliterating Roman control by destroying its fortified centres, but they could also be removed from the empire if the emperor reached agreement with the Chagan.

The Avars had only entered Roman horizons in about 558. Their precise origins have caused considerable debate, since the evidence, much of it in Theophylact's confused excursus on the Scythian people (vii. 7. 6–9. 12), is inconclusive.[46] The name Avar appears to have been quite widely used in central and western Asia by various tribal groups, but the Avars who appeared on the Danube had fled from their homeland in central Asia as the power of the Turk federation expanded in the mid sixth century. Those Avars who did not flee were subjugated by the Turks, and the Turkish Chagan insisted that the fugitive Avars were runaway slaves, whom he would in due course discipline and with whom the Romans must not make diplomatic agreements.[47] Although the Avars remained terrified of the Turks and sensitive about their past flight,[48] they themselves had a ferocious reputation, which suggests that it may not be fanciful to identify them with the Ruan-Ruan (or Juan-Juan), the dominant central Asian power before the rise of the Turks. On entering the sphere of Roman knowledge, the Avars rapidly justified their reputation by subjugating the tribes bordering the Black Sea, and even the Cotrigurs were reduced to the status of expendable subjects (Men. 5. 2; 12. 5. 88–93). They were summoned further west by the Lombards as allies in their struggle against the Gepids; the terms of the alliance were most favourable to the Avars, their defeat of the Gepids left them as sole masters of the Pannonian plain since the Lombards prudently migrated to Italy, and the Romans now lacked a counterweight to the Avars so that the traditional diplomatic strategy of divide and control was impossible. From Pannonia the Avars gradually extended their mastery over their neighbours, extorting diplomatic gifts from the Romans, expanding north-west towards the Frankish kingdom of Austrasia, gaining control of the Gepid, Herul, and Slav settlements in the Banat and Oltenia regions, and beginning the slow task of

[46] See in particular Haussig, 'Exkurs', A. Kollautz, 'Die Awaren: Die Schichtung in einer Nomadenherrschaft', *Saeculum* 5 (1954), 129–78, and A. Kollautz and H. Miyakawa, *Geschichte und Kultur eines völkerwanderungszeitlichen Nomadenvolkes* i (Klagenfurt, 1970).

[47] Men. 4. 2; 10. 1. 80–3; 19. 1. 64ff.

[48] M. Syr. x. 21, p. 363; Men. 25. 2. 20–9; Th. Sim. vii. 7. 5.

imposing their control over the Slavs along the lower Danube. The most obvious weakness of the Avars was their inexperience of boats (Men. 25. 1. 15–24), and the single most important factor that prevented them from ravaging the Roman empire during Justin II's reign was the difficulty of crossing the Danube.

(v) THE SITUATION AT MAURICE'S ACCESSION

During Tiberius' reign (578–82) the Balkans experienced a crisis which was the more devastating because of the deceptive calm of recent years. Following the massive Slav incursions of 549–51 that are recorded by Procopius (*Wars* vii. 38–40) and attested by coin-hoards,[49] there was only one major invasion in the next twenty-five years, that of 558/9 when the Cotrigurs crossed the frozen Danube and overran Thrace and northern Greece. Their plundering is graphically described by Agathias,[50] and they obtained much booty from the vicinity of Constantinople, but their ravaging was influenced by the Justinianic defences: there had been an eight-year lull in raiding, during which time the Thracian plain, and possibly also the northern Balkans, could have recovered some prosperity, as farmlands returned to cultivation and imperial subsidies perhaps contributed to the refurbishment of some urban centres, but this wealth was safeguarded from the Cotrigurs, who were forced to direct their attacks to the fertile country protected by the Gallipoli wall, and to penetrate beyond Thermopylae, presumably because there was only limited booty readily available in other parts of the Balkans.[51] Overall, Roman defences held firm: in the latter years of Justinian's reign, the general Justin achieved various successes on the Danube, and the river-crossings were closely watched, although Novae and Anastasiopolis were sacked by Huns (presumably Cotrigurs) in 562.[52] Justinian was content to provide subsidies to the Avars and encourage them to

[49] J. Juroukova, 'Les invasions slaves au sud du Danube d'après les trésors monétaires en Bulgarie', *BB* 3 (1969), 255–63, lists hoards of the late 540s and early 550s in the upper Marica valley.

[50] *Hist.* v. 11–14; also Theoph. 233. 4–234. 12. Agathias was writing during the crisis of Tiberius' reign, and contemporary events may have coloured his descriptions of the earlier Cotrigur attack.

[51] To date, no coin-hoards have been found that can be linked with this invasion, a possible indication that the newly restored fortifications withstood the raiders.

[52] Agath. *Hist.* iv. 22. 7; Men. 5. 4; Theoph. 236. 24–237. 1.

attack hostile tribes such as the Utigurs and Cotrigurs. This policy was abruptly changed by Justin II, who attempted to humble an Avar embassy that came to request gifts shortly after his accession in 565. For a time this arrogant reassertion of Roman authority appeared to work, since the Avars reacted quietly and turned their attentions towards Pannonia and the tribes on their north and west borders, but John of Ephesus (vi. 24) correctly observed that these attacks increased Avar strength.[53]

During the Gepid–Lombard conflict, the Romans had fortuitously recovered Sirmium, which gave them control of the crucial crossing of the Sava. They managed to defend it against the Avars, who claimed it as a former Gepid possession (Men. 12. 4–7); this might be the occasion of a victory by Tiberius over the Avars which John of Biclar, an unreliable source, records in Justin II's fourth year. The success was short-lived, since Tiberius was defeated in 570 (Men. 15. 5; Evag. v. 11, p. 207. 25–30); this probably led to a resumption of peace payments to the Avars, and to widespread Slav ravaging across Thrace into Macedonia. The Romans lacked the means to sustain Justin's resolute stand against the Avars, particularly when the start of the Persian war in 572 diverted resources to the east. In 574/5 Tiberius' recruiting-drive deprived the Balkans of potential defenders, in 577 the Slavs ravaged Thrace and other areas,[54] and Tiberius' only defence was to arrange for the Avars to attack the Slav homelands: the Avars were ferried across the Danube or Sava, marched downstream through Roman territory, and then transported back to the north bank to ravage the Slavs; the Slavs fled into the forests, but the Avars at least liberated thousands of Roman prisoners.[55] This display of Roman

[53] Cf. Corippus, *Laud. Iust.* iii. 151ff., with Cameron's notes; Men. 8. Greg. T. iv. 29 (Sigibert's defeat by the khan of the 'Huns' in 566) may be connected with the Avars' westward move.

[54] Men. 20. 2. 152–5; John of Biclar records under Justin's tenth year (577 on his reckoning) Slav attacks on Roman cities in Thrace, and attacks on the shores of Thrace and on shipping by Avars. John has probably confused Slavs and Avars, as he does in entries for Tiberius' reign; though John was present at Constantinople during the early part of Justin's reign, even for those years his information is inaccurate; he had probably returned to Spain by 576. Coin evidence for invasions *c.* 570/1, V. Popović, 'Une invasion slave sous Justin II inconnue des sources écrites', *Numizmatičar* 4 (1981), 111–26.

[55] Men. 21; 25. 1. 34–42. Blockley's analysis (*Menander* 280–1 n. 262) is unclear and disregards Menander's evidence: the Avars were brought across to Roman territory opposite Pannonia, from where they had to proceed a considerable distance by land, across Illyricum to Scythia, through territory which they were doubtless inspired to covet.

weakness doubtless encouraged the Avars to renew their attacks. With the forced co-operation of Roman engineers, the Avars blockaded Sirmium. Tiberius' attempts to organize a relief expedition failed, and in 581/2 he was compelled to negotiate a surrender.[56] Thus the Romans lost their most advanced defensive position in the Balkans, from which they could directly threaten Avar territory and regulate movement along the Sava valley; the Avars, who were well aware of Sirmium's strategic importance (Men. 12. 1. 14–20), had gained a vital bridgehead across the Danube.

Meanwhile the Slavs ravaged unchecked throughout the Balkans and, perhaps influenced by the Avar attack on their homeland in 577, were starting to settle as well as ravage (J. Eph. vi. 25). There is confirmation for the extent of ravaging: coin-hoards dated to Tiberius' reign have been found in Dalmatia, in the Morava valley, on the middle Danube in the region of the Cataracts, and several in the area of modern Bulgaria, from near Mihajlovgrad, Pleven, Popovo, and Sumen in the north, from Burgas and Varna on the Black Sea, and from Sofia and Plovdiv;[57] two hoards from Kenchreai, Corinth's port on the Saronic gulf, are dated to 578–80; three hoards from Athens can probably be dated to Tiberius' reign, and associated destruction suggests that the lower city was overrun.[58] The Slavs now even penetrated into the Peloponnese, where destruction layers at Argos and Porto Cheli and coin-hoards at Olympia reflect their arrival; some of the inhabitants of Greece may at this time have taken refuge on islands in the gulf of Corinth, using them as a safe haven from which to farm the mainland, a south Balkan variation of the hilltop fort.[59] At

[56] J. Eph. vi. 24; 30–2; Men. 25. 1–2; 27. Probably late 581, though Stein, *Studien* 113, preferred early 582. Solomon, the defending commander criticized by Menander (27. 3. 10–12), is probably the Solomon, *comes domesticorum* and *vicarius Thraciae*, who died on 7 Nov. 582 and whose epitaph was found at Hisar (C. M. Danov, 'Die Grabinschrift des Solomon Vicarius von Thrakien', *Acts of IV Int. Cong. of Byz. Studies* (Sofia, 1935), i. 389.

[57] Popović, 'Témoins' 458, 466; 'Slavisation' 233f.; Juroukova (art. cit. in n. 49) 261–2.

[58] R. L. Hohlfelder, 'Migratory Peoples' Incursions into Central Greece in the Late Sixth Century: New Evidence from Kenchreai', *Acts of the 14th Int. Cong. of Byz. Stud.* (Bucharest, 1971), iii. 333–8. D. M. Metcalf, 'The Slavonic Threat to Greece *circa* 580: Some Evidence from Athens', *Hesperia* 31 (1962), 134–57; Metcalf's first, second, and fifth hoards suggest destruction in Tiberius' reign, whereas the third and fourth hoards are from Maurice's reign, *c.* 584/5. There was probably more than one attack on Athens in this period.

[59] Popović, 'Slavisation' 233ff.; W. W. Rudolph, 'Excavations at Porto Cheli and Vicinity, Preliminary Report V; the Early Byzantine Remains', *Hesperia* 48 (1979), 294–320; S. Hood, 'Isles of Refuge in the Early Byzantine Period', *ABSA* 65 (1970), 37–45.

Constantinople Tiberius is said to have erected a fortification to protect the ships in one of the city's harbours (*Patr.* iii. 157).

When Maurice ascended the throne in 582, Roman control of the Balkans appeared on the point of collapse. On the northern frontier the Avars, never to be trusted, were digesting their recent acquisition of Sirmium, while within the Balkans Roman horizons contracted as Slav occupation and devastation isolated strongly defended Roman outposts. The Slav raids were not being orchestrated by the Avars, and indeed may have been inspired by fear of Avar oppression, but their effect complemented that of Avar attacks, restricting the presence and efficiency of imperial administration. The Romans were ignoring their contemporary maxim: 'After God, we should place our hopes of safety in our weapons, not in our fortifications alone' (*Strat.* viii. 1. 38).

Chronological Table: Balkan Events of Maurice's Reign (582–602)

582	autumn	Avar embassies request elephant and gold couch.
583	May	Avars demand increase in tribute.
	summer	Avars invade, capture Singidunum, reach Anchialus.
	autumn	Embassy of Comentiolus and Elpidius to Chagan at Anchialus.
584	spring	Second embassy of Elpidius; conclusion of peace.
	summer	Slav invasions reach Long Walls of Constantinople.
		Comentiolus' victory near river Erginia.
585		Comentiolus' victory at Ansinon.
585/6		Maurice constructs ditch beyond Adrianopolis.
586	autumn	Avars ravage along Danube; siege of Thessalonica.
587	spring	Comentiolus campaigns against Avars.
	spring/summer	Avar successes in Thrace; victory for John Mystacon and Droctulft at Adrianopolis.
	summer	Slavs ravage throughout Greece.
		Avars withdraw to Sirmium.
587/8	winter	Romans persuade Antes to attack Slav homelands.
588	summer	Priscus' first Balkan campaign; Avars capture Anchialus and besiege Priscus in Tzurullon.
	autumn	Avars return to Sirmium on rumours of Turkish attack, and after receiving payment from Maurice.
588/9		Slavs continue to ravage Balkans.
590	autumn	Maurice marches to Anchialus.
592		Arrival of eastern army in Balkans.
593	spring	Priscus sent to Danube; his second Balkan campaign; victories over Slavs.
	autumn	Army returns to Thrace for winter.
		Slavs ravage Aquis, Scupi, and Zaldapa.
594		Peter's first Balkan campaign.
595	spring	Priscus' third Balkan campaign; march along Danube to relieve Singidunum from siege by Avars.
	summer	Avars attack Dalmatia.
596/7		Avars fight Franks; no action on Danube.

597	autumn	Avars invade Moesia.
597/8	winter	Priscus blockaded at Tomi.
598	spring	Truce at Tomi; Comentiolus crosses Stara Planina to rescue Priscus, but is routed by Avars.
	spring/summer	Avars advance to Drizipera; Maurice marches to Long Walls; Avar–Roman treaty.
	summer/autumn	Army complains against Comentiolus, Romans prepare to renew war.
599	summer	Priscus and Comentiolus campaign from Viminacium; Priscus wins series of victories north of Danube.
	winter	Comentiolus crosses Trojan pass.
599/600		Comentiolus at Philippopolis.
600	summer	Comentiolus in command; no action on Danube. Slavs raid Dalmatia and Istria.
601	summer	Peter in command; confronts Avars at Cataracts.
602	summer	Peter's army defeats Slavs. Avars fight Antes; some Avar subjects revolt.
	winter	Mutiny of Roman army.

4

The Sources

The range of source-material for the Balkan events of Maurice's reign is probably greater than for any other period of Roman imperial history in these provinces; this reflects the importance of events as well as the historical accident that Syriac and Latin writers, besides Greek, were interested in Balkan affairs at this time. There are limits to the accuracy and amount of information in each source, but an overall reconstruction of events can be attempted by balancing and amalgamating the different information. The surviving literary sources survey the Balkans from the perspectives of Rome, Lombard Italy, Thessalonica, Antioch, Armenia, and most importantly Constantinople; they are composed by contemporary witnesses, reporters from the next generation, or later compilers to whom Balkan history was nothing more than an assortment of literary material. These literary sources can be supplemented by archaeological evidence that reveals living conditions in the towns and cities, and that may help to date their destruction.

(i) THEOPHYLACT

Theophylact is the earliest writer to preserve a narrative of the whole of Maurice's reign, and his information on the Balkans is often very full, particularly for the years 587, 593–4, 599, and 602, but his account presents problems, both descriptive and chronological, that have never been resolved. These can best be tackled by considering when Theophylact wrote, what sources of information he used for Balkan affairs, how far he was willing or able to check the available information, and then by supplementing his incomplete account with other surviving evidence.

The frequent assumption that Theophylact was a contemporary, or even a near-contemporary, of the events he was reporting is unjustified. Although the date of composition of the *History* cannot be determined precisely, there is no indication anywhere that Theophy-

lact had observed any of the events of Maurice's reign that he records. During his childhood in Egypt it is likely that little detailed information on Balkan affairs travelled to the eastern provinces: this at least is suggested by the general ignorance of Evagrius, who was composing his history at Antioch in the middle of Maurice's reign.[1] The earliest possible date at which Theophylact could seriously have begun to collect material was after the start of Heraclius' reign (610). At this time he would have been researching events that were already between ten and thirty years in the past, but he should have been able to find oral sources to use, either as his main source of information or to verify and clarify details in any written sources that may have been available: the massacres of Phocas' reign had spared several people who had been important under Maurice, particularly the generals Philippicus and Priscus, and such informants could have provided a record of their personal experiences. If, however, as was suggested above (ch. 2(iii)), the *History* was not conceived until the late 620s, the problems of research and composition would have been much greater: it would have been difficult to find people who remembered the precise military details even of the later Balkan campaigns, let alone of the Slav invasions of the 580s, and few people in Constantinople could have had accurate personal knowledge of Balkan geography since much of the peninsula had now slipped beyond Roman control. The confusions and errors of Theophylact's Balkan narrative strongly suggest that it was composed a considerable time after the events. Although it is impossible to prove that Theophylact did not use oral sources,[2] Haussig and Veh both argued for a written source on grounds of the type of military information contained, and their conclusions are supported by my own examination of the biases in Theophylact's military account and of his use of other source-material.

It is not possible to attach names to the sources used by Theophylact for his Balkan narrative, but useful progress can be made by isolating three types of source-material that are evident, namely a military narrative, a chronicle, and a hagiographical narrative, and by observing the effects that these sources had on Theophylact's

[1] Allen, *Evagrius* 16–19; cf. below, ch. 4(ii)(a).

[2] There is one possible reference to an oral source in the Balkan narrative: in 587 the Avars return Castus 'after receiving exceptionally lavish payment, as can be gathered from the elders among us, and there is no harm in belief' (ii. 17. 7), but this statement is more likely to be stylistic ornamentation than an authentic reference to an oral source.

account.[3] The differentiation of these sources depends on the identification of changes in the detail, bias, and interests of Theophylact's reporting. To a certain extent this is a subjective and circular process; the attribution of characteristics to a particular source can only be made on the basis of the identification of these attributes within Theophylact's narrative, but the identification of attributes may be influenced by preconceived notions about the possible characteristics of the sources. The dangers of subjective and circular method are inherent in hypothetical source-investigation of this type, and the best defence for the application of this approach to Theophylact is that it produces conclusions which are internally coherent and which cast considerable light on his narrative. Indeed, since Theophylact's *History* is a patchwork of source material which has not always been integrated into a homogeneous narrative, it could be claimed that unpicking the patchwork is a sensible, perhaps even a necessary, approach if the historical account is to be fully understood. This process will help to explain the omissions and chronological errors, and to resolve some of the obscurities of his military narratives.

(*a*) *The military source*

Most of Theophylact's information on the Balkans originated in a military narrative that reported Roman campaigns in the Balkans between the years 586/7 and 602. Haussig and Veh have examined the nature of this military narrative and identified some of its salient features.[4] Haussig, noting the frequent inclusion in the latter half of the *History* of minor details, especially the succession of days and the length of particular marches, and of references to official correspondence, suggested that this type of information originated in an official report or bulletin, which Theophylact could have used either directly or through the intermediary of an unknown source. This official report might have been a campaign diary which a general's secretary kept for the benefit of the emperor and senior administrators at the capital; this was subsequently rewritten in a more literary form that served as the intermediary between the official diary and Theophylact. In contrast to the analogous labours of Procopius, which had culminated in the production of complete histories of individual wars, including geographical and other background material, the postulated

[3] Cf. Whitby, 'Chronicle Source', esp. 317ff., 337ff.
[4] Haussig, 'Exkurs' 295–300; Veh, *Untersuchungen* 14–15.

secretary of the 590s only reported those campaigns which he had witnessed. Thus the work concentrated on the fighting along the Danube, but omitted action in Istria and the upper Drava valley associated with the Avar westward expansion (Paul D. iv. 10–11). It preserved the minor day-by-day chronology recorded in the campaign diary, but was less clear on the dating of events to different years, a fact that caused Theophylact considerable trouble. Haussig did not consider the starting-point of the diary: he only noted the abundance of chronological detail in books vi–viii (from Priscus' first Balkan campaign until his triumphs on the river Tisza), although he also observed that the geographical horizons of the account of Comentiolus' campaign in 586/7 resembled those of the diary.[5] Haussig argued that the diary terminated in 598/9 and was reworked into a more literary form in 599/600 when there was a one-year lull in campaigning in the Balkans (Th. Sim. viii. 4. 9). He advanced two reasons for this date, that Theophylact reports subsequent military actions much less fully, and that he oddly describes certain events of 595 as having occurred 'four years earlier' (vii. 6. 1). Neither dating argument is cogent. After the one-year lull, which occurred in 600, the campaign of 601 is only briefly recorded but, as was observed by Veh, there is considerable detail in the account of Peter's campaign in 602, including day-by-day narrative, references to imperial letters, and insights into the deliberations of the general. The events which occurred 'four years earlier' are a trio of chronicle entries (the death of the patriarch, Moorish raids on Africa, and the appearance of a comet): the campaign diary did not provide this non-military information, or the associated dating formula, and the date in fact demonstrates the type of chronological muddle to which Theophylact was prone when combining material from different sources.[6] However, if Haussig's date for the literary reworking of the 'diary' is not substantiated, he is probably correct in suggesting that it was reworked at some time.

Veh agreed with Haussig that the type of information preserved by Theophylact pointed to some form of official account as the original source, but he extended the coverage of the source by observing that chronological details in the 587 and 602 campaigns resembled those in

[5] Haussig, ibid. 296 n. 22, 297 nn. 24–6.

[6] Cf. Whitby, 'Chronicle Source' 317–18. In addition, events of 595 were not 'four years earlier' for a writer in 600.

the central section. This indicated that Theophylact's source must have been completed after Phocas' accession in 602, since the military narrative is linked too closely with the account of the coup. These modifications to Haussig's thesis should be accepted, but less convincing are Veh's arguments that Theophylact must have consulted the official account directly and not through an intermediate literary source. Veh argued, first, that Theophylact's employment in official service would have given him access to the original documents, and that it would not have been surprising if he had used official accounts of campaigns, since he reproduced Maurice's will from an official document and his predecessor Menander had frequently used official reports of embassies; second, that Maurice's march to Anchialus, which is handled with greater emphasis on superstition than any other campaign, would not stand out so clearly in Theophylact's narrative if he were only using an intermediary source; third, that Theophylact would have been better informed on chronology and the order of events if there had been an earlier narrative history on which to rely. These arguments lack substance. At an unknown date, Theophylact did act as *antigrapheus* (cf. ch. 2(i)), but this does not entail that he would have had easy access to official military and diplomatic documents of the previous generation. Although he claims to quote certain Persian documents verbatim, they were most probably lifted directly from his eastern source, John of Epiphania (cf. ch. 8(i)(*d*)), and Maurice's will was probably publicized at the start of Heraclius' reign, perhaps in conjunction with the commemoration ceremony in which Theophylact participated (viii. 12. 3–4), to demonstrate Maurice's concern for the empire in contrast to his unworthy successor Phocas. None of this indicates that Theophylact habitually made extensive use of official documents.[7] Maurice's march to Anchialus does stand out clearly from other campaigns, but it is reported differently because Theophylact found the information in a different type of source from his main military source (see below). Theophylact's chronological problems cannot be explained by direct use of official documents: an official campaign report would have noted the date of the particular campaign it was describing, and

[7] The clearest example of the use of an official document in Theophylact is the Turkish letter that provides the basis for his excursus on the origins of the Avars (vii. 7. 6–9. 12). But even this exceptional instance may not have been discovered by Theophylact himself, and his serious error about the letter's date does not inspire confidence in his ability to handle primary information (see below, ch. 12(i), p. 317).

Theophylact should have been able to arrange a chronological narrative from a series of dated reports, and possibly also to discover reports from officials in Thessalonica and Ravenna that covered events in the western and central Balkans so as to produce a more complete narrative. Finally, the Balkan military narrative occasionally describes reactions at Constantinople to specific incidents, for example Maurice's measures to counteract Comentiolus' misfortunes in 587 or the rejoicing at Priscus' success in 593 (ii. 17. 5–8; vi. 8. 8), as well as other information that would not have been contained in the original military dispatches, for example Priscus' decision not to report Peter's failures to Maurice (vii. 7. 2). This material is integrated into the narrative in a way that is out of keeping with Theophylact's heavy-handed and often inaccurate combination of different source-material.

Discussion of official campaign reports raises the question of what these might have been like. We have one contemporary example, unfortunately incomplete, in the letter which Heraclius sent from Azerbaijan describing events from 24 February to 8 April 628, in particular the coup against Khusro II (*Chr. Pasch.* 727–37). The text of the letter contains several indiction dates, and although it has no initial date this would probably have been contained in the salutation (the practice in Pope Gregory's correspondence), which in this case is replaced by a dated account of the letter's proclamation in St Sophia. Heraclius had probably provided regular dated reports on the progress of his Persian campaigns, as he refers to an earlier communication (*Chr. Pasch.* 729. 15–18). The detail of Heraclius' letter may not be typical of normal reports, since the emperor himself was personally involved and he was narrating dramatic events for public proclamation, but in any report the individual general or his assistant would at least have summarized the actions of different parts of the army and made the most of any successes.[8]

If Theophylact had consulted such campaign reports directly, he would have had more chronological and factual information, and been less influenced by information denigrating particular generals (see below). However, the detail and approach of his Balkan narrative

[8] For discussion of a 10th-c. Arab campaign report, see J. D. Howard-Johnston, 'Byzantine Anzitene', in Mitchell, *Armies* 239–89. Caesar's *Gallic Wars* provide an earlier example of the kind of narrative that an interested party might write up on the basis of his campaign diaries, and official reports to the senate probably underlie some of the military narrative in Tacitus' *Annals* (e.g. Tacfarinas' revolt in Africa).

between 586/7 and 602 (apart from the intrusive march to Anchialus) suggest that the account did ultimately originate in a campaign diary or series of campaign reports. The military operations of the main Roman army in the Balkans are reported from the perspective of that army. There is no mention of the actions of the praetorian prefect of Illyricum, who was fighting the Slavs in Greece (*Mirac. SD* i. 128) or of the exarch of Ravenna, who opposed the Slavs in Istria in 599 (Greg. *Reg.* ix. 154). Avar–Slav movements are only fully reported in the context of their interaction with the Roman army, so that widespread Slav raiding in 594 is only mentioned when the advance guard of the main army comes across some of the invaders (vii. 2. 2). When detachments of the Roman army take independent action, this is recorded in a way that suggests a subordinate submitting an account of his activities to his commanding officer, for example Salvianus' defence of the pass of Procliane in 588 (vi. 4. 8–5. 1), or Godwin's expedition to Dalmatia in 595 (vii. 12. 2–8). On the rare occasions when two Roman armies operate in the Balkans, the account tends to focus on the actions of one at the expense of the other, for example the brief mention of the victory of John Mystacon and Droctulft in 588 (ii. 17. 10–12) following the long report of Comentiolus' failures. The narrative concentrates on military action, the advance of the army to the frontier, skirmishes, and battles, which are reported with details of days and place-names, but it overlooks the intervals between these more notable events. This account includes detailed reports of individual incidents, but lacks any overall assessment of Roman strategy or of the contribution to that strategy of each campaign, and ignores less exciting military events. It is likely, as Haussig believed, that Theophylact did not have direct access to the primary source-material but was using an intermediary source which had already reworked and obscured the basic information.

The unity of detail and approach in these campaign narratives is paralleled by a consistency of bias, a factor not investigated by Haussig or Veh, but one which both supports their thesis of a single underlying source and also points to its nature. This bias favours the general Priscus at the expense of Comentiolus and Peter, the other two Balkan commanders appointed by Maurice; Priscus' victories are extolled and his failures minimized, while his rivals are made to appear lazy and incompetent. Thus in the campaign of 599 (viii. 1. 11–4. 8), when Priscus and Comentiolus were operating jointly on the Danube, Priscus won five sweeping victories over the Avars while

Comentiolus, the senior general, remained idly in camp; in spite of Priscus' attempts to stir him into action, his only apparent contribution to the campaign was an unfortunate winter march across the Stara Planina. Priscus was not always successful. His first Balkan campaign, which ended with the Avars ravaging Heracleia on the Sea of Marmara and besieging Priscus in Tzurullon, was as disastrous as any conducted by Comentiolus, but Priscus is not blamed for the failure: indeed, the Avar advance is reported almost as if Priscus had little responsibility for opposing it (vi. 5. 2–10), and it is probable that a major disaster, the capture of Anchialus by the Avars, has been glossed over. Again, in the account of the events of winter 597/8 (vii. 13. 1–7) it is unclear how Priscus came to be besieged by the Avars in Tomi, and it is possible that his personal truce with the Avar Chagan was responsible for placing Comentiolus in an exposed position. By contrast, the shortcomings of Comentiolus and Peter are frequently highlighted. Their campaigns are full of mistakes and reverses: Peter antagonized the loyal inhabitants of Asemus, and the subsequent losses on his campaign had to be concealed by Priscus (vii. 3. 1–10; 5. 1–10; 7. 2); confused orders from Comentiolus brought about a Roman defeat (vii. 13. 9–14. 11), and his obstinacy led the army to disaster while traversing the Trojan pass (viii. 4. 3–7). Any successes that they achieved were the work of subordinates: Alexander in 594 and Godwin in 602 won victories over the Slavs for Peter (vii. 2. 1–9; viii. 5. 10–12), while in the victorious 599 campaign Priscus was operating as Comentiolus' subordinate. By contrast, Priscus as supreme commander shared in the success of his subordinate Alexander (vi. 9. 1–15). Further, Comentiolus and Peter are often at odds with their subordinates: Comentiolus is accused of abandoning Martin and Castus in 587, in 594 Peter demoted Gentzon for failing to carry out sacrilegious orders, and in 599 Priscus grumbled at Comentiolus' inaction (ii. 11. 2; vii. 3. 8; viii. 2. 7). They are often idle through laziness or injury: in 587 Comentiolus' inertia endangered his subordinates until he was sharply rebuked by a junior officer (ii. 11. 1–3); in 594 a hunting injury prevented Peter from campaigning until an exasperated Maurice goaded his brother into action (vii. 2. 12–14); in 599 Comentiolus is portrayed as a poltroon, and the dangers to the Roman army were only removed when Priscus took over (viii. 2. 5–7). Their most energetic interest was hunting (vii. 2. 11; 14. 5). Maurice himself is not spared criticism for his handling of the armies: most notably, he is accused of avarice for insisting that his armies winter

north of the Danube (viii. 6. 10–7. 3), but he was also tricked by the Chagan into returning prisoners captured by Priscus (viii. 4. 1–2), and he unjustly rebuked Priscus for appeasing the Chagan by giving him a share of some booty (vi. 11. 17–21);[9] even his dismissal of the army's complaints against Comentiolus (viii. 1. 9–10) might also have unfavourable overtones in view of the hostile presentation of Comentiolus' actions.

There can be no doubt that there is a marked difference between the portrayal of Priscus' actions and those of Comentiolus and Peter, and to a lesser extent of Maurice, but this does not prove that Theophylact's source must have been biased: it is possible that Theophylact's narrative is an accurate reflection of events, or that any bias was Theophylact's own contribution to the neutral information of his source. It is difficult to refute the first objection because of the lack of evidence to control Theophylact's account. It is conceivable that Peter and Comentiolus were genuinely incompetent as generals, but were preferred by Maurice on grounds of kinship and loyalty: Peter was Maurice's brother, Comentiolus had been one of Maurice's fellow officers in the excubitors during Tiberius' reign, and both were executed when Phocas seized power, whereas Priscus survived to marry Phocas' daughter. On the other hand, although Priscus once incurred Maurice's displeasure (Greg. *Reg.* iii. 51), he was also trusted by Maurice, and was supervising important measures in Armenia at the end of Maurice's reign (Sebeos 20). It is hard to believe that personal ties would have persuaded Maurice to excuse the repeated extremes of indolence and incompetence as portrayed by Theophylact, or that he would have failed to use the military talents of Priscus more regularly if he really was the only Roman general who could bring success in the Balkans. Maurice himself was an experienced and competent general who did not tolerate failure or disobedience from his appointees (cf. ch. 1(iii), p. 16); he was determined to achieve success against the Avars and Slavs, since military failure in the Balkans might provoke unrest in Constantinople. In the circumstances, it is implausible that Maurice should have allowed Comentiolus or Peter to frustrate the progress of operations in the Balkans, and there are some signs that their military achievements have been misreported. Further consideration of this biased narrative may reveal more about its creation.

[9] Such action is recommended at *Strategicon* ix. 4. 51–6.

In spite of the difficulty of checking Theophylact's presentation, certain inaccuracies or misinterpretations emerge from the comparison of his account with the advice contained in the *Strategicon* on how to fight the Avars and Slavs.[10] The most obvious misinterpretation in Theophylact concerns Maurice's orders to his army to winter north of the Danube. On the first occasion, when Maurice told Priscus to spend the winter of 593/4 beyond the river, there is no explicit criticism of the emperor's orders, although they appear insensitive since the troops had already been grumbling about the excessive portion of their booty allocated to the imperial family: Priscus' eloquence quelled this unrest, but his only reward from Maurice was dismissal and accusations of simplicity (vi. 10. 1–vii. 1. 1). The next recorded occasion was in 602, when Maurice's orders to Peter sparked off Phocas' coup. Maurice's insistence seems foolish, the only recorded explanation being the desire to save money (viii. 6. 10); even Peter is made to criticize Maurice's parsimonious nature, 'An avaricious manner brings forth nothing good; avarice is a citadel of evils. . . . This day will be the start of many evils for the Romans . . .' (viii. 7. 2–3). However, winter campaigns were a less unusual strategy than Theophylact realized,[11] and Maurice's insistence is in fact explained by the *Strategicon*, which specifically recommended winter as the safest season for attacking the Slavs (xi. 4. 82ff.).

In the light of Theophylact's misunderstanding of winter campaigns, it is reasonable to look for similar cases in the presentation of Comentiolus' and Peter's actions. One example is the hunting for which both generals are criticized as though it were a diversion from serious military activity. In the *Strategicon* (xiiD) hunting is described as a training of great value for soldiers, since it makes them alert, exercises their horses, and imparts experience of military tactics; soldiers must therefore become expert huntsmen by constant practice at appropriate times, and the whole of the long chapter is devoted to advice on how this training should be organized. The close parallel between hunting and military tactics is drawn earlier in the work; in both spheres a near miss is worthless (*Strat.* viiA. pr. 45f.; viiB. 12. 12f.); scouts in particular must be well versed in hunting techniques in order to secure captives (*Strat.* ix. 5. 88f.). The methods of hunting, which involved flushing animals from woodland cover,

[10] On the *Strategicon*, see further below ch. 4(ii)(h).

[11] Cf. Greg. T. ii. 9, and Hendy, *Economy* 130, for analogous uses of winter campaigns.

would have been particularly appropriate for campaigning against the woodland Slavs or for detecting Avar ambushes;[12] hunting could even be used as a disguise for more serious military action (Priscus 11. 2. 74–8; Th. Sim. vii. 7. 4). It is very possible that when Peter and Comentiolus are blamed for frivolous hunting they were in fact performing serious military operations, training their armies, clearing thickets of ambushes, or rounding up captives for interrogation.

Another possible example of biased reporting is the frequent attribution of successes to subordinate generals whose ability compensates for the indolence of their commanders. One method of attacking the Slavs recommended in the *Strategicon* (xi. 4. 194ff.) is for the commander to divide his army and entrust a fast-moving column to a subordinate who ravages the countryside ahead of, but in conjunction with, the slower-moving contingent led by the senior commander. This arrangement might allow the subordinate to take the credit for the results of a joint enterprise, and open the commander to charges of indolence. A possible example of this is Comentiolus' apparent inaction during Castus' and Martin's manœuvres in 587: although Comentiolus was operating in Roman territory, so that ravaging was not in order, his attempt to dislodge invaders required the same tactics of sweeping the countryside as a raiding expedition; Comentiolus' central contingent provided the foundation for the successes achieved by the two advanced wings of his army. For campaigns beyond the Danube, the *Strategicon* (xi. 4. 89f.) recommends that a significant force of cavalry under senior commanders should remain within one day's march of the river to protect the crossing, to spread terror among the Slavs by threatening attacks in different directions and thereby allow the advance-party to achieve easier victories against disorganized opponents. Again the commander of the troops near the Danube might not share the glory for the successes of the advance force: Comentiolus and Priscus were perhaps campaigning on this principle in 599, when Priscus defeated the Avars while Comentiolus 'idled' beside the Danube.

Another factor that might contribute to the misrepresentation of Comentiolus' and Peter's actions is the misinterpretation or misreporting of their movements. This is clearest in the case of Comentiolus' march across the Trojan pass in autumn 599, a move

[12] Cf. Polyaenus, *Stratagems* iv. 2. 16, for Philip of Macedon using hunting-dogs to track down enemies who had taken refuge in thickets.

that is not explained by Theophylact apart from a reference to Comentiolus' impatience to return to Constantinople (viii. 4. 3–8). Comentiolus was informed that the pass had not been traversed for ninety years, and, even if this is a considerable exaggeration, it appears that the Trojan pass, which had been one of the major Roman routes across the central Stara Planina, was now difficult to negotiate. Comentiolus' action was probably a sensible attempt to reopen an important route over the mountains that had been closed by Slav infiltration, an operation that was best carried out in winter when the trees afforded less cover to the Slavs. A second example of possible misreporting is in the account of Peter's first campaign in 594, when important but unspectacular marching and countermarching is concealed behind the references to widely scattered towns on the Danube (vii. 2. 14–16): all commanders must have performed this routine type of police work, which is not recorded by Theophylact, but Peter's policing appears to have been particularly widespread to judge by the list of places he visited. Peter's movements are not explained, and instead the account concentrates on his failures.[13]

There is reasonable support for the hypothesis of a bias against Comentiolus and Peter, and in favour of Priscus. This bias was certainly the work of Theophylact's source, not his own contribution, the creation of a writer with sufficient military knowledge to be able to reinterpret the course of events, and produce the desired impression by suppressing or distorting facts. This bias is only highlighted by the superficial moralizing that Theophylact occasionally contributes, as for example when he criticizes the indolence of Comentiolus (ii. 11. 3). Theophylact himself did not have the military or geographical knowledge to create or counteract the bias, and there was no reason why he should have praised Priscus at the expense of the other generals: he retailed, at least in part, an unfavourable description of Priscus' eastern command (iii. 1. 8); he had praised the successes of Comentiolus' first

[13] The emperor Domitian's campaigns against the Chatti on the Rhine frontier may provide a parallel case of unfair reporting: these campaigns were not spectacular, since the Chatti were a dangerous enemy to attack head on, but they were a triumph for the organization and co-ordination of several legionary groups, who gradually constructed the roads and forts needed to subdue a wooded and mountainous region; there was no great victory with hordes of captives to impress the Roman public, but an enduring success: see R. Syme in *Cambridge Ancient History* xi. ch. 4(6). Cf. also the lack of credit in historians of Alexander the Great for the second in command, Parmenio, whose steadiness and organization were essential but overlooked elements in Alexander's dazzling victories.

two Balkan campaigns in brief reports that did not originate in his military source, and he approved the bold rebuke that Comentiolus delivered to the Avar Chagan (i. 7. 3–6; 4. 9). It is inconceivable that Theophylact would have criticized Maurice if he had understood the strategic purpose of winter campaigns beyond the Danube.

The recognition of the bias of Theophylact's military source throws some light on the nature of this source, as well as on the obscurities of Theophylact's narrative. This military source recorded Balkan events between the start of Comentiolus' third campaign in autumn 586 and Phocas' coup in 602. Some years, for example 593–4 or 599, are treated at greater length than others, but this is likely to reflect the relative importance, or suitability for presentation, of the actions of these years, whereas Avar successes in 588 are likely to have been played down in order to avoid embarrassing Priscus. This military information originated in an informed source whose precise nature is unknown, although Haussig's suggestion that it was a campaign diary is at least plausible. One of the officers in the Balkan army of the 590s was able to provide the first-hand material that underlies the advice on fighting the Avars and Slavs in the *Strategicon* (xi. 4. 225), and it is likely that other officers were also recording their experiences. The postulated diarist might have had access to the commander's military reports, or might even have been the official responsible for their compilation: each commander would have used these reports to present his actions to Maurice favourably, whereas the diarist could later interpret them in accordance with his own prejudices for or against particular generals. The basic information was reworked during Phocas' reign, when it would have been advantageous to extol the achievements of Priscus, the new emperor's son-in-law, at the expense of those of Maurice's closest supporters. In addition this reworked history tended to justify the army's dissatisfaction against Maurice on the question of winter campaigning, although it did not go so far as to retail the implausible story about imperial treachery which was preserved in the hagiography of Maurice and its offshoots (see below). The complimentary reference to Bonosus (viii. 5. 10), who is most probably to be identified with Phocas' hated henchman, is a further indication that the source was produced in the milieu of Phocas' court (and that Theophylact did not have the knowledge to correct its presentation). Its overall portrayal of events would have been inappropriate after Heraclius' coup, since although Priscus again survived the change of masters he soon fell from favour.

This military history reported events known directly to its compiler, namely those involving the main Balkan army, so that events in the western, central, and southern Balkans were largely ignored, as were those at the start of Maurice's reign when only very small Roman armies were operating in the Balkans. Superficially its account was clear, recording small-scale details and minor chronology, but it obscured more important matters, including strategy and broader chronology, particularly the sequence of years. These deficiencies are well illustrated by the account of Priscus' first Balkan campaign (vi. 4. 7–6. 1): the actions of Salvianus at the pass of Procliane are recorded in some detail, although the purpose of his defensive action is not explained; Priscus' actions in the Thracian plain are left obscure, and at one point the Avar advance is described as a retreat (vi. 5. 7); above all there is no indication of the date or time of year of the campaign, until Priscus is said to disband his army in the autumn (vi. 6. 1). Because the source concentrated on recording action, it may not always have recorded long intervals between actions, so that Theophylact might be led to overlook gaps of months or even years (a point relevant to the dating of Priscus' first campaign).

(*b*) *Chronicle and hagiography*

In addition to the military source, Theophylact had two other sources, a chronicle and a hagiography of Maurice, that provided information on Balkan events.[14] The chronicle, a Constantinopolitan record devoted mainly to imperial actions and natural disasters, supplied all Theophylact's limited material on the Balkan campaigns of Maurice's early years (i. 3. 2–7. 6), when Comentiolus achieved two victories (for which he receives due credit) over Slavs ravaging the Thracian plain. Theophylact had little factual information on these events, and tried to disguise this shortage by the rhetorical padding that characterizes his elevation of chronicle material to the literary level expected of a classicizing history. This chronicle probably noted major raids that threatened the security of the capital and military countermeasures organized from it. This was the type of event that attracted the attention of John of Ephesus, another chronicler who was working in Constantinople during these years. For the period covered by his military source, Theophylact naturally relied on its fuller information in preference to the briefer reports in the chronicle, but he probably

[14] See further Whitby, 'Chronicle Source' 317ff., 337ff.

followed the chronicle for the short notice of Slav raids in 588/9 (iii. 4. 7) that is preserved in the context of a survey of imperial affairs,[15] and for the historical framework of his account of Maurice's expedition to Anchialus when a solar eclipse was witnessed by the army at the Hebdomon (v. 16. 1–6; vi. 3. 5). Two stories connected with the campaign of 587 were also recorded by the chronicle: the account of Busas and the capture of Appiaria (ii. 15. 13–16. 11) is introduced by Theophylact as a digression, which is a strong indication that it did not originate in his main military source, while the story of a disrupted night march by the Roman army (ii. 15. 4–11) is recorded slightly differently, and more accurately, by Theophanes (258. 10–21).[16] The chronicle offered two types of information: brief notices of major invasions towards the capital and expeditions from the capital, and longer accounts of interesting but minor military actions. It did not, however, provide Theophylact with enough military information to allow him to resolve the chronological uncertainties of his military source.

The military information that Theophylact derived from the hagiography of Maurice was of much less value than the material provided by the other sources. The main concerns of the hagiography, which can be identified by examining the chronicles of Georgius Monachus and Leo Grammaticus and the Syriac hagiography of Maurice,[17] were the portents that presaged Maurice's overthrow and his saintly acceptance of death as a justified punishment for his sins. The hagiography recorded a cycle of imperial sin, repentance, and punishment, in which military events were only mentioned if they were relevant to the interests of the hagiography. It reported two military events, namely Maurice's fatal sin, which was to betray the Roman army and refuse to ransom captured Roman soldiers from the Avars, and an expedition under Maurice's leadership in the vicinity of the Long Walls which was dogged by unfavourable omens that

[15] Th. Sim. iii. 4. 6–9; cf. Theoph. 261. 27–9, for some of the material and an indiction date, which demonstrates that the chronicle tradition preserved this information.

[16] Cf. Whitby, op. cit. 327–9. This incident has recently been discussed by T. J. Winnifrith, *The Vlachs: The History of A Balkan People* (London, 1987), 85–7, but it should be noted that Theophylact and Theophanes do not provide independent testimony, since they ultimately both derive from the same chronicle account at this point, and it is unsafe to rely on Theophylact's precise language, since his version is a rhetorical adaptation of his source material. It is perhaps a pity that this incident cannot provide the first definite evidence for Vlachs, but the words *τόρνα, τόρνα, φράτερ*, spoken in a military context (and quite possibly by a military man) are likely to be military Latin.

[17] Whitby, ibid. 337–44.

signified imminent doom for Maurice. Theophylact excluded the hagiographic account of Maurice's sin, as much perhaps because of its incompatibility with his portrait of Maurice as because of its implausibility, but he took over the account of the march and its associated portents. He did not know the exact date of the march (which was not relevant to the hagiography), and he incorrectly amalgamated it with the brief chronicle notice of Maurice's expedition to Anchialus. The result was that Theophylact's account of the expedition to Anchialus contains incompatible chronological references, and that its concentration on portents and marvels distinguishes it from all other campaign narratives.

(*c*) *Conclusion*

This source investigation of Theophylact's Balkan narrative inevitably leaves areas of uncertainty.[18] All three postulated sources are lost, and it would be fruitless to attempt to establish the provenance of every single section of the narrative since Theophylact himself was capable of adding comments (not necessarily accurate) to the account in his sources, and he tended to embellish chronicle information with rhetorical adornment. However, it is important to establish the broad distinctions between the three types of source, and to recognize that they were written accounts. The chronicle and military source were clearly written compositions from the nature of their information, and the chronicle survived to be used by the eighth-century writer known as the Great Chronographer. In the case of the hagiography, it is less certain that this was written, since there was probably a considerable floating stock of quasi-religious stories connected with events of Maurice's reign, some of which could become attached to several different works without necessarily being transmitted in the form of a written saint's life: thus John of Nikiu (97. 34–7; 98) and John of Antioch (fr. 218*d*) record some of this quasi-religious material without preserving the whole hagiographic cycle;[19] Theophylact could claim that one of his relatives had vouched for a story that attested Maurice's

[18] e.g. the chronicle might have provided information on the Avar attack in 586 (i. 8), since the military source only began with this campaign; also the regnal-year-dated information at viii. 4. 9. The mutiny of 602 is likely to have been recorded briefly by the hagiography and chronicle (cf. G. Mon. 661. 13–18; Leo Gr. 142. 9–15), as well as by the military source.

[19] Cf. the *Life* of St Theodore of Sykeon 42 for a variant; Maurice's fate could be used as an example in a 7th-c. theological tract (cf. ch. 2 n. 28).

holiness (viii. 13. 7–14), and it is likely that he was familiar with many of the stories in circulation orally. At some stage, however, much of the religious material was collected in a written work, which was one of the sources used by the Great Chronographer, and it appears that Theophylact also had access to this account: Theophylact (vi. 11. 1) and two later sources indirectly dependent on the hagiography, Georgius Monachus (657. 3–4) and Leo Grammaticus (139. 14–16), independently record the same comment on some of the ominous portents that appeared to Maurice, 'writers of history say that such things bode ill for the cities in which they appear'. This suggests a common written source. The obvious occasion for the formation of a hagiography of Maurice was the start of Heraclius' reign. Heraclius was posing as the avenger of Maurice's murder by the 'mongrel barbarian Centaur' Phocas, but Maurice had been far from popular with the army and in Constantinople. The hagiography had the advantage of portraying Maurice as a flawed hero, a man who had betrayed his soldiers to the empire's worst enemies, and who then admitted that he deserved punishment: Maurice's overthrow was thus justified, but his saintly behaviour as a repentant sinner and the brutality of Phocas towards his children saved his reputation. A short collection of hagiographical stories about Maurice would have been useful for Heraclius in 610, and it could then have been used by Theophylact and later writers.

Theophylact had three written sources, a finite amount of information on the Balkans, which he had to reconcile and amalgamate through his own critical acumen, without the assistance of eyewitnesses who might have resolved specific problems. Although there must have been a few veterans from Maurice's armies at Constantinople in the late 620s, who could remember, albeit dimly, some of the events of Maurice's reign, there is no evidence in the *History* that Theophylact had searched at all diligently for such informants: thus he failed to discover the correct explanation for Maurice's insistence on winter campaigning, and did not understand the geography of particular manœuvres (cf. below p. 138). He appears to have been satisfied by the information that was most readily available, without examining either how accurate or complete it might be or searching for additional sources. Theophylact's account of Balkan events is inevitably obscure and confusing, although with the redeeming feature that he knew too little about the Balkans to try to reshape his source material into a homogeneous narrative; as a result some of

his confusions can be unravelled through the investigation of his sources.

(ii) OTHER LITERARY SOURCES

There are three extant contemporary sources that can be used to supplement Theophylact's information on the Balkans: the ecclesiastical histories of Evagrius and John of Ephesus, and the collection of Pope Gregory's letters; two sources composed in the first decades of the seventh century: the first book of the *Miracula S. Demetrii* and the fragments of the chronicle of John of Antioch; and several later sources: the Greek chronicle of Theophanes together with the anonymous fragments of the Great Chronographer and the *Chronicle of Monemvasia*, the Latin chronicle of Paul the Deacon, and the eastern accounts of Sebeos (Armenian) and Michael the Syrian (Syriac). The *Strategicon* of Maurice is an important contemporary source for information on military affairs. The following section summarizes and evaluates their evidence.

(*a*) *Evagrius*

Evagrius recorded little information on Balkan events of the 580s, even though his coverage of Maurice's reign is largely concerned with political and military matters. The inhabitants of Antioch, indeed of the eastern provinces in general, probably had little interest in the collapse of the Roman empire in the Balkans: these provinces had always been a poverty-stricken, unattractive area, plagued by tribal invasions and incessant wars, so that as one travelled east from the safe barrier of the Hellespont and Bosporus knowledge about current Balkan affairs became scarce. Evagrius has only two brief references to contemporary events in the Balkans. The first (v. 11, p. 207. 25–30) alludes to Tiberius' defeat by the Avars, when divine providence intervened to preserve him for his later elevation as Caesar. The second (vi. 10, p. 228. 21–6) records two Avar invasions that penetrated as far as the Long Walls and the capture, enslavement, and destruction of Singidunum, Anchialus, the whole of Greece, and other cities and forts, which could not be prevented because of the empire's eastern commitments. The explanation for Evagrius' uncharacteristic interest in the Balkans at this point is that he had visited Constantinople in 588 to assist his employer, Gregory, patriarch of Antioch, to

defend himself against accusations of incest; Gregory had left Constantinople in June 588, and Evagrius had certainly returned to Antioch by 31 October 588 when the celebrations of his second marriage were disrupted by an earthquake (vi. 8, p. 227. 1–9). Two dates are possible for these Avar attacks: Evagrius might be referring to the Avar attack of 583, when Singidunum was captured and the vicinity of Anchialus ravaged (Th. Sim. i. 4. 1–4), in combination with the Slav raids to the Long Walls in 584/5; however, since Evagrius was at Constantinople in 588, it is much more likely that he is recording the two Avar invasions of 587 and 588, when the defenders of Singidunum bought off the Chagan, Anchialus was captured, and Heracleia on the Sea of Marmara ravaged. In each year the proximity of the Avars caused consternation in Constantinople (Th. Sim. ii. 17. 5–6; vi. 5. 11), which would have encouraged the eastern visitor to take note of these events.[20]

(*b*) *John of Ephesus*

The six books of part three of John of Ephesus' ecclesiastical history record events from the reigns of Justin II, Tiberius, and Maurice. It was compiled at Constantinople over a period of years, as can be seen from chronological references in the text: thus he was writing i. 41 in 581, iv. 61 in 585, and vi. 25 in 584. The latest event definitely recorded by John was the trial of Gregory of Antioch at Constantinople in 588 (iii. 27–34; v. 17),[21] and it is probable that he died, a very old man, shortly afterwards. Book vi, which is exclusively concerned with secular events, appears to have been added as an afterthought by John to the predominantly ecclesiastical narrative of the earlier books. It comprises a surprisingly detailed and informative account of the Persian war during the reigns of Justin and Tiberius, which is then gradually interspersed with material on contemporary Balkan events, the Avar and Slav attacks of Tiberius' and Maurice's reigns. John

[20] Allen's discussions (*Evagrius* 18–19, 253–4) are confused: Evagrius was certainly not referring to the invasions of Tiberius' reign, and it is unfair to accuse him (or, for that matter, John of Ephesus or Theophylact) of muddling Avars and Slavs. Evagrius' visit to Constantinople had briefly given him access to accurate information on Balkan affairs.

[21] See Allen, 'New Date', which demonstrates that John's account conflates Gregory of Antioch's two trials in 580 and 588. Allen's conclusions are supported by the probability that the second earthquake at Arabissus (v. 23) was the earthquake of 588 that devastated Antioch; John may also have referred to Germanus' victory over the Persians in 588, cf. ch. 8(ii)(*d*).

personally witnessed the panic caused at Constantinople by these attacks (vi. 47), and it may well have been his experience of the disasters in the Balkans during Tiberius' reign that persuaded him to add the secular narrative of book vi as a quasi-appendix to the ecclesiastical history: his excuse for adding this military account was that the manifold disasters were a sure sign of the imminent approach of the end of the world (vi. 1). Book vi originally contained important information on Balkan events of 582–8, but the concluding chapters are lost. In the extant work, following the long account of the loss of Sirmium (vi. 30–2), there is only a brief reference to the destruction of Sirmium by fire, probably in 583 (vi. 33). He also comments, in the context of the Slav raids of Tiberius' reign, that the Slavs were still occupying Roman territory in 584 (vi. 25). The information in the lost chapters can be reconstructed in outline from the table of contents to book vi, in combination with Michael the Syrian x. 21, of which much is ultimately derived from John.[22] Marquart, who collated the accounts of John and Michael, concluded that all the Balkan information in M. Syr. x. 21, apart from the traditional aetiological story of the three Scythian brothers, originated in John of Ephesus.[23] The information that can be attributed to John on this basis comprises an account of Avar attacks on cities and fortresses; the Avars' offer to leave the inhabitants in peace if the cities delivered half their produce as tribute (or possibly half the taxes paid to the Romans: the Syriac is unclear); the great ditch built by Maurice beyond Adrianopolis which prevented the Avars from approaching Constantinople; the harsh conscription, extending even to the clergy, to which Maurice resorted in order to raise an army; and the widespread Slav ravaging, which included the sack of churches at Corinth, that became worse when Maurice paid the Antes to attack Slav territory north of the Danube.[24]

[22] Michael, a 12th-c. chronicler, states that his use of John ended at x. 20 (pp. 356–7); thereafter he followed Dionysius of Tel Mahre, a lost 8th-c. text. However, much of M. Syr. x. 21 originated in John. This error over John's terminus suggests that Michael only used John through an intermediary, possibly Dionysius, who misled him over the precise conclusion of John's work. The involvement of an intermediary increases the possibility of error in the transmission of information.

[23] *Streifzüge* 480–8; Marquart's conclusions have to be slightly modified in the light of Allen's redating of the terminus of John's work. Cf. also T. Olajos, 'Contribution à la chronologie des premières installations des Slaves dans l'empire byzantin', *Byz.* 55 (1985), 506–15, at 508–10.

[24] Cf. J. Eph. vi. 48, recording 'the attack on and devastation of the region of the Slavs'; Brooks (n. ad loc., p. 210), thought this was a mistake for 'the devastation of Thrace by the Slavs', but the chapter might rather have recorded the Antes' attack on the Slavs.

The last events recorded by John were the destruction of Anchialus (vi. 49), the Chagan's claim to hegemony in the Balkans, and finally, the Avar retreat, which was effected by a payment of 800 pounds of gold and the rumour of a Turkish attack on Sirmium. These last events are not dated, but they should be later than 584, when John was composing his first group of Balkan chapters (vi. 24–5; 30–3); it is probable that, like the last eastern events recorded by John, they occurred in 588. The fact that John was reporting contemporary events, some of which he had witnessed, greatly enhances the value of this information preserved in Michael. John might have been influenced by the pessimistic atmosphere at Constantinople in the 580s to overstate the intensity of Slav ravaging and the permanence of its effects, but his information on specific events (e.g. the loss of Sirmium) is detailed and credible, and stands comparison with his eastern information. Thus the account of John/Michael is an important supplement to Theophylact, recording some events that were unknown to him, and corroborating the testimony of Evagrius on the capture of Anchialus.

(*c*) *Pope Gregory*

The letters of Pope Gregory, which cover the whole of his pontificate (590–604), are, after Theophylact, our most valuable source for conditions in the Balkans during the latter half of Maurice's reign, but their evidence has never been thoroughly exploited to supplement Theophylact.[25] Apart from several letters to the imperial family, the patriarch, and various dignitaries in Constantinople, many of which are concerned with the contentious issue of the title 'Oecumenical Patriarch' and with items of imperial legislation that affected church interests, there are about sixty letters addressed to recipients in the Balkan provinces: these are mainly sent to bishops in the diocese of Illyricum, which was subject to papal jurisdiction, but there is one letter addressed to the general Priscus, *patricius Orientis* (iii. 51), and another to Jovinus the praetorian prefect of Illyricum (ii. 23). About half the Balkan letters are devoted to the long disciplinary wrangle that disrupted the churches in the Dalmatian coastal cities,[26] and most

[25] Jones, *LRE* 304, recognized the value of the *Dialogues* for conditions in Italy, and Popović, 'Témoins' 452–4 and 'Koutrigours' 622ff., has used some of the letters relevant to Balkan history.

[26] For this dispute, see J. Zeiller, 'La grande pitié des églises de Dalmatie dans les dernières années du vi^e siècle', *Acts of the 6th Int. Cong. of Byz. Stud.* (Paris, 1948), i. 333–6.

of the rest are concerned with other pastoral matters, for example the depositions of the archbishops of Corinth in 592 and Justiniana Prima in 601, the trial of the bishop of Thebes in 592/3, and the attendance of the bishops of Illyricum at a synod in Constantinople in 599. There are only a few incidental references to secular events, such as the mention of Slav attacks on Salona and Istria in 600 (x. 15). Clearly the course of Balkan history in the 590s could not be reconstructed from Gregory's letters alone, but their evidence is important because it covers western and southern areas of the Balkans that are almost completely ignored by Theophylact, and because it provides a different perspective from that of Theophylact's military narrative. A letter from Gregory to a local bishop indicates that some form of civilized life continued in the bishop's city, even if at a low level, that the city remained within the horizons of the Roman empire, and that communications with the outside world were maintained. There is no mention in any of the letters of the danger of interference to their delivery. Thus it is possible to infer that Corinth, where the lower city had been sacked by the Slavs in the 580s, was in Roman hands from at least 591 to 599 (i. 26; v. 57; viii. 10; ix. 156), and that it could function as a centre of communications, since Gregory asked the city's bishop to assist the papal envoy *en route* to Constantinople in 591 either with a ship or with provisions for a land journey; there was a metropolitan bishop at Justiniana Prima from at least 592 to 602 (iii. 6; xii. 10), although the see might have been vacant in May 591 when Gregory addressed a letter to the bishops of Illyricum (i. 43); Serdica had a bishop in 594 (v. 8), and Larissa from at least 592 to 599 (iii. 7; viii. 10; ix. 156); ecclesiastical administration survived in the provinces of Hellas (iii. 38; v. 62), Epirus Vetus (vi. 7), and Dalmatia (iv. 16, *al.*). Communications between the major centres were possible: thus in 592 the bishop of Justiniana Prima acted in a disciplinary dispute between the bishops of Thebes and Larissa (iii. 6), and in 599 the bishops of Justiniana Prima, Thessalonica, Corinth, Dyrrachium, Nicopolis, Scodra, and Larissa were among those invited to a council at Constantinople (ix. 156). Although the Slavs were infiltrating the Balkans, appearances of civilized life and of ecclesiastical and imperial order were maintained in the cities of the Adriatic coast, peninsular Greece, and Macedonia. On the other hand, there is no mention of the metropolitan bishops of Dardania, Moesia Prima, and Dacia Ripensis, which suggests that regular ecclesiastical administration no longer extended to the once important centres of Singidunum,

Viminacium, Ratiaria, Bononia, or Scupi (all places subject to Avar or Slav attacks in Maurice's reign).

It is difficult to determine how far appearances corresponded to reality. Most of Gregory's letters to Balkan bishops are concerned with urban matters, so that one would not expect to find many references to Slav infiltration of the countryside, unless this was affecting the security of the cities or the administration of the papal patrimony. Gregory knew how to exploit the Lombard threat when defending his independence of action in Italy to eastern correspondents,[27] and he may have been loath to offer his subordinates similar opportunities to evade his control by recognizing comparable problems caused by Slavs. There are, however, a few significant references to unsettled conditions. In May 599 Gregory congratulated the exarch of Italy, Callinicus, on his victories over the Slavs (ix. 154), and in July 600 he wrote to Maximus, bishop of Salona, mentioning the Slav threat to that city, which Gregory caps by referring to his own anxiety about the menacing approach of Slavs to Italy through the Istrian peninsula (x. 15). He records the loss of Lissus (Alessio) on the Adriatic near Dyrrachium, because the bishop was transferred to the see of Squillace in south Italy until his own city could be recaptured (ii. 37; June 592); Gregory does not record the circumstances of Lissus' capture, nor whether it had been occupied by its assailants. The refugee bishop was still at Squillace in August 598 (viii. 32), which suggests that his city had not been resettled by the Romans. At an unknown date, Bishop John of Euria (probably modern Ioannina, a place which Justinian had fortified) had to take refuge on the island of Corfu, where he attempted to assert his jurisdiction over the community of exiled Eurians which had established itself at Castrum Cassiopi. That infringed the rights of the bishop of Corcyra (Corfu); this dispute was referred to Maurice for adjudication, but was not finally resolved until after his overthrow, when John was still on Corcyra (xiv. 7–8). In 601 Maurice determined to replace quickly the metropolitan of Justiniana Prima, who was suffering from some sort of madness, lest the city should fall to the enemy while it lacked

[27] Gregory's letters to Constantinople lay greater stress on the imminence, severity, and duration of the Lombard threat than his Frankish or Italian correspondence (though western recipients may not have needed the reminder). He frequently disagreed with the aggressive imperial policy towards the Lombards, defending his more pacific approach by appeals to personal experience; he was also interested in soliciting charitable donations.

episcopal guidance (xi. 29): Justiniana Prima may not have been in immediate danger since Maurice had undoubtedly adduced the enemy threat as an excuse for his wish to depose the local bishop, an action contrary to church law, but neither was the excuse too fantastic to be believed.

Two letters from the start of Gregory's papacy throw important light on more general conditions in the Balkans. The first (i. 43), addressed to the bishops of Illyricum in May 591, refers to an imperial order to Jovinus, the praetorian prefect, to instruct bishops who remained in their own cities to make provision for those expelled by the fury of the enemy. Gregory urges the bishops to support their unfortunate colleagues, though refugee bishops were not to usurp the episcopal offices of their hosts (as John of Euria was thought to be doing). Maurice's edict cannot be precisely dated, but was probably issued shortly before Gregory's election to the papacy in 590.[28] The second letter (ii. 23), addressed to Jovinus the prefect in March 592, praises his achievements in securing the recovery of Illyricum from barbarian devastation and requests his assistance for the administrator of the papal patrimony in this area. Gregory might have exaggerated Jovinus' achievements in order to flatter him, but he at least believed that it was now possible to restore the administration of the church's possessions. Other letters from the same year refer to problems over the administration of the patrimony in Dalmatia: the problems could also have been caused by the invasions, although they might have arisen from the internal disputes of the church there (ii. 20–2; 45; 50). These letters from Gregory reflect the severe disruption which the Balkan provinces experienced during the 580s, but suggest that a general recovery had started by 592. Thereafter, Gregory's letters convey the impression that life in the main episcopal sees continued without serious interruption, although in some places the position was perhaps delicately poised, and the western Balkans were threatened by Slavs.

(*d*) *Miracula S. Demetrii*

The first book of the *Miracula*, composed by Archbishop John of Thessalonica in the first decade of Heraclius' reign, is a collection of

[28] Another edict of interest to Gregory was that regulating the entry into the church of soldiers and civilian officials; this edict should probably be connected with Maurice's desperate recruiting drive in the 580s, which Michael the Syrian also records (x. 21, pp. 361–2).

fifteen miracles which Demetrius performed for the benefit of his city and its inhabitants; all except the first two miracles took place during the reigns of Maurice and Phocas, and of these most occurred in the episcopate of Eusebius, who received letters from Pope Gregory between 597 and 603. Both books of the *Miracula* are of great interest for the light they cast on the society of Thessalonica and its beliefs in the late sixth and seventh centuries,[29] but of specific interest for the history of the Balkans during Maurice's reign are those connected with two Slav attacks on Thessalonica which are not mentioned by any other source. Miracle 12 concerns a brief raid on the city by a band of 5,000 Slavs; miracles 13–15 are connected with a seven-day siege by a large, mostly Slav, force. Shortly before this siege, Thessalonica had been struck by plague (miracle 3; cf. § 125), and after the withdrawal of the Slavs there was a serious famine that was only assuaged by the diversion of grain-ships bound for Constantinople (miracle 8).

The evidence of the *Miracula* has to be treated cautiously. The first book was compiled while Thessalonica was being threatened by Slav and Avar attacks, and this record of the saint's favours was intended to boost the citizens' morale by demonstrating that they had an ever-present guardian who watched over and defended the city like 'an unshakeable spiritual rampart, a barrier that cannot be assailed by demons and barbarians, a fortress that bestows calm on the billows of mortal life, an eternal defence for souls and bodies' (Prologue 4). Most hagiographies highlight the personal role of their particular saint, but the potential for distortion is increased in the case of the *Miracula*, in which the saint's past triumphs may have been exaggerated to rival the present dangers that he still had to overcome. It has been suggested that the accounts of these miracles were probably intended for delivery as sermons,[30] and it would have been particularly tempting for John to write up the repulse of an earlier Slav siege to prove to his audience that the saint had already rescued his city from the verge of destruction. Another possible source of distortion was the expectation of what a divine city-protector should do during a siege: when Alaric approached Athens in 396 he was deterred from attack by the sight of Athena Promachos patrolling the walls, similar in appearance to her statues (Zosimus v. 6); according to Evagrius (iv. 28, pp. 176. 24–177. 2), Sergiopolis had been preserved from Khusro I by the appari-

[29] See R. Cormack, *Writing in Gold; Byzantine Society and its Icons* (London, 1985), ch. 2.
[30] Ibid. 61.

tion on the walls of a multitude of armed defenders, a revelation of St Sergius' vigilant protection, but the alternative story in Procopius, that the besiegers had to withdraw because of a shortage of water, is probably true (*Wars* ii. 20. 10–15); when the Avars besieged Drizipera in 588, they failed to press their attack even though the city gates were left open since 'they imagined they saw countless Roman divisions in close formation, moving out of the city and hurrying to the plain in eagerness to do battle . . . the opposition was an illusion, a bogyman of vision and a bewilderment of perception' (Th. Sim. vi. 5. 7): in this case it was probably the martyr Alexander, whose shrine was situated just outside Drizipera, who was credited with saving his city.[31]

It is reasonable to accept that Thessalonica was besieged by the Slavs during Maurice's reign. The Slav approach was announced in the city on Sunday, 22 September (*Miracula* 119), a detail which allows the siege to be dated to 586 or 597; both dates have had their proponents in recent years, Lemerle arguing for 586 and Vryonis in favour of 597.[32] Although certainty is impossible, the earlier date should be preferred. During the decade 578–88 the Slavs ravaged widely across the Balkans, and their raids had extended far beyond Thessalonica into peninsular Greece and the Peloponnese. An attack on Thessalonica in 586 would be a natural accompaniment of such raiding, and the fact that sizeable bands of Slavs were already roaming the Balkan provinces would help to explain why the Slavs could appear outside the city walls with such surprising speed (119). At the time of the attack the praetorian prefect of Illyricum was absent with his soldiers on official business in Greece (128), a mission which might well be connected with the critical Slav threat to the Peloponnese at that time.[33] The Slav siege followed the rejection by Maurice of an embassy from the Avar Chagan (117): in summer the Romans were alleged to have received a fugitive Avar priest called Bookolabra (Th. Sim. i. 8. 1–7), and presumably rejected a request from the Chagan for his return, with the result that the Avars invaded in autumn 586.

[31] Cf. *Chr. Pasch.* 725. 9–11 for the Avar Chagan seeing a woman on the walls of Constantinople during the 626 siege; Proc. *Wars* v. 23. 5 for St Peter's promise to Rome.

[32] Lemerle, *S. Démétrius* ii. 50ff.; S. Vryonis, 'The Evolution of Slavic Society and the Slavic Invasions of Greece: The First Major Slavic Attack on Thessaloniki, AD 597', *Hesperia* 50 (1981), 378–90.

[33] P. A. Yannopoulos, 'Le pénétration slave en Argolide', *Études Argiennes* = *Bulletin de Correspondance Hell. Suppl.* 6 (1980), 323–71, notes that coins from the Thessalonica mint have been found in the Argolid in contexts of *c.* 586, which would fit in with the praetorian prefect's expedition.

Finally, production of coin at the Thessalonica mint seems to have been restricted in 585/6. By contrast the possible context for an attack on Thessalonica in 597 is less convincing. Although the Avars launched an invasion of the Danube provinces in summer 597, the evidence of Theophylact and Pope Gregory suggests that conditions elsewhere in the Balkans were more stable. Whereas it is not surprising that a siege of Thessalonica in 586 should have been overlooked by our meagre sources, this is less likely in 597 when Gregory was corresponding with Archbishop Eusebius of Thessalonica. The main reason advanced by Vryonis for the late dating is that in 586 the besiegers would not have had the sophisticated knowledge of siege-techniques which is recorded in *Miracula* 139ff., since they had only learnt about siege-engines in 587. This argument is suspect for two reasons. First, although the *Miracula* contains descriptions of elaborate machines, particularly of a great trebuchet (151), it is not safe to assume that these were actually used against the city in the sixth century: when John was composing his recital during the early years of Heraclius' reign, the Slavs and Avars were again threatening Thessalonica and descriptions of their contemporary equipment might have been introduced to improve the account of earlier events. Second, too much reliance should not be placed on the story in Theophylact that the Roman deserter Busas supposedly taught the Chagan about siege-engines at the siege of Appiaria in 587 (ii. 15. 13–16. 11). Although passages can be cited to prove that the Slavs were 'a people with a poorly developed military technology',[34] this conclusion cannot be applied to the Avars, who could have provided the Slavs with siege-engines. The Avars were accomplished warriors, and it is possible that they were responsible for introducing into Europe the type of great trebuchet described at *Miracula* 151, which is a lever-action machine rather than the standard torsion-operated Roman catapult.[35] The Avars had, in any case, had access to Roman engineering expertise from at least 578/9 (J. Eph. vi. 24), and the specific skills that Busas is said to have imparted in 587 turned out to be ineffective when applied against the Roman cities of the Thracian plain. Theophylact's story of Busas is a nice anecdote of dubious historical reliability. Thus September 586 is the more probable date for the Slav attack, which might have been encouraged by the Avar Chagan to coincide with his

[34] Vryonis, art. cit. 385.

[35] J. D. Howard-Johnston, 'Thema', in Moffatt, *Maistor*, 189–97, at 193.

attack on the cities of Moesia. However, the attack on Thessalonica was repulsed without great difficulty and the Slavs did not remain in the vicinity for more than a week, even though the praetorian prefect was absent in Greece with some of his soldiers, the leading men of the city and their retinues were in Constantinople to lodge a complaint against the prefect,[36] and other inhabitants were trapped outside the walls because it was harvest-time. In spite of the lack of defenders the city survived, but the effects of the Slavs on the countryside were significant and their ravaging caused a food-shortage in the following year.

The detailed description in the *Miracula* of the siege's progress is not trustworthy, but consists of a few sensational incidents that enhance Demetrius' glory, for example his presence on the walls during the first assault, when he spears the first attacker to climb the rampart (120), accounts of a jammed portcullis that threatened to admit the besiegers (149),[37] the utter confusion caused by the proximity of the Slavs since this was apparently the first time that they had appeared outside the city (124), or the apparition of miraculous armies of defenders (156–60). John's refusal to narrate the saint's achievements other than those he had personally witnessed at the Cassandreotic gate (146) is a hagiographic topos, but might also indicate that there was little drama to report.

The Slav raid was a much smaller affair, involving only 5,000 warriors who hoped to surprise the city by a night attack shortly after the festival of St Demetrius on 26 October; the citizens efficiently manned the defences (although they did not realize that the Slavs were attacking), and once day broke they defeated the Slavs outside the walls. The precise date of this attack is unknown. John claims that many of his audience had witnessed this miracle (101), but he makes similar assertions about the plague which preceded the Slav siege of 586 (29–30), so that the raid need not be any more recent. Lemerle, however, has argued for the precise date of 26 October 604 on the grounds that the raid occurred in a year when the saint's festival fell on a Monday, the second day of the week,[38] but his case is based on a most dubious interpretation of § 102. This section records that the

[36] The *Miracula* provides an honourable explanation for the absence of the city's upper classes, but this may conceal a more sinister reason, namely the flight of the more mobile rich to a safe haven at the first sign of danger.

[37] Cf. the open gates of Drizipera, Th. Sim. vi. 5. 5–6.

[38] *S. Démétrius* ii. 69ff.

whole district celebrated the saint's festival on 26 October in customary fashion; while everyone was enjoying the festivities in carefree peace, since there was no threat from barbarians, 'on the second day of the festival, suddenly, in the middle of the night' the saint's ciborium was destroyed by fire. The phrase *τῇ δευτέρᾳ ἡμέρᾳ τῆς ἑορτῆς ἄφνω μέσης νυκτὸς* naturally refers to the day (or night) following the festival, when a well-informed Slav band might have hoped to catch the city's defenders off their guard. It is strained to translate these words as 'on the Monday of the festival in the middle of the night', and even if Lemerle's translation could be accepted it would still not be of great assistance for dating this event: during this period, 26 October fell on a Monday in 582, 593, 599, and 610 as well as 604.

This discussion of the chronology of the minor raid is necessary because Lemerle has imaginatively combined the accounts of these attacks on Thessalonica to reconstruct the progress of Slav infiltration into Macedonia in the late sixth century:[39] in the siege, the Slav attackers had come from beyond the Danube, and were organized by the Avar Chagan (117), the attack was the first occasion that the city had seen a besieging army, and the defenders were confused by news of the attack (124); in the raid, however, the Slavs were responsible for organizing the assault, the citizens efficiently manned the walls in the middle of the night (107), and the customary Slav battle-cries could be recognized by people within the city (112). Lemerle claimed that the Slavs had, in the interval between the 586 siege and the raid, established themselves in Macedonia, so that they were independent of the Avars and their shouts had become familiar to the citizens. Although the Slavs were certainly living near Thessalonica in the mid seventh century, the evidence of the *Miracula* does not support Lemerle's hypothesis that there was large-scale settlement by the end of the sixth century. First, Lemerle has overstated the contrast in the hagiographic evidence between the circumstances of the siege and of the raid: in the siege narrative the inexperience and confusion of the defenders increases the glory of the saint's action, whereas in the raid the saint's ruse to alert the defenders depended upon their efficient mobilization, and the Slav cries had to be recognized within the city to prove the saint's miraculous intervention. Second, the lack of Avar involvement in the raid does not prove that it was carried out by Slavs living in

[39] 'Anciens recueils' 398–400.

Macedonia, since Danubian Slavs frequently campaigned independently of the Avars. Third, Lemerle's date for the raid is very insecure and cannot be used to uphold hypotheses on the development of conditions in the countryside around Thessalonica. In the mid sixth century, Slav bands had threatened to attack the city (Proc. *Wars* viii. 21. 21), and the region of Thessalonica was ravaged by the Slavs between 580 and 584 (J. Eph. vi. 25): these events would have given the city's inhabitants some experience of Slav battle-cries, and of the dangers posed by their lightning raids well before the siege of 586.

The account of the Slav raid in Miracle 12 is, unfortunately, less revealing about conditions in Macedonia than Lemerle hoped, and it may do no more than corroborate John of Ephesus' report of Slav ravaging in the vicinity in the early 580s.[40] The first book of the *Miracula* preserves important evidence on conditions in Thessalonica, the second city of the Balkans, and shows that Slavs attacked the city in 586, but it does not provide proof of infiltration into Macedonia: infiltration only became a serious threat to the city in the seventh century, when the constricting presence of Slavs is recorded in the second book of the *Miracula*.[41]

(*e*) *Byzantine Chroniclers*

The most useful of the Byzantine chronicles as a supplement to Theophylact is the *Chronographia* of Theophanes, which was compiled in the early ninth century. His account of the Balkan wars was based largely, though not entirely, on Theophylact, but he derived some additional information from an early seventh-century chronicle, which was probably the same work that Theophylact used. Theophanes did not consult this source directly, but through an intermediary source, the anonymous eighth-century Great Chronographer, of which a few important fragments survive.[42] Theophanes is of assistance for reconstructing the material that Theophylact might have derived from his chronicle, but he also

[40] If the raid occurred in 582, it would provide a good context for the coin-hoard concealed at Thessalonica *c.* 580 (see Metcalf, 'Mint' 125). Olajos (art. cit. in n. 23) preferred to remove the reference in John of Ephesus to Thessalonica (by emendation to Thessaly) in order to uphold the *Miracula*'s claim that the great siege was the first occasion when Slavs had been seen outside the walls of Thessalonica; but it seems unsafe to assume that this hagiographic detail is accurate.

[41] Cf. below, ch. 6, pp. 184–5.

[42] On the chronicles, see further Whitby, 'Great Chronographer' and 'Chronicle Source'.

preserves some additional details on military events: he provides a plausible explanation for Maurice's march to Anchialus, namely that he wanted to inspect the effects of Avar ravaging (268. 2–4); he retails a clearer version of the disruption that befell Comentiolus' night march against the Avars in 587 (258. 10–21); he records a date (March, indiction 3; i.e. AD 600) for a march by Priscus to Singidunum;[43] he also copied the Great Chronographer's extant account of Maurice's alleged attempt to betray the Roman army, combining this with Theophylact's description of Comentiolus' rout by the Avars in 598.[44]

A second account of this 'betrayal' is preserved in the fragments of the chronicle of John of Antioch. The exact date of the compilation of this work is unknown:[45] the last extant fragment records the overthrow of Phocas by Heraclius and, although it is possible that John's account continued for several years after 610, there are signs that his record of Maurice's reign may have been composed while Phocas was still alive, since fr. 218*d* gives a restrained account of the overthrow of Maurice by Phocas.[46] The two accounts of Maurice's 'betrayal' contain various inconsistencies. According to John, Maurice was angry with his army because of the hatred aroused by his betrayal of a group of prisoners, and so he ordered Comentiolus to betray the Thracian army secretly to the barbarians; the soldiers discovered this treachery by overpowering the general and reading the emperor's letter, and thereafter they plotted to kill Maurice; Maurice realized this and replaced Comentiolus by Philippicus; the army sent a delegation against Comentiolus; Phocas was one of the ambassadors, and he was struck in the face by an unnamed patrician for his opposition to Maurice. The Great Chronographer has a longer version: Maurice ordered Comentiolus to betray the army because of its indiscipline; Comentiolus accomplished this by giving his soldiers an order to arm in the middle of the night without revealing that they were about to confront

[43] Theoph. 278. 13–14; the date should probably be corrected to indiction 13, i.e. 595, when Priscus did march to Singidunum (Th. Sim. vii. 7. 1–5; 10. 1); see further below, ch. 5(i)(*d*).

[44] See Whitby, 'Great Chronographer'.

[45] This depends on the questions, perhaps insoluble, of whether Nicephorus used John directly as a source, and, if so, whether John was his only source for events up to 641 (at which point there is an obvious break in Nicephorus' work).

[46] Although the fragments of John, preserved in *Excerpta de Insidiis*, may have been severely abridged, it is unlikely that the excerptor would have excluded all anti-Phocas remarks.

the Avars, so that the soldiers prepared for a training exercise, not for battle (cf. Th. Sim. vii. 13. 9–11); at daybreak the truth became clear, the Romans were in uproar, and an Avar attack threw them into confusion; the Avars slaughtered the Romans and took numerous prisoners from the army and from Thrace (presumably civilians), whom they massacred when Maurice refused their demands for ransom; the Avars increased the Roman tribute by 50,000 solidi; the destruction of Maurice and his family was repayment for his inhumanity. The disagreements between these two versions are significant. In John, it is not stated that the prisoners betrayed by Maurice were Roman, and it is conceivable that a dispute had arisen over the surrender of captured barbarians (cf. Th. Sim. vi. 11. 19–21; viii. 4. 1–2); the betrayal of the prisoners precedes Maurice's attempt to betray the army, which is in fact foiled by the soldiers; the betrayal is not treated as a major sin for which Maurice has to atone. The Great Chronographer presents a hagiographic version of Maurice's death, according to which he committed a great sin by permitting the massacre of Romans captured in his betrayal of the army, but then atoned for it through his saintly acceptance of punishment.

Neither account is particularly convincing. In the Great Chronographer, Maurice refuses the Avar demands for ransom but then accepts a large increase in tribute; in John, the army complains against Comentiolus, who was not responsible for the treachery, to Maurice, who they apparently knew was to blame; according to John, Comentiolus had in any case already been replaced as general by Philippicus. The military incidents associated with these stories of treachery are part of the 598 campaign narrated by Theophylact: the Great Chronographer refers to Comentiolus' rout by the Avars in that year, John of Antioch to the army's subsequent complaints against Comentiolus (cf. Th. Sim. vii. 13. 9ff.; viii. 1. 9–10). However, both versions imply that the treachery occurred shortly before Maurice's overthrow in 602, and they certainly do not suggest that the army waited four years before its mutiny and conducted several successful campaigns in the meantime. This 'delay' in taking action strongly suggests that the army was not harbouring resentment against Maurice for a supposed act of treachery, and even in 602 the army seems to have been reluctant to press its mutiny to full-scale revolt. These discrepancies between the stories of the alleged treachery substantiate the doubts expressed on general grounds by Baynes about the truth of

this incident.[47] These stories provided a useful excuse for popular and military hostility against Maurice, and different versions were probably circulating during Phocas' reign; one of these was picked up by John of Antioch. When, at the start of Heraclius' reign, it became advantageous to canonize Maurice, the story was adapted to provide an explanation for Maurice's terrible, but voluntary, fate.[48]

Among other Byzantine chroniclers, the most useful are Georgius Monachus and Leo Grammaticus, who provide evidence about earlier source traditions for Maurice's reign.[49] Georgius preserves a hagiographic account of Maurice, in which the only references to military events in the Balkans are the betrayal of the army during a war in Mysia (658. 18ff.), and the outbreak of the mutiny in 602 when Maurice ordered Peter to winter in Slav territory (661. 13ff.). Leo's account of Maurice was based directly on the Great Chronographer, but his Balkan military information is almost identical with Georgius', the only addition being a reference to Maurice's march against the Avars, which provides the context for some of the portents that presaged Maurice's death (139. 4ff.). Later chroniclers such as Zonaras and Cedrenus contain rather longer accounts of Balkan affairs, but their military information is based entirely on Theophylact and Theophanes. The only possible independent item is Cedrenus' reference (698. 24–699. 3) to Maurice's reconstruction, in his fourteenth year, of Heraios' leper hospital at Galata, which had apparently been burnt by Slavs. If the statement could be trusted, this would be our only evidence that the Slavs penetrated the Long Walls, but it seems unlikely that all earlier sources would have overlooked such a momentous event: both John of Ephesus and Theophylact record panic in Constantinople caused by the approach of Slavs or Avars towards the Long Walls, panic that would have been more extreme if the Long Walls had actually been breached. It is possible that Cedrenus' reference to the Slavs at Galata is the product of some confusion.[50]

[47] 'Theophylactus' 40–1; as he observed, the question of the source of the story is 'one of great complexity' (41 n. 1).

[48] Cf. Anastasius of Sinai, *Questions* 18, for another contemporary interpretation.

[49] Cf. Whitby, 'Chronicle Source' 340–3.

[50] One possibility is that Cedrenus, who regularly garbles proper names (e.g. the Roman commander Apsich becomes 'a nephew', *anepsios* 693. 9), has conflated the burning of the shrine of Glyceria at Heracleia (Th. Sim. vi. 1. 3) with the destruction of the leper hospital of 'Heraios'. The name Heraios is a problem: elsewhere, the hospital is known as 'that of the olive', *elaios* (Janin, *Églises* 566–7), and Cedrenus' version of the

Apart from these mainly Constantinopolitan works, one other chronicle must be considered, the *Chronicle of Monemvasia*, which was probably composed in the Peloponnese *c.* 1000 AD. The interrelationship between the different versions of this brief chronicle (100 lines of primary text), and the origins and reliability of its evidence have been much discussed. The chronicler states (14–15) that Evagrius was one of his sources, and he also appears to have used Theophanes, Theophylact, and Procopius (perhaps indirectly).[51] His information on events outside the Peloponnese is of limited value, being largely a confused conflation of extant sources, but he provides important evidence on the extent and effects of 'Avar' ravaging in the Peloponnese, although the chronicler has here confused Avars and Slavs.[52] During these invasions many of the inhabitants were killed or driven out (86ff.): the people of Patras migrated to Rhegium in Southern Italy, the Argives to the island of Orobe, the Corinthians to Aegina in the Saronic gulf, the Laconians to Demena in Sicily or to the rocky peninsula of Monemvasia on the east coast of the Peloponnese. The 'Avars' apparently occupied most of the Peloponnese for 218 years, beginning in the sixth year of Maurice's reign (587/8), and Roman control was restricted to the rugged eastern part of the peninsula until the reign of Nicephorus.

Although the archaeological record confirms that the Peloponnese was severely troubled by invasions in the 580s and that, of the places specifically mentioned, Corinth and Argos were ravaged by Slavs, it is probable that the chronicle has overstated the permanence of the Slav impact on Greece. When Pope Gregory wrote to Bishop Anastasius of Corinth in February 591, he believed that the bishop would be able to help the papal messenger on his journey to Constantinople, a journey that might be completed either by land or sea: there is no suggestion that the bishop was enduring a difficult exile on Aegina. Equally it is unlikely that Patras remained outside imperial control until the ninth century: in Constantine Porphyrogenitus (*DAI* 49) there is an account of a revolt and attack on Patras during Nicephorus' reign by the Slavs who lived in the Peloponnese, but there is no indication that the city

name could be a corruption of this, if it is not a distortion of the proper name Hierios (cf. *Patr.* iii. 177 with apparatus for this easy corruption).

[51] For a summary of the debate, see Dujčev's introduction to his edition; sources, Dujčev, loc. cit., and Popović, 'Koutrigours' 621.

[52] The chronicler was perhaps misled by Evagrius' reference (vi. 10, p. 228. 21–6) to Avar invasions of Thrace; for Slavs ravaging Greece, J. Eph. vi. 25; M. Syr. x. 21, p. 362.

had only recently been reoccupied; the implication is rather that the Slavs were normally peaceful and under Roman control. There was widespread ravaging in Greece in the 580s, and the Slavs had begun to settle in Roman territory during Maurice's reign, while in Nicephorus' reign there were campaigns against the Slavs in the Peloponnese: it is likely that the chronicler, combining these items of information and lacking evidence for the intervening years, concluded that the Peloponnese had largely slipped from Roman control in the meantime. It may even be possible to suggest why Maurice's sixth year was chosen as the start of the period of 'Avar' control: the chronicler was interested in the history of Monemvasia and its bishop, and it is probable that this refuge-site in the eastern Peloponnese was first occupied on a permanent basis in the early years of Maurice's reign,[53] when a fugitive bishop from one of the cities sacked by the Slavs (probably Sparta) may also have established himself there.

(f) Western chroniclers

In Visigothic Spain and Merovingian Gaul two Latin authors, John of Biclar and Gregory of Tours, composed historical works during Maurice's reign, but neither preserves much information on affairs in the eastern Mediterranean. John of Biclar had lived in Constantinople in the early years of Justin II's reign, but after his return to Spain his access to information about, and perhaps also his interest in, eastern affairs declined; although he noted the Slav and Avar attacks of Tiberius' reign, there are no references to events in the Balkans under Maurice. References in Gregory of Tours to contemporary eastern affairs are restricted to information about the emperors and a few dramatic military events; much of it is gossip, the type of story that might be spread by itinerant clergy (x. 24, p. 516. 1) or other travellers, and none of his informants appears to have been interested in the Balkans even though the Avars were by now in contact, diplomatically and militarily, with the Franks.

Paul the Deacon is the only Latin historian to record useful information about the Balkans in this period. His *History of the Lombards*, a compilation of the eighth century, was naturally interested in Avar actions in the western Balkans, and their contacts

[53] P. Schreiner, 'Note sur la fondation de Monemvasie en 582–3', *TM* 4 (1970), 471–5, argued that it was founded in 582/3; such precision may not be justified, though the date must be approximately right.

with the Lombards and Franks. In 595 the Avars defeated the Bavarians, who were attacking the Slavs, and soon after the Avars attacked the Franks in Thuringia until they were bought off by Queen Brunhilda (Paul D. iv. 10–11). In 601 Agilulf, the Lombard king, sent shipwrights to the Chagan, who was besieging an island in Thrace; a perpetual peace was concluded between Avars, Lombards, and Franks, and the Lombards, Avars, and Slavs attacked Istria (iv. 24). Shortly before Maurice's death, the Chagan sent Slavs to help Agilulf besiege Cremona (iv. 28). Although the Avars and Lombards were in conflict in Venetia in 610 (iv. 37), Paul's account suggests that the Avars recognized the advantages of co-operation between enemies of Rome, especially at times of Roman strength, to counteract the divisive strategy of Roman diplomacy.

(*g*) *Eastern sources: Sebeos and Michael the Syrian*

The Armenian chronicle of Sebeos, which was compiled during the late seventh or eighth century,[54] contains some information on the involvement of Armenian nobles in the Balkan campaigns of Maurice's reign. Sebeos had no personal knowledge of the Balkans or of Greek accounts of Balkan history, and his evidence must be treated cautiously; furthermore, the oral historical traditions of the Armenian nobility, on which he must have relied, probably exaggerated the achievements of individual nobles such as Smbat Bagratuni. Nevertheless, Sebeos preserves useful information on Maurice's attempts to recruit Armenians, especially cavalry, for service in Thrace (chs. 8; 10), and on the reluctance of the Armenian nobility to die in the emperor's service so far from their native land; this led to an unsuccessful revolt by Smbat, who was condemned to fight wild beasts in the Contantinople hippodrome, from which he was saved by his physical strength, or by the clemency of the empress according to Theophylact, who records the incident from the Roman standpoint (dating it to 589; iii. 8. 6–8).[55] Sebeos also records two attempts by Maurice to transfer Armenians to settle in Thrace (chs. 6; 20), the second being in 602 when Priscus was ordered to transport 30,000 Armenian families. There is one mention of a specific campaign in the Balkans (ch. 8): at

[54] G. Abgarian, 'Remarques sur l'histoire de Sébéos', *REA* NS 1 (1964), 203–15, at 212–15.

[55] The date is roughly right, since Smbat, who was exiled to Africa after his hippodrome ordeal, had probably returned to the east before 595, the likely date of his appointment as Persian *marzbān* of Hyrcania by Khusro II (Sebeos 14).

the end of the Persian war, Maurice transferred his armies to Thrace and recruited an Armenian contingent under Musel Mamikonian, who is one of the heroes of Sebeos' history; a great victory was won on the banks of the Danube, and the Roman army then invaded enemy territory; the Romans were now heavily defeated and their retreat was blocked when the enemy occupied the defiles through which they had earlier advanced; some people escaped with difficulty to the fortresses of Thrace, but Musel was captured and slain, and numerous other Armenians were also killed. It is impossible to equate these events with any campaign narrated by Theophylact, and this account may well be a garbled conflation of several different incidents, for example, the Roman victories of 593 or 599 and Comentiolus' difficult retreat over the Balkan passes in 598.[56] However, Sebeos' informants were at least aware of the extreme gravity of the Roman position in Thrace (ch. 7), and of some of the problems of campaigning against the Slavs.

The other eastern source to be considered is Michael the Syrian, who compiled his chronicle in the twelfth century; much of his information on the Balkans has already been discussed in connection with John of Ephesus (see above, ii(*b*)), but he also preserves two notices on Balkan events after the terminus of John's account in 588/9. The reliability of this information is uncertain, since Michael was probably following the eighth-century chronicler Dionysius of Tel Mahre,[57] who in turn was using unknown earlier sources which contained much less information on Maurice's reign than the contemporary observer John of Ephesus. Michael's first notice is a story of three nomad brothers (x. 21, pp. 363–4); one, called Bulgarus, reached the lower Danube with 10,000 followers and was allowed by Maurice to settle in Upper and Lower Moesia and Dacia, flourishing provinces which had been devastated by the Avars since Anastasius' reign; Bulgarus and his followers, hereafter called Bulgarians, occupied these provinces as a protection for the Romans; the other two moved to the country of the Alans near the Caspian, where they were

[56] Musel's actions might even be linked with Balkan events of 587, when John Mystacon, a commander who is usually found operating in Armenia, achieved a rare success against the Avars (Th. Sim. ii. 17. 8–12). This would contradict Sebeos' statement that Musel's victory followed the end of the Persian war, but it would be consistent with Theophylact's date (589) for Smbat's rebellion, which according to Sebeos (8, 10) followed Musel's success. The problem for this reconstruction is that Musel, who died soon after his victory in Thrace, commanded the Armenian contingent in Khusro's army in 591.

[57] Cf. above, n. 22.

renamed Khazars after the elder. This story is a traditional explanation for tribal movements and relationships: Procopius (*Wars* viii. 5. 1–4) recorded a similar story about the two brothers Cotrigur and Utigur to explain the division between the two main Bulgar groups in his lifetime, and the much wider diffusion of the Bulgar groups in the seventh century is reflected in the accounts of the five sons of Kobrat preserved in Theophanes (356. 18ff.) and Nicephorus (33. 13ff.). Although Michael's story is a traditional tale, nevertheless it does represent a stage of Bulgar history, after the submersion of the Cotrigur and Utigur groups, which had been dominant until *c.* 565, but before the Bulgars came to represent their occupation of the territory south of the Danube as an act of military conquest by Asparuch in the late seventh century. It indicates that in the late sixth century there were some settlements of Bulgars in the Balkans which had to be explained, and it is possible, in view of Maurice's desire to repopulate the Balkans, that the emperor had given permission for this immigration.[58] Michael's second notice (x. 24, pp. 374–5) is an account of Maurice's overthrow: it begins with a reference to a victory by Philippicus against the Bulgars; Maurice subsequently refused to pay his army, which provoked a mutiny; Maurice's brother Peter could not be persuaded to claim the throne, and so an old man called Phocas was proclaimed emperor. It is tempting to dismiss this as a garbled recollection of events. The only cause for hesitation is that, although Theophylact does not record any Balkan command for Philippicus, John of Antioch (fr. 218*b*) notes that Comentiolus was replaced as general by Philippicus after the bungled attempt to betray the Roman army. Theophylact's sources might have failed to record a successful campaign under Philippicus' command in 599 or 600, but it seems unlikely that his military source would have failed to note the dismissal of Comentiolus in view of its hostility towards him. It is more probable that confused reports about the sequence of generals in the Balkans were transmitted to the eastern provinces, and that Priscus, who defeated the Avars in 599 shortly after the 'treachery campaign', was confused with Philippicus.[59]

[58] Justinian had already allowed the settlement of some Bulgar groups (Proc. *Wars* viii. 19. 7; *Chron. Monemvasia* 23–4, 41).

[59] For similar confusion between Priscus and Philippicus, cf. Leo Gr. 139. 18. S. Szádeczky-Kardoss, 'Eine unbeachtete Quellenstelle über die Protobulgaren am Ende des 6 Jhs', *BHR* 11/2 (1983), 76–9, tried to reconcile the accounts of Michael, John, and Theophylact, by suggesting that Philippicus won a minor victory over a

(*h*) *The* Strategicon *of Maurice*

The value of the *Strategicon* for unravelling the obscurities of Theophylact's campaign reports has already been noted, and its evidence will be used again in analysing strategies and tactics in the Balkans. At this point, a brief review of the evidence for the date of the *Strategicon* is appropriate. It was composed between 570 and 630, after the Avars, but before the Arabs, had emerged as major threats, and within this period various dates have been favoured: *c.* 580, *c.* 595–600, or *c.* 620.[60] The difference is not perhaps great, but it would be of interest to know whether the *Strategicon* was a contemporary product of Maurice's campaigns, or a prescriptive anticipation or later recollection of them.

There is little internal evidence for dating. The attribution of the work to Maurice, or to a Maurice who lived in the reign of the emperor Maurice, is not preserved in all the manuscripts and may be a false conjecture, although there is no obvious reason for the attribution. There are some references to recent events that help date the composition. The first (x. 1. 4–8) refers to the need for a strong camp and strict watches when besieging the enemy to avoid the discomfiture suffered in Arzanene by some commanders who had been left to besiege a fort: they were surprised either by a sally of defenders or by a relieving force. This probably refers to the siege of Akbas in 583 or that of Chlomaron in 586; on each occasion the Roman siege was disrupted by the arrival of Persian reinforcements (Th. Sim. i. 12. 1–7; ii. 7. 6–9. 15), although at Akbas the Romans did manage to press the siege to a successful conclusion. The second relevant passage concerns a surprise night attack by the Avar Chagan on Roman cavalry near Heracleia (ix. 2. 11–14): the Avars lulled the Romans into a false sense of security, so that the Roman cavalry encamped separately from the infantry and was then unprepared for an attack. Although it might be tempting to link this incident with the surprise Avar attack on the emperor Heraclius near Heracleia in *c.* 619, this is

Bulgar contingent of the Avar army as it retired from Drizipera in 598. This places too much reliance on the dubious evidence of Michael (not derived from John of Ephesus), who in any case appears to place Philippicus' victory much closer to Maurice's overthrow in 602; in 598 the priorities for the Romans were to reorganize their army and to escort the Avars back beyond the Danube, processes which would have been thwarted by an over-hasty renewal of hostilities south of the Danube.

[60] Cf. discussion by G. T. Dennis in the introd. to his tr. of the *Strategicon*, pp. xvi f.

impossible: Heraclius had marched from Constantinople with a largely civilian retinue for a peaceful meeting with the Chagan; there is no evidence that Heraclius' retinue grew over-confident through Avar inaction, or that his cavalry and infantry camped separately (if indeed he had both with him); the Avars attacked in broad daylight when the Chagan gave the signal with his whip at the fourth hour, and the main thrust of their attack was across the Long Walls towards Constantinople, not against the emperor's camp.[61] The incident mentioned in the *Strategicon* cannot be dated, although a possible context is Priscus' first Balkan campaign in 588 when the Avars reached Heracleia: on this occasion Priscus' failures were not fully reported by Theophylact's military source, but the Romans were certainly incommoded by the Avars and Priscus was forced to retreat to Didymoteichon with his infantry (Th. Sim. vi. 5. 8–9). A third possible contemporary reference is to an occasion when the Persians poisoned some barley and caused serious losses among the horses because there was no other fodder available (ix. 3. 125–7). In 591, immediately after the defeat of Vahram, Khusro II is alleged by John of Nikiu (96. 16–19) to have attempted to poison his Roman allies, but the treachery was foiled when Narses gave the poisoned food to some dogs. This is certainly not a close parallel for the *Strategicon* reference, and there is reason to doubt the truth of John's account, which is very hostile towards Khusro, since Maurice remained on good terms with Khusro and soon afterwards agreed to his request for a bodyguard (Th. Sim. v. 13. 1).[62] It is perhaps safer to assume that the poisoned barley refers to an unknown incident during the twenty-year Persian war. The only other dating criterion is the author's reference to his military experience (xi. 4. 225) which, in view of the considerable detail of the prescriptions for fighting the Slavs, must have included campaigns along the Danube. The campaigns of the 580s and 590s provide a suitable occasion for this experience, and it seems most likely that the author was writing in the 590s, after he had participated in Maurice's Balkan counter-offensive. A *terminus ante quem* for the work ought to be provided by the recommendation of winter campaigning against the Slavs (xi. 4. 82 ff.): it is difficult to believe that this advice could have been given, without qualification or comment,

[61] *Chr. Pasch.* 712. 12–713. 14; Theoph. 301. 26–302. 4; Niceph. 12. 29–14. 10.

[62] Furthermore, John, a bitter enemy of Maurice, uses the story to attack his support for Khusro.

after the mutiny of 602, for which this strategy was a central issue. A further subjective dating indicator is the defensive tone of the advice on how to attack the Avars (xi. 2): after the vigorous offensive of 599, some specific references might have been included about how best to invade Avar territory. The author of the *Strategicon* is unknown, but he was a well-informed contemporary of Maurice's Balkan campaigns.[63]

(iii) ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

The literary evidence for Maurice's reign can be supplemented by archaeological evidence which illustrates the cramped conditions of life in the north Balkan settlements, and which may occasionally confirm the literary record of events by the discovery of coin-hoards at destroyed sites or of individual coins in the context of continued inhabitation. However, the archaeological evidence has to be treated cautiously, and is sometimes of such uncertain date and significance that it can only be interpreted in the light of the literary evidence. The conflicting presuppositions of some Bulgarian and Romanian archaeologists present additional problems for the student of late-antique history. Bulgarian archaeologists tend to emphasize the evidence for the collapse of the Roman empire in *c.* 600, and find only limited signs of continuity thereafter at a few scattered sites: thus the influence of late Roman or sub-Roman civilization upon the Slav settlements and the Bulgaro-Slav state of the late seventh century is reduced. On the other hand, Romanian archaeologists highlight the evidence for continuity of settlement into the mid seventh century. These are problems which must constantly be borne in mind when studying this archaeological material. I offer the following summary of the evidence and its usefulness as background to my reconstruction of events based on the literary sources.[64]

Coin-finds are important, but there is a danger that the apparent

[63] Speculation about the author is unprofitable. Dennis (loc. cit. in n. 60), following J. E. Wiita ('The Ethnika in Byzantine Military Treatises', Ph.D. thesis, University of Minnesota, 1977), suggested Philippicus as a possibility, but the arguments are not convincing.

[64] For archaeological information, I have relied on secondary surveys of discoveries, particularly the works of Hoddinott and Popović, and foreign-language summaries in the main Bulgarian and Romanian archaeological journals, supplemented as far as possible by visits to the sites in question. Thus there are limitations to my competence to discuss this evidence.

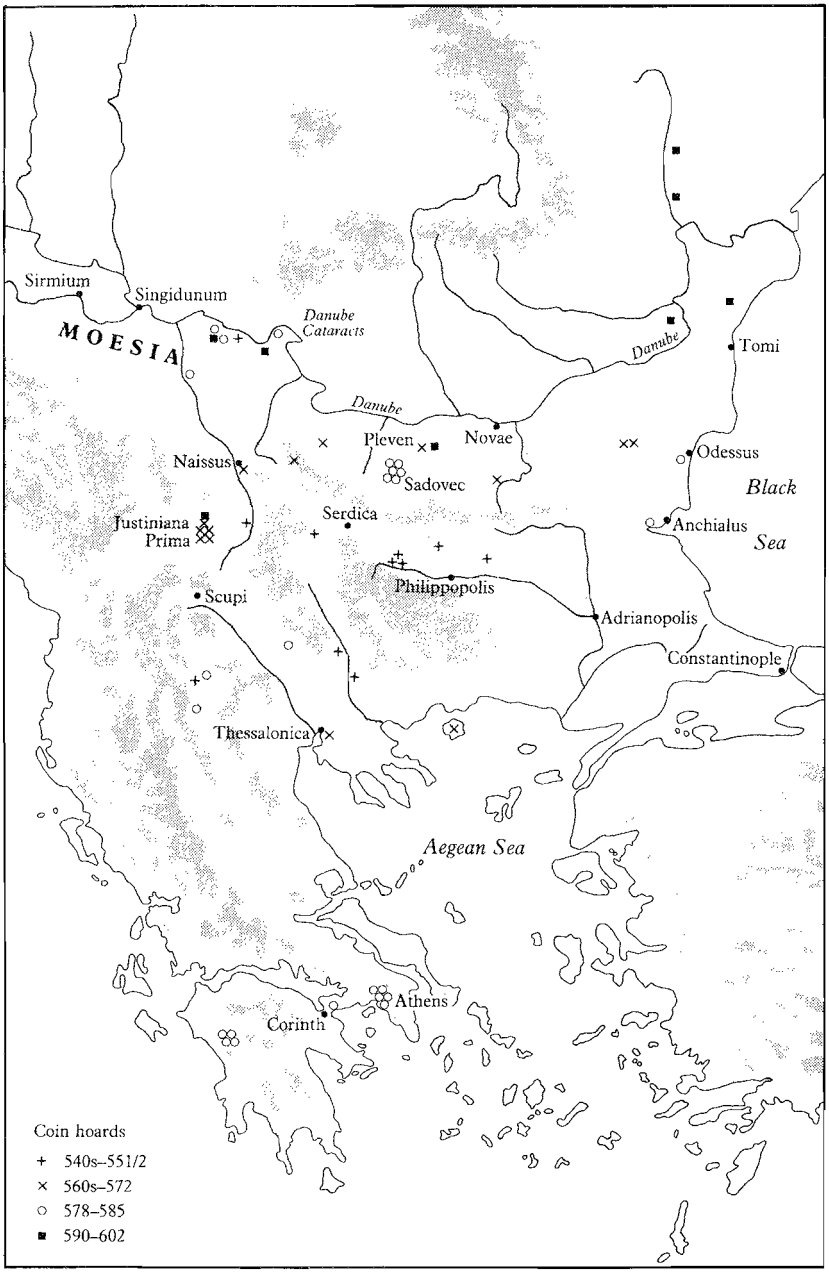
precision offered by their datable evidence may be interpreted too exactly. A dated coin or hoard provides a *terminus post quem* for an occurrence, whether it be destruction or continued inhabitation, but it may often be wrong to date this immediately after the terminus. Thus at Sirmium, which was not captured until 581/2 after a long blockade, the latest coins to be found date from 577/8, when the city lost contact with the Roman world: the city had been isolated for over three years, but this fact could not be deduced from the coin-finds. There is similar, but more misleading, evidence from Beroe, where the most recent coins date from Tiberius' reign although the city survived at least until 587, and probably for a long time into the seventh century.[65] It is particularly difficult to use the evidence from a site such as Beroe where only very limited excavation is possible. The finds of individual coins will often reveal nothing about the date and circumstances of a site's destruction, but equally they may not even prove that a site was still in occupation. There is no way of knowing how an individual coin reached a particular site, whether the coin was in commercial circulation and was dropped by a local inhabitant, or whether it was booty captured and then lost by a raiding party passing through or temporarily occupying a site. Gold must be distinguished from other coin: gold probably reflects state payments, either to a garrison as at Sadovec, or to official travellers such as an embassy, or to foreign tribes as subsidies, whereas bronze probably indicates the existence of small-scale local exchanges as at Sucidava or in the Olt valley settlements.[66] The age structure of the coinage in circulation is an unquantifiable problem: it has been noted that sixth-century hoards have an age-structure of twenty to thirty years, so that an individual coin found at a site may well not have been lost until a generation after it was minted.[67]

Hoards are in general more useful than individual coins since a hoard that contains a sequence of coin-issues may point fairly precisely to the date of concealment, and a scatter of contemporaneous hoards can date and chart the progress of an extensive invasion. Hoards from the fort at Sadovec in the valley of the Vit in

[65] Hoddinott, *Bulgaria* 313, was misled.

[66] For these, see Tudor, *Sucidava*, 117ff., and S. Dolinescu-Ferche, 'Ciurel. Habitat des VIe–VIIe siècles de notre ère', *Dacia* 23 (1979), 179–230 at 226ff.

[67] D. M. Metcalf, 'The Aegean Coastlands under Threat: Some Coins and Coin Hoards from the Reign of Heraclius', *ABSA* 57 (1962), 14–23, at 18–19; also 'Mints' 122–3.



Map 4. The Balkans: coin hoards, mid and late sixth century

Bulgaria suggest that it was destroyed early in Maurice's reign. Hoards from Athens and a fort at the Isthmus of Corinth point to destruction in *c.* 584. Bargala in Macedonia was cut off from the outside world in 585/6, and was probably captured shortly afterwards, since a hoard there contains a series of half-*folleis* for all years of Tiberius' reign and the first three years of Maurice's.[68] It is noticeable that the hoards from the latter part of Maurice's reign have mostly been found much further north in the Balkans: apart from a hoard at Caričin Grad (last coin 595/6), hoards have only been found at sites near the Danube, at Donji Milanovac (594/5) and Bosman (595/6) at the Danube Cataracts, at Reselec near Pleven (595/6), at Istria in the Dobrudja (592/3 and 594/5), and from the north bank of the Danube at Unirea in the Ialomiţă valley (594/5) and Movileni and Horgeşti near the River Prut (both *c.* 600).[69] These hoards reflect the Roman counter-offensive against the Slav tribes in the latter part of Maurice's reign, and the attempt by the Avars to block the Roman move upstream by asserting their control in the crucial region of the Cataracts. Hoards, however, are not necessarily evidence for contemporary destruction. It has been suggested that some hoards represent a sealed purse of coins that amounted to a given weight or value,[70] in which case the last-dated coin will only reflect the date at which the purse was sealed, which might have occurred some time before it was deposited. Such a sealed purse may be represented by the 595/6 hoard at Caričin Grad, since the city is known to have survived through to the reign of Heraclius.[71] Invasions are bound to have disrupted the distribution of coinage, as for example when isolated garrisons failed to receive their regular payment, and in such circumstances the most recent coin in a hoard may not be contemporaneous with the date of concealment. Nor do hoards prove that particular areas were lost to the Roman empire: at Athens the upper city remained in Roman hands, Porto Cheli and Argos were reoccupied after the destruction in Maurice's early years, while most of the riverside forts in the area of the Danube Cataracts were occupied until after 600. Many destroyed sites, however, do not appear to have been resettled and the abandonment of places like Lissus and Euria (Greg. *Reg.* ii. 37; xiv. 7–8) must have been paralleled at numerous other sites; furthermore, it would have

[68] Aleksova and Mango, 'Bargala' 273; Popović, 'Koutrigours' 617ff.
[69] Popović, ibid. 622ff., 'Slavisation' 241.
[70] Hendy, *Economy* 341 f.
[71] Caričin Grad hoards: Popović, 'Témoins' 485, 491.

been difficult for places that had been seriously damaged to recover fully, and so they would have been more vulnerable to the next phase of pressure.

The level of coinage in circulation may also offer some evidence on the state of the empire. The operation of the Thessalonica mint appears to have been very restricted in 585/6 and again in 590/1;[72] the first interruption can be connected with the Slav pressure on Macedonia shortly before the 586 siege, when Bargala was probably destroyed, and the second may be linked with the troubles mentioned by Gregory in his letter to the bishops of Illyricum (i. 43). No Constantinopolitan bronze coins have yet been found from 588/9, and minting was restricted in 593/4. The break of 588/9 could be connected with the disasters of Priscus' first Balkan campaign when the Avars reached the Sea of Marmara.[73] There is no immediate explanation for the second interruption, although it is probably relevant that Maurice tried to reorganize military pay in this year, a change that would have had some impact on the need to produce coin. Coin numbers are limited, however, and the overall picture could be radically altered by new finds. A further complication is that after the majority of Roman troops had been withdrawn from the Balkans in the early seventh century, relatively little gold coin would have found its way to the cities of the Balkans, so that the dearth of coinage in the seventh century may reveal little about the extent of Roman control. On the whole, the coinage evidence from Maurice's reign provides only limited assistance for establishing the chronology of invasions and of the destruction and desertion of particular sites.

The most revealing archaeological material is the evidence for living conditions in Roman settlements in the north Balkans. The insecurity and poverty of life are vividly portrayed by the packed houses of the hilltop fort of Sadovec, the flimsy construction of the last buildings in Iatrus, in the forts near the Danube Cataracts, or at Sucidava on the north bank of the river, and the evidence from Caričin Grad of increasingly dense habitation within and around the walls.[74] In many cases it is difficult to distinguish the last phase of Roman

[72] Popović, ibid. 462–3.

[73] Popović, ibid. 476, though he dated the Avar raid to 593 and linked it with the restricted minting of 593/4.

[74] Hoddinott, *Bulgaria* 256–8, 245–8; Popović, ibid. 478ff.; Tudor, *Sucidava* 115ff.; D. Mano-Zissi, *Caričin Grad* (Leskovac, 1979), 35ff.; D. Barrant, 'La ville dans le nord de l'Illyricum (Pannonie, Mésie I, Dacie et Dardanie)', in *Villes* 245–87, at 272–85.

'civilized' life in the Balkan settlements from the 'barbarian' world that was to replace it, and at some places it is likely that the last 'Roman' inhabitants included a considerable element of Slavonic or Germanic incomers. These changes must be remembered when using the evidence of Pope Gregory's correspondence, or of lists of bishops, as indications of continuity of settlement and Roman control in the Balkans.

5

The Balkans in Maurice's Reign

(i) THEOPHYLACT'S NARRATIVE

Most of Theophylact's information, and therefore most of our knowledge, about the Balkans during Maurice's reign concerns the major military campaigns, the Avar invasions and the Roman countermeasures against Slavs and Avars. The course and chronology of these campaigns have, however, remained obscure, and the complaint of Bury, written a century ago, is still largely applicable: 'The want of precision in the narrative of the historian [i.e. Theophylact] and the difficulty of the topography of the Thracian highlands make it impossible to follow with anything like certainty the details of these Avaric and Slavonic invasions.'[1] One reason for the lack of progress since Bury's investigation has been a tendency to regard these events as 'tedious',[2] the final spasm of a doomed empire, and this view has militated against the close analysis of the available sources which could have elucidated events.

A major problem for Theophylact's narrative was that his own knowledge of military matters and Balkan geography was scant, so that he did not understand the strategic or tactical issues, and could not interpret the information in his sources intelligently or counteract the bias of his military source. As a result, his narrative superficially presents a relatively full and orderly account of military action, but this appearance is shaken when an attempt is made to follow the action on a map. When describing a particular march, Theophylact tended to assume, unless his source specifically recorded the number of days involved or referred to definite geographical features, that it was short and crossed ordinary countryside. Thus his description of the Avar invasion of 583 significantly underrates their advance from Augustae to Anchialus, a distance of 250 miles involving the crossing of the Stara Planina: 'After destroying Augustae and Viminacium . . .

[1] Bury, *HLRE* (i) ii. 122.

[2] e.g. K. M. Setton, 'The Bulgars in the Balkans and the Occupation of Corinth in the Seventh Century', *Speculum* 25 (1950), 502–43 at 508.

he immediately encamped and blockaded Anchialus' (i. 4. 4). Similar weaknesses are evident in the presentation of Maurice's march to Anchialus, and of Peter's first Balkan campaign in 594, when armies are alleged to have marched improbable distances in one day (vi. 3. 5: Xerogypsus to Anchialus, about 100 miles; vii. 2. 16: Zaldapa to Iatrus, about 90 miles). When describing Comentiolus' actions in 587 Theophylact appears unaware that the Roman army had crossed the Stara Planina and advanced up the coast for several days before encountering the Avars (ii. 10. 8–12) or that Comentiolus' march across the Stara Planina in 598 was designed to relieve Priscus at Tomi and block the retreat of the besieging Avar army (vii. 13. 8). His narrative can only be unravelled by the identification of all places referred to in the text, so that lacunae and confusions can be isolated and reasonable hypotheses produced to explain aggressive and defensive moves.

The chronology of these campaigns has received its share of scholarly attention, but some uncertainty still remains.[3] There are two fundamental problems, the sequence of events in the first decade of Maurice's reign, for which Theophylact is a poor witness, and the date of the first campaign after the conclusion of the Persian war. The root cause of these problems was the nature of Theophylact's sources, and they can only be resolved through an investigation of these sources.[4] Theophylact's three Balkan sources each had their own chronological and narrative characteristics which determined what Theophylact could report and what errors he was likely to make when producing an ordered synthesis. The military source recorded campaigns between 586/7 and 602 in the correct order, but preserved few dates, such as indiction or regnal years, and it may have obscured intervals of inaction between individual campaigns; the single secure chronological point in this source was its conclusion, the overthrow of Maurice in winter 602. The chronicle source offered security by recording events by regnal or indiction years, but it did not provide a comprehensive military account and so did not give dates for all the campaigns recorded by the military source. The hagiographical

[3] The most important contribution is by Nystazopoulou-Pelekidis, "*Συμβολή*", which treats the latter half of Maurice's reign and surveys the solutions of earlier scholars, particularly Bury, 'The Chronology of Theophylaktos Simokatta', *EHR* 3 (1888), 310–15, Lemerle, 'Invasions', Haussig, 'Exkurs', and G. Labuda, 'Chronologie des guerres de Byzance contre les Avares et les Slaves à la fin du VIe siècle', *BS* 11 (1950), 167–73.

[4] Cf. above ch. 4(*a*).

source contained no clear indication of the date of Maurice's portent-ridden march, which was the major item of military information that Theophylact derived from it. There was scope for error in combining the succession of campaigns in the military source with the dated events of the chronicle, and Theophylact had to decide for himself where to locate the hagiographical material; these opportunities for error must be remembered when approaching Theophylact's chronology. I shall argue that there are two main chronological errors in Theophylact's account: that Priscus' first campaign is wrongly placed after the conclusion of the Persian war, and that the hagiographic march with its portents is wrongly connected with the chronicle account of Maurice's march to Anchialus.

(*a*) *The first campaigns, 582–6 (i. 3. 1–7. 6)*

Theophylact's Balkan narrative opens immediately after his account of Maurice's proclamation as Augustus, and takes precedence over the Persian narrative, 'because of the close proximity of events and of the appropriateness of the arrangement' (i. 3. 1). The first Balkan section continues down to Comentiolus' appointment to oppose the Avar invasion of 586 (i. 8. 11), at which point Theophylact apologizes for the chronological dislocation of his Persian narrative, 'for the continuity of the previous narrative did not tolerate a bridle, lest by the intermediate insertion of different narratives confusion might be brought upon events' (i. 9. 3). This lame apology is contradicted by its context, since the transition to eastern affairs interrupts the account of the Avar attack of 586/7; it is perhaps of greater significance that this first Balkan section covers the period before the beginning of the military source, when Theophylact had to rely mainly on his chronicle source (cf. ch. 4(i)(*b*)).

The Avars sent an embassy to Maurice shortly after his accession (i. 3. 8), and there were several diplomatic exchanges during the winter of 582/3. As they had done at the accession of Justin II in 565, the Avars wished to test the resolve of the new emperor, but whereas Justin had managed to cow the Avars for a few years by a show of blustering rhetoric,[5] Maurice had less room for manœuvre. Although

[5] Corippus, *Laud. Iust.* iii. 151ff.; J. Eph. vi. 24; Men. 8. Menander, who believed that Justinian's policy of diplomatic containment would have dealt with the Avars (5. 1. 23–6), hints at the hollowness of Justin's rhetoric in the emperor's concluding sentence to the Avars: 'we shall never need your assistance and you will never receive anything from us except what seems to us appropriate' (8. 54–6), assertions which would soon be proved false.

Map 5. The Balkans: campaigns of 582–6

the lavish expenditure of Tiberius had depleted the imperial treasuries, a display of apparently careless extravagance was a central part of the diplomatic presentation of the Roman emperor, and so Maurice could only accede to Avar demands for an elephant and a gold couch. Such gifts were intended to impress foreign powers with the wealth and might of the empire, but the Avars refused to be overawed and the gifts were rejected (i. 3. 8–12).[6] It is possible that the great Baian had just been succeeded as Chagan by his eldest son, who would have been anxious to enhance his standing in front of his followers, but it is equally probable that the Chagan, like Attila the Hun, knew the value of dominating the Romans in diplomatic dealings as well as in warfare. The Avars' diplomatic pressure culminated in a demand for an increase in tribute from 80,000 to 100,000 solidi (i. 3. 13; cf. Theoph. 252. 31–2): this embassy arrived in May and Maurice decided that any further concessions would only

[6] For gifts to the Avars, which included couches, see Men. 8. 4–6; cf. also 25. 2. 65–6.

provoke additional demands. The rejection of this embassy caused the Avars to break the treaty agreed after the capture of Sirmium in 581/2; the peace is said to have lasted under two years (i. 3. 8), which indicates that the Avar invasion began in summer 583. Singidunum was quickly captured since the Avars attacked at harvest-time when many of its inhabitants were outside the fortifications gathering in their crops. Theophylact comments that the city was 'off its guard and bereft of military equipment because of the great peacetime indolence which had spread throughout Thrace' (i. 4. 1), but this comment seems most implausible as Singidunum was now the Roman base furthest upstream on the Danube, a vital site from which Avar moves could be watched and perhaps thwarted by the operation of the Danube fleet. Furthermore, the city was only captured after a stiff fight (i. 4. 3), which suggests that there were some soldiers stationed there. Singidunum is likely to have been a militarized settlement, not unlike the fortified towns of the lower Danube valley, for example Libidina (i. 8. 6) or Appiaria (ii. 16. 1) where permanent garrisons were supplemented by a civilian population that was attuned to the dangers of life in their exposed position.[7] Theophylact is fond of introducing moralizing comments, and similar judgements on the effects of indolence or inadequate preparation recur elsewhere;[8] it is probable that the sentence about the inadequate defences is his own mistaken inference from the fact that the city was captured at harvest-time. Thereafter the Avars swept through the Danube provinces, capturing Viminacium and Augustae and then ravaging as far as Anchialus, where they were met by a Roman embassy after three months (i. 4. 4–6); the ambassadors were Elpidius, a former governor of Sicily, and Comentiolus, an officer in the imperial bodyguard. This mission failed when the Chagan's arrogant threats about further conquests provoked an irate reaction from Comentiolus, but the Avars do not appear to have advanced further. The availability of forage was an important factor determining the timing and direction of Avar movements and their fighting strength (cf. *Strategicon* viiA. pr. 25–35), and it is likely that they had settled down to spend the winter in the vicinity of Anchialus. Peace was achieved in the next year, 584, and Maurice agreed to increase Roman payments to 100,000 solidi (i. 6. 4–5). The Avars now presumably withdrew from the empire and did

[7] Cf. *Strat.* x. 3. 32–5; T. S. Brown, *Gentlemen* 95–6.
[8] Cf. i. 8. 11; ii. 6. 13; 8. 3; iii. 10. 3.

not occupy any of the cities they had captured. However, there was no interval of true peace, and the Slav tribes, which had been raiding the Balkans since the start of Tiberius' reign, continued their depredations. Although Theophylact asserts that these raids were encouraged by the Avars (i. 6. 6–7. 1), the Slavs appear to have been operating independently, taking advantage of the devastation caused by the Avar attacks but also trying to remove themselves to a safer distance from the expanding power of the Avars. Their widespread ravaging in these years is attested by coin-hoards at Athens and in the Peloponnese, as well as by John of Ephesus (vi. 25). Theophylact was unaware of the wider effects of these raids, but he records the Slav incursion as far as the Long Walls, which prompted Maurice to lead out his personal troops and to order the circus factions to guard the Long Walls.[9] Not since the Cotrigur attack of 558/9 had an enemy penetrated so close to Constantinople. Comentiolus was appointed to command against the Slavs, and he defeated them near the river Erginia, not far from the Long Walls (i. 7. 3). As a reward for his success he was appointed *magister militum praesentalis*, and when summer came round, that is in 585, he collected his forces, advanced to Adrianopolis, defeated the Slavs near Ansinon, and drove them out of the Astike, the fertile region of the Thracian plain (i. 7. 4–6).

These early campaigns of Maurice's reign highlight the weakness of the Romans: there was no army capable of preventing Avar and Slav invasions, and instead the Romans had to concentrate on limiting the extent of the inevitable ravaging. In 583, Theophylact does not mention any Roman troops in the Balkans; although he has probably ignored the scattered garrisons that protected the major sites in the Danube plains, it was not possible to co-ordinate these troops into an effective fighting force. Individual towns had to rely on their own resources if they were to survive the Avar assault, and Maurice's only response was to buy off the invaders. Such bribery did not work on the disparate Slav tribes, and military action was necessary to drive them away from the vicinity of Constantinople. During 584/5 Comentiolus achieved limited successes against the Slavs with a small army that probably consisted of the imperial guards that Maurice had led out of Constantinople in 584. His victories in the Thracian plain will have encouraged the Slavs to attack less defended areas, further from the

[9] Theoph. 254. 3–7, which supplements and clarifies the imprecise description at Th. Sim. i. 7. 2; cf. Whitby, 'Chronicle Source' 325–6.

sensitive eyes of Constantinople. It is no surprise to find archaeological and literary evidence for Slav attacks in Macedonia and Greece immediately after these limited Roman successes in Thrace: Bargala was probably destroyed in 585/6, the operation of the Thessalonica mint was severely disrupted in this year, Thessalonica itself was most probably attacked in September 586, Slav incursions into the Peloponnese prompted the flight of the inhabitants from some of the major cities, and the Slavs sacked part of Corinth.[10] Maurice did not have the resources to counter such widespread ravaging: the praetorian prefect of Illyricum took his troops to Greece, but this merely reduced the number of defenders at Thessalonica (*Mirac. SD* 128); Maurice bribed the Antes to attack Slav territory, but the only result was to convince the Slavs that it was safer to remain south of the Danube.

The only effective measure that Maurice could take was to consolidate Comentiolus' successes in the Thracian plain, which he attempted to do by the construction of a great ditch beyond Adrianopolis. Although only Michael the Syrian (x. 21, p. 361) mentions this ditch, he does so in the context of information derived from John of Ephesus: this gives his testimony considerable weight, since John would have witnessed the preparations for this undertaking at Constantinople, and it is difficult to see how such a report could have been invented or garbled. Such linear earthworks were a standard element of Roman frontier defences against persistent raiding and were designed to secure a safe area in which imperial authority could be maintained.[11] In the Balkans there was now a danger that the Thracian plains would become a frontier zone, and it was essential that the immediate hinterland of Constantinople be secured. Maurice's ditch was a major construction that could not have been undertaken before 585, when Comentiolus drove the Slavs from the Astike. The *Strategicon* contains a chapter devoted to the construction of a border fortress (x. 4), which recommends that such engineering works should be undertaken between July and September if the enemy were a cavalry nation, since the fodder could be burnt to prevent the approach of opposing horsemen; but this consideration would not have applied to the Slavs, and it is likely that Maurice pressed ahead

[10] Aleksova and Mango, 'Bargala' 273; Popović, 'Témoins' 462–3; *Chron. Monemvasia* 86–121; M. Syr. x. 21, p. 362.

[11] Cf. E. N. Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire* (Baltimore, Md., 1976), 74ff.

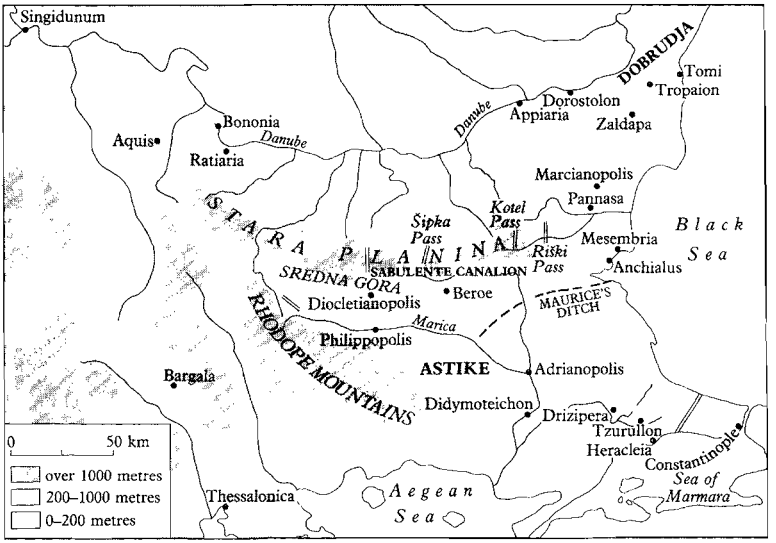
with the construction work through the winter of 585/6. It was perhaps completed during 586, when it may have encouraged the movement of Slavs west and south-west towards Greece, and in 587 it may also have influenced the direction of the Avar campaign by preventing them from marching directly towards Constantinople. The ditch, however, could only be an effective deterrent when it was defended by an army, and in 588 the Avars outmanœuvred Priscus to cross the ditch and reach Heracleia. It is now impossible to investigate the ditch's course because of its proximity to the Bulgarian–Turkish frontier, but this Roman work may underlie the later Bulgarian defence known as the Suda. The Suda starts at the gulf of Mandra on the Black Sea, just south of Burgas, and runs west as far as the Tundža, which it crosses six miles south of Jambol; after this it appears to turn sharply south-south-west and extends towards Harmanli on the Marica, although by the nineteenth century cultivation had already obscured this western section of it. Its southward turn is more understandable if the work was originally intended to defend the plains between Adrianopolis and Constantinople from a northern threat, rather than to protect the Bulgarian kingdom based on Pliska to the north of the Stara Planina from the Byzantines to the south.[12]

(*b*) *Avar invasion of 586–7* (*i. 8; ii. 10. 8–17. 13*)

At the beginning of autumn 586 the Avars openly broke the peace; the year is not recorded by Theophylact, although it can be calculated from his synchronism of Comentiolus' next campaign with the eastern events of 587 (ii. 10. 8). For this campaign Theophylact could combine information from his military and chronicle sources, which enabled him to produce his first detailed account of a Balkan campaign, although some confusion arose from the amalgamation of chronicle information with the main narrative based on the military source so that the story of the capture of Appiaria is inserted in the wrong place.[13] The cause of this invasion was a claim by the Avar Chagan that Maurice had received Bookolabra, a fugitive Avar priest who had

[12] The Roman ditch would have greatly simplified the construction of the Bulgarian Suda; the Bulgars perhaps only had to clear the ditch and pile earth on the north side to raise a defensive rampart. It is possible that the Bulgars did not reuse the south-west section of the Roman ditch, which would have contributed to the early disappearance of this part.

[13] Th. Sim. ii. 15. 13ff.; the other chronicle information, the night march over the Sredna Gora (ii. 15. 4–10), is recorded more clearly by Theoph. 258. 10–21.



Map 6. The Balkans: campaigns of 586–8

seduced one of the Chagan's wives (i. 8. 2–9). After the surrender of Sirmium, the Chagan Baian had demanded the return of one of his followers, who had seduced his wife and fled to Roman territory (Men. 27. 3. 29–31); at the time the Roman negotiator Theognis had pleaded the difficulty of finding a single fugitive who had concealed himself in the vast empire, but Bookolabra had now been apprehended by a Roman garrison at Libidina in the Dobrudja and conveyed to Constantinople, where his presence must have been reported to the Chagan. The reception by the Romans of Hun deserters had been a source of contention in the fifth century: the Romans used various methods of weakening their tribal neighbours, for example by bribing or seducing their ambassadors, and there was an obvious danger that deserters could be used to foment trouble unless the Chagan asserted his authority by obtaining their return.[14] The Chagan invaded while

[14] Relations with the Huns, Priscus 9. 3; 11. 1. 1–56; 11. 2. 181–8. Avar deserters, *Strat.* xi. 2. 74–8; cf. Men. 12. 6–7 for the Chagan demanding the return of Usdibad the

his ambassador Targitius was in Constantinople collecting the annual Roman tribute. The path of destruction is charted by the list of cities captured: first Aquis in the Timok valley, after which the Avars swept east through the Danube plains, capturing Bononia, Ratiaria, Dorostolon, and Tropaion, from where they turned south through Zaldapa to Marcianopolis and Pannasa in the foothills of the Stara Planina (i. 8. 10–11). By now it must have been late in the year, and the Avars moved north to spend the winter in the Dobrudja, where they could presumably secure supplies. This major Avar invasion coincided with the Slav attack on Thessalonica in the last week of September; it was this coincidence which perhaps persuaded the citizens of Thessalonica that their assailants had actually been ordered by the Chagan to undertake the siege.

During the autumn and winter of 586, Maurice took desperate measures to try to raise an army. Michael the Syrian (x. 21, p. 362) states that even clergy were press-ganged, and that the *scribones* who were in charge of recruiting caused much hardship as they dragged children from their parents and squeezed contributions of livestock from the areas where they were operating. This information was probably derived from John of Ephesus, who could have witnessed these actions in the vicinity of Constantinople. Maurice also probably began to raise recruits from further afield. In Italy a three-year truce was agreed with the Lombards in 586, which was perhaps followed by the transfer to the Balkans of some of the empire's Germanic allies: Droctulft, a Swabian who had been brought up by the Lombards and made a Lombard duke but who had subsequently fought for the Romans, was in the Balkans in 587 (Paul D. iii. 18–19; Th. Sim. ii. 17. 9), and he is likely to have been accompanied by other Germanic mercenaries. In Armenia Maurice may also have begun to recruit cavalry for service in the Balkans in the belief that Armenians might be less unreliable if used at a distance from their native land: at least, in 589 Theophylact (iii. 8. 5–8) records a revolt in Armenia which Sebeos (ch. 10) connects with discontent roused by the recruitment of 2,000 Armenians for service in Thrace,[15] and in 587 John Mystacon, a commander whose career was otherwise spent on the eastern front and in particular in Armenia, suddenly appears in the Balkans in

Gepid. The Romans won over Cunimund (also a Gepid?), ambassador for Avars in 562, Men. 5. 4. 11–22; cf. *Strat.* viii. 1. 17 for the policy.

[15] For the chronological problems, cf. ch. 4(ii)(*g*).

command of an army. The result of these measures was that in 587 Comentiolus could assemble an army 10,000 strong at Anchialus and march north to attack the Avars in the Dobrudja. This was probably the largest army that had operated in the Balkans since Tiberius' defeat by the Avars in 570, but its size was more impressive than its quality, since 4,000 of the troops were adjudged to be unsuitable for combat (ii. 10. 8–9): many of the recruits collected by the *scribones* may have been insufficiently experienced to face the Avars. With such an army Comentiolus' priorities were to avoid a head-on confrontation with the Avars in which his troops were likely to be overwhelmed, and to use guerrilla tactics to restrict their ravaging (cf. *Strat.* x. 2). He had probably spent the winter of 586/7 consolidating the Roman position in the Thracian plain, collecting supplies into fortifications, strengthening defences, and moving people and animals behind the protection of the new ditch. Early in 587, when the Avar horses would have been in poor condition after the winter (cf. *Strat.* viiA. pr. 34–6), Comentiolus left the security of Thrace and advanced across the Stara Planina to rescue the Danube cities, which were proving too weak to resist the Avars, and to restrict Avar ravaging by harrying their dispersed troops. The non-combatant Romans were left at Marcianopolis, from where the 6,000 fighters advanced in three divisions with the equipment and provisions needed for several days' campaigning: spare horses, small tents or two heavy cloaks, and up to thirty pounds of provisions which were regarded as particularly vital for operations against nomadic warriors (*Strat.* v. 3–4). The two wings of this army under Castus and Martin initially surprised the Avars near Zaldapa and Tomi (Th. Sim. ii. 10. 10–13), and, although Comentiolus' movements with the central division are not recorded, he was probably performing an important supporting and covering role even if he was not actually attacking the Avars. This action lasted several days, as Avar deserters were still being questioned 'on the fifth day' (ii. 10. 13), but the advance contingents came under pressure when the Avars regrouped; Castus and Martin joined forces, probably at the forward base-camp that will have been established (cf. *Strat.* v. 4), but Comentiolus was already withdrawing to Marcianopolis, where the whole army was in due course reunited. From there the Romans were forced to retreat into the Stara Planina as their nearest refuge. The Roman tactics during these operations may reveal their lack of experience in this type of warfare, since after their initial successes the advanced contingents should have withdrawn before the Avars could

rally. The Romans might also have underestimated their isolation and vulnerability in what was nominally Roman territory to the north of the Stara Planina.

While Comentiolus retreated into the higher regions of the Stara Planina, towards the south-west and the Šipka pass, the Avars overcame the defenders of the low eastern passes near Mesembria, burst into the Thracian plain, and put to flight an infantry contingent led by Ansimuth. These events are related most obscurely by Theophylact (ii. 11. 4–12. 9), since he did not understand where and when the Roman and Avar armies crossed the Stara Planina: as a result, he describes the Roman retreat across the mountains to the luxuriant valley of Sabulente Canalion (the Valley of the Roses, south of the Stara Planina),[16] after which they confront the Avars at a large river (probably the Tundža), although the Avars are supposedly still to the north of the mountains. The explanation for this muddle is probably that his military source was concentrating on the movements of the main army under Comentiolus (ii. 11. 4–12. 4), and that it only subsequently recorded (ii. 12. 5–9) the contemporaneous flight of Ansimuth's troops, which was caused by the Avar advance past Mesembria: as a result of this separation of parallel actions, the Avar crossing of the Stara Planina is noted belatedly (ii. 12. 9).[17]

After retreating into the Stara Planina, Comentiolus' objective was to move south-east towards Maurice's ditch and Constantinople, but his march was now blocked by the Avars, who were ravaging the northern part of the Thracian plain. He was forced to retire into the mountains, but after the morale of his troops had been restored, as advised in the *Strategicon* (viiB. 11), he managed to disconcert the Avars by a night march: the Avars did not make proper encampments and so were particularly at risk from night attacks (*Strat.* xi. 2. 33, 72–3; cf. ix. 2). The direction of Comentiolus' march is not known, since the

[16] This identification was suggested by Bury, *HLRE* (i) ii. 121 n. 1. It is customary to locate Sabulente Canalion near Anchialus (e.g. Jireček, *Heerstraße* 146; V. Beševliev, 'Bemerkungen über die antiken Heerstraßen im Ostteil der Balkanhalbinsel', *Klio* 51 (1969), 483–95 at 487–8) on the grounds that Th. Sim. vi. 5. 1 seems to imply that the Avars moved from Sabulente Canalion to Anchialus in a single day, but it is wrong to assume that Theophylact has recorded all the details of this march: it is much more likely that he merely noted the main points on their route, and that Sabulente Canalion was some distance from Anchialus (cf. ii. 17. 3–4, where the Avars apparently move from Philippopolis to Adrianopolis, about 130 miles, 'in the morning').

[17] There is a comparable example of confusion in Theophylact's description of the Persian invasion of 573 (iii. 10. 7–11. 1), where he was misled by the narrative order in his source John of Epiphania (cf. ch. 9(i), p. 257).

two places which he passed *en route*, Calvomuntis and Libidurgon (ii. 15. 3), cannot be identified, but it is likely that he was crossing the Sredna Gora, from which he could see the Chagan's scattered camp near Beroe (Stara Zagora), the first of the Thracian cities to be attacked by the Avars (ii. 16. 12). Theophylact's narrative is again obscure, this time because he wrongly inserted a discursive story from his chronicle source about the capture of Appiaria on the banks of the Danube (ii. 15. 13–16. 11) without realizing that it interrupted his account of events in Thrace. In spite of disruption to his night march caused by panic in the baggage-train, Comentiolus succeeded in forcing his way past the Avars, but his success was minor since thereafter they attacked the major cities around the northern edge of the Thracian plain, Beroe, Diocletianopolis, and Philippopolis (ii. 16. 12–17. 3) without being hampered by the Roman field army. However, the defences of these cities held firm, a reflection of the greater strength and prosperity of these places in contrast to the fortresses to the north of the Stara Planina; in particular, the Avars could not match the Roman defensive artillery. They may have hoped to weaken the Roman hold on the central Stara Planina by destroying the main cities to the south of the mountain passes, but the direction of their advance is still rather puzzling, since a rapid strike at Constantinople might have caused panic in the defenders and surrendered the city to them. It is possible that they were prevented from this by Maurice's ditch, which may have been defended by Ansimuth's infantry force.[18] From Philippopolis the Avars moved south-east to Adrianopolis, an advance that would have allowed them to outflank the Roman ditch if this stopped at the Marica. Their attack on Adrianopolis failed, and the year's campaign apparently ended with a tactical Roman success won by Lombard mercenaries under Droctulft,[19] possibly in conjunction with a new draft of Armenian troops that John Mystacon had brought to the west; Droctulft's troops were capable of executing a feigned retreat, a difficult manœuvre that the Avars had not expected from their Roman adversaries. Theophylact does not record subsequent events, what happened to Comentiolus,[20] or what the Avars did after

[18] Although he says that Ansimuth retreated to the Long Walls (ii. 12. 7), Theophylact or his source may have confused Constantinople's two outer defences, the Long Walls and the new ditch.

[19] The brevity of Theophylact's narrative of this rare victory (ii. 17. 10–11) may indicate that his source was not present.

[20] Although Theophylact's presentation of Comentiolus' actions might suggest that he was responsible for many of the Roman misfortunes, he does not appear to have been

the limited set-back at Adrianopolis, which the Roman commanders lacked the confidence to follow up (ii. 17. 12). The Avars probably withdrew across the Stara Planina to convey their booty back to Sirmium, taking the opportunity for further ravaging *en route* and possibly now capturing Appiaria; Maurice may also have sent ships to threaten the Avar homeland, since there was a naval force at Singidunum in 588 interfering with Avar preparations for the next campaign (vi. 3. 9–4. 1). Some negotiations must have taken place and Maurice ransomed the Roman officer Castus, and presumably other captives, from the Avars (ii. 17. 7). The Avars offered to make peace in return for a further increase in Roman tribute (vi. 3. 9), but this was refused by Maurice, who probably hoped that the Lombard and Armenian reinforcements had now given the Romans the means to resist the Avars. In the meantime, unrecorded by Theophylact, Slav raids continued throughout 587/8, the year in which the *Chronicle of Monemvasia* pessimistically placed the removal of the Peloponnese from Roman control.

(*c*) *Priscus' first campaign* (*vi. 3. 9—6. 1*)

Theophylact's next reference to Balkan events is a brief note of Slav ravaging in Thrace, which is included in the survey of imperial affairs in winter 588/9 that he derived from his chronicle source (iii. 4. 6–9). Theophylact conveys the impression that nothing significant happened in the Balkans in 588, but this appearance is contradicted by contemporary writers, Evagrius and John of Ephesus, who record another Avar invasion and the capture of Anchialus and Singidunum; there was widespread ravaging, which extended towards the capital, until the Avars were persuaded to return home by payments and the threat of an attack on their homeland.[21] The credibility of Theophylact's military narrative would be shaken if he overlooked such major action in the eastern Balkans, but it is probable that he has recorded the attack in the wrong place. Theophylact's account of Priscus' first Balkan campaign (vi. 3. 9–6. 1) shows several similarities to the reconstructed outline of the Avar invasion of 588: action at Singidunum and Anchialus, an Avar advance to the Long Walls, and retreat when their homeland was threatened. The campaign was disastrous

demoted: he probably spent two years in Spain as *magister militum*, before returning in 589 to command the eastern army (cf. ch. 10 n. 21).

[21] Cf. ch. 4 (ii)(*a—b*).

for the Romans, although this is decently obscured by Theophylact's source, which probably omitted the humiliation of the loss of Anchialus. Theophylact placed this campaign after Maurice's expedition to Anchialus and immediately before Priscus' second Balkan campaign, which can be dated to 593. The *terminus ante quem* is secure, since Theophylact derived his accounts of Priscus' two campaigns from the same source, but the link with the Anchialus expedition, which was not recorded by the military source, is weak. Theophylact suggests that Maurice marched to Anchialus earlier in the year in which Priscus began his first campaign (vi. 3. 5–4. 7), and that the latter lasted for a considerable time until the beginning of autumn (vi. 6. 1). Maurice had, however, set out from Constantinople in October 590, the date of the eclipse which he saw at the Hebdomon (v. 16. 5), so that Priscus' campaign cannot have begun in the same year as Maurice's expedition: the link between these two campaigns is nothing more than Theophylact's inference from his source-material, and this inference should be rejected if a more plausible location for Priscus' first campaign is found.

There are four reasons for suspecting that Priscus' campaign is wrongly located. First, Priscus commanded a relatively weak army. It is likely that many of the experienced troops who had repulsed the Avars at Adrianopolis in 587 had been sent to Singidunum, from where the Romans achieved some success in thwarting the Chagan's invasion plans (vi. 4. 1–2); as a result Priscus, who was only appointed general after the Avars had neutralized the troops operating from Singidunum, had to be given 'an improvised force' (vi. 4. 7) of the soldiers available at Constantinople. His army crumbled before the Avar advance, whereas the transfer of troops from the eastern frontier in 591/2 produced a much larger and better Balkan army that generally held its own against Avars and Slavs. Second, although the Avars were apparently tricked into retreating at the end of Priscus' first campaign (vi. 5. 16), they were strangely reluctant to attack the Romans in 593 and 594 (vi. 6. 6–14; vii. 4. 6–7): this change of attitude would be more comprehensible if a few years had elapsed after their triumphs during Priscus' first campaign. Third, on his march to Anchialus, Maurice repaired the shrine of Glyceria at Heracleia, which had been destroyed by the Avars (vi. 1. 3). Priscus' first campaign would offer a suitable context for destruction at Heracleia (which is not known to have been affected by other Avar incursions into Thrace in 583 and 598), as well as for the general destruction in

Thrace which Maurice marched out to inspect (Theoph. 268. 3–4). Fourth, when Pope Gregory wrote to Priscus in July 593 he congratulated him on regaining the emperor's favour (iii. 51); if Priscus' disgrace merited such comment in a letter from the pope, it is likely to have been a serious affair that had lasted years rather than months. Priscus must have returned to favour in winter 592/3 or spring 593, which would fit in with his appointment as Balkan commander for the campaign of 593. It is improbable that his disastrous first command, which may well have brought about his disgrace, was in 592; although Priscus could have commanded in 591, after Maurice's march to Anchialus in 590, and been in disgrace in 592, this would still involve the admission that Theophylact's source had concealed a period when Priscus was out of favour. Once a gap is created in the sequence of Priscus' commands, the arguments for advancing his first campaign to 588 are strong. The inappropriateness of Priscus' campaign in its position in the *History*, and its striking similarities to the events of 588 as recorded by John of Ephesus/Michael the Syrian, which were noted by Marquart,[22] make redating an attractive proposition. Theophylact's chronological error can easily be explained through the problems caused by his sources: the military source, because of its favouritism towards Priscus, would have overlooked his disgrace and might have reported his two commands without an obvious break, since there was no major military action in the interval; Theophylact accepted the chronology implied by this source, preserved the false link between Priscus' two campaigns, and so placed them after his account of Maurice's march to Anchialus, the substance of which he derived from the chronicle and hagiographic sources, which were in fact describing a different march. This incorrect arrangement would have been encouraged by the fact that the hagiographic account of Maurice's march probably concluded with a comment that Maurice handed over his army to Priscus (cf. Leo. Gr. 139. 18).[23]

Before the start of the 588 campaign the Avars ordered their Slav subjects to prepare boats for crossing the Danube, but these arrangements were delayed by Roman interference from Singidunum (vi. 4. 1–2). For the first time in his reign Maurice could try to prevent the Avars from invading. This more resolute action must have been

[22] *Streifzüge* 486.

[23] If, as is likely, the hagiographic description relates to Maurice's march to the Long Walls in 598, it is quite possible that he did hand over his troops to Priscus, who was a general in that year; see further below.

preceded by the dispatch to the Danube of a sizeable body of soldiers, probably some of the experienced Lombard or Armenian troops who had arrived in the Balkans in 587: only they would have had the resolve to carry out such aggressive actions from this threatened outpost. Theophylact, who says that it was 'the inhabitants of Singidunum' who disrupted the Slavs' labours, has falsely assumed that these soldiers based at Singidunum were the local population: a civilian militia is unlikely to have had the means or the inclination to perform dangerous actions that would immediately turn the Avars' attention against their city. The Avars indeed attacked Singidunum, but abandoned the siege after a week on receiving a moderate ransom payment of thirty pounds of gold, a gold inlaid table, and clothing (presumably silk); this was perhaps an occasion when the local interests of the people of Singidunum overrode imperial wishes, since as a result of this local agreement the Avars could return to Sirmium and complete the arrangements for crossing the Sava (vi. 4. 3–5). The significance of these operations, apart from the indication that the Romans could now try to defend the Danube frontier, is that the Avars were beginning to have difficulty in crossing the Danube and Sava. During the siege of Sirmium they had had two bridges built across the Sava, but Menander (27. 3. 3) records that one was already rotten in 581, less than two years after its construction, and it is very possible that both had collapsed by 587/8. The Avars could still cross the Danube, since they were able to attack Singidunum, but they no longer had a secure or permanent means of crossing and were subject to Roman harassment.

It was only after these obstructions had been overcome, probably not earlier than midsummer, when forage would have been plentiful, that the Avars began their invasion; in reaction Maurice now appointed Priscus to command the troops available for the defence of the environs of Constantinople. Earlier in 588 Priscus had been commander on the eastern front, until the mutiny on 18 April;[24] he is likely to have returned to Constantinople to present his report before the end of May, and, since he had suffered in the east for his zeal in implementing Maurice's financial decrees, he was entrusted with the responsibility for limiting the Avar incursion. Although the Avars advanced rapidly from Singidunum to Bononia, Priscus still had time to organize the defence of the Stara Planina passes in another attempt

[24] Cf. ch. 10 (ii), p. 288.

to protect the Thracian plains. Salvianus, however, the Roman second in command who was defending one of the central passes (probably the Šipka) was forced to retire by pressure of numbers, and the Avars then advanced through the Valley of the Roses to Anchialus (vi. 4. 7–5. 2).

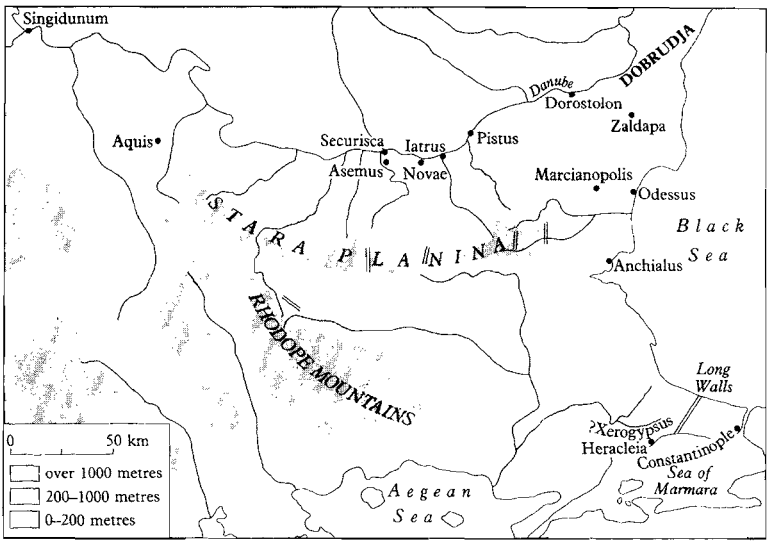
The Romans' first line of defence had been breached and Priscus now probably prepared his troops to defend the second line, Maurice's ditch beyond Adrianopolis; at least he appears to have had some plan to block the Avar advance in this area, since he did not take the opportunity to retire to the safety of the Long Walls. In the meantime the Avars concentrated on attacking Anchialus and Priscus failed to prevent its loss, the first Avar success against one of the main cities of the south-east Balkans. After its capture, the Chagan symbolically donned the robes of the empress Anastasia, which had been dedicated in a church there, and openly challenged Roman imperial authority. He offered the Roman cities the chance to pay their taxes to the Avars and so gain their protection (M. Syr. x. 21, p. 361). After this disaster, the Avars broke across the eastern end of Maurice's ditch, leaving Priscus outflanked near its western end. These events, most discreditable to Priscus, are not recorded by Theophylact but can be inferred from the progress of the Avar army by way of Drizipera to Heracleia on the Sea of Marmara while Priscus was forced to retreat with his infantry contingent to Didymoteichon on the west bank of the Marica. The fate of his cavalry is unknown, but this may well be the occasion mentioned in the *Strategicon* (ix. 2. 11–14) when the Avars surprised the Roman cavalry, who were encamped separately from the infantry near Heracleia. Priscus then tried to slip past the Avars to reach the Long Walls, but was forced to take refuge in Tzurullon, a fort midway between Drizipera and Heracleia. He was only rescued when Maurice persuaded the Chagan to retire by threats of an attack on Sirmium either by a Roman naval squadron or by the Turkish Chagan, and by a payment of gold: Michael the Syrian says that 800 pounds of gold were handed over (x. 21, p. 363), although Theophylact (vi. 5. 16) describes the sum as minimal, which avoids the suggestion that Priscus had been in extreme danger. Priscus disbanded his defeated army in the autumn, after the Avars had withdrawn.

(*d*) *The Roman recovery; campaigns of 593–5 (v. 16; vi. 3. 5; vi. 6. 2—vii. 12. 9)*

In the following years the Avars appear to have remained quiet; they were perhaps satisfied by Roman payments, or, since in the 590s they seem much less powerful, they may have been weakened by a Turkish attack[25] or even by unrest within their federation if Maurice pursued his diplomatic contacts with the trans-Danubian Antes (M. Syr. x. 21, p. 362). The Slavs, however, were ravaging in 588/9 (iii. 4. 7) and conditions in the Balkans remained unsettled into 590/1 (Greg. *Reg.* i. 43), although the Romans gradually re-established their authority in the Thracian plain and other areas where cities had survived. This recovery must have entailed a large operation of policing and reconstruction, but there were probably no notable military actions to attract the attention of Theophylact's military source. The only evidence for this recovery is Gregory's references to the situation in Illyricum (*Reg.* i. 43; ii. 23), and the account of Maurice's expedition to Anchialus in autumn 590, a momentous event considering that throughout the sixth century the emperor had rarely moved far from Constantinople. According to Theophylact (v. 16. 2–4), Maurice's decision to lead the army in person was strongly opposed by leading senators, the patriarch, and the imperial family, but Maurice, who had already broken with tradition by leading his household troops to the Long Walls in 584, was not to be deterred; it is also possible that Theophylact has exaggerated the amount of opposition to provide a parallel for the popular reaction to Heraclius' departure from Constantinople in 622 (cf. George Pis. *Exp. Pers.* i. 112ff.). The purpose of Maurice's expedition was to inspect the devastation wrought by the Avars (Theoph. 268. 3–4), and the destination, Anchialus, was important both symbolically, as the site of the Chagan's challenge to imperial authority, and strategically, as the centre of communications for the eastern end of the Stara Planina. Maurice's expedition was both a sign of restored order and a statement of future intentions: *en route* he repaired the shrine of Glyceria at Heracleia (vi. 1. 3),[26] and

[25] A Turkish embassy did visit Constantinople near the start of Maurice's reign (Th. Sim. vii. 7. 7–8. 11), and Maurice may have taken the opportunity to encourage them to attack the Avars.

[26] The other possible date for this restoration-work is 598, when Maurice led an expedition to the Long Walls (vii. 15. 7), but this is much less likely since the Avars were then encamped at Drizipera, only 30 miles away.



Map 7. The Balkans: campaigns of 593–5

spent two weeks at Anchialus (vi. 3. 5), but the main achievement was probably the psychological boost to morale provided by the appearance of the emperor in Thrace.

Theophylact's account of Maurice's expedition is extremely confusing, since he combined the chronicle notice of the march to Anchialus, which is specifically dated to Maurice's ninth year by the 'very great eclipse of the sun' which he witnessed at the Hebdomon (v. 16. 5) on 4 October 590,[27] with the hagiographic account of an

[27] See F. K. Ginzel, *Spezieller Kanon der Sonnen- und Mondfinsternisse* (Berlin, 1899), 227. Nystazopoulou-Pelekidis, "*Συμβολή*" 153–4, dismissed the regnal-year date and identified the eclipse with that of 19 Mar. 592, which allowed her to accept the implication of Theophylact's narrative that Maurice's march occurred earlier in the same year as Priscus' first campaign. However, the regnal date is more likely to be correct than Theophylact's narrative arrangement, and, whereas Constantinople lay within the central zone of the 590 eclipse, the path of the 592 eclipse was further north-west, so that it would have been a less impressive sight in the vicinity of the capital (see Ginzel, map XV, and cf. Haussig, 'Exkurs' 410, who suggested that the 592 eclipse would have been invisible at Constantinople).

expedition in the vicinity of the Long Walls that Maurice conducted several years later;[28] he inserted this combined account after the conclusion of the Persian War and the transfer of the eastern army to the Balkans (winter 591/2 at the earliest). Apart from the chronological contradictions, the unfortunate effects of this combination are evident in Theophylact's statement that Maurice advanced from the Xerogypsus to Anchialus in a single day (vi. 3. 5), a distance of about 100 miles. It is not an encouraging example of Theophylact's skill as a historian when faced by difficulties in his sources.

The gradual Roman recovery continued throughout 591 and into 592, when contingents from the eastern army began to arrive in the Balkans. Maurice could now extend the scope of policing operations across the Stara Planina towards the Danube, and it was in spring 593 that Priscus was sent there with orders to prevent the Slavs from crossing the river, the first essential if the Romans were to reassert their control south of it; in July 593 Pope Gregory wrote to Priscus to congratulate him on regaining Maurice's favour (*Reg.* iii. 51). Theophylact does not record the year of this campaign, but it can be calculated by counting back campaign-years from the overthrow of Maurice in winter 602, the only secure date in this part of Theophylact's narrative:

594	Peter appointed to command (vi. 11. 2; vii. 1. 1).
595	Priscus reappointed (vii. 5. 10; 7. 1).
595–7	18-month peace (vii. 12. 9).
597/8	Priscus besieged at Tomi until Easter, 30 March 598 (vii. 13. 1–3).
598	Rout of Comentiolus, negotiations with Avars, and recriminations in Roman army (vii. 13. 8–15. 14; viii. 1. 9–10).
599	Comentiolus confirmed as general; campaign on Danube with Priscus (viii. 1. 11–4. 7).
600	Comentiolus again reappointed (viii. 4. 8).
601	Peter in command (viii. 4. 9; 5. 5).
602	Peter again in command (viii. 5. 8).

Just as the re-establishment of the Danube frontier in the early sixth century had begun with the reoccupation of the Dobrudja under

[28] The 'hagiographic' expedition should be dated to 596 or later, since, immediately on his return, Maurice received an embassy from the Frankish king Theodoric (vi. 3. 6–7), who ascended the throne after Christmas 595. The events of 598 provide a plausible context.

Anastasius and then spread upstream, so during the campaigns of 593–5 Maurice's generals first concentrated on securing the eastern end of the Stara Planina and then moved west along the Danube, renewing links with surviving cities and attempting to prevent further invasions by overawing the Slavs on the north bank. Re-establishment of internal links and prevention of raids contributed equally to the reassertion of Roman control, although it is natural that a military reporter concentrated on the latter at the expense of the former. The internal policing can only be inferred from the succession of places passed by the army on its marches (e.g. vii. 2. 14–16), but the nature of the problems to be overcome is illustrated by Tatimer's encounter with a Slav band in 593 (vi. 8. 4–7): although he had 300 men to escort some booty back to Constantinople, he had difficulty in warding off a surprise attack by Slavs. During these years the Avars appear to have been preoccupied, since, although they objected to Roman successes against the Slavs, they did not try to intervene, and the soldiers of the eastern Roman army were a match for the Slavs.

Priscus' campaign in 593 appears to have been particularly successful. In spite of the difficulty of coming to grips with Slavs in marshy and wooded terrain (e.g. vi. 8. 10–12), he crossed the Danube and achieved two major successes north of the river: operations continued until winter when, disobeying Maurice's instructions to remain north of the river, he broke camp and retreated to the south bank. The Avar Chagan complained about this Roman excursion beyond the Danube, but he was mollified when Priscus gave him some of the booty and the Roman retreat was unhindered (cf. *Strat.* ix. 4. 51–6). Theophylact's account of this withdrawal (vi. 10. 3; 11. 3–20) was sufficiently obscure to mislead Theophanes into the belief that Priscus managed to persuade the army to obey Maurice's order and remain north of the river.[29] Theophylact had clearly lost track of Priscus' moves and his confusion was perhaps caused by his inclusion at this point of material from his hagiographic source (vi. 10. 4–11. 2; the discovery of the Gepid murderer). During the winter of 593/4 the Slavs ravaged widely: although this is not stated explicitly by Theophylact, it can be inferred from his incidental reference (vii. 2. 2) to the ravaging of Zaldapa in north-east Bulgaria, Aquis in the Timok valley, and Scupi (Skopje) the metropolis of Dardania.[30] The withdrawal of the Roman

[29] Theoph. 272. 11–19 compounded Theophylact's confusion by treating the events of Th. Sim. vi. 11. 2–21 as a separate campaign.

[30] V. Beševliev, 'Zur Geographie Nordost-Bulgariens in der Spätantike und im

army to winter quarters at Odessus (where they reassembled in 594; vii. 1.3) or further south in the Thracian plain will have contributed to the success of these raids: undoubtedly it was necessary for Priscus to leave the army in a region where supplies were plentiful (cf. *Strat.* i. 2. 86–91), and the area north of the Stara Planina was perhaps too impoverished to support the army, but Priscus may also have been motivated by professional jealousy against his successor Peter and have withdrawn his army for that reason (cf. iii. 1. 1). During the winter Maurice attempted to introduce changes in military pay: he apparently wished to substitute distributions of clothing and equipment for the cash allowances that were supposed to be spent on such items; the soldiers, who naturally preferred not to spend their full allowances on equipment, objected and it is likely that the attempt was abandoned (vii. 1. 2–9).

Theophylact presents Peter's campaign in 594 as a succession of mishaps and failures: because of a hunting accident he was unable to campaign energetically (vii. 2. 11–14), he offended the loyal citizens of Asemus (vii. 3. 1–10), he failed to defeat a small contingent of Bulgars whom he provoked to battle (vii. 4. 1–7), and through inadequate reconnaissance he sent his troops into Slav ambushes (vii. 4. 8–5. 10); the army ran out of water even though it was campaigning in a well-watered region and had only just left a riverside camp (vii. 5. 6). It is difficult to believe that these problems have not been exaggerated. Although Theophylact's description of Peter's moves suggests aimless wandering in response to imperial pressure (vii. 2. 14–16), his marches and countermarches along the Danube in fact represented energetic campaigning that was intended to deter Slav invasions at different points along the 200-mile frontier between Novae and the Black Sea. These manœuvres lasted several weeks, if not months, and it was only late in the campaigning season, some time after the feast of the martyr Lupus (23 August), which he passed at Novae (vii. 2. 17), that he was ready to advance beyond the Danube. His campaign on the north bank was much more extensive and energetic than Theophylact suggests. Although Slav ambushes were troublesome, Peter defeated the Slavs in open battle (vii. 5. 3–5) and fought his way from the vicinity of Securisca as far as the Helibacia river, where Priscus had

Mittelalter', *Linguistique balkanique* 4 (1962), 57–80 at 60f., argued that Aquis and Scupi were small, otherwise unknown, places in the vicinity of Zaldapa, but Theophylact is only likely to have mentioned the ravaging of major places. There were probably several Slav bands ravaging the Balkans at this time.

campaigned after crossing from Dorostolon in 593. Peter's march would have contributed greatly to the security of the frontier by disrupting Slav preparations for crossing the Danube and encouraging the inhabitants on the north bank to respect Roman might.

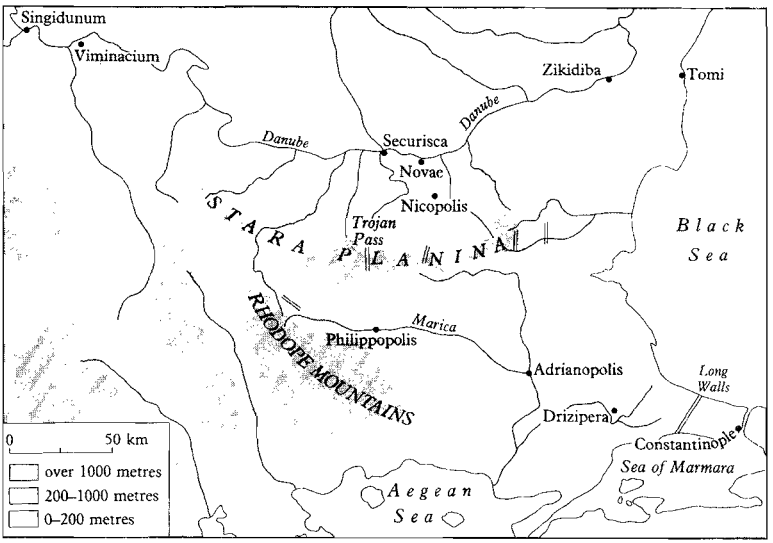
One indication of Peter's overall success is that in 595 Priscus was able to extend Roman operations further west to challenge the Avars. This progression upstream, and the confidence which Priscus displayed in his dealings with the Chagan (vii. 7. 5; 11. 1–6), would have been impossible unless Peter had maintained the momentum of Roman success along the lower Danube in 594. Priscus again provided a threatening demonstration of Roman power by marching along the north bank of the Danube to Upper Novae, and then, after dismissing complaints from the Chagan, he used his fleet to thwart an attack on Singidunum (vii. 7. 3; 10. 1–11. 8). The fact that the Avars were trying to raze the city's walls and deport its inhabitants (vii. 10. 1) may be an indication of their lack of confidence: in the 580s the Avars had believed that they could exploit the cities which they terrorized into subjection (M. Syr. x. 21, p. 361), but now they were worried by the threat posed by Roman outposts near their homeland. Singidunum was saved by the prompt arrival of the Roman fleet; naval power was the major advantage that the Romans had over the Avars, and on it depended the safety of the Roman possessions along the middle Danube. The Chagan's reaction was to bluster furiously at Priscus, but he did not dare attack him directly and instead turned his attention towards Dalmatia, where he sacked several forts (vii. 11. 9–12. 1). It was many decades since a Roman army had operated in Dalmatia, and even in Justinian's reign commanders had not been unduly concerned about Slav raids into this distant and impoverished region (Proc. *Wars* vii. 40. 7–8), so Priscus had to act cautiously: it would have been dangerous to commit the whole army to a campaign in Dalmatia, which would have left the Danube frontier unprotected, but a small detachment could be sent to watch Avar moves, and this managed to recover some of the booty that the Avars had captured (vii. 12. 2–8).

(*e*) *Campaigns of 597–602 (vii. 13–15; viii. 1. 9–6. 1)*

This campaign was followed by a period of comparative peace on the Danube. Theophylact's remark that 'for eighteen months and more nothing worthy of record was accomplished by the Romans and barbarians encamped on the Ister' (vii. 12. 9) conceals the steady

progress of Roman recovery, which in fact represented a considerable triumph. The Avars temporarily found it more profitable to turn their attentions to the west, where they harried the Frankish kingdoms. In autumn 597 the Avars, strengthened by their western victories, which had been ended by peace payments from Queen Brunhilda (Paul D. iv. 10–11), returned to ravage along the Danube. Priscus' army was probably operating at the eastern end of the Stara Planina, and the surprise of the Avar attack allowed them to advance as far as Tomi on the Black Sea, where they blockaded Priscus throughout the winter (vii. 13. 1–2). Theophylact does not record that the Avars captured any towns on this invasion, but this may well be the occasion when some forts near the Danube Cataracts were sacked: it was important for the Avars to undermine Roman control in this area to prevent their naval operations further upstream. At Easter 598 (30 March) the Avars strangely agreed to lift their blockade, supply the Romans with provisions, and then withdraw. Although the Avars were capable of surprising acts of generosity, as after the siege of Sirmium (J. Eph. vi. 32), and the spices which the Romans could give the Chagan had traditionally been enjoyed by nomadic leaders (cf. Priscus 11. 2. 307–11), the real reason for their withdrawal was probably the discovery that Comentiolus was advancing across the Stara Planina to cut their line of retreat. Comentiolus had crossed the Šipka pass, and advanced via Nicopolis (Veliko Tărnovo) to Zikidiba on the Danube about thirty miles west of Tomi (vii. 13. 8). Subsequent events are very obscure (vii. 13. 9–14. 12), because Theophylact's source was interested in discrediting Comentiolus and the campaign later became entangled with stories of imperial treachery (cf. ch. 5(ii)(*e*)). The Avars marched west towards Comentiolus, who withdrew rapidly to Iatrus in the hope of avoiding a battle: he had not expected to have to face the Avars by himself, and he may have been leading relatively inexperienced troops since the main Balkan army was camped at Tomi. He sent a night message to the Chagan (vii. 13. 9), which perhaps offered the Avars safe passage back to Sirmium; the Avars first accepted, but then rejected it when they realized that they could trap Comentiolus' army; it was only with considerable difficulty and confusion that the Romans fought their way back to the Stara Planina,[31] through the passes, and across Thrace to Constantinople. The Avars achieved a

[31] Comentiolus' hunting expedition (vii. 14. 5), a most implausible venture in the circumstances, was perhaps an attempt to secure his line of retreat and to remove ambushes.



Map 8. The Balkans: campaigns of 597–602

transient success, sweeping across the Thracian plain and capturing Drizipera, but they were struck by plague, regarded as the revenge of the martyr Alexander whose shrine they had burnt; seven of the Chagan's sons died. With the Avars at Drizipera there was panic at Constantinople, but Maurice led out his bodyguards and the circus factions to defend the Long Walls (vii. 15. 7); this expedition probably provided the basis for the hagiographic account of Maurice's doom-laden march in the vicinity of the Long Walls.[32] In return for a large payment the Chagan agreed to withdraw, grumbling about the Romans' responsibility for breaking the peace. Although there does not appear to have been any justification for these complaints, as the Avars had been the aggressors in 597, Theophylact believed the Chagan's assertions and commented on the misfortunes that had deservedly befallen the Romans (vii. 15. 12–13).

[32] Th. Sim. v. 16. 1–vi. 1. 2; vi. 1. 4–3. 4; 3. 6–8; cf. above, n. 28. In 595/6 the Franks had been troubled by Avar aggression, which may explain their embassy to Maurice offering help against the Avars (vi. 3. 6–7).

In spite of this success, the Avars were clearly not the irresistible force they had seemed in the 580s. The Chagan's complaints about Roman infringements of the peace admit a lack of self-confidence, and the terms of the Roman–Avar treaty in 598, which established the Danube as the frontier but specifically allowed the Romans to cross to attack the Slavs (vii. 15. 14), are another indication of weakness. In addition it was the Romans who eagerly broke the treaty once the Avars had been removed beyond the Danube. The latter part of 598 must have been devoted to regrouping the scattered elements of the Roman armies and investigating the causes for the Roman reverse (viii. 1. 9–10), but in summer 599 the united Roman armies under Comentiolus and Priscus prepared to attack the Avars in their Pannonian homeland. Such aggressive defence of the Danube was without parallel in the sixth century, and it was amply rewarded. While Comentiolus remained near the Danube, performing actions that were probably vital to the campaign's success but are not recorded by Theophylact, Priscus inflicted a series of defeats on the Avars (viii. 2. 7–3. 15): there were numerous casualties among them, including some of the Chagan's sons, the subject tribal groups and the Gepids in particular suffered very heavily, and there was a danger that the whole Avar federation would begin to fragment. At the end of the campaign Maurice returned the captured Avars to the Chagan (viii. 3. 15–4. 2). Although Theophylact alleges that Maurice was overawed by the Chagan's threats, it is more likely that there were sound diplomatic reasons behind his decision: the Romans had humiliated the Avars and so could now attempt to build a more stable relationship; in addition the return of Avars might have caused resentment among the subject tribes whose prisoners were not released.

After these great successes the process of consolidation continued within the empire: in autumn 599 Comentiolus reopened the Trojan pass (viii. 4. 3–8), in 600 there were no dramatic military events to report, and in 601 Peter prevented the Avars from encroaching on the Danube Cataracts (viii. 5. 5–7). Such actions were important affirmations of imperial authority. The Avars were on the defensive, and in 601 agreed to a perpetual alliance with the Lombards and Franks, nations which they expected to dominate at times of strength; the Lombards sent help for Avar operations on the Danube, while the Avars sent Slavs to assist in siege-operations in north Italy (Paul D. iv. 24; 28). In the last year of Maurice's reign Godwin defeated the Slavs beyond the Danube, the Avars were forced to turn their

attention against the Antes, who were allied with the Romans, and the signal loss of prestige by the Avars prompted their subjects to revolt (viii. 5. 11–6. 1). It appeared that the policy of a constant aggressive defence was at last establishing a proper respect for Roman power among the Slavs and Avars, but, when Maurice tried to exploit these successes by maintaining pressure on the Slavs throughout the winter, the army mutinied against his orders.

(*f*) *The mutiny of 602* (*viii. 6. 2—8. 1*)

The causes of this mutiny are not clearly set out by Theophylact, who believed that financial considerations were the explanation for Maurice's order (viii. 6. 10–7. 3). Maurice must have known that this command would be opposed by the troops, as it had been in 593 (vi. 10. 1–3), and, although there would have been a financial saving to the state if the army could live off the Slavs, it is unlikely that Maurice was desperately short of money in 602: in the past four campaigns considerable booty had been seized from Avars and Slavs, and the Romans were not paying peace subsidies to Persians or Avars. It is, however, by no means certain that the Roman army could have provisioned itself from the Slavs throughout the winter, particularly if it had spent the summer and autumn months campaigning in the territory where it planned to winter: the Romans would already have gathered in supplies from that region, and could live off them whether they wintered north or south of the Danube. An army could not winter safely in enemy territory unless it had already assured itself of supplies for the winter months: when Caesar invaded Britain in 55 BC, everyone knew that the army would not winter there because it had not supplied itself with corn for the winter, and even in semi-pacified Gaul arrangements for winter supplies were made in advance (*BG* iv. 29–30; v. 24; vi. 44). Whereas the Avars could force their Slav subjects to provide food, and Slav wives and daughters, throughout the winter (Fred. iv. 48), the decentralization of Slav society would have made it difficult for an army to be billeted among them unless it was broken up into small units that could be supplied by Slav hamlets. This would have been a highly dangerous procedure, and there is no evidence that it was what Maurice intended.

The truth was that winter was regarded as the time of year when the Slavs were most vulnerable to attack. The *Strategicon* (xi. 4. 82 ff.) specifically recommends winter raids across the Danube since Slav retinues were smaller, the bare forests could offer no protection, the

snows would reveal their tracks, and the frozen rivers could easily be crossed by the less mobile Romans. In the fifth century Arbogast had used the same strategy when campaigning from Cologne 'in the depth of winter, for he knew that all the retreats of Francia could be penetrated and burnt now that the forests, bare and sapless, with leaves shed, could not conceal ambushers' (Greg. T. ii. 9, p. 55).[33] It is possible that Roman troops had carried out minor winter raids during the 590s, since *Strategicon* xi. 4 seems to be based on personal experience. In 602 Maurice's intention was probably that these attacks should be carried out on a much wider scale: in view of the apparent disintegration of the Avar federation it was now time for the Romans to enforce their authority over the Slavs by showing that there would never be any respite from Roman attacks unless the Danube frontier was respected.

Although Maurice's order was probably determined by military rather than financial considerations,[34] the soldiers, accustomed to the rhythm of summer activity and winter repose, viewed matters differently.[35] They raised specific objections about their booty, the exhaustion of their horses, and the large number of Slavs on the opposite bank. Their booty at least would have been safeguarded in a base-camp south of the Danube (*Strat.* xi. 4. 96–8), and the Slavs who had just been defeated by Godwin should have been less formidable in

[33] A further parallel is provided by the 'winterreysen' in Lithuania, which consisted of 'a rapid foray of some 200–2000 men, carrying both rations and fodder at the back of their saddles; the object was to loot, devastate and depopulate a given area as rapidly as possible' (E. Christiansen, *The Northern Crusades* (London, 1980), 164–6); these Lithuanian campaigns required a moderately hard winter, one that was not too cold for men to survive in the open, but also one when a sudden thaw would not leave the army dangerously stranded. Cf. Arrian, *Anabasis* vii. 15. 2–3, Alexander the Great's winter campaign against the elusive Uxii, inhabitants of the Zagros mountains (also ibid. iii. 17); Diodorus Siculus xviii. 25. 1, Craterus invades mountainous Aetolia in winter; Hendy, *Economy* 130, the Byzantines campaign in winter against the nomadic Türkmen in Anatolia in the twelfth century.

[34] Kaegi, *Unrest* 111 ff., argued that Maurice may have intended to punish his soldiers by forcing them to winter north of the Danube, but this ignores the specific military purpose of winter campaigns. Justinian, *Edict* 13. 11. 1 (*CJ* iii. 785), prescribes transfer to guard duty north of the Danube as punishment for troops in Egypt, but since Egyptian units were locally recruited for local defence, this punishment represented exile to a distant and dangerous frontier. It is not an analogy for Maurice's treatment of his Balkan army.

[35] Soldiers in winter quarters were allowed 2–3 months' leave (*Strat.* i. 7. 14), which would presumably be forfeited if there was active winter campaigning. The army might also have been wondering if Maurice would pay a donative to mark the 20th anniversary of his accession.

winter than in summer, although it was obviously more dangerous for the Romans to remain in Slav territory than to retire to winter quarters in Thrace.[36] The question of the horses suggests that the army was again worried about conditions of service (cf. J. Nik. 102. 10–11). In winter 593/4 Maurice had unsuccessfully attempted to introduce distributions of clothing and equipment in lieu of cash allowances, since he believed that the soldiers did not spend their allowances in the way intended by the state. Horses would have been among the most expensive items of military equipment, and so the soldiers resented having to use their animals for an extra season when they were likely to have been in less than peak condition (cf. *Strat.* viiA. pr. 35–6). They probably suspected that Maurice, with his reputation for thrift, was again trying to make the army more 'cost-effective': in 593/4 he had wished to abolish cash allowances; perhaps the soldiers now suspected that he intended to increase their work-load and so ensure that allowances were more fully spent on horses and other equipment.[37]

The army may also have been concerned about other threats to its status. Maurice was currently organizing the transfer to the Balkans of large numbers of Armenian cavalry with their families (Sebeos 20), who would be given land that they would then defend. While Priscus was in Armenia gathering families for transfer, other officers must have been in the Balkans preparing land for distribution, so that the Balkan army would have known what was afoot. In spite of its dangers and discomforts, military service was on the whole a privileged profession, in which it was an advantage for sons to be given the right

[36] T. S. Brown, *Gentlemen* 89, cites an analogous case in the *Vita S. Floridi* 20 (ed. C. Mugi, *Memorie civili di Città di Castello II* 1884, where Byzantine troops in Italy desert to the Lombards after being ordered to spend the winter in dangerous places. Cf. Joshua the Stylite 81 for an indisciplined Roman army dispersing during cold weather in Mesopotamia.

[37] *Strat.* i. 6. 11 stipulated that if a soldier who received ὀπαρατίωνα disregarded his own arms, and the decarch did not compel him to procure them or report to his own commander, both the soldier himself and his decarch should be punished. ὀπαρατίωνα appears to be a *hapax*, so that translation is problematic. The general sense of the section seems to require something like 'allowance' for purchasing arms (almost 'reparations'); but Gamillscheg in his German translation—following Du Cange's *Glossarium*, whose interpretation was based on that contained in the emperor Leo's 9th-c. adaptation of Maurice's *Strategicon*—took it to mean 'leave for rest and recuperation' (*Erholungsurlaub*). The latter translation makes less sense of 'his own arms' and 'to procure them', and was perhaps no more than a later guess at the sense of an obscure word (a guess made at a time when the provision of money for the purchase of arms was no longer an issue).

to succeed to their fathers' place (Th. Sim. vii. 1. 7),[38] and so soldiers would have been suspicious of a large influx of new recruits. Their suspicions would have been increased if, as is conceivable, the new Armenian recruits were to be assigned land in return for an obligation of military service.

Whatever complications there may have been underlying the soldiers' complaints, it is clear that initially they were reluctant to press their discontent to open mutiny (J. Nik. 102. 10–11). After the first outcry against Maurice's order, the soldiers apparently considered returning to the north bank and were only dissuaded by the onset of bad weather (viii. 6. 7–8); next they tried to negotiate with Peter in the hope that he could be persuaded to accede to their demands as Priscus had in similar circumstances in 593, and it was only when Peter obdurately refused to disobey Maurice's instructions that the mutiny was confirmed and a leader elected by the troops (viii. 6. 9–7. 7). The mutineers will have known that there was hostility towards Maurice at Constantinople, since in February 602 rioting sparked off by a food-shortage had led to public abuse of the emperor (Theoph. 283. 12–24), and they may even have heard of the quarrels within the imperial family (Theoph. 281. 19–20; 285. 1–286. 14). The mutineers' original intention was to offer the throne to another member of Maurice's family, who would then have had to concede their demands: his eldest son Theodosius, and failing him Theodosius' father-in-law Germanus, were approached (Th. Sim. viii. 8. 5), Peter was a possible candidate (M. Syr. x. 24, p. 375), and even Philippicus could be suspected of harbouring ambitions (Theoph. 285. 1 ff.). When Anastasius had faced a similar threat from the discontented Balkan army led by Vitalian, he had been able to negotiate with the rebel troops about their grievances, and to rely on the strength of the city's defences and the considerable respect accorded to his own holiness to thwart Vitalian's personal ambitions.[39] Maurice's position, however, was much weaker than that of Anastasius; the mutineers could afford to reject his offer of negotiations, there was disorder within the city, and once Maurice had abandoned the palace to flee to the east it was no longer necessary for the army to turn to a member of the imperial aristocracy as their champion. The

[38] Furthermore, dismissal from military service was used as a punishment for non-military offences, e.g. *Codex* 1. 1. 4 (*CJ* ii. 6); cf. T. S. Brown, *Gentlemen* 85 ff.

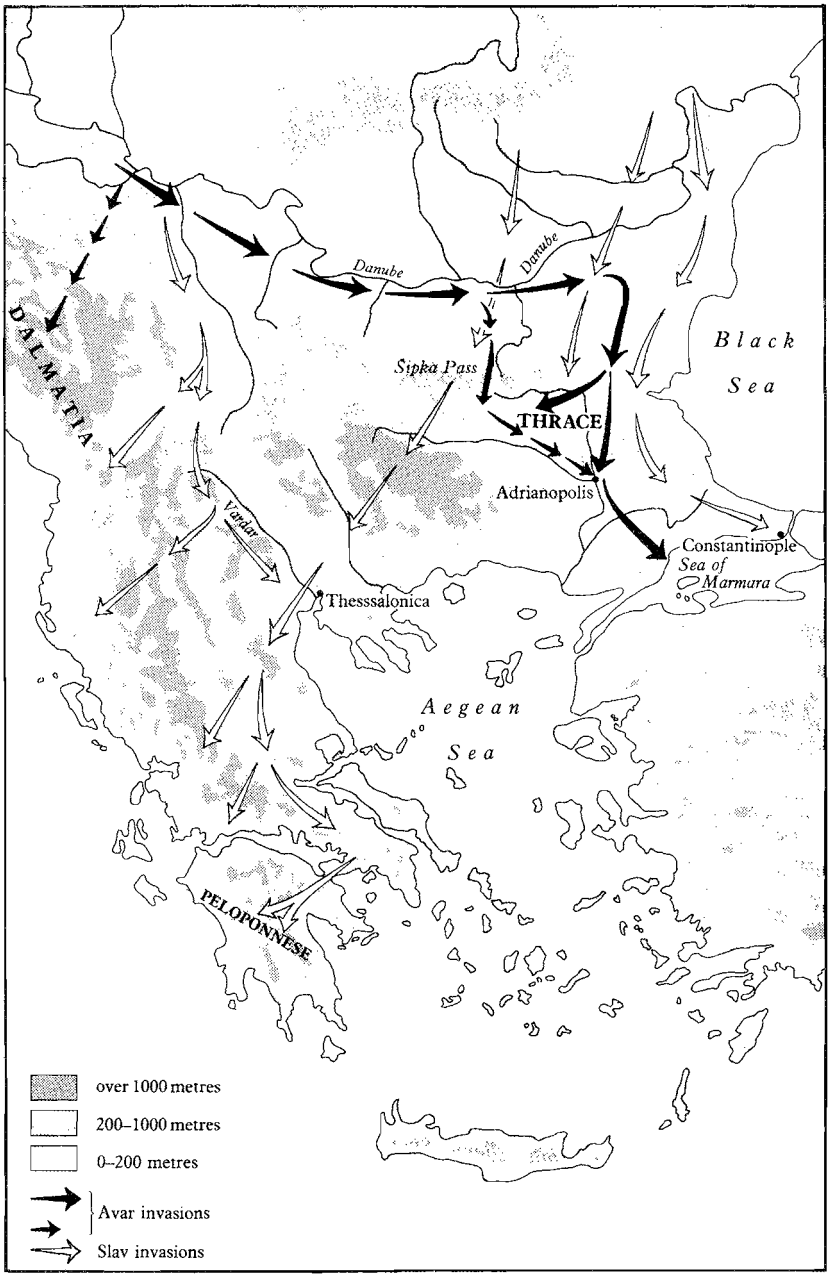
[39] For a narrative of these events, see Bury, *HLRE* (ii) i. 447–52.

officers and soldiers could trust their own leader Phocas to rectify their grievances, and he was duly acclaimed emperor. For his account of the mutiny Theophylact was at the mercy of his sources. In spite of his liking for Maurice and his loathing for Phocas, the narration of events in the army seems to be intended to justify the revolt: Peter has a dream in which God is shown to be supporting the mutineers, natural phenomena then reassure the hesitant soldiers, and Maurice's motives for making the army winter north of the Danube are not fully explained (Th. Sim. viii. 6. 6–7. 3). Once the focus of the narrative has switched to Constantinople (at viii. 7. 8), Theophylact derived his information from his chronicle source, and some of these events are described more fully and accurately by Theophanes.[40] Theophylact's personal contribution was to muddle the precise chronology of events (viii. 10. 6) and to introduce rhetorical denunciations of Phocas (viii. 10. 4), grandiloquent circumlocutions and explanations for 'technical' terms (e.g. viii. 9. 6–7), and moralizing comments (viii. 7. 11); there are no detailed touches suggestive of personal observation.

(ii) AVAR INVASIONS

The Avars were an international power whose interests extended from Central Asia, which they had fled in terror at the rising power of the Turkish federation, to the Frankish kingdoms, with which they sometimes clashed, but their main area of interest for the expansion of their power and wealth was the Balkan peninsula. Although the Avars had no experience of Roman military and diplomatic methods, and had indeed used Sarosius the Alan chief as intermediary to secure an introduction to Justinian (Men. 5. 1), they could soon have acquired such knowledge from the trans-Danubian tribes that they conquered. Before Maurice's reign the Avars were still consolidating their position north of the Danube, and they could be overawed by threats and blunt refusals (Men. 8; 12. 5–7), but the balance was shifted when the Romans became entangled in war against Persia, Roman helplessness against Slav raids revealed the hollowness of their diplomacy,

[40] Cf. Whitby, 'Chronicle Source' 335–7; it is possible that the chronicle also described the start of the mutiny, and contributed some information to Theophylact's account (e.g. Peter's strange dream; viii. 6. 5–6).



Map 9. The Balkans: invasion routes

and the Avars were at last able to enforce their repeated demands for the surrender of Sirmium. Control of Sirmium opened the way for invasions into the Balkans: the Romans no longer had a base on the borders of Pannonia from which to monitor and threaten the Avars, while the Avars could cross the Danube and Sava in greater safety.

During Maurice's reign the Avars led five major invasions into the empire, and in other years they may have exerted local pressure across the Danube that was not sufficiently dramatic to attract the notice of Theophylact's sources. The direction of Avar advances is significant both for the relative strength of Roman defences in different areas of the Balkans and for Avar strategy. Their normal route was to pass the cities on the lower Morava, cross the north-west end of the Stara Planina by the Timok or one of the other river-valleys, traverse the country south of the Danube, and then cross to the south of the Stara Planina by one of the low eastern passes where defensive positions could easily be turned. In 583 they overran Singidunum, Viminacium, and Augustae before ravaging the vicinity of Anchialus and threatening to continue towards the Long Walls. In 586 they swept through several Danubian cities before wintering near Tomi on the Black Sea; when Comentiolus attacked them, they advanced across the eastern end of the Stara Planina and then turned west against the cities of the Thracian plain. In 588 they again burst into the Thracian plain, although on this occasion they probably crossed the Stara Planina by the Šipka pass. In 597 they ravaged through Moesia before wintering near Tomi; in the spring they chased Comentiolus over the Šipka pass and across the Thracian plain. Only in 595, when a Roman force at Singidunum blocked the favoured eastward route, did the Avars march south-west into Dalmatia. Admittedly Dalmatia was a remote area, and it is possible that Theophylact's sources overlooked other raids in that direction. It is, however, noticeable that on the other four major invasions, which were all directed towards the fertile Thracian plains, the Avars did not invade by the most direct route, the military highway that crossed the Balkans diagonally from Sirmium to Constantinople. In the fifth century the Huns had sacked the cities along this route as they ravaged the empire, but there is no mention of an Avar attack on the key cities of Serdica and Naissus before the early years of Heraclius' reign. When the Avars attacked Philippopolis in 587, they were marching from east to west across Thrace, not advancing down the military highway from the north-west.

There are two possible explanations for the Avar preference for the

Danube invasion route. First, the Danube plains were more open and less heavily fortified than the mountainous central Balkans, where Justinian's fortifications clustered in the territories of Naissus and Serdica (cf. ch. 3(iii)). It was perhaps difficult for a large Avar cavalry army to slip past these forts; the local population was used to living within reach of a fortified refuge, and it might have been relatively easy to deny the Avars the supplies of forage which were recognized as one of their weak points (*Strat.* xi. 2. 66–7); on two occasions Avar ambassadors had been attacked by brigands in this area (Men. 15. 6; 25. 2. 33–6), and there was a danger that small bodies of Roman troops could block the route (Th. Sim. vi. 4. 7–5. 1) or ambush the dispersed Avar army (cf. vii. 12. 2–8). Second, control of the Danube route helped the Avars to enforce their authority over the Slavs: movement was easier along the Roman roads to the south of the river than across the wooded and marshy terrain on the north bank, and the Avars had used these roads when attacking the Slavs on behalf of the Romans (Men. 21. 23–5). Control of the south bank also restricted the scope for Roman naval operations up the river, particularly if the Roman hold on the Cataracts region could be undermined: if the Avars controlled the river banks, navigation through the Cataracts would have been difficult, since the strength of the current entailed that at some points boats had to be hauled upstream from a path cut into the riverside cliffs, and at others a canal had to be used since it was impossible to row upstream in the main channel.[41]

The main ingredients for Avar success were their speed of movement, their great experience and skill at fighting, and their ability to capture fortifications. Although their armies must have been followed by slow-moving herds of animals and camp-followers, the Avars could advance quickly in attack, sending advance parties to strike terror among Roman defenders, surprise garrisons, and anticipate the Roman field army, which, at least in the 580s, could only react slowly to their moves. By the mid 590s, the Avar advantage of speed had been reduced by the regular presence of a Roman army in the Singidunum area, and also by the collapse of the bridges over the Sava near Sirmium. Although the Avars could call on the Slavs and Lombards to provide naval expertise, the Roman fleet maintained control of the Danube and could hamper Avar actions.

As warriors, the Avars tolerated difficult conditions; they were well

[41] Bošković, 'Limes' 430ff.

armed, with bows, swords, sabres, and lances; even their horses wore armour. They were expert at surprise attacks and ambushes, but what distinguished them above all from other nations was the implacable pursuit with which they followed up victory (*Strat.* ii. 1. 19ff.; xi. 2. 1–65). Avar successes in sieges were achieved mainly through speed and their willingness to sacrifice their Slav subjects.[42] Although their siege-engines gained a considerable reputation, much of the evidence relates to occasions when they failed to capture a city and is preserved by authors and speakers who were interested in magnifying the threat that had been posed.[43] Avar machines could probably hurl large stones, but the Roman engines may have been more accurate and the Avars perhaps lacked experienced operators to position their machines correctly near the walls: the garrison of a strongly-walled and well-equipped city like Diocletianopolis in Thrace could rely on its defensive machines to keep the Avars at bay (Th. Sim. ii. 17. 1), and it is only in less prosperous areas like Dalmatia that Avar engines are specifically credited with reducing Roman fortifications in the sixth century (vii. 12. 1). On the whole Avar attacks succeeded when they managed to surprise the defenders, or could overwhelm them by weight of numbers, forcing their Slav subjects to bear the brunt of the attack. Such successes were often costly,[44] but the only alternative was for the Avars to resort to long blockades: Sirmium was starved out after three years of siege, and there were shorter (but unsuccessful) investments at Tzurullon in 588 and Tomi in 597/8. Fortifications in the Danube valley and Dalmatia might succumb, but the strong cities of the Thracian plain were in general able to withstand their assaults: the only Avar successes in this area were at Anchialus after a costly siege, and at Drizipera in an unexpected assault.

Avar ambitions expanded with their success. In the reigns of Justinian and Justin II, the Avars had been interested in finding a home, ravaging their new neighbours, and building up a federation of subject tribes. In Tiberius' reign they began to push the Romans away from their territory, and this process of rolling back the Roman frontier continued during Maurice's reign with such success that the Avars regarded the Danube as theirs by right of conquest (vii. 10. 5),

[42] Only the Huns matched Avar prestige as besiegers; German tribes had a poor record, Thompson, *Germans* 131ff.

[43] *Mirac. SD* 200, cf. also 139, 151; *Chr. Pasch.* 719; Theodore Syncellus 306. 13–19.

[44] Th. Sim. i. 4. 3, 8. 11; M. Syr. x. 21, pp. 362–3; cf. *Chr. Pasch.* 719. 8–14 for Slav 'cannon-fodder' at Constantinople in 602.

and were emboldened to claim control of the Balkan provinces. They were experienced in diplomatic dealings with the Romans, and knew when to apply pressure most effectively; they also appreciated the advantages of co-operation with other potential Roman enemies to maximize the empire's problems. They no longer pillaged and ravaged indiscriminately: near Anchialus the baths were preserved for the pleasure of the Chagan's harem; a civilian population was allowed to remain in Singidunum after the fortifications had been slighted, although the Avars tried to force it to migrate when the Romans approached in 595; other cities were offered the option of survival in return for tribute.[45] The Avars were prepared to treat the sedentary population of the Roman empire as an element within their federation, a source of revenue that could be exploited like their farming subjects north of the Danube: although enormous booty made the Avars rich, this wealth tended to be hoarded for its status value so that the economic structure of the Avar homeland preserved its simple agricultural base. In 588, the Chagan formally challenged imperial authority by donning the robes of the empress Anastasia,[46] but Avar pretensions were shaken by the Roman recovery during the 590s. The Avar federation was a heterogeneous grouping of tribes that was held together by the success and prestige of its leader: desertions were known to cause them particular problems (*Strat.* xi. 2. 74–8), and Roman diplomacy and Avar defeats would naturally encourage the subject tribes to revolt.

(iii) SLAV ATTACKS

To some later writers the Slav raids in Maurice's reign seemed to have been organized by the Avars as part of a grand strategy to undermine the Roman empire (Th. Sim. i. 6. 6–7.1; *Mirac. SD* 117), but this view of Slav movement is only partly true and in particular disregards the wide spread and diversity of Slav settlements north of the Danube. Slavs who had settled in the Banat region of western Romania, or along the upper course of the Tisza river, might have been kept firmly under control by the Avars, but Slavs along the lower Danube would have

[45] Th. Sim. i. 4. 5; vii. 10–11; M. Syr. x. 21, p. 361.

[46] Such was their symbolic importance that there was a prohibition on granting imperial vestments to northern tribes (Const. Porph. *DAI* 13. 24ff.).

been less obedient. On occasions the Avars did command specific groups of Slavs to attack in certain directions, as when they sent a contingent to help the Lombards at the siege of Cremona (Paul D. iv. 28), and the Slavs may sometimes have appealed to the Avars for help, as when their attack on Thessalonica failed (*Mirac. SD* 197) or they had been defeated by the Franks (Paul D. iv. 10–11), but in general the Avars found it no easier than the Romans to control the Slavs: the lack of a recognized Slav hierarchy created the same problems for both external powers. During Tiberius' reign the Romans were aware that the Slavs and Avars posed two distinct threats, and they were prepared to use the Avars as a mercenary army against the Slavs on the lower Danube (Men. 21), who appeared the more dangerous enemy at the time; the Avars already had a quarrel with these independent Slavs over the murder of an Avar ambassador. In 579 the Avars tried to exploit the Romans' knowledge of Avar–Slav hostility in order to conceal their designs against Sirmium (Men. 25. 2). It is unlikely that the Avars imposed their control over all the lower Danube Slavs between 579 and 582, and during Maurice's reign the association between Avars and Slavs probably remained loose. To the contemporary writer John of Ephesus the Avars and Slavs were two different menaces. Their relationship will have fluctuated according to the military successes of the Avars, and also the Slavs' need for protection from the Romans: thus the Avars may not have objected over-much to Roman attacks on the Slavs, provided that they received a share of the booty, since Roman pressure forced the Slavs to turn to the Avars for assistance. In the early seventh century Avar successes in the Balkans briefly established their authority over most of the Slavs, and this would have encouraged contemporary writers to attribute similar control to the Avars in the late sixth century.

Contrary to this anachronistic interpretation, a major factor determining Slav movement in Maurice's reign was their fear of Avar domination. Large-scale Slav raids had restarted in the 570s, when they were under pressure to recognize Avar hegemony. The Slavs entered the empire with different objectives from the Avars: the Avars collected wealth and extended the area under their control, but regarded Sirmium and Pannonia as their home, to be protected from attack, and as a place where they could store their booty; the Slavs ravaged widely and on occasions took their booty back beyond the Danube, but more importantly they sought land south of the Danube on which they could settle. Attacks on Slav territory north of the

Danube failed to persuade invading Slavs to retreat from the empire; indeed Roman strategy, by convincing the Slavs of the insecurity of their former territory, might have had the opposite effect to that intended (M. Syr. x. 21, p. 362). In the first decade of Maurice's reign the Slavs appeared to be on the point of taking over large parts of the Balkans, and in spite of the apparent re-establishment of Roman authority in the 590s the countryside was probably troubled by numerous small groups of resident Slavs as well as by new invaders.

Slav raids were more extensive, pervasive, and unpredictable than Avar attacks.[47] There were far more Slavs than Avars, and they were spread all along the north bank of the Danube. They were not restricted to the major channels of communication, and the general directions of their movements can only be surmised. Because of their nautical skills, the Danube was not a barrier to them, unlike the Avars. From the lower Danube, they could slip across the river to ravage the Danube plains and then over the Stara Planina towards the fertile Thracian plain; the Stara Planina with its upland forests and pastures was a negligible barrier, and indeed it afforded opportunities for settlement. From the middle Danube they could follow the north–south river valleys towards Macedonia and the Aegean. From the upper Danube and the Sava they could move into the barren Dalmatian mountains, west towards the coastal cities of the Adriatic, or south-west to Epirus and Greece. The presence of the Avars in the Pannonian plain and the reassertion of Roman control in Thrace increased the impetus of Slav movement towards the west and south-west Balkans. Some Slav groups may have been exploited by the Avars as a mobile frontier to protect their own homeland, as the Bulgars used the Slavs in Moesia in the 680s (Theoph. 359. 12–17), but in the 580s most were moving away from the Avars towards areas where they were unlikely to be disturbed by the Romans.

(iv) ROMAN COUNTERMEASURES; CONDITIONS IN THE BALKANS

In theory, Roman objectives were simple, to neutralize the tribes beyond the frontier and Romanize those that had settled within it so that imperial authority could be firmly re-established over all land south of the Danube, but in practice Roman actions were determined

[47] Cf. Am. Marc. xxviii. 2. 12 for the unpredictability of Saxon attacks.

by the availability of troops. In the 580s Maurice had difficulty both in recruiting and in paying an army for use in the Balkans. Although soldiering was a privileged profession, enlistment for hard fighting in the Balkans would have been unattractive: there was little booty to be won on defensive campaigns within the empire, and the lack of success for Roman forces in this region would also have deterred recruits. As a result Maurice had to organize a harsh recruiting drive in the 580s which virtually amounted to conscription (M. Syr. x. 21, p. 362), and the leakage of men from the army into the church continued to attract his attention (Greg. *Reg.* iii. 61). Finance was an equally serious problem for Maurice, and this will have contributed to the difficulty of attracting new recruits: whereas Tiberius could send Pamphronius back to Italy in 578/9 with money (probably his accession donative from the senate) to recruit Lombard mercenaries, and in 580/1 money (but not soldiers) could be found for the relief of Sirmium,[48] Maurice had to suffer for Tiberius' lavish expenditure. It is probably no coincidence that he attempted to reduce the pay of the eastern army in winter 587/8 (Th. Sim. iii. 1. 2), when he would have had to finance the cost of the 587 Balkan campaign, the first year in which a sizeable army had operated in the Balkans. These interrelated problems persisted, even though the situation was improved by the ending of the Persian war, the transfer of troops from the eastern frontier, and the more regular success of the Balkan army in defeating the Slavs and acquiring booty. The Balkans were inevitably an unattractive place for recruits from Armenia, which was now emerging as the main area of recruitment within the empire,[49] and Maurice's plan to resettle whole families of Armenians in Thrace was intended to overcome this difficulty. In 593/4 Maurice's desire to ensure that military expenditure was properly used underlay his attempted reforms, and the same motive was believed to be an issue in 602.

Without a mobile army stationed near the Danube it was impossible for the Romans to forestall Avar and Slav moves, and in the early years of Maurice's reign there was not even a force strong enough to restrict

[48] Men. 22, with Hendy, *Economy* 407–9; J. Eph. vi. 30–1. The successive waves of plague in the mid 6th c. seriously affected the empire's manpower, and must have reduced the availability of recruits. Haldon, 'Recruitment' 25–6, argued that there was no shortage of recruits, only a shortage of available soldiers, but the evidence for Maurice's reign suggests that lack of recruits was one part of the military problem.

[49] Stein, *Studien* 117f.; from the 4th to the mid 6th cc. the Germanic tribes within or neighbouring the Balkan peninsula had provided the backbone of the Roman armies, but the last major recruiting-drive there to be recorded was that of Tiberius in 574/5.

their ravaging or siege-operations by guerrilla tactics as recommended in the *Strategicon* (x. 2). The construction of Maurice's ditch beyond Adrianopolis defended the immediate hinterland of Constantinople, but it was also a virtual admission that the towns and cities beyond its protection had to rely on their own resources with little hope of help from outside. Most cities and towns had a garrison or citizen militia that was capable of defending the walls (cf. *Strat.* x. 3. 32–5), but only a united and well-organized city with sound defences could survive years of pressure, and the very act of survival, the concentration of local resources to meet local problems, contributed to the decline of the empire by loosening ties with the centre. In these circumstances, even the traditional Roman diplomatic strategy of playing one tribe off against another failed, since there were insufficient military forces in the Balkans to support it: it was easier for the Slavs to remain in the Balkans than to return to their former territory to face the Antes or Avars.

The transfer to the Balkans of much of the experienced eastern army was the decisive factor that led to the gradual restoration of Roman affairs in the second half of Maurice's reign. In the late 580s a Balkan army had slowly emerged: in 584–5 Comentiolus had commanded the limited forces available in Constantinople, perhaps little more than the imperial guard; in 587 he assembled an army of 10,000 soldiers, although 4,000 were non-combatants (Th. Sim. ii. 10. 9), and in 588 there were probably as many troops, either stationed at Singidunum or under Priscus' command. These forces were not small by late sixth-century standards, since the *Strategicon* (iii. 8; 10) regards an army of 5,000–15,000 as normal, and anything over 15,000 as slightly unusual. However, many of the recruits may have lacked the military training and experience to confront the Avars: in 587 Comentiolus' subordinates twice fell into difficulties because they did not retire quickly after an attack (Th. Sim. ii. 10. 14–11. 2; 11. 11–14), and they failed to maintain good order on an important night march (ii. 15. 4–11; contrast *Strat.* ix. 2. 33–8). On the other hand Droctulft, an experienced Lombard warrior, could lure the Avars to defeat (ii. 17. 11), and even the Romans could overcome the Slavs when the latter were hampered by booty (i. 7. 5–6).

In the 590s the Romans could field a larger and more experienced army, and they gradually evolved the best tactics for use against both Avars and Slavs; the results are recorded in the *Strategicon*. Against the Avars (*Strat.* xi. 2) all military actions had to be executed at a very high

standard of discipline: the Avar army was a formidable fighting machine, and the Romans must constantly be on guard against ambushes and surprise attacks, prepare supplies in advance, take care in selecting where to fight, and be cautious in skirmishing and pursuit; the flexible battle-array of the Avars was superior to the single line of the Romans (*Strat.* ii. 1. 19–23), although the formations recommended at *Strat.* iii. 10 would have counteracted this. The Avars did have their weaknesses (*Strat.* xi. 2. 66–78): their need for large supplies of fodder could be exploited against them, their complete reliance on cavalry left them at a disadvantage in close combat with infantry, their scattered encampments made them vulnerable to night attacks, but (as we have seen) their most serious problem was that of desertions. This advice in the *Strategicon* is general and defensive in tone: it concentrates on avoiding defeat and contains no suggestions for attacking Avar territory, so that it was probably formulated before Priscus' campaign in 599: this had demonstrated that the Avars, now weakened by plague, were much less formidable when forced to defend their own territory, when they might have to fight on unfavourable terrain or before they were fully prepared, and when Roman diplomacy could encourage Avar subjects to desert.

The *Strategicon*'s advice on fighting the Slavs is long and specific (xi. 4; xiiB. 20–1), and reflects the author's experience of operations in the 590s when the Romans had to adjust to the special difficulties of campaigning in Slav territory, where the marshes, rivers, and woods made it hard to come to grips with the Slavs and to inflict a heavy defeat without risk of being ambushed.[50] The problems of campaigns in the area of modern Romania are illustrated by the record of Valens' achievements in 367–9. In 367 the Goths had warning before Valens crossed the Danube from Moesia Secunda, and most of them managed to reach the safe refuge of the Carpathians before the Roman raiding bands could catch up; in 368 extensive flooding on the Danube prevented a crossing altogether; finally in 369 Valens managed to bring Athanaric to battle after long marches from Noviodunum in Scythia (Am. Marc. xxvii. 5. 2–6). Like the Goths, the Slavs skilfully exploited the terrain against the Romans: they could launch lightning raids in

[50] e.g. Th. Sim. vi. 8. 10–12; 9. 5; vii. 5. 1–5, 9–10, for Slav refuges in woods and marshes, counter-attacks, and opposition at river crossings. Cf. Greg. T. ii. 9, the problems of Quintanus attacking the Franks in their woodland retreats on the Rhine; Am. Marc. xvii. 1. 8–9, Julian and the Alamanni; Caesar, *BG* i. 39. 6; 41. 4, frightened Roman troops make a 50-mile detour to avoid marching through forests.

their canoes across the rivers and marshes, and disappear before the Roman defenders could organize a pursuit (cf. Themistius, *Or.* x. 137A–B). These problems could be overcome by careful preparations, which included materials for bridging and for constructing rafts; ideally invasions should consist of more than one raiding group moving at high speed, and good organization was essential so that the separate units of the army could co-operate with each other and with the fleet, which was in attendance to support river-crossings, ferry supplies, and convey booty back to Roman territory.[51] Special precautions had to be taken against ambushes, and if necessary a sizeable contingent must be left near the Danube to safeguard the return of the advance raiding parties; in summer it was advisable to avoid particularly difficult terrain. Winter campaigns were one solution for these problems, since there would be less scope for ambushes and it would be easier for the Romans to force the elusive Slavs to a straight fight, in which the Romans would have the advantage in discipline and equipment. The Slavs' greatest weakness was that they lacked organization, and so were vulnerable to surprise raids (*Strat.* ix. 3. 6–8). The moral of this advice was that the Romans had to maintain an aggressive defence throughout the year if unpredictable Slav raids were to be deterred. Only thus could the Slavs be overawed and, in particular, those who lived nearest the Danube persuaded that there were advantages in remaining at peace with the Romans, and that otherwise constant raids would bring them poverty through the destruction of crops and interruption of commercial contacts (cf. Am. Marc. xxvii. 5. 7); like the German tribes on the Rhine (Am. Marc. xxviii. 2. 7–8), the Slavs were either at the Romans' feet or at their throats. Maurice's army proved reluctant to sustain the constant burden of keeping the Slavs submissive.

The successes of the Roman army in the 590s ensured that at the superficial level of political boundaries the Roman empire weathered the storms of Maurice's early years: the Danube rather than the Thracian plains was now the front line, and the emperor was perceived as a strong ruler by subject and enemy alike, but consolidation and reconstruction were much more laborious than destruction, and by the end of Maurice's reign only limited progress could have

[51] Cf. Caesar, *BG* vi. 5–6 and Am. Marc. xvii. 1. 2–7 for similar tactics used against Gallic tribes and the Alamanni; *BG* i. 16; ii. 9, for the importance of rivers as lines of supply and communication; Anna Comnena xv. 4. 8–9 for the use of several detachments to ravage Seljuk territory.

been made towards repairing the damage of the 570s and 580s.[52] Within a secure frontier, the empire could reverse or adapt to the internal changes caused by Avar and Slav attacks: its influence could once more spread from its strongholds, Odessus and Tomi on the Black Sea, Dorostolon and Novae on the lower Danube, and (with some intermissions) Singidunum further upstream; towns and cities could have been refortified and repopulated, Slavs officially settled in the deserted countryside, and imperial administration reimposed as the natural state of affairs. In the event, lasting consolidation was not possible, and the destruction of Maurice's first decade was in the long term more significant than the recovery of his second.

Theophylact records anecdotes about the fortresses of Appiaria and Asemus that portray the general state of affairs in the Balkans. At Appiaria, the soldier Busas rode safely across the nearby fields, but when he continued further on a hunting expedition, probably into the adjoining woods, he was captured by tribesmen; Appiaria had already been under pressure for some time, since Busas had often distinguished himself in the defence of his city (ii. 16. 1–11). Asemus had also experienced this constricting isolation, which had taught its inhabitants to survive beyond the horizons of the empire with local self-interest as their overriding concern: they provided a civic welcome for the arrival of Peter's army in 594, but then under the leadership of their bishop they boldly rejected Peter's attempt to enrol their garrison in his army (vii. 3. 1–10). There may also be signs of local insecurity at Novae, where the citizens pressed Peter to stay while they celebrated the feast-day of the local saint, perhaps because they were afraid to devote themselves too enthusiastically to festivities by themselves: Thessalonica was attacked by the Slavs when the inhabitants might have been distracted by St Demetrius' feast (*Mirac. SD* 102).[53] It was not just along the Danube that cities felt insecure and remote from the interests of the empire: at Thessalonica in the fifth century the citizens had removed the keys from the prefect and entrusted them to their bishop (Malchus 20. 5–19), and in the sixth century divergences of interests may be reflected in the tensions between Demetrius and the emperor's representative, the praetorian prefect, and in the saint's appropriation of Constantinople's

[52] For an analysis of the impact of war on contemporary Italian society, cf. T. S. Brown, *Gentlemen*, ch. 3, esp. pp. 42ff. on settlement patterns.

[53] Cf. Am. Marc. xxvii. 10. 1–2 for Rando the Alaman capturing Mainz during a Christian festival.

grain-supplies for his own city (*Mirac. SD* 94–7, 70). At Justiniana Prima, Maurice was eager to replace the demented bishop lest the city, deprived of ecclesiastical guidance, should fall to the enemy. The local clergy played a crucial role in maintaining the security and unity of their towns and cities.[54] The weakness of the empire's hold on some of its inhabitants is illustrated by the presence of refugees living among the Slavs (*Strat.* xi. 4. 131–6): like the better-known case of the Greek trader from Viminacium who had chosen to remain at Attila's court (Priscus 11. 2. 419–510), these refugees preferred life outside the empire, and they could not be trusted to help Roman armies against their Slav neighbours. The empire had to overcome the suspicions of its own inhabitants before there could be any confident reassertion of Roman authority.

Isolation in a deserted or hostile countryside was a serious problem for the fortresses north of the Stara Planina, but the Thracian plain was more easily and resolutely defended, and communications there could quickly be re-established with surviving communities after the relatively brief interludes of invasion. Beyond the mountains, isolation and danger were the normal conditions of existence, and in times of insecurity natural obstacles to communication loomed larger. The mountains were a haven for Slav migrants, and thus became less accessible or passable for the Romans as travel along main roads, such as that over the Trojan Pass, became impossible. South of the Danube the Roman army might appear to be operating in alien territory (as in 587), where invaders were more numerous than the remnants of the former inhabitants now crowded into their hilltop refuges. The countryside had been emptied, and could only be repopulated by allowing alien tribes to settle, or by transferring reluctant groups from elsewhere in the empire.

These conditions probably prevailed throughout much of the Balkans. Beyond the horizons of Theophylact's narrative, the appearances of normal Roman administration were restored or maintained in the cities along the Adriatic and Aegean coasts, and in the Macedonian river-valleys. However, even these accessible areas did not fully recover from the devastation of the 580s, and they were affected by the gradual isolation caused by Slav infiltration: Lissus in Dalmatia and

[54] Cf. Dagron, 'Villes' 16f.; also *Life* of St David of Thessalonica 13–14 for an account (admittedly fictitious) of the archbishop of Thessalonica and a local holy man (summary by A. Vasiliev in *Traditio* 4 (1946), 115–47 at 122).

Euria in Epirus were abandoned by their inhabitants and clergy for safer abodes in Italy or on Corfu; there was little restoration in the ruined lower city of Athens, Bargala in Macedonia remained deserted, squatters crowded into makeshift accommodation in and around Caričin Grad and must have transformed the appearance of Justinian's prestige building-project. Isolation turned the cities in on themselves, and contributed perhaps to the petty squabbles that dominate Gregory's correspondence with the Dalmatian clergy. The prosperity, indeed the very life, of the towns and cities depended upon the surrounding countryside, so that the constriction of the rural foundation of the urban centres left them at greater risk during the next wave of invasion and migration, while the contraction and disappearance of urban settlements made it easier for tribes to settle in the country, thereby imparting a further twist to the cycle of collapse. As tribal pressures increased, the mobile elements of the population, i.e. the upper classes, migrated to safety, so that the more Romanized sections of society were removed: in 378 people with property fled Adrianopolis after a Goth assault (Am. Marc. xxxi. 16. 2); in the seventh century Salona was captured when an attempt by the upper classes to flee from the port caused panic among the defenders (Thomas the Archdeacon 26–7); the refugees from Justiniana Prima and Naissus who spread terrifying stories about Avar siege-engines (*Mirac. SD* 200) may also have been wealthy inhabitants who had anticipated their cities' capture. At Thessalonica itself there are signs of tension: in 586 the leading citizens were absent at Constantinople, ostensibly to complain against the prefect but possibly for a less creditable reason, and in the seventh century the citizens were not always united (*Mirac. SD* 129, 193, 244).[55] With the flight or impoverishment of their leading citizens, cities lost their cultural distinctiveness, and were less able, or perhaps less inclined, to resist tribal pressures on behalf of a remote and alien empire: it was now more important to establish friendly relations with local tribes than to antagonize them by attacks.

[55] Dagron, op. cit. 12; cf. also I. Ševčenko, 'Inscription Commemorating Sisinnios, Curator of Tzurulon (A.D. 813)', *Byz.* 26 (1965), 564–74 at 574, for a local official who may have withdrawn from his city to avoid the Bulgar invasion of 813.

6

The Balkans after 602

By 602 the Roman empire had recovered from the disasters of Maurice's first decade, and Roman authority was apparently re-established over much of the Balkans. In 602 it was the Avar federation that seemed to be on the brink of collapse under the combined pressure of Roman armies and disaffected subjects, and the Roman empire was gaining strength as communications were restored and civilians forgot the constant threat of Slav raids. Although such perceptions were important, the empire had only reached a stage of potential recovery: much of the countryside, particularly along the Danube, was deserted, defences needed repair, for example in the Cataracts region, and, if the interior of the Balkans was to be Romanized once more, the army had to maintain the Danube as a barrier to tribal movement.

The overthrow of Maurice was as unfortunate for the Balkans as it was for other parts of the empire. Admittedly Phocas was a convenient scapegoat for all the empire's troubles, and he is unlikely to have been as villainous as his portrait in Heraclian propaganda, but his accession undermined Maurice's achievements in the Balkans. The safety of the peninsula depended on an aggressive defence, a strategy that Phocas could not maintain since he had been placed in power by an army aggrieved by the excessive demands of Maurice's policies. His difficulties were increased by Khusro II's decision to exploit Maurice's death as an excuse for war: Phocas probably had to transfer some troops from the Balkans to the eastern frontier, but the worst disasters only began when Heraclius' revolt and the attendant civil unrest distracted troops from the defence of the frontiers (cf. *Mirac. SD* 82–3). Heraclius subsequently had to transfer all troops to face the Persians, and once again Roman control in the Balkans had to rely on the strength of fortifications and the willingness of Avars to keep agreements for which they had been paid.

The history of the Balkans in the seventh century is clouded by lack of evidence; only isolated incidents stand out clearly, for example the siege of Constantinople in 626 and events at Thessalonica. In the

background there was the constant encroachment of Slav migrants that throttled surviving Roman centres, and the gradual separation of tribes from the Avar federation, which again began to disintegrate after its humiliation at Constantinople in 626. Both processes can be illustrated from the *Miracula S. Demetrii*: whereas in the sixth century the Slavs were not unknown to the citizens of Thessalonica, but tended to attack from a distance, by the time of the third siege of the city, *c.* 615–20, the surrounding country was in Slav hands (197) even though the citizens still had much property outside the walls (212); by about 670 the Slavs had moved closer to the city (253) and could organize an effective blockade (243–4). One of the most serious threats to Thessalonica came not from Slavs or Avars, but from the descendants of Romans captured by the Avars who had achieved their freedom with the assistance of a Bulgar chief, Kouber; he now hoped to use these half-Romans as a means of taking over Thessalonica and parts of Macedonia. Kouber's attempt failed, but those tribes that successfully established their independence in the Balkans were subsequently graced by Byzantine writers with 'historical' fables describing their arrival south of the Danube.[1]

In the absence of reliable evidence it is generally assumed that the last vestiges of the Roman empire in the northern and central Balkans were swept away sooner rather than later in the seventh century,[2] so that only small areas of eastern Greece, the environs of Thessalonica, and parts of the Thracian plain remained in Roman hands by the middle of Heraclius' reign. This was certainly the position by the last quarter of the seventh century, but, although it is difficult to disprove the theory of rapid collapse, it is worth pointing to the scattered evidence for continuity of Roman control in some areas until the middle of the century. Just as some cities escaped or survived the destruction of the 580s, so some withstood the disasters of the first quarter of the seventh century,[3] although this time they were not to be rescued from their slow collapse by the re-expansion of the empire. There is no firm evidence for extensive destruction during Phocas'

[1] e.g. Const. Porph. *DAI* 29–32 on the Serbs and Croats; such stories must be treated very cautiously.

[2] e.g. Hoddinott, *Bulgaria* 245 (Novae), 248 (Iatrus), 259 (Abritus), 336, 341; on the other hand Romanian archaeologists suggest that in the Dobrudja Roman settlements survived into the mid 7th c.

[3] Cf. the case of Comacina in Italy, which survived for 20 years in the middle of Lombard territory.

reign. Coin-finds suggest that there was no monetary break in the area of the modern Albania under Phocas, and that the important cities of Naissus and Justiniana Prima survived until the early years of Heraclius; in Dalmatia, Narona survived.[4] Inaction under Phocas, however, prepared the way for the massive invasions of Heraclius' first decade, since it will have taken a little time for the Avars to reassert their authority over their subjects, and for the Slavs along the lower Danube to realize that the constant aggression of the 590s was not to be repeated. In the 610s the chronicles again record wholesale ravaging, and many cities, probably including Naissus and Justiniana Prima, finally succumbed to these attacks, so that Roman control of the Morava valley ended; Thessalonica was twice attacked by Slavs and Avars, and the ravaging of Greece and even the Aegean islands is attested by coin-hoards; Heraclius could not organize an effective defence for the Balkans, and his offers to the Avars of increased tribute and hostages were only temporary deterrents; the Avars could even demand that the Romans surrender Constantinople.[5]

The remnants of the empire were reprieved by the collapse of Avar power after 626, and some indication of its extent in the mid seventh century is provided by the *Notitia* of Ps.-Epiphanius. The use of such documents to illustrate the spread of bishoprics, and so usually of cities, at a particular date is fraught with problems, since they may record titular or absentee bishops, or may even be antiquarian compilations of little relevance to their apparent date of composition.[6] However, for the Balkans at least, Ps.-Epiphanius reflects the disappearance of several cities and the contraction of Roman control after the end of the sixth century: the reduction of Balkan bishoprics would not be so marked if this part of the list included titular bishops. Ps.-Epiphanius shows that ecclesiastical organization survived in the Thracian plain, where four eparchies were based on Heracleia, Traianopolis, Adrianopolis, and Philippopolis. Elsewhere, however, the situation had changed dramatically, and it is likely that the cities of Thrace had been boosted by the influx of refugees from more disturbed areas. North of the Stara Planina, there were autocephalous

[4] Popović, 'Témoins' 453 n. 2, 486f., 493f.

[5] Isidore 414A; Theoph. 300. 1; 301. 26; *Mirac. SD* 200; *Chr. Pasch.* 720. 13–15.

[6] Darrouzès, *Notitiae*, 7–9, and H. Gelzer, 'Texte der Notitiae Episcopatuum', *Abhandl. der K. Bayerischer akad. der Wissens.*, philos.-philol. Klasse, 21 (Munich, 1901), 531–49 for the date; for the problems of using this evidence, see G. Ostrogorsky, 'Byzantine Cities in the Early Middle Ages', *DOP* 13 (1959), 45–66 at 53f., and Hendy, *Economy* 76–7.

archbishoprics at Tomi and Odessus on the Black Sea, and also at Nicopolis, which must now have officially retreated to Veliko Tărnovo, since it is recorded in the eparchy of Thrace, which was centred on Philippopolis. Only six other places in this area are recorded, Rhodostolos (probably Dorostolon), Tramarisca, Novae, and Zikidiba on the Danube, the unknown Scaria, and Marcianopolis, the centre of this northern eparchy. There had clearly been a drastic contraction of Roman authority, but some Roman centres continued to exist beyond the Stara Planina and maintained some contact with Constantinople. There are other scraps of evidence. A church at Veliko Tărnovo has been dated to the late sixth or first half of the seventh century;[7] the reference to a Roman commander at Belgrade (Singidunum) in the middle of Heraclius' reign may show that the Roman navy maintained communications, perhaps intermittently, along the Danube.[8] The presence of officers or bishops does not, however, prove the existence of cities, and the northern bishops must have presided over impoverished and isolated communities which had to coexist with the Slav tribes that had settled in the deserted territory north of the Stara Planina; these Slavs may even have occupied some of the abandoned cities such as Voivoda, Abrittus, and Marcianopolis.[9] As late as 680/1, when the Bulgars established their state based on Pliska, this region was still nominally under Christian, i.e. Roman, control, although it was occupied by 'the so-called seven Slav tribes', whom the Bulgars proceeded to relocate (Theoph. 359. 12–17); Roman forts which the Bulgars destroyed during this process were probably situated within their new territory north of the Stara Planina, and the use by the Bulgars of a form of debased Greek as their earliest official language for inscriptions indicates the survival of some of the Roman urban or administrative population.[10] The demise of the Roman empire in the land north of the mountains had been a slow affair.

South of the Stara Planina, much of the Thracian plain remained in Roman hands into the late seventh century, and the Bulgars at first

[7] Hoddinott, *Bulgaria* 249–50.

[8] Const. Porph. *DAI* 32. 19–20; this comes in the suspect accounts of Serb and Croat arrivals in the Balkans, and so cannot be accepted without reservation.

[9] Hoddinott, ibid. 259–60; however, given the difficulty of distinguishing Slav remains, this material might indicate the reoccupation of these sites by impoverished refugees.

[10] J. D. Howard-Johnston, 'Urban Continuity in the Balkans in the Early Middle Ages', in Poulter, *Bulgaria* ii. 242–54.

Map 10. The Balkans in the seventh century

established the mountains as the natural defensible frontier for their new home. However, the evidence of bishoprics suggests that Roman authority had receded from the northern and western areas of Thrace. Of the twenty bishoprics recorded in Ps.-Epiphanius in this region, only seven sent representatives to the church councils of 680 or 692, and these all came from cities on or near the coast: Mesembria, Sozopolis, Bizye, Selymbria, Heracleia, Panion, Aenos. It is possible that representatives from some inland cities like Adrianopolis or Drizipera thought it too dangerous to travel, and it must be admitted that some coastal sees were surprisingly absent from these councils (e.g. Anchialus, Callipolis, Rhaedestus), but there had still been a substantial contraction: major centres like Beroe and Diocletianopolis, where archaeological evidence attests continued occupation into the seventh century,[11] have now disappeared. Literary sources support the evidence of the bishops' lists: there was a Roman estate near Bizye to which the Slav chief Perbundus fled in the 670s (*Mirac. SD* 234–8), and Anchialus and Mesembria could function as Byzantine military bases (Nic. 73. 15–18; Theoph. 376. 16). Elsewhere in the Balkans, Roman control was also severely limited: Thessalonica was saved by its walls and the sea, but its influence did not extend far inland, and land communications with Constantinople were so difficult that Justinian II had to lead a major expedition to reopen the Via Egnatia, and even this expedition was mauled by a Slav ambush on its return (Theoph. 364. 11–18). In Greece, Athens and Corinth survived, as did other sites near the Aegean coastline, but small Slav groups in the mountainous interior probably disrupted communications and created the impression of the total collapse of Roman control.

In Dalmatia the empire was driven back to the narrow coastal strip, a process that had begun before the end of Maurice's reign; in the mid seventh century further tribal pressure forced the Romans to abandon many of the coastal cities and to seek refuge on the Adriatic islands. The dating of this second move, which followed the capture of Salona, provides an example of the tendency to place the collapse of the Roman empire as early as possible in the seventh century. The scholarly consensus is that Salona was captured in about 614,[12] but

[11] Hoddinott, ibid. 300, 313–15.

[12] J. J. Wilkes, *Dalmatia* (London, 1969), 436; J. Ferluga, *L'amministrazione bizantina in Dalmazia* (Venice, 1978), 86; M. Abramić, R. Egger, and W. Gerber, *Forschungen in Salona* i (Vienna, 1917), 6f. There is no evidence for the frequent claim that Marcellinus

this is contradicted by the combined evidence of the *Liber Pontificalis* (i. 330), which records the ransom of captives and recovery of relics from Salona under Pope John IV (640–2), the bishops' list of Salona,[13] and Thomas the Archdeacon (25–9), sources which place the capture in about 638/9. Scholars rely on the fact that the last dated inscription at Salona, from a tomb outside the walls, records the death of the Abbess Joanna of Sirmium in May 612 (*CIL* iii. 9551), and they refer to the studies of Bulić, who argued for redating the capture from 639 to 614.[14] Bulić's arguments, which are never quoted, are not convincing: he had to undertake some improbable redatings of Salona's bishops, and he relied on chronicle references to general Slav raiding at the end of Phocas' and start of Heraclius' reigns to provide a suitable context for the capture of Salona; his only specific argument was that, if the Avars had not captured Salona till 639, the Dalmatian Slavs could not have gained their independence quickly enough to make a naval attack on Siponto in Italy in 641/2 as recorded by Paul the Deacon (iv. 44). It is, however, by no means certain that it was the Avars who captured Salona. Thomas the Archdeacon (25–9) suggests that it was the Germanic inhabitants of Croatia who sacked Salona, and there is better reason to trust his detailed tradition than Constantine Porphyrogenitus (*DAI* 29–30), who ascribes the capture to the Avars (or confusingly to 'the Slavs who are called Avars', 29. 23):[15] it was impossible for Constantine to blame the Croats for the sack of Salona, since he was concerned to emphasize that the Croats and Serbs had always been obedient to the Roman emperor, ever since they had been granted lands by Heraclius.

The history of Dalmatia is representative of the fate of the Balkans in the first half of the seventh century. Some cities survived the widespread destruction of the early years of Heraclius' reign, but they suffered a wasting death when there was no recovery in Roman power. The surviving cities were finally submerged by the Slav tribes who had

was proconsul when Salona was captured: he is the last known proconsul, being mentioned in an inscription of 599, but this does not link him with the defence of the city.

[13] F. Bulić, 'Kronotaksa solinskih biskupa', *Bullettino di arch. e storia dalmata* 35 (1912), supp. 97ff.

[14] Id., 'Sull'anno della distruzione di Salona', ibid. 29 (1906), 268–304.

[15] Thomas' dating evidence is also supported by the recent discovery at Salona of a coin from the middle of Heraclius' reign. I am grateful to Dr E. Marin for this information.

occupied much of the Balkans, or by one of the more dominant offshoots from the Avar federation which were now taking over the leadership of the Balkan Slavs. In the few areas where Roman control persisted, in the south-east part of the Thracian plain, the Aegean coastlands, and the Dalmatian islands, the Slavs were gradually brought into the social, cultural, and economic life of their Roman neighbours. The cities and civilization had attractions for the Slavs: the evidence from Thessalonica, where the multilingual Slav leader Perbundus chose to live inside the city, is well known, but a similar development occurred at Spalato in the early seventh century (Thomas the Archdeacon 31–3), and probably also in the Black Sea cities. Such contacts could provide the start for the gradual reassimilation of parts of the Balkans into the Byzantine empire. But for the overthrow of Maurice and the abandonment of his policies in 602 this process would have been undertaken much more quickly and extensively.

PART III

The Persian War

Introduction

The Romans devoted more attention and resources to Persian campaigns than they did to the less prestigious and less lucrative fighting in the Balkans, and this bias towards the eastern frontier is reflected in the ancient sources. Persian wars were a traditional historiographical subject, and they are the area of sixth-century history about which we are best informed: Malalas, Procopius, and Agathias in Greek, the Syriac chronicles of Joshua the Stylite and Ps.-Zachariah of Mytilene, and the chronicle tradition dependent upon John of Ephesus can be combined to provide a detailed picture of fighting under Anastasius and Justinian. For the wars of the late sixth century, Theophylact is the most important surviving source, but his account has to be collated with the fragments or incomplete narratives of earlier writers, Menander Protector, John of Epiphania, Evagrius, and John of Ephesus.

Theophylact's account of the twenty years' war has been examined by several scholars. Stein and Higgins respectively have analysed the evidence for the first and second halves of the war; Honigmann and Dillemann have tackled the many geographical problems in Theophylact's text and undertaken some analysis of military events.[1] Parts of the chronological schemes of Stein and Higgins are, however, open to doubt, several of the places referred to by Theophylact have been wrongly located, and little attention has been paid to the analysis of Theophylact's text to establish what sources he was using and how he combined them.[2] Reconsideration of accepted chronology and geography entails significant changes in

[1] Stein, *Studien*; Higgins, *Persian War*; the only recent work that covers the whole of the 20 years' war is Goubert, *Byzance* i, which is confused and inaccurate; Honigmann, *Ostgrenze*; Dillemann, *Mésopotamie*. On the chronology, Blockley, *Menander* 5 n. 20, states a preference for Stein's reconstruction over that in my thesis, but makes this assertion at a point where he abandons Stein and adopts the dating for which I had argued; no justification is offered for this haphazard allegiance to Stein's views.

[2] Apart from the exploratory remarks of Baynes, 'Theophylactus', see also Olajos, 'Théophylacte', which summarizes the results of her Ph.D. thesis (whose publication in a French version is announced).

the reconstruction of the strategies of the opposing empires, and permits a better understanding of a war that was, from the Roman point of view, remarkably successful in spite of the initial disaster of the loss of Dara.

7

Geographical and Historical Setting

(i) GEOGRAPHY

In 572, when war broke out again, the Sassanian and Roman empires had been neighbours for over three centuries, and for over two centuries their frontiers had remained unchanged apart from variations in their spheres of influence among the Caucasian tribes. This frontier can be divided into three main sections, in each of which particular geographical conditions imposed different forms of contact and conflict. In the south the empires were separated by the Syrian and Arabian deserts, areas beyond the control of the sedentary civilizations, where each side had to rely on the uncertain allegiance of competing Arab tribes for the protection of its interests. The Arabs, familiar with the terrain and availability of supplies, alone knew where, when, and in what numbers the deserts could be crossed, and they could exploit routes which were impractical for the larger and slower-moving armies of the two empires. There were significant seasonal variations in the practicality and capacity of these, and other, Mesopotamian routes, and the Romans had some understanding at least of probable constraints on Arab movement: thus Belisarius could predict that the Persian Arabs would not raid for two months after the vernal equinox, since they would be occupied with religious festivities (Proc. *Wars* ii. 16. 18), and this religious holiday coincides with the flood season on the Euphrates when overflowing wadis make travel slow and difficult.[1] In this area Roman and Persian communications were restricted to the line of the Euphrates, but this was a dangerous route for military operations and was rarely used, even though it offered a direct approach to the rich areas of Seleucia–Ctesiphon in

[1] See *Handbook to Mesopotamia* (Admiralty Intelligence Division, London 1917), iii. 288ff., a most useful source of information about the geography of the Roman eastern frontier; cf. also E. E. D. M. Oates, *Studies in the Ancient History of Northern Iraq* (London, 1968) 5; Gray, '*Limes*', 29f. For the role of the Arab federates in frontier defences, see Shahid, *Arabs*, part 3 and pp. 545–9; Shahid's projected volumes on the Arabs in the 5th and 6th cc. will be more immediately relevant.

Map 11. The eastern frontier: relief map

the south and Antioch in the north. The opportunities and dangers are apparent in Procopius' account of the expedition organized in 531 for Kavadh by the Arab al-Mundhir (*Wars* i. 17–18): the expedition chose the Euphrates route, which was not the normal line of attack, because al-Mundhir claimed that he could guide the army to the undefended cities of Syria, avoiding water- and supply-shortages and capturing Antioch before the Romans could organize their defences. In the event, al-Mundhir underestimated the competence of the Romans and was forced to retreat by the rapid appearance of Belisarius. A successful invasion required surprise and the co-operation of the dominant section of the Arab tribes; the Persians under Khusro achieved both on the two occasions in the sixth century when the Euphrates routes was used successfully: in 540 the Persian Arabs under al-Mundhir were greatly superior to the Roman Arabs under Harith, and in 573 the Ghassanid al-Mundhir (son of Harith) happened to have withdrawn from the war. There was, however, no easy line of retreat and an invading force could be threatened by the danger of isolation in the middle of enemy territory: in 542 Belisarius stationed himself on Khusro's line of retreat and so persuaded, or tricked, the much larger Persian army into abandoning its invasion of Palestine (Proc. *Wars* ii. 21); Julian in 363 and Maurice in 581 both found it difficult to retire after leading invasions down the Euphrates to Ctesiphon.[2]

In the central section of the frontier, in Upper Mesopotamia between the Jebel Sinjar in the south and the Taurus in the north, the two empires shared a common boundary with no subordinate buffer states or desert to separate them. Most of the important campaigns of the sixth century followed the routes across Upper Mesopotamia, and it was the easiest area in which to launch military operations since each side had strongholds close to the frontier (*Wars* i. 17. 25): the Roman fortress of Dara was situated only sixteen miles from Nisibis, while the Persian fort of Akbas could watch movements near Martyropolis (Evag. vi. 15, p. 233. 19–22); the Nestorian monasteries on the hills over Nisibis were within a day's journey of the monophysite centre of Qartmin. This accessibility was, however, offset by the

[2] Cf. Xenophon, *Expeditio Cyri* i. 5. 6–7; ii. 2. 11, for supply problems encountered during Cyrus the Younger's march down the Euphrates in 401 BC. By contrast parties of Arabs could move over the same terrain with relative ease: e.g. the Lakhmid al-Mundhir's raids towards Antioch in 527 and 529 (Zach. viii. 5; Mal. 445. 1–7).

maintenance of strong fortifications on both sides of the frontier,[3] so that campaigns frequently consisted of sieges or of localized ravaging when a siege could not be mounted. This section of the frontier is divided into two distinct parts by the plateau of the Tur Abdin–Izala to the Romans, who controlled most of it throughout the sixth century. There are relatively few routes from the Mesopotamian plain to the plateau, a region that Procopius describes as 'completely unsuitable for wagons and horses, that stretches for about two days' journey for an unencumbered person' eastward from Dara (*Bld.* ii. 4. 1), and the most important routes were commanded by the Roman forts at Rhabdion and Mardin. The steep south scarp of the Tur Abdin formed a significant barrier to Persian movement, and in the more fertile interior of the plateau village and monastic life flourished in the sixth century.[4]

To the south of the plateau the Mesopotamian plain was the most densely populated area of the whole frontier, with important cities situated in an east–west line near the northern edge of the plain where perennial water-supplies were available. The direction and timing of military operations were determined by the availability of water (e.g. Am. Marc. xviii. 7. 8–9), and control of water-supplies was an important military factor (Proc. *Bld.* ii. 2–3; Th. Sim. ii. 1. 5–6). Spring is the most favourable time for movement, when grazing and water are plentiful, whereas in summer the streams disappear and the grass is parched. The two areas with the best water-supply are the plains to the west of Edessa (the fertile district of Serug) and those of Beth Arabaye between Nisibis and the Tigris: these populous and prosperous areas remained attractive to ravaging expeditions much later in the year than other drier areas.

To the north of the Tur Abdin the rolling plains of the Tigris and its tributaries are enclosed by a circle of formidable mountains to the north and east, and of lower hills to the west and south. The region was divided into Roman Sophanene[5] and Persian Arzanene, with the Batman river flowing from north to south as the frontier. The easiest

[3] Proc. *Wars* i. 17. 34, and *Bld.* ii on Roman defences; *Wars* ii. 19. 1, on Persian defences.

[4] For the archaeological remains, see Bell, *Churches*, with the updated notes by M. Mango.

[5] Although this area was connected administratively with Roman Armenia (Proc. *Bld.* iii. 2. 1; Justinian, *Novel* 31, *CJ* iii. 235–9), it was regarded strategically as part of Mesopotamia, being included in the truces of 574–8, which halted fighting in the latter area but allowed it to continue in Armenia.

routes into this region were controlled by Roman forts guarding the Illyrisis and Saphcae passes over the Taurus (Proc. *Bld.* iii. 3. 3–5), and by Ciphas (Hasankeyf) in the Tur Abdin. Within the circle of hills the chief obstacles to movement are the rivers: the Tigris tributaries are generally fordable except during the flood season, which in Arzanene lasts from March to the end of June, although the Batman remains in flood until rather later. Persian Arzanene was bounded to the south and west by Roman territory, and to the east and north by the Hakkâri and Taurus mountains; Persian communications with this area had to cross the Taurus from Persarmenia, via Lake Van and the Bitlis pass, or follow difficult tracks from the south-east over the mountains of Carduchia (Hakkâri), where Khusro had to construct a path for his retreating army in 576 (J. Eph. vi. 9). Thus Arzanene was a vulnerable section of the Persian frontier, but it was also a vital area which provided the only direct link between Persian Mesopotamia and Persarmenia (the alternative route involved a long detour through Azerbaijan via Lakes Urmiah and Van).

In its northern section the Roman frontier crossed the Armenian highlands. Citharizon and Theodosiopolis (Erzurum) were the major Roman fortresses which guarded the routes into the empire and served as centres for dominating the tribes and nations that acted as a buffer between Roman Armenia and Persian Azerbaijan. In particular, from Theodosiopolis forts extended north-east into the territory of the Tzani, an unruly tribe whose country helped to secure Roman communications with Lazica and the sub-Caucasian region and to deny the Persians access to the Black Sea.[6] Both sides had an interest in controlling the Caucasus passes in order to prevent, or divert, raids by steppe nomads. In this northern area the Romans and Persians competed for influence among the independent tribes: the Romans, apart from political and military considerations, felt a religious obligation to give the tribes the salvation of Christianity and then a moral obligation to defend these converts against Persian pressure (Proc. *Bld.* iii. 6. 7; 7. 6–7); the Persians were reluctant to allow the Romans to control a group of client states that might create a new threat to Azerbaijan and the Iranian plateau, and to balance the religious bond that Christianity offered the Romans, the Persians could cultivate the natural community of views and interests that local

[6] Cf. Men. 18. 6. 80–5, for Khusro's appreciation of Theodosiopolis' role, and Theodosius, *Novel* v. 3 (*Cod. Theod.* ii. 15–16).

aristocracies had with their Iranian counterparts. Military operations in Armenia rarely affected either empire directly, but tended to fall most heavily on the respective allies, who could, however, usually maintain a limited independence because of the isolating effects of the harsh winters and high mountain ranges; the Armenians retained a fierce loyalty to their native land with its separate ecclesiastical and political traditions.[7] The Romans noted that the Persians did not arrive in Armenia before the end of August (Men. 18. 6. 21 ff.), and although they themselves could start campaigning earlier in the year, since their troops were usually stationed closer to the frontier, operations would have been hampered by blocked passes, flooded streams, and muddy roads at least until the end of June. The shortness of the campaign season and the geographical and political fragmentation of the country made it difficult for either empire to impose its control effectively, and it was an area where small mobile forces could operate successfully against whichever empire happened to be in temporary control.[8]

(ii) HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

There were three main phases to relations between the Sassanian and Roman empires. The most notable feature of the first phase, which lasted from the early third century until the death of Julian, was the aggressive nationalism of Sassanian diplomacy, which stressed the Sassanians' links with the Achaemenid past and their right to their ancestral Achaemenid territories. Ardashir, in his first contacts with the Romans, refused to be constrained by the Tigris, which was then the frontier, but claimed that all Asia was his by ancestral right and that the whole Achaemenid empire should be reunited. Ardashir was not impressed by the blustering diplomacy of Severus Alexander, the Roman emperor, and insisted that the dispute should be settled by force rather than negotiation unless the Romans returned the ancestral Persian heritage (Herodian vi. 2. 2–5; 4. 5). This aggressive Sassanian nationalism continued through the reign of Shapur I (243–

[7] e.g. Men. 20. 2. 60–4; Sebeos 10.

[8] The advantage of mobility over size is one explanation for the frequency of 'unexpected' victories in Armenia: in 576 Khusro I's large army was outmanœuvred, while in 577 Tamkhusro overcame a superior Roman army. In the 620s Heraclius eluded and outmanœuvred larger Persian armies.

73) and is reflected in his 'Res Gestae', a monumental inscription recording his achievements, which emphasizes Shapur's victories over successive Roman emperors and his (ephemeral) conquests of large areas of the Roman eastern provinces in order to imply that he had accomplished a vast expansion of the Sassanian empire towards its Achaemenid glory; the inscription of the high priest Kartir at Naqsh-i Rustam boasts of the organization of magi in the wake of Shapur's conquests 'in Antioch, Syria, and beyond Syria, Tarsus and Cilicia, and beyond Cilicia, Caesarea and Cappadocia as far as Greece'.[9] In the late third century Narses attacked the Romans in order to rival the exploits of his ancestor Shapur (Lactantius, *DMP* ix. 5). Even in the mid fourth century Shapur II could write to Constantius referring to his legal right to reclaim his ancestral heritage—which was now taken to extend as far as the Strymon and the borders of Macedonia, so that Constantinople was included among his rightful possessions; Shapur contrasted this legal right with his modest request for the return of Armenia and Mesopotamia (Am. Marc. xvii. 5. 3–8). This letter, however, with its limited practical objective might indicate that the confident aggression of the earlier Sassanians had now been moderated by considerations of realism.

The Romans had been slow to understand and adapt to their new aggressive neighbour. They had been firmly convinced of their superiority over the Parthians, whom they tended to regard as vassals who could be conquered by a new Alexander whenever other Roman commitments permitted. In response to Ardashir's demands Severus Alexander had denigrated Persian successes against eastern princelings, asserting that Ardashir would find the Roman empire a very different proposition (Herodian vi. 2. 4). For Dio (lxxx. 4. 1) Ardashir was a minor nuisance whose threats were only given credibility by mutinies in the Roman armies. Roman confidence might have been dented by humiliations at the hands of Shapur I, but these were shown to have been a temporary aberration by Galerius' triumph over Narses: Galerius could treat Narses' envoy with a display of arrogant magnanimity, and even before this Roman panegyrists were crowing over the Persians' submission to Diocletian.[10] In the early fourth century, the long minority of Shapur II reinforced Roman confidence

[9] See M. L. Chaumont, 'Conquêtes sassanides et propagande mazdéenne (IIIème siècle)', *Historia* 22 (1973), 664–710.

[10] Peter the Patrician 13; cf. Festus 25; *Pan. Lat.* x. 7.

in their supremacy, the Armenians converted to Christianity in 314, Shapur's brother Hormizd took refuge at Constantine's court in *c.* 320 (Zosimus ii. 27), and Shapur sent an embassy and gifts in order to obtain a treaty (Euseb. *VC* iv. 8). Roman arrogance is fully displayed in Constantine's personal letter to Shapur, written *c.* 324, which expounds the benefits of Christianity with a combination of religious and national arrogance (Euseb. *VC* iv. 9–13);[11] the authenticity of the letter has been doubted, but at the very least it reflects informed attitudes of the period. Constantine's death in May 337, at the start of a grand campaign against Persia, changed the balance on the eastern frontier, and was followed by two decades of Persian pressure on the major frontier fortresses, but even as late as 350, after a Roman victory at Singara, Themistius could describe the Persian empire as a satellite, a rudderless skiff that should be attached to the great trireme of the Roman state (*Or.* i. 12B). Early Sassanian-Roman relations are characterized by a mutual ignorance which allowed traditional attitudes to flourish long after their irrelevance might have been seen.

In the second period, from Julian's death to *c.* 500, conflict was rare. The partition of Armenia agreed by Theodosius I and Shapur III in 384 had removed a serious bone of contention, and thereafter there were only two brief crises: in 421–2, when the Persians were aggrieved by the Romans' reception of Christian fugitives, especially from Arab tribes supposed to be vassals of Persia, and in 440–1, when Yazdgard II exploited Theodosius II's preoccupation with the Vandals in Africa and the Huns in the Balkans to demand concessions.[12] Conflict, however, was the exception rather than the rule, and the fifth century seems to have witnessed an increase both in the regularity and the formalization of diplomatic contacts between the two empires.[13] As a result, co-existence and co-operation gradually, perhaps accidentally,

[11] T. D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Harvard UP, 1981), 258–9 (cf. id., 'Constantine and the Christians of Persia', *JRS* 75 (1985), 126–36 at 131) regards the letter as polite and carefully phrased so as to avoid offence, but this is perhaps to ignore the point of view of the Persian recipient. D. de Decker, 'Sur le destinataire de la lettre au roi des Perses (Eusèbe de Césarée, *Vit. Const.* iv. 9–13) et la conversion de l'Arménie à la religion chrétienne', *Persica* 8 (1979), 99–116, correctly observed that the addressee is treated as an inferior (although his complicated hypothesis that the king of Armenia was the recipient is unacceptable).

[12] For a different view of Roman–Persian relations in this period, which blames the Romans for causing the conflicts, see Rubin, 'Diplomacy'; also id. 'Mediterranean' 32 ff.

[13] See E. Chrysos, 'Some Aspects of Roman–Persian Legal Relations', *Κληρονομία* 8 (1976), 1–60. The elaborate ritual of these embassies is most fully recorded by Menander, e.g. 6. 1; 9. 1–3; 18. 6. 1–8.

replaced conflict as the normal climate of relations between the empires. Thus Roman attitudes to the loss of Nisibis slowly developed from outright horror at an unparalleled disgrace to an acceptance of the loss as a necessary concession to the Persians, who in fact acted with surprising humanity:[14] by the late fifth century Theodoret (*HE* iv. 2) could represent the Romans as being rescued from Julian's error by a combination of Jovian's piety and Persian charity. Each empire had more pressing problems on its northern borders to distract attention from potential sources of conflict: the Romans had to contain the devastation of the Balkans by Hun and Goth invaders, while the Hephthalites posed no less serious a threat to the Persians, whom they forced to pay tribute and humiliatingly defeated when provoked to war by Peroz's attack. The common interest in the northern tribes helped to promote the acceptance of a diplomatic vocabulary of mutual co-operation: the two empires were referred to as the two eyes or lights of the world, which had a duty to help each other in the preservation of civilization against the threats of unruly tribes.[15]

The empires removed one source of conflict by agreeing, probably in 422, not to accept each other's Saracen allies if they attempted to secede; at some stage there evolved an arrangement whereby the Romans could be asked to contribute to Persian military expenses, including the cost of garrisoning the Caspian passes, the so-called Gates, although the earliest evidence for this relates to occasions when the Romans refused Persian requests for financial assistance;

[14] The evidence is collected by R. Turcan, 'L'abandon de Nisibe et l'opinion publique', *Mélanges A. Piganiol* (Paris, 1966), ii. 875–90; he tries to distinguish the attitudes of pagans (hostile) from Christians (conciliatory), whereas I prefer a common progression from hostility to acceptance. Themistius, addressing Jovian in 364, naturally praises him for achieving peace with Persia (v. 69 B–C), but remains silent about the price.

[15] Peter the Patrician 13 (negotiations of Galerius and Narses in 297) is the earliest evidence for the application of this image to Rome and Persia, although his mid-6th-c. report may be anachronistic. Such imagery was used to express the relationship of Roman imperial colleagues (*Pan. Lat.* xi. 8. 3–4), and had been adapted in the 4th c. to describe the bond between Old Rome and Constantinople, the New Rome (Themistius vi. 83 C; xxxiv. 27); it was perhaps then extended to describe the peaceful *modus vivendi* with Persia that was gradually emerging. The Persians could easily assimilate the metaphor to the cosmic imagery of Iranian kingship, so that the 'peaceful' Persian sun-king was linked with the 'bellicose' Roman moon-king; in Persian eyes this undoubtedly proved the superiority of the Persian king, but in crises (e.g. Th. Sim. iv. 11) they could flatter the Romans by addressing them as equals (which was probably the Roman conception of the image).

restrictions were placed on new frontier fortifications, and there may even have been a wider agreement that each empire would help the other on foreign campaigns if requested.[16] Relations were sufficiently peaceful and stable for the story to gain popularity that Arcadius had appealed to Yazdgard I to act as guardian for the young Theodosius II.[17] By the early sixth century the principle of co-operation was firmly established, to be exploited and abused in diplomatic exchanges: Justin I urged Kavadh that the empires ought to be friends and not allow themselves to be manipulated by outsiders such as the Huns; Kavadh could demand money from Justinian as one of the obligations of co-operation.[18]

At the start of the sixth century a new phase in Roman–Persian relations began. Although both empires remembered, and continued to use, the rhetoric of peace that had been created in the fifth century, relations came to be dominated by mutual suspicion. Whereas in the fifth century minor differences had usually been settled by diplomacy, they now escalated into major grievances. Both sides took precautions to safeguard their interests and reinforce their influence along the common frontier, thereby contributing to the cycle of suspicion and conflict as events in the Yemen or Caucasus became of central importance to both sides. Kavadh's invasion in 502 initiated the new era of conflict, although from the Persian point of view the basis for friendly relations had already been undermined by the Roman refusal to contribute towards Persian military expenditure (Joshua 18). The Romans appear to have made intermittent contributions, but had then stopped them on the grounds that the Persians were wrongly enjoying the revenues of Nisibis, which they alleged had only been ceded by Jovian for 120 years (cf. Joshua 7); this uncorroborated allegation about Nisibis had probably been invented by the Romans in the mid-480s to justify their refusal to co-operate with the Persians, at a time

[16] Saracens, Malchus 1. 4–7. Roman contributions, Priscus 41. 1; 47; Joshua 18; J. Lydus, *De Mag.* iii. 53. Fortifications, Proc. *Wars* i. 2. 15. Foreign campaigns, Joshua 8, cf. Mal. 449. 20–450. 3. On all this see Rubin, locc. citt. in n. 12 above. The agreements with Persia made by Jovian and Theodosius I in 364 and 384 do not appear to have imposed financial obligations on the Romans, and it was during Theodosius II's reign that the Persian king began to demand money; demands by Persian kings for the payment of outstanding Roman 'debts' do not necessarily prove that the Romans were bound by a formal agreement to make payments.

[17] Proc. *Wars* i. 2. 1–10; Agath. *Hist.* iv. 26. 4–7.

[18] Mal. 415; 449–50: it is perhaps significant that Kavadh demanded money as a gesture of friendship, not as a treaty obligation (cf. above, n. 16).

when the Romans were at last beginning to resolve their Balkan difficulties whereas the Hephthalite victory over Peroz had disrupted the whole Persian empire. Kavadh's attack in 502 achieved dramatic successes with the capture of Theodosiopolis, Martyropolis, and Amida, and it is clear that Roman defences had been neglected during the period of peace:[19] at Edessa hasty repairs had to be made to the walls when the Persians were on the point of attacking, the gates were so weak that they had to be barricaded with blocks of stone, and the general repairs were hindered by a shortage of iron which had to be requisitioned from individual houses (Joshua 52); Batna surrendered to a small force of Persian cavalry because of the bad state of the wall (Joshua 63).

After these initial Persian successes Anastasius' generals managed to stabilize the position in 505, and a seven-year truce was agreed. While the Persians were forced to turn their attentions again to their north-east frontier, Anastasius rapidly organized the construction of a fortified military base at Dara, at the point of the border closest to Nisibis; elsewhere along the frontier he repaired the battered defences of Amida and Edessa, and considerably enlarged the fort of Theodosiopolis; the local governor Eulogius patched up the dilapidated walls of Batna, and similar emergency measures were probably undertaken at other cities and forts in the frontier region. Kavadh protested against the construction of Dara, which threatened Nisibis and contravened the fifth-century agreement banning new fortifications, but although the fortress was a further source of grievance and suspicion for the Persians hostilities were not resumed when the truce ended in 512. In 515, however, an invasion across the Caucasus by the Sabir Huns caused much devastation in Armenia and Cappadocia, and prompted Anastasius to repair the defences of these regions (Mal. 406. 15–18). The outbreak of the second war of the century illustrates the conflict in Persia between the traditions of co-operation with Rome and the more recent atmosphere of suspicion: Kavadh was prepared to trust Justin I to uphold Khusro's claim to the throne, but was suspicious of the extension of Roman influence in the sub-Caucasus regions, where a combination of military, political, and religious factors had raised tensions. Justin's refusal to adopt Khusro

[19] Cf. Whitby, 'Mesopotamia' 725–6; Gray, '*Limes*' 30; Parker, 'Retrospective' 648; Theodosius, *Novel* v. 3 (441: *Cod. Theod.* ii. 15–16), is a belated attempt to improve defences at Theodosiopolis and Satala, whose vulnerability to Persian attacks had suddenly become apparent.

was sufficient excuse for Kavadh to attack the Romans in 527. The third war was the product of Persian suspicions: Khusro, fearing that Justinian's western conquests would allow him in due course to overwhelm Persia, exploited a minor disagreement between the client Arabs to break the 'endless' peace in 540. In these conflicts the Persians tended to be most successful in the early stages when the Romans were unprepared (as in 502 and 540) or were disorganized (in 527/8). Once the Romans recovered from the initial surprise the fighting was more evenly balanced: Celer and Areobindus in 505, Mundus in 531, and Belisarius in 541 reversed Persian successes, and, provided there was time for essential preparations, the defences of Roman cities could usually withstand Persian assaults even in the absence of a Roman field army (e.g. Martyropolis in 531, Edessa in 544).[20]

The Romans regarded the Persians as opportunist aggressors, and neither Procopius (*Wars* i. 2. 6–10) nor Agathias (*History* iv. 26. 4–7) could understand the mentality of co-operation which had supposedly produced Arcadius' faith in Yazdgard as guardian of Theodosius II. Agathias' attitude was more anti-Persian than Procopius', whom indeed he criticizes for expressing admiration for Arcadius' confidence, and this general decline in trust can be seen in the terms of Roman–Persian treaties. Under the Endless Peace of 532 the two sides had exchanged forts that they had captured in Lazica and Persarmenia, the Romans had agreed to pay 11,000 pounds of gold for the defence of the Caucasus passes and to remove the military headquarters of the *dux Mesopotamiae* from the obnoxious fortress of Dara, and Justinian and Khusro undertook to provide each other with money or men in case of need (Proc. *Wars* i. 22; Mal. 477–8). The mutual trust of the fifth century might appear to have been re-created, but the negotiations leading to the fifty years' peace of 561/2 and its actual terms, recorded in great detail by Menander (6. 1) reveal deep suspicions. The Persians wanted the Romans to make an advance deposit of forty, or at least thirty years' payments; the Romans were understandably reluctant, but eventually agreed to annual payments of 30,000 solidi ($416\frac{2}{3}$ pounds of gold) with lump-sum advances to cover the first seven years ($2{,}916\frac{2}{3}$ pounds) and then the next three years ($1{,}249\frac{2}{3}$ pounds); detailed provisions covered the movement of

[20] For the course of these 6th-c. wars, see Bury, *HLRE* (ii) ii. 10–15, 79–123, and Stein, *Bas-Empire* ii. 92–101, 105–6, 267–73, 283–96, 485–516.

Saracens and other traders and of private individuals between the empires, and procedures were agreed for settling disputes and claims for compensation; neither side was to fortify places near the frontier, or to attack tribes or nations subject to the other;[21] the rights of the Christian inhabitants of Persia were guaranteed. This treaty explicitly recognized some of the ways in which suspicion and conflict could emerge, through the unsupervised activities of Saracens and merchants, through the creation of a defensive umbrella, or through indirect expansion at the expense of minor nations. During the sixth century Roman belief in Persian aggressiveness had encouraged them to improve their defences, to extend their diplomatic contacts in a search for anti-Persian allies, and finally to attack when Justin II believed that he had established a decisive advantage. Before examining the twenty years' war initiated by Justin, three general topics merit consideration: Roman fortifications, the attitude towards the empire of the population of its eastern provinces, and the radius of Roman diplomacy.

(iii) ROMAN DEFENCES

The success of Kavadh's invasion in 502 had proved the weakness of Roman frontier fortifications, and Anastasius took important steps to rectify this. The expansion of Theodosiopolis and the construction of Dara significantly improved the strength of the frontier, but in view of the fierce Persian reaction to Dara it is likely that elsewhere only limited repairs were carried out (e.g. at Batna and Edessa). Much more remained to be done in 527 when war with Persia was renewed, and this work was initiated by Justinian:[22] the Anastasian defences of Dara and Theodosiopolis were now greatly strengthened; Martyropolis was transformed into a secure base for one of the *duces Armeniae*,

[21] Men. 6. 1. 303–407, with Blockley's notes. Theophylact (iii. 9. 10) rounds the payment figure up to 500 pounds per year (note: in the translation of this paragraph, 'fifty' is in error for 'five hundred').

[22] Justinian's achievements have been questioned by B. Croke and J. Crow, 'Procopius and Dara', *JRS* 73 (1983), 143–59, who prefer to credit Anastasius with the restoration of the frontier, but a more sensible balance between the contributions of the two emperors had already been suggested by Gray, '*Limes*' 30; cf. also L. M. Whitby, 'Procopius' Description of Dara (*Buildings* II. 1–3)', in Kennedy, *Defence* 737–83; 'Procopius' Description of Martyropolis (*de Aedificiis* iii. 2. 10–14)', *BS* 44 (1984), 177–82; and for more detailed analysis of frontier development, id. 'Mesopotamia'.

with thicker and higher walls; a new fort at Citharizon was constructed for the other *dux*. There were attempts to make the frontier more impenetrable for raids and invasions: in 528 Belisarius tried to fortify Thanurium on the Khabour river to block Arab movements, and to construct a new fort at Mindon on the frontier near Nisibis, probably to command one of the routes from the Mesopotamian plain to the Tur Abdin plateau (Zach. ix. 5; Proc. *Wars* i. 13. 2–8). These efforts failed since Belisarius had insufficient forces to prevent the Persians from interfering, but considerable progress was achieved in building up defences within the Tur Abdin plateau. In the fourth century Roman control of this area had depended loosely on the forts constructed by Constantius II at Ciphas on the Tigris and at an unknown site to the south of the plateau, but Justinian now extended Roman protection over the numerous villages that had sprung up on the Tur Abdin during late antiquity. Forts at Mardin, Zerzevan Kale, Fafi, Savur, Hisarkaya, Rhabdion, Ciphas, and probably also major centres such as Hah and Midiat, constituted the most important addition to Roman frontier defences in the sixth century apart from Dara.[23] The precise date for the expansion of Roman control over the Tur Abdin is unknown, but the various fortifications there must be later than Dara and the most plausible date for their construction is during the next period of hostilities (527–32). Strengthened defences had an impact on the morale both of the empire's inhabitants and of its enemies: in the early seventh century, although Khusro II managed to capture Dara, his army was so demoralized by the eighteen-month-long siege that it failed to follow up the success at once (Sebeos 21).

To the south of the Euphrates, Roman defences depended largely on the protection afforded by the Ghassanid federation. The growing importance of the Ghassanids had been recognized by Anastasius at the end of his reign when their cult centre of Sergiopolis was accorded metropolitan status and adorned with grand ecclesiastical buildings. This development continued during the 520s, and, some time after 527, Justinian allowed the phylarch Harith to assume the title of king. However, he also transformed Sergiopolis into a strong Roman base with an impressive set of walls and cisterns, a centre from which

[23] For descriptions and photographs of remains at many of these sites, see Bell, *Churches*, G. Wiessner, *Studien zur spätantiken und frühchristlichen Kunst: Nordmesopotamische Ruinenstätten* (Wiesbaden, 1980), and F. W. Deichmann and U. Peschlow, *Zwei spätantike Ruinenstätten in Nordmesopotamien* (Sitzungsb. Bayer. Akad. d. Wiss., phil.-hist. Kl., Munich 1977).

Ghassanid actions could be observed and, if possible, controlled, since the inter-tribal rivalries of Arab client states might well conflict with the interests of the imperial patrons, whether Romans or Persians. The rise of the Ghassanids reduced the importance of frontier fortifications and their garrisons of *limitanei* along the *limes Arabicus* in Jordan, but changes in the occupation of forts point to a reorganization of defences in the light of altered priorities, not the wholesale desertion of the system.[24] In Sinai, as at Sergiopolis, an important religious centre was exploited as a military base from which the Romans could try to exercise control over nomadic Arabs.[25] The Arabs, able to conduct a semi-independent existence on the fringes of Roman or Persian authority, were recognized as a source of tension whose shifting allegiances, personal feuds, and generally unsettled existence might contribute to wider conflict: thus in 536, drought forced the Persian Arabs to cross the frontier in search of grazing (Marc. Com. *ad an.*), the type of unsupervised movement that the treaty of 561/2 tried to eliminate (Men. 6. 1. 320–2, 332–40);[26] in 539 a dispute between Ghassanids and Lakhmids about the pasture-lands in the vicinity of Palmyra, the so-called 'strata', contributed towards Khusro's decision to attack the Romans (Proc. *Wars* ii. 1. 1–11)—on this occasion the limits to Roman appreciation of Arab priorities are revealed by the comment of the ambassador Strategius that the disputed territory was 'worthless, being completely devoid of animals and plants'; towards the end of Maurice's reign Arab actions threatened to destroy the peace between the empires (Th. Sim. viii. 1. 1–8). It was perhaps to avoid such misunderstandings that in 532, in conjunction with the negotiations leading to the Endless Peace, Justinian had separately exchanged gifts with the Lakhmid king al-Mundhir (Mal. 466. 18–467. 14), an arrangement which may have been intermittently continued for several years (Men. 6. 1. 525–8).

The Persian invasions of 540–4 prompted another period of restoration and reconstruction, particularly in the cities and towns of Syria and Osrhoene, where defences had not been maintained in peak

[24] Sergiopolis, Whitby, 'Mesopotamia' 724, and 'Notes on some Justinianic Constructions', *BNJ* 23 (1987), 89–112 at 102ff. Arab rivalries, J. S. Trimingham, *Christianity among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times* (London, 1979), 197f. Frontier in Jordan and Syria, Liebeschuetz, 'Defences' 494–6; Parker, 'Survey'.

[25] For discussion of Procopius' account (*Bld.* v. 8. 4–9), see Cameron, *Procopius* 96–8.

[26] See I. Kawar, 'The Arabs in the Peace Treaty of A.D. 561', *Arabica* 3 (1956), 181–213.

condition: Antioch was captured in 540 through the weakness of a specific section of the wall, Callinicum fell in 542 when the Romans were caught in the middle of the systematic replacement of the city wall. Major repairs at Chalcis were completed in 550/1, and probably at about the same time at Cyrrhus and many other cities; these major reconstructions were financed by the imperial administration, but in the countryside local magnates were probably also funding private constructions for their own and their neighbours' defence against marauding Persians or Arabs.[27]

These Roman fortifications had two distinct roles. All the towns and cities of the eastern provinces had to be able to defend themselves against surprise attacks, even if they could not withstand a serious siege, since the frontier defences would not prevent the passage of all Persian or Arab raiding parties; as with the Danube defences, a mobile army was essential to supplement the passive protection afforded by the fortifications, but Anastasius' troubles in Isauria and the Balkans and Justinian's preoccupation with the reconquest of the west in the 530s meant that there were insufficient troops to spare for the active defence of the east during periods of supposed peace. Some important fortifications near the frontier also had an aggressive role. The best-known example is Dara, which was built to provide a base for operations against Nisibis (Zach. vii. 6).[28] Dara's aggressive function south of the Tur Abdin was matched to the north by Martyropolis, which served as 'a place of ambush and of refuge' that enabled Roman armies to ravage Arzanene (Zach. ix. 6). Further north, Theodosiopolis was a base from which the Romans could extend their influence over the Tzani and beyond (Men. 18. 6. 80–5). In the late sixth century the Roman forts in the Tur Abdin, notably Mardin and Rhabdion, took over the offensive role that had been performed by Dara, so that the loss of Dara, which Procopius (*Bld.* ii. 1. 13) had claimed would be a disaster for the whole Roman state, did not have a decisive effect on subsequent operations. The significance of border fortifications is revealed by the Persian reaction to Belisarius' attempted fortification

[27] Proc. *Wars* ii. 8. 8–15; 21. 30–1; *Bld.* ii. 10; 7. 17; 11. 1, 8; 11. 4; *IGL* Syr. ii. 348–9; cf. Whitby, 'Mesopotamia' 729, and 'Notes' (art. cit. in n. 24) 94ff., Liebeschuetz, 'Defences' 492–3. Prentice, *Inscriptions* no. 871, records a tower constructed in 543.

[28] Cf. Procopius' references to Dara as an *ἐπιτείχισμα* (e.g. *Bld.* ii. 1. 4). Nisibis itself was an aggressive base close to potential objectives in Syria and Mesopotamia, 'a bridgehead on cultivated land on the Roman side of a belt of desert separating the two empires' (Liebeschuetz, 'Defences' 490 n. 36).

of Mindon: Kavadh could claim that it would have been a greater threat even than Dara (Proc. *Wars* i. 16. 7), since he presumably feared that the Romans would now be able to encroach on Nisibis from the north or north-east as well as from the west, and the Persians ensured that Belisarius' efforts were frustrated. Fortifications near the frontier had important strategic and tactical functions, by extending influence and strengthening control over new areas. The construction of a new fort entailed careful reconnaissance and preparations; provisions sufficient for three or four months had to be assembled, and water-supplies ensured by means of earthenware jars, wooden barrels, or even temporary wooden cisterns (*Strat.* x. 4). The whole process was a delicate operation that could only be contemplated if the side organizing the construction had a decisive superiority in the field and could prevent enemy harassment; if the construction could be successfully completed, it constituted a military achievement at least as significant as the destruction of an enemy stronghold or a victory in battle.

(iv) MONOPHYSITE LOYALTIES

The attitude towards the Roman empire of the inhabitants of the eastern frontier was crucial, since Roman defences depended to a considerable extent on the loyalty of the civilian population; this had to resist repeated Persian sieges and raids as well as the depredations of Roman soldiers, who, if they were Arian Germans, might have seemed more foreign than the Persian army, which contained some Christian Armenians and Syriac-speakers from lower Mesopotamia. The majority of the eastern population was Monophysite, and its loyalty to the Chalcedonian empire of Justin I and his successors might have been weakened by religious differences. However, the extent of active persecution of Monophysites in the eastern provinces should not be overestimated.[29] Justinian was careful not to create martyrs, and the anti-Monophysite pressure during his reign consisted mainly

[29] Most of the evidence for persecution is provided by Monophysite sources, particularly John of Ephesus' *Lives of the Eastern Saints*. This must be used carefully, since John's account of Chalcedonian persecution in the early 6th c. may have been intended to divert Monophysites from their later schisms by recalling the period when persecution had united their church; John's account, in spite of its possible exaggerations, does not suggest more than sporadic and localized persecution.

of the removal of bishops and the displacement of monastic communities, so that religious continuity might be broken and Chalcedonian doctrines gradually accepted. Even after this process was thwarted by the creation of a separate Monophysite hierarchy in the 540s, there was no aggressive persecution, and there is no evidence that Monophysites were ever treated as harshly as the Samaritans, who were regarded as real religious enemies.[30] The Monophysites preferred the rule of Roman heretics to that of Persian heathens, and there is no sign of Monophysite treachery to parallel those of Jewish or Samaritan hostility to the empire.[31] The monks, presumably Monophysite, whose carelessness allowed the Persians to capture Amida in 503, are not accused of treachery by Greek sources, even though their archimandrite was a Persian (M. Syr. ix. 7, p. 158); Sittas betrayed Martyropolis to the Persians because of a personal grudge (Evag. vi. 14, p. 231. 30–3), and his religious affiliation is not recorded. In 571 the Armenian Monophysites turned to the empire when the Persians tried to introduce Zoroastrian practices into Armenia; in the early seventh century monks, again presumably Monophysites, defended Mardin after the flight of the Roman garrison and asked their bishop for permission to kill Persians (M. Syr. x. 25, p. 378). Khusro II, who had experience of Monophysite–Nestorian rivalries at his own court, was the first Persian king to realize that divisions between Monophysites and Chalcedonians could be exploited: on capturing Edessa in 609/10 he demanded that the Christians abandon the empire and the Chalcedonian faith; they could remain in Edessa if they became Jacobites (Monophysites) or Nestorians, but if they refused they would be killed (Agapius 460). Khusro's prayers and dedications to St Sergius in 591–3 show that he already appreciated the importance in Mesopotamia of Monophysite loyalties. It is possible that the experience of liberation under Khusro II contributed to the ambivalent attitude that some Mesopotamian Monophysites displayed towards the Arab invaders in the 630s, when cities often surrendered quickly in order to obtain favourable

[30] e.g. Justin II's anti-Samaritan edict, *Novel* 144 (*CJ* iii. 709–10); if Roman emperors had regarded Monophysites as treacherous enemies whose spirit had to be broken at all costs, they would have imposed serious disqualifications such as a ban on receiving inheritances; cf. G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World* (London, 1981), 483–4 with nn. 33, 39 (pp. 652–3).

[31] Joshua 58, a Jewish attempt to betray Tela/Constantina; Antiochus Strategus 10, Jewish revenge on Christians after the Persian capture of Jersualem; Theoph. 178. 22–179. 14, a Samaritan appeal to Khusro I.

treatment rather than resist to the bitter end in the faint hope of the arrival of a Roman relief force. However, there were no signs of such uncertainty in the sixth century: Theophylact praises the courage and loyalty of the inhabitants of the Tur Abdin, the people of Mardin prayed all day for Roman victory at Solachon, and country-dwellers near Fafi tried to betray the Persian garrison occupying their town (Th. Sim. ii. 1. 1–2; 3. 9; 18. 7).[32]

(v) DIPLOMACY

Conflict of diplomatic interests was a major factor that contributed to tension between the empires in the sixth century: Justin II's attack on Persia was preceded by disagreements concerning the Homerites, the Caucasian tribes, the Central Asian Turks, and finally the Persian Armenians. Only the Armenian revolt was an issue that affected the Roman–Persian frontier; the other three issues reflect the range of Roman diplomacy in the sixth century and point to the main areas where the diplomacy of the two empires might clash.

In Justinian's reign the Romans had cultivated relations with the inhabitants of the areas adjoining the south end of the Red Sea, the Axumites in Ethiopia and the Homerites in the Yemen: Julian led an embassy to both nations in 530/1 (Proc. *Wars* i. 20. 9–11; Mal. 456. 24ff.; Theoph. 244. 14ff.); Nonnosus led at least one mission to the Axumites and wrote an account of his actions (Photius *Bibl.* cod. 3). Continued diplomatic contact is suggested by Procopius, *Wars* i. 20. 13; an embassy, probably from the Axumites, reached Constantinople in 550/1 (Mal. 477. 7–8), and a subsequent mission may be referred to by Paul the Silentiary (*Ecphrasis* 230).[33] The Axumites and Homerites were both ruled by Christians, and Justinian hoped to use their common religion to persuade both rulers to help against Persia: the Axumites were to break the Persian monopoly of the sea-borne silk-trade, while the Homerites were to organize an attack on Persia with the aid of the Maddene Arabs. The Homerite attack failed, but

[32] For a survey of Chalcedonian–Monophysite relations in this period, see Allen, *Evagrius*, ch. 2.

[33] For the 550/1 embassy, cf. also the fragment of Malalas in A. Mai, *Spicilegium Romanum* (Roman, 1839), ii, *De Frag. Hist. Tusc.* 23–4, and Theoph. 226. 33–227. 2; in general on relations with this area, see N. Pigulevskaja, *Byzanz auf dem Wegen nach Indien* (Berlin, 1969). A welcome new study is promised by Rubin (see 'Diplomacy' 688).

the Persians had been alerted to the intentions of Roman diplomacy: in 540 Khusro cited the Homerites as an example of Roman ambition that threatened Persian interests (Proc. *Wars* ii. 3. 40–1). When an opportunity arose, probably in about 565, the Persians supported a native claimant to the Homerite throne against the pro-Roman ruler supported by the Axumites, and they subsequently sent a Persian governor to take over the country after their client had failed to consolidate his control (Tabari, pp. 220–37). The Romans regarded this peripheral Persian success as an attack on their vital interests; it therefore increased Justin II's suspicions of Persian intentions and his own enthusiasm for war (J. Epi. 2; Theoph. Byz. 3).

Among the Caucasian tribes, Roman and Persian interests clashed because both empires wished to have a network of reliable allied buffer-states and to control the movement of the nomadic tribes across the Caucasus, either preventing incursions or diverting the nomads into the territory of the opposing empire (Proc. *Wars* ii. 28. 22). The Romans feared that control of Lazica might allow the Persians to build up a powerful fleet on the Black Sea and so pose a direct threat to Constantinople, while the Persians feared that Roman domination in this region would lead to invasions of Azerbaijan, the religious heart of the Sassanian empire, increased problems in Persarmenia, and, possibly, greater Roman contacts with the tribes that threatened Persia's frontiers to the east of the Caspian. Up till the end of the fifth century the Romans, although they maintained friendly relations with some tribes in this area (Proc. *Wars* i. 10. 9), and had intervened in Lazica in the 450s to resolve an obscure dispute about a joint kingship (Priscus 33), had been content to leave the Persians with the primary responsibility, and expense, of defending the Caucasus passes: this attitude is reflected in the Syriac *Christian Romance of Alexander* (153–8), which describes the construction by Alexander for the benefit of the Persians of an iron gate to keep out the barbarian tribes.[34] The invasion of the Sabir Huns in 515 showed the Romans the dangers of this arrangement, and encouraged them to take their own defensive measures in the region.[35] At the same time, the Persians had probably been prompted to strengthen their influence over the Caucasian tribes, and Kavadh's decision to force Zoroastrian

[34] This text is a composite work of the early 6th and early 7th cc.; the description of the gate is part of the first stratum.

[35] For a summary of Caucasian history in this period, see Toumanoff, *Studies* 360–82.

practices on the Christian Iberians was one aspect of this consolidation (Proc. *Wars* i. 12. 3–4). The Iberians and their neighbours the Laz inevitably turned to Rome for protection, and the king of the Laz asked to be baptized: 'We wish thee (Justin) to make us Christians like thyself, and we shall then be subjects of the Roman empire'; when Kavadh angrily protested at this Roman interference in a Persian area, Justin replied: 'We have not taken from thee any of thy subjects . . . how could I forbid one who desired to return to the true God . . . and when he became a Christian, we permitted him to return to his own country' (J. Nik. 90. 35–41; cf. Mal. 412–13).

In spite of Justin's protestations to Kavadh about the minimal significance of his actions, the grand reception for the Laz king at Constantinople was a sign that the Romans had decided to compete for influence in this area. Justin sent an embassy to the Hun king living near the Caucasus to enlist his help for the Iberians, admittedly to no avail, and for a time Roman soldiers garrisoned the forts on the frontier between Lazica and Iberia (Proc. *Wars* i. 12. 6–19). The prominence of Lazica in the campaigns of Justinian's reign, and in particular Khusro's determination to fight on in this region after the agreement of the Mesopotamian truce in 545 is an indication of the importance of the competition of interest in the sub-Caucasian kingdoms. In spite of set-backs caused by the harshness of their administration (Proc. *Wars* ii. 15. 1–13), the Romans ultimately managed to maintain their influence in Lazica, so that the Persians were kept away from the Black Sea and the Romans controlled Lazica and the territory of the Tzani as buffers against any invasion from the north-east. The Persians, however, remained in control of the Caspian Gates, and refused to accept Roman claims that the small region of Suania should be treated as part of neighbouring Lazica and be regarded as a Roman dependency (Men. fr. 6. 1. 494ff.). Justin II continued negotiations over the status of Suania, but the failure and discomfiture of his ambassador, John son of Comentiolus,[36] contributed to Justin's resentment against the Persians (Men. 9. 1–3). After a Khazar raid across the Caucasus and into Persarmenia and Azerbaijan, Khusro established a Persian *marzbān* and settled troops as feudal overlords of the region;[37] this increased Persian presence south

[36] Stein, *Studien* 31 n. 8, preferred the form Domnentiolus for the father's name.

[37] G. Widengren, 'Xosrau Anōšurvān, les Hephthalites et les peuples turcs', *Orientalia Suecana* i (1952), 69–94 at 91–2.

of the Caucasus may also have affected Persarmenia, and the arrival in the vicinity of large numbers of Zoroastrians may have prompted fears among the Persarmenians that they would have to tolerate the polluting sight of Zoroastrian rites in their midst.

Further afield, the Turks of Central Asia only entered the horizons of Roman diplomacy in the early years of Justin II's reign, but they soon became the most important source of diplomatic conflict because they could threaten Persia's vulnerable north-east frontier. The memory of the Hephthalite victories over Peroz, and the ignominious tribute which had been imposed, made Persia deeply suspicious of Roman contacts in this area. The Hephthalites had been crushed in 558–60,[38] after Khusro made an alliance with the Turks, but the effect of this was to remove a useful buffer and leave Persia in direct contact with the rapidly expanding power of the Turks. Persian fears are expressed in the *Life of Anušīrwan*: Khusro pretended complete indifference to the treachery of the Turkish Chagan, who had broken his oath not to receive Roman ambassadors, but commented, 'I did not want him to see that I was alarmed by his friendship with the Caesar, and that I was afraid of such a move on his part. I showed my complete lack of interest in all that had passed between them. Then I made haste to prepare the defences of the eastern forts and cities . . .'.[39] There was a diplomatic confrontation between Roman and Persian envoys, either at the Chagan's court (J. Eph. vi. 23), or during a Turkish raid into Persia in which the Roman ambassador Zemarchus was asked to participate (Men. 10. 3. 64–89), and the Persian envoy was put to shame. The Romans had not initiated these diplomatic links with the Turks, since the Chagan had approached Justin in order to sell silk (Men. 10. 1), and the Turks were also interested in pursuing the fugitive remnant of the Avars. The Persians, however, at once showed their displeasure by attempting to have the Roman embassy ambushed as it returned from the Chagan; the Alans betrayed the Persians (J. Epi. 2; Men. 10. 5), and this bungled interference with Roman diplomacy will have increased Justin II's willingness to accept a Turkish proposal that a co-ordinated attack should be launched against Persia from east and west (Men. 13. 5).

[38] Stein, *Bas-Empire* ii. 518 and n. 1; for the sources, see Widengren, op. cit.

[39] M. Grignaschi, 'Quelques spécimens de la littérature sassanide conservés dans les bibliothèques d'Istanbul', *JA* 254 (1966), 1–142 at 16–28, esp. 24–5; although this is a 7th-c. work, its description of Khusro's attitude to the Turks is plausible.

Chronological Table of Eastern Events (572–591)

571/2		Persarmenians plot revolt.
572	spring	Sebukht's embassy to Justin II.
	summer	Marcian appointed commander in east.
	autumn	Raid into Arzanene.
573	spring	Marcian's victory at Sargathon; sieges of Thebothon and Nisibis, dismissal of Marcian.
		Romans flee from Nisibis at arrival of Khusro.
	summer	Khusro besieges Dara.
	winter	Capture of Dara; Justin II goes mad.
574	spring	Empress Sophia sends Zacharias to Khusro; one-year truce concluded.
	December	Tiberius appointed Caesar; embassy to Khusro.
574/5	winter/spring	Tiberius' ambassadors Trajan and Zacharias start to negotiate three-year truce.
575		Tiberius appoints Justinian as general in east, and recruits new army.
	summer	Terms of three-year truce agreed.
	autumn	Theodore (son of Bacchus) begins embassy to Khusro.
576	spring	Khusro invades Armenia, and forces Theodore to accompany expedition to Theodosiopolis.
	summer	Failure of Khusro's campaign in Armenia.
	autumn	Romans ravage northern Persia.
		Khusro opens peace negotiations.
577	winter/spring	Peace negotiations on frontier.
	summer	Tamkhusro defeats Justinian in Armenia; death of Justinian.
	autumn/winter	Persians protract peace talks to delay Roman military preparations.
578	winter/spring	Peace talks break down.
		Maurice appointed commander in east.
	spring	Persians anticipate end of truce by forty days.
	summer/autumn	Maurice's first campaign.
	October	Death of Justin II; accession of Tiberius.
578/9	winter	Tiberius opens peace negotiations.

579	February/March	Death of Khusro I; accession of Hormizd.
	spring/summer	Roman envoys in Persia; negotiations are deliberately protracted by Persians.
	autumn/winter	Romans prepare to renew war.
580	spring/summer	Al-Mundhir the Ghassanid engaged in religious diplomacy (reconciling Monophysite groups).
	summer	Maurice's second campaign.
581	summer	Maurice and al-Mundhir campaign down Euphrates. Persians ravage Upper Mesopotamia and defeat Romans in Armenia.
581/2	winter	Tiberius attempts to negotiate with Hormizd. Arrest of al-Mundhir after quarrel with Maurice.
582	June	Tamkhusro defeated and killed at Constantina.
	summer	Defeated Persian troops camp near Dara.
	August	Death of Tiberius; accession of Maurice.
	autumn	John Mystacon appointed commander in east. Campaign in Arzanene.
583	summer	Campaign in Arzanene.
	summer/autumn	Romans capture Akbas.
583/4	winter	Persians open negotiations.
584	spring/summer	Roman embassy in Persia. Philippicus replaces John Mystacon; recruits troops and strengthens Monocarton.
	autumn	Philippicus ravages Beth Arabaye.
585	summer	Campaign in Arzanene.
586	spring	Persians renew peace talks. Roman victory at Solachon.
	summer	Philippicus campaigns in Arzanene; siege of Chlomaron.
	autumn	Heraclius ravages Persian territory.
587	summer	Romans besiege Persian fortresses.
588	winter/spring	Priscus appointed to replace Philippicus.
	Easter	Mutiny of Roman army.
	May/June	Philippicus reappointed commander; mutiny continues, with Germanus elected as leader.
	summer	Germanus defends Constantina; Roman victory near Martyropolis.
588/9	winter	Attempts to reconcile army.
589	Easter	End of mutiny; Philippicus accepted as general.
	spring	Martyropolis betrayed to Persians by Sittas. Maurice organizes invasion of Azerbaijan by Iberian tribes under Guaram.
	summer	Philippicus besieges Martyropolis, but is defeated by Persian reinforcements.

		Vahram opposes Romans in Azerbaijan; Romanus defeats Vahram in Suania.
	autumn	Comentiolus replaces Philippicus as commander in east, and defeats Persians at Sisarbanon. Vahram revolts against Hormizd.
589/90	winter	Comentiolus besieges Martyropolis and captures Akbas. Vahram camps near river Zab; Hormizd's general Farrukhan opposes him, but is murdered.
590	6 February	Deposition of Hormizd.
	15 February	Coronation of Khusro II.
	20 February	Vahram and Khusro confront each other near Ctesiphon.
	28 February	Vahram attacks Khusro by night.
	1 March	Flight of Khusro to Roman empire.
	9 March	Coronation of Vahram.
	spring/summer	Khusro appeals to Maurice for help. Unsuccessful coup against Vahram; Vindoe flees to Azerbaijan and Armenia.
	summer	Maurice decides to support Khusro; preparations begin for expedition to reinstate him.
590/1	autumn/winter	Khusro gains support in Mesopotamia. Return of Martyropolis to Romans. Vahram prepares to resist Khusro.
591	January	Hormizd's general Zatsparham approaches Nisibis.
	February	Capture of Zatsparham.
	spring	Khusro advances to Dara, and returns city to Romans.
	spring/summer	Romans and Khusro advance to Tigris. Mahbodh sent to attack Lower Mesopotamia.
	summer	Khusro and Vahram manœuvre near Zab rivers. Armies cross Zagros mountains to Azerbaijan.
	late summer	Romans and Khusro defeat Vahram near Canzak. Roman troops return home.

8

The Sources

(i) THEOPHYLACT

(*a*) *Theophylact and John of Epiphania*

The *History* of Theophylact is the main surviving source for the Roman–Persian wars of 572–91, but it is decidedly not that of an eyewitness reporter (cf. above chs. 2(iii), 4(i)(*a*)). Writing over a generation after the latest events he was describing, he relied on written sources for his information; it is fortunate that his major source for eastern material can be identified, namely the account by John of Epiphania (*FHG* iv. 272–6). John, like his cousin the ecclesiastical historian Evagrius, was employed as a lawyer by Gregory Patriarch of Antioch. He considered that he was well qualified as a historian because he had had the opportunity to talk to prominent figures, including Khusro II and other leading Persians, not only during his work for Gregory but also when he accompanied the prefect George on an embassy to Persia at an unknown date in the 590s (John § 1).[1]

John had been inspired to compose his *History* by the conviction that Khurso's flight to the Roman empire and subsequent restoration in 591 were events of the utmost importance, and these constituted the climax to his work. However, as a prelude he undertook to record the Persian revolt against Hormizd that precipitated Khusro's exile, and to provide a brief account of the earlier course of the war from its origins in 572. His *History* comprised more than one book, since the title contains a reference to book i; its overall length is unknown, but examination of Theophylact's text suggests that it was perhaps equivalent to about 100 Teubner pages, with the first third covering the early history of the war (572–89), the second Vahram's revolt and Khusro's flight, and the last Khusro's restoration. John probably did not begin to collect information till 591, when the full significance of Khusro's flight became apparent, following his successful reinstate-

[1] For George's embassy, cf. below, pp. 234–5.

ment and the conclusion of peace between the two empires. The *History* had begun to take shape by 593/4, since Evagrius could refer to its subject-matter, although he noted that it had not yet been published (v. 24, p. 219. 18–26; cf. below ch. 8(ii)(*c*)); it must have been completed some time before 602, when Maurice's overthrow and Khusro's invasion of the empire would have altered the assessment of the events of 590/1.

John's position and distinguished contacts should have provided him with considerable information on Persian affairs during Vahram's revolt and Khusro's sojourn in Roman territory, but they are unlikely to have supplied all the evidence needed for the compilation of an accurate history of the whole of the twenty years' war. Information about events two decades in the past may have been difficult to find. Although Evagrius was probably collecting information during the 580s and could have noted events as they occurred, his reports of military actions contain several chronological and factual mistakes,[2] and he virtually admitted that his account was prejudiced in favour of Philippicus (vi. 3, pp. 224. 14–18). It would have been harder for John, writing longer after the events, to find detailed evidence; thus it would not be surprising if the early stages of John's work were much less detailed, and possibly less accurate, than his treatment of events following Vahram's revolt. John's full-scale narrative probably began with the Suania campaign in 589 (Th. Sim. iii. 6. 6ff.): at any rate, in Theophylact's derivative account there is a noticeable increase in the length of coverage at this point, and although Theophylact himself did not regard these actions in Suania as of central importance, their beginning is marked by a regnal-year date, a rare chronological indication which Theophylact most probably lifted from John.[3] Even in the main section of John's *History*, covering the years 590–1, there are likely to have been some variations in the detail and quality of the narrative: thus he seems to have been well informed about events at Ctesiphon in January and February 590, which must have been discussed in detail within the Patriarch Gregory's entourage after Khusro's flight; on the other hand his account of the military campaign to restore Khusro was perhaps less clear (at least Theophylact's reworking of it is), and John may have had access to less

[2] See Allen, *Evagrius* 235, 263ff.

[3] Cf. iii. 9. 4, a regnal date for the outbreak of war in 572, certainly derived from John of Epiphania (§ 2). Theophylact used an expansive description of time (iii. 8. 9) to highlight his choice of the significant moment in Vahram's revolt.

first-hand information for these actions since neither Gregory of Antioch nor Domitian of Melitene accompanied this expedition (Th. Sim. v. 2. 7; 5. 3).

The surviving fragment of John contains the first five chapters of his work, covering the outbreak of the war and events down to the conclusion of a three-year truce in Mesopotamia in 575. Comparison of this fragment with the relevant section of Theophylact (iii. 9. 3–12. 9) provides a good opportunity to examine in detail Theophylact's handling of a source, and reveals both the extent of Theophylact's dependence upon John and his willingness to incorporate material from other sources. It is necessary to investigate his use of John, and to consider how much information he might have derived from other sources, and what these other sources might have been. Two general points must be borne in mind during this investigation. First, John's history had been composed in a very different political atmosphere from that prevailing when Theophylact was writing. For John, Maurice's generosity towards Khusro probably appeared as the sign of the start of a new era in Roman–Persian relations, and it was the expectation of this which enhanced the importance of Khusro's exile and return; for Theophylact, Khusro II displayed his true intentions by invading the Roman empire in the seventh century, and so he might have chosen to reinterpret John's descriptions of Khusro's actions in the light of subsequent events. Second, Theophylact's use of John in this passage cannot necessarily be taken as representative of his general practice in handling his sources. Theophylact was using John in this section to compose a narrative flashback, and so might have chosen to abridge John more heavily than when using him to compose the main historical narrative. Even though John's account was a brief prelude to the main subject of his history, there were still details which Theophylact could omit without seriously affecting the narrative: for example, he excised the names of the Roman commanders in Arzanene (iii. 10. 2), and of the Persian commander at Nisibis (iii. 10. 4), some of the details of the Persian capture of Dara, including the name of the Roman general and the fact that Magnus was encamped at Mardin (iii. 11. 2). He also omitted references to winter and spring (iii. 10. 4–5, although noting the start of the new year), he substituted 'many' for 'ten' of the number of days of the Roman attack on Thebothon (iii. 10. 5), used the general term 'soldiery' (iii. 10. 7) for John's more informative 'Persians and nomads', and failed to report the Persian advance from Dara to

Constantina (iii. 12. 9). Interesting and useful details have disappeared, particularly names, but Theophylact was keen to combine elegance and brevity, and none of these omissions is of major importance. His account is still a comprehensible and reasonably accurate narrative of events. Another way in which this section of Theophylact is not typical of his normal handling of sources is that he was able to check and to supplement John's material because, exceptionally, he could easily find a second account of the period, namely the much longer narrative of Menander Protector; when such a good second source was not available, it would have been much harder for Theophylact to adapt his main source as extensively as he does in this passage.

Most of Theophylact's account in this section is merely a stylistic reworking of John's material that aimed to remove obscurities of syntax and to introduce a broader range of literary vocabulary. John's style was exceptionally convoluted: he composed excessively long sentences which frequently contain more than one major theme, as well as the inevitable asides, so that the overall construction can only be grasped by heavy punctuation; examples are his description of his motives for writing history (1), or the opening sentences of chapters 2 and 3. Although John balanced these long constructions by shorter sentences, his style is much less clear and elegant than Theophylact's, who carefully rephrased and subdivided John's more rambling sentences (e.g. iii. 9. 6–7, 9; cf. John 2). Theophylact also omitted some of John's rhetorical periphrases and moralizing, but this was merely for the sake of change since he shared John's taste in this respect and introduced his own circumlocutions and moral judgements.[4] Some of Theophylact's adaptations of John's language are insignificant and were clearly made just to vary the original: if John had used Theophylact's word, Theophylact would probably have chosen John's

[4] Omissions: iii. 11. 1, the periphrasis for Acacius; iii. 9. 10, the build-up to the special cause of the war; iii. 12. 1, moralizing on Justin's appointment of Tiberius. Additions or expansions: iii. 10. 3, the description of ravaging; iii. 12. 8, moral on the ability of money to rectify past mistakes. An example of John's contorted constructions: 'For when the emperor Justinian, having ruled the Romans for 39 years in all, ended his life, having lived for the end of the time in peace both with other men and the Medes themselves, Justin the younger, the offspring of his sister, succeeded to the empire of the Romans, and when there were broken the treaties which had earlier existed between Romans and Medes, those which Justinian had made with Khusro the son of Kavadh, the Persian king, for 55 years, they stirred up a great war against each other which had already begun in the seventh year of Justin's reign, extended for 20 years, and received its end in the ninth year of the reign of the Roman emperor Maurice' (J.Epi. 2).

term.[5] Theophylact, however, had a wider literary vocabulary than John, and he was concerned to display this linguistic knowledge in order to enrich and enliven John's dry prose. Many of the linguistic changes reveal Theophylact's literary education: much of the vocabulary represents the common usage of Second Sophistic and patristic writers, with the occasional more obviously Christian word that points the emphasis of his intellectual background, but he also included a few rare terms of various pedigrees (including classical and medical).[6]

Apart from abbreviating his source and improving its style, Theophylact also made some alterations to the material content of John's text. In some places Theophylact's literary rephrasing introduced slight changes of emphasis: thus when describing the negotiations between the citizens of Apamea and Adarmahan, Theophylact states that they 'agreed a ransom' (iii. 10. 9), which stresses the deceit of Adarmahan in sacking the city in spite of the agreement, whereas John's phrase 'proffered a ransom' is more neutral (since this wording admits the possibility that the ransom was rejected). At other points Theophylact may have misunderstood John, as in the discussion of the Homerites (iii. 9. 6) where John's brief account was rather complicated, or the statement that Adarmahan's sack of Apamea caused Justin's decision to replace Marcian as general (iii. 11. 1), where John's loose expression 'when these things had been done' is misleading. Such changes are sufficiently minor to be dismissed as accidental reshapings of the narrative in the light of the writer's own views and prejudices, but there are some more important differences: Theophy-

[5] e.g. iii. 10. 6, *στρατοπέδῳ* for *στρατῷ*, iii. 10. 7, *ἐξαπιναίως* for *ἀπροσδοκήτως*, iii. 11. 2, *ἀντοικοδομήσας* for *παροικοδομήσας*.

[6] Second Sophistic and patristic usage: *διιθύνω*, *ἀρχέκακος*, *εἰσήγησις ἀσμενίζω*, *ἀκατάσχετος*, *προνομεύομαι*, *λαφυραγωγέομαι*, *διανήχομαι*, *ἐπικάμπτομαι*, *περιστοιχίζω* (iii. 9. 3, 5, 6, 8, 11; 10. 3, 6, 9; 11. 1). More pronounced Christian pedigree: *ἀκήρατον λῆξιν*, *ἀποκληρόομαι*, *ἐξίτηλος*, *σύστασις*, *ἐπιστασία*, *ἐνδημία*, *μεταπλάττω* (iii. 9. 3, 7, 8, 11; 10. 3, 8; 12. 7). Rarer words: *κωλύμη* (iii. 9. 7; Thucydides, Procopius); *σοφιστεύω* (iii. 9. 8; Heliodorus, Gregory of Nyssa); *κλιματάρχης* (iii. 9. 9; Proclus, John Lydus); *ἐπαναζεύγνυμι* (iii. 10. 5, and at least 5 other places; Hesychius, Evagrius [5 times], *Chr. Pasch.* 708. 7, quoting a letter of the emperor Heraclius); *παλαμάομαι* (iii. 10. 7; Aristophanes, Euripides, Xenophon, Philostratus, Clement); *ἐγκοπὴν προκοπῆς* (iii. 10. 8; a gnomic phrase that originated in Heraclitus, fr. 131, and is included in the *Loci Communes* of Maximus Confessor; *ἐγκοπή* is fairly widely attested in medical writers and grammarians, and occurs twice in George of Pisida); *ἐπικύησις* (iii. 11. 3; Aristotle [fragment], Hippocratic treatise [title], Clement); *ἀποφλεγμαίνω* (iii. 12. 5; Hippocrates, Plutarch, Galen); *ἄνωρθος* (iii. 12. 7; no citations. The alternative reading, *ἀνορθος* [Hippocrates, Galen, Attic inscription] should probably be preferred).

term.[5] Theophylact, however, had a wider literary vocabulary than John, and he was concerned to display this linguistic knowledge in order to enrich and enliven John's dry prose. Many of the linguistic changes reveal Theophylact's literary education: much of the vocabulary represents the common usage of Second Sophistic and patristic writers, with the occasional more obviously Christian word that points the emphasis of his intellectual background, but he also included a few rare terms of various pedigrees (including classical and medical).[6]

Apart from abbreviating his source and improving its style, Theophylact also made some alterations to the material content of John's text. In some places Theophylact's literary rephrasing introduced slight changes of emphasis: thus when describing the negotiations between the citizens of Apamea and Adarmahan, Theophylact states that they 'agreed a ransom' (iii. 10. 9), which stresses the deceit of Adarmahan in sacking the city in spite of the agreement, whereas John's phrase 'proffered a ransom' is more neutral (since this wording admits the possibility that the ransom was rejected). At other points Theophylact may have misunderstood John, as in the discussion of the Homerites (iii. 9. 6) where John's brief account was rather complicated, or the statement that Adarmahan's sack of Apamea caused Justin's decision to replace Marcian as general (iii. 11. 1), where John's loose expression 'when these things had been done' is misleading. Such changes are sufficiently minor to be dismissed as accidental reshapings of the narrative in the light of the writer's own views and prejudices, but there are some more important differences: Theophy-

[5] e.g. iii. 10. 6, *στρατοπέδῳ* for *στρατῷ*, iii. 10. 7, *ἐξαπιναίως* for *ἀπροσδοκήτως*, iii. 11. 2, *ἀντοικοδομήσας* for *παροικοδομήσας*.

[6] Second Sophistic and patristic usage: *διιθύνω*, *ἀρχέκακος*, *εἰσήγησις ἀσμενίζω*, *ἀκατάσχετος*, *προνομεύομαι*, *λαφυραγωγέομαι*, *διανήχομαι*, *ἐπικάμπτομαι*, *περιστοιχίζω* (iii. 9. 3, 5, 6, 8, 11; 10. 3, 6, 9; 11. 1). More pronounced Christian pedigree: *ἀκήρατον λῆξιν*, *ἀποκληρόομαι*, *ἐξίτηλος*, *σύστασις*, *ἐπιστασία*, *ἐνδημία*, *μεταπλάττω* (iii. 9. 3, 7, 8, 11; 10. 3, 8; 12. 7). Rarer words: *κωλύμη* (iii. 9. 7; Thucydides, Procopius); *σοφιστεύω* (iii. 9. 8; Heliodorus, Gregory of Nyssa); *κλιματάρχης* (iii. 9. 9; Proclus, John Lydus); *ἐπαναζεύγνυμι* (iii. 10. 5, and at least 5 other places; Hesychius, Evagrius [5 times], *Chr. Pasch.* 708. 7, quoting a letter of the emperor Heraclius); *παλαμάομαι* (iii. 10. 7; Aristophanes, Euripides, Xenophon, Philostratus, Clement); *ἐγκοπὴν προκοπῆς* (iii. 10. 8; a gnomic phrase that originated in Heraclitus, fr. 131, and is included in the *Loci Communes* of Maximus Confessor; *ἐγκοπή* is fairly widely attested in medical writers and grammarians, and occurs twice in George of Pisida); *ἐπικύησις* (iii. 11. 3; Aristotle [fragment], Hippocratic treatise [title], Clement); *ἀποφλεγμαίνω* (iii. 12. 5; Hippocrates, Plutarch, Galen); *ἄνωρθος* (iii. 12. 7; no citations. The alternative reading, *ἀνορθος* [Hippocrates, Galen, Attic inscription] should probably be preferred).

lact made one significant addition to John's narrative, and at some points he disagrees with, or corrects, John's interpretation of events. These instances must be investigated for the light they may shed on Theophylact's use of a supplementary source.

(*b*) *Theophylact, John, and Menander*

Theophylact's discussion of the causes of the war transforms John's neutral presentation of the issues into a criticism of Justin's folly for initiating a chain of events that proved disastrous for both sides (iii. 9. 4–5). He comments on the levity of the grievances which the Romans gladly exploited as excuses for war (iii. 9. 8), and finally rejects John's interpretation of Justin's termination of peace payments: John, in a self-conscious adaptation of Thucydidean diction, refers to Justin's decision as the true underlying cause of the war, noting that Justin thought that the Romans should not always be tributaries to the Persians; Theophylact rejects this interpretation and introduces a comment that Justin's scruples about tribute were ill founded since the annual payment of 500 pounds of gold was a subsidy for the defence of the Caucasus passes (iii. 9. 10–11).[7] Theophylact continues to impose his criticism of Justin on the narrative: after the initial reverses suffered by the Romans, Theophylact remarks on Justin's helpless confusion and folly, and Justin reaps his reward when despair over the loss of Dara turns his mind (iii. 11. 1, 3). In John, Justin's illness is physical rather than mental, its link with the loss of Dara temporal rather than causal, and there is no mention of Justin's despair. Theophylact's interpretation of Justin neatly illustrates his own views on the consequences of folly, that it gives rise to helplessness and culminates in insanity, but the interpretation might have been suggested by Theophylact's second source: Menander certainly blamed Justin for causing the war (13. 5; 16. 1), although his views on Justin's madness are not known; Evagrius (v. 7–11) had also presented Justin's actions and madness in much the same way as Theophylact.

One passage in this section which Theophylact certainly did not derive from John of Epiphania, and which he did not invent for himself, is Justin's speech to Tiberius on the latter's proclamation as Caesar in December 574, and the subsequent measures taken by

[7] Persian responsibility for the defence of the passes was the first condition of the 50 years' peace, and a reader of Menander's account (6. 1) might have wrongly inferred that the payments were a contribution towards the cost of the garrison.

Tiberius until his appointment of Justinian as commander of the eastern armies (iii. 11. 5–12. 5). Theophylact first adapted John's brief reference to Tiberius' proclamation (iii. 11. 4), but then clearly marked the insertion of different material and promised to record the exact words of the speech (iii. 11. 5–6). Theophylact's version of the speech is shorter than that preserved by John of Ephesus (iii. 5), but it is probably an accurate representation of the tone and content of the original.[8] Justin's speech was recorded in shorthand and had perhaps circulated as a pamphlet; John of Ephesus probably derived his long version of the speech from such a pamphlet, or other official record, which noted the exact date of the speech and some details of the assembly addressed by Justin. Like John, Theophylact records a detailed date at the end of the speech (iii. 11. 13, although the indiction date is one year out), and his version must have derived ultimately from the official record. However, he did not use this directly: had he done so, he would have returned to follow John of Epiphania immediately after the end of the speech, whereas he in fact continued to follow a different source until the appointment of Justinian (iii. 12. 6) provided a suitable opportunity to return to John. In John (§ 5), Tiberius' proclamation was followed by the dispatch of Theodore, a Roman commander in Armenia, to inform Khusro of events and to initiate negotiations; Justinian was then appointed general and Tiberius collected an army of barbarian mercenaries. According to Theophylact, Tiberius wrote to the Persians announcing his proclamation and, at the start of spring (575), recruited barbarian mercenaries. Only then did Theophylact return to John for the report of Justinian's appointment, but, since John had recorded Tiberius' recruitment of mercenaries after the appointment of Justinian, Theophylact erroneously reported the recruitment for a second time: he tried to excuse the obvious doublet (iii. 12. 4–5, and 8) by treating the second report as a continuation of the earlier recruitment.

There are two possibilities for the source from which Theophylact derived this information on diplomatic negotiations and military preparations in association with the record of Justin's speech. Adamek suggested that Theophylact was following a Constantinopolitan chronicle, but this is unlikely since the chronicle tradition for Justin's reign connected this speech with Tiberius' elevation to Augustus (rather than Caesar), and transmitted a slightly different version of it

[8] A. M. Cameron, 'An Emperor's Abdication', *BS* 37 (1976), 161–7 at 166.

from that in Theophylact.[9] It is more likely that Theophylact was following Menander, whose work he knew (i. 3. 5). This hypothesis may explain why Theophylact did not revert to John's account immediately after the insertion of Justin's speech: Menander's version of the negotiations leading to the three-year truce in 575 was rather different from John's, and in particular he placed the embassy by an official called Theodore after the conclusion of the truce (Men. 18. 3–6);[10] Theophylact was perhaps unwilling to disregard Menander's detailed account of the negotiations, which was clearly superior to John's, and so he took from Menander the essential elements of the diplomacy and the subsequent material on Tiberius' recruitment of barbarians, at which point a reference to Justinian's appointment provided a link back to John. It is a reasonable assumption that Menander noted Tiberius' recruitment-drive and his appointment of Justinian, and also that he recorded Justin's speech, quite possibly in the exact words since he believed that important speeches or messages should be accurately recorded in cases where he was confident that he could use a precise version of the original (Men. 6. 1. 184–7; 6. 2. 3–11). Although Theophylact could have used Menander as his main source for the whole digression on the early stages of the war, he preferred John's account as his prime source, perhaps because its brevity suited his own purpose.

Theophylact's normal method of working was to adapt his account directly from John of Epiphania, while turning to Menander for occasional corrections[11] and for additional material that attracted his interest. The correspondence between Theophylact and John is frequently very close, and Theophylact must have composed with John's work open at his side. Some of the additional matter for which I have suggested Menander as a source is of a more general nature—a different interpretation of events rather than detailed facts, for example the adaptation of John's analysis of the causes of the war.

[9] Adamek, *Beiträge* ii. 9; Theoph. 248. 14–249. 11; Leo Gr. 135. 8–136. 10. Leo preserves the different version of Justin's speech, whereas Theophanes copied Theophylact's version but transferred it to the proclamation as Augustus; cf. Whitby, 'Chronicle Source' 322.

[10] John's account confuses the various Theodores involved, as well as the timing of the embassy (cf. below, ch. 9(iii), p. 260 n. 15).

[11] Thus Menander must have supplied the minor detail that Adarmahan enslaved Apamea 'on the third day' (Th. Sim. iii. 10. 9), a fact that John did not record; Menander may also have been responsible for Theophylact's correction of John's reference to a 55-year peace.

Theophylact could have remembered such adaptations from an earlier reading of Menander, but for the accurate record of Justin's speech, a passage which was of particular interest to Theophylact, he must have consulted his text of Menander directly.

(*c*) *The 'Heraclius source'*

Justin's speech is the only occasion on which Theophylact can be seen to depart from John at length, but there is other material which he may have derived from a different source (quite apart from the set speeches which Theophylact will have composed for himself; e.g. iii. 13, Justinian haranguing his troops). In the account of the military operations in 586, 587, and 589 there are signs that Theophylact combined John's narrative with information centred around the general Heraclius, the father of the emperor. The account of the 586 campaign is the longest report in Theophylact of an eastern campaign, longer even than the account of Khusro's restoration. Although this campaign contained a major Roman victory, and had probably been narrated by John at greater length than the less interesting events of 584–5, the type of detail preserved in Theophylact is not typical of other military reports for which John would appear to have been Theophylact's sole source (e.g. the fighting in Suania in 589, or Khusro's restoration). In his description of the Roman victory at Solachon, Theophylact reports the details of army manœuvres, explains the strategic importance of the Roman position on the river Arzamon, describes Mount Izala, recounts Persian measures to ensure a water-supply, and digresses on famous men of Solachon; the longest section of the battle narrative covers the fighting in the centre of the line, where Heraclius was in command. There are several detailed reports of relatively minor actions by Heraclius: in the evening after the battle Heraclius led out a troop of soldiers which quelled a momentary panic in the Roman army and discovered a dying hero whose wounds are described at length (ii. 5. 9–6. 9); in the subsequent campaign in Arzanene, Heraclius' escape from the Persians is recounted in some detail (ii. 8. 2–5). Further, there is a minor inconsistency in Theophylact's references to the Kardarigan's retreat from Solachon: first he withdraws to a hillock, where he remains for three or four days (ii. 4. 14), but then Heraclius, on his way to discovering the wounded hero, ascends the hillock at evening, which must be the evening of the battle, to find that the Kardarigan has already withdrawn (ii. 5. 9–10). This discrepancy could be

explained if Theophylact was combining two sources, John of Epiphania and another that was interested in Heraclius.

Another indication of a second source is a change of bias in Theophylact's account. In the campaigns of 584 and 585, Theophylact's attitude towards the general Philippicus is mildly favourable: Philippicus returns to Roman territory 'having accomplished a not inglorious prelude to his command' (i. 13. 8), and his military knowledge and foresight are commended (i. 14. 1–6). It is likely that John of Epiphania had presented Philippicus' actions favourably since the latter was on good terms with Gregory of Antioch; Evagrius (vi. 3, p. 224. 2–18) had emphasized Philippicus' successes and tactfully concealed his failures.[12] However, in Theophylact's version of the 586 campaign Philippicus does not receive full credit for the victory at Solachon: although it was normal for the general not to participate in the fighting (cf. *Strat.* viiB. 1), Theophylact stresses the eagerness of Philippicus' subordinates to banish him to the rear (ii. 3. 10–12); Philippicus is then dismayed by the indiscipline of the Roman looters, although Theophylact expresses his personal approval for the ruse that restored order (ii. 4. 2–4). After the battle Philippicus is shown to review the army and attend to the wounded in the approved manner (cf. *Strat.* viiB. 6), and he energetically invades Arzanene (ii. 6. 10–13), but subsequently his panic is blamed for the Roman retreat from Chlomaron (ii. 9. 1–2).[13] There are signs that the extent of the Roman setback at Chlomaron has been exaggerated, a presentation that allows the success of Heraclius' raid into Persia to appear more surprising and decisive. Cumulatively these indications suggest that for the year 586 Theophylact used some information connected with the family of Heraclius, and that he combined this with his main source, John of Epiphania. The 'Heraclius source' will at least have provided the reports that highlight Heraclius' actions, including the anecdote about the wounded hero of Solachon; it may also have contributed some of the strategic observations on the campaign, items of geographical information, or minor details of the fighting.

In Theophylact's report of the 587 campaign (ii. 10. 6–7; 18. 1–26), there is more material that may derive from the 'Heraclius source'. Most of the report is occupied by two long accounts of sieges: the first,

[12] Cf. Allen, *Evagrius* 248–9, although she regards Theophylact's attitude to Philippicus as entirely negative.

[13] Theophylact later (ii. 9. 14) notes that the camp-commander Theodore was held responsible; this may represent a version of events that exonerated Philippicus.

at a fort whose name is not given, was commanded by Heraclius, while the other siege is dominated by a long account of the heroic exploits of a Roman soldier, Sapeir, the type of anecdote that is unlikely to have been recorded in John of Epiphania's summary narrative. These sieges were significant events, but the length of Theophylact's accounts is disproportionate when compared with the more important attempts to recapture Martyropolis in 589, in which Heraclius was not involved and which Theophylact describes very briefly (iii. 5. 11–16). John of Epiphania probably mentioned the two sieges of 587, but it is likely that the 'Heraclius source' provided the details of Heraclius' siege and the story about Sapeir, which is similar in tone and presentation to the story of the hero of Solachon. During 588 Heraclius was not with the main army (iii. 1. 1), but the influence of the 'Heraclius source' can be detected again in Theophylact's account of the 589 campaign: all credit for the Roman victory at Sisarbanon is given to Heraclius (iii. 6. 1–4), who single-handedly turned a rout into a decisive victory while his commander Comentiolus was fleeing to Theodosiopolis (which was an impossibly long distance to the rear). However, according to Evagrius (vi. 15, p. 233. 5–10), Comentiolus was nearly killed in fierce fighting after his horse had been slain, but he was saved by an unnamed member of his bodyguard, who extricated him from the battle: there is no hint that Comentiolus acted like a coward, and no specific hero is credited with the victory. The combination in Theophylact of denigration of the Roman commander and eulogy of Heraclius is similar to the presentation of Philippicus and Heraclius in the 586 campaign.

There is no definite evidence as to the nature of this postulated 'Heraclius source', which extolled the elder Heraclius' achievements and preserved anecdotes about minor campaign incidents. The information, superficially detailed but in reality sometimes imprecise or irrelevant,[14] could have been obtained by Theophylact from conversations with a member or associate of the Heraclius family: from his main source, John of Epiphania, Theophylact would have known a little about the career of the elder Heraclius, perhaps no more than that he was a subordinate commander during the Persian wars, but the actions of the imperial family were naturally of interest

[14] Thus Theophylact does not record the name of the fort captured by Heraclius in 587, or the precise location of his escape from the Persians in 586; the information about the Persians' water-supply at Solachon is interesting, but of minor relevance.

and it is not impossible that Theophylact sought out additional information on the campaigns in which Heraclius had participated. In similar fashion, Evagrius had chatted to Maurice's parents and been told about the portents of Maurice's future greatness (v. 21, pp. 216. 28–217. 3). The hypothesis of an oral informant might be supported by Theophylact's reference to an oral report concerning the dryness of the country to the east of the Khabour river (i. 13. 10), in the context of information that may not have come from John of Epiphania.[15] On the other hand, the exploits of the elder Heraclius might have been accorded a literary celebration on his appointment as exarch of Africa towards the end of Maurice's reign, or after his son became emperor in 610. Such a panegyric could have been available to Theophylact when he wrote the *History*.

(*d*) *Other possible sources*

It is now necessary to examine certain short sections of the Persian narrative to establish whether John of Epiphania or an alternative source was responsible for Theophylact's information. One such passage is the account of the escape of the Dara captives from the Castle of Oblivion in Persia, and the associated report of the arrival in Constantinople of the head of the Persian general Maruzas (iii. 5. 1–8). Both probably originated in the Constantinopolitan chronicle that Theophylact had used for some reports of Balkan events. The escape of the prisoners was identified by Baynes as a 'wonder-tale' that Theophylact had inserted into the main narrative of his military source with a disruptive effect on his chronology.[16] Another indication of the change of source is that Theophylact has to report the battle of Martyropolis for a second time (iii. 4. 2–4; 5. 8) in order to explain the arrival of Maruzas' head in Constantinople. If the first report had originated in John of Epiphania, who noted the dispatch to Maurice of spoils without mentioning the head, the second, which is mainly concerned with Maruzas and the arrival of his head at Constantinople, can plausibly be assigned to the chronicle. The escape of the Dara captives is linked chronologically with the survey of imperial affairs (iii. 4. 6–9), much of which Theophylact derived from his chronicle

[15] Cf. ch. 10(i), p. 279. However, there is no mention of Heraclius in this report, so that attribution of it to the 'Heraclius source' is insecure.

[16] Baynes, 'Theophylactus' 35–6.

source, so that the chronicle is also likely to have provided the prisoner story.[17]

Another passage to be considered is the account of the embassy to Persia by George the praetorian prefect (viii. 1. 1–8). Theophylact introduces this in connection with the Balkan campaign of 598, and, although his Balkan chronology is so confused that this precise synchronism is worthless, he clearly believed that the embassy occurred a long time after the end of the Persian war in 591. There are two complicating factors: first, that George led an embassy to Persia in the years 592–5, since the Syriac *Life* of Sabrisho, the future Nestorian Catholicus, records that an ambassador named George met the holy man while he was still bishop of Lashom (i.e. before about Christmas 595); second that John of Epiphania accompanied George on a mission to Persia 'at a later time, after the end of the war' in order to achieve 'the concord for what had happened' (J. Epi. 1), which could be a vague allusion to the Saracen troubles that provoked George's mission according to Theophylact (viii. 1. 1–2). Higgins, who investigated this passage, concluded that George led one embassy to Persia and that it arrived in summer 592, but the arguments are far from conclusive.[18] It is improbable that Khusro would have contemplated a quarrel with Maurice so soon after his restoration: in winter 591/2, and again in 593/4, Khusro arranged for dedications to be made on his behalf at the shrine of St Sergius at Resapha, the cult centre of the Monophysite Ghassanid Arabs, and this action had required the approval of Maurice (Th. Sim. v. 13–14; cf. Evag. vi. 21, esp. p. 236. 14); in 592 Khusro was attempting to assert his authority at court, where he had his uncle Vindoe mutilated and crucified (*Anon. Guidi* 4), and his preference for his Christian wife Shirin aroused disapproval; further east Vahram was probably still at large, and was soon to be replaced by Vistam, who posed an even more serious threat. No conclusive solution to these problems is possible. If George only led one embassy, this could have set out, with John of Epiphania participating, in 594/5, which would have allowed George to meet Sabrisho, but was sufficiently long after the end of the war to justify Khusro's truculence and to explain why Theophylact believed that it should be narrated so long after the main Persian narrative. On the

[17] Cf. Whitby, 'Chronicle Source' 329–30.

[18] Higgins, 'Chronology'; at 222–3 Higgins provides a translation of the relevant section of the *Life* of Sabrisho; the general Narses also stopped at Lashom to receive Sabrisho's blessing during the 591 campaign to restore Khusro.

other hand, George was an experienced administrator and diplomat who may have conducted several embassies to Persia in the 590s, and it is possible that the Saracen troubles mentioned by Theophylact should be linked with other signs of tension on the eastern frontier at the end of Maurice's reign. It would be economical to assume that John was Theophylact's source of information, but it should also be noted that there is considerable rhetorical expansion and circumlocution in Theophylact's account of the embassy (viii. 1. 1, 6, 8):[19] this suggests that his source only provided a very brief account of the mission, and that Theophylact felt obliged to dress it up in the same way as he treated brief notices that he derived from his chronicle source.

Theophylact records several examples of Persian diplomatic correspondence which he claims to quote verbatim: the exchanges between Vahram and Khusro in 590 (iv. 7. 7–11; 8. 5–8), Khusro's appeal to Maurice (iv. 11. 1–11), his dedications to St Sergius (v. 13. 4–6; 14. 2–11), and a letter from Mahbodh to the Persian city of Antioch (v. 7. 1–2). Because of its place in the narrative this last letter must certainly have been derived from John, but the first three are introduced with the type of rhetorical periphrasis which in other circumstances might indicate a change of source.[20] It is noticeable that Khusro's two dedications to St Sergius are not introduced by such a rhetorical formula, and Higgins has convincingly argued that John of Epiphania was Theophylact's source for these dedications.[21] The detailed salutations at the start of the first three letters suggest a documentary original,[22] and it is possible that Theophylact, who claims at one point to have received oral information from a Persian official (iii. 18. 6; see below), could have asked a Persian for copies of documents relevant to his history, while the text of Khusro's appeal to Maurice could have been found in Roman archives. However, it seems unlikely that after his restoration Khusro would have encouraged the preservation of the degrading correspondence which he had been forced to have with a usurper, and above all it is surprising that Theophylact, who does not seem to have been a diligent researcher,

[19] I can see no justification for Allen's assertion, *Evagrius* 258, that 'Theophylact's account of these events bears the stamp of eye-witness'.

[20] Th. Sim. iv. 7. 6; 8. 4; 10. 11; a similar expression at iii. 11. 5, 'But I will also present . . .', marked the switch from John of Epiphania to the source for Justin II's speech.

[21] Higgins, 'Votive Offerings'.

[22] Cf. Men. 6. 1. 179–83, for the salutation of a letter from Khusro I to Justinian.

chose not to mention the extraction of documents from Persian archives, which would have been a creditable achievement: he was prepared to boast of his acquaintance with an anonymous Persian official, and of the 'research' that he conducted into the murder of Theodosius (viii. 13. 5–6). It is probable that Theophylact's source for all these documents was John of Epiphania: in his official capacity as adviser to Gregory, John could have obtained copies of these letters, and they would have helped to illustrate the central topic of his history, Khusro's flight and restoration. In 590 Khusro himself would have been happy to show the Romans proof of Vahram's arrogance in the form of his insulting letter (iv. 7. 7–11). The quotation of such long documents would have been consistent with the rather inelegant style of John's work, or John might have followed the example of Evagrius (vi. 24, p. 240. 29–31), who had appended a separate collection of relevant documents to his main work. Theophylact treated these letters as insertions into the narrative, either because he was transferring them from an appendix, or simply because he wanted to excuse the change from the classicism of the narrative to the more official language of the documents. In either case, Theophylact would have been reasonably certain that he was following an accurate record, hence his claim to quote the documents verbatim. In the case of the dedications to St Sergius, where Theophylact's versions can be checked against Evagrius, only minor variants are apparent and these can plausibly be traced back to two slightly different versions of the original.[23]

A source problem related to the question of the Persian letters is the origin of Theophylact's information on St Golinduch (v. 12). Stephen, the Bishop of Hierapolis where she died, composed a hagiography, probably in Syriac (it is now lost), which must quickly have been translated or paraphrased into Greek since it provided the evidence from which Eustratius, writing in Constantinople, had in 602 composed an extant Greek *Life* of the saint.[24] Peeters argued that Theophylact derived the general arrangement of his narrative from Evagrius (vi. 19–21), but that for detailed information on Golinduch, which Evagrius did not record, he turned to the *Life* by Eustratius.[25]

[23] Higgins, art. cit.

[24] Peeters, 'Golindouch' 91 ff.; the Greek version of Stephen's *Life* was also available to the 10th-c. source followed by Nicephorus Callistus.

[25] Peeters, ibid.; his argument about the narrative order is not compelling, since both Evagrius and Theophylact follow the natural chronological order of events; first the

However, the lost *Life* by Stephen was also the basis for an extant Georgian translation, and it was noted by Olajos that Theophylact's account is significantly closer to this tradition than to Eustratius' *Life*.[26] Olajos argued that Theophylact must have used the Greek version of Stephen's *Life* since John of Epiphania, his other possible source of information, could not have excerpted it.[27] Although the assumptions on which this argument are based are not compelling, and John of Epiphania cannot be excluded as a possible intermediary, it still remains likely that Theophylact, granted his interest in hagiography, knew and used the Greek version of Stephen's *Life*; indeed, he may also have been aware of Eustratius' alternative account.[28]

A further possible source that has to be investigated is 'a certain Babylonian, a sacred official who had gained very great experience in the composition of royal epistles' (iii. 18. 6), from whom Theophylact claims to have heard about Vahram's ancestry. The extent of the official's information is unclear, but it probably included the antiquarian account of the Persian hierarchy (iii. 18. 7–9): although the distinction between 'he stated' and 'they say' (iii. 18. 7, 8) might reflect a switch from a personal informant to more generally available information, the point cannot be pressed; 'they say' need only refer to the general Persian tradition which Theophylact received from the official, and this source probably provided the reference to Vahram's title of *darigbedum* (iii. 18. 12). Theophylact's claim to have found an informed Persian source recalls Agathias' boast (iv. 30. 3–4) about his

expedition to restore Khusro, which began in spring 591, next the story of Golinduch, who died on 13 July 591; lastly the dedications at Sergiopolis, which followed Khusro's return.

[26] Olajos, 'Golinduch'; I have only consulted the Latin summary (pp. 37–8) of this Hungarian article, but my own comparison of the texts agrees with its conclusions. The translation of the Georgian *Life* by Garitte was not available to Peeters, so that he could not consider this alternative.

[27] Olajos believed that John completed his *History* before Evagrius, and that Evagrius would have copied any information on Golinduch recorded by John. For the relative terminal dates of John's and Evagrius' histories, cf. below, (ii)(*c*).

[28] Garitte, 'Passion' 414, suggested that Theophylact corrected or adapted the confusing reference to Nisibis in Eustratius' version of the *Life*. In the Georgian text, Golinduch escapes to a place called Nision in Greek territory (possibly near Hierapolis), but Nision was misread by Eustratius as Nisibis: since this made nonsense of Golinduch's escape—for at Nisibis she would still be on Persian territory—Theophylact transformed Nisibis into a temporary refuge for Golinduch before her main captivity.

use of official Persian material specially translated for him by Sergius the interpreter, and it is possible that Theophylact was influenced by the example of Agathias to claim a special Persian contact for information that he had merely derived from John of Epiphania, who had conversed with Persian informants. Elsewhere Theophylact hints, by insisting on his ability to record the exact words used, that he had seen documents which he in fact lifted from an intermediary source,[29] and this could be an example of similar deception. However, his assertion that he personally heard the Persian official is unnecessarily strong if the information were only second-hand, and it is at variance with his practice at other places of merely suggesting direct acquaintance with information that was really second-hand. This section also contains an interpretation of Vahram's revolt (iii. 18. 11–13) which is rather different from that derived by Theophylact from John of Epiphania (iii. 8. 1 ff.). In the John-based version the quarrel between Vahram and Hormizd arose directly from Vahram's defeat in Suania, a campaign which John had narrated at length, but according to the Persian source the main cause of the revolt was Vahram's excessive pride in his triumphs over the Turks (iii. 18. 12), and the importance of the Suania defeat is minimized. The latter version is similar to eastern accounts of Vahram's revolt, which would support Theophylact's claim that information in this section originated in a Persian source.[30] Theophylact should perhaps receive the benefit of the doubt and his claim to an eastern source be accepted. The use of such a source does not, of course, guarantee the accuracy of Theophylact's information: the experienced official, perhaps an ambassador to Heraclius, seems to have provided Theophylact with the standard eastern interpretation of Vahram's revolt, and an archaic account of certain formal aspects of Persian society which rigidly assigns major functions to seven noble families but ignores areas of the administrative hierarchy that were of greater effective importance.[31]

[29] Apart from the Persian letters, cf. also Justin's speech (iii. 11. 5–6) or the false claim about the responsibility for the research in the Nile excursus (vii. 16. 10–12), which he had lifted from Diodorus Siculus.

[30] Sebeos 2; Tabari, pp. 270–2; note also that Theophylact had earlier (iii. 6. 9–14) given Hormizd most of the credit for these victories over the Turks, although he acknowledged that Vahram participated (iii. 6. 16). John of Epiphania's informants in the entourage of the fugitive Khusro would not have given Vahram the credit he deserved for the Turkish victories.

[31] Cf. Bardaisan, *FGrH* 719 F 1–2, for another historian who derived information from conversations with ambassadors (from India). Christensen, *Iran* 107ff., discusses

Another possible transmitter of information to be considered is Domitian, bishop of Melitene, who plays an important role in the account of Khusro's exile. Peeters claimed that Theophylact deliberately exalted Domitian in order to overshadow Gregory of Antioch, but even Evagrius, whom Peeters regarded as accurate, acknowledged Domitian's influence and qualities (vi. 18, p. 234. 19–23), and Peeters' argument was based on a faulty analysis of Khusro's dedications to St Sergius.[32] It is, however, noticeable that Domitian is connected in Theophylact's account with material that is hostile to Khusro II: thus Domitian exposes Khusro's deception over Martyropolis, and rebukes him for protecting the traitor Sittas and for defiling the church at Dara (iv. 15. 8–16; v. 3. 4–6); Domitian's sermon on the return of Martyropolis also contains much anti-Persian material (iv. 16), but this is clearly Theophylact's own composition. It is unlikely that John of Epiphania would have emphasized these points during the period of Maurice's good relations with Khusro, but it is not necessary to assume that Theophylact had a separate source for this anti-Khusro material: Theophylact exploited every opportunity to denigrate Khusro, for example by placing a hostile character sketch into Hormizd's mouth (iv. 4. 14–15), and he could easily have imposed an anti-Khusro gloss on to John's neutral reports. In the case of Khusro's alleged deception over Martyropolis, it is possible that Theophylact misinterpreted John in his desire to blacken Khusro. Theophylact records that Khusro openly ordered the city's surrender, but then sent a secret message to countermand this. Goubert recognized that the story of Khusro's secret message is, at best, improbable:[33] such duplicity was contrary to Khusro's interests and, even if he had wanted to deceive his Roman benefactors, it was unnecessary for him to send a second message to the same city, since the first messenger could have delivered any secret instructions. The second message might in fact have come from Vahram, whose envoys would have had to evade the Roman blockade and enter the city secretly: if John had recorded that the second message came from 'the Persian king', meaning Vahram, Theophylact could easily have

Theophylact's evidence somewhat credulously. V. G. Lukonin, *Cambridge History of Iran* iii (2), ch. 19 presents sounder evidence for Persian administration; see esp. pp. 698–708 on the king's council and the categories of nobility.

[32] Peeters, 'Ex-voto' 47ff.; for essential corrections, see Higgins, 'Votive Offerings'.

[33] Goubert, *Byzance* i. 141.

misunderstood this to refer to Khusro. The Roman traitors in Martyropolis naturally preferred to follow Vahram, rather than the urgings of the pro-Roman Khusro, whose prospects were still uncertain. Only when the balance of advantage had changed and Domitian could point to the isolation of Vahram and the strong Roman support for Khusro (iv. 15. 10) were the citizens persuaded to surrender: the choice for the city was whether to obey Vahram or Khusro, and Domitian's arguments assumed that the city was still resisting because of its allegiance to Vahram. It was probably Theophylact's interpretation rather than an independent source that has shaped this account.

There are, finally, some fairly brief and less important passages that Theophylact may not have derived from John of Epiphania. His account of Kavadh's exile and restoration (iv. 6. 6–11) could have been adapted directly from Procopius (*Wars* i. 5–6). A geographical handbook might have provided brief excursuses on topography, for example of Izala, the Tigris, and the Zab (ii. 1. 1–4; 10. 1–3; iv. 1. 7), and a similar work could have supplied the various digressions on points of antiquarian interest, geography, and ethnography that decorate the account of Mahbodh's actions in Mesopotamia (v. 6. 4–6, 10–11; 7. 7–9). On the other hand, John of Epiphania could well have included such material, which he would have gained on his embassy to Persia, and even the 'Heraclius source' might have provided some geographical information connected with the Solachon campaign. Two minor items that Theophylact did not derive from John are the accounts of Khusro's apocalyptic prophecy, and of the embassy to Khusro by Bishop Probus of Chalcedon. These stories are introduced as supplements at the end of the narrative derived from John of Epiphania which, as Baynes observed, terminated with the agreement of peace (v. 15. 2).[34] The prophecy, which Khusro revealed to John Mystacon, foreshadows the sequence of Persian and Roman successes in Heraclius' reign, and was probably circulated after Heraclius' final victory.[35] It culminates with the prediction of a Messianic golden age, which can be paralleled in the Syriac *Christian Romance of Alexander*, an apocalyptic work that was brought up to date in 629/30, soon after

[34] Baynes, 'Theophylactus' 38.

[35] P. J. Alexander, 'Historiens byzantins et croyances eschatologiques', *Acts of the 12th Int. Cong. of Byz. Stud.* (Belgrade, 1964), ii. 1–8 at 5, dated the prophecy to the start of Heraclius' victorious campaigns, but the prediction of Roman victory is sufficiently accurate to suggest that it was composed after the event.

Heraclius' triumph, and there is a comparable prediction of world rule by the Romans after the defeat of Persia in George of Pisidia's *Hexaemeron* (1845 ff.). The embassy of Probus can be dated to 596 or later, since it is reasonable to identify this mission with the visit recorded in the *Chronicle of Seert* (68) led by a bishop of Chalcedon whom the Syriac writer calls Marutha; he witnessed a miraculous cure effected by the Nestorian Catholicus Sabrisho (596–604). Marutha is described as a philosopher, with knowledge of Greek, Syriac, and Hebrew, who wrote commentaries on books of logic; Probus had formerly been a Monophysite theologian and had participated in complex doctrinal controversies.[36] Theophylact mentioned Probus' mission because of the prophecy which Khusro told Probus he had received from the Virgin Mary, who apparently promised Khusro victories comparable to those of Alexander the Great. Khusro probably intended the promise to foreshadow his extensive conquests in the Near East in the early seventh century, and so this prophecy was perhaps first circulated in *c.* 605–10. Theophylact's precise source for the two predictions is unknown: Haussig suggested that Theophylact received information directly from Probus,[37] but this is unlikely since the prophecies which Khusro revealed to John Mystacon and Probus relate to the seventh century and it is probable that John and Probus were both dead by the time that their names were used for publicizing these particular predictions. The stories reflect Theophylact's interest in hagiographic and other exotic stories current in Heraclius' reign.

(*e*) *Summary*

To round off this discussion, there can be no doubt that John of Epiphania provided most of Theophylact's information for his Persian narrative. In his excursus on the early course of the war Theophylact used another source, probably Menander, to adapt or supplement him. A limited amount of information, possibly oral, was derived from a source connected with the Heraclius family, one section from a Persian official, and the Constantinopolitan chronicle provided some information. Theophylact's use of these additional sources, Menander, 'Heraclius source', Persian official, and the chronicle cannot be proved conclusively, but the hypothesis is

[36] See Garsoïan, 'Le rôle' 126; A. Van Roey, 'Het Dossier van Proba en Juhannan Barboer', *Scrinium Lovaniense, Mélanges historiques, Étienne Van Cauwenbergh* (Louvain, 1961), 181–90; and Olajos, 'Carrière'.

[37] Haussig, 'Exkurs' 292–3, followed by Olajos, art. cit.

attractive since if offers an approach to Theophylact that helps to clarify some of the obscurities of his account. It is important to recognize that Theophylact's Persian narrative is a patchwork: it cannot be accorded the status of a contemporary source or accepted, as Higgins hoped,[38] as 'an accurate representation of the history of John of Epiphania'.

Theophylact's handling of his various sources is not beyond criticism. He chose John of Epiphania rather than the much fuller account of Menander as the basis for his excursus on the years 572–82, and, although he deserves credit for attempting at some points to combine John with Menander, his amalgamation of material is mechanical, and he failed to avoid repetitions and inconsistencies when moving from one source to another. Thus, even if the fragment of John of Epiphania did not survive, it could reasonably have been conjectured that Theophylact had changed source for Justin's speech to Tiberius and that he did not return to his main source until after the first reference to Tiberius' recruitment drive. Other weaknesses are that Theophylact accepted without proper investigation glamorous stories about the exploits of the elder Heraclius, and introduced reflections of contemporary hostility towards the Persians into his account of Maurice's reign.

(ii) OTHER SOURCES

Theophylact's account of the war of 572–91 can only be thoroughly investigated by collating it with the fragments or works of earlier writers, Theophanes Byzantinus, Menander Protector, Evagrius, and John of Ephesus, as well as with the later accounts in Sebeos, Tabari, and the Syriac chroniclers. This collation is a detailed and complex affair; before it is undertaken (chs. 9–10) it will be useful to survey the general characteristics of these sources and any factors that affect the quality and reliability of their information. It should be observed that the *Strategicon* of Maurice, which was of such importance for understanding Theophylact's Balkan narrative, is of much less use for Persian affairs: although the *Strategicon* refers to two minor incidents from contemporary eastern campaigns (x. 1. 4–8; ix. 3. 125–7), it would appear that the author did not have detailed personal experience of eastern military affairs.

[38] 'Votive Offerings' 101.

(*a*) *Theophanes Byzantinus*

Little can be said about this lost work, which is known only through the description of the contents of the first book in Photius' *Bibliotheca* (cod. 64). Theophanes appears to have written a detailed account of the causes of the war and, like Menander, to have recorded Roman–Turkish diplomatic contacts. Photius' summary of the military narrative concludes with the capture of Dara, but even in this brief section there is information about the allegiance of the Caucasian tribes that is not recorded by other sources.

(*b*) *Menander Protector*

Menander, inspired by Maurice's patronage for literature, produced a continuation of Agathias' *History* which covered the period 559–82. Regrettably only fragments survive, and most of these are preserved in Constantine Porphyrogenitus' *Excerpta de legationibus*, collections of historical passages relating to diplomatic affairs, so that our knowledge of Menander's *History* is both restricted and unrepresentative. He certainly recorded embassies to and from the Romans in great detail, but it is unsafe to draw general conclusions about the quality and coverage of his work overall. There is the additional problem that the tenth-century excerptor may have introduced his own distortions and inaccuracies into what has been transmitted.[39] Notwithstanding these difficulties, the fragments are of great interest for the development of Roman contacts with the Turks, for the procedures of Roman diplomacy, and for the diplomatic atmosphere of the late sixth century, a period when the Romans showed an uncharacteristic interest in the peoples beyond their frontiers. For the present discussion the fragments are particularly useful for establishing chronology, because they reveal how long diplomatic negotiations might last (for example in 579), whereas the brief references to embassies in Theophylact tend to conceal the slowness of diplomacy.

[39] Blockley's sanguine assessment does not take sufficient account of the problems affecting our knowledge of Menander. It is circular to claim that the concentration on diplomacy in the extant fragments 'conforms in large measure to the historian's own interests' (*Menander* 9); if there is little evidence in Menander of the literary exercise of the formal digression (ibid. 13), this merely reflects the interests of the Constantinian excerptor; conclusions about Menander's vocabulary for technical terms and foreign nations (ibid. 7–9) may well be invalidated by the fact that the excerptor made changes in such words (as examination of the excerpts from Theophylact reveals). Analysis of Menander needs to be preceded by detailed study of the methods of the Constantinian excerptor(s).

The detail of the fragments suggests that Menander's work was of high quality, but this impression may not be totally accurate. Peter the Patrician had produced a detailed account of the Roman–Persian negotiations in 561/2, in which he had participated (Men. 6.2), and the ambassadors who served on the mission to the Turkish Chagan led by Zemarchus had related stories about the marvels they had seen, and may even have composed a written record of this embassy (J. Eph. vi. 23).[40] These earlier reports probably provided Menander with the basis for his very detailed record of these events. At other points, when he had to collect and organize information for himself, his narrative may have been less clear and accurate. Thus he does not specify the lapse of time between the conclusion of the three-year truce in mid-575 and the campaign in Armenia in spring 576 (18. 4); in connection with Persian actions in 578 he records that in 575 Roman ambassadors had encountered problems in transporting money to Nisibis (23. 1), but this had not been mentioned in its proper context, namely the account of negotiations in 575 (18. 4).[41] He appears to have shared Theophylact's interest in religious stories and was prepared to include them in his classicizing history: at least a recently published account of the translation of fragments of the True Cross from Apamea to Constantinople (Men. 17) is attributed to Menander by the scribe of the manuscript.[42]

(*c*) *Evagrius*

Extravagant claims have been made for the quality of information in Evagrius, particularly by Peeters, but the limitations of his work have now been more accurately assessed.[43] Although as advisor to Gregory of Antioch he might have had access to privileged information, the military material which he chose to relate is very brief and sometimes inaccurate: the campaigns of 582–7 are recorded in half a page (vi. 3,

[40] Cf. the account by Nonnosus of his embassy to Ethiopia (Photius, *Bibl.* cod. 3).

[41] It is possible that such information was omitted by the Constantinian excerptor.

[42] See F. Halkin, 'Un nouvel extrait de l'historien byzantin Ménandre?', *Zetesis, Festschrift E. De Strijcker* (Antwerp, 1973), 664–7; a slightly different version of part of the story is recorded in M. Syr. x. 1, p. 285. Blockley doubts the attribution to Menander on stylistic grounds (*Menander* 271, n. 185), but the passage has clearly been rewritten at least in part (cf. Blockley, ibid. n. 189); further, there is no reason why Menander's style must have been completely homogeneous (Theophylact's is not), and he might have chosen to present a religious story in a different manner from his main military–diplomatic narrative. I am inclined to accept the manuscript attribution, since it is otherwise a strange connection for a medieval scribe to have invented.

[43] See Allen, *Evagrius*.

pp. 223. 31–224. 18), and the restoration of Khusro receives even less (vi. 19, pp. 234. 26–235. 4); he conflated the negotiations of 574 and 575 (v. 12), and the campaigns of Tiberius' reign are muddled (v. 20); further, he virtually admits that his treatment of Philippicus' actions has concealed certain reverses (vi. 3, p. 224. 14–18), and he transformed a defeat for Philippicus into a victory (vi. 14, p. 232. 23–8).[44] He narrated at greatest length those events in which his employer Gregory was directly involved, for example the mutiny of 588/9 (vi. 4–6, 9–12). It is not possible to establish whether, or how far, his history was influenced by the work of his cousin John of Epiphania. Allen suggested that John provided the basic historical framework which Evagrius filled out with his own choice of information,[45] but the structural similarities between Evagrius and Theophylact which are used to support this hypothesis are not conclusive, since both authors were merely reporting events in their natural order. Although Evagrius knew that John was writing a history, it appears from his reference to it that he was uncertain about its precise coverage (as too of Agathias' *History*; v. 24, p. 219. 19–26), and his errors over the events of 574–5 and 578–82 suggest that he had not seen John's version of these years. John's work was most probably completed after that of Evagrius, and John is more likely to have been affected by Evagrius' completed work than Evagrius by John's uncompleted work,[46] although the only possible example of such influence comes in the context of the very confused account of events in Armenia in 576.[47]

(*d*) *John of Ephesus*

Book vi of John's *Ecclesiastical History* provides an account of Roman wars against Persians and Balkan tribes that he added to the predominantly ecclesiastical narrative of books i–v because he believed these military conflicts and disasters presaged the imminent end of the world (vi. 1). In books i–v his narrative of events, whether secular or ecclesiastical, is often organized in a confusing manner, and it is clear that John himself did not write his *History* systematically, but tended to jump from one subject to another, and to compose different

[44] For detailed investigation of these events, cf. below, ch. 10(ii).

[45] Op. cit. 10, 253, 258; Blockley, *Menander* 3 (with n. 13, which implicitly misrepresents my views) states without evidence that Evagrius used John.

[46] Cf. G. Hertzsch, *De Scriptoribus Rerum Imperatoris Tiberii Constantini* (Jena, 1884), 24.

[47] Cf. below, ch. 9(iii).

sections simultaneously.[48] However, book vi opens with an account of the Roman–Persian wars from 572 to 581 (vi. 2–19) which is remarkably well ordered by John's standards: the only major error is the connection of 'Adarmahan's' raid with the negotiations of 577/8 instead of 574/5 (vi. 13). This section concludes with four general chapters containing information on the causes of the war, and character-sketches of Khusro I and Hormizd (vi. 20–3). Thereafter John began to record events in the Balkans as well as on the eastern front, and his attempt to synchronize these narratives disrupted his chronology. Furthermore, in contrast to his detailed information about the Balkans in both Tiberius' and Maurice's reigns, his evidence on Persia is somewhat disorganized: thus his account of Maurice's campaign in 578 (vi. 14–15) is repeated with few changes in two later chapters (vi. 27, 34). Although little survives of his narrative of Maurice's reign, since the end of book vi is lost, his material becomes less detailed and clear: the description of the capture of Akbas (vi. 36) follows directly on his third account of Maurice's actions in 578–9 (vi. 34–5), but it is subsequently revealed that the Romans took Akbas in 583 (vi. 37).

John probably owed his high-quality eastern military information for the years 572–82 to a single source. This source did not use the standard Seleucid Era chronology of the eastern Roman provinces, which was now calculated from 1 September 312 BC to synchronize with the indiction year, but a different system, possibly a local era or an *annus mundi*, or even an alternative Seleucid chronology,[49] which John inaccurately converted into his own Seleucid Era dates: it is noticeable that of his six dates in this section, four are one year too early (vi. 5, 12, 14, 26), one is wrong but textually corrupt (vi. 10),[50] and only one is correct; this, the date for Khusro's death (vi. 21), comes in a chapter where John gives a favourable portrayal of Khusro and his religious beliefs, information that may have been provided by a Persian Christian rather than John's military source, which tended to criticize Khusro. The nature of this military source is unknown: at one

[48] Cf. above, ch. 4(ii)(*b*).

[49] Alternative Seleucid Eras are the official Sassanian Seleucid Era, synchronized with the Persian New Year, which began in early July in the 580s (Higgins, *Persian War* 22), or the Babylonian Seleucid Era, whose year began in April. I am grateful to Dr Andrew Palmer for discussion of John's evidence.

[50] The final numeral of the date has probably been lost. In *Lives of the Eastern Saints* 58 (*PO* 19 (1925–6), 217), John dated the Persian attack on Amida one year early.

point John refers to information from the 'interpreters of the Romans and Persians' (vi. 9), which might suggest an oral informant, but a written report of events cannot be excluded.

Only the headings survive from John's last chapters on Persian events during Maurice's reign (vi. 38–44), but these show that he had recorded Roman–Persian negotiations, reviewed the state of the two empires and of the Arab tribes, and finally described notable Persian captives at Constantinople and a Roman victory in 'the year three' (vi. 44, the Greek word *tritos* is used for the numeral). Michael the Syrian x. 21, a chapter largely derived from John, provides a little information that helps to supplement this general outline of John's account: a Roman embassy was humiliated by being forced to watch the massacre of Roman captives, and notable Persian captives were sent to Constantinople after Germanus' victory during the mutiny of the Roman army in 588.[51]

Germanus' victory is the only battle in Michael's account that could correspond to John's obscure reference to a Roman victory in 'the year three', but this raises problems for the interpretation of the term *tritos*. Brooks, in his translation, regarded it as an indiction date, i.e. 584/5, in which case the battle should be equated with Solachon in 586 (another example of antedating by one year). However, although some Syriac chroniclers (e.g. Joshua) did use indiction dates, which they indicated by transliterating the Greek numeral into Syriac, this was not John's normal practice. There is only one other example of such a dating formula in John (v. 23), which records the earthquake at Arabissus in 'the second (*tartīn*, in Syriac) year of its construction, which is that of the third (*trițos*)', but Michael the Syrian (x. 21, p. 359) dated this earthquake to the Seleucid year 898 (1 September 586–31 August 587 = indiction 5), which indicates that later Syriac chroniclers either did not understand *tritos* as an indiction date, or, if they did, thought that it was wrong. To introduce a further complication, it is quite possible that Arabissus was destroyed by the same

[51] Michael the Syrian twice records the Roman mutiny, though with different emphases, a doublet which may indicate two different source-traditions. The first reference to the mutiny, together with the account of Germanus' victory, may have originated in John of Ephesus, since it is followed by a report of the construction and destruction of Arabissus, information recorded by John (v. 23). Next comes the second account of the mutiny, with a reference to Priscus' arrogance, which is followed by information not recorded by John. Priscus' arrival in the east is the first military event of Maurice's reign recorded in *Chron. 1234* (§ 77), a work largely independent of John of Ephesus.

earthquake that struck Antioch in 588, in which case both Michael's and John's dates would be erroneous.

Whatever chronology John intended his two *tritos* dates to represent, he did not warn his readers that he was departing from his normal Seleucid dating; further, there is no guarantee that the *tritos* formula, if it is an indiction year, is correct. This confusion leaves the identity of the Roman victory in John vi. 44 uncertain. Solachon might appear the most likely battle in terms of importance,[52] but for the fact that Michael the Syrian, who preserves most of the main events reported by John, records Germanus' victory in 588 but not Solachon. The sequence of Michael's narrative suggests that John's reference was to Germanus' victory, and it is probable that John, like Michael, failed to mention Philippicus' success at Solachon (or perhaps conflated it with that of Germanus).[53] John's narrative of the eastern campaigns of Maurice's reign does appear to have been less thorough than his treatment of the years 572–82; it is likely that he could no longer rely on the well-organized and informed source that had provided the earlier account, but now had to compile his *History* from information that reached Constantinople (where he was writing). Germanus' victory had been followed by the dispatch to the capital of much booty and the head of the defeated Persian commander Maruzas; it was recorded by the Constantinopolitan chronicler used by Theophylact (cf. above, p. 233), and so it would not be surprising if it was one of the relatively few eastern events of Maurice's reign that John recorded.

(*e*) *Later eastern sources*

Most of Michael the Syrian's material on the Roman–Persian war originated in John of Ephesus, and the supplementary information in x. 21, 23 is neither detailed nor accurate. Of the other Syriac chronicles, most are either defective for the late sixth century, or preserve very brief statements of the main events. The only one to record a significant amount of information independent of John of

[52] Higgins, *Persian War* 55ff., assumed that John's date was a correct indiction date and that it referred to Solachon, assumptions that are responsible for the one serious flaw in his reconstruction of the chronology of Persian campaigns in Maurice's reign.

[53] The date remains obscure, but one point might be noted: if the Arabissus earthquake is identical with the one at Antioch in 588, and if the Roman victory is that of Germanus in 588, we then have two '*tritos* dates' in John that both relate to the same year—but the explanation eludes me.

Ephesus is the *Chronicon ad an. 1234*; although the interrelationship of the various Syriac chronicles has not been established, this chronicle appears to represent the tradition of information (of variable quality) that Michael the Syrian used to supplement the narrative of John of Ephesus. The Armenian Sebeos preserves some useful information: he records events in Armenia that tend to be overlooked by Greek and Syriac sources, and preserves an Armenian version of the flight and restoration of Khusro, but his obvious Armenian bias has to be discounted and even for Armenian events some of his factual details may be inaccurate. Thus the periods of duty which he assigned (ch. 2) to the Persian generals in Armenia are either wrong or very corrupt. The *Anonymous Chronicle of Guidi*, a Nestorian work of the seventh century, contains information on Vahram's revolt from the perspective of an inhabitant of Lower Mesopotamia. A version of the overthrow and return of Khusro is recorded in the medieval Persian historian Tabari, who preserves an Iranian interpretation of events. There are, however, only a few points at which these later eastern sources can be preferred to Theophylact's account.

9

The War under Justin II and Tiberius (572–582)

(i) THE OUTBREAK OF WAR (Th. Sim. iii. 9. 3–11)

Theophylact recounts the first decade of the war in a digression introduced after the main narrative has reached the start of Vahram's revolt against Hormizd (iii. 8. 10–12), an interruption excused on the grounds that 'thus the pages of history will be adorned with completeness of narrative' (iii. 9. 2). The positioning of the digression disrupts the account of the build-up of Vahram's revolt (iii. 8. 10–12; 18. 13–iv. 1. 9), and if its main purpose was to inform the reader about the past history of the war it might have been more usefully placed in book i. As it is, however, it creates a firm break between the general narrative of Roman–Persian conflicts and the dramatic climax to the war in the flight and restoration of Khusro II. The digression is about ten chapters long (iii. 9. 1–18. 3), twenty-one pages of Teubner text, but of this much of two chapters (iii. 11, 13) is devoted to speeches, one chapter to the rhetorical account of a Roman victory in a fictitious battle (iii. 14), another to character-analysis of the new rulers Tiberius and Hormizd (iii. 16), and most of the last to discussion of Vahram's career and the Persian official hierarchy. This leaves relatively little room for the narrative of military events that Theophylact professed to be recording, and his account is sometimes no more than a bare survey that has to be considerably expanded and corrected from other sources.

In 572 Justin II provoked a new war to exploit the apparent weakness of the Persian empire.[1] Justin was highly conscious of the majesty of the Roman empire, and sensitive about slights to its dignity: to foreign nations he wished to project an image that would inspire

[1] H. N. Turtledove, 'Justin II's Observance of Justinian's Persian Treaty of 562', *BZ* 76 (1983), 292–301, provides a narrative of diplomatic dealings between Romans and Persians from 561/2 to 572, based in the main on the detailed account in Menander (see Men. 9; 16, with Blockley's notes).

fear, and he set about establishing this image in his dealings with Arabs and Avars as well as Persians (Men. 9. 1; 12. 5; 16. 1). It has been noted that Justin's coinage and his programme of decorating Constantinople with statues both reflect his arrogance and belief in the majesty of imperial office.[2] Although he must have paid the Persians 90,000 solidi in 568/9 to cover the three annual instalments of the peace payments that were then due under the terms of the fifty-year peace, he was in principle reluctant to make payments to foreign nations since this practice insulted the dignity of the empire: requests from Avars and Arabs were abruptly rejected (Men. 8; 9. 1; 12. 6). It is thus conceivable that he would have refused to send money to Persia in 572, when the stipulated payments became annual and so more obviously represented tribute, even if two other factors had not encouraged him to oppose the Persians. The first was an offer by the Turkish Chagan to launch a joint attack on Persia (Men. 13. 5). This offer was probably conveyed by the Turkish envoys who accompanied the Roman ambassador Zemarchus back to Constantinople in 571; the Chagan had already shown his wish to involve the Romans against Persia by taking Zemarchus on a raid into Persia (Men. 10. 3. 64–73). The second factor was the revolt of the Persarmenians. The Persarmenians had been negotiating secretly with Justin since the first year of the patriarchate of Gregory of Antioch (569/70), and Justin had given them certain written undertakings (Evag. v. 7, p. 203. 14–15); he had perhaps sent the patrician Justinian to Armenia to await developments, since Justinian was at Theodosiopolis (Erzurum) when the Persian commander in Armenia, Čihōr-Wšnasp of the house of Suren, was murdered (J. Eph. ii. 20). This murder, which marked the start of the revolt, probably occurred in February 572, and was followed by the flight to the Romans of several leading Armenians.[3]

Not surprisingly, the Persians were reluctant to fight the Romans, and subsequently on campaign Khusro paraded the treaty in front of his army to show that the Persians had not been responsible for the war (J. Eph. vi. 21). In an attempt to avoid war, Khusro chose a Persian Christian, Sebukht, as ambassador to urge Justin not to attack his

[2] Cameron, 'Patronage' 71.

[3] For the date, see Stein, *Studien* 24, 37 n. 23 (following Stephen of Taron). John of Ephesus (vi. 11) conflated the different stages of the Armenian appeal to Justin, the initial secret appeal in Justin's fifth regnal year (i.e. 569/70 and the later open flight after Čihōr-Wšnasp's death. John's Seleucid Era date for the flight is one year early (882 SE = Sept. 570–31 Aug. 571).

co-religionists (Men. 16. 1). This was skilful diplomacy since a major source of the troubles in Armenia was the belief that the Persian magi had encouraged Khusro to establish a single religion throughout his empire, an act that would have contravened the terms of the fifty-year peace, which had guaranteed freedom of worship to Persian Christians. Sebukht was visible proof that Christians could hold influential positions in Persia and that there was no general persecution of Christians. He might even have been able to explain the problem in Armenia: the account of persecutions in Armenia in John of Ephesus (ii. 18–19) was derived from Armenian informants who had probably exaggerated the extent of their sufferings; it is clear that the Armenians objected most strongly to the construction of fire-temples in Armenia, but these may have been intended to serve new Persian settlers in the region and not to act as centres for the forcible conversion of the native population,[4] a policy that would have contradicted the generally favourable reputation that Khusro had among his Christian subjects (J. Eph. vi. 20). Justin, however, was in no mood to listen to Sebukht, and he had two relatively minor grievances which he could allege as excuses for his bellicosity: the Persians had attempted to interfere with the return of Zemarchus' embassy to the Turks in 571 (Men. 10. 5), and they had also intervened against the Homerites in the Arabian peninsula, probably in 570/1. Sebukht had begun his embassy after Khusro had heard of Suren's death in February, and so it was probably midsummer when he appeared before Justin and was refused the payment stipulated in the fifty-year peace.

The prospect of Turkish support had elated Justin, who imagined that the power of Persia could easily be annihilated (Men. 13. 5. 9–10), but no extant source investigates his specific intentions in provoking war, and in any case his initial aims were soon obscured by the overriding need to recover Dara. However, some important considerations can be identified. The Romans felt a religious duty to defend the Christians in Armenia from Zoroastrian persecution, and to protect the Christian leaders who had turned to Rome for help: thus, when the Romans agreed to Persian control of Armenia in the negotiations of 577/8, they insisted that individual Armenians should be allowed the option of living in the Roman empire (Men. 20. 2.

[4] For the suggestion of Persian military colonization in this region in these years, see J. Kramers, 'The Military Colonisation of the Caucasus and Armenia under the Sassanians', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies* 8 (1935/7), 613–18.

41–56). Roman peace payments were also an important issue, not only because of the expense but also on the principle that a bought peace was neither fair nor secure (Men. 20. 2. 16–23; J. Eph. vi. 12). The Romans also had certain territorial objectives, which they might have hoped to achieve by attacking Persia. Justin had been aggrieved by the Persian refusal to hand over the Caucasian region of Suania (Men. 9. 2–3), and the revolt of the Persarmenians gave the Romans the opportunity for territorial expansion in this area; during the war the Romans took steps to consolidate their influence among the nations on their north-eastern frontier by attempting to control the Sabir and Albanians (Men. 18. 5–6), and by interfering in the affairs of the Armenian church (J. Eph. vi. 10, describing this as violent persecution). Rome's main territorial aims were, however, in Upper Mesopotamia, where they might hope to recover Nisibis, and probably also to conquer Arzanene. Nisibis appears to have been Justin's personal objective, since there is evidence that he revived Roman claims to legal ownership of the city (*Chron. 1234* 65), and he specifically directed his cousin Marcian to besiege the city (J. Epi. § 3). Nisibis became an impossible goal after the Romans lost Dara, but Arzanene remained a Roman objective throughout the war, and at times they controlled several of the key forts in the territory.

Theophylact's presentation of the causes of the war is fair, in that, whereas John of Epiphania had summarized the grievances on either side without apportioning blame, Theophylact made clear that the Romans were responsible. He did not, however, attempt to explain Justin's aggressiveness or his objectives in the war. To Theophylact Justin's provocation of Persia was folly, for which his subsequent madness provided a fitting reward, a superficial explanation that might have been undermined if he had examined more closely Justin's contacts with the Turks and Armenians. Justin's bellicosity had been prompted by his conception of Roman imperial dignity combined with a reasoned assessment of risks and opportunities. But, as events turned out, Justin overestimated the effects on Persia of the promised Turkish attack and the Armenian revolt, so that his aggression appeared to be the product of over-confidence; and, more importantly, he had failed to consider the consequences of the renewed Persian war on Roman interests in the Balkans and the west. For two centuries, since the unfortunate example of Julian, emperors had preferred to avoid, or to terminate quickly, conflicts on the eastern frontier; Justin may have been carried away by the image of Roman grandeur that he

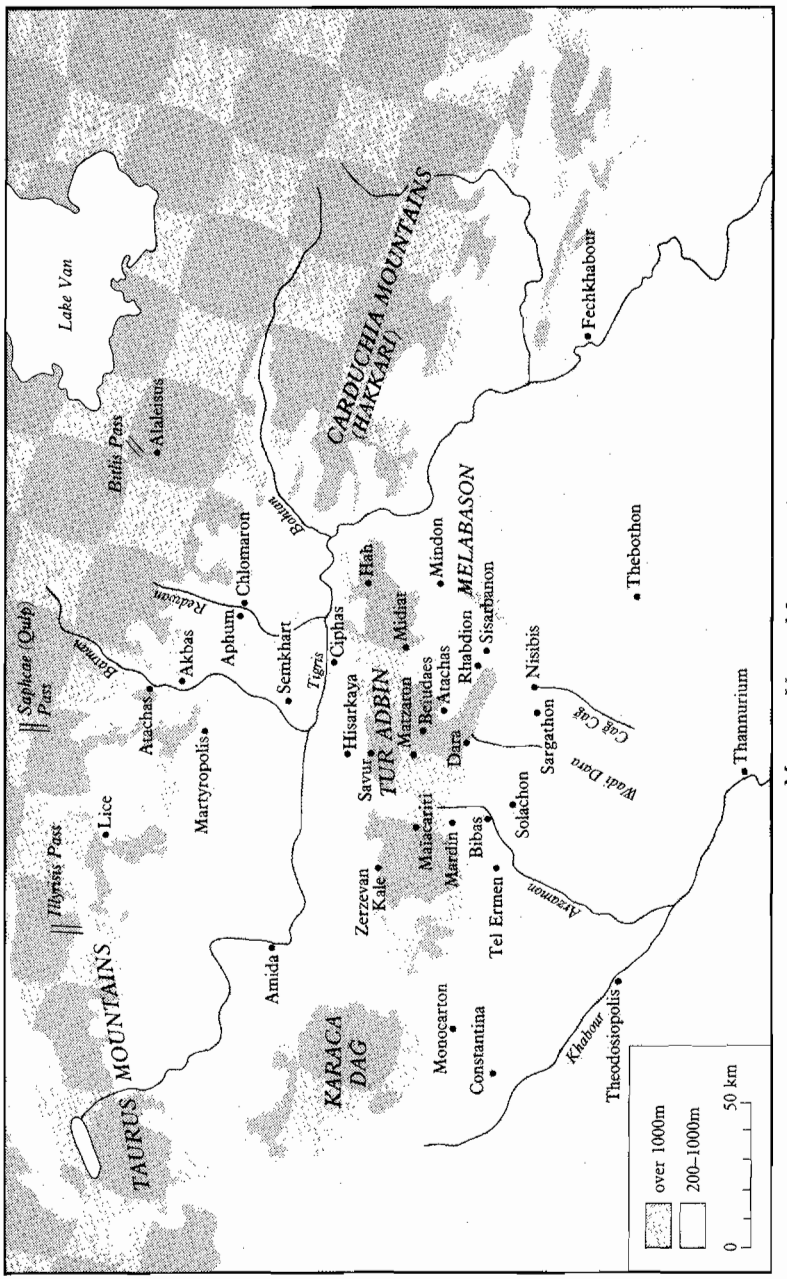
wished to project to Avars, Persians, and other neighbours and forgot that images often lose their potency when put to the test of war, the hard teacher.

(ii) THE CAMPAIGNS OF 572–3 (Th. Sim. iii. 10. 1–11. 2)

In a *Novel* dated to 569 (149. 1), Justin had proclaimed his belief that constant attack was the best form of defence for the empire, and so it is not surprising that he did not wait for Khusro's reaction to his high-handed treatment of Sebukht (Men. 16. 1. 26–8). Justin at once appointed his cousin Marcian to command the eastern armies and to prepare to attack Persia. Marcian arrived in Mesopotamia in late summer 572; in the autumn he sent 3,000 soldiers on a successful raid into Arzanene under the generals Theodore, Sergius from Tur Abdin, and Juventinus the commander at Chalcis (J. Epi. § 3).[5] Although Justin had attended to the upkeep of the cities in the eastern provinces (Men. 9. 1. 16–21),[6] it is possible that Marcian had to devote much attention to the recruitment, organization, and provisioning of his army for the new war, so that there may be some truth underlying the hostile picture in Evagrius (v. 8, p. 203. 28–33) of Justin's failure to make adequate preparations in advance. The small raid into Arzanene, executed by local commanders using the troops under their personal control, was perhaps the only aggressive action that Marcian could undertake immediately. He was not ready to launch a major invasion until early the next year, and this delay allowed the Persians to prepare their defences: this probably gave rise to the story that the Persian *marzbān* in Nisibis tricked Marcian into delaying his attack by four months, while he himself gathered supplies, felled trees outside the walls, expelled the Christian population, and made other preparations (*Chron. 1234* 65; M. Syr. x. 8, p. 307). The four months might represent the period between the raid into Arzanene and Marcian's advance to Sargathon in spring 573. Meanwhile in Armenia, the Armenian rebels with some Roman assistance recaptured Dwin from the Persians, although the Romans made themselves unpopular by burning a

[5] Theoph. Byz. dated Marcian's dispatch to the east to Justin's eighth year, i.e. after 14 Nov. 572, but this might rather refer to the time of the invasion of Arzanene.

[6] The ambassador John Comentiolus had been ordered to supervise this in 566 (Men. 9. 1. 17–19); cf. *Novel* 149. 2 (AD 569) for a general reference to the need to maintain defences.



Map 12. Upper Mesopotamia

church which the Persians had used as a storehouse (Sebeos 1). Among the Caucasian tribes the Colchians, Abasgians, and Alans supported the Armenians and their Roman allies, while the Sabir, Daganes, and Dilimainites assisted the Persians (Theoph. Byz. 4).

Early in the new year,[7] Marcian advanced towards Nisibis and defeated the Persians at Sargathon, eight miles west of the city: this success was perhaps the one celebrated at Constantinople by the erection of gold or gilded statues of Justin and Sophia (*Anth. Graec.* ix. 810). After this, Marcian besieged Thebothon, a fort about thirty miles south-east of Nisibis on the route towards Singara. He perhaps hoped to isolate Nisibis by cutting the routes leading south and east into Persia, but his attempt failed, he abandoned the siege after ten days, and he returned to Dara on Easter Eve, 8 April 573. After only a short stay, Marcian attacked Nisibis on the explicit orders of Justin, and the city was already being attacked by the second Sunday after Easter (J. Epi. 3; *Chron. 1234* 65). The siege was brief. According to Evagrius (v. 8, p. 204. 2–4) it was so ineffectual that the Persians did not even bother to close the gates, but it is likely that he has exaggerated Marcian's failure so as to corroborate his picture of the inadequacy of Justin's military preparations. By contrast the Syriac chroniclers state that Marcian prosecuted the siege vigorously, and came close to capturing the city (J. Eph. vi. 2; *Chron. 1234* 65), before the assault ended in confusion when Marcian's dismissal as general coincided with the arrival of a relief force under Khusro.[8] The sequence of these events in John of Epiphania and Theophylact, and to a lesser extent in Evagrius, is confused because of their failure to resolve the relative chronology of events at Nisibis, Antioch, and Constantinople, and to take account of the time required for the transfer of information from the frontier to the capital.[9] Thus John

[7] John of Epiphania (§ 3) wrote 'After the winter season', which Theophylact (iii. 10. 4) adapted to 'In the following year of Justin's reign'. On the basis of this linguistic change, Higgins ('Votive Offerings' 90 n. 3) claimed that Theophylact started his chronological year in the spring, but I doubt that the phraseology has such significance.

[8] Menander (16. 2) preserves an obscure comment on the siege, 'For this reason he did not concern himself with the siege of Nisibis'. This could refer to the confident Persian commander, or to the disappointed Marcian after his dismissal, or indeed to an unknown third party; it does not help to determine how effective the Roman siege really was.

[9] A distance of 1,000 miles, which might have been covered by important news in ten days; cf. W. M. Ramsay, 'The Speed of the Roman Imperial Post', *JRS* 15 (1925), 60–74; also Braudel, *Mediterranean* 355 ff., for comparative information on speeds of movement in the 15th to 17th cc.

(§ 4), followed by Theophylact (iii. 10. 8–11. 2), narrated Adarmahan's invasion of Syria (see below) *before* the Roman flight from Nisibis, and Theophylact inferred that Adarmahan's success was the reason for Justin's decision to replace Marcian. Evagrius, at least, correctly linked Adarmahan's success with Khusro's blockade of Roman troops at Dara (v. 9, p. 206. 3–5), and narrated it after Marcian's dismissal, but he believed that Justin replaced Marcian as a result of an unfavourable report on the progress of the siege of Nisibis from the bishop of Nisibis, which was transmitted to Justin via Gregory of Antioch (v. 9, pp. 204. 29–205. 8); any report of the attack on Nisibis could hardly have reached Constantinople before the brief siege broke up.[10] It is likely that Justin decided to replace Marcian after his failure at Thebothon was reported, but before news could arrive about his progress at Nisibis.

In the meantime Khusro, unknown to the Romans, who were misled by rumours that he was dead or dying (Evag. v. 9, p. 204. 20–2), had prepared an army and was advancing rapidly up the Euphrates, via Ambar and Circesium; from there he dispatched a force under Adarmahan to ravage Syria, while he continued up the Khabour river to surprise the Roman army outside Nisibis by appearing from the south.[11] Khusro's surprise was greatly helped by the withdrawal from the war of the Ghassanid Arabs under al-Mundhir, who ought to have been guarding the southern approaches to the empire: al-Mundhir had asked Justin for money, and in his pique at Justin's abrupt rejection of this request he might have accepted a bribe from Khusro to allow the safe passage of the Persian army. An involved and improbable explanation for al-Mundhir's refusal to co-operate with the Romans is preserved by John of Ephesus (vi. 3–4), who was naturally concerned to conceal any guilt on the part of his friend and fellow Monophysite: John's improbable story, which involves a bungled assassination attempt by Justin, was probably invented by

[10] The bishop might rather have been reporting the winter preparations of the Persian *marzbān*, or Marcian's unsuccessful attack on Thebothon.

[11] Evagrius (v. 9, p. 204. 18–19) and *Chron. 1234* (§ 65) both suggest that Khusro approached Nisibis from the east, across the Tigris, but they have mistakenly assumed that Khusro followed the normal route up the Tigris for travel between Lower Mesopotamia and Nisibis. John of Epiphania (§ 4), followed by Theophylact (iii. 10. 6–7), preserves the correct direction of march. The speed of Khusro's advance may be indicated by John's statement that Ambar was 5 days' journey from Circesium; the distance is about 200 miles, and John's comment could only refer to a specially rapid march, not to the normal journey time.

al-Mundhir to excuse his treachery. Whatever the reason, the Romans at Nisibis received little warning of Khusro's approach, and their confusion was increased since this coincided with the announcement of the demotion of Marcian. The Romans may even have been without a general, since it is unclear whether Acacius Archelaus was sent out to replace Marcian, or merely to announce his replacement by Theodore Tzirus, son of Justinian, whom Theophanes Byzantinus names as the new general. The Romans fled in panic to Mardin, and the closeness of Khusro's pursuit may have prevented the disorganized fugitives from entering Dara, which was a nearer refuge. Khusro captured the Roman siege-equipment and turned it against Dara; in the meantime Adarmahan ravaged Syria and sacked Apamea, without effective opposition from the shattered Roman army which skulked at Mardin under the command of the imperial treasurer Magnus (Evag. v. 9–10; J. Eph. vi. 6; J. Epi. 5). In November Dara fell to the Persians after a siege of almost six months (Evag. v. 10, p. 207. 14–15). The energy of Khusro's assault is revealed in John of Ephesus' detailed account of operations (vi. 5): the Persians managed to divert Dara's water-supply in spite of Justinian's measures to safeguard it, and they constructed a tower to overtop the walls at the most elevated point in the circuit.[12]

(iii) THE MESOPOTAMIAN TRUCES OF 574–8 (Th. Sim. iii. 11. 3–12. 10)

According to Evagrius (v. 11, p. 207. 20–3) and Theophylact (iii. 11. 3), the news of the loss of Dara deranged Justin's mind, although John of Epiphania (§ 5) preferred to be vaguer about the nature and cause of the illness (but suggests it was bodily rather than mental). Thereafter a one-year truce was concluded: John, followed by Theophylact, ascribed the initiative for this to Justin, and then at once passed to the proclamation of Tiberius as Caesar, but Evagrius recognized that the process was more complicated and that the empress Sophia had played a part (v. 12, pp. 207. 33–208. 17), although he confused the negotiations for the one-year truce in 574 with those for the three-year truce in 575. A fuller and more plausible account of this diplomacy is

[12] Khusro's decision to direct his attack against the citadel reflects the success of Justinian's various measures to protect other more obviously assailable parts of the defences. John's date for the siege is one year early.

preserved in Menander (18. 1–2): the negotiations were in fact initiated by Khusro, and the truce was concluded by the physician Zacharias (cf. M. Syr. x. 9, p. 312); Zacharias was the personal emissary of the empress Sophia, although Tiberius had already been appointed to assist in the administration of affairs. The date of the start of the truce is not recorded. Stein argued for mid-February 574 on the assumption that Michael the Syrian, who refers to a fifteen-month truce, calculated this length from the fall of Dara in mid-November.[13] However, the extra three months in Michael's figure (if it is correct) might just as easily relate to the period at the end of the one-year truce, since there was then a certain gap before the three-year truce of 575–8 was agreed. A later start for the truce, possibly the end of March, is more probable in order to allow time for the necessary diplomatic exchanges. The Persians, who received 45,000 solidi, insisted that the truce should not cover Armenia, while the Romans promised to send a further embassy to discuss an end to the war if Justin should recover his health.

Justin's continued illness prevented the Romans from fulfilling this promise; instead Tiberius, who was proclaimed Caesar in December 574, opened negotiations to extend the truce and provide more time for peace discussions, but at the same time he recruited barbarian mercenaries, mostly from German tribes north of the Balkans, for the new eastern commander, the patrician Justinian son of Germanus (Th. Sim. iii. 12. 3–4; Evag. v. 14, pp. 209. 27–210. 2): these recruits may have constituted the so-called Tiberiani, apparently 15,000 strong, who were subsequently commanded by Maurice (Theoph. 251. 24–7; Cedrenus 690. 14–15). During the talks, Tiberius issued *Novel* 163 (*CJ* iii. 749–51) which, while reducing tax payments in gold by one-quarter for each of the next four years, maintained payments in kind, and specifically referred to the continuation of such payments from Osrhoene and Mesopotamia for storage and military needs. Theophylact's brief account of the negotiations is obscure, since he first notes that an embassy discussed a truce (iii. 12. 3), but then records that the truce was arranged between the two armies on the frontier without reference to ambassadors (iii. 12. 9–10). In this passage Theophylact switched from a source (probably Menander) that stressed the role of ambassadors to John of Epiphania, who was less interested in diplomacy (cf. above, ch. 8(i)(*b*)).[14] Theophylact's obscurities are

[13] *Studien* 55 n. 14.

[14] John's fragment terminates during these negotiations.

elucidated by Menander's detailed account (18. 3–4; 23. 1). The Roman ambassadors Trajan and Zacharias were sent to negotiate a three-year truce covering all the eastern frontier,[15] but the Persians demanded a five-year truce that excluded Armenia: it was in the Persian interest to have time to consolidate their gains in Upper Mesopotamia, where the capture of Dara had fulfilled their greatest ambitions, but to retain the right to campaign further north, whereas the Romans preferred a shorter but comprehensive truce to allow time for training and reorganization, followed either by a lasting peace or by renewed campaigning from repaired bases. The Roman negotiators accepted the Persian terms, subject to the emperor's approval; when Tiberius insisted on a three-year truce, the Persian negotiator Mahbodh ordered Tamkhusro to ravage Roman territory; the one-year truce had probably already expired, so that Mahbodh's action was legitimate, and Tamkhusro raided as far as Constantina (J. Epi. 5), from where he was probably persuaded to retire by the news of the approach of Justinian at the head of a mercenary army (J. Eph. vi. 13).[16] The two armies faced each other across the frontier (Th. Sim. iii. 12. 10), and the impasse perhaps persuaded Mahbodh to accept Tiberius' amendments to the peace terms. Mahbodh, however, refused to receive the Roman peace payment at the frontier, and forced the ambassadors to convey the money an additional thirty miles or so to Nisibis as a public demonstration of Roman subordination, even though Tamkhusro was engaged in hostile manœuvres near the frontier (Men. 23. 1).

The date of the agreement of the truce is not known, but Stein's proposal of not earlier than July 575 is plausible:[17] Tiberius' ambassadors may not have been set out until the start of spring (Th. Sim. iii.

[15] Cf. Evag. v. 12, p. 208. 1–2, for Trajan. J. Epi. § 5 names as ambassador Theodore, 'a man who had controlled affairs in Armenia'; this Theodore might have participated in Trajan's embassy in the first part of 575, when a man with recent experience of Armenia would have been useful, in which case the ambassador might be identical with the Roman general of that name in Armenia in 575/6 (Men. 18. 6. 30)—the ambassador could have taken part in negotiations until mid-575, and thereafter been assigned to lead the Albanian campaign later in the same year (*pace* Blockley, *Menander* 270–1, n. 205). However, John has perhaps simply muddled this with the embassy conducted in 576 by the silentiary Theodore, son of Bacchus; and there were other possible Theodores to confuse the issue further (cf. below, n. 23).

[16] Although this chapter appears to record events of 578, and John names Adarmahan rather than Tamkhusro as the Persian commander, the reference to Justinian as general indicates that it relates to 575 (cf. Stein, *Studien* 81 n. 5).

[17] Ibid. 82 n. 6.

12. 3),[18] and the diplomatic wrangling and frontier skirmishing must have occupied several months. The duration of Roman–Persian negotiations has already been a relevant factor in the reconstruction of the events of 574, and it would be useful if the probable length of such diplomacy could be established. Urgent communications within the Roman empire could travel very quickly, and news from the eastern frontier could probably reach Constantinople within ten days, on the assumption that messages might travel at 100 miles a day. In emergencies diplomatic dealings might have proceeded at this pace: thus in 576 Khusro allowed thirty days for a Roman ambassador to travel from Theodosiopolis (Erzurum) and back, which must have been the absolute minimum for this return journey.[19] However, diplomacy normally proceeded more slowly, and in particular foreign ambassadors will have travelled much more sedately; they could invent their own reasons for delay, or find their hosts imposing unexpected obstacles, depending on whether one of the parties wished to protract the negotiations. Thus in 579 the Persians deliberately dragged out negotiations throughout the campaign season to allow them time for urgent military preparations (Men. 23. 8–9; J. Eph. vi. 22): the Roman envoys were subjected to a frustratingly slow journey to the Persian court, where they were detained for three months in the heat of the summer, and they then had a circuitous journey back to the Roman frontier. In 543 Roman ambassadors to Khusro in Azerbaijan had found it appropriate to protract their diplomacy (Proc. *Wars* ii. 24; cf. Men. 5. 4).

The Romans regarded 103 days as a reasonable time for the journey of a Persian ambassador from Dara to Constantinople in the sixth century (Const. Porph. *De Caer.* i. 89). Assuming that a Roman ambassador in Persia travelled at roughly the same speed, it would probably have taken him six weeks to travel from Nisibis to Ctesiphon

[18] Blockley, *Menander* 272–3 n. 197, suggested that these negotiations probably began after midsummer 574 but some time before Tiberius' elevation to Caesar in December. This ignores Theophylact's evidence (iii. 12. 2–3; possibly based on Menander, cf. ch. 8(i)(*b*)), and although his order of events may be wrong, the evidence in favour of the earlier date is even shakier. Menander (18. 1. 1–4) dated the start of Tiberius' control of affairs to winter 573/4, before the arrangement of the one-year truce: thus it is difficult to interpret 18. 4. 1, 'Since the affairs of the empire had already encompassed Tiberius, the two ambassadors Trajan and Zacharias wrote to him', as evidence that Tiberius only became Caesar when negotiations were nearing completion (hence that they had started in mid-574).

[19] In the 17th c., 18 days was regarded as a very fast time for a single journey from Erzurum to Istanbul (Braudel, *Mediterranean* 369).

in normal circumstances. On the other hand, ambassadors probably travelled rather faster inside their own empire than was permitted after they had entered the enemy empire. On these assumptions, one might reckon seven months as a reasonable time for an embassy to travel from one capital to the other and back. These times might have been reduced, if both sides wished to expedite matters; urgent negotiations could be conducted on the frontier, and messengers could have transmitted the results of negotiations more quickly than an ambassador in person (Men. 10. 4. 11–17). This 'reasonable' time of seven months could be extended almost indefinitely, depending on the urgency of the embassy's business and the motivation of the two sides involved in the diplomacy. Rapid travel by an ambassador was probably the exception rather than the rule, and numerous pretexts were undoubtedly invented when either side could see an advantage in delay. The slowness of diplomacy was already well enough known in the fifth century BC to be satirized.[20]

(iv) THE ARMENIAN CAMPAIGNS OF 576–7 (Th. Sim. iii. 12. 11– 15. 10)

The timing of the peace agreement in 575 is of great significance for the date of the next campaign, Khusro's invasion of Armenia. In Theophylact, this immediately follows the conclusion of the truce (iii. 12. 10–11), which implies that the invasion took place in summer 575; Evagrius (v. 14, p. 210. 2–3) dated it to the year after the capture of Dara, which on his compressed chronology would be the same year as the agreement of the three-year truce (i.e. 575). According to Menander, however, fighting in Armenia did not start until the beginning of spring (18. 4. 30), and Khusro arrived at Theodosiopolis (Erzurum) at the end of spring (Men. 18. 6. 66): although Menander does not specify the length of the interval between the agreement of the truce in 575 and the resumption of hostilities, the beginning of spring must be the spring of the next year, i.e. 576; further, he later

[20] Aristophanes, *Acharnians* 61ff. Comparative speeds of embassies may be unreliable as a guide, because of differences in conditions, but an English embassy in Persia in the early 17th c. spent about a month travelling 330 miles from Isfahan to Ashraf near the Caspian Sea, and its whole journey from the Persian Gulf via Shiraz and Isfahan to Ashraf took about 4 months. After Isfahan this embassy travelled by night to avoid the heat (in late April and early May), and progressed between 16 and 30 miles on those nights when it did travel. See Sir T. Herbert, *A Relation of Some Years' Travaile* (London, 1634), 51–67, 91–4.

confirms that Khusro's expedition occurred in 576 by dating Valentinian's embassy to the Turks 'to the second year of the rule of Tiberius Caesar, shortly before the events concerning Khusro' (Men. 19. 1). Menander also remarks on the disruption caused by the late arrival of pay for the Roman eastern army (18. 6. 45–7): this too points to 576 rather than 575, since a large part of Justinian's army were the barbarian mercenaries recruited by Tiberius in 574/5, who would probably not have been due to receive payment until the winter of 575/6; the payment in winter 575/6 would have been particularly liable to delay, since this was the tenth anniversary of Justin II's accession and an expensive extra donative was now due.

Stein accepted the chronology implied by Theophylact's account, and dated Khusro's invasion to 575, but his arguments are not convincing.[21] Stein was forced to emend the chronology in Sebeos (ch. 2) for the Persian commanders in Armenia: although Sebeos' dates may be corrupt, it should be noted that he assigns Tamkhusro, who is known to have been active in Armenia in 577–8, a two-year period of command immediately after Khusro's expedition (which would therefore appear to be in 576). Further, Stein was wrong to use the reference in John of Epiphania (§ 5) to an embassy by the general Theodore, which announced Tiberius' proclamation as Caesar and preceded the peace negotiations of 575, to date Menander's description of the embassy of Theodore, son of Bacchus, which followed the negotiations: the two Theodores are distinguished by Menander (18. 6). The main reason for Stein's choice of 575 was that John of Ephesus (vi. 12) provided a Seleucid Era date for the dispatch of Roman ambassadors after the repulse of Khusro's invasion (887 SE = AD 575/6); however, this Seleucid date, like others in book vi, is one year early, and these negotiations probably began in autumn 576 (888 SE) and lasted for over a year until spring 578. The date of Khusro's expedition must be 576. Theodore, son of Bacchus, the Roman ambassador whom Khusro forced to accompany him to Theodosiopolis, had set out on his embassy after the conclusion of the three-year truce: he would have arrived in Persia in the latter part of 575, far too late to accompany an expedition to Armenia in that year but at a suitable time for the preparations for an invasion in spring 576.

After the conclusion of the truce in 575, Justinian was ordered to

[21] Stein, *Studien* 62, 82 nn. 6–7. Blockley, *Menander* 5 n. 20 (cf. 32), is somewhat confused: he follows my chronology while claiming to adhere to Stein's.

transfer his army from the Mesopotamian frontier to Armenia (Th. Sim. iii. 12. 11; Men. 18. 6. 41–3). Before leaving Mesopotamia Justinian had probably achieved the all-important reconciliation with the Ghassanid leader al-Mundhir (J. Eph. vi. 4), who was probably worried that the conclusion of a long peace in Mesopotamia would expose him to Roman retribution for his earlier treachery; as earnest of his loyalty al-Mundhir skirmished with the Persian Arabs, recovering much Roman booty, and may have travelled to Constantinople to meet Tiberius.[22] In 575 the Roman commanders in Armenia, Theodore and Curs,[23] invaded Albania to impose Roman control on the Sabir and Albanian tribes, but the Albanians at least rebelled (Men. 18. 5–6). The Roman generals were again involved in Albania early in 576, while Justinian was transferring his army via Amida to Armenia. At about this time, Khusro arrived at Theodosiopolis; Theophylact suggests that the Persians had followed Justinian's route from Mesopotamia, but Menander's more detailed account (18. 6) reveals that they had marched unopposed across Persarmenia and appeared before Justinian, who arrived somewhat belatedly.[24] Plunder was probably not Khusro's main objective, because of the difficulties of transporting booty across the Armenian mountains; instead his intention was to restore Persian control in Armenia by demonstrating his superiority and by destroying the towns and cities that protected Roman influence in the area. Khusro was successful in Persarmenia, but he then failed to capture Theodosiopolis. There he dismissed the ambassador Theodore, whom he had forced to accompany his expedition, and agreed to wait thirty days for Tiberius to send another ambassador; this delay might seem surprising, since it would have allowed the Romans to regroup their defences, but it is possible that Khusro, who would have marched into Armenia before the spring thaw, was now being troubled by flooded streams and mud-choked

[22] John of Biclar 214. 19–21 records a visit to Constantinople in Justin's ninth year (575), but his dates are unreliable (cf. ch. 3 n. 54).

[23] This Theodore might be identified with Marcian's subordinate in 572 (J. Epi. 3) and/or with Theodore Tzirus, Marcian's successor at Nisibis in 573 according to Theophanes Byzantinus.

[24] Blockley, *Menander* 273–4 nn. 200, 209, uses Justinian's late arrival as proof that the 3-year truce was only concluded in late 575 ('a few months after July'), but this is to ignore the various measures (e.g. dealings with al-Mundhir; consolidation of defences; organization of the provisions whose storage is anticipated in Tiberius, *Novel* 163) that Justinian would have had to undertake in Mesopotamia before marching north.

roads and so accepted a delay as inevitable.[25] There is no mention of a return embassy from Tiberius, and Khusro proceeded with his invasion. Its progress is recorded most fully by John of Ephesus (vi. 8–9): Khusro thrust towards Caesarea in Cappadocia, but was thwarted by the Romans, and he then turned north against Sebaste which was sacked; refugees fled westwards in front of this invasion, and at Amasea the exiled Patriarch of Constantinople, Eutychius, had trouble finding enough food for them.[26] Khusro, however, was then almost trapped by an encircling movement in the Armenian mountains, where the Romans captured the royal baggage, he retired to Melitene, which he sacked; nearby he was confronted by the Roman army, although battle was not joined; and finally Khusro led a disorganized flight across the Euphrates during which half the Persian army perished.

Theophylact's account of these events is very sketchy (iii. 12. 11–14. 11), passing directly from Justinian's arrival in Armenia to his confrontation with Khusro, which occupies almost all his account of this campaign. He does not indicate the time or place of this encounter, apart from the references to Khusro's crossings of the Euphrates. His narrative is a stereotyped account of a battle, in which Justinian first revives the flagging Roman morale with a long speech that contrasts Roman piety and Persian wickedness; the armies prepare, trumpets blare, dust whirls, noise is everywhere; a pitched battle is fought, being decided when the solid Roman charge overcomes the Persians in spite of their superiority in archery (iii. 14. 4–8);[27] the Romans win a great victory, and plunder Khusro's baggage

[25] Blockley, *Menander* 274 n. 214, rejects this interpretation on the grounds that the Roman army was not prevented from mustering: but the Romans were not ready to oppose Khusro until he had advanced into Cappadocia (cf. Men. 18. 6. 27–8 for belated Roman activity throughout the year) and, in any case, during a crisis the Romans will have struggled against conditions that the Persian army (complete with elephants) preferred not to tackle (for a parallel, cf. Theodoret, *HE* v. 37: in 421 the Romans managed to assemble their troops while the Persians were prevented from advancing by storms of rain and hail). After Khusro realized that Theodosiopolis would not be captured, it was still in his interests to press ahead with the invasion: thus it is sensible to consider whether something more than diplomatic courtesy caused him to offer a delay.

[26] Eustratius, *Life* of Eutychius, col. 2344 B.

[27] Cf. Th. Sim. i. 9. 9 for the Persian failure to withstand a Roman charge, and i. 12. 5 for Persian archery; also *Strat.* xi. 1. 54ff. for advice on maximizing the effects of the Roman charge while minimizing that of Persian archery; cf. Am. Marc. xxxi. 12. 1–3 (Adrianople) for some stock battle elements, and Plautus, *Amphitruo* 219ff. for an 'off-the-peg' battle (I owe this reference to Dr Holford-Strevens).

while the Persians flee towards the Euphrates, burning Melitene *en route*. Theophylact does not refer to the Persian casualties in crossing the Euphrates. Overall, his description of this 'victory' poses problems. It appears to be a conflation of two incidents which John of Ephesus treated separately, the capture of the royal baggage in the Armenian mountains and the armies' later confrontation between the sacked city of Melitene and the Euphrates. According to John there was no pitched battle and the Persians suffered their casualties while fleeing across the river. There are certain resemblences between the accounts of Theophylact and Evagrius (v. 14, pp. 210. 11–211. 21), particularly in the pre-battle preparations. Evagrius also highlights a pitched battle against Khusro, but he places this before the capture of the royal baggage in the mountains, and does not record a confrontation near Melitene; in Evagrius' account of the battle, however, it is only the Roman right wing under Curs that charges the Persians, and Evagrius admits that most Persian casualties were suffered while they retreated across the Euphrates.[28] The accounts of Theophylact and Evagrius both reflect Roman propaganda, which created a major victory in pitched battle from a tactical success in the Armenian mountains that in fact may only have involved limited fighting;[29] this propaganda version has wrongly been preferred to the less glorious description in John of Ephesus, who preserves the best overall account of the campaign.[30]

After crossing the Euphrates, Khusro fled through Arzanene and over the Hakkâri mountains (Th. Sim. iii. 14. 11; J. Eph. vi. 9). He was so dispirited by the defeat that he published a decree that restricted campaigns by the Persian king: according to Theophylact (iii. 14. 11) this prohibited all foreign expeditions by the king, but in Evagrius (v. 15, pp. 211. 33–212. 1) only expeditions against the Romans were banned; the most accurate version of the decree is probably in John of

[28] Cf. Sebeos 1, who records an 'Armenian' victory over Khusro and the capture of baggage, although he also admits that most Persian casualties were suffered while crossing the Euphrates.

[29] Evagrius' account of the Roman triumph is more accurate and much more restrained than Theophylact's, a point of relevance to the interrelationship between Evagrius, John of Epiphania, and Theophylact (on the reasonable assumption that Theophylact's account at this point reflects John's presentation): Evagrius could not have derived his account from that of John/Theophylact, but John might have been influenced by Evagrius, elaborating the description of a Roman victory and transferring the 'battle' from the Armenian highlands to the vicinity of Melitene.

[30] e.g. Blockley, *Menander* 278 n. 239, citing Bury and Stein.

Ephesus (vi. 9), that the king should only go out to fight against another king, since this reflects Khusro's concern to maintain royal dignity. Khusro's expedition must have lasted several months, probably until the autumn; the Romans followed up their success by ravaging as far as the Caspian Sea, near which their army wintered, and threatening one of the Persian royal capitals (probably in Azerbaijan) before returning to the empire in the spring (Th. Sim. iii. 15. 1–2; J. Eph. vi. 10). During this raid Khusro was persuaded to reopen negotiations with the Romans by unrest among the Persian soldiers, who were discontented by the lack of booty (Th. Sim. iii. 15. 3–6). A minor embassy conducted by the Persian Nadoes initiated full-scale discussions, led on the Roman side by the patricians John and Peter, the former *magister* Theodore, and the doctor Zacharias, and for the Persians by the *sarnakhorgan* Mahbodh (Men. 20. 1. 19–29);[31] according to Theophylact, talks broke down when a surprise victory for Tamkhusro over Justinian in Armenia revived Persian confidence (iii. 15. 8–9), but he is unclear about when the negotiations began and does not report their substance or length. Menander records that discussions centred on the return of Dara, the question of Roman payments, and the status of Persarmenia and Iberia; they continued for more than a year, and were deliberately prolonged by the Persians after Tamkhusro's victory so as to delay Roman military preparations (Men. 20. 1–2; J. Eph. vi. 12).[32] The Romans argued for peace on equal terms, claiming that the return to Persia of such fertile territories as Persarmenia and Iberia balanced the restoration of Dara and the ending of payments; the Persians were not prepared to accept this exchange once Tamkhusro's victory appeared to have driven the Romans out of Persarmenia. In order to regain Dara the Romans would have to fight, and their overall success in the following campaigns shows that they were now ready to do so: during the four years of truce Tiberius had probably continued his attempts to recruit Germanic tribesmen (cf. Men. 22), and there will have been

[31] Blockley, ibid. n. 241, for more information on the Romans; Th. Sim. iii. 15. 6 wrongly describes Theodore's current post as *magister*, whereas he in fact was *comes sacrarum largitionum*. This Theodore, son of Peter the Patrician, is to be distinguished from Theodore the silentiary, son of Bacchus, ambassador in 576.

[32] John, whose account is hostile to Roman actions in Armenia, suggests that Roman intransigence was responsible for the breakdown; he reports Tamkhusro's victory separately (vi. 10), and treats it as divine punishment for the misdemeanours of the Romans against the Armenian Christians.

considerable reconstruction work and gathering of supplies in the towns and forts of Upper Mesopotamia and Syria.[33]

(v) MAURICE'S CAMPAIGNS, 578–82 (Th. Sim. iii. 15. 10–18. 3)

Maurice, who had been involved at Constantinople in the latter stages of peace negotiations (Men. 20. 2. 120), was appointed supreme commander of the eastern armies with the title of count of the federates to add to that of count of the excubitors (Theoph. 251. 27); this was during the winter of 577/8, in succession to Justinian whose recent death had led to quarrelling among subordinate Roman commanders (J. Eph. vi. 27).[34] *En route* to the frontier, he collected troops in his native Cappadocia, as well as in Anzitene and Syria, and then camped at Citharizon in a position to react to Persian moves in Armenia or Upper Mesopotamia (J. Eph. vi. 14). Theophanes, in a highly compressed account of Maurice's eastern campaigns, states that Tiberius now recruited 15,000 federates (251. 24–8), but these should probably be identified with the German mercenaries assembled for Justinian in 574/5; these latter had suffered casualties in Armenia in 576/7, and there may also have been desertions (J. Eph. vi. 10, 8), so that new recruits were needed. Maurice probably spent the winter improving Roman discipline, and took steps to prevent maltreatment of Roman allies (Men. 23. 3, 4): this probably refers to the Roman harassment of Armenians recorded by John of Ephesus (vi. 10). Forty days before the truce was due to expire (on Roman calculations) Mahbodh, also known as the *sarnakhorgan*, ravaged the regions of Constantina and Theodosiopolis (Resaina) in Mesopotamia, and captured the undefended fort of Thanurium (Th. Sim. iii. 15. 11; Men. 23. 1, 5). There may have been disagreement about the terminal date of the truce, with the Romans believing that it ran for

[33] See Prentice, *Inscriptions* 947, for an inscription dated to 577/8 from a fort to the north-east of Epiphania, and 823–5, 887, 893, for civilian buildings from this period. The Roman camp at Monocarton was renamed Tiberiopolis (Th. Sim. i. 14. 6), which suggests that Tiberius ordered some reconstruction there.

[34] Gregory of Tours preserves stories about plots involving Justinian against Tiberius in 578 and later (on which see Cameron, 'Gregory' 425–6); these stories are gossip rather than precise reports, and there is better reason to believe John of Ephesus' statement that Justinian had already died. Evagrius (v. 19, p. 214. 21–5) wrongly placed Maurice's appointment as general after Justin II's death; he may have confused Justin with Justinian the general.

three years from the date of agreement, whereas the Persians, not unreasonably, chose to interpret it as a direct continuation of the one-year truce of 574–5.[35] When Maurice hurried south to oppose Mahbodh, Tamkhusro took his chance to march from Armenia, past Citharizon, and ravage the vicinity of Amida.[36]

This Persian anticipation of the expected end of the truce may have been a sign of weakness: during the negotiations in 577/8, the *antigrapheus* Asterius,[37] who was a prisoner of the Persians, had tried to warn Tiberius of Persian weakness (Men. 20. 1), and it is possible that Persia's north-east frontier was now being threatened by the Turks, who for some years extracted peace payments from the Persians (Th. Sim. iii. 6. 10–11). The Persians probably hoped to disrupt the expected Roman invasion of Persian territory by capturing or damaging the main Roman bases in Upper Mesopotamia, where the loss of either Amida or Constantina would have been a serious blow to the Romans and would have restricted their ability to campaign further east. Maurice quickly responded to the Persian surprise: although he was suffering from a fever, he ravaged Arzanene, capturing Aphum, several other forts, and 10,000 prisoners; these were probably Nestorian Christians, the dominant group in the population of Arzanene, and they were resettled on deserted lands on Cyprus.[38] Maurice's ravaging was sufficiently extensive to be visible from the summer retreat of Khusro in Carduchia, and the upsetting sight

[35] Blockley, *Menander* 281 n. 269, rejects this suggestion, but his objection, based on the supposed care with which the negotiators in 561/2 had apparently clarified dates, is not cogent. Men. 6. 1. 389–93 merely notes that clause 13 of the 50-year peace stipulated that the year was to be 365 days long: this provision was perhaps necessary in such a long peace, because of minor differences between Roman and Persian calendars (the Persian year was made up of 12 months of 30 days, plus 5 intercalated days but no leap year, so that over the 50 years it would diverge from the Roman year by 13 days), but might well have been ignored in a brief truce. It is noteworthy that in Menander's detailed account of the 50-year peace there is no reference to the exact date on which it began, which suggests that such matters might not always have been spelt out as clearly as Blockley imagines. Further, Khusro's offer to return part of the payment for the 3-year truce (Men. 20. 2. 94–103) does not support Blockley's argument, since this was a Persian negotiating ploy in 577, one intended to frighten the Romans into accepting Persian demands, not a reaction to the infringement in 578; it does, however, indicate that the Persians wished to be seen to comply with their agreements, so that some explanation for the 40-day anticipation of the end of the truce is even more essential.

[36] Th. Sim. iii. 15. 12–13; Men. 23. 6; J. Eph. vi. 14.

[37] Not a *referendarius*, as Blockley *Menander* 278–9 n. 243 (on the difference, cf. ch. 2(i)).

[38] Th. Sim. iii. 15. 13–15; Evag. v. 19, p. 215. 16–26; Men. 23. 7; *Chron. Seert* 41; J. Eph. vi. 15, 34.

apparently contributed to Khusro's death shortly afterwards (Agath. iv. 29. 8–10), a story that parallels that of Justin's madness being caused by the loss of Dara. Maurice failed in an attack on Chlomaron, the main town in Arzanene, but the Persian defenders were forced to make a local truce with the Roman garrison in Aphum;[39] the local spokesman for the Persians was the bishop of Chlomaron, who was at this time probably Mar Isho-Yabh, the future Catholicus and a loyal friend of the Persians. Maurice then switched his attack from Arzanene to Beth Arabaye, ravaging the vicinity of Nisibis and sending Curs and Romanus across the Tigris; before winter he captured the important fortress of Singara (Th. Sim. iii. 16. 1–2). Maurice's sweeping successes might seem surprising, considering that this was the first Mesopotamian campaign since the loss of Dara. Possession of Dara did not greatly improve the Persians' aggressive position in Upper Mesopotamia, apart from increasing the security of Nisibis, but its loss, by removing their main advanced military base, ought to have significantly impaired the ability of the Romans to campaign in the plains to the south of the Tur Abdin. In place of Dara, the Romans had to operate from Constantina and the nearby camp of Monocarton,[40] which was developed by Tiberius (Th. Sim. i. 14. 6), but the Romans had probably also used the years of truce to improve their bases in the Tur Abdin, particularly Mardin and Rhabdion, so that the apparent disaster of the fall of Dara had little impact on later campaigns. The Persian forces were clearly too weak to oppose Maurice in the open, and instead they concentrated on defending the major towns, Chlomaron in Arzanene, which defied Maurice, Dara and Nisibis in Beth Arabaye, neither of which Maurice attacked. Maurice appears to have had two main objectives: to extend Roman influence in Arzanene by taking over Persian strongholds, and to weaken the Persian position in Beth Arabaye by gradually isolating the frontier cities of Dara and Nisibis so that a direct assault on these would be easier.

[39] For the locations of Chlomaron and Aphum, the source of much error in discussion of these events, see Whitby, 'Arzanene' 208–11.

[40] Monocarton is traditionally, but incorrectly, located at Tel Ermen (Dillemann, *Mésopotamie* 165–6). Monocarton is to be identified with Makarta (George of Cyprus 903), Minicerta (*Rav. Cos.* ii. 13, 24. 45), Minnocerta (*Tab. Peut.*), but distinguished from Manacarta (*Rav. Cos.* ii. 13, 24. 47) and Macharta (*Tab. Peut.*). The latter should probably be located on the Arzamon river, at Tel Ermen, whereas the former is considerably further west (in Osrhoene, George of Cyprus). Men. 26. 1. 76 describes Monocarton as 'in the vicinity of Constantina', which is corroborated by Th. Sim. iii. 1. 13.

Justin II died on 4 October 578, towards the end of Maurice's first campaign, and in February or March 579 Khusro I also died. Theophylact took the opportunity to contrast the characters of their successors (iii. 16. 4–13), after which he recorded the attempts by Tiberius to negotiate peace; these overtures were rebuffed by Hormizd the new Persian king, and fighting restarted at the beginning of summer (iii. 17. 3). Theophylact implies that there was no significant lapse of time between the end of negotiations and the resumption of fighting, so that Maurice's second campaign might appear to be dated to 579, the date which is traditionally accepted. This chronology, however, does not allow sufficient time for the negotiations described in detail by Menander (23. 8–9). The Persians deliberately dragged out the diplomacy, to allow supplies to be stored in the fortresses and the countryside to recover from the effects of Roman ravaging and a plague of locusts. The Roman envoys, Zacharias the doctor and Theodore the excubitor,[41] did not leave Roman territory until after Tiberius had learnt of Khusro's death (not before March 579), and were subjected to a most uncomfortable and frustrating series of delays on their journeys in Persia, where they also had to spend three months at court in cramped quarters unsuited to the summer heat (Men. 23. 9. 102–17; J. Eph. vi. 22); after their return they had to report their failure to Tiberius, who then ordered Maurice to make all necessary preparations for war. It is inconceivable that Maurice could have invaded Persia before the autumn of 579 at the very earliest, and, since Maurice's next invasion began in early summer (Th. Sim. iii. 17. 3–4), it appears that the Persian tactics had succeeded in preventing a major campaign in 579.[42] It is probable that the failure of Theophylact (and of John of Epiphania) to appreciate the slowness of diplomacy has again led to the omission of a reference to the start of a new year.[43] Theophylact in fact only records three campaigns for the four years of Tiberius' reign, and only notes the start of three new years instead of the expected four: it is most

[41] Blockley, *Menander* 282 n. 282, most implausibly suggests an identification between this excubitor and Theodore, son of Bacchus, the ambassador in 576, who was in fact a *silentiarius* (J. Eph. vi. 8; recognized by Blockley at n. 205, though in n. 282 he calls him a *spatharius*).

[42] Blockley, ibid. 283 n. 291, without argument disregards Theophylact's evidence for the duration of the campaign, and underestimates the Persian determination to prevent fighting in 579.

[43] Cf. above, p. 263, for the omission of 575/6.

probable that he has omitted the first campaign-year of Tiberius' reign, when there was no military action.[44]

There was no significant military action to report in 579, apart from some minor skirmishing in Armenia: the Armenian campaign of Varaz Vzur should probably be dated to 579, immediately after the two-year residence of Tamkhusro (Sebeos 2), and so too perhaps should an undated success for the Roman commander Curs (J. Eph. vi. 28). At the beginning of spring 579 Maurice had been sent to the eastern front to await diplomatic developments (Men. 23. 9. 18–23); he may have occupied his army by constructing a fort at Semkhart on the east bank of the Batman river (J. Eph. vi. 35); the Persians perhaps responded by fortifying Akbas, a site further north on the Batman.[45] The events of 580 are recorded only by Theophylact (iii. 17. 3–4), who briefly notes the extensive ravaging carried out by Maurice's subordinates beyond the Tigris and into the heart of Media; the invasion had begun in early summer, and the Romans spent the whole summer in Persia. Theophylact does not, however, mention any sieges in 580, and it is possible that the Persians had sufficiently strengthened the defences of their towns to render useless a direct attack in this year; as a result the Romans resumed their policy of attrition by ravaging. At the same time al-Mundhir, who earlier in the year had been honourably received by Tiberius at Constantinople, and had there attempted to reconcile Monophysite factions, defeated the Persian Arabs.[46]

Maurice spent the next winter (580/1) in Cappadocia (Th. Sim. iii. 17. 5), and then, at the beginning of spring, he led an expedition down the Euphrates in conjunction with al-Mundhir. The events of this campaign are obscure, and have not been satisfactorily resolved. It is to the credit of Theophylact, or rather John of Epiphania, that his brief account preserves the essential details more accurately than the long tendentious version in John of Ephesus (iii. 40; vi. 16–18), who was once again concerned to defend al-Mundhir's reputation, or the

[44] The traditional solution to this problem is to assume that Theophylact omits the transition from 581 to 582, and that there was little military activity to report in 582 before Maurice's return to Constantinople. The foundation for this solution is John of Ephesus' Seleucid Era date for the battle of Constantina (vi. 26), but this is another example of antedating on his part.

[45] For the location, see Whitby, 'Arzanene'.

[46] On the traditional chronology, al-Mundhir's religious diplomacy, which involved substantial efforts in the east to win acceptance for his reconciliation formula devised at Constantinople, has to be squeezed into the same year as his expedition down the Euphrates.

chronologically confused chapter in Evagrius (v. 20, pp. 215. 27–216. 14). Maurice set out from Circesium on the east bank of the Euphrates, and marched downstream, accompanied by a fleet of supply-ships, with the intention of attacking Ctesiphon (Th. Sim. iii. 17. 5–6). The expedition may have been delayed by an attack on Anathon (*Chron. 1234* 74), but managed to reach the vicinity of Ctesiphon, where it discovered that the great bridge across the Tigris had been cut (J. Eph. iii. 40; vi. 16).[47] This need only have caused a temporary delay, since Maurice could have constructed boats or transferred his ships from the Euphrates by way of the canal system of Lower Mesopotamia, but at this point he was forced to retreat rapidly by the news that Adarmahan had attacked Osrhoene, taking advantage of the absence of the main Roman army. The Persians ravaged extensively, attacked Edessa, and reached Callinicum on the Euphrates, where they could threaten Maurice's line of retreat, but they withdrew when Maurice rushed back up the river (J. Eph. vi. 17; cf. M. Syr. x. 20, p. 354).[48] According to John of Ephesus, Maurice was prevented from engaging the Persians by a deceitful message from Adarmahan, whereas Theophylact (iii. 17. 11) records a Roman victory; the truth was probably somewhere between the two extremes, and Adarmahan was at least persuaded to withdraw rapidly. Maurice and al-Mundhir quarrelled over the failure of this expedition, and al-Mundhir probably took no part in the repulse of Adarmahan (Evag. v. 20, p. 216. 5–14), although he achieved a minor success against the Lakhmid Arabs and their Persian helpers (J. Eph. vi. 18).[49] Maurice's grand offensive, which had probably included an unsuccessful attack on Dwin, the capital of Persarmenia (Men. 23. 11),[50] as well as on Ctesiphon, ended in total failure; the Persians gained much booty,

[47] It should be noted that Payne-Smith (p. 413) wrongly translated Beth Aramaye (i.e. Lower Mesopotamia) by Armenia.

[48] This is perhaps the occasion for the Persian attack on Qartmin in the Tur Abdin: *Chron. 819* dates this to 891 SE, i.e. AD 579/80, but this may be another example of a Seleucid date that is one year early.

[49] Al-Mundhir ravaged the Lakhmid camp (*hīrthā*); it is normally assumed (e.g. by Payne-Smith, p. 415, Brooks, p. 238 n. 4) that *hīrthā* refers to the Lakhmid capital al-Hira, but it need mean no more than a temporary camp (cf. Brooks, p. 131 n. 1), which is probably the sense in this context. John would have made much more of an attack on al-Hira itself.

[50] Stein, *Studien* 98, plausibly connected this failed attack with the Persian victory at Sirak, won by the Great Aspet Partew and Pahlaw (Sebeos 2), who is perhaps to be identified with Hormizd's son, the future Khusro II, who was sent to Iberia in *c.* 580/1 (Toumanoff, *Studies* 380ff.).

including 800 white horses, and the Romans spent the rest of the year in recriminations which culminated in the arrest of al-Mundhir as scapegoat for the mishap (J. Eph. iii. 40–1; *Chron. 1234* 74). Although Menander praises Maurice's careful planning and blames the indiscipline of other generals (23. 11. 8–12), the real cause of the reverse was perhaps the overambitious strategic plan devised after the easy successes in 578 and 580, since Maurice had clearly left insufficient troops in Upper Mesopotamia to prevent the Persians from attacking as soon as they learnt of his absence.

During winter 581/2, Tiberius made another attempt to negotiate with Hormizd, and discussions, which are not mentioned by Theophylact, were held on the frontier (Men. 26. 1. 1–15); as soon as negotiations failed, Tamkhusro invaded towards Constantina, near which the Romans were camped at Monocarton. The Persians had probably been emboldened by their partial success in 581, whereas the Romans were forced on to the defensive by their problems with the Ghassanid Arabs, whose loyalty and fighting capabilities were undermined by al-Mundhir's arrest, and possibly also by Persian successes in the Tur Abdin in the previous year. However, in June the Persians were defeated, Tamkhusro was killed, either by an anonymous common soldier (Men. 26. 5) or through the self-sacrifice of a Christian hero named Constantine (J. Eph. vi. 26).[51] Although the Persians retreated to the Wadi Dara, the Romans failed to follow up their success, and it is probable that Maurice, who may not have participated in the battle of Constantina since he is not directly credited with the victory, was already more interested in events at Constantinople. At some point during the summer Maurice left his army in defensive positions and returned to Constantinople; he was proclaimed Caesar on 5 August, and so had probably left the army by mid-July. Meanwhile the Persians camped on the Wadi Dara for three months, fearing a Roman attack (J. Eph. vi. 26), but fighting was not resumed until the autumn of 582, after Maurice's accession (Th. Sim. i. 9. 4).

Tiberius' death concludes Theophylact's excursus on the early years of the Persian war. This digression was not intended to provide a full-scale narrative of events, and so it would be unfair to complain of its brevity. Theophylact, however, does devote much space to

[51] John's Seleucid date is again one year early, but he is likely to be correct about the month.

Justinian's speech to his troops before the fictitious victory in Armenia, and to the comparison of Tiberius and Hormizd, space that could have been used more informatively. The most obvious defect of the excursus is the failure to record the duration of the repeated negotiations and embassies between the two sides, and this failure is responsible for Theophylact's two chronological omissions (575 and 579). It is probable that John of Epiphania did not narrate diplomatic negotiations very fully, and even Menander might not always have noted when negotiations started and finished (e.g. in 18. 4), so that there is some excuse for Theophylact's errors. Another weakness in the excursus is the omission of events in Armenia, to which Theophylact only turns during the Mesopotamian truce. This omission may again be blamed on John of Epiphania, although Theophylact could have extracted some information from Menander (e.g. 18. 5–6) if he had thought it necessary to supplement John's account. On the whole, however, Theophylact's account of military action, though brief, is reasonably clear and accurate. The worst section, the report of Khusro's Armenian expedition, probably reflects deficiencies in John of Epiphania, but John also deserves considerable credit for the good qualities of Theophylact's narrative: for this excursus, John's brevity was not a disadvantage, and Theophylact could in any case turn to an alternative source for additional material or a different interpretation of events. John's brevity became a problem when Theophylact wished to write more fully in his main narrative of Maurice's reign, for which he could not find a reliable supplementary narrative source.

10

The War in Maurice's Reign

(i) THE CAMPAIGNS OF 582–7 (Th. Sim. i. 9. 4–ii. 10. 7; ii. 18. 1–26)

In the early years of Maurice's reign the Romans continued the strategies which had brought success to Maurice as a general. There were no grand expeditions, such as had almost proved fatal in 581; instead the Romans concentrated on reinforcing their frontier defences and encroaching on the weaker parts of the Persian frontier. In Upper Mesopotamia, on the southern flank of the Tur Abdin, the Romans remained on the defensive for the most part, unable to organize a direct assault on their prime objective, Dara, though they maintained pressure on the Persians by regular raids on both sides of the Tigris. The collapse of the Ghassanid federation, and the defection to the Persians of some of the tribes, probably restricted the scope of Roman operations. In Arzanene the Romans were more aggressive, attempting to reduce the last Persian strongholds and to control the territory's links with the rest of Persia. The Persians, on the other hand, had difficulty in exploiting aggressive opportunities: possession of Dara and the disaffection of the Roman Arabs ought to have tilted the tactical balance in Upper Mesopotamia, but the Persian action was curtailed by the Roman defensive positions at Constantina, Mardin, and the other forts in the Tur Abdin; in Arzanene the Persians achieved some defensive successes, but their holding operation must have been hampered by Roman control of many of the routes into the region.

Theophylact defers the start of his account of Persian events until his brief narrative of Balkan campaigns has reached spring 587, at which point he clearly marks the transition to the first eastern campaign of Maurice's reign (i. 9. 1–3). The Balkan narrative is resumed after eastern events have been narrated down to spring 587 (ii. 10. 6–8). This period (582–7) is the only section where Theophylact had the problem of arranging accounts of simultaneous eastern and Balkan events, but his information on the Balkans was so limited that it could be presented first without significantly delaying the Persian

narrative. This arrangement preserved continuity in the Balkan narrative of 582–7.

Maurice appointed John Mystacon as his replacement in the eastern command. John had previously been general in Armenia, and had perhaps already been acting as supreme commander in Maurice's absence. His first military action was to camp near the confluence of the Batman and Tigris, probably on the east bank although this is not recorded by Theophylact. He engaged the Persians with only partial success (i. 9. 5–11): the initial Roman charge, led by the Lombard officer Ariulph, forced the Persians to retreat, but dissension between John Mystacon and Curs allowed the Persians to recover and the Romans eventually had difficulty in regaining their camp. John and Curs had been colleagues in Armenia during Tiberius' reign, on an occasion when Curs seems to have attacked the Persians independently of John (J. Eph. vi. 28); thus there may have been long-standing discord between the two men, and Curs certainly now resented the promotion of his former equal.

This campaign ended in autumn 582, and Theophylact then inserted reports of three Constantinopolitan events, two of which, Maurice's marriage to Constantina in late 582 and the destructive fire in the forum in April 583, occurred in the interval between the 582 and 583 campaigns.[1] He then returns to the eastern front to record further operations near the Batman river (i. 12. 1–7); the start of the new campaign is not dated, but it is clear from the Constantinopolitan notices that the narrative has advanced to spring 583 (i. 11. 1). This campaign was spent in manœuvres in Arzanene, where the Persians tried to regain Aphum in the centre of the district, while at the same time defending Akbas: the latter fort, on the banks of the Batman, had probably been hurriedly constructed in 579 after Maurice's successes in Arzanene in 578,[2] when it became important for the Persians to watch and interrupt communications between Martyropolis and the Roman outpost at Aphum. According to Theophylact the Persians had the better of the fighting, since the Roman blockaders of Akbas were surprised and forced to flee; but overall the Romans may have been the more successful. The threat to Akbas had forced the Persians to defer their attack on Aphum, indicating that the Romans could dictate the course of action, and it is probable that the Romans in fact

[1] The third, the discovery of the magician Paulinus, cannot be dated precisely.
[2] Cf. above ch. 9(v), p. 272.

managed to capture Akbas by the end of the year, since John of Ephesus (vi. 36) records its fall after a long blockade. The Romans did not attempt to garrison it, and were content to slight the defences: the fort's main function was to supervise the Romans at Martyropolis, and as long as the Romans held that city it was only necessary to prevent the Persians from fortifying and occupying the site.[3]

Theophylact then narrates two more Constantinopolitan events, an earthquake which struck on 10 May (Theoph. 252. 29), and Maurice's consulship in the winter of his second regnal year. Maurice assumed the consulship on 25 December 583 (Theoph. 253. 24), a break with the customary date of 1 January for imperial consulships that allowed the thrifty Maurice to avoid some of the normal heavy expenditure on consular games.[4] Theophylact again uses Constantinopolitan events to advance the date of his eastern narrative, and the chronological introduction to the next campaign, 'in the current year' (i. 13. 1), has to be interpreted by means of the preceding reference to the date of Maurice's consulship (i. 12. 12). In this year, i.e. 584, Maurice appointed his brother-in-law Philippicus to replace John Mystacon: although the latter had maintained offensive pressure in Arzanene, his overall record as general is described as mixed by Evagrius (vi. 3, p. 223. 32–4), who was perhaps reluctant to present any general as more successful than his favourite Philippicus. There was no fighting until the start of autumn 584, and in the meantime Philippicus enrolled troops and refortified Monocarton (Th. Sim. i. 13. 3; 14. 6). The explanation for the lull was that Hormizd and Maurice exchanged embassies (J. Eph. vi. 37–8; M. Syr. x. 21, p. 361). Although the Persians initiated these negotiations (which are not recorded by Theophylact), Hormizd was unwilling to offer concessions and instead publicly inflicted insults on the Roman envoys; he perhaps hoped that events in the Balkans might force Maurice to accept Persian demands, and that a display of intransigence would help to coerce the Romans. In any event the negotiations also provided the Persians with a respite from Roman attacks.

[3] The situation changed when Martyropolis was betrayed to the Persians, and the Romans occupied Akbas in 589 as part of their blockade; the Persians had probably refortified it in 588/9 (cf. M. Syr. x. 21, pp. 360–1).

[4] Thus Hendy, *Economy* 193. Theophylact probably deliberately separated the notice of the earthquake in May (i. 12. 8–11) from that of the fire in April (i. 11. 1–2), perhaps because he thought the fire preceded the start of the campaigning season whereas the earthquake did not—or perhaps for artistic reasons, to keep apart two accounts of natural disasters.

Maurice, who had been frustrated by Persian delaying tactics in 579, probably ordered Philippicus to be ready to attack as soon as negotiations broke down, and at the start of autumn Philippicus moved camp to the Tigris. He then marched for several days south-east across the Tur Abdin, at which point he learnt of Persian plans to attack the Tur Abdin further to the west through the pass of Maïacarire behind Mardin; while the Persian army was absent from Nisibis, Philippicus descended to the plains of Beth Arabaye and ravaged the vicinity of Nisibis until the Persians rushed back to oppose him; Philippicus retired into the Tur Abdin and camped near the Batman river (i. 13. 3–8). Theophylact then records a second Roman raid into Beth Arabaye that closely follows the pattern of the first (i. 13. 8–12): the Romans ravaged until the rapid approach of the Persians forced them to retreat; one group retired into the Tur Abdin, while the other managed with considerable difficulty to cross the parched desert to Theodosiopolis on the Khabour. This second raid may be a doublet for the first: on each occasion the Persian army was absent from Nisibis and had probably marched some distance west into Roman territory before being recalled by news of the Roman attack; it seems unlikely that the Persians would have allowed Philippicus to repeat his successful attack so soon. In his account of the second raid Theophylact refers to an oral report of the dryness of the country between Nisibis and the Khabour river which one group of Romans had to traverse while retreating (i. 13. 10). This unusual claim to an oral source may well indicate that Theophylact was not relying on John of Epiphania for this information: a second source, in this case possibly the 'Heraclius source' that contributed to Theophylact's narrative of the years 586–9,[5] could have provided the report of the 'second' raid, which concentrates on the troubles of the retreat to Theodosiopolis; Theophylact then failed to integrate this with the account of the 'first' raid, provided by John of Epiphania, which dealt with the actions of the main army group under Philippicus.

In the following year, i.e. 585, Philippicus ravaged Arzanene,[6] but

[5] Cf. ch. 8(i)(*c*).

[6] Theophylact (i. 14. 2–4) inappropriately introduced an involved account of Philippicus' military knowledge, stating that he was inspired to invade Arzanene by Scipio's strategy against Hannibal. Scipio's example was irrelevant to Philippicus' position, since the latter was not counter-attacking in Arzanene in order to remove a Persian army from Roman territory. Theophylact perhaps derived the Scipio comparison from George of Pisidia, who, in an obscure passage, compared the emperor Heraclius to Scipio (*Heraclias* i. 97–8; see Pertusi's notes ad loc.). Comparison between

then fell ill and entrusted his army to Stephen and Apsich. During his illness the Persians carried out two attacks, against Monocarton, which they unsuccessfully besieged, and, more cautiously, towards the environs of Martyropolis. The apparent inactivity of the Roman army is surprising. Philippicus' subordinates may have failed to co-ordinate their opposition to Persian attacks, but some of the Roman army may also have been forced to move south to deal with attacks by their former allies, the Ghassanids: Numan, the son of the arrested al-Mundhir, harried the Romans during Maurice's early years, until he was also captured (J. Eph. vi. 41–2; iii. 42); after his arrest the Ghassanid federation disintegrated into fifteen princedoms, of which some defected to the Persians. In winter Philippicus recovered from his illness, disbanded his army, and retired to Constantinople.

In the next campaign there is a marked increase in the scale of Theophylact's narrative. John of Epiphania probably regarded the Roman victory at Solachon as a subject that merited greater attention than the campaigns of 582–5, but Theophylact could also include additional information from the 'Heraclius source', so that his narrative is lengthened by stories involving the general Heraclius. At the beginning of spring 586, Philippicus left Constantinople and travelled east to Amida, where he was met by Persian ambassadors. Theophylact composed a speech for the ambassadors (i. 15. 3–10), in which they protest the Persians' desire for peace but insist that the Romans as aggressors must pay for a treaty. These arguments are perhaps genuine, and probably repeat those which had been unsuccessfully advanced in 583/4. The Persians still hoped that Maurice's resolve would have been weakened by the deteriorating position in the Balkans, but Maurice rejected their proposals when he was consulted by Philippicus. These negotiations were probably conducted quickly: the Persian envoys only travelled from Nisibis to Amida (just under 100 miles), and Philippicus would have referred the proposals to Maurice by express messenger, so that campaigning was not unduly

Heraclius and Scipio was appropriate on grounds of strategy and their connection with Africa, although George might also have been influenced by Claudian to choose Scipio as an exemplar (Claudian, *De Bello Gildonico* i. 95; on the relationship between Claudian and George, see T. Nissen, 'Historisches Epos und Panegyrikos in der Spätantike', *Hermes* 75 (1940), 298–325). George's reference to Scipio has been needlessly challenged by I. Shahid, 'Heraclius *πιστὸς ἐν Χριστῷ βασιλεύς*', *DOP* 34–5 (1980–1), 225–37; the parallel was relevant, in that the name of Rome's greatest attacking general, Scipio, was now to be superseded by Heraclius'. For another example of Scipio as an exemplar in this period, cf. *Strat.* viii. 2. 93.

delayed. In early summer Philippicus advanced from Amida across the Tur Abdin to Bibas on the river Arzamon, where he took up a defensive position near the foothills of the Tur Abdin that denied the Persians access to the waters of the river. The Roman camp must have been on the east bank of the river, in the plain immediately below Mardin (i. 15. 14–ii. 1. 6).[7]

The Persians under the Kardarigan advanced from the Wadi Dara, taking precautions to ensure their water-supply in case the Romans refused battle and tried to discomfit the Persians by blocking access to the Arzamon (ii. 2. 4). Their camel-train of water was not in fact needed, since the Romans were willing to fight at once and advanced to the plain of Solachon to meet the Persians; Theophylact's tactical information about the water-supply is of little relevance to the subsequent battle, and this may indicate that these details were supplied by the 'Heraclius source' rather than John of Epiphania's summary account. The battle was fought on a Sunday; a miraculous image, one of those 'not made by human hand', was paraded to encourage the Romans, and the bishop of Amida prayed throughout the day with the inhabitants of Mardin to ensure victory (ii. 2. 6–3. 9). The prayers were answered, and, with divine assistance, the Romans won a hard battle. The Persians suffered heavy casualties and fled in panic past Dara, where the city gates were shut against them; more than a thousand Persians were captured, and some thirsty fugitives drank themselves to death at village wells (ii. 4. 1–5. 8). After the victory Philippicus distributed prizes for valour and attended to the wounded (ii. 6. 10–12). Although in Theophylact's presentation of events Philippicus' contribution to the Roman success might seem minimal (cf. ch. 8(i)(*c*)), nevertheless his conduct was mostly in accordance with the recommendations in Maurice's *Strategicon*. Religious preparations for battle were seen as vital: prayers must precede the engagement, before danger appears the general must worship God so that in danger he can pray to God as to a friend, and the favour of God is absolutely essential in all military action (*Strat.* ii. 18; viiiB. 1; Preface 36ff.);[8] during the fighting the general should

[7] These movements were badly confused by Dillemann, *Mésopotamie* 292–6, who invented a Roman advance to the Wadi Dara in Persian territory, followed by a rapid retreat on the news of the Persian approach. There is probably a small textual corruption in Theophylact's description of Philippicus' camp-site near Izala (cf. Whitby, *Theophylact* 44 n. 1), but this does not affect the understanding of Roman strategy.

[8] The Justinianic military handbook, *Anon. Peri Strategikes*, does not display the *Strategicon*'s emphasis on religion. This change might reflect the increasingly religious

not participate, but be in a position to observe events and send assistance when necessary (viiB. 1), and after the battle the general must give prompt attention to the wounded and dead, both as a religious duty and so as to boost the morale of the living (viiB. 6).

The Romans next turned their attentions against Arzanene, where they unearthed the underground refuges of the inhabitants before moving to blockade Chlomaron, the region's administrative and religious centre. Two local nobles deserted to Philippicus, a reflection of the Roman success in dominating this area, and offered to point out certain strongly sited places which the Romans should occupy if they were to control Arzanene. Philippicus dispatched Heraclius to take over these places, which probably controlled the routes into Arzanene from the north and east (ii. 7. 9–11). During this mission Heraclius was surprised and forced to flee by the Kardarigan, who had collected a scratch army to protect Arzanene and was now advancing along one of the routes that Heraclius was trying to control. This minor incident is recorded in considerable detail (ii. 8. 1–5), which Theophylact will have derived from his 'Heraclius source'; it is possible that this source, with its depiction of Heraclius' courageous and cunning tactics, was trying to conceal the failure by Heraclius to prevent Persian reinforcements from entering Arzanene. The Kardarigan proceeded to Chlomaron, where he managed to outmanœuvre Philippicus and occupy a position near the top of the hill on which the city was situated. The Persians now overlooked the Roman camp and blocked their approach to the city (ii. 8. 12), so that Philippicus had to extricate his army from an untenable position. Philippicus himself withdrew to Aphum, but the Roman soldiers panicked on discovering his departure and the whole army fled by night across the ravine separating Chlomaron from Aphum (ii. 9. 1–14). In spite of the confusion, the Romans were able to withdraw across the Batman and reach Amida, although the Persians inflicted casualties on the rearguard.

Theophylact's description of events around Chlomaron contains several passages of involved rhetoric (e.g. ii. 9. 5–8) which are likely to have been his own elaboration of the somewhat distorted account provided by the 'Heraclius source'. He does not try to explain Philippicus' motives, but simply accuses him of deserting the army

orientation of late 6th-c. society (for which, see Cameron, 'Elites'), or more simply the attitude of the composer or patron of the *Strategicon*; Maurice himself was a pious general and emperor (cf. ch. 1(i), (iv)).

under the influence of blind panic. Philippicus in fact may have crossed to Aphum to organize the withdrawal of the Roman army, or to arrange some action to counter the Persian tactical success; he had not left the army leaderless, since Theodore the camp commander was responsible for maintaining order and was subsequently blamed for not preventing the flight (ii. 9. 14). It is suspicious that Heraclius, who failed to prevent the approach of the Kardarigan and could only give Philippicus short notice of his arrival, is praised, whereas Philippicus, who extricated the bulk of his army from a difficult position, is condemned. This presentation is unlikely to have originated in John of Epiphania, whose cousin Evagrius and employer Gregory were favourably disposed towards Philippicus.

Although Philippicus failed to take Chlomaron, as had Maurice in 578, this tactical reverse was not the major disaster which Theophylact presents and which has generally been accepted in modern accounts. The truth is revealed by subsequent Roman actions, which, when they are correctly located, show that the Romans were able to continue their offensive in spite of the retreat from Chlomaron. According to Theophylact the Roman failure caused Philippicus to despair (ii. 9. 17),[9] and he at once took defensive precautions in the Tur Abdin before sending Heraclius on a raid across the Tigris which at last restored Roman morale. Theophylact has probably misplaced and misrepresented Philippicus' fortification-work. The two forts mentioned by name, Phathacon and Alaleisus, were probably located in or near Arzanene, commanding the Taurus passes into that region, and their construction or reconstruction continued the policy of occupying strategic sites in Arzanene which Philippicus had begun during the siege of Chlomaron: Alaleisus should be identified with Balaleisus in the Bitlis pass, while Phathacon was probably further to the west in the Qulp pass.[10] This fortification-work, whether it was located in Arzanene or the Tur Abdin (or indeed in both regions, as is possible), could not have been carried out unless the Roman army maintained a decisive superiority in the field throughout the long operation (cf. *Strat.* x. 4); this superiority was merely emphasized by Heraclius'

[9] For the text of Theophylact, see Whitby, *Theophylact* 56 n. 22.

[10] There are two sites on the eastern frontier called Atachas with which Phathacon could be identified. One was in the Tur Abdin, in the triangle between Fafi, Dara, and Nisibis; but in 586 these three places were controlled by the Persians, which makes this a most improbable location for Roman fortification work. The other was 100 stades (12 miles) from Martyropolis (Proc. *Wars* i. 21. 9), probably near the confluence of the Lice and Qulp rivers at the start of a pass over the Taurus.

subsequent raid into Persia. Theophylact's account of this raid is confused (ii. 10. 1, 4), because he did not realize that Heraclius was already on the east bank of the Tigris before the raid began, and that the single crossing of the river which he mentions was from east to west, on Heraclius' return towards the Roman empire. Before the raid Heraclius had probably been in Arzanene, directing or protecting the fortification-work, and he then marched south towards the Tigris, where he encamped opposite the foothills of the Tur Abdin; next he proceeded through the Hakkâri to Thamanon, a village or area to the east of the Tigris and north of the Habur river, from where he struck south, across the Habur river and Zakho mountains, to ravage the Tigris plains, and finally recrossed to the west bank of the Tigris, where he continued to ravage until he returned to Roman territory at Theodosiopolis on the Khabour.

In the following spring, Philippicus, being too ill to campaign, handed over two-thirds of his army to Heraclius and the rest to Theodore and Andrew with orders to invade and ravage Persia (ii. 10. 6–7). The eastern narrative is delayed by the insertion of the 587 Balkan campaign (ii. 10. 8–17. 13), but Theophylact then describes how Heraclius continued his successful assault on the Persian empire from the previous year and captured an unnamed fort after an energetic siege. In the meantime Theodore and Andrew refortified Matzaron in the Tur Abdin and then, on the invitation of local farmers, attacked the nearby fort of Beïudaes (Fafi), which they captured through the heroic efforts of the soldier Sapeir. These two sieges are the only events of the campaign that Theophylact records, and it is likely that much of his information about Heraclius' siege tactics and Sapeir's heroism was derived from his 'Heraclius source'. Roman actions in 587 served to consolidate the achievements of 586. The unnamed fort in Persia attacked by Heraclius was probably located in Arzanene, on one of the routes leading into the territory, while Theodore's and Andrew's actions in the Tur Abdin reflected the Roman superiority in Upper Mesopotamia that had been established at Solachon: Beïudaes, a Roman fort only ten miles north-east of Dara, had been captured by the Persians earlier in the war, probably in 573, during the siege of Dara, or possibly in 580/1, when they ravaged other parts of the Tur Abdin. The Romans were now re-establishing their positions in the vicinity of Dara.[11]

[11] There is a confused discussion of these events by Dillemann, *Mésopotamie* 228–31. It is implausible to identify Heraclius' unnamed fort with the Roman fort of Ciphas

The chronology of the campaigns of 582–7 in Theophylact is not obscure, but it has been wrongly reconstructed by Higgins;[12] since his work is the basic treatment of the chronology of eastern events during Maurice's reign, and at other points his conclusions are completely acceptable, his arguments relating to these years must be briefly reviewed. The central point of Higgins' chronology is the redating of the battle at Solachon to 585: he assumed that John of Ephesus' reference to a battle in 'the third year' was a correct indiction date,[13] and that it applied to Solachon, but this forced him to compress from four to three years the campaigns in Maurice's reign which precede the battle, and to extend those following the battle by one year. He achieved the compression by arguing that Philippicus' appointment and first autumn campaign occurred in the same year as John Mystacon's reverse at Akbas (583): he dated this reverse to spring 583 (before the earthquake on 10 May), after which he supposed that there would be an unusually long gap if there was no action until autumn 584, but he overlooked John of Ephesus' report of the capture of Akbas, which probably occurred later in 583, and the subsequent peace negotiations, which occupied most of this gap. After Solachon he produced an extra year by assuming that a reference to a new year had fallen out in the lacuna postulated by de Boor at ii. 9. 17; he claimed that the Batman river must have been in flood when the Romans retreated from Chlomaron, and that Philippicus' fortification-works (ii. 9. 17) must have been carried out in winter since he believed this to be standard Roman practice, so that it appeared sensible to postulate a new year before Heraclius' raid into Persia (ii. 10. 1). However, de Boor's postulated lacuna was based on a misunderstanding of the text;[14] the Batman river in fact floods from March to July, not during winter, and it is in any case irrelevant to the question of the Roman retreat once

(Hasankeyf on the Tigris) merely because Theophylact states that the fort was situated on a high rock, and the original Syriac name for Hasankeyf probably meant 'the fortress of the rock'. It is also unlikely that Ciphas and Beïudaes had been captured by the Persians in 586 after the Roman failure at Chlomaron, since at this time the Romans were sufficiently superior in the field to continue their policy of fortification and invasion; further, Theophylact had a source which was interested in denigrating Philippicus' actions, and would probably have mentioned any signal reverses, such as the loss of Beïudaes, since this would have cast even more glory on to the raid of Heraclius into Persia.

[12] *Persian War* 55 ff.

[13] Cf. above ch. 8(ii)(*d*), for the obscure date.

[14] Cf. Whitby, loc. cit. in n. 9.

Chlomaron and Aphum have been correctly located;[15] fortification-work was a major military undertaking, and was regularly executed during the campaign season (cf. *Strat.* x. 4).[16] Higgins' arguments for redating the events of 584–6 are unconvincing: it was dangerous to base such a reconstruction on the extremely problematic date in John of Ephesus, and there is no need to tamper with Theophylact's chronology.

(ii) THE CAMPAIGNS OF 588–9 (Th. Sim. iii. 1. 1–8. 8)

During the winter of 587/8 Philippicus left Heraclius in charge of the army and set off towards Constantinople (Th. Sim. ii. 18. 26); *en route* he heard that he had been replaced by Priscus, and so he wrote to Heraclius instructing him to return to Armenia and entrust the army to Narses at Constantina (iii. 1. 1). Heraclius probably held the post of *magister militum per Armeniam*, but had been brought south by Philippicus in order to concentrate the Roman eastern forces. Philippicus was now dividing the army into its constituent parts, possibly an act of professional jealousy since this would have hindered Priscus' operations at the start of the new campaign; alternatively Philippicus may already have feared that there would be trouble in the army, and so wished to minimize the unrest by dispersing the soldiers. Philippicus also ordered that a decree from Maurice concerning military pay should be published. This decree had recently reached the camp (iii. 1. 2), but had not been proclaimed, and Philippicus might indeed have been travelling to Constantinople to advise Maurice against the proposed reforms. According to Theophylact this decree ordered a reduction in military pay of one-quarter, but he disregards the provisions concerning length of active service and equipment which it also contained (Evag. vi. 4, p. 224. 25–8): it is improbable that Maurice believed he could reduce military pay without altering other aspects of military service, and the reduction in pay was perhaps meant to be offset by a return to a standard issue of arms and by improvements in conditions of service (an anticipation of the reforms attempted in 594; Th. Sim. vii. 1. 1–7). One reason for Maurice's attempt to alter military

[15] Cf. id., 'Arzanene' 208–11.

[16] Higgins was misled in this respect by his redating of Philippicus' work at Monocarton to autumn/winter 583; the correct date for this was the 584 campaigning season.

pay now was that a quinquennial donative was due; this would have placed extra strain on the empire's financial resources, particularly when Maurice was having to pay an army in the Balkans as well as in the east.

The major event of 588 was the mutiny of the Roman army, which began at Easter 588 and was not resolved until Easter 589; during the mutiny there was relatively little military action, and the weakness of the Persians is shown by their failure to capitalize more on Roman dissension. Persian attention was probably directed towards the Turks, who were finally defeated by Vahram in 588/9. The Romans probably had to relinquish the gains they had made in Arzanene, where the local nobility would have been forced to return to their traditional allegiance to Persia: a Persian army was operating in Arzanene in 588, since it was on hand to check Germanus' raid (Th. Sim. iii. 4. 1), and the Persian capture of Martyropolis in the following year would have been facilitated if they had re-established their control over Arzanene.[17] The Persians, however, failed in an attack on Constantina, and their forces in Arzanene were later defeated at Martyropolis by a small Roman army under Germanus.

Theophylact's account of the mutiny seems to combine a pro- and an anti-Priscus slant, and certain inconsistencies are evident. The pro-Priscus version blamed Philippicus for jealously undermining Priscus' authority and sowing dissension in the army by publishing Maurice's decree; during the mutiny Priscus acted sensibly, trying to calm the soldiers by parading a miraculous image; after fleeing to Constantina he restored calm in the city before having his wounds treated; thereafter he made repeated attempts to reconcile his soldiers, and managed to win over a delegation which the army sent to Edessa (iii. 1. 11, 14–15; 3. 1–5). The anti-Priscus version emphasized his arrogance on arrival at Monocarton as the first cause of the army's unrest, and recorded that Priscus himself published Maurice's decree on the third day of the Easter festival, three days after his arrival at the camp. This anti-Priscus account is preserved by Evagrius (vi. 4, p. 224. 19–34), who made Priscus responsible for the unpopular decree, and Priscus' arrogance is also stressed in *Chron. 1234* (§ 77). It is not surprising that two versions of the mutiny were in circulation, reflecting the different interests of the participants. Priscus would at once have protested to Maurice that the army was disaffected before

[17] It was probably now that the Persians reoccupied Akbas.

his arrival, and his version gained at least partial acceptance since he was appointed to command the Balkan army on his return to Constantinople in 588. On the other hand Germanus, the reluctant commander of the mutineers, would have preferred to emphasize that the army was in reality loyal to Maurice, and that Priscus' personal arrogance had been the main cause of the mutiny; Philippicus would have preferred such an explanation, and this perhaps became the officially accepted version after Priscus' Balkan campaign ended in failure and the eastern mutineers had demonstrated their loyalty by defeating the Persians and sending the booty to Maurice. It is impossible to decide whether it was John of Epiphania who combined the two versions, or whether he presented Theophylact with an anti-Priscus account similar to that in Evagrius, which Theophylact then amalgamated with a separate pro-Priscus account. On the one hand John might be expected to share Evagrius' acceptance of the anti-Priscus/pro-Philippicus account, whereas the pro-Priscus account is connected with the elder Heraclius, who knew of Philippicus' machinations to discredit Priscus; the 'Heraclius source' had no interest in favouring Priscus, but it might have recorded Philippicus' jealousy as an accurate representation of events.[18] On the other hand, there are no obvious structural signs in Theophylact that he was amalgamating two sources, and so the question must be left open.

The mutiny began at Easter, 18 April 588, and it is probable that Priscus remained in command for not much more than a month since the news of the mutiny and of Maurice's response will have travelled very quickly between the eastern frontier and Constantinople, perhaps taking not more than a week in either direction. At any rate Philippicus had already been restored to command when Gregory of Antioch returned from Constantinople in June or July 588 (Evag. vi. 7–8, pp. 226. 31–227. 2), although he had not been accepted as general by the mutineers. Germanus, duke of Phoenice Libanensis (Evag. vi. 5, p. 225. 2–4), whom Theophylact mistakenly refers to as the bishop of Damascus (iii. 1. 3), was chosen as leader of the mutineers,

[18] It might seem attractive to connect this eastern Priscus material with Theophylact's Balkan military source, which was biased towards Priscus (cf. above, ch. 4(i)(*a*)). However, the Balkan source appears to have concentrated on the affairs of the main Balkan army, and the person responsible for its compilation was active in the Balkans from 587 onwards. Further, although Priscus acted courageously during the mutiny, the whole affair was not particularly creditable to him, and the Balkan source is unlikely to have included this one brief eastern report in its narrative.

and he persuaded some of the army to fight. He foiled a Persian attack on Constantina, and was able to lead a larger force into Arzanene after the soldiers had been mollified by Aristobulus, an envoy from Maurice. Germanus defeated a Persian army at Martyropolis, killed the commander Maruzas, and secured 3,000 captives, including several Persian leaders (iii. 3. 8–4. 4). The captives were dispatched to Constantinople, and were sufficiently prominent to be recorded in the Syriac chronicle tradition (M. Syr. x. 21, p. 359; cf. J. Eph. vi. 43).[19]

Theophylact extended his account of the 588 campaign through the expected winter break to record that at the start of spring the army received its normal payment; this was probably distributed by Andrew (Evag. vi. 10, p. 228. 27–9), who is likely to have visited the army shortly before Easter 589. At this point Theophylact digressed to insert two items that originated in his chronicle source (iii. 4. 7–5. 7), before returning with some awkwardness to the events of 589 (cf. above, p. 233). The army was publicly reconciled with Philippicus on the Saturday before Easter, 9 April 589, after an appeal from Gregory of Antioch which is recorded in full by Evagrius (vi. 11–13). The Romans, however, suffered an immediate reverse when Martyropolis was betrayed to the Persians by Sittas, a local commander, who brought into the city a group of alleged Persian deserters (Th. Sim. iii. 5. 11–13; Evag. vi. 14, pp. 231. 30–232. 4; *Chron. 1234* 78). Philippicus at once moved to recapture the city, and began siege-operations, but after a battle outside the walls he was unable to prevent a Persian relief force from reinforcing the defenders: Theophylact states plainly that the Romans were defeated (iii. 5. 15), and although the Persians may have suffered severe losses (M. Syr. x. 21, p. 360) they certainly succeeded in their main aim of strengthening the garrison. Evagrius records a Roman victory (vi. 14, p. 232. 23–8), but he was probably deliberately trying to obscure Philippicus' failure.[20] Philippicus abandoned the siege after the battle, which was probably fought in midsummer. Philippicus was replaced by Comentiolus, who was newly returned from Spain,[21] and the Romans at once raided Beth

[19] Cf. ch. 8(ii)(*d*).

[20] The significant differences between the accounts of the siege in Theophylact and Evagrius are convincingly discussed by Higgins, *Persian War* 34ff.

[21] Comentiolus' presence in Spain as *magister militum* is recorded in an inscription at Cartagena, where the patrician Comenciolus ordered the walls to be repaired (*Inscriptiones Hispaniae Christianae* 176, ed. A. Hübner, Berlin, 1871). The date of this inscription (between 1 Sept. 589 and 14 Aug. 590) poses a problem, since the general Comentiolus must have set out for the eastern command in Aug. 589. However, the

Arabaye and defeated the Persians at Sisarbanon to the east of Nisibis. Theophylact's account of the battle belittles Comentiolus in order to give Heraclius credit for the victory (iii. 6. 1–4): it is most improbable that Comentiolus should have fled from Sisarbanon to Theodosiopolis, a journey of several days that would have taken him past Nisibis and Dara; by contrast Evagrius, whose account is to be preferred, makes no mention of Heraclius, but says that Comentiolus was almost killed in fierce fighting after his horse had been struck down, that he was rescued by an unnamed bodyguard, and that the Persian survivors fled in panic to Nisibis (vi. 15, p. 233. 5–10). This battle was fought in autumn 589, during the opening phase of the revolt of the Persian general Vahram (Th. Sim. iv. 1. 1–2), probably while he was marching from Azerbaijan to the Tigris. Thereafter Comentiolus turned his attentions against Martyropolis (Evag. vi. 15, p. 233. 16–26); Theophylact does not mention the transfer of the army from Beth Arabaye to Martyropolis (and presumably did not realize that it had occurred), although he subsequently reports the capture of Akbas (iv. 2. 1), the fort on the banks of the Batman which the Persians had probably reoccupied in 588 or 589.

During this action in Upper Mesopotamia, events of greater importance were happening in the area to the south of the Caucasus: although Theophylact, in his metaphorical transition-formula to Suanian affairs, chose to compare them to the smallest elements in an artistic masterpiece (iii. 6. 6), it appears from the length of his narrative, as well as the regnal-year date by which it is preceded (iii. 6. 7), that John of Epiphania had selected this point to begin his full-scale historical narrative: the battle in Suania was indeed the immediate antecedent to Vahram's revolt against Hormizd. Early in 589, Maurice had tried to organize an invasion of Azerbaijan by Caucasian tribesmen, under the leadership of the Iberian noble Guaram, who was invested with the rank of *curopalatus* and given the title of king of Iberia, an office that Hormizd had abolished in *c.* 580.

general, who was also a patrician (*Chr. Pasch.* 694. 10–11), appears to have had a connection with Spain: Pope Gregory (*Reg.* xiii. 47; Aug. 603) complains of interference in Spanish church affairs by a Comitiolus who was rumoured to have died recently; Gregory's Comitiolus held the elevated rank of *gloriosus*, and should therefore be equated with the general Comentiolus, who was killed by Phocas in late Nov. 602 (Th. Sim. viii. 13. 2; *contra* L. Hartmann ad Greg. *Reg.* xiii. 47; vol. ii, p. 411 n. 3). It is most improbable that there were two patricians called Comentiolus (or the like) in Maurice's reign, and it is not unreasonable to postulate that the Cartagena inscription dates the completion of repair-works that had earlier been ordered by Comentiolus.

However, the raiders were surprised by the arrival of Vahram, a Persian general who held the rank of *darigbedum* and was distantly related to the royal house; he had recently been in command against the Turks on Persia's north-east frontier, where he had achieved great successes, although these had led to a dispute with Hormizd about the apportionment of booty. Vahram was now returning towards the royal court, probably by way of his ancestral district of Tehran, and his unexpected appearance forced the Caucasian raiders to withdraw to their own territory.[22] These preliminaries are not recorded by Theophylact, who treats Vahram's raid into Suania as the start of the campaign. Romanus, who had been appointed Roman commander in the region, consulted the bishop of Lazica, and then moved to oppose Vahram (iii. 6. 17).[23] Vahram retreated, and using nomad tactics tried to entice Romanus deep into Persia in order to annihilate his army; since Romanus had too little confidence in his troops to invade Persia, Vahram returned to the attack, but his army was surprisingly defeated when it failed to withstand the Roman charge (iii. 7. 17–18). Vahram, whose recent experience was in nomad warfare, had perhaps forgotten the danger of a Roman frontal assault.

The subsequent recriminations between Hormizd and Vahram led directly to Vahram's revolt, although Theophylact's account of the dispute is interrupted first by the report of a minor Armenian uprising (iii. 8. 4–8), and then by the long excursus on the early stages of the war (iii. 9. 1–18. 12), insertions which both tend to obscure the development of the internal Persian dispute. The Armenian revolt and the ordeal of the leading rebel, Smbat Bagratuni, in the hippodrome at Constantinople are recorded by Sebeos (10) in connection with Maurice's recruitment of Armenians for service in the Balkans in the 590s, but Theophylact's date is more likely to be correct.[24]

Theophylact's *History* is the best surviving account of the military events of these years (582–9), but it is by no means completely satisfactory. John of Epiphania had been an adequate source for Theophylact's summary excursus on the years 572–82, but Maurice's accession had not been a significant point in the war according to his

[22] Sebeos 2; Tabari, pp. 270–2; Toumanoff, *Studies* 382ff.; Higgins, *Persian War* 38.

[23] In Theophylact, Romanus' appointment is presented as Maurice's reaction to Vahram's invasion of Suania, but he must have been sent out much earlier. This may be another example of Theophylact's imposition of a causal connection upon less specific information in his source (cf. above ch. 9(ii), for his error over Justin's replacement of Marcian in 573).

[24] So Higgins, *Persian War* 38–9; cf. above ch. 4(ii)(*g*).

historiographical scheme and his full narrative only began with the events directly connected with Vahram's revolt. Theophylact, however, now wanted to write more fully, but Menander's account, which had previously been available as a supplement to John, terminated in 582 and no substitute of comparable quality was available. So far as can be checked, Theophylact has recorded most major events in their correct year, the only significant omissions being the capture of Akbas in 583 and the unsuccessful negotiations of 583/4 recorded by John of Ephesus (vi. 37–8), but his narrative does not give a clear picture of the war: for the campaigns of 582–5 he had very little information, so that his account is restricted to one or two actions in each year; when his narrative becomes more discursive in 586–7, it shows signs of bias towards Heraclius or is concerned with trivial incidents such as the hero of Solachon or Sapeir. The supplementary information provided by the 'Heraclius source', which permitted this more extensive treatment of these years, was of uneven quality, but thirty years after the events it would have been difficult, or even tactless, for Theophylact to question its authority. Overall, his geographical knowledge of the campaign theatre was poor, and his account only becomes intelligible when the locations of the places mentioned are correctly determined. On the other hand, his version is fuller than that of the contemporary observer Evagrius, and he does provide enough information to permit the reconstruction of the general outline of the war, once the bias and geography of his account have been understood.

(iii) THE PERSIAN CIVIL WAR (Th. Sim. iii. 18. 12–iv. 10. 7)

Theophylact's account of the Persian civil war is the most detailed section of the *History*; the quality of his account is an indication of the standard of this part of John of Epiphania's history, which had focused on these events, and which provided most of Theophylact's information. John's knowledge and his interests are reflected by the variations in the completeness and clarity of Theophylact's account: thus Hormizd's overthrow, Khusro's flight, and part of the Mesopotamian campaign of 591 are reported in detail; the events of summer/autumn 590, principally negotiations and military preparations, receive less attention, and the geography and strategy of the 591 campaign in the Zagros mountains are unclear. The overall chronology of events has

been reconstructed by Higgins,[25] but he failed to resolve the confusions in the account of the 591 campaign as well as some other minor obscurities.

In 589 Vahram had ensured the personal loyalty of his soldiers by spreading rumours that Hormizd intended to punish them for their defeat (iii. 18. 13),[26] and he then received the support of the soldiers at Nisibis, who also feared Hormizd's anger. The soldiers' disloyalty is a sign that Hormizd was out of touch with his armies, a probable result of Khusro I's restriction on personal campaigns by the king. Vahram now advanced as far as the crossing of the Great Zab (iv. 1. 6–7), taking care to keep his movements secret from Hormizd, and he made limited raids across the Zab, but then allowed an army sent by Hormizd to seize the river-crossing (iv. 2. 7); the crossing was important, because the Great Zab was not normally fordable even in autumn, and Vahram's failure to hold this strategic point reveals some uncertainty on his part. In fact neither commander had sufficient confidence in his troops to cross the river. Instead they confronted each other for an unstated length of time; Farrukhan, Hormizd's general, perhaps hoped that Vahram's army would desert when their supplies ran out, but it was Farrukhan who was betrayed and murdered by his officers. The news of this reached Hormizd 'on the fifth day' after its occurrence (iv. 3. 2), and persuaded him to gather his remaining troops and move to Ctesiphon: previously he had probably been travelling slowly from a summer palace on the Iranian plateau towards his winter residence in Lower Mesopotamia. 'On the third day', presumably counting from his arrival in Ctesiphon, Hormizd was overthrown in a palace coup (iv. 3. 5). Theophylact's occasional chronological indications in this passage (iv. 2. 5–3. 5) are not particularly helpful for understanding the sequence of events, but reflect the concern of a member of the Persian court who, for example, might have been more interested in the time taken for the news of Farrukhan's death to reach Hormizd than in the duration of the manœuvres near the Zab.

According to Theophylact, Hormizd's deposition, which occurred on 6 February, prompted his eldest son Khusro to flee towards Azerbaijan, from where he was persuaded to return by the coup's

[25] *Persian War* 24–54; the chronological unreliability of Evagrius has been demonstrated by Allen, *Evagrius* 263ff., who proves the accuracy of Higgins' conclusions against the criticisms of P. Peeters, *AB* 61 (1943), 281–6.

[26] Cf. Theoph. 323. 22–324. 16, for a similar story about Shahvaraz in 626.

leaders (iv. 3. 13–14). Hormizd, who was in prison, summoned a council meeting but failed to persuade the nobles to renounce their support for Khusro as king; Theophylact composed a pair of antithetical speeches for this debate (iv. 4–5), which provided him with an opportunity for criticism of Khusro II's character and Persian bellicosity, two themes of particular relevance during Heraclius' reign. Thereafter Hormizd was blinded, many of his relatives were killed, and Khusro II ascended the throne (on 15 February); Hormizd rejected the good treatment offered in prison, and was put to death (iv. 6. 1–7. 3).

Theophylact's account is at variance with Sebeos and Tabari. According to Sebeos (ch. 2), Hormizd summoned a council at which it was decided that the court should flee across the Tigris and seek help from the Arabs; but the court officials decided to depose Hormizd, and the nobles and generals were then responsible for Hormizd's death, which occurred before Khusro's proclamation. In Tabari (pp. 272–3), Vahram persuaded his troops to proclaim Khusro as king; this forced Khusro to flee towards Azerbaijan since Hormizd would have assumed that he was implicated in Vahram's revolt; the Persian nobles then overthrew and killed Hormizd, and Khusro only returned to the palace after hearing of this. The *Chronicle of Seert* (ch. 43) records that Vahram issued coins at Rai with Khusro II's head, which would support the first part of Tabari's account, and Michael the Syrian (x. 21, p. 360) also describes Hormizd's death without implicating Khusro. Certain features of the eastern tradition are more credible than Theophylact's account: Hormizd is more likely to have summoned his council before his deposition than from his prison, and Theophylact's account of a formal debate is pure invention;[27] Khusro probably fled to Azerbaijan before Hormizd's deposition on 6 February, since there was little time for this flight (a round trip of over 400 miles) between the deposition and his own proclamation on 15 February. The eastern tradition that Hormizd was killed by his nobles should also perhaps be preferred to Theophylact's accusations against Khusro. John of Epiphania had based his account, in part, on Persian sources, members of Khusro's entourage, men who would have been reluctant to proclaim that their

[27] Herodotus iii. 80–2, a fictional discussion of the relative merits of democracy, oligarchy, and monarchy, provided a historiographical antecedent for a debate at the Persian court.

master was a parricide. Instead, these informants might have stressed that Hormizd brought death on himself by rejecting Khusro's generosity, a story that Theophylact may then have adapted to emphasize Khusro's personal responsibility (iv. 7. 2–4); alternatively, they could have transferred the blame to other royal courtiers, for example Vindoe, who in due course was to be tortured and killed because he had stretched forth his hands against the king (v. 15. 1).[28] The strong anti-Khusro slant evident in Theophylact was probably introduced in the seventh century.[29]

Following his coronation Khusro unsuccessfully tried to negotiate with Vahram; their correspondence is preserved by Theophylact (iv. 7. 5–8. 8). He then collected the forces available at Ctesiphon, soldiers whom he may have raised in Azerbaijan as well as loyal remnants of Farrukhan's troops and of the Nisibis army, and marched to oppose Vahram on an unnamed plain where the two armies were separated by a river (iv. 9. 1–4). This confrontation probably occurred on the Nahrawan canal, a few miles to the east of Ctesiphon. After some skirmishing Khusro withdrew to the city and prepared to flee. A week after the first skirmish Vahram attacked Khusro's army by night, causing more casualties among the baggage-animals than the soldiers, but Khusro fled as his demoralized soldiers began to desert (1 March). He must have started to prepare to flee west to the Romans while it was becoming increasingly obvious that his scratch army was no match for Vahram's experienced soldiers. The Nestorian Catholicus, Mar Isho-Yabh, was asked to accompany Khusro, but declined (*Anon. Guidi* 2). Isho-Yabh had been favoured by Hormizd because, as bishop of Arzanene, he had kept the Persians informed of Roman military movements, and he was probably the bishop whom Maurice arrested for breaking his promises and supporting the Persians during the siege of Chlomaron in 578 (Men. 23. 7); Isho-Yabh was also strongly opposed to the decisions of the Fifth Oecumenical Council, to which he might have been urged to submit as the price of Roman support for Khusro; any of these factors might have been enough to

[28] Although Vindoe had tried to escape with Khusro (iv. 12. 2), and did eventually reach Roman territory (iv. 15. 6), he appears to have remained in Armenia, and so is most unlikely ever to have been encountered by John of Epiphania, a member of Gregory of Antioch's entourage.

[29] John of Nikiu, bitterly opposed to Maurice on religious grounds, exploited the story of Khusro as a parricide in order to denigrate Maurice's decision to provide assistance (96. 10–13).

dissuade him from accompanying Khusro. Khusro may have made some overtures to the Romans through the intermediary of the Lakhmid Arab leader Numan (*Chron. 1234* 90), but there was no time for the exchange of letters that Michael the Syrian records (x. 23, p. 371); *Anon. Guidi* (§ 9), a well-informed source on these affairs, states that Numan too refused to accompany Khusro. As his army crumbled, Khusro fled rapidly, accompanied by wives, relations, and some attendants. The flight took him along the same route that his grandfather had used when marching to relieve Nisibis, crossing the Tigris at Ctesiphon and then up the Euphrates, past Perozsapur (Ambar), Anat, and Hit (Th. Sim. iv. 10. 4–5).[30] He was closely pursued by Vahram's soldiers, and only escaped through the self-sacrifice of his uncle Vindoe, who donned the royal robes and allowed himself to be captured by Vahram's soldiers in order to delay their pursuit by one day (Tabari, pp. 280–2); at last Khusro reached the safety of the Roman empire at Circesium, while his pursuers returned to Vahram with the captured Vindoe on the seventh day. As soon as Vahram heard of Khusro's escape, he crowned himself king in spite of opposition from some priests and nobles (iv. 12. 2–6); this occurred on 9 March during the Nauruz festival.

Theophylact's account contains certain inaccuracies. First, in common with Evagrius (Th. Sim. iv. 10. 1–3; Evag. vi. 17, p. 234. 2–4), he records that Khusro was unsure about where to seek refuge and toyed with the idea of going east to the Turks or north to the Caucasus; in his uncertainty he appealed to the God of the Christians, and allowed his horse to take him towards his predestined refuge in Roman territory. This fanciful story, which is at variance with Tabari's account of Khusro's desperate haste as well as with the Syriac chroniclers' evidence for some advance preparations, was part of the Christianizing propaganda that Khusro encouraged in order to ensure the success of his appeal to Maurice. The direction of his flight was virtually determined once he had crossed the Tigris at Ctesiphon, since he could flee either to the Arabs or the Romans, but certainly not to the Turks or the Caucasus tribes; in the past, the Roman empire

[30] *Anon. Guidi* 2 describes this as 'the southern route', presumably in contrast to the northern route via Nisibis. Nöldeke and Guidi (see app. crit. ad loc.) were both worried by the expression 'southern route', and Peeters, 'Ex-voto' 50–1, proposed to emend the text to mean 'the country of the borders', a reference to Nisibis, but this is contradicted by all other evidence on the direction of Khusro's flight. The Syriac text is intelligible, and ought not to be doubted.

had provided a haven for members of the Persian royal family (e.g. Shapur II's brother Hormizd *c.* 320), and Khusro appears to have planned to seek this traditional refuge. Theophylact's second inaccuracy is to make Vahram's pursuit of Khusro and the capture of Vindoe occur while Maurice was considering Khusro's request for help; Theophylact was probably misled by the narrative order of John of Epiphania, who may have finished his account of Khusro's flight and appeal before turning to describe the simultaneous actions of Vahram.

(iv) THE RESTORATION OF KHUSRO (iv. 10. 8–v. 15. 2)

Khusro's arrival in the Roman empire was announced to Maurice via Probus, the garrison commander at Circesium, and Comentiolus at Hierapolis. Theophylact preserves the text of Khusro's written appeal, which emphasizes the close relationship between the Roman and Persian empires and the need for legitimate sovereigns to support each other (iv. 11. 1–11). In the appeal there is no explicit mention of Khusro's interest in Christianity, apart perhaps from a vague reference to evil demons confounding God's excellent dispositions (iv. 11. 4); Khusro probably preferred not to commit such things to writing, but he could rely on his ambassadors to spread the tantalizing rumours of the possible conversion of the Persian king. The Nestorian Catholicus would have been a useful tool for Khusro to manipulate in his dealing with Maurice, since emperors constantly hoped to lead the heretical Nestorians back to orthodoxy,[31] and this was probably the reason for Khusro's wish that Mar Isho-Yabh should accompany his flight.

The remaining months of 590 (April onwards) were occupied by diplomatic negotiations and Roman preparations to support Khusro's reinstatement. These events are recorded much less fully and clearly by Theophylact (iv. 12. 6–16. 28, much of which is occupied by two long speeches), presumably because John of Epiphania had failed to report them in detail: in fairness to Theophylact and John, these

[31] See A. Guillaumont, 'Justinien et l'église de Perse', *DOP* 23/4 (1969/70), 39–66 at 62–6 for Justinian's discussions with Paul of Nisibis in 562/3; *Chron. Seert* 67–8, for relations in the 590s, and ibid. 93–4, for accusations that the Catholicus Isho-Yabh II had been persuaded to betray the Nestorian faith during a mission to Constantinople in 630.

preparations would not have made exciting reading, but a brief general reference to the lapse of time would have been helpful. Theophylact's narrative does include several references to the passage of days (e.g. iv. 12. 9; 13. 1; 14. 3; 15. 2), but there is only one seasonal indication (the start of spring, iv. 13. 3), and it is a surprise to discover that it was already January 591 when the military narrative resumes with the approach of Zatsparham to Nisibis (v. 1. 2): even this information is provided indirectly, in Khusro's dedication to St Sergius (v. 13. 5), and in the main narrative there is no seasonal indication until the start of spring 591 (v. 3. 1).

Shortly after his coronation Vahram sent a message to Martyropolis (iv. 12. 6–7; probably also to all other cities in the Persian empire), and to prominent Armenian nobles (Sebeos 3) in an attempt to establish his authority. The message for Martyropolis was intercepted by the Romans, who, since autumn 589, had been besieging the traitors who had surrendered the city to the Persians; Khusro, now honoured by Maurice, was persuaded to order the city to surrender (iv. 12. 6–9), but his command was not obeyed, which is hardly surprising since the Roman traitors knew that they would be punished, while their Persian supporters probably thought that Vahram was stronger than Khusro. Khusro also sent his uncle Vistam to rally support in Armenia and Azerbaijan. Maurice, however, had not yet decided to offer active assistance to Khusro, and in reaction to this delay Khusro first planned to travel from Hierapolis to Constantinople himself, and then sent an embassy to plead his cause (iv. 13. 2–3).[32] According to Theophylact these ambassadors were sent at the start of spring, although it is likely to have been rather later in the year, possibly the start of summer (590).[33] In response to this second plea, Maurice decided to commit the Romans to active support for Khusro; this decision was probably not known on the eastern frontier before mid-July, which also supports a date in early summer for the embassy's dispatch. Maurice's council granted Khusro's request for help (iv. 14. 1–2) in spite of an attempt by Vahram to outbid him by offering to

[32] At Hierapolis Khusro met the 'living martyr' Golinduch, a noble Persian lady who had converted to Christianity and found refuge in the Roman empire after numerous persecutions in Persia. She had earlier prophesied Khusro's exile to Domitian, and now predicted his restoration; her support will have contributed to the Christian propaganda that was being disseminated by Khusro.

[33] Khusro had dispatched his initial appeal in Mar. 590, and, whatever his impatience, must have allowed several weeks for a decision to reach him before dispatching a second embassy.

surrender Nisibis to the Romans (iv. 14. 8–9), and probably also despite certain reservations by individual council members: Sebeos (ch. 2) records that Maurice, with the support of Domitian of Melitene, had to overrule the opposition of the council, which preferred to allow the Persians to weaken themselves in civil war, and John of Nikiu (96. 10–13) alleges that the Patriarch John Nesteutes advised against aiding a parricide.[34] Maurice was prepared to accept the risks of intervening in Persian affairs, in the hope that by supporting the legitimate sovereign and establishing reasonable peace-terms a stable relationship could be forged and the eastern frontier pacified.[35] Khusro now moved to Constantina, where he was joined by Domitian of Melitene and Gregory of Antioch (iv. 14. 5–6), the two most influential men in the eastern provinces, who could foster Khusro's alleged interest in Christianity as well as organize his return. By now Khusro would have received the encouraging news that Vindoe had been released from his imprisonment at Vahram's court during an unsuccessful coup, and had escaped to Azerbaijan where he was collecting troops (iv. 14. 10–15. 6). It was probably midsummer by the time that Vindoe contacted John Mystacon in Armenia with this news, and learnt, after some delays, that the Romans were now fully committed to Khusro's cause. During the rest of the year, preparations continued for the expedition to restore Khusro, and the increasing signs of Roman support encouraged more Persians to join Khusro. Towards the end of the year the garrison at Nisibis, which Khusro had been courting throughout the summer, decided to switch sides (iv. 14. 7; 15. 7), although their decision was kept secret from Vahram. The defenders of Martyropolis were persuaded by Domitian to obey Khusro's instructions and surrender. Although Theophylact accuses Khusro of duplicity in this affair, the fact that the traitor Sittas is described as a friend of Vahram suggests that, at the time, the Romans blamed Vahram rather than Khusro for encouraging the city to hold out. Sittas was put to death, either by stoning at Martyropolis (Evag. vi. 19, p. 234. 34–5) or by burning at Constantina (Th. Sim. iv. 15. 13–16); characteristically Theophylact

[34] Cf. above, n. 29.

[35] R. C. Blockley, 'Subsidies and Diplomacy: Rome and Persia in Late Antiquity', *Phoenix* 39 (1985), 62–74, strangely describes Maurice's decision as 'confrontationalist' (p. 73). It was, however, far from the bellicose posturings of Justin II and Hormizd: throughout, Maurice acted cautiously and did his best to uphold the authority of the legitimate Persian king.

does not record the month or season of the city's surrender, and merely observes that Sittas was burnt 'on the second day'. The return of the city to the Romans was celebrated with a grand festival, which may have coincided with the commemoration (on 16 February) of the Persian martyrs from whom the city took its name.[36] It was also recorded in a very long Greek (or possibly bilingual Greek–Syriac) inscription that was once visible in the city walls; this reported the transfer of a city by an unnamed Persian king to a Roman army, and has plausibly been connected with this action by Khusro.[37] To mark the return, Theophylact composed a long sermon for Domitian whose exultant and triumphant tone more closely reflects the spirit of Heraclius' victory over Khusro in 628 than the bloodless surrender of a betrayed city.

During winter danger suddenly threatened Khusro's preparations. After learning of Roman support for Khusro, Vahram dispatched subordinates to control key points on the invasion routes into Persia, Anathon on the Euphrates and Nisibis (Th. Sim. v. 1. 2). However, Mihradari was murdered by the troops at Anathon, and Zatsparham was tricked and killed before he could reach Nisibis. Khusro, who had appealed for help to St Sergius on 7 January when he heard of Zatsparham's approach, received the Persian's head on 9 February as confirmation that his prayer had been answered (v. 1. 3–2. 1; 13. 4–6). In gratitude for Sergius' help Khusro subsequently dedicated a gold cross at the saint's shrine at Resapha and described the sequence of events in a letter or inscription (naturally taking the personal credit for the initiative and success of one of his subordinates). This success appeared to convince Khusro of the truth of Christianity, and shortly afterwards the Patriarch Gregory returned to Antioch, perhaps believing that Khusro's conversion was sincere and that his mission was accomplished (v. 2. 4–7). Khusro persuaded Maurice to replace Comentiolus as commander by Narses, and then, after the start of spring, he advanced to Mardin, where he was proclaimed king by the nobles of Nisibis and received hostages from them (v. 3. 1–2). The expedition, commanded by Narses and Khusro, moved to Dara, which was returned to the Romans. From Dara Khusro dispatched 2,000 soldiers under Mahbodh to advance via Singara and attack the

[36] Higgins, *Persian War* 47.

[37] See C. A. Mango, 'Deux études sur Byzance et la Perse sassanide, I: l'inscription historique de Martyropolis', *TM* 9 (1985), 91–104.

Map 13. Persia: the 591 campaign

royal cities of Lower Mesopotamia (v. 4. 2–3); Khusro probably assumed that Vahram would not try to defend areas where his support was uncertain, but would concentrate his forces against the main army. Finally, at the start of summer, Khusro advanced by way of Amouda (v. 4. 3–4), where Domitian left the army after delivering a final harangue.

The expedition moved cautiously to the Tigris, which it reached on the third day (v. 5. 4), probably in the vicinity of Fechkhabour, the nearest crossing-point on the river to Nisibis. An advance party had secured supplies, which may have been difficult to find, since Khusro could not allow his army to pillage, while Vahram might have commandeered available supplies to the east of the Tigris. The army then waited to link up with the forces collected in Armenia, which were not likely to arrive before late July, after the spring thaw in the Zagros mountains and the flood season on the upper Zab. During this delay Khusro sent some of his personal bodyguard across the Tigris, who captured one of Vahram's generals near the Zab. After this success Khusro urged the Romans to cross the Tigris, which would now have passed the peak of its flooding, and the army advanced via Dinabadon to cross the Zab (v. 5. 5–6. 1). According to Theophylact the allied forces crossed the Zab on the day after crossing the Tigris, a physical impossibility for this large royal army:[38] there is clearly a minor gap in his account of its movements.

At this point Theophylact leaves Khusro to record Mahbodh's actions in Lower Mesopotamia, where he captured Seleucia-Ctesiphon and Antioch with little opposition (v. 6. 1–7. 10). Theophylact then provides a confused account of Khusro's moves between the Zab rivers and of his march to meet the Armenian troops (v. 7. 10–9. 3): he does not mention the crossing of the Zagros mountains, or indicate that Khusro suddenly marched north-east after his more leisurely progress south-east. The general course of events can, however, be reconstructed from the places mentioned in the text. Khusro advanced very slowly from the Great Zab to Alexandriana (Arbela), a distance of 17 miles, which was covered in four days (v. 7. 10); he then continued south-east through Chnaitha (v. 8. 1)

[38] The location of Dinabadon is unknown, which makes it impossible to decide between the two main alternatives for the army's route: if it crossed the Tigris at Fechkhabour, it would have been about 80 miles from the Zab crossing; if, unrecorded by Theophylact, it had marched down the west bank of the Tigris to the future site of Mosul, the Zab crossing would still have been 30 miles distant.

towards Koi Sanjaq, situated in the foothills of the Zagros on one branch of the Lesser Zab. Vahram attempted to disrupt the advance by seizing a bridge (v. 8. 2), which must have been over one branch of the Lesser Zab, but his plans were discovered and Narses extricated his army by seizing other crossings and marching into the territory of the Nanisenes (v. 8. 4–5). This move, towards the vicinity of Rowanduz, entailed a dramatic change of direction, with Narses returning north-east towards the Armenian troops instead of pressing on into the southern Zagros. Vahram had hoped to tie down the main Roman army in the Zagros foothills (v. 8. 3), where, as in the Armenian highlands, speed was a greater advantage than numerical superiority; as soon as he heard of Narses' escape, he marched north-east to attack the Armenian army commanded by John and Vindoe before the main army arrived; for once Theophylact records the direction of his march (v. 8. 6). Vahram encountered the Armenian contingent near an unnamed lake, which must be Lake Urmiah; John and Vindoe had probably been marching down the east shore of the lake, and were then faced by Vahram across the river Tatavi, which flows into the south end of the lake; they then continued south (v. 8. 8) in an attempt to outflank Vahram and reach Narses. Vahram was unable to force a battle before Narses and Khusro crossed the Zagros, probably via the Keli Shin pass, and joined the Armenian army (v. 9. 3). Vahram was now heavily outnumbered and, after an unsuccessful night attack and a minor reverse in a daytime engagement, he retreated south-east through difficult hill-country to the plain of Canzak, about sixty miles distant. He failed to shake off the Roman army and was decisively defeated in a fierce battle near the river Blarathos, although he himself managed to escape from Khusro's pursuit (v. 9. 4–11. 7).

Events after the victory are briefly reported by Theophylact; the remainder of his Persian narrative is an assortment of hagiography, quoted documents, and anecdotes about Khusro, combined with a little information on historical events. Theophylact alleges that the Roman soldiers were dismissed by Khusro without reward (v. 11. 7–8), although Michael the Syrian (x. 23, p. 372) says that they received payment, and Sebeos (ch. 3) refers to the enormous booty they acquired and to some gifts from Khusro. According to Sebeos there was considerable tension between Khusro and the Armenian noble Musel Mamikonian, but since Musel was one of the heroes of Sebeos' account this may well have been somewhat overstated. At any rate, relations remained sufficiently good for Khusro to ask for, and be

granted, a Roman bodyguard as a further favour (Th. Sim. v. 11. 9), and he fulfilled his earlier promise (iv. 13. 24) to hand over much of Persarmenia as well as the Roman cities of Dara and Martyropolis, which had already been returned. Thus the Romans benefited considerably from the peace treaty, so that Theophylact's brief reference to an agreement on equal terms is misleading (v. 15. 2): he perhaps meant that neither side had to make payments (cf. Men. 16. 1. 28–31), but his phrase conceals the substantial extension of the Roman frontier to include Arzanene, most of Persarmenia, and the sub-Caucasian principality of Iberia (Sebeos 3). This in fact represented the furthest extension of the Roman empire in this region, and was a great triumph for Maurice's diplomacy. Maurice had revitalized the fifth-century tradition of mutual co-operation between the Roman and Persian empires. Stories such as Arcadius' faith in Yazdgard the Persian king as guardian for the infant Theodosius II had been widely believed (Proc. *Wars* i. 2. 1–10), but the realities of co-operation had become strained during the decades of warfare in the sixth century.[39] A special relationship still existed between the two great powers, symbolized for example by the official notification of new rulers and the ritual of major and minor embassies (cf. Men. 18. 6. 1–8), and perceptive observers could warn of the folly of constant wars that would debilitate both empires and leave them an easy prey to outsiders (Men. 6. 1. 94–6), but Justin II's belligerence would have appeared to remove any basis for mutual confidence in future relations. Maurice's assistance for the exiled Khusro created the chance for a new start: he had intervened in Persian affairs on the side of legitimate authority, acting out the role that popular belief had attributed to Yazdgard, and he had returned Khusro to his throne as a free agent who could decide his own policies and priorities.

[39] Cf. above, ch. 7(ii).

11

Aftermath

During the remainder of Maurice's reign, Roman relations with Persia were untroubled, apart from a border incident involving Arab tribes. Khusro considered using this as an excuse for war, but was dissuaded by dissension in Persia and by the Roman ambassador George (Th. Sim. viii. 1. 1–8). The date of the crisis is unknown, and it is linked to the complicated questions of whether John of Epiphania was Theophylact's source for this passage, and, if so, when John's history was completed (cf. above ch. 8(i)(*a*)). It is improbable that Khusro would have contemplated war with the Romans in the immediate aftermath of his restoration. At court he had attempted to impose his authority by executing his uncle Vindoe (*Anon. Guidi* 4; Th. Sim. v. 15. 1), who, in spite of his support for Khusro, was killed because his previous attack on Hormizd violated the principle of royal sanctity, but in the eastern provinces Vahram was conducting a widespread rebellion which continued after his death under the leadership of Vistam, who had revolted on hearing of his brother Vindoe's execution. Relations with Rome were still good in 593 when Khusro, who had married the Monophysite Shirin in 592, sent a second dedication to Resapha, to the shrine of St Sergius the patron saint of the Monophysite Arabs; Khusro's first dedication had been dispatched in 592 in gratitude for Sergius' assistance during his exile (Th. Sim. v. 13–14).

The Arab border dispute that almost provoked conflict might have occurred even as late as 600, when Khusro was still being threatened by Vistam's rebellion. Towards the end of Maurice's reign, Khusro also came into dispute with Narses, the Roman commander at Dara, and Maurice agreed to a Persian request for Narses' removal (Th. Sim. viii. 15. 4). Narses was probably responsible for policing the Ghassanid Arabs and preventing cross-border raids, and his removal could have been linked with the Arab incident. It is also possible that Narses became involved in a major dispute in Nisibis. This began as a doctrinal argument at the important Nestorian theological school in the city, but extended to the royal court through the involvement of

11

Aftermath

During the remainder of Maurice's reign, Roman relations with Persia were untroubled, apart from a border incident involving Arab tribes. Khusro considered using this as an excuse for war, but was dissuaded by dissension in Persia and by the Roman ambassador George (Th. Sim. viii. 1. 1–8). The date of the crisis is unknown, and it is linked to the complicated questions of whether John of Epiphania was Theophylact's source for this passage, and, if so, when John's history was completed (cf. above ch. 8(i)(*a*)). It is improbable that Khusro would have contemplated war with the Romans in the immediate aftermath of his restoration. At court he had attempted to impose his authority by executing his uncle Vindoe (*Anon. Guidi* 4; Th. Sim. v. 15. 1), who, in spite of his support for Khusro, was killed because his previous attack on Hormizd violated the principle of royal sanctity, but in the eastern provinces Vahram was conducting a widespread rebellion which continued after his death under the leadership of Vistam, who had revolted on hearing of his brother Vindoe's execution. Relations with Rome were still good in 593 when Khusro, who had married the Monophysite Shirin in 592, sent a second dedication to Resapha, to the shrine of St Sergius the patron saint of the Monophysite Arabs; Khusro's first dedication had been dispatched in 592 in gratitude for Sergius' assistance during his exile (Th. Sim. v. 13–14).

The Arab border dispute that almost provoked conflict might have occurred even as late as 600, when Khusro was still being threatened by Vistam's rebellion. Towards the end of Maurice's reign, Khusro also came into dispute with Narses, the Roman commander at Dara, and Maurice agreed to a Persian request for Narses' removal (Th. Sim. viii. 15. 4). Narses was probably responsible for policing the Ghassanid Arabs and preventing cross-border raids, and his removal could have been linked with the Arab incident. It is also possible that Narses became involved in a major dispute in Nisibis. This began as a doctrinal argument at the important Nestorian theological school in the city, but extended to the royal court through the involvement of

powerful Nisibene doctors; in 601 the metropolitan bishop of Nisibis, Gregory of Kashkar, was exiled, but this failed to resolve the unrest and the city revolted in May 602. The Persian *marzbān* was killed, Khusro had to dispatch an army to restore order, and the city was sacked (*Anon. Guidi* 6–7; *Chron. Seert* 74–5).

In general, however, relations between Rome and Persia remained good until Maurice's death. Maurice wished to concentrate on the reassertion of Roman control in the Balkans, while Khusro had his problems with Vistam. Maurice attempted to defuse potentially disruptive issues, such as the allegiance of the Armenian nobility, and even proposed the wholesale removal of this troublesome people from the border areas (Sebeos 6). Several embassies passed between Maurice and Khusro, as well as between Maurice and the Persian Christians who were favoured by Khusro: Maurice asked Khusro for the body of the prophet Daniel (Sebeos 5), and also asked the Catholicus Sabrisho for his cap as a relic (*Chron. Seert* 67); Sabrisho in turn asked Maurice for the return of captive Persians, and for a fragment of the true cross; Probus (or Marutha), the bishop of Chalcedon, was honourably received by the Nestorian hierarchy and by Khusro, witnessing miracles on each occasion (*Chron. Seert* 67–8; Th. Sim. v. 15. 8–11). Eustratius, in his *Life* of Golinduch, composed in Constantinople in 602, between the deaths of Domitian in January and Maurice in November, praised the wisdom of Maurice's settlement with Persia. Maurice himself, while fleeing from Phocas, still had enough confidence in Khusro's goodwill and honesty to consider entrusting his eldest son Theodosius to Persian protection (Th. Sim. viii. 9. 11 f.).

It is possible, however, that Khusro's gratitude to the Romans was beginning to wear thin. The Persians clearly had more reason than the Romans to be discontented about the peace settlement, since what appeared to the Romans as a moderate agreement, involving the return of Roman property and the surrender of areas that had already rejected Persian control, was a serious blow to the prestige of the Persian king: the size of his empire had contracted, a slight to his dignity (cf. Men. 23. 9. 87–8), and he could no longer portray the Romans as tributaries. By 602 Khusro's main internal problem in Persia, Vistam's revolt in the east, had been resolved, and by coincidence the coup of Phocas presented him with an honourable pretext for attacking the Romans; there was even a sizeable army near the frontier as a result of the troubles at Nisibis. The Romans might

have been distracted by a revolt among the Armenian nobility, who may well have felt threatened by Maurice's attempt to transfer large numbers of Armenian soldiers, together with their families, to Thrace (Sebeos 10); Atat Xoropuni, who refused to serve in Thrace, was besieged in the fortress of Naxcawan by a Roman general, until an army sent by Khusro came to his relief (Sebeos 11). The intervention of Khusro's army suggests that Atat rebelled very near the end of Maurice's reign; he was probably rescued during the major Persian offensives at the start of Phocas' reign. The *Chronicle of Seert* (ch. 70) states that Khusro went to war both to avenge Maurice and to recover what he had ceded, an explanation that might accurately convey his original intentions.

The subsequent war lasted for a quarter of a century, but the details of its course are a complex subject beyond the scope of this study.[1] For almost two decades, the Persians repeatedly routed the Romans, sacking cities, taking over provincial administration, and penetrating as far as the Bosporus on two occasions, before Heraclius began to counter-attack from Armenia. Under Phocas (602–10), the Romans seem to have been slow to commit their full resources to the eastern frontier, ignoring the lessons of sixth-century warfare, which ought to have shown that they could only defeat the Persians by concentrating men and money in the east. Internal divisions in the Roman empire favoured the Persians, and in the early years of Phocas' reign the Persians were allowed to establish the foundation for their later sweeping successes. The major Roman fortresses in Upper Mesopotamia, Dara, Hasankeyf, Mardin, and Amida were captured (M. Syr. x. 25, p. 378); the long sieges of Mardin and Hasankeyf show that the Persians had realized the importance of the Tur Abdin to Roman defences in Upper Mesopotamia, namely that this area had to be controlled if the Persians were to penetrate deeply and permanently into the Roman empire. Success encouraged Khusro's ambitions, leading him to dream of the conquests of Alexander (Th. Sim. v. 15. 10), a dream whose futility he had once admitted (iv. 13. 11–12).[2] Alexander's conquests were in fact to be re-created when the Arabs took advantage of the weaknesses of the two empires, which had been exhausted by twenty-five years of bitter warfare. Such a catastrophe

[1] For an account (far from perfect), see Stratos, *Byzantium* i.

[2] Although the words are Theophylact's rather than Khusro's, the sentiment is contained in Khusro's letter to Maurice (iv. 11), which recognizes the mutual dependence of the two empires.

had been predicted by Peter the Patrician in 561 during the negotiations for the fifty-year peace, when he warned that Romans and Persians might jointly dissolve their own power and find themselves 'conquered by people who were not worthy', if they persisted in conflict (Men. 6. 1. 94–6). Khusro II, too, referred to the threat of unruly tribes when appealing to Maurice for help. Romans and Persians both expected this challenge to come from the tribes on their northern frontiers: neither foresaw the threat of the Islamic Arabs in the 630s, by which time the moderation and stability espoused by Maurice had been overwhelmed by mischance and myopic opportunism.

PART IV

Historiography

12

Theophylact the Historian

In the last section of the Proem (16), Theophylact apologized for 'the ignobility of the diction, the feebleness of the ideas, the ugliness of the arrangement of language, and the ineptitude of the organization' which were likely to mar his presentation of the narrative of history. This overblown modesty need not be taken as Theophylact's serious judgement on his own qualities, but it points to aspects of his work which deserve consideration now that his treatment of Balkan and Persian events has been examined. I shall consider aspects of Theophylact's organization first, then content, and finally literary presentation.

(i) 'INEPTITUDE OF ORGANIZATION'

As suggested above (ch. 2) Theophylact's conception of his role as a historian was passive. His acceptance of the limitations on human understanding, as expressed in *Predestined Terms*, predisposed him against a classical and towards a Christian view of history, namely as a sequence of events that were fully intelligible to God alone: History, whether conceived as a supra-human personification or as the universal teacher of mankind, was far superior to the individual historian, whose role was to function as History's lyre—or even as her plectrum.[1] Theophylact's subservient view of his contribution as historian was likely both to influence and to have been formed by his own practice in compiling his *History*. Whereas Procopius and John of Epiphania were proud of the participation in affairs which gave them access to first-hand information, Theophylact had no such personal advantage and instead relied to a great extent on existing accounts that merely had to be reshaped into a unified narrative. His treatment of the Persian war was founded on John of Epiphania, that of the Balkan campaigns on the military source biased towards the general Priscus,

[1] Dialogue 15 for lyre and plectrum.

while additional information was provided by subsidiary sources such as Menander Protector, the 'Heraclius source', a Constantinopolitan chronicle, and a hagiography of Maurice (cf. above ch. 4(i); 8(i)). The collection of this information need not have been a very arduous task. All his major sources are likely to have been written texts, available in Constantinople in the 620s: the Heraclius information might have been acquired through conversation with a member of the imperial household, if it had not already been included in a literary panegyric (cf. ch. 8(i)(*c*)); material for a short digression on the Persian official hierarchy (iii. 18. 6–12) possibly came from discussions with a Persian official; the diplomatic report of a Turkish embassy that underlies Theophylact's digression on the 'Scythians' of Central Asia is likely to have originated in official archives, but may not have been discovered by Theophylact himself.

Overall, Theophylact does not convey the impression of being a dedicated or thorough historical researcher. A test case is his description of Maurice's overthrow, since for this part of the *History* it should have been possible to find a good range of oral informants whose accounts could then have been cross-checked and collated to produce an authoritative narrative. However, far from being an eyewitness account replete with personal observations, Theophylact's narrative is no more than a literary reworking of information from his chronicle source: not only has Theophylact's rewriting not enhanced the narrative, but in fact it has obscured and confused some aspects of the coup which are reported more accurately and fully by Theophanes.[2] Although Theophylact claims that he laboriously investigated the story of Theodosius' escape from execution (viii. 13. 5–6), these researches on a very minor issue did not greatly enhance the narrative, and yet Theophylact's evident pride in his own small contribution suggests that at other points he made even less attempt at historical investigation. Elsewhere Theophylact's assessment of his information is not particularly impressive: although he changed the emphasis of John of Epiphania's investigation of the causes of the Persian war, probably by comparing it with Menander Protector, he was generally content to reflect the presentation of each source, so that his narrative betrays the differing emphases of the 'Heraclius source', the pro-Priscus Balkan source, or the hagiography of Maurice.

Theophylact's main contribution as a historian was to combine the

[2] Cf. Whitby, 'Chronicle Source' 335–7.

individual narratives of these sources into a composite 'universal' history, suitably arrayed with speeches and digressions, but even as organizer his performance is not entirely happy. Much of the narrative was already organized, in the sense that John of Epiphania and the Balkan military source provided chronologically ordered accounts; Theophylact's task, having decided for a basically chronological rather than thematic approach, was to ensure that eastern and western narratives fitted together properly and that extraneous information was inserted at the correct place. At the start of Maurice's reign, where the problem of synchronizing Persian and Balkan events was greatest, Theophylact decided against the division of material by campaign years and instead presented the Balkan history of 582–6/7 first (i. 3. 1–8. 11), followed by the Persian campaigns for the same period (i. 9. 1–ii. 10. 7), with Constantinopolitan information inserted after the eastern events of 582 and 583 (i. 10. 1–11. 21; 12. 8–13). The switch from western to eastern events is marked by a grand transition passage (i. 9. 1–3), which illustrates Theophylact's general tendency to emphasize in exaggerated fashion a change of scene or the insertion of a digression.[3] This organization allows Theophylact to preserve the coherence of his limited Balkan information for the start of Maurice's reign, and at the same time to convey an impression of the extensive problems that the emperor had to face. The sombre effect of the account of Tiberius' funeral followed by the sequence of reverses in the Balkans would have been interrupted if the joyful report of Maurice's wedding to Constantina in autumn 582 had been narrated nearer the start (as in Evagrius): on grounds of chronology, the wedding could have preceded the Balkan narrative, but instead it is delayed until after the first winter break of the Persian narrative (i. 10).

There are no chronological errors in the arrangement of these early chapters, but thereafter Theophylact was not so successful: the insertion of a story about captives from Dara (iii. 5. 1–7) caused a small dislocation in the adjacent narrative, the first section of Balkan narrative after the conclusion of the long Persian section combines material relevant to 590, 598, and 588 (v. 16. 1–vi. 6. 1; cf. above ch. 5(i)(*c*—*d*)), chronicle material is inserted at the wrong place (vii. 6. 1–9; 12. 10–11), and the only reference to eastern affairs in the second half of Maurice's reign is not certainly in the correct place. Fortunately for Theophylact there were few organizational decisions to be made.

[3] Cf. iii. 6. 6; v. 15. 12–16. 1; vii. 7. 6; viii. 11. 12.

Although 'continuity of the narrative' (e.g. iii. 18. 4) was the substance of history, a classicizing historian might well attach little importance to chronological precision in the narrative,[4] but devote more attention to the literary adornments of the text, namely the speeches and digressions which the writer should 'insert . . . into the body of the history like a gem-studded necklace, an intellectual feast for the eyes, a delight and festival, so to speak, for the ears' (iii. 5. 1). Geographical and ethnographic digressions had a respectable pedigree, stretching back to Hellanicus and Herodotus: indeed the emergence of historiography had probably been linked with the growth of interest in ethnographic matters in the sixth and fifth centuries BC; by the Hellenistic age such excursuses were regarded as an integral part of a universal history. These digressions could be used by the historian to provide historical and geographical background to his main narrative, or they might allow him to display a wider range of his interests and talents as a writer. The tradition flourished among the classicizing historians of late antiquity: Procopius prefaced his accounts of Persian, Vandal, and Goth wars with historical introductions which, however inaccurate they may be on points of detail, illustrate themes of relevance to the main narrative; Agathias' best claim to originality as a historian rests on the research he devoted to his major Frankish and Persian excursuses, and he eagerly exploited opportunities afforded by natural disasters to offer learned explanations and describe his own experiences.[5]

Procopius' excursuses may not be the strongest part of his historical account,[6] but they provide far more background information for the main text than do Theophylact's digressions, which are less historically informative and intellectually interesting than his predecessors'. Two historical excursuses are concerned with the empire's two main enemies, the Persians and Avars, but Theophylact chose not to locate them in the obvious position near the start of the *History*, where they might have served as useful introductions to the military narratives. The Persian excursus, which treats the origins and progress of the war

[4] Eunapius 1. 30–90; Priscus, too, may not have had a chronological scheme (Blockley, *Historians* 52).

[5] Cameron, *Procopius* ch. 12; *Agathias* viii; Agathias and natural disasters, *History* ii. 15–17; v. 3–10. On Hellenistic historiography, see J. Hornblower, *Hieronymus of Cardia* (Oxford, 1981), 86–7, 137ff.

[6] As urged by Cameron, *Procopius* 222; even Thucydides could produce a disappointing digression, vi. 2–5 on early Sicilian history, which was probably adapted from the account by Antiochus of Syracuse.

from 572 to 582 (iii. 9. 1–18. 4), is included so that 'the pages of the history will be adorned by the completeness of the narrative', but in book i the account of the Persian campaign of autumn 582 starts with only the briefest reference to earlier events (i. 9. 4), and the reader is expected to know about 'that glorious Persian campaign in which Tamchosro was at that time leader of the Median armies'.[7] The excursus is lifted directly from John of Epiphania's *History*, although Theophylact adapted his presentation of the causes of the war to emphasize Justin II's personal responsibility (iii. 9), added Justin's advice to Tiberius about kingship (iii. 11), and presumably composed the speech by the general Justinian in which he exhorts his troops to forget past failures and to trust in the superiority of Christianity and Tiberius' preparations (iii. 13). These changes to the source-material may explain the placing of the excursus:[8] the narrative of Khusro II's flight and restoration reveals the triumph of Christianity over the magi and the success which a moderate and honourable ruler could bring to Roman affairs, so that the excursus, by being located immediately before this narrative, invites a contrast with the folly of Justin and a comparison with the beneficial policies of Tiberius; Maurice's greatest success is set beside the achievements of his predecessors.

The excursus dealing with the Avars is even more delayed, being inserted into the narrative of the 595 Balkan campaign, where a disparaging reference by Priscus to the Avars' flight from the east leads into an account of the victories of the Chagan of the Central Asian Turks, and so to an investigation of the 'true' origin of the Avars, who were one of the peoples defeated by the Turks. This investigation, which is based upon a spurious distinction between the European or 'Pseudo-Avars' and the 'real' Avars, is the main historical purpose of the excursus, whereas the information on Turkish and Chinese history and customs, although of general interest, is of no relevance to anything in the *History*. When the Avars entered the *History* at the start of book i, Theophylact briefly characterized them as Danubian nomads whose previous military success had already

[7] Contrast Ammianus Marcellinus' digression on the provinces of the Persian empire (xxiii. 6), appropriately placed immediately before the account of Julian's invasion of Persia; its length is excused as being 'to the advantage of complete knowledge'.

[8] John's narrative appears to have been arranged in straightforward chronological order, so that the outbreak of war and Khusro's restoration would have come at opposite ends of the work.

been narrated by Menander (i. 3. 5), and, although allusions are made to their eastern origins in Comentiolus' speech (i. 5. 11, 14), no explanation is offered and the reader is assumed to be familiar with the facts. Theophylact presented this excursus in the context of the 595 campaign because he believed that in this year an embassy from the Turkish Chagan arrived in Constantinople, bringing a letter that recorded the sequence of the Chagan's victories with which the digression begins (vii. 7. 7–8). However, the letter cited by Theophylact was probably dispatched by the Chagan in 581/2, since it lists Turkish triumphs from the defeat of the Hephthalites (*c.* 558) to the suppression of Turum's revolt (*c.* 580), and a Turkish alliance with Taugast in China, whose history in the late 570s is also narrated.[9]

Theophylact's detailed diplomatic information in the excursus probably originated in official records, and analogous material is preserved in Menander's accounts of diplomacy, for example Justin's reception of a Turkish embassy in 568/9 (10. 1): the Chagan sent a letter, whose contents Menander recorded although the excerptor placed then in the (lost) *Excerpta de Epistulis* (10. 1. 57), Justin read the letter, and then questioned the ambassador Maniach on various matters. Like Menander's account, Theophylact's digression moves from the Chagan's letter to a miscellany of geographical–ethnographic items which were perhaps recorded during a conversation between emperor and ambassador. Menander preserves so much detailed information on diplomatic affairs that he must have had access to imperial archives, but it seems unlikely that Theophylact conducted comparable researches: in view of his boast about laborious investigation of the rumours of Theodosius' escape from death (viii. 13. 5), one might have expected some mention if he had himself discovered the diplomatic material;[10] after all, he highlights his own contribution to the excursus, namely the erroneous interpretation of 'Avars' and 'Pseudo-Avars' (vii. 8. 2, 6). Theophylact's immediate source of information is a puzzle. It is improbable that his Balkan military source or the Constantinopolitan chronicle preserved this whole account.

[9] For long discussions of the contents, see Haussig, 'Exkurs', and P. A. Boodberg, 'Marginalia to the Histories of the Northern Dynasties I; Theophylactus Simocatta on China', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 3 (1938), 223–43; on links with China, see also H. Miyakawa and A. Kollautz, 'Ein Dokument zum Fernhandel zwischen Byzanz und China zur Zeit Theophylakts', *BZ* 77 (1984), 6–19.

[10] Moreover, Theophylact's other two long excursuses, on the Persian war (see above) and the Nile (see next paragraph), were both lifted from an available written source.

One possibility is that some research was carried out in the 620s when official interest in the history of the nomad powers of Central Asia might have been stimulated by Heraclius' alliance with 'the Turks from the east who are called Khazars' (Theoph. 315. 15–16); in the process the document subsequently utilized by Theophylact might have been discovered. Whoever was responsible for finding the information, Theophylact made a serious chronological error in presenting it, since he thought that the Turkish victories were contemporary with Maurice's reign (vii. 7. 9; 9. 5). This error led to his misguided distinction between the 'true' Avars, who seemed to have been conquered by the Turks in Maurice's reign (vii. 7. 9–10), and the European Avars who had entered Roman horizons near the end of Justinian's reign (vii. 8. 1–5). Theophylact explained the distinction by calling the latter the Var and Chunni, perhaps because he remembered that Menander had recorded that the Turkish Chagan Turxanthus used the name Varchonitae for the Avars (19. 1. 50–74). Whereas the diplomatic information in the excursus is valuable, once it has been correctly dated, Theophylact's personal speculations about Avar origins are historically worthless—but indicative of the type of confused presentation and analysis of which he was capable.

The only other long digression, the investigation of the Nile flood (vii. 17), suggests that Theophylact was more interested in the impression that an excursus might create than in actually researching original material. The discussion is introduced as a topic that was specially relevant to Theophylact because of his Egyptian origin (vii. 16. 10), and the implication is that he has personally collected 'the more distinguished descriptions of the historians'; in fact, however, apart from the brief concluding section (vii. 17. 45), the digression is an unacknowledged copy of the discussion by Diodorus Siculus (i. 37–41).[11] Theophylact slightly rephrased Diodorus' treatment, and in particular toned down his criticisms of the classical authors cited. Herodotus was too great a figure to be dismissed without a gesture of 'respect for the man's love of learning' (vii. 17. 16), while in a society where, even for educated people, classical culture had contracted to an amalgam of evocative names, select quotations, and abstruse language, a mere reference to a Euripidean opinion (vii. 17. 11) was

[11] Diodorus' account too was a paraphrase of an earlier investigation, probably by Hecataeus of Abdera. For a discussion of the different ancient solutions to the flooding of the Nile, see D. Bonneau, *La Crue du Nil, divinité égyptienne, 332 av.—641 ap. J.-C.* (Études et Commentaires, LII, Paris, 1964).

sufficient: there was no need to transcribe the actual three-line quotation preserved by Diodorus (i. 38. 4).[12] In general Theophylact showed considerable respect for Diodorus' style and language, so that the digression preserves a more classical tone than Theophylact's ordinary narrative; there are one or two Theophylactean phrases and circumlocutions, the rhythm of the clausulae is made more dactylic (in terms of accent, not quantity), prepositional usage becomes less classical, but Theophylact's main contribution was to abridge, and occasionally to confuse and obscure, his source-material.[13]

Theophylact's digressions do not suggest that he had an enquiring or penetrating mind. When mentioning natural phenomena, he pompously alludes to the explanations of earlier authorities, 'which Stagirites and Platonists have inscribed on Helicon in the volumes of memory' (vii. 6. 8), but he declines the chance to offer his own opinions (i. 12. 9), a marked contrast to the eager Agathias. In Theophylact, there are several brief geographical excursuses (Izala, ii. 1. 1–4; Tigris, ii. 10. 1–3; Zab, iv. 1. 7; the cities and rivers of Babylon, v. 6. 4–6; 6. 9–11), but none of these can compare with the scope of a geographical introduction in Procopius (e.g. *Wars* viii. 2, on Lazica), and it is likely that Theophylact lifted them from an earlier source: many may have been provided by John of Epiphania, since it is only the Persian narrative, for which he was the source, that contains these geographical asides. The brief antiquarian account of the Persian hierarchy and the story of Vahram's career (iii. 18. 5–12; cf. above ch. 8(i)(*d*)) may, as Theophylact states, have been obtained from a Persian official, but it cannot stand comparison with Agathias' excursuses on the Sassanians,[14] which contained material provided by the interpreter Sergius.

A classicizing historian was expected to include such excursuses on geographical and historical matters, but what is more revealing for

[12] Unless Theophylact's text of Diodorus was defective at this point, which seems unlikely; I suspect that Theophylact felt that citation of the actual quotation would have seemed so recherché that his readers might have questioned Theophylact's responsibility for the 'research' in the digression.

[13] For Theophylactean usage: 'so to speak' (17. 5), 'leaving their description bereft of confirmation' (17. 6), 'if someone were to say, by way of concession' (17. 13); dactylic rhythms introduced at 17. 6, 7, 12, 30; imprecise prepositions, *ὑπὲρ* after the superlative (17. 8), *κατὰ* (17. 13) for *ἐν τοῖς ὑπὲρ* (D.S. i. 38. 6), *ἐπὶ* for *ἐκ* and vice versa (17. 29 with D.S. i. 40. 3; 17. 36 with D.S. i. 41. 1); obscurity, the substitution of 'time' (17. 41) for Diodorus' 'winter' (i. 41. 7).

[14] On which see A. M. Cameron, 'Agathias on the Sassanians', *DOP* 24 (1970), 69–183.

Theophylact's own interests is the stories of miracles and marvels that he retails, often at great length: the dying Tiberius has an angelic vision that foretells a period of tyranny (i. 2. 1–2), the magician Paulinus is exposed through the actions of the martyr Glyceria (i. 11), Khusro II's astrological prophecy and vision of the Virgin Mary provide different predictions of future events (v. 15. 3–11), an inspired monk prophesies Maurice's death (vii. 12. 10–11), the apparition of strange beings in the Nile has uncertain implications (vii. 16. 1–9; 17. 46), at Alexandria a calligrapher discloses to a relative of Theophylact a miraculous announcement of Maurice's death (viii. 13. 7–15), and the sceptical Maurice investigates the miraculous powers of St Euphemia (viii. 14). As Theophylact remarks of the last story, 'descriptions which have attained divine illumination bestow their great inherent benefit on the souls of their listeners' (viii. 14. 1), while the unmasking of Paulinus 'is an unusual miracle-story' which will be recorded 'since it is certainly wonderful' (i. 11. 3): miracles were an integral part of late-antique life, and in the hands of Theophylact classicizing history was adapted to the religious orientation of contemporary society more thoroughly than by Procopius or Agathias.[15]

Speeches were the other main form of literary embellishment that the high-class historian was expected to contribute to his narrative. Apart from a few brief snatches of direct speech, the *History* contains twelve single speeches and three pairs, which can be divided broadly into three main subject areas: military matters, leadership, and international relations. One speech, that delivered by Justin II to Tiberius, is recorded in its original words (iii. 11. 5–6), but the rest are Theophylact's own composition and one was actually delivered by the historian himself (viii. 12. 5–7, the truncated eulogy for Maurice). There are also seven letters, five of which, all composed by a Persian king or usurper (iv. 7. 7–11; 8. 5–8; 11. 1–11; v. 13. 4–6; 14. 2–11) are plausibly said to be accurate transcriptions, and were probably copied by Theophylact from John of Epiphania.[16] Such accuracy in the

[15] Procopius quite often narrates miracles, which he may use to explain or give emphasis to particular historical events, but in his work such stories still convey the impression of being Christian adaptations of one of the stock themes of pagan historiography (cf. the portents and prodigies that are regularly reported in Livy); on this, see Cameron, *Procopius*, ch. 7 (stressing the break with tradition).

[16] The other two letters are from Mahbodh to Antioch in Babylonia (v. 7. 1–2), possibly derived from John of Epiphania, and from Maurice to Priscus (vi. 5. 13–15), probably from the Balkan military source.

reproduction of these letters and Justin's speech might run counter to the traditions of classical historiography in which, in spite of occasional attempts to provide accurate summaries (e.g. Thuc. i. 22. 1), speeches were accepted as opportunities for rhetorical invention by the author (within reason: see Polybius iii. 20. 5). But accurate citation of documents was part of the tradition of ecclesiastical historiography, to which Theophylact shows affinities in other respects. Letters and speeches naturally occur at opportunities provided by the subject-matter of the narrative, i.e. a series of negotiations may give rise to a diplomatic speech or a battle to a military exhortation, but their disposition is not entirely predetermined, in that not all negotiations or battles receive the same treatment. Theophylact had to make decisions about placing as well as content. Book i contains speeches on leadership (i. 1), and relations with Avars (i. 5) and Persians (i. 15), which present themes of interest to Theophylact. In Book ii the victory at Solachon might seem a suitable occasion for a general's harangue, but the account was already quite long and contained the diversion of the anecdote about the wounded hero (ii. 6); instead, a military debate is composed for the Balkan campaign of 587 (ii. 13–14), and a straightforward exhortation to the army is introduced before Justinian's 'victory' over Khusro in Armenia (iii. 13), an action for which Theophylact had little hard evidence but which he felt deserved emphasis. The central narrative of Persian civil war and Khusro's restoration is highlighted by five speeches (iv. 4–5; 13; 16; v. 4) as well as six letters. The Balkan narrative of the latter half of Maurice's reign contains speeches on Roman–Avar diplomacy (vi. 6; 11; vii. 10–11) and loyalty in the Roman army (vi. 10), and even though this part of the *History* has fewer speeches than earlier books there are two long digressions that punctuate the continuity of the narration. In Book viii, Theophylact recounts Maurice's overthrow without any speeches, thus allowing the narrative to proceed swiftly but also throwing emphasis on to his own eulogy (viii. 12. 5–7).

On the whole these speeches are not just shallow rhetorical constructions, but serve either to illustrate the historical narrative or to characterize the speaker as an individual or representative of a nation: the *History* opens with a speech that highlights the qualities of leadership (i. 1), and the topic is picked up again in Justin's speech to Tiberius (iii. 11) and at the trial of Hormizd (iv. 4–5); the duplicity of Persians and Avars is shown by the speciously reasonable arguments

that their ambassadors use (i. 15. 3–10; vi. 6. 7–12); the principles that should govern Roman–Persian relations are explored (iv. 13); the rewards for just dealings and the triumph of Christianity are proclaimed (iii. 13; iv. 16; v. 5). With the exception of the simple diction used by Justin II, many of the speeches are composed at the same rhetorical level, so that a veteran soldier matches the oratorical style of an officer (ii. 13–14), but Bishop Domitian is distinguished by the fervent Christianity of his rhetoric, while Comentiolus' headstrong if inopportune speech (i. 5) reveals his individual character. Theophylact also appears to have attempted to present Avar diplomacy in blunter language than that used for the sophisticated Persians:[17] Koch and the Chagan both speak directly but deceitfully (vi. 6. 7–12; vii. 10. 5–7), while on the Roman side Theodore uses a simple parable to sway the Chagan, and Priscus speaks directly (vii. 11. 1–5); Comentiolus' grandiloquence is an exception to this simplicity, but his speech, though diplomatically disastrous, presents an introductory ideal for Roman relations with the outside world, an ideal that the empire was currently too weak to fulfil, so that the accomplished but inappropriate rhetoric mirrors the noble but unsubstantiated sentiments.

As an organizer, Theophylact's record is mixed:[18] when it came to arranging factual matter in the overall narrative, his decisions about combining sources were not always correct, as in the case of Maurice's march to Anchialus. Whereas Eunapius confidently dismissed chronological precision as suitable for a rich man's bailiff, Theophylact's imprecision is likely to have been inadvertent rather than a deliberate affectation. On occasions he presents information in such a way that the reader is for a long time left ignorant, or assumed to know, about events which he subsequently decides to narrate, as with the digressions on the Persian war and Avar origins (although the placing of the former may have been determined on artistic grounds). By contrast, the disposition of speeches is much more informative,[19] and they serve to highlight themes which Theophylact wished to bring to the reader's attention.

[17] Cf. Blockley, *Menander* 10ff., for similar practice by Menander.

[18] Cf. Allen, *Evagrius* 11.

[19] For speeches in Agathias, see K. Adshead, 'Thucydides and Agathias', in Croke and Emmet, *Historians* 82–7.

(ii) 'FEEBLENESS OF IDEAS'

The classicizing historian was expected not only to produce an accurate narrative bedecked with appropriate rhetorical adornments, but also an instructive account in which the historian's political and military insight would assist the reader to grasp the appropriate historical lessons: history had to be useful as well as truthful, and the former objective must not be sacrificed to an excessive concern for detail (Eunapius 1. 50–61). Procopius had proclaimed the traditional view that the narrative of historical events was of value to humanity (*Wars* i. 1. 2), and Agathias had gone even further in likening an uncritical history, where the author failed to point out the relevant lessons, to a collection of gossip from the women's quarters (*History* i. 7. 6–7).[20] In his Proem (13–15), Theophylact refers to the didactic importance of history; it is therefore not surprising that certain themes and attitudes are highlighted in his authorial comments and in the speeches assigned to the participants in the *History*. On the other hand, Theophylact's qualifications as a historical commentator were far from ideal, since he was not an eye-witness of the events of Maurice's reign, he lacked military expertise, and he seems to have had no geographical knowledge of the theatres of war with which he was dealing: interesting stratagems or unusual incidents might attract his attention, but the inclusion of such items might merely obscure the rest of the military narrative. In sum, he was a second-hand reporter who lacked the intellectual curiosity and determination to overcome the weaknesses of this status: by contrast Procopius, even when he was not writing as a first-hand observer, retained a general curiosity,[21] which ensured that his accounts, if not always accurate, are usually interesting and informative. Theophylact's incurious approach led to confusing and often dull reports which he attempted to enliven with rhetorical flourishes rather than well-researched and presented material. Theophylact's failings must be recognized, but to an extent

[20] Cf. Sempronius Asellio fr. 2 (Peter), who likens a dry annalistic narrative, lacking in detail, motivation, and causation, to stories for children, not history. For Polybius (iii. 20. 5) a history with unrealistic speeches is no better than the common gossip of a barber's shop. I owe these references to Dr Holford-Strevens.

[21] Cameron, *Procopius* 147, although *Wars* viii is less anecdotal than the earlier books composed from autopsy (ibid. 191). Eunapius is another author with no experience of, or interest in, military matters (Blockley, *Historians* 10–11).

his weakness, the absence of a strong personal interpretation, may mean that those attitudes which he chose to express are more fully representative of his own generation than similar expressions in Procopius and Agathias.[22]

Interest in causation was one of the hallmarks of the classicizing historian. Procopius, although he may not have had 'a theory of historical causation',[23] did present the background to major events in some detail so that, for example, the Persian decisions to attack the Romans in 527 and 540 are fully explained, and the importance, on the latter occasion, of Khusro's personal motives revealed. Procopius found it easier to offer explanations in human rather than theoretical terms:[24] thus he could not explain why God should permit such a disaster as the sack of Antioch, but could describe the sequence in human terms, the failure of negotiations with Khusro, the weak point in the city wall, the panic of the defenders; the account of the great plague similarly combines metaphysical incomprehension (*Wars* ii. 22. 1–2) with a detailed account of the 'human' aspect of the catastrophe (*Wars* ii. 22–3). Agathias had imposed an uncomplicated morality on his historical narrative:[25] victory attended the pious and defeat was caused by wickedness, so that moral issues were more important historical factors in the conduct of warfare than plain military considerations. To a limited extent Theophylact shared the moral determinism of Agathias: a Gepid murderer is caught 'through some divine solicitude', by 'the causation of the active Providence which daily traverses the whole world, watches over mortal affairs with its unerring eye, and always administers to mankind retribution for acts of violence' (vi. 10. 4); wickedness and piety sometimes obtain their due rewards, so that the Avars are struck by a plague because of their maltreatment of the corpse of the martyr Alexander (vii. 15. 2),[26] or Khusro II transforms his fortunes by adopting Christianity

[22] Untypicality: Cameron, ibid., ch. 2, and 234f.; *Agathias* vii–viii.

[23] Cameron, *Procopius* 145; but only exceptional historians such as Thucydides or Polybius had any view about causation, let alone theory, so that Procopius' deficiency in this respect is not surprising (and indeed Thucydides' view breaks down under the type of close scrutiny to which Procopius has been subjected).

[24] Cameron, ibid. 234–5, asserts that the *Wars* did not seek such human explanations, but Procopius' comments on individual character and personal motivation direct attention to human rather than divine matters.

[25] Cameron, *Agathias* 45–51.

[26] Cf. also vii. 15. 13–14; viii. 12. 9; 15. 8–9, for other examples of wrong being punished.

(iv. 10. 2), but, as the general Justinian admits to his army, 'Injustice is often successful' (iii. 13. 16); retribution might not be manifested in the mortal world, but be delayed until the individual appeared before the judgement-seat of God (i. 1. 5; viii. 11. 6).[27] Theophylact did not attempt to force moral explanations on to the historical narrative. Virtuous Christian conduct might contribute to success, as in the Roman triumph at Solachon, but it was not a guarantee of victory.

However, if Theophylact does not explain all events in straight moral terms, neither does he regularly provide an analysis in human terms of the nexus of underlying historical factors and antecedents. There are only two detailed examinations of causation in the *History*, the digressions on the Nile flooding and the outbreak of the Persian war (vii. 17; iii. 9. 3–11), both of which were lifted from previous writers. Historical analysis is not provided at the appropriate place: thus in book i there is no account of why the Romans were fighting the Persians or of the background of Avar–Roman relations. For the latter, the reader is referred to Menander's narrative of the loss of Sirmium, and Theophylact refuses 'to expound in greater detail those lengthy accounts, to relate again what has already been clearly reported' (i. 3. 5); the Persian narrative is introduced even more abruptly (i. 9. 4). There is no attempt to connect Roman difficulties in the Balkans with the demands of the Persian war, or to explain how the loss of Sirmium affected Roman defences; instead Avar successes in 583 are attributed to 'the great peacetime indolence which had spread throughout Thrace' (i. 4. 1; cf. i. 8. 11). In general, Theophylact's presentation of 'reasons' is haphazard: he will sometimes explain events in terms of individual character, so that Tiberius' honesty causes the Persian war to be 'granted a turn for the better' (iii. 16. 6), but for numerous events no explanation whatsoever is offered, for example the Avar attacks in 597 (vii. 13. 1) or Maurice's decision to fight the Avars in 599 (viii. 2. 1). Theophylact's lack of curiosity is epitomized in his dismissal of the chance to investigate the causes of earthquakes: he states that the Stagirite (Aristotle) has provided an explanation and the reader is told to accept or reject this as he sees fit, although it is not in fact recorded: Theophylact himself 'will not discuss its cause' (i. 12. 9). When Procopius criticized clever

[27] Cf. Justin II, who both accepts that he is being punished for his sins and also envisages an opportunity for requital before the tribunal of Christ (iii. 11. 9).

men who devised incomprehensible theories to explain a disaster like the great plague (*Wars* ii. 22. 1), he was sufficiently interested in the inexplicable phenomenon—and familiar with the Thucydidean precedent—to provide an account of its geographical origin and to investigate its manifestations at some length: by contrast, Theophylact used the cultivated reference to 'the Stagirite' to close his brief mention of the earthquake. Procopius, discussing the geographical boundary between Europe and Asia, had criticized those prepared to rely on the antiquity of an opinion without trying to construct their own (*Wars* viii. 6. 9); Theophylact's attitude, whether to natural phenomena or geographical matters (cf. ii. 10. 3), was the opposite, and it seems that only religious topics aroused his interest.

Theophylact's attitude to causation reflects his belief, clearly expressed in *Predestined Terms of Life*, that the scope of human knowledge was strictly limited and that it was more important for mankind to show respect for its imperfect understanding by behaving moderately than to attempt to extend the boundaries of knowledge. One of the recurrent themes in the *History* is the inconstancy or mutability of human fortune, which entailed a passive acceptance of the frequent changes of fate: no theory could explain the progress of events, which for Theophylact was equivalent to the manifestation of fate or fortune. Not even the most pious or virtuous of men could control the unstable workings of fate, so that the ideal response was the caution adopted by Stephen and Droctulft and advocated in the parable of Sesostris (ii. 5. 1–2; 17. 12–13; vi. 11. 10–15) or the philosophical acceptance of misfortune exhibited by Maurice, whose dying words recalled the endurance of Job, 'Thou art just, O Lord, and thy judgement is just' (viii. 11. 3). Only God could explain or understand events in their entirety, a state of affairs that Theophylact accepted as natural: whereas Procopius had felt that humanity ought to be able to understand even a disaster like the sack of Antioch, Theophylact adopted an approach to causation that is much closer to that of a chronicler or ecclesiastical historian, for whom events occurred as part of the Christian progress of history, a natural sequence that did not always require specific explanation. Causation might be assumed to be part of God's purpose, so that it was unnecessary—or even unwise—to examine it too closely. Thus Eusebius' narrative has been described as concerned to state the bare facts about the outcome of events rather than to discuss the underlying

causes or the means of attaining results: Evagrius did not even include causation (*διὰ τί*) in the list of information that he intended his account to impart (p. 5. 23–6).[28] However, Theophylact's acceptance of human ignorance and his consequent reluctance to investigate events deeply did not lead him to the extreme of regarding the future as predetermined. Khusro, who believed that astrology could reveal the future, is described as 'well versed in the burdensome folly of the Chaldaeans concerning the stars' (v. 15. 3),[29] and the possibility of predestined fate had been bluntly rejected in *Predestined Terms* as un-Christian: mankind must take responsibility for its decisions although they could only be made with partial understanding, and even when fate 'like a drone wasted the hives of prudence' (ii. 15. 5) the appropriate reaction was more, not less, prudence.

Christianity is naturally more prominent in Theophylact than his predecessors. He maintains the literary affectation of referring obliquely to many Christian affairs, so that a monk becomes a man 'who had severed himself from the present world, participated in the mysteries through the practice of contemplation, and retired to the solitary life',[30] or the church of St Sophia is 'the great shrine of the city, which had been founded with extreme munificence and expenditure by Justinian; the Byzantines call this the Great Church' (viii. 8. 15; cf. v. 16. 7), but this is merely part of the traditional window-dressing of a classicizing historian,[31] the same attitude that transformed the Tribunal in the Great Palace into a 'courtyard which adjoins the many-couched hall of the royal mansion, a far-famed vestibule and most glorious porch' (i. 1. 2). However, Theophylact explicitly accepts saints, Patriarch, bishops, and religious ceremonies as being integral parts of society. The emperor is married by the Patriarch of Constantinople (i. 10), allows his judgement to be overruled by him (i. 11. 15–20), although on other occasions he may disregard his advice (v. 16. 3), and lends money to the Patriarch; when the latter's personal property

[28] Cf. the verdict of Momigliano, that Christian chronography is concerned with 'the pattern of history rather than with the detail', and with narrative rather than explanation ('Pagan and Christian Historiography in the Fourth Century', in id. (ed.), *The Conflict between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century* (Oxford, 1963), 79–99, at 85).

[29] Cf. the criticism of the Kardarigan's folly for 'trusting in the dice of Fortune' (ii. 5. 5).

[30] vii. 12. 10; cf. i. 14. 8, of men who 'are in fact called monks, and their task is to anticipate departure from the body, to be dead while living, and to transmigrate to higher things through a sort of prudent madness'.

[31] See the analysis of Cameron, *Agathias*, ch. 8, with Apps. J–K.

proves totally inadequate to cover the loan, Maurice tears up the contract and gladly accepts in return John Nesteutes' wooden pallet and woollen blanket (vii. 6. 1–5).[32] Before setting out on campaign, Maurice seeks divine inspiration in St Sophia and celebrates Holy Communion in the church of the Virgin Mary at Pege (v. 16. 7–8), marks a Roman victory by a vigil in St Sophia (vi. 8. 8), and writes to the main churches of the empire asking that his sins be requited in this world (viii. 11. 6). The eastern army is accompanied by one of the 'divinely made' images, which is paraded to raise morale and restore order (ii. 3. 4; iii. 1. 11), Priscus hurries to reach his army in time to keep Easter in its company (iii. 1. 4–5), and Maurice participates in the celebration of Holy Communion at Blachernae as part of the standard Candlemas ceremonial of the capital (viii. 4. 11–5. 3). Bishops are naturally involved in public affairs, encouraging troops, acting as envoys, supervising important arrangements, and defending the interests of their own cities (e.g. ii. 3. 8; iii. 1. 5; iv. 14. 5–6; vii. 3. 6–9). Khusro II's interest in Christianity is also revealed: at a crisis he appeals for help to the Christian God or to St Sergius (iv. 10. 2–3; v. 1. 7–8), he sends lavish dedications to Sergius' shrine (v. 13–14), and he allegedly gains knowledge about the future from the Virgin Mary as well as his Chaldaean astrology (v. 15).

It is not just the regular occurrences of references to religious matters that make Theophylact's *History* a thoroughly Christian work, but also the nature of these references. Two speeches are composed for Bishop Domitian;[33] the first is a sermon, delivered in church in Martyropolis at a festival for the city's martyrs, in which victory over Persia is presented in aggressively Christian terms (iv. 16), the second an exhortation to the Roman army, which is encouraged to fight under the auspices of God as it sets out into Persia to restore Khusro (v. 4); the former contains a brief summary of the life of Christ (iv. 16. 19–20) and both end with an orthodox statement of Christian belief (iv. 16. 26; v. 4. 15). The bishop's statements are paralleled in the general Justinian's address to his troops, who are assured that angels 'are recording the souls of the dead' (iii. 13. 20), in the speeches of Tiberius

[32] In Procopius there are only two references to the Patriarch, *Wars* iii. 12. 2, where Epiphanius blesses the expedition against the Vandals, and *SH* 6. 26, where Amantius and some others are put to death for slandering John. Agathias does not mention the Patriarch at all.

[33] The only other individual to be accorded two speeches is Priscus (vi. 7. 10–16; vii. 11. 1–5), but Domitian's are twice as long.

and Justin II, who both acknowledge the power of the Creator (i. 1. 5; iii. 11. 8–13), and in the message that comes to Peter to proclaim that 'Our Lord Jesus the Christ, the true God, the divine grace, the leader of the churches, accomplishes what is lacking for the advantage of everyone' (viii. 6. 6). Theophylact himself refers to Easter as 'that saving Passion, through which the only-begotten Son of God, he who is co-honoured equally with the Father in nature and dominion, took the world in his care' (iii. 1. 4), or to the Virgin Mary, 'whom we Romans honour supremely and alone as mother of God' (viii. 5. 2). Such orthodox expressions of belief came naturally to Theophylact, just as religious stories about the powers of St Glyceria and St Euphemia or the life of Golinduch (i. 11; viii. 14; v. 12) aroused his interest in a way that secular narratives did not: in his Proem (13–15), repeating the sentiments of Diodorus, Theophylact had referred to the traditional secular advantages that history conveyed to generals, the young and old, but he also believed that history should include religious stories (viii. 14. 1).[34]

For Theophylact religious and secular affairs were intertwined; it is therefore not surprising that he takes a special interest in the conduct of the emperor as God's representative on earth. Two important speeches in Theophylact are devoted to the theme of the emperor's qualities (i. 1; iii. 11): both are cast in the form of advice from an old ruler to a new, from the experienced to the inexperienced (i. 1. 20; iii. 11. 11). The first, delivered on behalf of the dying Tiberius to his successor Maurice, illustrates Tiberius' paternal devotion to the empire, reviews the ruler's obligations to his subjects, and offers specific advice to Maurice. The second is Justin's advice to Tiberius at the latter's proclamation as Caesar, and in this case Theophylact's decision to preserve the exact words of the speech reflects his particular attachment to this theme.[35]

Theophylact's ideal ruler exhibits the same Christian qualities as had been commended in the *Ecthesis* of Agapetus Diaconus, a work addressed to Justinian in the early years of his reign. Imperial panegyrics and similar works had established a range of themes for praising and assessing emperors, and Agapetus' collection of advice is no more than a personal selection largely determined by the portrait of

[34] Theophylact's religious interests did not, however, extend to theological speculation; the same distinction can be made for George of Pisidia.

[35] The theme also attracted Theophanes, who copied this speech in full, contrary to his normal practice of summarizing Theophylact's speeches in a few sentences.

the ideal Christian emperor in Eusebius, but the convenience of this brief selection ensured that it became a dominant influence within this genre: Justin II had clearly read the *Ecthesis* and his deranged mind could recall some of its simple precepts; Theophylact too must have been familiar with it. The ideal rulers of Theophylact and Agapetus combine the four imperial virtues prescribed for praise in Menander Rhetor's advice on imperial panegyric, namely courage, justice, temperance, and wisdom, though with the addition of piety to reflect the Christianized context of the sixth and seventh centuries, and with less prominence accorded to the primarily military virtue of courage. Menander had assumed that the emperor's courage could be praised through his military actions (372. 28ff.), but of the sixth-century emperors only Maurice led an army during his reign, and even he did not engage in battle. The emperor's role as commander-in-chief now demanded insight or sagacity rather than physical courage, and accordingly this came to be overshadowed by the religious or civilian virtues. In Theophylact the only Roman general whose courage is directly praised is the elder Heraclius (iii. 6. 2), and physical courage is otherwise the property of ordinary soldiers.

For Theophylact the ideal ruler must recognize the realities of his position (iii. 11. 10), since this alone will enable him to act correctly. Although he may appear to be above all human laws, he is still accountable to God, whose judgements will be particularly harsh against rulers because of the power they have enjoyed; God bestows the honour of kingship and in return the king must honour God; the king must now allow himself to be made arrogant by the grandeur of his position, and in particular must not be influenced by the trappings of office.[36] He must be loved rather than feared by his subjects; prefer criticism to flattery, and be constantly concerned with justice, rejecting informers and exercising moderation in his punishments; philanthropy must guide anger, but prudence must be guided by fear.[37] He must attend to his army.[38]

Theophylact's concern with the character and personal behaviour

[36] i. 1. 5–6, Agapetus 23; iii. 11. 8, Agap. 1; i. 1. 16, Agap. 14, 21, 71; for *basileia* as a divine gift, cf. *Digest*, preface (*CJ* i. 8), and for a reconstruction of Justinian's opinions on kingship, see F. Dvornik, *Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy* (Washington, DC, 1966), 717ff.

[37] i. 1. 17; iii. 11. 11, Agap. 12, 19–22, 43–50, 65–6; i. 1. 19–20, Agap. 18, 21, 31, 41–2.

[38] iii. 11. 11. This is the only statement in Justin's (or Theophylact's) presentation of the ideal ruler that is without parallel in Agapetus; its inclusion might be a reaction to criticism of Justinian's neglect of his troops (Agathias, *Hist.* v. 13).

of the emperor is not surprising, since these individual factors were commonly used as a means of interpreting and explaining events both by ecclesiastical historians, for whom the Christian emperor played a central role in history, and by classicizing historians such as Procopius:[39] this approach was not unreasonable, granted that the emperor was directly responsible for major decisions on religious, military, diplomatic, and administrative matters, and that these decisions might well be influenced by the image or character which the emperor had decided—or was inclined by nature—to project. Theophylact chose to begin his *History* with a portrait of a good ruler, and Tiberius' speech to Maurice establishes a standard for assessing the behaviour of the participants in the *History*. A further illustration is provided by the contrasting character sketches of Hormizd and Tiberius (iii. 16. 4–6, 7–13): Tiberius is humane, charitable, generous, a father to his people rather than a tyrant, whereas Hormizd is cruel, deceitful, greedy, bellicose, bloodthirsty, and impious; Tiberius is the epitome of philanthropy, Hormizd an archetypal tyrant. Justin II is another foil to the ideal emperor: he foolishly provokes war with Persia, fails to cope with misfortune, and this brings on madness (iii. 9. 4–5; 11. 3). The ideal ruler is someone who is not elated or dejected by the inevitable fluctuations of fortune.[40] Sensible Roman leaders act prudently in victory or crisis: Stephen replies to a rebuke from Philippicus 'with a defence most appropriate for a leader, saying: "I know both how to respect the limits of victory and to fear the summit of Fortune" ' (ii. 5. 1–2); Heraclius is not upset by a sudden Persian attack, but unfolds a clever solution after examining the situation (ii. 8. 3–5); Maurice, though initially disturbed by an Avar invasion, devises an effective counter-stroke through sagacity (vi. 5. 11–12). Whereas Maurice can extricate himself from danger, or at least face an insoluble crisis with calm dignity (viii. 11. 3), lesser leaders, who over-confidently trust in their good luck, fail to foresee the instability of fortune and end up discomfited: the Kardarigan is reduced to panic by his trust in the dice of fortune (ii. 4. 14; 5. 5), Castus is 'bathed in sweat, his spirit cast down in despair' after he fails to preserve his good

[39] L. Cracco Rugini, 'The Ecclesiastical Histories and the Pagan Historiography: Providence and Miracles', *Athenaeum* 55 (1977), 107–26; G. F. Chesnut, *The First Christian Histories* (Théologie historique, XLVI, Paris, 1977), ch. 9; Cameron, *Procopius* 242; Blockley, *Menander* 22.

[40] On tranquillity or serenity as an imperial virtue, cf. Corippus, *Laud. Iust.* iii. 309 with Cameron ad loc.; also Paul the Silentiary, *Ecphrasis* 951; cf. Mary Whitby, 'Eutychius' 304f.

fortune (ii. 11. 12–12. 1), Hormizd 'raged and glared furiously ... distraught with despair like those possessed' (iv. 1. 9), after his haughty treatment of Vahram has merely exacerbated the latter's revolt.

It is particularly important for the leader to present a resolute and sensible attitude to fortune since the masses, both civilian and military, are inconstant by nature and so are more exposed to the fickleness of fate (iii. 5. 9; vii. 1. 9): generals must control the recklessness of their soldiers, establish discipline, and smother discontent (iii. 7. 3; 12. 7; vi. 7. 7–8. 3; 10. 3; 11. 19); the populace of Constantinople is 'uneducated and is frenzied by changes for the worse, being difficult to correct and utterly uninitiated in expediency' (viii. 9. 9; cf. ii. 17. 5), and in particular its passion for the circus factions is criticized as a raging madness that has brought extreme trouble upon the Roman world (viii. 7. 11). Maurice illustrates the proper attitude to the weakness of the people:[41] he refuses to be angered by the insulting chants of the ignorant masses and instead marshals this thoughts against the Avars (ii. 17. 5–8); if he is forced to punish rioters, his anger is short-lived (viii. 5. 4).

Just as he is concerned to analyse the qualities of an emperor or leader, so Theophylact pays attention to Rome's relations with the outside world, namely with the Persians in the east and the Avars in the north. The first chapter of the *History* had established a standard for judging rulers, and the same is achieved for international relations in the speech of Comentiolus to the Avar Chagan, placed near the beginning of the military narrative (i. 5), which criticizes the Avars while praising the Romans. The qualities of the Romans and their empire can be summarized as philanthropy, the nation reflecting the qualities of the ruler and the ruler epitomizing the qualities of the nation. Ideally the Romans are peace-loving and generous, reluctant to fight, preferring to forgive rather than to punish wrongs done to them, although as heirs to a great military tradition they are innately brave when the justice of their cause forces them to fight, and they fight under the auspices of God.[42] When the Romans depart from these high standards they are censured.[43] In contrast the Avars and their Chagan forget past kindnesses, do not understand virtue or

[41] Cf. John Lydus, *De mag.* iii. 55, on Justinian quelling the storms of popular passions at his accession.

[42] i. 5. 3, 6–7, 12–13; ii. 14. 6–7; v. 4. 12; 10. 4–5.

[43] iii. 9. 4; vii. 15. 13–14.

proper conduct, allow their actions to be governed by whim, and disregard all guarantees and agreements;[44] they have a one-sided notion of treaties, exploiting them for their own ends (i. 6. 6), but making specious complaints when they appear to be disadvantaged (vi. 6. 7–12; vii. 10. 5–7); the Chagan lacks moderation, is arrogantly over-confident in success but completely overwhelmed by failure (i. 3. 11–12; 4. 8; vii. 11. 4; 12. 9; 15. 9–10).

There are considerable similarities in the language used to describe Avars and Persians: both are haughty, swaggering, and bragging,[45] like the Avars the over-confident Persians cannot endure defeat or even minor setbacks without collapsing into despair or violently over-reacting. The Persian king reflects the character of his people, arrogant, bellicose, pagan (iii. 13. 7, 14). Persian duplicity, a traditional accusation (e.g. *Strat.* xi. 1. 1–2), is displayed through the speeches of their ambassadors, whose superficially reasonable arguments are shown to be specious: Mahbodh correctly reviews the troubles caused by war, but his assertion that Hormizd loves peace is patently false and the peace which he offers is disgraceful (i. 15); Khusro II's embassy urges the need for co-operation in interstate relations (iv. 13), but his claims about Khusro's good character have already been undermined by Hormizd's harsh characterization of his son (iv. 4. 15), and the contemporary reader of the speech would not forget the bellicose ambitions of Khusro in the seventh century, which had destroyed the reasonable agreement reached by Maurice. Persian failings are also illustrated in the account of Hormizd's trial, in which the virtues of stable monarchy are upheld, although the Persians are shown to be incapable of finding a good monarch: Hormizd eloquently defends monarchy as a bastion against the evils of tyranny (iv. 4. 7–13), sentiments equally applicable to Phocas, but the faults of his opponents and in particular of the young Khusro II are pointed out (iv. 4. 1, 15), and his own character is no better since his achievements have not benefited his kingdom (iv. 5. 6, 9–11).

Theophylact's view of foreigners may be stereotyped, and in general there is a stark contrast between the good Romans with their virtuous emperors and bad outsiders who are led by unprincipled and unscrupulous rulers, but his view of Rome's place in the world is not

[44] i. 5. 1, 5, 7, 9–10, a traditional picture of the unstable and unpredictable nomad, but also a fair representation of the historical Avars, or at least of the impression they created on their settled neighbours.

[45] i. 3. 12 with iii. 17. 3; i. 4. 8 with iii. 17. 1; i. 5. 7 and vi. 11. 8 with iii. 13. 7.

so simple, and his assessment of how Rome should conduct relations with its neighbours reflects contemporary reality, with an emphasis on the benefits of peaceful coexistence and stability. Theophylact's references to the horrors of war suggest that this traditional theme still had definite meaning for him: warfare is a disaster for everyone involved, because of both the devastation caused and the greater opportunities it provided for the uncertainties of fortune;[46] it is the 'putrefaction of human affairs' (iii. 9. 4), the mobilization of 'that world-destroying trumpet' (viii. 15. 7).[47] Although Theophylact had been inspired to write by Heraclius' victories over the Persians, his attitude to war reveals the war-weariness of the 620s, a weariness produced by more than fifty years of constant fighting against Persians and Danubian tribes, which gave rise to eschatological hopes of a messianic golden age[48] and to Roman defeatism when faced by the Arab upsurge. This aversion to war entailed a definite preference for a policy of peaceful coexistence with the Persians and Danubian tribes. In relations with the tribes, Theophylact upholds the principle of abiding by treaties, criticizing both Avar and Roman aggression (i. 5. 9–10; vii. 4. 1–7; 15. 13); he disapproves of subsidies, which merely appeared to reward Avar wickedness (i. 3. 7),[49] but is less hostile to the policy of payments than Agathias had been,[50] and he approves of Roman generosity provided that it was shown from a position of strength. This was the principle enshrined in Comentiolus' speech to the Chagan (i. 5), although Comentiolus could not speak from a strong position. Theophylact's attitude to relations with Persia is evident in his criticisms of Justin II's insane bellicosity (iii. 9. 4–5), and of Hormizd's rejection of Tiberius' proposals for a fair peace (iii. 17. 1–3), but it is most clearly portrayed in his treatment of Khusro II's appeal to Maurice. He records Khusro's letter in its exact words, and then amplifies these arguments in the speech composed for the

[46] Cf. Themistius, *Or.* vii. 84 D, for peace being contingent on the will of the ruler, war on the whim of random circumstance.

[47] The adjective 'world-destroying' (*kosmophthoros*) is comparatively rare, but was also used by George of Pisidia to describe the Nemean lion overcome by Heraclius the new Heracles (*Heraclias* i. 77), and is analogous to other 'world-slaughtering' compounds used by George (*Hexaemeron* 1845ff.).

[48] George of Pisidia, *Hexaemeron* 1845ff.; Th. Sim. v. 15. 5–7; *Christian Romance of Alexander*, pp. 155, 158.

[49] Even when payments are made the Romans should be perceived as bestowing rather than buying peace; cf. Themistius, *Or.* x. 135 A (of an agreement with the Goth leader Athanaric in 369).

[50] *History* v. 14. 1; Cameron, *Agathias* 125f.

Persian ambassadors (iv. 11; 13. 4–26). The appeal was based on the need for co-operation in international affairs, the recognition of the futility of world conquest, and the idea that the Persians and Romans were differentiated from other nations as the two divinely ordained empires in the world. The fact that Khusro II failed to live up to the grand ideals of his appeal does not affect Theophylact's approval for the policy of coexistence, which is encapsulated in the image of the empires as the two eyes of the world: Maurice had rightly tried to co-operate with Khusro II and establish the basis for a permanent peace.[51]

Theophylact's historical commentary is interesting not because of its originality, but as an illustration of attitudes current in the early seventh century. His approval for coexistence with Persia parallels Heraclius' policies in the agreements with Shiroe and Shahvaraz;[52] Heraclius wanted a reliable friend on the Persian throne and a sure end to a generation of constant fighting (which had indeed occupied seventy out of the previous hundred years).[53] The speech composed for Domitian of Melitene (iv. 16) reflects the triumphant atmosphere of Heraclius' victory over Khusro and the tendency of the seventh-century empire to interpret events in terms of biblical prototypes: the historical context of this speech, the return of the betrayed city of Martyropolis, did not warrant the exaggerated references to the subjugation of the Persians (iv. 16. 4–6, 12–15), but the jubilant biblical tone is close to that of Heraclius' message announcing the overthrow of Khusro (*Chr. Pasch.* 727. 15 ff.); in Theophylact's speech there is perhaps an intentional interplay between the royal triumph of

[51] P. Goubert, 'Les rapports de Khusrau II roi des rois sassanide avec l'empereur Maurice', *Byz.* 19 (1949), 79–98 at 89, and *Byzance* i. 145, was misled by Theophylact's condemnation of the disgraceful alliance proposed by the usurper Vahram and wrongly concluded that Theophylact strongly disapproved of Maurice's agreement with Khusro. See also L. J. Daly, 'The Mandarin and the Barbarian: The Response of Themistius to the Gothic Challenge', *Historia* 21 (1972), 351–79, who suggests that with regard to the use of force Themistius had 'a realistic recognition of the limits of its efficacy' (364–5).

[52] *Chr. Pasch.* 727 ff.; Nic. 20–1; N. Oikonomides, 'Correspondence between Heraclius and Kavādh-Široe in the Paschal Chronicle (628)', *Byz.* 41 (1971), 269–81; C. A. Mango, 'Deux études sur Byzance et la Perse sassanide II: Héraclius, Šahrvaraz et la vraie croix', *TM* 9 (1985), 105–17.

[53] Heraclius had already embarked on his policy of co-operation with Persia before the start of Arab attacks on Palestine, and this policy had been adopted by both Tiberius and Maurice in the 6th c. Thus Theophylact's reference to the common interests of Rome and Persia need not point to a date of composition in the mid 630s (*contra* Olajos, 'Contributions' 420).

Christ and the historical triumph of Heraclius over Khusro, the enemy of God, between the deliverance of Martyropolis, a city made barren by war but which now celebrates a royal festival (iv. 16. 7), and Constantinople, a city orphaned by the absence of the emperor on campaign but which now celebrates his return with a royal triumph.[54] Theophylact's approval for respecting treaties in the Balkans probably also reflects Heraclius' policies, and certainly differs from Maurice's policy of constant aggression as the best defence: Heraclius scarcely had the leisure to contemplate Maurice's policy, and instead he tried to establish binding agreements with the Avars (Nic. 12. 29ff.; 17. 16ff.);[55] Heraclius' agreements were always made from a position of weakness and not surprisingly did not last, but there was no realistic alternative.

Theophylact's criticism of the populace, and in particular the circus factions, would have been widely shared after the civil unrest associated with Heraclius' revolt against Phocas,[56] and his hostile characterization of the Jews, 'a wicked and most untrustworthy race, trouble-loving and tyrannical, (v. 7. 9) probably reflects the anti-Jewish feeling prevalent in the empire during Heraclius' reign after the Jews had collaborated with the invading Persians.[57] Theophylact's resigned attitude to the changes of fate and his interest in the qualities of leadership may mirror the views of his contemporaries, who had lived through the dramatic changes of the first three decades of the seventh century, and who had seen the majesty of the Roman emperor seriously shaken by the overthrow of Maurice, by Phocas' unfortunate reign, and by the slow struggle of Heraclius to restore the empire. A century before Theophylact, Justinian had regarded the unpredictable variety of human affairs as a challenge to be tackled in his legislation and resolved by constant adjustments.[58] Justinian's self-confident

[54] Cf. George of Pisidia, *Heraclias* i. 1–35, *Hexaemeron* 1845ff., *In Christi res.*; also Trilling, 'Myth' 261–3.

[55] The stories in Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *DAI* 31–2, about the Serbs and Croats who 'arrived to claim the protection of the emperor of the Romans Heraclius', may have originated in attempts by Heraclius to reach agreements with the various tribes who had *de facto* taken over the Balkans.

[56] Cf. George of Pisidia, *Heraclias* ii. 34ff.

[57] For which see A. Sharf, 'Byzantine Jewry in the Seventh Century', *BZ* 48 (1955), 103–15; Antiochus Strategus 10; *Doctrina Iacobi nuperbaptisati*.

[58] e.g. *Nov.* 49 pref., 84 pref. (*CJ* iii. 288, 411). T. Honoré, *Tribonian* (London, 1978), 27, gives additional references; cf. also M. Maas, 'Roman History and Christian Ideology in Justinianic Reform Legislation', *DOP* 40 (1986), 17–31, at 29f.

determination was unlikely to be shared by many in the battered empire of the early seventh century.

In sum, Theophylact reflects the interests and attitudes, including most importantly the religious orientation, of the educated class to which he belonged and for which he wrote: the centre of their world is Constantinople, and within Constantinople it is the emperor, God's representative on earth; outside the capital, attention is focused on the serious challenges on eastern and Danube frontiers, whereas the west and Africa, such dominant concerns in Justinian's reign, have receded.[59] Over all there watches God, 'wonderful in his saints' (viii. 14. 9), mankind will at some time have to answer to God for its actions when 'the recompense that is from God' demands an account (vii. 10. 8), and God's judgement, even if beyond human comprehension, is sure to be just (viii. 11. 3).

(iii) 'IGNOBILITY OF DICTION'

Ammianus Marcellinus had concluded his history with a sentence of advice to possible successors, that 'they should cast what they have to say in the grand style' (xxxi. 16. 9), and classicizing historians normally did write in a decorous and artistic manner that accorded with the status of history as a branch of rhetoric.[60] A historian who aimed at a simple style might fail to achieve the expected nobility of tone and, like Olympiodorus, have his 'formless' production declared 'unworthy to be categorized as history' (Photius, cod. 80). Procopius' style, though one of the simpler, is a careful construction that is far from artless in its reminiscences of the Attic simplicity of Xenophon or Arrian, and it can serve to enhance the grandeur of the events he describes; Agathias' art is more obtrusive, perhaps because his poetic training had made him self-consciously aware of stylistic matters, and he happily admitted that his conception of the ideal preparation for historiography was reading the classics for the purpose of imitation (*History* iii. 1. 4); Menander, in a traditional apology that must come

[59] Passing references at iii. 4. 8; vii. 6. 6–7; viii. 11. 9. Although Moorish attacks into Africa may not have demanded much attention, there were substantial campaigns in north Italy during Maurice's reign, comparable to the events narrated by Agathias, *Hist.* i–ii. 14.

[60] Cicero, *De oratore* ii. 35 ff., with T. P. Wiseman, 'Introduction: Classical Historiography', in C. Holdsworth and T. P. Wiseman (eds.), *The Inheritance of Historiography 350–900* (Exeter, 1986), 1–6.

from his introduction, regretted that his superficial existence had not equipped him with the education essential for historiography (1. 2), but style was certainly an important matter for him, even though it is difficult to reach general conclusions about his stylistic preferences on the basis of extracts concerned with diplomacy.[61] Theophylact's conception of the grand style required by history differs from those of his predecessors and reflects the changes in the cultural balance of the literary élite, from the fragile classical revival of the mid sixth century to the more profoundly biblical and Christian orientation of the seventh.

Theophylact's style invites criticism. For Bury, referring to the introductory Dialogue, the funeral oration (viii. 12. 5), and an elaborate transition (v. 16. 1), it was 'hardly credible that a sane man could use such language, and most pages of the History teem with similar passages', and many since have commented on Theophylactean bombast and his 'Byzantine taste for obscurity and ingenuity for its own sake';[62] probably the harshest verdict has come from van Herwerden, the only modern scholar to investigate Theophylact's style in any detail, whose judgement was that 'It is impossible to think of a rhetor more inept than Simocatta, who with his overblown and swollen style of writing—one that is often so supremely absurd and obscure that it is difficult or even impossible to understand what he intended—has never, in my opinion been surpassed by any writer'.[63] Even Byzantine readers might find his style excessive, as Photius commented: 'His expressions have some grace, except that the excessive use of metaphorical words and allegorical concepts leads to a certain frigidity and juvenile lack of taste. In addition the inopportune introduction of sententious language reflects an officious and excessive conceit.'[64] Theophylact's style can be so extravagant that aspects of it have even been regarded as parody of the artificial Septuagint-based style of ecclesiastical writing, or of the contemporary predilection for exaggerated sententious language.[65] These

[61] Cameron, *Procopius* 43–4; *Agathias* ch. 7; Blockley, *Menander* 7.

[62] Bury, *HLRE* (i) ii. 254–6; Cameron, *Agathias* 72ff.; cf. Goubert, *Byzance* i. 13. Veh, *Untersuchungen* 16–17, is a more sympathetic commentator.

[63] Herwerden, 'Hist.', 25–6.

[64] Photius, *Bibl.*, cod. 65, a judgement described as 'too lenient' by Wilson, *Scholars* 105.

[65] Garton and Westerink, *Predestined Terms*, Introduction, pp. xi–xii, discussing the style of this religious dialogue; Olajos, 'Remarques' 162, suggesting that Theophylact's exaggerated references to Homer (e.g. vii. 4. 5) are self-consciously ironic.

criticisms are not without foundation, and Theophylact's failings appear particularly marked when judged on the strictly classical standards adopted by van Herwerden, who could produce lists of linguistic inelegancies, grammatical errors, inconsistent contractions, middle verbs for active and vice versa, deponent verbs as passives, neuter plurals with plural verbs, wrong tenses and moods, and confusions over particles and prepositions.[66] Theophylact's grasp of classical Greek syntax was shaky, but almost all these failings can be paralleled in his contemporary George of Pisidia, and even the well-read Agathias, writing two generations earlier, shares many of Theophylact's departures from classical Greek.[67] A fair assessment of Theophylact's style could only be made through an extensive comparison with sixth- and seventh-century literary writing, ecclesiastical as well as secular, but this major undertaking is rendered difficult, if not impossible at the moment, by the oft-lamented lack of lexica, word-indexes, and specialist literary studies. For the present, I can do no more than suggest a possible approach for a reassessment of Theophylact.[68]

Theophylact deserves his reputation for bombastic exuberance, since this was his own conception of the grand style, demonstrated for example in his funeral speech for Maurice, but it is incorrect to present such extravagances as his stylistic norm. There is a connection between style and content in the *History*, and Theophylact generally presented his military narrative quite plainly, in sentences whose structure is much less complex than those of Menander or John of Epiphania,[69] whereas he used grandiloquent rhetoric as deliberate contrast: his style naturally becomes more elaborate in the speeches (apart from Justin II's speech, and the Avar diplomacy of books vi–vii), in the miniature *ecphrases* that decorate the narrative, in passages derived from his chronicle source, where he was self-consciously

[66] Herwerden, 'Hist.' 28–32; some of these features, e.g. middle verbs for active, were a definite grammatical preference produced by a mistaken conception of what was good Attic Greek, see G. Böhlig, *Untersuchungen zum rhetorischen Sprachgebrauch der Byzantiner* (Berlin, 1956), 945.

[67] Pertusi, *Giorgio* 42; Browning, 'Language' 110.

[68] The need for a similar new approach to Procopius, one broader and more aware of contemporary Christian influences, has recently been urged by A. M. Cameron, 'History as Text: Coping with Procopius', in Holdsworth and Wiseman (op. cit. in n. 60), 53–66. It is regrettable that Theophylact is, at present, unlikely to be covered by the revised version of Liddell and Scott's *Greek–English Lexicon*, leaving him as one of the few major Greek authors outside the scope of all the main lexica.

[69] Cf. above, ch. 8 n. 4, for an example of one of John's rambling sentences.

adapting 'sub-literary' material to an elevated stylistic level, and in transitional passages, where the rhetoric serves as punctuation to mark the shift from one topic to another.[70] It is from this material that Theophylact's critics have drawn most of their stylistic examples, expressions such as 'the pen which navigates the books with the ink ... anchoring in the harbour of its goal and carrying as cargo spectacular actions' (v. 15. 12), or 'by means of opposing shafts his tongue was marked with a cross by the counterposed conjunction of the barbs' (ii. 6. 2). These passages contain numerous examples of the rhetorical figures whose repeated use was criticized by van Herwerden—series of balanced clauses often with balanced endings, affected word-play, exaggerated antithesis, overblown imagery.[71] In the military narrative, however, the rhetoric is more restrained so that the occasional extravagant metaphor may even contribute to the 'grace' which Photius identified, and which has also been noted by Veh.[72] In terms of presentation, his accounts of campaigns emerge with credit from a comparison with his eastern source, John of Epiphania:[73] Theophylact's style is clearer, more elegant, and less convoluted than John's, and he was capable of describing dramatic events such as the restoration of Khusro or the overthrow of Maurice in a way that can catch the reader's interest. On the other hand, there are places where the plain military narrative tends towards a flat monotony (for example at the start of book vii), which is emphasized by the restricted range of conjunctions and particles he employs, and by a lack of variety in sentence structure, which might have been avoided by greater use of different kinds of subordinate clauses.

The rehabilitation of Theophylact's style should not be taken too far: in spite of occasional vivid flashes, as when Vindoe splutters at the dishonest oratory of Hormizd (iv. 5. 1),[74] the prosaic narrative and overdone rhetoric engender tedium. Although in his youth Theophylact

[70] *Ecphrases*: ii. 6. 2–3 (Solachon hero's wounds), iv. 3. 7 (Persian royal luxury), iv. 7. 2 (Hormizd's diet in prison), ii. 11. 4–8 (Sabulente Canalion). Chronicle material: i. 11. 1–2; 12. 8–11; vii. 6. 8–9 (natural disasters); cf. the geographical material of ii. 10. 1–3. Transitions: i. 9. 1; 11. 1; iii. 8. 9; v. 15. 12–16. 1.

[71] A few examples: balanced series, i. 11. 13; viii. 14. 8; word-play, i. 15. 3; iv. 4. 1–2; antitheses, iv. 4. 4–6; 16. 1–3; imagery, iii. 5. 1; 6. 6; cf. Pertusi, *Giorgio* 47, for similar features.

[72] *Untersuchungen* 16–17.

[73] Cf. ch. 8(i)(*a*).

[74] The word, βρασματώδης, borrowed from Gregory of Nazianzus, recalls a pot of boiling water.

will have received a standard rhetorical education that included reading the classics, his style, as Garton and Westerink observed of *Predestined Terms*, is that of a man thoroughly trained in the Septuagint and ecclesiastical Greek. This strong biblical influence sets Theophylact apart from his sixth-century historiographical predecessors: Menander, whose eclectic style in some respects anticipates Theophylact's, has not been accused of blurring the boundaries between secular and biblical; Evagrius, whose *Ecclesiastical History* might have been expected to display some biblical influences, constructed a literary style of modest classical pretensions to which the Bible did not make an integral contribution, even linguistically.[75] The closest stylistic parallels for Theophylact's *History* are provided not by historians but by contemporary homilies and 'high-class' hagiography, for example Theodore Syncellus' speech on the Avar siege of 626, or Eustratius' *Life* of the Patriarch Eutychius, whose more convoluted passages can in places surpass Theophylact's.[76] In Photius' *Bibliotheca* the author whose style is assessed in terms most similar to Theophylact's is the fifth-century homilist Basil of Seleucia (cod. 168): Basil's excessive abundance of figurative language is criticized as leading to monotony, though only rarely to the obscurity or frigidity which Photius detected in Theophylact. This style is very different from the purity, clarity, and dignity which Photius praised in Malchus, 'a yardstick for historical writing' (cod. 78).[77]

Another important stylistic influence is likely to have been the legal and administrative documents which formed the basis of his professional life, and which he must often have had to compose. Late Roman legal language, both in Greek and Latin, tended to be sonorous, ornate, and highly figurative,[78] while official documents from the reign

[75] Blockley, *Menander* 6–7; V. A. Caires, 'Evagrius Scholasticus: A Literary Analysis', *Byzantinische Forschungen* 8 (1982), 29–50 at 48.

[76] Eustratius' language becomes particularly elaborate and obscure when he self-consciously displays his learning through biblical and patristic comparisons: e.g. *Life* of Eutychius 87–9, 97, 99.

[77] Cf. cod. 77 on Eunapius, whose smooth, elegant, and urbane writing is praised, although the overall effect was marred by some inappropriate expressions and excessively figurative language; also cod. 29 on Evagrius, whose style 'is not deprived of grace, even if it sometimes appears verbose'. For brief comments on Basil's style, see M. B. Cunningham, 'Basil of Seleucia's Homily on Lazarus: A New Edition', *AB* 104 (1986), 161–84 at 168 (examples of anaphora and homoeoteleuton).

[78] Honoré (op. cit. in n. 58), ch. 3, esp. 86–93 on Tribonian's Latin; unfortunately the lack of a concordance prevented Honoré from investigating his Greek language, but its character appears to be similar to his Latin, though perhaps less extravagant.

of Heraclius, preserved in the *Chronicon Paschale*, reveal a combination of stylistic flatness and occasional attempts at grander writing, when synonymous phrases are agglomerated to lend weight to a particular passage or sentences are extended by strings of genitive absolutes.[79] Theophylact came to historiography as a lawyer and administrator with considerable knowledge of ecclesiastical Greek, but he was also aware that history might often demand a different and grander style (Proem 16); he took pains about his style, and in some respects is punctilious, so that his clausulae, among the most dactylic in all Byzantine writing, reveal a pedantic adherence to the precepts of the rhetorical schools.[80] However, his idea of how a grand historical style might be created was less influenced by classical prototypes such as Thucydides or Xenophon than by ecclesiastical Greek, so that his attempts at elevated writing have as much in common with 'middlebrow' Byzantine authors, the creators of the majority of Byzantine ecclesiastical literature,[81] as with his predecessors in the succession of classicizing historiography. This merging of stylistic levels is not surprising, in that his 'high-class' *History*, a work of self-conscious display, was probably aimed at the same educated audience as much 'middlebrow' literature.[82]

An important element in Theophylact's style is his choice of language, since to a great extent the use of an appropriate vocabulary drawn from the right classical models had come to replace less tangible notions of Attic style as the criterion for good prose composition.[83] In the past, Theophylact's language has been judged on the same strictly classical standards as have been applied to his style, and inevitably it has been found wanting;[84] the least uncomplimentary verdict is that it was eclectic, his vocabulary including 'poetic words of every kind, particularly from Homer, and a great many new formations.

[79] See H. Zilliacus, *Zur Abundanz der spätgriechischen Gebrauchssprachen* (Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum, Soc. Scient. Fenn. XLI/2, Helsinki, 1967), for a more detailed investigation of the style of late Greek documents: he identifies (pp. 30ff.) as particular features of the chancery style a penchant for long words, circumlocutions, formal politeness, parallel or adversative clauses in antithesis, tautologies to intensify meaning, and periphrases, and noted that in this it shared many of the developments of the literary language.

[80] See W. Hörnandner, *Der Prosarhythmus in der rhetorischen Literatur der Byzantiner* (Wiener byz. Stud. XVI, Vienna, 1981), 79ff.

[81] For which see Mango, *Byzantium* 236.

[82] P. Brown, *World* 180–1.

[83] Browning, 'Language' 106–7.

[84] e.g. Herwerden, 'Hist.' 25ff.

Almost any word attested in literature or formable according to the rules of derivation, was for him classical'.[85] There is much truth in this judgement, and yet there is also a danger that concentration on the classical archetypes of Theophylact's vocabulary will obscure his relationship with later writers, and especially with exemplars of the literary *koine* of late Greek prose, Second Sophistic and patristic authors. This disadvantage is evident in van Herwerden's investigation, since he approached Theophylact's language by compiling stark lists of Homeric, tragic, comic, and Thucydidean diction.[86] It is true that a strong Homeric influence is evident in the *History*, but almost always Theophylact uses Homeric language and allusions for special effect, not as part of the normal historical narrative: epic references are signposted in order to elevate a specific incident or comment (e.g. ii. 18. 18; v. 16. 1; vii. 4. 5).[87] Most of the 'tragic' and 'Thucydidean' words are in fact reasonably well attested in late Greek prose,[88] so that precise linguistic labels cannot be attached to them. Theophylact probably regarded the words as 'classical', but his selection was likely to have been influenced as much by his knowledge of late Greek usage as by awareness of the classical origin. The category of comic words is more interesting. Van Herwerden listed seven comic words, but another twelve with significant comic attestation can be added;[89]

[85] Browning, art. cit. 110.

[86] Herwerden, art. cit. 27–8. Cf. also Browning's selection (loc. cit.) of ten 'noteworthy' words: all except *ἀπόφοιτος* are attested in Second Sophistic and/or patristic literature. It is impossible to assess Theophylact's language simply by consulting Liddell and Scott, as this naturally excludes the very authors with whom his usage is likely to be most closely affiliated.

[87] Olajos, 'Remarques' suggested that in these Homeric allusions Theophylact was ironically drawing attention to a stylistic excess which he could not avoid: this seems most implausible.

[88] Herwerden listed seven 'tragic' words: of these, four are well attested in late Greek, *γεννήτωρ, ὁμορροθεῖν, ὑπερμαχεῖν* (including Evagrius), *ἀκορέστατος*; Theophylact probably regarded *τρανής/τρανῶς* as a gnomic rather than a tragic word (from its occurrence at Sophocles, *Ajax* 23, a tag also quoted at *Predestined Terms* iii. 30. 18–19); *κορυφή* for *κεφαλή* occurs in the Septuagint; the seventh 'tragic' term, *φῦναι* for *εἶναι*, can be paralleled in late Greek poetry. Herwerden also listed seven 'Thucydidean' words: of these, three are well attested, *μετάμελος* (including Procopius), *ὀργᾶν, τεκμηριοῦν* (including Evagrius); of the others, *ἀποδασμός* was used by Plutarch, *ἔνερσις* by Procopius and Agathias (6 times), *κωλύμη* by Dionysius of Halicarnassus (who describes it as a poetic word adopted by Thucydides), Procopius (7 times), and Evagrius, *σιδηροφορεῖσθαι* by Plutarch.

[89] Herwerden listed *ἀπεριμερίμνως, βρενθύεσθαι, ἐγκεκορδυλημένος, ἐρεβοδιφεῖν, ξυνωρικεύεσθαι, τονθορύζειν, ὠρικός*, to which can perhaps be added *ἀποπρίασθαι, ἀποσκέλλειν, ἀποσοβεῖν, αὐθαδικός, δαιταλεύς, κυλίχνη, κυνοφθαλμίζεσθαι, μορμολυκεῖον, ξενηλατεῖν, παρακλέπτειν, περιλαλεῖν, τεράτευμα.*

although many of these were adopted in late Greek prose, others remained very rare,[90] and it is likely that some still retained their comic flavour. Comic language was regularly used as a deliberate affectation in the rhetorical prologues of late Greek prose and poetry, and lists of comic diction were compiled to facilitate this: it would seem that Theophylact had access to such a list, and thought that the colourful language of comedy would enhance his descriptions of people who 'blanketed themselves' in the woods (ii. 12. 2), or were 'groping around in the nether regions' (ii. 7. 6).[91] Consideration of van Herwerden's analysis illustrates the limitations of investigating Theophylact's language on purely classical standards: the context of his use of Homeric terms reveals that this was not linguistic insensitivity but self-conscious affectation; much 'tragic' and 'Thucydidean' diction had become accepted as good prose usage long before Theophylact, but he differed from his predecessors in introducing more rare comic diction.

A thorough examination of Theophylact's language would, however, have to incorporate van Herwerden's approach, because it is necessary to establish, where possible, the classical origins for Theophylact's diction, since occurrences of rare words from particular authors or works may provide evidence for Theophylact's knowledge of classical literature, or for the authors covered by his word-lists and collections of excerpts. But the examination should also cover Second Sophistic literature and late Greek poetry, and pay special attention to patristic and biblical, particularly Septuagint, language in order to assess possible developments in meaning and usage from classical times to the seventh century, and to establish whether Theophylact's 'classical' vocabulary corresponds to that of earlier authors, secular or ecclesiastic, whether his language frequently represents Christian or Septuagint usage, and whether he was particularly influenced by any single late Greek author or work. Such treatment is beyond the scope of this study; instead I shall merely try to give a few general indications of possible linguistic affiliations.

Theophylact's penchant for comic vocabulary has just been noted. Another noticeable category is medical vocabulary, a taste which he shared with many patristic writers, with sixth-century legal writing

[90] *ἀποπρίασθαι* (iv. 15. 16), *αὐθαδικός* (i. 4. 8), *ἐρεβοδιφεῖν* (ii. 7. 6; vi. 5. 3).

[91] Cf. P. Oxy. XV/1803 for a 6th-c. glossary that contains comic lections (Aristophanes, Eupolis, Menander) in company with words from standard prose authors (Thucydides, Xenophon, Demosthenes).

(where medical metaphors are employed), and with his contemporary George of Pisidia. Theophylact's range of medical language might be extensive enough to suggest some acquaintance with medical literature: not only are medical terms used for the 'bruises' that Priscus suffered on his 'calves' (iii. 1. 15), but also for the 'crushing' of Comentiolus' feet in fetters (i. 6. 2), for the 'inflammation' of imperial anger (i. 8. 9), or for the 'sparkle' of a golden feast (i. 12. 13); medical images sprang to mind to describe the 'additional generation' of troubles that terrified Justin II (iii. 11. 3), and the 'festering sore' of Persian deceit that Domitian dispersed like an 'excrescence of blisters' (iv. 15. 9).[92] The *History* naturally contains some official or administrative language, since it quotes verbatim various items of diplomatic correspondence, but there are occasional traces of official terminology elsewhere, in addition to the occasional technical military terms or Latinisms such as *banda* or *sculca* for which Theophylact almost invariably apologizes.[93]

A major linguistic influence on Theophylact was the Bible, and in particular the Septuagint: biblical language predominates, of course, in the sermon of Domitian, which is a cento of scriptural texts, but it also occurs regularly in secular contexts, of Hormizd 'alloting' Vahram female attire (iii. 8. 1) or 'reducing by a tenth' military pay (iii. 16. 13), of the 'sneers' on the faces of Persian nobles (iv. 4. 3), or of Priscus 'bequeathing' spoils to the emperor (vi. 7. 12).[94] It is impossible to determine the precise extent of this linguistic influence on Theophylact, since biblical usage naturally affected many patristic writers, who formed another major but unquantifiable influence on his linguistic selection;[95] however, in view of Theophylact's consider-

[92] *γαστροκνήμη* and *μώλωψ* (iii. 1. 15); *ὑποθλίβειν* (i. 6. 2); *ὑποφλεγμαίνειν* (i. 8. 9); *περιγανοῦν* (i. 12. 13); *ἐπικύησις* (iii. 11. 3); *πομφόλυξ* and *ὕπουλος* (iv. 15. 9); there are more than 30 words with a pronounced medical flavour. Cf. Pertusi, *Giorgio* 41–2, for some medical words in George of Pisidia; Justinian, *Novel* 111 (pref.), *CJ* iii. 521, for laws as analogous to medicines (cf. G. Lanata, *Legislazione e natura nelle Novelle giustinianee* [Naples, 1984], 177–8).

[93] *κατεγγυᾶν*, 'undertake' (i. 1. 7; iv. 5. 5); *ἐκποίησις* 'sale' (i. 11. 6); *διαζύγιον* 'divorce' (v. 2. 2), and probably others. Latinisms or official terminology with apologies, e.g. *banda* (iii. 4. 4; 6. 4; vii. 3. 3), *sculca* (vi. 9. 14), *rex* (vi. 9. 1; 10. 13).

[94] *κληροδοτεῖν* (iii. 8. 1); *ἀποδεκατοῦν* (iii. 16. 13); *μυκτηρίζειν* (iv. 4. 3); *κατακληροδοτεῖν* (vi. 7. 12; viii. 12. 10); the list could be greatly extended.

[95] Patristic influences are naturally hard to pin down because of the lack of specific lexica and indexes, and because patristic language is part of the broad continuum of imperial Greek that embraces both secular and Christian writing; some possibilities (where citations from patristic authors seem more common than from non-patristic) are *ἀναθάλπειν*, *ἀναφοιτᾶν*, *ἀπειροπλάσιος*, *ἀποδογματίζειν*, *βρασματώδης*,

able biblical knowledge, it is likely that he will often have known the original context as well as later occurrences.

Apart from these identifiable linguistic influences, Theophylact also created several new words, perhaps as many as 150, but this creativity is less innovative than it might appear since almost three-quarters of his inventions are merely new compound forms (additional prepositional or alpha-privative prefixes): he attempted to gain linguistic grandeur by piling up prefixes in the same way as he hoped that piling up phrases would enhance his style. Such inventions are an extension of the linguistic trends of late Greek literature.[96]

By comparison with John of Epiphania, Theophylact's vocabulary seems quite varied and extensive, but this is not a demanding standard, and when set against classical and Second Sophistic writers its limitations are apparent. He tended to use similar words for similar ideas throughout the *History*, for example of the arrogance and anger of foreigners, and there are substantial linguistic overlaps between the *History* and the minor works, which corroborate the impression of a restricted range of linguistic expression, particularly imagery, being pressed hard. There are no signs that he had tried to improve his historiographical vocabulary by the wide reading of classical literature that Agathias had recommended (*History* iii. 1. 4):[97] what evidence there is for Theophylact's choice of secular reading matter suggests that he enjoyed relatively 'lightweight' literature, paradoxography and epistolography rather than historiography. His language generally reflects the common heritage of Second Sophistic and patristic writers, though with the Bible occupying a special place. It would not be surprising if he had been influenced by the language of his classicizing predecessors, as Menander was by Agathias,[98] but it is difficult to identify specific instances.

Theophylact's elevated, if not purely classical, vocabulary contri-

διαρραψῳδεῖν, ἐπήρεια, θεατρίζειν, καθυποτάσσειν, καθυπουργεῖν, καταγλαΐζειν, καταδηλοῦν, καταρδεύειν, κατασπιλάζειν, κατασυρίζειν, κατονειδίζειν, κατορχεῖσθαι, μουσουργεῖν, περιαυτίζεσθαι, περιθρυλεῖν, πολυάσχολος, προεκδημεῖν, σοβαρεύεσθαι, συγκρότησις, τεχνουργεῖν. It would obviously be useful, but very difficult, to try to identify specific works that Theophylact may have known; Gregory of Nazianzus' *Oration against Julian*, which provides the only previously attested usage of *βρασματώδης*, is one possibility.

[96] Cf. Zilliacus (op. cit. in n. 79) 90ff. for parallel types of word formation in documentary prose.

[97] Cf. Agathias' compliment to Procopius on the range of his reading (*Hist.* iv. 26. 4).

[98] M. Apostolopoulos, *Μένανδρος Προτέκτωρ Μιμητὴς Αγαθίου* (Athens, 1894).

buted to the impact of his rhetorical style. This was intended to function as a literary badge that marked Theophylact out as a member of the late Roman cultural élite; other stylistic features helped to emphasize this status. Classical allusions were, like obscure language, intended to raise the literary tone of certain passages. The introductory Dialogue and Proem, replete with allusions to scenes from the *Odyssey* and Plato and to the labours of Heracles, was meant to impose on the reader an impression of the author's cultured learning.[99] To help this impression survive the narrative of more precise historical events, mention of Philippicus' military knowledge is graced with a somewhat inappropriate reference to the skill of Scipio, the conqueror of Hannibal (i. 14. 2–4),[100] the wounded hero of Solachon is compared to the heroes of Greek history (ii. 6. 6), and the soldier Sapeir is braver than Tydeus and possibly even stronger than Heracles (ii. 18. 15), while brief but deliberately grandiloquent notices of an earthquake and comet are enhanced by references to the 'Stagirite' Aristotle (i. 12. 9; vii. 6. 8). Throughout the work, indirect allusions to foreign and place-names and to official terminology remind the reader of Theophylact's cultural detachment. Thus the Gepids can be presented as Huns 'whom it is more familiar for the many to call Turks' (i. 8. 5), while the Hephthalites also emerge as 'the Hun tribes whom history has almost universally recognized as Turks' (iv. 6. 10); the Turks proper are treated as Huns (iii. 6. 9), but also as Scythians (v. 10. 15, etc.), and the same applies to the Avars (i. 3. 2; 8. 2). For the Persians, the synonyms of Medes, Parthians, Babylonians, and Chaldaeans are used within the space of one chapter (iii. 15). The Slavs can be called the Getae, 'for this is the older name for the barbarians' (vii. 2. 5; cf. iii. 4. 7; vi. 6. 14). Similarly the city of Heracleia is qualified 'which the ancients once named Perinthus' (i. 11. 6), or referred to as Perinthus 'which more recently men have been accustomed to call Heracleia' (vi. 1. 1; cf. vi. 5. 8). Official and technical terms, particularly Latin words, are generally qualified by an oblique allusion or explanation: thus the *quaestor* John is described as 'a skilled orator and expert in Roman laws, who through the clarity of

[99] The display of learning in Theophylact's introductory sections has even misled some modern commentators, e.g. I. Ševčenko, 'A Shadow Outline of Virtue: The Classical Heritage of Greek Christian Literature (Second to Seventh Century)', in K. Weitzman (ed.), *Age of Spirituality: A Symposium* (New York, 1980), 53–73, who refers to the 'perfection' of Theophylact's Attic classicism (p. 64).

[100] Cf. above, ch. 10 n. 6.

his eloquence ennobled the imperial commands in a manner worthy of royal majesty; in their native utterance Romans call this man *quaestor*' (i. 1. 3), or within the space of a few lines Rhegium, the Hebdomon, St Sophia, the *ambo*, and the position of *a secretis* are all qualified or explained (viii. 10. 1–3).[101]

It is, however, not difficult to see through the objective veneer of the *History* so that, for example, there has never been any doubt about Theophylact's Christianity, as there once was about the beliefs of Procopius and Agathias: the Feast of Candlemas may be described obliquely (viii. 4. 11), but the circumlocution includes specific mention of Jesus Christ. Theophylact's objectivity on secular matters is not consistently maintained: the *quaestor* or the work of a calligrapher may call forth a periphrasis (i. 1. 3; viii. 13. 8), but a silentiary receives no such qualification (viii. 9. 14); foreign titles are directly equated with their Roman equivalent, *darigbedum* with *curopalatus* (iii. 18. 12), Farrukhan with *magister* (iv. 2. 2).[102] Apart from the allusive introductory sections and occasional mention of 'the poet Homer', there are few explicit references to classical texts,[103] and there is an element of artificiality in Theophylact's classicism that was certainly not evident in his sixth-century predecessors. In the sixth century, there had been an educated public—admittedly small—which could appreciate Agathias' learning, but by the seventh century the nature and interests of the literary élite had narrowed. Christianity was the dominant influence in all facets of life, and it is the biblical allusions, Septuagint and patristic language, and religious stories that most accurately reflect the direction of Theophylact's interests and those of his audience, not the classical patina.

(iv) CONCLUSION

Josephus in his *Jewish Wars* (i. 13–15) had criticized those writers who preferred to rework histories of Assyrians and Medes rather than

[101] Cameron, *Agathias*, App. K, lists many of these 'objective' phrases; note also periphrastic references to *scribo* (i. 4. 7), *magister militum praesentalis* (i. 7. 4), *cleisurae* (vii. 14. 8), *excubitor* (vii. 15. 7), *distria* (viii. 4. 13), and praetorian prefect (viii. 9. 6); cf. above, n. 93, also n. 30 for elaborate periphrases for Christian terms.

[102] These 'translations' do not prove that Theophylact had a wide knowledge of, or interest in, languages: on this see L. M. Whitby, 'Theophylact's Knowledge of Languages', *Byz.* 52 (1982), 425–8.

[103] Sophocles, *Ajax* 665, quoted as a moral tag at iv. 13. 22 and vii. 15. 11; Plato, *Phaedo* 67 B, another moral tag at i. 11. 8.

narrate contemporary events. Historians should set themselves to write the history of their own times, a task in which their connection with events added lucidity to their record: 'In fact the work of committing to writing events which have not been previously recorded and of commending to posterity the history of one's own time is one which merits praise and acknowledgement. The industrious writer is not one who merely remodels the scheme and arrangement of another's work, but one who uses fresh materials and makes the framework of the history his own.'

For the most part, the classicizing historians of late antiquity fulfilled Josephus' condition that the good historian should produce a new narrative of roughly contemporary events in an individual presentation, but they share the faults prevalent in almost all ancient historians, lack of attention to details of geography and topography, inaccuracy or imprecision over numbers, uncertainty about matters of precise chronology, excessive concentration on individual characters and moral issues: thus legitimate complaints on most of these counts have been made against Herodotus and Xenophon, and even Thucydides has not escaped censure.[104] Some ancient historians recognized the problems: Polybius, a harsh critic of most of his historical predecessors, listed the faults in Callisthenes' account of the battle of Issus (xii. 17–22). Herodian censured writers who were eager to make a new record of past events but whose main concern was to display their education, authors who concentrated on vocabulary and style rather than the truth and assumed that they could introduce some inventions since the precision of their research would not be analysed; he asserted that he had carefully collected his own historical information, and refused to accept any material from others without checking and verification (i. 1. 1–3). Such standards were abnormally high, and were difficult to maintain in practice (Herodian certainly failed): historiography was regarded as a form of rhetoric, and so style was inevitably a major consideration. Few historians had the detailed personal knowledge that might allow them to avoid the common faults of imprecision and inaccuracy:[105] maps were not sufficiently detailed

[104] G. E. M. de Ste Croix, 'Herodotus', *Greece and Rome* 24 (1977), 130ff.; G. L. Cawkwell, introduction to Xenophon, *A History of My Times* (Harmondsworth, 1979); A. W. Gomme, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides* iii (Oxford, 1956), 482ff.

[105] Ammianus Marcellinus stands out as a writer with considerable personal geographical knowledge (xxvii. 4. 2) of most of the areas covered by his account: the Balkans, the Rhine frontier, Persia, and even Isauria. Procopius, too, deserves credit in this respect.

or accurate to provide information about particular campaigns, it was rare for numbers of soldiers participating in a campaign to be precisely recorded and even then different sources would probably disagree,[106] the diversity of possible chronological schemes might deter any but the most pedantic of historians from investigating dates closely, while the continuing belief in the educative role of history meant that writers would draw attention to moral issues and to qualities of character. Above all, there was the acceptance that history was literature, a branch of rhetoric that was to be read or listened to with enjoyment. Many might have felt sympathy for Eunapius' rejection of excessive precision over chronology (i. 30ff.), or for Ammianus Marcellinus' criticism of those whose focus of interest was narrowly devoted to historical minutiae (xxvi. 1. 1–2): history's role as teacher could be thwarted by such surfeit (Eunapius 1. 60–1). It is perhaps not an accident that Olympiodorus of Thebes, a historian with an abnormal interest in geographical detail and concern for accuracy in various respects, should have called his work 'material for history' rather than history proper (Photius, cod. 80): Olympiodorus may have seen a distinction in content as much as style, and both factors contribute to the non-classical tone of his fragments.[107]

It is against this background that the succession of late Greek classicizing historians should be assessed. Procopius, for all the imperfections and weaknesses that have been ably illumined in Cameron's recent study, remains a historian of considerable stature whose creation of a major narrative of wide geographical and historical scope would have merited full praise from Josephus. Even Agathias, a lesser figure whose interests lay outside straight historical narrative, still deserves praise as much for the military narratives that he found less appealing as for the digressions that he enhanced with personal contributions. However, in many respects Theophylact must be found wanting, even when assessed by the standards appropriate for ancient historiography. He was not a contemporary historian but a compiler of earlier narratives, and although it was possible for such a second-hand historian to produce an interesting account, this required the writer to have a firm vision that allowed him to transform

[106] For example, four different contemporary figures survive for Alexander the Great's army at the Hellespont in 334 BC: see P. A. Brunt, introduction to Arrian, *History of Alexander* (2nd edn., Loeb, 1976), i, pp. lxix–lxxii.

[107] Concern for accuracy: J. F. Matthews, 'Olympiodorus of Thebes and the history of the west (AD 407–25)', *JRS* 60 (1970), 79–97, esp. 85 f.; Blockley, *Historians*, ch. 2.

existing accounts into a fresh production: such was the achievement of Arrian in his *Anabasis*, which was inspired by the author's belief in his role of Homer to Alexander's Achilles (i. 12. 2–5), or of Zosimus, whose paganism endowed his *New History* with a purpose that gives shape, albeit distorted, to the narrative. Theophylact had no such vision or purpose,[108] with the result that like the *Bibliotheca* of Diodorus Siculus, a similar reproducer of existing accounts, his *History* reveals the differing emphases and interests of its constituent sources, obscured in places by his own uncomprehending interventions. Whereas Procopius had detailed military experience, and Menander considerable knowledge of administration, Theophylact does not appear to have had any practical skill to contribute to his narrative, but unlike Agathias, who was comparably inexpert, he did not have a curiosity or enthusiasm for information that might have imparted interest to sections of his account. Some errors of geography or topography relating to Persian and Danubian affairs are to be expected, but Theophylact's narrative suggests complete ignorance of these matters: his apparent confusion about the place of Tiberius' death (i. 1. 2; 2. 3–4), which he failed to locate at the Hebdomon, shows that such errors were not confined to distant frontiers; the conflated muddle of the account of Maurice's march to Anchialus (v. 16. 1–vi. 3. 8) is another example of serious ignorance. To a major degree, Theophylact's *History* remains important, like Diodorus' *Bibliotheca*, because it preserves historical evidence from sources that are completely or partially lost.

As well as being related to its classicizing predecessors, the *History* should be set in the context of the literature and culture of Heraclius' reign, a task which is much harder because there is nothing to compare with the important historiographical studies of Blockley and Cameron: thus although George of Pisidia's panegyrics have been well edited and discussed by Pertusi, his major poem, the *Hexaemeron*, still requires a new edition; Maximus Confessor is much studied, but from theological rather than literary and cultural perspectives; the medical author Paul of Aegina has not yet benefited from the increase of attention being devoted to the history of medicine. This varied material, and much more, deserves a thorough investigation, but even in the current state of ignorance it is possible to identify contemporary

[108] Hunger, *Literatur* 314, suggested that the rehabilitation of Maurice was the theme of the *History*, but there is no evidence to support this.

elements in Theophylact's *History*. The topicality of many of his attitudes has already been noted (above, § ii), and these connections can be pushed further. A revealing comparison of the methods of George of Pisidia and the silversmith of the David plates has pointed to a similar interaction of three basic elements, the imperial, classical, and biblical, each of which illuminates and interprets the other;[109] George addresses the emperor, the artist creates scenes that recall court ceremony; the classical element is introduced by allegorical references to mythology in George, and by a retrospectively classical style of decoration in the silverware; the biblical through allegory or direct allusions in the poems, and by the central subject-matter of the plates. The same triad is evident in Theophylact's *History*, a classicizing work in an ancient tradition whose conventions are combined with the stylistic and linguistic influences of the Bible; the narrative depicts the religious and imperial ceremonial of the contemporary world, and one of Theophylact's central concerns is the character of the imperial leader, just as George of Pisidia's earliest work, the short *In Heraclium ex Africa redeuntem*, is occupied with praise of the qualities of a good emperor. Writers and silversmith were each imparting a classical element to a more widely expressed fusion of religious and imperial elements; this fusion is clearly portrayed in Heraclius' victory message over the Persians (*Chr. Pasch.* 727ff.), which combines the language of the Psalter with an account of imperial triumph,[110] or in the identification of imperial present and biblical prototype in Theodore Syncellus' sermon on the divinely assisted repulse of the Avar siege of Constantinople. Both George and Theophylact introduced a classical dimension to this bipartite fusion by attempting to elevate their poetry and prose to a nobler literary level. In some places, namely his references to Heraclius' triumphs over Phocas and Khusro II, Theophylact's presentation may have been influenced by the imagery and language already used by George,[111] but in large part he was reliant on his own education in, and reading of, the classics. The resulting production is less inherently classical than the work of his predecessors Procopius and Agathias, but by

[109] Trilling, 'Myth', esp. 261–3.

[110] Heraclius' message probably influenced Theophylact's composition of Domitian's sermon on the recovery of Martyropolis (cf. above, n. 54), and it may have had a similar impact on George's presentation of his panegyric (e.g. the opening of *Heraclias* i).

[111] Cf. ch. 2 n. 44.

Heraclius' reign the boundaries of culture had contracted, so that easily recognizable clichés of the type preserved in considerable numbers in Maximus Confessor's *Loci Communes* were a surer identification of cultural superiority than abstruse or unidentifiable allusions.

13

The End of Traditions

With Theophylact there comes to an end the succession of secular classicizing historians who had narrated the affairs of the later Roman empire and who had regarded themselves as direct heirs of the traditions of Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon. After his *History* there is a gap of over 150 years until the patchy attempt at classicizing history by the Patriarch Nicephorus, and more than another century before the reign of Constantine Porphyrogenitus saw the start of a more sustained and deliberate revival: thus, although there had been minor hiccoughs in the continuity before Theophylact, his work marks the most important break in the tradition. Two main explanations have been advanced for this break. One is that there was a drastic contraction in the educated literary élite, with the result that there was no longer a market for, or even people capable of producing, 'highbrow' classicizing history;[1] the other that changes in the nature of society, and in particular its increasingly pronounced religious orientation, made it more difficult for historians to respect rigid distinctions between the fields of secular and ecclesiastical historiography, with the result that both these genres succumbed to the popular taste for chronicles.[2] A further contributory factor is said to be a switch in official patronage from secular to ecclesiastical literature.[3] The two main explanations both focus on the disappearance of people able to produce high-class writing, whether through a simple reduction in the availability of education or caused by a 'fundamental societal change'.[4] Each is partially true, but neither, and in particular the latter, more subtle social analysis, which is currently the more fashionable, is entirely satisfactory.

[1] e.g. E. Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (Princeton, NJ, 1953), 33ff.

[2] Croke and Emmet, 'Historiography' 7, Allen, *Evagrius* 69–70, both developing the views of Cameron, *Agathias*, ch. 3, and 'Elites'; Cameron, *Procopius* 234 is now more cautious.

[3] Cameron, *Procopius* 21.

[4] Croke and Emmet, loc. cit.

Classicizing historiography had its various conventions, but these were certainly not a straitjacket, as is shown by the remnants of fifth-century historians or by the diversity between extant sixth-century authors. Diplomacy, warfare, speeches, digressions might be obligatory, but the manner in which they were handled was the responsibility of the individual, who would be influenced as much by his own predilections or the interests of his prospective audience as by the traditions of his predecessors. The last century of classical Greek literature is distinguished more by its adaptability than by its predictability: there is no exact parallel for Procopius' extended panegyric of Justinian's constructions in the *Buildings* or for Paul the Silentiary's combination of Homeric–Alexandrian epic, Christian ceremonial, architectural description, and imperial panegyric in his *Ecphrasis* of St Sophia;[5] George of Pisidia created a new form for epic panegyric, in iambic trimeters rather than the traditional hexameters;[6] the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Sophronius, composed religious poetry in the somewhat recherché anacreontic metre,[7] and, although most of his poems are simple narratives of Christian stories in plain style and language, he did attempt a more emotional composition in his lament for his separation from Jerusalem. Theophylact himself, in his minor works, displays his control of different literary genres, which are adapted to suit his interests rather than taken as rigid guidelines, and the same flexibility is apparent in the *History* with its open acceptance of Christian material. In terms of literary development, there is no reason why classicizing historiography should not have continued to develop after Theophylact, provided that there was suitable material to hand, since Theophylact's essentially Christian style and language had broadened the range of available historiographical models and established a precedent for future writers to follow—or disregard—as the inclination took them. A further difficulty for this explanation is that not only does the succession of classical (and ecclesiastical) historiography break, but there is also a major gap in the production of chronicles: after the *Chronicon Paschale*, completed in 630, there is no

[5] See Mary Whitby, 'The Occasion of Paul the Silentiary's *Ekphrasis* of S. Sophia', *Classical Quarterly*, NS 35 (1985), 215–28.

[6] Frendo, 'George' 162ff.

[7] In the 6th c., John of Gaza had composed anacreontics but, even though some of his poems were composed for the Christianized festival of the Roses at Gaza, his verse has a strongly Hellenic flavour, with high-flown language in keeping with contemporary conceptions of the classical manner of composition.

firm evidence for any extensive chronographic activity in Greek until the Great Chronographer compiled his lost work over a century later and George Syncellus and Theophanes produced their chronicles in the early ninth century.[8] In the sixth and seventh centuries the chronicle is not noticeably more popular than classicizing history: more than twice as many secular histories were produced in Greek as chronicles, and in the survival of medieval manuscripts chronicles are perhaps slightly worse attested than secular histories.[9]

The chronicle does not sweep away secular history, and 630 marks the start of a break in historiography as a whole. This suggests that the alternative explanation, in terms of the physical contraction of the literary élite, can only provide a partial cause for this general phenomenon. Justinian's closure of the Academy at Athens affected a small minority of non-Christian philosophers, but his wider anti-pagan legislation had greater impact, which would only have been increased if there is truth in Procopius' allegation that he withdrew public support from doctors and teachers (*SH* 26. 5).[10] The anti-pagan measures of Maurice might also have affected classical education, but far more drastic were the loss of the rich Syrian and Egyptian territories to the Persians, and then more finally to the Arabs, and the raids of Arabs and Slavs into Asia Minor and the Aegean: these combined to destroy the landed wealth that had maintained the empire's cities with their educated upper classes.[11] It certainly also became much harder for anyone to track down a high-class education, even if the story about students from Constantinople in the latter part of Heraclius' reign travelling to Trebizond to learn from Tychicus is a considerable embroidery of the truth.[12] Some of the problems are illustrated in the letter which Antiochus Monachus prefixed to a scriptural text which he was offering to Eustathius, former abbot of a monastery near Ancyra: the prevailing 'Chaldaean storm' (i.e. the

[8] In the intervening period there were probably a few writers (chroniclers?), whose works were subsumed by these later compilations, e.g. the '640 Chronicle' used by Nicephorus, or the shadowy Traianus Patricius.

[9] Malalas/*Malalas continuatus* survives only in Constantine Porphyrogenitus' *Excerpta* and, in abridged form, in one 11th-c. MS, John of Antioch only in the *Excerpta*, the *Chronicon Paschale* in one medieval MS.

[10] Cf. Mango, *Byzantium* 135.

[11] C. Foss, 'The Persians in Asia Minor and the End of Antiquity', *EHR* 90 (1975), 721–47.

[12] Evidence from the autobiography of Ananias of Shirak, discussed by Lemerle, *Humanisme* 81–4, Wilson, *Scholars* 61–2.

Persian attacks of 612–26) had forced Eustathius to wander form place to place, suffering hunger and thirst, not of bread and water but of hearing the word of God; since he could not carry books with him, or easily find them in the places where he took refuge, Antiochus had prepared a scriptural abridgement for solace and utility.[13] If invasions could threaten the continuity of scriptural and ecclesiastical literary knowledge, their impact on the diffusion and availability of classical texts is likely to have been even more marked.

The quality as well as the availability of classical learning is relevant. The standard education in grammar and rhetoric that was provided in the sixth century and thereafter imparted a smattering of classical knowledge which did not really equip its recipients to produce a work of high-class literature. Agathias envied the breadth of Procopius' reading, and complained of the legal duties that distracted him from studying classical authors; most telling, perhaps, is his praise of Paul the Silentiary's education and interest in literature, which he gained in spite of his distinguished ancestry and inherited wealth (*Hist.* iv. 26. 4; iii. 1; v. 9. 7). In the sixth century there had been a small group of literati centred on Constantinople who could provide mutual encouragement, enjoy the poetic exchange of classicizing epigrams, and appreciate the extreme erudition of Paul the Silentiary's *Ecphrasis* of St Sophia. In the seventh century, there is no evidence for such interaction, and whereas Agathias had wanted to read classical histories, the literature preferred by Theophylact, and other members of the diminished educated élite, were probably patristic writings or 'lightweight' Second Sophistic compositions: the professional bureaucracy, both secular and ecclesiastical, who constituted this élite are unlikely to have devoted their leisure to the consideration of literary problems with the attention that John Lydus had admired in the early sixth century.[14]

However, although classicizing literature presupposed a conscious intellectual effort, the religious controversies of the seventh and eighth centuries reveal that there were still intelligent people with sufficient education to have composed chronicles or secular histories if this had been regarded as an important literary task: at Constantinople, even if nowhere else, libraries would have survived the disasters of the

[13] *PG* lxxxix, col. 1421–8; cf. C. Foss, 'Late Antique and Byzantine Ankara', *DOP* 31 (1977), 27–87, at 70.

[14] *De mag.* iii. 13; cf. iii. 28–30 for John's own exceptional devotion to books.

seventh century and educational traditions been maintained in some form. There may in fact have been little enthusiasm for historiography of any sort in an empire beset by manifold and successive disasters: victories naturally produced their recorders, John Lydus for Justinian's first Persian war, Corippus for John Troglodyta's African campaign, George of Pisidia for Heraclius' Persian triumphs, while emperors and their entourages continued to pay attention to secular literature, Maurice rewarding Evagrius for an encomium and inspiring Menander to historiography, the Patriarch Sergius encouraging Theophylact and probably also the author of the *Chronicon Paschale*.[15] Defeat rarely generated such interest among patrons or writers, unless misfortunes could be interpreted as proof of religious imperfection or as signs of the imminent end of the world.[16] The lack of suitable historical material meant that the available intellectual and literary talent tended to focus on important contemporary issues, namely doctrinal disputes. When, in the early eighth century, an individual or small group at Constantinople constructed a type of historical work, namely the *Parastaseis*, this effort was devoted to explaining the mysterious remnants of antiquity that adorned the capital, not to recording historical events.[17] Society changed, education and interest in classical culture contracted, the empire suffered defeats: all are relevant to the cessation of classicizing historiography.

Just as Theophylact's *History* can be seen as the end of classical Greek literature,[18] so his subject-matter, the reign of Maurice, has been taken as a turning-point in the history of the eastern Roman empire: thus A. H. M. Jones selected Maurice's death as the conclusion for his study of the later Roman empire. Maurice's was the last reign in which the empire extended to its traditional frontiers in the east and in the Balkans, and imperial armies defended these boundaries in the traditional campaign-theatres of Upper Mesopotamia and the Danube provinces. After Maurice, the empire silently contracted in the Balkans, and on the eastern frontier, in spite of the

[15] This evidence for continued encouragement for secular works must be set against the accusations, probably somewhat exaggerated, that John Lydus and Procopius level at John the Cappadocian and Peter Barsymas for failing to appreciate the benefits of classical culture, and at Justinian for removing the support for teachers.

[16] Zosimus' *New History* is one such exception. In the west, Gildas and Gregory of Tours produced narratives of the troubles of their post-Roman world, and in the east there are comparable accounts in Coptic and Syriac, but not in Greek.

[17] See the introduction by Cameron and Herrin to their translation of the *Parastaseis*.

[18] E. L. Bowie, in K. J. Dover (ed.), *Ancient Greek Literature* (Oxford, 1980), 175–6.

sweeping triumphs of Heraclius' Persian campaigns, the rising power of the Arabs forced the Roman empire to retreat from Mesopotamia to Anatolia, the heartland of the Byzantine empire. Internal changes were equally dramatic: with few exceptions, the cities which had supported the administrative and intellectual hierarchy of the empire were lost to, or destroyed by, invaders, and in due course this development was reflected in the emergence of new territorial units and administrative structures based on the new military dispositions of the Byzantine armies.[19] The evident contrast between the Roman empire of Maurice and the Byzantine world of the successors of Heraclius is underscored by the abrupt decline in the available source-material for seventh-century history. The world of late antiquity was ending, a transition more conducive to the apocalyptic predictions of the Pseudo-Methodius literature than to historical interpretation.

[19] Haldon, 'Recruitment', 29–40, with references to the considerable bibliography; also id. 'Some Considerations on Byzantine Society and Economy in the Seventh Century', *Byzantinische Forschungen* 10 (1985), 75–112.

Select Bibliography

PRIMARY SOURCES

Most texts accessible in the Budé, Loeb, Oxford, or Teubner series have been excluded.

Agapetus Diaconus, *Ecthesis*, ed. A. Banduri, *PG* 86/1, cols. 1163–86.

Agapius of Membij, *Histoire Universelle*, part ii, tr. A. A. Vasiliev, *PO* 8 (1912).

Agathias, *History*, ed. R. Keydell (Berlin, 1967).

Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, ed. W. Seyfarth (Leipzig, 1978).

Anastasius of Sinai, *Questions and Answers*, ed. J. Gretser, *PG* 89, cols. 312–824.

Anon. Guidi = *Chronicon Anonymum de Ultimis Regibus Persarum*, ed. and tr. I. Guidi, *Chronica Minora, CSCO* Scr. Syri 3/4 (Paris, 1903).

——, 'Die von Guidi herausgegebene syrische Chronik', tr. T. Nöldeke, *Sitzungsb. der k. Akad. der Wissens.*, 128 (Vienna, 1893).

Anon. Peri Strategikes, ed. H. Köchly and W. Rüstow, *Griechische Kriegsschriftsteller* ii. 2 (Leipzig, 1855).

Antiochus Strategus, *La Prise de Jérusalem par les Perses en 614*, tr. G. Garitte, *CSCO* 203, Scr. Iberici 12 (Louvain, 1960).

Cedrenus, *Historiarum Compendium*, ed. E. Bekker (*CSHB*, 1838–9).

Christian Romance of Alexander, ed. and tr. E. A. W. Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great* (Cambridge, 1889).

Chronicle of Monemvasia, ed. I. Dujčev (*Istituto siciliano di studi bizantini e neoellenici*, Testi 12, Palermo, 1976).

Chronicon Anonymum ad Annum Christi 819 pertinens, tr. J. B. Chabot, *CSCO* 109, Scr. Syri 56 (Louvain, 1937).

Chronicon Anonymum ad Annum Christi 1234 pertinens, tr. J. B. Chabot, *CSCO* 109, Scr. Syri 56 (Louvain, 1937).

Chronicon Paschale, ed. L. Dindorf (*CSHB*, 1832).

Chronique de Seert, Histoire nestorienne, pt. ii, tr. A. Scher, *PO* 13 (1919).

Codex Theodosianus, ed. T. Mommsen and P. M. Meyer (Berlin, 1905).

Corpus Iuris Civilis i, ed. P. Krüger and T. Mommsen (16th edn., Berlin, 1954); iii, ed. R. Schoell and W. Kroll (6th edn., Berlin, 1954).

Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, ed. G. Moravcsik, tr. R. J. H. Jenkins (Budapest, 1949).

—— *De Caerimoniis*, ed. J. J. Reiske (*CSHB*, 1829).

—— *Excerpta de Insidiis*, ed. C. de Boor (Berlin, 1905).

Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *Excerpta de Legationibus*, ed. C. de Boor (Berlin, 1903).
Corippus, *In Laudem Iustini Augusti minoris libri IV*, ed., tr., and comm. A. M. Cameron (London, 1976).

Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica*, ed. F. Vogel (Leipzig, 1888–93) and C. T. Fischer (1905–6).
Doctrina Iacobi nuperbaptisati, ed. N. Bonwetsch, *Abhandl. des k. Ges. der Wissens. zur Göttingen* XII/3 (1910).

Ps.-Epiphanius, *Notitia*, ed. J. Darrouzès, *Notitiae Episcopatuum Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae* (Paris, 1981), 204–13.
Epistolae Austrasicae, ed. W. Gundlach, *MGH Epist.* iii (Berlin, 1892).
Eugippius, *Life* of St Severinus, ed. P. Knoell, *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* 9/2 (1886).
Eunapius, ed. and tr. Blockley, *Historians*.
Eustratius, *Passio S. Golindouch*, ed. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ἀνάλεκτα Ἱεροσολυμιτικῆς Σταχυολογίας* IV (St Petersburg, 1897), 149–74.
— *Life* of Eutychius, ed. A. Mai, *PG* 86/2, cols. 2273–389.
Evagrius, *Ecclesiastical History*, ed. J. Bidez and L. Parmentier (London, 1898).
Expositio Totius Mundi et Gentium, ed. J. Rougé (Paris, 1966).

Festus, *Breviarium*, ed. J. W. Eadie (London, 1967).
Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum, vols. iv–v, ed. C. Müller (Paris, 1851–70).
Fredegarius, *Chronicae*, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarun* ii (1888).

George of Cyprus, *Georgii Cyprii Descriptio Orbis Romani*, ed. H. Gelzer (Leipzig, 1890).
George of Pisidia, ed. E. Bekker, *PG* 92, col. 1197 *ad fin.*
—, ed. A. Pertusi, *Giorgio di Pisidia, Poemi, I Panegirici epici* (Ettal, 1960).
Georgius Monachus, *Chronicon*, ed. C. de Boor, re-ed. P. Wirth (Stuttgart, 1978).
Golinduch, 'La Passion géorgienne de sainte Golindouch', tr. G. Garitte, *AB* 74 (1956), 405–40.
— *see also* Eustratius.
Gregentius, *Life*, ed. A. Vasiliev, *Byzantina Chronika* 14 (1907), 23–67.
Pope Gregory, *Registrum Epistolarum*, ed. P. Ewald and L. Hartmann, *MGH Epistolae* i–ii (Berlin, 1887–99).
Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum*, ed. W. Arndt and B. Krusch, *MGH Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum* (Hanover, 1884).

Hierocles, *Synecdemus*, ed. E. Honigmann (Brussels, 1939).

Isidore of Seville, *Chronicle*, ed. T. Mommsen, *MGH Auct. Ant.* XI, *Chron. Min.* ii (Berlin, 1893–4).
Itineraria Romana, vol. i, ed. O. Cuntz (Leipzig, 1929); vol. ii, ed. J. Schnetz (Leipzig, 1940).

John Lydus, *De Magistratibus Populi Romani*, ed. R. Wuensch (Leipzig, 1903).
John of Antioch, *FHG* v. 27–38.
John of Biclar, *Chronicle*, ed. T. Mommsen, *MGH Auct Ant.* XI, *Chron. Min.* ii (Berlin, 1893–4).
John of Ephesus, *Iohannis Ephesini Historiae Ecclesiasticae pars tertia*, ed. and tr. E. W. Brooks, *CSCO* 106, Scr. Syri 55 (Louvain, 1936).
—— *The Third Part of the Ecclesiastical History of John of Ephesus*, tr. R. Payne-Smith (Oxford, 1860).
—— *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, ed. and tr. E. W. Brooks, *PO* 17–19 (1923–5).
John of Epiphania, *FHG* iv. 272–6.
John of Nikiu, *Chronicle*, tr. R. H. Charles (London, 1916).
Joshua the Stylite, *Chronicle*, ed. and tr. W. Wright (Cambridge, 1882).

Leo Grammaticus, *Chronographia*, ed. E. Bekker (*CSHB*, 1842).
Liber pontificalis, ed. L. M. O. Duchesne (Bibliothèque de l'école française d'Athènes et de Rome i, 1886).

Malalas, *Chronographia*, ed. L. Dindorf (*CSHB*, 1831).
Malchus, ed. and tr. Blockley, *Historians*.
Marcellinus Comes, ed. T. Mommsen, *MGH Auct. Ant* XI, *Chron. Min.* ii (Berlin, 1893–4).
Maurice, 'Histoire de Saint Maurice, empereur des Romains', ed. and tr. L. Leroy and F. Nau, *PO* 5 (1910), 773–8.
—— *Strategicon*, ed. G. T. Dennis, tr. E. Gamillscheg (Vienna, 1981); English tr. by G. T. Dennis (Philadelphia, 1984).
Menander Protector, ed. and tr. R. C. Blockley (Liverpool, 1985).
Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, ed. and tr. J. B. Chabot, ii (Paris, 1901).
Miracula S. Demetrii, ed. P. Lemerle, *Les Plus Anciens Recueils des Miracles de saint Démétrius*, i. Le Texte (Paris, 1979).

Nicephorus, *Opuscula historica*, ed. C. de Boor (Leipzig, 1880).
Notitia Dignitatum, ed. O. Seeck (Berlin, 1876).

Olympiodorus, ed. and tr. Blockley, *Historians*.

Panegyrici Latini, ed. W. Baehrens (Leipzig, 1911).
Parastaseis, ed. A. M. Cameron and J. Herrin, *Constantinople in the Early Eighth*

Century: The Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai (Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition X, 1984).

Patria Constantinopoleos, ed. T. Preger, *Scriptores Originum Constantinopolitanarum* (Leipzig, 1901–7).

Paul the Deacon, *History of the Lombards*, ed. L. Bethmann and G. Waitz, *MGH Scriptores Rerum Longobardicarum et Italicarum, saec. VI–IX* (Hanover, 1878).

Paul the Silentiary, *Ecphrasis of St Sophia*, ed. P. Friedländer (Leipzig, 1912).

Peter the Patrician, *FHG* iv. 181–91.

Photius, *Bibliotheca*, ed. R. Henry (Paris, 1959–77).

Priscus, ed. and tr. Blockley, *Historians*.

Procopius, *Opera omnia* ed. J. Haury, re-ed. G. Wirth (Leipzig, 1963–4).

Ravennatis Anonymi Cosmographia, ed. J. Schnetz, *Itineraria Romana* ii (Leipzig, 1940).

Sebeos, *Histoire de Héraclius*, tr. F. Macler (Paris, 1904).

Tabari, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden aus der arabischen Chronik des Tabari*, ed. and tr. T. Nöldeke (Leiden, 1879).

Tabula Peutingeriana, Die Peutingerische Tafel, ed. K. Miller (Ravensburg, 1887).

Themistius, *Orations*, ed. G. Downey and A. F. Norman (Leipzig, 1965–74).

Theodore Lector, *Ecclesiastical History*, ed. G. C. Hansen (Berlin, 1971).

Theodore of Sykeon, *Vie de Théodore de Sykéon*, ed. and tr. A. J. Festugière (Subsidia Hagiographica XLVIII, Brussels, 1970).

Theodore Syncellus, ed. L. Sternbach, *Analecta Avarica* (Cracow, 1900).

Theodoret, *Ecclesiastical History*, ed. L. Parmentier, re-ed. F. Scheidweiler (Berlin, 1954).

Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed C. de Boor (Leipzig, 1883–5).

Theophanes Byzantinus, *FHG* iv. 270–1.

Theophylact, *Questioni naturali*, ed. L. Massa Positano (Naples, 1965).

—— *Epistulae*, ed. J. Zanetto (Leipzig, 1985).

—— *On Predestined Terms of Life*, ed. and tr. C. Garton and L. G. Westerink, *Arethusa Monographs* VI (Buffalo, NY, 1978).

—— *History*, ed. C. de Boor, re-ed. P. Wirth (Stuttgart, 1972).

Thomas the Archdeacon, *Historia Salonitana* (Monumenta spectantia Historiam Slavorum meridionalium XXVI, Zagreb, 1894).

Ps.-Zachariah of Mitylene, *Ecclesiastical History*, tr. F. J. Hamilton and E. W. Brooks (London, 1899).

Zosimus, *New History*, ed. L. Mendelssohn (Leipzig, 1887).

SECONDARY SOURCES

Adamek, *Beiträge* = O. Adamek, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des byzantinischen Kaisers Mauricius (582–602)*; *Jahresb. des Staats-Gymnasiums in Graz* (1890–1).

Aleksova and Mango, 'Bargala' = B. Aleksova and C. A. Mango, 'Bargala: A Preliminary Report', *DOP* 25 (1971), 265–81.

Allen, *Evagrius* = P. Allen, *Evagrius Scholasticus the Church Historian* (Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense, études et documents XII, 1981).

—— 'New Date' = P. Allen, 'A New Date for the Last Recorded Events in John of Ephesus' *Historia Ecclesiastica*', *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 10 (1979), 251–4.

Baldwin, 'Menander' = B. Baldwin, 'Menander Protector', *DOP* 32 (1978), 101–25.

Baynes, 'Theophylactus' = N. H. Baynes, 'The Literary Construction of the History of Theophylactus Simocatta', *Xenia: Hommage international à l'université nationale de Grèce* (Athens, 1912), 32–41.

Bell, *Churches* = G. L. Bell, *The Churches and Monasteries of the Tur 'Abdin*, introd. and nn. M. M. Mango (Pindar Press, London, 1982).

Beševliev, *Kastellnamen* = V. Beševliev, *Zur Deutung der Kastellnamen in Prokops Werk 'De Aedificiis'* (Amsterdam, 1970).

Blockley, *Historians* = R. C. Blockley, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire*, i–ii (Liverpool, 1981, 1983).

—— *Menander* = R. C. Blockley, *The History of Menander the Guardsman* (Liverpool, 1985).

Bošković, 'Limes' = D. Bošković, 'Aperçu sommaire sur les recherches archéologiques du limes romain et paléobyzantin des Portes de Fer', *MEFRA, Antiquité* 90 (1978), 425–63.

Braudel, *Mediterranean* = F. Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (London, 1972).

Brock, 'Sources' = S. Brock, 'Syriac Sources for Seventh-Century History', *BMGS* 2 (1976), 17–36.

Brooks = John of Ephesus, *Ecclesiastical History* (see under primary sources).

P. Brown, *World* = P. R. L. Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity* (London, 1971).

T. S. Brown, *Gentlemen* = T. S. Brown, *Gentlemen and Officers: Imperial Administration and Aristocratic Power in Byzantine Italy A.D. 554–800* (British School at Rome, 1984).

Browning, *Bulgaria* = R. Browning, *Byzantium and Bulgaria* (London, 1975).

—— 'Language' = R. Browning, 'The Language of Byzantine Literature', *Byzantina kai Metabyzantina* 1 (1978), 103–33.

Bury, *HLRE* (i) = J. B. Bury, *A History of the Later Roman Empire from Arcadius to Irene (395 A.D. to 800 A.D.)* (London, 1889).

Bury, *HLRE* (ii) = J. B. Bury, *A History of the Later Roman Empire from the Death of Theodosius I to the Death of Justinian* (London, 1923).

Alan Cameron, *Factions* = A. D. E. Cameron, *Circus Factions* (Oxford, 1976).
Cameron, *Agathias* = A. M. Cameron, *Agathias* (Oxford, 1970).
—— 'Elites' = A. M. Cameron, 'Images of Authority: Elites and Icons in Late Sixth-Century Byzantium', *Past and Present* 84 (1979), 3–35.
—— 'Gregory' = A. M. Cameron, 'The Byzantine Sources of Gregory of Tours', *JTS* NS 26 (1975), 421–6.
—— 'Patronage' = A. M. Cameron, 'The Artistic Patronage of Justin II', *Byz.* 50 (1980), 62–84.
—— *Procopius* = A. M. Cameron, *Procopius* (London, 1985).
—— 'Theotokos' = A. M. Cameron, 'The *Theotokos* in Sixth-Century Constantinople', *JTS* NS 29 (1978), 79–108.
Charanis, 'Chronicle' = P. Charanis, 'The Chronicle of Monemvasia and the Question of the Slavonic Settlements in Greece', *DOP* 5 (1950), 139–66.
Christensen, *Iran* = A. Christensen, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides* (2nd edn., Copenhagen, 1944).
Croke and Emmet, *Historians* = B. Croke and A. Emmet (eds.), *History and Historians in Late Antiquity* (Pergamon Press, 1983).
Croke and Emmet, 'Historiography' = *Historians* 1–12.

Dagron, 'Villes' = G. Dagron, 'Les villes dans l'Illyricum protobyzantin', in *Villes* 1–20.
Darrouzès, *Notitiae* = Ps.-Epiphanius (see under primary sources).
Dillemann, *Mésopotamie* = L. Dillemann, *Haute-Mésopotamie et pays adjacents* (Paris, 1962).
Downey, 'Composition' = G. Downey, 'The Composition of Procopius' *de Aedificiis*', *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 18 (1947), 171–83.

Frendo, 'George' = J. D. C. Frendo, 'The Poetic Achievement of George of Pisidia: a Literary and Historical Study', in Moffat, *Maistor* 158–87.

Garitte, 'Passion' = Golinduch (see under primary sources).
Garsoïan, 'Le rôle' = N. G. Garsoïan, 'Le rôle de l'hiérarchie chrétienne dans les rapports diplomatiques entre Byzance et les Sassanides', *REA* 10 (1973–4), 119–38.
Garton and Westerink = Theophylact, *On Predestined Terms of Life* (see under primary sources).
Goubert, *Byzance* = P. Goubert, *Byzance avant l'Islam* i, ii/1–2 (Paris, 1951–65).
Gray, '*Limes*' = E. W. Gray, 'The Roman Eastern *Limes* from Constantine to

Justinian—Perspectives and Problems', *Proceedings of the African Classical Associations* 12 (1973), 24–40.

Haldon, 'Recruitment' = J. F. Haldon, *Recruitment and Conscription in the Byzantine Army c.550–950: A Study on the Origins of the* Stratiotika ktemata (Sitzungsb. der österreichischen Akad. der Wissens, phil.-hist. Klasse 357, Vienna, 1979).

Haussig, 'Exkurs' = H. W. Haussig, 'Theophylakts Exkurs über die skythischen Völker', *Byz.* 23 (1953), 275–462.

Hendy, *Economy* = M. F. Hendy, *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy c.300–1450* (Cambridge, 1985).

Herwerden, 'Hist.' = H. van Herwerden, 'Varia ad varios IV: ad Theophylacti Simocattae Historias', *Mnemosyne* 17 (1889), 24–43.

Higgins, 'Chronology' = M. J. Higgins, 'Chronology of Theophyl. Sim. 8.1.1–8', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 13 (1947), 219–32.

—— *Persian War* = M. J. Higgins, *The Persian War of the Emperor Maurice (582–602)*, i: *The Chronology* (Washington, DC, 1939).

—— 'Votive Offerings' = M. J. Higgins, 'Chosroes II's Votive Offerings at Sergiopolis', *BZ* 48 (1955), 89–102.

Hoddinott, *Bulgaria* = R. F. Hoddinott, *Bulgaria in Antiquity* (London, 1975).

Hohlfelder, 'Walls' = R. L. Hohlfelder, 'Trans-Isthmian Walls in the Age of Justinian', *GRBS* 18 (1977), 173–9.

Honigmann, *Ostgrenze* = E. Honigmann, *Die Ostgrenze des byzantinischen Reiches von 363 bis 1071* (Brussels, 1935).

Hunger, 'Imitation' = H. Hunger, 'On the Imitation (*Μίμησις*) of Antiquity in Byzantine Literature', *DOP* 23/4 (1969/70), 15–38.

—— *Literatur* = H. Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner* (Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft XII/5, Munich, 1978).

Janin, *Constantinople* = R. Janin, *Constantinople byzantine* (2nd edn., Paris, 1964).

—— *Églises* = R. Janin, *Les Églises et les monastères* (2nd edn., Paris, 1969).

Jireček, *Heerstraße* = C. J. Jireček, *Die Heerstraße von Belgrad nach Constantinopel und die Balkanpässe* (Prague, 1877).

Jones, *Cities* = A. H. M. Jones, *The Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces* (2nd edn., Oxford, 1971).

—— *City* = A. H. M. Jones, *The Greek City from Alexander to Justinian* (Oxford, 1940).

—— *LRE* = A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire, 284–602: A Social, Economic and Administrative Survey* (Oxford, 1964).

Kaegi, *Unrest* = W. E. Kaegi, *Byzantine Military Unrest 471–843* (Amsterdam, 1981).

Kennedy, *Defence* = H. Kennedy and P. Freeman (edd.), *The Defence of the Roman and Byzantine East* (BAR Int. Series CCXCVII, 1986).

Lampe, *Lexicon* = G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford, 1968).

Leanza, 'Citazioni' = S. Leanza, 'Citazioni e reminiscenze di autori classici nelle opere di Teofilatto Simocatta', in *Studi classici in onore di Quintino Cataudella* (Catania, 1972), ii. 573–90.

—— 'Motivi' = S. Leanza, 'Motivi cristiani nelle storie di Teofilatto Simocatta', in *Umanità e storia, scritti in onore di Adelchi Attisani* (Messina, 1971), ii. 553–74.

Lemerle, 'Anciens recueils' = P. Lemerle, 'Les anciens recueils des Miracles de saint Démétrius et l'histoire de la péninsule balkanique', *Bulletin de la classe des lettres et des sciences morales et politiques, Académie royale de Belgique*, 5th ser., 65 (1979).

—— *Humanisme* = P. Lemerle, *Le Premier Humanisme byzantin* (Paris, 1971).

—— 'Invasions' = P. Lemerle, 'Invasions et migrations dans les Balkans depuis la fin de l'époque romaine jusqu'au VIIIe siècle', *Revue historique* 211 (1954), 264–308.

—— *S. Démétrius* = *Miracula S. Demetrii* (see under primary sources).

Liebeschuetz, 'Defences' = J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, 'The Defences of Syria in the Sixth Century', *Journal of the 10th International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies* (Cologne, 1974), 487–99.

Liddell and Scott = H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *Greek–English Lexicon*, rev. H. S. Jones and R. McKenzie (Oxford, 1968).

Mango, *Brazen House* = C. A. Mango, *The Brazen House: A Study of the Vestibule of the Imperial Palace of Constantinople* (Arkæol. Kunsthist. Medd. Dan. Vid. Selsk. 4, no. 4, Copenhagen, 1959).

—— *Byzantium* = C. A. Mango, *Byzantium, the Empire of New Rome* (London, 1980).

Marquart, *Streifzüge* = J. Marquart, *Osteuropäische und ostasiatische Streifzüge* (Leipzig, 1903).

Metcalf, 'Mint' = D. M. Metcalf, 'The Mint of Thessalonica in the Early Byzantine Period', in *Villes* 111–29.

Mitchell, *Armies* = S. Mitchell (ed.), *Armies and Frontiers in Roman and Byzantine Anatolia* (BAR Int. Series CLVI, 1983).

Moffatt, *Maistor* = A. Moffatt (ed.), *Maistor* (Canberra, 1984).

Nystazopoulou-Pelekidis, "*Συμβολή*" = M. Nystazopoulou-Pelekidis, "*Συμβολὴ εἰς τὴν χρονολόγησιν τῶν ἀβαρικῶν ἐπιδρομῶν ἐπὶ Μαυρικίου (582–602) (μετ' ἐπιμέτρου περὶ τῶν Περσικῶν πολέμων)*", *Συμμεικτά* 2 (1970), 145–206.

Obolensky, *Commonwealth* = D. Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth* (London, 1971).

Olajos, 'Carrière' = T. Olajos, 'Données et hypothèses concernant la carrière de Théophylacte Simocatta', *Acta Classica Universitatis Scientiarum Debreceniensis* 17–18 (1981–2), 39–47.

—— 'Contributions' = T. Olajos, 'Contributions à une analyse de la genèse de l'Histoire Universelle de Théophylacte Simocatta', *Acta antiqua* 29 (1981), 417–24.

—— 'Golinduch' = 'Quo ex fonte Theophylactus Simocatta narrationem de sancta Golinduch hauserit' (Latin summary of Hungarian article), *Acta Antiqua et Archaeologica*, Supplementum i (Szeged, 1978).

—— 'Remarques' = T. Olajos, 'Quelques remarques sur le style de Théophylacte Simocatta', *JÖB* 32/3 (1982), 157–64.

—— 'Théophylacte' = T. Olajos, 'Théophylacte Simocatta l'historien' (résumé de thèse de candidature)', *Homonoia* 2 (1980), 167–73.

Ostrogorsky, *History* = G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, tr. J. M. Hussey (2nd edn., Oxford, 1968).

Parker, 'Retrospective' = S. T. Parker, 'Retrospective on the Arabian Frontier after A Decade of Research', in Kennedy, *Defence*, 633–60.

—— 'Survey' = S. T. Parker, 'Archaeological Survey of the Limes Arabicus: a Preliminary Report', *The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Annual of the Department of Antiquities* (Amman), 21 (1976), 19–31.

Payne-Smith = John of Ephesus, *Ecclesiastical History* (see under primary sources).

Peeters, 'Ex-voto' = P. Peeters, 'Les Ex-voto de Khosrau Aparwez à Sergiopolis', *AB* 65 (1947), 1–56.

—— 'Golindouch' = P. Peeters, 'Sainte Golindouch, martyre perse', *AB* 62 (1944), 74–125.

Pertusi, *Giorgio* = George of Pisidia (see under primary sources).

Popescu, *Inscripţiile* = E. Popescu, *Inscripţiile greceşti şi latine din secolele IV–XIII descoperite în România* (Bucharest, 1976).

Popović 'Koutrigours' = V. Popović, 'La descente des Koutrigours, des Slaves et des Avars vers la mer Égée: le témoinage de l'archéologie', *CRAI* (1978), 596–648.

—— 'Slavisation' = V. Popović, 'Aux origines de la slavisation des Balkans: la constitution des premières sklavinies macédoniennes vers la fin du VIe siècle', *CRAI* (1980), 230–57.

—— 'Témoins' = V. Popović, 'Les témoins archéologiques des invasions avaro-slaves dans l'Illyricum byzantin', *MEFRA, Antiquité* 87 (1975), 445–504.

Poulter, *Bulgaria* = A. G. Poulter, *Ancient Bulgaria* (Nottingham, 1983).

—— 'Communities' = A. G. Poulter, 'Rural Communities (Vici and Komai)

and their Role in the Organisation of the Limes of Moesia Inferior', *Journal of the 12th International Conference of Roman Frontier Studies* (Stirling, 1979), 729–44.

—— 'Town' = A. G. Poulter, 'Town and Country in Moesia Inferior' in Poulter, *Bulgaria* ii. 74–118.

Prentice, *Inscriptions* = W. K. Prentice, *Publications of the Princeton University Archaeological Expedition to Syria in 1904–5 and 1909, Division III: Greek and Latin Inscriptions* (Leiden, 1922).

Rawlinson, 'Site' = H. C. Rawlinson, 'The Site of Atropatenian Ecbatana', *Journal of the Royal Geographic Society* 10 (1840), 1–158.

Richards, *Consul* = J. Richards, *Consul of God* (London, 1980).

Rubin, 'Diplomacy' = Z. Rubin, 'Diplomacy and War in the Relations between Byzantium and the Sassanids in the Fifth Century AD', in Kennedy, *Defence* 677–95.

—— 'Mediterranean' = Z. Rubin, 'The Mediterranean and the Dilemma of the Roman Empire in Late Antiquity', *Mediterranean Historical Review* 1 (1986), 13–62.

Shahid, *Arabs* = I. Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century* (Washington, 1984).

Sophocles, *Lexicon* = E. A. Sophocles, *Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods* (Boston, 1870).

Stein, *Bas-Empire* = E. Stein, *Histoire du Bas-Empire* (Paris, 1949).

—— *Studien* = E. Stein, *Studien zur Geschichte des byzantinischen Reiches, vornehmlich unter den Kaisern Justinus II. und Tiberius Constantinus* (Stuttgart, 1919).

Stephanus = H. Stephanus, rev. L. Dindorf, *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (Paris, 1831–65).

Stratos, *Byzantium* = A. N. Stratos, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, i, tr. M. Ogilvie-Grant (Amsterdam, 1968).

Thompson, *Germans* = E. A. Thompson, *The Early Germans* (Oxford, 1965).

Tinnefeld, *Kaiserkritik* = F. H. Tinnefeld, *Kategorien der Kaiserkritik in der byzantinischen Historiographie von Prokop bis Niketas Choniates* (Munich, 1973).

Toumanoff, *Studies* = C. Toumanoff, *Studies in Christian Caucasian History* (Georgetown, 1963).

Trilling, 'Myth' = J. Trilling, 'Myth and Metaphor at the Byzantine Court: A Literary Approach to the David Plates', *Byz.* 48 (1978), 249–63.

Tudor, *Sucidava* = D. Tudor, *Sucidava, une cité daco-romaine et byzantine en Dacie* (Collection Latomus LXXX, Brussels, 1965).

Veh, *Untersuchungen* = O. Veh, *Untersuchungen zu dem byzantinischen Historiker Theophylaktos Simokattes, Jahresbericht 1956/7 des Human. Gymnas. Furth i. Bay.*

Velkov, *Cities* = V. Velkov, *Cities in Thrace and Dacia in Late Antiquity* (Amsterdam, 1977).

Whitby, 'Arzanene' = L. M. Whitby, 'Arzanene in the Late Sixth Century' in Mitchell, *Armies* 205–17.

—— 'Chronicle Source' = L. M. Whitby, 'Theophanes' Chronicle Source for the Reigns of Justin II, Tiberius and Maurice (AD 565–602)', *Byz.* 53 (1983), 312–45.

—— 'Great Chronographer' = L. M. Whitby, 'The Great Chronographer and Theophanes', *BMGS* 8 (1982–3), 1–20.

—— 'Mesopotamia' = L. M. Whitby, 'Procopius and the Development of Roman Defences in Upper Mesopotamia', in Kennedy, *Defence* 717–35.

—— *Theophylact* = Michael and Mary Whitby, *The* History *of Theophylact Simocatta: An English Translation with Introduction and Notes* (Oxford, 1986).

Mary Whitby, 'Eutychius' = J. Mary Whitby, 'Eutychius, Patriarch of Constantinople: An Epic Holy Man', in M. Whitby and P. Hardie (edd.), *Homo Viator: Classical Essays for John Bramble* (Bristol, 1987), 297–308.

Wilson, *Scholars* = N. G. Wilson, *Scholars of Byzantium* (London, 1983).

Wortley, 'Legend' = J. Wortley, 'The Legend of the Emperor Maurice', *Acts of the 15th International Congress of Byzantine Studies* (Athens, 1976), iv. 382–91.

Index

Abasgi 256
Abrittus 76, 187
Acacius Archelaus 258
Achaea 64
Achaemenids 202–3
Adarmahan 226, 246, 258, 260, 273
Adina 71
Adriatic 60–2, 64, 113–14, 176, 182
Adrianopolis 61, 67, 111, 143–5, 150–2, 155, 183, 186, 189
Aegean 60, 64, 70, 176, 182, 186, 189, 191, 355
Aegina 125
Aelian 29, 34–5
Aeneas of Gaza 29, 36
Aenos 189
Aequitius 61
Aetolia 166
Africa 7, 9, 73, 95, 97, 233, 280, 336
Agapetus 4, 328–9
Agapius 214
Agathias:
  anti-Persian attitude 208
  attitude to Justinian 79–80
  causation 37–8, 323
  contemporary influences 86
  education 28
  excursuses 314, 318
  history and poetry 45–6
  Persian material 237–8, 314, 318
  preface 28, 42
  providence 37–8
  purpose of history 322–3
  reading classics 30–1, 336, 345, 356
  speeches 321
  style, language 338, 342, 347
Agilulf 127
Akbas 130, 199, 246, 272, 277–8, 290, 292
Alaleisus 283
Alamanni 179, 181
Alans 128, 169, 218, 256
Alaric 116
Albania 186
Albania (Caucasus) 253, 264
Alciphron 35
Alexander the Great 103, 166, 203, 241, 307, 349–50
  his gate 216
Alexander (martyr) 117, 163, 323
Alexander (supporter of Phocas) 26, 47–8, 99
Alexandria 28, 48, 319
  education at 28–9, 36–7
al-Hira 273
al-Mundhir (Ghassanid) 199, 257–8, 264, 272–4, 280
al-Mundhir (Lakhmid) 199, 211
Amasea 265
Ambar 257, 296
ambo 347
Amida 207, 214, 264, 269, 280–2, 307
Ammianus:
  Balkans 61–2, 348
  Franks 179
  historiography 349
  Persia 315, 348
  Saxons 176
  style 336
Anastasia (d. of Maurice) 18
Anastasia (empress) 15, 20, 155, 174
Anastasiopolis 86
Anastasius (emperor) 6, 14, 81, 128, 168, 210, 212
  Balkans 69–70, 75, 159
  eastern wars 195, 207, 209
Anastasius of Antioch 23
Anastasius of Corinth 125
Anastasius of Sinai 37–8, 124
Anat, Anathon 273, 296, 300
Anatolia 11, 166
Anchialus 77, 96, 98–9, 106–7, 110, 112, 122, 138, 140, 142, 148–9, 174, 189
  capture in 589, 151–3, 157
Ancyra 355
Andrew 284, 289
Anonymous Guidi 249, 295–6, 305–6
Ansimuth 16, 149–50
Ansinon 143

Antes 82–3, 111, 144, 156, 165
antigrapheus 31, 39, 96, 269
Antioch 11, 20, 92, 109–10, 199, 203, 256, 323, 325
  earthquakes at 24, 248;
  see also Gregory of
Antioch in Persia 235, 319
Antiochus Monachus 355–6
Anzitene 268
Apamea 226, 244, 258
Aphrodisias 31
Aphum 269, 277, 282, 286
Appiaria 106, 118, 142, 145, 150–1, 181
Apsich 124, 280
Aquileia 61
Aquis 77, 147, 159
Arabissus 5, 20–1, 24, 110
Arabs:
  cause of conflict 204, 208–9, 211, 234–5, 305
  Christianity among 204, 305; *see also* Sergius, Resapha
  client status 197, 205, 211
  knowledge of deserts 197, 199
  Limes Arabicus 211
  Maddene arabs 215
  7th-cent. invasions 50, 130, 214, 307–8; *see also* Ghassanids, Lakhmids
Arbela (Alexandriana) 302
Arbogast 166
Arcadiopolis 67, 69
Arcadius 206, 208, 304
Ardagastus 82
Ardashir 202–3
Areobindus 208
Argos (Argives) 88, 117, 125, 135
Arians 213
Aristaenetus 29, 35
Aristobulus 289
Aristophanes 226, 262, 343
Aristotle (the Stagirite) 28, 226, 325, 346
Ariulph 16, 277
Armenia 9, 16, 92, 201–4, 207, 272, 298, 306
  campaign of 576 202, 245, 262–6
  excluded from truces 259–60
  see also Persarmenia
Armenians:
  Christianity among 204, 213–14, 218, 251–2
  in Balkans 127–8, 147, 150, 154, 167, 177, 291, 307
  in Persian service 213
armies:
  inexperience 148, 178
  manpower, lack of 79, 111, 136, 143
  morale 149
  pay and allowances, lack of 79, 129, 160, 166–7, 177, 263, 286–7
  recruiting, military service 111, 115, 127, 147, 177, 259, 268
  religion and 281–2, 327
  size of 178
  unrest, mutinies 25, 101, 122–3, 129, 165–9, 184, 268, 286–9
  winter quarters 160, 165–7
Arrian 336, 350
Artabanes 79
Arzamon 230, 270, 281
Arzanene 12, 130, 200–1, 212, 224, 231, 253–4, 269–70, 276–7, 282–4, 287, 289, 295, 304
Asemus 99, 160, 181
a secretis 347
Asia 9, 169, 202, 215, 218, 312, 317
Ashraf 262
Asparuch 129
Assyrians 347
Asterius 269
Astike 143–4
Atachas (Phathacon) 283
Atat Xoropuni 307
Athanaric 179
Athena Promachos 116
Athens 63–4, 88, 116, 135, 143, 183, 189, 355
Athyras 68
Attila 67–8, 79, 84, 141, 182
Augustae 138, 142, 171
Augustalis 28
Avars 11, 13, 80, 84–9, 98–106, 109–32, 138–65, 169–91, 251, 320–1, 346
  attack Heraclius 130–1
  burn shrine of Glyceria 21, 124, 152
  character 332
  cities and 84–5, 87–8, 110–11, 118, 143, 150, 155, 161, 174
  confused with Slavs 87, 125
  deserters 145–6, 148, 179, 184
  embassies, diplomacy 71, 140–2, 146–7, 151, 161, 164, 169, 174, 321, 332–3
  military matters 84–5, 118, 171–3, 179
  origins 85, 169, 315–17
  payments to 84, 87, 141–2, 154–6, 163, 333
  relations with Slavs 82, 86–9, 117–18, 143, 153–4, 165, 172–6, 186

Avars (*cont.*)
rivers, naval matters 78, 87–8, 127, 153–4, 172
Roman relations with 320, 331–5
structure of federation, subjects 84–5, 146, 164–5, 174
supplies, forage 142, 147–8, 154, 172, 179
tactics and strategy against 101–2, 127, 132, 148, 150, 178–9
Theophylact's excursus on 314–17
'True' and 'False' Avars 315–17
Turks and 85, 218, 315–17
west and 85, 87, 95, 126–7, 162, 164
Austrasia 85
Axumites 215
Azerbaijan 97, 201, 216–17, 261, 267, 290, 294, 298–9

Babylon 318
Babylonians 346
Baduarius 6
Baian 84, 141, 146
Balkans:
administration in 59–64, 70, 75, 112–15
Anastasius and 69–70, 72, 75
archaeological evidence 58, 86, 88, 132–7, 187
armies in 79–80, 142, 177–8
church in 60, 112–15, 181–2, 186–90
civilian/self-defence 67, 80, 119–20, 142, 154, 178, 181
coins in 86, 88, 117–18, 132–7, 186, 190
communications in 59–63, 71, 103, 113, 125, 158–9, 172, 182, 189
depopulation of 66–9, 71, 182
diversion of troops from 79, 184
effects of invasions 66–9, 82–3, 88, 120–1, 125–6, 182–3
fortifications and defences 70–8, 89, 144–5, 150, 171–3, 184
ignorance about 55, 58, 92–3
insecurity, isolation 70–1, 75–6, 78, 83, 89, 120–1, 135–7, 149, 181–5
invaders 66–9, 75, 82–6, 117–21, 169–76
Justinian and 70–80
literary evidence on 92–132
passes 61–2, 76, 102–3, 149, 154–5, 162, 171, 182
Persian wars take priority 79, 87, 169, 184
poverty of 70, 136–7, 160
praetor 75
quaestor exercitus 70
recovery in 590s 115, 156–61, 164–5, 178–81
refuge sites 71, 76–8, 88, 125, 182–3
relative prosperity in 66, 86, 150
Roman authority in 12, 55, 58–9, 66–9, 89, 144, 156, 180–1
Roman conquest of 60
settlement of Armenians in 127–8, 167, 177
settlement of tribes in 66–9, 80, 83, 111, 120–1, 125–6, 128–9, 176, 181–2, 185–91
spread of *Romanitas* 64, 184
suspicions against emperors 69, 182–3
towns and cities in 63–4, 70–2, 76–8, 133–7, 178, 181–3, 185–91
weakness in 580s 111–12, 143–5, 147–8
Banat 85, 174
Bargala 135–6, 144, 183
Basil of Caesarea 37
Basil of Seleucia 340
Bastarnae 66
Batman 201, 272, 277, 282, 285, 290
Batna 207, 209
Bavarians 127
Beirut (law school) 29
Beïudaes (Fafi) 284–5
Belgrade (Singidunum) 187
Belisarius 199, 208, 210, 212
Beroe 133, 150, 189
Beth Arabaye 200, 270, 279, 290
Beth Aramaye 273
Bibas 281
Bishops:
with armies 281, 289, 291, 299, 302
control of cities 69, 114–15, 181–2
provide information 257, 295
Bitlis pass 201, 283
Bizye 189
Black Sea 62–3, 68, 76, 85, 145, 160, 162, 171, 201, 216–17
Blarathos 303
Boethius 36–7
Bononia 61, 114, 147, 154
Bonosus 104
Bonus 84
Bookolabra 117, 145–6
Bosman 135
Bosporus 26, 109, 307
Brunhilda 127, 162
Bulgars 55, 69, 75, 81, 129, 160, 176, 183, 185, 187

aetiological stories 111, 129
Burgas 145
Busas 106, 118, 181

Caesar, *Gallic Wars* 97, 165, 179–80
Caesar:
  Maurice as 7, 274
  Tiberius as 6, 258–9
Caesarea 5, 203, 265
Callatis 75–6
Callinicum 212
Callinicus 114
Callipolis 189
Callisthenes 348
Calvomuntis 150
Campaign diary/reports 94–105
Candlemas 347
Canzak 303
Cappadocia 5, 203, 207, 265, 268, 272
Carduchia 201, 269
  see also Hakkâri
Caria 31, 70
Caričin Grad 74, 135–6
  see also Justiniana Prima
Carpathians 179
Carpi 66
Carrhae 22
Cartagena 12, 289–90
Caspian Gates 205
Caspian Sea 216, 262, 267
Cassius Dio 46, 203
Castrum Cassiopi 114
Castus 93, 99, 102, 148, 151, 330
Cataracts 68, 75, 88, 135–6, 162, 164, 172, 184
Catholicus 234, 241, 270, 295, 297, 306
Caucasus 9, 197, 201, 206–8, 216–18, 296, 304
Cedrenus 124
Celer 208
Chagan (Avar) 84–5, 99–100, 104, 117–18, 127, 130–1, 141, 145–7, 150, 155, 159, 161–4, 174, 321, 331–3
Chalcedon:
  harbour of Eutropius 26
  monastery of Virgin 20
  St Euphemia 23
  see also Probus
Chalcedonians 11, 213–14
Chalcis 212, 254
Chaldaeans 346, 355
Charito 7, 15
Chatti 103
Chersonese 73
  see also Gallipoli
China 9, 316
Chilbuldius 82
Chlomaron 22, 130, 231, 270, 282–3, 285–6, 295
Chnaitha 302
Christianity:
  conversion of neighbours to 201, 204, 217
  divisions in 11, 213–14
Chronicle of Monemvasia 125–6, 151
Chronicle of Seert 294, 306–7
Chronicon ad an. 1234:
  independent of John of Ephesus 248–9
  on Priscus 287
Chronicon Paschale 26, 40, 341, 354, 357
  Heraclius' victory dispatch in 97, 334, 351
Cicero 336
Čihōr-Wšnasp *see* Suren
Cilicia 203
Ciphas (Hasankeyf) 201, 210, 284–5, 307
Circesium 257, 273, 296–7
circus factions 17, 25–6, 143, 163, 331, 335
Citharizon 201, 210, 268–9
cities:
  class divisions in 119, 183
  control of food supplies 69
  distribution in Balkans 63–6
  fate/survival of 9, 67–8, 70–1, 84, 113–15
  function of 63, 70–1
  protectors 116–17
  relations with invaders 185–7, 191
Claudian 280
Claudius Gothicus 66
Clement 226
Cleopatra 18
Colchians 256
Cologne 166
Comacina 185
Comana 5
Comentiolus (general) 15–16, 25–6, 95, 97–105, 128–9, 139–50, 158, 162, 164, 171, 178, 344
  'betrayal' of army 122–3, 162–4
  bias against 98–104, 129
  eastern command 232, 289–90, 297, 300
  in Spain 151, 289–90
  rebuke to Chagan 104, 142, 316, 321, 331, 333

comes domesticorum 88
Constantina (city) 7, 214, 225, 260, 268–9, 274, 276, 286–7, 289, 299
Constantina (empress) 7, 14–15, 18, 20, 25–6, 277, 313
Constantine (emperor) 66, 204
Constantine (soldier) 274
Constantine Lardys 13, 25–6
Constantine Porphyrogenitus 353
  DAI (on Avars, Serbs and Croats) 190, 335
  DAI (on Patras) 125
  De Caerimoniis (on embassies) 261
  Excerpta 243, 316
Constantinople:
  arrival of booty at 233, 247–8, 289
  Blachernae 327
  buildings etc. at: 20 (arsenal); 19 (baths at Blachernae); 20, 23 (Chalce mosaic); 20 (cistern of Ram); 20 (Diaconissa); 21 (Exokionion); 127, 291 (Hippodrome); 251, 256 (Justin II's statues); 20 (Magnaura)
  churches in: 8 (Holy Apostles); 20 (Myroceraton); 20 (St George); 18, 20, 27, (St Mamas or Nea Metanoia); 26, 326–7, 347 (St Sophia); 20 (St Theodore); 327 (Virgin at Pege); 22 (Virgin in Chalcoprateia)
  claimed by Shapur II 203
  education at 28–9
  effect on Balkans 59–60
  episcopal synod at 113
  Galata 20, 124
  grain supply of 13, 24, 116, 181–2
  Hebdomon 8, 26, 106, 152, 157, 347, 350
  Long Walls of 68, 75, 106, 109–10, 124, 131, 143, 150–1, 155, 158, 163, 171
  Neorion harbour 21
  palaces: 20 (Bryas, Damatry, Sophiae); 326 (Great)
  panic, disorders at 19, 24–6, 100, 110, 124, 163, 168, 331
  raids towards 68, 75, 78, 86, 106, 109–11, 124, 131, 143, 151–2
  regions: 20 (Areobindus); 20 (Armatus); 20 (Carianus); 6 (Maurianus); 20 (Sphoracius); 20 (Xerocircus)
  repair of aqueducts 19–20
  siege of 626, 32, 84, 117, 184–5
Constantius II 62, 203, 210
consularis (*hypatos*) 13, 21, 32
consulship 18, 278
Cordoba 12
Corfu 114, 183
Corinth 63–4, 88, 111, 113, 125, 144, 189
  Isthmus of 68, 72, 76, 78, 135
  see also Anastasius of
Corippus 6, 357
Cotrigurs 78, 80, 82, 85–7, 129, 143
Craterus 166
Cremona 127, 175
Croats 190, 335
Croton 79
Ctesiphon 223, 261, 273, 293–6, 302
Cunimund 147
curopalatus 15, 290, 347
Curs 16, 264, 266, 272, 277
Cyprus 24, 70, 269
Cyriacus 20, 23
Cyrrhus 212
Cyrus 199

Dacia:
  inland 63
  Parapotamia/Ripensis 63, 113
  trans-Danubian 60, 64
Daganes 256
Dalmatia 60–3, 77, 79, 88, 98, 112–15, 161, 171, 173, 176, 182–3, 186, 189–91
Damascus 288
Daniel 23, 306
Danube frontier 12, 25, 55, 60–4, 75, 78, 86–8, 154, 164, 176–80, 184
  campaigns beyond 102, 159–61, 164, 180
  destroyed by Attila 68
  restoration of in 6th cent. 69–78
  winter 101, 165–7; *see also* winter campaigns
Dara 12, 199–200, 207, 209–10, 212–13, 224, 239, 256, 261, 270, 276, 283, 290, 300, 305
  captives from 233, 313
  capture (573) 212, 224, 227, 243, 253, 258–60, 262; (604) 210, 307
  construction of 207, 209
  return of 267, 300, 304
  Wadi 274, 281
Dardania 61, 63, 69, 77, 113, 159
darigbedum 237, 291, 347
Daurentius 82
David (plates) 351
David (Saint of Thessalonica) 182

Demena 125
Demetrius 23, 116–20, 181
see also Miracula
Dexippus 42
Didymoteichon 131, 155
Dilimainites 256
Dinabadon 302
Dinaric Alps 61
Diocletian 66, 203
Diocletianopolis (Hisar) 88, 150, 173, 189
Diodorus Siculus 42, 46, 238, 317–18, 350
Dionysius of Halicarnassus 342
Dionysius of Tel Mahre 111, 128
diplomacy (Roman):
and Arabs 211, 251
and Balkan tribes 80, 82–7, 127, 140–2, 144, 155, 164, 169, 174, 178, 320–1, 333–5
and Germans 82
and Persians 202–6, 215–18, 234–5, 297–9, 304–6
and Turks 218, 243, 251–3, 263, 315–16
Christianity in 201, 215–17, 251–3, 297, 306
co-operation, coexistence (with Persia) 204–6, 297, 304–8, 333–4
historians' attitudes to international relations 80, 208, 304, 320–1, 331–5
length of 243, 261–2, 267, 271, 278–80
sources for 243, 259–60, 271, 316
trade and 209, 215, 218
treaties with Persians 208–9, 269, 303–4
diplomacy (Sassanian) 202–4, 216, 218, 259–60, 271
internal 235–6, 295–6
Dobrudja 60, 64, 70, 135, 146–7, 158, 185
Domitian (emperor) 103
Domitian of Melitene 14–15, 21, 25, 224, 306
possible source for Theophylact 239–40
relations with Khusro II 239, 299–300
speech at Martyropolis 39, 300, 327, 334, 351
Donji Milanovac 135
Dorostolon 161, 181, 187
Drava 95
Drizipera 117, 130, 155–6, 163, 173, 189
Droctulft 98, 147, 150, 178
dux (duke):
of Armenia 209–10
of Mesopotamia 208
of Phoenice Libanensis 17, 208
Dwin 254, 273
Dyrrachium 61, 113–14

Eastern frontier:
communications on 197–9
control of movement 210–11, 216
Endless Peace 5, 208, 211
fortifications on 199–200, 207, 209–13, 267–70, 283–6, 307
Ghassanids and 199, 210–11; *see also* Ghassanids, Arabs
invasion routes 197–202, 257–8, 264, 272–3, 302–3
lack of troops 212
loyalty of inhabitants 213–15, 281, 284
outbreak of war in 572, 250–4
Edessa 21, 200, 207–9, 214, 273, 287
education, problems of 28–9, 353–6
Egypt 24, 28–9, 93, 166
Elpidius 142
end of world, eschatology 111, 240–1, 333, 358
Epidamnus 69
see also Dyrrachium
Epirus 61, 64, 77, 176, 183
Epirus vetus 113
Epistolae Austrasicae 5, 15
epistolography 29, 34–5
Erginia 143
Ethiopia 79, 215
Eulogius 207
Eunapius:
attitude to chronology 41–2, 314, 321, 349
lack of interest in warfare 322
style 340
eunuch of bedchamber 20
Euphemia 23, 319, 328
Euphrates 197–9, 210, 257, 265–6, 272–3, 300
Eupolis 343
Euria 114, 135, 183
Euripides 29, 226, 317
Europe (province) 63
Eusebius of Caesarea 43, 204, 329
Eusebius of Thessalonica 116
Eustathius 355–6
Eustratius 236–7, 265, 306, 340
Eutychius 6, 265
Evagrius:
aware of Agathias' *History* 245
Balkans 109–10, 151

Evagrius (*cont.*)
bias towards Philippicus in 223, 231, 245, 278, 283, 288–9
causation 326
Comentiolus 232, 290
confusion and errors in 223, 245, 257, 262, 268, 273, 289, 296
diplomacy 258
documents in 236
Domitian 239
eastern affairs 244–5
Gregory of Antioch 109–10, 244
John of Epiphania and 223, 236–7, 245
John Mystacon 278
Khusro II 296
Maurice and his family 4–5, 8–9, 21, 233, 357
outbreak of war 227, 254
Priscus 288
Sergiopolis 116–17
siege of Nisibis 256
used by *Chronicle* of Monemvasia 125
visit to Constantinople 109
Exantaprista (Pistos) 76
exarchs: 114 (Callinicus); 12 (Gennadius); 16, 233 (Heraclius); 16 (Romanus)
excubitors 6, 100, 347
count of 5–6, 15, 25, 268
Expositio Totius Mundi 62–4

Fafi 210, 283
see also Beïudaes
Farrukhan 293, 295, 347
fate, fortune 37–8, 325–6, 330–1, 335
Fechkhabour 302
federates, count of 6, 268
finance, problems of 11, 18–19
see also armies, pay
fleet *see* navy
fortifications:
construction, organization of 213, 285
Justinianic 71–7, 86, 210–13
Limes Arabicus 211
long walls 68, 86; *see also* Constantinople, Long Walls
role and effect of 69, 75–8, 82–3, 86–8, 210–13, 283
see also Balkans, fortifications; eastern frontier, fortifications
Francia 166
Franks 158, 163, 179
dealings with Avars 85, 126–7, 162, 164, 169
Gregory's correspondence with 114
Gundovald 12
interventions in Italy 12
free-will 35–7
Fritigern 67

Galen 226
Galerius 203, 205
Gallipoli 75–6, 86
see also Chersonese
Gaul 68, 126
generals:
conduct in battle 231, 281–2
co-ordinated actions 99, 102, 148, 164, 180, 273
disputes between 7, 160, 268, 273–4, 277, 286
improve discipline 13, 231, 268
loyalty to Maurice 17
Gennadius 12
Gentzon 99
George (ambassador) 222, 234–5, 305
George (officer) 15
George of Pisidia 40, 44, 226, 357
Hexaemeron 241, 333, 350
influences on, parallels with Theophylact 44, 240–1, 279–80, 328, 333, 338, 344, 350–1, 354
George Syncellus 355
Georgius Monachus 106, 108, 124
Gepids 69, 78, 80, 85, 87, 147, 159, 164
Germans 82–3, 180, 213, 259, 268
Germanus (*dux*) 17, 247–8, 287–9
Germanus (elder) 7, 79
see also Justinian, son of Germanus
Germanus (patrician) 7, 15, 25–6, 168
Getae 346
Ghassanids 199, 210–11, 234, 257, 264, 274, 276, 280, 305
Gildas 357
gloriosus 290
Glyceria 21, 124, 152, 156, 319, 328
Godwin 16, 98–9, 164, 166
Golinduch 236–7, 298, 328
Gordia 5, 20, 26
Goths 81, 179, 205
4th-cent. attacks 55, 66–7
5th-cent. attacks 68–9
food shortages 69
Great Chronographer 107–8, 122–3, 355
Greece 63, 68, 83, 86, 88, 98, 109, 113, 117, 119, 125–6, 144–5, 176, 185–6, 189, 203

Gregentius 71, 78
Gregory, Pope 9, 18, 60, 97, 290
  attitude to Lombards 23–4, 114
  correspondents in Constantinople 14
  Dalmatia 112–14, 183
  dispute over Oecumenical title 23–4, 112
  evidence on the Balkans 112–15, 156
  relations with Maurice 23–4
  writes to Anastasius of Corinth 125; to Eusebius 116, 118; to Priscus 112, 153, 158
Gregory of Antioch 20, 109–10, 251, 257, 288–9
  Khusro II and 239, 299–300
  patron of Evagrius and John of Epiphania 32, 222–4, 244–5
Gregory of Kashkar 306
Gregory of Nazianzus 339, 345
Gregory of Nyssa 226
Gregory of Tours 357
  gossip in 7–8, 126, 268
Guaram 290

Habur 284
Haemimontus 63, 77
hagiography *see* Golinduch; Maurice; Theodore of Sykeon; Theophylact, sources (individual)
Hah 210
Hakkâri *see* Carduchia
Harmanli 145
Harith 199, 210
Hasankeyf *see* Ciphas
Hebrew 241
Hecataeus of Abdera 317
Helibacia 160
Helicon 318
Heliodorus 226
Hellanicus 314
Hellas 113
Hellespont 109
Hephthalites 205, 207, 218, 316
Heracleia 21, 67, 99, 110, 124, 130, 145, 152, 155–6, 186, 189
Heracleia Lyncestis 69
Heraclitus 226
Heraclius (elder) 16, 329
  bias towards in Theophylact 230–3, 281–3, 290
  eastern campaigns 230–3, 282–6, 290
Heraclius (emperor) 30, 33, 40, 96, 104, 135, 156, 184, 240, 335, 351–2
  avenger of Maurice 30, 108, 124
  Balkans 130–1, 171, 184–7, 190, 335
  diplomacy 334–5
  education under 355–6
  letter of 226, 334, 341, 351
  mythological/historical parallels 44–5, 279–80, 333
  restoration of philosophy (Stephen of Alexandria) 28, 33
  victory over Persians 39–40, 240–1, 300, 307, 351
Heraios 124
Herodian 202–3, 348
Herodotus 294, 314, 317, 348, 353
Heruls 85
Hesiod 29
Hesychius 226
Hierapolis 236–7, 298
Hierocles *Synecdemus* 63–4
Hippocrates 226
Hisar *see* Diocletianopolis
Hisarkaya 210
historiography:
  authors as participants 311, 350
  causation in 37–8, 322–6
  character in 330–2
  Christian/ecclesiastical 42–3, 325–6, 340, 353–4
  chronicles 354–5
  chronology in 314, 349
  conventions 41–2, 314, 318–19, 322
  end of 353–7
  fate and necessity in 37–8
  nature and weaknesses of 347–50
  prefaces, diversity of 28, 40–2
  style 336–41
Hit 296
Homer 29, 337, 341–2, 346, 350
Homerites 71, 215–16, 226, 252
Horgeşti 135
Hormizd (brother of Shapur II) 204, 297
Hormizd (king) 222, 239, 290–5, 344
  character 293, 299, 330–2
  different accounts of overthrow 293–5
  negotiations 271, 274, 278
Huns 55, 66–8, 171, 204–5, 216–17, 346
  deserters 146
  dissolution of federation 68, 81
  siegecraft 67, 173
hunting 101–2, 160, 162, 181

Ialomiţa 135
Iatrus 136, 139, 162, 185

Iberia 12, 217, 267, 290, 304
Ildigisal 79
Illyricum 60, 67–8, 71, 76, 78–80, 112–13, 115, 117, 136, 144, 156
Illyrisis 201
imperial judge 31–2
Ioannina 114
Iran (plateau) 201, 293
Isauria 212
Isfahan 262
Isho-Yabh I 270, 295, 297
Isho-Yabh II 297
Iskăr 62
Issus 348
Istria (Adriatic) 95, 98, 113–14, 127
Istria (Dobrudja) 135
Italy 9, 11–13, 60–1, 69, 79, 85, 92, 112, 114, 147, 167, 177, 183, 185, 190, 336
Izala 200, 230, 240, 281, 318
  see also Tur Abdin

Jambol 145
Jebel Sinjar 199
Jerusalem 22, 40, 214, 354
Jews 214, 335
Joanna, abbess of Sirmium 190
John of Antioch 20, 107, 129
  on Maurice's 'betrayal' of his army 122–4
John of Biclar 87, 126, 264
John the Cappadocian 357
John, son of Comentiolus 217
John of Ephesus:
  al-Mundhir 257, 272–3
  Armenians 252–3, 267
  Balkans 87, 105, 110–12, 143, 147, 151, 175, 246
  dates in 246–8, 258, 263, 272–4, 285–6
  date of composition 110
  on east 245–8, 263–8, 278
  Justin II's speech 228
  Maurice 5, 18
  Michael the Syrian and 111–12, 247–8
  Monophysites 213
  Table of Contents 43
John of Epiphania:
  attitude to Persia 224, 239
  attitude to Philippicus 231, 283
  confuses Theodores 229, 260
  date of composition 222–3, 245, 305
  diplomacy in 258–9, 271, 275, 297–8
  documents in 236
  Evagrius and 223, 236–7, 245, 266, 283
  George the ambassador 222, 234–5, 305
  informants, source of knowledge 42, 223–4, 292–5, 311
  Justin II 227, 253, 256
  outbreak of war 227, 253
  preface 28, 42, 222
  in service of Gregory of Antioch 32, 222, 236
  style 50, 225–6, 338, 345
  Theophylact and 222–9, 239–40, 253, 256–7, 266, 275, 280–1, 291–2, 338, 345
  Thucydides and 227
John of Euria 114
John Lydus 33, 44, 226, 357
John Mystacon 7, 16, 98, 128, 147, 150, 240–1, 277–8, 299, 303
John Nesteutes 15, 21–2, 299, 327
John of Nikiu:
  hostility to Maurice 7, 19, 131, 295, 299
  troubles in Egypt 24
  Paulinus story 107
John, patrician 267
John IV, Pope 190
John of Thessalonica 115, 119
John Troglodyta 357
Jordan 211
Josephus 347–9
Jovian 205–6
Jovinus 112, 115
Julian (emperor) 62, 199, 202, 204–5
Julian (envoy) 215
Justin I 6, 14, 68, 70, 72, 206–7, 213, 217
Justin II:
  aggression 11, 209, 227, 250, 253–4, 299, 304, 315, 330, 333
  building works of 19, 251, 256
  dealings with Arabs 251, 257–8; with Avars 86–7, 140, 251; with Persians 215–18, 225, 227, 250–8; with Turks 218, 251–2, 316
  death of 271
  imperial glory 19, 250–1, 253–4
  madness 11, 227, 258–9, 270, 330
  sin 324
  speech to Tiberius 227–9, 328–9
Justin, son of Maurice 18
Justinian I 5–6, 11, 213, 225, 328, 335–6, 354
  Balkans (control and defence of) 55, 69–80, 82, 86
  diplomacy (Balkans) 80, 86–7; (eastern) 206, 208, 215–16

eastern defences and wars 207–13
education and 29, 355, 357
Justinian II 62, 189
Justinian, father of Theodore Tzirus 258
Justinian, son of Germanus 7, 13, 228–9, 251, 259–60, 263–5, 267
death of 6, 268
harangues troops 230, 265, 275, 315, 320, 327
Justinian, son of Maurice 18
Justiniana Prima 62, 74, 113–15, 182–3, 186
see also Caričin Grad
Juventinus 254

Kardarigan 230, 281–3, 326, 330
Kartir 203
Kavadh 199, 206–9, 216–17, 225, 240
Keli Shin 303
Kenchreai 88
Khabour 210, 233, 257, 279
Khazars 129, 217, 317
Khusro I 6, 199, 207–8, 211, 216–18, 323
573 campaign 251, 257–8
576 campaign 201–2, 262–7
death of 246, 269–71
diplomacy with Romans 208–9, 216–17, 251–2, 259–61, 267
Khusro II:
accession of 293–5
asserts authority 234, 305
astrology, predictions, and prophecies 39–40, 47, 240–1, 319, 326
Christianity and 14, 214, 296–8, 300, 305–6, 323, 327
death of 39
dedications to St Sergius 234–6, 239, 298, 300, 305
exchanges with Vahram 235–6, 295
exploitation of Maurice's death 184, 306–7
flight to Roman empire 222, 292, 296–7
ingratitude to/arguments with Romans 131, 224, 234, 303, 305–6, 332
Martyropolis and 239–40, 299–300
relations with Maurice 12–13, 131, 234–5, 303–8, 332–4
restoration of 222, 250, 297–304, 327
7th-cent. wars 40, 224, 240–1, 307, 332, 334–5
victory in Armenia 273
Kobrat 129
Koch 321
Koi Sanjaq 303
Kotel pass 62
Kouber 185

Laconia 125
Lakhmids (Persian Arabs) 199, 211, 273, 296
Larissa 113
Lashom 234
Laz, Lazica 16, 201, 208, 216–17, 291
Leo (emperor) 68
Leo Grammaticus:
hagiography of Maurice and 106, 108, 124
image of Maurice in 3
proclamation of Tiberius 229
Leontia 26
Leontius 13
Libanius 29
Libidina 142, 146
Libidurgon 150
Lice 283
Lilius 48
Lissus 62, 114, 135, 182
Lithuania 166
Livy 319
logothete 13, 17, 25
Lombards 11–12, 23, 69, 79–80, 85, 114, 126–7, 164, 167, 175
assistance to Avars 164, 172
mercenaries 147, 150, 154, 177–8, 277
Lucca 79
Lucian 29

Macedonia 60–2, 64, 69, 77, 113, 120–1, 134, 144, 176, 183, 185, 203
Macharta 270
magister 15, 347
magister militum
per Armeniam 16, 286
per Hispaniam 151
per Thraciam 79
praesentalis 143
Magnus 224, 258
Mahbodh 235, 240, 300, 302, 319
Mahbodh, the *Sarnakhorgan* 260, 267–9, (?332?)
Maïacarire 279
Mainz 181
Makarta 270
Malchus 58, 340
Manacarta 270
Mandra, gulf of 145

Maniach 316
Marcellinus 189–90
Marcellus 6
Marcian 6, 226, 254, 256–8
Marcianist 19
Marcianopolis 63, 68, 76, 147–8, 187
Marcipetra 77
Mardin 200, 210, 212, 214, 224, 258, 270, 276, 279, 281, 300, 307
Margus 67
Marica 145, 150, 155
Marmara, sea of 68, 99, 110, 136, 155
Martin 99, 102, 148
Martyropolis 12, 199, 207–10, 212, 232, 278, 280, 287, 289–90, 298
  betrayal of 214, 289
  return of 239–40, 299–300, 304
  celebrated by Domitian 39, 239, 300, 334, 344
Marutha *see* Probus of Chalcedon
Maruzas 233, 289
Matasuntha 7
Matzaron 284
Maurice:
  acceptance of death 106, 124, 325, 330
  accession 8–9, 313
  achievements 11–13, 27
  administration 13, 17, 19
  Anchialus march 96, 106–7, 122, 139, 152–3, 156–8, 321, 350
  appointees 15–17
  avarice 19, 99, 101
  Balkan bishops appeal to 60, 114
  Balkans, policy towards 25, 27, 101, 140–5, 159, 164–9, 177–8, 184, 335
  'betrays' army 106–7, 122–4, 162
  building works 19–21, 124
  children 18
  consulships 18, 278
  criticism of 99, 101, 104
  ditch 144–5, 149–50, 155
  early career 5–7
  eastern campaigns of 199, 268–74
  finance, military pay 18–19, 101, 136, 140–1, 154, 160, 166–7, 177, 278, 286–7
  hagiography of 3, 104–8
  'Marcianist' 19
  marriage of 4, 7, 9, 277, 313, 326
  overthrow of 24–7, 131–2, 165–9
  patronage of literature 21, 42, 243, 357
  Persia, policy towards 13, 299, 304, 306, 334
  piety 3, 22, 282
  popularity/unpopularity 18–19, 24–6, 168, 331
  relations with Khusro II 131, 297–9, 303–4, 306, 333–4
  relatives, quarrels with 25–6; use of 14–15, 18–19, 100
  relics and 23, 306, 319
  religious matters 21–2, 327, 355
  remission of taxes 19
  repentance of 22, 106
  return to Constantinople in 582, 7, 274
  Saint 21
  self-control 5, 330–1
  Strategicon attributed to 130–2
  titles of 5
  will 47, 96
Maximus Confessor 226, 350, 352
Maximus of Salona 114
Medes, Media 225, 272, 346–7
medical writing 226, 343–4
Melitene 5, 14, 265–6
  see also Domitian of
Menander Comicus 29, 343
Menander Protector:
  Agathias and 345
  attitude to Justinian 80
  Avar successes 316, 324
  career of 30
  diplomacy/negotiations 227–9, 243–4, 259–63, 267, 271, 316
  early career of Maurice 4–5
  patronized by Maurice 21, 42, 243
  possible defects of 244, 275
  praise of Maurice 274
  preface of 28, 42, 336–7
  religious stories in 244
  sources of 96, 244, 316, 350
  style 337, 340
  Theophylact's use of 227–30, 242, 275
  unrepresentative remains of 243
Menander Rhetor 329
Mesembria 149, 189
Mesopotamia 73, 259–60, 268–70, 274, 276
  geography and routes 199–201
  Monophysites in 213–15
  Sassanian claims to 203
Michael the Syrian:
  Balkans 111–12, 128–9, 144
  death of Hormizd 294
  death of Tiberius 8
  eastern campaigns 247–9
  John of Ephesus and 111–12, 247–8

Midiat 210
Mihradari 300
Mindon 212
Minicerta 270
Minnocerta 270
miracles *see* prophecies; Theophylact, *History*
Miracula S. Demetrii 115–21, 185, 189
  sensationalism in 118–19
Moesia (Mysia) 55, 60, 63–4, 68, 70–1, 76, 79, 113, 119, 124, 128, 171, 176, 179
Monemvasia 125–6
Monocarton 268, 270, 274, 278, 280, 287
Monophysites 11, 21–2, 213–15, 234, 241, 272, 305
  see also Ghassanids
Moors 95
Morava 61, 171
Mosul 302
Movileni 135
Mundus 208
Musel Mamikonian 128, 303
Musocius 82

Nadoes 267
Naissus 61–2, 64–8, 77, 171, 183, 186
Naqsh-i Rustam 203
Narona 62, 186
Narses (eunuch of Justinian) 79
Narses (general) 7, 16, 131, 286, 300, 303, 305
Narses (king of Persia) 203, 205
natural phenomena: comet 95; earthquake 278, 324–5; eclipse 106, 152, 157; fire 277
navy 62, 70, 78, 142, 151, 155, 161, 172, 180, 187
Naxcawan 307
Nestorians 214, 234, 241, 269, 297, 305
Nicephorus (emperor) 62, 125
Nicephorus (patriarch):
  History 122, 353
  on Bulgars 129
Nicephorus Callistus 236
Nicetas 30
Nicopolis (ad Istrum) 63, 66–7, 76, 162, 187
  see also Veliko Tărnovo
Nicopolis (Epirus) 113
Nile:
  apparitions in 319
  crocodiles 24
  Theophylact's excursus on 238, 317–18, 324
Nisibis 199–200, 210, 212, 224, 237, 244, 254–8, 270, 279, 283, 290, 293, 295, 298, 300–2
  Roman attitudes to loss of 205
  Roman claims to 206, 253
  theological school 29, 305–6
Nision 237
Noricum 60, 69
notaries 5–6
Novae 68, 76, 86, 160, 181, 187
Noviodunum 179
Numan (Lakhmid) 296
Numan, son of al-Mundhir 280

Oblivion, castle of 233
Odessus 76, 160, 181, 187
Olt valley 81, 83, 133
Oltenia 85
Olympia 88
Olympiodorus *History*: contents 349; style 336
Orobe 125
Osrhoene 211, 259, 273
Ostrogoths 68–9, 77

Palestine 199
Palmyra 211
Pamphronius 177
panegyric
  at accession of Justin II 30
  commissioned by Justinian 33, 357
  of Heraclius 232–3
  imperial topoi in 3–4, 329
  in Procopius *Buildings* 72–4
Pannasa 147
Panion 189
Pannonia 60, 63, 68, 76–7, 80, 84–5, 87, 164, 171, 175
paradoxography 34
Parastaseis 357
Parmenio 103
Parthians 203, 346
passes:
  Balkans 61–2, 76, 78, 149, 154–5, 162, 164
  Caucasus 201, 205, 216–17
  east 201, 283
Patras 125
patriarchs 6, 15, 20, 23, 32–3, 39, 50, 95, 112, 156, 326–7

patriarchs (*cont.*)
see also Cyriacus; Gregory of Antioch; John Nesteutes; Sergius
patricians: 6 (Maurice); 7 (Germanus); 16 (Romanus); 112 (Priscus); 251 (Justinian); 267 (Peter and John); 290 (Comentiolus)
patriographic texts 21
Paul of Aegina 350
Paul the Deacon 126–7
Paul, father of Maurice 5, 15
Paul, son of Maurice 18
Paul of Nisibis 297
Paul the Silentiary 33, 215, 354, 356
Paulinus 22, 50, 277, 319
Pautalia 68
Peloponnese 72, 88, 117, 125–6, 143–4, 151
Perbundus 83, 189, 191
Perinthus 346
see also Heracleia
Peroz 205, 207
Perozshapur 296
see also Ambar
Persarmenia 12, 201, 208, 217–18, 251–3, 264, 267, 273, 304
Persia/Persians 39, 79, 87, 201–2, 332
agreements/relations with Romans 13, 202–9, 215–18, 227, 258–9, 269, 303–4, 320–1, 332–4; *see also* diplomacy
civil war 13, 292–303, 320
Christianity in 204, 209, 216–17, 251–2, 254, 269–70, 295, 297
deceit etc. 254, 269, 271, 273, 278, 320, 332
hierarchy 237–8
invasion routes 199–202
military skills of 265, 291
north-east frontier of 205, 218, 269, 287, 291, 308
Roman payments to 206, 208, 227, 251–2, 259–60, 267, 304, 306
treatment of embassies 247, 271, 278
wars against 195, 203–4, 206–8, 250–308
Pessau 69
Peter Barsymas 357
Peter, brother of Maurice 5, 15, 17, 95, 97, 129, 168–9, 181
Balkan campaigns of 139, 158, 160–1
bias against 98–103, 160
buildings of 20
failures of 99, 160
Peter, son of Maurice 18
Peter the patrician:
predicts overthrow of empires 308
used by Menander Protector 244
Peter (patrician) 267
Peter of Qatar 29
Phathacon, *see* Atachas
Philippicus 5, 13, 15–16, 25, 93, 122–3, 129, 168
buildings of 20
confused with Priscus 129
eastern campaigns 278–89
favoured by Evagrius 223, 231, 278, 288–9
Scipio parallel 44–5, 279–80, 346
victory at Solachon 230–1, 280–1
Philippopolis (Plovdiv) 61, 67, 79, 88, 149–50, 171, 186
Philostratus 35, 226
Phocas 8, 17, 19, 25–7, 40, 96, 100–1, 104, 108, 116, 122, 129, 169, 184, 190, 306, 335
kills Maurice's supporters 15, 93, 100
mythological parallels for 44, 108
Phoenice Libanensis 17, 288
Photius 337, 339–40, 349
Plato 29, 318, 346–7
dialogue form 34, 36
Pleven 88, 135
Pliska 62, 145, 187
Plovdiv *see* Philippopolis
Plutarch 226, 342
Polybius 43, 320, 323, 348
Popovo 88
Porto Cheli 88, 135
Praebasis 64
Praeneste, shrine of Autonomus at 26
Praesentinus 15
predestination, providence 35–8, 109, 323, 325–6
prefect, ex- (*apo eparchon*) 31–2, 39
of Illyricum 98, 112, 115, 117, 144, 181, 183
praetorian 17, 25
Priscus (general) 15–16, 93, 95, 97–105, 112, 122, 136, 139, 145, 168, 321, 327, 344
Balkan campaigns 151–5 (first); 152, 158–60 (second); 161–2 (third); 164 (599 victories)
bias towards in Theophylact 97–105, 153
eastern command 103, 154, 286–8, 327
failures concealed 99, 104, 131, 151–2

out of favour with Maurice 100–1, 153, 158
Priscus (historian) 58, 68
Probus of Chalcedon 30, 47, 240–1, 306
Probus (general) 297
Procliane 98, 105
Proclus 226
proconsul 190
Procopius (historian) 80, 94, 117, 129, 208, 240, 322, 355
Buildings 33, 71–8 (Balkans); 73–4 ('incompleteness' of); 72–5 (reliability of); 209–13 (east); 354
causation 38, 322–5
digressions, excursuses 81, 314, 318, 325
miracles in 319
participation in events 311, 350
Slavs 81
style and language 226, 336, 342, 356
Procopius (usurper) 61
prophecies, miracles etc. 5 (Maurice's birth); 8 (to Tiberius); 24, 106 (Anchialus march); 48, 116–17, 119–20, 241
Prut 135
Pseudo-Epiphanius, *Notitia* 186–7

Qartmin 199
Qatar 29
quaestor 8 (John); 79 (of Moesia); 346–7
Quintanus 179
Qulp 283

Rai (Tehran) 294
Rando 181
Ratiaria 67, 114, 147
Ravenna 12, 16, 98
Red Sea 215
referendarius (*rhepherendarios*) 31–2, 269
relics 23, 306, 319
Resapha 300
see also Sergiopolis
Reselec 135
Rhabdion 200, 210, 212, 270
Rhaedestus 189
Rhazates 39
Rhegium (Italy) 125
Rhegium (Thrace) 347
Rhine 60, 103, 179–80
Rhodopes 61, 77
Rhodostolos (?Dorostolon) 187
Riš 62
Roads:
administration and 60–3
Avars and 84, 171–2
invasions, defences and 68, 76–7, 84
supplies along 197–9
Romania 174, 179
Romanus 7, 12, 16, 291
Rome 5, 29, 205
Roses, Valley of 149, 155
Rowanduz 303
Ruan-Ruan 85

Sabir 207, 216, 253, 256, 264
Sabrisho 23, 234, 241, 306
Sabulente Canalion 34, 149, 339
Sadovec 133, 136
Salona 62, 64, 77, 113–14, 183, 189–90
Salvianus 98, 105, 155
Samaritans 214
Sandil 80
Sapeir 232, 284, 292, 346
Saphcae 201
Saracens 205, 209, 234
see also Arabs; Ghassanids; Lakhmids
Sargathon 254, 256
Sarnakhorgan *see* Mahbodh
Saronic gulf 88, 125
Sarosius 169
Sassanians 197, 202–3
see also Persia
Satala 207
Sava 61, 78, 87, 154, 171–2, 176
Savur 210
Saxons 176
Scamareis 71
Scaria 187
Scatrina 76
scholae 80
scholarios 32
scholastikos 30, 39
Scipio 45, 279–80, 346
Scodra 113
scribo 15, 32, 147, 347
Scupi 114, 159
Scupion 77
Scythia (province) 63, 70, 76, 87, 179
'Scythians' 312, 346
Sebaste 265
Sebeos:
Balkans 127–8, 147
chronology of Armenian campaigns 263
eastern wars 249
Hormizd's overthrow 294

Sebeos (*cont.*)
Khusro's appeal to Maurice 298–9
Musel Mamikonian 303
Smbat 291
Sebukht 251–2, 254
Securisca 160
Seleucia-Ctesiphon 197, 302
see also Ctesiphon
Seleucid Era *see* John of Ephesus, dates
Selymbria 68, 189
Semkhart 272
senate, senators 156; 177 (Rome)
Septuagint 342–4
Serbs 190, 335
Serdica 62, 67, 77, 113, 171–2
Sergiopolis (Resapha) 116, 210–11
see also Sergius (Saint)
Sergius (commander) 254
Sergius (interpreter) 238, 318
Sergius (Patriarch) 32–3, 39–40, 44, 50, 357
Sergius (Saint) 117, 214, 235–6, 239, 298, 300, 305, 327
Serug 200
see also Batna
Sesostris 325
Severinus 69
Severus Alexander 202–3
Seville 12
Shahvaraz 32, 293, 334
Shapur I 202–3
Shapur II 203–4
Shapur III 204
Shiraz 262
Shirin 234, 305
Shiroe 334
Sicily 13, 79, 125, 142
Sieges:
Avars, ability at 84–5, 118, 172–3; use of Slavs in 164, 173
Huns 67–8
Persians 258
Sigibert 87
silentiarius 271, 347
Simeon Stylites (younger) 6
Sinai 211
Singara 204, 256, 300
Singidunum 61, 67–8, 70, 77, 109–10, 113, 122, 142, 151–4, 161, 171–2, 174, 178, 181, 187
Šipka 62, 149, 155, 162, 171
Siponto 190
Sirmium 61, 66, 68, 78, 84, 87–9, 111–12, 133, 142, 146, 151, 154–5, 162, 171–3, 177, 190, 324
Sisarbanon 232, 290
Siscia 61
Sisinnios 183
Sittas 214, 239, 289, 299–300
Slavs 11, 69, 71, 75, 78–89, 98, 100–6, 110–11, 113–14, 138, 143–5, 151–4, 156, 174–6, 346, 355
aquatic skills 82–3, 153, 159, 176, 179–80
attacked by Romans 158–61, 164–7, 178–80
attacks on Thessalonica 79, 83, 116–21, 147, 175, 181, 185
attraction of cities to 83, 191
confused with Avars 87, 125–6
direction of invasions 143–4, 176
effect of attacks on 89, 111, 143–4, 175–6, 178
impact on, occupation of Balkans 71, 83–4, 87–9, 111–14, 125–6, 132–7, 175–6, 181, 185–90
Italy and 114, 127, 164, 175
military skills 82, 118, 179–80
relations with Avars 71, 82, 84, 87–9, 118, 120–1, 153, 164–5, 173, 175–6
settlement structure 81, 83, 165
tactics and strategy against 101–3, 165–7, 179–80
Smbat Bagratuni 127, 291
Sofia *see* Serdica
Solachon 215, 230–2, 240, 247–8, 281, 284–5, 320, 324
hero of 230, 232, 292, 346
Solomon 88
Sophanene 200
Sophia 6–7, 11, 25, 256, 258
Sophocles 38, 342, 347
Sophronius of Jerusalem 354
Sozopolis 189
Spain 9, 12, 23, 126, 151, 289–90
Spalato 191
Sparta 126
spatharius 271
Squillace 114
Stagirite 318, 324–5, 346
see also Aristotle
Stara Planina 61–3, 68, 70, 76–7, 99, 103, 138–9, 145, 147–51, 154, 158–60, 162, 171, 176, 182, 187
Stenes 77
Stephen (eunuch) 20
Stephen (general) 280, 325, 330