Procopius and the Persian Wars


This thesis takes as its focus book I ofProcopius' Persian Wars in an attempt to investigate both the events it describes and the way in which they are reported.

A two-fold approach has therefore been employed, on the one hand dealing with the actual events, and on the other withProcopius' handling of them compared to that of other sources. While the first chapter thus considersProcopius himself and the genre of 'classicising' history, the second provides the fifth-century background to the events. Subsequent chapters generally consider the events in question first, before going on to examineProcopius' account in detail.

The third chapter investigatesProcopius' information on Sasanian history and the Hephthalite Huns, which is remarkably detailed. The following chapter considers his account of the war waged against the Persians under the Emperor Anastasius (502-506), and concludes that he is offering a very partial account. Chapters five and six consider the centrepiece of Persian Wars I: the campaigns of 530 and 531, including Belisarius' victory at Dara and defeat at Callinicum. Close comparison with the chronicler John Malalas is undertaken in the case of the latter battle.

Chapter seven analysesProcopius' excursus into southern Arabian affairs, where he seems to have had access to good geographical and historical information. Chapter eight considers the final events reported in Persian Wars I, which, it is argued, were added at a later stage; his account of the Nika riot in Constantinople is omitted from consideration, but his final detailed excursus on internal Persian history and his report on the coup at Dara are examined.

A conclusion is offered at the end, emphasising the general accuracy ofProcopius, particularly concerning events of his own day, and seeking to account for his selectiveness in the deployment of information.
Procopius and the Persian Wars

D. Phil. Thesis (Hilary Term 1994)
G. Greatrex (Exeter College)
CONTENTS

Acknowledgements iii
Frequent Abbreviations iv
Preface vii
List of Figures ix

1. Procopius 1
   (a) Procopius and *Persian Wars* I 1
   (b) Procopius’ sources 3
   (c) Other sources 6
      (i) Contemporary Sources 7
      (ii) Later Sources 10
   (d) Procopius and ‘classicising’ historiography 13
   (e) Li 17

2. Procopius and the Fifth Century 24
   (a) Roman-Persian relations, 408-518 24
   (b) The Guardianship of Yadzgerd and the mission of Anatolius
      (L.ii) 35

3. Procopius and Persian History 40
   (a) Procopius on the Hephthalites (I.iii-iv) 40
   (b) Procopius on internal Persian history (I.v-vi) 67

4. Procopius on the Reign of Anastasius 83
   (a) The Anastasian War 83
      (i) The causes of war 83
      (ii) The course of the war 85
   (b) Procopius on the Anastasian War 99
      (i) I.vii 99
      (ii) I.viii 106
      (iii) I.ix 109
   (c) The treatment of the war by Procopius and other sources 110
   (d) The aftermath of war (I.x) 114
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. The First Justinianic War (Part 1)</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Rome and Persia, 518-532</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) I.xi</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) I.xii.1-19</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) I.xii.20-24</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The First Justinianic War (Continued)</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Lxiii.1-8</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) The battle of Dara (Lxiii.9-xiv.54)</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) The battle of Satala (L.xv)</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Negotiations after Dara (L.xvi)</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) The Callinicum campaign and its background (I.xvii-xviii)</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) The final negotiations (I.xxxi-xxii)</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Procopius on southern Arabia</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Introduction</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) The Geographical Excursus (I.xix)</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) The northern Red Sea (xix.2-7)</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) The Arabian coast (xix.7-16)</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) The African coast of the Red Sea (xix.17-26)</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iv) Egypt (xix.27-37)</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) The Historical Excursus (I.xx)</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Persian History and the Coup at Dara</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Introduction</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) The plot against Khusro (I.xxii)</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) The attempt on Dara (I.xxvi)</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is a pleasure to acknowledge the help of those who have contributed in various ways to the completion of this thesis. My first debt must be to my supervisor, James Howard-Johnston, for his untiring work and for saving me from many obvious errors. John Matthews and Cyril Mango have also made helpful suggestions at various stages; I have benefited too from discussions with Zeev Rubin, Sam Barnish, Mark Whittow, Peter Heather and Irfan Shahid.

Others have assisted through providing the text of papers or books before publication, not least my supervisor, but also David Braund, Sam Lieu and Irfan Shahid.1 Others still have drawn my attention to material which might otherwise have gone unnoticed, such as Sebastian Brock, Sam Lieu, Barbara Levick, John Rea, Robin Lane Fox, Benet Salway, Anne McCabe, Theodora Antonopoulou, Robert Hoyland, Kate Leeming, Colin Adams, and Jonathan Bardill. I am grateful also to Ghuzal Badamshina for her translation of an article into Esperanto. On a more general level thanks are due to Simon Davies (for constructive criticism), Liz Beaumont Bissell (for deconstructive criticism) and Mo Holkar; and a special debt of gratitude is owed to my parents for their constant support.

This thesis naturally owes much to the work of previous scholars on the sixth century. It was Robert Graves’ Count Belisarius which first drew my attention to the period, and to its chief historian. Finally, mention should also be made of the Procopian scholars who have most influenced this work. Jakob Haury and Averil Cameron.

1 All references to Shahid’s forthcoming work, Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century, vol. 1 (henceforth BASIC I) are to the chapter ‘The Reign of Justinian: The First Persian War’ unless otherwise indicated. All those to Braund’s work, Georgia in Antiquity (henceforth Braund), are to the chapter on ‘The War in Lazica’: page numbers of the typescript are offered in brackets.
Frequent Abbreviations

AB, Analecta Bollandiana


ASS, Acta Sanctorum.


BJRL, Bulletin of the John Rylands Library

BMGS, Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies


BSOAS, Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies


BZ, Byzantinische Zeitschrift


CIS, Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum, Paris 1889-1929.

CMH, Cambridge Medieval History, Cambridge 1911-.

CP, Chronicon Paschale, ed. L. Dindorf, Bonn 1832.

*CQ*, Classical Quarterly

*CR*, Classical Review

*CSCO*, Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium


*DOP*, Dumbarton Oaks Papers


*EI*, *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (second edition), Leiden 1960-.

*Elr*, *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, ed. E. Yarshater, London 1985-.


*FHG*, Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum, ed. Müller, C., Paris 1851 (vol.4), 1870 (vol.5).

*GRBS*, Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies


*IGLS*, Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie, edd. L. Jalabert, and R. Mouterde, Paris 1929-.

*JA*, Journal Asiatique

*JHS*, Journal of Hellenic Studies

*JÖB*, Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik

*JRAS*, Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society

*JRS*, Journal of Roman Studies
LRE. The Later Roman Empire, A.H.M. Jones, Oxford 1964.


MGH. AA. Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auctores Antiquissimi Berlin 1877-1919.

MTB. Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko

ND, Notitia Dignitatum, ed. O. Seeck, Berlin 1876.


PG, Patrologia Graeca, ed. J.P. Migne, Paris 1857-.

PL, Patrologia Latina, ed. J.P. Migne, Paris 1884-.

PO, Patrologia Orientalis, Paris 1903-.


RE, Pauly's Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertums-wissenschaft, Stuttgart 1893-.

REArm. Revue des études Arméniennes

REB. Revue des études Byzantines

ROC. Revue de l'Orient Chrétien

TAPA, Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association

TM, Travaux et Mémoires

ZDMG, Zeitschrift der Deutche Morgenlandische Gesellschaft

PREFACE

In her important book on Procopius, Averil Cameron expressed the view that 'to assess the evidential value of Procopius' work we need if possible to examine the credentials of every individual passage'; and it is with the latter task that this thesis is concerned. Further justification for such a detailed analysis may be found in the lack of any such treatment previously: the only substantial commentary is that of B. Rubin, which nonetheless offers only 20 columns of Pauly to Wars I. Other than this there is only a nineteenth century Russian commentary on Wars I, and the exiguous - and often inaccurate - remarks of Veh in his translation of 1970.\(^1\) Given the mass of Procopius' works that survives, only a small proportion can be dealt with in the space of one thesis; and while it had been hoped that both books of the Persian Wars could be covered here, the wealth of material relating to Wars I has meant that this study has had to confine itself to this work. The opening book of the Wars is a suitable place at which to start an examination of Procopius' evidence, however, and there is no reason to suppose that it was not Procopius himself who divided his work on the Persian wars into two books.\(^2\)

A two-fold approach has been employed to analyse Procopius' account. For in order to understand his technique for reporting events, it is necessary first to examine those events themselves. Most chapters therefore consist of an analysis of the events with which Procopius is concerned, followed by a more detailed comparison of his account with those of other surviving sources. And just as the Persian Wars is a composite work, incorporating material on internal Persian history, the Hephthalite Huns, and southern Arabia, so of necessity the range of this thesis is also broad. Its chief focus lies in the eastern frontier of the Roman empire, and the two wars which were fought there early

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2 In Photius' day, *Bibliotheca*, ed. and tr. R. Henry, Paris 1959-1977, vol.1, cod.63, the division into eight books was clearly in place. That a division between Persian Wars I and II was evident already in the sixth century is implied by Evagrius' separate synopses of these books at IV.12-13 and 25-29 (*Ecclesiastical History*, ed. J. Bidez and L. Parmentier, London 1898). Cf also Proc.'s reference at Wars VIII.vi.12 to book IV of Herodotus. I am grateful to Mr N.G. Wilson for his advice on this point.
in the sixth century; in the case of the second of these Procopius was an eye-witness to
the events, and his account assumes paramount importance.

In line with the two-fold strategy explained above, two preliminary chapters are
required. The first of these concerns the writer, the genre of history he was writing
('classicising history'), and the sources with whom his account is compared. The second
considers relations between Rome and Persia in the fifth century, in order that the
events of the following century may be seen in their appropriate context. This procedure
follows that of Procopius, who explains his motives for writing history at I.1, and provides
a few details on the fifth century at I.3. Later chapters also generally follow Procopius'
ordering of material, which can lead to a certain disjointedness. While it is intended that
this work be read alongside Procopius' work, an effort has been made throughout to
explain what exactly is under discussion, so that it may be understandable without the
need constantly to refer to the text.
LIST OF FIGURES

1. The Transcaucasus and the Roman-Persian borderlands 27
2. The Northeastern Sasanian empire 41
3. The Far eastern frontier of the Sasanian empire 51
4. The Eastern frontier (of the Roman empire) c.502 86
5. The main area of campaigning in the Anastasian War 88
6. Plan of Amida 103
7. The main area of campaigning in the first Persian war of Justinian 130
8. The family of Kavadh and Khusro 140
9. Lazica and Armenia in the reign of Justinian 149
10. The Eastern frontier around Nisibis 165
11. The southern section of Dara 171
12. The battle of Dara  phase 1 177
13.  phase 2 181
14.  phase 3 182
15.  phase 4 183
16. The battle of Callinicum  phase 1 205
17.  phase 2 206
18.  phase 3 207
19.  phase 4 208
20. Southern Arabia in the sixth century 222
21. The harbour at Adulis 237

LIST OF CHRONOLOGIES

1. The Anastasian War 98
2. Justin and Justinian's First Persian War 137-138
3. Events in southern Arabia 230
Procopius, 'a writer who must be accounted the most excellent Greek historian since Polybius', was born in Caesarea, Palestine, early in the sixth century. Prior to his appointment as the assessor of the dux Mesopotamiae Belisarius in 527 it is uncertain what sort of training he received - whether legal or literary, or perhaps both. It is clear at any rate that he accompanied Belisarius on his campaigns until 540 and possibly up to 542. Thenceforth he is believed to have set to work composing his Wars and Anecdota, which were both completed by 550-551. The latter of these was never published in his lifetime, and contrasts with much that is said in the Wars; no corrections, however, are made to what is stated in Wars I, although there is further clarification of some points (such as the downfall of John the Cappadocian). The former work, the Wars or Bella, provided an account of the campaigns fought under Justinian up to this time - against Persians (books I-II), Vandals (III-IV) and Goths (V-VII). Procopius continued to write, moreover, and Wars VIII and the De Aedificiis both followed around the year 554. The final book of the Wars took the history of Justinian's wars up to that year, while the de Aedificiis, which may have been commissioned by the Emperor, detailed the lavish building programme initiated by him. Most probably he died not long afterwards, and should not be identified with the prefect of Constantinople in 562-563.

When Procopius started to compose his Wars is unclear, although it is a not unlikely hypothesis that he began to take notes on events soon after his appointment to the post of assessor and the possibility of a legal background will be considered below. On his possible connection with the Gaza school and Procopius 1 in the Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire (henceforth PLRE) vol.III, ed. J. Martindale, Cambridge 1992. cf. G. Greatrex, 'The family of Procopius of Caesarea' (forthcoming). The quotation comes from J. Bury, History of the Later Roman Empire vol.2 (henceforth HLRE II), London 1923, p.419.


Proc.'s works will be referred to as Wars or Bella, de Aed. and Anecd., ed. J. Haury, rev. G. Wirth, Leipzig 1962-4 (four volumes); tr. H. Dewing, Cambridge Mass., 1914-40 (seven volumes).
Belisarius' staff; such a view helps to explain the wealth of detail in the central sections of *Persian Wars* I (xii-xxii), particularly in his description of the battle of Dara (xiii-xiv), at which Procopius was present in person. At some point, however, a decision was made to embark on a full-scale history of the wars waged by the Emperor Justinian (i.1), divided up geographically. The unusualness of this choice, not often noted, should be underlined. His fifth century 'classicising' predecessors, such as Priscus and Malchus, seem to have preferred the more traditional technique of narrating events in chronological order, although Olympiodorus' work was more composite. The only obvious precedent was the second-century writer Appian, to whom Procopius never refers. In the final book of the *Wars*, however, the geographical division was abandoned, to be replaced by a chronological structure (VIII.i.1-2, cp. *Anecd*. i.1).³

This geographical division is of some importance, in that it is sometimes possible to observe Procopius' difficulties in arranging his material: in the case of *Wars* I there are the two chapters concerning events at the capital (xxiv-xxv), which were most probably added on at a later stage. The opening of *Wars* III (the *Vandalic Wars*), moreover, refers to the conclusion of the *Μηδικος πολεμος*, which is more naturally taken to refer to the war which ends at I.xxxii; for at the end of *Wars* II the war against Khusro is continuing, interrupted only by a precarious truce, and the last section concerns John the Cappadocian in any case (II.xxx.49-54). Two phases of composition can reasonably then be postulated, the latter probably falling around the year 546.⁴

As has been explained in the preface, it is intended in this chapter to discuss the background to Procopius' work. First his sources will be examined (section (b)), and then the other accounts with which he is to be compared (section (c)). His place in the context of 'classicising' historiography will then be considered (section (d)); the chapter concludes with an examination of Procopius' own introduction to his work (section (e)).


⁴ *V.i.* ch.8 nn.1 and 27 also on the dating of xxiii-xxvi. For a useful discussion of the dating of the composition of the wars, cf. J. Haury, 'Procopiana' (part 1) in *Programm des Königlichen Realgymnasiums Augsburg*, 1890/1, pp.4-7.
(b) Procopius' sources

Compared to a historian such as Evagrius, who usefully provides a complete list of the various sources available to him (V.24), it is extremely difficult to ascertain whence Procopius derived his information. Since, however, unlike Evagrius he was writing what is generally referred to as 'classicising' history, it was conventional not to indicate any sources used, in the manner of Thucydides. On the positive side, there is little doubt that for the two main campaigns recounted in Wars I - of 530 and 531 - the historian himself was present, as also at the abortive attempt to construct a fort at Minduos (xiii.1-8). It is probable too that he was present in Constantinople during the Nika riots, although this has not been universally accepted. This still leaves three major areas, however. First, and most importantly, there is the information on events previous to his own day, about which Gibbon declared that 'Procopius is a fabulous writer (for the events which precede his own memory)' - an unduly harsh verdict. Second, there is his material on Persian affairs, much of which refers to a period before his own day; and lastly there are the passages which refer to events in Justinian's reign, at which Procopius could not have been present - such as the battle outside Satala in 530 (xv) or the embassies to southern Arabia (xx). A table is offered below to illustrated these categories.


References to Proc. without a book number at the front refer to book I of the *Persian Wars*. 
In the case of the first category, uncertainty must prevail as to whence Procopius acquired his information. It is significant that Agathias was unable to find any reference to the adoption of Theodosius II by the Persian king Yadzgerd before Procopius (IV.xxvi.3-4; Proc. ii.1-10); nor does any other source report the withdrawal of the Egyptian frontier to the north by Diocletian (xix.29-36). On the other hand, both Priscus and Olympiodorus, the latter of whom came from Egypt, refer to events in Egypt in the fifth century; and since the former of these at least was used by Evagrius (V.24), it is likely that Procopius made use of such works which no longer survive, at least for his information on Diocletian. In the case of the preface to the Vandalic Wars it is generally held that he made extensive use of Priscus' work. 7

The most important part of the Persian Wars dealing with the period prior to Procopius' own day is that concerning the Persian War fought under Anastasius (vii-ix). In this case there are numerous other accounts with which his version may be compared; it is also possible to gauge how selective he has been in this case, for in other works, such as Wars II and De Aedificiis, he recounts further episodes from the war, omitted from the narrative in Wars I. A close comparison of Procopius' version with other surviving accounts reveals a marked geographical concentration on the city of Amida as well as a tendency to play down the Roman effort in the war. Such is the similarity between his account and that of Zachariah Rhetor concerning the siege of Amida that

7 On Proc.'s use of Priscus for the opening of Wars III. cf. Cameron, pp.208-209, stressing that he was not his only source, and noting that Eustathius may have been an intermediary source. Cf. also Blockley, FCH vol.1, p.115, and J. Haury in his preface to Wars I, pp.vii-xix, on Priscus.
a common source might be conjectured: the chronicler Eustathius of Epiphaneia. He wrote a history in two books, the latter of which ended soon after the capture of Amida in 503, as well as a separate work concerning the siege of the city; although he was held in high esteem by both Evagrius and Malalas, scarcely any of his work survives.⁸

A link between the first and second categories distinguished above may be found in the use of oral informants, a practice that also had its root in Thucydides (I.22.3). While previous written sources had no doubt dealt with Persian history - such as Priscus’ account of the embassy of Constantinus to Peroz in 464-5 (frg.41.3) - the fact that Procopius continues to recount Persian affairs in detail up to the 540s implies the use of at least some oral sources. An obvious candidate as the provider of this information is the younger Kavadh, grandson of king Kavadh, who fled to the Byzantine court around the year 541 (xxiii.23); Procopius’ material on Persian history dries up almost entirely after this. Another comparable supplier of material may be found in Gourgenes’ son Peranius, who fled to Constantinople during Justin’s reign (xii.11-14). Both he and Kavadh went on to command units of the Roman army in Italy, where Procopius was also serving as an aide to Belisarius. Given then that both the historian and the exiles were serving at a high level in the Italian campaigns, there is every reason to suppose that they will have known one another, and that Procopius could have acquired material for his work from them.⁹

There is at any rate no need to suppose that Procopius himself was acquainted with the Persian language: interpreters were available, and are referred to in his works. Agathias was to make extensive use of one, Sergius, for his excursus on Sasanian history. And as has recently been well demonstrated, the frontier was no barrier to information: the common language, Syriac, spoken on both sides of the Roman-Persian border, provided an obvious vehicle for news on Sasanian affairs, whether or not Procopius himself knew the language. Details on local matters, such as on the holy man Jacob

⁸ V.i. (c) below on Zachariah; ch.4 (c) for a comparison of Proc. and the other sources regarding the Anastasian War.


⁹ Cf. PLRE III, s.v. Cavades on Kavadh and v.i. ch.8 n.9: also PLRE III, s.v. Peranius. Reference to fragments in Priscus, Olympiodorus, Eunapius and Malchus are to the edition of R.C. Blockley, FCH vol.2, Liverpool 1983.
near Amida (vii.5-11) or the attempt of John to seize Dara (xxvi), could certainly be acquired from the inhabitants of these places.  

The final matter requiring investigation among potential sources of Procopius is that of 'official' or 'court' documents. That there were archives stored not only in the imperial capital but also at the headquarters of the *comes Orientis* at Antioch is certain. Procopius' contemporary Malalas appears to have made extensive use of the latter, while Menander Protector, writing later in the sixth century, probably used the Constantinopolitan archives to record the terms of the Romano-Persian treaty of 561/2. But did Procopius have recourse to such archives? No categorical answer may be offered; for, unlike Menander or Evagrius, he nowhere quotes any official documents verbatim. Given that it was at Constantinople that he worked on his *Wars*, it is *prima facie* likely that he took advantage of the records stored there. That being said, in the case of *Wars* I only a few episodes can with any probability be linked to official archives. Among these would be the embassy of Eusebius to the Hephthalites (iii.8-22), since such ambassadors seem to have deposited accounts of their missions in the capital; likewise, the digression on southern Arabia (xix-xx) probably stems from the account of an ambassador, perhaps Julian himself. The mysterious 'History of the Armenians', evidently a written account of some sort, may also have been situated in Constantinople.  

(c) Other sources

Within this heading a two-fold division may be made: on the one hand sources contemporary with Procopius, and on the other subsequent accounts, which may derive

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On interpreters, cf. Lee, p.51 and n.7. Cameron, p.156, on the use of local sources.

11 Cameron, p.156, on Proc. using 'official' sources for the list of army commanders at viii.1-5. On the archives in Constantinople, see now Lee, pp.35-40, noting the practice of ambassadors to deposit their accounts. On those of the *comes Orientis*, cf. B. Croke and E. Jeffreys in *Studies in Malalas*, pp.9-11, 208. On the 'History of the Armenians', v.t. ch.3 nn.97-98.
their information at least in part from him. In the former category there are the important Syriac works of 'Joshua the Stylite' and 'Zachariah Rhetor', bishop of Mitylene; the Chronographia of Malalas is also a vital source for the early years of Justinian's reign, while the Chronicle of Marcellinus comes provides useful, if brief, pieces of information. In addition, John Lydus' De Magistratibus, published only a little after Wars I-VII, provides some incidental details. In the latter category come the Chronicon Paschale and the ninth-century chronicle of Theophanes, as well as still later Byzantine chronicles, such as those of Zonaras and Cedrenus. Falling between these two categories are traditions independent of Procopius, such as the Armenian 'Epic Histories' and the Iranian Khvadaynamagh; this Persian royal tradition, surviving only in much later works (and Agathias), nonetheless reflects earlier accounts, which owe nothing to Procopius.

(i) Contemporary sources

'Joshua the Stylite' provides a remarkably detailed account of the Persian war fought under Anastasius, written from an Edessene perspective. Although the work was most likely not composed by Joshua, but rather just copied by a monk of this name, there is no doubt that it was written very soon after the truce which concluded the war in 506. The author gives a year by year description of events in Mesopotamia from the 490s to the end of the war, and regards the Persians as the instruments of God's punishment of the region. He is clearly well informed about military and political affairs, deriving his information 'from meeting with men who served as envoys to the two rulers (Anastasius and Kavadh)', as well as eye-witnesses and written texts (§25). The work is preserved in the chronicle of Pseudo-Dionysius of Tell-Mahre, and appears to be independent of all the other surviving sources on the war. 12

'Pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor', bishop of Mitylene is a vital source, though yet more complex than Joshua. It seems that Zachariah, writing under Anastasius, composed (in Greek) only books III-VI of the work which now bears his name; these cover the years 451-491, and were much used by Evagrius. But it is with books VII-XII (covering the period 491-569) that we shall be concerned, which seem to have been compiled in 569: at XII.4 there is a reference to the year 561, while at XII.7 to 555 and at I.1 and I.3 to 569. A number of authorial references to events under Anastasius and Justinian, however, point to use of earlier sources: at VII.5 there is a reference to a certain Gadono in the Anastasian War, known to the author, and he also claims to be acquainted with Dominicus, who fled from Italy to Constantinople during the Gothic war (IX.18).13

Evidently therefore the Syriac writer who compiled the work in 569 had access not only to Zachariah but also to other sources, which he used for the later books; among these may have been the second book of John of Ephesus' Ecclesiastical History. Eustathius of Epiphaneia is a likely source for the remarkable detail concerning the siege of Amida; and if Procopius too had used Eustathius, then the similarity between his account and that of Zachariah becomes comprehensible. Since the compiler appears to have made use of earlier sources, his account merits careful consideration.14

Joshua may have made use of Greek sources, e.g. Candidus the Isaurian or Eustathius, cf. N. Pigulewskaja, 'Theophanes' Chronographia and the Syrian Chronicles', Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinischen Gesellschaft 16 (1967), p.57.


14 Cf. PLRE II, s.v. Zacharias (the Rhetor) 4 on his life. Kugener, 'La compilation', considered that the chapters on the Anastasian war were written by a monk of Amida, and that Michael Syrus later attributed the whole work to Zach., not knowing who indeed who was its author, pp.202-203. Cf. also P. Allen, 'Zacharias Scholasticus and the Historia Ecclesiastica of Evagrius Scholasticus', Journal of Theological Studies n.s.31 (1980), pp.471-473 and the introduction to the translation of Hamilton and Brooks, pp.4-7 for a discussion of the compiler's sources.

Haury, Bella 1, pp.xix-xx, suggests that Eustathius was the source in common of Zach. and Proc. for the siege of Amida, cf. Allen, 'An early epitomator', p.3. Note also Allen, 'Zachariah Scholasticus', p.472 on the library of Mare, bishop of Amida, which was probably available to the compiler.
The Chronographia of John Malalas has been the subject of close study in recent years; as a result of this, the reputation of the work has risen considerably. John was born probably in the reign of Zeno, and from the fact that he is termed rhetor by Evagrius (a term similar to the Syriac 'mil' - Malalas) it is supposed that he had some legal or rhetorical training. From the wealth of information he provides on the city of Antioch in particular, as well as the detailed information on military and foreign affairs relating to the East, access to the records of the comes Orientis has also been inferred. The debate as to the positioning of the end of the first edition of the chronicle need not be considered here: most likely it should be situated in 532, soon after which Malalas moved to Constantinople.\(^{15}\)

While Malalas has little to say concerning the Anastasian War, he offers a very detailed account of the campaign of 531, culminating in the battle at Callinicum, which has frequently been contrasted favourably with Procopius' version of events. While his information on the events leading up to the battle are invaluable, it should be stressed that his account may be just as partisan as that of Procopius: among his informants was probably the magister officiorum Hermogenes, who will have had his own perspective on the causes of the Roman defeat. Thus even if Malalas is reflecting official reports which passed through the office of the comes Orientis, this is no guarantee that his version is any more trustworthy.\(^{16}\)

The Chronicle (and Additamentum) of Marcellinus comes. The Chronicle was initially published in 518, but was later extended by the author up to 534; a further continuation to 548 also survives. Marcellinus served as the cancellarius of the future Emperor Justinian during the reign of Justin, and it has long been observed that his account

\(^{15}\) On Malalas, cf. Jeffreys, Studies in Malalas; on his life, the debate over the first edition and the use of the archives of the comes Orientis, cf. B. Croke, 'Malalas, the man and his work' in this volume, pp.3-4, 17-22 and 9-11. The text of Malalas (henceforth Mal.) used is that of B. Niebuhr, Bonn 1831, cf. also the translation (with comments) by E. and M. Jeffreys and B. Croke, Melbourne 1986.


Below, ch.6(e) on the 531 campaign; nn.3 and 92 for assessments of the accounts of Proc. and Mal.
reflects an official perspective. This is particularly evident in the case of the Nika riot of January 532, which had occurred so shortly before Marcellinus published his extension of the work. Although his chronology is not always accurate, such as his placing of the fall of Amida in 502 (rather than January 503), he can on occasion help to compensate for Procopius' failure to date events explicitly.\(^7\)

*The de Magistratibus of John Lydus*, a 'disgruntled civil servant and antiquarian', contains a few relevant pieces of information, though mainly on the Nika riot and the activities of John the Cappadocian. He also was commissioned by Justinian to write a work on his first Persian War, which has vanished entirely.\(^8\)

(ii) Later sources

The importance of sources subsequent to the sixth century naturally lies in their access to contemporary sources no longer extant. Sometimes these sources can be pinpointed accurately, but often not.

The Chronicle of Malalas proved to be a most popular work, and later chroniclers in the Byzantine period made extensive use of it. Thus John of Nikiu, writing in the late seventh century, appears to have depended on Malalas considerably, incorporating many sections of the work into his own text; the *Chronicon Paschale*, dating from earlier in the century, also relied heavily on Malalas for the period with which we are concerned. But, as in the case of the Nika riot, the work on occasion preserves material lost from our

\(^7\) On Marcellinus, cf. B. Croke's D. Phil. thesis (soon to be published), *The Chronicle of Marcellinus*, Oxford 1978; p.35 on his position as *cancellarius* (cf. also *PLRE* II, s.v. Marcellinus 9), p.327 for his error on the fall of Amida. On his official stance, cf. R. Scott, 'Malalas and his contemporaries' (ch.4) in *Studies in Malalas*, p.76. The text of Marcellinus (ed. Th. Mommsen) is in *MGH AA XI*, Berlin 1894, pp.60-104.

\(^8\) On John Lydus, cf. M. Maas, *John Lydus and the Roman Past: Antiquarianism and politics in the age of Justinian*, London 1992, p.1 for the quotation; also *PLRE* II, s.v. Ioannes Lydus 75 for his career. Scott in *Studies in Malalas*, pp.72-75, notes similarities between his outlook and that of Malalas. On his work on the Persian war, cf. *De Magistratibus Populi Romani*, ed. R. Wuensch, Leipzig 1903, III.28 on this (all references to Lydus will be to *de Mag.* unless otherwise indicated). All references henceforth to John Lydus refer to this work, unless otherwise indicated.
Theophanes made use of a range of sources, including Procopius and Malalas, as well as others which no longer survive. He provides a few unique items of information concerning the Anastasian War and the Nika riot, generally acquired from Malalas, and often gives more precise dates for events than the text of Malalas now available. Subsequent chroniclers seldom have anything to add to Theophanes and Malalas; among them may be noted the fourteenth century writer Nicephorus Callistus Xanthopulos, who composed an ecclesiastical history from the time of Christ to 911, of which the portion up to 610 survives, and who evidently relied much on Evagrius and earlier church historians, but also had access to all of Procopius' works.

A tradition of chronographies also emerged in Syriac, where later sources such as Michael the Syrian, Gregory Bar Hebraeus, Pseudo-Dionysius of Tell Mahré and the Chronicon ad a.c. 1234 pertinens can preserve details from sixth century sources, now lost or fragmentary. Hence the loss of the second book of John of Ephesus' Ecclesiastical History is compensated for slightly by these later works, which also make much use of Zachariah. The siege of Amida proved to be a particularly popular story, and accounts of it - generally differing little from that in Zachariah - can be found in many Syriac chronicles.

Consideration must also be given to the Iranian tradition, which is of particular importance when dealing with Procopius' information on Persian affairs. The principal

On the Chronicon Paschale (henceforth CP), cf. the helpful translation and commentary of M. and M. Whitby, Chronicon Paschale 284-628 AD, Liverpool 1989 (henceforth CPW), pp.ix-xiv on the work and xv-xvii on its sources (esp. xviii-xix on the fifth-sixth centuries, cp. note B, pp.112-113 on the Nika riot); the edition used is that of L. Dindorf, Bonn 1832.

20. On Theophanes, cf. the useful entry of A. Kazhdan in the Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium (henceforth ODB) vol.3, p.2063, reviewing the various views as to his sources. On Xanthopulus (as he will henceforth be referred to), cf. G. Gentz, Die Kirchengeschichte der Nicephorus Callistus Xanthopulus und ihre Quellen, Berlin 1966 and ODB, vol.3, p.2207 (A.-M. Talbot). References to Theophanes will be given by Anno Mundi (A.M.); the texts used are those of C. de Boor, Leipzig 1883 (vol.1) and J. Classen, Bonn 1839. Xanthopulus - in PG 145-147, ed. J.-P. Migne.

21. On the Syriac chronicles and their sources, cf. e.g. Witakowski, The Syriac Chronicle of Pseudo-Dionysius, chs. 3 and 4 (on Pseudo-Dionysius); also Pigulewskaja, 'Theophanes' Chronographia', pp.58-60 (on the use of John of Ephesus) and Brock, 'Syriac historical writing', pp.5-6 on John and 7-21 on later chronicles. Cf. also now The Seventh Century in the West-Syrian Chronicles, tr. and annot. A. Palmer, Liverpool 1993, pp.xviii-xcii and 95-104 (on Pseudo-Dionysius and the 1234 chronicle, though for a slightly later period).
Sasanian traditions were recorded in the Royal Annals, preserved in the Pahlavi Khvadāyānāmāgh during the reign of Yadzgerd III (632-651). Both the original version of this and the translation of it into Arabic by Ibn Moqaffa in the eighth century are lost. An early version of the annals survives in Agathias' excursus on Sasanian history, however, which can be compared fruitfully with the much later Arabic and Persian texts.\textsuperscript{22} While an analysis of the numerous strands of the Khvadāyānāmāgh is a task far beyond the scope of the thesis, a few points may be noted here. First, the presence of multiple versions of events in the Khvadāyānāmāgh is extremely likely, and helps to explain the diversity of accounts to be found in Nöldeke's translation of Tabari (d.923), Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sassaniden (Leiden 1879). It has been observed further that the eleventh century Iranian epic of Firdausi, the Shahnameh, and the Arabic work of al-Tha'alibi (d.1038) differ quite considerably from the royal tradition; thus the Khvadāyānāmāgh was not the sole preserver of Sasanian history into later times.\textsuperscript{23}

In a few instances Procopius is in close agreement with at least one of the versions preserved in Tabari, such as over the last battle of Peroz against the Hephthalites in 484 (iv). But since this battle attracts the attention of so many sources, such as Lazar P'arpec'i and Joshua as well as the numerous Iranian traditions, no connection to the Royal Annals need be inferred for Procopius.\textsuperscript{24}


\textsuperscript{23} On the Sasanian tradition, cf. Nöldeke, Iranian National Epic, esp. §14, p.25 and §27, p.63, on the divergence of the Shahnameh and al-Tha'alibi. In general see the introduction to Nöldeke, Geschichte der Araber zur Zeit der Sassaniden (henceforth Tabari). Christensen, L'Iran sous les Sassanides (second edition). Copenhagen 1944 (henceforth Christensen or L'Iran), pp.59-74 (where he also discusses the various works apart from the Khvadāyānāmāgh); also idem, Le règne du roi Kawâd et le communisme Mazdakite (henceforth, Le règne), Copenhagen 1925, pp.22-25 and E. Yarshater, 'Iranian National History', Cambridge History of Iran (henceforth CHIr) vol. 3.1, Cambridge 1983, pp.359-364.

\textsuperscript{24} Below, ch.3 (a), on this battle. On Lazar, cf. The History of Lazar P'arpec'i, tr. R.W. Thomson, Atlanta, 1991, pp.6-8 and 18-31; his work terminates in 485, after which there is a lacuna in the Armenian sources for most of the sixth century.
(d) Procopius and ‘classicising' historiography

‘Now war and royal power are agreed to be the greatest of all things in the world': such are the words which Procopius attributes to the Roman senator Origenes (xxiv.26). They also help to explain the scope of Procopius’ work, which concentrates chiefly on the first of these 'greatest things'. He explains this at the very beginning of the Wars, declaring his intention to describe Justinian's wars against foreign peoples in the east and west (i.1). A glance through book I of the Persian Wars reveals that Justinian's wars - in this case those in the east - indeed form the core of the work: a detailed account of the campaigns of 530 and 531 is offered, as well as of the negotiations which brought Justinian's first Persian War to a close (xiii-xviii; xxi-xxii). But Procopius does not limit himself to events of his own day. His account starts over a hundred years before Justinian ascended the throne, in A.D. 408, when Theodosius II became Emperor (ii.1). The chapters which follow keep to the theme of 'war and royal power', but also concern events before Justinian's reign. First, the struggles of the Persians against their eastern neighbours, the Hephthalite Huns, are considered (iii-iv), and then the eventful reign of the Sasanian king Kavadh I (488-496/7; 498/9-531). Second, an account of the Persian war waged under Anastasius (502-506) is offered (vii-ix).

Nor does this exhaust all the material to be found in book I. Geographical and ethnographical excursuses are also offered, such as on the Caspian Gates (x.1-9) and southern Arabia (xix). At a later stage, moreover, the contents of the book became still more varied, when chapters were added, not just on Persian history (xxiii), but also on the Nika riots and the career of John the Cappadocian (xxiv-xxv). The last chapter in the book concerns a coup in Dara, which took place in 537 (xxvi).25

What grounds did Procopius have for covering these events in particular? A two-fold answer may be offered here. On the one hand, as he tells us himself, he was well placed to recount Justinian's wars, having witnessed so many of them personally in his capacity as the assessor of the leading general of the day, Belisarius (i.3). He was appointed to

25 On the later dating of xxiii-xxv, cf. ch.8 nn.1 and 27. Since xxiv-xxv were not only added later, but also concern events far removed from the Persian frontier, they have not been examined in this thesis; the Nika riot was dealt with in detail by Bury. 'The Nika riot'. JHS 17 (1897), pp.97-119; on John the Cappadocian, cf. Cameron, pp.69-71.
this post in 527, when Belisarius became dux of Mesopotamia at Dara (xii.24).

As will be noted below, such a position was ideal for a historian. But while there is no doubt as to when Procopius was appointed to this office, it is less clear what exactly the functions of the assessor were, and what qualifications were required to become one. A brief consideration of the office is in order. The post is rendered in Greek by two terms: here Procopius refers to himself as a ξυμβουλος (i.3), while at III.xiv.3 he styles himself τον αντον [sc. Belisarion] παρεδρον. Yet although this seems to have been a post usually assigned to lawyers, Procopius' services to Belisarius do not obviously point to a legal background; rather, he appears to have fulfilled the role of an adjutant or staff officer, with responsibility for administrative matters, such as supplies.26

Now both the Codex Theodosianus and Codex Justinianus refer to assessores, who emerge as the right-hand men of duces, such as in Justinian's reorganisation of Africa. They are also referred to as consiliarii (= παρεδρος), and were evidently in the habit of trying to continue their legal career while simultaneously serving in the provincial government. In Justinian's day then assessores were generally former lawyers; but from an oration of Libanius (Or XXXIII.4-5) it appears that it was not necessary to have legal training to hold the position.27 The question as to whether Procopius had trained as a lawyer is thus not solved by his appointment as an assessor. The weight of evidence, however, tends to support the view that he had some legal training: Menander's excerptor refers to him as a δικηγορος (frg.14.2), and the term ρητωρ often used of him

26 Cf. Wars VI.iv.1-4 on his mission from Rome to collect supplies, and PLRE III, s.v. Procopius 2, for Proc.'s services to Belisarius. For a case similar to Proc., cf. Justinian, termed the συμβουλος and παρεδρος of Stilicho, who had previously been an advocate in Rome (Zosimus, Histoire Nouvelle, ed. and tr. F. Paschoud, vol.3.1, Paris 1986, V.xxx.4-5) and PLRE II, s.v. Justinianus 2.


is used to designate advocates (Anecd. xx.17).28

It is worthy of note how the occupant of this position was in an enviable position for acquiring information for history writing. Hence it is surely significant that not only was Procopius an assessor, but also most probably his forerunner Priscus: he accompanied the general Maximinus on his mission to the Huns in 449, then to Isauria, to Damascus and also to the Thebaid. It has been suggested further that Olympiodorus derived much of his information on Stilicho from his assessor Justinian.29

Mention of these two fifth-century predecessors of Procopius leads into the second part of the answer to the question posed above - why Procopius covered the events he did. For the wider context in which the Wars were written must be also considered, and the whole genre of 'classicising' history, as it is now known. The 'classicising' historians flourished between the fifth century and the early seventh, but in very few cases are their works preserved in their entirety. In the case of the fifth century 'classicising' historians particularly, what remains of their works is due primarily to their inclusion in the (surviving) Excerpta compiled in the tenth century at the behest of the Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus.30

The fifth century 'classicising' historians Priscus and Olympiodorus have been encountered already; the somewhat earlier Eunapius should also be mentioned, as well as Malchus of Philadelphia, writing under Anastasius.31 In the sixth century, Procopius' work seems to have stimulated interest in 'classicising' history: Agathias took up where Procopius left off, and his work was in turn continued by Menander Protector. Finally, at the end of the tradition comes Theophylact Simocatta, writing early in the seventh

28 Cf. PLRE III, s.v. Procopius 2, ad initium on the matter as to whether he was a δικαστήριος; also Evans, Procopius, p.32, Bury, HLRE II, p.419 n.2, Cameron, p.8, Stein II, p.711 and n.1, all favour the view that Proc. was a lawyer, contra Haury. Zur Beurteilung, pp.19-20.

29 On Priscus, cf. PLRE II, s.v. Priscus 1 and Maximinus 11; on Olympiodorus, cf. J.F. Matthews, 'Olympiodorus of Thebes and the history of the West', JRS 60 (1970), p.90, cp. Blockley, FCH vol.1, p.34. Note also that the historians John of Epiphania and Evagrius were both assessores of the Patriarch Gregory of Antioch: the latter certainly had a legal training, cf. PLRE III, s.v. Evagrius and Ioannes 162.

30 Cf. Blockley, FCH vol.1, p.97, for this point, noting too that the particular book of Excerpta in which the material is to be found determines the theme of the fragment - whether (for instance) moralising, from the Excerpta de Sententis, or diplomatic, from the Excerpta de Insidiis.

century and dealing with the reign of the Emperor Maurice (582-602).

The term 'classicising' historians alludes partly to the tendency among these writers not to concern themselves with ecclesiastical affairs, despite their increasing importance in the period in which they were writing. Instead, they gave prominence to military and diplomatic affairs, embellishing their accounts with speeches and ethnographical digressions, in the manner of the classical historians; and by their avoidance of technical terms as well, they might hope to make their work resemble that of Thucydides or Herodotus to a great extent.

But like all labels, that of 'classicising historians' must be treated with caution. Differences of approach certainly existed among the writers to whom this label applied, and some sought to emulate their classical predecessors more than others. A few examples may be put forward to illustrate this point. On the matter of chronology, it is generally held that while the classical historians, in particular Thucydides, strove to date events carefully, this was not the case with their 'classicising' imitators. Upon closer examination, however, the attitude of 'classicising' historians can be seen to vary markedly: on the one hand, Eunapius (frg.1) clearly eschewed chronological precision deliberately, while on the other, it appears that Malchus' History dealt with events under the Emperors Leo (457-474) and Zeno (474-491) on a year by year basis. Again, while the general tendency among 'classicising' historians was to ensure that everything was described in the same grand manner, Menander provides the actual text of the treaty agreed between Rome and Persia in 561, rather than reworking it himself. And although 'classicising' historians are accused of failing to offer explanations for events, Theophylact enters into a substantial digression to explain the war which broke out

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33 Cf. Blockley, FCH vol.1, pp.87-92; also p.69 (on Priscus). He rightly stresses that avoidance of ecclesiastical affairs does not imply that the writers were not themselves Christian, p.88.

34 Blockley, FCH vol.1, pp.72-73, on Malchus' work.

between Rome and Persia under Justin II.\textsuperscript{36}

Thus while the category of 'classicising' historiography is important to an understanding of Procopius' work, it incorporates many different strands. Finally, before considering the preface to the \textit{Wars}, it is worthwhile briefly to note how strong the influence of the two major classical historians - Thucydides and Herodotus - was on Procopius. The theme of Persian Wars in particular gave him a link with Herodotus, and it is not surprising therefore to find close verbal echoes of him throughout book I, particularly when dealing with Persian affairs. His debt to Thucydides may be seen, for instance, in his notice concerning the close of the campaigning season of 530, and the opening of that of the following year, a procedure which he employed more extensively in the \textit{Gothic Wars}.\textsuperscript{37}

\textit{(e) I.i}

The opening chapter of the \textit{Wars} has occasioned considerable debate. The obvious debt of the author to Herodotus and Thucydides has been the focus of attention, and the preface termed a 'farrago' of the two. It is not the brief of this work, however, to give detailed consideration to Procopius' literary debts.\textsuperscript{38}

The opening section of the chapter owes more to Thucydides than Herodotus. For while Herodotus (I.1) states that he is recording the past in order that great deeds not be forgotten, it is Thucydides (I.22.4) who adds that the events described might prove useful in future times; the opening words, moreover, are also a direct reminiscence of

\textsuperscript{36} Blockley, \textit{FCH} vol.1, p.69, for the lack of analysis of causes; Theophylact Simocatta, \textit{Historiae}, ed. C. de Boor, rev. P. Wirth, Stuttgart 1962, III.ix, on the causes of Justin II's war. Note also Whitby, \textit{Maurice}, pp.41-42, who stresses divergences within the class of 'classicising' historians.

\textsuperscript{37} Echoes of Herodotus in Persian history - \textit{v.l.} esp. ch.8 nn.15-16 on xiii.9; on the 'dating of the campaigning season, cf. xvi.10-xvii.1, ch.6 n.68. Cf. also Cameron, pp.36-45, esp. 38-39, on the influence of Herodotus and Thucydides.

\textsuperscript{38} R. Scott, 'The Classical Tradition in Byzantine historiography' in \textit{Byzantium and the Classical Tradition}, edd. M. Mullett and R. Scott, Birmingham 1981, pp.61-74 at p.73 for his notion that Proc. is 'poking fun at his classical models' by referring so far back to Iliadic times.

Thucydides' Θοικυδίδης Ἀθηναίος ξινερασίης ἔννεψασε τὸν πόλεμον ... (I.1.1). Later classical historians elaborated on these sentiments: Diodorus (I.i.3) also invoked the utility of history, as did Polybius (Li.2).

The tone of this first section is obviously optimistic; its composition was placed by Haury in 546, who contrasts it with the disillusioned tone of the Anecdota. On the other hand, a link between this preface and the Anecdota may be suggested in connection with Procopius' statement at i.5 that he will include the μορφηρά of even those closest to him in his account. For while there is some criticism of certain generals in the Wars, any shortcomings of Belisarius receive little treatment in the work; but in the Anecdota, on the other hand, Procopius specifically states at the end of his preface that he will now proceed to catalogue the μορφηρά of Belisarius, and then of Justinian and Theodora (i.10). It might thus be proposed that this reference in the Wars to the μορφηρά has the Anecdota in mind, and is likely therefore to have been written in or shortly before 550.

Although it has been argued that Procopius is less successful than Thucydides in his assertion concerning the superiority of his own times, he enjoys a certain advantage over his illustrious predecessor in regard to his participation in the events described. For Thucydides studiously notes how careful he has been in obtaining material from informants (I.22.2-3), whereas Procopius merely states how well placed he was to acquire information; unfortunately he provides no indication about his procedures when he had not witnessed an event himself. His claim to be setting forth the truth - αληθεία (i.5) - is again nothing new, and was taken up again by Agathias (prooem.20), who also stresses how his work will not be panegyrical.

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39 Lieberich, p.1, for a detailed comparison of the Herodotus and Thucydides passages. The parallel with Thucydides renders Haury's view (Zur Beurteilung, p.26) that Kaωαρέως indicates that Proc. was writing in Caesarea (and not Constantinople) rather unconvincing, since Thucydides too was not writing his work at Athens, having been expelled in 424 (though he later returned). Rather, the Kaωαρέως should be taken - like Thucydides' Ἀθηναίος - as indicating the birthplace of the author, cf. Cameron, p.5. PLRE III, s.v. Procopius 2, also supposes him to have been writing in Constantinople.


41 Lieberich, p.6, notes earlier precedents for the insistence by historians that they will not show undue partiality to their friends. e.g. Polybius I.xiv.4-5.

42 Cp. also Diodorus Siculus, I.iii.7, who favourably contrasts history with poetry (and law), as noted by Rubin, Πν.col.361.
Concerning Procopius' discussion of Homeric archers (i.6-11) scholarly opinion is divided: should it be seen as an entertaining reworking of a classical topos or as a serious expression of the author's admiration for the Roman cavalry of his own day? A definite resolution of this problem is clearly impossible, although Procopius' sincerity concerning the skill of the Roman archers is not in doubt. The reference to Iliadic bowmen becomes less odd if several factors are borne in mind. First, the practice of archery did need to be defended: not only is it condemned in the Iliad, but it is also a particularly Persian weapon in Herodotus (e.g. VII.226). Furthermore, horse archers were a relatively recent introduction into the Roman army, and no doubt not to the liking of some traditionalists. Hence Procopius sought to deflect these criticisms by attacking a well known work hostile to archers.

Of more interest than his review of Homeric bowmen is Procopius' detailed description of the mounted archers of his own times (i.12-16). Unfortunately there are no surviving representations of the Roman cavalrymen here described, although depictions of Persian horse archers are of some help. The equipment and style of fighting of the Roman armies of the sixth century differed markedly from those of previous (and subsequent) periods: the prominence accorded to archery is perhaps the most major change, since heavy cavalry had become a feature of the Roman army from the fourth century. The horse-archer here described possesses the long-range effectiveness of Hunnic warriors, but can fight efficiently at close quarters as well; the cavalry was of course rather lighter than the clibanarii or cataphracti of previous centuries, but this had the corresponding advantage of according greater

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44 Proc. may also have come across works specifically concerned with Homeric archers, such as that of Neoteles, noted by Porphyrius, Porphyrii Quaestionum Homericarum ad Iliadem pertinentium reliquias, ed. H. Schrader, fasc.1, Leipzig 1880, p.123, cf. C. Wendel in RE XVI (1935), col.2477. s.v. 'Neoteles'; Neoteles' dates are uncertain.

The equipment described by Procopius is in general agreement with the *Strategikon* assigned to Maurice, although Avar influence had clearly led to developments in the intervening half century between the two works. The strength of the Roman armour is attested by the relative frequency of wounds to the few areas which remained unprotected, such as the eyes and neck; it appears likely that the armour referred to here is mail, though other types were certainly in use. Some dispute has been occasioned by the mention of an ἀσπίς at i.13: it is clear, however, that what is being described is a type of shield, strapped to the upper arm, which served to defend the face and neck. An example of such an item is pictured on a Sasanian bowl.

Procopius' account of the Roman cavalrymen focuses particularly on the dexterity of the riders and the power of their shots; their prominent role in the wars under Justinian

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47 T.G. Kolias, *Byzantinsiche Waffen*, Vienna 1988, p.221, makes the point regarding the strength of the Roman armour; Trajan (War VI.v.24-7) sustained such a wound (to the forehead). *Das Strategikon des Maurikios*, ed. G.T. Dennis, tr. E. Gamillscheg, Vienna 1981, I.2 (pp.76-78), on the hooded coats of mail worn by the cavalry, which it states extended down to the ankles - surely referring to a heavier type of cavalry than that here depicted. Haldon, p.13, specifies three types of armour in use in the sixth century - scale (and its sub-types), laminated and mail. On the mail armour and for a synthesis of the various sources on the sixth century horse-archers, cf. *idem*, pp.18-19, p.21 on the influence of the Avars. The Περί Στρατηγικῶν in *Three Byzantine Military Treatises*, ed. and tr. G.T. Dennis, Washington 1985, has little to add regarding cavalry equipment, though it also recommends armour for the horses in the front line at §17.

On the quiver carried, cf. Haldon, p.21 and n.52.

48 Haldon and Kolias disagree, but largely over semantics - as to whether such an object can be termed an ἀσπίς, cf. Haldon, p.18 and n.33 and Kolias, p.122 and n.179 for his (unconvincing) counter-argument. Cf. the sensible description of J.C. Coulston, 'Roman, Parthian and Sassanid tactical developments', *Defence of the Roman and Byzantine East* (henceforth *DRBE*), edd. P. Freeman and D. Kennedy, Oxford 1986, p.67. For the Sasanian illustration, cf. the picture of Khusro II in Bivar, 'Cavalry Equipment', plate 23, where some sort of small circular shield can be detected behind Khusro's head (Pl. 6.1, p.64 in Coulston).
testifies to their effectiveness in the field of battle. Against the Goths, on the one hand, they were remarkably deadly: hence Belisarius laughs in scorn at the advancing ranks of Goths at the opening of the siege of Rome \( (\text{Wars V.xxii.2-7}) \). In the battle which marked the demise of the Vandalic kingdom in Africa, the infantry was not even present; but in the East, on the other hand, the Persians possessed horse-archers of their own. This is clarified at xviii.32-33 at the battle of Callinicum (531), during which most of the day was taken up in an exchange of missiles: Procopius here asserts that the Persians fired more frequently than the Romans, but with less force. The \textit{Strategikon} also notes that the Persians employ archery - both their infantry and their cavalry - as well as distinguishing a Roman and a Persian method of shooting.\(^{49}\) Much stress was laid upon effective archery in the sixth century, as is evident from the military manuals of the time - not only the \textit{Strategikon} (I.1), but also Urbicius’ short work from the start of the century as well as the anonymous Περὶ τοξείας. The last of these distinguishes three methods of firing: some draw the string with the middle three fingers, others with just two, while others still employ the thumb and forefinger. It considers this last method to be the most powerful, although all three should be learnt by soldiers, in order that they can vary the fingers they use.\(^{50}\)

The usefulness of the horse-archer in being able to fire off his missiles in pursuit and flight is also noted by the Περὶ Τοξείας (I.1). Drawing the string back to the ear was the most powerful method of firing known: three gradations of power were generally distinguished. The first of these was that mentioned at i.11, and involved only drawing the string back to the breast; more effective was to pull it back to the neck, and the most

\(^{49}\) I.1 (p.74, ed. Dennis) on training the Roman soldiers to shoot rapidly on foot in the Roman or Persian manner and n.2 (p.11, tr. Dennis) for the distinction between the two; that this difference is not a contrivance of Roman writers is proved by representations of Persian bowmen in Sassanian art. The ‘Roman’ or Hunnic manner of shooting was only re-introduced by the Muslims, cf. Bivar, ‘Cavalry Equipment’, pp.284-285 and n.52 on evidence in Sassanian art.

The \textit{Strategikon} too, it should be noted, remarks on the Persian ability to shoot more rapidly, but less strongly - XI.1, p.354 (ed. Dennis); \( \text{v.i.} \) also ch.6, text to n.99.

powerful was to stretch it right back to the ear. For all that their finger-combination may not have produced such a strong shot as the Romans, the Persians were at any rate also in the habit of drawing the string back to the ear, as is clear from artistic evidence.\textsuperscript{51}

The suspicion arises then that Procopius has overemphasised the prowess of the Roman archers. For Ammianus (XXIV.2.13) notably lays stress on the penetration of Persian arrows in direct contradiction of Procopius (i.11), while Theophylact (I.xii.5) also pays tribute to Persian skill with the bow, viewing it as their weapon \textit{par excellence}. It is possible, however, that the Roman armour in the sixth century was better adapted to protect against Persian archery.\textsuperscript{52} No doubt the penetration of the Roman archers, so praised by Procopius, varied depending on the range: Belisarius was able to kill two Gothic leaders in armour at the outset of the siege of Rome, it is true, but by hitting them in the neck (\textit{Wars} V.xxii.4-6). The Persian missiles, on the other hand, (I.xviii.33) are said to bounce off Roman armour and to inflict little damage, whereas the Roman bows are again here praised for their greater effectiveness (xviii.34); despite this, it may be noted, they did not bring victory to the Romans at Callinicum.

Procopius finally returns to his theme (i.16) - to counter the opinions of those who hold ancient times in such high esteem, and relate the remarkable deeds of his own day. He does so in a spirit of enthusiasm for 'modern improvements' - \textit{ἐπιτεχνηθησθαι}, which need not be in contrast to the writer's well-known conservatism: hence at v.1 Kavadh is portrayed as an innovator, as is his son Kavadh at xxiii.1, not to mention Justinian in the \textit{Anecdota} (e.g. vi.21). In this case, however, it is a \textit{technical} innovation that is in question; and it is clear throughout Procopius' writings that he was interested in the

\textsuperscript{51} The three distinctions are made in the \textit{Περὶ Τοξείας} [44] (Dennis, p.128); as von Fleschenberg notes, p.56, the three-fold distinction may well go back to Neoteles.

Koliaš, p.234 on the Persians also pulling the string back to the ear; q.v. n.49 for a representation of Khusro II doing this; another may be found in O. Maenchen-Helfen, \textit{The World of the Huns}. Berkeley-Los Angeles-London 1973 (henceforth Maenchen-Helfen) fig.8, p.230.


invention of new weapons and devices. Hence his interest in the Sabir Huns building a new type of battering-ram for the Romans at *Wars* VIII.xi.27-31, and his contempt of the Goths for their (rather Iliadic) infantry archers at V.xxvii.27-29.\(^{53}\)

CHAPTER TWO: PROCOPIUS AND THE FIFTH CENTURY

(a) Roman - Persian relations, 408-518

Procopius' account of events in the East up to the reign of Justinian is remarkably selective: one chapter alone covers over fifty years (I.ii), while two chapters are spent dealing with Peroz's wars against the Hephthalites (iii-iv), and a further two on Kavadh's adventures in securing his throne (v-vi). The following three chapters (vii-ix) are devoted to the war waged between the two sides under Anastasius (502-6), although two of these deal almost exclusively with events at Amida. Finally he describes the erection of fortifications at Dara and Theodosiopolis and Anastasius' refusal to take over control of the Caspian Gates (x).

In order to understand both what Procopius includes and what he omits, it is necessary to devote some space to a consideration of events in the East in this period. An exhaustive discussion, however, is impossible here, and perhaps no longer a requirement in the light of recent work on this subject. 1 Despite the detailed treatment accorded to this period by modern scholars, consensus has not been reached as to how to interpret relations between the two powers. On the one hand, there are those who would view the Romans as operating a principle of opportunistic belligerence, seizing on any sign of Persian weakness as a chance to escape from treaty obligations. 2 A convincing case has been presented to challenge this view, on the other hand, which casts doubt on the


2 As argued by B.Isaac, The Limits of Empire (revised edition), Oxford 1992, (henceforth Isaac) esp. pp.265-266, 425 (though more with reference to the fourth century and earlier) and Z. Rubin, 'Diplomacy and War in the relations between Byzantium and the Sassanids in the fifth century A.D.', The Defence of the Roman and Byzantine East, edd. P. Freeman and D. Kennedy, Oxford 1986 (henceforth DRBE), pp.677-695 and (more fully) in 'The Mediterranean and the Dilemma of the Roman Empire in Late Antiquity', Mediterranean Historical Review 1.1 (1986), pp.13-62. Rubin views the Romans as constantly struggling to free themselves from the payments they owed, which the stronger Persians were generally able to prevent; cf. K. Hannestad, 'Les relations de Byzance avec la Transcaucasie et l'Asie centrale aux 5e et 6e siècles', Byzantium 25-7 (1955-7), p.454, who also (oddly) sees the Romans as both the more aggressive and the weaker side.
existence of any such obligations to the Persians, but notes their willingness nonetheless to make *ex gratia* payments when pressed. The focus of this dispute was the Caspian Gates (the Dariel Pass across the Caucasus), which had featured in negotiations from the fourth century. While a detailed discussion of the Gates will be provided later, this account will tend to follow the second of the two views presented above.

Controversy still also surrounds the story of Yadzgerd I's adoption of the young Theodosius II, although the trend now seems to favour Procopius' account. Whether or not the adoption is accepted, there can be little doubt that relations between the two powers were at a zenith in the opening phase of Theodosius' reign: Socrates and Sozomen speak of a treaty being made in 408/9, while a piece of legislation from precisely these years also attests to co-operation on the border (C.J. IV.63.4). By the end of the reign of Yadzgerd I (399-420), however, the situation had worsened: the more hard-line Pulcheria had replaced Anthemius as the leading figure at the imperial court, while the excessive zeal of some Christians in the Persian Empire gave rise to renewed persecution at the close of Yadzgerd's reign. When in 420 Theodosius refused to return Christian refugees to the Persians, hostilities soon broke out; evidence of the deterioration in relations can be found in an imperial rescript ordering property-holders along most of the eastern frontier to fortify their estates (C.J. VIII.10.10).

3 As argued by Blockley, 'Subsidies and Diplomacy: Rome and Persia in late antiquity', *Phoenix* 39 (1985), pp.62-74, and also in *ERFP*, e.g. p.138. Synelli, while believing that an agreement was made over payments between 408 and 413 (p.110), does not attribute to the Romans the belligerent attitude of Isaac and Rubin. Lee, pp.21-25, rightly draws attention to the suspicions felt by each side.


5 *Vide infra* (b) for a detailed discussion of the details of the adoption; Blockley, *ERFP*, is inclined to accept it, so also P. Pieler, 'L'aspect politique et juridique de l'adoption de Chosroès proposée par les Perses à Justin', *Revue International des droits de l'antiquité*, 3ème série, 19 (1972), pp.408-420, albeit in a loose sense; cf. also Cameron, 'Sassanians', p.149, for a conspectus of modern views, while tending towards a limited acceptance of the story.

6 Socrates, *Church History*, ed. R. Hussey, Oxford 1883, vol.2, VII.8; Sozomen, *Kirchengeschichte*, edd. J. Bidez and G.C. Hansen, Berlin 1960, IX.4. Blockley, *ERFP*, p.54 (where oriental evidence for the good relations is also noted), Synelli, p.22, though (p.63) she wishes to place the one hundred year peace of Sozomen in 422, rather than 408: she also (pp.92-94) argues for an earlier treaty between the two sides, c.400, which was organised by Anthemiuss on an embassy to Persia, cp. Blockley, *ERFP*, p.48, where he also considers C.J. IV.63.4. The piece of legislation is translated and discussed by Isaac, p.407, and Synelli, pp.89-94.

A few incidents on the border served to bring matters to a head, and in 421 Ardaburius, a *magister militum praesentalis*, was despatched to the East, where he invaded Arzanene by way of Armenia. At the same time it seems that another Roman commander, Anatolius, was operating in Armenia, probably seeing to the fortification of Theodosiopolis. Ardaburius carried all before him, thwarting Mihr-Narseh's attempt to ravage Mesopotamia and laying siege to the Persians in Nisibis. The conflict then escalated, however, as Theodosius transferred further troops to the East, while Yadzgerd's successor Bahram V (420-439) took the field in person, supported by a large contingent of Arab allies. He drove the Romans from Nisibis, though the Arabs failed in their bid to capture Antioch. Bahram then went on to besiege the Romans in Theodosiopolis, which more probably refers to the Armenian city of that name than to the Mesopotamian. Negotiations followed in 422, although a further defeat of the Persians was required before peace terms were agreed. These left the position in the East unchanged, and the persecution of Christians ceased. A clause was added that neither side was to accept the defection of the other's allies, however, probably on account of the defection of an Arab chieftain, Aspebetus, to the Roman side in the course of the war.\(^8\)

The rest of the century saw no further warfare between the two sides: the 'war' of 441 seems to have amounted to no more than a Persian incursion, swiftly deflected by Roman gold. Diplomatic contacts were dominated by the issue of Roman payments, usually linked to the defence of the Caspian Gates. The impression given by the repeated Persian demands for money is one of relative weakness: Yadzgerd II (439-457) and Peroz (459-484) were forced to spend much of their reigns campaigning against first the Kidarite, then the Hephthalite, Huns. The Romans were little better off, however, facing both the Vandals and the Huns; but by the end of the century they were probably

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in a considerably stronger position than the Persians.  

An important development which took place over the fifth century was the rise in importance of the Transcaucasian region - Armenia, Lazica and Iberia. The partition of Armenia under Theodosius I in 387 had helped to defuse tensions in the region, and it was not until 428 that the Persians deposed the last Arsacid monarch in the territory under their control; yet the Roman fortification of Theodosiopolis (Erzurum) in the 420s

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* Contra Hannestad and Z. Rubin (q.v. n.2), who both see the Romans as the weaker party in this period, as does Synelli - at any rate in 441, cf. p.69. Howard-Johnston too is unwilling to see Persian demands for money as a sign of weakness, 'The Great Powers' (despite the explicit statement of Joshua §18 on the empty treasury of Balash).


On Persian difficulties against the Kidarites and Hephthalites, v.i. chapter 3 (a).
points to continuing distrust between the two sides.10 And while the principal battleground of the two powers remained in Mesopotamia until the 540s, the issues over which they fought generally had little to do with the area; moreover, the balance of power which reigned there throughout the fifth century, combined with the generally pacific attitude of the two empires added to regional stability. It is thus unsurprising that no changes were made to the frontier in Mesopotamia throughout the fifth and sixth centuries.11

In 441 Yadzgerd II had succeeded in extracting money from the hard-pressed Theodosius: Anatolius had handed over considerable sums when the king launched his invasion of Roman lands. Subsequent Persian requests, not backed up with military might, met with more mixed fortunes. Initially the Romans appear to have been willing to co-operate with Persian demands; so Marcian not only failed to give any support to the Armenian revolt of 451, but is also said to have ransomed Peroz from captivity among the Hephthalites.12 Leo and Zeno, on the other hand, displayed a more ambiguous policy towards the demands: Priscus tells of several Persian missions to Constantinople, aimed at securing Roman contributions for the Caspian Gates, but his

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11 Cf. Whitby, Maurice, p.197 on the static nature of the frontier from 363; also Isaac, p.267 on the hardening of the Mesopotamian front in the sixth century and the importance of the passes across the Caucasus then.

12 Maris, Amri et Slibae, De patriarchis Nestorianorum, tr. H. Gismondi, volume 1, Rome 1899 (henceforth Mari), p.35, on Marcian ransoming Peroz, adding that Marcian cited the precedent of Yadzgerd I's help to Arcadius, and sent off a dux to ransom the king; of course the chronology is impossible - if the report is credited, it must be placed under Leo or Zeno, since only Peroz - not Yadzgerd II - is known to have needed ransoming; cp. Blockley, ERFP, p.68, on a notice in Jordanes on a peace with the Persians under Marcian.

An inscription at the Derbent pass apparently attests Marcian's assistance in the construction of fortifications there, although doubts have been expressed regarding the trustworthiness of this evidence - J. Marquart, 'Eränšahr nach der Geographie des Ps. Moses Xorenac' Abhandlungen der königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Phil.-Hist. Klasse, N.F., Band III, no.2, Berlin 1901 (henceforth Eränšahr), p.105, doubted by Braund (p.584 and n.14).
account strongly implies that no money was forthcoming.\textsuperscript{13} The oriental sources, on the other hand, report that Peroz did succeed in extracting money on occasion: Joshua the Stylite (§§8-10) makes this assertion, adding that there existed a treaty between the two sides which allowed either side to claim men or resources from the other in case of need.\textsuperscript{14}

In both Persia and the Roman Empire considerable turmoil prevailed in the 460s and 470s: Peroz had to contend first with a famine, followed by campaigns against the Kidarites, and finally the more powerful Hephthalites. Leo, on the other hand, faced the problem of dealing with the refractory Lazic king Gobazes, and was fortunate that the Persians were unable to intervene in the conflict in Lazica; in any case, at some point after 467 the region defected to the Persian cause, not to be recovered until the reign of Justin I. The failure of the expedition to North Africa in 468, while a grave setback for Leo, was not exploited by the Persians, for Peroz by this point was involved in a war against new foes, the redoubtable Hephthalite Huns.\textsuperscript{15}

Peroz’s difficulties were compounded by instability in the Transcaucasus: during the civil war, in which he ousted his brother, Hormizd III (457-459), the Albanian king Vachë revolted as a result of Yadzgerd’s intolerance towards Christianity. He turned to allies north of the Caucasus for help, opening the Derbent pass to them; but the Persians, their appeals to Vachë having proved unsuccessful, responded by letting in some Huns through the Dariel pass, thereby bringing about the submission of the

\textsuperscript{13} Cf. Blockley, \textit{ERFP}, pp.74-75 and n.32, where he notes that others consider that Leo did pay up (e.g. Synelli, pp.111-112, Z. Rubin, ‘Dilemma’, p.40); Priscus, frgs. 31, 41, 47, 51 for these dealings.

\textsuperscript{14} Cp. Mal. pp.449-450, who also alludes to a such a treaty; Mari, p.36, refers to Leo and Peroz making peace (cf. \textit{ERFP}, n.32 to p.75), apparently relatively early in Peroz’s reign. Synelli, unlike Blockley, firmly believes in the existence of this treaty, pp.109-111, dating it to 408/13; Peroz’s request for either money or men, reported at Priscus frg.47, may lend some support to this view, although the arrangement will doubtless have been a loose one in any case.

Albanians around 463/4. Only a few years later, perhaps taking advantage of the weak Persian grip on the area, the Saraguri broke through the Caucasus (c.467). Furthermore, although an Armenian revolt in the 470s was put down, when the Iberian king Vakht'ang Gorgasal murdered the Persian bdeaśkh in 482, rebellion soon revived in neighbouring Armenia. Peroz's intolerant attitude towards the Christians of this region late in his reign was probably the principal cause of these rebellions, combined with the evident difficulties faced by the Sasanian kingdom; although no official Roman assistance was given, it has been argued convincingly that the Armenians did receive aid from their compatriots across the border. This last major Armenian uprising was never suppressed, on account of Peroz's overwhelming defeat against the Hephthalites in 484: his successor, Balash (484-488), was forced to come to terms with the rebels.

A more serious breach of the treaty agreed in the aftermath of the 421-2 war took place in 474, when Leo accepted a certain Amorcesus (Imru' al-Qays) as phylarch of the Saracens in the region of Iotabe, at the mouth of the Gulf of Aqaba; for he had previously been an ally of the Persians, and consequently his defection should have been rejected by the Romans.

From the 480s the situation becomes considerably clearer: the overwhelming defeat of Peroz at the hands of the Hephthalites in 484 had a huge impact on contemporaries, and Joshua the Stylite's detailed account compensates for the absence of any major Armenian source after Lazar. With Persian power at an unprecedented low ebb, Zeno's attitude to requests for money hardened; and it seems that none was forthcoming.

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Peroz's suspicions of the Christians can only have been heightened by the letter of the catholicos Babowi to Zeno, intercepted in 483/4, cf. ERFP, p.84 and Grousset, p.214 from Mari, p.37.

18 Cf. Malchus, frg.1, ERFP, p.78, Stein I, pp.357-358 and v.i. ch.7 n.31.
despite insistent demands, until the end of the Anastasian War. As Joshua notes (§§17-18), Zeno had problems of his own in suppressing the revolt Illus and Leontius; so an expedient to refuse payment was thought up by the Emperor, in the form of a claim that the city of Nisibis was due to be returned to Roman rule 120 years after its surrender to the Persians in 363. Little credence is now given to this claim, which was employed nonetheless by both Zeno and Anastasius. The correspondence of Barsauma of Nisibis conspicuously omits any reference to such an agreement, while also providing an interesting view of continuing co-operation between Romans and Persians in the Mesopotamian marchlands at this time (c.485).

During the brief reign of Balash the Persians were able to bring the Armenian revolt to an end: Peroz’s persecutions were terminated, and religious freedom granted. The Persian marzban stationed in Persarmenia was removed, and replaced by Vahan Mamikonean; Iberia too seems to have enjoyed a measure of autonomy. But no such solution was found to deal with the victorious Hephthalites, who appear to have exacted tribute from the Persians until the 540s: hence Balash turned to Zeno for financial help upon finding his treasury exhausted (Joshua §18). Having failed to retrieve Peroz’s defeat, Balash was soon ousted by the nobility in favour of his nephew Kavadh (488-496/7; 498/9-531). In the first phase of his reign, however, Kavadh had no more

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19 ERFP, p.84 on Barsauma; for the letter, Synodicon Orientale, ed. and tr. J.-B. Chabot, Paris 1902, ep.2, pp.532-534. On the alleged agreement over Nisibis, cf. ERFP, p.84, Synelli, pp.71-72, who notes that while Rubin and Bury are inclined to accept the Roman claim, Stein is not, cp. also the judgement of E.K. Chrysos, ‘Some Aspects of Roman-Persian legal relations’, Kleronomia 8 (1976), p.31; C.D. Gordon, ‘Subsidies in Roman imperial defence’, Phoenix 3 (1949), p.66, seems to accept the claim, and notes the cessation of Roman payments in 483. Whitby, Maurice, pp.206-207, is rightly sceptical, and connects the claim with the cessation of Roman payments; E. Stein, Histoire du Bas-Empire, vol.2 (henceforth Stein II) Paris 1949, p.64, also sees 483 as the cut-off point.

Chrysos suggests (p.31) that the story was invented by those who had been expelled from Nisibis in 363 - or more probably by those still in city, who were still pro-Roman, cf. Zach. VII.5 and Syn. Or., pp.534-536 with A.D. Lee, ‘Evagrius, Paul of Nisibis and the problem of loyalties in the Mid-Sixth Century’, Journal of Ecclesiastical History 44 (1993), pp.575 and 583.

20 Grousset, p.229, on the accession of Vahan in 485, cf. Thomson, Lazar, p.17, who notes the assistance given by the Armenians to Balash against his brother Zareh, cf. Christensen, p.295; Blockley, ERFP, p.84, on the granting of religious freedom to Armenia, also Christensen, p.295; Toumanoff, CMH IV, pp.600-601 on the conclusion of peace with the Armenians and Iberians.

21 Christensen, pp.295-296 is sceptical concerning the Persian tradition reported by Tabari (Noldeke, Tabari, pp.131-132) concerning a successful campaign waged by Zarmihr to avenge Peroz’s defeat, v.i ch.3, n.33 Cf. also Joshua §§18-19 on Balash’s unpopularity with the nobility and Lazar, pp.218-240 [158-178] for his concessions to the Armenians.
success than his uncle: he made two demands to Anastasius in rapid succession in the early 490s, but was brushed off in the same way as his predecessor. He too incurred the wrath of the nobility, through his support for the Mazdakite movement, and was replaced by his brother Zamasp. Yet after only a brief interval Kavadh reclaimed the throne, having secured the backing of the Hephthalites; and henceforth no warfare between the two sides is recorded until the elimination of the Hephthalites in the 560s. With no need to guard the eastern approaches to his empire, and having confirmed the religious freedom of the Armenians, Kavadh was able to back up his demands for gold with an invasion of Roman territory, as had his grandfather Yadzgerd II. Unlike Yadzgerd, however, he refused to be deflected from his invasion by a tardy Roman payment.22

The course and causes of the Anastasian War will be dealt with separately below. For the moment it may be observed that the Persians had no reason to believe that any gold would be forthcoming from the Eastern Empire unless it could be extracted by force. On the other hand, it does not seem that the Romans sought to exploit the turmoil in Persia for any aggressive purposes; the bribery of Huns - presumably Sabirs - described by Zachariah (VII.3) as having occurred in the thirteenth year of Anastasius’ reign should indeed be placed in 504, and not brought back to the reign of Peroz.23

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In the 421-2 war the Arabs had played no small part on the Persian side, and had proved troublesome to the Romans at various points in the fifth century.24 In the Anastasian

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22 Kavadh’s demands - ERFP, pp.88-89. Kavadh’s flight to the Hephthalites - Christensen, pp.347-350, where he also notes the precariousness of the peace with the Armenians and other revolts which menaced Kavadh’s régime. V.i. ch.3 (b) on Kavadh’s reclaiming of the throne. Joshua, §§50 and 54 on Kavadh’s seizure of Anastasius’ envoy Rufinus, who was prepared to offer the king money to evacuate Roman territory and below, ch.4 (a).

23 Blockley, ERFP, p.83 tries to use this as evidence for Roman intervention in the Transcaucasus in the 480s - presumably taking Zach. to be referring to the thirteenth year of Zeno (a possible interpretation, for Zach. goes on to describe the defeat of Peroz in the same chapter). Since, however, a Hun incursion is recorded around 504 (Proc. viii.20 - v.i. ch.4 n.71), it is preferable not to view the Romans as behaving so aggressively (while the revolt of Illus was still in progress) at this point, cf. ch.3 n.43. The presence of a certain Eustathius in the Hunnic army, also noted by Blockley, can hardly be used to demonstrate official Roman support for the Huns - any more than Eusebius’ (Proc iii.8) among the Persians shows Roman support for them.

24 Other than Amorcesus, cf. Shahid, BAFIC, pp.37-38 and 56 on Arab raids in the fifth century.
war, Joshua reports the influential role of the Persian-allied Lakhmid ruler Na'man, who perished in the course of the war. On the Roman side, there is a report of an expedition launched against Na'man's camp (Hírta/Hira; Joshua §57), and from other sources it is clear that significant developments were taking place along the frontier between the Romans and the Arab tribes. At the opening of the sixth century several Arab raids were launched into Roman territory, which may be attributed in part to Persian attempts to put pressure on Anastasius. It also appears that Rome's previous Arab allies, the Salihids, were overthrown in this period by the powerful Ghassanid tribe; and in 502 the envoy Euphrasius secured a peace not only with the ascendant Ghassanids, but also the Kindite Arabs and the Salihids, the last of whom soon fade from view. While the Ghassanids too disappear from the records until the reign of Justin, there is no need to suppose that they had fallen out with their Roman allies; the tribe which sacked Hira in 503, however, was probably part of the Kindite confederation.25

Anastasius was quick to learn from the Roman failures at the outset of Kavadh's invasion. A major fortress was constructed at Dara, menacingly close to the frontier; important work was also carried out at Theodosiopolis in Armenia, as well as at other forts in poor condition in Mesopotamia.26 A truce was agreed late in 506, while work on Dara was still underway, and the Persians failed to halt the Roman building work there; by 508/9 the fortress was finished, and Kavadh's displeasure assuaged by bribery and diplomacy. Although the truce was valid for only seven years, hostilities were not resumed before the death of Anastasius; what little information available on the period


On the 'Tha'antalabites' who raided Hira, v.i. ch.4 n.29. Shahid believes that the Ghassanids refused to co-operate with Anastasius (e.g. BASIC I, 'Reign of Justin I: Procopius'), but conclusive evidence is lacking, cf. Sartre, p.165.

506-518 points to a continuing shift to the north. Procopius alone tells of an offer by a certain Hun, Ambazuces, to sell control of the Caspian Gates to Anastasius, which was not taken up. Kavadh consequently took over the Gates himself, and seems to have been active in the Transcaucasus generally: he strengthened the Persian grip on Albania, constructing a new capital at Partaw, as well as installing a marzban at Mtskheta in Iberia around 520. Shortly before this in 513/4, moreover, he had suppressed a minor uprising among the Armenians, partly by confirming their religious freedom. It seems plausible that his interest in the region stemmed in part from the irruption of the Sabir Huns in 503, which had distracted him from his war against the Romans. The Sabir raid of 515, on the other hand, primarily affected Roman territory, and perhaps points to Persian control of the Caspian Gates by this stage.27

For a century after the Anastasian War the initiative in the East lay almost exclusively with the Persians: they were no longer at war with the Hephthalites, even if they were still tributary to them. And so, not unnaturally, the Persians looked to the west, and seized upon any opportunity either to extract money from the Romans or to make territorial gains in the Caucasus - or indeed both. The Romans for their part were content to make occasional payments, but gradually were drawn into regularising them (cf. Proc. VIII.xv.1-20); this in turn led to Roman aggressiveness under Justin II, and to Tiberius' insistence upon a peace without financial conditions (e.g. in Menander, frg.20.2.22-3). Only in 591 was such a peace concluded, to last for a mere twelve years.28

27 V.I ch.4 n.71 on the 503 raid; Mal. p.406, Marcellinus a.515, on the raid of 515, also Grousset, p.232, Stein II, p.105, and Marquart, Ėrăngšahr, pp.63-4 and p.107; further Roman building work was started in the wake of the 515 raid, cf. Whitby, 'Defences', p.726. On Ambazuces and his offer, cf. x.9-12, v.i. ch.4 n.99.


28 Whitby, Maurice, pp.303-4; also M.J. Higgins, 'International relations at the close of the sixth century', Catholic Historical Review 27 (1941), pp.288-292 on the Romans being drawn into regularising payments and Justin II's refusal to comply. Cf. Blockley, 'Subsidies and Diplomacy', pp.72-73 on Roman discontent with tribute paying, also ERFP, pp.108-109.
(b) The Guardianship of Yadzgerd and the mission of Anatolius (I.ii)

Procopius confines himself to two episodes in his history of Roman affairs before the reign of Anastasius. Both of these have a relevance to later events in the same book, most notably in Kavadh's proposal to Justin that he adopt Khusro (I.xi). Interestingly therefore the explicit praise accorded to Arcadius for entrusting his young son to Yadzgerd (ii.6) contrasts sharply with the admonition of the quaestor Proculus to Justin and Justinian against adopting Khusro (xi.13-18).²⁹

Yadzgerd's adoption of Theodosius has attracted much attention since Procopius' day. For according to Agathias (IV.xxvi.3-4) he was the first source to report the story, although it had circulated widely for some time, and was still popular in Agathias' day. It may be doubted how much research Agathias had conducted in making his assertion concerning his failure to find the story in any other source save Procopius; on the other hand, it has been pointed out that the circumstances of the reign of Justin favoured the circulation of such a report, whereas the deterioration in Roman-Persian relations soon after 408 might have deterred historians then from recording it.³⁰

Whether Procopius was relying upon the oral tradition noted by Agathias or some written source is unclear. In light of the fact that subsequent chroniclers were able to provide further details concerning the adoption, involving the guardianship of a certain Antiochus, it seems likely that it was reported by some sources of the fifth century (now lost). It has thus been proposed that Theophanes' account - which involves Antiochus - is derived from Priscus, while Procopius may have used Eustathius of Epiphaneia as his source.³¹ Later sources embellished the story, involving not only the 'guardian'...

²⁹ V.t. ch.5 (b) on Kavadh's proposal to Justin.

³⁰ On Agathias' discussion of Proc.'s report, cf. the comments of Cameron, 'Sassanians', p.149. For the suggestion as to why the matter may not have been reported by contemporary sources, Blockley, ERFP, p.51.

³¹ Cf. B. Rubin, PvK, col.361 and cp. Cameron, p.153; Haury, Zur Beurteilung des Geschichtsschreibers Procopius von Cäsarea, Munich 1896 (henceforth Zur Beurteilung), p.21, sees a similarity between Bar Hebraeus' account (tr. E.A.W. Budge, London 1932, p.66) and Proc.'s, and suggests that Zach. was the source for both (n.1). This is rejected by Pieler, p.413, who favours Friscus (perhaps through Eustathius) as Proc.'s source. P. Sauerbrei, 'König Jazdegerd der Sünder der Vormund des byzantinischen Kaisers Theodosius des Kleinen', Festschrift Albert von Bamberg, Gotha 1905, p.95, reckons that both Proc.'s account, and all subsequent versions, derive ultimately from one source, which was unknown to Agathias. Bar Hebraeus, it should be noted, follows Theophanes (A.M. 5900) more than Proc., reporting the
Antiochus, but also the payment of 1000 lbs. of gold to the Persians, while more contemporary sources record a peace treaty. Whatever Procopius' source, he has seriously underestimated Theodosius' age: he was born on 10 April, 401, and proclaimed Augustus on 10 January 402. He was thus hardly still unweaned in 408, despite Procopius' statement, although it suits the story rather better to stress Theodosius' vulnerability. He similarly underestimates Kavadh's age, describing him as a youth still in 484 (iv.1), whereas it appears that he was in fact born around 450.

The general consensus tends now to accept Procopius' word that Yadzgerd did undertake in some way to defend the young Theodosius; controversy persists, however, in determining quite what sort of arrangement was made. Various views have been put forward as to how rigorously the notion of a Sasanian king becoming επιτροπός of a Roman Emperor may be interpreted.

An analysis of the term επιτροπή has shown that while it was first used as the Greek equivalent to the Latin tutela, it also became the post-classical Greek rendering of the Latin term curator; and in this context it may be noted that it is just this term, κοινοτευτώρ, which Theophanes uses to designate Yadzgerd. In the sixth century then the term επιτροπός could on the one hand refer to an executor of a will, as well as on the other hand to a guardian or tutor. Since Theodosius, as Augustus, had already shared in the governing of the empire (if only theoretically) for over five years before his father's despatch of a Persian emissary to the Roman court.


death, it has been argued that the sense of \( \epsilon\iota\nu\tau\rho\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron \) must be more that of a guarantor of his succession than any formal guardianship; a parallel has been adduced with Stilicho's role as \( \epsilon\iota\nu\tau\rho\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron \) to Arcadius and Honorius in 394, reported by John of Antioch.\(^{34}\) Other scholars, however, have preferred to play down term \( \epsilon\iota\nu\tau\rho\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron \), and argue that the arrangement must have been informal, for otherwise Roman law would have been violated. It must be borne in mind, however, that at a later stage the Emperor Maurice was prepared to accept Khusro II as his son; hence too much credit must not be accorded Proculus' speech to Justin and Justinian concerning Khusro I.\(^{35}\)

The circumstances certainly favoured the making of such a request of a Sasanian king: the good relations between the eastern empire and the Persians have already been noted, and Procopius' report concerning the situation in the west (ii.4) is no understatement. The execution of Stilicho in August 408 was closely followed by Alaric's invasion of Italy and the siege of Rome; two years later the city was sacked.\(^{36}\) Agathias confirms Procopius' statement that Yadzgerd remained on good terms with the Romans throughout his reign (IV.xxvi.8), while Theophanes (A.M. 5900) provides the text of the letter supposedly addressed by the king to the Senate (cp. Proc. ii.10), which threatened war in the event of any plots being directed against Theodosius. Given that both Procopius and Theophanes refer to a letter to the Senate from Yadzgerd, and that they seem to have been using different sources, it cannot be ruled out that the king did seek

\(^{34}\) Theophanes, A.M. 5900; John of Antioch, frg. 188 in FHG IV, p.610, where in fact both Rufinus and Stilicho are described as (self-styled) \( \epsilon\iota\nu\tau\rho\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron \). Pieler, pp.411-420, for the meanings of the term \( \epsilon\iota\nu\tau\rho\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron \), and noting how Theodosius, as Augustus, could not have a guardian (cf. Blockley, ERFP, pp.51-52), and n.73, p.420 for the parallel of Stilicho. Blockley, p.51 and n.36, p.197, perhaps overestimates the degree to which Pieler argues in favour of a more formal arrangement; Synelli, pp.163-164 n.59, regards him as pronouncing in favour of a relatively loose agreement.

\(^{35}\) Cf. N.G. Garsoian, ‘Byzantium and the Sasanians’, CHIr 3.1, pp.578-579, who also notes Theophylact's references to Maurice's adoption of Khusro II, IV.xi.11, V.iii.11. Güterbock too, p.27, prefers a loose agreement, cp. Cameron, 'Sassanians', p.149, who believes that it did not go as far as Kavadh's proposal to Justin, and A. Lippold, ‘Theodosius II’, RE Supp. XIII (1973), cols.963-964. An overview on the views taken of the adoption is to be found in her commentary, loc. cit., as in Holum, Theodosian Empresses, p.83, n.18 (on the ancient sources) and n.19 (on modern views).

On Theodosius' supposed guardian Antiochus, probably a later confusion over the sense of the term \( \epsilon\iota\nu\tau\rho\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron \), cf. Pieler, p.414, Güterbock, p.27 (distinguishing two bearers of the name), Blockley, ERFP, p.51 (favouring the view that he had come from Persia) and Holum, p.83, who reckons that he sponsored the idea that he was Theodosius' guardian himself to bolster his position.

\(^{36}\) On the situation in the west at this time, cf. Stein I, pp.255-259 and Demandt, Die Spätantike, pp.157-169.
to defend Theodosius' position; certainly the survival of an eight year old boy on the throne is sufficiently remarkable for such a possibility not to be ruled out at once.\textsuperscript{37}

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If Procopius did believe Theodosius to have been a baby at the time of his father's death, then the invasion reported at ii.11-15, when the Emperor had grown to manhood, must refer to that of 441, and not to the war of 421-2. On the other hand, the mention of a king Vararanes, i.e. Bahram V, succeeding from Yadzgerd (I), points to the earlier war. The whole of this section appears to be a conflation of the two conflicts, which renders any attempt to date it securely impossible.\textsuperscript{38}

The oriental tradition concerning the death of Yadzgerd I - as unpopular a ruler in this tradition as he is popular among western sources - has him kicked in the heart by a magical horse while in Gurgan. This rather implausible account has been interpreted as a cover for an assassination of the ruler by the irritated nobility and clergy. On the other hand, Procopius is not alone in attributing his death to illness (ii.11): Mari and the Chronicle of Seert report that he died from the recurrence of a headache. Given that Procopius and these latter sources are independent, greater credence is to be accorded to them, rather than the more 'tendentious' Khvadhâynâmâgh tradition.\textsuperscript{39}

Agathias (IV.xxvii.1-2) unfortunately follows Procopius' account (ii.12-15) in his description of Bahram's swift withdrawal from Roman territory, substituting 'generals' for Procopius' more specific 'Anatolius'. Since Procopius is most probably alluding to the 441 raid in reporting Anatolius' mission, he is sacrificing the more prosaic truth - that Anatolius in fact bought Yadzgerd II off - for the sake of a good (and more

\textsuperscript{37} On the sources of Theophanes and Proc. q.v. n.32 and Pieler, p.412, arguing from Theophanes' use of the term \textit{kovparcop} that he must be using a different source from Proc. Sozomen, IX.4, reports that Yadzgerd did prepare for war, but that peace was agreed before any hostilities began. For a case of the Senate writing to the Persian king, cf. \textit{CP}, pp.706-709 and \textit{CPW}, p.160 n.444.

\textsuperscript{38} On the age of Theodosius, q.v. n.33.

\textsuperscript{39} On the traditions concerning Yadzgerd I, cf. Cameron, 'Agathias on the Sassanians', p.150, who also describes the Khvadhâynâmâgh tradition as 'tendentious'; cp. Noldeke, \textit{Tabari}, p.77, for his death, and Christensen, p.273, for the suspicion that he was assassinated. Mari, p.29, and the Chronicle of Seert, 1.74, \textit{PO} 5 (1910), p.332 [220], for the story of the headache, cf. Blockley, \textit{ERFP}, p.199 n.25, who considers it to be 'plausible'.
flattering) story. Anatolius, it must be noted, is a problematic figure for historians of Roman dealings with Persia, for Theophanes introduces him into his account of negotiations at the end of the 421-2 war; furthermore, if the building of Armenian Theodosiopolis is placed around 420, then the clause referred to by Procopius (ii.15) must surely have been added at the end of the earlier war. All the indications thus point to a conflation of the two wars by Procopius, which allows him also to omit record of a war (that of 421-422) in which the Romans were notably successful; for this success might seem to detract in some ways from the achievements of Belisarius.40

40 Cf. Greatrex, 'The Two fifth century wars', *ad finem*, for a discussion of Proc.'s confusion here, and the general confusion which prevailed in the Greek sources over the two fifth century wars, cp. Blockley, *ERFP*, n.39 p.201; q.v. also n.9 on the sources for Anatolius' mission in 441.

On Anatolius, cf. Blockley, *ERFP*, n.31 p.200 and Holm, *Theodosian Empresses*, p.101 n.102; he does seem to have played a role in the East c.420 as well as in 441. Synelli attaches too much significance to Procopius' (surely anecdotal) statement concerning his dismounting in the presence of the Persian king and the term *εὐπνοοῦσιν*, p.69.

On the terms of the peace agreed in 422, q.v. n.8.
(a) Procopius on the Hephthalites (iii-iv)

Procopius offers an ethnographic digression on the eastern neighbours of the Sasanian empire, the Hephthalites, before he deals with their relations with Persia. The Romans seem to have had an enduring interest in Persia's eastern flank, reflecting the importance of this region to the whole Sasanian empire: from Ammianus (XVI.9.3) to the journey of Zemarchus reported by Menander (frg.10.1-5) and beyond, the Romans were clearly well informed of events on the eastern fringes of Iran. While peace reigned there, the Persians could pose a threat to the Roman frontier; hence the menace in Peroz's boast to have captured the Kidarite capital Balaam (Priscus frg. 51.1), and Justin II's decision to ally with the Turks at a later stage (Menander frg.10.1). In order to understand Procopius' account of the Hephthalites and their wars against Peroz, it is necessary first to review events on the eastern frontier of the Sasanian empire.¹

It is sometimes asserted that the Hephthalites are first mentioned in connection with the aftermath of the death of the Persian king Yadzgerd II (439-457), although the Persian and Arabic sources refer to 'Turks' before this time who are sometimes identified with the Hephthalites. Yet even before these references to Turks there is a mention of Hephthalites in a Greek source - the Vita Guriae, Samonae et Abibi in the Acts of the Edessene Martyrs - which refers to Οὐννοι μεν οἱ Ἐφθαλίται, Πέρσων δὲ μοροι καὶ προς ἀνισχοντα ἡλιον οἰκουντες, το σκαῖον ἔθνος τοντι καὶ βαρβαρον (describing the Hunnic raid on Mesopotamia in 395/6). Relying on this piece of evidence, as well as a tenuous interpretation of coinage of a certain king Kidara, R. Ghirshman argued that the Hephthalites had been established in Bactria as early as A.D. 371 - and are indeed the Chionites described by Ammianus Marcellinus (XIX.1-2). Such an identification has not met widespread approval, and it is generally now considered that the Hephthalites crossed the Oxus towards the middle of the fifth century. The reference to the Hephthalites in the Acts of the Edessene martyrs tends to be overlooked, however; it is perhaps best explained as the insertion of a later metaphrast, since in the account of the

Hunnic incursion in the *Cod. Oxon.* there is no mention of Hephthalites.²

It is clear that in the fifth century the Sasanians experienced grave problems in defending their eastern and northern frontiers, something which no doubt contributed to the peace which prevailed with the Romans for almost the whole century. The


difficulty is in determining who their adversaries were at which stage - whether Kushans/Kidarites or Hephthalites. A brief examination of the relationship between these two peoples is called for.

The Kidarites are generally now viewed as being Kushans - i.e. the same people who had fought against Shapur II in the fourth century (Amnianus' Chionitae and Cuseni, XVI.9.4). They are seen as a dynasty which revitalised Kushan power in the first half of the fifth century, unlike the Hephthalites, who had little connection with the previous enemies of the Sasanians in the east.3 The Chinese sources refer to the Great and Little Yueh-chih in an area extending both north and south from the Hindu Kush mountains, under a valiant king Chi-to-lo; the Great Yueh-chih are to be identified with the Kidarites, and it has been argued that Chi-to-lo is the Chinese rendition of Kidara.4 Kidara or Chi-to-lo is reported to have had a son, who was installed by his father at Fulo-sha (modern Peshawar), where he became the ruler of the Little Yueh-chih. This son, Ch'u K'oohan, whose reign is tentatively dated to 444-464 by Enoki, has been identified with Priscus' Kounchas.5

Confirmation of an ascendant Kidarite kingdom in the first half of the fifth century

3 This is against the view of Ghirshman, who argued (chiefly on (contested) numismatic grounds) that kings by the name of Hephdalanus, claiming to be a Chionite, can be found even in the 450s (pp.11-12); for him then the term 'Hephthalite' was a dynastic title (as 'Kidarite' is now viewed), and the people referred to were the same as those in the fourth century. Cf. Lippold, col.128 on the dispute over Ghirshman's reading of a coin as referring to a Chionite king Hephtal, and Enoki, 'The Origin of the White Huns or Hephthalites' (henceforth 'Origins'), East and West 6.3 (Oct. 1955), p.233.

On the Kidarite dynasty, cf. A.K. Narain, 'Indo-Europeans in Inner Asia', The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia, ed. D. Sinoi, Cambridge 1990 (henceforth CHEIA), p.171, D. Sinoi, 'The establishment and dissolution of the Turk empire', CHEIA, p.299 and Frye, p.347, who also notes the break which the Hephthalites presented from Kushan rule. Enoki, 'On the Date of the Kidarites (2)' (henceforth 'Kidarites (2)'), MTB 28 (1970), pp.32-36, on the problems in determining the relationship between the Kidarites and Kushans - at p.33 he suggests that the Kidarites in Tokharestan and Gandhara may have been a political rather than an ethnic group; A.D.H. Bivar, El 111, p.303, s.v. 'Hayala', considers that they may well have been the same people.

4 Cf. K. Enoki, 'On the Date of the Kidarites (1)' (henceforth 'Kidarites (1)'), MTB 27 (1969), pp.1-2, Narain, CHEIA, pp.171-172; also 'Kidarites (2)', p.30, for the identifcation with Ammianus' Cuseni and Chionitae. Bivar, El 111, pp.303-304, considers Kidara to have lived in the fourth century, however, based on numismatic evidence - but cf. Enoki, 'Kidarites (1)', pp.3-5. Miyakawa and Kollautz also seem to prefer an earlier date for Kidara, reckoning that Shapur II actually got support from him against the Kushans, for which he was rewarded with Gandhara and Kashmir, Reallexikon der Byzantinistik, s.v. 'Abdelai', ed. P. Wirth, Reihe A, Band 1, Heft 3, Amsterdam 1969, col. 115.

5 Enoki, 'Kidarites (1)', p.4, for Ch'u K'oohan being Priscus' Kounchas: at p.22 he seems, however, not to reckon that Kounchas is the king of the Little Yueh-chih left at Peshawar, since Kounchas is said to have fought against the Persians in the northeast. Priscus' Kounchas - frg 41.3.13.
may be derived from the report of Tung Wan's embassy of 437, which testifies to a large Kidarite empire, holding sway over five kingdoms to the north of the Hindu Kush, and others to the south. The location of their capital, Po-lo according to the Chinese sources, is a matter of dispute; not long after Tung Wan's embassy, however, they themselves came under pressure from the Hephthalites, and dispersed both to the west and south. ⁶

For how long the Hephthalites had been pressing westwards and southwards is uncertain, although one scholar has ventured to date their crossing of the river Oxus (from the north) to the year 466. ⁷ It is possible, however, that they had arrived in Sogdia/Bactria earlier in the fifth century, and only gradually pushed southwest. This would help to explain the movements of the Kidarites in response to this pressure: some, it seems, headed west from Tokharistan, while others sought refuge to the south of the Hindu Kush in Gandhara. ⁸ At some stage after 477, however, the Hephthalites brought Gandhara under their control; the last embassy from the Yueh-chih kingdoms to the Chinese court is attested in this year; the first embassy from the Hephthalites, on the other hand, is recorded in 456, and they remained in contact with the Wei court until the end of their kingdom. Hence it seems possible to postulate a marked increase in Hephthalite power between these years. ⁹

By 518-520 the Hephthalite empire had reached its zenith: the account of the Chinese embassy of Sung Yun gives an excellent insight into the extent of Hephthalite power. Late in 519 he reached the Hephthalite kingdom, visiting the royal capital at Pa-ti-yen (see fig.2); he describes how Sogdia, Khoten, and more than thirty other regions had

⁶ Enoki 'Kidarites (1)', p.14 on what information can be derived from the Hsi-yü-chuan of Wei-shu on the Kidarites. p.18 on Tung Wan's embassy. cf. Sinor. CHELA, p.299, on the chronological value of this embassy; v.i. n.19 on the location of Po-lo.

⁷ J. Harmatta, noted by Frye, p.348 and n.16.


⁹ Enoki, 'Kidarites (1)', p.24 on the Hephthalite take-over of Gandhara post-477. cf. Narain, CHELA, p.172. On the embassies, cf. the useful table of Enoki, 'Origins', p.234, where the embassies from the Kidarites-Yueh-chih and Hephthalites are correlated. p.237 for the inference concerning the rise of the Hephthalites: their name at the Chinese court. according to Enoki, was Hua. p.231, though other names were used. cf. Frye. p.347.
submitted to them. Among the over forty nations said to bring tribute to them is that of the Po-sseu to the west, presumably a reference to the Persians. A gap in the sending of embassies to China is visible in the 530s, and by the 550s the Hephthalites were being eclipsed by the rise of the Turks (Tou-kiue); before the end of the 560s the Sasanians and the Turks had succeeded in all but eliminating the Hephthalite kingdom.

So far the Hephthalites and Kidarites have been considered somewhat in isolation: it remains to examine their relations with the Persians. This is scarcely any less difficult a task, for since those who attacked the Sasanians in the east and north are given such varied names in the oriental - not to mention Roman - sources, it is very much a matter of dispute whether they can be identified with the Kidarites or the Hephthalites. The first Persian campaign in which this dispute arises is that of Bahram V in the late 420s; invaders from the east, we are told, swept through Margiana, penetrating as far west as Khorasan. But Bahram proved victorious, and installed his brother Narses as the governor of Khorasan, with his headquarters at Balkh. A large range of views present themselves: Enoki considers that the Kidarites were the beneficiaries of this campaign, which broke the power of the Kushans. The Kidarites, he argues, were soon able to expel the Persian governor at Balkh. Others have been in no doubt that Bahram's foes were Hephthalites, while it has also been argued that they were Chionites-

10 On Sung Yun's journey, and reports of it in the Chinese sources, cf. E. Chavannes, 'Voyage de Song Yun dans l'Udyāna et le Gandhāra', Bulletin de l'école Française d'extrême Orient III.3, 1903, p.402 on his arrival at Pa-ti-yen, pp.402-405 on the tributary regions; on p.404 Chavannes seems to accept Po-sseu to be Persia, yet on the following page (n.7) he denies such an identification.


A useful chronological table of Hephthalite-Persian relations is to be found in Altheim, Geschichte der Hunnen, vol.2, pp.258-263.
Kidarites. Given the absence of any notice of the Hephthalites in the Chinese account of 437, and that Balkh is generally thought to have been under Kidarite domination at this time, it is unlikely that the attackers were Hephthalites.

Yadzgerd II spent much of his reign campaigning in the east. His first opponents are described as Chols, a supposedly Turkic tribe situated in Dehistan, to the north of Gurgan. He proved victorious against them, and constructed a base on the border called Shahristân i Yadzgerd in the vicinity of the ancient Hecatompylos. The mention of Gurgan here is important, since it features in both Priscus (as Gorga, frg.41.3) andProcopius (as Gorgo, iii.2). Since Priscus describes Peroz as waging war against the Kidarites from his base at Gorga, it is tempting to infer that the Chols mentioned here are Kidarites/Chionites. It would be surprising, moreover, if the Hephthalites had already penetrated so far west at this stage: for Tabari relates that Peroz handed over Talakan (near Merv) to the Hephthalites as a reward for having helped him mount the throne. This puts the Hephthalites still some distance to the east from the Chols/Kidarites.

Despite this victory Yadzgerd generally had little success against enemies in the north and east during his reign. The Armenian sources are the most informative concerning these campaigns against the ‘Kushans’: it seems that after the suppression of the Armenian revolt in 451 Yadzgerd set out eastwards from Albania against the Kushans,

13 For the former view, cf. Lippold, cols.132-133 and Drouin, p.154; for the latter, cf. Marquart, Erânsahr, p.52, Christensen, p.280. Miyakawa-Kollautz sidestep the problem by terming them Hephthalite-Chionites, col.117; Bivar too (p.303) refuses to commit himself, cf. Schippmann, p.43 and n.131.


15 Noldeke, Tabari, p.116 and n.1 on Peroz’s concession of Tâlakân. On Gurgan, see further below, nn.32 and 33: Enoki has expressed doubts whether it can necessarily be equated with the places in Priscus and Proc.
but met with failure in his campaign in year 16 of his reign (453/4).\footnote{This is reported both by Elishè, tr. Thomson, pp.192-193 \[pp.141-142\] and Lazar, tr. Thomson, p.133 \[86\], cf. Miyakawa-Kollautz, col.118. Lazar mentions Persians marching from Vrkan. generally identified with Gurgan, ancient Hyrcania; but it seems that Yadzgerd pressed much further east from there, since he deposited Armenian prisoners at Nishapur, cf. R.N. Frye, \textit{Iran under the Sassanians}, \textit{CHFr} 3.1, p.146, and Thomson, \textit{Elishè}, p.72 and n.3 for identifying Kushans and Hephthalites here.\)} Following Yadzgerd's death, as so often in Sasanian history, a dispute over the succession broke out; in the ensuing civil war his eldest son Hormizd III (457-459) was overthrown by Peroz (459-484). According to Tabari, Peroz secured the throne by appealing to the Hephthalites, who gave him their support. By this stage, moreover, they had sent their first embassy to the court of the northern Wei, so it is difficult to rule out such a possibility outright. It was contested by Christensen, however, who regarded it as a doublet of the story of Kavadh's flight to the Hephthalites in 496. Nevertheless Tabari's story is generally accepted, and henceforth there is no doubt that the Hephthalites were a neighbour of primary importance to the Sasanian empire.\footnote{Noldeke, \textit{Tabari}, pp.115-116 on Peroz's appeal. Christensen, p.289 n.5, following the view of Marquart, \textit{Erânšahr}, p.57. Those who accept Tabari's view unfortunately do not attempt to refute these doubts - cf. Enoki, \textit{Origins}, p.234, Lippold, cols.133-134 and Schippmann, p.44 and n.134. Lazar makes no mention of Hephthalites in his account of Peroz's victory against Hormizd, p.159 \[108\]. A good point in favour of accepting the story is made by Ghirshman, p.87, who notes that Peroz was well placed as governor of Seistan to seek the help of the Hephthalites (Noldeke, \textit{Tabari}, p.115, for Peroz's position).}

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Peroz's reign too was primarily occupied with defending Persia against incursions from the northeast. The principal problem lies in determining whom he was fighting at what stage: Priscus recounts Peroz's campaigns against the Kidarites, who were finally defeated and their capital, Balaam, captured. Then Procopius describes two unsuccessful expeditions against the Hephthalites, culminating in Peroz's death in 484. Unfortunately the oriental sources do not appear to draw a distinction between two such enemies, with the exception of Žazar P'arpec'i.\footnote{Priscus, frgs. 41, 47, 51. At frg. 41.3 he mentions that Peroz had ceased paying tribute to the Kidarites, which had led to war (though others have taken the passage to mean that the Kidarites had paid tribute, cf. Blockley, \textit{FCH}, vol.2, p.396 n.163). This and the capture of Balaam (frg. 51.1) point to an adversary on the decline, quite the reverse of the Hephthalites. Lazar, p.204 \[146\], for his mention of Hephthalites, cp. p.133 \[86\] on the Kushans, noted by Marquart, \textit{Erânšahr}, p.61, and cf. Miyakawa-Kollautz col.91 on the Armenian term.} If it is accepted that the Hephthalites had by this
stage started to displace the Kidarites, then it is possible that one branch of the latter had pushed west to the Caspian Sea area, and that it is these who were vanquished by Peroz: Balaam has been situated in the vicinity of modern Krasnovodsk on the eastern shore of the Caspian Sea.\(^{19}\) The problem is not helped by an analysis of the various names given to kings who marched against Peroz. Priscus' Kounchas, whose identification with the son of Kidara/Chi-to-lo has already been noted, is equated by Nöldeke with Tabari's Achšunwar and Firdausi's Khushnawaz. Such a proposal ties in with Nöldeke's view that the Kidarites and Hephthalites are the same people; others, however, while wishing to separate the two peoples, nonetheless seem to be prepared to follow this identification of kings despite the inconsistency involved.\(^{20}\)

Clearly the matter does not permit a definite solution. The distinction between Kidarites and Hephthalites should be upheld, however, and for this reason it is desirable to separate Peroz's successful initial campaigns against the Kidarites from his later failures against the Hephthalites. If Peroz had received Hephthalite support in his bid for the throne, then it is quite plausible to suppose that he campaigned initially against the Kidarites; only once they were beaten did he turn eastward against his erstwhile allies, who were threatening Khorasan. Some support for such a view can be derived from Tabari, who records the construction of at least one city in the vicinity of Gurgan early in his reign. Only once this and other cities near the Caspian had been erected, and his position secured, did Peroz set out for Khorasan to take on the Hephthalites.\(^{21}\)

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19 Cf. Enoki, 'Kidarites (1)', p.22, noting various proposed locations of the city, cf. Christensen, p.287 n.3 (following Marquart, Eränsahr, p.58, who also equates Balaam with the Chinese Po-lo). Sanspeur, however, 'L'Arménie au temps de Peroz', RÉArm n.s.11 (1975-6), p.163, prefers to equate Balaam with Balkh, far to the east, cf. also Nöldeke, Tabari, p.119 n.1 (a view criticised by Enoki). Enoki, art. cit., p.26, on the Kidarites being pushed west by the Hephthalites and being defeated by Peroz c.468; Drouin, however, thinks Priscus' Kidarites are simply Proc.'s Hephthalites under another name, pp.143-144.

20 Nöldeke, Tabari, p.123 n.4, for his identification of Kounchas; p.115 n.2 for his equating of Kidarites and Hephthalites. Sanspeur, p.162, asserts that 'les Hephthalites ne peuvent être confondus avec les Kidarites', yet considers Kounchas to have been a Hephthalite king! Ghirshman solves the problem by denying the accuracy of Priscus' notice on Peroz's victory: for him the Chionite 'Akun' found on coins is to be equated with Priscus' Kounchas, who prevailed over Peroz, p.88, pp.13-14 for the coin.

Before Peroz's expeditions against the Hephthalites are discussed, it is necessary to examine briefly their origins and customs, since Procopius sheds some light on these matters. First, the origins of the Hephthalites: the consensus on this holds that they are likely to have been inhabitants of the Transoxiana area rather than invaders from afar. Enoki has argued convincingly for the theory that they were an Iranian tribe originating in eastern Tokharestan, pointing to Iranian elements in their culture; he rejects the view based on Chinese sources that they hailed from Chinese Turkestan - the Altai area - which had earlier been accepted. The two views are not entirely mutually exclusive, however, and it is likely that the Hephthalites were indeed a combination of Iranian highlanders and invaders from Central Asia.

Controversy also surrounds the name of the Hephthalites. The theory that it derives from a king Hephthalanus is not given wide credence now, although both Chinese sources and Theophanes Byzantinus refer to a ruler by this name. While the identification of the Hephthalites with the Kidarites should be rejected, it appears that they were known as Abdelai in some Greek and Syriac sources: this term is derived from the Turkic name of the tribe. As for the appellation 'White Hun' mentioned by Procopius in connection with the Hephthalites (iii.1), this has been ascribed to a general tendency of sources to attribute colours to Huns: Pahlavi sources refer to the Hephthalites as Xyon(o), distinguishing both a Red and White section. On the other


23 As Frye suggests, p.347, cf. CHEIA, p.301, on the possible integration of Chionite elements among the Hephthalites.

24 Theophanes Byzantinus in FHG IV, p.270 on Hephthalanus - the king, according to him, who defeated Peroz. On the Chinese sources, cf. Frye, p.347 n.10; not a personal name - Marquart, Æransähr, p.61 n.3 and Lippold, col.128, contra Ghirshman, e.g. p.90, on Hephthalanus III being the conqueror of Peroz. Sinor, CHELA p.298, however, reckons that the name Hephthalite was a 'dynastic appellation' of a people or country called Avar or Var, subjects of the Juan-juan. According to H.W. Bailey, 'North Iranian problems', BSOAS 42 (1979), p.208, the word Heftal is 'likely to be a north Iranian Saka word meaning 'strong". For a full discussion of forms of the name, cf. Noldeke, Tabari, p.115 n.2. Marquart, Æransähr, pp.58-59 and Miyakawa-Kollautz, cols. 91-93.

25 Miyakawa-Kollautz, col.88 on the term Abdelai, found in Theophylact VII.vii.7-9 and Zach XII.7.
hand, anthropologists have uncovered traces of 'eine europid-mongolische Zwischenrasse' between the fifth and tenth centuries in Transoxiana and Siberia, which have been linked to Procopius' description of the Hephthalites' fair appearance (iii.4). Cosmas Indicopleustes, a contemporary of Procopius, also refers to *leukoi Oiwnoi* under a king Gollas, equipped with elephants for war; these 'Zabulites' may have been Hephthalites as well, although it is again disputed whether it was the Kidarites or the Hephthalites (if not both) who irrupted into northern India towards the end of the fifth century.

The question also arises as to whether the designation 'Huns' is appropriate for the Hephthalites. In the case of the Kidarites-Chionites, there is widespread agreement that they were not Huns; rather they were Kushans, who had inhabited the region for centuries. If the view concerning the Tokharian origins of the Hephthalites above is accepted, then the term 'Hun' becomes rather inappropriate; since it is quite likely that they also comprised an element of invaders from Central Asia, however, it is unsurprising to find the label 'Hun' being applied to them. Procopius at any rate was

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26 On the Pahlavi sources, *CHEIA*, pp. 299-300 and Bivar. 'The History of Eastern Iran'. p. 213 and n. 6; on the 'Zwischenrasse'. Miyakawa-Kollautz, cols. 108-109. Drouin also thought it plausible that the Hephthalites should have had white skin, noting that such tribes are attested in Chinese sources, and that the Alans are described as such in Ammianus (XXXI.2), p. 82. Sinor, *CHEIA*, notes that Proc.'s statement may have been prompted by the Caucasoid appearance of some Hephthalites. p. 300. But Bivar, *El* III, p. 304, remarks that the paintings found at Bamiyan (see fig. 2) do not corroborate any fairness of skin of the Hephthalites.

Marquart, *Ernahr*. p. 55 n. 8, considers the label ‘White Huns’ to have been applied initially to the Chionites, and later applied to the Hephthalites. cf. Christensen. p. 293 n. 3.

27 Cosmas Indicopleustes. *Topographie Chrétienne*, ed. and tr. W. Wolska-Comus, vol. 3, Paris 1973, XI.20, cf. Drouin, p. 83 who considers them probably to have been Hephthalites. as does Ghirshman, p. 128, where he sees the 'Zabulites' (his term) as a southern branch of the Hephthalites. But Enoki. 'Kidarites (1)', p. 25, argues that it was the Kidarites who invaded India in the 450s or 460s, though noting that the Hephthalites followed them into Gandhara at least. Frye, p. 349, notes the reference in Indian sources to invasions of 'Hunias', and considers the numismatic evidence to point to a fragmentation of Hephthalite territory in the region. Yu Tai-shan, ap. Naito-Kollautz p. 122, notes a similar label in the Chinese sources: Po Hiung. i.e. White Huns.

28 Cf. G. Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, Berlin 1958 (vol. 1). p. 69; *CHEIA*, ch. 6, on the Kushans' long existence to the east of the Sasanian empire, and p. 179 for the distinction between Chionites and Huns. Ghirshman, p. 74, also considers the Kushans-Kidarites not to have been Huns, which for him also implies that the Hephthalites were not as well: they were just another ruling clan, like the Kidarites had been. On the failure of some Chinese sources to distinguish Hephthalites and Kidarites (terming them both Yueh-chih). cf. Narain, *CHEIA*, pp. 172-173 and Enoki. 'Origins'. p. 232.
conscious of the extent to which they differed from the Huns who invaded Europe.  

Even the location of the Hephthalites is not a question free from controversy. Over the heartlands of their empire there is little doubt; the problem lies in determining the extent of their dominions. While a discussion of the thirty or more nations subject to the Hephthalites is well outside the brief of this chapter, it is necessary to consider the location of Procopius' Gorgo. Enoki has postulated two centres for the Hephthalite empire: one of these he places on the Upper Oxus, west of Badakhshan. It was here at Pa-ti-yen that the Chinese envoy Sung Yun visited the king and queen of the Hephthalites in 519. The other was situated at a place variously named Ghur or Hua or Hua-lu, placed by Enoki south of modern Kunduz; it is this city which he wishes to equate with Procopius' Gorgo. It is unfortunate that neither Priscus nor Procopius give any indication of where Gorgo or Gorga (if they are different places) were situated: Procopius' placing of Gorgo on the border (iii.2; iv.10) is not of much help, but it should be borne in mind that he says this having just placed the Hephthalites to the north of the Persians (iii.2). A more westerly location, such as at Gurgan, rather than in the vicinity of Kunduz, is also to be preferred in the light of the presence among the Persians there first of Constantinus (Priscus frg. 41.3) then of Eusebius (Proc. iii.8). Given that both Procopius and Priscus place Gorgo-Gorga in Persian territory - or at any rate in a disputed zone - it seems unlikely that it can be considered a major centre of the Hephthalites. It should rather be viewed as a Persian base, from which they could march northwards or eastwards: initially the focus of Persian campaigns was northward, against the Chols and Kidarites, then later to the east, towards Khorasan and the

29 Cf. above nn.22 and 23 on the composition of the Hephthalites. Ghirshman, pp.116-117, believes that Procopius terms the Hephthalites Huns on account of confusion between the term 'Hun' and 'Chionite'. On the generic use of the term 'Hun', CHELA, p.179.

30 Fig.2 for the location of Pa-ti-yen; Enoki, 'Origins', p.235, distinguishing the two centres and on the location of the city visited by Sung Yun. Its name is in Chavannes, p.402, and is identified with Balkh by Miyakawa-Kollautz, fig.2, cols.105-106.

31 'Origin', pp.231-232; the Chinese term 'Hua' for the Hephthalites was named after their capital. In 'Nationality', pp.5-6, Enoki again discusses the matter, and suggests a location to the southwest of Balkh for Ghor/Hua/Gorgo - hundreds of miles from modern Gurgan. Priscus' Gorga he is prepared to place at modern Gurgan, however.
Hephthalites.\textsuperscript{32}

Procopius' Gorgo then is to be identified firmly with the Persian Gurgan in ancient Hyrcania; it seems, moreover, that the name was applied both to the city (as in Procopius) and to the area (as in Shapur's inscription). A more minor problem remains, however: to whom did the place belong? At the time of Constantinus' embassy (c.464-5) the Persians are found encamped at Gorga (frg. 41.3), but by the time of Peroz's penultimate campaign against the Hephthalites (474/483) it is regarded as a city of the

\textsuperscript{32} The identification of the Armenian Vrkan, Priscus' and Proc.'s Gorga and Gorgo and Persian Gurgan is therefore accepted; Gurgan is also mentioned in Shapur I's inscription at Naqsh-e Rustam, cf. Frye, p.371, and E. Honigmann and A. Maricq, 'Recherches sur les Res Gestae Divi Saporis', Académie Royale de Belgique, Mémoires 47-4, 1952, p.40.16, as well as in Nestorian documents - Synodicon Orientale p.672, cf. Miyakawa-Kollautz, cols.91 and 111. It is also to be found in Tabari (Noldeke), p.131 and n.1 for its identification with the Greek and Armenian names.

The second centre of the Hephthalites proposed by Enoki need not be rejected - it is accepted by Miyakawa-Kollautz, col.113; it should merely not be identified with Gorgo/Gurgan.
Hephthalites, albeit one right on the frontier. Furthermore, the Hephthalite king was not prepared to defend it (iv.10), and only took measures to deal with Peroz's final expedition when it had passed the city. It can hardly be viewed therefore as a major Hephthalite centre.33

The next issue raised by any analysis of Procopius' description of the Hephthalites is his designation of them as being non-nomadic (iii.3). In this he is followed by Menander, but is in apparent direct contradiction of the Chinese sources: Sung Yun describes the Ye-ta as being nomadic, moving alternately to temperate climes in the winter and to fresher areas in summer.34 The contrast is not so strong as might initially seem, however. For Sung Yun describes also the numerous temples and pagodas of the Hephthalite capital at Pa-ti-yen, as well as the many cultivated fields he saw. Enoki points to another Chinese source, Liang-shu, which notes the mildness of the Hephthalite territory and the five varieties of cereals produced.35 The second stage in resolving the discrepancy lies in the vastness of the territories under Hephthalite sway: both the Greek and the Chinese sources could be right through referring to different areas. Thus those inhabiting the parts of the Hephthalite empire adjoining the Persian empire - in the Merv, Herat and Gurgan regions, as well as Sogdia and Khwarezmia - appear to have enjoyed a more sedentary mode of life than their Hephthalite overlords. It may be concluded then that Procopius and Menander are by no means inaccurate in their insistence upon the sedentary nature of the Hephthalites: there are indeed numerous walled cities to be found in their empire, even if most were not occupied by the Hephthalites.36

33 V.i, text to n.45 on the date of Peroz's campaign described in Proc. iii: the termini are provided by the reign of Zeno and the final campaign in 484. Worth noting as a parallel to iv.10 - the Hephthalite response being triggered by Peroz reaching Gurgan - is Tabari (Noldeke) pp.130-131, where Aḥšunwar, the Hephthalite king, only takes action against the Persian general Sokhra when he has passed Gurgan; v.i. n.48 on Sokhra's campaign.

In 420 too Gorgo was probably a Persian base: Yadzgerd I died there, Christensen, p.273.

34 Menander, frg.10.1.76-78; Chavannes, p.402, for the Hephthalites being nomadic.

35 Chavannes, pp.402-403 (though, n.1 p.403, he doubts the mention of cultivated fields). Enoki, 'Nationality', pp.28-29 for the description of Hua (=Hephthalite) territory by Liang Shu.

36 Lippold, col.136, on the castles to be found in Hephthalite territory, dating from the sixth century; on the tradition of co-existence of nomadic and sedentary populations in the Balkh area, cf. the remarks of Robin Lane Fox, Alexander the Great, London 1973, p.298; also Ghirshman, p.128, arguing that the Chinese sources are right in attesting some nomads among the Hephthalites. Enoki, 'Nationality', p.50
That the Hephthalites were ruled by a king (iii.5) is not disputed, although it should be noted that the monarchy was not hereditary: like the Sasanian system, the king's eldest son would not automatically succeed, but any relative who was sufficiently capable. The Chinese sources also remark upon the severity of the Hephthalite legal system: those found guilty of theft were cut in two, and were liable to repay ten times the amount stolen. With regard to Procopius' reference to their rectitude in international relations (iii.5), it is worth noting how Tabari portrays the conduct of the Hephthalite king towards the treacherous Peroz: he reminds him of the oaths he has sworn, and goes into battle carrying the treaty signed by Peroz.  

Procopius' description of the interment of the living followers of a noble upon his death (iii.7) has also attracted much attention: again it may be compared with Chinese sources. Sung Yun informs us that when a leading Hephthalite died, he was buried in a tomb decorated with precious stones; poorer Hephthalites were interred in a hole. He adds that all the personal objects of the deceased were buried with him. From another Chinese account it emerges that wooden coffins were used in the burial. Such practices, markedly different from Zoroastrian custom, were common among steppe nomads from China to southern Russia; a parallel is recorded by Herodotus among the Scyths. Even if some Chionites were absorbed into the Hephthalite empire, the fact that their king Grumbates cremated his son outside Amida surely points to an altogether different culture, and provides yet another ground for doubting the identification of the

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n.5. regards the Chinese sources as 'more correct' since they must have changed location in summer and winter, though he concedes that they did have cities for administration.


37 Chavannes, p.402, on the punishments of the Hephthalites and their monarchy, as noted by Ghirshman, p.124. Christensen, p.263, on the Sasanian succession and v.i. ch.5 n.49.
Tabari, p.126, on Aχšunwār bearing with him the treaty signed by Peroz (cf. Proc.'s description, iv.9). cf. below n.67.

38 Chavannes, p.402. and Ghirshman, p.4 (on a find of a Hephthalite tomb at Setq-Abād, conforming to the Chinese descriptions), also p.120. Enoki, 'Nationality', pp.49-50, on the wooden coffins (from Liang-shu), though he mistakenly refers to Proc.'s description of the 'immolation' of the companions of the dead man.
Next we turn to Procopius' description of the two campaigns of Peroz against the Hephthalites. While the date of his final expedition can be placed firmly in 484, no consensus has been achieved upon the campaign - or campaigns - which preceded it. Rather than discussing the various proposed dates at length, it is preferable to review the available evidence on the initial campaign(s). The most important piece of evidence is Procopius' mention of an ambassador sent by Zeno (iii.8): whoever this Eusebius is, he plainly cannot have been despatched by the Emperor before 474, the year he ascended the throne. And since the final campaign took place in 484, this leaves ten years (if 474 is included) in which the expedition described by Procopius can have taken place. Furthermore, Zeno is unlikely to have sent him out in 475-476 during the usurpation of Basiliscus. Beyond that, the evidence cannot be pressed far: while he may be the *magister officiorum* referred to in *C.I. XII.29.2* for November 474, it does not follow that he was necessarily sent out around this time.

Second, there is the evidence of Joshua the Stylite (§§10-11), which confuses the...
picture further. He reports that Peroz was captured twice by the Hephthalites before finally dying in battle against them. This is by no means incompatible with Procopius' version of events: he could well have omitted the first campaign of Peroz and his first capture, either believing it to be a doublet of the second, or just because he is selective in his presentation of material in any case. Unfortunately neither the Armenian nor the Persian-Arabic sources are of much help in fixing the chronology of Peroz's campaigns, although they are unaware of Peroz twice suffering capture: they only recount two campaigns as Procopius does.42

A further piece of evidence which is sometimes introduced in this context is Zachariah's report of alleged Roman intervention to bring about a Hun invasion (VII.3). He dates a Hun irruption through gates guarded by the Persians to the thirteenth year of Anastasius (504/5), and notes the presence of an Apamean merchant among the Huns, who acted as their adviser. Zachariah reports that 400 Huns and 400 Persians, under Peroz, proceeded to make a treaty, which the Persian king broke after only ten days; the Huns vanquished him, however, on account of the justice of their cause, and Peroz's body was never recovered after the battle. He adds that Peroz was known as 'the liar' in Persia. Clearly this report is rather confused: Peroz died in 484, and so the date of 504/5 is quite impossible. Two strands in his account need to be separated: one concerns a breach of the Caspian Gates in 504/5, while the other indeed refers to the final campaign of Peroz. The former may be connected to the departure of Kavadh from the Anastasian War to fight against Huns in the north (Proc. viii.19), and to Roman attempts to secure Sabir help to distract the Persians.43 The latter, on the other hand, does appear to refer to the death of Peroz in 484, although whether Eustathius, the Apamean merchant, should be linked to this story or to the later episode, is

42 The late Persian source Bal'ami, however, does offer a figure of about four years between the two expeditions, cf. M.H. Zotenberg, *Chronique de Tabari tr. sur la version persane*, Paris 1869 (henceforth Bal'ami or Zotenberg, *Tabari*), vol.2, II.25, p.137 - 'three or four years' from the first peace with the Hephthalites to Peroz's decision to undertake a further campaign. One manuscript, however, (p.537) states that it was in the seventeenth year of his reign (i.e. 474 or 476) that he declared war against the Hephthalites.

Although Christensen, *Le règne*, p.24, Nöldeke, *Tabari*, p.xxvi, and Yarshater, *CHIr*, p.360, consider Bal'ami to be of little or no independent worth, it is by no means unlikely that he made use of Persian accounts as well as Tabari; I am indebted for this point to Dr Zeev Rubin.

43 V.i. ch.4 n.71 on this raid: Altheim, *Geschichte der Hunnen*, vol.2, pp.9-10, on this, but he prefers to link Zach.'s whole account to the Hephthalites.
uncertain. The interval of only ten days between the two campaigns is somewhat implausible: both Procopius and Tabari’s versions portray Peroz as being forced to return to his own territories before reneging on his agreement.\footnote{Tabari’s versions are in Nöldeke, pp.119-132 (and cf. n.1 p.119 for Nöldeke’s analysis and comparison with other sources), cf. also Zotenberg, Tabari, pp.131-142. After narrating the defeat of Peroz, Zach. adds that Kavadh blamed the Romans for the invasion and immediately invaded Roman territory, turning first against Theodosiopolis (Erzurum): hence he is now dealing with the Anastasian War. Clearly major chronological confusion has occurred.}

In the absence of any reliable evidence for the penultimate campaign of Peroz, we may tentatively place it in the mid-470s. As for whether Peroz suffered the ignominy of capture twice, it is difficult to give preference to Joshua alone here: he only very briefly tells of Peroz’s disastrous wars against the Kushaniya in any case. In view of his general reliability, however, his account cannot be dismissed lightly, and so it is quite possible that throughout the 470s Peroz waged war against the Hephthalites.\footnote{On the reading Kushaniya in Joshua, cf. Frye, p.345 n.6 contra Altheim, Geschichte der Hunnen vol.2, p.7, who prefer to see Joshua as referring to Chionites. Toumanoff, Studies, p.367 and n.39, argues that Joshua’s account should not be rejected contra e.g. Christensen, p.293 n.4.}

Finally it remains to compare Procopius’ account of Peroz’s campaigns with those presented in other sources. Procopius is the only Roman source to describe them in detail: neither Agathias (IV.xxvii) nor Theophanes (A.M. 5967-8) add anything of substance.\footnote{Some interesting details are provided in Maurice’s Strategikon, IV.3, p.194 (such as the dimensions of the trench) which appear to refer to the 484 engagement. His account does not seem to derive from Procopius, which may be significant - see further n.56 below.} Joshua the Stylite covers the events briefly (§11), while Łazar Parpec’i offers a detailed narrative of the final confrontation. Tabari, however, provides three different versions of the two expeditions which bear the closest resemblance to Procopius’ version; Firdausi contains little not in Tabari.\footnote{On the sources for the defeat of Peroz in 484, cf. Sanspeur, p.165, although he is primarily concerned with secondary works. He also calculates that Peroz must have been defeated on 29 or 30 July 484, p.142. Nöldeke assesses the various versions of Tabari, Tabari, p.119 n.1. Q.N. ch.1 n.23 on the Iranian tradition.} Now Procopius sets the first campaign in a mountainous area, where the Persians are drawn into an impasse by the crafty Hephthalites; but thanks to the advice of a wise Roman envoy, Peroz extricates his army without bloodshed by performing proskynesis to the Hephthalite king (iii). Desirous of avenging this disgrace, however, Peroz sets off on a further campaign,
leaving only one of his sons, Kavadh, at home; this time he is decisively defeated by the Hephthalites, himself perishing in the battle. An anecdote is told about a pearl belonging to Peroz, and the Hephthalites are said to have subjected the Persians to tribute for two years; Kavadh succeeded his father to the throne (iv).

Tabari's accounts may be summarised briefly. The first tells only of the final disastrous expedition, in which four brothers and four sons of Peroz died; after the battle the Hephthalites annexed all of Khorasan, although Sokhra avenged the Persian defeat. It also provides a motive for Peroz's expedition against the Hephthalites, asserting that the Hephthalite king was oppressing Persian subjects in the lands under their control.48

The second version stresses what a hapless ruler Peroz was for his people, recounting the famine which oppressed the land before going on to describe how Peroz set out to do battle against the Hephthalite king Achšunwār in Khorasan. By the self-sacrifice of a latterday Zopyrus Peroz is led astray on his expedition, and the majority of his army perishes in the desert. Achšunwār forces Peroz to sign an agreement never to invade Hephthalite territory again, and he returns home. Ignoring the advice of his counsellors, Peroz sets off once more, and throws bridges over the trenches separating Persian and Hephthalite territory. After fruitless negotiations with Achšunwār, battle is joined; the Hephthalite king carries on his lance the document signed by Peroz, invoking divine vengeance. In the fray Peroz dies, fleeing into the trench which separates the two kingdoms, and all his wives and treasury fall into Hephthalite hands, to be recovered only by the boldness of Sokhra.49

The third version describes how Peroz left Sokhra in charge at home, while he crossed the boundary between Persia and Hephthalite territory; a pillar erected in the days of Bahram V marked the frontier, but the king had it carried forward by a team of men and elephants. Peroz dismissed a remonstrating letter from Achšunwār, and sought to

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48 Nöldeke, pp.119-121: this avenging campaign of Sokhra, after Peroz's defeat, is almost certainly a fiction, cf. Christensen, p.296, following Nöldeke, Tabari, p.130 n.3; also Nöldeke, tr. L. Bogdanov, The Iranian National Epic, §9 p.16, on the Karen house (to which Sokhra belonged) reviving an Iranian myth and embellishing it for its own ends.

49 Nöldeke, Tabari, pp.121-128. This is essentially the same version as is found in Bal'ami, tr. Zotenber, pp.131-144, cf. also Eutychius in PG 111, cols.1058-1061; Nöldeke, Tabari, p.121 n.1. notes that the source for this version is Ibnu Muqaffa', and (one may suppose therefore) ultimately the Khvadaynāmāgh, cf. op. cit., p.x. The poor morale of the Persian army in the second battle, on account of Peroz's broken oath, should also be noted.
meet the harrying Hephthalites in open battle. They however dug a trench behind their army, covered over with earth. Aḵšunwār's army then withdrew some distance; Peroz, hearing of his presence, spurred on his army and led it to utter destruction in the ditches. The Hephthalite king was thus able to capture Peroz's camp, including a daughter of Peroz; he buried Peroz and his followers, however. Again in this version the disaster is mitigated by the valour of Sokhra, who forces Aḵšunwār to return all the Persian captives and treasure, among them Peroz's daughter.\textsuperscript{50}

The one other major source to provide a detailed account of the final campaign is Lāzār, though he provides no information on the expedition which preceded it: he begins with Peroz mustering his troops at Vrkan (Gurgan). The poor morale of the soldiers is noted, as well as Peroz's failure to heed the warnings of his counsellors. The Persian king, unmindful of all the previous defeats sustained at the hands of the Hephthalites, pays no attention to the Hephthalite king's reminder of the covenant agreed between the two sides. The Iranians feel the assertion of the Hephthalite king to be just, but Peroz undertakes nonetheless to win the battle with only half his army; the other half is ordered to gather up the earth from Hephthalite territory and use it to fill the ditches which divide the two armies. But the ditches prove to be the instruments of the destruction of Peroz's army; he perishes in the battle, along with all his sons, and few escape the slaughter.\textsuperscript{51}

The general congruence of these sources is remarkable. First the treatments of the penultimate campaign may be compared; only Procopius and the second account in Tabari preserve a detailed account of this expedition. Both these descriptions attribute the war to a dispute over boundaries: in Tabari, Peroz seeks to avoid perjury by pushing

\textsuperscript{50} Nöldeke, pp.128-132. Firdausi's version most resembles this third account - \textit{Le Livre des rois}, ed., tr. and comm. J. Mohl, vol.6, Paris 1868, pp.97-105 - although he considers Kavadh too to have been captured in the same battle as that in which Peroz died. He also describes Peroz as being equipped with a Roman helmet. This third version given by Tabari is the most tendentious of the three, as Nöldeke noted: it refers to the Hephthalites as Turks, and the mention of Bahram V's tower on the border is extremely suspect, cf. p.128 n.3.

\textsuperscript{51} Tr. Thomson, pp.214-215 [155-156]. Lāzār also alludes to Peroz having fallen into Hephthalite hands at an earlier juncture: the wise adviser in his account of the final campaign is the sparapet Vahram. On Lāzār, q.v. ch.1 n.24.
forward the column erected to demarcate the frontier. They differ, however, over the terrain involved: for Procopius the Persians are trapped in a wooded mountain pass (iii.8-9), from which they escape unscathed only by Peroz's submission to the Hephthalite king. In Tabari the expedition takes place across a desert, and the vast majority of the Persian army perishes before the remnants are allowed home. Both, however, emphasise discontent in the army with Peroz's conduct. The role of the adviser to Peroz is markedly different in the two sources: in Procopius Eusebius is an astute, well-meaning counsellor, who brings Peroz to his senses (iii.12-14). In Tabari, the Hephthalite agent leads Peroz astray, despite the mistrust of the other Persians towards him.

At no point does Procopius report the name of the Hephthalite king. Some have identified Tabari's Achšunwâr and Firdausi's Khuschnawâz with Priscus' Kouchas, although the objections to such a view have already been noted. That Peroz's opponent could be the Akun found on Hephthalite coins is more probable; Theophanes Byzantinus' reference to a king Hephthalanus as the vanquisher of Peroz has already been rejected. The ruse by which Peroz thought to extricate himself from his obligation to the Hephthalite king, as described by Procopius, has a parallel in Plutarch: in his life of Artaxerxes he describes how the Theban envoy Ismenias, on an embassy to the Persian king in 367 B.C., deliberately dropped his ring in order to save his conscience on the matter of performing proskynesis to Artaxerxes.

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52 Proc. on the war being over boundaries - iii.1. Noldeke, Tabari, p.125 n.3, on the fuller text of the second version containing the details concerning the boundary stone pushed forward by Peroz - similar to Bal'ami, pp.131-138. On the importance of the second account in Tabari, q.v. n.49.

53 Bal'ami, p.134, on only 1000 men out of 50,000 returning from the expedition, and for the mistrust towards the Hephthalite general among the army. Noldeke, Tabari, p.124 n.1 for the parallel between Tabari and the story of Zopyrus (Herodotus III.153-160).

54 Noldeke, Tabari, p.123 n.4, for his discussion of the name, and q.v. n.20; cf. also Christensen, p.294 n.1 on the name, which may go back to the Sogdian word for 'king'. Ghirshman, p.15 for a coin of Akun - an overstrike of a coin of Peroz (#6); his identification of this Akun with Kouchas, however, p.88, is to be rejected. Marquart, Erânsahr, p.61 n.3 for discounting the report of Theophanes Byzantinus. FHG IV, p.270, cf. supra n.24.

55 Plutarch, Vita Artaxerxi XXII.8.4 in Vitae Parallelae III.1. edd. C. Lindskog and K. Ziegler, rev. K. Ziegler, Leipzig 1971, XXII.8.4 on Ismenias; on proskynesis in Persia, cf. the whole chapter on this in Altheim, Geschichte der Hunsen, vol.2, pp.125-166, esp. pp.130 and 142 on proskynesis towards the sky. Worship of the sun was a practice of both Persians and Huns, op. cit., p.275, and Proc. seems to be reflecting this here.
Before the doomed campaign of 484 is discussed, a word should be said on Procopius' sources for these chapters. Various possibilities for his information on Persian history have been countenanced, among them Persian oral sources and Armenian works (cf. v.40). In this case, however, his account is closer to Tabari than to the surviving Armenian source Lazar. The possible role of Eusebius in transmitting the information should be stressed: he must have written up a report on his embassy, and could even have published his account, as Peter the Patrician did just under a century later. Eusebius did not take part in the 484 campaign, however. Another interesting suggestion is that Sasanian military manuals were translated into Greek, and that from one such manual, the Ain-nameh, Maurice (Strategikon IV.3, p.194) derived his information on Peroz's defeat; certainly his account bears few similarities to that of Procopius. At any rate it is clear that some source other than Procopius was available to the author of the Strategikon. That some of Procopius' information on Persian affairs came from the self-avowed grandson of king Kavadh (therefore the great-grandson of Peroz) seems highly probable, although perhaps less likely for events so far before his own day. None of these suggestions are mutually exclusive, however. The failure of Malalas or the Chronicon Paschale to allude to any event involving Peroz is striking, but need not reflect the lack of any account of the campaigns among records at Constantinople or Antioch.56

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Typically, Procopius gives no indication of the interval between Peroz's two campaigns, just as he makes no attempt to date the first expedition relative to Bahram's incursion into Roman territory (ii.11-15).57 His assertion that among Peroz's sons only Kavadh


On the records at Constantinople and Antioch, q.v. ch.1 n.11. On the younger Kavadh, q.v. ch.1 n.9. For a discussion of the sources for these chapters, cf. also Cameron, pp.153-154, where she favours a variety of sources - western probably for the penultimate campaign.

57 Cp. the equally unhelpful χρὸνος δὲ πολλὰ ὑπερετον (iii.1) and χρὸνος δὲ ὃ ὑπὲρετον (iv.1).
was left at home (iv.2) does not conform with what is reported by the other sources; it is also doubtful whether he was still a boy, even if he was the youngest of Peroz's sons. That he should have omitted Zamasp, who replaced Kavadh for a few years at the end of the century (c.496-498) is understandable, since he confounds Zamasp with Balash, the uncle of Kavadh. But Łazar (alone) mentions yet another son of Peroz who survived: a certain Zareh, who proceeded to rebel against Balash, but was defeated with help from the Armenians. Hence at least two sons of Peroz survived, including Kavadh, and most probably three.58

Just as Procopius significantly underestimates the age of Theodosius II in 408 (ii.1), so he appears to do the same with Kavadh (iv.2): for Malalas reports that when he died in 531 he was 82, implying he was born in 449. Some oriental sources, however, do consider Kavadh to have ascended the throne at a very early age, 12 or 15; this would make him 8 or 11 in 484, allowing for the four years of Balash's rule. One recent scholar, P. Crone, has accepted this tradition, pointing to the fact that he died in the field, having attracted no comments as to his fragility: she therefore doubts that Malalas and Firdausi can be correct in supposing him to have died an octogenarian. Such an argument ex silentio is less than convincing: Khusro I campaigned until the 570s, when he must have been in his sixties at least. While it is possible that the Persian nobles deliberately picked a minor for the throne to further their own ends, the balance of probabilities lies with Malalas and Firdausi; the sources relied upon by Crone are remarkably inconsistent in their statements on the age of Kavadh in any case.59

Next there is the matter of Kavadh's participation in the campaign of 484: Procopius is categorical that he did not (iv.2), though his credibility is somewhat dented by his belief that he succeeded immediately upon Peroz's death. According to Firdausi,

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59 On Kavadh, cf. PLRE II, s.v. Cavades I; Malalas, p.471, on his age in 531. Note too that he did not in fact command the expedition of 531, nor the attack on Dara in 530 (against Crone's arguments). Firdausi, tr. Mdbhl, p.155. Crone, p.30, for her arguments, and n.210 for her sources; but cp. Noldeke. Tabari, pp.138-139 and nn.4 (p.138) and 1 (p.139). At one moment Kavadh is an old man, at another a child. Christensen too, Le règne, p.93 n.3, is dismissive of the tradition concerning the youth of Kavadh on his accession.
Kavadh was captured in the battle, and only returned to Persia at some stage in Balash's reign. In some versions reported by Tabari Kavadh is said to have fled to the Hephthalites when Balash succeeded, which might be a doublet with his flight in 496. But numismatic evidence may be brought to bear here, for it appears that Kavadh started issuing coinage in 484, presumably thereby staking his claim to the throne. It appears unlikely then that Kavadh was present at the battle, but that he may indeed have been forced to flee to the Hephthalites when the throne was bestowed on his uncle Balash. So in the absence of evidence other than Firdausi to the contrary, Procopius' assertion should provisionally be accepted. As for the thirty sons mentioned by Procopius at iv.2, such a high figure is entirely plausible, given the polygamy practised by the Persians: in 628 Kavadh II murdered eighteen brothers in order to secure the throne for himself. The first version in Tabari reports the death of four sons and four brothers all endowed with royal titles, while Lazar just refers to the death of Peroz with his sons. The final version of Tabari is more interested in the capture of Peroz's daughter, Perózdocht, only later rescued by Sokhra. Clearly then numerous offspring of Peroz perished in the field, and Procopius' figure of thirty is by no means impossible.

The Hephthalite king again emerges as a sagacious ruler in this chapter, confidently answering the accusations of his critics (iv.3–6). The site of the battle is rather different from the previous campaign: an extensive ditch is constructed for this battle in a plain (iv.10), whereas previously the terrain had been mountainous and wooded. In this case there is thus more affinity with the Persian accounts, where both campaigns are placed in a desert in the east. Now in all the accounts which survive of the final

60 Nöldeke, Tabari, p.133 n.6, on the doublet concerning Kavadh's flight. On the numismatic evidence, cf. R. Göbl, tr. P. Severin, Sasanian Numismatics, Braunschweig 1971, p.49, and Schippmann, p.46; if this is interpreted as a bid for the throne, then it perhaps helps to explain Proc.'s view that Kavadh followed Peroz as king.

Ghirshman, p.91 n.7, suggested that the two years which the Persians spent as tributary to the Hephthalites, according to Proc. (iv.35) may refer to Kavadh's period at the Hephthalite court, cf. also Nöldeke, Tabari, p.133 n.6 and p.119 n.1. Firdausi, tr. Mohl, p.103, on Kavadh's capture; he was rescued in Balash's reign, tr. Mohl, p.119.

61 Nöldeke, Tabari, p.120 and n.2 (first version), p.130 (third version); Lazar, tr. Thomson, p.215 [156]. On the executions by Kavadh II, cf. PLRE III, s.v. Cavades II qui et Siroes.

62 Cp. Belisarius' laughter at V.xxii.2 in anticipation of his victory over the Goths.

63 Cf. e.g. Tabari (Nöldeke), p.125 - apparently in the same area as p.124; p.129 for an easterly location. Lazar also mentions Gorgo (Vrkan; cp. Proc. iv.10), tr. Thomson, p.214 [155].
battle, the feature which looms most largely is the ditch-system. Certainly much of the Persian army met its end by toppling into a deep trench, but beyond that there is a great deal of confusion over where the trench was, who built it, and what its role was in the battle.

Procopius' account of the positioning of the trenches (iv.7-8) foreshadows Belisarius' use of them at the battle of Dara (xiii.13): for this reason its reliability was doubted by B. Rubin. His version has also been called into question on account of its similarity to Herodotus' description of how the Phocians overcame the Thessalians in 480 B.C. (VIII.28). Despite this scepticism, there can be little doubt that the Persians were outwitted by a ditch of some sort. The Strategikon is in agreement with Procopius as regards the construction of the trench by the Hephthalites, and the despatch of some troops in advance to lure on the Persians; they themselves made use of the solid sections in their retreat. Procopius is here closest to the third version in Tabari, where Achšunwār's construction of a ditch behind his army is described, followed by his retreat, luring Peroz and his forces into the trap. All three of these accounts add a few more details, such as the dimensions of the trench, or the size of the solid section across it; these are hardly reconcilable, and need detain us no further.64

The other tradition on the battle associates the Persians with the preparation of the trench, and often links it to the boundary between Hephthalite and Persian territory. Lazar, it is true, has it that the Hephthalites constructed the trench, but it is rather less clear how the Persians fell into it. The second version of Tabari attributes the building of the trench to Achšunwār, which was bridged by Peroz; only in defeat did it prove a killing-ground for the Persians. A similar account can be found in al-Tha'ālibi and Eutychius.65

64 Rubin, ZI, p.254 for his doubt; Brückner, Zur Beurteilung, for the Herodotean parallel, p.22. The historicity of the ditches is accepted e.g. by Bury, HLRE II, p.7. Christensen notes the antiquity of the tradition - going back to Lazar, tr. Thomson, p.294 and n.3. The trench described by Maurice (IV.3, p.194) is wider than that of Tabari, but much shallower (though his account is vague as to whether he is definitely referring to this engagement or not); Proc. has only one solid section through it (iv.7) while Maurice has several.


Firdausi, tr. Mohl, p.103, is more in line with the first group of sources, which associate the Persian defeat with a headlong charge into the trenches (rather than retreat).
There seems then no good reason to reject the universal word of the sources - that the Persians were defeated in some way by the use of a ditch. Furthermore the balance of evidence lends support to the version of Procopius and those in agreement with him: the suspicion arises that in the other sources a connection has been made between the boundary marker or trench between the two empires and the ditch used in the battle, leading to the two becoming conflated.\(^\text{66}\)

The point of detail given by Procopius (iv.9) that the Hephthalite king affixed to his banner the salt used by Peroz in his oath is to be found also in Tabari's second version: there it is a piece of paper signed by the Persian king. Sealing an oath with salt was a standard Persian practice: references to its use can be found in both the 'Epic Histories' and Sebeos.\(^\text{67}\)

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Before recounting the aftermath of the battle, Procopius offers a lengthy tale concerning Peroz's pearl earring (iv.14-31): this has no parallel in any of the oriental sources, although they do note how the king's treasury fell into Hephthalite hands. The Persian version of Tabari, however, does remark upon a particular item of Peroz - a gold amulet, which listed all his treasures, which was taken by the Hephthalite king and used to recover the other items.\(^\text{68}\)

Various suggestions have been made as to the source for Procopius' story of the pearl. Cameron considers it to be 'basically folkloric', while Veh considers the story to correspond to an oriental fable, and suggests that the detail on the attempt of the Roman Emperor to buy it comes from a Roman middleman; Rubin, by contrast,

\(^{66}\) Cameron's scepticism about the trenches, 'Sassanians', p.154 is unconvincing, though she is correct in seeing a heavy emphasis among the oriental sources in pinning the blame on Peroz personally, cp. Nöldeke, *Tabari*, p.125 n.1.

In support of the view of the second group of sources in one respect - that the Persians were aware of the trenches - is the battle of Dara, where the Persians were fully cognizant of Belisarius' trench.


\(^{68}\) Nöldeke, *Tabari*, pp.126 and 132 on the capture of the Persian treasury; Zotenberg's translation of Bal'ami, p.142, on the gold amulet.
proposes that the story comes from a Constantinopolitan source, despite Procopius' own assertion at iv.31.69

Consideration of the story need not end there, however. For it appears to have gone unnoticed that while Theophanes does not recount the tale, it is to be found in Cedrenus.70 It appears that Cedrenus had access to a different source for the story, for his account diverges from that of Procopius in several respects. Thus he adds that the events took place in the Persian Gulf, which is situated to the north of the Red Sea, whereas Procopius just talks of the Persian coast (iv.18). Furthermore, he adds that the oysters which produced the pearls were known as 'Zambakai.' His account of the fetching of the pearl by the fisherman is shorter than that of Procopius: in Cedrenus the fisherman leaps in to fetch the pearl of his own accord, throws it to the king's men on the boat, and is eaten by the shark. Peroz then rewards his children generously, which was part of the bargain according to Procopius (iv.25). The last difference between them is over the selling of the pearl to the Romans: Procopius reports that the Hephthalites could not find it (iv.16), but that it was said that they subsequently sold it to Kavadh. Cedrenus, on the other hand, asserts that they refused to sell it to Justinian, though he offered them 100 lbs. of gold, for they considered it to be a monument to Persian stupidity.

Now it is unlikely that Cedrenus has elaborated the story himself, for he adds quite specific details to Procopius' version. It is particularly interesting that Cedrenus considers that it was Justinian who attempted to buy the pearl, for Procopius merely specifies 'the Roman Emperor', which does not exclude Justinian, though one would expect it to refer to the Emperor of the time, Zeno. Cedrenus' source for the story therefore probably dates from Justinian's time or later, though greater precision can...

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69 Cameron, pp.154-155, noting too the symbolism of the pearl in Syriac literature. Veh; p.460; Rubin, col.362 on the whole tale. He notes that the parallel story in Nöldeke is suggestive of an oriental source on the other hand, so that contamination of missing sources cannot be ruled out. But the 'parallel' in Nöldeke (Tabari, p.123) is hardly that close, extending only so far as to mention the capture of the Persian treasury. Proc. asserts (iv.31) that he was told the story by the Persians, and there is no reason to doubt that he could have heard it during his service in Mesopotamia, cf. Cameron, p.155.

The style of the anecdote, and to some extent the subject matter, recall Herodotus' tale of Polycrates' ring, III.40-43; cp. also Ammianus, XXVI.3.85-87 on pearls, and the dangers of retrieving them.

scarcely be attained; it might be suggested that the source, assuming Cedrenus has used it directly, dates from the reign of Justinian, since later sources would be expected only to know the story through Procopius.\footnote{A possible candidate would therefore be John Lydus, who wrote a history of the Persian wars (q.v. ch.1 n.18) and who provides such details e.g. in the de Mensibus.}

In what manner Peroz died (iv.32) is a matter of some dispute among the sources: the report of Joshua the Stylite (§11) that his body had not been found is a pointer to the uncertainty surrounding his death. Two Syriac accounts report him to have committed suicide to avoid capture; his body was eventually found by the Hephthalites, who, according to one version in Tabari, actually buried the fallen in a building.\footnote{Mari, p.37; Chron. Seert, part 2, PO 7 (1911), ch.5 p.[15]. Nöldeke, Tabari, p.130 and n.2 on the burial buildings - hardly what the Zoroastrian Persians could have wished for!}

It may be wondered on what authority Procopius knew of the law he claims was passed by the Persians (iv.33) forbidding pursuit of the enemy. A similar decision is reported by Theophylact (III.xiv.11), when Khusro I decreed that the Persian king should not go on campaign in person, on account of an unsuccessful invasion of Armenia. Whether or not Procopius' reference is accurate, it is difficult to find instances of impetuosity in Persian conduct in wars after this: a good instance of their caution can be found in Theophylact II.ix.13: the Persians fail to follow up a Roman retreat in 586 through fear of a trap.\footnote{Whitby, Maurice, pp.266-267, on the sources for Khusrō's decree; cf. also Strategikon XI.1 (p.360), which remarks that the Persians pursue cautiously and in good order.}

Procopius passes straight from Peroz's death to the reign of Kavadh (iv.34), omitting entirely the reign of Balash, evidently through confusion between Balash and Zamasp.\footnote{On the omission of Balash, cf. Cameron, 'Sassanians', pp.154-155. Balash was the uncle of Kavadh, the brother of Peroz, cf. Cameron, art. cit., p.155, and Nöldeke, Tabari, p.133 n.4, though some versions make him another son of Peroz. Also Rubin col.360, and Cameron, p.154, on Proc.'s error. Christensen, p.349 n.1, views the similarity of the character and destiny of the two as helping to account for Procopius' mistake; Theophanes, A.M. 5968, gives the two names Blasius and Oualas (with Blases also being attested as a variant of the former) as alternatives, which shows the confusion which could arise between the names. On the reign of Balash, q.v. ch.2. n.21.}

That the Hephthalites reduced the Persians to tributary status is confirmed by numismatic evidence in the form of Hephthalite overstrikes to Sasanian coins: Marquart connected these with payment of tribute, and has generally been followed by subsequent
scholars. This subjection did not last for a mere two years, however, despite Procopius' assertion (iv.35). The numismatic evidence shows that right through until 545 the Persians were having to make payments to the Hephthalites: this goes some way to explain the rapaciousness of Kavadh and Khusro in their campaigns against the Romans.75

(b) Procopius on internal Persian history (v-vi)

In these chapters Procopius continues his account of internal Persian history to the end of the fifth century, highlighting the more sensational episodes. Interweaved into his account is an extract from a 'History of the Armenians', providing an anecdote on the curious 'Castle of Oblivion'. In his version of events concerning the reign of Kavadh, Procopius bears a remarkable similarity to some of the versions reported by Tabari: it seems that he is in touch with a Persian tradition about Kavadh, which would help to explain why Agathias in his excursus on Sasanian history (IV.xxiii-xxx) does not differ from him. The 'History of the Armenians', on the other hand, was evidently a written source, and has been connected with the 'Epic Histories' attributed to the Armenian writer P'awstos Buzand, where the same incident is reported in similar terms.76

While Procopius passes over the opening years of Kavadh's reign (488-496), they nonetheless deserve consideration. Balash's conciliatory policies had proved unpopular with the aristocracy, leading to his overthrow in 488. Probably a leading figure behind the installation of Kavadh was the noble Zarmihr (Sokhra) of the Karen house.77


76 Tabari's accounts of Kavadh's overthrow and restoration are to be found in Noldeke's translation, pp.139-164; Christensen, Le règne, pp.26-71, separates out the various strands in Tabari and other oriental sources and provides a helpful schematisation of the traditions. Agathias, IV.xxviii, for his account of Kavadh's reign. On P'awstos Buzand, cf. Garsoian, Epic Histories, pp.1-11. Although she demonstrates that the name of the author is in fact a misreading of the title of the work (pp.13-14), the anonymous author will be referred to as P'awstos henceforth for the sake of convenience.

77 On the two names of Zarmihr/Sokhra, cf. Christensen, Le règne, p.92 n.1 and Nöildeke, Tabari, p.120 n.3 and p.140 n.2. On the problem surrounding the identification of this person with Proc.'s Seoses, v.i. n.113.
Kavadh failed to prove pliant towards the aristocracy, and at some point in the 490s took advantage of the rivalry between Zarmihr/Sokhra and Shapur Mihran, the commander-in-chief of the army (Ērān-spāḥbadh), to have the former executed. According to the traditional view, Kavadh’s conversion to Mazdakism followed soon after the execution of Zarmihr/Sokhra; then, probably in 496, he was replaced by his brother Zamasp. Whether Mazdak’s doctrines were already causing offence to the nobility is uncertain, but Kavadh’s position was further weakened by external problems: the Armenians had defeated a Persian army sent to restore fire-worship in their country, while the Arabs had launched raids into Persian territory. Furthermore, the Kadishaye in the vicinity of Nisibis were proving restless.

It has been suggested, however, that Kavadh’s overthrow should not be connected with his support for the Mazdakites. Before considering this proposal, the various sources concerning the event must be reviewed. Procopius relates it briefly: Kavadh incurs the wrath of the παραβάση by his introduction of communal intercourse with women (v.1-2), and is therefore ousted in favour of his brother Blases (v.2). Despite the advice of Gousanastades (Gushnaspādādh) he is cast into prison (v.2-9), which prompts the excursus concerning the Prison of Oblivion (v.10-40). Procopius is clearly more interested in his anecdote on the prison, and Kavadh’s crafty escape, than in the motivation behind his removal from the throne. Nor are his tastes unique: Agathias (IV.xxvii) merely moralises on the idea of communal intercourse with women, while Joshua the Stylite (§20) also alludes to this measure alone. While Joshua connects this to the ‘Zarādushtakān’ sect, it is only the oriental sources that link Kavadh’s overthrow

78 Christensen, Le règne, pp.94-95, Frye, CHIr 3.1, p.150. Nöldeke, Tabari, p.140. Q.v. n.59 against the view that Kavadh was very young when he ascended the throne.

79 Nöldeke, Tabari pp.427-8 on the details of the chronology - Agathias (IV.xxviii.1) places Kavadh’s overthrow in his eleventh year, which would be correct for his restoration, cp. Cameron, p.157, Christensen, L’Iran, p.348. Schippmann reckons that Kavadh’s support for Mazdak commenced in 494/5, soon after the death of Zarmihr, p.49.

Tabari, p.140, puts Kavadh’s deposition in his tenth year. Procopius (vi.18) puts the length of Zamasp’s reign at two years, while Agathias (IV.xxviii.7) puts it at four: Proc.’s figure is to be preferred, though since neither Zamasp nor Kavadh may have instantly gained complete control, some leeway must be allowed. Crone, p.21, supports Nöldeke’s dating of Kavadh’s overthrow to 496.

80 Cf. Joshua §§21-22, Christensen, L’Iran, p.347, Frye, CHIr, p.150. On the Kadishaye, v.i. ch.4 n.4. Christensen, loc. cit., points to the lack of major disturbances under Zamasp as evidence that the Mazdakite movement had made little headway by the time of Kavadh’s removal.
to his support for the Mazdakite movement. The failure of the more contemporary western sources to mention any other reforms of Kavadh save in respect of women has led Crone to argue that the king had proposed such a measure (and no others) in the 490s, as a result of which he was thrown into prison; only later, she argues, did he have dealings with the Mazdakites. The oriental sources, according to this view, retrojected these links to the period before his overthrow, and therefore attributed the king's fall to his Mazdakite sympathies.81

Now the more traditional view holds that the western sources are selective in their reporting of Kavadh's overthrow, and that the measures concerning women which caught the attention of Procopius and Agathias were only part of a more extensive programme of reform inspired by Mazdak. The difficulty with such an interpretation is the time gap: there is no doubt that Kavadh was removed from power between 496 and 498, nor that Mazdak and his followers came to grief in the late 520s or even the early 530s. If Kavadh was indeed expelled for his association with Mazdak, then it is necessary to suppose that upon his return he did not renounce his support for the movement, which continued to flourish for several more decades. While it is hardly appropriate to attempt a detailed investigation of Mazdakism at this point, it is however necessary to consider Procopius' account concerning Kavadh's overthrow; for if one is to separate Kavadh's revolutionary proposal concerning women from Mazdak's teachings, then one must regard the silence of western sources as significant. It seems more probable, however, that little can be read into the failure of Procopius, Agathias or Joshua to mention any wider reform programme leading to Kavadh's downfall.82

It was, according to Procopius, the προιτον (v.1) who were angered by the king's measures: Crone attaches considerable importance to this statement, arguing that this refers to the common people of Persia. But Mazdak, according to the oriental sources, enjoyed popular support for his programme. Hence, she argues, Kavadh's overthrow


82 For the more traditional view (and a detailed treatment of Mazdakism), cf. Christensen, Le règne, pp.95-106 and L'Iran, pp.337-347; also E. Yarshater, 'Mazdakism', CHI3 3.2, pp.991-1024, Frye, pp.322-323, and Schippmann, pp.46-49. Crone makes the point about the time-gap, p.22; Christensen, for instance, assumes that the western sources are just being selective in their reportage, L'Iran, p.345. Considering it remarkable that they fail to note Mazdak's measures on the holding of goods in common.
should not be linked to Mazdak. It is difficult, however, to pin so much on Procopius’ use of the term πληθος: it has also been argued that it refers to the Persian nobility, and it is quite possible that Procopius was uncertain just who was responsible for the usurpation of Zamasp. To stake so much on his use of this word then seems dangerous, especially considering his confusion of Balash and Zamasp.83

Kavadh’s measures were by no means so drastic as the western sources imply in any case: Sasanian law allowed a husband to cede one of his wives, including his ‘principal wife’ to another man in need. Thus Joshua is slightly more accurate in this instance when he talks of Kavadh reviving the sect of the Zarādushtakān (§20). It would seem then that Kavadh merely loosened the laws of marriage, probably as part of an attempt to reduce the power of the nobility; for by weakening the bonds of marriage the bloodlines of the aristocracy would be threatened.84

Procopius, like Agathias and Joshua, is hostile towards Kavadh’s revolutionary programme (v.1): he does not explicitly condemn his measures concerning women, but latent criticism of the king may be seen in his use of the term νεωτερος.85 His conflation of Zamasp and Balash has already been remarked upon: the description of Blases as the brother of Peroz (v.3), as well as the report that he was blinded once Kavadh reascended the throne (vi.17) recall the fate of Balash, yet from the context of the incident, it is clear that Procopius is referring to Zamasp. It may be supposed then that either Procopius received an unclear version of the reigns of Balash and Zamasp, such that he supposed them to be one and the same, or that he has consciously pared

83 Crone’s arguments - p.23; she acknowledges that one may doubt Proc.’s account, but insists that even if the king was not overthrown by the multitude, one is not justified in inferring that he actually enjoyed popular support (n.48). N. Figulewskaja, Les villes de l’état Iranien aux époques parthe et sassanide, Paris 1963 (henceforth Les villes), p.212, for her interpretation of Proc. as referring to the nobility, also Christensen, Le règne, p.111. Cf. the comments of Cameron, ‘Sassanians’, pp.156-157, who rightly stresses Proc.’s ignorance of the circumstances of Kavadh’s overthrow. Agathias (IV.xxivii) holds the nobility responsible for the downfall of the king; Proc.’s account, it should be noted, alludes to general revolutionary measures introduced by Kavadh (v.1), even if he specifies only one.

84 On Sasanian marriage laws, cf. Christensen, Le règne, pp.105-106, cp. L’Iran, pp.328-332, 344-345; also A. Perikhanian, ‘Iranian society and law’, CHIR 3.2, pp.646-650. Nöldeke considered Kavadh to have been striking a blow against the nobility, Tabari, p.142 n.3, followed by Figulewskaja, Les Villes, p.210 and Crone, p.25, although Christensen believed him to have been sincere in his backing for Mazdak, Le règne, pp.107-111.

85 Q.v. ch.1 n.53 on Proc.’s conservatism.
down a longer account for the entertainment of his reader.86

The report on the conference held to determine the fate of Kavadh (v.2-9) is to be found in no other source; nor does Gousanastades attract the attention of any of the main Persian sources in their accounts of Kavadh’s reign. He does, however, figure in Lazar, where he is sent out by Balash to pacify the Armenians: he is named as Nixor Všnaspdat, and described as ‘a calm and thoughtful man, concerned for the land’s welfare’. He enjoyed good relations with the Armenians, and is reported by Lazar to have been heavily critical of Peroz when speaking to Vahan Mamikonean, accusing him of having delivered over the Sasanian kingdom to the Hephthalites.87 Thus from both writers he emerges as a determined foe of the Hephthalites, who presumably believed that peace in the west was a necessary precursor to restoring Persian ascendancy in the east. He had been prominent under Balash, and now clearly backed the usurpation of Zamasp: his desire therefore to be rid of Kavadh is unsurprising. What is less clear, however, is whence Procopius derived his account of the debate concerning the king’s fate.

Two possibilities may be suggested here. On the one hand, given that the deliberations are followed by an extract from the ‘History of the Armenians’, it is possible that this work might have contained information on the kanārang Gousanastades. Support for such a view may be found in his involvement in Armenian affairs, although he had charge of a province far removed from Armenia. Perhaps more likely in this case, however, Procopius may have acquired his information from the younger Kavadh, who had been reared at the court of Gousanastades’ successor Adergoudounbades (xxiii.7), and must therefore have been well informed on this family. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that Procopius devotes more space to this family than to any other, save that of the Sasanian line.88

According to Procopius, Gousanastades occupied the position of kanārang (v.4), in

86 Vf. n.104 for another likely case of such compression; q.v. n.74 on the confusion between Zamasp and Balash.

87 Lazar’s praise for Gousanastades - tr. Thomson, p.219 [159]; his good relations with the Armenians - p.223 [163]; his criticism of Peroz, pp.226-227 [165-166]. Cf. also Justi, p.219, for the identification and p.354, s.v. Warešna and Christensen, L’Iran, p.348.

88 Q.v. ch.1 n.9 on the younger Kavadh.
command of the eastern frontier. It is uncertain, however, whether this position was among the seven hereditary offices of state restricted to seven noble families, though Procopius may be correct to suppose that it was. The headquarters of the domain under the kanārang (Abharshahr) were situated at Nishapur, so that the duty of guarding against the Hephthalites fell to him. The title may have been more generally used, however, for the Persian lexicographers interpret the word as meaning 'governor of a province'. It also apparently became a personal name - the parallel of Patricius may be appropriate - so that the Chanaranges to be found in Procopius and Agathias should not necessarily be viewed as the usual product of Roman confusion over Persian titulature.

The 'Prison of Oblivion', in which Kavadh was confined (v.7-9) is attested in numerous other sources, none of them Persian. It was situated in Susiana, and known as Gêlgard, Anushbard or Andmishn, the last of these in the Armenian sources; its site has been placed near Gundishapur. As Procopius states, it was used for the permanent removal of enemies dangerous to the state. His account implies that the inmates were generally royal, and he notes at v.7 and v.29, in almost the same words, the reluctance of the Persians to execute a man of royal blood. But Theophylact, on the other hand, devotes an excursus to the Prison, and from his account it emerges as a general gaol, in which a considerable number of prisoners were held. He describes how the Romans of Dara, who were among those imprisoned there, led a break-out and succeeded in returning to their own lines. The Life of John Eleemosynarius also mentions the prison, where John was imprisoned in the seventh century; it is said that no one could


90 On the name and location of the prison, cf. Christensen, L'Iran, pp.307 and 349. Nöldeke, Tabari, p.144 n.1 and J. Markwart, Südarmenien und die Tigrisquellen nach griechischen und arabischen Geographen, Vienna 1930, pp.44*-48* believe that it can be sited at a place they identify with Diz-i-pul, where Istakhri places a bridge of Andāmīšn; a modern map locates a place called Andimeshk just north of Dezful. Garsoian, Epic Histories, p.443, s.v. Anyūs, puts it in Khuzistan, to the north-west of the Persian Gulf, but maintains that its site is unknown. Ammianus (XXVII.12.3) refers to it as Agabana.

91 Theophylact III.v.3-7, cf. M. Whitby, The History of Theophylact Simocatta (henceforth History), Oxford 1986, pp.77-78, where they note that this episode is clearly inserted from a different source; the detail on the return of the Romans may imply that the report stemmed from one of them.
be recalled from the prison, but some inmates effected an escape to Cyprus.\textsuperscript{92} Armenian sources also mention the release of "une multitude sans nombre de captifs" from the prison under Khusro II.\textsuperscript{93}

The references in Theophylact, Symeon, and the Armenian sources would argue a more general purpose for the prison, and it seems likely in any case that it was not solely used for high ranking prisoners. It is interesting that it fails to catch the attention of either the Syriac or oriental sources. The latter at most make mention of a prison or "einen Ort, zu dem niemand als sie [die Mazdakiten] kommen konnte".\textsuperscript{94} Both Procopius and Theophylact devote some attention to the place, digressing from their narrative, while the Armenian sources, such as Pawstos, bring it in as part of the narrative. Procopius' detail on the execution of anyone referring to an inmate of the Prison (v.8) appears to be an elaboration: Pawstos' account does not mention such a law, though Shapur is unwilling to let Arsaces' servant visit him. Doubtless it would be unwise to mention a high-ranking inmate of the Prison, but if it were used for Roman prisoners from Dara, it is hardly likely that mentioning them would incur the death penalty.\textsuperscript{95}

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\textsuperscript{92} The life of John Eleemosynarius can be found in Symeon Metaphrastes, \textit{PG} 114, col.37 on the episode. cp. H. Delehaye, 'Une vie inédite de saint Jean l'Aumonier', \textit{AB} 45 (1927), p.53 ch.37. Whitby notes that the life of St Golinducht (to be found in G. Garitte, 'La passion Géorgienne de sainte Golindouch', \textit{AB} 74 (1956), pp.430, 435 and 437 and P. Peeters, 'Santie Golindouch martyre perse', \textit{AB} 62 (1944), pp.84-85) refers to the Prison, cf. \textit{History}, p.148 n.54 and p.149 n.58 (on V.xii.12); whether these (relatively frequent) mentions of the Prison in such works should be taken too seriously may be doubted, even if (e.g.) Peeters, p.99, is prepared to accept the word of the hagiography.


\textsuperscript{94} Noldeke, \textit{Tabari} pp.142, 144 for the 'Gefängniss' and p.144 n.1 on the Prison itself, Cameron, p.157, considers it unsurprising that the oriental sources do not mention it if it was indeed forbidden even to name the place, as Procopius says.

\textsuperscript{95} Stein's view (vol.2, Excursus U, p.835 n.2) that Faustus came from Buzanta, rather than Byzantium, has now been rejected by Garsoian, \textit{Epic Histories}, pp.11-16; she accepts, however, that the prison could not be named, p.443. The prison is also referred to by Moses Khorenats'i III.35, \textit{History of the Armenians}, tr. R.W. Thomson, Cambridge Mass., 1978, pp.292-293 and in the Life of St Nerses, in Langlois, vol.2, p.33 in their accounts of Arsaces' incarceration.
The Prison of Oblivion provides Procopius with the opportunity of entering into an entertaining story concerning the Armenian king Arsaces III (?350-364). He tells in some detail of how the Armenians come to the aid of the Persians, which leads to the end of war between the Persians and Armenians (v.10-14). The Persian king Pacurius and Arsaces become friends, but through magical means Pacurius discovers that Arsaces is plotting against him, and therefore summons him to court and imprisons him in the Prison of Oblivion (v.10-29). Finally, a faithful retainer of Arsaces distinguishes himself in the service of the Persians, and is allowed to visit his king; and Arsaces kills himself after a banquet is held in honour of his visitor (v.30-39).96

Now the story of Arsaces’ imprisonment is also recounted in very similar fashion in the Epic Histories once attributed to Pawstos Buzand. Despite varying views in the past, it seems most probable now that the work was originally composed in Armenian.97 The relationship between the two accounts remains a puzzle, however. Garsoian places the composition of the Epic Histories in the 470s, over a century after the events described, which implies the existence of a prior source. She further suggests that versions of Arsaces’ ordeal may well have circulated in both Greek and Armenian. Hence the existence of the two stories, she adds, does ‘not necessarily provide a direct link between ‘Pawstos’ and Procopius’. Rather, given the material on Armenia included in the de Aedificiis as well (III.i.6), it does not seem implausible to suppose that there was some sort of ‘History of Armenia’ available in Greek in the sixth century; and that it was this work which was exploited by Procopius.98 Other sources, such as Moses Khorenats’i, Ammianus Marcellinus and the Life of St Nerses, refer briefly to the fate of Arsaces, but offer few details; Ammianus notes the guile employed by Shapur in luring Arsaces to a banquet, and how he was bound in silver chains as a concession to his nobility. But it is with Pawstos that Procopius’ account must be most closely

96 PLRE I, s.v. Arsaces III, for the (tentative) dates of his reign.


compared.99

While Procopius places the length of the Armeno-Persian war at 32 years (v.10) P'awstos varies in his figures: at one point he gives 34 years (IV.50), elsewhere he puts 'over thirty years' (IV.20). The two writers are thus remarkably close here. Although it is difficult to date anything within the war, it appears that Arsaces was captured in its thirtieth year, after which hostilities continued for two more years.100 As Peeters says, 'Fauste nous décrit en réalité une situation ambiguë, qui n’est ni la paix ni la guerre' - i.e. the πόλεμος ἀκινητός of v.10.101

The fact that Procopius has succeeded in accurately relating the length of the war makes it all the more remarkable that he should have committed the blunder of placing it in the time of the Persian king Pacurius; for the Persian king in question is clearly Shapur II (308-78). There never was a king of Persia by that name, though it was held by several kings of Parthia.102 In 368 Arsaces presented himself at Shapur's court for the last time: so if the war had been going on for thirty years until then, it must have started in 338/9, which would coincide with the start of the persecution of Christians in the Persian empire.103

P'awstos' version of events is by far the more detailed, and it seems likely indeed that not only has Procopius compressed the account given in the Epic Histories - or whatever 'History of the Armenians' was available to him - but he has also somewhat recast the tale for his readers.104 Procopius omits the first encounter of Arsaces with Shapur:

99 Ammianus, XXVII.12.1-3; Moses III.35 and the Life of Nerses, p.33, for their versions, cf. Garsoian, Epic Histories, p.313.

100 Peeters, 'Le début', p.23 and n.6, on the siege of Artogerassa following the capture of Arsaces (in Ammianus, XXVII.12), cf. also Garsoian, Epic Histories, p.291 n.19.


102 Garsoian, Epic Histories, views the name Pacurius as 'an all-purpose' one, meaning in Persian 'god's son', and notes the resemblance of the tale to that of Heracles and Antaeus, p.302.

103 Cf. Peeters, 'Le début', p.26; at p.23 he notes how P'awstos IV.54 implies there were thirty years of war before the capture of Arsaces. Garsoian, Epic Histories, p.291 n.19, for a discussion of the dates of the war.

104 So Peeters, 'Le début', p.22; or the changes may have been made already in the Greek version used by Proc.
during the stay of Arsaces and his faithful henchman Vasak (Procopius' Bassicius) at Shapur's court, the latter decapitated the head of Shapur's stables for an insult to his master. But this did not blunt Shapur's liking for Arsaces, and oaths were sworn by Arsaces to remain faithful to the Persians. Disputes among the Armenian hierarchy led to the sudden flight of Arsaces and Vasak from the court (P'awstos IV.16), though this does not appear to have spoilt relations between the two sides. For when the Romans failed to seek the aid of the Armenians, the Persians and Armenians co-ordinated an attack on the Roman forces in Aruestan, near Nisibis, which restored Arsaces to favour with Shapur. Yet again, however, Armenian intrigues precipitated Arsaces' flight and from this arose the thirty-year war (IV.20).105

Now the attack of the Armenians on the 'barbarians' living not far off (v.30) must be Procopius' revision of P'awstos' attack on the Romans near Nisibis.106 The distrust which arose after this battle is not seen by Procopius as the cause of the war, for the attack actually takes place during it: hence P'awstos' notice at IV.20 on the war lasting over thirty years is probably either misplaced or inaccurate. The removal of the Romans from Procopius' version is hardly surprising: it is required by the aim of the story - to arouse pity for the plight of Arsaces in the Roman reader, and may already have been present in the 'History of the Armenians' used by Procopius.

The main oddity about Procopius' account is the omission of any fighting between Persians and Armenians: he is clearly more interested in the individuals. It is perhaps as a result of a wish not to go into detail about the lengthy conflict between the two sides that leads him (or his source) to telescope drastically the events leading up to Vasak's final visit to the court of Shapur. For he passes over the first encounter of the two men, at which oaths were sworn, but seems to insert the oaths into the second encounter, when (according to P'awstos) Shapur promised his daughter in marriage to Arsaces. In neither case does Procopius mention the flight of Arsaces: he manages to explain the distrust between the two sides as being due to slanders made to the Persian king (v.16). This reworking of the story allows him to compress events considerably, and


106 So Peeters, 'Le début', p.22.
only adds to the sympathy for Arsaces: in P'awstos' account, the internal disputes of the Armenians and the flights from the Persian court are scarcely heroic.

It is the final part of the story which Procopius narrates in the greatest detail, and here there are fewer divergences between his account and that of P'awstos (IV.54). Nevertheless it is noticeable that in P'awstos Arsaces and Vasak only depart to see Shapur very reluctantly, virtually coerced by the Armenian people, and having received an assurance of their safety from the Persian king. Hence Procopius' version of an unsuspecting Arsaces again reflects well on the king.107

In the plan of the Magi (P'awstos IV.54; Proc. v.20-21) there is broad agreement between the two sources, but they diverge over what follows. Thus P'awstos recounts the scene between Arsaces and Shapur mainly in direct speech, where Procopius just describes it in general terms (v.25-27), concentrating on how Arsaces spoke - whether arrogantly or submissively - instead of on what he said. He also omits the banquet at the end of the day, which in P'awstos' account clinches Arsaces' guilt when he waxes arrogant yet again; but on the detail of the punishment of Vasak they are in general agreement. Procopius however states that he was flayed, whereas in P'awstos he is strangled, before his body is filled with chaff or grass, and suspended from a tree (v.28). P'awstos adds that the body was placed outside the Prison.108

The version of the Epic Histories (IV.54) concerning the death of Arsaces is again fuller than that of Procopius (v.35-39), who does not even furnish us with the name of the faithful servant of Arsaces: according to P'awstos, he was a eunuch called Drastamat, who saved Shapur's life in a campaign against the Kushans.109 As before, P'awstos

107 Cf. Moses III.34-5, tr. Thomson, pp.292-293, on their reluctance: the Life of St Nerses, on the other hand, considers them to have gone willingly, p.33.

108 Cp. Agathias, IV.xxiii.2-5, on the flaying of the general Nachoragan by Khusro following a defeat in Lazica; his body too was inflated like a wineskin and hung from a pole, a practice which Agathias considers to have originated with the savage Shapur I, but cf. Cameron, 'Herodotus and Thucydides in Agathias', BZ 57 (1964), p.51 n.86. Cp. The Book of Government or Rules for Kings, tr. H. Darke, London 1960, p.40, on a flaying ordered by Khusro. The Life of Nerses just states that Vasak was killed in prison, p.33.

109 Presumably some time after 370, cf. Christensen, L'îran p.239 contro Garsoian, Epic Histories, p.313; PLRE 1, s.v. Arsaces, puts it some time in the 360s. Moses III.35, tr. Thomson, pp.292-293, and the Life of Nerses (p.33) ignore the role of Drastamat and have Arsaces kill himself with his own sword; Ammianus refers to the torture of the king at Agabana, following his blinding, then his execution. XXVII.12.3.

On the name Drastamat, cf. Garsoian, Epic Histories, pp.369-370; she suggests that he may be part of an 'epic tradition' in the role of the faithful retainer, considering too that in Pahlavi his name means
narrates in direct speech, while Procopius summarises what was said. Procopius would appear to have elaborated P'awstos' version (or that of his source), for the Epic Histories do not mention Arsaces and Drastamat embracing, though they do recount the bathing and dressing of the king. It is also at this point that Procopius describes a banquet put on by Arsaces - perhaps an adaptation of the one to be found slightly earlier in P'awstos' version. Finally, in the Epic Histories Arsaces kills himself with a dagger provided by his loyal servant, but in Procopius he has to steal it from the banquet; again Procopius has adapted the story to focus on Arsaces, for in P'awstos Drastamat too commits suicide after his master.

* * *

Procopius' account of Kavadh's imprisonment (vi.1), escape to the Hephthalites (vi.2-9) and subsequent restoration to power (vi.10-19), bears great similarity to the versions reported by Tabari. While he attributes Kavadh's escape to the assistance of his wife (vi.1-9), however, the oriental sources tend to refer to his sister; but as has been pointed out, the tradition may have considered the king to have been married to his sister. A separate version in Tabari omits references to Kavadh's wife, but gives the leading role to the son of Sokhra, Zarmihr, in effecting the king's escape.110

In Procopius, Kavadh escapes by donning his wife's clothes, while she takes his place in the prison (vi.6-8). In the version of Tabari which involves the king's sister, however, she effects his escape by having him taken out wrapped in a carpet. Thus she escapes with him, although no more is heard of her once he flees to the Hephthalites. Since Procopius considers her to have taken her husband's place, he is faced with the problem as to what befell her once he had escaped; Agathias, it may be noted (IV.xxviii.3), alludes specifically to Procopius' version, but indicates that he was aware of alternative accounts of the king's escape. This ties in well with Procopius' declaration (vi.9) that 'welcome'.

110 See esp. Christensen, Le règne, p.112, on the ruse of Kavadh's wife/sister: while he views this as a legend, he recognises that its presence in Proc. demonstrates that it must have arisen at an early stage; loc. cit. for the identification of the wife and sister. Noldeke, Tabari, p.144, for the version there of the sister's help. p.142 for that of Zarmihr; cf. also Le règne, pp.25-89, for a useful schematisation of the various traditions on Kavadh.
there were conflicting Persian stories as to what became of Kavadh's wife, although none of these has survived in the oriental tradition. That Procopius had heard the story from more than one source need not follow from his statement, any more than that he could speak Persian. Syriac speakers on the Roman-Persian borderlands doubtless had knowledge of Persian history; and Persians themselves, such as Kavadh's grandson Kavadh, could have transmitted the story to Procopius in Greek.111

Procopius' Seoses (vi.3), the helper of Kavadh, is problematic: Nöldeke argued that Sokhra and Zarmihr should be identified, lest we have an account according to which Kavadh murders both father and son. This sort of doublet is not unusual: another example is that which arose surrounding Kavadh's flight, so that he is said to have fled from both his uncle Balash and his brother Zamasp.112 But can Seoses be identified with this Sokhra/Zarmihr? The solution of Christensen is to put the execution of Sokhra/Zarmihr before the usurpation of Zamasp, and to consider Siyāvush not to be connected to Sokhra/Zarmihr in any way. He rejects the identification of Seoses with Sokhra/Zarmihr on the grounds that Seoses was not executed until the reign of Justin (cf. Proc. xi.37), by which time (considering that he played an active role as early as the death of Peroz in 484) he would have been extremely old. Furthermore, he argues, it would be very odd for Procopius to have confounded the names of both Zarmihr and Shapur with those of two other dignitaries; for in the Persian tradition, it is Shapur who succeeds in bringing about Zarmihr's death, while according to Procopius it is Mebodes who causes the downfall of Seoses (xi.31). Moreover, it is known that Mahbodh was of the Suren family, while Shapur was a member of the Mihran house. In the light of these points therefore, it seems impossible to identify Procopius' account of Seoses and his fall with the Persian stories concerning the rivalry of Zarmihr/Sokhra and Shapur. Christensen's solution - that Siyāvush was from some other house - should then be
accepted. Hence Zarmihr/Sokhra will have been executed before the usurpation of Zamasp (against the view of Nöldeke), while Siyāvush (Seoses) therefore emerges as the devoted follower of Kavadh, unconnected with Zarmihr/Sokhra and the house of Kāren.\(^\text{113}\)

Concerning Kavadh’s flight to the Hephthalite king (vi.10), similar accounts may be found in Joshua and Tabari. Joshua (§24) reports that Kavadh married his own niece at the Hephthalite court: she was the daughter of the khagan and Pèròzdocht, the daughter of Peroz. According to Tabari, Kavadh secured aid from the Hephthalite king through the intercession of his wife, but no marriage is mentioned. Furthermore, this tale is placed in the reign of Balash, in the context of Kavadh’s first flight to the Hephthalites in 484. In reporting Kavadh’s flight from Zamasp, on the other hand, the oriental sources are fairly unanimous in recounting a romantic encounter of the king (in Hephthalite territory), the product of which was Khusro, although this is generally regarded as a later invention.\(^\text{114}\)

The same account in Tabari which tells of the army entrusted to Kavadh by the Hephthalite king also alludes to his arrival in Nishapur, where his son Khusro was brought to him. Nishapur was the seat of Gousanastades’ territory, so it seems that it was indeed through this region that Kavadh advanced in his bid for the throne. Procopius’ anecdote concerning how Gousanastades was replaced by a relative (vi.12-16) is scarcely convincing, even if the position of kanārāng may have been tied to one family. Adergoudounbades survived in office for the rest of Kavadh’s reign, but was replaced by Khusro for his sheltering of Kavadh’s grandson (xxiii.22).\(^\text{115}\)

On the fate of the hapless Zamasp, the sources generally favour the view that his life was spared, and it is probable that he was not even blinded: Procopius may be confusing

\(^{113}\) Christensen, *Le règne*, p.94 n.1 for his arguments, and q.v. n.78 on the execution of Zarmihr/Sokhra; Nöldeke, *Tabari*, p.145 n.1 had already noted ‘Diesen Seoses mit Zarmihr zu identifizieren, hat aber seine grossen Bedenken.’ Note also that the whole story is repeated from Procopius in Theophylact (IV. vi.6-11). Agathias’ account is more detailed, stressing Kavadh’s plight, but contains no new information (IV.xxviii).


\(^{115}\) Q.V. n.89 on the office and Nishapur.
him with Balash here (vi.17), since he was blinded (as Joshua reports, §19). Procopius then relates the Persian method of blinding, which was evidently a topic of some interest to him: for at VIII.x.20-22 he narrates in greater detail the method employed in this case by Khusro in blinding a relative.\footnote{Procopius then relates the Persian method of blinding, which was evidently a topic of some interest to him: for at VIII.x.20-22 he narrates in greater detail the method employed in this case by Khusro in blinding a relative.}

The execution of Gousanastades (vi.18) was to be expected, butProcopius says nothing of the fate of his fellow nobles. Joshua relates that they suffered the same fate, but it seems more likely that Kavadh spared them, as the oriental sources report: they were still a powerful force, and their power was only gradually diminished by the reforms of Kavadh and Khusro.\footnote{The execution of Gousanastades (vi.18) was to be expected, butProcopius says nothing of the fate of his fellow nobles. Joshua relates that they suffered the same fate, but it seems more likely that Kavadh spared them, as the oriental sources report: they were still a powerful force, and their power was only gradually diminished by the reforms of Kavadh and Khusro.}

Procopius is incorrect in his assertion (vi.18) that Seoses was the only Persian ever to hold the office of adrastaran salanes (artestaran sâlâr): we know that a certain Kârdâr, one of the sons of Mihr-Narseh, also held it under Bahram V Gor. The office may have been another name for the Êrân-spâhbadh (the commander-in-chief of the army), a position abolished by Khusro I; Procopius is thus on firmer ground in asserting Seoses to have been the last holder of the office. It is clear at any rate that the position amounted to a major military command, though whether Seoses had control over all the other offices as well as the army, as Procopius asserts, is uncertain.\footnote{Procopius is incorrect in his assertion (vi.18) that Seoses was the only Persian ever to hold the office of adrastaran salanes (artestaran sâlâr): we know that a certain Kârdâr, one of the sons of Mihr-Narseh, also held it under Bahram V Gor. The office may have been another name for the Êrân-spâhbadh (the commander-in-chief of the army), a position abolished by Khusro I; Procopius is thus on firmer ground in asserting Seoses to have been the last holder of the office. It is clear at any rate that the position amounted to a major military command, though whether Seoses had control over all the other offices as well as the army, as Procopius asserts, is uncertain.}

Procopius’ favourable attitude to Kavadh (vi.19) contrasts with his criticism of his successor Khusro. In the war which followed his restoration, Procopius tells of incidents to the credit of the king (vi.32-34); criticism is reserved only for his tendency towards innovation (v.1, cp. xi.3), which is in any case by no means so pronounced as that of his son. The oriental tradition, on the other hand, favours Khusro far more than his father,\footnote{Procopius’ favourable attitude to Kavadh (vi.19) contrasts with his criticism of his successor Khusro. In the war which followed his restoration, Procopius tells of incidents to the credit of the king (vi.32-34); criticism is reserved only for his tendency towards innovation (v.1, cp. xi.3), which is in any case by no means so pronounced as that of his son. The oriental tradition, on the other hand, favours Khusro far more than his father.}

\footnote{\textit{An ecclesiastical history in Anecdota Cramer}, vol.2, Oxford 1839 (repr. Hildesheim 1967), p.109, also reports the blinding of a certain Blassus. \textit{Contra}, cf. Agathias IV.xxviii.7, and Cameron, ‘Sassanians’, p.158; Christensen, \textit{L règne} p.114, notes that Agathias agrees with the oriental traditions he labels III and IV over the sparing of Zamasp, and is followed by Cameron in supposing them to be right. So despite Theophylact’s (IV.vi.11) assertion that Kavadh exacted a savage revenge from his opponents, Agathias’ evidence is to be preferred. Q.v. also n.74 on Proc.’s confusion of Balash and Zamasp.}

\footnote{\textit{Cp. Pawstos (III.20) describing the heating of iron for use in blinding the Armenian king Tiran: Christensen, L’\textit{Iran} p.308, accepts Procopius’ word on this matter. A similar description to Proc.’s - perhaps based upon it - may be found at Theophylact IV.vi.5.}}
doubtless through the influence of the *Khvadhāynāmagh* (drawn up under Khusro).\textsuperscript{120}

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These chapters have not generally been well received by modern historians, although it has been realised that Procopius was hardly setting out to narrate Sasanian history of the fifth century in detail. It is probably best to regard them as 'Herodotean-like tales', acquired from a diversity of sources, set out for the entertainment of the reader, rather than as an attempt to analyse Persian problems on their eastern frontier; for Procopius makes no effort to tie in these stories with relations between Rome and Persia. The chapters on either side of this section (ii and vii-ix), on the other hand, are clearly relevant to his account of the wars waged under Justinian.\textsuperscript{121}

\textsuperscript{120} On the terms used by Proc., cf. Cameron, p.240 and n.84. On his hostility towards Khusro, cf. op. cit, pp.162-163. For the later tradition favourable to Khusro, and its influence on Agathias, cf. *Le règne*, p.91.

\textsuperscript{121} On the modern verdict on this section, cf. Scott, 'The Classical Tradition in Byzantine historiography', p.73 (for the quotation); also Cameron, p.156 and Evans, *Procopius*, p.52.
CHAPTER FOUR: PROCOPIUS ON THE REIGN OF ANASTASIS

(a) The Anastasian War

The war which shattered the long-standing peace in the East was also the most devastating that had occurred between Rome and Persia since 363. It is treated only briefly by Procopius, however, since his primary intention was to deal with the wars waged under Justinian. For a full account of the war it is necessary to turn to other sources, which fortunately are not lacking. With their aid it is possible to arrive at a judgement of the importance of the war and to assess Procopius' version of events.

(i) The causes of war

The immediate cause of war lay in Anastasius' refusal to accede to a demand from the Persian king Kavadh for money. This was not the first such request that had been put to the Emperor: Kavadh had made similar demands in 491, when Anastasius had just ascended the throne, and again during the 490s, before his own expulsion.

Behind the immediate causes of Kavadh's attack lay more general Persian grievances, in particular the general hardening of the Roman attitude since Peroz's defeat in 484. Repeated requests for help from the Romans had fallen on deaf ears, and Zeno and Anastasius had both even laid claim to Nisibis. Kavadh also had pressing financial motives for embarking on an invasion of Roman territory, once it became clear that Anastasius could not be prevailed upon by diplomatic means to contribute any money: he was under financial obligation to the Hephthalites, who had backed his return to power. His campaigns, like those of his successor Khusro, were thus chiefly undertaken to extort money or booty. Domestic factors too played a part in his decision, for he had only recently regained his throne, and had almost immediately been faced by a famine (in 499). Furthermore, there remained even after his restoration problems

1 Theophanes, A.M. 5998, on the devastating nature of the war.

2 On these previous demands, cf. Joshua §§19 and 23; also P. Lamma, 'La politica dell'imperatore Anastasio I', Rivista Storica Italiana, ser.6 vol.5 (1940), pp.176-177. Blockley, ERFP, pp.88-89, and above ch.2 n.22. V.i. n.41 for a full discussion of the sources concerning the loan(s).

3 Q.v. ch.2 n.19 on this background.
throughout the western part of the Sasanian empire: the Tamuraye were still in revolt, as were the Kadishaye (Kadiseni) in the region of Nisibis, and the Armenians too had to be brought into line. Campaigns against these former allies were unlikely to be lucrative, whereas the peaceful conditions which had prevailed along the frontier with Rome offered territory and cities ripe for attack. A foreign war thus offered the opportunity to pay off his debts and recover his popularity. Moreover, he already had a considerable army operating near the border, and it was not often that the Persians were able to muster a large force. It was hence a clever and convenient tactic to enrol his rebellious subjects for an incursion into enemy country.

Events on the Roman side of the border may also have encouraged Kavadh to strike: for in 498 the Roman frontiers had endured raids by three different Arab tribes, which were repelled only with difficulty. One of these, led by the Lakhmid king al-Nu'man, penetrated into Syria Prima, and may have been intended by Kavadh to reinforce his demands for money. The other two incursions, by the Ghassanids and Kindites, took place further to the south, and probably had no connection with that of al-Nu'man. Four years later the Kindites launched another raid, which was so swift that the Romans had no time to respond; but in the following year (502/3) Anastasius came to terms with both the Kindites and the Ghassanids. It seems unlikely that Kavadh was aware of the rapprochement before war broke out, however, since the peace was made only shortly

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4 Joshua §24; on the Cadusii Qadishaye see Th. Nöldeke, 'Zwei Völker Vorderasiens', ZDMG 33 (1879) pp.157-66: he places the Qadishaye by Siggar and Tebeth, in the area round Dara. v.l ch.6 n.46; the Tamuraye he views as a mountainous tribe of Iran, p.158 n.4. On Persian payments to the Hephthalites, cf. ch.3 n.75.

On the famine in 499, Frye, p.323, noting the general discord in the Sasanian empire, due also to the strength of the Mazdakite movement, cf. Blockley, ERFP, p.90, for these problems impelling Kavadh to war.

5 Blockley, FCH vol.2, p.398 n.180, for the difficulties of the Persians in assembling large forces. Whitby, 'Defences', p.725, cp. Maurice, p.207 and n.19, on the decline in the Roman defences over the fifth century, noted explicitly by Proc. (in the case of Martiropraxis) at de Aed. III ii.3 and (Constantia) at Wars II.xiii.14. Tella (mod. Viranşehir) will be referred to throughout as Constantia; in other works it is sometimes known as Constantina.

6 Theoph. A.M. 5990 on these raids, i.e. 498, also in Evagrius, III.36 - cf. Shahid. BAFIC, pp.121-130, who identifies the place where al-Nu'man was defeated, Bithrapsa, with Sergiopolis, pp.123-124. Stein II, p.91 n.5. however, cp. Nöldeke. Tabarr. p.169 n.1, prefers to place al-Nu'man's raid in 499 or later, since Arab sources only attribute to him a very brief reign.
before the capture of Theodosiopolis.7

Such is the background to the outbreak of war in August 502. It is unlikely that Kavadh expected such a determined Roman reaction: for if Anastasius was unwilling to part with money in the face of the repeated demands, he would surely be reluctant to undertake an expensive campaign to fight off the invader. Hence the king no doubt believed that his demand for money in April 503, immediately following the capture of Amida, would be accepted by the Emperor, and peace concluded.8 This had been the outcome of Yadzgerd's invasion of 441; but Anastasius realised the damaging long-term consequences of giving in to Persian arms, and ensured that terms were not dictated by the aggressor.

(ii) The course of the war

Two phases may be distinguished in the war. First, the invasion of Kavadh in 502, followed by the initial unsuccessful campaign of the Romans in 503; second, the rest of the war, which witnessed the almost unchallenged dominance of the imperial forces in the East. An overview of the war will be offered here, while particular episodes, such as the siege of Amida, will be dealt with later.

The first target of Kavadh was Theodosiopolis in Armenia, which was surrendered by its governor Constantinus; he is reported to have been on poor terms with the Emperor. It seems quite likely that the invasion of Roman Armenia immediately followed the campaign to restore Sasanian control of Persarmenia; at any rate the incursion achieved almost complete surprise.9 It may be that Constantinus had little choice in yielding to Kavadh, considering the poor quality of its defences; another tradition reports that he


8 Joshua §54 on Kavadh's demand. Kavadh had also omitted to solve all his internal difficulties, as is shown by the Kadiseni revolt reported by Theophanes (A.M. 5998), v.i. n.33.

was taken prisoner and died in Persia.¹⁰

The fate of the city is disputed: Zachariah (VII.3) reports that the inhabitants were treated mercifully by Kavadh, while Joshua (§48) asserts that the city was plundered and burnt, and captives carried off. Joshua's version is usually believed, but it seems unlikely that the city was utterly destroyed by the Persians, since by his own account Kavadh then proceeded to garrison it, having made Constantinus a general. For it is clear that no resistance had been offered to the Persians, and Kavadh will not have wanted to encourage other cities to hold out against him, which they would be likely to do if he was

¹⁰ Poor defences: Proc. x.18-19 on Anastasius' extensive repairs there after the war, and q.v. n.5 on the poor condition of defences along the frontier generally.

The alternative tradition on Constantinus may stem from Eustathius of Epiphaneia, who died in 503, and thus may have believed erroneously that he perished in Persian territory. It is reported by Mal., p.398, while Zach. VII.3 also makes no mention of treachery. The story of the betrayal may then be an invention to excuse the ease with which Theodosiopolis fell, especially compared to Amida.
ruthless in this case.\textsuperscript{11}

Some confirmation of Persian clemency may be found in Kavadh's treatment of Martyropolis, which is reported only in Procopius' \textit{de Aedificiis} (III.ii.3-4).\textsuperscript{12} Its citizens, in conjunction with Theodorus, whom Procopius calls the satrap of Sophanene, surrendered instantly to the king; he responded mercifully and left Theodorus in charge. It is significant that Procopius omits this episode from the \textit{Wars}, where so many have viewed his account as pro-Persian, since this is a clear example of Kavadh's generosity. The whole question of Procopius' sympathies must be discussed later, however.\textsuperscript{13}

Kavadh had thus marched south from Theodosiopolis, traversing Ingilene and Sophanene. According to Joshua (§50), both these regions were laid waste by the king, though Procopius' account in \textit{de Aedificiis} implies that some areas at least may have been spared. So far Kavadh's campaign had been entirely successful, and he felt sufficiently confident to hold captive the Roman envoy Rufinus (Joshua §50), not releasing him until the fall of Amida (Joshua §54). But his rapid progress through Roman territory ground to a halt at Amida, where he arrived at the start of October. For three months he besieged the city, which was only taken in the end through a piece of good luck: the attackers succeeded in finding a passage into the city, which was carelessly guarded.\textsuperscript{14}

Kavadh was not inactive during the siege, but dispatched other armies to penetrate deeper into Roman territory. One force, under the leadership of the Arab chief al-Nu'man, pressed on in its ravaging of Osrhoene, pushing as far west as Carrhae and Edessa; another seems to have headed directly south, comprising Persians, Arabs and Hephthalites, towards Constantia. In the vicinity of this town there took place a battle

\textsuperscript{11} Zach.'s account is rejected by C. Merten, 'de Bello Persico ab Anastasio gesto' in \textit{Commentationes Philologae Ienenses} VII.2, Leipzig 1906 (henceforth Merten), p.162, on the grounds that he is just trying to praise Kavadh. Stein II. p.94, accepts Joshua's version. Proc.'s description of the 'building' of a city there by Anastasius provides some support for Joshua, but need not imply total destruction of what was there before - \textit{de Aed.} III.v.3-4 and \textit{Wars} I.x.18-19.

\textsuperscript{12} Cf. Noldeke, \textit{Tabari}, p.146 n.1, on two oriental sources which note the capture of the city.

\textsuperscript{13} Cf. Theodorus 52 in PLRE II; also N. Adontz, \textit{Armenia in the Age of Justinian}, tr. N.G. Garsoian, Lisbon 1970 (henceforth \textit{Armenia}), pp.88-93 on the satrapies of Armenia. Section (c) below on Proc.'s bias.

in November, in which the *duces* of Armenia and Mesopotamia, Eugenius and Olympius, were defeated by a Persian army, despite initial success. At this point the Roman forces, under the *dux* Eugenius, counter-attacked and retook the city of Theodosiopolis (Joshua §52). Despite a general tendency to suppose that this is Armenian Theodosiopolis, this is nowhere stated by any source, and the geographically more likely

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15 Joshua §51; the engagement took place to the east of Constantia, near Tell Beşmê, cf. Dillemann, p.189 and n.5 for the position of the place on the route between Amida and Constantia; John of Ephesus in F. Nau, ‘Analyse de la seconde partie inédite de l'histoire ecclésiastique de Jean d'Asie’, ROC 2 (1897), p.464, also mentions an engagement at Tell Beşmê in 503.

On Eugenius, cf. *PLRE* II, s.v. Eugenius 6. On Olympius - Theophanes’ Alypius, A.M. 5996 - op. cit., s.v. Olympius 14: he was *dux* of Mesopotamia since (cf. e.g. *Notitia Dignitatum*, ed. O. Seeck, Berlin 1876, *Orients XXXVI*, pp.77-79), Constantia is in Mesopotamia, not Osrhoene, *contra* *PLRE*.
Mesopotamian Theodosiopolis (Resaina) should be preferred. Amida fell in mid-January, and a Persian garrison, under the leadership of a certain Glon, was installed. Kavadh returned to Nisibis, while his army remained between Amida and Constantia, poised to move to the southwest against Edessa and Samosata or to the northwest against Melitene.

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According to Procopius (viii.1), Anastasius despatched an army to the East upon hearing of the siege of Amida, while Joshua (§54) reports two waves of reinforcements: first, the Emperor sent some troops to garrison various cities over the winter, while in May he sent forth a larger force. It seems likely that the second wave actually arrived at the front in May rather than only setting forth from Constantinople then, since Joshua recounts numerous operations in the east before July: the forces could hardly have left Constantinople in May and have conducted all these operations in the East before July. Moreover, Procopius states (viii.6) that there was a delay in the gathering of troops and their progress to the East.

The year 503 was not a glorious one for Roman arms, despite the grand scale of the imperial army. Its precise size is difficult to gauge: Marcellinus has the most conservative estimate at 15,000 men (a.503.1), while Joshua (§54) has a total of 52,000. These are the only two sources to offer figures, although Procopius states that it was said to be the largest army ever assembled against the Persians (viii.4). Marcellinus’ figure

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16 Stein II, p.94 seems just to assume that Eugenius retook Armenian Theodosiopolis (Erzurum), cp. Capizzi, p.182. PLRE II, s.v. Eugenius 6, labels him *dux utriusque Armeniae*, and also believes that he recaptured Armenian Theodosiopolis. Support for supposing that Resaina is here meant can be gained from the Chronicle of Arbela, tr. P. Kawerau, Louvain 1985, XIX, p.101; there is no difficulty in supposing that the Persians had captured Resaina as well as Erzurum. Note also that at §48 Joshua specifies *Armenian Theodosiopolis*, which he does not at §52.

17 Theophanes A.M. 5996 on Kavadh’s return and the position of the army, although his use of the word *δυσαρεία* here is somewhat opaque: Dillemann, fig. XVII (p.148) offers an excellent map of the area.

18 Cf. Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *de Caesariis*, ed. J.J. Reiske, Bonn 1829, I.89 on embassies being reckoned to take 103 days from Dara to Constantinople, noted by M. Whitby, *Maurice*, p.261. Merten, p.176 n.1, assumes that Procopius is in error in placing the despatch of troops while Amida was being besieged, despite the evidence of Joshua.
is obviously too small, even if he adds that Celer was dispatched with a further 2000 troops; doubtless there were forces left in the area, such as those under Eugenius, but this still leaves only some 20,000 men, assuming that there were 3000 already in the East. Joshua's figures, however, seem rather too high on the other hand, though the fact that he is so precise lends credence to them; at any rate the imperial forces will not have numbered fewer than 30,000.  

The cumbersome late Roman military machine assembled in Edessa, under no overall commander: among the generals were the two *magistri militum praesentales* Hypatius and Patricius, the *magister militum per Orientem* Areobindus, as well as the future Emperor Justin and the redoubtable Lazic general Pharesmanes. To give an account of the course of the year's campaign is particularly difficult, given the divergence between the three principal sources, Joshua, Zachariah and Procopius; a rough outline, however, may be attempted.

Throughout the campaign the Romans had two armies in operation against the Persians, excluding the force sent against the Lakhmid Arabs of Hira (al-Hira). The one was commanded by Hypatius and Patricius, while Areobindus had charge of the smaller force, put at 12,000 men by Joshua. It is possible that the two army groups were united at one stage in besieging Amida, but this did not last long if it ever was the case. The siege was left in the hands of the two *magistri militum praesentales*, while Areobindus undertook an offensive into Persian territory; he was joined in this by the former *dux* of Palestine, Romanus, and the Arab chief Aswad. This took place in June, it appears, and met with considerable success: although Kavadh deployed his troops which were quartered in the Singara area, these were beaten and forced back to Nisibis.

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19 Note also the precise number of *modii* produced by the Edessenes (§54): Jones, *LRE*, pp.231-232, calculates that the quantities of wheat specified by Joshua for the Roman army would provide an army of 32,500 to 40,000 men with sufficient rations for six months. Cp. also Joshua §55, where he puts a part of Kavadh's force at 20,000 men. At II.xxxiv.16 Proc. refers to a Roman army in the 540s as being 30,000 strong: for the claim to be made that the force in 503 was the largest ever assembled, it can hardly have fallen short of this number, even if Proc. only reports the size as what was claimed.

20 See Proc viii.1-3 for a list of commanders, also Theoph. A.M. 5997 (gathering at Edessa), Zach. VII.4. John Lydus III.53.

21 Joshua §57 on this force; Timostratus' troops are also not included among the two forces, since they were certainly not so numerous. V.i. n.29 on the attack on Hira.

22 Zach. VII.4 claims that all the generals attacked Amida first.
In the following month, however, the Hephthalites and Arabs came to relieve the Persian force, led by the renegade Constantinus, and Areobindus appealed to Hypatius and Patricius to come to his assistance. But they remained encamped against Amida, forcing him to withdraw in haste, leaving his baggage to be plundered by the enemy. Meanwhile on the southern front Timostratus, the dux of Osrhoene, had inflicted a defeat on the Persian Arabs when they had penetrated as far as the river Khabur.23

After Areobindus' retreat, his colleagues finally came to his aid, and the two armies blocked Kavadh's advance westward: the two magistri militum prasentales held the northern fork of the road, leading to Amida, while Areobindus' army guarded the route leading west towards Constantia and Edessa.24 Communication between the armies appears to have been inadequate, however, and Areobindus retired to Constantia, while Hypatius and Patricius remained in place. At this point the sources diverge quite markedly over the battle which ensued: Procopius reports an initial Roman success (viii.13), while Joshua insists that the Roman vanguard was beaten by the Persians (§57). At any rate the Romans were defeated near Apadna, and the bulk of their forces fled west to Samosata, seeking refuge behind the Euphrates.25

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23 Joshua §55; Theoph., A.M. 5997. On the pro-Roman attitude of the Nisibenes, cf. Zach. VII.5 and q.v. ch.2 n.19. Theophanes gives other details on Areobindus' successes, claiming that Nisibis was indeed nearly captured. Joshua §56 on Timostratus' victory; also PLRE II, s.v. Timostratus.
On the location of the battle, Marcellinus places it 'ad Syficum castellum', a.503.1 (one manuscript has 'Syfream', cf. Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze des Byzantinisches Reiches, Brussels 1935, (henceforth, Ostgrenze) p.9 n.7). Siphrius is also mentioned in Hierocles, Le Synekdesmos d’Héroklès et l’opuscle géographique de Georges de Chypre, ed. E. Honigmann, Brussels 1939, p.64 #918.

24 As Procopius describes at viii.10; Dillemann accurately describes the position of the battlefield on p.315, using the accounts of Joshua, Proc. and Zach. Several sources ascribe this second invasion to Persian awareness of the dissent among the Roman commanders, so Proc. viii.8, Theoph. A.M. 5997. It is possible that Hypatius and Patricius twice disengaged themselves from the investment of Amida: the first time, they failed to make contact with the enemy (Joshua §56), while the second time they met with the defeat described (Joshua §58), cf. Dillemann, loc. cit., who separates the two manoeuvres of the generals, and below n.69.

25 Cf. also Marcellinus, a.503.1. Dillemann has a useful discussion of this campaign, pp.313-316. (cf. also Honigmann, Ostgrenze, pp.9-10). But Dillemann's order of events is odd: he seems to regard Procopius' description of the force dispositions as that at the outset of the campaign (p.314), which is highly unlikely. He rightly doubts Proc.'s assertion that none of the generals attempted to invest Amida, but places Patricius' raid into Arzanene before the battle near Apadna (following Zach. VII.5); it is more likely, however, that it followed this defeat, v.i. p.108. On the location of the battle, v.i. n.70.
Joshua does not mention Hypatius in his account, though he refers to an officer called Peter: Procopius includes both Hypatius and Patricius, but v.i. n.83 for his mistakes in prosopography in this campaign. Hypatius could conceivably have been left to guard Amida.
The events of Joshua §56 concerning the attempt of Hypatius and Patricius to intercept the Persians
Kavadh then seized the initiative and proceeded towards Edessa, following the retiring columns of Areobindus. *En route* he attempted to capture Constantia, but soon pressed on when it became clear that the city would not easily be taken: as Joshua notes, there was a scarcity of provisions for his army, since he had already laid waste the area, and he was unwilling to give the Romans a chance to regroup. Moreover, the end of the campaigning season was drawing near, and Roman reinforcements were expected. For nearly three weeks he paused just east of Edessa, attempting to wrest the city from Areobindus. Then he endeavoured to extort a large sum of money in return for his departure: the weakness of Areobindus' force is illustrated by the sum he agreed to pay, although it was less than what Kavadh had demanded. Persian forces were also despatched to overrun the surrounding countryside, though they failed to capture Carrhae; the Arab contingent was sent westward, despite the recent death of al-Nu'man, but a Persian cavalry detachment, which penetrated as far as Batnae, was thrown back by the early arrival of a new wave of Roman reinforcements.

This seems to have spurred on the Persian king, who at last launched an assault on the city. After this failed, he determined to withdraw, reducing his demand to 2000 lbs. of gold, whereupon he moved southeastward to Dabana. His attempt to collect part of the money before the appointed time being frustrated by the growing confidence of Areobindus, Kavadh returned and attacked the city once more, towards the end of September, but again without success. This time he retreated southward to the Euphrates, pausing only to launch an unsuccessful assault on Callinicum (Joshua §§61-65).

The Lakhmid allies of the Persians also played a part in harrying the Roman empire.

must precede this defeat; they doubtless returned to besiege Amida briefly, before co-ordinating with Areobindus' army.

Joshua §58. cp. Proc. II.xiii.8-15, where he too describes the role of the bishop Baradotus in persuading the Persians to leave the city, but laying more stress on the weakness of the defences. Proc. adds that the inhabitants supplied the Persians with provisions; he also oddly believes that Kavadh approached Constantia from Edessa, having hardly attempted to capture Edessa (II.xiii.11).

Joshua §§59-60: the relief force, under Patriciulus, then moved forward behind the Euphrates to Samosata, threatening Kavadh's northern flank.

Despite J. Jarry, 'Une prétendue invasion Perse en Égypte sous Anastase', *Bulletin de l'institut d'archéologie orientale* 64 (1966), pp.197-201, the notion that Kavadh penetrated as far as Syrian Alexandria (Alexandretta), reported only by Eutychius (PG 111, col.1061) may safely be rejected.
further south: Cyril of Scythopolis recounts an incursion by al-Mundhir, described as the leader of the Arabs under Persian control, into Arabia and Palestine. He places this after the fall of Amida, but seemingly before the beginning of September 503. This episode, often ignored in accounts of the war, illustrates how early al-Mundhir started to serve the Persian cause, despite the appointment by Kavadh of a certain Abu Ya'fur to replace al-Nu'man. The rivalry between Abu Ya'fur and al-Mundhir helps to explain how Arabs allied to Byzantium were able to capture the Lakhmid capital Hira in August 503.28

This assault upon Hira, reported only in Joshua (§57), has been the subject of some controversy, for he attributes the capture to the ‘Tha’labite’ Arabs - but it remains unclear whether they were Kindites or Ghassanids. Given that Anastasius had made his peace with both these groupings less than a year previously, both might plausibly have carried out this raid. It is possible, moreover, that al-Mundhir was unconcerned by the capture of Hira: for it would have been the base of his rival, Abu Ya'fur, who soon fell from power.29

Meanwhile further Roman reinforcements had started to reach the front: Celer arrived at Hierapolis, and the Roman forces dispersed to their winter quarters. Advanced elements, under Patriciolus and his son Vitalian, had already prevented Persian cavalry from proceeding beyond Batnae. Hypatius and Apion were recalled to Constantinople (Theoph. A.M. 5998), the former having proved a liability to the Roman cause on account of his hatred towards Areobindus. Apion was replaced by Calliopius as
praetorian prefect to the army, taking charge of the organisation of supplies. It is possible that, as Joshua reports (§70), Apion was sent to Alexandria, to organise the despatch of supplies from there. It is uncertain who succeeded Hypatius as the other magister militum prasentalis.30

* * *

With Celer's arrival and supreme command begins the second phase of the war, during which the Romans regained the initiative; their cause was further helped by the absence of Kavadh, who was distracted by a war against Huns in the north (Proc. viii.19).31

Even before the opening of the campaigning season, the Romans took the field: Patricius, upon hearing of the complacency of the Persians at Amida, set off from his winter quarters at Melitene and destroyed the market outside the city. Kavadh reacted by despatching a force to repel the Romans, but this was defeated by Patricius despite the initial rout of the Roman army (Joshua §66).32 Patricius then set about investing the city, while the main Roman force assembled near Resaina. Kavadh's reaction was to send another army to dislodge him, but it proceeded only as far as Nisibis. The force consisted of only 10,000 men, according to Joshua (§69), and it is significant that they did not attempt to confront Patricius at Amida. Two reasons may be suggested as to why they failed to obey the king's orders: first, they may have had local unrest with which to contend. Second, it is difficult to see how they could have reached Amida in any case: Celer's army at Resaina meant that any attempt to approach the city from the

30 Mal., p.399, notes the recall of Hypatius, who is not mentioned in Joshua after §56. Proc. mistakenly states that Areobindus (ix.1) was recalled. It seems likely that Pharesmanes later succeeded as magister militum prasentalis (Joshua §88), cf. Merten, p.185, and PLRE II, s.v. Pharesmanes 3.


On a possible raid by Patricius into Arzanene at some point in 503, v.i. p.108.

31 V.i. n.71 on these difficulties. Joshua does not mention Kavadh conducting any military operations after his despatch of an army against Patricius at Amida in spring 504 (§69).

32 The Romans apparently retreated eastwards after their initial defeat, as far as the Kallath (i.e. the Nymphios/Batman - Wright p.56 note *). This is not so surprising if the Persians were still in control of the Apadna area, blocking the way south, in which case their forces may have approached Amida from the south, rather than the east - the quickest way for them to come from the Singara area in any case.
south, along the road through Apadna, was unfeasible. The alternative was a circuitous
march through Arzanene, which would leave Nisibis exposed to a Roman attack; and
Celer's force could still reach Amida much more quickly than the Persians in any
case.

Hence Celer's army at Resaina had effectively prevented the Persians from doing
anything to assist their garrison in Amida. Celer further took advantage of his position
by ordering Timostratus to capture the livestock of the Persian army in Nisibis, which
had been left in the mountains of Singara. Next Celer's army moved north, to join in
the siege of Amida, which held out obstinately. In June the former governor of
Theodosiopolis, Constantinus, returned to the Roman side - an indication that the tide
had turned in Rome's favour. Areobindus meanwhile led a force against Persian
Armenia, which caused extensive damage, as well as leading to the defection of an
Armenian army to the Roman cause (Joshua §§69-75).

At a later point in the siege, in winter 504-5, Celer took charge of a plundering
expedition himself, which inflicted great damage to Persian territory: the policy of the
Roman army was to kill all males above the age of twelve, and to cause as much damage
to the country as possible. The target of Celer's invasion is not specified very precisely
by Joshua: he merely talks of a Persian force being defeated on the east bank of the
Tigris. But it seems that he turned his attention to Beth Arabāyē chiefly, which had so
far escaped the Roman armies, save for Areobindus' brief incursion. Nisibis nearly fell
to the Romans, yet Amida continued to resist.

Just as Kavadh's troops had been discomfited by the cold during their investment of
Amida, so the Roman soldiers suffered, and the army started to disperse. Kavadh saw
his opportunity to come to terms with the Romans, and the Persian astabad was
despatched to secure the safety of the garrison in return for the Persians not renewing
the war: he also returned all the hostages he had taken so far during the war. Celer

₃₃ Theoph., AM. 5998, on trouble among the Cadusii Kadishaye (and a famine), q.v. n.4: Joshua refers
to the Kadishaye in §22 and §24 besieging Nisibis before the war.

₃₄ On Celer's raid, Joshua §79. Theoph. AM. 5998; also John of Ephesus (Nau) p.464, where he
specifies the lands between Nisibis and Beth Arabāyē, repeating Joshua's detail on the killing of males
above twelve years old. Marcellinus (a.504) also refers to a raid through Callinicum, in which Celer
commanded the Mesopotamian citizenry in their ravaging of Persian lands as far as Pons Ferrus. This
is said by Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, p.10 n.1, to bridge the Euphrates in the heights of Cesiphon in Beth
Arabāyē. V.i. p.108 on Proc.'s error (viii.22), placing Celer's raid in Arzanene.
attempted to reassemble the Roman army, but agreed to the Persian terms when this proved impossible (Joshua §81). Most sources report that the surrender of Amida was bought by the Romans: Zachariah states that 1100 lbs. of gold was the price (VII.5). Procopius puts forward 1000 lbs. (ix.4), while Theophanes (A.M. 5998) gives three (or thirty) talents. Marcellinus (a.503.1) merely states that a large sum was handed over; and although Joshua refers to no such agreement, he does mention presents given to Kavadh, which included a golden service for his table (§81).35

Peace did not immediately follow the hand-over of Amida: the agreement concluded between the astabad and Celer had to be ratified by the two monarchs, and in the meantime Anastasius set about securing the frontier. Rebuilding work was carried out at Edessa and Batnae, a wall was constructed at Europus, and a whole fortified city constructed at Dara: Armenian Theodosiopolis was also strengthened.36 Zachariah (VII.5) asserts that Kavadh rejected the peace terms, which is not wholly credible: for he also reports that Kavadh was unable to counter the erection of Dara on account of his war against the Tamuraye (VII.6). Doubtless the construction work which took place in 505 was the cause of Persian complaints, but a truce was concluded nevertheless in November 506, nearly two years after the actual fighting had ceased. Joshua (§97) records some intimidation by the Romans during these negotiations, including scaring the Persians into retiring to Nisibis from Dara, where the talks were taking place.37

The terms of the agreement are unclear. No doubt the ban on fortifications was reiterated, but much of the Roman refortification work had been carried out already. It is probable that Anastasius offered a considerable sum to appease Persian pride, yet it is unlikely that he agreed to regular payments for the duration of the seven years of the

35 Cf. Merten pp.192-3 and Stein II, p.98 and n.3, dismissing Theophanes' figure, accepting those of Zach. and Proc. De Boor's text (p.148) has three talents, Niebuhr has 30. It is odd that Joshua does not mention a specific price, considering the detailed nature of his account, though he may have suppressed such an unfavourable detail to the Roman side (cp. his insistence at §§8-9 that the Romans had not given money to the Persians as tribute). On the problems caused by the cold weather to Romans and Persians, cf. Lee, pp.92-93.
Vi. ch.5 n.65 on the rank of astabad.

36 Joshua §§87, 88, 90, 91 on the building work. Cf. Capizzi, pp.214, 224; vi. section (d) on Dara and Theodosiopolis.

37 The peace noted by Theophanes, A.M. 5998, concluded between Ammodius and Mardin, refers to the talks in January 505. Cf. Merten p.197; hence he can describe the war as having lasted three years.
truce.\textsuperscript{38} No source makes this claim, and it is difficult to see why Anastasius would have agreed to such a term, considering the strong position of the Romans during the negotiations and Kavadh's preoccupation with another war.\textsuperscript{39}

\textsuperscript{38} Proc. ix.24 on the seven years of the truce; John Lydus mentions modest concessions by Anastasius, III.53.2. Blockley, \textit{ERFP}, p.91, on its conclusion in October or November 506, though he now believes that it was a full peace treaty, rather than a truce, p.91 n.42.

\textsuperscript{39} \textit{Contra} Stein II, p.99, who claims that 550 lbs. of gold a year would fit well with the 11,000 lbs. handed over in 532; but equally it is half the 1100 lbs. handed over for Amida. Little can be demonstrated by numerical conjecture. Blockley, 'Subsidies and Diplomacy', p.68, wonders whether the sums mentioned by Procopius at x.17 are to be equated with truce payments, but it is preferable just to view them as a sop to Persian pride and to ensure that hostilities were brought to a definitive close in 506. Dara was not finished until 508-9 (Whitby, 'Dara', p.751), and Persian interference was not desirable (cf. Merten p.201).
The Anastasian War: a chronology

October 502  
Kavadh takes Theodosiopolis and Martyropolis  
Start of the siege of Amida

November  
Battle near Constantia and Tell Beşmé, Romans defeated  
Persian forces move on to Carrhae and Edessa  
Eugenius recaptures Theodosiopolis (Resaina)

January 503  
Fall of Amida: Kavadh returns to Nisibis, while his army stays between Amida and Constantia

? May  
Anastasius' army arrives in the East

June  
Persian army besieged at Nisibis by Areobindus

July  
Areobindus forced to retreat by Persian reinforcements

(summer)  
Hypatius and Patricius beaten near Mardin  
Kavadh advances, fails to take Constantia, then lays siege to Edessa  
Persian contingents lay waste as far as Batnae. Kavadh moves to Dabana, near Carrhae

September  
Kavadh besieges Edessa again. He withdraws southwards to Euphrates, but fails to take Callinicum on his way back.

(winter)  
Celer arrives at Hierapolis.  
Patricius moves from Melitene to attack Amida

(spring) 504  
Roman forces assemble at Resaina  
Timostratus' raid on Beth Arabaye

(summer)  
Celer and his army join in the siege of Amida  
Areobindus raids Persarmenia

(winter)  
Celer leads a raid on Beth Arabaye  
Negotiations start for the hand-over of Amida  
Amida returned to the Romans

505  
Work started on Dara: Anastasius strengthens other forts and cities  
Kavadh initially rejects truce terms (?)

November 506  
Terms for the truce finally agreed
This chapter deals primarily with the Persian siege of Amida, which is also recounted in considerable detail by Joshua and Zachariah; hence there is the opportunity of examining Procopius' method of reporting more closely here than almost anywhere else.

Procopius is alone in asserting that it was merely a loan which Kavadh sought from Anastasius (vii.1-2), while the only other major source to mention the request in 502 is Theophanes (A.M. 5996). Joshua (§23) and Theophanes assert that Anastasius was willing to lend Kavadh money, but not to give it to him as he requested, although Joshua places the incident before Kavadh's expulsion. Evidently Anastasius offered a loan to Kavadh at some point, most likely in 502, and perhaps also earlier.40

Xanthopulus too recounts the incident, adding that a peace was concluded between the two sides in the eleventh year of Anastasius; the Emperor then refused to give Kavadh the money he demanded, offering instead a loan, as a result of which the king launched his invasion.41 Procopius may thus have attempted to condense the episode by leaving out an initial request for money, preferring to concentrate on relations between the Hephthalites and the Persians, which are not mentioned by any other source.42 It seems more probable then that his failure to mention any Persian demands to be given money is due to a desire for conciseness rather than to any sympathy for the Persians, given the description of Kavadh's invasion as $\ell\xi\alpha\tau\iota\alpha\varsigma\omicron\omicron\dot{d}\iota\delta\epsilon\mu\alpha\varsigma$.43 That


42 Stein II, p.93 accepts Theophanes' version. It is worthy of note that Proc. mentions the Hephthalites not only at vii.2 but also again at vii.8, and he is the only source to note that the Persian contingent defeated by Patricius and Hypatius in the following year (viii.13) was composed of Hephthalites. V.l. n.78 on Proc.'s sources.

43 Proc. vii.3 for Kavadh attacking $\ell\xi\alpha\tau\iota\alpha\varsigma\omicron\omicron\dot{d}\iota\delta\epsilon\mu\alpha\varsigma$. Kirchner, p.5, regards Procopius as giving the Persian version, and is followed in this by Merten, p.148.

F. Altheim and R. Stiehl, Ein Asatischer Staat, Wiesbaden 1954, pp.33 and 37 and Finanzgeschichte der
Anastasius was consciously aiming to offend Kavadh by the offer of a loan may be doubted, despite the suggestions of some scholars: he had no interest in provoking the Persians, as is clear from his refusal to assist the Armenians in their revolt in the 490s.44

Procopius reports that there were no soldiers stationed at Amida (vii.4), since no attack was expected; nor do any other sources refer to troops there. Those of the duces appear to have had their quarters further from the frontier, at Constantia and Melitene: in November they were defeated when trying to repel Persian raiders from Constantia.45 Although the Amidenes were taken by surprise by the arrival of Kavadh, their decision to resist was perhaps not so unexpected as Procopius describes: the city was well fortified to resist a siege, as the three months required to take it demonstrate, and since Kavadh only arrived there on 5th October, its citizens must have hoped that the onset of winter would discourage the Persians from maintaining the siege.46

Before starting his narrative of the course of the siege, Procopius provides an anecdote concerning Kavadh's respect for a local holy man, Jacob (vii.5-11), whom he places at Endielon, a day's journey from Amida (vii.5). It is uncertain where precisely this place was situated, although Dillemann has suggested that it is to be identified with Egil; and

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44 For the suggestion that Anastasius was trying to insult Kavadh, see Blockley, 'Subsidies and Diplomacy', p.68 n.19, Stein II, p.93, Bury, HLRE, p.11 and n.1; but the Emperor's offer may equally have been an attempt at a compromise. Joshua §21 for Anastasius' refusal to aid the Armenians. A blatantly pro-Persian account of events is furnished by Zach. at VII.3, where the Romans are blamed by Kavadh for the Hephthalite invasion which defeated Peroz, on which q.v. ch.3 text to n.43.

Blockley, ERFP, p.89 and n.25 on the possible conflation of Persian demands by Greek sources, suggesting that no demand may have been made in 502.


Zach. comments on the winter harming the Persian troops (VII.3). Joshua (§50) records Kavadh's arrival on 5th October.
indeed Joshua mentions (§50) that Kavadh ravaged Agêl on his way to Amida. 

The actual anecdote, telling how the holy man immobilised some Hephthalites who tried to shoot at him, is something of a *topos* in authors of late antiquity, though usually those who are overtly Christian: so John Moschus tells a story of a Saracen being frozen for two days by a monk reading on a mountain, until the monk finally let him go. Similar stories can also be found in John of Ephesus and Sozomen, both involving Huns. 

No other source records this episode, nor tells of the multitude which flocked to Jacob after Kavadh granted him his request (vi.11); perhaps Procopius was relying on oral information in this case.

Worthy of note is Procopius' specific reference to the Hephthalites among the Persian forces (vii.8): Joshua also refers to Huns, evidently Hephthalites. The Huns in general left a lasting impression among the inhabitants of the eastern provinces, as is evident from some of the 'Lives of the Eastern Saints'. Procopius' attribution of bows to them is to be preferred to the versions of both Joshua and Tabari, who report them as having employed hand-to-hand weapons, rather than any missiles: thus Joshua refers to the maces of the Huns, while Tabari recounts the fear struck into the hearts of the Hephthalites by Sokhra when he shot the horse of one of their number. Joshua's reference does not exclude the possibility that the Huns also used bows, however, while the Sokhra episode is worthy of very little credence in any case.

Over the course of the siege there are few divergences between the sources; indeed

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47 Dillemann, p.87 n.1 - Agêl or Igel is the equivalent of Greek Ingilene or Angilene. Egil, the place, was the capital of Ingilene. Dillemann, p.103. Cp. Kavadh's respect for Baradotus in the same war, Proc. ii.xiii.15, and above n.26.


the similarity between them is striking. Both Zachariah (VII.3) and Procopius (vii.12-13) refer to the battering rams employed against the city, and the successful counter-measures of the defenders. Next Kavadh determined to construct a mound to surmount the walls of the city, but the defenders set about undermining the foundations of the mound (vii.14-15). Joshua adds that the Amidenes also raised the height of their own walls in response (§50), although the Persians succeeded in destroying the newly built section of wall. All three sources report the undermining of the mound by the defenders, though Zachariah’s account is the most detailed. There is an interesting difference between Zachariah’s version of events and that of Procopius: according to the former, the defenders deliberately engineered the collapse of the mound during a major attack by Kavadh, while for the latter it was just the weight of the Persian attackers that caused the collapse. At first it might seem as though Procopius’ version points to use of a source on the besieging side, unaware of the ruse of the defenders; the most likely explanation, however, is that Procopius was just condensing the material available to him, and hence passed over this detail.

Joshua then supplements the other sources in telling of Kavadh’s attempt to rebuild the mound with firmer materials; but the Amidenes countered with a catapult, known as ‘the Crusher’, which inflicted great damage on the besiegers (§53). Fifty thousand Persians perished in the siege, according to Joshua, and all the sources are in agreement over the growing discomfiture of Kavadh’s army. Only Zachariah (VII.3) tells of an

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51 Proc. vii.12, Zach. VII.3, p.153, and n.2 on the word kpioς used in both authors, cp. Joshua §50 and n.1.

Haury, Zur Beurteilung, p.6, long ago rejected the notion that Proc. was merely imitating Thucydides’ description of the siege of Plataea here, and hence unreliable. He also compares in detail the accounts of Proc. and Zach., pp.22-23, cp. Merten, pp.164-174.

52 The course of the siege thus far is closely paralleled by that of Plataea in 431 B.C. (Thuc. II.75-8): the Peloponnesians built a mound to overtop the walls, in response to which the defenders increased the height of their walls and undermined the mound. But the defenders of Amida were more cunning in propping up the mound until it suited them to destroy it. The monastery of Mar John was used to help erect the mound, cf. John of Ephesus, Lives, PO 19 (1925), p.[563].

53 Cp. the catapult used by the defenders of Theodosiopolis against Bahram in the 421-2 war, Theodoret, Histona Ecclesiastica, ed. L. Parmentier, Berhn 1954, V.37.7-10, known as ‘The apostle Thomas’ and the effect on the morale of the Goths of a similar machine in Adrianople in 378, Ammianus XXXI.15.

54 Zach. mentions the cold, VII.3; Proc. (vii.16) moves straight from the failure of the mound to Kavadh’s decision to leave.
offer by Kavadh to abandon the siege in return for a small gift of silver, which was turned down by the proud leaders of the city. He goes on to describe Christ’s apparition to Kavadh, announcing to him that the city would fall on account of the sins of the inhabitants. That one of the sins of the inhabitants was the shameless behaviour of the courtesans towards Kavadh (vii.18) is possible, though it is not explicitly mentioned by Zachariah, whose primary concern is the lack of a bishop to restrain the people.\textsuperscript{55}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Amida_plan.png}
\caption{Plan de l'enroche d'Amid}
\end{figure}

3 Plan of Amida, from van Berchem and Strzygowski, \textit{Amida}, p.7.

There are again few discrepancies over the fall of the city. In this case Procopius’

\textsuperscript{55} Zach. VII.3-4 on the lack of a bishop and Kavadh’s offer; Merten, p.167, on Proc.’s version. Mari, p.41, also tells of Christ’s apparition to Kavadh, as does the Chronicle of Seert, part 2, PO 7 (1911), ch.17, p.40. Proc.’s detail concerning the courtesans again points to use of a local source: clearly the hubris of the defenders needed to be stressed in the aftermath of the city’s fall. Perhaps because of this motif, the account of the siege, and the vision, remained popular in later Syriac accounts, e.g. in the \textit{Narrationes vanae}, tr. E.W. Brooks and I. Guidi, Paris 1903 [CSCO ser.3 tom.4 pt.3], XVIII, pp.261-2, cp. also the extensive account in the \textit{Chronicon anonymum ad a.c. 1234 pertinent} [CSCO ser.3 tom.14], tr. J.-B. Chabot, Louvain 1937, ch.51, pp.147-150.
account is quite detailed, recounting how an (unnamed) Persian found a hidden passage into the city, which was poorly guarded by monks on the day of Kavadh’s assault (vii.20-24); consequently, despite a valiant struggle, the city was stormed and the population massacred (vii.25-30). Zachariah (VII.4) is fullest concerning the monks whose carelessness led to the sack: they belonged to the convent of St John of Abarnia, whose archimandrite was a Persian, and from this arose the later tradition that they had betrayed the city. The tower they were guarding, the Tripyrgion, was in the western wall of the city, and it was here that the underground passage was discovered. Only Zachariah (VII.4) and the later Syriac tradition tell of its discovery by a marzban named Kanarak, who had observed the raids of a certain Kutrigo using the passage.

One night, according to Zachariah (VII.4), Kanarak pursued Kutrigo into the passage, and surprised the sleeping monks; he claims that they had drunk more than usual on account of the rain, while Procopius ascribes their somnolence to a festival (vii.23). At any rate the monks were slain at once, and an immediate assault ordered; Procopius passes straight on to the attack launched once day had dawned, but Zachariah provides details on the skirmishing which took place during the night. The battle which took place the next day was bitterly fought, and both sources speak of Kavadh’s close involvement in the fighting, urging on his men, just like predecessor Shapur II almost one and a half centuries earlier.

The besiegers triumphed in the end, eventually gaining control of the whole wall, though they had to spend two nights and one day driving back the Amidene guards; then they could open the gates, and the massacre began. The city fell on the night of 10th January, 97 days after the start of the siege, so that Procopius’ eighty days (vii.29) is actually an underestimate. Procopius passes quickly over the sack of the city (vii.30),

56 Dillemann, p.313 on the convent, where he corrects previous readings of the Syriac text; Marcellinus, a.502, reports the city as having been betrayed by the monks, while Joshua notes that people were making this claim (§53), cf. Merten, p.168.

57 Later tradition - e.g. Chron. ad a.c. 1234, ch.51. pp.148-149; Barhebraeus, p.72.

58 Proc. has the existence of the passage reported to Kavadh before the assault is launched, which is preferable to Zach.’s version: on Shapur at Amida. Ammianus XIX.7.8.

59 Later Syriac chronicles, e.g. Elias of Nisibis (a.814) in Elias Metropolitae Nisbenti Opus Chronologicum, pars prior [CSCO ser.3 vol.7], ed. and tr. E.W. Brooks, Rome 1910. Chronicon Edessenum, tr. I. Guidi [CSCO ser.3 tom.4 pt.1. versio], Paris 1903. (henceforth CE) ch.80. put the length at 97 days.
which lasted three days according to Zachariah (VII.4): Theophanes adds the detail that Kavadh entered the city riding on an elephant (A.M.5996, cp.vii.30). The survivors were deported (vii.32) in line with standard Persian practice; some ended up as far afield as the Caspian Gates, where they are attested some thirty years later. The anecdote concerning the complaint made to Kavadh about the massacre (vii.30-32) is confirmed by Zachariah, who reports how a certain Christian prince from Arran (Albania) persuaded Kavadh to spare the fugitives sheltering in the Great Church of the Forty Martyrs.

Procopius continues his account with the installation of the Persian Glon in charge of the city (vii.33). Zachariah (VII.4) puts Glon’s garrison at 3000 men, rather than Procopius’ 1000, and provides the names of his assistants in ruling the city. Procopius is probably mistaken, however, in believing Kavadh to have retired home with his army after the siege (vii.34); although the king himself seems to have departed, his army remained in the area of Amida and Constantia. That Kavadh should release some captives as a gesture is entirely plausible (vii.35), probably as an incentive to Anastasius to accede to his financial demands, although Zachariah’s evidence on the deportations causes one to doubt that they were all returned. Procopius’ information on the rewards granted by Anastasius to the city (vii.35) are confirmed by Zachariah (VII.5).


Concerning the casualties, Zach. reports that 80,000 were killed in the city, cp. John of Ephesus (Nau), p.465 (85,000) and Elias of Nisibis. a.814 (80,000).

61 Merten is unjustly sceptical about Proc.’s story, which is accepted by Christensen, Le règne pp.108-9; cf. Zach. VII.4 and Michael Syrus Chronique de Michel le Syrien, Patriarche Jacobite d’Antioche 1166-1199, tr. J.-B. Chabot, Paris 1900, vol.2. IX.7, who makes the suppliant an Armenian prince.

A vivid account of the massacres is given in John of Ephesus. Lives. PO 19 (1925). pp.[564-566]. On the church in which the population took refuge, cf. Palmer, Monk and Mason, p.116: it had been constructed only twenty years previously.

62 Theophanes, A.M. 5996, q.v. n.17; given that Proc. omits Areobindus’ campaign altogether here, Theoph.’s account should be preferred in this instance (v.i. also n.78 on Theoph.’s sources).

63 Cf. Lamma, ‘La politica dell’ imperatore Anastasio I’, p.178. on the courting of the border peoples by both sides.
This chapter may be divided into two sections: the first concerns the composition of the force despatched by Anastasius to confront the Persians (viii.1-10), while the second recounts the battle fought at Apadna (viii.11-22). Procopius' list of the commanders despatched to the front is probably the most complete available, being alone in mentioning Godidiscus and Bessas, and may reflect the use of official records.64

From Procopius' text (viii.1-2) it would appear that Areobindus, Celer, Hypatius and Patricius were all invested with equal authority and sent out at the same time. Zachariah is in agreement with this (VII.4), though he implies that Areobindus arrived somewhat later. But it emerges quite clearly from Joshua (§64), Malalas (p.399), Theophanes (A.M. 5997-8) and Marcellinus (a.503.1) that Celer was only sent out later in 503, once Hypatius had been recalled. Procopius himself appears aware of this at viii.10 when he indicates that the forces of Celer had not arrived at the time of the battle of Apadna.65

The common error of Procopius and Zachariah may go back to a common source, dealing with the siege of Amida and its aftermath. If this source had relied on information from the Amidenes, it is clear that they would have had difficulty in ascertaining which generals were commanding the Roman army at any time, and in 504 Celer was indeed among the besieging army. Alternatively, if Procopius were relying on official records, they may not have indicated when the commanders set off for the East, or when they held their commands. This would also explain why he views the four generals as having held equal authority, when there were never more than three in charge at any one time. It appears that in 503 the three generals initially held equal authority, while Celer had yet to arrive. But following the recall of Hypatius, the command seems to have been entrusted to Celer, perhaps in conjunction with Areobindus: Patricius must have been discredited to some extent by his failure to assist Areobindus and the defeat at Apadna. Areobindus' reputation, on the other hand, had

64 I.i. n.84 on the use of official sources; on the various commanders, v.i. n.67.

65 Kirchner, p.6, noting that Malalas and Theophanes are here independent; Joshua §64 on the despatch of Celer in September 503, following the retreat of the Persians from Edessa.
been enhanced by his attack on Nisibis, while his enforced retreat could be blamed on his fellow commanders.66

While Procopius does not provide a figure for the total force, he notes the rumour that it was said to be the largest army ever mustered, even if he does not endorse this himself (viii.4). He also conveys the impression that it was a substantial force by the large number of commanders assigned to the campaign.67

As has been noted, Kavadh himself had indeed withdrawn following the capture of Amida, though probably not his army (despite viii.6). Procopius’ statement that none of the Roman generals undertook the siege of Amida (viii.7) is also incorrect; it is difficult, however, to work out whether this is a chronological error - misplacing the start of the siege of the city by the Romans - or an omission. Certainly he is being highly selective at this point, since it is clear that the battle near Apadna and Tell Beşmê (viii.10-21) took place after Hypatius and Patricius had started the siege of Amida as well as Areobindus’ successful counter-attack as far as Nisibis.68 While the events leading up to the battle (viii.8-10) have already been considered,69 Procopius’ account of the actual engagement contains some details not to be found elsewhere, such as the king’s discovery of the Roman army (viii.16). The battle took place in mountainous country, it seems, for both Zachariah (VII.5) and Procopius (viii.18) refer to casualties

66 Theoph., A.M. 5998, for the replacement of Hypatius by Celer and below, n.73, on the supreme command.

67 For their careers, cf. PLRE entries, s.v. Pharesmanes 3, Bessas, Apion 2, and Romanus 7 and Justinus 4; Theophanes, A.M. 5997, adds that Romanus, the dux of Euphrates joined the army group, as well as a certain Zemarchus and the phylarch Aswad; at A.M. 5998 he mentions a Bonosus, cf. PLRE II, s.v. Zemarchus and Bonosus 3. On Apion’s role (vii.5), q.v. n.30.

68 It cannot be ruled out, however, that Procopius was unaware of Areobindus’ campaign - v.i. text to n.84. He is either telescoping events drastically or poorly informed; the wealth of detail on various minor matters, however, heavily tilts the balance in favour of the former hypothesis, cf. Cameron, p.156.

69 On the capture of Areobindus’ camp and baggage train, q.v. text to n.23. Neither Zach. nor Joshua specifies where this took place but it could be in the vicinity of Apadna, in line with Proc’s account. Joshua mentions Opadna at §57, as does Zachariah at VII.5.

The distances from Constantia and Amida given by Procopius (viii.10) appear accurate, yet it is odd, considering how near the two places are, that they are measured from two separate cities (as Dillemann notes, p.314) and in different units. This may be explained if we assume the use of official reports here, since Areobindus’ base was clearly in Constantia or Edessa, while Hypatius and Patricius were coming from Amida: the commanders themselves may have been unaware of how close they were to one another, or at any rate have seemed fit to try to make it seem so. Doubtless blame must have attached to the two magistri militum praesentales for their failure to support Areobindus.
on the Roman side owing to the cliffs in the vicinity. The river mentioned has been identified with the Arzamon, but the precise location of the battlefield remains irrecoverable.\(^70\)

Two further inaccuracies in Procopius follow the battle: first, contrary to what he says (viii.19) Kavadh certainly did not return to his country at once to fight the Huns, but continued west as far as Edessa, before returning to Persia by a southerly route. The war against the Huns is not mentioned by any other source, but is credible since Kavadh was not present on the front after the 503 campaign; other sources mention various peoples who were threatening the Persian empire at this point. It should be underlined that there can be no doubt about Procopius' selectivity on Kavadh's operations here, given that he reports an attempt on Edessa at II.xiii.9.\(^71\) Second, the other Roman army (viii.22), which raided Arzanene, was probably under Patricius, rather than Celer, who cannot have reached the front in time to lead this operation; when he finally arrived in the east towards the end of 503 he confined himself to assembling his forces in Hierapolis before dismissing them to winter quarters (Joshua §65, Marcellinus a.504).

Procopius' criticism on the lack of an overall commander (viii.20) is one which could frequently be levelled at armies in the sixth century; he repeats it in almost the same terms when dealing with the commanders who succeeded Belisarius in Italy.\(^72\) Yet as has been noted, there appears in effect to have been only one overall commander after the appointment of Celer, who brought the war to a successful conclusion. Hence Procopius' comments are somewhat inappropriate at this point, though division among

\(^70\) Zach. too mentions Arzamena and Aphphadna, though as places from which Areobindus fled, while in his account Hypatius and Patricius fled from Thelkatsro, but his narrative is extremely unclear here. Dillemann, p.315, for the identification of the river with the Arzamon and on Thelkatsro (also connected by him with the river). Q.v. n.23 on the battle itself and the location of Siphrios.

\(^71\) Proc. viii.19 on the Hun invasion, also referred to at ix.24, x.15, and de Aed. II.i.5; q.v. n.33 on Kavadh's other difficulties. Cf. Christensen, p.352 and Marquart, Étâniach, p.63 n.4, on the war against the (Sabir) Huns, who interrupted again, however, around 515-6, q.v. ch.2 n.27. Contra the view of (e.g.) Whitby, 'Defences'. DRBE, p.717. Kavadh's war was not against the Hephthalites, cf. ch.2 n.23; Proc would clearly have so specified them, if he were referring to them.

\(^72\) Veh, p.463, on this war foreshadowing Procopius' later criticisms: Proc.'s criticism of the division of command at viii.20, ἀλλ' ἵνα πρὸς ἄλλ wlan ὁ στρατηγὸς οὐκ ἔπηκαν... recalls Thucydides II.65.10 on the mediocre successors of Pericles, echoed more distinctly by Proc. at Wars VII.i.23 regarding Belisarius' successors to the command in Italy. The defeat at Anglon (II.xxv.23) is another example of the disastrous effects of a divided command.
the leaders had undoubtedly cost the Romans heavily in 503.\textsuperscript{73}

(iii) Lix

The narrative returns to Amida at this point, and the siege of winter 504: it had been invested since the start of the year, when Patricius had heard of the Persians' relaxation of security. Procopius is in error over the recall of Areobindus (ix.1), since it was in fact Hypatius who was summoned away, as well as the prefect Apion.\textsuperscript{74}

That the Roman generals were unaware of the want of provisions among the defenders is not unlikely (ix.2), especially since they knew of the provisioning of the city which had taken place previously (Joshua §66, Proc. viii.7). The anxiety of the Persian garrison (ix.3) is also referred to by Joshua (§71), and it is clear that they had little option about coming to terms with the Romans: no relieving army could be expected, while the massacre which had taken place in the city less than two years previously made their chances of surviving a surrender slim indeed.

Concerning the hand-over of the city for a sum of gold (ix.4), discussed above, Procopius is again closest to Zachariah (VII.5) in placing the price at 1000 lbs. The discomfort of the Roman forces in the face of the onset of winter is confirmed by Joshua (§81), though it is doubtful whether the Romans need have worried about the approach of another Persian army (ix.2).\textsuperscript{75} Although Procopius (ix.22) does not recount at such length the macabre stories found in Zachariah (VII.5) and Joshua (§76) on the plight of the inhabitants of the city during the siege, he does indulge in a digression to tell the story of the death of Glon (ix.4-19).

The ambushing of Glon is also to be found in Zachariah (VII.5), and may be presumed to stem from an Amidene source: the source used by the compiler 'pseudo-Zachariah' actually names his informant as a certain Gadono of Akhorè 'whom I myself

\textsuperscript{73} Theoph., A.M. 5998, on Anastasius entrusting the war to Celer and Areobindus, and q.v. n.66; from Joshua's account (e.g. §64) it seems that Celer was the supreme commander, cf. Merten, p.185. Even if he held a joint command with Areobindus, his influence with the Emperor averted disunity (Stein II. p.97 and n.1).

\textsuperscript{74} Joshua §66 on Patricius' opening of the siege, some time soon after 25 December 503. Q.v. n.30 on Apion.

\textsuperscript{75} Lee, pp.92-93, on the problems caused by the weather.
Procopius' dating of the event is somewhat vague, but it is clear from Zachariah and Joshua (§56) that it occurred in 503, shortly before the battle of Apadna, when Hypatius and Patricius were besieging the city. Gadono, who is not named by Procopius, lured Glon and a few hundred guards from the city, and they were cut down in an ambush by the Romans. Procopius has elaborated the story somewhat, adding some points of detail, such as the location of the ambush near Thilasamon (ix.14), placed to the southwest of Amida by Honigmann: his statement that the Persians destroyed only the sanctuary of Symeon among Amida's buildings (ix.18-19) must be an exaggeration, however, given the unanimity of the sources on Kavadl's sack. Zachariah adds that Glon's head was sent to Constantia.76

Procopius labours the disgrace to the Roman side of having permitted the Persian garrison to escape intact (ix.23), when it was incapable of holding out much longer. There is probably therefore some exaggeration in his tales of the cunning of the Persians in keeping their want of resources a secret, and only being left with a week's provisions at the end of the siege; but it was a poor reflection on the Roman army that it had been unable to maintain a siege over the winter, when the Persians had done so successfully.77 The suspicion remains, however, that Procopius is keen to underrate the success of the Romans in this war, and the purchase of the surrender of Amida provides an excellent means of so doing.

(c) The treatment of the war by Procopius and the other sources

Having compared Procopius' version of events with that of the other surviving sources, some consideration should be given as to whence he derived his information. Haury proposed that he employed the account of Zachariah, pointing to the many similarities

76 Zach. VII.5 puts the incident after the battle of Apadna, immediately following a ruse by Pharesmanes against the Persian defenders in Amida. Joshua §56 puts Pharesmanes' ruse before Apadna. Clearly Glon's death can be placed in 503, and since Joshua's chronology is more reliable on the whole than Zach.'s, it should probably be placed before Apadna, moreover, after the battle at Apadna the Roman army fled behind the Euphrates (Joshua §57).

Q.v. nn.60-61 on the sack of Amida: and ch.1. nn.13-14 on 'pseudo-Zachariah'.

77 Cp. Marcellinus a.504 on the disgrace of buying back an deserted city for a large sum: also Hdt. I.21-2 for defenders tricking besiegers into believing that they are adequately supplied with provisions. On the Persian envoy Aspabedes (ix.24), v.i. ch.5 n.53.
between them, especially in relation to the siege of Amida. The problems associated with Zachariah have already been mentioned, but it remains likely that both the compiler of what we now know as Zachariah’s work and Procopius made use of the works of Eustathius of Epiphaneia, who dealt specifically with the siege. No doubt Procopius was able to supplement the written evidence available to him with oral reports he heard while at the frontier. There is at any rate a clear contrast between the apparently official versions to be found in the chroniclers Malalas and Theophanes and the rather less patriotic accounts of Procopius and Zachariah. A likely precursor to the chroniclers is a certain Colluthus, who composed a verse account of the war, no doubt highly creditable to the Emperor and his generals; his work does not survive, however.76

Procopius’ account of the war has been seen to be highly selective, and actually in error in places. While some may be genuine mistakes, caused by ignorance or carelessness, in other cases it appears as though discrimination against certain generals, such as Areobindus, is operating. The suspicion arises therefore that Procopius is playing down the importance of the wars before Justinian’s reign, and an examination of his account, as well as that of other Justinianic writers, strengthens this impression.79

The other two authors who offer criticism of the conduct of the war are John Lydus (III.53.2) and Marcellinus comes. The former reports no details of the war, but is heavily critical of the leadership of Areobindus particularly, and scarcely less so of Hypatius and Patricius. After initial defeats as a result of the incompetence and cowardice of these generals, Celer was able to turn the tables, and talks ensued with Kavadh, according to John. Marcellinus’ account contains a few more details, and no specific criticism of generals. Nevertheless he reports that the Romans fought ‘sine

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Cecalova offers a useful analysis of the relationship between the various sources on the war, and the extent to which Eustathius was used. She rightly rejects the view that Theophanes’ account was derived principally from Proc. (p.72), and stresses the interrelationship between Greek and Syriac writers.


79 Cp. Cameron, p.156, for the cursory nature of Proc.’s account of the war.
audacia at the battle near Syficum castellum (Apadna). This need not be taken as criticism, and may well be true, but the way in which he describes the recovery of Amida is hardly favourable: the Roman generals buy back a deserted city for a large price, which is similar to Procopius' version. Even his account of Celer's raid of 504-5 is cast in hostile terms, describing the slaughter of the Persian farmers and their animals (a.503-4).

Procopius' account is not so obviously prejudiced as that of John, and is rather fuller than that of Marcellinus. Yet his omissions are similar and striking when compared with the versions of Joshua and Theophanes. Of the three sources so far discussed, only Marcellinus mentions something approaching a Roman success - Celer's raid into Persian territory, which is scarcely favourably portrayed. But Joshua's account, written so shortly after the event, depicts several Roman victories, and is corroborated by Zachariah and Theophanes.

Now the bias of Procopius has not escaped notice, and motives have been suggested: in the case of Areobindus, it is pointed out that Justin later recalled several of the general's enemies, such as Vitalian, Apion and Hypatius. His acclamation as Emperor in 512 may also have led to a tendency to play down his importance in the war. There is no evidence, however, to support the idea that either Vitalian or Apion were hostile to Areobindus: indeed Apion dissuaded him from returning to Constantinople after Hypatius and Patricius had failed to come to his support. Furthermore, it is difficult to see how the enmity of Hypatius should have caused Procopius' account to denigrate Areobindus, since Hypatius was also acclaimed Emperor and executed in 532. We should therefore expect both to be criticised by Procopius, and indeed he does report that Hypatius and Patricius were the first to flee at the battle of Apadna (viii.19). Hence it may be that Areobindus only appears to be more harshly treated by Procopius because he had more success: no victories of Patricius and Hypatius could be passed

80 Merten pp.143-6 on Joshua's accuracy, p.147 on the usefulness of Zach.'s account.

81 Kirchner p.6, followed by Merten p.153, cf. Lamma. 'La politica dell'imperatore Anastasio I', p.179 n.80 (on the attitude of Proc. and John towards Hypatius and Areobindus).

82 Theoph., A.M. 5997. As Merten notes p.177, this points to friendship between the two: Theoph. is surely mistaken in ascribing Apion's recall to hostility towards Areobindus. A.M. 5998, although this is credible in the case of Hypatius.
over, because there were none.83

Two factors may be suggested as contributing to the bias detectable in Procopius’
account. On the one hand, there was a tendency among writers of Justinian’s time to
play down Roman successes in Anastasius’ war, due in part perhaps to the fall from
favour first of Areobindus, then later of Hypatius, and partly too in order to magnify the
victories won by Justinian’s commanders subsequently. On the other hand, it may be a
reflection of Procopius’ sources that he omits certain episodes: like Zachariah, it seems
as though he was using some Amidene source (or a work specifically about the siege),
and this may have caused something of a ‘northern’ bias in his account: the most
southerly event which Procopius reports is the battle of Apadna, although Zachariah
does refer to the attack on Nisibis by Areobindus.84 The concentration on the sieges
of Amida thus points to use of a local source; but only in the case of the siege by the
Persians can Eustathius be postulated as a source, for he died before the Romans
invested the city.

The one chapter not concerned with Amida concerns the army sent out by Anastasius,
for which official sources may well have been employed, and the battle at Apadna.85 It
is interesting that in this chapter (viii.7) he asserts that none of the Roman generals were
willing to besiege Amida before the battle at Apadna, although this is contradicted by
both Zachariah (VII.4) and Joshua (§54). This appears to confirm that Procopius was
here using a different source from the other two chapters. It is impossible to determine
whence he derived the account of the battle, which bears slight similarity to Joshua’s
account: it may be suggested tentatively that some local source, though not from Amida,
was used. The official record, insofar as that is what is preserved in Theophanes (A.M.
5997), omits the battle, passing straight from Areobindus’ forced retreat to the siege of

83 The mention of the recall of Areobindus at ix.1 may be an innocent error, like his mention of Celer
at viii.21, where Patricius was probably the commander, q.v. p.108. Merten, p.157, suggests that since
Theoph. was using Theodore Lector as a source, who wrote primarily under Anastasius (cf. PLRE III, s.v.
Theodorus 2), he might thus reflect a tradition rather favourable to Areobindus.

84 Haury, Zur Beurteilung, pp.24-26, questions Theoph.’s account of Areobindus’ achievements. A
comparison of Joshua’s account (§§61-64) with that of Theophanes (A.M. 5997) does not confirm the
latter’s description of a clear-cut (albeit unexpected) victory for Areobindus at Edessa.

85 Cf. Merten, p.153, on the use of Roman sources for the leaders at any rate; also Kirchner, p.6 where
he notes that only Procopius mentions Bessas and Godidisclus. cf. Cameron, p.156. On the official
sources, q.v. ch.1 n.11.
Finally there is the question of the supposed bias of Procopius in favour of Kavadh and the Persians. It is true that he does praise Kavadh on several occasions, though it is doubtful that he displays particular partiality towards the Persians. For while it has been noted that there is a tendency to pass over Roman successes in the war, this does not imply that he is actually favouring the Persians. Instances of a supposed bias have been suggested, such as Kavadh's sparing of Jacob; but although this is not found elsewhere, numerous sources report Kavadh's decision to stop massacring the inhabitants of Amida after he is so entreated. And while Kavadh is praised for his release of prisoners, Anastasius' conduct too is lauded (vii.34-5). So despite the fact that there are several incidents which redound to the credit of the Persians, there is no evidence of active partiality in their favour on Procopius' part: the fact remains that Kavadh had invaded 'for no reason' (vii.3), even if he was a clever and active king.

(d) The aftermath of the war (x)

Procopius passes quickly over the remaining years of Anastasius' reign. His account remains as selective as that of the Anastasian war, but furnishes details unreported in other sources. The first of these is the offer of the Hunnic king Ambazuces (x.9-10), to which unfortunately he assigns no date; this is followed by a brief notice on building work at Dara and Theodosiopolis (x.13-19).

86 The detail of the account on the battle, e.g. on the 800 Hephthalites (viii.13), perhaps points to a local source. The greater quantity of religious material on this war than is usual for Proc. - the anecdote on Jacob (vii.5-13) and that on Baradotus (II.xiii.8-15) - also conveys this impression.

87 Despite Kirchner, p.5; Merten, p.148, even states that it is generally agreed that Procopius takes the Persian side in this war in order to magnify Justinian's victories, and at p.173 claims that the report of Proc. that Kavadh released the prisoners shows this bias.

88 Proc. vii.30-32. Zach. VII.3. The placing of the episode concerning Baradotus at II.xiii.8-15, during one of Khusrô's far more devastating forays onto Roman soil, favours the view that Proc.'s perceived bias in favour of Kavadh may reflect a desire to magnify his achievements in contrast to his son's.

89 At vi.19 he notes how Kavadh guarded his kingdom well, and remarks on his cleverness and activeness. Almost the same phrase is used by Xanthopolus at XVI.36, PG 146'3, cols 195-196, before he records a peace between the two sides, followed by the outbreak of war. Since neither the preceding nor the succeeding passages in Xanthopolus relate to Proc., it may be that this praise comes from a third source, such as Eustathius. In this case, it need not be seen as Proc.'s considered opinion on the king.
First, however, Procopius provides a geographical excursus on the Taurus range, in order to provide the background to Ambazuces' offer of the 'Caspian Gates' to Anastasius (x.1-8). His description of the Caspian Gates and the Caucasus range corresponds to that of other ancient authors: Strabo too, for instance, views the Caucasus chain as a branch of the Taurus range.\(^9^0\) It is quite clear that he is dealing with the Dariel Pass in this passage (x.4-8), since the Derbent Pass leads into Albania rather than Iberia. His description of the pass is clearly from the Iberian perspective: beyond it lie the Huns, who control the lands as far as the Maeotic Lake (Sea of Azov), and no further details are given. Strabo, by contrast, approaches the pass from the north, and provides more information on the difficulties of the route: seven days are required to reach the fortress on the Iberian frontier, four of them spent on a single-file road along the Aragus (modern Aragvi) river.\(^9^1\) If the accounts of Strabo and Procopius are combined, and it is assumed that the fortresses reported by both authors are located at the same place, then the 'Gates' were situated less than six miles from the Iberian frontier, at a particularly narrow part of the valley; but beyond them, to the north, lay an arduous journey before the plains referred to by Procopius could be reached. The best explanation of Procopius' ignorance here is that he was relying on an Iberian source for the information; there is no evidence to suppose that he had visited the region himself.\(^9^2\)

A trickier question lies in Procopius' identification of the Caspian Gates with the Dariel Pass. Ancient authors themselves differ over the location of the Caspian Gates:

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On the question of Roman payments for the defence of the Caspian Gates, q.v. ch.2, esp. nn.2-4.


\(^9^2\) But he will doubtless have known Peranius, the son (possibly brother) of King Gurgenes of Iberia, having served with him in Italy, q.v. ch.1 n.9 and *PLRE* III, s.v. Peranius. Procopius' fifty stades, x.3, equate to roughly 5.75 miles (9.2 km), but v.i. n.107 on Proc.'s stade. The Huns referred to (x.6) should be identified as Sabirs, who had arrived in the region in the mid-fifth century. cf. Marquart. *Étânsahr*, pp.98-99 on the emergence of the Sabirs. and *CHEI4*, pp.259-260.
the title 'Caspian Gates' was in fact used to refer to different passes at different times. At first it was used in connection with the pass between Media and Parthia, a little to the southwest of Rhagae; it was called the Caspian Gates on account of the neighbouring Caspii tribe. Alexander the Great, who is credited by Procopius with the erection of the Gates (x.9) probably did make use of this pass, but there is no evidence that he built any fortifications.

In the reign of Nero the term is first applied to the Dariel Pass, but in Anderson's view not until the seventh century is it used to refer to that at Derbent. Hence Procopius is in line with the general usage of his time, and is not utterly mistaken in believing that the Pass had been known as the Caspian Gates from of old: he was writing four and a half centuries after Nero's officers had started to use the title. Although the references in Priscus (frgs. 41.1, 47) and John Lydus (III.52) leave some doubt as to where they placed the Caspian Gates, Menander (frg. 6.1.315) clearly specifies two passes over the Caucasus, Tzon and the Caspian Gates. The former of these can be firmly identified with Procopius' Tzur (VIII.iii.4), the Armenian Cor, which is the modern Derbent; hence for Procopius the Caspian Gates must be the Dariel Pass.

A further problem lies in whether the fort mentioned by both Strabo and Procopius at the Dariel Pass can be identified with the Biraparach mentioned in Priscus and John Lydus. There is some disagreement here among modern scholars, though the consensus favours the placing of Biraparach at Dariel rather than Derbent. The most clear piece of evidence in favour of this view is Priscus (frg. 41.1), who actually states that the fort was situated at the Caspian Gates. His other reference to the Caspian Gates is rather more obscure, however: the Saraguri, in attempting to invade Persia, fail to breach the

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94 Anderson, pp.130-132, Synelli, p.100; Anderson tentatively identifies it with the modern Sirdarapass.

95 Anderson, p.135.

Caspian Gates, and are forced to find another route to Iberia (frg. 47).^97

Neither the evidence of Priscus nor that of John Lydus allows a final resolution of the matter. Whether in the sixth century it was entirely clear to the Romans where Biraparach and the Caspian Gates were situated may also be questioned: for as Marquart noted, the Persians may have employed ambiguous terms in order to extract money from the Romans for the defences of the Derbent Pass (as well as the Dariel Pass). We may conclude that there was a fortification of some sort at the Dariel Pass; it may have been called Biraparach, but it remains possible that this was situated at Derbent.98

Although no credence is now given to the notion that Alexander had anything to do with either pass across the Caucasus range, it is clear that such a view was widely held in late antiquity: Jordanes too associates him with the Dariel Pass. The detours - *περίοδοι* - mentioned by Procopius (x.8) more probably refer to less accessible passages in the vicinity of the Dariel Pass than to Derbent; for the Derbent defile is more easily traversable than that at Dariel.99

The Hunnic king Ambazuces (x.9) is unattested in any other source; he was probably a Sabir Hun, since they were a major force in the region north of the Caucasus at this time. It is odd, however, that he should have held control of the pass, since the aim of the fort was to guard against the incursions of the Huns. It was thus clearly failing to

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97 Cf. Isaac on Biraparach at the Dariel Pass, p.230 n.62; also *RE* XI (1921), col.58, s.v. ‘Kaukasiiai Pylai’, and III.1 (1899), col.489, on ‘Biriparach’. On the name Biraparach, cf. Dillemann, p.92 and Synelli, p.104: it has been connected with the Armenian word for Iberia (Virk).


99 So Anderson, p.151: as he points out, Procopius refers to Derbent as Tzur in any case. Allen and Muratoff, pp.4-5, on the importance of the Derbent Pass - ‘this coastal route has always been the historic highway along which armies have passed the Caucasus’. Alternative passes, leading into Suania, are those of Sançar, Maruh and Kluhor (cf. the map of C. Zukermann, ‘The early Byzantine strongholds in Eastern Pontus’, *TM* 11 (1991), p.539).

Jordanes, *Getica* VII.50, for the connection with Alexander: that he is referring to the Dariel Pass is clear from the mention of the Lazi, as Anderson notes, p.152. Cf. also Rubin, *PK*, cols.364-366, on the legends connecting Alexander with the Caspian Gates.
do so if it was actually in their power, and it is plausible to connect Hunnic control of
the passes with Kavadh's problems in the north around 503.\textsuperscript{100} Because Procopius
places Ambazuces' offer just before the fortification of Dara and Theodosiopolis, it
cannot be inferred that the former must have preceded the latter. It is in fact impossible
to place the king's proposal any more precisely than the period between 506 and 518.
Given Kavadh's activities in the Caucasus and Armenia late in Anastasius' reign, it is
perhaps preferable to place it earlier rather than later: for since Ambazuces is described
as a friend of Anastasius (x.9), it seems implausible that he would have permitted the
Sabirs to launch their 515 raid on Roman territory. Thus it may be supposed that
Kavadh ousted Ambazuces' sons from the Gates at some stage before 515, and was
therefore able to deflect the Sabir incursion into the Roman empire.\textsuperscript{101}

Anastasius' refusal of the offer is unsurprising (x.11), even considering the Emperor's
natural caution. The Romans, it is true, had at one stage even reached the shores of the
Caspian Sea, and in the fourth century they had still been active in Iberia, but over the
fifth century their influence in the northeast had waned considerably: even the Lazic
king, traditionally a Roman ally, had defected to the Persian camp.\textsuperscript{102} Hence it is
difficult to see how the Romans could have taken up Ambazuces' offer, even if
Anastasius been willing: a war would have had to be undertaken to recover not only
Lazica, but much of Iberia as well. When Justin did attempt to support the revolt of the
Iberian king Gourgenes, once the Lazi had returned to their allegiance with Rome, he

\textsuperscript{100} On these problems, q.v. n.71.
On Ambazuces, cf. \textit{PLRE} II. s.v. Ambazuces; on the name, Maenchen-Helfen, p.390, ('having arms with
24 (1892), pp.614-515, believes Ambazuces to be a Sabir, and places his offer to Anastasius c.508.

\textsuperscript{101} Q.v. ch.2 n.27 for Kavadh's strengthening of Persian control in the Transcaucasus and the Sabir raid
of 515/6.

fort was built near Mtskheta in A.D. 75, Isaac, p.44 and n.167. Under Domitian, a unit is found stationed
century a division of Iberia between Rome and Persia had been proposed. Ammianus \textit{XXVII}.12.15-18 and
\textit{XXX}.2.2.

On the defection of the Lazic king Damnazes, cf. Zuckerman, 'The early Byzantine strongholds', pp.542-
543 and Braund (pp.580-588).
was unable to prevent the Persians from taking control of the whole kingdom (xii.1-19).  

Thus the Emperor can hardly be condemned for declining Ambazuces’ offer. Opinions vary as to whether Procopius is criticising Anastasius in laying stress on his unwillingness to act swiftly: in general, Procopius appears to hold Anastasius in relatively high regard. For although he usually rates energetic men highly - so Kavadh is described as being δραστήριος οὐδενὸς ἡσυχον (vi.19) - this need not imply any criticism of those who weigh matters up carefully before deciding: he appears to be unimpressed with the speed with which Justinian and Justin accede to Kavadh’s request to adopt Khusro (xi.10-11).  

In this case then, it is best to view Procopius as condoning Anastasius’ decision. considering that he gives good reasons to justify it (x.11): hence Isaac’s view, that ‘this was perhaps a reasonable decision, despite Procopius’ strictures’ somewhat misinterprets the passage.  

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The second part of this chapter deals with the construction of two major Roman forts on the Persian border, at Dara and Theodosiopolis (x.13-19). Procopius deals with both forts in greater detail in the de Aedificiis, and considerable attention has been lavished by modern scholars on Dara in particular. Since lengthy discussions are already available on Dara at any rate, this commentary will confine itself to a few remarks on the forts as

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103 It appears from x.12 that Kavadh had little difficulty in taking control of the pass: Anastasius already had problems in the area in any case. cf. Theodore Lector, 466B, on the Tzani overrunning Pontus just after the conclusion of the Anastasian War. V.i. ch.5 (c) on the Persian invasion of Iberia.


105 Isaac, p.230: the evidence he puts forward for the difficulty of warfare in the region supports Anastasius’ decision. Proc.’s description of the Emperor’s crafty dissuasion of Persian intervention in the building of Dara and Theodosiopolis also implies a favourable attitude to him.
As has been pointed out, Procopius is in error in the figures he gives for the location of Dara: he has apparently overestimated the length of the stade by a factor of two. Thus although Pliny the Elder puts forward the conversion rate as eight stades to the mile, Procopius appears to think that there were four. Consequently, he puts the fortress 28 stades from the frontier, when it should be 56 (10.4 km). He is also mistaken in his total of 98 stades between Nisibis and Dara: the cities are in fact 26 km from one another, which would equal 70 Procopian stades (140 for Pliny). Clearly Procopius thought that the 70 stades extended only from Nisibis to the frontier, and so added in the 28 stades again, to give a total of 98 stades from Nisibis to Dara. Whence Procopius derived his figures is not clear; Marcellinus comes places Dara 60 miles south of Amida, 15 miles west of Nisibis.

The inability of the Persians to interfere with the building work is reported also by Zachariah (VII.6), who ascribes it to a war being waged by Kavadh against the Tamuraye. By the time Kavadh was in a position to take account of the new fort, it was all but complete. Anastasius cleverly succeeded in ensuring Persian non-intervention by threats and payments (x.17); these payments may have been connected in some way to the truce halting the war in 506, but were probably unofficial. The less than successful Anastasian war, followed by the uprisings within his empire, will have

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107 Dillemann, pp.226-228 on Dara, p.228 for these calculations; also Pliny, NH V.xi.63. For the distance from Dara to the frontier, cf. George of Cyprus, ed. Honigmann, #912 (p.64) putting it at six miles (though Honigmann regards this as a later interpolation); Whitby, 'Dara', p.750, puts it at 5 km, while Dillemann, p.228, puts it at 10.4 km. Although Whitby's figure of 5 km to the frontier would eliminate the oddity of Proc.'s stade here, the problem still remains in cases such as the distance from Dara to Ammodius, v.t. ch.6 n.24. Haury, review of L. Ginetti, L'Italia Gotica in Procopio di Cesarea, BZ 15 (1906), pp.295-298, calculates that seven of Proc.'s stades equal one Roman mile, though this fails to solve the problem of distances here.

108 Marcellinus' figures - Croke, 'Marcellinus and Dara', p.83. Haury's review, p.296, notes that Proc.'s 98 stades between Nisibis and Dara is divisible by 7 (14 times): in such a case we find little difference between Proc.'s 14 miles and Marcellinus' 15.

109 Q.v. nn.33 and 71 on the problems besetting Kavadh; Proc.'s Huns referred to (x.15) must be Sabirs, q.v. n.71. The Tamuraye (on whom q.v. n.4) may also of course have been troubling the Persian king.
diminished Kavadh's zeal to provoke a new war over the erection of two fortresses, however important they were. Doubtless he complained of Anastasius' violation of the treaty mentioned at ii.15, though to no avail.110

There has been less discussion concerning Anastasius' fortification of Theodosiopolis, clearly undertaken in response to the ease with which it fell to the Persians in 502. As has been suggested earlier, its lack of fortifications may have been the cause of its prompt fall, which was later blamed on the treachery of the city commander, Constantinus. Procopius deals with the strengthening of the defences in greater detail in the de Aedificiis (III.v.1-12), and in both passages he stresses the inadequacy of the Theodosian defences.

Doubt is cast on the accuracy of Procopius regarding Theodosiopolis by Croke and Crow, though their case has been weakened by Whitby's refutation of their criticisms concerning Dara. They point out that Procopius' insistence on the poor state of defences in Anastasius' time is in contrast with Moses Khorenatsi'i's lengthy description of the foundation of the city by Anatolius.111 As Whitby has pointed out, however, it is clear that defences had been allowed to fall into disrepair in the fifth century, and hence even if Procopius is understating the work of Anatolius, it is highly probable that by 502 the city fortifications were in need of extensive renovation.112 Thus it is not surprising that there are parallels between the accounts of Moses and Procopius of the building of defences at the city: similar work will have had to be carried out on both occasions.

There can be no doubt that these fortifications presented a major threat to the Persians: Kavadh later lays great stress on the difficulties caused by Dara in particular.

110 Blockley, 'Subsidies and Diplomacy', p.68, suggests that the payments were connected with the truce; note the gifts mentioned by Joshua §81. John Lydus, III.52, mentions modest concessions by Anastasius to Kavadh, which may bear some relation to these payments. Q.v. n.39 on the question of truce payments.

111 Croke and Crow, p.159; Moses Khorenats'i, III.59 (tr. Thomson), cf. also n.1, p.331, and n.4, p.332 on the similarities between Moses' description and Procopius. Procopius at de Aed. III.v.2 seems mistakenly to attribute the foundation of the fort to Theodosius I, but this is due to his misdating of the Partition of Armenia, for at III.i.11 he puts it in the reign of Theodosius, son of Honorius, i.e. Theodosius II. Hence Procopius is aware that he is referring to Theodosius II, but misplaces the end of the Arsacid dynasty. On the foundation of Theodosiopolis, cf. Greatrex, 'The Two Fifth Century Wars'.

112 Q.v. n.5 on the poor state of fortifications in the east.
asserting that it required him to maintain two standing armies (xvi.7) - one at the Caspian Gates and one near Dara. Both of these areas are first dealt with in this chapter: evidently Procopius has selected them because of their significance in later events. Dara lay menacingly close to Persian territory: at x.19 Procopius refers to it as a πειραμαν, as he does at xvi.6, while in de Aedificiis II.i.13 it is portrayed as openly threatening enemy lands. The term itself denotes an offensive stronghold; confirmation in the case of Dara may be found in John Lydus' striking description of the city as ἡ πόλις Ἀναστάσιος [θαυμάζει τὸν πολέμιον ἐπιτεθείκειν (III.28, cp. III.47). On the other hand, it is possible to over-emphasise the offensive role of Dara: of the six possible aims of a fort isolated by Isaac, and applied by him to Dara, only one of these is as a base for operations against the enemy - in this case to assault Nisibis. But although Anastasius' motivation may have been primarily defensive, and while Roman raids were rarely launched unprovoked, tension between the two powers was raised considerably by this building work.114

113 Cf. Blockley. 'Subsidies and Diplomacy', p.69

114 Isaac, pp.254-255, cp. Whitby, Maurice, pp.212-213 on fort-building. On the term ἐπιτεθείκειν, cf. M. Sartre, Bostra - des origines à l'Islam, Paris 1985, p.59, and Whitby, Maurice, p.212 n.28. Note also how the generals who had commanded in the Anastasian War sought the construction of a fort (a) as a place of refuge for the army, (b) as a place to prepare weapons and (c) as a protection against Arab raids: no mention of an offensive purpose is made. Zach. VII.6.

Cf. Lee, pp.24-25, on Persian suspicion of Roman aims generally.
CHAPTER FIVE: THE FIRST JUSTINIANIC WAR (PART 1)

(a) Rome and Persia, 518-532

Although the war which broke out between Rome and Persia in the late 520s was a continuation of that begun under Anastasius, circumstances had altered considerably during the intervening years. Kavadh’s invasion at the start of the century had exposed serious weaknesses in the Roman defences, which had deteriorated over the fifth century. Consequently Anastasius had begun a programme of improvement on the Roman fortifications, carried through to completion by Justin and Justinian: in many cases it is difficult to determine who initiated the improvements, and it is likely that Anastasius deserves more credit than is accorded to him in Procopius’ De Aedificiis. Thus it has been suggested that most of the building work carried out on the north of the frontier was in a state of near completion by the end of Anastasius’ reign; Theodosiopolis certainly was extensively refortified by him, and work begun at Melitene. There is still some controversy over who deserves the credit for bases such as Citharizon.

The other major change in the situation between the two powers had taken place in the northern sector of the frontier. Here Roman prestige had gained significantly, despite some reverses towards the end of Anastasius’ reign: an Armenian rising had taken place in 513, followed by a Sabir raid two years later, which caused extensive devastation. But the 520s saw several notable Roman successes. First the Lazic king Tzath defected to the Roman camp in 521/2, and only a few years later the Iberian royal


3 Stein II. p.105; on the Armenians, Chron. a.724 and Michael Syrus IX.11; q.v. ch.2 n.27 on the Sabir raids. Howard-Johnston considers that Anastasius’ rebuilding programme was extended to southeastern Anatolia as a result of the Sabir raid, since other areas had hitherto had priority. ‘Citharizon’. p.218.
family followed suit.4 Furthermore, the refractory Tzani were incorporated into the empire during this period, finally defeated by Sittas at some stage before the outbreak of war.5 When this subjugation was undertaken is unclear, though it may well have been linked to the raid of the Tzani launched in 505; the offer of the Hunnic chief Ambazuces reported by Procopius may be another reflection of the rise in Roman prestige in this area.6

Does this Roman resurgence point to a renewed aggressiveness against the traditional enemy? It has been interpreted thus, yet it is far from clear that either Justin or Justinian had any desire to come to blows with the Persians. Indeed there is every sign that relations between Kavadh and Justin became quite cordial, despite the raid of al-Mundhir in 519 (instigated by Kavadh to further his continuing financial demands): Cedrenus (1.638) even reports the conclusion of a peace in the third year of Justin's reign (521), in the context of which it is possible that the Lakhmid chief released the Roman commanders Timostratus and John.7 Whether or not the existence of a formal peace treaty is accepted, the request of Kavadh to have Justin adopt his son Khusro clearly points to friendly relations, even after the defection of Tzath. Only after Justin agreed to intervene in Iberia was recourse had to armed force, and even then it was

4 Cf. Whitby, CPH, p.106 n.330, for 521: Braund (p.593) places it 'around 522'.

5 Proc. xvi.24. clearly putting Sittas' victory before the war contra Stein II, p.291. Braund and PLRE III, s.v. Sittas; cf. Howard-Johnston, 'Citharizon', p.218, pointing out that it would in any case be unfeasible to attempt to reduce this hardy tribe in wartime.

6 Proc. x.9-12 for Ambazuces' offer: Howard-Johnston, 'Citharizon', p.218, considers that the conquest of the Tzani would need to have been started under Anastasius to have been completed by Justinian's reign, though it may be doubted whether such a length of time would have been necessary. Tzanic raid: Theodore Lector 466, Stein II, p.105.

some time before the conflict spread to Mesopotamia.8

Thus whereas in the previous phase of the war it was Kavadh who had clearly opened hostilities by his unexpected assault on Theodosiopolis, it is rather more difficult to determine even at what point this extension of the war began. The two sides seem to have faced one another first in the Caucasus, a pointer to the growing importance of this region in the sixth century, which was to witness steadily larger-scale conflicts until the peace of 561. The defection of the Lazi was resented by the Persians, though no action was taken; but when their neighbours, the Iberians, followed their example, Kavadh responded swiftly.9 A substantial Persian army forced the Iberian monarch to flee the kingdom, while the Romans initially appear to have been unwilling to escalate hostilities: no Roman forces were sent out at once, but only Anastasius' nephew Probus, who failed to recruit any Hunnic mercenaries. Then Peter was despatched, but he too was accompanied only by Huns. Only when he in turn was forced back to the borders of Lazica was a Roman force finally sent out to the area, which enjoyed little success. It seems that although Peter was able to retrieve an initial defeat, the Romans nevertheless lost control of the important border forts of Sarapanis and Scanda.10

The chronology of the fighting in Lazica and Iberia is uncertain, though it is likely that the final battle between Peter and the Persians took place in 528; Gourgenes' appeal to Rome should be dated to Justin's reign, perhaps c.524/5.11 The first event of the war which took place outside Lazica, but not far to the south, was the incursion of Belisarius and Sittas directed against Persarmenia (Proc. xii.20-21), which took place before Justinian became Augustus. This raid was probably intended to alleviate the pressure being brought to bear on the Iberians and the Romans in the Caucasus.12

8 V.i. n.58 for the question of the date of the negotiations over the adoption, which must, however, fall after Tzath's defection (cf. Proc. xi.28-29); also on the negotiations carried on through a certain Labroeus, cf. PLRE II. s.v. Labroeus.

9 Resentment of the Lazic defection - letter in Mal (p.414), also Proc. xi.28.; v.t. on the details. Howard-Johnston, 'Citharizon', pp.219-220, however, interprets the Romans as becoming more aggressive from the mid-520s. On the rising importance of Iberia, cf. Braund (p.604).


11 V.t. text to n.79 for the date of Gourgenes' defection, usually put in 526; on the 528 campaign, v.t. n.92.

12 V.t. n.94 on Persarmenia, and n.96 for the possibility that Sittas was dux of Horonon at this time.
Once Justinian came to the throne, building work was carried out further south on the frontier, which has been viewed as provocative to the Persians; but by 528 it is questionable whether such a term is appropriate. For Gourgenes had already been expelled from his kingdom, and Roman forces were actively engaged in fending off the Persians from Lazica. It is not surprising therefore to find Justinian undertaking repair work on the cities closest to the frontier, and seeking to construct new forts to secure his empire against Persian invasion. Had he intended to challenge the Persians in the field, he could equally have launched a major attack against Persian territory; as it was, a half-hearted attempt was made to take Nisibis, then Thebetha, probably to distract the Persians from the imminent construction work to be undertaken at Thannuris.13

Thus the strengthening of the fortifications at such places as Martyropolis and Dara need not be interpreted as a prelude to a Roman inspired 'war of revenge', but can be viewed rather as a preparation for an extension of the war already being waged in the north; a war, moreover, which the Persians had restarted, even if under pressure from Roman diplomacy. Doubtless work on these forts, situated so close to the border, was left until war was regarded as inevitable.14

It is tempting to view the entire war in the south as a sideshow to the struggle in the north: for when peace terms were finally agreed, it was the forts on the Lazic border which occasioned the greatest controversy.15 Most of the fighting took place in Mesopotamia and Osrhoene, however, where it quickly became clear that neither side could gain the advantage: the 531 Persian campaign along the Euphrates is a witness to this, representing a bold but unsuccessful attempt to break the deadlock. The restoration programme of Anastasius and his successors had made it almost impossible to capture cities or extract money from them - at least while there were sufficient forces

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13 Zach. IX.1 for this attack, probably the same as that reported by Proc. xii.23-24 (summer 527).

14 For the fortifications at Dara, see M. Whitby, ‘Dara’ and at Martyropolis, ‘Martyropolis’, pp.178-179 (dating the improvements to 528, cf. Mal. p.427), cf. Howard-Johnston, ‘Citharizon’, p.220 (also for the ‘war of revenge’). The rebuilding of Palmyra was hardly threatening to the Persians, though it may have caused annoyance to the Lakhmids, whose incursions it was designed to curb (Howard-Johnston, loc. cit., sees it as provocative; Mal. p.425). On leaving the strengthening of more sensitive sites until war was imminent, cf. Howard-Johnston, ‘Citharizon’, p.220 and Whitby, ‘Dara’, p.758.

15 Proc. xxii.11-12: Dara was the other chief point of dispute. cf. xvi.6 and xxi.16.
in the vicinity. Kavadh was obviously eager to capture Dara and Martyropolis, but was foiled in both cases. From his demands made towards the end of the war (Proc. xvi.4-8), it emerges that his objective was not to change the frontier between the two empires, but to remove the threat posed by Dara, to ensure Iberia remained in Persian hands, and to keep the Lazic forts if possible. Hence the war in the south should probably best be viewed primarily as an attempt to acquire bargaining counters for the negotiations; these will have become all the more necessary for the Persians after Pharangium and Bolum passed to the Roman camp in 530.

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The chronology of the war is attended by as many problems as its origins. A narrative of the main events will be attempted, however, before the difficulties are examined in detail.

The failure of the negotiations regarding the adoption of Khusro by Justin and the defection of the Iberian king Gourgenes led to a Persian military intervention in Iberia around 526. The Roman reaction was slow to materialise, and largely ineffective once it had arrived. After some fighting in 528, the Romans pulled back to the Lazic border, and eventually abandoned even that: the Persians were able thus to overrun parts of Lazica as well as Iberia without difficulty.17

The Romans sought to draw the Persians away from the Caucasus by a series of diversions towards the end of Justin's reign: first there were the raids of Sittas and Belisarius into Persarmenia, not far from the Caucasus, but the second of these raids was repulsed successfully by Armenian commanders (in 526/7). Then in summer 527 the Romans started to make use of the offensive capability of Dara: the dux at Dara, Libelarius, launched an attack against Nisibis, which failed utterly, as did the subsequent assault on Thebetha.18 These attacks were accompanied by Roman efforts to strengthen

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17 Proc. xii.1-19 and v.i. section (c).

18 Zach. IX.6 and Proc. xii.23-24; v.i. text to n.98 for a discussion as to who commanded this raid. Stein II, p.272 n.2 for a chronology, also Rubin, ZI, p.487 n.777 and below pp.137-138.
strengthen their frontier with further forts: Justinian was clearly trying to exert as much pressure as possible in Mesopotamia, thereby pinning down a large number of Persian troops.\(^{19}\) Probably at the same time as these attacks, a certain silentiary Thomas was ordered to construct a fort at Thannuris, not far from Thebetha; but he was frustrated by Saracens and Kadisenes from Singara and Thebetha. In the autumn building works on the river Tigris at Melabasa were also foiled.\(^{20}\)

Perhaps as a result of these failures, Anastasius' nephew Hypatius was restored to his former position of *magister militum per Orientem* (summer 527). Libelarius too was replaced by Belisarius (autumn 527).\(^{21}\) In 528 the Persians responded in force, even while they were also doing battle with the Romans in the Caucasus. An invasion of Mesopotamia was led by Mihran and Xerxes, probably to put a definite stop to the Roman attempts at fort-building in the region of Nisibis. Belisarius' forces were defeated mainly through their lack of discipline, and suffered heavy casualties; the Persians withdrew soon after (spring/summer 528).\(^{22}\) During the same year the Roman ally al-Harith the Kindite, having fled eastward after a quarrel with the Roman *dux* Diomedes, was killed by his rival, al-Mundhir the Lakhmid. Justinian therefore ordered a retaliatory strike, which penetrated far into Lakhmid territory and captured several Persian forts (spring 528).\(^{23}\)

Daunted by the Roman failure in battle of 528, Justinian took measures to ensure that the eastern provinces were equipped with the manpower to withstand any sieges: various senators were despatched with forces to garrison various cities, including Amida,

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\(^{20}\) Zach. IX.2 (Thannuris) and IX.5 (Melabasa): for a full discussion of these attempts, *v.i.* ch.6 (a); Proc. xiii.1-8 on an attempt at fort building at Minduos.

\(^{21}\) Hypatius' appointment (under Justin and Justinian, so between 1 April and 1 August 527). Mal. p.423, and *PLRE* II, s.v. Hypatius 6. Belisarius' appointment. Proc. xii.24, *PLRE* III, s.v.: Belisarius 1.

\(^{22}\) Proc. xiii.2-8: Mal., pp.441-442; Zach. IX.2.

\(^{23}\) Mal., pp.434-435. Dionysius was *dux* of Phoenice at the time of this raid, but had apparently been replaced by Proclianus by the time of the battle later in the same year. cf. *PLRE* III, s.v. Dionysius 1: the absence of Hypatius from these operations is noticeable, considering that Malalas states that he was appointed specifically to combat the Saracens, and suggests that his appointment was chiefly nominal. Stein II, p.297, considers that the camp of al-Mundhir reached by the Romans was Hira, though this would have involved a long distance for the attackers: Mal. just says that al-Mundhir's camp was captured. *loc. cit.*
Edessa, Sura and Constantia. To judge from the distance of all of these from the Persian frontier, Justinian seems to have expected the Persians to break through places close to the border, such as Martyropolis and Dara, which were probably still undergoing repair. Pompey, another of Anastasius' nephews, was also sent to the East with reinforcements from the Balkans. The Armenian front was thoroughly reorganised before August 528, and a separate commander entrusted with all the troops in Armenia and the Pontus; the first man to hold this position was Sittas, closely followed by Dorotheus. Hostilities were suspended by mutual consent later in 528, on account of a severe winter (winter 528).

Early the next year al-Mundhir avenged the attack on his territory, penetrating almost as far as Antioch by way of Emesa and Apamea; the Roman commanders failed to intercept him before he had returned eastwards with his booty. Justinian replied with another retaliatory raid, undertaken by a force of Lycocranitae from Phrygia and some infantry (April 529).

Notwithstanding this episode, the prospects for peace improved considerably at first in 529: it is possible that the Persians had attained all their objectives in the Caucasus by this stage, and were willing to come to terms to solidify their new position. In May that year Hermogenes set off for the Persian court to conduct peace negotiations and

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24 On the troops sent to the East, cf. Mal. p.442 and G. Sotiriadis. 'Zur Kritik des Johannes von Antiochia', Jahrbucher fur Classiche Philologie supp. XVI (1888) (henceforth Sotiriadis), pp.115-116; on the magister militum per Armeniam, cf. Mal. p.429. C.J. 1.29.5 and Novel 31 (in Corpus Iuris Civilis vol.3, edd. R. Schoell and W. Kroll (sixth edition), Berlin 1954) and Stein II, pp.290-291 and n.5 p.289 for the date. Howard-Johnston, 'Citharizon', p.220, attributes the creation of this post to the failure of the Romans in Lazica, but there is no reference to this region in any of the texts noted above. More likely the improvement in the defences of the region, combined with Sittas' successes against the Tzani, were felt to merit his promotion to this higher rank; from Malalas, it is clear that he had some input into the details of the post (pp.429-430), cf. Adontz, Armenia, pp.102-109, on Sittas' appointment and the new post.

25 Mal. p.445, Theoph. A.M. 6021 (March 529), cf. Zach. VIII.5, who mentions Apamea and Emesa, John of Nikiu 90.79-80; who adds that al-Mundhir burnt Chalcis; also Stein II, p.284 and n.2. The reports of Michael Syrus IX.16 and Gregory p.73 (tr. Wallace Budge), both of which follow Zach. VIII.5, probably concern the 519/20 raid and the one in 529 - they both refer to Apamea and Emesa at this point. Q.v. n.7 on the 519/20 raid.

Whitby, Maurice, p.199 n.2, gives 527 as the date for the first raid, cf. Shahid, Martyrs, p.242, who argues that Zach. refers to two raids in this year. I prefer (with Stein, loc. cit.) to identify Zach.'s raid with that of the chroniclers, and place it in 529.

to convey news of Justinian's accession. He was received by Kavadh in July, and was sent back to the Emperor with a letter: Malalas provides the text of this letter, in which Kavadh repeats the familiar request for money. Relations between the two sides were soured once more, however, by the Samaritan revolt which broke out in May/June 529 in Scythopolis, and quickly spread. It was only with the help of Arab allies that the

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27 Mal. pp.449-450. Worthy of note too is Kavadh's claim that the Persian treasury is still empty, and the reference to a (probably fictitious) agreement concerning mutual aid, cf. ch.2 n.3 - though it is accepted by Synelli, p.120, and identified with the treaty alluded to in Joshua §8.

Theophanes puts Hermogenes at Antioch on 22 May; while Malalas (pp.447-448) says that he was at the Persian court in July. On the slow progress of this diplomatic activity, cf. Scott. 'Diplomacy in the sixth century', p.160.
rebellion finally was put down, after considerable damage to the whole of Palestine.\textsuperscript{28}

News of this event encouraged Kavadh not to pursue the negotiations any further, though it appears that it was only after the battle of Dara (530) that he actually broke off the talks.\textsuperscript{29} Perhaps on account of the time spent negotiating and the late stage at which talks were opened between the rebels and the Persian king, no offensive action was taken by the Persians in 529.\textsuperscript{30}

The major Persian offensive came in 530: it comprised two separate ventures, one directed against the troublesome fortress at Dara, the other much further north in Armenia, perhaps with the intention of reaching the Black Sea and further securing the gains made in Lazica. The strike against Dara appears not to have been altogether expected: although Belisarius, promoted in the previous year to the supreme eastern command, had a substantial army gathered at the city, Rufinus was waiting for Kavadtvs message at Hierapolis to continue the negotiations.\textsuperscript{31} The Persians clearly reckoned that they had every chance of capturing the city, and overcoming Belisarius' men, already defeated in 527 and 528. They approached the city from the south, encamping at Ammodius: the strong Roman presence outside the city deterred the Persians from


On the Arab phylarch involved, whether al-Harith or Abu Karib, see ZI p.280 n.839 (al-Harith), Shahid, 'Arethas the son of Jabalah' p.108 (al-Harith), also BASIC I. loc. cit. (accepting that two phylarchs may be involved) and Stein II. p.288 and n.1 (Abu Karib). Cf. also R. Paret, 'Note sur un passage de Malalas concernant les phylarques Arabes'.Arabica 5 (1958), pp 259-260 and Sartre, pp.168-170 for the suggestion that the two phylarchs mentioned by Malalas need not be the same person.

\textsuperscript{29} Theoph. A.M. 6021 asserts that Kavadh broke off negotiations in 529, having just accepted Hermogenes' gifts, while Mal., p.455, places this after the battle of Dara. Though Theophanes' dating may appear more likely, his credibility is diminished by his assertion that peace was concluded immediately after the battle of Dara. A.M. 6022. PLRE III. s.v. Hermogenes 1, considers Theophanes mistaken in placing the suspension of talks in 529, cf. Winkler, pp.447-448, who prefers 530 and argues that Rufinus and Alexander were negotiating before the battle of Dara. Cf. also Scott, 'Diplomacy in the sixth century', p.161, on the continuing discussions in 530.

\textsuperscript{30} Stein II. p.286. accounts for the Persian quietness in 529 through Kavadh's attempts to suppress Mazdakism, but Crone 'Kavad's heresy', p.32, puts the elimination of the sect under Khusro rather than Kavadh, though she notes that Malalas assigns it to 528-9 (p.444).

\textsuperscript{31} Note the αφων at Proc. xiii 12 (implying that the Persian advance was unexpected); on Belisarius' promotion to the post of magister militum per Orientem. cf. PLRE III. s.v. Belisarius 1 and v.i. ch 6 n.16.
attacking at once, but battle was joined on the third day. The result was a major victory for Belisarius, and Kavadh opened negotiations once more (June 530).32

In the north, the Persian force, consisting mainly of barbarian allies - Sabirs and Sunitae - was beaten on several occasions by the *magister militum praesentalis* Sittas and the *magister militum per Armeniam* Dorotheus: it was defeated for the first time before it had entered Roman territory through the work of Roman agents. The Persian commander Mihr-Mihroe (Mermeroes) regrouped his forces, however, and penetrated far into Roman territory; he must have skirted the recently strengthened Theodosiopolis.33 Although the Persian army, 30,000 strong, outnumbered the Romans two to one. Sittas' tactics prevailed, and the invaders were thrown back. This triumph of Roman arms had further repercussions: for it was probably at this point that the Armenian commanders Narses, Aratius and Isaac, hitherto loyal to the Persians, defected to the Roman cause. Thus the Romans acquired the fort of Bolum, to the east of Theodosiopolis: Pharangium also fell into their hands, when its ruler Symeon threw in his lot with the Romans (summer 530).31

The Romans had thus had much the better of the Persians in 530: both Sittas and Belisarius had beaten Persian armies in the field, something which had not happened for over 100 years.34 Kavadh was therefore determined to avenge these defeats, and a bold

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32 Proc. xiii-xiv on the battle. v.i. ch.6 (b) for a detailed discussion. Mal. places the interruption of negotiations on account of the Samaritans towards the end of this year, after terms had actually been reached (pp.454-456). cf. Scott. 'Diplomacy in the sixth century', pp.161-162.

33 Menander frg. 18.6.180-5 for the strength of the fortifications there some 40 years later (cf. Whitby, Maurice, p.201). On the commanders. cf. PLRE III. s.v. Mermeroes, Dorotheus 2 and Sittas 1.

34 Proc. xv for these events, not reported elsewhere: on the defection of the Armenians, cf. Stein II, p.292 n.1, who accepts Adontz's suggestion (Armenia, pp.22-23) that the brothers were members of the Kamsarakan clan, also PLRE III. s.v. Aratius, Isaacius 1 and Narses 2. Stein places the event in 530, surely rightly. Mal., pp.455-456, also has some information on forts in Armenia, and the goldmines there: the mention of the eunuch Narses in both accounts suggests that they are both concerned with the same events.

35 Proc. xiv.54 on how long it was since the Romans had defeated the Persians; because there had been few pitched battles in the Anastasian war, the previous victory of the Romans must have taken place during the 420-422 war. On Roman pride over these events, note John Lydus, III.28.5, on how Justinian asked him to write an account of this campaign. The praetorian prefect Julian (PLRE III. s.v. Julianus 4) set up a statue of the Emperor to commemorate this victory. cf. A. Cameron, 'Some prefects called
counter-stroke was put into operation. In spring 531 a Persian army under Azarethes, accompanied by a considerable Saracen force under al-Mundhir, set out against Antioch, the Roman capital of the East, advancing up the Euphrates. Roman intelligence was aware of the imminence of a Persian attack, but was unsure of where it would fall. Hermogenes left the capital again, and by the time he reached the eastern provinces, it was clear that the invaders were heading towards Antioch itself. Belisarius only heard of the enemy's route when they had reached Callinicum, though they had first crossed into Roman territory at Circesium; the Persians had succeeded in stealing a march on their enemy, making use of a route last employed in 421, and then only by their Saracen allies.36

As soon as this was brought to Belisarius' attention, he acted swiftly. He left a large part of his forces, doubtless mainly the infantry, to guard the cities of Mesopotamia, while he led the remainder westwards. With 8000 Romans and 5000 Arabs he moved to cut off the Persian advance, crossing the Euphrates near Hierapolis probably, reaching Chalcis while the Persians were arriving at Gabbulon.37 At this point, the Persian invasion had failed in its primary objective - the capture of Antioch. The Persian force was rapidly surrounded, though it endeavoured to continue north nonetheless. After a certain amount of manoeuvring, the invaders determined that it was time to withdraw, and followed the Euphrates back to the east, keeping the river on their left.38 Belisarius moved from his base at Barbalissus to follow the Persians in their retreat, but as a result of his victory in the previous year, the Roman soldiers were determined to engage the Persians before they left Roman territory. Belisarius' unwillingness to fight proved of no avail, and the Roman army suffered a heavy defeat in an engagement on


36 421 invasion - Socrates VII.18, cf. Greatrex. 'The two fifth century wars' - it met with failure; Shahid, BAFIC. p.29 and n.29 notes the parallel with the 421 campaign. Mal., p.460, for Hermogenes and Belisarius hearing of the invasion. Hermogenes had returned to the capital in winter 530, Proc. I.xvi.10. cf. Scott. 'Diplomacy in the sixth century', p.161. On the ease with which the frontier was penetrated here, v.i. ch. 6 n.77.

37 Rubin. ZI p.286. suggests the route Dara-Samosata-Zeugma for Belisarius' march: but this seems to head unnecessarily northward - more plausible is the direct route west. Dara-Constantia-Edessa-Hierapolis (as used e.g. by Kavadh in the Anastasian war, at least as far as Edessa).

38 Mal., pp.461-462 on this. Proc. xviii. Zach. IX.4.; v.i. ch.6 (e).
19 April at Callinicum, although the Persians too suffered considerable losses (spring 531).

News of the battle was conveyed to Justinian by Hermogenes, who ordered Sittas to come to Belisarius’ aid; he therefore left Armenia, and took up position at Samosata. An investigation into the conduct of the battle by Constantioulos led to the recall of Belisarius, and his replacement as magister militum per Orientem: Demosthenes was also sent out to the East, to prepare the cities to withstand sieges. Meanwhile the Persians took advantage of their victory at Callinicum to launch an incursion into Oshroene, in which they captured the fortress of Abgersaton with some difficulty; al-Mundhir for his part entered into negotiations with Justinian, though Kavadh still proved obdurate. He had yet to gain a decisive advantage, in order to be able to conduct negotiations on his own terms. Consequently assaults were launched against the two nearest and most threatening forts, Dara and Martyropolis.

Two attempts were made to capture Martyropolis, which the Romans had been using as a base to ravage the neighbouring Persian lands in Arzanene. Probably in the summer of 531, a Persian force advanced on the city, but was defeated by the Roman commander Bessas before it could begin a siege; Bessas had just been appointed dux of Martyropolis at this point. Several Persian leaders were captured in the wake of the defeat. Kavadh was not deterred, however, and another army was despatched to invest the city: Dara too may have come under attack around this time, but the city withstood the assault, thanks no doubt to the troops left there by Belisarius.

\[\text{Proc. xxi.i. Mal., p.465; Belisarius’ successor and the reasons for his recall will be examined later: Mal., p.467, on Demosthenes, cf. PLRE II. s.v. Demosthenes 4 and also PLRE III. s.v. Constantioulos: he is never referred to in all Proc.'s works.}\]


\[\text{I take de Aed. II.ii.19 (concerning a siege of Dara by the Mihran) to refer to a siege attempt which took place under Kavadh, and most likely to have occurred at this point, which is not mentioned by Whitby, ‘Dara’: for the battle in 530 could hardly be described as a siege. But the dismissal of the Mihran (xvii.26) by Kavadh in 530/1 might favour an earlier date for the siege. cf. PLRE III, s.v. Perozes.}\]
second Persian expedition, having reached Martyropolis, started to besiege the city at once. The Roman commanders there, Bouzes and Bessas, put up a strong resistance, while Sittas joined forces with al-Harith at Amida in October or November. These two leaders then proceeded to Atachas, to the northeast of the besieging Persians, thereby menacing their line of retreat. At this point news reached the besiegers that Kavadh had died, and it was not long before the Persian army withdrew. Other circumstances helped bring about their withdrawal: the onset of winter caused them considerable discomfort, just as it had affected the besiegers of Amida 29 years previously (Zach. VII.3). The presence of another Roman army at Atachas no doubt also have contributed to their decision, as well as rumours surrounding the imminent arrival of Huns: for although the Persians had solicited the aid of these Huns, the Romans, according to Procopius (xxi.11-16), had suggested to the Persian commander that they had been persuaded to change their allegiance.

Hermogenes, who had accompanied Sittas' army to Atachas, was thus able to persuade the Persians to lift their siege (xxi.27), and negotiations with Khusro, Kavadh's successor, were begun. Before the end of the year, however, the eastern provinces had to endure one further invasion: the Sabir Huns engaged by the Persians arrived late, and turned against the empire unaided. They ranged extensively through the provinces, penetrating as far as Euphratesia, Cilicia II and even Antioch according to some sources. But Bessas was able to inflict heavy losses on them (presumably at or near Martyropolis), as was the magister militum per Armeniam Dorotheus: they were also repulsed from Citharizon (Zach. IX.6; Proc. xxi.28). The Roman ambassador Rufinus, having investigated the episode, declared that the Persians were not responsible for the raid (Mal. p.472).

Only in late 532 was peace concluded at last between the two sides, preceded by much negotiation. Hermogenes and Rufinus met Khusro at the Tigris to agree terms, probably in early 532, but the Persian king proved unwilling to return the Lazic forts in return for Pharangium and Bolum. Rufinus therefore returned to Constantinople to confer with

44 From the sites of these victories over the Sabirs, the line of their retreat northward may be observed: from Sophanene through the passes into Asthianene, and northwards into the area around Theodosiopolis. cf. J.D. Howard-Johnston, The Scholar and the Gypsy, London 1992, p.56 on this northward retreat. Chron. ad A.D. 724, a.843 dates the incursion to December 531 as does CE 103. cf. Stein II, p.293 and n.2. On Rufinus' mission. Scott, 'Diplomacy in the sixth century', p.164.
the Emperor, who at first accepted Khusro's terms, but subsequently decided to stand firm over the forts in Lazica. Consequently the negotiations were suspended, and Rufinus barely succeeded in securing the return of the money which Justinian had agreed to pay the Persians for the peace. Not long afterwards, however, Hermogenes and Rufinus were back at the Persian court, where peace terms were agreed; the forts in Lazica were to be returned to the Romans. In September 532 the 'Eternal Peace' was agreed: it was to last for less than eight years.45

45 Stein II, pp.294-295 on the peace, and n.1 for the date, on which see below ch.6 n.116.
Chronology of Justin and Justinian’s First Persian War

Background

505  
Construction of Dara started; Theodosiopolis strengthened
Raid of Tzani

513  
Armenian revolt

515  
Raid of Sabir Huns

518  
Death of Anastasius

519/20  
al-Mundhir raids Roman territory

521/2  
Defection of Lazic king Tzath

? 525  
Negotiations over adoption of Khusro by Justin

524/5  
Gourgenes appeals to Justin

c.525  
Sittas completes subjugation of Tzani

526  
Probus’ mission to Bosporus

The course of the war

526/7  
Peter sent to Iberia with Huns
Sittas and Belisarius raid Persarmenia

527 spring  
Justinian associated with Justin as Emperor

527 summer  
Failure of Roman assaults on Nisibis and Thebetha; Belisarius succeeds Libelarius as dux at Dara
Hypatius becomes magister militum per Orientem

(1 Aug) Justinian becomes sole Emperor
Failed attempts to construct forts at Thannuris and Melabasa
Peter fails to prevent the Persians from overrunning Iberia

528 spring  
Al-Harith the Kindite killed by al-Mundhir; Roman reprisal raid captures some Persian forts

spring/summer  
Battles between Romans and Persians in the Caucasus
Belisarius defeated while attempting to defend the Roman fortification works at Minduos
(528) Sittas appointed *magister militum per Armeniam (et Pontum et gentes)*
Senators despatched to defend eastern cities

winter
Hostilities suspended due to harsh conditions

529 spring
Al-Mundhir’s raid towards Antioch, followed by Roman reprisal raid
Belisarius made *magister militum per Orientem*

summer
Hermogenes to Persian court for negotiations
Samaritan revolt breaks out

530 summer
Persians defeated by Belisarius outside Dara
Sittas repulses Persian attack on Satala; Romans gain control of Pharangium and Bolum
Rufinus’ negotiations with Kavadh

autumn
Negotiations suspended (? because of Samaritans)

531 spring
Azarethes’ invasion along the Euphrates
Persian victory over Belisarius at Callinicum
Belisarius dismissed as *magister militum per Orientem*; Sittas moves to Samosata
Abgersaton falls to Persians

summer
Bessas beats off first attempt against Martyropolis

autumn
Kavadh dies
Second siege of Martyropolis called off; Persians withdraw

winter
Raid of Sabir Huns against Roman provinces

532 ?spring
First round of peace talks with Khusro, broken off on account of disagreement over Lazic forts

summer
Final negotiations, culminating in the ‘Eternal Peace’
This chapter is chiefly concerned with the request of Kavadh that Justin adopt his son Khusro (xi.6-30), which is followed by an account of the fall of the Persian negotiator Seoses (xi.30-38) and the dismissal of his counterpart Hypatius (xi.39). Although the episode of the adoption is to be found in no other contemporary source, its occurrence has never seriously been doubted. Because Procopius is more interested in the Persian succession, he passes over the accession of Justin cursorily, merely noting that Anastasius' relatives were bypassed in the selection of the Emperor (xi.1). He perhaps exaggerates the unexpectedness of Justin's elevation in order to emphasise Kavadh's anxiety for Khusro. The only plausible candidate for the purple among Anastasius' three nephews was Hypatius, and he was absent from the capital when his uncle died. Moreover, Anastasius' anti-Chalcedonian line, which had hardened during his reign, had made him deeply unpopular in the capital; so that the failure of any of his relatives to succeed, even one who supported the Council, was not altogether surprising.

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By contrast, Procopius furnishes far more information on the matter of Kavadh's possible successors; no doubt by this point he had reached events sufficiently recent to be reported to him by Kavadh, the supposed grandson of the king of this name. It is interesting to note that Zames, the father of this younger Kavadh, receives high praise among the sons of Kavadh, more so than either of his brothers (xi.5).

Whether or not the accession of Justin actually caused Kavadh anxiety over his

46 A full account of Justin's elevation may be found in the de Caerimoniis I.93, almost certainly from Peter the Patrician, cf. Vasiliev, Justin I, p.69; this account could have been available by the time Proc. was writing, so that further detail would have been unnecessary. Cf. PLRE III, s.v. Petrus 6 on his works.

47 Cf. PLRE II, s.v. Fl. Hypatius 6, Pompeius 2, Fl. Probus 8 on the careers of Anastasius' nephews and G. Greatrex, 'Flavius Hypatius, quem vidit validum Parthus sensitque timendum: an investigation of his career' (forthcoming) on Hypatius and the situation in 518. Evagrius (IV.1) and Xanthopulus (PG 146, XVII.1, col.220), perhaps both influenced by Proc., also described Justin's elevation as unexpected.

48 On the younger Kavadh, q.v. ch.1 n.9.
successor (xi.2) can hardly be established; but he must at any rate have realised that he would have to make clear who he wanted his successor to be, considering that he was already an old man in 518 - approximately the same age as Justin - although he reigned for another thirteen years. Procopius is not strictly correct in declaring that Kaoses was due by law to succeed Kavadh (xi.3), being his eldest son; for as Christensen points out, that decision was in fact in the hands of the king. In early Sasanian times, he had been able to nominate anyone to succeed him, though it was usually one of his sons. But as the power of the monarchy waned, the nobility had come to exert more influence in the matter. Kavadh, reversing this trend, succeeded in restoring royal power to a sufficient extent to be able to enforce his will. The suspicion therefore arises that Procopius is using Kavadh's nomination of Khusro as a pretext for criticising Kavadh for his refusal to be bound by tradition (xi.3): Procopius' hatred for reform and innovation is well known, while Khusro was to prove even more revolutionary than his father.

Procopius refers to three sons of Kavadh - in order of age, Kaoses, Zames and Khusro (xi.3-5). Malalas, however, reports that Khusro was the second oldest, but is generally less reliable on internal Persian affairs: he also refers to two sons of Khusro, otherwise unattested, Perozes and Xerxes (p.441). Another son, the Phthasuarsas mentioned by Theophanes (A.M. 6016), is generally identified with Kaoses, the governor of Padhishkhvar (Tabaristan), south of the Caspian

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49 Christensen, p.263; on earlier Sasanian practice, p.353; q.v. ch.3 n.59 on Kavadh's age.

50 Note v.l on Kavadh making innovations to the Persian constitution, also I.xxiii.1 on the revolutionary character of Khusro; on Procopius' dislike for innovation, cf. Anecd. vi.21 on his criticism of Justinian's reforms and ch.1. n.53.
Sea; he has probably confused the region with the name of the prince.  

Now Procopius also states that the mother of Khusro was the sister of Aspebedes, the general who concluded the peace with Anastasius in 506 (ix.24). This Aspebedes later supported the younger Kavadh in his bid for the throne (xxiii.6), and hence may well have been the uncle of Zames as well as Khusro. A family tree may be proposed at this point, in order to demonstrate the various family connections more clearly (see the diagram above). While some scholars have considered Procopius' Aspabedes to be a mistaken rendering of the Persian title *spāhbadh*, it is preferable to see in him a member of the house of Aspābadh Pahlav, one of the major noble families of Persia. Considering furthermore the likelihood that he was uncle of Zames, and hence the great-uncle of the younger Kavadh, it would be surprising for Procopius to commit such a mistake here.

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Next Procopius comes to the request of Kavadh that Justin adopt Khusro (xi.6-30). He fails to provide an explanation for this development in Romano-Persian relations, other than noting Kavadh's anxiety over the succession. In fact Kavadh was still faced with considerable internal difficulties on account of the Mazdakite movement: his eldest son was an avowed Mazdakite, which led to his execution perhaps late in his father's reign,

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51 So Christensen, p.353, cf. *PLRE* II s.v. Phtharsuarsas; for the name, see Justi p.99; Nöldeke, *Tabari*, p.147 n.1, is sceptical concerning Perozes and Xerxes. But given that king Peroz had thirty sons (iv.2), it is by no means impossible that Perozes and Xerxes were sons of Kavadh, by a different wife; it is doubtful, however, that Mal.'s Perozes, fighting in the Caucasus in 528 (p.441), is to be connected with the Perozes (*PLRE* III, s.v. Perozes) of Proc. xiii.16, v.i. ch.6 n.27.

For Xerxes, cf. Justi, p.174, s.v. *Xlayārṣā* (8); Justi also identifies Mal.'s Perozes with Kaoses, cf. p.248, s.v. Peroč 21 and Usan 7, p.335, so also *PLRE* II, s.v. Caoses. But given Kaoses' link with the Mazdakites, and his execution around this time, such an identification is unconvincing; v.i. n.54 on Kaoses' death.

52 The suggestion of Nöldeke, *Tabari*, p.147 n.1.

53 Christensen, pp.102-104 on the noble houses of Persia, although at p.104 n.1 he considers Proc. here to be referring to the title *spāhbadh*. He mistakenly thought that Proc.'s Aspabedes could be identified with Bawi, the *astabad* in Joshua (§59), p.336 n.6, although Bawi died before the end of the war (§85), cf. M.-L. Chaumont, 'Un Astabad (*magister officiorum*) à la cour des Sassanides au IIIe siècle ?', *Museon* 81 (1968), p.234 and *EIr*, vol.2, s.v. 'Astabed', pp.825-826.

In the diagram, it should be noted that *PLRE* III, s.v. Bindoes and Bestam, disagrees with *PLRE* II, s.v. Aspebedes as to whether they were indeed his sons; in the latter volume it considers that the Aspebedes of Theophylact IV.iii.5 is not the same as his homonym here in Proc.
or (more probably) at the outset of Khusro’s, along with the entire Mazdakite hierarchy.54

The immediate background appears to be a rapid thaw in relations between the two powers, which had become extremely fraught in the wake of the defection of the Lazic king Tzath. Malalas and other chroniclers tell of the dealings of the two powers with a Hunnic king Zilgibis, who had contracted an alliance with both sides. Justin, alarmed by his support for the Persian cause, told Kavadh of his alliance with the Romans, which led the Persian king to destroy the Hunnic leader and his men. This in turn caused a rapprochement between the two sides: Malalas speaks of a certain Labrooeus despatched by the Persians to conduct negotiations with the Romans.55

Zachariah too mentions the matter of Khusro’s succession, but reports that it was the Roman ambassador Rufinus who suggested that Kavadh’s youngest son succeed him (IX.7); but while Khusro evidently held Rufinus in high esteem (cf. e.g. xi.24), it may be doubted whether he was actually responsible for Khusro’s accession. The view of PLRE II, however, that it was during the mission reported by Procopius in this chapter that Rufinus persuaded Kavadh to appoint Khusro to succeed him, is plainly absurd; for the purpose of this mission of Rufinus was to conduct negotiations regarding the request already made by Kavadh for Justin to adopt Khusro.56

Zachariah (VIII.5) also records talks between a Persian astabad and two Roman envoys, Hypatius and Pharesmanes. It is tempting to identify these negotiations with those reported by Procopius, but the evidence is not sufficient to do so with any confidence. Although neither Zachariah nor Procopius offer any date for the negotiations, they must have taken place between 521 (the earliest date possible for the defection of Tzath, alluded to by Seoses at xi.28) and 527 (the death of Justin). The

54 Stein II, p.268, cf. Christensen, p.354 on Kaoses probably being exposed to Mazdakism from an early age, p.359 for his death. Crone, ‘Kavâd’s heresy’, pp.30-32, puts the final suppression of the Mazdakites at the opening of Khusro’s reign, cp. Proc. xxi.20-21 on Kaoses seeking to overturn Kavadh’s will: evidently Proc. believes him to have survived his father’s death.

55 Mal. pp.413-415; CP, pp.615-616, naming the Persian emissary Broios; also Theophanes A.M. 6013. Modern discussion of these events: Stein II, p.268, Vasiliev. Justin I., pp.264-265. Rubin, ZI, p.259 (where he suggests that Labrooeus was involved in the negotiations concerning the adoption). Cf. also PLRE II for Labrooeus and Zilgibis.

56 PLRE II, s.v. Rufinus 13; also worthy of note is Zach. IX.6, where it is reported that the mother of Khusro (i.e. the sister of Aspebedes) was cured by the holy man Moses near Dara in 526.
only other chronological indicator available is the dismissal of Hypatius from office (xi.39): it is known from Malalas that he was reappointed *magister militum per Orientem* in 527 (p.423) and dismissed two years later (p.445). He had also held the post from 520 at least, but clearly must have been replaced at some stage before his re-appointment in 527.57

The chapter in which Zachariah narrates the negotiations deals with events into the early 530s, although the talks are placed between the flood at Edessa of April 525 and al-Mundhir's raid of 529; they also follow an account of some Roman raids on Arzanene and Nisibis. It seems likely then that Zachariah's notice refers to talks held very close to the end of Justin's reign, when relations between the two sides had become more tense, perhaps when Hypatius had been reappointed *magister militum per Orientem* by Justin and Justinian; Procopius, however, must be referring to Justin's reign. Moreover, the fact that Hypatius' fellow ambassador is different in the two sources must tell against an identification of the two missions; for both Procopius and Zachariah are well informed on these two men, and are unlikely to have failed to mention their participation in an embassy. The selective Procopius and the patchy Zachariah might well omit a series of failed negotiations altogether, however. Hence Procopius' negotiations should be placed in the mid-520s, while Zachariah's may tentatively be placed somewhat later, probably in 527.58

Whether or not the letter of Kavadh (xi.7-9) represents a genuine letter of the monarch it is impossible to say; Malalas and the chroniclers also provide the text of letters of Kavadh and his successor. It thus seems possible that some sort of archives were accessible, and it is interesting that Procopius does not offer the text of any reply of Justin to balance Kavadh's letter; the chroniclers, on the other hand, give a letter

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57 Q.v. n.4 for the date of 521; although Theophanes puts the proposal (A.M. 6013) before the defection of Tzath (A.M. 6015), he is probably grafting Proc. onto Mal. here. On Hypatius, *PLRE* II, s.v. Hypatius 6. *V.i*. n.65 on the office of *astabad*.

58 Vasiliev, *Justin I*, takes Zach. as referring to the same negotiations as Procopius, p.168 n.20. He dates the plan to 522, immediately after the Zilgibis episode; Pieler, 'L'aspect politique', p.400, prefers 522/4 for Proc.'s negotiations and Schippmann 522/3, p.51. Stein, however, puts the adoption attempt in 525 (cp. also *PLRE* II, s.v. Cavades, 525/6) but cautions against placing too much reliance on Zach.'s chronology (Stein II, p.269 and n.3). *PLRE* II, s.v. Hypatius 6, also separates the negotiations in the two sources.

Stein II, p.283, dates Zach.'s episode to 527, followed by *PLRE* II, s.v. Pharesmanes 3, cp. also Rubin, *ZI*, p.486 n.757 (527 or 531) and Stein in *RE* X (1919), col.1325, s.v. Iustinus 1 (527).
from each monarch regarding the defection of Tzath. In both Procopius and the chroniclers, Kavadh presents himself as the aggrieved party; one presumes that in this instance he is alluding to the events in Lazica, also mentioned at xi.28-29.19

The hastiness of the Emperor and his nephew to accede to the Persian king's request is contrasted strongly with the caution of the *quaestor sacripalatu*, Proculus. He delivers a forthright speech (xi.13-18) concerning the upholding of traditions, among which mistrust of the Persians looms large; given the favourable description of Proculus, some have considered that Procopius himself must have agreed with this imperial adviser. Support has also been found for Proculus' warnings: B. Rubin highlights the dangers of a Persian trying to take advantage of internal strife within the Roman empire. He regards it as too radical a policy for the Romans to concede equality in this way to the Persians, who were in a position of weakness in any case. According to his view, it was realised at Constantinople that Khusro would not prove pliable to Roman influence, although Proculus somewhat dismissively disclaims any knowledge as to who Khusro is (xi.17).60

Just as opinions vary over Procopius' account of the adoption of Theodosius II by Yadzgerd I, so in this case controversy prevails. The legal argument put forward by Proculus, despite his apparent legal expertise, is belied by the case of Yadzgerd and Theodosius, told by Procopius only a few chapters previously. Moreover the Emperor Maurice seems to have felt no barrier to the adoption of Khusro II, although in this case Khusro was able to profit from this to attack Roman territory upon the murder of Maurice.61 Kavadh appears only to have desired to ensure Khusro's succession in potentially adverse circumstances, just as Arcadius had feared for Theodosius. Yet the

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19 Mal. pp.413-414, CP pp.614-615, John of Nikiu 90.39-41 and the notes in CPW, p.106 n.330. Pieler, 'L'aspect politique', p.403, considers the letter not to be original, but to point to Proc.'s access to official sources, though cf. Lee, pp.37-38, arguing that correspondence evidently took place, and that the letters may well have been kept.

60 Rubin, ZI, pp.259-260, and p.485 n.745; Khusro was surely known in Constantinople, as Zach.'s account shows, IX.7. On Proculus cf. *Anthologia Palatina*, vol. 4, ed. H. Beckby, Munich 1958, XVI.48, noting his previous legal career and his role as Justin's spokesman, and John Lydus III.20, praising his justice, cf. PLRE II, s.v. Proculus 5 and Vasiliev, Justin I, pp.121-122.

Romans proved less generous than the Sasanians: only adoption by arms was proposed. Theophanes (A.M. 6013) for his part adds that Proculus spoke against the Persian proposal in the Senate, where it was rejected. It may then best be supposed that there was opposition to the proposal, doubtless on the grounds of distrust, for which the *quaestor* was the chief spokesman.  

Justin and Justinian accepted Proculus' advice, but the *quaestor* was not able to prevent the start of negotiations; the adoption, however, was to be of a type accorded to barbarians, such as Theodoric and Eutharic. Evidently this style of adoption was not immediately perceived as precluding negotiations. At any rate, although Kavadh was aware before the negotiations that the adoption would have to be 'by arms', the envoys of both sides met on the border, and Khusrro even stationed himself on the Tigris near Nisibis (xi.27). Clearly hopes were high for a successful outcome.

The Roman negotiators (xi.24) were both veterans of the Anastasian war, the one (Hypatius) an unsuccessful general yet nonetheless currently *magister militum per Orientem*, the other (Rufinus), a respected diplomat. While Rufinus was held in high esteem at the Persian court, the same is unlikely to have been true of Hypatius: Rubin notes how surprising his appointment is, considering his relationship to Anastasius, but points out that Justin and Justinian never broke with the previous Emperor's nephews. He even suggests that he may have been sent out as a scapegoat, in case the negotiations should go wrong.  

The Persian emissaries, Seoses (Siyavush) and the *magister* Mebodes (Māhbōdh), were no less distinguished than their Roman counterparts. Seoses was second in power to

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42 So Pieler, 'L'aspect politique', pp.426-432; also pp.422-423 on the unconvincing nature of Proculus' arguments; note also Hypatius' opposition to the proposal, xi.31. Theophanes' placing of Proculus' speech in the Senate is probably just an elaboration of Proc. (who does not state where Proculus spoke). Cf. Stein II, p.268 and Christensen, p.355 on the adoption and q.v. ch.2(b).

45 Dewing, p.91 n.1, considers that the adoption 'by arms' meant 'by force', but is surely mistaken. Stein II, p.269, gives the parallels of Theodoric and Eutharic, the latter being adopted by Justin himself. Jordanes, *Getica* LVII.289, describes Zeno's adoption of Theodoric thus: '[Zeno] in arma sibi eum filium adoptavit', which clearly refers to the same procedure as was now offered to Kavadh and Khusrro, cp. Cassiodorus' *Variae*, ed. Th. Mommsen, *MGH AA* XII, Berlin 1894, VIII.1.3 'factus est per arma filius' (Eutharic). See also Rubin, ZI, p.484 n.745, on the adoption.

44 Proc. states that Rufinus (xi.24) was known to Kavadh through the acquaintance of their fathers - i.e. Silvanus and Peroz (cp. xvi.1, and cf. *PLRE* II, s.v. Silvanus 7); cf. Lee, p.47, on the prominent role of Rufinus' family in negotiations with the Persians. For Rubin's suggestion concerning Hypatius, ZI, pp.260-261, accepted by Pieler, 'L'aspect politique', p.431.
Kavadh himself, while Mebodes evidently occupied another major position in the Persian court - perhaps the office of astābad or spāḥbadh, if the two are not to be identified. Mebodes was of the Suren family, another of the great Persian houses, but was eventually brought down in the reign of Khusrō by a similarly underhand way to that which he had used against Seoses (xxiii.25-29).

Seoses appears to have cherished as little desire for peace as Hypatius (xi.31): in the course of the negotiations he reiterated the Persian claims to Lazica (xi.28), which had been made by Kavadh himself in similar terms only slightly earlier, after the Lazic king Tzath had defected to the Roman cause. In response the Romans clarified that the adoption by arms was an expedient generally reserved for barbarians, which swiftly brought the negotiations to an end (xi.29), with Khusrō eager for revenge. It may be supposed that while Khusrō was aware that the negotiations were about adoption by arms, it had not been made explicit that this type of adoption was of an inferior variety. Moreover, the fact that Khusrō was disappointed by the failure of the negotiations (xi.30) strongly implies that he had hoped for the adoption to go ahead, whether or not by arms. Any sort of formal recognition would have sufficed to strengthen his position in the succession, just as Yadzgerd's 'adoption' of Theodosius II had ensured that Emperor's safety. The Romans in this case, however, emphasised that the adoption was for barbarians, and did not involve any obligations to the person adopted: no help had been granted to king Theodoric. Thus the adoption no longer had any point, and recriminations broke out among the negotiators (xi.31).

Procopius closes the chapter with a juxtaposition of similar Roman and Persian events, paying closer heed to the latter. Procopius is the only source to tell of Seoses'
condemnation: he attributes it to the machinations of Mebodes, who accused his rival of failing to respect Zoroastrian burial customs (xi.35). His account implies that Seoses was a supporter of the Mazdakite movement: this would explain the accusations of religious unorthodoxy, and it should be remembered that he had delivered Kavadh when he was imprisoned on account of his Mazdakism. Thus it has plausibly been suggested that Seoses’ continuing ties with the Mazdakites led Kavadh to dispense with his erstwhile ally now. For the power of the Mazdakites was waxing still, and was only brought to an end by the mass execution of its leading adherents. 68

Whether or not Seoses was indeed the last to occupy the post of artēštārān sālār, as Procopius claims (xi.38), is not certain, but since the post was abolished by Khusro, if he did have a successor, he cannot have long held the office. 69 Hypatius had to wait several more years to suffer a similar fate to Seoses, though in this case Justinian’s investigation found no evidence to substantiate Rufinus’ accusations (xi.39). Procopius, in asserting that Hypatius bore a grudge against Justin (xi.31) evidently believed they were accurate. Hypatius was replaced as magister militum per Orientem probably by Timostratus, but was back in his old office in 527, following Libelarius’ failed attack on Nisibis. 70

(c) xii.1-19

Procopius presents the war which soon broke out in Iberia as a direct consequence of the failure of the negotiations (xii.1), though it seems unlikely that Kavadh’s measures

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68 Christensen, pp.355-356 and n.2, p.356. E. Chavannes and P. Pelliot, J4 1.2 (1913), ‘Un traité manichéen retrouvé en Chine’ (part 2), pp.354-6 and 338 note the practice of burial by Manichaeans at any rate (though Crone, ‘Kavād’s heresy’, p.26, stresses that Mazdakism is not a type of Manichaeism). Rubin, PVK, col.366, is doubtless right to point to an oriental source for this detail on Seoses’ fall, which has parallels in the Iranian tradition in the fall of Sokhra at the hands of Shapur of Ray, cf. Christensen, p.336 on this.

69 Christensen, p.132, on the abolition of the office; he points out that since Procopius is wrong on no one having previously held the office, he may equally be mistaken about no one succeeding Seoses. But this ignores the fact that Procopius is better informed about this stage in Persian history than the fifth century; q.v. ch.3 n.119, on the office.

70 V.i, n.99 on Hypatius’ successor.
to enforce Zoroastrianism there only started once the adoption attempt fell through.\textsuperscript{71}

The Iberians had been Christians since the early fourth century, and like their Armenian neighbours, had frequently come to blows with their Sasanian overlords. The Persians appear to have gained control of Iberia late in the fourth century, when Roman forces are last found operating in the region: Valens had proposed a partition of the kingdom, an arrangement which failed to work.\textsuperscript{72}

Kavadh's method of subduing the Iberians was to insist on their adoption of Zoroastrian burial practices - to leave the dead outside, and not to bury them, so as not to contaminate any of the four sacred elements (xii.4). This was clearly offensive to Christian custom and could be used as a gauge for adherence to the Zoroastrian faith: thus Seoses' condemnation had been due in part to the fact that he had buried his wife (xi.35).\textsuperscript{73}

The Iberians appear to have been the focus of Kavadh's attentions largely as a result of his weak position: in order to distance himself from the Mazdakites he sought to prove his loyalty to Zoroastrianism through imposing it on them. They presented an obvious target, having proved notably refractory in preceding years: the Georgian histories tell of the stubborn resistance of a king Vakht'ang Gorgasal for much of the fifth century. He took part in the Armenian uprising of the early 480s, although his role is played down in the Armenian sources. Following his death in battle against the Persians in 491, his children were divided in their loyalties to Rome and Persia. The Persians, after Peroz's disaster in 484, seem to have accepted that the forcible conversion of Armenia was beyond their grasp, and Kavadh, following their revolt in 513/4, confirmed the religious tolerance previously granted to them; the Iberians, however,

\textsuperscript{71} So C. Toumanoff, review of Stein II, Traditio 7 (1949-51), pp.483-484, arguing against Procopius' apparent chronology here.

\textsuperscript{72} Ammianus XXVII.12.16-18 for the proposed partition and Roman troops in Iberia, and XXX.2.2 for Shapur trying to take over the whole kingdom; cf. C. Toumanoff, 'Caucasia and Byzantium', Traditio 27 (1971), p.120 and 'Iberia on the eve of Bagratid rule', Muséon 65 (1952), p.23.

\textsuperscript{73} On the Zoroastrian burial practices, cf. Herodotus I.140, where this practice is shrouded in secrecy; he too describes dogs and birds as devouring the corpse and Agathias II.xxiii.1-3 for another description. Menander, frg. 6.1.405-407 (the terms of the peace treaty of 561/2), notes that the Christians in Persia were to be allowed to bury their dead in graves, cf. Lee, p.103, arguing for a good Roman knowledge of Persian customs. Cf also on Zoroastrian burials, M. Boyce, A History of Zoroastrianism vol.1, Leiden-Kölín 1975, pp.109-129.
could be assailed more easily, especially following the installation of a *marzban* at Mtskheta around 520. The Roman regaining of Lazica in 521/2 must have persuaded Kavadh that it was necessary now to strengthen the Sasanian grip on Iberia and ensure continued control of that important bargaining chip, the Dariel Pass.74

It is remarkable how much ground Procopius covers in this section, and it is no easy task to establish the chronology of the events referred to. The first appears to be the defection of Gourgenes to the Roman cause (xii.5) as a result of Kavadh's Zoroastrian zealotry. In response to Gourgenes' appeal Justin first despatched Probus in order to recruit Huns to defend Iberia (xii.6). After this proved unsuccessful (xii.9), Justin sent

74 Toumanoff *CMH*, p.601, on Kavadh's resumption of Zoroastrianising after his restoration. On Vakht'ang Gorgasal, once erroneously identified with Procopius' Gourgenes (e.g. by Toumanoff, *Studies*, p.369), cf. Braund, (pp.603-608), who also notes the strength of Christianity in Iberia. On his role in the revolt in the 480s, cf. Toumanoff, *CMH*, pp.600-601 and Grousset, p.216.

On the installation of a *marzban* at Mtskheta, q.v. ch.2 n.27.
Peter and some Huns to Lazica to assist Gourgenes (xii.9). At this point Procopius indicates that Kavadh put a certain Boes in charge of a substantial force in Iberia, which succeeded in driving Gourgenes and the Romans out of the kingdom (xii.11). Across the border in Lazica the Romans and the exiled Iberian nobility made a stand, where the difficult terrain brought the Persian advance to a halt (xii.12).

The focus of operations then moved to Lazica, now threatened by the large Persian forces operating in neighbouring Iberia. Peter was recalled to Constantinople, where the Iberians had now arrived, and was ordered to defend Lazica at all costs; to accomplish this he was provided with an army and a fellow-commander, Irenaeus (xii.14). Procopius' interest in operations in Lazica seems unfortunately to fade at this point: he merely notes that the two forts at the border between Lazica and Iberia were occupied by the Roman troops, who soon withdrew on account of supply difficulties. Thus the Persians were able to take control of the forts with ease (xii.19).

Clearly all these events must have taken place over several years, and some may even have occurred in the reign of Justinian, although his accession is only reported by Procopius at xiii.1: he fails to name the \( \beta \alpha ρ \alpha \nu ζ \) who ordered the defence of Lazica by Peter and Irenaeus (xii.14), which could thus refer to Justinian. By a comparison of the operations recorded in Procopius and the notices of chroniclers, a clearer picture may be attained.

The chroniclers are almost unanimous in assigning a campaign in Lazica to the year 528: they describe how three \( \textit{magistri militum} \) were despatched to Lazica in this year in order to protect Tzath from the Persians. While they are also agreed as to the course of the campaign - initial defeat for the Romans owing to the divided command, followed by a victory once the supreme command is bestowed on Peter - they vary considerably in the names they give of the commanders involved. Thus the \textit{Chronicon Paschale} records the presence of Belisarius, Cerycus and Irenaeus, as does John of Nikiu. On the other hand, Malalas prefers Gilderic, Cerycus and Irenaeus, while Theophanes opts for Belisarius, Cerycus and Peter (perhaps trying to combine Malalas and Procopius).\(^{75}\)

\(^{75}\) CP p.618, John of Nikiu, 90.52-53, Malalas, p.427, Theophanes, A.M. 6020. On Irenaeus, cf. \textit{PLRE} II, s.v. Irenaeus 7; on Cerycus, Gilderic and Belisarius, \textit{PLRE} III, s.v. Belisarius 1 (rejecting his participation in the Lazic campaign), Cerycus (placing the campaign in 527/8) and Gilderic.

Worthy of note is the rather obscure episode of Boa(rex), which also took place in 528, and is reported widely in the chroniclers - cf. \textit{PLRE} III, s.v. Boa: a Sabir Hun, she vanquished an army of Huns allied to
Nor does this exhaust all the available evidence on the war in Lazica and Iberia at this time: the life of a certain Grigor, a Persian convert to Christianity, also sheds welcome light on these events. Grigor was originally called Pirangushnasp, according to the hagiography, and was a member of the noble Mihran house. Kavadh placed him in command of a large army in Albania and Iberia, where it seems he was converted around 520. Having been imprisoned for three years, he was restored to his previous command. When war broke out with the Romans in the area, he was captured in battle and taken to the Emperor. He was accorded high rank by him, but after some years returned to Persia, having become disillusioned with the heretical views of the Emperor.76

The general approach to these various accounts of the war in Lazica and Iberia has been to distinguish the events recorded in Procopius from the reports of the chroniclers.77 It seems more probable, however, that they should be integrated, even if this means supposing that Procopius is extending his account to cover events under Justinian: for it is standard practice for Procopius to give precedence to the interests of geography over chronology. For this reason a whole series of events in one particular area is narrated together, as in the case of southern Arabia (xix-xx). Thus although he tells of the defection of Iberia after Kavadh's attempt to have Justin adopt Khusro, it does not follow that the actual revolt began then: the establishment of the Persian marzban at Mtskheta around 520 testifies to Persian concern for the region before the negotiations over Khusro's adoption. The flight of Gourgenes, however, must postdate not only the accession of Justin but also the defection of Tzath, and hence can have taken place in 521 at the earliest.78 Just as Procopius fails to record the name of Tzath, let alone do more than allude to his defection, it is not difficult to believe that he has

the Sasanians (presumably in the Transcaucasus). Cf. Stein II, p.283, on the importance of these events.

76 Auszüge aus syrischen Erzählungen von persischen Märtyren, G. Hoffmann, pp.78-81; he is not to be found in PLRE II or III.

77 So Stein II, pp.271 and 283 and Kirchner, p.9; Braund regretfully does not deal with the events. Rubin, ZI, p.266, however, seems to combine them. On the chronological problems here, cf. CPW, p.109 n.337.

78 Q.v. n.4 on Tzath's defection. Even if the date of the adoption negotiations is obscure, Gourgenes could not have hoped for Roman help if Lazica had still been in Persian hands.
omitted the names of commanders other than Peter and Irenaeus as well as record of their engagements. In this case the following sequence of events may be proposed:

(1) Kavadh starts to impose Zoroastrianism on Iberia in the early 520s, perhaps following Tzath’s switch of allegiance in 521/2. When Grigor announces his conversion, he is imprisoned, then Gourgenes appeals to Justin. Given the number of events which take place between Gourgenes’ appeal and the campaign of 528, it is preferable to place it earlier rather than later: 524/5 should therefore be preferred to the more traditional dating of c.526. It is probable, moreover, that the appeal took place after the negotiations over the adoption of Khusro, given the evident importance attached by the Persians to control of Iberia: Kavadh is unlikely to have made such a proposal after Justin had agreed to assist Gourgenes.79

(2) Justin, while readily agreeing to support Gourgenes, declined to offer direct aid. Instead, Probus was despatched to recruit barbarian forces, which were to act as allies of the Iberians: this was a tactic which had been employed by the Iberians themselves during their uprising in the 480s, taking advantage of their control of the Dariel Pass.80

The allegiance of Justin to the Council of Chalcedon seems not to have deterred Gourgenes from his appeal, though the Emperor selected his emissary carefully (xi.6): Probus, like his uncle Anastasius, was an opponent of Chalcedon, and will thus have been more acceptable to the Caucasian Christians.81 Zachariah also mentions a visit of Probus to the Caucasus region, which is generally identified with the mission reported by Procopius; but there a few problems with this view. For the captives whom Probus meets claim to have been in the Caucasus region for 34 years: they had been taken

79 For the 526 dating, cf. Braund (p.602) and PLRE II, s.v. Gourgenes. Rubin, ZI, p.263, tends towards an earlier dating, in that he considers Peter to have been removed from his command in 526. Toumanoff, on the other hand, prefers to date Gourgenes’ appeal to 522, review of Stein II, Traditio 7, p.483 - but largely in order to fit in with his identification of Gourgenes with Vakht'ang Gorgasal.

80 Lazar, tr. Thomson, p.172 [118] on Vakht'ang promising to enlist the aid of the Huns against the Persians.

prisoner in the Anastasian war which had started in 502. Hence the earliest possible date for Probus' mission to the area, judging from this point of detail at any rate, is 536. The only other chronological indicator given by Zachariah is that the Christian missionaries from Arran (Albania) had been at work north of the Caucasus for some seven years by the time they met Probus. Procopius, moreover, only describes Probus as having visited the Crimea (xi.7), though he could have proceeded eastwards from there, seeking to recruit Huns.82

It is possible therefore that Probus undertook more than one mission to the Caucasus region, although it seems more likely that Zachariah's chronology is awry here, and that he and Procopius are referring to the same event. Moreover, both writers note the wealth brought by Probus: Zachariah describes his distribution of it among the Christianised peoples, while Procopius refers to Probus going ξυν χρημασι πολλοίς (xi.7), although he was still unable to recruit a Hunnic army (xi.9). It is not surprising that Justin preferred to recruit Huns to assist the Iberians: the deployment of Roman forces in the area was no easy task, as was discovered when it became necessary. The Huns, chiefly the Sabirs, were often used by both sides in their struggles in the region: the chroniclers describe several incidents in the struggles between Rome and Persia for the allegiance of various tribes in this period.83

But although Probus was not able to secure aid, his mission evidently laid the foundations for the baptism of the king of Bosporus only a few years later. Furthermore, if Probus visited not only the Crimean peninsula, but also the Caucasus region, he must have spent a considerable period away from the capital, probably in the

82 Zach. XII.7; it also emerges from this chapter that it was composed in 555 - so that ‘Our King’ in this passage should refer to Justinian, rather than Justin, thus pointing to a date after 527 for this mission of Probus. For the Georgian garbling of Probus’ mission under Justin, see Toumanoff's review of Stein II, Traditio 7, p.485, where he notes record of ineffectual Roman aid against the Persians, with Probus being called Palekarta, the son of the Emperor's sister (confusing Anastasius with Justin).

PLRE II, s.v. Probus 8, places his mission in c.526 and identifies it with the account in Zach. Whitby places Probus' mission in 527, CPW, p.107 n.337; Stein II, pp.270-1, puts it in 525/6.

83 Q.v. n.75 on Boa(rex) and her defeat of two fellow Huns aligned with Kavadh, as well as the Zilgibis episode, PLRE II, s.v. Zilgibis; the Sabirs fought on both sides when open war broke out, cf. Rubin, ZI, p.263. Proc. VIII.xi.24. At VIII.v.27 Proc. refers to Huns in the vicinity of Bosporus without specifying them; the Sabirs were situated well to the east of the Chersonese (VIII.iii.5), but Probus may well have proceeded along the coast of the Black Sea, seeking to win allies.
Procopius at this point interrupts his narrative of Caucasian affairs to tell of the recent restoration of imperial power in the Crimea (xii.7-8): no explanation is offered as to why the Bosporites determined at this point to place themselves under Roman authority, but it may plausibly linked to internal strife in the city. Shortly afterwards, in 528, the king of the Huns of the Bosporus area, Grod, was baptised in Constantinople; he was overthrown as a result and replaced by his brother, but restored by Roman arms. It may be supposed that Grod had need to bolster his control of his domain, and turned to the Romans for assistance. Once Grod had been re-installed under Justinian, the area remained firmly under Roman control, and Justinian even carried out building work at the city and nearby.

Procopius’ Cherson is the Sevastopol of today, while his Bosporus is the modern Kertch; he seems to be in error over the distance between the two cities, however: twenty days’ journey to get from one side of the Crimea to the other, a journey of approximately 250 km, is clearly an overestimate. It may be significant that Herodotus, in dealing with the Crimea, gives a figure of twenty days’ journey from the sea to the ‘Black Cloaks’ north of Scythia (IV.101); he also, in the same chapter, calculates a day’s journey at 200 stades, which is roughly equivalent to 23 miles (37 km). Hence seven days should have sufficed to travel between the two cities, assuming Herodotus’ estimate for a day’s journey is accepted. Since this book of Herodotus is later specifically cited by Procopius (VIII.vi.12, referring to IV.45), it seems most probable that he has taken

84 Cf. Engelhardt, *Mission und Politik*, pp.85-87 on the conversion of Grod, and the suggestion that Probus was sent at least partly to support this king.

85 Mal. pp.412-413 on Grod, cf. also John of Nikiu 90.66-69, Michael Syrus IX.21, and PLRE III, s.v. Grod), also Rubin, ZJ, p.267; on the Bosporus area, see Vasilev, *The Goths in the Crimea*, Cambridge Mass. 1936, pp.70-71 on the time of Justin and Justinian; also pp.40-41 on Roman and Gothic co-operation in the area (op. de Aed. III.vii.10-17). Worthy of note is Khuro’s accusation against Justinian (II.iii.40) of having taken over Bosporus by force. Justinian clearly attached importance to the area, judging from de Aed. III.vii.10-17, confirmed by inscriptions found on the Taman peninsula and at Doras (Vasilev, op. cit., p.71).
the figure straight from Herodotus.86

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(3) Both sides then took steps to secure control of Iberia (xii.9-13). Kavadh appointed the general Boes to direct operations (xii.10), while Justin again refused to commit Roman soldiers to the area, sending instead Peter with some Hunnic forces (xii.9). In this phase of the war, the Romans failed to prevent the Persians from taking over the whole kingdom, and many Iberian nobles were forced to flee to the Lazic frontier.87

This episode may be assigned to the period 526/7: time must be allowed for Probus to return to Constantinople, and for Peter then to reach Iberia and withdraw to the Lazic frontier.88

It is unclear whether Gourgenes himself reached the imperial capital; his son Peranius, however, enjoyed a lengthy career in the Roman army. Nor is it certain whether the Persians suppressed the monarchy of Iberia from this point: Procopius later states that it was, but his statement has been contested.89


Rubin, PtwK, col.367, draws attention to Proc.'s use of isyvqgoj at xii.9, considering it to indicate that he was drawing on earlier material (since in 550 the acquisition of Bosporus was hardly recent). While the chronology of the Roman take-over of Bosporus remains obscure - a bishop of Bosporus is attested at Constantinople in 518, cf. Honigmann's review of Vasiliev, Justin I in Byzantion 20 (1950), p.347 - Proc.'s use of the term isyvqgoj need not be significant (cp. xi.35, where he also uses it).

87 Braund is probably right in supposing that Proc. is exaggerating in stating that all the members of the Iberian aristocracy fled (p.661 n.52): there were usually supporters of the Sasanians among the nobility. Controversy still surrounds the identity of Boes: he should not be identified with the Bawi of Joshua (§59), who probably died before the end of the Anastasian war, q.v. n.53 above. His rank of varizes has been linked to the Greek KvbepvymjC and the Armenian Warić, cf. O. Blau, 'Altarabische Sprachstudien', ZDMG 27 (1873), p.313 and n.2, also Justi, p.340, s.v. Wahrīc no.3; Elr vol.4, p.318 s.v. Boes, places his mission to Iberia in 523, however.

88 Proc.'s tovse δε at xii.4 is of little help chronologically, since it is unclear how it relates to the evθwvς δε at xii.1.

89 Proc.'s Greek at xii.11 is ambiguous as to whether Peranius is one of Gourgenes' brothers or his sons: contra Toumanoff, Studies, p.372 n.62, the latter of these two options seems the most likely, cf. PLRE III, s.v. Peranius and stemma 24. Proc. will certainly have known Peranius, q.v. ch.1 n.9.

Proc. II.xxviii.20 and Stein II, p.294 on the suppression of the Iberian royal family; contra, Toumanoff's review of Stein II, Traditio 7, p.483.
(4) Finally, the Iberian refugees arrived at Constantinople (xii.14), and Peter was summoned back from Lazica. In light of Procopius' failure to specify the name of the Emperor and the ἐπιτραὶ δὲ at xii.14, it seems plausible to argue that the remaining events may be assigned to the reign of Justinian, rather than Justin.90 Again, time must be allowed for Peter to return to the capital, and for him to return, this time with more troops and commanders. Given the mention of Peter and Irenaeus in this campaign, it is very difficult to suppose this is anything other than the 528 war reported in the chroniclers: otherwise still more to-ing and fro-ing from the capital must be envisaged, with Peter travelling to Lazica three times!91

It is therefore possible to expand Procopius' narrative here from the chroniclers and the life of Grigor: at least two battles took place, in the first of which the Romans were defeated. Belisarius may confidently be exonerated from participation in this campaign, if the date of 528 is accepted, since by then he was dux Mesopotamiae. Following this initial defeat Peter was given overall command, and succeeded in ensuring that the majority of Lazica - apart from the two forts mentioned by Procopius - remained in Roman hands, probably through a victory over the Persians. This victory, not reported by Malalas, but to be found in the Chronicon Paschale (p.618) and Theophanes (A.M. 6020) is open to doubt; but some confirmation of it is gained by the fact that Grigor must have been beaten in battle at some point in order to be captured by Roman forces.92

90 The case of Peter himself furnishes evidence of confusion between Justin and Justinian at this point, cf. PLRE II, s.v. Petrus 27: it describes him as the secretary/notarius of Justin, cf. Proc. II.xv.8. But CP, p.618, and Theophanes, A.M. 6020, refer to him as the former notarius of the Emperor - who in 528 was Justinian. It is possible, of course, that he had served both men in this capacity.

91 That Peter was again sent to Lazica is not stated explicitly by Proc., but implied by the word ξυμφωλοσεῖν (xii.14).

92 Q.v. n.75 for the commanders named by the chroniclers. On the non-participation of Belisarius, cf. PLRE III, s.v. Belisarius 1 - though it places the engagement in Justin's reign - and K. Hofmann, Zur Kritik der byzantinischen Quellen für die Römerkriege Kobad's I, Schweinfurt 1877, pp.21-22 (placing it in 527). Whitby, CPW, p.109 n.337 on CP using Mal. here, not very attentively; hence its mention of Belisarius need not be taken too seriously. Kirchner, however, p.9, believes that Proc. is concealing Belisarius' participation in this campaign. On Grigor, Hofmann, Auszüge, p.80. The other commanders involved were probably Cerycus and Gilderich, cf. PLRE III, s.v. Cerycus and Gilderich.

Mal., p.427, omits any victory of Roman forces, and agrees with Proc. on the withdrawal from the area. Perhaps his Peroz (p.441), who led an invasion into Persarmenia and Lazica in 528, was operating in conjunction with Boes.
The Roman insistence on stationing troops at Sarapanis and Scanda (xii.15) - these are the two forts alluded to by Procopius, named at VIII.xiii.15-20 - did not prove popular with their newly acquired allies. Their failure to hold the forts against the Persians is by no means so unsurprising as Procopius implies, for his description of the infertility of the region (xii.16-18) is not confirmed by other sources: Agathias (III.v.1-3) specifically refers to Lazic prosperity. Wine was even produced in Lazica, and what the region imported was by way of luxury goods rather than necessities. The harshness of the terrain is also stressed by Procopius (xii.13, 17, cf. VIII.xiii.5), although Sarapanis, situated on the river Phasis, could easily be supplied. The suspicion arises that Procopius has been misled in some way, perhaps by official reports seeking to account for the loss of the two important fortresses. They were recovered by the Romans by the terms of the Eternal Peace in 532 (xxii.18), but were retaken during Khusro's invasion of Lazica in 541.93

(d) I.xii.20-24

Having dealt with the events of several years in Lazica, Procopius returns to the aftermath of the failed negotiations concerning the adoption of Khusro. No effort is made at either geographical or chronological precision with regard to these two raids by the young Roman commanders, though it is clear that they must at any rate have taken place before 1 April 527: Justinian is referred to only as οπαραθυος, who subsequently ruled with his uncle (xii.21). Given the severity of the Armenian winter, it is unlikely that these raids can have taken place in 527; the most likely date for them must then be 526. Persarmenia covers a wide area, situated on the northern part of Rome's frontier with Persia; Procopius puts it next to Iberia, and places the Persarmenians on the other side of the mountains from the Lazi. Hence it seems highly likely that these incursions

93 On Proc.'s errors over the Lazic economy, cf. the useful article of Braund, 'Procopius on the economy of Lazica', CQ 41 (1991), pp.221-225, noting how Herodotus, Agathias and Strabo agree over the fertility of the region: even Proc., at VIII.xiv.46, notes the prosperity of at least one part of Lazica. On the forts at Sarapanis and Scanda, cf. Braund (pp.612-613); also (p.604) on the continuing unrest in Iberia. On events after the 532 peace (pp.616-649).
were linked to the efforts of Peter to defend the Roman possessions in the Caucasus.94

Sittas and Belisarius receive a Homeric introduction, but are merely referred to as δορυφόροι of Justinian.95 But even if their raids were not conducted with large forces, it would be surprising if neither of the commanders held any official position. It may be suggested therefore that by this point Sittas had been appointed the first dux of Tzani, based at Horonon; for he not long previously completed the reduction of the Tzani. The Armenian commanders by whom they were defeated, Narses and Aratius (xii.22), defected to the Romans in 530.96

The other event briefly dealt with in this chapter is Libelarius' ineffectual attack on Nisibis (xii.23-24). It is not made clear whether it was simultaneous with the incursions of Sittas and Belisarius, but comparison with Zachariah's account suggests that this operation took place in summer 527. According to Zachariah, in the time of the dux stratelates Timostratus, the Romans launched an attack on Nisibis. When this proved unsuccessful, the army moved south against Thebetha, which it also failed to capture. Suffering in the summer heat, the remnants of the army withdrew with difficulty to Dara, with the loss of many infantry.97

If this version is to be reconciled with that of Procopius, the question of the commander involved must be confronted. Zachariah does mention a dux Libelarius elsewhere, in order to date events in 525/6 (in the time of the dux Libelarius, IX.6). He does not give the name of the commander of the attack on Nisibis, it should be noted, merely stating that it took place when Timostratus was dux stratelates. Consequently Procopius' attribution of the attack to Libelarius is not incompatible with Zachariah's

94 On the position of Persarmenia, cf. VIII.ii.20, where Proc. makes the territory extend to Iberia, and places it over the mountains from the Lazi cp. x.1 (mention of the Lazi and Iberians) and xv.20; de Aed. III.iii.3 puts Persarmenia to the north of Sophanene. Cf. also Adontz, Armenia, pp.168-179. On the conditions for campaigning in this area, cf. Whitby, Maurice, p.202; Hartmann in RE III (1899), col.210, (s.v. Belisarius) puts the raids in 526.

95 πρωτον ἄρηντα ἄρην (xii.21) echoes Homer, Iliad 24.348, Odyssey 10.279, in both cases referring to the guise of Hermes among mortals.

96 On the Tzani, v.i ch.6 n.60 on xv.20-25; for their reduction, cf. de Aed. III.vi.15-17, where it is noted that Horonon bounded the territory of the Tzani, the Roman Empire, and Persarmenia. It is likely that the position of dux was created immediately after the pacification of the tribe and the construction of the fort, cf. Howard-Johnston, 'Citharizon', p.220.

97 Zach. IX.1; the text has Timus (Hamilton and Brooks, p.222 n.2), which can surely only refer to Timostratus; Rubin, Zf, p.486 n.758 on Tebeth/Thebetha.
account.

These unsuccessful Roman attacks are now generally assigned to summer 527, though 526 has sometimes been advocated. The chronology put forward by Stein remains the most convincing: the campaign took place in summer 527 (some time after June), since Zachariah mentions the effect of the summer heat on the Roman forces. 98 As a result of this poor performance, Belisarius became the new dux Mesopotamiae: on this Zachariah and Procopius are in agreement. But while the latter states that he succeeded Libelarius, Zachariah maintains that his predecessor was Timostratus. It has usually been thought that Libelarius was the magister militum per Orientem, in which case Procopius has made an error in stating that he was replaced by Belisarius; for it is known that the magister militum per Orientem between 527 and 529 was Hypatius, appointed during the joint reign of Justin and Justinian. 99

The matter can easily be resolved, however. No ancient source ever states that Libelarius held the office of magister militum per Orientem, and hence Procopius may be believed when he reports that Belisarius succeeded him as commander of the troops in Dara, i.e. as dux Mesopotamiae. The question therefore arises as to who was magister militum per Orientem: and the most likely candidate is Timostratus. He had already served for a long period in the East, and Zachariah's references to him as dux stratēlatēs also favour such a solution. This title could refer to an honorary rank of magister utriusque militiae, but may equally be Zachariah's rendering of magister militum per Orientem. He may not have taken part in the dismal attacks on the Persian cities, but was certainly dead before September 527. He presumably died a month or two earlier in fact, since Hypatius' reappointment, made by both Justin and Justinian, must have

98 Stein II, p.272 n.2, for his chronology of 527, followed by PLRE II, s.v. Libelarius; he appears to have favoured dating the events to 526 initially, RE X (1919), s.v. Iustinus, col.1326, where he argued that Belisarius succeeded Libelarius as dux in 526. RE XIII (1927), col.14, s.v. Libelarius seems to put forward the date of 529/530 for the attack on Nisibis.

99 Hypatius' appointment, Mal, p.423 and PLRE II, s.v. Hypatius 6. For Libelarius as magister militum per Orientem see PLRE II, s.v. Libelarius, and Stein seems to accept him as such, p.272 n.2. Rubin, ZI p.486 n.757, rather implausibly considers that Libelarius could represent a title of Timostratus (at Zach. IX.6), through a confusion with the scriinium a libellis.
taken place before 1 August.\textsuperscript{100}

The conclusion is therefore that it is Zachariah who has committed the error, rather than Procopius, which is \textit{prima facie} the more appealing alternative: considering that Procopius became Belisarius’ adviser upon his appointment as \textit{dux Mesopotamiae} (xii.24), it would be remarkable indeed if he had made a mistake over whom his commander replaced in the function. Moreover, Zachariah’s error is quite comprehensible: given how uneventful Hypatius’ tenure of the post of \textit{magister militum per Orientem} had been between 527 and 529, it may well have seemed to him that the more active Belisarius had held the post from 527 (if he was aware of these finer distinctions in titulature in any case).\textsuperscript{101}

\textsuperscript{100} Zach. IX.2 on his death and succession by Belisarius (who was \textit{dux} in year 5, which started in September 527 - hence Timostratus must have died by then). \textit{PLRE} II, s.v. Timostratus, is adamant that he was not \textit{magister militum per Orientem}, but fails to offer any justification; it is also in error that he took part in the attacks on the cities. Cf. also Shahid, \textit{BASIC} I, Appendix III: ‘Zacharia of Mytilene on Timostratus and Jabala’.

\textsuperscript{101} Mal., p.429, says that Hypatius was appointed to deal with the Arab incursions in any case, and so may have been based in Syria. \textit{PLRE} II (s.v. Timostratus) suggests Timostratus may have been an honorary \textit{magister ubriacum militiae}, while Stein II, p.272 n.2 thinks he may have been made a \textit{magister militum vacans}. 
Hitherto the conflict between the two powers had been on a relatively minor scale: a few campaigns in the northern theatre, and some raids in Mesopotamia. But from the time of Justinian's accession as sole Emperor (1 August 527) greater Roman activity on the eastern frontier becomes evident. At just this time, moreover, Belisarius took over as dux Mesopotamiae and Procopius became his assessor (xii.24). Hence there is also a certain change in Procopius' work here: the account becomes more detailed and vivid, though it loses none of its selectivity. Initially, while Belisarius remained dux of Mesopotamia, Procopius recounts only one episode - the attempt to build a fort at Minduos (xiii.2-8) - after which, at an unspecified time (xiii.9; in fact 529), Belisarius is promoted to the chief eastern command. No word on the raids of al-Mundhir in 529, nor on the death of al-Harith the Kindite in 528 and the Roman response to it. By contrast, however, once Belisarius takes charge of the east, two chapters (xiii-xiv) are devoted to his victory at Dara, and one to that of Sittas at Satala in the same year (xv). A detailed account is offered too of the negotiations after the battle of Dara (xvi), and then of the Callinicum campaign of 531 and the role of the Arabs in it (xvii-xviii). Finally, after a digression on southern Arabia (xix-xx), Procopius recounts the remaining events of 531 (xxi), which culminate in the conclusion of the 'Eternal Peace' in the following year.1

Before Procopius' account is examined in detail, two points should be made about the criticisms raised against his omissions here. First, as has been argued above, Procopius is not concerned with the internal history of the empire (such as the Samaritan revolt at this time) or with whirlwind raids by Arab chieftains: his brief is to record the epa eirpμευεθη of his times, into which category neither of these events falls. Second, there appears to be a widening of his horizons from 529, perhaps due to the greater scope of Belisarius' command: events in Armenia are recounted in some detail, as well as the Persian invasion through Euphratesia in 531.2

1 Bury, HLRE II, p.420 n.2, suggested that xii-xxii represent an early attempt at history-writing by Proc.

In the case of the Callinicum campaign in particular, Procopius' account has been compared unfavourably to that of Malalas. While there has already been some discussion of the chronicler, it is useful to bear in mind the suggestion of one of Procopius' chief detractors, Roger Scott, that Malalas was acquainted with both Rufinus and Hermogenes. Hence even if his account is based on official reports, a certain partiality towards these two men might be expected; and in the case of Hermogenes especially, it is quite evident.³

(a) I.xiii.1-8

Before discussing the principal topic of this chapter - Belisarius' attempt to construct a fort at Minduos - the remaining events which can be assigned to 527 must be considered; for the battle described by Procopius between the builders of the fort and the Persians probably took place in the following year.

It appears that Belisarius' efforts at Minduos were not the first Roman attempt at erecting fortifications close to the Persian border. Zachariah reports two similar ventures in 527, one of which has often been identified with Procopius' description of Belisarius at Minduos. The first of these operations took place at Thannuris: Justin heard that it would make a good base against Saracen raids, and Thomas of Aphphadna was sent out to begin construction works there. The work was soon destroyed, however, by marauding Saracens and Kadisenes from Singara and Thebetha.⁴ The second of these attempts took place at Melabasa on the Tigris, some distance north of Dara on the other side of the Tur Abdin. Zachariah clearly dates this episode after that at Thannuris, yet still during year 5, which therefore implies late summer 527 (before

³ Q.v. ch.1 nn.15-16 on Mal.; Scott, 'Diplomacy in the sixth century', p.165 for his suggestion.

⁴ Zach. IX.2; Zach.'s text actually has 'during the lifetime of Justinian the king', but Brooks (surely rightly) considers that Justin must be meant.

On the utility of a fort at Thannuris, dearly eventually built by Justinian, cf. Proc. de Aed., II.vi.14-16, where it is also stated that it was designed to ward off Saracen intruders; q.v. ch.4 n.131 for the possibility that Anastasius also carried out work at Thannuris. PLRE II s.v. Thomas 11, wrongly states that Thomas was sent to build a city at Apadna. On Thannuris, cf. also figs. 68 and 69 and pp.118-121 in D. Kennedy and D. Riley, Rome's Desert Frontier from the Air, London 1990 (henceforth Kennedy and Riley).
September). Because Zachariah's text appears to refer to a place called Biddon, it has been suggested that it was this enterprise that was led by Belisarius. There are, however, overwhelming objections to such a view.

First, an emendation to Zachariah's text was proposed by Nöldeke, which removes the reference to Bidden and replaces it with the Syriac for 'wherefore'; thus the reference to Biddon itself is far from secure.\(^5\) Second, Zachariah does not in fact state that Belisarius commanded the operation; he merely dates the episode to the time when Belisarius was dux. Indeed it seems highly improbable that the dux of Mesopotamia would be involved in constructing a fort so far from Dara, which could be built by a force operating from Amida or Martyropolis more easily. For it is generally agreed, even by those who equate Zachariah's Biddon with Procopius' Minduos, that Melabasa is situated downstream from Amida on the Tigris, on the border with Arzanene. Although Procopius states that Minduos is on the left as Nisibis is approached, Melabasa is hardly near enough to this area for such a description to be appropriate. Thus it seems more likely to suppose that the venture at Melabasa was conducted by Roman forces from elsewhere than Dara; and it was in any case frustrated by the intervention of Gadar the Kadisene.\(^6\)

Procopius unhelpfully provides no date for the attempt to construct yet another fort on the frontier with Persia which he reports (xiii.2-8); clearly it must be placed after 1 August 527 and before Belisarius' promotion to magister militum per Orientem in 529. Furthermore, the location of Minduos, and even the name of the place itself, has been the subject of considerable controversy. The matter remains incapable of a definitive

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\(^6\) Rubin, ZI, p.487 n.777, favours the identification of Minduos and Melabasa, following Hoffmann's note in Krüger and Ahrens, about p.172.21. Dillemann has a discussion of the matter as well as a useful map, pp.316-318, and argues against Hoffmann's identification of the two places; Honigmann, Ostgrenze, pp.17-18, places Biddon on the left bank of the Tigris by Mt. Melabas. Whitby, History, map 4, places the Melabas hills to the southeast of the Tur Abdin; but the intervention of Gadar, who is later found in the Martyropolis area, surely favours the traditional location of Melabasa (Zach. IX.5 on Gadar); cf. Dillemann, p.34, arguing (against Honigmann, loc. cit.) that the Melabasa moutains extended over both sides of the Tigris. PLRE III, s.v. Belisarius 1, however, identifies Bidhwin (as it calls Biddon) with Minduos.
solution, but some points should be borne in mind.\footnote{On these fort-building campaigns generally, cf. Whitby, \textit{Maurice}, p.213.}

First, Minduos is the designation of the place in our text of Procopius, and not Mindon, which is nonetheless often found in recent works: all modern editions are in agreement over this, and there is no textual variant to support the name Mindon.\footnote{Cf. the texts of Veh, Haury and Dewing \textit{ad loc}. The Bonn edition does indeed have Mindon, which led to Dillemann preferring that reading (p.316 n.2). Whitby, \textit{Maurice}, p.210, 'Dara' p.758 and \textit{passim} also refers to the place as Mindon.} Second, there is the matter of the dating of the event, which is bound up with where Minduos is situated. Two other sources appear to preserve details of the battle described by Procopius (xiii.5-8): Malalas (pp.441-442) and Zachariah (IX.2). An analysis of the commanders involved in the battle, as well as its outcome, strongly suggests that they are all concerned with the same events. Procopius mentions only Coutzes and Bouzes in addition to Belisarius, and notes the capture of Coutzes. Zachariah has more details, naming Belisarius, Coutzes, Basil, Vincent and the Saracen chief Atafar; he recounts how the Persians used trenches against the Romans, and how some Roman generals were captured, while Coutzes and Atafar were killed. Most of the infantry perished, though Belisarius and the cavalry escaped to Dara. Malalas describes an invasion of Mesopotamia by Xerxes, whom he regards as a son of Kavadh, with 30,000 men; this took place around the time his elder brother Peroz was attacking Lazica and Persarmenia. Against the 'Meran' and Xerxes there set out the former \textit{dux} of Damascus Coutzes, as well as Sebastian and some Isaurians, Proclianus \textit{dux} of Phoenicia, the \textit{comes} Basil, Belisarius and the phylarch Tapharas, clearly to be identified with Zachariah's Atafar. In the battle both Tapharas and Proclianus are slain, while Sebastian and Basil are captured; Coutzes is captured after being wounded, while Belisarius succeeds in escaping. The Persians are also said to have suffered heavy losses, and soon returned to their own territory.

It can be concluded safely therefore that all three sources are dealing with the same battle. It now becomes possible to use the more precise information offered by Zachariah and Malalas to place the episode described by Procopius geographically and chronologically. Malalas' only geographical reference is to Mesopotamia, but he does conveniently date the episode to 528, when the struggle for supremacy in the Caucasus
was raging; it is also clear from the position of the entry that 528 must be the correct date. Zachariah, on the other hand, provides no chronological clues, but firmly places the episode at Thannuris. It appears from his account that the Romans persisted in their attempts to build a fort there, despite having been driven off by the local tribes in the preceding year. But while the dating of the incident to 528 conflicts with none of the sources and may be accepted without hesitation, its location is more problematic. Three possible locations may be distinguished. Underlying the whole discussion is the assumption that Zachariah and Procopius are both referring to the same event; given the similarity between their two accounts of the battle which took place during the

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1 The eastern frontier around Nisibis (after Dillemann, Honigmann and Kennedy and Riley)

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9 Cf. G. Sotiriadis, 'Zur Kritik des Johannes von Antiochia', *Jahrbücher für Classische Philologie* supp.XVI (1888) (henceforth Sotiriadis), p.115 on the date, spring or summer 528, accepted by Bury, *HLRE* II, p.81. Also Shahid, *BASCI* I, III, who places the attempt in summer 528; he also correlates the three sources and considers that Atafar/Tapharas is to be identified with Jabala, father of al-Harith the Ghassanid.
construction work, this does not seem an unreasonable supposition, however. First, the orthodoxy. Minduos is usually placed to the northeast of Dara, representing a Roman attempt at encircling Nisibis; hence the determination of the Persians to frustrate the Roman plans. Dillemann has suggested that the name Minduos is linked to the river Mygdon, and therefore located the projected fort between the forts at Sina and Banasymeon, described in the *de Aedificiis*. In favour of this view is Procopius' phrase ἐν αἰροτείρῃ ἐγς Νήσιβι ἴοντι (xiii.2), but against this is Zachariah's clear placing of the battle at Thannuris (IX.2).10

Second, Procopius' reference to Nisibis could be re-appraised: it might be suggested that it need not refer to the route from Dara to Nisibis. For if Nisibis were approached from the south, from around the area of Thannuris, then the two authors' accounts could perhaps be reconciled, and Minduos situated at the point where the Mygdon (thus accepting Dillemann's link of Minduos and Mygdon) bends to the west near Tell Brak, having flowed south from Nisibis until this point. One point in favour of this hypothesis is the provenance of the Roman commanders who took part in the battle: Coutzes and Bouzes came from the Lebanon area, whereas if Minduos were to the north of Dara, one might expect reinforcements to come from the region of Amida and Martyropolis. This is, however, a very tentative proposal, for the most natural reading of Procopius would consider the route to Nisibis as originating in Dara.11

Third, the possibility that Procopius is referring to Sargathon cannot be rejected: this is described by Dillemann as a Persian fortification in the Byzantine style. It is certainly situated on the route from Dara to Nisibis, slightly to the north; and it is at least closer to Thannuris than the first option noted above. On the other hand, given that Belisarius did not succeed in constructing anything at Minduos, the remains found there need not

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10 See fig. XL in Dillemann, p.317; *de Aed. II* iv.14 for Sina and Banasymeon. Whitby, Maurice, map 12, p.255, appears to place 'Mindon' much further to the northeast of Nisibis than Dillemann; in 'Dara', p.758, he places 'Mindon' in the Tur Abdin.

11 Dillemann, fig. XXXI, p.227, on archaeological finds at this point, which he identifies with Sihannus, found on itineraries, and cp. the two forts in this area discussed by Kennedy and Riley - Tell Brak (pp.187-189, believed by Poidebard to be of Justinianic date, p.188) and Tell Zenbilet (p.155). *PLRE* III, s.v. Bouzes, places the battle by Thannuris, rather than Minduos. Shahid, *BASIC* I, III, also places the battle near Thannuris.

The suggestion that Zach. is referring to the Thannuris area at this point, rather than Thannuris itself, is also probably stretching the text somewhat.
tell in favour of the identification. The location of Minduos remains a puzzle therefore. Of the three proposals discussed, the third is perhaps the most satisfactory, since it comes closest to reconciling the apparently irreconcilable locations described by Zachariah and Procopius.

A few details of Procopius' account are worth noting. Among them is the youth of all the commanders mentioned by him (xiii.5): he has already underlined the tender years of Belisarius and Sittas at xii.21, and here too he remarks on the youth and impetuosity of Coutzes and Bouzes. It is clear that a new generation of commanders was being brought to the fore by Justinian, in contrast to the generals in Anastasius' and Justin's day. The leaders of the Roman army in the first war of the century had for the most part been somewhat older than in this conflict: Zachariah (VII.4) notes the advanced age of Patricius. Veterans of the war, such as Hypatius, Pharesmanes and Timostratus had continued to serve in the East in the intervening years, and only in 529 with the removal of Hypatius were the links with the previous generation of commanders broken. In this battle the inexperience of the commanders led to defeat, but Belisarius at any rate learnt his lesson; if Zachariah's reference to trenches is accurate, it may have been here that he picked up the idea which he used to good effect two years later.

Malalas' figure of 30,000 men for the Persians (p.441) is of course suspect: he inflates the Persian army at Dara to 70,000 men, when Procopius puts it at only 50,000. Evidently, however, this was a smaller-scale engagement than the following battle between the two sides, even if no figures can be offered. The differences in the sources over the fate of Coutzes are hardly irreconcilable: Zachariah's statement that he died may well reflect his ultimate fate, since Procopius states that the Roman prisoners were incarcerated indefinitely (xiii.8). Malalas is the most detailed of the three, adding that

12 F. de' Maffei, 'Fortificazioni di Giustiniano sul limes orientale: monumenti e fonti', The Seventeenth International Byzantine Congress - Major Papers, New York 1986, pp.237-241, for the argument that Minduos be identified with Sargathon, cf. Dillemann, p.228, for his description. The same argument - that the location of remains need be no pointer to the site of Minduos - applies equally to the two forts discussed by Kennedy and Riley, q.v. n.11.

13 Cf. also Oθροπικου επιτηδευμα, p.368 on the age of the commanders in Anastasius' day, cf. Greatrex, 'Flavius Hypatius'.

14 On the trenches of the Persians, cp. Maurice, Strategikon XI.1, where the Persian practice of surrounding their position with a trench and stakes is described; Shahid, 'First Persian War', III, for the suggestion of the influence this had on Belisarius (though the tactic was hardly novel).
Coutzes was wounded before being captured (p.442). The permanent imprisonment of captives was an unusual procedure; it may be wondered whether the Roman prisoners were not in fact exchanged when the Eternal Peace was concluded. Zachariah preserves the details of one exchange of leaders at any rate; but Coutzes' wound presumably proved fatal in captivity.15

(b) The battle of Dara (xiii.9-xiv.54)

Although he fails to provide any information on the general background to the battle, Procopius now provides a lengthy description of the events which immediately preceded the battle of Dara. First, however, he recounts the promotion of Belisarius to the post of magister militum per Orientem (xiii.9) which in fact took place in April 529; he relieved the ineffectual Hypatius from his final tenure of the office. His predecessor, appointed to take in hand the Arab raids on the empire, had enjoyed no success whatever in this field, and it may well have been al-Mundhir's successful incursion in early 529 which brought about his dismissal. Belisarius' career had so far been checkered: while he had been defeated in the previous year, he had set about constructing the fort at Minduos with alacrity (xiii.3), and had been effective in his raiding of Persarmenia.16

Hermogenes, the magister officiorum, was sent by Justinian to join Belisarius in his command (xiii.10); his role recalls that of another magister officiorum, Celer, in the Anastasian War. Celer, however, appears to have had greater powers than Hermogenes, and commanded forces himself. The magistri officiorum were by no means unsuited to duties on the frontier: they had charge of the arms factories of the empire, as well as the duty of inspecting the limitanei annually. One of Hermogenes' principal tasks was to keep the Emperor informed on the conduct of the war, as well as to ensure unity among

15 Zach. IX.5 for the exchange of Domitiziolus (Bouzes' nephew, and presumably Coutzes' too) for the Persian commander Yadzgerd. Cf. PLRE III, s.v. Cutzes.

16 Mal., p.429, for the appointment of Hypatius, p.445, for his removal; Theoph. A.M. 6021 provides the date of April for his dismissal. It may be wondered whether Justinian's order to proceed against the Persians also dates to 529, cf. Mal. p.445, since in 530 peace negotiations were underway (xiii.11); but it is more likely to refer to 530, though not necessarily to a specific order to undertake an offensive against Persian territory. Mal. has Belisarius put in charge of the troops elc την κατα Περσικην μαχην, p.445. Proc.'s lack of concern for the year which intervened between Belisarius' appointment and the battle of Dara is disconcerting.
the Roman commanders: this latter task was as necessary in this war as it had been in Anastasius' time.17

To what extent Hermogenes had any say in strategic matters is unclear: Procopius describes him as helping to 'set the army in order' - ξυνδιακοσμήσων - but he is never depicted as making any military decisions save with Belisarius. His forbidding of Andreas to engage in single combat a second time (xiii.35) points to a concern for the army's morale, which might be expected of the Emperor's representative. In summer 529 he had negotiated with Kavadh at the Persian court, but without success. In spring 530 he and Rufinus were again despatched to the East, but Kavadh, apparently regarding Belisarius' mustering of an army at Dara as a demonstration of hostile intent, responded with force. Procopius' account is at odds with the versions of Malalas and Theophanes over the two imperial envoys: he states that Rufinus was ordered to await Justinian's instructions at Hierapolis (xiii.11), while the chroniclers place both the ambassadors at Dara with Belisarius. In general Procopius' accounts of negotiations on the frontier are more detailed, and hence his version is here to be preferred; it is possible, however, that the chroniclers are correct in stating that both envoys went to Dara. Once Belisarius had assembled his forces there, Rufinus may have been ordered back to Hierapolis, in order that his role as a negotiator might not be jeopardised. For while he was able to conduct talks with Kavadh after the battle, he was accompanied by the comes Alexander rather than Hermogenes: it may be supposed that Hermogenes' role in the confrontation barred him for the moment from being a suitable emissary.18

Procopius provides no explanation for the sudden arrival of the Persian army outside the city (xiii.12-16), despite the detail he lavishes on the proceedings once the forces were drawn up. The chroniclers shed some light on the matter: they state that when

17 It is interesting that Hermogenes is not referred to once by Zach., who is aware of Celer's role. On the functions of the magister officiorum, cf. LRE pp.368-369 and q.v. ch.3 n.41. Hermogenes had difficulty reconciling Belisarius and Sunicas in 531, Mal. p.462. Rubin, PK col.368, thinks the reference to Hermogenes and Vitalian is 'eine sicher pikante Bemerkung', though fails to explain why; Procopius makes little mention of Vitalian's revolt in any case. On Hermogenes' career, cf. PLRE III, s.v. Hermogenes 1.

18 Mal. pp.447-448, Theoph. A.M. 6021 for Hermogenes' 529 mission; Mal. p.452, Theoph. A.M. 6022 for the 530 mission of him and Rufinus, cf. PLRE II, s.v. Rufinus 13 and PLRE III, s.v. Hermogenes 1 and Scott, 'Diplomacy in the sixth century' for an account of the negotiations generally. Theophanes places their despatch in March 530, which would allow time for them to reach Dara, and then for Rufinus to return west when Belisarius assembled his men. Proc.'s detail on embassies, Lxxii, a much fuller account than Mal. Alexander and Rufinus to Kavadh after the battle, Mal. p.453.
Kavadh heard that Belisarius had encamped with a substantial force outside Dara, his reaction was to send out an army against the Romans. No doubt he inferred that a Roman attack was imminent, not unreasonably given the attacks on Nisibis and Thebetha only three years previously. He therefore determined to preempt the blow, and engage the Romans on their territory. It is possible that Justinian indeed intended Belisarius to make an attack on Nisibis or some other Persian fort, and Procopius' words at xiii.9 - that Justinian ordered Belisarius to march against the Persians - favour such a theory. But the despatch of high-ranking ambassadors, and Procopius' statement concerning the peace negotiations in progress, imply rather that no offensive was planned (xiii.11, cf. xiv.3); it would in any case be an odd point at which to launch such a major offensive, since the Samaritan revolt had still not been put down.19

It remains to explain why Belisarius prepared for battle outside the city (xiii.13-14), and why such a large army was gathered there in the first place if peace talks were in progress. A motive is not hard to find: the strengthening of the city's fortifications. The Romans had met with no success in their efforts to erect new forts, and so turned to ensuring that those already in existence were equipped to meet the Persian threat; because Dara was such a vital strongpoint, Belisarius commanded a large force to ward off any attempts by the enemy to disrupt the work. This would also explain why he based himself outside the city, and chose not to accept a siege despite the uncertain quality of his troops; he will also have been unable to undertake a campaign elsewhere, which would leave the city exposed. The dating of Justinian's work on Dara to the period between the defeat at Thannuris and 532 has been suggested by Whitby, on the very reasonable grounds that it could not have been carried out after the Eternal Peace without provoking the Persians to war.20

Rufinus is placed by Procopius at Hierapolis at this point (xiii.11); he was almost invariably included in any embassy sent to the Persian court from the time of the Anastasian war, and enjoyed excellent relations with Kavadh and the Persian nobility. Hierapolis, to the west of the Euphrates, was clearly some distance from Dara, but

19 Since it seems that the Samaritans persuaded Kavadh to break off negotiations after the battle of Dara, it is clear that the region was still not finally pacified, q.v. ch.5 n.29.

20 Whitby, 'Dara', pp.758-759, where he notes Belisarius' decision to fight a pitched battle rather than accept siege (nn.34, 35); de Aed. II.i.13 on the city's importance.
allowed closer contact with the Emperor via Antioch; Procopius’ description of the city as πρὸς τῷ Εὐφράτῃ ποταμῷ (xiii.11) is slightly inaccurate, since πρὸς would usually imply immediately adjacent to, while the Euphrates is actually situated 24 km away from the city.²¹

²¹ Q.v. ch.5 n.64 on Rufinus. Celer had made Hierapolis his initial base during the Anastasian war; in recounting this, Joshua also describes the city as lying on the Euphrates, §65. F. Millar, The Roman Near East 31 B.C. - A.D. 337, Cambridge Mass. 1993, p.243, for the distance to the Euphrates.

2 The southern section of Dara (after Whitby, ‘Dara’, p.740)

Although one of the Persian objectives in marching on Dara doubtless was the capture of the city (xiii.12), especially if it were more vulnerable owing to repair work, it seems more likely that the elimination of a Roman army poised on the frontier was the main brief of the Persian commanders. Their invasion of Roman territory took place in July, according to Theophanes (A.M. 6021). Evidently Belisarius anticipated that they would come from the south, where the gate opposite Nisibis (xiii.13) was probably situated; it may plausibly be identified with the gate facing Ammodius referred to in the de Aedificiis...
(II.i.26), which would place it on the south side of the city, rather than the southeast. Two points favour such a view. First, Procopius himself tells us (xiii.15, confirmed by Zach. IX.3) that the Persians approached the city by way of Ammodius, directly to the south of Dara. Second, Procopius mentions the existence of ditches to the south of the city, also in the de Aedificiis, where the soil is suitable for their construction. It may be that the moats referred to there were taken over by Belisarius for his own ends, or that they were fashioned from the trenches used in the battle. Whitby places this gate between the easternmost of four towers in the southern section of the wall and the water gate.22

Belisarius’ trench-system is interesting in that its aim was not so much to catch over-impetuous enemy cavalry unawares, like that of the Hephthalites. Rather, its objective seems to have been to keep the enemy cavalry at bay from the Roman infantry; for by the sixth century the Roman infantry troops were considerably inferior to the cavalry. Thus during the Gothic war, Procopius reports two infantry commanders begging that they and their men be allowed to take part in the fighting; and although Belisarius accorded them their request, they were nonetheless stationed in the rear, and the bulk of the combat left to the cavalry. This use of trenches as a means of protecting the infantry from cavalry charges may be linked to the suggestion of Urbicius, who advocated the planting of sharp stakes in the ground to break the charges of enemy cavalry.23

The Persians approached Dara along the main highway running west from Nisibis, which continues almost due west in the direction of Constantia. They encamped at Ammodius before turning off northwards to Dara, which lay only 7.7 km away; Procopius puts the distance at 20 stades. This figure is in line with Procopius’ placing of Dara 28

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22 See the plan of Dara in ‘Dara’, p.740, fig.41.2, and his placing of the gate on p.742; also fig.2 above. Proc., de Aed. II.i.23-27, for the ditches south of the city. Whitby notes evidence for further fortifications in this area, ‘Dara’, p.742.

stades from the frontier (x.14), though it still makes his stade twice as large as Pliny's.24

Procopius' information on the Persian leaders (xiii.16) is rather muddled: Pityaxes is almost certainly his rendering of a Persian title Petiaxes, the Armenian bdeaskh. Who held this office, and over what area he had control, is unknown; it is possible that he was the bdeaskh of Arzanene, who is named by Zachariah (IX.6) as Hormizd.25 Baresmanas is unknown save for this mention; it could be a rendering of the Persian marzban.26 Procopius is in error again, however, over the 'Mihran' Peroz in that 'Mihran' does not refer to Peroz's office, but rather his family. Such a mistake is understandable, since it appears that the supreme command of the army was in the hands of the Mihran family by tradition; consequently Roman historians often came across the name, and not unnaturally regarded it as a title.27 Malalas is in agreement with Procopius over the presence of Peroz Mihran at the battle (henceforth Peroz), but also states that a son of Kavadh was present. He is probably referring to Xerxes, who had taken part in the battle against Belisarius in 528 (Mal. p.441), though he is the only source to refer to a son of Kavadh by this name.28

The overconfidence of the Persians is a constant theme in these two chapters, brought

24 For the road, cf. Dilleman 'route 1', pp.155-162, fig. XII (the Peutinger table), p.134/5, and figs. XVIII (p.149) and XX (p.156) for a modern map of the road. Cf. also Theophylact V.iv.4, where the distance between Ammodius and Dara is given as 14 (no unit); Whitby, in his note (History, p.136 n.17), suggests that Theophylact, or his source, originally had 40 stades (which Whitby reckons to be the equivalent distance in stades between the two places). Clearly Procopius' stade is too long again here.

25 On Pityaxes, see Justi p.254, s.v. Πιτίαξες, Christensen, p.102, PLRE III, s.v. Pityaxes and cp. Ammianus' vitaxa (XXIII.6.14), whom he regards as a governor of a province, a magister equitum; Noldeke suggested the identification with the ruler of Arzanene, 'Zwei Völker', p.159 n.2. On the position of bdeaskh, ruler of a border province, cf. Toumanoff, Studies, p.184 and Garsoian, Epic Histories, pp.516-517, Frye, p.295 (noting the antiquity of the title) and Sundermann's entry in EI vol.4, s.v. 'bidaxš', pp.242-244. On this Hormizd, see Justi s.v. Ahuramazda no.20, p.8.

26 As Rubin suggests, PVK col.368; cf. also PLRE III, s.v. Baresmanas.

27 Cf. Christensen, p.109, on the large number of army commanders from the Mihran (and Suren) families, though it is not proven that the supreme command was exclusively in their hands, and p.105 n.3 on the confusion of Roman authors; also Stein II, p.288 n.3 on Procopius' mistake. Rubin, ZI, p.486 n.765, distinguishes this Peroz from the Peroz fighting in Lazica in 528, Mal. p.441, since Mal. refers on the same page to a 'Meran' in Mesopotamia, who is probably to be identified with this Mihran; q.v. ch.5 n.51.

28 Cf. Noldeke, Tabari, p.147 n.1 and q.v. ch.5 n.51. Mal. p.452 for the commanders at Dara: the Greek text surely refers to Mihran and the son of Kavadh, though the Latin translation seems to run them together 'Meram, primarius Persarum filius', and the Jeffrey's translation is entirely ambiguous. Theoph. clearly distinguishes the two, A.M. 6022.
out here in Peroz’s request that Belisarius prepare a bath for him in Dara (xiii.17), and in his letters and speech; to what extent Procopius has exaggerated it is impossible to say, though it is clear from the previous engagements of the war that the Persians had good reason to expect a clear victory.29

Procopius’ description of the positioning of the Roman forces for battle (xiii.19-24) is extremely detailed, and clearly based on autopsy. Unfortunately there is an insoluble difficulty in the details of the construction of the trench-system (xiii.13-14), which has some bearing on our perception of the battle. The problem surrounds whether the short straight stretch of trench in the middle lay forward from, or to the rear of, the other longer straight sections of trench. This matter has nowhere been discussed, though plans in accordance with both interpretations have been drawn up. It is clear that Belisarius’ intention was to ensure that the infantry played as little part as possible in the fighting; with the trench blocking any possible cavalry charge by the Persians, they would be free to discharge their missiles. The trench also helped to neutralise the Persian advantage in numbers, since the Romans were able to station their best forces on the flanks, while still not being in danger of being defeated in the centre. Trenches had similarly been employed to offset a numerical inferiority by Sulla at Chaeronea, and by Caesar against the Belgae; in both these cases, however, the trenches were on the flanks, in order to prevent envelopment by enemy cavalry. A closer parallel to Belisarius’ trench might be the stakes of the English longbowmen at Agincourt, which successfully frustrated the charges of the French cavalry.30

It is slightly more likely on balance that the central section of the trench lay to the fore of the rest, in that the cavalry detachments of Sunicas and Simmas would therefore not have to pass over the trench when coming to the aid of the main cavalry wings; but this is not a decisive argument, since Procopius specifically states that there were many

29 Rubin, PoK col.369 on Procopius’ contrast between Roman rationality and Persian _άλαξωσια_; Zach. IX.3 also notes the confidence of the Persians, though again this is to be expected. 

passages across it (xiii.13).31

Procopius is selective in the details he gives regarding the numbers in Belisarius' army: he puts its strength at 25,000 men (xiii.23), but beyond giving figures for the Hun and Herul cavalry contingents (xiii.20-21), he gives no indication of how strong the wings or the centre were, or what proportion of the force the infantry made up. The forces on the wings may well have been stronger than usual, considering that the centre was protected by the ditch; but the fact that five commanders are named on the right, while Bouzes alone is mentioned on the left (excluding the Heruls) need not imply that there was any major difference in numbers between the two flanks.32

Pharas and his Heruls were to play an important part in Belisarius' North African campaign, after which they returned to the East: they are found fighting in Armenia in the 540s (II.xxv). He and his men emerge from Procopius' account in a very favourable light, and the deeds of the Heruls also caught the attention of Zachariah (IX.3). Justinian made much use of these barbarians in his wars, after a part of the tribe had been given land in the Roman empire during the reign of Anastasius; Justinian even moved them to better lands in Pannonia. It is more likely therefore that they served the empire as *foederati* rather than as *symmachoi*. Procopius does not generally hold them in high esteem, however, although he makes an exception for Pharas and his contingent during the Vandalic war.33

The commanders of the Huns were also regular companions of Belisarius, though relations between him and Sunicas became fraught later in the following year.

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31 I have therefore followed the plans of Dewing (and to some extent Haury) in my diagram of the battle; the alternative version is given by Oman and Rubin (loc. cit. in n.30).

32 5000 cavalry took part in the 533 campaign against Gelimer, III.xi.2, accompanied by 10,000 infantry; it may be supposed therefore that there were not less than 5000 cavalry present at Dara, and probably closer to 8000 (assuming the same 2:1 ratio). Shahld, BASIC I, X, ‘The battle of Daras’, unconvincingly argues for al-Harith’s participation at Dara - simply because of his recent promotion by Justinian (xvii.46); no ancient evidence supports such a claim.

33 On the (Eastern) Heruli in this period, see RE VIII (1912), cols. 1160-1163; their way of fighting and their lack of armour is described by Proc. at II.xxv.26-27; Proc. VIxiv for a history of the tribe. For Proc.'s vehement antipathy towards it, IV.jv.30, where their lack of restraint is again criticised, and Pharas and his men are praised. The term *foederati* had changed greatly in meaning since the fourth century, Grosse, p.280, though he still considers them to have been *symmachoi*. Cf. now M. Whitby, 'Recruitment in Roman Armies from Justinian to Heraclius (c.565-615), Late Antiquity and Early Islam, Third Workshop (1992) (forthcoming) on the Heruls being recruited in both categories.
Procopius' archaising reference to these Huns as Massagetae (xiii.20) is not unusual among classicising historians, and he specifies at III.xi.9 that the Massagetae are now known as Huns; he also describes the Hunnic contingent destined for North Africa as being comprised exclusively of horse-archers (III.xi.12), which must also have been the case for the forces present at Dara. Of the four Hunnic commanders named here, only one - Ascan - is heard of again in the *Persian Wars*, at the battle of Callinicum (xviii.38), while Aigan took part in the North African campaign. Sunicas and Simmas are both mentioned by Malalas at Callinicum, however, and his Apskal in the same context may represent Procopius' Ascan. Zachariah (IX.3) mentions Huns called Sunita and Simuth, the second of whom may be identified with Procopius' Simmas. They probably served on the Roman side as *symmachoi*.34

Belisarius' tactics cleverly made optimum use of the effectiveness of the Hunnic cavalry; he clearly had confidence in the reliability and discipline of the troops to entrust such a major task to them. They appear to have merited such faith, considering that Sunicas was able to break off from the fighting on the Roman left to take an active part in the route of the Persian left; such a move of troops in the midst of a battle requires considerable discipline. Belisarius' plan also covered every eventuality. For if the Roman cavalry on the wings proved victorious, then the Huns could be thrown in to turn the victory into a route. Alternatively, as in fact happened, if the Roman cavalry should be forced back, then the Huns could assail the enemy in the flanks, and throw them into confusion. A reserve was also posted behind the infantry, which no doubt included some cavalry, perhaps including Belisarius' own *bucellarii* (xiii.22), which were eventually committed to the crucial battle on the Roman right (xiv.44).35

Mal. pp.462-464 on Callinicum; Hamilton and Brooks, p.224 n.4 suggest that Simuth may represent Proc.'s Simmas. Cf. *PLRE* III, s.v. Aigan, Ascan, Simmas (accepting that Simmas is Simuth, though mistakenly supposing Zach. IX.3 to refer to an attack by the Persians on Dara in 527, in which he defended the city) and Sunicas on the names with Maenchen-Helfen, pp.412-413, 420-421: their origin is unclear to him (p.442). On Mal.'s Aspskal being his equivalent of Ascan, cf. Rubin, *ZI*, pp.500-501 n.882, though this is apparently not accepted by *PLRE* III, s.v. Apskal.

On the use of the term 'Massagetae' for Huns, cf. Maenchen-Helfen, pp.5-9, esp. p.8 on Procopius. On *symmachoi*, see Grosse pp.291-293, where he lists the Huns among the allies of Rome. Aigan was part of Belisarius' household in 533 (III.xi.7), but may only have been enlisted among them following his campaigns in the East, cf. Grosse, p.289 on *bucellarii* and *PLRE* III, s.v. Aigan.

The vulnerability of the Persian flanks is noted in the *Strategikon*, XI.1, pp.358-360.
Procopius' description of the Persian deployment is brief, but paralleled in the slightly later work, the *Strategikon*, where the Persian tendency to divide their line into three is noted, as well as that of keeping the front of the formation even and dense. It also mentions the Persian technique of deferring combat when their opponents are clearly ready for battle. Thus while the Persians may have been genuinely surprised at the improvement of discipline among the Romans, they may also have deliberately decided not to come to close quarters immediately. The despatch of some cavalry from their right wing (xiii.25-28) was doubtless intended to test the mettle of the Romans; the Persian detachment was thrown back, however, by the forces of Bouzes and Pharas, who employed the 'Scythian' tactic of suddenly wheeling about to face their pursuers, having initially given ground. Such a manoeuvre, at least against the Persians, is not recommended by the *Strategikon*, on account of their good discipline.

There follows at this point a lengthy description of the victories of the wrestler

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37 *Strategikon*, XI.1, pp.358-360, on not using the tactic against the Persians; XI.2, p.364 on the 'Scythian' tactic. The author does recommend charging the Persians, however, to minimise losses from archery (XI.1, p.358).
Andreas over two Persian challengers, clearly witnessed by Procopius (xiii.29-38). This was not the first instance of single combat in a war between Romans and Persians: the general Areobindus had defeated the Persian Ardazanes during the 420-422 war.38

The shouting from the walls must refer to spectators watching from the walls of Dara, although the reference to the withdrawal of the Romans to within the περιβολος (xiii.38) could refer equally to a camp as to the city itself. Most likely, however, Belisarius' forces spent the night in the city, since no reference is made to a separate Roman camp at any point.39

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The arrival of 10,000 Persians from Nisibis brought their strength up to 50,000 men (xiv.1). This is a more credible figure than Malalas' 70,000 (p.453), since Procopius had no motive for playing down Persian numbers; many of the 50,000, if the Persian army was indeed even as large as that, will have been infantry, who played scarcely any part in the battle.40

Procopius' account of the exchange of letters between Peroz and Belisarius (xiv.1-12) serves only further to set the stage for the Roman victory; the letters are full of the stock themes of ancient writers. What their relationship might be to any actual letters which passed between the commanders is unascertainable. Reference is made to the peace negotiations in process (xiv.3), while Peroz complains of the failure of the Romans to abide by their oaths (xiv.6). This theme is taken up again by Kavadh at xvi.4-8, where specific complaints are made about the breaching of the treaty concluded by Anatolius, and the construction of the fort at Dara. The overconfidence of the Persians is evoked

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38 Mal. p.364 for Areobindus' victory; for another single combat before battle, described very similarly, cf. VII.xxxi.11-16, where Coccas is defeated by the Armenian Anzalas before the battle at Busta Gallorum. Cf. Chapot, p.208 and n.2, on the phenomenon of individual combat, and cp. Heraclius' feats in battle in Cilicia, J. Bury, *A History of the Later Roman Empire*, vol.2, London 1889, p.236; Holom, *Theodosian Empresses*, p.166, notes the tough reputation of bath attendants in connection with the disturbances during the council of Ephesus, cf. (e.g.) *ACO*, ed. E. Schwartz, Berlin 1914, I.1.3.50 (a letter from Cyril) on the criticisms levelled against those who had accompanied him from Alexandria ἐκ τοῦ βαλανείου.

39 The περιβολος at xiv.12 (cf. de Aed. II.12-26) clearly refers to Dara. The outer proteichisma (de Aed. II.12-26), however, had yet to be built, cf. Whitby, 'Dara', p.761.

40 Kirchner, p.11 on the two figures, and for accepting those of Proc.
again in Belisarius’ reply to Peroz (xiv.9), while his affixing of the letters to the banners recalls the action of the Hephthalite king in hanging from his banners the salt over which the Persian king Peroz had sworn never to attack the Hephthalites again (xiv.10, cp.iv.9).41

The speeches of the leaders on both sides (xiv.13-27) also contain little but the usual commonplaces of such set pieces. Procopius uses Peroz’s speech to emphasise the improved discipline of the Romans (xiv.14); it also makes clear that the Persians were fully aware of Belisarius’ trench (xiv.15), and hence why no effort was made to attack the Roman centre. The speech of Belisarius and Hermogenes shows the Romans to be the underdogs at this point; their criticism of the Persian infantry (xiv.25) may well be justified in light of their failure to affect the issue of the battle in any way.42

The proximity of the city of Dara, which lay to the rear of the Roman army, precluded the Persians from attempting to outflank the Romans. Peroz therefore seems to have tried to make use of his numerical superiority by allowing his troops to fight in rotation (xiv.29-31), a procedure which requires good co-ordination between units. It is interesting to note that the initiative for the positioning of Pharas’ troops came from the Herul himself (xiv.33); Belisarius appears often to have accepted such suggestions, and to have consulted his commanders.43

The delay before the Persian attack was sufficiently typical to be remarked on by the author of the Strategikon (XI.1, p.356), where he attributes it to the Persians’ ability to tolerate hot temperatures. The tactic of taking advantage of the enemy’s hunger was

41 For a speech in similar vein to the letters of Belisarius, cf. Menander, frg.26.1.112-132, where Zachariah, addressing the Persian Andigan, finishes his speech by referring to the treachery of the Persians; this whole fragment (26.1), concerning events on the eastern frontier near Dara in 580-581, and speeches exchanged between Romans and Persians, bears considerable similarity to Proc. here.

42 The opening words of Peroz’s speech echo the sentiment of Catiline in Sallust, Bellum Catilinae, ed. L.D. Reynolds, Oxford 1991, 58.1-3; likewise the theme of the inexperience of the Romans (xiv.14) recalls the inexperience of the Syracusans in Gylippus’ speech at Thuc. VII.66.1 and 66.4 (cp. also xiv.21 - the disadvantage of numerical superiority - with Thuc. VII.67.3). Another parallel with Thuc. can be seen between xiv.21 and Thuc. VI.69 and 72, where the initial defeat of the Syracusans is blamed on indiscipline rather than any lack of courage.

Q.v. n.23 on the poor quality of the Persian infantry.

43 Proc. VII.i.6-16 in praising Belisarius does not mention this trait; he was notably prevailed upon to fight at Callinicum contrary to his better judgement. Another instance of his acceding to a request, V.xxviii.28-29; at II.xix.45 he accepts the advice of John, son of Nicetas, having gathered the officers for a discussion, II.xix.35. Units fighting in rotation, cp. the Persian tactics at Thermopylae, Hdt. VII.210.
nothing new: the Athenians had been defeated in similar fashion by the Spartans at Aegospotami, while a contributory factor in the Roman defeat in 531 was the hunger of the troops on account of their fasting. At the battle of Adrianople, Ammianus refers to the hunger and thirst of the Roman troops in the heat (XXXI.12.13). The more rapid fire rate of the Persians (xiv.35) is discussed more fully by Procopius at xviii.32-35, where it is contrasted unfavourably with the more penetrating firepower of the Romans. The wind which favoured the Romans (xiv.36) was of major significance, when both sides were employing missiles to such an extent; in the following year, Zachariah (IX.4) notes that the wind was blowing against the Romans at Callinicum.

It is perhaps not surprising that Bouzes' forces on the Roman left suffered more than those on the right: for while the Romans could expect the Persians to be at a disadvantage in close combat (so Strategikon XI.1, p.356), they instead found themselves confronted by the Kadiseni (xiv.38). It is not altogether clear to what ethnic group the Kadiseni belonged - whether they were a branch of the Huns, perhaps of the Hephthalites, or natives of the Thebeta and Singara area. The usual view is that they were Huns of some sort, although the evidence for this is far from conclusive: the only ancient author to refer to them as Huns is John of Antioch (frag.214, FHG IV, p.28), where he refers to Kavadh fleeing to the Kadiseni. This is almost certainly a mistake for Kidarites, since it was northeasterwards that Kavadh fled in 496, where the Kidarites had been situated. They caused Kavadh trouble in 502 upon his return to the throne, and are mentioned by Theophanes as having been in revolt in 506; in this war, however, their loyalty to the Persians appears to have been consistent. They are clearly not to be identified with Strabo's Cadusii (VII.1) near the Caspian Sea, and it is doubtful whether they were related to the Cadusii who are attested in Shapur I's time. It would appear that some did enter Roman service, however, for evidence for a numerus Cadisianus has been found in Grado in Italy. Considering that Procopius could be expected to refer to them as Καδιτονοι καλουμενοι Οθωνοι if they were Huns, and that they are never attested north of Arzanene, it seems more probable to suppose that they were a

44 Aegospotami - Xenophon, Hellenica, ed. E.C. Marchant, Oxford 1900, II.i.22-27; Hypatius and Patricius had been surprised by the Persians while having their lunch during the Anastasian war, viii.14-15.

45 Cp. Strategikon XI.1, p.354, and Proc.'s praise of contemporary Roman archery at i.15, cf. ch.1, pp.21-22.
powerful local tribe.\textsuperscript{46}

The success of the Kadiseni was short-lived, however, on account of the onrush of Sunicas' Huns and Pharas' Heruls, who were able to attack both flanks of the attackers (xiv.40; phase two on the diagram). The Persians were thrown back in disorder, and their cavalry sought the shelter of the infantry phalanx. The Romans maintained their discipline and formed up opposite the phalanx (xiv.43). Peroz's stealthy strengthening of his left wing might easily have won the day for the Persians (xiv.44), had it not been perceived by the Roman commanders, who were able to take measures to meet the

\textsuperscript{46} Nöldeke dealt with the Kadiseni, or Qadiškîyê as he called them, in detail in 'Zwei Völker', pp.157-161; p.158 n.3 for the suggestion of John of Antioch's error. Joshua §23 on their revolt against Kavadh, at §58 they are in his army again; Nöldeke also accepts Theophanes' Cadusii (A.M. 5998) as Kadisenoi, p.159, as he does Theophylact's Kadasenes (III.v.5) though Whitby, History, p.78 n.18 places them by the Caspian Sea. Q.v. also ch.4 n.4 and note Gadar the Kadisene operating in the Martyropolis area in Zach. IX.5.

Nöldeke, \textit{art.cit.}, p.161, suggested that they were most probably a powerful local tribe, and Maenchen-Helfen, p.440, accepts that they had no connection with the Huns, cf. also Brunner in \textit{CHir}, p.761; yet Christensen, p.347 n.4, and Marquart, \textit{Eränjahr}, p.77 n.2, cling to the view that they were a branch of the Hephthalites. On the \textit{numerus Cadusianus}, see Haussig in Altheim-Stiehl, \textit{Finanzgeschichte der Spätantike}, p.107 (who considers them to have been Huns), and in Altheim, \textit{Geschichte der Hunnen}, vol.2 pp.11-12, where he asserts that they are Hephthalites or their neighbours (despite the obvious geographical indications to the contrary).
threat; it is a tribute to the manoeuvrability of the Huns that Sunicas and Aigan's men were able to take part in the engagements on both flanks. The 1200 Huns, in conjunction with Belisarius' men, placed to the left of the Roman right wing, ensured that the same technique that led to the Persian defeat on the left was repeated on the right; for while the Persians threw more forces into the attack, notably the Immortals, the Romans had correspondingly more shock cavalry to throw against the flank of the advancing attacker (xiv.44-47, phase 3).

The attack of the Huns and the forces with them drove a wedge through the middle of the advancing attackers (xiv.47, phase 4), and the ensuing mêlée heavily favoured the Romans. The death of the Persian standard-bearer dealt Persian morale a further blow, and was followed by that of Baresmanas himself. The valorous deeds of Sunicas were sufficient to attract the notice of both Malalas (p.453) and Zachariah (IX.3); Malalas reports that he killed a Persian exarch Sagos, who should therefore be identical with Procopius' Baresmanas (perhaps the name of the marzban, if this is what Procopius' Baresmanas represents). Zachariah notes the havoc wreaked by Sunicas and another Hun - probably Simmas - with only 20 men each. The Persians then turned to flight.
(xiv.50), in the course of which many were killed.\textsuperscript{47} The infantry, who might have attempted to cover the retreat of the cavalry, as seems to have happened initially on the Persian right, instead turned to flight themselves, and suffered heavy losses; this is picked up by Zachariah, who reports that Bouzes and the Heruls inflicted large casualties on the infantry to the east of the city. The care of Belisarius and Hermogenes not to allow the Romans to pursue too far was sensible: the Roman army was thrown into disorder following its victory over Gelimer in December 533 (IV.iv.1).

\textsuperscript{47} The mention of the forgetting of \textit{aρη} recalls Hdt. IX.70, the battle of Plataea, also noted for its troop manoeuvres. Chapot, pp.58-59, considers Persian discipline to have been marred by their excessive dependence on their commander, cp. xiv.50 for Persian horror at the death of Baresmanas.

At xii.26 Proc. implies that the Persians had lost over half their army, i.e. over 25,000 men; but this is no doubt an exaggeration.
with Kavadh and urging him not to make terms with the Romans (pp.455-456).

(c) The battle at Satala (xv)

While the battle at Dara is recorded in several sources independent of Procopius, he is almost our sole witness for the events unfolding at the same time north of the Taurus. The Persian offensive in this area is better seen as connected with operations in the Caucasus than with the battles in Mesopotamia: it is likely that by this stage the Persians had taken control of the forts on the Lazic border with Iberia, and had perhaps pushed further towards the Black Sea. Hence this Persian invasion was probably aimed at the Black Sea as well, in order to cut off the Lazi and the newly subjugated Tzani from the Romans.

From Procopius’ description of the Mermeroes’ army (xv.2), it would appear that it was constituted entirely of Persian allies or subjects rather than Persians themselves. The multiplicity of operations against the Romans had begun to place a considerable strain on Persian manpower: some 50,000 men were involved in the battle of Dara, and Boes’ force deployed in the Caucasus is described by Procopius as being very large (xii.10). In this area, moreover, the Persians could find allies more easily than elsewhere. The Persarmenians had already taken part in the war, having repelled Sittas and Belisarius some years previously (xii.20-22). The Sunitae (xv.1) are mentioned nowhere else by Procopius, nor in any other Latin or Greek source, though they are to be found in Armenian sources as the Siwnik. Their country was on the edge of Armenia, and may have given the impression of being distinct from Persarmenia. Where Procopius means to place the Sunitae is difficult to work out, since his geography of the Caucasus is somewhat confused; it appears that they lay to the east of the Tzani, north

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48 Rubin’s hypotheses in PvK, col.369, regarding different versions of the account of the battle, one favourable to Belisarius and one to Hermogenes, have not been discussed; there may have been tensions at this stage between the two commanders, but little is to be gained by trying to separate out different strands in the text.

The failure to mention the Samaritans at all has already been noted, q.v. n.2 on Proc.’s omissions generally: assuming Mal. is correct, Proc. cannot fail to have been aware of the capture of the Samaritans.

49 Rubin, PvK col.369, states that the chroniclers have nothing to say on this campaign, although Mal. pp.455-456 may well relate to some of the events reported by Proc. Veh. p.472, on the Persian intention of reaching the Black Sea and cutting off the Romans from Lazica.
of the Persarmenians, while the Alans lay to their northeast. The Sabirs (xv.1), three thousand of whom are said to have served in Mermeroes’ army, were often employed by both Persians and Romans as allies in the sixth century, until their disappearance around 575. They had come to occupy the Kuban steppes as far as the Volga in the mid-fifth century, having been pushed eastward by the Avars, and in turn displacing the Saraguri, Urogi and Unoguri westward. The chroniclers preserve details of the attempts made by the two great powers to enlist their support during the 520s, but they were quite capable of launching unsolicited attacks, such as the raid of 515. They are placed in the Caucasus region by Procopius, beyond the Alans, i.e. to the north of the Caspian Gates (Dariel Pass).

The Persian commander Mermeroes (Mihr-Mihroe, xv.2) served Kavadh and Khusro for almost a quarter of a century in this area, and in general proved a powerful adversary to the Romans. He is possibly also referred to in Zachariah (IX.6) as Mihr Girowi, who is employed by Hormizd the bdeaškh to recruit Huns for the war in Arzanene and Sophanene.

Dorotheus (xv.3), as the second magister militum per Armeniam since the creation of the post only two years previously, was probably based at Theodosiopolis. Sittas appears also to have been stationed there as magister militum praesentalis, to some extent fulfilling the same role as Hermogenes in the south, although he also had the primary role in strategic matters; his marriage to Theodora’s sister Comito had cemented his ties with the imperial family. There is no record of Dorotheus’ participation in previous wars, but it may be assumed that he had played a part in the reduction of the Tzani, and

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50 Proc.'s geography is particularly obscure owing to his confusion of the Boas and Phasis rivers, cf. I.xv.20-21, II.xxix.14-19, though VIII.ii.6-9 seems to refer only to the Boas and not to equate it with the Phasis. The identification of Proc.’s Sunitae with Zachariah’s Sisakan (XII.7) is made by Adontz, Armenia, pp.171-172, cf. Gansoian, Epic Histories, pp.490-491 and R. Hewsen, The Geography of Ananias of Sirak (Aškarhac‘or’c”), Wiesbaden 1992, p.189 n.189. Both Marquart (Ernšahr, p.122) and Hübischmann (p.237 n.2) prefer to read Ἀλβανος at xv.1 to Haury’s Ἀλανος.


52 Cf. Justi, p.203, Ahrens and Krüger, p.173 n.3; the only difficulty with the identification is that Mihr-Mihroe seems to be a more minor character in Zach. Cf. PLRE III, s.v. Mermeroes, which does not connect him with Mihr Girowi.
had perhaps been a dux at one of the recently built forts in Armenia, such as Citharizon, or Artaleson.53

The two commanders, hearing of the Persian preparations, sent out two δορυφόροι to find out more details (xiv.4-6); among bucellarii, δορυφόροι were senior to ἰππασπιστεῖς, and often entrusted with important tasks. It may be supposed that these two were themselves Huns, and hence well suited for this operation. Procopius' information may well have come from one of them, whom he actually names - Dagaris: he is later described in highly complimentary terms at xxii.19, when he was returned to the Romans in exchange for a high-ranking Persian. The surprise attack of the Romans was completely effective, though it failed to avert the Persian invasion; from Procopius' words at xiv.9, it would seem that only a part of the Persian army had been defeated, and Mermeroes was probably elsewhere with the bulk of his forces.54

The invasion route of the Persians is not made clear by Procopius; the mention of Octava (xiv.9) would be of use, if it could be located. 56 stades should be the equivalent of about 22 km, but Procopius fails to indicate whether the Persians encamped to the east or the north of the city. Perhaps the most likely invasion route, given the presence of Sittas and Dorotheus (at any rate initially) at the powerful fortress of Theodosiopolis, was along the Akampsis/Boas river, past Pharangium (Ispir) and Bayburt. The Roman commanders would have needed only about four days to reach Satala from Theodosiopolis, once they ascertained the route of the invading army.55

Sittas' tactics for dealing with the invaders resemble those of Belisarius at Dara: he

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53 Adontz, Armenia, p.109, believes that Dorotheus was still a dux at this stage, though Procopius' text is hardly ambiguous, cf. Stein II, p.289 and n.5; Veh too, p.472, regards him as magister militum per Armeniam. He died during the Vandalic war. Contra Stein II (p.291), however, Sittas' promotion was not due to his subjugation of the Tzani (accomplished some years previously, q.v. ch.5, n.6), but probably to his recent marriage to Comito (in 528). Dorotheus is explicitly attested as magister militum per Armeniam in Mal. pp.469 and 472 (in 531); Sittas is also referred to as magister militum praesentalis, p.465, cf. PLRE III, s.v. Sittas and Dorotheus 2.

54 Grosse, p.290 on the two types of bucellarii, where he points to this passage as an instance of the δορυφόροι being entrusted with important missions, cf. Lee, pp.172-173. V.i. n.112 on spies in general. Cf. also PLRE III, s.v. Dagaris.

55 Octava is not mentioned in A. Bryer and D. Winfield, The Byzantine Topography of the Pontus, Washington 1985; but cf. p.38 on the route from the Boas/Lykos valley to Pharangium, p.37 and n.193 for the journey time from Theodosiopolis to Satala. Rubin, ZI, puts Octava at 43 km from Satala, surely an over-estimation. On the strength of Theodosiopolis, q.v. ch.5 n.33.
refused to accept a siege, probably also on account of the weakness of the fortifications.\textsuperscript{56} He stationed 1000 men behind a hill, so as to attack the Persians from the rear while they were encircling the city, a tactic akin to Pharas' positioning of his Heruls at Dara. Sittas was forced to rely on outmanoeuvering the Persian army on account of the weakness of his forces (xv.11): the bulk of the Roman army was deployed in Mesopotamia, and he had fewer than 15,000 men to counter the 30,000 in the Persian army (xv.11). The dust cloud which obscured the quantity of Sittas' forces positioned on the hill (xv.12) points to a date for this battle around August; the Roman general may well have been aware of the likelihood of such a dust cloud, and to have perceived the advantage it gave him. Belisarius employed the same device in 558 (Agath. V.xix.9) against Zabergan's Kotrigurs. It seems that the invaders hastened to concentrate their forces when they beheld the onrush of Sittas' cavalry (xv.12-13); but the division of Sittas' forces prevented them from doing so. The sally from Satala by the men under Dorotheus led to a mêlée in which the enemy was assailed from both sides, but the Romans only seem to have assured themselves of victory through the capture of Mermeroes' standard (xv.15-16). Procopius' note that this was an all-cavalry engagement is interesting, though not surprising; the 'Scythian' technique of feigning flight, and then wheeling about against the pursuer, used by the Romans at Dara, was here employed by both sides.\textsuperscript{57}

Sittas may have been unwilling to pursue the invaders not just because the Romans were satisfied with their victory (xv.17), but also because they still probably outnumbered the Romans. Furthermore, as emerges from the rest of this chapter, the Persarmenians were not unswerving allies of the Persians; this success brought substantial diplomatic gains to the Romans. For not only did they acquire the forts of Pharangium and Bolum,
but three leading Armenian chiefs defected to their cause (xv.18, 26-33). Pharangium is generally identified with modern Ispir and Strabo's Syspiritis (XI.xiv.9); its gold is also mentioned by Malalas (pp.455-456). Malalas' passage is somewhat confused, in that it states that the gold reserves were only discovered in Anastasius' time, yet implies that previously all the revenues from the mines had been divided between Rome and Persia; then, from Anastasius' reign, it had gone only to the Romans. Now it is unlikely that the gold was only discovered in Anastasius' day, since it is mentioned by Strabo; it is, however, possible that in Anastasius' reign the Romans had succeeded in acquiring possession of some of the gold-producing region. The subjugation of the Tzani will have put Pharangium still more in the Roman orbit. The versions of Procopius (xv.26-30) and Malalas remain inconsistent, however, and it can only be stated with certainty that Pharangium lay in territory disputed by the two sides, and that both laid claim to the revenues from the gold. The location of Bolum is less certain than Pharangium: it is generally identified with the Armenian Bol, to the east of Theodosiopolis.

Procopius here introduces a digression on the Tzani (xv.20-25), giving much the same information as in de Aedificiis III.vi. Sittas had brought the area under Roman control earlier in the 520s, probably during the reign of Justin; the process of pacifying this hardy mountain tribe may have begun even earlier, following their depredations in 505. Their subdual considerably strengthened the Roman position in this area, since the Tzani bounded both Persarmenia and Lazica; Justinian himself was sufficiently proud of his achievement in bringing them into the empire that he mentions them in the preface to his first Novel, as Agathias noted (V.ii.4).

The Tzani had originally been known as Macrones, but even by Strabo's time they were known as Σαννοι (XII.3.18, cf. Arrian, Periplus 11.1-2). They had caused increasing problems for the Romans from the fifth century: Marcellinus mentions a Tzanic raid in 441 (ad annum), and Priscus notes a Tzanic attack on Trapezus in Leo's reign (frg.51.2).

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58 Adontz, Armenia, pp.22-23 on Pharangium and its identification with Strabo's Syspiritis, cf. Bryer and Winfield, p.56 and n.393, where they note that they arrived at the same conclusion independent of Adontz. Socrates reports a similar dispute over claims to gold-mines at the start of the 420-422 war, VII.18, which could refer to the same area, cf. the reference to gold mines in Lazar and Thomson's note in his translation, p.170 [117], n.3.

59 Adontz, Armenia, p.22; Thomson also identifies Bolberd with Bolum, Lazar, p.294, cf. Hewsen, Geography, p.209 n.252. Q.v. ch.5 fig.2 for a map of the area.
Then came the 505 raid (Theodore Lector 466), followed at some stage by the programme of subjugation; although they remained pacified for some decades, trouble broke out again in the 550s, and Theodorus had to campaign against them (Agath. V.i). Their territory lay to the south of Trapezus, the other side of the Parhars mountains, on the west and north sides of the Boas/Akampsis (VIII.i.8-9); it was not a productive area, and the Tzani frequently had resort to brigandage.60

Procopius' geographical excursus on this area (xv.20-30) is not helped by his conflation of the Phasis and Boas/Akampsis rivers; if his reference to the Phasis is instead applied to the Boas, which is clearly the river he has in mind, then his account becomes clear (xv.21). Before the composition of VIII, he seems to have realised his error, since at VIII.ii.6-9 he describes the Boas as rising among the Tzani and flowing into the Black Sea, and identifies it with the Akampsis (but not the Phasis); this passage even reads like a correction of his description of the Boas here and at II.xxix.14-19, where the Boas is explicitly equated with the Phasis. The mountains referred to by Procopius must be the Parhars range (xv.20). The Tzani were enrolled in the Roman army, as Procopius states (xv.25), and served in later campaigns in the Caucasus area (II.xxix.10. VIII.xiii.10).

The prosperous valley described by Procopius at xv.26 is surely that of the Boas, which is described by Bryer and Winfield as being 'good for cereal growing and fruit...'. The description of Symeon's defection to the Romans (xv.26-30) implies that Pharangium and the gold mines lay right on the border between Persian and Roman territory, now that Tzanica had become incorporated into the Roman empire: the annexation of Tzanica had brought the two sides face to face in this area, which helps to explain its increased prominence in the wars of the sixth century. The Persians never succeeded in recovering

60 On the Tzani, A. Bryer, 'Some notes on the Laz and Tzan (1)', in Bedi Kartlisa 21-22 (1966), pp.187-188. He notes the infertility of Lazica, which he likens to Tzanica, at pp.176, 186; cf. also Adontz, Armenia, pp.23-24 and 49-53, and RE XIV (1928), col.815, s.v. 'Makrones'. On the location of the Tzani, cf. Adontz, Armenia, p.50, and Bryer, 'Some notes on the Laz and Tzan (2)', Bedi Kartlisa 23-24 (1967), pp.161-3, placing them a little to the east of medieval Tzanika. Stein's error in dating their subjugation has been noted above, ch.5 nn.5-6.

Blockley's note on the Priscus passage, FCH vol.2, p.398 n.181, rightly distinguishes the Tzani from the Suani, but wrongly states that it was the Suani who had been known as Makrones. The position of the Tzani towards the Roman empire was similar to that of the Isaurians, who had also received regular payments (to no avail) before their subjugation in the 490s.

Phanagryum or Bolum by force (cf. xv.30), but they were returned under the terms of the Endless peace (xxii.18).\textsuperscript{61}

The rest of the chapter describes the defection of Narses and Aratius and their mother, followed shortly by their brother Isaac (xv.31-33); their decision to change sides is yet another indication of the rising fortunes of Rome on the northeastern frontier. Justinian's use of the eunuch Narses in this region is unsurprising: Procopius notes his Persarmenian origins (xv.31). He is also referred to by Malalas (p.469) in this area, after the battle of Callinicum, so that it appears he remained in Armenia until the following year. Since Procopius does not report any campaigning in this area in 531, this perhaps suggests that Procopius' source for the events in xv was someone involved in Sittas' entourage rather than Dorotheus'. For before Dorotheus launched his raids on Persarmenia in 531, Sittas had been ordered southwest to Samosata (Mal. p.465). In the absence of any report in Procopius, Malalas' information on the events in Persarmenia in 531 is all the more valuable. He is scanty on details, however, merely noting a cruel victory of Dorotheus and his capture of an important Persian base, which is described but not named; Narses then took charge of the fort (p.469). Clearly the initiative in this region remained with the Romans after their victory at Satala and the defection of these Armenians.\textsuperscript{62}

(d) Negotiations after Dara (xvi)

Where the Persian army positioned itself after its defeat at Dara is not made clear by Procopius; he implies that it did not retire to Nisibis, but it is also improbable that it remained in the immediate vicinity of Dara (xvi.1). Most likely the Persians remained encamped at Ammodius, just inside Roman territory.

While Malalas reports that Rufinus and Alexander conducted the negotiations which followed the battle (p.453), Procopius refers only to Rufinus here; given that he later reports Alexander's presence in negotiations in 531 (xxii.1), the omission here may be

\textsuperscript{61} Bryer and Winfield, p.7, for the description of the Boas (modern Çoruh) valley; Adontz, Armenia, p.24 on the struggle for this area in the sixth century.

\textsuperscript{62} Q.v. ch.5 n.34 on the brothers who defected.
considered deliberate, perhaps because Rufinus was clearly the chief envoy in this case. Rufinus' speech (xvi.2-4) is rather conventional; the use of the term 'brother' for the Persian king was by this period a commonplace in Roman-Persian diplomatic exchanges, and can be traced back at least as far back as the fourth century. Kavadh's letter to Justinian in Malalas (pp.449-450) in 529 also points to the antiquity of this relationship: Kavadh claims to have found record that the two monarchs were brothers in times past. Some scholars have seen Kavadh's speech as being critical of Justinian, but compared with those of some non-Romans, it scarcely concerns the Emperor. It contains references to a number of specific episodes, which tie in with the background to the war provided by Procopius. Thus Ambazuces' offer to Anastasius to buy control of the Caspian Gates is mentioned (xvi.4, cf.x.9-12), and the strain placed on the Persians in defending the Gates. But at x.12 it was noted that Kavadh had deliberately taken over control of the Gates, expelling Ambazuces' sons; and his assertions about the benefits to the Romans of this Persian protection are somewhat undermined by what Procopius has reported concerning Persian aggressiveness in Iberia and Lazica (xii.1-19).

The complaints about Dara also echo those previously made at x.16, when Kavadh had also referred to the treaty made in the time of Anatolius (ii.15). The unprovoked attack by the Persians in 502 (vii.3), however, renders this criticism somewhat unconvincing. Kavadh's complaint about the need for the Persians to maintain two armies is quite credible; and his reference to a request that the Romans station some troops at the Caspian Gates is not unparalleled. A treaty concerning mutual aid is also mentioned in a letter from Kavadh to Justinian in Malalas (pp.449-450), although it cannot be the request alluded to by Kavadh (xvi.7), since this had preceded the Roman attempt to

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64 So Veh, p.472, Rubin P-K col.370, who sees similarities between it and the Anecdota; but the speech of the Armenians at II.iii.32-53 is much more critical.

65 On Ambazuces, q.v. ch.4 (d); on the Persian invasion of Iberia, ch. 5 (c).
fortify Minduos in 528; its contents were doubtless similar, however.66

Just as he had threatened Anastasius, Kavadh now made clear to Justinian that he would have to help in the guarding of the Caspian Gates or face continued war in the east; but this time the option was also given of dismantling Dara, thus testifying to its usefulness to the Romans. Kavadh's more conciliatory intimations to Rufinus (xvi.9), seeking only financial compensation, are in line with his previous requests to Anastasius, reported in Joshua: the Persian treasury, still suffering the strain of payments to the Hephthalites, was probably little fuller now that it had been at the turn of the century.67 Procopius ends the chapter in Thucydidean style, although the formula he uses here is not so close to Thucydides as the one he employs in the Gothic Wars.68

(e) The Callinicum campaign and its background (xvii-xviii)

This section begins with a report on the Persian invasion through Euphratesia of spring 531 (xvii.1-3). The novelty of this line of attack prompts Procopius to a geographical digression on the general area (xvii.4-25), followed by a discussion of the role of the Arabs in the service of Rome and Persia (xvii.29-48). The invading army consisted mainly of cavalry (xvii.1), since speed was of the essence. Since Procopius tells us that the Persians furnished 15,000 men for the campaign (xvii.1; xviii.1), and that al-Mundhir had a large contingent of Arabs with him (xvii.1), their total combined forces may be estimated at 25,000. Their invasion route up the Euphrates was not entirely unprecedented, however, despite Procopius' insistence on this (xvii.2, xviii.3): Shapur II

66 Q.v. ch.2 n.14 and ch.5 n.27 on this supposed agreement. Blockley, ERFP, p.219 n.26, mistakenly interprets this passage to mean that Kavadh had offered the Caspian Gates to Anastasius.

67 Joshua §18 on the emptiness of the Persian treasury, cp. Mal. p.450; Mal. also claims that terms were agreed between the two sides, and were only broken off when news reached Kavadh of the Samaritan revolt (pp.454-455). On Persian payments to the Hephthalites, q.v. ch.3 n.75.

68 Cp. Thuc. II.103 and Proc. V.vii.37. While Thuc. uses τελευταω twice in his formula, Proc. in both cases prefers two different words, τελευταω and ἔτηω. Of more significance is the fact that Procopius does not attempt to date which year of the war ended in winter 530/1, doubtless because of the complications this would entail, such as whether to date it from 502 or some point in the 520s. As Veh notes (p.472), Thuc.'s years begin in early summer, rather than spring, which would for him come under the previous year, cf. III.116 for an event at the start of spring told before the formula for ending the year. But in Syria the campaigning season started much earlier, and so the change to the Thucydidean model is necessary. Also rather Thucydidean is Kavadh's remarkable knowledge of Ambazuces' offer to Anastasius and the Emperor's reasons for refusing it (xvi.4).
may have used it after defeating Valerian in the 260s, while Nohodares in 354 attempted unsuccessfully to penetrate Osroene because Mesopotamia was so well guarded (Ammianus XIV.3.2). It is probable too that a predecessor and namesake of al-Mundhir had approached Antioch by a similar route in 421, though he was overwhelmingly defeated by the Roman general Vitianus (Socrates VII.18). Procopius should not be censured too heavily for his error, however: for in both passages where he asserts that the Persians had never previously attacked on this front, he adds that this is so far as he knows (xvii.2, xviii.3). The earlier attack of al-Mundhir in 529, it should be noted, had taken place well to the south of the Euphrates, following the Orontes northwards along the route Emesa-Apamea-Antioch. Hence it was by no means a precursor to the 531 invasion, and could not have given the Romans any reason to suspect an imminent attack through Euphratesia.69

Procopius proceeds first into a geographical digression, then quickly into a mythological one concerning Iphigenia and Tauris. His description of the sources of the Tigris and Euphrates is inaccurate in both cases, though less so with the Euphrates; he places the source of both rivers 42 stades north of Theodosiopolis (xvii.4). But the Tigris rises to the northwest of Amida, well to the southwest of Theodosiopolis, though it is correct that no major tributaries flow into it before it reaches Amida.70 The Euphrates, on the other hand, does rise not far from Theodosiopolis, to the north of the city; the marsh referred to by Procopius (xvii.8-10) - the modern Sazlyk - still exists. Procopius' Celesene is the Armenian Acilisene, the area around Satala and modern Erzincan.71 The strengthening of Melitene (xvii.21) had been initiated by Anastasius, perhaps following the Sabir raid of 515, and was completed by Justinian; Procopius also notes its

69 Shahid's criticises the omission of the 529 raid in 'Procopius and Arethas' p.363 and n.1, p.370; q.v. ch.5 n.25 on the raid. Proc.'s acknowledgement of a possible error - Rubin, PvK col.370. The Euphrates route was successfully employed again in 573, cf. Whitby, Maurice, p.258 and Lee, p.94; on the dangers of the route for the Persians, cf. Whitby, Maurice, p.199.

On the Persian commander Azarethes, Malalas' Exarath (p.461), see Justi p.88 s.v. Exarath, who strangely dates his period of leadership to 529 and PLRE III, s.v. Azarethes; also Noldeke, Tabari, p.76 n.2, Stein II. p.292 n.2, ZI, pp.498-499 n.865 and Christensen, p.409 - it is probably a rendition of the Persian title hazaraf.

70 Cf. Dillemann, p.47, on Proc.'s strange placing of the source of the Tigris.

71 Cf. Bryer and Winfield, pp.32-33; Procopius' mythological excursus on Orestes and the temple at Comana is fully discussed in Rubin, PvK, cols.370-372, and is beyond the scope of this work. Proc. had clearly travelled in the area himself, xvii.17, cf. Veh. p.473, who also notes the location of the marsh.
importance in the *de Aedificiis*. The province referred to by Procopius at xvii.23 'outside' the river - i.e. not in Mesopotamia - is Euphratesia, already noted at xvii.2 as being the equivalent of the ancient Commagene. The foundation of Osrhoene (xvii.24) by a certain Osroes is a false derivation by Procopius, however.

Procopius' geographical excursus demonstrates a combination of autopsy and research on his part; on the whole, his historical information is probably sounder than his geography. His sense of direction is rather incomprehensible: the Tigris, according to him, proceeds northwards from Amida (xvii.6). He seems to be viewing the rivers from a perspective looking eastwards or south, which would thus put the Euphrates to the right of the Tigris, though on such a model the Euphrates would really start off on the left of the Tigris (rising well to its north).

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Following a brief notice concerning the demotion of the Mihran (xvii.26-28), Procopius devotes the rest of the chapter to the Arabs, and in particular al-Mundhir, who is credited with the idea for the raid. Al-Mundhir's speech (xvii.30-39) is clearly entirely Procopius' concoction and contains little of significance. It start with some conventional rhetoric concerning τύχη, which is followed by information regarding Antioch and its susceptibility to attack. Shahid criticises al-Mundhir's speech on the grounds that the Lakhmid king clearly knew where Antioch was, having raided to its very outskirts in preceding years. This is to overlook the obviously literary nature of such

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72 *De Aed*. III.iv.15-20, cf. Howard-Johnston, 'Citharizon', p.219, who reckons Anastasius started work soon after 505; Whitby, 'Notes' p.101, for the suggestion that work was only started after 515.

73 Cf. Dillemann, p.125 on Osrhoene; pp.124-126 deal with the boundaries between Armenia and Mesopotamia (cp. Proc. xvii.23-24). Rubin, *PvK* col.372, notes that Dionysius of Tell-Mahré is not in agreement with Proc. over the founding of Osrhoene, and considers the name to have originated in the land. Proc. wrongly believes that king Osroes (c.137 B.C.) gave his name to the province: its name probably in fact means 'water-rich', cf. *RE* XVIII.2 (1942), cols.1589-1590, s.v. Osroene and Osroes (1).

74 Veh, p.473, on Proc.'s research, cp. xvii.17, where Proc. refers to himself in Cappadocia.

75 For Proc.'s interest in Persian apparel, shown here by his description of Kavadh's removal of Peroz's head-dress, cp. the digression on king Peroz's earring, iv.14-31. Cf. Christensen, pp.407-409, on the bestowal of robes of honour by the Persian king and *Epic Histories* III.21 with Garsoian's note, p.266 n.19, for another case of the removing of a diadem by a Persian king.
speeches, however: for Kavadh would hardly need to be told where the city was in the first place.76

The statement of al-Mundhir (xvii.34) that the route to Antioch was not fortified and was devoid of imperial forces seems largely accurate; although Justinian had installed troops in Palmyra (Mal. p.426) at the start of his reign, they hardly stood between the invaders and Antioch. The matter of how fortified the cities along the Euphrates were is less straightforward, however.

While Callinicum and the cities higher up the Euphrates may not have been repaired until the 540s, it is generally thought that Circesium, the frontier post at the junction of the Khabur and Euphrates, was refortified early in Justinian's reign, between 527 and 532. It seems more probable, however, that in this instance al-Mundhir's statement is correct. Malalas specifically states that the Persians invaded the Roman empire by way of Circesium (p.461), and that Belisarius only heard of the incursion once the invaders had reached Callinicum. Now although Azarethes could have bypassed the place even if it had been strongly fortified and had a dux stationed there, this would have left his rear dangerously exposed. Furthermore, while it is true that Khosro bypassed the city in his attack in 540 (Wars II.v.2-3), Procopius reports here that the city was protected by the rivers Aborras (Khabur) and Euphrates on two sides, and by a wall on the other: but when it had been refortified by Justinian, the whole city was enclosed by a wall (de Aed. II.vi.7-9). Thus this passage in the Wars actually supports the view that it was only after Khosro's invasion that Justinian upgraded the fortifications at Circesium, and installed a dux there. Moreover, it is odd to suppose that only Circesium was fortified and made a centre for troops between 527 and 532, when no other cities along the Euphrates were strengthened, and no attacks expected from that quarter. Consequently al-Mundhir's assertions on the defenceless state of the Euphrates should be accepted.77

Procopius next turns to consider al-Mundhir himself (xvii.40-46), and describes his successes in raiding the eastern provinces. His competence is given high praise, and the

76 Shahid, 'Procopius and Arethas', p.370; parallels between the sentiments concerning fortune expressed at xvii.30-32 can be found in Thuc. VII.66.2-3 and 67.4.

77 On Callinicum, de Aed. II.vii.17 and cf. Whitby 'Notes', pp.93-94; cp. Sura, II.ix.1-2, where it is explicit that it was fortified after Khosro's invasion. On Circesium, Stein II, p.289 holds for a date early in Justinian's reign, as does Whitby, 'Development', p.727, though at p.725 he notes the absence of a garrison there from the fifth century.
length of his rule noted: Procopius' figure of 50 years squares well with Arabic traditions on al-Mundhir's reign, which is put at 49 years by Hisam. It is known that he was killed in June 554 near Kinnasrin (Chalcis), and hence that he came to the throne around 505; in the early stages of his reign, the power of the Kindites had caused some difficulties for the Lakhmids, but he had conducted a bold raid in 519/20 against the Antioch area nonetheless. It was probably on this occasion that he captured the two Roman generals mentioned by Procopius (xvii.44), who were soon ransomed by the Romans. He eliminated his enemy and father-in-law al-Harith the Kindite in 528, and again launched a razzia against the Antioch region in 529; the number of prisoners captured in this expedition is remarked on by Malalas (p.445), though some were subsequently bought back for a large sum (p.460). Worth noting is the similarity between the descriptions by Procopius and Cyril of Scythopolis of al-Mundhir: the former states that he ...καὶ τοὺς ἀνθρωποὺς κατὰ πολλὰς ἁδεὶς μυριάδας ἀνδραποδίζων καὶ... (xvii.41), while the latter describes the chief's razzias thus: ...καὶ κατὰ πολλὰς μυριάδας Ρωμαίους ἀνδραποδίζων καὶ... (V. Sabae, p.211.18). Given the tendency to criticise Procopius for exaggerating al-Mundhir's prowess to contrast with al-Harith's incompetence, it is significant that his sentiments were shared by another contemporary.78

Malalas' description of the 529 raid bears out Procopius' description of the inability of the Roman commanders to deal with these razzias (p.445, the Saracens flee across the limes before the generals can intercept them, cp. xvii.42). His ability to concentrate his forces and attack when he chose (xvii.45-46) was a major advantage: whenever the Romans launched a retaliatory raid, several Arab commanders are always named, whereas no rivals to al-Mundhir are recorded. In 531, moreover, Khusro invested him with Bahrain, Oman and Yamama, helping to secure Persian control over traders in the

78 Length of al-Mundhir's reign, G. Rothstein, *Die Dynastie der Lakhmiden in al-Hira*, p.70, cf. Shahid, 'Arethas the son of Jabala', *JAOS* 75 (1955), p.211 n.37, where he describes Procopius' figures as 'surprisingly accurate', while mistakenly giving the dates as 505-555; also Nöldeke, *Tabari*, pp.169-170 and p.169 n.4. Whether this indicates that Proc. was writing this passage after al-Mundhir's death, i.e. after June 554 (cf. xvii.48), may be doubted; more probably, he is approximating, and making a lucky guess. Worthy of note too is Cyril's description of al-Mundhir as possessing the ἀξιωματικοῦς (V. Ioh. Hesychastes, p.211), having received it from Kavadh. On the terror inspired by al-Mundhir in the east, cf. La vie ancienne de Syméon Syllète le jeune, vol.1, ed. P. Van den Ven, Brussels 1962, ch.186, pp.104-105.

Despite the verbal similarity of Cyril and Proc., it may be doubted whether the former (writing later in the 550s, cf. A.J. Festugière, *Les Moines de Palestine* 1, Paris 1962, p.26) was making use of the latter.
Persian Gulf.\textsuperscript{79}

In order to counter al-Mundhir, Justinian elevated al-Harith to a higher rank than the other phylarchs of the Romans (xvii.47), and although Procopius provides no date for this event, it is generally placed in 529. Al-Harith has attracted much discussion, notably by Irfan Shahid, and in this passage (as elsewhere) he clearly emerges as inferior to his arch-rival.\textsuperscript{80} His father Jabala had been defeated by Romanus during an incursion made into Roman territory in 502, after which the Ghassanids had taken the place of the Salih as the primary allies of Rome on the desert frontier.\textsuperscript{81} Previous to his elevation, al-Harith had taken part in the reprisal raid of 528, and had probably helped to suppress the Samaritan revolt in 529.\textsuperscript{82} Now he was endowed with some sort of supreme command over his fellow phylarchs, of a type which had so far not been attempted; the other phylarchs remained in place, however, and may not have been gratified by the promotion of one among them. It appears from Procopius’ text (xvii.47) that al-Harith remained phylarch of Arabia as well as exercising more general control over other phylarchs stationed elsewhere.\textsuperscript{83}

\textsuperscript{79} On al-Mundhir’s reign, see Rothstein, pp.79-86; on the extension of his power to Bahrain and the Persian Gulf, Shahid, ‘The Arabs in the peace treaty of A.D. 561’, p.194 and Potts, The Arabian Gulf in Antiquity, vol.2, p.249. On Timostratus and John, PLRE II, s.v. Timostratus and Ioannes 70. The negotiations to free them were carried out by Abraham at Ramla around 520/1, cf. ch.5 n.7. Roman retaliatory raids, Mal. pp.435, 441 (only one phylarch on p.441, but different from those at p.435).


\textsuperscript{82} Al-Harith’s career is recounted in Shahid, ‘The Patriciate’, ‘Arethas’, and ‘Procopius and Arethas’, also now BASIC I; on the phylarch involved in quelling the Samaritan revolt, q.v. ch.5 n.28. On the functions of a phylarch, cf. the useful discussion of Isaac, pp.243-249.

\textsuperscript{83} On al-Harith’s phylarchate of Arabia, which is clearly what Procopius’ ev ἀπὰΒως (xvii.47) means, cf. Shahid, ‘Arethas son of Jabalah’, pp.209-210, where he argues that he was originally phylarch of Palaestina II, and given Arabia after the death of al-Harith the Kindite, also Sartre, p.152; cf. Shahid, ‘Patriciate’, p.340, where he notes Nöldeke’s error in believing that al-Harith only became phylarch of Arabia in 536 (Nov. 102).

Procopius' assertion that the granting of the title βασιλεὺς was unprecedented for the Romans (xvii.47) is something of an over-statement, if he is not confining himself to the Arabs: kings in the West were recognised as such, though they might be called rex rather than βασιλεὺς. But too much attention has been focused on Procopius' precise words here, since he merely states that this was the ἀξιωμα of al-Harith, rather than his specific title. It is the case, however, that such an elevation is without obvious parallel. Shahid contests that the example of Odenathus was well known to Procopius, and that he had been called king of kings by the Romans. Moreover, while Procopius is aware of Odenathus (II.v.5-6), his claim here is not inaccurate, since it was Odenathus himself or his descendants who bestowed the title rather than the Emperor: in fact, he was styled ἐπαυρθωτης by Gallienus around 271.

Procopius' verdict on al-Harith and his effectiveness in counterbalancing the redoubtable al-Mundhir is extremely negative, especially in light of the fact that al-Harith in fact finally defeated his adversary in battle in 554. He emerges as a traitor in Procopius' account at both Callinicum and in Belisarius' Assyrian campaign of 541, and the suspicion has arisen therefore that he may have been selected as a scapegoat for Belisarius' failures in both cases. The first of these two instances will be examined below; the assertion that nothing certain is known about him (xvii.48) perhaps reflects a lack of information among Belisarius' entourage, since Justinian would hardly have not extend to Palæstina III, the phylarch of which was still under the Emperor's control, cf. Stein II, p.297 n.2 and Shahid. BASIC I. VI. VII. 'The Two Basileias: Ghassanid and Byzantine', and VIII (who discusses the extent of al-Harith's command in detail).

84 On the title, Nöldeke. Ghassanischen Fürsten, is unnecessarily sceptical, pp.12-13, and is wrong in stating that it was only applied to the Emperor - this was not the case until 629, cf. Shahid. 'Arethas son of Jabalah', p.212. As Sartre, p.171 notes, Proc. only uses the term βασιλεὺς of al-Harith once, and it is doubtful whether he was ever officially so called, cp. PLRE III. s.v. Arethas.

Shahid. BASIC 1. 'First War of Justinian'. VI, however argues that al-Harith was made βασιλεὺς, because this was a looser term than ἀρχιψαλατῆς and would not create friction with the Roman eastern command; he discusses the title further in VII. 'The Two Basileias: Ghassanid and Byzantine'. He prefers to play down Proc.'s reference only to ἀξιωμα βασιλεὺς, contra Chrysos. 'The title βασιλεὺς in early Byzantine international relations'. DOP 32 (1978), pp.47-51: Shahid replied in 'On the titulature of the Emperor Heraclius'. Byzantion 51 (1981), pp.290-291. Q.v. also n.78 for Cyril of Scythopolis' reference to the ἀξιωμα βασιλεὺς.

appointed an unknown quantity to such a major position. The *duces* further south will have had more contact with him, especially if he was involved in the suppression of the Samaritan revolt.86

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At the start of xviii Procopius returns to his narrative of the 531 campaign, which culminated in the battle at Callinicum. While he concentrates on the battle itself, Malalas provides more details on the Roman response to the Persian invasion, though his account of the actual battle is extremely unsatisfactory.87

Procopius initially repeats what has been said at xvii.1-3; his statement (xviii.2) that the Persians invaded through Assyria is of little assistance in trying to work out their line of attack, on account of the vagueness of the term. Belisarius' precautions in guarding the cities of Mesopotamia (xviii.4) were vindicated by the failure of a Persian attack on Dara noted in the *de Aedificiis*, which probably occurred in 531.88 There is an apparent discrepancy in the troop figures given by Procopius (xviii.5) and Malalas (p.461), since the latter states that Belisarius came with 8000 troops from Mesopotamia, as well as 5000 Saracens under al-Harith; but the matter is easily resolved, since Procopius' 20,000 clearly refers to the whole combined force, after the arrival of Hermogenes and the

86 Shahid, 'Procopius and Arethas' is the central work on Procopius' alleged bias against al-Harith; note, however, that at II.xxviii.12-14 a victory over al-Mundhir is recorded. At pp.366-369 Shahid suggests that Justinian too comes under criticism in this section, on account of his choice of such a feeble opponent for al-Mundhir; but since Proc. accepts that al-Mundhir's advantage lay in his supreme command, he is surely not criticising the idea of some sort of supreme phylarch at any rate (*contra* Shahid). Rubin, *PVK*, col.373, considers that the Roman counter-measures have the air of a satire, which is unconvincing. It is true that by 554 the Romans should have had adequate information on al-Harith ('Procopius and Arethas', p.367), but this phrase must have been written before then; Christides, 'Saracens' prodosia in Byzantine sources', p.8 n.3, takes Proc. to be referring to lack of knowledge up to this point in the narrative - a possible interpretation.


88 Vagueness of Assyria, Rubin *PVK* col.372; on the possible attack on Dara, q.v. ch.5 n.42.
other duces. Moreover, Malalas refers to two further contingents of 4000 men each (p.462), which joined Belisarius at Barbalissus, bringing his total up to 21,000 altogether. Procopius' information on the commanders of the contingents (xviii.6) implies that Belisarius had taken only cavalry with him from Mesopotamia, which would explain how he was able to reach Chalcis so swiftly. Since neither the Isaurians nor Peter were mentioned at Dara, it may be inferred that they had joined Belisarius in Euphratesia; they had probably accompanied Hermogenes to his junction with Belisarius at Barbalissus. Stephanacius, one of the Isaurian leaders according to Procopius (xviii.7), is reported by Malalas (p.463) to have died in battle; he gives the names of the Isaurian leaders as Dorotheus and Mamas. But although he mentions more commanders than Procopius at the battle, he is clearly confused as to who was in charge of what contingent, and Procopius is undoubtedly more reliable in this case.89

Procopius reports that Belisarius' army mustered at Chalcis, thus blocking the route west to Antioch. The Persians, encamped at Gabbulon, determined to withdraw when they heard this (xviii.8-10). It is at this point that Malalas (pp.462-463) sheds considerably more light on the circumstances of the Persian retreat, and the feuds within the Roman camp. For while he agrees with Procopius over the Persians being situated at Gabbulon, he places Belisarius at Barbalissus; Sunicas, termed a dux by Malalas, launched an attack upon the invaders on his own initiative, which led to a rift with Belisarius. In the meantime, Hermogenes arrived at Hierapolis, and hastened with reinforcements to Barbalissus to reconcile the two commanders. The Persians had pressed northwards from Gabbulon, however, penetrating as far as Bathnae, on the road

89 Stein II, p.292 n.2, on the troop figures; Rubin, ZI pp.500-501 n.882, on Mal.'s unreliability regarding names and contingents, despite the confidence of e.g. Sotiriadis, p.122. He reckons that the Isaurians were in fact freshly recruited Lycaonians (cf. Proc. xviii.40), perhaps to be identified with the Lycoeranes mentioned at p.445. This may have explain Mal.'s confusion over their leaders; his Phrygians, p.464, may also refer to the Lycaonians/Isaurians. Proc. usually names the Isaurians apart from the other Roman troops; generally their performance was better than here, cf. V.ix at the siege of Naples.

The Peter named at xviii.6 should not be confused with Petrus 27 in PLRE II, who campaigned in Lazica; he is Petrus 2, PLRE III. Mal.'s Dorotheus probably refers to the commander who was on the right wing at Dara (despite PLRE III, which distinguishes Dorotheus 1, the commander at Dara from Dorotheus 3 at Callinicum), while Mamas is an uncertain reading in any case, cf. PLRE III, s.v. Mamas.

It is odd that Proc. does not mention the absence of Bouzes, who, according to Zach. IX.4, was ill at Amida, and consequently sent his nephew Domenantius in his stead to defend Agbasek; he was captured by the Persians. By xxi.5 (September/October) Bouzes was at Martyropolis, cf. PLRE III, s.v. Buzes.
between Beroea and Hierapolis. Here it seems that they were forced to turn back by the Romans, and their retreat began. It is difficult to give a more detailed account of this stage of the campaign than this; Procopius' Chalcis and Malalas' Barbalissus are by no means mutually exclusive, for Belisarius may well have taken up position in the more western city initially, blocking the way towards Antioch, and then moved to Barbalissus, threatening the Persian rear, when it became clear that the Persians were heading north rather than west. Sunicas may then have been left in charge of Chalcis, from where the Hun made his attack against the invaders.90

The Persian attack had effectively petered out at Gabbulon, once it became clear that there was no possibility of capturing Antioch. The invaders did not retreat at once, however, but devastated the surrounding area, capturing Gabbulon, and pressed a little further north; Malalas' account is somewhat unclear at this point, since he twice refers to Gabbulon, though only on the second occasion do the Persians attempt to take the town (pp.461-462). The only solution to this is that the Persians skirted Gabbulon on their way north, preferring to move swiftly rather than be detained in storming a town, and that they stopped to besiege it upon their return from the Bathnae region. While the Antiochenes proceeded to abandon their city, the Persians set about trying to escape from the Roman net: the fear attributed to the invaders (xvii.9) is hardly unjustified, since the places named in Malalas and Procopius form a neat triangle around the Persian area of operations, bounded by Hierapolis, Chalcis and Barbalissus. There was thus a serious risk of being surrounded by the Romans.91

The failure of Procopius to report the differences between the Roman commanders is difficult to explain; later in his history, he does not hesitate to tell of the differences between officers, including Belisarius. It is possible that in this case he did not believe that these disagreements were responsible for the defeat to such an extent as the

90 Rubin, ZI p.498 n.865, prefers Chalcis to Barbalissus, but there is no need to choose between them. Belisarius' anger at Sunicas was quite justified, cp. the disastrous effects of the insubordination of Isaac during the siege of Rome in the 540s, VII.xix.24-34. On this Bathnae, to be distinguished from the Batnae of Osrhoene, cf. RE III (1899), col.124, s.v. Batnae and Rubin, ZI p.499 n.867; Gabbulon lies about 48 km from Chalcis as the crow flies, so Proc. appears to have rather underestimated the distance in this case, cf. ZI pp.498-499 n.865, though allowance must be made for the greater length of the Proc.'s stade, q.v. ch.4 n.107. Chapot equates the 110 stades with 12-13 miles, p.344 (misinterpreting the Procopian stade).

91 Shaht, BAFIC, p.29 and n.29, notes the similarity between Proc.'s description of the Saracens' fear at this point and that in Socrates VII.18 (the 421 invasion).
insubordination of the troops and the treachery of al-Harith, whereas in later cases the lack of co-ordination between commanders clearly led directly to defeat. In their accounts of the battle itself, however, Procopius far outshines Malalas, though the latter has on occasion been preferred.92

Belisarius insisted upon shadowing the retreating Persian army (xviii.9-11), refusing to engage them. It is highly likely that the troops who had joined him in Euphratesia were critical of this refusal to join battle, on the grounds that they had now the opportunity to avenge not only the damage caused in this incursion, but also in al-Mundhir’s numerous other razzias; and the troops who had won the battle at Dara may have been encouraged by this success to view Belisarius as needlessly cautious (xviii.12).93

Where the Persians were planning to proceed from Callinicum is uncertain; al-Mundhir may have intended to head south, leaving Azarethes to continue east across the Euphrates towards Singara, passing through the deserted regions south of Thannuris (xviii.13). Clearly Procopius believes that they no longer wished to follow the Euphrates, presumably to avoid returning by exactly the way they had come. Our sources are at any rate unanimous concerning the date of the battle - 19 April, Easter Saturday - and its location, opposite the city of Callinicum. But while Zachariah (IX.4) and Procopius (viii.15) stress the date, and the fact that the Romans were consequently weakened on account of their fasting, Malalas omits any mention of this. Zachariah and Procopius also emphasise Belisarius’ unwillingness to engage in battle, though Zachariah attributes the initiative to fight to the Persian commander.94

It is interesting to note that Procopius’ only reference to Hermogenes in this campaign places him in agreement with Belisarius regarding the undesirability of bringing the

92 Proc.’s reporting of disputes between commanders, conspicuous in the Gothic Wars, seems to start in Wars IV, when Belisarius returns to Constantinople following rumours concerning his loyalty (IV.viii.1-7); for an example of his account of disputes, cf. II.xxv.16-20 and xviii.16-26 (probably written after BV). Sotiriadis, p.122, prefers Mal., while Kirchner, p.16, prefers Proc., cp. Rubin, ZI, pp.500-501 n.882, on Mal.’s failings.

93 Cf. Rubin, ZI pp.500-501 n.882, on the hostility to Belisarius at the imperial court and among the Antiochenes.

94 On the sparseness of the population of southern Osroene, cf. Ammianus XIV.3.4; also de Aed. II.vi.12-16, where a few forts in roughly this area (but extending as far north as Resaina) are mentioned.
invaders to battle (xviii.16); for Malalas’ account, probably derived from Hermogenes’ report to the Emperor, is noticeably partial to the Huns and hostile to Belisarius. Belisarius’ speech (xviii.17-23) allows Procopius to set out the disadvantages under which the Romans laboured in this battle, and helps to exculpate their commander from failing to repeat his success of the previous year; its general thrust - the undesirability of engaging the enemy - is sound, and Belisarius’ one mistake on this campaign was to heed the demands of his soldiers.

His speech was met with contempt, however, and he was forced to give way to the wishes of his troops; Procopius’ description of the scene gives the impression of that of an eyewitness, particularly his use of ἐὰν οἴκει (xviii.25). This introduces some doubt as to whether Belisarius’ aim was indeed to prepare the troops for battle; it is possible to imagine that, like Nicias in the debate over Pylos (Thuc. IV.28), he decided to call the bluff of his opponent(s), and yield to their demand. But this did not cool their ardour, and he was forced to put a brave face on Roman prospects. Procopius’ attitude to Belisarius’ volte face is not so obvious as some have assumed: this is apparent from the different verdicts that have been reached concerning it. Some have seen him as doing his best to defend Belisarius from any criticism, while others have regarded him as being unimpressed with his general’s change of mind. It is perhaps significant that it is from Zachariah (IX.4) that we know that there was an adverse wind for the Romans, which Procopius could easily have mentioned when discussing the exchange of missiles at xviii.31-35 (especially since he had noted the wind favouring the Romans at Dara, xiv.36). Thus he could have included at least one more detail to excuse the Roman defeat; and, unlike Malalas, he does not conceal that the Romans were beaten, even if he emphasises the hollowness of the victory. His aim would then appear to have been merely to avoid Belisarius being held responsible for having brought about a Roman defeat, and to make clear his success in preventing the defeat from turning into a

95 Cf. Kirchner, p.14, on Mal. using Hermogenes’ report, Bury, HLRE II, p.87 n.2, E. Jeffreys, ‘Malalas’ sources’ in Studies in Malalas, pp.209-210, and q.v. n.3; Rubin, PVK col.373, for Proc.’s hostility to Hermogenes.

96 Rubin, ZI pp.500-501 n.882, on Belisarius’ mistake. Gyippus’ speech, Thuc. VII.66-68, deals with a similar topic - battle with a retreating enemy - but argues quite the reverse.
Procopius' account of the Roman disposition is perfectly credible (xviii.26-27); Malalas (p.463) puts the Romans on the southern side of the Euphrates as well, but places the river behind them, rather than on their side. It is extremely improbable, however, that Belisarius would array his troops in such a dangerous position, even if boats were available. Despite its confused nature, Malalas' account can be of some assistance in supplementing Procopius. Thus it would appear that the Isaurians were also stationed on the Roman right: Malalas refers to them being positioned there, and later refers to Phrygians in the same place. Either the Phrygians and the Isaurians should therefore be identified, or the two contingents may have fought side by side; Malalas is probably confused also when he refers to Apskal (Procopius' Ascan) as their leader. Procopius' positioning of Peter and the infantry on the left should be preferred to Malalas' statement that Sunicas and Simmas were stationed there; it is of course possible that Sunicas and Simmas were stationed next to Peter's men, while Ascan's may have been on the right side of the central section (diagram: phase 1). Belisarius' men would thus have held the central section of the Roman centre; in general, however, our picture of this battle is considerably less clear than that at Dara. Azarethes for his part stationed al-Mundhir furthest from the river, while he placed his own cavalry in the centre, and his infantry on the right, opposite that of the Romans (xviii.30).

The battle began with the customary exchange of missiles, in which Procopius insists that the Persians were at a disadvantage. This is in accord with his praise for the Roman archers in i.15, but in contradiction to the Strategikon. The author of the Strategikon (I.1, pp.74-76) is aware of both Roman and Persian techniques with the bow, yet advises the Romans to come to close quarters with the Persians as soon as possible once they are

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97 Differing modern views: Kirchner, p.14 sees Proc. as unimpressed by Belisarius' indecision, while Rubin, Ptk col.373, regards Proc. as defending Belisarius to the hilt. Propagandism of Mal.: Kirchner, pp.14-16, who also notes Proc.'s failure to try to disguise the defeat to exculpate Belisarius further. For a similar case of a Roman commander unwillingly following his troops' desire for battle, cf. Tacitus, Hist. II.18 (Vestricius Spurinna in A.D. 69): he reluctantly acquiesces to the soldiers' demands, and finally pretends that he too wishes to fight. A parallel in Justinian's day may be found in Corippus' Johannis VI.478-505, on John Troglita's reluctance to fight against the Moors in 547; his troops insist, and are heavily defeated, cf. PLRE III, s.v. Ioannes qui et Troglita 36.

98 See Rubin, ZI pp.500-501 n.882, for criticism of Mal. and praise for Proc.'s accuracy; he also there suggests the identification of the Phrygians with the Isaurians and Apskal with Ascan, q.v. nn.34 and 89.
within bowshot (XI.1, p.358). In general the exchange of missile fire appears to have had little impact on the course of battles on the Persian front, since both sides were accustomed to archery (unlike the Goths).99

According to Procopius two thirds of the day was spent in the exchange of arrows (xviii.35), though there was no doubt some mêlée between the two sides (cf. xviii.31), before the Persian breakthrough in the south occurred. Malalas’ detail concerning the Persian attack on Sunicas and Simmas may have been part of this limited combat before the Persians gained the decisive advantage. This the Persians achieved by employing a similar device to that used at Dara, concentrating their forces on one flank; on this occasion, it proved effective, and the Arabs and Isaurians were unable to withstand their onslaught (xviii.36, cp. Mal. p.463). The majority of al-Harith’s men took flight at this point, though (according to Malalas) their chief valiantly stood his ground. Both Procopius (xviii.36) and Malalas (p.464) mention the suspicion that there was treachery among the Arabs, and for this reason they fled so quickly; doubtless this was felt at the

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The battle of Callinicum: phase 2

time, and advanced by both Belisarius and Hermogenes as a contributory factor to their defeat, but it is possible that the Arabs genuinely were overcome by the Persian attack. Al-Harith's conduct seems to have been commendable, and it should be noted that Procopius does not express an opinion regarding the rumour of the Arabs' treachery, let alone accuse al-Harith himself. Nevertheless, given his appraisal of the phylarch at xvii.48, it may be felt that the implication is sufficient.¹⁰⁰

The Roman right wing, both the Saracens and the Isaurians, thus collapsed under the impact of the Persian charge. They were thus able to set about enveloping the Roman position, causing the whole army to move north in an attempt to escape across the river. There were exceptions, however, most notably Ascan, who may have been the first to bear the brunt of the Persian attack once the left wing had disintegrated (diagram:

¹⁰⁰ Rubin, ZI, p.287, countenances the possibility of treachery on the part of the Arabs; it is vigorously rejected by Shahid, 'Procopius and Arethas', pp.44-48 and BAS/C I, XI. He rightly points to al-Harith's subsequent role in meeting Sittas with his forces in Amida in the same year, which strongly suggests that he was not viewed as a traitor, and indeed, as Shahid argues, he had little to gain from betraying the Romans. Other phylarchs, perhaps jealous of his position ('Procopius and Arethas', p.55), may have sought to undermine his position, however. On Abrus (Mal. p.463), cf. Shahid, 'Byzantium and Kinda', BZ 53 (1960), p.67 n.19 and Nöldeke, Ghassanischen Fürsten, p.17; also PLRE III, s.v. Abrus.
phases two and three). The Roman army hence changed its facing by ninety degrees: both Malalas and Procopius refer to the river ending up at the backs of the Roman troops (Mal p.463, Proc. xviii.44), so that encirclement was no longer possible. Belisarius' tactics of fighting an infantry battle here were clearly the best means available to him of preventing further casualties, and ensuring that the most troops possible reached safety along the Euphrates as possible (diagram: phase four). The infantry formation described by Procopius (xviii.46) resembles one in the Strategikon on the drilling of infantry to resist enemy cavalry charges. It is unlikely that by this stage Belisarius' troops had kept hold of their lances with which to fend off the Persian horse, but the bowmen protected by the shield wall would have been able to inflict considerable damage on the attackers. The discipline of the infantry which remained on the south bank is attested by their steadfastness in the face of the enemy charges; the technique of clashing shields to distress enemy horses (xviii.48) was often employed in the ancient world. Malalas' insistence that Belisarius was among the first to take flight has seldom been treated seriously, and is rightly viewed as reflecting the hostility of his source, who

101 Proc. xviii.38 seems to indicate that Ascan's Huns were adjacent to the Isaurians.
prefers to exalt the bravery of Sunicas and Simmas. While the exploits of these Huns are passed over by Procopius, they are clearly not incompatible with his account, although they have been exaggerated to such an extent as to seem as if they actually achieved a victory over the Persians.\textsuperscript{102}

The final discrepancy between the two comes over the aftermath of the engagement: Procopius (xviii.50) claims that the Romans only arrived at Callinicum on the day after the battle, having passed the night on the island on which they had sought refuge, while Malalas (p.465) asserts that the Romans arrived at Callinicum on the day of the battle, having pursued the Persians for two miles. Again, the propagandistic version of Malalas must be rejected in favour of Procopius' more plausible account, just as Procopius' statement that the Persians despoiled the corpses, rather than the Romans, should also be preferred. As has been pointed out, it is unlikely that the Romans could have despoiled the Persian corpses on the day after the battle, since they would have been in

\textsuperscript{102} \textit{Strategikon} XII.16 (pp.442-444) for the close infantry formation, cp. XI.1, p.356, on the Persians being disturbed by a close infantry formation, and Περὶ Σπαρτηνας 36. On Mal.'s bias here, q.v. nn.95 and 97. Some have given his account greater credence, however, cf. E. Jeffreys, 'Malalas and his sources', \textit{Studies in Malalas}, p.210, and Shahid, \textit{BAS/C} I, XI.
Procopius' details on Azarethes' poor reception at the Persian court (xviii.54-56) point up the strategic failure of the Persians: they had won a bloody victory over Belisarius, and indeed secured his removal from the front, but had little tangible to show for their bold venture. Gabbulon had been captured, but although some have criticised Procopius for underplaying Persian successes in this campaign, it was hardly a significant place.104

(f) The final negotiations (xxi-xxii)

Hermogenes' visit to the Persian court just after the battle (xxi.1) was by no means the only diplomatic initiative to take place at this point: al-Mundhir also opened negotiations with Justinian, and at some stage Rufinus and Strategius set off to meet Kavadh, though they got no further than Edessa on account of his unwillingness to receive them (Mal. pp.466-467). Kavadh appears to have been determined to gain more bargaining-counters before he attempted to come to terms with the Romans.105

Belisarius was relieved of his command (xxi.2) as a result of the failure at Callinicum, and his defeat at Minduos may also have been taken into account (Zach. IX.6). His removal marks a triumph of expediency over justice: he was clearly unpopular in the Eastern provinces, and this is reflected to a large extent by Malalas' account of Callinicum as well as the behaviour of his troops before the battle. Consequently Justinian's decision to replace him need by no means reflect the Emperor's opinion of the general, and it is interesting that he did not instantly dismiss Belisarius when he heard of the outcome of the battle: instead, Constantiulus was sent out to find out the details, and only after this was Belisarius recalled (Mal. p.466). Procopius' reference to the command against the Vandals is generally seen as an attempt to cover up the negative aspect of Belisarius' recall; for it was not until two years later, and following the

103 Kirchner, p.15, points out the implausibility in Malalas' version; Rubin, ZI p.286, considers that both sides plundered the battlefield in turn on the Easter Sunday.

104 Kirchner, p.14, criticises Proc. for omitting the taking of Gabbulon; but as Rubin, ZI p.288, notes, it was scarcely an important place. Cp. Azarethes' reception with the demotion of Peroz at xvii.26-28.

105 Q.v. ch.5 n.40 on these negotiations.
Nika riots, that the expedition to North Africa was despatched.106

The question remains as to who succeeded Belisarius in the post of *magister militum per Orientem*: Malalas' statement, that it was Mundus (p.466), is usually accepted, yet is extremely improbable. For he had only been appointed *magister militum per Illyricum* in 529, and when he was present in Constantinople in January 532 Procopius actually designates him as holding this same post (xxiv.40). Moreover, there is no other evidence that Mundus ever served east of Constantinople, and his appointment to an eastern command would prima facie be extremely surprising: there was no shortage of distinguished commanders in the East at this time. Zachariah (IX.6) reports that Constantinus was Belisarius' successor, but this is almost certainly a mistake for Constantiolum, Justinian's investigator of the defeat at Callinicum. Procopius, on the other hand (xxi.3), states that Sittas was sent by Justinian to guard the east, and this might imply that Sittas was Belisarius' successor. Three possibilities exist then: first, Sittas took charge of the eastern provinces without actually taking up the position of *magister militum per Orientem*, which thus remained vacant until Belisarius received it again before the Vandalic war (III.xi.18). Second, Sittas indeed received the position, in place of his post as *magister militum praesentalis*. Or third, Mundus was invested with the command, albeit very briefly, and never visited the front; likewise, when Belisarius was restored to the post, it was for an expedition to the west, rather than a return to the East.107

Procopius does not mention the Persian assault on Abgersaton in Osrhoene (Mal. pp.465-466), which cannot be identified with the offensive against Martyropolis reported here (xxi.5-10). No date is assigned to the attack on Martyropolis, but it clearly took place late in 531. Zachariah provides some background to Persian operations in the area of Sophanene, noting how Bessas had defeated the forces of Gadar the Kadisene and


107 Stein II, p.293, accepts Mundus' appointment, also *PLRE* III, s.v. Mundus; Stein, loc. cit. n.1 for the dismissal of Zach.'s Constantinus. *PLRE* III, s.v. Constantinus 3, however, believes that the Constantine who later tried to assassinate Belisarius received an eastern field command in the East at this point. Kirchner, p.16, also accepts the succession of Mundus, as does Bury, *HLRE* p.87; Rubin, however, *ZJ* p.289, thinks his appointment unlikely, though proposes no alternative. I cannot see the irony in Proc.'s description of Justinian's command to Sittas, which is noted by Rubin, *PvK* col.374; Sittas (Mal. p.465), positioned himself at Samosata.
the nephew of the ḧdēuḵh, Yadzgerd. At a battle somewhere on the Tigris, probably in the vicinity of Martyropolis, Gadar was killed and Yadzgerd captured; Bessas went on to ravage Persian territory in Arzanene (Zach. IX.5). This spurred on the ḧdēuḵh to launch a major attack on Martyropolis, for which he recruited Huns through Mihr-Girowi (perhaps Procopius’ Mermeroes), and besieged Bessas and Bouzes in the city (IX.6).108

The line of the Persian attack is unclear: Procopius states that Martyropolis was in Sophanene (xxi.6), yet insists that the Persians invaded Mesopotamia. Martyropolis could however be reached easily through Persian held Arzanene, although it is possible that they instead traversed the Tur Abdin northwards, approaching the city from the south rather than the east. The only commander in the Persian army not previously named is Khanaranges (xxi.4), which is probably yet another instance of Procopius mistaking a title for a name, though at some stage it did indeed become a proper name.109

It is likely that one reason for the Persian attack on Martyropolis, apart from its provocative position close to the frontier (xxi.6), was the repair and strengthening work which had been undertaken there during the war: it had recently received a dux - Bessas - who had proved an energetic opponent to the Persians. According to Malalas (p.427), Justinian had restored the city in 528, and installed a numerus there, so it is likely that the work on the city described in de Aed. III.ii had been carried out by this point. If this is the case, Procopius has distorted matters somewhat in this case by emphasising the poor state of the city’s defences (xxi.7-8). This may be due in part to a desire to stress the weakness of the Roman position in the east after Belisarius’ recall, and the unambitious conduct of Sittas and Hermogenes, but may also reflect the unpreparedness of the city for a siege at this time, when the Romans were seeking to come to terms with

108 Zach. places the battle at Beth Helte on the Tigris, which he puts only four stades from Martyropolis; clearly there is something wrong in the text here, since nowhere on the Tigris could be only four stades from Martyropolis. Zach.’s account is probably (despite the discrepancy in the figures for the number of troops involved) to be identified with Mal.’s entry (pp.468-469), which also reports a Roman victory on the Nymphius near Amida; he also notes the capture of Persian leaders, which accords with Zach.’s report on Yadzgerd falling into Roman hands. On Mermeroes and Mihr-Girowi, q.v. n.52.

109 Proc. v.4 equates the position of kanārān̄g with that of a στρατηγός, q.v. ch.3 n.89. Despite PLRE II, s.v. Bessas, p.226. Martyropolis was never situated in Mesopotamia.
Meanwhile Sittas attempted to draw off the Persians by threatening their rear from Atachas, about 20 km to the north of Martyropolis. Hermogenes, having returned to Constantinople after failing to open negotiations with Kavadh earlier in the year (xxi.1), now accompanied Sittas (xxi.9). Sittas, having joined forces with al-Harith at Amida on his way from Samosata (Zach. IX.6, cp. Mal. p.470), was unwilling to engage the Persians in battle: Roman morale was doubtless still low after the defeat in April, and it could be expected that the Persians would retreat soon in any case, since it was already late in the year (October or November). His cautious tactics soon paid off for a variety of reasons.\footnote{On the fortifications at Martyropolis, see Whitby 'Development', p.727, Howard-Johnston, 'Citharizon', p.220. Whitby, 'Martyropolis', p.182, prefers to accept Proc.'s account in the de Aed. to that in the \textit{Bella} in this case. Since the campaigning season was over by this time (Zach. IX.6 on Sittas joining al-Harith in October or November), this might also help to explain the unpreparedness of the city. Mal.'s account of the siege, p.470, gives the impression that the Persians certainly had a chance of taking it. Rubin, \textit{PoK} col.378, on Proc. emphasising the weakness of Hermogenes and Sittas.}

Procopius' digression concerning the \textit{katako}p\textit{oi} explains how the Persian besiegers were at length induced to withdraw from Martyropolis (xxi.11-16); the activities of Roman spies or scouts had already been reported in xv.4-6, but here Justinian is able to achieve a considerable success through the defection of a Persian agent. It would appear that the Persians had attempted to recruit Sabirs rather earlier in 531, since the Persian scout would have required some time to reach Justinian at Constantinople and then return to the Persian army outside Martyropolis. There is a resemblance between this episode and an incident reported in the chroniclers under 522: then Justin had tricked Kavadh into massacring a Hunnic army, which the Emperor had persuaded him was going to defect to the Roman side. The two cannot, of course, be identified, but if the chroniclers' reports are accurate, the fickleness of the Huns was exploited adroitly by the Romans on more than one occasion. In this case, the Huns indeed arrived, though not

\footnote{Atachas lies 20 km north of Martyropolis, so Proc.'s 100 stades seem rather excessive (particularly for his stade); note also that Amida is said to lie slightly less than one day's walk from Martyropolis in \textit{de Aed.} III.ii.1, and in fact lies about 75 km away. The alternative is that Proc. is not referring to the Atachas north of Martyropolis, but a place to the south, nearer Amida - the fort mentioned in \textit{de Aed.} II.iv.14. This is not very conveniently placed for warding off attackers from Martyropolis, however. The Atachas north of Martyropolis is recorded by George of Cyprus, \#938 (cf. Honigmann's note, p.65). On the other factors leading to the Persians' retreat, q.v. ch.5 n.43; Proc.'s account highlights the ruse concerning the Huns. Zach. IX.6 provides the date for the manoeuvres around Martyropolis.}
until the end of the year, and caused some damage to the eastern provinces; they operated independently of the Persians, however, and were rebuffed at several places by the Roman commanders.112

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Kavadh died on 13 September 531, having arranged for his son Khusro to succeed him; that this had been his intention for some time is attested by his effort to have Justin adopt him in the mid-520s. Since Khusro was not his eldest son, however, his older brothers Kaoses and Zames (cf. xi.3) could be expected to resist their father’s will. Kavadh was persuaded to ensure the success of his plan by setting it down in writing, and entrusting it to his faithful adviser Mebodes (Māhbōdh) (xxi.17-19); this procedure is confirmed by Persian and Chinese sources. The assembly of the Persian nobles, despite the objections of Kaoses, ratified the king’s choice, and confirmed Khusro as king (xxi.20-22). It is possible, however, that Khusro had been crowned king on 18 August, in which case the ratification will have been a mere formality. Procopius’ reference to the burial of Kavadh (xxi.20) is evidently a careless slip, since this would have been contrary to Zoroastrian practice; indeed one of the charges made against Seoses had been that he had buried his wife (xi.35).113

Malalas provides some details on how a three month truce was eventually concluded between the two sides (pp.471-472); for at first it appears that Justinian was unwilling to enter negotiations, and refused to recognise Khusro, perhaps hoping thus to foment internal strife in Persia. Procopius, on the other hand, stresses the eagerness of


113 On the chroniclers’ reports of Justin’s ruse and the death of the Hunnic king Zilgibis, q.v. ch.5 n.55.

114 On the date of Kavadh’s death, see Stein II, p.294 and n.2 on the suggestion concerning Khusro’s coronation in August, which accords with Zach. IX.6; on Kavadh’s age, q.v. ch.3 n.59.


On Mebodes, q.v. ch.5 n.65; on Persian kings nominating their successor, q.v. ch.5 n.49.
Hermogenes and Sittas to end the siege of Martyropolis (xxi.23). The speech delivered by the Roman envoys bears a certain similarity to the first message of Belisarius before the battle of Dara, alluding to the presence of envoys from the Emperor, who should be allowed to conduct negotiations in preference to joining battle (xxi.24-25, cp. xiv.3); it may be supposed that Hermogenes is the envoy in question.

Thus the Persians were induced to abandon the siege and receive hostages from the Romans (xxi.26-27; Mal. p.472). Malalas asserts that Hermogenes passed on a friendly letter from Khusro to Justinian (p.471), which must have followed the Persian withdrawal from Martyropolis in autumn 531. With the Emperor's permission, terms were then agreed for a temporary truce, and two of the Roman envoys, Strategius and Rufinus, summoned back to Constantinople (Mal. p.472). Finally, a Sabir raid took place in December, which probably caused more devastation than Procopius indicates, but was not blamed on the Persians. Both monarchs had every incentive to cease hostilities at this point: in January 532 the Nika riot almost brought down Justinian's government, while Khusro's position was no more secure for some months.

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Procopius again fails to give any indication of the date for the negotiations between the Roman envoys and Khusro here described (xxii.1), though they are most likely to have taken place early in 532, after Rufinus had declared that the Persians were not responsible for the Sabir raid (Mal p.472). Since the sources vary in their dating of the conclusion of the Eternal Peace, a review of the evidence is called for.

Procopius explicitly places it during the sixth year of Justinian's reign (April 532-March 533).  

114 On the hostages handed over, Martinus and Senecius, cf. PLRE III, s.v. Martinus 2 (identified with the general Martin, who had a long career for most of Justinian's reign) and Senecius. On this phase of the negotiations, cf. also Scott, 'Diplomacy in the sixth century', p.164.

115 Mal. pp.472-473 on the Sabir raid - on the date, q.v. ch.5 n.44; it is perhaps worth noting that had Proc. wanted to stress the weakness of the Roman position in the east after Belisarius' recall, he could have played up this raid far more. That the Persians bore some responsibility for the raid is by no means unlikely, but it suited Justinian's interests to acquit them of any part in it.

Proc.'s reference to internal disquiet in Persia fits in with Mal.'s description at p.472, and the revolt of Zames, Proc. xxiii.3-6 (paralleled by the Nika riot of January 532, and hence probably very early in Khusro's reign).
533, xxii.17). Malalas (p.477) implies a date late in 532: the notice of the peace follows one concerning the restoration of John the Cappadocian to his post as praetorian prefect, which had taken place by October that year. The Edessene Chronicle (104) specifically places the conclusion of the peace in September 532, while Zachariah (IX.7) places it in year 11 (September 532-August 533), though he adds that it took place in summer time. Marcellinus, on the other hand, places it in 533, a date preferred by some; considering, however, that he is alone in putting forward the later date, and that he mistakenly places the fall of Amida in 502, preference should be given to a date late in 532, most probably September.116

No mention of the Nika riot in January 532, doubtless a major factor in spurring on Justinian to come to terms, is made here. Although xxiv-xxv represent a later addition to the work, no indication whatever is inserted to alert the reader to the proper sequence of events: the opening words of xxiii in fact imply that the riot followed the conclusion of peace.

The Roman ambassadors met Khusro probably at the same place as he had awaited the outcome of the adoption talks a few years earlier (xi.27) - on the Tigris, to the east of Nisibis, presumably around Bezabde. In providing the names of four ambassadors at this point (xxii.1),117 Procopius supplants Malalas as the chief sources on Roman-Persian negotiations: the chronicler omits this phase of the discussions, and refers only to Hermogenes and Rufinus returning to Constantinople (p.477; cp. Proc. xxii.16) at the end of negotiations, having secured a peace. Procopius’ criticism of the conduct of the Roman ambassadors overlooks the plight of Justinian at the time, and probably also the desire of Khusro to come to terms. The sum which the Romans agreed to pay the Persians - 110 centenaria or 11,000 lbs. of gold - was not a major burden on the Roman treasury, but still represented a concession to the Persians, whose demands for money had been refused repeatedly throughout Kavadh’s reign. In order to place in context the amount of gold handed over to the Persians, a few other cases may be put forward.

116 So Stein II, p.295 n.1, followed by Cameron, Mediterranean World, p.110; Stein oddly believes that the treaty only came into effect in 533, however. Rubin, ZI p.297, unambitiously dates it to post-April 531! PLRE III, s.v. Ioannes 11, on the date of his re-appointment. Zach.’s placing of the event in summer does not rule out September.

117 Namely Alexander, Thomas and Hermogenes, on whom cf. PLRE III, s.v. Alexander 1, Thomas 4 and Hermogenes 1. On Rufinus, q.v. ch.5, n.64.
First, in 443, Attila forced Theodosius II not only to make annual payments to the Huns of 2100 lbs. of gold, but also to pay an outstanding sum of 6000 lbs. of gold. In comparison with this, therefore, an 'Eternal' peace for 11,000 lbs. seems not unreasonable. Second, Olympiodorus, writing about the early fifth century, describes how the annual income of many households in Rome was 4000 lbs. of gold, and cites several cases of lavish expenditure by Roman nobles. On the other hand, Jones has suggested that the annual income of the eastern empire at this time amounted to only 400 centenaria (40,000 lbs. of gold); were this figure to be accepted, then the payment would have been crippling indeed. Subsequent exactions by the Persians - such as by the terms of the peace of 561 - were by no means so high.118

The sum agreed was in line with previous Persian demands; thus Zachariah reports that Kavadh had sought 500 lbs. of gold at the start of Justin's reign, while Michael the Syrian gives the figure of 5500 centenaria, which clearly should be read as pounds rather than centenaria. Nonetheless, although the figure agreed to by Justinian fits with previous Persian requests, it should not be linked to any payments made by Anastasius at the end of the Anastasian war: there is no evidence that annual payments were agreed to by the Romans at that point. It is likely that in this case Justinian preferred to pay in a lump sum, rather than smaller amounts every year, which could be viewed as tribute.119

The pretext for the payment was the guarding of the Caspian Gates (xxii.7), as it had been for so long in Kavadh's reign, though Khusro accepted that Dara need not be demolished. The Persians were firm regarding the northern frontier, however: not only

118 Priscus, frg. 9.3.1-10, for the payments to Attila. Olympiodorus, frg. 41.2 on the expenditure of Roman nobles, cf. A. Cameron, *The Later Roman Empire*, London 1993, p.117, for similar cases. Jones, *LRE*, p.463, for his suggestion on the annual revenue, based on *Anecd*. xix.8; he overlooks Proc.'s statement there that this sum was raised illegally, and hence excludes all the legitimate income of the government. In 561/2 the Romans agreed to pay 416.6 lbs. of gold each year for a fifty year period, Whitby, *Maurice*, p.208 and Menander, frg. 6.1; even though a lump sum had to be handed over to cover the first seven years, this amounted to less than 3000 lbs, cp. also Proc. VIII.xv on payments to the Persians in the 540s and 550s.

Stressing the insignificance of the sum paid to the Persians, Z. Rubin, 'Diplomacy and war', *DRBE*, p.684; contra, Stein II, p.295, on the large scale of the expenditure, though his view that it was linked to Roman payments owed since 363 is not justifiable. Rubin, ZI p.296, on Proc.'s criticism of Justinian's readiness to come to terms.

119 Stein II, p.99 n.5 for a discussion of the figures of Zach. (VIII.5), Michael Syrus (IX.16), though he seems to believe in payments following the Anastasian war; q.v. ch. 4 n.39 on this matter.
did they demand back Pharangium and Bolum (xxii.3), but they refused to return the two forts in Lazica, Sarapanis and Scanda, to the Romans. The Roman ambassadors wisely refused to concede these forts without the Emperor's approval: the envoy John Comentiolus agreed to suggestions made by Khusro much later in his reign, and incurred Justin II's wrath for having done so (Menander frgs. 9.1-2). Rufinus was therefore given seventy days (xxii.7) to return to the capital to consult the Emperor and report back: this was adequate time to get to Constantinople from the Tigris and back, travelling by sea from Antioch; the selection of Rufinus as the emissary was presumably due both to his friendship with Kavadh as well as his seniority as an envoy.120

Justinian agreed to Khusro's terms in the wake of the Nika uprising of January 532, but doubtless as his grip on power returned, he repented of his concessions. The rumours concerning the execution of Rufinus may be linked to the reprisals which followed the riots; it is interesting, however, to note Persian awareness of events in Constantinople, and how quickly news (even if inaccurate) reached them. Khusro's march towards Roman territory (xxii.9) may well have been a bluff, to encourage the Romans to come to terms, rather than the first step in continuing the war. Rufinus' influence with Khusro emerges at this point, when Justinian forbade the envoys to surrender the Lazic forts. It is likely therefore that he had advocated acceptance of Khusro's terms, and had hastened to convey the money to the Persians; but once Justinian refused to allow the Persians to keep the Lazic forts, his position was in jeopardy. Had Khusro not returned the money, trust of the Persians and the prospects for peace would have declined rapidly, and Rufinus disgraced for being so conciliatory to a perfidious foe. Hence Khusro's return of the money (xxii.13-14) demonstrates his desire for peace, and it is possible that he indicated to Rufinus that peace might still be

120 Q.v. n.62 on claims for contributions for the Caspian Gates, and above on Kavadh's speech in xvi. On ambassadors and their briefs, see A.D. Lee, 'Embassies', pp.458-459, who cites the cases of John Comentiolus and Seoses in Proc. xi.

On the time allowed to Rufinus, cf. Whitby, Maurice, p.256 and n.9, suggesting that news of the fall of Dara in 573 could have reached Constantinople in 10 days; also Lee, p.163 and n.70, noting that Libanius Or. XXI.15-16 refers to the distance from Antioch to Constantinople being covered in just five and a half days on one occasion. It may also be noted that Justinian did not dismantle the imperial post service to the Persian frontier, Anecd. xxx.10.
made even without the Lazic forts.  

Finally in September 532 the Eternal Peace was concluded, and 31 years of conflict were brought to an end (xxii.16, cf. Mal. p.478 on the length of the war). A compromise was reached concerning Dara, so that the headquarters of the military establishment in the East should no longer be based there (xxii.16). They did not seek to denude the place of soldiers, and clearly a garrison was left (cf. xxvi.5). Rather its importance was reduced, in that it was no longer the residence of the *magister militum per Orientem*, nor probably even the *dux Mesopotamiae*.  

Procopius, evidently picking out the more controversial aspects of the peace, mentions the case of the Iberians (xxii.16). It is clear that the kingdom was restored to the Persians, who had regained control of it militarily in any case, despite Justin's assurances to Gourgenes (xii.5). Procopius even notes how Justin had promised never to abandon the Iberians to the Persians, although his nephew agreed to do just that. The flight of king Gourgenes to the empire did not spell the end of the Iberian monarchy, it appears, since the Georgian histories preserve record of kings for another forty years. Three sons of Vakht'ang Gorgasal are reported, the oldest of whom succeeded in ousting his two younger brothers from their portions of the kingdom. Internal difficulties may have persisted in Iberia, however, just as they had in the 370s; for Theophanes (A.M. 6027) preserves a record of the reception of an Iberian dynast, Zamanarsus, a few years after the conclusion of this peace, who may have become a Roman-sponsored claimant to the throne.  

The meaning of the phrase *ατέρπαντος εἰσφημός* has been the subject of some controversy, although the traditional view - that it refers to an 'Endless' i.e. limitless

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121 *PLRE* II, s.v. Rufinus 13 and q.v. ch.5 n.64 for his connections with the Persian court, which unsurprisingly caused some suspicion among his fellow-ambassadors; Proc. does not mention who these were, though he gave the names of the negotiators at xxii.1. Could Hermogenes have informed on Rufinus, just as he had probably denigrated Belisarius to the Emperor?  
Lee, p.167, on the circulation of rumours in late antiquity generally.

122 Stein II, p.294, states that the base of the *dux Mesopotamiae* was transferred from Dara to Constantia, which probably rightly interprets Proc. xxii.16.

123 Cf. C. Toumanoff, *Studies*, pp.371-372 and p.385 n.8 on Zamanarsus; in 'Caucasia and Byzantium', *Traditio* 27 (1971), p.120 he notes the cession of Iberia to Persia in 244, 363 and 532, n.34 concerning this passage in Proc., arguing that it does allude to a cession. He rejects Stein's view (p.295 n.1) that Theophanes' reference to Zamanarsus is a reminiscence of Gourgenes' visit, surely rightly. Q.v. ch.5 (e) on Gourgenes' defection.
peace - is surely correct. Others have argued, however, that it merely indicates that no terminus was set to the peace, and thus that either side was free to break it whenever it suited them; in this case it is difficult to imagine why the Romans were prepared to pay such a considerable sum for so worthless an arrangement. Even if the Greek is capable of both interpretations, Justinian’s reference to it in C.J. 1.27.2 pr. *pacem cum Persis in aeternum confirmavimus* clearly demonstrates the validity of the conventional view.\(^{124}\)

Malalas (pp.477-478) provides a few more details regarding the peace, noting that the kings agreed to provide one another with aid in case of need, which Kavadh had previously claimed to have been agreed before in any case (Mal pp.449-450). He also notes the return of the forts reported in Procopius (xxii.18). Procopius closes the chapter by reporting the return of Dagaris to the Romans (xxii.18-19), though this is the last mention made of him. The reference to his future successes against the Huns presumably refers to the East rather than the Balkans; Procopius’ specific mention of him leads one to suspect that he was among the historian’s informants on the 530 campaign in Armenia at any rate (cf. xv.6), even if he was in Persian hands from then.\(^{125}\)

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Here ends the first part of the most detailed campaign narrative to survive since the work of Ammianus Marcellinus, one and a half centuries earlier. Like his predecessor, Procopius had been the witness to stirring events on the eastern frontier, and the ‘internal economy’ of his account throws particular weight upon the episodes at which he was present - the battles of Dara and Callinicum.\(^{126}\) Nonetheless, he does not confine himself to reporting only those events in which he himself participated, but


Güterbock, pp.43-45, on the terms of the peace, cf. also Rubin, *ZI*, p.297.

\(^{125}\) On Dagaris, q.v. n.54; *PLRE* III, s.v. Dagaris, however believes that his victories probably occurred in the Balkans, rather than the East.

\(^{126}\) Cp. Ammianus XIX.1-8 on the siege of Amida, at which he was present.
includes important details on the campaign in Armenia, as well as developments still further afield, from the Caucasus to southern Arabia.

In the case of episodes such as the battles mentioned above, Procopius is a far preferable guide to what happened than Malalas, whose picture is both confused and biassed. In the case of the battle of Callinicum in particular, it has been shown that Procopius' reputation has suffered unjustly when he is compared with Malalas; for as has been noted, the chronicler is by no means offering a neutral account of the engagement. Nonetheless, the narrative of the war offered at the start of chapter five, when compared to Procopius' version of events, reveals major gaps in his reporting; indeed so scant is his account up to the battle of Dara that it is unclear why the Persians have all of a sudden launched an invasion of Mesopotamia. Two grounds for this may be suggested here. First, there is a distinct change in Procopius' presentation from the year 530: his account becomes much fuller thenceforth, and there are few events which he fails to report. This might be connected to Belisarius' promotion in the preceding year. It may equally be linked to the second ground - the author's customary selectiveness: the raids and counter-raids which took place over the late 520s were neither grand nor successful for the Romans. Hence Procopius may have felt justified in doing no more than touching on them, and concentrating instead on the two major engagements of the war.
CHAPTER SEVEN: PROCOPIUS ON SOUTHERN ARABIA (xix-xx)

(a) Introduction

In the middle of his narrative concerning Justinian's first Persian War, Procopius inserts a lengthy digression on events unfolding far away to the south. Critics have been quick to infer from the positioning of the excursus that he was actuated chiefly by a desire to distract attention from the defeat of Belisarius at Callinicum. While some credence may be accorded to this view, there is no doubt that Justinian did cast his gaze southward at this period; and the misfortunes of his forces in Mesopotamia in 531 may have spurred his interest further.

Procopius offers a two-fold digression, geographical and chronological. First comes geography, as at x.1-8, and with it incidental details relating to the places mentioned. In the case of xix these are particularly rich, furnishing information not only on contemporary conditions in the region (e.g. on the Palm Groves under the phylarch Abu Karib and the closure of the temple at Philae) but also on previous events, such as Diocletian's withdrawal of the Egyptian frontier northwards. Next Procopius turns to the events which have prompted his excursus (I.xx), and gives a succinct account of Roman involvement in the Arabian peninsula, covering about a quarter of a century (c.525-550): precedence is thus accorded to geography over chronology as at xii.1-12, and all the events taking in place in a particular area are narrated en bloc.

The geographical excursus starts from the port of Aelas and proceeds down the Red Sea along the eastern coast as far as the Himyarites, situated in modern-day Yemen. Thence he deals with the Axumites (Ethiopians) across the straits from the Himyarites, and finally returns northwards to the Roman frontier in the Thebaid. His information is generally accurate, and appears to stem from an eyewitness account; whether this came from an oral or a written source cannot be determined, but the material on

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1 So Veh, p.477, S. Smith, 'Events in Arabia in the sixth century A.D.', BSOAS 16 (1954) (henceforth Smith), p.448, 'the excursus distracts attention from the results of the defeat of Belisarius'; Cameron, p.147.

2 Cp. Tacitus, Annals, ed. E. Koestermann, Leipzig 1965, XII.40, where he explains that his breaking with his annalistic structure in order to relate events of several years in Britain is motivated by a desire for clarity.
Diocletian clearly must come from an earlier source.  

Perhaps the most important part of this digression is his account of the shift in the Roman frontier under Diocletian: this has occasioned much debate, both as to when this was undertaken and what the causes were. These will be dealt with in detail below.

At first sight, events unfolding hundreds of miles to the south of Mesopotamia and the Roman frontier in Arabia might appear to have little relevance to the war being waged between Rome and Persia. While Procopius’ geographical digression serves to bring out the complex connections of the Romans with this area, the interests of both sides had long conflicted in the Arabian peninsula: the much disputed Nemara inscription of the

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3 Note (for instance) the detail concerning Abraha being the slave of a Roman (xx.4). N. Pigulewskaja, *Byzanz auf den Wegen nach Indien*, Berlin 1969 (henceforth Pigulewskaja), p.184, considers that Proc. acquired the information himself at first hand, though there is no evidence that Proc. visited the region himself. Shahid, *BASIC* I, IX ‘Abu Karib’, suggests that Proc. could have made use of official documents in Constantinople on Arab affairs. *V.g.* n.51 for the possibility that Proc. made use of Priscus and Olympiodorus.
king Imru al-Qays mentions a campaign against Najran, while the Persian king Shapur II is known to have campaigned as far west as the Hijaz. In Procopius' day a further case may be offered to underlie the importance still attached to the region by both powers. An inscription from Marib (see fig.1) dating from around the year 542 records intense diplomatic activity at the court of the Himyarite king Abraha: embassies were present not only from Constantinople and Persia, but also from Ethiopia, as well as the Lakhmids and both Ghassanid chiefs, al-Harith and Abu Karib. Evidently Himyar was felt to warrant considerable attention by all these parties, and with this example in mind it is worth examining the events which unfolded there early in the sixth century, in order to put Procopius' account in context.4

It is unfortunate that Procopius did not attempt to give the background to the Ethiopian invasion of Himyar in 525, beyond attributing it to religious differences (xx.1). For the history of relations between these two powers is the subject of much dispute, and no certain reconstruction of the various fragments of available evidence has been achieved. While a more detailed analysis of Procopius' account must be deferred until later, the general sequence of events may be outlined here.

Procopius' introduction of events there in the context of the enmity between Jews and Christians well reflects a situation which had prevailed for perhaps a century before the Ethiopian expedition described. For Christianity, introduced at Najran in the early fifth century, seems to have made considerable progress in a continent chiefly pagan and Jewish. So in 467 the Christian Azqir was imprisoned in Najran, from where he was sent to the Himyarite king, Šurakbi'il Yakkaf, and disputed with Jews at his court. Finally


he was sent back to Najran and martyred. The other feature of Procopius' account - the intervention by the Ethiopians - is also foreshadowed in earlier events: an inscription of 504 (619) attests the presence of Ethiopian merchants at the Himyarite capital Zafar, and it seems that the Himyarite king at this time, Martad'ilan Yanuf, was Christian.

It is at this point that the chronology of events becomes seriously problematic. For several sources, such as Malalas (pp.433-434) and Theophanes (A.M. 6035), tell of the action of a Himyarite king, Dimion or Dimnos by name, who killed Roman traders and confiscated their goods. In response to this, the Ethiopian king, whose name is given as Aidug, Andas or Addad avenged the merchants, and embraced Christianity in fulfilment of a vow after his victory. Because both Malalas and Theophanes place this event in Justinian's reign (though at different points) it has generally been identified with an invasion by the Ethiopian ruler Ela Asbeha against the Himyarite king Dhu Nuwas - the one which preceded that described by Procopius at xx.1. It seems more probable, however, that this war took place rather earlier, during the reign of Anastasius, if it is to be accepted at all; the Ethiopian king cannot be identified with Ela Asbeha at any rate, since it is clear that he was a Christian before launching any of his invasions.


7 Cf. Müller, col.312.

8 Cf. Z. Rubin, EFRE, p.389.

Under Anastasius Roman interest in the Red Sea revived, with the recapture of Iotabe from the Arabs by the dux Romanus in 498: Theophanes notes (A.M. 5990) how the island was handed over to Ρωμαίος πραγματευτικος once more, so that they could live there with their own laws, paying a fixed tax to the Emperor. Roman involvement in the Red Sea area went back to the time of Augustus, and is generally seen as motivated chiefly by a desire to maintain contact with the trade routes to the east: the southern route via the Red Sea and Indian Ocean offered the prospect of contact with Taprobane (Sri Lanka) and thus to China, unmediated by Persia, though Sasanian efforts largely prevented such direct trade. The chief product sought by the Romans was silk (xx.9), which was imported in ever larger quantities into the empire.10

The Christianisation of the empire provided a powerful instrument of diplomacy to strengthen links with peoples along this route. Doctrinal differences between opponents and supporters of the Council of Chalcedon receded into the background on the international stage, and in the first decades of the sixth century these two elements - trade and religion - served to bring the Roman empire into close contact with Ethiopia and Himyar.11

Thus the presence of Roman merchants in Himyar is unsurprising, and in 525 Roman ports such as Clyisma, Aelas and Iotabe are found contributing a major part of the Ethiopian fleet which sailed against the Himyarite king, Dhu Nuwas.12 The catalyst in

Z. Rubin suggests, EFRE, p.394, that the name of the Ethiopian king (Aidog/Andas/Addad) may refer to a prince of Adulis, who seized power in Ethiopia, and converted to Christianity when he won, pp.394-395. Harmatta proposes, p.103, that Dimnos may be a rendering of a Himyarite king Du Ma'ahir.


activating this Roman involvement was the rise to power of Dhu Nuwas, probably to be placed in 517; in the previous year (631) a Christian Himyarite king, M‘adikarib Ya‘fur is attested campaigning in central Arabia against the Lakhmid king al-Mundhir, and it is likely that he was backed by some Ethiopian troops. Ela Asbeha was not slow to take action against the usurper Dhu Nuwas, and an expedition under a certain Hywn‘ soon forced him into submission. This proved to be but a ruse on Dhu Nuwas’ part, and the Ethiopian army was defeated piecemeal when it had dispersed to garrison various towns. In the winter of 517/8 Dhu Nuwas was in contact with al-Mundhir and the Persians, bidding to secure their support. In the words of Robert Browning, ‘what had been a trivial squabble between two neighbouring south Semitic peoples had become part of a world conflict.’

The events of the succeeding years illustrate the widening importance of events in the area. During 518 the war raged throughout southern Arabia: Dhu Nuwas campaigned north-east of Najran in the summer, before turning his attention to the annihilation of the Christian inhabitants of this city. In November that year thousands were martyred there, among them St Arethas, whose life, written in the 530s, preserves many useful details. News of the terrible events travelled rapidly across the peninsula; two letters survive which concern the events, one written by Simeon of Beth Arsham, as well as the ‘Book of the Himyarites’.

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13 Müller, cols.312-313, Harmatta, p.104, Z. Rubin, EFRE, pp.399-400 and n.63 on this campaign.


On the many names of the Ethiopian ruler Ela Asbeha, cf. Shahid, Martyrs, pp.252-260 and Müller, col.316. Altheim-Süehl, pp.383-384, wish to emend Proc.’s Ἐλεοθαυρος to Ἐλεοσθαυρος, though there is no manuscript support for this.


For the Christian sources, the religious dimension of the events is accorded primary importance, such that scholars have referred to the Ethiopian expedition of 525 as a crusade. Dhu Nuwas seems to have enjoyed contacts with Jewish communities throughout the Arabian peninsula, but had less success in securing any help from the Persians or Lakhmids. It should not therefore be assumed that he was part of some Sasanian bloc; the financial inducement he proposed to al-Mundhir to elicit aid from him does not point to close relations between the two rulers. The conference held at Ramla in 519, at which the news of the massacre at Najran was reported, illustrates both the international importance of the conflict as well as the weak position of Dhu Nuwas: al-Mundhir failed to respond to the appeal of Dhu Nuwas to follow his example, influenced by the presence of Christians among his own followers. The Romans, on the other hand, seem to have secured the release of two generals at this meeting and to have been persuaded of the need to intervene in the events unfolding in southern Arabia.17

In his own camp, Dhu Nuwas was also experiencing difficulties: some Himyarites, apparently disillusioned with his policies, crossed over to Ethiopia, including a certain Sumyafā 'Aṣwā (generally identified with Procopius' Esimiphaeus).18 This time Ela Asbeha was determined to overthrow Dhu Nuwas utterly: thus careful preparations were made, and it was not until 525 that his expeditionary force set sail across to Himyar.19

17 The campaign as a crusade - Vasiliev, Justin I, p.296.


19 Z. Rubin, EFRE, p.400, rebuts the view that this interval is too long (and hence that the persecutions must have occurred in 523), cf. Smith, p.455, pointing out the shortage of vessels available to the Ethiopians. Also Shahid, Martyrs, pp.220-222, on a failed initial attack of the Ethiopians in which 15,000 soldiers perished, and the possible landing of Sumyafā 'Aṣwā around Hisn al-Ghurab before Ela Asbeha's invasion (where an inscription attesting him building a fort has been discovered from 525 (640); cf. Smith, p.455, for a translation of the inscription and a different interpretation).

It is more likely that the preparations witnessed by Cosmas, ed. Wolska-Comus, vol.1, H.56 (p.369), early
Some seventy ships gathered at the port of Adulis, Gabaza, and soon after Pentecost 525 the expedition sailed. The Ethiopian force attacked from two points and proved victorious; Ela Asbeha commanded the section which landed to the north, and advanced on the capital Zafar. Dhu Nuwas was defeated while opposing the landing of the other Ethiopian army to the south. No assistance had been forthcoming for the embattled Dhu Nuwas: al-Mundhir had lost his capital, Hira, to the Kindites around this time, and it may be doubted whether the Christians among his followers would have countenanced him aiding such an extreme persecutor in any case. At Zafar Ela Asbeha constructed churches, as also at Marib. Sumyaf'a 'Ašw'a was installed as king, and St Gregentius sent to take up the post of archbishop of southern Arabia; Ela Asbeha returned to Ethiopia, having remained in Himyar for seven months.

As Procopius records, however, this was not the end of story. For although the Axumite grip on the Himyarite kingdom was loosened by the downfall of Sumyaf'a 'Ašw'a around 530, the advent of Abraha did not lead to the restoration of Judaism there. Ela Asbeha's reaction was initially hostile (xx.5-7), but eventually relations between the two kingdoms improved (xx.8). Thus Justinian turned to Abraha in the 540s to launch a raid into southern Arabia, which eventually took place around the year 547-8.

in Justin's reign (usually placed in c.522 at the latest, cf. Pigulewskaja, p.182) refer to an earlier abortive expedition like the one mentioned above, cf. Z. Rubin, EFRE, p.480.


Muller, cols.317-319, Harmatta, p.104; Christides, 'The Himyarite-Ethiopian War', p.115, on the appointment of Gregentius and p.134 on his 'Acts'.

On Ela Esbaha's stay in Himyar. cf. Vasiliev, Justin I, p.298. Christides, 'The Himyarite-Ethiopian War', p.122 and I. Shahid, 'Byzantium in Southern Arabia', DOP 33 (1979), p.62. On the appointment of Sumyaf'a 'Ašw'a, cf. Shahid, Martyrs, pp.228-230, where he suggests that he took the name Abraham upon converting to Christianity (which might explain why the Christian sources fail to refer to Sumyaf'a at all, and is accepted by PLRE III, s.v. Esimiphaeus); alternatively, Christides, 'The Himyarite-Ethiopian War', p.129, suggests that Sumyaf'a is simply omitted because it did not suit the writers of the hagiographical accounts.

Q.v. n.4 on the Marib dam inscription from 542 (657), attesting continuing Roman interest in Himyar. Harmatta, p.105, on the overthrow of Sumyaf'a 'Ašw'a, cf. Muller, col.318; whether or not he was also called Abraha, he should be distinguished from the Abraha to whom Proc. refers.

On the expedition of 547 (662), cf. Loudine, 'Sur les rapports', p.320, who connects it to the wars
The final phase in this struggle to gain control of the region was played out in the reign of Justin II: Khusro I took over Himyar around the year 570 at the invitation of a local noble (who had previously appealed to Justin).  

It remains now to provide an approximate chronology for the events related, and to go on to examine the points raised by Procopius' account in greater detail.  

24 Letsios, p.295 and n.200, C.E. Bosworth, 'Iran and the Arabs'. CHIr 3.1, pp.606-607 and Smith, p.434, on this.  

25 For two rather different chronologies (using different dates for the start of the Himyarite era), cf. Ryckmans, pp.21-22 and Smith, pp.464-465. The more detailed problem of the chronology of the various diplomatic missions reported by Proc., Nonnosus and Malalas will be dealt with below.
Events in southern Arabia: a chronology

467 Azqir imprisoned in Najran, later martyred
473 Amorcesus (Imru' al-Qays) gains control of Iotabe
498 Romanus recaptures Iotabe
504 Ethiopian traders attested in Himyar
?
Murder of Roman traders by Dimion; Ethiopian invasion by Andas
overthrows Dimion and converts Andas to Christianity
516 M'adikarib Ya'fur campaigns against al-Mundhir in Central Arabia
517 Death of M'adikarib Ya'fur; Dhu Nuwas seizes power
517/8 Dhu Nuwas in contact with al-Munhdir and the Persians
518 (summer) Dhu Nuwas campaigns northeast of Najran
518 (autumn) Dhu Nuwas martyrs the Christians of Najran
519 The Conference at Ramla; the two letters concerning the massacre at
Najran written

C.522 Cosmas Indicopleustes observes Ethiopian preparations for war
C.524/8 Kindite interregnum in Hira
525 Ela Asbeha's expedition to recapture Himyar
C.530 Embassy of Julian to Sumyaf'a 'Ašw'a (Proc. xx.9)
C.530/1 Abraha overthrows Sumyaf'a 'Ašw'a
530s Expeditions of Ela Asbeha to oust Abraha
542 Marib dam inscription
547 Abraha's campaign in Central Arabia
570/575 Khusro I takes over Himyar
(b) The Geographical excursus (I.xix)

(i) The northern Red Sea (xix.2-7)

The point of departure for the excursus concerning southern Arabia is the port of Aelas. His statement that the Red Sea lies on the eastern boundaries of Palestine (i.e. Palaestina III) has been impugned, yet the province hardly extended much to the east of the gulf, whereas it included the whole Sinai peninsula. It is unclear to what area is he referring when he uses the term India, since ancient authors apply it to almost any place eastern or southern: thus Malalas refers to both the Ethiopians and the Himyarites as Indians (p.457), while opinions vary as to whether έως τεραν’ Ίδιαν in Cosmas Indicopleustes II.30 refers to India or South Arabia. Procopius' geography with regard to such distant places seems to have been ill-informed in any case: in the de Aedificiis (VI.i.6) he places the source of the Nile in India, while his reference in this digression to man-eating Saracens also points to a lack of concern for precision (xix.16).

Aelas (xix.3) was a prosperous port in the sixth century, and was one of the departure points for Roman trade in the Red Sea; the other main Roman port in the north was Clysma, in the Gulf of Suez. The importance of these ports is attested by the high number of ships they contributed to the expedition of the Ethiopian king Ela Asbeha.

26 Smith, p.428, for criticism, but cf. the map in K.C. Gutwein, Third Palestine, Washington 1981, p.16, from which it is clear that the frontier went mainly north from Aelas. Also Millar, Roman Near East, pp.387-389, on settlements north of Aelas being situated chiefly along the Via Nova Traiana (i.e. to the north, rather than east). He also notes Eusebius' description of Aelas as being situated 'on the borders (of Palestine)', Das Onomastikon der biblischen Ortsnamen, ed. E. Klostermann, Hildesheim 1966, p.6.25-27, with which Proc. is in agreement.

27 Cf. Cosmas, ed. Wolska-Comus, vol.1, Introduction, p.17 and n.1, and II.30 n.30 (p.335) for the disagreement in this case. Also the Expositio totius mundi et gentium, ed. and tr. J. Rougé, Paris 1966, ch.17 (p.152), where India Minor is placed next to Axum: in this case it is to be identified with Africa (Nubia) rather than southern Arabia, where Saracens were also believed to live (Ammianus XIV.4.3), Rougé, pp.229-230. Pliny appears to do the same, NH VI.34.175; Carpentier, De SS. Aretha et Ruma, in ASS Oct. vol.X, §34 p.672, also notes the application of the term to South Arabia and Ethiopia, as does Pigulewskaja, p.315. Also v.i. n.42 on the boundaries of the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.

28 Cp. Procopius' inaccurate information on Britain, VIII.xx (and Cameron, pp.215-216 on this). His placing of India beyond the man-eating Saracens, who themselves are situated beyond the Himyarites, implies an eastern location of the country (xix.16).
against the Himyarites in 525: Clyisma provided twenty vessels, while Aelas sent fifteen, which together represent half the fleet assembled. The Edict of Anastasius, traces of which have been found in various places in the Near East, also points to the prosperity of the region, ordaining that the dux of Palaestina receive his pay from the revenue of Clyisma rather than the public treasury. 29

That Procopius was aware that the Egyptian mountains referred to in xix.3 are actually in the Sinai peninsula is demonstrated by his description of the monastery on Mt Sinai, where he refers back to this passage (de Aed. V.viii.1-3). The distance between Aelas and Iotabe, assuming that the island is to be identified with the modern Tirân, is a little under 200 km, so that in this case Procopius’ figure of 1000 stades appears more in line with the usual ancient stade, though inconsistent with other measurements given in stades on the Mesopotamian frontier. 30

The island of Iotabe (xix.3) enjoys a certain prominence in the surviving accounts of the late fifth and first half of the sixth centuries: taken over by the Arab chief Amorcesus (Imru’ al-Qays) in 473, it was recaptured some 25 years later by the commander Romanus. 31 A powerful Jewish presence remained on the island, however, and appears

29 On Aelas, cf. Gutwein p.139, noting its mention in George of Cyprus (ed. Honigmann, #1053, p.68); also p.257 on the description in Antoninus of Placentia’s Itinerarium (PL 72.912, referred to as ‘Abela’) of its prosperity in the sixth century and its position on the Red Sea trade route. Cosmas (II.54) mentions the presence of Roman merchants from Ela (Aelas) at Adulis in his time. In the fourth century a legion was stationed there, having been moved from Jerusalem, Gutwein p.139, and ND, Or. XXXIV.30, p.73. Gutwein also notes the great prosperity of this area in Byzantine times, pp.1-2.


30 Cf. F.-M. Abel, ‘l’ile de Jotabe’, Revue Biblique 47 (1938), p.513, for the identification of Iotabe with modern Tirân and p.526 for its distance from Aelas - 185 km. Z. Rubin, ‘Byzantium and southern Arabia’, p.388, notes the absence of remains on Tirân, and prefers to place Iotabe at Jazirat Fara’un, however, cf. Isaac, p.247 n.170. But Sartre has defended Abel’s view, IGLS XIII, p.116 n.4; Abel had rejected Jazirat Fara’un, which, being only 12 km from Aelas, is clearly incompatible with Proc.’s measurement. It would also make it difficult to explain Proc.’s reference to the sea opening out beyond the island (xix.5). Q.v. ch.4 n.107 on Proc.’s stade.

31 Malchus, frg. 1, on Imru’ al-Qays’ capture of Iotabe in 473 and the wealth amassed by him through his control of the island. Theophanes A.M. 5990 on Romanus’ recapture of it, its wealth, and the presence of Roman merchants or customs officials there, cf. Sartre, IGLS XIII, p.117 n.1; Sartre, Trois études, p.155, on the weakness of the Roman position in 473 in yielding the island to Imru’ al-Qays, cf. also Isaac, p.248 and n.175.

The seizure of Iotabe by the mysterious Imru’ al-Qays, has occasioned considerable discussion in modern works: D.G. Letsios, The case of Amorkesos and the question of Roman foederati in Arabia in the Vth century in L’Arabie préislamique et son environnement historique et culturel, ed. T. Fahd, Leiden 1989, p.530, notes the importance of the island for the empire’s trade, and regards Imru’ al-Qays as having held
to have seized control of it at some stage: Choricius of Gaza, in his encomium of Aratius and Stephanus, describes how these two men succeeded in retaking the island from raiders who had overrun it from a nearby base. The attackers are not explicitly described as Jews, but the identification has been made on the grounds they are said to be based in a fort nearby, located by Abel at Maqna, which was inhabited by Jews. Whoever the attackers were, the date of this operation is uncertain, and need not necessarily be placed in 531, since Procopius only states that they Jews were brought under Roman sway during Justinian's reign; it must have been before 535/6, however, the date of Choricius' work.  

The island was an important commercial centre, as might be expected from its strategic location at the mouth of the Gulf of Aqaba. Evidence for its wealth may be found in Malchus' reference (frg.1) to Roman tax collectors there, ejected by Imru' al-Qays, while Choricius, noting how it was a port for goods from India, states ὅπως μεγας φορος τα τελη (§67). Moreover, despite its small size, the island had provided seven ships for the Ethiopian expedition against the Himyarites.

Procopius' description of the relative ease of travelling south from Iotabe along the Red Sea (xix.5-7) contrasts with the account provided in the Periplus Maris Erythraei, composed in the first century A.D. This work describes the coast of Arabia as 'altogether risky, since the region with its lack of harbours offers poor anchorage, is foul with rocky stretches, cannot be approached because of cliffs, and is fearsome in every respect'; it also mentions the presence of bilingual pirates on this coast, which may help to account for the unfavourable description of the coastline. For the author clearly kept control over a wide area, cp. Z. Rubin, EFRE, p.388. Blockley, FCH vol.2, n.5 p.456, regards his territory as having lain primarily outside the empire. Shahid, BAFIC pp.61-90, considers the episode at length, and views Imru' al-Qays as a Ghassanid. Smith, p.444, on the other hand, suggests he was a Lakhmid. Neither view is capable of proof.

32 Choricius of Gaza, ed. R. Foerster and E. Richsteig, Leipzig 1929, Or.3, Ἐἰς Ἀρατίον Δουκα καὶ Στεφάνον Ἀρχοντα, §§66-78 (pp.65-68). On their operations on the island, cf. the comments of Abel, pp.529-532; also F. Litsas, Choricius of Gaza: An approach to his work, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Chicago 1980, pp.75 and 268. PLRE III, s.v. Aratius, offers no date for these operations; clearly they must also postdate his defection to the Romans in 530, reported by Proc., xv.31.

33 On the number of ships, cf. Abel, pp.527-528, and q.v. n.12; on the significant Jewish power in the Arabian peninsula around this time, cf. Smith, pp.462-463, Altheim-Stiehl, p.317 (on links between north and south Arabia) and B. Rubin, ZI, pp.304-305. Smith's assertion of Proc.'s ignorance of the events at Iotabe, p.229, is unfair, since he is not seeking to give a full account at this point; Pigulewskaja, p.184, commends Procopius for underlining the importance of the island.
to the centre of the Red Sea, carefully staying far from the Arabian littoral, and had no doubt therefore acquired his information at second hand. By the sixth century, however, navigation down the eastern coastline had clearly become much safer, with the improved political control of the area by the Ethiopians: one of the inscriptions known as the ‘Monumentum Adulitanum’, the text of which is preserved in Cosmas, refers to the conquest of this eastern coast by an unknown king. It has plausibly been suggested that Ela Asbeha was interested in this text because he too was claiming to exert control over the coastline.34

(ii) The Arabian coast (xix.7-16)

The Palm Groves (Φαοινγξ) referred to by Procopius (xix.8) are generally located in the northern Hijaz, in the vicinity of Tabuk and Tayma, which accords with his description. Their insignificance is stressed by the historian, yet it is likely that they were of value to the Empire on account of their position on the trade route. They are also referred to in the Martyrium Arethae, which confirms Procopius’ positioning of them - they are described thus: εστι δε ἡ χωρα των Ομεριτων ἐκ νοτον νων ἐπο Ρουμαιον ὑντος καὶ λεγομενον Φαοινκωνος, thirty days from the town of Najran.35

The phylarch of the Saracens of this area referred to by Procopius, Abu Karib, is now universally accepted to have been the brother of the Ghassanid chief al-Harith. He

34 On the Periplus Maris Erythraei, cf. the new edition with translation and commentary by L. Casson, Princeton 1989. On its date, A.D. 40-70, pp.6-7 and ch.20 for the description of the Arabian coast. Smith regards Procopius’ description of the route followed southwards as being accurate, p.429, and notes the contrast with the Periplus, Smith, pp.454-455, for the suggestion regarding the ‘Monumentum Adulitanum’, cf. Cosmas II.60-63 (pp.373-379).

Concerning the shoals - βραγγος - mentioned by Procopius in xix.6, cp. Hdt. II.102, where he notes how Sesostris’ campaign in the Red Sea was brought to a halt on account of the shoals there. The Admiralty Handbook, Western Arabia and the Red Sea, Naval Intelligence Division 1946, pp.66 and 126 draws attention to the reefs there; it also plays down the number of harbours on the Arabian coast, p.126.


Cameron, p.121 n.56, describes Proc’s views on the Palm Groves as ‘naive’, while Shahid, BASIC I, IX. prefers to ascribe them to Proc’s Kaiserkritik. He also discusses the position of Abu Karib at length here as well as the location of the Palm Grove. Mart. Arch. 12, p.722, for its placing of the Palm Groves. Gutwein, loc. cit., misquotes Proc. xix.8-13, apparently under the impression that he is referring to Palaestina III.
seems to have exercised the role of phylarch of Palaestina III, although Procopius provides no dates for when he took up this position or for how long he held it; it has been suggested that he followed al-Harith the Kindite as phylarch of this province. The one date that is fixed is that of the Marib dam inscription (657), which at the earliest refers to A.D. 539, and from which it is clear that Abu Karib was still phylarch at this point. The other difficulty with Abu Karib's tenure of the phylarchy is the mention in Nonnosus that a certain Qays (cp. Proc. xx.9-10) apparently held τὴν τῶν Παλαιστινῶν ἱππευμονίαν (p.179) around the same time. These problems are not insoluble, however, and will be dealt with below when considering Procopius' reference to Qays.36

Abu Karib's position appears to have been very similar to that of Imru' al-Qays, in the way that he took advantage of the weakness of the Empire in this region to acquire a phylarchate: Procopius stresses how nominal imperial control of the Palm Groves was (xix.13), as had been Leo's hold over Iotabe. He is accorded high praise by the historian, in contrast to his brother: δραστηριος is a favourite commendatory term of Procopius.37

The Ma'add tribe mentioned at xix.14 are also referred to by Nonnosus (p.179), who states that they were under the control of Qays, along with the Kindites. Procopius' statement concerning the dominance of the Himyarites over the Ma'add is in accord with the Arabic sources, who also confirm the close ties between the Kindites and Himyar. It is difficult to be certain as to the extent of the territory of the Ma'add, but it appears that they came into the orbit of both the Himyarites and the Lakhmids. They had mocked Simeon at Ramla in 519 over the persecution of Christians in Najran, while in


Smith p.443, places Abu Karib on the borders of Palaestina III; cf. also Gutwein, pp.317-319 on Abu Karib. It is possible that he played a part in the suppression of the Samaritan revolt, cf. Sartre, Trois Études, pp.168-170 (unmentioned in PLRE) and Shahid, BASIC I, IX. Nonnosus in FHG IV, ed. C. Müller, Paris 1851, pp.178-181. Infra, nn. 74 and 76, on Qays and the phylarchate of Palaestina III.

37 Shahid, 'Procopius and Arethas', p.377, notes the praise accorded to Abu Karib and how different this is from the treatment of his brother, cf. BASIC I, IX. On δραστηριος, cp. the praise of Kavadh, vii9, and Apion, viii.5, to both of whom the same adjective is applied, cf. Cameron, p.240 n.84.
the 530s Justinian tried to involve them in his anti-Persian coalition (xx.9-10). 38

Next to them Procopius places the Himyarites, whose territory lies on the coast of the Red Sea (as opposed to the Arabian Gulf, cf. xix.19). His statement that beyond the Himyarites live many other tribes as far as the man-eating Saracens (xix.15-16) is more plausibly taken to show his lack of interest in what lay beyond the scope of his digression than being the result of any extensive research or a conscious attempt to make the whole venture of Justinian appear ridiculous. It may be, as Smith suggests, that they are a reminiscence of the ichthyophagoi reported in Alexander the Great’s time; many tribes reported in Strabo are named according to their diet, although no cannibals are mentioned. Procopius draws his excursus regarding the eastern side of the Red Sea to a close with a reference to India, which implies that he placed it to the East at any rate; his lack of interest in geographical niceties is perhaps further indicated by his concluding sentence at xix.16. 39

(iii) The African coast of the Red Sea (xix.17-26)

Next Procopius describes the location of Ethiopia in relation to Himyar. From the details concerning the length of the journey from Bulicas to Adulis (for instance), it would seem that he is using the description of someone who had travelled in these waters themselves; this is also implied by the remarks concerning the presence or absence of shoals, and whether the sea is navigable by night (xix.6 and 19). The location of Adulis has been established at the modern village of Zula, south of the modern Massawa harbour;

38 On the links between the Himyarites, the Kindites and the Ma’add, cf. Nöldeke, Tabari, p.148, where the Himyarites order al-Harith the Kindite to attack al-Hira (at the start of the sixth century) by way of the territory of the Ma’add. At n.1, however, Nöldeke states that the name Ma’add is ‘einer der umfassendsten Gruppenamen für arab. Stämme’. Shahid, BASIC I, XII, ‘The mission of Julian’, argues that the Kindites generally ruled over the Ma’add, cf. XV, ‘Byzantium and Ma’add’ for the most detailed consideration. Also Oliner, p.37, on the connection between the Himyarites and the Kindites. Pigulewskaja, p.262, notes the links of the Ma’add with the Lakhmids, cf. Trimingham, p.275 and Altheim-Stiehl, p.362 (and see below), against whom Abraha later campaigned, v.i. n.80; Zach. VIII.3 (Simeon’s letter) on the Ma’add at Ramla.

Smith, p.428, criticises Proc.’s placing of the Ma’add, in that the Ma’add are nowhere else placed next to the Red Sea; on his own map, however, he clearly puts them in the region between the Hijaz and the Himyarites, even if they did not extend as far as the coast.

39 Smith, p.429 for the suggestion regarding the Ichthyophagoi, who are found in the Periplus ch.33, cp. Strabo XVI.4.13. Shahid, ‘Procopius and Arethas’, p.374, for the suggestion that mention of cannibalistic Saracens is somehow intended to show up how unrealistic the Emperor’s plans were.
Cosmas puts the distance of Adulis from the sea as two μιλευ (II.54, p.365), while the Periplus (ch.4) gives precisely the same figure asProcopius (xix.22) - twenty stades. The port of Adulis was known as Gabaza, where there was a customs-house. Procopius' figures for the journey between Bulicas and Adulis (xix.22) cannot be compared with any other ancient authors, however, since Bulicas is nowhere else mentioned; Carpentier's suggestion that it lay on the same latitude as Adulis at modern Ghalefka seems entirely plausible. This would make the journey approximately 400 km, so that five full days is not an unreasonable figure, although Pliny talks of completing the journey from Ptolemais, further up the western coast, to Adulis in only two days, despite the longer distance involved. While Nonnosus (p.181) puts the journey from Adulis to Axum at fifteen days, the Periplus (ch.4) reckons it at eight days, so that Procopius' figure of twelve days is clearly not unrealistic.

Procopius draws a distinction between the Red Sea and the Arabian Gulf (xix.19-20), which ancient authors were not always careful to observe: thus on the one hand Cosmas

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On Gabaza, cf. Mart. Areth. VII.29 (pp.749-750) and Carpentier's note '1'; a map illustrating Cosmas' text (II.55) also refers to Gabaza and its customs-house, cf. Wolska-Comus' edition (vol.1), p.367. Casson, 'The location of Adulis', pp.118-120, argues that the harbour referred to in Cosmas and Proc. should be distinguished from the main harbour, situated at Gabaza (Massawa harbour, to the north, and considerably more than 20 stades/2 miles from Adulis); he points out that there is only a beach to the east of Adulis, at the modern village at Malcatto. (See fig.2).

(II.29, p.333) mentions the Arabic Gulf called the Red Sea, while Strabo (XVI.3.1) and Ptolemy (IV.7.8) do distinguish the two. Strabo’s distinction seems closest to that of Procopius here, whereby the Red Sea is the term used for the Indian Ocean, although it seems that it can include the modern Red Sea as well for Procopius.42 It is interesting that Procopius regards the origin of the term Arabian Gulf to lie in the Nabataean kingdom (xix.20), which was based at Petra and Bostra until its annexation by Trajan in 106; why he refers to the region of Arabia as extending only as far as Gaza is unclear, since the Nabataean kingdom extended further north and east from this city, incorporating the Sinai peninsula and the city of Gerasa. The mention of Gaza may be due to its position at the end of Red Sea trade route, as mentioned by Pliny; it should also be noted, moreover, that Procopius should have been well acquainted with the city, being a native of Palestine, and especially if his involvement with the Gaza School is accepted.43

His information concerning the sewn ships in India (xix.23) appears accurate; the *Periplus* (ch.36) also mentions sewn boats, which have continued in use up to the present century. These craft were more of a feature of the Indian Ocean than the Red Sea, but, as has just been argued, the Red Sea for Procopius covers the modern Indian Ocean as well.44 The refutation of the popular explanation for the absence of iron from these

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42 For a full conspectus of ancient references to the Red Sea and Arabian Gulf, cf. S. Sidebotham, *Roman Economic Policy in the Erythra Thalassa*, 30 B.C.-A.D. 217, Leiden 1986, Appendix 1, pp.182-186; and cf. also J.F. Salles, ‘Fines Indiae - Ardh el Hind’, *Proceedings of a colloquium on the Roman and Byzantine Army in the East* (7-8 September 1992), ed. E. Dabrowa, Cracow (forthcoming), text to nn.21-26. It is unclear whether Proc.’s reference at xix.26 to the Red Sea refers only to what he calls the Red Sea (as opposed to the Arabian Gulf) or the term is being used in the more general sense of the whole Red Sea (as at xix.1); Dewing’s note (n.1, p.185) does not help in this regard, and it seems more probable that Proc. is referring just to the former, given the distinction he has just drawn. The reference to the sewn boats (xix.23), which plied the Indian ocean, further supports such a view (v.t. n.44 on these boats).


ships is in a similar vein to Procopius' discussion on the division between the continents at VIII.vi, although there he names his various sources. In this case it is possible to find two sources which speak of magnetic rocks, one of which, Palladius, locates them in just this area. He reports on the voyage of a lawyer from Egyptian Thebes, who embarked on a journey to Taprobane (Sri Lanka) some time in the fourth century, although he never reached the island. He describes, however, the thousands of islands in the Red Sea, where a magnetic rock prevents iron ships from sailing; hence, he explains, special boats are employed to travel to Taprobane, which contain no iron. He names the islands as the Μαυολαὶ ἡσοι, which are generally identified with the Maldives; and it has been observed that the native vessels here do not use iron, for the greater elasticity of ships without nails serves them better in the event of collision with the many coral reefs in this area. The other source to mention a magnetic rock is John Lydus (de Mensibus IV.13); in the following chapter he discusses the provenance of pepper (from near Axum) in a section derived from Palladius, it appears. It seems extremely likely therefore that both these writers had access to Palladius, and that Procopius was rather more sceptical about the lawyer's account.45

Procopius' explanation of the lack of iron in the region contrasts sharply with the references in the Periplus on the importation of iron into the area, as well as the presence of 'Indian' iron. His statement concerning the ban on exporting iron (xix.25-26) is quite accurate: a law of Marcian in the Codex Justinianus prescribes the death penalty and confiscation of property for those conveying weapons or iron to barbarians.46

45 Palladius, de gentibus Indiæ et Bragmanibus, ed. W. Berghoff, Meisenheim am Glan 1967, I.5 on the islands; at 1.4 the lawyer's visit to Adulis and Axum is recounted. Cf. also J.D.M. Derrett, 'Palladius on the races of India', Classica et Mediaevalia 21 (1960), p.77 for the date of the journey. J. Desanges, 'Le voyage du "scholasticus de Thèbes"', Historia 18 (1969), p.630, for the view that the passage in John Lydus comes not from Ctesias (as was initially thought) but from Palladius. On the Μαυολαὶ ἡσοι, cf. Herrmann's entry in RE XIV (1930), cols.1145-1146, where they are identified with the Maldives and the native craft described.

John Lydus, De Mensibus, ed. R. Wuenisch, Leipzig 1898, pp.76-77 for these passages. John was writing in the 550s (cf. PLRE II, s.v. Ioannes Lydus 75), and so after Wars I-VII were published; it may be wondered whether John might not have included such a detail in his history of the Persian war (cf. de Mag. III.28 on this work), in which case Proc. might not have been using Palladius directly. Naturally other sources too (no longer extant) may have referred to the magnetic rock.

The geographical excursus continues in its clockwise arc, moving northwards from Axum to Elephantine; Cosmas also puts the distance from Axum to the Cataracts at thirty days, the same length of time as he allows for the journey from Alexandria to the Cataracts (II.48, p.357). Procopius then enters upon a digression concerning the Blemmyes and Nobades, and in particular the measures taken by the Emperor Diocletian to combat their incursions: the Nobades are invited to occupy the Nile valley in order to fend off the attacks, but they continue to raid Roman territory nonetheless (xix.28-35).

The details provided in this section concerning the Blemmyes and Nobades, and the withdrawal of the Roman frontier northwards, have attracted much scholarly attention. Several issues must be dealt with here: first, that of the location of these two tribes in Diocletian's day and Procopius'. Then the date and nature of the shift in the frontier must be considered, and finally the reason for the withdrawal.

First, the position of the Nobades and Blemmyes. In Justinian's day Procopius places the former along the Nile, and the latter inland in the desert to the east of the Nile (xix.28). While this statement appears quite accurate, his information on the earlier history of these two tribes has been called into question. For it is believed now that it was pressure from the Meroitic kingdom which lay behind Diocletian's decision, and that Procopius may be anachronistic in his reference to Nobadae at this stage. They are only once mentioned before the reign of Diocletian, and even in the fourth century they continue to be absent from our sources. Nor is there any trace of them at the Kharga

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47 Veh notes that the distance between Axum and the First Cataract is 1300 km, which accords well with Proc.'s 30 days, p.476. At III.i.17 (cp. VIII.v.33) Proc. estimates the length of time needed for a day's journey - but by land, rather than river.

48 Whether a *foedus* was ever concluded with either tribe may be doubted, cf. L. Torok, 'A contribution to Post-Meroitic chronology: The Blemmyes in Lower Nubia', Meroitic Newsletter 24 (1985), p.57; but L.P. Kirwan, 'The X-Group problem', Meroitica 6 (1982), p.197, believes that the Blemmyes may have been *foederati* in the fifth century.

oasis (the city of Oasis which Procopius says they used to raid, xix.29), although it was the target of Blemmyan raids in the 430s. On the other hand, in defence of Procopius, it has been suggested that the Meroites who took over the land will have been Nubian speakers, and hence could be described as Nobades. It seems probable, however, that Procopius has retrojected the importance of the Nobades from his own day, when Meroe had long ago faded into obscurity.50

At the time of Diocletian's withdrawal, the Blemmyes were based east of the Nile, to which area they had returned by Justinian's day. Their importance should not be underestimated, nor their impact on the Roman frontier: Joshua the Stylite (§20) reports that Anastasius, refusing to accede to Persian demands for money, cited among the many wars he faced one against the Blemmyes. Moreover, Procopius specifically alludes to the large size of the tribes in this area (xix.28). Under Diocletian they were defeated by the Romans, but succeeded in establishing a foothold in lower Nubia nonetheless. In the late fourth century, hagiographical sources recount the terrors of Blemmyan raids, and by 423 they were in command of the Nile valley beyond the Roman frontier: the historian Olympiodorus paid them a visit, travelling up the Nile to cities which once had been under Roman rule (frg.35.2). Between Olympiodorus' visit and the middle of the fifth century the Nobades entered upon the scene, and in conjunction with the Blemmyes posed a serious threat to stability in the region. But following a defeat at the hands of the general Maximinus a one hundred year treaty was agreed, and access to the temple of Isis at Philae conceded to the barbarians (Priscus frgs.27.1-2). Unity between Nobades and Blemmyes did not prevail, however, and inscriptions recount warfare between kings of the two tribes, usually now dated to the fifth century; in this period the

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50 The most detailed critique of Proc. here may be found in Updegraff, 'The Blemmyes 1', pp.73-79, cp. L.P. Kirwan, 'Rome beyond the southern Egyptian frontier', Proceedings of the British Academy 63 (1977), p.19. L. Török, in his remarks which follow Updegraff's entry, p.103, makes the suggestion concerning the Meroites speaking Nubian.

Kirwan, 'Comments', p.70, is not prepared to reject completely raids by Nobades on Oasis; L. Castiglione too, 'Diocletianus und die Blemmyes', Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde 96 (1970), p.95 and n.15 accepts that the Nobades may have come from the west, cf. too J. Desanges, 'L'empire et l'Afrique Nilotique et Érythréenne', ANRW II.10.1, p.33.


On the Blemmyan raid on Oasis in the 430s, cf. Sethe in RE III (1899), s.v. Blemmyes, col.567 and Evagrius I.7: Nestorius was taken prisoner in the raid.
Blemmyes were pushed east from the Nile, to return to the area in which Procopius describes them as inhabiting in his day (xix.28). Thus the Roman position in the 530s was somewhat stronger than it had been eighty years previously.51

Next comes the question of when the frontier was withdrawn by Diocletian. Egypt was the scene of two major campaigns in the 290s, both of which were linked to serious revolts. Diocletian himself took part in the quelling of the second of these, and was at the siege of Alexandria in March 298. It seems likely that it was following the capture of the city that he journeyed southward, in order to deal with the unstable frontier. That the Blemmyes were proving troublesome at this time is indicated by a reference to a victory of Diocletian over them from March 297: the Romans may have been siding with Meroe against their mutual enemy. Uncertainty remains over the year in which the frontier moved north, which doubtless was not accomplished overnight. Preparations may have begun during the Theban campaign of Galerius in the period 293/5, while the actual shift may not have been made until Diocletian's second visit to Egypt in 301/2.52

There remain the questions of how much land was evacuated and for what reason. Initially Rome exerted control over not only the Dodecaschoenus (which extends from the First Cataract to Hiera Sycamos) but even further south, over the area termed the Triacontaschoenus, 320 km up the Nile valley from the First Cataract. It was the Dodecaschoenus, however, which became the border region up to the reign of Diocletian. Moreover, as has been noted above, considerable pressure from Meroe was exerted here, such that the Dodecaschoenus has been termed a 'co-principauté' of Rome and Meroe. Now it is noteworthy that Procopius does not use the term Dodecaschoenus


himself; instead he refers to an area which took seven days to traverse (xix.28) as that which was conceded to the barbarians. This figure may be compared with the four days Herodotus reckons for going through the Dodecaschoenus along the Nile (II.29) and Olympiodorus' figure of Prima being situated five days south of Philae (frg.35.2). Thus Procopius would appear to be maximising the area evacuated by the Romans; he is not necessarily being inaccurate, since Roman bases (such as Prima) certainly had existed south of Hiera Sycaminos, and it may be that it is these he has in mind.53

Finally, the motivation behind the shift in the frontier. Procopius' explanation is not altogether credible, although it has been accepted by some modern scholars. He states that the area yielded little in taxation, there being little cultivable land next to the Nile in this area (xix.29): many soldiers were therefore guarding a region which was proving to be a drain on resources. Whether or not such a consideration ever actually played a part in determining the location of frontiers, it has plausibly been suggested that Procopius is here reflecting the official reasons put forward at the time: and these should be treated with caution. For not only may Diocletian have had little option than to cede territory to the Meroites but it is also open to question how poor the area was: for while the Nile valley indeed narrows considerably beyond Philae, leaving little land available for cultivation, the gold mines of the Wadi Allaqi could only be approached from the Dodecaschoenus, and Olympiodorus (frg.35.2) specifically mentions the emeralds to be found in this region. Furthermore, Procopius actually stresses the large size of the cities and the productiveness of the land abandoned, in recounting how Diocletian persuaded the Nobadae to move (xix.29). The reference to large forces being stationed there is probably closer to the mark, however: reinforcements will have been drafted in under Probus and Galerius to stabilise the frontier. Thus it is likely that Diocletian made a virtue out of necessity in abandoning the region, and that his claims (presumably indirectly) were repeated by Procopius.54


54 Kirwan, 'The X-Group problem', p.194, accepts Proc.'s explanation. But Török, 'To the history of the Dodekaschoenos', p.85 notes the presence of the gold mines in the area, cf. idem, 'A contribution', p.27, where he makes the suggestion that Proc. is following Diocletian's explanation. I am grateful to Mr
The digression concludes with a return to contemporary history, à propos of the temple of Philae. This temple is frequently mentioned in other sources, although Procopius is incorrect in supposing it to have acquired this name through Diocletian: Strabo (XVII.1.49) refers to it under the same name, as a joint settlement of the Egyptians and Ethiopians. Diocletian's attempt to allow access to it seems to reflect earlier agreements of the Romans with Meroitic rulers, and it is possible that it was something which the Nobades and Blemmyes insisted upon: in the discussions of 453 with the Roman general Maximinus, one of their preconditions was to be allowed access to the temple, and this is described as being in accordance with an ancient custom (perhaps a reference to Diocletian's measures). The fortification of the temple (xix.34) can be tied in with the stationing of the *legio I Maximiana* there, attested in the *Notitia Dignitatum*.55

Justinian's firm measures against the paganism of the tribes (xix.35-37) is in accord with other harsh measures against the 'Hellenic' faith, such as the closure of the Academy at Athens. The Nobades and Blemmyes had apparently maintained their paganism right up to this time, despite the encroachments of Christianity, although there is no record of human sacrifice by the Blemmyes (xix.36). The success of Nares' closure of the temple is shown by the conversion of the Nobades to (anti-Chalcedonian) Christianity soon afterwards. It appears too that Justinian succeeded in checking the inroads of the tribes at any rate, judging by these notices of wars between the Blemmyes and the Nobades; and an Egyptian poet later in the sixth century celebrated the removal of the Blemmyan menace by the Emperor. Where once Isis had been worshipped, a Christian church was now built. The seizure of the statues (xix.37) was a calculated blow to the tribes, since they had been in the habit of removing them to their own territory

C. Adams lor his information on the Nile valley above Philae.

The cities mentioned by Proc. at xix.29 will doubtless have been those visited by Olympiodorus, frg.35.2. On the troops stationed there, cf. M. Speidel, 'Nubia's Roman garrison', *ANRW* II.10.1, p.775.

55 Q.v. n.50 on the agreement in 453. On the legion stationed at Philae, and archaeological evidence for the fortification of the place under the tetrarchs, cf. Bowman, 'The military occupation', p.30 and ND *Or.* XXXI.37, p.64.

Updegraff, 'The Blemmyes: 1', p.74, derives the name Philae from τυλαύ ('gates') *contra* Proc. xix.34.
at a fixed point each year.56

Finally, there is the question of the date of the closure of the temple. It is generally placed in 535, when the eunuch Narses had been sent to Alexandria to quell public unrest there over the appointment of the patriarch Theodosius. The Narses who shut the temple (xix.37) defected to the Romans in 530 (xv.31), which clearly provides a *terminus post quem*. And since he served first in Italy, then in the east, from 538, a date between 535 and 537 seems most likely. Less than a decade after this, in the period 542-545, Theodora succeeded in evangelising Nubia, for which the foundations had been laid by the installation of a bishop at Philae, Theodore, as early as 525. He continued in office for at least half a century, and played an important part in the Christianisation of the area.57

(c) The Historical excursus (I.xx)

In contrast to the lengthy geographical digression, Procopius relates the events which took place in southern Arabia remarkably briefly. His chief interest is the negotiations initiated by Justinian, designed to end Roman dependence on Persia for the import of silk (xx.9), and to bring pressure to bear on the Sasanians on their southern flank (xx.9). But to provide the background to these attempts, which proved largely unsuccessful, he gives an account of the downfall of the king installed by the Ethiopians, Esimiphaeus


For a detailed consideration of the date of the closure, cf. Nautin, *art. cit.*, pp.3-6 and *PLRE* III, s.v. Narses 2, which agree on a date of c.535; both also suggest that Narses was *dux* of the Thebaid.
(Sumya'fa 'Ašw'a) and the usurpation of Abraha (xx.1-8).\textsuperscript{58}

Procopius typically deploys one of his less helpful chronological indicators to start his digression - ὡς ὀγδόεμον τὸν ὃδε (xx.1). In fact, as has been seen above, the Ethiopian victory over Dhu Nuwas took place in 525, although Procopius' words imply that it was during the war between Rome and Persia, and hence somewhat later.\textsuperscript{59} The course of the war has already been considered, as well as the religious dimension of the conflict; that paganism was still strong in the region is evident even in the account of the martyrdom of al-Harith, where some of the actions of the Christians seem to reflect earlier pagan practice.\textsuperscript{60}

The placing of Sumya'fa 'Ašw'a's overthrow at the hands of Abraha χρόνῳ νῦν πολλῷ ἑστήκων (xx.3) is in line with the interpretation of Himyarite events given in the introduction. Sumya'fa had been installed as king in 525, and enjoyed a reign of about five years before the coup: he was still in charge at the time of Julian's embassy (xx.9).

Procopius' information that there were slaves in Ela Asbeha's army (xx.2) is not recorded elsewhere, though it is clear that the Ethiopians, as previously, left a considerable garrison to support their regent.\textsuperscript{61}

The new ruler Abraha went on to rule Himyar and even expand his authority until perhaps as late as 569/70, the so-called 'Year of the Elephant'.\textsuperscript{62} Procopius is the only source to describe him as an ex-slave, and offers the interesting further piece of information that he had belonged to a Roman citizen working in Adulis (xx.4); this

\textsuperscript{58} Q.v. n.18 on the identification of Esimiphaeus and Sumya'fa 'Ašw'a.

\textsuperscript{59} Smith, p.448 and n.3, reckons that νῦν can mean 'just before' or 'just after', but this does not emerge from \textit{LSJ}, and the more usual meaning is simply 'about' or 'at', cf. Dewing's translation, p.189.

\textsuperscript{60} Cf. Christides, 'The Himyarite-Ethiopian War', pp.119-120, for the instances and on paganism in the region generally.

\textsuperscript{61} On the garrison left with Sumya'fa 'Ašw'a, cf. Z. Rubin, \textit{EFRE}, p.401 and n.62. After the first campaign of Ela Asbeha, the \textit{Martyrium Arethae} reports that Ethiopian troops were left in Himyar (I.2, p.722). Q.v. n.22 on the installation of Sumya'fa'.

\textsuperscript{62} Cf. Smith's chronological table, p.465; the 'Year of the Elephant' is generally put in 569/70, but M.J. Kister, 'The Campaign of Huluban - A new light on the expedition of Abraha', \textit{Museon} 78 (1965), p.428, has argued that the expedition of the Elephant took place in 552 (and therefore might be referred to in the inscription concerning the northern campaign of Abraha, dated to 662 of the Himyarite era). \textit{PLRE} III is ungenerous concerning the length of Abraha's rule, s.v. Abraha, where it places the end of his rule in 7547. On Abraha cf. also \textit{EI} I, pp.102-103.
report may just reflect rumours which circulated in the Roman empire, however. Apart from what Procopius records here, the career of Abraha before he seized the Himyarite throne is obscure; but he attracts more attention than his predecessor among ancient sources, who in some cases pass over Esimiphaeus altogether, and make Abraha the direct successor of Dhu Nuwas.63

A figure who looms large in the Arab tradition, and may be referred to in Malalas and Theophanes is a certain Ariat, who appears also to have been overthrown by Abraha; Nöldeke and Carpentier both made the suggestion that the relative of Ela Asbeha sent over to quell the rebellion, according to Procopius (xx.5), may be this Ariat. Problems remain nevertheless, since on the one hand it seems from one Arab tradition that Ariat had exercised control in Himyar for a while before being ousted by Abraha, yet if we identify him with the ruler sent over by Ela Asbeha, it would seem that he had not been Himyar until then. It may be noted, however, that Procopius refers to the army sent by Ela Asbeha fraternising with Abraha’s troops (xx.6), which may point to a period of flux in Himyar with Abraha and his opponent vying to assert control. In this case the two traditions could be identified, supposing that Procopius reflects a version more favourable to the claims of Abraha, according to which his rule precedes that of Ariat, whereas the Arab sources put Ariat first. At any rate both the Arabic sources and Procopius are united in portraying Abraha as a usurper; for him to have seized power it would seem probable that he was an army commander of some importance, as the Arab sources attest, though this need not necessarily entail that he had not once been a slave at Adulis.64

63 On Abraha’s previous career, cf. Ryckmans, pp.6-7 on the Arab tradition placing Abraha on the throne after Ela Asbeha’s victory; also Nöldeke, Tabari, pp.194-204 for two Arab versions, one of which makes Abraha the direct successor of Dhu Nuwas, while the other brings in another ruler, Ariat. Q.v. n.21 for explanations for the omission of Sumyafa ‘Ašwa in some sources. The presence of Cosmas in Adulis (II.56, p.369) shows that there were Roman citizens in the city, whose slave Abraha could at one stage have been.

64 The passages in Mal. and Theoph. are pp.457-459 and A.M. 6064 (misplaced under Justin II, on which cf. E. Jeffreys, ‘A lacuna in Theophanes’ text of Malalas ?’, Studies in Malalas, pp.273-274) respectively; their ‘Indian’ rulers Anganes and Arethas may be identified with this Ariat (so Nöldeke, Tabari, p.190 n.3) - Anganes (p.457) is at any rate referred to as a relative of Ela Asbeha. Smith, pp.449-451, translates the passage of Malalas, and states that ‘Ariat ... corresponds in description though not in name to the Anganes of Malalas’ (p.451), cf. Carpentier §126, pp.698-699; he also reckons that this ruler visited by Julian (whom he views as the Roman ambassador, equating Mal.’s embassy with that referred to by Proc. at xx.9) was located in Himyar rather than Ethiopia, which could tie in with the Arab tradition. Nöldeke. Tabari, p.200 n.4. and Carpentier. §126. for the suggestion concerning Ariat being the
Procopius' description of the background to the revolt against Sumyaf'a 'Ašw'a receives further confirmation in an Arab source, Waqidi: he gives yet another version of how Abraha came to power, describing how Aariat was sent to take control of Himyar by the Ethiopian king with 4000 men (cf. Proc. xx.5, where he gives a figure of 3000), which he succeeded in doing. He proceeded, however, to 'reward the qayl-princes and humble the poor', and was soon overthrown by Abraha. This may account for Procopius' characterisation of the supporters of Abraha as slaves and criminals, if Abraha did secure the backing of the poor oppressed by Aariat. It should be noted too that Procopius does not attribute the rebellion to Abraha himself. It is only after the incarceration of Sumyaf'a that Abraha is established as king (xx.3).65

The dating of Abraha's seizure of power has so far not been considered; it is, of course, a matter of some dispute, but is generally agreed to have taken place between 530 and 533. Now at the time of Julian's embassy (xx.9) Sumyaf'a 'Ašw'a was still on the throne. Procopius dates Julian's embassy by implication to 531, since the τορε at the start of xx.9 strongly implies that this is the project of Justinian which led to the whole excursus; if, however, it is identified with the embassy reported in Malalas (pp.457-459), then it may have taken place in 530, since it is under this year that it is placed by the chronicler. On account of the disagreements over the start of the Himyarite era, considerable debate has taken place over this matter. In this context it has been noted that Masudi refers to Abraha opposing Ela Asbeha while Kavadh was still alive (i.e. before September 531). If such a late source may be trusted, then this is a useful terminus ante quem for the usurpation of Abraha (as well as the embassy of Julian).66

commander referred to in Proc.

65 Smith, p.451, notes this version and translates the piece quoted, cf. Nöldeke, Tabari, p.215. The mention of Aariat being sent across fits with the view, mentioned above, that he is the commander referred to in Proc.; the closeness of the troop figures is also interesting, particularly as it is not a large number. On a more detailed note, as has been noted by modern scholars (while discussing CIS IV.3, Paris 1919, no.621, pp.54-59), Proc.'s κατειρριησεν should be translated as 'imprison' rather than 'besiege', cf. Smith, p.431 n.5 (where he translates the passage), and Ryckmans, p.9, although they differ radically in their view of the inscription. Proc.'s text does not provide firm support for any particular view of the inscription in question.

66 Smith, pp.450 and 456 and Ryckmans, pp.6-7 for various arguments on the date of Abraha's coup and of inscription CIS IV.3, no.621. Those who prefer an earlier dating for the start of the Himyarite era prefer a later date for Abramus' seizure of power - Smith puts it in c.533, p.463, while Figulewskaaja puts it in 531 or 532, p.255. Ryckmans, p.7 n.27, on the evidence of Masudi; Nöldeke, Tabari, p.xxvi, on this source.
The defection of the first Ethiopian army sent to remove Abraha (xx.5-6) has been identified with the Arab tradition concerning the defeat of Ariat. Procopius is the only source, however, to record a second unsuccessful attack (xx.7). The Arab sources do concur with Procopius over Ela Asbeha's rage at the usurpation of Abraha and the defeat of Ariat, but are also aware of Abraha's continued allegiance to Ethiopia and the eventual acceptance by the Ethiopians of his régime. Moreover, despite some translations, the events described at xx.5-8 are all covered by the last phrase \( \tau a v t a \; \mu e v \; \chi r o \nu o \; \tau o \; \iota o s t e r o \; \epsilon g e n e t o \) (xx.8): the attempts of Ela Asbeha to dislodge Abraha thus may have gone on throughout the 530s. The date of Ela Asbeha's death is unknown, but usually placed in the late 530s; according to one tradition he abdicated to become a monk.

According to Procopius, Justinian sought to divert the profits gained by the Persians through their control of the silk trade by using Ethiopian intermediaries to import silk instead (xx.9). But while the Emperor's reasoning behind this venture was clearly sound, it turned out that the Ethiopians were themselves unable to circumvent the Persians. The trade in silk was carefully regulated in the Roman empire: only the comes commerciorum (C.J. IV.40.2) was allowed to purchase the product from barbarians. Moreover, consumption had grown in the late empire, as Ammianus notes in rather exaggerated fashion in the fourth century - '[sericum] nunc etiam infimorum sine ulla discretione proficiens' (nowadays [silk is] available even to the lowest without any distinction) (XXIII.6.67). While peace prevailed between Constantinople and Persia, the profits accruing to the Persians need not have concerned the Romans excessively, but the current war with Persia showed every sign of continuing for a long time; in the end it was only Kavadh's death which brought the Persians to terms. Moreover, Procopius mentions in the Anecdota (xxv.13-26) that silk traders were claiming that the Persians were charging higher prices, though he does not give any date. Hence Julian's embassy

On the date of Julian's embassy, cf. now Shahid, BASIC I. XIII (n.490), placing it in 530/1.

67 For the Arab versions, Nöldeke, Tabari, pp.196-197, on Ela Asbeha's rage but eventual forgiveness of Abraha, after the latter gave pledges of allegiance; also pp.198-199.
68 Smith, p.465, puts Ela Asbeha's death in c.536. Altheim-Stiehl, p.391, notes the story that Ela Asbeha abdicated to become a monk, cf. PLRE II, s.v. Elesboas.
Ryckmans, pp.6-7, for the mistranslation ("ceci") of xx.8, cp. Dewing, p.191 ('this').
to the Ethiopians should be seen against this background. Eventually, Justinian was able to manufacture silk within the Empire itself in any case, thanks to the transport of the eggs of *bombyx mori* to Constantinople by two monks.69

Procopius' clarification of the term *μεταξα* (xx.9) is in keeping with his circumlocutions to maintain his 'classicism': for the word *μεταξα* is very late, and *σηρυκη* is found only after the first century A.D. Thus some means of putting it into a classical context needed to be found, and Procopius finds this in his reference to Herodotus' *εσθης Μεδικη*. It is not necessary to see in this any allusion to a decline from classical standards: Procopius' explanation is merely to compensate for his use of modern terminology.70

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The second part of Julian's embassy, aimed at inciting a Himyarite attack on the Persians, occupies but little space in Procopius' text (xx.9-10), yet requires discussion at some length. For the Caisus (Qays) mentioned here is generally identified with the Qays to whom Nonnosus and his father Abraham were sent. Little of Nonnosus' account of his mission to Himyar and Axum survives, but it is clear that it is relevant to Roman diplomacy in this region around this time. The passage of Malalas concerning a Roman envoy at the court of an Indian ruler (pp.457-459) has also been connected with this mission, on the grounds that the term there used to refer to the Himyarites -'Ἀμεριται -

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70 The first reference in *LSJ* to *μεταξα* (in compound form) is in Diocletian's Price Edict, cp. the piece of legislation of Justinian, Περι *μεταξης* in * Corpus Iuris Civilis*, vol.3, ed. G. Kroll, Berlin 1895, App.5, p.798. Smith, p.427, makes the suggestion that there is some hint at a decline in standards in Proc., and also sees an allusion to the strife between the opponents and supporters of Chalcedon in the reference to the 'community of religion' at xx.9; but both these points seem a little forced. As Dewing notes (p.193 n.1), *σηρυκη* refers to China, cp. Ammianus XXIII.6.67-78 on the Seres. Hdt. III.84 and 1.135 on the *Μεδικη έσθης*, surely what Proc. has in mind in his explanation.

On Proc.'s use of periphrasis, cf. Cameron ch.3, esp. pp.36-37; Cosmas uses the word *μεταξη* at II.45-46 (pp.353-355), where he also discusses the trade routes from China and notes how sought after silk is.
is the same as that used by Nonnosus.\textsuperscript{71}

The chronology of these various embassies is the subject of much debate, which in this case depends on the interpretation of the Greek texts in question rather than the start of the Himyarite era. Since no one solution has met with universal acceptance, the various pieces of evidence will be set forth below. Nonnosus records three embassies (A-C below) to southern Arabia, two undertaken by his father, and one by him. To maintain clarity, below is given a list of the missions, each of which will be designated by a letter for ease of reference:

A Abraham’s first mission to Qays, described as \textit{φυλάρχος δὲ τῶν Σαρακηνῶν ἔχοματις Καισος ἀπογονος Άρεθα} and as having control over the Kindites and Ma’add tribe. Abraham made a treaty with him, and brought back his son Mavia as a hostage to Constantinople.

B Nonnosus’ mission to Qays and Ela Asbeha: his brief is to persuade Qays to come to the Emperor (Justinian, according to the preface to Nonnosus’ fragment), which he fails to do, and to visit Ela Asbeha as well as the Himyarites.

C Abraham’s second mission to Qays, when he succeeds in persuading him to come to Constantinople, leaving his kingdom to his two brothers, Ambrus (‘Amr) and Yezid.\textsuperscript{72} Qays therefore receives the phylarchy of Palestine (the Greek actually has ‘Palestine’ in the plural), bringing with him many followers.

D Julian’s mission, reported by Procopius (xx.9-11), and dated by him to between 527 and 531 certainly, and most probably to 530 or 531 (τοτε, xx.9) to persuade Sumya\textsuperscript{a} to restore Qays to charge over the Ma’add and to urge greater

\textsuperscript{71} Nonnosus in \textit{FHG} IV, ed. C. Müller, pp.178-181; on Nonnosus, cf. e.g. R. Laqueur in \textit{RE} XVII (1936), cols.920-921. On the term for the Himyarites, cf. Figulewskaja, p.182, who argues that Malalas must have derived his information from Nonnosus. On the other hand, Shahid, ‘Byzantium and Kinda’, p.63, argues that Julian also wrote an account of his embassy, which was used by Malalas. Smith, p.449, suggests that Nonnosus was Julian’s interpreter or that Julian was the author of the fragments attributed to Nonnosus.

\textsuperscript{72} On these two, cf. \textit{PLRE} III s.v. Ambrus 1 and Iezidus 1.
commercial co-operation between Constantinople and Axum.

Finally there is the embassy reported by Malalas (pp.457-459), conducted by an unknown ambassador, which reports a successful Roman request to an 'Indian' ruler (Anganes and Ela Asbeha are both named) to launch an attack upon the Persians.

The difficulty arises in determining whether some of these missions overlap, and in establishing a chronological order for them. But before an attempt is made to correlate the various missions recorded above, it is worth noting the controversy that the name Caisus/Qays itself has occasioned. It was proposed at first that he be identified with the Arab poet Imru' al-Qays, the grandson of al-Harith the Kindite, who is reported in the Arab tradition as having journeyed to Constantinople and died at Ancyra. This view was strongly rejected first by Olinder, and subsequently by Shahid; it was nevertheless accepted by Stein, and has recently been advocated by Sartre. On balance, the identification may tentatively be accepted, though there is no doubt that he was a grandson of al-Harith; since the solution of this dispute would not in any case help with the discussion of the embassies listed above, the matter may be left to one side.73

It is worthwhile also to consider briefly the phylarchate of Abu Karib in Palestine (mentioned in C above), since it too need not have any bearing upon the chronology of the embassies. For it seems likely that Qays' phylarchate was either an honorary appointment or even held jointly with Abu Karib: it need not be supposed that Abu Karib was removed from office, which would be surprising in any case. Some sort of honorary phylarchate may also be implied by Nonnosus' use of ΤΟΝ ΤΟΝ ΠΑΛΑΙΣΤΙΝΩΝ

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73 Olinder, pp.114-116 for his arguments and for his identification of Qays with another figure in the Arab tradition; Shahid, 'Byzantium and Kinda', p.59 and Appendix 1, arguing against Stein II, pp.298-299; Sartre, pp.174-176, for his arguments against Olinder; Aigrain too, col.1198, accepted the identification, as does Cameron, p.121 n.56, although she fails to note the controversy surrounding the matter. PLRE III appears to support Shahid against the identification, s.v. Caisus. For a demonstration of the utter confusion which the name can cause, cf. the incomprehensible genealogy in Trimingham, pp.276-277. Shahid, BASIC I, XIII, 'Byzantium and Kinda' offers a clearer family tree.
The Ma'add tribe seem to have rebelled against the Kindites (and their chief, Qays) soon after the death of al-Harith the Kindite (in 528); eventually they fell under Lakhmid control. Furthermore, it is interesting that Ma'dikarib Ya'fur, the first regent installed by Ela Asbeha, campaigned in the north against various tribes, among whom were the Kindites. Given the traditional cordial relations between Kinda and Himyar, it might be supposed that al-Harith's success in the north of the Arabian peninsula had been the cause of tensions between the two sides. It is evident that this part of the Hijaz was a disputed area, in which Himyarite, Kindite, Lakhmid and Roman interests clashed, and it is unsurprising that the picture is not altogether clear.

Next the matter of the embassies to southern Arabia must be examined. They have been most thoroughly dealt with by Shahid, who puts A soon after al-Harith the Kindite's death in 528, arguing that Qays succeeded to the phylarchate held by his grandfather, and that Abraham renewed the foedus concluded with the Kindites in 502. He then wants to tie in B and D, viewing them as part of the same mission: Nonnosus was the junior partner, who had to inform Julian of whether he had been successful in persuading Qays to come to Constantinople. He places this second embassy around 530, and all of them within the five years 527-532; E he regards as representing Julian's report. There are problems with Shahid's interpretation, however: on the one hand there is the fact that in Nonnosus' account, Qays emerges as a powerful chieftain, while in Procopius he is a fugitive who has killed a relative of Sumyaf'a 'Asw'a (though of distinguished descent - γενος ζ μεν Ἰυ του φυλαρχικου, xx.10). Moreover, if Qays had
been overthrown in the period since 528, it is difficult to see why he should refuse Nonnosus’ offer to come to Constantinople. The other objection to Shahid’s view is that it implies that Qays’ position changed rapidly in the course of a few years: initially, at the time of A, he was a powerful chieftain, then in 530/531 he was a wandering renegade (D), but finally emerged in a strong position (C). Such a fluctuation of fortunes cannot be ruled out, but this linking together of B, D and E appears far from convincing.

As is so often the case with the affairs of this region, the information is too fragmentary to admit of a definitive solution. Certainly the embassies of Procopius and Nonnosus must be interlinked, and it is hardly in doubt that the Qays referred to in both is the same figure. The problem lies in the huge difference in Qays’ position in the two sources; Shahid avoids this to some extent by casting doubt on Procopius’ account.77

Given the criticism that has been made of Shahid’s interpretation, an alternative should be offered; clearly it too must be subject to caution. If the assumption that the embassies of Nonnosus and Julian were simultaneous is removed, then a quite different schema might be suggested: all three of the missions reported by Nonnosus might be placed after D/E, over the course of the 530s, which would explain why his account contains no mention of Persia (a notable omission). It would be preferable for B to occur sooner rather than later in the 530s, since Ela Asbeha is mentioned in it as king of Ethiopia, but beyond that the dating must remain imprecise. The rationale behind A, B and C would thus be more connected to the situation in southern Arabia than relations with Persia, and the desire to remove Qays in the end could be ascribed to a policy of maintaining good relations with Abraha; for it is known that he campaigned against the Ma'add tribe. D and E should still be connected: both are explicitly dated in any case to 530/1.78 This solution does at any rate have the advantage of providing a reasonable ground for the Roman desire to recall Qays, whereas with Shahid’s interpretation the motivation is far from clear; the difference in Qays’ position between Procopius and Nonnosus may also be explained by Qays succeeding in seizing power in

77 ‘Procopius and Kinda’, passim, esp. p.76, where he doubts that Qays really was a fugitive, and whether he had killed a relative of Sumyafa 'Asw'a. In BASIC I, XII, he notes a campaign of Qays against the Lakhmids in the Arab sources, which (if accurate) must have taken place very soon after his grandfather's death at the hands of al-Mundhir.

78 V.i. n.80 on Abraha's campaign. On the dating of D and E, q.v. n.66.
the course of Abraha’s revolt against Sumyaf’a ‘Ašw’a. Indeed, if Qays had murdered a relative of Sumyaf’a ‘Ašw’a, he would have been an ideal ally for Abraha, until the latter secured his throne and cast his gaze northwards. Finally, to place A, B, and C all before D/E has the obvious problem that Nonnosus puts Justinian on the throne, and it seems more plausible not to place all three embassies between 527 and 530/1.

The failure of both aims of Julian’s embassy is perhaps overstated by Procopius (xx.12), although some modern scholars have concurred in his conclusion. The Ethiopians, whose lack of warships had caused them to turn to the Romans for help in unseating Dhu Nuwas, proved no more successful in using their trading vessels to buy silk in the East. Procopius may be more disingenuous regarding the Himyarites: clearly it was unrealistic for them to be expected to attack the Persian empire themselves, but it is unlikely that this was ever requested by the Romans. They could, however, hurt Persian interests by assailing their Lakhmid allies, as indeed Abraha subsequently did; an epigraphic record of a campaign of Abraha in 547 (662) is often identified with the expedition reported by Procopius at xx.13. The attitude of Procopius to Justinian’s ventures is hardly straightforward: it is plain from his account that nothing was gained by the embassy he reports, at least in his view. But it is not necessary to regard this as part of a general bias against the Emperor; it could equally reflect a lack of interest in events far beyond the main front, which seemed to him to accomplish little. This would also explain why he fails to mention the embassies reported by Nonnosus - not through malice, but through lack of interest.79

Since the dating of the inscription referring to Abraha’s thrust northward uses the Himyarite dating system, there are numerous dates put forward for when it took place, ranging from 544 to 552. Assuming that it is to this expedition that Procopius refers (xx.13), then the latter of these dates is ruled out by the publication date of *Wars* I-VII

79 Scholars who regard the ventures as a failure - Z. Rubin, *EFRE*, p.401; Pigulewskaja, p.252, and B. Rubin, *ZI*, pp.315-316, note how Persian seapower rendered Justinian’s plan impossible, q.v. n.10; Shahid, ‘The Arabs in the Peace Treaty of 561’, p.194, notes the extension of al-Mundhir’s power by the Persians around 531 to Bahrain, Oman and Yamama, and sees in this a move to secure Persian control of trade. Shahid, ‘Procopius and Arethas’, pp.374-376 and ‘Procopius and Kinda’, *passim*, all but accuses Proc. of deliberately telling untruths, although this can hardly be proved; Smith too, p.448, notes that Proc. may be drawing attention to the Emperor’s failure, cp. B. Rubin, *PvK*, col.374 who sees an underlying ironic streak in Proc.’s account. It is worth noting that there are no more Roman successes from the point of this excursus to the end of the book, which might connected with the withdrawal of Belisarius from the frontier.
in 550; and in the interests of consistency with regard to the start of the Himyarite era, it is preferable to place the campaign in 547. There need be no connection with the second Persian war under Justinian, given that Procopius reports (II.xxviii.12-14) that the hostilities between the vassal Arab kings of both sides continued long after fighting between the protagonists had ceased. One of the targets of Abraha, it emerges from the inscription, was the Ma’add tribe; moreover, it was Abraha’s fourth campaign against them. It is even reported that a certain Qays was installed as their chief, but he has never been identified with the Qays of Nonnosus and Procopius. That Lakhmid interests were indeed felt to be at risk can be seen from the fact that a nephew of al-Mundhir, ‘Amr, held command of the forces opposed to Abraha. Thus it may be seen that there were benefits to be reaped from good relations with Himyar, although these came at a time when they profited Justinian little.80

* * *

This digression is the longest in Wars I, if the opening chapters are ruled out from this category. As is Procopius’ custom (cp. x.1-12), more attention is devoted to geography than to history; given the interest which the region attracted in this period, he could no doubt have acquired his information from a variety of sources, oral and written.

The negative tone of xx, which ends with the failure of either the Ethiopians or the Himyarites to harm Persia in any way, has been seen to imply criticism of Justinian. Such a view misses the mark. What emerges more strongly from the two chapters is the foolishness in placing any faith in barbarian allies - ‘ut sunt fluxioris fidei barbari’, as Ammianus put it (XVIII.2.18). Thus although Procopius may have viewed the Emperor’s schemes in southern Arabia as an irrelevant sideshow, he is more openly critical of Diocletian for his ineffectual payment of subsidies to the Nobades and

80 On Abraha’s thrust north, cf. Bosworth, CHlr 3.1, pp.605-606 (placing it in 547), Shahid, BASIC I, XIV, and Smith, pp.436-437, who notes the presence of Qays (but does not identify him with his homonym in the Greek sources); cf. Noldeke, Tabari, pp.203-204 for Qays, though at p.204 n.2 he seems to want to place the expedition in 570 (the usual year given for the ‘Year of the Elephant’). Ryckmans, p.22, dates the episode to 552 (noting that it was Abraha’s fourth against the Ma’add), cf. Kister, ‘The campaign of Huluban’, p.428, putting it in the same year and identifying it with the Expedition of the Elephant. Shahid, ‘Procopius and Arethas’, p.376, cf. Noldeke, Tabari, p.204 n.2 for the identification of Proc.’s campaign with that mentioned in the inscription (Ry 506 in ‘Inscriptions sud-Arabes’, Museion 66 (1953), pp.275-284).
Blemmyes (xix.32-33); in the same way he applauds the subjugation of the Tzani, to whom subsidies had also been paid to no avail (xv.23). As Procopius himself declares, 'it seems that with all barbarians there is no means of compelling them to keep faith with the Romans except through the fear of soldiers to keep them in check' (xix.33). And so since no Roman forces were involved in the Emperor's initiative in southern Arabia, it achieves little, and warrants little scrutiny.
CHAPTER EIGHT: PERSIAN HISTORY AND THE COUP AT DARA

(a) Introduction

Book I ends with four rather diverse chapters - one (xxiii) on internal Persian history, one on the Nika riot (xxiv), one on John the Cappadocian (xxv), and finally one on an attempted coup at Dara (xxvi). These final chapters may be assigned with some confidence to a later period of composition than those which precede them: Procopius provides numerous indications of this in his account, sometimes quite explicitly. Thus at xxiii.12 he refers forward to II.xvii - Khusro's campaign in 541 - while at xxv.43 he states clearly that he is writing in the third year since John the Cappadocian's exile to Egypt, to be placed in 544 at the earliest.¹

Now while the relevance of xxiii to the Persian Wars cannot easily be impugned - a lengthier account of Persian internal history is offered at the beginning of Wars I - xxiv-xxv seem remarkably out of place. No attempt is made to relate them in any way to the wars against Persia, save the notice at xxiii.1 on plots being hatched against the rulers of both empires around the same time. A not unreasonable supposition would be that Procopius used the notice concerning the attempts made against Khusro as a peg on which to hang his account of the Nika riot and its aftermath.² Since xxiv-xxv then not only represent a later addition to the book, but are also concerned with events far removed from the eastern front, they must await discussion elsewhere.

(b) The plot against Khusro (xxiii)

This chapter represents Procopius' final excursus of any length on Persian affairs and is made up of three tales. Although the first two are linked, the downfall of Mebodes (xxiii.25-29) appears to have been inserted here just because internal Persian matters are under consideration. The first tale concerns a plot against Khusro (xxiii.1-6), whose position at the opening of his reign was by no means secure: the Mazdakites probably

¹ On the dating of xxv, cf. e.g. Bury, HLRE II, p.59 n.1 and Cameron, p.236 n.66. That xxiv must date from post-541 (his fall) is clear from the abuse levelled at him at xxiv.11-15, cf. PLRE III, s.v. Ioannes 11.

² Cameron, p.166 on the problem of the relevance of these chapters and how it reduces the need to explain the uprising.
remained to be suppressed, among whom was his elder brother Kaoses, though Procopius passes over this. Then at some point, according to Procopius, another brother, Zames, was involved in a plot. Khusro, of a suspicious disposition in any case, exacted bloody retribution on both occasions.³

The parallels between Justinian and Khusro in Procopius' works are striking and have not escaped notice.⁴ The attitude of the historian to Khusro is uniformly hostile, which is reflected still more strongly in later passages - II.ix.8-12 (following the capture of Antioch) and especially VIII.x.8-10 (concerning the rebellion of Khusro's son Anosazadus); this view contrasts both with his treatment of Kavadh and with other Roman historians' treatment of Khusro.⁵ It can hardly escape the reader's notice that Khusro almost suffers the same fate as his father - to be replaced by one of his relatives - and for similar reasons. Kavadh's introduction of νεωτερια led to his expulsion by the people (I.v.1): indeed Agathias states that it was his change to the law regarding marriage that the chief cause of his expulsion (IV.xxviii.1), just as here Procopius considers Khusro's love of innovation to be the principal ground for the coup prepared against him (xxiii.2).⁶

The first two episodes in this chapter involve the family of Zames. First, there is the attempt to place the son of Zames, one of Khusro's brothers, on the throne (xxiii.4-6). This is followed by an account of how Khusro attempted to kill Zames' son Kavadh, and how he exacted revenge upon Adergoudounbades for having failed to carry out his

³ On Khusro's position at the start of his reign, cf. Crone, 'Kavâd's heresy', pp.31-33, placing the massacre of the Mazdakites early in Khusro's reign; she also notes how quickly he came to terms with the Romans. Cf. also Christensen, pp.381-382 and q.v. ch.5 n.54 on the question of when the Mazdakites were suppressed. V.i. n.25 on Khusro's suspiciousness.

⁴ Cameron, p.143, pointing to Anecd. xviii.28-30 on Khusro's interest in religious matters, mirroring that of Justinian; cf. also II.iii.38 on Justinian upsetting the existing order of things, according to the Armenian envoys.

⁵ Cp. e.g. Agathias IV.xxx.5-10, who refers to Proc.'s account of Khusro's deeds, but holds his reign in high esteem despite his inglorious death. Both John of Ephesus, Historiae Ecclesiasticae Pars Tertia, tr. E.W. Brooks, Louvain 1952, (III) 6.20, p.240, and Zach. (XII.7) lay stress upon Khusro's adherence to Christianity.

⁶ On Proc.'s attitude to Kavadh, q.v. ch.4 n.89, and cf. also Cameron, p.163, n.90 and p.240; Christensen, pp.379-380 compares Proc.'s treatment of Khusro with the oriental sources. Despite the praise for Kavadh at vii.34, where he generously releases prisoners taken at Amida, his refusal to abide by established customs over the choice of a successor comes in for criticism at xi.3, and his treatment of his saviour Seoses at xi.37 is likewise portrayed in a poor light.
orders (xxiii.7-24). Whereas Kavadh had alienated the \( \pi\lambda\eta\theta\omicron\zeta \) by his support for the Mazdakites (v.1), Khusro managed to estrange the \( \delta\rho\alpha\sigma\tau\eta\mu\nu\iota\iota \), who proved less capable of remedying the situation, however. Procopius lays considerable stress on the claims of Zames, and to a lesser extent his elder brother Kaoses, to the throne: at xi.2-4 he incorrectly considers that Kavadh was obligated by precedent to designate his eldest son as his successor.\(^7\) Later at II.ix.12, in the aftermath of the fall of Antioch, Procopius again upholds the claims of Zames to the throne, on the grounds of his seniority to Khusro. It is tempting to suppose from these references that Procopius is here relying on the younger Kavadh, the supposed grandson of king Kavadh, for his information; this would also account for the lack of similar support for Kaoses, and perhaps for the greater favour shown to king Kavadh than to his successor.\(^8\) Moreover, despite the uncertainty expressed at xxiii.24 regarding the identity of the younger Kavadh, by the time of VIII.xxvi.13 Procopius appears to be in no doubt that he is really is Kavadh's grandson. One more piece of evidence which might favour the notion that Kavadh was a source for much of the information on internal Persian matters in book I is the corresponding lack of such detail in book II; as has been noted above, the only subsequent notice on Persian domestic affairs comes at VIII.x, concerning Anosozadus' rebellion, which was important enough to ensure that information from other sources was available.\(^9\)

Khusro was able to suppress the plot with ease when it was brought to his attention (xxiii.5-6); this may account for the fact that Procopius is the only source for the whole

\(^7\) Q.v. ch.5 n.49.

\(^8\) Q.v. ch.5 n.54 on Kaoses: his support for the Mazdakites ruled him out from the succession, and he was eliminated by Khusro around the time of his accession.

\(^9\) Cf. Nöldeke, Tabari, p.147 n.1, who also suggests that the information on Zames' plot comes from Kavadh the younger. It is clear, moreover, that Proc. was particularly well informed about the campaigns of 541 - both that of Belisarius and that of Khusro: his knowledge of the Persian attack in the north is the more striking, and is illustrated not only by this passage (and II.xvii-xix) but also by Anecd ii.29-37. Here again he also seems to have access to some source on the Persian side, who could also supply information on Adergoudounbades' death. If Kavadh was the source, then he must clearly have acquired the information at second hand, given Khusro's desire to execute him. Q.v. also ch.1 n.9 on Proc.'s use of Kavadh.
episode, whereas the revolt of Anosozadus is also reported by Dinawari and Firdausi.10 A regrettable consequence of this lack of any other source is the lack of a date for this plot: it clearly took place around 532, certainly no later than 541 (xxiii.12), but beyond that precision is impossible. Whether Procopius himself could have been more precise is doubtful: there are no precise dates to be found anywhere in his excurses on Persian affairs. Khusro’s measures against his male relatives (xxiii.6) were not unusual in the Sasanian dynasty, since usurpers generally came from the royal house: similarly Kavadh II Shiroe, when he ascended the throne in 628, had his eighteen brothers executed to remove any potential rivals.11 What is unclear, however, is who these brothers were: for at xi.2-4 Procopius lists three potential candidates for the Persian throne, but by the time of Zames’ revolt, Kavadh’s eldest son Kaoses had vanished from view, thus apparently leaving only Zames. Given the polygyny practised by the Persian monarchs, however, it is highly probable that Kavadh had other sons, and it is these who were now eliminated by Khusro.12

The next episode (xxiii.7-24) related by Procopius is the most colourful of the three in this chapter, and serves further to show up the deceit of the Persian king. For just as Kavadh had permitted the execution of his faithful supporter Seoses, so here Khusro eliminates Kavadh’s loyal lieutenant Adergoudounbades; and finally he removes Mebodes (xxiii.25-29), who had been instrumental in securing the succession for him. Adergoudounbades had served as the kanarang in the East since Kavadh’s return to power in 498 (vi.18), but it is unclear why he should have been entrusted with the


11 PLRE III, s.v. Cavades II qui et Siroe; Mari, p.42, refers to Khusro eliminating his brothers and his chief general. Q.v. also ch.6 n.115 on the unrest noted by Proc. and Mal. in the Persian court in 532. Kaoses is last mentioned by Proc. at xxi.21, where his dissatisfaction with Kavadh’s will is reported.

12 Q.v. ch.5 n.51 on Khusro’s sons; note also iv.2 on the thirty sons of Peroz who accompanied him in his final battle against the Hephthalites.

Nöldeke, Tabari, p.147 n.1, argues that Khusro and Zames probably shared the same mother; for Aspebedes is unlikely to have conspired against Khusro if Zames were not as closely related to him as his brother. But Proc.’s words here (xxiii.6) - that Khusro executed καὶ τοὺς αὐτὸν τε καὶ Ζαμων ἅδελφους - might imply that the two had different mothers. On Aspebedes, who was also executed, q.v. ch.5 n.53.
rearing of Zames' son. Procopius states that Adergoudounbades had subdued twelve barbarian tribes to the Persians (xxiii.21); this combined with the length of his tenure of the post explains why Khusro treated him with circumspection. While the effectiveness of Adergoudounbades as a commander may be accepted, whether he had indeed accomplished such conquests is open to question: the Persian and Arabic sources depict Kavadh's reign as one in which the Persian empire contracted rather than expanded, although it is possible that Adergoudounbades may have gone on the offensive only during the first ten years of Khusro's reign (531-541). Since the Hephthalites remained a thorn in Persia's side until the 540s, however, it seems more likely to suppose that the conquests attributed to Khusro in the oriental sources were made in the late 550s during the elimination of the Hephthalite kingdom.

The tale of Khusro's message to the kanārang Adergoudounbades (xxiii.7-11) is narrated in a most Herodotean fashion; indeed it is clear that Procopius is consciously echoing the story of Cyrus' birth, thereby also much flattering Kavadh the younger by the comparison. Adergoudounbades is cast as the new Harpagus, ordered by Khusro (Astyages in Herodotus) to kill a young child: in Herodotus the child is Cyrus, Astyages' grandson by his daughter Mandane. In Procopius it is Khusro's nephew and Kavadh's grandson, although it appears that the younger Kavadh is not as young as the infant Cyrus in Herodotus. The closest point of contact between the two tales comes when Kavadh's nurse begs the kanārang not to kill the child:

\[\text{δακρύσασα δὲ ἡ γυνὴ καὶ τῶν γονάτων τοῦ ἄνδρος λαβομένη, ἐχρῆζε τέχνη μηθεμία Kaβάδην κτείναι. (xxiii.8)}\]

\[\text{δακρύσασα καὶ λαβομένη τῶν γονώτων τοῦ ἄνδρος ἐχρῆζε μηθεμία τέχνη ἐκθεῖναι μν. (Herodotus I.112)}\]

13 On Adergoudounbades and the rank of kanārang, q.v. ch.3 n.89.

14 Cf. Noldeke, Tabari, p.156, on Khusro retaking lands lost under Kavadh and n.1 for the suggestion that these lands were only retaken during the destruction of the Hephthalites. The lands referred to by Tabari are in the east of the empire, e.g. Sind, Arachosia and Zabulistan, and hence in the vicinity of Adergoudounbades' territory, which bordered that of the Hephthalites (Proc. v.4). Nonetheless the continuing threat posed by the Hephthalites makes it unlikely that any major conquests were effected there by Adergoudounbades, cf. ch.3 n.75.
Unlike Cyrus, however, Kavadh did not succeed in taking over the throne, but was forced to seek refuge in Constantinople; no date is given for his departure from the kanārang's house, but he is said to have arrived in Constantinople soon after Adergoudounbades' fall in 541 (xxiii.23). It might be suggested therefore that he took refuge initially with the Hephthalites, given their proximity to his guardian's court in the east and his grandfather's ties with them; in this case he may have been able to furnish Procopius with some of the details he gives concerning them at iii.1-7.15

The betrayal of Adergoudounbades by his son Bahram (xxiii.12-24), like the failed coup of Zames, is reported in no other source save Procopius. It is dated to 541 at xxiii.12, since it was in this year that Khusro launched his campaign in Lazica (II.xvii). The details of the ruse employed by Khusro are again related in Herodotean style; Harpagus too was tricked by Astyages, when the king feigned satisfaction with his decision not to expose Cyrus, but then invited him to a banquet where he served up his son's flesh.16 Khusro's proposal to the kanārang - that he should lead half the Persian army up one side of the Euphrates, while he himself proceeded invaded on the other side - was by no means implausible: in the following year, 542, he did indeed invade the Roman empire along the Euphrates, keeping to the left bank of the river (II.xx.1). Some thirty years later, moreover, Khusro launched a two-pronged attack along the Euphrates: while he turned northward along the Khabur to attack Dara, Adormahan continued along the Euphrates to sack Apamea.17

Much stress is laid on the shameful way in which the kanārang was lured to his death, considering his old age and his past services to the empire; there is again something of a parallel with Harpagus, who was delighted to be summoned to a banquet by Astyages after Cyrus' identity was established, although he was destined to eat the flesh of his son

15 Herodotus I.107-119 for this part of the tale of Cyrus. Since Kavadh was not captured when Adergoudounbades was executed, he must have spent some time between having left the kanārang's court and arriving at Constantinople.

16 Herodotus I.118-119.

17 Theophylact III.x.7-9 (in 573).
there. His replacement by his son Bahram (xxiii.22) is not surprising, since Procopius asserts at vi.13 that the office was confined to one particular family.

There was nothing novel in Kavadh's decision to seek refuge at the imperial court (xxiii.23); in the fourth century Hormisdas, a son of of the Persian king Hormizd II, had sought refuge in the Roman empire. During the reign of Hormizd IV (579-590), a supposed brother of the king turned up at Constantinople, and was treated with deference by the Emperor Tiberius. He was exposed by a Persian spatharius, however, at Chalcedon. Not long after this Khusro II fled to Roman territory, having been defeated by the usurper Bahram Chobin in 590, and appealed successfully for Roman aid. Since there was no prospect for Kavadh to be installed on the Persian throne, he seems to have joined other exiles at the Constantinopolitan court and sought his fortune in the wars in Italy.

Despite Procopius' caution in describing Kavadh as the grandson of the homonymous king, it has already been noted that by VIII.xxvi.13 he indulges in no such speculation, and states outright that he was indeed Kavadh's grandson. Worthy of attention too is the reference to the refugee's physical similarity to the previous Persian king - ἐφερεστατος (xxiii.23) - given the limited number of those at the Constantinopolitan court who can have laid eyes upon king Kavadh. In none of the campaigns of Belisarius between 527 and 531 did the Persian king take part, so it is impossible that Procopius

18 Christensen, p.382, considers that Proc. makes Adergoudounbades' death reflect Khusro's cleverness, but it points rather to his callousness. For another example of the Persian king's ruthlessness - and Roman treatment of it - cp. Agathias IV.xxiii on the punishment inflicted upon the defeated Nakhoragan in 554.

19 Q.v. ch.3 n.89 on whether the office of kanārang was hereditary; also Christensen, p.107 n.3. Bahram's subsequent fate is unclear: he might just be identified with the Bahram who served Khusro in the 570s in southern Arabia and was defeated at Sargathon in 573, which would make him the father of the usurper Bahram Chobin and a member of the Mirhan house, cf. PLRE III, s.v. Bahram 1 for the general in the 570s.


21 Wars VIII.xxvi.13. Another such exile was Peranius, of the Iberian royal family: both he (VI.xix-xx) and his son Pacurius (VIII.xxvi.4) took part in the Gothic wars. Hormisdas too had served in the Roman army, cf. PLRE I, s.v. Hormidas 2.
can be speaking from his own experience.\footnote{An envoy who was a personal friend of Kavadh, however, such as Rufinus, could have provided such a detail, although he is not attested after 532, cf. \textit{PLRE} II, s.v. Rufinus 13. But Hermogenes and Alexander, for instance, had both met Kavadh as well, cf. \textit{PLRE} III, s.v. Alexander 1 and Hermogenes 1.}

Typically, no date is offered for the fall of Mebodes (Māḥbōdh) (xxiii.25-29). Although this tale is to be found in the Persian and Arabic sources, this is of no help in attempting to place the episode. It should be noted, however, that the ὄντως at xxiii.25 should not be taken as post-541 (the date of the death of Adergoudounbades and the arrival of Kavadh in Constantinople, just related), but rather as referring to a time subsequent to the insurrection of Zames: the whole section xxiii.12-24 is an aside, dealing with events following Khusro’s suppression of the rebellion. Hence the execution of Mebodes may well have taken place in the 530s, not long after Khusro’s accession, in which he had played an important role; confirmation for this may be inferred from the fact that Theodora had addressed a letter to the architect of Mebodes’ downfall, Zaberganes, some time before Belisarius’ Assyrian campaign in 541 (\textit{Anecd.} ii.32-33).\footnote{Proc. xxi.17-22 on Mebodes assuring the succession of Khusro and q.v. ch.6 n.113.}

As Christensen notes, the story enjoyed a considerable vogue in the oriental sources: Mebodes is portrayed as a wise man and vizier, who faithfully serves king Khusro together with his two sons. He incurs the wrath of the chamberlain Zerwan/Azarwindad, who enlists the help of a Jewish sorcerer to bring about his downfall. Although they succeed in bringing about the death of both Mebodes and his sons, they in turn are executed by Khusro when he discovers their plot.\footnote{Firdausi, tr. Mohl, pp.295-305 and al-Tha’alibi, tr. Zotenberg, p.625. Cf. also Christensen, p.382, who notes (n.5) that Tha’alibi’s Azarwindad is a confusion with Adergoudounbades in place of Zerwan/Zabergan.} Procopius’ version as it stands is scarcely more probable: that Khusro should have executed the man who helped him succeed to the throne for not having instantly obeyed a royal summons. A more probable explanation for the fall of Mebodes is the eminence of his position: just as Kavadh had done away with the leading noble Sokhra at the start of his reign, so Khusro moved to eliminate the most powerful of the nobility in his day. The attempt of Zames to organise a plot against Khusro may well have precipitated such a measure:
the oriental sources make note of the king's suspicious nature.25

Of Zabergan, the architect of Mebodes' fall, little is known: he reappears as a callous adviser to Khusro during his invasions of Roman territory in the 540s (II.viii.30, II.xxvi.16-19), as well as the addressee of a letter from Theodora. He may reasonably be identified with a Zabargan mentioned in a Syriac life of the martyr Grigor, who took part in a Persian embassy to the Roman Emperor in the 530s. His fortunes would appear to have been at their peak in the early 540s, but following the siege of Edessa in 544, no more is heard of him. As has been noted above, Procopius in fact reports very little about Persian affairs after 544 in any case, and so his death need not be inferred from his absence thereafter. According to the oriental tradition, at some point Khusro discovered the plot of Zaberganes and put him to death; it may be significant that although Procopius' account of Mebodes' downfall differs considerably from that of Tabari and al-Tha'alibi, they all nonetheless agree that Khusro was tricked into executing his faithful courtier. Procopius thus again appears to be in line with the oriental tradition.26

The tales in xxiii represent the end of Procopius' detailed account of Persian domestic affairs, which starts at iii with Peroz's attack on the Hephthalite Huns. The internal consistency of these chapters is striking: the same people and the same families recur regularly. In this case the sons of Kavadh - Khusro's brothers - are dealt with, as well as the replacement of Adergoudounbades, who had himself replaced Gousanastades in not dissimilar circumstances. Mebodes likewise falls victim to an intrigue similar to the one he had devised against Seoses following the failure of the negotiations in the mid 520s (xi.31-37). Thus the continuing instability of the Persian court is highlighted, as well


26 Cf. Noldeke, *Tabari*, p.251 n.1 - ' Weniger ideal, aber historischer, ist [what Firdausi says], to be identified with Proc. xxiii. Noldeke appears to equate the Zabergan in question with a homonymous marzban; the reference he gives, however, is untraceable, although it may be to the Martyrdom of Grigor, cf. Hoffmann, *Auszüge*, p.80. In this work a certain Zabergan is sent by Kavadh to Constantinople on a diplomatic mission. I am grateful to Dr S. Brock for his help with this reference.

The name Zabergan itself is Persian, and appears in Shapur's inscription of A.D. 261, cf. Maenchen-Helfen, p.392, although it was also borne by the leader of the Kotrigur Huns who invaded Thrace in 558/9. Cf. also Justi, p.377, on the name.

Of the tripod referred to by Proc. at xxiii.28 nothing else is known: it is not mentioned in the oriental sources, cf. Christensen, p.382 n.3.
as the ruthlessness of their kings.

(c) The attempt on Dara (Lxxvi)

Procopius finishes his account of the first war between Rome and Persia under Justinian with an isolated incident at Dara. He prefaces it, however, with some details of events between it and the outbreak of the following war, such as the reconquest of North Africa, to be told in his Vandalic Wars.

Now although xxiv-xxv have been omitted from discussion in this chapter, it is worth noting that xxv (concerning John the Cappadocian) probably represents an addition to the book, inserted after xxiv and xxvi. For not only is the chapter complete in itself, as though lifted from the Anecdota, but there is also the matter of the awkward τοιε at xxvi.1, which simply cannot refer to the time at which xxv closes - the mid-540s. It is more plausibly to be connected either to the end of xxii or of xxiv, since it was at some stage before the Vandalic war that Belisarius was re-appointed to his post of magister militum per Orientem; in all likelihood it was bestowed on him for his signal loyalty during the Nika riot, i.e. soon after January 532. He certainly held the office by February 533, but beyond that precision is impossible.27

Procopius' handling of material is illustrated by his mention at this point (xxvi.3-4) of envoys of Khusro present at Belisarius' triumph in Constantinople late in 534: although the full description of this occasion is reported at FV.ix, no mention is made there of the Persians. Instead they are inserted in the books dealing specifically with the Persian wars, since Khusro's desire for a part of the spoils forms part of the background to the outbreak of war six years later. Independent confirmation of the presence of Persian emissaries at the triumph comes in Zachariah (IX.17); Justinian's gift to the ambassadors proved to be only a temporary solution, however, although it pointed the way to a tactic used increasingly frequently as his reign progressed.

Three other sources provide corroborative evidence concerning the uprising at Dara

27 PLRE III, s.v. Belisarius, noting that Nov. 155 establishes him in the post by February 533; Stein II, p.312, countenances that he may have resumed his former position as early as winter 531-2.

On xxv and its internal completeness, note also the character assessment of John and Tribonian, offered first at xxiv.11-16, then again (rather unnecessarily) at xxv.1-3.
led by John, called John Cottistis by the continuator of Marcellinus *comes* (a.537); but it is Procopius who provides the fullest details. According to his account (xxvi.5-12), a soldier called John took charge of the palace (no doubt the one which had been the seat of the *dux Mesopotamiae* before the Eternal Peace) and set about taking over the city. The initiative of the local citizens brought a swift end to his coup, however (xxvi.5-12).28 As usual, Procopius fails to offer a date for the event, but in this case it can be supplied with a fair degree of confidence. For not only does the continuator of Marcellinus' chronicle place the insurrection in 537, but the fragmentary text of Zachariah at this point (X.1) has reference to a rising - *âμραπαία* - in Dara in the summer of year 15, i.e. 537. Unfortunately Zachariah's text is too fragmentary to do anything more than confirm that the uprising took place then, and that the leader was put to death: no John is mentioned in the surviving fragments. Elias of Nisibis, perhaps relying on Zachariah, also notes the seizure of power by a Roman soldier, who was killed by the local population; he seems to place this rather later, however, in 541. There is thus no way of checking the details reported by Procopius, which he clearly garnered from several sources (xxvi.9); he himself was serving with Belisarius in Italy at this time.29

No attempt is made to explain John's seizure of power; but given the proximity of the frontier, he must have hoped to have come to terms with the Persians. In the Anastasian War there were doubts concerning whether the *dux* Constantinus had handed over Armenian Theodosiopolis to Kavadh (Joshua §48), while in 589 a lower ranking officer, a certain Sittas, handed over Martyropolis to the Persians (Evagrius VI.14). But perhaps a more important factor in leading to this insurrection was Justinian's harsh cuts in defence expenditure in the East following the Eternal Peace: in the *Anecdota* Procopius tells of payments to the *limitanei* in the East being delayed and the damaging effects this had (xxiv.13-14). Around the same time more than one conspiracy took place in Africa, first against Solomon, then against his successor Germanus, and finally the usurper Gontharis had to be overthrown in an episode not dissimilar to the one related here. Clearly considerable disquiet existed among the soldiery generally, perhaps due

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28 On John, cf Ioannes Cottistis 24 in *PLRE* III.

to the majority of Roman resources being poured into the Gothic war in Italy by this stage.  

Procopius' statement concerning the disaster which would have occurred if the Persians had not still respected the peace is in line with the importance he attaches to Dara (cf. de Aed. II.i.xiii). Two versions of events are given, both leading to the eventual death of the usurper; no attempt is made to choose between them. Perhaps the most remarkable point about the episode is the absence of any reference to the dux of Mesopotamia or the chief commander in the city. For although according to the terms of the Eternal Peace, Dara was no longer to be στρατηγους τις ἡρχη (xxii.16) it is clear from this episode that soldiers were still present, and a commander of some sort senior enough to have δορυφοροι (xxvi.9). Procopius is quite specific that John was not in charge of the city, yet despite the mention of the leading citizen Anastasius and the bishop Mamas, no commander is named. Given that some of the bodyguards supported John (xxvi.9), it may be inferred either that he was senior enough to have bucellarii of his own (against the most natural interpretation of xxvi.5) or that the mutiny was directed against the commander - as in Africa - and that some of the commander's bodyguards defected; yet the fate of their master remains perplexing. While the commander remains conspicuous by his absence, however, the role of the inhabitants of the city is striking: both Mamas and Anastasius are eager to unseat the usurper, and it is they who take the lead in urging on the soldiers loyal to the Emperor. And if the second story offered by Procopius is given preference, it was a resident of Dara who delivered the first blow against the tyrant.

Anastasius was later to act as a go-between between Justinian and Khusro in the prelude to the invasion of the Persian king in 540; Procopius describes him as known for his εινεσία at II.iv.15, during his visit to Constantinople. He failed to dissuade Khusro from his projected invasion, and was only released by him following the capture of Sura.

50 Wars IV.xiv (against Solomon); IV.xviii (against Germanus, hence 536/9); IV.xxxviii for the overthrow of Gontharis. Cf. Whitby, 'Recruitment in Roman Armies' (n.129) on these problems, also W.E. Kaegi, Byzantine Military Unrest 471-843 - An interpretation, Amsterdam 1981, pp.47-55 on problems of ill-discipline among the soldiery under Justinian, ch.4 on the eastern frontier, and p.65 for this incident.

31 Note the details concerning Maximinus at IV.xviii, who is a δορυφορος of Theodorus then Germanus, yet conspires against the latter despite his oaths of loyalty. One would expect to hear, however, if the city's commander had been killed during the uprising.
in early 540. At no point is it stated, however, that he held any office, or that he held any position in Dara: he appears indeed just to have been a distinguished citizen (xxvi.8), presumably summoned to the capital as a result of the loyalty displayed in this incident, and then employed as an ambassador.\textsuperscript{32}

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Thus ends Book I of the Persian Wars. Book II begins only two years later, in 539, providing the background to Khusro's devastating invasion of the following year; despite the unhelpful chronological indicator at II.i.1, he makes the dating quite clear at II.iii.56 (cp. II.v.1). Yet while Book II provides the sequel geographically to Book I, it is to Book III of the Wars (i.e. Vandalic Wars I) that the reader turn, should he or she wish to follow events chronologically, both in terms of the unfolding of events and probably in the order in which they were written up by Procopius.\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{32} On Anastasius, cf. PLRE III, s.v. Anastasius 6.

\textsuperscript{33} Q.v. ch.1 n.4.
CONCLUSION

It has never been doubted that Procopius is our principal source on the wars waged under Justinian, and among these, on his first Persian War. In addition, the information he provides on the period before his own day - such as on the guardianship of Yadzgerd I over Theodosius II or his description of the Hephthalite Huns - has rightly been perceived as being of great importance. The problem has lain in how to treat the material presented by Procopius; the close analysis of *Wars I* undertaken in this thesis can, it is hoped, help in assessing both the information contained in his account, as well as how this is deployed. Before any general points are made, however, it is worth emphasising that *Wars I* is not altogether typical of the *Wars* generally: it is probably the most diverse of all the books, with its detail on Persian affairs, the Hephthalites, southern Arabia as well as the account of the Nika riot in Constantinople. This last case in particular points to the problems arising from Procopius' geographical division of his work: the two chapters dealing with events in the capital (xxiv-xxv) seem somewhat out of place, and (as has been argued) were probably a later addition.1 Hence conclusions drawn from *Wars I* may not apply to the later books to the same extent.

First, Procopius' sources. Various suggestions as to possible sources of information have been made throughout the thesis, although in almost all cases certainty can never be attained. 'Some of them [narratives of events] I found in old books; others I learned from meeting with men who had acted as ambassadors to both monarchs; and others from those who were present at these occurrences.' So Joshua the Stylite helpfully informs his reader at §25. Procopius' approach may be viewed as essentially similar, with the important addition that he himself was among those present at many of the occurrences he describes. 'Old books' provided him with information on the siege of Amida probably, and for his digression on the Prison of Oblivion certainly. His account of the negotiations for the adoption of Khusro and on the mission to southern Arabia most likely stem from written or oral accounts by diplomats involved. And his information on the Armenian campaign of 530, which he cannot have witnessed,

1 Another instance of the problems caused by the geographical division may be found at II.iv.1-11, where an invasion of the Balkans is reported, though it is clearly of no relevance to Persian wars.
doubtless came from someone who was present there.²

Second, Procopius' selectiveness. This has also been remarked on in different contexts, and is an important feature of the work. A distinction should be drawn, however, between the selectiveness which operates in the period before Procopius' own day, and that which may be observed in his reporting of contemporary events. His extremely limited coverage of events up to the reigns of Justin and Justinian has been the target of considerable criticism, as was noted in the first chapter. It can be argued, however, that much of this criticism is inappropriate, when the matter is investigated more closely.³

Procopius makes no claims to be writing a history of the events before Justinian's reign: he clarifies at once that he is concerned with events of his own day (i.1-4). It is not until almost halfway through book I, however, that he reaches the reign of Justinian. Yet although he starts his account at the beginning of the fifth century, remarkably little is said on Roman history of the fifth century, or even on Roman-Persian relations, until the Anastasian War is reached. And even then, his coverage of this conflict has been shown to be extremely selective. But before criticisms are levelled for his failure to mention major events during this period, the works of his predecessors must be called to mind. For Procopius' forerunners had in fact ensured that there was no shortage of accounts available covering fifth century history and the Anastasian War. It is our misfortune that only fragments of these works survive, and Procopius can hardly be blamed for failing to go over the ground already covered by his predecessors. This point requires emphasis; for not only were there the works of Priscus, Malchus and Candidus the Isaurian, for instance, but also that of the less well known Eustathius, who incorporated all these writers into his chronicle. It would thus be surprising indeed if Procopius had provided a detailed account of Roman-Persian affairs in the fifth century, given this background; and the fact that he starts as early as 408 can almost certainly be

² On Joshua, q.v. ch.1 n.12.

³ Q.v. ch.1 n.6 for these criticisms, and cf. also Cameron, p.156, J.A.S. Evans, Procopius, New York 1972, p.52; cp. the damning views of W. Goffart on the preface to Wars III, Barbarians and Romans, Princeton 1980, pp.62-68.
attributed to the omission of the guardianship of Yadzgerd I from earlier sources.⁴

When this is borne in mind, it is no surprise that Procopius is so selective in his reporting of events before his own day. And what he does recount has generally been chosen for a particular reason. Several principles of selection employed by Procopius may be suggested, one of which has already been noted - the failure of earlier sources to report an event. Perhaps the most important of them is the *comparatio deterior* with events of his own day, which is particularly visible in his account of the Anastasian War: before Belisarius' victory at Dara no Roman victories are reported, and the impression is conveyed that there had been none since at least A.D. 408. Nor is Procopius inattentive to the tastes of his reader, who expected to be entertained as well as informed: the chapters on Persian history at the start of *Wars I* (iii-vi) are by no means required in order to understand the rest of the work. They are, however, full of exciting adventures and remarkable deeds, and were picked up as such by later writers.⁵ One further principle of selection may also be noted: relevance to subsequent events. Hence another reason for reporting the guardianship of Yadzgerd is that it prefigures the proposal of Kavadh that Justin adopt Khusro (xi), while the agreement of Anatolius not to erect fortifications on the border (ii.15) is referred to later by Kavadh (xvi.6), as well as by Procopius himself (x.16). Likewise the offer of the Hunnic king Ambazuces (x.9-12) is also alluded to by Kavadh in the same passage (xvi.4).

All these points must be borne in mind therefore in considering the opening chapters of the *Wars*, and some of them may also be applied to Procopius' reporting of events in his own day. Among them is that concerning the principle of not duplicating information already available elsewhere. A good example of this is the case of the defection of Lazica. Procopius merely mentions Persian complaints about the defection of Lazica at some point before the negotations on the adoption of Khusro, and offers no further details whatever (xi.28-29); yet in the case of the Iberians, who transferred their

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⁴ On Eustathius, q.v. ch.1 n.8. Cp. Agathias' remarks at the opening to his work, *Procem*.20-21: he acknowledges that Proc.'s works make it unnecessary to go over the same ground again, but reserves the right to deal with earlier events which have not been covered sufficiently.

⁵ Note Theophylact IV.vi.6-11 (essentially repeating Proc. vi) and Agathias IV.xxviii.1-xxix.4 (again telling the story of Kavadh's flight, and musing on the changes in his fortunes). Cf. also Evans, *Procopius*, p.52 and Scott, 'The classical tradition in Byzantine historiography', p.73 on the entertaining nature of these chapters.
allegiance not long afterwards, background information is provided (xii.2-5). When the chroniclers are consulted, however, it is striking that considerable detail is offered concerning the defection of the Lazic king Tzath, while no mention of the Iberians is made at all. It does not seem unreasonable to infer from this that Procopius was conscious of what had already been said, and took this into account in what he chose to report and what to omit.6

Even in his reportage of events in his own day, however, Procopius has attracted criticism, not so much for what he does say as for what he does not say: thus it has been pointed out that he fails to report (for instance) border incidents involving the Arab allies of Rome and Persia, as well as the major uprising of the Samaritans at the time of Justinian's first Persian war. But as has been pointed out earlier, these events were hardly ἐπιδείξει τινα ἐπη (i.1), and thus lay outside the scope of his work; he in any case notes the general problem of al-Mundhir's raids at xvii.40-46. Procopius' primary focus was on the wars which he himself witnessed - in the case of this book, the battles of Dara and Callinicum. This helps to explain why they are treated at such length, though it should be remembered that he also offers considerable detail in his account of operations in Armenia in 530 and 531, as well as of the negotiations which led to the Eternal Peace. Thus while his autopsy at certain events may have caused him to deal with them at greater length, significant developments elsewhere along the front do not go unnoticed.

Finally there is the question of how Procopius' work compares with that of other 'classicising' historians: does he display the 'vague chronology, topography, and geography, the refusal to give accurate and detailed numbers, the avoidance of technical terms and other 'inappropriate' details, and the building of the narrative around a few leading personalities' which have been described as the 'faults of the late classical form'?7 As was noted in the first chapter, it may in any case be questioned whether the 'classicising' historians are sufficiently homogeneous for such general criticism to be appropriate. Close scrutiny of Procopius further helps to rebut such negative

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6 On Tzath and the Lazic defection, cf. e.g. Mal. pp.412-413 and CP pp.613-614. Q.v. ch.1 n.15 for the publication of the first edition of Malalas probably in 532.

7 Quotation from Blockley, FCH vol.1, p.69 (on Priscus).
assessments of classicising historiography.

This study of Procopius has shown that - at least with the events of his own day - Procopius certainly does provide troop numbers, as well as good chronological indicators (from the end of 530), and detailed discussions of points of geography. In some cases he is in error - as over the river Boas - but elsewhere, as with southern Arabia or the Caspian Gates, his account is accurate. As was emphasised in the first chapter, however, geography takes precedence over chronology for Procopius, which means that it may seem as though he is confused over the order of events, when this is merely his method of ordering his material. In the case of the analysis of events, Procopius has met with criticism, like his predecessor Priscus: they are perceived as good reporters, who fail to explain what they describe. Yet while Procopius does not spell out the causes for the outbreak of the first Persian war under Justinian explicitly, as Polybius might have done, his description of the events leading up to it and the speeches he attributes to Kavadh (e.g. xvi.4-8) provide ample explanation for the outbreak of hostilities.

Procopius does indulge in periphrasis, however, although never to the extent of obscuring his meaning: a good example of this is his description of the commanders who led the Roman army in the Anastasian War (viii.1-5), where it is quite clear which offices the generals held. When non-classical offices or features have to be referred to, he explains them to his reader, such as the Christian monks at vii.22 or the Roman duces and phylarchs at xvii.46. His various digressions are also paralleled by other classicising historians, such as Priscus and Theophylact, who both provide (for instance) detailed information on Persian affairs, and their relations with their northeastern neighbours.

While Procopius attracted the admiration of those who took up where he left off, and continued to do so until this century, his reputation has suffered considerably in recent

8 Q.v. ch.1 n.3 on this.

9 Cameron, p.151, on Proc.; Blockley, FCH vol.1, p.69 on Priscus.

10 There is no longer any doubt that Proc. was a Christian, cf. Cameron, ch.7 on his attitude to Christianity.

years.\textsuperscript{12} This thesis has sought to put his account to the test, in a case where a wide range of alternative sources are available. From such close scrutiny, inaccuracies and omissions have of course been revealed - as is the case with any ancient historian, classical or classicising.\textsuperscript{13} But this should not obscure the fact that Procopius, for all his selectiveness in the deployment of material, can rarely be shown to be in error; and where he does differ from other sources, his account (at least with events of his own day) should certainly command greater credence.


\textsuperscript{13} Cp. Gomme's list of omissions in Thucydides' account of the Pentekontaetia, \textit{A Historical Commentary on Thucydides}, vol.1, Oxford 1945, pp.365-369; cf. also his criticisms of the excursus on Pausanias (I.128-138), pp.431 and 446-447.
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