

WHY WERE THE SCLAVENES NEVER ROMAN ALLIES?

A Study of Late Antique Roman Frontier Policy
and a Barbarian Society

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Except where acknowledged in the customary manner, the material presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge, original and has not been submitted in whole or part for a higher degree at any university or institution.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amy Wood.' with a period at the end. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Amy Wood

*For my parents
and grandparents*

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Abbreviations

<i>Caes.</i>	Sextus Aurelius Victor, <i>Epitome de Caesaribus</i> , New York.
<i>DAI</i>	<i>De Administrando Imperio</i> , Washington.
<i>Hist.Lang.</i>	Paul the Deacon, <i>Historia Langobardorum</i> or <i>History of the Langobards</i> , Philadelphia.
<i>ILS</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae</i> , Berlin.
<i>PL</i>	<i>Patrologia Latina</i> , Paris.
<i>SHA</i>	<i>Scriptores Historiae Augustae</i> , London & Cambridge.

A note on the sources: for the sake of consistency, the ancient sources will be named or abbreviated based on the edition or translation used as per the bibliography (English or ancient language), or as they are otherwise commonly known e.g. Jordanes' *Getica*, Ammianus Marcellinus' *Res Gestae*. The book numbering for all of Procopius' works will follow the Loeb editions as per the bibliography.

Summary

This thesis addresses evidence which suggests that those barbarians identified as Sclavenes in the sources never became fully integrated into the Roman system of alliances or its cultural orbit in the sixth and seventh centuries. The written and archaeological evidence available is examined to compare it with previous Roman-barbarian relationships to draw reasonable conclusions about the Slavene relationship with the Eastern Roman Empire and to some extent, the nature of Slavene society before it transformed into the recognisable Slavic polities of the Early Middle Ages. The question is conceptualised within the overall framework of the Late Antique Roman frontiers along the Danube and its hinterland on either side (the Balkans and Pontic-Danubian region). This is the point at which the Sclavenes become visible in the written sources and where the cause and effect of Roman barbarian policy can be seen over time and across various (mainly Germanic) barbarian groups in both the written and archaeological material. It will be argued that the Sclavenes were never Roman allies due to a confluence of historical circumstances, the nature of Slavene society itself, and the availability and operation of alternative imperial orbits in Central Eastern Europe, namely the First Avar Khaganate.

Chapter 1

Introduction

In the early sixth century A.D., a completely unknown group of barbarians arrived on Rome's Lower Danubian frontier.¹ Throughout the course of the following two centuries, they caused considerable damage to the Eastern Roman Empire and eventually succeeded in settling much of the Balkans and Central Eastern Europe. There were at least two different groups mentioned in the sources, the Sclavenes and Antes, who were often assumed by those sources to be related to each other in terms of origin, language and culture. Regardless of whether or not this was the case, their respective trajectories vis-à-vis the Eastern Roman Empire are illustrative of the central concern of this thesis – that on the basis of the available evidence, those barbarians identified as Sclavenes never became fully integrated into the Roman system of alliances or its cultural orbit in the sixth and seventh centuries.

Rome at this time was undergoing significant transformations and had been since the reign of Constantine the Great, the traditional marker for the transition into the period known by modern historians as Late Antiquity. The

¹ Procopius, *Wars* 7.40.5-7 (Antes – 518); 7.14.2 (Sclavenes – 530/1).

political, social, economic, religious and cultural transformations within the old classical Mediterranean world between the fourth and seventh centuries are a thematic paradigm which has driven more recent scholarship.² Even if the utility of the periodisation of history can be legitimately questioned,³ the labels “Late Antiquity”, “Eastern Roman Empire”, “Early Byzantine Empire”, and “Early Middle Ages” which are used in this thesis are helpful in creating a conceptual break with what had gone before. In the last twenty years, there has been an effort to contextualise the region of Eastern Europe and the Balkans in relation to the rest of Europe in Late Antiquity and properly integrate it into these wider historical processes.⁴ Thus, any study of Rome and the Sclavenes must proceed with an understanding that they existed within a changing world.

Equally important is the need to position Eastern Europe and the Balkans on their own terms as an alternative or parallel model; the development in that part of the world in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle

² E.g. Whittow (2002); Wickham (2005); Swain & Edwards (2004); Smith (2005); Poulter (2007a); Rousseau & Papoutsakis (2009); Mathisen & Shanzer (2011). See also Haldon (1986) and especially (1997) which take transformation in the seventh century as their central theme, as well as the European Science Foundation’s *Transformation of the Roman World* series which contains 14 volumes and mainly focuses on the post-Roman West. There is an emphasis in the literature on the urban landscape and also changes in the Roman villa system which are seen as both symptomatic and causative of the transformations in this period: e.g. Banks (1984); Barnish (1989); Dunn (1994); Christie & Loseby (1996); Harris (1999); De Vries (2000); White (2000); Polci (2003); Ripoll & Arce (2003); Christie (2004). Vanhaverbeke, Martens & Waelkens (2007), Burns & Eadie (2001) and Izdebski (2013) concentrate specifically on the relationship between urban and rural contexts in this transformative period. For city and region specific studies, see Foss (1997) - Syria; Poulter (2000) and (2007a) – the Balkans; Gelichi & Milanese (1998); Sjöström (1993) – North Africa; Dark (1994); Dark (1996) – Britain; Izdebski (2013) – Asia Minor. A number of works also address changes in religion during this time: e.g. Stroumsa (2009); Judge & Nobbs (2010); Harper (2013), as well as in literature and historical writing: e.g. Brodka & Stachura (2007); Greatrex & Elton (2014). See also Cameron (1993: 1-2) for debate as to whether Late Antiquity can be predominantly characterised by continuity or change.

³ See e.g. Bury (1958 vol. 1: 1); Foucault (1972: 149-151); White (1978: 64); Morley (2002: 1-6); Jenkins (2003: 40); Cameron (2006: 5-6).

⁴ Care must still be taken with this approach given that East Europe as a concept was invented in the Early Modern period: Wolff (1994), and the Balkans in the nineteenth century: Todorova (2009).

Ages did not necessarily always follow the same trajectory as the post-Roman West.

To ask why the Sclavenes were never Roman allies inevitably involves the much larger issue of Rome and her relationship with barbarians generally and over time. At its crux are processes of cultural contact, acculturation and integration, ethnicity and identity, social formation and the operation of empire and frontier regions.⁵ The role of the Late Roman Empire in the formation of the barbarian societies which eventually gave rise to Early Medieval Europe continues to stimulate interest and debate, and it is within this context that this thesis aims to examine how Rome dealt with the Sclavenes and how the Sclavenes dealt with Rome.

1.1 Current State of Research

The earliest discourses on Slavic history in Eastern Europe appeared in the fifteenth century and centred on the idea of continuity from ancient indigenous Illyrians through to the early Slavs and the early Medieval Slavic kingdoms. It became particularly prominent in Slavic-speaking areas under Venetian and Habsburg rule and continued to have an influence on scholarship well into the twentieth century.⁶ The emphasis shifted in the Renaissance and early Humanist periods in Poland and Bohemia to ideas of wholesale migration of monolithic Slavic groups into the Balkan region.⁷

⁵ There is abundant literature on this topic: e.g. Thompson (1988); Goffart (1980); Wolfram (1990); Shepard & Franklin (1992); Pohl, Wood & Reimitz (2001); Gillett (2003a); Heather (2005); Halsall (2007); Woolf (2011).

⁶ On Illyrian-Slavic discourses, see Dzino (2014a: esp. 3-11, 16-20).

⁷ E.g. *De origine et rebus gestis Polonorum* (*The origin and achievements of the Poles*) by Polish bishop, historian and diplomat Martin of Kroměř, first published in 1589, and *De Regno Dalmatiae et Croatiae* (*On the Kingdom of Dalmatia and Croatia*) by the Croatian historian Ivan Lučić of Trogir, first published in 1666: on this see Dzino (2010: 17-18). Slavs as having some form of Iranian or Sarmatian origin was also part of the Medieval Polish discourse which has

In the eighteenth century, the ideas of German philosopher Johan Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) resonated with Slavic nationalists like the Slovak philologist Pavel Josef Šafářik (1795-1861) who eagerly absorbed Herder's philosophy of the Slavic *Volksgeist* (national homeland) and the importance of the preservation and celebration of national language, tradition and culture.⁸ Herder's almost contemporary, the Czech philologist Josef Dobrovský (1753-1829), is regarded as the founder of Slavic studies proper,⁹ while Slavic archaeology is considered to have been established with the publication of the Czech Lubor Niederle's multi-volume *The Antiquities of the Slavs* from 1902-1924.¹⁰ The idea of early Slavs has been used over time to further varied nationalist causes, whether it be eighteenth century Slavic-speaking nations under the Habsburg Empire enthusiastically co-opting the idea of a historically ancient and united Slavic race,¹¹ or state-mandated Soviet arguments for Slavic autochthony¹² to counter Nazi claims to Eastern Europe in the 1930s and 40s.¹³

The Czech historian and Franciscan monk Francis Dvornik published several useful books in the mid-twentieth century which were influential on Anglophone scholarship as there were no other English works available. Dvornik focused mainly on the written sources and narrative history¹⁴ and tended to use sources uncritically – his descriptions of early Slavic society in

survived in a limited way into modern times: e.g. Dvornik(1956: 277-297); Fine (1983: 57-59). Kim (2013: 108, 146) follows Fine. On this see Dzino (2010: 20-21) and (2014a: 4-5).

⁸ Godja (1991: 2); Curta (2001a: 6-7).

⁹ *Geschichte der böhm. Sprache und alten Literatur* (*History of the Bohemian Language and Old Literature*) was published in 1792, and *Die Bildsamkeit der slaw. Sprache* (*Introduction to the Old Slavic Language*) in 1799.

¹⁰ In Czech: *Slovanské starožitnosti*. Godja (1991: 2-6).

¹¹ Godja (1991: 2). See e.g. *Documenta historiae Croatiae periodum antiquam illustrantia* (*Documents illustrating the ancient history of Croatia*) by Croatian historian, politician and founder of the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts Franjo Rački, first published in 1877. These impulses eventually led to the First Pan-Slav Conference in Prague in 1848, and the Yugoslav pan-Slavism of the twentieth century should be considered as part of this wider movement.

¹² Curta (2001a: 16-17) and (2002 : 207-218, esp. 207-209). The Soviet work was based on the theories of N.I. Marr which built on the linguistic work of Šafářik from the mid-nineteenth century: Curta (2001a: 7 note 5). On N.I. Marr, see Bruche-Schulz (1993) and Slezkine (1996).

¹³ E.g. Borkovský (1940).

¹⁴ Dvornik (1949), (1956) and (1962).

Late Antiquity are based on eleventh and twelfth century material.¹⁵ Furthermore, Dvornik still treated Slavic history as a monolith based on ancient ethnic and political unity.¹⁶

The 1960s and 70s brought a renewed interest in Šafářik's linguistic theories of the Slavs as ancient and indigenous to Eastern Europe. The Russian V.V. Sedov argued that the Antes and Sclavenes originated within the Przeworsk culture of central and southern Poland dating from the third century B.C. As they moved further south and east, they broke away and developed distinct material cultures and a common Slavic language. Subsequent Russian archaeological work was framed within these terms and merely sought to confirm the theory.¹⁷

It is clear then that the historiographical tradition of Slavic history has often been heavily politically and ideologically motivated. Anglophone scholarship has tended to stay confined to the "Classical" Mediterranean world, a result at least in part due to orientalisering and otherwise negative attitudes towards both Slavic and Byzantine history in those circles.¹⁸ Nonetheless, contributions from Eastern European scholars in the past and

¹⁵ Dvornik (1956: 57-59).

¹⁶ Dvornik (1962: xxi-xxii). In one instance, Dvornik explicitly projects concepts of Yugoslavia back to the ninth century: Dvornik (1956: 340). Furthermore, his attempt to place Eastern Slavic Europe within the context of developments in the rest of Europe presents as little more than an effort to emphasize Slavic importance: see Dvornik (1962: xxi-xxviii). This is somewhat curious given his earlier recognition of the link between Slavic historiography and nationalism: see Dvornik (1956: 340).

¹⁷ On Sedov and the consequences of his theories, see Curta (2001a: 9-13). Gimbutas appears to follow Sedov on this point: Gimbutas (1971: 116).

¹⁸ For the orientalisering of Eastern Europe, the Balkans and Byzantium, see Todorova (2009: 3-20); Dzino (2014b); Cameron (2014: 7-25). For example, Edward Gibbon did not think particularly well of Byzantium: Cameron (2014: 10), and at the same time as Eastern historians, archaeologists and philologists were embracing knowledge of early Slavic history in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Gibbon paid very minor attention to the Sclavenes in his narrative and obviously took the sources at face-value, viewing them as little better than animals. He clearly believed that the Roman Empire was indeed "...the most civilized portion of mankind," and that the Western provinces constituted the more important half of the Empire: Gibbon (1872 vol. 1: 2). See also Gibbon (1872 vol. 2: 134-136) for Sclavenes as animalistic.

more recently are still vital, not least because of their valuable local knowledge. A small number of older publications have brought the “alternative archaeology” of Slavic studies to Anglophone academia,¹⁹ and contributions from Eastern European scholars to multi-volume projects in English are also valuable.²⁰

In the last two decades, a clearer line of scholarship combining the fruits of Eastern and Western historical and archaeological investigation with a stronger focus on Roman-Slavic (Sclavene) relations has emerged. In 2001, the Romanian-American historian Florin Curta published *The Making of the Slavs. History and Archaeology of the Lower Danube Region c. 500-700*, which, together with his body of work before and since,²¹ has opened up the study of the beginnings of Slavic society, identity and their relationship to the Eastern Roman and early Byzantine Empires.²² Curta’s central argument is that the emergence of various Slavic identities was a response to Justinian’s massive re-fortification of the Balkans in the mid-sixth century.²³ With reference to the related and central question of this thesis, Curta has argued that the issue is actually evidence of a Roman labelling system which cast Rome’s barbarian

¹⁹ Godja (1991: viii). Martin Godja’s 1989-90 Rhind Lectures, *The Ancient Slavs. Settlement and Society*, are a valuable if brief look at the archaeology of early Slavic people and complements Lithuanian-American Mirija Gimbutas’ 1971 book titled simply *The Slavs*. A worthwhile and more recent collection of articles in English from the Scientific Society of Polish Archaeologists contains work from Polish, Czech, Austrian and German archaeologists and historians: Urbańczyk (1997a).

²⁰ E.g. Kobyliński’s article in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*: Kobyliński (2013) and Walter Pohl’s volume in the *The Transformation of the Ancient World* series: Pohl (1997a). The Brill series titled *East Central and Eastern Europe* currently contains 36 volumes.

²¹ E.g. Curta (1994), (1997), (1999a), (1999b), (2001b), (2002), (2005b), (2006), (2008) and (2010a).

²² *The Early Slavs, Eastern Europe from the Initial Settlement to the Kievan Rus* by Russian archaeologist Pavel. M. Dolukhanov was published only five years prior to Curta’s book but is not particularly useful due to certain methodological flaws and the very limited attention it directs to the Slavs in the sixth and seventh centuries: see Bogucki (1997); Barford (2001a: 2); Curta (2002: 218).

²³ Curta applied the model to the Tervingi Goths of the fourth century in a subsequent article: Curta (2005b).

enemies on the Lower Danube as Sclavenes, thereby setting up an enemy-ally dichotomy in opposition to the Antes, who *were* Roman allies.²⁴

Another way the problem has been looked at is to conceptualise early Slavene history as an alternative or parallel model to the post-Roman West. In the long term, the Slavicisation of Europe was certainly very successful and the atypical features and apparently undeveloped nature of early Slavene society relative to other barbarian groups have been suggested as a key reason for this success. This argument has been put forward by a number of different scholars²⁵ in various iterations and will be addressed in chapter 4.

These theories have created further questions. If, as Curta argues, the emerging identity of the Sclavenes was a response to Justinian's building program and triggered associated socio-political development, how does that sit with the evidence upon which others argue that the Sclavenes were never Roman allies because they were *not* sufficiently developed in this manner? These questions are significant and will also be addressed in chapter 4.

Curta's book and another 2001 publication, P.M. Barford's *The Early Slavs: Culture and Society in Early Medieval Eastern Europe*, marshals and gives order to the written and archaeological evidence on the early Slavic peoples, making it and its associated problems more accessible. A number of other important English studies have subsequently followed.²⁶

These studies build and expand upon a rich corpus of work, both general and via specific case-studies, on Roman and Byzantine foreign policy in

²⁴ Curta (2001a: 83-84).

²⁵ See Obolensky (1971: 56-57); Browning (1975: 36); Fine (1983: 27); Pohl (1988). See also Pohl (1997a: 154), (1998: 23) and (2005:129); Geary (2002: 145-6); Heather (2009: 433ff) following Urbańczyk (1997b).

²⁶ See Fine (2006); Dzino (2010). Walter Pohl has been producing prolific and important work on early Eastern Europe in both English and German over the last 25 years: see Spinei & Hriiban (2008) for an edited collection of his papers. The Brill series *East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages* has published a number of excellent titles in English on various aspects of early Eastern Central Europe e.g. Buko (2007); Charvát (2010); Macháček (2010); Stepanov (2010); Štih (2010); Sophoulis (2012).

relation to barbarian groups on imperial frontiers and the associated processes of interaction, integration, assimilation, ethnogenesis and socio-political development.²⁷ The volume edited by Florin Curta titled *Borders, Barriers, and Ethnogenesis* brings various perspectives on these concepts together nicely.²⁸ There are also excellent volumes which provide detailed general narratives of Roman history based on the sources which are crucial to understanding the world within which these processes were occurring.²⁹

Frontier studies have generated some invaluable work from historians through the varied lenses of military, economic, political, diplomatic and social considerations on the Roman frontier at various points in its history. Edward Luttwack's work on the so-called Roman "grand strategy" against frontier barbarians may no longer hold weight for its overall thesis³⁰ but still remains a useful source of information and insight, as is the work by C.R. Whittaker and B.H. Isaac on Roman frontiers.³¹

Studies outside of the context of Rome can also help show the way to conceptualising *alternative* empires, a paradigm which will be applied to Slavene history in this thesis because it is very likely that a considerable role was played in Slavene history by the First Avar Khaganate, a steppe empire which succeeded Attila's Hunnic Empire in Pannonia. It is entirely possible that for the Slavenes, the Khaganate was an alternative imperial orbit to Rome.³²

²⁷ E.g. Amory (1997); Blockley (1992); Browning (1975); Burns (1980), (1984), (1994) and (2009); Geary (1988); Goffart (1980); Gillett (2003a); Gruen (2010); Halsall (1995a) and (2007); Heather (1991a), (1991b), (1996), (2005) and (2009); Shepard & Franklin (1992); Thompson (1988); Wells (1999); Wolfram (1990); Woolfe (2011).

²⁸ Curta (2005a).

²⁹ For Late Antiquity, the older works by Bury (1958) and Jones (1964) are still outstanding. Other studies on specific reigns can provide more focused detail, such as Kaegi's work on Heraclius: Kaegi (2003).

³⁰ Luttwack (1976) and (2009). For useful critiques of Luttwack, see Isaac (2000: 372-418); Whittaker (2004: 28-49).

³¹ Whittaker (1994) and (2004); Isaac (2000). See also useful studies by Lee (1993); Mathisen & Siven (1996) and Elton (1996).

³² See e.g. Geary (2002: 145-6) and Pohl (1988), (1997: 154), (1998: 23) and (2005:129).

Work on the ancient nomadic “shadow” empires of the Chinese frontier by Thomas J. Barfield³³ offers intriguing parallels with the steppe empires of the Avars, whereby the Avar Khaganate existed as a shadow of the Roman Empire, dependant on it but at the same time occupying the imperial space it would otherwise have filled. The significance of the role played by steppe empires in the Late Antique history of Rome, Byzantium and China has been very recently explored by Hyun Jin Kim, who argues that the Hunnic Empire of the fifth century provided the model for all subsequent steppe empires, including the Avar Khaganate, perhaps revealing a longer-term process by which imperial power was slowly being drawn away from Rome.³⁴

The operation of frontiers and of empires has current traction due to the increasing visibility of real or pseudo- imperial power being exercised by the United States of America in a global context in the twenty-first century.³⁵ Works which take the United States as their subject have generated useful conceptual tools with which to think about empires and frontiers, including relationships of imperial dominance and hierarchies of power over subordinate units in frontier regions.³⁶ Theoretical and comparative studies such as the work of David Ludden on tributary empires in nineteenth century India have also provided valuable insights.³⁷

³³ Barfield (1989) and (2001).

³⁴ Kim (2013: esp. 137ff). See also Curta (2008) which deals specifically with the conceptual spaces the Avars and their successor steppe empires occupied in opposition to the successor kingdoms in the post-Roman West and the Eastern Roman Empire.

³⁵ Ludden (2011: 133).

³⁶ Good examples are Hardt & Negri (2000); Maier (2006); Münkler (2007); Immerman (2010); Coates (2015). Comparative work between ancient empires may also be instructive: see Mutschler & Mittag (2008); Scheidel (2015) on Rome and China.

³⁷ Ludden (2011). See also Haldon (1993).

1.2 The Conceptual and Methodological Framework

This thesis will consider the written and archaeological evidence available on the Sclavenes, utilising relevant anthropological and sociological concepts in order to understand the nature of Slavene society. That evidence will be compared, within the relevant historical context, with previous Roman-barbarian relationships in order to draw reasonable conclusions about the Slavene relationship with the Eastern Roman Empire. It is important to understand how Rome dealt historically with other, primarily Germanic, barbarian groups to see how this may have changed over time and why interaction with the Sclavenes may not have followed the same pattern. Furthermore, it will attempt to position the Sclavenes on their own terms as a comparative model to the Western successor states and the other short-term political entities which emerged in Eastern Europe in the early Middle Ages such as the Avar Khaganates and Old Great Bulgaria.

This thesis is conceptualised within an overall framework of the Late Antique Roman frontier systems and frontier policy, particularly along the Lower Danube. The frontiers are the point at which the Sclavenes become visible in the written sources and also the point at which the cause and effect of Roman barbarian policy can be seen. The frontiers are therefore where the Sclavenes can be properly contextualised and important results can be produced from a comparative analysis with other barbarian groups vis-à-vis the Roman Empire, as well as an examination of political, economic and social structures within Slavic society itself.

The identity-making processes reflected in the material cultures of the frontiers³⁸ require methodological tools to interpret them. Concepts of ethnicity postulated in the 1950s and 60s by social anthropologists like Edmund Leach

³⁸ Curta (2007a); Dzino (2010: 122).

and Frederick Barth found that ethnicity should not be equated with biological notions of race and genetic origins and are more perceptively and transactionally based.³⁹ Rich coverage of these ideas can be found throughout the literature on barbarian peoples.⁴⁰ For the purpose of the following work, ethnicity as defined as a situational,⁴¹ multi-layered construct (gender, class, social status, age and so on) comprised of both self-perception and the perception of others and prone to constant group and individual renegotiation in order to yield a benefit or advantage.

Elements of the theory of cultural *habitus* as articulated by Pierre Bourdieu are a useful lens through which to consider the two-way perceptive nature of ethnicity.⁴² Cultural *habitus* is a social landscape of unconscious but enduring common human predispositions which are the result of self-perpetuating structural practices which “...are objectively organized as strategies without being the product of genuine strategic intention...”⁴³ When the identity of a group begins to harden into something more solid on the part of the participants themselves, it could be classed as the politicisation of a

³⁹ Leach (1954: esp. 4ff, 279-292); Barth (1969: esp. 9-10). See also Nagal (1994) and Jenkins (1997) for good overviews. The German historian Reinhard Wenskus similarly argued that early medieval ethnicity was not biological but based on a subjective sense of belonging centred around beliefs rather than realities of common origin: Wenskus (1961: 14-18). On Wenskus see Curta (2001a: 18-20) and Callander Murray (2002). Wenskus’ ideas were followed by sociologist Anthony Smith: e.g. Smith (1986) and also historian Herwig Wolfram, although Wolfram’s ideas are problematic due to both the monolithic way in which he views barbarian groups and the fact that he argues that some measure of objective truth can be uncovered in early barbarian origin myths: Wolfram (1988). On Wolfram and the “Vienna” school, see Halsall (1999: 140-141).

⁴⁰ E.g. Amory (1994); Halsall (1995a: 26ff), (1995b) and (1999: 140-141); Effros (2002a), (2002b), and (2003) – post-Roman Gaul; Härke (2011) and (2014); Williams (2003) and (2006); Lucy (2002) – post-Roman Britain; Curta (2001a: 6-34) and (2007) – Eastern and Central Eastern Europe. More generally see Amory (1997:13-42); Gillett (2003a) and (2006); Halsall (2007: 35-62); Burns (2003: 36-37, 365-366); Hu (2013). See specifically Pohl (1988) and (1998); Heather (1996) for works which unpack the definitions of Barth and Leach.

⁴¹ See Okamura (1981) for the term “situational ethnicity”.

⁴² See Bourdieu (1977: 72-95). See also Bentley (1987) for a thoughtful and instructive analysis of Bourdieu’s theory.

⁴³ Bourdieu (1977: 72, 81). Guy Halsall utilises Bourdieu’s idea of *habitus* in relation to Merovingian Metz: Halsall (1995a: 22).

cultural *habitus* and may signal increased socio-political development – an unconscious and purely cultural *habitus* transforms into a conscious *political* identity.⁴⁴ It is *consciously* acted upon and reproduced by those within the group. On the other hand, if that hardening of identity is imposed from the outside to produce order through differentiation, it can be seen as an artificial construct to describe or account for a common cultural *habitus* as observed.⁴⁵ This may account in part for why a multitude of groups are given the common name of Sclavenes in the written sources when they seem to have very little to do with each other in reality.

Whether the “Sclavenes” was an artificial label for a cultural *habitus* and/or a creation from Roman stimuli can certainly pose methodological challenges – the “Sclavenes” could very well evaporate under close scrutiny.⁴⁶ However, this thesis will take the approach that such ideas can be a paradigm through which to address problems and help inform analysis of the relevant sources about a group of peoples with some commonality but no real unity, but who actually existed and eventually settled most of Eastern and Central Eastern Europe.

⁴⁴ See Bentley’s discussion of domination generated by *habitus*: Bentley (1987: 40-43).

⁴⁵ Dzino (2010: 119, 211).

⁴⁶ See Pleterski (2013) for an alternate view. Pleterski argues on the basis of an extremely detailed analysis of the Slovene site at Bled that evidence as to the division of farming land indicates a stratified and developed society that existed either prior to Slavic settlement south of the Danube or almost immediately afterwards (i.e. seventh - eighth century), most likely brought on by the need to farm. Barford (2008) has also pointed out that Curta’s thesis does not completely account for Slavic cultures which developed further afield than the Danubian *limes* (in Poland for example), nor the fact that the Slavic language could not have just developed overnight in response to Justinian’s building program and therefore must pre-date it. A lively response from Curta has very recently been published in relation to Pleterski’s arguments in particular. Curta finds Pleterski’s findings nonsensical, groundless and largely based on a nationalistic desire to project “Slavic” social structures (the *župa*) known from later times (eleventh, twelfth and even eighteenth centuries) back into the past in order to claim Slavic continuity: Curta (2015b: esp. 299-303).

1.3 The Written Sources

The narrative coverage of the sixth and seventh centuries is not as satisfactory as the historian might wish and the written source body has limitations which must be carefully considered before their utility can be decided. There is no narrative of Slavic history from a Slavic point of view until the early twelfth century, and so any investigation must by necessity rely on archaeological evidence together with Greco-Roman and Western written sources and the ethnographic underpinnings they bring with them.

Greco-Roman ethnographic writing, often in the form of digressions within a main text, had its own generic conventions.⁴⁷ The overarching paradigm of was that of “the other,”⁴⁸ whereby the world was divided into civilisation represented by Greek and Roman (or early Byzantine) society, and barbarians who lived in beast-like squalor⁴⁹ without proper law, government or religion in the wilds beyond Rome’s frontiers.⁵⁰ They were often depicted as faithless and given to conflict.⁵¹ Simultaneously, literary tropes used barbarians

⁴⁷ Kaldellis (2013: 1-2). For a short general overview, see Dench (2007).

⁴⁸ There is a vast amount of literature on this point, but the general studies by Cartledge (1993); Gruen (2010); Woolf (2011); Skinner (2012) and the classic case study on Herodotus by Hartog (1988: esp. 61-111) are particularly instructive. See also Almagor (2005) for a brief ethnographic study of Strabo’s *Geography*. Heather does an excellent survey on the concept of the barbarian in elite and imperial rhetoric in the fourth and fifth centuries in the West: Heather (1999).

⁴⁹ E.g. Procopius, *Wars* 4.6.10-13 (Moors/Berbers); 6.15.16-25 (beast-like Scythians); *Buildings* 3.6.10 (Tzani); 4.5.9 (barbarians on the Danube between Gaul and Dacia).

⁵⁰ See e.g. Procopius, *Buildings* 3.5.2 (Tzani live without rulers); 7.14.22 (Sclavenes and Antes live without rulers in a “democracy” for good or ill cf. Herodotus, *Histories* 3.80-82 for undertones of Herodotean disapproval). cf. Procopius, *Wars* 1.3.5 (Hephthalite Huns are not as savage as they live by a “lawful constitution” and have a ruler); 6.14.37-42; 15.27-36 (Heruli descend into chaos after they murder their king and then realise they cannot function without one).

⁵¹ E.g. Procopius, *Wars* 4.8.10-11; 4.26.2-3 (Moors/Berbers); 4.4.29 (Heruli – cf. Agathias, *Histories* 1.14.3 on the Heruli leader Filocaris); 6.25.2 (Franks); *Buildings* 4.1.7 (barbarians on the Danube including Huns, Goths, Sclavenes and others). Procopius also mentions Persians in this same light (Procopius, *Wars* 1.19.33), but it should be noted that whilst Greco-Roman writers considered Persians as barbarians, they were nevertheless thought to be largely civilised and not given to same sorts of behaviours as other barbarian groups.

as a strategy through which to criticise Roman failings by blurring the points of difference between the two. This can sometimes lead to ambiguity.⁵²

The associated “environmental theory” goes back as far as Hippocrates⁵³ and later Strabo,⁵⁴ and held that barbarian groups reflected their environment in the way they lived, their physical traits and appearance.⁵⁵ John of Ephesus certainly applied this theory to the Sclavenes.⁵⁶

The immutable nature of barbarians who were outside the influence of civilisation and tied in some elemental way to their environment also led to the trope of archaic ethnic continuity. The idea was that those peoples who occupied the same environmental niche or territory as a known group in the past must in fact be the same peoples across time.⁵⁷ Thus Scythians, Medes and the Massagetae still make appearances in histories almost a thousand years after Herodotus mentions them.⁵⁸ In this sense, the “barbarian” was a categorisation in perpetuity, necessary for Greek, Roman and early Byzantine self-definition.⁵⁹

⁵² See Kaldellis (2013: 10-25). Kaldellis argues this was particularly used by Procopius in order to criticise Justinian, especially in light of the *Secret History*.

⁵³ See also Aristotle, *Politics* 7.1327b.

⁵⁴ Strabo likely drew on his predecessor Posidonius of Rhodes who ascribed to the theory of climates (see Posidonius frg. 169). Strabo explicitly places himself in a line of scholarship which ends with Posidonius: Strabo, *Geography* 1.1.1.

⁵⁵ Majeska (1997: 75-76); Woolf (2011: 44-51). In addition, the further away a barbarian group was from direct Roman knowledge, the more monstrous and grotesque their appearance became in popular imagination: see Evans (1999). Kaldellis argues that this was not a feature of the Late Antique barbarian discourse: Kaldellis (2013: 10).

⁵⁶ John of Ephesus, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.6.25. Further, the mention of Sclavenes in Pseudo-Caesarius' *Erotapokriseis* may actually be specifically aimed at challenging the environmental theory by showing that different groups could in fact occupy the same climatic zone: Curta (2001a: 43-44). Contrary to older opinion, Curta dates Pseudo-Caesarius in the decade after Jordanes and Procopius were writing i.e. the 560s.

⁵⁷ Majeska (1997: 75).

⁵⁸ E.g. Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 31.2.12 (Alans in the fourth century are Massagetae); Evagrius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.2 and Procopius, *Wars* 3.11.9 (Huns as Massagetae in the sixth century). Theodore Metochites was still using this trope in fourteenth century Byzantium and thought the Tartars were Scythians simply because they occupied the same territory as Herodotus' Scythians: Theodore Metochites, *Miscellanea* 110. See also Hunger (1969/70) and Scott (1981). On the Scythians, see Hartog (1988: esp. 1-33).

⁵⁹ Gillett (2009: 4).

The effect of these tropes was that barbarian identities from a Roman viewpoint were largely built around stereotypes fitted into conventions of genre, with information being selected or discarded accordingly.⁶⁰ It also gave barbarian groups a unity which usually did not represent reality.⁶¹ The concept of ‘the barbarian’ became embedded in Greek and Roman cultural expression, and written and artistic output formed around the construction of classical identity in this way.⁶²

In a general sense, Slavene history in and of itself was of no particular concern to most Late Antique authors except (1) as it impacted on the Empire and the Church, (2) in how it fitted into the Christian worldview, and (3) in how it served the purpose and genre of the source itself, which all must be kept in mind.

Generally speaking, sixth and seventh century Greek writers referred to the Slavenes as *Sklavenoi/Sklabenoi*. The shorter version, *Sklavoi* is first used by Agathias in Constantinople in the 580s. The same word in Latin (*Sclavus/Sclavi*) is found almost contemporaneously in a poem by Martin of Braga which appears to have been based on Constantinopolitan sources.⁶³ It is also used by later Latin sources such as Fredegar (who also uses the term Wends – see section 1.3.2.1 below). The term *Sklavenoi* was originally used by the Romans to

⁶⁰ Majeska (1997: 76); Kaldellis (2013: 9). Cyril Mango argued that classicising Byzantine historiography “[obliterated] the reality of Byzantine life” and that literary and historical output had very little to do with the reality of most Byzantine citizens and how they experienced the events described in Byzantine historiographical writing: Mango (1981: 50). He calls it the “dim and... distorting mirror” of late Roman and Byzantine historiography, which was “hopelessly schematic” in its selection of material according to classicising genres: (Mango: 1975: 8, 18). Kaldellis (2004: 40-41) bitterly disagrees with this position. His argument is somewhat curious as he positions Procopius as a true classicising historian rather than a mere imitator and seems to indicate that this means Procopius is more true to the dictates of the genre, but can somehow still escape its artificial constraints, which are exactly the point of Mango’s argument. Greatrex addresses Kaldellis in a general sense on these points, arguing that Kaldellis’ analysis can border on the over-subtle and that Procopius should not be seen as a special case but rather a product of his times and his genre: Greatrex (2014: 90-96).

⁶¹ Burns (2003: 16).

⁶² Gillett (2009: 5-6).

⁶³ Barford (2001: 28); Curta (2001a: 45-46).

designate those groups of peoples on their northern borders who were causing trouble for the Empire, but also seemed to encompass the perception that these peoples had a similar material culture and a possible linguistic unity. Both these issues are addressed in detail in this thesis.

This thesis will confine itself to the contemporary or near contemporary sources which provide information on the Sclavenes and their context in the sixth and seventh centuries before they start developing into recognisable Slavic polities after the Avaro-Slavic defeat at Constantinople in 626.

1.3.1 *Contemporary Eastern Sources*

The Eastern sources tend to be richer in information as their authors were geographically closer to the Sclavenes' theatre of operations. News travelled faster to Constantinople than to the post-Roman West and there was a better chance of hearing or having access to eyewitness accounts or official documentation on Slavene encounters. Simply put, Slavene activities impacted the Eastern Roman Empire to a much greater extent.

1.3.1.1 Procopius of Caesarea – *The Wars, Buildings and Secret History*⁶⁴

One of the last historians to write true classicising military history,⁶⁵ Procopius of Caesarea completed his great work the *Wars* in Greek in the early 550s in Constantinople. *Buildings* and the *Secret History* were finished shortly thereafter.⁶⁶ Procopius includes material on Slavene incursions into Roman interests but also engages in the longest ethnographic excursus in his works in *The Wars*, covering Slavene origins, society, territory and warfare,⁶⁷ as well as

⁶⁴ Greatrex (2014) is an excellent and up-to-date overview of recent literature on Procopius.

⁶⁵ On this see Cameron (1985: 19-46); Kaldellis (2004: 17-61).

⁶⁶ For the dates of these works, see Greatrex (1994) and (2013); Evans (2006); Kaldellis (2009).

⁶⁷ Procopius, *Wars*, 7.14.1-36.

the surrounding contextual narrative. In his own estimation, he was “especially competent” to write his history because he was “an eye-witness of practically all the events” he described as advisor to the famous general Belisarius.⁶⁸ He is largely silent on his sources, although it is quite clear that he was not as informed on certain points as he would have the reader believe.⁶⁹ Procopius most likely had little personal knowledge of the Balkan area,⁷⁰ but it is known that Belisarius used Slavene and Antean mercenaries at the siege of Auximum in 539/40⁷¹ whom Procopius could have spoken to in order to gather his ethnographic information. He used more archival and oral sources for information on events occurring after Belisarius was recalled to Constantinople in 548 and is therefore more localised in his outlook from that point onwards.⁷²

The length of the ethnographic excursus on the Sclavenes reveals a specific interest in the Sclavenes – their activities were of current concern to the Eastern Roman Empire.⁷³ The Sclavenes are not viewed altogether badly by Procopius,⁷⁴ but his picture is coloured by the classic ethnographic outlook typical of his day and genre.⁷⁵

⁶⁸ Procopius, *Wars* 1.1.3. See Kaldellis (2013:6): “There were probably few men in the sixth century who knew as much about the world as did Prokopios...”

⁶⁹ On Procopius’ possible sources, see Cameron (1985: 210-222).

⁷⁰ Curta (2001a: 37).

⁷¹ Procopius, *Wars* 6.26.16-22.

⁷² Curta (2001a: 38). See also Treadgold (2010: 215-216) for Procopius’ sources.

⁷³ Curta (2001a: 38). See also Kaldellis (2013: 4) for the desire of Late Antique classicising historians to introduce new and unknown peoples.

⁷⁴ Whether Procopius was a Christian and whether his views on barbarians were coloured by his belief in the universal Christian empire (*oikumene*) is a matter of debate. It is largely accepted he was Christian: Cameron (1985: 239-240); Curta (2001a: 37-38), but see Kaldellis (2004) who consistently argues that Procopius most certainly was not a Christian and therefore did not approach his subject matter with a Christian worldview. He makes a very similar argument in relation to Agathias: Kaldellis (1999). Cf. Cameron (1970:89-111).

⁷⁵ On Procopius’ bias against Germanic barbarians and the Sclavenes, see Cameron (1985: 210-13, 218-19). Kaldellis has sought to revise this picture somewhat over the last decade, suggesting that the trope of the admirable barbarian looms large in Procopius in order to criticise Justinian and that Procopius may not necessarily have had negative views on barbarians: Kaldellis (2013: 17-21). See also Kaldellis (2004) for an overall assessment of Procopius’ negative agenda towards Justinian. However, this trope has always been part of classical historiography operating alongside negative stereotypes by Kaldellis’ own admission

Buildings is an important source for details on Justinian's re-fortification of the Danubian frontiers⁷⁶ in response to Sclavene, Cutrigur and Utigur raiding in the mid-sixth century, which is a significant issue to be addressed in evaluating Roman-barbarian relations.⁷⁷

Caution should be exercised when using Procopius due to the classicising models he was following and the associated generic tropes. He uses the same stereotype-laden descriptors for the Sclavenes as for other groups such as the Goths, which in turn leads to very similar conclusions about both groups.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, as Cameron notes, it is simply impossible not to rely on Procopius for this time period,⁷⁹ and in some cases, there are opportunities for cross-referencing with other sources.

1.3.1.2 Jordanes – The *Getica* and *Romana*

Jordanes wrote the *Getica* and the *Romana* in Latin in Constantinople in 550 or 551,⁸⁰ making him a direct contemporary of Procopius.⁸¹ The *Romana* seems to have largely been drawn from Jerome, Orosius, Eutropius and Florus, and in his own words Jordanes drew his information for the *Getica* from the lost *Gothic History* of Cassiodorus and added other information from other sources and

(e.g. Herodotus), and so does not offer anything new in and of itself in terms of uncovering Procopius's true views on the matter.

⁷⁶ See Procopius, *Buildings* 4.4.

⁷⁷ But see Poulter (2007b: 9-11); Liebeschuetz (2007: 105-107) which question Procopius' reliability in light on his panegyric agenda and the archaeological evidence. E.g. inscriptional evidence conclusively shows that Ratiaria was re-fortified by Anastasius and not completely rebuilt by Justinian as Procopius claims: see *Buildings* 4.6.24. Treadgold notes that Procopius does not make any claims as to the truth of the *Buildings* (panegyric) as he does in the *Wars* (history): Treadgold (2010: 190-191).

⁷⁸ Majeska (1997: 82-83): e.g. Procopius, *Wars* 7.14.22-23, 29 (Sclavenes and Antes shared the same customs, institutions and religion from ancient times, were once both collectively called the Spori) cf. 3.2.10-11 (Sauromatae and Melanchlaeni differ in nothing but name, were originally from the same tribe and share the same laws and religion).

⁷⁹ Cameron (1985: 207).

⁸⁰ For composition dates of both works, see Croke (2005).

⁸¹ Curta in fact makes a reasonable argument that Jordanes may in part have been responding directly to Procopius' negative attitude towards barbarians (and the Slavic tribes in particular) in his work: Curta (2001a:39-43).

(presumably) his own knowledge.⁸² Whether Cassiodorus had anything to say about the Sclavenes is not clear.

Like Procopius, Jordanes claims an ancient origin for both the Sclavenes and Antes in the *Venedi/Venethi* of the first century A.D. as mentioned by both Tacitus and Pliny the Elder as occupying the Eastern Carpathian Mountains and Baltic Coast respectively.⁸³ Jordanes locates the Sclavenes in densely wooded swamplands in the area between the source of the Vistula, the Dniester and the town of Noviodunum (near Isaccea).⁸⁴ He also adds vague details such as they were numerous, cowardly and were causing great damage to the Empire in Jordanes' time as punishment for Rome's sins.⁸⁵

Unlike Procopius, this may be less a result of classicising genres and more to do with a corpus of Late Antique works collectively labelled the *Origines Gentium* (National Histories).⁸⁶ These works sought to legitimise the barbarian successor kingdoms by providing ancient origin stories and continuous histories around which barbarian identities could coalesce. They were a mix of mythic and ethnographic material and cannot be taken to say

⁸² Jordanes, *Getica* 2-3. The older view that Jordanes copied almost *verbatim* from Cassiodorus has become more nuanced in more recent times. Brian Croke and Florin Curta are both more willing to take Jordanes at his word that he supplemented his material with other written sources, many of which are actually named (although some may have come to Jordanes by way of Cassiodorus rather than directly), and oral sources the closer the events came to Jordanes' own lifetime: Croke (1987: esp. 122-129); Curta (2001a: 37-38). See also Søby Christensen (2002: 115-123). Cf. Liebeschuetz (2011: 186-188). The written sources Jordanes' used are discussed briefly in turn in the Introduction to Charles Mierow's English edition of the *Getica*: Mierow (1915: 19-36) and in O'Donnell (1982: 228-240). See also Gillett (2000) and Liebeschuetz (2011: 189-195) on Jordanes' relationship to Ablabius' lost *History of the Goths*. Curta further discusses the likelihood that one of Jordanes' sources was a map: Curta (2001a: 42).

⁸³ Tacitus, *Germania* 46; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 4.13. See also Strabo, *Geography* 4.4 (Venonnes/Vindelici to the North of Italy) and Ptolemy, *Geography* 6.14.9 (Soubenoi in Northern Scythia). c.f. Procopius, *Wars* 7.14.22-30 (Sporoi between the Vistula and Carpathian Mountains). Jordanes seems to see the Venedi as both an overarching group to which both the Sclavenes and Antes belong, and as a third group existing alongside them: *Getica* 119.

⁸⁴ Jordanes, *Getica* 34-36.

⁸⁵ Jordanes, *Getica* 119.

⁸⁶ The *Origines Gentium* includes Cassiodorus' *Gothic History*, Jordanes' *Getica*, Paul the Deacon's *History of the Langobards*, Gregory of Tours' *History of the Franks*, Isidore of Seville's *History of the Gothic, Vandal and Suevic Kings* and possibly Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*.

anything particularly genuine about the ancient origins of various barbarian peoples. Such texts “must be taken as deliberately composed wholes.”⁸⁷

Jordanes’ was primarily concerned about Gothic history but his treatment of the Slavic peoples must be seen in light of the overall purpose. Peter Heather has shown emphatically that despite Jordanes’ own Gothic heritage, his work does not contain any legitimate material on Gothic history before about 376.⁸⁸ Jordanes is therefore more valuable if his information is taken to reflect some measure of truth about the Sclavenes in his own time.

1.3.1.3 Agathias Scholasticus – The *Histories*

A lawyer in Constantinople, Agathias saw himself as a continuer of Procopius⁸⁹ and covers the period 552 to 559. He has been criticised for being overly artificial in the classical style and for lacking the knowledge, resources and even the proper motivation to write political and military history.⁹⁰ There is some debate over whether Agathias used much reliable source material,⁹¹ but he importantly would have been in Constantinople in 558/9 and witnessed the

⁸⁷ Halsall (1999: 135). See also Gillett (2009: 8-12).

⁸⁸ Heather (1991: 34-67). See also Goffart (1988: 20-111) and (2005) which is elementary reading on this subject, and Søbyst Christensen (2002). There has been a tendency to trust these sources uncritically. The idea that these origin myths were built around a nucleus of truth (*traditionskerne*) goes back to Reinhard Wenskus (1961) and has more recently been followed by Jones (1996: 42-43, 269-272), Wolfram (1990: 14-34) and Pohl (2003a). Liebeschuetz has argued even more recently that the *Getica* does in fact preserve genuinely Gothic traditions that formed the basis of Gothic identity as a *gens* prior to their arrival into the Empire: Liebeschuetz (2011). See Wolfram (1997: 53) for the argument that Sclavene society actually had no such nucleus of tradition, thus their decentralised state.

⁸⁹ Agathias, *Histories* Preface 22-23.

⁹⁰ See Cameron (1970: 30-37, 75-88). See also Kaldellis (1999) and (2003); Gador-Whyte (2007) for Agathias’ classicising tendencies.

⁹¹ Cameron (1970: 39-41) argues that it was unlikely Agathias had access to military dispatches or diaries as was often assumed due to his lack of geographical knowledge and confused chronology (although this could have come more from imitating Thucydides’ chronological system) and more likely relied uncritically on oral sources. Curta accepts that he used military reports and campaign diaries: Curta (2001a: 45). Agathias possibly also had friends in positions within Justinian’s court: Treadgold (2010: 281) e.g. Agathias, *Histories* 5.9.7-9 (Paul the Silentiary, Justinian’s attendant); 1 pref. 1 (Eutychianus, imperial secretary).

Cutrigur siege which concludes the *Histories*.⁹² Agathias reflects the same general attitude to barbarians as his predecessors⁹³ and does not have very much to say on the Sclavenes. The name of one Slavic soldier serving in the Roman army is preserved⁹⁴ and he is the first to use the name *Sklavoi* rather than *Sklavenoi*.⁹⁵

1.3.1.4 John Malalas – The *Chronographia*

John Malalas' *Chronographia* is a work in the genre of the Universal Christian World Chronicle⁹⁶ and covers the period from Genesis to 565. Malalas was educated for government service and served in bureaucratic positions in both Antioch and Constantinople.⁹⁷ Both cities were of central importance to the Empire and as such, Malalas probably had access to a range of source material of military and political significance and clearly drew on imperial laws, decrees and letters.⁹⁸ He also based his work on the City Chronicles of Antioch and Constantinople along with earlier chroniclers and oral sources for events in his own lifetime.⁹⁹ Malalas mentions that the Sclavenes took part in the Cutrigur attack on Constantinople in 558/9, a fact omitted by Agathias and likely indicating that if they did in fact take part, they did so in a subordinate capacity.¹⁰⁰

⁹² Agathias, *Histories* 5.11.5-25.6.

⁹³ Agathias' preoccupation with the Franks in particular was connected to the potential of a possible alliance between Rome and the Franks in order to oust the Lombards from Italy at that time: see Cameron (1970: 115-123) for Agathias' attitudes to barbarians and particularly the Franks. Cf. Kaldellis (2013: 21-25) who argues that Agathias is more concerned about using the Franks as a literary device through which to reflect badly on Justinian and Rome.

⁹⁴ Agathias, *Histories* 4.20.4.

⁹⁵ Curta (2001a: 45).

⁹⁶ On the Christian World Chronicle, see Croke (1990b).

⁹⁷ See Croke (1990a).

⁹⁸ Jeffreys, Jeffreys & Scott (1986: xxiii).

⁹⁹ For a fuller treatment of the sources used by Malalas, see Scott (1985); Jeffreys (1990: 172-196); Treadgold (2007) and (2010: 246-256).

¹⁰⁰ Curta (2001a: 45-46).

1.3.1.5 Menander the Guardsman – The *History*

Menander's *History* is only preserved in fragments in later Byzantine sources. The surviving Preface states that he was continuing the work of Agathias¹⁰¹ and thus was working in the classicising mode,¹⁰² possibly under the patronage of the Emperor Maurice.¹⁰³ The work appears to have followed a two-fold chronology based on the foreign relations of Rome with Persia and the Avars¹⁰⁴ and it is largely in the context of Roman-Avar relations that Sclavenes appear.¹⁰⁵

Menander seems to have held a relatively high diplomatic post in Constantinople¹⁰⁶ and therefore focuses primarily on Eastern diplomatic happenings. What survives of his work reflects a reliance on archival material; diplomatic reports and official correspondence, including the accounts of Peter the Patrician.¹⁰⁷ Because of the more formalised nature of relations between Rome and Persia, that information is more detailed and structured, but the Avar material on embassies, treaties, the payment of tribute and Roman-Avar conflict is nonetheless important and highly visible.

Use of stereotypes towards barbarians must again be taken into consideration in Menander; the Avars are typically treacherous and intent on slaughter¹⁰⁸ while the Sclavenes murder Avar envoys because they cannot control their wild natures.¹⁰⁹ Other barbarians are similarly cast.¹¹⁰

¹⁰¹ Menander the Guardsman frg. 1.

¹⁰² See Baldwin (1978: 109-111) for the Thucydidean influence on Menander, but also see Blockley (1985: 2-4) for ways in which Menander seems to have broken the mould to some extent.

¹⁰³ Theophylact Simocatta confirms that Menander's work ended with the fall of Sirmium to the Avars in 582: Theophylact Simocatta, *History* 1.3.5.

¹⁰⁴ Blockley (1985: 5, 13-15).

¹⁰⁵ Blockley (1985: 14).

¹⁰⁶ For the sort of position Menander may have held and what the appellation "Protector" may have denoted, see Baldwin (1978: 104-105); Blockley (1985: 1-2).

¹⁰⁷ Baldwin (1978: 112-113); Blockley (1985: 18-19); Curta (2001a: 47).

¹⁰⁸ See Menander the Guardsman, frg. 5.4; 6; 12.1; 12.4 and 25.1-2 (treachery, deceit, the breaking of oaths and treaties).

¹⁰⁹ Menander the Guardsman, frg. 3 and 21.

¹¹⁰ See Menander the Guardsman frg. 7 (Thracians break oaths); frg. 15 (Saracens are quarrelsome); frg. 48 (barbarians are foolish and fractious). See Baldwin (1978: 114-117).

1.3.1.6 The *Strategikon* of Maurice

The *Strategikon*, a military manual (*tactica*) written during the reign of Maurice and sometimes attributed to him,¹¹¹ is a vitally important source of information on the Sclavenes. In outlining how best to make attacks on Slavene territory, Book 11 contains a great deal of information about Slavene society and methods of fighting, as well as the ways in which Rome endeavoured to deal with them.¹¹² Inferences about Roman-Slavene relations can also be made from looking at what is *not* addressed in the manual – it does not address attacking or defending against Sclavenes or Antes within Roman territory, but taking offensive action across the Danube.¹¹³

The sheer space dedicated to the Sclavenes not only indicates their importance in contemporary affairs,¹¹⁴ but also the author's own first-hand knowledge. The *Strategikon* was written by a soldier with campaign experience against the Sclavenes and Antes who was imparting personal knowledge to other military leaders in a factual manner.¹¹⁵ For this reason, the *Strategikon* can provide as much certainty as can be possible from an ancient source from the Roman perspective.

1.3.1.7 Theophylact Simocatta – The *History*

Much like Menander the Guardsman, Theophylact Simocatta was primarily concerned with the Roman relationship with the Persians and Avars and took up Menander's narrative from 582 to 602. Legally trained, Theophylact seems to have had a very successful administrative career in Constantinople.¹¹⁶ As

¹¹¹ For who may have specifically authored the *Strategikon*, see Dennis (1984: xvi-xvii) and Curta (2001a: 51-52).

¹¹² Curta (2001a: 51).

¹¹³ Luttwack (2009: 298-299).

¹¹⁴ Cf. Leo, *Tactica* 78 and 98 which reveals no sense that the Sclavenes or Avars are a large or present problem in the late ninth century: Curta (2001a: 66).

¹¹⁵ Dennis (1981: xv-xvi, xxi).

¹¹⁶ For example, he delivered a panegyric in honour of Maurice in 610 before the Emperor Heraclius: Theophylact Simocatta, *History* 8.12.3-7. He later won the patronage of the powerful

such, one would expect Theophylact to have had access to official imperial archival material. He used the City Chronicle of Constantinople and it has been argued convincingly that he also relied on a campaign diary (*Feldzugsjournal*) for the events in Book 6 onwards. Unfortunately, Theophylact was unable to fully synthesize them into an intelligible chronology and so can be confusing. Nonetheless, he preserves not only a narrative of events, but details such as the names of several Slavene leaders.¹¹⁷

Importance also lies in the agreement of Theophylact's narrative with the *Strategikon*. The second part of Theophylact's history is concerned with Maurice launching attacks against Avar and Slavene settlements across the Danube, which is *exactly* the concern of Book 11 of the *Strategikon*.¹¹⁸

Theophylact Simocatta is in fact the basis for Theophanes Confessor's sixth and seventh century material in the *Chronographia*, but as Theophanes confuses or amends a lot of his information to achieve an artificially imposed chronology, his usefulness is limited.¹¹⁹

1.3.1.8 *The Miracles of Saint Demetrius Books I & II*

Book I is a collection of miracle stories written in Greek by Archbishop John of Thessalonica around the turn of the seventh century. The sermonising tone of the collection, its tendency towards sensationalism, and its purpose in

Patriarch Sergius of Constantinople. Further, the full title of his work as preserved by Photius records the high ranking positions he held: see Whitby & Whitby (1986: xiv).

¹¹⁷ Curta (2001a: 56-57).

¹¹⁸ Whitby & Whitby (1986: xviii).

¹¹⁹ Curta (2001a: 63-64), who goes as far as to say Theophanes' version is "entirely misleading." Theophanes' work was written in the very early ninth century and was a world chronicle combining Christian and secular material within an extensive chronological structure: see Mango & Scott (2006: lxiii-lxxiv) for an extensive analysis of Theophanes' chronological framework. The chronicle as a whole was essentially a file of sources left to Theophanes to compile into a single chronology and in this sense, Theophanes was more an editor than a historian: see Mango & Scott (2006: lxxiv-xci) for Theophanes' sources. His use of still extant sources such as Procopius shows that in some cases he did not add or alter much to what was already there, but for others such as John Malalas, he was very selective and was more concerned with fitting the material neatly into his chronology: Mango & Scott (2006: xci-xcv).

demonstrating Saint Demetrius' protection of the city has prompted Curta to warn against taking the accounts too seriously.¹²⁰ Book I contains stories of two attacks on Thessalonica by 5,000 Sclavenes and then 100,000 Sclavenes and Avars.¹²¹ Given that no other source securely records these attacks and considering Archbishop John's purpose, it is likely that the significance and scale was exaggerated.¹²² They still, however, speak to some level of threat to provincial cities from Slavene raiding.

Book II is of unknown authorship and was written about seventy years later. It provides a curious mix of normal Roman attitudes towards barbarians as savage, violent heathens intent on destroying Thessalonica,¹²³ and a growing sense of the normality of a Slavic presence within Roman territory – seven Slavene tribes are named as Thessalonica's neighbours and in some cases are on good terms with Romans.¹²⁴

Book II does not have the same sermonising and sensationalist tone as Book I and appears to have relied more on documentary and oral material,¹²⁵ giving detailed information about Slavene military units and weaponry.¹²⁶

1.3.2 *Contemporary Western Sources*

There are a number of sources from the post-Roman West including John of Biclar, Isidore of Seville, George of Pisidia and the *Chronicon Paschale* which give limited information about the Sclavenes. Gregory the Great provides some

¹²⁰ Curta (2001a: 53).

¹²¹ *Miracles of Saint Demetrius* I 12 (attack of 5,000 Sclavenes); I 13 (attack of 100,000 Avars and Sclavenes). See Appendix B.1.5.

¹²² Curta (2001a: 54). It is possible that John of Ephesus, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.6.25 is describing the same event.

¹²³ E.g. *Miracles of Saint Demetrius* II 4.24; II 2.214; II 4.274.

¹²⁴ *Miracles of Saint Demetrius* II 1.179, II 4.323.

¹²⁵ Curta (2001a: 62).

¹²⁶ E.g. *Miracles of Saint Demetrius* II 3.219, 3.222, 4.231, 4.279-80, 5.289, II 4.262.

details about the threat the Slavs posed to Italy at the turn of the seventh century in his correspondence to Eastern clergymen and officials.¹²⁷

The most important contemporary source from the West however is Fredegar's *Chronicle*.

1.3.2.1 Fredegar – *Chronicle*

The *Chronicle* of Fredegar, like other world chronicles, is annalistic in its arrangement and was based on material drawn from earlier Western chronicles.¹²⁸ It was compiled in the mid to late seventh century and covers Creation to around 642 and was written in unpolished Latin by an unknown author.¹²⁹ The first three books are little more than a compilation of previous Chronicles. Book 4, however, introduces new material.¹³⁰

Book 4 importantly contains an account of the Wends. They were possibly some sort of elite Slavene military or political unit within the Avar Khaganate¹³¹ that rebelled against Avar rule to form a kingdom under a Frankish merchant named Samo in the 620s.¹³² The Wendish kingdom then came into conflict with King Dagobert of Austrasia whom Fredegar viewed with deep disdain, and the Wends have an important role to play in his account of Dagobert's downfall.¹³³ This does not necessarily mean that Fredegar's

¹²⁷ See *Letters* 10.15; 9.155 – these events are also mentioned by Paul the Deacon: *Hist. Lang.* 4.24. On Gregory the Great generally, see Martyn (2004 vol. 1: 1-118). On use of his letters in reconstructing Balkan history, see Dzino (2010: 88, 97-98); Whitby (1988: 114-115).

¹²⁸ Wallace-Hadrill (1960: ix-xi, xiii). His sources included Hippolytus, Jerome, Hydatius and Isidore of Seville as well as local Burgundian annals

¹²⁹ There is debate over whether the *Chronicle* was authored by a single person or three different people: see Wallace-Hadrill who advocates for two or three authors (1960: xiv-xxviii) and Goffart (1963) who argues for a single author. See also Curta (2001a: 59).

¹³⁰ See Wallace-Hadrill (1960: xxiv).

¹³¹ See Curta (1997: 144-155) and (2001: 60).

¹³² Fredegar 4.48, 68, 72-77.

¹³³ Curta (2001a: 60).

account is pure fantasy, but that he may have embellished the Wendish material to suit his purpose.¹³⁴

1.3.3 *Later Sources*

1.3.3.1 Paul the Deacon – *History of the Langobards*

Paul the Deacon provides most of the evidence for the Western Sclavenes other than Fredegar and was writing in the last part of the eighth century. At first glance, he paints a picture somewhat similar to Book II of the *Miracles of Saint Demetrius* – Sclavenes could be friends as well as enemies, or at least familiar neighbours.¹³⁵ However, Paul's *History* is part of the *Origines gentium* corpus and has similar aims. Furthermore, Paul uses the Sclavenes in his narrative for a particular Christian historiographical purpose – they are the manifestation of the civil discord between various Lombard factions within the kingdom and therefore a divine punishment.¹³⁶ It would be reasonable to expect that Paul would have had *some* knowledge of Slavene political organisation due to his upbringing at the Lombard court, but he does not mention anything. It did not fit his purpose and so did not concern him.¹³⁷

1.3.3.2 Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus – *The De Administrando Imperio*

The tenth-century *De Administrando Imperio* compiled by the Byzantine Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus is largely beyond the scope of this thesis but is still worth noting for the two different accounts it provides of the

¹³⁴ Curta (2001a: 61). For Fredegar's concern with good governance and kingship, see Wood (1994: 361ff).

¹³⁵ Paul the Deacon, *Hist. Lang.* 4.37 (three generations prior to Paul's own time, a Slavic woman living in the vicinity of a Lombard town aided Paul's grandfather – see Appendix B.2.3.A), 5.22 and 6.52 (Sclavenes as a place of refuge) cf. 4.28 (Sclavenes as enemies under Avar command).

¹³⁶ Curta (1997: 155-161). See also Jordanes, *Getica* 119; Liebeschuetz (2011: 206-210) and O'Donnell (1982: 226-227) both point out that Jordanes utilises the Sclavenes as a motif of divine punishment. Similarly, John of Ephesus called them "the accursed people of the Slavs": John of Ephesus, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.6.25.

¹³⁷ Curta (1997: 160).

migration of Slavic Croats and Serbs into Dalmatia.¹³⁸ While neither represents a reliable account of a Croat migration in the seventh century,¹³⁹ Constantine has probably preserved some form of a native origin story of the arrival of Slavic peoples to the Balkans, albeit recorded by a Byzantine Emperor with a completely different agenda.¹⁴⁰

1.4 The Archaeological Evidence

Relatively speaking, there is not an enormous amount of written evidence about the Sclavenes in the sixth and seventh centuries and so reliance on archaeological evidence is unavoidable.¹⁴¹ The only real glimpse into the world of the Sclavenes from their own perspective is through what physical remains they left behind, which is generally settlement and burial remains including ceramics, jewellery and some articles of clothing (belt buckles, fibulae and other decorative items).

The material cultures associated today with sixth and seventh century Sclavenes are known by a number of different names and first start becoming evident in the archaeological record in the fifth century across Eastern Europe in the area from modern Ukraine to the Danube, Black Sea and Baltic. They seem to have gradually replaced the declining Sântana de Mureş–Chernyakhov culture as the associated Germanic peoples moved further into West Roman territory.¹⁴² Assemblages from the Korčhak-Peňkovka-Koločhin cultural

¹³⁸ *DAI* 29-32. Sections 29, 31-32 contain the story that Heraclius sponsored the migration of the Croats and section 30 contains a more legendary type story. The Serb story is contained in sections 33-35.

¹³⁹ Croats are not known to contemporary seventh century sources and therefore the *DAI* is more likely to reflect Constantine's own times and concerns: Dzino (2010: 110).

¹⁴⁰ Curta (2001a: 66). The story does not necessarily reveal any truth about Croat origins, but rather Croat *belief* in their origins. For a more detailed analysis, particularly on Constantine's agenda, see Dzino (2010: 104-117) and (2014b); Borri (2011).

¹⁴¹ Godja (1991: 16).

¹⁴² Barford (2001: 43).

complex have been found in North-Eastern Ukraine (the Upper Dnieper area), an associated Suceava-Șipot culture in Romania (Moldavia and Walachia), and in the northern Balkan Peninsula. The similar Prague-Korčhak culture is found in Poland, Western Ukraine, and the Czech Republic – see Figures 1 and 2 on pages 32-33.

These cultures are relatively uniform in a general sense and should probably be seen as regional variants of a common cultural complex.¹⁴³ The different designations have more to do with previous efforts of Slavic scholars to locate and privilege for their own nation the specific homeland of “Proto-Slavs.”¹⁴⁴ The hand-crafted pottery produced in the areas covered by these cultures upon which the naming conventions are based had similar forms and some have wavy line decorations. Analysis of the pottery has problems including dating, differentiation and their rigid culture-historical classification as inherently “Slavic,” rather than being seen as an amalgam of styles, influences and ethnicities.¹⁴⁵

These cultures also produced similar jewellery styles, residential building styles of sunken rectangular houses with a stone or clay oven set in one corner, and mostly practiced cremation.¹⁴⁶ Slavic bow fibulae are probably the most well-known type of find from these assemblages and are particularly important to the construction of Slavene identity, as Florin Curta has demonstrated in great detail.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴³ Gimbutas (1971: 89).

¹⁴⁴ See Curta (2001a: 6-11) on this.

¹⁴⁵ See Curta (2001c). In other words, the pottery alone cannot be used to indicate a Slavene presence in a given area even if more accurate classification and differentiation methods are used.

¹⁴⁶ Godja (1991: 16).

¹⁴⁷ Curta (2001a: 227-275). He precedes his argument on Slavic bow fibulae by demonstrating the same role was played by fibulae worn by Lombard and Gepid women in Pannonia as they tried to assert identity in the face of Lombard-Gepid conflict in the fifth and sixth centuries: Curta (2001a: 201-204). See also Effros (2004).

A caveat must be given here: the identification of the Sclavenes with the Prague-Korčhak and associated material cultures is tentative and the problems with culture-historical approaches to archaeology are well known. The ethnic character of archaeological assemblages can never be assumed and simplistic labels often mask complex processes. Nevertheless, the archaeological record in the fifth to the seventh centuries does show a marked change in material culture as well as recurring patterns of cultural affinity across large territories in Central and Eastern Europe where the written sources locate peoples called Sclavenes.¹⁴⁸ One might therefore call this the Slavene or Slavic cultural *habitus* with reasonable confidence while at the same time acknowledging that it cannot reflect the entirety of social, political, economic and cultural reality.

The concern of this thesis is to determine whether any of the archaeological material alone or in conjunction with the written sources might shed light on aspects of Slavene society. This may in turn suggest reasons why they were never Roman allies and in fact what the nature of their interaction with Rome actually was. In this respect, relevant Roman and Avar material will also be considered, particularly in terms of prestige items and emblematic styles which may have been imitated in the Slavene assemblages and therefore might indicate identify-forming processes due to integration and acculturation. For comparative purposes, the use of such items and styles in Germanic groups in previous centuries will be examined as well.

The relationship between archaeological evidence and written sources is a vexed one and not as intuitive as it may seem. Historical studies tend to present written and archaeological evidence together as a seamless whole,¹⁴⁹ and this can be both deceptive and miss opportunities to approach the gaps heuristically to generate fresh questions, perspectives and new problems.¹⁵⁰ In

¹⁴⁸ Barford (2001: 32).

¹⁴⁹ Riello (2009: 43).

¹⁵⁰ Johnson (2011:134-135).

barbarian studies in the past, the need of the historical enterprise to interpret archaeological evidence to fit documentary sources has been problematic and does no justice to either source body.¹⁵¹

There are legitimate criticisms of various theoretical approaches to material archaeology.¹⁵² It is hoped that one advantage of limiting this thesis in scope to the period between the first mention of the Sclavenes in the sources in 530/1 to the fall of the First Avar Khaganate after the loss at Constantinople in 626, is that the archaeological material can be dealt with in a more focused manner to avoid some of these issues.

¹⁵¹ Halsall (1999: 33-35). Halsall uses Jordanes' *Getica* as a case study to demonstrate this point to great effect. See also Poulter (2007b: 1-3).

¹⁵² See Viet (1989); Curta (2002: 202-203); Halsall (1997). See also Burmeister (2000); Heather (2009: 1-34); Renfrew & Bahn (2012: 463-492) for the problematics and debates on the archaeology of migration which has a central place in late antique barbarian studies.

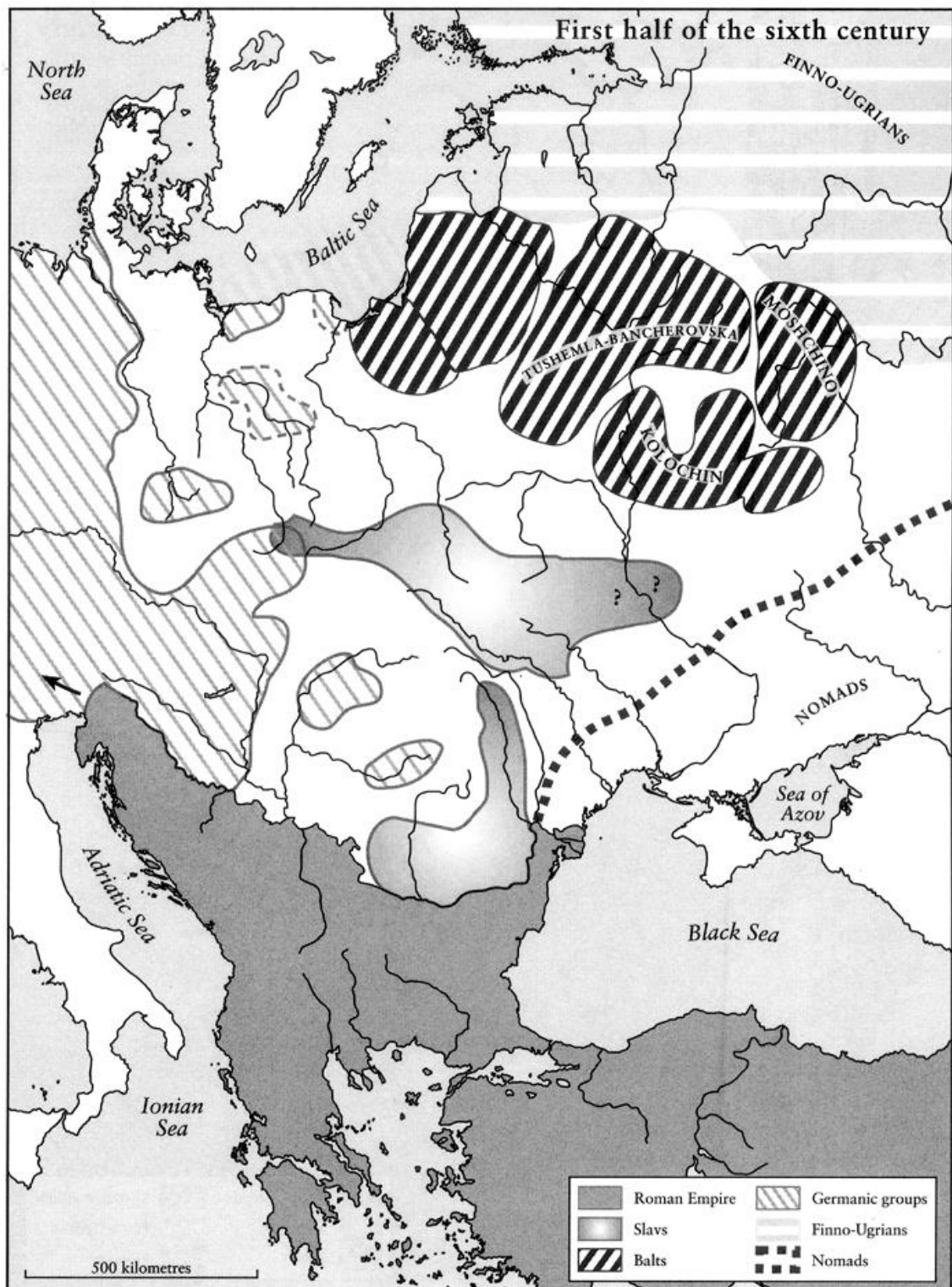


Figure 1 – Material cultures of the first half of the sixth century. Reproduced from Barford (2001: 395).

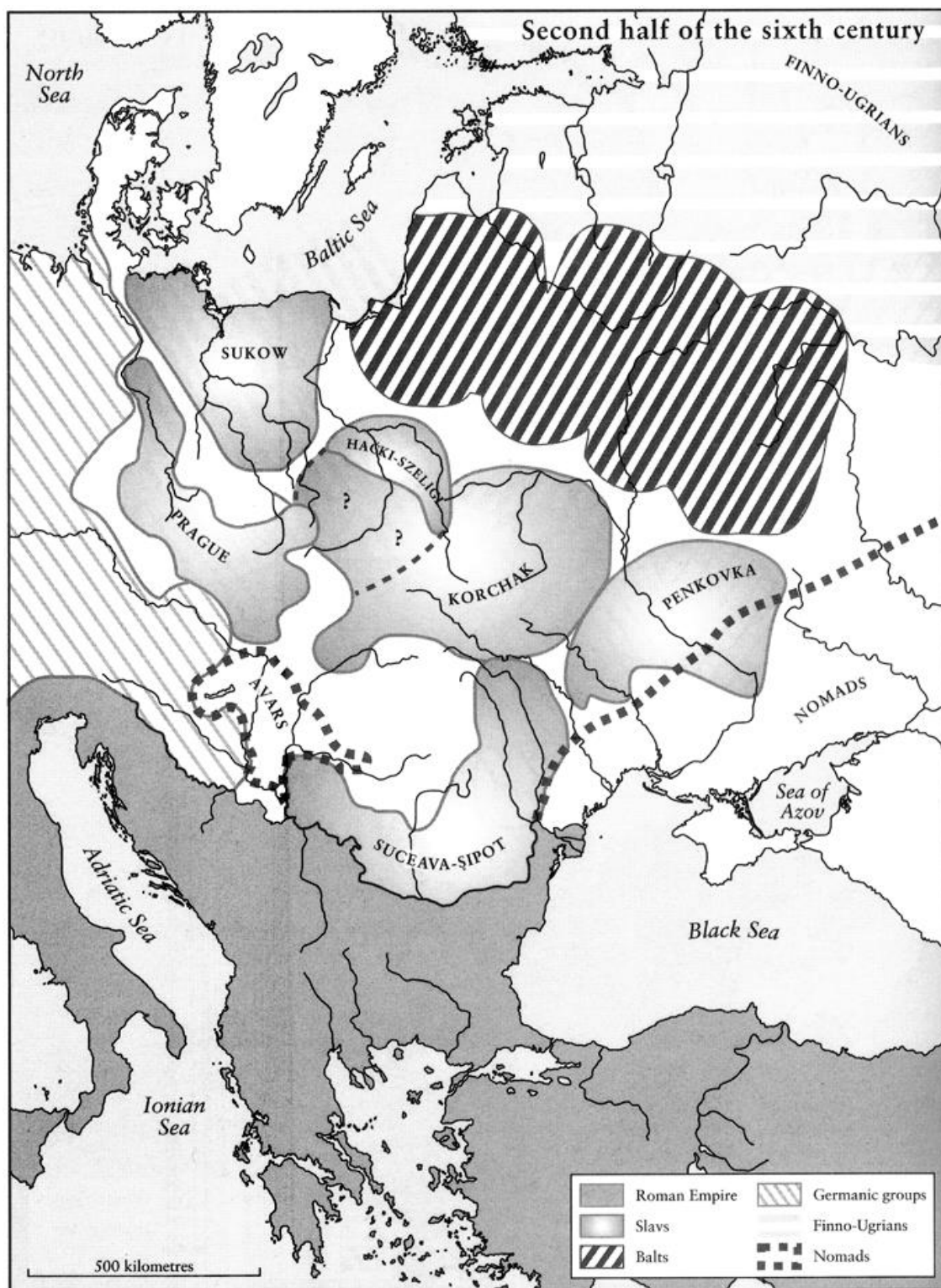


Figure 2 - Material cultures of the second half of the sixth century. Reproduced from Barford (2001: 396).

Chapter 2

Rome and the Historical Context

2.1 Rome in Late Antiquity

The Sclavenes appeared on the lower Danube within five years of Justinian I taking the imperial throne in 527 at Constantinople. Justinian's coronation neatly represents some of the major reorientations which had been transforming the Roman Empire in Late Antiquity – the Christianisation of the Empire and a shift in imperial power towards the East.

The change from Rome to Constantinople as the imperial capital was part of a long-term process which had begun as early as the third century A.D. The balance of power between Rome and her neighbours began to drastically change due to the almost simultaneous emergence of bigger and more organised Germanic confederacies on the Danube, Rhine, and in the Black Sea and Asia Minor on the one hand, and a more centralised and aggressive Sassanian Persian state on the other. At that point in time, any breach of the Roman frontiers had consequences far more serious than previously, in part due to the increased size and organisation of the attacking groups but also because of the inadequacy of the old Roman systems of defence. Rome's rigid defensive lines and lumbering legions were exposed as severely lacking against

their highly mobile enemies in the third century,¹ a problem which would only increase with the arrival of the bow-wielding horsemen of the Eurasian Steppe.² Roman defences were more easily overcome at any given point and once they were, an invading force could slice right through to the Roman hinterland.³

The latter half of third century thus saw the rise of soldier-emperors, often of common provincial stock, whose military expertise was desperately needed and who spent their reigns on the frontiers. Prior to this, the gradual politicisation of the army starting during the Severan dynasty had already helped bleed away a great deal of the power of the Roman Senate in imperial politics.⁴ The large-scale regionalisation and inclusion of barbarians within both the command structure and rank and file of the Roman military was another way in which peripheral groups were able to incorporate themselves into the power structures of the Empire,⁵ and they, together with the soldier-emperors, drew military and political power towards the frontiers.

The need to monitor the reorganised lower Danubian frontiers after Dacia was abandoned and protect the economic resources of the Eastern

¹ Watson (1999); Southern & Ramsey Dixon (1996: 4-5, 23-37).

² See Haldon (1999: 190-217); Elton (1996: 104-105) demonstrating the final shift to cavalry as the main operational force in the Roman army in the sixth century. See Curta (2015a) on the Avar, Bulgar and Slavene horsemen of the sixth century.

³ Starr (1982: 142-3). The provinces to the south of the Middle and Lower Danube in particular were under constant threat because Germanic groups could cut straight through Dacia. See Burns (1980: 32-33) on the dating of the Roman withdrawal from Dacia in the third century.

⁴ See Potter (2004: 125-172, 217-298) on the politicization of the army by the Severans and their successors which is a running theme in his narrative and analysis, largely embodied by Septimius Severus' advice to his sons: "*Be harmonious, enrich the soldiers, and scorn all other men.*" (Dio. 77.15.2). The marginalisation of the senatorial class in Rome in favour of the *equites* is well covered in Jones (1964 vol.1: 3-36) and Alföldy (1985: 157-185). Septimius Severus had already given command of three new legions to equestrian commanders and appointed an equestrian prefect to the province of Mesopotamia. There is also evidence that *equites* served in place of senatorial governors on seven occasions (two in Dacia, Africa, Asia, Syria, Galatia and one other) although they may have only been in a temporary capacity: Campbell (1984: 408).

Further, although there is no evidence of Gallienus' edict excluding senators from military commands (Vict.Caes.33.34.), the reference may be a recognition that legionary commands and military tribuneships were by and large no longer given to senators but to *equites* from the 260s.

⁵ See Cameron (1993: 50-56); Goffart (2006: 190-197); Burns (2003: 321-323). Cassius Dio accused Marcus Aurelius of barbarising the Roman army as early as the second century (Dio.75.2.5), although Italians most certainly still served as officers: ILS 1180; 1332; 9014.

provinces saw Constantine establish Constantinople in 330. The decisive split of the Empire under Theodosius II's two young sons at the turn of the fifth century concentrated Roman imperial power almost completely in the East as the West truly began to fragment under increasing pressure from Germanic barbarians.

The Visigoths had sacked Rome in 410 and were settled in Aquitaine by 418, moving on to Toulouse and then into Spain under Frankish pressure. The nascent Merovingian dynasty went on to occupy most of the former Gallic territories. The Vandals had almost complete control of North Africa by 439 and sacked Rome in 455, a fate it had narrowly avoided in 453 at the hands of Attila's Huns who had the core of their empire on the crossroads between the East and West in Pannonia. The Ostrogoths emerged from the ruins of Attila's empire and had established themselves in Italy by the end of the fifth century, leaving Gepids and Lombards in their wake. The last Western Roman emperor had already been deposed in Rome in September 476.⁶

By the coronation of Justinian I then, the Western provinces had largely been lost, and Attila's Hunnic Empire had already risen and fallen. War with Sassanian Persia was still fairly constant, and the Roman Empire was largely Christian following a series of watershed moments in the fourth and fifth centuries.⁷ A Christian imperial worldview had developed in relation to barbarian peoples – they had to be brought into the Christian imperial orbit of Rome by any of those means usually utilised to do so.⁸

⁶ The developments leading to the establishment of the Successor Kingdoms in the post-Roman West are amply dealt with in the literature: e.g. Burns (1980) and (1984); Amory (1997) – Ostrogoths; Heather (1991) and (1996); Burns (1994) – Visigoths and Ostrogoths; Thompson (1988) – Visigoths; Goffart (1980); Cameron, Ward-Perkins & Whitby (2000); Halsall (2007); Wickham (2009) – generally.

⁷ See Bury (1958 vol. 1:348-388) and (1958 vol. 2: 364-390); Jones (1964 vol. 2: 950-970).

⁸ Cameron (1985: 239-240); Curta (2001a: 37-38).

2.2 Framing Rome and the Barbarians in Late Antiquity: Frontiers, Empire, and Policy

2.2.1 *Frontiers and Empire*

The focal point of Rome's imperial orbit was the frontiers. Their role in facilitating and mediating contact between imperial territory and those peoples living beyond it in Late Antiquity in the period before the Sclavenes arrived is fundamental to understanding the ideological and policy context in which Rome and the Sclavenes encountered one another.

Written sources abound with references to linear boundaries which divided Rome and barbarian territory. For Procopius, the Romans held the right bank of the Rhine whilst barbarians held the left.⁹ The Rhine and Danube were seen in the same way by Tacitus five centuries earlier, but it was not reality. Discourses of this nature were central to the function of empire, whereby it transformed power and social imbalance into a clear-cut distinction which could then only be softened by the civilising intervention of the empire itself. This imagined landscape existed precisely in the absence of real, hard imperial boundaries.¹⁰ Imperial frontiers should be seen as outward looking, dynamic, but ill-defined zones of power¹¹ which could often develop their own interests quite separate from those of the core¹² so that it had more in common with those areas beyond it than the imperial hinterland.¹³

Empires are often not concerned only with territoriality but also with cultural and political influence and so tend to be more universalist in both time

⁹ Procopius, *Buildings* 4.5. See also *SHA, Hadrian* 11.2 (Hadrian's wall) and *de Rebus Bellicis* 6.20 (the whole of the fourth century empire hemmed in by barbarians on its borders).

¹⁰ Münkler (2007: 96-7).

¹¹ Whittaker (2006: 6).

¹² Bloemers (1989: 178).

¹³ Münkler (2007: 5, 8, 23-35, 81, 85).

and space.¹⁴ There is always a focus on the frontier regions because the dynamics and power generated on and through the periphery is what allows outward expansion of imperial influence beyond territorial borders.

The fact that Rome made Christianity the official religion in the fourth century enhanced that ability. The universal mission of the Church via the workings of the Empire was a predominant theme for writers such as Eusebius of Caesarea and enabled emperors to portray themselves as protectors of Christians everywhere, regardless of whether they were within imperial territory or not.¹⁵ In the *Passion of St. Saba* a Roman *dux* collected Saba's body from within Germania,¹⁶ indicating links between Christians in both areas.¹⁷

The imperial frontier then was not a border, but rather a cultural space of different modes of interaction which cut across formal Roman and barbarian divides.¹⁸ The Alamanni king Vadamarius, who crossed the river "as if it were a time of profound peace,"¹⁹ is a good fourth century example of how easy it was for barbarians to cross boundaries. Military installations often did not function as boundary markers or as an indication of military action against barbarian groups.²⁰ Double bridge heads such as at Cologne-Deutz on the Rhine and

¹⁴ Hardt & Negri (2000: 11). See Virgil, *Aeneid* 1.279: "To Romans I set no boundary in space or time. I have granted the dominion, and it has no end." See also Ovid, *Fasti* 2.684: "Romanae spatium est urbis et orbis idem."

¹⁵ Ostler (1996: 95ff); Goetz (2005: 74-5). Constantine certainly took on this role in relation to Christians in Sassanian Persia: see Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* 4.9-13. Burns argues that the church together with the army and bureaucracy was key in transmitting Roman cultural influence across the Danube: Burns (1980: 25-26).

¹⁶ *Passion of St. Saba* 8.1.

¹⁷ Lee (1993: 75). The Goths possibly also saw the Constantinople-backed mission of the Bishop Ulfila in the fourth century as an extension of Roman imperialism: Heather (2001: 25). The Christian persecutions of 347/8 and 367-378 within Gothic territory should probably be seen as a response to the perceived threat of Roman influence on Gothic culture: Wolfram (1990: 83).

¹⁸ Münkler (2007: 13); Whittaker (2004: 2-3). Maier (2006: 81) calls frontiers "osmotic membranes establishing a flow of influences and interactions."

¹⁹ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 21.4.3.

²⁰ Elton (1996: 6-7). Isaac (2000: 161-218) argues extensively that the *limes* were not defended boundaries, but rather frontier districts.

Daphne Constantiniana-Transmarisca on the Lower Danube²¹ were built to facilitate crossing, communication with, and control of areas beyond the river itself,²² and there are recorded instances of Roman military outposts well into barbarian territory.²³

2.2.2 Roman Frontier Policy in Late Antiquity

Military installations had been in place along the Rhine and Danubian frontiers since at least the third century. A system of *limes* fortified both rivers, consisting of intermittently placed watchtowers, forts and bridgeheads which were occasionally added to or rebuilt by various emperors throughout the fourth and fifth centuries.²⁴

By about 554 Justinian had built or rebuilt over six hundred fortifications on the Danubian frontier as chronicled by Procopius, consisting of fortresses, fortified churches, communication settlements and upland refuges.²⁵ The fortifications were built along three successive lines radiating out from the Balkan Peninsula. The first stretched from Singidunum to the mouth of the Danube, the second along the Stara Planina range in Bulgaria, and the last along the Istranca Daglar range in Bulgaria and Turkey. The fifth century Long

²¹ Whittaker (1994: 203). There were also seven fortified crossings on the Danube bend in Pannonia: Lee (1993: 71). See also Madgearu (2003) for a survey of six bridgeheads on the Lower Danube. See Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 27.5.2 for Valentinian's army crossing at Daphne.

²² Lee (1993: 70-71); Curta (2005b: 178).

²³ See Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 27.1.11 (Julian restoring a fort in Alamannia); 28.2.5 (Valentinian fort at Mount Piri) and 29.6.2-3 (Valentinian fort in Quadic territory). See also *Notitia Dignitatum* 32.41; 33.44, 48, 55; Symmachus, *Oratio* 2.14, 18-20.

²⁴ Whittaker (1997: 157-158). Jones has estimated that there were about 65,000 *limitanei* troops on the frontiers: Jones (1966: 217) and the *Notitia Dignitatum* indicates about 50-60% stayed on the frontiers throughout the fourth century: Whittaker (1997: 158-176, 207), but see Cameron (1993: 50-51); Burns (2003: 357) for problems in using the *Notitia* as a source. There is also evidence of ships patrolling the Danube: Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 31.5.3. For an overview of the fourth century *limes* and *limitanei*, see Elton (1996: 200-208). See also Isaac (2000: 161-218) which mainly covers the *limes* in the Near East.

²⁵ Procopius, *Buildings* 4.1-11.

Walls about 65 kilometres west of Constantinople stretching from the Black Sea to the Sea of Marmara added a fourth line of defence²⁶ - see Figures 3 and 4 below.

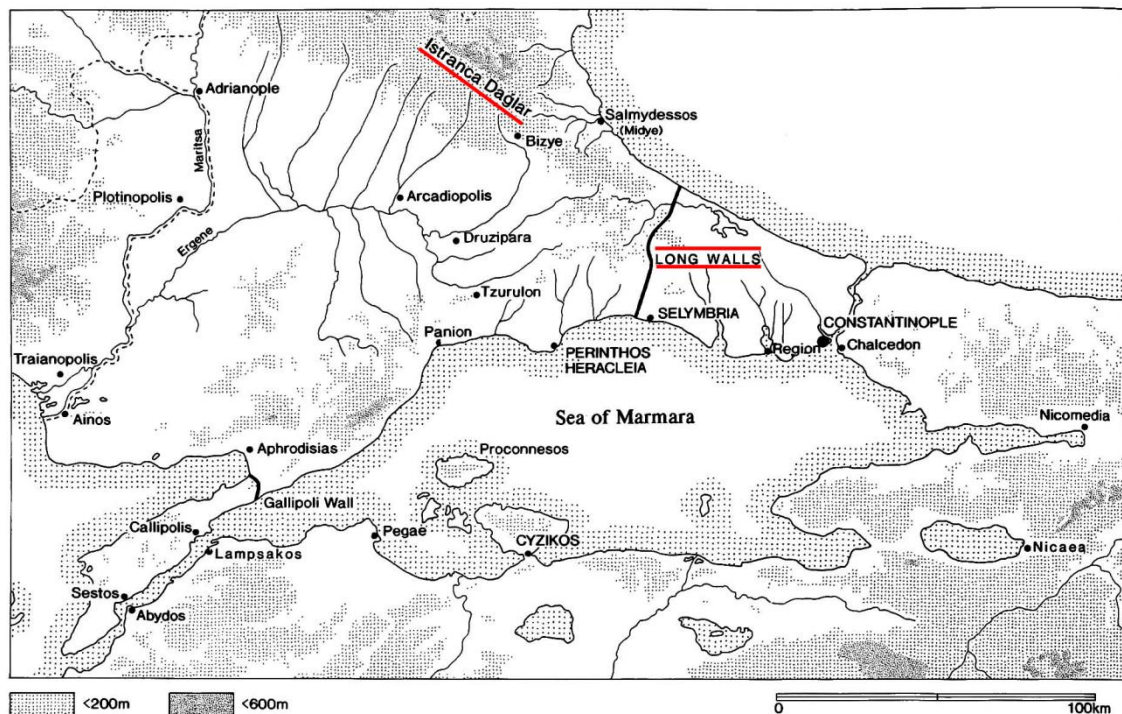


Figure 3 - The Long Walls of Constantinople and the Istranca Daglar range. Reproduced from Crow & Ricci (1997: 236). Emphasis added.

²⁶ Not to be confused with the Walls of Constantine and of Theodosius II (Sea of Marmara to the Golden Horn) which fortified Constantinople itself.



Figure 4 - The Balkans in the time of Justinian I showing key locations in relation to the fortification of the region. Reproduced from Whitby (2000: 707). Emphasis added with slight alterations.

Despite the fortification of the Danube river itself, fortification of the Balkan hinterland makes it clear that it was still expected that barbarians would break through and that the fortifications were a means of slowing the advance

until help could arrive,²⁷ i.e. defence-in-depth.²⁸ A number of Balkan cities including Serdica (Sofia in Bulgaria) and Justiniana Prima (Caričin Grad in Serbia) were fortified,²⁹ and walls were built across the pass of Thermopylae³⁰ while the fifth century wall across the Isthmus of Corinth was repaired.³¹

The general contours of the defences have been confirmed by archaeological evidence.³² Most of the sites found along the Iron Gates were likely new sixth century constructions and seem not to have been intended for permanent garrisons³³ but rather aimed at protecting interior cities such as Naïssus (Niš in Serbia). Hilltop sites between the Danube and Naïssus are numerous, with excavations showing several, such as Iatrus and Nicopolis ad Istrum,³⁴ were restored in the sixth century.³⁵ To the immediate south, large forts were clustered around the main mountain passes.³⁶

²⁷ Gregory (2000: 107-108).

²⁸ For defence-in-depth, see Luttwack (1976); Isaac (2000); Whittaker (2004). To be clear, defence-in-depth is here used to denote localised military action/building in response to specific stimuli (Sclavene/Hunnic raiding in the Balkans) rather than as any true “Grand Strategy” in the sense meant by Luttwack.

²⁹ See Bavant (2007) for the fortifications of Justiniana Prima.

³⁰ Procopius, *Buildings* 4.2.23.

³¹ Procopius, *Buildings* 4.2.27-28. Procopius mentions that a defensive wall already existed, albeit in bad repair, and archaeological evidence indicates the first phase of construction was in the early fifth century with repairs dating to the mid-sixth: see Gregory (2000: 111-112).

³² Curta (2001a: 120-189) outlines the archaeology of Justinian’s fortifications in a detailed study. It is worth noting that upland fortified sites which appear in the Dalmatian hinterland at this time are no longer thought to be connected with barbarian raiding or Justinian’s project. Recent arguments seem rightly to suppose that they represent an internal change in settlement dynamics in response to Dalmatia’s newly marginalised position within the Eastern Roman Empire: Špehar (2008); Dzino (2016). See also Wilkes (2005) for an archaeological survey of the Danubian frontier in the first to fourth centuries and Poulter (2010) for a survey of fortifications from the first to the sixth centuries.

³³ Dinčov (2007). Curta puts the number of new constructions at nine: Curta (2001a: 162). See also Špehar (2012: 46-51) for a survey of twelve early sixth–early seventh century fortification sites along the Iron Walls between Lederata and Aquae which contain some evidence of being manned by Lombardic or Gepid federate units.

³⁴ See von Bülow (2007); Whittow (2007) for overviews of these sites. Both seem to have been abandoned in the aftermath of Hunnic attacks in the fifth century.

³⁵ Curta (2001a: 157). Procopius specifically mentions Nicopolis: *Buildings* 4.1.37.

³⁶ Curta (2001a: 165-166).

Various fortification types have been found further south, though none in Thessaly despite Procopius stating seven were rebuilt there.³⁷ Procopius gives evidence that many Greek positions were fortified: twenty-six rebuilt forts and thirty-two new ones in Epirus Nova and forty-six rebuilt in Macedonia. This probably reflects the importance of the Via Egnatia which passed through both provinces. Four inscriptions from the town of Byllis in modern Albania identifies Justinian's chief military architect Victorinos as carrying out building activities in Moesia, Scythia, Illyricum and Thrace as well as at the Isthmus of Corinth.³⁸ Stamped tiles associated with the fortifications at Dyrrachium might also be dated to Justinian,³⁹ and the second phase of defence building at Scodra in Praevalitana has recently been conclusively attributed to Justinian.⁴⁰ Procopius is silent as to the fortification of the Peloponnese other than the Isthmus but archaeological evidence has hinted that sixth century work was carried out at Argos and Epidauros among other places.⁴¹

The fortification project seemed to have been effective only to an extent. No Slavene raiding is recorded between 552 and 577 although there was extensive Utigur and Cutrigur raiding in the 540s and 50s. Furthermore, evidence suggests that the long-term maintenance of the fortifications in terms of both man-power and supplies were untenable given the declining economic

³⁷ Curta (2001a: 166-169).

³⁸ Liebeschuetz (2007: 107). For Victorinos' inscriptions from the Isthmus of Corinth and correlation to evidence in Procopius, see Brown (2010).

³⁹ Sodini (2012: 315). Could also be dated a little earlier to Anastasius. The Greek archaeological evidence is difficult – results are scarce and proper stratigraphic excavation has not always been a priority. Trying to differentiate between building phases can therefore be very problematic, particularly when coupled with the desire to link any apparently early Byzantine construction with Justinian's programme: Gregory (2000: 109-110); Sodini (2012: 314).

⁴⁰ Sodini (2012: 319).

⁴¹ Gregory (2000: 108). The evidence suggests that the various fifth century fortifications and defensive walls in cities such as Sparta, Korone and Megara were repaired in the sixth or early seventh century. Attribution to Justinian's programme is not conclusive: Gregory (1982: 18-21).

and demographic situation in the Balkans, and so the fortifications eventually succumbed under their own weight.⁴²

Military fortification was, however, only one prong of Roman frontier policy. As a whole, frontier policy was based on the signing, re-signing, breaking and changing of treaty arrangements.⁴³ From Constantine to Justinian and his successors, treaties with peoples of the Middle and Lower Danube were concluded in order to create buffers against other, more hostile groups in return for subsidies and aid against their enemies.⁴⁴ The question of the utility of subsidies paid to barbarian groups, particularly the Avars, through the reigns of Justinian, Justin II, Tiberius II and Maurice features in the histories of Menander,⁴⁵ Agathias,⁴⁶ Procopius⁴⁷ and Jordanes⁴⁸ accounts and indicates how heavy a concern it was in the sixth century.⁴⁹

Rome could also have a hand in actively bringing about the destruction of certain groups, as shown by their policy of assassinating particular rulers and installing their preferred choices,⁵⁰ as well as playing groups off against

⁴² See Curta (2001b).

⁴³ Wolfram (1990: 62); Chrysos (1992: 37). See also Pitts (1989). As an interesting aside, it has been argued by both Wolfram and Elton that barbarians often broke treaties on the death of the Emperor with whom they had contracted, perhaps indicating a different perspective between the two cultures and possibly contributing to the stereotype that barbarians were dishonest: Wolfram (1990: 62); Elton (1996: 185).

⁴⁴ See e.g. Goffart (1980); Heather (1991); Burns (1994) which track the relationship between Germanic barbarians and Romans largely based on alternating periods of treaties and warfare.

⁴⁵ See Menander the Guardsman, frg. 5 (subsidies paid by Justinian is wise) cf. frg. 25 (disapproval towards Tiberius for paying subsidies) cf. frg. 14 and 15 (approval of Justin II for abandoning the payment of subsidies to the Avars in favour of aggression).

⁴⁶ Agathias, *Histories* 5.24 (defends Justinian's use of subsidies).

⁴⁷ Procopius, *Secret History* 11.5ff; 19.4-10, 13-17 (criticism of Justinian squandering money on barbarian subsidies). Cf. John of Antioch frg. 243 for a similar criticism of Anastasius.

⁴⁸ Jordanes, *Getica* 119 states that Sclavenes and Antes were running riot over the Empire due to Rome's neglect, which indicates some censure of Roman policy in this respect.

⁴⁹ See in particular Cameron (1970: 125-126, 136); Blockley (1985: 24-26).

⁵⁰ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 21.4.3-6 (attempt by Julian to assassinate Alamanni king Vadomarius in 360); 28.10.3-4 (attempt and actual assassination of Alamanni king Vithicabius in 366); 29.6.5 (assassination of Quadic king Gabinius in 372).

one another.⁵¹ As a general proposition in the fifth and sixth centuries, Lombards were played off against Gepids,⁵² Antes against Sclavenes,⁵³ and Utigurs against Cutrigurs.⁵⁴ There is also evidence that Rome was meddling in Alamanni and Frankish kingship from about the time of Constantine.⁵⁵ Whilst such actions obviously created situations where groups were destroyed, it is also easy to see how this could solidify identities as against Rome and other barbarians.

Client management of this kind, based on the patron-client dynamic upon which Roman society operated at every level,⁵⁶ was aimed at achieving peace and stability by identifying and advancing the interests of a certain group or leader willing to cooperate with the Empire in guaranteeing that stability in return for gifts and subsidies.⁵⁷ This then provided certain individuals with a flow of Roman items which could then be redistributed to those in lower positions. The barbarian leader's power became tied to Rome and therefore made it easier for Rome to exercise influence. The individual did gain some

⁵¹ Heather (2001: 22). Constantine Porphyrogenitus gives a very good tenth-century account of these policies in action: *DAI* 1-11.

⁵² See Procopius, *Wars* 7.33.10-12, 34.1-10, 35.12-22; Agathias, *Histories* 1.4.1-3; Paul the Deacon, *Hist. Lang.* 1.21-2; 2.27. See also Procopius, *Wars* 8.25.1-10, 13-15; 8.27.1-5, 7.29; Jordanes, *Getica* 264 ff; Paul the Deacon, *Hist. Lang.* 1.23-4. Justinian also invited Heruli to settle adjacent to Singidunum after the Gepids took it in 535/6: Procopius, *Wars* 6.14.35-36.

⁵³ E.g. The Sclavene-Ante conflict in 533/4-545 (Procopius, *Wars* 7.24.2) was probably encouraged by Rome, and the Antes were likely destroyed or totally subsumed by the Sclavenes' Avar allies in 602 in retaliation for Roman meddling: Curta (2001a: 78). Haldon has also argued that the Wendish revolt against Avar control in the 620s (Fredegar 4.48, 68) was possibly encouraged by Rome: Haldon (1997: 47).

⁵⁴ Whitby (2000: 717). E.g. Justinian paid the Utigurs to attack the Cutrigurs in the early 550s before warning the Cutrigurs so they would retreat: Procopius, *Wars* 8.19. The same thing happened in 559 when they were induced to largely destroy each other. The Cutrigurs next appear as part of the Avar Khaganate: Agathias, *Histories* 5.24-25.

⁵⁵ Heather (2001: 22). E.g. The Alamannic king Vadomarius held letters of special favour from Constantius II in the 350s (Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 18.2.16) and Maximian appears to have interfered with the Franks even earlier (Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 17.10; 18.2).

⁵⁶ Burns (2003: 8-9).

⁵⁷ See Hardt & Negri (2000: 15) for the role of empires coming into being based on their capacity to resolve conflict and maintain peace and the status quo. The role of the Roman Republic as peace-keeper in conflicts of the late Hellenistic kingdoms of the Mediterranean and the Near East (which can be seen as one of the genesis points of the Roman Empire) largely supports this contention.

measure of power in negotiating the position of their group within Roman power structures and tying members of his own group to him through redistribution of Roman gifts, creating hierarchy and stratification. In the fifth and sixth centuries, these gifts often took the forms of jewellery such as fibulae which led to large-scale local imitations.⁵⁸

Archaeological evidence suggests that there was trade of Roman goods into the Germanic north of both low and high value goods in Late Antiquity. Low value goods such as pottery, brooches, bronze coins and drinking vessels are mostly found within a 200km radius of the frontier, whilst more valuable and prestige items are found in a belt about 400-600km away, mostly in small quantities and in “princely graves.” This suggests regular access to Roman goods close to the frontier nullified their value as symbolic expressions of social and political power within barbarian communities.⁵⁹ For groups farther away from direct Roman influence, such items could visibly tie an individual to Rome and therefore could be used in local theatres of competition. Competition for power via visual display such as lavish burials is often symptomatic of developing and unstable socio-political structures which do not have formalised mechanisms of power transmission such as would be present in a more developed polity. This phenomenon has been detected when comparing the more politically and socially developed La Tène tribes, who had much longer and extensive contacts with Rome, with the Germanic north.⁶⁰ That those areas closer to the northern Roman frontiers in Late Antiquity did not engage in such displays is an indication that contact with Rome had accelerated or at least

⁵⁸ Heather (2001: 27).

⁵⁹ Hedeager (1987: 126-27); Elton (1996: 90). See also Tacitus, *Agricola* 28; Diodorus Siculus, 5.26; Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 22.7.8; 29.4.4; SHA, *Gallienus* 21.3; Ausonius, *Bissula*; Symmachus, *Epistle* 2.78 for abundant evidence on the slave trade between Rome and Germania.

⁶⁰ Hedeager (1987: 129-30). See also Halsall (1995a) and (1995b) who identifies the same dynamic in in early Merovingian Metz after the collapse of the Roman West but before it was fully integrated into the new Frankish polity.

stimulated their development into more stable societies in comparison to those further away, who utilised Roman goods in a completely different way.

2.2.3 *The Effects of Roman Frontier Policy on Late Antique Barbarian Societies*

Contact with Rome via the military and trade, as well as other ways of attaining Roman goods (booty, subsidies, gifts), demonstrate the role of the frontier as an agent of socio-political change. The frontier did not divide political units of equal rights and social complexity. David Ludden has demonstrated that tributary empires which by definition involve unequal partners encourage ongoing processes of “adaptive transformation” on the subordinate periphery.⁶¹ The draw to imperial territory and goods was directly connected to the cultural and economic attraction of imperial power.⁶² For example, when Valens cut off trade with the Danubian Goths in 367-9, Athanaric was eventually forced to sue for peace due to their reliance of Roman goods.⁶³

It is hard to see how these societies could not have been affected, particularly when the processes of tribalisation and imperatives of imperial safety come into play. Peter Wells argues that the process of tribalisation is characteristic of the peripheries of empires and other complex societies, whereby less socially complex groups develop in response to interaction with larger, more complex societies. This makes it easier for empires to deal with such units because they usually result in the coalescence of leadership

⁶¹ Ludden (2011). See also Haldon (1993). Hardt & Negri (2000: 20) go as far as to suggest that the power of an empire is subordinated to the local power dynamics on the frontiers. This is very much in keeping with specific arguments about the role frontiers played in the end of Western Roman Empire: see e.g. Whittaker (1989: 68); Geary (1988); Halsall (2007).

⁶² Münkler (2007: 5). See also Maier (2006: 7, 60). Peter Heather has recently made this economic argument specifically in the context of migration processes and demographics: Heather (2009: 1-9). See Canepa (2009) for a very clear contrast with Sassanian Persia, which existed on equal terms with Rome.

⁶³ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 27.5.7; Themistius, *Oratio* 10.135AD.

structures and fixed territories.⁶⁴ A paramount imperial aim of frontier action is always the safety and stability of the empire,⁶⁵ and unless non-Roman populations developed a social organisation capable of integrating with the Roman way of life, Rome could not guarantee her own frontier stability.⁶⁶

Barbarians were also integrated into the imperial system itself by the levying of troops as part of agreements with the Empire, although barbarian troops had always been part of imperial armies.⁶⁷ The story of the Alamannic soldier returning home on business whilst serving in the imperial bodyguard⁶⁸ is demonstrative in this respect. At least some Roman military items such as belt tips found in Alamannia in the fourth and fifth centuries could be interpreted as soldiers returning home from Roman service, although locally made moulds for the same items have been found.⁶⁹ Amory has demonstrated well how the Gothic military milieu in the fifth and six century Balkans contained hybrid linguistic, religious and military traits due to their integration into the imperial military.⁷⁰

The effect of contact with Rome on Germanic barbarians can be further tracked through settlement remains. Formerly quite simple unfortified northern villages with wooden buildings⁷¹ begin to show signs of centralisation. Fortified sites appear from the third century, such as the rebuilt La Tène *oppidum* at Glauberg in Alamannia which had some stone buildings and contained Roman coins dating from the third to fifth centuries. Hilltop sites such as Zähringer

⁶⁴ Wells (1999: 116-118).

⁶⁵ Münkler (2007: 85).

⁶⁶ Hanson (1989: 58).

⁶⁷ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 17.13.3; 28.5.4; 30.6.1; 31.10.17.

⁶⁸ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 31.10.3.

⁶⁹ Brather (2005: 152). See also Glad (2012) for the use by Gothic federate soldiers of segmental helmets and lamellar weapons originating from Byzantine workshops in a trans-Danubian context in the fifth and early sixth centuries. There is also archaeological evidence that Germanic barbarian federates helped man the fortifications at Justiniana Prima in the sixth century: Ivanišević (2012).

⁷⁰ Amory (1997: 277-320).

⁷¹ See e.g. Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 18.2.15 (Quadi and Marcomanni).

near Frieburg also appear in Germania in the fourth and fifth centuries as centralised, defensive positions and possibly local seats of power.⁷² Ammianus remarks upon coming across an Alamanni village in 357 which was built in the Roman fashion,⁷³ and the site of Cifer Pác has a mix of wooden and stone buildings with roof tiles marked with stamps from fourth century Roman military units.⁷⁴

Brather has documented an increasing homogeneity in Germanic burials in later graves. As mentioned above, all known chiefly graves are found well over 200km from the frontier region and contain numerous Roman goods such as bronze, silver and glass drinking vessels, coins and furniture. Therefore, Germanic elite status was expressed through Roman luxury goods. Some goods were Germanic imitations such as Roman pottery technology found in a production centre in Haarhausen (Thuringia) but this still demonstrates that self-representation and therefore the identity of Germanic elites was created and sustained via Roman symbolism.⁷⁵

Emerging, more highly developed political structures and hierarchies within barbarian groups close to the frontiers or within the frontier region itself clearly demonstrate the impact that Roman patronage, gift-giving and political intervention had over time. The larger, more organised and more troublesome Alamanni and Frankish confederacies which emerge at the very beginning of the fourth century appear to have been the result of processes begun between the late second and early third centuries among the smaller, more fragmented

⁷² Elton (1996: 105); Brather (2005:155-57).

⁷³ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 17.1.7.

⁷⁴ Elton (1996: 106-07); Whittaker (1994: 217). Cifer Pác and a number of other sites beyond the Danube in Moravia (Czech Republic) and Slovakia (Mušov-Burgstall, Oberleisburg, Stupava, Devin, Bratislava-Dúbravka, Milanovce, Stillfried and Niederleisand) have yielded mixed Roman-German material and building styles from the period of the Marcomannic Wars to the end of the fourth century. They have been interpreted as settlements of Quadi clients of Rome: Pitts (1987). Other stone walled buildings are found in barbarian settlements in the Ukraine, Romania and Moldova with a material culture which indicates the sites are probably Gothic: Curta (2005b: 197-198).

⁷⁵ Brather (2005: 147-149).

Germanic tribes recorded by Tacitus in the first century.⁷⁶ It could also work in the reverse when larger structures broke down under Roman pressure, producing smaller groups which then needed to find a different way to define themselves – the Wendish revolt could be seen in this way.⁷⁷ Some groups even appear to have reinvented pre-existing identities once these collapses had occurred.⁷⁸

The emergence of more defined leadership structures is quite clear within various groups of Germanic barbarians. Centralised leaders at first appear only in times of contact with the Empire characterized by stress – they are defined by the power they actually wielded rather than any established hierarchy.⁷⁹ There are many references to multiple Visigothic tribes⁸⁰ and several independent Visigothic chiefs aided Procopius against Rome in 364,⁸¹ but very soon afterwards, a larger scale confederacy under Athanaric emerged.⁸² However, once security and stability returned after settlement of Gothic groups in Moesia in 382, the confederate leader disappears, or at least assumes lesser importance and power, and individual tribal leaders again appear.⁸³ In a similar way, seven Alamanni kings and ten princes were present at Strasbourg in 357 and various kings ruling discrete territories are mentioned by Ammianus over the next two years.⁸⁴ Some later sources mention an overall Alamanni king. Furthermore, Ammianus' information about the Alamanni king Chnodomarius demonstrates that some Alamanni kings were more powerful

⁷⁶ Hedeager (1987: 133); Lee (1993: 26).

⁷⁷ Fredegar, 4.48, 68.

⁷⁸ Heather (1998) demonstrates this by taking the Heruli and (Ostro)Goths as case studies.

⁷⁹ Burns (1980: 51).

⁸⁰ E.g. Eunapius frg. 48.2.

⁸¹ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 26.10.3.

⁸² Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 26.6.11.

⁸³ Thompson (1988: 44); Themistius, *Orations* 16.210B.

⁸⁴ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 16.12.1-6, 23-26; 17.1, 10; 18.2. See also Burns (2003: 336-337) for stratification among the Quadi.

than others.⁸⁵ Florin Curta and Thomas Burns have demonstrated similar processes in relation to the Tervingi Goths⁸⁶ and Ostrogoths⁸⁷ respectively.

Therefore, the barbarian confederacy and the coalescence of certain groups was not necessarily a permanent, but rather temporary arrangements stimulated or destroyed by Roman intervention in certain circumstances which, over time, did lead to powerful Germanic groups emerging with more formalised leadership structures. Contact with Rome and the resulting centralisation of power in the hands of leaders who had contact with, and the support of Rome, had resulted in quantities of public property accumulating in private hands from the third century onwards, accompanied by the growth of private political power. In the *Passion of St. Saba*, the fact that Saba owns no private property is highlighted as an indicator that he was of no consequence in the socio-political order of the village, although this is also a well-used hagiographical trope. The influence of prestige goods may have produced relationships of economic and social dependence leading to surrender of land and livestock. Social and economic stratification would have followed. The surplus generated by ownership and control of land would have further consolidated power, particularly in a time where it seems that barbarian populations were on the rise.⁸⁸ As chieftainships began to become hereditary rather than merit based, political power and attendant wealth concentrated in fewer hands.⁸⁹

Burial evidence compliments the narrative of increased social stratification in Germanic tribes, with more wealth being concentrated in fewer graves from the third century onwards. It is probably no coincidence that the

⁸⁵ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 16.12.23-6 – Chnodomarius had actually been held as a hostage of the Empire and showed that influence by naming his son Serapio. See also Macrinus in the 370s (*Res Gestae* 19.4.2).

⁸⁶ Curta (2005b).

⁸⁷ Burns (1980: 29-56).

⁸⁸ Hedeager (1987: 138).

⁸⁹ Thompson (1988: 53-54); Brather (2005: 133).

first large-scale Germanic confederacies (Franks, Alamanni, Thuringii, Burgundians, Goths) emerge in the third and fourth centuries after the close of the Marcomannic Wars which had served to militarily, politically and psychologically galvanise the Germanic peoples in their relationship with each other and with Rome. Prestige goods appear to have been distributed to local petty chiefs by more powerful chiefs and there are good examples of this in Thuringia and in south-east Zealand in Denmark.⁹⁰

The level of integration of these groups into Roman power structures and cultural orbit meant that there was an increasing lack of distinction between Romans and barbarians on either side. Whittaker cites a particular kind of brooch shaped like a cross-bow and a dolphin buckle which was common to frontier societies along both sides of the Rhine and Danube from the early fifth century as a material culture correlate of this process. The brooches have also been found in assemblages associated with the intense contacts between Romanised frontier populations and the Sîntana-de-Mureş culture along the Danube.⁹¹ The adoption of Roman chip-carved decorations which began as Roman military belt fittings but were adapted on the frontier for fibulae and furniture were also part of new strategies for ethnic and social distinction in the border regions,⁹² as was the adoption of bracteates, medallions based on Roman coins and medals and worn as jewellery⁹³ - see Figures 5 and 6 on page 54.

Germanic burials became integrated with local populations, using the same graveyards without signs of disruption. The best example is the fifth century necropolis at Krefeld-Gellep at the Roman fort of Gelduba north of Cologne. There is continuity from Roman to Frankish periods from the mid-fourth century when Germanic styles appear and burial orientation changes to

⁹⁰ Hedeager (1987: 130-1).

⁹¹ Whittaker (1994: 216-17; 235).

⁹² Brather (2005: 168); Burns (1980: 31-32).

⁹³ Brather (2005: 153).

row graves. The change is not sudden, but gradual. The same is true of the cemetery at Frenouville (Normandy), which shows remarkable continuity from the late third to seventh centuries other than a change in the mode of burial and orientation of the graves sometime in the mid-fifth century.⁹⁴



Figure 5 - Late Roman chip-carving.
Reproduced from Burns (2009: 351).



Figure 6 - Gold bracteate, northern Germanic, 6th century, Gotland, Sweden (likely traded). ©Trustees of the British Museum.

The frontier therefore facilitated multiple and varied points of contact between the Roman Empire and the Germanic barbarians embedded within the imperial system. The effect that such an open and dynamic frontier had on these peoples occurred at a fundamental level, defining their own self-identity which then flowed back into the Empire, creating a two way process of acculturation and ethnogenesis, particularly at the level of local elites. The increasing contact and crossings of barbarians from the fourth century onwards

⁹⁴ Whittaker (1994: 235-239). See also the cemetery at Klosterneuburg in north-western Austria which shows that Romans and barbarians lived side by side well into the fifth century: Wilkes (2005: 162).

accelerated not only the development of barbarian societies but created a frontier society which was indistinguishable from those beyond it.⁹⁵

2.3 Framing Rome and the Sclavenes in Late Antiquity: The Narrative⁹⁶

Into this world came the Sclavenes, occupying those territories on the Lower Danube the Germanic tribes had left. Procopius first mentions Sclavenes raiding across the Danube in 530/1 but says they had already been doing so for several years.⁹⁷ In response, the *magister militum per Thraciam* began offensive attacks across the Danube in 531 for the first time since the Gothic Wars of the late 360s. He did so for three years before he was killed and “[t]hereafter the river became free for barbarians to cross at all times just as they wished...”⁹⁸ Sclavene raiding in the latter part of the 530s and into the 540s coincided with Justinian’s Gothic Wars in Italy, Sicily and Dalmatia and likely represents resources being redirected towards the West.⁹⁹

It is unclear whether the Sclavenes participated in the devastating Hunnic raids of 539/40,¹⁰⁰ but annual Sclavene raiding was significant after the Antes concluded a treaty with Rome in 545. Sclavenes crossed the Danube that

⁹⁵ Whittaker (1994: 223); Maier (2006: 139).

⁹⁶ See Appendix A for timeline.

⁹⁷ Procopius, *Wars* 7.14.2. Raids by the Antes are first mentioned in 518: Procopius, *Wars* 7.40.5-7. He also makes a general statement that Huns, Antes and Sclavenes invaded almost annually from the time Justinian took the throne: *Secret History* 18.20. See Appendix B.1.1.A and C.

⁹⁸ Procopius, *Wars* 7.14.1-6. See Appendix B.1.1.A.

⁹⁹ Jones (1964 vol. 1: 299); Curta (2001a: 76-77). A thorough narrative of the two periods of conflict is provided in Bury (1958 vol. 2: 151-291) and Jones (1964 vol. 1: 266-277, 285-294) based on the main sources (Procopius, *Wars* 5-8; Jordanes, *Getica* 307-314; various of Cassiodorus’ letters which detail the strain between Rome and Constantinople after the death of Theodahad and the imprisonment and murder of Amalasuentha e.g. *Letters* 11.13).

¹⁰⁰ Curta has raised the possibility given that Huns, Sclavenes and Antes are often grouped together in the sources: (2001a: 78-79). See e.g. Procopius, *Secret History* 18.20; 23.6 (Huns, Sclavenes and Antes – see Appendix B.1.1.C and D); Jordanes, *Romana* 388 (Bulgars, Sclavenes and Antes).

year¹⁰¹ and again every year between 548 and 551. They reached Dyrrachium in 548,¹⁰² and went through Illyricum and Thrace in 549, capturing the city of Topiros and killing many.¹⁰³ After coming uncomfortably close to Naïssus in 550, the Sclavenes were diverted into Dalmatia where they wintered with little resistance from either the Roman or Ostrogothic inhabitants.¹⁰⁴ The following year they crossed back over the mountains, joined another group and then split, one reaching the Long Walls of Constantinople and the other raiding through Illyricum. Both groups were able to return home with a large quantity of booty.¹⁰⁵

There are no independent Slavene raids recorded for the period between 552 and 577, although Slavene groups may have taken part in the massive Cutrigur and Utigur invasions of 568/9.¹⁰⁶ The Sclavenes only clearly come back into the picture once the Avars were established on the Hungarian Plain, the Langobards having migrated *en masse* from Pannonia into Italy in 568.¹⁰⁷ Possibly emboldened by the Avars' success,¹⁰⁸ Slavene raiding began again in 578, when Menander the Guardsman records a raid of 100,000 Sclavenes through Thrace and other areas.¹⁰⁹

The Avar khagan Bayan sent envoys to a Slavene leader named Daurentius around this time, the first such person recorded in the sources. Bayan's request for recognition of his overlordship was rebuffed and the envoys murdered, giving Bayan an excuse to enter into an alliance with

¹⁰¹ Procopius, *Wars* 7.13.26.

¹⁰² Procopius, *Wars* 7.29.2.

¹⁰³ Procopius, *Wars* 7.38.7-10. For the stereotypical elements of this episode, see Curta (2001a: 84-86).

¹⁰⁴ Procopius, *Wars* 7.40.31-32.

¹⁰⁵ Procopius, *Wars* 7.40.31-45.

¹⁰⁶ Slavene participation is mentioned by John Malalas (*Chronicle* 18.129) but not by Agathias (*Histories* 5.2.6), who was probably an eye-witness to the attack on Constantinople.

¹⁰⁷ Paul the Deacon, *Hist. Lang.* 2.7.

¹⁰⁸ Curta (2001a: 91).

¹⁰⁹ Menander the Guardsman frg. 20.2 (see Appendix B.1.4.B). John of Biclar may be recording the same event although he puts it in his entry for 576: see John of Biclar, *Chronicle* 41-42.

Justinian's successor Tiberius II in order to attack the Slavene territory across the Danube.¹¹⁰

In the early 580s, John of Ephesus records Slavene raiding through Greece and the areas surrounding Thessalonica and in Thrace.¹¹¹ A significant Avar presence recorded in Greece by John of Biclar and Evagrius¹¹² at around the same time may indicate that some groups were operating together.¹¹³ Avar power was becoming a serious threat at this point, even to strategic sites which had been re-fortified by Justinian only twenty years earlier. They captured Sirmium in 582, and the subsequent refusal by Maurice to pay an increased subsidy resulted in the sack of Singidunum and other Danubian cities in 584.¹¹⁴ A large army consisting of Slavenes and other barbarians under Avar orders besieged Thessalonica for a week in 586,¹¹⁵ and Slavene groups were making independent raids in the area two years later.¹¹⁶

Roman campaigns across the Danube were carried out in 593-4¹¹⁷ but were not decisive and Slavene raiding continued,¹¹⁸ including in raiding in Istria in early 600.¹¹⁹ Significant Avar activity also continued with raids in the north of Dalmatia in 597.¹²⁰ Roman offensives resumed in 602, and imperial

¹¹⁰ Menander the Guardsman frg. 21 (see Appendix B.1.4.C). Menander records the Romans ferrying 60,000 Avars across the Danube to torch Slavene villages somewhere in eastern Wallachia or western Moldavia. For the possible location, see Curta (2001a: 92).

¹¹¹ John of Ephesus, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.6.25. See also *Miracles of Saint Demetrius* I 12.107-13 which may be describing the same event.

¹¹² John of Biclar, *Chronicle* 53; Evagrius, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.10.

¹¹³ Curta (2001a: 92-95).

¹¹⁴ Theophylact Simocatta, *History* 1.3.1-4; 1.4.1-4. Theophylact states that the fall of Sirmium was covered in detail by Menander the Guardsman (Theophylact Simocatta *History* 3.5).

¹¹⁵ *Miracles of Saint Demetrius* I.13.117 (see Appendix B.1.7.B). The number given is 100,000 but is obviously exaggerated (see Chapter 1.3.1.8). See also Curta (2001a: 97-98) for the dating of the siege.

¹¹⁶ Theophylact Simocatta, *History* 3.4.7.

¹¹⁷ See Curta (2001a: 100) for the vexed dating of this event.

¹¹⁸ Theophylact Simocatta, *History* 7.2.1-10, 15.

¹¹⁹ Gregory the Great, *Letters* 10.15.

¹²⁰ Theophylact Simocatta 7.12.1 mentions an unknown town called Bonkeis and some forty unnamed fortified positions. Dzino has argued that in the context of the narrative, these locations were in the north of Dalmatia: Dzino (2010: 88). Whitby & Whitby also seem to support this conclusion saying it was part of a campaign towards the Adriatic/Ionian Gulf:

orders for the army to winter in Slavene territory was the catalyst for revolt under an officer named Phocus, who turned the troops around, besieged Constantinople, and overthrew Maurice. There seems to have been little Slavene activity in Roman territory until Heraclius came to power in 610, when Slavenes again raided through Istria.¹²¹ Throughout the following decade, there was a large Slavene presence in Greece including attacks on Thessalonica, Thessaly, the Greek Islands and Illyricum as well as parts of Asia.¹²² Isidore of Seville noted that the Slavs took Greece from Rome during Heraclius' reign.¹²³

Within a decade, Slavenes under the command of the Avar khagan took part in the last major offensive of the First Khaganate, an unsuccessful joint Persian-Avar assault on Constantinople in 626.¹²⁴ After the Avar defeat, conflict apparently broke out between Slavenes and Avars,¹²⁵ possibly a precursor to the revolt of the Wends. Fredegar's chronology suggests Samo's revolt occurred in 623/4,¹²⁶ but even if this is the case, Curta's assumption is reasonable that Samo would have taken advantage of the 626 defeat to consolidate his power.¹²⁷ In the following decades up to the close of the seventh century, more concrete Slavene groups begin to be mentioned across Slavene occupied territories, and the following centuries saw the emergence of some of the recognisable Slavic polities of the early Middle Ages such as Croats, Serbs, Sorbs, Moravians and Carantanians etc.¹²⁸

Whitby & Whitby (1988: 230 n 55). See also Gregory the Great, *Letters* 9.155 and 10.15 for Slavene activity in nearby Istria in 599/600 (see Appendix B.2.2.A and B).

¹²¹ Paul the Deacon, *Hist. Lang.* 4.40. See also George of Pisidia, *Heraclius* 2.75-8.

¹²² *Miracles of Saint Demetrius* II.1.179.

¹²³ Isidore of Seville, *Chronicon* (PL 83) col. 1065. See also *Chronicle of 754* 7.

¹²⁴ George of Pisidia, *Bellum Avaricum* 197-201; *Chronicon Paschale* p. 173-4.

¹²⁵ George of Pisidia, *Restitutio Crucis* 78-81; *Chronicon Paschale* p. 178-179.

¹²⁶ Fredegar 4.48, 68, 87.

¹²⁷ Curta (2001a: 109).

¹²⁸ E.g. The Wendish Kingdom of Samo apparently lasted thirty five years in the Thuringian marchlands (Fredegar 4. 48). Further south, two future dukes of Friuli received tribute from a "territory of the Slavs which is named Zeilia" in the 620s (Paul the Deacon, *Hist. Lang.* 4.38 – see

Appendix B.2.3.B), and fifty years later Paul mentions a son of a Friuli duke fleeing to “Carnuntum... to the nation of the Slavs.” (*Hist.Lang.* 5.22 – see Appendix B.2.3.D). Theophanes places a polity he calls *Sklavinia* in the hinterlands of Constantinople in the 650s (Theophanes Confessor p. 347) and in the area around Varna (Odessos) in modern Bulgaria in the 670s (Theophanes Confessor p. 359). The kingdom of the Rychines tribe led by Perbundos emerged in the vicinity of Thessalonica in the 660s and 70s and at times allied themselves with other nearby tribes, including Slavene groups settled in the Strymon Valley (*Miracles of Saint Demetrius* II. 3.219, 3.222, 4.231, 4.242, 4.254-255, 4.262, 4.268, 4.271-6; Theophanes Confessor p. 508).

Chapter 3

The Sclavenes

Having established a sense of the Roman relationship with northern barbarians in previous centuries and the general timeline of the Slavene arrival on the Lower Danube, our attention turns to the Sclavenes themselves in the sixth and seventh centuries.

3.1 Slavene Society in the Sixth and Seventh Centuries

The question of the homeland of the Sclavenes and the origin of the Slavic language has long been a matter of fierce nationalistic debate which is still not resolved.¹ A full exploration of the issue is beyond the scope of this thesis, but it has some relevance to the extent that the early unseen stages of Slavene society may have impacted on their subsequent course vis-à-vis Rome. It is reasonable to suppose from the written, archaeological and linguistic evidence that prior to their appearance in the sources, groups with some sort of proto-Slavic character occupied or moved into territory in the Pontic-Danubian region between the

¹ There is a large bibliography on this topic but for overviews, see Curta (2001a: 6-14); Barford 2001: 35-44). See also Gimbutas (1971: 58-62).

Lower Danube and the Don rivers north of the Black Sea. Sarmatian, Gothic and Hunnic tribes successively dominated a variety of multi-ethnic populations here from the first to the fifth century.² According to Jordanes, the Black Sea Goths under King Hermanaric subjugated the Venethi, including the Sclavenes and Antes, in the 350s.³ The Huns under Balamber in turn subjugated the Goths sometime before Hermanaric's death in 375.⁴ Shortly afterwards, Hermanaric's successor Vinitharius rebelled against Hunnic rule by attacking the neighbouring Antes, murdering their king Boz to prove his strength before ultimately being brought to heel by Balamber.⁵

Parts of Jordanes' story are suspect as to the particulars – Hermanaric is lifted from Ammianus Marcellinus⁶ and given a rather dubious Amal lineage to suit his purpose⁷ – but the surrounding information about the interplay between different ethnic populations is interesting. There is some hint here that largely undefined Slavic elements existed under Gothic and Hunnic dominance in the fourth century. Only later would it coalesce into a visible cultural *habitus* which could be recorded in the sources and also leave a traceable material culture correlate. In fact, these groups may have first been introduced to fighting from horseback in a Hunnic context.⁸ It is undeniable that the Sclavenes were significantly influenced by similar Avar methods of fighting in the sixth century, but Sclavenes were already being recruited as cavalry decades before the Avars appeared on the scene.⁹ There is also inferential evidence relating to how quickly raiding parties travelled and attacked, and how goods were likely transported, indicating that the Sclavenes were already

² Gimbutas (1971: 63).

³ Jordanes, *Getica* 116-120 (Appendix B.1.2.B).

⁴ Jordanes, *Getica* 129-130 (Appendix B.1.2.C).

⁵ Jordanes, *Getica*, 246-249 (Appendix B.1.2.D)

⁶ See Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 31.3.

⁷ Heather (1991: 57-58).

⁸ Barford (2001: 43).

⁹ See Procopius, *Wars* 5.27.1 for 1,600 Slavene and Antean cavalry recruited by Rome in 537.

employing horses in warfare prior to the Avar arrival.¹⁰ There is scant linguistic evidence of Slavic influence on the Hunnic language as well, with Jordanes recording the use of the Slavic word *strava* for Attila's funeral, but it is not particularly convincing.¹¹

Archaeological evidence supports this proposition. While some Goths must have stayed under Hunnic rule in a weakened state until 453, a significant number were pushed towards Roman territory and crossed the Danube into the Empire in 376.¹² The shift in power dynamics and local populations changed the demographics of the region as Gothic dominance subsided. The complex settlements of the Sântana de Mureş–Chernyakhov culture (large settlements of wooden post built houses with craft and metal-working manufacturing centres, ritual spaces and elite furnished inhumation burials) slowly disappeared from the region in the course of the late fourth and fifth centuries. Further north and west, the Kiev, Przeworsk and Wielback cultures associated with other Germanic and Sarmatian peoples also declined.¹³ Simpler, inter-related cultures characterised by undefended settlements of predominantly smaller, partially subterranean wattle and daub houses with a clay or stone oven set in one corner and grain storage pits essentially replaced the Germanic material cultures on the fringes of the Hunnic Empire – see Figures 7 and 8 on page 64.¹⁴

Simply or undecorated hand- and wheel-made pottery of the Prague and similar types (see Figures 9 and 10 on page 65) and flat cremation burials (often

¹⁰ The evidence is brought together in Curta (2015a).

¹¹ Gimbutas (1971: 99); Godja (1991: 10). See Jordanes, *Getica* 258. Gimbutas also suggests that the subject peoples Priscus of Panion came across as he was travelling through the Banat (western Romania and north-eastern Vojvodina) in 448 may have been Slavic. He refers generally to subject peoples of the Huns speaking their own languages as well as Hunnic, Latin or Gothic which is not particularly conclusive: see Priscus frg. 11.2.

¹² Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 31.3.1.

¹³ Barford (2001: 26).

¹⁴ While there are some instances of ground-level buildings (e.g. at Dulceana I in Wallachia), the majority are the sunken type: Curta (2001a: 277). See Kobyliński (1997) for uniformity between various locations.



Figure 7 - Excavated sunken house with stone oven in the corner.
Reproduced from Godja (1991: 19)

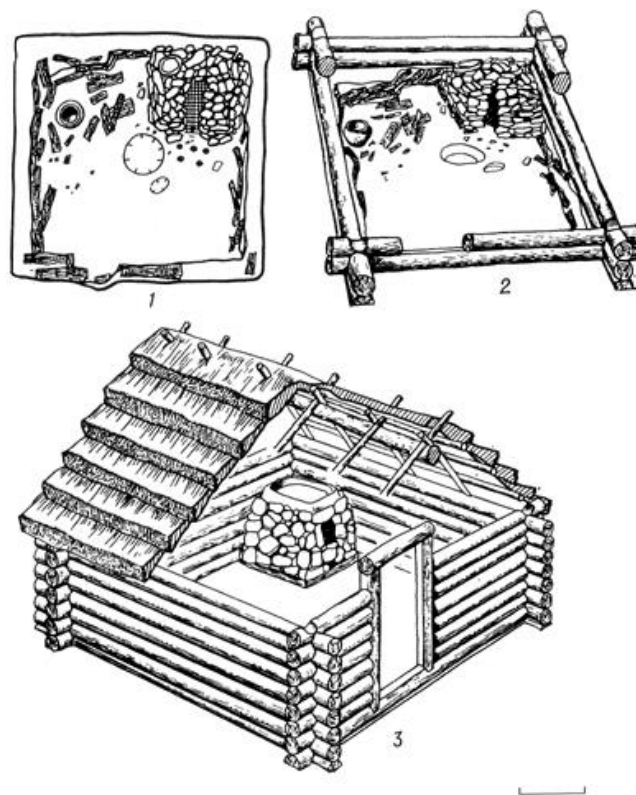


Figure 8 - Reconstructed sunken house line-drawing.
Reproduced from Barford (2001: 333).

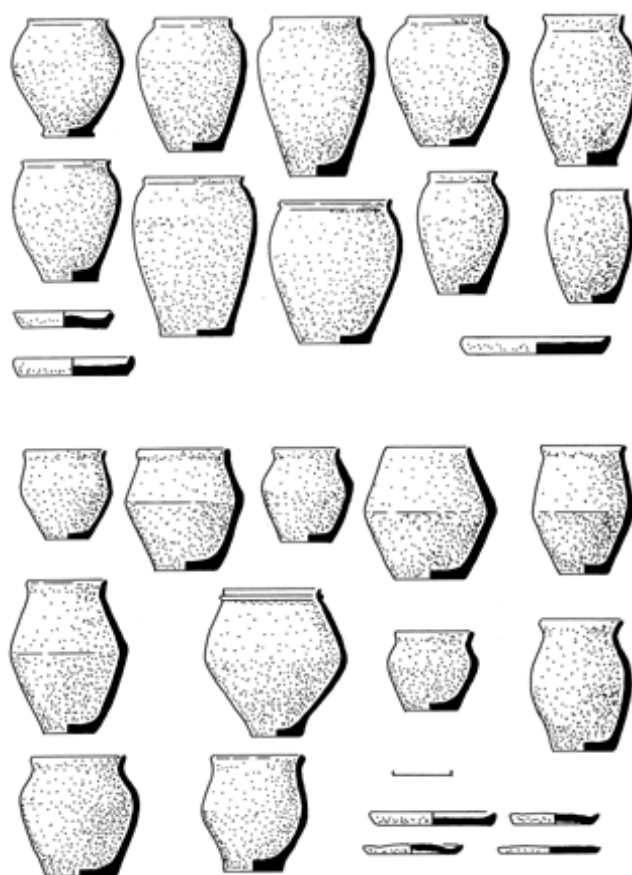


Figure 9 –Prague-Korčhak pottery (top) and Peňkovka pottery (bottom).
Reproduced from Barford (2001: 335).

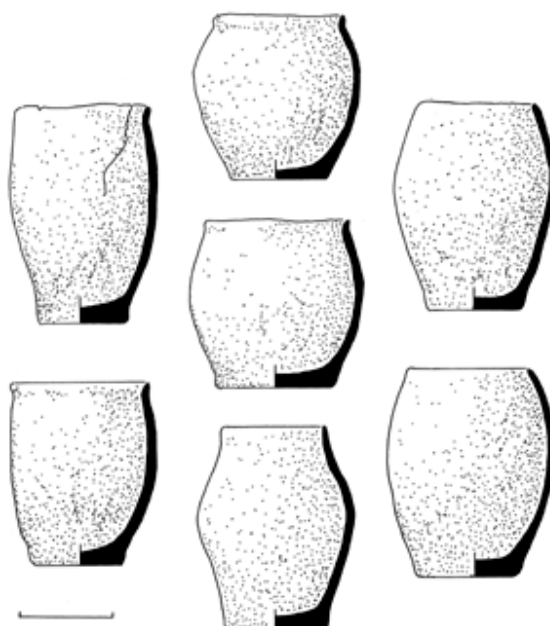


Figure 10 - Suceava-Șipot pottery. Reproduced from Barford (2001: 337).

in urns) are associated with the sites.¹⁵ There are also some instances of burrow burials.

By the reckoning of some, these new cultures appeared first in western Ukraine as early as the very late fourth century, gradually spreading west and south.¹⁶ On the basis of datable material such as coins and fibulae (and the resistance of the pottery to secure dating), Florin Curta has put forward a convincing argument that none of the “early” sites are in fact conclusively datable to before the sixth century. He does concede, however, that it is very likely that the settlements existed prior to the datable material being deposited.¹⁷ Some sites in Wallachia in Romania on the left bank of the Danube, such as Ciresanu (settlement), Dragosloveni (settlement) and Sărăta-Monteoru (cemetery) appear to be contemporaneous with the earliest sites in the western Ukraine based on (often singular) finds of late fourth and fifth century brooches, belt buckles and fibulae.¹⁸

The older Germanic cultures did not disappear completely and of course, the Ostrogoths ruled the general region between 454 and 489. There are a number of sites such as Botoșana (Moldavia), Sărăta-Monteoru (Wallachia) and Březno (Bohemia) which show cohabitation with what must have been local remnant Gothic, Gepid and Dacian populations.¹⁹ Other sites show short periods of overlapping cohabitation with peoples utilising Lombardic identity-markers in the first half of the sixth century.²⁰ By the mid-sixth century, the Ostrogoths were long gone and there is less evidence of intermixing with remnant populations, who had likely fully adopted the cultural *habitus* of the

¹⁵ The later but related Sukow-Dziedzice culture in Polabia and Pomerania (Poland) does not feature sunken huts but rather level “blockhouses”: Barford (2001: 65).

¹⁶ Barford, (2001: 25); Kobyliński (2013: 528-529).

¹⁷ Curta (2001a: 276-307, 309); (2010).

¹⁸ Barford (2001: 42).

¹⁹ Gimbutas (1971: 111-112, 122).

²⁰ Godja (1991: 12).

Prague-Korčhak culture by that stage. The variant Suceava-Șipot culture which developed at this time in Romania is a good example.²¹

Attila's empire was at its height in the 430s to the mid-50s and if the genesis of the Korčhak-Peňkovka-Koločhin complex and related cultures can be tentatively put into the fifth century, then the Hunnic Empire could have affected the development of Slavene groups in two ways. Firstly, what was recognized by the Byzantines as a Slavene common *habitus* may have developed amongst largely unrelated groups in the face of a weakened Gothic presence on one hand and Hunnic power on the other.²² The exact role of the Huns in this equation is unclear, but even if these cultures only existed on the fringes and did not come under direct Hunnic rule, Hunnic hegemonic power in the area may still have been sufficient stimuli.

Secondly, the subsequent collapse of the Hunnic Empire allowed for the emergence or re-emergence of groups such as the Ostrogoths and the Hunnic Cutrigurs and Utigurs in the last half of the fifth century. It is possible that the development and spread of the material cultures associated with the Slavenes intensified in this period in the same way, such that it became visible by the sixth century in the archaeological record and in the written sources. Indeed, Procopius relates the story of the migration of a group of Heruli in 512 along the Middle Danube who went through "all the nations of the Sclaveni" and then crossed "a large tract of barren country."²³ The reference has been interpreted not as a de-populated area (possibly Silesia) but rather one without a noticeable "supra-local military-political organisation" which was probably part of the Slavene *habitus*.²⁴

²¹ Barford (2001: 56).

²² Barford (2001: 43); Kobyliński (2013: 529); Gračanin (2013: 44-45). Cf. Heather (2009: 394) who does not believe any Slavic groups had significant involvement in the Hunnic Empire.

²³ Procopius, *Wars* 6.15.2.

²⁴ Urbańczyk (2002: 259).

By the mid-sixth century, Jordanes located the Sclavenes in densely forested swamplands between the source of the Vistula, the Dniester and Noviodunum.²⁵ Jordanes' location seems reasonable considering the Slavene point of entry into the Empire on the Lower Danube, and accords with sixth century settlements in western Ukraine, Romania, Moldavia and Bulgaria. By 537, Sclavenes and Antes recruited as cavalry to aid Belisarius against the Ostrogoths were described as "settled above the Ister River not far from its banks."²⁶

Procopius describes the Sclavenes and Antes as living a harsh life which preserved "the Hunnic character in all its simplicity."²⁷ Their hovels were set quite a way apart from each other and they constantly changed abode. From this fact Procopius derives an ancient name *Spori* to describe the sporadic way in which they moved about their vast territory to the north of the river.²⁸ They were tall, ruddy and filthy and worshipped a lightening god as well as rivers and nymphs. Their government is called a democracy by Procopius and "everything... whether for good or for ill is referred to the people." He demonstrates this in action when the Antes all meet together to discuss Justinian's offer of a treaty in 545. In war, they went on foot carrying small shields and javelins and were often bare-chested.²⁹

About two generations later, the *Strategikon* records Slavene settlements within about 20 miles of the river bank in dense woods. The houses were set in close rows with no space between them together with livestock and millet

²⁵ Jordanes, *Getica* 34-36. See Appendix B.1.2.A.

²⁶ Procopius, *Wars* 5.27.1. See also Menander frg. 21 (Appendix B.1.4.C) – in 578/9, the Avar khagan Baian was able to set upon the Slavene settlements (in Wallachia or Moldavia) immediately after being ferried across the Danube.

²⁷ Cf. Priscus of Panion frg. 11.2 who describes anything but a simple society, despite the Huns living in tents. Procopius, however, was relying much more heavily on Hunnic stereotypes and therefore likely could not appreciate the nuances Priscus did as an eyewitness to Hunnic society.

²⁸ Procopius, *Wars* 7.14.29. See Appendix B.1.1.A.

²⁹ Procopius, *Wars* 7.14.22-30. See Appendix B.1.1.A.

stores. Multiple exits were fashioned into the area to facilitate hasty retreats to nearby settlements in times of attack. A hardy and populous people, they lived in farming communities without government and were fiercely independent. In war they had no battle formation or discipline owing to their lack of government and preferred guerrilla tactics which could be carried out from the safety of the trees. Each warrior carried two short javelins and a wooden bow with poisoned arrows.³⁰

By and large, these two sources, which are the ones most likely to contain relatively accurate information, agree with each other and the archaeological evidence. The early settlement archaeology of the Prague-Korčhak complex, of which the village of Korčhak itself is a good example, yield five to fifteen sunken houses over areas of about 0.5 ha built on low river terraces at a distance of 10-15 meters apart from each other as described by Procopius. Associated pottery types were also found at these sites, as are small cremation cemeteries. The Peňkovka sites of Lug I and II are similar.³¹ Some slightly larger settlements occasionally stretched for as long as a kilometre along the rivers and are found on the Middle Dnieper, Moldavia, the Lower Danube in Romania and north-eastern Bulgaria.³² Settlements often occur in clusters not more than 5-10km away from each other, particularly in the Ukraine.³³

Both Prague-Korčhak and Peňkovka settlement sites show relatively short durations of habitation indicated by the very thin cultural stratigraphic layers and the relatively flimsy manner in which the houses were constructed, allowing for about a decade of habitation at most.³⁴ This fits the Slavene

³⁰ *Strategikon* 11.4. See Appendix B.1.2. See also Menander the Guardsman frg. 21 (Appendix B.1.4.C) which also mentions Sclavenes running away to hide in the woods when attacked.

³¹ Barford (2001: 63).

³² There are also over twenty such sites in Western Slovakia although some date to the seventh and eighth centuries: Gimbutas (1971:81-82, 111, 117).

³³ Kobylíński (1997: 108).

³⁴ Gimbutas (1971: 87-88); Barford (2001: 39, 54).

character as semi-nomadic farmers who moved around within their own territory from time to time in search of productive farming land. Procopius noted that their way of living reminded him of the Huns, reinforcing the argument made above that the Hunnic Empire was an important factor in the development of what Byzantines recognised as the Slavene way of living.

The fact that both Procopius and the *Strategikon* state that the Slavenes had no government, or in Procopius' case a democracy, has generated a lot of debate and is a central concern of this thesis. Generally speaking, the material cultures associated with the Slavenes (and Antes) leave very few discernible traces of socio-political differentiation until the mid-ninth century.³⁵ Centralised positions or strongholds like the ones found in Germania in the third to fifth centuries do not appear until the later seventh century in the northern Balkans and westwards towards the Elbe.³⁶ Most of the artefacts uncovered within the Slavene settlements are utilitarian, simple and generally uniform in character, particularly the pottery. Farming tools such as ploughshares, hoes and sickles are common enough finds as are animal bones of mainly pigs, cattle and chickens.³⁷ Very few luxury or iron goods are found apart from farm equipment and there was a reliance on wood instead.³⁸ All these findings are consistent with the society without visible intra-societal differentiations found in the sources.

There is however, some evidence of relatively unrecognisable elites and very low levels of stratification within these small communities. Pleterski has argued that archaeological evidence of the division of farming land indicates a stratification which existed either prior to Slavene settlement south of the

³⁵ Heather (2009: 436).

³⁶ Barford (2001: 67, 71). See also Godja (1991: 44-57). The stronghold of Wogastisburg mentioned by Fredegar as the site of a three day battle between Samo's Wends and Austrasian forces is yet to be found and may in fact not be of Slavic origin anyway: see Fredegar 4.68 (Appendix B.2.1.B).

³⁷ Barford (2001: 154-157).

³⁸ Barford (2001: 163).

Danube (sixth century) or almost immediately afterwards (seventh and eighth centuries). His evidence is yet to be replicated across more than one archaeological site and his methodology seems infected with a nationalistic desire to claim early origins for later Slavic social structures.³⁹ His research is therefore of very limited value at this stage.

‘Slavic’ bow fibulae of various types found in assemblages associated with Slavene settlements (and some buried hoards) date from 500 to the 720s, with heavier occurrences from the second part of the sixth century – see Figures 11 and 12 overleaf. While they seem not to be a Slavic development *per se* (several styles appear instead to have emanated from the Crimea and from Mazuria in south-eastern Poland rather than the eastern Carpathians), they were still utilised by Slavene communities as social identity markers. There is some evidence of local production, such as the mould found at Bernashivka (Ukraine). Importantly, other than the buried hoards, such as the famous one at Martynivka, only singular or paired fibulae have been found per settlement on the Lower Danube, indicating that they were most likely a restricted marker of social prestige and identity for the women who wore them.⁴⁰

³⁹ Pleterski (2013). See also Curta (2015b) and chapter 1 n 46.

⁴⁰ Following Curta’s dating reassessment of Werner’s types: Curta (2001: 247-275). See also Curta (2013a); Curta & Gândilă (2013).



Figure 11. Fingered Slavic bow fibula, late 6th – 7th century
Romania (Suceava-Șipot Culture)
©Trustees of the British Museum.



Figure 12. Slavic bow fibula
late 6th – 7th century
Martynivka, Ukraine (Peňkovka Culture)
©Trustees of the British Museum.

Some communal feasting also appears to have taken place which may have conferred prestige on those who performed the associated ritual acts, or it may simply have reinforced the sense of community within settlements.⁴¹ Florin Curta's analysis of clay pans found on Slavene sites dating from the sixth and seventh century associated with the "communal front region" of the settlements show that some form of ritual eating of flat loaves of bread occurred in that space – see Figure 13 overleaf. As the pans only account for 3-4% of the ceramics found and are not found in all settlements, these acts were not an everyday activity and were obviously of some social importance.⁴²

⁴¹ For ritual feasting in other "barbarian" contexts see e.g. Effros (2002b).

⁴² See Curta (2001a: 276-307).



Figure 13 - Examples of clay pans found on sixth and seventh century sites.
Reproduced from Curta (2001: 296).

The use of the clay pans and the popularity of the Slavic bow fibula as an identity marker in the second part of the sixth century dovetails tantalisingly with the names of Sclavene leaders appearing in the written sources during the raids of the late 570s and 580s when the Sclavene groups seemed to have become stronger in their military organisation.⁴³ Justinian's fortifications had also been in place for some two decades by that stage. The names of four Sclavene leaders including a king are recorded, and the *Strategikon* states that in the 590s the Sclavenes had "many kings" who were always at odds with one another. It is quite clear from the written evidence that none of these individuals exercised the form of power that the Germanic confederate leaders or even local Germanic chieftains had in earlier centuries, and that their roles were functionally restricted.

These men were not chiefs. The sources show no evidence that they exercised integrated control of the economy, military force and unitary ideology,⁴⁴ and they certainly did not exist within "redistributional societies

⁴³ Barford (2001: 58).

⁴⁴ Curta (2001a: 318); Barford (2001: 125).

with a permanent central agency of coordination” with a potential for further rapid stratification and socio-political sophistication.⁴⁵ That sort of leadership much more closely accords with the nature of the Germanic confederacies.

The true nature of Slavene leadership behind these named men is most usefully understood when viewed through the lens of the big-men/great-men concept.⁴⁶ A big-man was a leader within a society without a strong social hierarchy whose position was based on personal influence, military achievement and wealth rather than an inherited position. They also organised community and ritual feasting, which was shown above to have been part of Slavene community life. Pseudo-Caesarius in fact states that Slavene leaders were often killed during feasts, showing a direct link between Slavene leaders and feasting as well as identifying feasting as an important site of competition between leaders.⁴⁷

Great-men on the other hand derived authority primarily from military self-achievement without the attendant control of wealth.⁴⁸ For both big-men and great-men, authority is confined to times of conflict and defence of communities and can be exercised by many different individuals at once. Authority is never permanent and is based more on personal prestige and dominant personalities.⁴⁹ Curta has suggested that Slavene society combined elements of chiefdoms, big-men and great-men,⁵⁰ but the stronger evidence more comfortably fits a combination of big-men and great-men.

Slavene leaders usually occur in the sources in the context of warfare or rebellion. Ardagastus and Peiragastus, contemporaries operating in the 590s, were both military leaders of some kind. Theophylact calls Peiragastus a “tribal

⁴⁵ Service (1971: 134); Haldon (1993: 213).

⁴⁶ The concept was first articulated in Sahlins (1963) in relation to Melanesian and Polynesian political and military structures.

⁴⁷ Extracted in Curta (2001a: 326): συνεχώς ἀναιρούντες συνεστιώμενοι ἢ συνοδεύοντες τὸν σφῶν ἡγεμόνα καὶ ἀρχοντα. See Riedinger (1969) for original Greek edition.

⁴⁸ Dzino (2014b: 130); Curta (2001a: 328); Sahlins (1963).

⁴⁹ Barford (2001: 125).

⁵⁰ Curta (2001a: 328-332).

leader”⁵¹ but also a “brigadier,”⁵² a term he uses for Roman military leaders such as Alexander, a commander under the *magister militum*.⁵³ Ardagastus “had... [a] train [of] great hordes of Sclavenes” and a gaggle of prisoners together with “splendid booty.”⁵⁴ He also had a specific territory.⁵⁵ The “king” Musocius, another contemporary, had “subjects” and the use of the term *rex* may imply an attendant territory.⁵⁶ Ardagastus and Musocius both had some sort of accumulated wealth and territory and the ability to speak on behalf of their “subjects” which was also the case for Daurentius, the leader mentioned by Menander.⁵⁷ These were big-men. Peiragastus on the other hand was most likely strictly a military leader i.e. a great-man.

The “kings” mentioned in the *Strategikon* were most likely big-men or great-men as well. Their inability to be controlled by Roman gifts makes more sense in this context. Their influence within their communities was built upon a different base than that of a true king or chief. Wealth did play a part in the status of big-men but was not utilised in a redistributive way, nor did it constitute the entirety of his power-base. It is rather more likely that it was hoarded or displayed. In a material culture with little visible socio-political differentiation, the ritual feasting and singular prestige items such as Slavic fibulae visible in the archaeological remains are the closest extant correlates of these leaders. It may also have extended to the distribution of agricultural surplus among the community (grain for communal feasting?) rather than actual prestige goods in the more usual sense.⁵⁸

⁵¹ Theophylact Simocatta, *History* 7. 4.13 (Appendix B.1.6.E).

⁵² Theophylact Simocatta, *History* 7. 5.4 (Appendix B.1.6.F).

⁵³ See also Theophylact Simocatta, *History*, 1.12.1; 1.14.5; 1.15.2; 2.3.1; 2.4.1; 2.10.8; 2.12.7; 7.3.6 for other uses of the same term to refer to Roman captains.

⁵⁴ Theophylact Simocatta, *History* 1.7.5 (Appendix B.1.6.A).

⁵⁵ Theophylact Simocatta, *History* 6.7.5 (Appendix B.1.6.B).

⁵⁶ Theophylact Simocatta, *History* 6. 9.1 (Appendix B.1.6.C).

⁵⁷ Menander the Guardsman frg. 21 (Appendix B.1.4.C).

⁵⁸ Barford (2001: 126).

Leadership structures which expressed themselves in this way complimented the un-stratified and agricultural foundation of the Sclavene *habitus*. Thus, the Sclavenes lacked centralisation but could be organised by individual military leaders into raiding bands.⁵⁹ The activities of these leaders show that the Sclavene experience had at least two levels – that of the overall common material culture, and that of singular or localised groups (and leaders) who acted according to their own situation.⁶⁰

A final point to be made regarding leadership is that foreign leaders sometimes utilised their more permanent forms of power and military expertise within Sclavene populations in order to achieve their political goals. The Lombard Hildigis certainly did this with his small band of Sclavene followers in his challenge to the Lombardic throne in the 540s. The Frankish merchant Samo could also be seen in this way. It is probably no accident that his followers formed the first Slavic “kingdom” under a leader more familiar with hierarchical forms of authority and wealth redistribution.⁶¹

The Sclavenes simply did not follow the Germanic model of socio-political organisation or development during this time, and despite being present on the Danubian frontier for over a hundred years before the 626 loss at Constantinople, the weak elite status visible within these communities was not predominantly (if at all) based on Roman cultural influence and prestige goods. This matter is at the heart of this thesis and is discussed below.

⁵⁹ Liebschuetz (2007: 110).

⁶⁰ Brachmann (1997: 27).

⁶¹ On this concept, see Urbańczyk (2002). He also explicitly links the ability of Sclavene communities to be exploited in this way to the Avar-Sclavene relationship – see Chapter 4.3 below.

3.2 The Sclavenes and Rome

The *Strategikon* contains two brief passages in relation to how Rome dealt with the Sclavenes during Maurice's campaigns in 593-4 and 601-2, saying, "[t]hey are completely faithless and have no regard for treaties, which they agree to more out of fear than by gifts" and "...it is not difficult to win over some of them by persuasion or by gifts... to attack the others..."⁶² These methods are part of the identifiable toolkit the Empire utilised when dealing with its frontiers as discussed in chapter 2.2.2. Apart from these two generalised passages however, there is no record of Sclavenes being allies of the Empire or being paid subsidies under any treaty except when some Slavene groups were subsumed under the First Avar Khaganate.⁶³ As previously stated, the archaeological evidence also shows that Roman prestige goods simply did not assume the same social importance or play the same role as it had in various Germanic barbarian groups in previous centuries. Even everyday Roman goods do not feature heavily in Slavene settlement finds.

There are of course instances of Slavene-Roman contact in the written sources, and it could scarcely be avoided given their proximity and Slavene raiding activities. The episode of the phoney Chilbudius in 531 when some Sclavenes tried to ransom a man parading as the slain *magister militum* demonstrates a relatively easy crossing into Roman territory and presumably some command of Latin and/or Greek to complete the transaction.⁶⁴ 1,600 Slavene and Antean cavalry were recruited by Rome in 537⁶⁵ and mercenaries served at the siege of Auximum in 539/40 A.D from whom Procopius likely got

⁶² *Strategikon* 11.4 (Appendix B.1.5).

⁶³ Curta (2001a: 82-83).

⁶⁴ Procopius, *Wars* 7.14.7-20. Barford (2001: 30). See also Curta (2015b: 288-290) for other (mostly later) examples of bilingual Sclavenes.

⁶⁵ Procopius, *Wars* 5.27.1.

his information.⁶⁶ Agathias also mentions a Slavene soldier named Saurunas serving in the Roman army during the Utigur and Cutrigur attack on Constantinople in 558/9.⁶⁷ What is striking about these examples is that the recruitment seems to have been done only in an individual capacity and never as part of an agreement between the Empire and any Slavene group. The examples are not particularly numerous either.

Evidence of trade is similarly scarce. Small-scale finds of Roman coins dating from the reign of Anastasius I onwards reappear north of the Danube in modern-day Romania, Moldavia and the Ukraine after a significant break and may indicate small-scale trading. There is nothing to indicate how long these coins had been in circulation when they were deposited,⁶⁸ but Curta postulates that the lower value coin hoards represent small grain sales to soldiers manning the frontier.⁶⁹ The south-north flow of Roman gold *solidi* into the Baltic region through Central Europe is traceable between 395 and 518, but none of it appears to have come to the Slavenes themselves despite most likely having to pass through their territory first.⁷⁰ A distinct lack of Roman coins on both sides of the Danube in the aftermath of Justinian's fortification project indicates an economic closure of the frontier zone.⁷¹ As was shown in chapter 2, trade had been very important in the transformative processes of the frontier and the fact that the economic dimension of the frontier during this time became more of a linear boundary than a zone of interaction meant that it could not function as it normally did, further undercutting any sort of cultural influence the Empire may have been able to exert on Slavene groups. The significant increase of coins and coin hoarding north of the Danube following the dry period between

⁶⁶ Procopius, *Wars* 6.26.16-22.

⁶⁷ Agathias, *Histories* 4.20.4 (Appendix B.1.3).

⁶⁸ Curta (2001a: 238 n 18, 341).

⁶⁹ Curta (2001a: 361).

⁷⁰ Barford (2001: 54). The dovetail of the halting of the flow of *solidi* in 518 with the appearance of the Antes on the Danube in Procopius is perhaps a little too neat.

⁷¹ Barford (2001: 52); Curta (2001a: 176ff).

535 and the 570s might indicate that renewed Slavene raiding at this time was a response to this economic closure.⁷² If this is a correct assertion, perhaps the inferred Slavene desire for Roman coinage was connected with the need for the big-men and great-men leaders who also emerged at this very time to prove both their military prowess and accumulate the wealth necessary to elevate their position.

The Baltic amber trade into Central Europe and Rome largely stops in the Danubian region in the sixth and seventh centuries and is not associated with Slavene material cultures. Whether or not the amber trade was actually disrupted by the presence of the Slavenes as is sometimes argued,⁷³ it seems that the prestige value of amber held very little appeal for Slavene groups. Amber finds at this time are largely concentrated to the north of the Middle Danube in Avar assemblages, as well as in Lithuania, the Crimea, and further east at the foot of the Urals on the Middle Volga. The local communities in all these regions relied heavily on prestige goods including amber as social markers.⁷⁴

Settlements in Wallachia and Moldavia do show more intense Roman contact, obviously because of the proximity to the Danubian frontier – East Roman influences are shown through small finds of fibulae, star-shaped earrings and amphorae.⁷⁵ Some Christian artefacts such as Menas flasks for holy water and Latin and Maltese pectoral crosses worn as brooches, necklaces or earrings have been found in these regions in sixth and seventh century contexts.⁷⁶ However, even if there were Christian communities north of the Danube either within Slavene settlements or under Avar overlordship, they

⁷² See Curta (2001a: 169-181).

⁷³ Barford (2001: 83).

⁷⁴ See Curta (2007b).

⁷⁵ Barford (2001: 48-49).

⁷⁶ See Curta (2005c).

were not large and do not seem to have made an overly big impact on Sclavene society at this time.

No Roman missions or even independent attempts at either wholesale or elite conversion among the Sclavenes are recorded prior to the ninth century. On the other hand, such activity is recorded in the case of Ulfila's fourth century mission to the Goths, while a large group of Alans were converted, possibly by Martin of Tours, also in the fourth century.⁷⁷ The Heruli leader in 535 was required to convert to Christianity as part of the treaty with Rome when they were installed to fight the Gepids in Singidunum.⁷⁸ The same condition was placed on the Bulgar leader Kovrat in 619, and some attempt also seems to later have been made to convert the Khazars in the eighth and ninth centuries by the same Byzantine missionaries who eventually converted various Slavic peoples in the Balkans.⁷⁹ The Heraclius story of the Croat and Serb migration in the *DAI* states that they were required to convert in order for Heraclius to let them into Dalmatia and to secure their loyalty to Byzantium.⁸⁰ Although the story itself is not true, it does show that Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus continued to see it as the mission of the Byzantine Empire to bring barbarian groups into the imperial orbit by conversion to Christianity.⁸¹ The story of the Heruli leader and of Kovrat show that this attitude also prevailed in the sixth and seventh centuries. Importantly, a key part in each scenario is friendly relations with the Empire secured by treaty, something the Sclavenes never had.⁸² Walter Pohl has in fact argued that a lack of a Christian

⁷⁷ Fortunatus, 2.287-291. On the conversion of the Alans, see Bachrach (1973: 75-76).

⁷⁸ Procopius, *Wars* 6.14.36.

⁷⁹ See Obolensky (1971: 62, 175); Haldon (1997: 47); Noonan (1992: 114). Other possible instances include the conversion of an Utigur leader named Gordas in 527 under the auspices of Justinian and a mission by an Armenian bishop named Karustat to the north of the Caucasus to convert Huns: see Obolensky (1971: 60-61); Golden (1992: 106-107). On the later conversions of Slavic peoples by SS Cyril and Methodius, see Dvornik (1970); Tachiaos (2001); Betti (2013).

⁸⁰ *DAI* 31-32. On this, see Curta (2010b); Dzino (2014b).

⁸¹ On this generally, see Collins (1991: 200-236).

⁸² Curta has argued that the lack of Roman or Byzantine missionary activity amongst Sclavene populations shows that no political gains were expected to arise from such missions: Curta

superstructure among sixth to eighth century Slavene groups meant that they could not form any kind of powerful leadership, and that any emerging forms were thus territorially and institutionally limited.⁸³

What this evidence of scant cultural and economic contact between Slavene groups and the Empire reveals is that the complex frontier system outlined in section 2.2 no longer existed by the sixth century. Roman rural society contracted quite sharply as the traditional economic markets north of the Danube largely disappeared with the Germanic barbarians. Archaeological evidence shows that buildings associated with imperial administration were gradually abandoned and that rural Balkan settlements moved very close to, or even inside of, city walls. Churches and buildings previously used for imperial administration were often divided into smaller living spaces. Good archaeological examples of this can be found in Justiniana Prima, Iatrus and Nicopolis ad Istrum.⁸⁴

The Danube frontier became much more like a territorial and military boundary rather than any sort of broad zone of interaction, even going so far as complete economic closure. This was truly significant given the central role previously played by the frontier in fostering and monitoring trade. As such, it was simply not possible for the Roman frontier, previously the main vehicle of Roman cultural power, to play a large (if any) role in influencing Slavene society.

(2005c: 181-219). However, given that historically the Empire had invested in the politically stabilising power of Christianisation amongst barbarians on the frontier as a normal part of their policy coupled with the real threat posed by the Slavenes (see the narrative in Chapter 2.3), this argument is not entirely convincing.

⁸³ Pohl (2003b: 571).

⁸⁴ See Bavant (2007) – Justiniana Prima; von Bülow (2007) – Iatrus; Whittow (2007) – Nicopolis ad Istrum. See also the survey of various sites by Curta who notes the same pattern across much of the Balkans: Curta (2001a: 121-189), (2001b) and (2013). See also Dunn (1994); Harris (1999); Burns & Eadie (2001) Cf. n. 32 on page 43 regarding the same process of demographic contraction and change in Dalmatia.

The Eastern Roman and Early Byzantine Empires only ever treated the Sclavenes as enemies. In a collective sense (as opposed to recruited soldiers), Procopius always classes them as such and the narrative of Roman action (or inaction) in a policy context confirms this. It was the Antes, not the Sclavenes, who were approached by Justinian for a treaty, likely as a means of defence not just against the Huns but against the Sclavenes. In this sense at least the Sclavenes were part of normal imperial policy, just never as allies. The subsequent fortification of the Danube was specifically in response to Slavene as well as Utigur and Cutrigur raiding, but was not accompanied by any form of diplomacy; Curta sees this as major change in imperial policy.⁸⁵

After the fortifications stopped being effective in the 570s, Maurice in the 590s launched offensive attacks over the Danube as recorded by the *Strategikon*. The afore-mentioned attempts to buy off the “kings” were largely assumed to (and evidently did) fail judging by the raiding activity at the time. This would not be surprising if Roman prestige goods continued to lack value in Slavene society. Roman gold may not have held enough worth to buy their alliance and was rarely used by the Sclavenes even when huge amounts must have been pouring into the eastern Carpathian region once Rome started to pay tribute to the Avars. Conversely, another explanation could be that a new generation of elites coming from a slightly more stratified society due to Roman and Avar contact over time could have required *more* gold than Rome was prepared to give. This might also help explain the renewed raiding after 570. A story in Theophylact is interesting in this respect. Around the year 600, three Slavene travellers were on their way to Avar territory in order to refuse a request for alliance which had been accompanied by lavish gifts: “they accepted the gifts but refused... the alliance...”⁸⁶ Theophylact says the reason for the refusal was because the distance was too far. This obviously plays into the trope of the

⁸⁵ Curta (2001c: 76).

⁸⁶ Theophylact Simocatta, *History* 7.2.10-16.

faithless barbarian, but it also ties in with the episode in the *Strategikon* (which was not concerned with literary tropes) where either little persuasive value was placed by Sclavenes on prestige goods and Roman coins, or the Sclavenes felt the payment was not high enough. Interestingly, they came into Roman territory because they had heard that the Empire was very wealthy.

There are instances of higher value, usually silver goods of Byzantine origin or inspiration being deposited in hoards north of the Danube, including plate-ware, drinking vessels and jewellery such as the Martynovka treasure. The majority of hoards that can more firmly be attributed to Sclavenes usually date from the latter part of the seventh century.⁸⁷ Hoards from the turn of the seventh century are more likely to be associated with Avar assemblages despite the presence of so-called Slavic bow fibulae. These include more military items such as bronze helmets and military belt buckles which are much more indicative of the Avar warrior elite. The Avar hoards fit squarely within the context of competitive conspicuous consumption of prestige goods⁸⁸ which had a similar purpose to the lavish furnished inhumations of Germanic societies. In this way, the Avar elite represented their social status, wealth and power through Byzantine (or local imitation) goods. This is something Sclavene groups did not do.

Curious amongst all the evidence are the references in the written sources to Sclavene treasure. When he attacked the Sclavenes for Tiberius II in 582, the Avar khagan Baian was greedy for the gold the Sclavenes had acquired during their Balkan raids.⁸⁹ John of Ephesus also suggests that the Sclavenes were in search of gold, silver, weapons and horses⁹⁰ and the Sclavene leader Ardagastus captured “splendid booty” during his raids.⁹¹ The groups raiding

⁸⁷ Barford (2001: 163).

⁸⁸ See Curta (2001a: 208-226).

⁸⁹ Menander the Guardsman frg. 21 (Appendix B.1.4.C).

⁹⁰ John of Ephesus, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.6.25.

⁹¹ Theophylact Simocatta, *History* 1.7.5 (Appendix B.1.6.A).

through Thrace and Illyricum in 550 also made off with a large amount of booty. Such piles of treasure and booty, however, are simply not borne out in the associated material remains.

The idea of Sclavene leaders as big-men is interesting in this context. The wealth they might have controlled had value in its display and hoarding, not its redistribution. As suggested above, communal feasting, display of Slavic bow fibulae and distribution of agricultural surplus are probably correlates of the display aspect. But if more traditional prestige items were also collected as military booty or as payments for failed attempts at alliance and then hoarded and controlled by these men, it is not as likely that traces of it would appear in the material evidence amongst the everyday items of the community. It would have been kept together and therefore found (or not found) as a hoard, either because of collection patterns or as part of practices of conspicuous material display. This is, however, mere speculation, and it is unclear whether any of the silver and bronze hoards found north of the Danube in the sixth and seventh centuries can be interpreted in this way.

It is possible that Sclavene groups acting for the Khaganate may have turned over most of their spoils to the Avar elite (who were certainly known for their accumulation of treasure). Another possibility is that despite the sources *assuming* that the Sclavenes would be interested in such goods, the booty may have actually consisted largely of foodstuffs/grain stores, livestock and slaves. When they sacked Topiros in 549, as well as “valuables” the Sclavenes took the women and children as slaves and burned the men alive together with all the remaining cattle and sheep “they were utterly unable to take with them to their native haunts.”⁹² Curta has also demonstrated that less traditionally prestigious Roman items such as amphorae containing oil, wine and *garum* were viewed as valuable within Sclavene communities and may have played a part in the

⁹² Procopius, *Wars* 7.38.19-22.

display of big-men or great-men leaders, particularly when the association between amphorae remains and the finds of clay pans and ritual feasting is taken into account.⁹³ Such items would not automatically register as “treasure” to either the Roman observer or those examining the archaeological remains. The specific references to gold and treasure also only come after Slavene raiding recommenced in the 570s and 80s when big-men and great-men first appear in the sources. This possibly ties in with the emergence of new elites who were much more interested in Roman gold than their predecessors, who, like those who sacked Topiros in 549, may have been satisfied with slaves, livestock, and foodstuffs.

A fourth possibility, within the bounds of the Khaganate at least, is that the accumulation of valuable booty through military prowess was part of the process by which a Slavene *became* an Avar, adopting the Avar cultural *habitus* rather than that of the Slavenes. In this vein, Pohl has argued that a person could be both Slavene and Avar, given that “one of these names denoted the higher, constitutional unit, the other one a subgroup.”⁹⁴ People undertaking military duties within the Khaganate could, by adopting the relevant outward material culture (and presumably also integrating into their elite military core), *become* an Avar. Anyone else within the Khaganate who was part of or was absorbed into the rural community became a Slavene.⁹⁵ This might account for why such treasure is not associated with Slavene assemblages, but Avar assemblages, containing military and equestrian gear, are often very rich (see Chapter 3.3 below).

Being able to determine with some certainty if and how Slavenes defined and utilised “treasure” and “booty” would certainly make things

⁹³ Curta (2001a: 299, 342).

⁹⁴ Pohl (2008: 19).

⁹⁵ Pohl (1988: 99-100, 243-245; 278-281); (2003b: 587); (2008).

clearer, but the current evidence is simply not sufficient for anything beyond conjecture.

Finally, the naming of an Antean king (unattested elsewhere) by Jordanes in the fourth century story of Hermanaric is a tantalising bit of information which might tempt the historian into speculating about a much earlier phase of internal socio-political development for the Antes than for the Sclavenes.⁹⁶ This is an interesting proposition in light of the evidence discussed above and the fact that the Antes were Roman allies while the Sclavenes were not. The Peňkovka-Koločin complex of the Middle Dnieper usually associated with the Antes does not shed much light on the matter – there is no indication of any such level of stratification and the complex cannot be dated quite that early in any case. As far as Procopius goes, his account of the Antes deciding on the 545 treaty with Justinian mentions no such king or leader and is specifically used to demonstrate that there was no such person. Boz may have been more of a great-man/big-man leader than a king. The fact remains, however, that the Antes were able to be drawn into an alliance with Rome which appeared to have been fairly successful until their demise in 602.

It is reasonable to argue for *some* level of greater socio-political development on the part of the Antes simply because a measure of centralisation would have been needed in order to coordinate the whole group to fulfil their treaty obligations to Rome *at the time the treaty was made*. There are also no real instances in the sources of Antes acting outside of this alliance under independent leaders. Furthermore, if a decent proportion of the population mentioned in Procopius did indeed relocate to the urban environment of Turrís (thought to be somewhere on the Black Sea coast), centralisation would have developed further. Certainly, by the time the Antes

⁹⁶ See Gimbutas (1971: 76-77) who argues that the King Boz episode shows that the Antes existed in the fourth century and survived to reappear in the sixth. Given Heather's arguments as to disappearing and reappearing tribes (see chapter 2.2 n 78), this is not so far-fetched but at this point in time, the evidence is not particularly strong.

fought the Avars in the 560s, they already had powerful leaders named in the sources as archons who began to show the true characteristics of a militarised chiefdom in the same way the Germanic tribes had.⁹⁷ The populations of the Peňkovka-Koločin culture which remained on the Middle Dnieper and were likely already heavily slavified possibly became absorbed back into the egalitarian Slavene model, whilst those Antes who moved to Turris adopted a more political, stratified identity.⁹⁸ At this point in time, it is impossible to tell.

Curta's argument that Rome distinguished between allies and enemies by creating labels for the Antes as against the Slavenes is relevant here.⁹⁹ It is a useful way to distinguish amongst peoples who appear to have shared a very similar material culture but were viewed quite differently from a Roman perspective. However, this implies that any Slavene group could become an ally of the Empire, renegotiate their identity, and thus become Antes. Such a proposition would be an argument against there being something inherently different about Slavene society which prevented them from becoming Roman allies and being drawn into the culturally transforming processes of the frontier. The idea is feasible enough given the fluid and transactional nature of ethnic identity, but Procopius makes it clear that the Antes were limited to the group who concluded the treaty with Justinian and moved to Turris in 545. There were no other Antean groups along the Danube. Those populations are always identified as Slavenes and no Roman efforts to engage with them diplomatically are recorded other than the vague references in the *Strategikon* to unsuccessful overtures in the 590s.

⁹⁷ See Menander the Guardsman frg. 5.3 for the archon Mezamir who had a known lineage and 70 associated nobles, likely indicating a more hereditary kind of leadership structure (see Appendix B.1.4.A). See also Agathias, *Histories* 3 6.9, 7.2, 21.6 for the Antean naval commander Dabragezas who commanded a Roman fleet against the Persians in 555/6. Curta (2001: 332).

⁹⁸ Curta thinks of the Antes after the 545 treaty as a political identity in much the same way as he does the Wends: Curta (2001: 105). See also Szmoniewski (2010: esp. 67-82) for the problematics involved in strictly associating the Antes with a particular culture or groups of finds.

⁹⁹ Curta (2001:83-84).

Roman-Slavene contact then was largely hostile and not tempered by diplomacy in any successful way, nor did the processes of the frontier facilitate discernible networks of distribution of Roman prestige goods between local leaders resulting in hierarchies within communities or the coalescence of larger groups. The story seems to have been slightly different for the Antes, who developed a political identity once they became Roman allies, perhaps building on the beginnings of a socio-political development which was a little more advanced than the Slavenes. The question remains then that if the Slavenes were largely unaffected by Rome's imperial orbit and her diplomatic, if not her military policies, was there any alternative?

3.3 The Slavenes and the First Avar Khaganate

It was noted above that Slavene military organisation seemed to become stronger once raiding resumed in the late 570s and Slavene leaders are named. Not only did this happen twenty or so years after Justinian's fortifications had been completed, it was also after the Avars had been on the scene in Eastern and Central Europe for almost as long, although they did not become entrenched in Pannonia until 582. As Barford cautions, "[t]he influence of the nomadic hegemonies of eastern Europe in the formation of Slav speaking groups should perhaps not be underestimated."¹⁰⁰

It is impossible to talk about the Slavenes without talking about the First Avar Khaganate. Based on the richness of grave good finds, the centre of the Khaganate in the sixth and seventh centuries was between the Danube and the Tisza rivers,¹⁰¹ and the narrative of Slavene activity in the sixth and seventh centuries outlined in chapter 2.3 makes it clear that the history of the two groups was heavily intertwined. Some Slavene groups came directly under the

¹⁰⁰ Barford (2001: 43).

¹⁰¹ Daim (2003: 469).

Avar Khaganate while others operated independently on its fringes or in alliance from time to time.

Evidence for the most direct Avaro-Slavene contact can be found in Fredegar. He states that the Avars wintered with the Sclavenes (whom he calls Wends), slept with their wives and daughters and burdened them with many other hardships. Furthermore, the Avars sent the Wends to fight their battles, only getting involved if it seemed that they were losing.¹⁰² As stated earlier, the Wends were possibly some sort of Slavene military or political unit¹⁰³ and it certainly appears that they had a very particular function within the Khaganate. It is not hard to imagine the Wendish political identity forming within a rather rapid timeframe in these circumstances, particularly considering they had a very specific role *within* the structure – they did not simply exist as followers or as a ruled population as they had done under the Huns in the fifth century. Nor were they an adjacent society across a frontier as they were with the East Roman Empire. At the same time, the Avars appear on some occasions to have attempted to curb independent Slavene action and identity making processes due to their numerical advantage. The Byzantine-backed attack in 578 could be seen in this way.¹⁰⁴ Fredegar's evidence shows a strong level of interdependence. The Avars relied on the Sclavenes for their agricultural produce during the winter, while the Sclavenes relied on the Avars for protection from other groups as well as taking their place within Avar armies.¹⁰⁵

A measure of influence can also be seen in the burial material, which is extensive - over 60,000 Avar graves have been excavated from all periods of Avar history.¹⁰⁶ Several large cemeteries on the Middle Danube dating to the period under examination have yielded inhumations with strong steppe and

¹⁰² Fredegar 4.48 (Appendix B.2.1 A).

¹⁰³ See Curta (1997: 144-155) and (2001: 60).

¹⁰⁴ Pohl (2003b: 584); Gračanin (2013: 47).

¹⁰⁵ Pohl (2003b: 584).

¹⁰⁶ See Daim (2003: 466-467) for a listing and location of the most important Avar sites.

Byzantine influences as well as cremation burials, which have been interpreted to reflect Avar and Sclavene burials respectively.¹⁰⁷ The remains of funerary pyres in the Carpathians and the central position in Avar cemeteries given to warrior burials containing horses and weapons show that political power was reserved for the elite.¹⁰⁸ Social stratification within the elite is also evidenced by the hierarchic quality of various warrior burials in both position and grave goods within the warrior group.¹⁰⁹ Female burials show more Byzantine and Germanic (Merovingian or Lombard) influences including cross and disc-shaped brooches, animal brooches, basket earrings and pendants and Roman fibulae.¹¹⁰ There are also instances of elite Avar items such as belts with ornate fittings in burials which actually probably contained Sclavenes. This shows a level of acculturation and ethnic negotiation on the part of Sclavenes within the Avar influence which simply did not happen to any discernible degree with Roman emblematic styles.¹¹¹

Given the account of the Wends showing that the Sclavenes were positioned across both the agricultural and military spheres, as well as the possible adoption by some Sclavenes of the elite military *habitus* of the Avars, the differentiation within and on the fringes of the Khaganate seem to have preserved the rural *habitus* of the Sclavenes to some degree. The everyday culture of the Khaganate was most likely that of the Sclavenes. The upper echelons of elite Avar culture were based instead on prestige, including Byzantine goods.¹¹² The Avars had a culture which was very flexible in relation to outside influences,¹¹³ but they still maintained the Hunnic Steppe Empire

¹⁰⁷ Gimbutas (1971: 121-122). It has been demonstrated in Chapter 3.3.2 that Avars expressed elite identity partly through Byzantine prestige goods.

¹⁰⁸ Vida (2008: 15).

¹⁰⁹ Vida (2008: 29).

¹¹⁰ Vida (2008: 17-18, 34-36); Daim (2003: 471-476).

¹¹¹ Barford (2001: 34). See also Pohl (2003b: 590).

¹¹² Pohl (2003b: 592-3).

¹¹³ Daim (2003: 463).

template, as it was proven to be a workable structure and was part of their Inner Asian traditions.¹¹⁴

There are other ways in which the Avars could influence those groups who operated outside of direct Avar power. In those raids when Sclavenes and Avars were allied, it is reasonable to suppose that the Sclavenes might have learned organisational and leadership skills from the militarily superior Avars in order to become more efficient and therefore more successful. It is also particularly interesting that the two instances in which there is evidence for specific diplomatic overtures being made to the Sclavenes (as opposed to the vague reference in the *Strategikon*) it is by the Avar khagan and not Rome. Both instances also involve Sclavenes in leadership positions. The earliest named Sclavene leader Daurentius, who refused to submit to the Avar khagan Baian in 578/9, is a king in the context of dealing with the Avars, not Rome.¹¹⁵ Similarly, the story of the three Sclavenes recorded by Theophylact Simocatta relates that the khagan sent formal ambassadors who “lavished many gifts on their nation's rulers” in the hope of a military alliance.¹¹⁶

Here then are clear examples of Avaro-Sclavene interaction which go further than Roman-Sclavene interaction ever did. This dimension therefore must be seriously considered alongside any argument that the Sclavenes formed in response to Justinian's fortification project. The Sclavene leadership configurations revealed in the 570s and 80s are very weak in terms of sustained, hierarchical power. Furthermore, the material remains attest to the general Sclavene social structure and (non-) use of prestige goods largely staying the same over this period except for the rise in popularity of Slavic bow fibulae. The Avar Khaganate generally seems to have played a much larger role than the East Roman and Early Byzantine Empires in Sclavene society in this time

¹¹⁴ Pohl (2003b: 595); Vida (2008: 14). Cf. Bálint (2000); Daim (2000) and (2003) who argue that the Avar Khaganates were largely a creation of the Byzantine periphery.

¹¹⁵ Menander the Guardsman frg. 21 (Appendix B.1.4.C).

¹¹⁶ Theophylact Simocatta, *History* 7.2.10-16.

period. The reasons for why that might have been, why the Sclavenes still seem to have resisted Roman-stimulated social transformations while on the fringes of an imperial and quasi-imperial power, and ultimately why the Sclavenes were never Roman allies is discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

Why Were the Sclavenes Never Roman Allies?

In light of the above discussion, which has shown that the Sclavenes of the sixth and seventh centuries followed an alternative model to what had previously been the norm of Roman-barbarian relations and the operation of the frontier, some suggestions as to how this might be explained will now be offered.

4.1 Historical Circumstances

First and foremost, the comparative analysis undertaken in chapters 2 and 3 reveals that the time frames involved in the development of the Germanic societies which eventually took over the post-Roman West, and the Sclavene societies on the Danubian frontier in the sixth and seventh centuries were vastly different. The Germanic tribes had engaged in intense contact with Rome on the frontiers for at least four hundred years before the large confederacies of the fourth and fifth centuries emerged. All the while Roman culture and goods were making their way back into the hinterland of Germanic *barbaricum* for hundreds of kilometres, as shown particularly by the princely graves and stratified settlements discussed in chapter 2.2.3.

The function of the frontier in not only affecting frontier societies but stratifying barbarian societies at a greater distance, allowed various Germanic groups to fairly easily integrate into imperial structures through treaties and alliances once they started moving towards imperial territory in earnest. This was the basis for their success and the continued development of formalised hierarchies and power structures based on Roman models and stimulus.

What is more, Germanic and Hunnic groups had dominated the territorial, cultural and conceptual space north of the Danube until the mid-fifth century when the Slavene *habitus* began to emerge. Peter Heather has argued that groups with Slavene elements probably existed behind a large buffer of Germanic and Hunnic groups which impeded access to all the profitable positions on the frontier and thus blocked Roman influence and material culture to regions beyond.¹ As was discussed in chapter 3.1, it is perhaps more likely that such elements existed *underneath* the dominant Germanic and Hunnic socio-political structures and that the buffer was vertical rather than horizontal.

The Hunnic Empire, like all steppe empires, contained both a strong sedentary element and the core pastoral nomadic element. The nomadic core was the basis of their military power and the site of their elite culture which was known for its material display.² The sedentary element was usually agricultural and peoples who might have later emerged within the Slavene *habitus* could very well have been part of it, a role they later filled within the First Avar Khaganate. They likely absorbed other ethnic elements, such as the remnant Germanic populations who were still visible in the material record for a length of time prior to the mid-sixth century.

The correlation in time between the relatively rapid emergence of the Slavene cultural *habitus* with firstly the decline of Germanic dominance and

¹ Heather (2009: 441).

² Kim (2013: 43). For the material richness of Attila's court, see Priscus of Panion frg. 11.2.

associated material cultures in the Pontic-Danubian region, and then the rise and fall of Hunnic power is undeniable, if not entirely conclusive. Later large-scale movements of the Ostrogoths in 489 and the Lombards in 568 from the Middle Danube into Italy further greatly changed the cultural and political make-up of the region. All these factors allowed for the emergence of the Sclavenes who were dominant in terms of material culture but who, owing partly to their previous position underneath other dominant cultural and ethnic elites, did not and could not occupy the same role along the Danubian frontier as their Germanic predecessors had done.

A crucial and associated element of the historical circumstances of the time was Justinian's fortification of the Balkans. Curta has argued that the fortifications discussed in chapter 2.2.2 were not only a drastic change in Roman frontier policy, but that they "created" the Sclavenes. They were created not through the processes of the frontier but because the historical circumstances of the time meant that they were now politically important to Rome in terms of being a direct threat. These groups were then labelled by Romans trying to make sense of peoples who, although they had been present prior to the fortification project, had not been of any import to the Empire – they had not been visible to Rome in the only sense that mattered. This certainly ties in neatly with the suggestion that populations who later became Sclavenes occupied a largely invisible position under dominant Germanic and Hunnic elements until this point. Only with the raiding of the 530s and 40s did they become worth mentioning after maybe a hundred years of development outside of Hunnic influence. On Curta's argument, Sclavene military leaders like those of the 570s and 80s may in fact have existed prior to this time, but again, they were of no concern to Rome until the 530s and therefore were not mentioned in the extant sources until several decades later.³

³ Curta (2001: 346-350).

The theory is very helpful in highlighting and defining the proper limits of the label “Sclavenes” to the historical actions of groups on the Danubian frontier as seen from a Roman or Byzantine perspective, as opposed to large territories and populations which shared a common cultural *habitus* which this thesis has also labelled “Sclavene.” In this sense, there were two distinct but overlapping phenomena going on: (1) the spread of the Sclavene *habitus* and (2) the military actions of Sclavene groups as recorded by Roman and Byzantine authors.⁴

Curta’s theory is persuasive but does not necessarily explain why Justinian sought to deal with the Sclavenes in this way or why the role they fulfilled on the frontier did not follow the frontier processes outlined in chapter 2.2. It only explains their presence on the frontier and their visibility as a distinct ethnic identity in the sources (and not necessarily in their own perception). Further, there is some measure of the cart before the horse here. The fortification of the Balkans most assuredly was largely due to Sclavene and other raiding becoming a problem *before* the fortifications were put in place. In this sense, the reason cannot also be the result and while the fortifications may have contributed to social transformations to some extent, it is clear that the frontier was no longer what it had been. The Danubian frontier no longer facilitated the development of flourishing frontier societies and economic and cultural contact across wide stretches of non-imperial territory. Balkan communities, their economies, and the frontier itself contracted sharply and the erection of Justinian’s fortifications appears only to have exacerbated the problem rather than rectify it, resulting in complete economic closure and no significant contact of any kind for the better part of two decades.

When contact recommenced, it was purely aggressive on the part of the Sclavenes and in the context of the growing influence of the First Avar

⁴ Barford also makes this distinction: Barford (2001: 27).

Khaganate. Therefore, a more complete picture is possible when taking into account how the distinct nature of the Slavene cultural *habitus* interacted with the frontier and also the Slavene position within the First Avar Khaganate.

4.2 An Alternative Society

The Germanic cultures of the previous centuries largely reflected Roman influence through a competitive material culture based on prestige goods and the galvanising force of the frontiers.⁵ It has been demonstrated above that this was not the case for Slavene groups north of the Danube in the sixth and seventh centuries. They operated on an entirely different, largely un-stratified social and cultural premise which was nevertheless very successful and was in fact remarked on by late antique writers. The author of the *Strategikon* called the Slavenes independent and as “absolutely refusing to be enslaved or governed,”⁶ while Menander records a speech to this very effect by the leader Daurentius when confronted with Avar demands.⁷ Slavene groups did not require the vehicle of Roman political, military or social culture in order to flourish, and therefore both resisted and *did not need* to be within the Roman cultural orbit.

A way of explaining this has been to conceptualise early Slavene history as an alternative or parallel model to the post-Roman West, an idea which has been around since the nineteenth century.⁸ The Russian historian Dimitri Obolensky argued in 1971 that Roman frontier policy was only aimed at a particular kind of barbarian group at a certain stage of social and political development,⁹ achieved by hundreds of years of exposure to the powerful

⁵ Barford (2001: 25).

⁶ *Strategikon* 11.4 (Appendix B.1.5).

⁷ Menander the Guardsman frg. 21 (Appendix B.1.4.C).

⁸ See Curta (2001: 311-313)

⁹ Obolensky (1971: 56-57). See also Browning (1975: 36).

processes of the frontier. Patrick Geary later briefly suggested that the egalitarian nature of early Slavic groups was key in that there was no centralised figure for Rome to deal with, and that Sclavene communities were sufficiently disparate and numerous that any single defeat did not have a catastrophic effect on their advance.¹⁰ Peter Heather has reiterated this idea more recently following Urbańczyk and on a slightly different tangent: the egalitarian lifestyle of the Sclavenes made their social model attractive to non-Sclavenes they came across, making them stronger and therefore more successful.¹¹

Walter Pohl had earlier articulated a similar argument in 1988. He suggested that the early (Sclavene) Slavs represented a different model of how widespread regional groups *without* a central authority based on old Roman models of power and representation could still form a loose ethnic community and ultimately be more successful than both the Western successor states and the other short-term political entities in Eastern Europe in the early Middle Ages, namely the First Avar Khaganate and Old Great Bulgaria.¹²

The unconscious goal-oriented nature of a common cultural *habitus* makes a lot of sense in light of Pohl's and similar arguments. Heather and Urbańczyk's position resonates to some extent with Curta's findings that there were no large-scale invasions or migrations of Sclavene groups into the Balkans, particularly into Greece, and that its spread must have been a much slower process.¹³ Gradual accretion seems much more likely than large-scale migration, both southwards into the Balkans and westwards towards the Elbe, as small Sclavene communities were augmented with various peoples from

¹⁰ Geary (2002: 145-6). See also Fine (1983: 27).

¹¹ Heather (2010: 433ff). See Urbańczyk (1997b).

¹² Pohl (1988). See also Pohl (1997a: 154), (1998: 23) and (2005:129).

¹³ See Curta (2010a), (2011: 48-96) and (2013b). cf. Heather who argues that general levels of migration of barbarian communities was much more substantial than is usually allowed for within the current paradigm of barbarian studies: Heather (2009: 579). Unfortunately, he applies the same formula to many different barbarian groups at different points in time without fully accounting for possible differences:

local populations who adopted the same *habitus*.¹⁴ This process would have been particularly easy due to the Sclavene practice of itinerant farming where, based on the duration of their settlements and evidence in Procopius, they moved short distances every decade or less in search of fresh farming land. As Heather and Urbańczyk argue, such a lifestyle may very well have been attractive to other populations in rural areas.¹⁵ The material remains indicate they certainly had already absorbed Germanic populations by the mid-sixth century. The large number of Sclavenes is often noted in the sources although the references to “hordes” also play into barbarian stereotypes.¹⁶ In addition, Theophylact Simocatta mentions a Gepid living in a Sclavene community in the 590s,¹⁷ while the *Strategikon* records the presence of Romans who lived with or at least acted in the interests of Sclavene groups during military confrontations within Sclavene territory.¹⁸ The Sclavene treatment of slaves might also have served to swell their ranks with people who then became Sclavenes. The author of the *Strategikon* notes that,

“they do not keep those who are in captivity among them in perpetual slavery... [b]ut they set a definite period of time for them and then give them the choice either... to return to their own homes... or to remain there as free men and friends.”

Obviously there are recorded instances when the Sclavenes killed indiscriminately, but it also seems it was quite easy for foreign elements to be absorbed into the Sclavene *habitus*, making for a more successful society.¹⁹

¹⁴ Barford (2001: 43-44).

¹⁵ Pohl (1988: 94 ff esp.125-127). See *Strategikon* 11.4 (Appendix B.1.5) and Theophylact Simocatta, *History* 6.8.

¹⁶ E.g. *Strategikon* 11.4 (Appendix B.1.5); Theophylact Simocatta, *History* 1.7.5; 7.4.13 (Appendix B.1.6.A & E).

¹⁷ Theophylact Simocatta, *History* 6.8.13.

¹⁸ *Strategikon* 11.4 (Appendix B.1.5).

¹⁹ See Urbańczyk (1997b: 41-42) for anthropological theories that societies with the easiest incorporations of aliens are more likely to be successful.

The first real indication of a *specific* intent to settle in Roman territory was at the siege of Thessalonica in the early years of Heraclius' reign as recorded in Book II of the *Miracles of Saint Demetrius*. The Sclavenes brought their families and intended to settle the city after they had taken it. They evidently were not coming from very far away because the prisoners they took from Thessalonica were able to return home from Sclavene territory carrying booty in short order, suggesting that the Sclavene settlements must already have been somewhere in the vicinity after having slowly advanced over the previous hundred years.²⁰

The situation reveals a certain dichotomy between the proliferation of Sclavene communities into the Balkans and elsewhere which goes largely unremarked except in the archaeological record (the spread of the Sclavene *habitus*), and the military activities in Roman and Byzantine territory described in the sources (the Roman-Byzantine history of the "Sclavenes"). Peter Heather has also noted the differentiated movements between the migrations of small-scale farming communities and more militarised groups.²¹ No doubt the raiding into Roman territory created opportunities for territorial advancement but most often the sources tell us the raiders returned home across the Danube after the season was over. Something unseen was obviously occurring within these communities that was not directly linked to the Sclavene military activities that were the most obvious target of Justinian's fortifications.²² Perhaps these

²⁰ Curta (2004: 539); Heather (2009: 400, 434-435). See *Miracles of Saint Demetrius* II 2.196.

²¹ Heather (2009: 443). See also Barford (2001: 128) for a similar idea.

²² There is a large bibliography on the movement and settlement of Sclavene groups south into Greece although there is little conclusive evidence of this before the early to mid-seventh century or that it was a large-scale and widespread invasion as opposed to gradual migration and assimilation as argued on pages 95- 97 above. The Chronicle of Monemvasia does record an Avaro-Sclavene invasion of Greece in the late sixth and seventh centuries, but this is thought to be a late source dating from the tenth to as late as the thirteenth century and therefore is difficult to rely on with any confidence. See Lemerle (1963) and (1980); Dujcev (1976); Vyronis (1981); Ferjančič (1984); Kalligas (1990) and (2013); Metcalf (1991); Chrysos (1997); Turlej (1997) and (1998); Brown (2011).

tentatively postulated processes could not necessarily be dealt with by either treaties or fortifications and so neither approach was successful in the long run.

In this sense then, due to its own internal makeup and operation, the Slavene cultural *habitus* did not need to be part of the Roman cultural orbit in order to maintain its structures and perpetuate itself. This in and of itself may very well have allowed it to resist that orbit and the workings of the frontier, therefore completely obstructing socio-political developments of a kind recognisable within the German confederacies and Successor Kingdoms.

4.3 Alternative Orbits

Slavene resistance to the workings of the frontier and Roman frontier policy was strengthened due to the availability of alternative imperial orbits towards which they could gravitate. Indeed, Kim calls the Avar arrival in Europe in the sixth century “a watershed in the political history of the Slavic peoples.”²³ It has been argued that in this period of history, Europe was merely on the periphery of a world order based on the Turko-Mongol political configurations of Inner Asia embodied by various steppe empires.²⁴ The Huns had already shown that a successful territorial empire could be maintained in Central Europe which favoured networks which *cut across* traditional Roman frontiers, thus offering a real alternative to Roman imperial hegemony.²⁵ Fine has argued that the Avars actually disturbed Slavene settlement patterns by either forcing them to flee or turning them into soldiers. That some Slavenes were fighters within the Khaganate is clear, but there is no evidence that the Avar presence caused widespread Slavene movements in this way, even when the Avars were

²³ Kim (2013: 144).

²⁴ Kim (2013: 4-8).

²⁵ Pohl (2003b: 572-3); Kim (2013: 59).

attacking them.²⁶ The frontiers and associated spheres of influence which really mattered in Europe were those of the Avar Khaganate and it is in fact here that a much greater degree of ethnic negotiation and cultural influence on the part of Sclavenes can be seen, *as well as* mechanisms which preserved the Sclavene way of life and material culture at the same time.

Large-scale Eurasian nomadic political organisations such as the Avar Khaganate evolved and existed primarily to extract recognition and resources from major sedentary powers while exploiting a largely sedentary agricultural base. Nomadic pastoralism by itself was not sufficient to support such large political structures, and so military might was utilised by a militarised nomadic core to extract revenue from sedentary powers such as the Chinese and Roman Empires. The severe consequences for the Roman Empire after various emperors refused to continue paying subsidies to the Khaganate is evidence enough of this process in action. The tribute and prestige goods extorted by this system were then redistributed amongst the subordinate Asiatic subject tribes of the core in order to bind them to the leadership²⁷ in much the same manner as the Germanic confederate societies had done.

This is what Thomas Barfield means by “shadow empires” which existed alongside a sedentary power, mimicking it to some extent and being symbiotically dependant on it.²⁸ The readiness of the Avars to partly adopt the Roman and Byzantine elite *habitus* for their military elite can thus be explained – the exploitation of the rich resources of the Empire was part of the very way in which their political organisation perpetuated itself. Their exploitation of the agricultural nature of Sclavene society, particularly evident in Fredegar’s account of the Wends, can similarly be explained as part of this model.

²⁶ Fine (1983: 30).

²⁷ Barfield (2001: 14).

²⁸ See Barfield (1989: 5-16) and (1993: 149-152).

The structure of steppe empires may also help to understand the presence of many groups of Sclavenes who were not always or ever directly under Avar control. Steppe empires could operate unconcernedly alongside independent and 'rebel' tribes on their fringes, partly because they could not maintain a territorial presence at all times, but also because expansion into other territories was not necessarily their goal. Internal conflicts and independent operations could be dealt with or not provided that the central aim and basis of steppe political organisation could be maintained i.e. the exploitation of a sedentary power and a sufficient agricultural base. Independent actions by groups on the fringe could actually be advantageous to the Khaganate as testing grounds for further areas of exploitation in the future.²⁹ For example, the Gepid who betrayed the Sclavene "king" Musocius to the Romans in 593 gave a signal by singing an Avar song so as not to alert the Sclavenes.³⁰ Musocius and his men were clearly familiar with the Avar language and did not feel threatened by hearing it. It is unclear what the relationship of Musocius and his followers was to the Avar Khaganate, but the episode demonstrates that groups which appear to have been independent operated on the fringes of Avar power but still obviously maintained a relationship with the Khaganate in some way.

Lastly, it is possible that the Slavic language, the origin and spread of which has troubled scholars for a very long time, was actually used as the *lingua franca* within the Avar Khaganate by the numerically superior Sclavene agricultural base which, as suggested above, largely absorbed all non-dominant foreign elements they came across.³¹ Barford has also suggested communication theory as helpful here, an anthropological concept which theorises that networks of individuals connected by forms of communication, including

²⁹ Kim (2013: 61-64).

³⁰ Theophylact Simocatta, *History* 6.9.10 (see Appendix B.1.6.C).

³¹ Curta (2001: 344-345).

language, can help to develop common ideologies including identity.³² Perhaps this was one of the ways in which Slavene groups absorbed newcomers whilst still remaining differentiated from the Avar elite who, as we are told by Theophylact, had their own songs presumably in their own language.³³

Clearly then, the First Avar Khaganate played a significant role in the success of the Slavenes. Due to Avar support and the advantages of existence on the fringes of the Khaganate, Slavene groups were able to preserve their agriculturally based material culture (necessary for the perpetuation of the Khaganate's political order) and their language, whilst at the same time being able to absorb the local rural populations who were attracted to their way of life.³⁴ The key to Slavene success in Central and Eastern Europe was thus not wholly due to internal strengths of the Slavene way of life but also to direct and indirect influences of Avar power and political organisation.³⁵

³² Barford (2001: 31).

³³ Theophylact Simocatta, *History* 6.9.10 (Appendix B.1.6.C). The only extant remains of the Avar language occur in a very few runic inscriptions.

³⁴ Pohl (1997b: 71); Barford (2001); Gračacin (2013: 47).

³⁵ Pohl (2003b: 583).

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Asking the question why the Sclavenes were never Roman allies is really asking questions about the nature of Slavene society, the circumstances in which it developed and prospered and how it interacted with the Roman frontier and frontier policies in the Late Antique and Early Byzantine periods. This thesis has tried to highlight those issues by conducting a comparison with those barbarian groups who had occupied the same space as the Sclavenes along the Danubian frontier in previous centuries.

The Germanic tribes and large confederacies of Late Antiquity were the result of over four hundred years of frontier interaction with Rome which facilitated their socio-political development through redistributive networks of Roman prestige goods. Periods of alliance, warfare, and the intense cultural attraction generated by and through the frontier meant that Roman socio-political models became the basis upon which the Germanic tribes modelled their emerging societies. In this way, the Germanic confederacies and the Successor Kingdoms of the post-Roman West were creations of the Roman frontier.

Sclavene communities, on the other hand, were not. Their genesis as a largely undifferentiated material culture of small, un-unified, itinerant farming communities likely occurred within the mostly invisible agricultural base beneath Germanic and Hunnic polities that later left the regions north of the Danube. The resulting unfettered access to the frontier did facilitate some contacts between Sclavene groups and Rome, but the frontier at that time also no longer operated as it once had, become more a purely military boundary. There is evidence of small-scale trading and exchange, as well as the limited use of Roman prestige goods such as jewellery, religious items and amphorae. For the most part though, Sclavene communities did not and could not rely on the frontier or the Roman imperial orbit it generated in order to perpetuate itself.

What low-level stratification is visible within Sclavene communities was based on the personal military achievements and manipulation of wealth by big-men and great-men whose power was never permanent. That power was facilitated to some extent by raiding and the collection of booty from across the frontier as well as low levels of exchange with the Empire, but even if Roman goods played a part in the elevation of big-men and great-men, their transformative potential remained weak. Such goods were utilised in very different ways and it was the limited use of Slavic bow fibulae and ritual communal feasting which were the primary markers of elite identity, such as it was.

The inability of Rome to engage any Sclavene group successfully in alliance, and the ultimate failure of Justinian's fortification of the Balkans assisted in an unseen advance of Sclavene communities in the first part of the seventh century. The itinerant agriculture practised by these communities and the ease with which they were able to absorb foreign elements were significant factors in their ability to do this. This advance must have occurred in parallel to the Sclavene military raiding recorded in the sources, a reminder that the archaeological evidence of the Sclavene cultural *habitus* and the particular

historical events recorded by Roman, Byzantine and Western authors most definitely overlap but are not identical.

Sclavene communities were successful not only because of their own internal operations, but because of their relationship across three centuries with Asiatic steppe empires. As part first of the Hunnic Empire in the fifth and then the First Avar Khaganate in the sixth and seventh centuries, Sclavene communities were either part of or existed along the fringes of a political structure which facilitated their way of life and language, and allowed for the spread of both. They also cut across the traditional frontiers and redistributive networks of Rome, thus creating an alternative to the imperial orbit which was primarily generated through those very frontiers. Justinian's fortifications and the associated twenty year economic closure of the frontier also undercut whatever transformative power it may have been able to exert.

The Sclavenes then were unique. Their way of life was not sophisticated or rich, but was inherently attractive through its very potential for success, endurance and its ability to capitalise on the steppe political structure it had grown out of as well as the lack of any real sort of functioning frontier zone with Rome as had existed in previous centuries. The position of Rome's allies on the Danubian frontier was taken by the Antes between 545 and 602 and, on and off, by the Khaganate itself. Both groups required the Eastern Roman Empire for their existence – the Antes as Roman allies within a Roman city and carrying out treaty obligations to Rome, and the Khaganate as a shadow empire existing alongside Rome and extorting it for resources. Through all this the Sclavenes endured, numerous, at times very dangerous, and above all successful.

So why were the Sclavenes never Roman allies? Because they simply did not need to be.

Appendix A

Sclavene activities in the sixth and seventh centuries and other important events

A.D.

- | | |
|------------|---|
| 488/89 | Ostrogoths abandon Pannonia and Illyricum for Italy, defeat Gepids. |
| 518 | Antes cross the Danube with a large army, are defeated by Germanus. |
| 530/1 | Sclavenes first mentioned as having previously crossed the Danube together with Huns and Antes many times, causing great damage. |
| 531-534 | Chilbudius, <i>magister militum per Thraciam</i> , carries out raids in Sclavene and Antean territory across the Danube. |
| 533-540(?) | Hostility between Sclavenes and Antes. Sclavenes prevail. |
| 535-554 | Justinian's Gothic Wars/Wars of Reconquest. |
| 537 | 1,600 Sclavenes and Antes settled close to the northern bank of the Danube recruited by the Empire as cavalry to rescue Belisarius from the Ostrogoths in Rome. |
| 539/40 | Widespread Hunnic raiding of the Balkan Peninsula. Sclavenes <i>may</i> have taken part (no direct evidence). |
| 545 | Treaty between Rome and Antes who are settled in Turris (location unknown) and paid subsidies in return for defending Rome against the Huns. Sclavenes cross the Danube the same year and are defeated by Narses. |
| 546-549 | Sclavenes involved in Hildigis' power plays between Rome, Lombards and Gepids. His Sclavene entourage fights under Totila in Italy for a short time. |

- 548 Sclavene raids reach Dyrrachium (Epirus Nova).
- 549 Sclavene raiding through Illyricum and Thrace. Topirus sacked.
- 550 Sclavene raiding reaches the vicinity of Naïssus. Germanus diverts them into Dalmatia, where they winter for the year with little resistance.
- 551 Sclavenes leave Dalmatia and meet up with other groups who have just crossed the Danube. One group raided through Illyricum while another reaches the Long Walls of Constantinople. Both groups return across the Danube with large amounts of booty.
- 568 Lombards leave Pannonia for Italy.
- 568/9 Possible Sclavene participation in Zabergan's Utigur and Cutrigur invasions.
- 578 100,000 Sclavenes raid through Thrace and other areas.
- 578/9 Avar envoys rebuffed and murdered by Daurentius' Sclavenes. Joint Roman-Avar campaign (60,000 Avars) against Sclavene villages in either eastern Wallachia or southern Moldavia.
- 581-584 Avars and Sclavenes capture Sirmium (Pannonia - 582) and Singidunum (Moesia - 584), and reach as far as the Long Walls in Thrace and extensively raid Greece including Thessaly.
- 582 Treaty between Tiberius II and Avar khagan Baian.
- 585 Sclavenes under Ardagastus raiding around Adrianople (Thrace).
- 586 Week-long Sclavene siege of Thessalonica (Macedonia) under Avar orders.
- 588 Independent Sclavene raiding in Thrace.
- 592/3 Avars and Sclavenes besiege Singidunum.

- 593 Aggressive Roman campaign across the Danube into Slavene territory under Priscus. Romans come into contact with Slavene leader Ardagastus and so-called Slavene king Musocius.
- 594 Slavene raiding through Moesia Inferior and continued Roman campaigns across the Danube under Peter. A raiding band is intercepted near Marcianopolis. Slavene leader Peiragastus killed.
- 596 Avars again besiege Singidunum.
- 597 Large-scale Avar raiding to the north of Dalmatia.
- 598 Peace treaty between Maurice and Avar khagan allows for the Danube River to be an access-way for attacks on Slavene territory across the Danube.
- 599 Avars reach Constantinople, but do not breach the walls. Priscus captures 8,000 Slavene soldiers under Avar command.
- 599/600 Slavenes raiding in Istria.
- 600 Emperor Maurice recaptures Sirmium. Peace concluded between Avars and Byzantium for a payment of 120,000 gold pieces p.a. Byzantium breaks treaty almost immediately and crosses Danube into Avar territory.
- 601 Byzantine forces under Godwin again cross the Danube into Slavene territory and are ordered to winter there.
- 601/2 Phocas revolts and leads troops back across the Danube. Marches on Constantinople and overthrows Maurice.
- 602 Avars retaliate against Byzantine raids on Slavene territory by attacking the Antes. Antes disappear from the historical record.
- Persia declares war on Rome to avenge Maurice.
- 602-4 Danubian defences are weakened due to war on Persia.
- 603 Avar khagan sends a detachment of Slavenes to aid the Lombard king Agilulf.

- 610/1-20(?) Slavene raiding in parts of Asia, Istria and through Greece, including Thessalonica, Thessaly, the Greek Islands, and Illyricum. Naïssus and Serdica sacked.
- 614-16 Significant Slavene settlements mentioned in the surrounds of Thessalonica, who negotiate with Avars on equal terms to attack the city. A number of distinct tribal names are recorded.
- 617 Avars attempt to ambush and capture Heraclius. The attempt fails and Avars destroy parts of Constantinople.
- 619 Avar raiding in Thrace.
- 620s Friuli dukes collecting tribute from a Slavene territory called Zeilia.
- 621 Avars and Byzantium conclude a peace.
- 622 Avars demand and are given increased tribute by Byzantium.
- 623(?) Wendish revolt against Avar rule under Frankish merchant Samo.
- 626 Failed Avar-Persian attack on Constantinople, including Slavene infantry and canoe-men. Power of the First Avar Khaganate is effectively broken. Many Slavenes desert.
- 629 Further conflict/unrest between Avars and Slavenes.
- 635 Onogur Bulgars revolt against Avars under Kovrat and establish an independent nation allied with Byzantium.
- 642 Slavene raid on Sipontum and Benevento as Byzantine allies.
- 656/7 Constans II campaigns against a *Sklavinia* in the surrounds of Constantinople.
- 663 Son of a Friuli duke seeks refuge with Carnuntum Slavenes.
- 663/4 Slavenes deserting the Roman army settle in Syria.

- 670s Slavene kingdom of the Rynchines tribe led by king Perbundos located in the surrounds of Thessalonica. Other local tribes are also mentioned as well as groups settled in the Strymon Valley.
- 677 Siege of Thessalonica by Rynchines Sclavenes and other local Slavene tribes.
- 681 Sclavenes settled in the vicinity of Varna.

Appendix B

The Written Sources - Extracts

B.1 The Eastern Sources

B.1.1 PROCOPIUS OF CAESAREA (*translation from the original Greek by H.B. Dewing*).

A. Wars 7.14. 2-7, 11 (Loeb vol. 4, pp. 263-265).

[p. 263] (2) This Chilbudius was appointed by the emperor, in the fourth year of his reign, to be General of Thrace and was assigned to guard the river Ister, being ordered to keep watch so that the barbarians of that region could no longer cross the river, since the Huns and Antae and Sclaveni had already made the crossing many times and done irreparable harm to the Romans. (3) And Chilbudius became such an object of terror to the barbarians that for the space of three years, during which time he remained there holding office, not only did no one succeed in crossing the Ister against the Romans, but the Romans actually crossed over to the opposite site many [p. 265] times with Chilbudius and killed and enslaved the barbarians there. (4) But three years later, when Chilbudius crossed the river, as was his custom, with a small force, the Sclaveni came against him with their entire strength; (5) and a fierce battle taking place, many of the Romans fell and among them the general Chilbudius. (6) Thereafter the river became free for the barbarians to cross at all times just as they wished, and the possessions of the Romans were rendered easily accessible; and the entire Roman empire found itself utterly incapable of matching the valour of one single man in the performance of this task.

(7) But later on the Antae and Sclaveni became hostile to one another and engaged in battle, in which it so fell out that the Antae were defeated by their opponents.

... (8)-(10)

(11) At about this time the Antae descended upon the land of Thrace and plundered and enslaved many of the Romans inhabitants ; and they led these captives with them as they returned to their native abode.

B. Wars 7.14. 22-30 (Loeb vol. 4, pp. 269-275).

[p. 269] (22) For these nations, the Sclaveni and the Antae, are not ruled by one man, but they have lived from old under a democracy, and consequently everything which involves their welfare, whether for good or for ill, is referred to the people. [p. 271] It is also true that in all other matters, practically speaking, these two barbarian peoples have had from ancient times the same institutions and customs. (23) For they believe that one god, the maker of the lightening, is alone lord of all things, and they sacrifice to him cattle and all other victims ; but as for fate, they neither know it nor do they in any way wise admit that it has any power among men, but whenever death stands close before them, either stricken with sickness or beginning a war, they make a promise that, if they escape, they will straightaway make a sacrifice to the god in return for their life ; and if they escape, they sacrifice just what they have promised, and consider that their safety has been bought with this same sacrifice. (24) They reverence, however, both rivers and nymphs and some other spirits, and they sacrifice to all these also, and they make their divinations in connection with these sacrifices. (25) They live in pitiful hovels which they set up far apart from one another, but as a general thing, every man is constantly changing his place of abode. (26) When they enter battle, the majority of them go against their enemy on foot carrying little shields and javelins in their hands, but they never wear corselets. Indeed some of them do not wear even a shirt or a cloak, but gathering their trews up as far as to their private parts they enter into battle with their opponents. And both the two peoples also have the same language, an utterly barbarous tongue. (27) Nay further, they do not differ at all from one another in appearance. For they are all exceptionally tall and stalwart men, while [p. 273] their bodies and hair are neither very fair or blonde, nor indeed do they incline entirely to the dark type, but they are all slightly ruddy in colour. (28) And they live a hard life, giving no heed to bodily comforts, just as the Massagetae do, and, like them, they are continually and at all times covered with filth ; however they are in no respect base or evil-doers, but they preserve the Hunnic character in all its simplicity.

(29) In fact, the Sclaveni and Antae actually had a single name in the remote past ; for they were both called Spori in olden times, because, I suppose, living apart one man from another, they inhabit their country in a sporadic fashion. (30) And in consequence of this very fact they hold a great amount of land ; for they alone inhabit the greatest part of the northern bank of the Ister. So much then may be said regarding these peoples.

C. *Wars* 7.40, 1-3, 5 (Loeb vol. 5, pp. 37-39).

[p. 37] (1) But while Germanus was collecting and organizing his army in Sardice, the city of Illyricum, and making all necessary preparations for war with the greatest thoroughness, a throng of Sclaveni such as never before was known arrived on Roman soil, having crossed the Ister River and come to the vicinity of Naïssus. (2) Now some few of these had scattered from their army and, wandering about the country there alone, were captured by certain of the Romans and made prisoners; and the Romans [p. 39] questioned them as to why this particular army of the Sclaveni had crossed the Ister and that they had in mind to accomplish. (3) And they stoutly declared that they had come with the intention of capturing by siege both Thessalonice itself and the cities around it.

...(4)

(5) During the reign of Justinian, the uncle of Germanus, the Antae, who dwell close to the Sclaveni, had crossed the Ister River with a great army and invaded the Roman domain.

C. *Secret History* 18.20-21 (Loeb vol. 6, pp. 217-219).

[p. 217] (20) And Illyricum and Thrace in its entirety, comprising the whole expanse of country from the Ionian Gulf to the outskirts of Byzantium, including Greece and the Chersonese, was overrun practically every year by the Huns, Sclaveni and Antae, from the time when Justinian too over the Roman Empire, and they wrought frightful havoc among the inhabitants of that region. (21) For in each invasion more than twenty myriads of Romans, I think, were destroyed or [p. 219] enslaved there, so that a veritable "Scythian wilderness" came to exist everywhere in this land."

D. *Secret History* 23.6 (Loeb vol. 6, pp. 269-271).

[p. 269] (6) Furthermore, though the Medes and Saracens had plundered the greater part of the land of Asia, and the Huns and Sclaveni and Antae the whole of Europe, and some of the cities had been levelled to the ground, and others had been stripped of their wealth in very thorough fashion through levied contributions, and though they had enslaved the population with all their property, making each region destitute of inhabitants by their [p. 271] daily inroads, yet he [Justinian] remitted tax to no man, with the single exception that captured cities had one year's exemption only.

B.1.2. JORDANES (*translation from the original Latin by C.C. Mierow*).

A. *Getica*, 34-35 (pp. 59-60).

[p. 59] (34) Near their left ridge, which inclines toward the north, and beginning at the source of the Vistula, the populous race of the Venethi dwell, occupying a great expanse of land. Though their names are now dispersed amid various clans and places, yet they are chiefly called Sclaveni and Antes. (35) The abode of the Sclaveni extends from the city of Noviodunum and the lake called Mursianus to the Danaster, and northward as far as the Vistula. They have swamps and forests for [p. 60] their cities. The Antes, who are the bravest of these peoples dwelling in the curve of the sea of Pontus, spread from the Danaster to the Danaper, rivers that are many days' journey apart.

B. *Getica*, 116-120 (pp. 84-85).

[p. 84] (116) Soon Geberich, king of the Goths, departed from human affairs and Hermanaric, noblest of the Amali, succeeded to the throne. He subdued many warlike peoples of the north and made them obey his laws, and some of our ancestors have justly compared him to Alexander the Great. Among the tribes he conquered were the Golthescytha, Thiudos, Inaunxis, Vasinabroncae, Merens, Mordens, Imniscaris, Rogas, Tadzans, Athaul, Navego, Bubegenae and Coldae. (117) But though famous for his conquest of so many races, he gave himself no rest until he had slain some in battle and then reduced to his sway the remainder of the tribe of the Heruli, whose chief was Alaric. Now the aforesaid race, as the historian Ablabius tells us, dwelt near Lake Maeotis in swampy places which the Greeks call helé; hence they were named Heluri. (118) They were a people swift of foot, and on that account were the more swollen with pride, for there was at that time no race that did not choose from them its light-armed troops for battle. But though their quickness often saved them from others who made war upon them, yet they were overthrown by the slowness and steadiness of the Goths; and the lot of fortune brought it to pass that they, as well as the other tribes, had to serve Hermanaric, king of the Getae. After the slaughter of the Heruli, Hermanaric also took arms against the Venethi. [p. 85] (119) This people, though despised in war, was strong in numbers and tried to resist him. But a multitude of cowards is of no avail,

particularly when God permits an armed multitude to attack them. These people, as we started to say at the beginning of our account or catalogue of nations, though off-shoots from one stock, have now three names, that is, Venethi, Antes and Sclaveni. Though they now rage in war far and wide, in punishment for our sins, yet at that time they were all obedient to Hermanaric's commands. (120) This ruler also subdued by his wisdom and might the race of the Aesti, who dwell on the farthest shore of the German Ocean, and ruled all the nations of Scythia and Germany by his own prowess alone.

C. *Getica*, 129-130 (pp. 87-88).

[p. 87] (129) When the Getae beheld this active race that had invaded many nations, they took fright and consulted with their king how they might escape from such a foe. Now although Hermanaric, king of the Goths, was the conqueror of many tribes, as we have said above, yet while he was deliberating on this invasion of the Huns, the treacherous tribe of the Rosomoni, who at that time were among those who owed him their homage, took this chance to catch him unawares. For when the king had given orders that a certain woman of the tribe I have mentioned, Sunilda by name, should be bound to wild horses and torn apart by driving them at full speed in opposite directions (for he was roused to fury by her husband's treachery to him), her brothers Sarus and Ammius came to avenge their sister's death and plunged a sword into Hermanaric's side. Enfeebled by this blow, he dragged out a miserable existence in bodily weakness. (130) Balamber, king of the Huns, took advantage of his ill health to move an army into the country of the Ostrogoths, from whom the Visigoths had already separated because of some dispute. Meanwhile Hermanaric, who was unable to endure either the pain of his wound or the inroads of the Huns, died full of days at the great age of **[p. 88]** one hundred and ten years. The fact of his death enabled the Huns to prevail over those Goths who, as we have said, dwelt in the east and were called Ostrogoths.

D. *Getica*, 246-249 (pp. 120-121).

[p. 120] (246) Since I have followed the stories of my ancestors and retold to the best of my ability the tale of the period when both tribes, Ostrogoths and Visigoths, were united, and then clearly treated of the Visigoths apart from the

Ostrogoths, I must now return to those ancient Scythian abodes and set forth in like manner the ancestry and deeds of the Ostrogoths. It appears that at [p. 121] the death of their king, Hermanaric, they were made a separate people by the departure of the Visigoths, and remained in their country subject to the sway of the Huns; yet Vinitharius of the Amali retained the insignia of his rule. (247) He rivalled the valor of his grandfather Vultuulf, although he had not the good fortune of Hermanaric. But disliking to remain under the rule of the Huns, he withdrew a little from them and strove to show his courage by moving his forces against the country of the Antes. When he attacked them, he was beaten in the first encounter. Thereafter he did valiantly and, as a terrible example, crucified their king, named Boz, together with his sons and seventy nobles, and left their bodies hanging there to double the fear of those who had surrendered. (248) When he had ruled with such license for barely a year, Balamber, king of the Huns, would no longer endure it, but sent for Gesimund, son of Hunimund the Great. Now Gesimund, together with a great part of the Goths, remained under the rule of the Huns, being mindful of his oath of fidelity. Balamber renewed his alliance with him and led his army up against Vinitharius. After a long contest, Vinitharius prevailed in the first and in the second conflict, nor can any say how great slaughter he made of the army of the Huns. (249) But in the third battle, when they met each other unexpectedly at the river named Erac, Balamber shot an arrow and wounded Vinitharius in the head, so that he died. Then Balamber took to himself in marriage Vadamerca, the granddaughter of Vinitharius, and finally ruled all the people of the Goths as his peaceful subjects, but in such a way that one ruler of their own number always held the power over the Gothic race, though subject to the Huns.

B.1.3 AGATHIAS SCHOLASTICUS (*translated from the original Greek by J. D. Frendo*).

Histories, **Book 4.20.4** (p. 121).

[p. 121] (4) The barbarians were in dire straits but they still put up a stiff resistance. Some of them brought up a wicker-roof and advanced against the Roman siege-works with the idea of demolishing them. But before they drew near and took cover under it a Slav named Saurunas hurled his spear at the one that was most visible and struck him a mortal blow...

B.1.4 MENANDER THE GUARDSMAN (*translated from the original Greek by R.C. Blockley*).

A. *Fragment 5.3* (p. 51).

(*Exc. de Leg. Gent. 3*)

[p. 51] When the leaders of the Antae had failed miserably and had been thwarted in their hopes, the Avars ravaged and plundered their land. Since they were hard pressed by the enemy incursions, the Antae sent an embassy to them, appointing as ambassador Mezamer the son of Idariz and brother of Kelagast, and they asked him to ransom some of their own tribe who had been taken captive. The envoy Mezamer was a loudmouthed braggart and when he came to the Avars he spoke arrogantly and very rashly. Therefore, that Kutrigur who was a friend of the Avars and had very hostile designs against the Antae, when he heard Mezamer speaking more arrogantly than was proper for an envoy, said to the Khagan, "This man is the most powerful of all the Antae and is able to resist any of his enemies whomsoever. Kill him, and then you will be able to overrun the enemy's land without fear." Persuaded by this the Avars killed Mezamer, setting at nought the immunity of ambassadors and taking no account of the law. Thereafter they ravaged the land of the Antae even more than before, carrying off prisoners and plunders without respite.

B. *Fragment 20.2* (p. 191).

(*Exc. de Leg. Gent. 24*)

[p. 191] (2) While time was passing and the envoys of both states were engrossed in these discussions and the status of the war in the East remained unclear, in the fourth year of the reign of Tiberius Constantine Caesar it happened in Thrace that the nation of the Slavs to the number of 100,000 devastated Thrace and many other areas.

C. *Fragment 21* (pp. 193-195).

(*Exc. de Leg. Rom.* 15)

[p. 193] Greece was being plundered by the Slavs, and a succession of dangers was threatening there on all sides. Since Tiberius did not have a force strong enough to resist even a part of the invaders (and certainly not the whole horde of them) and since he was unable to face them in battle because the Roman armies were occupied with the wars in the East, he sent an embassy to Baian, the chief of the Avars. At the time he was not hostile to the Romans, and, indeed, from the beginning of Tiberius' reign had wished to be friendly with our state. Tiberius, therefore, persuaded him to make war on the Slavs, so that all of those who were laying waste to Roman territory would be drawn back by the troubles back home, choosing rather to defend their own lands. Thus, they would cease to plunder Roman territory, preferring to fight for their own.

The Caesar, then, sent this embassy to him, and Baian agreed to his request. John, who at this time was governor of the isles and in charge of the cities of Illyricum, was sent to assist him. He came to the land of Pannonia and transported Baian himself and the Avar armies to Roman territory, ferrying the multitude of barbarians in the so-called 'large transports'. It is said that about sixty thousand armoured were brought across to Roman territory. From there Baian crossed Illyricum, reached Scythia and prepared to re-cross the Danube in the so-called 'double-sterned' ships. When he [p. 195] gained the far bank, he immediately fired the villages of the Slavs and laid waste to their fields, driving and carrying off everything, since none of the barbarians there dared to face him, but took refuge in the thick undergrowth of the woods.

The Avar attack on the Slavs arose not only out of the embassy from the Caesar and the desire of Baian to return the favour to the Romans in exchange for the great generosity which Caesar had shown to him, but also because Baian was hostile to them out of a personal grievance. For the leader of the Avars had sent to Daurentius and the chiefs of his people ordering them to obey the commands of the Avars and be numbered amongst their tributaries. Dauritas and his fellow chiefs replied, "What man has been born, what man is warmed by the rays of the sun who shall make our might his subject? Others do not conquer our land, we conquer theirs. And so it shall always be for us, as long as there are wars and weapons." Thus boasted the Slavs, and the Avars replied with a like arrogance. After this came abuse and insults, and because they were

barbarians with their haughty and stubborn spirits, a shouting match developed. The Slavs were so unable to restrain their rage that they slew the enjoys who had come to them, and Baian received a report of these doings from others. As a result he nursed his grievance for a long time and kept his hatred concealed, angered that they had not become his subjects not to mention he had suffered an irreparable wrong at their hands. Moreover, thinking both to win favour with the Caesar and that he would find the land full of gold, since the Roman Empire had long been plundered by the Slavs, whose own land had never been raided by any other people at all...

B.1.5 THE STRATEGIKON (*translation from the original Greek by G.T. Dennis*).

Strategikon, **Book 11. 4** (pp. 120-126).

[p. 120] 4. *Dealing with the Slavs, the Antes and the Like*

The nations of the Slavs and Antes live in the same way and have the same customs. They are both independent, absolutely refusing to be enslaved or governed, least of all in their own land. They are populous and hardy, bearing readily heat, cold, rain, nakedness, and scarcity of provisions.

They are kind and hospitable to travellers in their country and conduct them safely from one place to another, wherever they wish. If the stranger should suffer some harm because of his host's negligence, the one who first commended him will wage war against that host, regarding vengeance for the stranger as a religious duty. They do not keep those who are in captivity among them in perpetual slavery, as do other nations. But they set a definite period of time for them and then give them the choice either, if they so desire, to return to their own homes with a small recompense or to remain there as free men and friends.

They possess an abundance of all sorts of livestock and produce, which they store in heaps, especially common millet and Italian millet. Their women are more sensitive than any others in the world. When, for example, their husbands die, many look upon it as their own death and freely smother themselves, not wanting to continue their lives as widows.

They live among nearly impenetrable forests, rivers, lakes, and marshes, and have made the exits from their settlements branch out [p. 121] in many directions because of the dangers they might face. They bury their most valuable possessions in secret places, nothing unnecessary in sight. They live like bandits and love to carry out attacks against their enemies in densely wooded, narrow, and steep places. They make effective use of ambushes, sudden attacks, and raids, devising many different methods by night and by day. Their experience in crossing rivers surpasses that of all other men, and they are extremely good at spending a lot of time in the water. Often enough when they are in their own country and are caught by surprise and in a tight spot, they dive to the bottom of a body of water. There they take long, hollow reeds they have prepared for such a situation and hold them in their mouths,

the reeds extending to the surface of the water. Lying on their backs on the bottom, they breathe through them and hold out for many hours without anyone suspecting where they are. An inexperienced person who notices the reeds from above would simply think they were growing there in the water. But a person who has some experience with this trick, recognizing the reeds by the way they are cut or by their position, either shoves them down further into their mouths or pulls them out, which brings the men to the surface, since they cannot remain under water any longer without them.

They are armed with short javelins, two to each man. Some also have nice-looking but unwieldy shields. In addition, they use wooden bows with short arrows smeared with a poisonous drug which is very effective. If the wounded man has not drunk the antidote beforehand to check the poison or made use of other remedies which experienced doctors might know about, he should immediately cut around the wound to keep the poison from spreading to the rest of the body.

Owing to their lack of government and their ill feeling toward one another, they are not acquainted with an order of battle. They are also not prepared to fight battle in close order, or to present themselves on open and level ground. If they do get up enough courage when the time comes to attack, they shout all together and move forward a short distance. If their opponents begin to give way at the noise, they attack violently; if not, they themselves turn around, not being anxious to experience the strength of the enemy at close range. They then run for the woods, where they have a great advantage because of their skill in fighting in such cramped quarters. Often too when they are carrying booty they will abandon [p. 122] it in a feigned panic and run for the woods. When their assailants disperse after the plunder, they calmly come back and cause them injury. They are ready to do this sort of thing to bait their adversaries eagerly and in a variety of ways.

They are completely faithless and have no regard for treaties, which they agree to more out of fear than by gifts. When a difference of opinion prevails among them, they either come to no agreement at all or when some of them do come to an agreement, the others quickly go against what was decided. They are always at odds with each other, and nobody is willing to yield to another.

In combat they are hurt by volleys of arrows, sudden attacks launched against them from different directions, hand-to-hand fighting with infantry, especially light-armed troops, and having to fight on open and unobstructed ground. Our army, therefore, should comprise both cavalry and infantry,

especially light-armed troops or javelin throwers, and should carry a large amount of missiles, not only arrows, but other throwing weapons. Bring materials for building bridges, the kind called floating, if possible. In this way you may cross without effort the numerous and unfordable rivers in their country. Build them in Scythian manner, some men erecting the framework, others laying down the planks. You should also have ox-hide or goatskin bags to make rafts, and for us in helping the soldiers swim across for surprise attacks against the enemy in the summer.

Still, it is preferable to launch our attacks against them in the winter when they cannot easily hide among the bare trees, when the tracks of fugitives can be discerned in the snow, when their household is miserable from exposure, and when it is easy to cross over rivers on ice. Most of the animals and superfluous equipment should be left behind in a very safe place with a suitable guard and officer in charge. The dromons should be anchored at strategic locations. A moira of cavalry under outstanding officers should be stationed in the area as protection so that the army on the march shall not be distracted in the event of hostile ambushes, and also to spread rumors that an attack against the enemy is being planned in some other location. By means of such rumor and the anxiety of their chiefs, each of whom will be worried about their own problems, they will not have the opportunity to get together and cause trouble for our army. Do not station these troops close to the Danube, for the enemy would find out how few they are and consider them unim- [p. 123] portant. Nor should they be very far away, so there will be no delay, if it becomes necessary, to have them join the invading army. They should stay a day's march from the Danube. This army should cross over into enemy territory suddenly and make its invasion on clear and level ground. Immediately a competent officer should ride ahead with some picked men to take captives from whom it will be possible to get information about the enemy. As far as possible, avoid marching through rough or wooded terrain during summer until thorough reconnaissance has been made, and, in the case the enemy is present in force, until they have been driven away by our infantry or cavalry. If we have to march through a narrow pass, and if we expect to return by the same route, measures must be taken, as explained in the book dealing with this matter, to clear the way, widen the road, or to leave a relatively strong force behind in the area to prevent the enemy from hiding and making surprise attacks which could overwhelm our army on its return when it is likely to be encumbered with plunder.

As much as possible, avoid making camp in thickly wooded areas or pitching your tents near such places. For they can easily serve as a base for launching attacks or for rustling horses. The infantry force should encamp in order and within the fortification. The cavalry should camp outside, with sentinels posted in a wide circle around the grazing horses, unless it is possible to bring in forage for the horses, so they can stay inside day and night.

If an opportunity for battle occurs, do not make your final battle line against them too deep. Do not concentrate only on frontal attacks, but on the other sectors as well. Suppose that the enemy occupy a fairly strong position and have their rear well covered so that they do not allow us an opportunity to encircle them or to attack their flanks or their rear. In that event it is necessary to post some troops in concealment, have others simulate a flight before their front, so that, lured by the hope of pursuit, they may abandon their good defensive position, and then our men will turn back against them, while those in hiding come out and attack them.

Since there are many kings among them always at odds with one another, it is not difficult to win over some of them by persuasion or by gifts, especially those in areas closer to the border, and then to attack the others, so that their common hostility will not make them united or bring them together under one ruler. The so-called *refu-* [p. 124] *gees* who are ordered to point out the roads and furnish certain information must be very closely watched. Even some Romans have given in to the times, forget their own people, and prefer to gain the good will of the enemy. Those who remain loyal ought to be rewarded, and the evildoers punished. Provisions found in the surrounding countryside should not simply be wasted, but use pack animals and boats to transport them to our own country. The rivers there flow into the Danube, which makes transportation by boat easy.

Infantry are necessary not only in narrow places and fortified places, but also in rough country and along rivers. Even in the face of the enemy it is then possible to bridge over them. When a small force of infantry, both heavy and light, has been secretly brought across at night or during the day and immediately drawn up in formation, keeping their backs to the river, they provide enough security to put a bridge across the river. In cramped river crossings or in defiles it is necessary for the rear guard to be ready for action at all times, disposed according to the terrain. For one may expect attacks to occur whenever the force is divided, and the troops who are advancing cannot aid those in the rear. Surprise attacks against the enemy should be carried out

according to the standard procedure. One detachment approaches their front and provokes them, while another detachment, infantry or cavalry, is posted secretly in the rear of the route by which they are expected to flee. The enemy then who avoided action or who flee from the first attacking force will unexpectedly run right into the other detachment. In summer there must be no letup in hurting them. During that time of year we can pillage the more open and bare areas and aim at entrenching ourselves in their land. This will aid the Romans who are captives among them to gain their freedom, after escaping from them. The thick foliage of summer makes it fairly easy for prisoners to escape without fear.

The procedures of the march, the invasion, and the pillaging of the country, and other more or less related matters, are dealt with in the book on invading hostile territory. Here the subject will be summarized as best as possible. The settlements of Slavs and Antes lie in a row along the rivers very close to one another. In fact, there is [p. 125] practically no space between them, and they are bordered by forests, swamps, beds of reeds. As a result, what generally happens to invasions launched against them is that the whole army comes to a halt at their first settlement and is kept busy there, while the rest of the neighboring settlements, on learning of the invasion, easily escape with their belongings to the nearby forests. Their fighting men then come back ready for action, seize their opportunities, and attack our soldiers from cover. This prevents the invading troops from inflicting any damage on the enemy. For these reasons we must make surprise attacks against them, particularly in unexpected places. The bandons or tagmas must be so arranged beforehand that they know which one is first, which second, which third, and they should march in that order through very constricted areas, so they do not get mixed up and lose time in reorganizing themselves. When a crossing has been made without detection, if there are two suitable places which can be attacked, the army ought to be divided in two, with the lieutenant general taking one part, ready for battle and without a baggage train, and advance a distance of fifteen to twenty miles through unsettled land on their flanks with a view to launching an attack from the more mountainous areas. Then on approaching the settlements there, he should begin pillaging, continuing until he meets the units with the general. The general, keeping the other part of the army, should invade and pillage from the other end of the settlements. Both should be advancing, destroying and pillaging the settlements between them until they meet up with one another in a determined place. On arriving there they should

pitch camp together toward evening. In this way the attack is successfully carried out. The enemy running away from one detachment will unexpectedly fall right into the hands of the other, and they will not be able to regroup.

If there is only one suitable road by which it is possible to invade the settlements, the army should still be divided. The lieutenant general must take half or even more of it, a strong force and ready for battle, without a baggage train. His own bandon, with himself in his proper place, should advance at the head of the whole force, and accompanying him should be the tagma commanders. When his force approaches the first settlement, he should detach one or two bandons so, while some go about pillaging, others may keep guard over them. It is not wise to detach too many bandons for the first settlements, even if they happen to be large ones. From when our army arrives, there is no time for the inhabitants to organize any resis- **[p. 126]** tance. The lieutenant general should continue his advance rapidly, while still carrying out the same procedure at the rest of the settlements along the way as long as there are enough tagmas under his command. The lieutenant general himself ought to stay clear of all these actions. He should retain for himself three or four bandons, up to a thousand capable men, until the invasion is completely finished, so he can see to reconnaissance and security for the rest of the troops.

While the lieutenant general is discharging these duties, the general should follow along, have the pillaging troops join him, and keep moving up toward the lieutenant general. For his part, the lieutenant general should turn back and gather up the pillagers along his line of march. In the place where the two encounter each other they should set up camp together that same day. These surprise incursions made by the two units should not advance more than fifteen or twenty miles, so that they may get there, do their pillaging, and pitch camp on the same day. In these expeditions those of the enemy able to put up resistance need not be taken alive, but kill everyone you encounter and move on. When you are marching along do not let them delay you, but take advantage of the opportunity.

B.1.6 THEOPHYLACT SIMOCATTA (*translation from the original Greek by M. Whitby & M. Whitby*).

A. History 1.7.5

(5) Next, when the summer came around, he collected the Roman forces, moved to Adrianopolis, and encountered Ardagastus, who had in train great hordes of Sclavenes with a most distinguished haul of prisoners and splendid booty. After passing the night, at daybreak he approached the fort of Ansinon and courageously engaged the barbarians.

B. History 6.7.5

(5) And so the Romans made the Slavene hordes a feast for the sword, and ravaged Ardagastus' territory; they put their captives in wooden fetters and sent them to Byzantium.

C. History 6.9.1-13

(1) But the Gepid described everything and revealed events in detail, saying that the prisoners were subjects of Musocius, who was called *rex* in the barbarian tongue, that this Musocius was encamped thirty parasangs away, that he had sent out the captives to reconnoitre the Roman force, and that he had also heard about the misfortunes which had recently befallen Ardagastus. (2) He advised the Romans to make a sudden attack and to catch the barbarian by the surprise of their onslaught. And so Alexander came to Priscus and brought the barbarians, but the commander consigned these to slaughter. (3) So that barbarian Gepid came before the general, described to Priscus the barbarians' intentions, and advised Priscus to attack the barbarian; as a pledge of success the Gepid agreed to trick the barbarian. (4) Then Priscus joyfully accepted the proposal and, lubricating the deserter with splendid gifts and securing him with glorious promises, he sent him to beguile the barbarian. (5) Therefore the Gepid came to Musocius, and asked to be provided by him with a number of canoes, so that he could ferry across those involved in Ardagastus'

misfortunes. (6) And so Musocius, regarding as a godsend the plan woven against him by deceit, provided canoes so that the Gepid could save Ardagastus' followers. Then, taking a total of one hundred and fifty skiffs and thirty oarsmen, he came to the other side of the river which the natives call Paspirius. (7) Priscus, in accordance with the agreement, began his march at dawn. But the Gepid man eluded the notice of his companions, and in the middle of the night came to the Roman commander; he asked to be given one hundred soldiers, so that he could destroy the barbarian sentries in the jaws of the sword. (8) Then the general marshalled two hundred men and gave them to the brigadier Alexander. When the Romans had come near the river Paspirius, the Gepid placed Alexander in hiding. (9) Accordingly, when night had fallen, the barbarians happened to be heavy with sleep and, since they had been drinking, they held fast to their dreams, whereas the Gepid dissimulated so as to destroy the barbarians. (10) In the third watch he moved away a short distance, came to the hiding-place, and led Alexander out of the ambush. And so he directed the Romans to the river Paspirius, exchanged signals, and came to the barbarians. Then, since the barbarians were still consorting with sleep, the Gepid gave Alexander the signal by means of Avar songs. (11) Alexander attacked the barbarians and provided the mortal penalty for sleep. When he had gained control of the skiffs, he dispatched messengers to the general to increase the impetus of the attack. (12) Priscus took three thousand men, divided them between the skiffs, and crossed the river Paspirius. Next, in the middle of the night, they provided the introduction to their attack. Now the barbarian was drunk and debilitated by liquor, since on that day there had been a funeral celebration for his departed brother in accordance with their custom. (13) And so great panic ensued; then the barbarian was taken captive, while the Romans revelled in a night of bloodshed. As day grew bright, the general put a stop to the slaughter; at the third hour the general ferried across his equipment and forces.

D. *History, 7.2.13-15.*

(13) They replied that they were Sclavenes by nation and that they lived at the boundary of the western ocean; the Chagan had dispatched ambassadors to their parts to levy a military force and had lavished many gifts on their nation's rulers; and so they accepted the gifts but refused him the alliance, asserting that

the length of the journey daunted them, while they sent back to the Chagan for the purpose of making a defence these same men who had been captured; they had completed the journey in fifteen months; but the Chagan had forgotten the law of ambassadors and had decreed a ban on their return; (14) since they had heard that the Roman nation was much the most famous, as far as can be told, for wealth and clemency, they had exploited the opportunity and retired to Thrace; (15) they carried lyres since it was not their practice to gird weapons on their bodies, because their country was ignorant of iron and thereby provided them with a peaceful and trouble-free life...

E. *History, 7.4.13*

(13) But Peiragastus, who was the tribal leader of that barbarian horde, took his forces, encamped at the rivercrossings, and concealed himself in the woods like an overlooked bunch of grapes on the vine.

F. *History, 7.5.4*

(4) Then their brigadier, whom the story has already declared to be Peiragastus, was killed; for he was struck in the flank by a missile and death took him in hand, since the blow had reached a vital part. Therefore, after Peiragastus had fallen, the enemy turned to flight.

A. Book I Miracle 12 (pp. 124-129).

[Θαῦμα ιβ']

Περὶ τοῦ ἐν τῷ κιβωρίῳ γενομένου ἐμπρησμοῦ

[100] Ἀλλ' ὁ πᾶς ἡμῖν χρόνος τὰ τοῦ μάρτυρος οὐκ ἐπαρκέσει διηγουμένοις θαυμάσια, καὶ δέδοικα μὴ τὸν φιλομάρτυρα πόθον ὑμῶν σπεύδων ἀνάπτειν τοῖς διηγήμασι, τῷ πλήθει τῆς γραφῆς τὸν κόρον ἐπάξωμαι, καὶ παραδώσω τὴν πρόθυμον ἀκοὴν ἀκυδερνήτῳ ναυτιασμῷ — πάντα γάρ, ὡς λόγος, ὑποίσει ἀνθρώπου φύσις, κόρον δὲ οὐδαμῶς —, εἰ καὶ ὅτι κόρος τῶν θείων διηγημάτων οὐδεὶς τοῖς ἐχέφροσι, διὰ τὸ μᾶλλον τὴν δίψαν τοῦ ἡγεμονικοῦ διακαίεσθαι τῶν χανδῶν δι' ἀκοῆς τὰ τοιαῦτα ἐκπεπωκότων · πλὴν καὶ τοῦ μὴ τινων τὴν ἀπιστίαν ἐξαμαρτάνειν φειδόμενοι, λήξωμεν τῶν ἀμέτρων θαυματουργημάτων τοῦ μάρτυρος · ἀπὲρ τὸν κολοφῶνα τούτων ἑαυτοὺς ἀνατείναντες, τὰς ἐν πολέμοις αὐτοῦ προνοίας καὶ βοηθείας συγγράψωμεν. [101] Ἀλλὰ κἀνταῦθα πάλιν εἰ πάντων ὧν ἐγνώμεν καὶ ἠκούσαμεν μνημονεῦσαι προθώμεθα, μῆκος ἄφατον συγγραφῇ περιθήσομεν. Ἐν ᾧ γὰρ τὰ παρελθόντα συντάττομεν, ἕτερα πάλιν ἐπικαταλαμβάνουσιν ἐφ' ἐκάστης εὐεργετήματα, καὶ μᾶλλον οὐ λήξουσιν ποτε προσγινόμενα, εἰ καὶ διὰ βίου παντὸς ἡμεῖς τε καὶ οἱ μεθ' ἡμᾶς συγγράφειν ἐλοίμεθα. Οὐκοῦν δύο καὶ μόνα κεφάλαια πολεμικῆς ἐπικουρίας προθέντες σιγήσομεν. Τῇ διηγῇ γὰρ ἐπιμένοντες, περατῶσαι τὸν σκοπὸν οὐκ ἰσχύσομεν. Χαίρω δέ, ἀγαπητοί, παρ' ὑμῖν τὰ τοῦ πανενδόξου ἀθλοφόρου προτιθεῖς κατορθώματα, τοὺς αὐτοὺς ἀκροατὰς τῶν γενομένων καὶ μάρτυρας κεκτημένους, ὡς μὴ κόπου μοι δεῖν περὶ τὴν πειθὴ τῶν ἀκουόντων ὑμῶν — θεαταὶ γὰρ τούτων οἱ πλεῖστοι γεγόνατε —, εἰ καὶ τὸ μέγεθος τῶν ῥηθησομένων ἐκπλήξει πάντως καὶ τὴν ἀκοὴν καὶ τὴν ἔννοιαν.

[102] Τοῦ καλλινίκου καὶ φιλοπόλιδος τούτου μάρτυρος Δημητρίου ἡγὼν ἑορτὴν ἢ χώρα πᾶσα, καθὼς εἰώθει, τῇ τοῦ ὀκτωβρίου μηνὸς εἰκάδι ἔκτη ἡμέρᾳ. Καὶ δὴ πάντων εὐφραϊνομένων πνευματικῶς, ὡς πληρώσαντος τοῦ κυρίου τὴν εὐχὴν τῶν δούλων αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἀξιόσαντος αὐτοὺς τῆς χαρᾶς τοῦ μάρτυρος ἐν εἰρήνῃ πλατεῖᾳ, καὶ βαρβαρικῆς ὁμφῆς μηδόλως μηδαμοῦ τηνικαῦτα κατακουομένης, τῇ δευτέρᾳ ἡμέρᾳ τῆς ἑορτῆς ἄφνω μέσης νυκτὸς κατ' οἰκονομίαν τοῦ ἀθλοφόρου, οὕτω γὰρ με λέγειν τὸ | πέρας τοῦ πράγματος ἔπεισεν, ἀνήφθη πυρὶ τὸ ἅγιον αὐτοῦ κιβώριον τὸ ἀργύρεον, περὶ οὗ πολλάκις ἀνωτέρω ἐμνημονεύσαμεν. [103] Τούτου δὲ κατὰ πάσης τῆς πόλεως ἐν βραχεῖ καιρῷ διακουσθέντος, συνήχθη πᾶν τὸ νέον ὡς μάλιστα τῆς ἡλικίας, τὸ καὶ τὸν ὕπνον εὐχερῶς δι' εὐσθένειαν ἀποβάλλον. Ὡς δὲ τοσοῦτοι γεγόνασιν ὡς ἀποδυσιῇ τῷ πλήθει τὸ πανάγιον τέμενος, ὁ μὲν ἄργυρος λυθεὶς τῷ πυρὶ ἦν ἅπας ἐπὶ ἐδάφους ὡς ὕδωρ, τὸ δὲ πλῆθος τῶν ἀμφορέων περιέκλυζε τοῦτον ποταμηδόν, ὅφ' ὧν καὶ προνοία θεοῦ νενίκητο τὸ τῆς φλογὸς ἐπικίνδυνον. [104] Οὐ τοσοῦτον γὰρ τῇ ἀθυμίᾳ πάντας εἰς ἀμηχανίαν ἐβάπτισεν ἢ τοῦ κιβωρίου πυρπόλησις, ὅσον ἡ προσδοκία τοῦ φθάνειν τὴν φλόγα περὶ τὴν ὀροφὴν τοῦ ναοῦ τὰς καρδίας τῶν θεωμένων ἐξέτηκεν. Οὐπερ καὶ γενομένου — φόβος γὰρ ὃν ἐδεδοίκεισαν ἐπῆλθεν αὐτοῖς, καθὼς γέγραπται¹ — ἐκ τοῦ διὰ τῆς <κατὰ τῆς> κορυφῆς τοῦ κιβωρίου κρεμαμένης ἀλύσεως σιδηρᾶς, ἐξ ἧς πολύφωτός τις ἀπηρεῖτο

καὶ ἀργύρεος τηνικαῦτα κρατῆρ, δίκην σμίλακος τὸ πῦρ ἀνανεμηθὲν φθάσαι τὴν ὀροφὴν καὶ τοὺς καλουμένους καλὰθους ἄρξασθαι περιτεφροῦν, δὴ τότε τινές, ἀεροδρομήσαντες εὐσχύλτως κατὰ τῶν δοκῶν σὺν ἀγγείοις πλείοσιν ὕδατοφόροις, θεοῦ συνεργείᾳ περιεγένοντο τοῦ φλογμοῦ.

[105] Μετὰ γοῦν ταῦτα, τοῦ πλήθους τῶν ὄχλων οὐ διεκχωροῦντος, ἀλλ' ἐπιμένοντος ἔνδον, καὶ τῶν ἀποσοβούντων ἢ καὶ ὑποχωρεῖν διὰ τὸ ἄωρον τῆς νυκτὸς κελευόντων οὐκ ἰσχυόντων πεῖσαι τὴν πληθύν, δέος ὑπεισῆλθέ τινας τῶν κηδομένων τοῦ πανσέπτου ναοῦ μὴ τινες ἀγνώτες διὰ τε τὸ πλῆθος τοῦ ὄχλου, διὰ τε τὸ νύκτα τυγχάνειν, ἐπιχειρήσαιεν εἰς ἀρπαγὴν τοῦ ἀργύρου, οὐ τοῦ καταφλεχθέντος μόνον

τῷ πυρί, ἀλλὰ καὶ παντὸς τοῦ κρεμαμένου πρὸς εὐκοσμίαν τῆς ἐορτῆς. [106] Καὶ δὴ βουλευσάμενος εἷς, ἀξιομνημόνευτος ἀνὴρ καὶ τὴν ἐντιμον στρατείαν τοῦ δακικοῦ καλουμένου σκρινίου τῶν ὑπερλάμπρων ὑπάρχων τοῦ Ἰλλυρικοῦ στρατευόμενος, ὡς οὐκ ἔσται τρόπος ὁ δυνάμενος ἀλύπως καὶ εὐπροφασίστως ἐξωθῆσαι τὸν ὄχλον ἐκ τοῦ ναοῦ, εἰ μὴ προφασίσοιτό τις αἰφνιδίαν βαρβάρων ἐπιδρομὴν, τοῦ ἀθλοφόρου τὴν ἐκείνου καρδίαν εἰς τοῦτο κινήσαντος, ἤρξατο βοᾶν · « Βάρβαροι περὶ τὸ τεῖχος, ὦ ἄνδρες πολῖται, ἀπροσδοκῆτως ἐφάνησαν, ἀλλὰ σὺν ὅπλοις ἅπαντες ὑπὲρ τῆς πατρίδος ὀρμήσατε. » Καὶ ταῦτα μὲν ἐκεῖνος δῆθεν ἐβόα πλαττόμενος καὶ μόνου γινόμενος τοῦ ἐξαγαγεῖν τοὺς ὄχλους ἐκ τοῦ ναοῦ καὶ κατασφαλίσαι τοὺς πυλεῶνας, ὡς ἂν μεθ' ἡσυχίας ἢ συλλογῇ τοῦ χωνευθέντος ἀργύρου προσγένηται · τὸ δὲ προμηθεῖα | καθειστήκει τοῦ πανενδόξου μάρτυρος εἰς τὸ μὴ νυκτὸς ὑπ' ἀγνοίας κινδυνεῦσαι τὴν πόλιν.

[107] Ὁ γὰρ δῆμος ἅπας τῆς ἀπροσδοκῆτου ταύτης βοῆς κατακούσαντες ἔδραμον εἰς οἴκους, καὶ ὀπλισθέντες ἐπὶ τὰ τεῖχη ἀνῆσαν. Εἵτα καθορῶσιν ἐπὶ τὸ πεδίον τοῦ σεβασμίου ναοῦ τῆς χριστοφόρου μάρτυρος Ματρώνης πληθύν βαρβαρικὴν, οὐκ ἄγαν μὲν πολλήν, ἄχρι γὰρ πέντε χιλιάδων παρ' ἡμῖν ἐλογίσθησαν, σφοδρὰν δὲ τῇ ἰσχύϊ διὰ τὸ ἐπιλέκτους τε ἅπαντας καὶ ἐμπειροπολέμους καθεστηκέναι. Οὐ γὰρ ἂν οὕτως ἀθρόον πόλει τηλικαύτῃ προσέβαλλον, εἰ μὴ ῥώμη καὶ θάρσει τῶν πώποτε κατ' αὐτοὺς στρατευσαμένων διενηνοχότες ἐτύγγανον. [108] Ὡς δὲ ἀνέκραξεν ἀπὸ τοῦ τεύχους ἡ πόλις αὐτοψεῖ τοὺς ἀντιπάλους εἰσδράψασα — ὀρθρος γὰρ λοιπὸν ἦν καὶ τὰ τῆς ἡμέρας ἐπέφωσκεν —, οἱ πλεῖστοι κατελθόντες καὶ τὰς πύλας ἀνοίξαντες ἔξω τὴν συμπλοκὴν πρὸς ἐκείνους, τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἀθλοφόρου αὐτοὺς ἐνισχύσαντος, ἐποιήσαντο, ἥδη λοιπὸν φθάσαντας τῇ μανίᾳ τῆς θηριωδίας αὐτῶν καὶ μέχρι τοῦ σεβασμίου τεμένους τῶν τριῶν ἀγίων μαρτύρων Χιόνης, Εἰρήνης καὶ Ἀγάπης, ὑπὲρ ὡς ἴστε βραχυτάτῳ διαστήματι τοῦ τῆς πόλεως τεύχους ἀφίστηκεν. Καὶ δὴ μέχρι πολλοῦ τῆς ἡμέρας συρρηγνυμένων ἀμφοτέρων ἀλλήλοις, καὶ τὰς διώξεις καὶ τὰς ὑφέσεις ἐπικινδυνότερον ὁ τοῦ ἀθλοφόρου στρατὸς ποιησάμενος, διὰ τὸ παντὸς τοῦ τῶν Σκλαβίνων ἔθνους τὸ ἐπίλεκτον ἄνθος, ὡς εἴρηται, τοὺς ἀντιπαρατασσομένους καθεστηκέναι, τέλος αὐτῆς τοῦ μάρτυρος τῆς ἐπιστασίας ἐπιφανείσης, ἀπεδιώχθη τὸ βάρβαρον αὐτῆς ἡμέρας τῶν τῇδε μερῶν, οὐ παρ' ὀλίγους ὑποχωρῆσαν ἥπερ εἰσέβαλε. Καὶ τὰ μὲν τῆς τότε γεγενημένης ἀπροσδοκῆτου καὶ θηριώδους ἐπιδρομῆς οὕτω συνετελέσθη.

[109] Ἐπανέλθωμεν δὲ τῷ λόγῳ πρὸς τὸν καιρὸν τῆς νυκτός, ὅτε τὸ πλῆθος

ἅπαν τῆς πόλεως τὸ ἅγιον τέμενος τοῦ πανενδόξου μάρτυρος καταλιπὸν ὥρμησεν ἐπὶ τὰ τείχη, τῷ κράξαντι πεισθέντες ὡς οἱ βάρβαροι παρεγένοντο. Ἡ γὰρ ἀκολουθία τοῦ διηγήματος καὶ τὴν τοῦ ἀθλοφόρου περὶ ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἁμαρτωλοὺς κηδεμονίαν ἀποδείξειεν ἀναντίρρητον, καὶ τὰς ὑμετέρας ψυχὰς εἰς τὸν αὐτοῦ πόθον ἀναφλέξειε τῆς πατρικῆς ὥσπερ ἀντιλήψεως ἀναμιμνησκομένας ἐκάστοτε. Ὁ γὰρ λαμπρὸς καὶ φιλόμαρτος ἐκεῖνος ἀνὴρ ὁ βοήσας ἐν τῷ ναῷ καὶ τὴν τῶν βαρβάρων δῆθεν πλασάμενος ἄφιξιν, ὡς εἶδεν ἅπαντας ἐξορμήσαντας καὶ τὸν ναὸν τοῦ ἀθλοφόρου καθησυχάσαντα, μόνων τῶν τῆς ὑπηρεσίας αὐτοῦ ἔνδον ἀπομεινάντων, καὶ τινων ὀλίγων καὶ γνησίων φίλων τοῦ προλεχθέντος ἀνδρός, οὓς αὐτὸς ἔκοντι παρακατέσχεν ὡς εἰδὼς τὸ γενόμενον, εἶπε τοῖς ἐν τῷ ναῷ παραμένουσιν · « Ἰδοὺ τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ θεοῦ βοηθήσαντος καὶ τοῦ πανενδόξου μάρτυρος συνεργήσαντος, καὶ τὸ πῦρ ἐσθέσθη καὶ οὐδὲν τῶν ἐντεῦθεν ἀπώλετο · κλείσαντες οὖν τοῦ ναοῦ τὰς θύρας, μεθ' ἡσυχίας τὸν χωνευθέντα συλλέξατε ἄργυρον · πάλιν γὰρ εὖ οἶδα ὅτι ἡ εὐπρέπεια τοῦ τόπου τούτου διὰ τοῦ ἁγίου μάρτυρος ἀναστήσεται. » [110] Τῶν δὲ ἀσφαλισμένων τὰς θύρας καὶ συλλεγόντων τὸν ἄργυρον καὶ τὰ τῆς πυρκαϊᾶς διακαθαιρόντων, ἡγείρετο δεινὴ βοή καὶ μακράκουστος τῆς τῶν βαρβάρων φάλαγγος καὶ τοῦ στρατοῦ τῆς πόλεως ἐξ αὐτοσχεδίου συρρηγνυμένων. Ὡς δὲ κατεθορυβήθησαν οἱ ἐν τῷ ναῷ τῇ βοῇ καὶ τῶν ἐν χερσὶ κατημέλησαν, λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ θαυμάσιος ἐκεῖνος ἀνὴρ · « Ὑμεῖς, ἀδελφοί, τὸ ἔργον ὑμῶν ποιεῖτε, καὶ μηδένα λόγον ἔχετε περὶ βαρβάρων · ἐκ γὰρ τοῦ ἐμὲ τοῦτο διαδοῆσαι τετραραγμένην ἔχετε τὴν ἀκοήν, καὶ τὴν νῦν βοήν, οὐκ οἶδα ὅθεν γεγεννημένην, εἰκότως διὰ τὴν πρόληψιν βαρβάρων εἶναι νομίζετε · οὐκ ἔστι δὲ οὕτως, οὐκ ἔστιν · ἐγὼ γὰρ τοῦ ἁγίου μάρτυρος ὑποβαλόντος τὴν τῶν βαρβάρων φήμην ἀνεπλασάμην ὡς ἂν διασκεδάσω τὸν ὄχλον ἐντεῦθεν, καὶ μεθ' ἡσυχίας ὑμεῖς τὰ περὶ τὴν κόσμησιν καὶ τὴν ἀσφάλειαν τοῦ ναοῦ μεριμνήσητε. » [111] Οἱ δὲ τοῦ ἁγίου οἴκου λειτουργοὶ καὶ οἱ φίλοι τοῦ ταῦτα εἰρηκότος ἀνδρός ὡς ἐξ ἐνὸς στόματος εἶπον · « Ὁ θεὸς τοῦ ἁγίου καὶ πανενδόξου μάρτυρος Δημητρίου εὐλογῆσαι καὶ πληθύναι τὴν ζωὴν σου ἐν ἀγαθοῖς, πρῶτον μὲν ὅτι τῶν ἱερῶν σκευῶν καὶ τῆς ἀσφαλείας τοῦ ναοῦ ὡς τέλειος χριστιανὸς μεγάλως ἐφρόντισας, εἴτα δὲ ὅτι καὶ τὰς ἡμετέρας νῦν ψυχὰς ὡς ἐξ ἄδου εἰς φῶς ἀνεζώγρησας, μηνύσας ἡμῖν τάληθες τῆς σῆς προσποιήσεως · νομίσαντες γὰρ ἀψευδῶς σε περὶ τῶν βαρβάρων διαδοῆσαι, μάρτυς ἡ ἀλήθεια, οὐδὲ τὰ ἐν χερσὶν ἐωρῶμεν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς, ὅλῳ τῷ νοῖ τὰ περὶ τὸν πόλεμον φανταζόμενοι · νῦν δὲ μετὰ προθυμίας ἅπαντες τῶν ἐσπουδασμένων ἀντιληψόμεθα. »

[112] Ὡς δὲ σὺν τοῖς ὑπηρέταις τοῦ ναοῦ καὶ οἱ μετ' ἐκείνου νεώτεροι πιστῇ προθυμίᾳ περὶ τὴν κάθαρσιν τῶν κεκαυμένων καὶ τὴν ἐκβολὴν τῶν ἀπηνθρακωμένων

ἐπεδοθήουν, μειζόνως ἡσθάνοντο τῆς βοῆς τοῦ πολέμου, καὶ τινα τῆς βαρβαρικῆς κραυγῆς σημεῖα διὰ τῆς ἐθάδος ἀκοῆς ἐπεγίνωσκον. Ὁ δὲ καὶ πάλιν αὐτοὺς θορυβούμενους ἰδὼν · « Τί, φησὶν, ἴστασθε τοῦ ἔργου καταμελήσαντες ἐνεοί ; εἶπον οὖν ὑμῖν, τὰ περὶ τοῦ ναοῦ φροντίσατε καὶ περὶ τοῦ πολέμου μηδένα λόγον ἔχετε · ἐγὼ τοῦτον, ὡς προείρηκα, διεφήμισα πλασάμενος ἔκοντι διὰ τὸ ἡρεμῆσαι | τοῦ ὄχλου τὸν οἶκον · νῦν οὖν ἀμεριμνοῦντες τῶν ἐν χερσὶν ὡς δοῦλοι τοῦ ἀθλοφόρου φροντίσατε. » [113] Ὡς δὲ ἤρξαντο πάλιν, ἀναθαρσήσαντες τούτοις τοῖς ῥήμασι, τὰ περὶ τὸν ναὸν συλλέγειν καὶ καθαίρειν καὶ διαβαστάζειν καὶ τὴν μεθ' ὕδατος ἰλὸν διασαροῦν, ἤκόν τινες ἀναγγέλλοντες ὡς χάριτι Χριστοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν

ἐδιώχθησαν οἱ πολέμοι, μέχρις αὐτῶν τῶν πυλῶν καταθρασυνθέντες ἐπιδραμεῖν. Ἡ δὲ συμμαχία τοῦ ἀθλοφόρου καὶ μόνη τὸ πᾶν τοῦ πολέμου κατώρθωσε · πρῶτον μὲν εἰς τὸν ναὸν αὐτοῦ συνάξασα τοὺς τῆς πόλεως, προβαλλομένη τὸν ἐμπρησμόν, οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἄλλως μετὰ σπουδῆς ἄωρὶ νυκτὸς ἐκ τῶν κλινῶν διηγείροντο εἰ μὴ τὸ περὶ τὸν ναὸν σέβας μετ' ἐκπλήξεως αὐτοὺς διανέστησεν · εἴτα δὲ ὥσπερ εἰς παράταξιν τούτους ἀθροίσασά τε καὶ συσχεύασα, ἐμπλήσασα θάρσους, διὰ μιᾶς ἀνθρώπου φωνῆς ἔξω πυλῶν ὀρμῆσαι καινοπρεπῶς παρεσκεύασε, καὶ μέχρι τοῦ νῦν ἀπὸ ἑωσφόρου δις καὶ τρίς καὶ πλεονάκις συγκρούσαντας, νικητὰς διὰ τῆς μνήμης αὐτοῦ, τῆς νῦν παρ' ἡμῖν τελουμένης, τοὺς ἰδίους δούλους ἀνέδειξεν.

[114] Ὡς δὲ ταῦτα οἱ ἐξηγούμενοι αὐτοφει θεάσασθαι διεμαρτυροῦντό τε καὶ διώμυντο — τὸν γὰρ ἔκοντι ψευδόμενον ἄλλως οὐκ ἔπειθον —, ὁ θαυμάσιος ἐκεῖνος ἀνὴρ, οὗ ἡ καρδιά ἐψεύδετο καὶ τὸ στόμα τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἀπεφθέγγετο, δι' οὗ ὁ θεός, ἐκεῖνου ἄλλα προθυμουμένου, ἕτερα τῇ πόλει σωτήρια ἐχαρίζετο, ὁ νέος Ἀβραάμ ὁ ψευδόμενος τῇ πόλει τοὺς βαρβάρους, τὴν δὲ σωτηρίαν ἄκων αὐτῇ προξενήσας διὰ τοῦ μάρτυρος, ὡς ἐκεῖνος τοὺς παῖδας ἐψεύδετο μετὰ τοῦ Ἰσαὰκ ὑποστρέφειν εὐθὺς ὑποσχόμενος¹, τῇ δὲ γλώττῃ αὐτοῦ χωρὶς συνειδήσεως τὸ γεννησόμενον προεφήτευσεν — οὗτος δὴ ὁ ἀνὴρ, ἀκούσας τὰ συμβάντα τῇ πόλει, ὕμνησε τὸν θεὸν καὶ τὸν ἀθλοφόρον σὺν τοῖς παροῦσιν αὐτόθι λέγων · « Κύριε ὁ θεὸς ὁ προαιώνιος, ὁ παντοκράτωρ, ὁ τῶν κρυφίων γνώστης καὶ τῶν ἀδήλων ἐπιστήμων, ὁ ἀνεξιχνίαστος ἐν εὐεργεσίαις καὶ ἀκατάληπτος ἐν φιλανθρωπίᾳ, οὗ ἡ βουλή ἔργον καὶ τὸ νεῦμα πράγματος ἀποτελεσμα, σὺ καλεῖς καὶ πάντα ὑπακούουσί σοι τρόμφ, διατί ; ὅτι τὰ σύμπαντα δοῦλα σά, ὁ καταμόνας πλάσας τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν² καὶ ποικίλλων αὐτὰς πρὸς ὃ χρὴ τοῦ προκειμένου χάριν · εἰ γὰρ καὶ τὸ αὐτεξούσιον ἐχαρίσω αὐταῖς, ἀλλ' ἐν ταῖς οἰκονομίαις τῶν εὐεργεσιῶν σου πηδαλιουχεῖς αὐτὰς πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον. Ὅποῖον καὶ νῦν ἐπ' ἐμοὶ τῷ νέῳ Βαλαάμ¹, δέσποτα, κατειργάσω, ἀμαρτωλῶ καὶ ἀπερριμμένῳ κατ' ἐκείνον ὑπάρχοντι, διὰ τὴν μνήμην τοῦ πανενδόξου μάρτυρος οἰκτειρήσας τὴν ταπείνωσιν ἡμῶν, καὶ τὴν ὅλην διασώσας πόλιν ἐξ ἀπροσδοκήτου καὶ ἀγνοουμένης αἰχμαλωσίας · ὥσπερ γὰρ ἐκείνον ἄλλα προφέρειν διὰ γλώττης βουλομένον, ἕτερα προσεύχεσθαι καὶ εὐλογεῖν τὸν λαόν σου διὰ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος παρεσκεύασας, οὕτω καὶ μὲ τὸν ἀνάξιον δοῦλόν σου, ἄλλα βουλευσάμενον διὰ τῆς φήμης τῶν ἁλλογενῶν διαπράξασθαι, | μείζονα καθ' ὑπερβολὴν τὴν εὐεργεσίαν τῇ πόλει μνηστεύσασθαι προενόησας. Ποῦ γὰρ ἴσον ἄργυρον ῥήτὸν μὴ ἀπολέσθαι, καὶ πόλιν τηλικαύτην ἐκ δουλείας καὶ αὐτοῦ θανάτου ῥυσθῆναι ; Ὡς τῆς πρεσβείας τοῦ ἀθλοφόρου σου καὶ τῆς ἀνυπερβλήτου σου, κύριε, ἀγαθότητος ! Ὁ νοῦς μου τὸν ἄργυρον διεφύλαττε, καὶ ἡ γλῶσσά μου τὴν πόλιν διέσωζε · μία ἢ προφορὰ τοῦ λόγου, καὶ τὰς ἐνεργείας εἰς δύο εὐεργεσίας ἡ σὴ φιλανθρωπία διέσχισεν · ἐψευδόμεν ἔκων διὰ τὸν ναὸν σου, καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια τῶν λεγομένων, ἀγνοοῦντος ἐμοῦ, τὴν πόλιν διεφύλαξεν. Εὐχαριστοῦμέν σοι, δέσποτα ὁ θεός, καὶ ἀξιόχρεόν τι προσενέγκαι σοι ἀποροῦμεν. Ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴ πάντων δεσπόζεις καὶ οὐδὲν δέχῃ ὡς καρδίας ἐν εὐθύτῃ εὐχαριστοῦσας, ἰδοὺ ταύτας ἐκχέομεν ἐνώπιόν σου, κατὰ τὸ ψαλμικόν², ὅπως σὺ ἔτι καὶ μᾶλλον οἰκτειρήσας διαφυλάττης ἡμᾶς, οὐ μόνον ἐκ τῶν ἀνθρωπομόρφων θηρίων τούτων, ἀλλὰ πολὺ πρότερον ἀπὸ τῶν νοητῶν πολεμίων, τῶν τὰς ψυχὰς ἡμῶν ἀεὶ βουλομένων αἰχμαλωτίζειν. Ὅτι καὶ τῶν νοητῶν καὶ τῶν αἰσθητῶν ἀπάντων δεσπόζεις, ὡς τῶν ὅλων ποιητής, καὶ σοῦ ἐστὶ τὸ κράτος καὶ ἡ ἐξουσία καὶ τὸ βασιλεῖον τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας. Ἀμήν. » [115] Οὕτω δὴ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς τὰ εὐχαριστήρια τῷ θεῷ καὶ τῷ μεγάλῳ ἡμῶν πρεσβευτῇ τῷ πανενδόξῳ προσανυμνήσαντος μάρτυρι, ἅπαντες εἰς οἴκους τὸν θεὸν δοξάζοντες ἀνεχώρησαν. Ὅτι αὐτοῦ ἐστὶν ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος νῦν καὶ ἀεὶ καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. Ἀμήν.

[Θαῦμα ιγ']

Ἐκ τῶν τοῦ ἀθλοφόρου θαυμάτων
Περὶ τῆς πολιορκίας τῆς πόλεως

[116] Καίρως ἤδη λοιπὸν καὶ τοῦ κεφαλαιωδεστάτου τῶν θαυμασίων ἀψασθαι τοῦ πανσέπτου καὶ φιλοπόλιδος μάρτυρος, λέγω δὴ τοῦ κατὰ τὸν μέγιστον τῶν πώποτε γεγεννημένων τῇ Θεσσαλονίκῃ πολέμων περιφανῶς ἐπιλάμψαντος, καὶ τῆς κινδυνώδους ἐκείνης καὶ ἀδιαφύκτου πολιορκίας ἀπροσδοκῆτως ἡμᾶς διασώσαντος, καὶ σχεδὸν εἰπεῖν ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστήσαντος. Τοῦτο γὰρ τὸ θαυμαστὸν καὶ ἀπιστοφανές καὶ μέγα διήγημα παραστήσει τηλαυγῶς, εἰ | καὶ μηδὲν ἄλλο προϋλέλεκτο, τοῦ ἀθλοφόρου τὴν ἀνυπέρβλητον δύναμιν, καὶ τὸ τῆς φιλανθρωπίας αὐτοῦ θεομίμητον, καὶ τὸ τῆς περὶ τὴν πόλιν κηδεμονίας ἀσύγκριτον. Τοῦδε γὰρ χάριν καὶ τελευταῖον τῆς συγγραφῆς αὐτὸ τέταχα, ὥς ἂν ἀπερισπάστου τῆς ἀκοῆς ὑμῶν μετ' αὐτὸ φυλαχθεῖσης, καὶ τῇ μελέτῃ τῶν εἰρημένων τῆς μνήμης ταῖς διανοαῖς ὑμῶν ἐνριζωθείσης, παρασκευάσω τὰς καρδίας ἀπάντων ἀνεξαλείπτους τὰς τῆς εὐχαριστίας ὁμολογίας, οὐ μόνον ἐν σαρκί, ἀλλὰ καὶ μετὰ τὴν ἔξοδον, πρὸς τὸν ἀλεξίσακτον καὶ ὑπερένδοξον καὶ ὄντως σωσίπατριν ἀθλοφόρον διαφυλάττειν · οὕτω τε καρπώσασθαι ὑμᾶς, μὴ τὴν ἐν τῷ βίῳ τούτῳ μόνον προστασίαν τοῦ μάρτυρος, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς ἐν τῷ φοβερῷ βήματι τοῦ Χριστοῦ πρεσβείας ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν παρ' αὐτοῦ πρὸς τὸν ἀπαραλόγιστον γεννησομένης κριτῆν, τὸν φιλοῦντα παρὰ τῶν ἁγίων αὐτοῦ αἰτεῖσθαι, καὶ τὰς αὐτῶν ἀξιώσεις θεοπρεπῶς χαριζόμενον.

[117] Λέγεται περὶ τινος πράγματος ἡξιωκέναι τὸν τὸ τηνικαῦτα τῶν Ἀδάρων ἡγούμενον, στείλαντα πρέσβεις πρὸς τὸν τῆς εὐσεβοῦς λήξεως καὶ τὰ σκῆπτρα τῆς Ῥωμαίων ἀρχῆς κατέχοντα τότε Μαυρίκιον. Ὡς δὲ ἡστόχησε τῆς αἰτήσεως, ὀργῇ ἀκατασχέτῳ φλεχθεὶς καὶ τῷ παρακούσαντι μηδὲν ποιῆσαι δυνάμενος, τρόπον ἐπινοεῖ δι' οὗ μάλιστα τοῦτον ὀδυνῆσαι τὰ μέγιστα ὑπετόπαζεν, ὅπερ ἦν καὶ πανάληθες. Σκοπήσας γὰρ ὡς ἀπάσης πόλεως κατὰ τε Θράκην καὶ πᾶν τὸ Ἰλλυρικὸν ἢ θεοφύλακτος τῶν Θεσσαλονικέων μητρόπολις ὑπερβαλλόντως προὔχει πλούτῳ τε ποικίλῳ, καὶ ἀνθρώποις εὐθεάτοις καὶ συνετοῖς καὶ χριστιανικωτάτοις, καὶ ἀπλῶς εἰπεῖν γνούς ὡς ἐν καρδίᾳ βασιλέως κεῖται ἡ προλεχθεῖσα μητρόπολις διὰ τὸ λάμπειν ἀπανταχόθεν τοῖς προτερήμασι, καὶ ὅτι ταύτης τῶν ἀπροσδοκῆτων τι παθούσης, οὐχ ἥττον τῆς τῶν τέκνων σφαγῆς ὀδυνήσει τὸν τὸ Ῥωμαϊκὸν κράτος ἀνεστεμμένον, καλεῖ πρὸς ἑαυτὸν τὴν ἄπασαν τῶν Σκλαβηνῶν θηριώδη φυλὴν — ὑπεῖκον γὰρ αὐτῷ τηνικαῦτα τὸ ἔθνος ἅπαν — καὶ προσμίζας αὐτοῖς καὶ ἄλλογενεῖς τινὰς βαρβάρους, στρατεῦσαι πάντας κατὰ τῆς Θεοφρουρήτου Θεσσαλονίκης παρεκελεύσατο.

[118] Μέγιστος οὗτος στρατὸς τῶν κατὰ τοὺς ἡμετέρους χρόνους ὤφθη, ἀγαπητοί. Οἱ μὲν γὰρ αὐτοὺς ὑπὲρ τὰς ἑκατὸν χιλιάδας ὀπλίτας ἄνδρας ἐδόξαζον, οἱ δὲ ὀλίγω ἥττους, ἄλλοι πολλῷ πλείους · τῆς γὰρ ἀληθείας διὰ τὸ ἀπειρον μὴ καταληφθείσης, αἱ δόξαι τῶν θεωμένων ἐσχίζοντο. Νέον Ξέρξου στρατόν, ἢ τὸν ὑπὸ Αἰθιοπῶν καὶ Λιβύων κατὰ Ἰουδαίων τὸ πρὶν ὀπλισάμενον¹, εἶδομεν τοῦτον. Καὶ ποταμοὺς γὰρ καὶ πηγὰς ἐκλείψαι ἠκούσαμεν οἷς ἂν στρατοπεδεύσαντες παρεκάθισαν, καὶ τὴν ὅλην γῆν δι' ἧς παρῶδευσαν ὡς πεδὶον ἀφανισμοῦ, κατὰ τὸν προφήτην², κατέστησαν. Καὶ ἡ τοσαύτη πληθὺς τοσοῦτῳ τάχει τὴν ὁδὸν διανύσαι προσετάχθησαν, ὡς μηδὲ γνῶναι ἡμᾶς τὴν ἔλευσιν αὐτῶν πλὴν πρὸ μιᾶς ἡμέρας.

[119] Κυριακῇ γὰρ ἡμέρᾳ μηνυθέντων τούτων, τῇ εἰκάδι δευτέρᾳ τοῦ Σεπτεμβρίου μηνός, καὶ τῶν τῆς πόλεως ἀμφιβόλως ἔχοντων ὡς μετὰ τέσσαρας ἢ καὶ πρὸς ἡμέρας μόλις τάνθαδε καταλαμβάνουσι, κἀντεῦθεν ἀμελέστερον περὶ τὴν αὐτῆς φυλακὴν διαμεινάντων, αὐτῇ τῇ νυκτὶ δευτέρας σαββάτων ἐπιφωσκούσης ἐπὶ τὰ τεῖχη τῆς πόλεως ἔφθασαν ἀψοφητί. Καὶ πρώτη εὐθὺς ἐπισκιάσεις τοῦ πανενδόξου μάρτυρος Δημητρίου γεγένηται, ἐν τῷ ἀμαυρωθῆναι αὐτοὺς τῇ νυκτὶ ἐκείνῃ, καὶ περὶ τὸ φρούριον τῆς καλλινίκου μάρτυρος Ματρώνης ὥραις ἱκαναῖς ἐνασχοληθῆναι, νομίσαντας ἐκεῖνο τὴν πόλιν καθεστηκέναι. Ὡς δὲ λοιπὸν ἐωσφόρος διηγήσατο, καὶ πλησίον οὖσαν τὴν πόλιν ἐγνώρισαν, ὥρμησαν ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐπ' αὐτὴν ὡς λέων ἀρπάζων καὶ ὠρυόμενος¹. Εἶτα καὶ τῷ τείχει τὰς κλίμακας ἀνορθώσαντες, αὐταὶ γὰρ αὐτοῖς προκατεσκευασμένα διεβαστάζοντο, ὅπλοφόροι δι' αὐτῶν ἀνιέναι παρεβουλεύοντο.

[120] Τότε δὴ τότε τὸ ἐξάκουστον καὶ μέγα θαῦμα τοῦ ἀθλοφόρου γεγένηται. Οὐκέτι γὰρ νοητῇ ἐπισκιάσει, ἀλλ' ὀφθαλμοφανεῖ ἐνεργείᾳ ἐν ὀπλίτου σχήματι κατὰ τὸ τεῖχος ὀφθεῖς, τὸν πρῶτον ἀνιόντα διὰ τῆς κλίμακος, ἥδη τὸν πόδα τῷ τείχει ἐπιβαλόντα τὸν δεξιόν, λόγχῃ πλήξας κατὰ τὸ μέσον τῶν δύο ἐπάλξεων, ὥθησε | νεκρὸν ἐπὶ τὸ ἐκτός · ὅς καὶ διὰ τῆς κλίμακος κυλινδούμενος, τοὺς μετ' αὐτὸν συγκατέσπασεν, αὐτὸς μὲν εἰς γῆν καταπεσὼν νεκρός, ῥανίδας δὲ τοῦ οἰκείου αἵματος ἀμφὶ τὰς ἐπάλξεις καταλιπὼν, ἵνα δὴ φαίνοιτο ὅποι τε ἀνῆλθε καὶ ὅθεν ἐξέπεσεν. [121] "Ὅτι δὲ τοῦ ἀθλοφόρου γέγονε τὸ κατόρθωμα, δῆλον ἐκ τοῦ μηδένα μέχρι τοῦ νῦν τολμῆσαι τῆς ἀληθείας κατεξαναστῆναι, καὶ κἂν ἐρίσασθαι φιλοδοξίᾳ τινὶ πλάσασθαι, καὶ τὴν ἀνδραγαθίαν ἑαυτῷ περιθεῖναι τῆς τοῦ τολμηροῦ βαρβάρου σφαγῆς, καίτοι τῶν τηνικαῦτα κρατούντων τῆς πόλεως πολλὰ ζητησάντων, καὶ τιμῆσαι προθεμένων τὸν ἀνελόντα τὸν βάρβαρον. Μηδεὶς τοίνυν ἀπιστεῖτω μόνου τοῦ ἀθλοφόρου τὸ τοιοῦτο γεγονέναι κατόρθωμα · πρῶτον μὲν ἐκ τοῦ καὶ πάντας τοὺς ἐκεῖσε παρατυχόντας βαρβάρους, πληθὸς ὄντας ἱκανόν, παραχρῆμα δειλίᾳ ληφθέντας ἀμέτρῳ ἀποχωρῆσαι τοῦ τεύχους μακράν · εἶτα δὲ ὅτι οὐδὲ τῶν ἀνδρῶν τῆς πόλεως ἦσαν τινες ἐπὶ τοῦ τεύχους κατ' ἐκείνην τὴν νύκτα, πλην λίαν ὀλίγων, οἱ καὶ αὐτοὶ ταχύτερον κατελθόντες κατὰ τὸν ὕθρον οἴκοι διανεπαύοντο, διὰ τὸ μετὰ τινος ἡμέρας, ὡς εἴρηται, τὴν πληθὺν οἶεσθαι τῶν βαρβάρων ἐφίστασθαι. Τὸ δὲ καὶ ταραχὴν ἀθρόον μεγίστην κατὰ τὴν πόλιν γενέσθαι, ὡς ἅπαντας ἄρδην ὀπλίτας ἐπὶ τὸ τεῖχος ἀναδραμεῖν, τίς ἂν ἀμφιβάλοι μὴ θείας εἶναι ῥοπῆς καὶ ἁγίων ἐπισκιάσεως ἐνεργείαν ;

[122] Ὡς δὲ ἡμέρα λοιπὸν ἐγεγόνει, οἱ θῆρες ἐκεῖνοι τὸ τεῖχος ἅπαν κύκλῳ περιεῖλιξαν ἀσφαλῶς, ὡς μηδὲ ὄρνεον, τὸ δὴ λεγόμενον, συγχωρῆσαι τῶν πυλῶν ἐξελθεῖν ἢ ἔξωθεν εἰσελάσαι τῇ πόλει. Τότε δὴ ὥφθη αὐτῶν τηλαυγὺς τὸ ἀνήριθμον πλῆθος. Ἀπὸ γὰρ τῆς ἄκρας τοῦ πρὸς θάλασσαν τεύχους τοῦ πρὸς ἀνατολὰς μέχρι

τοῦ πέρατος τοῦ δυτικοῦ τοῦ πρὸς θάλασσαν τεύχους, ὥσπερ στέφανος θανατηφόρος περιέσχον τὴν πόλιν, οὐδενὸς τόπου θεωρουμένου τῆς γῆς ὃν ὁ βάρβαρος οὐκ ἐπάτει · ἀλλ' ἦν ἰδεῖν ἀντὶ γῆς ἢ χλόης ἢ δένδρων τὰς κεφαλὰς τῶν ἀντιπάλων, ἀλλεπαλλήλων ἔτι καὶ στενοχωρουμένων, καὶ τὸν εἰς αὖριον ἡμῖν ἐπισειόντων ἄφυκτον θάνατον.

[123] Καὶ τὸ θαυμαστόν, ὅτι τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης οὐ μόνον περὶ τὸ τεῖχος ἐκύκλουν ὥσει ἄμμος τὴν θάλασσαν, ἀλλὰ καὶ πλεῖστοι λίαν ἐξ αὐτῶν τὰ περὶ τὴν πόλιν φρούρια καὶ προάστεια καὶ ἀγροὺς κατελάμβανον, ληϊζόμενοι πάντας καὶ τὰ πάντα ἐσθίοντες καὶ λεπτύνοντες, καὶ τὰ ὑπόλοιπα τοῖς ποσὶ καταπατοῦντες, κατὰ τὸ φοβερόν τοῦ Δανιὴλ θηρίον καὶ ἐκθαμβόν¹. Οὐκ ἔχρηζον τότε χάρακα βαλεῖν περὶ τὴν πόλιν ἢ πρόσχωμα · χάραξ γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἢ τῶν | ἀσπίδων ἀλλεπάλληλος καὶ ἀδιεξόδευτος συμπλοκή, πρόσχωμα δὲ τὸ πυκνὸν τῶν σωμάτων, ναστὸν μιμούμενα δίκτυον.

[124] Τίς λόγος ὑμῖν ἀγαγεῖν ὑπ' ὄψιν δυνήσεται τὴν ἔργοις αὐτοῖς καταλαβοῦσαν ἡμᾶς τότε περιστάσιν, οὐκ ἐξ αὐτομάτου, ἀλλ' ἐξ ἡμετέρων ὄντως ἁμαρτιῶν ; Καλὸν γάρ, ἀδελφοί, τὸ ὁμολογεῖν τὴν ἀλήθειαν · ἴσως πεσεῖται καὶ νῦν ὁ ἔλεος ἡμῶν ἐνώπιον τοῦ κυρίου³ · ἐὰν γὰρ ὁμολογῶμεν, φησί, τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν, πιστὸς ἐστὶ καὶ δίκαιος ἵνα ἀφήσῃ ἡμῖν τὰς ἁμαρτίας καὶ καθάρισις ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἀδικίας³. Τὸν δὲ ἄφατον φόβον τῇ πόλει τότε περιεποίησε, καὶ τὸ πρῶτως ἰδεῖν φάλαγγα βαρβαρικὴν · οὐδέπω γὰρ οὕτω πλησίον ὥφθησάν ποτε περικαθίσαντες οἱ πολέμιοι, καὶ ἀγνώτες ἦσαν οἱ πολλοὶ τῶν πολιτῶν καὶ τῆς θεᾶς αὐτῶν, πλὴν τῶν ἐν στρατιωτικοῖς τεταγμένων λόχοις, καὶ τῶν ἄλλως πως ἐθισθέντων μακρὰν που τῆς πόλεως ὀπλιτικῶς αὐτοῖς παρατάττεσθαι. Ἦν οὖν ἡ καρδίᾳ τότε καὶ τῶν ἀνδρειοτέρων καὶ τῶν δειλοτέρων μία γεγεννημένη · τῷ γὰρ ἀνελπίστῳ τῆς σωτηρίας ἡ διαφορὰ τούτων οὐκ ἐγνωρίζετο, πάντων δὲ τὰ δάκρυα ποταμῆδὸν ἔρρει κατὰ προσώπων, κατήφειά τε δεινὴ καὶ ἀλλοίωσις τοὺς πάντας ἐμαύρωσεν, ὥς πληροῦσθαι τότε τὸ προφητικὸν λόγιον τὸ φάσκον · Πᾶν πρόσωπον ὡς πρόσκαυμα χύτρας⁴.

[125] Τῶν οὐκ ἐνδεχομένων γὰρ εἶναι πάντες ἐνόμιζον τὸ δύνασθαι διασωθῆναι τὴν πόλιν, πάσης παρὰ ἀνθρώποις ἀνελπιστίας περὶ αὐτὴν τότε θεωρουμένης, πρῶτον μὲν διὰ τὸ λοιμὸν φοβερὸν τότε κατασχεῖν αὐτὴν μέχρι τοῦ ἰουλίου μηνός, καὶ ἀνοχῆς τινος ἐκ φιλανθρωπίας θεοῦ καταξιοθεῖσαν ὥς ἡμερῶν ἄχρι πεντήκοντα, εὐθύς τῇ εἰκάδι δευτέρᾳ, ὥς εἴρηται, τοῦ σεπτεμβρίου μηνός καταφθάσαι τῶν βαρβάρων ἐκείνων τὴν θεήλατον ἐπέλασιν, ὥς εὑρεθῆναι τοὺς ἐν τῇ πόλει καὶ βραχεῖς τῷ ἀριθμῷ καὶ νενεκρωμένους τῇ προσφάτῳ λύτῃ τῶν τεθαμμένων. [126] Δεύτερον δὲ διὰ τὸ ἰσόψαμμον ἐν ἀριθμῷ τῶν πολιορκούντων · εἰ γὰρ μὴ μόνον τοὺς Μακεδόνας ἅπαντας, ἀλλὰ καὶ Θετταλοὺς καὶ Ἀχαιοὺς ὑποθεῖτό τις σωρηδὸν ἐν Θεσσαλονίκῃ τηνικαῦτα συνηθροισμένους, οὐδὲ πολλοστὸν μέρος τῶν ἔξωθεν περιστοιχισάντων τὴν πόλιν ἐτύγχανον. [127] Τρίτον δέ, ὃ καὶ πλέον ἀπάντων τὴν ἀμηχανίαν ἡμῖν ἐνεποίησεν ἐκεῖνο ἦν, ὅτι καὶ αὐτοῦ τοῦ περιλειφθέντος ἐκ τοῦ λοιμοῦ παγανικοῦ τε καὶ στρατιωτικοῦ ὀλιγοστὸν πᾶν μέρος τάχα καὶ ἄχρηστον ἐν τῇ πόλει τηνικαῦτα ἐτύγχανε, πολλῶν μὲν ἔξω ἐν προαστείαις καὶ ἀγροῖς ἐναποκλεισθέντων ὥσπερ καὶ μὴ δυνηθέντων εἰσβαλεῖν τῇ πόλει, διὰ τὸ τρύγης εἶναι καιρὸν, καὶ ἀθρόως καὶ ἀπροσδοκῆτως ἐχέκολλα τῷ τείχει τοὺς πολεμίους περικαθίσει — ἀμέλει μᾶλλον οἱ πρὸς τὰ ἔξω μέρη διαφυγόντες ἐσφύζοντο, ἤπερ οἱ εἰς τὴν πόλιν καταφυγεῖν βουλευθέντες — . [128] πλειόνων δὲ καὶ αὐτῶν τῶν ἐπιλέκτων νεανιῶν τοῦ τε στρατιωτικοῦ καὶ τῶν ἐν τῷ μεγίστῳ | στρατευομένων πραιτωρίῳ, ἅμα τῷ τηνικαῦτα τὴν ἐπαρχον μετὰ χειρὸς ἔχοντι ἀρχὴν, κατὰ τὴν Ἑλλήνων χώραν δημοσίων ἕνεκα χρεῶν ἀποδεδημηκότων · [129] καὶ αὐτῶν δὲ τῶν ἀπομεινάντων τὸ ἄνθος, ὅσοι καὶ πλούτῳ καὶ φρονήσει καὶ δούλοις ἀκμάζουσι καὶ ἐμπειροπολέμοις ἐκαλλωπίζοντο, καὶ ἐν τοῖς σκρινίοις τῶν ὑπάρχων τοῦ Ἰλλυρικοῦ πρῶτοι ἐτύγχανον, κατὰ τὴν βασιλίδι τῶν πόλεων ἀπάρχαντες ἦσαν σὺν φίλοις πολλῷ πλείοσι καὶ τῇ θεραπείᾳ πάσῃ, προσέλευσιν βασιλεῖ κατὰ τοῦ τηνικαῦτα τὴν ἀρχὴν τῶν ἐνθάδε διέποντος ποιησόμενοι.

[130] Οὕτω γοῦν ἐκ ποικίλων τρόπων ὀλιγανδρωθείσης τῆς πόλεως, ἡ ἀμηχανία πᾶσαν ἐλπίδα σωτηρίας ἀπέκειρε. Καί με μὴ τις μωμῆσεται μεγαλύνοντα τοῦ κινδύνου τὸ μέγεθος, μὴδὲ λόγοις οἰέσθω με πλέον τοῦ δέοντος τὴν ἀνάγκην ὑψοῦ ἐπαίρειν. Ποῖος γὰρ λόγος οὕτως ἱκανὸς εὑρεθήσεται, ὥς δοκιμασθῆναι αὐτὸν τοῦ τῶν γεγεννημένων μεγέθους ἰσάμιλλον κήρυκα ; Ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν καὶ γραφὴν προπετείας εὐκαιρον δέδοικα, ὥς ἀδυναμίᾳ λόγου κατασμικρύνων τὸ τῆς περιστάσεως ἄμετρον. Εἶθε γὰρ ἦν μοι δύναμις ῥημάτων τοιαύτη, καὶ πλείονες γλῶσσαι καὶ στόματα μεγάλφωνα, ὥς τοῖς τότε γεγεννημένοις συνεξιωθῆναι διαλεγόμενον · οὕτω γὰρ ἂν παραστήσαντός μου τῆς ἀνάγκης τὸ μέγεθος, συναπεδείκνυτο ὑμῖν καὶ τὸ

ὑπερβάλλον πλοῦτος τῆς χρηστότητος¹ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐφ' ἡμᾶς. Ἄλλ' εἰ καὶ παρ' ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος ἀτονεῖ, παρ' ὑμῖν ἡ εὐχαριστία μεγαλυνθεῖη, καὶ ὅσον ἡμεῖς οὐ δυνάμεθα τῶν κινδύνων ἐκείνων ἐκφράσαι τὸ μέγεθος, τοσοῦτον ὑμεῖς τὸ παντοδύναμον τοῦ κυρίου πιστεύσατε καὶ τὸν κοινὸν πρεσβευτὴν τῆς ἡμῶν πατρίδος δοξάσατε. Ὅτι αὐτοῦ ἐστὶν ἡ δόξα καὶ ἡ τιμὴ καὶ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. Ἀμήν.

B.2 The Western Sources

B.2.1 *FREDEGAR* (translation from the original Latin by J.M. Wallace-Hadrill).

A. *Chronicle, Book 4.48* (pp. 39-40).

[p. 39] (48) In the fortieth year of Chlotar's reign, a certain Frank named Samo, from the district of Soignies, joined with other merchants in order to go and do business with those Slavs who are known as Wends. The Slavs had already started to rise against the Avars (called Huns) and against their ruler, the Khagan. The Wends had long [p. 40] since been subjected to the Huns, who used them as Belfulci. Whenever the Huns took to the field against other people, they stayed encamped in battle array while the Wends did the fighting. If the Wends won, the Huns advanced to pillage, but if they lost, the Huns backed them up and they resumed the fight. The Wends were called Belfulci by the Huns because they advanced twice to the attack in their war bands, and so covered the Huns. Every year the Huns wintered with the Slavs, sleeping with their wives and daughters, and in addition, Slavs paid tribute and endured many other burdens. The sons born to the Huns by the Slav's wives and daughters eventually found this shameful oppression intolerable ; and so, as I said, they refused to obey their lords and started to rise in rebellion. When they took the field against the Huns, Samo, the merchant of whom I have spoken, went with them and his bravery won their admiration : an astonishing number of Huns were put to the sword by the Wends. Recognising his parts, the Wends made Samo their king ; and he ruled them well for thirty-five years. Several times they fought under his leadership against the Huns and his prudence and courage always brought the Wends victory. Samo had twelve Wendish wives, who bore him twenty-two sons and fifteen daughters.

B. *Chronicle, Book 4.68* (pp. 56-58).

[p.56] (68) In this year the Slavs (or Wends, as they are called) killed and robbed a great number of Frankish merchants in Samo's kingdom ; and so began the quarrel between Dagobert and Samo, king of the Slavs. Dagobert despatched Sicharius on an embassy to Samo to request him to make proper amends for the

killing and robbing of the merchants by his people. Same had no wish to Sicharius and would not admit him to his presence. But Sicharius dressed up as a Slav and so got with his followers into Samo's presence and fully delivered to him the message that he had been instructed to deliver. But, as is the way of pagans and men of wicked pride, Samo put right none of the wrong that had been done. He simply stated his intention to hold an investigation so that justice could be done in this dispute as well as others that had arisen between them in the meantime. At the this point the ambassador Sicharius, like a fool, addressed threatening words to Samo, for which he had no authority. He declared that Samo and his people owed fealty to Dagobert. Taking offence, Samo replied, 'The land we occupy is Dagobert's and we are his men on condition that he chooses to maintain friendly conditions with us.' Sicharius retorted : 'It is [p. 57] impossible for Christians and servants of the Lord to live on terms of friendship with dogs.' 'Then if,' said Samo, 'you are God's servants, we are his hounds, and since you persist in offending Him we are within our rights to tear you to pieces!' And Sicharius was forthwith thrown out of Samo's presence. When he came to report to Dagobert the outcome of his mission, the king confidently ordered the raising of a force throughout his kingdom of Austrasia to proceed against Samo and the Wends. Three corps set out against the Wends ; and the Lombards also helped Dagobert by making a hostile attack of Slav territory. But everywhere the Slavs made preparations to resist. An Alamannic force under Duke Crodobert won a victory over them at the place where they had entered Slav territory ; and the Lombards were also victorious and, like the Alamans, took a great number of Slavs prisoner. Dagobert's Austrasians, on the other hand, invested the stronghold of the Wogastisburg where many of the most resolute Wends had taken refuge, and were crushed in a three-day battle. And so they made for home, leaving all their tents and equipment behind them in their flight. After this the Wends made a plundering sortie into Thuringia and the neighbouring districts of the kingdom of the Franks. Furthermore Dervan, the duke of the Sorbes, a people of Slavic origin long subject to the Franks, placed himself and his people under the rule of Samo. It was not so much the Slavic courage of the Wends that won [p. 58] them this victory over the Austrasians as the demoralization of the latter, who saw themselves hated and regularly despoiled by Dagobert.

C. *Chronicle, Book 4.75* (p. 63).

[p. 63] (75) In the eleventh year of Dagobert's reign the Wends, on Samo's orders, were raiding widely and often crossing the frontier to lay waste to the Frankish kingdom, spreading out over Thuringia and other territory. Dagobert came to the city of Metz and there, on the advice of his bishops and lords and with the consent of all the great men of his kingdom, placed his son Sigebert on the throne of Austrasia and allowed him to make Metz his headquarters. Bishop Chunibert of Cologne and Duke Adalgisel were chosen to control the palace and the kingdom. Having given his son a sufficient treasure, he provided him with all that his rank required and confirmed the gifts he had made by separate charters. Thereafter, it is reported that the Austrasians bravely defended their frontier and the Frankish kingdom against the Wends.

D. *Chronicle, Book 4.77* (pp. 64-65).

[p. 64] (77) Duke Randulf, son of Chamar, who was made duke of Thuringia by Dagobert, fought repeated engagements with the Wends; and he beat them and put them to flight. These victories turned his head: time and again he behaved aggressively towards Duke Adalgisel, and this led on to preparations for a revolt against Sigebert. He behaved thus because, as they say, he who likes fighting picks quarrels.

B.2.2 GREGORY THE GREAT (*translation from the original Latin by J. R.C. Martyn*).

A. *Letters*, 9.155 (p. 639).

Gregory to Callinicus, Exarch of Italy, May 599

[p. 639] Be aware that I have been comforted with great joy by your reports of victories over the Slavs, and that the bearers of this letter, hurrying to Saint Peter, prince of the apostles, to be joined to the unity of the Holy Church, have been sent over by your Excellency from the isle of Cáorle. ...

B. *Letters*, 10.15 (p. 724).

Gregory to Maximus, Bishop of Salona, June 600

[p. 724] Our common son and priest, Veteranus, came to the city of Rome and found me so weak from the pains of gout that I am in no way able to reply to your Fraternity's letters on my own. In fact I am very much afflicted and disturbed over the race of the Slavs that threatens you so greatly. I am afflicted by the suffering I share with you, and I am disturbed that the Slavs have already begun to enter Italy through the Istrian approach.

B.2.3 PAUL THE DEACON (*translation from the original Latin by W.D. Foulke*).

A. *History of the Langobards 4.37*

(37) ...And straightway rising he began to proceed in that direction which he had heard in his dreams, and without delay he came to a dwelling place of men; for there was a settlement of Slavs in those places. And when an elderly woman now saw him, she straightway understood that he was a fugitive and suffering from the privation of hunger. And taking pity upon him, she hid him in her dwelling and secretly furnished him food, a little at a time, lest she should put an end to his life altogether if she should give him nourishment to repletion. In fine, she thus supplied him skilfully with food until he was restored and got his strength. And when she saw that he was now able to pursue his journey, she gave him provisions and told him in what direction he ought to go. After some days he entered Italy...

B. *History of the Langobards 4.38*

(38) After the death, as we said, of Gisulf, duke of Forum Julii, his sons Taso and Cacco undertook the government of this dukedom. They possessed in their time the territory of the Slavs which is named Zeilia (Gail-thal), up to the place which is called Medaria (Windisch Matrei), hence, those same Slavs, up to the time of duke Ratchis, paid tribute to the dukes of Forum Julii. ...

C. *History of the Langobards 4.40*

(40) King Agilulf, indeed, made peace with the emperor for one year, and again for another, and also renewed a second time the bond of peace with the Franks. In this year, nevertheless, the Slavs grievously devastated Istria after killing the soldiers who defended it. ...

D. *History of the Langobards* 5.22

(22) Finally, after Lupus was killed in this way, as we have related, Arnefrit, his son, sought to obtain the dukedom at Forum Julii in the place of his father. But fearing the power of king Grimuald, he fled into Carnuntum, which they corruptly call Carantanum (Carinthia) to the nation of the Slavs, and afterwards coming with the Slavs as if about to resume the dukedom by their means, he was killed when the Friulans attacked him at the fortress of Nemaes (Nimis), which is not far distant from Forum Julii.

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