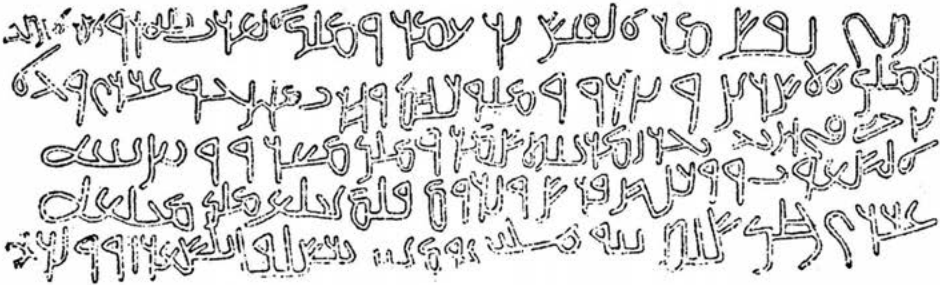
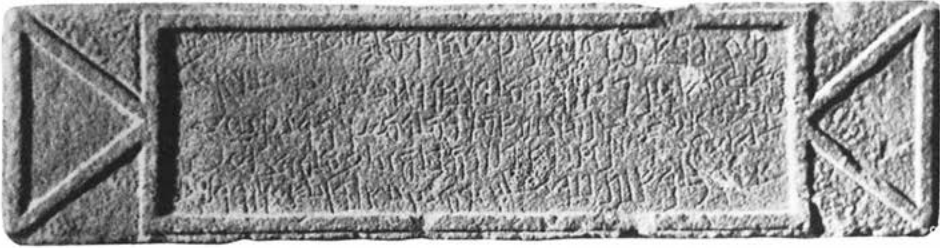

BYZANTIUM
AND THE
ARABS IN
THE FOURTH
CENTURY

IRFAN SHAHÎD

BYZANTIUM AND THE ARABS
IN
THE FOURTH CENTURY



The Namāra Inscription

top: The lintel on which the Namāra inscription is engraved and which now rests in the Louvre, AO 4083.

bottom: A facsimile of the inscription published by R. Dussaud and F. Macler in *Mission dans les régions désertiques de la Syrie Moyenne* (Paris, 1903), p. 314.

BYZANTIUM AND THE ARABS
IN
THE FOURTH CENTURY

IRFAN SHAHÎD
Georgetown University

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Abbreviations

- AAW: Altheim-Stiehl, *Die Araber in der alten Welt*
AB: *Analecta Bollandiana*
ASS: *Acta Sanctorum*
BAFIC: Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century*
BASIC: Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century*
BASOR: *Bulletin of the American School of Oriental Research* (Jerusalem)
BGA: *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum*
BHG: *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca*
BSOAS: *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (London)
BZ: *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*
CAH: *Cambridge Ancient History*
CCL: *Corpus Christianorum, series Latina*
CHI: *Cambridge History of Islam*
CIL: *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*
CMH: *Cambridge Medieval History*
CSCO: *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*
CSEL: *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*
DACL: *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie*
DHGE: *Dictionnaire d'Histoire et de Géographie Ecclésiastique*
DLH: Rothstein, *Die Dynastie der Lahmiden in al-Hîra*.
DOP: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*
EC: Piganiol, *L'empire chrétien*
EI: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*
FHG: *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, ed. C. Müller, 5 vols. (Paris: 1841–70)
GAL: Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Literatur*
GAS: Sezgin, *Geschichte der arabischen Schrifttums*
GCAL: G. Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, *Studi e Testi*, 118
GCS: *Griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten {drei} Jahrhunderte* (1897–)
GF: Nöldeke, *Die Ghassânischen Fürsten*
GN: Caskel, *Ġamharat an-Nasab*

- HA: *Historia Augusta*
HBE: Stein, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*
HE: *Historia Ecclesiastica*
HMH: Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*
HN: Zosimus, *Historia Nova*
IGLSYR: Jalabert-Mouterde, *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie*
IJMES: *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*
ILS: Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*
JAOS: *Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JNES: *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JÖBG: *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinischen Gesellschaft*
JRAS: *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*
JRS: *Journal of Roman Studies*
JSS: *Journal of Semitic Studies*
JTS: *Journal of Theological Studies*
KN: Shahîd, "The *Kebrâ Nagast* in the Light of Recent Research"
LRE: A. H. M. Jones, *Later Roman Empire*
MGH, AA: *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auctores Antiquissimi*
ND: *Notitia Dignitatum*
NH: Pliny, *Natural History*
PAS: Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden*
PG: J. P. Migne, ed., *Patrologia Graeca*
PL: J. P. Migne, ed., *Patrologia Latina*
PLRE: A. H. M. Jones, *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*
PO: *Patrologia Orientalis* (Paris: 1903–)
PPUAES: *Publications of the Princeton University Archaeological Expedition to Syria, 1904–5; 1909*
RA: Shahîd, *Rome and the Arabs*
RB: *Revue Biblique*
RE: *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, new rev. ed. (Stuttgart: 1893–)
REI: *Revue des études islamiques*
Rec. Alt.: Itineraria, Recensio altera, CCL, 175
Rev. Arch.: Revue Archéologique
RG: Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*
RM: R. Grosse, *Römische Militärgeschichte*

RSR: Revue des sciences religieuses

TU: Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur (Leipzig–
Berlin: 1882–)

ZDMG: Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft

ZDPV: Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins

Preface

Before their historic assault on Byzantium in the seventh century, the Arabs had had seven centuries of close relations with both Rome on the Tiber and Rome on the Bosphorus. The history of Arab-Roman relations in these seven centuries awaits and deserves a satisfactory treatment if only because it is the necessary prolegomenon for understanding the extraordinary events of the seventh century, when it was not the Persians, who lived in the military consciousness of the Romans as their principal antagonists in the East, but the Arabs who succeeded in dismembering the Oriental and African provinces of Byzantium and ushering in a new era in the history of the Mediterranean region and southwestern Asia. These seven centuries are clearly divisible into two periods each of which is a genuine historical period and not one bounded by two conventional dates. The first is the Roman period of four centuries which elapsed from the Settlement of Pompey in 63 B.C. to the reign of Diocletian, A.D. 284–305; the second is the Byzantine period¹ of three centuries from the reign of Constantine in the fourth to that of Heraclius in the seventh.

1

The first period, the Roman period of four centuries, has been treated by the present writer in an interpretative essay² written as a prolegomenon to the study of the Byzantine period. The present book, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century*, is the first in a series of three volumes which treats the Byzantine period of three centuries and which might be entitled "Byzantium and the Arabs before the Rise of Islam." The first volume begins with the reign of Constantine and ends with that of Theodosius the Great; the second volume deals with the fifth century from the reign of Arcadius to that of Anastasius and is entitled *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century*; the third volume deals mainly with the sixth century and partly with the seventh from the reign of Anastasius to that of Phocas or Heraclius and is entitled *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century*.³ These three volumes are an

¹Still Roman, and Byzantine only in the sense that the capital of the empire was Constantinople and its religion Christianity.

²*Rome and the Arabs* (hereafter, *RA*).

³These three volumes are abbreviated *BAFOC*, *BAFIC*, and *BASIC* respectively. The second and the third remain to be written, but research on them is in a very advanced stage and

intensive and detailed treatment of Arab-Byzantine relations in these centuries. In addition to being a history of these three centuries, they are intended to be a prolegomenon to the study of the rise of Islam and the Arab Conquests in the seventh century. For this they are chronologically closer than *Rome and the Arabs*, which provides the remoter Roman background.

2

The Arabs who figure in this book are not the Arabs who had become Roman citizens in the Roman period nor those independent Arabs who lived in the Peninsula beyond the Roman frontier, but the groups that are termed *foederati*, the allies of Byzantium, who represent the new relationship that obtained between Byzantium and the Arabs after the end of the Roman period.

Byzantium knew three such groups of *foederati* in the course of these three centuries: the Tanūkhids of the fourth century, the Salīhids of the fifth, and the Ghassānids of the sixth. Thus the three centuries are divisible into three periods, each roughly coinciding with one century during which flourished a dominant Arab group, the Tanūkhids, the Salīhids, and the Ghassānids respectively. The material on these three centuries cannot be presented clearly except in this way and in three separate volumes, since each of these three centuries witnessed the rise of a new dominant group of Arab *foederati* and it is only when the history of each of these dynasties and dominant federate groups is presented separately that their respective identities can be discovered. Thus the result is a diachronous treatment of three centuries of Arab-Byzantine relations which should enable the student of this period to view the succession of these three dominant federate groups not as Saracens, a general and vague term, but as Tanūkhids, Salīhids, and Ghassānids, three Arab groups each possessed of its own identity. The present book is the history of the first century of this Byzantine period, treating the history of the Tanūkhids, the federates of Byzantium in the fourth century.

The region where federate Arab history unfolded itself is the Byzantine administrative division known as the Diocese of Oriens.⁴ The book is thus an ethno-regional history, that of the federate Arabs in the Diocese of Oriens. This is important to bear in mind. As has already been said, this series of

some of the chapters are already written; hence the references to them in this book and the abbreviated forms. It is hoped that their composition will not take long after this present volume goes to press.

⁴This extended from the Taurus to Sinai and included Roman Mesopotamia. Egypt, which also formed part of Oriens, was separated from it in the early years of the reign of Theodosius I around A.D. 380. For a study of the Arab presence in Egypt in pre-Islamic times, little known, see chap. 5 on the *Notitia Dignitatum* in *RA*. This presence has not been taken into account in studies of the Muslim Arab conquest of Egypt, but it does have some relevance to it.

books on Arab-Byzantine relations in pre-Islamic times is a prolegomenon to the Arab Conquests, and it is in this very region, Oriens,³ that the decisive battles of Islam against Byzantium took place; and so a study of the Arab element in the same region is obviously of much relevance to the study of the events of the seventh century. In that century, the Muslim Arabs attacked a region in which the Arabs were represented by two elements: the visible federate presence and the tangible layer of Arab *Rhomaioi*—a substrate that had been formed in the Roman period. The two elements interacted in pre-Islamic times and became a factor to be taken into account in the study of the Arab Conquests. Thus, in Arab terms, Oriens is an intelligible unit of study from the point of view of historical and political geography.

Although it is Oriens and its federate Arabs that are the subject and main theme of this book, the treatment does not neglect other groups, and, indeed, it does place the fortunes and history of the *foederati* within the international context of the various political entities and communities of the Near East, namely, Sasanid Persia and its Arab clients, the Lakhmids of Ḥīra, the Arabs of the Arabian Peninsula, Ḥimyar and Najrān of South Arabia, and, across the Red Sea, Ethiopia. Nevertheless, it is sharply focused on the *foederati*. These were the shield of Byzantium against the Arabs of the Peninsula in the fourth and the following two centuries, and this tutelary shield functioned well in these three centuries. But when the Peninsular Arabs appeared in the seventh century as Muslims, the shield broke and crumbled. That it did so and did not ward them off is part of the answer to the large historical question of the Arab victory over Byzantium in the seventh century. Hence the importance of the history of these *foederati*, on which these three volumes, *BAFOC*, *BAFIC*, and *BASIC*, focus and which they try to illuminate.

These federate Arabs were soldiers in Byzantium's army of the Orient, and this explains the emphasis on their military history, especially as the book is partly a prolegomenon to the Arab Conquests of the seventh century. Yet the cultural life of the *foederati* is not neglected, and its most important facet relates to their involvement in Christianity and in ecclesiastical history. Thus the roles of the *foederati* are placed in the context in which they belong, the world of the Byzantine *imperium* and of the *ecclesia*, in the Diocese of Oriens and in the Patriarchate of Antioch, both of which roles are practically unknown to the historians of this period. And it is noteworthy that important matters pertaining to Arabic culture can be examined better when not the Arab *Rhomaioi* but these *foederati* are involved. Thus the book is a cultural as well as a political and military history of these federate Arabs in the fourth century.

³In Arabic Islamic terms, Oriens was Bilād al-Shām, al-Jazīra, and Miṣr, scene of the battlefields and victories of Islam against Byzantium in the times of the orthodox caliphs.

The case for the appearance of this volume as the first in a series of three on Byzantium and the Arabs before the rise of Islam needs no pleading. These are the three lost or forgotten centuries in the history of Arab-Byzantine relations, as the following historiographical sketch will abundantly show.

Of these three centuries only the sixth may be said to have been subjected to a scientific investigation. Nöldeke's *Ghassânischen Fürsten* is truly an epoch-making work in the history of the Arabs before the rise of Islam and of the Arab-Byzantine relationship.⁶ But although it is philology at its best, the work is really a series of notes and footnotes rather than a history, and, what is more, it is a history of an Arab dynasty or kingdom rather than a historical study of Arab-Byzantine relations. Nöldeke wrote as an Orientalist, not a Byzantinist; the Byzantine profile of Ghassânid history owes its appearance in his work to the fact that he had to depend on reliable Byzantine sources for working out the chronological framework of Ghassânid history, but he was not primarily interested in the Byzantine profile of Arab history. A. A. Vasiliev was, and he is, therefore, the father of *Byzantino-arabica*; his pioneering work was carried on by a first-rate Arabist, Marius Canard. Both of them were interested in the *Islamic* period of *Byzantino-arabica*, but, regrettably, Vasiliev started with the late period of the ninth and tenth centuries rather than with the seventh, the century of the rise of Islam and the Arab Conquests. However, toward the end of his life, he apparently developed interest in the pre-Islamic period and realized its importance to the Arab Conquests of the seventh century.⁷ But the result of this interest was slight and was worked out posthumously by his colleague Canard.⁸ N. Pigulevskaia dealt with many aspects of Near Eastern history in pre-Islamic times in various articles and volumes, the most relevant of which are two: *Byzanz auf den Wegen nach Indien* and *The Arabs on the Frontiers of Byzantium and Iran in the IV–VI Centuries*.⁹

⁶*Die Ghassânischen Fürsten aus dem Hause Gafna's, Abhandlungen der königl. Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin* (Berlin, 1887) (hereafter, *GF*). On the grandiose failure of his predecessor Caussin de Perceval to reconstruct the history of the Arabs before the rise of Islam, see the section on the sources, *infra*, pp. 1–4.

⁷See Sirarpie Der Nersessian, "Alexander Alexandrovitch Vasiliev: Biography and Bibliography," *DOP*, 10 (1955), pp. 7–8. Of the pre-Islamic period, he wrote: "The more I delve into this period, the more I realize how important and how vital this pre-Islamic era is for the elucidation of the epoch of the amazing Arab advance . . ." (*ibid.*, p. 8).

⁸See his "Notes on Some Episodes concerning the Relations between the Arabs and the Byzantine Empire from the Fourth to the Sixth Century," *DOP*, 10 (1955), pp. 306–16.

⁹Of the two, the former was translated from Russian into German and appeared in *Berliner Byzantinistische Arbeiten*, 36 (Berlin, 1969) (hereafter, Pigulevskaia, *Byzanz*). The latter, *Araby u granits Vizantii i Irana v IV–VI vv.*, appeared in Moscow in 1964. I should like to thank Mr. P. Bienenstock and Mr. M. Flannick of the Russian Department, Georgetown University, for helping me with this Russian text.

Strictly speaking, neither work is *Byzantino-arabica*. The former is the better, much better, of the two; the latter is unfortunately a superficial compilation in which the prolific authoress did not do justice to herself or to the subject. The most relevant part of it treating the fourth century is especially inadequate.¹⁰

Thus the ideal for writing the history of Byzantium and the Arabs before the rise of Islam is to combine the method of the German Arabist Nöldeke¹¹ in treating the Arab profile with the conception of the Byzantinist Vasiliev in presenting the finished result as a contribution to the history of Byzantium. This is the principle that has guided the writing of *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century*. With the exception of a perfunctory and unsatisfactory treatment by Pigulevskaia, the fourth century in Arab-Byzantine relations has had no historians. Its two most important documents, the Namāra inscription and the literary accounts of Mavia, have so far been in the hands of the epigraphist and the ecclesiastical historian respectively. It is therefore hoped that this book on the fourth century will fill this vacuum by illuminating the first of the three forgotten centuries in the history of Arab-Byzantine relations and in such a way as to enable the general historian to have a better perception of the place of the Arabs in this century.¹² And it should, together with the two subsequent volumes *BAFIC* and *BASIC*, serve as a prolegomenon for the study of the Arab Conquests, which opened the Islamic period in Arab-Byzantine relations.¹³

4

W. W. Tarn's work on Alexander the Great¹⁴ in two parts has partly inspired the format of this book, which was to have been published in two volumes: volume one containing the synthesis and exposition; volume two devoted to the sources, to analyses, to topical studies, and to the extraction of the data from the various sources. Owing to the prohibitive cost of publication in these hard times, the plan of publishing the work in two volumes had to be abandoned, but the format has survived in the structure of the present book, the single volume that it is. The first three parts answer to volume two

¹⁰A printed French version of it appeared as a short contribution which the authoress presented to the Twenty-fifth Oriental Congress held at Moscow in 1960, *Les arabes à la frontière de Byzance au IV siècle*.

¹¹On Nöldeke's method and technique, see the section on the sources, *infra*.

¹²In standard works on the fourth century, such as A. Piganiol, *L'empire chrétien*, and E. Stein, *Histoire du bas-empire*, vol. 1, hardly anything on the Arabs appears.

¹³A new generation of talented scholars is working on this Islamic period, notably, Walter E. Kaegi and Ahmad Shboul.

¹⁴W. W. Tarn, *Alexander the Great*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1950–51): vol. 1, Narrative (1951); vol. 2, Sources and Studies (1950).

as originally planned, while Part Four answers to volume one. Part One deals with the Greek and Latin sources, Part Two with the Oriental. The sources had to be divided in this fashion in order to present to the reader a lucid account of them and of the problems which each of the two sets of sources presents.¹⁵ Part Three consists of a series of topical studies not dependent on one set of sources to the exclusion of the other. Part Four represents the synthesis, necessary in a work of this kind, full of details, specialized studies, and appendices, which interrupt the sequence of the presentation.

In addition to the customary section on the sources in the introductory part of this book, three more have been included: "The Problems and Major Themes," "Byzantium and the Arabs before the Rise of Islam," and "The Fourth Century." The case for the first is explained in the opening paragraph of that section; the second has been included because *BAFOC* opens a series of three books on the pre-Islamic period in its entirety; hence a survey of these three centuries from the reign of Constantine to that of Heraclius becomes necessary; the third section on the fourth century is written as a synoptic view which will conduce to a better comprehension of Parts I–III that follow, consisting as they do of so many chapters that range over a wide variety of topics.

DECEMBER 1981

WASHINGTON, D.C.

¹⁵On this, see the section on the sources.

Acknowledgments

As this book has been in the making for a number of years, many are the organizations and individuals to whom it owes its completion.

First and foremost must come Dumbarton Oaks. It is there that I have undertaken all my researches on *Byzantino-arabica*, those that have been included in this book and those that have appeared in print on the fifth and sixth centuries. The first chapters of this book were written at Dumbarton Oaks when I was in residence in the first term of the academic year 1975–76, and it was also there during 1979–80 that the manuscript was almost completed. In the second term of the academic year 1975–76, I was a member of the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, at its School of Historical Studies, where I worked on this book in those ideal surroundings. In addition to support from Dumbarton Oaks and the Institute for Advanced Study, I received grants that enabled me to continue working on my manuscript and to be free from teaching duties in the summers of the period 1976–79. One grant was awarded by the Joint Committee on the Near and Middle East of the Social Science Research Council of the American Council of Learned Societies, and the Social Science Research Council and I used this grant for two consecutive summers, 1976 and 1977. The Center for Contemporary Arab Studies at Georgetown University awarded me a grant for the summer of 1978, as did Georgetown University for the summer of 1979. To all these institutions and organizations I am deeply grateful.

Research on this book was conducted at three libraries in Washington, D.C. The first place must be given to the Dumbarton Oaks Library, the unrivaled resources of which are familiar to all those who have been privileged to use it. I should like to thank the Librarian, Irene Vaslef, and her staff for their help and unfailing courtesy. The second library is the Woodstock Theological Center Library, Georgetown University, where I enjoyed the invaluable help of its Head Librarian, Father H. Bertels, S.J., and its Assistant Librarian, Father W. Sheehan, C.S.B. The third is the Joseph Mark Lauinger Library, also at Georgetown University, especially valuable for its collection of Arabic sources, and I should like to thank its Arabic Materials Specialist, B. Bickert, and the Assistant Reference Librarian, C. Colwell, for answering my many queries.

The manuscript of this book was read in whole or in part by five

readers. The first to read the part based on the Greek and Latin sources was Professor Glen W. Bowersock during the period 1976–78; Professor Franz Rosenthal read the part based on the Oriental sources and Ahmad Shboul read the section on Hishām al-Kalbī. For the comments of all three scholars and the two anonymous readers I am very grateful.

In addition to the constructive comments of the readers of the manuscript, those of various colleagues have also been valuable. These colleagues belong to the Dumbarton Oaks community of scholars, whether living permanently in the Washington area or coming as transient visitors. I should like to single out Peter Topping, Alexander Kazhdan, John Callahan, Nicolas Oikonomides, Lennart Rydén, Evangelos Chrysos, Kenneth Holum, Speros Vryonis, Walter Kaegi, Averil Cameron, Sidney Griffith, Jelisaveta Allen, Michael McCormick, John Duffy, and Thomas S. Parker.

Maps, however sketchy and skeletal, are essential for a better comprehension of this book, since some of the localities are little known to the general reader or altogether unknown. I am, therefore, particularly grateful to John Wilson, Assistant for Drafting and Reproduction, Dumbarton Oaks, St. Sophia Project, for giving generously of his time and skillfully executing the task of drawing the eight maps.

The precious Arabic inscription that has flooded with light the history of Arab-Byzantine relations in the fourth century appears as the frontispiece in this volume in order to give the reader, guiltless of Arabic and Semitic epigraphy, a visual impression of this most important document. It was through the good offices of Mlle C. Metzger, Conservateur, Département des Antiquités Grècques et Romaines, and of M. A. J. Decaudin, Documentaliste, Département des Antiquités Orientales, Musée du Louvre, that I was able to obtain a photograph of the Namāra inscription. I should like to thank both of them for the photograph and the latter for permission to reproduce it.

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As these acknowledgments began with Dumbarton Oaks, so must they end, this time addressed to the scholar who is its Director, Giles Constable. *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century* with the major themes which it treats and the problems which it raises has naturally attracted the attention of a distinguished medievalist with far-ranging historical sympathies. I am deeply sensible of his encouragement and his responsiveness to my researches.

Introduction

I. THE SOURCES

The sources of *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century* are divisible into two major sets: the Graeco-Roman and the Oriental. Most readers will be familiar with one or the other of these two sets, so different from each other. But since this book is addressed to both the Arabist and the Byzantinist, since its arguments draw on both sets of sources, and since its conclusions are welded from data extracted from the two sets, the customary chapter on the sources assumes even greater importance. Of the two sets, it is the Oriental sources that need and deserve special attention because of their nature, their limitations, and the problems that they present to the historian who is using them for writing the history of Arab-Byzantine relations.

The Greek and Latin sources, on the other hand, are well known to the Byzantinist and the medievalist and they have been intensively studied. However, a few words on them in the context of this book are desirable in order to demonstrate better their relation to the Oriental sources.

1

The Greek and Latin Sources

These sources are many and belong to various orders of historical writing. From this variety, three authors stand out as the major sources for the history of Arab-Byzantine relations in the fourth century, namely, the secular Latin historian Ammianus Marcellinus, the Greek ecclesiastical historian Sozomen, and the biblical scholar St. Jerome. In addition to a minute analysis of their relevant works for the extraction of data, a chapter has been devoted to each of these three writers as a contribution both to historiography and to the theme of the image of the Arabs in the fourth century. Of the three, Ammianus receives the most detailed treatment.¹

¹For these three authors, see the relevant chapters in this book. On the Greek and Latin authors drawn upon in this book, see K. Krumbacher, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Litteratur*, 2nd ed. (Munich, 1897); G. Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Berlin, 1958); B. Altaner, *Patrology*, trans. Hilda C. Graef (New York, 1960); H. G. Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich* (Munich, 1959); J. Quasten, *Patrology*, vol. 3 (Westminster, Md., 1960); and H. Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner*, vol. 1 (Munich, 1978).

The Greek and Latin sources for the history of Arab-Byzantine relations in the fourth century are extremely good. Many of them are primary and contemporary and they are relatively abundant compared to those on the fifth century. Besides, they illuminate all the reigns from Constantine to Theodosius I with the exception of that of Constantius which, however, they do indirectly. They leave many gaps in the reigns of each of these emperors, but they provide enough material for the thread of continuity to be traced and for making the diachronous treatment of Arab-Byzantine relations in the fourth century possible. Through this diachronous treatment, the historical evolution of the various institutions of the Arab *foederati* admits of being studied. The data which these sources provide are mostly on military and political history, and thus the position of the Arabs as *foederati* of Byzantium emerges clearly in the wars and politics of fourth-century Byzantium. These sources illuminate two other areas, namely, the extent of the Arab federate presence in the Diocese of Oriens and the ecclesiastical history of the Arab *foederati*. The Greek and Latin sources are the backbone of this book; but for them, and especially the sound chronological framework which they provide, no intelligible history of Arab-Byzantine relations in the fourth century would have been possible. It is for this reason that the analyses start with them, and the reader is advised to read the analyses, composed of two sections, the Graeco-Roman and the Oriental, in this order. It is only in this way that the part on the Arabic sources can be profitably read by the Byzantinist and even by the Arabist as well.

The Oriental Sources

Of the various Oriental sources for the fourth century, the Arabic are the most important.² The Syriac and Sabaic come next.

These Arabic sources are divisible into two sets, the epigraphic and the literary. The first is represented by the Namāra inscription, the most important Arabic document for the Arab-Byzantine relationship in the fourth century. Indeed, without it, it is almost impossible to reconstruct this relationship during the reign of Constantine, the terminus a quo of this relationship in the fourth century and the subsequent centuries of the Byzantine period in its entirety.

The second set, the literary sources, were written in later Islamic times. They are reliable sources such as Ṭabarī, Balāḍurī, and Masʿūdī. Most, if not all, of what they have to say on the federate and other Arabs of the fourth century derives from the work of Hishām al-Kalbī. A special section has, therefore, been devoted to this chief Muslim historian of pre-Islamic Arabia

²For the full range of these sources, comprising Arabic, Syriac, Sabaic, Ethiopic, Coptic, Armenian, and Pahlevi, see the list of sources in the Bibliography.

and the writer of a monograph on the federate Tanūkhids of the fourth century. These Islamic sources are literary, historical, geographical, and genealogical.³

In view of the fact that these Arabic literary sources are late, it is necessary to discuss them, especially for the guidance of non-Arabists. These are sources that were written not in the fourth century but in later Islamic times. However, until and unless more pre-Islamic inscriptions are found, they will remain the only extant sources for the extraction of data of a special type on the Arab *foederati* of the fourth century, and so they cannot be ignored. Those unfamiliar with the problems of Arabic historiography may understandably raise questions about the use of Islamic sources for writing the history of the pre-Islamic Arab *foederati*. They should remember, however, that although late, these sources depend on a long *isnād*, or chain of authorities, which goes back to the distant past,⁴ and sometimes they depend on written sources which themselves go back to early times, some possibly pre-Islamic, or close to it. So the *floruit* of the Islamic historians should not constitute too much of a problem. The section on Hishām shows that that literary Muslim historian depended on pre-Islamic epigraphy for gathering data on the Lakhmids of Ḥīra.⁵

The Greek and Latin sources are specific in the data which they provide, especially on matters of chronology, but they are not so in other areas that pertain to the Arab-Byzantine relationship. The Arabs, for instance, all appear as Saracens, and it is the Arabic sources that give specificity to this general designation. It is they that describe the tribal affiliations of the various Arab groups in Oriens in the fourth century, a matter of considerable importance to understanding the history of these federate groups. Again, in the Greek and Latin sources, hardly any mention is made of the locations in which these *foederati* were settled. The Arabic sources contribute something specific to solving this problem too.⁶

³For the Arabic sources used in this book and for their authors, see C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Literatur*, vols. 1–2 and supplements 1–3 (Leiden, 1943–49) (hereafter, *GAL*); and F. Sezgin, *Geschichte der arabischen Schriftums* (hereafter, *GAS*), of which vols. 1–2 (Leiden, 1967–75) are the most relevant.

⁴For Sir Hamilton Gibb's trenchant rejoinder to van Berchem's animadversions on one of Ṭabarī's accounts, see Gibb, "Arab-Byzantine Relations under the Umayyad Caliphate," *DOP*, 12 (1958), p. 226.

⁵For epigraphic confirmation of some of the data included in these late Islamic literary sources, see *infra*, Chap. 10, note 90. The section on Hishām in that chapter is basic not only to *BAFOC* but also to *BAFIC* and *BASIC* since it is from Hishām that most that is known about the *foederati* of the fifth and sixth centuries is derived.

⁶There are other instances of specificity whereby the Arabic sources complement the Greek and Latin sources. They pertain to such problems as the federate *basileia* and *phylarchia* and may be consulted in the relevant chapters of this book.

In addition to specificity in such areas as tribal affiliations and toponymy, there are other dimensions of the Arab-Byzantine relationship which the Arabic sources illuminate, namely, cultural matters. With the exception of Sozomen, who provides the precious data on the composition of Arabic poetry in the fourth century, it is only these Arabic sources that provide this type of cultural information, and this is illustrated in the chapters that deal with the *foederati* and Christianity, their involvement with Arabic poetry, and the problem of an Arabic Bible and liturgy in the fourth century.

Finally, it is the Arabic sources (and also the Syriac), not the Greek and Latin, that describe the fortunes of the fourth-century Arab *foederati*, the Tanūkhids, in subsequent pre-Islamic centuries and in the Islamic period, a matter of considerable importance to the Arab-Byzantine relationship in Islamic as well as pre-Islamic times.

The Two Sets of Sources

The two sets of sources may now be viewed synoptically. Unrelated as they may seem and hailing from two entirely different worlds, they are now related in this context in which they speak of the same century and contribute data on the same Arab *foederati*:

(1) The Greek and Latin sources take precedence over the Arabic in the establishment of the fundamental framework for the reconstruction of the history of Arab-Byzantine relations in the fourth century. This is why the first part of the series of analyses draws on them. The Arabic sources, especially the literary, are chronologically posterior to the Greek and Latin sources, and this is why they have been relegated to the second position.

(2) In the data which they provide on the Arab *foederati* of the fourth century, the two sets of sources are complementary to each other, and the one is absolutely essential to the other. This should be clear from a perusal of the various chapters on the two sets of sources. Each explores dimensions of Arab-Byzantine relations that are different from the other; sometimes data from one set fills in the picture or the frame left vacant by the other with specific details. The two sets are also complementary in the process of drawing conclusions on certain problems. For instance, the *cognomen* of Constantine, *Arabicus*, attested in a Latin inscription, receives considerable illumination from the Arabic Namāra inscription. The same may be said of the chapter on the Bible and the liturgy, in which conclusions cannot be drawn without laying under contribution data from both sets of sources.

It remains to discuss the method and technique employed in the utilization of the Oriental sources as the second of the two sets of sources on which

this book is based. It is partly a matter of apprising the reader, when he is a non-Arabist, of the methodology worked out by the German Arabist and Father of *Byzantino-arabica* in the pre-Islamic period, Theodor Nöldeke, of the application of his critical method to the Oriental sources that treat the fourth century, and of the modifications that have been introduced by the present writer into Nöldeke's technique.

In his famous monograph on the Ghassānids,⁷ Nöldeke turned his back on the methodology employed by his predecessor Caussin de Perceval,⁸ who depended uncritically on the Arabic sources for reconstructing the history of the Arabs before the rise of Islam, including that of Arab-Byzantine relations. "The serious aspersions he cast on the genealogical tables and the chronological sequences of the Arab historians—on which Caussin de Perceval had leaned so heavily, but which carried no conviction for Nöldeke's critical acumen—undermined the groundwork on which his predecessor had rested his structure and thus caused it to collapse. In so doing, Nöldeke transferred the emphasis from the Arabic to the Greek and Syriac sources, and thus revolutionised the methodology of reconstructing the history of Ghassān."⁹ Thus Nöldeke depended on the Greek and Latin sources for reconstructing the Arab-Byzantine past in pre-Islamic times and then, and only then, turned to the Oriental sources for more data, relying on the Syriac rather than on the Arabic sources for the history of the Ghassānids, at least in certain areas. The Syriac sources took precedence over the Arabic because they were written much before the Arabic ones. When Nöldeke utilized the latter, he depended more on contemporary Arabic poetry than on the later Islamic historians, whose reconstructions of the distant Ghassānid past did not always pass his tests.

Nöldeke's methodology has guided all those who have written on pre-Islamic *Arabica* for almost a century, including the present writer in his various articles on *Byzantino-arabica*, and it is this methodology that has basically guided the writing of this book. But in view of the fact that Nöldeke wrote almost a century ago, it is only natural that certain modifications should be introduced into his method. The problems of the fourth century are not identical with those of the sixth; the fortunes of the Tanūkhids are different from those of the Ghassānids; and the sources of these two centuries present different problems. Furthermore, advances have been made in both Byzantine and Arab history in this long period and new sources have been discovered. All this calls for some modifications of Nöldeke's technique.

⁷GF, which appeared in 1887.

⁸Whose *Essai sur l'histoire des arabes avant l'islamisme* had appeared in 1847–48 in Paris in three volumes; now reprinted in Graz, 1967.

⁹See the present writer in "Ghassān and Byzantium: A New *terminus a quo*," *Der Islam*, 33 (1958), p. 232.

Observations on these modifications may be divided into two parts: (A) observations of a general nature, and (B) specific ones that pertain to the fourth century.

A

These observations relate principally to the status of the Arabic sources vis-à-vis the Greek and Latin and also the Syriac.

Although Nöldeke's conclusions remain valid, namely, that precedence should be given to the Greek and Latin sources in certain areas, e.g., in chronology, the Arabic sources that happened not to be valuable for his purpose¹⁰ in reconstructing the history of the Ghassānid dynasty turn out on closer examination to be not so unreliable for other periods. These sources have been examined for *Byzantino-arabica* in the fifth century, for the Salīhids, and they turned out to be worthy of more consideration, much more than Nöldeke had been willing to concede. Some tests have been applied for establishing the reliability of the Arabic accounts,¹¹ and two large questions have been raised, namely, "How to use the Arabic sources?" and secondly, "What to expect from them?" In an article on the Salīhids, the present writer has concluded in answering the first question that the Arabic sources "contain much that is valuable and historical." The task of the student of these sources is "how to isolate the solid spots in them, by-pass the soft ones, resolve contradictions in them that are only apparent, and apply certain tests to establish their authenticity, thus penetrating eventually to the kernel of historical truth which they undoubtedly contain."¹² In answer to the second question, the same article has shown "that while the sources may not answer questions of one order or category they can and do answer questions of another order which in the last analysis may be even more important than the first."¹³

B

The following departures from Nöldeke's technique specifically pertain to writing the history of *Byzantino-arabica* in the fourth century:

1. For the fourth century, the Arabic sources are more important than the Syriac, on which Nöldeke depended heavily for writing on the sixth.¹⁴ The latter have only limited usefulness, which consists mainly in the light these sources throw indirectly on the question of the involvement of the Arab

¹⁰On what he was looking for when he discarded the Arabic sources, see the present writer in "The Last Days of Salīh," *Arabica*, 5 (1958), p. 156.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 154.

¹²*Ibid.*

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 156.

¹⁴In the course of the thirty-five years that preceded the publication of his monograph on the Ghassānids in 1887, many Syriac sources important to the history of the Ghassānids were discovered; see Nöldeke, *GF*, p. 3.

foederati in Christianity and of the later fortunes of the Tanūkhids, in Islamic times.¹⁵

2. Arabic epigraphy was hardly an important source for Nöldeke when he reconstructed Ghassānid history in the sixth century. But for the fourth century it is a major source. It is the Arabic Namāra inscription that is the main source for the history of the Arab-Byzantine relationship in the reign of Constantine. Without it, it would have been impossible to make sense of that relationship for the reign of Constantine, which, moreover, happens to be the first reign and the terminus a quo for the Arab-Byzantine relationship in its entirety. That is why this inscription is discussed not in the context of its proper set of sources—the Arabic—but in that of the Greek and Latin, the sources from which were extracted the data for writing a diachronous history of Arab-Byzantine relations in the reign of each of the emperors of the fourth century from Constantine to Theodosius.

3. The value of the Arabic literary sources for the history of the fourth century has already been commented upon.¹⁶ They had not been very helpful to Nöldeke in his reconstruction of Ghassānid history in the sixth century or what he was looking for in that history. But they are valuable for the history of the Tanūkhids both in the fourth century and after.

Thus the Arabic sources, both epigraphic and literary, are basic for writing the history of Arab-Byzantine relations in the fourth century; they are the most important of all the Oriental sources. And this importance is likely to be enhanced with the lapse of time. The world of Arabian archeology, as well as that of the Arabic manuscripts, is opening up, and this is sure to yield some crucial data for reconstructing the history of the Arabs before the rise of Islam and that of the Arab-Byzantine relationship.

One set of Oriental sources made available by Arabian archeology is now assuming crucial importance, namely, the Sabaic inscriptions from the distant Arabian South. These inscriptions have shed a bright light on the obscure Peninsular phase in the history of two of Byzantium's Arab *foederati*—the Tanūkhids of the fourth century and the Ghassānids of the sixth.¹⁷ Thus they represent a new set of sources for reconstructing the history of Arab-Byzantine relations in pre-Islamic times.¹⁸

¹⁵For the Syriac authors, see A. Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur* (Bonn, 1922).

¹⁶On the use of Semitic epigraphy to validate the statements in the Arabic literary sources on the Tanūkhids of the fourth century, see *infra*, Chap. 10, notes 69–70.

¹⁷For the inscription which makes that precious mention of Peninsular Tanūkh, see *ibid.*, note 69. For the equally precious inscription that mentions the Peninsular Ghassānids, see *infra*, Chap. 3, note 58.

¹⁸They were unavailable to Nöldeke when he wrote his monograph on the Ghassānids, and this vitiated his conclusion on one of the major problems in the history of these federates of Byzantium in the sixth century; see the present writer in "Procopius on the Ghassānids," *JAOS*, 77 (1957), p. 86.

II. THE PROBLEMS AND THE MAJOR THEMES

The range of problems and themes that this book both treats and relates to is extensive. Their synoptic presentation is, therefore, desirable as conducive to a better comprehension of Arab-Byzantine relations in the fourth century and to a further probing of these problems in the light of new evidence that may turn up. Many of these problems persist in the fifth and the sixth centuries, and so their identification in this book on the fourth century lays a foundation for a diachronous treatment which will reveal their evolution and thus enable the history of Arab-Byzantine relations in pre-Islamic times to be written along genetic lines. These problems and themes may be divided into three main groups.

1

First are those that pertain to the fourth century itself, and a list of them may be found in the table of contents.¹⁹ They may be grouped around a few major themes, which may be presented as follows:

(1) Political, military, and economic: (a) Byzantium and the Eastern Question; (b) Byzantium and the Barbarians; a study of the process of Byzantinization; (c) the place and function of the Arab *foederati* in the Byzantine army and their contribution to the defense of Oriens and the *Limes Orientalis*.

(2) Cultural: (a) the involvement of the Arabs in Christianity and the ramifications of this involvement: the rise of an Arab Church in the fourth century within the Patriarchate of Antioch; the Arabic liturgy and the light it sheds on the search for the Arabic Bible in pre-Islamic times; (b) the composition of Arabic poetry in Oriens in the fourth century; (c) the image of the Arabs in the mirror of Byzantine historiography.

Finally, a major problem and a vexed question that involves the Arabs is that of heresies and national movements and their relation to the fall of the Roman Empire, a view associated with the name of the Oxford historian E. L. Woodward.

2

Of the many groups of barbarians who tried to breach the Roman Wall, only two succeeded—the Germans in the West and the Arabs in the East. The history of the German breakthrough in the West has been studied by generation after generation of scholars, but the same cannot be said of the Arab

¹⁹The reader will not fail to note that social and economic problems do not figure prominently in *BAFOC*. The sources for the fourth century are silent on such topics as diet, means of subsistence, livestock, clothing, use of money or barter, and habitation. They are slightly more informative on some of these topics and on others, including the numbers of the *foederati* when the Ghassānids of the sixth century are involved. They will be discussed in *BASIC*.

breakthrough in the East. To make a contribution to this understudied area is one of the goals of this and the following volumes in this series, *BAFOC*, *BAFIC*, and *BASIC*, in which are presented the fortunes of the other group of barbarians that are involved in the empire's fall. This book should, therefore, be of special interest to the scholar who deals with the German profile of Byzantine history. The study of the history of the two peoples in this comparative context is mutually illuminative, whether the study is conducted synchronously for the fourth century or diachronously for the fifth and the seventh centuries when the Germans and the Arabs effect their historic breakthroughs respectively. For the concerns of this book, the comparative approach is especially fruitful for the study of the federate experiment as applied to these two peoples:

(1) The history of the Visigoths who broke through the Danube line in the fourth century has been the subject of much research. The investigation of the history of the Arab *foederati* in Oriens in the same century has revealed the existence of another group of *foederati* similar to the Visigoths with whom these may be compared and contrasted for examining the conclusions that have been drawn on the Visigoths regarding such aspects of their federate history as their legal status, the terms of the *foedus*, and their settlement within the *limes* on Roman soil.

(2) The Byzantine experiment with the Germans did not last long. After the major breakthrough at Adrianople in A.D. 378 in the fourth century, these brought about the collapse of the empire in the West in the following century. By contrast, the experiment with the Arabs lasted much longer, for three centuries, before the breakthrough of the Peninsular Arabs took place in the seventh century. Hence the importance of this experiment, this federate experiment with the Arabs, as one that endured so long, maturing in the sixth century and thus admitting of a close examination and evaluation.

Thus the Arab problem in the East balances the German problem in the West through the historic roles of these peoples as two hammers that hewed down the imperial fabric of Mediterranean Rome. The fortunes of the two peoples are linked together within this historical framework and through their complementary roles in the work of destruction. But they are also linked in the subsequent work of reconstruction—the erection of the new imperial structures that each built on the old Roman soil: the *Sacrum Imperium* and the Islamic Caliphate. Thus the fruitfulness of the comparative approach extends beyond the limits of late antiquity.

3

The seventh century is a watershed in the history of Byzantium, and its character as such is due to the rise of Islam and the Arab Conquests. On the

one hand, the century witnessed the establishment of Arab ascendancy in the Near East and half of the Mediterranean region; on the other, it witnessed the amputation and loss to the Arabs of the Afro-Asian provinces and the conversion of Byzantium from an empire almost coterminous with the Mediterranean basin into a Balkan-Anatolian state. Thus, in addition to being a recovery of the past, the past of these three centuries, research on the fourth and the two following centuries acquires a new significance derivative from that of the seventh, since these three centuries emerge as the period of the gathering storm in Arabia, the period that witnessed the silent growth of a number of factors that finally went into the making of the great historic movement of Arab expansion and conquest in the seventh century. In this larger sense, research on Byzantium and the Arabs in the fourth and subsequent centuries before the rise of Islam becomes crucially related to the problem of the fall of the Byzantine Empire.²⁰

The third group of major historical problems that the theme "Byzantium and the Arabs before the Rise of Islam" is related to pertains to the seventh century and may be specified as follows:

(1) The first is the rise of Islam in the second decade of the seventh century in Mecca in a region that had experienced a strong Byzantine presence in Ḥijāz, a large part of which had been the Provincia Arabia. Ḥijāz or Western Arabia, rather than Arabia in its entirety, is the true "Cradle of Islam."

(2) The second is the Arab Conquests, the offensives which the Arabs mounted against Byzantine Oriens in the fourth decade of the same century and which resulted in the final loss of that diocese to the Muslim Arabs. A partial solution to the problem of the Arab victory is provided by the investigation of the history of the Arab *foederati* of Byzantium and the failure of their protective shield to withstand the Muslim Arab onslaught.

(3) Less known is the relevance of "Byzantium and the Arabs before the Rise of Islam" to Umayyad history, to the history of the mettlesome Arab state which wrestled with Byzantium in the seventh and eighth centuries, indeed was interlocked with it in a life-and-death struggle. The Umayyad state was in many important ways "Byzantium *post* Byzantium." Its rise, decline, and fall was intimately related to the history of the *ajnād*, the army corps in Umayyad Oriens/Shām, a considerable portion of whom had been former Byzantine *foederati*. These constituted the sinews of the Umayyad thrust against Byzantium, and in so doing they lived on for another century as

²⁰That fall was not brought about by the Arabs, whose share consisted in the amputation of the Afro-Asian provinces. It was left to another Muslim people, the Turks, to bring about the eventual fall by their occupation of the Byzantine heartland, Anatolia and the Balkans. But this historic role of the Turks was made possible by the rise of Islam and the Arab Conquests.

ajnād after the collapse of the system to which they had belonged as *foederati* at the decisive battle of the Yarmūk in A.D. 636. Thus they formed part of the persistent heritage in the structure of the Umayyad state and represented one of the strong strands of continuity between Byzantine Oriens and Umayyad Shām.

The extraordinary, even dramatic, events of the seventh century and the surprises with which that century abounds both for Arabia and for Byzantium become intelligible once the history of these three centuries has been elucidated. They are the background of Islam and the Arab Conquests and "Byzantium and the Arabs before the Rise of Islam" is the prolegomenon, logically and chronologically, to "Byzantium and the Arabs in the Seventh Century." The problems of this century will be better comprehended after the relevant features of their background in the three preceding centuries have been investigated and after the roots of the historical process which culminated in the seventh century have been traced to this pre-Islamic period. This investigation by itself will not solve the problems of the seventh century, but it is indispensable to their solution. "Byzantium and the Arabs in the Seventh Century" can be most adequately studied only as the third part of a trilogy whose first part is "Rome and the Arabs from the Settlement of Pompey to the Reign of Diocletian" and whose second part is "Byzantium and the Arabs before the Rise of Islam, from the Reign of Constantine to that of Heraclius."

III. BYZANTIUM AND THE ARABS BEFORE THE RISE OF ISLAM

The period from the reign of Constantine to that of Heraclius is a genuine historical era and not a conventional one bounded by two arbitrary dates.²¹ And it is such not only in the history of Byzantium, a fact which needs no laboring, but also in the history of the Near East, represented by the neighboring powers that are involved in the Arab-Byzantine relationship, namely, the Persians, the Abyssinians, and the Sabaeans.²²

In the history of Persia, this period was opened by the reign of Shāpūr II, who revived the Sasanid claims to the *pars orientalis* and the hopes for the fulfillment of the Achaemenid dream. In the history of Abyssinia, it was opened by the reign of 'Ezānā, the Constantine of Abyssinia, who adopted

²¹For a synthesis and exposition of the history of the Arabs in general before the rise of Islam in these three centuries, see the present writer in "Pre-Islamic Arabia," *Cambridge History of Islam*, vol. 1, chap. 1. It is a synthesis against which this Introduction on the Byzantine profile of Arab history may be profitably set. For conclusions on the Ghassānid *foederati* included in this Introduction, see this writer's articles on Arab-Byzantine relations in the sixth century, a list of which may be found in the Bibliography, which also includes some articles on the fifth century.

²²The Sabaeans, or the Ḥimyarites, as the peoples of South Arabia were called in this period, are a differentiated Semitic group, related to the Arabs but quite distinct from them.

Christianity as the state religion and inaugurated a pro-Byzantine policy that continued for centuries. In the history of Arabia, it was opened by the reign of Shammār Yuhar'ish, the Sabaeen king who about A.D. 300 united for the first time in their long history all the kingdoms of the Arabian South. The period was brought to an end by the Arab Conquests during the reign of Heraclius, which thus represents the terminus ad quem.

In the history of Arab-Byzantine relations, these three centuries are flanked by four earlier centuries, from the first B.C. to the third A.D., and by four later centuries from the seventh to the eleventh. They form a middle period between the earlier Roman one that extended from the Settlement of Pompey to the reign of Diocletian and the later Islamic one that extended from the seventh to the eleventh century. The Roman period witnessed powerful Arab kingdoms, which had risen as independent political entities even before Rome extended its rule to the eastern Mediterranean, and whose best representative was the Palmyra of Odenathus and Zenobia in the third century. The Islamic period began in the seventh century with the lightning conquests of Muslim arms, which established the political and military supremacy of the Arabs in the Near East and completely reversed their relation to Byzantium from vassals to conquerors. It is not only for the sake of political and military history that this periodization has been made. The Arabs had eleven centuries or so of cultural relations with Rome on the Tiber and Rome on the Bosphorus and an even longer period of relations with Hellenism, whether directly through the Macedonians or through the mediation of Rome. The history of these cultural relations as one theme becomes comprehensible once the natural divisions of this long history have been recognized and characterized. The process of cultural exchange and assimilation in each period responds to the rhythms and contours of political life and history.

The setting of this period within this long historical perspective of eleven centuries, between the military ascendancy of Palmyra in the third century and the Muslim supremacy in the seventh, clearly reveals its character as a period of eclipse in Arab history. A curious conjunction of events and circumstances contributed to the eclipse of the Arabs in these three centuries: the rise of the Sabaeen wall in the southwest, of the new system of frontier defense in the Byzantine northwest, of the Sasanid power buttressed by a powerful Arab frontier state in the northeast, all placed a term on the expansion of the Arabs in three directions. The Arabs were truly immured. The veritable hell on earth to the southeast known as the Empty Quarter had always been an impenetrable natural barrier.

As a result of these constrictions on their political and military self-expression in this period, the Arabs led what might be termed a satellitic existence. They were surrounded by powerful political entities in whose shadow

they moved. In the northeast, there was Sasanid Persia; in the northwest, Byzantium; in the southwest, Ḥimyar. The Arabs became the clients of these three powers; such were Kinda for Ḥimyar, Lakhm for Persia, and Tanūkh, Salīh, and Ghassān for Byzantium. Furthermore, the Arabs were drawn into the wars of the great powers of this period, the Sasanid-Byzantine conflict in the north and a parallel conflict in the south between Ḥimyar and Ethiopia, which after the conversion of ʿEzānā became politically aligned with Byzantium, just as Ḥimyar generally speaking was aligned with Persia.

Just as the Arabs in this period led a satellitic political existence, so they did in the cultural sphere as well. These three centuries were a period of cultural domestication for the Arabs as they revolved in the orbits of the three powers that surrounded them, Byzantium, Persia, and Ḥimyar. And the most important borrowed cultural constituent in the life and history of the Arabs in these centuries was Christianity, which was most powerfully mediated by Byzantium. In fact, Christianity gave Arab history in these three centuries its distinctive character culturally. Before this period, most of the Arabs were pagan, and after it most of them became Muslim. Consequently, these three centuries are those during which the dominant and significant cultural current that influenced the life of the Arabs was the Christian one, and thus they represent the middle period in the spiritual journey of the Arabs, from paganism to Christianity to Islam.

The exploration of the historical dimensions of this period, the unity that characterizes it, and its relation to the Roman and the Islamic periods, has not only placed it diachronously as a middle period in the history of a long relationship but has also disclosed its centrality. Hence its significance and complexity. Its complexity is partly derivative from its relations to two major historical themes: (a) Byzantium and the Eastern Question, and (b) Byzantium and the Barbarians. Of these two themes, only what is relevant to and illuminative of the Arab-Byzantine relationship will be treated in this introduction.

A. The Eastern Question

The military and the economic facets of the Arab profile of the Eastern Question are related to the most important encounter in the history of Arab-Roman relations, namely, the meteoric rise of Palmyra and its spectacular fall in the third century. Palmyra had been at one and the same time the capital of a vast commercial empire and of a powerful military organization. Under Odenathus, it saved for Rome the *pars orientalis*; under Zenobia, it annexed it. Aurelian razed it to the ground, thus completing the dismantling of the Arab military establishment in its entirety, a process which began three decades earlier with the fall of Ḥatra to Shāpūr and of Edessa to Gordian. The main features of the political and economic aspects of the Eastern Question that

emerge out of the Arab-Roman encounter in the third century and that affect the Arab-Byzantine relationship may be presented as follows:

1. The elimination of Palmyra and the vacuum created by its fall brought the Romans face to face with the Persians, and the important military facet of the Eastern Question again became for Rome what it had always been and what it continued to be—a Persian problem. The Arabs ceased to have an independent existence for Byzantium. After they had been a factor in the shaping of Roman history in the third century, they became an element in Byzantium's scheme of things.

2. In the economic sphere, the fall of Palmyra brought about that gradual shift of commerce from the Mesopotamian route to the West Arabian one—the historic *via odorifera*—a process which was consummated in the sixth century. Through this shift, Byzantium was brought into a new relationship with another Arab group, the city dwellers of West Arabia. But what Palmyra had united, namely, economic prosperity and military power, was now separated. The military groups in the north had no economic basis for their power but were entirely dependent on Byzantine subsidies. The Arab trading cities of western Arabia had no appreciable military power to match their economic prosperity. Neither was capable of any major military undertaking because the two complementary resources for such an undertaking did not obtain. Hence Byzantium's control of the Arab problem throughout this period.

The military and the economic facets of the Eastern Question as it bears on the Arabs in the context of the Arab-Byzantine relationship may be briefly elaborated as follows:

(a) The Byzantine solution of the Arab problem benefited from the lesson that the encounter of Rome with Palmyra had inculcated. Powerful independent caravan cities such as had characterized the Roman period were not allowed to develop or to be revived. With the elimination of the Arab client-states of the Roman period, especially Palmyra, a new structure had to be devised to fill the vacuum created by the fall of Palmyra and to meet the challenges posed by the Arabs and the Arabian Peninsula and which placed the Romans in a constantly reactive posture in defense of the *imperium*. This new structure was the work of Diocletian, who complemented the military victory of Aurelian over the Arabs by the construction of the *Strata Diocletiana*, which with its *castra* and *castella* reflected Rome's determination to take upon itself the defense of the Orient, or that part of it, previously undertaken by Palmyra.

But the new defense system with its *Limes Diocletianus* and its Roman *limitanei* was not enough to deal with the challenges coming from the Arabs and the Arabian Peninsula. The *limes* rose and remained in a state of permanent tension between the desert and the sown, and this could only be resolved

or alleviated through the employment of Arabs to deal with the Arabs who were raiding the imperial frontier and the limitrophe provinces. The *foederati* were Byzantium's answer to the permanent challenges that were emanating from the Arabian frontier. The *foedus*, the treaty, was the convenient device which absorbed the shock of the Arab military groups who fought their way across the *limes*, and it made them technically allies of the empire, allowing them to settle on Byzantine territory and extending to them the *annona*, the annual subsidy in return for military service. For three centuries the *foederati* represented the new Byzantine experiment in Arab-Byzantine relations.

(b) The shift from the Mesopotamian to the West Arabian route chimed well with the plans and interests of Byzantium. The Persians were astride two of the principal trade routes which connected the Mediterranean with the Far East. The goal of Byzantine diplomacy was the establishment of a series of alliances in the Red Sea area which would enable Byzantium to bypass the Persian obstacle, enter into direct commercial relations with the Far East, and revive the tradition of Roman trade which had slipped in the third century into the hands of foreign intermediaries. These endeavors brought Byzantium in touch with the Arabs of the incense route, and they explain the concerns of Byzantium over what otherwise might seem insignificant episodes, such as the military operations against the Arabs in the island of Iotabe around A.D. 500, or the acquisition of an oasis in northern Ḥijāz, probably Tabūk, around A.D. 530, or the assiduity with which they cultivated the friendship of the phylarchs of Palestina Tertia in the fifth century.

Just as the Persians were astride the Mesopotamian route, so were the Sabaeans astride the West Arabian one, and this fact presented a problem for Byzantium, although a less serious one than the Persian. Much depended on the goodwill of the Sabaeans, who were strategically located in control of the incense route. But they were anti-Byzantine ever since the ill-starred expedition of Aelius Gallus during the reign of Augustus. Hence the function of the Arabs settled on the West Arabian route as an important link between Saba and Byzantium. They became the intermediaries of this transit trade and consequently reached a degree of economic prosperity which Mecca, the future city of Islam, fully illustrates in the sixth century. Mecca's services to Byzantium were complemented in the most adequate fashion by a sister city to the south, namely, Najrān. Although situated in the Sabaeon south, Najrān was an Arab city. It was an important trade center, being the focus of a number of trade routes within the Peninsula; and it finally and indirectly rid Byzantium of the Sabaeon problem. A joint expedition by Abyssinia and Byzantium brought about the downfall of the Sabaeon kingdom, its occupation by the Abyssinians, its conversion to Christianity, and its amenability to Byzantine influence. The spice route in all its segments thus became safe for Byzantium.

To sum up: the displacement of the Mesopotamian route by the West Arabian one was a turning point in the history of the Arabs before the rise of Islam and in the history of their future relations with Byzantium. Of the many consequences that attended the fall of Palmyra, it was this economic one that turned out to be the most significant, since it enabled Mecca to rise to a position of dominance in Arabia and to perform against Byzantium what Palmyra had been unable to perform against Rome. *From Palmyra to Mecca* would be a suitable rubric for describing the story of this Byzantine period, as *From Petra to Palmyra* would be an equally suitable one for the earlier Roman period. By what they express and imply, these rubrics illustrate important aspects of the law of political generation and decay, or the rise and fall of political organizations in pre-Islamic Arabia: namely, that it was the sedentary element that shaped the history of the Peninsula and not the nomads, in spite of the latter's wide diffusion and numerical superiority, and that the changes and revolutions in Arab history were directly related to the replacements and displacements of the trans-Arabian routes.

B. Byzantium and the Barbarians

The history of Byzantium is inseparably linked with that of the three principal groups of barbarians who hammered at its northern and southern frontiers, the Germans, the Slavs, and the Arabs. All of these succeeded in erecting new political structures on former Roman and Byzantine territory and all of them had been drawn into the cultural orbit of Mediterranean Rome. The northern barbarians, the Germans and the Slavs, remained in that orbit, while the Arabs, after revolving for three centuries, suddenly and dramatically flew off, erected a new *imperium sacrum* of their own, the Islamic Caliphate, and themselves became the center of a new cultural orbit within which revolved new groups of barbarians, the Turks and Mongols of central Asia and the Berbers of North Africa. Byzantium's was not the only cultural orbit in which the Arabs of pre-Islamic times revolved. There were two others, that of Himyar in South Arabia and that of Sasanid Persia. But it was the Byzantine orbit that was the most powerful of the three in the life of the Arabs as a center of cultural radiation and it continued as such throughout these three centuries. The illumination of some of the obscurity that shrouds the process of Byzantinization among the Arabs in pre-Islamic times is, therefore, highly desirable as a complementary contribution to the study of the Slavic profile of the same process and the Germanic profile of the process of Romanization.

Before examining this process, a few preliminary remarks and a number of distinctions and definitions are necessary:

1. Of the three constituents of Byzantinism, namely, the Roman, the Christian, and the Greek, the Roman and the Christian are especially signifi-

cant, and the Christian is the much more important of the two. It was the most vital and efficacious instrument of Byzantinization among the Arabs of pre-Islamic times.

2. The agents of the process of Byzantinization are principally two: the imperial administration and the ecclesiastical establishment. The interests of the two do not necessarily coincide, except in areas of overlapping jurisdiction, but, generally speaking, their resources and efforts are complementary.

3. The Arab beneficiaries of Byzantium are not homogeneous, but fall into four distinct groups of varying degrees of receptivity to the cultural process. A recognition of their heterogeneous social structure is essential for an accurate evaluation of the success or failure of the Byzantinizing process among them. The first group are the *cives*, the *Rhomaioi*, living in the Diocese of the Orient, to whom *civitas* was extended by the Edict of Caracalla in A.D. 212. The second group are the *foederati*, the allies settled on both sides of the *limes*. The third group are the nomads of inner Arabia. The fourth group are the city dwellers of the middle segment of the spice route in western Arabia.

The first group, the *cives*, belonged to Byzantium, and their history is really part of Byzantine provincial history and not so much of Arab-Byzantine relations. They were the group in whom the process of Byzantinization was complete in all its elements, Roman, Christian, and Greek, and whose life and fortunes are intimately reflected in the Latin and Greek inscriptions of Syria. They were the Arabs of such client-states as Petra and Palmyra, who continued to live within the *limes* after the annexation of the first by Trajan and the second by Aurelian and who lived mainly in the eastern provinces of the Diocese of the Orient. They had settled in this area long before Rome extended its conquests to the eastern Mediterranean, and for this reason they had been subjected to the Greek influence for a much longer period than to the Roman or the Christian, having had three centuries of contact with Hellenism through the Seleucids and the Ptolemies. Although not strictly the concern of this book, they are relevant in three ways:

(a) They determined the ethnic constitution of the eastern provinces and thus enabled the Arab *foederati* to function smoothly and efficiently in discharging their duties.

(b) They became an element in the story of the Muslim conquest of these provinces in the seventh century, an element which, however, tends to be exaggerated; they also gave the Muslim occupation of Syria a quality of permanence and accelerated the process of Arabization in the former Byzantine provinces of Oriens.

(c) Finally, they remained one of the most important links between the Old Order and the New and a strand of continuity in the Byzantine influence in Umayyad times.

The second group, the *foederati*, comes next to the Arab *Rhomaioi* in reflecting the success of Byzantinization among the pre-Islamic Arabs. Both the imperial administration and the ecclesiastical establishment work together in the transmission of the Roman and the Christian elements. The Christian element preceded the Roman, since conversion to Christianity was one of the terms of the settlement of the *foederati* and their alliance with Byzantium. The Roman element follows the Christian, mediated through their service in the Byzantine army. The influence of this Roman element is reflected in their adoption of Roman weapons and methods of warfare, but more so in the spirit of the Roman army, in its discipline and organization. Their commanders were given the title "phylarch," and it is the emergence of the phylarchate of the Orient, organized along Roman lines, that affords the best opportunity for inspecting the process of Romanization. The phylarchs were endowed with the ranks of the imperial hierarchy, including the gloriosissime. The conferment of these high ranks is a telling indication of the importance of the *foederati* and the degree of their integration into the Byzantine system, and this integration is best attested in the sixth century. The gloriosissime made the supreme phylarch equal in rank to the highest civil and military Roman officials in the diocese, the *magister militum* and the *comes Orientis*. But it was not only in purely military and administrative fields that the *foederati* revealed the degree of Byzantinization to which they had been subjected. Contrary to a widely held view, they were not rude soldiers or semi-nomads, but a sedentary group that contributed to the urbanization of Syria and to the stabilization of the frontier between the desert and the sown. From their *hīras*, their military encampments, towns developed, and along the *limes* rose their castles and palaces, the desolate ruins of which are still standing.

A more sensitive measure of the degree of Byzantinization that the *foederati* underwent is afforded by their involvement in Christianity, the most vital of the three constituents of Byzantinism. The sincerity and seriousness of their Christian confession are most sharply reflected in their stand against the Arian emperors of the fourth century and the Chalcedonian emperors of the sixth on purely doctrinal grounds, since none of their interests, material or other, could have been served by opposition to the empire on whose subsidy they depended. Through their involvement in Monophysitism, the *foederati* touched the deeper rhythms in the life of an empire whose mind was theological, and this involvement eventually brought about their downfall.

The *foederati* turned out to be not only recipients of Byzantinism but also its middlemen to their countrymen in the Arabian Peninsula. Through their contacts with the groups they had to deal with militarily, politically, and diplomatically, they became indirect agents of the process of Byzantinization, supplementing the work of the imperial administration and the ecclesiastical

establishment, particularly in the propagation of Christianity in regions that were more accessible to them than to the Orthodox Byzantine Church.

The third group, the nomads, was the group in whom the process of Byzantinization was least effective. The inaccessibility of the inhospitable regions where they roamed and their very nomadism were factors which militated against the success of Byzantinization among them. The element that could reach them was neither the Roman nor the Greek, but the Christian, and when it did, it did not sink very deep. They were more the concern of the ecclesiastical establishment than the imperial administration. Of considerable interest, however, is the fact that the more important instrument of Christianization was the monastery, not the church. The anchorites and eremites of early Christian times found in the desert a congenial place of retreat, and so, where the church could not function for geographical and other reasons, the monastery could and did. But it remained a passive center of pietism and asceticism and not an active agent of evangelization. Nevertheless, its influence was considerable.

Of the cities of western Arabia which represent the fourth group, Najrān in the Arabian South is the city that merits most attention. The agents of Byzantinization were neither the imperial administration nor the ecclesiastical establishment in Orthodox Byzantium. The process of Byzantinization was part of "the involuntary mission of Byzantium," carried out by non-Orthodox missionaries. The base from which these issued was Mesopotamia, whence they carried their activities into India, Central Asia, and the Far East, and part of this extensive evangelic movement was the drive to the southwest, to the Arab city of Najrān; this was not the only region where the missionaries spread Christianity among the Arabs, but this was the most important and the most relevant for Byzantium. The Monophysites came not only from Mesopotamia but also from Abyssinia, Christian since the conversion of the famous king of Axum, 'Ezānā. Najrān became the great center of Christianity in the Sabaean South and the focus of international intrigues in which economics, politics, and religion were all entangled. Diophysite Byzantium, doctrinally opposed to the heretical form of Christianity prevalent among the Arabs of Najrān, could not withhold its support of a center in that area of vital importance for its economic and political interests, namely, South Arabia. Hence the joint Byzantine-Ethiopian expedition in the third decade of the sixth century which made of South Arabia a Christian country for some fifty years and also a Byzantine sphere of influence.

The Foederati

Of the four groups of Arabs subjected to the Byzantinizing process in these three centuries and discussed in the preceding section, the second, the

foederati, deserve much attention because they are the concern of this book. These three centuries may, in fact, be justly and rightly called the period of the *foederati* in the history of Arab-Byzantine relations. They will, therefore, be singled out for a somewhat elaborate treatment in a more comprehensive context.

1. Just as the term *foederati* distinguishes this new Arab-Byzantine relationship in these three centuries, so does the term *phylarchus*. Although the *foederati* were ruled by their kings, the more distinctive term that describes their commanders is that of *phylarchus*, the title given to them and sometimes even to their kings. This period is, then, also the period of the phylarchs, as contrasted with that of the Arab rulers of such important centers as Petra, Edessa, and Palmyra in the preceding Roman period. The early history of the phylarchate in the fourth century is obscure, but it is clearest in the sixth century when it reached the climax of its development. The structure of the phylarchate then became complex, and it was pyramidal. At the apex stood the supreme Ghassānid phylarch and king with the rank of *gloriosissimus*, while at the base stood minor commanders with a lesser rank, such as *clarissimus*. Within this system, the supreme phylarch was the undisputed head of the other phylarchs whose relation to him was similar in rank and function to that of the various *duces* to the *magister militum*.

2. The *foederati* of these three centuries are distinguished from the Arabs with whom Rome had had to deal in the third century, such as the Palmyrenes, in many important respects:

(a) The Palmyrenes, as also the Nabataeans and the Osroenian Arabs, had been settled in the area even before Pompey appeared in the East, while the *foederati* of this period, such as the Tanūkhids and the Lakhmids, were newcomers who crossed the *limes* in the fourth century and some possibly before, in the third. One of the most important differences between the new *foederati* and the Palmyrenes is that the life and history of the latter centered around their fortress city, Palmyra, as did the history of the Nabataeans around Petra and of the Osroenians around Edessa. It was from Palmyra and because of it that the Palmyrenes were able to pose a threat to the empire during Zenobia's revolt. In contrast with the Palmyrenes, the Nabataeans, and the Edessans, the *foederati* of this period are not masters of important urban centers in Syria whence their power could grow to the point at which they could pose a real danger to imperial authority. It was perhaps the bitter lesson of Palmyra that induced Byzantium not to provide her new Arab allies with the urban nuclei for the growth of an imperial and aggressive political and military structure. The new *foederati* have their military establishments, their *hīras* and *paremboles*, and sometimes they are associated with an important center such as Anasarthā, but they were not allowed to develop a major urban center. This fact,

possibly, has *inter alia* given rise to the false notion that these *foederati* were nomads.

(b) Important as the differences are between the *foederati* and the Arabs of Palmyra, the most important differences, however, are to be sought in the cultural sphere. The conversion of the Arab *foederati* to Christianity constituted the *differentia* between them and all the other Arab groups with whom Rome had had to deal in the Roman period. The *foederati* received the *annona*, and thus they were technically mercenaries, paid soldiers, and so the subsidy was the bond that united them, a bond that alone could not have induced in them a real sense of loyalty. Christianity revolutionized the relationship between the *foederati* and Byzantium and added a powerful dimension to their loyalty. The old legal and technical bond of *fides* that had united Roman emperor and his Arab ally was now cemented by a common faith to which both Byzantium and her Arab allies were passionately devoted. The concept of *fides* underwent a spiritualization that caused it to emerge even stronger and to be more meaningful as a bond. This was especially fortunate, coming as it did after the bloody encounter with Palmyra which resulted in its utter destruction, perhaps reflecting Roman despair in future cooperation with the Palmyrene Arabs. The result must have been an atmosphere of mutual distrust which was not easy to dispel, and it would have been difficult to find a formula of coexistence through which the Arab-Roman relationship could be restored to normality. Christianity solved this problem by uniting the two parties within its spiritual fold, and whatever disagreements developed turned round the correct interpretation of the same faith which they shared. But it was the community of this faith that mattered on the battlefield when they fought the fire-worshiping Persians and the idol-worshippers of Arabia.

(c) There was yet another important cultural difference between the *foederati* of these three centuries and the Palmyrenes of the third. While Arabic was the first language of the Palmyrenes, these became, as a commercial community and a military power, so much involved because of their international relations with Aramaic, the *lingua franca* of the East, that it is unlikely that written Arabic was ever used by them for any purpose. The language of their Semitic inscriptions was Aramaic. The *foederati* of these three centuries present a different spectacle in their relation to the Arabic language. Although they must have learned some Latin as the language of the Roman army of which they formed a part, and more Aramaic, yet Arabic was their principal language, and those of the fourth century had hailed from the region of the Lower Euphrates, in and around Hīra, which probably witnessed one of the earliest outbursts of pre-Islamic Arabic poetry. It was through the medium of Arabic that the earliest attested Arabic poetry in Oriens was composed in the fourth century for these very *foederati*, thus preludeing a long tradition

of Arabic poetic composition in Oriens associated with the *foederati* of the fifth century, the Salīhids, and those of the sixth, the Ghassānids. The tradition of poetic composition associated with these *foederati* had extraliterary implications, one of which was related to their strong sense of identity as Arabs. Unlike the other Arab groups of the Roman period who were assimilated to the Graeco-Roman and the Aramaic cultures of Oriens, these retained their Arabness in spite of the non-Arab influences to which they were subjected.

3. These *foederati* and their *phylarchi* had an important place in the Byzantine army of the Orient, a function that developed throughout these three centuries until it reached its climax in the sixth. This place and the assignments and duties which went with it may be summarized as follows:

(a) The new army of the Byzantine period was created by Diocletian and further developed with important modifications by Constantine, who strengthened the mobile army of *comitatenses* at the expense of the *limitanei* and separated the cavalry from the infantry, putting the former under a *magister equitum*.

The place of the Arab *foederati* may be set against these innovations of Constantine and his *exercitus comitatensis* and the new qualities of mobility and horsemanship which characterized the new army. The Arab *foederati* were professional fighters, raiders and riders, in the Arabian Peninsula before they settled in both parts of the Fertile Crescent. Unlike their Nabataean and Palmyrene predecessors, they did not engage in trade or agriculture and thus were purely professional soldiers who, unlike the *limitanei*, were kept at a high level of military efficiency. Throughout these three centuries they functioned as mobile cavalry units in the army of the Orient and on occasion were drafted into the *exercitus comitatensis*, as happened in the reign of Valens when they accompanied the emperor to fight in the Gothic War in Thrace and where their *cuneus equitum* acquitted itself remarkably well in encounters with the Goths.

As mobile cavalry units in the Byzantine army of the Orient, the *foederati* reach the climax of their development in this capacity in the sixth century, and more is known about the Ghassānid *foederati* of that century than about any other groups of *foederati* in this pre-Islamic period. To the army of the Orient they contributed numbers, mobility, and spirit. The Byzantine armies of the sixth century were relatively small armies and the Arab federate contingent formed a substantial portion of that army. In a war the battles of which were sometimes entirely cavalry engagements, the Arabian horse proved its mettle tactically and strategically. It was ubiquitous on the battlefield and in the pursuit. It coursed far and wide, crossed the Euphrates, and penetrated as far as Assyria and Armenia. Once it covered the retreat of Belisarius and

probably saved for Justinian the life of the *magister militum* who was to effect the reconquest of Africa from the Vandals and Italy from the successors of Theodoric. Hailing from a Peninsula where war was the national industry and from a heroic age in pre-Islamic Arabia, these *foederati* infused fresh blood and new vigor into the Byzantine army of the Orient throughout the three centuries of their employment in the imperial service.

(b) The *foederati* had three main assignments in Oriens: the defense of the more outlying and exposed provinces against any threat from the Arabian Peninsula; the containment of the Lakhmids, the Arab allies of Sasanid Persia; and participation in the regular campaigns of the Byzantine army against the Sasanids. Each of these three assignments was a response to permanent challenges and problems which obtained in the East.

In spite of the rise of the *Limes Diocletianus* and the concentration of regular Roman troops along that *limes* in great numbers, the Arab *foederati* remained indispensable, especially for dealing with the Arabs of the Peninsula and with the Lakhmids of Ḥīra. The nature of the problem was such as to admit of only one solution—the employment of Arab troops as allies. Not static defenses, but mobile ones, could meet the threat of the Peninsular Arabs. The *foederati* thus stepped in to perform what static defenses could not perform. Thoroughly familiar with the principles of desert warfare, with the topography of the Peninsula from which they had come, and, above all, with its tribal groups and political alignments, the *foederati* could impose the will of Rome in the desert. The end in view was to impose a *pax Romana* in the desert, or that part of it which adjoined the Roman frontier, to enable the provinces of Oriens to develop peacefully and quietly without the alarms and raids of the Peninsular Arabs. That the *foederati* eminently succeeded in the discharge of this duty is amply clear in the case of the Ghassānids of the sixth century when there is ample documentation for this success. And the same holds true of the success of their assignment to contain the Lakhmid Arabs, the Arab allies of Sasanid Persia, whom their overlords, the Persian kings, used to unleash against the Byzantine frontier whenever it was convenient for them to do so. This threat was adequately met in the sixth century, whose *foederati* turned out to be more powerful than their Lakhmid adversaries and who succeeded in administering a check to their raids and in burning their capital, Ḥīra.

The *foederati* were a military group, unlike some of their Arab predecessors in the Roman period, for instance, the Nabataeans, who were a commercial community. And yet they contributed to the economic well-being of Byzantium by protecting the caravans of the spice route in Palestina Tertia and in Ḥijāz, by enabling the outlying provinces of Oriens to grow, unmo-

lest by nomadic raids, by participating in military expeditions in the Peninsula in support of Byzantine economic interests, and by engaging in diplomatic activities on behalf of the empire in the world of the Southern Semites.

After successfully warding off for three centuries the assaults of the Peninsular Arabs against the *limes* and Oriens, the *foederati* could not withstand the assault of a new group of Arabs in the seventh century, united by the power of Islam, after some two decades of a series of strikingly unfavorable circumstances in Arabia which operated to the disadvantage of Byzantium. In A.D. 636 the federate shield irreparably broke at the decisive battle of Yarmūk in Trans-Jordan.

Christianity

Of the three constituents of Byzantinism and of the process of Byzantinization analyzed previously, namely, the Greek, the Roman, and the Christian, the one that affected and influenced the Arabs of pre-Islamic times most vitally was the last. For this reason it deserves some elaboration, especially as it is the cultural component that endows this period of three centuries with the unity it undoubtedly possesses, as the Christian period in the spiritual history of the Arabs, as indeed the golden period of Arab Christianity. It is also the cultural constituent which was officially sponsored for propagation by Byzantium, both the *imperium* and the *ecclesia*, within the confines of the empire and outside it in the Arabian Peninsula, and which affected so deeply the life and history of the *foederati* in the course of these three centuries. In this area as well as that of the army, the *foederati* attained full integration into the Byzantine system.

(a) Just as Arabia and the Arabs revolved in the political orbit of three Near Eastern states, Persia, Byzantium, and Ḥimyar, so were they subjected to influences from three main Near Eastern religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Zoroastrianism. Arabia became the playground of these three religions, but what mattered was the first two and what might be termed the struggle for Arabia between the two monotheistic religions, Judaism and Christianity. The latter won the upper hand, and the tide turned decisively against Judaism in the sixth century. In addition to the rise of a strongly Christian Arab presence in Oriens in the shadow of the Christian Roman Empire in this period, there were two other great centers that radiated Christianity to the Arabs: Ḥīra, the capital of the Lakhmids on the Lower Euphrates, and Najrān, the Arabian martyropolis in the south. These three centers transmitted powerfully, converting the Arabs to Christianity in these three centuries, a process facilitated by the conversion of the pagan Roman Empire. Christian Byzantium remained not only the imperial Colossus for the Arabs but the great

Christian fortress that was protecting and propagating Christianity, especially in Oriens, in western Arabia, and in South Arabia.

(b) How a religion of peace and humility was presented to and accepted by such military groups as these hardy desert warriors, hailing from the Arabian Peninsula, is not a mystery. Constantine had militarized the image of Christ, and the Cross became a symbol of victory carved on the shields of the Roman soldiers. The Arab *foederati* accepted this new image of Christ and Christianity, of a powerful, victorious Christ, who gave them victory in battle, and under that aegis they fought their wars and invoked his name in battle. Christianity converted the *foederati* into Crusaders, and as such they fought their wars in the course of these three centuries, whether they were fighting the fire-worshipping Persians or the pagan Lakhmid and Peninsular Arabs.

Their commitment to Christianity was also reflected in the religious wars of the period on the domestic scene in Byzantium itself, reflecting the seriousness with which they took their Christian confession in support of what they considered the correct theological position. Perhaps the most remarkable instance of this commitment and involvement was the role played by the sixth-century *foederati* in the history of the Monophysite movement. It was an Arab federate king, Arethas, who, resting on his military record in the Persian War and with the help of the Empress Theodora, was able to resuscitate the Monophysite movement in Oriens. The federate kings assumed the role that the Byzantine emperors had assumed of presiding over church councils and using their prestige to enforce uniformity of theological opinion when Monophysitism was rent by theological dissensions. Their role in the resuscitation of the Monophysite movement was important, as were the consequences of that revival among the Syrians, the Arabs, the Copts, the Ethiopians, and the Armenians. Thus, through their involvement in Monophysitism and its revival, the Arab *foederati* of this period contributed to the shaping of the fortunes of Christianity and of Christian history in Oriens and ensured for themselves a place in the history of Eastern Christianity.

(c) These three centuries were the golden period of Arab Christianity in the sense that during this period the Arabs developed a fairly mature Christian culture. Only faint vestiges of some of the components of this Christian culture in these three centuries have survived: the ruins of some of the architectural monuments, the churches and the monasteries, while whatever Christian poetry or literature was composed has disappeared, with the exception of a few verses. Well preserved, however, is the memory of their saints and martyrs. Two of the saints of the Christian Church are Arabs of this period, St. Moses and St. Arethas, whose feasts fall on the seventh of February and the twenty-third of October respectively.

IV. THE FOURTH CENTURY: A SYNOPTIC VIEW

The fourth century opens this middle period in the history of Arab-Roman relations, extending from the reign of Constantine to that of Heraclius, divisible into three subdivisions or smaller periods, and roughly coinciding with the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries.

1

In the study of Arab-Byzantine relations in the pre-Islamic period of three centuries, a grasp of the history of the fourth century is fundamental since it was during its course that were laid the foundations of the Arab-Byzantine relationship and were born the institutional forms of Arab federate history that developed in the course of these centuries, reaching their climax in the sixth. Various constituents of federate cultural life also came into being in this century. These institutional forms and cultural constituents of Arab federate history in the fourth century may be summarized as follows:

(1) This was the century of the *foederati* and the *phylarchi*, representing a new type of relationship and alliance between Byzantium and the Arabs in Oriens. It witnessed the rise of what might be termed the phylarchate of the Orient.

(2) The century also witnessed the rise of the twin institution that went with the phylarchate, namely, the Arab episcopate of the Orient. It is in this century that both Arab bishops and bishops of the Arab *foederati* are first attested.

(3) In addition to the episcopate, the beginnings of an Arab Church also came into being in this century, since all the components that a church consists of may be said to have existed. This was the church of the Saracens, representing most probably the oldest roots of the Arab Church within the Patriarchate of Antioch.

(4) All indications point to the conclusion that it was in this century that the rudiments of an Arabic liturgy came into being.

(5) Although Cosmas and Damian of the Roman period were, according to a Greek hymn, considered Arab, it is to this century that belongs the first undoubtedly Arab saint of the Byzantine period, St. Moses.

(6) The beginnings of pre-Islamic Arabic poetry are shrouded in obscurity, but the first attested composition of such poetry took place in this century in its latter half, during the reign of Valens, and possibly the earliest attested poetic expression of Christian religious sentiments.

Thus, the century witnessed a highly organized Arab military, ecclesiastical, and cultural presence in Oriens, which served as the foundation of all subsequent developments of federate presence until the seventh century. In

strictly Arab terms, the dominant Arab group among the *foederati* of this century were the Tanūkhids, and the history of Arab-Byzantine relations in the fourth century is largely that of the rise, decline, and fall of this dominant group among the *foederati* and the first Arab client-kingdom of Byzantium, the Tanūkhids.

2

The fourth is a tumultuous century in the history of Byzantine-Persian relations and of Byzantine-German relations, the climax of which was the Visigothic victory at Adrianople in A.D. 378. And so it is in the history of Arab-Byzantine relations, especially when contrasted with the fifth century, which was a century of relative peace on the eastern front. The course of Arab-Byzantine relations in this century becomes intelligible when set against the background of the policies initiated and pursued by the two historical personalities who dominated this century and left their mark on it.

On the Byzantine side, this was the century of Constantine, as it witnessed the Christianization of the empire, the barbarization of the army, and the *translatio imperii*, all of which affected the Arabs and the Arab-Byzantine relationship. On the Persian side, it was the century of Shāpūr II, who lived so long (A.D. 309–79) and reigned so long (A.D. 326–79). It was not so much his longevity as his aggressiveness that mattered and that set the two world powers on a collision course. His aggressiveness was irredentist. The Persians considered the Diocletianic acquisition of the Mesopotamian and trans-Tigrine provinces a rape. Shāpūr II was thus determined to recover the lost provinces. And it was not until the latter half of the century and by the terms of the Peace of Jovian in A.D. 363 and of the Settlement of A.D. 387 that the Persians considered the wrong had been righted.

Within the dynamics of the forces unleashed by the policies of these two sovereigns and their interaction, the place of the Arab *foederati* was assured in the history of this century, and they did make important contributions to the welfare of both the *imperium* and the *ecclesia*.

(1) They took an active part in the Persian and the Gothic Wars. They participated in the wars of the house of Constantine against Persia; and of the Persian Wars of that house, it was Julian's in which their participation was most significant. After the conclusion of the Peace of Jovian in A.D. 363, the Gothic problem claimed the attention of the Emperor Valens, and it was his reign that witnessed the most substantial contribution of the Arabs to the Byzantine war effort. In that reign, the Arab *foederati* were withdrawn from their settlements and encampments along the oriental *limes* and dispatched to faraway Thrace, where they defended Constantinople itself and took part in the Gothic War before Adrianople and possibly also in that fateful battle. And

if Imru' al-Qays of the Namāra inscription did indeed conduct his campaign against Najrān in South Arabia, sponsored by the Romans in the reign of Constantine, then the two expeditions would represent the farthest limit of Arab participation in, and contribution to, the Byzantine war effort in the fourth century.

(2) Between their participation in the Persian and the Gothic Wars, the *foederati* fought a war of their own against the imperial armies of the Emperor Valens in the last triennium of his reign, A.D. 375–78. In a sense, this was the most significant of all the wars of the century in which they participated. Unlike their participation in Julian's Persian War or Valens's Gothic War, this one was fought on purely doctrinal grounds, and this is what endows it with more than a merely military significance. The *foederati* fought it as an orthodox group against the Arian Valens and won.

It was an extraordinary military encounter between a group of Arab *foederati*, led by their queen, Mavia, and the imperial armies of Valens. In this century, the Arab *foederati* were the champions of orthodoxy and the faith of Nicaea against the Arian emperors of the century. Their soldiers fought for it, their saint, Moses, stood for it, and their queen, Mavia, negotiated for it. The *foederati* appear as the mailed fist of the Nicene party in Oriens who took upon themselves the defense of the true faith. Their relation to orthodoxy is especially important since the image of the Arabs in the Byzantine ecclesiastical mirror was that of heretics, hallowed by the phrase *Arabia haeresium ferax*. This was true of the *foederati* of the sixth century, the Ghassānids, who veered toward Monophysitism, but not true of the federate Arabs of the fourth century, who were strictly orthodox. Their correct doctrinal persuasion in the fourth century indicates that their gravitation toward nonorthodox views was not a uniform pattern of response to doctrinal challenges. They appear in this century not only orthodox but also the defenders of orthodoxy against the imperial government itself.

Their strict orthodoxy, however, did not save the *foederati* of the fourth century from imperial displeasure, since there were many grounds on which federate-imperial relations could founder, and they did. One of the ironies of the history of these orthodox *foederati* is that it was the very orthodox emperor, none other than Theodosius himself, that brought about their downfall in the first triennium of his reign.

PART ONE
THE GREEK AND THE LATIN SOURCES

I

The Reign of Constantine

I. THE NAMĀRA INSCRIPTION

The most important Arabic inscription of pre-Islamic times is undoubtedly the epitaph of Imru' al-Qays, the Arab king who was buried in Namāra,¹ in the Roman province of Arabia, in the year 328 of the Christian Era. Since its publication in 1902,² the Namāra inscription has been the subject of a lively discussion,³ and "the intensive study of this inscription has shed a bright light on many problems such as written Arabic and its script, on the tribal structure of the Arabian Peninsula in the fourth century, on the religious complexion of a fourth-century Arab ruler," and on a number of other problems.⁴ The French version of this inscription, that of Dussaud himself, in 1903, reads as follows:

Ceci est le tombeau d'Imru'lqais fils de 'Amr, roi de tous les Arabes, celui qui ceignit le diadème (2) qui soumit (les deux tribus) d'Asad, (celle) de Nizār et leurs rois, qui dispersa MĤDJ jusqu'à ce jour, qui

¹Between Bostra and Damascus; see R. Dussaud, *Topographie historique de la Syrie antique et médiévale* (Paris, 1927), p. 378, and A. Poidebard, *La trace de Rome dans le désert de Syrie* (Paris, 1934), pp. 61–63; also the earlier works of J. G. Wetzstein, *Reisebericht über Hauran und die Trachonen* (Berlin, 1860), pp. 75–76, and W. H. Waddington, *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie* (Paris, 1870; reprinted Rome, 1968), p. 522. A legionary detachment from III Cyrenaica was stationed at Namāra. On why this Arabic inscription is discussed in this first chapter of "Part One: the Greek and the Latin Sources," see *supra*, p. 7.

²By R. Dussaud, "Inscription nabatéo-arabe d'En-Namāra," *Revue archéologique*, 2 (1902), pp. 409–21, and again in the following year in *Mission scientifique dans les régions désertiques de la Syrie Moyenne* (Paris, 1903), pp. 314–22.

³For bibliographical orientation, see *Répertoire chronologique d'épigraphie arabe* (Cairo, 1931), vol. 1, pp. 1–2; since then the inscription has continued to engage the attention of scholars. There are attractive discussions of it in all the volumes of F. Altheim and R. Stiehl's *Die Araber in der alten Welt*, 5 vols. (Berlin, 1964–68) (hereafter, AAW), to which may be added W. Caskel, "Die Inschrift von En-Nemāra-Neu Gesehen," *Mélanges de l'Université St. Joseph*, 45 (Beirut, 1969), pp. 367–79. For the latest discussions of this inscription, see A. F. L. Beeston, "Nemara and Faw," *BSOAS*, 42 (1979), pp. 1–6, and the present writer in "Philological Observations on the Namāra Inscription," *JSS*, 24 (1979) (hereafter, "Observations"), pp. 33–42.

⁴"Observations," p. 33. Some scholars saw in Imru' al-Qays the builder of the famous Trans-Jordanian palace, al-Mushatta; see the bibliography in K. A. C. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture* (Oxford, 1969), vol. 1, part 2, pp. 604–6.

apporta (3) le succès(?) au siège de Nedjrân, ville de Chammâr, qui soumit la tribu de Ma'add, qui répartit entre ses fils (4) les tribus et organisa celles-ci comme corps de cavalerie pour les Romains. Aucun roi n'a atteint sa gloire, (5) jusqu'à ce jour. Il est mort l'an 223, le septième jour de Kesloul. Que le bonheur soit sur sa postérité.⁵

The problems that the inscription presents are numerous, but only those relevant to Arab-Byzantine relations will be discussed. These problems are important and deserve more attention than they have received, in view of the fact that (1) the king whom the inscription commemorates is buried in Namâra, one of the military posts in the province of Arabia; (2) the inscription makes a pointedly explicit reference to the Romans; and (3) Imru' al-Qays was a contemporary and almost certainly became a client of Constantine. For Arab-Byzantine relations during the reign of Constantine, it is the most important extant document and consequently it calls for an intensive and careful analysis.

1

Imru' al-Qays is none other than the Lakhmid king of Ḥīra, mentioned by Hishâm al-Kalbî, the chief Muslim historian of pre-Islamic Arabia. The epigraphic-literary confrontation is so complete⁶ that there can be no doubt whatsoever concerning the identity of this "king of all the Arabs." But the same complete identification poses a problem, namely, why a king of Ḥīra, who was in a special relationship to Persia, was buried in faraway Namâra

⁵Dussaud, *Mission*, p. 314. The translation of this inscription has had many versions, which reflect differences in its interpretation. Dussaud himself changed his mind many times, for which see his *Topographie*, p. 373 note 7, and *idem*, *La pénétration des Arabes en Syrie avant l'Islam* (Paris, 1955), p. 64; for more recent versions, see Caskel, "Die Inschrift," p. 374 and Beeston, "Nemara and Faw," p. 6. For *Byzantino-arabica*, the main problem occurs in line 4, where the Arabic word (f-r-s-w) has been interpreted by some as "horsemen" and by others as "Persians"; see *infra*, note 52.

⁶His name, his patronymic, and his being the second king of Ḥīra after his father, 'Amr ibn-'Adi, all interlock with the data in the inscription, which is, however, understandably silent on the Ḥīran phase in his rule; Nöldeke's suggestion in "Der Araberkönig von Namara," *Florilegium Melchior de Vogué* (Paris, 1909), pp. 463-66, that the Lakhmids started in Syria and later went over to Ḥīra cannot be accepted. The publication of the Paikuli inscription after the appearance of the *Florilegium*, and the publication of the Coptic Manichaean documents in the thirties, has established beyond doubt that the Arabic tradition represented by Hishâm al-Kalbî is correct, since in these documents Imru' al-Qays's father, 'Amr, appears where the Arab historians have placed him, not in Syria but in Iraq, in the Persian sphere of influence. For the Iranian inscription, see E. Herzfeld, *Paikuli*, vol. 1 (Berlin, 1924), pp. 118-19, 136-37, 140-42; for the Coptic Manichaean papyri, see H. H. Schaefer's review of C. Schmidt and H. J. Polotsky, "Ein Mani-Fund aus Ägypten," in *Gnomon*, 9 (1933), pp. 344-45. These are basic documents for reconstructing the reign of Imru' al-Qays's father, the founder of the Lakhmid dynasty in Ḥīra, and all the more so in view of the fact that they came to light after Rothstein wrote his standard work on the history of that dynasty, *Die Dynastie der Lakhmiden in al-Ḥīra* (Berlin, 1899) (hereafter, *DLH*).

and, what is more, in Roman territory. The clue is furnished by Hishām al-Kalbī himself, who mentions that Imru' al-Qays was the first of the Lakhmid kings to adopt Christianity.⁷

In support of Imru' al-Qays's Christianity, it may be said that this was the period that witnessed the conversion of some Near Eastern rulers to Christianity, the most relevant of which was the conversion of the Armenian king, Tiridates, by St. Gregory the Illuminator, and of Constantine himself. The adoption of Christianity by an Arab king of Ḥīra who was moving in the political and cultural orbit of Zoroastrian Persia provides an intelligible background for the circumstances under which Imru' al-Qays severed his Persian connections, left Ḥīra, and crossed over to the Romans, now ruled by a Christianized emperor.⁸ The parallel case of Tiridates, also related to Persia as Imru' al-Qays was, is instructive. The political alignments of the two rulers are related to their religious complexion—the two contemporaries, Armenian Tiridates and Arab Imru' al-Qays, both turn to the Christian West, away from Zoroastrian Persia.

Yet there is a dissonant note in the evidence that causes the foregoing reconstruction of the possible circumstances of the change of allegiance to be viewed with some suspicion. Although Imru' al-Qays was considered Christian by Hishām al-Kalbī, there is not a single Christian formula or symbol in the inscription. This omission may be dismissed as insignificant,⁹ but it does call for an explanation, especially as the inscription is a funerary one. The difficulty may be negotiated as follows: (1) Imru' al-Qays died only three years after the Council of Nicaea, the first ecumenical council, had been convened. He had come from the area of heresies and theological nonconformity, the land of the followers of Bardaiṣān and Marcion; his Christianity may have been doctrinally suspect, and so nothing was said about it; it was left conveniently implied by the mere fact of his burial in a church. (2) Perhaps Imru' al-Qays's Christianity was of the Manichaeic type, completely unacceptable to those in Byzantium. His father, 'Amr, was the protector of Manichaeism in Ḥīra in the period that followed the crucifixion of Mani, as the Coptic papyri have shown,¹⁰ and it is pertinent to remark that his ancestor,

⁷Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, ed. M. Ibrahim, 10 vols. (Cairo, 1960–69), vol. 1, p. 53. Nöldeke was unable to accept Hishām's statement on Imru' al-Qays's Christianity in his *Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden* (Leiden, 1879) (hereafter, *PAS*), p. 47 note 2, since he wrote before the Namāra inscription was discovered.

⁸On the assumption that he changed his allegiance after Constantine became sole emperor in 324, which is likely. But he could have converted and changed allegiance at an earlier date too.

⁹It could also argue for his Christianity, since pagan funerary inscriptions normally mention pagan deities; see Dussaud, *Pénétration*, p. 65 note 1.

¹⁰For these papyri, see *supra*, note 6. The information contained in these papyri on 'Amr's involvement with Manichaeism is invaluable as it sheds a bright light on the religious com-

King Abgar VIII, had converted to Christianity and had been the friend of Bardaiṣan, whose doctrines were a formative influence on Manichaeism.¹¹

Imru' al-Qays's Christianity, orthodox, heretical, or of the Manichaean type, may not have been the only feature of background that can explain his change of allegiance. There is an important piece of evidence in the literary sources that can easily be brought to bear upon this change of allegiance. It is Shāpūr's famous campaign against the Arabs of the Peninsula.¹² It is perfectly possible that this harsh punitive expedition brought him into conflict with Imru' al-Qays, who considered himself the king of all these tribes Shāpūr punished, and that the campaign implied a complete disregard for his independent or autonomous position as king of Ḥīra and the Arabs. Shāpūr's personal campaigning against the Arabs, and not indirectly through the Arab ruler of Ḥīra, could imply some sort of an attempt on the part of Shāpūr to dispense with the services of Imru' al-Qays and establish direct Persian rule over the Peninsula.¹³ This would have made the position of Imru' al-Qays, as the Arab king of Ḥīra, untenable. His change of allegiance thus becomes even more intelligible.

The foregoing arguments will have provided sufficient background for the defection of Imru' al-Qays to the Romans, the argument for which is fortified by the parallel of other Arab figures in the history of Sasanid-Byzantine relations, such as Aspebetos in the reign of Theodosius II and a namesake of Imru' al-Qays in the reign of Leo I.¹⁴

It has been necessary to argue for Imru' al-Qays's change of allegiance and that he was a fugitive king partly because the question of the identity of the king in the Namāra inscription is closely related to this change of allegiance, but more so because, without it, the inscription will lose much of its intelligibility and of its interest for reconstructing the political and cultural history of the Arabs and the Arab-Byzantine relationship in the fourth century.

plexion of the founder of the Lakhmid dynasty and on religious currents in Ḥīra as early as A.D. 300; see W. Seston, "Le roi sassanide Narsès, les arabes, et le Manichéisme," *Mélanges syriens offerts à M. René Dussaud* (Paris, 1939), vol. 1, pp. 227-34.

¹¹Amr's descent from the Abgarids of Edessa is almost certain, vouched for by the Paikuli inscription, which speaks of him as the descendant of the Abgars; for this inscription, see *supra*, note 6; see also p. 226 in U. Monneret de Villard's article, cited *infra*, note 20. On Abgar VIII and Bardaiṣan, see J. B. Segal, *Edessa, 'The Blessed City'* (Oxford, 1970), p. 70.

¹²For Shāpūr's campaign against the Arabs, see Nöldeke's German version of Ṭabarī's account in *PAS*, pp. 55-57, and also the study of this campaign in *AAW*, vol. 2, pp. 344-56.

¹³Alternatively, Shāpūr's campaign against the Arabs may have been conducted with the participation of Imru' al-Qays as Shāpūr's Arab client-king, but during the campaign disagreements might have developed between the two concerning its conduct, as was to happen between the Ghassānid kings and their Byzantine superiors in the campaigns of the sixth century.

¹⁴For these two Arabs of the fifth century, see *BAFIC*.

In spite of the steady progress that has been made in the interpretation of this inscription in the course of the long interval since it was discovered, it still presents many problems, both philological and historical. Only what is relevant to *Byzantino-arabica* will be discussed in this section, luckily not so shrouded in obscurity and thus allowing the Byzantine profile of the inscription to emerge.

Line One

(1) *The king of all the Arabs*: Since Imru' al-Qays became Byzantium's client-king, this phrase acquires considerable importance for the problem of the Byzantine sphere of influence in Arabia.

The claim of kingship over all the Arabs is not entirely an empty vaunt,¹⁵ although it may be exaggerated. The claim tallies with the evidence of the literary sources,¹⁶ which speak of his dominion over the Arabs, partly inherited from his father, 'Amr. Imru' al-Qays enlarged his territorial patrimony by a campaign in western Arabia which took him as far as Najrān.¹⁷ Moreover, the general statement, "all the Arabs," is made very specific by the enumeration of the tribal groups Imru' al-Qays was king of, i.e., the two Asds, Nizār, and Ma'add. These indeed constitute almost "all the Arabs," or at least a very large portion of them.¹⁸ The difficulty posed by what seems to be an exaggerated claim may be negotiated in the following manner: when he was in Ḥīra, Imru' al-Qays had ruled over the Arabs of the eastern half of the Peninsula, and when he changed his allegiance, he ruled over the Arabs along the

¹⁵After the destruction of Ḥatra and Palmyra, Ḥīra became the main center of Arab political dominance, and its first two rulers could with some justification refer to themselves as kings of all the Arabs. It is noteworthy that the Muslim historian of pre-Islamic Arabia, Hishām al-Kalbī, wrote a monograph on the Lakhmid Muḍir III of the sixth century, whom he described not as "king of the Lakhmids" but as "king of the Arabs"; the extent of Muḍir's dominion was practically the same as that of Imru' al-Qays; see Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vol. 2, pp. 104, 149, and Nöldeke's footnote written before the Namāra inscription was found, *PAS*, p. 46 note 4 and p. 238 note 4.

¹⁶See Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vol. 2, pp. 53, 61.

¹⁷Seen in this perspective, the claim over "all the Arabs" becomes more intelligible: Jaḍīma is described in the Umm al-Jimāl Bilinguis as simply the king of Tanūkh; his nephew 'Amr, Imru' al-Qays's father, who inherited Jaḍīma's kingdom, enlarged it by his numerous conquests (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vol. 1, pp. 627–28). What his official title was is not clear from the sources, but whatever it was, he was more than the king of Tanūkh, itself a large confederacy. In this connection, cf. the discussion of the title of the Arab king of Ḥatra in Altheim and Stiehl, *AAW*, vol. 4, pp. 269–70. For the Umm al-Jimāl Bilinguis, see E. Littmann, *PPUAES*, Division IV, Semitic Inscriptions (Leiden, 1914), p. 38; for 'Amr, see Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vol. 1, p. 627.

¹⁸Especially if Nizār is the large tribal group comprising Rabī'a and Muḍar or at least Rabī'a in eastern Arabia, and if the two Asds are the Azds, another large tribal group; for a discussion of the tribal groups of the inscription and the interpretations they are susceptible of, see "Observations," pp. 35–38.

Arabian *limes* in the Orient Diocese and those in Hijāz. It is unlikely that from Namāra he retained his effective kingship over the tribes of eastern Arabia, thus ruling both east and west simultaneously, and this may perhaps be implied epigraphically in the separation of the two tribal groups of line 2 from the group in line 3.

The possibility that Imru' al-Qays participated in the Arabian campaign of Shāpūr (*supra*, p. 34) has to be taken into account in the interpretation of the Namāra inscription. Imru' al-Qays's conquests and subjugation of so many tribes referred to in this inscription and in such remote parts of the Arabian Peninsula could become more intelligible if viewed as possibly part of a campaign by the Great King himself, in Arabia, in which the client-king participated. If so, most of the victories recorded in the inscription must have been scored while he was still in the Persian sphere of influence, reigning in Hīra. As he became a refugee in Roman territory, the funerary inscription understandably is silent on the Persian phase of his reign and presents the conquests as exclusively his.

(2) *He who assumed the crown:* The language of the inscription is not decisive for deciding whether Imru' al-Qays's royal headdress was an Iranian crown or a Byzantine-Hellenistic diadem;¹⁹ the verb *asara* could favor a diadem, while the noun *tāj* indicates a crown.

U. Monneret de Villard has argued that the crown in question represents not a Sasanid but a Parthian type, such as the ancestors of Imru' al-Qays, the Abgarids of Edessa, had worn a century before.²⁰ The conclusion does not necessarily follow, but it is extremely tempting. Against it, one may advance the following considerations: (1) Much had happened to the descendants of the Abgarids since the fall of Edessa: one of them, 'Amr, succeeded his maternal uncle, Jaḍīma, king of Tanūkh, and he may have acquired Jaḍīma's crown; the same 'Amr is associated with the events that led to the downfall of Zenobia,²¹ and he could have styled his crown on that of the Palmyrenes; or he

¹⁹For a linguistic analysis of the two terms, see "Observations," pp. 34–35; for the latest on the etymology of *tāj* ("crown"), see M. Mayrhofer, "Altpersische Spāne," *Orientalia*, 33 (1964), p. 85 note 4. Doubts have been cast on whether the relevant word in the inscription is really *tāj*, for which see *infra*, Chap. 10, App. 3. *Tāj*, however, remains the most plausible reading.

²⁰See his "Il Tāj di Imru' l-Qais," *Atti della Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Rendiconti. Classe di Scienze morali, storiche e filologiche*, 8 (1953), pp. 224–29. The royal headgear of the Abgarids may be seen on their coins; for that of Abgar VIII, the Great, see Segal, *Edessa*, pl. 28, b(i).

²¹The Arabic sources completely ignore the fact that it was Aurelian who overthrew Zenobia and captured Palmyra and concentrate on the purely inter-Arab aspect of the fall; what exactly the role of 'Amr was in these events is very difficult to determine; he may have joined the Romans during their campaign against Palmyra or acted independently in a small role exaggerated in the Arabic sources.

may have adopted the Sasanid type instead of keeping that of their old enemies, the Parthians. So his son Imru' al-Qays could have inherited any of these crowns. (2) On his defection, Imru' al-Qays could conceivably have received from the emperor a diadem reflecting the new relationship of the two, or he may have himself changed the style from a Persian crown to a Byzantine diadem in order to reflect his change of allegiance in much the same way that the Nabataean Arab kings changed their Hellenistic diadems to laurel crowns after the Roman model.²² (3) References in the Arabic sources²³ to the royal headdress of Arab client-kings of later times indicate a pliable diadem rather than a solid crown, and a well-known passage in the *Ecclesiastical History* of John of Ephesus explicitly states that it was not until the reign of Tiberius that the first Arab king received a crown instead of the diadem.²⁴

While it is practically impossible to draw any definite conclusions as to exactly what type of crown or diadem Imru' al-Qays wore, it is clear that he was a *malik mutawwaj*, a crowned or diademed king,²⁵ who had that royal *insigne* on his head, a fact from which the political history of the period benefits. For a half century after the fall of Palmyra, it is unlikely that Rome had an Arab client-king of any importance until the arrival of Imru' al-Qays from Hira. The reference to his *tāj*, and it is a matter of detail what type it was, is a welcome and attractive detail for the history of these Byzantine client-kings of the fourth century.

Lines Two and Three

(1) *And he reigned over the two Asds and Nizār and over their kings:*²⁶ The identity of these tribal groups is important for Imru' al-Qays's Byzantine connections, especially if these tribes were the ones affiliated with the Quḍā'a group, settled *intra limitem* in Oriens, rather than with the Nizār and the Azd in eastern Arabia, far from the Byzantine sphere of influence. If affiliated with

²²Dussaud, *Mission*, p. 317.

²³On Ḥārith, the Ghassānid king, there is the verse of Labīd, for which see *Sharḥ Dīwān Labīd*, ed. I. 'Abbās (Kuwait, 1962), p. 266, v. 50. The German translation by Huber is not precise enough; see *Die Gedichte des Labīd*, ed. and trans. A. Huber (Leiden, 1891), p. 42, v. 50. On Hawḍa, Persia's client-king, see Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vol. 2, p. 169.

²⁴Monneret de Villard is aware of the difficulty posed for his views by this passage; see "Il Tāj," p. 229. On the other hand, it may be said that John of Ephesus had in mind the royal headdress of the sixth-century client-kings of Byzantium and not those of the distant fourth, of which he probably had no knowledge.

²⁵On the possibility that he was "King of Kings," see *infra*, p. 38.

²⁶It has been argued by the present writer in "Observations" that the Arabic word in the inscription, *malaka*, should be translated "reigned" and not "soumit" as in the French version, and that *Asad* could be read *Asd*, the large tribal group that emigrated from South Arabia and occupied large parts of eastern and western Arabia. It is better known as *Azd* but, as the lexicographers point out, *Asd* is the more correct form. For a detailed analysis of these tribal groups in this line, see "Observations," pp. 35–39.

Quḏā'a, these tribes would afford a valuable glimpse into the structure of the Arab military presence in Oriens under Imru' al-Qays. The further statement that Imru' al-Qays ruled over their *kings* recalls the Arab *reguli* of the reign of Julian²⁷ and indicates that he considered himself, or was considered, not only "king of all the Arabs" but also "king of their kings." This description immediately recalls the Iranian Shāhānshāh, and it is perfectly possible that Imru' al-Qays's claim is an echo of the Iranian title.²⁸

(2) *Madḥij-Najrān-Ma'add*: The sentence in which these three terms occur could imply that they are to be taken together,²⁹ a description of one undertaking involving the three of them. According to this interpretation, Imru' al-Qays would have put to flight Madḥij,³⁰ then would have marched to the region of Najrān, and finally, on his return, would have established his rule over Ma'add.

The main problem is whether Imru' al-Qays had conducted the campaign against Najrān while he was still in Ḥīra, before he joined the Romans, or whether he conducted it from his base in the Provincia Arabia after his defection to the Romans. An allied problem is whether or not he conducted it on his own, unaided by the Persians or the Romans. No definitive answer can be given to any of these alternatives or questions, but the various possibilities should be explored and argued for:

In support of a campaign conducted from Ḥīra, it may be argued that (1) the kings of Ḥīra did war with those of South Arabia,³¹ and one of them is known to have visited that country;³² (2) even more relevant, because it pertains

²⁷For these, see *infra*, p. 107. On the other hand, it is quite likely that the tribes in question were those of eastern Arabia and that his reign over them was already a thing of the past after Imru' al-Qays changed allegiance from Persia to Byzantium; if so, the claim records the Persian phase in his career.

²⁸It is noteworthy that his celebrated predecessor in the service of Rome and in the same area, Odenathus, assumed the same title of "King of Kings," and so did his son Wahballāt, for which see J. Starcky, *Palmyre* (Paris, 1952), pp. 55, 57. His own contemporary, Hannibalianus, Constantine's nephew, likewise assumed the title in the thirties, for which see the present writer in "The Iranian Factor in Byzantium during the Reign of Heraclius," *DOP*, 26 (1972), pp. 298–99. In the case of Odenathus and Hannibalianus, the significance and implication of the title are different, but the assumption of the title by all of them is related to Persia and its King of Kings, Shāpūr I in the third century and Shāpūr II in the fourth.

²⁹See "Observations," pp. 37–38.

³⁰The reference to Madḥij clinches the point that the Najrān in question is the one in South Arabia and not the one in Ḥawrān (Auranitis).

³¹But this took place much later, in the sixth century, and not in South but in central Arabia; for the campaigns involving the Lakhmid king Mundir in central Arabia against the South Arabian kings Ma'dī-Karib Ya'fur and Abraha, see G. Ryckmans, "Inscriptions sud-arabes," *Le Muséon*, 66 (1953), pp. 307–10 and M. J. Kister, "The Campaign of Ḥulubān," *ibid.*, 78 (1965), pp. 425–36 respectively; Kister's article (p. 425) has a bibliography on the inscription set up by Abraha.

³²On Mundir in South Arabia, see the present writer in *The Martyrs of Najrān: New Documents*, *Subsidia Hagiographica*, 49 (Brussels, 1971), pp. 56, 86–89.

to the reign of Shāpūr II, is a statement in a Nestorian ecclesiastical work that Shāpūr II conducted a campaign against “bilād al-Ḥabashat,” “the country of the Abyssinians,” where he pillaged, burned, killed, and took captives.³³ Imru’ al-Qays could have taken part in this campaign, which brought him close to Najrān and during which he could have attacked the city. But it is almost certain that the statement in the Nestorian source confuses Ḥabashat with Arabia.³⁴ Less unlikely is that Imru’ al-Qays’s campaign against Najrān was conducted as part of Shāpūr’s campaign in Arabia. But this possibility, too, has its difficulties, in view of the fact that the South Arabian kings were on friendly terms with those of Persia and are known in later times to be allied with them against the common enemy, Rome.³⁵ As for a campaign conducted by Imru’ al-Qays on his own, it is difficult to believe that, powerful as he was or might have been, he could have marched against a city so far away and, what is more, so impregnable as Najrān was.

A campaign conducted from Ḥīra is possible but does not seem very likely in view of the difficulties attending such a campaign. Alternatively, the campaign may have been conducted from the Provincia Arabia. It might be observed that this campaign is the penultimate in the list of the king’s exploits enumerated in the inscription, indicating a military effort undertaken not long before his death and thus possibly falling within the Roman, not the Persian, phase of his clientship. Najrān is closer to the Roman frontier than to the Persian, especially when it is realized that the Provincia Arabia comprised a generous portion of Ḥijāz in northwest Arabia.³⁶ Furthermore, the traditional enmity between Rome and South Arabia could afford a more suitable background for a campaign conducted by its client-king than by a Persian one. If Imru’ al-Qays conducted his campaign from the Provincia, he is most likely to have been supported by the Romans since a campaign to distant Najrān was

³³See *Maris Amri et Slibae de Patriarchis Nestorianorum Commentaria*, ed. H. Gismondi (Rome, 1899), pars altera, p. 14.

³⁴The statement is not so incredible if by Ḥabashat is meant not Abyssinia in Africa but Abyssinia in South Arabia, for which see A. K. Irvine, “Ḥabashat,” in *IEP*, 3, 9; even so, it is difficult to accept and may be construed as one that confuses Ḥabashat with Arabia: (1) a campaign against Ḥabashat is not attested elsewhere in the sources, which have much to tell about Shāpūr; (2) the text of the Nestorian work suggests a confusion of Ḥabashat with Arabia. The sentence in which this campaign against Ḥabashat is described is enclosed between two brackets and is followed immediately by an almost identical sentence that describes Shāpūr’s campaign against *al-maghrib*, which in the Arabic script can easily be an error for *al-‘arab*. The first sentence may then be taken as a confused dittograph of the second.

³⁵In a well-known Sabaic inscription, it is now generally recognized that what is involved in a controversial reading is really an embassy sent by the South Arabian king, Shammar, to Ctesiphon; see J. Ryckmans, “Appendice,” in *Le Muséon*, 80 (1967), pp. 508–12. For the letter addressed by the South Arabian king, Yūsuf, ca. 520 to the Persian king, Kawad, see the present writer in “*Byzantino-arabica: the Conference of Ramla, A.D. 524*,” *JNES*, 23 (1964), pp. 122–28.

³⁶On this, see *infra*, notes 37, 86.

far beyond the power of an Arab client-king to conduct single-handedly, even though he was styled "king of all the Arabs."

In support of a campaign against Najrān, possibly conceived by the Romans, a number of arguments may be put forward:

(1) Rome did not lose interest in South Arabia after the disastrous expedition of Aelius Gallus in 27 B.C. during which Najrān was captured.³⁷ The annexation of the kingdom of the Nabataeans by Trajan in 106 and its conversion into the Provincia Arabia brought the Roman imperial frontier deep in the heart of Hijāz much closer to that of the Ḥimyarites of South Arabia and to Najrān. A Roman-inspired expedition against a traditionally hostile neighbor, now not so distant, does not seem incredible.

(2) Toward the end of the third century, the Roman monetary system had collapsed and trade with the Orient—India and the Far East—had slipped into the hands of non-Roman intermediaries—Arabs, Ḥimyarites, and Persians. Such was the unfavorable situation when Constantine was sole emperor. The *autokrator* who transferred the capital from Rome to Constantinople would have been even more interested than Augustus in Arabia, and the expedition against South Arabia could thus be viewed as remedial or restorative, an attempt to establish direct contact with the Orient.³⁸

This Roman expedition may have been a joint Roman-Ethiopian expedition against South Arabia, from the north and from the west. In the political alignments of the period and the region, Rome always sided with Ethiopia against South Arabia and Persia. The case for such a joint expedition involving Ethiopia may be supported by the following considerations:

(1) The course of Ethiopian-Sabaeen relations lends support to such a view. They were consistently hostile, and the Sabaic inscriptions speak of transmarine expeditions sent by the Negus against South Arabia.³⁹ Of particular

³⁷On the mission of Gaius Caesar and the attack on Aden there are conflicting views, for which see G. W. Bowersock, "A Report on Arabia Provincia," *JRS*, 61 (1971), p. 227 and notes 55–56; and, more recently, T. D. Barnes, "The Victories of Augustus," *JRS*, 64 (1974), pp. 22–23.

³⁸This could shed new light on how Constantine tried to solve the economic problems of his reign. In addition to the possibility of reestablishing contact with the world of the Indian Ocean, there was Arabia itself, the wealth of which the emperor may have been after. The Arabian Peninsula was, after all, the El Dorado of the ancient world—the same region to which the first *princeps*, Augustus, had dispatched the ill-starred expedition of Aelius Gallus in search, *inter alia*, of Arabian gold.

A fundamental source for the gold and silver mines of Arabia is Hamdānī's *Kitāb al-Jawharatayn*, recently edited and translated into German by Christopher Toll, "Die Beiden Edelmetalle Gold und Silber," *Studia Semitica Upsaliensia*, 1 (Uppsala, 1968); for the location of the Arabian mines, see pp. 137–51. See also H. von Wissmann, "Öphir und Ḥawīla, das westarabische Goldland," in *RE*, Supplementbd. 12 (1970), cols. 906–79. On the Byzantine mines, see S. Vryonis, "The Question of the Byzantine Mines," *Speculum*, 37 (1962), pp. 1–17.

³⁹See Irvine, "Ḥabashat," *EP*, 3, 9–10.

importance and relevance is an inscription that speaks of both Ethiopia and Najrān itself aligned against Ḥimyar.⁴⁰ The Ethiopians did not need much persuasion by the Romans for joining them in a military expedition against South Arabia.

(2) Around A.D. 300, South Arabia produced the warrior-king Shammar Yuhar'ish, who united for the first time in their history all the kingdoms of the Arabian South and who conducted campaigns far and wide in the Arabian Peninsula.⁴¹ This could understandably have alarmed both Rome and Ethiopia, and the result of this alarm may have been the joint expedition that nipped in the bud the emerging Arabian Empire of Shammar Yuhar'ish either during his lifetime or that of his successor.⁴² Sabaicists have also suspected that the general of Shammar Yuhar'ish may have been on a diplomatic mission to Ctesiphon.⁴³ Such an alliance between South Arabia and Persia would have been sufficient to induce Byzantium to take action, as indeed it was to do two centuries later, during the reign of Justin (518–27), when it was faced with the same hostile alignment that called for a Byzantine-Ethiopian expedition against Ḥimyar and South Arabia.⁴⁴

The case for a Roman expedition against South Arabia, possibly a joint

⁴⁰See inscription no. 577 in A. Jamme, *Sabaeen Inscriptions from Mabram Bilqis (Mārib)* (Baltimore, 1962), pp. 77–79.

⁴¹The exact chronology of the reign of Shammar Yuhar'ish is controversial; some place him slightly before A.D. 300, while others place him slightly after that date. Ca. 300 may be a convenient dating for him; even if he was not alive after A.D. 300, his conquests, his enduring achievement in uniting the Arabian South is the relevant fact in this connection. For the controversy concerning the dates of Shammar Yuhar'ish's reign, see Jamme, *op. cit.*, chap. 9, pp. 351–75.

⁴²Important for this reasoning is the explicit reference to Shammar in the Namāra inscription in the phrase *madīnat Shammar* ("the city of Shammar"), appositionally used after *Najrān*; it is unlikely that *Shammar* in this phrase is a geographical name, for which see J. Ryckmans, "Inscriptions sud-arabes," p. 334. The appositional phrase may have been used either (1) to distinguish South Arabian Najrān from Najrān in Ḥawrān (Auranitis), and so to indicate that Imru' al-Qays's campaign was in the far south, not in a region close to Namāra; but this depends on whether Najrān in Ḥawrān already existed in the fourth century and was not a town that developed after the expulsion of the Najranites from the South Arabian city in the seventh century; or (2) to indicate that the victorious campaign was not conducted merely against an Arab tribe, Maḍḥij, but involved also a South Arabian ruler (Shammar himself or one of his successors) for whom Maḍḥij fought as his ally, a role for Maḍḥij attested in the Sabaic inscriptions, for which, see no. 665 in Jamme, *Sabaeen Inscriptions*, p. 169. The appositional phrase *madīnat Shammar* with its precious reference to the South Arabian king places the campaign of Imru' al-Qays in the context of a war that involved South Arabia and probably Rome, thus giving it its international Near Eastern dimension.

⁴³See *supra*, note 35.

⁴⁴One could add that the campaign of Shāpūr against the Arabs in the sixteenth year of his reign, 326, and his conquests in the Arabian Peninsula that brought him to Ḥijāz and to the *limes* in Oriens must have alarmed the Romans; it is possible that in this campaign Shāpūr was aided by a South Arabian king; the answer to this alliance was the campaign against Najrān and an Ethiopian thrust from the west. For the campaign of Shāpūr, see *supra*, note 12.

Roman-Ethiopian one, that may have resulted in the occupation of the country for a period, not necessarily a long one, by the Ethiopians, may be supported by the following:

(1) The royal titlature of the Ethiopian Negus in the fourth century was a long one that included the South Arabian titles of "King of Ḥimyar, Raydān, Saba', and Salḥēn." This composite title has been somewhat of a puzzle and one of the explanations—the most natural one—can relate it to an Ethiopian victory over the Sabaeans of South Arabia, resulting in the acquisition by the victorious Negus of the titles of his vanquished adversary, the Sabaean king.⁴⁵

(2) The case for a joint Roman-Ethiopian expedition and, possibly, for an occupation of South Arabia, however short, by the Ethiopians may be supported by references in the Byzantine sources relating to the reign of Constantine's son. Constantius sends an ecclesiastical mission to both Ethiopia and Ḥimyar in a way that implies a relationship of some sort in the previous reign and, what is more, suggests that the two countries were conceived by the *autokrator* as one region.⁴⁶ More important is one of his edicts regulating the travel of his political agents to those parts, in which he speaks of *gentem Axumetarum et Homeritarum*. The use of the singular, *gentem*, is significant; it implies that the two peoples were under one political domination.⁴⁷

Najrān. The inscription makes no mention of the Romans in connection with Najrān, but its silence on a possible Roman participation in the campaign is

⁴⁵Sabaicists have withdrawn support for the theory of an Ethiopian *occupation* of South Arabia in the fourth century because of the extreme form in which it had been presented; see J. Ryckmans, "Le christianisme en Arabie du Sud préislamique," *Problemi attuali di scienza e di cultura*, Quaderno 62, *Atti del convegno internazionale sul tema: L'Oriente cristiano nella storia della civiltà* (Rome, 1964), p. 419. But the Ethiopian expedition need not have been followed by an occupation, or, if it was, the occupation may have been of short duration or a longer one maintained indirectly through Sabaean kings, who were allowed to keep their titles. In the sixth century, the relation of the Ḥimyarite king Sumayfa' Ashwa' to the Ethiopian Negus, Ella-Asbeḥa, is instructive; although a vassal of the Negus, he was allowed to keep his titlature. On the Sabaic titles of the Ethiopian kings Ella 'Amda and his son 'Ezānā, see J. T. Bent, *The Sacred City of the Ethiopians* (London, 1898), p. 254, lines 1–3, and *Journal des Savants* (Oct.–Dec., 1970), p. 265, lines 6–8.

⁴⁶For this mission, see *infra*, pp. 86–93.

⁴⁷For this edict, see *Cod. Theod.*, XII.12.2. A Roman-Ethiopian expedition might, of course, have taken place in the reign of Constantius himself, but there is no echo in the sources of a Byzantine involvement during that reign as there is during the reign of Constantine, such as the reference to Najrān in the Namāra inscription. The Ethiopian Negus could, of course, have conducted the expedition alone, unaided by the Romans, either in the reign of Constantine after the death of Imru' al-Qays or in the reign of Constantius. The Ethiopian Negus 'Ezānā was still a minor in the twenties after the death of his father Ella-'Amda sometime between A.D. 320 and 325, for which see J. Doresse, *L'empire du Prêtre-Jean* (Paris, 1957), vol. 1, p. 138. Thus the most likely Negus to have conducted the expedition is Ella-'Amda, since he had the South Arabian titles which his son 'Ezānā presumably inherited. If so, the expedition would have taken place in the early twenties or even before.

consonant with the independent tone of the inscription, an epitaph understandably emphasizing the role of the deceased king rather than that of the living *autokrator*,⁴⁸ and also with the possibility that the Roman contribution was made not by land but by sea, as indeed it was to be two centuries later in the joint Byzantine-Ethiopian crusade against South Arabia in the reign of Justin I.

Ma'add. Of all the tribes mentioned in the inscription, Ma'add is the one most relevant to the Arab-Byzantine relationship. The tribe appears in the pages of Nonnosus and Procopius⁴⁹ in the sixth century, in contexts that involve Byzantium and its imperial interests in Arabia. It is separated in the inscription from other tribes that most probably belonged to central and northeastern Arabia, Persia's sphere of influence. Procopius places Ma'add to the north of the Ḥimyarites of South Arabia, in Ḥijāz and western Arabia. But Procopius wrote in the sixth century, and there is no way of telling where Ma'add was settled in the fourth. In the inscription it is mentioned immediately after the campaign of Najrān, but its geographical location in Arabia depends largely on whether Imru' al-Qays conducted his campaign against Najrān from Ḥīra or from the Provincia Arabia. If he conducted it from Ḥīra, Ma'add could have been settled anywhere on his way back from Najrān to Ḥīra; but if he conducted the campaign from the Provincia, Ma'add is almost certain to have been settled where Procopius placed it, in Ḥijāz—a matter of considerable importance to the extension of Rome's sphere of influence in western Arabia.⁵⁰

Lines Four and Five

Reference is made in these two lines to the king's setting up of his sons as chiefs over the tribes and their being horsemen (f-r-s-w) in the service of the Romans (r-w-m).

This reference presents some problems,⁵¹ turning mainly round the word (f-r-s-w),⁵² which has been interpreted as either "Persians, Persia" or "horse-

⁴⁸And so it is on the victories over the tribes listed in the inscription, which are presented as exclusively his; but, as has been argued before, they were possibly scored by Imru' al-Qays during Shāpūr's campaign in Arabia; see *supra*, p. 36.

⁴⁹See the present writer in "Byzantium and Kinda," *BZ*, 53 (1960), pp. 57–73, and "Procopius and Kinda," *BZ*, 53 (1960), pp. 74–78, and the references to Nonnosus and Procopius therein.

⁵⁰See *infra*, 2, B.2.

⁵¹On these, see the present writer in "Observations," pp. 39–40.

⁵²The two words in Arabic meaning "Persia, Persians" and "horsemen, cavalry" lend themselves to confusion, deriving from the fact of non-synonymous homophonous roots. For those who believe that (f-r-s-w) means "Persians, Persia," see G. W. Bowersock, "The Greek-Nabataean Bilingual Inscription at Ruwwafa, Saudi Arabia," *Le monde grec: Hommages à Claire Préaux* (Brussels, 1975), p. 522, and Beeston, "Nemara and Faw," pp. 5–6. The present writer is on the side of those who believe the word is more likely to mean "horsemen, cavalry" than

men." Whatever the correct interpretation of (f-r-s-w) turns out to be, there is no doubt about the word that stands for the Romans (r-w-m), the most firm and explicit reference to the Roman connection⁵³ of Imru' al-Qays.

This precious reference to the Romans calls for some comments on the crucial words, "his sons" and "the tribes."

(1) *His sons*: Although the reference is general and does not give the names of these sons, it is valuable enough in that it clearly indicates that Imru' al-Qays did not die issueless but had sons, who, moreover, were in charge of the tribes and in the service of Rome. As his patronymic in the first line is valuable for establishing his correct genealogical affiliation, so is this reference to "his sons" for establishing the fact that Imru' al-Qays before his death had founded a dynasty, which served Byzantium in the reign of Constantine and presumably after. In the history of Arab-Byzantine relations, Imru' al-Qays emerges not as an isolated figure who got his quietus and made his exit in 328, but as a dynast whose sons have to be taken into account in reconstructing the history of the Arab client-kings of Byzantium in the fourth century.

(2) *The tribes*: The question arises who these tribes were whom the sons of Imru' al-Qays were in charge of. They were either the Arab tribes in Oriens or the tribes outside the Roman *limes* such as the inscription enumerates, more likely the latter or some of them.

Although certainty cannot be predicated of either of these alternatives, some likelihood attaches to the possibility that Ma'add was the tribal group of whom the sons of Imru' al-Qays were in charge. (1) Ma'add immediately precedes the sentence in which the tribes are mentioned, and this proximity suggests that "the tribes" could denote it.⁵⁴ (2) Ma'add was precisely the group of tribes over whom, two centuries later, Ḥārith, the king of Kinda⁵⁵ and an ally of Byzantium, put his sons, and it was the same group of tribes that were ruled in the sixth century by the Ghassānid kings, also allies of Byzantium, e.g., al-Nu'mān.⁵⁶ (3) It has been argued in the preceding section that Imru'

"Persians, Persia." Those who have argued for the latter do not take into account the fact that the king was a fugitive from Persia and would not have been anxious to advertise his former Persian connection. They are also influenced by the view of the "independent" position of Imru' al-Qays vis-à-vis the two powers, Persia and Rome, for which see *infra*, 2, A.

⁵³The fact of his burial in Roman territory in Namāra, in the Provincia Arabia, only implies it.

⁵⁴*Shu'ūb*, the word for "tribes," is plural, but this does not argue against the referent's being Ma'add since this was a large group composed of many tribes.

⁵⁵For Kinda, see the present writer in "Kinda," *EI*², s.v. For the various tribes of Ma'add under the sons of Ḥārith, the Kindite, see Ibn-Ḥabīb, *al-Muḥabbar*, ed. I. Lichtenstädter (Heyderabad, 1942; reprinted Beirut, n.d.), p. 369; and Ibn-Khaldun, *Ibar* (Beirut, 1956), vol. 2, p. 571.

⁵⁶See Nöldeke, *GF*, p. 38 note 3.

al-Qays ruled over Ma'add possibly after his campaign against Najrān, conducted from the Provincia; it is not unnatural to suppose that he followed up this military success with an administrative disposition such as the inscription describes—putting his sons in charge of those Peninsular tribes over whom he reigned as king from his base in the Provincia. The two sentences involving his sons and the tribes close the list of his achievements enumerated in the inscription. And it is possible that the campaign against Najrān was conducted in his old age, shortly before his death, and that putting his sons at the head of the tribes was a delegation of authority called for by the infirmities of old age.

The two sentences taken together give a rare glimpse of the complex structure of an Arab client-kingdom in the fourth century. The sons are at the head of the tribes, the tribes are horsemen⁵⁷ in the service of Rome, and both sons and tribes are under the rule of Imru' al-Qays, a king to his subjects and a client to Rome.⁵⁸

2

The career of Imru' al-Qays and the text of the Namāra inscription raise some large and important questions for *Byzantino-arabica* that deserve to be singled out for a separate treatment.

A

The tone of the inscription carved for the king of all the Arabs raises the question of his legal position vis-à-vis Persia and Rome. The key to a correct understanding of this position is the realization that Imru' al-Qays first moved in the Persian and later in the Roman sphere of influence, but did not move in the two spheres simultaneously, as the intensive examination of his background before his defection to Rome has amply shown.

1. In the first phase, Imru' al-Qays must have been as independent as his father 'Amr b. 'Adi⁵⁹ had been, ruling the Arabs from Ḥīra, not a Persian but an Arab foundation. Yet Hishām al-Kalbī describes him as a 'Āmil,⁶⁰ a viceroy, for Shāpūr over the Arabs. This might imply that the independence of the Lakh-

⁵⁷Even if the controversial word (f-r-s-w) turns out to be "Persians." The case for its being "horsemen" rather than "Persians" is fortified by the historical fact that the Arab contingents in the Byzantine army of the Orient were indeed horsemen, *equites*, as is clear from the testimony of the historians and the *Notitia Dignitatum*, for which see the present writer in *RA*.

⁵⁸Partly paralleled in this respect by the Ghassānid phylarchate of the sixth century.

⁵⁹See the valuable passage on 'Amr b. 'Adi in Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vol. 1, p. 627, where the historian makes explicit 'Amr's independence of the Persian kings.

⁶⁰Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vol. 2, p. 61. Also, *Tārīkh*, vol. 1, p. 628, where 'Amr, his father, is also included among the Lakhmid 'Āmils ('Ummāl), viceroys of Persia over the Arabs of the Peninsula.

mids of Ḥīra was encroached upon by the aggressive Shāpūr II, and it is consonant with what is known of the history of Lakhmid-Sasanid relations throughout three centuries. Independent allies of the Sasanids as they were, the Lakhmids lived in the shadow of a world power and their independence was contingent upon the imperial mood of this or that Shāhānshāh. But generally speaking, the Lakhmids, allied neighbors of the Sasanids and living in their own city and territory, were more independent than the Arab federates of Byzantium, who were settled in Roman territory, and the difference in status is reflected in the geographical positions of Ḥīra and Namāra.

2. In the second phase, the Roman, Imru' al-Qays would have been less independent than in the first. By going over to the Romans he joined the ranks of many a barbarian *rex-basileus* allied to Rome. It is impossible to believe that he was a truly independent king in view of the fact that he crossed the *limes* in the reign of a *manu ad ferrum* emperor such as Constantine and was buried in Namāra, in the Provincia Arabia, the station of a legionary detachment of III Cyrenaica.⁶¹ Imru' al-Qays was a *foederatus*, or *symmachos*, most probably in the pay of Byzantium, receiving the customary *annona* in return for services to the Romans. Thus, theoretically, Imru' al-Qays was or may have been an ally of Rome and an equal partner, but practically his relationship to Rome and to the *autokrator* was that of client to patron, in much the same way as that of the Ghassānid kings of the sixth century was to be. Less truculent than the Persians to their Arab client-kings, the Romans could on occasion be so with their Arab clients, as the Ghassānids were to experience in the sixth century.⁶²

Imru' al-Qays was a client-king; the first term expresses his correct relation to the Byzantine *autokrator*; the second, his relation to the Arabs over whom he reigned. A term that can describe his position more concisely and, what is more, functionally is the phylarchate or the supreme phylarchate, which in the administrative terminology of the Later Empire became the regular and technical term in vogue in the fifth and sixth centuries.

The foregoing paragraph has perhaps shown that Imru' al-Qays could not have been genuinely independent, as has recently been argued.⁶³ If his seat had been a locality in Inner Arabia outside the Roman and the Persian frontiers,

⁶¹Poidebard, *La Trace de Rome*, pp. 61–62.

⁶²See Nöldeke, *GF*, pp. 24, 28–29. Imru' al-Qays's own ancestors, the Abgarids of Edessa, experienced a taste of Roman imperial displeasure: Abgar VIII, the Great, spent his last days in a Roman jail, while the last of the Abgarids had to surrender his sovereignty to Gordian. Checkered indeed were the fortunes of the family of Imru' al-Qays as a result of both Roman and Persian imperial displeasure, moving as they did from Edessa to Ḥīra to Namāra and back to Ḥīra again sometime in the fourth or fifth century.

⁶³See Caskel, "Die Inschrift," p. 377. The section in this article entitled "Der Hintergrund der Inschrift von En-Nemāra," pp. 377–79, is pure guesswork.

whence he ruled tribes in eastern and western Arabia, then he could have been independent of both, with treaty relationships with the two empires.⁶⁴ But there is no evidence that he ever ruled from Inner Arabia, the two seats of his power being well known, Ḥīra, not far from Ctesiphon, and Namāra in the Provincia Arabia. There is no parallel or record of an Arabian power in the Byzantine period that was independent of both empires and at the same time treating with both of them.⁶⁵

B

The defection of Imru' al-Qays to the Romans and his accommodation in the Provincia Arabia raise the question whether this entailed any provincial administrative changes involving the structure of the Arab phylarchate in Oriens and in the Provincia Arabia itself.

1. As far as the structure of the Arab phylarchate in Oriens is concerned, much depends on the position of Imru' al-Qays within that system. History knows of him buried in Namāra in the Provincia Arabia, and it is certain that his jurisdiction over his Arabs was also in the Provincia.⁶⁶ But it is doubtful whether Byzantium had in the first half of the fourth century an Arab *foederatus* as powerful as the fugitive "king of all the Arabs," Imru' al-Qays. Whether or not he was also put in charge of other Arab *foederati* in Oriens is not clear, and that he was, must remain a possibility.⁶⁷ If so, the phrase "king of all the Arabs" takes on a new dimension, namely, that he was made the king of all of Byzantium's Arab *foederati* in Oriens, or most of them,⁶⁸ a

⁶⁴Such was Kinda in the fifth and sixth centuries, based in Inner Arabia. But it is doubtful whether even Kinda was an ally of both Persia and Byzantium simultaneously. The extant sources on its famous king, Ḥārith, suggest that he was treating at one time with Byzantium, at another with Persia; for Kinda, see the present writer in *El²* and in "Byzantium and Kinda."

⁶⁵As for Palmyra in the Roman period, the elder Pliny's phrase that it was an independent buffer state between the two world powers, *inter duo imperia summa* (*NH*, V.88), cannot but be an anachronism; see J. Starcky, *Palmyre*, pp. 31–34.

⁶⁶Rather than in the northern portion of Oriens where the Tanūkhids were in power (see *infra*, pp. 400–407) and where the *Strata Diocletiana* might have made less urgent the stationing of Arab federate troops, more needed in the more exposed southern part. On the other hand, if the last sentence in line 1 of the Namāra inscription admits of some other interpretation, involving Tanūkh, Imru' al-Qays could have had jurisdiction in the north, deriving from his supreme kingship over Tanūkh itself; see *infra*, Chap. 10, App. 3.

⁶⁷A faint echo of this possibility may be heard in the famous Strata dispute in A.D. 539 (Procopius, *Wars*, II.i. 1–11), when the Lakhmid king of Ḥīra, Mundir, contended that the sheep-walk called the Strata belonged to him on the ground that the Arabs who pastured there paid tribute to him. The Strata, south of Palmyra, was far from Mundir's sphere of influence in Ḥīra, but these Arabs could have belonged to the tribe of Lakhm, which had come to Oriens with Imru' al-Qays himself. If so, Imru' al-Qays could have had some "jurisdiction" over the Arabs in Phoenicia Libanensis.

⁶⁸For the supreme phylarchate and kingship of the famous federate Arethas in 529, see Procopius, *Wars*, I.xvii.47.

disposition that would have entailed important changes in phylarchal power in the Diocese.

One change, however, that can be predicated with certainty of the structure of Arab federate power in Oriens and which was occasioned by the defection of Imru' al-Qays is the emigration of the tribe of Lakhm, or part of it, the tribal group to which Imru' al-Qays belonged, to Oriens. Its presence in the Provincia is attested as late as the period of the Arab Conquests in the seventh century. This presence is anomalous in view of the fact that Lakhm was a Euphratesian Arab tribe; but it is explicable by Imru' al-Qays's change of allegiance, which brought with it Lakhm to Oriens, where part of it presumably stayed on in the service of the Romans, even after the return of the Lakhmids to rule in Ḥīra, in the Persian sphere of influence.⁶⁹

2. Related to possible phylarchal reorganization in Oriens is the more important problem of provincial reorganization in Arabia (and also in the adjacent province, Palestine), which went through four stages: (1) the conversion of the Kingdom of the Nabataeans into the Provincia Arabia⁷⁰ by Trajan in A.D. 106; (2) the reduction in the size of the Provincia; (3) the division of the Provincia, possibly the reduced province, into two smaller ones: a northern one, the capital of which was Bosra, and a southern one, the capital of which was Petra; (4) the incorporation of the southern province into Palestine.

These four stages raise many problems: one is whether stages two, three, and four were sequent or concurrent; another is the chronology of these three stages; a third is the reasons that impelled the Romans to make these changes. No definite solutions have been given to these problems. What is relevant in this context is not the distant past of the Provincia in Trajanic, Hadrianic, and Antonine times, but the more recent past of the times of Diocletian and Constantine. For the purpose of this chapter, therefore, the discussion of the three last stages—two, three, and four—has been focused on the reigns of these two emperors, contemporaries of Imru' al-Qays, whether ruler in Ḥīra or client-king in Namāra, in the Provincia itself.

The arguments for a Diocletianic or a Constantinian reorganization rest largely on the interpretation of the *Laterculus Veronensis*,⁷¹ whether it reflects the

⁶⁹It is not altogether impossible that Lakhm might have migrated into Roman territory in the third century after the reduction of independent Edessa and Ḥatra, where Arab dynasties had ruled. The Lakhmids, as has been pointed out *supra*, note 11, were descended from the Abgarids of Edessa. There is, however, no record in the sources of such a migration. For more on Lakhm in Oriens, see *infra*, Chap. 10, sec. IV, 1, A.1.

⁷⁰The standard work on the Provincia is still R. E. Brünnow and A. von Domaszewski, *Die Provincia Arabia*, 3 vols. (Strasbourg, 1904–9); for Palestine, see F. M. Abel, *Géographie de la Palestine*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1938). In vol. 2, pp. 168–91 of the latter there is a discussion of changes and reorganization in both Arabia and Palestine which is still valuable.

⁷¹And to a lesser degree on the *Notitia Dignitatum*, for which see RA.

administrative realities of the reign of Diocletian or of Constantine.⁷² The arguments for the one or the other may be supplemented by drawing attention to some relevant material involving the Arabs. The Provincia Arabia was probably the most Arab⁷³ of all the provinces of Oriens, and it is almost certain that these rearrangements were at least in part related to the problems posed for Rome by its acquisition in A.D. 106 of a vast territory that involved Rome directly with the Arabs and the new world of the Arabian Peninsula, previously watched over by its Nabataean client-kings.

Diocletian divided many provinces into smaller ones and regrouped the provinces into large units, the dioceses, of which Oriens was one. It is natural to suppose that the provincial reorganization of Arabia was thus due to his initiative.⁷⁴ Moreover, Diocletian was heavily involved with the Arabs: (1) Malalas speaks of his construction of a *fabrica*⁷⁵ in Damascus as a measure against the inroads of the Saracens,⁷⁶ (2) a *Panegyricus* speaks of *victis accolentibus Syriam nationibus*, and these *nationes* could only have been Arabs; (3) the same *Panegyricus* speaks of *oppressumque captivitatis vinculis Sarracenum*.⁷⁷ The first two references clearly pertain to operations near Phoenicia and Syria Coele in the north, while the third, it has been argued, might refer to others conducted in or near Arabia and Palestine.⁷⁸ These three operations indicate that the Arabs were turbulent all along the limitrophe provinces from the Euphrates to Sinai. The administrative measures associated with Diocletian answer to the list of these perturbances: (1) the construction of the *Strata Diocletiana* in the north may be related to the inroads of the Arabs against Syria and Phoenicia;⁷⁹ (2) the withdrawal of the Tenth Legion, Fretensis, ca. 300, from Jerusalem to Ayla suggests that the legion was needed more against the Arabs and the Arabian

⁷²For bibliography on the two opposite views, see T. D. Barnes, "The Unity of the Verona List," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 16 (1975), pp. 275–78. The author argues persuasively for the nonhomogeneity of the *Laterculus* and a pre-Constantinian dating (in or before 307) for the division of Arabia and the incorporation of its southern half into Palestine, on evidence supplied by Eusebius in *The Martyrs of Palestine*; see also the epilogue in Bowersock, "A Report on Arabia Provincia," p. 242.

⁷³Even as late as the sixth century, Justinian refers to the Provincia as the "country of the Arabs," τὴν Ἀράβων χώραν; see the *prooimion* to Novella 102 on Arabia.

⁷⁴On Diocletian and the Orient, see W. Ensslin, "Zur Ostpolitik des Kaisers Diokletian," *Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Heft 1 (1942).

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, p. 65.

⁷⁶See *infra*, "Constantinus Arabicus Maximus," pp. 56–59, on this and other raids conducted by the Arabs in the times of Diocletian and Licinius.

⁷⁷For these two references in the *Panegyricus* of Mamertinus on Maximianus, see Ensslin, "Ostpolitik," p. 15.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, p. 19 note 5.

⁷⁹The remoter and the more important, much more important, Arab background of the construction of the *Strata* was the destruction of Palmyra by Aurelian in 272 and the vast vacuum created by the destruction of the city that had been Rome's shield against the Persians as well as the Arabs of the Peninsula.

Peninsula than in Judaea.⁸⁰ Within this framework, it is not unlikely that the division of the Provincia Arabia could also be related to the Arab problem;⁸¹ perhaps the province was divided in order to weaken the spirit of its Arab inhabitants,⁸² who might have risen against Rome and whose national consciousness might have welled up a few years earlier during the revolt of Arab Palmyra.

For those who ascribe this reorganization to Constantine and date the *Laterculus* to the last decade of his reign, there are two sources that are relevant and should be taken into account. (1) Malalas (*Chronographia*, p. 319, lines 19–20) expressly says that it was Constantine who created *Palestina Tertia*.

⁸⁰This withdrawal would have left the Judaeac part of Palestine, or possibly the whole of Palestine, without a legion, since Ayla belonged to the province of Arabia before the incorporation of the southern Arabian province into Palestine, and this might have been a factor in the incorporation; for the view that the other legion assigned to Palestine, VI Ferrata, may still have been stationed in the northern part of the province, see Ensslin, "Ostpolitik," p. 57. The *Notitia* is silent on VI Ferrata in Palestine.

⁸¹And so could the rise of the so-called *Limes Palaestinae*. A plausible explanation for this *limes* is that it was a line of fortifications protecting Palestine proper, or what later became *Palestina I*, against the inroads of the Arabs from the southern desert and Sinai; see Bowersock, "A Report on Arabia Provincia," pp. 227–28. The presence of phylarchs in the area of the *Limes Palaestinae* would fortify this view, since it always implies Arab raids, especially in the southern part of Oriens where a threat could have been posed only by the Arabs. The withdrawal of the Tenth Legion, Fretensis, from Jerusalem, which left the Judaeac part of Palestine without a legion, could give further support to this plausible explanation and also tip the scales in favor of a Diocletianic dating for the *limes*. The construction of the *Strata Diocletiana* in the north by Diocletian would be a third supportive argument from analogy and both *limites* may thus be viewed as lines of fortifications constructed by the same emperor against the same people who raided his frontiers; for further details on the *Limes Palaestinae*, first discovered by A. Alt, see M. Avi-Yonah, *The Holy Land* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1966), pp. 118–21, where the author favors a Diocletianic origin for the *limes*. On M. Gichon's Herodian and Flavian dating, see G. W. Bowersock's review, "Old and New in the History of Judaea," *JRS*, 65 (1975), p. 183. In this footnote, the present writer has tried to argue for a Diocletianic origin for the *Limes Palaestinae* by showing the relevance of fairly datable references, involving the Arabs, to the solution of the problem.

⁸²A possible parallel might be the division, late in the fourth century, of *Palestina I* into two provinces, *Prima* and *Secunda*, the second province comprising Galilea, Gaulanitis, and part of the Decapolis. The earlier division of the province, enlarged by the incorporation of the southern part of Arabia, into *Palestina I* and *Salutaris* is known to have taken place in 358. Why and when *Secunda* was separated from *Prima* have been unanswered questions. (a) Perhaps Byzantium wanted to weaken the power and resistance of Palestinian Jewry. Most of the Jews then lived in Galilea with Tiberias as their center, much more important than Caesarea, the other center in *Palestina I*. It was in Galilea that the great revolt ca. 350 against Gallus Caesar erupted and spread, whence it spilled over to Lodd. The separation of *Secunda* from *Prima* could thus have been motivated by a desire to isolate the Jews and contain them in the north, the better to rule them; for the revolt against Gallus Caesar, see M. Avi-Yonah, *The Jews of Palestine* (New York, 1976), pp. 176–81. (b) A statement in Malalas, which has not been noticed, credits Theodosius the Great with the creation of *Palestina Secunda* as a province, separate from what became *Prima*; Malalas, *Chronographia*, ed. Dindorf (Bonn, 1831), p. 347, lines 13–15. For *Palestina II*, see Abel, *Géographie*, vol. 2, pp. 170, 175–76.

This is certainly an error on the part of the chronographer, since the creation of Tertia took place in 358, when it was separated from the already enlarged Palestine. Nevertheless, the statement in Malalas does associate Constantine with what later became known as Palestina III, and it could be argued that Malalas, a careless writer, was not accurate in his statement but generally right in suggesting a connection between Constantine and Palestina Tertia, which had been the southern part of the divided Arabia. (2) More important is a section in John Lydus, *De magistratibus*, which speaks of Constantine and Oriens,⁸³ with references to the organization of Syria and Palestine and the appointment to Oriens of a ὑπαρχος, all of which suggests that Constantine's share in the provincial reorganization of Palestine cannot be entirely ignored.⁸⁴

Just as Diocletian's possible share in this provincial reorganization can be related to his involvement with the Arabs, so can Constantine's; and the involvement of the latter is perhaps more explicit in the sources, namely, the defection of Imru' al-Qays and the assignment of at least the Provincia Arabia to him and his *foederati*. The question naturally arises whether or not the provincial reorganization of Arabia was related, at least in part, to the sudden appearance of a powerful *foederatus* such as the "king of all the Arabs" was, especially as he must have brought with him his seasoned troops and as he put his own sons at the head of the Arab tribes, as *equites* to the Romans. It is possible that, welcome as his defection was, his power, prestige, and Arab self-awareness⁸⁵ might have caused some apprehensions; the Provincia Arabia, the former Nabataean Kingdom, again had an Arab king, a circumstance that might have led to a revival of Arab self-consciousness in the Provincia; as a result, the Provincia was divided and in part allocated to Palestine to keep the king's jurisdiction coterminous with a diminutive province. But what is

⁸³See John Lydus, *De magistratibus*, ed. R. Wünsch (Leipzig, 1903), III.33, p. 121. The crucial word in the passage is the verb ἀναδείξας, which has for its object both Syria and Palestine. What exactly the verb means in this context of provincial reorganization is not entirely clear. The passage is relevant to the institution of the office of *comes orientis*, for which see G. Downey, *A Study of the Comites Orientis and the Consulares Syriae* (Princeton, 1939).

⁸⁴In the case of Constantine, a motive can be discussed for the incorporation of southern Arabia into Palestine. It included Sinai, which already in the fourth century was the object of Christian pilgrimages such as that of Egeria. Since it was in Old Testament terms a holy land, its incorporation into the Holy Land proper by the first Christian emperor, whose interest in the Holy Land is well known and whose mother is said to have made a pilgrimage to Sinai, is readily understandable. This enlarged Holy Land contained all the *loca sancta* of both the Old and the New Testaments, but its unity was destroyed by the splitting of the *provincia* administratively into three Palestines in the course of the fourth century, only to be reunited ecclesiastically in 451, when according to the canons of the Council of Chalcedon the three Palestines were converted into one patriarchate.

⁸⁵Reflected, *inter alia*, in the language of the Namāra inscription, Arabic, not Aramaic—the first instance of the use of written Arabic in the Provincia Arabia.

more likely is that the kingship of Imru' al-Qays in the Provincia may be related not to these stages of the division and the incorporation, but to the reduction of the extent of the Provincia, especially if Ma'add, the large tribal group, was at this time in western Arabia, in Ḥijāz, and if his sons were appointed hipparchs in charge of Ma'add. The extent of the Provincia at the time of its creation was vast, almost coterminous⁸⁶ with Nabataea, difficult for Rome to control directly; but Imru' al-Qays could control for the Romans its outlying parts much better than the Romans themselves. Of all the four stages mentioned above pertaining to the history of the Provincia, it is the second, the reduction, that is likely to have been accelerated by the kingship of Imru' al-Qays in Arabia. That process could have started earlier than the reign of Constantine, but the appearance of Imru' al-Qays, the most powerful client-king in the Provincia since the days of the Nabataean kings, might have given some impetus to the process of reduction, possibly in Ḥijāz, which, however, would have remained a Roman sphere of influence, governed by their new client-king and his sons. On the other hand, if the reduction took place completely before Imru' al-Qays crossed over to the Romans, his defection would still have had great relevance to the reassertion of Roman influence in the Peninsula in the part most vital to Rome, namely, Ḥijāz, adjacent to the Provincia Arabia. If the campaign against Najrān was conducted from the Provincia and if Ma'add was then in Ḥijāz,⁸⁷ Rome would have acquired a new, large sphere of influence indirectly through Imru' al-Qays or rather would have reasserted its political and military presence in Ḥijāz,⁸⁸ which had

⁸⁶Two newly found inscriptions have drastically changed the previously accepted view of the territorial extent of the Provincia Arabia: the first was found at Madā'in Šālīḥ (al-Ḥijr) in Ḥijāz, the second at Dūmat al-Jandal (al-Jawf), at the southern entrance to Wādi al-Sirḥān, where legionary detachments from the Third Cyrenaica, the legion of Arabia, were stationed. For the first, see Bowersock, "A Report on Arabia Provincia," p. 230; for the second, see *idem*, "Syria under Vespasian," *JRS*, 63 (1973), p. 139 note 57. On the new conception of the extent of the Provincia, see the section entitled "The New Province," in Bowersock, "A Report on Arabia Provincia," pp. 228–34.

⁸⁷It is important to remember that Ṭabarī specifically speaks of Imru' al-Qays as the *'āmil* of Shāpūr over Ḥijāz (*Tārīkh*, vol. 2, p. 53). The association of Imru' al-Qays's rule over Ḥijāz with Shāpūr and the Persian phase in the king's career may have been the later Lakhmid version which Hishām al-Kalbī accepted. But the statement is welcome for establishing Imru' al-Qays's connection with Ḥijāz whether or not he conducted the campaign against Najrān from the Provincia. This overlordship over Ḥijāz he would have retained even after his defection, and indeed he would have been closer to Ḥijāz from Namāra than from Hīra. The association of the Lakhmids with Ḥijāz is referred to by Ṭabarī in his account of the reign of their famous king Mundir in the sixth century, for which see *AAW*, vol. 5, pt. 1, pp. 361–65.

⁸⁸Indirect Roman political and military presence in Ḥijāz is established beyond doubt in the sixth century, during which the Ghassānid *foederati* of Byzantium spread their influence as far as Medīna/Yathrib in the south, partly inhabited by their relatives, the two Azd tribes of al-Aws and al-Khazraj; the Ghassānid presence in Ḥijāz can now be even better established than in Nöldeke's time; see *GF*, pp. 38, 40.

been part of the Provincia Arabia⁸⁹ for some time after the elimination of the Nabataean Kingdom in A.D. 106.

II. *VITA CONSTANTINI*

The *Vita*,⁹⁰ which as a source for the reign of Constantine has to be used with care,⁹¹ contains references which could have some bearing not only on Imru' al-Qays but also on other Arab *foederati* of the fourth century, such as Tanūkh (*infra*, pp. 366–72) and the Himyarites of South Arabia. These references may be found in three chapters (I.8; IV.7; IV.50) which speak of the "Indians," οἱ Ἰνδοί; although the Arabs and Arabia are not explicitly mentioned, they are most probably denoted by, or subsumed under, this term.

1

(1) As used by the authors of the early Byzantine period, the term *Indians*⁹² denotes the Ethiopians or the South Arabians or the Indians proper, and sometimes all of them. In the idiom of the *Vita*, the term *Indians* is circumscribed, since the Ethiopians are referred to as such and so are distinguished from the other Indians. The author wanted to demonstrate the extent of Constantine's dominion⁹³ in the four corners of the earth; for him, the Ethiopians represented the peoples of the south, while the Indians represented those of the east, and the two peoples are so presented in the *Vita*. This circumscription leaves the term *Indians* to denote Arabia and India proper, since the South Arabians were to the east of the Ethiopians, and it is unlikely that the author would have jumped from Ethiopia to India and, at least without

⁸⁹As the cradle of Islam, Hijāz eventually turned out to be Rome's Achilles' heel in the seventh century. Viewed from this perspective, the reduction of the extent of the Provincia acquires a new and more significant dimension as this extends from the context of Roman provincial history to that of the Decline and Fall.

⁹⁰For the text, see F. Winkelmann, "Eusebius Werke," I, 1, GCS (Berlin, 1975).

⁹¹On the problem of authenticity that haunts the *Vita*, see the select bibliography in F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (London–New York, 1974), s.vv. *Eusebius* and *Constantine*; see also J. Quasten, *Patrology*, 3 vols. (Westminster, Md., 1953–60), vol. 3, pp. 319–24.

⁹²For the two terms *India* and *Indians*, see Pigulevskaia, *Byzanz*, register, pp. 342–43; see also *The Christian Topography of Cosmas*, trans. J. W. McCrindle (London, 1947), p. 39 note 2.

⁹³The terms τὴν ἀρχήν and κτήσιον in I.8 are rhetorical hyperboles and are not to be taken literally. There was no conquest or annexation in Ethiopia or India but only presence, and the *Vita* has preserved echoes of this (*infra*, note 102). Whatever military presence Byzantium might have had in those parts must have been only naval, as may be inferred from a statement in Philostorgius that Theophilus Indus was taken hostage on the island of Dibos in the reign of Constantine (*infra*, p. 96) and from the fact that in the same reign some Byzantine ships were captured near the port of Adulis in the Red Sea J. Doresse, *Histoire de l'Éthiopie* (Paris, 1970), p. 21.

implying it, would have left out Arabia, lying medially as it was between the two countries.⁹⁴

(2) The superlative terms which the author uses, such as “the most distant” of the Indians and the phrase *πρὸς ἀνίσχοντα ἥλιον*, which recur, seem to exclude the Arabians and to denote the Indians proper.⁹⁵ However, a close examination of the style of the author reveals that these superlatives were used only to serve a rhetorical purpose, namely, to indicate the vast boundaries of the dominion of Constantine by emphasizing the farthest limits. But the farthest limits imply the nearer ones; besides, the Ḥimyarite dominion in those days extended over the whole of South Arabia, reaching the straits of Hormuz,⁹⁶ and this extension brings Arabia close to India proper and the connotation of the superlatives.

It is, therefore, quite likely that the Arabs and the Arabians are included in the term *Indians*.⁹⁷ Constantine could not have left out Arabia from his calculations, so centrally and strategically located between Ethiopia and India; and the foreign policy of his son and successor Constantius in those regions, explicitly attested in the sources (*infra*, pp. 86–95), should give support to this view. That policy could have been an entirely new one on the part of Constantius; but it is more likely that it was a continuation of the policy of Constantine in those regions, a policy for which the *Vita* has preserved some evidence.

2

(1) Chapter I.8 of the *Vita* speaks of Constantine’s conquests and the submission of foreign rulers.⁹⁸ The terms *toparchs* and *ethnarchs* bring to mind the Arab chiefs who became the *foederati* of Byzantium in the fourth century, while *satraps* and *kings* immediately suggest Imru’ al-Qays, who had moved in

⁹⁴The Indians evangelized by Pantaenus in Eusebius (*HE*, V.10) were for Philostorgius none other than the South Arabians; see Philostorgius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, ed. J. Bidez, rev. F. Winkelmann, *GCS*, 21 (Berlin, 1972), II.6. The destination of an Egyptian missionary around A.D. 180 is not likely to have been the very distant India but the much nearer South Arabia, a biblical land associated in the minds of early Christians with the Queen of Sheba and Solomon, to whom there is a pointed reference in the Gospels (Matt. 12:42). See also *infra*, note 97, on a possible explanation for Eusebius’s avoidance of the term *Arabia* for the Peninsula and his substitution of *India* for it. Piganiol clearly understood that the “Indians” in the *Vita* were the Sabaeans of South Arabia; see A. Piganiol, *L’empire chrétien* (Paris, 1972) (hereafter, *EC*), p. 62 and p. 62 note 2.

⁹⁵But roughly the same superlative terms of distance are used by Philostorgius to describe the South Arabians, *καθήκειν δὲ ἐπὶ τὸν ἔξωτότω Ὀκεανὸν* (*HE*, III.4, p. 32, lines 13–14), which may be compared with the description of the Indians in *Vita*, I.8, lines 32–33.

⁹⁶So understood by Philostorgius when he speaks of the churches Theophilus Indus built in the country of the Ḥimyarites, the third of which was built at the entrance to the Persian Gulf (*HE*, III.4, p. 34, lines 21–23).

⁹⁷Perhaps Eusebius avoided the use of the term *Arabia* lest the Peninsula should be confused with the Provincia; as used by Eusebius in the *HE*, Arabia is always the Provincia.

⁹⁸Not to be taken literally of those in the south and the east, in Ethiopia, South Arabia, and India proper; see *supra*, note 93.

the Persian sphere of influence before his defection, and also Hormisdas,⁹⁹ the Persian prince who, ca. 324, sought refuge with Constantine and served him, his son Constantius, and his nephew Julian. Constantine's use of the name of God in his communications¹⁰⁰ to these distant nations cannot be dismissed lightly, in view of Frumentius's missionary activity in Ethiopia and his special relationship to the Negus.

(2) Chapter IV.7 speaks of the barbarian ambassadors to Constantine, among whom the Arabs and South Arabians could have been included. The offering of crowns of gold recalls the *ex auro corona* offered Julian by the Arab chiefs (*infra*, p. 107), while that of vestments embroidered with gold could suggest a present from South Arabia, famous in those days for its luxury articles and textile industry; the reference to horses, long spears, bows, and arrows also suggests Arab chiefs, associated in the classical sources with all these weapons.¹⁰¹ The terms *σύμμαχοι*¹⁰² and *Ῥωμαϊκοῖς ἀξιώμασι*¹⁰³ bring to mind the Arab *foederati* of the north, among others.

⁹⁹See *RE*, 8.2, col. 2410, *s.v.* Hormisdas (3). "Satrap" could easily and inaccurately have been applied to Imru' al-Qays in much the same way "Sipahbad" was applied to another Arab chief almost a century later, Aspebetos, for whom see *BAFIC*.

¹⁰⁰Cf. the letter of Constantius to the two rulers of Ethiopia, for which see Doresse, *L'empire du Prêtre-Jean*, vol. 1, pp. 151–53, where the circumstances of its dispatch are discussed.

¹⁰¹The mounted spearmen of Queen Mavia may be mentioned since they defended the City of Constantine itself against the Goths after the battle of Adrianople in 378, for which see *infra*, pp. 176–78. As for horses, it is relevant to mention that in the following reign Constantius sent the ruler of South Arabia, among other presents, two hundred Cappadocian horses, which might imply a previous present in kind by the South Arabian ruler (*infra*, p. 88). The Arabs were famous as *sagittarii*, especially the Ituraeans, who are attested in the fourth century in the service of Byzantium. For Arab *equites* and *sagittarii* in the service of Byzantium, see chap. 5, "Notitia Dignitatum," in *RA*.

¹⁰²The more correct term than those used in chap. 1.8 (*supra*, note 93) for expressing the relationship that obtained between Byzantium and these peoples during the reign of Constantine. There was a *symmachia* with the Arabs of the north. What the situation in South Arabia was and what relationship that country had to Byzantium is not clear, but it is in the case of Ethiopia, which witnessed the missionary activity of Frumentius and the introduction of Christianity into the country during the reign of 'Ezānā, Constantine's contemporary. It is possible that the *foedus* between the two powers, which had been broken in the reign of Ella-Amida (died sometime between 320–25), was renewed during the reigns of 'Ezānā and Constantine, especially if the consecration of Frumentius as bishop of the Ethiopians by Athanasius took place during the first period of Athanasius's patriarchate (328–36) before the death of Constantine in 337. The source for the mission of Frumentius in Ethiopia is Rufinus, *HE, PL*, 21, Liber I, Cap. IX, cols. 478–80. A clear chronological indication in Rufinus's account is the statement on Athanasius, *nam is nuper sacerdotium susceperat*, but the statement is included between parentheses and is not to be found in the "Bononiensis liber." Jones must have accepted it as genuine since he placed the consecration shortly after 328; see A. H. M. Jones and E. Monroe, *A History of Abyssinia* (Oxford, 1935), p. 28. Doresse places the consecration later during the reign of Constantius between 341–46, but for this period, 339–46, Athanasius was an exile in Rome; see Doresse, *L'empire du Prêtre-Jean*, vol. 1, p. 150. The Byzantine presence in Ethiopia is relevant to the South Arabian-Byzantine relationship in view of the real possibility of an Ethiopian expedition against South Arabia in this period, but *exactly* when in this period the expedition took place is not clear; see *supra*, pp. 38–43.

(3) Chapter IV.50 is devoted exclusively to the embassy and the presents of the Indians.¹⁰⁴ The reference to precious stones and exotic animals suggests Southern Arabia as much as it suggests India proper¹⁰⁵ since Arabia, too, was a land of *exotica*.¹⁰⁶

Perhaps the foregoing analysis of these three chapters has shown that the data they provide cannot be dismissed lightly and that the *Vita* may be taken seriously for the light it sheds on the Byzantine presence, at least by implication, among the Arabs and in Arabia during the reign of Constantine. Vice versa, and at the cost of some circularity, this analysis might raise to a higher degree the reliability of the *Vita* as a historical source.

III. CONSTANTINUS ARABICUS MAXIMUS

*Arabicus*¹⁰⁷ appears as one of the *cognomina* of Constantine in an inscription set up in 318–19 by Flavius Terentianus, the *praeses* of Mauretania.¹⁰⁸ The rarity¹⁰⁹ of this

¹⁰³The crown assumed by Imru' al-Qays and referred to in the Namāra inscription must have been assumed by, or bestowed on, his son and successor after the former's death in 328. The succession of the son might have entailed a journey to Constantinople, visited by other Arab figures in this early Byzantine period for receiving imperial honors.

¹⁰⁴The embassy should be dated 336, as is clear from the preceding chapter, IV.49, which speaks of the thirtieth year of his reign, suggesting that Constantine was celebrating his *tricennalia*.

¹⁰⁵For trade relations with the Orient, see Pigulevskaia, *Byzanz*, pp. 70–87; for India in particular, see the footnotes on p. 71; the authoress, however, did not notice the value of the *Vita* for relations with the Orient in the reign of Constantine. Reference should be made in this connection to the philosopher Metrodorus, who visited India proper, whence he brought some precious stones to Constantine; for this, see Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* (hereafter, *RG*), XXV.4.23, and Cedrenus, who dates this episode to the twenty-first year of Constantine's reign in 326–27: Cedrenus, *Historiarum Compendium*, ed. I. Bekker, 2 vols. (Bonn, 1838–39), vol. 1, pp. 516–17. Metrodorus's journey to India was known to Rufinus since he refers to it in his account of the evangelization of Ethiopia by Frumentius (*supra*, note 102); the *foedus* mentioned in that account was not with the Indians proper, as in Piganiol, *EC*, p. 62, but with an African people, most probably the Ethiopians, as understood by Jones and Monroe, *Abyssinia*, p. 27; see also *supra*, note 102.

¹⁰⁶See *infra*, pp. 104–6, on a chapter in Philostorgius devoted to the *fauna* of the Orient, where it is argued that these were Arabian-Ethiopian as much as Indian, perhaps even more the former, and that the king of the Indians who sent an ape as a present to Constantius was probably either the ruler of the Ethiopians or the South Arabians.

¹⁰⁷This study of *Arabicus* has benefited from a communication by Dr. J. F. Matthew of the Queen's College, Oxford, and from conversations with Professors J. F. Gilliam and Ch. Habicht of the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton.

¹⁰⁸For the inscription, see *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, VIII, no. 8412; and H. Dessau, ed., *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, vol. 1, no. 696. For Flavius Terentianus, see A. H. M. Jones, J. R. Martindale, and J. Morris, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire* (Cambridge, 1971), vol. 1, p. 881.

¹⁰⁹First assumed by Septimius Severus; see Dessau, *ILS*, nos. 8916–17; it appears on his coins and in many inscriptions dedicated to him, some of which have recently been discovered; for these, see *L'année épigraphique*, 1968, nos. 518, 520–24; 1969–70, no. 610.

cognomen and the implications of its assumption by Constantine for *Byzantino-arabica* make it necessary to subject this inscription to a careful examination.

Since Aurelian's victory over the Arabs in 272–73 and his assumption of *Arabicus*,¹¹⁰ no Roman emperor had assumed the title, and there is no record in the sources of any subsequent serious military engagement with the Arabs after 272–73 and before 318–19, with the exception of raids during the reign of Diocletian,¹¹¹ which, however, do not seem to have been important enough to call for the assumption of *Arabicus* since the title does not appear among the *cognomina* of Diocletian and other tetrarchs¹¹² for the year 302. It does not appear among the *cognomina* of Galerius for the year 311 either,¹¹³ and it may be safely assumed that no important military engagement with the Arabs took place in the period 302–11. Its appearance in *CIL*, VIII, no. 8412, in an inscription set up for Constantine in 318–19 poses a difficulty,¹¹⁴ which may be negotiated as follows.

(1) It is possible that there was a military operation against the Arabs in this period, 311–18, as a result of which *Arabicus* would have been assumed by the Augustus of the East, Licinius, and likewise by the Augustus of the West, Constantine.¹¹⁵ *Arabicus* is not attested for Licinius, but this is not decisive, since this may only reflect the unsatisfactory state of the extant inscriptions. There are, however, in the sources echoes which may be related to this *cognomen*:

(a) The most distinct echo is in Malalas (*Chronographia*, p. 313, lines 16–19), where the chronographer speaks of the dispatch of "Maximus, also called Licinianus," to the Orient with a large army to guard it against the Persians and the raids of the Saracens, who had formerly ravaged it.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁰Dessau, *ILS*, no. 576. Aurelian's *Arabicus* must be distinguished from his *Palmyrenicus* which appears in *ILS*, no. 579, and this distinction is important to the historian of his campaigns. It is significant that Wahballât, Zenobia's son, likewise assumed *Arabicus*, and this is of considerable interest to the self-image of the Arab Palmyrene royal house; see Dessau, *ILS*, no. 8924. P. von Rhoden was unaware of the fact that Aurelian assumed *Arabicus*; see *RE*, 2.1, col. 362. On *Arabicus* as a *cognomen* for Severus, Aurelian, and Constantine, see P. Kneissel, *Die Siegestitulatur der römischen Kaiser* (Göttingen, 1969), pp. 211–15, 240, 273.

¹¹¹See Malalas, *Chronographia*, pp. 307–8; these raids may be dated 296–97, since they are recorded in the account that tells, among other things, of the war against Persia (*ibid.*, pp. 308–10), which took place during these two years.

¹¹²As is clear from Dessau, *ILS*, no. 642.

¹¹³These appear in the Edict of Toleration, for which see Eusebius, *HE*, VIII.xvii.3.

¹¹⁴If the date of the inscription were in the thirties, the *cognomen* would be comprehensible, since it would be related to the campaign of Constantine's nephew Hannibalianus against the Persians, in whose army there would, conceivably, have been an Arab contingent; on the Arab raids in Roman Mesopotamia, see E. Stein, *Histoire du bas-empire* (Amsterdam, 1968), vol. 1, p. 130.

¹¹⁵Just as the four tetrarchs assumed identical *cognomina*; see Dessau, *ILS*, no. 642.

¹¹⁶In this passage in Malalas, the dispatch of Licinius to the Orient is attributed to Constantius Chlorus, mentioned by name earlier (*Chronographia*, p. 313, lines 4–5).

Malalas may have confused this military assignment of Licinius against the Persians and the Arabs with the well-known campaign of Galerius against the Persians in A.D. 296–97 during the reign of Diocletian, since Licinius fought with distinction in that campaign with Galerius¹¹⁷ and, moreover, Galerius's full name had in it "Maximianus,"¹¹⁸ which recalls the Maximus mentioned by Malalas. But this confusion is unlikely, since Malalas had mentioned the campaign of Galerius twice before (*Chronographia*, pp. 306, 308) and his account of Licinius's military assignment is quite different from that of Galerius in the Persian campaign of 296–97; furthermore, that one has no reference to the Arabs, while this one speaks more of the Arabs¹¹⁹ than of the Persians. It is, therefore, quite likely that Malalas, whose interest in the Orient is well known, has given a true account of a military assignment for Licinius which has not been recorded in the other sources for this period. This assignment, to defend the Orient "with a large army" against the Arabs who had ravaged it, may have entailed a military operation that won him the *cognomen* "Arabicus," preserved only in the titulature of his western colleague, Constantine.¹²⁰

(b) There are references in the *Vita Constantini* to Arabia in which Constantine is directly involved.¹²¹ These relate to the period after he became sole emperor, and so would be irrelevant to *Arabicus* assumed in 318. But it is not impossible that the situation described in the *Vita* originated in the period during which Licinius was Augustus in the East and continued after Constantine became sole emperor.

(c) More important than the Greek *Vita* is the Arabic Namāra inscription¹²² of Imru' al-Qays, the "king of all the Arabs," who died in 328. The defection of Imru' al-Qays from Persia to Rome entailed the submission of a hostile Arab king and the accession of a vast territory over which he ruled to the Roman sphere of influence; Licinius and Constantine could have assumed

¹¹⁷Eutropius, *Breviarium*, X.iii.

¹¹⁸As he is known to Ammianus Marcellinus, who speaks of him as Maximianus when the historian remembers his role in the war of 297 with Persia (*RG*, XXV.7.9). The possibility of confusion in Malalas is facilitated by the fact that *Maximus* and its near homophones are common in the period of the tetrarchy. Diocletian's co-Augustus was Maximianus, whose son was Maxentius; Galerius was Maximianus and his nephew Daia was Maximinus. But Licinius had it not, his full name being Valerius Licinianus Licinius.

¹¹⁹The statement on the Saracens, who "had formerly ravaged the Orient as far as Egypt," recalls a similar statement in Malalas, *Chronographia*, pp. 307–8, recorded for the period 296–97. It was because of these raids that Diocletian constructed a *fabrica* in Damascus (*ibid.*, p. 307).

¹²⁰According to this interpretation of the historicity of this passage in Malalas and at the cost of some circularity in the argument, the *cognomen Arabicus* in *CIL*, VIII, no. 8421 and the passage in Malalas would be mutually corroborative. The inscription with its date 318–19 would also afford a chronological *terminus* to the passage in Malalas.

¹²¹For these references, see *supra*, pp. 54–56.

¹²²For a detailed analysis of this inscription, see *supra*, pp. 31–53.

Arabicus on that occasion.¹²³ Alternatively, the *cognomen* may have been assumed after the mysterious campaign against South Arabia mentioned in the inscription, especially if it was Roman-inspired. Both alternatives could encounter chronological difficulties¹²⁴ if the defection of Imru' al-Qays and the South Arabian campaign took place in the twenties rather than in 318.

(2) It is perfectly possible that *ARAB(icus)* is nothing but an error¹²⁵ for another *cognomen*, namely, *ADIAB(enicus)*: (a) the inscription¹²⁶ (or the copy) betrays traces of such errors: *CAPP* instead of *CARP(icus)* and *COTH* instead of *GOTH(icus)*; (b) this particular *cognomen*, *Adiabenicus*, seems to lend itself to corruption, as is clear from a number of inscriptions.¹²⁷ Especially relevant is one where *Arabicus* is a dittograph, standing for *Adiabenicus*;¹²⁸ (c) among the *cognomina* of the tetrarchs, *Adiabenicus* appears as part of a cluster of three *cognomina* collocated together, namely, *Armeniacus*, *Medicus*, *Adiabenicus*. In *CIL*, VIII, no. 8412, the first two appear but the third, *Adiabenicus*, is missing and instead *Arabicus* suspiciously appears.

These arguments, especially (c), encounter a difficulty, namely, that the *cognomina* of Constantine are not a replica of those of the first tetrarchs.¹²⁹ If they had been, (c) in particular would have been decisive.

IV. THE THREE DOCUMENTS

Three documents for this chapter on Constantine and the Arabs have been analyzed: the Latin inscription found in Mauretania, the Greek *Vita Constantini*, and the Arabic *Namāra* inscription. No definite conclusions can be drawn from the first two documents. The *cognomen* "Arabicus" in the first¹³⁰ may turn

¹²³It was on such an occasion that *Arabicus* was first assumed by Septimius Severus, namely, after Abgar VIII, the Arab king of Edessa, submitted to him during the Parthian campaign.

¹²⁴The *Namāra* inscription becomes totally irrelevant if the campaign against Najrān was undertaken before his defection to the Romans, while he was still in Ḥīra.

¹²⁵Suggested by Dr. J. F. Matthew and implied by C. Ferrero, who lists *CIL*, VIII, no. 8412 under *Adiabenicus maximus*; see E. de Ruggiero, ed., *Dizionario epigrafico di antichità romane* (Rome, 1895–), vol. 2, p. 649, s.v. Constantinus I.

¹²⁶See the version in *CIL*, VIII, no. 8412.

¹²⁷It appears misspelt as *Aziabenco*, *Adiabin.*, *Adiab.* in Dessau, *ILS*, nos. 417, 732, and 8942 respectively.

¹²⁸Dessau, *ILS*, no. 2007, an inscription of Severan date.

¹²⁹In this very same inscription, *CIL*, VIII, no. 8412, *Persicus* is omitted and *Gothicus* added; in another inscription, Dessau, *ILS*, no. 8942, *Persicus* is retained, *Gothicus* added, and both *Armeniacus* and *Carpicus* omitted. *Adiabenicus* could, therefore, have been omitted and *Arabicus* substituted for it in *CIL*, VIII, no. 8412. For both inscriptions, see Ch. Habicht, "Zur Geschichte des Kaisers Konstantin," *Hermes*, 86 (1958), p. 371. See also the appendix on the Barāqish inscription, *infra*, pp. 72–73.

¹³⁰The study of this inscription, negative as the result may be as far as the reign of Constantine is concerned, has been necessary. In addition to guiding the student of the reign against using the *cognomen* as incontestable evidence for a victory over the Arabs, the section on

out to be an inscriptional or transcriptional error for "Adiabenicus"; the evidence from the second on Constantine's involvement with the Arabs and Arabia has only a high degree of probability. It is, therefore, the third, the Namāra inscription, that is the most solid document for drawing conclusions with absolute certainty. In view of the detailed nature of the analysis of these three documents, especially the third, it is well that a résumé of the data that they yield be given.

1

The incontestable facts that emerge out of the analysis are from the Namāra inscription and may be summarized as follows:

(1) It is established that in the reign of Constantine, Byzantium had an Arab client-king, probably a crowned one, installed in the Provincia Arabia, in the same region that more than two hundred years earlier the Nabataean Arab client-kings had ruled in the independent Arab kingdom of the Nabataeans.

(2) The king had been a dynast in Ḥīra and continued as such also in the Provincia, since his sons are attested in control of the tribes in the service of Rome.

(3) The king's control of the Arab tribes through his sons ensured for Rome either a new sphere of influence or the reassertion of its presence in areas formerly held by legionary detachments, probably in Ḥijāz, a large portion of which had formed part of the Provincia Arabia.

(4) The Diocese of Oriens acquired a new tribal group, Lakhm, which accompanied the king on his defection from Persia.

2

The résumé given in the foregoing section should not carry the implication that the remainder of the data provided by the Namāra inscription, the Latin inscription, and the *Vita Constantini* cease to be of value to *Byzantino-arabica* during the reign of Constantine. Because of the uncertainty that attends their correct interpretation, they have been separated¹³¹ from the other, certain data, presented in the preceding section. Their analysis provides the student of the reign with a set of ready answers to the questions which these data raise or a framework for the fruitful discussion of these questions, now that these questions have been identified and the entire range of possibilities has been explored, supported by whatever relevant facts there are in the

the inscription has assembled material for the reigns of Aurelian, Diocletian, Galerius, and Licinius, important as background for *Byzantino-arabica* in the reign of Constantine.

¹³¹They have been largely banished from the synthesis; when they do appear, their status in the order of possibility or probability is indicated.

sources.¹³² The correct answers can be given only as a result of a further confrontation of these possibilities with new epigraphic and literary discoveries, as has been the case with the Namāra inscription, the problems of which have been partially solved by new evidence supplied by the Pahlevi Paikuli inscription, the Sabaic inscriptions, and the Coptic Manichaean Papyri.

Of all the various data provided by the three documents, the campaign against Najrān mentioned in the Namāra inscription is the most important one. If it turns out to have been conducted from the Provincia Arabia and if the Indians of the embassy that reached Constantine in the thirtieth year of his reign, mentioned in the *Vita*, turn out to have been Arabians, this will be the most important gain for *Byzantino-arabica* during the reign of Constantine, since this would have been a major historical event of international dimensions, possibly involving Byzantium, South Arabia, and Ethiopia. Such a campaign would shed a bright light on the theme "Constantine and the Orient," would document a revived Roman interest in South Arabia, and would make more intelligible the much better attested and incontestable Byzantine presence in the reign of Constantius.

In spite of the uncertainty of the various interpretations of the campaign against Najrān, it is well that what, in the opinion of the present writer, seems the most likely interpretation be given, both of the campaign itself and of the sequence of events preceding and following it: (1) The campaign of Shāpūr against the Arabs of the Peninsula in 326 is a fact and an important one for the Arabs, for Persia, and for Byzantium. It was probably after this campaign that Imru' al-Qays joined the Romans. (2) The campaign against Najrān followed that of Shāpūr's in the Peninsula; it was conducted by Imru' al-Qays with the support of Byzantium or was possibly a joint campaign with the Ethiopians against a South Arabia that might have been hostile to Imru' al-Qays, to Ethiopia, and to Byzantium, especially as the South Arabian king of the time might have collaborated with Shāpūr in his campaign against the Arabs, and thus was a potential ally of Persia against Byzantium.¹³³ (3) The embassy that reached Constantine during the celebration of his Tricennalia can have for its background this campaign, which entailed the movement of South Arabia in the Byzantine political orbit.¹³⁴

¹³²Cf. *supra*, note 63 on Caskel's efforts. Guesswork is justifiable when one is handicapped by the paucity or nonexistence of relevant material for a correct or definitive interpretation, but it should be presented as such.

¹³³On South Arabian-Persian relations, see *supra*, note 35.

¹³⁴In addition to the arguments advanced for the "Indians" of the embassy as South Arabians (*supra*, pp. 53–55), the campaign against Najrān could serve as an additional argument in that it supplies a relevant background for the dispatch of an embassy from the South Arabians rather than from the Indians proper. The pearls of Metrodorus cannot compete with this campaign as a background for the dispatch of an embassy from India; for the pearls, see *supra*, note 105.

V. CONSTANTINE AND THE ARABS

The various data that have been extracted from the three documents may now be set against the course of Byzantine history in the last phase of the reign, when Constantine was sole Augustus, for (1) discussing the theme "Constantine and the Arabs"; (2) reexamining the theme "Constantine and the Orient"; and (3) raising the question whether Constantine had a well-defined and coherent policy toward that Orient. The Arabs were involved in all three areas.

1. The Arabs

The two main data for "Constantine and the Arabs" are undoubtedly (1) Shāpūr's campaign against the Arabs of the Peninsula in 326, and (2) the acquisition by Byzantium of a powerful Arab ally, who was installed in the Provincia Arabia, Imru' al-Qays, "the king of all the Arabs." Both are incontestable facts and the two facts are, as has been argued, most probably related.

(1) The occasion for Shāpūr's campaign was the raids that the Arabs of the Persian Gulf had conducted against his territory. Had Shāpūr limited his campaign to a punitive expedition in those Arabian regions adjacent to the Gulf, the campaign would have remained a Persian-Arab engagement. But Shāpūr pushed to Inner Arabia, reached Ḥijāz and the *limes* in Oriens, subjugating all the Arab tribes of those regions not far from the Roman frontier.¹³⁵ It is almost certain that the future warrior-king, whose plans for the aggrandizement of Sasanid Persia at the expense of Rome are well known, meant the campaign to be a preliminary for more ambitious plans against Rome. He celebrated the attainment of his majority with a campaign that, without actually involving him with the Romans, gave him a great advantage over the southern flank of Oriens in the event of a war with them. The military implication of this campaign could not have been lost on the Romans. Even if it had been, the defection of two major figures from the Persian camp, Hormuz and Imru' al-Qays, who knew or must have known of Shāpūr's plans of self-aggrandizement, would have alerted the Romans to those plans. Thus, quite early in Constantine's reign as sole Augustus, a large portion of the Arabian Peninsula, and the one most strategically situated to inconvenience the Roman *limes* in Oriens, had become a Persian sphere of influence with Arab tribes under the rule, directly or indirectly, of Shāpūr. Persia had stepped into territory previously garrisoned by Rome when the Provincia Arabia had been coterminous with Nabataea, most menacingly in Ḥijāz and probably including the strategic Dūmat al-Jandal, guarding the southern

¹³⁵The first chapter in what might be described as "the struggle for Arabia" between Byzantium and Persia in the three centuries before the rise of Islam. The final chapter was the Persian occupation of South Arabia in 572.

entrance to Wādi-al-Sirhān. The campaign created for Constantine a new element of involvement with the Arabs as well as with the Sasanids.

(2) The acquisition of Imru' al-Qays is the second important fact. It is related to the first, Shāpūr's campaign, as has been argued earlier¹³⁶ when the Byzantine profile of his inscription was intensively examined. What remains to be discussed is Imru' al-Qays's position in the context "Constantine and the Arabs."

In view of the threat that Shāpūr's territorial acquisitions in the Peninsula had posed for Rome, the installation of Imru' al-Qays in the Provincia rather than elsewhere in Oriens becomes intelligible. As a fugitive from Persia, he would be a prospective ally against it in the event of a future war, and consequently one would expect him to be installed in a province in Oriens closer to the Persians. But the Persian front was nonoperational in the twenties, and thus it is possible to conclude that Imru' al-Qays was installed in the south, in the Provincia Arabia, less well defended against the Arabs of the Peninsula than Phoenicia and Syria, which were protected by the *Strata Diocletiana*,¹³⁷ but more importantly because from the Provincia he could watch Ḥijāz, parts of which had been Roman territory. An equally significant reason for his installation there would have been for mounting the campaign against Najrān, which, as has been argued previously, was conducted most probably from the Provincia. Thus, for the time being, Constantine had stabilized the Arabian front and neutralized the effects of Shāpūr's campaign and acquisitions by the employment of a powerful Arab king, whose sons were at the head of the Arab tribes, and who thus could watch the Arabian *limes* against the raids of the Arab allies of Shāpūr.

The position of Imru' al-Qays thus emerges as central in Byzantium's Near Eastern involvement, not only vis-à-vis the Arabs of the Peninsula but also the secular enemy, the Persians.¹³⁸ The campaign of Najrān, if conducted

¹³⁶*Supra*, pp. 59–61.

¹³⁷Possibly also because the other group of Arab *foederati*, the Tanūkhids, known from the Arabic literary sources, were stationed in the north of Oriens; see *infra*, pp. 400–407.

¹³⁸In receiving Imru' al-Qays and enlisting him in the service of Rome, Constantine may well have had in mind the example of Odenathus, the Arab prince of Palmyra, who in the century of the imperial crisis was in the service of Valerian and his son Gallienus and was pitted against the first Shāpūr. The analogy is striking: both Arab figures were warriors, were contemporaries of the two most aggressive of Sasanid kings, the two Shāpūrs, had had a Persian connection before their Roman one, were located in roughly the same area in Oriens, and were endowed with resounding titles. But while Odenathus was integrated into the Roman titular system, having been *vir consularis*, *dux Romanorum*, *imperator*, *corrector totius Orientis*, Imru' al-Qays, if his title in the Namāra inscription is an indication, was not so integrated; besides, he died before the outbreak of Constantine's Persian War, while before his assassination Odenathus had reoccupied Syria and Mesopotamia for Rome, forced Shāpūr to retreat across the Euphrates, and twice reached the gates of Ctesiphon. His title, *rex regum*, however, recalls that of Imru' al-Qays (*supra*, p. 35), which, as has been suggested, could have been given or assumed with the

from the Provincia, would have enhanced his value even more, as this would have involved him with the world of the Southern Semites, with whom Byzantium had important relations, commercial and other. Thus Imru' al-Qays was involved in the two parts into which the Orient may be divided: the Iranian Orient of Sasanid Persia—the rival world power—and the Semitic Orient of Arabia and Ethiopia.

2. The Orient

Unlike the two facts on which the foregoing section rests, the campaign against Najrān and the embassy from South Arabia have only a high degree of probability. The campaign and the embassy have been analyzed above¹³⁹ as isolated episodes, and it remains to relate them to the theme "Constantine and the Orient," but with the reservation that their status is on a lower level of reliability than the two facts of the preceding section.

The Southern Semites

Byzantine relations with Ethiopia are better attested than with South Arabia during the reign of Constantine. The ecclesiastical historian's account of the conversion of Ethiopia's Negus, 'Ezānā, is an established fact, and thus the embassy of the Ethiopians to Constantine can be predicated with certainty,¹⁴⁰ and there are no good grounds for viewing it with suspicion.

Byzantium had no expansionist policy in these regions; its main interest was economic—what the region produced and what it mediated in its transit trade.¹⁴¹ The new significant fact in the history of Byzantium's relations with Ethiopia is the Negus's adoption of Christianity not much later than Constantine's own adoption of it. Constantine was not responsible for the Negus's conversion; but Constantine's bore one of its earliest fruits in Ethiopia as it had already done in Armenia with the conversion of Tiridates.¹⁴² The new faith

Persian title of *rex regum* in mind, just as Hannibalianus's title was. Odenathus put at the disposal of Rome Palmyra's famed archers and heavy mailed cavalry. Imru' al-Qays's contribution is not entirely clear; he certainly brought with him his Lakhmid cavalry and enlisted the Arab tribes, also mounted, in the service of Rome; but whether his Lakhmid cavalry was mailed is an open question. It could have been, in view of his having been allied to the Persians, whose cavalry was mailed, and of the fact that the Lakhmids of later times in Ḥīra employed two celebrated cavalry squadrons, most probably mailed, called al-Shahbā' and al-Dawsar; on these two, see Rothstein, *DLH*, pp. 134–36.

¹³⁹See *supra*, pp. 38–43, 56.

¹⁴⁰The Ethiopians are clearly referred to as such in *Vita*, IV.7, which also speaks of the "alliance" (*symmachia*).

¹⁴¹For trade with Ethiopia and the Orient, see Pigulevskaia, *Byzanz*, pp. 70–87.

¹⁴²On the Byzantine-Armenian alliance between the two Christian rulers Constantine and Tiridates, see R. W. Thomson, *Agathangelos: History of the Armenians* (Albany, 1976), pp. xii, 27.

common to both rulers was a spiritual bond that supported whatever *foedus* existed between the two. It is also almost certain that Constantine must have cultivated this new spiritual bond between him and the Negus, as his son was to do some twenty years later in his letter to the two Ethiopian rulers.¹⁴³

It is therefore possible to conclude that the reign of Constantine witnessed the forging of a new bond between Byzantium and Ethiopia that was to last for centuries.¹⁴⁴ Less clear and not so well attested are relations with South Arabia since they depend on the controversial campaign against Najrān and the embassy of the "Indians" mentioned in the *Vita*.¹⁴⁵ On the assumption that the interpretation of these two data undertaken above is correct, it may be said that Constantine was the first Roman emperor to draw South Arabia, a traditionally hostile country, into the Roman orbit. The immediate concern of the emperor was probably to break the possible alliance that obtained between Persia and South Arabia, which was becoming dangerous after Shāpūr's campaign in the Peninsula, especially as the South Arabian king could conduct campaigns to the north on his own or as an ally of Persia at a time when Constantine was not ready for a war on the eastern front. But Byzantium's enduring interest in South Arabia was not unlike its interest in Ethiopia; it was in what South Arabia produced and what it mediated in transit trade. Unlike those with Ethiopia, relations with South Arabia must have been less intimate, since the country was not yet converted to Christianity, as is clear from the account of the mission of Theophilus Indus late in the fifties.

This new relationship with South Arabia, well attested in the reign of Constantius, probably did not outlast the fourth century. Before its close, the tide turned against Byzantium in South Arabia, whose rulers turned away from Christianity toward a new religion, Judaism.¹⁴⁶ It was not until the third decade of the sixth century that South Arabia was truly Christianized and also occupied under circumstances that involved both Byzantium and Ethiopia.

¹⁴³Eusebius, *Vita*, I.8, states that he used to mention the name of God in his correspondence with foreign rulers, which must have been true in his correspondence with the Christian Negus. For the letter of Constantius that mentions God at the beginning and at the end, see Doresse, *L'empire du Prêtre-Jean*, vol. 1, pp. 151–53.

¹⁴⁴The highest point of cooperation between the two countries was in the reign of Justinian when the emperor sent his *agens in rebus*, Julian, ca. 530 to negotiate an alliance with Ethiopia, which also involved South Arabia, against the Persians.

¹⁴⁵The reference to the "Indians" in *Vita*, IV.7 is noteworthy. In the enumeration of the barbarians who came to Constantine, they are placed between the Blemmyes and the Ethiopians. In view of the proximity of the Blemmyes and the Ethiopians to the South Arabians rather than to the Indians proper, this could fortify the conclusion, already drawn, that the "Indians" in the *Vita* are the South Arabians; it is unlikely that the author would have used "Indians" in two different senses, and the superlatives used to describe the "Indians" in *Vita*, I.8 and IV.7 do not necessarily imply that they are different "Indians" from the South Arabians; see *supra*, pp. 53–54 on how far South Arabia extended to the east.

¹⁴⁶See J. Ryckmans, "Christianisme," pp. 427–28.

Sasanid Persia

Important as the Arabian-Ethiopian world was, that of Sasanid Persia, the secular enemy, was the much more important part of the Orient for Constantine. As the accounts of the war with Persia in the thirties are so sketchy and as Constantine died before he could engage the Persians, this war needs to be reexamined in the light of the new data extracted from the literary and epigraphic sources.

(1) The first stage of hostilities with Persia opens not in the thirties but in the twenties with Shāpūr's campaign against the Arabs of the Peninsula, which brought him to Ḥijāz and the Arabian *limes* and thus with one stroke changed the balance of power in the Peninsula and in the regions adjacent to the *limes* system of Diocletian, framed with a view to dealing with the threat of the Arabs, now made doubly dangerous by the power of the Sasanids. In view of the fact that Shāpūr did not actually attack Roman territory, it was difficult to construe the campaign as a *casus belli*,¹⁴⁷ and the defection of Imru' al-Qays, who probably bore the main brunt of the campaign with Shāpūr,¹⁴⁸ was a windfall for Constantine, who was busy with the Visigothic problem in the twenties and who must have seen in Imru' al-Qays an adequate defense for the frontier against any invasions that Shāpūr might have encouraged the Arabs or the South Arabians to undertake. Besides, Constantine would not have cared to fight Shāpūr in Arabia.¹⁴⁹ The campaign against Najrān was quite adequate for the reassertion of Roman power in the Peninsula, and so was the alliance with the powerful "king of all the Arabs" and his sons.

(2) The second stage opens when hostilities with Persia actually begin in the thirties. The unsatisfactory state of the sources, the uncertainties that attended its inception, and the sudden death of Constantine have all left this war badly documented, but it is safe to assume that the Arabs were included in the projected campaign.¹⁵⁰ Imru' al-Qays had died in 328, but his sons, attested in the Namāra inscription, would have been available and especially valuable in a war against Persia, partly because of their former Persian connection and partly because the Lakhmids had originally hailed from Mesopo-

¹⁴⁷The statement in the *Vita*, IV.8, that there was a peace treaty between Constantine and Shāpūr is fortified by a statement in Ṭabarī (*Tārīkh*, vol. 2, p. 58) that at the beginning of his reign in the twenties Shāpūr had a peace treaty with Constantine; apparently both were not ready for coming to grips with each other in the twenties.

¹⁴⁸Ṭabarī mentions that the Persian contingent in Shāpūr's campaign formed only one thousand soldiers (*Tārīkh*, vol. 2, p. 57).

¹⁴⁹The preparations in the thirties for the war against Persia were made in northern Oriens, in Mesopotamia; see the valuable passage in Lydus on Constantine's strategy against Persia, *De magistratibus*, III.33–34.

¹⁵⁰For an account of this war and the sources, see Stein, *HBE*, vol. 1, pp. 129–30; reference to the only echo that the sources preserved of Arab participation in this war relates to the raids of the Persian Arabs against Roman Mesopotamia; see *ibid.*, p. 130 note 208.

tamia, the theater of the prospective war, and must have been familiar with both the topography and the ethnography of the region, inhabited by tribes related to them or known to them.¹⁵¹ In addition to the Lakhmid allies of Constantine, there were the Tanūkhids of the north, the other Arab allies of Byzantium, known from the Arabic literary sources. They too had hailed from Mesopotamia and had moved in the Persian orbit before they crossed over to Roman territory after disagreements developed with the Persians.¹⁵² It is not until Julian's campaign against Shāpūr that the extent of Arab participation can be measured because it is reflected in a major historian's work that has been preserved.¹⁵³

The important event in Arabia, in both the Peninsula and the Provincia, in the twenties, Shāpūr's campaign, in which the Arabs were heavily involved, now calls for a reevaluation of Constantine and his Persian War. Although there was enough provocation in the twenties and in spite of the inevitability of a conflict with Persia ultimately, Constantine postponed the campaign against Shāpūr from the twenties to the thirties. The reason for his doing so was the Visigothic problem on his hands on the Danube, a front already operational and closer to his new capital which was being built. It was not until he had pacified the Danube front by solving the Visigothic and the Sarmatian problems on the lower and the middle Danube respectively that he was free in 334 to turn his attention to Shāpūr. In so doing he demonstrated his grasp of military priorities, namely, that the Danube then was more important than the Euphrates and that war with the more advanced Persians needed his full attention and could not be waged successfully if he was fighting on two fronts.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹See *supra*, "The Namāra Inscription," on the Mesopotamian origin of the Lakhmids. According to Ṭabarī (*Tārīkh*, vol. 2, p. 53), Mesopotamia was included in Imru' al-Qays's jurisdiction as Shāpūr's viceroy over the Arabs.

¹⁵²For the Tanūkhids, see *infra*, pp. 366–72.

¹⁵³Historians know of Hormisdas, not of Imru' al-Qays, because the Namāra inscription was discovered only in this century, while Hormisdas is mentioned in well-known literary sources. Even after its discovery, the Namāra inscription has remained mainly in the hands of Semitic epigraphists. The intensive study of the inscription in this book has been undertaken in order to make it available to the Byzantinist for writing the chapter on "Constantine and the Arabs." For the Arabs in the *Res Gestae*, see *infra*, pp. 107–24.

¹⁵⁴Constantine must have had in mind the lessons of the Persian Wars of the third century when he worked out his strategy against Shāpūr. The Roman disasters during the reign of the first Shāpūr were incurred in the midst of the imperial crisis and of the assaults of the barbarians along the northern frontiers, which circumstance forced the Romans to fight on two fronts and often to disengage themselves from the Persians in order to face the Germans, especially the Goths. The principle of fighting on one front was appreciated by Justinian in the sixth century. He was able to bring about the destruction of the Germanic kingdoms, thereby effecting the reconquest of the Roman Occident, only after he had bought off the Persians with gold and concluded with them a peace treaty.

Ammianus would have the student of this period believe that Constantine went to war with Shāpūr because he was living in bejewelled depression for some pearls which Shāpūr is said to have pilfered and which had been sent him by the Indian king through the philosopher Metrodorus!¹⁵⁵ The foregoing paragraphs have suggested that Constantine was a patient and imperturbable strategist who resisted the temptation of going to war in the twenties when a major imperial interest was at stake in the Arabian Peninsula, that he went to war only when he was ready, and consequently that Ammianus's account of "the pearls of Metrodorus" as *casus belli* for Constantine's Persian War cannot be taken seriously.

Constantine's conduct of his relations with Shāpūr in the twenties as well as in the thirties provides a background for reevaluating the efforts of his mediocre son and his adventurous nephew against the same Shāpūr:¹⁵⁶ the one violated the principle of fighting on one front, the other reversed the military priorities;¹⁵⁷ by contrast, a new dimension is given to Constantine's generalship.

3. The Eastern Question

It remains to ask whether Constantine's relations with the Orient were a series of responses that were forced on him by events as these developed, or whether he had a well-defined and coherent policy toward that Orient, embracing it in its two parts, Sasanid Persia and the world of the Southern Semites.

The *autokrator* who had reunited the empire and had emerged from tetrarchal struggle as sole Augustus declared for the *pars orientalis*, whither he returned after so many years of absence in the Occident and where he fixed the site of his new capital. It is difficult to believe that one who was so oriented did not have a clear policy toward his two closest neighbors. The state of the extant sources, poor and exiguous as these are, justify such a conclusion.

The Southern Semites

As far as the world of the Southern Semites is concerned, it is possible to argue that Constantine wanted to establish firm amicable relations with this world, mainly for economic reasons. In support of this suggestion, the following may be advanced:

(1) The embassies that reached Constantine from those parts as recorded

¹⁵⁵RG, XXV.4.23. Cedrenus assigns the affair of the pearls to the twenty-first year of Constantine's reign, 326–27; Cedrenus, *Historiarum Compendium*, vol. 1, pp. 516–17.

¹⁵⁶And with it Ammianus's judgment on the three members of the house of Constantine involved in the same war with Persia, Constantine, Constantius, and Julian. The chapter opened by Constantine is closed by the Peace of Jovian in 363; see *infra*, p. 135.

¹⁵⁷Instead of attacking the Visigoths in 362, as some of his advisors had urged him to do, Julian chose to attack what seemed to him the worthier foe, the Persians! See RG, XXII.7.8.

in the *Vita Constantini* reflect more than a fleeting relationship with the emperor, as is clear from the sections in which they are discussed. The embassy of the Ethiopians is the best attested, since Ethiopian-Byzantine relations are certifiable independently of the *Vita*. Besides, the conversion of Negus 'Ezānā to Christianity provided this relationship with a new bond, which apparently the emperor was aware of since, according to the *Vita*, he used to mention the name of God in his letters to the barbarian rulers, of whom the Ethiopian Negus was undoubtedly one.¹⁵⁸

(2) Furthermore, Constantine's name is associated with many financial and monetary reforms, and it is natural to suppose that the same emperor would have exploited the spacious opportunities offered by his new relationship to the world that exported or mediated many of the trade items needed by the Romans.¹⁵⁹ The opening up of the trade routes in a large way was desirable in view of the situation that Constantine inherited from his predecessors: a hostile or potentially hostile Persia lay astride important trade routes, especially the silk route; South Arabia, too, on the Trans-Arabian route was traditionally hostile; Palmyra had performed a most useful commercial function for Rome both on the Trans-Arabian and the Mesopotamian routes, but after its destruction by Aurelian, Rome had no important intermediary to perform a similar function. Diocletian's measures in the Orient were mainly military, designed to guard the Roman frontier; Constantine, on the other hand, inherited from the tetrarchs a stable and pacified Orient, and thus the pursuit of a vigorous trade policy with the Southern Semites was both possible and desirable.

(3) Finally, in the reign of Constantius, Byzantium presents the spectacle of a power that had a clear, sure, and unified policy toward the world of the Southern Semites, as is clear from Philostorgius's account of the mission of Theophilus Indus in the fifties.¹⁶⁰ The clear implication of the account is that Byzantine influence and presence was *already* established in those countries and is the explanation for the success of the mission. This raises the question of when this influence in those regions was established. Constantius's reign was plagued from the very beginning with civil and foreign wars, and there is no record in the sources of any attempt on his part to cultivate relations with the Southern Semites prior to the mission of Theophilus Indus. In view of the references in the sources to Constantine's relations with that world, it is reasonable to assume that the foundation for that mission had been laid down

¹⁵⁸*Vita*, I.8. This is even clearer in the letter of Constantius to the two rulers of Ethiopia, *supra*, note 143. The evidence of the *Vita* could suggest that Constantius might have imitated his father in so doing.

¹⁵⁹See *supra*, note 141; also J. Innes Miller, *The Spice Trade of the Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1969).

¹⁶⁰On Theophilus's mission, see *infra*, pp. 86–95.

in the reign of Constantine, who thus may be credited with having successfully reopened the world of the Southern Semites for Roman trade.

There is no doubt that Constantine's main interest in this world was the advancement of Roman trade. But indirectly and to a much lesser degree this world was not irrelevant to his political and military plans against Persia. The major thrust against Shāpūr was to be directed from Oriens and from its northern part, where Mesopotamia would be the battlefield; but the mobilization of the Semitic Orient and its inclusion in the Byzantine sphere of influence, and also Armenia in the north, testify to the circumspection and completeness that characterized Constantine's strategy against the Persians.¹⁶¹ The fact that these embassies reached him on his Tricennalia, when the preparations for the Persian War had already been made, suggests that he might have taken them into account for his forthcoming war. In so doing he completely neutralized the victory scored by Shāpūr in 326 when the latter conducted his famous campaign in Arabia and succeeded in disturbing the balance of power in that Peninsula.

Sasanid Persia

It is possible to argue that as far as Sasanid Persia is concerned, Constantine most probably wanted a decisive or "final" solution to the Persian Question, and in support of this the following may be advanced:

(1) Unlike the barbarian tribes of the north, whom he could smash and finally did smash, Sasanid Persia was a world power, with which Rome had been warring for more than a century. Its kings had waged a series of aggressively successful wars during the imperial crisis of the third century. What is more, the Roman-Persian conflict in the third century was fought on ideological grounds. The Sasanids considered the Roman territorial gains in the Orient a usurpation of former Persian territory, which they were intent on recovering. Constantine, like many a Roman emperor, was aware of the ideological basis¹⁶² of the conflict with the Neo-Persian Empire.

(2) He himself first saw service as a military tribune in Mesopotamia in

¹⁶¹The contribution of the Southern Semites to the war effort against Persia would have been indirect. The trade routes across Persia were certainly closed to Byzantium in the thirties after the outbreak of hostilities, but the Southern Semites were in a position to keep other trade routes open and possibly help in keeping some trade with India itself going. In the fifties, Constantius may in a similar light have conceived the function of the Southern Semites in the war effort against the Persians; see *infra*, pp. 89–90. It was not until two centuries later that Justinian invoked direct military assistance from the Southern Semites against the Persians ca. 530; for Julian's embassy, see the present writer in "Byzantium and Kinda," pp. 61–66.

¹⁶²For this, see Ensslin in *CAH*, 12, p. 127. Shāpūr I assumed the significant title of "King of Kings of Iran and Non-Iran" (*ibid.*, pp. 111, 133). Shāpūr II claimed Roman territories as far as Macedonia and the river Strymon; see Ammianus, *RG*, XVII.5.5.

the army of Galerius when the latter defeated the Persian King Narse in 297. Constantine witnessed the transaction that brought about the Peace of 297, which advanced the Roman frontier to the Tigris and gave Rome vast territorial gains in the East at the expense of the defeated Narse. The Peace, unjust from the Persian point of view and signed under duress, had left the Persians unreconciled to these territorial losses, especially as these were strategically located not far from Ctesiphon itself. Constantine must have been aware of the future implications of this unjust peace, that it spelled a resumption of the Roman-Persian conflict¹⁶³ in the future once Persia had a warrior king free from dynastic troubles to resume the struggle for the lost provinces; the lull in the course of Persian-Roman hostilities was due to Sasanid dynastic struggles and to the long minority of Shāpūr II, convenient for the Romans who themselves were busy with their own tetrachal struggles.

(3) Such a warrior-king appeared when the namesake of the first Shāpūr (who had humiliated Rome by capturing Valerian in the third century) attained his majority in 326, which he celebrated with a resounding triumph for Persian arms in regions adjacent to the Arabian profile of Oriens and the limital network constructed by Diocletian. The victory constituted a potential menace for Oriens and its system of defense, designed as static against the Arabs of the Peninsula as well as the Sasanids.

(4) In addition to the old irritants deriving from the fact that the hostile Sasanids lay astride the trade routes to Central Asia and the Far East, there was a new element that had not obtained before the reign of Constantine but which came to the fore because of him, persisting as a permanent cause of friction in the conflict between the two empires—Christianity. Constantine's conversion intensified the conflict and diversified its scope and nature. The Persians now started to suspect the Christians in their realm of being pro-Byzantine, owing spiritual allegiance to the Christian *autokrator*, and, consequently, they could persecute them on the ground of being disloyal to the state, while Constantine felt bound to come to the rescue of his embattled coreligionists not only in Persia but also in recently converted Armenia.¹⁶⁴

(5) The few facts that have survived for the Persian War of Constantine's

¹⁶³As indeed happened some forty years later. The conflict persisted until it was terminated by the Peace of Jovian in 363, which undid what for the Persians was the unjust Peace of 297.

¹⁶⁴The Christian profile of the Byzantine-Persian conflict became dominant in 334 when the Persians occupied Armenia and carried off into captivity its king, Tiran. This forced Constantine to take immediate action, which precipitated the war, since what was involved in the Persian occupation of Armenia was not only the fate of Christianity in the newly converted country but also that of a region of great strategic importance—Byzantium's northern outpost in the struggle with Persia; for the Byzantine-Persian conflict in Armenia, see Stein, *HBE*, vol. 1, p. 130 and his notes; on Constantine's strategy against Persia, see Lydus, *De magistratibus*, III, 33–34; see also W. E. Kaegi, "Constantine's and Julian's Strategies of Strategic Surprises against the Persians," *Athenaeum* (University of Pavia), 69 (1981), pp. 209–13.

reign confirm what has been said in the foregoing paragraphs. Although Shāpūr's campaign in Arabia foreboded evil on the Persian front, Constantine deferred starting a war with Persia in the twenties, and his deferment of the war to the thirties, when he was free from the Visigothic problem, is a measure of the importance he attached to it. His preparations¹⁶⁵ suggest that he wanted a "final" solution of the Persian Question: the reorganization of Oriens and the institution of the *Comitiva Orientis*; the installation of his eldest son Constantius at Antioch and his nephew Hannibalianus in Cappadocian Caesarea with the striking and significant title of *Rex Regum*; the enlisting of Hormuz, the Persian fugitive prince; and finally his taking the field in person, possibly as a commander-in-chief, to direct operations, leaving it to his son and his nephew to engage the enemy.

The Persian War could have been the crowning achievement of his military career. He had eliminated all his rivals, pacified all the frontiers, and was himself at the height of his military experience—the emperor who never lost a single battle. The chances are that he would have beaten the young and still inexperienced Shāpūr and would have settled for a long time to come the Persian Question in a way favorable to Rome.¹⁶⁶ His sudden and untimely death while en route to the front has deprived the student of this period of an exciting chapter in the military annals of the empire, in much the same way that Caesar's death before he could engage the Parthians has deprived the student of Republican times of an equally exciting chapter.

VI. APPENDIX

The Barāqish Inscription

A bilingual Latin-Greek inscription¹ said to have been found in a cemetery near Barāqish, not far from ancient Ma'rib in South Arabia, is of great relevance to the study of the campaign of Imru' al-Qays against Najrān in South Arabia, mentioned in the Arabic Namāra inscription, and of *Arabicus* included among the *cognomina* of Constantine in the Latin inscription from Mauretania.

¹⁶⁵Lydus, *loc. cit.* For more detailed studies of certain aspects of Constantine's Persian War, see O. von Seeck, *Geschichte des Untergangs der antiken Welt* (Stuttgart, 1911), vol. 4, pp. 7, 24–26; N. Baynes, "Rome and Armenia in the Fourth Century," *English Historical Review*, 25 (1910), pp. 625–43; W. Ensslin, "Zu dem vermuteten Perserfeldzug des rex Hannibalianus," *Klio*, N.F. 11 (1936), pp. 102–10.

¹⁶⁶His successors failed to solve the Persian Question. The Peace of Jovian in 363 ensured a long period of quiet on the Persian front, but hostilities started again in the reign of Anastasius early in the sixth century and continued till the reign of Heraclius in the seventh, which witnessed the climax of these hostilities. It was the Persian front that in the reign of Heraclius exhausted both empires and consequently made possible the Arab Conquests, which eliminated Persia entirely and dismembered the Oriental and African provinces of Byzantium.

¹See P. M. Costa, "A Latin-Greek Inscription from the Jawf of the Yemen," *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* (London), 7 (1977), pp. 69–72.

The inscription refers to a certain *equus*, a cavalryman, by the name of Publius Cornelius. The publisher of the inscription, Paolo M. Costa, has argued that the inscription was dedicatory and not funerary and that it "can be tentatively dated to the end of the III century or the beginning of the IV century A.D." He rested his conclusion on paleographic grounds but more on the way in which the Latin name "Publius" is spelled as "Publis" in the Greek version of the inscription.

Costa could not find a historical context which would accommodate this inscription since the expedition of Aelius Gallus against South Arabia in 27 B.C. was ruled out by his dating of the inscription some three centuries later. But the campaign of Imru' al-Qays against Najrān in South Arabia, especially if it was Roman-inspired, could easily afford an obvious historical context. Apparently Costa was unaware of the Namāra inscription and its relevance to his conclusion on the late date of the inscription found near Barāqish.

Two years after the publication of Costa's article, G. W. Bowersock wrote a paper entitled "The New Bilingual Inscription from Barāqish," in which he joined issue with Costa.² He argued that the inscription is likely to have been funerary rather than dedicatory and that neither the paleography nor the Greek version of the Latin name "Publius," namely, "Publis," is a ground for drawing a conclusion on the date of the inscription as late third or early fourth century. He then proceeded to argue that a historical context within which the inscription will fit can determine its date, and he found that context in the expedition of Aelius Gallus against South Arabia in 27 B.C.

Bowersock's argument is eloquent and rests on the fact that Gallus's is the only Roman expedition against South Arabia that has been recorded in the classical sources. But Cassius Dio, who thought Gallus's expedition was the only one that Rome had dispatched to South Arabia, wrote before the fourth century, in which the campaign of Imru' al-Qays against South Arabia took place and which was probably Roman-inspired. This possibility weakens Bowersock's argument and relieves Gallus's expedition of its uniqueness and, consequently, of its being the only historical context that can be given to this bilingual inscription.

If Costa's conclusion on the late date of this bilingual inscription turns out to be correct in spite of Bowersock's acute remarks, the relevance of this inscription to that of Namāra becomes evident. It will tip the scales in favor of Imru' al-Qays's campaign in South Arabia as having been undertaken not from Persian but from Roman territory—from the Provincia Arabia. As has been argued in connection with that campaign, it is unlikely that Byzantium contributed an army or a contingent to Imru' al-Qays's expeditionary force, but it might conceivably have sent with its client-king a few officers or soldiers, one of whom was this Publius Cornelius. The late dating of this bilingual inscription could also serve as ground for arguing that Constantine's *cognomen* "Arabicus" in the Latin inscription from Mauretania is probably genuine and not a corruption of "Adiabenicus."

²Prepared for the Second International Symposium on Studies in the History of Arabia, held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in the spring of 1979. The *Proceedings* of the Symposium have not yet appeared in print, but the author's *Roman Arabia* has; see pp. 148–53.

II

The Reign of Constantius

I. CONSTANTIUS AND THE ARABS

1

The Arab participation in the Persian Wars of Constantius's reign is reflected in only one explicit reference, in Julian's *First Oration*.¹ This is startling since the Arabs usually receive mention in the sources when Rome is at war with the Persians and in both the preceding and the following reigns their presence is established and for the latter abundantly attested. Two reasons may be suggested for the disappearance of the Arabs from the sources:

(1) The main historian for the wars of Constantius is Ammianus, but the extant books of the *Res Gestae* do not cover the long period from Constantius's accession in 337 to 353, when Book XIV begins with an account of the cruelty of Gallus Caesar. The lost books of the *Res Gestae* that covered the first Persian War which ended in 350 might have noticed Arab participation. But the books that cover the second war (359–61) are extant and detailed, and yet there is no single explicit reference to the participation of the Arabs.²

(2) It is possible that the Arab *foederati*, whether the Lakhmids in Arabia or the Tanūkhids in Phoenicia and Syria, were left where they were, to watch the frontier against inroads from the Peninsula, rather than transferred to the north of Oriens in Mesopotamia, where the war was fought. This, too, is unlikely in view of the fact that Constantius's preparations for the war with Persia were considerable and entailed transferring the Tenth Legion, Fretensis, from Ayla in the south of Oriens to fight in Mesopotamia (*RG*, XVIII.9.3), where it defended Amida during its siege by Shāpūr in 359. Watching the frontier in the Provincia Arabia may explain the nonparticipation of the Lakhmid *foederati*, especially after the withdrawal of Fretensis, but does not explain the nonparticipation or inactivity of the Tanūkhid *foederati* of the north, especially as the Arabs would have been particularly functional in

¹*Juliani imperatoris quae supersunt*, ed. F. C. Hertlein, Bibliotheca Teubneriana (Leipzig, 1875–76), vol. 1, p. 25, lines 9–11. The text of the Loeb edition of the works of Julian, prepared by W. C. Wright, is Hertlein's, revised and more accessible; see vol. 1, p. 52, lines 25–29.

²See *infra*, note 24.

Mesopotamia in terrain with which they were familiar and where their cavalry and scouts would have been invaluable against an enemy they knew so well and whom they had abandoned before they declared for the Romans.

(3) The most likely explanation for the nonparticipation of the *foederati* is that they were discontented and possibly in revolt. In support of this view, the following arguments may be advanced:

A

1. In a paragraph that comes shortly before the reference to the participation of the Arabs in Julian's *First Oration* (p. 24, lines 5–6), the author speaks of the achievements of Constantius in the year of his father's death (337) in the face of perils of all kinds, among which is mentioned the revolt of the allies, *συμμάχων ἀποστάσεως*. What follows elaborates this reference to the revolt and speaks of the Armenians, who had gone over to the Persians, and the Arabs, who had been conducting raids against the Roman frontier from Arabia. The technical term used, *συμμάχων*, and the preceding phrase,³ *πολλῆς καταδρομῆς*, which speaks of the "many raids," makes almost certain that the term *συμμάχων* includes the Arab allies, who were in revolt and who, moreover, had become hostile, making raids against the Roman frontier, a thought recast in more explicit terms further on (p. 25, lines 9–11), where Julian speaks of how Constantius reconciled them.

2. Equally important is a reference in Ammianus (*RG*, XIV.4.1), a well-known sentence which speaks of the Arabs as *Saraceni tamen nec amici nobis umquam nec hostes optandi*, in connection with their raids in the year 353 at the time the Isaurians were also making similar raids. The significant term is *amici*, which in this context can only be the technical phrase, *amici et socii populi Romani*, and thus describes the Arabs as *socii* in revolt. Thus both Ammianus and Julian know of the Arabs during the reign of Constantius, in 337–38 and in 353, as allies in revolt.⁴

B

The ecclesiastical history of the period provides more evidence for the view that the Arab allies were indeed in revolt and, what is more, gives the reason—their involvement in the christological controversies that soured the last years of the reign of Constantine and the whole of the reign of Constantius.

1. Even before their defection to the Romans, both groups of *foederati*,

³Almost uniformly used in the sources for Arab raids against the Roman frontier.

⁴For a more detailed analysis of the passage in Ammianus where this technical term occurs, see *infra*, pp. 83–84, and *RG*, XXIII.2.1, where the phrase *amicos et socios* occurs, analyzed *infra*, in the chapter on Julian, "The Arabs in the *Res Gestae*," p. 115 and note 34.

the Lakhmids of the south and the Tanūkhids of the north, had been converted to Christianity,⁵ and one of the two groups, possibly both of them, chose to abandon the Persians in favor of the Romans in order to remain faithful to their new religious persuasion.

2. One of the subscriptions of the Council of Nicaea is that of Pamphilus, the bishop of the Arabs, who was orthodox and belonged to the Nicene party.⁶ This precious subscription enables the course of Arab-Byzantine relations after 325, for the reigns of both Constantine and of Constantius, to be easily reconstructed. The last decade or so of Constantine's reign⁷ after 325 witnessed the deposition of the leaders of the Nicene party, a process almost complete in 335. Among the exiles was almost certainly Pamphilus (or his successor), the orthodox bishop of the *foederati*.⁸ It is thus perfectly possible to assume that the Arab *foederati* were discontented in 335, and with the death of Constantine in 337 the *symmachia* most probably was not renewed with his successor.⁹ The outbreak of the Persian War would have provided the *foederati* with an occasion for translating their discontent into open revolt, and such was the situation when Constantius acceded to the throne.

3. A striking confirmation of this reconstruction of Arab-Byzantine relations is afforded by the revolt of Queen Mavia in the reign of the Arian, Valens, a little later in the same fourth century. The revolt sheds a bright light which illuminates the obscurity that pervades Arab-Byzantine relations in the reign of Constantius. Mavia's Arabs are orthodox, they are in revolt for a purely doctrinal reason—the consecration of a bishop of their own kin and, what is more important, an orthodox one. They mount an offensive against the empire from Phoenicia to Egypt and are finally reconciled when their demands are met by Valens.¹⁰ A pattern emerges in the history of Arab-Byzantine relations which corroborates the argument of this section.

⁵For the stubborn attachment of the Tanūkhids to Christianity before and after their defection, see the long chapter on the reign of Valens, *infra*, pp. 138–202, especially pp. 152–58 and 169–75.

⁶On Pamphilus, see *infra*, pp. 330–34.

⁷For this, see B. J. Kidd, *A History of the Church to A.D. 461* (Oxford, 1922), vol. 2, chap. 3, pp. 50–68.

⁸The Arabs would also have heard of the banishment of the leader of the Nicene party, Athanasius, to Trier in 336, since the synod that decreed his exile was held in nearby Tyre in 335. On the refusal of Moses, the Arab bishop of Queen Mavia's reign, to be consecrated in Alexandria by the Arian Lucius who became patriarch after the death of Athanasius in May 373, see *infra*, pp. 153–55.

⁹The king of the *foederati* could also have died in the late thirties, and so the *foedus* would have been automatically dissolved, as happened in the reign of Valens when Mavia's husband, the Arab *foederatus* of Rome, died; see *infra*, pp. 140–42.

¹⁰And so were discontented the Monophysite Ghassānids in the reign of Justin I (518–27), when the Chalcedonian emperor exiled the Monophysite bishops and their patriarch, Severus of Antioch; they returned to the service only on Justin's death, after Justinian returned the exiles; on Ghassānid-Byzantine relations during the reign of Justin, see the present writer in "Djabala b. al-Ḥārith" in *EI*² (Supplement).

Perhaps this section has thrown enough light on the problems of Arab-Byzantine relations during the reign of Constantius and the last decade of Constantine's to make possible an intensive analysis of the only explicit reference to the Arab participation in the Persian Wars of Constantius, namely, the one in Julian's *First Oration* already referred to (*supra*, note 1).¹¹ In 338 Constantius sends embassies to the Arabs and turns their marauding bands into allies of the Romans in the war against the Persians.¹² The reference to the Arabs is couched in terms that require a close examination for understanding who these Arabs were, and it repays a careful study for the light it sheds on some related problems.

The marauding Arabs could, of course, have been tribes in northern Arabia not allied to the Romans, but this is only a very remote possibility.¹³ It is much more likely that they were the Arab *symmachoi* of Byzantium who had revolted, and in support of this view the following arguments and observations may be advanced:

(a) The year of the agreement with these Arabs is 338, when Constantius marched from Pannonia and arrived in Syria (Julian, *Oration I*, p. 24, lines 10–12), where his presence is attested in Antioch (*Cod. Theod.*, XII.1.23) and in Emesa (*ibid.*, XII.1.25), from which cities he issued edicts in the month of October. The Arabia mentioned in the passage in Julian thus could only have been the Peninsula, not the Provincia,¹⁴ and the Arabs he dealt with will also have been located *extra limitem* to the east of the province of Syria and possibly Phoenicia. Now this is exactly the area where the *foederati* of the north, the Tanūkhids, were settled.¹⁵

(b) Julian speaks of embassies (several, not one) that Constantius dispatched to the Arabs before he won them over. This suggests that the emperor was not dealing with unorganized nomads or marauding hordes, but with an organized group with whom he could negotiate, and this suggests that he was dealing with the *foederati*, whose path he probably crossed five years earlier in 333, when his father dispatched him to Antioch against the Persians.¹⁶

The word τρέψας thus does not refer to Arabs unrelated to the empire,

¹¹καὶ τοὺς ἐξ Ἀραβίας ληστὰς ἐπὶ τοὺς πολεμίους ταῖς πρεσβείαις τρέψας.

¹²The reference, short as it is, clearly shows that the Arabs of Constantius's reign were active and were mentioned in sources that are no longer extant. These must have been available to Julian in the West where he composed his *First Oration* and must have been quite reliable, since Julian was addressing the oration to the one who treated with the Arabs, sent them embassies, reconciled them, and finally turned them against the Persians.

¹³This very remote possibility does not make the reference less important; the nonparticipation of the *foederati* in the wars of Constantius is more significant than their participation; see *infra*, pp. 81–82.

¹⁴Since he was treating with raiding bands from his base in Syria, undoubtedly from Antioch itself.

¹⁵For the geographical location of the Tanūkhids in Oriens, see *infra*, pp. 465–76.

¹⁶On the Arab groups Julian dealt with after his arrival in Antioch, see *infra*, p. 132.

who had been raiding its territories but were now turned against the enemy. It refers to the Arab allies in revolt who were again made allies of Byzantium and were turned against the Persians. This is consonant with what the Tanūkhid *foederati* must have done, as others were to do under Mavia in the reign of Valens, namely, they left Roman territory, which they had occupied as *foederati*, and withdrew into the desert, whence they raided the frontier. Constantius, according to this view, did not enlist the services of Arab groups unknown to the Romans but of Rome's former allies in revolt.

(c) The question arises as to how Constantius effected this reconciliation with his former allies in 338. The key is supplied by the ecclesiastical history of this period at this juncture. On his accession, Constantius allowed the exiled bishops to return,¹⁷ among whom must have been the bishop of the *foederati*, Pamphilus, or his successor. The situation is exactly paralleled by what happened to the Arabs of Mavia under Valens and the Ghassānid *foederati* at the accession of Justinian.

How long this reconciliation lasted is not clear, but again the contours of political and military history follow those of ecclesiastical history and suggest some answers or solutions. The period may be divided into two parts: the first, 337–50, extends from the accession of Constantius to the end of the first Persian War;¹⁸ the second, 350–61, extends from the death of Constans, which made Constantius sole emperor,¹⁹ till his death in 361 and the end of the second Persian War, 359–61.

(1) In 337 the *foederati* were in revolt for doctrinal reasons, which had become operative in the last years of Constantine's reign; his death in 337 apparently dissolved the *foedus*, which needed to be renewed with the accession of the new emperor.²⁰ If the Arabs referred to in Julian's *First Oration* were not *foederati*, then there is no record in the extant sources that they were reconciled in this period; if they were *foederati*, as is much more likely, then they were reconciled in 338 and fought with Constantius against the Persians. Since then, Athanasius was again sent into exile in 339, and the Council of Dedic-

¹⁷As did his two brothers, Constantine II and Constans, for which see Kidd, *History of the Church*, vol. 2, p. 71.

¹⁸This period has a certain unity in that Constantius could not carry out his Arian policy as he may have wanted; he had the Persian War on his hands. His two brothers, Constantine II and Constans, belonged to the Nicene party, and they warred with each other; Constantine was slain at Aquileia in 340; ten years later Constans was challenged by the pretender Magnentius and was killed at Helena in 350.

¹⁹The usurpation of Magnentius did not last long, since after his defeat by Constantius at Mursa in 351 he was but a fugitive and died on his own sword in 353. Thus Constantius's last decade could see the reestablishment of Arianism and its triumph; see chaps. 5–6 in Kidd, *History of the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 117–81.

²⁰See *supra*, note 9.

tion²¹ was held in nearby Antioch in 341. Either of these two might have alienated the Arabs again, but no certainty can be predicated of their alienation or continued reconciliation. In the period that follows, 343–51, Constantius continued to have on his hands both the Persian War and the civil war in 350–51 against Magnentius, and so he “left events free to take their course . . . without his control.”²² If the *foederati* were alienated by the exile of Athanasius in 339 and the Council of Antioch in 341, then they would have left the service; but if they were not, then they would have continued in the service, especially as Athanasius returned to Alexandria in 346 to begin his “Golden Decade.” The situation is obscure, with the loss of the relevant books of the *Res Gestae* for this period, and the other sources make no mention of the Arabs during the three sieges of Nisibis, in 338, 346, and 350, or in the battle of Singara in 348.

(2) For the second period, 350–61, the *Res Gestae* is extant from 353 and describes in detail the second Persian War of 359–61—the fall of Amida after a heroic siege in 359 and the capture of Singara and Bezabde in 360 by the Persians.²³ There is no reference to the Arabs in the Persian War, and the only explicit reference²⁴ is to their assaults upon the empire in 353 in the *Res Gestae* (*supra*, 1, A.2). It is possible to conclude that the Arab *foederati* were in revolt in this decade. Their raids against the Roman frontier in 353 may have been due to the unenlightened policy of Gallus Caesar, who might have alienated them as he did the Jews,²⁵ who, too, revolted in 351; but in the case of the Arabs, the revolt is likely to have been due to the reestablishment of Arianism and its triumph in this decade.²⁶ If his cousin Gallus did not alienate them, Constantius would have done so in the fifties with his aggressively Arian policy, which reached out even beyond the frontiers of the empire to Abyssinia.²⁷

2

The examination of the sources for the reign of Constantius with a view to ascertaining the extent of Arab participation in his Persian Wars provides a

²¹For the Council of Dedication at Antioch, see Kidd, *History of the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 77–82. At this council the sentence against Athanasius was also confirmed.

²²*Ibid.*, p. 87. In this period took place the two sieges of Nisibis in 346 and 350, and Constantius's rout at Singara in 348.

²³The triangle of three fortresses that protected Nisibis since the days of Diocletian.

²⁴There may be an implied reference in *RG*, XVIII.8, where *speculatores* advise the Romans of the Persian preparations before Shāpūr's siege of Amida in 359. These scouts are possibly Arabs, probably recruited locally in Mesopotamia.

²⁵See Avi-Yonah, *Jews of Palestine*, pp. 176–81.

²⁶See *supra*, note 19.

²⁷See *infra*, pp. 86–93.

basis for treating three related problems: (A) general Arab participation in these wars and not only federate participation; (B) the involvement of the *foederati* in the christological controversies of the period; (C) the image of the Arabs in the works of Ammianus and Julian.

A

The fitful participation of the Arab *foederati* in the wars of Constantius and in those of the last years of Constantine may be summarized as follows: disagreements began to develop in the last years of Constantine and probably came to a head in 336 with the exile of Athanasius and with the death of Constantine, when the *foedus* was probably dissolved automatically on the death of the Byzantine *autokrator* and had to be renewed with his successor; the *foederati* are attested in revolt at the beginning of the reign of Constantius. It is a source of the reign of Constantius that finds the *foederati* in revolt and thus succeeds in throwing light retroactively on Arab-Byzantine relations, so obscure and poorly documented for the last years of Constantine. Constantius reconciled the *foederati* in 338, and the presumption is that they remained reconciled in the forties, but there is no record of their participation in the Persian Wars, and it is just possible that they revolted again; the loss of the relevant books of the *Res Gestae* for this period precludes drawing conclusions one way or the other. In the fifties, Ammianus finds them in revolt in 353, and the extant books of the *Res Gestae*, so detailed in their description of the Persian War (359–61), have no explicit reference to Arab participation. The presumption is that they did not fight, owing to the determined Arian policy of Constantius in the fifties. Constantius apparently fought his Persian Wars without federate Arab participation or, at any rate, without their effective participation. This nonparticipation may in part account for the unsuccessful wars he waged and, possibly, for some of the disasters, such as the rout at Singara in the first war and the fall of the military triangle—Amida, Singara, and Bezabde—that protected Nisibis in the second.

In contrast with Constantius, Shāpūr could count on many allies in his successful wars against Constantius, but the participation of the Arab allies of Persia is a matter of inference. In the graphic passage (*RG*, XVIII.20.22) in which Ammianus describes the army of Shāpūr before the latter invaded Mesopotamia and laid siege to Amida, he enumerates the allies of the Persian king. After mentioning the Chionitae and the Albani, he says that Shāpūr had as allies in his army various leaders, *duces varii*, of neighboring nations, *ex vicinarum gentium*. Almost certainly, the Arabs must have been included among these neighboring nations, since they answer the description. The reference to their leaders, *duces*, who are further described as *auctoritate et potestatibus eminentes*, brings to mind one Arab leader in the service of the Persians mentioned

by name in the *Res Gestae* (XXIV.2.4), namely, Malechus, of the reign of Julian, who thus in all probability took part in the famous siege of Amida.²⁸

It would be extreme to maintain that Constantius lost because he failed to enlist effectively his Arab federates, while Shāpūr won because he did, but there may be an element of truth in this contention;²⁹ in such a war, the Arabs, as has been pointed out before, would have been very functional and thus might have made Constantius's wars at least less disastrous.³⁰

If the Arab *foederati* did not participate or actively participate in the Persian Wars, other Arabs did. Various military units in Oriens, listed and described in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, were Arab.³¹ That document reflects military dispositions in the Later Empire, including the fourth century; so several of its units that fought in these Persian Wars would have been Arab, not *foederati* but provincial Arabs who were *cives*, and this applies both to its legionary³² and auxiliary units.

B

The revolt of the Arab *foederati* and their seeming nonparticipation in the Persian Wars are more significant than whatever participation on their part there might have been. Their revolt throws light on their involvement in the cultural life of the period and on an important factor in Arab-Byzantine relations, which remained operative throughout three centuries.

1. Although this involvement is known for the reign of Valens later in the century, the examination of the reign of Constantius establishes the fact that this involvement started from the very beginning of the Byzantine period, in the reign of Constantine himself, the reign that witnessed the outbreak

²⁸On Malechus *nomine* Podosacis, see *infra*, pp. 119–23. Perhaps Ammianus omitted explicit references to the Arabs during the siege of Amida and to their possible contribution toward its fall lest his judgment on the Arab federates and their value should be called into question.

²⁹The contribution of Odenathus, the Arab prince of Palmyra, to the Roman war effort against the Persians comes to mind, and so does that of Queen Mavia's *foederati* during the defense of Constantinople (*infra*, pp. 176–78); closer, since it involves the Persians and occurs in the same century, is the contribution of the Salīhids at the inception of their rise to power (see *BAFIC*). However, the most important contribution to the fortunes of Byzantine arms in the Persian Wars was not made until the sixth century with the advent of the Ghassānids.

³⁰Compare the stand of Arethas, the Ghassānid king, against the Persians at the battle of Callinicum in 531 after the Roman army under Belisarius fled; for which, see the present writer in "Procopius and Arethas," *BZ*, 50 (1957), pp. 43–48, 55–56. On the other hand, compare the adverse effect of the Ghassānid withdrawal from the service on the course of the war that the Persian client-king Mundir waged against the limitrophe provinces of Oriens during the reign of Justin I (518–27); see *supra*, note 10.

³¹On the Arab units in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, see the present writer in *RA*.

³²Noteworthy is the case of the Tenth Legion, Fretensis, which was transferred from Ayla to Mesopotamia where it guarded Amida during its famous siege (*RG*, XVIII.9.3). In this period the legions were recruited locally, and since Fretensis had been in Ayla since ca. 300, the chances are not remote that most of its members were Arab.

of the Arian controversy. In the case of the *foederati*, the controversy was translated into military terms and became a source of friction between the Christianized Arab *foederati* and the Christian Roman Empire.

2. The pattern of federate involvement in theological controversies and of consequent friction between lord and vassal persists. The reign of Constantius reveals it for the first time and illuminates it for the reign of his father. The change in the doctrinal persuasion or position of the *autokrator* entails discord with the conservative *foederati*, who would not change their position and who loyally follow their bishops, to whom they are attached. Synods and councils decree the deposition and banishment of nonconforming bishops, and imperial authority enforces both. The *foederati* do not accept this imperial high-handedness; they leave the service and sometimes actively engage in hostilities against their former lord and patron. They return to the service only when the *autokrator* relents and orders the return and reinstatement of their bishops.

Constantine's adoption of Christianity rejuvenated the old empire, but theological controversies and the imperial enforcement of synodical and conciliar decrees on depositions and banishments introduced new forms of tension in the fabric of the new Christian empire. When these tensions touched the military groups, such as the Arab *foederati*, they did not remain a battle of books but were translated into military terms, which sometimes neutralized the gains made by the Christianization of the empire. This neutralization can be amply illustrated from the course of Arab-Byzantine relations in the fourth and the sixth centuries. And it is especially important in the case of the Arabs, in view of the fact that it was the Arabs (not the *foederati* but a related group, similarly involved) that brought about the catastrophe of the seventh century. Thus the involvement of the *foederati* in theological controversies becomes relevant to the theme of the "Decline and Fall."³³

C

The similarity in Julian's and Ammianus's attitude toward the Arabs is striking and calls for a few observations, important for a better understanding

³³The relevance to E. L. Woodward's thesis in his *Christianity and Nationalism in the Later Roman Empire* (London, 1916) is obvious. Cf. A. H. M. Jones's rejoinder in "Were the Ancient Heresies National or Social Movements in Disguise?" *JTS*, n.s. 10 (1959), pp. 280-98. The truth or falsity of this thesis will become plain, as far as the Eastern Empire is concerned, only when each of the many ethnic groups in Oriens has been studied in detail throughout the three centuries from Constantine to Heraclius. The present book deals with one of these ethnic groups in Oriens, the Arabs, and one of its main concerns is the involvement of the Arabs in the theological controversies of the fourth century. *BAFIC* and *BASIC* will also deal with the same problem in the fifth and sixth centuries. The conclusions already drawn from these as yet unpublished researches make possible resetting Woodward's thesis and providing it with a new field of application that will enable whatever elements of truth there are in it to emerge.

of Julian's relations with the Arabs and of Ammianus's chapters on Julian's reign.

Julian. When first he has occasion to refer to the Arabs, Julian describes them as "robbers," ληστής. This is a strong pejorative term, especially as the Arabs referred to are most probably not Peninsular nomads but diocesan *foederati*. In view of Julian's uneven relations with the Arabs during his Persian campaign, the description is significant:

1. It is revelatory of his antipathies toward the Arabs even before he came in touch with them. The year is 355 when he was designated by Constantius to the Caesarship, and the element of prejudgment is manifest in his description as early as that date.

2. The description is not purely academic; panegyrist in the year 355, he became *imperator* in 361, and his antipathies, already pronounced in 355, shed light on his relations with the Arabs in the course of the Persian campaign, during which he maintained toward them roughly the same attitude in word and deed. His well-known response to them that *imperatorem bellicosum et vigilantem ferrum habere, non aurum* (RG, XXV.6.10) may not literally translate his ληστής of the year 355, but it breathes its spirit of contemptuous arrogance. These antipathies provide a key to understanding why he failed to enlist the Arabs effectively in his Persian campaign and why he finally succeeded only in alienating them, a matter which may turn out to be not entirely irrelevant to the manner of his death.

Ammianus. The first mention of the Arabs in the extant books of the *Res Gestae* (XIV.4.1) is equally pejorative. Indeed the whole of chapter 4 may be so described, both in its opening section, which describes their raids against the Roman frontier, and in its other sections, which describe their customs. The important section is the first, but the rest are relevant to a better understanding of Ammianus's views in the first section and are revelatory of the general attitude of the historian toward the Arabs.

1. The first section in chapter 4, which describes them in 353 as rapacious hawks swooping upon the empire, has been noticed earlier (*supra*, p. 75), but it deserves a more intensive analysis:

(a) The section opens with an oft-quoted sentence, *Saraceni tamen nec amici nobis umquam nec hostes optandi*, which succeeds, or almost succeeds, in concealing the fact that the Arabs involved are the diocesan *foederati* of Byzantium in the fourth century. But they were in revolt, for reasons analyzed previously in this chapter. Their description as *milvorum rapacium similes* would be true of the Tanūkhid *foederati* in revolt, who must have retreated to the

desert, allied themselves to the Peninsular Arabs settled in northern Arabia,³⁴ and mounted their offensive against the Roman frontier in much the same way that the *foederati* of Queen Mavia were to do in the reign of Valens. Ammianus's description of their attacks is undoubtedly correct as the description catches the Tanūkhids *in revolt*. The fact that they were in revolt and engaged in hostilities against the empire helps Ammianus in presenting them as marauding Arabs from the Peninsula and in obscuring the fact that they were or had been *foederati*. He repeats this when describing the Arabs defending Constantinople after the battle of Adrianople, undoubtedly *foederati*, by referring to them not as such but as *Saraceni*.³⁵

(b) The use of the adverb *umquam* in the opening sentence of this section is significant, since it expresses a general dissatisfaction with the Arab *foederati*, not only for the year 353 or the reign of Constantius but for all reigns and periods in Roman history. This is, indeed, the attitude of Ammianus toward the Arabs during the reign of Julian and the following reigns of Jovian and Valens when his history ends; it is almost certain that such was his attitude toward them also for the reign of Constantine and the years 337–53 of the reign of Constantius, in the lost books of the *Res Gestae*.

2. The ethnographic digression³⁶ which runs from sections 3 to 6 in chapter 4 is prefaced with section 2, which speaks of Ammianus's notices of the customs of the Arabs several times (*aliquotiens*) in various parts of his *Res Gestae*, now lost. The *aliquotiens* in it recalls the *umquam* of the first sentence in section 1 and suggests general dissatisfaction with the Arabs in all periods of Roman history, since he found their customs barbaric in all times. The ethnographic digression itself succeeds in enhancing the pejorativeness of the first section in the following manner.

It describes the nomadic Peninsular Arabs known to the classical authors as Scenitae (tent-dwellers); the description is undoubtedly correct and also of considerable interest to the social anthropologist.³⁷ However, in the structure of this chapter (4), the description is presented as though it were applicable to those Arabs mentioned in the opening sentence of section 1—the *Saraceni*—who, as has been argued, were not Scenitae but *foederati*. These were sedentary

³⁴Among whom the most powerful group was that of Kalb, which played an important role in the Arab-Byzantine relationship; on Kalb, see *El*, 4, pp. 492–94, and on the possibility that Queen Mavia belonged to that tribe, see *infra*, pp. 196–97.

³⁵Their character as *foederati* is attested by the ecclesiastical historians of the reign of Valens. This analogy with the *foederati* of Queen Mavia is a major point in favor of the view presented in this chapter, namely, that the Arabs in *RG*, XIV.4.1 were indeed *foederati*.

³⁶For a useful commentary on this ethnographic digression, see P. de Jonge, *Sprachlicher und Historischer Kommentar zu Ammianus Marcellinus* (Groningen, 1935; reprinted 1972), vol. 1, pp. 122–24.

³⁷For what it says rather than what it implies, since Ammianus was probably unaware of the societal and environmental exigencies that called for the rise of such customs as he describes.

or sedentarized Arabs in revolt who had withdrawn to the Arabian desert adjacent to the Diocese of the Orient and allied themselves to the Scenitae of the Peninsula; thus *temporarily* they became tent-dwellers, and in this sense they were not different from the Scenitae. Ammianus obliterates the distinction between the two, the Scenitae and the *foederati*, and in this he was aided by Byzantine usage in the fourth century, to which he himself refers in the *Res Gestae*, namely, that the term *Saraceni* in the fourth century was applied to the Scenitae.³⁸ He enhances the nomadic character of the Arabs he describes by referring to them as *gentes*, while in Byzantine usage the *foederati*, who constituted a part of the Arabs he is describing, are not referred to as such. Ammianus succeeded in speaking in identical terms of two entirely differentiated groups of Arabs who were temporarily united by a revolt. The unsuspecting reader, unaware of the distinction between the two, will conclude that the *foederati*, and indeed all the Arabs, were Scenitae, whose customs justify Ammianus's final judgment on them in the last section of the ethnology as a *natio pernicioso*.³⁹

Ammianus and Julian. There is a striking similarity between the attitude of Julian to the Arabs and that of Ammianus:

From 354 to 357, Ammianus was on the staff of Ursicinus in Gaul and he, naturally, heard of Julian's Gallic exploits and must have read his writings. It was in this period that Julian's *First Oration* was composed, in 355, and in that oration occurs the reference to the Arabs that describes them not

³⁸RG, XXII.15.2: *et Scenitas praetenditur Arabas quos Saracenos nunc appellamus*; XXIII.6.13: *et Scenitas Arabas quos Saracenos posteritas appellavit*. Ammianus is the only authority for what he says, namely, the equation in Byzantine usage of *Scenitae* with *Saraceni*. Unlike the first reference with its *nunc*, the second reference is rather vague with its *posteritas*, and leaves the question open as to whether this equation began to appear in classical usage in the fourth century or before. The term *Saraceni* has for a long time been a difficult term to explain and it poses many problems (see the present writer in *RA*, chap. 9); what is relevant in this connection is to observe that the equation of *Scenitae* with *Saraceni* is not precise or exact. *Scenitae* remained a well-defined term, its connotation being revealed and guarded by its etymology, *tent-dwellers*, while *Saraceni* was not; its etymology is obscure and has been a crux for some time. It became a capacious term that included Scenitae but was not always used interchangeably with it. In Byzantine usage, the Arab *foederati* are always referred to as *Saraceni*, but these were not Scenitae, in spite of the fact that some elements recruited by them in Arabia or the Arabian limitrophe may have been. The Saracen *foederati* were sedentaries and the fact is incontestably reflected in the cultural life of these groups, the Tanūkhids, the Salīhids, and especially the Ghassānids, builders of churches, monasteries, fortresses, and palaces. In Islamic times, the Byzantine sources use the term *Saraceni* when they speak of the Umayyads of Damascus and the Abbasids of Baghdad, and these were certainly not Scenitae.

³⁹In spite of their division into many groups, extending originally from Assyria to the Cataracts of the Nile (RG, XIV.4.3), the Arabs presented to Ammianus and to the outside world the spectacle of being one people; the *gentes* of sec. 3 become the *natio* of sec. 7 in RG, XIV.4.

as *foederati* in revolt but as “robbers,” ληστές, raiding the Roman frontier. A close examination of the first reference to the Arabs in Ammianus’s extant work reveals that it is an elaboration of the sentiments expressed by Julian in his *First Oration*.

The word ληστές is not used in *RG*, XIV.4, but its equivalent clearly is, in the remaining part of the section in the long simile of the rapacious hawks, *milvorum rapacium similes*. However, in a later book of the *RG* (XXIV. 2.4), the exact term in its Latin form appears when Ammianus is describing an Arab ally of Persia who molested Julian’s march and to whom he applies the term *latro*.⁴⁰ Like Julian, who in his relations with the Arabs during his Persian campaign would not refer to, or treat with, the Arab *foederati* as such, Ammianus in this section presents the Arabs as Peninsular Scenitae rather than Diocesan *foederati* in revolt.

It is difficult not to conclude that Ammianus’s view of the Arabs as reflected in the *Res Gestae* was partly derivative from that of his hero Julian. Although their views on barbarians and Christians have been arrived at independently, the Arab image in the *Res Gestae* was directly influenced by that in Julian’s *First Oration*, thus providing an additional dimension to the relationship that obtained between the two close coevals, the one who wrote history and the other who made it.

II. CONSTANTIUS AND THE SOUTHERN SEMITES

1

Constantius’s relations with the Southern Semites—the world of Arabia, Ethiopia, and “India”—are documented in the following sources: (1) the third book of the *Ecclesiastical History* of Philostorgius, three chapters of which⁴¹ describe the embassy headed by Theophilus Indus to these regions ca. A.D. 356; (2) the letter sent by Constantius to the two rulers of Ethiopia, ‘Ezānā and Saizana, concerning Frumentius, the bishop of Ethiopia;⁴² (3) one of the edicts of Constantius addressed to Musonianus, the praetorian prefect, in A.D. 356 or 357 concerning the travel of Byzantine agents to Axum-Himyar (*Cod. Theod.*, XII.12.2); (4) a reference to the deputations of the Divi and Serendivi⁴³ in Ammianus Marcellinus (*RG*, XXII.7.10).

⁴⁰None other than Malechus, for whom see *supra*, note 28. In the lost books of the *RG* which covered the early years of Constantius’s reign, Ammianus no doubt gave an account of Constantius’s relations with the Arabs in the year 338, mentioned in Julian’s *First Oration*. The loss of the relevant book is regrettable; if it were extant, it would be possible to collate the two accounts and examine the dependence of Ammianus’s account on Julian’s. The chances are that he would have referred to them as *latrones* or *Saraceni*.

⁴¹The three relevant chapters are in Book III, chaps. 4–6.

⁴²Athanasius, *Apologia ad Constantium Imperatorem*, *PG*, 25, cols. 636–37.

⁴³The deputations from these distant parts were undoubtedly sent to Constantius, not to Julian, as was noticed by Gibbon a long time ago. In the *RG* they appear as though they

By far the most important of these sources is the *Ecclesiastical History* of Philostorgius; it is the central piece of evidence, and the three other sources are auxiliary as they relate to this or that aspect of Philostorgius's account. His account in three chapters turns round the mission of the ecclesiastical diplomat Theophilus Indus to South Arabia, Ethiopia, and Indicē, and the mission deserves a close examination.⁴⁴

A

The most detailed and valuable of the three chapters is the one that tells of the mission of Theophilus to South Arabia. It is invaluable for the history of that region, of Byzantine-Arabian relations, of Byzantine-Sasanid relations, and of the introduction of Christianity to the Arabian peninsula:

1. Philostorgius's conception of the ethnography of South Arabia is biblical and consists in the application of the concept of the Family of Nations to the peoples of that part of the Near East as he derives the Sabaeans (or the Ḥimyarites, as these came to be called) from Abraham and Keturah.⁴⁵

2. He draws an accurate picture of the religious complexion of the country at the time Theophilus arrived. Apart from the large Jewish community in South Arabia, the country was in the embrace of paganism, of an astral religion and the worship of the native divinities.⁴⁶ The rite of circumcision was also practiced.

3. His account clearly indicates that the country had not been converted when Theophilus arrived. This implies that the mission of Pantaenus a century and a half before had not produced any appreciable or permanent results for Christianity, even if the area of his ministry was Najrān, further to the north.⁴⁷

had been sent to Julian, who received them while he was at Constantinople. See Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ed. J. B. Bury (London, 1897), vol. 2, p. 480 note 6; p. 481 note 7.

⁴⁴The account of the embassy in Philostorgius comes immediately after the chapter that describes the expulsion of Athanasius from his see in Alexandria in February 356. Internal evidence enables the embassy to be dated more precisely between February 357 and October 358, the period of the episcopate of George the Cappadocian in Alexandria, for which, see *infra*, notes 65–66.

⁴⁵His view that Saba is the capital of the region is mistaken, since Saba is the gentile term, the tribe, never a city. This mistake is repeated by Philostorgius elsewhere in *HE*, II.6.

⁴⁶These religious forms or pagan religious practices lingered into the sixth century, as is clear from the *Book of the Himyarites* and the *Martyrium Arethae*, for which, see the present writer in "*Byzantino-arabica*," p. 126 note 43.

⁴⁷Previous missions to South Arabia are shrouded in obscurity and uncertainty: they consist of the mission of St. Bartholomew, who according to Philostorgius, *HE*, II.6, preached in South Arabia, and of the mission of Pantaenus late in the second century, for which see Eusebius, *HE*, V.x. The Oriental sources speak of a nun who carried Christianity to South Arabia, for which see *The Chronicle of John of Nikiou*, ed. and trans. R. H. Charles (London, 1916), p. 69, and of a holy man, Fīmyūn, who converted the city of Najrān. For Fīmyūn, possibly ποιμήν, and other accounts of the introduction of Christianity to Najrān and South Arabia, see J. Ryckmans, "Christianisme," pp. 416ff, 440ff. It is not impossible that Fīmyūn

4. The presents sent by Constantius to the ruler of South Arabia are of special interest: the two hundred Cappadocian horses were an imaginative and appropriate present to a people that prized the horse;⁴⁸ the other presents can only be conjectured. They are described as marvelous and splendid gifts, δώροις . . . μεγαλοπρεπέσι, possibly Byzantine artifacts or works of art.⁴⁹ Perhaps they included church decorations such as those referred to at the beginning of chapter 5, the ones Theophilus used for decorating the churches he had dedicated. It is also natural to suppose that a portion of the βασιλικῶν ἀναλωμάτων brought by Theophilus to South Arabia to defray the cost of building these churches was gold *solidi*,⁵⁰ the new currency created by Constantine.

5. The ruler⁵¹ of South Arabia is of special interest. He is naturally the prime object of the embassy, sent from one ruler to another; the ruler's conversion would entail the conversion of his people. It is noticeable that he is not referred to as king, βασιλεύς, but as ἔθνάρχης. This fortifies the view that he was not on an equal footing with the Ethiopian Negus or the Neguses,⁵² to whom he was probably subordinate, and this in turn could imply that the country was under the rule of the Ethiopians directly or indirectly, a supposition inferable from the assumption of the South Arabian titlature by the Ethiopian Negus of the period.⁵³

is none other than Pantaenus. In the Arabic script *Pantaenus* with very moderate corruption could be read as *Fīmyūn*.

⁴⁸The Cappadocian horse may have added a new strain or infused new blood into the Arabian, the celebrated *equus caballus*.

⁴⁹Possibly statues and mosaic cubes, among other things. One is tempted to think of the Bronze Horse of Dumbarton Oaks in this connection; see A. Jamme, "Inscriptions of the Sabaean Bronze Horse of the Dumbarton Oaks Collection," *DOP*, 8 (1954), pp. 315–30, and J. Ryckmans, "The Pre-Islamic South Arabian Bronze Horse in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection," *DOP*, 29 (1975), pp. 275–303. For Byzantine gifts to Grod and Vladimir on their conversion, see Pigulevskaia, *Byzanz*, p. 74.

⁵⁰For Byzantine coins in Indicē, see E. H. Warmington, *The Commerce between the Roman Empire and India*, 2nd ed. (London, 1974), pp. 123–24. The South Arabians must have wondered at the Byzantine coins just as the Ceylonese were to do in the sixth century; for the anecdote of Sopatros, see Cosmas Indicopleustes, *Topographie chrétienne*, ed. and trans. W. Wolska-Conus, *Sources chrétiennes* (Paris, 1968–73), vol. 3, Book XI.17–19. The admiration of the Arab poets for Byzantine coins is reflected in extant pre-Islamic poetry. For a literary reference to the *solidus* in South Arabia, see the *Leges Homeritarum* attributed to St. Gregentius, *PG*, 86, col. 587, where Law XV speaks of gold *nomismata*. On the problem of the authenticity of these *Leges*, see the present writer in "Byzantium in South Arabia," *DOP*, 33 (1980), pp. 33–35.

⁵¹On the identity of this South Arabian ruler, see J. Ryckmans, "Christianisme," p. 419, and *infra*, Appendix 1, p. 100.

⁵²For the two Neguses, his contemporaries, see *infra*, p. 91.

⁵³See *supra*, p. 42. When Nonnosus visited Ethiopia and South Arabia ca. 530, the latter was a dependency of the former; on the mission of Nonnosus, see the present writer in "Byzantium and Kinda," pp. 57–73.

6. The miracles performed by Theophilus during his mission in South Arabia went a long way toward converting the South Arabian ruler. The zealous missionary was armed with the gift of the thaumaturge,⁵⁴ especially efficacious as an instrument of conversion among the barbarians.⁵⁵ It is noteworthy that his thaumaturgy displayed itself during what must have been a dialogue with the Jews of South Arabia, who according to Philostorgius opposed Theophilus's mission.⁵⁶

7. The three churches Theophilus built are especially important for the ecclesiastical map of Arabia in the fourth century. The one built in *Zafār* was for the *Himyarites* in the capital and for the ruler himself; it was the first of many churches built in *Zafār*.⁵⁷ The second in Aden was mainly for Byzantine traders and others who came out of Roman territory and landed in South Arabia. The importance of Aden emerges clearly as an emporium for Byzantine trade with the Orient and a central station between the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.⁵⁸ Most significant is the location of the third church, built near the mouth of the Persian Gulf.⁵⁹ Although it was to serve as a post for the spread of Christianity in eastern Arabia, its choice must have been determined by imperial interests also. A Byzantine post in that strategically located region could easily be interpreted as one chosen with a view to watching the Persians to the north and guarding commercial interests with India, and the two were interlocked. Thus the Byzantine presence in South Arabia seems to reflect a desire on the part of the *autokrator* not only to lock the Persians *out* of the Red Sea but also to lock them *in* the Gulf that carried their name, or at least to see to it that imperial Roman interests were not affected by a Persian naval

⁵⁴He healed the Empress Eusebia, Constantius's wife, as recounted by Philostorgius, *HE*, IV.7.

⁵⁵Compare the healing powers of St. Euthymius and St. Simeon the Stylite, who converted many of the Arabs of the north in the fifth century.

⁵⁶The two features of this section in the chapter on the conversion of South Arabia, namely, the miracles he performed in the course of the dialogue with the Jews, are repeated some two centuries later in the accounts that describe the mission of St. Gregentius to South Arabia.

⁵⁷For Christian churches in *Zafār* in the sixth century, see *The Book of the Himyarites*, ed. and trans. A. Moberg (Lund, 1924), pp. cv–cvii; the *Martyrium Arethae*, *ASS*, Octobris Tomus, sec. 38; and the present writer in *Martyrs*, pp. 226–27.

⁵⁸This reference to Aden recalls the well-known one in the *Periplus* on the destruction or subjugation of Aden by the then Caesar. Much had happened since the days of the *Periplus*, and Rome now had a church in the South Arabian port.

⁵⁹*Qāna'* on the South Arabian coast to the east of Aden has been suggested as a possibility; see Dorese, *L'empire du Prêtre Jean*, vol. 1., p. 151. But *Qāna'* does not answer to the description of Philostorgius as an emporium close to the mouth of the Persian Gulf since it is situated far from it. The exact location of this emporium is difficult to determine. What is more important is its description as being close to the mouth of the Persian Gulf, so far to the east. On a toponym in the present-day Sultanate of Oman, called *Diba al-Bī'a*, "Diba of the Church," see *infra*, note 85.

blockade.⁶⁰ The building of a church in itself would not have effected that, but the conversion of the ruler of South Arabia to Christianity would have contributed to the amenability of South Arabia to Byzantine influence and thus indirectly to aligning it against Persia in the event of a war, especially since, as is clear from Philostorgius's account, the dominion of the South Arabian ruler extended to the east as far as the Persian Gulf itself.

B

From South Arabia, Theophilus crossed over to his own island, Dibos, clearly not part of the Arabian mainland, being an island and described as part of Indicē, whence he went over to other parts of Indicē.⁶¹

This short chapter on his activities in his native island and in Indicē has some interest, partly for the background of Theophilus himself and partly for the fact disclosed in this chapter, namely, that while Christianity had not reached South Arabia when Theophilus arrived, it had already done so when Theophilus arrived in Dibos and the other parts of Indicē. This is natural, since an island such as Dibos was more accessible to missionary activity than the Arabian mainland, under powerful rulers for whom conversion to Christianity would have carried implications other than a change in religious persuasion. More important is Theophilus's "correction" of Christian religious customs in Indicē, such as reading the Gospels in a sitting posture, and the assertion that in doctrine they needed no correction inasmuch as they believed that the Son is different in substance from the Father. This could imply that the Christians of those southern seas had received that form of Christianity before the Council of Nicaea.⁶²

C

After putting in order the ecclesiastical affairs of Indicē, Theophilus goes to the Axumites. Chapter 6, in which Philostorgius describes the mission of

⁶⁰A striking parallel in modern times is that of the Portuguese, who both occupied Hormuz and burned Aden with similar designs against the Ottoman Turks.

⁶¹Indicē in this context may mean Barbary, in East Africa, a view that could derive support from the sequence of Theophilus's visits: South Arabia–Dibos–Barbary (Indicē)–Ethiopia. The proximity of Barbary to Ethiopia, of an island such as Socotra, or Perim, to Barbary, and of both to South Arabia could suggest that Theophilus's travels and missionary activities were perhaps mainly in South Arabia and East Africa. Alternatively, Indicē could be the Nubian region, and in this case Dibos would be an island in the Red Sea. It is relevant in this connection to mention that Gregory of Nyssa describes Theophilus as a Blemmyan, which description assigns him to one of the ethnic groups of Nubia; see Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium*, PG, 45 (2), col. 264, line 3. On still another possibility for the location of Dibos and Indicē, see *infra*, note 84.

⁶²The attestation of an Arian form of Christianity in the Arabian Peninsula in the fourth century may be of importance to the religious map of Arabia before the rise of Islam and possibly also to the Qur'anic conception of Christ.

Theophilus in Ethiopia, is a curious chapter. The historian says much about the geography of the Red Sea and the ethnography of Ethiopia but very little on Theophilus's activity as a missionary, and this contrasts sharply with his account of Theophilus's activity in South Arabia.

1. The ethnographic digression is more valuable than the geographical, especially as it attests the existence of a Syrian community in Ethiopia sent there, according to Philostorgius, by Alexander.⁶³ It was still there in the fourth century A.D., speaking its own native tongue. The attestation in Ethiopia of a Semitic-speaking community other than the Ethiopian has obvious linguistic and cultural implications for the history of Ethiopia in the Axumite period.⁶⁴

2. The activity of Theophilus as a missionary in Ethiopia and among the Axumites is a curious one. Philostorgius dismisses it in two subordinate clauses, τοῖς Αὐξουμίταις δὲ παραγεγονῶς καὶ τὰ ἐκέισε καταστησάμενος, and these say next to nothing on what Theophilus did in Axum. They are couched in extremely general terms, contrasting sharply both with the account of Theophilus's activity in Indicē and also with the detailed account of his mission in South Arabia. This could not have been accidental. Even without external evidence, it is possible to conclude that Philostorgius was not anxious to dwell upon Theophilus's activity in Axum, and the presumption is that it was crowned with failure. Fortunately, there is extant a piece of evidence that both corroborates this presumption and also gives a very detailed account of what Theophilus had wanted to accomplish. It is preserved in Athanasius's *Apologia* (*supra*, note 42), and it is a primary source of the first importance for the history of Ethiopian Christianity and of theological controversies during the reign of Constantius. It is an official imperial letter sent by Constantius to the two rulers of Ethiopia, 'Ezānā and Saizana, in which he tries to sell them the Arian version of Christianity and specifically recommends recalling the orthodox Frumentius (who had been consecrated bishop of Ethiopia by Athanasius) and sending him to George the Cappadocian, the intrusive bishop of Alexandria (February 357–October 358), for reinstruction and reconsecration.⁶⁵

⁶³According to Philostorgius, it was Alexander the Great; but this is unlikely, and some other namesake of the Macedonian may have been the one who sent them there, possibly Alexander Gennaëus, who vanquished the Samaritans. Perhaps the success of Frumentius, himself from Tyre, in those parts may be explained in part by the presence in Ethiopia of this Syrian community.

⁶⁴In the sixth century, another "Syrian" community possibly appeared in Ethiopia, the Samaritans, sold in those parts after their revolt in Palestine in A.D. 529, for which, see Malalas, *Chronographia* (Bonn), pp. 445–47. The chronographer speaks of their being sold in the Persian and Indian parts, and the latter could be construed as Ethiopia.

⁶⁵For the dates of the episcopate of George the Cappadocian in Alexandria, see Kidd, *History of the Church*, vol. 2, p. 137.

This letter was carried by Theophilus; it is almost certain that he carried it as part of his mission to the world of Axum–Himyar–Indicē, described by Philostorgius.⁶⁶ The letter makes clear that (1) Christianity had already reached Ethiopia when Theophilus arrived, thus confirming the accounts of Rufinus on Meropius and the consecration of Frumentius as the first bishop of the Ethiopians; (2) Ethiopian Christianity was Nicene and Athanasian; and (3) not only was Christianity practiced in Ethiopia but that the two rulers most probably were also Christian.⁶⁷

Philostorgius's curious account of Theophilus's mission to Axum becomes crystal clear. He carried to its two rulers a letter, the contents of which obviously did not appeal to them. They, therefore, disregarded the imperial recommendations and left Frumentius at his episcopal see.⁶⁸ Hence the silence

⁶⁶The chronology of Constantius's letter and Theophilus's mission is so close that it is almost certain that it was Theophilus who carried the letter. Constantius refers to the episcopate of George the Cappadocian (357–58), and Philostorgius situates the mission of Theophilus (chaps. 4–6) immediately after he has recounted in chap. 3 the expulsion of Athanasius (February, 356) and the election of George. Doresse's view (*L'empire du Prêtre-Jean*, vol. 1, p. 151) that the mission may be dated slightly before 356 cannot be accepted since the mission took place after the expulsion of Athanasius (February, 356). His further view that Theophilus carried the letter to the two rulers while on a second mission to Ethiopia is untenable; it is inherently improbable that Theophilus would have been sent twice within such a short time to a distant country such as Ethiopia; besides, not long after his return from his mission he was banished by Constantius to Heraclea in Pontus, in the spring or early summer of 358, for which see Kidd, *History of the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 161–62. Strangely enough, Pigulevskaia, *Byzanz*, p. 213, dates the embassy between 340 and 346.

⁶⁷Doubts on 'Ezānā's Christianity have been completely dispelled with the discovery of the long Greek inscription which unequivocally declares it; see *Journal des Savants* (Oct.–Dec., 1970), p. 265, lines 6–8.

⁶⁸The career of Frumentius in Ethiopia—his consecration by Athanasius, Constantius's attempt to recall him, and the refusal of the Ethiopian rulers to send him back—are all relevant to the theme of Christianity and national movements in the Later Roman Empire. The Ethiopian facet of that theme in this period calls for the following observations. The achievement of Frumentius was the organization of the Ethiopian Church, the most important feature of which was the link he established between that Church and the Coptic See of Alexandria. The ecclesiastical dependence of the Ethiopian Church on the Patriarchate of Alexandria has remained firmly established throughout the centuries, and the doctrinal position of the former has always followed that of the latter, which circumstance explains why present-day Ethiopia is Monophysite. Frumentius apparently avoided being consecrated by the then Arian patriarch of Antioch and instead went to Athanasius in Alexandria. But, had he gone to his native Syria and been consecrated in Antioch, Axum would have followed Antioch in its theological position thereafter, and the doctrinal position of Ethiopia would have been different. The Ethiopians and the Copts are two entirely different peoples with distinct national identities, and, what is more, in the fourth century the former were a sovereign people, while the latter were Romanized provincials, and yet the former followed the latter doctrinally and were dependent on them ecclesiastically. All this has to be taken into account before general and final conclusions can be drawn on the relationship between heresies and national movements in the Later Roman Empire. On Woodward's work and the present writer's observations on approaches to a re-examination of this work, see *supra*, note 33.

of the Eunomian historian on the mission of Theophilus to Axum and his dismissal of it in his uninformative subordinate clauses. Theophilus perhaps had contemplated failure for his mission to Axum, and this may explain why he chose to commence his missionary effort by going to the yet unevangelized South Arabia. As South Arabia was most probably an Ethiopian dependency at that time, failure in Ethiopia would have been detrimental to his contemplated mission to South Arabia; hence he began with the latter.

2

In its conception, execution, and choice of the leading ambassador, the mission of Theophilus Indus to the Southern Semites must be adjudged a major diplomatic as well as missionary effort on the part of Constantius.

A

The emperor chose well when he picked for the mission to the world of the Semites one who hailed from it⁶⁹ and who had already proved himself a successful figure in negotiating the secular as well as the ecclesiastical affairs of the reign.⁷⁰ Theophilus was personally known to Constantius, whose relations with his cousin Gallus he had satisfactorily regulated⁷¹ and whose wife he had healed. But it was his mission to the Southern Semites that turned out to be the most significant of all his achievements, and it is owing to this mission that he has survived in the consciousness of most modern historians.

The primary or the ostensibly primary object of the mission was the spread of Christianity in its Arian version. But other motives are discernible and inferable from the account, skeletal as it is in Photius's epitome:⁷²

1. As a missionary effort, the conversion of South Arabia, however ephemerally, to Arian Christianity is its most signal triumph. Theophilus emerges as the first absolutely historical figure in the story of the conversion of Arabia to Christianity,⁷³ and the effort reveals the origin of South Arabian Christianity in the fourth century. It was Byzantine and, what is more, imperial, an act of conversion sponsored by the *autokrator* himself from Con-

⁶⁹For the possible Semitic origin of Theophilus, see *infra*, sec. 3, pp. 96–100.

⁷⁰Perhaps it was owing to his general success as a diplomat that Theophilus was not given the charge of an episcopal see (Philostorgius, *HE*, III.6) but was kept as roving ambassador at large to be called upon when the occasion arose.

⁷¹Although he ultimately could not save Gallus (Philostorgius, *HE*, IV.1). The influence of Theophilus on Constantius was appreciated by J. Bidez; see *La vie de l'empereur Julien* (Paris, 1965), p. 36.

⁷²Philostorgius was an ecclesiastical historian and ecclesiastical history was his main concern. It is thus possible that he did not care to include in his account of the mission non-ecclesiastical matters; but these are implied in that account.

⁷³The truth about earlier missions to South Arabia is not established; see *supra*, note 47.

stantinople.⁷⁴ There is no doubt that the mission was part of the ecclesiastical policy of the reign, the defense of Arianism; this is certainly true of the mission to Ethiopia, while the mission to South Arabia envisaged the conquest of a new province for Christendom.

2. But the mission bears other interpretations, and this is especially true of the one to South Arabia, namely, that it was meant to serve imperial as well as ecclesiastical interests. It cannot have been entirely coincidental that in A.D. 356–57, the same year in which Theophilus was sent on his mission, Constantius issued an edict to Musonianus, the praetorian prefect,⁷⁵ concerning the travel of his *agentes in rebus* to Axum and Ḥimyar (*Cod. Theod.*, XII.12.2). Theophilus himself headed a group of envoys, who were not necessarily clerics, when he went on his mission. But these imperial interests are also easily discernible from an analysis of the details of Philostorgius's account. They may be divided into two main parts: (a) commercial and (b) political-military.

(a) The commercial interests of Byzantium are clearly involved in the references to two emporia for Roman merchants (Aden and possibly Dibā), strategically located near the mouth of the Red Sea and of the Persian Gulf respectively, guarding the exits to the Indian Ocean and forming stations on the long trade artery that extended from Egypt to India.⁷⁶ Establishing commercial contact with the world of the Southern Semites and Indicē would have been especially urgent at this juncture, in the late fifties, in view of the fact that the overland routes leading to the Orient were most probably closed by Shāpūr.

(b) In the immediate background was the secular enemy, Persia, to which Constantius had lost his first war a few years before and with which another war was inevitable in the near future. The mission was sent during the truce period with Persia which had obtained since 350, but the truce was fragile and uneasy, dependent on the preoccupation of the two powers with problems other than their conflict with each other; it was made even more fragile by the imprudent initiative of Musonianus, the very same praetorian prefect to whom

⁷⁴Constantinople may thus be added to the other Christian centers that sent missions for the conversion of the Arabian Peninsula—Alexandria, Axum, Ḥīra, and Jābiya. The struggle for winning these regions to one theological position against another, Arian against Nicene, is reminiscent of a similar struggle in the reign of Justinian between the Monophysites and the Chalcedonians to win over Nubia, for which, see John of Ephesus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, ed. E. W. Brooks, *CSCO*, *Scriptores Syri*, *Seria Tertia*, Tomus III, versio, Liber IV, Cap. vi–vii.

⁷⁵Further on the relevance of Musonianus, see *infra*, note 77.

⁷⁶The embassies of the Divi and the Serendivi (*RG*, XXII.7.9) must have had, at least for their partial background, the successes of Theophilus in his native Dibos and in the other parts of Indicē. Contact with the other side of the Indian Ocean is documented by a papyrus, a tax-receipt of the year 359, studied by H. I. Bell, for which see Piganiol, *EC*, p. 112 note 5.

Constantius's edict on the travel of the *agentes in rebus* was addressed.⁷⁷ To this same period (March 358) belongs Shāpūr's arrogant letter to Constantius, laying historic claims to Byzantine territory as far as the river Strymon, but contenting himself with the recovery of Armenia and Mesopotamia (*RG*, XVII.5)! It is, therefore, almost certain that the mission of Theophilus carried political and military implications in the context of the Byzantine-Sasanid conflict;⁷⁸ and this is especially true with regard to South Arabia which extended to the Persian Gulf itself and which of all the countries washed by the Indian Ocean was the one most strategically located in the event of a war with Persia. The strategic location of the locality, situated near the mouth of the Persian Gulf, where Theophilus built his third church, emerges clearly as a potential outlying Byzantine post, especially when it is realized that Shāpūr evinced unusual interest in developing Persian naval power and must have used a fleet when he transported his troops across the Persian Gulf for his Arabian campaign. The rise of a Byzantine post, ecclesiastical as it was, at the mouth of the Persian Gulf could reflect a bold and imaginative attempt on the part of Constantius to watch the enemy from its own backyard.⁷⁹

B

Constantius's casting about for allies among the Southern Semites inevitably raises the question of the status of his Arab *foederati* in the north and their place in this southern diplomacy. As has been pointed out in the preceding section, these *foederati* were in revolt for doctrinal reasons; perhaps a nexus of some sort can be established between their revolt and Constantius's search for allies further to the south.⁸⁰

⁷⁷For the background of the outbreak of this Second Persian War and the part played by Musonianus in it, see *ibid.*, pp. 111–12. The author is aware of the relationship that obtained between the imminent outbreak of the Persian War and the dispatch of Theophilus on his mission.

⁷⁸The chronology is striking and points to no other conclusion; in the midst of some humiliating negotiations with Shāpūr, which boded ill for the stability of the Persian front, it is inconceivable that Constantius would have chosen to divert himself by sending a mission of such ambitious objectives to the Southern Semites without its being related in some way to the dangerous situation he had on his hands in the north, created by the increasingly aggressive Shāpūr.

⁷⁹Reminiscent of his father's strategy of waging war against the Persians in their own territory, as stated by John Lydus, for which see *supra*, p. 71 note 164.

⁸⁰It is more than likely that Theophilus approached the *foederati* for a reconciliation, and he would have been the ideal ambassador to the Arabs in view of his probable Southern Semitic origin. Besides, one of the areas of his activity was Oriens and the Patriarchate of Antioch (Philostorgius, *HE*, IX.18), in the shadow of which lived the Arab *foederati*. It is almost certain that if he was sent to them to win them over to Arianism, their reactions would have been the same as that of the two Neguses, to whom Theophilus was sent on a similar

Of the three sons of Constantine, it was Constantius who fell heir to his father's policies in the Orient—the promotion of the cause of Arianism, the prosecution of the war against Persia, and the cultivation of friendly relations with the Southern Semites. His ecclesiastical policy in behalf of Arianism ultimately failed, in spite of all outward appearances;⁸¹ his wars against Sasanid Persia were disasters; only his mission to the Southern Semites was crowned with success, a bright spot in an otherwise cheerless reign.

3

The head of the embassy that scored some signal successes among the Southern Semites has not fared well with historians of the reign of Constantius, who treat him rather unceremoniously.⁸² But Theophilus deserves better; he was a remarkable figure who played an important role in the history of the reign, and that role ranged from theology to thaumaturgy to diplomacy at home and also abroad among the Southern Semites. His mission to that world has been analyzed in the preceding section, while his role in the theological controversies of the period has been noticed, however casually, by ecclesiastical historians. It remains to analyze the few references in Philostorgius to his background since these shed light on his mission to the Southern Semites.

(1) Philostorgius (*HE*, III.5) speaks of his having been sent by the Divaeans as a hostage to Constantine when he was very young (νεώτατος). What the background of this transaction was that sent an "Indian" boy to Constantinople can only be conjectured. Hostile Byzantine naval presence in the Red Sea is attested during the reign of Constantine (*supra*, p. 53, note 93), and if the island of Dibos, whence he hailed, was a Red Sea island or somewhere near it, Theophilus could have been a war hostage. The question why it was Theophilus that was sent as a hostage is more important, and it suggests that he may have been a son or relative of the ruler of that island. There

mission. That such would have been their reaction may be guessed from their flat rejection of the overtures of Arian Valens. They waged a relentless war against him and finally succeeded in having an orthodox holy man of their own consecrated their bishop; for Mavia, see *infra*, Chap. 4, pp. 138–202. The failure of Constantius's policy toward the Arabs of the north was, however, counterbalanced by his success with the Armenians, with whom he renewed the alliance, in 357; see Piganoli, *EC*, p. 111.

⁸¹See chap. 6 in Kidd, *History of the Church*, vol. 2, with its title, "(b) the outward triumph, but inner disintegration, of Arianism, 356–361," and also p. 181.

⁸²The historian who is the chief source for Theophilus's career happened to be a Eunomian, continually referred to by his Orthodox epitomizer, the Patriarch Photius, as "the impious Philostorgius." The theological position Theophilus defended, Arianism, had no sympathizers after it was swept away, and its figures remained, in the consciousness of later historians, living under a cloud. The Oriental profile of Byzantium is little researched by Byzantinists; all this has contributed to a certain lack of interest in such a figure as Theophilus Indus. Pigulevskaia has a short account of Theophilus's mission in *Byzanz*, pp. 72–74.

are parallels to this in the history of the region, and, what is more, a parallel that involves Byzantium. After the Byzantine diplomat Abram of the reign of Justinian negotiated in 528 with the Kindites of central Arabia, he took with him to Constantinople a prince of the royal family, Mu'āwiya, as hostage to Constantinople.⁸³ Theophilus, then, most probably came from the ruler's house in the island of Dibos, and the house was, conceivably, known to other rulers of the region, a fact of some relevance to his dispatch as an ambassador to that region and possibly to his successes there. His noble origin may also explain some personal traits he displayed throughout his career, a certain self-assurance, most likely derivative from his princely background.

2. Even more important is where in the "Indian" world his island, Dibos, was located. Many answers have been given to this question, ranging from Ceylon to Socotra to an island in the Red Sea.⁸⁴ But no certainty has been attained, perhaps because no serious attempts have been made to locate it.

The case for its being a Red Sea island is stronger than for its being Ceylon or Socotra and may be supported as follows. In relating the circumstances under which Theophilus became a "Byzantine," Philostorgius mentioned that he was sent as a hostage from the Divaeans to Constantine. This could easily imply a Byzantine military operation and immediately recalls the campaign of Imru' al-Qays against Najrān (*supra*, pp. 38–43). The Byzantine participation in that expedition would have been naval, the providing of a fleet for the transportation of an Ethiopian expeditionary force across the Red Sea, exactly as was to happen two centuries later during the reign of Justin I. The island could have been Perim in the Strait of Aden or some other island nearby. There is, however, no island that carries the name Dibos or one reasonably near it in the Red Sea.

⁸³On this, see the present writer in "Byzantium and Kinda," pp. 59–60. Not long before 528, Caleb, the Ethiopian Negus and conqueror of South Arabia, took back with him to Ethiopia princes of the South Arabian royal family as hostages, for which see *The Book of the Himyarites*, p. cxlii.

⁸⁴Kidd, *History of the Church*, vol. 2, p. 161; vol. 3, p. 429, declares for Ceylon; Warmington, *Commerce*, p. 103, favors Socotra or a Red Sea island; Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire*, vol. 2, p. 322, is for Socotra, as is Pigulevskaia, *Byzanz*, p. 73. Bury (*loc. cit.*) makes the glaring mistake of saying "an Arian named Theophilus was appointed bishop of the new churches in Abyssinia, Yemen, and the island of Socotra." Doresse, *L'empire du Prêtre-Jean*, vol. 1, p. 151, is for a Red Sea island. Ceylon may be ruled out completely since it is clearly distinguished from Dibos by Ammianus (RG, XXII.7), who speaks of embassies that reached Julian in Constantinople from the Divi and the Serendivi. The latter are certainly the Ceylonese since their island is known to have been called, among other names, Serendīb. The fact that Ammianus speaks of the Divi and the Serendivi in one sentence does not argue that they were ethnically (or even geographically) related to each other; he speaks of the Armenians and peoples from beyond the Tigris together, in the very same passage, and these were certainly not related ethnically or linguistically. Ammianus placed the Divi and the Serendivi together for purely geographical reasons, as peoples representing the East, just as the Moors, for instance, in the same passage, represent the South.

The Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman have not been explored as a possible region where the island of Dibos was located. And yet the detailed maps that are nowadays available show two toponyms that are phonetically very close to Dibos, the last letter of which is only the Greek terminal *sigma*. They are ports, one of which is a *tripolis* composed of Dibā al-Bīʿa (Dibā of the Church), Dibā al-Ḥiṣn (Dibā of the Fort), and Dibā al-Ghurfa (Dibā of the Chamber); it is on the Gulf of Oman. The other is Dubayy (diminutive of Dibā) on the Persian Gulf.⁸⁵

These are modern toponyms, but they are certainly survivals of ones that existed in ancient times. Dibā is attested in the seventh century, since Muhammad communicated with Dibā in Oman and sent the tribal group the Azd/Asd of Oman a letter, in which the group is referred to as “Azd Dibā,” “the Azd of Dibā.”⁸⁶ Three centuries earlier, in the same century in which Theophilus lived, the *Expositio totius mundi et gentium* refers in section XV to the people of Diva, a country which, in the author’s list of countries he was enumerating, comes before India Maior, identifiable with India proper.⁸⁷ This Diva close to India thus belongs to the world of the Persian Gulf or Southeast Arabia and could very well be the fourth-century attestation of the Dibā of the seventh century located in the region where three Dibās nowadays are to be found.

The striking phonetic correspondence between these toponyms and Dibos of Philostorgius (the name is very rare), suggests that the island of Dibos was one of the islands in or near the Persian Gulf.⁸⁸ The narrative of Philostorgius on the sequence of Theophilus’s journeys gives support to this view: (1) he crossed over to Dibos after he had dedicated the third and last church in South

⁸⁵The two toponyms are clearly shown on the detailed map issued in 1973 by the Emirate of Abū-Zabī for the whole of the United Arab Emirates. Of the *tripolis*, Dibā al-Bīʿa is in the Sultanate of Oman, while Dibā al-Ḥiṣn and Dibā al-Ghurfa are in the United Arab Emirates. The Persian word *dibā* comes to mind as the possible etymology; the word means “silk” and the three places may have acquired that name from the language of the country that mediated silk in ancient times and may themselves have been engaged in that trade.

⁸⁶For this, see M. Ḥamīdullah, *Majmūʿat al-Wathāʾiq al-Siyāsiya* (Cairo, 1956), pp. 99, 260.

⁸⁷*Expositio totius mundi et gentium*, ed. J. Rougé, *Sources chrétiennes*, 124 (Paris, 1966), p. 150. On India Maior and India Minor, see the notes on sections XVI and XVIII, pp. 228–229.

⁸⁸The fact that nowadays there is no island with that name in or near the Persian Gulf should present no insuperable difficulty for the identification of Dibos with one of its islands. The existence of three toponyms that carry the name Dibā in that area is striking and suggests that there might have been in it an island with that name to which in later times another name was given. The islands of Baḥrayn provide a parallel; in ancient times, Manāma was Tylos, while Maharraq was Arados. Perhaps that part of the Arabian Peninsula witnessed the rise of a state called Dibā which also controlled some of the islands of the Gulf, one of which was called Dibā. The Sultans of Oman once ruled the distant island of Zanzibar; Algeria (Arabic al-Jazāʾir, “islands”) derives its name from the *al-jazāʾir*, the islands off its coast, as possibly Diva of the *Expositio* derived its name from some island called Diva.

Arabia near the mouth of the Persian Gulf; it is natural to suppose that the island was not far from the mouth of that gulf; (2) after visiting Dibos, Theophilus made his way to the other parts of *Indicē*, which in this context could very well be India proper or its western coasts, the natural country to visit after having been to South Arabia, eastern Arabia, and the Persian Gulf area; (3) it is noteworthy that he traveled to Ethiopia, the country of his last mission, not directly from *Indicē*, but from South Arabia, and after the completion of his mission in Dibos and *Indicē*; this implies that he was coming from the east and visited South Arabia again in order to cross over to Ethiopia, all of which implies that Dibos was far to the east of South Arabia. If it had been to the west of South Arabia, an island in the Red Sea or Socotra, Theophilus would have gone directly to Ethiopia without having had to come back first to South Arabia.

3. The ethnic background of Theophilus is not clear, being shrouded in the obscurity of the all-embracing term *Indus*. The answer to this question is closely bound up with the identity of the island he hailed from, the mysterious Dibos, which, as has been argued, was possibly or probably an island in the Persian Gulf. This should provide some ground for suggesting that he was possibly not an Indian proper but a Southern Semite.

The arguments for Theophilus's being an "Indian" and those for his being a Semite can be reconciled by the realization that his birthplace was not part of the mainland, but an island: (1) Theophilus was an "Indian" only insofar as he hailed from an island situated in the all-inclusive term *Indicē*; the ecclesiastical historian, aware that Theophilus did not come from the mainland of the *Himyarites* or the *Axumites*, naturally could not call him either, and so he found it convenient to describe him as "Indian," a correct enough description; the islands of those regions are many and their inhabitants belong to various ethnic and linguistic groups. The ecclesiastical historian probably did not know how to allocate Theophilus ethnically and linguistically, and so, quite scrupulously and properly, he chose to designate him by the safely capacious term *Indian*.⁸⁹

The implications of his ethnic affiliations with the Southern Semites to his dispatch as an ambassador to their world are clear. Theophilus probably retained knowledge of the language of his South Arabia, and possibly more than South Arabian; the inhabitants of the islands are exposed to many languages, and it possible that Theophilus spoke more than one of these languages (not difficult to acquire since they are so closely related) in much the same way that the present-day inhabitants are bilingual or trilingual. His

⁸⁹On the possibility that the term *Indians* means *Semites* in the phrase "king of the Indians" in Philostorgius, *HE*, III.11, see *infra*, p. 105.

dispatch as ambassador was consonant with perceptive Byzantine diplomacy of sending to the barbarian world Romanized barbarians related to that world.⁹⁰

APPENDIX I

Christianity in South Arabia

The introduction of Christianity to South Arabia by Theophilus Indus during the reign of Constantius has been much discussed by Sabaicists. In a fundamental article on Christianity in South Arabia in pre-Islamic times, J. Ryckmans examined the problem and concluded that the Ḥimyarite ethnarch mentioned in the *Historia Ecclesiastica* of Philostorgius was indeed converted to Christianity, and he identified him as Malkikarib.¹ Ryckmans rested his conclusion on the explicit and clear account of Philostorgius and on Malkikarib's use of the phrase "lord of heaven" (Sabaic *mr'lsmyn*) to describe God (Sabaic *Rabmān-ān*), the same phrase used in admittedly Christian Sabaic texts of the sixth century and which contrasts with the earlier fifth-century phrase, *b'lsmyn*, employed in Jewish texts.²

A

Of late, A. F. L. Beeston has contested the conclusions of Ryckmans in a paper delivered to the Second International Symposium on Pre-Islamic Arabia held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in 1979.³ The present writer shares the views of Ryckmans on this problem, but those of Beeston deserve to be examined.

Beeston's chief difficulty⁴ in accepting Ryckmans's conclusion derives from the fact that in his inscription Malkikarib refers to God simply as "the Merciful, the lord of heaven," without any reference to Christ, and he does not find Ryckmans's observation on this omission satisfactory. The latter had argued that the omission is explicable by the fact that the Christianity preached to South Arabia by Theophilus was of a heretical type—Arian—in which prominence is given not to the Second Person of the Trinity but to the First.

The text of Philostorgius is clear and explicit, and Ryckmans's observation surely should carry conviction on this point. Beeston's difficulty in accepting this observa-

⁹⁰Diplomatically, his mission to the Southern Semites recalls that of Nonnosus, most probably a Semite, who also went on a similar mission to the Ḥimyarites and the Ethiopians in the reign of Justinian; on Nonnosus (the account of whose mission was also preserved in an epitome by Photius), see the present writer in "*Byzantino-arabica*," p. 116 note 4. On his mission, see the present writer in "Byzantium and Kinda," pp. 57–73.

¹J. Ryckmans, "Christianisme," *supra*, note 51. For the part that deals with the mission of Theophilus Indus, see *ibid.*, pp. 416–20.

²On these two phrases, see *ibid.*, pp. 432–36.

³Entitled "Ḥimyarite Monotheism." It will appear in the *Proceedings* of this symposium. Beeston's views on the mission of Theophilus are to be found on pp. 1–3 of the typescript supplied to the participants of the symposium. The paper discusses also other problems such as Judaism in South Arabia and the pre-Islamic Arabian monotheistic tradition called al-Ḥanafīya, but only the Byzantine profile of the paper, Theophilus's mission to South Arabia, will be examined in this Appendix.

⁴Beeston does not discuss the significance of the shift from *b'lsmyn* to *mr'lsmyn*.

tion can be negotiated by drawing attention to the most important and relevant document of this period, namely, Arian Constantius's letter to the two *tyrannoi* of Ethiopia.⁵ There is not a single reference to Christ in the letter addressed by the Christian Emperor Constantius to the Christian rulers of Ethiopia, 'Ezānā and Saizana. The letter speaks only of God and it mentions him five times, but never once does it mention Christ. This important document decisively invalidates Beeston's objection, expressed strongly as follows: "It is to me axiomatic that no formula which fails to mention Christ can be Christian." The letter not only confirms Ryckmans's position on the reality of the conversion of the South Arabian ethnarch but also bears him out in detail in his explanation of why there is no mention of Christ in the Sabaic inscription; Malkikarib's Christianity was of the Arian type, as indeed is clear from Philostorgius's account.

Beeston sees in the Ge'ez (Ethiopic) and the Greek inscriptions of Negus 'Ezānā a confirmation of his views on the religious complexion of the South Arabian ethnarch. As the monotheistic Ge'ez inscription does not refer to Christ while the Greek one does use a Christian trinitarian formula, Beeston concluded that 'Ezānā was conveying one message to his pagan people and another to Christian Byzantium, and applied this conclusion to the South Arabian ethnarch's church-building activity, viewing it as "political manoeuvre" and the location of the churches as "intended for foreign visiting merchants rather than for native Christians."

The use of the two different religious formulae by 'Ezānā certainly admits of interpretations other than the ones suggested by Beeston. What is relevant here to the South Arabian situation is to state that Constantius's letter, just discussed, disposed of the view that the Ge'ez inscription, silent on Christ, is a pagan one, while the erection of a church in the capital, in Zafār, located in the interior of the country, and not only in Aden or Hormuz, ports frequented by Byzantine merchants, suggests that the ethnarch could not have had in mind only foreign visiting merchants and not native Christians.

The discussion of Beeston's paper provides an occasion for making a few more observations on the Byzantine Christian mission to South Arabia in the fourth century.

(1) The converted South Arabian ruler is referred to only as ethnarch by Philostorgius. In view of the very real possibility of Ethiopian control of South Arabia in this period,⁶ it is possible that the South Arabian ruler was in a position of dependence on his Ethiopian overlord, and indeed in the letter of Constantius to the two Ethiopian rulers these are referred to as *tyrannoi*.

(2) The identity of the converted South Arabian king has been discussed. Ryckmans suggested he was Malkikarib, while Beeston in "Himyarite Monotheism" suggests that since Malkikarib was alive ca. A.D. 378 he would have, accordingly, been ruling for some twenty years around this date and consequently the converted South Arabian ethnarch might have been his predecessor. This is possible, but it is not even

⁵For this letter, see *supra*, note 42.

⁶On the implication of the use of the singular (*gentem*) in the edict of Constantius addressed to Musonianus, see *supra*, p. 42.

a remote possibility that this predecessor could have been 'Ezānā, as suggested by Beeston.

(3) The mission of Theophilus dates the introduction of Christianity to South Arabia with great precision. The implication as well as the explicit text of Philostorgius on the practice of paganism in that country when Theophilus arrived suggests that the Ethiopians, who, according to one view, had invaded South Arabia in the first half of the fourth century, did not carry with them the Christian mission to the conquered territory. But this may be the impression which Eunomian Philostorgius wanted to convey, and the possibility must be entertained that the Ethiopian occupation of South Arabia, at least during the reign of Christian 'Ezānā, witnessed the introduction of a Chalcedonian form of Christianity. Whatever the truth about the history of Christianity in South Arabia before the mission of Theophilus may turn out to be, that religion did not endure for long in South Arabia but persisted only toward the end of the fourth century. Thus both the short-lived conversion of South Arabia to Christianity and the equally short-lived Ethiopian control of the country are consonant with the incontrovertible evidence from Philostorgius and from the Ethiopian imperial titulature respectively. There should be no difficulty in accepting both as facts as long as extravagant claims are not made for the longevity and diffusion of both Christianity and Ethiopian control.

B

Arguments can also be advanced against the views of Christian Robin on the embassy of Theophilus Indus. These appeared a year after the Riyadh Symposium in an article⁷ the distinctive feature of which is its exclusive dependence on epigraphy and archeology. The article is welcome as it conveniently and carefully assembles this evidence and interprets it, but that part of it which deals with the embassy of Theophilus has, unfortunately, to be rejected:

1. The major objection is the author's handling of the epigraphic "evidence" for invalidating what the literary source, Philostorgius, has to say. The evidence of epigraphy alone is notoriously deceptive, and the author himself has collected epigraphic evidence that could give the *coup de grâce* to his own conclusion. No one will deny the historicity of the extraordinary events that shook Oriens Christianus ca. A.D. 520 related to the South Arabian persecutions, martyrdoms, and invasions, so well and amply documented in the literary sources—the *Book of the Himyarites*, the *Martyrium Arethae*, and the *Letters* of Simeon of Bēth-Arshām.⁸ And yet, what does epigraphy have to offer in the way of information or confirmation? Three documents, or even two, are adduced by the author to evidence autochthonous Christianity in South Arabia, an ensemble of crosses and a graffito with the name 'Abd al-Masīh; what is more, according to the same writer, these may even belong to the Islamic period! If

⁷See his "Judaïsme et christianisme en Arabie du Sud d'après les sources épigraphiques et archéologiques," *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*, 10 (1980), pp. 85–96; the parts that deal with the embassy of Theophilus and the problem of Christianity in South Arabia in the fourth century occupy pp. 89–94.

⁸For all these, see the section on the sources in the present writer's *Martyrs*, pp. 277–81.

the student of South Arabian Christianity has to depend on epigraphy, he will not be able to conclude that there was any serious spread of that religion in South Arabia in the sixth century. This is what Christian Robin, following Beeston, says about Christianity in South Arabia in the fourth century, looking at it from the exclusively epigraphic perspective. Compared to the extensive and successful propagation of Christianity in South Arabia in later times, that carried out by Theophilus Indus in the fourth century appears as a modest effort; but if the former has survived epigraphically in only three insignificant documents, no wonder then that the latter has left no epigraphic traces of itself, or if it did, these have either disappeared or not yet come to light. To draw conclusions on the Christian presence in fourth-century South Arabia from purely epigraphic data without taking into account what the reliable literary source explicitly states is unsound.

2. When the literary sources are reliable, they should be the guides for such a problem as the introduction of Christianity into fourth-century Arabia. Such is the account of Philostorgius; it is not a short, ambiguous statement that admits of being misinterpreted or misunderstood. It is a trustworthy source written by one who lived not long after the mission of Theophilus Indus; moreover, the account is full of details that carry the stamp of authenticity.⁹ This account should then be the guide for the Christian presence in fourth-century Arabia even if no indubitable Christian inscriptions have been found to support it, just as the three literary documents referred to in the foregoing section served as the guide for the history of Christianity even before the long historical Sabaic inscriptions of the same century were discovered. Discriminating and perspicacious scholars such as Nöldeke, Dillmann, and Guidi accepted the authenticity of these literary sources even without the benefit of confirmatory epigraphy. This should be the case with Philostorgius's account of the introduction of Christianity into South Arabia in the fourth century. And the discovery of inscriptions confirmatory of this literary source cannot be ruled out entirely.

3. Finally, the epigraphic evidence adduced by Christian Robin does not affect the crucial reign in this discussion, namely, the reign of Malkikarib, whom J. Ryckmans thought was the king converted by Theophilus. The author leaves his religious affiliation undetermined and reflects this by a question mark in the chart.¹⁰ Moreover, as has been said in part A of this Appendix, the converted king could have been Malkikarib's predecessor. Consequently, the epigraphic "evidence" cannot be said to have invalidated the account of the literary source on the introduction of Christianity into South Arabia in the fourth century.

The preceding chapter on the reign of Constantius has carefully analyzed the account of Philostorgius and has also provided a framework within which the mission of Theophilus and its *limited* success can be understood, as stated in the last paragraph

⁹Eunomian Philostorgius is not above reproach in his omissions, and in this he is not unlike orthodox historians—Rufinus, for instance. Philostorgius leaves out the exploits of orthodox Mavia and her bishop, Moses, while Rufinus leaves out the mission of Arian Theophilus and that of Ulphilas to the Goths. But Philostorgius, Eunomian though he was, would not have fabricated the account that tells of the success of the mission of Theophilus in South Arabia.

¹⁰See Robin, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

of section A of this Appendix. What has been said in the Synthesis on the imperial Byzantine attitude toward South Arabia in the second half of the fourth century may also in this connection be brought to bear on this problem. The Byzantine emperors after Constantius did not follow up the successes of the latter, being involved elsewhere, while the Ethiopian occupation of South Arabia in the fourth century was of short duration. Thus the two foreign powers who were behind the Christian mission and its propagation in South Arabia withdrew from the South Arabian scene not long after the introduction of Christianity into that country in the fourth century.¹¹

APPENDIX II

Philostorgius, *HE*, III. 11

After his account of the mission of Theophilus Indus, Philostorgius indulges in a geographical digression on the Orient (III. 7–11) along biblical lines. Chapter 11 is entirely devoted to the fauna of the region, with the exception of the last part on the nuts and gold of Arabia. It is a valuable account of the fauna of the Orient in the fourth century, or at least those parts of it that interested a Byzantine such as Philostorgius.¹ He enumerates some ten kinds of animals and birds: elephants, serpents, unicorns, camelopards (giraffes), varieties of apes, as well as the phoenix, the zebra, parrots, and other painted birds. Of particular interest are animals he testifies to having seen himself in Constantinople, i. e., the ox-deer, the skin of huge serpents, the apes, the parrot, and the unicorn, of which, he says, a picture was to be seen in Constantinople.² It is relevant to note that these animals are more typical of Ethiopia

¹¹Christian Robin returned to the theme of Christianity in South Arabia in 1981; see his article, "Le christianisme dans la péninsule arabique d'après l'épigraphie et l'archéologie," *Travaux et mémoires*, 8, pp. 45–61. He cursorily treats the mission of Theophilus on p. 46, reiterating his position expressed in the previous article, but wording it more guardedly. Of the embassy he writes, "*celle-ci n'avait guère eu de suite*"; in support of his view he says that when the persecution was unleashed in A.D. 518 by the Ḥimyarite king Yūsuf, there is no mention in the sources of indigenous Christian communities in the Ḥimyarite heartland, but only in the oases which bordered on the desert—Najrān, Ma'rib, and Ḥadramawt.

Surely this is strange reasoning; more than a century and a half separate the mission of Theophilus from the reign of Yūsuf, and it is well known that South Arabia in the fifth century had a new religious affiliation that was not favorable to the propagation or persistence of Christianity or whatever Christianity had been propagated in the preceding century. And the last paragraph in section B of this Appendix, involving Ethiopia and Byzantium, has thrown new light on why Christianity did not and could not survive long in fourth-century Arabia. Thus, the nonsurvival of Christianity in Ḥimyar around A.D. 518 is not a cogent or valid argument that it had been introduced in the fourth century.

¹It is of interest to compare this chapter in Philostorgius with another in Cosmas Indicopleustes (Book XI), which describes the fauna and flora of "India" and of the island of Taprobane (Ceylon). The comparison is instructive: (1) Cosmas occasionally states that a particular animal is a native of Ethiopia alone and not India proper, e. g., the giraffe; (2) he uses the adjectival form derived from India as a comprehensive term to include both India proper and the Afro-Arabian part of the oriental regions, while he uses the substantive *India* to describe India proper.

²*HE*, III. 11, p. 40, line 15. The picture is ἐκτύπωμα, a figure in relief. Cosmas mentions the unicorn in his digression (Book XI, pp. 319–20), and it is of interest to note that

and Arabia than of India, and some of them, such as the giraffe, are native to Ethiopia and not to India.

In the course of his digression on the fauna, Philostorgius incidentally mentions that an ape of the variety called "Pan" (Πάν) was sent by "the king of the Indians" as a present to Constantius, that the ape died on the way, but was embalmed and brought to Constantinople. It is of some interest for the history of diplomatic relations between Byzantium and the Orient to determine whether the "king of the Indians" who sent the ape was an Indian, an Ethiopian, or an Arabian.

(1) It is unlikely that the "Indians" are the Indians proper: (a) transport of animals by sea was not practical and only land routes were used for that purpose; unlike Arabia and Ethiopia, India was separated from Byzantium by an ocean, and indeed the author of the *Periplus* nowhere mentions the exportation by sea of any animal from India, and his Digest-list contains no reference to Indian animals;³ (b) the ape sent to Constantius is described as so ferocious that it had to be enclosed in a cage; this suggests that it was either a gorilla or a chimpanzee, not natives to India but to Africa.

(2) Although the term *Indians* is used by the authors of this period to refer to all those oriental nations in general, Philostorgius uses it specifically in describing the inhabitants of the island of Dibos, the birthplace of Theophilus. The "king of the Indians" could have been the king of the island of Dibos. Now these Divi, it is noteworthy, did send an embassy with gifts to Constantius, as recorded in Ammianus (*RG*, XXII.7.10). It may well be that the *dona* referred to in Ammianus as sent by the Divi to Constantinople consisted among other things of this ape "Pan" described in Philostorgius.⁴

(3) It is not improbable that the "king of the Indians" was either the Ethiopian Negus or the South Arabian king. Both qualify as "king of the Indians" in the idiom of Byzantine writers, and both would have had apes to send as presents to the Roman *autokrator*. The case for the king's being the Ethiopian Negus may be somewhat weakened by the fact that in this period Ethiopia seems to have had a dyarchy, as is apparent from the letter of Constantius to the two rulers of Ethiopia, 'Ezānā and Saizana.⁵ The case for the South Arabian ruler may be weakened by the fact that he is called by Philostorgius "ethnarch," but this is counterbalanced by the fact that diplomatic contact between Constantius and South Arabia is attested in Philostorgius himself—in the account of the mission of Theophilus to South Arabia and, what is

he too speaks of this animal represented in art—Ethiopian art; he saw brazen images, στήλας, of four of these unicorns in the four-towered royal palace of the Negus of Ethiopia, presumably one in each tower.

³On this, see Warmington, *Commerce*, pp. 146–47.

⁴The Divaeans could have easily transported it from their island to the mainland and thence sent it over the land route. The choice of this gift was inauspicious since both ape and *autokrator* died almost simultaneously, the one following the other.

⁵But Saizana could have been only a junior partner, a son or a brother of 'Ezānā, chosen by the latter as an associate and possible heir.

more, by the fact that in that mission certain presents are involved that are of particular relevance to this discussion. Among other things, the emperor sends a gift of two hundred Cappadocian horses to the ruler of South Arabia. This gift of animals very conceivably called for a reciprocation in kind, the dispatch of the exotic ape Pan.⁶

The identity of the Indians whose king sent an ape to Constantius as possibly Ethiopians or South Arabians fortifies the view put forward in the preceding section II.3 that *Indus* in Theophilus Indus could mean Semite.

⁶The baboon is known to South Arabia; see D. L. Harrison, *The Mammals of Arabia* (London, 1964), vol. 1, pp. 185–90. The close relations that obtained in this period between Ethiopia and South Arabia enabled Ethiopian animals and products to be easily ferried from Ethiopia across the Gate of Lamentation to South Arabia; African elephants are attested in South Arabia in the sixth century. It is therefore perfectly conceivable that the king of South Arabia acquired a gorilla or a chimpanzee from Ethiopia and sent it to Constantius in much the same way that Hārūn al-Rashīd is said to have sent an animal not native to Iraq—namely, an elephant—to Charlemagne; on Abū al-Abbās, Hārūn's elephant, see F. W. Buckler, *Harun' l-Rashid and Charles the Great*, Medieval Academy of America, Monograph No. 2 (Cambridge, Mass., 1931), p. 31 and appendix 3.

Postscript: Constantius, not Constantine, was the emperor to whom the ape Pan was sent, but it is the latter whose name appears in connection with Pan in C. Mango, *Byzantium: The Empire of New Rome* (New York, 1980), p. 179, surely a misprint or an oversight.

III

The Reign of Julian

I. THE ARABS IN THE *RES GESTAE*

References to the Arabs and their participation in Julian's Persian campaign are many. The main source is Ammianus Marcellinus; others, such as the ecclesiastical historians and Libanius, are important mainly to the examination of the Arab involvement in Julian's death. The *Res Gestae* provides valuable material for examining such problems as the nature and extent of the Arab contribution to Julian's campaign, the causes of friction between Julian and the Arabs relevant to the problem of his death, the identity and legal status of the Arabs in Julian's army, and other related problems, such as Julian and the Third Temple.

1

References to the Arabs in the *Res Gestae* fall into two categories: (A) explicit and (B) implicit.

A

There are seven explicit references to the Arabs in the pages of the *Res Gestae*, the last two of which are included in the chapters that describe Jovian's retreat after Julian's death.

1. On 28 March 363, while Julian was encamped in an outpost not far from Callinicum, the Saracen kinglings, *Saracendarum reguli gentium*, came to pay homage.¹ They offered him a golden crown, *ex auro corona*, and he in turn received them gladly (XXIII.3.8).

2. The *auxilia*, provided with great willingness by the Saracen *reguli* on 28 March near Callinicum, march with Julian, and about 1 April they reach Circesium at the confluence of the Khābūr and the Euphrates (XXIII.5.1).

3. After the fall of Anatha, the Saracens bring to Julian some enemy skirmishers, *procursores*, they had captured. The emperor was pleased, gave the Saracens rewards, and sent them back to resume such activities (XXIV.1.10).

¹On this important passage, see *infra*, sec. 4.

4. Two days after the burning of Ozogardana² in May, a Perso-Arab force was commanded on the Persian side by Surenas and on the Arab side by "Malechus Podosacis nomine,"³ an Arab chief in the service of Persia who had long harassed the Roman frontier territory (XXIV.2.4).

5. In June, during its retreat from Ctesiphon along the Tigris and before it reached Hucumbra, the Roman army was followed by the Persian Saracens, who first retreated, then joined with the main body of the Persians,⁴ trying to carry off the Romans' baggage, but their attempt failed (XXV.1.3).

6. On 1 July, the Roman army reaches Dura on the Tigris, where a group of Arabs surrounds the Roman cavalry, tired and marching in the rear, but the Roman light-armed cavalry, *expeditiores turmae* (possibly Arab), saves them (XXV.6.9). These Arabs had fought with Julian but were later alienated after Julian denied them their *salaria* and *munera*⁵ (XXV.6.10).

7. At some spot near the Tigris and before the Romans reached Ḥatra, the Arabs appear for the last time in Ammianus's account of Julian's Persian campaign.⁶ They or the Persians cut down or carry away those Roman soldiers who crossed the Tigris; but it is not clear whether these Arabs were acting independently or conjointly with the Persians (XXV.8.1).

B

In addition to these explicit references, there are a number of passages that may imply Arab participation in Julian's campaign. This is suggested by the employment of such terms as *procuratores*, *excursatores*, applicable to the Arabs, who did function as *auxilia* in Julian's army.⁷ The other group of *auxilia* mentioned by Ammianus are the Goths, but those are mentioned only once,⁸ while the Arabs receive explicit mention many times; besides, unlike the Goths, they were native to the region and were familiar with its to-

²Between Diacira and Macepracta; see map V.

³For this Arab chief, see *infra*, sec. 6.

⁴This Arab-Persian assault is recorded by Zosimus, *HN*, III.27.

⁵For a detailed analysis of this important passage, see *infra*, sec. 3.

⁶With the possible exception of a reference to the *procuratores* in *RG*, XXV.8.4.

⁷Clearly so designated in *RG*, XXIII.5.1.

⁸*RG*, XXIII.2.7, where they are referred to as Scythians in conformity with the prevailing classicism that identified them with the Scythians of Herodotus. This solitary reference to the Goths in the *RG* conflicts with an explicit reference in Libanius's *Epitaphios* on Julian (Oration XVIII.169) delivered in 365. In that oration, Julian is lauded for his refusal to invoke the aid of the Goths. Perhaps the conflict may be resolved by another solitary reference to the Goths in the *RG*, pertaining to the reign of Constantius (XX.8.1), in which the emperor asks the Goths to join him, while he was still in Constantinople. The Gothic contingent in Julian's army may thus have been the one that had joined Constantius and was in the East when Julian arrived to take the field against the Persians. As for the Armenian *auxilia* under Arsaces, those operated away from Julian across the Tigris and did not march with him along the Euphrates against Ctesiphon; see *RG*, XXIII.3.5.

pography, and Julian had received them gladly *ut ad furta bellorum appositi* (XXIII.3.8). It is possible, therefore, even likely, that the following auxiliary units, mentioned in the *Res Gestae* without indication of their ethnic origins, were Arab:

1. In March while at Carrhae, scouts, *procuratores*, report to Julian a successful enemy raid (XXIII.3.4).

2. In April, between Zaitha and Dura on the Euphrates, Julian marched in order of battle,⁹ lest he should be entrapped by ambushes, and arranged for fifteen hundred mounted scouts, *excursatores*, to watch against any sudden attack (XXIV.1.2).

3. Near Macepraeta on the Euphrates and the banks of Naarmalcha, the Persians attacked the Roman cavalry while these were crossing Naarmalcha, but the *auxiliares* pursued the Persians and struck them down (XXIV.2.8).

4. Three squadrons of scouting cavalry, *procuratorum partis nostrae tres turmas*,¹⁰ were attacked by the Surenas after the fall and burning of Perisabora (XXIV.3.1).

5. Julian leads a band of light-armed skirmishers, *procuratores*, near Coche/Seleucia (XXIV.5.4). Shortly after, three cohorts¹¹ of light-armed skirmishers engage the Persians (XXIV.5.5).

6. In the battle of Ctesiphon,¹² Julian is at the head of light-armed auxiliaries, *levis armaturae auxilia* (XXIV.6.9); and it is the light-armed skirmishers, *procuratores*, that open the battle by casting their javelins, *missilia* (XXIV.6.10).

7. During the retreat and after leaving Hucumbra, the legions complained that the "cavalry troops of the Tertiaci," *Tertiacorum equestris numerus*,¹³

⁹For this order of battle and tactic, see R. Grosse, *Römische Militärgeschichte von Gallienus bis zum Beginn der byzantinischen Themenverfassung* (Berlin, 1920) (hereafter, *RM*), p. 255.

¹⁰On the *turma*, see *ibid.*, p. 48, and on the *foederati* and their auxiliary units and role, pp. 80–88, 280–83. G. L. Cheesman's *Auxilia of the Roman Imperial Army* (Oxford, 1914), old as it is, has not entirely outlived its usefulness.

¹¹On the *cohors*, see Grosse, *RM*, pp. 42–45.

¹²The possible Arab participation in the battle of Ctesiphon is confirmed by Ṭabarī's account of that participation, explicitly stated, for which see *infra*, sec. 5.A. The use of javelins, *missilia*, by the *procuratores*, who opened the battle, could fortify the possibility that these were indeed Arab.

¹³This *numerus* was presumably protecting the flanks of the legions; on the *numerus*, which was normally composed of barbarian troops, see Grosse, *RM*, pp. 25–29. On the *ductor* of this *numerus*, see *infra*, sec. 5.B.

Who these Tertiaci were has been a problem; possibly they were the Tertiani of the *Notitia Dignitatum* or the "Equites tertii clibanarii Parthi," as suggested by D. Hoffman, *Das spätrömische Bewegungsheer und die Notitia Dignitatum*, 2 vols., Epigraphische Studien, 7 (Düsseldorf, 1969–70), vol. 1, pp. 275–76 and their notes. If true, this will answer the question of what happened to III clibanarii Parthi; see J. W. Eadie, "The Development of Roman Mailed Cavalry," *JRS*, 57 (1967), p. 171 note 58.

had given way while they (the legions) were attacking, and thus demoralized the army (XXV.1.7).

8. After crossing the Tigris and before they reached Ḥatra, the *procuratores* inform the Romans that the Persians were constructing a bridge across the river (XXV.8.4).

These explicit and implicit references pertain not only to the Roman but also to the Persian Arabs. All of them provide material for examining important problems in the Byzantine-Arab-Persian relationship which will be examined in the course of the following sections. The conclusions of these sections, however, will be drawn mainly from the explicit references to the Arabs and from one implicit reference, namely, XXIV.6.9–10, on the battle of Ctesiphon, since, as will be argued, this almost certainly involves the Arabs.

2

The references to the Roman Arabs in the *Res Gestae* are valuable for assessing the extent and nature of the Arab contribution to Julian's Persian campaign:

(1) The maps¹⁴ show the range and extent of Arab participation and the places at which or near which the Arabs take part in the military engagements of the campaign. Explicit references find them at Callinicum, Circesium, and Anatha. The most natural presumption is that they continued to serve as *auxilia*, at least until the siege of Ctesiphon,¹⁵ since disagreement with Julian developed during his retreat after the battle of Ctesiphon.¹⁶ The implicit references support this presumption; these references find the Arab *auxilia* in Julian's army at the following places before Ctesiphon: between Zaitha and Dura, near Macepracta, near Perisabora, near Coche/Seleucia, the last of which is important because Julian himself leads the band of *procuratores*. The climax of their participation is the battle of Ctesiphon, when they open the attack, led by Julian himself. During the retreat, the Roman Arabs are attested after Hucumbra (Symbra). Thus, they would have marched with Julian along the Euphrates, fought at Ctesiphon, and retreated with him along the Tigris until his death at or near Sumere.

(2) The nature of their contribution is clearly defined from the very beginning; they join Julian as *auxilia* and function as such throughout the campaign, acting as guides and scouts in terrain familiar to them and as

¹⁴See maps V and VI.

¹⁵Especially as the last explicit reference to the Roman Arabs after the fall of Anatha (*RG*, XXIV.1.10) clearly indicates that Julian was pleased with their performance and there is nothing in the *RG* that even suggests any dissatisfaction on the part of Julian with his Arabs before the retreat from Ctesiphon. If there had been, Ammianus would have mentioned it.

¹⁶After the last explicit reference to the Arabs at Anatha, *RG*, XXIV.1.10.

protective cover to the legions. As mounted lancers, they belong to the cavalry arm of the expedition. Implicit references in the *Res Gestae* suggest that they formed such units in the Roman army as the *numerus* and the *turma*,¹⁷ and the same references also suggest that, in spite of their subordinate role as *auxilia*, they took part in the battle of Ctesiphon led by Julian himself. This was probably due to Julian's satisfaction with their performance¹⁸ and possibly to his realization that they were more efficient than the legions themselves, especially in such hot climate and forbidding terrain.

The relative importance of the Arabs in Julian's campaign may be measured by a comparison with that of the other two auxiliary groups involved in the campaign, the Goths and the Armenians. The first are mentioned only once,¹⁹ while the second failed to appear or participate in the campaign. This importance is also reflected in the general strategy of Julian's campaign and the Arabs' place in it. That strategy envisaged a pincers movement along both the Tigris and the Euphrates with Ctesiphon as the target. The Tigris arm of the pincers was under the direction of Procopius and Sebastian, who were to effect a junction with the Armenian *auxilia* under their king Arsaces. But from the very beginning, Procopius's assignment was secondary, and the Euphrates arm represented the main thrust of the pincers under the personal command of Julian himself. Furthermore, the pincers movement did not work since Arsaces failed to make an appearance, and consequently Julian marched along the Euphrates, reached his destination, and fought the battle of Ctesiphon alone, without effecting a junction with the two commanders.

The relatively important role of the Arabs is reflected in the fact that, unlike the Armenians, they were assigned to the much more important arm of the pincers, the Euphrates one, and are attested at various junctures during the march, including participation in the battle of Ctesiphon.²⁰

3

The disagreements that developed between Julian and the Arabs are important to examine for their relevance to the fortunes of his campaign and to the question of Julian's death:²¹

¹⁷However, the possibility must be entertained that the Arabs who formed or might have formed such units belonged not to the *auxilia* under discussion but to the regularly enlisted Arabs in the Roman army; for these, see chap. 5 on the *Notitia Dignitatum* in *RA*. The assessment of the Arab contribution in its entirety must also take into account those units listed in the *ND*.

¹⁸See *RG*, XXIV.1.10 for Julian's satisfaction with the Arabs after the fall of Anatha.

¹⁹It is pertinent to remark in this connection that the Arab *auxilia* were to beat the Goths before the walls of Constantinople shortly after the battle of Adrianople in 378 and in terrain and climate more favorable to the Goths; see *infra*, pp. 176–78.

²⁰For which, see Tabari's account, *infra*, sec. 5.A.

²¹See *infra*, pp. 124–32 and 132–35.

(1) The explicit reference to the disagreement is in *RG*, XXV.6.9–10. A group of Arabs surround the Roman cavalry after these had reached Dura on the Tigris during Jovian's retreat. Julian had denied them their *munera* and *salaria*, and their complaint at this denial only elicited from him the haughty reply, *imperatorem bellicosum et vigilantem ferrum habere non aurum*.

(a) The quarrel with the Arab *auxilia* must have taken place after the battle of Ctesiphon, during the retreat.²² Julian's coffers were low.²³ Even as early as the fall of Perisabora he had offered a *donativum* of a hundred pieces of silver to each of his regular soldiers, but the smallness of the amount roused the soldiery to a mutinous uproar (*RG*, XXIV.3.3). Julian was opposed to employing the services of *auxilia* in principle (*RG*, XXIII.1.2). He had paid them when he needed them, but now, after he had declined the siege of Ctesiphon and was beating a retreat, he thought he no longer needed them; for Julian, the Arabs had outlived their usefulness.

(b) Ammianus makes clear that their defection was not inspired by treachery,²⁴ and he gives the reason for their defection—Julian's denial of the Arabs their *munera* and *salaria*. The Arab *auxilia* were mercenaries, and if his own regular troops almost rebelled after the fall of Perisabora for a similar reason, it is understandable that the mercenaries, not Roman citizens, should have deserted when the bond that united them with Julian, namely, the subsidies, had been cut off.²⁵

(c) Important in this reference is the mention of *munera et salaria*. Although it is implied that the *auxilia* received subsidies in return for their services, this explicit reference is valuable for a better understanding of the terms of the alliance with the Arabs and the whole problem of the new type of *foederati* in the fourth century.²⁶ The further phrase, *ad similitudinem praeteriti*

²²See *supra*, sec. 2.2.

²³In his speech to the troops, Julian complained that the Romans became impoverished as a result of the practice of paying gold for peace with the barbarians (*RG*, XXIV.3.4). This sentiment clearly indicates that Julian was, in principle, opposed to paying money to non-Romans, including the Arabs.

²⁴In this he compares favorably with Procopius; for his views on Arab *prodosia*, see the present writer in "Procopius and Arethas," pp. 39–67, 362–82. The episode of Arsaces and his failure to effect a junction with the two Roman commanders in Assyria is instructive; Ammianus does not comment on the fact but merely records it without expressing or implying that the Armenian king betrayed the cause of the Romans; cf. what Procopius says on Arethas, the Ghassānid king, and his role in the Assyrian campaign of 541; Procopius, *Wars*, II.xix.15–49.

²⁵How Arab-Roman relations could disastrously deteriorate as a result of not honoring the terms of the *foedus* on the part of Rome is amply evidenced by the events of A.D. 630 in southern Palestine, when the Romans denied the Arab *foederati* their *annona*; Theophanes, *Chronographia*, 2 vols., ed. C. de Boor, Bibliotheca Teubneriana (Leipzig, 1883–85), vol. 1, pp. 335–36. An imperial novel for the year 443 had uttered warnings against abstracting or withholding anything from the *annona* of the Arab *foederati*; see *Cod. Theod.*, Novella 24.

²⁶On the status of Julian's Arabs as *foederati*, see sec. 4, *infra*, pp. 113–14. For the terms *munera* and *salaria*, see Th. Mommsen, *MGH*, AA (Berlin, 1877–1919), vol. 9, p. 186, *s.v. dona*.

temporis, that the pay that was denied them had been extended to the *auxilia* in the past, is also informative. It can refer both to the immediate past—to Julian's campaign—and to the remoter one of the previous reigns, and thus could document the view that the fourth-century Arab *auxilia* in the service of Byzantium were paid as part of the terms of the alliance and not only allowed to settle on Roman territory.

(2) There is or may be an implicit reference to the Arabs that involves discontent on their part with Julian. It has been argued before that the *equestris numerus*²⁷ of the Tertiaci mentioned during Julian's retreat could have been Arab. In the following section, Ammianus relates how Julian accepted the accusation of the legions that the *numerus* failed them in battle, and so he inflicted a humiliating punishment on the members of the *numerus*; he had their standards taken from them and their lances broken and forced those who were thought guilty to march with the packs and the prisoners.

Since both these episodes took place close to each other, the one at Dura on the Tigris, the other not far from Hucumbra, it may be concluded that Julian's relations with the Arabs remained good throughout the campaign and that they deteriorated only after Ctesiphon, during the retreat.

Of these two references, the first is the much more important. In addition to being explicit, it is more informative on both the possible Arab involvement in Julian's death and on the larger problem of the terms of the Arab *foedus* with Byzantium.

4

A

The question must now be raised whether these *auxilia* were the *foederati* of Byzantium who were in revolt during the reign of Constantius. In spite of the fact that Arab groups other than the *foederati* are or may have been involved in these references, it will be argued that the *auxilia* with whom Julian treated were the *foederati* of the previous reign.²⁸ In support of this contention the following can be adduced:

1. The most detailed reference in the *Res Gestae* for establishing that the *auxilia* who joined Julian at Callinicum were *foederati* is to be found in XXIII.3.8. Julian had encamped not far from Callinicum and it was there

²⁷On this *numerus*, see *supra*, p. 109 and note 13.

²⁸For the *foederati* of Constantius's reign, see *supra*, pp. 74–79. This is the most important group to examine since a major goal of this investigation is to recover the history of the *foederati* in the fourth century and present a continuous narrative of their fortunes in each reign. The *RG* is the *locus classicus* for recovering their history in the reign of Julian. The identity of their tribal affiliations must remain an open question. They could have been the Lakhmids of the house of Imru' al-Qays or the Tanūkhids of the north, or a combination of both. See the section on Ṭabarī's account, *infra*, sec. 5.A, and also *infra*, p. 126 and note 88 on the possible Tanūkhid involvement in Julian's death.

that *Saracenarum reguli*²⁹ *gentium, genibus supplices nixi, oblata ex auro corona*,³⁰ *tamquam mundi nationumque suarum dominum adorarunt, suscepti gratanter, ut ad furta bellorum appositi.*

The passage leaves no doubt that these were not Peninsular Arabs unfamiliar with Roman customs but Roman Arabs acquainted with the presentation of the *aurum coronarium* or *corona aurea*, which in this case was certainly not a tax but a symbolic expression of respect or loyalty, such as was customary on occasions that called for such expressions.³¹ Julian's accession to the throne and his appearance in the Orient for the Persian campaign was clearly the background of this presentation, which took place on 28 March 363 near Callinicum.³²

2. The antecedents of this scene near Callinicum are fortunately described in Julian's own letter to Libanius, which corroborates the view that these Arabs were Roman Arabs.³³ Around 10 March while at Hieropolis and on reaching that city after a five-day march from Antioch, Julian says that he sent out ambassadors to the Saracens suggesting that they could come to him, if they wished. These Arabs who received embassies from Julian must have been known to the Romans as their Arabs with whom they had established relations in the previous reigns.

3. Another passage in the *Res Gestae* not only furnishes the background for Julian's letter to Libanius dispatched from Hieropolis, but also clinches the argument that these were Roman Arabs and *foederati*. In XXIII.2.1, Ammianus relates how *legationes*, embassies from the nations, reached Julian, offering aid for the forthcoming campaign but that the emperor gallantly declined their aid on the ground that it was not fitting for Rome to defend itself by such aid, but rather that it should itself protect its *amicos et socios* when necessary. Julian was then at Antioch in Oriens and, consequently, the *legationes gentium* or most of them that offered aid must have been Arab; these

²⁹Ammianus confirms the Arabic accounts that the Roman Arabs were indeed ruled by kings; cf. the various categories of *reges*, *regales*, and *reguli* in RG, XVIII.2.13.

³⁰For material extremely relevant to this presentation of the *corona aurea*, see the fourth-century edicts, including one by Julian himself, in *Cod. Theod.*, XII.13. The Arabs offered their *corona aurea* voluntarily, and this must have pleased Julian, who stated at the beginning of his edict of 20 April 362 (*Cod. Theod.*, XII.13.1) *aurum coronarium munus est voluntatis*.

³¹See *Cod. Theod.*, XII.13.4 for the offering of golden crowns on the occasion of imperial successes, *rebus prospere gestis*; and *ibid.*, XII.13.6, where the crown is offered *pro devotione, quae Romano debetur imperio*.

³²On his accession, Julian received golden crowns (Libanius, Oration XVIII.193). Although the offering of these crowns was differently inspired from the Arab one, it is relevant to mention that Julian would not accept crowns of more than seventy *solidi* since he valued the offering as an honor, *τιμή*.

³³See *The Works of the Emperor Julian*, tr. W. C. Wright, Loeb ed. (London–Cambridge, Mass., 1913), vol. 3, letter 58, pp. 206f.

gentes are described as *amici et socii*, and so the Arabs among them could only have been the *foederati* of the fourth century.³⁴

B

The three passages analyzed above, the two from the *Res Gestae* and the one from Julian's letter to Libanius, make clear that Julian was treating with the Arab *foederati*. These were the same *foederati* of the reign of Constantius, whose fortunes, examined in the preceding chapter, illuminate all these transactions in Julian's reign. Just as Constantius had negotiated with them at the beginning of his reign,³⁵ so does Julian negotiate with them at his accession and with the same end in view—participation in his Persian campaign.

It has been argued that these *foederati* had revolted in the reign of Constantius on grounds that have been explored, and this raises the question why they joined Julian, who was from their point of view even worse than Constantius, a pagan and, what is more, an apostate. It is possible that the orthodox *foederati* had not yet heard of his apostasy. But the more probable reason is that in spite of this and of his championship of paganism, Julian's short reign began with a proclamation of religious tolerance and with an edict that recalled all the bishops banished in the reign of Constantius. Thus the Nicene bishops to whom the Arab *foederati* were attached returned³⁶ from exile, and this was sure to make the Arabs flock again to his standard. His anti-Christian measures, such as forbidding the Christians to teach or study the liberal arts, would have been of only remote concern to the Arab *foederati*, perhaps of no significance whatsoever.³⁷

5

Two sections in the *Res Gestae* raise questions which call for a separate treatment.

³⁴The *amicos et socios* of *RG*, XXIII.2.1 is a major piece of evidence that the status of these *auxilia* was indeed that of *amici et socii*. On how Ammianus obscured this status of the Arabs in the reign of Constantius, see Chap. 2, "The Reign of Constantius," *supra*, pp. 83–85. The phrase *amici et socii* is of course elliptical, the full phrase being *amici et socii populi Romani*.

³⁵A transaction Julian was aware of while Caesar in Gaul, as is clear from his panegyric on Constantius, for which see *supra*, p. 75.

³⁶Athanasius returned to his Alexandrian see in 361, although he had been hiding in the city from 356 to 361; he was exiled again in 362. That the Arab *foederati* in Oriens were not unconcerned about the patriarchal see of Alexandria and the theological position of its incumbent is clearly indicated by the encounter that took place in Alexandria itself in the reign of Valens between their own orthodox bishop, Moses, and the Arian Lucius, for which see *infra*, pp. 153–155. More relevant to the *foederati* would have been the return of their own orthodox bishop, possibly the Theotimus who appears in the list of the Synod of Antioch convened in the reign of Jovian, for which see *infra*, pp. 334–35.

³⁷On Julian's religious policy, see Bidez, *La vie de l'empereur Julien*, pp. 225–35, 300–304, 310–14.

A

The first section, XXIV.6.9–10, bears on the battle of Ctesiphon and possible Arab participation in it. It has been argued that the *auxilia* who took part in the battle were probably Arab. This conclusion could derive support from the Arabic *History* of Ṭabarī, which has a fairly detailed account of the battle of Ctesiphon and of Arab participation in Julian's campaign.³⁸ The relevant important features of this account are the following:

1. The Arabs formed a substantial portion of the army of Julian, but the numbers are fabulously exaggerated.³⁹ What is important, however, is not their numbers but the fact of their participation in Julian's campaign, which can be checked with Ammianus's account, implicit as it is in its reference to the Arabs.

2. The Arabs were eager to join Julian; their eagerness derived from their animosity toward Shāpūr, engendered by the latter's brutal campaign against the Arabs in 326 when he sought them and beat them in various parts of the Peninsula and the Fertile Crescent.⁴⁰ The Arab eagerness to join Julian may be interlocked with *RG*, XXIII.2.1 and XXIII.5.1, and thus supplies the background for Ammianus's account of their willingness to join him. That these were not Peninsular but Roman Arabs is clearly indicated by a statement in Ṭabarī's account, namely, that Julian recruited "those of the Arabs who were in his kingdom." This statement is valuable: it interlocks (*a*) with what has

³⁸Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vol. 2, pp. 58–59; see also Nöldeke's translation and notes in *PAS*, pp. 59–61, and *idem*, "Über den syrischen Roman von Kaiser Julian," *ZDMG*, 28, pp. 263–92, esp. pp. 291–92.

Ṭabarī's account cannot be dismissed so lightly, as the above analysis will show. Nöldeke did not pay too much attention to the Arab-Byzantine relationship in the fourth century nor did he analyze Ammianus's account in the *RG* of Arab participation in Julian's campaign. Besides, he published *PAS* in 1879, and much progress has been made in the course of the century that has elapsed since his work was written, and some of his views and conclusions have to be reexamined. Such for instance is his footnote (note 2 on p. 60 of *PAS*) on Ṭabarī's inclusion of the Khazars as a contingent in Julian's army. Just as Ammianus calls the Goths Scythians, so does Ṭabarī call them Khazars; as Julian's army was indeed composed of Romans, Arabs, and Goths, Ṭabarī's statement that it was composed of Romans, Arabs, and Khazars is not open to much questioning; thus Nöldeke's judgment that the inclusion of the Khazars is *eine Zutat des arab. Bearbeiters* is unjustified.

Ṭabarī was well informed about Julian's reign, and his account of that reign, with the exception of some patently erroneous statements, is basically correct; he was a Persian writing in the eastern half of the Islamic Empire and was naturally interested in the history of the Persians and their relations with the Romans and the Arabs and was careful to use reliable Persian and Arabic sources. For an evaluation of both Ṭabarī and Nöldeke, see the present writer's review article of *PAS* in *IJMES*, 8 (1977), pp.117–22.

³⁹The use of the plural, *reguli*, in *RG*, XXIII.3.8 suggests that the Arabs who joined Julian near Circesium came to him in considerable numbers.

⁴⁰On this campaign and the possible involvement of Imru' al-Qays in it, see *supra*, pp. 62–64. Ṭabarī's statement that the Arabs who joined Julian did so because they wanted to conduct a war of revenge against Shāpūr could suggest that Imru' al-Qays's defection may be related to this campaign rather than to his Christianity; but it could be related to both.

been said on the Arab contingent in the preceding section, namely, that they were *foederati*, and (b) with what has been said about the two groups of *foederati* in Rome's service, the Lakhmids of the Provincia Arabia, the descendants of Imru' al-Qays, and the Tanūkhids⁴¹ of the north, namely, that they fled Persian territory after their quarrel with the Sasanids.

3. The Arab contingent in Julian's army won a resounding victory over Shāpūr before the walls of Ctesiphon. There is no record of this in *RG*, XXIV.6.9–10; there is mention only of auxiliary participation, and it has been argued (*supra*, sec. 1.B.6) that this is or may be a reference to Arab participation. The two accounts may be reconciled; Ṭabarī grossly exaggerated the Arab achievement, while Ammianus, not partial to the Arabs, obscured it or left it implied. The truth seems to lie between Ṭabarī's overstatements and Ammianus's understatements.

Less important than Ṭabarī's account is another that may be found in Dīnawarī's *Al-Akbbār al-Ṭiwāl*.⁴² It is, however, not devoid of interest since it contains references to the Ghassānids both in Persian and in Roman territory. Dīnawarī states that the Ghassānids took part in Julian's campaign against the Persians; that a Ghassānid king penetrated Mesopotamia during the minority of Shāpūr II, who upon reaching his majority besieged the Ghassānid Dayzan in his city on the Euphrates, captured it, and killed him. The account and Dīnawarī's sources have been analyzed by Nöldeke and dismissed as untrustworthy,⁴³ yet there is the tantalizing reference to the Assanite Arabs in Ammianus during the campaign of Julian, and the possibility that after all the Ghassānids may have been already in those regions in the fourth century.⁴⁴

B

The second section in the *Res Gestae* that needs a specialized treatment is XXV.1.7, the episode of the *ductor* of the *Tertiatorum equestris numerus*, who fought bravely while his *numerus* gave way. An examination of this section could yield the conclusion that he was possibly an Arab phylarch, and this conclusion could corroborate the view already argued for—that the *numerus* under his command was indeed Arab.

The argument for the *ductor's* being an Arab derives partly from that advanced for the *numerus's* being Arab (*supra*, sec. 1.B, note 13), namely, that the *numeri* were normally composed of barbarian troops; furthermore, the members of the *numerus* carried lances that Julian broke in order to disgrace

⁴¹For the Tanūkhids and the Lakhmids, see *infra*, pp. 366–72 and 383.

⁴²Dīnawarī, *Al-Akbbār al-Ṭiwāl*, ed. A. 'Āmir and J. Shayyāl (Cairo, 1960), pp. 48–49.

⁴³See Nöldeke's evaluation of this work as inferior and deriving from *Nihāyat al-Irab*, in *PAS*, pp. xxv–xxvi and p. 36 note 1.

⁴⁴For this, see *infra*, sec. 6. In Ammianus's account, however, the Ghassānid chief Podosacis is on the Persian side, but the large group may have divided itself between the Persians and the Romans, or some of them may have been acting independently.

them, and the Arabs carried lances as part of their regular accouterment. The details given by Ammianus on the *ductor* himself suggest also the following further observations on the Arab origin of the *ductor*:

1. The *ductor* is left anonymous, while Ammianus usually goes out of his way to mention by name individual commanders who distinguish themselves, as the *ductor* of this *numerus* did.⁴⁵ This could suggest that the name was so foreign to Ammianus that he found it difficult to pronounce it or transliterate it, a difficulty already experienced by Strabo, who omitted mentioning the names of Arab tribes along the Euphrates because of the difficulty of pronouncing them.⁴⁶

2. After he had disgraced the *numerus*, Julian gave the *ductor* the command of a *turma* whose commander had disgraced himself. The *turma* was usually composed of barbarian troops, and these could have been Arab; this may explain why the *ductor* was assigned to the *turma*, whose members could understand the language of their newly appointed *ductor*, who, as has been argued, could have been an Arab.⁴⁷

3. The title that describes the leader could point in the same direction. *Ductor* is not a technical term in Roman military terminology, and this suggests that the holder of that title did not have a regular appointment in the Roman army but was the leader of barbarian *auxilia*.

The last point raises the question whether this *ductor* was a *phylarchus*, the title used to describe the commander of the Arab *foederati* and which was used later, in the fifth century, and attained its widest vogue in the sixth.⁴⁸ Ammianus uses the term only once, applying it to the Arab chief who commanded the Persian Arabs (*RG*, XXIV.2.4), clearly in the nontechnical sense of *chief*. For the Arab chiefs he uses the term *reguli*, as in *RG*, XXIII.3.8. Perhaps Ammianus did not want to use *phylarchus* to describe the *ductor* because it had not then become a technical term,⁴⁹ or he did not wish to disclose the Arab origin of the *ductor*,⁵⁰ possibly the former.

⁴⁵He even gives the names of those who did not distinguish themselves, as, for instance, in *RG*, XVIII.6.12, which mentions a fleeing tribune whose name, Abdigildus, he gives.

⁴⁶Strabo, *Geography*, XVI.4.18.

⁴⁷The Arab *foederati* of the fourth century probably did not understand Latin, the language of the Roman army.

⁴⁸On this, see Procopius, *Wars*, I.xvii.46.

⁴⁹The reluctance of classical authors to use the term *phylarchus* for Arab chiefs in the service of Rome may derive from the fact that *phylarchus* in the Roman military terminology translated *tribunus*, and this would have made the military and legal status of the Arab *phylarchus* ambiguous, as it would have confused him with the Roman *tribunus*. The former was not *civis*, while the latter was. On Nöldeke's view why the term was not used, see *GF*, p. 13. See also *infra*, pp. 520–21.

⁵⁰If proved Arab, the bravery of the *ductor* invites comparison with that of Arethas at Callinicum in 531; he, too, stood his ground while the other phylarchs fled; see the present writer in "Procopius and Arethas," pp. 43–56.

6

A most informative section in the *Res Gestae* as far as the Arabs are concerned is XXIV.2.4, which involves not the Roman Arabs but a joint Perso-Arab operation that took place in May, two days after the burning of Ozogardana, and which contemplated the capture of Hormisdas, the fugitive Persian prince. The Persian force under the Surenas was accompanied by an Arab force under the command of *Malechus Podosacis nomine, phylarchus Sarcenorum Assanitarum*. It is the most detailed and specific reference to the Arabs in the pages of Ammianus, and, in spite of the fact that it refers to the Persian Arabs, it is of great importance and relevance to the entire Byzantine-Arab-Persian relationship.

A

The problem that this reference poses is the identification of the three proper names—Malechus, Podosacis, and Assanitarum—a problem well known since the days of O. Blau:⁵¹

1. *Malechus* may be the Arabic title *king*, and it recalls the *reguli* who joined Julian near Circesium. Alternatively, it could be a proper noun, the Arabic personal name Mālik, and it has been persuasively argued that his full name was “Mālik, the son of Podosacis,” the last word being a patronymic.⁵²

2. *Podosacis* presents a much more difficult problem: (a) It could be a Persian name or title with which the Arab chief or his father was endowed in view of his association with the Persians, to which there are parallels in the history of Arab-Persian relations.⁵³ The closest Persian title to *Podosacis* is *Bidbakhsb*.⁵⁴ (b) Alternatively, and more probably, it is an Arabic proper name,

⁵¹See his “Arabien im sechsten Jahrhundert,” *ZDMG*, 23 (1869), p. 577; see also R. Aigrain, “Arabie,” *DHGE*, 3, cols. 1190–91.

⁵²See *AAW*, vol. 2, pp. 325–26.

⁵³Some of the Arabs living in or near the Persian sphere of influence assumed Persian names, such as Bistām and Qabūs. The Persian title *Sepahbad* was assumed by an Arab chief in the fifth century, Aspebetos, the friend of St. Euthymius, for whom see *BAFIC*. This title applied to Arab chiefs is also known to classical Arabic lexicographers. On *Sepahbad*, see A. Christensen, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides* (Copenhagen, 1944), p. 104 note 1.

⁵⁴On this Persian title, see *ibid.*, pp. 22–23, 137. The title is known to Ammianus, who spells it *vitaxa* (*RG*, XXIII.6.14); this Latin spelling of the title does not necessarily argue against its identification with *Podosacis*. By the time it reached the ears of Ammianus, it had been transformed by the Arabs and adapted to the phonology of Arabic; Ammianus could have retransliterated it unaware that he was transliterating the same title he had rendered as *vitaxa*. Consonantly, *Podosacis* (the last *s* is that of the genitive) and *Bidbakhsb* are mutually reducible to each other; the third and the fourth consonants, *s* and *c*, have possibly experienced metathesis, a common fate that befalls words that cross these linguistic frontiers; the final consonant in Persian (*sb*), as always, becomes an *s* in Greek and Latin. If *Podosacis* turns out to be really Persian *Bidbakhsb*, this would be a remarkable application of the term to an Arab figure in view of the importance of the title in the Persian hierarchical order. But as in the case of

the nearest to which is Arabic *Fadawkas*⁵⁵ (the young fox). His full name would have been "Mālik, the son of Fadawkas" if, as is probable, *Podosacis* is to be construed as a patronymic. This would be a gain genealogically, since the father's name is thus recovered,⁵⁶ and the father, too, most probably ruled his Saracens and was in the service of Persia.

3. More important than his name and patronymic is his tribal affiliation; this is rarely mentioned by classical writers when relating the fortunes of Arab historical figures. It is almost certain that the *Saracenorūm Assanitarūm* to which he belonged were none other than the Ghassānids, who became the *foederati* of Byzantium in the sixth century.

In support of the identification of the Assanitae with the Ghassānids, the following arguments and observations may be advanced: (a) It is the most natural identification on phonological grounds,⁵⁷ and the tribal group for whom this name stands must be the well-known Ghassānids, the future *foederati* of Byzantium. (b) Aigrain had declared against this identification on the ground that the Ghassānids appeared only later, and so this reference would be too early for them; recent epigraphic discoveries, however, have invalidated this view. A Sabaic inscription, recently discovered, clearly proves that the Ghassānids already in the third century had moved from South Arabia and were somewhere in the north.⁵⁸ It is, therefore, quite likely that in the fourth century their wanderings took them to northeast Arabia and the Euphrates region, in the Persian sphere of influence. (c) The literary sources also know of the Ghassānids in Hīra itself, and this gives even more precision to their

Aspebetos in the fifth century, the title was probably loosely applied. If he was Persia's client-king over the neighboring Arabs and their regions, the title would have been applied with some appositeness. For an alternative explanation of *Podosacis* as an Iranian title, see *AAW*, vol. 2, p. 326.

⁵⁵On Fadawkas, see Ibn-Durayd, *Al-Isbtīqāq*, ed. 'A. Hārūn (Cairo, 1958), p. 338. In view of the almost certain Ghassānid affiliation of this Arab chief, it is pertinent to remark that a major figure in Ghassānid history also carried the name *Fox*, although it is a different Arabic word, *Tha'labā*, that designates him. On the Ghassānids as the "House of Tha'labah," see the present writer in "Ghassān and Byzantium: A New *terminus a quo*," *Der Islam*, 33 (1958), pp. 232–55.

⁵⁶In much the same way that the patronymic given to the famous Arethas, "son of Jabala," by Procopius is valuable; Procopius, *Wars*, I.xvii.47.

⁵⁷In spite of some difficulties noted in *AAW*, vol. 2, pp. 327–28. The transliteration of Arabic words into Greek does not follow strict rules and they appear quite distorted.

It has been suggested that Ammianus may have written not *Assanitarum* but *Muscenitarum*, the Syriac term for "tent-dweller"; see P. Peeters, "Bulletin des publications hagiographiques," *AB*, 44 (1926), p. 396. This is to be wholeheartedly rejected since it violates the rules of transcriptional probabilities. Besides, Ammianus is informed about the Arabs who were tent-dwellers, the *scenitae*, and indeed he is one of the main sources for the identification of *Saraceni* with *Scenitae*. *Saracenorūm Muscenitarūm* would be absurdly tautological. Peeters wrote at a time when the history of the Ghassānids in its peninsular stage was still obscure.

⁵⁸W. Müller, "Ergebnisse neuer epigraphischer Forschungen im Jemen," *ZDMG* (1977), Supplement III, 1, p. 732.

whereabouts, in the Persian sphere of influence.⁵⁹ (d) The old view that the Ghassānids reached the Roman frontier from the south, from Ḥijāz, has militated against the identification of the Assanitae of the *Res Gestae* with the Ghassānids. But this view is now open to question and the probabilities are that, in spite of their connection with the Azd of Medina, the Ghassānids reached the Roman frontiers and became Rome's allies after their association with the Persians.⁶⁰ This fortifies the conclusion that the Assanitae, whom Ammianus finds along the Euphrates and in the service of Persia, are indeed the Ghassānids.

B

The correct identification of this figure is of considerable importance to the history of the Romans as well as the Persians and to the interrelationship that obtained among the Arabs, the Persians, and the Romans.

1. He appears as a powerful ally of the Persians, important enough to be associated with the Surenas⁶¹ himself in military operations. He had long harassed the Roman frontier as a dedicated foe of the Romans, and this implies that he took part in the Byzantine-Persian war of the previous reign, that of Constantius. He thus could have been included in the phrase *duces varii*⁶² with

⁵⁹For the Ghassānids in Ḥīra, their Christianity, and their church, and for an Azd colony settled in Naarmalcha, not far from Ḥīra, see Ibn-Ḥazm, *Jamharat Ansaba al-'Arab*, ed. 'A. Hārūn (Cairo, 1962), pp. 374–75; also, al-Mas'ūdī, who speaks of their kings in Ḥīra; see *al-Tanbīh wa al-Isbrāf*, ed. 'A. al-Ṣāwī (Cairo, 1938), p. 158; on the Ghassānids in the Persian sphere of influence in this period, see the account of Dīnawarī, summarized *supra*, sec. 5.A.

It is also pertinent to note that the mother of the Lakhmid king of Ḥīra (Imru' al-Qays) who went over to the Romans was an Azdite, and that his wife, the mother of his son 'Amr, was a Ghassānid princess; see Ḥamza, *Tārīkh* (Beirut, 1961), p. 86; and Mas'ūdī, *Murūj* (Beirut, 1966), vol. 2, p. 223. This indicates or at least implies that the Ghassānids were in the fourth century in or around Ḥīra. These genealogical data on Lakhmid-Ghassānid marriage relationships cannot now be lightly dismissed; they are consonant with what has been independently argued for on the Ghassānid presence in the eastern part of the Fertile Crescent in the fourth century.

Rothstein's view that the Ghassānids of Ḥīra are not the same as the well-known group who became the allies of Byzantium in Oriens has now to be rejected. Rothstein wrote in 1899 and under the influence of Nöldeke; see Rothstein, *DLH*, p. 68 note 2.

⁶⁰The course suggested here for the movement of the Ghassānids from Persian to Roman territory is illustrated by the career of Imru' al-Qays, the adventurous phylarch of the reign of Leo, whose Ghassānid affiliation has been argued for by the present writer in still unpublished research and who will be discussed in the second volume of this work, *BAFIC*. For the time being the reader may consult the published article on him, which, however, leaves out the problem of his tribal affiliation; see "On the Patriciate of Imru' al-Qays," *The World of Islam (Studies in Honor of Philip K. Hitti)*, eds. J. Kritzeck and B. Winder (London, 1959), pp. 74–82.

⁶¹On the Surenas, see Nöldeke, *PAS*, p. 438 note 4.

⁶²It is almost certain that the Arabs, who were native to Mesopotamia, formed part of the army of Shāpūr, but their role was unnoticed by Ammianus or obscured by him. See the preceding chapter on the reign of Constantius, pp. 74–86. For Ammianus, Podosacis was a *latro*.

which Ammianus describes the military allies of Shāpūr before the siege of Amida in 359 (*RG*, XVIII.6.22), all of which is reflected in the fact that he became known to the Romans by name, rank, and tribal affiliation, an unusually detailed description of an Arab chief in classical literature.

2. The reference to his tribal affiliation as a Ghassānid is more important than his name. The obscurity that pervades the history of the Ghassānids in the Peninsular stage before they joined the Romans in the sixth century is partially dispelled by the precious reference in the *Res Gestae* with its precise geographical and chronological indications. Thus, the *Res Gestae* is an important document for Ghassānid history in the fourth century, coming as it does between the Sabaic inscription in the third and Malchus's⁶³ fragment in the fifth; the three documents give a reasonably clear chart of their wanderings until they joined the Romans during the reign of Anastasius, ca. 500.

The Persian connection of Podosacis is of great relevance to the history of Byzantine-Ghassānid relations. It indicates that before they became the *foederati* of Byzantium in the sixth century they had been in alliance with the Persians, and that the course of their wanderings to the Roman *limes* has to be recharted; they appear to have wandered from the eastern to the western part of the Fertile Crescent rather than from the south (Ḥijāz) to the north, the Provincia Arabia.⁶⁴

3. The position of Podosacis among the Persians and his Ghassānid affiliations raise questions pertaining to the history of Ḥīra in this period and the relation of the Ghassānid Podosacis to it.

It is possible that Podosacis was the head of a Ghassānid group in the service of Persia based somewhere along the Euphrates, but it is more likely that he had some connection with Ḥīra, the history of which is confused and obscure at this time after the defection of Imru' al-Qays, the Lakhmid, and his migration to Roman territory.⁶⁵ It is precisely in this period that Ḥīra is said to have been ruled not by Lakhmids but by a figure with the name of Aws ibn-Qallām. According to *Aghānī*, he belonged to the tribe of al-Ḥārith b. Ka'b,⁶⁶ the well-known South Arabian tribe, which ruled Najrān in the

⁶³See *supra*, note 60, on Imru' al-Qays of Leo's reign.

⁶⁴A possible course for their wanderings from the Euphrates region to the West, to the Roman frontier, is that some of them went directly to the Romans, represented by the group of Imru' al-Qays of the reign of Leo, while others went to northern Ḥijāz where they were associated with the two tribes of Medina, al-Awas and al-Khazraj, both, like the Ghassānids, belonging to the large Azd group. It is also possible that the connection of Medina with the Eastern Ghassānids may go back to the time and group of Imru' al-Qays, who established a contact with the Byzantines before the later and more important contact was established ca. 500 in the reign of Anastasius.

⁶⁵See Rothstein, *DLH*, pp. 64–65. It is possible that Ghassān reached Ḥīra as part of Tanūkh, which counted among its members the Azd, to whom Ghassān belonged.

⁶⁶See Nöldeke, *PAS*, p. 78 note 1.

sixth century.⁶⁷ But this tribe was South Arabian, as were the Ghassānids and their chief. This fortifies the conclusion that Podosacis was connected with Ḥīra. He may have been an ally of Aws or his general, or even the ruler of Ḥīra⁶⁸ at this time of confusion, but his name did not reach the Arab historians, or if it did, it has not survived.

7

The examination of the references to the Arabs in the *Res Gestae* for the reign of Julian calls for some general comments on Ammianus's account of Arab participation in Julian's Persian War:

(1) He had left vague the status of the Arabs for the reign of Constantius, and he has done the same for the reign of Julian. The fact of their being *foederati* has had to be reconstructed from his own narrative and from other contemporary sources (*supra*, sec. 4).

(2) Although his account includes references to their active participation in the campaign, the examination of the implicit references suggests that the range of their participation was probably much more extensive than Ammianus has chosen to include (*supra*, sec. 1).

(3) The nature of their participation too may have been obscured. Although the Arabs were certainly adapted for guerilla warfare, it has been argued that they were much more than that, and that they took an active part in the battle of Ctesiphon commanded by Julian himself (*supra*, sec. 5).

The foregoing conclusions or comments receive confirmation from the manner of the Arabs' appearance in the classical sources in the reign of Valens, so *shortly* after the death of Julian. They appear so well organized and so powerful that this must have been the case also in the previous reign.⁶⁹ Thus Ṭabarī's account of active and substantial Arab participation in Julian's campaign receives some additional support, while, on the other hand, Ammianus's account for both the reigns of Constantius and Julian suggests that the historian did not tell the story of their participation in its entirety.

Nevertheless, Ṭabarī's account, in spite of arguments in its favor, remains a later Arabic one, written in Islamic times, and, consequently, is not

⁶⁷It is not entirely clear whether the tribe had occupied Najrān in the fourth century or whether it was still somewhere in its vicinity.

⁶⁸This could derive support from the genealogical data of Lakhmid-Ghassānid marriage relationships referred to *supra*, note 59. Perhaps there was a Ghassānid interregnum in the history of Ḥīra after the defection of Imru' al-Qays to the Romans, as there was to be a Kindite interregnum in the sixth century.

⁶⁹On the Arab *foederati* in the reign of Valens, see *infra*, Chap. 4. The reference to the σπονδαί between the Romans and the Arabs, dissolved by the death of the latter's king, is decisive. It represents a link with the immediate past and establishes the fact that the Arabs were, indeed, *foederati*.

as decisive as contemporary classical sources would be for evaluating Ammianus's account. Fortunately, those classical sources are available for the following reigns and will form the basis for passing a judgment on Ammianus.⁷⁰

II. THE DEATH OF JULIAN

The sudden death of Julian during his retreat from Ctesiphon raised in the minds of contemporaries the question of whether he was accidentally killed or struck down by the lance of an assassin.⁷¹ The question also involved the identity of the killer, whether he was a Christian, a Roman legionary, a Persian, or a Saracen.

The views that implicate the Arabs in the death of Julian are two: (1) Libanius,⁷² the pagan friend of Julian, argues that the assassin was an Arab in the Roman army and in the employ of some group. (2) On the other hand, the ecclesiastical historian Philostorgius⁷³ asserts that the Saracen who hurled the lance at Julian was in the Persian army and does not express or imply that there was a plot behind his death. Two other ecclesiastical historians, Sozomen and Theodoret, include a reference to an Arab as one of the possibilities, but only passingly.⁷⁴

A

Of all the authors who discussed the death of Julian, Libanius is the most engaged and concerned. This was natural since he was a teacher, friend, and admirer of the emperor whose reign witnessed the climax of his career. Furthermore, after 353 he lived permanently in his native Antioch, the base whence Julian marched against Persia and whither Ammianus, the primary source for that campaign, retired after the death of Julian. Thus Libanius was

⁷⁰On this, see the section entitled "Ammianus and the Arabs," *infra*, pp. 239–50.

⁷¹For a critique of the sources, see Th. Bürtner-Wobst, "Der Tod des Kaisers Julian, eine Quellenstudie," *Philologus*, 51 (1892), pp. 561–80. On the Eunapian tradition as a source for the death of Julian, see G. W. Bowersock, "Gibbon and Julian," *Gibbon et Rome* (Geneva, 1977), pp. 207–10.

⁷²See Oration XXIV.6. The Julianic Orations have been conveniently collected by A. F. Norman in vol. 1 of his *Libanius: Selected Works*, in the Loeb Classical Library (London–Cambridge, Mass., 1969).

⁷³*HE*, VII.15. John Lydus adds a picturesque detail, namely, that the Saracen who killed Julian did so after recognizing him by his purple mantle and shouting in his native language, Μαλχάν; see Lydus, *De mensibus*, ed. R. Wünsch, Bibliotheca Teubneriana (Leipzig, 1898), IV.75. According to Philostorgius, the Saracen was attacked by one of Julian's bodyguard, who cut his head off.

⁷⁴Sozomen refers to him as a "Saracen," *Historia Ecclesiastica*, ed. J. Bidez, *GCS*, 50 (Berlin, 1960), VI.1, while Theodoret calls him "one of the nomads who were called Ishmaelites," *Historia Ecclesiastica*, ed. L. Parmentier, *GCS*, 19 (Leipzig, 1911), III.20.

in a favored position to know much about that death, and his thoughts on it deserve to be carefully analyzed.⁷⁵

Libanius discusses Julian's death in four different orations: XVII, XVIII, I, and XXIV. The first was composed in 364/65, the second in 365, the third in 374, and the fourth in 379, some fifteen years after the first one, and addressed to the emperor Theodosius. Thus the problem was on his mind for a number of years, and his views on the identity of Julian's murderer went through important changes.

1. In Oration XVII (Monody), he speaks of the Assyrians (sec. 6) and later of an Achaemenid⁷⁶ (sec. 32) as the killers of Julian. Thus he assumes that the emperor fighting in Assyria against the Persians was killed by one of his adversaries. In this account he may have been reflecting the views of Ammianus Marcellinus (*RG*, XXV.3.6–7), whom he undoubtedly met after the latter's return to Antioch and who in the version he was later to write of Julian's death did not suspect any plot or foul play.⁷⁷

2. In Oration XVIII (Funeral Oration), Libanius returns to the question of Julian's death and devotes to it two sections (274–75). He had reflected on the manner of his death since writing the Monody and had come to the conclusion that Julian was killed not by a Persian but by a Roman hand⁷⁸ in the employ of a Christian group. He does not mention the Christians by name, but they are so clearly implied, and the implication was understood by other writers such as Sozomen,⁷⁹ who quotes this very passage.

This shift in Libanius's position may be due to the circulation of a new version of the death of Julian, such as the one Ammianus later incorporated in

⁷⁵They were discussed in Büttner-Wobst's analysis of the sources for the death of Julian (pp. 569–71), for which see *supra*, note 71. But that article appeared in 1892, and in addition to not noting the references in Orations XVII, I, and XVIII, the author did not accept the reading crucial for the present analysis, namely, *Ταίηνός τις*, since then accepted by R. Foerster, ed., *Libanii Opera*, Bibliotheca Teubneriana, 11 (Berlin, 1963), vol. 2, p. 517, line 4.

⁷⁶The Sasanids of Libanius's time derived their descent from the Achaemenids. The use of the term *Achaemenid* for *Persian* is an archaism, not startling coming as it does from the Atticising Libanius, who may have chosen it seduced by the proximity of his reference to the Achaemenids Cyrus and Cambyses and to Alexander in the same section 32. Even so, it is rather incongruous since the Achaemenids were only the royal house or the ruling dynasty; *Achaemenid* and *Persian* are not interchangeable terms.

⁷⁷For his desire to be informed by eyewitnesses on the Persian campaign, see Libanius, letters 1220, 1434, *Libanii Opera* (Teubner), vol. 11.

⁷⁸He rests his argument on the assumption that the assailant received no reward from the Persian king, who issued a proclamation on this point inviting the killer to come forward, but no one did. This argument may be answered by reference to Philostorgius's account, according to which the killer was beheaded by one of Julian's bodyguard. Ammianus does not record this incident, but he may have suppressed it lest his hero should appear a fool who, in the land of Parthian arrows, fought without wearing his armor.

⁷⁹Sozomen thinks Libanius was probably right in his suspicion and, what is more, has a good word for the Christian soldier who is said to have killed Julian.

his *Res Gestae* (XXV.6.6) where Roman responsibility is suspected by the Persians who were informed of it by a group of deserters. As for the further statement that the killer was in the employ of a Christian group, this could have been inspired by manifest and undisguised Christian satisfaction or jubilation over Julian's death, and the pagan sophist thus easily accepted the thesis of Christian guilt or complicity.

3. In Oration I, his autobiography, written in 374, some ten years later, Libanius makes a reference to Julian's death but limits himself to saying that a spear pierced his side.⁸⁰ On the identity of the killer and the Christian group who, according to his previous Oration XVIII, inspired the killing, Libanius is silent.

His silence was probably a course of prudence that he pursued as a result of his being accused in the years after 365 of complicity in conspiracies against Valens, an accusation that could gain credence in view of his avowed paganism and friendship with the anti-Christian Julian.

4. But it is in Oration XXIV, *On Avenging Julian*, addressed to Emperor Theodosius I, that Libanius goes beyond speaking in general terms of Julian's death at the hands of a Roman inspired by a Christian group (secs. 11, 21) into specifying that it was Ταϊηνός τις,⁸¹ an Arab, that killed Julian (sec. 6): Ταϊηνός τις ἐντολήν πληρῶν τῶ σφῶν αὐτῶν ἄρχοντι. This section, with its precious reference to Ταϊηνός τις, poses a number of problems and calls for some observations:

(a) The first problem is the peculiar term used to describe the Arab assailant as *Taienos*. Originally the term signified a member of the tribe of Tayy and later came to be applied by the Aramaic-speaking peoples of Assyria and Babylonia to the bedouin Arabs, who were called *Saraceni* by those in Syria and Egypt. Although the term is known to Byzantine writers⁸² not only in the restricted sense of bedouins but also in the wider generic sense of Arabs,⁸³ its use by Libanius is somewhat odd since it was far from being a

⁸⁰See *Libanius' Autobiography*, ed. A. F. Norman (Oxford, 1965), sec. 133. On the dating of the *Autobiography* and the part within which sec. 133 falls, see p. xiii of the introduction.

⁸¹This reading, Ταϊηνός τις, had been rejected by Büttner-Wobst, who suggested τῶν ἡμετέρων τις instead; see p. 570 note 24 of his article cited *supra*, note 71. But O. Crusius accepted it, following Reiske, and argued for it in his "Ταϊηνός τις als Mörder Julians," *Philologus*, 51 (1892), pp. 735–38. This reading has been accepted for the standard text in the Teubner series (*supra*, note 75). It could derive some additional support from a later passage in the same oration (sec. 29), where the word *tent*, σκηνή, is used twice, for which see *infra*, note 89.

⁸²Such as Uranios, who locates them to the south of the Saraceni. For the Taienoi, see E. Honigmann, "Ταϊηνοί," *RE*, 4, A.2, cols. 2025–26.

⁸³Its use in Eusebius and the Acts of the Council of Nicaea is of special importance since both are fourth-century attestations; see *infra*, pp. 330–34 and notes. Eusebius distinguishes the Taienoi from the Saraceni; the conciliar reference is even more important, since

common term for the Arabs, and one would expect him to use either *Arab*⁸⁴ or the term which was in vogue in the fourth century, namely, *Saracenos*. Few, if any, of Libanius's readers would have understood what *Taienos* meant. The employment of this term, therefore, calls for an explanation: (1) Libanius may simply have recorded what he had heard from one of his countrymen who spoke Syriac and for whom the Arabs were called *Taienoi*.⁸⁵ (2) It is just possible that the killer of Julian may have belonged to the *Taienoi* in the very restricted sense of one Arab group, the Ṭayy tribe, and so the term would have been appropriate and accurate; but there is no evidence that the tribe had, in the fourth century, moved from Inner Arabia into Oriens. (3) Perhaps Libanius wanted to be deliberately obscure, as he also was in his concealed reference to the Christian plotters. He may have been afraid of the Arab *foederati*, who were at this juncture powerful and influential owing to their record in the war against Valens and in their defense of Constantinople, in addition to the fact that one of their princesses, Queen Mavia's daughter, was married to an influential functionary in the imperial administration, none other than Victor, the *magister militum*, who resided in Antioch itself;⁸⁶ so instead of using the term *Arab* or *Saracenos* he used the much less common *Taienos* for security reasons. (4) It is not altogether impossible that the word used by Libanius stands not for Ṭayy but for Tanūkh, the Arab *foederati* of Byzantium in the fourth century, who must have taken part in Julian's campaign.⁸⁷ One of the many variant readings in the *apparatus criticus* is ταῖκνός τις, which, with some metathesis involving the *kappa* and the *nu*, rather common in the transliteration of Arabic words, could be read as Tanūkh.⁸⁸

(b) It is not entirely clear who the τῷ ἄρχοντι in the phrase τῷ σφῶν

if this group were the *foederati* of Byzantium, the two terms *Taienoi* and *Sarakenoi* must have been used interchangeably in this case; on an alternative explanation of the conciliar use of *Taienoi*, see *infra*, p. 331, d.

⁸⁴It is interesting to note that Libanius's own son was called Arabios! Perhaps this may have disinclined him to use *Arab*.

⁸⁵See Th. Nöldeke, "Ταῖκνός τις," *Philologus*, 52 (1894), p. 736. Libanius's use of this unusual term to designate the Arabs cannot be compared to his use of *Achaemenid* for *Persian*, since in the latter case Libanius could count on a cultured readership familiar with the term in Herodotus and Xenophon; furthermore, he had drawn attention to the Achaemenids by his reference to Cyrus and Cambyses.

⁸⁶On Mavia and her fortunes, see *infra*, Chap. 4.

⁸⁷Since they were the dominant Arab federate group in the fourth century.

⁸⁸How the name of this tribal group was mutilated in Greek may be examined in the Umm al-Jimāl inscription of Jaḍīma, described as the "king of Tanoukh or Tanukhites," Βασιλεὺς Θανουηγῶν; see *PPUAES*, p. 38. Ταῖκνός does not seem too improbable a reading for Arabic *Tanūkh*. If the word is truly *Tanūkh*, the reading *Taienus* in some of the MSS may possibly be due to a copyist to whom this term *Tanūkh* must have sounded strange and who consequently changed it to *Taienus*, which is to be found in classical Greek writers, is at least twice attested in the fourth century, and with which the copyist was presumably familiar.

αὐτῶν ἄρχοντι is or what the antecedent of σφῶν αὐτῶν is. Büttner-Wobst (*op. cit.*, p. 570 note 24) had argued that what is involved in both is not the Arabs but the Romans, suggesting καὶ τρώσας τῶν ἡμετέρων τις, while Crusius (*op. cit.*, p. 373), who cogently stated the case for Ταῖηνός τις, argued that the archon would consequently be an Arab chief or commander under whose instructions the Taienus acted; the Arab archon would be a phylarch in the service of Rome who, in turn, acted in the interests of others, presumably the Christian group that Libanius mentioned in Oration XVIII and to whom he refers again in section 21 of this very one, XXIV.

The acceptance of the reading Ταῖηνός τις naturally tilts the scales in favor of τῷ ἄρχοντι being an Arab chief or commander, and this involves the Arabs even more in the question of Julian's death and also in the interpretation of this passage. So far it has been assumed that two groups were implicated in Julian's assassination—the Christian group that plotted his death and the Arab group that executed the plot. But in the discussion of this problem it has not been realized that the Arab *foederati* of Byzantium were Christianized, and, as the history of Queen Mavia shows, they were zealous Christians. In the light of these facts, the distinction between the Christian plotters and the Arab executors involved in Julian's death may have to be discarded, since the plotters could very well have been Arabs, Christian Arabs. This could derive some support from section 29, which speaks of the plotters, and where a term usually associated with the Arabs,⁸⁹ namely, the tent (σκηνή), is used. Section 21, which likewise speaks of the plotters with the clear implication that they were Christians, could according to this interpretation refer to Christian Arabs.⁹⁰

The question arises as to why Libanius, who had been almost silent on Julian's murder and Christian complicity in Oration I and on the Arabs in Orations XVII and XVIII, suddenly becomes expansive in 379 and specifically mentions an Arab as Julian's murderer.

His expansiveness may be related to the accession of Theodosius, whose reign, coming after that of Valens, may have represented for him a period of emancipation, during which he could express himself freely and boldly for a pagan revival. As for the reference to the Arabs, it was also in this period that they became prominent in the ecclesiastical and military annals of the empire as a result of the successful revolt of Queen Mavia against Valens. If it was an

⁸⁹So much so that they were referred to often as *Scenitae*, "Tent-dwellers." The term σκηνή could, of course, mean not the tent of the Arabs but the military tent of the Roman general, the *praetorium*.

⁹⁰In this section (21) occurs the statement that the death of Julian turned out to be to the good fortune of the plotters or somebody else, and the somebody else is taken to be Jovian. This could recall the events of a century or so before, when another Roman emperor, Gordian, was killed during the Persian campaign, and the conspirator involved was allegedly an Arab, Philip, who reigned after him.

Arab group that was responsible for Julian's death, they could have circulated the report⁹¹ on their responsibility themselves, just as the Arabs of Queen Mavia boasted of their victory over Valens in songs that were still recited in the fifth century. Libanius, the Antiochene, conceivably heard this report in the seventies⁹² and thus could give credence to a version of the death of Julian that associated it with the Arabs.⁹³

B

It is not impossible that Julian was killed by an Arab. If so, the following observations are pertinent, since the Arab involvement in Julian's death has not been carefully studied in spite of much that has been written on this topic.

In the sources, the Arab presumed to have killed Julian is presented either as a soldier in the Persian army who killed him without any motive or a soldier in the Roman army who was not endowed with a motive other than that of reward. The analysis of the passage in Libanius just undertaken enables one to examine more closely the question of motives in connection with Arab complicity in Julian's death. Such an examination must take into account Arab involvement in the ecclesiastical and military annals of the fourth century and Arab relations with Julian during the Persian campaign.

1. It is perfectly possible that Julian's Arab killer might have been inspired by a religious motive. The record of the Christian Arabs in taking action when their religious susceptibilities were touched is instructive: (a) the career of Imru' al-Qays of the Namāra inscription and the history of Tanūkh's defection from the Persians to the Romans because of their loyalty to their Christian faith are of obvious relevance;⁹⁴ (b) so is the career of Queen Mavia who, because of the dispute over the consecration of an orthodox rather than an Arian bishop, declared war on the empire and finally forced it to accept her own terms;⁹⁵ (c) the same pattern unfolds in the sixth century with the Ghassānids and the close relationship that obtained between their religious convictions and their military record.⁹⁶

⁹¹Examples are not lacking of Arab kings killed by unruly tribesmen, who conceived of the kings as tyrants; such are the sixth-century Lakhmid 'Amr, son of Hind, and the Kindite Ḥujr, son of al-Ḥārith, both known to the Romans. Arab poets extolled the regicides, and even in the Islamic era the Christian poet al-Akhtal of Umayyad times took pride in the fact that his ancestors were regicides; see *El*², vol. 1, pp. 451–52, *s.vv.* 'Amr b. Hind and 'Amr b. Kulthūm; also Rothstein, *DLH*, pp. 100–102.

⁹²Either directly from the Arabs or indirectly from others; cf. *supra*, note 77.

⁹³On why he was not very explicit, see *supra*, p. 127.

⁹⁴On this, see *supra*, pp. 32–35 and *infra*, pp. 370–71.

⁹⁵On Mavia, see *infra*, Chap. 4.

⁹⁶This will be discussed at length in *BASIC*; for the time being, see Nöldeke, *GF*, pp. 24–27. Even closer to the problem of killing an apostate emperor for religious motives is the case of the martyrs of Najrān, a group of Christian Arabs in the sixth century who chose to die rather than apostasize.

2. It is more likely that the motive behind killing Julian was not religious but related to the concept of revenge, Arabic *tha'r*,⁹⁷ which figures so prominently in the *ayyām*, the battle-days of pre-Islamic Arabia. Views about a religious motive can be advanced only by analogy and a priori, but a motive related to revenge can be discussed with reference to the actual course of Julian's relations with the Arabs in the *Res Gestae* and the deterioration that took place in these relations.

The crucial passage is *RG*, XXV.6.9–10, analyzed above,⁹⁸ which tells how Julian withheld from the Arabs their *munera* and *salaria* and how the Arabs then left the service and molested the Roman army during its retreat after Julian's death. It is not difficult to see how, against this background of deteriorating relations, an Arab soldier, and a mercenary, cheated of his pay, could have decided to kill Julian. This group of discontented Arabs had already signaled their chagrin by deserting Julian and possibly joining the Persians.

Set against this episode, the other references in the sources to Julian's Arab killer can be shown to be coherent and reconcilable. The account of Philostorgius that he was in the Persian army becomes intelligible, and so does the account of John Lydus that the Saracen recognized Julian by his purple mantle and shouted "Malchan," "the king!" The Saracen, having been on the Roman side before and having seen Julian, was thus able to recognize him when he saw him.⁹⁹

A final remark may be made on Ammianus's account of Julian's death. He dispatches it with the utmost brevity (*RG*, XXV.3.6). It is possible that he was convinced that it was a stray lance that had killed Julian and that there was nothing more to say. Nevertheless, his laconic *incertum unde* is striking in view of the fact that he was writing a detailed account of the campaign, that he accorded lesser matters so much space in his history, much more than the death of one who was his hero, that some rumors were circulating to the effect that Julian was not accidentally killed but was murdered by a group that had deliberately plotted the murder,¹⁰⁰ and that these rumors were expressed in many contemporary writers, some of whom, such as Libanius, Ammianus

⁹⁷On *tha'r*, see R. A. Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs* (Cambridge, 1907), pp. 93–100.

⁹⁸See *supra*, sec. I.3. It has been argued also that the *numerus* humiliated by Julian (*RG*, XXV.1.7) could have been Arab. If so, a member of that *numerus* could have been Julian's killer, and in this case the concept of revenge would be related not to *munera* and *salaria* but to honor.

⁹⁹A Roman emperor would have been recognized by his royal dress, as indeed Julian himself was before the walls of Ctesiphon, *RG*, XXIV.5.6. But he would have been even more unmistakably recognized by one who had seen him and fought with him.

¹⁰⁰He refers very briefly and in passing to only one such rumor (*RG*, XXV.6.6), and it is significant that he relegates it to the chapters that describe Jovian's retreat.

certainly knew. All this calls for an explanation or at least for a comment. His apparently studied silence could fortify the view that it was an Arab who killed Julian. Ammianus's attitude to the Arabs has been examined for the reign of Constantius.¹⁰¹ For the reign of Julian, it was at best an ambivalent attitude and at worst one that resulted in a series of *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi*.¹⁰² It is, therefore, just possible that Ammianus suspected it was an Arab who had killed Julian, one of those whom the latter had alienated by his arrogance, and consequently his admiring historian was loath to discuss a report which would only have reflected on the judgment of his hero in handling the Arab *foederati* and with it the whole conduct of the campaign, and, what is more, would have drawn attention to the ethnic group that was associated with a death that changed the course of Byzantine history in the fourth century.

C

If Julian was killed by an Arab, and, furthermore, if the killing was not accidental, this would involve the Arabs more intimately in the structure of Byzantine history. But more important than the identity of the one who killed him is the fact of Julian's death itself. The question has been raised as to what might have happened if the thirty-one-year-old emperor had not died only eighteen months after his accession. Idle as speculation is, yet in this case it may be permitted, at least within a modest range, in the wake of one wave of speculation that has not spent itself. It is almost certain that if the young Julian had lived in the purple to a ripe old age, he would have continued his assault on Christianity. He might not have been able to suppress it but he would have dissolved the union of church and state, as he did during his reign, and this alone would have had far-reaching consequences; Christianity would have remained in his reign only a *religio licita*, unsupported and unprotected by the Roman state.

It is within this context that one of Julian's efforts admits of a reflection, even though it is in the framework of a historical might-have-been that has been expressed in the following terms: "undoubtedly Julian could have turned Jerusalem into a Jewish city and could have had the Temple rebuilt as the symbol of its freedom."¹⁰³ If this had taken place, the Umayyad Arabs would not have been able to build their two monuments, the Dome of the Rock and the Aqsa Mosque, since the site would have been occupied by the Third Temple

¹⁰¹See *supra*, pp. 83–85.

¹⁰²See *supra*, pp. 123–24.

¹⁰³Thus, *inter alia*, has an imaginative Jewish historian argued concerning Julian and the Jews. For him, "the spear of the Christian Arab which put an end to Julian's life deflected the course of history"; see Avi-Yonah, *The Jews of Palestine*, p. 204.

and they would not have pulled down what to them was Miḥrāb Dawūd,¹⁰⁴ an area well remembered in the Qurʾān and for Muslims made even holier by Muhammad's Nocturnal Journey. As it happened, the Muslim Arabs appeared on the stage of Near Eastern history in the seventh century, conquered Palestine, and occupied Jerusalem only to find the Temple Mount in ruins. It was in this way that they were able to build their two sanctuaries on the very site of the Second Temple and in so doing opened the third chapter in the history of Jerusalem as a Holy City.¹⁰⁵

III. JULIAN AND THE ARABS

The analyses undertaken in the preceding sections now make possible the drawing of some general conclusions on Julian's relations with the Arabs and on his conduct of the Persian War.

1

A close examination of the evidence reveals that these relations were not steady but checkered, passing through many stages—indifference, cooperation, deterioration, and hostility: (1) on his arrival in Antioch he turns his back on the embassies that reached him from his allies, and it has been argued that the Arabs were represented by some of those embassies; (2) at Hieropolis he changes his mind and sends for the Arabs, asking them to join him if they wanted to; (3) at Callinicum on the Euphrates the Arabs join him and they are enlisted by him as *auxilia*; (4) they march with him along the Euphrates until he reaches his destination, Ctesiphon; (5) after the battle of Ctesiphon and during his retreat disagreements develop, and at least some of them desert him; (6) after his death they attack his army, commanded by Jovian.

Julian's ambivalent attitude to the Arabs may be explained as follows: it was consonant with his attitude to the barbarians¹⁰⁶ in general, reflected in a

¹⁰⁴They did not pull down the Church of the Resurrection built on the site of the Crucifixion, which the Qurʾān rejects.

¹⁰⁵This carries to its farthest limits the consequences of the historical might-have-been associated with Julian and explored by Avi-Yonah.

¹⁰⁶Julian's letter to the king of another group of *auxilia*, the Armenians, is illuminating. It reveals in a detailed fashion the real attitude of the Roman to the barbarian who, in this case, was also Christian. This must have been also his attitude toward the Arab *auxilia*, which may be reconstructed from the scattered references in Ammianus. The letter has been suspected as spurious but it was known to Sozomen, although in a somewhat different version that included "blasphemies against Christ" (*HE*, VI. 1). In any case, it is the kind of letter Julian would have written to one who was at one and the same time barbarian and Christian; and it is just possible that Arsaces' failure to appear with this *auxilia* may be related to his fear or displeasure after receiving such a humiliating letter, which might have inclined him to think that he was better off with the Fire-worshiper than with the Apostate. His nonparticipation in Julian's campaign could be a forceful argument for the authenticity of the letter, for which see *The Works of the Emperor Julian* (Loeb), vol. 3, letter 58.

well-known passage in the *RG*, XXIII.2.1, and it was enhanced in the case of the Arabs because of their Christianity. In his *First Oration* (Panegyricus) in honor of Constantius, he conceived of them as "robbers."¹⁰⁷ Thus even as Caesar and before he came in contact with them as emperor, Julian was ill-disposed toward them.

2

In view of the fact that the campaign ended disastrously both for Julian and for Roman arms, the question arises as to what extent Julian's attitude toward the Arabs contributed to the disaster. His relations with the Arabs, marked by vicissitudes, are of some importance to an appreciation of Julian's generalship and the manner in which it affected the course of the campaign.¹⁰⁸ It will be argued that Julian did not take a correct measure of Arab war potential. He gave them a subordinate role, whereas he could have mobilized Arab manpower more extensively and effectively for his campaign. In support of this position the following arguments may be given:

(1) Julian arrived in the East with preconceived ideas about how to fight his Persian campaign, namely, that he must depend on Roman soldiers, not on allies and *auxilia*. But the legions in the fourth century had lost much of their fighting qualities, and the Arab *auxilia*, as mounted lancers, were most probably much more mettlesome than the legionaries. More important are the facts of geography. Julian and his Gallic legions had fought in the cold climate of Western Europe and in terrain quite different from the flat and desert lands of the Tigris and the Euphrates with their oppressively high temperatures; they were utterly inexperienced in, and unfamiliar with, the conditions of desert warfare. The new theater of war, the Land of the Two Rivers, both in Assyria and in Babylonia, presented conditions that made more dependence on the Arab *auxilia* imperative. Julian does not seem to have appreciated these conditions presented by the new theater of war and, what is more, by the new adversary, not barbarians in Gaul but Sasanids in the East, and thus failed to effect the necessary changes and adjustments, the most important of which might have been the fuller exploitation of Arab manpower and expertise. The Arabs were the only fighting force in the whole empire that was perfectly at home with the terrain and climate of the new theater because they were native to it.

(2) The strategy of Julian's campaign points in the same direction. Trajan had made Armenia his base of operations whence he descended against Ctesiphon along the Tigris, leaving only a secondary detachment to march

¹⁰⁷On this, see *supra*, p. 83.

¹⁰⁸This has not been taken into account by historians of Julian's Persian campaign just as the positive Arab contribution has not been either.

along the Euphrates. Constantine himself had also contemplated a descent upon the Persians from the mountainous regions of Colchis. Julian departed from this plan and reversed the line of advance against the Persians by making the Euphrates line the main arm of the pincers. In so doing he may have had good reasons, and he certainly seized the military initiative and kept the Persians in the dark as to whence the main thrust of his offensive was to come; it was only after Ozogardana that the Persians established contact with the Roman army and knew that they were being attacked from the Euphrates front. But the choice of the Euphrates and not the Tigris might have suggested to him a fuller dependence on Arab resources at his disposal. Although there were Arabs along the upper Tigris and in Mesopotamia, they were far more numerous all along the Euphrates, where they lived from ancient times, a fact known to classical writers.¹⁰⁹ The Euphrates was also closer to the vast ethnic reservoir in the Arabian Peninsula.

(3) The Persian War was unpopular with many groups. His courtiers had advised Julian against it and suggested that instead he should attack the unreliable Goths (*RG*, XXII.12.3). Even after he had opened the campaign and was at Circesium, Sallustius, the praetorian prefect of Gaul, sent him *litteras tristes*, begging him to give it up (*RG*, XXIII.5.4). The Antiochenes, too, were against it. His Gallic legions, loyal as they were, must have had their loyalty tested by the harsh climate and terrain of those regions.

The Arabs were the only ones who were truly enthusiastic about the war, and this for two reasons: (a) Shāpūr had conducted his brutal campaign against them in the twenties, and thus they would have welcomed the opportunity of serving under Julian in a war of revenge; (b) the Arab *foederati* of Byzantium, whether the Lakhmids in the south or the Tanūkhids in the north, both had their brushes with the Persians before their defection to the Romans, and they, too, would have welcomed participation in a campaign against their old adversary.¹¹⁰

A measure of what Arabs, both capable and willing, could achieve in the service of Rome is reflected a few years after Julian's death in the exploits of the Arab *foederati* of Queen Mavia, in fighting the imperial armies of Valens in Oriens and, after Adrianople, in the defense of Constantinople against the Goths, in climate and terrain more clement and more familiar to the Goths than to themselves.¹¹¹

A larger and more apposite measure of Arab achievement in the service of Rome is provided by the events of almost a century before, when Rome was

¹⁰⁹See Strabo, *Geography*, XVI.i.26–28.

¹¹⁰Julian not only failed to exploit their enthusiasm to the full but also alienated them after he had enlisted them in his service by refusing to pay them their *salaria* and *munera*.

¹¹¹For the Arabs of Queen Mavia, see *infra*, Chap. 4.

fighting the same enemy in a perilous war in which a Roman emperor, Valerian, died in captivity. Gallienus did better than Julian when he allowed the Arab prince of Palmyra, Odenathus, a free hand in the conduct of the Persian War, which virtually became an Arab war effort and won the Palmyrene, who beat the first Shāpūr back to the walls of Ctesiphon, the title *Restitutor Orbis*. It is not suggested here that the fourth-century Arab *foederati* of Byzantium possessed anything like the might of third-century Palmyra. It is suggested, rather, that a more substantial and effective participation of the Arabs in Julian's Persian campaign might have made its outcome less disastrous both for the honor of Roman arms and for Julian himself.

3

Julian's death terminated a chapter that might be entitled "The House of Constantine and the Arabs." The policy of Constantine and Constantius toward the Arabs and the Orient in general has already been examined, and it has been argued that Constantine laid the foundation of a sound comprehensive policy toward both. His son continued his policy toward the Orient and the world of the Southern Semites but alienated the Arab *foederati*. Julian's career reveals departures in his policy toward both; the world of the Southern Semites he apparently had no interest in or no time to court; his absorbing concern was a direct assault upon the secular enemy, Persia. While Constantine had perfected the experiment of surrounding himself with allies for his prospective campaign against the Persians, Julian, in spite of letters to the Armenians and the Arabs, adopted a different style. He fought his Persian War without the effective participation of the Arabs, whom he first befriended and then alienated by his arrogance. The war ended disastrously both for Rome and for Julian. Although the defeat does not seem to have broken the ties of the Christianized Arabs to the Christian Roman Empire (since the former appear again as *foederati* in the reign of Valens), it affected the reputation of Roman arms among the Arabs of the Peninsula and those in the Persian sphere of influence. Shāpūr's victory must have enhanced his prestige in the same Peninsula in which he had campaigned successfully in the twenties and which was a bone of contention between the two world powers. It also must have convinced the Arab rulers of Ḥīra, Persia's clients, of the superiority of the Persian king over his Byzantine counterpart.

IV. APPENDIX

Libanius, *Autobiography*, Sec. 138

In section 138 of the *Autobiography* there is a tantalizing reference to an ἀνὴρ βάρβαρος who tried to incite the new emperor, Jovian, against Libanius for having continued to lament the fate of Julian. The orator goes on to say that as a result Jovian wanted to kill him but that a Cappadocian friend of his interceded and saved his life.

This ἀνὴρ βάρβαρος has been identified as a military officer¹ and could very well have been a Saracen *foederatus*; he is described as a barbarian, but there were not many barbarian groups in the army of Julian, which Jovian took over, other than the Arabs;² besides, the scene is laid in Antioch,³ in a region where the Arab *foederati* were to be found.

This identification becomes even more plausible when related to the open accusation in Oration XXIV, addressed to Theodosius in 379, that it was a Tainenos who killed Julian, acting on orders from an *archōn*. The reference to an *archōn*, who, as has been argued, was an Arab one,⁴ could be identified with this military officer, the ἀνὴρ βάρβαρος. Furthermore, being an *archōn* in the army he would have been close to Jovian, whether as emperor or as *domesticorum ordinis primus* before his elevation; thus he answers to the description⁵ of the ἀνὴρ βάρβαρος in the *Autobiography* as one who had access to the emperor.

The course of federate-imperial relations during the reign of Jovian could easily be reconstructed, and the reconstruction would illuminate both this section, 138, of the *Autobiography* and the plausibility of the identification of this barbarian officer with an Arab *foederatus*.

(1) The Arab *foederati* had left the service of Julian after he denied them their *salaria* and *munera*, and the last explicit reference to them in the *Res Gestae*⁶ describes them as harassing the Roman army in retreat after the death of Julian and now under Jovian.

(2) Just as the Persians immediately heard of the death of Julian, so would the Arab *foederati* have heard, and they would have been pleased with the choice of a Christian successor to Julian.⁷ Consequently it is reasonable to suppose that they would immediately have joined the army of Jovian and returned to their allegiance. As will be argued later, they did fight with Valens against the pretender Procopius in 364, and this implies that they had returned to their Roman allegiance after the death of Julian.

(3) The emperor, who was forced to conclude his peace with Persia for security reasons, would have been glad to receive the *foederati* back.

This must have been the situation during the few months when Jovian was in

¹See Norman's note on the identification of the ἀνὴρ βάρβαρος as a military officer and on Libanius's dislike of the barbarization of the army; Libanius, *Autobiography*, pp. 188–89.

²The Armenians did not participate in Julian's Persian campaign, while the Goths are referred to only once; see *supra*, p. 111.

³Whither Jovian came after concluding his peace with Persia; he resided in Antioch from October 363 till early in 364 when he set out for Constantinople.

⁴See *supra*, "The Death of Julian," pp. 124–32.

⁵The reference not to many but to one individual in the *Autobiography* and in the *Oration* is noteworthy; it could give additional support to the identification of the ἀνὴρ βάρβαρος of the former with the ἄρχων of the latter.

⁶See *supra*, p. 108.

⁷And what is more, an Orthodox one. Jovian received Athanasius at Edessa where the latter presented a Confession of Faith and then probably accompanied the emperor to Antioch; on the possible sensitivity of the Arab *foederati* to the expulsion of the Nicene bishops, including Athanasius, in the reign of Constantine, see *supra*, p. 76.

Antioch before his departure for Constantinople in the winter of 364: Libanius laments the death of Julian, and the Arabs, close to Jovian and probably involved in the death of Julian, would have frowned on the rhetorician's lament as incriminating to them, hence the attempt of the "barbarian" to incite Jovian against him. The emperor's sympathetic reaction to the barbarian's demand also becomes intelligible: he was happy to see Caesar buried in Tarsus but not praised in Antioch; avenging a pagan emperor was not congenial to the Christian one; and ordering an inquest would not have served the imperial interest, especially when his own position was not yet quite secure.⁸ This, then, may be the explanation for Jovian's curious reaction to Libanius's lament over the death of Julian.

Although this section of the *Autobiography* is primarily relevant to the problem of Julian's death, it can incidentally throw some light on the course of Arab-Byzantine relations during the reign of Jovian if the ἀνὴρ βάρβαρος turns out to be an Arab *foederatus* and the *archōn* of Oration XXIV. These relations are attested by one solitary reference in the *Res Gestae*, and this section of the *Autobiography* could enrich this reference by suggesting that the Arabs returned to their allegiance almost immediately after the death of Julian. This may be inferred from their participation in the campaign against Procopius in 364, but this section adds some intimate details on the relationship of one of their officers to Jovian and how close he was to him. Who this ἀνὴρ βάρβαρος was must remain open to question, but it is just possible that he was none other than the federate Arab king of the time, left anonymous in the sources, but known as the husband⁹ of Queen Mavia of the reign of Valens.

⁸His position was not secure with possible rivals and pretenders, such as Procopius, who had been marked out as a successor to Julian even before the latter's death.

⁹See *infra*, pp. 140–42.

IV

The Reign of Valens

I. INTRODUCTION

1

The reign of Valens is surprisingly well documented for the history of Arab-Byzantine relations; the sources yield data from which may be drawn conclusions that illuminate the poorly documented preceding and following reigns, thus making more intelligible the course of Arab-Byzantine relations in the fourth century from Constantine to Arcadius. The checkered history of the Arab *foederati* in the preceding reigns has had to be pieced together from sporadic references, and the very fact of their federate status has had to be argued for. The opposite is true of the reign of Valens. The fortunes of the *foederati* are described in clear enough terms and the main features of their relationship with Byzantium emerge clearly from the sources: they are loyal to Byzantium but revolt when they become involved in the theological controversies of the period; they are Christian; and once reconciled they fight for the empire and acquit themselves remarkably well.

Their relations with Byzantium turn round the figure of Queen Mavia. The sources speak of her revolt after the death of her husband and the dissolution of the *foedus*, ca. 375; her successful war against the Romans; the peace treaty on her own terms, which included the choice of an Arab holy man, Moses by name, as the bishop of her *foederati*, and his consecration not by the Arian Lucius of Alexandria but by orthodox ecclesiastics; her contribution of a cavalry contingent that fought in the Gothic war and defended Constantinople in the aftermath of Adrianople.¹ Mavia's wide-ranging presence during the triennium (375–78) is reminiscent of that of another Arab queen well known to the Romans almost a century before, namely, Zenobia of Palmyra.²

¹On the chronology of Mavia's reign, see *infra*, App. 1, pp. 183–84.

²Unlike Zenobia's, her fortunes are hardly ever mentioned in modern works on the fourth century, and when they are, the account is quite inaccurate and altogether unsatisfactory; see, e.g., Piganiol, *EC*, pp. 158, 169 note 102.

2

While the sources for the Arab *foederati* during the reign of Julian are limited to one, or almost one, secular source, namely, Ammianus, they are relatively abundant for the reign of Valens, and they are both secular and ecclesiastical.

(1) The main ecclesiastical historians are four: Rufinus, Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret.³ Rufinus is the earliest; furthermore, he was a contemporary author, having come to the Orient ca. 371, where he lived in Alexandria and Jerusalem. The other three come slightly later, and their histories may be assigned to the first half of the fifth century. Two of them, Sozomen and Theodoret, were born in Palestine and Syria respectively⁴ and so lived not far from the scene of Mavia's activities.⁵

(2) The secular historians are two, Ammianus and Zosimus.⁶ The first was a contemporary, while the second wrote later. Both limit themselves to information on the Arab contribution to the defense of Constantinople; Zosimus describes that contribution before the battle of Adrianople and Ammianus after it.

The ecclesiastical historians are much more important than the secular ones. They are essentially in agreement with one another and they virtually tell the same story;⁷ but each of them has details and features peculiar to himself, and consequently all of them have to be taken into account in writing

³Rufinus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, ed. Th. Mommsen, GCS, 9 (Leipzig, 1908), pp. 1010–12; Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, ed. R. Hussey (Oxford, 1853), vol. 2, pp. 564–66; Sozomen, *HE*, pp. 297–300; Theodoret, *HE*, pp. 261–62. For the three Greek historians, see G. F. Chesnut, *The First Christian Histories, Théologie historique*, 46 (Paris, 1977) and the bibliography, pp. 13–29; for Rufinus, see Appendix 7, *infra*, pp. 197–201 and notes 1 and 5.

⁴Sozomen finally settled in Constantinople where he wrote his *History*.

⁵A valuable account of the Arab *foederati* in this period appears in the *Ecclesiastical History* of the late medieval Byzantine historian Nicephorus Callistus, ca. 1256–ca. 1335. It is based on the accounts of all of the four ecclesiastical historians mentioned above and thus includes almost all the data furnished by them. Nicephorus mainly follows Sozomen, but unlike him he divides his account into two separate chapters, the first devoted to Queen Mavia and the second to the religious history of the Arabs and to the conversion of the phylarch, Zokomos. If the four ecclesiastical historians had not survived, Nicephorus would have been of great value as he would have been the source on Mavia and the only source on Zokomos, an important figure for reconstructing the history of the *foederati* in the fifth century; see *Historia Ecclesiastica*, PG, 146, cols. 732–36; on Nicephorus Callistus, see Krumbacher, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Litteratur*, pp. 291–93; Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, vol. 1, pp. 259–60; G. Gentz, *Die Kirchengeschichte des Nicephoros Callistus Xanthopoulos und ihre Quellen*. Nachgelassene Untersuchungen, überarbeitet und erweitert von F. Winkelmann, TU, 98 (Berlin, 1966); further on Nicephorus, see *infra*, p. 194, D.

⁶For an evaluation of Ammianus, see *infra*, pp. 239–74; for Zosimus, see RA, chap. 8, "Zosimus and the Arabs."

⁷Theodoret is the least important of the four; see *infra*, App. 2, pp. 184–85.

the history of Mavia's exploits.⁸ However, the most important is undoubtedly Sozomen, and it is, therefore, chapter 38 of Book IV of Sozomen's *Historia Ecclesiastica*,⁹ so crucial for the history of the Arab *foederati* in the reign of Valens, that will be the object of an intensive analysis in the following sections.

II. THE ANONYMOUS KING

(1) The reference in Sozomen to the ruler of the Saracens, who died about A.D. 375, is valuable. He is described as βασιλεύς, and this chimes well with the title "king" assumed by Imru' al-Qays in the Namāra inscription and with the Saracen *reguli* of Julian's reign in Ammianus (*RG*, XXIII.3.8), thus documenting the persistence of the tradition of kingship among the Arab *foederati* of Byzantium in the fourth century. Even more important is the reference to the ΣΠΟΝΔΑΪ ("treaty") that makes the king *foederatus*; this reference provides testimonial evidence that after the death of Julian the federate relationship between the Arabs and Byzantium continued to obtain in the sixties and the seventies, during the reign of Valens, especially valuable since the secular sources hardly ever mention the Arabs during this reign or the fact of their federate status.

(2) The implication of the statement on the death of the Saracen king and the dissolution of the treaty between Byzantium and the Arabs is that the treaty had remained in force as long as the king had been alive and that for it to remain valid it had to be renewed by his successor.¹⁰ This provides an insight into the inner working of this imperial-federate relationship, which for its continuance depended on the person of the federate king rather than on the federate institution.

(3) That the deceased king was succeeded by his wife calls for an explanation. Since there is no mention of a male issue in Sozomen's account but only a daughter, two possibilities are open: (a) the king had no sons, and as his wife happened to be an extraordinary woman she succeeded him, in much

⁸For the confused accounts of later historians such as Theophanes and Michael the Syrian, deriving from Theodorus Anagnostes, see *infra*, App. 5, p. 194.

⁹Sozomen crowded in one and the same chapter his valuable account of Queen Mavia, of the religious development of the Arabs as Ishmaelites, and of the rise of the Zokomids, the Arab phylarchs of Byzantium who succeeded the Tanūkhids toward the end of the fourth century. This has proved confusing to those who have used Sozomen as their source. The fortunes of Mavia are, therefore, separated in the present work from those of the Arabs as Ishmaelites and from those of the Zokomids. Each of these three themes needs and deserves a separate treatment.

¹⁰So did Shāpūr II consider the *foedus* and *pax* with Byzantium null and void after the death of Jovian; Ammianus, *RG*, XXVI.4.5. The ruffled course of Arab-Byzantine relations early in the reign of Theodosius may partly have for its background the dissolution of the *foedus* with the death of Valens and its nonrenewal immediately by Theodosius after his accession in January, 379; see *infra*, p. 203.

the same way that a century before another Arab queen, Zenobia, succeeded her husband, Odenathus; (b) the king may have left a son who was still a minor when his father died and Mavia simply acted as guardian during his minority,¹¹ an historical situation paralleled in Palmyrene history by the guardianship of Zenobia over Wahballāt.¹²

(4) The detail in Socrates on Mavia's having a daughter old enough to be married to the *magister equitum* Victor in the late seventies suggests that the deceased king had reigned for some twenty years before his death, and so was king at least as early as ca. 360. He then must have been the federate king (or one of them) in the reigns of Constantius¹³ and Julian, one of the *reguli* with whom Julian treated, as stated in the *Res Gestae* (XXIII.3.8).

(5) It is unfortunate that Sozomen left the king anonymous. If he had given him his name,¹⁴ as he did in the case of his wife or that of the first of the Salīhids, Zokomos, he would have made an important contribution toward disentangling some important problems in the history of the Arab *foederati* in the fourth century. His identity and that of the group to which he belonged remain a matter of inference. He could have been either (a) a Lakhmid, a descendant of Imru' al-Qays of the Namāra inscription,¹⁵ or (b) a Tanūkhid, more likely the latter, and if so, he would have been the last of the three kings of Tanūkh mentioned in the Arabic sources.¹⁶

¹¹A supposition that may derive some support from the use of the participle ἐπιτροπεύουσα, which expresses the notion of trusteeship or guardianship. In addition to being a romantic episode, the succession of a queen rather than a king could throw light on, or provide a context for, understanding the transference of power from one group of *foederati*, the Tanūkhids, to another, the Salīhids (*infra*, pp. 214–16), in the last quarter of the fourth century. It is not easy to reconstruct with precision what exactly happened, but the curious fact of the accession of a queen, interrupting the line of male succession, supplies just enough of an anomalous situation to make the struggle for power between the two groups, the Tanūkhids and the Salīhids, intelligible, a struggle that ended with the victory of the latter and their emergence as the new *foederati* of Byzantium.

¹²For the relevant material on Zenobia, see Starcky, *Palmyre*, p. 57, and H. Mattingly, "The Imperial Recovery," *CAH*, 12, p. 302; for the latter, "Zenobia is one of the most romantic figures of history."

¹³This inference provides indirect evidence for the *foedus* between the Arabs and Byzantium in the reign of Constantius, for which, see *supra*, p. 80, sec. 2.A.

¹⁴As Tacitus had given the name of Boudicca's husband, Prasutagus; *Annals*, 14.31. The Briton king left no male issue; unlike the Arab one, his widow was scourged and his daughters violated.

¹⁵According to Ḥamza al-İṣfahāni, Imru' al-Qays's mother was an Azdite called Mavia; see Ḥamza, *Tārīkh*, p. 86.

¹⁶On the last Tanūkhid king, al-Ḥawārī, see *infra*, pp. 378–79. The Lakhmids and the Tanūkhids are the two Arab groups mentioned in the Arabic sources, epigraphic and literary, as clients of Byzantium in the fourth century. Mavia's husband must have belonged to one or the other of the two groups. But as the two were related in more than one way, it is possible that they united (and possibly intermarried) after the defection of the Lakhmid Imru' al-Qays and his emigration to Byzantine territory. On this relationship, see *infra*, pp.

(6) The Lakhmid/Tanūkhid affiliation of the deceased king may be supported by references in the sources to the provinces that became the battlefield of the federate-imperial conflict. These clearly point to some northern¹⁷ province in Oriens: (a) Sozomen, who gives the most precise account of the war, speaks of the main battle as involving both the *bēgemōn* of Phoenicia and the *magister utriusque militiae*, whose seat was Antioch; (b) the Arab *foederati* with whom Julian treated were assembled in the north, where they met him at Callinicum; (c) a Greek inscription that most probably refers to Mavia or her daughter was found in Anasartha in Syria;¹⁸ (d) it was in the limitrophe of the three provinces, Arabia, Phoenicia, and Syria, that the main Arab *foederati* of Byzantium, the Lakhmids and the Tanūkhids, were settled.¹⁹

The revolt spread throughout Oriens, as might be inferred from the references of a general nature in the sources.²⁰ Rufinus speaks of Palestine and Arabia, and Sozomen speaks of Phoenicia, Palestine, and Egypt. But the main thrust, which involved Mavia's army, came not from the south in Palestine or Egypt but from the north, in or near Phoenicia, and this confirms that the deceased king's tribal affiliation must have been Lakhmid/Tanūkhid.

III. THE REVOLT AND MAVIA'S OFFENSIVE

(1) The death of the Saracen federate king was immediately followed not only by the dissolution of the *foedus* but also by the revolt of his widow, Queen Mavia. Two questions inevitably arise: why Mavia chose not to renew the treaty and why she revolted. A close examination of Sozomen's account does not reveal any grievance²¹ nursed by the Arab *foederati* other than the one related to the doctrinal position of the ecclesiastic who was to become their bishop; if there had been other grievances, the ecclesiastical historians would have mentioned them since they gave a detailed account of Mavia and her revolt, and one of them, Sozomen, digressed into military details that fell outside his

412–15. The possibility that Mavia's husband was Obedianus, the Arab chief who ruled in the desert of Pharan in Sinai and mentioned in the *Ammonii Monachi Relatio*, has to be ruled out; see de Perceval, *Essai*, vol. 2, p. 218 note 2. For the *Arabica* in the *Relatio*, see *infra*, pp. 297–308.

¹⁷Not to Sinai in the far south where Obedianus of the *Relatio* ruled. It is impossible to conceive that the widow of a petty chief in faraway Sinai would have acquired such power as to wage a war of the description given in the ecclesiastical sources, let alone that she would have crossed the Gulf of Aqaba or marched overland through Palestina Salutaris and Arabia to engage in combat the *bēgemōn* of Phoenicia.

¹⁸For this inscription, see *infra*, pp. 222–27.

¹⁹On localities associated with the Tanūkhids and Lakhmids, see *infra*, pp. 395–407.

²⁰For this, see the following sec. III, pp. 142–50.

²¹Such as withholding the *annona*, as happened in the reign of Julian, for which see *supra*, p. 112. Normally the *foederati* were loyal and satisfied with the privileges conferred on them by the terms of their *foedus* with Rome.

immediate interests as an ecclesiastical historian. The doctrinal position of the prospective bishop was clearly the issue to which the revolt must be related, and this is consonant with the previous record of the *foederati*.²² It is true that the king's death automatically dissolved the *foedus* and that with his death the state of peace that had obtained between the two parties no longer existed.²³ But this could have been only a technical reason or pretext for the revolt. The real cause must be sought in the ecclesiastical history of the period, specifically, Valens's "persecution" of the orthodox bishops to whom the *foederati* were attached and possibly his attempt to impose on them an Arian bishop.

One of the implications of Mavia's insistence on the consecration of none other than Moses could be that the bishop of the *foederati* had died or had become unacceptable. This could have been the circumstance that precipitated the revolt of the *foederati*, already discontented in the sixties (see *infra*, p. 171) by the Arian policy of Valens but now directly affected by the question of consecrating a bishop acceptable to them doctrinally and otherwise. This reconstruction of the *casus belli* on doctrinal grounds can be supported by being related to a reference in Socrates (Book III, chap. 25) to a "Theotimus Arabum," who with other bishops assembled at Antioch had signed a homoousian declaration addressed to Jovian in 363 (*infra*, pp. 334–35). This Theotimus was possibly the bishop of the *foederati* whose death, probably in the seventies, brought matters to a head between Mavia and Valens. His death could have taken place at roughly the same time as that of Mavia's husband. The death of the latter dissolved the *spondai*, and its dissolution enabled Mavia to go into a war she had been predisposed to on doctrinal grounds without violating a treaty.

Mavia's revolt is unintelligible without a grasp of the background of

²²Mavia's revolt and her war with Byzantium for purely doctrinal reasons would thus throw light on the revolt of the Arab federates during the reign of Constantius. It has been argued (*supra*, pp. 81–82) that the latter had also for its background doctrinal reasons; and now that it has been shown that Mavia's husband was most probably reigning in the fifties, that argument receives fortification by being related to Mavia's revolt. The wife followed in the footsteps of her husband; as Orthodox Christians, both husband and wife fought against the two Arian emperors, Constantius and Valens. Mavia's revolt invites comparison with that of the Ghassānids in the sixth century, who during the reign of Justin I (518–27) revolted for purely doctrinal reasons and after Justin had persecuted the Monophysite bishops; see the Arabic Chronicle of Bar-Hebraeus, *Mukhtaṣar Tāriḫ al-Duwal*, ed. A. Ṣalḫāni (Beirut, 1958), p. 87.

²³Why the deceased king did not revolt against Valens in the seventies may be related to purely fortuitous circumstances; he may have died just as Valens started his last and severe persecution against the homoousians in 375. However, the possibility must be entertained that he was won over to Arianism; the history of the Ghassānid *foederati* in the sixth century affords an illuminating parallel in the case of some of the sons of the federate king Arethas, who were won over to the Chalcedonian position; see Nöldeke, *GF*, pp. 27, 30. On possible federate Arab participation in the wars of the decade 365–75, preceding the revolt, see *infra*, pp. 169–75, and p. 171 note 124.

theological controversy and imperial intervention in ecclesiastical matters.²⁴ And it is this background that gives the revolt its significance in the history of Arab-Byzantine relations in the fourth century.

(2) It is clear from the accounts of the ecclesiastical historians that after her revolt Mavia withdrew *extra limitem* to the desert regions adjoining the oriental *limes*, whence she mounted her assaults against the outlying provinces of Oriens.²⁵ Only two of the ecclesiastical historians, Rufinus and Sozomen, make reference to specific provinces. Rufinus speaks of her assaults against two provinces, Arabia and Palestine: *Palaestini et Arabici limitis oppida atque urbes*.²⁶ In this period, Palestine consisted of Prima and Salutaris; part of Salutaris, which included Sinai, lay across the Gulf of Eilat and Wādi 'Araba, geographically a continuation of the province of Arabia. Since the two provinces, Arabia and Palestine, are joined together in Rufinus's phrase that describes the assaults of Mavia, it is natural to suppose that by Palestine is meant the eastern, non-Sinaitic part of Salutaris, which would have been the part exposed to an assault mounted by Arab federates who had retreated to the eastern desert *extra limitem*.²⁷

(3) Rufinus also speaks of *vicinas provincias* attacked by Mavia. The provinces adjacent to Arabia and Palestina Salutaris were Phoenicia and Egypt;

²⁴It is necessary to point this out for an additional reason, namely, the views of some modern historians, going back ultimately to a confusion in Theodoret, that Mavia's Christianity was recent and that she was converted by Moses after his ordination! For a detailed discussion of this and related matters, see *infra*, App. 4, pp. 189–90.

²⁵This is very clearly implied in Rufinus's use of the term *limes*. The term clearly indicates that Mavia had withdrawn *extra limitem* and that the thrust of her offensive was directed against the frontiers or frontier territories of Oriens. That she could occasionally penetrate deeper into the interior cannot be excluded, and she probably did, as will be clear in the course of this chapter.

²⁶G. W. Bowersock has persuasively argued that the *limes Arabicus* was a frontier territory; see his "*Limes Arabicus*," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* (1976), pp. 219–29.

²⁷Palestina Prima could hardly have been meant in Rufinus's phrase. Mavia was attacking the frontier territories of Oriens, and Prima was far from these limitrophes and not within striking distance from Mavia's forces, which were deployed *extra limitem*. The northern part of Prima, however, was not so inaccessible, since it was partly Trans-Jordanian (the future Palestina Secunda), but Rufinus's phrase does not seem to imply it. He uses the term *limes* in the singular, and this implies a continuous line involving Arabia and Palestine, which latter province must be Salutaris in its eastern, non-Sinaitic part. The same singular use excludes the so-called *Limes Palaestinae* in the Negev. This *limes* does not link up with the *Limes Arabicus*, and so the singular would not have been appropriately used if it had been employed to denote it.

However, the northern part of Palestina Prima, which was partly Trans-Jordanian, could have been reached by Mavia's troops, as might possibly be inferred from Sozomen's account (*infra*, pp. 150–52). The two ecclesiastical historians are reconcilable: Mavia, according to Sozomen, mounted many offensives and engaged in many operations; Rufinus remembered or chose to remember those that were directed against Arabia and Palestina Salutaris, while Sozomen, who left a more extensive and detailed description of the war, included an account of an operation that involved both Phoenicia and the Trans-Jordanian part of Palestina Prima.

that these were the provinces implied in Rufinus can be confirmed by Sozomen, whose account of Mavia's military operations is the most valuable and precise.

The Phoenicia mentioned by Sozomen must have been Phoenicia Libanensis, not Phoenicia Maritima, which was far removed from the eastern borderland.²⁸ The Arab element in Phoenicia Libanensis was strong, since the days of Arab Palmyra a century before, and the *foederati*, or part of them, were probably quartered in Phoenicia,²⁹ whence after their revolt they would have withdrawn east of the *limes* to desert regions which must have become their base of operation.

In describing the battle in which Mavia was victorious, Sozomen speaks of the commander of the troops in both Phoenicia and Palestine, and the phrase is repeated twice. The Palestine in question could only have been Prima, adjacent to Phoenicia, and the curious phrase could imply that Mavia's troops penetrated the *limes* and reached the Trans-Jordanian part of Palestina Prima, where the boundaries of Palestine and Phoenicia met. The region had a strong Arab ethnic complexion, especially the Gaulanitis, and was not far from Namāra, the seat of the Lakhmid federate Arabs, all of which would have made Mavia's advance to those regions feasible.³⁰ Alternatively, the phrase

²⁸R. Devreesse suggested that Φοινίκων in Sozomen's τὰς Φοινίκων . . . πόλεις should be translated "Palmiers," the palm-groves, the oases, rather than the Phoenicias or the Phoenicians. This has to be wholeheartedly rejected: (1) the term *cities*, πόλεις, would be inappropriately used of desert oases since it suggests a more densely inhabited region with an urban establishment such as Phoenicia was; (2) three of the four oases he enumerates were in Palestine (Tertia); it does not make much sense to say that Mavia ravaged the cities of Palestine and of the oases, since the latter were part of Palestine; (3) morphologically, φοινικίωνων would be required as the genitive of φοινικίων, the date-palm oasis; φοινίκων could be the genitive of φοίνιξ, the date-palm, not the oasis, but in this context does not make much sense; (4) the phrase τὸν ἡγεμόνα τῶν ἐν Φοινίκη καὶ Παλαιστίνῃ στρατιωτῶν (lines 19–20) is decisive. Φοινίκη can mean only *Phoenicia*, clearly indicating that what is involved is Phoenicia and not date-palms or date-palm oases; see R. Devreesse, "Le christianisme dans la péninsule sinaïtique, des origines à l'arrivée des musulmans," *RB*, 49 (1940), p. 206, and *idem*, "Le christianisme dans le sud palestinien," *RSR*, 3–4 (1940), p. 239, where he repeats this view and suggests that the oasis was El-Nakhl.

Devreesse's erroneous conclusions are serious because what is involved in them is not only Mavia, but also the *Relatio* of Ammonius; his rejection of the authenticity of the account on Obedianus is based on his conclusion that Mavia and her husband belonged to Sinai and that the hagiographer fabricated a story, guided by analogy; on the *Relatio*, see *infra*, pp. 297–308. Even more serious are Devreesse's views on the most important Arabic document for the history of the *foederati* in the fourth century, namely, the Namāra inscription; he identified the fourth-century Lakhmid king with Qays, the Kindite chief of some two centuries later mentioned by Nonnosus! See Devreesse, *Le patriarcat d'Antioche* (Paris, 1945), p. 263 note 3.

²⁹On the Saracen units in Phoenicia, mentioned in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, see *RA*, chap. 5.

³⁰Almost a quarter of a century before, the Jews revolted in Palestine against Gallus Caesar and the center of the revolt was the northern part of Palestina Prima. It is not impossible that they rose up again at the news of a general Arab revolt in Oriens against Byzantium led

may not imply any such penetration by Mavia's forces; it may simply be related to purely military matters pertaining to the Byzantine strategy of containing Mavia's advance and beating her back.³¹

(4) Sozomen is our only source for the extension of the war so as to include Egypt.³² And the Egypt reached by Mavia's troops was the region east of the Delta, the so-called Arabian Ladder. Rufinus's account of Mavia's attack against the Palestinian *limes* becomes intelligible. Access to Egypt for a land army such as Mavia's could only have been through Palestina Tertia.

The extension of the theater of war to Egypt calls for the following comments: (a) An examination of Mavia's field of operations reveals that she was avoiding the extreme north, Syria and the Trans-Euphratesian provinces in Oriens, militarily understandable since she probably did not want an encounter with the *magister militum* in Antioch and the heavy concentration of regular Roman troops in those provinces and also the possibility of involvement with the Persians or the Persian Arabs so close to her rear. (b) But as she wanted the revolt to spread as widely as possible and press the Romans hard, that region, Palestina Tertia and the Arabian Ladder in Egypt, offered a very good chance of doing so militarily. It was not so well defended as the Euphrates region; it was mostly desert country in which the Arab presence was very strong,³³ and on this presence Mavia could count. Although she herself may have penetrated into these regions, the chances are that the penetration was effected by Arabs in Sinai or in the Palestinian limitrophes, to whom she was related ethnically³⁴ and who probably shared her doctrinal position.³⁵ (c)

by Mavia and that Byzantium found itself fighting both the Jews and the Arabs in the same area, where the boundaries of Palestine and Phoenicia met. That Jewish revolts in Palestine were often in response to the news of a hostile army advancing against Rome from the East is an established fact, also true of some of the Samaritan revolts in Palestine. On this and on the Jewish revolt against Gallus, see *supra*, p. 79 and note 25; on the creation of Palestina Secunda by Theodosius I, see *infra*, p. 215. It is not inconceivable that Mavia's revolt and penetration as far as Palestina Prima might also have been a factor in the creation of the new province; and it is pertinent to remark in this context of administrative changes in Palestine in response to events in Phoenicia that at the outset of his reign Justinian ordered the stationing of fresh troops in Palmyra and involved the *dux* of Phoenicia, stationed in Emesa, in the defense and protection of Palestine; Malalas, *Chronographia*, p. 426.

³¹For a further treatment of this possibility, see *infra*, p. 150.

³²Mavia's operation in Egypt recalls that of Zenobia. It is unlikely that Mavia was imitating the exploits of her more famous predecessor; her invasion of Egypt was dictated not by a historical precedent but by other considerations. Memories of Zenobia, however, must have been fresh in those same regions where the Palmyrene queen had reigned only a century before.

³³Amplly attested for the fourth century in such a document as the *Relatio*. The Arab king Obedianus (Ubayd/Ubayda?) mentioned there could have taken part in the expedition against Egypt. On the Arab presence in Sinai and Egypt, see *infra*, pp. 295–329.

³⁴If Mavia belonged to the tribe of Kalb, as is possible or even likely (*infra*, pp. 196–97), she would have been in an advantageous position to attack Palestina Tertia, since the powerful Kalb was settled over a wide area in northwestern Arabia, including the regions immediately to the east of Tertia.

³⁵The Christianized Arabs in Sinai were certainly orthodox. Such was Obedianus, con-

Since this was a war of religion, it is quite possible that Mavia wanted her armies to reach those regions for a reason connected with orthodoxy. It was to those regions that many of the orthodox bishops were exiled and so Mavia may have wanted to reach them,³⁶ as indeed she did, possibly conceiving of herself as the military arm of orthodoxy in the revolt against Arian Valens.³⁷

(5) Noteworthy is the reference to Mavia's assaults on *oppida atque urbes* and *πόλεις* in the accounts of Rufinus and Sozomen. Even in the sixth century and after two centuries of association with the Romans and Roman fighting methods, the Arab *foederati*, according to Procopius,³⁸ were incapable of besieging cities and fortresses. Exaggerated as this may have been, the large fact remains that it was not in siegecraft that the Arabs were at their best. Mavia is explicitly referred to as engaged in assaults on the urban establishment in Oriens. Some of these cities must have been walled and defended by regular Roman troops, especially as they were located in the limitrophe of Oriens, and it is unlikely that Mavia was possessed of the paraphernalia of siegecraft. The explanation for her plan to attack cities may perhaps be sought in the background of this revolt and the *casus belli* that has been referred to before, the theological controversy between the Arian and the Nicene parties and the persecution launched by Valens, including the exile of the orthodox bishops.

If orthodox Mavia waged her war within this framework, she naturally would have carried it into the cities; in those days, Christianity was an urban religion, and it was in the cities that the Church establishment was to be found. Into these cities Mavia carried the war to make her orthodox presence felt. She clearly did not conceive of herself as a desert queen whose life and interests were unrelated to those of the faithful in Oriens, but wanted to reach the centers of the faith she was defending. Her self-image apparently was that of *fidei defensor*.³⁹

(6) In discussing Mavia's strategy, a distinction may be drawn between her attacks against the towns and cities of the oriental *limes* and the pitched battles in which she engaged the Romans. The first type must represent the native Arab *ghazāt*, the raid, the swift assault, which may be described as "hit-and-run" tactics. Conceivably, Mavia would attack suddenly and do so with a

verted by the solitary Moses, of the monastery of Rhaithou, for whom see *infra*, pp. 299, 301; and so were the Arabs of the Negev, for whom, see *infra*, pp. 288–90.

³⁶In this way, she also made her revolt felt in Alexandria, not far from the Arabian Ladder, where Lucius the Arian was the incumbent of the Patriarchal See of Alexandria. On Lucius and the Arab holy man Moses, see *infra*, pp. 153–56.

³⁷Egypt at this time formed part of the Diocese of Oriens and remained so until it was detached by Theodosius I about 380–82 and made a distinct diocese; it is not improbable that its detachment was partly due to Mavia's revolt.

³⁸*Wars*, II.xix.13.

³⁹Not unlike that of another group of *foederati* in the sixth century, the Ghassānids, who, however, defended Monophysitism.

great concentration of horse,⁴⁰ and then would retire quickly into the desert.⁴¹ But more remarkable are her victories against the Romans in pitched battles, one of which is described in detail by Sozomen. In that battle, she beat first the *hēgemōn* of the Phoenician and Palestinian troops and then the *stratēgos* of Oriens himself. Her success in this type of warfare suggests a high degree of sophistication in the conduct of the war, no doubt explicable by the association of the *foederati* with Rome and their assimilation of Roman methods and techniques. She was thus able to combine the traditional Arab *ghazāt* with more advanced methods of Roman warfare.

(7) The ecclesiastical sources are agreed that Mavia won the upper hand in her war against the Romans. The tense international relations of Rome could partly explain the Roman defeats; nevertheless, Mavia's victories remain striking and consequently require some explanation: (a) Mavia's *foederati* were seasoned cavalry units; indeed they formed part of the cavalry arm of the army of the Orient stationed against the Persians and the predatory Arabs of the Peninsula. The sudden reversal of their role from a spearhead against the enemy into one directed against Rome must have confronted the provincial commanders with grave technical problems. (b) Then there was their base of operations deep in the desert zone east of the oriental *limes* whither her troops could retreat. Unlike Zenobia's Palmyra, which could be besieged and razed to the ground, Mavia's troops were inaccessible to the reach of Roman arms. (c) In a war that was waged mainly in desert terrain the mobility of the Saracen horse must have been a decisive factor both in offensive operations and in the retreat. (d) It is noteworthy that in the major battle described by Sozomen Mavia commanded her troops in person and this must have been especially inspiring to Arab troops. (e) Mavia's religious zeal in behalf of orthodoxy could also be predicated of her troops, and this too must have been an important factor that needs to be taken into account.⁴²

These factors can offer only a partial explanation for Mavia's victories, which now must be placed against the background of the ecclesiastical and military picture of the reign of Valens for a more adequate one: (a) as a result of Valens's Arian policy, which expressed itself in various ways, one of which was the exile of orthodox bishops, there was considerable dissatisfaction in various parts of Oriens, and thus Mavia could count on friendly orthodox

⁴⁰The mettle of this Saracen cavalry was tested again in the defense of Constantinople against the Goths shortly after Mavia came to terms with Valens (*infra*, pp. 176–78); and it was the Arab cavalry that was to win the battles of Islam against Byzantium in the seventh century.

⁴¹Cf. what Procopius says on the tactics of the Lakhmid Mundir, *Wars*, I.xvii.46.

⁴²The operativeness of this factor in the case of another group of *foederati*, the Ghassānids of the sixth century, admits of no doubt and is attested in contemporary Arabic poetry. It is, of course, clearest in the case of the Muslim Arabs.

sentiment in the cities she attacked;⁴³ (b) the delicate political and military situation, involving both the Persians and the Goths, especially the latter, must have been the most important factor that could explain her successes. Valens was preoccupied with these two problems and could not commit more troops than was deemed necessary for dealing with the threat posed by Mavia in the southern sector of Oriens.

(8) Mavia dominates the scene of operations in what the ecclesiastical historians choose to describe not with the familiar ἐπιδρομαί, *raids* of the Arabs, but with the term *war*, πόλεμος. As has been indicated earlier, this scene extended from Phoenicia Libanensis through Arabia and Palestina Salutaris and reached Egypt. The two facts, Mavia's dominating figure and the extent of the theater of war, raise the question of whether or not the Arab federate organization in Oriens was centralized.⁴⁴ The question admits of two answers: (a) Imru' al-Qays, of the Namāra inscription, is described as "king of all the Arabs," and it has been argued that, among other things, this could refer to his being put in command of all the federate Arabs in Oriens. Only some fifty years separate the death of Imru' al-Qays from Mavia's revolt, not too long an interval for a centralized federate organization to persist and for Mavia to inherit. If so, this could be an argument that Mavia is related herself or through her husband to the Lakhmid Imru' al-Qays or the Lakhmid-Tanūkhid federate group, a supposition fortified by the fact that her field of military operations roughly coincided with that area in Oriens where Imru' al-Qays had ruled rather than the Euphratesian and Trans-Euphratesian areas. (b) Alternatively, Mavia's may have been the dominant group in Oriens, or one of them, made more dominant by the appearance of a figure with extraordinary qualities of leadership. This group would have allied itself with the other groups in Oriens⁴⁵ and led them in the revolt that thus spread over this large area encompassing the four provinces. These other Arab groups would

⁴³In much the same way that the Muslim Arabs in the seventh century were able to count on dissatisfaction among the population of Syria as a result of imperial ecclesiastical policy. It is also not inconceivable that the regularly employed Arab units (the non-*foederati*) in the limitrophe province of Oriens sympathized with Mavia and did not take their duties seriously during this war; on these units as listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, see RA, chap. 5.

⁴⁴The only explicit statement in the Byzantine sources dates the centralization to ca. 530 and it comes from Procopius (*Wars*, I.xvii.47), the implication being that this centralization had not obtained before the sixth century. Oriens had had a number of Saracen groups federated with the empire, quartered in the various provinces and each commanded by its own phylarch who was subordinate to the Roman commander of the province. But a close examination of the federate organization in the fourth century shows that this may not have been entirely true of this century.

⁴⁵One of these tribes in the southern part of the province of Arabia must have been Judām. An old and important Arab tribe, it was most probably even in this period settled in the area and was one of the main tribal groups to which the Lakhmids of Imru' al-Qays must have been affiliated; on Judām, see *infra*, pp. 383–84.

have joined them, being related to them ethnically. Furthermore, the spectacle of ecclesiastics, in the words of the holy man Moses, comprising "bishops, presbyters, and deacons," languishing in exile in Arabia and Palestina Salutaris would have been a further inducement for them to join the revolt, being already predisposed to do so by their doctrinal opposition to Arian Valens.

IV. THE ROMAN COUNTEROFFENSIVE

The Roman counteroffensive against Mavia is limited in the sources to the description of one major pitched battle; that description, however, is sufficiently detailed to explain the threat posed by Mavia to Oriens and merits Socrates' and Sozomen's conception of Mavia's military operations as a war (πόλεμος) and not simply a series of raids.

(1) The Romans who fought Mavia are described as Palestinian troops commanded by τὸν ἡγεμόνα τῶν ἐν Φοινίκη καὶ Παλαιστίνη στρατιωτῶν. Phoenicia and Palestine were two distinct provinces and to each was assigned a *dux*, and yet their troops appear united under the command of one *hēgemōn*.⁴⁶ This might imply that Mavia's offensive could not be contained by the troops of one of the two provinces and that as a result troops from the neighboring province were called upon;⁴⁷ in this sense the *hēgemōn* of one of the two provinces could be described as commander of the two different groups of provincial troops.⁴⁸ Alternatively, the two provinces may at this juncture have been commanded by one *dux* or, more probably, were under one *comes rei militaris* whose jurisdictions extended across provincial boundaries and to whom the *duces* were subordinated.⁴⁹

It is unlikely that the battlefield was in Palestina Prima; it probably has to be sought either in the area where the two provinces met or, even more likely, in Phoenicia proper, possibly the eastern part of the province where the terrain was more suitable than Palestine for the deployment of Mavia's cavalry. Besides, Phoenicia was closer to the *magister militum* at Antioch, whose aid was invoked by the *hēgemōn*.⁵⁰

⁴⁶Who this *hēgemōn* was who commanded in Phoenicia or Palestine and possibly in both is not clear; the list of *duces* and *comites rei militaris* for these two provinces is not complete, and the names of the *duces* for the last triennium of Valens's reign are missing; see *PLRE*, vol. I, pp. 1118–21.

⁴⁷As happened when troops from Arabia crossed over to Palestine to help the *dux* of the latter province quell the Samaritan revolt of 529, for which see the present writer in "Arethas, Son of Jabalah," *JAOS*, 75 (1955), pp. 207–9.

⁴⁸This supposition could derive some support from the shift in the description of the command of this *hēgemōn* in Sozomen from τὸν ἡγεμόνα τῶν ἐν Φοινίκη καὶ Παλαιστίνη στρατιωτῶν to τοῦ ἡγεμόνος τῶν Παλαιστίνων καὶ Φοινίκων στρατιωτῶν.

⁴⁹For the extended jurisdiction of the *duces* and the *comites rei militaris*, see Piganiol, *EC*, p. 332.

⁵⁰In an account that describes a Saracen invasion involving Phoenicia and Palestina Prima, a contiguous province, Arabia, is rather conspicuous by its absence; in 378 the Goth Mun-

(2) Mavia's offensive must have been especially strong in view of the fact that combined troops of both Phoenicia and Palestine were inadequate to contain it and that the *hēgemōn* was forced to appeal to the *magister equitum et peditum per Orientem* for help. The latter will have been the Julius⁵¹ who held the *magisterium* of Oriens from 371 to 378. With some temerity the *magister* decided to engage Mavia single-handed and ordered the *hēgemōn*, who had appealed to him, to stay away from the combat. But he was worsted by Mavia, who commanded her troops in person, and was with difficulty rescued by the *hēgemōn*, whose turn it was now to disobey the *magister* and rush to his rescue. This he did by effecting a junction with the *magister's* troops; he covered the retreat of his superior, himself yielding ground, and at the same time shooting arrows at the Saracens to ward off their assault. The swift action taken by the *hēgemōn* and his resorting to bowmanship extricated the *magister* and made the defeat less disastrous.

The ruse employed by the *hēgemōn* of Palestine and Phoenicia for extricating the *magister* and saving him from utter defeat suggests that he had at his disposal mounted archers such as those listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum*.⁵² The same ruse could suggest that Mavia's troops used other weapons, such as swords and spears, which would be consonant with what is known about their squadron of mounted spearmen which defended Constantinople after the battle of Adrianople.

(3) That the battle was considered both a major military operation and a defeat for the Romans is clear from Sozomen's account. This is confirmed by the final comment of the historian, who, writing some seventy years after the event, says that the battle was still remembered by the inhabitants⁵³ of those

derichus was appointed *dux limitis Arabiae*, and it is not impossible that Mavia's troops might have overpowered the Arabian *dux* in much the same way that late in the sixth century, during the Arab revolt, the Ghassānid federates occupied Bostra itself, for which see Nöldeke, *GF*, pp. 31–32.

⁵¹For Julius, see *PLRE*, vol. I, p. 481, where his battle with Mavia does not form part of the prosopographical entry. For the *magisterium* in the reign of Valens, see A. Demandt, "Magistri Militum," *RE*, Supplementbd. 12, cols. 710–26.

⁵²It is noteworthy that some of the mounted archers in the *ND*, the *equites sagittarii indigenae*, are listed as serving under the *dux* of Phoenicia, not of Palestine. This might suggest that the battle took place in Phoenicia, but this depends on whether or not the *ND* units serving in Phoenicia were also in that province in the reign of Valens. Among the *ND* units stationed in Phoenicia were two *Equites Saraceni*, and it has been argued in *RA*, chap. 5, that these were not regular Roman troops but *foederati*. If so, this, too, could suggest that Phoenicia was the province in or near which the battle took place, as Mavia would have been operating against a province that was not *terra incognita* to her and her *foederati*.

⁵³Sozomen's statement that Mavia's victory was remembered by many, ταῦτα δὲ πολλοὶ τῶν τῆδε προσοικούντων εἰσέτι νῦν ἀπομνημονεύουσι, clearly indicates that the battle was fought not in a desert or deserted area but in one that was inhabited, probably, as has been suggested above, within the confines of Phoenicia. Sozomen visited some of the provinces in Oriens and his statement could imply that this information was gathered on the spot. The contrast between the two terms, προσοικούντων, the inhabitants of the region where the

parts where it was fought and was celebrated in songs by the Saracens of his day.⁵⁴

After the defeat inflicted on the Romans by Mavia, the former sued for peace. Remarkable as the successes of Mavia had been, the desire of the Romans for the employment of diplomacy to terminate the Saracen War could not but have been related to the Gothic problem, which had by then reached menacing dimensions and which had diverted the attention of Valens.⁵⁵

V. THE HOLY MAN MOSES

The revolt of Mavia would lose much of its interest were it not for the bright light shed on it by the career of the holy man Moses. It is his career that relieves the revolt from being only an outstanding military operation and relates it to another, more significant, context, namely, the ecclesiastical history of the period and its theological controversies. The interrelation of secular and ecclesiastical history so characteristic of the fourth century is reflected in the history of Mavia's Arab *foederati*. Their involvement in theological controversy is a measure of the degree of acculturation that the Arab *foederati* of the fourth century had attained.

The section on Moses, therefore, deserves a careful analysis in view of the important problems it raises, especially in the ecclesiastical history of the Arabs.

battle took place, and the Σαρακηνοῖς, who remember it in songs, suggests that the former were not Saracens. Thus the battle must have been fought well within the Roman *limes* at a locality inhabited by *Rhomaioi*.

⁵⁴But much more significant for Arab culture before the rise of Islam is his statement that the battle was celebrated in his days (before 450) in ὠδαῖς, songs, by the Arabs. This is the earliest certain attestation for the composition of pre-Islamic Arabic poetry (around 375) and for the continued transmission of this poetry for at least seventy years after its composition. For the Arabs, this would have been one of the *Ayyām*, their battle-days, celebrated in Arabic heroic poetry. Unfortunately these songs on Mavia's victory have not survived; if they had, they might have solved the problem of where the battle was fought, since it was customary to mention place-names in such songs. In contrast, a poetic fragment that commemorates the defeat of the Salīhid *foederati* in the fifth century has survived and with it the name of the locality where the battle took place, roughly in the same area that has been suspected for Mavia's victory either in Phoenicia or where the boundaries of Phoenicia and Palestine met, in the Trans-Jordanian part of Palestina Prima. This poetic fragment will be discussed in vol. 2 of this series, *BAFIC*.

⁵⁵And possibly the resumption of hostilities with Persia in the event of a Gothic war. On Valens's awareness of the Gothic peril at this juncture, see Sozomen, *HE*, VI.37, and also Socrates, *HE*, IV.35. Valens's willingness not only to make peace, but also to accept the consecration of Mavia's orthodox holy man, Moses, may likewise be related to the Gothic problem. His persecution of the homoousians ceased in 377 with his departure for Constantinople to meet the Gothic peril, for which see Socrates, *HE*, IV.35, and Sozomen, *HE*, VI.37. The revolt of Procopius early in the reign (365), which also made Valens abate his first persecution, affords a parallel and unfolds a pattern; see Sozomen, *HE*, VI.7.

(1) The identity of Mavia's holy man and where in Oriens he had lived before he became known to history as Mavia's bishop are uncertain. Rufinus and Sozomen speak of his having lived in a neighboring desert, while Socrates speaks only of a desert. If Mavia's camp was in Phoenicia/Arabia, as has been argued, this neighboring desert must have been near these two provinces. Theodoret is the only historian who is more specific; he expressly states that his abode was on the confines of Egypt and Palestine; but Theodoret's account is open to question (*infra*, pp. 184–85).

Much precision, both concerning his identity and his habitation, could be attained if Mavia's Moses was the Moses mentioned in the *Ammonii Monachi Relatio* as a monk of the monastery of Rhaithou in the oasis of Pharan in Sinai. Something could be said for this view, but no certainty can be predicated (*infra*, pp. 299–300).

(2) More important than his identity and habitation is the fact that Moses was neither a deacon nor a presbyter but a holy man, a real eremite living in a desert. It is this category of holy men, a new type of Christian,⁵⁶ that was of particular importance in the conversion of the Arabs in these three centuries from Constantine to Heraclius.⁵⁷ The Arabs must have been impressed both by the fact that these holy men left the cities and came out to the same inhospitable⁵⁸ desert in which they themselves lived and, furthermore, that they were possessed of miraculous powers. These holy men were predominantly⁵⁹ non-Arab, as the names of the major figures who converted the Arabs indicate—St. Hilarion in the Negev, St. Euthymius in the Judaeen desert, and St. Simeon in Syria. When an Arab, Moses, appeared in the desert as a holy man and performed wonders, he must have immediately attained celebrity among the Arabs of Oriens. This explains the prominence given to Moses in the ecclesiastical accounts of Mavia's revolt and possibly explains or partly explains Mavia's insistence that he rather than anyone else should be her bishop.

(3) The scene in Alexandria and the dialogue, which degenerated into an altercation, between Lucius and Moses give an intimate glimpse into the

⁵⁶The standard work on the holy man is Peter Brown's "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity," *JRS*, 61 (1971), pp. 80–101.

⁵⁷Vouched for by Sozomen himself in the passage that describes the conversion of the Arabs in this chapter (*HE*, XXXVIII.34.11; p. 291, lines 7–10). An account of holy men in the deserts of Oriens that makes clear the category of holy men to whom Moses belonged may also be found in Sozomen, *HE*, VI.28–34.

⁵⁸Especially as the raids of the Arabs from the desert to the sown implied that they were rejecting the very same desert that the holy men had chosen, while these holy men were voluntarily renouncing the world of the sown that the Arabs coveted and were trying to penetrate.

⁵⁹Some of the names of these holy men were Semitic and could have been either Aramaic or Arabic. Abdaleus, mentioned in Sozomen, *HE*, VI.33, is likely to have been an Arab.

passions aroused by the theological controversies of the period.⁶⁰ More importantly, it throws light on Moses himself and clarifies some aspects of Mavia's revolt:

(a) It is clear from Socrates that Lucius wanted to give Moses some instruction first before consecrating him. He spoke of "the principles of religion," which confirms that Moses was only a holy man with no place in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, a fact perhaps implied by Moses' own statement that he was unworthy of being ordained bishop. Presumably Lucius wanted to be correct; before ordaining him he wanted him to be instructed in doctrine, and, naturally, this would have been an Arian doctrinal position. Mavia's bishop was thus eventually consecrated, perhaps uncanonically, without first serving in the lower ranks of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, another indication of how the hands of the Arian imperial government were forced in the ecclesiastical matters that pertained to Mavia and her bishop.

(b) Moses' reply to Lucius clearly betrays the practical bent of mind, uninstructed in theology; he argues that it was not matters of faith that were in question but deeds and practices, with reference to what counted with him most, namely, the expulsion of the orthodox bishops, their banishment, and the hardships inflicted on them during their exile. The spectacle of bishops expelled from one province and banished to another in Oriens would have impressed upon the minds of the Arab *foederati* the seriousness of the christological controversy, which otherwise would have remained remote and theoretical to them. It is this that must finally have induced Mavia to revolt,⁶¹ especially as some of the bishops might have taken refuge with her *foederati*,⁶² while her ranging far and wide in Oriens was possibly inspired by a desire to reach the various provinces where these exiled bishops were to be found.

(c) Moses was taken for consecration to Alexandria and not to Antioch,

⁶⁰It was these passions and controversies that interested the ecclesiastical writers rather than the secular history of the Arab *foederati*, and it is precisely owing to this interest that history knows of the Saracenis, Queen Mavia, and the chapter she wrote in the history of Byzantium in the fourth century, which otherwise would have been consigned to oblivion. It was in the wake of his account of the Arian persecution, especially in Alexandria, that Rufinus chose to record his account of Mavia, and his interest in her is mainly through the dialogue between Lucius and her holy man Moses. This leads one to observe that much secular Arab federate history must have been left unrecorded in this age of ecclesiastical historians and that, consequently, the Arab presence in Oriens must have been much more extensive than these historians suggest. As for the major secular historian of the century, Ammianus, and the skeletal account he gave of the Arab *foederati*, see *infra*, pp. 251–68.

⁶¹A parallel situation obtained in the sixth century when the Ghassānid *foederati* were engaged against Justin I after he had banished the Monophysite bishops, for which see *supra*, p. 134 note 22.

⁶²Pelagius, bishop of Laodicea, was banished to Arabia in 367, for whom see Theodoret, *HE*, IV.12. In the sixth century, the Monophysite bishop, the famous Jacob Baradaeus, took refuge with the Ghassānid *foederati* of Arabia.

and this could suggest that he lived not far from Egypt. The evidence, however, admits of other interpretations: (1) Just as Mavia avoided in her military operations Antioch (and Syria in general), so was she loath to send her holy man to the same city. Moreover, at this time, Valens was himself at Antioch and the consecration he did not want would have been humiliating to him if it had been celebrated there. (2) Sozomen mentions (*HE*, VI.37) that it was at this time that the Arian patriarch of Antioch, Euzoius, died; some time might have elapsed before the new patriarch was elected and consecrated, and so the see of Antioch might have been vacant at the time with no patriarch to perform the consecration.

In his reply to Lucius, Moses speaks of exiled ecclesiastics suffering in the mines. This could suggest the mines of Phaeno, south of the Dead Sea between Petra and Zoara. But no conclusions can be drawn on whether or not this indicates the place where Moses had lived before he was consecrated. The statement occurs only in Sozomen with no indication whether the reference to the mines was a result of autopsy on the part of Moses; even if it was, the question remains open whether Moses saw the ecclesiastics languishing at Phaeno as a traveler to Alexandria or as a resident in the neighborhood. The reference to the mines is more likely to be an evocation of the time of the Great Persecution when Christians were sent to the quarries and the mines. This is confirmed by the reference in Socrates to Christians being committed by Lucius to the beasts and to the flames, all of which must be rhetorical exaggeration called for by the heated argument with Lucius. Most probably Moses only heard⁶³ about the hardships inflicted on the exiles, which must have been common knowledge among the orthodox in Oriens.⁶⁴

(4) The sequel to Moses' encounter with Lucius was his consecration not by Lucius but by the orthodox bishops in exile. Socrates adds the significant detail that this was done at "the mountain," τὸ ὄρος. This immediately brings to mind the τὸ Ἀράβιον . . . κλίμα mentioned by Sozomen⁶⁵ as that region in Egypt into which Mavia carried her war against Byzantium. Presumably it was an area inhabited by Arabs,⁶⁶ whither had been sent ecclesiastics exiled

⁶³It is difficult to believe that a desert solitary such as Moses would have seen the exiles committed to flames and beasts, unless he was an itinerant solitary.

⁶⁴Early in the reign of Valens, Eusebius of Samosata, together with other bishops, was expelled and banished from his see. Theodoret's account of him is instructive on how knowledge of what happened to the orthodox bishops could easily spread in Oriens. Theodoret records how he traveled in Syria, Phoenicia, and Palestine after his expulsion, working for orthodoxy; see Theodoret, *HE*, IV.12.

⁶⁵Also the Ἀραβικὸν ὄρος of Dionysius of Alexandria; *PG*, 10, col. 1305.

⁶⁶On the Arabs in Egypt, see chap. 5 on the *Nottia Dignitatum* in *RA*. Dionysius of Alexandria knew the Arabs as Saracens who sold Christians into slavery, but since his time the process of conversion among the Arabs had made some good progress.

previously⁶⁷ and whither also were sent some of the exiled bishops of the reign of Valens.⁶⁸ If so, this could explain why it was included in the range of Mavia's offensive despite the fact that, as has been argued before, her base of operation must have been a more northerly province, Phoenicia/Arabia.

(5) After his consecration, Moses, now a bishop, goes back to the Saracens, and his return signals the end of what Socrates chose to call ὁ Σαρακηνῶν . . . πόλεμος.⁶⁹ Moses returns in the capacity of an ecclesiastical diplomat and reconciles the Saracens to Rome; the former resume their status as *foederati*, return to the service immediately, and participate in the Gothic War.

According to Sozomen, Moses engaged, after his return to the Saracens, in missionary activities and converted many of them. The two more primary sources, Socrates and Rufinus, are silent on this point. Socrates says absolutely nothing on his activities as a missionary among the Saracens, while Rufinus testifies only to his being steadfast in his orthodox doctrinal position, *fidei catholicae custodivit intemerata consortia*.

It is necessary to analyze Sozomen's statement because it could be misleading on the question of the beginning of Christianity among the Arabs.⁷⁰ Unlike the two other historians, Sozomen was interested in the process of conversion among the Arabs and wrote a most valuable section on this question. His statement, therefore, is likely to be only a reflection of some thinking on his part on what a holy man would have done after his return to the people whose bishop he had just been consecrated. He rightly assumed that not all the Arabs had by then been converted and that Moses gave an impetus to the process. Consequently, the statement that he converted many of them would not be incorrect, since this would apply to many who were still pagan, and so would his further statement that he found few who shared his beliefs.

That Sozomen had in mind the Saracens in general, not Mavia's Arabs, is confirmed by the opening of the paragraph immediately following, where he

⁶⁷Such as Chaeremon, bishop of Nilopolis.

⁶⁸The spectacle of the exiled bishops seeking refuge no doubt made a direct appeal to the Arabs of "the mountain," who must have readily responded by extending *jiwār*, "protection," to these bishops. The Ghassānid *foederati* of the sixth century were also to accord *jiwār* to banished ecclesiastics, for which see *supra*, note 62. On the institution of *jiwār*, an important constituent of Arab ethos before and after the rise of Islam, see J. Lecerf, "Djiwār," *EI*, 2, pp. 559–60; on a celebrated instance in Arab history of its extension to a refugee, see Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs*, pp. 84–85.

⁶⁹That Mavia waged a war, πόλεμος, rather than raids, the familiar ἐπιδρομαί, brings to mind Tacitus's phrase describing the Germanic tribe, the Chatti: *alios ad proelium ire videas, Chattos ad bellum; rari excursus et fortuita pugna* (*Germania*, 30).

⁷⁰On this, see *infra*, App. 4, pp. 188–90.

speaks of the same Saracens he had referred to in connection with Moses' missionary work as Ishmaelites, descended from Abraham.⁷¹ Mavia and her own *foederati*, on the other hand, were already Christian, and it was probably other groups of *foederati* and Saracens, settled or roaming along the Roman limitrophe and in touch with Mavia's *foederati*, Ishmaelites, not yet Christianized, that were the object of Moses' missionary activities.⁷²

(6) Two large problems remain to be discussed, perhaps more important than all the preceding ones in this section: Socrates' statement that Moses was ethnically a Saracen, Σαρακηνὸς τὸ γένος, and Sozomen's that he was their first bishop. Both problems, especially the second, belong more properly to the chapter on the ecclesiastical history of the Arabs in the fourth century (see *infra*, pp. 335 ff.); therefore only the political profile of the two problems will be discussed in this section as they relate to the career of the queen who brought Moses into prominence.

Sozomen's statement can be true only in the sense that Moses was the first *Saracen* bishop of the Saracens,⁷³ since a close examination of the ecclesiastical history of the Arabs in the fourth century reveals that they had had over them bishops before Moses (*infra*, pp. 330–34). Socrates' statement that Moses was a Saracen by birth thus makes intelligible what otherwise would have been a startlingly erroneous statement on the part of Sozomen.

Mavia's insistence on having Moses consecrated as her bishop raises the important problem of the nascence of an Arab national church⁷⁴ in the last quarter of the fourth century and of the self-image of the *foederati*, a group possessed of a high degree of Arab self-awareness.⁷⁵ But Mavia's insistence could admit of other interpretations: (1) it may simply derive from the fact that Moses was a holy man who had performed miracles and who had been known to her and to her Arabs; he had attained the stature of the other holy men who were non-Arab and so he was deemed worthy of the episcopate; his Arab

⁷¹This may be reflected even in his idiom. Of the Arabs in general in this passage he uses the term φῦλον, meaning the race, the people in general, while when talking about a particular Arab tribe, that of Zokomos, further in the same section, he uses the term φυλή. Although both words could be used interchangeably, his idiomatic shift could suggest that he used the first, φῦλον, in the larger sense of a race, people, and the other, φυλή, in the restricted sense of a tribe.

⁷²Such as the Arabs of Sinai, for which see *infra*, pp. 292–308. Asia Minor itself, the Byzantine heartland, still had many pagan pockets even in the sixth century, and it was left to John of Ephesus to convert them.

⁷³The denotation of *Saracens* may even be narrowed down to Saracen *foederati*.

⁷⁴That a discussion of this intricate problem in this distant past is at all possible is due to the precious reference in Socrates to the ethnic origin of Moses.

⁷⁵The choice of Arabic, not Greek or even Aramaic, as the language of the Namāra inscription (*supra*, pp. 31–53) is indicative. The use of Greek by the Arabs in religious inscriptions is understandable (*infra*, pp. 222–38).

origin would thus have been accidental;⁷⁶ (2) Mavia's insistence that he rather than someone else be her bishop may have been due to his strict orthodoxy rather than to his Arab origin, which thus can turn out to be of secondary or no significance; (3) it may have been due to some practical consideration; Mavia probably found it easier to treat with a bishop of Moses' description than with a Greek coming from Antioch, closely associated with Valens and the Arian patriarch of Antioch; and, possibly, Valens or his patriarch had tried to impose on the *foederati* an Arian bishop or one who had such leanings. The evidence seems to yield uncertain and conflicting conclusions, but what emerges with certainty is that Mavia stood for orthodoxy in ecclesiastical matters, and once the issue of an orthodox bishop for her *foederati* was resolved, she returned to the Roman fold.

The Moses episode in Mavia's career makes possible the drawing of some conclusions on the question of federate acculturation. Mavia's *foederati* were, legally, not *Rhomaioi*;⁷⁷ they remained Arabs aware of their national ethos and mores. They and their queen participate in the religious and military life of the empire both on their own terms and on terms which chime well with the welfare of an empire ruled not by an Arian emperor but by an orthodox one.

If Mavia was the founder of an Arab national church, the nascency of that church was perhaps natural after half a century of association with Rome and of Christianity championed by the *foederati*. But this church was not separatist;⁷⁸ on the contrary, Mavia considered she was in the same camp as the persecuted orthodox majority of the empire and distinguished herself by making Valens bend the knee to her demands. Once her orthodox Moses is consecrated bishop, she returns to the service, as the ideal *foederata*,⁷⁹ sends a contingent of cavalry to participate in the Gothic War, and cements her reconciliation by the marriage of her daughter to none other than the *magister equitum*, Victor.

VI. MAVIA'S DAUGHTER

After the termination of the Saracen War, Mavia gave her daughter in marriage to Victor, the Master of Horse in the Orient, thereby fortifying the *foedus*

⁷⁶Cf. the efforts of the Ghassānid federate king Arethas in the sixth century in behalf of a Syrian bishop, Jacob Baradaeus, not an Arab; but Theodorus, the other bishop consecrated with the help of the Empress Theodora, may, in spite of his name, have been an Arab; see Nöldeke, *GF*, p. 20.

⁷⁷For Socrates, her *foederati* were an *ethnos*, the Ishmaelites of the Bible, who were, as is clear from Sozomen's phrase, under her direct rule, τὴν ἡγεμονίαν τοῦ ἔθνους ἐπιτροπέουσά, thus forming vis-à-vis Byzantium a little *imperium in imperio*.

⁷⁸The ecclesiastical policy of Mavia as it turns round the figure of Moses is thus of obvious importance and relevance to a major theme, the discussion of which was opened by E. L. Woodward in his *Christianity and Nationalism in the Later Roman Empire*.

⁷⁹The sequel to Mavia's revolt may be contrasted sharply with that of Zenobia a century earlier; Christianity made the difference.

that had just been concluded between Byzantium and the Arabs.⁸⁰ The marriage of a princess who must have been very young at the time and, what is more, a Saracenissa to one who was none other than the sexagenarian⁸¹ *magister equitum* and, in spite of his Sarmatian origin, a *Rhomaïos*, must be adjudged unique.⁸² It raises important issues and their discussion throws light on many aspects of Arab-Byzantine relations and others as well.

1

It may be inferred from Socrates' statement that it was Mavia who took the initiative in this transaction; that she followed up the *foedus* with a marriage in order to cement the former with the latter—it was the most personal and intimate way of expressing her *fides*⁸³ that had just been reflected

⁸⁰This precious datum is recorded only by Socrates, and it is as important as the other one in his *History* on the ethnic origin of Moses: Σαρακηνὸς τὸ γένος.

⁸¹He must have been around that age, since he retired a few years later.

⁸²Well-known instances of intermarriage between Romans and non-Romans normally involve a Roman woman and a barbarian prince or chief, for which see the present writer in "The Iranian Factor in Byzantium," p. 310 note 66. The case of Victor and Mavia's daughter was different; it was that of a Roman commander married to a barbarian princess, and so it was a rare case, an instance of the old Roman *conubium cum peregrinis mulieribus*. But more important and relevant is the fact that it was in violation of a Constitution, *De nuptiis gentilium*, issued by Valentinian and Valens only a few years before, prohibiting such intermarriages under threat of capital punishment (*Cod. Theod.*, 3.14). Only the *foedus* with the Saracens, which Valens desiderated, can explain this unusual marriage between his *magister equitum* and the barbarian princess, coming as it did only a few years after he himself had issued his Constitution, and thus Victor must have entered into that marriage by special permission of the emperor. This matrimonial transaction must be adjudged unique; instances cited as parallel to it are not really so since they involve not a barbarian woman and a Roman citizen but a barbarian chief and a Roman lady. Such is the case of the Lazic chiefs and the Roman ladies of senatorial families, for which see Procopius, *Bellum Persicum* II, 29; *Bellum Gothicum* IV, 9. On the false parallel that refers to these Lazic chiefs, see R. Mouterde and A. Poidebard, *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie* (Paris, 1939) (hereafter, *IGLSYR*), vol. 2, pp. 169–71; this erroneous view is echoed in Pignaniol, *EC*, p. 169 note 102. On the other facet of this unique marriage, see *infra*, note 85.

The case of Fravitta, the Gothic chief of the reign of Theodosius I, is illuminating; he, too, married a Roman lady by special permission of the emperor, presumably because at the time he was not a Roman citizen. The marriage proved as politically fruitful as that of the barbarian Saracen princess to the Roman Victor; to this marriage must be attributed at least in part Fravitta's pro-Roman sympathies that ranged him against another Goth, Eriulph, the chief of the anti-Roman faction, whom he killed in the midst of a heated argument on whether the Goths should destroy or defend the Roman Empire; see Eunapius, *FHG*, IV, frag. 60; Zosimus, *HN*, IV.56.1–3.

⁸³This is clear from the context within which Socrates records the information on this marriage, namely, that Mavia observed the terms of the *foedus* so scrupulously that she gave her daughter in marriage to Victor (*supra*, note 80). Her son-in-law must have become known to Mavia during his long *magisterium* over the Roman horse or during the negotiations that resulted in the *foedus*.

legally by the conclusion of the *foedus*.⁸⁴ The context makes it clear that it was a political marriage, although the romantic element in it should not be excluded (see *infra*, note 87).

In choosing Victor for her son-in-law, Mavia clearly was operating within the concept of what later in Islamic times was to be known as *kafā'a*,⁸⁵ the equality in social rank that was expected to obtain between the parties in the marriage transaction. She must have deemed him in rank equivalent to her princess daughter.

In marrying her daughter to Victor, Mavia must have considered the marriage desirable for the continuance of the *foedus* and for her good relations with Rome, since the son-in-law was the *magister equitum*. As Master of Horse, Victor was directly involved with Mavia's soldiers who were horsemen, and as his seat was in Antioch, where Valens resided for a long time, this would have ensured that the *foederati* had a friend in the capital of the Orient who would be sympathetic to their cause and an intermediary with the imperial administration.⁸⁶

As important as marrying her daughter to one so high in the imperial hierarchy must have been the fact that he was not only a devout Christian but

⁸⁴A much more attractive way of reflecting *fides* than the giving of hostages in the sixth century; the Arab chieftain Qays sends his sons 'Amr and Mu'awiya as hostages to Constantinople after Abraham concludes a *foedus* with him; see the present writer in "Byzantium and Kinda." Completely erroneous is the view that Mavia had to give her daughter in marriage to Victor for the preservation of the peace and that the marriage was a hostageship; see M. Waas, *Germanen im römischen Dienst im 4. Jh. n. Chr.*, *Habelts Dissertationsdrucke*, Reihe Alte Geschichte, 3 (Bonn, 1971), p. 112. Socrates (cited *supra*, note 80) does not bear this view out nor do the facts of Mavia's relations with Byzantium analyzed in this chapter. The marriage took place not after but before the Gothic War and the battle of Adrianople, and this is important to bear in mind; as has been shown in this section, it was a marriage that carried political implications and was related to the course of events that took place immediately after the Gothic War and the battle of Adrianople. O. Seeck reverses the date of the marriage and places it in the period that followed the Gothic War; Seeck, *Die Briefe des Libanius*, TU (Leipzig, 1906), p. 313.

⁸⁵On *kafā'a*, see J. Schacht, *An Introduction to Islamic Law* (Oxford, 1964), p. 162 and bibliography on chap. 22:2, p. 278. The willingness of an Arab queen to marry her daughter to a non-Arab was most unusual, and this makes the matrimonial transaction doubly unique (*supra*, note 82). Al-Nu'mān, the last of the Lakhmids of Ḥīra, the Arab client-kings of Sasanid Persia, refused to marry one of his daughters to his Persian overlord Chosroes Parvis, with disastrous consequences; see Ṭabari, *Tārikh*, vol. 2, pp. 202, 204, 206; Nöldeke, *PAS*, pp. 325–32.

⁸⁶The marriage arranged by Mavia crowns the series of successes that attended her relations with Byzantium—the revolt, the military victories, the consecration of her choice, Moses, and the *foedus*. Having won the war, Mavia apparently was anxious to give the peace a firm foundation, and the marriage of her daughter to the *magister* was the most imaginative means of securing that foundation. How right in her calculations she was is evidenced by the course of Arab-Byzantine relations after the retirement of Victor and his disappearance from the administrative and military scene, for which see *infra*, p. 213.

also devoutly orthodox. Mavia's revolt was motivated by a desire on her part to see the orthodox position assured among her *foederati*; Victor's orthodoxy and his efforts in its behalf would have been known to Mavia, who, having insisted that her bishop should be orthodox, would have been anxious that her son-in-law should also be so.⁸⁷

2

At the time of his marriage to the very young Saracen princess, Victor, presumably a bachelor or a widower, must have been around sixty. Although romantic elements cannot be entirely excluded, it is almost certain that other considerations must have weighed with him as they must have weighed with Mavia. They are worth exploring because they relate to the special position of the Arabs in Oriens, to the career of Victor himself, and to Roman imperial interests. They make almost certain that it was Victor who was most instrumental in persuading Valens to conclude a peace with Mavia.

A

Victor was not *magister peditum* but *magister equitum*, and he endured remarkably long in that *magisterium*, which he held for some twenty years, 363–82 (?). The Arab *foederati* of Mavia were part of the cavalry arm of the army of the Orient, directly related to his assignment as Master of Horse. They were, therefore, of special interest to Victor, particularly in a period when the cavalry arm in warfare was asserting itself. As a professional soldier, he must have judged that the Arabs were worth courting for maintaining the efficiency of the Roman army in the Orient.

Furthermore, Victor was entrusted with important assignments during the reign of Valens. He negotiated with both the Goths and the Persians, and he knew well that he could not afford to have the Arab horse against him at a critical juncture in 377 when only an uneasy truce obtained with Persia and the war with the Goths in Thrace was imminent, especially after Mavia's horse had proved its mettle in the war against Rome in the triennium 375–78. It must have been Victor, the *magister equitum*, rather than Julius, the vanquished *magister utriusque militiae*, that recommended the conclusion of a peace with Mavia and, what is more, the enlistment of a Saracen squadron for the war with the Goths in Thrace.

⁸⁷The princess most probably rode horses as her mother did; if so, her marriage to Victor, himself a horseman, would have been especially appropriate! Horsemanship and Orthodoxy, but more the latter, would relieve the marriage of being an entirely political one and would inject into it a romantic element. Where in Oriens the marriage was celebrated is not recorded; more likely than Antioch is Anasartha, in view of some inscriptions found near it which might involve both Mavia and her daughter; see *infra*, pp. 222–38.

That he followed the conclusion of the legal *foedus* with a marriage could easily be related, at least in part, to a desire to ensure the smooth working of the *foedus* and to reflect sincerity on the Roman side. The course of Arab-Byzantine relations in the previous reigns afforded precedents for how these relations could go sour as a result of bad faith. Victor marched Julian's army from Constantinople to Antioch and took part in the military operations of Julian's Persian campaign. He certainly came into contact with the Arab *foederati* in the course of that campaign⁸⁸ and appreciated the role of the Arab horse in it. What is more important, he witnessed the deterioration of Julian's relations with the Arabs during that campaign as a result of the emperor's arrogance and bad faith.⁸⁹ The breaking of the *foedus* by Julian alienated the Arabs and turned them hostile, and all this must have been fresh in the mind of the Arabs, who in the reign of Valens had fallen out with the emperor, this time on doctrinal grounds. Victor must have drawn a lesson from Julian's campaign; his marriage to the Saracen princess could very well have been a gesture on his part designed to allay the suspicions of the *foederati* on the durability of the *foedus* and to convince them through this union that Rome would honor its terms.

B

In addition to being the Master of the Horse in the Orient, Victor was a devout Christian and a zealous Orthodox. Especially important is his role as mediator between the orthodox *ecclesia* and the Arian *imperium* throughout his career, during which he always tried to serve the interests of orthodoxy and to protect it against the aggressive ecclesiastical policy of the Arian Valens. He appears as an influential orthodox officer on many occasions in various parts of Oriens—in Thrace, in Constantinople, in Cappadocia—defending the orthodox cause and promoting its interests by his proximity to the seat of power, Valens himself.⁹⁰

It is likely that in the course of the Saracen War the sympathies of the Master of the Horse were with Mavia, who shared with him his orthodox position. He must have seen in Mavia's *foederati* the orthodox army of the Orient⁹¹ that was trying to do by force of arms what he himself was trying to do by persuasion. On the ground of his orthodox position, it is even possible to suggest one of the reasons for the defeat of Roman arms by Mavia's forces. As

⁸⁸If, as has been argued before, Mavia's husband was then alive and was one of the Saracen *reguli* that met Julian at Callinicum, then Victor could have met his future father-in-law.

⁸⁹For Julian and the Arabs, see *supra*, pp. 132–35.

⁹⁰On Victor's Christianity and services to the Nicene party, see *infra*, pp. 165–69.

⁹¹In much the same way that the Monophysites of the sixth century saw in the Ghassānid *foederati* the Monophysite army of the Orient.

Victor and Mavia shared the same doctrinal position, it is possible that the former was lukewarm in the prosecution of the war against the latter, and this may be a partial explanation for what otherwise seems strange—the repeated defeats of the Roman army at the hands of a Saracen queen.⁹²

What has been said above on the role of Victor in bringing about the conclusion of peace for military reasons may with equal truth be said of it in this context of religious controversies. As he was for the orthodox “their man in Antioch,” Victor must have pleaded Mavia’s cause with Valens and presented her in a favorable light,⁹³ that of a loyal *foederata* who revolted only because she was alienated by his aggressive Arian policy, in much the same way that, a little later in Thrace, he was to support the protests of his colleague, the orthodox Trajan, who protested the policies of Arian Valens and brought them to bear on the reverses suffered by Roman arms at the hands of the Goths.⁹⁴

Victor’s marriage to the Saracen princess thus admits of being placed within this religious, doctrinal context. The two were united by their orthodoxy, and the spiritual bond that united them fortified the legal bond of marriage, assuring the orthodox Saracens that the high-ranking officer in the imperial administration at Antioch allied to them by matrimonial ties was, like them, orthodox.

C

The incidental statement in Socrates on Victor’s marriage to the Saracen princess has proven to be exceptionally valuable. The preceding analysis has shown that it is not merely a colorful detail but also a most valuable statement

⁹²The scene before the campaign of Adrianople, in which Victor was involved, provides an insight into his real feelings and how in his consciousness military matters were entangled with doctrinal ones. He supports his fellow officer Trajan, who protested to Valens that the latter’s persecution of the orthodox bishops had alienated God’s favor and given victory to the enemy; Theodoret, *HE*, IV.30. The scene in the Orient, where Valens had persecuted and exiled the orthodox bishops and where his armies had been beaten by the Arabs, provides a parallel and can be easily evoked.

⁹³Victor must have been for the orthodox Arabs in the fourth century what Theodora was to be for the Monophysite Arabs in the sixth. For what he might have done to keep Cappadocia and its Church Father, St. Basil, from being inconvenienced by Valens’s designs in the early seventies, see *infra*, pp. 165–67.

⁹⁴See *supra*, note 92. What is relevant here is Theodoret’s further statement on Victor that he implored Valens not to take offense at Trajan’s reproaches, and presumably succeeded. Victor would have pleaded the case of Mavia and her Arabs in a similar fashion as soldiers who were faithful servants of the emperor, but who could not disobey their conscience in religious matters. Victor must have been influential with Valens who apparently found him congenial as a *magister praesentalis* and capable as a soldier-statesman. Otherwise, it is difficult to believe that he would have retained him, the staunch orthodox that he was, throughout the whole of his relatively long reign.

for extracting data that throw light on the course of Arab-Byzantine relations in the second half of the fourth century.

Victor emerges as one of the few, very few, officers in the whole course of Arab-Byzantine relations who were friendly with and sympathetic to the Arab *foederati*, and what he achieved shows how important it was for Rome to have such officers. Victor started with a number of affinities with the Arabs. Although he was a Roman citizen,⁹⁵ he was ethnically a Sarmatian barbarian; furthermore, he was a horseman who must have admired Arab horsemanship; and finally, he was orthodox, as the Arabs were. He was familiar with the course of Arab-Byzantine relations for some twenty years, having served under four emperors, Constantius, Julian, Jovian, and Valens; and he witnessed the deterioration of relations with the Saracens, especially in the reigns of Constantius and Julian. His opportunity came in the reign of Valens, and it is Victor who must be credited with the termination of the Saracen War and the normalization of federate-imperial relations. The *foedus* enabled Rome to have a quiet front against Persia and to enlist the service of a squadron of Saracen cavalry for participation in the Gothic War (*infra*, pp. 175–83). It also strengthened the arm of orthodoxy by returning to the service the *foederati* who were its soldiers in Oriens. Thus a new dimension may be added to the career of Victor, both in the service of the *imperium* and the *ecclesia*.

For Arab-Byzantine relations and the history of the Arab *foederati* in the fourth century, these last years of the reign of Valens, dominated by the figure of Victor, represent the climax and the ideal of what these relations should always have been. The technical bond of *fides* that had united Roman emperor and Arab chief through the formal *foedus* was fortified spiritually in the fourth century by the conversion of both the empire and the *foederati* to the same faith, Christianity. The marriage of the Roman Master of the Horse to a federate Arab princess crowned this bond and represented the most perfect moment in the checkered history of the Arab *foederati* and their relations with Byzantium, which had floundered previously and was to do so subsequently because Roman officers of the stamp of Victor were not in abundance.⁹⁶

VII. MAVIA'S SON-IN-LAW

Mavia's son-in-law, Victor, *magister equitum praesentalis*, was one of the most distinguished officers in the second half of the fourth century, serving both

⁹⁵On this, see *supra*, note 82.

⁹⁶Such as Richomer who was a pagan and who moved in circles unfriendly to the Arabs, for whom see *infra*, pp. 210–14. Such also was Maurice in the sixth century even before he became emperor and while still general; it was his unsympathetic attitude to the Arabs and their king, Mundir, that finally brought about the disintegration of the Ghassānid phylarchate as a centralized organization. Arab-Byzantine relations during the reign of Maurice will be treated at length in the third volume of this series, *BASIC*; for the time being, see Nöldeke, *GF*, pp. 27, 29, and P. Goubert, *Byzance avant l'Islam* (Paris, 1951), vol. 1, pp. 249–60.

the *imperium* and the *ecclesia*. In view of his importance in the Arab-Byzantine relationship, his career calls for an evaluation.⁹⁷

1

Two features distinguish his career as an officer in the Roman army, his acceptability and his durability: (a) although a staunch orthodox Christian, he was acceptable to two Arian emperors, Constantius and Valens, to a pagan one, Julian, and to such eminent pagans as Themistius and Libanius; (b) he endured in the service through the reigns of no less than six emperors—Constantius, Julian, Jovian, Valens, Gratian, and Theodosius.

In the military annals of this second half of the fourth century, he took an active part in its two most important wars, the Persian War of Julian and the Gothic War of Valens, distinguishing himself in both: (a) he marched Julian's army from Constantinople to Antioch, was assigned a leading role in the various stages of the campaign, distinguished himself in the battle of Ctesiphon, and received a wound before its walls; (b) he counseled Valens against offering battle before the arrival of his nephew Gratian; after trying in vain to rescue Valens, he was able to ride out of the battlefield with his own troops intact and reached Pannonia, where he broke the news of the disaster of Adrianople to Gratian. The two epithets applied to him by Ammianus, *cunctator* and *cautus* (RG, XXXI.12.6), are indeed applicable to him in the complimentary connotation, and he displayed both qualities in these two wars. If his counsel with Valens had prevailed, the issue of Adrianople might have been different.

Evidently, he was more than a mere soldier: he was a soldier-statesman who on various occasions left his mark on the course of some important historical events. After Julian's death, he was instrumental, together with Arintheus, in the choice of Jovian, and in so doing he returned the purple to a Christian emperor. He was entrusted with important diplomatic tasks involving negotiations with the Goths on two occasions and on three with the Persians, and he held the consulship in 369 together with Valens's young son Valentinian.

2

He appears in the sources as a genuinely pious Christian and a very zealous Orthodox. Two church fathers, St. Basil and St. Gregory of Nazianzus, corresponded with him and invoked his aid, and St. Isaac of Constanti-

⁹⁷The documentation for this section may be found in *PLRE*, vol. 1, pp. 957–59. Waas took a correct measure of Victor's worth: see his *Germanen*, pp. 130–33. However, he did not use the *Vita Isaacii*, an important source for the final stage of Victor's career, in either the 1965 or the 1971 edition of his work; J. Matthews did use this source in *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court A.D. 364–524* (Oxford, 1975), pp. 120–21, 130–31.

nople had close relations with him. Favorable contemporary evaluation of the *magister equitum* comes not from the secular military historian of the period, Ammianus,⁹⁸ but from the two church fathers.

(1) In the early seventies, he crosses the path of St. Basil, who addresses to him two letters (152–53), the more important of which is the first.⁹⁹ In this letter he speaks in glowing terms of his piety, his righteousness, and his walking the path of orthodoxy; he thanks him for his services in behalf of the *ecclesia* and refers to him as one who surpasses in honors all the inhabitants of the *oikoumene*.

With all due allowances for exaggeration inspired by gratitude and admiration, there can be no doubt that this contemporary view of Victor is substantially correct. But more important is the background of this eulogy. As the letter is dated 373, that background must be sought in the ecclesiastical history of the period immediately preceding 373, and this can only be the biennium 371–72 during which Valens tried hard but in vain to win over Cappadocia to the Arian position.¹⁰⁰ In his capacity as *magister praesentalis*, Victor was very close to the emperor. He wielded great influence with him, and the latter trusted him and kept him in his position for the entire reign. Before the battle of Adrianople he remonstrated with Valens concerning his Arianism, which was alienating God, and interceded in behalf of Trajan, at whose remarks Valens had taken offense. Valens's giving up all attempts to interfere in the religious life of Cappadocia may in part be attributed to the good offices of Victor, and it is this that Basil must have had in mind when in his letter he acknowledges his services to the Church. Thus Victor contributed to the triumph of orthodoxy in Cappadocia, so important to the final triumph of orthodoxy against Arianism in the fourth century, and this alone could give him a place in the ecclesiastical history of the period.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸On the image of Victor in the *RG*, see *infra*, pp. 268–74.

⁹⁹On the letters of Basil, see Quasten, *Patrology*, vol. 3, pp. 220–26; for editions, translations, manuscript tradition, and studies, see pp. 221–22. The standard edition is by Y. Courtonne, *Saint Basile: Lettres* (Paris, 1961); for the two letters addressed to Victor, see vol. 2, pp. 77–78.

¹⁰⁰On this, see Kidd, *History of the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 242–43.

¹⁰¹Valens prepared orders for the banishment of Basil but never issued them. Gwatkin suggested that “perhaps the influence of Terentius and Arinthaëus is enough to explain the unexpected mildness of Valens”; and in this he was followed by Kidd; see H. M. Gwatkin, *Studies of Arianism* (Cambridge, 1882), p. 243 note 2; Kidd, *History of the Church*, p. 243. The two could have exercised their influence in behalf of Basil, together with Victor. But the case for Victor rests on much stronger grounds: (1) Terentius was *comes et dux* in faraway Armenia, while Victor was much closer to Valens as *magister praesentalis* and so was in a more advantageous position to help Basil and the embattled Nicene party in Cappadocia; for Terentius, see *PLRE*, vol. 1, pp. 881–82; (2) as *magister peditum*, Arinthaëus was closer than Terentius to Valens, but Basil's letter to him (179) does not suggest any services he rendered to Basil or to orthodoxy in Cappadocia during the crises; for Arinthaëus, see *PLRE*, vol. 1,

(2) In the early eighties, another Cappadocian Father, Gregory of Nazianzus, addressed two letters¹⁰² to Victor (133–34); the first, dated the summer of 382, is the important one, in which Gregory asks Victor to give his support toward bringing order and peace to the Church.¹⁰³ The occasion is the synod of 382 in Constantinople, in which Gregory had no faith and in which he did not participate.¹⁰⁴

Although the empire had been returned to an orthodox emperor and although Theodosius had, the year before, convened the Council of Constantinople, which ensured the triumph of orthodoxy, yet Gregory found it necessary to write to Victor and invoke his aid.¹⁰⁵ Less important than Basil's letter, nevertheless, Gregory's is a document relevant to the prestige and influence of Victor in ecclesiastical affairs, even in the aftermath of the Second Ecumenical Council. He is referred to in the letter as a distinguished member of the *ecclesia*.

The letters of both church fathers¹⁰⁶ testify in no ambiguous terms to the large figure Victor had cut in the affairs of the Church and in the service of orthodoxy. In this he was advantaged by his strategic position so close to the seat of imperial power as *magister praesentalis*. His *magisterium* is roughly coterminous with the priesthood of Basil and with his episcopate in Caesarea.¹⁰⁷ During this period, Victor was the *ecclesia's* best friend, helping from within the *imperium* the work of Basil, the leader of the Nicene party, for the final triumph of orthodoxy.

102–3. None of the letters addressed by Basil to powerful officials in the imperial administration rivals his Letter 152 to Victor in reflecting profound gratitude for substantial services and in suggesting that what was involved was nothing less than the fate of orthodoxy in Cappadocia itself.

¹⁰²On the letters of Gregory of Nazianzus, see Quasten, *Patrology*, vol. 3, pp. 247–48. For these two letters, see P. Gallay, ed., *Saint Grégoire de Nazianze: Lettres* (Paris, 1967), vol. 2, pp. 22–23.

¹⁰³For the ecclesiastical and theological disputes of the period involving the Ecumenical Council of 381 and the Synod of 382, see Kidd, *History of the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 282–88, 291–94.

¹⁰⁴On this, see his letter in Kidd, *Creeds, Councils, and Controversies*, ed. J. Stevenson (London, 1966), pp. 150–51.

¹⁰⁵He no doubt remembered Victor's role in the Cappadocian crises of Valens's reign in which Gregory too played a role when he agreed to be consecrated bishop of Sasima by Basil. And he must have met Victor in Constantinople when he preached there in the Church of the Resurrection in 379–81 and also during the sessions of the Council of Constantinople, which elected him bishop of the capital.

¹⁰⁶Victor was not the only *magister* who received letters from the two church fathers; others, such as Arinthaëus, also did, but he is not addressed in such terms as Victor is (*supra*, note 101).

¹⁰⁷Basil was ordained priest ca. 364 and was elected archbishop of Caesarea in 370; he died in 379. Victor's *magisterium* extended from 363 to ca. 382. When exactly he retired is not clear; see *infra*, pp. 213, 231.

(3) In addition to the patristic letters of the two Cappadocian Fathers, there is the *Vita Isaacii*, the *Life* of St. Isaac of Constantinople,¹⁰⁸ which has many references to Victor's activities as a pious Christian and zealous Orthodox in Constantinople shortly before and after the death of Valens.

Together with Saturninus,¹⁰⁹ another *magister*, Victor plays a leading role in the life of St. Isaac and in his relations with both Valens and Theodosius: (a) after Isaac's encounter with Valens, the latter orders the two *magistri* to arrest Isaac and keep him in custody until his return from the campaign against the Goths (*Vita*, 247 F); (b) Valens dies, Theodosius accedes, and the two *magistri* lead the saint to the latter, who had heard much about him and his prophecy against Valens (*Vita*, 249 D); (c) after the triumph of orthodoxy at the Council of Constantinople, in which Isaac took part,¹¹⁰ the saint wants to go home to his desert in Oriens, but the two *magistri* persuade him to stay in Constantinople (*Vita*, 251 F); (d) finally, they provide him with a dwelling; Victor offers his property at Psamathea,¹¹¹ a suburb of Constantinople, and builds for Isaac a structure that Isaac, however, declines to accept, in favor of a modest cell built for him by Saturninus (*Vita*, 251 F, 252 A).

Thus the *Vita Isaacii* is an important source for the last phase of Victor's career, sporadically documented in various sources. In addition to its providing a background for a fuller understanding of other sources¹¹² for Victor's career, the *Vita* presents a picture of the activities of Victor, not the soldier but the Christian in the service of the *ecclesia*. These activities are alluded to in other sources, but the *Vita* speaks of them explicitly and exclusively and, what is more, adds to them a new dimension. Together with Saturninus, Victor persuaded the saint to stay in Constantinople and provided him with a dwelling. Although Isaac chose the modest cell Saturninus had built for him, Victor did collaborate in persuading him to stay in the capital and continued to cultivate his friendship, seeing him every morning before he would go to the palace to see Theodosius (*Vita*, 252 A). From this modest cell developed the monastery of St. Dalmatus, known as the Dalmatian monastery, said to be the

¹⁰⁸For St. Isaac, see *BHG*, vol. 2, p. 43. For the *Vita*, see *ASS*, 20 Maii, Tom. 7, pp. 243–55.

¹⁰⁹For Saturninus, see *PLRE*, vol. 1, pp. 807–8.

¹¹⁰*Vita*, 250 A–B; he must have participated unofficially as a holy man since his name does not appear among the subscriptions of the council.

¹¹¹On this, see *PLRE*, vol. 1, p. 959.

¹¹²Such as the patristic letters discussed in this section. These presuppose an influential presence for Victor in the capital and elsewhere, and this becomes clear from his picture in the *Vita*, so close as *magister praesentalis* to both Valens and Theodosius. On the relevance of the *Vita* to a possible solution of some problems in a Greek inscription involving the Arabs, see *infra*, pp. 230–31.

oldest monastery in Constantinople.¹¹³ If so, Victor would have contributed to the rise of monasticism in Constantinople, brought thither from the lands of the Semitic Orient by one of its holy men, Isaac.¹¹⁴

3

These two profiles of Victor, who represents the new type of Roman commander in the fourth century, present him in his true light as a fully integrated barbarian in the Roman system, a Christianized and Romanized barbarian who probably belonged, when still very young, to the Sarmatian group that had been settled within the imperial frontiers by Constantine.¹¹⁵ He must be adjudged the ripest fruit of Sarmatia and a witness to the success of the Constantinian experiment.

The role that Victor played in the Arab-Byzantine relationship in the last triennium of Valens's reign has been discussed. That role becomes clearer when set against his career with its two profiles analyzed in this section. He was orthodoxy's man in the imperial court, the liaison between the *ecclesia* and the *imperium*. Since Mavia's revolt involved both, little doubt is left that it was, indeed, the *magister equitum praesentalis* Victor that composed the differences between Byzantium and her Arab *foederati*, crowning his achievement by his marriage to Mavia's daughter.

VIII. THE DECADE 365–75

The sudden appearance of the Arabs, powerful and effective in their revolt against Valens in the last triennium of his reign, clearly implies that they had been Byzantium's *foederati* in the years that preceded that triennium. Their

¹¹³Callinicus, *Vita Hypatii*, ed. G. J. M. Bartelink, *Sources chrétiennes*, 177 (Paris, 1971), p. 74; and the editor subscribes to this view. On this monastery, see R. Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin*. 3.1: *Les églises et les monastères* (Paris, 1953), pp. 86–89. For traces of the development of monasticism in Constantinople before the reign of Theodosius, see G. Dagron, "Les moines et la ville: le monachisme à Constantinople jusqu'au concile de Chalcédoine (451)," *Travaux et Mémoires*, 4 (1970), pp. 229–76.

¹¹⁴According to the *Vita*, 246 B, Isaac hailed from Oriens, and it is possible that he had lived in its arid zones as did those holy men who appear in the ecclesiastical histories of the period. His ethnic origin does not seem to have been Greek but Semitic, either Aramaean or Arab: (1) to Valens, he looked physiognomically a stranger (*Vita*, 246 C); (2) his assumption of a biblical Semitic rather than Greek name could also suggest a Semitic origin; the Semites of the Orient found the Semitic names of the Bible closer to their own; (3) he appears as a strong character who seized the bridle of Valens's horse twice while rebuking him for his Arianism and his persecution of the orthodox (*Vita*, 246 C, 274 D); and he is probably the same Isaac who had an encounter with John Chrysostom (Sozomen, *HE*, VIII.9). These character traits could ally him to another Semitic holy man of the period, Mavia's Moses, who also appears fearless in his altercation with Lucius of Alexandria; see *supra*, pp. 153–55.

¹¹⁵Anonymous Valesianus: Pars Prior, 6.32.

presence as *foederati* fighting for Rome is also attested in the reign of Julian. They could not, therefore, have disappeared from the military scene¹¹⁶ in the decade or so that elapsed between their participation in Julian's Persian campaign and their revolt against Valens in 375. The revolt itself, which broke out late in his reign, could suggest that before that date the alienation of the Arab *foederati* from Valens and his Arian policy had not reached the point of open revolt and that they had still been in the service.

The major secular historian of the period is silent on the whereabouts of the Arab *foederati* in this decade, but Ammianus's silence does not necessarily imply Arab nonparticipation in the wars of the period. He maintained complete silence on their military activities in the triennium 375–78, and these have had to be recovered from the ecclesiastical historians.¹¹⁷ His account of the reign must therefore be examined for possible implied references to the Arabs, and, indeed, there are two sections in the *Res Gestae* that may contain such references.

1

There are two possible references to the Arab *auxilia* in the *Res Gestae* during the rebellion of Procopius:¹¹⁸

(1) When Valens had returned to Ancyra, news reached him that Lupicinus was approaching with considerable reinforcements: *comperissetque Lupicinum ab oriente cum catervis adventare, non contemnendis* (XXVI.8.4). Lupicinus was not only *magister equitum* but also commanded in the Orient. The oriental command of the *magister equitum* was *trans Taurum*, and this makes certain that the Arab mounted *foederati* were under his general jurisdiction and would have marched with him in such a military operation as the one against Procopius.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶The references to possible Arab participation in the wars of this decade, 365–75, are exiguous as well as implicit; it is, therefore, more fruitful to examine them after the explicit references to their presence in the triennium 375–78 have been collected and discussed. Without these and the data they provide, the case for Arab participation in the decade would not be strong, based as it is on implicit references. Hence in this chapter on the reign of Valens, the decade 365–75 is treated after the triennium 375–78.

¹¹⁷In addition to what has been said earlier in detail about Ammianus's silence on the Arab *foederati* in the triennium 375–78 (*infra*, pp. 251–68), attention may be drawn to a statement in *RG*, XXX.2.6, that for the prosecution of the war against Shāpūr in 377–78 Valens had to recruit mercenaries from among the Scythians (Goths), *ideoque auxilia festina celeritate mercante*. That Valens was forced to recruit Goths and not Arabs, who were closer to him, clearly implies that these were unavailable and must have been ill-disposed. It is only the ecclesiastical historians that solve the problem of the whereabouts of the Arab *foederati* in this triennium and disclose that they were alienated by the Arian policy of Valens.

¹¹⁸It lasted from September 365 to May 366; see Piganiol, *EC*, pp. 154–55.

¹¹⁹For Lupicinus, see *PLRE*, vol. 1, pp. 520–21. He was promoted *magister equitum per Orientem* by Jovian, for which see *RG*, XXVI.5.2. The command of Julius, the *magister utriusque militiae* in the Orient, was also *Trans-Taurine*; *RG*, XXXI.16.8.

The term used by Ammianus to describe the force is *catervae*; in military language, this means barbarian *auxilia* in contrast to *legiones*. If it does mean this in this context, then it is almost certain that these *catervae* were the Arab *foederati* or partly Arab.

(2) Later in the course of the rebellion, Valens was joined by Lupicinus with a strong band of auxiliaries: *juncto sibi Lupicino cum robustis auxiliis* (XXVI.9.1). The term used, *auxilia*, is clearer in connotation than *catervae* and less uncertain in the possibility of its application to the Arab *foederati*. Whether these *auxilia* were Arab remains an open question, but the chances are that, as the *catervae* of RG, XXVI.8.4, they were Arab or partly Arab, and for the same reasons stated in the preceding paragraph.

For the decade that elapsed between the rebellion of Procopius and Mavia's revolt in 375, there is no explicit reference to the Arab *auxilia* in hostilities against the Persians in Armenia and Iberia. The theater of war may have been too far for Arab participation;¹²⁰ moreover, the war is not well documented,¹²¹ and as Ammianus usually does not go out of his way to record the contribution of the *auxilia*, it is difficult to draw conclusions on the degree of Arab participation in the wars of this period.

However, the examination of the course of Arab-Byzantine relations in the reign of Constantius (*supra*, pp. 74–86) provides a guide for the pattern of their participation. Basically, they were ill-disposed and alienated because of Valens's Arian policies, but they would join his forces when he would relax the severity of his anti-Nicene policy. This may be illustrated during the rebellion of Procopius when, in spite of his order of May 365, he was forced for political considerations to amnesty Athanasius¹²² and possibly others as well, such as Meletius of Antioch and Eustathius of Sebastea.¹²³ Under these circumstances the Arab *foederati* could have fought with Valens against Procopius, as suspected above. The same might apply to the period 367–71 when there was a truce¹²⁴ in what is known as "the second Arian persecution." Thus their fitful

¹²⁰Although in the sixth century the Ghassānid *foederati* fight in Armenia under their king Arethas; see Zacharia Rhetor, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, CSCO, ser. iii, tom. vi, *textus*, p. 97 (no. 84); *versio*, p. 67 (no. 88).

¹²¹For references to this war in the RG and a succinct account of it, see Piganiol, *EC*, 157–58.

¹²²Kidd, *History of the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 228–29.

¹²³See Gwatkin, *Studies of Arianism*, p. 239 note 1.

¹²⁴Kidd, *History of the Church*, vol. 2, p. 231; the possibility that Mavia's consort was won over to Arianism (*supra*, p. 143 note 23) must also be entertained to explain the possible participation of the Arab orthodox *foederati* in the wars of the Arian Valens, just as their nonparticipation may admit of explanations other than the one offered above or additional to it, namely, discontent deriving from friction with the Romans, possibly concerning the *annona* (*supra*, p. 142 note 21). Whether data yielded by the epigraphic evidence can be related to Arab military activity during the reign of Valens is not entirely clear; for construction work in

appearance on the military scene in this decade must be related to their doctrinal position, and it is this that makes their military record significant because it allies it to the cultural history of the period.

2

Of an entirely different nature is Ammianus's account of what he calls a group of *grassatores acerrimi*, called Maratocupreni, who dwelled in a village by the same name not far from Apamea in Syria and who ravaged the region until they were crushed and rooted out completely in 369 by the imperial army (XXVIII.2.11–14).

The account is strange both in its details and in its place in Ammianus's narrative, which before this account was on Valentinian and the West and which immediately after reverts to the West with an account of the activities of the elder Theodosius in Britain. Ammianus tries to justify this digression in the opening sentence of the account by relating it to similar acts of brigandage which took place in Gaul and which he has just described. Yet the digression is curious¹²⁵ since it violates the principle of treating the reign of Valens not chronologically, but topographically. This and the details of the account raise some important questions.¹²⁶

From Ammianus's account, it is clear that these Maratocupreni belonged to the Semitic population of Oriens, and so must have been either Aramaeans or Arabs or a mixture of both. This is clear from their name, Maratocupreni, a recognizably Semitic-sounding word, a compound composed of two elements, the first of which must mean "cave," while the second admits of a number of interpretations.¹²⁷

the province of Arabia in this period, see such inscriptions as may be found in *Revue archéologique* (1933), p. 413 (no. 178 at Dibīn), and Dessau, *ILS*, vol. 1 (no. 773 at Umm al-Jimāl), in the second of which Julius, *magister utriusque militiae*, is involved.

¹²⁵It is also noteworthy that it is surprisingly much more detailed than his account of brigandage in Gaul, which resulted in the death of Valentinian's relative, the *tribunus stabuli* Constantianus (*RG*, XXVIII.210).

¹²⁶Not answered by Honigmann or Dussaud; see E. Honigmann, *RE*, 14.2.1, cols. 1435–36; Dussaud, *Topographie*, p. 205.

¹²⁷Ammianus says that the Maratocupreni dwelled in a *vicus* of the same name. The name of the village must be Maratocupren, the terminal vowel being the *i* of Latin plural nouns. The terminal consonant could, of course, be part of the Latin adjectival suffix *enus*, but it is more likely that it is part of the second element of the Semitic compound word. (a) The first element is undoubtedly Syriac *m'artā*, or Arabic *maghārat*, meaning "cave." The vowel *o* could be the West Syrian pronunciation of the *aleph* in *m'artā*, or it could be the terminal vowel of Arabic *maghārat* in the nominative case. (b) The second element in the compound is possibly Syriac *kafrā*, meaning "village," which appears in the region as a toponym, or is the diminutive of it, *kafrūna*; the latter possibility would account for the consonant *q* in the second element. Alternatively, it could be an Arabic word, either *qabr*, "grave," or *qafr*, "wilderness," in the dual, which would account for the consonant *n* in this second element, the dual being common

Their village is described as being in the vicinity of Apamea, and this, together with their name, could suggest they might be Arab. The area was heavily Arab in ethnic complexion, as is clear from a description of it in the first century B.C., and the presumption is that in the fourth century A.D. its Arab population, Romanized as they came to be, had not entirely lost their Arab identity.¹²⁸

More important is to determine whether these Maratocupreni were just brigands who went on a rampage or whether their activities admit of interpretations other than the one Ammianus gives. Their possible Arab origin and their rising in the reign of Valens, who alienated the orthodox Arabs, could suggest that possibly they rose in sympathy with the general dissatisfaction of the orthodox Arabs in Oriens with the Arian policy of Valens. If so, Ammianus understandably would not have cared to discuss this or to reveal the springs of their action, and thus his silence on this matter does not rule out this possibility. He was silent on the Arab *foederati* of Mavia throughout the entire reign of Valens, and when he mentioned them during the defense of Constantinople he presented them as rude, nude, and bloodthirsty mercenaries.¹²⁹ Had it not been for the ecclesiastical historians, no reader would have concluded that these were none other than the orthodox Christian *foederati*, fighting for the Christian empire and defending the capital. Thus, although there is no reason to doubt the truth of what he says about the activities of the Mara-

in the name of toponyms in the region. A last possibility for interpreting the second element in the compound is to derive it from Syriac *kšar* or the Arabic *kafara*, "to apostasize" or "to deny"; the second element would then be a *nomen agentis* of the verb in the plural, meaning "the apostasizers." As will be argued further on in this section, it is possible that these Maratocupreni were orthodox Christians who rose against Arian Valens, and the term would have been applied to them from the viewpoint of the Arian party. For a detailed map of the region of Apamea, see Dussaud, *Topographie*, Map 8, opposite p. 232.

¹²⁸The *locus classicus* is Strabo, *Geography*, XVI.2.10. This section and others as well document the extensive and intensive presence of the Arabs in Oriens in the first century B.C. Especially important is what he says in the following section (XVI.2.11) on the two regions east of Apamea which he calls Parapotamia and Chalcidice, inhabited for the most part by the Arab Scenitae. The chances are that these two regions kept their ethnic complexion for centuries to come, including the fourth. If so, the fact is relevant to the wide diffusion and signal success of Mavia's revolt. The river involved in "Parapotamia" is likely to be the Orontes rather than the Euphrates.

¹²⁹This account of the Maratocupreni understandably reflected the official attitude of the central authorities toward a resistance movement, and thus could not, in tone, have been different; it was also bound to be drawn in even darker colors by a historian who happened to be not only nonorthodox but also pagan and anti-Christian.

Whether or not these Maratocupreni were such as has been suggested in this section remains an open question; but Ammianus's inclusion of an account of their activities shows how curiously selective he was in the choice of material in these last six books when he completely left out an account of Mavia's revolt, much more important in itself and more relevant to his interests as a military historian; on his selectiveness and *silentium* in these books, see *infra*, pp. 251-68.

tocupreni and the extent of their destructive raids, yet there is a chance that he concealed their identity, motives, and affiliation beyond recognition. It is, therefore, possible that these Maratocupreni were dissatisfied orthodox Arabs who might have risen because of a local problem concerning a persecuted or deposed bishop or might have been sympathizers of the Arab *foederati*, whom Valens had alienated.¹³⁰

If these Maratocupreni turn out to be Arabs in revolt, this would be valuable in documenting the responsiveness of the Arab *Rhomaioi* of Oriens to the Arab *foederati*, who ca. 370 might well have withdrawn from the service for doctrinal reasons. Furthermore, the rising of the Maratocupreni could shed light on the events of a few years later in the reign—on the success of the revolt of Mavia ca. 375 and its extensive range throughout Oriens both in the limitrophe and in the cities of the interior, as described by the ecclesiastical historians. The Arabs in all these provinces could easily respond favorably to Mavia's revolt, especially if they shared her doctrinal position.¹³¹

The truth about this account may turn out to be otherwise, unrelated to any ecclesiastical policy or Arab discontent. Even so, the reference to the toponym, the *vicus* by the same name—Maratocupren—will remain a most valuable one, in view of the complete silence of the classical sources on the seats of the Arab *foederati* in the fourth century, the Tanūkhids. It is only the Arabic sources that inform on them, and one of these seats is Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān (*infra*, p. 405), located in exactly the same region of Apamea as Maratocupren of Ammianus. If Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān was indeed the seat of the Tanūkhids as early as the fourth century,¹³² what has just been said on the reasons behind the rising of the Maratocupreni could receive some confirmation, since these would have been so close to the orthodox Tanūkhids of

¹³⁰It is noteworthy that he does not use the term *latrones* when describing them but *grassatores* (RG, XXVIII.2.11), which seems to imply that they were rioters rather than brigands. The term *conjurati* (RG, XXVIII.2.12) in this context can mean those who banded themselves together by oath and not only conspirators, and thus could suggest a more complex situation than that of mere brigands. It is noteworthy that a locality with this name sent a bishop to the Council of Constantinople, Menna, in 536. If this Maratocupren can be identified with it, then the case for the religious basis of the rising receives some fortification.

¹³¹Even as late as the seventh century, the Arab element in Oriens acted responsively to the Muslim Arabs during the period of the Conquests.

¹³²Important in Strabo's account (*Geography*, XVI.2.10) is the reference to Apamea and the region as a place for the royal stud of the Seleucids under Seleucus Nicator and for instructors in the arts of war. The region must have retained its character as one suitable for breeding and rearing horses, and it brings to mind the Gaulanitis in the sixth century, the seat of the Ghassānid *foederati* and their horses. As will be discussed further on (*infra*, pp. 405–6), Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān was one of the seats of the Tanūkhids according to the Arabic sources, where presumably in the fourth century one of their encampments or settlements was located close to regions suitable for pasturing their horses. On Apamea, see A. H. M. Jones, *Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces*, 2nd rev. ed. (Oxford, 1971), pp. 241–43, 259–61, 267–69.

Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān. And it is not altogether impossible that the two names stand for one and the same locality, the recognizably Arab one, Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān, having been given later to Maratocupren.¹³³ Ammianus does mention that the houses of the Maratocupreni were destroyed (XXVIII.2.14), and thus the Arabic name might have been given to it after the reconciliation of the *foederati* with Valens and the resettlement of the town. The fact that the name Maratocupren has not survived while so many others in the same region have points to this conclusion, and if so, Ammianus would have presented the original name of the *vicus* which has survived in later times as Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān.

IX. THE GOTHIC WAR

The marriage of Victor to the Arab princess crowned the regularization of Arab-Byzantine relations after the composition of ecclesiastical and political differences between Mavia and Valens and set the stage for the last mention of the Arab queen in the ecclesiastical historians, namely, the contribution by the formerly rebellious *foederata* of a contingent to the Roman army, which fought the war against the Goths in 378.

Just as Victor must have been the one who was instrumental in negotiating the *foedus* with Mavia, so it must have been he who arranged for the participation of the Saracen contingent in the forthcoming campaign against the Goths in Thrace. His assignments during the entire reign of Valens confirm this. He had been engaged in negotiations not only with the secular enemy in the East, Persia, but also with the new one in Thrace, the Goths. Besides, he was not *magister peditum* but *magister equitum*, and consequently he could professionally evaluate the Arab horse, which had proved itself in the war against Valens, and could appreciate its prospective role in the war with the horsemen of the north.

The ecclesiastical historians have short, identical statements on this contribution of the Arab *foederati* to the Gothic War, namely, that the Saracens took part in the successful defense of Constantinople against the Goths who advanced against the city after their victory at Adrianople.¹³⁴ In spite of their brevity, these accounts are invaluable in that they establish that the Saracens who took part in the defense were *foederati* and, what is more, were those of Mavia, two facts left unmentioned by the secular historians who noticed the Arab contribution, Ammianus and Zosimus. The ecclesiastical historians thus make possible the tracing of the strands of continuity in the fortunes of

¹³³The phenomenon is common in the Syrian region where Semitic and Hellenistic names were given to the same locality, sometimes simultaneously, sometimes successively; see the chapter on Syria in Jones, *Cities*, pp. 226–94.

¹³⁴Socrates, *HE*, V. 1; Sozomen, *HE*, VII. 1. 1.

Mavia's *foederati* after the conclusion of the *foedus* with Valens, and this leads to a better comprehension of the problem of their fall in the reign of Theodosius (*infra*, pp. 203–14). On the other hand, the secular historians provide details that are precious because they are precise and informed, coming as they do from one who was a professional military historian and another who was writing in Constantinople itself, not far from the scene of the Arab exploit against the Goths, and who must have had access to reliable sources.¹³⁵ These details throw retrospective light on the events of the preceding triennium, during which Mavia's *foederati* scored victories over the Romans, and make for a better understanding of the secret of those victories.

The Arab contribution to the Gothic War has been understood to be limited to their defense of Constantinople after Adrianople, described by the ecclesiastical historians and by Ammianus. The account of Zosimus, which refers to another contribution before Adrianople, has been identified by modern historians with that described by Ammianus.¹³⁶ But, as will be argued in the course of this section, the two accounts of Ammianus and Zosimus are not to be identified with each other but must be differentiated, while possible Arab participation in the battle of Adrianople is inferable from implicit references in Ammianus. Thus the Arab contribution to the Gothic War may be divided into three phases—before, during, and after the battle of Adrianople—and each phase needs a separate treatment. Since the account of the first phase has been identified with the third, and since the second is not explicitly documented, it is desirable to start with a treatment of the third phase, which is documented and which admits of no doubt.¹³⁷

1

Ammianus's account is the most informative (*RG*, XXXI.16.5–7). He explains the Arab contribution to the Byzantine victory over the Goths outside the walls of Constantinople not by their collective effort, which, according to him, failed to break the power of the Goths, but by the action of a single Saracen who killed his Gothic adversary and sucked his blood. As a result, the Goths were terrified and lost confidence; besides, they were overawed by the fortifications of the impregnable city.

Despite his omission of the fact that these Saracens were Mavia's *foederati* and that his interpretation of the cause of the defeat of the Goths contains

¹³⁵On Zosimus and his sources, see *RA*, chap. 8.

¹³⁶Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, vol. 3, p. 116 note 100; Piganiol, *EC*, pp. 168–69.

¹³⁷This phase belongs strictly to the reign of Gratian; but since only a few days separate the second phase, the battle of Adrianople at which Valens fell, from the third, the advance of the Goths to the walls of Constantinople, the treatment of this third phase is included in this chapter which deals with the reign of Valens.

some incredible elements,¹³⁸ his account is valuable because of some important military details he incidentally throws into it: (a) he refers to the Arab unit as a *turma*,¹³⁹ and this reference gives the Arabs their correct position in the composition of the Roman army and the order of battle; (b) their further description as a *cuneus* throws more light on their function as a tactical unit fighting in wedge formation. The latter description gives a glimpse of how Mavia fought or partly fought against the Romans, employing advanced tactics.¹⁴⁰ More revealing details come from Zosimus (*infra*, pp. 178–81).

The ecclesiastical historians¹⁴¹ Socrates and Sozomen speak in general terms of the contribution of the Arabs, but they are not so grudging in their evaluation of the nature of that contribution; for Sozomen, the Arabs were of great service. Both of them, however, describe the Arabs as few in number, ὀλίγοι, and this description calls for the following comments: ὀλίγοι does not necessarily imply that the Arab *auxilia* initially sent by Mavia were such.¹⁴² The term describes only those who took part in the defense of Constantinople and who were quartered within the city walls, and these would necessarily have been relatively few in number, especially when contrasted with the city population referred to in Sozomen's account.¹⁴³ Ammianus's phrase *recens*

¹³⁸For an analysis of Ammianus's account of the Arab defense of Constantinople, see *infra*, pp. 252–57.

¹³⁹Ammianus describes the Arab *turma* as *Orientalis*. This, of course, refers to the fact that it had formed part of the army of the Orient where it had been stationed before its transference to Thrace for taking part in the Gothic War. The term *Orientalis* could be of relevance to those who argue that the Anatolikon theme of later Byzantine times received its name under partly similar circumstances that obtained in the seventh century, namely, when Heraclius transferred what remained of the army of the Orient after the Persian victory to Western Asia Minor, which thus was designated the Anatolikon theme; on the origin of the term *Anatolikon* as a description of the theme, see J. B. Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire* (London, 1889), vol. 2, pp. 347–48.

¹⁴⁰This precious reference to the *cuneus* could establish a link of some sort between the armies of the two Arab queens of the third and the fourth centuries, Zenobia and Mavia. One of the Arab units in the *Notitia Dignitatum* is the *cuneus equitum secundorum clibanariorum Palmyrenorum*, most probably enlisted in the service of Rome after the fall of Palmyra; see chap. 5 on the *Notitia Dignitatum* in *RA*. It is perfectly possible that the Palmyrene method of fighting in wedge formation survived regionally among the Arabs and was taken up by the *foederati* of Mavia in the fourth century or was recommended to the *foederati* by the Roman commanders; on Jabala, the Arab federate king of the sixth century who fought in the Roman manner, see the present writer in *Martyrs*, p. 276 note 1.

¹⁴¹Socrates, *HE*, V. 1; Sozomen, *HE*, VII. 1.

¹⁴²Theodorus Anagnostes speaks of an army, στρατός, sent by Mavia: Μαυία δὲ ἡ τῶν Σαρακηνῶν βασιλῆς πέμψασα Σαρακηνῶν στρατόν; *Historia Ecclesiastica*, ed. G. C. Hansen, *GCS*, 54 (Berlin, 1971), p. 75. On this sixth-century ecclesiastical historian, his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, and his account of Mavia, see *infra*, pp. 190–94.

¹⁴³Ammianus also speaks of the vast population of Constantinople: *incolentium plebem . . . immensam* (*RG*, XXXI.16.7). He does not, however, describe the populace as participating actively in the defense of the city but only acting as a deterrent.

illuc accersitus,¹⁴⁴ describing the Saracen *turma*, confirms this; it was only a detachment of the Saracen contingent, called in from its quarters somewhere in Thrace at that juncture expressly to ward off the Gothic peril. On the other hand, the ranks of the Arab contingent must have been thinned after their losses at the battle of Adrianople, in which, as will be argued later (*infra*, pp. 181–83), the Arabs most likely participated, and the term ὀλίγοι would thus refer to the survivors.

While the ecclesiastical historians speak of the successful defense of Constantinople as having been conducted both by the Arabs and by the city populace, Ammianus speaks only of the former. The account of the ecclesiastical historians on the participants in the defense is the more satisfactory one; it is more accurate and comprehensive and supplies important details on the contribution of Valens's wife, the Empress Dominica. The truth must lie between the two accounts: Ammianus, a military historian, noticed the professional contribution to the defense and expressed it in strict military terms involving the Arab *turma* and *cuneus*, but he neglected the contribution of the populace, which was that of a militia and which must be taken into consideration for an adequate understanding of the deliverance of the city from the Goths in 378.

2

Zosimus has a valuable account (*HN*, IV.22) that records the contribution of the Arabs to the first phase of the Gothic War before the battle of Adrianople. The account is important for both some significant military details that it provides and for the view that the Arab contribution was much more extensive than has been believed.

The account describes a military operation conducted by the Arabs against the Goths not far from Constantinople. These vanquish the Goths, and specific reasons are given to explain their victory: the unconquerable thrust of their pikes, the long pikes with which they transfix their adversaries from a distance; the speed and agility of their horses; and the skill of their riders in fighting on horseback. In short, it was a combination of horse, rider, and weapon that won the day for the Arabs. Even during tactical retreats, the fleetness of their horses advantaged the Saracens. Such was the slaughter among the ranks of the Goths that they preferred to recross the Danube and surrender to the Huns rather than be wiped out by the Arabs. Zosimus is more sober and informative than Ammianus, the avowedly military historian of the fourth century; he describes the Arab victory over the Goths in precise military terms. More important than his testimony to the mettle of the

¹⁴⁴RG, XXXI.16.5. For more on this phase, see *infra*, note 152.

Arabian horse and to the skill of its rider, which are well known, is his reference to the armor of the *foederati*, namely, the pike¹⁴⁵ (κοντός); coupled with the reference to the *cuneus* in the *Res Gestae*, enough details are thus made available on both tactics and armor¹⁴⁶ to explain the series of victories scored by Mavia's *foederati* against the imperial armies during their revolt.

It has been assumed that Zosimus described the same engagement that Ammianus had described,¹⁴⁷ namely, the defense of Constantinople after the battle of Adrianople, but that he erroneously transferred it to the period preceding the battle. This is possible, but only remotely so; it is much more likely that the two historians were describing two different engagements: Zosimus the one before Adrianople and Ammianus another one, after the battle. In support of this contention, the following may be advanced:

(1) Zosimus was well informed about the Gothic War and the battle of Adrianople, and he supplies important details, missing in Ammianus.¹⁴⁸ Besides, he wrote in Constantinople not long after these events had taken place, and thus he was in a privileged position to ascertain such details as affected the deliverance of the city in which he lived. Moreover, his account of the Gothic War is not very long, and yet he devotes almost one quarter of it to this one exploit of the Saracens, with whom he must have been impressed; thus it is quite unlikely that Zosimus would have made such a mistake as to misdate and misplace that exploit. Furthermore, this account is followed by his description of the achievement of Sebastian, and both accounts come before those of the second stage in the campaign when the tide turned against the Romans. Zosimus is thus clear about the two stages of the Gothic War, and this suggests that there is no reason to suspect an error on his part in assigning a military operation to the first stage. The detailed nature of the account itself points in the same direction; he is expansive on the first stage when the Romans were victorious but treats the second stage summarily, as if

¹⁴⁵As mounted spearmen, the Arabs are also known to Joshua the Stylite; see *The Chronicle of Joshua the Stylite*, trans. W. Wright (Cambridge, 1882), p. 54.

¹⁴⁶Thus the Arabs appear in the Gothic War not as bowmen or swordsmen, but as spearmen. As horsemen, the spear rather than the sword would naturally have been their weapon. Whether they were also mounted bowmen as the Ituraean Arabs and the *equites sagittarii* of the *ND* is not clear. Apparently they were not, judging from the fact that the *hēgemōn* of Phoenicia and Palestine was able to extricate the *magister utriusque militiae* from their charge by bringing into action his bowmen; for Mavia's battle with the *magister* described in Sozomen, see *supra*, pp. 150–52.

¹⁴⁷See *supra*, note 136.

¹⁴⁸Both make no mention of the fact that these Saracens were *foederati* or Christian or Mavia's. All these affiliations are supplied by the brief account of their contribution in the ecclesiastical historians. However, Zosimus's informative account of the Saracens is not open to question since he cannot be accused of too much partiality toward them. On the attitude of the two historians toward the Arabs, see *infra*, pp. 239–68 for Ammianus and *RA*, chap. 8, for Zosimus.

he is reluctant to dwell on Roman reverses and defeats, and this also suggests that the detailed account that describes the Arabs belongs on stylistic grounds to the first stage.

(2) Zosimus's account contains topographical and chronological indications which leave no doubt that he knowingly assigned it to the first phase of the Gothic War. The beginning of chapter 21 speaks of Valens as arriving in Constantinople from Antioch and then proceeding to Thrace to meet the Goths. The beginning of chapter 22, which describes the Arab exploit, speaks explicitly of his sending the Saracens ahead to encounter the Goths in Thrace, which these were ravaging. At the end of the chapter, he speaks of the Goths as leaving the vicinity of Constantinople and recrossing the Danube for fear of the Saracens, which circumstance enabled Valens to move his troops forward.¹⁴⁹ All these details clearly point to the phase of preliminary operations before Valens moved in person to meet the Goths at Adrianople.

(3) Zosimus explicitly states that these Saracens were brought along by Valens himself when he marched from Antioch to Constantinople. An operation such as the one Zosimus describes on the morrow of their arrival is quite consonant with the fact of their having been brought along at the *beginning* of the Gothic War, while their assignment is also consonant with their expertise in this type of warfare. Otherwise, one has to assume the adoption by Valens of the most improbable of courses, namely, that instead of hurling the Arab against the Gothic horse, he locked up the Arab *foederati*, horsemen adapted to mobile warfare, within the walls of Constantinople, where they remained inactive, to be exhibited only after the campaign was over, in the aftermath of the battle of Adrianople, and fight in an engagement such as the one Ammianus describes in the final stage of the war.

(4) Finally, a close examination of the accounts of the two engagements reveals that in spite of superficial similarities¹⁵⁰ involving Gothic and Arab horsemen fighting not far from Constantinople, they are quite distinct from each other. The accounts of the two engagements have been analyzed—Zosimus's sober one and Ammianus's, the horror story—and the analysis shows that the two cannot be compared but can only be contrasted, and this suggests that the two accounts describe two different engagements. Zosimus describes the first operation in which the Saracens engaged on their arrival in Thrace, and that operation rolled the Goths back across the Danube, while Ammianus describes their last operation against the Goths, after the battle of

¹⁴⁹The Arab victory over the Goths was thus tactically important.

¹⁵⁰Fully accountable by the fact that the Arab *foederati*, having marched from a distant region, fought their first battle with the Goths on their way out to Thrace and the second on their way back home.

Adrianople which eventually drove them back across the Balkan provinces as far as the foot of the Julian Alps (RG, XXXI.16.7).

The Arab victory over the Goths described by Zosimus before the battle of Adrianople may be identified with one of two operations of the Gothic War as described in the *Res Gestae*: (1) the operation conducted by Sebastian against the Goths at Beroea (RG, XXXI.11.2–5); this is close to the Danube, which the Goths are said to have recrossed after their defeat by the Arabs, but, on the other hand, Sebastian led only legionary troops, not auxiliaries and *foederati*; (2) the preliminary operation described in RG, XXXI.12.1–3. This is the likely one, in view of the fact that it was conducted by Valens himself, that his troops were not only legionaries but included varying elements, *multiplices copias*, that he dispatched against the Goths an *equitum turma*, and that the Goths were fifteen miles from Constantinople. But Zosimus may have described an engagement unnoticed by Ammianus, or if it was, the Arab contribution in it was left unmarked.¹⁵¹

3

If the Arabs fought before as well as after the battle of Adrianople, it is natural to suppose that they also fought during that battle.¹⁵² The main source for the detailed history of the campaign is Ammianus. It is, therefore, to the

¹⁵¹Thus the identification of the operation described by Zosimus as distinct from that described by Ammianus increases the data for the Gothic War and enables the course of its first phase to be charted with more accuracy. Gibbon was partly responsible for the unfavorable judgment of historians on Zosimus. It is noteworthy that his well-known animadversion on Zosimus, "whom we are now reduced to cherish," was made while he was saying of him, in connection with this operation, that he "misplaces the sally of the Arabs before the death of Valens"; accordingly, Gibbon fused the two accounts of Zosimus and Ammianus and assigned them to the last phase. In this he was followed by others, including Piganiol, whose text reflects this fusion so loyally that the name of Zosimus (from whom comes the information on the Saracens carrying back into the city the heads of the Goths as trophies) does not appear in the footnote that documents Piganiol's text, only that of Ammianus does. See Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, vol. 3, p. 116 note 100; Piganiol, *EC*, pp. 168–69 and note 102.

¹⁵²Also inferable from the fact that the engagement Ammianus describes (RG, XXXI.16.5–7) took place only a few days after the battle of Adrianople: on 10 August, the day following the battle, the Goths try to storm Adrianople; on the 12th they give up and march to Perinthus, whence they advance against Constantinople. Otherwise one has to assume that while the battle of Adrianople was raging against the Gothic horsemen, the Arabs, who were enlisted specifically for a field encounter with the Goths, were left inactive in Constantinople. The Arab *turma* that fought before the walls of Constantinople at the end of the Gothic War must then have been part of the one-third of the imperial army that had survived the battle of Adrianople. A realization of this and of the fact that only a few days elapsed between the battle of Adrianople and the siege of Constantinople by the Goths fully explains the adverb *recens* in Ammianus's phrase that describes the Arab *turma* before Constantinople, namely, *recens illuc accersitus* (RG, XXXI.16.5–7).

Res Gestae that one must turn for recovering more of the contribution of the Arabs to the Gothic War.

(1) Ammianus's sections on the immediate antecedents of the battle (XXXI.12. 1–3) could contain some references to Arab participation: (a) He speaks of the *multiplies copias* that Valens commanded and adds that they were *nec contemnendas nec segnes* because they were joined by the *veterani*. This suggests the presence of such troops or contingents as barbarian auxiliaries and *foederati*, which the Saracens of Mavia were.¹⁵³ (b) The use of such terms as *exploratio* and *procuratores* suggests activities with which the Saracens were associated. (c) The dispatch against the Goths of an *equitum turma* recalls the term used by Ammianus in describing the Arabs in their defense of Constantinople after the battle. (d) The fear on the part of the Goths of a sally against them, *eruptio*, could suggest the Arab sally from Constantinople described by Zosimus and which the Goths presumably remembered.

(2) In describing the opening phase of the battle—the Roman dispositions and their line of battle—Ammianus speaks of the movements of the cavalry on the right wing (XXXI.12.11) and on the left wing (XXXI.12.12). At another phase of the battle, he describes the charge of the Gothic horsemen who decimated the Roman left wing, which, according to Ammianus, was deserted by the rest of the cavalry, *a reliquo equitato desertum* (XXXI.13.2). As horsemen, the Arabs could have taken part in these operations that involved the cavalry arm in the Roman army; his reference to desertion¹⁵⁴ could confirm their participation, thus left pejoratively implied.

(3) After the turn of the tide in the battle, when the infantry was surrounded and cut to pieces and when the rest of the cavalry fled, Ammianus tells how Valens took refuge with the *lancearii* and *mattiarii* (XXXI.13.8). Trajan cries that the emperor should be protected by his foreign auxiliaries, *princeps saltem adventicio tegetetur auxilio*; although Victor hastened to invoke the aid of the Batavi, the phrase *adventicium auxilium* could easily refer to or include the Arabs, who qualify as such.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³The terms in which his thoughts are couched, not reflecting much respect for the fighting quality of the *multiplies copias*, suggest even more that the Arabs formed a part of these *copias*; for his views on the Arabs, see *infra*, pp. 239–68. According to him, the *procuratores* misled Valens into thinking that the Goths numbered only ten thousand (RG, XXXI.12.3). If these were Arab, as is possible, Ammianus may have wanted to imply that the faulty intelligence supplied by these brought about the disaster of Adrianople.

¹⁵⁴Compare the charge of desertion leveled by Procopius against the Arab federate horse during the battle of Callinicum in 531, for which see the present writer in "Procopius and Arethas," pp. 43–48, 55–56.

¹⁵⁵The participation of Victor in the battle and, what is more, as one of the principal officers close to Valens could also argue for the participation of the Saracens, now his in-laws. The *magister equitum* who, as has been argued, must have been instrumental in bringing the Arabs to fight in the Gothic War, is not likely to have left them behind to perform garrison

This is all that can be extracted from the pages of the *Res Gestae* on the possible participation of the Arabs in the battle of Adrianople. They were the contingent whose previous exploit against the Goths before Adrianople Zosimus described, and it was their remnants that must have taken part in the defense of Constantinople described by Ammianus.

Thus their participation in the Gothic War was extensive, as they fought in its three phases; it was triumphant twice, once before Adrianople and another time after it. What their performance was during the battle of Adrianople itself is not recorded; their very participation as cavalry is left implied by Ammianus, who, moreover, evinces a tendency to praise the Roman infantry at the expense of the cavalry. If they performed creditably before and after Adrianople, the chances are that they performed similarly also in the battle¹⁵⁶ but were outnumbered and overwhelmed by their adversaries. However, since some of them fought the Goths afterwards near Constantinople, they could not have been entirely annihilated; some of them survived the battle, evidently not intimidated by the Goths, since they issue out of the city and beat them back.

APPENDIX I

The Chronology of Mavia's Revolt

The chronology of Mavia's revolt is important to determine; the revolt has been variously dated¹ and the dating ranges from 370 to 374. This is erroneous, and the need for correction is all the more called for in view of the fact that the chronology of Mavia's rule over the Saracens and her revolt has been brought to bear on the dating of the *Expositio totius mundi*. The editor argues that the work was published toward the end of 359 or the beginning of 360 and sees in one of the statements of the *Expositio* on the Saracens, namely, *et mulieres aiunt in eos regnare*, a reference to Mavia. The reference may well be to Mavia, but the editor's chronology and his conception of the various stages of Mavia's career are not borne out by the primary ecclesiastical sources, which have been intensively analyzed in this chapter on the reign of Valens. Unac-

duties in Constantinople; rather, he would have taken them along with him to engage in field operations and active combat.

¹⁵⁶The enthusiasm with which the Arabs fought the Goths, as recorded by Zosimus and Ammianus, calls for an explanation. As orthodox Christians they had just won a war against Arian Valens, waged along doctrinal lines. The realization that they were again fighting for orthodoxy, this time against the Arian Goths, may have been an element in the enthusiasm they showed in their two victories over the Goths recorded by the secular and the ecclesiastical historians. Their enthusiasm may also be related to the enhanced loyalty engendered by the curious circumstance that the *magister equitum* under whom they served had just married their princess, a matter that must have carried weight with the Arabs.

¹Aigrain dates it 373 or 374 ("Arabie," col. 1191); Piganiol gives no date but his paragraph on Mavia immediately follows the one on the Isaurians, dated 368 (*EC*, p. 158); J. Rougé dates it 370 in his edition of the *Expositio totius mundi, Sources chrétiennes*, 124 (Paris, 1966), pp. 24-25.

ceptable are such views as (1) that Mavia had been a Christian slave (see *infra*, p. 190); (2) that after her husband's death she gradually extended her rule over most of the Arab tribes; (3) that her holy man, Moses, was an Egyptian; (4) that her husband died in the fifties, in the period 355–58; and (5) that her revolt took place around 370.

There is no doubt whatsoever that the revolt broke out in the last triennium of Valens's reign, and this dating is determined by references in the ecclesiastical sources that provide the *terminus ante quem* and the *terminus post quem*. The first occurs in chapter 37 in Sozomen, which precedes the one that tells the story of the revolt, and it speaks of the departure of Valens for Constantinople in the spring of A.D. 378, which date thus provides the first *terminus*. The second is provided by Rufinus, who says that Mavia's revolt began (*coepit*) during Lucius's incumbency over the see of Alexandria, which according to Socrates fell between 373 and 377. Thus the revolt could not have started before 373 nor after the spring of 378. When exactly it started during this quinquennium can be determined with reasonable accuracy. Valens's last residence in Antioch² took place in the period 372–78, but it was in 375 and after the death of Valentinian that he intensified his Arian stand against the non-Arians in the Orient and started what from the point of view of the homoousians was a persecution. Since Mavia's revolt was related to the ecclesiastical discord of the period (it was that of an orthodox queen against an Arian emperor), the quinquennium may be narrowed down to the triennium of 375–78.

APPENDIX II

Theodoret

The four ecclesiastical historians who are so informative on the Arabs and Arab Christianity are not of equal reliability. Valuable as Theodoret is in various ways, he is inaccurate on Mavia and Moses. A close examination of the more primary historians, Rufinus, Socrates, and Sozomen, reveals a number of inaccuracies in his account, and these need to be pointed out since they have misled modern historians of Arab Christianity:

- (1) that Mavia made a truce with the Romans *before* the consecration of Moses;
- (2) that she was converted to Christianity at that time;
- (3) that Moses lived somewhere between Egypt and Palestine;
- (4) that Moses was sent to Lucius in Alexandria because it was conveniently near Moses' abode or habitation;
- (5) that Lucius wanted to kill Moses after their altercation;
- (6) that he refrained from so doing lest the war that had come to an end be rekindled;
- (7) that Moses was consecrated in Alexandria itself whither Lucius ordered orthodox bishops to consecrate him.

Of the above list, numbers (1), (2), (5), and (7) are plainly erroneous statements; in addition to what has been said on numbers (1), (2), and (7) in the course of this

²On Valens in Antioch, see G. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria* (Princeton, 1961), pp. 399–403.

chapter, one might say on number (5) that the picture of Lucius drawn by the other three ecclesiastical historians is rather the contrary of that drawn by Theodoret; he appears almost attractive by his moderation and restraint, but it is possible that Theodoret confused Lucius of Alexandria with another Lucius, the Arian bishop who usurped the see of Samosata, for whom, see Theodoret, *HE*, chap. xviii.

Numbers (3) and (4) are presented as facts, but it has been shown that they are at best only possible conclusions intelligently drawn and that the evidence admits of other interpretations and conclusions (*supra*, pp. 152–58; *infra*, pp. 185–87). As categorically stated by Theodoret, they could be misleading.

The least inaccurate is number (6). The war had not come to an end; only hostilities had ceased and a truce had obtained. It was only after Moses' consecration and return to Mavia's camp that peace was concluded and the war was terminated, Moses being instrumental in both.

APPENDIX III

Moses

Mavia's bishop, Moses, has been erroneously identified as an Ethiopian and a Carmelite!¹ More plausibly, he has been identified with the Moses of the *Ammonii Monachi Relatio*.² In view of Moses' importance in the history of Arab Christianity in this period, it is necessary to examine this last identification and see what can be said for it and against it.

A

What must have made this identification attractive are the following: (1) the identity of name, Moses; (2) that he was Arab; and (3) that he lived in Sinai. But all three of these could have been entirely coincidental, especially the identity of name; in this century of holy men, the Semites among them were inclined on their conversion to adopt Old Testament names.

More detailed arguments may be propounded against this identification: (1) In the *Relatio*, Moses appears as an eremite associated with the monastery of Rhaithou near Pharan, while Mavia's Moses appears as a holy man living in a neighboring desert unrelated to any ecclesiastical establishment. (2) Unlike the identity of name and ethnic origin, the Sinaitic habitation is far from certain in the case of Mavia's bishop (*supra*, pp. 152–58). (3) Furthermore, if the two had been one and the same person, Rufinus and Sozomen would certainly have mentioned the fact. Sinai was not unknown to the Christians of the fourth century and was considered as part of the Greater Holy Land. Rufinus lived in Palestina Prima and the chances are that he would have known about Moses' background in Pharan if this had been the case. (4) More important is Sozomen's silence on Moses' background. Sozomen goes out of his way to emphasize the importance of Palestine, his birthplace, as the Holy Land and

¹ASS, Februarii Tomus Secundus, p. 45.

²L. Duchesne, *Églises séparées* (Paris, 1896), p. 340 note 2; Aigrain suspends judgment in "Arabie," col. 1192. On the *Relatio* and for further reference to Moses, see *infra*, pp. 297–308.

gives it much attention in his *History*. If Moses had been a monk at Rhaithou near Pharan, which belonged to Palestina Salutaris, this would have come to his knowledge and he would have recorded it, especially as he went out of his way to investigate many details in the career of Mavia and Moses remote from his concerns as an ecclesiastical historian. The background of one who to him was the first bishop of the Arabs would have attracted his attention.³

The identification of the two Arab holy men must then remain only a possibility. Besides, the accounts of each come from two different orders of sources, the one from a solid ecclesiastical history, the other from a hagiographic work, whose authenticity has been in question. The precious firm data supplied by ecclesiastical history should not be confused with data hailing from an inferior source, although in the opinion of the present writer the *Arabica* in the *Relatio* can be entertained seriously (*infra*, pp. 297–308). It would indeed be pleasant if the two Moseses turned out to be one and the same person since this would enlarge the little prosopography of Moses, Mavia's bishop. In that case, the time spent by Moses at Rhaithou must antedate his connection with Mavia, and one has to assume that the fame of the solitary of Rhaithou spread over Oriens until it reached Mavia's camp in the north. Time spent at Pharan and with Mavia must then represent two different phases in his career.

All this is possible and can be entertained. What cannot be entertained is another identification that has been made and which concerns Obedianus, the petty Arab chief of Pharan whom Moses the monk of Rhaithou converted to Christianity. This chief has been identified with Mavia's consort, the deceased king, and the identification has had to be wholeheartedly rejected (*supra*, p. 141 note 16). These are two different Arab figures of the fourth century; if the two have any relation to each other at all, this relation must derive merely from the possibility that Moses conducted his activities as a holy man among the two Arab groups, that of Obedianus, whom he converted, and that of Mavia, whose bishop he later became.

B

One of the popes of the eighth century, Gregory III (731–41), made a pointed reference to this Saracen bishop-saint in his dialogue with St. Willibald, the nephew of St. Boniface, the apostle of Germany. Willibald was remonstrating with the pope against the latter's desire to send him to Germany to help his uncle St. Boniface in his missionary work when Gregory presented Moses as a model for Willibald.⁴

³See also J. M. Sauer's article on Moses in *Bibliotheca Sanctorum*, 9 (1967), pp. 650–52. The author shares with Tillemont the view that the two holy men are not to be identified with each other. He also subscribes to the view propounded and argued for by the present writer that Mavia was already a Christian when she treated with the Romans about the consecration of Moses.

As to the spot where Moses had been a hermit before he was consecrated bishop, the desert of Chalcis might be suggested as a possibility to be added to Sinai. Chalcidice had a strong monastic and eremitic community and also a strong Arab complexion; see "The Tanūkhids and Chalcidice," *infra*, pp. 465–76.

⁴Accounts of the wanderings and of the pilgrimage of the first English traveler to the Holy Land, St. Willibald, have been preserved in two versions, the *Hodoeporicon* and the *Itiner-*

Why the pope should have chosen this Saracen saint to persuade the English monk to undertake the German mission may be answered as follows:

(1) Pope Gregory III, like two of his eighth-century predecessors, Popes Sisinnius (708) and Constantine (708–15), was of Syrian origin. Thus he would naturally have been interested in the saints of his native Syria, and, as he was a learned man who knew both Latin and Greek, he must have been familiar with the ecclesiastical histories of the Greek Orient on Moses and the Latin history of Rufinus. Indeed, in referring to the Saracens he uses the same term that Rufinus had used to describe them, *gens ferocissima*.⁵

(2) St. Willibald himself was not unaware of the Saracens. He had made his pilgrimage to a Holy Land the new masters of which were the Saracens, and he had also been detained in a Saracen prison in Syria during his pilgrimage.⁶ Thus the model of a fourth-century Saracen saint who belonged to the very same ethnic group that had both conquered the Holy Land and had detained him would have made a strong impression on Willibald.

(3) Gregory's lifetime coincided with the period of the great Arab conquests in the East and in the West. Like his countryman and contemporary St. John of Damascus,⁷ he must have been aware of the great historical revolution brought about by the Arab/Muslim conquests in the eastern and western parts of the Christian Mediterranean. What is more, the European continent itself was invaded and Christendom was deprived of the Iberian Peninsula, which the Arabs invaded successfully in A.D. 711.

(4) It was in the second year of his pontificate that one of the decisive battles in the long history of Christian-Muslim encounters was fought, namely, the battle of Poitiers in A.D. 732. Surely the pope, the Syrian pope, was aware of the danger to Western Europe from the people who invaded the Iberian Peninsula in 711 and only two decades or so later were fighting the Franks across the Pyrenees. One year before his dialogue with St. Willibald in A.D. 740, he wrote to the victor of Poitiers, Charles Martel, trying to involve him in the affairs of Rome in order to ward off the Lombard peril.

These facts and relevant features of background should make intelligible the interest of the bishop of Rome in the bishop of the Saracens. And it is not difficult to believe that when the pope invoked the example of the Arab to the prospective English missionary to the Germans, he had or must have had in mind the eventual failure of the Christian mission to the Saracens and the dire political and military consequences of this failure in the seventh century. He surely nourished hopes that the mission to the Germans would not meet with the same failure as its predecessor to the Saracens but that it would win over the vigorous people of the north as the protectors of Christianity and the defenders of Christendom.

arium. For the English translation of this earliest English travel book by W. R. Brownlow, see *Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society*, vol. 3 (London, 1891). The dialogue with Pope Gregory appears on pp. 32–33 of the *Hodoeporicon* and pp. 51–53 of the *Itinerarium*. The latter is the much fuller account and the one in which St. Moses is mentioned.

⁵In the English version it appears as "that most fierce nation," *ibid.*, p. 52.

⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 42–43.

⁷Who in his writings supported Gregory's attack on Byzantine iconoclasm.

APPENDIX IV

Mavia's Christianity

It is clear from a careful examination of the primary sources, Rufinus, Socrates, and Sozomen, that Mavia was not a pagan but already Christian when the revolt broke out and so involved in Christianity that the issue between her and Valens was the doctrinal position of her bishop-to-be. And yet in the literature that has appeared on Arab Christianity, including standard works on church history, there is some confusion on this point,¹ which needs to be disposed of since it is also related to views on the rise of Christianity among the Arabs.

The source of this confusion has to be sought partly in the account of one ecclesiastical writer, namely, Theodoret, who rather inaccurately² incorporated in his *Ecclesiastical History* the accounts of the earlier ones. But Sozomen himself may also be responsible for this erroneous view partly because he crowded in one and the same chapter too much history of the Arabs and, what is more, discussed the involvement in Christianity of two different groups among them. It is not difficult to see how modern historians have been confused by Sozomen because the possibility of confusion is already inherent in his narrative.

A

It has been argued before (*supra*, pp. 156–57) that Moses' missionary work among the Arabs after his consecration must have involved not the circle of Arabs immediately surrounding Mavia, who like her were already Christian, but others, and that the short digression on Moses' missionary activity most probably expressed only the view of the ecclesiastical historian, who was interested in the peoples of the Byzantine borderland and the process of Christianization among them and thus was talking in general terms. If the immediate circle of Mavia was involved in his missionary activity, that activity must have been directed toward bringing back only those who may have backslided from orthodoxy to Arianism. Such a view could derive some support from the possibility that Mavia's husband may have been won to Arianism and with him presumably went over some of his Arab *foederati*. More support could derive from Rufinus's statement on Moses (*supra*, p. 156), which makes no reference to missionary activity but to his remaining firm in his orthodox doctrinal position: *fidei catholicae custodivit intemerata consortia*.

B

But in the following section in which Sozomen treats of another group of Arabs, the Zokomids, there are statements that could be misleading on this point. After tracing the religious history of the Arabs as sons of Ishmael and their association first with paganism and then with Judaism, Sozomen describes their conversion to Christianity

¹E.g., A. Fliche and V. Martin, eds., *Histoire de l'Église* (Paris, 1950), vol. 3, pp. 496–97; moreover, the writer of the chapter, J. R. Palanque, draws a false analogy between Mavia and another queen, Fritigil of the Marcomanni.

²On his inaccuracies, see *supra*, App. 2, pp. 184–85.

and states that some of them were converted “not long before the present reign,”³ attributing their Christianization to the holy men who lived in their deserts. Reference to the conversion of the Saracens in such a context and in such terms could of course mislead and give the impression that this was their first taste of Christianity. After this general reference to their conversion at the hands of desert holy men, Sozomen relates the story of a chief, Zokomos, who was converted to Christianity by a holy man “about this time,”⁴ which must be related to the adverbial phrase he had used earlier concerning conversion, namely, “not long before this reign.”

The first statement on conversion is general, while the second is specific, as it relates to a particular tribe, the Zokomids. It is almost certain that Sozomen was thinking primarily of the conversion of this tribe when he spoke of the conversion of the Arabs in general terms. But the conversion of this particular tribe cannot be the *first* instance of Arab conversion since *inter alia* this tribe appears as *foederati* on the scene of Roman history *after* the Tanūkhids or the Arabs of Mavia, who were by then already Christianized. It is probably a *lapsus calami* on the part of Sozomen, who transferred his attention from the Saracens of Mavia to those of Zokomos and in so doing may have forgotten that he had just finished giving an account of another group of Saracens, Mavia’s, who were already Christianized.

Sozomen includes in his account a chronological indication of the “first” conversion of the Arabs, namely, the adverbial phrase “not long before this reign” (*supra*, note 3). The reign could be either that of Theodosius II, under whom he was writing his *History* and to whom he dedicated his book, or that of Valens, the emperor whose reign he was describing when he included in Book VI this chapter on the Arabs. If the first, then “not long before,” which could be the reign of Arcadius (395–408) or the last years of Theodosius I, would refer to the conversion of the Zokomids, who are known to have followed the Tanūkhids and the Saracens of Mavia late in the fourth century, and so it would fortify the conclusion that Sozomen was indeed thinking of the Zokomids when he talked about the first conversion of the Arabs; if the second, then either the reign of Constantius or that of Constantine could be meant, and this would refer to the Arabs of Mavia or of Imru’ al-Qays whose Christianity goes back to the first half of the fourth century. In that case, the statement would be correct not of the Zokomids but of the earlier group of *foederati*, represented or partly represented by Mavia. It is only in this way that Sozomen can be relieved of a seeming contradiction.

Arab groups had been converted to Christianity as early as the Roman period, the most notable of whom were the Abgarids of Edessa. This past was too remote for Sozomen, and he may not have been aware of the Arab origin of the Abgarids. Moreover, Sozomen was writing his *Ecclesiastical History* within a chronological framework, as a continuator of Eusebius. His concern was therefore the fourth and fifth centuries. It was in this period, in the fourth century, that the first conversion of the Arabs took place in the shadow not of the pagan but of the Christianized Roman

³Sozomen, *HE*, p. 299, lines 20–21: οὐ πρὸ πολλοῦ δὲ τῆς παρουσίας βασιλείας καὶ χριστιανίζειν ἤρξαντο.

⁴*Ibid.*, lines 24–25: λέγεται δὲ τότε.

Empire, and those involved were the Arabs of the Byzantine borderland, mainly the *foederati* of Byzantium in the Diocese of Oriens;⁵ it is these that were the concern of Sozomen. In spite of some vagueness in his narrative and some potentially misleading statements, he remains the most informative of all ecclesiastical historians on the Arabs of the Byzantine limitrophe in the fourth century.

APPENDIX V

Mavia's Ethnic Origin

It is clear from the accounts of the three ecclesiastical historians, Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret, especially the first two, that Mavia was not only a queen of the Arabs but also an Arab queen.¹ The point would need no laboring were it not for the fact that a different view appears in the work of Theodorus Anagnostes,² who speaks of her as a Roman prisoner of war with whom the Saracen king fell in love and whom he subsequently married. This view, to be found in the third book of his *Historia Tripartita*, is expressed as follows: φησὶ δὲ ὅτι ἡ Μαυία Χριστιανὴ ἦν, Ῥωμαία ἐκ γένους, καὶ ληφθεῖσα ἀιχμάλωτος ἤρεσε διὰ κάλλος τῷ βασιλίσκῳ τῶν Σαρακηνῶν καὶ τῷ χρόνῳ εἰς βασιλίδα προέκοψε.³

The ethnic origin of Mavia is important to the study of Arab-Byzantine relations in the reign of Valens and to understanding its course. Th. Anagnostes' view must therefore be thoroughly examined, especially as it has been repeated by Theophanes in his *Chronographia* and in modern works on the fourth century (*infra*, note 22).

A

Th. Anagnostes is a later ecclesiastical writer who avowedly compiled his history from the works of his three predecessors.⁴ It is, therefore, these three, especially Socrates and Sozomen, that have to be consulted on the ethnic origin of Mavia.

(1) Socrates and Sozomen wrote a fairly extensive account of Mavia's revolt, replete with colorful details. It is inconceivable that they would have omitted this feature of background, which is even more colorful than the details they included.⁵

⁵Only this context can relieve Sozomen's last sentence that concludes his chapter on the conversion of the Arabs from being misleading or plainly erroneous; *ibid.*, p. 300, lines 7–9.

¹For the Arabic material on Mavia, see *infra*, pp. 194–97. On the possibility of a reference to Mavia's Arab origin in a Greek inscription, see *infra*, p. 234.

²An early sixth-century author who wrote two works, the *Historia Tripartita*, compiled from the works of Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret, and the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, continuing the first work and covering the period from 439 to the accession of Justin I in 518; see Hansen, ed., *Theodoros Anagnostes: Kirchengeschichte*.

³The first two books of the *Historia Tripartita* have survived in *Marc. Gr. 344* (*ibid.*, pp. XI–XVI); the third and fourth books have survived as part of an *Epitome* made by an anonymous author who carried the *Historia Ecclesiastica* down to the year 610 (*ibid.*, pp. XVI, XXXVII–XXXIX). His view that Mavia was a Roman appears in book 3 and thus is preserved in the *Epitome*; hence φησὶ which introduces the above quotation in Greek, inserted by his epitomator; see Hansen, *Theodoros Anagnostes*, p. 69, lines 14–16.

⁴See his dedicatory epistle, *ibid.*, p. 1.

⁵And, what is more, especially apposite, in view of what Socrates says on another romance, the marriage of Mavia's daughter to Victor. The "romance" between Mavia and her

(2) Names in this period are significant. If Mavia had been a Roman, she would have had a Roman name. But her name is not Roman; it is recognizably Arab,⁶ and this is telling because in this period of acculturation it was the Arabs who were adopting Roman and Christian names and not vice versa.

(3) Mavia did not remain inactive after the death of her husband. She waged a war against Rome which was ferocious and which lasted long. If she had been a Roman, the two historians would certainly have mentioned the curious fact of a Roman lady leading Saracen troops in person against an empire of which she had been a citizen.

(4) Her insistence on the ordination of a specifically Arab bishop could also point in the same direction, as could the employment of such terms as *genti suae* in Rufinus and τοῦ οὐκείλου ἔθνους in Socrates.

Thus the accounts of the primary sources clearly imply that Mavia was an Arab and there is not an inkling that she was not. Furthermore, these ecclesiastical authors, especially Sozomen, go out of their way to discuss the Arabs ethnologically, and one of them, Socrates, specifically mentions the Arab origin of Mavia's holy man, Moses. If Mavia had been a Roman *cives* turned Arab *foederata*, they would certainly have mentioned the fact.

B

Th. Anagnostes' view on the ethnic origin of Mavia cannot, therefore, be taken seriously since his own sources on which he is entirely dependent do not bear him out. The "Roman" origin of Mavia must therefore be rejected and adjudged an embroidery to be included in the same category of additions, alterations, and liberties that epitomators indulge in.⁷ Nevertheless, his view must be examined for what it is, especially as his editor is inclined to entertain it.

(1) Hansen has himself noted that the account which speaks of a prisoner of war by whose beauty the Saracen king was smitten and who succeeded him after his death sounds *romanhaft*. But he states that the rule of a bedouin tribe by a foreign princess is not entirely rare, and thus the account cannot be dismissed without further ado. As he fails to give examples of this⁸ and as there is no record⁹ of such a precedent in Arab

deceased husband would have been of the same stuff as that of her daughter with a Roman, Victor, and consequently would have been mentioned by the historian who went out of his way to record the latter. Perhaps Th. Anagnostes was inspired by Socrates' account to provide Mavia's Arab daughter with Roman blood through a fictitious Roman origin he ascribed to her mother. This motive may have been *partly* operative with Th. Anagnostes when he fabricated the story of Mavia's Roman origin; for more on his motives, see *infra*, pp. 192-93.

⁶The name is Māwiya or Māwiyya, not Mu'āwiya, as in Hansen, *Theodoros Anagnostes*, p. XVI; on her Arabic name, see *infra*, pp. 194-96.

⁷On these, see Hansen, *Theodoros Anagnostes*, pp. XII, XV, XXXIX.

⁸It is rather strange that he does not substantiate his statement on this point in view of the fact that his argument depends on it. But even if there is an example of an Arab tribe that was ruled by a foreign queen, it will not validate his argument since the evidence from Sozomen and Socrates is decisive; it will only be an example of a false analogy.

⁹If there is, the fact is unknown to me.

history, Hansen's judgment on the value of Th. Anagnostes' account has to be rejected.

Since the *romanhaft* element in the account constitutes most of it, not much of it remains other than that Mavia was a Roman; but this is inherently incredible, besides the fact that there is no record of a non-Arab queen and, what is more, a Roman lady leading an Arab tribe in a war against her former countrymen. Thus both parts of the account on Mavia's background collapse: the Roman and the *romanhaft*, the latter apparently concocted to give credibility to the former.

(2) The accounts of Socrates and Sozomen are relatively long. In the *Historia Tripartita* they are compressed into some twelve lines, into which the statement on Mavia's Roman origin is injected. Admittedly, Th. Anagnostes is an epitomator, who is not expected to reproduce the accounts of his predecessors. Yet in this case the compression of the longer accounts seems designed to give verisimilitude to his statement on the Roman origin of Mavia, since his incorporation of the entire original account with such significant details as the Arab origin of Moses would not have supported his view on Mavia's Roman origin and would not have carried conviction to the reader.¹⁰

(3) Queens and warrior-queens are a barbarian rather than a Roman phenomenon: among others, one may mention Boudicca, the Briton queen, Gaatha, the Gothic queen, and Fritigil, the queen of the Marcomanni. More important and relevant than all these is Arab Zenobia, who flourished a century before Mavia in the same region and among the same ethnic group that was not unaccustomed to matriarchal systems.¹¹

Th. Anagnostes' entire account of Mavia's background may, therefore, not only be described as *romanhaft* but also dismissed as such.

C

More important than impugning the credibility of Th. Anagnostes is to explain why the author drew on his own imagination and fabricated a Roman background for Mavia.

The dedicatory epistle¹² at the beginning of the *Historia Tripartita* provides the key: Th. Anagnostes wrote in exile while he was at Gangra, whither, it has been suspected, he had fled from Euchaita, where he had been with the Chalcedonian patriarch Macedonius, deposed in 511 by the Monophysite emperor, Anastasius. His account is colored by hatred toward Anastasius; hence his one-sidedness and misrepresentations.¹³

¹⁰Contrast the work of a much later ecclesiastical historian, Nicephorus Callistus (ca. 1256–1335), who like the anonymous writer of the *Epitome* carried his history down to the death of Phocas in 610; on Nicephorus, see *infra*, p. 194 and also *supra*, p. 139 note 5.

¹¹On Boudicca, see *infra*, p. 263 note 63; on Gaatha, see E. A. Thompson, *The Visigoths in the Time of Ulphila* (Oxford, 1966), pp. 159–60; on Fritigil and St. Ambrose's correspondence with her, see Kidd, *Creeds, Councils, and Controversies*, p. 143. On the Arabs and the matriarchal system, see R. F. Spencer, "The Arabian Matriarchate: An Old Controversy," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, 8 (1952), pp. 478–502.

¹²Hansen, *Theodoros Anagnostes*, p. 1.

¹³On all this, see *ibid.*, p. X.

The point of view from which the *Historia Tripartita* was written, that of a staunch Chalcedonian in exile for his doctrinal position, could explain his curious account of Mavia's background. It was in the very same reign, that of Anastasius, that the Ghassānids finally established themselves as the new *foederati* of Byzantium.¹⁴ Like the emperor, they were staunch Monophysites and anti-Chalcedonians, associated with figures hateful to the Chalcedonians, such as the emperor himself, Anastasius, and the patriarch of Antioch, Severus. Their image in Chalcedonian historiography was that of heretics; and they fought or revolted in the sixth century along doctrinal lines,¹⁵ exactly as Mavia had done, with the difference that Mavia was orthodox while the Ghassānids, from the viewpoint of the Chalcedonians, were not. Th. Anagnostes, used to the Arabs as heretical Monophysites, probably could not conceive of the same ethnic group as orthodox¹⁶ in the fourth century, fighting under an Arab queen. Consequently, he relieved the accounts of Socrates and Sozomen of their two Arab figures, Mavia and Moses; he Romanized the ethnic origin of the first and eliminated any reference to that of the second.¹⁷

This rounds off the argument for the spuriousness of the account of Mavia's Roman background by explaining how it was possible for an ecclesiastical historian to indulge in such a fabrication. But Th. Anagnostes' account, unhistorical as it is on the ethnic origin of Mavia, remains valuable for a more important topic, namely, the image of the Arabs in sixth-century literature.¹⁸

¹⁴On this, see the present writer in "Ghassān and Byzantium: A New *terminus a quo*," pp. 232–55.

¹⁵This topic will be fully treated in *BASIC*.

¹⁶As Th. Anagnostes or his epitomator most probably could not reconcile orthodoxy with ethnic affiliation, another Greek writer, Malchus of Philadelphia, could not conceive of the Saracen chief Imru' al-Qays of the reign of Leo (457–74) as Christian, although it is practically certain that he was. Malchus chose to say that his Christianity was only an allegation on the part of Leo. For Imru' al-Qays and Leo, see *FHG*, vol. 4, pp. 112–13; and the present writer, "On the Patriarchate of Imru' al-Qays," pp. 74–82, in which only the question of his patriarchy is discussed; his career will be fully treated in Vol. 2, *BAFIC*. The Arabs in the sixth century were associated with Monophysitism in much the same way that the Goths were with Arianism.

¹⁷On his other alterations, additions, and liberties, see *supra*, note 7. Especially relevant in this connection are the changes in the text he effected on doctrinal grounds, for which, see Hansen, *Theodoros Anagnostes*, p. XV.

There is a passage on the Arab phylarch Mundir in Th. Anagnostes, *Historia Ecclesiastica* (Hansen, *op. cit.*, p. 147), in which the Arab phylarch is referred to as orthodox. The passage has been the subject of much controversy. What is relevant here is to point out that it does not conflict with the view put forward in this chapter on Th. Anagnostes' conception of the Arabs as heretics. The passage is clearly included in order to embarrass the archenemy of the Chalcedonians, Severus, by going to the extreme of showing that his doctrinal position seemed ludicrous even to a barbarian phylarch. Besides, if Mundir was converted to Christianity at some point in his career, the conversion is likely to have been to Nestorianism and not to Chalcedonian Christianity. On these points, see the present writer in *Martyrs*, pp. 269–72. Hansen's footnote (*ibid.*) that Mundir could not have been the Lakhmid of Hira cannot be accepted in view of the recent researches on the religious complexion of Mundir in his early career.

¹⁸This will be treated in the third volume, *BASIC*.

D

The work of Th. Anagnostes was influential, however indirectly, both in the Latin West and the Greek East throughout the Middle Ages, and his romantic account of Mavia found its way into such works as the *Chronographia* of Theophanes and the *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian.¹⁹ It is a tribute to the critical judgment of Nicephorus Callistus that although he used the work of Th. Anagnostes through the *Epitome*²⁰ it was to the primary sources for the history of Mavia—Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret—that he went back for giving that detailed account of Mavia and the Arabs, which, as has been argued (*supra*, p. 139 note 5), included all the details that would interest the historian of this period and which would have been an accurate²¹ and valuable guide even if these three historians had not survived. Significantly, he did not include Th. Anagnostes' account of Mavia's background, and the clear implication is that he rejected it.

Those who have written on Mavia in recent times have also succumbed to the temptation of using Th. Anagnostes rather than his sources, with the result that in some standard works on the fourth century the Arab queen is still conceived of as she had been in the sixth century by Th. Anagnostes.²²

In spite of these animadversions on Th. Anagnostes' account of Mavia, there is one valuable solitary datum that he provides, namely, that the ceremony of circumcision among the Arabs took place at the age of thirteen.²³ Contrary to what he or possibly his epitomator says, it is not to be found in Sozomen, and it is of some importance for reconstructing Arab social and religious practices in pre-Islamic times.²⁴

APPENDIX VI

On the Name "Mavia"

The name of the Saracen queen, familiar to the Byzantinist from the pages of the ecclesiastical historians, has survived only in its Greek form, Μαυία.¹ It has generally been recognized that this is the Arabic proper name Māwiya, or Māwiyya,² but in view

¹⁹Theophanes, *Chronographia*, vol. 1, p. 64; Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, ed. and trans. J. B. Chabot (Paris, 1899), vol. 1, p. 294. On these two authors and the derivation of their accounts from Th. Anagnostes through the *Epitome*, see Hansen, *Theodoros Anagnostes*, pp. XXIX–XXX; XXXIV–XXXV.

²⁰Hansen, *op. cit.*, pp. XXXIII–XXXIV.

²¹He seems, however, to have followed Theodoret's inaccurate account concerning Mavia's conversion.

²²E.g., Piganiol, *EC*, p. 169 note 102; Rougé, *Expositio totius mundi*, p. 24; Ensslin, *RE*, 14.2, col. 2330.

²³Hansen, *op. cit.*, p. 69, line 17.

²⁴This will be treated in the second volume, *BAFIC*.

¹For a different spelling of the name which appears in a Greek inscription found near Anasartha in Syria, spelled with an *omicron* between the *alpha* and the *upsilon*, see *infra*, p. 222.

²On the confusion in de Perceval between "Māwiya" and "Māriya," another famous Arab princess of the pre-Islamic period, who was a Ghassānid, see his *Essai*, vol. 2, pp. 220–21, and Nöldeke's correction of de Perceval's error in *GF*, p. 23 note 2. The confusion of Māwiya with Māriya was repeated by Ensslin; see *RE*, 14.2, col. 2330, *s.v.* Mavia.

of the fact that this identification has been questioned it is necessary to discuss this onomastic problem and also a related one, namely, Mavia's tribal affiliation.

A

There can be no doubt whatsoever that the Arabic form of the Greek *Māvia* is *Māwiya* or *Māwiyya*.³

(1) The name is a well-established one in pre-Islamic times and appears as the name of some distinguished women in the history of the Arabs before the rise of Islam.⁴ Although the fourth-century queen remained unknown or almost unknown to the Arab historians, one particular account does refer to a *Māwiya* who was a queen.⁵ The account is confused, but the reference could suggest that this was a distant echo from the fourth century.

The etymology of the name is uncertain,⁶ but it is noteworthy that a masculine form of it, *Māwī*, may now be presumed to be epigraphically attested.⁷

(2) The suggestion that the *Μαυία* of the Greek sources is Arabic *Mu'āwiya* cannot be accepted.⁸

(a) *Mu'āwiya* is a man's name in Arabic, not a woman's, and there is no recorded instance of the application of this name to a woman in the Arabic onomasticon.

(b) The view that Greek *Μαυία* is Arabic *Mu'āwiya* could have been erroneously suggested by the almost identical orthography in Greek of *Māwiya*, *Μαυία*, and *Mu'āwiya*, *Μαυίας*, the only difference being the terminal *sigma* attaching to the latter.⁹

(c) One of the etymologies given to *Mu'āwiya* may have given rise to this view, namely, "a bitch in heat."¹⁰ This is certainly a possible etymology and can explain the

³Nöldeke (*GF*, p. 23 note 2) seems to think that *Māwiyya* rather than *Māwiya* is the correct or more correct form; but this form may be due to metrical exigency, and both forms of the name are to be found in Arabic verse.

⁴See Ibn-Ḥabīb, *Al-Muḥabbar*, index, p. 709, and W. Caskel, *Ġambarat an-Nasab: Das Genealogische Werk des Hišām ibn Muḥammad al-Kalbī*, 2 vols. (Leiden, 1966) (hereafter, *GN*), vol. 2, p. 405. According to Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī (*Tārīkh*, p. 86), the mother of Imru' al-Qays of the Namāra inscription was called *Māwiya*; noteworthy is the fact that two of the martyrs of Najrān in the sixth century were called by that name; whether these two Christian martyrs were called after the famous fourth-century Christian queen is not entirely clear. For the two martyrs, see *The Book of the Himyarites*, p. xcii.

⁵The *Māwiya* in question is the wife of Ḥātīm al-Ṭā'ī, the well-known poet and *sayyid* of the Christian tribe of Ṭayy; for the account, see *Dīwān Shi'r Ḥātīm*, ed. 'Adil S. Jamāl (Cairo, 1975), pp. 335–39.

⁶According to Ibn-Durayd it means *mirror* or is related to *water*; see *Al-Ishtiqāq*, pp. 40–41.

⁷As restored by J. Pirenne in "The Incense Port of Moscha (Khor Rori) in Dhofar," *The Journal of Oman Studies*, 1 (1957), p. 86.

⁸See *AAW*, vol. 2, p. 328.

⁹Both names appear in Theophanes, *Chronographia*, vol. 1, pp. 64, 345. Another *Mu'āwiya*, the Kindite prince of pre-Islamic times, appears in Nonnosus, *FHG*, vol. 4, p. 179. Even in Arabic, the orthography of the two different names is almost identical; for "*Māwiya*, daughter of *Mu'āwiya*," see Ibn-Ḥabīb, *Al-Muḥabbar*, p. 458.

¹⁰"Die (brünstige) Hündin, die die Hunde anheult"; *AAW*, vol. 2, p. 328.

application of the term not to a man but to a *woman* as a proper name.¹¹ But either of two alternative etymologies for Arabic Mu'āwiya can explain why Mu'āwiya is masculine in gender and a man's name in the Arabic onomasticon: Mu'āwiya can be the *nomen agentis* standing for *kilāb* (plural of *kalb*), "dogs," or *di'āb* (plural of *di'b*), wolves, meaning howling dogs or wolves;¹² and it may possibly be the *nomen agentis* standing for the singular *kalb*, "dog," or *di'b*, "wolf," the final *ta* being intensive, as in *rahḥalat*, 'allāmat.¹³

B

Mavia's tribal affiliation is of some importance in itself and for its possible relevance to the decline of the Tanūkhids as Byzantium's *foederati* toward the end of the fourth century and their replacement by the Salīhids.¹⁴

The Arabic sources refer to a number of distinguished Mavias in pre-Islamic times.¹⁵ The reference to two of these is noteworthy inasmuch as one belongs to the tribe of Banū-al-Qayn while the other belongs to Kalb. Both tribes were settled in the limitrophe regions of Oriens facing the Arabian Peninsula and were most likely allies of Byzantium.¹⁶ The Tanūkhid king whose death left Mavia a widow and made her a celebrity in the military annals of the reign of Valens could have married into either of these two tribes, Banū-al-Qayn or Kalb, but the probabilities are in favor of his having married into Kalb: (a) There is a group within the tribe of Kalb known as Banū-Māwiya,¹⁷ "the sons of Māwiya"; the genealogists say nothing about this Māwiya's being a queen, and they provide Māwiya with sons and descendants¹⁸ without any reference to a Tanūkhid consanguinity or a Roman connection, but the term

¹¹For such names as *al-Kalba*, "the bitch," and *Banū-al-Kalba*, "the sons of the bitch," in the Arabic onomasticon, see Ibn-Durayd, *Al-Ishtiqāq*, pp. 20, 319–20. The term *bitch* in Arabic does not carry quite the same connotation that it does in English.

¹²Kilāb is a well-known masculine proper name in Arabic. It could be a noun, the plural of *kalb*, "dog," or the verbal noun; see Ibn-Durayd, *Al-Ishtiqāq*, p. 20. It is noteworthy that Kilāb and Mu'āwiya appear as the names of father and son respectively (*ibid.*, p. 296). Ibn-Durayd relates "Mu'āwiya" not to dogs or wolves but to human beings, to warriors challenging one another to combat; see *Al-Ishtiqāq*, p. 75.

The Arabs used the names of faithful or ferocious animals as proper names and so did the Arab tribes, many of whose names are those of animals, such as Kalb (dog), Asad (lion). Against the view that this betrays the influence of totemism, see the remarks of Nöldeke in his review of W. Robertson Smith's *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*, in *ZDMG*, 40 (1886), pp. 156ff; see also Ibn-Durayd, *op. cit.*, pp. 4–7.

¹³Another derivation relates the name to the "young of the fox," the *tha'lab*; see al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-'Arūs* (Beirut, 1966), vol. 10, p. 259. Any of these derivations—"fox," "howling wolf," "howling dog"—are appropriate for the name of the Umayyad caliph who almost brought about the collapse of the Byzantine state in the seventh century.

¹⁴On this, see *supra*, p. 141 note 11.

¹⁵See *supra*, note 4.

¹⁶See *infra*, pp. 384–85.

¹⁷Matrilineal descent was a distinctive feature of the tribe of Kalb. In addition to Banū-Māwiya there were twenty-one other such groups within Kalb; see Caskel, *GN*, vol. 2, p. 76 note 2.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 405, *s.v.* B. Māwiya.

Banū-Māwiya is striking and could suggest the fourth-century queen since there is nothing in the Greek sources that militates against this identification. In these sources only her daughter is mentioned, who was married to Victor, the *magister militum*, but she could have had sons on whom the Greek sources are understandably silent. On the other hand, the genealogical account in Arabic which provides her with sons may not be accurate on the identity of her descendants. (b) Kalb was the much more important and powerful tribe in the limitrophe, and it is, therefore, natural to assume that it was within this tribe that the Tanūkhid king must have contracted a marriage, which in the context of inter-Arab tribal politics would have been a political expediency or even a necessity.¹⁹

Mavia's Kalbite affiliation, perhaps, could explain the fact that while the Tanūkh were stationed in the north of Oriens, near the Euphrates, Mavia was able to wage a war against Rome on a front extending from Phoenicia to Egypt.²⁰ As it is not certain whether the kings of Tanūkh had actual jurisdiction over all the Arab *foederati* of Oriens, the natural explanation for this is that Mavia could and did count on the military support of her own tribe, Kalb, which was encamped in the steppes from Palmyra to Tabūk in northern Ḥijāz²¹ and thus could help Mavia mount her offensive against Rome. In addition to this there is the conflict between the tribe of Kalb and the kings of Salīḥ in the fifth century. Salīḥ wrested power from Tanūkh after the death of Mavia and emerged as the dominant military group of *foederati* in Oriens, and if the last Tanūkhid king married a Kalbite, this would understandably have allied Kalb with Tanūkh and naturally disposed her against those who had wrested power from her new relatives.²²

Postscript: "Mavia," the name of the Christian Arab queen of the fourth century, seems to have had a remarkable diffusion among the Arabs as a Christian and a royal name in pre-Islamic times, and this may have been due to the fame of the Christian Arab queen. Two of the women martyrs of sixth-century Najrān in the far Arabian South carried the name Māwiya, as did the wife of the last Lakhmid king of Ḥīra, on the lower Euphrates, Christian al-Nu'mān. For the first, see *The Book of the Himyarites*, p. xcii; for the second, see *Chronicum Edessenum*, trans. I. Guidi, *Scriptores Syri*, Series Tertia, Tomus IV, *Chronica Minora*, CSCO, versio, p. 18.

APPENDIX VII

Rufinus

The preceding chapter and appendices on Mavia and on the Arab profile of the reign of Valens have depended heavily on Socrates and Sozomen among the four major ecclesiastical historians for the reign. Theodoret has been left out. He is not a safe

¹⁹An Umayyad caliph, none other than Mu'āwiya himself, found it politically expedient to marry a Kalbite woman, Christian Maysūn, the mother of his son and successor, the Caliph Yazīd.

²⁰On this, see *supra*, pp. 142–50.

²¹And elsewhere, in *bādiyat al-Samāwa*.

²²The fall of Salīḥ and the Kalbite involvement in it will be fully discussed in Vol. 2 of this series, *BAFIC*.

guide to the history of Mavia and her bishop Moses since he has committed so many inaccuracies, and these have been pointed out in a special appendix devoted to them. Rufinus, although the earliest of the four ecclesiastical historians, is not expansive on Mavia, and his account is skeletal. However, he remains the earliest of these four ecclesiastical historians to report on Mavia and Moses, and as he has figured prominently in two articles that have appeared since this chapter and its appendices were written in 1977 and, what is more, has been the subject of a doctoral dissertation exclusively devoted to him, it is only appropriate that this appendix should present a brief discussion of these three works which also treat Mavia and her bishop Moses, the protagonists in the story of Arab-Byzantine relations in the reign of Valens.

A

In a doctoral dissertation presented to the University of Paris/Sorbonne and defended in June 1978, Françoise Thelamon has, in the opinion of those who examined her during her *soutenance de thèse*, rehabilitated Rufinus, reintegrated him into the stream of Christian historiography, and demonstrated his documentary value.¹ What is most relevant in this Appendix is to discuss briefly the résumé given of her interpretation of the *Byzantino-arabica* in Rufinus for the reign of Valens.²

(1) The authoress analyzes correctly the events associated with Mavia and Moses, the independence of the Saracens within the Roman alliance and within the Christian *ecclesia*, observing that in this case Romanization and Christianization are not necessarily linked. In discussing the rise of the "Église des Saracènes," she rightly draws attention to the new image of the Arabs as orthodox defenders of the true faith. She draws some important conclusions on Rufinus's universalistic conception of the Church, not current in his day, and relates them to her views on the Christianized barbarians and their relations with the empire. She analyzes *foedus*, *fides*, and *solum barbaricum* in religious terms, gives them new connotations, and concludes that the barbarians now have a new image and a new role as they are not only the instruments of divine punishment directed against the heretical emperor but also are the guardians of orthodoxy, the defense of which they assume. The kingdom of God is no longer reducible to the dimension of the *imperium romanum*.

(2) Dr. Thelamon's comprehension of the place of Mavia and her Arabs in ecclesiastical and secular history is admirable. There are, however, two points in her presentation that need to be commented upon:

(a) Like many of those who have written on Mavia's Arabs, she speaks of their conversion. It has been pointed out in Chapter IV and in Appendix IV that Mavia and her Saracens were already Christian when the war broke out. The following observation may now be added in this context. If Mavia and her Saracens had been converted, Rufinus would certainly have said so in no ambiguous terms and would have described it in terms similar to the ones he had used when he had described the

¹The dissertation is entitled "Rufin—*Histoire Ecclésiastique*: Recherches sur la valeur historique de l'*Histoire Ecclésiastique* de Rufin d'Aquilée." See the notice of it in *Revue des études augustiniennes*, 26 (1979), pp. 185–91.

²*Ibid.*, pp. 186–87.

conversion of Ethiopia and which Dr. Thelamon herself cites on p. 185, namely, *semina fidei prima*. Having examined the conversion of Ethiopia and Georgia, the authoress was led into thinking that this was also true of the third group of barbarians whom she was viewing synoptically in Rufinus's narrative, namely, the Arabs; furthermore, Sozomen misled her by his description of Moses as the first bishop of the Saracens, a description which significantly enough is not found in Rufinus, the earliest of these ecclesiastical authors who reported on the reign of Valens and on the first conversion of the Ethiopians and the Iberians.

(b) It is very arguable whether the territory of Mavia's Saracens could be described as *solum barbaricum*. They were *foederati*, and if they were the Tanūkhids, then they lived *intra limitem*.³ But in view of the uncertainty that attends the exact location of their territory, it is possible that they lived partly *extra limitem*. Thus there is an element of truth in the description of Mavia's Arab territory as *solum barbaricum*, and Dr. Thelamon's analysis of the three Latin terms referred to above—*foedus*, *fides*, and *solum barbaricum*—or the conclusion she draws from this analysis is not affected materially, while her analysis of the two terms *foedus* and *fides* remains firm.

B

In 1980 appeared an important article devoted exclusively to Queen Mavia by G. W. Bowersock.⁴ It ranges over many problems of which the following are the most relevant to discuss here:

(a) The author devotes some four pages (478–82) to the problem of the sources, or rather "the source of the sources," in which Rufinus figures prominently. To the old question whether Rufinus derived his information for Books X and XI of his *Ecclesiastical History* from Gelasius or vice versa,⁵ he gives the answer that Gelasius of Caesarea in Palestine was the Greek source "upon which Rufinus himself relied in composing his last books *ex maiorum traditionibus*," and that "the ecclesiastical writers of the fifth century, notably Socrates and Sozomen, have therefore to be seen as owing what they have in common with Rufinus to Gelasius" (p. 481). In reaching these conclusions the author brought to bear on the problem the evidence from Mavia, and he also concluded "that the lost history of Gelasius of Caesarea included a full account of Mavia."

These conclusions are important and attractive. The credibility of Rufinus is vindicated, but it is also argued on p. 486 that "it will no longer do to appeal to Rufinus for anything as the basic source for the fifth-century Greek historians (Socrates and Sozomen)." These, too, have used Gelasius and drew on him more amply than Rufinus had; hence the details that they include and that Rufinus does not have.⁶

³On the territory of the Tanūkhids, see *infra*, pp. 400–407 and 465–76.

⁴See his "Mavia, Queen of the Saracens," *Studien zur antiken Sozialgeschichte; Festschrift Friedrich Vittinghoff*, Kölner historische Abhandlungen, 28 (Cologne, 1980), pp. 477–95.

⁵On this question, see also F. X. Murphy, *Rufinus of Aquileia: His Life and Works*, Studies in Medieval History, 6 (Washington, D.C., 1945), pp. 160–64.

⁶On Sozomen's independent researches, e.g., the *odai* associated with the Saracens of Mavia, see the sections on Sozomen, *infra*, pp. 276, 443–48.

The credibility of these historians is thus enhanced since their accounts derive from one who lived in Caesarea not far from the scene of Mavia's activities and, what is more, was a contemporary.

(b) The rest of the article is devoted to a variety of problems, some of which may be commented upon as follows:

(1) The author adopts the view that the Arabs of Mavia were nomads,⁷ a view no longer tenable and against which arguments have been advanced in the course of this book. Their "nomadism" is related to the application of the term *Saracens* to Mavia's Arabs and to the equation of the term *Saraceni* with *Scenitae* (pp. 482–83).

(2) The author undertakes to reconstruct the Arab-Roman relationship in terms of confederations. This reconstruction rests on the etymology of the term *Saraceni* suggested by D. F. Graf, which in the view of the present writer is erroneous.⁸

(3) The author subscribes to a widely held view that Mavia was a convert to Christianity (p. 482). It was Sozomen who confused scholars concerning Mavia's Christianity when he talked about Moses as the first bishop of the Saracens. This problem has been examined in detail earlier in this book. The statement in Sozomen would document not the conversion of Mavia's Saracens but the inception of a Saracen episcopate among them as part of, or the climax to, a process, namely, the rise of an ecclesiastical hierarchy among them, not their conversion.

(4) It is suggested that the Mavia mentioned in the Anasartha inscription of A.D. 425 is not related to the queen (p. 490). His conclusion rests on the ground that "Mavia was not all that rare a name." But it is also not that common. Besides, the author has placed Mavia's territory in southern Syria, whereas it has been argued in this book that it is likely to have been in the north, in Chalcidice,⁹ not far from the same Anasartha near which the inscription was found.

(c) The author also discusses the Umm al-Jimāl and the Namāra inscriptions and assumes that the Arab king Jaḍīma mentioned in the first is the predecessor of Imru' al-Qays mentioned in the second (p. 484). The present writer has been reluctant to draw such a conclusion. The inscription speaks primarily not of the king, Jaḍīma, but of his tutor, Fihir, and there are other difficulties. Only future epigraphic discoveries can throw light on Jaḍīma and his relations with the Romans, and until such time it is difficult to give an interpretation of the Arab-Roman relationship based on the Umm al-Jimāl inscription.

It is for this reason that this famous document was not used by the present writer in his book *Rome and the Arabs* for drawing any significant conclusions on the Arab-Roman relationship in the third century. Nor was it used to suggest a strand of continuity between Jaḍīma of the third century and Imru' al-Qays of the fourth, which witnessed the rise of a new system of *foederati* and *phylarchi*, so characteristic of the Byzantine period. No doubt the roots of this system went back to the Roman period, during which the Romans formed alliances with this or that local chief, but it was in the Byzantine period that this system was fully developed and became the basis

⁷Sometimes described as semi-nomads, as on p. 485.

⁸See the intensive analysis of this etymology in *RA*.

⁹On this, see *infra*, pp. 222–38 and 465–76.

of the Arab-Byzantine relationship, contrasting with another system that had obtained in the Roman period that had witnessed the rise and fall of powerful Arab client-kingdoms and caravan city-states, the last of which was Palmyra.

In spite of these criticisms, this article is a remarkable contribution toward a better understanding of the complexities of Arab-Roman relations in the fourth century.

C

In the same year, 1980, appeared the second of the two articles on Mavia, this one by Philip Mayerson,¹⁰ who has written extensively on the Saracens in Sinai and southern Palestine in the early Byzantine period. His attitude and conclusions are negative both on the historicity of the events associated with Mavia and on the credibility of the ecclesiastical sources. These he dismisses as untrustworthy and falls back on the earliest of them, Rufinus, but only to declare for his unreliability.

Perhaps he may be excused this extreme scepticism in view of the fact that the only detailed analysis of the history of Mavia in the reigns of Valens and Theodosius, the one undertaken in this book, had not been published when Mayerson wrote his article, while his central thesis involving Rufinus would have received much modification had he been aware of Thelamon's dissertation and Bowersock's article, especially the latter's study of the Rufinus-Gelasius problem. These works and the preceding sections of this Appendix should lay to rest Mayerson's doubts, and they do make superfluous a systematic examination of the sceptical views expressed by the author.

The subtitle of his article, "a cautionary note," however, may be applied to the conclusions of A. Musil on the presumed Zokomos-Mavia filiation and on his "reconstruction of the events recorded by Sozomen,"¹¹ which Mayerson rightly rejects. That Mavia's revolt took place after the death of Zokomos is impossible to accept.

APPENDIX VIII

E. L. Woodward

The Arabs are associated in the minds of ecclesiastical historians with heresy, and the phrase "*Arabia baeresium ferax*," "Arabia, the breeding ground of heresies," speaks for itself. In his well-known book, the Oxford historian Woodward argued early in this century that Christian heresies championed by the barbarians and the Oriental peoples of the Near East contributed to the decline and fall of the Roman Empire. This view had, and still has in some circles, a wide vogue, but it suffered a reverse in 1959 through an article which appeared in the *Journal of Theological Studies* by the Cambridge historian, the late A. H. M. Jones.¹ His theory took into account the Arab *foederati* of the sixth and seventh centuries, who were Monophysites when Byzantine

¹⁰See his "Mavia, Queen of the Saracens—A Cautionary Note," *Israel Exploration Journal*, 30 (1980), pp. 123–31.

¹¹*Ibid.*, pp. 129–30.

¹For Woodward's book and Jones's article, see *supra*, p. 82 note 33.

Oriens fell to the Muslims but not those of the fourth who were very orthodox. Nevertheless, these fourth-century *foederati* of Queen Mavia did throw a challenge to the central imperial government of the Emperor Valens during the Gothic crisis in the seventies, and religion was an issue in the conflict. The question that arises in their case is whether their adoption of orthodoxy was a reflection of an aggressive national sentiment and whether this had a counterpart in political separatism or tendencies toward it.

The answer to this question is a categorical no. A careful examination of the accounts of the three major ecclesiastical historians, Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret, clearly shows that theirs was far from being a rebellion or an expression of separatism. The *foederati* of Queen Mavia were staunchly orthodox. Although they themselves understood little of the theological controversies of the period, their queen probably did, as did their priests, and it was their loyalty toward these that made them stand fast by the orthodox position and fight for it. They were known for their intransigence in such matters since their Mesopotamian days when they fought with their Zoroastrian Persian overlords and before they crossed the *limes* and went over to Byzantium, according to the Arabic sources.

The negotiations that were conducted between the rebellious orthodox Saracens and Arian Valens confirm this. The ecclesiastical historian is interested in the theological dimension of the dispute and thus may have privileged the religious clause of the treaty, which stipulates that the bishop must be the Arab Moses, but it is perfectly clear from the sequel that the Saracens returned immediately to their Roman allegiance and rallied to the empire's support during the biennium or so of the Gothic peril by their participation in the Gothic War and the defense of Constantinople. They formed part of the *comitatus* of the imperial army and were transferred to Thrace to fight in the Gothic War.

Thus, these Arab *foederati* of the fourth century do not answer to Woodward's view of heretical barbarians who were bringing about the collapse of the imperial fabric through the marriage of heresies to nationalist movements. These Arabs were orthodox, not heretical, and they exhibited no separatist tendency but engaged in what they considered a holy war in defense of orthodoxy.

V

The Reign of Theodosius I

I. THE FALL OF THE TANŪKHIDS

After their reconciliation with Valens and their contribution to the Gothic War and the defense of Constantinople, the Tanūkhids might have remained the dominant group among the Arab *foederati* of Byzantium; but they did not. According to the Arabic sources,¹ they were superseded by a new group, the Saliḥids, and their fall is confirmed by a Latin source that, together with other sources, furnishes the details not to be found in the Arabic ones and that can give some precision to the chronology and manner of their fall.

The Tanūkhids of the fourth century were the *first* group of Arab *foederati* in the service of Byzantium, to be followed by the Saliḥids and the Ghassānids of the fifth and sixth centuries respectively. The examination of the manner of their fall and the circumstances that attended it is, therefore, all the more important since it gives a glimpse of how the course of Arab-Byzantine relations could be ruffled and thus provides material relevant to the examination of the larger problem of the rise, decline, and fall of the three Arab client-kingdoms in the course of these three centuries.

The reconstruction of the course of events that led to the fall of the Tanūkhids involves not only the political and military aspects of the relationship that obtained between Byzantium and her Arab *foederati* but extends further into such matters as the working of the imperial administration in the context of the innovations introduced by Theodosius I and their immediate results in the Orient. Some well-known figures in the reign are involved in this work of reconstruction, such as the new *magister*, Richomer, and Libanius himself, and with them the vexed question of Julian's death, which the latter revived with a vengeance as soon as Theodosius was elevated to the purple.

II. THE LATIN SOURCE

A precious reference² in the *Panegyricus* of Latinius Pacatus Drepanius, brief as it is, could be considered the testimonial evidence for the fall of the Tanūk-

¹For these, see *infra*, p. 367, 370.

²*XII Panegyrici Latini*, ed. R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1964), p. 99, lines 29–30.

hids early in the reign. The discourse was delivered in 389, sometime between 13 June and 1 September, when Theodosius was in Rome.³ The reference occurs in section 22 of the *Panegyricus: dicam a rebellibus Sarracenis polluti foederis expetitas?* From it the following data may be extracted:

(1) The reference to the Saracens may be dated A.D. 383 since it comes in the *middle* of an enumeration of the exploits of Theodosius involving the Goths, the Scythians-Albans, and the Persians;⁴ the preceding reference is clearly to the Settlement of Theodosius with the Goths in 382, while the following one points to the arrival in 384 of a Persian embassy⁵ in Constantinople announcing the accession of Shāpūr III (383–88).

(2) These Saracens can only have been those of Mavia—the Tanūkhids—since they are not just another group of Saracens who were assaulting the imperial frontiers but are described as *foederati*, whose defeat was deemed important enough to be mentioned in the context of a series of victories involving other well-known adversaries.

(3) Decisive for the identity of these Saracens as Tanūkhids is the testimony of the Arabic sources;⁶ according to these it was exactly in this period that the Tanūkhids fell and were superseded as the dominant federate group by the Salīhids of Zokomos, a figure luckily mentioned by Sozomen⁷ and chronologically assigned by him to this very period.

The orator speaks only of the defeat of the *foederati*, and this leaves the question open whether the revolt began and ended in the same year, 383, or whether it had begun at some earlier date.

As the *foederati* were defeated in 383, their revolt must have broken out sometime between this date and the end of 378, since they were then still fighting for Byzantium shortly after Adrianople (9 August) before the walls of Constantinople. But unlike the first revolt, the causes of this second one are not stated, and so its inception can only be inferred since it cannot be related

³On the date of the *Panegyricus*, see E. Galletier, *Panegyriques Latins*, Budé (Paris, 1955), vol. 3, pp. 51–52; on the historical value of the discourse, see *ibid.*, pp. 52–59.

⁴Strangely enough, Galletier conceives of it as “*épisode de la fin du règne de Valens (378)*” (*ibid.*, p. 89 note 3). This is impossible to accept: (a) the discourse is addressed to Theodosius, not to Valens; (b) the reference comes after one to the Goths, namely, the Settlement of 382, which was concluded four years after the death of Valens; (c) the revolt of Mavia against Valens does not answer to the description of the revolt in the discourse; the first was a success, the second a failure. The reference is correctly dated 383 in A. Guldenpenning and J. Ifland, *Der Kaiser Theodosius der Grosse* (Halle, 1878), p. 121, and in *RE*, Supplementbd. 13, col. 863.

⁵There are two datable references to the Persians in the discourse; the first begins with *Persis ipsa*, the second with *denique ipse ille rex*, for which, see Mynors, *op. cit.*, p. 100. As the second reference is to the embassy of 389 which came to announce the accession of Bahram IV and which reached Theodosius while in Rome, the first must refer to the earlier one in 384, which announced the accession of Shāpūr. For these embassies, see *EC*, pp. 250–51; see also Baynes’s note on the second embassy in *CMH*, vol. 1, p. 240 note 1.

⁶*Infra*, pp. 367–72.

⁷*Infra*, pp. 274–75.

to datable facts in this period, as can that of the first revolt. However, as will become clear in the course of this chapter, the seeds of discontent must have been sown in the triennium or so that had preceded the revolt, which most probably had smouldered for three years and broken out in the fourth year of Theodosius's reign in 383. An exploration of possible causes of the revolt in the first triennium of the reign is thus imperative.

III. THE BACKGROUND OF THE REVOLT

1

Constantinople: A.D. 379–82

When Theodosius acceded as emperor on 19 January 379, the Arab contingent that had fought in Thrace and had defended Constantinople might still have been there. The *foedus* between the Tanūkhids and Byzantium had lapsed with the death of Valens, as it had done with the death of Mavia's consort in the seventies.⁸ The accession of a strong soldier who had been recalled from his retirement in Spain and to whom the Saracens were an unknown group could easily have created difficulties between the new emperor and the *foederati*, proud of their record in the Gothic War and of their successes against the armies of Valens. It is, therefore, conceivable that disagreements developed while the two parties were negotiating the new *foedus*.

What the grounds of disagreement in this triennium were or could have been can only be guessed.

(1) The Arab *foederati* were uncompromisingly orthodox and in this respect were intransigent, possibly even truculent, in their relations with the imperial government, as the events of the last years of Valens's reign adequately show.⁹ The situation in the capital during the short period preceding the Council of Constantinople was such as to provide cause for disagreements. The city was torn by theological dissension and, what is more, Theodosius saw fit to invite the Arian bishop of the Goths, Ulphilas, to the Council of Constantinople.¹⁰ He also invited the chief of the anti-Christian faction among the Goths, Athanarich, and treated him royally.¹¹ All this could have irked the orthodox Arabs. Some of them may have stayed on in Constantinople after 378 and conceivably had brushes with some influential figures in the capital, perhaps with the emperor himself.¹²

⁸*Supra*, p. 140.

⁹On the encounter between their bishop Moses and Lucius of Alexandria, see *supra*, pp. 153–55.

¹⁰See *EC*, p. 384.

¹¹For Athanarich, see Jones, *PLRE*, vol. 1, *s.v.* Athanarichus.

¹²The brushes between the oriental holy man and the Roman emperor are best illustrated in this period by St. Isaac and Valens (*supra*, p. 169), but they may have occurred not only with the emperor but also with the populace, to which the events of a few years later (A.D. 400)

A telling indication of the possibility that the Arabs were discontented might be the fact of their nonparticipation in the Council of Constantinople in 381. After their wars in behalf of orthodoxy and their victories over the Arians both in Oriens and in Thrace, it was expected that they would send a representative to the council,¹³ which, moreover, was composed almost exclusively of the Oriental bishops; but they did not, and the name of a bishop of the Saracens does not appear among the signatures.¹⁴ The council was held in 381, and this could suggest that already in 381 they were discontented.

(2) The Arab *foederati* were good orthodox Christians who had successfully fought for orthodoxy against Arian Valens and fought for the state against the Arian Goths. They must have considered that they had claims on the attention of the new emperor with whom, unlike Valens, they shared the same doctrinal persuasion and, consequently, expected more recognition and participation in imperial affairs. It is not difficult to imagine how disappointed they must have been to see that they were left out of the calculations of the new emperor who, moreover, favored the heretical Goths. In more concrete terms, their discontent in this area might be related to their being excluded from Theodosius's appointments to the various *magisteria*.¹⁵ The emperor may not have increased the number of *magistri*,¹⁶ but he did appoint new ones, many of whom were Germans,¹⁷ belonging to the same ethnic group that the Arabs had fought against in the Gothic War and had beaten before the walls of Constantinople. Especially vexatious might have been their appointment to the regional command in Oriens, where the Arab *foederati* were encamped.¹⁸

involving the Goths in Constantinople afford an illuminating parallel. In this case they developed into a tumult that ended with the extermination of the Goths; see Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire*, vol. 1, pp. 133–34.

¹³As a bishop of the Tatiens/Saracens had participated in the Council of Nicaea, for whom, see *infra*, pp. 330–34.

¹⁴Perhaps the signature has not survived, or St. Isaac, known to them through Victor, a common friend to both parties, might have been considered by the *foederati* as their representative. This is possible, but it is more likely that they refused to participate, and thus their nonparticipation was significant and indicative of an incipient alienation.

¹⁵If not to the *magisterium praesentale*, at least to the regional *magisterium orientale*; for the *magistri militum* of Theodosius, see Demandt, "Magistri Militum," cols. 710–26, and A. Lippold, "Theodosius I," *RE*, Supplementbd. 13 (1973), cols. 937–42.

¹⁶For an analysis of a well-known passage in Zosimus (*HN*, IV.27), on the military reform of Theodosius, see Demandt, *op. cit.*, cols. 720–22, and Lippold, *op. cit.*, cols. 938–39.

¹⁷Five of them: Modares, Hellebich, Richomer, Stilicho, and Butherich, four of whom were appointed early in the reign; this is in contrast with his predecessor Valens, none of whose newly appointed *magistri* were German; *RE*, Supplementbd. 12, col. 709.

¹⁸These appointments to the *magisterium orientale* affected them directly, and, as will be shown later in this chapter, it was in this area that friction between the *foederati* and the imperial administration must have taken place before the revolt broke out; *infra*, p. 209.

(3) More probable as a cause for the revolt is the Settlement¹⁹ of 382. It was very favorable to the Arian Goths in every way, and the orthodox Arabs would certainly have heard about it. They had fought loyally for Byzantium and triumphed over the Goths before Constantinople, and consequently they expected, and probably demanded, better terms for their *foedus* with Theodosius, at least as good as those granted by the emperor to the Goths. This is the most likely background for the revolt and is chronologically attractive since it comes just before the revolt broke out the following year.

Theodosius's apparent coolness toward the Arabs is explicable when viewed in the context of the historical situation that obtained in this first triennium of his reign. The emperor fell heir to all the problems of the previous reign, and paramount among them was the Gothic problem. He embarked on a policy of pacification directed mainly to the conciliation of the Goths and finally accommodated them comfortably by the terms of the Settlement of 382. Viewed in this context, his irresponsiveness to the Arabs and their demands becomes more intelligible.

(1) Their status as noncitizens may have militated against the appointment of Arab *foederati* to the *magisterium*. But exceptions were made during the reign, both before and after the Arab revolt. Although Theodosius was not expected to appoint an Arab *after* the revolt, the question may be asked why he did not make such an appointment before it, in view of the undoubted orthodoxy of the Arabs and of their military competence, demonstrated in wars against the Romans and the Goths, and in view of the fact that the emperor apparently did not suffer from any racial prejudice.²⁰ The answer to this question may be sought both in the Germanophile policy of Theodosius and in the anti-Gothic sentiment among the Arabs. The emperor courted the Visigoths after Adrianople, accommodated them with the *foedus* of 382, and appointed them to high positions in order to induce in them a sense of loyalty to the state.²¹ In view of the animosity between the Arabs and the Goths, Theo-

¹⁹For the Settlement, see Jones, *LRE*, vol. 1, pp. 157–58 and vol. 2, p.1099 notes 46–47, where the sources of the Settlement are discussed. An examination of the terms of the Settlement with the Goths could be very fruitful for ascertaining more facts about the status of the Arab *foederati*. One could only guess that they pressed for the same terms that the Goths had been given. Among other things, they may have wanted more of their fellow tribesmen settled within the Roman frontiers, increase of the *annona*, and possibly more independence in military matters. They had succeeded in extracting from Valens ecclesiastical independence, and this could give an indication of the trend that might have prevailed among them for more of the same kind in other areas.

²⁰He appointed to the various *magisteria* other barbarians who were non-Germans: there was the Persian, Sapore; Addaeus, who was probably an Aramaic-speaking Semite; the Iberian king, Bacurius; and the Mauritanian prince, Gildo; for all of whom, see *PLRE*, vol. 1, pp. 803, 13, 144, 395–96 respectively.

²¹And the Goths fulfilled his expectations; he was to win the two wars against Maximus

dosius may have decided that the appointment of an Arab would not have been conducive to a harmonious relationship among his *magistri*. His nonretention of Julius, the *magister utriusque militiae per Orientem*, possibly for having butchered the Goths in Asia after Adrianople, might be illuminating.²²

(2) Of all the demands that the *foederati* conceivably made, the most likely must have been the modification of the terms of their *foedus* on lines analogous to that concluded with the Goths in 382. And it was this one that must have been distasteful for Theodosius to grant. It was humiliating enough for him to accept on the Lower Danube an autonomous federate state of barbarians, virtually a *civitas foederata* within the *limes*; understandably, he could not tolerate the spectacle of a second²³ along the Euphrates in Oriens. The historical circumstances and the imperial posture at the time justified his decision both to grant the Goths their federate state and to deny the Arabs theirs, in spite of the latter's loyalty, of which he was probably not so sure.²⁴ Having inherited the problems of the previous reign after the Gothic victory at Adrianople, he could not help making that great concession to the victors. In the case of the Arabs, the situation was entirely different; since these did not pose a threat to the empire, especially with the Persian front quiet, he decided that they were dispensable.²⁵

This reconstruction of the possible causes of friction between Theodosius and the Arabs must now be set against the background of the personality of the new emperor and the image of the Arabs in his court, which could not have been favorably disposed toward them. Theodosius hailed from the farthest part of the Roman Occident, Spain, and so was quite remote from the Arabs of the Orient; unlike all his predecessors, from Constantine to Valens, he had not fought or resided in the East and thus saw no military service with the Arabs, who consequently remained strangers to him.²⁶ Perhaps more important is their image at the time. They had revolted against his predecessor Valens, and although their revolt was in behalf of the doctrinal persuasion Theodosius belonged to, they must have been viewed by the central government as rebels against the state. Furthermore, an influential rhetorician of the period tarnished even further their image in the eyes of the new emperor. In

and Eugenius with the help of his Gothic *foederati*. On the loyalty of his Gothic *magister* Fravitta, see *PLRE*, vol. 1, pp. 372–73.

²²On the nonretention of Julius, see Demandt, "*Magistri Militum*," cols. 710–11.

²³Possibly a third one, if Gratian settled the Ostrogoths in Pannonia and Upper Moesia even before Theodosius did the same in Lower Moesia; see *CMH*, vol. 1, p. 254, and *EC*, p. 214.

²⁴*Infra*, p. 210.

²⁵*Infra*, pp. 211, 213.

²⁶Even Julian could express some appreciation for their services because they fought with him in the Persian campaign; *supra*, p. 107.

Oration XXIV addressed to the emperor on his accession in 379, the orator raised hue and cry: he called on Theodosius to avenge the death of Julian and came out with the open accusation that it was the Arabs who, sixteen years before, had murdered an emperor in the purple.²⁷

2

Antioch: A.D. 383

Important as the relations of the *foederati* with the emperor himself in Constantinople might have been in explaining the background of the revolt, their relations with the Roman commanders in Oriens must be adjudged the immediate cause for the rapid deterioration of imperial-federate relations and the breaking out of discontent into an open revolt.

(1) A well-known passage in Zosimus, referred to above,²⁸ has probably the most immediate relevance to the Arab revolt. The historian speaks not only of the increase in the number of the *magistri* but also of the subordinate commanders; especially relevant in this context are the *cavalry* wing-commanders, ἰλάρχαι. Such measures may have created some friction between the newly appointed commanders and the Arab cavalry contingent of the *foederati*. But far more important is his reference to the huckstering, καπηλεία, of the στρατιωτικὰ σιτηρέσια. If the Roman *stratiotai* suffered from such malpractices, it is certain that the Arab *foederati* suffered even more. The statement in Zosimus on the military provisions rings true since it can be paralleled before the reign of Theodosius and after; it is a recurrent theme in federate-imperial relations.²⁹

(2) The *foederati* had no friends in the *magisterium orientale* at this time. Victor, their only friend in the ranks of the imperial administration, had departed from Antioch in 378 and most probably had retired in the summer of 382. Who the *magister militum per Orientem* was when the revolt actually broke out is not entirely clear. For the period 378–81 there was the Persian Sapore, but how well- or ill-disposed he was toward them cannot be ascertained.³⁰ In the year of the revolt, 383, it was either Richomer or Hellebich,

²⁷*Infra*, App. 1, pp. 216–19.

²⁸*Supra*, note 16.

²⁹This had been a cause of friction with Julian, who had denied the Arabs their *salaria* and *munera*, for which see *supra*, p. 112. For the *annona* as an issue which could ruffle Arab-Byzantine relations in other reigns (Theodosius II and Heraclius), see *supra*, p. 112 note 25.

³⁰The whereabouts of Julius, the *ex-magister*, in this period are not known. After his retirement, he might have remained in Antioch or elsewhere in Oriens and, if so, his presence would not have helped the cause of the *foederati*. In addition to his having been beaten by them in the first revolt, he was a Roman who was probably averse to barbarian infiltration of the army and must have viewed the Arabs in much the same way that he viewed the Goths, whom he had ruthlessly massacred in Asia after Adrianople; see *supra*, note 22.

both Germans and pagans³¹ and almost certainly not well-disposed toward the Christian Arab *foederati*.³²

The first part of this section has analyzed the possible causes of disagreement between the Arab *foederati* and Theodosius in the first triennium of his reign, and it has been suggested that the most important cause must have been the negotiation of a new *foedus* on the analogy of the one concluded with the Goths. The second part of this section has examined the situation in the Orient, and it has been suggested that the immediate cause of the revolt has to be sought in that region and must have been the administration of the *annona*. When the revolt broke out in 383, it was a case of grievances accumulating throughout the triennium but sparked by malpractices locally in Oriens. There was no Victor to plead their cause, and the Arabs had to deal with an unsympathetic administration, from the emperor in Constantinople to his commanders in Antioch. The imperial mood had changed, and it was against the background of a Germanophile court unsympathetic to the Arabs and a *magisterium* half of which was staffed by Germans that the Arabs first aired their grievances and then revolted. Unlike their first revolt, this one could only have ended in a crushing defeat.

IV. THE REVOLT

While much is known about the first revolt, precious little is known about the second. Luckily there are references in the sources, from which some facts may be extracted:

The statement in Pacatus, the only explicit source for the revolt, is brief but informative: the Saracens revolted; but they were crushed and also punished for their revolt. This bare outline may be enriched as follows:

1. The commander who quelled the revolt must have been the Frank Richomer,³³ the new *magister* of Theodosius:

(a) Letters³⁴ addressed to Richomer by Libanius clearly suggest that he was in Antioch in 383, the very same year that the revolt was quelled. Since he was *magister*, it is certain that he was at least involved.

(b) One of Libanius's letters³⁵ speaks of a successful campaign conducted by

³¹Richomer's paganism is undoubted, while Hellebich's is not certain; for the latter, see Waas, *Germanen*, p. 86.

³²There is some disagreement on the sequence, dates, and function of these *magistri* in the service of Theodosius, but it does not affect the argument on the deterioration of the position of the Arab *foederati* in this period. On Hellebich and Richomer, see Waas, *op. cit.*, pp. 85–86, 101–3; *PLRE*, vol. 1, pp. 277–78, 765–66; and Demandt, "Magistri Militum," cols. 711, 718–19.

³³Correctly identified in Gùldenpenning and Ifland, *Kaiser Theodosius*, p. 121.

³⁴For these and for his stay in Antioch in 383, see *PLRE*, vol. 1, pp. 765–66.

³⁵For this letter (no. 390), see Foerster, ed., *Libanii Opera*, pp. 106–7.

Richomer in the region, and it is natural to suppose that it was directed against the Arabs who had revolted. Although the sources speak of the Tzanni and of the Persians, these two groups could not have been the object of Richomer's campaign referred to by Libanius:

(1) According to Malalas,³⁶ the Tzanni, after ravaging the provinces of Cappadocia, Cilicia, and Syria, went back whence they had come, and there is no mention of a campaign against them.

(2) More important are the Persians: the year 383 witnessed the death³⁷ of one Persian king, Ardashīr II (379–83) and the accession of another, Shāpūr III (383–88), and it is unlikely that in the midst of a transitional period, difficult for the Persians internally, these would have decided to resume hostilities with Rome. That they had no intention of doing so is confirmed by the fact that they sent in the following year a friendly embassy³⁸ to Constantinople to announce the accession of the new king, Shāpūr III. It is of course possible that Richomer was dispatched to Antioch so that he might watch for a possible resumption of hostilities with Persia,³⁹ but as it turned out these were not resumed in 383 and no campaign was conducted against Persia; consequently, Libanius's congratulatory letter to Richomer on a successful campaign could not have been a reference to a victory over the Persians.

Conceivably, Richomer might have been dispatched to the Orient with a triple assignment—to watch the Persian frontier, to deal with the Tzanni, and to quell the Arab revolt. As the Persian front remained quiet, the victorious campaign referred to by Libanius could have been conducted against either the Tzanni or the Arabs or both. There is no mention of a campaign against the Tzanni, but there is of one conducted against the Arabs, clearly implied in the language of the Latin orator. Even if Malalas forgot to mention or was unaware of a campaign against the Tzanni, these cannot replace the Arabs as the object of Richomer's campaign but may be added to it. Thus the reference to Richomer's victorious campaign must be to the Arabs⁴⁰ and can include the Tzanni only as a possibility,⁴¹ but the important assignment must have been the quelling of the Arab revolt.

³⁶*Chronographia*, p. 347.

³⁷Lippold, "Theodosius I," col. 863, with references to Nöldeke's works on the Persians.

³⁸See *EC*, p. 250.

³⁹Waas, *Germanen*, p. 102; Demandt, "*Magistri Militum*," col. 718.

⁴⁰Baynes brought the Arab revolt and Richomer's campaign together, but as the fortunes of the Tanūkhids and the detailed course of Arab-Byzantine relations were unknown to him, the careful English scholar expressed himself guardedly: "the nomad Saracens had broken their treaty of alliance with Rome, and Richomer had marched on a punitive expedition" (*CMH*, vol. 1, p. 238).

⁴¹It is tantalizing to think that the Tzanni of Malalas are none other than the Tanūkhids. As they are mentioned only once in the *Chronographia*, it is not impossible that Malalas transliterated "Tanoukhoi" as Τζόυβοι. The name of the Tzanni appears also transliterated

Richomer was then dispatched by Theodosius to deal with unfavorable developments in the Orient, both potential and actual, but of the triple assignment the Arab revolt must have been the principal one, since the Arabs had revolted a few years earlier in the reign of Valens and memories of their dangerous revolt must still have been fresh. That Richomer did not tarry in Antioch for more than a year and did return to Constantinople to enter his consulship in 384 suggests that he was dispatched there not to stay but to deal with an emergency situation⁴² such as the one just described.

(c) A reference in Libanius's Oration I may give further support to the view that it was Richomer who smashed the Arab revolt.⁴³ In that oration, Libanius, no friend of the Arabs, is not only a source but possibly a participant, however remote, in the deliberations that led to the quelling of the revolt.

2. Where the theater of war was is not clear. Malalas⁴⁴ speaks of provincial reorganization in Oriens, involving the division of Phoenicia into two provinces, Maritima and Libanensis, the separation of Palestina Secunda from Prima, and of Egypt from Oriens. These administrative changes may be related to the revolt. It is possible to conclude that these were the provinces that were exposed to Saracen attacks, and that it was this or partly this that induced the emperor to reorganize them for their better defense. This could derive some support from the fact that it was against these very provinces⁴⁵ that during the first revolt Mavia had directed her attacks and that the Saracens, encouraged by their successes in the first revolt, attacked the same provinces in the second. These thrusts against the three provinces suggest that the base of operations for the Arab *foederati* in the second revolt was the province of Arabia,⁴⁶ as it probably had been in the first.

Τζανικχοί, a form that brings it even closer to *Tanoukboi*. The names of these two groups seem to have been variously transliterated; for the Tanūkhids, see *supra*, p. 127 note 88, and *infra*, p. 332; for the Tzanni, see under "Makrones," *RE*, 14.1, col. 815. The reading "Tanūkhid" (τᾱνῦκνός τις) has been suspected in one of Libanius's orations (*supra*, p. 126), and if the Tzanni of Malalas turn out to be the Tanoukhoi, this will be a welcome addition to the attestations of the Tanūkhids in the Greek sources.

⁴²Ensslin argued that Richomer's *magisterium* was at the time *praesentale* rather than *per Orientem*; see his "Zum Heermeisteramt des spätromischen Reiches," *Klio*, 24 (1931), p. 138; but see Demandt, "*Magistri Militum*," cols. 718–19.

⁴³See *infra*, p. 217.

⁴⁴*Chronographia*, pp. 345, 347.

⁴⁵See *supra*, pp. 142–50.

⁴⁶The strategic position of the province as a base whence both Palestine and Phoenicia, and possibly Egypt, could be attacked may have been appreciated by the Romans after these revolts, and this may explain the presence of the two Saracen units listed in the *ND* not in Arabia but in Phoenicia (see chap. 5 on the *Notitia Dignitatum* in *RA*). This could imply that the Romans transferred whatever federates there were in Arabia to Phoenicia, which in the *ND* appears as the center of Arab federate power.

3. The contrast between the signal success of the first revolt and what apparently was the dismal failure of the second is fully accountable:

(a) The Arabs were able to score a victory against Valens because of a favorable international situation that then obtained, namely, the preoccupation of Byzantium with both the Persians and the Goths. This time, in 383, the Settlement with the Goths had been effected the previous summer, while the Persian front was quiet.

(b) As has been suggested above, the *foederati* possibly directed their thrusts against the same provinces they had attacked in the first revolt. If so, they would have repeated their strategy and tactics, encouraged by their previous successes, but in so doing they would have played into the hands of the Roman commanders, who must have remembered the lessons of the first revolt and were thus well prepared to meet the second military challenge.⁴⁷

(c) The Arab *foederati* in 383 must have been much weaker than they had been in 378. They had fought in the Gothic War, and although they survived the massacre at Adrianople, their ranks must have been considerably thinned.

4. Pacatus speaks not only of their defeat but also of punishment inflicted on them. It is, of course, possible that this was in return for their having ravaged the provinces during the revolt, which they had done in the first one. Yet the infliction of punishment rather than the normalization of relations after the revolt suggests that relations had gone sour. The *foederati* in the last year of the reign of Valens had returned to their loyalty and had fought for Byzantium, and thus the explanation for what apparently was a severe punishment must be sought in the new imperial mood. During the reign of Valens, Victor was *magister*, and he did his best to restore relations and normalize them. In 383 he had retired, and the Arabs had to deal instead with a new imperial administration that was unsympathetic to them.

It is, of course, not impossible that the punishment meted out to the *foederati* did not reflect so much imperial displeasure in Constantinople as it did a local one in Oriens, where memories of the first revolt were still fresh in the minds of Roman officers who had been worsted in its battles. It is also possible that Richomer was responsible for it; a dedicated soldier,⁴⁸ he might have overreacted in his revenge. Furthermore, he was not a Christian as the *foederati*, but a pagan who received letters from such eminent pagans as Symmachus and Libanius. Consequently he might have conducted his cam-

⁴⁷The *hēgemōn* of the troops in Palestine and Phoenicia mentioned in Sozomen's account of the first revolt as the one who extricated Julius from his military predicament may still have been in command in the eighties. If so, his experience in the first revolt would have been at the disposal of Richomer in quelling the second.

⁴⁸He fought against his own people at Adrianople, and before the battle had offered his own person as a hostage to meet Fritigern's demands; see *PLRE*, vol. 1, p. 765.

paign against the Christian Arab *foederati* with relish, while his close connections with Libanius in particular might also suggest that he was doing what Libanius had suggested to Theodosius in Oration XXIV—avenging Julian.⁴⁹

5. It was only five years before that Mavia had led her troops in person against the Romans; it is therefore natural to suppose that she also led them in the second revolt. This may be inferred from Libanius's short panegyric letter to Richomer, which is silent on the identity of the vanquished adversary. The silence is probably studied; an orator who likened himself and his hero Richomer to Homer and Agamemnon respectively would not have cared to divulge the fact that the victory he trumpeted was scored against a woman.⁵⁰

What happened to Mavia after the defeat is not known. If a Greek inscription found outside Anasarth⁵¹ in Syria refers to her, the queen survived her defeat in the second revolt and spent the rest of her life as a pious widow, possibly a cloistered one.

V. THE AFTERMATH OF THE REVOLT

It is almost certain that the defeat of the Tanūkhids, coming as it did after two revolts, both of which had probably spread far and wide in Oriens, entailed some changes in the structure of Arab federate power, in federate-imperial relations, and in the administration of the diocese.

(1) The powerful and dominant group among the *foederati*, the Tanūkhids, were no longer so. After their military efforts in two revolts and in the Gothic War, they must have been considerably weakened and reduced in numbers.

(2) The Arab tribal structure in Oriens most probably experienced some important changes. After their defeat and their disappointments with the Romans, it is possible that part of the Tanūkhids returned to Persian⁵² territory whence they had come as a result of their quarrel with Shāpūr. Most important is the return of the Lakhmids of the South, the group of Imru' al-Qays or part of them, to Persian territory. After what was probably a Ghassānid interregnum in Ḥīra, they reappear as the rulers of that city; the fall of their allies, the Tanūkhids, in Oriens and complications in their relations with the Romans must be the most plausible explanation of their return.⁵³

⁴⁹See *infra*, App. 1, pp. 216–19. As a pagan and a friend of Libanius, he might also have been a posthumous admirer of Julian.

⁵⁰On the *bellum contra feminam* involving a Roman and another Arab queen, Zenobia, see "Aurelian," *HA*, XXVI.3.

⁵¹See *infra*, pp. 222–27.

⁵²Cf. what the Ghassānids were to do late in the sixth century after their revolt during the reign of Maurice when some of them crossed over to the Persians; see Nöldeke, *GF*, p. 31.

⁵³Exactly when they regained control of Ḥīra is not clear, and some of them may have returned even before the Arab revolt during one of the crises in federate-imperial relations in the fourth century. After their return to Ḥīra, the Lakhmids seem to have kept some contact

(3) In spite of the possibility that some of the Tanūkhids crossed over to the Persian side, they did not completely disappear from the scene of Arab-Byzantine relations, and some of them stayed on as part of the Arab federate group until the seventh century.⁵⁴ They did so in much the same way that the Salīhids after their fall stayed on with the new dominant group of the sixth century, the Ghassānids. In so doing, they made the tribal structure of the Arab federate group even more complex.

(4) The fall of the Tanūkhids signaled the rise of a new Arab group to a position of dominance in the service of Byzantium—the Salīhids. But the threat they had posed in the first revolt and their successes in the Gothic War must have convinced the Romans that the development of a powerful group in Oriens was undesirable,⁵⁵ valuable as that group had been in wars against the Goths and the Persians. This probably explains why the next dominant Arab group of *foederati* in the service of Byzantium, the Salīhids of the fifth century, were not so powerful or centralized as the Tanūkhids, and the Romans apparently had no trouble with them throughout the century. It was only as late as 529 that Justinian revived the concept of a centralized and powerful federate Arab group in Oriens,⁵⁶ only to be abandoned some fifty years later in the reign of Maurice.

(5) The provincial reorganization of Oriens by Theodosius may be related, at least in part, to the revolt of the Tanūkhids. It was in this period that the emperor separated Egypt from Oriens and created two new provinces, Phoenicia Libanensis and Palestina II, separating them from Phoenicia Maritima and Palestina I respectively. It was exactly these provinces that felt Arab federate thrusts during the first revolt and, as has been suggested above, also during the second.⁵⁷

(6) In 387 Theodosius concluded with Persia a peace treaty,⁵⁸ and in so

with Byzantium, which may be illustrated by the relations of their fifth-century king Nu'mān with such military figures as Antiochus and with St. Simeon. Their fourth-century association with Byzantium through Imru' al-Qays is one plausible explanation for such curious contacts; on the Lakhmids, see the present writer's articles, "Lakhm" and "Lakhmids" in *EP*, vol. 5, pp. 632–34.

⁵⁴See *infra*, pp. 455–57.

⁵⁵In much the same way that in the third century they must have decided that the rise of a powerful city-state such as Arab Palmyra was undesirable. The end of the two Arab political entities, Palmyra and Tanūkh, in the third and fourth centuries respectively was alike, once they had encountered imperial displeasure.

⁵⁶See the present writer in "Arethas, son of Jabalah," pp. 205–16.

⁵⁷For this, see *supra*, p. 213, 3b.

⁵⁸Theodosius was forced to settle with Persia and agree to a peace treaty whereby Persia received four-fifths of Armenia while Byzantium received only one-fifth. In so doing he continued the work of Jovian. Both emperors have been condemned by modern historians for these concessions, but the long peace with Persia, which lasted until the reign of Anastasius, justified

doing he made the militant and unruly Tanūkhids even more dispensable. The treaty stabilized the eastern front and ensured for the empire a long peace that lasted well over a century.⁵⁹ It is this long peace that must be considered the most important key for understanding the course of Arab-Byzantine relations toward the end of the fourth and throughout the whole of the fifth century. With the Persian front quiet, these relations remained harmonious, and the fall of the Salīhids toward the end of the fifth century was not like that of the Tanūkhids, the result of a federate-imperial war, but was the result of an inter-Arab one that brought about the rise of the Ghassānids as the new Arab *foederati* of Byzantium in the sixth century.

The Greek literary sources are silent on the fortunes of the Tanūkhids after 383, but it is just possible that they were noticed in two Greek inscriptions discovered near Anasartha in Syria.⁶⁰

APPENDIX I

Libanius

Ammianus has his *incertum unde* concerning the lance that killed Julian in A.D. 363, and the student of Arab-Byzantine relations might express in similar terms his puzzlement over the fall of the Tanūkhid client-kingdom in A.D. 383, so shrouded in obscurity and so striking after its record in the preceding years. The foregoing sections have perhaps dispelled some of the darkness that surrounds its fall, and it remains to examine the possible involvement of Libanius.

A

Although the orator was aware of the tasks awaiting the newly elevated emperor in 379 after the disaster of Adrianople, yet in Oration XXIV, dated 379, he chose to single out the death of Julian, which occurred sixteen years before, and suggest it as an assignment for Theodosius to attend to.¹ The call on the emperor to avenge Julian's death is sustained throughout the oration, wherein he develops the theme that Julian's death was murder and that the murder was perpetrated by the Arabs.

Four years later, in A.D. 383, the Tanūkhids fell after a campaign not conducted by Theodosius himself but by one of his *magistri*, the Frank Richomer, and the question immediately arises as to whether or not Libanius was involved. When one remembers that Libanius had in his oration instigated the emperor himself against the

the humiliating peace conditions. Whether Theodosius would or could have reacted differently to Shāpūr's invasion of Armenia if he had had a powerful Arab client-kingdom such as that of the Tanūkhids must remain an open question; the war with Maximus in 387 was more vital to his interests and security than the retention of Armenia, and the war with Eugenius in 392 further confirmed his judgment; for the Peace with Persia in 387, see *EC*, pp. 250–51.

⁵⁹With the exception of two minor wars, which did not last long, during the reign of Theodosius II.

⁶⁰See *infra*, pp. 222–38.

¹For a detailed analysis of this oration, see *supra*, pp. 126–29.

Arabs, that he was specific in pointing his finger at them as Julian's murderers, that in A.D. 383 Richomer appears in Antioch as Theodosius's *magister*, that Libanius addresses to his pagan friend a congratulatory letter² on a victorious campaign in the very same years that the Tanūkhid Arabs fell, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that Libanius was in some way involved in their fall. Richomer did not set out from Constantinople to avenge the death of Julian, but avenging Julian may have been an element in his thinking, especially after he reached Antioch and established contact with Libanius. The severity with which he meted out punishment for the revolt could also suggest that he might have been influenced by the orator.

Libanius's *Autobiography*, Oration I, has been examined earlier for data on the question of Julian's death, but it was the *Autobiography* in its original form dated to 374, during Valens's reign, that has been examined.³ The *addenda* to this original form, written in the period 374–92, have some material relevant to the possible involvement of Libanius in avenging Julian's death during the reign of Theodosius.⁴

Most important is his description of the arrival of Richomer in Antioch as *magister* and the latter's anxiety to be counted among his friends (sec. 219). Especially relevant is his saying that Richomer not only became his friend but also was ill-disposed toward those who were not his friends: γενομένης δὲ ἡμῖν φιλίας τοῖς οὐ φιλοῦσιν ἡμᾶς ἀνιαρᾶς. Those who were not friends of Libanius could, of course, be fellow Antiochenes or others in the imperial administration, but it is quite possible that this is an implied reference to the Arabs, whom he accused of murdering Julian and who must have been aware of the orator's campaign against them and were thus dedicated enemies of his. A reference in an earlier section of the *Autobiography* could give some confirmation to this view. In section 138 he says that an ἀνὴρ βάρβαρος tried to rouse the emperor against him for his having continued to lament the death of Julian and that as a result Jovian tried to kill him. Now the barbarian could easily be an Arab *foederatus*⁵ who was one of the Tanūkhids. These were still around Antioch in 383, and thus it is quite possible that it was they who were the object of Richomer's displeasure.⁶

In section 220 Libanius speaks of Theodosius's admiration for him; thus four

²For the letter, see *supra*, p. 210 and notes 34–35. It is noteworthy that in this letter Libanius is not explicit in his reference to the Arabs as the target of Richomer's campaign, whereas in Oration XXIV he had referred to them by name, accusing them of murdering Julian. What mattered to him now was the fall of Julian's murderers and not advertising his complicity; furthermore, he might have been afraid of retaliation against himself; see *infra*, note 6.

³For this, see *supra*, p. 126.

⁴For the chronology of the various parts of the *Autobiography*, see Norman, *Libanius' Autobiography*, pp. xii–xiv.

⁵For an analysis of this section of the *Autobiography* involving ἀνὴρ βάρβαρος, see Chap. 3, App., *supra*, pp. 135–37.

⁶Section 138 thus makes even clearer why Libanius is reluctant to be explicit about the Arabs in the *Autobiography* and in his congratulatory letter to Richomer; he was afraid of retaliation, and his experiences with Jovian had remained fresh in his memory. On his melancholy, neuroses, and concern for his health as "the most significant factor in his life," see Norman, *op. cit.*, p. xi.

years after he composed his Oration XXIV, addressed to Theodosius, Libanius was still in the good graces of the latter, and this triangular relationship, involving Theodosius, Richomer, and Libanius, documented in secs. 219–20, could point to the involvement of Libanius in the fall of the Arab *foederati*, who for him were Julian's murderers. Jovian had turned a deaf ear to his appeals and even had tried to kill him, and Libanius had had to wait a good sixteen years before a new emperor acceded who was receptive to his appeals for revenge.⁷

Julian's death was thus an issue in the reign of Theodosius and not only a theme in oratorical literature. The campaign of revenge conducted by the influential rhetorician over the years finally bore fruit and became an element in the fall of the Tanūkhids. If, according to Libanius, Julian's death was an assassination, one may wonder whether the fall of the Tanūkhids may not also be described, at least partly, in similar terms.

B

A few years after the death of Theodosius, an anti-German reaction set in. Around A.D. 400 Synesius set out from Cyrene and stayed in Constantinople for some three years, during which he delivered a speech before Arcadius, *Περὶ Βασιλείας*, in which he lamented the fact of German dominance in the army and in the capital and urged its eradication.⁸ It may be extravagant to assume that the deliverance of Constantinople from the Goths and the termination of the Gothic dominance in the East were the result of a speech; but it is reasonable to suppose that it was an element in the process.

Bury described Synesius's speech addressed to Arcadius as an anti-German manifesto;⁹ Libanius's, too, addressed to Theodosius, may also with some measure of truth be called an anti-Arab manifesto. Addressed to father and son, the two speeches were an element in the fall of the Arabs and the Goths respectively. Thus the two documents have a certain affinity; but while that of Synesius has long been recognized for what it was, Libanius's has not, since it had been plagued with a textual obscurity¹⁰ that has militated against the recognition of the anti-Arab sentiment in it. As a result, this oration has been studied as a rhetorician's call for revenge and for ascertaining what happened to Julian when he died sixteen years before the accession of Theodosius. The establishment of the crucial reading involving the Arabs has now shown the importance of the speech for the reign of Theodosius himself. Certain passages in the *Autobiography* and in Libanius's congratulatory letter to Richomer can now be related to the speech, which thus becomes an important document for the possible

⁷In 363, it was an ἀνὴρ βάρβαρος who had instigated the Emperor Jovian against Libanius; in 379, it is Libanius who is instigating the Emperor Theodosius against the Arabs. Thus the relevant passages in the *Autobiography* and in Oration XXIV establish a strand of continuity in the story of Julian's death and in the campaign of revenge conducted by both parties.

⁸For the speech, see *PG*, 66, cols. 1053–1108; for a commentary on it, see A. Fitzgerald in *The Essays and Hymns of Synesius of Cyrene* (Oxford, 1930), pp. 183–210.

⁹See Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire*, vol. 1, p. 129.

¹⁰For a discussion of this, see *supra*, pp. 126–29.

involvement of Libanius in the process that finally brought about the downfall of the first Arab client-kingdom of Byzantium, the Tanūkhids.

APPENDIX II

Victor's Retirement

A

The *Vita Isaacii* is a valuable source on the whereabouts of Victor in the first triennium of Theodosius's reign and on the question of his retirement, which had been discussed without reference to it. The *Vita* makes clear that he was still employed and stationed in Constantinople.¹ This may be inferred from his close association in the service of Theodosius with one who had certainly not retired, namely, Saturninus, the two sharing almost identical assignments.

However, Victor did retire early in the reign of Theodosius but exactly when is not entirely clear. The only hint that he did so comes from one of the letters (134) of Gregory of Nazianzus: Νικῶν γὰρ τοῖς ὄπλοις τοὺς πολεμίους, ἕως ἔξῃν, καὶ νῦν πάντας νικᾶς χρηστότητι. But even this does not necessarily imply that he had actually retired; the second part of the sentence, καὶ νῦν πάντας νικᾶς χρηστότητι, could mean that he was not engaged in field operations, in contrast to the first, which refers to his active military career. The letter is dated to the second half of the year² 381, but is more likely to have been written in 382/83, since it comes after letter 133 datable to 382, and most probably it does allude to his retirement. The other letter (134) addressed to Victor invokes his aid in behalf of orthodoxy at the Synod of Constantinople which met in the summer of 382, and thus suggests that Victor had not retired by then.

Perhaps October 382, the date of the Settlement with the Goths, might serve as terminus. Saturninus alone is mentioned in that connection; but Victor was a veteran diplomat who had negotiated on many occasions for Rome, and twice with the very same Goths, and, what is more, has been associated with Saturninus at the battle of Adrianople and afterwards in Constantinople in the service of Theodosius. His non-participation in the Settlement of 382 could suggest that he had by then retired.³ In the summer of the same year was held the Synod of Constantinople with reference to which Gregory addressed his appeal to Victor, and the latter's response to that appeal

¹But possibly not on active duty owing to his advanced age. It should also be remembered that his *magisterium* was *praesentale*, and this explains the nature of the duties he performed and which are referred to in the *Vita*.

²According to the editor and translator of his letters, Paul Gallay; see his *Saint Grégoire de Nazianze: Lettres*, vol. 2, p. 23.

³For a discussion of Victor's *magisterium* under Theodosius and the question of his retirement, see Demandt, "Magister Militum," cols. 712–13. He argued cogently against Waas for the retention of Victor by Theodosius on the strength of Gregory's two letters. However, he did not use the *Vita Isaacii*, which, unlike the two letters of the church father, explicitly links Victor to Theodosius himself. The *Vita* does not give his military rank; both he and Saturninus are described as ἐνδοξότατος, but Gregory's letter (133) is addressed to Victor as στρατηλάτης. Thus the *Vita* and the letter fortify each other and argue for his *magisterium* under Theodosius.

may well have been his last act in public life, which he chose to be in the service of the *ecclesia*. His retirement⁴ may thus be narrowed down to the short interval that elapsed between the synod and the Settlement, the summer of 382.

In addition to providing evidence for his retention by Theodosius, not to be found elsewhere in the sources, the *Vita* provides data on Victor that are intimate and revealing, especially on the religious strand in him that was growing stronger.⁵ This must be added to his advanced age as background for his retirement.

B

In spite of the fact that advanced age or religiosity may be considered as grounds for Victor's retirement in the summer of 382, they are not entirely convincing. His colleague Saturninus⁶ must have been then at least as old as he was since he had been in the service for more than thirty years and was to endure until A.D. 400. Besides, Victor's nonparticipation in the negotiations for the Settlement with the Goths cannot be ascribed to old age. He is attested in Constantinople for the year 382, still active as *magister praesentalis* in the service of Theodosius, and a diplomatic mission such as that to the Goths would not have been a strenuous assignment. Thus, one would have expected the veteran soldier-diplomat to have participated in the famous Settlement of October 382.

It is therefore possible to conclude that disagreements developed between him and Theodosius and that these drove him to resign. The Germanophile policy of the emperor could not have been a factor, since Theodosius had retained him for some three years, and in spite of the dominance of the Germans in his high command, there were many non-Germans. Coming as it did just before the Settlement with the Goths in 382 and before the Arab revolt in 383, Victor's retirement may then be profitably set and discussed within this context.

It has been argued that it was in this very period that the Tanūkhids must have pressed their claims for more favorable terms of their *foedus* with Rome, based on their record in the Gothic War and on their orthodoxy. Theodosius was understandably reluctant to see the rise of a second *civitas foederata* within the *limes*, in Oriens, and near the Persian border, after the first in Lower Moesia on the Danube. He was as distant from the Arabs as Victor was close. As their friend in the imperial administration and one who understood the value of the Arab horse in the wars of Byzantium, Victor would have championed their cause and the acceptance of their terms, which he would have judged reasonable and less dangerous than those of the impending settlement with

⁴The exact date of Victor's retirement is of importance not only to the history of the *magisterium* under Theodosius I but also to the discussion of Arab-Byzantine relations, which foundered in the early years of Theodosius's reign.

⁵This gives some support to the view expressed above that Victor chose to retire after his contribution to the welfare of the *ecclesia* at the Synod of Constantinople. For a Greek inscription that might possibly refer to him, see *infra*, pp. 227-38.

⁶For Saturninus, see *PLRE*, vol. 1, pp. 807-8.

the nonorthodox Goths, and, moreover, he may have been opposed to that settlement. All this would have been unacceptable to Theodosius; hence the disagreements between the emperor and his *magister praesentalis*, which resulted in the resignation of Victor and his nonparticipation in the Settlement of 382.

VI

Two Greek Inscriptions

I. ANASARTHA: MARTYRIUM EXTRA MUROS

One of the two Greek inscriptions that may be relevant to the history of the Tanūkhids was found outside the city limits of Anasartha in Syria, not far from the Euphrates:¹

[+ Γ]υναικείας φύσεως Μαουία [θαυμάσ-]
[ι]ον (?) ἄ[γ]αλμα, σωφροσύνης τε κ[αὶ εὐσεβ-]
[ε]ίας αὐτῆς καὶ φ(ιλ)ανδρίας κ[λέος (?), ἔκ-]
[τι] σεν ἁγίου μαρτύριον Θωμᾶ τ[οῦτο, χρ-]
[ό]νοις ἰνδικτιῶνος ι' τοῦ ζλψ' [ἔτους +]

The inscription is dated A.D. 425 (737 of the Seleucid Era) and the honorand is an Arab lady by the name of Mavia. In addition to the enumeration of her virtues, the inscription commemorates her erection of a *martyrium* dedicated to St. Thomas.

1

The main interest of the inscription is the identity of the Arab lady. The editor of the text argued that she must be related to Queen Mavia² and suggested she was her granddaughter born of the marriage of Mavia's daughter to Victor. This is a possible identification, based primarily on the date of the inscription and what the editor considers the improbability of Mavia's being alive in A.D. 425. But there is no evidence that Mavia had a granddaughter through the marriage of her daughter to Victor, or that the presumed daughter was named Mavia, or that she was as described in the inscription. The editor is right in affirming the Mavian connection of the honorand; however, the difficulty he had in entertaining an identification with the queen on

¹See Mouterde and Poidebard, *Le limes de Chalcis*, vol. 1, texte, pp. 194–95.

²Which indeed must be true, as will be evident in the course of this section; besides, the name "Mavia," although not uncommon, is restricted to some famous women among the Arabs in pre-Islamic times; on this name, see *supra*, pp. 194–97.

chronological grounds is not insuperable and is indeed negotiable, while the praises of Mavia recited in the inscription, when set against the aftermath of the second Arab revolt in the reign of Theodosius, could point to the honorand's being Mavia herself rather than her granddaughter.

(1) Mavia could have lived to a ripe old age³ and could have been alive in the twenties of the fifth century. As she was vigorous enough to lead her armies in person in A.D. 378, she could have been at that time 35 to 40 years old,⁴ and thus it is not inconceivable that she lived to be in her eighties, outliving the termination of her first revolt by some forty-seven years.⁵

(2) The praises of Mavia sounded *louanges hyperboliques* to the editor, and indeed they would when applied to a lady about whom nothing is known, such as the one whose existence was posited by the editor. But they do not sound so when applied to Mavia herself, since this is exactly the tone of the accounts of the ecclesiastical writers who recorded her exploits in the first revolt and who were, indeed, struck by her virtues in war and in peace, by what the inscription refers to as her σωφροσύνη and εὐσέβεια.⁶ Sozomen explicitly mentions that her victories over the Romans were still remembered in songs of the fifth century, and it would indeed be remarkable if the Greek inscription remembered Mavia in similar or identical terms, thus reflecting some of the sentiments expressed in the Arabic poems that have not survived.

(3) Although the career of Mavia fully corroborates the epigraphic reference to her σωφροσύνη and εὐσέβεια, yet these, or at least the latter, may be considered conventional virtues, and so they are nondistinctive, the kind that would be included in a commemorative inscription. However, one among her virtues, the last, φιλανδρία, is not so conventional. Mavia's conjugal love brings to mind an item in the ecclesiastical accounts, namely, that she was widowed. The implication of her φιλανδρία is that she did not remarry and remained faithful in her love for her husband after his death; thus the virtue of

³To have led the Arab revolt in person, she must have been possessed of a strong constitution; thus her longevity is not so surprising, especially since she retired early in the reign of Theodosius and lived a quiet life. It is of interest to mention that one of her fellow tribesmen, Zuhayr ibn-Janāb al-Kalbī, an important historical figure in pre-Islamic Arabia, lived to an almost legendary age; see Abu-Hātim al-Sijistānī, *Kitāb al-Mu'ammariin*, ed. 'Abd al-Mun'im 'Āmir (Cairo, 1961), pp. 31–36. On the Kalbite affiliation of Mavia, see *supra*, pp. 196–97.

⁴Arab girls are nubile at a very early age; thus it is perfectly possible that Mavia married as a teenager and thus could have had a daughter who was of marriageable age when she herself was in her late thirties.

⁵Not fifty-three as stated by the editor, who followed others in dating Mavia's revolt to A.D. 272/73.

⁶These two terms are not actually used by the ecclesiastical historians, but their accounts of her exploits in the first revolt could easily be summed up in these two terms since these accounts speak of her competence in directing the war and of her strict doctrinal position in insisting on an orthodox bishop.

φιλανδρία could imply a widowed state, and this brings the Mavia of the inscription very close to the widowed queen.⁷

(4) The location of the *martyrium* that she erected is also noteworthy; it is *extra muros*. If the honorand had been the daughter of Victor, she would have been the daughter of a Roman citizen, and consequently a citizen herself. She would not have found it difficult to have a *martyrium* erected within the city walls, as indeed the one referred to in the second of these two Greek inscriptions was. But the *martyrium* of St. Thomas was erected *extra muros* and this suggests that the benefactor was a noncitizen such as Mavia, the *foederata*, was.

(5) That Mavia is not referred to in the inscription as βασίλισσα is only natural.⁸ Even if, after the revolt, she continued to be queen, at least among her own people, she would have ceased to be such in her eighties. The chances, however, are that after the failure of the second revolt she renounced the world and led a private and sequestered life, possibly a cloistered one.⁹

Thus the unusual name, Mavia, the location of the inscription outside the walls of Anasartha,¹⁰ and the striking correspondence between the virtues recited in the epigraphic and the literary sources all point to the fact that the honorand in the inscription is most probably none other than the queen of the literary sources.

2

The dedication of the *martyrium* to St. Thomas raises some important questions in the history of Arab Christianity in this period and of Tanūkhid Christianity in particular. As has been pointed out by the editor, the saint in question could not have been the Apostle's namesake, the Syrian monk who died in A.D. 551. The saint can only have been the Apostle Thomas, and the dedication of the *martyrium* to him rather than to another saint is likely to be significant.

The Tanūkhids hailed from the Land of the Two Rivers where they had wandered from Hīra to Mesopotamia before they crossed over to the Romans and became their *foederati*. But the cult of St. Thomas was widespread in Mesopotamia and the Apostle had a *martyrium* dedicated to him at Edessa, as

⁷Cf. the φιλανδρία of the Arab martyr Ruhayma of the sixth century; see the present writer's *Martyrs*, p. 57.

⁸See *infra*, p. 226, (3).

⁹Cf. the fortunes of the Saliḥid Dāwūd (David), the Arab client-king of Byzantium in the fifth century, and those of the Ethiopian Negus, Caleb, in the sixth; the first will be discussed in the second volume of this series, *BAFIC*; for the second, see the present writer in "The *Kebrā Nagast* in the Light of Recent Research," *Le Muséon*, 89 (1976), pp. 166–72.

¹⁰On the association of the Arabs and, what is more, a Kalbite king with Anasartha, see *infra*, p. 405 note 218; see also *supra*, note 3.

mentioned by Socrates and Sozomen, and visited by Egeria late in the fourth century.¹¹ The Tanūkhids, who had been in those regions, would certainly have carried with them their veneration for St. Thomas when they left the service of the Persians and went over to the Romans. The translation of his relics to Edessa in A.D. 394 would only have added an impetus to the cult of St. Thomas in the region;¹² thus a *martyrium* dedicated to him some quarter of a century later near Anasartha seems explicable.

There was another reason for the veneration of the Tanūkhid Arabs to St. Thomas, related to their Mesopotamian origin. Edessa, the great center of Christianity in that region, had been ruled for a long time by an Arab dynasty, the Abgarids, evangelized by Thaddeus, one of the Seventy, who had been sent by Thomas, one of the Twelve.¹³ The Tanūkhids, like all the Arab tribes of Mesopotamia, must have looked up to the Abgarids and their capital as the main Arab and Christian center in the region, and it is more than likely that even when they emigrated and settled in Syria they continued to look up to Edessa rather than Antioch as the fount of their faith. The saint, so venerated in Edessa, the city of the Abgarids and the great center of the Semitic Christian Orient, would thus have continued to be venerated among the Tanūkhids, who were in a special relationship to the Abgarids as Arabs, the Arab patrons of Christianity in the Roman period.¹⁴

Thus the dedication of the *martyrium* to St. Thomas is in all probability significant; it reflects the continuance of the spiritual bonds that united the Tanūkhids to Mesopotamia, to Edessa, and to the Abgarids. It could also suggest that St. Thomas may have been their patron saint in much the same way that St. Sergius was to be that of the Ghassānids in the sixth century.

3

Whether the Mavia of the inscription is the queen or one of her descendants is a matter of detail, which does not affect the value of this precious inscription, from which the following general conclusions may be drawn.

(1) The main value of the inscription consists in its being the only Greek source that indicates the area where the Tanūkhid *foederati* were settled. The

¹¹On this, see H. Delehayé, "Les origines du culte des martyres," *Subsidia Hagiographica*, 20 (Brussels, 1933), pp. 212–13.

¹²The reputed relics of St. Thomas were translated to Edessa from India and were translated again to the island of Chios, and thence to Ortona.

¹³This tradition was already current early in the fourth century and was popularized by Eusebius, who apparently accepted it as true: Eusebius, *HE*, I.xiii.

¹⁴The memory of the Abgarids must have remained green for some time after their fall, especially among the Arabs of the region. Egeria saw their palace in Edessa which was still standing in the fourth century. The assumption of the name Abgar by some of the bishops of that century may also be indicative; see *infra*, p. 345.

literary sources have not a word on this point, while this source, a solid epigraphic one, places them in Chalcidice. The confrontation of the Arabic literary sources with this Greek epigraphic one yields the same conclusion; for it is in this very region that the former place the Tanūkhids, and thus the confrontation incidentally testifies to the essential authenticity of the Arabic sources. These speak of Beroea (Aleppo) and Chalcis (Qinnasrīn) as the camps of the Tanūkhids in the province of Syria, close enough to Anasartha; the last, however, is not unremembered as a possible location for the Tanūkhids since the geographers Yāqūt and Bakrī have a few details that suggest an Arab settlement in or near Anasartha in pre-Islamic times.¹⁵

(2) The location of the *martyrium* of St. Thomas outside the walls of Anasartha is noteworthy. It brings to mind Sergiopolis, outside the walls of which the Ghassānids erected a *martyrium* for St. Sergius, also *extra muros*. These erections clearly indicate that the *foederati* were not quartered within the cities but outside them, in the vicinity. This is paralleled by the sites of their military camps, also outside the cities, the *parembolae* of the Greek sources and the *ḥiyār* of the Arabic sources, which are explicit on the point.¹⁶

(3) The inscription sheds some light on the spiritual life of the Tanūkhid royal house which may also be gathered from and is consonant with the accounts of the ecclesiastical historians. In section 1 above it has been argued that the Mavia of the inscription is the queen, and according to this analysis the inscription is informative on the last years of her life and probably also on her fortunes after the failure of the second revolt, when the literary sources, so informative on her during the reign of Valens, become suddenly silent. In the inscription she appears as a devout woman whose last act after an active career in the reign of Valens was the erection of a church in honor of the Apostle Thomas.¹⁷ In so doing, she may have been the first Arab queen to engage in such an activity, in which she was followed by others.¹⁸

(4) The language of the inscription is also revealing. Almost a hundred years before, Imru' al-Qays's commemorative inscription at Namāra had been written in Arabic, but Mavia's is in Greek.¹⁹ Although the subject matter of

¹⁵For the Arabic sources, see *infra*, p. 405.

¹⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁷On the monastery of Ḥanna erected by the Tanūkhids in Ḥīra, see Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-Buldān*, 5 vols. (Beirut, 1955–57), vol. 2, p. 507. On their churches mentioned in the Arabic and Syriac sources, see *infra*, pp. 425, 431, and 433–35.

¹⁸Such as Hind, the Kindite princess and wife of the Lakhmid Muḥammad, the Arab client-king of Persia in the sixth century. She built a monastery, "Dayr Hind," which survived at least until the days of Harūn al-Rashīd, as did her inscription written in Arabic, which after the Namāra inscription is the most important document for written Arabic in pre-Islamic times; see Yāqūt, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 542–43.

¹⁹Cf. Hind's inscription in the previous note. The Lakhmids continued to write their inscriptions in Arabic since the time of Imru' al-Qays. Ḥīra was an Arab foundation, outside

the inscription could explain the choice of Greek rather than Arabic, it is possible to conclude that after a hundred years of association with Byzantium, the process of acculturation had made good progress among the *foederati*. But it is certain that Arabic remained the language of the rank and file among them, while Greek was spoken among the higher echelons and was used precisely on such occasions as the dedication of a *martyrium*.²⁰

(5) Finally, both the inscription and the erection indicate that the Arab *foederati* of Byzantium in the fourth century were neither nomadic nor unlettered. The misconception that they were such has arisen because their history has been obscure and unattended to and its students had not assembled the evidence from the inscriptions and from the literary sources, especially the Arabic, and confronted these two sets of sources with each other. Furthermore, the *foederati* were a mobile striking force and their mobility was confusedly equated with nomadism. It is evident, however, that they were not nomads but were sedentaries who had their own permanent establishments outside the big cities. Far from being a nomadizing and unsettling element, they were the watchmen of the imperial frontier against the inroads of the nomads from the Arabian Peninsula, and as builders of castles, palaces, churches, and monasteries, they were active participants in the development of settled life in the Byzantine limitrophe.²¹

II. ANASARTHA: *MARTYRIUM INTRA MUROS*

The second of these two Greek inscriptions was found within the walls of Anasartha.²²

[Μ]άρτυσιν εὐύμνοισι πολύλλιτον ἄνθετο νηόμ,
 [π]ολλὸν ὑπ' αἶθους, σήισι καὶ ἔρκεσιν εὐκπιτον ὦδε
 [λα]μπρότατος Σιλβανός, αἰὲ κρατέων ἐν Ἐρεμβοῖς
 [πά]ντα δ' ὑπ' ἐννεσίησιν ἀποιομένης θέτο παιδός,
 5 [πα]ντοίηισ' ἀρετήισιν ἀοιδ<ιμ>οτάτης Χασιδαθης
 [ἀ]μφὶ φύλαρχοι <οἶ>ον ἔης ἤνζευξαν ἄνακτες.
 [ᾠς κ]αὶ πένθος ἔπαυσε τὸ πάτριον ἰ οὐδ' ὑπ' οἴωι τε]

the range of Greek and even of Persian. There is no record of a Persian inscription in Hīra, although the city was within the range of Persian cultural influence. The foreign language that could have been used in inscriptions at Hīra would have been Syriac.

²⁰The poems composed to commemorate Mavia's victory ca. A.D. 380 were written in Arabic and were still recited in the fifth century, according to Sozomen; see *infra*, pp. 443–48.

²¹Most clearly illustrated by the Ghassānids of the sixth century; on the Tanūkhids, see *infra*, pp. 395–407, 418–35, and 465–76, which have materials on this aspect of Tanūkhid history.

²²See Jalabert and Mouterde, *IGLSYR*, vol. 2, pp. 168–69.

[και]ρω̄ι, ὑφ' αἵματο<ς> ἐντὶ λαχεῖν γέρας, οὐχ[ι σέσωται ?]
 [ὄστις] ὅσον ψαλμοῖσιν ἐπ' εὐχολαῖς τε κο[ρέσθη ?],
 10 [ἄλλ' ὅς] θειοτάτησι γραφαῖς ἔχε μετα [νοῆσαι ?].

The inscription consists of ten hexameters and may be divided into three parts:

(1) The first three lines speak of a certain Silvanus who erected a shrine for the celebrated martyrs (lines 1–3).

(2) In doing so, he acted on the suggestion of a young girl celebrated for her virtues, by the name of Chasidat (lines 4–6).

(3) The third part consists of ethical and pious statements: glory is attained by sacrificing one's own blood; salvation is attained not by recitation of psalms and prayers but by a genuine change of life according to the Holy Scriptures (lines 7–10).

1

The inscription is of great historical importance to Arab-Byzantine relations; unfortunately it is undated, and some crucial words are effaced or mutilated. The main problem it raises is that of identifying the two personages mentioned, namely, Silvanus and Chasidat. The inscription has been commented upon twice²³ and both commentaries are gallant attempts at solving the problem of identification. The attempts, however, must be adjudged unsatisfactory, and before a fresh attempt is made, criticism must be brought to bear on the old identifications.

The First Commentary

(1) The editor suggests that Silvanus was *dux Arabiae* on the ground that he is described in line 3 as *toujours puissant parmi les Arabes*. But the Arabs were to be found not only in Arabia but in other provinces of Oriens, and so the use of the gentile does not justify an identification with *dux Arabiae*. He also suggests that he could have been the *dux Phoenicis* and this too is unjustified. The inscription was found not in Phoenicia but in the province of Syria where Anasartha was located, and this, too, militates against his first identification of Silvanus with *dux Arabiae*.

(2) The girl Chasidat is identified as a princess whom perhaps the Ghassānid phylarchs gave in marriage to Silvanus. There is no evidence whatsoever that the strange name Chasidat is a Ghassānid name or that a Ghassānid princess was married to a Roman officer; furthermore, there is the fact that this dates the inscription to the sixth century, while, as the editor himself is aware, the inscription should be dated earlier on paleographic grounds.

²³*Ibid.*, pp. 169–71; and Mouterde and Poidebard, *Le limes de Chalcis*, vol. 1, pp. 193–94, where Mouterde returned to the inscription which he had commented upon six years earlier.

More serious than his identification of the phylarchs in the inscription with the Ghassānid ones is his view that "*le mariage d'un officier byzantin et d'une fille des grandes tentes n'est pas un fait isolé.*" This has been disputed earlier in this book, where it has been shown that, as far as is known, it happened only this once, namely, in the case of Mavia's daughter and Victor.²⁴

The Second Commentary

The editor comes to closer grips with the problem of identification by suggesting some Roman commanders who carried the name "Silvanus" and tries to identify the Silvanus of the inscription with one or two of them.

(1) The first is a Silvanus who was *dux limitis et comes Silbanus*, in whose honor a Latin inscription was engraved at Khān al-Abyaḍ on the route from Damascus to Palmyra. This is impossible to accept. Silvanus of the Greek inscription is a Christian, while Silvanus of the Latin one is clearly a pagan. Khān al-Abyaḍ is in Phoenicia Libanensis quite far from Anasartha in Syria. The sentiments of the Khān al-Abyaḍ inscription, Latin and pagan, are entirely different from those of the Greek Christian inscription of Anasartha. The actions of the two Silvani are also different, although the editor thinks they were identical. The one builds a *martyrium*, the other a *castrum* for the convenience of the wayfarer in the desert. This identification, therefore, cannot be entertained at all.

(2) The editor himself is aware of the difficulties involved, and thus he tries to identify him with another Silvanus, one of the ancestors of Rufinus, *magister militum per Orientem* in 514/15. According to Procopius, Rufinus was the son of Silvanus and his ancestors were known to Kawad, the Persian king to whom Rufinus was sent on a fruitless embassy by Justinian in 527. The editor concludes that the Silvanus of the Latin inscription of Khān al-Abyaḍ could have been the ancestor of Silvanus, the father of Rufinus, and that the Silvanus of the Greek inscription could have been a member of the family whose genealogical line extended from Silvanus of Khān al-Abyaḍ to Rufinus the *magister militum* of the reign of Anastasius. Thus he is both a descendant of Silvanus of Khān al-Abyaḍ and an ancestor of Rufinus.

This is pure guesswork replete with hypothetical statements, without any evidence whatsoever to support this reconstruction, and this is true of both the genealogical as well as the functional part, according to which three members of this long line of Silvani united the function of the *ducatu limitis*

²⁴See *supra*, p. 159 note 82. The same mistake is repeated in the second commentary, where marriages of the Umayyads with the daughters of the tribal chiefs are instanced. These are entirely different marital transactions which belong to a different world, that of Islam, but what is more important is that these marriages were contracted between two parties that were both Arab, which thus sharply distinguishes them from the one referred to in the inscription.

with being great proprietors of lands along the Euphrates and, furthermore, were united by marriage alliances to the great families of the nomadic Arabs.

It is not difficult to see why the editor reasoned the way he did. Starting from the assumption that the marriage of a Roman officer to an Arab lady was common, he looked for Roman officers in the region whose names were or could have been the same as that of the officer mentioned in the inscription and then made his identifications. He did not realize that these marriages are unattested except in one solitary case, and so he was misled into a conclusion which has no support whatsoever in actual fact and which, as has been indicated, rests on a false assumption. An entirely new approach to the study of the inscription is therefore necessary.

2

The intensive examination of the course of Arab-Byzantine relations in the reigns of Valens and of Theodosius I will now serve as a background for unlocking the secrets of this inscription,²⁵ and its contents will be the chief guide for identifying its Silvanus.

The striking datum in the inscription is that the Roman officer was married to an Arab girl; as has been indicated, this is an isolated and unique case, the only instance on record being that of Victor, the *magister equitum praesentalis*, marrying the Saracen princess, Mavia's daughter. The process of identification will then proceed from this confrontation of the literary and epigraphic sources, and the result will show that it is perfectly possible, almost certain, that the Silvanus of the inscription is none other than Victor himself and that Chasidat is none other than Mavia's daughter. As to how Victor appears in the inscription as Silvanus, this will turn out to be a perfectly negotiable difficulty.

Not only does the fact of his marriage to Mavia's daughter, an Arab princess, commend the identification of Victor with Silvanus but also all the other data about him in the inscription:

(1) The first and most important is line 3, which reads: λαμπρότατος Σιλβανός ἀεὶ κρατέων ἐν Ἑρεμβοῖς. This is the *magister praesentalis* who composed the differences between Mavia and Valens, married her daughter, and secured the contribution of a contingent of Arab cavalry for the Gothic War.²⁶

²⁵The relevant features of the careers of Victor, Mavia, and her daughter as studied in the two preceding chapters on the reigns of Valens and Theodosius I are essential for following the arguments presented in this section for the proposed identifications.

²⁶λαμπρότατος is most probably used not as a technical term but as a literary locution, reflecting his fame and prestige. He is addressed by Valens as *magnifica auctoritas tua* (*Cod. Theod.*, VII.4.12), and in the *Vita Isaacii* he is referred to twice as ἐνδοξότατος (p. 249 D; p. 251 F). In this period, λαμπρότατος would have been sufficient to describe him as *magister*,

(2) He appears as a pious man who builds a shrine for the martyrs; he had engaged in a similar activity when he donated his own property at Psamathea, a suburb of Constantinople, for accommodating St. Isaac in a monastery.

(3) The pious reflection²⁷ in the inscription (lines 8–10), namely, that salvation can be achieved not by reciting the Psalms and prayers but by a change in the course of life according to the Holy Scriptures, is consonant with the image of Victor early in the reign of Theodosius as reflected in the *Vita Isaacii*.

Thus the unique case of a Roman officer married to an Arab girl, fortified by many striking details, points to Victor. And no officer in the annals of Arab-Byzantine relations answers to this description other than he.

It remains now to solve the onomastic problem that involves the identification of Silvanus with Victor:

(1) The assimilated Sarmatian presumably assumed the *tria nomina* of the Romans. Only two of his names, his *praenomen* and *cognomen*, have survived, namely, Flavius and Victor respectively.²⁸ His *nomen* could very well have been Silvanus, his full name being Flavius Silvanus Victor.

(2) The inscription is composed in hexameters, and the one in which his name appears, line 3, cannot scan with either Flavius or Victor. Thus a metrical exigency probably determined the choice of Silvanus and the rejection of Victor as his name in the inscription, just as it most probably explains the use of Ἑρεμβοί rather than Ἄραβες or Σαρακηνοί.

(3) The choice of Silvanus rather than Victor, or possibly the assumption of a new name, such as Silvanus, is also consonant with the image of Victor as reflected in the *Vita Isaacii* and what has been said above on the strengthening of the religious strand in him in the early years of Theodosius's reign. The last pious sentiment in the inscription could corroborate this. He changed the course of his life from *magister* to a simple private citizen, and he might have thought that the high-sounding and pretentious name Victor was inappropriate to a man who had renounced the world. Already his Latin name, Victor,

but most important as a consideration that might have weighed with the one who composed the inscription in hexameters is the fact that it is the only honorific title that makes the hexameter scan; the others do not. It is also the most modest title, and thus the one more consonant with the image of the new Victor, for which see *supra*, pp. 168–69.

²⁷This describes Silvanus more appropriately than the commemorated martyrs to whom the ethical reflection in lines 7–8 may refer. As noted by the editor, the pious reflection in lines 8–10 is an echo of Matt. 7:21, but it also could be an echo of Matt. 19:21, and if so, it is even more applicable to Victor as a pious donor. If it is an echo of Matt. 7:21, it will be a valuable autobiographical note related to his determination to retire from public life, for which see *supra*, pp. 219–21.

²⁸See Waas, *Germanen*, p. 110.

had been the subject of a pun by Gregory of Nazianzus, whose letter might have suggested the thought of changing his name at this juncture.²⁹

(4) He may have reflected this onomastic change in the hexameter through a *paranomasia*, involving κρατέων; thus αἰὲν κρατέων ἐν Ἑρεμβοῖς may be translated "always Victor to the Arabs!"³⁰

Chasidat—Mavia's Daughter

Just as Victor's is the only recorded case of a Roman officer married to an Arab girl, conversely, the only recorded case of the marriage of an Arab girl to a Roman officer is that of Mavia's daughter. The Chasidat mentioned in the inscription as married to a Roman officer will thus be Mavia's daughter. This is, of course, a corollary of the identification of Silvanus with Victor, whose Arab wife was Mavia's daughter, but identifying Chasidat can also proceed independently of Silvanus's identification with Victor, and the data in the inscription on Chasidat are corroborative:

(1) She is referred to in line 4 of the inscription as παῖς, and this fits in very well with the age of Mavia's daughter. The mother must have been herself a relatively young lady when her daughter's marriage took place, and so the description of the daughter as παῖς is appropriate.

(2) That she should also have died so early is striking. Her death may have been due to natural causes. But her association with the martyrs in the inscription suggests an alternative to this explanation. As her mother had led the first Arab revolt against Valens, so might she too have participated in the second and died as a result, but not before expressing a wish for the erection of a shrine for the martyrs.

The Martyrs—Arab Foederati

Striking is the fact that the shrine was dedicated not to one but to many martyrs and that these were left anonymous. This suggests that it was dedicated not to an Apostle, as Mavia's was to St. Thomas, or to well-known martyrs who had died before the Peace of the Church in A.D. 313, but to recent ones, a conclusion that may derive support from the fact that it was erected in obedience to the wish of one who was herself about to die. These martyrs could very well have been local ones who had only recently died and to whom the dying Chasidat was in some way related. Set against the background of the Arab revolt, the identity of these martyrs ceases to be a puzzle. They were probably the *foederati* who died in the first or the second revolt in which Chasidat herself might have participated.

²⁹Thus the employment of λαμπρότατος rather than ἐνδοξότατος, discussed *supra*, note 26, would have been appropriate for this reason too.

³⁰The employment of αἰὲν may also argue for a *paranomasia*; it sounds too emphatic, but in the context of the *paranomasia* suggested, it is not.

If these martyrs were Arab *foederati*, then the two questions raised about them admit of answers: (a) they were not one but many; hence the reference to them in the plural; (b) their names are not mentioned because it would not have been practical to give a long list, and thus they were referred to collectively. Moreover, their anonymity may have been due not only to practical but also to prudential considerations, since they would have been considered rebels by the authorities against whom they had risen.

The Two Inscriptions

Not only do the references to Silvanus in the inscription point to Victor but also those to Chasidat and the martyrs point to Mavia's daughter. Thus the two personages in the second inscription could be identified independently of each other, although one identification implies the other, since according to the literary source, Socrates, the two were united in marriage. It is therefore practically certain that they are Victor and Mavia's daughter.

These identifications have been made without reference to the first inscription, which now may be drawn upon for confirming these identifications. The first one is explicit in its reference to Mavia, who, as has been argued, must be the queen or someone related to her; it is impossible to believe that two inscriptions belonging to roughly the same period, one found outside the walls of Anasartha, the other inside its walls, written in Greek and Christian in sentiment and both referring to Arab personages and important ones, are not related. The Mavian connection of the second inscription, arrived at independently of the first, derives considerable support from the testimonial evidence in the first for the fact that Mavia was still remembered in the region, and thus clinches the argument that the two inscriptions relate to each other and that they involve mother and daughter.

A final remark pertains to the difference in the legal status of Mavia and Chasidat and how this is reflected in the location of the two inscriptions. As a *foederata*, Mavia was a noncitizen, and so she could erect her *martyrium* only *extra muros*, but her daughter was a citizen or became one after her marriage; so the *martyrium* erected at her instance could be built *intra muros*. Even if her status was not clear, her husband, Victor, who erected the *martyrium*, was a Roman, and thus he could build within the city walls. In spite of the fact that the martyrs were rebels, they had been allies of Rome and had fought its wars against the Goths only recently; this as well as Victor's prestige as an *ex-magister* fully explains the erection of the *martyrium intra muros*.³¹ Thus even the location of the two inscriptions may be added to the list of the correspon-

³¹Cf. the existence of a church at Anasartha, presumably erected by a group of exiled Monophysites; see Mouterde and Poidebard, *Le limes de Chalcis*, p. 195. The pathos of the invocation inscribed on the lintel is worthy of the Psalmist who wrote *super flumina Babylonis*.

dences that have been noted between what the literary sources say on the trio Victor, Mavia, and her daughter and what the epigraphic sources say on Silvanus, Mavia, and Chasidat, to justify concluding that it is almost certain that the identifications suggested above are correct.

3

The series of identifications proposed in the preceding section calls for a return to the text of the inscription. It has not been satisfactorily edited and the following improvements may be suggested:³²

(1) In line 2, αἶθους, σήισι should certainly be read as one word, αἰθούσ[σ]ηισι, and be translated not *le soleil* but “colonnades, corridors, cloisters.”

(2) In line 4, θέτο παιδός should be read not as two words but as one, θετόπαιδος, “the given child” (given to Silvanus).

(3) In line 6, ἄνακτες is the only word that presents no problems; all the preceding words do, as is evident from the editor’s difficulty in restoring the line and commenting on it.

(a) The first step toward restoring the line is to divide ἦν ζευξαν into two words, ἦν ζευξαν, which must be the correct reading.

(b) ἀμφί may be an adverb meaning in this context “around, in the region, on all sides,” and may go with the virtues of Chasidat referred to in the preceding line, indicating that they were well known everywhere, or it can go with the word following it, φύλαρχοι, meaning “the phylarchs of the region or the neighborhood.”

(c) φύλαρχοι has been taken by the editor as a noun in the nominative going with ἄνακτες, but what comes after it is not clear. For the ον ἐῆς of the edited text, νέης has been suggested,³³ and this goes well with the description of Chasidat as a young girl in line 4, but this leaves the line unmetrical and leaves unsolved its morphological, syntactical, and semantic problems.

Instead of what the editor has proposed, [ἀ]μφί φύλαρχοι <οῖ>ον ἐῆς ἦν ζευξαν ἄνακτες, the following may be suggested: ἀμφὶ φυλαρχείου γενεῆς, ἦν ζευξαν ἄνακτες. The verse continues the description of Chasidat in the preceding one and may be translated “on both sides descended from phylarchs, whom lords and kings gave in marriage” (to Silvanus). In support of this reading, the following may be adduced:

1. The line is a hexameter, and according to this reading it scans, but it does not scan according to the others that have been suggested.

2. What has been said of the Khān al-Abyaḍ inscription may with

³²I am grateful to Dr. Donald A. F. M. Russell for uniting what the editor had separated in line 2, namely, αἶθους, σήισι, and for separating what he had united in line 6, namely, ἦν ζευξαν, and to Prof. N. Oikonomides for suggesting θετόπαιδος instead of θέτο παιδός (line 4), all of which must be correct.

³³Suggested by Dr. Russell.

appositeness be quoted in this connection: “the vagaries of spelling, declension, and of syntax may be passed over cheerfully; they are not worse than those of the Greek inscriptions in this land.”³⁴ But only one of these animadversions is applicable to this line, namely, spelling, which justifies reading φυλαρχείου γενεῆς.

3. The verse makes better sense. In its immediate context it continues the praises of Chasidat in the preceding line by indicating that she was of noble lineage on both her father’s and her mother’s side.³⁵ According to this reading of the verse, ἀμφί may still go with the description of Chasidat in the preceding line, but much more likely it is to be construed with the two words following it in line 6. It may remain an adverb meaning “on both sides,” or it may be the suffix of a compound word consisting of it and the word following, φυλαρχείου, or separated by tmesis from ΓΕΝΕῆς.

4

History is silent on Mavia’s daughter after the first and last mention of her in the ecclesiastical source, Socrates, but this precious inscription gives her name as well as informs on the manner of her death and on her last wish before she died or was cloistered. It also informs both on Victor, who disappears from the sources after the year 382, and on the fallen among the *foederati*, to whom there is a solitary reference in a literary source datable to A.D. 383 expressing imperial displeasure. The new identifications and improvements in the text of the inscription make necessary a return to it for a historical commentary.

(1) The shrine is dedicated to μάρτυσι εὐύμνοισι (line 1), and, as has been argued above, most likely these are the fallen among the Arab *foederati*:

(a) The use of the term *martyrs* to refer to the fallen is significant. It reflects the self-image of the *foederati* as soldiers of the Cross and of Orthodoxy.³⁶ This is consonant with what is known about the Tanūkhids both while they were in Persian territory before they went over to the Romans and throughout their association with Byzantium in the fourth century.

(b) The term εὐύμνοισι may well mean not only *célebres*, as the editor translates it, but also what it literally means, “celebrated in many hymns.” This is corroborated by Sozomen’s reference to the ᾠδαί that celebrated the

³⁴W. K. Prentice, *Greek and Latin Inscriptions, PPUAES*, Part 3, p. 283. In the first inscription, which hails from the same region as this one, ΦΙΛΑΝΔΡΙΑC is spelled ΦΗΔΑΝΔΡΙΑC; see Mouterde and Poidebard, *op. cit.*, p. 194 note 2.

³⁵This answers to the Arabic phrase *mu’imm mukhwil*, “noble on his father’s side, noble on his mother’s side.”

³⁶Almost a century and a half later, the Arabs of Najrān in South Arabia were to provide the Church with a large number of martyrs. This time their names were recorded in a long list, and one of them became a saint of the universal Church, St. Arethas; see the present writer in *Martyrs*.

victories of Mavia over the Romans a few years earlier and is consonant with the facts of the Arabic literary tradition pertaining to the composition of elegies in verse on the fallen in battle, a poetic genre well attested in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry.³⁷ So the fallen among the Arab *foederati* apparently did not die *unsung*.

(2) The *martyrium* is described as πολλὸν ὑπ' αἰθούσ[σ]ησι (line 2), extensive with colonnades, or corridors, or cloisters, and is further described as ἔρκεσιν εὐκτετον, well-built with walls. The two references thus constitute a brief *ekphrasis* of some architectural features of the memorial shrine built in honor of the martyrs. This brings to mind the structure that Victor had built for St. Isaac but which the latter had declined to accept since it was not modest enough for an ascetic.³⁸

(3) The reference to the Ἑρεμβοί (line 3) is noteworthy. This is the latest attestation of this Homeric term for the Arabs, used not by an antiquarian writing about the distant past but by a contemporary of the people he was referring to and who clearly considered they were identical with the Arabs.³⁹

(4) Three hexameters (lines 4–6) are devoted to the praises of Chasidat, and from them the following data on Mavia's daughter, left anonymous in Socrates, may be extracted:

(a) The name of the young lady appears in the Greek inscription as Χασιδάθη (line 5). This is clearly a Semitic name,⁴⁰ not a Greek or Latin one, and the most plausible Semitic name for the Greek form is not an Arabic but a Syriac one, namely, Ḥasīdtā, the epithet applied to the Virgin Mary in Luke 1:28, meaning *gratia plena*,⁴¹ κεχαριτωμένη. This is particularly apposite for

³⁷It is not entirely clear whether these hymns were composed in Greek or Arabic. Some may have been composed in Greek, as the three hexameters on Chasidat in the inscription (lines 4–6), but it is almost certain that most were composed in Arabic, as those on Mavia's victories a few years earlier had been. If so, these hymns on the fallen may be added to the war songs on Mavia, mentioned by Sozomen, as testimonial evidence for the composition of Arabic poetry as early as the fourth century. They would thus constitute a welcome new dimension to the cultural history of the *foederati*. While nothing of this poetry on the fall of the Tanūkhids in the fourth century has survived, two fragments have on the fall of the Salīhid *foederati* in the fifth century, or rather on the fall of their king, Dāwūd, one consisting of a single verse composed by his daughter and another consisting of three verses composed by the Kalbite regicide who felled him. These fragments will be discussed in the next volume in this series, *BAFIC*.

³⁸On this, see *supra*, pp. 168–69.

³⁹On the Ἑρεμβοί, see Tkač, in *RE*, 6, cols. 413–17, and the discussion of the term in Strabo (*Geography*, XVI.4.27). The term is also attested in Menander Rhetor, and the attestation is of some importance for the relation of the Arabs to the Romans in the third century; see L. Spengel, *Rhetores Graeci*, Bibliotheca Teubneriana (Leipzig, 1894–96), vol. 3, p. 387, line 26. I am grateful to Dr. Russell for drawing my attention to this reference.

⁴⁰The *South-Arabian* name Kašd suggested by the editor is most unlikely.

⁴¹For which see *Thesaurus Syriacum*, vol. 1, col. 1329; it is the term used in *Versio Novi Testamenti Harklensis*.

a pious girl of the description given in the inscription. In this period Syriac, not Arabic, was the language of the Semitic Christian Orient, and the Christian Arabs assumed Syriac names.⁴² The process of acculturation among the Tanūkhids, reflected in Mavia's employment of Greek for her inscription, is thus also reflected in the assumption of names from the Syriac Bible.⁴³

(b) Chasidat is referred to in line 4 as ἀποικομένης, which can mean "departed" as well as "dead." Without the Mavian background against which this inscription has been set, the term would almost certainly mean "dead," and it probably does even with this background. But the possibility may be entertained that Chasidat had not yet died but had departed from the region, probably disappointed at the deterioration of Arab-Byzantine relations early in the reign of Theodosius and the inability of her *magister* husband to help the cause of the Arab *foederati*. If so, she would either have retreated to a limitrophe region whither the Tanūkhids after the failure of their revolt might have withdrawn or possibly she would have chosen a cloistered existence.⁴⁴

(c) The reference to Chasidat in line 4 as θετόπαιδος is revelatory. In addition to its being a reference to the fact that she was married very young to an elderly husband, it may imply that the marriage was not really consummated but was a spiritual one. This view is defensible because of the disparity in age between Chasidat and her husband, because of the fact that immediately after the marriage Victor departed in order to take part in the Gothic War, and finally because of the vogue of asceticism and spiritual marriages in this period. But most important is the evidence of the inscription itself. Line 7 speaks of [Ὀς κ]αὶ πένθος ἔπαυσε τὸ πάτριον, which the editor translates: *Ainsi cessa le deuil de la contrée*. In so doing, he clearly understood πάτριον to be an adjective of πατρίς/πάτρα, rather than πατήρ, and he must have been led to this interpretation by the fact that Silvanus was her husband, not her father. But it is doubtful whether the derivation of the adjective πάτριον from πατρίς/πάτρα is correct, or whether the concept of *patria* was applicable in this case, and, indeed, it sounds alien in this context. The sentence may then be translated: "Thus, he put an end to a father's grief,"

⁴²Cf. the Ghassānid name Māriya, not *Mary* but Syriac *Martā*, meaning "lady, mistress," for which, see Nöldeke, *GF*, p. 22 note 3.

⁴³A like-sounding name appears in *PO*, vol. 1, pt. 3, p. 323 note 4, but it is very doubtful whether she would have been remembered even as a local saint in the Orient.

⁴⁴The last four lines of the inscription (lines 7–10) could throw much light on Chasidat and Silvanus if the referents of the ethical and pious reflections in them were clear. The pious reflection in lines 8–10 has been understood to refer to Silvanus (*supra*, note 27), but it could refer to Chasidat. If so, the change in the course of her life would certainly be more appropriately spoken of a girl who had renounced the world rather than of one who had died. It is also perfectly possible that the first reflection (lines 7–8) on the attainment of glory through shedding one's own blood may refer to Chasidat, who thus could have participated in the second revolt and died as a result; see *supra*, p. 232.

and *πάτριον* may thus be translated “fatherly.” This would be consonant with the reference to Chasidat as *θετόπαιδος* in line 4 and with the self-image of a husband who was pious, retired, and so much her senior in years, and who, consequently, would have regarded his bride as his daughter rather than as his wife and who would have conceived of her as *θετόπαιδος*, a child spiritually entrusted to him.

(d) The phylarchal affiliation of Chasidat (line 6) is certain whether the second word in the line, *φύλαρχοι*, is to be taken as a noun in the nominative or an adjective in the genitive, as suggested above and argued for. The conjectural emendation describes her descent as phylarchal on both her mother’s and her father’s side. According to the ecclesiastical sources, she was the daughter of the king of the *foederati*, who was succeeded on his death by his wife, Mavia. But the sources say nothing on her mother, Mavia, before the king’s death or on her tribal affiliation. The Arabic sources, however, suggest that she belonged to the powerful tribe of Kalb.⁴⁵ The emendation, which describes her maternal lineage as also phylarchal, suggests that the Kalb tribe, too, was in phylarchal federate relation to Byzantium. This may be inferred from the area where the tribe was settled and from its possession of the strategic fortress of Dūmat al-Jandal,⁴⁶ but the information from this epigraphic evidence is welcome as it supports the inference on Kalb’s Roman connection drawn from other sources.

(5) The employment of the term *φύλαρχοι* in line 6 is noteworthy. In the literary sources for the fourth century the term *kings* (*βασιλεῖς*, *reges*, *reguli*) is used to describe the chiefs or rulers of the Arab *foederati*, including Mavia’s husband. The epigraphic attestation could suggest that the literary sources reflected by their employment of the term *king* the legal status of the Arab chiefs of the *foederati* vis-à-vis their own people and not their technical or correct status vis-à-vis the Romans. Thus, in an inscription engraved by a Roman officer and set up in a Roman city, the term *βασιλεῖς* could not have been used, but only the term *φύλαρχοι*, which probably reflected their real status vis-à-vis the Romans.⁴⁷

⁴⁵On this see *supra*, pp. 196–97.

⁴⁶Where a Latin inscription was found, of obvious importance in determining the extent of Rome’s sphere of influence in northern Arabia, for which see *supra*, p. 52 note 86.

⁴⁷*ἄνακτες* in the same line is a poetic, imprecise word and so is nonsignificant, but it is emphatic and it adds to the praises of Chasidat, namely, that it was lords or masters who gave her in marriage. Who these were is not clear; they must have been the Arab chiefs, including Mavia herself, who acted as her guardians after her father’s death and gave her away at the marriage ceremony; these “lords” may have included some high-ranking Roman officers in Oriens and possibly Valens himself, who, after the reconciliation with Mavia, might have participated. Roman emperors engaged in such activities as arranging political marriages, for which see *supra*, p. 159 note 82. On the term *phylarch* as applied to the chiefs of the Arab *foederati*, see *infra*, pp. 514–18.

VII

Two Historians: Ammianus and Sozomen

I. AMMIANUS AND THE ARABS

The many references to the Arabs in the pages of the *Res Gestae* in various contexts call for a general evaluation of these references, which principally relate to the two areas of ethnology and military history. Having lived in Oriens, Antiochene Ammianus knew the Arabs personally in peace and in war,¹ and for this reason his observations are valuable. Their evaluation is all the more called for in view of the fact that these references, especially the military ones in military contexts, have not received due attention from those who have written on Ammianus Marcellinus.² This evaluation will bring out from the contexts in which they lie obscure important data for the Arab-Byzantine relationship and the Arab image in the fourth century and will throw more light on the major secular historian of the fourth century.

Ammianus and the Scenitae

The Arabs are referred to by a number of designations: (1) *Scenitae*, (2) *Saraceni*, (3) *Arabes beati*, (4) *Nabataei*, (5) *Palmyreni*, and (6) anonymously, *veteres* and *incolae*, when those of the Provincia Arabia are spoken of.

1

By far the most important reference to the Arabs ethnologically is section XIV.4 of the *Res Gestae*, entirely devoted to them. The Arabs described in this section are the Saraceni, the Arab group who are Ammianus's main concern and who come into prominence in his narrative during the reign of Julian. These

¹As a soldier on the staff of Ursicinus and in Julian's Persian campaign. Furthermore, there is the explicit statement in *RG*, XIV.4.6: *et plerosque nos vidimus frumenti usum et vini penitus ignorantes*.

²The Arabs hardly receive mention even in specialized books and monographs on Ammianus: *infra*, p. 251 note 43. But see W. Seyfarth, "Nomadenvölker an den Grenzen der spätrömischen Reiches: Beobachtungen des Ammianus Marcellinus über Hunnen und Sarazenen," in *Das Verhältnis von Bodenbauern und Viehzüchtern in historischer Sicht*, Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, Institut für Orientforschung (Berlin, 1969), pp. 210–13. The author is mostly occupied with the custom of temporary marriage referred to by Ammianus and its relation to the *mut'a* of later Islamic times.

are the Arabs who, as Ammianus states elsewhere (XXII.15.2; XXIII.6.13), had been called in the sources *Scenitae*, but later writers and those of the fourth century called them *Saraceni*. These statements define them clearly and make them recognizable—they are the nomads, the tent-dwellers among the Arabs.

Ammianus's judgment is unfavorable,³ although not as severe as that on the Germans or the Huns and the Alans,⁴ who fare even more badly than the Germans. In spite of its tone and some misunderstanding on his part of Arab customs, the section is valuable⁵ as it ranges over their mobility and destructive raids, their wide geographical diffusion,⁶ their dress, their mounts—swift horses and slender camels—their lack of taste for agriculture, their lawless existence, their marriage customs, and their food and drink.

The chapter calls for two main observations, related to the substance⁷ of the ethnology and to its place in his narrative:

1. The disapproving tone of Ammianus is to be expected from a city dweller who has a natural dislike for the nomad, and there is no need to doubt the general truth of the ethnology as a description of the *Scenitae* Arabs. However, his disapproving tone suggests that he was unaware of the social and geographical factors that gave rise to these mores, while some of his statements are not likely to be entirely true⁸ or accurate.⁹ It is, nevertheless,

³Summed up at the end of the section by the phrase *natio perniciosa*. The only redeeming feature of the Arab ethos is their martial spirit, *omnes pari sorte sunt bellatores*.

⁴On the Huns and the Alans, see *RG*, XXXI.2.1–24; on the Germans, see *infra*, p. 266 and note 82.

⁵It takes its place alongside his sections on the Huns and the Alans, who made their first appearance on the stage of Roman history during Ammianus's lifetime and about whom nothing has been written before; E. A. Thompson, *The Historical Work of Ammianus Marcellinus* (Cambridge, 1947), p. 119, speaks of the account as "one of his most valuable disquisitions."

⁶According to Ammianus, their original abode, *exordiens initium*, extended from Assyria to the Cataracts of the Nile and the frontiers of the Blemmyae. The term used by Ammianus in connection with this wide geographical diffusion, *exordiens initium*, may suggest that in his time the Arabs no longer lived in those regions, especially Assyria and Egypt. Chapter 5 on the *Notitia Dignitatum* in *RA* and two of the maps clearly indicate an important Arab presence in both these regions in this early period. What the Latin phrase of Ammianus could imply is that the Arabs extended the area of their diffusion from their original abode to sectors that had not lain within that abode, namely, across the Roman *limes*, a fact known independently of Ammianus and implied by him since the section on the Saracens comes in the wake of a description of barbarian inroads into Roman territory. This is confirmed by what he says in *RG*, XIV.8.5 on the Saracens who live to the left of the Euphrates and the Nile. The point is relevant to the study of the ethnic constitution of Roman military units stationed in Egypt and Assyria as analyzed in chap. 5 in *RA*.

⁷For P. de Jonge's commentary on this ethnology, see *supra*, p. 84 note 36.

⁸That they are *sine legibus* is a Roman-centered view that regards the nomads as lawless; but of course the pre-Islamic Arabs had their own laws, quite elaborate and strict, though unwritten.

⁹Ammianus states that many Arabs, *plerosque*, were unfamiliar with wine. It is possible that some isolated Arab group might have been unfamiliar with wine, but it is certainly untrue

welcome inasmuch as it is a contemporary account, portions of which apparently were based on personal observation.

2. Its place, however, in the narrative is unnatural. The chapter comes as part of Ammianus's account of the career of Gallus Caesar, whom he detested and whose rule in the Orient he drew in dark colors as a period during which disasters encompassed the region, among which were the inroads of the Isaurians and the Saracens, but the context shows that the ethnology has no place in the course of the narrative,¹⁰ especially as he does not give a similar description of the other group, the Isaurian barbarians,¹¹ and more so as he had already mentioned the mores of the Saracens before. This is confirmed by the apologetic tone of the opening statement that introduces the ethnology (XIV.4.2), and it gives the impression that Ammianus anticipates surprise on the part of the reader at the digression.

The above analysis of the place of the ethnology in the structure of book XIV confirms what has been said earlier when Ammianus's handling of the status of the Arab *foederati* in the reign of Constantius was being discussed, namely, that he presented them not as *foederati* but as *Scenitae*.¹² Thus the ethnology as such remains valuable, while its deliberately unnatural place in book XIV is equally valuable for the larger problem of Ammianus and the Arabs.¹³

of the pre-Islamic Arabs in general, especially of those living not in Inner Arabia but in the Fertile Crescent and the Roman limitrophe, the ones Ammianus met. A distinction must be drawn between unfamiliarity with wine and reluctance to drink it. It is well known that drinking wine is prohibited in the Qur'an; but wine was certainly well known in Arabia both in Muhammadan and in pre-Islamic times and is, indeed, one of the motifs of Arabic poetry in this early period. Apparently the pre-Islamic Arabs found wine too intoxicating, and as it affected their manners and behavior they considered drinking the beverage unbecoming; a number of pre-Islamic Arabs are known to have given up drinking wine for this reason, on which see the chapter in Ibn-Ḥabīb, *Al-Muḥabbar*, pp. 237–41.

Syme compares this passage in Ammianus with another one in the *HA*, "Pescennius Niger," VII.8, involving the Saracens who drink water; R. Syme, *Ammianus and the Historia Augusta* (Oxford, 1968), p. 64. An examination of the context suggests that these were Saracens near the Nile, not the Euphrates; also, the preceding section does not say that the Egyptians were unfamiliar with wine but that they found the Nile so sweet that it was superfluous to ask for wine. It cannot be concluded from this that the Egyptians or the Saracens in Egypt were unfamiliar with wine. What could be inferred is that the Saracens did not customarily drink wine or drink it with their food; they drank milk instead, as Ammianus himself mentions.

¹⁰He speaks in the preceding chapter (XIV.3) of a Persian plot, and in the following one (XIV.5) of Constantius and his torturing of the followers of Magnentius.

¹¹Whose military operations he discusses at great length while he hardly says anything about those of the Saracens, but writes mostly on their mores, a noteworthy omission coming from an avowedly military historian.

¹²See *supra*, pp. 83–85 on the analysis of the political and military implications of the ethnology.

¹³See *infra*, pp. 245–48.

2

In addition to the Scenitae, Ammianus included accounts of the Arabs of the Provincia Arabia and of Arabia Felix:

1. Section XIV.8.13 is devoted to the Provincia Arabia and its inhabitants. He speaks with some admiration of the wares, fortresses, and cities of the Provincia. Its inhabitants are left anonymous; he speaks of them twice, once in connection with the castles and fortresses they erected, and refers to them merely as *veteres* in the phrase *sollicitudo previgil veterum*, and again in connection with the reduction of the country into a *provincia* by Trajan, referring to them simply as *incolae* in the phrase *incolarum tumore saepe contunso*.¹⁴ The first reference, *veteres*, is complimentary, while the second is not, as it implies that the inhabitants were turbulent and lawless before they were brought to live under Roman law by Trajan, *obtemperare legibus nostris*.

The use of the terms *veteres* and *incolae* cloaks the ethnic complexion of the provincials after whom the Provincia was named *Arabia*. They are none other than the Arabs of the old Arab kingdom of Nabataea, who in 106 became the provincials of the now Roman province of Arabia and who in 212 became *Rhomaioi*. Ammianus may have wanted to obscure the ethnic complexion of the provincials of Arabia, or he may not have been clear about it. The latter alternative is difficult to conceive since the reduction of the Arab Nabataean kingdom into the Provincia by Cornelius Palma during Trajan's reign must have been a fact well known to him and since the name itself of the Provincia—*Arabia*—revealed the ethnic complexion of its inhabitants.¹⁵ Even in the sixth century, after centuries of Roman rule, the Provincia was still referred to as "the country of the Arabs" in one of Justinian's Novels.¹⁶

Two other Arab groups are mentioned in this section: (a) the Nabataei, whose land the Provincia adjoins;¹⁷ and (b) "neighboring tribes" in the phrase

¹⁴The phrase is relevant to the problem of whether or not Trajan's annexation of Nabataea and its formation into a province was effected peacefully, as his nonassumption of *Arabicus* and the numismatic legend *Arabia adquisita* (not *capta*) might suggest.

¹⁵One could thus see the reason behind the employment of the complimentary *veteres* in contradistinction to the uncomplimentary *incolae*. Ammianus may have wanted to suggest that the watchful *veteres* who had built the fortresses he admired were not related ethnically to the turbulent *incolae* who were finally reduced to obedience by Trajan, the provincials of Ammianus's time. But these were, of course, the descendants of the *veteres* and were sedentarized Arabs.

The urbanization of what later became the Provincia Arabia was, of course, not exclusively the work of the Nabataean Arabs since the Macedonians contributed their generous share; but this does not affect the reality of the Nabataean contribution; see the present writer's review of Philip Hammond, *The Nabataeans: Their History, Culture and Archaeology*, *Classical Review*, 26, (1976), pp. 239–40.

¹⁶See *supra*, p. 49 note 73.

¹⁷This could suggest to the careless reader that the Nabataean Arabs are not included among the provincials of the Provincia Arabia, which is contrary to the fact. Ammianus thus

gentium vicinarum excursus, who must be Arabs of the type Ammianus called *Scenitae*. The Arab affiliation of the Nabataeans is left unstated, but that affiliation was well known in ancient times and must have been known to Ammianus as well.¹⁸

2. After enumerating the provinces of the Persian Empire, Ammianus devotes a few paragraphs to the description of the *Arabes beati* of South Arabia¹⁹ (XXIII.6.45–47), of whom he speaks in glowing terms. For him, these Arabs of the Peninsula were very prosperous and happy sedentaries, more advanced in the ladder of civilization than the Saraceni and the Romanized Arabs of the Provincia.

But how Ammianus thought the peoples of South Arabia, composed of both Arabs and cognate Semitic groups, were related to the Arabs of the north is not clear. They were two distinct ethnic groups.²⁰ Whatever the case may be, his value judgment varies according to the degree of sedentarization and civilization attained by these groups; it is favorable to the sedentaries²¹ but

may well have wanted to separate the provincials of the Provincia, whom he left anonymous, from the Nabataeans, who were known to the classical authors as Arabs and for whom authors such as Strabo (XVI.4.21, 26–27) and Diodorus Siculus (XIX.94–97) reserve much praise. Ammianus's separation of the provincials of Arabia from the Nabataeans could be related to his general unfavorable attitude toward the Saracen Arabs, to whom the provincials of Arabia—the former Nabataeans—were closely related and who in fact were sedentarized Arabs, having been formerly nomadic Arabs, on the same level of cultural development as the Saraceni of Ammianus's time.

¹⁸In the preceding section (11) he speaks of Herod, the builder of Caesarea, but whether he knew of Herod's ethnic origin as an Idumaeen Arab is not clear. The same may apply to his reference to the Palmyrenes in RG, XXVIII.4.9.

In spite of the vagueness that surrounds Ammianus's description of the Provincia Arabia, his statement that it adjoins the land of the Nabataeans is valuable. That land must be northern Hijāz, and the implication is that after the size of the Provincia, which had encompassed practically the whole of Nabataea deep into the Hijāz, had been reduced, those of the provincials who were left out still called themselves in the fourth century Nabataeans.

¹⁹The account of the South Arabians is couched in general terms and the interesting part of it is the strings of city names and the name of one island, Turgana. His conception of the peninsula sometimes smacks of the legendary and the fantastic, as when he speaks of winged armies of snakes (*pinnatis agminibus anguim*) that come from the Arabian marshes (*Arabicis paludibus*) and are met by Egyptian birds; RG, XXII.15.26. It is possible, though, that these marshes were in Egyptian Arabia; for Arabia in Egypt, see the relevant part of chap. 5 on the *Notitia Dignitatum* in RA; perhaps this fantastic element in Ammianus was copied from some earlier author on Arabia. More pleasant than his winged armies of snakes is his attestation of Arabian perfumes (*odoribus Arabicis*) in the fourth century both in the same passage on Arabia Felix, XXIII.6.45, and also in XXIX.1.30.

²⁰On this, see the present writer in "Pre-Islamic Arabia," pp. 5–6. Ammianus's use of the term *Arabes* to denote the non-Arab inhabitants of the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula such as the Sabaeans and the Himyarites is most probably to be interpreted in geographical terms, i.e., inhabitants of Arabia Felix, and almost certainly taken from the classical division of the Arabian peninsula into Petraea, Deserta, and Felix.

²¹And among these he is more favorable to the sedentaries of the Peninsula, i.e., Arabia Felix, than to those of the Provincia. His unqualified admiration for the former may be com-

unfavorable to the nomads, the Scenitae and Saraceni. The unfavorable judgment seems in this case founded on cultural rather than on racial grounds.

The foregoing examination of references in the *Res Gestae* to the Arabs of the Byzantine borderland enables the following conclusions to be drawn:

The limitrophe provinces of Oriens were heavily Arab in ethnic complexion,²² and yet Ammianus's survey of these provinces completely obscures the fact. The Arab inhabitants of such provinces as Arabia and Phoenicia—sedentarized and Romanized—are thus separated from the Saraceni whom he had discussed earlier and appear to the unsuspecting reader as ethnically quite distinct from the Saraceni, while in fact they were related as Arabs but separated by their being on two different levels of social and cultural development: the former were sedentaries, while the latter were nomads. As a result of this separation, the Saraceni, his main concern, are isolated and designated nomads, *Scenitae*. He clinches the equation of *Saraceni* with *Scenitae* explicitly when on two occasions he says that the term *Saraceni* was the one regularly used for the Scenitae in the fourth century.²³ He also, incidentally, uses the term *Arabes*, in this context of equating *Scenitae* with *Saraceni*, and thus presents the generic term *Arab* as equivalent to *nomad*. Consequently the three terms *Arabes*, *Scenitae*, and *Saraceni* are finally presented as equivalent to and interchangeable with one another.²⁴

As has been argued before, Ammianus confused the Arab *foederati* with the Arab Scenitae,²⁵ and thus gave a false impression of the status of the *foederati* by this association with the Saraceni-Scenitae. This was done in two stages, first by isolating and separating the Saraceni-Scenitae from the sedentarized Arabs, thus emphasizing their nomadism, and then by allocating the *foederati* to the Scenitae-Saraceni group, to whom they were related ethnically but from whom they were distinct culturally, being in an intermediate stage between the Scenitae nomads and the sedentarized Arab *Rhomaioi* of the eastern provinces.

pared with his ambivalence toward the latter and could derive from his conception of them as completely unrelated to the Saraceni, the object of his displeasure and disapproval.

²²On the extensive and intensive Arab presence in Oriens when Pompey appeared on the scene in Near Eastern history, see *RA*, esp. chap. 1.

²³*RG*, XXII.15.2; XXIII.6.13. Ammianus is the only authority for what he says. The term in the fourth century assumed a certain vogue because of the ecclesiastical historians who erroneously biblicalized the etymology of *Saraceni* in this Christian period. But its antiquity and vogue before the fourth century are attested. In his *Chronicon*, Eusebius speaks of the equation of *Saraceni* with the Ishmaelites in general, the Arabs, not only with the Scenitae; see *RA*, chap. 7.

²⁴The three terms are of course not interchangeable. *Arabes* is the generic that includes the other two; *Saraceni* is the narrower term and is applied to both Scenitae and other groups such as the *foederati*, who were not Scenitae, or cannot be described simply as Scenitae. Ammianus's terminology must have had a strong influence on subsequent generations of writers.

²⁵*Supra*, pp. 83–85.

3

In the course of his *ethnologia* on the Arabs (RG, XIV.4), Ammianus speaks in section 2 of his having noticed the Saracens in his account of the reign of Marcus Aurelius and on several occasions after that reign. These notices are lost together with the first thirteen books of the *Res Gestae*, but his statement in the above quoted *ethnologia* calls for a number of observations that are important to his conception of the Arabs and of Arab history and may be of some relevance to the problem of the lost thirteen books.

1. In a history that began with the principate of Nerva (96–98) it is curious that the first reference to the Saracens should have been made during the reign of Marcus Aurelius, especially since there is no reference in the sources to the Saracens in that reign.²⁶ The natural place in this work for the first reference to the Arabs should have been the reign of Trajan, whose legate Cornelius Palma annexed the kingdom of the Nabataean Arabs and made it a *provincia*. But now that Ammianus's conception of the Arabs as Saraceni-Scenitae has been examined, his omission of a reference to the conversion of Nabataea into a *provincia* perhaps becomes explicable. Mention of this conversion would have drawn attention to the Arabs as the highly sedentarized Saraceni well known to classical writers, and Ammianus apparently did not want to open his history (Trajan's would have been the first reign he would have discussed after Nerva's, which was only a biennium) with an operation, and an important one, that presented the Arabs in a light less unfavorable than the one he chose, namely, that they were Scenitae.²⁷

2. It is noteworthy that in referring to the Saracens he speaks not of their history but of their mores. These form the substance of his disquisition on the Saracens in the well-known *ethnologia* analyzed above. This makes almost certain that of the various groups of Arabs he could have treated, he chose to

²⁶Two Arab figures, Sohaemus of Emesa and Mannos of Edessa, belong to the reign of Marcus Aurelius; the first was made king of Armenia, while the second was restored to Edessa. But as they do not qualify as Saraceni-Scenitae, it is quite unlikely that Ammianus had them in mind when he spoke of the Saracens during that reign. It is much more probable that the reference to the Saracens must have been made in connection with the revolt of Avidius Cassius. Like Zenobia in the third century, he might have enlisted Saracens in his army when he occupied Cilicia, Syria, and Egypt, or the region might have witnessed a Saracen offensive during the revolt or when Marcus Aurelius visited the region after the revolt was quelled. Two references to Marcus Aurelius in the extant books of the *Res Gestae* could be invoked to give some support to this conclusion: (a) RG, XXXI.5.13, which speaks of *vesania gentium dissonarum* during the reign, and the following section with its *calamitosa dispendia*; the Arabs could have been one of these *gentes* that assaulted the Roman frontier in the East; (b) perhaps more important is RG, XII.5.5 on Marcus Aurelius's encounter with the rebellious Jews in Palestine while he was on his way to Egypt. Ammianus, although a pagan, presumably read the Septuagint and was aware of the descent of both the Jews and the Arabs from Abraham. This might have been the occasion when he spoke of the Saraceni in the same vein as he spoke of the rebellious Jews.

²⁷For another reason why he possibly chose to begin his notices of the Arabs in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, see *infra*, pp. 247–48.

speak about one particular group, namely, the Saraceni-Scenitae, and in much the same way that he spoke about them in the extant *ethnologia*. The structure of the *ethnologia* gives a clue to how he would justify including a reference to the Arabs every now and then in the lost books. That *ethnologia* begins with an account of their raids into Roman territory, and this gives him an occasion to make his observations on their mores. He must then have repeated this time and again in those references to them in the lost books; when there is record of a Saracen raid against the frontier in the reign of some emperor, he would notice it and then follow it up with some account of their mores, in much the same way that he spoke of these mores after the Saracen raid in the reign of Constantius in 353 and similarly in the reign of Marcus Aurelius when presumably there was a Saracen raid during the revolt of Avidius Cassius.

3. His disquisition on the mores of the Saracens is distributed throughout his work, as he himself says when he uses the term *aliquotiens* (RG, XIV.4.2). These notices on their mores could not have been repetitious; in the one *ethnologia* that is extant, he says *tamen nunc quoque pauca de eisdem expediam carptim*, which suggests that in each *ethnologia* he added a few more details, something new, and thus the various ethnological notices in various parts of his book are complementary, and it is their sum total that gives a picture of Saracen mores in their entirety. Even at the end of his work when he notices the Saracens during the defense of Constantinople (RG, XXXI.16.5), he goes out of his way to say that he has noticed their mores in various connections, which sounds strange in a military context and gratuitous since it was as recently as the reign of Julian that he noticed them several times. Furthermore, he could have expressed his views on the Saraceni, especially since these were on their mores, in one place. But he did not and instead chose to distribute them throughout the *Res Gestae*, which could lead to the conclusion that he wanted to remind the reader constantly of his conception of the Arabs, and this suggests that he had the Arabs on his mind and that his interest in them was more than passing.

This handling of the image of the Saracens in the lost books of the *Res Gestae* makes possible the drawing of the following conclusions:

(1) In the treatment of Arab history throughout the two and one-half centuries covered by the lost thirteen books of the *Res Gestae*, Ammianus projected the image of the Arabs as Saraceni-Scenitae in spite of the fact that in the course of this long period the Arabs appeared as sedentaries on the stage of Roman history at important junctures and their presence in Oriens was both extensive and intensive, represented by such groups as the Nabataeans, the Palmyrenes, and the Abgarids of Edessa. How Ammianus treated their history or at least referred to them cannot accurately be described with certainty. He may have kept silent on them and concentrated on the Scenitae,

noting their raids. Alternatively, he may either have left their ethnic affiliation undetermined or he may have presented them as Saraceni-Scenitae, probably the former.²⁸ His account of the Provincia Arabia, the country of the Nabataean Arabs, analyzed earlier (*supra*, pp. 242–44), gives a clue to what he might have said about other Arab sedentaries, such as the Nabataeans, the Palmyrenes, and the Arabs of Edessa.²⁹ In so doing he would have left unclear the distinctions that obtained among three groups of Arabs with whom the Roman limitrophe was familiar, distinctions that are essential for a reconstruction of the history of Arab-Roman relations: (a) the real Scenitae on both sides of the *limes*, but mostly outside it; (b) the *foederati*, sedentarized to a considerable extent and Romanized; and (c) the Arab *Rhomaioi*, the fully integrated provincial Arabs such as the Nabataeans and the Palmyrenes.

(2) The image of the Arabs as Scenitae is projected by Ammianus in the *Res Gestae* through the device of the *ethnologia*, which with him is not only the conventional feature of classical historiography but also a device with a function, namely, the means whereby he projects the Arab image. One of these ethnologies has survived intact in book XIV.4, and it makes possible the study of Ammianus's technique in projecting that image:

(a) The *ethnologia* consists of two parts: the first part records a raid³⁰ by the Arabs in the reign of some emperor, while the second part discusses the mores of the raiders. These are the two constants³¹ in the structure of each *ethnologia*.

(b) The concentration on their mores cannot but be significant, coming as it does from a *miles quondam*, a historian who was a professional soldier and not an ethnologist. In addition to his desire to present them as nomadic Saraceni and not as sedentarized Arabs, Ammianus probably wanted to say that the two are related, namely, that their mores as nomads explain their raids against the Roman frontier and, what is more, from a strictly professional

²⁸As a later fellow pagan historian, Zosimus, was to treat the Palmyrenes, for which see chap. 8, "Zosimus and the Arabs," in *RA*.

²⁹His short account of the Provincia and its Arab inhabitants in the 4th century is thus extremely valuable in that it confirms what has been inferred on his treatment in the lost books of other Arab sedentaries in the Roman period, and so does the account of Zosimus on the Palmyrenes; see *ibid.*

³⁰In addition to the one noticed for the year 353 in the reign of Constantius which called for the *ethnologia* in *RG*, XIV.4, and which has survived, it is possible to conclude that the raid of the year 338 may also have been the subject of another *ethnologia*. That raid was noticed by his hero Julian, and Ammianus would have described it in similar terms in one of the lost books: on Julian and the Arabs for the year 338, see *supra*, pp. 75–78.

³¹That references to the Arabs during the reigns of Julian and Gratian do not speak primarily of their mores but of their military record in the Persian campaign and the aftermath of Adrianople is indirect evidence for what has been maintained earlier—that these Arabs were indeed *foederati*, although Ammianus obscured their status and never designated them as such.

military point of view, that their style of warfare even when they were fighting with the Romans was related to their mores as a nomadic and mobile people with no fixed habitation; hence such phrases as *ad furta bellorum*, which recur in his description of the Saracen style of war. Thus their political and military behavior along the *limes* is explicable by their mores.

(c) That the mores of the Arabs and their style of fighting throughout the centuries is a recurrent theme in his work raises the question why it is so recurrent. The implication is that the Saraceni are incorrigible and have not been able to adapt or acculturate. Perhaps all these ethnological sketches for the second and third centuries are meant to be a prolegomenon to his distorted picture of the Arabs in the fourth century when they appear in the pages of the *Res Gestae* as Scenitae raiding Roman territory, while in fact they were *foederati* fighting in the Roman army and defending the imperial frontier.

(3) The choice of the reign of Marcus Aurelius for the first mention of the Arabs in the *Res Gestae* may be referred to again in this context. This choice could be revelatory of one of the principles that guided the composition of the *Res Gestae* and of the author as an analyst of Roman decline.³² This reign saw the barbarians in motion as they had not been before; the emperor triumphed over them, Marcomanni, Quadi, Sarmatians, and presumably Arabs. Since Ammianus conceived of the barbarians as a destructive force³³ and closed his narrative with their greatest victory, Adrianople, the reign that witnessed their menacing appearance on the stage of Roman history naturally attracted his attention, and he thus included in his chapter on the reign an account of the Saracens whom he classed with the other barbarians who were harassing the Roman frontier.

4

It remains to account for Ammianus's unsympathetic attitude toward the Arab Scenitae and examine its roots. Was it cultural, racial, imperial, or a combination of all three?

1. The cultural is the most obvious and natural ground of Ammianus's antipathy. It is that of the sedentary to the nomad, and, what is more, the sedentary whose heritage was none other than that of the culturally dominant

³²On this, see *infra*, pp. 262–68.

³³The role of the Arabs in the century of the imperial crisis, which he treated sketchily in the lost portion of his work, must have convinced him of the dangers that this group of barbarians posed. That century witnessed the elevation to the purple of Philip the Arab, the first Christian Roman emperor, unacceptable to a pagan author, and, what is more important, the revolt of Queen Zenobia of Palmyra against Rome, a revolt that entailed the fall of the whole *pars orientalis*. Perhaps Ammianus was thinking of the Palmyrene Arabs, who first were allies of Rome under Odenathus and then revolted under Zenobia, when he wrote *Saraceni tamen nec amici nobis unquam nec hostes optandi* (RG, IV.4).

Hellenism in the Orient. The Hellenism of the Antiochene and the nomadism of the Scenitae represent the extremes in the cultural world of Oriens.

2. These Scenitae were in Ammianus's opinion not harmless ones, staying away in their deserts, but chronic raiders of the Roman *limes*, which they were accustomed to raid regularly. For one like Ammianus, a *Rhomaïos* who was a professional soldier fighting in the armies that defended the Mediterranean fortress that was Rome, all these people with predatory instincts were objectionable.³⁴

3. It is not entirely clear whether Ammianus suffered from racial prejudice. The evidence in the *Res Gestae* is ambivalent but weighs in favor of his being at least racially conscious. He was a Greek who considered himself as one belonging to the Graeco-Roman establishment,³⁵ the coexistence of whose two cultures was expressed in the phrase "our two languages," *uterque sermo noster*. Other peoples of whom the empire was composed were not considered part of the establishment.³⁶ And if the Pannonians who produced Valentinian³⁷ and the Sarmatians who produced Victor³⁸ fared so badly, the Arabs of the tents must have been completely outside the pale.³⁹

All these grounds are general ones which could explain his aversion to all barbarian groups. But in the case of the Arabs there were very special causes for antipathy which deserve to be pointed out, elements peculiar to Ammianus himself, and they are related to the accident of his birth in Oriens.

Ammianus was not a Greek living in Athens far from the Roman border where these barbarians roamed. He was born and he lived most of his life in Antioch. Consequently, both he and his city, of which he was very proud,

³⁴In this he was in harmony with Muhammad himself and also with the Qur'ān, which spoke of the Arab nomads, the bedouins, the Scenitae of Ammianus, in stridently disapproving terms. This was the attitude of the sedentary Arabs to their less fortunate relatives. They called them *a'rab* to distinguish them from *'arāb*, although sometimes the latter term is inclusive of the former. It was the Caliph Omar who restored the balance when he spoke of them more understandingly and described them as *maddat al-Islam*, the sinews of the Arab Islamic conquests.

³⁵On his description of himself as *Graecus* in the peroration of his work, see *RG*, XXXI.16.9.

³⁶Cf. what has been said of the Iberians, Celts, and Germans of Spain and northern Europe: "Of these the Romans succeeded in assimilating the first two into the Latin civilisation, while mostly failing with the latter"; A. N. Sherwin-White, *Racial Prejudice in Imperial Rome* (Cambridge, 1967), p. 2.

³⁷In his speech against Valens, the rebel Procopius, who considered himself a true Roman, jeers at the Pannonian emperor in racial terms; *RG*, XXVI.7.16. This, of course, comes in a speech put in the mouth of Procopius, but it is almost certain that it reflects Ammianus's own views.

³⁸On Victor, the *magister equitum*, and Ammianus's attitude toward him, see *infra*, pp. 268-74.

³⁹Even Ammianus himself, the fully assimilated *Rhomaïos*, was not taken seriously by the exclusive Roman aristocracy.

knew the Arabs intimately. Of all the barbarians whom he discusses, the Arabs were the ones he knew best because they were his neighbors:

(1) Ammianus belonged to the Greek community of Antioch whose ancestors had emigrated from the Greek homeland to the Orient after the conquests of Alexander. Such Greeks would have been especially aware of their cultural superiority over the *barbaroi* of the region in view of the historical circumstances which transported them to the Orient as representatives of the superior Hellenic culture which was imposed by force of arms on the lands and peoples of the Semitic Orient. Traces of such awareness of cultural superiority on the part of Ammianus are discernible in his narrative.⁴⁰

(2) Relations between the Seleucids and the Arabs were hostile. When Pompey appeared in the Orient and subjugated the area to Rome, the Arabs had fallen heirs to almost the whole Seleucid patrimony. Throughout the Roman period, Arab relations with the Romans, the successors of the Seleucids as masters of the area, remained hostile and finally resulted in the elimination of the Arab military establishment in the third century.⁴¹ Even so, the raids of the nomads continued against the Roman *limes* and the region of Antioch, so close to Scenarchia.

Thus of all the barbarians who appear in the *Res Gestae*, Ammianus had a special interest in the Arabs, the people who crossed swords with the Seleucids and the Romans for almost six centuries. Both his enduring interest in the Arabs and his antipathy are thus explicable not only on the three grounds that have been explored but also on historical ones. And yet he is controlled in the expression of his antipathy, with no outbursts such as those directed against other barbarian groups, as the Goths, the Alans, and the Huns, in spite of the fact that these were distant from him and his Antioch. His control was probably due to the fact that he viewed these barbarians as a concerned Roman and they were far more dangerous than the Arabs and posed a more serious threat to the empire. If so, this would be a tribute to his objectivity.

The last great Roman historian is also the first of the Byzantine period whose pages reflect an image of the Arabs. He precludes a series of Byzantine historians who contributed each in his own way⁴² to the formation of an image, familiar in the mirror of Byzantine historiography.

⁴⁰As when he describes Macedonian rule in Osroene under Seleucus Nicator and contrasts the Seleucid urban establishment with the rustic dwellings, *agrestibus habitaculis*, of the Semites; *RG*, XIV.8.6. Splendid as the Hellenistic urban establishment throughout Oriens undoubtedly was, the Arab one in such centers as Petra, Palmyra, and Edessa could hardly be described as rustic.

⁴¹On this, see the first three chapters in *RA*.

⁴²On Ammianus and Procopius, see *supra*, p. 112 and note 24.

II. AMMIANUS AND THE *FOEDERATI*

Ammianus was an avowedly military historian and the customs of peoples such as the Arabs must have been peripheral to his main interests despite the fact that ethnologies were a regular feature of classical historiography. It is the Arab *foederati* that were his main concern, and it is the elucidation of his treatment of this group of Arabs in the *Res Gestae* that is more important to examine both for recovering their role in, and contribution to, the wars of the fourth century and for the new light that this examination will throw on Ammianus as a historian.⁴³

As has been indicated earlier, Ammianus confused the *foederati* with the *scenitae*. He never referred to them as *foederati*, the correct technical name by which they were known. He associated them with the *scenitae* and instead of subsuming the two under the more general and capacious term *Saraceni*, he identified the one with the other and was as antipathetic to the former as he was to the latter.

The grounds of his antipathy to the *foederati* are more significant than those to the *scenitae* since they are related to important issues in Roman history. Before exploring these grounds, it is necessary to analyze the passages in the *Res Gestae* where the *foederati* are mentioned or should have been mentioned for a better understanding of these grounds. The result of this examination will show that Ammianus engaged in a series of *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi* which involved these *foederati* throughout the extant books of the *Res Gestae* and probably the others that have not survived.

1

It is difficult to ascertain accurately the series of *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi* that Ammianus indulged in for the reigns of Constantius, Julian, and Jovian. In the case of the first,⁴⁴ the difficulty derives principally from the lack of sources with which Ammianus's account can be compared. Even the one explicit reference to the Arabs for the year 337 in Julian's *Panegyricus* cannot be checked in the *Res Gestae* since the books that gave an account of this first phase of Constantius's Persian War are lost. On the other hand,

⁴³While Ammianus's *ethnologia* on the Arabs has been noticed by Arabists and anthropologists, references to the *foederati*, although sometimes noted, have not received attention from those who have written on Ammianus as a historian or even from those who have written on him specifically as a military historian, e.g., Thompson, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, and G. A. Crump, "Ammianus Marcellinus as a Military Historian," *Historia*, 27 (1975). The Arabs are mentioned only once in the former work (p. 119), with reference to the *ethnologia*, and never in the latter. The omission is understandable; it is the task of those who deal with the Arab profile of Roman history to examine these references as their contribution to Ammianic studies.

⁴⁴See *supra*, pp. 75-78.

references to the Arabs for the reigns of Julian and Jovian are many.⁴⁵ They have been analyzed in detail, but they are such as not to admit of being used with absolute certainty as a basis for evaluation of Ammianus's performance as a historiographer. It is, however, for the reign of Valens and for the short period immediately after his death at Adrianople, during the siege of Constantinople by the Goths, that Ammianus's worth as a historian admits of being closely examined.

A

Throughout the six books devoted to the relatively long reign of Valens there is not a single explicit reference to the Arab *foederati*. Previous sections in this book on the reign of Valens and on Adrianople have shown how active these *foederati* were, while the information has to be extracted not from the main military historian of the reign but from ecclesiastical historians and one later secular historian, Zosimus. Ammianus's omissions may be summarized as follows:

1. Those pertaining to the last triennium of the reign of Valens, during which the scene of Byzantine-Arab relations in the Orient was dominated by the exploits of Queen Mavia.

2. Those pertaining to the Gothic War and the battle of Adrianople: (a) the participation of the *foederati* in the defense of Constantinople before the battle was joined—missing, but documented by Zosimus; (b) their participation in the battle when it was joined—argued for and inferred from Ammianus's narrative. Only their role in the defense of Constantinople after Adrianople is mentioned.

3. For the decade before the outbreak of Mavia's revolt in 375—not a single explicit⁴⁶ reference to the Arabs for this period, in spite of the fact that there were occasions when they might have been mentioned in connection with Byzantine-Persian relations.

Thus for the fourteen years of Valens's reign there is not a single explicit reference to the Arabs and only one during the short period of Gratian's sole rule, when they appear with no indication that they were *foederati* affiliated with Mavia's Arabs.

B

Two previous sections have pieced together the role of the Arabs in the reign of Valens, while this section has shown the extent of Ammianus's silence on that role. It remains to analyze the one reference⁴⁷ in the *Res Gestae* to the

⁴⁵See *supra*, pp. 107–24.

⁴⁶As has been suspected (*supra*, pp. 170–71), the *foederati* who joined Valens against the rebel Procopius in 366 were possibly Arab.

⁴⁷For the examination of this reference in its military context, see *supra*, pp. 176–78.

Arabs during the siege of Constantinople in this new context of Ammianus's silence and to discover the series of *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi* that it involves.

1. He prefaces his account of the Saracen contribution by drawing the reader's attention to what he has written about them, i.e., their origin and their customs (*mores*).

This prefatory note seems otiose. He had spoken of them and had remembered them in his account of the reign of Julian many times, and the prefatory note can be interpreted correctly only as an attempt on the part of Ammianus to obscure the fact that these were *foederati*⁴⁸ and to ally them with the *Saraceni* whom he had previously equated with the *scenitae*. This is clinched by the fact that he speaks of having described their *mores*, customs, whereas it would be more relevant to say that he had remembered their participation in Julian's Persian campaign. Thus at the end of the *Res Gestae* the reader is reminded of the many uncomplimentary references to the Saracens throughout the work.

2. He then describes their military competence, which consists in their ability to make stealthy raids and not to engage in regular pitched battles as the disciplined legionaries. Of the *Saracenorum cuneus*, he says: *ad furta magis expeditionalium rerum, quam ad concursatorias habilis pugnans*.

This is a repetition of the judgment he has passed on them while taking notice of their participation in Julian's Persian campaign: *ad furta bellorum appositi* (RG, XXIII.3.8). It was a low estimate of their fighting capacity, and the judgment deserves some comments. The Arabs, as mounted *auxilia*, were no doubt adapted to this type of fighting, and this was indeed part of their assignment as auxiliary troops. Ammianus seems to judge them for what they were not, and there is a pejorative tone in his language, suggesting that he was not merely describing but also censuring.⁴⁹ Zosimus expressed himself more objectively and informatively when he described to future generations what Ammianus had pejoratively and disapprovingly expressed—namely, the fleetness of their horses, the efficacy of their pikes, and their skilled horseman-

⁴⁸After drawing attention to them as *Saraceni*, Ammianus reverts to the use of some technical military expressions, such as *cuneus*, *orientalis turma*, which might have implied to the reader that they were *foederati*, but does not explicitly state it.

⁴⁹His employment of the term *furta* is revealing. Although it can imply a military operation of a certain type the *auxilia* performed, it does have a pejorative implication that allies it to robbery; indeed, in his description of the fighting ways of the Sarmatians and the Quadi he uses similar terms and is more explicit as he uses the term *latrocinium quibus ad latrocinia magis quam aperto habilibus Marti* (RG, XVIII.11.2). Ammianus handled the Arab contribution to the battle of Constantinople in a manner that allied it to his own conception of the technique they were adapted for, namely, *furta bellorum*. The battle of Trasimene itself might be described by an unsympathetic and disapproving critic as an ambush, *furta*.

ship in general.⁵⁰ The different attitudes of the two historians are thus reflected when they describe either the same engagement or two similar engagements, the one historian unsympathetic, the other appreciative.

The Arab federate record, however, shows that the *foederati* could acquit themselves remarkably well in pitched battles too, as the accounts of Sozomen clearly show when describing the victory of Queen Mavia over the *magister militum* Julius.⁵¹

3. He describes the Saracens in Constantinople as having been summoned there recently: *recens illuc accersitus*. The statement is not informative on who summoned them, whence and when they were summoned, and on their whereabouts before then. A previous section (*supra*, pp. 175–83) summarized their movements in 378: their departure from Oriens with Valens and their participation in the Gothic War before and in the battle of Adrianople. Ammianus's statement isolates them from all these important antecedents and obscures their role.⁵²

4. The victory of the Saracens over the Goths is not ascribed to the former's prowess since, according to Ammianus, the Gothic-Saracen encounter

⁵⁰Not only does Ammianus conceal the political fact of their federate status, but he also conceals the military one, namely, that they were horsemen, which only the reader who is familiar with the term *cuneus* would be aware of. Without this awareness, the unsuspecting reader might understand that no cavalry was involved in the engagement, and the verbs used, such as *erupit*, *discessere*, *inseruit*, give no indication that the subjects of those verbs were horsemen. Zosimus is the one who described the maneuvers of the Arab horse before Constantinople, of which Ammianus was undoubtedly aware; he had spoken of these horses in the ethnographic digression (*RG*, XIV.4.3), as *equorum pernicium*, and it is significant that he used this phrase in the *ethnologia* and not in describing their performance in a military context. This method of separating data about the Arabs and assigning them to two different contexts is noteworthy. There is probably another instance of this, when he spoke of the *foederati* (*supra*, note 46) as *robustis auxiliis* in a military context and of the Saraceni as *robusti bellatores* in the *ethnologia* (*RG*, XIV.4). Whatever virtues the Saraceni have are assigned by Ammianus to the ethnological context where they are pictured as a menace to the empire.

⁵¹The successes of Mavia's troops against the army of the Orient imply that her Saracens were not entirely uninstructed in fighting pitched battles against disciplined armies; this could suggest a precedent in the annals of Arab-Roman relations, namely, when the Saracens of Palmyra under Odenathus beat the regular armies of Shāpūr and later under Zenobia occupied the whole of the *pars orientalis*. Since only a hundred years separated Mavia from Zenobia, it is possible that skills acquired by the Saracens in the wars of the third century as regular soldiers in a disciplined army of a city-state, Palmyra, may have survived or persisted among them.

If Ṭabarī is right in his account, namely, that the battle of Ctesiphon was won for Julian by the Arabs, then these would have distinguished themselves in two consecutive decades, before the walls of the capitals of the two world empires. Ammianus is uninformative on one and misleading on the other.

⁵²The use of *recens* could suggest to the reader that the Saracens appeared only in the last stage of the Gothic War, and so the term might have been deliberately used to convey that impression.

ended in a draw. The victory was due to a strange event, *novo eventu*, and not to their military superiority.

In addition to the intrinsic improbability that attaches to his account, there is the testimonial evidence of the ecclesiastical historians who, however briefly, did notice this engagement and referred to no extraordinary events but to the Arab performance itself.⁵³ The similar engagement recorded by Zosimus provides significant details that would explain the Arab victory over the Goths.

5. The event itself smacks of the horror story; Ammianus tells how the Gothic host rather incredibly lost its self-confidence because of the terror that the conduct of *one single* Saracen induced in it and how their courage or what remained of it deteriorated further after they saw the walls of the city, its houses and population, and the straits.

The various elements in this strange account may be discussed in some detail. (a) That the Saracen fought half-naked may have been due to the excessive heat⁵⁴ that prevailed in August and which Ammianus refers to shortly before when writing the account of the battle of Adrianople (RG, XXXI.12.13). (b) That the Gothic host was frightened by the cries of the Saracen, *subraucum et lugubre strepens*, sounds incredible, especially as the Goths themselves, in Ammianus's own phrase, were known for their unholy shrieks, which they uttered a few days before at Adrianople, *ululante barbara plebe ferum et triste* (RG, XXXI.12.11). (c) There is no reason to disbelieve what Ammianus says on the Saracen's sucking the blood of his Gothic adversary after he killed him; but what may be rejected is Ammianus's view that this frightened the Goths and made the whole army lose its self-confidence.⁵⁵ This incident could have helped induce terror in the Goths, but it surely could not be the key to understanding their defeat; the choice of this one "exploit" to the exclusion of all others, such as Zosimus recounts for the same or a similar engagement, leads to the conclusion that Ammianus was unfairly selective.⁵⁶

⁵³*Supra*, pp. 177–78.

⁵⁴Cf. what the monk Malchus says on the Saracens of northern Syria, who go about with little clothing except for a covering around the loins because of the excessive heat; *infra*, p. 286, B.2.

⁵⁵The barbarians in ancient times were not unacquainted with bloody scenes such as the one Ammianus describes; cf. what Strabo says on the Germanic Cimbri and their female seers' draining the blood of their prisoners, for which see Sherwin-White, *Racial Prejudice in Imperial Rome*, p. 10. Ammianus's account of the Saracen's sucking the blood of his adversary may be interpreted as a revenge (Arabic *tha'r*) for the heavy losses sustained by the Saracens at the battle of Adrianople. If so, it could be indirect evidence for the participation of the Arabs in that battle.

⁵⁶Thus the Saracen who "distinguished" himself before the walls of Constantinople could very well have sucked the blood of his vanquished adversary, probably to reflect the consumption of his victory. But that later historians should have swallowed Ammianus's account

6. All this detailed account of the deliverance of the city is prefaced with the introductory sentence in XXXI.16.4 that the check administered to the Goths was effected by a *caeleste numen*, with the implication that the Saracens were merely the passive agents of that *numen*.

In so doing, Ammianus has paganized the true causes of the deliverance of Constantinople. His more sober pagan colleague, Zosimus, does not speak of a *numen* (if he was recording the same engagement that Ammianus describes), while Ammianus, not an ecclesiastical historian but a secular one, has to resort to supernatural factors to explain the deliverance of the city and thus obscures the role of the Saracens.

If a supernatural power did intervene to deliver the city from the Goths, surely a more objective historian might have sought it in the God of the Christians. As has been explained earlier in this book, the Saracens of Mavia fought with the consciousness that they were orthodox Christians, first against the Arian Valens and then against the Arian Goths, and they might have attributed their victory to their unswerving orthodoxy and their faith in Christ the Victorious.⁵⁷

One does not have to go that far, and the foregoing explanation has been offered only because Ammianus introduced the supernatural in his account. Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret, although ecclesiastical historians, do not involve the supernatural in their accounts. They speak as sober secular historians do and refer to the valor of the Saracens and the efforts of the Empress Domina in supplying the sinews of the defense from her own jewels.⁵⁸

7. Finally, Ammianus concealed the fact that the Saracen *cuneus* or *turma*

uncritically is rather startling (see, for instance, M. Manitius, in *CMH*, vol. 1, p. 252), while Gibbon combined both Ammianus's and Zosimus's account, also clearly indicating that he thought they were the same engagement.

It is noteworthy in this context of blood and bloodletting that Ammianus follows up this episode with an account of the massacre of the Goths in Asia by the *magister militum* Julius. While Roman historians join Ammianus, and rightly so, in lauding Julius's decisive action, they also repeat with him his horror at what he chose to select of the episode of the Saracen. At least the Saracen's bloodthirstiness was in a fair and open trial of strength, while that of Julius was mass murder in cold blood and plain treachery. It is of interest to note that this Julius was the very same one who had been beaten by Mavia's *foederati*; *supra*, p. 151 and note 51.

⁵⁷Orthodox ecclesiastical and hagiographic literature of the time interpreted the defeats of Arian Valens, present and prospective, in theological terms; on St. Isaac of Constantinople and his encounter with Valens before Adrianople, see *Vita Isaacii*, pp. 246–47; Theodoret, *HE*, IV.31. It is perfectly possible that accounts of the miraculous deliverance of Constantinople from a Christian point of view were in circulation, and, naturally, they would not have appealed to Ammianus. This may be the explanation for his resort to this *deus ex machina* as a counterblast to a similar explanation emanating from the Christian camp. That the God-guarded city was protected by the Virgin Mary herself was a line of thought developed later, but some beginning along such lines might have been made already in the fourth century.

⁵⁸See *supra*, note 53.

that delivered the city belonged to the troops of the very same queen whose military exploits he had passed over in silence while writing his narrative for the reign of Valens.⁵⁹ The reader gains the impression from Ammianus's narrative that the Saracens before Constantinople were rude and nude soldiers, mere mercenaries in the service of Byzantium. Previous chapters in this book have drawn the picture of Mavia's *foederati* and have elucidated their role in both the affairs of the *ecclesia* and the *imperium*. It may be extravagant to expect Ammianus to bring all this out, but at least a hint or indication of their background is expected.

It is in this fashion that the Arabs figure for the last time in the *Res Gestae*, in a horror story. They make their exit from its pages not as Mavia's Christianized *foederati*, fighting for the empire, but as Saraceni, anonymous, related to the Scenitae whose *mores* (customs) Ammianus recorded for the first time when he discussed the reign of Marcus Aurelius; to these *mores* he continually refers throughout the *Res Gestae*, and it is with a reference to them that he concludes his account of the Saracens in the last chapter of his work.⁶⁰

2

The validity of the charge that Ammianus indulged in a series of *suppressio veri*⁶¹ concerning the Arab *foederati* of Queen Mavia depends on whether affirmative answers can be given to two questions: (1) Did Ammianus know of the exploits of Mavia's *foederati*? (2) Ought he to have included an account of them in his narrative?

A

In answer to the first question, it is impossible to believe that Ammianus was not informed about Queen Mavia: (*a*) during her revolt, Ammianus was

⁵⁹This anonymity has plagued the entire image of the Roman Arabs in the *RG*. They are presented as types, not individuals. The only Arab mentioned by name is Podosacis—a Persian not a Roman Arab (*supra*, pp. 119–23). But from the inscriptions and from the ecclesiastical historians, it is established that the Roman Arabs had significant historical figures in the fourth century such as Imru' al-Qays and Mavia; other names still lie buried in the Roman limitrophe.

⁶⁰This analysis of Ammianus's account of the Saracens before Constantinople has been undertaken on the assumption that he was not describing the same engagement as the one recorded by Zosimus, which in the opinion of the present writer took place before the battle of Adrianople. Zosimus's account of a similar engagement was invoked in order to show the extent of Ammianus's *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi*. But for those who believe it is an account of the same engagement, not much analysis is needed to indicate Ammianus's omissions since a collation of the two accounts will show this without much argumentation.

It is of interest to note that for reasons different from those of Ammianus, the ecclesiastical historian Philostorgius is silent on Mavia. He was a Eunomian, while Mavia was an Orthodox queen in arms against Arian Valens.

⁶¹The *suggestio falsi* has already been discussed in the analysis of his account of the Arab role in the defense of Constantinople; *supra*, pp. 176–78.

living in Antioch, quite close to the scene of the Arab revolt, which was far-reaching in its range and finally brought the Romans to their knees; (b) furthermore, the marriage of Mavia's daughter to Victor was a matter of some importance in the social history of the Orient—that of a barbarian princess to the *magister equitum*, whom he mentions several times in his work and who must have been known to him personally.⁶²

The answer to the second question must also be in the affirmative: (a) Ammianus was writing a very detailed history of the reign of Valens that occupied six books; the inclusion of such important details certainly fell within his frame of reference. (b) Ammianus was a military historian recording the *res gestae* of Roman emperors; military operations that entailed the defeat of the *magister militum* of Valens certainly would have been relevant to his purposes. (c) It is well known that for the period covered by the last six books Ammianus discarded the annalistic method of presentation and adopted the topographical, but within this topographical framework the wars of Mavia in the Orient surely should have found a very congenial place, especially as these wars were fought in the Diocese of Oriens, not far from Antioch where he hailed from. (d) The increasing importance of the barbarians during the reign of the two Pannonians, which the last six books covered, is well known; and he records it in detail. Since the Saracens of Mavia counted as barbarians, his silence on them for Valens's reign must have been deliberate, and all the more so in view of their victories, first over the army of the Orient and then over the barbarian Goths after Adrianople. (e) His silence on Queen Mavia is all the more striking in view of the fact that his model, Tacitus, has rather a celebrated account of the revolt of another queen against Rome during the principate of Nero, namely, that of Boudicca, the Briton queen of the Iceni.⁶³

It is therefore safe to assume that Ammianus's omission of a section in his *Res Gestae* on Mavia is an example of studied silence.

B

The conclusion drawn in the preceding section on Ammianus's studied silence on Mavia and her *foederati* may now be related to what he himself says on *silentium* in the opening and concluding sections of the last hexad.

He opens the hexad with a statement on his method of selecting material for his work: that the true principles of writing history prescribe attention to important events and omission of insignificant details. Of the latter he gives four instances related to imperial table-talk, the common soldiers (*gregarii*

⁶²On Ammianus and Victor, see *infra*, pp. 268–74.

⁶³For more on Boudicca and how her example and place in Tacitus's work might actually have discouraged Ammianus from mentioning anything about Mavia, see *infra*, pp. 263–64. For Boudicca, see Tacitus, *Annals*, XIV.31–37.

militēs), insignificant forts, and names of those who pay their respects to the city praetors (*RG*, XXVI.1.1–2)!

Both the revolt of Mavia and the subsequent participation of her *foederati* in the Gothic War do not admit of being classed in any of these categories of insignificant details that Ammianus enumerates. Both fall in the category of *res militaris* and they were not insignificant since they concerned the limitrophe of Oriens for a triennium and entailed the defeat of the *magister utriusque militiae* and active federate participation in the Gothic War.

What is more, there is evidence that these exploits were considered significant at the time and shortly after. They attracted the attention of some three historians who, furthermore, were not military but ecclesiastical ones, and yet these went out of their way to describe purely military matters that fell outside their interests and frame of reference, a sure sign that these exploits were quite striking and merited recording. To these may be added Zosimus, a secular historian who could not be accused of partiality toward the Arabs (as the ecclesiastical historians could be because of their interest in Mavia's orthodoxy) and who devoted a relatively long section to the contribution of the Saracens to the Gothic War, although he was not, like Ammianus, devoting six books of his work to the reign of Valens but dispatched it in a very short account.

Thus a close examination of this opening passage of the last hexad and the series of *suppressio veri* on the Arab *foederati* in these books for the reign of Valens suggests that Ammianus violated the principles that he set out to apply. One could conclude after this analysis that the section was written to justify his omissions and to guard himself against the charge of having suppressed these facts deliberately. Presumably he thought others would record these events and the question would arise in the future why he, the military historian of the reign, omitted them. In these opening paragraphs of the hexad, he gives himself away and also gives the impression that he is conscious of the series of omissions he is indulging in.

The concluding paragraph of the last hexad, which also closes his work in its entirety, is intimately related to the one that opens the same hexad. Its relevant part in this context is his conception of the duty of the historian, the pursuit of *veritas*, and what *veritas* consists in. While his model, Tacitus, spoke of writing *sine ira et studio*, Ammianus may be described as writing *sine silentio et mendacio*, thus substituting for the Tacitean *ira et studium* the two concepts *silentium* and *mendacium*. Although he had discussed *silentium* and *mendacium* in the opening section of the hexad,⁶⁴ he reverts to them at the end

⁶⁴In *RG*, XXVI.1.1–2, where they appear paraphrastically, e.g., *ut et pericula declinentur veritati saepe contingua*, which relates to the concept of *mendacium*, and the long statement on omissions which follows and which relates to *silentium*. *Silentium* does not appear as such but the verb *silere* does, in the passage where he speaks of *exiguus castellis*.

of his work, and this suggests that he had them on his mind and betrays his concern for what might be said about his success in pursuing *veritas* through avoiding *silentium* and *mendacium*. This is further confirmed by a revealing addition in his statement,⁶⁵ that he never *knowingly* ventured to debase his history through silence or falsehood. *Numquam ut arbitror sciens* is a significant addition to what he had already said about his avoidance of *silentium* and *mendacium* and reflects extreme care to guard himself against any charge of having indulged in both.

It is now possible to make an assessment of Ammianus's handling of the history of Mavia's *foederati* in relation to these two concepts, especially as, chronologically, their history lies exactly within the period covered by the last hexad, opened and closed with sections on the avoidance of *silentium* and *mendacium* in the pursuit of *veritas*. *Mendacium* he did not commit; *suggestio falsi* he did, as in his account of the Arab participation in the defense of Constantinople. But it is *silentium* that he indulged in and he did so in a large way.

Perhaps the foregoing analysis has not failed to corroborate the view that Ammianus is not entirely impartial. The list of omissions in which the Arabs are involved may be added to others where his impartiality has been impugned, in cases such as those of Gallus Caesar and the elder Theodosius.⁶⁶

3

The ascertaining of the series of *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi* involving the Arab *foederati* undertaken in the preceding section clearly implies that Ammianus was antipathetic to them and his attitude to them calls for an explanation.

The grounds of his antipathy toward the Arab *scenitae* have been explored. Although the *foederati* were distinct from the *scenitae*, they were related to them and no doubt shared with the latter some of their customs and ways of life. So some of the grounds of his antipathy to the *scenitae* must be applicable to the *foederati* as well. If Ammianus suffered from some racial prejudice against the *scenitae*, he would have extended this to the *foederati*, who, like the *scenitae*, were ethnically Arabs. Furthermore, in spite of their being on a more advanced cultural level than the *scenitae*, still they would have been viewed by Ammianus, the Greek Antiochene, as *barbaroi*.

As has been indicated earlier, Ammianus confused for his reader the *foederati* with the *scenitae*. But he himself knew that the *foederati* were not the same as the *scenitae*, since among other things they were not nomadic raiders of the Roman frontier but its sedentarized defenders and watchmen. That this

⁶⁵*Opus veritatem professum numquam ut arbitror sciens silentio ausus corrumpere vel mendacio* (RG, XXXI.16.9).

⁶⁶See Thompson, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, pp. 56–71, 85–107.

has not elicited from him any measure of approval suggests that his antipathy derives from other sources and it is these that are more worth exploring.

1. He knew about their revolts, and this must have suggested to him that these were unruly Saracens who did not abide by the terms of the *foedus* whereby they were supposed to be defending the empire and not assaulting its frontiers. He was fair in describing their leaving Julian during the Persian campaign, but from his point of view as a soldier what was important was the fact itself of their desertion and not its causes,⁶⁷ however justified or understandable these might have been.

2. Ammianus was a professional soldier, who served as an infantryman in Gaul and in Oriens on the staff of Ursicinus, and he must have shared the classical Roman view that the strength of the Roman army lay in its legions, which always won the victories, and that the cavalry was auxiliary and protective. The rise to importance of the horse, which, moreover, was ridden and commanded by barbarians,⁶⁸ must have been an unpleasant spectacle for him. The Arab *foederati* were from his point of view barbarian horsemen, and thus it is possible that a personal element was involved in his judgment—that of an infantryman belonging to an arm in warfare that was on the wane, especially as this was dramatically demonstrated by the victory of the Gothic horse at Adrianople.⁶⁹

3. The *foederati* of Queen Mavia were Christianized Arabs. They would have been more acceptable to him if they had remained pagan, affiliated with a religion which, unlike Christianity, carried with it no ecumenical claims and had not become the state religion of the empire.⁷⁰

⁶⁷Much more disapproving would have been his comments on the revolt of the Palmyrene Arabs under Zenobia, who annexed almost the entire *pars orientalis*. Whether in the lost books of the *Res Gestae* he did discuss the Palmyrenes, and, if he did, whether he referred to them as Arabs or, as Zosimus was to do later, simply as Palmyrenes, is not clear. His description of the Arabs as *natio perniciosa* (*RG*, XIV.4.7) would have been justified in the case of the Palmyra of Zenobia.

⁶⁸On his low estimate of the tactical ability of barbarian cavalry and their employment of *furta*, see *supra*, note 49.

⁶⁹In his account of the battle of Adrianople, Ammianus praises the infantry at the expense of the cavalry (*RG*, XXXI.13.2.5). On his curious description of the military engagements involving the cavalry of the *foederati* of Queen Mavia in the defense of Constantinople, see *supra*, pp. 176–78.

⁷⁰This is predicated on the assumption, which is the present writer's view, that Ammianus was not only pagan but also anti-Christian. The passages in which he discusses Christians and Christianity have often been discussed; see, for instance, Ensslin's chapter "Ammian und das Christentum" in "Zur Geschichtsschreibung und Weltanschauung des Ammianus Marcellinus," *Klio*, 16 (1923), pp. 96–102; see also the recent and careful analysis of these passages in R. C. Blockley's chapter "Ammianus on Christianity" in "Ammianus Marcellinus: A Study of His Historiography and Political Thought," *Collection Latomus*, 141 (1975), pp. 123–36, with an up-to-date bibliography. The passages in which Ammianus displays no anti-Christian bias and sometimes pro-Christian sentiments have been rightly suspected of being dictated by prudence

4. Finally, his antipathy to the *foederati* might have been derivative from that of Julian, whose views on the *foederati* are well known.⁷¹ Julian was his hero, and it is quite likely that Ammianus, who worshiped at the shrine of pagan imperial Rome, might have been influenced by his hero's views on the Arabs, both as Christians and barbarians. Furthermore, Ammianus may have suspected that it was an Arab *foederatus* who had killed his hero Julian, and if this was the case, the Arabs would have changed for Ammianus the course of Roman history in the fourth century as well as that of his own career, so closely related to Julian's.

These grounds explain the picture he drew of the Arabs during the reign of Julian when the Arabs do appear in the pages of the *Res Gestae*, but they do not explain the complete withdrawal of any explicit reference whatsoever to the Arabs in the entire reign of Valens, a relatively long reign, especially as they were unusually active in that reign throughout the whole of Oriens, and so much so that they did not fail to attract by their military performance the attention of other historians, and, what is more, ecclesiastical ones.

4

Ammianus's reasons for the complete withdrawal of Mavia's *foederati* from the entire scene during the long reign of Valens, of which he wrote the most detailed account, have to be sought elsewhere than in the areas examined in the preceding section, in a larger and more important territory. The exploration of this territory will reveal that his reasons are related to fundamental problems that pertain to his composition of the last six books of the *Res Gestae* and to the structure of Roman history in the fourth century.

A

It is generally recognized that these last six books have no hero as the preceding ones have Julian and, to a lesser degree, Ursicinus.⁷² And yet there

and political necessity. Even if some of these passages were written before the Theodosian repression of 392, the fact remains that Ammianus wrote his *Res Gestae* under very Orthodox emperors, and he must have even then read the signals correctly as to the fate of paganism and probably had done so as early as 363 when Julian died. One might add that these passages (not too many) were also dictated by a concern on the part of Ammianus to appear as an objective historian—an example of burning incense to *veritas*, which he set up as the ideal the historian should strive for. It is the same method he employed in his evaluation of the various emperors of the fourth century, by writing on their vices as well as on their virtues. In the case of Christianity, the balance of the two kinds of passages, those that are for Christianity and those that are against it, is decidedly in favor of the latter, and this must represent Ammianus's real thoughts on the subject. It is impossible to believe that a dedicated fourth-century pagan, writing when Ammianus did and witnessing the disintegration of paganism under the determined assault of a universalistic and exclusive religion, could have been anything but anti-Christian.

⁷¹On Julian and the Arabs, see *supra*, pp. 132–35.

⁷²On the problem of the last six books, see Thompson, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, pp. 108–33; Syme, *Ammianus and the Historia Augusta*, pp. 12–16.

was no lack of Romans who could easily have qualified as heroes. Valentinian could have been one, a distinguished military emperor, utterly dedicated to the service of Rome, and so much so that he literally died in a fit of anger while rebuking the envoys of the barbarians who had molested the frontier. But Ammianus ruled him out, having made his vices neutralize his virtues, and instead resuscitated the figure of the elder Theodosius, under whose son he was writing his work, and almost made him the “hero” of these six books.⁷³ Other curiosities have been noted about these books, such as the fact that discussions of religious matters have been almost completely banished from them⁷⁴ and the fact that Ammianus ends his accounts of events in the West⁷⁵ not in the year 378 but three years earlier, in 375.

These six books, then, were carefully constructed, involving a series of *suppressio veri* that is striking. It is against this background that Ammianus’s complete silence on Mavia’s exploits may be fruitfully set for an explanation.

1. An account of Mavia’s exploits, which may with some measure of truth be described as both heroic and romantic, would have given these last six books if not a hero at least a heroine. If Ammianus did not think of Mavia in heroic terms, his readers might have, attracted by this curious episode in the reign of Valens—that of a Saracen queen who defied Valens, beat the army of the Orient and the *magister militum* himself, forced Rome to conclude a *foedus* with her on her own terms, married her daughter to the *magister equitum praesentalis*, and contributed a contingent of mounted spearmen who fought meritoriously in the Gothic War and in the defense of Constantinople itself. In a cheerless period in Roman history this would have been a bright spot and might have stolen the show in the work of a historian who so carefully constructed the last six books as a chronicle of unrelieved gloom.⁷⁶

⁷³On the elder Theodosius, see Thompson, *op. cit.*, pp. 87–107; a résumé of how Ammianus handled his career may be found on p. 107.

⁷⁴Thompson, *op. cit.*, pp. 114–17. The passage in *RG*, XXX.9.5 on Valentinian’s toleration was correctly interpreted by Thompson, pp. 115–16.

⁷⁵Although he does give an account of the elevation of Valentinian II (*RG*, XXX.10.4–6) and of Gratian’s campaign against the Alamanni (*RG*, XXXI.10).

⁷⁶The only reference to the Saracens in the last six books comes after the death of Valens when they defended Constantinople against the Goths; see *supra*, pp. 176–78, where it has been pointed out that these were none other than the Saracen *foederati* of Mavia. The complete silence of Ammianus on Mavia has succeeded in leaving these Saracens in Book XXXI unaffiliated and unidentified and in presenting them as bloodthirsty savages. The question arises why, after suppressing all the facts of Mavia’s career during the reign of Valens, Ammianus chose to record the Arab presence during the defense of Constantinople. Possibly he could not avoid it since this was a military exploit that he could not ignore, especially as it would have been recorded by others, as in fact it was, and he did not wish to give the impression that he was deliberately indulging in *silentium*, which he deprecated. But in describing them as he did, Ammianus succeeded in suppressing the fact that they were Mavia’s *foederati*, belittled their achievement, and transferred the credit for the deliverance of Constantinople from the Saracen horsemanship attended by religious orthodox zeal to that of a pagan *numen*—evidence of his

His silence on Mavia is all the more remarkable in view of the fact that his model Tacitus did not consider it beneath his dignity to tell the fortunes of another queen. Tacitus had recorded the history of Fritgausus's widow, Boudicca, the queen of the Iceni, a former *foederata* of Rome, who incited an insurrection of the Britons against Rome after her two daughters were violated; she defeated the Roman legions but then was vanquished by Suetonius Paulinus and finally took her own life. The similarities in the careers of the two queens are striking, but the outcome was different. Mavia triumphed, married her daughter to the *magister equitum*, and returned to the Roman fold and to her duties as an ally. The recounting of the exploits of Mavia would have immediately brought to the mind of the reader or the listener in Rome who knew his Tacitus those of the Briton queen,⁷⁷ but it would have put Mavia in a favorable light especially repellent to Ammianus since Mavia's Christianity, unlike Boudicca's Druidism, was the central issue in the former's revolt and a bond that linked the Saracen *foederati* to the empire in spite of doctrinal differences.

That the palm in the account of the reign of Valens might have gone to a Christianized barbarian and, what is more, to a woman⁷⁸—a Saracenissa—would understandably have been intolerable or unacceptable to a pagan *miles quondam et Graecus* such as Ammianus was.

2. Not only Valentinian could have been the hero of the last six books, but also the *magister equitum praesentalis*, Victor, whose career has been sketched in a previous chapter as the new type of Roman general, not a mere soldier but a soldier-statesman who rendered important services to both the *ecclesia* and the *imperium* and to their mutual relationships. His floruit was in the reign of Valens, but Ammianus handled his career in such a way as to leave an indistinct picture of one of the most distinguished officers of the Magisterium of the Orient in this period.⁷⁹

It is perhaps too much to expect Ammianus to present as the hero of

reluctance to recognize the success of imperial federate policy in the fourth century, at least with the Arabs; for more on this, see *infra*, pp. 265–68.

⁷⁷And also of Zenobia, whom apparently he did not admire; *RG*, XXVIII.4.9. In spite of her defection and defeat, the figure of Zenobia was an attractive one in the annals of the third century. Recollection of Zenobia by the Romans to whom the *Res Gestae* were read and in whose city that queen spent the last years of her life, in Tibur married to a senator, would have improved the image of Mavia, who flourished not long after Zenobia had died in Rome.

⁷⁸Women do not fare well with Ammianus; for the uncomplimentary picture of Gallic women-warriors, see *RG*, XV.12.1. Nor do queens, either; see his views on Semiramis, Cleopatra, Artemisia, and Zenobia (*RG*, XXVIII.4.9).

⁷⁹Gibbon seems to have appreciated him; see *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. 3, p. 112; and so, more recently, has Waas in a prosopographic notice; see his *Germanen*, pp. 130–33. On Victor, and Ammianus and Victor, see *supra*, pp. 164–69, and *infra*, pp. 268–74 respectively.

the last six books a *magister equitum*, especially one of Victor's description; and yet, it was a *magister equitum* that was one of the two heroes of the preceding books, none other than Ursicinus, otherwise unknown or almost unknown to history and on close scrutiny far from being the stuff of which heroes are made.⁸⁰ What is more relevant in this connection is to relate Ammianus's silence on Mavia's exploits to the career of Victor. The union of Mavia's fortunes with those of Victor through the latter's marriage to the former's daughter linked the fortunes of these two Christianized barbarians but it also must have increased Ammianus's coolness to both. Thus the silence of Ammianus on Mavia's exploits acquires a new dimension and becomes even more explicable. A recital of these exploits would have drawn attention to the part played by Victor in the peace negotiations with Mavia and to Victor's enlistment of a Saracen contingent for participation in the Gothic War; all this would have redounded to the advantage of the *magister* whom Ammianus slighted four times by referring to him as "the man called Victor," but who was known to St. Basil as the most honored Roman in the whole οἰκουμένη.

B

That the last six books have no hero leads to a further question that must be asked about these books, namely, why they have no hero, especially, as has been argued, there was no lack of distinguished Romans to qualify as such. The ultimate reasons behind Ammianus's silences on Mavia's exploits must be related to the correct answers to this question. Since there was no lack of heroic figures in the reign of Valens, the conclusion is inevitable that Ammianus did not want these books to have a hero, and his reluctance to give them one must be related to his views on imperial history in the reign of Valens and on the process of Roman decline.

These views may be directly inferred from the picture he drew of the reign of Valens and indirectly from the fact that he was writing the history of that reign under none other than Theodosius; they involve the processes that revolutionized Roman history in the fourth century—barbarization and Christianization.

1. Although the barbarians had been a problem on the hands of Roman emperors and as recently as the third century they had posed a perilous threat, it was in the fourth century that the dimensions of the barbarian problem

⁸⁰On Ursicinus, see Thompson, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, pp. 42–55; only one other historian, and a much later one, Zonaras, noticed Ursicinus; see E. A. Thompson, "Ammianus Marcellinus," in *Latin Historians*, ed. T. A. Dorey (London, 1966), p. 146. It is noteworthy that even in the last six books and at the very end he evokes the image of Ursicinus when he refers to the death of his son, Potentius, tribune of the *promoti*, at Adrianople. Of all those who fell in that battle it is this tribune who comes in for most of the praise, and so does his father; *RG*, XXXI.13.18.

became truly menacing. In that century, they were settled within the imperial frontiers, both Goths and Sarmatians; they formed a significant part of the Roman army as *foederati* fighting in the barbarian manner, and they penetrated the Roman high command, which witnessed a considerable degree of Germanization⁸¹ since the days of Constantine. To an observer of the Roman scene such as Ammianus, this amounted to barbarization⁸² of the army on all levels and of society in many sectors, carrying with it manifest dangers.

The reign of Valens, which he recorded in the last six books of the *Res Gestae*, witnessed the climax of this barbarization: (a) the empire was ruled by two barbarians from Pannonia;⁸³ (b) swarms and hordes of barbarians made an almost universal and unprecedented assault on the imperial frontiers at the beginning of the reign: Picts, Saxons, Scots, Alamanni, Quadi, Sarmatians, Goths, and Moors; (c) new groups of barbarians appeared for the first time, the Alans and the Huns; (d) and finally the barbarians won their smashing victory at Adrianople in 378.⁸⁴

2. The reign also witnessed the renewed triumph of Christianity. Pagans such as Ammianus had hoped that Julian would succeed in turning the tide against Christianity and would reestablish the old religion; but his death dashed these hopes to the ground and signaled a sharp turn to the worse in the evolution of Roman history. The long reign of Valens succeeded in reestablishing Christianity and considerably dimmed any hopes for the renewal of paganism, in spite of the violent theological controversies that divided the Christian camp during that reign. Furthermore, for pagan Ammianus writing in the nineties of the fourth century, the disastrous reign of Valens proved to be even more disastrous in that it precluded that of Theodosius, who put the house of the Church in order, reestablished orthodoxy, and made Christianity the state religion, which *inter alia* spelled intolerance for paganism as well as Christian heresy.

3. Thus the reign of Valens covered by this last hexad witnessed for Ammianus the intolerable predominance and the assertiveness of both Christians and barbarians and, what is more, their union,⁸⁵ individually in such

⁸¹See Waas, *Germanen*, especially pp. 5–27.

⁸²On Ammianus's strong feelings against the Germans, see Ensslin's chapter on "Ammians Römerstolz und Antigermanismus" in *Zur Geschichtschreibung und Weltanschauung des Ammianus Marcellinus*, pp. 30–33; a more moderate view than Ensslin's on Ammianus's anti-German feeling is taken by K. F. Stroheker, for which see his "Zur Rolle der Heermeister fränkischer Abstammung im späten vierten Jahrhundert," *Historia*, 4 (1955), pp. 320–22.

⁸³On Valentinian and Valens as barbarians, see *supra*, p. 249 note 37.

⁸⁴These last six books could be described as the barbarian hexad.

⁸⁵The above discussion on Ammianus's attitude to Christians and barbarians may be related to what has been said earlier (*supra*, pp. 248–50). In that context, the antipathy induced in Ammianus by both was personal and cultural, while in the present one it may be described as imperial—affecting the being and welfare of the *imperium*.

cases as Victor and collectively in such barbarian groups as the Goths. These barbarians had been settled within the Roman frontier on the lower Danube, had been Christianized, and had been accepted as *foederati*. But since their settlement in the reign of Constantine and after some fifty years of uneasy relations with Rome, they proved unreliable. They assaulted their former allies, won a second Cannae over them at Adrianople, and left the *pars orientalis* of the Roman world lying prostrate with its emperor dead on the field of battle. This is the climax of this barbarian hexad of the *Res Gestae*, and its message is clearly and powerfully transmitted by the finale, namely, the failure of imperial policy toward, and specifically of Constantine's experiment with, the barbarians in general and the Goths in particular.

A world presided over by Christians, barbarians, and Christianized barbarians could have no heroes.⁸⁶ The last Roman hero of the fourth century was both anti-Christian and antibarbarian, and he had done his best to de-Christianize and debarbarize the empire; but he died in 363.

4. The withdrawal of the Arab *foederati* from the picture that Ammianus drew of the reign of Valens is now more explicable. While the *foedus* with the Goths turned out to be a dismal failure, that with the Arabs proved to be a signal success. The quarrel of the latter with Valens was on doctrinal grounds, and once that quarrel had been settled the *foederati* returned to the service and fought creditably in the Gothic War. They presented the spectacle of Christianized barbarians who were well integrated within the Roman system, both as soldiers of the Cross and as faithful servants of Rome. Thus they constituted an anomalous element in the picture he drew of the barbarians as unreliable allies and of the failure of imperial policy toward them. Unlike the Goths who validated the point of view from which he observed the reign of Valens and according to which he probably wrote the last hexad, the experiment with the Arabs invalidated that point of view and involved him in self-contradiction. Hence his complete silence on them throughout the entire reign.

C

This in the last analysis is the solution of the problem of Ammianus and the Arab *foederati*. The real grounds of his antipathy were neither racial nor

⁸⁶It should not be inferred from this that Ammianus viewed Christianization and barbarization as the two causes for the decline of the empire, a view that was to find its classical expression in the work of Edward Gibbon. Ammianus's own stated analysis of Roman decline is related to general deterioration in personal morality. But it is difficult to believe that the two processes of Christianization and barbarization that transformed the century in which he lived were not on his mind as contributing causes, striking at the very foundation of the Roman state or of Roman society. It was left to a fellow pagan, Zosimus, to unbosom himself on both. For what Ammianus might have said if he had been differently circumstanced and situated, see the last paragraph in chap. 8, "Zosimus and the Arabs," in *RA*.

cultural, important as these might have been, and no doubt accounting for some of that antipathy. Ammianus did not write a social history of the barbarians, however interested he was or might have been in barbarian mores; he wrote the *res gestae* of Roman emperors and was an analyst of Roman decline. His antipathy to the Arabs on cultural grounds, therefore, recedes into the background, and to the fore come imperial considerations related to his conception of Roman history and to the factors that were adversely affecting the imperial idea. He lived to see the world to which he belonged collapsing with the triumph of Christianity and with the growing ascendancy of the barbarians, both of which he considered a threat to the empire. The Arab *foederati* crossed his path as Christianized barbarians; as such they were repellent to him, and as faithful servants of Rome they invalidated his conclusions. It was too much against the grain to do justice to them; hence, his antipathy is not so much personal as it is "imperial." It was as a concerned Roman that he viewed the Arab *foederati*, and it is from this concern that the grounds of his antipathy are derivative.

III. AMMIANUS AND VICTOR

The career of Victor has been analyzed (*supra*, pp. 164–69) and his substantial contributions to both the welfare of the *imperium* and the *ecclesia* have also been evaluated. And yet he does not come off well in the pages of the *Res Gestae*. It is not expected that a pagan and secular historian as Ammianus should record his services to the *ecclesia*, but it is expected that as a military historian he pay some attention to one of the most distinguished officers in the Roman army in the second half of the second century. Ammianus is noticeably cool toward Victor, and this calls for an explanation, especially since some important problems are closely related to this coolness.

1

The *magister equitum praesentalis* is mentioned many times in the *Res Gestae*, but guardedly.

(1) On four occasions he is referred to by the phrase *Victor nomine*, although he was a high-ranking officer in the army of Julian and Valens and must have been known personally to Ammianus himself.⁸⁷ Two of these references pertain to the Persian War and two to the battle of Adrianople, and on all four occasions Victor distinguished himself. On the first occasion, he reconnoitered the roads to Ctesiphon and declared them safe (XXIV.4.13); on the second, he prevented the Romans from rashly entering the gates of

⁸⁷Both of them participated in Julian's Persian campaign; furthermore, Victor spent a long time in Antioch, Ammianus's city, with Valens, as his *magister praesentalis*, and both had Libanius as common friend.

Ctesiphon and was himself wounded by an arrow in the battle (XXIV.6.13); on the third, the eve of the battle of Adrianople, he gave crucial counsel to Valens to await the arrival of Gratian (XXXI.12.6); and on the fourth, he tried in vain to rescue Valens in the course of the battle (XXXI.13.9).

The general impression from this repeated reference to him as *Victor nomine* is unfavorable. If Ammianus had employed the phrase on the first occasion when he introduced him to the reader, he might be excused. But he did not; on the first occasion, when he commanded the rear guard during Julian's march, he refers to him as Victor without any title (XXIV.1.2). Victor was a high-ranking officer, at least in the reign of Valens, a *magister equitum praesentalis*, and Ammianus's repeated description of him as *Victor nomine*, as if he had been a nonentity, arouses suspicion.

(2) In his account of the Persian campaign, he is not accurate or consistent in his references to him. In XXIV.4.13, when Victor was reconnoitering the roads to Ctesiphon, he is referred to as *dux*, and so also before the walls of Ctesiphon (XXIV.6.13). In XXIV.4.13 and XXIV.6.4, he is referred to as *comes*. In the last reference to him at Adrianople, and after referring to him as *magister* during the reign of Valens, Ammianus reverts to calling him *comes* (XXXI.13.9).

Victor was possibly *comes rei militaris* during the Persian campaign, but not *dux*. The use of *dux* may be defended as a nontechnical use of the term, but Ammianus was a military historian and accuracy is expected from him as a specialist in military affairs.⁸⁸ Throughout the reigns of Jovian and Valens, Victor was *magister equitum* and his rank was well defined. The use of *comes* to describe him in the course of the battle of Adrianople may refer to the fact that he was *praesentalis*,⁸⁹ but it could also suggest to the reader the *comes* of the Persian campaign when Victor was certainly not *magister equitum*. The inconsistency in referring to his rank even during one phase of his career could suggest to the unsuspecting reader that more than one Victor is involved in Ammianus's account.

(3) There are also some serious omissions. Zosimus did not write a detailed account of the period as Ammianus had done. And yet the student of these wars owes to the former the knowledge that it was Victor who marched Julian's army from Constantinople to Antioch, a significant enough assignment omitted by Ammianus, who thus obscures Victor and his position and refers

⁸⁸According to Zosimus, Victor was *magister peditum* under Julian. If so, Ammianus obscured the fact. Victor might have been *magister peditum* under Julian before he became *magister equitum* under Jovian and Valens, as stated by Ammianus; see *PLRE*, vol. 1, p. 958. The *magisterium equitum* would thus have been a promotion; contrast the change in Ursicinus's *magisterium* from horse to foot in 359–60; see *ibid.*, p. 986.

⁸⁹Richomer was *comes et magister utriusque militiae*; see *PLRE*, vol. 1, p. 766.

to him sometimes as *comes* and sometimes as *dux*⁹⁰ with the nonflattering *nomine* twice in the course of the Persian War. Again it is Zosimus who records that it was Victor who rode out of the battle through Macedonia, Thessaly, and Moesia to Pannonia in order to tell Gratian the news of the disaster at Adrianople. Ammianus is silent on this last operation of Victor. His exit from the pages of the *Res Gestae* takes place in XXXI.13.9 when he tried to rescue Valens but could not find the Batavi, the reserve force, and thus *Victor gradiens retro discessit*, and he does so not as *magister equitum per Orientem* but as *Victor nomine comes*!

2

One section in the *Res Gestae* (XXXI.12.6) in which Victor figures prominently deserves a separate treatment. On the eve of the battle of Adrianople, a council of war is held in which Victor ranges himself on the side of prudence and warns Valens against an immediate engagement with the Goths before the arrival of his imperial colleague Gratian. The impression Ammianus conveys is a favorable one, and in this same section he makes a strikingly succinct but informative reference to Victor, which gives his name, rank, ethnic origin, and his military style: *Victor nomine magister equitum Sarmata sed cunctator et cautus*. In view of Ammianus's coolness toward Victor, this long descriptive phrase repays a careful study, and it will be argued that at best it is ambivalent.

(1) After many references to Victor in the *Res Gestae*, this penultimate one is surely strange with its employment of *nomine*, especially as the term is used in the same phrase that describes none other than a well-known senior officer, the *magister equitum* himself.

(2) *Sarmata* is both valuable and significant. Without this biographical item, no reader would have even suspected that the *magister equitum* who carried the good Latin name Victor was anything but Roman.⁹¹ However, the disclosure of his ethnic origin sounds strange and out of place coming as it does toward the very end of Ammianus's narrative and in the penultimate reference to Victor, whereas the natural place for it should have been the first reference to him in the *Res Gestae*. The phrase in which *Sarmata* occurs is so carefully worded that there must have been a reason for including it: (a) it is possible that it is meant to contrast with *cunctator et cautus*; this could be supported by the fact that the Sarmatians were dashing horsemen,⁹² and Ammi-

⁹⁰On the possibility that he was *magister peditum* under Julian and not only *comes*, see *supra*, note 88.

⁹¹The German *magistri* kept their native names for the most part; see Waas, *Germanen*, pp. 68–110.

⁹²On Ammianus and the Sarmatians, see *infra*, pp. 272–73.

anus wanted to imply that Victor was not typical; (b) but it also could imply some racial prejudice or consciousness on the part of Ammianus, who lamented the fact that the Roman high command in his day was staffed mostly by non-Romans.⁹³

(3) Ambivalence in Ammianus is at its best in the case of the two epithets he applies to Victor, namely, *cunctator et cautus*. These, especially the first, are well known as epithets employed by Fabius's *magister equitum*, Minucius Rufus, in his reproachful reference to the dictator. They immediately recall Livy, XXII.12.12, who undoubtedly was in Ammianus's mind both when he wrote this phrase and when he described the battle of Adrianople, which he likened to Cannae. As applied to Fabius, the abusive title *Delayer* (*Cunctator*) became an honor, and it is the latter connotation that has survived in the consciousness of students of Roman history. But in view of Ammianus's coolness toward Victor, it is difficult to believe that he would have applied them to him as posterity has understood the terms. In support of this view, the following may be adduced:

(a) In Livy, the two epithets were applied by a Master of Horse to one who was not, Fabius. In Ammianus, they are applied by one who was not a Master of Horse to one who was, Victor. Thus the adversative force of *sed* in Ammianus's phrase could involve not *Sarmata* or only *Sarmata* but also *magister equitum*, implying that the latter, who by definition should be aggressive, dashing, and ubiquitous on the battlefield, was not to the manner born.⁹⁴ This could receive some confirmation from Ammianus's last notice of Victor in the course of the battle of Adrianople (XXXI.13.9) when he fails to rescue Valens. He seeks the Batavi, but these were not to be found, and so he rides out of the battlefield.⁹⁵

(b) That *cunctator et cautus* are possibly not used in a complimentary sense is further supported by the sequel to both Cannae and Adrianople, and an appeal to the sequel is justified because Ammianus certainly had Livy in mind when he wrote his account of Adrianople, which he likens to Cannae (XXXI.13.18). The strategy of Fabius Cunctator proved to be sound in that it made possible the application of the bolder strategy of Scipio and the final

⁹³RG, XXXI.16.8, where he speaks of Julius's letters to the Roman commanders in Asia before their massacre of the Goths.

⁹⁴This may be brought to bear on the problem of Jovian's promotion of Victor to the *magisterium equitum*, for which see *supra*, note 88. Perhaps Ammianus wanted to imply that the promotion was undeserved, because temperamentally Victor was not fitted to be a cavalry officer.

⁹⁵Ammianus does not conceal the fact that Victor showed great concern over Valens's safety and tried hard to rescue him, but the general impression that is conveyed to the reader is the failure of Victor's attempt and his abandoning the battlefield. It is pertinent to remark that Minucius fell at Cannae, while Victor effected a safe retreat for one-third of the Roman army that fought at Adrianople. Ammianus does not record the fact and remembers only his disappearance from the scene.

defeat of the Carthaginians; but Victor *cunctator* was unable to prevail upon Valens to refuse battle with the Goths.⁹⁶ The result was the battle of Adrianople and the Gothic victory which, unlike that of the Carthaginians at Cannae, was clinched a few years later by Theodosius's Settlement with the Goths in 382. The abusive title *cunctator* became an honor only with the success of Fabius's policy and the eventual defeat of Hannibal; thus the analogy with Fabius Cunctator breaks down and with it the connotation to be imparted to *cunctator*, which thus could regain its pejorative sense of *delayer*.

Ammianus read his *Res Gestae* in Rome itself, and the Romans who listened to him understood in what sense *cunctator* could be a complimentary term as applied to Fabius; many of his listeners remembered Ennius's famous verse, *unus homo nobis cunctando restituit rem*. But the state of the Roman world in the aftermath of Adrianople would not have inclined them to impart a complimentary sense to Ammianus's description of Victor as *cunctator*, and it is scarcely credible that the historian who closed his *Res Gestae* with an account of the disaster of Adrianople would have wanted his reader to remember Victor in this role of *restitutor*.

(c) That these two epithets may have been used not enthusiastically of Victor could derive some support from the concluding section of the *Res Gestae* that describes the action of Julius, *magister militiae trans Taurum*, who massacred the Goths of Asia after the news of Adrianople reached him (XXXI.16.8). Ammianus speaks with a strong approving tone of his *efficacia*; it was *velox*, and the deed was done *sine mora*.⁹⁷

These terms could contrast with those applied to Victor⁹⁸ and could impart a pejorative tone to the latter, since the two figures come into comparison in Ammianus's thought and the reader's. The two were *magistri per Orientem*; the one was *magister equitum*, the other *magister utriusque militiae*, and both dealt with the Goths and the Gothic problem.

3

More important than Ammianus's ambivalence toward Victor are the motives behind the ambivalence:

(1) Victor presented to Ammianus the union of the two elements he viewed with disfavor, the barbarian and the Christian. Especially noteworthy in this connection is his volunteering the fact of his ethnic origin in a context

⁹⁶Fabius too was unable to persuade the Romans to avoid pitched battles with Hannibal after Trasimene, until he was justified by the Roman disaster at Cannae.

⁹⁷These terms that describe Julius bring to mind Sozomen's account of the same impatient and impetuous *magister* whom Mavia had beaten; *supra*, p. 151.

⁹⁸Ammianus's coolness toward Victor may be contrasted with his warmth toward Julius; he makes him steal the show in his account of Roman-Gothic relations and get away with murder; his massacre of the Goths is judged as the action of a man of decision.

that does not seem especially to call for it (XXXI.12.6). Ammianus possibly⁹⁹ wanted to ally Victor with his barbarian group, the Sarmatians, who like many other barbarians do not come off well in the *Res Gestae*; they are brigands (XVI.10.20) and fight with spear and horse in the barbarian manner (XXII.12.2). In spite of his Latin name, he belonged to that group of barbarians that had harassed the Danube frontier, a fact that survives in the military *cognomen* Sarmaticus assumed by the Roman emperors.

(2) But there were specific reasons, possibly personal ones, that related to Victor not as a type but as an individual. These may be summarized as follows:

(a) Victor was instrumental in the choice of Jovian. For Ammianus, the return of a Christian emperor to the throne changed the course of history that had been set by his hero, the pagan Julian, and the change was for the worse.

(b) A personal note may be detected in his attitude toward Victor, the professional jealousy of one soldier toward another. Ammianus had served on the staff of Ursicinus in the fifties and later in Julian's army during the Persian War. Then came Jovian, and his career ended abruptly. With that change in the course of Roman history, Ammianus's own career was changed; he retired from the army, and although he had been a man of action, he lived in obscurity until the end of his life. It was a disappointed army officer in retirement that wrote the *Res Gestae*, and it is not unnatural to suppose that some of his views on the major figures of the period, including the one who effected Jovian's succession, may have been colored by this disappointment. This note may be audible in the passage that refers to Victor's promotion by Jovian (XXVI.5.2), promotion Ammianus had probably hoped for if Julian had remained alive.

(3) Finally, his coolness toward Victor may be related to his loyalty toward his hero Ursicinus.¹⁰⁰ The latter was *magister equitum* in the Orient in the fifties, and that Orient looked good to Ammianus then. His successor to the *magisterium equitum* for the entire reign of Valens was the Christianized barbarian Victor, with whom Ammianus had no rapport.

Some or all of the preceding motives could have been operative with Ammianus and might explain his coolness toward Victor. But racial prejudice and cultural antipathy are perhaps not the main keys to understanding Ammianus's attitude toward Victor. These, as in the case of his attitude toward the Arab *foederati*, have to be sought in his views, not explicitly stated,¹⁰¹ on the

⁹⁹On an alternative explanation for the inclusion of *Sarmata* in that biographical note on Victor, see *supra*, pp. 270–71.

¹⁰⁰His strong feelings on the dismissal of Ursicinus are reflected in the irony of his reference to his successor, Sabinianus. One of these speaks of his inspecting the tombs of the martyrs and being entertained with a Pyrrhic dance instead of attending to his military duties (*RG*, XVIII.7.7). For other references, see *PLRE*, vol. 1, p. 789.

¹⁰¹See *supra*, sec. II, 4.B–C, pp. 265–68.

unwholesome tendencies and adverse factors that were affecting the course of Roman history, namely, Christianization and barbarization. These two were united in Victor, the new type of Roman in the fourth century, the Christianized barbarian who, moreover, like many others, penetrated the Roman high command and who reached so high and endured so long. Victor's marriage to Mavia's daughter, who also belonged to a barbarian group toward whom Ammianus was antipathetic, did not endear him further to Ammianus, while habits of cooperation among the barbarians not against Rome but for it ran counter to his views on the worth of these barbarians and the dangers inherent in their federate status. Victor has been described earlier in this book (*supra*, p. 169) as the ripest fruit of Sarmatia and a witness to the success of the Constantinian experiment. His career invalidated for Ammianus his views on the dynasty of the Second Flavians, whose hero was Julian and whose villain was Constantine.¹⁰²

IV. SOZOMEN ON THE ARABS

The most extensive and valuable account of the Arabs in the ecclesiastical historians is to be found in Sozomen's *Historia Ecclesiastica*,¹⁰³ in a precious, long section (VI.38) that sheds a bright light on the religious history of the Arabs before the rise of Islam and on Arab-Byzantine relations in the second half of the fourth century. As Sozomen illuminates so many facets of Arab history in this century, it is well that an evaluation of this major historian of *Byzantino-arabica*¹⁰⁴ should be attempted, encompassing the range of his usefulness for reconstructing Arab-Byzantine relations in the fourth century, the reasons behind his interest in the Arabs, and his sources for Arab history.

Sozomen's account mainly treats the military, political, ecclesiastical, and cultural history of the Arab *foederati* in the service of Byzantium, especially those of the fourth century, but it also treats related matters. His account illuminates the following areas:

1. The revolt of Queen Mavia during the reign of Valens, the consecration of Moses as the bishop of the Saracens, and the participation of the Arabs in the defense of Constantinople after Adrianople.¹⁰⁵
2. The conversion to Christianity of the tribe of Zokomos, the eponymous

¹⁰²On this, see chap. 8, "Zosimus and the Arabs," in *RA*.

¹⁰³For Sozomen and his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, see Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, vol. 1, pp. 510–12, and Quasten, *Patrology*, vol. 3, pp. 534–36. The standard edition of Sozomen's *Historia Ecclesiastica* is that of J. Bidez in *GCS*, 50, hereafter cited as *HE*. His account of the Arabs occupies pp. 297–300; 302.

¹⁰⁴Cf. his value for *Byzantinoturcica*; Moravcsik, *op. cit.*, p. 511. This discussion could thus also serve as a contribution to a better and more comprehensive appreciation of Sozomen as a historian of the barbarians along the Byzantine limitrophe.

¹⁰⁵A detail not mentioned by Socrates, for which see Sozomen, *HE*, VII.1.

founder of the Salīhid dynasty, the Arab *foederati* of Byzantium in the fifth century. Sozomen is the only source for this precious datum on Zokomos.¹⁰⁶

3. The religious history and development of the Arabs as sons of Ishmael between biblical times and the rise of Islam.

4. Arabic poetry in the second half of the fourth century; this earliest attestation of its composition goes back to Sozomen.

The unusual interest taken by Sozomen in the history of the Arabs, especially of Queen Mavia and her bishop Moses, may be explained by three main reasons:

(1) It is well known that Sozomen's *History* treats the border as well as the central lands of the empire and sometimes those *extra limitem*. Furthermore, as a native of Bethelia, near Gaza, he had a very special interest in Palestine both as his native land and as the Holy Land whose special position in the history of Christianity and the Church he wanted to vindicate. Now, the scene for the revolt of Mavia was set in the borderland of the Diocese of Oriens and involved Palestine itself.

(2) As a native of Bethelia in the region of Gaza, Sozomen must have come in touch with the Arabs of southern Palestine, while his native town Bethelia was partly Jewish. This could very well explain his unusual interest in the conversion of the Arabs to Christianity, in the tracing of their earlier religious development, and in their one-time conversion to Judaism. The two biblical peoples, descendants of Abraham, were of special importance to him as an ecclesiastical historian and as a native of Palestine.

(3) The conversion of the Arabs to Christianity took place under the influence of hermits and monks, as is explicitly stated in the *HE*. Now, the importance Sozomen attaches to monasticism is evident and perhaps derives from his own background. His family had been pagan, and it was a desert hermit, none other than St. Hilarion himself, who converted Alaphion, the head of a noble family in Bethelia, who in turn converted Sozomen's grandfather.¹⁰⁷ It is, thus, not unnatural that Sozomen should have developed an interest in the Arabs and in the manner of their conversion at the hands of these representatives of monasticism.

His sources for Arab history are partly primary and partly derivative. To the latter category belongs Socrates,¹⁰⁸ his older contemporary, who unlike Sozomen was born in Constantinople and who wrote a shorter account of the Arab *foederati* during the reign of Valens. Socrates worked in Constantinople, which

¹⁰⁶Sozomen's account of Zokomos was included by the later author Nicephorus Callistus in his *Historia Ecclesiastica*; see *PG*, 146, col. 736.

¹⁰⁷*HE*, V. 15.

¹⁰⁸Although he does not explicitly name him as his source; on this, see Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, p. 510, and Quasten, *Patrology*, vol. 3, pp. 535–36.

had been saved after the death of Valens by a squadron of cavalry sent by Queen Mavia. Consequently, information both official and nonofficial on Mavia and her people must have been available in Constantinople. And it is in Constantinople that Socrates must have collected his material. He does not state his source on Mavia, nor does he give any indication as to whence he could have received this account. But judging from the subject matter, it is fairly clear that he got it from official, imperial (secular) records on Mavia and from ecclesiastical records on Moses and Lucius.

The question arises whether Sozomen had used Socrates for his account of the Arabs. He may have done so, or he may have used the same sources, possibly guided by Socrates.¹⁰⁹ It is noticeable that he fails to mention that Moses was an Arab ethnically and makes no mention of the marriage of Mavia's daughter to Victor, the Byzantine commander. But he adds details on the military operations against Mavia not to be found in Socrates. This could suggest that he consulted the same sources but chose what he pleased rather than copied Socrates. There is at the end of the chapter¹¹⁰ the verb *παρελήφραμεν*, which, as the context shows, refers to the account of Moses as the first bishop, that is, to the account that both he and Socrates have on Mavia and Moses, rather than on Zokomos. This suggests that he depended for that account on tradition, but the form of transmission, whether oral or written, is not entirely clear.

His dependence on an oral tradition may be supported by two statements in his work:

1. He relates¹¹¹ that the victory of Mavia over the Romans was still remembered in the region and celebrated among the Arabs in their songs, "even at the present day," *εἰσέτι νῦν*. This is the kind of information that would have been received on the spot and not in Constantinople

2. More explicit is a statement that occurs in book VII.19, where, contrasting the one bishop of the Scythians with the many whom the Arabs and the Cypriots have, he says that "I have learned this from the Arabs and the Cypriots."¹¹² This is a crucial sentence for testing the reliability of Sozomen's account of the Arabs as it indicates clearly that he ascertained his facts on the spot and from the people concerned. Who the Arabs he consulted were remains an open question. They were evidently sedentary, not nomad, as is clear from the reference to the villages (*κῶμαι*), and they are referred to as Arabs, not

¹⁰⁹For Sozomen's independence of Socrates in his use of the sources, see Quasten, *Patrology*, vol. 3, p. 536. His account of the Arabs contains many passages for which there are no parallels in Socrates, and so it is valuable for drawing conclusions on the question of his independence. For Sozomen's dependence on Gelasius of Caesarea, see *supra*, p. 199.

¹¹⁰*HE*, p. 300, line 19; cf. p. 127, line 14.

¹¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 298, line 1.

¹¹²*Ibid.*, p. 330, line 14.

Saracens.¹¹³ This suggests that they were *Rhomaioi* living either in southern Palestine near Bethelia, his native town, or residents of the province of Arabia across the Jordan from his native Palestine, very accessible to him.

His independence of Socrates is clearly reflected in the second part of his account of the Arabs, which treats their religious history and the conversion of the Arab chief Zokomos,¹¹⁴ a most valuable account, which Socrates has not nor any other ecclesiastical historian.¹¹⁵ His inclusion of this part and the material he puts together have not been appreciated in modern studies of Sozomen since no detailed analysis of this section has been attempted.¹¹⁶ But the section is unique in its contents and it gives hints on Sozomen's method in assembling his data.

1. His statement that many Arabs conform to Jewish practices until now, εἰσέτι νῦν,¹¹⁷ suggests personal knowledge on the part of a historian who not only was born in an area where the Arab element was attested in the Gaza district and southern Palestine, but who also explicitly states that he conversed with Arabs on religious matters.¹¹⁸

2. There are two other indications in the passage that treats of the conversion of the tribe of Zokomos: "it is said," λέγεται, and "they say," φασί.¹¹⁹ These two terms definitely suggest an oral tradition and one that is likely, because of the nature of the subject matter, to have been collected locally from among the Arabs he elsewhere says that he visited.

Sozomen's account of the Arabs is therefore most trustworthy, based as it is on sound written and oral tradition.¹²⁰ Whether he knew Arabic is not clear, but it is almost certain that he knew a related cognate Semitic language, Syriac.¹²¹ This would have helped him gather information about the Arabs from those among them who spoke Syriac, as many of them did, or from the Syriac-speaking inhabitants of the Orient.

V. ON THE IMAGE OF THE ARABS IN THE FOURTH CENTURY

Two chapters of this book treat in a detailed fashion the image of the Arabs as perceived by two major secular and ecclesiastical fourth-century writers, Ammianus and Jerome respectively.¹²² It remains to give some attention to two other ecclesiastical writers of the same century, who represent the two extremes

¹¹³*Ibid.*

¹¹⁴*HE*, pp. 299–300.

¹¹⁵*Supra*, note 106.

¹¹⁶It is intensively analyzed by the present writer in *BAFIC*.

¹¹⁷*HE*, p. 229, line 20.

¹¹⁸*Supra*, note 112.

¹¹⁹*HE*, p. 299, line 24 and p. 300, line 6 respectively.

¹²⁰His own words on his research methods may be consulted; *HE*, I.1.

¹²¹See his chapter on St. Ephraim, *HE*, III.16.

¹²²See *supra*, secs. I–II, and *infra*, Chap. 8, sec. II.

in their perceptions of the Arabs, to the discussion of the patristic etymology of the term *Saracen*, and to the self-image of the Arabs themselves. These are important dimensions of the present theme, the image of the Arabs, without which the study of this image will not be complete for drawing conclusions and for the synthesis.

1

In addition to Jerome, there are two ecclesiastical writers of the fourth century who provide important data for understanding the image of the Arabs in that century, Epiphanius and Rufinus. The first wrote on the provincial Arabs, the *Rhomaioi*, as heretics, while the second wrote on the *foederati* as orthodox.

1. Epiphanius associated the Arabs with heresy.¹²³ Hippolytus of Rome had written on the heretical views of the Arab Monoimism,¹²⁴ who may be assigned to the second half of the second century, and Eusebius had written on the heretics and heresies of Arabia in the third. But Epiphanius wrote more extensively than either of his predecessors on Arabian heresies, listing those of the Roman period and adding new ones, e.g., the Audiani of the Byzantine period in the fourth century.¹²⁵ Although it is only the Valesians that he explicitly relates to an Arab heresiarch, namely, Valens, his work fixed in the consciousness of posterity the image of the Arabs as heretics.¹²⁶ Unlike Hippolytus, Eusebius had not written a special book on heresies, and so it is the former that would have been Epiphanius's model in writing his *Panarion*.¹²⁷

¹²³The heresies of Arabia discussed by Epiphanius have been treated by Aigrain, for which see his "Arabie," cols. 1173–74; his long treatment of Christianity in the province of Arabia, before and after Diocletian, is still valuable; *ibid.*, cols. 1161–89; in that treatment, the author is not circumscribed by the boundaries of the Roman province but includes in it the discussion of such topics as Zenobia and Paul of Samosata, and the *Didascalia Apostolorum* (cols. 1167–69).

¹²⁴*Ibid.*, col. 1164; the name is recognizably Arabic, Mun'im, or its diminutive, Munay'im.

¹²⁵For which, see *ibid.*, col. 1174; Epiphanius, however, speaks of the heresiarch Audeus as a Mesopotamian (PG, 42, col. 340A); Jerome associates him (A.D. 341) with Syria Coele (*Chronicon*, p. 235); and Theodoret speaks of his being a Syrian in race and in speech (*HE*, IV.9).

¹²⁶The Arabs of Epiphanius were, of course, *Rhomaioi*, provincials of Arabia, but the charge of heresy was leveled in due course against the Arabs in general, and the phrase *Arabia haeresium ferax* must have contributed to the perpetuation of the image of the heretical Arab. Harnack considered the rise of heresies in Arabia a reflection of independence and mental activity; A. Harnack, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*, trans. and ed. J. Moffat (London–New York, 1908), vol. 2, p. 154 note 3. So deep-seated was the Byzantine perception of the Arabs as heretics that theologians could view Islam itself, a new religion, only as a Christian heresy; see John of Damascus, *De haeresibus compendium*, PG, 94, cols. 764–73. For the image of the Muslim Arabs in Western Europe, see N. Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* (Edinburgh, 1962) and R. W. Southern, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, Mass., 1962).

¹²⁷On the wide use of the *Syntagma* of Hippolytus by Epiphanius, see Quasten, *Patrology*, vol. 2, p. 170; Irenaeus's *Adversus haereses* was his other source for earlier times; see Altaner, *Patrology*, p. 366.

But it is reasonable to suppose that the account of the Arabian heresies in the sixth book of Eusebius's *HE* did influence Epiphanius, especially as Hippolytus discussed only one Arabian heresy, that of Monoimus.

2. Rufinus, on the other hand, associated the Arabs with orthodoxy. It was he, as the continuator of Eusebius and his translator, that included in his work an account of the Arabs of Queen Mavia,¹²⁸ and in so doing he both wove the exploits of the Arab *foederati* into the texture of ecclesiastical history in the fourth century and presented the Arabs in an entirely new light, that of Christian soldiers fighting for orthodoxy and, what is more, against the *imperator* himself, who happened to be at the time a heretic, the Arian Valens. Rufinus's account of the Arab *foederati* of the fourth century as orthodox Christians is especially significant in the ecclesiastical history of the Arabs, a people whose image, as projected by Eusebius and Epiphanius, was that of heretics.

2

More important than the etymologies¹²⁹ of the term *Saraceni* is the semantic dimension of the term, which for the Graeco-Roman writers was equivalent to *Scenitae*, "Tent-dwellers," and which in the Roman period was used fairly accurately to designate these nomadic groups among the Arabs.

A

In the Byzantine period the term started to be indiscriminately applied to groups of Arabs who were certainly not nomads, such as the Arabs of Palmyra and even the South Arabians, who were sedentaries.¹³⁰ The extension of the applicability of the term *Saraceni* to such groups may perhaps be explained by the desire to have one generic name for those Arabs who were not Roman citizens and provincials living within the *limes* but who were outside its limits in the Arabian Peninsula.¹³¹

This extension of applicability affected the image of the Arabs since it equated the Arab sedentaries with the Arab nomads. The extension operated to the particular disadvantage of one Arab group, namely, the *foederati* of Byzantium in the course of the three centuries of its pre-Islamic period. These had originally hailed from the Arabian Peninsula or from the regions outside

¹²⁸See *supra*, pp. 197–201.

¹²⁹These as well as the history of the term *Saraceni* in the Roman period have been examined by the present writer in *RA*, chap. 9, which is the foundation for the present observations on the term *Saraceni* in the Byzantine period.

¹³⁰As in Procopius, *Buildings*, II.viii.8; V.viii.2.

¹³¹Although in the case of Procopius some motive may be suspected for his application of the term *Sarakenoi* to such sedentaries as the Palmyrene Arabs and the Homeritae of South Arabia, who are not usually referred to as such. The antipathetic historian may have wanted to portray the Arabs in their entirety as nomads; on Procopius and the Arabs, see the present writer in "Procopius and Arethas," pp. 39–67, 362–82, and "Procopius and Kinda," pp. 74–78.

the *imperium romanum*; they were mobile troops, some of whom were or may have been semi-nomadic. But as has been explained in various parts of this book, they cannot be described simply as nomads or rude soldiers.¹³² It would be extravagant to maintain that the mere application of the term *Saraceni* has been exclusively responsible for their distorted image and the misunderstanding of their place in the cultural life of Arab Oriens; this has been due mainly to lack of research on their history. But the application to them of the term *Saraceni*, which in the idiom of Graeco-Roman historiography had been used for designating the *Scenitae*, must have contributed its generous share to confusing them with the nomads and to the projection of that image that has obscured all the constituents of their higher cultural life.¹³³

B

Although, as has been maintained, the signification of the term *Saraceni* is more important than its etymology or etymologies, one of these, the earliest and patristic, is the most important historically and the most relevant to the theme of the Arab image.

Perhaps it was St. Jerome who first suggested the involvement of "Saraceni" with Sarah, Abraham's wife.¹³⁴ This etymology, patently false as it is, has had a fateful history and is directly responsible for the new impetus imparted to the vogue of the term *Saraceni* and its application to the Arabs. It is quite distinct from all the other etymologies suggested and, indeed, may be placed in one category vis-à-vis all the rest, while its vogue is not related to the three confrontations with the Arabs in the Roman period. Its etymology is related to a figure in the Bible and its vogue to the conversion of the pagan Roman Empire to Christianity. Both facts speak for themselves concerning the nature and extent of the new impetus imparted to the vogue of the term.

Even more important than the vogue which this patristic etymology gave an impetus to is the fact that the etymology contributed substantially to the projection of an image of the Arabs that had already suffered from the equation of *Saraceni* with *Scenitae* and the subsequent application of the term *Saraceni* to Arab groups that were not nomads or tent-dwellers. This etymology tarnished the image of the Arabs in a new sphere and, what is more, a sensitive one, namely, religion,¹³⁵ the biblical or Christian religion that had become the third

¹³²See "The Reign of Constantius," *supra*, p. 85 note 38, and "Ammianus and the *Foederati*," *supra*, pp. 251–68.

¹³³See the chapters on their involvement with religion, on their bishops, their poetry, and on the Arabic Bible and liturgy in various parts of this book, esp. Part Two.

¹³⁴*Agareni qui nunc Saraceni appellantur falso sibi assumpsere nomen Sarae ut de ingenua et domina videantur generati*; see his commentary on Ezekiel, *Corpus Christianorum*, series latina, LXXV, p. 335.

¹³⁵The biblical image of the Arabs will be treated at length in the second volume in this series, *BAFIC*.

constituent in the make-up of the new Roman Empire, Byzantium.¹³⁶ The derivation was depreciatory as it suggested that the Saracens were the sons of the slave woman with all that that suggestive phrase implied.

3

The self-image of the Arabs is an important dimension of the general problem of their image in the context of Arab-Byzantine relations and confrontations. This second dimension is not as easy to explore for the Arabs in the fourth century as it is for those in the sixth when the relevant material is more plentiful.¹³⁷ However, there are hints and references in the scanty sources, and they enable the student of this period to form a fairly clear perception of it.

1. Judging from their behavior during the reign of Valens and Theodosius, the Arab *foederati*, the military group that fought for orthodoxy, were proud warriors who must have possessed the ethos and mores of the pre-Islamic Arab warriors familiar from a study of pre-Islamic Arabic poetry in the fifth and sixth centuries.¹³⁸ It is practically certain that the same ethos and mores obtained in the not-too-distant fourth century. One Arabic cultural term, *murūʿa*, etymologically counterpart to Latin *virtus*, sums up this ideal: hospitality in peace and courage in war. The capacious term includes other components, such as loyalty, fortitude, blood-revenge.¹³⁹ Theodosius may have viewed the Arab *foederati* as rebellious Saracens,¹⁴⁰ but they viewed themselves in a different light related to their own native concept of *murūʿa*. A hint of their self-image as loyal and doughty warriors may be gained from the fact that they composed poetry to celebrate their victory over Valens. When an achievement finds literary expression, the presumption is that it was keenly and vividly felt. Since the object of their odes was their victory over the *imperator* himself, their self-image must have clashed with their image in the Byzantine mirror which viewed them as rebellious Saracens. This is an instance, perhaps the only instance, in Arab-Byzantine relations in pre-Islamic times when the conflicts or clash of images resulted in a victory for the Arabs. On almost all other occasions it resulted in disaster for them or a draw, as in the reign of Justin I in the sixth century.¹⁴¹

¹³⁶See G. Ostrogorsky's chapter "The Christian Roman Empire," in his *History of the Byzantine State*, trans. J. Hussey (New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1969), pp. 27–50, and the observations of the present writer in "The Iranian Factor in Byzantium during the Reign of Heraclius," p. 295.

¹³⁷The Arab self-image in the sixth century will be treated in *BASIC*.

¹³⁸On the antiquity of the Arab poetic tradition and the case for the authenticity of some third-century poetic fragments, see Chap. 11, sec. III, "Arabic Poetry in the Fourth Century," *infra*, pp. 443–48.

¹³⁹On Arab *murūʿa*, see Nicholson, *Literary History of the Arabs*, pp. 72–100.

¹⁴⁰See *supra*, pp. 208–9.

¹⁴¹This will be treated in *BASIC*.

The discrepancy between the two perceptions is measurable also by the terms employed by the two parties to denote the Arabs. To the Byzantines the Arabs were *Saracens*, a term that carried some pejorative implications including their way of life as nomads and consequently as barbarians. The Arab self-image vis-à-vis non-Arabs was reflected in the two conjugates *Arab* and 'Ajam: the Arabs and the non-Arabs, the latter term literally meaning the mutes, presumably those who could not speak or pronounce the Arabic language. This ethnocentricity, expressed in these conjugates, the counterparts of Greek/Barbarian or Jew/Gentile, is, like *murū'a*, documented in later times but, like it, possibly goes back to the fourth century.

2. As far as their Christian image is concerned, the *foederati's* self-image was clearly that of orthodox defenders of the true faith of Nicaea.¹⁴² Ecclesiastical writers have done justice to the federate self-image. Rufinus in the fourth century and others in the fifth, Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret, transmitted an identical image of the *foederati*. This was one of the rare instances, perhaps the only instance, where there was no discrepancy between what the two different mirrors, the Byzantine and the Arab, reflected.

4

The exploration of the Arab self-image in the preceding section has involved the second mirror in this theme of the image. In fact this theme involves not one or two but four mirrors, two Byzantine and two Arab. These may be described as follows:

1. The first reflects the Byzantine self-image which has been explored many times.¹⁴³
2. The second reflects the Byzantine perception of the Arabs which has been explored in various chapters of this book.¹⁴⁴
3. The third reflects the Arab self-image discussed in the preceding section.
4. The fourth reflects the Arab perception of Byzantium in pre-Islamic times, especially in the fourth century.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴²See the chapters on the reigns of Valens and Theodosius *supra*.

¹⁴³See C. Mango, "Byzantinism and Romantic Hellenism," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 28 (1965), pp. 30-31 and their notes and a more extensive and detailed treatment of the Byzantine self-image.

¹⁴⁴It is noteworthy that the theme of Arab *prodosia* that figures so prominently in the work of Procopius never appears as a component in the make-up of the Arab image in this first Byzantine century nor in the following. So Procopius could not have availed himself of a traditional Byzantine image of the Arabs that involved *prodosia*; see the present writer in "Procopius and Arethas Again," *Byzantion*, 41 (1971), pp. 336-37. As far as the *prodosia* theme is concerned, Procopius was at one and the same time the reflector, maker, and refractor of the Arab image in the sixth century.

¹⁴⁵For this, see the relevant part in A. Shboul's article on this topic, "Byzantium and

The presentation of the problem of the image in terms of four mirrors is not merely an exercise in ethnological research, important as it is to know how each of the two parties viewed itself and the other party. It goes beyond this into being an element, sometimes a factor, that affected and influenced the course of Arab-Byzantine relations throughout these centuries of the pre-Islamic period. A more correct Byzantine perception of the Arabs would have enabled Byzantium to deal better with its Arab *foederati*. This is clearest in the sixth century when Arab-Byzantine relations were ruffled more than once. Even in the fourth century, the data of the Arab-Byzantine conflict admits of being understood and interpreted, at least partly, in these terms of image and perception.

the Arabs: The Image of the Byzantines as Mirrored in Arabic Literature," *Byzantine Papers*, eds. A. Mofatt, E. Jeffreys, M. Jeffreys (Canberra, 1981), pp. 43–68. Although his main concern is the Islamic period, there is an extensive treatment of the Byzantine image in pre-Islamic times, and much of what he says about the sixth century is true of earlier centuries including the fourth.

VIII

The Arab Presence in Oriens

I. THE ARABS IN THE WORK OF ST. JEROME: TWO *VITAE*

The Arabs receive mention in the work of St. Jerome¹ as Saracens and reference to them is especially important in two of his *vitae*: the *Vita Malchi* and the *Vita S. Hilarionis*.

1. *Vita Malchi*

The *Vita Malchi*² recounts the adventures of a monk, Malchus, a native of Nisibis, who had left his city, had renounced the world while still a young man, and had come to live among the monks of the desert of Chalcis in Syria between Imma and Beroea.³ After the death of his father in Nisibis, the desire possessed him to return to Nisibis and see his mother; on the way from Edessa he was captured by the Saracens. After spending some time in captivity, he and his female companion decided to escape, and they did, but were subsequently overtaken by their Saracen master, who was devoured, together with his servant, by a lioness. Thus, miraculously saved, Malchus and his female companion traveled for ten days in the desert and reached the Roman camp whence they were sent by the tribune to Sabianus, the *dux* of Mesopotamia. Finally, both returned to the desert of Chalcis where they lived as solitaries; and they were still alive in 374 when Jerome heard the account from Malchus himself, while he was spending his quinquennium as an eremite in the desert of Chalcis. The *Vita* was written at Bethlehem in 391.

A

Jerome's account of the adventures of Malchus present some problems that need to be examined before assessing the value of its references to the Arabs:

¹For St. Jerome, editions of his works, and bibliographies, see Altaner, *Patrology*, pp. 462–76.

²For the *Vita Malchi*, introduction, text, and annotation, see ASS (October IX), pp. 59–69, and also PL, 23, cols. 55–62; 73, cols. 205–10; the text of the *Vita* in ASS will be the one referred to in this chapter. On its authenticity, see Paul van den Ven, *S. Jérôme et la vie du moine Malchus le captif* (Louvain, 1901).

³Imma is almost halfway between Antioch and Beroea; see map 14, opposite p. 472, in Dussaud, *Topographie*.

1. The first problem is the chronology of Malchus's life. When he told his story to Jerome in 374, he was an old man, *senex* (sec. I). He had left Nisibis a young man and after many years, *post multos annos* (sec. III), in the desert of Chalcis among its solitaries, he set out on his journey back to Nisibis and on the road from Beroea to Edessa he was taken captive by the Saracens. Not long after his escape he returned to Maronia (sec. I), the village situated some thirty miles to the east of Antioch, where he grew to be a *senex* and where Jerome, at the time an *adolescentulus* (sec. I), met him and questioned him about his background.

There are no firm⁴ chronological indications in the account,⁵ and such terms as *senex*, *adolescentulus*, and *post multos annos* are only relative chronological signals. What is most relevant is the period of Malchus's captivity among the Saracens. If the Sabianus (Sabinianus) referred to in the text was the *magister equitum per Orientem* and not the *dux Mesopotamiae*, as Jerome states, then his captivity must have taken place in 359–60 when Sabinianus was *magister*.⁶ If Sabianus was not *magister* but only *dux*⁷ as stated by Jerome, then his captivity must have taken place earlier than the *magisterium* of Sabinianus in 359, most probably in the forties.

2. The second question is where in the Mesopotamian region Malchus spent his captivity and where in northern Oriens these Saracen captors of his were settled. According to the *Vita*, the Saracens roamed over a wilderness that adjoined the road from Beroea to Edessa (sec. IV). This places them in three of the provinces of Oriens—Syria, Euphratensis, and Osroene.

As to where Malchus spent his captivity, it is certain that it was in the Trans-Euphratesian region, but actually where he was captured is not entirely clear. Much depends on what is meant by the river that he crosses after his captivity, *grandi amne transmisso* (sec. IV). If this is the Euphrates, as the epithet *grandis* could imply, then Malchus must have been captured in the Cis-

⁴The only firm terminus to which the events of the *Vita* could be related is the Peace of Jovian. The *Vita* clearly implies that the adventures of Malchus took place before that peace, when Nisibis was still in Roman hands. But that peace was concluded in 363, and thus it is too close to 374, the year Jerome heard the story of Malchus, to be a valuable terminus ante quem.

⁵For an attempt to establish a chronology for the life of Malchus, see the introduction to the *Vita* in ASS, p. 61.

⁶The view adopted in ASS (*ibid.*), where it is argued that the *dux Mesopotamiae* was Cassianus, not Sabinianus, a view that rests on the assumption that Jerome had made a mistake; for Cassianus, see PLRE, vol. 1, p. 184.

⁷As he may well have been early in his career before he finally became *magister* in 359. If so, this item in the *Vita* may be added to the prosopographical notice of Sabinianus, who appears only in the pages of the *Res Gestae* and, what is more, in an unfavorable light because of his Christianity; but the implication of the tribune's sending Malchus to Sabinianus could be that he was a good Christian who was genuinely concerned about the tribulations of a desert solitary among hostile Saracens; on Sabinianus, see PLRE, vol. 1, p. 789.

Euphratesian region, but spent his captivity somewhere across the Euphrates, probably in Osroene. If the river is not the Euphrates, but one of its two tributaries, the Balīḥ or the Khābūr, or even one of the tributaries of the latter, then Malchus would have been captured somewhere in the Trans-Euphratesian region and would also have spent his captivity there.⁸

As far as the Saracens are concerned, it is sufficient that the *Vita* should have disclosed a wilderness inhabited by them and adjoining the highway from Beroea to Edessa. As this highway goes through Syria, Euphratensis, and Osroene, an Arab presence is thus implied in these three provinces of northern Oriens around the middle of the fourth century.

B

In addition to indicating the extent of the Saracen presence in the three provinces of northern Oriens, the *Vita* has a valuable account in section IV which describes these Saracens:

1. The narrator is a monk; hence his abductors, although they are referred to as Saracens in section IX, are for him a biblical people, the Ishmaelites.

2. He refers to their flowing hair that was bound with fillets and also to their cloaks; they are half-naked, and in section VI he gives the reason for that state of semi-nakedness—excessive heat.

3. Their armor and accouterment are especially noteworthy: they ride camels and horses; they have broad military boots and their quivers are slung upon their shoulders; their bows are unstrung; and they brandish their long spears; they also use swords (sec. V).

4. As Malchus was given flesh to feed upon and camel's milk to drink, this was at least in part the Saracen's food too.

5. They are real nomads in the literal sense of being shepherds and herders; Malchus is given some sheep to tend (sec. IV).

6. The statement in the opening part of section IV that Malchus, after crossing the river, was ordered to pay his respects to the mistress of the tribe and her children, *dominam liberosque*, might imply a matriarchal system of some sort.⁹

⁸In addition to the river, *amnis*, described as *grandis* in sec. IV, there is reference to a river, *fluvius*, mentioned in sec. IX, in connection with his escape from his Saracen captors. Unlike the *amnis* of sec. IV, this *fluvius* is not described by any epithet, and thus it is not clear whether this was the same river referred to in section IV; the switch from *amnis* to *fluvius* may be significant. For an attempt to describe Malchus's itinerary with precision, see ASS, pp. 61–63, where use is made of the Peutinger Table.

⁹The reference to the *domina* of the tribe recalls what the author of the *Expositio totius mundi* says on the Saracens: *et mulieres aiunt in eos regnare* (XX, p. 154). The *domina* in the *Vita* lives *intra limitem*, while the *mulieres* of the *Expositio* are clearly *extra limitem*; but the two fourth-century documents speak of women ruling the Saracens, which could suggest that the matriarchal system was prevalent or had survived to the fourth century. Note that in the *Vita* not

7. From the evidence of the dialogue between Malchus and his captors on marriage (sec. V), it may be presumed that this group of Saracens were not Christian.

Although the manners, customs, and armor of the Saracens are not unknown from other classical sources, there are some new, significant details. More important is the light that this section sheds on the social and cultural level of this group of Saracens who, as has been established, lived in Roman Mesopotamia around the middle of the fourth century.

C

The three sets of complementary data on these Saracens, geographical, chronological, and cultural, make possible the discussion of some important problems of *Byzantino-arabica* in the fourth century:

1. Who were these Arabs who were roaming the Byzantine limitrophe in its Euphratesian and Mesopotamian regions? They must have been a tribal group that had recently wandered into the region from the Arabian Peninsula and were settled there, or more plausibly they were the old settlers of that region, described by Strabo, the *locus classicus* for the extensive and intensive penetration of Mesopotamia, Euphratesia, and northern Syria by the Arabs in the first century of Roman rule in Oriens. If these Arabs described in the *Vita* were indeed the descendants of those mentioned by Strabo, this would be a remarkable case of continuity in the social and political history of that region throughout four centuries.¹⁰

2. They appear as Strabo¹¹ conceived of the Scenitae Arabs, both *ληστρικοί* and *ποιμηνικοί*, quite distinct from the *foederati* of the fourth century who through the two institutions of the episcopate and the phylarchate are on an entirely different social and cultural level.¹² These Arabs of the *Vita* do not perform any of the functions of the *foederati*, and thus it is almost certain that they were not such but must have been *vectigales*, Arabs who were allowed to settle or continue to settle in those desert regions.

regina but *domina* is used, and this allies the latter more to the term *ἡγουμένη* which appears in Arabic as a female proper name, for which see Nöldeke, *PAS*, p. 133 note 1 and Rothstein, *DLH*, pp. 72–73.

¹⁰The attestation of this group of Arabs in the Roman Trans-Euphratesian region in the fourth century is additional documentation for the Arab presence in Mesopotamia in pre-Islamic times. For references in Strabo to the Arabs on both sides of the Euphrates, see *Geography*, XVI.1.26–27; 2.1; 3.1. For the attestation of a strong Arab presence in Persian Mesopotamia in the sixth century, see the *Life of Ahūdemneh*, *infra*, pp. 419–22. It is not unlikely that the Arabs of the *Vita* were those of the sixth-century Scenarchia, mentioned in the *Synecdemus* of Hierocles and the *Descriptio orbis romani* of Georgius Cyprius. In Jones's map, Scenarchia appears as a Cis-Euphratesian region (*Cities*, map 5, opposite p. 226, and pp. 267–68); for Hierocles and Georgius, see *ibid.*, pp. 514–21.

¹¹*Geography*, XVI.1.26.

¹²Such as Mavia's Saracens who fight Rome's wars and defend Constantinople.

3. In addition to the fact that these Arabs were far from acting responsibly or contributing to the maintenance of law and order, they were evidently not Christian, and the fact is not surprising. The imperial policy of Christianizing barbarians was still in its initial stages, and Oriens as well as other parts of the empire was still full of pagan pockets, one of which Jerome himself describes in his *Vita S. Hilarionis*, in the Holy Land¹³ itself.

4. The picture drawn of these Saracens suggests that there was some disorderliness along the frontier in that period. This could be traced to the Persian Wars of Constantius's reign and possibly to the fact that the Arab *foederati* had withdrawn from the service for doctrinal reasons during most of the reign of the Arian emperor.¹⁴

5. But the most important problem that the presence and behavior of these Arabs raises pertains to the Roman defense system in Oriens. In addition to its being designed primarily against the Persians and the Arabs of the Peninsula, there is the possibility that it also had to take into account security problems *within* the *limes* occasioned by the presence of such groups as the Arabs described in the *Vita Malchi*. Such a possibility has been entertained in connection with the *limes Palaestinae*,¹⁵ and the Arab zone referred to in the *Vita Malchi* and analyzed in this section could suggest that the same possibility could be entertained for other *limites* in northern Oriens, such as the so-called *limes* of Chalcis.¹⁶

2. *Vita S. Hilarionis*

Jerome's *vita* of St. Hilarion, the founder of the anchoritic life in Palestine, has some important material on the Arabs and their conversion to Christianity. Like the *Vita Malchi*, it was written at Bethlehem in 390 and treats events of the fourth-century saint who died in 371. The Arabs of this *vita* are *Rhomaioi* living in Elusa, the capital of Palestina III, in the Negev, and also some Saracens in the countryside around Elusa. The account is of impor-

¹³See *infra*, pp. 288–93.

¹⁴See *supra*, pp. 169–75.

¹⁵See Avi-Yonah, *Holy Land*, pp. 119–22, 162–64, and *supra*, p. 50 note 81.

¹⁶A statement in one of the letters of Jerome is of some relevance in this connection. In Letter 7 written in 374, in the first year of his quinquennium in the desert of Chalcis, he speaks of that part of the desert *quae inter Syros et Sarracenos vastum limitem ducit*. The translator quite rightly takes *limitem* to mean "a broad boundary line," but Jerome's description of the boundary line as lying between the Syrians and the Saracens, the potentially hostile Saracens, such as those he described in the *Vita Malchi*, could suggest that he conceived of the boundary line also as a military *limes*, protecting the sedentary Syrians from the inroads of the nomadic Saracens; for Jerome's letter, see F. A. Wright, ed. and trans., *Select Letters of St. Jerome*, Loeb ed. (London, 1933), Letter 7, Sec. 1. For the *limes* of Chalcis, see Mouterde and Poidebard, *Le limes de Chalcis*, and also J. Sauvaget, "Chateaux umayyades de Syrie," *REI*, 35 (1967), p. 5.

tance to Arab religious life and the spread of Christianity among the Arabs in southern Oriens in the fourth century.¹⁷

The conversion of the Arabs of Elusa by St. Hilarion is described in section 16, and the main points of interest may be summarized as follows:

1. The Arab city of Elusa is a pagan city where Venus, Arab al-‘Uzzā, had a temple and an annual festival. Furthermore, Venus/Lucifer is the goddess not only of the Arabs of Elusa but of the Saracens in general: *colunt autem illam ob Luciferam, cuius cultui Saracenorum natio dedita est*. To Jerome, Elusa *ex magna parte semibarbarum est propter loci situm*.

2. When the Saracens hear that St. Hilarion was passing through Elusa they flock with their wives and children to meet him (he had previously healed many Saracens possessed of demons), and bend their knees crying in Syriac, “*Barech*,” i.e., *benedic*, bless.

3. He prays for their conversion; they respond and do not let him leave the town before he has drawn the outline of a church in the town and signed their pagan priest with the sign of the cross.

A

While the *Vita Malchi* has nothing on the religious life of the Saracens of Osroene and Euphratensis, the *Vita S. Hilarionis* has some precious data on both the paganism and the Christianity of the Arabs of Elusa in southern Palestine.

1. Elusa is the center of religious life in the Negev, both pagan and Christian, and has a temple for Venus¹⁸ and an annual festival for her cult. The clear implication of the account is that both Elusa and its vicinity were Arab.

2. The employment of the term *Saracens* rather than *Arabs* is noteworthy and suggests that Jerome was thinking not only of the inhabitants of the *oppidum*, who clearly led a sedentary life, but also of the nomads of the Negev around Elusa. Thus the shrine of Venus in Elusa functioned as such both for the people of Elusa and for the neighboring Arabs in much the same way that other pagan centers had functioned and were to do so, such as Petra, and Mecca itself before the rise of Islam.

¹⁷The *Vita* is based on a letter now lost, written by St. Epiphanius and referred to by Jerome in the opening section of the *Vita*; the historicity of St. Hilarion has been vindicated by O. Zöckler in “Hilarion von Gaza. Eine Rettung,” *Neue Jahrbücher für deutsche Theologie*, 3 (1894), pp. 147–78. The *Vita* is published in *ASS* (October IX), pp. 46–59, and in *PL*, 23, cols. 29–54; 73, cols. 193–206; reference made to the *Vita* in this discussion will be to the *ASS* edition.

¹⁸For an account of Arab Venus, her worship and various names among the pre-Islamic Arabs, see T. Fahd, *Le panthéon de l'Arabie centrale à la veille de l'Hégire* (Paris, 1968), pp. 163–82, 204.

3. The conversion of the Saracens in and around Elusa reflects a phenomenon that has been noticed elsewhere in the process of Christianization among the Arabs, namely, that it was carried through by the anchorites and the eremites, the holy men of this early Christian period.¹⁹ Hilarion possessed miraculous powers and this, *inter alia*, impressed the Arabs, some of whom had been cured of their demons by the saint.

4. The brief ceremony of signing with the sign of the cross their pagan priest and the drawing of the outline of a church on the spot signals the rise of a hierarchy and the beginning of an organized and settled ecclesiastical life.²⁰ The garlanded pagan priest who received the sign of the cross was the first Christian cleric of Elusa and the first in a series of ecclesiastics who as bishops of Elusa took part in the councils and synods of the fifth and sixth centuries.²¹ The existence of an ecclesiastical hierarchy among the Tanūkhid *foederati* has been inferred from the attestation of their bishops, and the conversion of the Saracens of Elusa and its region provides testimonial evidence that on conversion a hierarchy was also born, and, what is more, a native one; the first ecclesiastic of Elusa was its Arab pagan priest.²²

B

An important datum furnished by the *Vita* for the study of Arab Christianity is the employment of the term *Barech*, "bless," with which the Saracens appealed to St. Hilarion: *et voce Syra Barech, id est, benedic, inclamantes*. Taken together with other statements in section 13 of the same *Vita*, in which Syriac is described as the language of Palestine and Hilarion's knowledge of Greek and Syriac is attested, it appears that according to Jerome the people of Elusa spoke Syriac to Hilarion and employed that language in beseeching the saint to bless them. It is not entirely clear whether Jerome implies that the people of Elusa spoke Syriac normally, or whether they knew it together with Arabic but employed Syriac in order to communicate with the saint, who was not familiar with Arabic, or whether their knowledge of Syriac was limited to a few words relevant to the context of their encounter with a saint, such as the term *bless*. It is impossible to determine from the evidence of one single

¹⁹In much the same way that other eremites and anchorites were to spread Christianity among the Arabs of Oriens, such as St. Simeon and St. Euthymius in the fifth century. They will be treated at length in the second volume of this series, *BAFIC*.

²⁰Cf. Aḥūdemmeḥ's creation of an ecclesiastical hierarchy for the Arabs of Persian Mesopotamia in the sixth century; see *infra*, pp. 419–22.

²¹For these, see R. Devreesse, "Le christianisme dans le sud palestinien (Négeb)," *RSR*, 3–4 (1940), pp. 247–48; Devreesse's article is basic for Christianity in the Negev.

²²Although the Elusans were *Rhomaioi*, the choice of an Arab as their first priest is significant and may be added to other data on the rise of an Arab national church discussed in connection with Moses and the *foederati* of Mavia; *supra*, pp. 288–93.

word what the linguistic picture in Elusa was. Jerome's source, the letter of Epiphanius mentioned in the opening section of the *Vita*, is lost; he himself was living in Bethlehem when he wrote the *Vita* and presumably had no first-hand knowledge of Elusa and the languages spoken there.

The problem raised by the term *Barech* in the *Vita* is important: none other than that of an Arabic liturgy before the rise of Islam. The terms employed by Syriac and Arabic for *bless* are homophonous or almost so in these two cognate languages, and if *Barech* in the *Vita* turns out to be Arabic *Bārik*²³ mistaken by Jerome for Syriac *Barech*, then this will be a gain for the view that Arabic was employed in the celebration of the Christian liturgy before the rise of Islam. The following relevant observations may be made in this connection:

1. Jerome conceives of Syriac as the language of Palestine, as is clear from section 13 of the *Vita*. This was certainly true of the urban centers, especially of the First and the Second of the Three Palestines. But Elusa was a city of the Negev in Palestina Tertia, the desert regions of southern Palestine. To maintain that it spoke Syriac or only Syriac and not Arabic as well may be fallacious reasoning from the general to the particular.

2. In the account, the term *Barech* is put in the mouth of what for Jerome were Saracens, who, as has been argued before, were probably the nomadic inhabitants of the desert regions around Elusa. Now these, it is almost certain, spoke Arabic, and the presumption is supported by Jerome's description of Elusa as *semibarbarum propter loci situm*, which, it is natural to suppose, means it was located in a desert region surrounded by barbarian nomads, the Saracens.

3. The names of the two bishops of Elusa who took part in ecclesiastical councils of the fifth century are striking; they have distinctly Arabic names,²⁴ contrary to the normal practice of adopting biblical and Christian Graeco-Roman names on consecration. This reflects a strong Arab sentiment in Elusa and suggests that its inhabitants retained knowledge and use of the Arabic language.

4. But the most relevant piece of evidence for the discussion of the language used by the newly converted Arabs of Elusa in their Christian worship is supplied by Epiphanius himself, Jerome's source for the *Vita S. Hilarionis*. The writer of the *Panarion* has a crucial passage in his work on the liturgical

²³The Arabic term is a loanword from the North Semitic languages which developed the sense "to bless" possibly from the root *B-R-K*, "to kneel," known to Arabic. *Bāraka*, "he blessed," appears in the Qur'an together with many derivatives of the root *B-R-K* and is rightly considered a foreign word in Arabic by A. Jeffrey; see Jeffrey, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'an* (Baroda, 1938), p. 75.

²⁴Devreesse, *op. cit.*, pp. 247-48.

celebrations of the feast of the epiphany of Venus in Elusa, and it may be analyzed as follows:

(a) The language of the pagan liturgical celebration of the feast of Venus in Nabataean Petra was Arabic.²⁵ This is attested by Epiphanius himself who, when describing the celebrations, explicitly states that the people of Petra “hymn the praises of the virgin in the Arabic dialect or language, calling her in Arabic Χααμουῦ, that is, ‘Korē’: καὶ Ἀραβικῇ διαλέκτῳ ἔξυμνοῦσι τὴν παρθένον, καλοῦντες αὐτὴν Ἀραβιστὶ Χααμουῦ τουτέστιν Κόρην.

(b) In the same passage, he states that this feast in honor of Korē was observed in Elusa as well as in Alexandria. But Elusa was a Nabataean Arab city; in 106 it became a city of the Provincia Arabia, and it was only as late as the fourth century that it belonged to Palestina Tertia, but it continued to use the Era of Bostra—that of the Provincia Arabia.²⁶ Its orientation was, therefore, to the East, to Arabia, and it is quite likely that it continued to use Arabic for the liturgical celebration of the epiphany of Venus²⁷ in much the same way that Petra continued to do so till the end of the fourth century when Epiphanius recorded these celebrations a few years after the death of Hilarion in 371. It is therefore not unlikely that the term *Barech* recorded by Epiphanius and transmitted by Jerome belonged to the pagan liturgical language of the Elusans²⁸ but was now given a new Christian connotation.

²⁵Epiphanius, *Panarion*, ed. K. Holl, GCS, 37 (Leipzig, 1933), II, 51, 22. This is a most precious piece of evidence, and Epiphanius cites one Arabic word, Χααμουῦ; for which see, Fahd, *Panthéon*, p. 204. The terms used by Epiphanius to describe Arabic are equivalent to Arabic *lisān al-‘Arab* or *al-‘Arabiyya*, known to the Hebrew sources of the third century as *lašhōn ‘arābhī* (for which, see C. Rabin, “‘Arabiyya,” *EI*², vol. 1, p. 561) and to Jerome himself, who in two of his works speaks of it: (a) in his preface to the Vulgate version of the Book of Job, which he wrote in 392, he speaks of the accuracy of his own translation, reproducing the original Hebrew, Arabic, and sometimes the Syriac: *ex ipso Hebraico, Arabicoque sermone, et interdum Syro*; see *PL*, 28, col. 1139; (b) in his preface to the Book of Daniel, he speaks of the Book of Job as having much affinity with Arabic: *Job quoque cum Arabica lingua habere plurimam societatem; ibid.*, col. 1358; but of the Semitic languages, he knew only Hebrew and some Syriac.

The Nabataean Arabs used Aramaic for writing their inscriptions, but they must have used Arabic or also Arabic as the language of everyday life. The passage in Epiphanius testifies to the oral use of Arabic in liturgical celebrations, and this almost certainly should imply that Arabic in Petra had other oral uses—conversation. Thus three documents attest the functional use of Arabic in the fourth century in various parts of Oriens: (1) the Namāra inscription records historical events in written Arabic; (2) Epiphanius testifies to the use of spoken Arabic for pagan liturgical celebrations in Petra; and (3) Sozomen affirms the use of Arabic in the composition of poetry that celebrated the victories of Mavia.

²⁶Devreesse, “Le christianisme dans le sud palestinien,” pp. 245–46.

²⁷The language of the formularies of the liturgy, as is well known, is conservative and remains static for centuries. In the case of the liturgical languages of some Christian communities such as the Ethiopians and the Copts, the conservative and the static have become the unintelligible to most of the worshippers.

²⁸Jerome, who did not know Arabic, may have thought that Arabic *Bārik* was Syriac *Barech*; he knew some Syriac but no Arabic, and the almost homophonous terms in the two cognate languages could have encouraged him to think along this line.

The truth about the etymology of *Barech* and the liturgical language of Elusa must remain hypothetical. What is not hypothetical and is much more significant is the fact that the Arabs of Petra, till late in the fourth century, celebrated their pagan liturgy, centering round the worship of Aphrodite-Venus-al-'Uzzā, through the medium of the Arabic language. This is a fact most relevant to the question of an Arabic Christian liturgy in pre-Islamic times; it clearly indicates that Arabic was fit for and actually used in liturgical expression.²⁹ Three centuries later Arabic becomes the liturgical language of Islam and the linguistic medium of its holy book, the Qur'ān.

All this does not, of course, prove that there was in fact an Arabic Christian liturgy before the rise of Islam; it only argues in its favor. The scene of the conversion of the Arabs of Elusa, or some of them, is instructive and provides relevant material; the garlanded pagan Arab priest was retained and prepared for ordination, and if, as has been argued, the Arabs of Elusa followed those of Petra in using Arabic for liturgical pagan celebrations, the chances are good that they continued to do so after their conversion.³⁰ *Barech* may thus turn out to be one surviving word³¹ attested in the classical sources of a lost primitive Arabic liturgy or of a liturgical formula.

II. ST. JEROME AND THE ARABS

The data on the Arabs provided by the two *vitae*, *Vita Malchi* and *Vita S. Hilarionis*, serve as a basis for understanding Jerome's perception of the Arabs and their image in his work. For him the Arabs are Saracens; they are worshippers of Venus and raiders of the *limes*.

In view of Jerome's long-enduring and far-reaching influence in the Latin West,³² some relevant features of his background and personality should be examined and these could offer an explanation for his perception of the Arabs.

²⁹This is, of course, inferable from the intensive development of the Arabic language in pre-Islamic times to be the medium of pre-Islamic poetry developed almost to satiety, metrically and lexically. The presumption is that a language so well developed as to express a poetry of this description was also ready and fit for the expression of the Christian liturgy. Cf. in this connection how Punic and Celtic were unfit for liturgical expression and how the fact explains the nonexistence of Punic and Celtic liturgies.

³⁰On the controversy concerning the Christian Arab liturgy and Bible before the rise of Islam, see A. Baumstark, "Das Problem eines vorislamischen christlichkirchlichen Schrifttums in Arabischer Sprache," *Islamica*, 4 (1931), pp. 562-75; and G. Graf, "Das Problem einer Literatur der Arabischen Christen in vorislamischer Zeit," *GCAL*, Studi e Testi, 118, vol. 1, pp. 27-52.

³¹As *Masrūq* may be one word that has survived from an Arabic pre-Islamic Bible or at least Pentateuch, for which see *Martyrs*, p. 264. Baumstark sees in *quddūs* a term that belonged to an Arabic pre-Islamic Christian liturgy; Baumstark, *op. cit.*, p. 565.

³²For the image of the Arabs as Muslim conquerors in the Roman Occident, see Daniel, *Islam and the West*, and Southern, *Western Views of Islam*. The works of the influential Latin church father, who has drawn a picture of the pre-Islamic Arabs as pagan Saracens in the Roman Orient, may have contributed to the growth of that image in Western Europe even before the rise of Islam and the Arab Conquests.

1. Jerome was born at Strido near Aquileia and studied in Rome. He was thus culturally, and in spite of his Christianity, Roman to the core,³³ enamored of Latin, Italy, and Rome on the Tiber; consequently, he was not sympathetic to the Semitic Orient with its deserts and "barbarous" languages³⁴ and could not help viewing its Arabs as Saracens who spoke an outlandish tongue.

2. This impression he had of the Arabs as Saracens was enhanced by the accident of his having lived in two places in Oriens, both of which confirmed that impression; the first was the desert of Chalcis, not far from the Saracens; the second was Bethlehem, also on the edge of the Negev, the desert of southern Palestine where the Saracen Arabs roamed and raided. Thus his contacts with the Arabs were unfortunate.

3. Included in the activities of the Saracens as raiders are the destruction of monasteries and the killing of monks, a theme that recurs not infrequently in the ecclesiastical writers of the period.³⁵ For one who devoted himself to the ascetic life, who championed it in the West, and who was instrumental in building in Bethlehem three convents for women and one for men (which he directed), the Saracens were understandably repellent, especially as on one occasion (A.D. 410–12) their raids threatened the very existence of his community at Bethlehem and disrupted the scholar who needed quiet and security.³⁶

4. Jerome's life in the Orient was continually disturbed by alarms not only from the Saracens but from the other barbarian invasions in the East and in the West. The Orient witnessed the Hunnic invasion of northern Syria in 393 and the Isaurian invasion of northern Palestine in 405. On the first occasion, the monks of southern Palestine had to leave their monasteries and prepare for embarkation at Ioppa. In the Occident, the Goths won their victory at Adrianople, his own Dalmatia was overrun, and Rome was sacked by Alaric.³⁷

³³While tarrying in Antioch on his way out to Palestine ca. 374, he was self-accused in a dream, "*Ciceronianus es, non Christianus.*"

³⁴Letter 7 has two most telling chapters (chaps. 2–3) wherein he speaks of his joy at having received a letter in Latin from his friends in Italy, which gave him more joy than the Romans experienced when news of Marcellus's victory at Nola over Hannibal's troops reached them; he also speaks of the barbarous languages of the region in which he was staying, i.e., the desert of Chalcis, and these could have been only Arabic and Syriac; for this letter, see *Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi Epistulae*, ed. I. Hilberg, CSEL (Leipzig, 1910), vol 40, pp. 26–27.

³⁵In Jerome's *Life of Paul*, who for him was the first hermit, even before St. Antony, it is the Saracens who seized the latter's monastery; see *Vita Pauli*, PL, 23, chap. 12, col. 26. For more on the Saracens and their raids on the monasteries of Sinai, see *infra*, pp. 297–308.

³⁶Letter 126 (sec. 2), written in 412; see CSEL, vol. 56, p. 144.

³⁷It was on this occasion that he exclaimed in Letter 127 (sec. 12), quoting from the Psalmist, *Deus venerunt gentes in haereditatem tuam!* (*ibid.*, p. 154); on his Roman sentiments, see *supra*, note 33. In Letter 126 (sec. 2), referred to in the preceding note, he speaks of a general assault of the Saracens against the Roman frontier, encompassing Egypt, Palestine, Phoenicia, and Syria, an important historical datum for *Byzantino-arabica* in the fifth century.

To Jerome the Arabs took their place together with all these barbarian peoples as raiders of the Roman *limes* and destructive agents of the fabric of the Roman state.³⁸

5. For the biblical scholar who translated the Bible and wrote so many commentaries, it was not easy to dissociate the Arabs from their biblical image as the sons of Ishmael, who, in the language of Genesis 16:12, "shall dwell over against all his brethren."³⁹ They were raiders of the Roman frontier and the Holy Land just as in biblical times they were at war with all their neighbors.

It has been said of Jerome that "he is a recluse, and has no thought of the general interests of mankind,"⁴⁰ and his conception of the ecclesiastical history he had hoped to write was limited, narrow, and conceived as *vitae* of saints and holy men. No wonder then that the Arabs did not fare well with him, and their conversion, part of the mission to the gentiles and the barbarians that was widening the circle of Christendom, failed to attract him.⁴¹

III. ITINERARIUM EGERIAE

The account⁴² written by Egeria of her pilgrimage to the East around A.D. 400 has some material relevant to the Arabs and to Arab Christianity:⁴³

(1) The *Itinerarium* indicates an Arab presence in southern Oriens in three of its regions: (a) in addition to the Provincia Arabia which she refers to as *Arabia* (chap. 10), there is (b) Sinai which she describes as the "lands of the Saracens," *terras Saracenorum* (chap. 7), and (c) the region in Egypt between the Pelusic branch of the Nile and the desert to the east, which she also calls *Arabia* (chaps. 7–9); this was, of course, the twentieth Nome, which carried the name Arabia from Ptolemaic to Byzantine times.⁴⁴

³⁸In this he was at one with the pagan Ammianus.

³⁹He himself quotes this verse in Letter 126, sec. 2; see *supra*, note 36.

⁴⁰See W. H. Fremantle, "The Principal Works of St. Jerome," *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1954), vol. 6, p. xxix.

⁴¹Even Rufinus, the Latin author, his contemporary, countryman, and associate for many years, did not fail to be attracted by the part played by the orthodox Arabs of Mavia in defense of orthodoxy; see *supra*, p. 198. On the improved image of the Arabs as Christians, see V. Christides, "Arabs as *Barbaroi* before the Rise of Islam," *Balkan Studies*, 10 (1969), pp. 319–20, and *idem*, "Pre-Islamic Arabs in Byzantine Illuminations," *Le Muséon*, 83 (1970), pp. 167–81.

⁴²For the text, see E. Franceschini and R. Weber, in *Itineraria et alia geographica*, CCL, 175, pp. 37–90. For a recent translation with introduction, commentary, and bibliography, see G. E. Gingras, *Egeria: Diary of a Pilgrimage*, Ancient Christian Writers, 38 (New York, 1970); also J. Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels* (London, 1971).

⁴³The date of the pilgrimage is controversial, but it is generally agreed that it must be ca. 400; see P. Devos, "La date du voyage d'Égérie," *AB*, fasc. 1–2 (1967), pp. 165–94, and *idem*, "Égérie à Bethléem," *AB*, fasc. 1–2 (1968), pp. 87–108, where it is argued that the pilgrimage took place between 381 and 384; this brings it well within the chronological termini of the present volume.

⁴⁴Both the Nome (*terra*) and the city (*civitas*) are referred to as *Arabia*. For the city, the

This Arab presence in a large continuous zone of southern Oriens is reflected *onomastically* by the employment of the terms *Saracens* and *Arabia*, but whether Egeria was aware that the Saracens were nomadic Arabs and the Arabs were sedentary Saracens is not clear.

(2) Of the data provided by Egeria on Edessa, the most important relate to the Abgarids, the Arab kings of Edessa (chaps. 17, 19). In chapter 19, she draws a complimentary picture of the Abgarids; there are specific references to their palaces within which their marble statues, pools, and tombs were located (secs. 6, 7, 18). The statue of Abgar V, Christ's contemporary, presented to Egeria the spectacle of *virum satis sapientem et honoratum* (sec. 6), while that of his son Magnus (Arabic Ma'n) had *aliquid gratiae in vultu* (sec. 7).

In addition to having been the first rulers in the Near East to adopt Christianity, they developed the city of Edessa as a center of Semitic culture in the region. But they had flourished in the pagan Roman period, and after their overthrow by Gordian, their memory did not last long in the consciousness of secular historians. However, their conversion to Christianity around 200 ensured for them a certain longevity, and the father of Byzantine historiography, Eusebius, recorded the legendary correspondence between Christ and Abgar.⁴⁵ Egeria's account is valuable in that it indicates that around A.D. 400 their own city, Edessa, was resonant with the memories of its Arab rulers who had laid the foundation for its becoming the great Christian center of the Semitic Orient.

It is regrettable that the part of the *Itinerarium* that must have described Pharan is not extant.⁴⁶ Coming as it does chronologically between the *Ammonii*

capital of the Nome, as Pi-Sopod, present-day village of Saft-el-Henneh, see Gingras, *op. cit.*, p. 180 note 91 and p. 184 note 111; as Phacusa, in the Roman period, and probably Phagroriopolis in the Ptolemaic period, see Jones, *Cities*, chap. 11, p. 470 note 2. It was an episcopal see, as is clear from references to *sancto episcopo de Arabia* in chaps. 8 and 9; Egeria is informative on its bishop, but unfortunately none of the details she includes reveals with certainty anything about his ethnic origin or the language in which he celebrated the liturgy. As the use of the term *Arabia* indicates, the region was Arab in ethnic complexion.

⁴⁵On Edessa, the Abgarids, and St. Thomas, see the notes to chaps. 17 and 19 in Gingras, *Egeria*, pp. 202–7.

⁴⁶With the exception of some data in chap. 6. As Gingras has argued, Egeria must have written more extensively on Pharan in the part of the *Itinerarium* no longer extant, some of which may be recovered from the fragments discovered by Dom de Bruyne and from the *Liber de locis sanctis*, whose twelfth-century author, Peter the Deacon, extracted for the final portions of his book the first seven chapters of the *Itinerarium*; on Peter the Deacon and the *Itinerarium*, see Gingras, *Egeria*, pp. 16–17; also chap. 2, p. 165 note 16, where the author quotes the relevant fragment on the monks' oath; for Peter the Deacon on Pharan, extracting the *Itinerarium*, see "Appendix ad Itinerarium Egeriae, II," *CCL*, 175, p. 103. There is in the *Liber* a reference to the *castrum* of Clysmā erected *pro defensione et disciplina pro incursione Saracenorum*; *ibid.*, p. 101. The statement supports what has been said elsewhere in this book on Roman military posts established for security reasons within the *limes*.

Monachi Relatio and the sixth-century Anonymus of Placentia, both of which describe Christian Arab Pharan, the *Itinerarium* might have solved some problems related to that Arab oasis in Sinai, especially the language used by its isolated Arab community in church services.

IV. AMMONII MONACHI RELATIO

Valuable data on the Arabs of Sinai (Palestina Tertia) may be extracted from the *Ammonii Monachi Relatio*,⁴⁷ an account of the martyrdom of monks both at Mt. Sinai and at Rhaithou written by Ammonius, a monk from Canopus, Egypt, who happened to be at the monastery of Mt. Sinai when the massacres took place sometime in the seventies, during the reign of Valens.⁴⁸ The account may be divided into three parts and may be summarized as follows:

(1) The first part tells the story of the massacre by the Saracens of monks who were in various hermitages and cells in the vicinity of Mt. Sinai and the survival of those who with the *hēgoumenos*, Doulos, took refuge in the fortress; it was only the miraculous flame of fire on the summit of the Holy Mountain that saved the remainder of the community from the Saracens who fled when they saw the miracle. Those who died numbered forty, and the date of the massacre was 28 December.

(2) Shortly after the massacre at Mt. Sinai, an Ishmaelite arrived and told the story of another massacre, also of forty monks and on the same date, 28 December. It took place at Rhaithou and was perpetrated by the Blemmyes. The account was confirmed by a monk who had escaped the massacre and who gave a detailed account of it to the *hēgoumenos*, Doulos.

(3) It is the account of this monk that furnishes important data on the Arabs of Sinai:

(a) He describes the community at Rhaithou, whose main figure was Moses, the Arab holy man.

(b) He gives an account of the two military operations between the Blemmyes and the Arabs. Outnumbering the Saracens who try to defend

⁴⁷For the Greek and Latin versions, see *Illustrium Christi Martyrum Lecti Triumphi*, ed. Combefis (Paris, 1660), pp. 88–122. A Syriac version of the *Relatio* with an English translation was published by A. S. Lewis in *Horae Semiticae*, 9 (Cambridge, 1912); for the English translation, see pp. 1–14. The Greek and Latin versions have not been reprinted in *PG*, *PL*, or *ASS*, and thus they were unavailable to me; I had, therefore, to depend on R. Devreesse's analysis of the Greek text in "Le christianisme dans la péninsule sinaïtique, des origines à l'arrivée des musulmans," *RB*, 49 (1940) (hereafter, Devreesse, "Christianisme sinaïtique"), pp. 216–20, and on the Syriac and Arabic versions published by Lewis.

⁴⁸The two termini are A.D. 373 and A.D. 378, spanning the patriarchate of Peter over the see of Alexandria, to which there is reference at the beginning and at the end of the *Relatio*, pp. 1, 14. The Peter mentioned in the *Relatio* is Athanasius's successor and not the bishop of Diocletian's reign (Eusebius, *HE*, VII.13.7); see *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, 1, s.v. "Ammonius, 4."

Rhithou, the Blemmyes vanquish them, and thus Rhithou lies open for them to massacre its monks. On their return to the shore to embark and go to Clysma, they find their ship broken; the Pharanite Arabs arrive, now outnumbering the Blemmyes, and they annihilate them to the last man. Obedianus, their chief, buries the martyred monks. The data on the Arabs in the *Relatio* are valuable as well as plentiful and they may be analyzed as follows:

1

The circumstance that led to the massacre of the monks of Mt. Sinai was the death of the Arab chief in the region: ἀποθανόντος τοῦ κρατοῦντος τῆν φυλαρχίαν; the Syriac version has "the king of the desert had died, he was the guardian of the desert."⁴⁹

The two versions clearly imply that the deceased Saracen chief had held the peace in the region and it was only on his death⁵⁰ that the Saracens went out of control and launched their attack on Sinai. The Greek version is probably the more accurate of the two in that it suggests that the chief was a phylarch and thus attests that institution in Sinai. But the two versions are not necessarily contradictory; the chief was probably a little king to his people but to the Romans he was a phylarch, probably in the technical sense of an Arab chief who was a *foederatus*, receiving the *annona* and in return guarding Roman interests in the region, one of which was the protection of the monks of Mt. Sinai. The implication of the assault on Sinai is that his Saracens were not Christian yet.⁵¹

It is, however, not in the region of Mt. Sinai but in that of Rhithou and Pharan that the data on the Arabs are plentiful and significant; they may be divided into two parts involving (a) Moses, the hermit of Rhithou, and its community of eremites and (b) the Arabs who battle the Blemmyes, both the Saracens and the Pharanites whose chief was Obedianus.

The authenticity of the *Relatio* had been accepted by scholars as early as Tillemont in 1732 and as late as Aigrain in 1924 (*DHGE*, 3, cols. 1191–92); a dissident voice is that of Devreesse ("Christianisme sinaïtique," pp. 218–20), whose views are examined and rejected *infra*, pp. 308–15.

⁴⁹Devreesse, *op. cit.*, p. 216; Lewis, *Relatio*, p. 1.

⁵⁰A parallel situation obtained when Mavia's husband died; this Sinaitic chief, however, must have been a local one. The attack of the Saracens on the monks of Mt. Sinai may be related to the general state of confusion and disorderliness that prevailed in the limitrophe provinces of Oriens during Mavia's revolt; so, in addition to the death of their chief, the local Saracens of Sinai may have taken advantage of Mavia's revolt to engage in such activities as the *Relatio* describes, and so may the Blemmyes have; for Mavia's husband, see *supra*, pp. 140–42.

⁵¹To be distinguished from the Saracens around Rhithou and the Arabs of Pharan, especially the latter, who were clearly Christian after the conversion of their chief, Obedianus. Thus the Arabs of the southeastern part of Sinai were not Christian at this time, unlike those of the southwestern part, who were.

The *Relatio* gives a remarkably detailed account⁵² of this Arab religious figure of the fourth century to which only the accounts of the ecclesiastical historians of Moses, Mavia's bishop, may be compared. The main points are the following:

(1) Moses was a native of the region of either Rhaithou or Pharan;⁵³ he had adopted the anchoritic life from his early youth,⁵⁴ persisting in that way of life for seventy-three years.

(2) He dwelt in his cell, a cave in the mountain of Rhaithou, and imposed on himself severe austerities; he never drank wine, but fed on dates and water only, and his dress was of palm-fibre.⁵⁵

(3) His sleep was after the liturgy of the night, and he spent the rest of the hours in vigils. He kept the Fast of Forty Days rigorously, alone in his cave, and would open the door of his cell only on the fifth day of Holy Week.

(4) Most important, he was endowed with miraculous powers: he healed many people of their sicknesses and also of their evil spirits. It was in this way that he converted the chief⁵⁶ of the Arabs of Pharan, Obedianus, who was possessed by an evil spirit, and with him all the Arabs of Pharan who had been pagan but since then have become elect and zealous Christians; and so had he converted also the "people in that desert."

(5) His influence was felt in the eremitic community at Rhaithou where he had disciples, one of whom was Pseos, a native of the Thebaid.⁵⁷

⁵²The present analysis of this account is based on Lewis's version, pp. 4–5.

⁵³It is not clear from the Syriac version which of the two places he was a native of. According to Devreesse, who had access to the Greek version, he was a native of Pharan ("Christianisme sinaitique," p. 217); Aigrain speaks in general terms of *contrée* and *pays*, after referring to him as an *érémitte à Rhaithou* ("Arabie," cols. 1191–92).

⁵⁴His adoption of the name Moses may not have been entirely fortuitous. Both Rhaithou and Pharan have been identified with biblical sites associated with the Israelites during their wanderings in Sinai, Rhaithou with Elim and Pharan with Raphidim, and both are associated with Moses. Apparently, not only the name of Moses but also that of Aaron was assumed in this region, and for obvious reasons; see *infra*, note 64.

⁵⁵It is in this connection that the *Relatio* mentions that the Saracens of the region brought wheat from Egypt and transported it to Sinai, some of which they gave to the monks in exchange for dates (Lewis, *Relatio*, p. 5); see also Devreesse, *op. cit.*, p. 217 note 3. Thus the *Relatio* gives a glimpse of an important function that the Saracens performed in the economic life of that desert region.

⁵⁶Another instance that illustrates the pattern of conversion among the Saracens through the miraculous powers of the holy man, exemplified in the north of Oriens and in the same period by the conversion of the chief, Zokomos; in this case, the holy man was an Arab himself, unlike others, such as St. Hilarion and St. Euthymius who converted the Arabs of Elusa and those of the Preamble in Palestina I in the fourth and the fifth centuries respectively.

⁵⁷There is in the *Relatio* a reference to a monk by the name of Joseph, who hailed from Ayla/Eilat, and also to the *begoumenos* Paul, who hailed from Petra; Lewis, *Relatio*, pp. 5, 8. The chances are that these were Arabs, and so they evidence the development of the anchoritic

One large problem arises out of this account of Moses in the *Relatio*, namely, whether the hermit of Rhaithou was the same as the bishop of Mavia? If he was the same (and this must be entertained as a possibility), then the account of the *Relatio* would be welcome as giving many significant details for the background of Mavia's bishop whose career before Mavia chose him is described by the ecclesiastical historians only very sketchily.⁵⁸ If, on the other hand, he was not,⁵⁹ then this would be a gain for Arab Christianity in the fourth century—two holy men instead of one, each of whom is called Moses, one in the north of Oriens and the other in the south.

The conflict of the Arabs with the Blemmyes consists of two battles, one before and another after the massacre of the monks of Rhaithou.⁶⁰

(1) The first battle was fought when the Arabs were trying to defend the monks:

(a) The Arabs are referred to as *Saracens*; the term distinguishes them from

life among the Arabs of the fourth century. That the anchoritic community at Rhaithou counted many Arabs among its members is inferable from the statement in the *Relatio* on one of the martyrs, Domnus, who is described as a Roman; the author went out of his way to make that statement on his ethnic origin, and this suggests that the others were not so but were probably native to the region; see Aigrain ("Arabie," col. 1192), who does not mention the name of the martyr; for Domnus, who was "from Rome," see Lewis, *Relatio*, p. 13.

The references to Joseph and Paul hailing from the two Arab cities of Ayla and Petra suggest that it was the reputation of Moses that may have attracted the two to migrate to Rhaithou since the region around Ayla and Petra was forbidding enough to attract those who opted for the anchoritic and eremitic life. Thus Rhaithou emerges as a center of Arab anchoritic life in Palestina Tertia in the fourth century, attracting Arabs from other parts of the region as far as Ayla and Petra, in the 'Araba region.

⁵⁸Since something could be said for this view, the two following observations are not irrelevant: (a) the *Relatio* mentions that Moses spent seventy-three years as an anchorite; this as well as the fact that others such as Joseph of Ayla and Paul of Petra chose to join his community may explain how Mavia in the north of Oriens heard about him and chose him to be her bishop; (b) the *Relatio* is silent on his fortunes after a long, detailed account of his anchoritic life and does not mention his name together with those of the monks that were martyred. This is surprising and could suggest that Moses had left Rhaithou or was not at Rhaithou when the attack was made. If so, he may have already attracted Mavia's attention and so was on his way to be consecrated bishop, or he may have been dead by the time the attack was launched against Rhaithou, and the account of his anchoritic life would have been that of a dead man who had been a moving spirit in the life of the community.

⁵⁹It should be noted that the name Moses was not uncommon, especially among the Christians of the Orient who were of Semitic origin; these probably found O.T. names more convenient to adopt than Graeco-Roman ones, and the adoption of O.T. names by the Muslim Arabs partially substantiates this view. Thus the frequency of the name Moses could argue that it might easily have been assumed by two different Arab holy men in the fourth century; cf. the case of the unusual name Obedianus/'Ubayda, for whom see *infra*, note 65. For the arguments adduced against the identification of the hermit of Rhaithou with Mavia's bishop, see *supra*, pp. 185–86. But whatever the truth about this identification may turn out to be, there is no doubt that Obedianus was not Mavia's husband since he was alive and active exactly during the period of her widowhood.

⁶⁰For the account of the conflict, see Lewis, *Relatio*, pp. 7–14.

the Blemmyes, who are called *barbarians*, and the distinction is significant in that it clearly indicates that these Saracens were Christianized, and their Christianity explains their defense of Rhaithou. They must have been Christianized by Moses and included in the category of the "people in that desert"⁶¹ whom he had converted. The application of two different terms to the two peoples, the Arabs and the Blemmyes, suggests that the term *Saracens*, which normally carries pejorative overtones, does not do so in this context, and the conversion of the Saracens to Christianity explains the fact. They are Saracens but not barbarians, as the non-Christian Blemmyes are.

(b) These Saracen Arabs are further distinguished in the narrative from the Pharanite Arabs who engage the Blemmyes in the second battle and who are not referred to as Saracens but only as Pharanites.⁶² The distinction is significant. It clearly implies that the Saracens of the first battle were nomadic Arabs living in the desert while the Pharanites were sedentaries. This must be the case since Pharan was indeed an oasis and so its Arabs were sedentaries.

(c) The account mentions that both parties in the battle used arrows, that the barbarians outnumbered the Saracens, and that finally they vanquished them after killing a hundred and forty-seven of them. The reference to Arab archery is consonant with what is known about the weaponry of other Arab groups in Oriens in the fourth century.⁶³

(2) The second battle was fought on the beaches of Rhaithou between the Blemmyes and the Arabs of Pharan:

(a) Those who fought the battle were not the Saracens of the desert but the Arabs of the oasis of Pharan who had heard about the massacre and had marched from Pharan to the succor of the monks.

(b) They were six hundred and thus outnumbered the Blemmyes. They fought again with arrows for nine hours from sunrise and completely annihilated the Blemmyes, having themselves lost eighty-four men.

(c) Obedianus is not mentioned by name in the account of the battle, but he is very clearly implied since he was the chief of the Pharanites; and immediately after the battle he brings costly garments with which he covers the bodies of the martyred monks and, together with the Pharanites, he buries them.

(d) His name is undoubtedly Arabic 'Ubayd or 'Ubayda, the diminutive of 'Abd, meaning "slave" or "servant." The name is significant if the connotation

⁶¹Lewis, *Relatio*, p. 4.

⁶²The distinction does not come out in Devreesse's résumé; he speaks of the Pharanites engaging the Blemmyes on the two occasions; "Christianisme sinaitique," pp. 217-18.

⁶³And also brings echoes of the bowmanship of Ishmael, associated with Sinai. Those echoes were audible in Islamic times in connection with Muhammad himself and the Muslim Arabs.

it carries is Christian, which it most probably is, namely, "the slave or servant of God or Christ," in much the same way that its plural, 'Ibād, was, the name applied to the Christian Arab community of Ḥīra in pre-Islamic times, the 'Ibād of Ḥīra, "the slaves or servants of God or Christ."⁶⁴ If so, the Arab chief could have assumed the name on his conversion.⁶⁵

Just as Moses is the principal figure in the preceding part of the *Relatio*, so is Obedianus in this one. He had been exorcised and baptized by Moses; he became a zealous Christian, avenged the martyred monks, and buried their remains.

2

The *Relatio* discloses an Arab presence in two areas in the southern part of the Sinai Peninsula, the southeast not far from Mt. Sinai and the southwest around the two oases of Pharan and Rhaithou. The data extracted from the *Relatio* on that presence may now be synthesized and interpreted.

The southeastern area near Mt. Sinai, in spite of the phylarchate, was apparently unstable; this could suggest that the phylarchal system had not been perfected and also that Christianity had not been effectively propagated; the area appears as a restive pagan⁶⁶ Arab pocket, reminiscent of another one in Mesopotamia as revealed in the *Vita Malchi* of St. Jerome. The two pockets could provide material for understanding certain aspects of the Byzantine defense system in the Orient: that certain military posts were established not so much against an external enemy but an internal one within the *limes*.⁶⁷

The southwestern area of the Peninsula appears stable, and its stability seems to derive from the fact that its Arabs are mainly sedentaries living in two oases, Pharan and Rhaithou, and from the fact that they had been converted to Christianity, which latter fact explains the conduct of even those

⁶⁴It is noteworthy that the name Doulos by itself or as part of a compound was not uncommon among the eremitic community of Sinai; it was the name of the *begoumenos* at Mt. Sinai as indicated in the *Relatio* and also that of the *begoumenos* in the reign of Justinian. The vogue of the name in Sinai (and the concept it stands for) is attested epigraphically: excavations at Sinai have uncovered an inscription that speaks of a monk with the significant name Aaron, who describes himself as δοῦλος τοῦ ἁγίου τόπου; the "sacred place" could be the church built on the site where Moses prayed during the battle with Amalec at Raphidim; see H. Leclercq, "Sinai," *DACL*, 15.1 (1950), col. 1472.

⁶⁵The name 'Ubayda is noteworthy for another reason, namely, its uncommonness in this period as a personal name in the diminutive form; in fact, it is not attested elsewhere in the classical sources or even in the Arabic ones for an Arab chief related to Byzantium. Thus both the vogue in Sinai of the concept for which the name stands and the extreme rarity of its occurrence in the sources, especially in its diminutive form, could speak for the authenticity of the account in the *Relatio* that involves the Arabs.

⁶⁶On the survival of Arab pagan practices in this part of Sinai as late as the sixth century, see *infra*, p. 321.

⁶⁷On references to such posts in Sinai also as late as the sixth century, see *infra*, pp. 319–24.

Arabs who were not sedentary, the Saracens of the desert referred to in the *Relatio*. Christianity is the specific difference that makes the author of the *Relatio* refer to the nomadic Blemmyes as *barbarians* and withhold the application of the same term to the nomadic Saracens.

Of the accounts in the *Relatio* on the two areas of Arab presence in the Peninsula, it is the one on this area that is significant: it provides plentiful and valuable data on military, religious, and cultural matters⁶⁸ and, what is more, it represents gains in onomastic and toponymic precision,⁶⁹ such as the names of Moses and ʿUbayda and those of the two oases, Pharan and Rhaithou.

Pharan

Pharan emerges from the *Relatio* as the main center of Arab presence in the Peninsula:⁷⁰

(a) Its Arabs are settled nomads of an oasis, related to the Arabs of the surrounding desert, the Saracens of the *Relatio*, in much the same way that an Arab tribe in the Arabian Peninsula was partly sedentary and partly nomadic. They were most probably considered *Rhomaioi* although they were living in the *desertum Saracenorum*⁷¹ of the ecclesiastical historians and in a Peninsula largely inhabited by Saracens. And yet the civilizing mission of Byzantium had won them over and they appear as loyal and faithful *Rhomaioi*.

(b) Its chief, ʿUbayda, converted by the Arab holy man Moses, becomes a zealous Christian and a protector of the eremitic community of neighboring Rhaithou; he lays the foundation for the emergence⁷² of Pharan as a major Christian center in the Sinai Peninsula, and shortly after, around A.D. 400, the oasis appears in the sources as an episcopal see.⁷³

⁶⁸Thus making the reign of Valens the best documented of all the reigns of the fourth century for Arab-Byzantine relations; the *Relatio* balances the accounts of the ecclesiastical historians on Mavia in the north of Oriens.

⁶⁹Unlike the accounts of Mavia, which offer no helpful toponymic indications.

⁷⁰And it is its main oasis, *la perle du Sinai*, in Devreesse's words; see "Christianisme sinaitique," p. 211.

⁷¹St. Jerome's phrase, quoted by Devreesse, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

⁷²On Pharan as a Christian center in Byzantine times, with monasteries, churches, and bishops, see Leclercq, "Sinai," cols. 1469–72; on two of its monks, Alexander and Zoilos, see *Apophthegmata patrum*, PG, 65, col. 100 A.

⁷³Its first attested bishop is Nathyr, Netras, for whom see *ibid.*, col. 312 A, and *De vitis patrum*, PL, 73, col. 918 C–D. He had been a monk at Mt. Sinai before he was consecrated bishop of Pharan; the contrast between the desert, which was the former, and the oasis, which was the latter, is brought out in the dialogue with his disciple, who apparently followed him from Mt. Sinai to Pharan. He was probably an Arab since his name in Greek could be a reproduction of one of the following Arabic names: Nasr, Naṣīr, Naḍr, Naḍīr, Naḍīr. If so, this might explain why he was chosen to be bishop of Pharan. On the Arabic names of the bishops of Elusa, see *supra*, note 21. Devreesse ("Christianisme sinaitique," p. 205) suggests that Nathyr was the disciple of the same Silvanus who founded the monastery of Gerar in Palestine; on the bishops of Pharan, see Leclercq, "Sinai," col. 1469.

‘Ubayda represents the type of the assimilated Arab, and it may be presumed that his duties in Pharan and its region were the enforcement of law and order, the protection of the trade routes, and possibly the spread of Christianity among the Saracens.

(c) Pharan takes its place among other Arab cities of the Byzantine limitrophe of which it is possible to visualize the civil and religious life from the relative wealth of material in the sources.⁷⁴ Unlike other cities in Oriens whose ethnic complexion was Arab, these cities were in the limitrophe. They grew and continued to develop in Arab surroundings, and the Arab ethos of their inhabitants remained strong;⁷⁵ thus they afford excellent material for examining the process of Byzantinization among the Arabs of the fourth century.

Rhaithou

Both Pharan and Rhaithou appear as flourishing Christian oases; Rhaithou, however, is more the center of the eremitic community in the region.⁷⁶

(a) The principal figure in its Christian life is the Arab holy man Moses, the hermit of Rhaithou, the details of whose life are intimately recorded in the *Relatio*.

(b) His longevity and his influence for some seventy-three years could easily account for the major thrust of the process of conversion in the south-western part of the Peninsula; one of his achievements was the conversion of ‘Ubayda who as chief of Pharan becomes himself an agent of Christianization or at least a chief who protects and undoubtedly promotes the interests of Christianity. Pharan protects Rhaithou.

(c) The Arab character of Rhaithou and of Moses’ Arab origin could

⁷⁴Such as Nessana in the Negev, which will be treated in *BAFIC*. The account of Pharan in the *Nili Narrationes* provides additional material on that Arab oasis, which may be added to what the *Relatio* provides; the *Relatio* and the *Narrationes* taken together make possible the drawing of a fairly clear picture of life in a pre-Islamic Arab city in the Byzantine limitrophe.

⁷⁵Reflected *inter alia* in their names, not Graeco-Roman, as those of the assimilated Arabs in Syria were, but Arabic, such as ‘Ubayda.

⁷⁶The member of that community best known to posterity is undoubtedly Menas, the companion of Cosmas Indicopleustes, who had been a merchant before he became a monk at Rhaithou. Cosmas mentions that he collaborated with him in transcribing the Adulis inscription for the Ethiopian Negus and records his views on the interpretation of the figures of Hercules and Mercury, sculpted on the back of the Chair of Ptolemy. He must have died ca. 550 since Cosmas refers to him as having “departed this life not long ago.” Cosmas’s account of Menas gives a valuable glimpse of the cultural level of one of the prospective monks of Rhaithou as well as the social sector to which he had belonged. It is also clear from Cosmas’s account that Rhaithou had non-Arab monks such as Menas, who was most probably a Greek or a Greek-speaking Egyptian to whom Rhaithou’s geographical position, accessible and not far from the sea, must have been attractive (*supra*, note 72); for Cosmas’s account of Menas, see *Topographie chrétienne*, vol. 2, pp. 56–57. On references to Rhaithou in the fifth and sixth centuries, see Devreesse, “Christianisme sinaïtique,” p. 210.

explain the far-reaching influence of Rhaithou on the Arabs of the 'Araba valley, encompassing Ayla and Petra. Joseph and Paul, natives of these two cities respectively, may have been drawn to Rhaithou not only by the reputation of its holy man Moses but also by the fact that he was one of them. Rhaithou, not Mt. Sinai, thus emerges as a Christian center in the Peninsula, with a strong Arab coloring.⁷⁷

3

The emergence of Sinai in the fourth century as part of a larger Holy Land, a fact reflected in the new name, *Palestina Tertia*, enhanced the importance of the Peninsula through which passed the trade routes that ran from Ḥijāz to Egypt and the Mediterranean.⁷⁸ This new significance called for more attention on the part of the imperial administration toward that Peninsula and the various pockets of Saracens that were to be found in it, especially when these posed a threat to the new Christian establishment in this part of the Holy Land. It is to this threat which found expression in assaults on Christian centers such as Mt. Sinai and Rhaithou that the student of Arab-Byzantine relations owes these valuable accounts of the Saracens⁷⁹ which would not have been written but for those assaults.

These accounts in the *Relatio* have been analyzed in the preceding section but the analysis has not exhausted their usefulness; they still supply material for the examination of a number of problems of a different order which may be summarized as follows:

(1) The *Relatio* provides a background for understanding the history of the federate-imperial relationship in Sinai, reflected in the phylarchate over the whole of *Palestina Tertia* of Imru' al-Qays and of the Ghassānid Abū-Karib in the fifth and sixth centuries respectively.⁸⁰ These two commands probably represent the concentration of all phylarchal power in this large province in the

⁷⁷It is noteworthy that, in addition to Mt. Sinai, Rhaithou was the other locality in the Peninsula that was the object of imperial favor in the sixth century; Justinian built its monastery, probably the same that Menas chose for his cloistered existence; see Eutychius, *Annales*, *CSCO* (*Scriptores Arabici*), 50, p. 202, lines 20, 22, where Rhaithou appears as RAYT; when vocalized, it may be pronounced Rāyat, which either represents its pronunciation in later Islamic times in the tenth century when Eutychius wrote his *Annales* or an erroneous form of Raytā/Raythā, through metathesis.

⁷⁸The Persian wars of the fourth century and the tense relations that obtained between Byzantium and Persia from the Peace of Jovian to the Settlement of Theodosius must have contributed to the prosperity of the West Arabian route at the expense of the Mesopotamian one and consequently enhanced the importance of the Sinai Peninsula.

⁷⁹Just as he owes to the frequent Persian wars in the fourth and sixth centuries most of the references in the sources to the Arab *foederati* who took part in those wars.

⁸⁰For the two phylarchs, see for the time being the present writer, "On the Patriariate of Imru' al-Qays," pp. 74-82, and "Procopius on the Ghassānids," pp. 79-87. The two will be treated in detail in the following volumes of this series.

hands of one Arab chief, and that for security reasons in a region important both for its trade routes and its Christian centers.

(2) The precise onomastic and toponymic data provided by the *Relatio* make possible a return to the biblical, the classical, and the Arabic sources for some light on the tribal identity of the Arabs of Sinai in pre-Islamic times.⁸¹

(a) The sources are silent on the identity of the Arabs in the vicinity of Mt. Sinai in the fourth century, but the tenth-century author Eutychius speaks of Banū-Ṣāliḥ and the Lakhmids as the remnants of the community brought there from Egypt by Justinian in the sixth century.⁸²

(b) Rhaithou brings echoes of Ptolemy's Ῥαθηνοί, who have been erroneously identified with the inhabitants of the small Arab oasis of Byzantine times, but the identification has to be rejected since it is amply clear that the Ῥαθηνοί of Ptolemy lived not in Sinai but in Arabia Petraea.⁸³

(c) Pharan, the main Arab center in Sinai, brings to mind, at least phonetically, biblical Paran, the habitation of Ishmael, the biblical ancestor of the Arabs of the region.⁸⁴ It was known to Ptolemy, who places it farther to the south and thus closer to the eastern coast of the Peninsula.⁸⁵ It is not impossible that in the course of the centuries that elapsed from biblical to Byzantine

⁸¹On the tribal identity of the Saracens of Oriens in the service of Byzantium, see *infra*, pp. 381–95.

⁸²The passage in Eutychius is not crystal clear. The “slaves” transported from Egypt by Justinian to serve and protect the monks of Mt. Sinai may or may not have been Arabs. More important than Banū-Ṣāliḥ are the Laḥmiyyīn, corrected by the editor to Lakhmiyyūn (Lakhmids). If the correction is valid, as is likely, these were certainly Arabs and must have belonged to the Lakhmids of Imru’ al-Qays of Namāra in the Provincia Arabia; they are to be distinguished from Banū-Ṣāliḥ, who may or may not have been Arab in the sixth century. This isolated reference to the Lakhmids in the vicinity of Mt. Sinai is of great interest. These were, of course, Christian Arabs since the days of their king, Imru’ al-Qays; it is not unlikely that their dispatch for the protection of Mt. Sinai took place during the phylarchate of Abū-Karib, himself a zealous Christian, who was endowed with the phylarchate of Palestina Tertia by Justinian (*supra*, note 80); for the passage in Eutychius, see *Annales*, pp. 203–4.

⁸³Where Rātiya still exists; see Ῥαθηνοί in *RE*, Zweite Reihe, I.1 (1914), cols. 259–60; also Devreesse, “Christianisme sinaitique,” p. 210, where other references to Rhaithou in Christian writers may be found. As it was a resting station for travelers (two hospices are mentioned by Anonymus of Placentia in the 6th cent.), it would be tempting to connect the name with the Arabic root (R-Y-TH) meaning “stop, linger at a place.” The name is not biblical, so it must have appeared in postbiblical times, probably during the period of Nabataean presence and rule in Sinai. The last syllable in the Greek form of Rhaithou may reflect the influence of Aramaic in the pronunciation of the terminal long vowel, Raythō for Arabic Raythā; perhaps it was so pronounced by the Syriac-speaking monks of its eremitic community. Rhaithou is identified by the Byzantine Christian authors with the biblical Elim.

⁸⁴It is not identified by biblical scholars with Paran of Genesis; in Byzantine times it was identified with Raphidim, where Joshua smote Amalec and where Jethro came to meet his son-in-law, Moses; on these Byzantine identifications, see Devreesse, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

⁸⁵See “Φαράν,” in *RE*, 19.2 (1938), cols. 1810–12, for a good discussion of Pharan in the classical sources and of Paran in the Bible. It is noteworthy that there is reference in the Sinaitic inscriptions to an Arab tribe by the name of Farrān, Fārān; *ibid.*, col. 1811.

times, the Arabs associated with Paran moved from the north of the Peninsula, where biblical Paran is located, to the southwest, where the Byzantine authors locate Pharan.⁸⁶

(3) The relative isolation of the two oases of Rhaithou and Pharan and their location in a Peninsula that consisted largely of desert land and was sparsely inhabited by pockets of Saracens present favorable conditions for examining the problem of a pre-Islamic Arabic liturgy.

(a) In the sixth century, Anonymus of Placentia refers to three monks of Mt. Sinai who knew five languages: Latin, Greek, Syriac, Egyptian, and a fifth language, *bessas*, the identity of which is not clear; it could be a corrupt word for Arabic.⁸⁷ The anonymous author also speaks of interpreters of each of these languages, and the chances that one of the languages these interpreters knew was Arabic are good, if only because Mt. Sinai was surrounded by Saracens and the monks, it is natural to suppose, needed to know the languages of those surrounding them. But the majority of the inmates of the hermitages at Mt. Sinai were evidently non-Arab.

(b) Rhaithou and Pharan, therefore, are better localities for the examination of the problem. Rhaithou was mainly an eremitic community,⁸⁸ but Pharan was more than that, and traces of churches,⁸⁹ about three, have been recovered that no doubt ministered to the Arab inhabitants of the oasis. One would expect a simple form of an Arabic liturgy to be celebrated in Pharan, and yet this inference awaits verification. The same sixth-century traveler, Anonymus of Placentia, speaks in his valuable chapter on Pharan of being greeted in the "Egyptian language," which may have been a mistake for Arabic.⁹⁰ Furthermore, the name of the first attested bishop of Pharan was Nathyr, and it has been argued that he was most probably Arab;⁹¹ if so, it is likely that he and

⁸⁶Some data from Muslim geography are very pertinent: (a) the toponym Pharan appears as a locality in Ḥijāz where the tribe of Sulaym had an iron mine; see Bakrī, *Muʿjam*, ed. M. al-Saqqa, 4 vols. (Cairo, 1945–51), vol. 3, p. 1011; whether the Arabs of the two Pharans are related from Nabataean times, when the two localities were within the confines of one political domination within which its Arabs could move freely from one locality to the other, is not clear; (b) more significantly for Islamic religious thought, the name Pharan is applied not to a locality or wilderness in Sinai but to the mountain or mountains of Mecca as the geographical background and setting for the mission of Muhammad with reference to Deut. 33:2; see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam*, vol. 4, p. 225.

⁸⁷On this, see *infra*, pp. 320–21.

⁸⁸There is reference to a monk from Rhaithou by the name of Ammon and his reading of Holy Scripture, but it is not clear what language is involved; see *Apophthegmata patrum*, col. 397 D. His name suggests "Ammonius," an Egyptian name not uncommon among the Christians of this period, but it could also be an Arabic name, a form of Amman/Ammanes, the Arab chief in *Pseudo-Nilus*.

⁸⁹*Supra*, note 72.

⁹⁰See *infra*, p. 322.

⁹¹*Supra*, note 73.

the presbyters under him would have used a language intelligible to the Pharaites in the celebration of the liturgy, namely, Arabic.

(4) Sinai, now a part of the larger Holy Land, had been a part of Arabia, the *provincia* into which Trajan had converted Arab Nabataea. Thus unlike Palestine proper—the Holy Land west of the Jordan—this part had been and remained Arab in ethnic complexion in Byzantine times. According to Genesis,⁹² Sinai was the homeland of Ishmael, the eponymous ancestor of the Arabs. And yet the Christianized Arabs of the Byzantine period in Sinai were either not aware of their Ishmaelite descent or, if they were, did not reflect their awareness in any significant manner. They do not seem to have assumed the name *Ishmael*, which was, rather, applied to them by others,⁹³ and its application normally carried a pejorative connotation.⁹⁴ The converted Arabs of Sinai appear as assimilated Christians whose awareness of biblical ancestry is associated with Moses' father-in-law, rather than with Ishmael;⁹⁵ the Pharaites do not conceive of themselves as sons of Ishmael but as Midianites descended from Jethro.

V. THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE *AMMONII MONACHI RELATIO*

R. Devreesse was the first to argue against the authenticity of the *Relatio*.⁹⁶ He suggested that it is not what it purports to be, a fourth-century work, but a sixth-century one; that it was written by some learned monks of Mt. Sinai, who were motivated by a desire to provide the monastery with *un contexte coloré* to a bloody Saracen incursion or to a massacre of monks of the Peninsula that took place on 14 January; that these monks availed themselves of sources for the fourth century, the most important of which was Sozomen, whose account of the conversion of the Arab queen, Mavia, and the phylarch, Zokomos, the authors fully utilized.

It is noteworthy that Devreesse distinguishes the sources of the *Relatio*, which for him are basically genuine in spite of some tampering on the part of the hagiographers, from the purely hagiographic elements, which for him were either fabricated or exaggerated and, what is more, antedated to the fourth century. Thus it is the hagiologist rather than the Byzantino-arabist that should be mainly concerned with Devreesse's rejection of the authenticity

⁹²Paran was Ishmael's habitation: Gen. 21:21; his mother, Hagar, had wandered into the desert of Shur in Sinai where the angel found her: Gen. 16:7; his descendants lived from Havila to Shur: Gen. 25:18.

⁹³*Supra*, p. 297, where Ammonius refers to the Saracen who brought the news of the massacre at Rhaithou as an Ishmaelite.

⁹⁴Especially in the ecclesiastical sources.

⁹⁵On this, see *infra*, pp. 321–22.

⁹⁶Devreesse, "Christianisme sinaïtique," pp. 218–20; on distinguished predecessors who had accepted the authenticity of the *Relatio*, see *supra*, p. 297 note 48.

of the *Relatio*, but the concerns of the two are intimately related and the contribution of the latter should be of considerable relevance to the concerns of the former since the *Byzantino-arabica* in the *Relatio* is the major piece of "evidence" in Devreesse's thesis. It will, therefore, be argued that in spite of certain similarities between the account of Sozomen and the *Relatio* of Ammonius the two have to be distinguished from each other (with the possible exception of the part that treats Moses, the holy man); that the account of the *Relatio* could not have been an adaptation of Sozomen's; that consequently the foundation on which Devreesse rested his case against the authenticity of the *Relatio* must crumble, and both hagiography and *Byzantino-arabica* are advantaged by the rejection of Devreesse's thesis. This rejection makes certain that the *Relatio* is an independent document and not a distorted adaptation of Sozomen's account; consequently, it becomes an important source that provides new and valuable data on the Arabs of Sinai and on the history of the two major Christian centers of the Peninsula in the fourth century, the two eremitic communities of Mt. Sinai and Rhaithou, in both of which the Arabs were involved.

1

A close examination of the text of Sozomen and of Devreesse's résumé of that text reveals that the latter has made a number of serious mistakes in his interpretation of the former both as pertains to Queen Mavia and to the phylarch Zokomos.

As far as Mavia is concerned, the following may be pointed out: (1) there is no question of converting Mavia in Sozomen's account; she as well as her Arab group had been Christian for some time when the Arab revolt broke out in Valens's reign; (2) the death of her husband was not followed by attacks on monasteries and other Christian establishments but by a general revolt of orthodox Christians against Arian Valens; (3) her husband is described as a king and not a phylarch as the Arab ruler in the *Relatio* is; (4) Devreesse assumes without further ado that her bishop Moses, mentioned in Sozomen, is the same as the hermit of Rhaithou, a big assumption, which, even if it turns out to be true, will not fortify his argument in any decisive way.

Serious as the above mistakes are, they remain matters of detail; what cannot be described as such is Devreesse's interpretation of a phrase in Sozomen which he rendered "les villes des Palmiers"⁹⁷ and which thus transferred the thrust of Mavia's offensive from the north of Oriens—from Phoenicia—to Sinai and made her a Sinaitic queen operating mainly in Palestina Tertia. The phrase has been analyzed before⁹⁸ in this book, and it has been shown that the

⁹⁷Devreesse, *op. cit.*, p. 206.

⁹⁸*Supra*, p. 145 note 28.

phrase can only mean the cities of Phoenicia. The correct interpretation of the phrase dissociates Mavia from Sinai except insofar as she included or must have included Sinai in her general offensive against Byzantium, and this dissociation is fatal to Devreesse's thesis, which presumed that Sozomen's chapter on Mavia was a record of events in fourth-century Sinai and that consequently the authors of the *Relatio*, learned monks of the monastery, found it easy and convenient to adapt this account to their hagiographic purpose.

As far as the phylarch Zokomos is concerned, Devreesse has made the following mistakes: (1) Zokomos belonged to a group of Arabs different from Mavia's and the two figures may not even have belonged to the same generation, and yet Devreesse conceives of their Arabs as one group;⁹⁹ (2) more important in his analysis is the presumed relationship that obtained between Zokomos and Moses; nowhere in Sozomen is it stated that Mavia's bishop Moses converted Zokomos; consequently the identification of Zokomos with Obedianus as the Arab chief converted by Moses breaks down and with it the central argument in Devreesse's thesis, since his views on the Moses-Zokomos/Moses-Obedianus relation are even more important in his argument than those concerning Mavia; (3) Devreesse, not too familiar with the Arab onomasticon, has argued that the name Obedianus was simply given by the author of the *Relatio* to the converted chief, who is the Zokomos of Sozomen. As has been pointed out before,¹⁰⁰ the name was probably significant in this Sinaitic context, reflecting local color. Thus Obedianus appears as a real Sinaitic Arab chief and the identification of the Zokomos of Sozomen with the Obedianus of the *Relatio* becomes even more untenable on onomastic grounds.

Just as Mavia belonged not to Sinai but to northern Oriens, so did Zokomos who, together with his Arabs, is explicitly described in Sozomen as becoming after his conversion formidable to the Persians, and these were not in Sinai. And yet Devreesse transfers him from the north to the south and assumes also that he was converted by Moses and given by the hagiographer the name Obedianus. In both cases, Devreesse forced the evidence, almost twisted it, to support his thesis. In the case of Mavia, he chose to give an impossible interpretation to a crucial phrase which he translated "les villes des Palmiers," and in that of Zokomos he made him a spiritual conquest of Moses.

Unlike Sozomen's account, the *Relatio* discusses the fortunes of a group of Arabs different from those of Sozomen and tells a different story. The features of similarity between the two accounts are of a general kind and do not argue for any genetic relationship between the two. Oriens was replete with pockets of pagan Saracens in the south as well as in the north, and not only in the

⁹⁹Probably misled by Sozomen's inclusion of the data on both in one and the same chapter; see *supra*, p. 193 note 5.

¹⁰⁰*Supra*, pp. 301-2.

first century of the Christian Roman Empire, the fourth, but even in the sixth.¹⁰¹ The process of conversion among these Saracens followed the same pattern, conversion by the holy man, the eremite of the desert who was also possessed of miraculous powers. Such was the case with Moses and the Arabs of Mavia, with the anonymous holy man who converted Zokomos and his tribe, with St. Hilarion and the Arabs of Elusa, with St. Euthymius and the Arabs of the Parebole, with St. Simeon and the Arabs of Syria. Why should the account of Moses and Obedianus of Pharan¹⁰² in Sinai in the reign of Valens be suspect? No cogent reasons have been advanced and none are needed.

2

Devreesse's interest in the *Arabica* of the *Relatio* was secondary and derivative since his main interest was the *hagiographica* pertaining to the forty or eighty martyrs of the Sinai Peninsula. His conclusions on the *hagiographica*, resting on a series of misunderstandings of the *Arabica* in Sozomen, have now lost their bases and thus may be rejected without further ado. However, not only his handling of the *Arabica* but also the *hagiographica* in the *Relatio* might also be examined. The following comments may thus be made on matters he brought up and on others that might strike sceptics as embroideries or as miraculously incredible or inconsistent with solid data in other sources.

(1) The fact that the *Relatio* has two different accounts of martyrdoms at Mt. Sinai and Rhaithou, and, what is more, martyrdoms that took place on the same date, 28 December, with an identical number of martyrs in each massacre, namely, forty, inclined Devreesse to view its reliability with suspicion. But reliability should be distinguished from accuracy, and inaccuracy in reporting, whether conscious or unconscious, should not lead to an outright rejection or condemnation of the reliability of the account. Such problems and other related ones may be detailed and negotiated as follows:

(a) It is perfectly possible that forty was indeed the correct number of martyrs; alternatively, it could have been close to forty and the hagiographer

¹⁰¹*Infra*, p. 320.

¹⁰²That Pharan had a bishop ca. 400 is confirmatory evidence for the authenticity of the accounts of the *Relatio* on its conversion in the reign of Valens since these accounts provide a background for the sudden appearance of the name of the bishop for that oasis; on Nathyr, the bishop of Pharan, see *supra*, p. 303 note 73. The same may be said of the bishop of Elusa ca. A.D. 400 and Jerome's account of the conversion of the Elusans before that date by St. Hilarion, for which see *supra*, pp. 289–90. Devreesse, however, believes it is anachronistic to speak of a bishop of Elusa ca. A.D. 400 ("Christianisme sinaitique," p. 222 note 1), an objection that cannot be sustained: Elusa is administratively designated a *polis*, and after its conversion it is natural to assume that it became an episcopal see (attested explicitly for the fifth century), in much the same way that a less important center, such as Pharan, did have a bishop ca. 400; see also P. Mayerson's objections to Devreesse's view in "The Desert of Southern Palestine," p. 158 (cited *infra*, note 124).

quite understandably rounded the number, and that for a very good reason, because that particular number with its biblical associations had something magical about it in Sinai; inaccurate, rather than false, could be the description of the number of these martyrs.

(b) The weakness of the hagiographer for the miraculous and, in this case, also for symmetry may have induced him to make the number of the martyrs of Rhaithou forty also and to give an identical date for their martyrdom, namely, 28 December. In so doing, the author may have responded to the demands of the hagiographic art; failure to understand such features of hagiography must inevitably result in incredulity.

(c) To the same order as the above two features may belong the device of the messenger and the survival in the *Relatio*—the Saracen and, after him, the monk who fled to Mt. Sinai where he told the story of the martyrs of Rhaithou. But it remains to be shown whether even this was an artistic device of the hagiographer. It was a messenger that told the story of the Arab martyrs of Najrān in the sixth century, even as the Monophysite bishop Simeon of Bēth-Arshām was at the court of Muṅḍir, the Lakhmid king, who, too, threatened to kill all the Christians in his army in sympathy with what the Ḥimyarite king had done in Najrān¹⁰³—almost a parallel situation to the two massacres at Mt. Sinai and Rhaithou.

(d) The flame of fire that appeared on the summit of Mt. Sinai and which frightened the Saracens away might also be added to the elements of the miraculous or the embroideries in the *Relatio*. It could be so, but it does not have to be: a not so pious historian such as Procopius alludes to the celestial phenomena associated with the same summit,¹⁰⁴ and it is not altogether impossible that there was indeed a thunderbolt that did frighten away the Saracens, known to be superstitious about such phenomena.

(2) Then there is the onomasticon of the *Relatio* involving the two names Peter and Ammonius, which seemed suspect to Devresse. For him, the first is not Athanasius's successor over the see of Alexandria (373–78) but the martyr of Diocletian's reign, while Ammonius is not the monk of Canopus and Peter's contemporary but the Alexandrine presbyter, associated with the same Peter of Diocletian's reign; both names, according to him, are lifted from the pages of Eusebius. But Christian bishops and monks did assume, and still do, the names of illustrious predecessors, and thus the recurrence of these names is not necessarily suspect. In the case of Ammonius, this is a good Coptic name and its assumption by an Egyptian monk was not unnatural, as was not

¹⁰³For the messenger and Muṅḍir's reaction, see I. Guidi, "La lettera di Simeone vescovo di Bēth-Arsām sopra i martiri omeriti," *Atti della R. Accademia dei Lincei, serie III, Memorie della Classe di Scienze morali, storiche e filologiche*, 7 (1881), pp. 502, 507–8.

¹⁰⁴He speaks of thunderclaps and other terrifying celestial phenomena; see *Buildings*, V.viii.7.

the monk's pilgrimage to the Holy Land in view of the vogue of pilgrimages and the close proximity of Egypt to Sinai and Palestine.¹⁰⁵

More intriguing is the name of the *hēgoumenos*, Doulos, who brings to mind Eutychius's account of the monastery in the sixth century and the name of its then *hēgoumenos*, Doulos. But it is not entirely clear from Eutychius's account whether the sixth-century *hēgoumenos* had had this name before he was sent to Sinai or whether he assumed it on his being sent there, after some former *hēgoumenos* of Sinai, possibly this fourth-century one. In any case, the name or the concept that the name stands for seems to have been common in Sinai, and its assumption by the *hēgoumenos* of the monastery in the fourth and the sixth centuries should arouse no suspicions. Even more significant is the name of the Arab chief of Pharan, Obedianus, which, as has been argued before, is Arabic 'Ubayda, the diminutive equivalent of Greek Doulos. The two names are reflections of local color in the Sinai Peninsula and no adverse conclusions can be drawn from them; if anything, they could confirm the authenticity of the *Relatio* by the local color they reflect.¹⁰⁶

(3) It is noteworthy that the *Relatio* describes the martyrdom not only of the monks of Mt. Sinai whose inmates in the sixth century, according to Devreesse, concocted the account, but also that of the monks of Rhaithou. This somewhat weakens his view that the writer or writers were inspired by pride in their own monastery and wanted to give to a sixth-century raid *un contexte coloré*.

(4) The reference to fortified places at Mt. Sinai in the *Relatio* seemed to Devreesse to suggest the Justinianic fortress completed in 557 and led him to argue that the *Relatio*, reflecting sixth-century conditions, was consequently composed in the same century. But the imperial government did not leave Christian establishments entirely undefended. Eutychius specifically mentions that before Justinian built his fortress there had been at Mt. Sinai a *burj kabīr*, a "large tower," whither the monks retreated in emergencies such as Saracen raids.¹⁰⁷ This could very well be the πύργος referred to twice in the *Relatio*.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵If the author of the *Relatio* had fabricated the account, he would have been careful *not* to use the names of Peter and Ammonius, associated together in Eusebius, because the prospective reader would immediately suspect that they were lifted from the pages of that author, where they appear together, and the suspicion would impugn the credibility of the account.

¹⁰⁶Unlike the names Peter and Ammonius, 'Ubayda is not attested elsewhere in the sources and thus is not likely to have been lifted from any; on these Sinaitic names involving the concept of service or slavery, see *supra*, pp. 301–2.

¹⁰⁷Eutychius, *Annales*, pp. 202–3. It is noteworthy that in his account of Justinian's fortress (*Buildings*, V.viii.9), Procopius makes clear that the construction of the fortress and the stationing of a considerable garrison of troops were not only, or even not so much, for the protection of the monastery as for the defense of Palestine against Saracen raids, another indication that the survival of pockets of Saracens within Oriens posed a threat to security and called for the establishment of internal defense posts within the *limes*; cf. what has been said on the *limes Palaestinae*, *supra*, p. 50 note 81.

¹⁰⁸Devreesse, "Christianisme sinaitique," p. 216 note 3; p. 217 note 1.

(5) The colophon of the *Relatio* attracted Devreesse's attention. Written by Ammonius in Coptic and translated into Greek by the monk John, it confirmed for Devreesse his suspicions that the *Relatio* was the work of learned monks of Sinai, some of whom were polyglot. There is nothing in the colophon that really calls for suspicion; a more complex colophon that has been viewed much more suspiciously than that of the *Relatio* is that of the Ethiopic Apocalypse, the *Kebrā Nagast*, but even this has been recently vindicated.¹⁰⁹

(6) After he was through with his analysis of the *Relatio*, Devreesse turned to another document which also tells of the Martyrs of Sinai, namely, the *Nili Narrationes*,¹¹⁰ a better-known document than the *Relatio* because, *inter alia*, of its attribution to St. Nilus of Ancyra, false as that attribution is.

Spuriousness by association is what might describe Devreesse's discussion of the *Narrationes* immediately after the *Relatio* and his conception of the two documents as belonging to one and the same category, that of patent frauds. The *Narrationes* were under a cloud when Devreesse wrote,¹¹¹ and so it was not unnatural for him to invoke and enlist the "spuriousness" of the *Narrationes* while he was impugning the authenticity of the *Relatio*, especially as the feast of the martyrs of one of the two documents has been confused with that of the other.¹¹² Since then, the claims of the *Narrationes*, at least as far as the *Arabica* are concerned, have been vindicated,¹¹³ and thus the authenticity of the *Relatio* can no longer be impugned by association with the *Narrationes*, although it is defensible separately and without support from the rehabilitated or partially rehabilitated *Narrationes*.

3

The converging probabilities argue against Devreesse's rejection of the authenticity of the *Relatio*. After a close analysis of the *Arabica* in it, of his mistakes in interpreting it, and of the dubiousness of his reasoning concerning the *hagiographica*, it is, indeed, easier to accept the *Relatio* for what it purports to be, a document of the fourth century, rather than to assume that it emanates from the pens of unscrupulous monks of the sixth.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁹See the present writer in *KN*, pp. 141–44.

¹¹⁰Devreesse, *op. cit.*, pp. 220–22.

¹¹¹Devreesse wrote under the influence of K. Heussi (*ibid.*, p. 220), and P. Abel's views encouraged him to reject (*ibid.*, p. 222) the *Narrationes* in its entirety with the exception of one single toponym, Sbaita!

¹¹²The feast of the martyrs of Rhaithou in the *Relatio* is celebrated on the same date as that of the martyrs of the *Narrationes*, on 14 January; *ASS*, January, t. ii., pp. 233–48, 248–49.

¹¹³For the researches of P. Mayerson on the *Narrationes*, see *infra*, notes 124–25. The *Arabica* in the *Narrationes* will be discussed in the second volume of this series, *BAFIC*.

¹¹⁴Thus it is to be sharply distinguished from the patent forgeries that emanated from learned pens at St. Catherine's, such as the charter attributed to Muhammad; in this case, the motives behind the forgery are fully understandable.

In that fourth century, the process of Christianization had not advanced far enough in Sinai and elsewhere among the Saracens to induce in them a sense of reverence for its eremitic communities; even in the sixth century, the Saracens still celebrated their pagan rites in the vicinity of the Holy Mountain.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, the Saracens of Palestina Tertia in the fourth century were not under the strict or centralized command of powerful phylarchs such as Imru' al-Qays of the fifth century or Abū-Karib, the Ghassānid phylarch of the sixth. Thus Sinai, as Palestina Tertia west of the 'Araba, a large province, was not under centralized phylarchal direction, and this enabled pockets of Saracens, with whom the Peninsula was no doubt dotted, to make raids against its eremitic centers. When it is remembered that the *Relatio* clearly suggests that this took place in the period 373–78 during the patriarchate of Peter, Athanasius's successor, the bloody events recorded in the *Relatio* do not sound unlikely: it was exactly in this period, the triennium 375–78, that Mavia's revolt took place. In the midst of the turmoil generated by that revolt in the limitrophe provinces of Oriens, it is not surprising that some pagan local Saracens chose to attack the hermitages of Mt. Sinai and that even the Blemmyes, as Red Sea pirates, took advantage of the same state of disorderliness and attacked the other center, Rhaithou.

In spite of his undoubted contribution to the ecclesiastical history of the Diocese of Oriens, and thus to the general framework within which Arab-Byzantine relations in the pre-Islamic period can be profitably studied, Devreesse is not a safe guide to *Byzantino-arabica*, and his mistakes in analyzing them have vitiated his conclusions and his views on related matters such as the *Relatio*, which has important historical material on the history of Sinai in the fourth century.

His mistakes in analyzing Greek texts pertaining to the Arabs in the fourth century have been pointed out, but the most telling indication of how unsafe a guide he is in this area is his handling of something that admits of no controversy as far as its fourth-century date or provenance is concerned, namely, the Namāra inscription discovered by R. Dussaud and dated A.D. 328, intensively analyzed in the first chapter of this book. In spite of the labors of distinguished French and German Orientalists, he argued that the inscription tells the adventures not of the Imru' al-Qays who was the Lakhmid king in the fourth century but those of a Kindite prince of the sixth century.¹¹⁶ When this is borne in mind, Devreesse's attempt to doubt the authenticity of the *Ammonii Monachi Relatio* as a fourth-century document and his assigning it to the sixth century cannot be taken seriously.

¹¹⁵On this, see Anonymus of Placentia, *infra*, p. 321.

¹¹⁶On this, see Devreesse, *Le patriarcat d'Antioche*, p. 263 note 3.

Devreesse's article was published in 1940. Two years before, a work appeared on the monastery of St. Catherine in which the author made available a number of Sinaitic inscriptions.¹¹⁷ One of these was engraved on a marble plaque that was placed in the south wall of the Chapel of the Holy Fathers in the basilica. It commemorates martyrs, "holy fathers," whose remains were buried in the chapel dedicated to them. In spite of some difficulty in the interpretation of the abbreviated numeral in the inscription,¹¹⁸ there is no doubt that the inscription is a gift to the student of the martyr tradition of Sinai since it elevates the *Relatio* to a higher level of authenticity. Devreesse apparently had not seen Rabino's work and so he wrote his article without reference to the epigraphic evidence, which might have led him to conclusions on the authenticity of the *Relatio* different from those he reached¹¹⁹ and which, moreover, have proved prejudicial to the writing of the early history of Mt. Sinai in the fourth century.

Devreesse's views have unduly influenced the epigrapher of the Alexandria–Michigan–Princeton Archaeological Expedition to the Monastery of St. Catherine at Mt. Sinai, I. Ševčenko, who accepted Devreesse's conclusions on both the *Relatio* and the *Narrationes* and consequently was forced to declare as "pious or erudite frauds" the two literary documents and as "epigraphic pendant to literary fabrications" the marble plaque with its inscription.¹²⁰ Seven years after the appearance of his preliminary report on the inscriptions of Mt. Sinai, he repeated his convictions about both the literary and epigraphic sources for the martyr tradition in Sinai.¹²¹

Whether Devreesse would have reached different conclusions about the *Relatio* and the *Narrationes* had he been aware of the epigraphic evidence on the martyrs of Sinai is not clear.¹²² However, it was his evaluation of the two literary documents that inclined Ševčenko to view the inscription on the martyrs with suspicion. The latter apparently reached his conclusions without

¹¹⁷H. L. Rabino, *Le monastère de Sainte-Catherine du Mont Sinai* (Cairo, 1938), p. 105, no. 56.

¹¹⁸On this, see *infra*, p. 317.

¹¹⁹But see *supra*, note 116, on how he handled another inscription, dated A.D. 328, and assigned it to the sixth century.

¹²⁰I. Ševčenko, "The Early Period of the Sinai Monastery in the Light of Its Inscriptions," *DOP*, 20 (1966), pp. 256, 258.

¹²¹See G. H. Forsyth and K. Weitzmann, *The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai. The Church and Fortress of Justinian* (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1973), p. 20. His views were apparently shared by Forsyth, who wrote the "Introduction to the Architecture" in the same volume; see p. 5.

¹²²See *supra*, note 119.

having had at his disposal a defense of the *Relatio* other than that of S. Schiwietz in 1908, which apparently was neutralized for him by Devreesse's evaluation of the same document.¹²³

But Ševčenko discussed the inscription apparently unaware of the more recent researches of Philip Mayerson on the *Narrationes*, which appeared in 1963. The latter had persuasively argued for the authenticity of many features of the *Narrationes* even though its attribution to St. Nilus is patently erroneous.¹²⁴ More recently, in 1975, he returned to the *Narrationes*,¹²⁵ and since then he has joined issue with Ševčenko on the interpretation of the abbreviated numeral in the inscription,¹²⁶ arguing that it stands not for the number of the martyrs,¹²⁷ namely, forty, but for the date of the martyrdoms or the date as celebrated in the sanctoral cycle of the Christian calendar, namely, the fourteenth of January.¹²⁸ The difference between the two is a matter of detail since both are in agreement that the reference is to local martyrs of Sinai, as it must be in view of what is said about the remains of the holy fathers buried in the chapel itself. But a major problem is raised by the two words ζηλώσαντες and ισάριθμοι. Who are these martyrs whom those buried in the chapel imitated and to whom they were equal in number, forty? Ševčenko had argued that they cannot be the Forty Martyrs of Sebastea, and Mayerson has argued equally persuasively that they can and probably must. Since the *Relatio* tells the story of two groups of martyrs, each numbering forty, whose feasts fall on the fourteenth of January (in spite of the fact that they were martyred on the 28th of December), it is simpler and more natural to assume that the reference is indeed to these two groups of martyrs of the *Relatio*, a conclusion alluded to by Ševčenko, although he does not see in the inscription an epigraphic confirmation of the literary source but the perfection of the literary fraud through a solid epigraphic one.

¹²³See S. Schiwietz, "Die altchristliche Tradition über den Berg Sinai und Kosmas Indikopleustes," *Der Katholik*, 4th ser., 38 (1908), pp. 16–22; and Ševčenko, "The Early Period of the Sinai Monastery," p. 256 note 4.

¹²⁴P. Mayerson, "The Desert of Southern Palestine according to the Byzantine Sources," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 107.2 (1963), pp. 160–72.

¹²⁵*Idem*, "Observations on Nilus' *Narrationes*: Evidence for an Unknown Christian Sect?" *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*, 12 (1975), pp. 51–74.

¹²⁶See Mayerson, "An Inscription in the Monastery of St. Catherine and the Martyr Tradition in Sinai," *DOP*, 30 (1976), pp. 375–79.

¹²⁷Ševčenko had rendered the inscription as follows: "four times ten" fathers (of Sinai) who had "imitated the baptism by blood of an equal number of Martyrs"; "The Early Period of the Sinai Monastery," p. 258.

¹²⁸Mayerson has rendered it as follows: "The Holy Fathers lie here, equal in number to those who were killed on the (14th of January) and imitating them through a baptism of blood" ("Inscription," p. 379).

The genuineness of the epigraphic evidence derives further support from the following: (a) The inscription is not scribbled in some humble or inconspicuous place but is on a marble slab inside the south chapel of the basilica dedicated to the Holy Fathers;¹²⁹ it may not be difficult to believe that some erudite monk composed the *Relatio*, drawing on his imagination, but it is difficult to believe that *consciously* and *knowingly* the monks of Sinai desecrated the south chapel with such a fraud and celebrated there a feast of forty local, fictitious martyrs once every year on the fourteenth of January.¹³⁰ (b) Furthermore, there is the Monastery of the Forty at the foot of Mt. Sinai;¹³¹ although information on it, such as the date of its construction, is scanty, the presumption is that it was named after the Forty Martyrs of Sinai.¹³² This structure and the south chapel could argue for the strength and reality of the local martyr tradition in Sinai; otherwise one has to assume that the fraud was not only literary and epigraphic but also architectural, an assumption difficult to maintain.

Those who see in the literary-epigraphic-architectural confrontation a confirmation of the tradition of the Forty Martyrs of Sinai may add these two final observations to what has been said in this chapter in support of their conclusions: (a) Such a fraud would have been conceivable if it had been perpetrated before, not after, Justinian built his fortress;¹³³ the inmates of Sinai were then unprotected by that strong fortress and they may have wanted to mobilize pious public opinion by suggesting that their cells were exposed to Saracen raids in order to induce the government or a prospective benefactor to fortify Mt. Sinai.¹³⁴ But after the Justinianic constructions, such a motive can-

¹²⁹In his note on the inscription (p. 263), Ševčenko speaks of the "Chapel of the Holy Fathers"; the "Holy Fathers" presumably are the ones whose relics are referred to in the inscription, and so I take it that the chapel is dedicated to them; so understood also by Mayerson, "Inscription," p. 379.

¹³⁰One may quote in this connection the following statement from Ševčenko's article on the Sinaitic inscriptions (p. 258): "In epigraphy, fabrication or misleading information is rare, but not altogether impossible." However, the inscription on the martyrs in the south chapel is of an entirely different order than the two inscriptions he discusses on pp. 258–61.

¹³¹For a brief description of it and some bibliography, see Mayerson, "Inscription," p. 377.

¹³²Mayerson takes the name "The Monastery of the Forty" to refer to those of Sebastea. But the more likely explanation of the name is that the monastery was so called after the local martyrs of Sinai, also forty according to the *Relatio*. Perhaps it was there that the martyrs or some of them were killed, and so the monastery probably marks the site of martyrdom, while the chapel enshrines the translated relics; for the identification of "The Monastery of the Forty," Arabic Dayr al-Arba'in, with one of the hermitages, Codar, that was attacked by the Saracens according to the *Relatio*, see Aigrain, "Arabie," col. 1192.

¹³³As Devreesse, who assigns the composition of the *Relatio* to ca. A.D. 600, has argued ("Christianisme sinaitique," p. 219); besides, what Procopius says on Justinian's motives in building the fortress is very relevant in this connection (*supra*, note 107).

¹³⁴Even this line of reasoning, which might give some support to Devreesse's view of

not be convincingly attributed to its inmates. (b) Nor can be considered a motive the desire to glorify the monastery and dignify it with martyrs. If Mt. Sinai were just another mountain or locality in Christendom, a case could be made for this view; but this was already one of the holiest of the *loca sancta*, the scene of the Theophany and the Decalogue, and it is unlikely that its monks thought its holiness needed further enhancement.¹³⁵

Perhaps the foregoing discussion has not failed to state the case for the soundness of the martyr tradition in Sinai. After all, what is involved in the discussion is nothing less than two fairly extensive documents for the history of Sinai in the fourth century, the *Relatio* and the *Narrationes*.¹³⁶ When it is remembered how obscure the history of Sinai in that century is and how dependent almost on a single document, the *Itinerarium Egeriae*, it is, the defense of the two documents with their wealth of data assumes considerable importance to the historian of Sinai in this very early period. The history of the Holy Mountain is illuminated by these documents and so is the truth about its Forty Martyrs; these are especially important not only because they were martyred at that holy place but also because the event happened after the Peace of the Church and the period of the persecutions and, what is more, within the confines of the Christian Roman Empire.

VI. ANTONINI PLACENTIAE ITINERARIUM

Although a late sixth-century work, the *Itinerarium*¹³⁷ provides data that can be brought to bear on the problems of the fourth century as these pertain to the Saracen pockets in Oriens. The relevant chapters of the travelogue speak of the pilgrim's journey to Elusa in the Negev, through the desert that lies to the south, to Mt. Sinai, and to Pharan.¹³⁸

une incursion sanglante (op. cit., p. 219) in the sixth century before the building of the fortress, is not borne out by what Procopius says on Justinian's motives for fortifying St. Catherine's; see *supra*, note 107.

¹³⁵Furthermore, and apropos of holiness, it is relevant to mention that the martyrs of Sinai had not been confessors before they were martyred—they had not been faced with the choice of renouncing their faith or being killed.

¹³⁶As Mayerson has discussed the *Narrationes*, the present writer has limited himself in this volume to the discussion of the *Relatio*. Both are important to the study of the martyr tradition in Sinai, and of the two the *Relatio* is the more important document for the tradition of the Forty Martyrs. Perhaps the two discussions will generate more interest in these two hagiographic works and in the preparation of a critical edition of their two Greek texts.

¹³⁷For the text, see *Itineraria et alia geographica*, CCL, 175, pp. 129–53, and *Recensio altera*, *ibid.*, pp. 157–74 (hereafter, *Itinerarium* and *Rec. Alt.* respectively); for the author, who should be referred to as Anonymus of Placentia, see *DHGE*, 3 (1924), cols. 852–53, *s.v.* Antonin, 8.

¹³⁸In the last chapter of the *Itinerarium*, which treats the Mesopotamian and the Euphratesian region, there is a reference to St. Sergius: *et ad duodecim milia intus in haremo inter Saracenos requiescit sanctus Sergius in civitate Tetrapyrgio*; it is of obvious relevance and significance to the Christianity of the Arab *foederati*, especially the Ghassānids of the sixth century whose

(1) In chapter 34, the author describes the entry of his party into Elusa and speaks of its bishop and of the maiden Maria,¹³⁹ whose husband died on the very night of her marriage, but he does not throw any light on the linguistic and ethnic picture of Elusa late in the sixth century.¹⁴⁰

(2) More valuable is his description in chapter 36 of the journey through the desert that lies between Elusa and Mt. Sinai. On the fifth or sixth day after the pilgrims leave the hospice of St. George, twenty miles to the south of Elusa, they meet a group of Saracens with their families and wives, who exchange with them bread for cold water. He also speaks of their presents of aromatic plants, although the Saracens were not permitted to offer these because there was a prohibition against doing this during the festival they were celebrating. He concludes his chapter by saying that the number of the Saracens who entered the greater desert was 12,600.

This then was a Saracen pocket of considerable size in the southern Negev or northern Sinai; although they seemed friendly, the presumption is that they were not Christian.¹⁴¹

By far the more valuable chapters of the *Itinerarium* are the ones on Mt. Sinai and Pharan, especially the latter.

(3) The author devotes three chapters to the description of Mt. Sinai and the surrounding region, chapters 37–39:

(a) In the first (chap. 37), he refers to three abbots of Mt. Sinai who were learned in five languages and to many interpreters of each language: *tres abbates scientes linguas, hoc est, latinas et graecas, syriacas et aegyptiacas et bessas, vel multi interpretes singularum linguarum*.¹⁴² It is not clear what the fifth language was, but it is not unnatural to suppose it was Arabic,¹⁴³ important to

patron St. Sergius was; the information provided by the *Itinerarium* could throw some light on why he was their patron saint. For the quotation, see *Itinerarium*, 38, p. 153; it does not appear in the corresponding chapter of *Rec. Alt.*, 47, p. 174.

¹³⁹If she was an Arab girl, the name Maria would reflect one aspect of the process of Christianization among the Arabs of Elusa.

¹⁴⁰In the same chapter there is a reference to a lion in the Dead Sea region as there is to another near Mt. Sinai in chap. 39. Both references in the *Itinerarium* should make credible the account of the adventures of Malchus in which a lion is mentioned; for the *Vita Malchi* of St. Jerome, see *supra*, pp. 284–88.

¹⁴¹The location of this pocket of Saracens is relevant to the discussion of the Arab chief Ammanes, who figures in *Pseudo-Nilus*.

¹⁴²The *Rec. Alt.* has the languages in the singular: *latinam, grecam, syram et aegyptiacam et bessam* (p. 171).

¹⁴³There is for *bessam* a variant reading, namely, *persam*, which *bessam* could well be (see *Rec. Alt.*, chap. 37, p. 171, line 15); but it is unlikely that Persian rather than Arabic was known at Mt. Sinai. Devreesse suggests "Thracian" for *bessas* ("Christianisme sinaïtique," p. 214 note 5). However, even if *bessam* turns out to be *arabicam*, the fact will not be significant; it is at Pharan and Rhaithou with an Arab community in the two oases that knowledge and use of Arabic would be significant and relevant to the problem of an Arabic liturgy in pre-Islamic times. For the Thracian tribe, the *bessi*, see Strabo, *Geography*, VII.5.12, and Pliny, *NH*, IV.40. Prof. F. Rosenthal has suggested to me that *bessam* might possibly be Nubian Bedja.

monks surrounded by Arabic-speaking Saracens and possibly counting among their eremitic community some Arabic-speaking inmates from the neighboring region.

(b) In the second (chap. 38), he speaks of a pagan Arab cult with a priest¹⁴⁴ and a marble idol that was an object of wonder to the pilgrims.¹⁴⁵ The description of the priest and the idol is precise and is of considerable interest since it indicates that paganism among the Saracens of Mt. Sinai had not been wiped out even late in the sixth century, and thus it corroborates the accounts of the *Relatio* on the group of Saracens that attacked Mt. Sinai in the reign of Valens after the death of their chief; these were not held back from attacking the hermitages by any religious scruples because they were not Christian.

(c) In the third (chap. 39), he speaks of the desert of the region and its animals including the lion. The pilgrims could not remain in the desert because the festival days of the Saracens¹⁴⁶ were coming to a close and so it was not safe to linger in the desert.¹⁴⁷ Thus even in this late period the region was not quite safe for pilgrims.

(4) Even more important than these chapters on Mt. Sinai is chapter 40 on the Arab oasis in southwestern Sinai, Pharan, which for the anonymous author was the scene of Joshua's victory over Amalec at Raphidim. The Arab oasis appears in the late sixth century as a flourishing Christian center and an episcopal center. The important data are the following:

(a) The author quotes the sixth-century tradition presumably prevalent in Pharan itself, namely, that this was the land of Midian and that the inhabitants were descended from Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses. Two conclusions may be drawn from this self-image of the Pharanites: (1) since Jethro was the priest of Midian, the Pharanites then would have considered themselves Midianites in tribal affiliation; (2) more important is the biblical self-image of the Pharan-

¹⁴⁴The reference to the priest brings to mind the garlanded Arab pagan priest of Elusa whom St. Hilarion converted (*supra*, p. 289); this one is described in the *Itinerarium* as *indutus dalmatica et pallium lineum*.

¹⁴⁵The chapter that describes the changing color of the marble idol—the center of the cult—may be compared with the well-known description of the Arab pagan cult of Venus in Sinai in *Pseudo-Nilus*, the authenticity of which has been called into question, but which is not less credible than this account in the *Itinerarium*.

¹⁴⁶For the *dies festi Saracenorum* of the *Itinerarium*, the *Rec. Alt.* has *dies festi Hysmabelitarum* (chap. 39, p. 171). The Christian writer equates the Saracens of the classical sources with the Ishmaelites of the O.T.; see *infra*, note 148.

¹⁴⁷The implication of the statement would seem to be that the pagan Saracens could engage in fighting after, but not during, the festival days, which were held sacred and consequently could suggest the period of the Sacred Months, during which no fighting was allowed. This famous pre-Islamic Arab institution was known to Procopius in the same century (*Wars*, II. 16); see the pertinent remarks of Nöldeke in "Arabs," *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. J. Hastings (New York, 1928), vol. 1, p. 668.

ites; throughout these centuries the Christian Arabs do not affiliate themselves with Ishmael,¹⁴⁸ their biblical ancestor, even the Sinaitic Arabs who lived in a Peninsula that was the habitation of Ishmael. The *Itinerarium* thus provides valuable information on one group of Arabs in Sinai who do affiliate themselves with a biblical figure; however, he is not Ishmael, the descendant of Abraham and Hagar, but Jethro, the descendant of Abraham and Ketura.

If this genealogical self-image is true, it is important enough for ascertaining the tribal identity of one group of Sinaitic Arabs; but the truth of this self-image must be relegated to the realm of the possible or remotely possible. What is more important is that the Pharanite Arabs, rightly or wrongly, did affiliate themselves with a biblical figure, almost certainly because of his relation to Moses, who dominates the Old Testament in their new holy book, the Bible. The Pharanites had been Christian since the fourth century, and their readiness to conceive of themselves as a biblical people is the most telling reflection of the degree of their cultural assimilation.¹⁴⁹

(b) The inhabitants of Pharan, represented by its women and their children, welcome the pilgrim party in this manner: *lingua Aegyptiaca psallantes antifonam 'Benedicti vos a Domino et benedictus adventus vester, osanna in excelsis'*.¹⁵⁰ Since Pharan was an Arab town, one would expect the language of the benediction to be said in Arabic, especially as it was not sung by learned monks but by the women of Pharan, who presumably spoke its vernacular. But there could have been a Coptic community in Pharan late in the sixth century since relations between Pharan and Egypt were quite close. However, the more likely interpretation is that the author, coming from the Latin West and probably vague about these nonclassical, Near Eastern languages, confused Arabic with Coptic and described as Egyptian what in fact was Arabic.¹⁵¹ If this turns out to be the case, then this quotation from the Gospel could suggest that Arabic was used for devotional purposes in Pharan.

(c) Intimate details are also provided on the military arrangements for the protection of Pharan: those in charge appear as soldiers quartered with their wives in eighty houses within the city; they receive the *annona* from Egypt and do not till the ground because it is desert; their principal function appears to be the protection of this Christian center against the Saracens;¹⁵² the city

¹⁴⁸But others did, esp. the ecclesiastical historians. This is a large problem which will be treated in *BAFIC*.

¹⁴⁹For more detailed analyses, see *infra*, App. 1, pp. 324–27.

¹⁵⁰The benediction recalls the one used on the entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday (Matt. 21:9; Mark 11:10; Luke 19:38) but does not reproduce the *ipsissima verba*. It was probably a local adaptation used for welcoming pilgrims into Pharan; alternatively, the anonymous author was quoting from memory.

¹⁵¹In much the same way that St. Jerome may have thought Arabic *bārik*, addressed by the Elusans to St. Hilarion, was Syriac *bārech*, for which see *supra*, pp. 290–91.

¹⁵²Cf. the function of those in the region of Rhaithou in the little *castellum* called Sur-

itself is fortified and its gates are locked for fear of these; the soldiers patrol the desert on their Saracen mares, *equas Saracenas*, for the protection of the monasteries and the hermits *propter insidias Saracenorum*. The account calls for the following comments:

(1) The soldiers who protected this desert oasis could have been Arab *foederati*;¹⁵³ these did receive the *annona* for the services they rendered; that they could have been *foederati* is not ruled out by the language of the author who does not use the technical term and probably conceived of them as simply soldiers.

(2) But the more plausible view is that these soldiers were indeed Romans who were protecting Pharan against the Saracens, possibly even the federate Saracens. In support of this view, the following may be adduced:

(a) It is difficult to believe that the conditions of fear and insecurity described in the *Itinerarium* prevailed *normally* in a town well within the *limes* such as Pharan was. The description rather suggests a state of emergency that coincided with the visit of the author or obtained in those regions for some time in the last quarter of the sixth century.

(b) But it was roughly in this period during which the author passed through Pharan that the Ghassānid *foederati* fell out with Byzantium during the reigns of their kings Mundir and Nu'mān. This was the period of the Ghassānid revolt,¹⁵⁴ and the conditions described in the *Itinerarium*—fear and insecurity—are consonant with what is known about conditions elsewhere in Oriens during that revolt.¹⁵⁵

The examination of the chapters relevant to the Arabs in the *Itinerarium* has disclosed the existence of important pockets of Saracens in various parts of Sinai. The work presents a picture of its Saracens in the sixth century not unlike the one presented by the *Relatio* in the fourth, and it indicates that even after the lapse of two centuries the process of Christianization among the Saracens of Sinai had not gone very far.

In addition to providing data for examining some important problems of Arab-Byzantine relations in the fourth century, the *Itinerarium* is important for the image of the Arab Saracens and possibly the growth of that image in

andela in the *Itinerarium* (chap. 41). The garrison there protected the church with its presbyter and the two hospices.

¹⁵³In a well-known passage, Procopius records Justinian's appointment of the Ghassānid Abū-Karib around A.D. 530 over Palestina Tertia, precisely for his prowess in dealing with Saracen raids; *Wars*, I. xix.8–13.

¹⁵⁴For the Ghassānid revolt, see Nöldeke, *GF*, pp. 27–31; the date suggested for the *Itinerarium*, namely, 570, is only approximate; see *DHGE*, 3, cols. 852–53, *s.v.* Antonin, 8.

¹⁵⁵Among other things, the Ghassānids spread fear and consternation in none other than Bostra, the capital of the Provincia Arabia: Nöldeke, *GF*, pp. 29–30. The main center of Ghassānid power was located farther to the north in Oriens, but the revolt could easily have spread to Sinai in much the same way that Mavia's revolt had done in the fourth century.

the West. The reader of this travelogue will surely have concluded that the Saracens were unregenerate pagans, faithfully wedded to their ancient cults. More important than their paganism is the fact that unlike other pagans and heathens these Saracens are living in Sinai, no longer a tract of arid land belonging to Nabataea or the *provincia* of Trajan, but now part of the larger Holy Land—as Palestina Tertia, where churches and monasteries had been built on biblical sites and whither the vogue of the pilgrimage sent pious Christians to visit the *loca sancta*. For these pilgrims, the Saracens were not only raiders of the Roman *limes* but also, and more importantly, they were attacking the *loca sancta* and terrorizing the pilgrim parties. The author of the *Itinerarium* hailed from the Latin West and wrote for Western readers; his work may thus have contributed to the growth of the image of the Arabs in the West¹⁵⁶ as Saracens who were molesting pilgrims, killing monks, and looting churches and monasteries. But as the *Itinerarium* itself in its description of Pharan indicates, it was not only pilgrims and readers of their *Itineraria* that were concerned about the Saracen threat to the Christian establishment in Sinai; the imperial administration of the Christian Roman Empire was also similarly concerned about the safety of the pilgrim route and the *loca sancta* as well as trade routes within the Peninsula; the fact could throw light on certain aspects of the Roman defense system and the establishment of some military posts within the *limes*.¹⁵⁷

APPENDIX I

Midian

The sixth-century tradition quoted by Anonymus of Placentia to the effect that Pharan was Midian and the Pharanites were descended from Jethro raises a number of important questions that may conveniently be discussed in this appendix:

(1) Where Midian was located in biblical times has been a problem; some locate it in Arabia, others in Sinai. Perhaps there were two Midians, an Arabian and a Sinaitic one. Since the term was applied in the seventh century to northwestern Ḥijāz, the chances are that the homeland had been in Ḥijāz in biblical times and Sinaitic Midian was an extension of it, explicable by the attraction of the Sinai Peninsula to a people such as the Midianites, merchants who naturally followed the trade routes into Sinai and possibly were also attracted by its copper mines; the biblical Kenites, who were metal-workers, were part of Midian.

That there may have been two Midians on both sides of the Gulf of Eilat could derive some support from the fact that there are not one but two Pharans, also

¹⁵⁶Cf. what has been said of the work of St. Jerome, *infra*, pp. 562–63.

¹⁵⁷Thus the emergence of the concept of the larger Holy Land, the vogue of pilgrimages, and the rise of monasticism in the East added somewhat to the responsibilities of the imperial administration in providing for internal security and defense, as at Pharan and Surandela.

on both sides of the same gulf, Pharan in Ḥijāz,¹ which belonged to the Sulaym tribe, and Pharan, the oasis in Sinai. Since the Pharanites of Sinai considered themselves Midianites, the existence of another Pharan in Ḥijāz, Arabian Midian, could suggest some connection between the two areas that involved migration from Arabia to Sinai, and consequently two Midians.²

(2) To sixth-century Christians, Pharan was the Raphidim of the Bible, the home of the Amalecites rather than the Midianites, whose association with Pharan seems to be limited to Jethro's second encounter with Moses after the latter's return from Egypt. And yet the two peoples are associated together in wars against Israel (Judges 6:3), and this association could suggest some relationship between them as does Jethro's visit to Raphidim.³ So when the Pharanites, inhabitants of the oasis that in biblical terms was the home of the Amalecites, claimed a Midianite descent, they may not have strayed far from the truth in spite of their partiality to descent from Jethro rather than Amalec.

The preference of the Pharanites for a descent from Midian over one from Amalec is significant culturally. The Christian Pharanites, now part of the new "Israel of God," must have been embarrassed by the association of their oasis with the Amalecites, who tried to block the passage of the Israelites through Raphidim and against whom Moses prayed (Exodus 17). It must have been this identity crisis that made them search for a new affiliation; and the search was conveniently concluded by the affirmation of a new one with Jethro and Midian, which dissociated them from Amalec and the Amalecites.⁴ That an Arab group in pre-Islamic times during which the Arabs were proud of their ancestry should have renounced its true lineage⁵ and should have adopted another one, almost certainly fictitious⁶ and, what is more, non-Arab, says much for the degree of their conversion to the biblical self-image of the Christian Roman Empire of which they were a part.⁷

¹For Pharan in Ḥijāz, see *supra*, p. 307 note 86; it is noteworthy that the toponym is most uncommon.

²The toponymic difficulties involved in the biblical narrative of Moses' wanderings that turn round the two encounters of Moses with Jethro (Exodus 2:15–3:1 and 18:1–18) may be reconciled by positing two Midians; Moses had met Jethro first in Arabian Midian and after the Exodus in Sinaitic Midian in Raphidim, whither Jethro came from Arabian Midian after he had heard of Moses' arrival in Sinai.

³In biblical genealogies, the Amalecites are the descendants of Esau's grandson, Amalec (Gen. 36:12).

⁴Even in the fourth century, the memory of the Amalecites was odious in Pharan; witness the monks' oath, for which see *supra*, p. 296 note 46.

⁵Arab tribes did change their affiliation occasionally, entering into political unions with other tribes; but this happened rarely and was in response to some necessity, political or military; at any rate, the new affiliation involved not a non-Arab tribe, but an Arab one.

⁶If they were the descendants of a biblical Sinaitic people (which could have remained stationary since biblical times in those isolated regions), the Pharanites were likely to be descendants of the Amalecites rather than the Midianites. What the real tribal affiliation of the Pharanites was is not clear; they could have been the Farrān or the Fārān of the Sinaitic inscriptions uncovered by Euting as cited by G. Holscher in "Φαράν," *RE*, 19.2 (1938), col. 1809.

⁷This section on the possible ultimate descent of the Pharanite Arabs from the Amalecites

(3) Memories of Jethro were apparently alive not only in sixth-century Sinai but also in seventh-century Arabia; some relevant material on Jethro and Midian may be of interest to the student of the cultural history of the region in this period.

(a) One of the important Arab tribes of Oriens was Juḏām,⁸ a Christian tribe that lived, among other places, in Midian, the land of Jethro, who was identified in the Muslim tradition as the Arabian Qur'ānic prophet Shu'yab. If the Christian Arab community of Pharan conceived of itself as descendants of Jethro, it is quite likely that Christian Juḏām living in Midian conceived of itself, too, as descended from the same biblical figure. Consequently, there may have been some tribal affinity between the Pharanites and Juḏām; thus the former, known only by the name of their oasis rather than through their tribal affiliation, would have belonged or would have been related to the tribe of Juḏām.⁹

(b) Madyan¹⁰ is known to the Arab Muslim geographers as Arabian, not Sinaitic, as early as the seventh century.¹¹ It had some monasteries wherein lived monks remembered in Arabic poetry.¹² It is practically certain that if the Pharanites considered Sinaitic Pharan biblical Midian, the monks of Arabian Madyan, the Midianite homeland, viewed their region in biblical terms that related it to Midian and its priest, Jethro; naturally, the monasteries and their monks go back to pre-Islamic times when the region was a Byzantine sphere of influence although outside the *limes*.

Thus some valuable data on the tribal affiliations of some of these Arab groups in Oriens in pre-Islamic times may be gleaned from these Christian sources that reveal an awareness of a biblical past or a desire to belong to it on the part of a group of Arabs, the Pharanites descended from Midian. Other Arab groups, such as Juḏām, may also have expressed this same desire or awareness, and this could explain the pairing in the consciousness of later Muslim genealogists of such tribes as 'Āmila and Juḏām which may have conceived of themselves as united by a common descent from a biblical ancestor or tribe such as Midian. But the complete biblical self-image of the

is of some importance to the discussion of one of the old Arab tribes in Oriens, namely, 'Āmila, which form could be a corruption of biblical 'Amālica; for which see *infra*, p. 383.

⁸On Juḏām, see *EP*, s.v. *Ḍjudhām*, and *infra*, p. 384.

⁹The two tribes, 'Āmila and Juḏām, are usually grouped together by the Arab genealogists; if the Pharanites were descendants of the Amalecites, and if 'Āmila is the later Arabic form of 'Amālica, then their association in the Arabic genealogical conception would be explicable by their association together since biblical times either as Amalecites and Midianites or as Midianite tribes after the Pharanites transferred their tribal affiliation to Midian. If the two tribes grouped themselves together in the Byzantine period, this is likely to be partly under the influence of the biblical tradition on the two Christianized tribes. Juḏām even more than the Arabs of Pharan could thus qualify as a Midianite tribe because of its geographical location in the region, still called Midian in pre-Islamic times; in the Muslim tradition they are conceived of sometimes as the in-laws of Moses.

¹⁰The Arabic form of Midian; it is identical with the form in the Vulgate where the vowel of the first syllable is an *alpha*, as in the Septuagint.

¹¹Musil's appendix on Midian is still useful; see *The Northern Hejaz* (New York, 1926), pp. 278–96; the appendix (pp. 279–82) contains a résumé of what Arab and Muslim authors have to say on Midian.

¹²On the monks of Midian, see Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, vol. 5, pp. 77–78.

Arabs was yet to come, in the seventh century when it was expressed in a much more significant manner by a return to Abraham's first-born, Ishmael.

APPENDIX II

Pharan

The vindication of the authenticity of the *Relatio* justifies drawing the attention of military historians to the important data contained in it on Pharan.

This Sinaitic Arab town and its warriors receive mention in travel books and in the papyri of the sixth century. The only fourth-century source that has been used for the military history of Pharan has been the *Itinerarium* of Egeria. In a valuable résumé of the role of the Pharanite Arabs in the military history of Sinai and Egypt in the sixth century, J. Gascou has availed himself of this *Itinerarium* as the only fourth-century source.* But useful as the reference in it is to the role of the Pharanites in the policing of the desert of Sinai, its account is much less important than that of the fourth-century *Relatio*. In addition to the specific and detailed nature of the account summarized in the above chapter, it is of interest to note that the sixth-century archers of Pharan had been known for their expertise with the bow in the fourth century, not an inappropriate accomplishment for the descendants of archer Ishmael, known for his skill with the bow and who, moreover, was associated in the Bible with Pharan itself. So the tradition of bowmanship at Pharan has a long history, attested in the fourth-century *Relatio* and possibly going back to biblical times. It is also of interest to note that the descendants of the Pharanites who battled the Blemmyes on the beaches of Rhaithou in Sinai were also to battle them in Egypt. In the sixth century, the Pharanites fought with Athanasius, the *dux* of the Thebaid, in repressing an insurrection of the Blemmyes.

APPENDIX III

On Ammonius, Procopius, and Eutychius

Some two years after the typescript of the two sections on the *Relatio* was ready, P. Mayerson's article on the same subject appeared.¹

A

The author vouches strongly for the authenticity of the *Relatio* with some reservations that mainly concern the accuracy of numbers in the work. "There are other elements," he says, "such as the coincidence of the time and number of slain at both sites, that are not reasonable to accept as historical fact." His conclusions are summarized in the long last paragraph (p. 148).

Mayerson's article is a welcome contribution to the literature on the *Relatio*, a

*On this, see J. Gascou, "L'institution des bucellaires," *Bulletin de l'institut français d'archéologie orientale*, 76 (Cairo, 1976), p. 154.

¹P. Mayerson, "The Ammonius Narrative: Bedouin and Blemmye Attacks in Sinai," in *The Bible World; Essays in Honor of Cyrus H. Gordon*, eds. G. Rendsburg, R. Adler, M. Arfa, and N. H. Winter (New York, 1980), pp. 133-48.

document that had been treated rather unceremoniously by scholars. His approach to the problem of authenticity is different from that of the present writer who has examined the *Byzantino-arabica* in the document and rejected Devreesse's view that it was an adaptation of Sozomen. The two approaches are complementary and fortify each other on the undoubted authenticity of this important document for the history of Sinai in the fourth century.

B

In addition to arguing for the authenticity of the *Relatio*, "The Ammonius Narrative" is a valuable contribution to Sinaitic studies since the author has firsthand knowledge of the area, which he apparently has visited and inspected several times. Many details of the Sinai scene in the fourth century are discussed in this article, and two of the details may be treated in this context:

1. On page 141, he raises some questions concerning the application of the term *Ishmaelites* to the Arabs of Pharan and the conspicuous absence of the term *Saracens* in "this part of the narration." In note 24, he wonders whether this is significant and whether *Ishmaelites* and *Saracens* signified Christian and pagan Arabs respectively.

It has been argued in section IV on the *Relatio* (*supra*, p. 301) that the distinction between the "Saracens" and "Pharanites" is that of nomads and sedentaries. The term *Saracens* is used of Christian Arabs who fought the first battle against the Blemmyes defending the monks. I am therefore inclined to think that the application of the term *Ishmaelites* to the Arabs of Pharan² is simply the natural employment in a hagiographic work of a biblical term that was common as a description of the Arabs. What is more, the application of this term to the Arabs of Pharan was especially called for in view of the association of Pharan itself with the eponymous ancestor of the Arabs, Ishmael.

2. The author thinks that the name of the Arab chief, Obedianus, is "a Hellenized form of the Semitic Obadiah and Abdullah, the Servant of God" (p. 138 note 14).

Hebrew "Obadiah" is unlikely to be the name of the Arab chief of Pharan, while "Abdullah" is too far from it phonetically. I have argued that it is none other than the diminutive of 'Ubayd or 'Ubayda, and I should like to add here that in the process of Hellenizing the Arabic form some metathesis was involved, as is common in the transliteration of Arabic words into Greek.³

C

In another article⁴ which appeared in 1978, Mayerson discussed Justinian's fortification of the monastery at Mt. Sinai and raised the question of the more reliable

²The Arabs of Pharan are called in the Greek version of the *Relatio* the "Ishmaelites of Pharan"; "The Ammonius Narrative," p. 141. This, it has been argued in this book, was apparently not their self-image. For the descent of the Pharanite Arabs from Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, rather than from Ishmael, see *supra*, pp. 321–22.

³According to the Greek text that Mayerson used, the chief, 'Ubayda/Obedianus is described as πρῶτος, ἀρχή; see "The Ammonius Narrative," p. 144.

⁴P. Mayerson, "Procopius or Eutychius on the Construction of the Monastery at Mt. Sinai: Which is the More Reliable Source?" *BASOR*, 230 (1978), pp. 33–38.

guide to what Justinian did—Procopius or Eutychius? Since reference has been made to both in the section on the authenticity of the *Relatio* (*supra*, p. 313 and note 107), it is necessary to take notice of the views expressed in this article, in spite of the fact that it treats events that took place in the sixth century.

Mayerson finds it difficult to believe that the purpose of Justinian's fortification of the monastery was also the protection of Palestine proper (Palestina Prima) against the inroads of the Saracens, a sort of "an extension of the *limes* of Palestina Tertia" (p. 33), and so he joins issue with George H. Forsyth who had concluded that "as a fortress, the monastery had its assigned part to play in a vast theatre of military operations along the eastern borders of Justinian's empire" (p. 34). Mayerson offers many arguments to support his views on pp. 34–36. Then on p. 36 he turns to another author, the tenth-century historian Eutychius, and accepts his description of what Justinian did at Mt. Sinai as something that has "nothing to do with a military installation or with military strategy." Eutychius described "simply a monastic establishment surrounded by a protective wall . . . a fortified monastery" (p. 36).

In spite of some perceptive arguments that Mayerson advances to support his view, I am inclined to agree with Forsyth on what Justinian did and purposed at Mt. Sinai. Mayerson seems to assume that the facts of human geography in Sinai have remained constant throughout the many centuries of the post-Byzantine period until the twentieth century. Procopius was a military historian who derived his information either from official records or from personal observations when he was secretary to Belisarius. As to Sinai, that was not far from his native Caesarea. Moreover, he is specific in his description of the military establishment of Justinian and speaks of it in clear, strong terms. The alternative to accepting his statements is to assume that he falsified the account, but this raises another question: what purpose would falsifying have served? Mendacity on occasion is not beneath Procopius, but it is difficult, almost impossible, to think of a cogent reason that would have caused him to adopt this course.

As a historian of the buildings of Justinian, he has written his special book on the subject and included accounts of the ecclesiastical and military establishments which thus find expression in his account of Sinai, the monastery and the fortress. Eutychius, four centuries later, was writing from a much narrower point of view, as an ecclesiastical writer, and he had no interest in the military establishment of Justinian. His silence on it is thus explicable and it is reconcilable with the more extensive account of the contemporary historian whose account included a description of both.

IX

Ecclesiastical History

THE BISHOPS OF THE ARAB FOEDERATI

1

Three bishops of the Arabs are attested for the fourth century: Pamphilus, Theotimus, and Moses. The first and the second participated in the Council of Nicaea (325) and the Synod of Antioch (363) respectively; the third was the bishop of Mavia's reign. These attestations are precious; they enable the student of this period to write a tolerably clear account of the ecclesiastical history of the Arab *foederati* in the fourth century.¹ They are, however, attended with problems that need to be examined.

Pamphilus

In one of the lists of the Council of Nicaea, namely, "the list of 318 names," there appears a subscription (no. 229) Πάμφιλος Τηνηῶν.² This subscription raises three problems: (1) the status of the Tayenoi (Arabs) over whom Pamphilus was bishop; (2) the identity of these Tayenoi; and (3) the ethnic origin of Pamphilus himself.

1. It is almost certain that the Tayenoi in the subscription are *foederati*, and in support of this contention the following may be adduced:

(a) The Arab *foederati* did have a bishop over them in the reign of Valens, Moses, and the accounts of the ecclesiastical historians imply that they had had bishops over them before. These accounts do not necessarily imply that the *foederati* did in fact have one in the reign of Constantine, but this is the

¹On R. Devreesse's attempt, see *infra*, App. 1, pp. 340–41.

²See E. Honigmann, "La liste originale des pères de Nicée," *Byzantion*, 14 (1939), p. 56. For the list of participants, see H. Gelzer, ed., *Patrum Nicaenorum Nomina*, Bibliotheca Teubneriana (Leipzig, 1898), and E. Honigmann, "The Original Lists of the Members of the Council of Nicaea, the Robber-Synod and the Council of Chalcedon," *Byzantion*, 16 (1942–43), pp. 20–80; the latter article is especially important for the Arab bishops of the fifth century. Devreesse's lists of Nicaea and the other councils and synods are limited to the oriental bishops, the participants from the Patriarchate of Antioch (*Patriarcat*, pp. 124–27); this is especially convenient since his list provides the immediate background against which the Arab episcopate of the Orient and the participation of its bishops in the councils of the period may be set; for the "list of 318 names," see Honigmann, "Liste originale," pp. 52–61.

presumption. Otherwise one has to assume improbably that the federate episcopate was an innovation of the successors of Constantine!

(b) It would indeed be startling if the institutionalization of the ecclesiastical life of the *foederati* through the episcopate took place in the reign of the successors of Constantine rather than in that of the first Christian emperor, who, moreover, is the one to whom goes the credit for the new policy of dealing with the *foederati*. It was Constantine who was the first to initiate that enlightened policy toward the barbarians and who settled them within the confines of the *imperium* both as *foederati* and as Christians, and it would have been consonant with his organization of their military life as *foederati* that he should also have organized their ecclesiastical life.

(c) A bishop of the Goths took part in the Council of Nicaea.³ Although this is an argument from analogy, it is persuasive; the participation of a bishop representing one group of *foederati* of the reign, namely, the Goths, could argue for the participation of a bishop representing the other group of *foederati* of the same reign, namely, the Arabs. Otherwise one would have to assume that Constantine—the father and innovator of the new experiment—viewed one group, the Goths, in one light and the other, the Arabs, in another light, an assumption difficult to maintain.

(d) It might be said that the Arabs whom Pamphilus represented were not *foederati* but such as Jerome knew or knew of, who were probably *vectigales*.⁴ Oriens had or must have had such Arab groups, but it is most unlikely that Constantine would have invited to Nicaea such groups rather than the Arabs whose Christianity was important to imperial interests. Constantine was more concerned about the doctrinal persuasion of his *foederati* than about that of the nomadic Arabs in Oriens.

2. The Arab *foederati* in the fourth century belonged to various tribal groups, and the second question that needs to be asked is to which of these did the Arabs of Pamphilus belong. It will be argued that it is almost certain they were the Tanūkhids:

(a) The only other important tribal group of federates that Pamphilus could have represented are the Lakhmids of Imru' al-Qays. But it is not certain whether they had crossed the *limes* by A.D. 325 or whether the Christianity of their king was orthodox.⁵

(b) With the elimination of the Lakhmids of the Provincia Arabia, the Tanūkhids remain the only possible group of *foederati* over whom Pamphilus could have been bishop. The identification of these Tayenoi with the Tanūk-

³For the bishop of the Goths, Theophilus, see Gelzer, *Nomina*, pp. 56, 70.

⁴For these groups of Arabs, see *supra*, pp. 284–93.

⁵On the Lakhmids of the Provincia Arabia and the Christianity of their king, see *supra*, pp. 31–35.

hids is only natural: they were the dominant Arab group of *foederati* in the service of Byzantium in the fourth century, and it was the dominant group that must have been asked to send a representative to Nicaea. Besides, in the list of subscriptions there is only one, not more, that represents the Arabs. If there had been more, it would have been difficult to state categorically which of these is the one that represents the Tanūkhids; but the fact that there is only one subscription makes it all the more probable that it represented the Tanūkhids.⁶

(c) The description of the Arabs as *Tayenoi*⁷ rather than *Saracenoī*⁸ is noteworthy and could point in the same direction—to the Tanūkhids. The employment of one term rather than another may not be significant, but the term *Saracenoī* was the more common one for designating the Arabs in the fourth century, especially among ecclesiastical historians. As the Tanūkhids were recent arrivals from Persian territory, it is possible that they carried with them the designation “Tayenoi,” which had been applied to them in those regions, and that the subscription, so early in the century, reflects that fact.⁹

(d) The *Codex Sinaiticus* of the subscriptions¹⁰ has Pamphilus as bishop not of ΤΑΗΝΩΝ but ΤΑΧΝΩΝ. The reading may be an incorrect form of ΤΑΗΝΩΝ, but it is noteworthy that this reading reproduces the three radicals that constitute Tanūkh in Arabic with a metathesis involving the *kappa* and the *nu*, not uncommon in the transliteration of Arabic words into Greek.¹¹ If this reading stands and is the correct one, then the Tanūkhid identity of these *foederati* can be established not inferentially but evidentially.

(e) Finally, it should be remembered that the Tanūkhids had been Christian and, what is more, militant in the pre-Byzantine past while they were still in Persian territory, and it was partly their militant Christianity that

⁶Besides, the Arab phylarchate in the fourth century was not centralized and it remained so until the reign of Justinian in the sixth. Thus the bishop, Pamphilus, must have represented only the Tanūkhids, which would not have been the case if the phylarchate had been centralized; in that case he would have represented tribal groups other than the Tanūkhids.

⁷For “Tayenoi,” see E. Honigmann, in *RE*, 4, cols. 2025–26.

⁸For “Saracenoī,” see B. Moritz, *s.v.* Saraka in *RE*, Zweite Reihe, I.A, cols. 2387–90.

⁹On the application of the term *Tayenoi* to the Arabs in Mesopotamia, see Nöldeke’s note, *supra*, p. 127 note 85. The term *Tayenos/Taienos* is used by Libanius of the alleged murderer of Julian; it would indeed be remarkable if it was a descendant of one of these orthodox Arabs of the reign of Constantine, whose bishop was invited to the Council of Nicaea, that killed the Apostate.

The generic name for the Arabs, *Tayenoi*, derives from Ṭayy, the name of one of the principal tribes of pre-Islamic Arabia; it is most unlikely that the *Tayenoi* over whom Pamphilus was bishop were members of the tribe of Ṭayy. The tribe is attested in Oriens only late in the seventh century, and the most likely period for its migration there is the sixth century; for Ṭayy, see *infra*, p. 383. Thus, the “*Tayenoi*” of the Council of Nicaea is a generic name for the Arabs, who, as has been argued, were the Tanūkhids.

¹⁰See Honigmann, “Liste originale,” p. 56.

¹¹For the indifferent way in which Tanūkh is spelled in Greek, see *supra*, p. 127 note 88.

drove them to emigrate and cross over to the Romans. A federate group such as this, so conscious of their Christianity, and intransigent as they continued to be throughout their Byzantine period and in later Islamic times,¹² would naturally have participated in a council that was convened for the true definition of the Christian faith.

3. It remains to ascertain whether Pamphilus was an Arab. His non-Arabic name obscures his ethnic origin and makes it impossible to determine whether or not he was. The following observations may be offered on his ethnic identity.

(a) When the Tanūkhids crossed over to the Romans they were already Christianized and possessed of a high degree of ethnic and religious identity. It is natural to suppose that they would have had over them a bishop who was one of them or an Arab bishop from Oriens rather than a non-Arab who could not communicate with them.¹³

(b) Later in the same century, Mavia insisted on the consecration of a monk who was Arab as bishop for her *foederati*. Although the implication of her insistence is not clear for the reign of Valens, let alone retrospectively for that of Constantine, it is just possible that the Tanūkhids of the latter reign may have been as insistent on an Arab bishop as Mavia was. The bishops of the Arab Parembole in Palestine in the following century were certainly Arab.¹⁴

(c) His name, Pamphilus, does not exclude an Arab origin. On their conversion or consecration as bishops, the Arabs shed their Arabic names which linked them to their pagan past and assumed either biblical or Graeco-Roman Christian names.¹⁵ Aspebetos, the Arab chief, was named Petrus on his consecration as bishop of the Parembole in Palestine.¹⁶

It is not impossible that Pamphilus¹⁷ was a Rhomaic Arab, a *cives*, who was thus made bishop of the Arab *foederati*, or perhaps a Syriac-speaking

¹²On the fortunes of Tanūkh and their fanatical attachment to Christianity in both their pre-Byzantine and post-Byzantine period, see *infra*, pp. 418–35.

¹³Cf. the cases of Ulphilas of the Goths and Theophilus Indus, who was sent to the various peoples associated with his birthplace or close to it; see *supra*, pp. 93–100.

¹⁴For these Arabs, see Aigrain, "Arabie," cols. 1193–95; they will be discussed at length in the second volume of this series, *BAFIC*.

¹⁵There are exceptions, of course; such is the case of Abgarus, who participated in the Council of Seleucia (Socrates, *HE*, II.40). But there was a good reason for his retention of the Arab name Abgarus. His episcopal see was the city of Cyrrhus in Euphratesia, still not forgetful of the Abgarids, the first Christian kings of Edessa in the third century; furthermore, the name Abgarus is associated with that of Christ, who, according to the legend, sent Abgar, the king of Edessa, his famous letter.

¹⁶Aspebetos participated in the Council of Ephesus in 431; had it not been for the fact that his Arab background is known from the account of Cyril of Scythopolis, it would have been impossible to tell from his name, "Petrus," his ethnic origin or to affirm that he was Arab.

¹⁷The name "Pamphilus" must have been assumed by this bishop of the Arabs after the martyr of recent memory, who died during the persecution instigated by Galerius and Maximinus; see Eusebius, *HE*, VI.32.

bishop with whose language they may have been familiar since their Mesopotamian days.

Theotimus

The name of the second bishop of the Arabs appears in the accounts of the Synod of Antioch, which was held in 363 during the reign of Jovian.¹⁸ The participants in that synod, both the Macedonians and the Acacians, drew up a declaration in which they ratified the Nicene Creed, and among the signatories to that declaration was a bishop referred to as Θεότιμος Ἀράβων.

The three questions that have been raised in the preceding section on Pamphilus may be raised concerning Theotimus, and the answers are identical. It is almost certain that the Ἀραβες over whom Theotimus was bishop were *foederati* and Tanūkhids and that the ethnic origin of Theotimus, like that of Pamphilus, must remain unknown. The arguments that have been advanced in resolving the three questions that were raised concerning Pamphilus may be advanced for the same three questions concerning Theotimus. There is no need to repeat them, but a few observations may be made on the bishop of the Arabs who appears some thirty-eight years after his predecessor at Nicaea:

(a) The term used to describe the jurisdiction of Theotimus, namely, that it was over the Arabs (Ἀραβες) while that of Pamphilus was over the Tayenoi (Ταηνοί), should present no difficulty. In the first Byzantine century, the fourth, the Arab *foederati* are referred to indifferently by various names, and it was only later, in the fifth and sixth centuries, perhaps starting from the late fourth century, that the term *Saracens* established itself as a regular term for the Arab *foederati*. In addition to *Tayenoi*, they are referred to as *Arabs* (the most general term), *Saracens*, and even *Eremboi*.¹⁹

(b) The establishment of the fact that the Tanūkhid *foederati* had a bishop representing them at Nicaea in 325 fortifies the view that at the Synod of Antioch the bishop of the same ethnic group was also that of the Tanūkhid *foederati* of the fourth century. The precedent set at Nicaea, it is natural to suppose, argues for their participation also at another orthodox council—at Antioch.

(c) The fact that only one bishop of the Arabs participated in the council suggests that these Arabs were the most prominent among the *foederati*, namely, the Tanūkhids. The location of the episcopal seat of Theotimus is also noteworthy. The bishops who signed before and after him were Anatolius of Beroea and Lucian of Arca, bishops over two cities that are located in the

¹⁸For an account of the Synod of Antioch wherein the name of Theotimus has been preserved, see Socrates, *HE*, III.25.

¹⁹On *Eremboi*, see *supra*, pp. 230, 236 and 236 note 39.

north of Oriens, in Syria Coele and Phoenicia respectively. If the sequence of the subscriptions follows a geographical order, it could fortify the conclusion that the federate Arabs of Theotimus were those of the north, the Tanūkhids.

(d) Something is known about the doctrinal background of Theotimus before he participated in the orthodox Synod of Antioch in 363 and signed its declaration ratifying the Nicene Creed. He had apparently been won over to the Acacian position,²⁰ and this must have taken place in the few years that intervened between the Council of Seleucia in 359 and the Synod of Antioch in 363, for no bishop of the *foederati* participated in the former council²¹ or in that of Sardica in 343. This indicates that the *foederati* had remained orthodox throughout most of the long reign of Constantius and that it was in the last four years of the reign that their bishop went over to the Acacian position, only to revert to the orthodox one a few years later. Thus the attestation of Theotimus's participation in a church council in 363 is an important datum for tracing the history of the Arab episcopate in the fourth century, coming late as it does, between that of Pamphilus early in 325 and that of Moses in the seventies.

(e) What happened to Theotimus after the death of the orthodox Jovian in 364 and the accession of the Arian Valens is not clear. He had had Acacian leanings and may have reverted to that position under Valens, but it is more likely that he remained steadfast in his orthodoxy and united with his federates. The likelihood that this was the case may be reflected in the irregular participation of the Arab *foederati* in the wars of Valens's reign, and thus the doctrinal position of Theotimus and his *foederati* throws light on the course of secular Arab-Byzantine relations²² in that reign.

Moses

Unlike the other two preceding bishops of the Arabs, Moses is fairly well described in the ecclesiastical sources and is more than just a name in a conciliar or synodical list. He has already been discussed in a different context, the secular history of the reign of Valens,²³ and it remains to treat him in this context of the ecclesiastical history of the Arabs in the fourth century:

(a) The recovery of the names of two bishops of the Arabs for the years 325 and 363 confirms what has been said earlier on the inaccuracy of Sozomen's statement that Moses was the first bishop of the Arabs.²⁴ An interpretation has

²⁰On the Acacian background of those who ratified the Nicene Creed at the Synod of Antioch in 363, see Socrates, *HE*, III.25.

²¹On the possibility that Barochius, who participated in the Council of Seleucia, was a bishop of the Arabs, see *infra*, App. 2, pp. 342–44.

²²For these relations, see *supra*, pp. 169–75.

²³See *supra*, pp. 152–58, 185–87.

²⁴*Supra*, pp. 156–57.

been suggested that would relieve Sozomen of an inaccuracy and may be restated here. Moses could have been the first bishop of the Arabs only if Sozomen's statement involves three elements simultaneously, as it may well do: (1) that Moses was ethnically an Arab, (2) that he was the bishop of the Saracens, and (3) that the Saracens in question were *foederati*; all of which are true of Moses and Mavia's Saracens.

(b) Of the three questions raised in connection with Pamphilus and Theotimus, the last, their Arab ethnic origin, could not be determined. In the case of Moses it can be answered in the affirmative on testimonial evidence from Socrates.

(c) His background is another important feature that distinguishes him from Pamphilus and Theotimus. He had been a monk, and this indicates that monasticism, which had spread from Egypt to other parts of Oriens, had spread among the Arabs also.

(d) The orthodoxy of the *foederati* is inferable from the participation of their bishops Pamphilus and Theotimus in orthodox councils. In the case of Moses, the orthodoxy both of the *foederati* (represented by their queen, Mavia) and of their bishop, Moses, is explicitly stated and described with significant details that leave no doubt whatsoever concerning the religious and doctrinal complexion of the *foederati* throughout the fourth century.²⁵

(e) Because of its proximity to that of Moses, Theotimus's episcopate could provide a background for examining the problems that the episcopate of the former poses, especially if Theotimus was indeed Moses' immediate predecessor as bishop of the Arab *foederati*. His oscillation between Arianism and Orthodoxy could suggest that to the *foederati* the bishops might have become administrators in the imperial hierarchy and their doctrinal position was susceptible to imperial influence. This could explain Mavia's insistence on a simple holy man, such as Moses was, to be her bishop. In Socrates it is not clear whether Mavia's insistence on the choice of Moses was related to his orthodoxy or his Arab origin or both. But it is possible that a third dimension may now be added as an explanation for her insistence, namely, the fact that he was a monk and not a member of the ecclesiastical hierarchy.²⁶

(f) Of the three bishops, Moses is by far the most important; the chapters in the ecclesiastical historians on him and on his queen, Mavia, are full of significant details that do not fail to draw clearly the picture of a fourth-century Arab bishop. By contrast, Pamphilus and Theotimus are mere names

²⁵On the nonparticipation of Moses in the orthodox Council of Constantinople in 381, see *supra*, p. 206 and notes 13–14.

²⁶See also *infra*, App. 2, pp. 342–44.

in a conciliar and a synodical list.²⁷ And of the three he is the only one who has been honored as a saint;²⁸ his feast is celebrated on 7 February.

2

The data extracted from the sources on each of the three bishops of the Arabs may now be viewed synoptically and treated diachronously for drawing conclusions on the Arab episcopate of the Orient in the fourth century:

1. It is clear from the sources that the *foederati* had only one bishop representing them at the church councils of the fourth century. This was undoubtedly the bishop of the most important Arab federate group, the Tanūkhids, stationed in the north and poised against the Persians. It was only with the eclipse of the Tanūkhids as the dominant federate group and the rise of the Salīhids²⁹ that the Arab phylarchate of the Orient became more complex, and so became, correspondingly with the phylarchate, the sister institution of the episcopate. Hence the rise in the number of Arab federate bishops in the fifth century.³⁰

2. All the three bishops were orthodox, and this is striking in view of the fact that the image of the Arab federates in the sixth century was the contrary, that of heretical Monophysites; their Orthodoxy is thus instructive for a true understanding of Arab Monophysitism in the sixth. The Tanūkhids of the fourth century started as orthodox, and their bishop, Pamphilus, subscribed the canons of the Council of Nicaea. His successors continued in that doctrinal tradition, in much the same way that the Ghassānids started as Monophysites in the reign of Anastasius and continued to be so till the reign of Heraclius.

3. The *foederati* themselves were no theologians. They simply followed their bishop and gave him their staunch support.³¹ Their loyalty was that of

²⁷The chapter written by Mavia and Moses in the reign of Valens illuminates so much of federate history in the fourth century, both secular and ecclesiastical, and its tone is consonant with what is known of the Tanūkhids both in the pre-Byzantine and post-Byzantine periods. It was only accidentally recorded by the ecclesiastical historians, and this leads one to reflect on how much federate history was left unnoticed by the authors of the fourth century. Such figures as Pamphilus and Theotimus, which are mere names, isolated and lonely in the sources, may have been the center of events as exciting as those that surrounded Moses.

²⁸ASS, Feb., Tom. II, pp. 42–45.

²⁹And such federate groups as the phylarchs of the Parembolē in Palestine; see *supra*, note 14.

³⁰On the necessity of distinguishing the various groups of Arabs, federate and nonfederate, and their bishops, see *infra*, App. 2, pp. 342–44.

³¹As did the Goths when they remained Arians following their bishop Ulphilas; as did the Cappadocians when they followed their clergy under the leadership of Basil during the reign of Valens; and, even more remarkable, as did certain nuns who took refuge in Constan-

the warrior who transferred the concept from the tribal and military sphere to that of the religious. In so doing the Tanūkhids also drew on the Arab ethos of *walāʾ* and *wafāʾ*.³²

4. Their orthodoxy and the participation of two of the three bishops, Pamphilus and Theotimus, in the Council of Nicaea and the Synod of Antioch respectively raise the question of their nonparticipation in other councils of the same century, such as that of Sardica³³ ca. 343 and of Seleucia³⁴ (in Isauria) in 359. Their orthodoxy is the key to understanding their nonparticipation in such councils,³⁵ and thus their doctrinal persuasion reveals a pattern that is also reflected in their secular history, in their nonparticipation in the wars of the Arian Constantius, in their fitful participation in the wars of Valens, and in their open revolt against him in the seventies.³⁶

5. The fact that the *foederati* had a bishop over them clearly implies the existence of an ecclesiastical hierarchy. It is certain that the *foederati* had over them clergy of the lower ranks,³⁷ priests, deacons, and subdeacons, and the chances are that these were Arab clergy who could communicate with them in their own language and possibly celebrate a simple form of the liturgy in Arabic.³⁸

tinople during the persecution in the Orient in the reign of Tiberius; they contended that they were only women uninstructed in theological controversies; but from the tradition of the Oriental fathers they would not deviate; see John of Ephesus, *HE*, pp. 107–8.

³²So characteristic of the Tanūkhids both in their pre-Byzantine period with Shāpūr in Persian territory and in their post-Byzantine period with the Abbasid Caliph al-Mahdī in the ninth century; see *infra*, pp. 418 and 424–32.

³³The council summoned by Constantius and Constans. Although it settled the orthodoxy of Athanasius and confirmed his restoration, the council, as far as the Arabs in Oriens were concerned, was summoned by Arian Constantius with whom they had quarreled and of whom they were suspicious; but there may have been other causes for their nonparticipation. For the council, see Kidd, *History of the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 83ff; for the list of Oriental bishops who traveled to Sardica but did not attend the sessions of its council, see Devreesse, *Patriarcat*, pp. 127–28.

³⁴The semi-Arian council, more properly a synod, summoned by Constantius in 359 to settle the Arian question. See Kidd, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 168ff; for the list of Oriental bishops who attended it, see Devreesse, *Patriarcat*, p. 128; on the possibility that one of these Oriental bishops, Barochius, may have been the bishop of the Arabs, see *infra*, App. 2, pp. 342–44.

³⁵For the nonparticipation of the Arab *foederati* in the Orthodox Council of Constantinople in 381 and the causes thereof, related to their disappointments in the new emperor, Theodosius, see *supra*, pp. 205–10.

³⁶On the Arabs in the wars of these two emperors, see *supra*, pp. 74–86 and 169–75.

³⁷Before the discovery of the *Letter* of Simeon of Bēth-Arshām, the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the Christian Arab community in Najrān and South Arabia in the sixth century was unknown and only presumed to exist; only the name of their bishop was known, as in the case of the Tanūkhids; now the names of the clergy as well as the various ranks of the hierarchy have come to light, for which see the present writer in *Martyrs*, pp. 45, 64.

³⁸The difficult question of an Arabic Bible and liturgy in pre-Islamic times is treated in a separate chapter; see *infra*, pp. 435–43.

6. The question of Tanūkhid churches and their location inevitably arises. It is almost certain that these are to be sought in the general area where the Tanūkhids were encamped, either in or around such places as Anasartha, Zabad, Şawwarān.³⁹ At least one Tanūkhid church is attested, dedicated to St. Thomas and erected by a Mavia (who could have been, as argued earlier, the famous queen herself) outside the walls of Anasartha.⁴⁰

7. Another question that arises is the seat of their bishops. Where the episcopal seat of these bishops was is not entirely clear. Their subscriptions are not related to any city, a fortunate circumstance, since this would have obscured their federate status. But it is more than likely that their bishops had their seat in one of the localities associated with the Tanūkhids in the north, Anasartha, Zabad, Şawwarān. In view of the epigraphic evidence that links the Tanūkhids to Anasartha and, what is more, to a city that had no bishop⁴¹ until the year 446, it is quite likely that Anasartha was the seat of the bishop of the Arab *foederati*.⁴²

8. The largest problem, however, that these bishops of the *foederati* pose is that of an Arab national church as early as the fourth century. Only Moses is explicitly stated to have been Arab, while the other two may or may not have been. The chances, however, are that these bishops were Arabs. The only one among the three about whom it is possible to form a tolerably clear picture is Moses, and the accounts of the ecclesiastical historians provide enough data for at least examining the problem; and yet it is not clear whether his ethnic origin was the main consideration or even a consideration at all in Mavia's insistence on his consecration as a bishop. However, the discussion of an Arab national church among the *foederati* throughout the three centuries of the

³⁹On the topography and political geography of the Tanūkhids, some of which involve Christian remains of the sixth century, see *infra*, pp. 395–407.

⁴⁰For the church dedicated to St. Thomas, see *supra*, pp. 222–27. On the religious foundations of the Tanūkhids in the Arabic sources, especially their monasteries, see *infra*, pp. 433–34. Their other churches in Oriens must be presumed to have existed since it is unlikely that their contribution to the ecclesiastical map of Syria throughout the century consisted of a single church dedicated to St. Thomas! Again, the parallel of the Christian Arab community of South Arabia may be invoked (*supra*, note 37) with regard to the number of churches in that region. It is only recently that intensive researches have disclosed the number, location, and names of those churches; see the present writer's "Byzantium in South Arabia," *DOP*, 33 (1980), pp. 23–94.

⁴¹The lists of the councils of the fourth century do not reveal a bishop of Anasartha among the bishops of Syria Coele or Syria II. It was only at the Synod of Antioch in 445 that Anasartha first appears represented by a bishop, Maras; see Devreesse, *Patriarcat*, p. 162.

⁴²Although Mavia erected the *martyrium* of St. Thomas *extra muros*, the fact does not militate against the possibility that the bishop of the Tanūkhids had his seat in Anasartha itself. On the *martyrium* and its location, see *supra*, pp. 222–27. It is noteworthy that George of Cyprus omits Anasartha from his list; it was raised to city rank only in the reign of Justinian, who named it Theodorapolis after his wife; so it must have been in the fourth century unimportant enough to be the seat of a federate bishop. See Jones, *Cities*, pp. 267–68, 462.

phylarchate until the reign of Heraclius must begin with Moses and the Tanūkhids, and it is just possible that Moses started the line of Arab bishops throughout these centuries, his episcopate being the precedent.⁴³

9. However, Mavia's insistence on the consecration of a holy man rather than a canonically ordained ecclesiastic may be the significant feature of the whole episode. It is testimony to the rising importance of the holy men⁴⁴ in the spiritual life of the Arabs, who apparently revered them even more than they revered the clergy and who marveled at the spiritual powers they possessed, including working miracles, which set them above the clergy. And apparently, after fifty years of association with Byzantium, the Christianity of the *foederati* had matured to the point where they became so discriminating and assertive as to express strong preferences concerning the identity and qualifications of their prospective bishop.

APPENDIX I

R. Aigrain and R. Devreesse

Of the few who have written on the ecclesiastical history of the Arabs in the fourth century, two writers need to be singled out, R. Aigrain and R. Devreesse.

A

In section 5 of his article "Arabie," entitled "Les arabes nomades. Les phylarques" (*DHGE*, 3, cols. 1190–93), Aigrain discusses the Christianity of what to him were the nomadic Arabs, but could not write their ecclesiastical history in the fourth century. Apart from the reign of Valens with its Mavia and Moses, the Arab episcopate of the fourth century is unknown to him. Apparently he was discouraged from delving into the sources by the fact that the political and military structure with which it was associated was shrouded in obscurity. He knows of the Tanūkhids (col. 1190), but only through Caussin de Perceval who constructed an impossible chronology for them before the fourth century, which Aigrain rightly rejected. As a result, the fifty years or so of Tanūkhid or Arab federate ecclesiastical history before the reign of Valens are left unnoticed, and so is their secular history as *foederati* in the service of Byzantium. For him, the *foederati* of the reign of Julian remained Saracens and those of the reign of Valens Saracens allied with Byzantium, but isolated from that special relationship with Byzantium that started some fifty years before in the reign of Constantine.

Devreesse, on the other hand, is the only author who sensed the beginnings of an Arab ecclesiastical hierarchy among the Saracens of the fourth century (*Patriarcat*, pp. 215–16). He did delve into the sources and discussed the references to the two bishops, Pamphilus in A.D. 325 and Theotimus in 363 (p. 215), but was unable to understand their place in the ecclesiastical history of the Arabs or in the Patriarchate

⁴³See *infra*, pp. 556–58.

⁴⁴On the importance of the holy man, see Peter Brown's article, *supra*, p. 153 note 56.

of Antioch. Unlike Aigrain, he was not informed about the Tanūkhid *foederati* and so could not relate the existence of these Arab bishops to that of the sister institution, the Arab federate phylarchate, and, consequently, conceived of these bishops simply as bishops of the nomadic Arabs.

The same confusion pervades his analysis or understanding of the status of the two fifth-century bishops of the Saracens, John and Eustathius, the bishops of Osroene and Phoenicia II respectively, who participated in the Council of Chalcedon (p. 215). These are bishops of the *foederati* of the fifth century, when the number of these bishops participating in ecclesiastical councils multiplied—from one in the fourth century to three in the fifth—with the rise of the Salīhids and of the phylarchs of the Parembolē in Palestine. Devreesse was as uninformed about the Salīhids,¹ the Arab *foederati* of the fifth century, as he was about the Tanūkhids of the fourth, and so could not relate the Arab episcopate of the fifth century to its phylarchate, which in this century was becoming complex with the rise of the Salīhids, a new federate group that was added to the Tanūkhids, now in eclipse but still surviving.²

B

In his account of Arab Christianity before the rise of Islam, Aigrain gave much prominence³ to the Provincia Arabia both before and after Diocletian (cols. 1161–89). However, the Arab presence in Oriens was much more extensive;⁴ but just as it was manifested onomastically by the application of the term *Arabia* to the Arab kingdom of the Nabataeans, it was obscured by the application of such terms as *Phoenicia II* to the area of Arab Palmyrene supremacy, and *Osroene* to the Arab kingdom of the Abgarids, i.e., by the application of geographical terms not related to the Arabs of the limitrophe provinces of Oriens, which had been and remained strongly Arab in ethnic complexion. Indeed, Osroene and Phoenicia may have remained more Arab than Arabia, since the fall of Nabataea to the Romans in 106 antedated the fall of

¹These phylarchs of the end of the fourth century and of the fifth century are represented in his work by the single name “Zocom” (p. 246), which appears in a context that suggests no knowledge of the history of the Salīhids. Aigrain is better informed (cols. 1190, 1192–93) about the Salīhids/Zokomids, but not sufficiently to be able to relate their secular to their ecclesiastical history; neither scholar had at his disposal an account of the Tanūkhids and the Salīhids other than that of Caussin de Perceval with its impossible chronology. The Salīhids form the main theme of the second volume in this series, *BAFIC*.

It is possible that Devreesse's untenable views on the Ghassānids of the sixth century (p. 216) may derive in part from the fact that both the secular and the ecclesiastical history of the Arab *foederati* in the fourth and the fifth centuries was unclear to him; the Ghassānids form the theme of Vol. 3 in this series, *BASIC*.

²He was right, however, in rejecting Schwartz's view that John, the above-mentioned bishop of the Saracens, is misplaced among the bishops of Osroene and must be assigned to Palestine (p. 215).

³He may have given so much prominence to Arabia in the structure of his article because of his assignment to write the article “Arabie” for a dictionary of ecclesiastical history and *geography* and also by the wealth of materials on early Christianity and heresies associated with Arabia.

⁴Of which he was apparently aware, judging from sec. 1 of his article, entitled “Délimitation géographique” (cols. 1158–59).

Edessa in 243 and Palmyra in 272, and thus the process of acculturation must have started earlier in Arabia and with it the gradual loss of Arab identity among the Arabs of Nabataea, now Roman citizens of the new *provincia*. Thus, although the Provincia Arabia remained heavily Arab, it was not the only province in Oriens of which a strongly Arab complexion might be predicated; furthermore, when Aigrain treated the history of Christianity in Arabia, he was really writing the history of Christianity in a Roman and Byzantine province, the inhabitants of which had become Roman citizens after the issue of the *Constitutio Antoniniana*.⁵

Devreesse seems to have held similar views in writing his accounts of Arab Christianity.⁶ It is in his chapter on the Provincia Arabia that he discusses the rise of the Arab ecclesiastical hierarchy⁷ and even speaks of the eighteen bishops of Arabia—its metropolitan and suffragans—as Arab, although he qualifies his use of the term by including it between quotation marks, “arabe” (p. 215). In this context of the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the Provincia, Devreesse discusses the bishops of the Arabs (who appear as *Taienoi* and *Arabes*) and reflects on the rise of what he calls *un embryon de hiérarchie dans les chrétientés nomades*,⁸ which puzzled him and which has been analyzed above.

Devreesse's work, however, is valuable for the ecclesiastical history of the Arab *foederati* and for the Arabs of Oriens in general. It is a history of the Patriarchate of Antioch, and this was roughly coterminous with the Diocese of Oriens, especially before the rise of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem in the reign of Marcian and after the separation of Egypt from Oriens in the reign of Theodosius I. Hence it is the larger background against which may be set the ecclesiastical history of all the groups of Byzantine Arabs since these were to be found in Oriens, especially in the limitrophe provinces.

APPENDIX II

Barochius, Bishop of Arabia

The last signatory of the declaration of faith proposed by Acacius at the semi-Arian Council of Seleucia¹ in 359 was Βαρόχιος ἐπίσκοπος Ἀραβίας.² The description of Barochius as the “bishop of Arabia” is curious, and it admits of two interpretations.

(1) Barochius could have been the bishop of one of the cities of the Provincia

⁵However, his article remains a substantial contribution to the history of Arab Christianity, especially before the rise of Islam, to which most of the article is devoted.

⁶Perhaps led by the same reasons as Aigrain's, referred to *supra*, note 3; see Devreesse, *Patriarcat*, preface, p. ix.

⁷His long discussion of the Arab *foederati* (pp. 241–82) which prefaces his chapter on the provinces of Euphratesia, Osroene, and Mesopotamia is manifestly out of place in that chapter, despite the case he makes for its inclusion (p. 241); it had appeared separately as an article, “Arabes Perses et Arabes Romains, Lakhmides et Ghassanides,” in *Vivre et penser* (Paris, 1942).

⁸On his inclusion of Barochius in the list of Arab bishops, see *infra*, App. 2, p. 343 note 4.

¹For the Council of Seleucia, see Devreesse, *Patriarcat*, pp. 13–14; for the list of Oriental bishops who participated, see *ibid.*, p. 128.

²The name is preserved in Epiphanius; see *Panarion*, *baer.* 73, 26, p. 301.

Arabia or a bishop of the Arabs of one of the cities of the Provincia in much the same way that Beryllos was the bishop of the Arabs of Bostra (*infra*, note 4). He could also have been one of the many bishops whose sees were in the *κῶμαι* of the Provincia and whose number attracted the attention of Sozomen in the fifth century (*HE*, VII. 19).

(2) Alternatively, he could have been the bishop of neither of these two groups of Rhomaic Arabs, but the bishop of the Arab *foederati*, and the case for this presumption may be stated as follows:

(a) Only four years later, there appears among the subscriptions of the Synod of Antioch "Theotimus, bishop of the Arabs," and this suggests that the Arabs had not disappeared from conciliar participation in this period, and so they could have been represented at Seleucia by their bishop, Barochius, whose subscription erroneously includes the territorial Ἀραβία instead of the gentilic Ἀράβων.³

(b) Furthermore, Barochius was an Acacian and so had Theotimus been before he ratified the Nicene Creed at Antioch. The identity in doctrinal persuasion of two bishops related to Arabia and the Arabs could suggest that they were bishops of the same ethnic group⁴ and that the former was the predecessor of the latter.

It would be more significant for the ecclesiastical history of the Arabs and for a better understanding of Arab-Byzantine relations if Barochius turned out to be not a bishop of the Rhomaic Arabs but a bishop of the *foederati*:

1. To the list of three bishops of the Arabs in the fourth century, Pamphilus, Theotimus, and Moses, the name of a fourth bishop, Barochius, would be a welcome addition.

2. His Acacian position would thus link him with Theotimus before the latter came over to the orthodox position at the Synod of Antioch in 363. The doctrinal persuasion of two bishops of the Arabs separated by only four years could thus reveal that during a short period toward the end of the reign of Constantius the bishops of the *foederati* deviated from the orthodox position, possibly under imperial pressure.

³Another subscription in the list is relevant, that of Ἀραβίων ἐπίσκοπος Ἀδράων. The editor, K. Holl, suggested Ἀραβίας instead of Ἀραβίων; see his note, *ibid.* Could Ἀραβίων in that subscription and Ἀραβίας in that of Barochius have been transposed? However, it should be noted against Holl that Arabion, as a proper name, is attested; see *RE*, 2, col. 363.

⁴The status of Barochius as a "bishop of the Arabs" has been presented above only as a possibility, not a fact. In his enumeration of the bishops of the Arabs for the fourth century, Devresse counted Barochius among them (*Patriarcat*, p. 215) and described him as "évêque des arabes" (p. 212). The above analysis of the subscription has suggested that Barochius cannot be simply described as "bishop of the Arabs" without further ado and before some decisive evidence turns up that would tip the scales in favor of his being a federate bishop.

The description given by Eusebius of Beryllos, Origen's contemporary, could be helpful in this connection if Eusebius were more precise and consistent. On one occasion (*HE*, VI.xx.2), he describes him as "the bishop of the Arabs of Bostra" and on another as "the bishop of the Bostrans of Arabia" (*HE*, VI.xxxiii.1). Since Bostra is involved in both descriptions, the chances are that Beryllos was the bishop of Bostra, the Nabataean Arab city and capital of what was now the Provincia Arabia, rather than the bishop of a specific Arab group, let alone Arab *foederati* since these were not stationed at Bostra while the Bostran Arabs were now *Rhomaioi*, *cives* since the Edict of Caracalla. Whether Beryllos was ethnically Arab is not clear. He could have been.

3. The ecclesiastical and secular problems of the reign of Valens involving Mavia and Moses would also be provided with a background that could illuminate some of their obscurities.

(a) It has been pointed out earlier (*supra*, pp. 336, 340) that Theotimus's once Acacian leanings may have been behind Mavia's insistence on the consecration of the monk and holy man Moses. The case for this view could receive corroboration from the evidence of Barochius's Acacian position, too, thus reflecting federate disillusionment both with their own ecclesiastical hierarchy, amenable to imperial pressure, and with governmental Christianity in general. And this may be one of the explanations for the rise in importance of the holy man in the estimation of the laity, namely, that the holy man remained aloof and distant in his desert, unaffected by the theological currents of the day.

(b) The Acacian leanings of the two bishops, Barochius and Theotimus, and the nonparticipation of the *foederati* in the wars of Constantius's reign could throw a bright new light on the Christianity of the *foederati*. Even in this short period of four years when one and possibly two of their bishops departed from the orthodox path, the *foederati* did not. If so, this would be a remarkable reflection of their loyalty to orthodoxy, acquired since the days of the participation of their bishop Pamphilus in the Council of Nicaea. And it may have been *partly* this—their steadfastness and intransigence—that finally brought back their bishop, Theotimus, from the Acacian to the orthodox position at the Council of Seleucia. The accounts of the ecclesiastical historians present a Mavia self-willed in ecclesiastical as well as in secular matters, and her intransigence is striking. It may well be that the federate experience with one and possibly two of their bishops, Barochius and Theotimus, forced Mavia to take strictly ecclesiastical matters in her own hands, and thus her picture as drawn in the sources becomes clearer and her intransigence more intelligible.

APPENDIX III

On the Bishops of the Arab Provincials

A distinction, and an important one, has been drawn in the preceding Appendix between the bishops of the Arab *foederati* and those of the Arab provincials in Oriens. It is only when the strictly Arab zone of the federate Arabs in Oriens is separated from that of the provincial Arabs, who were *Rhomaioi*, that a clear account of Arab Christianity in this period, both federate and provincial or Rhomaic, can be written. As this book is concerned with the Arab *foederati*, it is their Christianity that has been the subject of investigation in this chapter. But the Christianity of the one group, the Arab *cives*, is related to that of the other, the *foederati*. The two groups were living in close proximity to each other and were related to Byzantium, both its *imperium* and its *ecclesia*. Hence the relevance of the following short presentation of one aspect of Arab provincial Christianity.

The history of Christianity among the provincial, Rhomaic Arabs can be fully accounted for only when it is realized that the Arab presence in Oriens was not limited to the Provincia Arabia but extended to the other provinces of the Byzantine limitrophe. In view of the fact that there were not one but three Arabias in Oriens

and the fact that the limitrophe provinces of the Orient had a strong Arab complexion,¹ the Arabs must have been well represented by many bishops in the councils and synods of the fourth century. The names of bishops who represented the ecclesiastical provinces of the Patriarchate of Antioch, in which the Arab element was strong, have been preserved in the various conciliar lists. Whether these bishops, or some of them, whose names appear in these lists, were Arab is not clear.² Their names are Greek and Latin, but this is not decisive against the view that at least some or a few of them could have been Arab. Greek and Latin names were assumed by the Arabs when they were consecrated bishops, as in the case of the bishops of the Parembolē in Palestine. In spite of their names, Petrus of Ayla and Marinus³ of Palmyra, who appear in the lists of the Council of Nicaea, could have been Arab, representing as they did well-known Arab cities in the former territories of the Nabataeans and the Palmyrenes. In the list of the Council of Seleucia, A.D. 359, such a name as Abgarus, that of the bishop of Cyrrhus in Euphratesia, is Arab. Whether its bearer was also Arab is likely but not certain since the name could have been assumed by the Christians of the region to perpetuate the memory of the first Christian king of Edessa, the Arab Abgar.⁴

An intensive examination of the names of bishops in the lists of the councils and synods of the fourth century is likely to reveal extensive Arab participation in ecclesiastical life in this century. The Arabs constituted demographically a substantial portion of the imperial Diocese of Oriens and correspondingly a substantial portion of the ecclesiastical Patriarchate of Antioch in this early Byzantine period. It is therefore natural to assume that they were proportionately or at least well represented in the ecclesiastical hierarchy. These facts are important to the historian of the Patriarchate of Antioch both before the rise of Islam and after the Arabization of the region with the Islamic Conquests in the seventh century. The study of the Arab component in the Patriarchate must begin with these facts that pertain to this early Byzantine period.⁵

¹On the extensive Arab presence in Oriens, see *RA*, chap. 1.

²This quest for the Arab bishops of Oriens in the early Byzantine period could receive some illumination from the statement in Sozomen to the effect that there was a great number of bishops among the Arabs in the villages of the Provincia Arabia; see Sozomen, *HE*, VII.19.

³"Marinus" was also the name of the father of the Arab emperor, Philip; it could be an Arab name derived from the root MRN, and it bears a striking resemblance to the name of a famous Arab clan in Ḥīra, Banu-Marīnā, "the Sons of Marīnā." The lexicographers, however, do not think the name of the clan is Arabic; see *Lisān al-ʿArab*, vol. 13 (Beirut, 1956), p. 405.

⁴On the name "Abgarus," see also *supra*, p. 333 note 15.

⁵The twentieth-century Arab historian of the Patriarchate of Antioch sensed the reality of this Arab component in pre-Islamic times without researching it; see A. Rustum, *Kanīsat Madīnat Allāh Al-ʿUzmā* (Beirut, 1958), pp. vi–vii.

PART TWO
THE ARABIC AND THE SYRIAC SOURCES

X

Political and Military History

I. HISHĀM AL-KALBĪ

The principal historian of pre-Islamic Arabia, Hishām b. Muhammad al-Kalbī¹ (ca. 737–ca. 820), is a Muslim Arab whose *floruit* was some two centuries after the pre-Islamic era in the history of the Arabs had been terminated by the mission of Muhammad. Living in the good graces of two Abbasid caliphs—al-Mahdī and al-Ma'mūn—and coming from a Shī'ite family long established in Kūfa, the Muslim capital of Iraq before the foundation of Baghdad, he had every reason to be interested in and to concentrate on the Islamic era. The recording of its preceding two centuries of events, which had changed the course of world as well as of Arab history, could have occupied him and a team of other authors as well all their lives. And yet Hishām busied himself with the pre-Islamic as much as with the Islamic past of Arab history, even more, much more, with the former. As a result of this interest, the history of pre-Islamic Arabia has not entirely vanished from the literary records of Islamic times or from the historical consciousness of the Arabs, and it is owing to the interests and the efforts of Hishām, who thus emerges as the principal Muslim historian of pre-Islamic Arabia, that much about that Peninsula in that distant past is known.²

For the Byzantinist as well as the Late Roman historian, Hishām is

¹He is often referred to as Ibn-al-Kalbī, a patronymic he could share with three others, his father, Muhammad, and two other learned men of the tribe of Kalb, for whom see *infra*, note 6. Since Hishām is not a common name and quite uncommon among historians, it is better to call him by his name rather than by his patronymic, which is not distinctive (since he shares it with three others) and is not as easy to reproduce in English as the name "Hishām."

²Interest in pre-Islamic Arabia was started by Yamanite writers such as 'Abīd b. Sharya and Wahb b. Munabbih, who, however, were interested in the South rather than the North Arabians. Hishām reversed the focus of interest, but a later writer, al-Hamdānī, a South Arabian, reversed it again. Thus the combined works of Hishām and al-Hamdānī provide a fairly balanced account of pre-Islamic Arabia, both its north and its south. Until the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, knowledge of pre-Islamic Arabia was derived principally from the works of these two authors, Hishām and al-Hamdānī; but even with the rise and development of Arabian epigraphy and archeology these two authors, especially Hishām, remain indispensable for understanding pre-Islamic Arab and Arabian history, since the information they provide is such as not to be found in inscriptions and is sometimes indispensable for understanding the latter. Almost all later authors draw on Hishām for their accounts of pre-Islamic Arabia.

important and deserves to be better known. As the historian of the Arab tribes, he is in line with such classical authors as Strabo, Ptolemy, and Pliny, who noticed these tribes but did so as outsiders to whom these tribes or most of them were mere names, unlike Hishām, who was an Arab himself and thus wrote about them with considerable knowledge and understanding. He is also close to Tacitus, whose *Germania* discussed the various Germanic tribes that harassed Rome's northern frontiers and belonged to the race that brought about the downfall of the empire in the West. Hishām chronicled the genealogy and the history of the Arab tribes that first harassed the south-eastern frontier, then brought about the dismemberment of the empire in the East and, through the Ottoman Turks, its eventual downfall. For the Byzantinist, Hishām is the Jordanes of the Arabs; just as the latter, author of the *Getica* and himself a Goth, described the fortunes of the Germanic people that effected the breakthrough on the Danube front at Adrianople in A.D. 378 and settled on Roman soil by force of arms, as the new type of *foederati* in the fourth century,³ so did Hishām chronicle the history of the Arab *foederati* of Byzantium in the southeast, in Oriens. Not only did he chronicle the history of the Tanūkhids of the fourth century but also that of the Salīhids of the fifth and that of the Ghassānids of the sixth and early seventh centuries.

More specifically, the Byzantino-arabist who is writing the history of the fourth century owes Hishām the possibility of reconstructing the past of *Byzantino-arabica* in the fourth century, for it is Hishām that supplies the *Arabica* of this distant past, not available elsewhere. In addition to his data on the Tanūkhids, the most primary source for Arab-Byzantine relations in the first half of the fourth century, namely, the Namāra inscription, becomes historically meaningful only with the data provided by Hishām, which thus enables the literary-epigraphic confrontation to be fruitfully made; and knowledge of the tribal groups in Oriens (other than the Tanūkhids) who became part of the Byzantine military system there is also derived from Hishām.

Hishām was a prolific author. More than 150 items are ascribed to him, and these may be divided into two main categories: (1) general works that comprehensively treated the history of the Arabs as one people, tribally and genealogically arranged,⁴ and (2) a large number of short, specialized works

³On Jordanes (alternatively spelled Jordanis), the least known of these Graeco-Roman authors to the Arabist, see Kappelmacher's article in *RE*, 9.2, cols. 1908–29. Jordanes and Hishām come in for comparison because they happen to have recorded the history of the new *foederati* of Byzantium in the fourth century, the Germans and the Arabs respectively. Almost in everything else they can only be contrasted with each other.

⁴For the genealogical arrangement, see F. Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography* (Leiden, 1968) (hereafter, *HMH*), pp. 95–98; this work may be consulted for all aspects of Arabic and Muslim historiography that are touched upon in this chapter; on the early Arab historians, see A. al-Dūrī, *Baḥṭh fī Nash'at 'Ilm al-Tārikh 'ind al-'Arab* (Beirut, 1960).

that are really monographs or researches on the individual tribes or other topics on some of which his comprehensive genealogical history touched. It is beyond the scope of this work to study his *oeuvre* in its entirety. This has been done with great competence in a monumental study on Hishām with special reference to his chief genealogical work, *Al-Jamhara*.⁵ What has not been done is a study of the Byzantine profile of his work, to which the following sections of this chapter will be devoted.

1

Hishām's interest in the pre-Islamic past of Arabia and the Arabs may be related to the following:

(1) Although he was a Muslim, as were his lineal ancestors beginning with his great-grandfather Bishr, whose sons fought on the side of the Caliph Ali in A.D. 656 at the Battle of the Camel, it was in pre-Islamic times that his tribe, Kalb, had had a distinguished history and had been the most powerful of the tribes of northern Arabia of the Quḍā'a group.⁶ Thus his own tribe's glorious history belonged to the pre-Islamic past, unlike the tribes of Muḍar which rose to prominence in Islamic times. And it was from this pre-Islamic period when it adopted Christianity that Kalb derived its importance even in early Islamic times, during which it was the main prop of the Umayyads in Syria, who depended on it as a regional and Christian tribe against the other tribes of the Qays group.

(2) Although Hishām lived not in Syria but in Iraq—in Kūfa and occasionally in Baghdad—and in the first Abbasid century during which the Islamic rather than the Arab element started to be dominant, yet there was in Iraq a great monument that must have reminded him of the pre-Islamic past. His birthplace, Kūfa, was quite close to Ḥīra, the great Arab center of pre-Islamic times, which in the time of Hishām was still a flourishing city and a favorite resort even for some Abbasid caliphs. Its monuments were still standing and in his time may have overshadowed Kūfa itself. It is, therefore, quite likely that Ḥīra aroused Hishām's historical sensibilities and enamored him of the pre-Islamic past.

⁵See W. Caskel, *Ġamharat an-Nasab: Das genealogische Werk des Hišām ibn Muḥammad al-Kalbī*, 2 vols. (Leiden, 1966) (hereafter, Caskel, *GN*). Although this fundamental work is primarily a study of Hishām's *Jamharat al-Nasab*, the introductions to the two volumes also contain valuable material on Hishām and his father, Muhammad, on Arab genealogy, and on the history of all the Arab tribes.

⁶The tribe also distinguished itself by producing four "historians" in this early period, Hishām and his father, Muhammad, 'Awāna b. al-Ḥakam, and al-Sharqī al-Quṭamī, for whom see Caskel, *GN*, vol. 2, p. 79. The fame of Kalb for learning and preservation of knowledge is reflected in an episode involving 'Awāna b. al-Ḥakam; see Yāqūt, *Irsḥād al-Arīb ilā Ma'rifat al-Adīb*, ed. D. S. Margoliouth, 7 vols. (London, 1923-31), vol. 6, p. 95.

Thus affiliation with Kalb and proximity to Ḥīra, the greatest center of northern Arab culture in pre-Islamic times, could partly account for his interest in the pre-Islamic era. But there is no doubt that, Kalbite though he was and close to Ḥīra as he was, it was not the tribal Arab but the Islamic factor that paradoxically enough drew his attention to the pre-Islamic past.

(3) In spite of its denunciation of the pre-Islamic past which it pejoratively referred to as "the Days of Ignorance,"⁷ Islam inevitably created great interest in that past⁸ with its many Qur'ānic references to it, the most important of which may be described as follows: (a) the concept of the Arab descent from Ishmael, the son of the first patriarch; (b) the pre-Islamic Arabian prophets and their tribes; and (c) references to Arab and Arabian peoples, localities, and practices. As a Muslim, Hishām was naturally interested in this pre-Islamic past to which the Qur'ān repeatedly refers, especially the Arab pre-Islamic past of the Arabian Peninsula, the cradle of Islam itself and the homeland of the Arabs.

(4) Within this Islamic framework there was something even more decisive that must have stimulated Hishām's interest in the pre-Islamic past. His father Muhammad, to whom he owed so much, was a great Qur'ānic exegete, *mufasssīr*, and his commentary on the Qur'ān was the most extensive then available. It is impossible not to conclude that his son Hishām, who was much more of a historian than a Qur'ānicist, conceived the idea of continuing and amplifying what his father had begun, namely, writing a *historical* commentary on the Qur'ān on matters that needed historical annotation, to which he limited his researches.⁹ Hence the flow of those monographs that elucidate its pre-Islamic past, e.g., on 'Ād, the tribe of the Arabian prophet Hūd.¹⁰ His Qur'ānic historical monographs, therefore, are related to his father's interests, and thus the two Kalbīs, father and son, may be viewed as two scholars whose works are intimately connected, the one evolving from the other.¹¹

⁷This is the common translation of the term *al-Jāhiliyya*; for the most recent discussion of this term, see F. Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant: The Concept of Knowledge in Medieval Islam* (Leiden, 1970), pp. 32–35.

⁸For relevant material, see F. Rosenthal, "The Influence of the Biblical Tradition on Muslim Historiography," *Historians of the Middle East*, eds. B. Lewis and P. M. Holt (Oxford, 1962), pp. 35–45; and Rosenthal, "The Historical Outlook of Muhammad," *HMH*, pp. 24–30.

⁹Ṭabarī combined the two activities of exegete and historian in his *Tafsīr* and his *Tārīkh*. For Ṭabarī's conception of his work and of the revelation in its double aspect "as the written Word of God in the Koran, and as the manifestation of the Will of God in History," see O. Loth, quoted by H. A. R. Gibb, *Arabic Literature* (Oxford, 1963), pp. 80–81.

¹⁰For some of these monographs, see the list of Hishām's work in Ibn-al-Nadīm, *Al-Fihrist*, ed. G. Flügel (reprinted Beirut, 1964), pp. 96–98.

¹¹The *Jamhara* itself grew out of a more modest work on *nasab*, genealogy, by Hishām's father, Muhammad.

Perhaps the foregoing paragraphs have not failed to explain Hishām's interest in the pre-Islamic past of the Arabs and Arabia. Whether his vision of pre-Islamic history extended beyond what has been said into something more advanced or sophisticated remains to be shown.

2

Of all the Arab groups of pre-Islamic times, the Lakhmids and their capital, Ḥīra, were the ones that attracted Hishām's attention most, even more than his own tribe Kalb and the Arab groups of the Byzantine limitrophe. This is reflected in the number of monographs he devoted to the Lakhmids and the Ḥīrans; according to some,¹² it was after the famous Lakhmid king that he called his own son Munḍir, and it was by this tecnonymic, Abu-al-Munḍir, that Hishām was often referred to. This interest in Ḥīra and the Ḥīrans may be due to Hishām's proximity to the great Arab center of pre-Islamic times and to the availability of documents that recorded the history of the city, but also to his realization that Ḥīra was indeed the great center of Arabic culture before the rise of Islam and even of their political and military presence.¹³ The Lakhmids endured remarkably long and so did their capital—some three hundred years—as long as the series of three groups of *foederati* in the service of Byzantium, the Tanūkhids, the Salīhids, and the Ghassānids.

A

Of special interest are his sources for the history of the Naṣrids, the royal house of the Lakhmids: their *asfār* and *kutub*, books on the Naṣrids that had survived to the time of Hishām in the first quarter of the ninth

¹²Caskel, *GN*, vol. 1, p. 79; not only his tecnonymic, which involves the name of a pre-Islamic pagan king, but also his name, Hishām, is rather unusual for a Shī'ite; he was called so by his Shī'ite father as an act of loyalty toward the Umayyad Caliph Hishām (*ibid.*, p. 73)!

¹³It is noteworthy that he calls Munḍir not the king of the Lakhmids or of Ḥīra, but "the king of the Arabs." Another reflection of his great interest in the Lakhmids and Ḥīra is his interest in the history of their overlords, the Persians, which must have been derivative, at least in part, from his interest in the vassals, the Lakhmids. He does not seem to have written a monograph on the Sasanids, but he wrote one on the Parthian Arsacids, namely, *Kitāb Mulūk al-Ṭawā'if*. This great interest he had in the Lakhmids, greater than his interest in the Arab *foederati* of Byzantium in Syria, could *inter alia* explain why the Lakhmids and the Sasanids figure so largely in the history of Ṭabarī, unlike the Ghassānids and Byzantium. In addition to Ṭabarī's natural interest in *Persica*, being himself a Persian, the source at his disposal, Hishām, was also more interested in the Lakhmids and the Sasanids, and thus more data were available to Ṭabarī on Persia and the Lakhmids than on Byzantium and the Ghassānids.

Margoliouth apparently thought that *Kitāb Mulūk al-Ṭawā'if*, which he called *The Book of the Kings of the Parties*, treated the Ḥimyarites of South Arabia; but surely it is on the Arsacids, who are indeed referred to in Ṭabarī as *Mulūk al-Ṭawā'if*; see the titles of three chapters, especially the first, in Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vol. 1, pp. 580–84; 585–605; 609–28. For D. S. Margoliouth on Hishām, see *Lectures on the Arabic Historians* (reprinted New York, 1972), p. 91.

century, and their *kanāʿis* and *biyaʿ*, their churches, in which were to be found their inscriptions as well as their books.¹⁴

In addition to recording the history of the Naṣrids, Hishām mentions that he gathered his data on the Arabs in general also in Ḥīra, further evidence for what has been said above on the position of Ḥīra as the great urban center and emporium, cultural as well as commercial, not only for the Naṣrids, the Lakhmids, and the Ḥīrans, but also for the Arabs in general.¹⁵ Thus Hishām's information on the Arab pre-Islamic past depended at least partly on solid written documents he found still extant in Ḥīra.

There must have been a third written type of document on which Hishām drew for his information on pre-Islamic Arabia, namely, Arabic poetry—not the oral tradition of that poetry, which he undoubtedly drew upon too, but the written *dīwāns* or whatever written *dīwāns* there were in pre-Islamic times.¹⁶ One of the monographs attributed to him is the *Kitāb ʿAdī b. Zayd*,¹⁷ a study of the famous Christian poet of Ḥīra who belonged to the ʿIbād, was from the tribe of Tamīm, and was a bilingual *kātib* in the Lakhmid chancery who knew Arabic and Persian and possibly Syriac. ʿAdī b. Zayd was primarily a poet, one of the major urban poets of the pre-Islamic Arabs, and his poetry or most of it must have been committed to writing quite early in that highly literate society of Ḥīra. The *Kitāb* that Hishām composed on ʿAdī b. Zayd must have depended largely on written documents about ʿAdī and must have contained much of his poetry which has since then sur-

¹⁴For the important passages in Ṭabarī that have preserved the precious information on Hishām's sources in Ḥīra, see *Tārīkh*, vol. 1, pp. 627–28. The terms *kutub* and *asfār* come from Ṭabarī when speaking of ʿAmr b. ʿAdī and the Lakhmids respectively, as does the term *kanāʿis* (churches); the direct quotation from Hishām preserved in Ṭabarī speaks only of *biyaʿ* (churches) as the places in Ḥīra from which he extracted his information on the Arabs and the Naṣrids. That books formed part of Hishām's sources is explicitly stated, while inscriptions, funerary and dedicatory, are clearly implied; see *infra*, pp. 355–57.

¹⁵It will be remembered that the population of Ḥīra and the neighboring region was composed of ʿIbād, Aḥlāf, and Tanūkh, and thus many Arab tribes were involved in its composition. The Lakhmids exercised control over many of the tribes of northeastern and central Arabia; Tamīm, for instance, was represented in Ḥīra, and its *sayyids* (chiefs) were the *ardāf* of the Lakhmid kings. On the varied ethnic complexion of Ḥīra, see Rothstein, *DLH*, pp. 18–40; on the *ardāf*, see *ibid.*, pp. 112–13, 133.

¹⁶Tradition has it that a *dīwān* of the poetry of the Arabs was made for the last Lakhmid ruler, al-Nuʿmān, and that it survived well into Islamic times; on the written as opposed to the oral tradition of pre-Islamic Arabic poetry, see *infra*, pp. 443–48, and the present writer's review of Michael Zwettler's *The Oral Tradition of Classical Arabic Poetry*, *JAOS*, 100 (1980), pp. 31–33.

¹⁷Ibn-al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, p. 96. Although it is entitled *Kitāb*, not *Dīwān*, it is certain that it contained much of the poetry of the famous Ḥīran poet. There was a *ḥilf* between Tamīm and Kalb, the tribe of Hishām, who wrote a book on it. ʿAdī was from Tamīm and Hishām was, thus, understandably interested in the career of this distinguished Ḥīran poet and statesman.

vived, undoubtedly through Hishām's book, excerpted by later historians.¹⁸ 'Adī was an influential *kātib* well connected with the Lakhmids, the Arab tribes, and the Sasanids; Hishām's book on him must have been a mine of information on Ḥīra, the Lakhmids, the Arab tribes, the Sasanids, the Lakhmid-Sasanid relationship, and, what is more, on Christianity.

B

What Hishām says on the *biya'* (churches) of Ḥīra as his sources of information deserves special attention. He does not state the nature of these sources in the *biya'* (churches) of Ḥīra, whether they were books or inscriptions or both. But Ṭabarī (*Tārīkh*, vol. 1, p. 628), presumably in possession of Hishām's books on the subject, speaks of his sources as *asfār* (books) and *kanā'is* (churches); the statement on *kanā'is* and *asfār* could imply that the *asfār* were in the *kanā'is*, as some undoubtedly were, and that this is all that Ṭabarī meant. But this is not the natural meaning of the phrase, where two terms, *kanā'isihim* (their churches) and *asfārihim* (their books), are used, and this indicates or implies that the nature of the sources related to *kanā'is* is different from that of *asfār*, books. As has been stated above, this is a reference to inscriptions, dedicatory and funerary, and in support of this contention the following observations may be made:

1. Yāqūt has preserved for posterity a long Arabic inscription of Ḥīra, that of Dayr Hind,¹⁹ the Monastery of Hind, built sometime in the period A.D. 554–69. This precious inscription²⁰ could not have been seen and read by Yāqūt in the thirteenth century but must have been taken from some earlier work. This could have been a book written by Hishām, who is known to have composed monographs on Ḥīra, and one specifically on its monasteries, and from Hishām's account of Ḥīra have drawn all subsequent authors including Yāqūt, who was a great admirer of Hishām.²¹ Ḥīra was

¹⁸On the *Dīwān* of 'Adī by al-Sukkari and on Hammād's book on 'Adī at the disposal of Hishām, see *GAS*, vol. 2, p. 179.

¹⁹Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, vol. 2, p. 542. This is the Monastery of Hind the Elder, to be distinguished from another monastery in Ḥīra, that of Hind the Younger.

²⁰The inscription is of considerable importance. In addition to the firm data it provides for Arab history, both secular and ecclesiastical, it is an authentic document of Arabic prose in pre-Islamic times, to which may be added a shorter inscription, that of Dayr Ḥanzala in Ḥīra, for which see Bakrī, *Mu'jam*, vol. 2, p. 577.

²¹That Hishām, who lived some three centuries later, could read the inscription is a matter of great relevance to the development of the Arabic script and its genesis in Ḥīra. It suggests that this inscription was written in a script so close to the early Arabic script with which Hishām was familiar (the Kūfic) that he had no difficulty reading it. This observation should be of great interest to those who believe that the Ḥīrī and the Kūfī are two different names for one and the same script or that the second developed from the first, both deriving from the Syriac; for the Syriac origin of the Arabic script, see J. Starcky, "Pétra et la Nabatène," *Dictionnaire de la Bible: Supplément*, 7, cols. 926–34, especially 932–34; and J. Sourdel-Thomine, "Les origines de l'écriture arabe à propos d'une hypothèse récente," *REI*, 34 (1966), pp. 152–57.

the burial place not only of the Lakhmid rulers but also of some of the Nestorian *catholici* of pre-Islamic times²² and of other celebrities, and its churches and monasteries were numerous.²³ It is therefore practically certain that what Hishām did was to go to these monuments in Ḥīra which were still standing and read the dedicatory and funerary inscriptions that told much about the honorands buried there. It is from these inscriptions that he derived some very valuable information, most of which has been lost with the passage of time, and whatever has survived has done so only sporadically and incidentally in the work of later historians who had no special interest in the distant past of pre-Islamic Arabia.

2. The contents of this inscription in the Monastery of Hind may now be related to the direct quotation from Hishām. These contents provide data on the dedicant: her name, Hind; her *nasab*, affiliation with the Kindites through her father and with the Naṣrids through marriage; her chronology, related to the reign of the Persian king Chosroes and to the episcopate of Ephraim; her building the *bīʿab*, presumably the conventual church. It is exactly such data that Hishām mentions in that direct quotation preserved by Ṭabarī: “*innī kuntu . . . kullubā*” (*Tārīkh*, vol. 1, p. 628), which speaks of such data as the *ansāb*, genealogies of the Naṣrids, the ages of those who acted as governors for the Persians, and the dates of their governorships or reigns. Thus it may be safely stated that when Hishām speaks of the *biyaʿ*, the churches, as sources of information for him, he means such inscriptions, at least *inter alia*. That churches had books in them may be granted, but books on the Lakhmids could not have been kept only in churches but must have been available elsewhere in Ḥīra. What could be found on the Naṣrids only or mostly in churches and monasteries were inscriptions, funerary and dedicatory, from which that one long inscription has been miraculously preserved by Yāqūt.²⁴

²²The work that would have given details on the tombs of the Lakhmid kings and other celebrities in Ḥīra is undoubtedly Hishām's monograph on Ḥīra and its monasteries, no longer extant. Echoes of such descriptions in this book have been preserved by Yāqūt in his accounts of both the Monastery of Hind the Younger and Hind the Elder (*Muʿjam*, vol. 2, pp. 541–42); see also the verses on the Monastery of Hind in the entry on Jannād, in Ibn-al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, p. 92.

²³On Ḥīra and its monasteries, see the important chapter in J. M. Fiey, *Assyrie chrétienne* (Beirut, 1968), vol. 3, pp. 203–30; the bibliographical references on p. 203 note 5 are especially important.

²⁴This important point was missed by Rothstein in his analysis of this direct quotation from Hishām. He translated the phrase *taʿrīkh sinīhim* as *die Chronik ihrer Zeit*, whereas what is involved in the term *taʿrīkh* is chronology or dating or the recording of their years, not their chronicle (*Chronik*). This is clear from a close examination of the direct quotation; it falls into two parts: the enumeration of the data Hishām extracted and the source of these data. The data are referred to in the long opening sentence which consists of small coordinate phrases joined by the conjunction *wa*, the last of which is *taʿrīkh sinīhim*, while his source for these

It is these that Ṭabarī had in mind when he spoke of *kanāʿis* as the sources of Hishām's accounts of the Lakhmids, perhaps paraphrasing Hishām's own statement which he quoted verbatim and having at his disposal other books of Hishām in which reference to inscriptions in churches were made.

C

For the history of Arab-Byzantine relations, the most important Lakhmid king was undoubtedly Imru' al-Qays, whose funerary inscription found at Namāra in the Provincia Arabia is the major piece of evidence for those relations in the first half of the fourth century. The contents of that inscription interlock in a striking fashion with the literary accounts of Hishām on Imru' al-Qays and are thus illuminated by these accounts. Without them the inscription would have remained a great, or a greater, mystery.²⁵

The famous Lakhmid king, as has been argued, had fled or left the service of Persia, possibly because of his Christianity, and went over to the Romans. If so, how did Hishām get to know about him and from where did he derive his information?

1. Hishām gives a clue in the above-quoted statement on his having acquired his information on the Naṣrids from Ḥīra itself, from its books and its inscriptions. That celebrated Naṣrid, Imru' al-Qays, the son of the founder of the dynasty, ʿAmr b. ʿAdī, must have been a well-known figure, whose exploits were not forgotten even after his defection and must have been committed to writing then or soon after the Naṣrids went back to the service of Persia.²⁶ Of the two categories of sources, books and inscriptions, it is prac-

data is referred to by the phrase *min biyaʿ al-Ḥīra* which follows *taʿrikh sinīhim*; see Rothstein, *DLH*, p. 51.

The last sentence in this direct quotation from Hishām, *wafīhā . . . kullubā*, does not imply that records of the Naṣrids were not to be found elsewhere than in the churches, but it indicates that in those churches there were complete records of the Naṣrids. It was only natural that in the Islamic period the churches and monasteries of Ḥīra should have been the repositories of records of the distant pre-Islamic and Christian past.

²⁵For the historical commentary on this inscription and the epigraphic-literary confrontation, see the present writer's article (in Arabic), "Imru' al-Qays's Campaign against Najrān," *Studies in the History of Arabia; Sources for the History of Arabia, Part I* (Riyad, Saudi Arabia, 1979), pp. 73–79.

²⁶This could explain the confusion that attends the accounts of these early Lakhmid rulers in Hishām, e.g., the plainly erroneous statement on the duration of his reign, which is given as 114 years! Far from casting a shadow on the veracity or critical faculty of Hishām, the incredible 114 years allotted to him possibly represent an error in transmission but also reflect uncertainty in the Lakhmid sources about Imru' al-Qays's reign, since the first part of it was spent in Ḥīra, the second in the Provincia Arabia. Furthermore, there was that interregnum after his defection, and the Lakhmid sources may not have wished to admit the fact, and so gave Imru' al-Qays such a long reign to conceal the reality of the interregnum; finally, there might

tically certain that it was not from the second that Hishām derived his information but from the first, the *asfār* of Ḥīra he referred to. There is no evidence that Hishām visited Syria, but he might have; if he did, he would not have been able to read the Namāra inscription written in Nabataean characters,²⁷ even if he knew about it, which is most unlikely.

2. That his source must have been a literary one in Ḥīra itself is further supported by the incomplete nature of the account (compared to the data provided by the Namāra inscription) that he gives of the career of Imru' al-Qays. Hishām is silent on his defection to the Romans and his important campaign against Najrān. This admits of one of two explanations: either he knew about both and mentioned the two facts in one of his detailed monographs that have not survived, or the facts were unknown to him. The latter alternative is more likely to be correct; Ṭabarī would have mentioned such important facts about Imru' al-Qays if he had known about them, and such facts would have been mentioned in Hishām's works, still available to him. Thus the more natural explanation is that Hishām did not know about them because information on these circumstances was not included in the official history of the dynasty or was deliberately omitted from it. When their history was written for the Naṣrids in those *asfār*, their authors would have been embarrassed to dilate on the defection of the illustrious Naṣrid king to the Romans, especially if the cause for his defection was Christianity, unacceptable to the Sasanid kings and not openly embraced by the Lakhmids for that reason until late in the sixth century. The argument from silence could corroborate the view that the campaign of Imru' al-Qays against Najrān was conducted not from Ḥīra but from Byzantine territory.²⁸

3

Hishām left behind him some important works on the Arabs of Syria and, what is more relevant to the theme of this book, those valuable data on the three groups of *foederati* in the service of Byzantium—the Tanūkhids, the Salīhids, and the Ghassānids—without which it would be difficult to understand the history of the Arab-Byzantine relationship before the rise of Islam.

have been some confusion with the Era of Bostra, the 106 years of which may not have been taken into account in the calculation of the reign of Imru' al-Qays.

²⁷As he could read the Ḥīrī script, so close to his Kūfī.

²⁸The argument from silence is also fruitful to invoke in support of the view that there is no reference (and naturally so) to the Persians in the funerary inscription of the king who deserted them, possibly because of his Christianity. The successor of Imru' al-Qays, presumably his own son and a client of Constantine, would not have been anxious to record the fact of the allegiance of his deceased father to the inveterate enemy of Byzantium, Shāpūr II, and the secular foe, Persia; on the silence of the Namāra inscription on Imru' al-Qays's Persian connections, see the present writer in "Observations," esp. pp. 39–41.

And yet he does not seem to have been as enthusiastic about these *foederati* as he was about the Lakhmids and their city, Ḥīra, judging from the number of works devoted to these two groups. This may have been due to the following: (1) his pro-Abbasid sympathies may have disinclined him to write much on the Arabs who became the main prop of the Umayyad dynasty; (2) and possibly their pre-Islamic past allied these Arabs of Syria to Byzantium, of which they were clients; unlike Sasanid Persia, Christian Byzantium remained the chief adversary of Islam in the Near East. The history of his own tribe, Kalb, illustrates the combined operation of the two considerations that might have disinclined him to treat the history of the Syrian Arabs extensively. Nevertheless, Hishām did not entirely forget his own tribe²⁹ or the other Arabs in the country of his ultimate provenance, Syria.

The data on the *foederati* may be found in part in the later historians who had used the lost works of Hishām, both a direct student such as Ibn-Habīb, and indirect ones, such as Ṭabarī, Masʿūdī, and Ibn-Khaldūn. With the intensive study on Hishām conducted by W. Caskel and with the availability in microfilm of the Arabic text of his major work, *Jamharat al-Nasab*, it is possible to raise some pertinent questions on Hishām's treatment of the history of the Arabs of Syria, and these may be presented as follows:

(1) The data on the Arab *foederati* come in the works of the authors of universal and general history and are derived from the version of the *Jambara* available to them in those days. The question arises of whether or not Hishām treated these *foederati* not only in his general work, *Al-Jambara*, but also in his specialized monographs. These are not very many on the Arabs of Syria: two such books, *Nawāqil Quḍāʿa*³⁰ and *Ḥilf Kalb wa Tamīm*, are expressly on Syrian Arab tribes—on Kalb and the comprehensive tribal group Quḍāʿa—and books such as *Ifṭirāq walad Nizār*³¹ and *Tafarruq al-Azd* no doubt had references to both Tanūkh and Ghassān.

²⁹He wrote on it in a book entitled *Ḥilf Kalb wa Tamīm* (see Ibn-al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, p. 96), and of course in the *Jambara*, where Kalb is well remembered. Hishām's work on the Arabs of Syria in pre-Islamic times may be considered as belonging to the category of local or regional history of Syria by one who was ultimately a Syrian; it is, of course, distinguished from many other works of this genre because it deals not only with Islamic but pre-Islamic Syria; for this historical genre pertaining to Islamic Syria, see S. Dahhān, "The Origin and Development of the Local Histories of Syria," *Historians of the Middle East*, pp. 108–9.

³⁰On *Nawāqil*, communities that changed their tribal affiliations, see Caskel, *GN*, vol. 1, pp. 59–62.

³¹On this *Ifṭirāq*, see *ibid.*, p. 81. In his monograph on *Tafarruq al-Azd*, "the dispersion of the Azd," Hishām may have been influenced at least partly by *sūrat Saba* in the Qurʾān (XXXIV) and the famous phrase *wa mazzāqānābum kulla mumazzaq* (v. 19). And so the book might have been an amplification of a historic incident mentioned in the Qurʾān; this supports what has been said above on Hishām's historical conception's growing out of the activity of his father, Muhammad, as a Qurʾānic exegete. The Azd group cannot be identified with Saba,

(2) But it is not altogether impossible that Hishām did subject the history of some of the Arabs of Syria to monographic treatment and that this fact is not reflected in the basic work on Hishām, i.e., *Fibrīst*, as it has survived. This may be supported by the fact that *Irshād* has some books of his not mentioned in *Fibrīst*, and this suggests that Yāqūt had a better manuscript of *Fibrīst* than the ones now available.

And so apparently had the author of *Kitāb al-Rijāl*, Aḥmad b. ‘Ali, better known by his nickname, al-Najāshī, an author of the eleventh century and considered one of the ten great divines of pre-Safavid Persia.³² He was interested in Hishām because of the latter’s Alid sympathies, and thus it is this feature of Hishām’s background that accounts for the survival of more of the titles of his books than is to be found in the well-known sources, such as *Fibrīst* and *Irshād*. Among the titles of books that the author lists under the name of Hishām is a precious one, *Akbbār Tanūkh wa Ansābubā*.³³ This must be the source, presumably lost now, of all or most of the accounts of the later historians of Tanūkh.³⁴ It is both *akbbār* and *ansāb*, and this is significant, and from this book must have been taken the list of the three kings of Syrian Tanūkh preserved in Mas‘ūdī and copied from him by subsequent authors.³⁵

(3) That Hishām should have chosen Tanūkh from among the many tribes of Syria³⁶ to write a book on calls for some explanation. Perhaps his interest in it derived from the following:

but it did come from the south and its emigration could have been related to what had befallen the Sabaeans.

³²On al-Najāshī, see E. G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia* (Cambridge, 1953), vol. 4, pp. 355, 405; also Brockelmann, *GAL*, Supplement 1, p. 556; see also the introduction to al-Abṭāḥī’s book on al-Najāshī referred to in the following note.

³³Al-Najāshī, *Kitāb al-Rijāl* (Tehran, n.d.), p. 339. The inclusion of Hishām and his works in this book is noteworthy and calls for the following comments: (a) it could be inferred from the short introduction, especially the phrase *li‘adam akthar al-kutub*, that the author did actually see the books he included in his work and not only copied from lists; (b) he is interested in Hishām because of his Shī‘ism and says so on p. 339, *wa kāna yakhtassu bimadhabinā*; (c) the list of books written by Hishām should be of interest to students of early Arab historiography since it has works not to be found in *Fibrīst* or *Irshād*; (d) his inclusion of Hishām’s book on Tanūkh cannot be considered an illustration of the author’s enthusiasm for Shī‘ism and his ascription to Hishām of books on it, because the *Kitāb* does not deal with Shī‘ism but with a Christian tribe whose history goes back to pre-Islamic times.

Important to the study of *Kitāb al-Rijāl* is the recent work of M. al-Abṭāḥī, *Tabḏīb al-Maqāl fi Tanqīḥ Kitāb al-Rijāl* (1970?), of which only vol. 1 is available to me. It contains a valuable introduction, pp. 1–136, on al-Najāshī and a detailed commentary on *Kitāb al-Rijāl*; pp. 24, 77–78 corroborate and amplify what has been said in (a) of the preceding paragraph.

³⁴Just as most of what is known about the Ghassānids in the Arabic literary sources goes back to a book most probably written by Hishām and entitled *Akbbār Mulūk Ghassān*; this will be discussed in Vol. 3 of this series, *BASIC*.

³⁵On the list of Tanūkhid kings, see *infra*, pp. 373–81.

³⁶See *supra*, note 34, on the high probability of his having written on Ghassān, too.

(a) Although it was in Syria and as the *foederati* of Byzantium that the Tanūkhids entered the stage of international history and of the Mediterranean region, they had played an important role in the history of the eastern half of the Fertile Crescent as the group ruled by that important figure in pre-Islamic Arab history, Jaḍīma. In so doing, they wrote an important chapter in the history of the region of Ḥīra in which Hishām had a special interest, both in the pre-Naṣrid and post-Naṣrid periods of its history.³⁷

(b) Although the tribe or that part of it that was converted to Christianity migrated into Byzantine territory and so became far removed physically from Hishām and his Iraqi surroundings, a part of Tanūkh remained in the Land of the Two Rivers and so did not entirely disappear but remained close physically to Hishām in Kūfa.

(c) Furthermore, as the *foederati* of Byzantium in the fourth century, the Tanūkhids must have had important relations with his own tribe, Kalb, the most powerful of the Quḍā'a group in Oriens. In recording the history of Syrian Tanūkh, Hishām was recording also in part the history of Kalb itself.³⁸

(d) Like many of the tribes of Syria that had been clients of Byzantium in pre-Islamic times, Tanūkh formed part of the famous *ajṅād* of Syria in Umayyad times. Hishām wrote a book on the *ajṅād*, probably the Syrian *ajṅād*;³⁹ hence his interest in Tanūkh, a tribe that had had an illustrious pre-Islamic past and remained even in early Islamic times, and in spite of its Christianity, of some importance in the history of Muslim Umayyad Syria.

(e) Finally, Hishām's interest in Tanūkh must have derived also from that dramatic though bloody episode that associated them with his patron, the Caliph al-Mahdī, when the latter visited northern Syria and had that encounter with the remnants of that pre-Islamic Christian community.⁴⁰

(4) It remains to say a few words on the sources of Hishām for the history of Tanūkh:

³⁷It is probably from this book that Ṭabarī derived the precious data he included in his history on Jaḍīma and 'Abduljinn al-Tanūkhī. Although it is equally difficult to accept or reject the details of the account in its entirety, the kernel of historical truth is evident in the account in spite of embellishment. On the name 'Abduljinn and the relation of the Jinn to the strange career of 'Amr b. 'Adī in Ṭabarī, it may be mentioned that Hishām wrote a book on the Jinn; for Ṭabarī's account, see *Tārīkh*, vol. 1, pp. 613–27.

³⁸See *supra*, pp. 196–97, on the possibility that the fourth-century Queen Mavia of the ecclesiastical sources was a Kalbite princess who was married to the then-king of Tanūkh in Syria. On Banū-Māwiya, the Sons of Māwiya, as a Kalbite group, see Caskel, *GN*, vol. 2, p. 76.

³⁹*Kitāb Tārīkh Ajṅād al-Kbulafā'*, in Ibn-al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, p. 97. His younger contemporary, Ibn al-Muqaffa', had also written on the Syrian *ajṅād* in his *Risāla fi al-Ṣaḥāba* but also on the Jund of Khurāsān; see M. Kurd 'Ali, *Rasā'il al-Bulaghā'* (Cairo, 1954), pp. 127–29, 119–24. Even if Hishām's book was not exclusively on the Syrian *ajṅād* but on the *ajṅād* of the caliphs in general, it would at least have had a chapter on the former.

⁴⁰For this episode, see *infra*, pp. 423–32.

(a) Since Tanūkh formed part of the Arab community that grew in and around Ḥīra, both in pre- and post-Naṣrid Ḥīra, it is almost certain that material for Hishām's book on Tanūkh must have derived from those *asfār* he stated were his sources for the history of that region.

(b) Tanūkh was a Christian tribe and some of its Christian structures were known to have existed in Ḥīra, e.g., the monastery of Ḥanna.⁴¹ Since the Christian Arabs sometimes used their monasteries as cemeteries, it is conceivable that Hishām might have derived some of his information from the funerary inscriptions of such a Tanūkhid monastery.

(c) Tanūkh remained represented in Iraq and in Ḥīra after the emigration of the main group just as the Ghassānids remained represented by such a group as the Banū-Buḡayla, and it is not inconceivable that Hishām derived his accounts from one of the *shaykhs* and *'alims* of Tanūkh as his father had derived his material on Kinda and Iyād from such sources.⁴²

4

Some final observations may now be made on Hishām's conception of Arab history, his historical technique and method, and his reliability and worth as the historian of the Arab *foederati* of Byzantium in the three centuries that elapsed from the reign of Constantine to that of Heraclius.

A

The striking feature of Hishām's work is the combination of synthesis and analysis, of the general and the particular, illustrated by his great work *Al-Jamhara*⁴³ and the many small monographs respectively.

1. Hishām was the first to attempt a history of the Arabs in this comprehensive manner, and the fact is striking.⁴⁴ In so doing, he may have been following Qur'ānic concepts of the term *Arab* and of the descent of the Arabs from one ancestor, namely, Ishmael.⁴⁵

2. He did write this comprehensive history, however, along tribal lines, and indeed its title, *Jamharat al-Nasab*, reflects this in its genealogical arrangement. The tribal structure of Arab society and history was perhaps too patent and potent to allow him to write the history of that people otherwise; but

⁴¹On this monastery, built by the Tanūkhid Banū-Sāṭi', see Fiey, *Assyrie chrétienne*, pp. 224–25.

⁴²Ibn-al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, p. 95.

⁴³Although it should be remembered that it was his father, Muhammad, who started this *nasab* work; but it was Hishām who amplified it and thus gave it the scope that it finally had.

⁴⁴Caskel, *GN*, vol. 1, p. 22.

⁴⁵This and the following observations are made in order to account for the composition of this unique work and to supplement the important observations already made by Caskel in *GN*, vol. 1, p. 22.

there was the Islamic concept of the *Umma* brought about by the Qur'ān and Muhammad, and yet Hishām did not write the history of the *Umma* except in the genealogical sense of the Arabs as one related family. To one whose immediate forebears had lived in the turbulent period of the Umayyads and the early Abbasids and who saw the unity of Islam blown up by tribal dissension and civil wars, the thought might have occurred to him that, in spite of Islamic ideals and hopes, the important factor in the unfolding and evolution of Arab history in the first two centuries of Islam remained the tribe, not the *Umma*; and it was this that brought about the downfall of the Umayyads internally before the Abbasids administered the final and fatal blow.

3. Islamic Arab history was relatively young—only two centuries or so—when Hishām was writing. But pre-Islamic Arab history had endured much longer and it was not so distant;⁴⁶ hence Hishām's interest in it. This interest was possibly enhanced by the difficulties Hishām would have had in writing on Umayyad and early Abbasid history: the Abbasid was too recent, while the Umayyad was anathema to his Abbasid patrons.⁴⁷

Perhaps it was because of all this that the Christian Arab tribes and the *foederati* were noticed by Hishām. If, in addition, he had a vision of the significance and relevance of the pre-Islamic past to the Islamic present, then it was natural that the Christian Arab tribes should have attracted his attention.⁴⁸ They had been quite important in that pre-Islamic past because of their Byzantine connection, and, what is more, they became even more important to the new masters of the Near East, the Umayyads of Syria, who rested their power on the shoulders of the *ajnād*, recruited principally from the very same Christian Arab tribes of pre-Islamic times in Syria. For one who came from the key Syrian tribe of Kalb and who possibly wrote on the *ajnād* of Syria, interest in these Christian tribes is very understandable.⁴⁹

B

As important as his conception of Arab history and the framework within which he conceived it was the heuristic technique he employed to reconstruct it. In an age that revered so much the oral tradition, it is striking that

⁴⁶Both statements are becoming increasingly untrue with the passage of time.

⁴⁷His own name, Hishām, given him after the Umayyad caliph, was a constant reminder of his father's allegiance to the Umayyads; he wrote, however, conveniently enough, on their *mathālib*; for *Mathālib Banī-Umayya*, see al-Najāshī, *Kitāb al-Rijāl*, p. 339.

⁴⁸For other considerations that explain the attraction of the pre-Islamic past to him, see *supra*, pp. 351–53.

⁴⁹It would have been difficult, if not impossible, to recover this pre-Islamic past had it not been for the efforts of Hishām. Later Muslim historians had naturally no great interest in researching the distant past which was less significant to world history than the many centuries of the Islamic period.

Hishām, the son of a Qur'anicist and a scholar of *ḥadīth* (Muhammadan traditions), should have paid so much attention to the nonoral sources:

1. Unlike his illustrious successor, al-Hamdāni, the historian of South Arabia, he lived far from Yaman and did not know any Sabaic. Thus, he must have been aware of the unsatisfactory account he gave of South Arabian history, which he derived from inferior sources; hence his alertness to the news of an excavation in Yaman and the possibility of extracting solid historical data from it.⁵⁰ An examination of the data reported is disappointing and inclines one to doubt its historicity, but what matters is Hishām's awareness of the importance of such evidence for the difficult reconstruction of the history of the Arabian South.

2. He knew what he needed from specialists and that they were indispensable for the composition of his work. Thus he availed himself of the services of those who had access to the sources of biblical and Palmyrene history.⁵¹ The accounts supplied him by these, as in the case of those who informed him on the excavation in Yaman, do not inspire confidence in these specialists, but the desire or determination to consult specialists or what seemed to him such is laudatory.

3. The most outstanding example of his grasp of the structure of Arab history before the rise of Islam is the realization of the role of Ḥīra in that structure. And it was a critical spirit of the first order that animated him, the Muslim son of a Qur'anicist and traditionist, to go to Ḥīra and seek its Christian *asfār*, from which he recounted much of the history of the Arabs before the rise of Islam.⁵²

4. By far the boldest and the most original of these techniques he employed for extracting data on the pre-Islamic past from nonoral sources is Hishām's recourse to epigraphy, represented by the Arabic inscriptions of Ḥīra. This probably gives him a place in general historiography as being one of the earliest to enlist epigraphy in the service of his craft.⁵³ In the history of Arabic and Muslim historiography, he was certainly the first to conceive of epigraphy as *ancilla historiae*.

⁵⁰Ibn-Durayd, *Isbtīqāq*, ed. 'A. Hārūn (Cairo, 1958), p. 524.

⁵¹Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vol. 2, p. 273.

⁵²Again the conservational aspect of the work of Hishām may be commented upon in this context. Had it not been for his journey to Ḥīra to gather the data for his work from its books and inscriptions, these would certainly have disappeared, as indeed they did without anyone preserving what they had to say. The inscription already referred to in the Monastery of Hind in Ḥīra had certainly vanished when Yāqūt wrote in the thirteenth century, and Yāqūt must have copied it from one of the works of Hishām, who had recorded it and thus preserved its contents from complete oblivion.

⁵³His alleged employment of a *kātib* by the name of Jabala b. Sālim to translate for him Persian material from Pahlavi is discussed *infra*, App. 1, pp. 408–10. This misconception goes back to Nöldeke and has been echoed since then.

C

Finally, a few concluding remarks may be made on the image of Hishām as a historian in medieval and modern times:

1. For a very long time, Hishām had lived under a cloud. He inherited from his father not only many of the latter's interests but also much of the suspicion with which the Sunnite world of Islam viewed those with Shī'ite allegiance.⁵⁴ This is understandable in the case of his father, who was involved in such sensitive areas of research as Qur'ānic exegesis and *ḥadīth*, but not in the case of his son, who was not primarily an exegete. Furthermore, one may disregard what in his work involves religious and sectarian matters and concentrate on the nonsectarian historical material, and it is the latter that is the concern of the Late Roman historian, the Byzantinist, and the historian of the Arabs in pre-Islamic times.⁵⁵

2. Although he was maligned by many,⁵⁶ the judicious and discriminating Ṭabarī relied heavily on him, and this in itself is a compliment to Hishām, as it reflects the confidence reposed in his accounts by the principal historian of medieval Islamic times. But it was the equally judicious and discriminating Yāqūt who really did Hishām justice, not so much in his *Irshād* but in *Mu'jam al-Buldān*, where he paid him that glowing compliment on his trustworthiness.⁵⁷

3. In modern times, it was Nöldeke⁵⁸ who first sensed the importance of Hishām and his reliability. In this he was followed by Rothstein,⁵⁹ who drew generously on Hishām for reconstructing the history of the Lakhmids of Ḥīra. D. S. Margoliouth⁶⁰ did not do him justice at all and missed all the important

⁵⁴Many Sunnite traditionists and theologians put no credence in him; for the intensity of al-Zuhri's dislike of Hishām, see Ibn-al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, p. 96.

⁵⁵On the necessity of distinguishing legal from historical traditions in the utilization of Islamic sources, see J. Schacht, *Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence* (Oxford, 1950).

⁵⁶In the case of the author of the *Aghānī*, al-Iṣbahānī, who, however, relied very heavily on Hishām and yet joined the chorus of disapproval against him, the following explanation may be given: in spite of his *tashayyu'*, his pro-'Alid sympathies, Iṣbahānī was most probably a crypto-Umayyad since he was a lineal descendant of the Marwānid Umayyads to whom the Caliph Hishām belonged. The historian Hishām came from a pro-'Alid family that later transferred its allegiance to the Abbasids; thus for the descendant of the Marwānids, the historian who was named after one of them, the Caliph Hishām, was a hypocrite who transferred his allegiance to the anti-Umayyad Abbasids and who wrote against his ancestors, *Mathālib Banī-Umayya*, for which see *supra*, note 47.

⁵⁷Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, vol. 2, p. 188. Another measure of his confidence in his trustworthiness is the fact that Yāqūt made a résumé of the *Jamhara*, Hishām's major work, a résumé known as *Al-Muqtaḍab*, for which see Caskeel, *GN*, vol. 1, pp. 106–7.

⁵⁸In a sense, his *Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden* is a salute to Hishām, since Ṭabarī's account of those relations are dependent on the former's; see the present writer's review of Nöldeke's book in *IJMES*, 8 (1977), pp. 117–22.

⁵⁹See Rothstein, *DLH*, pp. 50–52.

⁶⁰See his *Lectures on the Arabic Historians*, p. 91, where he speaks of his ignorance of the

features that give Hishām his unique place among the early Arab historians. But the foregoing sections have, perhaps, vindicated this major figure in early Arab historiography and revealed the various facets of his significance as the historian of pre-Islamic Arabia and, what is most relevant to the theme of this book, as the historian of the Arab *foederati* of Byzantium for three centuries in pre-Islamic times.

II. THE IDENTITY OF THE FOURTH-CENTURY *FOEDERATI*: THE TANŪKHIDS

1

Greek and Latin authors who had occasion to notice the Arabs of Oriens in the Roman period were very specific when they did. They gave their tribal affiliations and geographical locations, and thus the student of Arab-Roman relations from the Settlement of Pompey in the first century B.C. to the reign of Diocletian in the third century A.D. has a tolerably clear picture of the various Arab groups in Oriens. In fact, these authors are so specific that the Arab character of the various Arab groups referred to by their names has to be pointed out, as has been said previously, in order to show that in spite of these various designations all these groups were subsumed under the generic term *Arab*.⁶¹

The specificity that characterizes classical accounts of the Arabs in the Roman period recedes to the background and vanishes from the sources for the Byzantine period of three centuries from the reign of Constantine to that of Heraclius. The various Arab groups in Oriens become simply *Arabs*: those who were in the service of Byzantium or who were roaming along the frontier are referred to simply as *Scenitae* or by the new term that receives so much vogue in the fourth century, namely, *Saracens*. Although the tribal groups of the Roman period remained in Oriens and are attested in the following three centuries, and although other groups crossed the *limes* from the Peninsula in this period, yet there is not a single explicit reference to an Arab tribal group in the Byzantine authors of this period of three centuries, with the exception of one solitary reference to the tribe, Kinda, with whom Justinian had to deal in Central Arabia and one of whose members, Qays, was endowed with the Hegemonia of Palestine.⁶² Even references to individual historical figures, so abundant in the Roman period, are scarce. The Arab federate kings of the fourth century are never referred to by their names; for Ammianus they are *reguli*, and even Mavia's husband is referred to as *basileus*.

Sabaic language instead of speaking of his novel method of consulting the Arabic inscriptions in Ḥīra and makes an erroneous statement on his authorship of *Kitāb Mulūk al-Ṭawāʾif*, for which see *supra*, note 13.

⁶¹On all this, see *RA*, esp. chap. 1.

⁶²For this, see the present writer in "Byzantium and Kinda," p. 66 note 18.

The anonymity that plagues the Arabs tribally and individually, especially in accounts of the fourth and fifth centuries,⁶³ poses a great problem to the student of this period. Arab history could thus become the concern of the sociologist, history without proper names,⁶⁴ and without these proper names of individuals and of tribal groups it would be impossible to write a scientific account of the history of the Arab-Byzantine relationship in these three centuries. This anonymity has obscured, *inter alia*, such important aspects of the Arab-Byzantine relationship as (1) the sequence of the three dominant groups of *foederati* in these three centuries—the Tanūkhids, the Salīhids, the Ghassānids; and (2) the fact that in addition to these three dominant groups there were other Arab tribes and tribal groups in Oriens that must be taken into account in any meaningful attempt to write the history of the Arab-Byzantine relationship.⁶⁵

The value of the Arabic sources for this period is most evident in exactly these areas. Without them, it would be impossible to relieve Arab history of this anonymity and thus write the history of the Arab-Byzantine relationship.⁶⁶ The aim of this section and the others related to it is to identify the dominant and the other Arab groups in Oriens and enable the Byzantinist to conceive of these various groups, each of which had its own identity, not by the generic term *Arab*, so capacious as to be of little value, but to conceive of them as he would conceive of the tribes of the other ethnic group that dismantled the empire in the West, not simply as Germans or Teutons but as Goths, or Vandals, or Franks.

What these sections will *not* do is involve the Byzantinist in the details of Arab genealogies. These are hopelessly entangled, and until further epigraphic discoveries are made there is no point in introducing their problems into a book of this nature to which, moreover, their relevance is very remote. Too extensive or capacious genealogical terms such as Quḍā'a and Qaḥṭan are normally avoided, and so are diminutive ones, the many clans into which an Arab tribe is divisible. These are not fruitful terms or units with which a Byzantinist can operate, and they inevitably lead to confusion and obfuscation. Only tribes clearly differentiated and possessed of a strong identity among

⁶³The sources become more informative on the Ghassānids of the sixth century; although they mention the names of various Ghassānid kings and phylarchs, they do not, even once, reveal their identity as Ghassānids.

⁶⁴As history is reduced by the positivist Auguste Comte to an *histoire sans noms d'hommes ou même sans noms de peuples*.

⁶⁵On the range of important historical problems obscured by the anonymity under which these other tribes have so far labored, see sec. IV of this chapter, "The Federate Arab Tribal Groups in Oriens," *infra*, pp. 381–95, esp. pp. 394–95.

⁶⁶On how to use the Arabic sources and on what to expect from them for reconstructing the history of the Arab-Byzantine relationship before the rise of Islam, see the present writer in "The Last Days of Salīh," *Arabica*, 5 (1958), pp. 154–56.

those who played a historic role as *foederati* in Byzantine Oriens will be discussed. And foremost among them are the three dominant groups in these three centuries: the Tanūkhids, the Salīhids, and the Ghassānids, with the first of which this volume is concerned. It is, therefore, to the Tanūkhids that most of the following chapters are devoted.

2

That there were Arab *foederati* in Oriens in the fourth century is an established fact, documented in the contemporary and primary sources of the same century: the Namāra inscription, the *Res Gestae* of Ammianus Marcellinus, and the ecclesiastical histories of the fifth century.⁶⁷ But the identity and the tribal affiliations of these Arab *foederati*, especially those mentioned in the Byzantine sources, remain to be established. The Arabic sources are unanimous in stating that the first group of Arab *foederati* in the service of Byzantium were the Tanūkhids, that there were other Arabs or Arab groups in Syria, but that the Tanūkhids who had adopted Christianity were the dominant group. Three kings, a father and his two sons, ruled them in succession, and the names of these kings have been handed down. This is the extent of the informativeness of these sources on the Tanūkhid *foederati*. Brief and limited as these accounts are, they are welcome, since without them it would be impossible to establish from the Byzantine sources the identity and the tribal affiliation of the first group of Arab *foederati* in the fourth century and thus construct a framework within which the history of these *foederati* may be filled with further data and ultimately be adequately written. But before this can be done, it is necessary to subject these accounts, written much later in the Muslim period, to a thorough and close examination.

There is not much doubt that the accounts of the Arabic sources on Tanūkh's being the first group of Arab *foederati* in the service of Byzantium in

⁶⁷The study of the history of Tanūkh bristles with problems, but these mainly pertain to the Peninsular and the Mesopotamian stages in the evolution of its history and thus fall outside the scope and concern of this book which concentrates on the elucidation of the history of Tanūkh in Syria and its role as the *foederati* of the Christian Roman Empire. Nöldeke went through the work of Caussin de Perceval for the Arab-Byzantine relationship and rewrote the history of the sixth-century Ghassānids but avoided the Tanūkhids of the fourth; thus de Perceval has remained till the present day the only author who gave special attention to Syrian Tanūkh. However, his treatment appeared more than a century ago, and his methodology has been animadverted upon by Nöldeke; for de Perceval's treatment of Syrian Tanūkh, see his *Essai*, vol. 2, pp. 199–201; for Nöldeke on de Perceval, see his *GF*, p. 3. Since then H. Kindermann wrote his article and W. Caskel his section on Tanūkh in *EI*, 4, pp. 227–30, and *GN*, vol. 2, pp. 80–84, respectively, but Syrian Tanūkh receives no special treatment by either author and thus its history has remained obscure in these works, which, moreover, are general surveys and not specialized monographs on Tanūkh. The only phase of its history that has been closely examined is the Iraqi one, for which see Rothstein, *DLH*, pp. 18–40.

the fourth century are correct, and in support of this contention the following arguments may be adduced:

(1) The Arabic accounts of federate Tanūkh and their kings derive from the historian al-Mas'ūdī, and the latter, it is almost certain, derived from Hishām whose worth for the history of the pre-Islamic Arabs and for Tanūkh in particular has been examined in the preceding section. Thus these data on Tanūkh derive from the specialized treatment that Hishām gave to the Tanūkhids in *Akbbār Tanūkh wa Ansābuba*, and they must command respect since they come from that respectable source.

In addition to the authority of Hishām to which these data may be related or are in fact related, a number of tests of various orders may be applied to them to demonstrate their essential correctness.

(2) The accounts of the Arabic sources concerning the sequence of Arab political supremacies from the third to the seventh century in Syria and the Euphrates region are as follows: the kingdom of Jaḍīma, the Palmyra of Odenathus and Zenobia, the Lakhmids of Ḥīra, the Tanūkhids of Syria, the Salīhids, and the Ghassānids. The non-Arabic sources have confirmed that the sequence is correct in the case of Jaḍīma (ca. 250), of Palmyra, of the Lakhmids, of the Salīhids, and of the Ghassānids.⁶⁸ If these sources are right on the correct sequence of five of these six supremacies, it is unlikely that they are wrong about the remaining one, namely, the Tanūkhids, who in this sequence must be assigned to the fourth century.

(3) The Arabic historical tradition on the various stages of Tanūkh's wanderings from the Peninsula to the Persian Gulf area to the Mesopotamian region has been on the whole substantiated by the non-Arabic sources.⁶⁹ Tanūkh's migration into Syria and Roman/Byzantine territory is the last stage in their wanderings,⁷⁰ and if the earlier stages in remoter periods have been confirmed, their last is *a fortiori* less subject to suspicion, being the latest and closest to the times of Hishām, himself of Syrian origin, belonging to the tribe of Kalb, which had or must have had close relations with Tanūkh both in pre-Islamic and Islamic times. Thus on geographical and chronological grounds, Hishām's account of the Syrian phase of Tanūkhid history should be the most reliable.

⁶⁸On these confirmatory non-Arabic sources, see *infra*, p. 375 note 90.

⁶⁹The crucial non-Arabic source is the Sabaic inscription that speaks of *ard* Tanūkh, the "land of Tanūkh" in northeastern Arabia, either near the Persian Gulf or the Euphrates; see J. Ryckmans, "Appendice," p. 509, line 11. On Tanūkh on the Lower Euphrates and in sixth-century Mesopotamia, see Rothstein, *DLH*, pp. 18–40, and the Syriac *Life of Ahūdemmeb*, analyzed *infra*, pp. 419–22, respectively.

⁷⁰The Umm al-Jimāl inscription ca. A.D. 250, which speaks of Jaḍīma's tutor, Fīhr, does not necessarily imply that Tanūkh was settled in Syria, but on the other hand it does not exclude it; indeed, the natural presumption is that the warden's home was not far from the ward's. For the inscription, see *infra*, p. 375 note 90. For more on Tanūkh's settlement in Syria, see part 2.6 of the present section.

(4) The same account should also be considered reliable not only within the framework of Tanūkhid history and its various phases but also within that of Arab federate history in the Byzantine period. The Arabic sources deriving from Hishām speak of three groups of *foederati* who succeeded one another in the service of Byzantium in the three centuries or so that preceded the rise of Islam, the Tanūkhids, the Salīhids, and the Ghassānids. These sources have been proved right in relation to the second, the Salīhids, and the third, the Ghassānids, two links in this chain of three. Now if these sources have been proved right in the case of the second and the third federate groups, it is unlikely that they are wrong in the case of the first, especially as the same century, the fourth, that witnessed the rise of the Salīhids witnessed also the fall of the Tanūkhids, who thus as federates do not belong to a remote and obscure past but to the same century as the Salīhids. Thus these sources could not have gone wrong in a matter such as this, especially as their authors have isolated these groups of Arabs from the other Arab tribes and understood their functions as clients of the Byzantines, thus demonstrating some understanding of the evolution of the history of these groups that were distinguished from the other Arabs by their special relationship with Byzantium.

(5) The presence of Tanūkh in Byzantine Oriens in pre-Islamic times is an established fact since they are mentioned several times in the Arabic Muslim sources⁷¹ of the conquest of Syria in the seventh century as clients of Byzantium fighting together with other Arab federate groups against the Muslim Arabs. This large and established fact reduces the discussion of the problem to its chronological dimension, namely, when in the course of the few centuries before the rise of Islam did the Tanūkhids cross over from Mesopotamia and become clients of Byzantium or even of Late Rome? The Arabic sources on the three federate groups of Arabs leave no doubt that the Tanūkhids were the earliest of the three groups, and this must be the case since the Salīhids' and the Ghassānids' federate supremacies covered the fifth and the sixth centuries respectively, and consequently there is room for a third supremacy only in the period antedating the Salīhid one of the fifth century.⁷²

(6) The Arabic sources are not silent on the periods and occasions of the migration of some of the tribes from the Peninsula or Mesopotamia to Syria or Byzantine Oriens. Although onomastic and chronological precision is not to be expected from them on such matters, they do offer helpful hints on the times when such migrations took place or could have taken place. Hishām

⁷¹For these references, see Kindermann, "Tanūkh," *EI*, 4, p. 229.

⁷²And the only natural explanation for their *military* presence in the seventh century at the time of the conquest is that they had been, as the Arabic sources say, military clients of Byzantium in the fourth century, and that after their fall they remained in the area but incorporated within the new supremacy of Salīh, just as Salīh did not disappear after its fall but was incorporated within the new supremacy of the Ghassānids.

places the emigration of Tanūkh from Persian territory to Roman Syria in the reign of Ardashir with whom the Tanūkhids fell out; as a result, they chose to migrate to Roman territory in the first half of the third century.

The account may or may not be true or accurate,⁷³ but the third century could easily have witnessed the emigration or first emigration of Tanūkh from Mesopotamia which had become intolerable to the Arabs after the establishment of the Sasanid dynasty; and the third was also the century of the imperial crisis for Rome and for the Arabs, the century that witnessed the fall of the three Arab fortresses, Edessa, Ḥatra, and Palmyra.⁷⁴ It is not unlikely that in the midst of all this instability the migration of Tanūkh to Syria took place. Epigraphic evidence, represented by the inscription of Umm al-Jimāl, referred to above, that speaks of Jaḍīma, the king of Tanūkh, could confirm a Tanūkhid presence in Syria; however, this was in the third century of the Late Roman period and relates not to the Tanūkhids, the Christian *foederati* of Byzantium, but to the independent Arab kingdom of Jaḍīma, who according to the Arabic sources warred with Zenobia of Palmyra. Nevertheless, he foreshadows the rise of the Tanūkhids, whom the Romans or the Byzantines could easily have employed in their service, after their destruction of Palmyra, the inveterate enemy of the Tanūkhids.⁷⁵ Thus the Jaḍīma inscription of ca. A.D. 250, set against the background of the third century and Hishām's statement on the emigration of Tanūkh in the reign of the Sasanid Ardashir, does provide some background for the second Tanūkhid presence in Oriens, this time as Christian *foederati* of Byzantium in the fourth century.

(7) The few details that the Arabic sources give on the Tanūkhid *foederati* are confirmatory of the above conclusions:

(a) The military camps in which they were found to be quartered in the seventh century were located near Beroea (Aleppo) and Chalcis (Qinnasrīn).

⁷³Nöldeke did not accept it; see *PAS*, p. 23 note 2. But he wrote in 1879 before the period of epigraphic discoveries involving Jaḍīma and Tanūkh, for which see *infra*, p. 375 note 90; see also Altheim and Stiehl, *AAW*, vol. 2, pp. 251–52. It is not altogether inconceivable that there was a clash between the Arabs of Mesopotamia/Babylonia and the founder of the Sasanid dynasty whose desire to centralize his realm and eliminate all autonomous groups brought him into conflict with the Arabs.

⁷⁴Echoes of the association of the Tanūkhids with Ḥatra, relations with Palmyra, and their supremacy in Syria after the fall of the latter, have been preserved in the Arabic sources; for these echoes turning round the obscure figure of a certain Tanūkhid, al-Ḍayzan b. Mu'āwiya, see Kindermann, "Tanūkh," p. 227.

⁷⁵Ibn-Khaldun, *Ibar* (Beirut, 1956), vol. 1, p. 579, records the rise of the Tanūkhids in Syria after the fall of Palmyra but without reference to the possible role of the Romans in their rise, which, however, might be inferred from the references to the Saracens in the chapter on Aurelian in the *HA*; but no specific name is given to the Saracens in that source and thus their tribal affiliation remains unknown, and Tanūkhid only as a possibility, even a probability. For these references to the Saracens, see "Aurelian," *HA*, XI.4; XXVII.4; XXVIII.2, 4, esp. the last.

The location of these military camps⁷⁶ not in the south but in the north of Oriens argues for a crossing from a neighboring region—the Euphrates—and for a military function that assigned them to face Persia, with whom the Romans warred in the fourth century and against whom the Tanūkhids had fought before they emigrated from the Land of the Two Rivers.

(b) The Arabic sources provide the Tanūkhid *foederati* with only three kings.⁷⁷ The number is noteworthy since it does not suggest an attempt on the part of the Arab historian Hishām to construct or fabricate long fictitious royal lists. It rather suggests that the number was a genuine reflection of the fact that the Tanūkhid supremacy was of short duration or that knowledge of this oldest and earliest of the clients of Byzantium was dim by the time the historian collected his material on the Tanūkhids.

Perhaps the foregoing arguments have fully vindicated the well-known account of Mas'ūdī, which goes back to Hishām, that the first group of Arab *foederati* in the service of Byzantium were indeed the Tanūkhids of the fourth century. As is well known to the Arabist, Tanūkh was not one tribe but a group of tribes, a confederation, when it emigrated from Mesopotamia-Babylonia to Syria and was such even before its Mesopotamian phase when it was still Peninsular. The confederation apparently continued to grow, its numbers being swelled by other groups who affiliated themselves with the Tanūkh after their arrival in Syria.⁷⁸ The capaciousness of the term Tanūkh might consequently accommodate the group of Imru' al-Qays of the Namāra inscription.⁷⁹ Even the Salīhids, according to some authorities,⁸⁰ were in the Tanūkh confederation, and this is a further argument for the Tanūkhid presence in Oriens in the fourth century since Salīh's presence is an established fact in that century. In spite of this, the Tanūkhids in the narrower sense of the first group of *foederati* in the service of Byzantium should be distinguished from later accessions to the confederation, as indeed they are distinguished in the Arabic sources from such groups as Salīh—the second group of *foederati*, who may or may not have belonged to the confederation before it gained ascendancy toward the end of the fourth century—and it is in this narrower sense that the term *Tanūkhids* is used in this book.

⁷⁶On these camps, see "Toponymical Observations," *infra*, pp. 401–3.

⁷⁷On these three kings, see the following section.

⁷⁸Ibn-Hazm gives as the three constituent members of the Tanūkh confederation Fahm, Nizar, and al-Ahlaf; *Jamharat*, p. 453. The first, a Syrian group, a subdivision of Asad ibn-Wabara, long established in Syria, would represent an accession to Tanūkh as a confederation during the Syrian phase of its history. In genealogical works, the phrase *dakhalū fī Tanūkh*, "they affiliated themselves with Tanūkh," recurs quite often, and thus supports the view of the genealogists that Tanūkh ended up by being a very large confederation.

⁷⁹Further on this, see *infra*, pp. 373–74, and App. 3, pp. 411–15.

⁸⁰Ibn-Khaldun, *Ibar*, vol. 1, p. 580; al-Qalqashandi, *Nihāyat al-Arab fī Ma'rifat Ansāb al-'Arab*, ed. I. al-Abyārī (Cairo, 1959), p. 189.

III. THE LIST OF KINGS

The Tanūkhid presence in Oriens that is the concern of this book is not the third-century one, referred to in the preceding section, but the fourth-century presence, which according to the Arabic sources began some time after the fall of Palmyra. Unlike the first one, which may be supported by the confrontation of the accounts of the Arabic literary sources with the epigraphic evidence of the Umm al-Jimāl bilingual inscription, the second presence has so far not been advantaged by a similar epigraphic discovery. And while it is possible to determine with some chronological precision the reign of Jaḍīma by relating it to that of Zenobia of Palmyra, it has not been possible to determine exactly when after the fall of Palmyra the second Tanūkhid presence began. Furthermore, the Arabic sources have a list of three kings assigned to the latter Tanūkhids, a list that increases the burden of precise data from the literary sources but without a corresponding increase of solid data from some other non-Arabic source for evaluating this onomastic data, the little onomasticon of the kings of Tanūkh. In the absence of such solid data as inscriptions, one can only set the accounts of the Arabic sources on this second Tanūkhid presence against the background of the historical situation that then obtained for determining the chronological problem, which in turn will serve as an introduction to the study of the main problem of this section, the onomasticon of the kings of Tanūkh.

1

The situation after the fall of Palmyra is confused, but it is not unlikely that the Romans enlisted the services of the Tanūkhids immediately after their defeat of the common enemy, Palmyra.⁸¹ These, however, could not have been the Tanūkhids whose kings are the three enumerated in the list of the Arabic sources, because the statement of Mas'ūdī clearly suggests that this Tanūkhid supremacy took place not in the days of the pagan empire but in those of the Christian Roman Empire;⁸² hence it must have been after Constantine became sole Augustus. But in the very same reign there ruled in the province of Arabia Imru' al-Qays, the king whose exploits are commemorated in the *Namāra*

⁸¹Implied in Ibn-Khaldun's account which places the supremacy of Tanūkh after the death of Zenobia: *Iḥār*, vol. 1, p. 579; the Tanūkhids could have been the Saracens who became allies of Aurelian in his campaign against Palmyra; see "Aurelian," *HA*, XXVIII.2; see also XI.4; XXVII.4; XXVIII.4.

⁸²Mas'ūdī is the most important extant source on the Tanūkhids, and it is from him that the later historians, including Ibn-Khaldun, derived their accounts; in the process of transmission, these accounts suffered in accuracy, and so it is to Mas'ūdī that one must return for the history of the Tanūkhids, exiguous as his accounts are; see *Murūj*, ed. Ch. Pellat (Beirut, 1966), vol. 2, p. 231. On Mas'ūdī, see T. Khalidi, *Islamic Historiography: The Histories of al-Mas'ūdī* (Albany, 1975); A. Shboul, *Al-Mas'ūdī and His World* (London, 1979).

inscription, and this fact has to be taken into account in discussing the rise of the Arab federate system in the fourth century. What was the place of the Tanūkhids in that system, and what was their relationship to Imru' al-Qays?

(1) The clientship of Imru' al-Qays to the Romans is the one solid and large fact in the history of Arab-Roman relations after the fall of Palmyra and of the vacuum in those relations created by that fall. The defection of Imru' al-Qays, the "king of all the Arabs," from Persia to Rome must have been an event of considerable importance, and it is not impossible that it was that defection from Persia and subsequent allegiance to Rome that reactivated a close and meaningful Arab-Roman relationship for the defense of the Arabian frontier and thus gave rise to the new federate system in the Orient in the fourth century.

(2) How Imru' al-Qays was related to the Tanūkhids of Syria is not clear. The funerary inscription that commemorates his death is silent on his relations with Tanūkh, or seems to be.⁸³ But the Arabic literary sources are available for suggesting what these relations might have been. According to these, Imru' al-Qays's paternal grandmother, Raqāsh, was a Tanūkhid, the sister of Jaḍīma, the king of Tanūkh, while his own mother—who is given the name Māwiyya—was from the Azd (who formed part of Tanūkh), as was his wife, Hind.⁸⁴ Thus Imru' al-Qays, although Lakhmid, was united by ties of consanguinity with the Tanūkhids. His father, it is true, the famed 'Amr b. 'Adi, had asserted his independence from the Tanūkhids and established the Lakhmid line and rule in Ḥīra after the death of Jaḍīma,⁸⁵ but his son Imru' al-Qays was a refugee in Syria, a fugitive from Persia, and thus he could in his new environment very well have affiliated himself and his group to his maternal uncles, the Tanūkhids, already settled in Syria, and he may also have brought with him from Ḥīra a Tanūkhid group from those that had been left in Iraq. Thus the Namāra inscription turns out to be not irrelevant to establishing a Tanūkhid presence in Oriens in the fourth century. Whether the three kings of the Tanūkhids were his descendants⁸⁶ or ruled simultaneously with his sons, mentioned in the inscription, but in different part of Oriens, cannot be determined. The geographical location of the Tanūkhids in northern Syria,⁸⁷ far from Namāra in the Provincia Arabia, could suggest that the Tanūkhids and the Lakhmids of Imru' al-Qays were two different groups of federates in the fourth century, however related to each other they may have been.

⁸³On the possibility that there is a reference to Tanūkh in the inscription, see *infra*, App. 3, pp. 412–14.

⁸⁴Ḥamza, *Tārīkh* (Beirut, 1961), pp. 85–87.

⁸⁵See Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vol. 1, pp. 621–22.

⁸⁶On this possibility, see *infra*, App. 3, pp. 414–15.

⁸⁷Along the Euphrates and in Chalcidice, for which see "Toponymical Observations," *infra*, pp. 400–407.

2

The three kings assigned by the historian Mas'ūdī⁸⁸ to the Tanūkhid *foederati* of the fourth century are (1) al-Nu'mān b. 'Amr b. Mālik, (2) 'Amr b. al-Nu'mān b. 'Amr, and (3) al-Ḥawārī b. al-Nu'mān. The first reaction of the student of this period to such a list must be incredulity, but, as will be shown in the course of this discussion, the list may have to be taken seriously, and in support of the view that something could be said for its authenticity, the following arguments and observations may be advanced:

(1) A century or so ago, when Nöldeke was subjecting the Arabic literary tradition on the history of the Arabs before the rise of Islam to a thorough criticism, scepticism concerning such precise data as these dynastic names was justified.⁸⁹ But since then epigraphic and incontestably authentic non-Arabic literary discoveries have completely transformed the status of this tradition. The existence of Arab royal figures both before and immediately after the Tanūkhid kings of the fourth century has been confirmed in the case of Jaḍīma, the king of Tanūkh in the third century, of 'Amr b. 'Adī, the founder of the Lakhmid dynasty, of his son, Imru' al-Qays (all of whom chronologically preceded the three kings of Tanūkh), and also in the case of the first ruler of the Salīhids, Duj'um, who came immediately after the fall of the Tanūkhids in the last quarter of the fourth century.⁹⁰ It is not unnatural to suppose that the same tradition is authentic concerning the names of the three kings of the Tanūkhids in the fourth century and that these names have to be accepted at least tentatively until epigraphic or other discoveries clinch the matter decisively in favor of accepting the list or rejecting it.⁹¹

(2) There is no doubt that the Tanūkhids ruled in Syria in the fourth century as the first group of Arab *foederati* in the service of Byzantium, as

⁸⁸Mas'ūdī, *Murūj*, vol. 2, p. 231.

⁸⁹Although Nöldeke himself was not so sceptical of this particular list; see App. 3, p. 411.

⁹⁰For Jaḍīma, see the Umm al-Jimāl bilingual inscription in E. Littmann, *PPUAES*, Division IV Semitic Inscriptions, Section A Nabataean Inscriptions (Leiden, 1914), pp. 37–40; for 'Amr b. 'Adī, see E. Herzfeld, *Paikuli* (Berlin, 1924), vol. 1, pp. 119, 136–37; 140–42; and Schaefer, "Ein Mani-Fund aus Ägypten," pp. 344–45; on Imru' al-Qays, see "The Namāra Inscription," *supra*, pp. 31–53; on Duj'um/Zokomos, see Sozomen, *HE*, VI.38.14–16; also von Gutschmid and Nöldeke, *GF*, p. 8. And whoever thought genealogical data pertaining to the tribe of Kinda in the remote past, to be found in the Arabic literary sources, could be confirmed by the South Arabian inscriptions? "Thawr" appears in a Sabaic inscription; see A. Jamme, *Sabaeen Inscriptions from Mabram Bilqīs* (Baltimore, 1962), no. 635, p. 137, line 27; while "Mu'awiya" appears in an Arabic inscription found at Faw; see Beeston, "Nemara and Faw," p. 1. For "Thawr" and "Mu'awiya" in the Arabic literary sources, see Ibn-Khaldun, *Ibar*, vol. 2, p. 537.

⁹¹Christian Arab sites have not been the object of systematic archeological expeditions. When this takes place, the value of the Arabic literary tradition for the history of the Arabs before the rise of Islam is likely to be enhanced.

has been argued in the preceding section. These Tanūkhids were ruled by kings, as may be inferred from the Byzantine sources. Thus a list of kings for this Tanūkhid dynasty, found in a major Arab historian, cannot be viewed with much suspicion, especially as it is a list of bare names without any embroideries that might create the impression that the historian was constructing or engaged in adorning a tale. Its brevity also speaks in favor of its authenticity; it is in harmony with the short duration of the Tanūkhid supremacy in the fourth century. The lists of the kings of the Salīhids and the Ghassānids have not been invalidated by the non-Arabic sources or by modern research, and the chances are that the list of the Tanūkhids will not be either.⁹²

(3) The list is to be found in a major Arab historian. Mas'ūdī certainly did not fabricate it and had no reason to; he must have taken it from an earlier source, which, as has been argued before, was Hishām, who composed a special work on the Tanūkhids. The composition of this work,⁹³ specifically devoted to the Tanūkhids, by no less an authority on the pre-Islamic Arabs than Hishām, whose methods and techniques in gathering together his data have also been examined, completely changes the status of the list and its dependability. Surely in speaking of the Tanūkhids, Hishām must have mentioned their kings in much the same way that he mentioned the kings of Salīh and of Ghassān, and the list of three kings must therefore go back to him and to his book on the Tanūkhids. The work entitled *Akhhār Mulūk Ghassān*,⁹⁴ which, it has been said before, was the work of Hishām on the kings of the Ghassānids, suggests that Hishām was interested in the rulers of these Arab *foederati* and that the list of Tanūkhid kings goes back to him.

3

The case for the authenticity of the list may finally be stated on internal grounds through an examination of the names themselves which constitute this little royal onomasticon. Two of the names are striking, the first, al-Nu'mān, and the third, al-Ḥawārī. Both have an archaic flavor about them that justifies exploration and the enlisting of the facts of political geography and cultural history toward the solution of this onomastic problem.

al-Nu'mān

This name is much less common than 'Amr; it is a royal name by which was called many a Lakhmid king⁹⁵ and at least two Ghassānids in the sixth

⁹²As will be discussed in detail in the two volumes that will follow this one on the fourth century.

⁹³Unknown to those who have animadverted on the list; see Caskel, *GN*, vol. 2, p. 82 note 1.

⁹⁴See "Hishām al-Kalbī," *supra*, p. 360 note 34.

⁹⁵On this, see *infra*, App. 3, pp. 414–15.

century. This is probably the earliest attestation of it in either half of the Fertile Crescent, among the Arab royal houses of Syria and Iraq in the pre-Islamic period. Various data from the history of the Arabs before the rise of Islam may be brought to bear on supporting the authenticity of the name of the first Tanūkhid king, and may be elaborated as follows:

(1) In the entry on Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān, between Ḥamāt and Ḥalab (Aleppo), where Tanūkh survived well into the Islamic period, Yāqūt⁹⁶ rightly rejects the view that the town was called after al-Nu'mān b. Bashīr, the companion of the prophet Muhammad, and suggests a much earlier figure, also called al-Nu'mān. The place of this al-Nu'mān in the genealogical chain that Yāqūt gives suggests that he was a pre-Islamic figure.⁹⁷ Since the town was settled by Tanūkh, it is not unnatural to suspect that the Nu'mān who founded it or ruled in it is none other than this king, and this would be consonant with the practice of calling towns by the names of their founders or rulers, e.g., Ḥīrat al-Nu'mān, so called after a Lakhmid namesake.

(2) Yāqūt gives al-Nu'mān a *laqab*, a nickname, namely, al-Sāṭi' ("brilliantly white"), and the nickname illuminates the Tanūkhid affiliation of al-Nu'mān. In the entry on Dayr Ḥanna in Ḥīra, Yāqūt mentions that the monastery belonged to a Tanūkhid group called Banū-al-Sāṭi'.⁹⁸ This is a valuable statement that links the Tanūkh of Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān with their Christian relatives in Ḥīra, along the Euphrates, the region they had emigrated from, and it indicates that the *laqab*, al-Sāṭi', is pre-Islamic.

(3) The nickname is uncommon and curious. It could carry one of two connotations: (a) the king of Tanūkh in Iraq, Jaḍīma,⁹⁹ is known to have been a leper (*abraṣ*) and was given two euphemistic *laqabs*, *al-abraṣh* and *al-waḍḍāḥ*. Perhaps this nickname, Sāṭi', was also a *laqab* euphemistically given to Jaḍīma, after whom his Tanūkhid group assumed it and became known as "Banū-al-Sāṭi'" both in Ḥīra and in Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān in Syria. (b) Since these kings were Christian, Sāṭi' may have some Christian connotation, i.e., "white garments of saints";¹⁰⁰ his son, the third king on the list, has a more recognizably Christian name, Ḥawārī, which according to one etymology could be related to the concept of whiteness.

(4) The first part of the construct in the name of the town, Ma'arrat

⁹⁶*Mu'jam*, vol. 5, p. 156.

⁹⁷It is not clear whether or not Yāqūt so considered him. The value of Yāqūt's comment, however, is that it draws attention to the antiquity of the town and its name.

⁹⁸*Mu'jam*, vol. 2, p. 507; note the survival of the uncommon proper name Sāṭi' in Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān centuries later when one of the inhabitants of Ma'arrat by that name guides al-Khatīb al-Tibrīzī to the tomb of Abū al-'Alā' al-Ma'arri; see al-Qiftī, *Inbāh al-Rawāt*, 'alā Anbāh al-Nuḥāt, ed. M. Ibrāhīm (Cairo, 1950), vol. 1, p. 71.

⁹⁹On Jaḍīma, see the present writer in *EP*, s.v.

¹⁰⁰Rev. 3:4.

al-Nuʿmān, cannot be the Arabic *maʿarrat* (“shame,” “disgrace”).¹⁰¹ It is almost certainly Syriac *mʿāra* (Arabic *magbāra*), “cave,” and this, too, is significant.¹⁰² This Christian king may have frequented a saint who used to live there or may have retired to a cave there and renounced the world.¹⁰³

(5) The name itself, al-Nuʿmān, is also significant.¹⁰⁴ In Arabic it is vocalized al-Nuʿmān, but in pre-Islamic times al-Naʿmān is likely to reflect the more correct vocalization, attested in the Greek transliterations of the name. Formed according to this morphological pattern, the name could easily be Christian, derived from *nīma*, “grace,” and could also translate *al-saʿīd*, “the happy one,” as a Christian epithet.¹⁰⁵ But it may also be related to the biblical name Naaman,¹⁰⁶ and the analogy between the Tanūkhid king and Naaman, the Syrian, is striking. Both were military commanders in the same region who accepted the One God and who were either plagued by leprosy or had it in the family. The first king of Tanūkh in the list could very understandably have chosen to adopt that biblical name for some obvious reasons.¹⁰⁷

al-Ḥawārī

The name of the third and last king, son of the first, is the most significant in the list. Its distinctly archaic and Christian character could argue for its authenticity:

(1) If it is related to the concept of whiteness, Ḥawārī would, according to the lexicographers, mean *qaṣṣār*, “fuller,” “bleacher,” one who whitens or washes clothes. It is not impossible that this last king of Tanūkh may have been involved in some such activity, which he indulged in as an act of

¹⁰¹Ṭāha Ḥusayn’s attempt to give a new Arabic etymology for the town of his favorite Arab author, Abū al-ʿAlāʾ, cannot be considered successful; see his *Tajdīd Dīkrā Abī al-ʿAlāʾ* (Cairo, 1963), pp. 97–100.

¹⁰²Syria has many toponyms that begin with this word; its attribution, however, to al-Nuʿmān is what justifies this exploration, especially as caves are not normally associated with kings except in unusual cases; see the following note.

¹⁰³As the Ethiopian Negus, Caleb, a zealous Christian, was to do in the sixth century, for whom see the present writer in *Martyrs*, pp. 215–18, and in *KN*, pp. 166–71. Two other Arab kings of the pre-Islamic period come in for comparison in this connection regarding the influence of Christianity on their lives: the Lakhmid al-Nuʿmān in Ḥīra who became a wanderer and was, consequently, nicknamed al-Sāʿīḥ, and the pious Salīḥid king, Dāwūd (David) who used to carry water, earth, and mud on his back, presumably with his own hands, for building churches and monasteries and who consequently was nicknamed al-Lathiḥ, “the bedrabbled”; for the former, see Rothstein, *DLH*, pp. 66–67; for the latter, see Caskel, *GN*, vol. 2, p. 232.

¹⁰⁴See *supra*, note 95.

¹⁰⁵Often applied to Christian martyrs or pious Christians after their death.

¹⁰⁶See 4 Kings 5, and the present writer in *Martyrs*, p. 67.

¹⁰⁷Al-Nuʿmān, which did not become a very common Arabic name, appears in the patronymic of a Tanūkhid at the battle of Šiffīn in A.D. 657; see Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Šiffīn*, ed. ʿA. Hārūn (Cairo, 1962), p. 355. For more on al-Nuʿmān and his name, see *infra*, App. 3, pp. 414–15.

piety.¹⁰⁸ It is also noteworthy that the name Ḥawārī brings to mind al-Sāṭīʿ, which, as has been argued, may have been the nickname of al-Nuʿmān, the first king of Tanūkh in the list.

(2) If the name Ḥawārī is the same word used later in the Qurʾān¹⁰⁹ to denote one of the Twelve Apostles and is not merely a homophone of it, then this will establish the Christian character of the name beyond doubt, and this, in turn, will argue for its authenticity.¹¹⁰ The Tanūkhids were indeed staunch and zealous Christians, and the fact would thus be appropriately reflected in their names.¹¹¹

4

In part 1 of this section, an attempt has been made to relate the list of Tanūkhid kings of the Arabic literary sources of Islamic times to the most important primary Arabic source of the fourth century, namely, the Namāra inscription and the king whose exploits the inscription commemorates, Imruʿ al-Qays. It remains to relate the list to the set of other primary and con-

¹⁰⁸As the Salīhid king Dāwūd was to engage in a similarly humble activity for which he earned the nickname al-Lathiḡ; see *supra*, note 103.

¹⁰⁹Nöldeke argued persuasively that the Qurʾānic term is a loanword from Ethiopic. The attestation of the word in the fourth century, if valid, must raise anew the question of the etymology of Ḥawārī and its status as a loanword. As Arabic has the verb of motion *ḥāra*, *yahūru*, it is possible that both Arabic and Ethiopic formed the word independently of each other, although it should be noted that the Arabic word is not semantically the exact equivalent of its Ethiopic cognate. But if Ḥawārī is established as an Arabic word coined in Syria in the fourth century, it does not necessarily invalidate Nöldeke's view on Qurʾānic Ḥawārī/Ḥawariyyūn. The Arab area was vast, and it is perfectly possible that Ḥawārī, a technical Christian term coined in Roman Syria, may not have been known to western Arabia, which might very well have borrowed the term from Ethiopic, the dominant Semitic Christian language in the Red Sea area. Noteworthy is the occurrence of the term Ḥawariyyūn in a poem of al-Ḍābiʿ ibn al-Ḥārith which goes back to pre-Muhammadan and pre-Qurʾānic times. All the relevant material on the etymology of Ḥawārī/Ḥawariyyūn has been collected by Jeffrey in *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qurʾan*, pp. 115–16. Material for the study of the term, both in the masculine and the feminine genders, may also be found in L. Cheikho, *Al-Nasrāniya wa ʿĀdābuhā bayn ʿArab al-Jāhiliya*, 3 vols. (Beirut, 1912–23), vol. 2, pp. 189–90.

This most unusual name, al-Ḥawārī, appears later in Islamic times, assumed by one of the Azd, the tribal group that formed part of the Tanūkh confederation, but the chances are that it was assumed as a Qurʾānic Muslim name; see Ibn-Ḥazm, *Jamharat*, ed. ʿA. Hārūn (Cairo, 1962), p. 371.

¹¹⁰If al-Ḥawārī turns out to be truly the last king of the Tanūkhids and so possibly Queen Mavia's deceased husband mentioned by the ecclesiastical historians, then this will explain the war of religion and zealotry she waged in behalf of orthodoxy.

¹¹¹If the derivation of the name Ḥawārī can be truly related to "apostle," it could bring to mind the name of the group of Christian *foederati* that followed the Tanūkhids, namely, the Salīhids. Although Arab genealogists relate it to the root from which *armor* and *weaponry* are derived, it may, after all, turn out to be a Syriac term for *apostle* naturalized in Christian Arabic as *salih*; cf. the term used for the dynasty of the Rasūlids in Islamic South Arabia, which could stand for *apostle* as well as *envoy*.

temporary sources of the fourth century, the Byzantine literary sources, which have made possible the writing of the history of the Arab *foederati* in the fourth century from the reign of Constantine to that of Theodosius the Great.

In general terms, the two sets of sources, the Arabic and the Byzantine, are not in conflict at all. The latter speak of Arab *foederati* in the service of Byzantium who participate in its Persian and Gothic wars, but they are not specific when it comes to onomastic and toponymic matters. Since the days of Strabo, the Greek and Latin historians found Arabic names difficult to pronounce and reproduce, and, as has been pointed out in the introduction to these chapters on the Arabic sources, these sources seem to despair of being specific about the names of Arab tribes and figures in the service of Byzantium and merely refer to them as Saracens. This is generally the case in regard to the Arabs of the fourth and fifth centuries, the Tanūkhids and the Salīhids, but in the sixth century Ghassānid figures are mentioned by name, although the term Ghassānid never appears in the Graeco-Roman sources. It is to this unfortunate circumstance that must be attributed the difficulty of interlocking the Arabic list of Tanūkhid kings with the Greek and Latin sources when they refer to Saracens in the service of Byzantium in the fourth century. However, the confrontation of the two sets of sources with each other must be attempted, and the confrontation does yield some valuable results, general and unspecific as they are:

(1) It was by the merest chance that the fifth-century ecclesiastical historian Sozomen went out of his way to mention by name the Arab chief Zokomos, the eponym and founder of the line of the second group of Arab *foederati*—the Ḍajāʿima/Salīhids—and thus enabled their history to be correctly placed in the fifth century, between the Tanūkhids and the Ghassānids, exactly where the Arabic sources have placed it. The historian of Tanūkh has not at his disposal such a windfall¹¹² as the historian of Salīh does who has the name of the eponym of the Salīhids, a datum supplied by Sozomen and extremely important for measuring the life span of the Salīhid dynasty. But fortunately the very same datum is very helpful in providing a terminus for the fall of the Tanūkhids, one which is not very precise, yet is precise enough and assignable to the last quarter of the fourth century. Thus the last of the three kings of the list most probably was a contemporary of Valens,¹¹³ while the first was a contemporary of Constantine. The terminus provided by Sozomen makes the life span of the dynasty of short duration, and this is in perfect harmony

¹¹²On the possibility that the term *Tanūkhid* in its Greek form is used by Libanius in connection with Julian's murder, see "The Death of Julian," *supra*, p. 127 and note 88.

¹¹³On the possibility that the last Tanūkhid king, al-Ḥawārī, was Queen Mavia's husband, see *supra*, note 110, and on the possibility that the first king in the list of three kings was none other than Imru' al-Qays himself of the Namāra inscription, see *infra*, App. 3, p. 414.

with the small number of kings that is assigned to the Tanūkhid dynasty by this list of three.

(2) The Byzantine sources on the Arab *foederati* have two features which can be interlocked both with data in the Arabic sources and with what the examination of the list has yielded: (a) The chiefs of these *foederati* are not referred to as phylarchs but as kings: *reguli* in Ammianus and *basileus* in the ecclesiastical historians. And so they are in the Arabic sources and in the list; they are *mulūk*, kings. (b) Their Christianity is explicitly stated, naturally not by the pagan and anti-Christian Ammianus but by the ecclesiastical historians of the reign of Queen Mavia. This, too, is consonant with the accounts of their Christianity in the Arabic sources and possibly with two of the three names of their kings, al-Nu'mān and al-Ḥawārī.

This is all that can be said of the confrontation of the Arabic sources on the kings of Tanūkh with the Byzantine ones. But more is not expected of such confrontation in view of the nature of the Byzantine sources and the concerns of their authors. Suffice it to say that as a result of the investigation it can be safely stated that the first group of *foederati* in the service of Byzantium were indeed the Tanūkhids of the fourth century and that their supremacy was of a short duration. As to the list of three kings, it may be said that it is equally hard to accept or reject. When faced with a bare list of names that goes back to the distant past of the fourth century, all that the student of this period can do is to give it a fair hearing and subject it to a thorough examination. This has been done in the preceding sections, and although no certainty can be predicated of the results, it has been suggested in the course of the examination that this list cannot be simply or merely dismissed as sheer fabrication and that something may be said for its authenticity. More than this cannot be claimed for the results of this investigation which awaits validation or invalidation by future epigraphic research. Until then, the names of the three kings may be used in a history of the Tanūkhid *foederati* only with the qualification "according to the Arabic sources."

IV. THE FEDERATE ARAB TRIBAL GROUPS IN ORIENS

The Tanūkhids were not the only Arab tribal group in Oriens in the fourth century;¹¹⁴ they were the dominant group encamped in the north, but in various parts of Oriens there were other Arab groups in the service of Byzantium. The fact is inferable from an examination of fourth-century documents: the Arabic Namāra inscription of the Provincia Arabia and Byzantine sources which testify to the presence of Arab federate groups in various parts of Oriens.

¹¹⁴See sec. II of the present chapter, "The Identity of the Fourth-Century *Foederati*," *supra*, pp. 366–72.

The Arabic literary sources of later Islamic times are, however, the most informative of all sources on the number and identity of these tribes.

This section will, therefore, discuss these various tribes and tribal groups in Oriens in the fourth century and then mark their significance for Arab-Byzantine relations.

1

The most informative of all the Arabic sources on the Arab federates of Byzantium in the fourth century are not those on Arab genealogy but on the Arab conquest of Oriens. Although this conquest took place in the seventh century and the sources that record it were written later in the Islamic period, they remain the most valuable documents for solving the problem of the tribal structure of the Arab federate presence in the fourth century. They give complete lists or almost complete lists of the Arab federate groups that fought with Byzantium against the Muslim Arabs, and they are specific about their names, tribal affiliations, the names of some of their commanders,¹¹⁵ and of the battlefields where they engaged the Muslim Arabs. The picture they draw is, of course, that of Arab federate power and organization in the seventh century, but it is not difficult to isolate the tribes and groups that were already *intra limitem* in Oriens in the fourth century. These sources naturally present some difficulties, but these are negotiable.

The tribes that received mention in the sources participated in the well-known military battles of the Byzantine-Muslim encounter in Syria such as Mu'ta, Dūmat al-Jandal, and the Yarmūk, and subsequently in those in Mesopotamia. Ṭabarī is the historian who is the most informative on these tribes, which appear in his accounts of these battles: Lakhm, Juḍām, 'Āmila, Balqayn, Bahrā', Balī, Kalb, Ghassān, Tanūkh, and Salīḥ (Ḍajā'im); a trio appears in the conquest of Roman Mesopotamia fighting the Muslim Arabs; they are Taghlib, Iyād, and al-Namir.¹¹⁶ There were other Arab tribes in Oriens in the seventh century; such were Banū-Ṣālīḥ¹¹⁷ in Sinai, Kinda¹¹⁸ in Dūmat al-Jandal, and Ṭayy¹¹⁹ in Qinnasrīn (Chalcis); 'Uḍra's relation to Byzan-

¹¹⁵See the precious account of these commanders who participated in the defense of Dūmat al-Jandal against the Muslim Arabs under Khalid b. al-Walīd in Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vol. 3, p. 378.

¹¹⁶*Tārīkh*, vol. 3, pp. 37, 378, 389, 570; vol. 4, pp. 35-36, 54-56. Reference in Wāqidi to Wā'il and Bakr as having taken part in the battle of Mu'ta in A.D. 629 are suspect, especially as the names of two tribes who undoubtedly did take part in the battle, namely Balī and Balqayn, are missing; this suggests that a scribal error is involved; see Wāqidi, *Maghāzī*, ed. M. Jones (Oxford, 1966), vol. 2, p. 760.

¹¹⁷For Banū-Ṣālīḥ, see *infra*, p. 385.

¹¹⁸Kinda is implied in Ṭabarī's account of the encounter at Dūmat al-Jandal (*Tārīkh*, vol. 3, p. 378) since Ukaydir, the lord of Dūmat, was a Kindite.

¹¹⁹Ṭayy's presence in Oriens is documented in Balāḍurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, ed. S. Munajjid (Cairo, 1956), vol. 1, p. 172. Roman association with Ṭayy and indeed Roman presence in the

tium is not clear.¹²⁰ As to Balī, its federate status depends on how deep in Ḥijāz the southern boundary of the Provincia Arabia was in the fourth century.¹²¹

The following tribes may be safely eliminated from this list since it is almost certain that they crossed the *limes* and migrated to Oriens later than the fourth century: they are Ghassān, Kinda, Ṭayy, Bahrā', Taghlib, Iyād, and al-Namir, and most of them emigrated in the sixth century.¹²² The elimination of these tribes from the extensive list preserved in the sources on the conquest leaves in that list some six or seven tribes. These were almost certainly in Oriens in the fourth century, and some of them had been in it for a long time, possibly centuries. They may now be briefly discussed.

A

1. Lakhm: Lakhm is the best attested of all these tribes in the fourth century.¹²³ The Namāra inscription makes certain that Lakhm emigrated early in the fourth century and was settled in the south of Oriens, in the Provincia Arabia or partly in that province.

2. Juḏām and ʿĀmila: The Arab genealogists conceive these two as sister tribes and old ones settled in the south of Oriens, in the Ḥisma region in northern Ḥijāz, and east of the ʿAraba and the Jordan.¹²⁴ But it is practically

territory of Ṭayy in pre-Islamic times is reflected in the name of a mountain in their territory, Malikān, or Malakān, called Malakān al-Rūm, "Malakān of the Romans"; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam*, vol. 5, p. 194. If the information is accurate, it suggests a deeper Roman penetration of Arabia than has been suspected; see also App. 4, *infra*, pp. 415–17.

¹²⁰Uḏra appears on the side of the Muslim Arabs at the battle of Muʿta since one of them, Quṭba, commanded the right wing of the Muslim expeditionary force; see Ibn-Hishām, *Sīrat al-Nabī*, ed. M. ʿAbdulḥamid (Cairo, 1937), vol. 3, pp. 433, 437; but in Yaʿqūbī's account of the campaign of Ḍat al-Salāsīl, ʿUḏra or part of it seems together with Balī the object of ʿAmr's raid; see *Tārīkh* (Beirut, 1960), vol. 2, p. 75. Christianity penetrated ʿUḏra, and they may have been federates in the fifth century and possibly in the fourth. ʿUḏra and its relation to the Meccan chief Quṣayy will be discussed in the second volume of this series, *BAFIC*.

¹²¹In the seventh century, Balī is associated with Byzantium; see *infra*, p. 384.

¹²²The best guide for the confusing history of these tribes discussed in this section is still the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* in its two editions, the old and the new; its succinct accounts of these tribes and its bibliographies may be supplemented with Caskel's studies of these tribes in the second volume of his *GN*.

¹²³On Lakhm, see *EP*, *s.v.*; for Lakhm's whereabouts in Islamic times, up to the tenth century, see Hamdānī, *Ṣifat Jazīrat al-ʿArab*, ed. M. al-Akwaʿ (Riyad, 1974), pp. 271–72, 273; regions mentioned by Hamdānī such as Ḥawrān, Jawlān, Bathaniyya, are not far from Namāra; but Lakhm apparently moved to Palestine and Egypt, too.

¹²⁴For Juḏām and ʿĀmila, see *EI*, *s.vv.* The regions they dwelled in, it is practically certain, formed parts of the Provincia Arabia including the Ḥismā, west and northwest of Tabūk. Christian monasticism penetrated this region of northern Ḥijāz: (a) reference to the monks, *rubhān*, of Madyan, clearly implies a monastery there, (b) while the monastery of Ḥismā, Dayr Ḥismā, is explicitly mentioned. These references to monks and a monastery in this region

certain that they are older than the Arab authors thought and that their genealogical relationship to each other is quite different from what the Arabic sources state. It is perfectly possible that both go back to biblical times, 'Āmila being none other than Amalec¹²⁵ and Juḏām none other than Edom.¹²⁶ If so, they certainly would have been in Oriens in the fourth century since they survived in that region until the seventh and well into the Islamic period.¹²⁷

3. Banū-al-Qayn/Balqayn: This tribe has also been identified with the biblical Kenites.¹²⁸ The identification is as attractive as that of 'Āmila with biblical Amalec. The tribe would certainly have been in Oriens in the fourth century; their settlements were well within the *limes*, in such regions as Sinai and Trans-Jordan.

4. Balī: Balī fought with Byzantium against the Muslim Arabs in the seventh century.¹²⁹ One of them, Mālīk by name, commanded the confederation of Christian Arabs in the battle of Mu'ta in A.D. 629. 'Amr b. al-'Ās, whose mother belonged to the Balī tribe, raided them at Dāt al-Salāsīl, A.D. 629–30, and they are attested at Antioch before the battle of Yarmūk in A.D. 636.

Balī dwelt to the south of Juḏām but still close enough to Tabūk in northern Ḥijāz to be possibly within the boundaries of the Provincia Arabia in the fourth century or of Byzantium's sphere of influence in Ḥijāz.

come in the *dīwāns* of very early Islamic poets, but surely monasticism in that region must go back to pre-Islamic times; whether it goes back to the fourth century is not clear; for these references to monasticism in Madyan and Ḥismā, see Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, vol. 5, pp. 77–78, *s.v.* Madyan, where two verses by the early Islamic poet Kuthayyir on the monks of Madyan are cited; for reference in an Arabic verse of the seventh century to Dayr Ḥismā, "the monastery of Ḥismā," see Bakrī, *Mu'jam*, vol. 2, p. 447. This monastery could have been only in Ḥijāz, not in Mesopotamia, al-Jazīra, as Yāqūt cogently argued; see Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, vol. 2, p. 259. The reference in the same verse to another monastery, that of Ḍamḍam, suggests the country of the tribe of Ḍubyan, also in Ḥijāz.

¹²⁵Nöldeke's view; see his "Über die Amalekiter," *Orient und Occident*, vol. 2, pp. 614ff.

¹²⁶Suggested to me by Dr. Mahmud Ghul.

¹²⁷'Āmila's participation with Lakhm and Juḏām against 'Amr b. al-'Ās when he raided Dāt al-Salāsīl in A.D. 629 is attested in Balāḍurī, *Ansāb al-Ashraf*, ed. M. Ḥamīduddīn (Cairo, 1959), vol. 1, p. 381; also in the account of the false alarm reported by al-Wāqidi on the eve of the Tabūk expedition in A.D. 630; for which see *Maghāzī*, vol. 3, p. 990; the tribe formed part of the expeditionary force assembled by Heraclius at Antioch on the eve of the battle of Yarmūk in A.D. 636, for which see Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vol. 3, p. 570.

¹²⁸Suggested by H. Ewald and entertained by Nöldeke; see his review of W. Robertson Smith's *Kinship and Marriage*, *ZDMG*, 40 (1886), p. 181; A. Fischer, however, considered this identification "a very daring assumption"; see *EI*, *s.v.* Al-Kain.

¹²⁹For Balī, see *EI*, *s.v.* The genealogists regard Balī and Bahrā', the other Christian tribe who fought with Byzantium against the Muslim Arabs, as consanguineous tribes, both belonging to the old Quḏā'a group. Ibn-Ḥazm's account of Balī has some significant details; the theophoric name, Qīsmīl, with its archaic flavor, occurs in the onomasticon of Balī, as does Fārān with its Sinaitic association; what their descendants in Andalusia refused to eat may also be significant; see Ibn-Ḥazm, *Jamharat*, pp. 442–43.

5. Banū-Ṣāliḥ: The Christian writer Saʿīd b. al-Batrīq (Eutychius) speaks of a group of Arabs near Mt. Sinai in the reign of Justinian, the Banū-Ṣāliḥ, the sons of Ṣāliḥ; he affiliates them with Lakhm.¹³⁰ If so, they were certainly in Oriens in the fourth century, but how and when they separated from the main tribe and wandered into Sinai is not clear.¹³¹ The patronymic, however, suggests that they could have belonged to the group of the Prophet Ṣāliḥ,¹³² namely, Thamūd.¹³³

6. Kalb: The well-known powerful Arab tribe Kalb was settled in north Arabia between Syria and Mesopotamia and in possession of many strategic positions, of which Dūmat al-Jandal was one.¹³⁴ The genealogists are agreed that it is a very old Arab tribe of that area, and it is not impossible that it was a biblical tribe, possibly descendants of Duma and thus one of the Ishmaelite tribes, whose name was later changed into Kalb.¹³⁵ It certainly was in those regions in the fourth century, and the boundaries of the Provincia Arabia might conceivably have extended to Dūmat al-Jandal.¹³⁶

7. Salīḥ: According to the Arab genealogists, Salīḥ was already settled in Oriens even before it became the dominant group in the fifth century; if true, the tribe would certainly have been in Oriens in the fourth.¹³⁷

B

Absolute certainty on these Arab tribes in Oriens as federates can be predicated only of Lakhm and Tanūkh, and the same degree of certainty can be predicated of the *presence* of the other tribes in the region, although the question must remain open as to whether or not all of them had federate

¹³⁰For Saʿīd b. al-Bitrīq's account of Banū-Ṣāliḥ, see *supra*, p. 306 note 82.

¹³¹In the time of the Arab geographer Hamdānī, Lakhm's dwellings were between Ramla in Palestine and Egypt; see *supra*, note 123.

¹³²One of the Arabian Prophets mentioned in the Qurʾān. There is a site twenty-five miles northwest of Mt. Sinai called Nabi Ṣāliḥ.

¹³³In the *Notitia Dignitatum*, the Thamudi Arabs are located not in their original dwellings in northern Ḥijāz but in Palestine and Egypt; see chap. 5, "Notitia Dignitatum," in RA. Banū-Ṣāliḥ were still in the nineteenth century the protectors of the monastery of Mt. Sinai carrying the same name, Ṣawāliḥa, but in the plural; see O. Blau, "Arabien im sechsten Jahrhundert," *ZDMG*, 23 (1869), p. 565 note 3. If these survived some thirteen centuries in Sinai and, what is more, performed the same function, why could not the Balqaḥ have survived from biblical times? See *supra*, p. 384.

¹³⁴For Kalb, see *El*, s.v.

¹³⁵When, according to one view, the Arab tribes went in their religious development through a stage of totemism.

¹³⁶For the important Latin inscription discovered at Dūmat al-Jandal implying at least a Roman presence in that locality, see G. W. Bowersock, "Syria under Vespasian," *JRS*, 63 (1973), p. 139 note 57.

¹³⁷Since the second volume in this series, *BAFIC*, deals with the Salīḥ and the Salīḥids as the dominant Arab clients of Byzantium in the fifth century, the discussion of Salīḥ and the Salīḥids will be undertaken in that volume. It is enough for the time being to note their presence in Oriens in the fourth century.

status. A close examination of the history of each tribe, however, suggests that this was almost certainly the case. The crucial test is the southern boundary of the Provincia Arabia in the Arabian Peninsula. The presumption is that in this early Byzantine period it was deep in Ḥijāz, and that even if it had been withdrawn to the north, the area settled by these tribes would still have been within that of the residual Roman presence or the unofficial sphere of Byzantine influence in Arabia; consequently, these tribes would have been engaged in the defense of the Byzantine frontier and were likely to have been granted federate status of some sort.¹³⁸

Even if doubts linger about this or that tribal group—whether it was in Oriens in the fourth century or whether it had federate status—the facts deducible from a study of the history of Tanūkh and Lakhm alone could justify the conclusion that the Arab federate presence was complex and multitribal and that there were many tribes with federate status in Oriens other than the dominant group, the Tanūkhids.¹³⁹ This is the important conclusion on the structure of the Arab federate presence; how complex and how tribally constituted that presence was in its entirety are matters of detail that cannot be solved without further epigraphic discoveries.

Closely related and equally important is the problem of the geographical location of these tribes and tribal groups in the fourth century. With the exception of the Tanūkhids and the Lakhmids, the location of the other tribes is a matter of inference.¹⁴⁰ The Arabic sources on these tribes refer to them in areas in which they were settled in the seventh century;¹⁴¹ so the question arises of whether or not they had been in those areas or locations in the fourth.

With rare exceptions, the chances are that these tribes were settled in the fourth century in roughly the same areas as in the seventh. Their dependence on their own water and pasturage, rare in Arabia, makes their mobility very

¹³⁸Recent epigraphic discoveries suggest that the boundaries of the Provincia in the Peninsula were much more extensive than has been thought; for the Greek inscription at Madā'in Šāliḥ and the Latin one at Dūmat al-Jandal, see Bowersock, "Report," p. 230 and "Syria," p. 139 note 57 respectively. If these inscriptions could imply too generous a portion of the Peninsula within the Provincia, the fact is noteworthy that the Arab tribes discussed above and considered federates lived very close to the Provincia in its most reduced form or even within it; their regions, such as Ḥismā and Madyan, were east of the Gulf of Aqaba!

¹³⁹Also partly inferable from a study of such Greek and Latin authors as the ecclesiastical historians and Ammianus.

¹⁴⁰Those of the Lakhmids and the Tanūkhids are documented partly by Arabic and Greek inscriptions, those of Namāra and Anasartha, for which see *supra*, pp. 29–53 and 222–38.

¹⁴¹Blau attempted a study of the tribes of Arabia in the sixth century, a solid piece of work for its time. In spite of the fact that the passage of more than a century has made it out of date in many respects, it is still a useful work, remarkable for the confrontation of the Arabic with the non-Arabic literary sources and of these literary sources with the epigraphic; for his article, see *supra*, note 133.

restricted. In the case of tribes that, as has been suggested, may go back to biblical times, such as Balqayn and Juḏām, their areas in southern Oriens did not witness great upheavals that might have displaced them. Nabataea, where they had dwelled, was on the whole quiet and stable, unlike Palmyrena which experienced some of the upheavals of the third century. The manner of annexation in A.D. 106 was, generally speaking, peaceful, and it was outside the way of conquerors. Even the Byzantine-Sasanid conflict in the reign of Heraclius could not have affected it much.¹⁴² As to ʿĀmila, possibly a descendant of biblical Amalec and supposed to have dwelled near Juḏām and Balqayn, there may have been special reasons why it was to be found elsewhere in Islamic times,¹⁴³ possibly related to the movement of tribes in Oriens during the period of Muslim conquests.¹⁴⁴

C

The identification of the number, names, tribal affiliations, and geographical locations of these tribes in the fourth century makes it possible to make some observations on how these tribes were politically grouped in Oriens.

1. The newcomer, Lakhm, as has been argued, could have joined hands with Tanūkh in the north and formed part of its confederacy, since it was already united to it by ties of consanguinity.¹⁴⁵ However, the Arab authors of later times associate it genealogically with Juḏām and ʿĀmila; but this is perfectly explicable by the fact that toward the end of the fourth century, and after the fall of Tanūkh, Lakhm, already in the south of Oriens and close to Juḏām and ʿĀmila geographically, affiliated itself politically with its two powerful neighbors.

2. Juḏām and ʿĀmila are likely to have formed one group in southern Oriens, exactly where the Arab geographers locate them. Furthermore, according to the Arab genealogists, they were consanguineous tribes descended from a common ancestor, Kahlān. Their descent from an ancestor by that name is likely to be fictitious, but what is important is that the genealogists felt that they were somehow related. In a preceding section it has been argued that they might have been originally biblical tribes. It is, therefore, not their

¹⁴²Contrast with Mesopotamia, the battleground of the secular Roman-Persian conflict in both Roman and Byzantine times. This, together with the destruction of Arab Ḥatra, must have affected the stability of the area and its Arab tribes, who thus experienced constant uprooting and dispersion.

¹⁴³In Upper Galilea and Southern Lebanon, where the tribe gave its name to its southern part, Jabal ʿĀmil, and in Syria, south of Aleppo; see *EI*, s.v. ʿĀmila.

¹⁴⁴At the battles of Dūmat al-Jandal and Yarmūk, the Arab federate tribes appear fighting on battlefields far removed from the area of their normal dwelling, since they were mobilized to meet the Muslim armies that had appeared in great numbers.

¹⁴⁵On this, see *supra*, pp. 373–74, and App. 3, pp. 412–13.

consanguinity but their antiquity and long habitation as neighbors in roughly the same area that accounts for their being linked together in the consciousness of the genealogists, and this suggests that their ties were those of a political alliance.

3. More difficult to probe are the two other tribes of the south, namely, Balqayn and Balī, the former of which, as has been argued, may go back to biblical times. As in the case of the two preceding tribes, Judām and ʿĀmila, no great credence can be put in what the genealogists say about their descent, since knowledge of this was vague by the time the genealogists composed their works, which assign the two tribes to the not so very helpful capacious genealogical term *Quḍāʿa*. How the two tribes were related, if at all, in the fourth century, is impossible to tell, but they and the two preceding ones appear as one group at the battle of Muʿta (A.D. 629) and, what is more, fighting under a commander from Balī named Mālīk. This could suggest that these four tribes were grouped together since they lived not far from each other in the south of Oriens. In later Ghassānid times, two of them, Balqayn and ʿĀmila, receive mention in the sources; the text is not clear but it could easily imply an alliance between the two tribes which one of the Ghassānid commanders was trying to tamper with.¹⁴⁶

4. To the same genealogical category, *Quḍāʿa*, is assigned the all-powerful and large tribe of Kalb, which played a most important role in the history of north Arabia and the Fertile Crescent in both pre-Islamic and Islamic times. The term *Quḍāʿa* is not very helpful, but the main geographical and historical features pertaining to Kalb are clear enough as it lay astride important trade routes and played a decisive role in federate history in the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries. Precise and certain information on its role in the fourth century is not available, but if, as has been argued,¹⁴⁷ Mavia was possibly a Kalbite princess, then Kalb would have been an ally of Tanūkh in the fourth century.

D

Instead of conceiving of the Arab tribes in Oriens as do the Arab genealogists who derive their descent from such a distant ancestor as *Quḍāʿa*,¹⁴⁸ or as the Byzantine authors who subsume them under the generic term *Saracens*,

¹⁴⁶For this precious text that gives a glimpse of inter-Arab federate relations in Ghassānid times, see, for the time being, Nöldeke, *GF*, p. 52 note 1. It will be discussed in the third volume of this series, *BASIC*.

¹⁴⁷On this, see *supra*, pp. 196–97.

¹⁴⁸For *Quḍāʿa*, see the article by M. J. Kister in *EI*, 5, pp. 315–18, of which pp. 317–18 are devoted to Balī and which may be added to the bibliography on the tribe cited *supra*, note 129. A detailed discussion of *Quḍāʿa* may be found in Bakrī, *Muʿjam*, vol. 1, pp. 17–52.

the preceding discussions have tried to classify the heterogeneous Arab tribal structure in Oriens. They have isolated some very old tribes such as Juḏām, ʿĀmila, Balqayn, and examined the possibility that they were biblical tribes, both Ishmaelite and non-Ishmaelite. These were the oldest tribes of the region that have survived into the fourth century and well into the Islamic period. It was over this substrate of old tribes that the current of tribal wanderings from the Land of the Two Rivers brought two new tribes that infused fresh blood into the tribal fabric of Oriens, namely, Tanūkh and Lakhm, the first of which had wandered in the Peninsula and had strong Azdite elements in it which were fortified by the arrival of the Ghassānids, an Azdite tribal group that appeared on the political and military scene of Oriens some two centuries later.

It will have been noticed that this discussion has avoided operating with the names of tribal groups arbitrarily subsumed by Arab genealogists under one name, e.g., Quḏāʿa, or with the very small ones, the multitudinous splinter groups into which an Arab tribe is divided. Instead, it has concentrated on the important six or seven tribes, the fully differentiated units that were possessed of strong identities, and it was these that constituted Arab federate strength in Oriens in the fourth century.¹⁴⁹

Just as it has avoided too much involvement in Arab genealogical muddles, this discussion has steered away from the hundreds, even thousands of inscriptions, Greek, Latin, and Arabic, both Safaitic and Thamudic, that rarely or never refer to these six or seven federate tribes who made history in Oriens in the fourth century.¹⁵⁰ Luckily for the purpose of this book, the precious gift from the Islamic Arabic literary sources on the tribal map of Oriens in the period of the conquests has provided the major evidence for Arab federate presence. The foregoing sections and chapters have analyzed these sources and extracted from them the pertinent data for understanding the place and role of the Arabs as *foederati* in Oriens in the fourth century. Further epigraphic discoveries would enrich and possibly refine or modify these conclusions, but at least a framework has been constructed within which

¹⁴⁹Now it is possible to understand the Arab profile of the military history of the oriental *limes* not in such vague terms as Hagarenes and Saracens but in those of specific tribes and tribal groups, and this contributes to a better understanding of the history of that *limes*, just as the German profile of the same problem on the Rhine and the Danube is understood in terms of specific German tribes.

¹⁵⁰These inscriptions have their uses, and they are extremely valuable for the history of the various provinces of Oriens viewed from a different angle. How useful and valuable they are may be seen from a perusal of the most recent work that has made extensive use of them, namely, a doctoral thesis presented to the University of Manchester in August 1979, entitled "Studies in the History of the Roman Province of Arabia." I am grateful to Dr. Henry MacAdam for sending me a copy of his thesis.

the problems of Arab-Byzantine relations in the fourth century may be profitably set and understood.

2

The elucidation of the tribal structure of the Arab federate presence in Oriens in the fourth century is of considerable importance to the study of Arab-Byzantine relations and Arab-Roman relations in the third century, the watershed between the preceding Roman period from Pompey to Diocletian and the following Byzantine period. This elucidation illuminates a host of problems as well as uncovers others; and the range and diversity of these problems may be described as follows:

A

1. In the preceding centuries,¹⁵¹ Rome had depended upon the Nabataean Arabs, then the Palmyrene Arabs for the defense of part of the Orient. This dependence came to an end with the destruction of Palmyra in A.D. 272 which ushered in a new period of Arab-Roman relations and a new defense system for the Orient that obtained throughout the three centuries of the Byzantine period during which changed the nature and extent of Arab participation in the defense of the region. This participation did not disappear; it persisted, and the tribal picture in the fourth century explains what this participation consisted in and in what way or ways it differed from the previous participation in the third century under the leadership of Palmyra.

2. The identification of some of the tribes both in the north and in the south of Oriens adds more definition and specificity to the Arab share in the defense system of the Roman period. It is almost certain that such tribes in the south as Judām, Balqayn, and ʿĀmila must have functioned as military units in the Roman period, forming part of the Nabataean confederacy in much the same way that Thamūd did. The same is or may be true of some of the tribes of the north, especially the Tanūkhids,¹⁵² possibly associated with Palmyra but who later fought against it.¹⁵³

3. The tribal trio consisting of Judām, ʿĀmila, and Balqayn, it has been argued, go back to biblical times.¹⁵⁴ These tribes then represent the strand of ethnographic continuity in the region, running from biblical to Byzantine to

¹⁵¹For the Arabs in the Roman period from the Settlement of Pompey to the reign of Diocletian, see RA.

¹⁵²And possibly the Kalbites.

¹⁵³They or the Lakhmids, under the leadership of ʿAmr, the father of Imruʾ al-Qays of the Namāra inscription, may have been meant by the Saracens whom Aurelian enlisted in his service against Palmyra, as stated in the HA; see *supra*, p. 371 note 75.

¹⁵⁴See *supra*, pp. 383–84 and notes 125–28.

Muslim Arab times, a matter of some interest to the biblical scholar, the Arab genealogist, and the student of Arab-Roman and Arab-Byzantine relations.

Their possible biblical origins thus give a new significance to these Arab tribes. They cease to be obscure tribes with outlandish names roaming in equally unfamiliar terrain. They come alive as the descendants of those very tribes that dwelled in such biblical regions as Sinai and Midian, and, what is more, become the clients of the Roman Empire, first the pagan and then the Christian.

B

With the destruction of the Palmyrene Arab shield and before it the Nabataean, Byzantium was engaged in the fourth century in the making of a new one against the Arabs and their Peninsula. The obscurity that surrounds this new Arab shield is considerably illuminated by the extra data extracted from the Arabic sources. For the fourth century,¹⁵⁵ the concern of this book, the list of federate tribes extracted from the Arabic sources illuminates the following problems:

1. It clearly indicates that the shield did not consist of one tribe but of many, spread over the length and breadth of Oriens. Hishām's account of the Arab clients of Byzantium in the fourth century, the Tanūkhids, is laconic, and although he speaks of the other Arabs of whom the Tanūkhids were put in charge, he does not specify who these Arabs were. The list does just that and, what is more, it makes possible the process of confrontation between the Greek and Latin sources on the *foederati* of the fourth century with those specific references to the tribes of the list.

2. How these Arab groups were related to one another is not clear. The Tanūkhids were the dominant group, but whether or not they were put in charge of all the other Arab tribes in Oriens¹⁵⁶ cannot be firmly established. Such a centralized Arab federate presence is usually dated to ca. A.D. 530, when Justinian put Arethas, the Ghassānid, in charge of the Arab tribes in Oriens. But it is not impossible that Tanūkh was put in charge of the Arabs for a short time, possibly because of the exigencies of the Persian War.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵Although the forging of the shield must have started soon after the destruction of Palmyra, it was in the fourth century, in the days of the Christian Roman Empire, that the shield acquired its distinctive features of Christianized Arab tribes in the employ and pay of Byzantium and ranged for the defense of the *limes* and for the participation in the Persian Wars of that century; on these new types of *foederati*, see "The Arab *Foederati* of the Fourth Century," part 6, *infra*, pp. 509–10.

¹⁵⁶As stated by Mas'ūdī in his account of the Tanūkhids, for which see *infra*, App. 2, pp. 410–11.

¹⁵⁷The campaigns of Queen Mavia of the Greek sources seem to suggest such centralization.

Be that as it may, the student of this problem has at his disposal the component parts of this relationship between the dominant and the other Arab groups in Oriens, whatever the nature of that relationship was.

3. Specific information on the tribes, especially on their tribal affiliations, will help clarify inter-Arab federate relations. Something has been said on how these tribes were possibly grouped and aligned, but unfortunately information is almost nonexistent¹⁵⁸ on how such grouping and alignment affected or governed their intertribal relations in this fourth century, unlike the sixth, when it became more abundant.¹⁵⁹ The only hint at such intertribal relations may possibly be afforded by the circumstance of the fall of Tanūkh itself late in the century and the possible involvement of Kalb and Salīh in that fall.

4. The list gives a glimpse of the extent of this Arab shield that extended from the north of Oriens to its south, in practically all the limitrophe provinces of Oriens. Tanūkhids and Salīhids lived in the north;¹⁶⁰ Kalb lived in the center, a little withdrawn to the east, and possessed Dūmat al-Jandal; Lakhm was in the Provincia Arabia; the three tribes ʿĀmila, Judām, and Balqayn were in the southern part of Arabia and what later came to be Palestina Tertia, including also Banū-Ṣālīh. This is roughly how the Arab tribes were deployed along the *limes*.¹⁶¹

5. Finally, the list of tribes is a contribution to a better understanding of the Byzantine defense system in the Orient. Much has been written on this, and Mommsen elaborated the theory of the two *limites*, the inner and the outer.¹⁶² Whatever the truth about that theory is or may turn out to be, there is no doubt about the reality of the Arab shield in the fourth century, unknown

¹⁵⁸Future epigraphic discoveries will provide such information as also will the discovery of new Arabic manuscripts, not impossible in view of the fact that only a small percentage of the corpus of extant Arabic manuscripts has been edited and published. In the meantime, what matters is the construction of a framework within which such problems as are identified here may be placed and presented.

¹⁵⁹This will be fully discussed in vol. 3 of this series, *BASIC*; for examples of inter-Arab hostile relations among the federate tribes in the sixth century, see Nöldeke, *GF*, p. 17 and p. 52 note 1.

¹⁶⁰And apparently in the center, as will be discussed in *BAFIC*.

¹⁶¹What the situation in Mesopotamia was and which tribes dwelled there in the fourth century is not clear; on the trio Taghlib, Iyād, and al-Namir of the seventh century, see *supra*, p. 382.

The list of federate tribes is complete only for the period of the Arab Conquests in the seventh century. Even so, the recovery of the names, possible or probable, of some of these tribes, and certain in the case of others, does endow the Arab profile of the history of the *limes orientalis* with a degree of specificity that had been lacking in discussions of this *limes*. It should answer, at least in part, Franz Cumont's question on the identity of some of the "acteurs" who acted the drama of the secular struggle between Persia and Byzantium; see his "Préface" to Poidebard, *Trace*, p. XII.

¹⁶²See *infra*, p. 477 and note 52.

as it is to most historians of the oriental *limes*.¹⁶³ The Arab participation in and contribution to that defense system has so far been measured mainly by the references to the Saracen and Arab units in that precious document, the *Notitia Dignitatum*. Although it reflects the military situation as it was in the early part of the fifth century, the *ND* is also a valuable document for the fourth century. The Arab units in that document have been identified,¹⁶⁴ but most of these units were regularly enrolled in the Roman army, and the legal status of the members of those units was almost certainly that of *cives*. The *ND* thus leaves out the many tribal groups that were enlisted by Byzantium, noncitizens but *foederati* who defended the oriental *limes*, tribes that constituted the Arab shield, the unknown shield, now revealed by the study of the Arabic sources.

This Arab shield of tribes and tribal groups has to be taken into account in the study and description of the Roman defense system in the Orient since these tribes performed an important function, sometimes a threefold one: participation in the Persian Wars,¹⁶⁵ the maintenance of law and order in certain zones within the *limes*, and the protection of the *limes* against inroads from the Arabian Peninsula.

Although left out from the *Notitia Dignitatum*, the list of federate tribes could throw some light on the puzzles presented by the references in the *ND* to the two Saracen units in Phoenicia Libanensis and to the two Thamudi units in Palestine and Egypt: (a) That the two units stationed in Phoenicia¹⁶⁶ should have been singled out for inclusion in the official document could argue that at that juncture they were deemed important enough to receive mention in the *ND*.¹⁶⁷ Whether their inclusion implies that they were granted *civitas* remains an open question. (b) The tribal affiliation of the two Saracen units of Phoenicia is not indicated,¹⁶⁸ but it is in the case of two other units, namely, the Thamudeni,¹⁶⁹ referred to one time as "Saraceni" and on another occasion simply as "Thamudeni."¹⁷⁰

¹⁶³With few exceptions, e.g., Musil, who made some tentative remarks on it in *Palmyrena*, pp. 247–48.

¹⁶⁴See chap. 5 on the *Notitia Dignitatum* in *RA*.

¹⁶⁵A function not performed by the tribes settled in the south of Oriens, in Sinai and northern Ḥijāz, too far from the Euphrates and the Persian border.

¹⁶⁶Stationed at Betroclus and Thelsee.

¹⁶⁷For more on these two units, see chap. 5 in *RA*.

¹⁶⁸They could have been Salīḥid Arabs, the dominant Arab group in the fifth century.

¹⁶⁹For these two units, one stationed at Scenas Veteranorum in the *Limes Aegypti*, the other at Birsama in Palestine, see *RA*, chap. 5.

¹⁷⁰What significance can be attached to the description of only one of the two units of Thamudeni as *Saraceni* is not clear; it is noteworthy that neither the Palmyrene nor the Ituraean Arabs are so described in the *ND*; see chap. 5 in *RA*. On the etymology of the term

This reference to the Arab tribe of Thamūd is precious. It represents the last known phase of the journey of the tribe from its dwellings in Ruwḡāfa¹⁷¹ in the second century A.D. to its absorption in the Roman army and its transference from its home in northern Ḥijāz to Palestine and Egypt.¹⁷²

It is the ideal of the student of Arab-Byzantine relations to be able, with the help of epigraphic and literary discoveries, to write the history of the various tribes of the Arab Shield; like Thamūd, some of them were tribes of the Roman period that were absorbed into the Roman system of defense but, unlike Thamūd, were not included in the *Notitia Dignitatum*. When that happens, a modest Arabic version of the *Notitia Dignitatum* will have been compiled, as an ancillary document to the *ND* itself, on the nature and extent of the Arab contribution to the defense of the oriental *limes*.

C

In addition to its importance to the Roman period and to the Byzantine fourth century, the tribal list is important to the centuries that followed, Islamic as well as pre-Islamic:

1. The Arab federate presence in Oriens that obtained for the three centuries of the early Byzantine period becomes extremely complex in the sixth century. It had grown in complexity already in the fifth century with more tribes crossing the *limes* and many more in the sixth, dominated by the Ghassānids. For a systematic and profitable study of this Arab federate presence at its peak, it is important to know its foundation in the fourth century; this foundation makes possible the study of the evolution of the federate system and of the genetic relationship that obtained between the various stages of its evolution in the course of these three centuries.

2. The tribal composition of the Arab Shield revealed in this fourth-century list is relevant to the study of the Arab war effort in Byzantium's struggle against the Muslim Arabs in the seventh century, after the number of Arab federate tribes had been swelled by newcomers in the fifth and sixth

Saraceni as related to the Thamudic term *shirkat* to be found in their inscriptions, see the appendix to chap. 9, "The Term *Saraceni* and the Image of the Arabs," in *RA*.

¹⁷¹Epigraphically attested; for the important bilingual inscription of the Thamūd, see G. W. Bowersock, "The Greek-Nabataean Bilingual Inscription at Ruwḡāfa, Saudi Arabia," *Le monde grec: Hommages à Claire Préaux* (Brussels, 1975), pp. 513–22.

¹⁷²Thamūd is more the concern of the Qur'ānic scholar than the Arab genealogist from whose consciousness it almost vanished, sure evidence of its antiquity and the early date of its transference from the Arabian Peninsular orbit to the Roman. According to the Qur'ānic account, it had a prophet by the name of Ṣāliḥ, and this could imply that some monotheistic missionary activity, Jewish or Christian, must have reached it before the disaster that the Qur'ānic account speaks of befell it. If that missionary activity was Christian, then Thamūd would have been assimilated not only into the Roman military system but also into the religious life of Byzantium; see also *supra*, p. 385 on Banū-Ṣāliḥ.

centuries. It could make possible a more precise study of the major military engagements of the conquest in which these tribes took part, such matters as the number and identity of the tribes that fought in a particular engagement, the strategic transference of the tribes from one part of Oriens to another to meet the Muslim invaders, and possibly certain defections to the Muslim side reported in the sources.¹⁷³

3. After the Muslim conquest of Oriens in the thirties, the various Arab tribes were settled in the famous four junds, military circumscriptions into which Syria was divided.¹⁷⁴ These tribes of the fourth century are attested in Muslim Syria and associated with the momentous events that took place in the first century of the Muslim Era even until the fall of the Umayyad dynasty. The power of the Umayyads rested on the Jund system, on these very same tribes of pre-Islamic times that stayed on in the service of the Umayyads and formed the military and political mainstay of the dynasty. The number of tribes constituting the Junds, the Umayyad armies in Syria, was swelled by newcomers from Arabia, Muslim Arab tribes, who were settled side by side with the old pre-Islamic Christian tribes of Byzantine times.¹⁷⁵ The list of federate tribes in the fourth century and in the fifth and sixth as well is important for separating the Muslim tribes of the Umayyad Junds from the Christian ones (those who were Christian or who had been Christian), a matter of some importance to understanding the politics of the Umayyad period in Syria and the history of the dynasty. It is noteworthy that the two most powerful and reliable tribes in the service of the Umayyads were Kalb¹⁷⁶ and Juḏām; they belonged to the oldest of all these tribes, since they go back to the original list of federates in the fourth century, and most probably even earlier when they were in some relationship to Rome.

V. TOPONYMICAL OBSERVATIONS

The preceding discussion has attempted the reconstruction of the Arab federate presence in Oriens in the fourth century and the indication of the range and

¹⁷³Possibly also their victory at Mu'ta in A.D. 629, fought mostly by some of the oldest tribes in the service of Byzantium, Balqayn, Juḏām, Balī, and Lakhm, and consequently for centuries used to fighting in the advanced and sophisticated Roman manner.

¹⁷⁴Like the Greek *thema*, Arabic *jund* in this region and period meant both the army corps and the military circumscription. The relation of the Umayyad jund to the Byzantine theme will be discussed in detail in the third volume of this series. For the time being, see the preliminary observations of the present writer in "The Byzantine Origin of the Umayyad *Ajnād* (Theme) System," in *Abstracts of Papers*, Fifth Annual Byzantine Studies Conference, Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C., 1979, p. 21.

¹⁷⁵A list of some of the tribes, Christian and Muslim, constituting the four junds of Umayyad times may be found in Naṣr b. Muzāḥim's account of the battle of Ṣiffīn in A.D. 657; see his *Waq'at Ṣiffīn*, ed. 'A. M. Hārūn (Cairo, 1962), pp. 206–7.

¹⁷⁶It remained Christian for a long time after the rise of Islam and was very influential with both branches of the Umayyad ruling house, the Sufyānid and the Marwānid.

diversity of the problems related to that reconstruction. It has revealed that a number of tribes, not only the Tanūkhids, were deployed along the Byzantine limitrophe from the north in Mesopotamia and along the Euphrates to the south in Sinai and the confines of Egypt. But it has also been indicated that the important problem of where in Oriens each tribe dwelled or was deployed remains open in view of the fact that information on the whereabouts of these tribes derives from sources written in the Islamic period and describes the conditions that then prevailed. Some conclusions, however, were drawn with a fair degree of certainty on the areas where certain tribes dwelled in the fourth century, but the fact remains that these conclusions are general in nature. For them to be truly useful, more precision is needed which would define fairly precisely the stations of these federate tribes and would thus enable the historian of the oriental *limes* to assess and interpret the role of the Arab federate contribution in the defense system of Byzantium. The data from which the present investigation proceeds are not abundant, but they are the only ones available, and such as they are, they enable the first step to be taken. Future archeological and epigraphical discoveries will certainly further the progress of this investigation, and it is only such discoveries that are likely to accelerate this progress.

1

Before discussing the few specific toponyms that may be extracted from the Arabic sources, it is well that a general picture be drawn of the various tribes and tribal groups as they were or might have been deployed along the Byzantine limitrophe from Mesopotamia to Egypt in the fourth century. Something has already been said on this topic in the preceding section which dealt with a variety of problems, but the topic deserves a section exclusively devoted to it in which those observations will be amplified and will serve as a background against which will be set the discussion of the specific toponyms, mainly related to the Tanūkhids, that have survived in the Arabic sources.

These Arab federated tribes and tribal groups which formed the Arab shield of Byzantium in the fourth century may be divided into roughly three groups, following a tripartite geographical division of the oriental *limes*:

1. The northern sector along the Euphrates, across it in Mesopotamia and this side of it in northern Syria. Practically nothing is known about the identity of the federate tribes in Mesopotamia and where exactly they had their settlements in the fourth century. In the seventh, the Mesopotamian federate tribes are known by name—the trio Taghlib, Iyād, and Namir—¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁷On this trio, see *supra*, p. 383.

but whether or not a fourth-century presence can be predicated of one or more of these three tribes is not clear.

Arab tribes, however, had settled in Mesopotamia in ancient times,¹⁷⁸ and since then a significant Mesopotamian Arab presence was maintained around such urban centers as Ḥatra and Edessa in the third century A.D. The Arab dynasts of these two important urban centers no doubt had each their own Arab tribes as constituents of their respective military establishments. After the dismantling of the two Arab fortresses in the third century by the Persians and the Romans, many of the Arabs of these two centers must have become Roman Arabs and Persian Arabs; and the federate Arabs of Roman Mesopotamia in the fourth century no doubt were partly related to those Arabs of the third.¹⁷⁹ The reality of the federate Arab presence in Mesopotamia in the fourth century is reflected best in the pages of the *Res Gestae*, especially in Julian's Persian campaign.¹⁸⁰ Unfortunately, these pages are singularly lacking in specificity of reference to their tribal affiliation,¹⁸¹ and it is only in the seventh century that the student of the Arab *foederati* begins to form a clear picture of the tribal constitution of the Arab presence in Oriens, which in that century becomes very clear with reference to the trio Taghlib, Iyād, and Namir, fighting with Byzantium against the Muslim Arabs.¹⁸²

Related to these Mesopotamian Arabs geographically and functionally as participants in the Persian Wars of the fourth century were the Tanūkhids who dwelled this side of the Euphrates and who thus may be conceived as belonging to the federates of the northern sector. As the conclusions drawn in

¹⁷⁸See chap. 5, "Notitia Dignitatum," in RA. Reference to an Arabia in Mesopotamia is as early as Xenophon; see *Anabasis*, I.V.1.

¹⁷⁹After the Peace of Jovian in A.D. 363 and the cession of Singara, Nisibis, and so much of eastern Mesopotamia to Persia, Ammianus speaks of the transference of population from that lost Roman territory to western Mesopotamia. The presumption is that whatever federate Arabs were in that ceded part must have moved to the western part; besides, having been Christianized, they would have preferred to live in the Christian Roman Empire rather than in that of the fire-worshippers; for the transfer of the inhabitants of Singara, Nisibis, and the Roman fortresses, see Ammianus, *RG*, XXV.7.11; for a perceptive analysis of the peace treaty, see E. Chrysos, "Some Aspects of Roman-Persian Legal Relations," *Kleronomia*, 8 (1976), pp. 25–48.

¹⁸⁰For the federate Arab participation in Julian's Persian War, see *supra*, pp. 106–24.

¹⁸¹The only exception to this is Ammianus's reference to Podosacis, the phylarch of the Persian Arabs, the Assanitae, for whom, see *supra*, pp. 119–23. This precious reference only goes to show how precise knowledge of Arab-Byzantine relations in this period has suffered from the vogue of the term *Saracen* and its general application to all these tribes.

Such references as to be found in the Syriac sources are valuable in documenting the federate Arab presence late in the fifth century and the war between the federate Arabs of the two powers in divided Mesopotamia; see *Synodicon Orientale*, ed. J. B. Chabor (Paris, 1902), pp. 532–33.

¹⁸²For this trio of tribes, see *supra*, p. 382; Salih was possibly one of the tribal groups of the northern sector before it superseded Tanūkh as the dominant federate Arab group in Oriens; see *supra*, p. 385 note 137.

the second part of this section will show, they were encamped in Chalcidice, near the so-called *limes* of Chalcis.

2. The central sector roughly coincides with the two provinces of Phoenicia Libanensis and Arabia, especially the second. Firm toponymy in this sector is represented by Namāra,¹⁸³ where the Lakhmid king Imru' al-Qays was buried:

(a) In the Provincia Arabia must then be sought the dwellings of Lakhm.¹⁸⁴ Federate Arab tribes must have been stationed in this central sector since through this particular region passed the routes that could lead the nomadic invaders from the Arabian Peninsula into Phoenicia.¹⁸⁵

(b) What tribes other than Lakhm were in this sector is difficult to tell. However, mention must be made of the powerful and important tribe of Kalb;¹⁸⁶ it is well known that one of their possessions in the north of the Arabian Peninsula was Dūmat al-Jandal. In view of the strategic importance of Dūmat for the control of so many gateways to Oriens,¹⁸⁷ it is almost certain that Dūmat may be considered a firm toponym in the list of posts where there was a direct or an indirect Roman presence.¹⁸⁸

It was in this central sector, in Phoenicia Libanensis, that according to the *Notitia Dignitatum* two Saracen units were stationed at Thelsee and Betroclus.¹⁸⁹ If these two units of Saraceni turn out to be *foederati*, then the two

¹⁸³For Namāra, see the work of the scholar who made it famous by his discovery of the epitaph of Imru' al-Qays, Dussaud, *Topographie*, pp. 255, 269, 353, 371, 378; see also Poidebard, *Trace*, texte, pp. 61–62.

¹⁸⁴For Lakhm, see *supra*, p. 383 note 123, where the regions of Ḥawrān, Bathaniyya, and Jawlān were among the regions in which Lakhm was settled.

¹⁸⁵For a valuable discussion of these routes, between Dūmat al-Jandal (al-Jawf) on the one hand and Bostra, Damascus, and Emesa on the other, see Poidebard, *Trace*, pp. 96–104; also the older work of Musil, *Arabia Deserta*, pp. 316–18.

¹⁸⁶For Kalb, see *supra*, p. 385.

¹⁸⁷On the many routes into Oriens that began with Dūmat, see *supra*, note 185; on Dūmat itself, see the still valuable appendix of Musil in *Arabia Deserta* (1927), pp. 531–53.

¹⁸⁸On the Latin inscription found at Dūmat, see Bowersock, "Syria," p. 139 note 57. The wide diffusion of Kalb over a vast area in northern Arabia makes it difficult to allocate it precisely to the right sector. The Kalbite presence in such places so distant from each other as Samāwa and Dūmat in northern Arabia suggests that the tribe could be allocated to a region in Arabia parallel to both the central and southern sectors of the *limes*.

¹⁸⁹On these two units in the *ND*, see *supra*, p. 393, and chap. 5, "Notitia Dignitatum," in *RA*; on the two localities, see also Musil, *Palmyrena*, pp. 252–53. Musil identified one of the two localities, Thelsee, with Khan al-'Ajjas, but Dussaud's identification of that locality with Ḍumayr is more convincing; see *Topographie*, pp. 265, 270, 300–301. If correct, Thelsee/Ḍumayr would represent a remarkable instance of continuity in federate Arab presence at one and the same site from the fifth and probably an earlier century to the sixth when the Ghassānid Muḍir built his *purgos* near Ḍumayr. The stationing of the Saracen unit at Thelsee after the site had been occupied by Roman troops also represents the transference of the site to the care of the Arab *foederati* of the Byzantine period, a process that reached its climax in the sixth century with the Ghassānids.

localities or posts can be added to Namāra,¹⁹⁰ and the list of firm toponyms for this central sector of federate presence will consist of three, Namāra, Thelsee, and Betroclus. A further question will arise as to why these two units were singled out for mention in the *Notitia Dignitatum*,¹⁹¹ and why they were stationed in this particular province. One answer to this question could be that this was a fifth-century disposition of federate power, a rearrangement in response to the new conditions that obtained in the fifth century, namely, the peace with Persia, which no longer called for the stationing of seasoned federate troops along the Euphrates, but reassigned them to this sector against the permanent and persistent threats posed by the Arabs of the Peninsula.

3. The southern sector was constituted by the southern part of the Provincia Arabia which became Palestina Tertia toward the middle of the fourth century. Here lived the trio Juḏām, Balqayn, and 'Amila, and possibly Balī.¹⁹² It would be pleasant to be able to pinpoint the localities where these tribes lived in the fourth century, but without the help of the archeological and epigraphic evidence, it is idle to speculate. It is more profitable to indicate the regions where these tribes lived, namely, Sinai, Ḥisma, and Madyan.¹⁹³

¹⁹⁰It is noteworthy that Namāra was not only a station of the Lakhmid Arab *foederati* of Imru' al-Qays but was also a post of the legionary troops, those of the third Cyrenaica, the legion of Bostra. Whether the Arab federates were in occupation of Namāra simultaneously with the legionary detachment is not clear; what is important is the occupation of one and the same post, whether simultaneously or successively, by regular units of the Roman army and by Arab *foederati*. This raises the question whether other posts included in the *ND* were also so occupied. If so, the Namāra inscription would have thrown light on these unknown units, occupying well-known posts in the *ND*, and left unmentioned in that document, but whose contribution to the defense of the Orient was no less real in spite of their anonymity.

¹⁹¹Since the *ND* in its final extant form betrays its Theodosian period or the first half of the fifth century, it is possible that the two Saracen units were Salīhids, the new dominant Arab federate group in the fifth century; but there is no way of telling, and besides, the two posts may have been occupied or garrisoned in the fourth century by troops other than the two Saracen units.

¹⁹²For these four tribes, see *supra*, pp. 383–84. In addition to these four, known to the Arabic Islamic literary sources, there is Thamūd, for which see the relevant section in *RA*, chap. 5. The description of one of the two Thamudeni units in the *ND* as *Saraceni* raises the question of whether this particular unit was considered as still having federate status or whether it was incorporated into the Roman army as one of its regular units. If the former, then Thamūd or part of it may be added to this list of federate tribes; its station in Palestine, Birsama, may also be mentioned in this toponymic context.

¹⁹³Musil's appendices in his *Northern Hejaz* are still valuable for this area and this discussion: (a) on Ma'ān, the seat of Farwa, the Juḏāmi chief of the seventh century, see pp. 247–48; whether Juḏām occupied Ma'ān in the fourth century is not clear; (b) on his conception of the *limes interior* and the *limes exterior*, a controversial subject, pp. 257–59; (c) on the region of Madyan/Midian, pp. 278–98; (d) on the classical and Arabic authors on northern Ḥijāz, pp. 302–13; (e) on the region of al-Ḥismā, pp. 313–17; (f) on the important oasis of Tabūk, pp. 318–21. In addition to what Balāḏūrī says on its inhabitants' paying the poll tax to Muhammad in A.D. 630, it might be mentioned that Muhammad considered Tabūk the point where Shām (Oriens from the Taurus to Sinai) ended and Yaman began, the implication being that Tabūk

These tribes were settled far from the Persian border and the Euphrates front, but they were strategically stationed on the roads that led from Ḥijāz into the Provincia Arabia and Palestina Tertia, more easily defensible by Arabs than by regular Roman soldiers. They also maintained law and order internally, especially in a region such as Sinai.¹⁹⁴

2

It remains to discuss the toponyms that are to be found in the sources, mainly Arabic, associated with the dominant group of *foederati* in the fourth century, namely, Tanūkh, in order to establish where in Oriens Byzantium's chief group of *foederati* were settled and where exactly they had their camps.

There can be no doubt that these settlements were in the northern sector of Oriens,¹⁹⁵ this side of the Euphrates, mainly in the region of Chalcidice. In support of this, the following may be adduced:

1. The Tanūkhids went over to the Romans after they fell out with the Persians; thus they entered Oriens after crossing the Euphrates, and it makes sense to argue that they were settled not far from the Euphrates and the Persian frontier so that they might participate in the wars of the fourth century against Persia.

2. That Saracens and important groups participated in the wars of that century is fully attested in the *Res Gestae*; the many references to the Arab *foederati* who joined the army of Julian suggest that these did in fact take part in Julian's war against the Persians, while a check on the localities at which they met Julian, such as Callinicum, suggests that they were settled in the northern sector not far from the Euphrates.¹⁹⁶

3. There is an explicit reference in a major Arab historian to their settlement in this northern sector, near Chalcis (Qinnasrīn), immediately after they

is the last southern station of the Roman presence in Arabia; on this, see al-Wāqidi, *Maghāzi*, vol. 3, p. 1021.

¹⁹⁴For Banū-Šāliḥ as custodians of the Holy Mountain, see *supra*, p. 385 note 133.

¹⁹⁵In the time of the Arab Conquests, Tanūkh fought in various places, and not only in northern Syria, e.g., at Dūmat al-Jandal; see Kindermann, *EI*, 4, pp. 229–30. Their ubiquitous presence in Oriens is not evidence that they lived in all the places mentioned; they formed one of the contingents of the Christian Arab army under the command of the Ghassānid Jabala b. al-Ayham, and they appeared wherever they were needed to repel Muslim arms. Kindermann (*ibid.*, p. 229), unaware that they were the *foederati* of Byzantium, thought they must have moved from Ḥatra (Ḥadr) when they joined the army of Heraclius during his counterattack. They could easily have retreated with the Byzantines after the initial defeats and returned with them for the counteroffensive.

¹⁹⁶On the dealings of Julian with the Arabs before and after they joined his army at Callinicum and then marched with him along the Euphrates to Circesium and elsewhere, see Chap. 3 on Julian, *supra*, pp. 105–24. On the possibility of a Tanūkhid military station in the fourth century near Callinicum, see *infra*, p. 406.

had crossed over to the Romans.¹⁹⁷ In addition to this most important reference, others in the later Muslim historians and geographers unanimously confirm that the Tanūkhids were indeed settled in this sector and continued to live in it in Islamic times.¹⁹⁸

4. Finally, that Greek inscription found outside Anasartha, presumed to be the epitaph of the Arab queen, Mavia, or one related to her, is a precious and welcome piece of evidence that corroborates the conclusions drawn from the Arabic sources on the location of Tanūkh's settlements in Oriens.¹⁹⁹

References to specific toponyms associated with the Tanūkhids may be presented as follows:

(1) The safest and most solid guide to this toponymy of Tanūkh is the historian of the Muslim Conquests, Balāḍurī. In his *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, he explicitly states while speaking of the conquest of Syria in the thirties of the seventh century that the Tanūkhids were then to be found in two localities, near Chalcis (Qinnasrīn) and Beroea (Aleppo).²⁰⁰

The specificity that informs Balāḍurī's statements on Tanūkh is extremely important:

(a) As will have been noted in the previous section, the various Arab federate tribes at the time of the conquests appear in various places in Oriens, apparently rushed from one place to another to meet the Muslim peril, wherever that appeared. It is difficult—with few exceptions, as in the case of the trio Judām, ʿĀmila, and Balqayn—to know the region where each of the tribes was settled. But in the case of Tanūkh it is possible to establish it with certainty since Balāḍurī speaks not only of Tanūkh but also of their fixed settlements and structures near Chalcis and Beroea, which suggests that they were indeed settled in that region and that their appearance elsewhere was occasioned only by the fluctuating fortune of the war with the Muslims and by the fact that they were rushed here and there wherever they were needed.²⁰¹

(b) Furthermore, Balāḍurī goes out of his way to state that it was in Chalcis or near it that Tanūkh was *first* settled when they crossed over to the Romans, that originally they had lived in tents, and that subsequently

¹⁹⁷For a further treatment of this most important reference which traces them back to the period of their first settlement in Oriens in the fourth century and possibly the third, see *infra*, pp. 401–3.

¹⁹⁸It is noteworthy that they continued to live in this region of Chalcis from the thirties of the seventh century till the eighties of the eighth, the period of their encounter with the Abbasid caliph, al-Mahdi, for which see *infra*, pp. 423–32. Their continuing presence in the same region in the Muslim period in spite of their difficult position as Christians in the new order suggests that they were attached to their Christian locales of pre-Islamic times and equally suggests that this was their region throughout the pre-Islamic period as well.

¹⁹⁹On this Greek inscription, see *supra*, pp. 222–27.

²⁰⁰Balāḍurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, vol. 1, pp. 172–73.

²⁰¹For this, see also *supra*, note 195.

they erected *manāzil*, permanent solid structures.²⁰² This makes certain that they were in that region in the fourth century and that they continued to live there until the seventh when Abu-'Ubayda, the Muslim commander, made peace with them in the thirties.

(c) Important is the term that Balāḍurī uses for the habitations of the Tanūkhids near Chalcis and Beroea. He uses the Arabic term *ḥāḍir*, a technical term in the military lexicology of Arabic, indicating a military camp.²⁰³ The Tanūkhids that the Muslims met in the region were then military groups, living in solid structures outside city walls. This answers exactly to the *paremboles* of the Greek writers when they refer to the settlements or military encampments of the Arabs, which were, as Balāḍurī's text indicates, outside the city walls of the major cities.²⁰⁴ The Tanūkhids, then, whom the Muslims met in this northern sector of Oriens were a military group, the federates of the Arab shield, stationed in Chalcidice, and settled there for at least some three centuries from the fourth to the seventh.²⁰⁵ The two well-known cities in northern Syria, Chalcis and Beroea, must then be considered as the first two places associated with the Tanūkhids.

(2) Not as clear as his references to Chalcis and Beroea is a third one, to a locality not far from these two cities, which Balāḍurī does not locate precisely and which he refers to in the same account of the conquest of Chalcidice by the Muslims; he speaks of the Ḥiyār of Banū-al-Qa'qa'²⁰⁶ which 'Absid Arabs occupied in Umayyad times ca. A.D. 700 but which according to Balāḍurī was a pre-Islamic locality associated with the Lakhmid Muḍir of the sixth century.

In spite of his imprecision in locating Ḥiyār, Balāḍurī's statement is valuable for the student of Arab-Byzantine relations and possibly for Tanūkhid toponymy:

²⁰²The statement gains in credibility when it is remembered that the information scattered on Tanūkh in these later Islamic sources all derives from an excellent source, Hishām, who devoted to Tanūkh a special work, *Akḥbār Tanūkh wa Ansābuhā*; see *supra*, p. 360.

²⁰³Further on this technical term and its conjugate, *ḥīra*, see "The Etymology of *Ḥīra*," *infra*, pp. 490–98.

²⁰⁴On *parembole* translating Arabic *ḥīra*, *ḥayr*, see *ibid.*, p. 496. The prefix, *para*, could also suggest that it translated *ḥāḍir*, too; the Greek term probably was used to render either of the two Arabic military terms which, deriving as they do from two different roots, probably came to have much the same signification; yet *ḥayr*, *ḥīra*, may have retained a distinctive nuance.

²⁰⁵The *ḥāḍir* of Beroea (Aleppo) was seen by Yāqūt himself who noticed it briefly; by then its name had become *ḥāḍir* al-Sulaymaniyya: Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, vol. 2, p. 206.

²⁰⁶Balāḍurī, *op. cit.*, pp. 173–74. He does not specify where this locality is, nor is the place of his account of *ḥiyār* clear in his narrative. Perhaps there is something missing in the manuscript of Balāḍurī's *Futūḥ al-Buldān*. Ḥiyār, however, is known to Yāqūt who considers it belongs to the desert of Chalcis (Qinnasrīn), and Nöldeke is probably right in thinking it was north or northeast of Epiphania (Hama); see Nöldeke, *GF*, p. 18 note 2. In Bakrī, it appears as one of the stations of Sayf al-Dawla on his way from Aleppo to al-Raqqā, and apparently was known for its waters; see Bakrī, *Mu'jam*, *s.v.* al-Ramusa, vol. 2, p. 629.

(a) It is certain that the text should be corrected from *maqīl* to *maqṭal*. Al-Ḥiyār thus becomes the place where Muṣṭafī, the Lakhmid king, was “killed” rather than “rested” or had as his “resting place,” and this is a valuable explicit statement on a vexed question.²⁰⁷

(b) Which Arab tribal group occupied Ḥiyār in pre-Islamic times is not stated by Balāḍurī. But the context—its location in Chalcidice and reference to the Tanūkhid military encampments near Chalcis and Beroea—suggests that this, too, was a Tanūkhid military camp and thus may be added as a third one after Chalcis and Beroea to the list of Tanūkhid toponyms.

(c) It is noteworthy that the term used to designate this locality is *ḥiyār*, not *ḥādīr*, but like the latter it is a technical term in the military terminology of the Arabic language. The two terms, as has been noted, are derived from two different roots but came to have much the same signification.²⁰⁸ As Ḥiyār, plural of *ḥayr* or *ḥīra*, is an Arabian word, Arabic or Sabaic, it is quite likely that it was brought to the Fertile Crescent by an emigrant Arabian group such as the Tanūkhids.

3. One of the verses of a poet born in pre-Islamic times, Ṣakhr al-Ghayy, of the tribe of Huḍayl, contains a precious reference to two certainly Christian Arab localities in northern Syria, most probably Tanūkhid.²⁰⁹ In the amatory prelude to one of his poems, he employs a simile that involves a Christian monk whose abode or abodes are associated with Rum (the *Rhomaioi*), Tanūkh, and two localities, Ṣawwarān and Zabad.

The verse testifies to the Christianity of Tanūkh, its associations with the *Rhomaioi*, and its proximity to two localities that are known to be in northern Syria, Ṣawwarān and Zabad. The chances that the two localities are Tanūkhid ones are good; they are Christian sites, in northern Syria, the very same area that Tanūkh is known to have inhabited, and contextually they are associated with it in the verse of the pre-Islamic poet:

(a) That Zabad was a pre-Islamic Christian center is known from the

²⁰⁷For Nöldeke's perspicacity in sifting the conflicting reports on this most important *yawm*, battle-day between the Lakhmids and the Ghassānids in the sixth century, see *GF*, p. 18; this explicit statement in Balāḍurī on Muṣṭafī's *maqṭal* (as a noun of place) at Ḥiyār corroborates Nöldeke's conclusion.

²⁰⁸It would be of considerable interest for determining what exactly the difference between these two military terms is if one knew more about these two military federate camps so close to each other, the first of which is described as *ḥādīr*, while the second is described as *ḥiyār* or *ḥayr*, and whether the different terminology reflects some functional or structural difference between the two terms. It is noteworthy that *ḥayr* and *ḥa'ir*, more allied to *ḥīra* than to *ḥadr* etymologically, are attested in Islamic times as terms with a nonmilitary connotation, meaning game preserves.

²⁰⁹For this verse, see *Kitāb Sharḥ Ash'ār al-Hudāliyyīn*, ed. 'A. A. Farrāj (Cairo, n.d.), vol. 1, pp. 254–55; on Ṣakhr al-Ghayy, see *GAS*, vol. 2, pp. 144–45. Some attribute the verse to another poet from the tribe of Huḍayl, namely, 'Amr ḍu al-Kalab, a pre-Islamic poet, for whom see *ibid.*, p. 254; on the attribution of the verse to this 'Amr, see *Aghānī*, XXII, 379.

dated trilingual inscription that was discovered there in the last century.²¹⁰ Valuable as the inscription is in so many respects, it has not given a clue as to what group of Christian Arabs Zabad belonged to; this verse makes very possible a Tanūkhid affiliation for Zabad or its Arabs.²¹¹

(b) Unlike Zabad, the second locality, Ṣawwarān, has not been recognized as an Arab Christian or even a Christian center.²¹² Thus the information provided by the verse referred to above is welcome as it adds to the small list of Arab Christian centers. The verse is also specific on Ṣawwarān, its *āṭām* (plural of *uṭm* or *utum*), fortifications, which brings to mind the military establishments, the *ḥādīrs* of the Tanūkhids in Chalcis or near Chalcis and Beroea, or possibly the fortified monasteries of this period in Syria.²¹³ But this reference to Ṣawwarān poses a problem of identification; the sources mention two Ṣawwarāns,²¹⁴ one belonging to the Jund of Ḥimṣ (Emesa) and another situated to the north of Beroea (Aleppo) near Dābiq. The latter rather than the former is likely to be a Tanūkhid locality since it is within the territory of Chalcis or the Jund of Chalcis (Qinnasrīn) in Islamic times.²¹⁵

²¹⁰For bibliography on this celebrated *trilinguis*, see *IGLSYR*, vol. 2, p. 178.

²¹¹For Zabad (Zebed), see Dussaud, *Topographie*, p. 204, and Mouterde and Poidebard, *Limes*, pp. 161–71; it is relevant in this connection to mention that Yāqūt considers Zabad part of the territory of Chalcis (Qinnasrīn), and this could promote the possibility of its Tanūkhid origin to a probability; see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam*, vol. 3, p. 130. It could, of course, also be associated with the Ghassānids of the sixth century, but it is noteworthy that the trilingual inscription found there is dated A.D. 511, that is, before the extension of Ghassānid jurisdiction over the Arabs of Oriens ca. 530.

²¹²It does not appear in Mouterde and Poidebard's *Limes*, a specialized work on the region, nor in Poidebard's *Tracé*; Souwar, which appears in the latter work (pp. 133–34), is a different locality, a station or post on the Trans-Euphratesian *limes* of Khābūr. It does, however, appear in Dussaud's *Topographie*, transliterated as Soran, Ṣoran, Sawaran (p. 208), and Souran (p. 222); it had received better and more detailed treatment at the hands of M. Hartmann in "Beiträge zur Kenntnis der Syrischen Steppe," *ZDPV*, 22 (1899), pp. 155, 158; 23 (1900), pp. 20, 117, 125. Hartmann depended on such authors as Istakhri, Yaʿqūbī, and Yāqūt for his account of Ṣawwarān, but these authors are not informative on its pre-Islamic Christian past. Yaʿqūbī, however, mentions that Ṣawwarān in the territory of Ḥimṣ was in his day inhabited by Iyād, but whether the Iyād were still Christian when Yaʿqūbī wrote is not clear. Yāqūt, however, cites this very verse from Ṣakhr al-Ghayy in his entry on Ṣawwarān, but it is the preceding line, which he does not quote, that brings out the Christian character of Ṣawwarān in pre-Islamic times.

²¹³It may have been like Zabad, one of the refuge-cities, for which see Mouterde and Poidebard, *Limes*, p. 237. It is of interest to note that Ṣawwarān in the territory of Emesa (Ḥimṣ) is mentioned in an Arabic Muslim chronicle and included among the *ḥuṣūn* that fell to Tancred in the year 498 of the Hijra, the Muslim Era; Hartmann, "Beiträge," *ZDPV*, 23 (1900), p. 125.

²¹⁴See Bakrī, *Muʿjam*, vol. 3, p. 847, and Yāqūt, *Muʿjam*, vol. 3, p. 433.

²¹⁵Unfortunately Yaʿqūbī's account of the Jund of Chalcis (Qinnasrīn) has not survived; so there is no way of telling whether he included this Ṣawwarān in his account; the fact that the inhabitants of the other Ṣawwarān in the territory of Ḥimṣ was inhabited by Christian Iyād in Islamic times could argue that another Christian group such as the Tanūkh might have been in the other and that it is this other one that was meant in the verse of the pre-Islamic poet,

(4) Anasartha (Arabic Khunāšira) may be added to the list of toponyms with which the Tanūkhids were associated. The evidence in this case does not come from the Arabic but from the Greek sources, from epigraphy, from that precious dated inscription that has already been analyzed.²¹⁶ Whether or not the Tanūkhids established a presence within the city walls is not clear, but they seem to have had a shrine *extra muros*, and the presumption is that there was at least a camp, a *ḥāḍir*, not unlike those in which the Muslim Arabs found the Tanūkhids settled in the thirties of the seventh century near Chalcis and Beroea. Thus the chances are that the Tanūkhids did maintain a presence in Anasartha itself or a strong presence in the vicinity; the city is even closer to the desert regions near the Euphrates and Scenarchia²¹⁷ than both Chalcis and Beroea, and apparently it had an Arab ethnic complexion.²¹⁸

(5) Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān could easily be added to this list of Tanūkhid toponyms in pre-Islamic times. Although there is no reference to it as such in pre-Islamic sources, the later Islamic authors provide data that point to its pre-Islamic Tanūkhid character. Its possible or even probable association not only with Tanūkh but also with the Tanūkhid king, al-Nu'mān, has been discussed in a previous section.²¹⁹ It remains to give a few more details that will link Ma'arrat with Tanūkh and Christianity; they pertain to Islamic times, but unmistakably point to a strong pre-Islamic Christian complexion: (a) in the tenth century, there is reference to a church in Ma'arrat, called *kanīsat al-A'rāb*, "the church of the nomads or bedouins";²²⁰ (b) and even in the thirteenth century there is a reference to a monastery in Ma'arrat.²²¹

That such vestiges of Christianity should have survived or lingered on in

but no certainty can be predicated. For Iyād in Ṣawwarān, see Ya'qūbī, "Kitāb al-Buldān," *BGA*, 7 (reprinted Leiden, 1967), p. 324.

²¹⁶See *supra*, pp. 222–27.

²¹⁷What has been said above on Anasartha is even more true of Sergiopolis (Ruṣāpha), closer to Scenarchia than Anasartha. The Ghassānids of the sixth century certainly established a strong presence in it, although their main base was in the faraway Jawlān. Thus, the Tanūkhids, who lived in the northern sector so close to the shrine of St. Sergius, are likely to have had a presence in the vicinity, for religious as well as for military reasons; St. Sergius may have been their patron saint as he was to be that of the Ghassānids.

For Scenarchia of George of Cyprus in the sixth century, see the map in Jones, *Cities*, opposite p. 226.

²¹⁸On the Arab Abimenes, who ca. 600 was involved in the restoration of the walls and gates of Anasartha, see *IGLSYR*, vol. 2, nos. 281, 288. Yāqūt thought Anasartha was founded by an Arab king; what matters in Yāqūt's statement is not truth or accuracy but the feeling of this discriminating Arab geographer that the town had strong Arab associations even in pre-Islamic times; see Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, s.v. For useful material in the Arabic sources on Anasartha, see Musil, *Palmyrena*, p. 204 note 58.

²¹⁹*Supra*, p. 377.

²²⁰The reference to this church occurs in Abu al-'Alā' al-Ma'arri, *Risālat al-Ghufrān*, ed. 'A. Abdurrahmān (Cairo, 1963), p. 422.

²²¹See al-Qiftī, *Inbāh al-Ruwāt 'alā Anbāh al-Nuḥāt*, ed. M. Ibrāhīm (Cairo, 1950), vol. 1, p. 70.

Ma'arrat so late in the Islamic period suggests a very strong Christian past for the city that the Tanūkhids continued to inhabit in Islamic times, Muslim as they or most of them became.

(6) In his accounts of the Muslim Conquests, Balāḍurī speaks of the "ḥāḍīr of the Arabs" around al-Raḡqa (Callinicum).²²² Although his account describes conditions that prevailed in the seventh century during the conquest of Mesopotamia, yet it is not impossible that the site had been occupied in the fourth by the Tanūkhids. In support of this view the following may be advanced:

(a) Callinicum was an important station in the Roman system of defense, located as it was at the confluence of the Balīḥ with the Euphrates. The Tanūkhids were settled in the north, and it is quite likely that Rome's dominant Arab group had a camp, a ḥāḍīr, in the fourth century there for participation in the Persian Wars.²²³

(b) It was at Callinicum that the Arab *foederati* of the fourth century met the Emperor Julian, on his way to meet the Persians.²²⁴ This does not necessarily establish that the Tanūkhids had a ḥāḍīr there, but it could possibly associate Callinicum with Tanūkh in the fourth century. It is, therefore, not unlikely that the Tanūkhids who had other ḥāḍīrs in Chalcidice and whose main function was participation in the Persian War, also had a ḥāḍīr near Callinicum.

(c) Around A.D. 530, Arab federate power was centralized and placed in the hands of the Ghassānids, who thus become ubiquitous in Oriens, occupying various sites far from their base in the Provincia Arabia and the Jawlān. They are attested in Sergiopolis and in Thelsee/Dumayr,²²⁵ and they could conceivably have been in occupation of this ḥāḍīr near Raḡqa when the Muslim Arabs captured it in A.D. 639. But just as there had been a group of Arabs at Thelsee in the fifth century other than the Ghassānids, so there might have been another group of Arabs at the ḥāḍīr of Raḡqa in the fourth century long before the Ghassānids could have occupied it, and the Tanūkhids are the most likely group of occupants in that century. It is also noteworthy that Balāḍurī

²²²Balāḍurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, vol. 1, p. 205; the preposition used, ḥawla ("around"), makes it difficult to visualize where and how the ḥāḍīr was located. Perhaps ḥawla simply means near and close to Raḡqa. That the ḥāḍīr was a military camp is clear from the context: it is contrasted with the *fallāḥūn*, farmers, mentioned immediately after; and the term is of course known to Balāḍurī as a military one; indeed it is to him that the student of this period owes the references to the various military ḥāḍīrs of Tanūkh and Ṭayy mentioned above and to that of Ghassān (*ibid.*, p. 74).

²²³Important material on al-Raḡqa (Callinicum) from both classical and Oriental sources was put together by Musil in his *Middle Euphrates*, pp. 325–31.

²²⁴*Supra*, p. 107; it was also at Callinicum that the Arabs offered Julian the *aurum coronarium*.

²²⁵See *supra*, note 189.

does not specify which group of Arabs were in occupation of that *ḥāḍīr*. So its association with Tanūkh even in the seventh century is not out of the question. Apparently it was not a specifically Ghassānid *ḥāḍīr*; if it had been, Balāḍurī might have said so, since the Ghassānids were the dominant group in that century and he had mentioned them repeatedly before; the chances then are that it was a *ḥāḍīr* for groups of Arabs, not one, just as other *ḥāḍīrs* were, and that one of these groups were those close to it geographically, namely, the Tanūkhids.

(7) In a different category from all the preceding references that pertain to pre-Islamic times or are even found in pre-Islamic sources on the toponymy of Tanūkh are a few references in the Arabic sources to Tanūkh and its whereabouts in Islamic times: (a) Epiphania (Ḥama) according to Yaʿqūbī²²⁶ was peopled mainly by Tanūkh and Bahrāʾ; (b) Laodicea (al-Lāḍīqiyya) according to al-Hamdānī²²⁷ was also a town where the Tanūkh lived; and (c) according to Iṣṭakhri,²²⁸ the mountain range from Laodicea to Emesa was called “Jabal Bahrāʾ wa Tanūkh,” “the Mountain of Bahrāʾ and Tanūkh.”

Thus even in Islamic times, Tanūkh was to be found settled in the northern sector of Syria, slightly to the southwest of the various settlements discussed in the preceding paragraphs. Whether they lived in the two cities Epiphania and Laodicea also in pre-Islamic times or outside the walls remains an open question.

Perhaps this discussion has established with some precision the whereabouts of Tanūkh in Oriens in the fourth century. It was clearly in the northern sector, and the toponyms associated with them may be gathered together now in a single enumeration: Chalcis, Beroea, Ḥiyār, Anasartha, Maʿarrat al-Nuʿmān, and possibly Zabad and Ṣawwarān. Whether they lived in Epiphania and Laodicea in pre-Islamic as they did in Islamic times is not entirely clear, nor is their association with the mountain to which they gave their name, Jabal Tanūkh.

Thus, of the various tribal groups that constituted the Arab shield of Byzantium in the fourth century, the Tanūkhids are the best known, and this is natural since they were the dominant group of the Arab *foederati* in that century. The settlements of the other constituent tribes of the Arab shield are known only regionally in a general fashion, but in the case of the Tanūkhids it is known with some precision, as this section on toponymy has shown. They are thus the only Arab group in the fourth century that make possible a fruitful discussion of the Arab federate contribution to the Roman defense system in the Orient in the fourth century.

²²⁶Yaʿqūbī, *Buldān*, p. 324.

²²⁷Hamdānī, *Ṣīfat*, p. 275.

²²⁸Istakhri, “*Masālik al-Mamālik*,” *BGA*, 1, p. 56.

APPENDIX I

Jabala b. Sālim

Nöldeke suggested that Hishām had a *kātib*, a secretary, by the name of Jabala b. Sālim, who translated for him certain works written in Pahlevi.¹ He based this suggestion on a text in the *Fibrīst* (pp. 244–45) that refers to Jabala b. Sālim as one of a group of translators from Pahlevi into Arabic, and it reads: “Jabala b. Sālim, the *kātib* of Hishām, who was mentioned before.” Nöldeke argued that of the two possible Hishāms that could have been meant in this context, namely, the Umayyad caliph and the Kalbite historian, the first is out of the question, since such translations from Pahlevi as are ascribed to Jabala—the *Book of Rustam and Isfandiyār* and the *Book of Babrām Chūbīn* (*Fibrīst*, p. 305)—were not made as early as the reign of the Caliph Hishām (A.D. 725–43). Only the historian can be meant here, who thus had at his disposal the Persian material he needed for his work on the Arabs and the Arab-Persian relationship.

This view cannot be accepted. As it involves the Caliph Hishām and his namesake the historian, and one, possibly two, important translators of the eighth century, it needs and deserves a thorough examination:

(1) There is no reference earlier in the *Fibrīst* to a *kātib* for Hishām, the historian. Ibn-al-Nadīm’s account of Hishām in the *Fibrīst* (pp. 95–98) is extensive, and if Hishām had had a *kātib*, he would have mentioned the noteworthy fact.

(2) If Hishām had a *kātib* who translated for him *Persica*, the alleged fact would have been reflected in his books, of which Ibn-al-Nadīm has given a very extensive list. And yet the only book of Hishām’s on Persian matters is the one entitled *Kitāb Mulūk al-Ṭawāʾif*, not related to the books translated by Jabala b. Sālim, namely, *Kitāb Rustam and Isfandiyār* and *Kitāb Babrām Chūbīn*.²

A close examination of the text that led Nöldeke to argue the way he did reveals that he misconstrued it; when correctly understood, it yields information that is perfectly consonant with the data furnished by Ibn-al-Nadīm in the *Fibrīst*. Apparently Nöldeke was himself aware that he might have misunderstood the puzzling statement of Ibn-al-Nadīm, since he begins a footnote on this subject with: “*Verstehe ich den Text richtig.*”³ The statement may be quoted again here: “Jabala b. Sālim, the *kātib* of Hishām, who was mentioned before”:

(1) In this text, the clause “who was mentioned before” does not refer to Jabala but to his father, Sālim, who was indeed “the *kātib* of Hishām.” Nöldeke assumed it refers to Hishām; hence his efforts to look for an appropriate Hishām, whom he thought was the historian, not the caliph.

(2) The Hishām mentioned in this text is not the historian but the caliph. The historian would not have been referred to simply as Hishām but by his patronymic or

¹See *PAS*, pp. xxvii, 474–75.

²Bahrām Chūbīn lived in the sixth century and belonged to the Sasanid period, while Rustam and Isfandiyār are two legendary heroes and the *Kitāb* on them presumably tells of the fight between the two. Neither book can be identified with *Kitāb Mulūk al-Ṭawāʾif* or can have been a tributary source to it.

³*PAS*, p. 475 note 1.

his tribal affiliation, and so he is referred to in the entry devoted to him, entitled Hishām al-Kalbī (*Fibrīst*, p. 95). The more cogent argument, however, for his being the caliph is the fact that Ibn-al-Nadīm does indeed refer to a Sālīm who is described as “*kātib* of Hishām,” and there is no doubt that it was the caliph that was meant in this text on Sālīm since his patronymic is added, “ibn ‘Abdulmalik” (*Fibrīst*, p. 117).

Thus, this biographical notice of Sālīm solves the problem and answers all the questions that may possibly be raised about the biographical notice of Jabala b. Sālīm. When the two notices are put together, the following conclusions may be deduced:

(1) Not one but two translators are involved: the first, Sālīm of the reign of Hishām, who must have flourished in the first half of the eighth century; the second, Jabala, who was his son, and who may be assigned to the second generation, following his father; his *floruit* may be assigned to the second half of the eighth century.

(2) Nöldeke argued that such Persian translations as are associated with Jabala’s name were done later than the reign of Hishām. This, as will presently be argued, is not a very valid objection, but the realization that Jabala is the son of the Sālīm of the reign of Hishām should answer Nöldeke’s objection since he would belong to the second half of the eighth century when, according to Nöldeke, such translations were made.

(3) It is interesting to note that the father, Sālīm, translates not Persian but Greek material—some of the letters of Aristotle to Alexander—while the son, Jabala, translates from Pahlevi.

Perhaps the foregoing paragraphs have established beyond doubt that the Hishām involved is the caliph and that the historian did not have a *kātib* who translated for him from Persian. It remains, however, to entertain the possibility that not two but one translator may have been involved in these texts in the *Fibrīst*.

It is noteworthy that in the entry on Sālīm, the title is just Sālīm. One would have expected a patronymic but only a tecronymic is provided.⁴ It is, therefore, just possible that “Jabala ibn” dropped out of the title which in its entirety would have read “Jabala ibn Sālīm”; according to this, the reference to him in the *Fibrīst* (pp. 244–45) would also make very good sense, since the clause “who was mentioned before” would refer to Jabala b. Sālīm, referred to before and described as the *kātib* of the caliph Hishām (*Fibrīst*, p. 117). In support of this view the following may be noted:

(1) There is no difficulty in Jabala’s having lived and translated in Umayyad and Abbasid times. Ibn-al-Muqaffa⁵, the much more famous translator from Pahlevi, lived

⁴The titles of other entries in the *Fibrīst* consist sometimes of one single name, but in the opening statement of each entry a *nasab* is provided, as in the case of al-Zuhri (pp. 91, 95). In the case of Sālīm, only his name is given, to which is added an unsatisfactory *kunya*, Abu al-‘Alā’, which does not reveal his pedigree as a patronymic would have done; cf. the *nasab* given to such *mawālī* as Ḥammād and Jannād on pp. 91–92.

⁵Thus the clause would have a more natural referent, i.e., Jabala himself, the translator who was being discussed, rather than his father, Sālīm, in much the same way that an identical clause describes Balāqūrī, not his father, in the sentence immediately preceding the one on Jabala. What the tribal or ethnic affiliation of Jabala was is not clear; he could have been a Ghassānid since Jabala, an uncommon name, was assumed by more than one Ghassānid.

and worked in both periods. It is noteworthy that he was *kātib* to one of the very last Umayyad caliphs, and so he could very well have survived the Umayyads and worked in the early Abbasid period.

(2) As to his Persian translations, these could have been made in the Abbasid period or even during the reign of Hishām, which witnessed the Umayyad shift from the Byzantine to the Persian orientation.⁶ Hishām's story with the Persian *shu'ūbī* poet Ismā'il b. Yasār is well known, and there is no decisive argument against translations from Persian being made in the reign of Hishām.

(3) As to his having translated Aristotle's letters to Alexander (*Fibrīst*, p. 117), this could have been done either from Greek or from some other language into which they were already translated.⁷ Alternatively, he could have known both languages, Greek and Persian, and examples of translators who were trilingual in this period are not lacking.

It has been necessary to examine Nöldeke's view in some detail in view of the importance of what his interpretation of the text in the *Fibrīst* involving Jabala b. Sālīm expresses and implies. As Nöldeke's gaze when scanning a text was usually accipitral, his misinterpretation of this one must be construed as an example of Homer's nodding.

APPENDIX II

Mas'ūdī on the Tanūkhids

Al-Mas'ūdī's account of the Tanūkhids in his valuable chapter on "Mulūk al-Shām" needs to be examined (*Murūj*, vol. 2, p. 231). He speaks of the large tribal group "Quḏā'a" as being the first to settle in al-Shām (Syria) and to become attached, *indāfū*, to the Romans, who made them kings of the Arabs in Syria after they had adopted Christianity. Then he goes on to say: "And so the first king of Tanūkh was al-Nu'mān."

It is almost certain that when al-Mas'ūdī in the above paraphrase of his account speaks of "Quḏā'a", he means the Tanūkhids: (a) The Tanūkhids according to him belonged to the larger tribal group Quḏā'a genealogically, and so the historian unwittingly spoke of this larger group to which Tanūkh belonged rather than to the specific one among the Quḏā'a, namely, the Tanūkhids; in so doing, he was not mistaken but not precise enough. (b) It is clear from his account that the Arab group in question were made kings of the Arabs in Syria after they had adopted Christianity; this must reflect conditions not in the pagan empire but in the Christian one, that is, in the fourth century; and this settles the question decisively on the identity of the Quḏā'a group who were so honored, namely, the Tanūkhids, since the fourth is the century of

⁶On this see H. A. R. Gibb, "Arab-Byzantine Relations under the Umayyad Caliphate," *DOP*, 12 (1958), pp. 232-33; on the translation of Persian books in the second quarter of the eighth century, almost exactly coterminous with the reign of the Caliph Hishām, see Rosenthal, *HMH*, p. 29; and Shboul, *Al-Mas'ūdī*, pp. 106-7.

⁷His description as a relative of the famous Umayyad *kātib* 'Abdulhamīd b. Yaḥyā could confirm his knowledge of Greek. On the other hand, the two phrases *wa nuqila labū wa aslahā huwa*, which follow reference to his translation of Aristotle's letters to Alexander (*Fibrīst*, p. 117), could imply that his task was to perfect the Arabic of an already-translated text or perhaps to improve it.

their supremacy in Oriens, after which they were followed by the Salīhids of the fifth century, who, however, started their period of supremacy toward the end of the fourth. (c) His account of these, the Salīhids, also corroborates this conclusion on the Quḍā'a group's being the Tanūkhids. Mas'ūdī says that after adopting Christianity the Romans made them kings over the Arabs of Syria. In so writing he repeated what he had said on Quḍā'a in the preceding paragraph, and the two accounts betray what must have been his conception of the rise of these Arab "kingdoms" in the Byzantine period, namely, that they followed a certain pattern, the adoption of Christianity before their establishment by the Romans. But it was the Tanūkhids who held the first of these "kingdoms" in Syria, and so Mas'ūdī must have been thinking of them when he spoke of the Quḍā'a. The subject of the verb *indāfū* in the passage in question must then be not the Quḍā'a but the Tanūkhids among the Quḍā'a, a conclusion corroborated by his use of the inferential *fa* at the beginning of the sentence that specifically mentions Tanūkh, *fakāna*.

APPENDIX III

Further Observations on the List of Kings

The list of three kings presents a number of problems that need to be treated separately from the preceding section: (1) Ibn-Qutayba's version of it; (2) the possibility of a reference to Tanūkh in the Namāra inscription; and (3) the possible identification of Imru' al-Qays of that inscription with al-Nu'mān, the first king in the list.

A

The list of the kings of Tanūkh appears in the accounts of the historians Mas'ūdī, Ya'qūbī, and Ibn-Khaldun.¹ Ibn-Qutayba² also has the list, but he assigns it to Salīh, not Tanūkh! Caskel dismissed the list as "*indiskutabel*,"³ while Nöldeke's measured judgment on the two lists of the kings of Tanūkh and of Salīh was: "*Beide Reihe können richtig sein*."⁴ Nöldeke limited himself in his famous monograph on Arab-Byzantine relations to Ghassān and made acute observations on the phylarchate of Salīh but did not research Tanūkh. He had despaired of Tanūkh and of its early Peninsular history, and his despair was understandable and justified at a time when incontestable epigraphic evidence was not available. However, Nöldeke's flair for authentic rings in the Arabic sources encompassed the list of the Tanūkhid kings in Mas'ūdī, and the foregoing analysis of the list and of Tanūkhid history undertaken in this book is in a sense a tribute to his critical judgment.

Ibn-Qutayba was not a historian, and he is the only author who transferred the list from Tanūkh to Salīh. Although his account does not have the credibility of that of Mas'ūdī who was a historian, indeed was the *imam* of historians in the opinion of

¹References to the list to be found in such historians as Ya'qūbī and Ibn-Khaldun all derive from Mas'ūdī's account of the Tanūkhids which in turn derives, as has been argued above, from Hishām's book, *Akbbār Tanūkh wa Ansābuhā* (*supra*, p. 360).

²Ibn-Qutayba, *Kitāb al-Ma'ārif*, ed. Th. 'Ukāsha (Cairo, 1960), p. 640.

³Caskel, *GN*, vol. 2, p. 82 note 1.

⁴Nöldeke, *GF*, p. 8 note 2.

Ibn-Khaldun, yet it needs to be examined and the confusion in it has to be pointed out:

(1) His list is imprecise and confused as it does not include al-Ḥawārī, and the same is true of the sequence of the three kings.

(2) His list leaves no room for an Arab client-kingdom before Salīḥ, while it is established that there was such in the fourth century.

(3) The list of the kings of Salīḥ is relatively well known and confirmed in part by incontestable Greek sources. But the names of the three kings he wrongly assigns to Salīḥ do not appear in the list of the Salīḥids with the exception of 'Amr, which happens to be one of the commonest Arab names even in pre-Islamic times.

(4) He is unaware that as clients of Byzantium the Salīḥids belonged to the line of Zokomos, the Ḍajā'ima of the Arab historians, and yet the name Ḍajā'ima does not appear in his account, which is also confused in that he considers Salīḥ part of Ghassān.

(5) His account is also confused and unreliable concerning Jid', the Ghassānid who figures in the Ghassānid-Salīḥid conflict in Oriens; he gives him a role that ranged over the whole of western Arabia, as the killer of Samlaqa of the tribe of 'Akk in South Arabia, and it is only after wanderings to the north that Jid' kills the Salīḥid 'amil of the Romans in Oriens, after which he returns to Yathrib (Medina) where he plays a role in the defeat of the Jews. Jid' is a historical personality, well attested, but only his role in the Ghassānid-Salīḥid conflict is certain; and it is unlikely that he had anything to do with the struggle of Ghassān with 'Akk and the killing of its chief, Samlaqa, for which credit is given to the Ghassānid Zawba'a in Hishām's account.⁵

The value of Ibn-Qutayba's account of "Muluk al-Shām" consists not in his conception of the various Arab supremacies and their sequence in Oriens, but in data scattered here and there, which he preserved from sources not extant, such as the assistance rendered to the Meccan chief Quṣayy by Qayṣar⁶ (Caesar) and the Ghassānid campaign of al-Ḥārith b. Jabala against Khaybar in Ḥijāz.⁷

B

The Tanūkhid connections of Imru' al-Qays have been explored in a previous section,⁸ and the possibility of a reference to Tanūkh in the Namāra inscription may in this context be explored. In view of the strength of these Tanūkhid connections of Imru' al-Qays, the silence or seeming silence of the inscription, which mentions so many tribes, is startling.⁹ The third phrase in the first line offers the fairest chance for an emendatory effort involving Tanūkh.¹⁰

⁵See Caskel, *GN*, vol. 2, p. 510.

⁶*Kitāb al-Ma'ārif*, p. 640; for the Arabs, the Byzantine *autokrator* or *basileus* was Qayṣar; see the present writer in *EP*², s.v. Qayṣar.

⁷*Kitāb al-Ma'ārif*, p. 642.

⁸See "The List of Kings," *supra*, p. 374.

⁹On Caskel's view that Tanūkh is implied in the word *al-Asadyan* in the second line of the inscription, see the present writer in "Observations," pp. 35-36.

¹⁰The inscription has no word where the letter *khā'* is represented and with which the last letter of the word under discussion, presumed to be Tanūkh, can be compared. Only a

The crucial phrase in the first line of the inscription, usually transliterated *du asara al-tāj* and translated "who assumed the crown," could alternatively be transliterated *du asara al Tanūkh* and translated "who took captive (or strengthened) the (Royal) House of Tanūkh." This reading of *al-tāj* as *al Tanūkh* faces a paleographic objection, namely, that the letter *waw* is missing in Tanūkh. However, the fact that this was probably the first Arabic inscription to be expressed through the Nabataean script, the fact that other Semitic languages, e.g., Sabaic, spell Tanūkh without a *waw*,¹¹ and the unsatisfactory state of the preservation of the inscription, all could make acceptable the orthography of this word as standing for Tanūkh.

(a) The verb is ambivalent; it could mean "capture" or "take captive" the House of Tanūkh; this could easily be related to Ṭabarī's account of the struggle between his father, 'Amr, the founder of the Lakhmid line, with the Tanūkhid Abduljinn, and the fact that the Lakhmids superseded the Tanūkhids as the dominant Arab power on the Lower Euphrates. The inscription could be making a reference to his participation in such hostilities against the Tanūkhids or to the fact that Imru' al-Qays himself engaged on his own in some military operation against the Tanūkhids.

(b) More likely as a signification for the verb *asara* is not "to take captive" but "to bind," the primary meaning of the verb which is used in classical Arabic in this sense. A fugitive king from Sasanid Persia who was related to the Tanūkhids by blood is likely to have affiliated himself with his relatives established in Syria and in this sense may be said to have strengthened them.¹²

The paleographic difficulty noted above may disappear with the discovery of more Arabic texts in Nabataean characters in the region, but the unsatisfactory state of the script itself and of our own knowledge of it suggests that the paleographic

diacritical mark distinguishes the *jīm* from the *khā'* in the later Arabic script, and consequently these two letters may have been identical in the alphabetical system of this inscription; thus, what had been read as *jīm* in the word *tāj* could be a *khā'* in the same word, to be read as *Tanūkh*.

¹¹For the attestation of Tanūkh as *TNKH* in the Sabaic inscription, see Ryckmans, "Appendice," p. 509, line 11.

¹²This could derive support from the literary sources; Lakhm, according to Ibn-Ḥazm's genealogy, formed part of al-Aḥlāf, and the latter formed one of the three constituents of the Tanūkh Confederation; see Ibn-Ḥazm, *Jambarat*, p. 453, and *supra*, p. 372 note 78.

It is relevant in this connection to mention that not far from Namāra in the province of Arabia is Umm al-Jimāl, where was found the famous bilingual Greek-Nabataean inscription of Fihri, the tutor of Jaḍīma, "the king of Tanūkh." It is still not certain whether Jaḍīma's description as king of Tanūkh necessarily implies that Tanūkh was settled in that region since the funerary inscription honors not Jaḍīma but his tutor. However, the inscription with its reference to Tanūkh cannot be entirely left out in this connection, nor can the possible identification of Umm al-Jimāl with Thantia and the view that Thantia stands for Tanūkh; on all this, see *infra*, pp. 415–16.

The most important and original discussion of the Umm al-Jimāl bilingual in recent years is that of Maurice Sartre in "Le trophée de Gadhimat, roi de Tanukh: Une survivance en Arabie d'une institution hellénistique, *Liber Annuus*, 29 (1979), pp. 253–58. In spite of the persuasive arguments and ingenious conjectures which the author presents, certainty does not attend his conclusions on either the function of Fihri or his tribal affiliation and so the inscription remains as tantalizing as ever. Consequently, it is still difficult to use this most important epigraphic source for reconstructing the history of Tanūkh in Syria.

difficulty is not decisive against this interpretation which is presented only as a possibility. The student of the Namāra inscription cannot fail to be struck by the fact that it is a historical inscription of the first order and solutions of what this or that word is or seems to be may have to be sought extratextually, in the external historical order, outside the philological framework of the text, at least for hints on how the textual difficulties may be negotiated. Specifically, the inscription is remarkable for the great number of important tribes and tribal groups that it mentions, but one of the most important, namely, Tanūkh, is conspicuous by its absence, and it is this conspicuous absence that justifies at least as a possibility the reading of one of the words of the inscription as Tanūkh.¹³

C

With what has been said on the Tanūkhid connections of Imru' al-Qays as a background, it is not altogether impossible that al-Nu'mān, the first in the list of the Tanūkhid kings, could be identified with Imru' al-Qays himself:

(1) "Al-Nu'mān" may be a *laqab*, a nickname,¹⁴ for Imru' al-Qays; the literary source remembered him by his *laqab*, while the inscription, an official document, recorded his name.¹⁵ It is well known that Arab rulers had both names and nicknames by which they were often referred to. Furthermore, this particular one, al-Nu'mān, is a distinctly Lakhmid name attested for members of the dynasty in Ḥīra, and indeed the dynasty is sometimes referred to as al-Nu'māniyya or al-Na'āmina.

(2) The case for al-Nu'mān being a *laqab*, a nickname for Imru' al-Qays, could receive some fortification from the fact of Imru' al-Qays's Christianity. The nickname may be vocalized al-Na'mān, as an adjective meaning "the Happy One," sometimes expressed by the word *al-Sa'īd*.¹⁶ This concept of *Sa'īd* was known in the milieu of Imru' al-Qays since it is the word used in the final eulogistic sentence in the inscription.¹⁷ Both al-Sa'īd and al-Na'mān can easily have a religious connotation, and the first is

¹³An alternative emendation has recently been offered by Beeston in "Nemara and Faw," p. 3. He suggests that the sentence in question should read 'srā 'ilā tāj, "sent a military expedition (*sariyya*) to Thaj." This is attractive but like the emendation to Tanūkh is plagued by paleographic problems pertaining to two of the words of the sentence, 'srā and 'ilā, in both of which the final radical is missing, especially important in the first. In the case of the old reading, *tāj*, or the new one, *Tanūkh*, there is some support from the literary historian (Hishām); Imru' al-Qays is described as *mumallak* in Hishām's account of Imru' al-Qays (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vol. 2, p. 53), while for his Tanūkhid connections, see *supra*, p. 000. But there is no reference to Thaj in the literary accounts of Imru' al-Qays or any of the Lakhmids. This, however, is not decisive since such references to Thaj in the sources may not have survived.

¹⁴The definite article, *al*, could be supportive of this view.

¹⁵In exactly the same way that the Ghassānid king of the sixth century is called Jabala in one set of sources, mainly the Arabic, but Aṣfar, his *laqab*, in another, the Christian Syriac and Greek; and the same is true of the Ethiopian Negus of the same century, who in the secular sources is known by his proper name, Ella-Asbeḥa, while in the Christian sources he is known by his biblical name, Caleb; for Jabala, see the present writer in *Martyrs*, pp. 272–76; for Ella-Asbeḥa, see *idem*, *KN*, pp. 150–57.

¹⁶On this, see *supra*, p. 378.

¹⁷On this, see the present writer in "Observations," pp. 41–42.

often applied to saints and martyrs. It is perfectly possible that after his death Imru' al-Qays was referred to as al-Nu'mān in order to reflect his association with Christianity and present him as a Christian ruler.¹⁸ Although nothing is said in the inscription about his religion, the fact remains that, according to Hishām, he was the first Lakhmid king to adopt Christianity.¹⁹

(3) The grandfather of al-Nu'mān in the list is called Mālik, while that of Imru' al-Qays is, of course, 'Adī b. Naṣr. But Mālik was the common ancestor of both the Lakhmid Imru' al-Qays and the Tanūkhid descendants of Jaḍīma;²⁰ he was Imru' al-Qays's great grandfather, and the list may have become abbreviated with the passage of time, and, consequently, Mālik appears in it as his grandfather. It is noteworthy that his patronymic in the list is "son of 'Amr," and this could bring him closer to a Lakhmid affiliation since 'Amr could be 'Amr b. 'Adi, the father of Imru' al-Qays.

(4) In the list, the second and the third kings, 'Amr and al-Ḥawārī, are brothers, sons of al-Nu'mān. Imru' al-Qays is known to have had sons, and this is attested in the inscription, and, what is more, they were in the service of Rome, just as the two sons of al-Nu'mān were.²¹ It would be pleasant to think that their anonymity in the inscription could be terminated by identifying them with 'Amr and al-Ḥawārī of the list. Moreover, the Arabic word for "his sons" (*banīhi*) in the inscription could easily be read as a dual, "his two sons" (*bnayhi*); if so, this will make the identification with the two sons of al-Nu'mān even closer.

As in the case of the emendatory effort involving Tanūkh in the Namāra inscription, this one involving the identification of Imru' al-Qays of that inscription with al-Nu'mān of the list of Tanūkhid kings is presented only as a possibility and as the last phase of the process of confrontation undertaken in this chapter between the epigraphic and the literary sources.

APPENDIX IV

Thainatha, Malikān, Ilāha

A

This chapter on Tanūkhid toponymy would not be complete without some attention to Umm al-Jimāl in the Provincia Arabia, which H. C. Butler tentatively identified with Thainatha of the *Notitia Dignitatum* (Or. XXXVII, 29) and Thantia of Peutinger's map (*PPUAES*, II, A, p. 151; III, A, 2, p. XIV). In making this identification he referred to the famous Fihri-Jaḍīma bilingual inscription, discovered at Umm al-Jimāl,

¹⁸The application of the *laqab* "al-Nu'mān" to Imru' al-Qays becomes all the more understandable in view of the fact that "Imru' al-Qays" is a pagan theophoric name, for which see T. Fahd, *Le panthéon de l'Arabie centrale à la veille de l'Hégire* (Paris, 1968), pp. 136–38.

¹⁹Hishām collected his accounts of Imru' al-Qays in Ḥīra from Lakhmid records in which he was known as Imru' al-Qays, the second king of the dynasty after his father, 'Amr, and before his defection to the Romans, after which he possibly acquired the *laqab*, al-Nu'mān, in Roman Arabia.

²⁰For the family relationships of the Lakhmid and Tanūkhid royal houses, see Rothstein, *DLH*, pp. 38–39.

²¹For the reference to Imru' al-Qays's sons in the inscription, see the present writer in "Observations," pp. 39–41.

which refers to Jaḍīma as “king of the Tanūkhids.” One may add that the form *Thainatha* or *Thantia* could be the equivalent of Arabic *Tanūkhiyya*, i.e., the Tanūkhid town.

The identification is, of course, not certain, but it is intriguing. As is well known, the reference to Jaḍīma in the famous inscription does not necessarily argue for a Tanūkhid settlement but only for a Tanūkhid connection since the stele is for the tutor of Jaḍīma, Fihir, whose tribal affiliation is not stated. Whatever the truth about the identification may turn out to be, the inscription that associates Thainatha with Tanūkh is clearly a third-century one which is also anterior to the period of Odenathus and Zenobia of Palmyra. The latter, according to the Arabic tradition, vanquished Jaḍīma, and if Thainatha was indeed a Tanūkhid locality it would certainly have ceased to exist as a Tanūkhid stronghold in the short period of Palmyrene supremacy in the Orient during the reign of Zenobia.

In view of its possible Tanūkhid connection and of the discussion of its ruins and architecture (*PPUAES*, II, A, pp. 149–213) and its inscriptions (*ibid.*, III, A, pp. 131–223), Thantia must have been a major center of Arab Christianity in the Byzantine period throughout the three centuries before the rise of Islam. Butler estimated that its inhabitants must have been about fifteen thousand (*ibid.*, II, A, p. 195), and early in this century the ruins of no less than fifteen churches were found (*ibid.*, p. 171). He contended that the city “undoubtedly remained purely Arabic in blood until the end” (*ibid.*, p. 155). For the most recent treatment, see the monograph of Bert De Vries, *Umm El-Jimal*, Publications of the Department of Antiquities, Jordan (Amman, 1982).

In addition to what has been said on Umm al-Jimāl in the two volumes of the *PPUAES*, two of its inscriptions deserve further comment: (a) The first has the Arabic name Yatur, with references to six other attestations of the name in the other inscriptions. This name is most probably related to Yetur of Genesis, the name of one of the sons of Ishmael, the eponym of the Ituraean Arabs of the Roman period. It is most interesting that the name survived not for the people only but also as that of individuals; for the inscription, see *ibid.*, III, A, 3, no. 316, p. 171. (b) The second commemorates an Arab soldier from Thantia who was a legionary in III Cyrenaica, the legion of the Provincia Arabia, thus providing evidence that the legions or parts of them were locally recruited. The evidence of the inscription is consonant with that of the *Notitia Dignitatum*; in the latter document Thainatha appears as a locality where the “Ala prima Valentiana” was stationed (Or. XXXVII, 29), suggesting that the Arab inhabitants of Thainatha in the three centuries of the Byzantine period were assimilated *Rhomaioi* who were not *foederati* but *cives*. For the inscription, see *PPUAES*, no. 349, p. 178.

B

Two other toponyms that are to be found in the Arabic sources may also be discussed for their Roman associations, real or apparent:

1. Yāqūt refers to a Malakān/Malikān as a mountain in the territory of Ṭayy

(*Muʿjam*, vol. 5, p. 194). According to him, it used to be called “Malikān of the Rūm (Romans), because the Rūm used to dwell there in pre-Islamic times.”

Its association with the Rūm (Romans), as expressed in the idiom of the Arab geographer, can only mean that the mountain witnessed a Roman military presence and perhaps was the station of a Roman detachment or patrol. Ṭayy was a well-known Christian tribe before the rise of Islam, a fact that could lend some support to the authenticity of the statement in Yāqūt on a Roman presence in the territory of Ṭayy in northern Arabia outside the *limes*. The tribe moved into Oriens in the sixth century.

Malikān (“the two kings”) is in the dual, and this is not unusual since many Arab toponyms are expressed in the dual. The Latin inscription found at Dūmat al-Jandal (Bowersock, “Syria,” p. 139 note 57) refers to more than one Roman ruler (*domini*), and this could suggest the period of the tetrarchy with an Augustus and a Caesar in the eastern half of the empire. The dual, Malikān, “the two kings,” might also suggest the period of the tetrarchy and the fourth century.

Where in the territory of Ṭayy Malikān is located is not clear, and only archaeological research can establish whether Malikān was in fact a Roman post in northern Arabia. If it does, it will only go to show how advanced the unofficial Roman presence in northern Arabia was through the alliances with friendly Arab tribes.

2. Musil speaks of another toponym in northern Arabia, Mount Ilāha, as being the boundary between the Arab tribes that he conceived as allied with Rome and those that were not, such as Kalb and Taghlib, and thus states that it represented the farthest point in northern Arabia of indirect Roman presence through allied Arab tribes in that region. The toponym, located in the territory of Kalb in Samāwa, is mentioned both by Bakrī (*Muʿjam*, vol. 1, p. 186) and Yāqūt (*Muʿjam*, vol. 1, p. 243), but the two geographers do not suggest any Roman connection or that the mountain formed a boundary. Furthermore, Musil’s conception of the role of Kalb in the Roman scheme of things is misleading; for Musil on Kalb and Mount Ilāha, see his *Palmyrena*, p. 248, and *Arabia Deserta*, pp. 250–56, especially note 57 on p. 255.

XI

Cultural History

I. TANŪKH AND CHRISTIANITY

The ecclesiastical historians testify to the Arab *foederati*'s allegiance to Christianity and to their zeal in the defense of orthodoxy during the reign of the Emperor Valens.¹ But these Byzantine sources, ecclesiastical as well as secular, are silent on the fortunes of these *foederati* and their involvement in Christianity for the period that preceded the reign of Valens and for the period that followed it. It has been argued in a previous chapter that these *foederati* were almost certainly none other than the Tanūkhids of the Arabic sources,² which have valuable data on this Christian Arab group. They confirm what the Byzantine sources have to say, and in so doing they fortify the identification of the *foederati* of the Byzantine sources with the Tanūkhids of the Arabic ones. They also are informative on the later history of the Tanūkhids and their involvement in Christianity. The information they provide is specific and, therefore, valuable.

1

The Arabic tradition speaks for their Christianity before the Tanūkhids migrated to Syria and while they were still in the Land of the Two Rivers. Their Christianity is inferable from the battle cry that they raised when Shāpūr made war on them in the third century.³ That battle cry which invokes the "servants," "slaves," "people" of God (*yā la 'ibād Allāh*) may not explain why they were called *'ibād*, "servants," "slaves," but their Christianity in this early period cannot be dismissed lightly.⁴ The following may be adduced in support of this view:

¹On this, see "The Reign of Valens," *supra*, pp. 138–202.

²On the identity of the Arab *foederati* of Byzantium in the fourth century as the Tanūkhids, see *supra*, pp. 366–72.

³For the Arabic tradition that recounts the fortunes of Tanūkh as Christians before they migrated to Syria, see Kindermann, "Tanūkh," pp. 227, 229. In the first of these two pages he discusses the battle cry mentioned in *Aghānī* and in the second he expresses doubts on its being a reflection of their Christianity. But the term *'ibād Allāh* which forms part of the battle cry is a well-attested pre-Islamic phrase, and there is no evidence to support the view that it is an echo of the Qur'ānic phrase.

⁴The scepticism on the conversion of Tanūkh to Christianity in this early period derives

(a) Jaḍīma, their famous king, is said to have *tanabba'a* and *takabhana*, "prophesied and foretold the future";⁵ although this description of Jaḍīma is vague and does not necessarily imply allegiance or conversion to Christianity, it does suggest involvement in religion, possibly the new faith that was winning converts in Mesopotamia, namely, Christianity.

(b) A Tanūkhid figure, 'Abd al-Jinn, the adversary of the first Lakhmid king, 'Amr, son of 'Adi, has two verses attributed to him which mention Christian monks and Jesus.⁶

(c) One of the monasteries of Ḥīra, Dayr Ḥanna, belonged to the group Banū-Sāṭī', who were Tanūkhids.⁷

(d) Their fanatic zeal for Christianity in the fourth century when they were in the service of Byzantium suggests that their Christianity was not recent and superficial but of long standing and consequently profound, recalling as it does the same fanaticism that inspired them to fight the King of Kings before they came over to the Romans.

The chances, then, are that they were converted to Christianity while they were in the eastern half of the Fertile Crescent, in much the same way that a part of Lakhm with its king, Imru' al-Qays, had adopted Christianity in Ḥīra, and like the Lakhmids they changed allegiance from Persia to Rome, migrating to Roman territory and becoming *foederati* for Byzantium.⁸ Whether they emigrated in the third or the fourth century remains uncertain⁹ and is a matter of detail, but they are attested in the fourth century as Christianized Arabs and *foederati* of Byzantium and remained as such, Christian *foederati*, throughout the three centuries of Byzantine rule in Oriens.

2

Before leaving Tanūkh in the eastern half of the Fertile Crescent whence part of it migrated to Roman Syria, it is well that an important section of partly from a hypercritical attitude toward the Arabic sources in the nineteenth century before epigraphical discoveries confirmed many elements in these sources and partly from the Syriac life of Aḥūdemmeḥ which speaks of the conversion of a *pagan* part of Tanūkh in the sixth century in Mesopotamia (*infra*, pp. 420–22). It is not often realized that one part of an Arab tribe could be Christian while the other part remained pagan.

⁵Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vol. 1, p. 614. On the same page Ṭabarī quotes a poem attributed to Jaḍīma in which occurs the phrase "my God," *Rabbi*. This would give better support for his involvement in Christianity. However, according to Hishām, only three of the verses of that poem are genuine, but he does not say which ones (*ibid.*). On the seriousness with which some of the earliest fragments of Arabic poetry have to be taken, see *infra*, pp. 447–48.

⁶Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vol. 1, p. 622. On the authenticity of such early fragments, see the previous note.

⁷On this monastery, see *supra*, p. 377. This is certainly a pre-Islamic monastery, but when and in what century it was built is not clear.

⁸Cf. the fortunes of the Christian Arab tribe of Iyād under the Sasanids and their migration to Byzantine territory in the sixth century; see *EP*, 4, p. 289, *s.v.* Iyad.

⁹On this point, see *supra*, p. 369.

the *History of Aḥūdemmeḥ*¹⁰ be analyzed. Although written in Syriac and recounting a missionary activity that took place in the sixth century, it does shed a bright light on and provides insights into the process of converting the Arabs to Christianity in the pre-Islamic period. What is more, the section involves a part of Tanūkh that apparently was still pagan when Aḥūdemmeḥ, the Jacobite Metropolitan of the Orient, appeared among them between A.D. 559 and 575 and converted them. The following features are noteworthy:

(1) After many unsuccessful attempts at converting the Arabs, Aḥūdemmeḥ finally rids the daughter of their chief of an evil spirit, a demon, and this opens the door of conversion.¹¹ It is the familiar story of the healer-saint.

(2) Aḥūdemmeḥ lays a solid foundation for his missionary activity by giving the Arabs the elements of institutionalized Christianity:¹² he assigns to every tribe a priest and a deacon;¹³ he founds churches and gives them the names of the tribal chiefs¹⁴ to ensure the continuance of their support for them; he consecrates altars and places them within these churches.

¹⁰See *Histoire de Mar Aḥūdemmeḥ*, PO, 3 (1909), pp. 19ff, especially pp. 26–29. The *vita* was preserved in a manuscript that was written in A.D. 936; see the introduction of the editor and translator, F. Nau, *ibid.*, p. 13. For more information on the collection of *vitae* of which this work is no. 17, see W. Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum* (London, 1872), vol. 3, pp. 1111, 1113; the name of Aḥūdemmeḥ appears confusingly as “Achudemes,” p. 1113, no. 17. No author is indicated for the *History*, as in the case of the *History* of Marouta, a successor of Aḥūdemmeḥ, whose *vita* was written by his successor, Denha; see PO, 3, pp. 52–60. The *Life of Aḥūdemmeḥ*, then, probably does not go back to pre-Islamic times; it may have been written sometime after the Muslim Conquest but before the encounter of the Tanūkhids with the Caliph al-Mahdī in the second half of the eighth century; on this, see *infra*, pp. 423–32. On the name “Aḥūdemmeḥ” which appears in Wright as “Achudemes”: this curious name, “the brother of his mother,” could indicate that the ecclesiastic took after his mother physically and looked like her, “brother” in this context meaning “similar to,” “identical with.”

¹¹*History*, p. 25.

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 27.

¹³Aḥūdemmeḥ was not Arabic-speaking and so he could not communicate with the Arabs before their conversion in their “difficult language” (*ibid.*, p. 22). But the priests and deacons that he recruited to minister to the spiritual needs of the converted Arabs of Mesopotamia must have come from that area and must have either understood Arabic or spoke it as their native tongue. This raises the question of what liturgical language was used for worship in these churches that Aḥūdemmeḥ built for the Arabs. It is implied in the passage that speaks of their difficult language that Aḥūdemmeḥ could not understand or speak Arabic and perhaps that they also could not understand Syriac. If this implication is correct, then some form of a simple liturgy in Arabic may have been used in those churches.

¹⁴The names of Arab benefactors are reflected in the names of some of the monasteries enumerated by Yāqūt and Bakrī, such as Hind, in Dayr Hind (Yāqūt, *Muʿjam*, vol. 2, p. 542), and Ḥanzāla, in Dayr Ḥanzāla (Bakrī, *Muʿjam*, vol. 2, p. 577). Interesting in this connection is what the author of the *History* says on Aḥūdemmeḥ’s building of a *martyrion* for St. Sergius (according to the writer the favorite saint of the Arabs) as a substitute for the famous shrine in Sergiopolis near the Euphrates, too distant for the Arabs of Mesopotamia (*History*, p. 29). His account of this *martyrion* brings echoes of the Ghassānid Arab *ecclesia extra muros* near Sergiopolis with its famous Greek inscription of Mundir, Aḥūdemmeḥ’s contemporary.

(3) In order to perfect the piety of the neophytes, he calls on the Arabs to make donations, especially to the poor; they respond generously in contributions to the churches, the monks, the poor, but especially to the maintenance of the holy monasteries;¹⁵ these converted Arabs distinguish themselves among all the Christian communities by their devotion to fasting and to the ascetic way of life.¹⁶

(4) Finally, the author of the *History* testifies to their zeal and devotion to Christianity; he describes them as being “*zélés et ardents dans la foi orthodoxe.*” Whenever the Church was persecuted, the Arabs laid down their lives in its defense; three Arab tribal groups especially distinguished themselves in the defense and in making the supreme sacrifice, the “chosen and numerous ‘Aqūlāye, Tanūkhāyē, and Tū‘āyē.”¹⁷

The account is valuable because of its specificity in describing the process of conversion. The last item in it, namely, the zeal of the Arabs in the defense of Christianity, confirms what the Greek ecclesiastical historians have to say of Queen Mavia.¹⁸ Yet the very same item presents a problem pertaining to the three Arab groups that the writer has chosen to commend. The scene of Aḥūdemeh’s missionary activity lies in northern Mesopotamia between Takrit, Sinjar, Nisibis, and Balad, and yet these tribal groups are mostly associated with the south, with Babylonia. The problem admits of being solved in one of two ways:

¹⁵*History*, pp. 27–28, where a list of these monasteries is given. The statement on p. 27 that the converted Arabs were maintaining the monasteries and contributing toward their upkeep even in the days of the author suggests that a long time had elapsed between the building of the monasteries and the date of the *vita* which, as has been argued (*supra*, note 10), was written after the Muslim Conquests.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 28.

¹⁷*Ibid.* Nau’s footnote on the Tū‘āyē (note 5) cannot be accepted. “Tū‘āyē” cannot be the well-known generic name for the Arabs, “Ṭayāyē,” as the context fully indicates, since what is involved in the passage is one particular Arab tribe and not the Arabs in general. His identification of Tū‘āyē with Ṭayāyē is to be rejected not only on contextual grounds but also by the fact that the author of the *vita*, when he has occasion to speak of the Arabs in general, uses the other term with its different spelling, “Ṭayāyē,” as on p. 23.

This mysterious Christian Arab tribal group that appears in Syriac literature as “Tū‘āyē” is most probably the tribe of Ṭayy, the very same tribe whose name became in Syriac the generic name for the Arabs, Ṭayāyē. In order to distinguish reference to the tribe, Ṭayy, from the Arabs in general, Syriac writers apparently employed two different orthographies for the tribe and the Arabs—Tū‘āyē and Ṭayāyē respectively. The usefulness of this orthographic distinction is evident in the description of a priest, Abraham, who happened to be both of Arab origin and from the tribe of Ṭayy; the two orthographies are employed, the one reflecting his ethnic origin, the other his tribal affiliation; see Wright, *Catalogue*, vol. 3, p. 1195, col. 1. Not only Syriac writers but also the Arab and Persian writers had to devise special relative adjectives for the name of the tribe Ṭayy, namely, Ṭā’ī in Arabic and Tāzī in Persian, and in the latter, the relative Tāzī became the generic term for Arab. If Arabic found it necessary to insert a consonant, the plosive sound *hamza*, and Persian the sound *z* in order to form the relative adjectives of Ṭayy, Syriac could very well have inserted the ‘ayn which appears in Tū‘āyē.

¹⁸And also what the Arabic sources have to say on the Tanūkhids.

(a) As the author of the *History* is late, writing in the Muslim period, he may have had in mind the three groups over whom George (bishop of the Arabs) was made bishop toward the end of the seventh century,¹⁹ and thus his reference to the three groups and their activities in defense of Christianity would have been anachronistic.²⁰ But the three groups may have merited the description in the *History* even in the sixth century, since there is no precise and detailed information on the whereabouts of the three groups in that century to invalidate its account.

(b) As far as the Tanūkhids are concerned, some of them are attested in the Arabic sources in Mesopotamia in the third century, in pre-Islamic times, and their Mesopotamian presence is associated with the shadowy figure of a certain al-Dayzan, son of Mu'āwiya.²¹ This part of Tanūkh could have been the one the writer of the *History* had in mind when he spoke of the Tanūkhāyē as zealous Christian soldiers in the sixth century.

Whether the Tanūkhids of the *History* belong to the pre-Islamic past or to the Muslim period is a matter of detail; the passage that refers to them drives home their passionate attachment to Christianity and their readiness to die for their faith, the same picture that the Arabic sources draw of them in their encounter with the Persian Shāpūr in the third century and that the Greek sources draw when they describe their encounter with the Emperor Valens in the fourth.²²

3

Little is known about the Tanūkhids after the fourth century when they ceased to be the dominant federate group with the rise of the Salīhids in the fifth and the Ghassānids in the sixth century. Their presence in Oriens, military and Christian, however, is undoubted during these two centuries, and they suddenly emerge in the thirties of the seventh century in that fateful decade of the Arab Conquests.²³ Their Christianity is reflected in their stand

¹⁹On George, bishop of the Arabs, and the chronological problem of his enthronement, see H. Charles, *Le christianisme des arabes nomades sur le limes* (Paris, 1936), pp. 77–78.

²⁰The very same tribal groups appear associated with one another even earlier in the seventh century than the episcopate of George. In the year 639 (or according to Lammens in 644) they undertake a task significantly reflective of their attachment to Christianity and the relatively high degree of cultural level they had attained: they collaborate on a translation of the Gospel. On the problems pertaining to this report in the *Chronicle* of Michael Syrus, see F. Nau, *Les arabes chrétiens de Mésopotamie et de Syrie du VII^e au VIII^e siècle* (Paris, 1933), p. 106 note 2.

²¹On this, see Kindermann, "Tanukh," p. 227.

²²If the passage in the *History* describes the zeal of the Tanūkhids for Christianity in Islamic times, that zeal becomes even more remarkable since they were then isolated and not protected by the Christian Roman Empire as they had been in pre-Islamic times.

²³For this, see various references to Tanūkh collected by Kindermann, *op. cit.*, pp. 229–30.

with the other Christian Arab federates under Heraclius against the Muslim Arabs and is attested explicitly in the accounts that tell of the Muslim conquest of Chalcidice.²⁴ They remained Christian throughout the Umayyad period,²⁵ when they played an important role as part of the *ajnad* on which Umayyad power rested, but their status as Christian became increasingly difficult or untenable, especially with the fall of the Umayyads and the rise of the Abbasids. History has recorded their Christianity during the caliphate of al-Mahdi (A.D. 775–85) and has preserved valuable data on the Christian Tanūkhids before they make their exit as a strong, well-defined Christian community from the annals of *Oriens Christianus*. Their very endurance to the reign of al-Mahdi reflects their attachment to their faith.

The sources recount that when the Caliph al-Mahdi came to northern Syria, in A.D. 780, the Tanūkhids went out to greet him and receive him, riding their Arab horses. When he was told that they were Christians, he had their leader beheaded, and the rest were thus forced to convert to Islam—five thousand strong—but not the women. The literary sources that recount this important episode are not only Arabic but also Syriac and, what is more, are confirmed by an inscription. They dovetail and complement one another in the data they provide. But before the truth about what happened to the Tanūkhids in the reign of al-Mahdi can be known accurately, it is necessary to give a thorough examination to all these various sets of sources, and all the more so as this episode has been treated unceremoniously, in spite of its

²⁴Even after some of them turned renegades during the Muslim offensive against Aleppo and Chalcis. At one stage of these operations, they returned together with the inhabitants of Qinnasrīn to the Byzantine allegiance and Christianity and were described for doing so as *akṣar man hunāka*. The term *kafir* is sometimes applied to Christians among others, and the use of the superlative, *akṣar*, reflects the intensity of their return to the Byzantine fold and to Christianity; see Ibn-al-ʿAdīm, *Zubdat al-Ḥalab min Tāriḫ Ḥalab*, ed. S. al-Dahhān (Damascus, 1951–68), vol. 1, p. 30. Ibn-Ḥubaysh's account has *akṭhar* ("most numerous") instead of *akṣar*, and either reading is possible; but the occurrence of the verb *kafara* in the preceding sentence suggests that *akṣar* is likely to be the correct reading. Ibn-Ḥubaysh's account is included in the Leiden edition of Ṭabarī, I, V, and the term *akṣar* occurs on p. 2501; for Ibn-Ḥubaysh, see *infra*, p. 458 note 5.

Slightly before the conquests began and in the lifetime of Muhammad, there is reference in one source to the allegiance of Tanūkh and its strong attachment to Christianity. In the *Musnad* of Ibn-Ḥanbal there is an account of Heraclius's dispatch of an envoy to Muhammad ca. 630. The envoy was a Tanūkhid who refused to embrace Islam when invited by Muhammad to do so. The account may be apocryphal, but if so it is still significant that the one who fabricated it chose a Tanūkhid Christian as the envoy, a reflection of the fact that the Tanūkhids were known for their Christianity and their attachment to it; see Ibn-Ḥanbal, *Musnad* (Beirut, 1969), vol. 4, p. 75.

²⁵This is inferable from the account of their encounter with the Abbasid Caliph al-Mahdi in A.D. 780, to be discussed presently. No doubt some of them converted to Islam, as is recorded in the sources, but apparently not the majority. For their military presence in Umayyad times, see Kindermann, "Tanukh."

significance as the last chapter in the history of the Tanūkhids who had, for some five centuries, played a dominant role in the history of Arab Christianity before and after the rise of Islam.

A

Before the Arabic and the Syriac literary sources recorded the encounter of Tanūkh with the Caliph al-Mahdi, a Syriac inscription had already done so, and in so doing it has established beyond doubt the historicity of the episode or the encounter, which is the main value of the inscription.²⁶ Its brevity, however, is more than compensated for by the reference in it to al-Mahdi's destruction of churches, mentioned in the other sources which, however, do not state explicitly the location of these churches but only imply it.²⁷ The inscription, carved on a stone in a Christian church in northern Syria, not far from the right bank of the Euphrates, makes it certain that the destruction of churches took place in northern Syria, in the Umayyad *jund* (military circumscription or province) of Qinnasrīn (Chalcis), in former Byzantine Chalcidice—home of the Tanūkhids—and involved, at least in part, the churches of the Tanūkhids.²⁸

B

The Syriac literary sources are represented by two authors, Michael Syrus (d.1199) and Bar-Hebraeus (d.1286), of whom the latter gives the more informative account.

Bar-Hebraeus. His account of the Tanūkhids and their encounter with al-Mahdi occurs in two different paragraphs in the chapter that describes the reign of that caliph,²⁹ but the events described in the two paragraphs do form one

²⁶The inscription is carved on a stone in a chapel ten minutes' walk south of a village called 'Emesh, quite close to the right bank of the Euphrates. Its inhabitants were almost exclusively Christian and the chapel lay in ruins when Chabot visited the region in the spring of 1897 and collected epigraphic data; see J. B. Chabot, "Notes d'épigraphie et d'archéologie orientale," *Journal Asiatique*, n.s. 16 (1900), pp. 249–88, esp. pp. 249, 283, 285, 287–88 (inscription discussed on pp. 287–88).

²⁷As in Bar-Hebraeus; see *infra*, pp. 424–26. It is only Hishām's *Jambava* (*infra*, p. 431) that explicitly associates the destroyed churches with the Tanūkhids, but even this datum from Hishām would have remained unauthenticated had it not been for the epigraphic literary confrontation made possible by this precious Syriac inscription.

²⁸Of al-Mahdi, the inscription says "il pénétra *jusqu'au Gibôn*," and the fact is recorded in Ṭabarī (*Tārīkh*, vol. 8, p. 148), where the historian speaks of his accompanying his son Hārūn as far as the river Jihān. Ṭabarī's account is part of his chapter on the events of the year 163 of the Muslim Era, during which al-Mahdi made the journey to northern Syria. Furthermore, the inscription states precisely the date of the caliph's visit to the region, the year 1091 of the Seleucid Era (A.D. 780), and not 1090 as in Bar-Hebraeus (*loc. cit.*); this interlocks with the year 163 of the Muslim Era indicated in Ṭabarī.

²⁹See *Chronography*, trans. E. A. W. Budge (Oxford, 1932), vol. 1, pp. 116–17; the first paragraph is on p. 116, the second on p. 117. For the Syriac version that Budge followed, see Bedjan, *Chronicon Syriacum* (Paris, 1890), pp. 126, 127–28.

sequence of events that developed during al-Mahdi's visit in A.D. 780 to northern Syria,³⁰ as may be inferred from the context and is actually confirmed by other sources.

The first paragraph speaks of his destruction of Christian churches: "Mahdi, however, pulled down the churches which had been built in the time of the Arabs, and he destroyed the church of the Chalcedonians which was in Aleppo." The caliph visited northern Syria only once, and it was clearly during this visit that he ordered the destruction of Christian churches in that region which must be northern Syria, also because there is reference to the destruction of the church in Aleppo and the two sentences are closely related to each other, the first on churches in general and the second on the one in Aleppo. The Syriac inscription, however, with its use of the plural, "churches," brings together the encounter with the Tanūkhids and the destruction of Christian churches.³¹ It clearly indicates that the second paragraph in Bar-Hebraeus which describes their meeting with al-Mahdi and their conversion to Islam is related to the first, which, chronologically, should follow, not precede, the second since it was after the encounter that al-Mahdi ordered the destruction of the churches. But Bar-Hebraeus reversed the correct sequence because he wanted to open his account of the reign of al-Mahdi with what he considered important from his viewpoint as a Christian writer, namely, al-Mahdi's attitude toward the Christians. The union of the two paragraphs and their correct sequence make it possible now to extract the following valuable data from them:

(a) The first paragraph makes it clear that in the first century of the Islamic caliphate, the Christian Arabs had no great difficulty in building new churches.³² The tolerant Umayyads who rested their power on the *ajnad*, mostly

³⁰This is necessary to point out since the reader of this chapter in the *Chronography* might be misled by the phrase "And in the beginning of his reign," which opens the paragraph on p. 116 in which the statement on the destruction of the churches occurs. This phrase describes the freeing of the Byzantine and Muslim prisoners of war by al-Mahdi and Leo respectively.

³¹The encounter and the destruction are even more explicitly united in Hishām's *Jamhara* (*infra*, pp. 431–32). Noteworthy is what is said of the Manichaeans in the sources: immediately after his statement on the destruction of the church of Aleppo, Bar-Hebraeus speaks of al-Mahdi's persecution of the Manichaeans. Ṭabarī (*loc. cit.*) speaks of his persecution of Manichaeans (*zanādiqa*) while al-Mahdi was in northern Syria at Dābiq, where he ordered their execution. Thus Ṭabarī established the fact that northern Syria was a home for a Manichaean group in the eighth century, and Bar-Hebraeus adds that some of them were Arabs. These references to Manichaeism in northern Syria may be relevant to the study of such a sect as the present-day Nuṣayris of that region; on the Nuṣayris, see *EI*, *s.v.*, and *infra*, p. 457 note 176. It is noteworthy that while Ṭabarī mentions the Manichaeans, he omits all mention of the Tanūkhids; he was a Persian who was mainly interested in the eastern half of the Islamic Empire, especially in what was related to Persia and the Persians. Hence his notice of the Manichaeans and his silence on the Christian Tanūkhids; he had dismissed in a few lines the Arab conquest of Spain!

³²Bar-Hebraeus's phrase on the churches "which had been built in the time of the Arabs"

former Arab *foederati* of Byzantium, allowed their Christian subjects considerable freedom in religious practice. These churches, destroyed by al-Mahdi, must have been built or mostly built by the Tanūkhids since these appear as the representative of Arab Christianity in northern Syria during that reign, and it is consonant with what is known about their zeal for the building and maintenance of churches and monasteries in the pre-Islamic period.

(b) Bar-Hebraeus's description of them as living "in tents round about Aleppo"³³ does not necessarily mean that they had reverted to tent-dwelling in the Islamic period. By the time of the Arab Conquests they were living in *ḥādīrs* and in *manāzil*, as is clear from the trustworthy Balāḍurī.³⁴ Bar-Hebraeus, far removed from them in time, probably remembered what Balāḍurī had said about them when they arrived in Aleppo in pre-Islamic times and lived in tents before they moved to solid structures. Alternatively, this may have been their military camp in which they congregated for the occasion of receiving al-Mahdi. They appear shortly after the turn of the century, living in houses that had camps near them.³⁵

(c) The great number that went out to meet al-Mahdi, riding horses, could suggest that these were the remnants of the Tanūkhids who formed part of the *jund* system in Umayyad times and whose fortunes took a turn for the worse with the fall of their patrons the Umayyads and the rise of the Abbasids.³⁶

(d) Bar-Hebraeus supplies the name of the one martyr that fell on that day, namely, Layth (Lion).³⁷

Michael Syrus. The earlier historian, Michael, is less informative than the later Bar-Hebraeus on the Tanūkhids and their encounter with al-Mahdi, but he has an important account of their fortunes in the early part of the eighth century after the death of Hārūn al-Rashīd in A.D. 809.

His account of the encounter of the Tanūkhids with al-Mahdi³⁸ has one

refers of course to the Islamic period in Arab history. His *Chronography* is composed of accounts of the successive kingdoms in world history of which the Arab is one, and the chapter on the Islamic caliphate is actually entitled "The Kings of the Arabs."

³³*Chronography*, p. 117, where the statements on the Tanūkhids analyzed in (b), (c), and (d) of this section on Bar-Hebraeus occur.

³⁴See *supra*, pp. 401–3.

³⁵As described by Michael Syrus, *infra*, p. 427.

³⁶The deterioration in their status after the fall of the Umayyads probably brought about an identity crisis for the Tanūkhids and may in fact explain, at least partly, why they went out to meet the caliph, perhaps hoping for an amelioration of their condition in view of the fact that they considered he was related to them; on this, see *infra*, p. 429.

³⁷The Arabic sources have more to say on this last Tanūkhid martyr known to the sources; *infra*, pp. 431–32.

³⁸For this, see Michael Syrus, *Chronique*, ed. and trans. J. B. Chabot (Paris, 1905), vol. 3, p. 1. Chabot translates the Syriac of Michael correctly when he speaks of Layth, the

important item that is peculiar to him. Like Bar-Hebraeus he says that the Tanūkhid women did not convert to Islam, only the men, and that these women “were to be found until his days in the churches of the Occident.” What the statement means is not entirely clear; it could mean that after losing their Tanūkhid men, they chose to serve in the churches of the Occident rather than to stay with their converted husbands or remarry.³⁹

His other account⁴⁰ of the Tanūkhids tells of their encounters with the Muslim Arabs near Aleppo and how the former after ten days of fighting had to quit and leave for Qinnasrīn. It was only in this way that the people of Aleppo were able to possess themselves of the Tanūkhid settlements outside Aleppo, which were extensive and rich. In this account, the following points are noteworthy:

(a) Michael speaks of “*leurs maisons et de grands campements*,” which is a more accurate statement than the “tents” of Bar-Hebraeus, discussed above. These tents might have been pitched by them temporarily in order to meet al-Mahdi.

(b) Michael moralizes on the fate of the Tanūkhids and considers their sad end condign punishment for their apostasy. The account, however, suggests that some Tanūkhids retained their identity even after the encounter with al-Mahdi both as Tanūkhids and as Christians, since they appear quite separate from the Muslim population. This is confirmed by the accounts of the Arabic sources,⁴¹ which speak of their emigration out of the lands of the Islamic caliphate to Armenia, among other places, an emigration reminiscent of that of the Christian Ghassānids after the Muslim Conquest. There is also the possibility that Michael, being a Monophysite patriarch, could not remember the Tanūkhids kindly since they presumably remained what they had been in the fourth century, orthodox Diophysites.⁴²

C

The Arabic literary sources are represented by Balādurī, Ya‘qūbī, and Hishām, and they complement one another and, as one set of sources, also complement the Syriac ones:⁴³

Tanūkhid, as “*souffrit le martyre*,” while Budge erroneously translates “testified.” The same Syriac word means, as it does in many other languages, both “martyr” and “witness,” “confessor.”

³⁹If this interpretation is correct, it sheds more light on the attachment of Tanūkhid women to Christianity, reminiscent of the two Mavias, the elder and the younger; see “Two Greek Inscriptions,” *supra*, pp. 222–38.

⁴⁰*Chronique*, vol. 3, p. 31.

⁴¹*Infra*, p. 457.

⁴²It is interesting to note that the Tanūkhids represent an Arab tribal group part of which was Diophysite in Byzantium while the other part was Monophysite in Mesopotamia after its conversion by Aḥūdemeh.

⁴³The Arabic sources are important to discuss not only because of the valuable data they have to offer but also because many of those who have written on Arab Christianity are unaware

Balāḍurī. His account⁴⁴ of the Tanūkhids has been analyzed in a previous chapter,⁴⁵ but the account is important in the present context since it sheds light on some aspects of the Tanūkhid encounter with al-Mahdi:

(a) Those who apostasized are in his account the inhabitants of the *ḥāḍir* of Qinnasrīn, and it is clear from his account, in which he refers to their solid structures, *manāzil*,⁴⁶ that the reference to tents in Bar-Hebraeus's account has to be interpreted in such a way as to suggest that these were the temporary dwellings of sedentaries, as has been argued before.⁴⁷

(b) His account suggests that only a *jamā'ā*, a group among the Tanūkhids of the *ḥāḍir* of Qinnasrīn, adopted Islam during the reign of al-Mahdi, and not all; this is more credible than the other accounts which suggest that all of them converted.⁴⁸ He adds the further colorful detail that he inscribed on their hands in green the word "Qinnasrīn." This suggests that the Tanūkhids who embraced Islam were more associated with Qinnasrīn than with Aleppo, as suggested by Bar-Hebraeus. But the two towns were close to each other, and the Tanūkhids were associated with both of them.⁴⁹

Balāḍurī's account describes the fortunes of another group of Tanūkhids associated with the *ḥāḍir* of Aleppo, and his account makes clear the following:

(a) These Tanūkhids, according to Balāḍurī, remained Christian but paid the poll tax when the Muslim Arabs conquered Syria, and they converted to Islam only later. This is almost certainly a reference to their conversion after the famous encounter with al-Mahdi, and thus that encounter may be said to have involved the Tanūkhids of both *ḥāḍirs*, Qinnasrīn and Aleppo.

(b) The short account on the Tanūkhids after the death of Hārūn al-Rashīd in A.D. 809 preserved in Michael Syrus receives considerable illumination from Balāḍurī. The identity of the Muslim Arab antagonists of the Tanūkhids, rightly described by Michael as Qaysites, is revealed; they belonged to the tribe of Banū-Hilāl, the maternal uncles of the Hashimites of Aleppo who appealed to them for help against the Tanūkhids.⁵⁰

of them. Kindermann is aware only of the less important of Balāḍurī's two accounts, while Nau is completely oblivious to them; see Kindermann, "Tanukh," col. 230, and Nau, *Arabes chrétiens*, pp. 106–9. This unawareness has naturally affected these writers' perceptions of Arab and Tanūkhid Christianity, and this is especially true of the latter; see Nau, *ibid.*, p. 107.

⁴⁴Balāḍurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, vol. 1, pp. 172–73.

⁴⁵See "Toponymic Observations," *supra*, pp. 401–3.

⁴⁶He mentions their tents only when describing their arrival in the region centuries before.

⁴⁷See *supra*, p. 426, and also the account of Michael Syrus and his phrase, "*leurs maisons*," *supra*, p. 427.

⁴⁸For Hishām on this, see *infra*, p. 431.

⁴⁹The difficulty may be resolved through Ya'qūbī's account, for which see *infra*, pp. 429–30.

⁵⁰The importance of matrilineal descent among the Arabs is evident in this episode as recorded by Balāḍurī, and it plays an important part in the encounter of Tanūkh with al-Mahdi

(c) The affinity between the Christian Arabs of Aleppo and those of Qinnasrīn since pre-Islamic times is reflected in the fact that the Tanūkhids of the *ḥāḍir* of Aleppo, after being dislodged from their *ḥāḍir* by the Banū-Hilāl, moved to Qinnasrīn where they were well received.⁵¹

(d) Balāḍurī finally says that these Tanūkhids eventually migrated to Takrit in Mesopotamia (where he personally saw some of them), to Armenia, and to many other countries, all of which suggests that they probably retained their identity as Christian Arabs.⁵²

Ya'qūbī. His account⁵³ is unique among those of Arab and other historians, and it raises some important historical problems:

(a) The location of the encounter is not specified as having taken place near Aleppo or Qinnasrīn but in the *jund* of Qinnasrīn, the large military circumscription or province in northern Syria, which included both Aleppo and Qinnasrīn.⁵⁴ This phrase, "Jund Qinnasrīn," used by al-Ya'qūbī could also suggest what has been suspected earlier⁵⁵ in this section, namely, that the Tanūkhid group that went out to receive al-Mahdi formed part of the *jund* of Qinnasrīn and that their procession had political and military implications related to their position as Syrian and former Umayyad troops in the new order of the Abbasids.

(b) Ya'qūbī is the only historian who provides the significant detail on the antecedents of the conversion of Tanūkh after their encounter with al-Mahdi. In addition to the gifts they brought with them when they went out to receive him, they told him, "we are your maternal uncles, O Commander of the Faithful," thus hoping to incline him in their favor and win his sympathy. In what sense they were his maternal uncles may be answered in one of two ways: either through Rayṭa, a woman from al-Ḥārith-ibn-Ka'b, the well-known tribe of Christian Najrān, whom Muhammad the father of al-Saffāh, the first Abbasid caliph, married; or through Arwā, his own mother, wife of al-Manṣūr, the second Abbasid caliph, and the sister of Yazīd, son of Manṣūr

(*infra*, p. 429). In the case of the Hashimites and Banū-Hilāl, it worked. Echoes of the appeal of the Hashimites to Banū-Hilāl on grounds of matrilineal descent were still audible in the caliphate of al-Mu'taṣim during the campaign of Ammorium in A.D. 838. The famous appeal of a Muslim woman to al-Mu'taṣim against the Byzantines, *wā mu'taṣimāh*, reminded one of al-Mu'taṣim's Hashimite friends during that campaign of a similar appeal made by the Muslim women of Aleppo to al-'Abbas of Banū-Hilāl against the Tanūkhids; Balāḍurī, *loc. cit.*

⁵¹Later they quarreled with the inhabitants of Qinnasrīn, who drove them out.

⁵²For the view that all of them embraced Islam, see *infra*, p. 431.

⁵³Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh*, vol. 2, pp. 398–99.

⁵⁴On the problem of the apparent discrepancy in the sources as to where the encounter with al-Mahdi took place and which group of Tanūkhids were involved, see *supra*, p. 428.

⁵⁵On this, see *supra*, p. 426.

al-Ḥimyari.⁵⁶ Thus, the marriage of two Abbasids to women of South Arabian origin related them to the Tanūkhids, originally a confederation of tribes of whom the South Arabian Azdites were one component, and the Tanūkhids could, therefore, appeal to al-Mahdi on that score.⁵⁷ The fact that the caliph had also just returned from his visit to Jerusalem⁵⁸ might have been a factor in the situation that developed. For the Tanūkhids, the zealous Christian Arabs, Jerusalem was the City of the Crucifixion, and they might have been impressed by the visit to the Holy City of an Abbasid caliph from remote Baghdad as indicative of a more sympathetic attitude of the new Abbasid caliph to Syria and its Christian Arabs.⁵⁹

(c) Al-Mahdi's reaction decided the fate of the Tanūkhids as Christian Arabs. When he enquired about them and was told they were *all* Christian and that they were prosperous and numerous, he refused to acknowledge the fact of his matrilineal descent, and the result was their conversion to Islam.⁶⁰ The episode is remarkable; it raises an important question, namely, why the Abbasid caliph, governed by the *Shari'a*, the sacred Law of Islam, forced the Tanūkhids to renounce their religion and did not let them remain *ḍimmis* (scriptuaries), that is, non-Muslims who were assured of their religious freedom by paying the poll tax.

Surely the reason is that al-Mahdi must have been greatly embarrassed by the indiscreet reception the Tanūkhids gave him. They had come out to him five thousand strong, riding their horses and festively attired, and must have seemed like a small army of Christians welcoming a ruler who was, after all, called "The Commander of the Faithful," the third dynast of the Abbasids, who revolutionized Arab and Islamic history by enhancing the Islamic element in it after a century or so of Umayyad history, during which the center of power was in a predominantly Christian region, Syria, ruled by caliphs who were very favorably disposed toward the Christian Arabs. It is in this light that al-Mahdi's reaction to the festive reception which the Tanūkhids gave him must be interpreted.

⁵⁶On Rayṭa and Arwā, the two South Arabian women, see Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vol. 7, p. 471; vol. 8, p. 102; for Yazīd, son of Maṣṣūr, and his closeness to and influence with al-Mahdi, see *ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 148.

⁵⁷On the importance of the matrilineal descent among the Arabs and its relevance to another episode that involves Tanūkh, see *supra*, p. 429 and note 50, on the Hashimites and Banū-Hilāl. A more celebrated example of the importance of matrilineal descent in the political and military annals of early Islam is provided by the support that the tribe of Kalb gave to Mu'āwiya and the Umayyads—Sufyānids and Marwānids alike—after the first Umayyad caliph married the Christian Kalbite Maysūn, the mother of his son and successor, Yazīd.

⁵⁸Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vol. 8, p. 148.

⁵⁹It was in Jerusalem that Mu'āwiya was declared caliph in 661.

⁶⁰Cf. the success of Banū al-Ḥārith b. Ka'b when they appealed to the Caliph al-Saffāh on the ground of matrilineal descent; Ibn-al-Athīr, *Al-Kāmil* (Beirut, 1965–67), vol. 2, p. 295.

Hishām. His account is most informative on the Tanūkhid martyr and the circumstances that attended his death.⁶¹ The following data may be extracted from his account:

(a) When the Tanūkhids went out to receive al-Mahdi they did so on horseback and with their turbans on their heads. This may be what the Syriac authors have in mind when they speak of the Tanūkhids being festively attired for the occasion since the turbans would or could have been colored. Their wearing them was, of course, significant and reflective of a certain pride and self-assertiveness, one of the elements that must have both incensed al-Mahdi and embarrassed him.⁶²

(b) After he was told that they were the Tanūkhids and that they were Christian, he invited them to embrace Islam, but they refused to do so. On their refusal he beheaded their chief, and so the rest adopted Islam and al-Mahdi destroyed their churches, and "not a single Christian remained in Tanūkh."

The account thus clarifies some points in the encounter, namely, that it was al-Mahdi who took the initiative and called on them to apostasize and that only after their refusal and the death of their chief did they do so.⁶³ The Arabic phrase employed to describe the death of their chief suggests that it was al-Mahdi himself who killed him.⁶⁴ The churches which al-Mahdi destroyed are clearly described here as Tanūkhid, and this clinches the point about their religious establishments in northern Syria in the Muslim period. The statement of the total disappearance of Christianity among the Tanūkhids,

⁶¹On the special position that Hishām holds as the historian of the Arab *foederati* and of Tanūkh itself, see "Hishām al-Kalbī," *supra*, pp. 358–62. Furthermore, Hishām was a contemporary of al-Mahdi and was very close to him. The account of the encounter with al-Mahdi almost certainly formed part of his book on Tanūkh and was also included in his *Jambara*.

Hishām's *Jambara* was epitomized by Yāqūt in a work called *Al-Muqtaḍab*, and it is from this latter work, still in manuscript form, that this information on Tanūkh has been extracted. For a description of this manuscript, see Caskel, *GN*, vol. 1, p. 106; the account of Tanūkh's encounter with al-Mahdi is on p. 101. I am grateful to my friend and colleague, Prof. Marsden Jones, of the American University of Cairo, for sending me a microfilm of this manuscript.

⁶²The Arab pride in the turban, *imāma* (pl. *'amā'im*), is reflected in the saying "*al-'amā'im tijān al-'Arab*," "the turbans are the crowns of the Arabs." This headgear also distinguished them from their Byzantine adversaries. On the dress of the *ḍimmis*, the non-Muslim scriptuaries, as prescribed by laws issued by the caliphs, see A. S. Tritton, *The Caliphs and Their Non-Muslim Subjects* (London, 1930; reprinted 1970), pp. 115–26. According to a law issued by the Umayyad caliph, 'Umar II (717–20), the *ḍimmis* were not to wear turbans (*ibid.*, p. 116).

⁶³Yāqūt speaks of their trepidation after their chief was killed.

⁶⁴The verb *amara* is missing in the sentence, normally used to indicate the causative, but Yāqūt may have expressed himself elliptically. The Arabic sentence involving al-Mahdi is *fa ḍaraba 'unuqahu*.

it has been argued, is an exaggeration, and if true, was so only of that group that met al-Mahdi.

(c) The account is informative on the name of the martyr. In Hishām he is referred to by his patronymic, Ibn-Maḥaṭṭa,⁶⁵ as the Syriac sources provide his proper name, Layth, his full name is Layth Ibn-Maḥaṭṭa. Furthermore, he turns out to be the chief of the Tanūkhids, not just another member of the group. This explains why he was chosen for that fate, because the death of the *sayyid*, the chief, would be demoralizing for the rest of the group.⁶⁶

(d) Layth Ibn-Maḥaṭṭa thus emerges as the last *sayyid* of Christian Tanūkh in the Islamic period. If he was at the head of five thousand men, most or all of whom were probably horsemen, he and his Tanūkhids must have been an important military fact in the *jund* of Qinnasrīn in early Abbasid times. His fate recalls that of his ancestors who fought for orthodoxy and for Byzantium in pre-Islamic times and that of other Christian Arab martyrs in the Umayyad period, such as the two Taghlibite chiefs who refused to apostasize, namely, Muʿaḍ and Samalla.⁶⁷

4

The relevant section in the *History of Aḥūdemmeb* on the Arabs and the Tanūkhids, analyzed above, gives a glimpse into the attachment of the converted Arabs to the maintenance of the churches and monasteries, a list of which is given in that text.⁶⁸ According to the author, these were maintained by the Arabs rather than built by them, although it could be inferred from his description of the churches named after the Arab chiefs that at least some of them were also built by the Arabs. The *History* describes the process of conversion among the Arabs of northern Mesopotamia in general, and the Tanūkhids are mentioned as one among three Arab groups that were noted for their zeal in the defense of Christianity. Even so, the passage in the *History* is very valuable since it provides a background for putting together the references scattered here and there in the Arabic sources on the Tanūkhid Christian edifices. These sources are late, written in Islamic times after many of these Christian edifices had disappeared and by writers who had no special interest

⁶⁵Not Maḥaṭṭa, as in Caskel, *GN*, vol. 2, p. 35, col. 1. "Layth" is his proper name preserved in the Syriac sources, and so what Hishām has preserved could have been only his patronymic.

⁶⁶Yaʿqūbī's account of the death of the Tanūkhid, who is left anonymous, could imply some resistance on his part. The verb used, *irtadda* ("apostasized"), however, is surprising since it implies that the chief was a Muslim, which obviously he was not. Perhaps the text is corrupt; *ishtadda* could be a possible emendation for *irtadda* and implies or could imply resistance on the part of the chief.

⁶⁷Nau, *Arabes chrétiens*, pp. 109–10.

⁶⁸See *supra*, part 2. On the churches and monasteries, see *supra*, notes 14–15.

in making a complete list of what had survived. They have, however, preserved a few references,⁶⁹ which when set against such a document as the *History of Ahūdemmeh*⁷⁰ must not be adjudged exhaustively reflective of the Tanūkhid religious foundations in their entirety but only of a miserably small number that had survived into the Islamic period. The non-Arabic sources help in the process of reconstruction, but only archeological research can appreciably increase knowledge of the Tanūkhid establishment of churches and monasteries in pre-Islamic times. Until then, the rare references in the sources may be gathered together and, what is equally important, the relationship between the Tanūkhids and monastic Christianity may be briefly discussed.

(1) A previous chapter has established that the geographical area of the Tanūkhid settlements was northern Syria this side of the Euphrates and that within this area Chalcidice in particular was the sector that had the strongest Tanūkhid association.⁷¹ In the fourth century this very region, especially the desert of Chalcis, experienced a transformation into a region of anchorites and eremites and thus became a great center of monasticism,⁷² not less important than two other centers in the south, in Palestine and Sinai. The rise of monasticism and its spread into northern Syria, to the desert of Chalcis, was a matter of some importance to the Tanūkhids both as *foederati* and as Christian Arabs. It brought about a happy symbiosis between the desert Arab and the new type of the Christian holy man—the desert anchorite and eremite. The Tanūkhids, close to the desert as Arabs, were like most Christian Arabs⁷³ greatly attracted to this type of Christian, the desert holy man. Thus to the zealous Tanūkhids the desert of Chalcidice acquired new significance as a Christian region dotted with monasteries and holy men, and this added a new dimension to their military duties and commitment to the defense of the region.⁷⁴

(2) It is, thus, in this region of northern Syria, Chalcidice, the area around Zabad, and the one around Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān, that Tanūkhid ecclesiastical foundations or establishments have to be sought. The only religious

⁶⁹Even fewer than the toponyms that have been suspected of being Tanūkhid (discussed *supra*, pp. 395–407) and to which the discussion of their religious foundations in this section may be related.

⁷⁰With its lists of churches and monasteries maintained by the Arabs and also for what the authors say on the Arab devotion to fasting and the ascetic life; see *supra*, pp. 419–20 and notes 12–16.

⁷¹See "The Tanūkhids and Chalcidice," *infra*, pp. 465–76.

⁷²See its description as such in Jerome's *Vita Malchi*, *infra*, p. 465 note 2; see also Poidebard, *Limes*, p. 238.

⁷³Such as the Salīhids, their successors as the dominant group of *foederati* in the fifth century, and the Ghassānids of the sixth.

⁷⁴It was not long before these monasteries were fortified and before bishops became the principal defenders of the countryside in the fifth and sixth centuries; Poidebard, *loc. cit.*

foundation that is explicitly described as Tanūkhid is Dayr Ḥanna, the Monastery of Ḥanna in Ḥīra;⁷⁵ and the only reference to Tanūkhid religious foundations is the one in *Jamhara* where Hishām speaks of al-Mahdi's destruction of the "churches of Tanūkh" in the eighth century,⁷⁶ valuable also for explicitly associating the churches of Tanūkh with the region of Chalcidice.

However, the sources have other references to pre-Islamic Arab religious foundations which it is fruitful to examine for their possible Tanūkhid origin. The following paragraphs list these religious foundations, but the truth about their Tanūkhid affiliation must remain hypothetical and inferential, resting as it does on association with the region of Tanūkhid settlement:

1. In the region of Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān the following could be Tanūkhid because of the strong association of the Tanūkhids with that town: (a) "the church of the nomads," *kanīsat al-'Arāb*, in Ma'arrat itself;⁷⁷ (b) "Dayr al-Naqīra," "the Monastery of al-Naqīra," near Ma'arrat,⁷⁸ which may be identified with the monastery mentioned earlier in *Inbāh al-Ruwāt*, left anonymous,⁷⁹ but the two may also be two different monasteries.

2. In the region of Anasartha, there is reference to (a) Dayr Khunāshira, the monastery of Anasartha,⁸⁰ in view of the strongly Arab character of that town, the monastery could have been Tanūkhid; (b) the *martyrium* or church dedicated to St. Thomas mentioned in the Greek inscription of Mavia, either the queen or one related to her.⁸¹

3. At the time of the Muslim Conquest there is reference⁸² to a "Dayr Ṭayāyē,"⁸³ "the Monastery of the Arabs." From the context in which the refer-

⁷⁵On Dayr Ḥanna, see *supra*, p. 377.

⁷⁶See *supra*, p. 431.

⁷⁷See *supra*, p. 405 and note 220.

⁷⁸This monastery is described as being on a mountain near Ma'arrat; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, vol. 2, p. 539. The name "Naqīra" brings to mind another Naqīra (Nuqayra), the village near 'Ayn al-Tamr in Iraq. It was in one of the churches of this Naqīra that Khalid b. Walid found children studying the elements of writing, in the year 12 of the Muslim Era; *ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 301, *s.v.* Nuqayra. But Naqīra is not far from the region in which Iraqi or eastern Tanūkh had settled before they migrated to Syria, and it may even have been one of their settlements. This raises to a high degree of probability that Naqīra in Ma'arrat was a Tanūkhid settlement named after the one in Iraq in much the same way that the Najranite emigrants named one of their settlements in Syria after the South Arabian Najrān. Noteworthy also in Yāqūt's statement is the function of the Christian church as a center for learning. In Yāqūt, this Naqīra is vocalized Nuqayra.

⁷⁹See *supra*, p. 405 and note 221.

⁸⁰Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, vol. 2, p. 507.

⁸¹See "Two Greek Inscriptions," *supra*, pp. 222–27.

⁸²Balāqūrī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, vol. 1, p. 176.

⁸³Undoubtedly the Christian Syriac form of the term *Arabs*, of rare occurrence in Arab authors; for one of these very rare occurrences of the term in an Arabic verse, see T. al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyya al-Kubrā*, eds. M. al-Ṭanāhī and A. al-Ḥulw (Cairo, 1964), vol. 1, p. 276. The monastery is attested in a Syriac document that goes back to pre-Islamic times;

ence to the monastery occurs, it may be inferred that it was situated to the north of Anasartha, the region associated with the Tanūkhids. Whether this Arab religious foundation was also a federate one and, what is more, Tanūkhid can be entertained only as a possibility.

II. THE PROBLEM OF AN ARABIC BIBLE AND LITURGY IN PRE-ISLAMIC TIMES

The problem of an Arabic Bible in the pre-Islamic period is a thorny and vexed question⁸⁴ the solution of which should illuminate vast areas of Arab cultural history. A new approach to the problem is necessary,⁸⁵ one that will take into account the fact that the major areas of Arab Christianity in which an Arabic translation of the Bible could have been undertaken were three: Mesopotamia,⁸⁶ Syria, and South Arabia where Christianity had been propagated for at least three centuries before the rise of Islam. It is only when each of these three areas has been studied carefully and, what is more, studied diachronously throughout these three centuries that an informed answer might be given to the question of an Arabic translation of the Bible in pre-Islamic times. As this book deals with the western half of the Fertile Crescent, or with Byzantine Oriens, and only in the fourth century, the discussion will be limited to this area and period.⁸⁷

1

It would be pleasant to think that even as St. Jerome was translating the Bible into Latin in Bethlehem and as Ulphilas was translating it into Gothic in the fourth century,⁸⁸ a Christian Arab in Oriens was translating it

see E. Honigmann, "Nordsyrische Klöster in vorarabischer Zeit," *Zeitschrift für Semitistik*, 1 (1922), pp. 18–19, where it appears as a Monophysite monastery of the sixth century. If it turns out to be a Tanūkhid monastery, one has to assume that some of the orthodox Diophysite Tanūkhids became Monophysite in the sixth century.

The Christian element in the north of present-day Syria, as in "Wādi al-Naṣārā" ("the Valley of the Christians"), may possibly go back to the fourth century when the Tanūkhids established a strong Christian presence in the region; see "Tanūkh *post* Tanūkh," *infra*, p. 457 note 176.

⁸⁴The two main interlocutors in this dialogue who argued for and against an Arabic Bible before the rise of Islam are still A. Baumstark and G. Graf respectively; for the position of the former, see *Islamica*, 4 (1931), 562–75; for that of the latter, see *GCAL, Studi e testi*, 118 (1944), vol. 1, pp. 27–52.

⁸⁵For new questions and new answers to old questions, see the preliminary observations of the present writer in *Martyrs*, pp. 247–50.

⁸⁶In the larger sense of the Land of the Two Rivers.

⁸⁷The subsequent volumes in this series will discuss the problem of the Arabic Bible in the fifth and sixth centuries.

⁸⁸The Armenians Mesrop and Sahak seem to have started later in the fourth century than Ulphilas and Jerome since the first Armenian version was ready by A.D. 414. Jerome accomplished his task in the years 383–405, but most of it was done in the first two decades of his stay in Bethlehem.

into Arabic for the benefit of the Arabs in that region, whether the *cives* or the *foederati* whose fortunes have been the main theme of this book. The chances, however, that such a translator existed in the fourth century are almost certainly nil.⁸⁹ The only express reference to a translation of the Bible, or rather the Gospel, into Arabic in the patriarchate of Antioch pertains to the first half of the seventh century, immediately after the Arab Conquests; and it is of particular importance to the theme of this book since the Tanūkhids, the dominant Arab group among the *foederati* in the fourth century, were involved in it, another evidence of their close relation to Christianity as late as the seventh century.⁹⁰

The search for an Arabic Bible in pre-Islamic times is likely to be more fruitful if it is conducted as subsidiary to a search for an Arabic liturgy in that period. For practical purposes and for the majority of Christians, the liturgy was more important than the Bible, because without it Christian worship would have been impossible. It is therefore in those parts of the liturgy that are directly borrowed from the Bible, such as psalms, prayers, and lessons, that biblical translations into Arabic have to be sought. The search for an Arabic Bible in this limited sense is thus related to the search for an Arabic liturgy, and those Arabs who were or must have been the beneficiaries of such a liturgy, if it existed, are likely to have been not the Arab *cives* in Oriens who were assimilated *Rhomaioi* but rather the Arab *foederati* who retained a considerable degree of Arab identity.

2

The case for an Arabic liturgy in fourth-century Byzantine Oriens may be prefaced by two important preliminary observations: (1) unlike Islam, Christianity had no such dogma as that of the Arabic Qurʾān and had no objection

⁸⁹It is noteworthy that the Arabic tradition has nothing to say on a translator of the Bible as it has on those who allegedly invented the Arabic script, three Christians from the tribe of Ṭayy, whose names are given, and for whom see *EP*, s.v. Khatt.

⁹⁰This account of a Gospel translation presents many problems and will be discussed in a subsequent volume in this series (*supra*, note 87). It would appear from the context that the Tanūkhids involved in the Gospel translation represented not the Orthodox but the Monophysite branch; they appear in company with the two other Arab tribes who are mentioned in the *Histoire de Mar Aḥudemmeb* and who were later put under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of George, bishop of the Arabs, for whom see *supra*, p. 422 and note 19. For the two Syriac authors who recorded this episode, Michael Syrus and Bar-Hebraeus, together with modern literature on it, see Graf, *GICAL*, pp. 35–36.

The only other reference or possible reference to an Arabic Bible or Gospel in Syria pertains to the sixth century. It occurs in a verse by the pre-Islamic poet al-Nabigha in praise of the Ghassānids, but *inter alia* it is plagued by a variant reading that shifts the reference from *Scripture* to *Holy Land*; for the verse, see W. Ahlwardt, *The Divans of the Six Ancient Arabic Poets* (London, 1870; reprinted Osnabrück, 1972), p. 13, line 14. There will be a discussion of this verse in the third volume in this series, *BASIC*.

to the appearance of Bibles and liturgies in the vernaculars of the various converted peoples; (2) the fourth century witnessed the triumph of Christianity as well as the christological controversies, which contributed respectively to the spread and importance of open, public Christian worship and to the standardization of the form of that worship among the orthodox through set liturgical texts. The Oriental rivals of Greek—Armenian, Syriac, Coptic, and Ethiopic—were quick to develop their own liturgies, and it would be difficult to assume that Arabic alone failed to do so; thus an Arabic liturgical development was not altogether inconceivable alongside these other particular liturgies. This presumed Arabic liturgy did not have to be elaborate and extensive but might have been a simple one, catering to the needs of the Arab Christian worshipers in their camps and in their settlements. In support of the possible existence of such a liturgy, the following arguments and types of arguments may be adduced.

A

The state of the Arabic language in the fourth century and the uses to which it was put support the view that an Arabic liturgy possibly existed in that century:

1. Arabic in the fourth century was not an undeveloped language unsuited for liturgical expression, as Celtic or Punic is supposed to have been. It was, on the contrary, very well developed; witness the Namāra inscription and the war songs that were composed to celebrate the Arab victories over the armies of the Emperor Valens. These are not extant, but poems of the century immediately following the fourth are, and they are full-blown and highly developed odes. Thus the Namāra inscription and the odes of Mavia's reign testify to the fact that Arabic in the fourth century was both a written and a literary language.⁹¹

2. St. Epiphanius has a most relevant and significant passage on the religious life of Arab Petra toward the end of the fourth century. He records that the pagan Arabs of Petra celebrated the epiphany of Venus in the Arabic language.⁹² The Petran Arabs were Nabataeans who had been exposed to all kinds of influences, Greek, Latin, and Aramaic, who had used the Aramaic language in their inscriptions and in their relations with the outside world, and since A.D. 212, the date of the Edict of Caracalla, had become Roman citizens, even more exposed to Roman influences than before; and yet, for the expression of their religious sentiments and the celebration of their religious

⁹¹On the Namāra inscription and the odes sung in praise of Mavia's victories, see "Arabic Poetry in the Fourth Century A.D.," *infra*, pp. 443-48.

⁹²On the use of Arabic in Petra, see the section on Jerome's *Vita S. Hilarionis*, *supra*, p. 292.

festivals they used their own native language, Arabic, which no doubt they continued to speak if not to write.

3. Other relevant data come from Jerome's *Vita S. Hilarionis*, which describes an Arab community of sedentaries in Elusa in the Negev of Southern Palestine and the Saracens around it, and their conversion from paganism to Christianity by the saint. According to the hagiographer, the Saracens called on the saint to bless them using the Syriac word *barech*. It has been argued in a previous chapter that this most probably was Arabic *bārik*. If so, the Arabs on conversion surely retained the use of their native Arabic, which had been used for a pagan liturgical expression, adapting it to the doctrines of the Christian faith. *Barech/bārik* may thus be the one solitary term that has survived from the liturgical formulas employed by the Arabs of Elusa in the fourth century.⁹³

B

The argument for an Arabic liturgy in the fourth century gains in force with the examination of some relevant data regarding the *foederati* who are the Arab group most likely to have been its beneficiaries:

1. If Arabic was used by the bilingual and possibly trilingual Petran Arabs—Roman citizens since 212 and overexposed to foreign languages—for the expression of their sentiments, a fortiori it must have been used by the *foederati*, newcomers from Arabia or across the *limes*, still very much attached to their language, Arabic, most probably the only language they knew when they went over to the Romans. Even if they knew another language such as Aramaic, the assumption does not imply that they abandoned the use of their native language, especially for the expression of something as personal and intimate as religious sentiments. They may have acquired Greek and Latin for communicating with the imperial officials, but they did not have to pray in either and most probably did not. They kept close relations with the Arabian Peninsula and also with the Arabs across the *limes*. What is more, they were legally *foederati*, not Roman *cives*, and remained possessed of a considerable degree of their ethnic and cultural identity as Arabs. The use of the Arabic language in their churches would be consonant with all these relevant features of their life and history.

2. These *foederati*, whether Lakhmids or Tanūkhids, had come from the region of the Euphrates near Ḥirā, where a highly literate Arab society had developed. Some Arabic poetry had been attributed to the two main figures in Tanūkhid and Lakhmid history in the third century, namely, Jaḏīma and 'Amr b. 'Adi respectively, and both were involved in the religious movements of

⁹³On Elusa and its Arabs, see *supra*, pp. 288–93.

that century in Iraq.⁹⁴ These *foederati*, with whom the first attested Arabic inscription and the first mention of Arabic verse in Oriens are associated, were probably the ones who brought this very tradition of written and literary Arabic to Oriens from Iraq. And it is natural to suppose that these *foederati*, who upheld the traditions of written and literary Arabic in their new environment, also worshiped in the same native language they had used in Iraq before they went over to the Romans.

3. The Christianity of the Tanūkhid *foederati* and the various elements of institutional Christianity attaching to it—the ecclesiastical hierarchy, the churches, and the monasteries—have been examined in a previous chapter,⁹⁵ and they have made clear that the beginnings of an Arab church did develop in the fourth century.⁹⁶ Although the ethnic background of two of the attested bishops of the Arab *foederati* in the fourth century remains obscure,⁹⁷ one of them, Moses, of the reign of Mavia, was certainly Arab, and Mavia insisted on his elevation to the episcopate as a condition for making peace with the Romans. If the federate church, at least in Mavia's time, had an Arab bishop and if the lower ranks of the clergy were Arabs, as it is natural to suppose,⁹⁸ and if the worshipers in the churches of the *foederati* were Arabs, for whom Arabic was the language of their poetry, it is most unlikely that they would have used anything other than Arabic as their devotional language.⁹⁹

4. Mavia's attachment to Orthodoxy and the Nicene faith as well as that of her orthodox bishop, Moses, who had a dialogue with the Arian Lucius in Alexandria on the true definition of the faith, has already been analyzed and underlined.¹⁰⁰ Since Mavia fought so hard with Arian Valens for the faith of

⁹⁴On the case for the possible authenticity of this poetry attributed to these two figures, see the present writer in "The Composition of Arabic Poetry in the Fourth Century A.D.," *The Proceedings of the Second International Symposium on the History of Arabia*, Riyadh University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia (forthcoming).

⁹⁵For this, see "Tanūkh and Christianity," *supra*, pp. 418–35.

⁹⁶Other Arab churches may be mentioned in this connection: (1) the Arab church of Elusa in the fourth and fifth centuries, *supra*, pp. 288–93; (2) the church of the phylarchs of the Palestinian *parembole* in the fifth century; (3) the church of the Mesopotamian Arabs whom Aḥūdemmeḥ converted, *supra*, pp. 419–22; and (4) the sixth-century Arab church of Najrān in South Arabia. The church of the phylarchs of the Palestinian *parembole* will be treated in detail in the second volume of this series, while the Arab church of Najrān has been treated by the present writer in *Martyrs* and in "Byzantium in South Arabia," *DOP*, 33 (1980), pp. 23–94.

⁹⁷On the Arab episcopate in Oriens in the fourth century, see *supra*, pp. 330–45.

⁹⁸For the ecclesiastical hierarchy in Najrān and Ḥadramawt with its strong Arab complexion, see the present writer in *Martyrs*, pp. 45, 64.

⁹⁹A parallel situation obtained or must have obtained in the churches of the nomads over which were appointed the so-called "bishops of the nomads." These must have used Arabic in order to communicate with the nomadic Arabs who could have known no other language, and the presumption is that these bishops were Arabs or Arabic-speaking.

¹⁰⁰For this, see *supra*, pp. 153–55.

Nicaea and since her bishop, Moses, argued so vehemently with Arian Lucius in Alexandria, it is natural to suppose that Mavia was familiar with the Nicene Creed; and it would be surprising if after their exploits militarily and dialectically with the two Arians, Valens and Lucius, that queen and bishop would not have wanted the Nicene Creed for which they fought to be known or better known among their followers. Now these followers had celebrated their own victory over Arian Valens in Arabic, and it would have been surprising if they had not celebrated the Nicene Creed for which they fought in the same language. At least this part of the liturgy, the Nicene Creed, over which the whole Saracen war of Mavia's reign raged, was most likely to have been said in Arabic.¹⁰¹

3

Perhaps the foregoing observations and arguments have shown that a certain degree of probability attaches to the view that an Arabic liturgy and some portions of an Arabic Bible could have come into existence as early as the fourth century in Byzantine Oriens. The following tentative conclusions on both may be put together as follows:

A. The Arabic Liturgy

1. It is unlikely that this presumed Arabic liturgy was an extensive one, such as the Liturgy of St. James, which was the patriarchal rite of Antioch in the fourth century. It must have been a simple form of it designed to meet the spiritual needs of an Arab group that was essentially a community of soldiers.

2. The possible use of a language or languages other than Arabic in the celebration of the liturgy in the Arab church of the fourth century is certainly not precluded. Either or both of the two major liturgical languages in Oriens, Greek and Syriac, may well have been also employed in the celebration of part of the liturgy. This is the situation that obtains nowadays in the churches of the Arab East.

3. The liturgy associated with Mavia and her bishop was that of the Diophysite rite. What the doctrinal position of the Arab *foederati* of the fifth century, the Salīhids, was remains to be shown, while the Ghassānids of the sixth century were certainly staunch Monophysites. Thus the Arab federate liturgy in the fourth century may safely be described as orthodox.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹What the orthodox Tanūkhids used as the equivalent of Greek *orthos* is not clear; but the root must have been the same as that from which *qawīm* is derived, the term used by the sixth-century poet al-Nabigha to describe the "orthodoxy" of the Ghassānids, and it could have been the same word. For the term, see Ahlwardt, *loc. cit.* (*supra*, note 90).

¹⁰²To the geographical and chronological complexity that attaches to the search for the pre-Islamic Arabic Bible and liturgy, noted *supra*, p. 435, a new dimension of complexity may

4. This liturgy has perhaps been irretrievably lost. If the poems composed in honor of Mavia's orthodox victories had survived, they would have been invaluable for this work of recovery since they must have contained terms reflective of the theological controversy over which the war was fought; but they are not extant.¹⁰³ The only term attested in Byzantine Oriens in the fourth century that could be considered an Arabic liturgical term is *barech/bārik*, which occurs in Jerome's *Life* of St. Hilarion.¹⁰⁴ If Ḥawārī, the name of one of the kings of the Tanūkhids in the fourth century, turns out to be authentic and semantically the equivalent of *apostle*, as has been suggested,¹⁰⁵ this would be one of the Christian terms that go back to Tanūkhid times in the fourth century and could argue that the Arabs were translating Christian concepts into Arabic in that century.

5. Relevant material that would fortify the case for the existence of a simple Arabic liturgy may also be found in "Tanūkh and Christianity," *supra*, note 13. The difficulty of the Arabic language, even for one who spoke Syriac, such as Aḥūdemmeḥ, suggests that local native Arab clergy must have been employed to communicate with the worshipers and that the language of this liturgical communication was or must have been Arabic.

6. The examination of the many sources dealing with Sinai and Palestina Tertia has revealed many pockets of Arabs or Saracens who because of their isolation and of their being located in the Byzantine limitrophe are likely to have retained knowledge and use of the Arabic language and consequently to have employed it for liturgical purposes. Such was Elusa in the Negev and to a greater extent Pharan in southwestern Sinai.

be added, namely, the denominational. If an Arabic liturgy came into existence in Arab Ḥīra in Iraq and in Arab Najrān in South Arabia, surely the former would have reflected the Nestorian rite and the latter the Monophysite. The denominational dimension must also be taken into account in investigating the problem of an Arabic Bible before the rise of Islam. It is possible that the Monophysites of Syria did not have an Arabic Bible, unlike the Nestorian Arabs of Ḥīra or the Monophysite Arabs of Najrān, who could have had one; thus the episode referred to *supra*, p. 436 and note 90, involving the translation of the Gospel into Arabic immediately after the Arab Conquests does not necessarily imply that the Gospel had not been translated elsewhere in Arabia and by Christian Arabs of a different denomination.

¹⁰³The process of recovery is hampered by the nonsurvival of the "Poems of Tanūkh," which might have contained some of these terms; see "*Dīwān Tanūkh*," *infra*, pp. 448–55. For Christian terms prevalent among the Nestorian Arabs of Ḥīra, the poetry of 'Adi ibn-Zayd (or rather what has survived of it) is valuable, and so is that precious epigraphic document that goes back to the middle of the sixth century, the Dayr Hind inscription in Ḥīra; see Rothstein, *DLH*, p. 23 note 2, extending to p. 24. Rothstein did not appreciate the importance of its last part for Christian Arabic. The *Dīwān* of Banū-al-Ḥārith b. Ka'b would also have been valuable for South Arabian Christianity if it had survived. L. Cheikho collected an impressive number of Christian pre-Islamic Arabic terms, but the material needs to be organized and critically evaluated; see Cheikho, *Al-Nasrānīya wa Ādābuhā*, vol. 2, pp. 157–226.

¹⁰⁴For this, see *supra*, p. 291.

¹⁰⁵*Supra*, pp. 378–79.

This presumed liturgy for which a case has been made in this chapter must have been the earliest Arabic liturgy to come into existence, since it did so in the fourth century itself and in that part of the Christian world that witnessed the striking development of the Christian liturgy in that century. Thus if this reasoning is correct, the Arabic liturgy was born quite early and did not wait until the tenth century to make its appearance.

B. The Arabic Bible

Much the same arguments that have been advanced for the existence of an Arabic liturgy in the fourth century may be applied to the existence of an Arabic Bible or rather portions of it. The case for an Arabic Bible in this century is not so strong, and the liturgy is more important than the Bible, but a framework may be constructed for the further investigation of the problem in these three centuries of the pre-Islamic period.¹⁰⁶

1. The various phases that this pre-Islamic Bible must have gone through are as follows: (*a*) what might be termed "the Bible in the liturgy," those portions of it that were used in church service, such as prayers, psalms, lessons; this may possibly have resulted in the collection of a lectionary; (*b*) translations of this or that book of the Bible, such as the Psalms; (*c*) the translation of larger units such as the Pentateuch and the Gospels.¹⁰⁷ In the fourth century, the possibility of (*a*) alone can be entertained.

2. The tripartite approach recommended above¹⁰⁸ is the most fruitful for the investigation of this problem: (*a*) each of the three areas must be examined carefully: Syria, Mesopotamia, especially Ḥīra and its surroundings; finally South Arabia, especially Najrān; (*b*) the pre-Islamic period is a long one that lasted for three centuries, and the diachronous treatment of the problem throughout these centuries in each of the three areas where Arab Christian communities appeared and developed is extremely illuminating; (*c*) the affiliations of the Arabs to three different Christian denominations, namely, the Orthodox, the Nestorian, and the Monophysite, should be borne in mind in conducting this investigation.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶The investigation will continue in the following volumes in this series. It is in the latter part of this pre-Islamic period that the case for larger portions of an Arabic Bible grows stronger. The translation of the Bible in its entirety is more probably post-Islamic. On the problem of post-Islamic versions, see Graf, *GCAL*, vol. 1, pp. 85–195.

¹⁰⁷In addition to references in the sources to various Gospels in pre-Islamic Arabia, there are the two Qur'ānic terms for the Pentateuch and the Gospel, al-Tawrāt and al-Injīl.

¹⁰⁸*Supra*, p. 435.

¹⁰⁹It is in conformity with this approach and also with the scope and range of this book that the arguments and the observations in this section on the Arabic liturgy and the Arabic Bible in the pre-Islamic period have been restricted to the fourth century. For a discussion that ranges over more than one area and one century and does not take into account the fourth, see Baumstark's article and Graf's reply (*supra*, note 84). Their acute observations will be discussed in a later volume in this series.

3. Students of Arab Christianity have accorded most of their attention to the extant Arabic versions of the Bible in Islamic times,¹¹⁰ in spite of the fact that these are late versions and thus have little value for biblical textual criticism. Besides, the Arabic Bible was not a vital force in Islamic times; it was the new Sacred Book of Islam, the Qur'ān, that was and that inspired the rise of a new major world civilization that was truly Qur'ano-centric. Thus, it was in pre-Islamic times that an Arabic Bible would have been a vital force in the life of the Arabs, if indeed it existed, and for this reason the search for it, non-extant as it now is, is of supreme importance for rewriting the history of Arab culture before the rise of Islam.

III. ARABIC POETRY IN THE FOURTH CENTURY A.D.

The ecclesiastical historian whose account of the Saracens has been one of the major documents for reconstructing the course of Arab-Byzantine relations in the fourth century, especially during the reign of Valens, may be drawn upon for one last problem on which his testimony is decisive, namely, the composition of Arabic poetry as early as the fourth century A.D. The authenticity of pre-Islamic Arabic poetry is crucial for reconstructing the history of the Arabs before the rise of Islam and of the Arab-Byzantine relationship, but it has been clouded by some unsound scholarship when Pandora's box was opened in 1925. However, the views of D. S. Margoliouth and Tāha Ḥusayn on the authenticity of pre-Islamic Arabic poetry may now be said to be dead beyond resuscitation,¹¹¹ and the student of pre-Islamic poetry must, therefore, turn to other important problems, one of which is the beginnings of Arabic poetry. To the solution of this problem, the ecclesiastical history of Sozomen and the Namāra inscription can make a substantial contribution.¹¹²

If the beginnings of pre-Islamic Arabic poetry cannot be determined with accuracy, it can be safely assumed that the composition of Arabic poetry goes back to at least the fourth century A.D. The truth of this statement may be defended inferentially and supported evidentially. Developed poems, such as those of 'Amr b. Qamī'a¹¹³ al-Bakrī, a very early pre-Islamic poet whose

¹¹⁰On these, see *supra*, note 106.

¹¹¹On the problem of authenticity, see Sezgin, *GAS*, vol. 2, pp. 14–33, with an extensive bibliography. An outstanding contribution in Arabic to the problem and indeed to the study of pre-Islamic poetry in general is Nāsir al-Dīn al-Asad's *Maṣādir al-Shi'r al-Jāhili* (Cairo, 1962). Margoliouth opened the discussion on authenticity in 1925 in his article "The Origins of Arabic Poetry," *JRAS* (1925), pp. 417–49. His arguments against the authenticity of pre-Islamic poetry were swept away beyond recall by A. J. Arberry; see the "Epilogue" in his book *The Seven Odes* (London, 1957), pp. 228–54. The latest substantial contribution to the problems of pre-Islamic poetry in English is M. J. Zwettler, *The Oral Tradition of Classical Arabic Poetry* (Columbus, Ohio, 1978); see the present writer's review of this book in *JAOS*, 100 (1980), pp. 31–33.

¹¹²For an expanded and more elaborate version of this section, see the present writer in "The Composition of Arabic Poetry in the Fourth Century A.D." (cited *supra*, note 94).

¹¹³Sezgin, *GAS*, vol. 2, pp. 7, 152.

birth date may be assigned to ca. A.D. 480, clearly imply a tradition of poetic composition that antedates them by at least a century, going back to our fourth. More important is the statement in the *HE* of Sozomen,¹¹⁴ who lived partly in the fourth and partly in the fifth century and who explicitly states that the Arabs celebrated the victories of their queen, Mavia, over the Roman Emperor Valens ca. 380 in war songs that were still recited in the middle of the fifth century.

1

Sozomen's account is the earliest extant reference to the composition of Arabic poetry in any language. And yet it has not been closely examined or analyzed,¹¹⁵ although it deserves a detailed analysis for the precious light it sheds on the state of Arabic poetry in the second half of the fourth century. Relevant conclusions that a detailed analysis of Sozomen¹¹⁶ and other historians of the period yields may be presented as follows:

(1) Mavia mounted an offensive against the Romans in most of the limi-trophe provinces of Oriens. The main battle described in detail by Sozomen must have been in Phoenicia Libanensis; and the name of the Byzantine general beaten by Mavia and who had the rank of Master of Horse and Foot in the Orient was Julius.

(2) For the Arabs, this battle would have been one of the *ayyām*,¹¹⁷ and thus it is practically certain that the poetry written to celebrate Mavia's victories was of that genre, which only goes to confirm the critic Ibn-Sallām (d. ca. A.D. 847) on the close relationship that obtained between war and the rise of Arabic poetry.

(3) The Greek ecclesiastical historian speaks not of one song but of songs, *odai*, and this suggests that what is involved is a cycle of poems written by various poets on this battle in much the same way that the *yawm* of Dū-Qār, fought in the first decade of the seventh century, was celebrated in a number of poems. This cycle of poems on the victory of Queen Mavia thus antedates the fragments of a similar cycle, that of the Basūs War,¹¹⁸ by a century, and thus it is the earliest datable cycle of Arabic poems of the *ayyām* genre.

¹¹⁴Sozomen, *HE*, *GCS*, 50, p. 298.

¹¹⁵It has received more than a passing mention only in Altheim and Stiehl, *AAW*, vol. 3, pp. 101–7, but the discussion is vitiated by dating the victories of Queen Mavia to the first half of the fourth century and relating them to the Namāra inscription, whereas it is clear from the account of the Greek historian that these must be assigned to the seventies, in the reign of the Emperor Valens.

¹¹⁶For this detailed analysis, see the chapter on the reign of Valens, *supra*, pp. 138–202.

¹¹⁷For *ayyām* (sing. *yawm*), battle-days of the Arabs, and *akhbār* (sing. *khabar*), accounts, see E. Mittwoch in *EP*, 1, *s.v.* Ayyam al-Arab.

¹¹⁸For an account of the Basūs War, see *EP*, 1, *s.v.* Basūs.

(4) According to Sozomen, the exploit of Mavia lived in the memory of the people of the country where the battle was fought and was celebrated in *odai* by the Saracens. The ecclesiastical historian was reporting some three quarters of a century after the exploits of Mavia, and this is a late date for the transmission of both the poems that were composed then and the accounts of the events that took place, thus confirming the possibility of the transmission of pre-Islamic poetry over long intervals of time.

(5) The transmission of the *kbabar*, the account of the *yawm*, and of the *odai* raises the question of whether the transmission was oral or written. Fundamental research on the problem of transmission in pre-Islamic times conducted in recent years has inclined scholars in favor of written transmission or at least of its reality in pre-Islamic times.¹¹⁹ The Arab allies of Byzantium in the fourth century, whose queen Mavia was, were not illiterate since the Namāra inscription earlier in the century clearly points to the use of writing for recording the exploits of the Arab federate king Imru' al-Qays. Later in the century there are Greek inscriptions associated with Mavia or one of her relatives. The chances are that these poems that celebrated a victory so dear to the hearts of the Arabs were also recorded. Furthermore, if the non-Saracens remembered in the middle of the fifth century the events and details of Mavia's exploits, the chances are that the Saracens too remembered them and, what is more, recorded these details in the form of *akbbār*, the well-known Arabic genre which consisted of written prose accounts of the *ayyām* and other happenings. Thus Sozomen's account attests the earliest extant reference to the transmission as well as to the composition of pre-Islamic poetry, and thus it is doubly unfortunate that neither the *odai* nor the Arabic versions of the *akbbār* have survived.

(6) Who were these poets and what was their tribal affiliation? The question is asked in the context of the view that Arabic poetry is supposed to have appeared in Syria, Bilād al-Shām, rather later, even in Umayyad times, when the region produced only one notable poet, 'Adī b. al-Riqā'.¹²⁰ However, when it is remembered that Tanūkh and Lakhm were not native Syrian tribes but emigrant ones from Mesopotamia, the problem admits of an answer. The Arab tribes that had emigrated brought with them the tradition of Arabic poetry just as they brought with them the tradition of Arabic writing reflected in the Namāra inscription.¹²¹

¹¹⁹For the written and oral traditions of pre-Islamic Arabic poetry, see the works of N. al-Dīn al-Asad and M. J. Zwettler respectively, cited *supra*, note 111.

¹²⁰The argument of this section, that Arabic poetry was composed in Syria as early as the fourth century A.D., should thus, *inter alia*, considerably modify the view that it appeared late in Bilād al-Shām.

¹²¹This emigration is of considerable importance to the problem of the diffusion of Arabic poetry regionally in pre-Islamic times, from Iraq to Syria. It will have to be taken into account

(7) In this earliest attestation of the composition of Arabic poetry in the pre-Islamic period, it is noteworthy that the historian uses the term *odai* rather than *poemata*, thereby confirming the view that the recitation of early Arabic poetry was *inshād*.

(8) Although this poetry composed for Queen Mavia and her Arabs, Tanūkhids or Lakhmids, has not survived, it can be conceived through analogy with such *ayyām* poetry as that composed on the Basūs War, but this was an inter-Arab war; the *yawm* of Dū-Qār might be better since it involved a foreign power, Persia; better still would be the poetry composed on such battles of the seventh century as al-Yarmūk and Ajnādayn, since these involved Byzantium.¹²²

2

In spite of its brevity, the account of the Greek ecclesiastical historian has proved invaluable for drawing the foregoing conclusions on the reality of Arabic poetic composition in the second part of the fourth century, thus testifying to the employment of meter in the composition of Arabic verse. The loss of these poems is regrettable since if they had survived, they would have enabled the investigator of pre-Islamic poetry to examine the second major problem after meter that he must solve, namely, the *language* of these poems—how developed it was and how close or distant it was from that of the earliest extant poems of the fifth century, such as those of ‘Amr b. Qamī’a. The language of these poems is mature and developed and suggests that the Arabic of the fourth century must have been almost identical with it or very close to it, just as the employment of developed meters in the fourth century is inferable from their employment in these poems in the fifth. This inference on meter has been confirmed by the testimonial evidence of Sozomen, and now we must turn to another document that confirms the phase of development that the Arabic *language* had reached in the fourth century and which was used in these poems composed for Queen Mavia, namely, the Namāra inscription. This is important since the language of pre-Islamic poetry has been one of the major issues in discussing the problem of authenticity, and the Namāra inscription deserves more attention as the most important document for discussing this problem. It is testimonial evidence for the state of the Arabic language in the fourth century, evidence that would enable the investigator to

when the traditional account of this diffusion is discussed, namely, poetry’s appearance first in the Rabī’a group and then its spread to Muḍar.

¹²²See al-Nu’mān A. M. al-Qādi, *Shi’r al-Futūḥ al-Islāmīya* (Cairo, 1965), pp. 153–61. What meters were in use in the fourth century is difficult to tell. Almost certainly the *rajaz* and some of the *qasīd*-meters, since the latter are fully developed and employed in fifth-century poetry that has survived.

proceed in examining concrete poems attributed to this early period and rejected by those sceptical of their authenticity. Without it we would be dealing only with inferences on what Arabic must have been like in this early period, but with it, the evidence is incontestable, and it is as welcome as that of Sozomen on meter. The two documents complement each other since the one without the other would not enable us to examine concrete specimens of early Arabic poetry from the two important viewpoints of language and meter.

A close examination of the language of the Namāra inscription¹²³ reveals that it is none other than classical Arabic. No one who reads the inscription can deny that its language is classical Arabic. What seems strange or unintelligible or un-Arabic in the inscription may be due to the following: (a) the employment of the Aramaic-Nabataean *script*, which may have obscured some of the words, a condition made worse by the longevity of the inscription carved on a stone some sixteen centuries ago; (b) the fact that its Arabic was written under the influence of Aramaic, the language of the Semitic inscriptions in Syria, which was also used by its Arabs such as the Nabataeans and the Palmyrenes; this is reflected in such a feature as the employment of the word *bar* for *ibn*;¹²⁴ (c) the fact that some of the words are most probably old technical terms whose meanings are no longer intelligible, just as certain words in pre-Islamic poetry are. It is only when one remembers all this that one is forced to conclude that the Arabic of the Namāra inscription is resoundingly classical and identical with the literary Arabic of pre-Islamic poetry.

In addition to the language, the inscription is remarkable for two other relevant facts: (a) its early date in the fourth century, slightly after the close of the first quarter; (b) the Lakhmid Mesopotamian origin of its honorand, Imru' al-Qays, who brought with him to the western half of the Fertile Crescent the tradition of classical Arabic and of the composition of Arabic poetry as developed in the Land of the Two Rivers.

The first fact makes it possible to judge poetic fragments that are ascribed not only to the fourth but also to the third century A.D., since Imru' al-Qays must have lived at least a quarter of a century in the third; the second makes it possible to judge these earliest fragments of Arabic poetry, some of which were composed in the eastern half of the Fertile Crescent, such as the poetry attributed to the Lakhmids and to the Tanūkhids of Mesopotamia, to whom belonged Imru' al-Qays himself. Thus the Namāra inscription provides the philological, chronological, and regional framework within which some of

¹²³See the present writer in "Observations," pp. 33-42.

¹²⁴On the terminal *waw* in Nabataean Arabic which in the Namāra inscription appears attached to such a proper name as 'Amrū, in the first line, see Zwettler, *Oral Tradition*, pp. 149-51, which draws on W. Diem's "Die nabatäischen Inschriften und die Frage der Kasusflexion im Altarabischen," *ZDMG*, 123 (1973), 227-37.

these fragments—among the earliest in the extant corpus of pre-Islamic poetry—can be profitably studied.¹²⁵ But this investigation of these third-century fragments would not have been entirely possible had it not been for the crucial passage in Sozomen on the composition of Arabic poetry in the fourth century. Thus it was the combination of the two documents that has made this investigation possible, the literary one hailing from the world of Byzantine historiography and the epigraphic one from al-Namāra in the Provincia Arabia.

As a contemporary testimony for this remote and ill-documented period of three centuries before the rise of Islam, pre-Islamic poetry is invaluable.¹²⁶ But this investigation of pre-Islamic poetry is especially important for the *foederati* of the fourth century, the chief concern of this book. In addition to shedding a bright light on their cultural life, one constituent of which was poetry, this investigation provides an important background for the question of an Arabic liturgy in this century, the case for which is considerably strengthened by the realization that these *foederati* were not rude, illiterate soldiers but a Christian Arab group that had its own poets who composed Arabic *odai* on their orthodox victories against Arian Valens and are therefore likely to have sought an expression for their religious sentiments through the community of the same language in which their victory *odai* were composed. That case could receive further fortification if it could be established that a *dīwān* (collected poetic works) for Tanūkh existed in pre-Islamic times, the theme of the following section.¹²⁷

IV. *DĪWĀN TANŪKH*

As has been remarked in the preceding section, the loss of the *odai* that celebrated Mavia's victories is regrettable. However, Sozomen's notice of these *odai*, now lost, was fortunate. Just as it enables the student of pre-Islamic Arabic poetry to argue for the reality of Arabic poetic composition in the fourth century A.D., it enables him to pursue further the question of Tanūkh's association with Arabic poetry, the possibility of a *dīwān*, a collection of Tanūkhid poems in pre-Islamic times, and the search for such a *dīwān* in Islamic times.¹²⁸

¹²⁵These third-century fragments are discussed by the present writer in "The Composition of Arabic Poetry" (cited *supra*, note 94). In this paper, it is argued that the authenticity of these fragments can no longer be considered utterly inconceivable, especially since recent research has shown that the poets with whom these fragments are associated are well-attested historical figures, such as Jaḍīma, the Tanūkhid king, and 'Amr b. 'Adi, the first Lakhmid king. Thus the anonymity that has been presumed to shroud early Arabic poetry has been broken through; on the "anonymous era" of Arabic poetry, "mid-fifth century and before," see Zwettler, *Oral Tradition*, pp. 199–200.

¹²⁶See the opening paragraph of this section, *supra*, p. 446.

¹²⁷See "*Dīwān Tanūkh*," especially part 2, *infra*, pp. 452–55.

¹²⁸For the *dīwāns* (poetic collections) of the various Arab tribes, see Sezgin, *GAS*, vol.

1

Neither the list of Ibn-al-Nadīm (d.995 or 998) nor that of al-Āmidī (d.981) includes a *dīwān* for Tanūkh.¹²⁹ This does not mean that Tanūkh had no *dīwān*; these lists were either noncomprehensive when their authors compiled them or are now incomplete, having lost some items in the process of transmission. This must be the case in view of the fact that there is an unmistakable reference to a “*Dīwān Tanūkh*” or “*Ash‘ār* of Tanūkh,”¹³⁰ as the collection is called in the commentary of the Andalusian al-Baṭalyawsi,¹³¹ and a more specific reference in the work of al-Qifṭī (d.1248) to a *dīwān* of Taym Allāt, one of the constituent tribal groups of the confederation that Tanūkh was.¹³² These references make clear that such a *dīwān* existed in Baghdad in the eleventh century when the Tanūkhid Abū al-‘Alā’ al-Ma‘arri (d.1058) made his famous visit to that city. As the most eminent Tanūkhid in Islamic times, the blind poet and philosopher was interested in the *dīwān* of his tribe, especially as it was not to be found in his native Syria, in the libraries of Tripoli.¹³³

This reference to a *dīwān* of Tanūkh raises many important questions, such as the date of its composition, whether it was pre-Islamic or Islamic, and why it was not included in the two lists of Ibn al-Nadīm and al-Āmidī.

(1) A *dīwān* that was extant in the eleventh century, i.e., four centuries after the rise of Islam, undoubtedly contained poetry of the Tanūkhids in Islamic times; it would be inconceivable that it contained only the pre-Islamic poetry of the Tanūkhids. But it would be equally inconceivable that it did not contain also their pre-Islamic poetry or some of it.¹³⁴ Tanūkh, the tribe with a well-defined identity that played an important role in the history of the Arabs, is pre-Islamic Tanūkh and the Tanūkh of the first century of the Islamic Era, when the tribe continued to flourish as part of the Umayyad *ajnad* system. It

2, pp. 36–46; on the possibility that some of these were compiled in pre-Islamic times, see *ibid.*, pp. 35–36.

¹²⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 38–39.

¹³⁰*Ash‘ār* (i.e., “the poems”) rather than *dīwān* had been the title of such collections before the term *dīwān* acquired vogue; on this and other titles for such collections, see *ibid.*, p. 37.

¹³¹Abu-Muhammad ‘Abd Allah b. Muhammad b. al-Sid (d.1127), the celebrated grammarian and philosopher, who wrote a commentary on Abu al-‘Alā’ al-Ma‘arri’s *dīwān*, *Saqt al-Zand*. He is to be distinguished from another Baṭalyawsi, Abū-Bakr ‘Aṣim b. Ayyūb al-Baṭalyawsi (d.1101), who commented on pre-Islamic Arabic poetry.

¹³²For the reference to *Ash‘ār Tanūkh* in al-Baṭalyawsi, see al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh al-Ruwāt*, vol. 1, p. 50 note 1; for reference to the *Dīwān of Taym Allāt*, see *ibid.*, pp. 50–51; for al-Baṭalyawsi, *Dīwān Taym Allāt* was a *juz’* (“a part”) of *Ash‘ār Tanūkh*; see al-Āmidī, *Al-Mu’talif*, p. 299.

¹³³See al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh al-Ruwāt*, p. 50.

¹³⁴Especially as pre-Islamic poetry was considered the model of later Islamic poetry, and Arab tribes took pride in the longevity of their poetic tradition going back to pre-Islamic times; on the “Seven Odes” (“al-Mu‘allaqat”) of pre-Islamic Arabia, the most celebrated odes in the whole corpus of Arabic poetry, see Sezgin, *GAS*, vol. 2, pp. 46–53.

is, therefore, practically certain that a goodly part of the *dīwān* consisted of poems that went back not only to later Islamic but to pre-Islamic¹³⁵ and Umayyad times.¹³⁶

(2) A reference to the *dīwān* of Tanūkh in the eleventh century in Baghdad brings to mind that monograph written by Hishām on the Tanūkhids, entitled *Akbbār Tanūkh wa Ansābuhā*, a work of the eighth century, written in the same region, Iraq.¹³⁷ The question immediately arises as to how the two works are related, whether they are one and the same work or two different ones: (a) the two titles suggest that they were two different works, the one devoted exclusively to the poetry of Tanūkh, while the other is a more general work on its history and genealogy; (b) but, as is well known, the *dīwāns* of the various Arab tribes would have included material on the history of the tribe and its genealogy and the *dīwān* was often called the *kitāb*, "the book" of such and such a tribe.¹³⁸ So the two works may have been one book, that written by Hishām in the eighth century, which was comprehensive but out of which in later times the poetry was taken out, and thus it formed a separate work, entitled in the eleventh century *Ash'ār Tanūkh*, the *Poems of Tanūkh*.¹³⁹ If so, this work would go back to the eighth century, not as distant from pre-Islamic times as a book composed in the eleventh century.¹⁴⁰

(3) The noninclusion of a *dīwān* for Tanūkh by Ibn-al-Nadīm and al-Āmidī calls for an explanation. It has been stated above that a *dīwān* of a division of Tanūkh, that of Taym Allāt, was available in Baghdad in the eleventh century, and this reference may be the key to solving this mystery. Tanūkh, it may be remembered, was not a single tribe but a confederation of tribes. The Azd (Asd) of Jaḍīma, the king of Tanūkh, formed part of it, and,

¹³⁵Whether the pre-Islamic portion included poetry of both eastern (Mesopotamian) Tanūkh and western (Syrian) Tanūkh cannot, of course, be determined. However, it is western Tanūkh that was the more important of the two branches because of its Byzantine connection and of its role in Umayyad times in the *ajnad* system in Syria. Its poetry, therefore, is more important than that of eastern Tanūkh, but for traces of Christianity in this poetry, the poetry of both would have been valuable since both branches were Christianized.

¹³⁶See, for instance, a verse by 'Amr b. Aḥmar al-Bāhilī which refers to a *Qasīda*, an ode by a Tanūkhid who apparently had plotted against the poet at the court of the Umayyad Caliph Yazīd, son of Mu'āwiya; *Shi'r 'Amr ibn Aḥmar al-Bāhilī*, ed. H. 'Aṭwān (Damascus, n.d.), p. 85. The variant "Ma'add" for "Tanūkh" is not likely to be right since Tanūkh, considered a Qaḥṭāni South Arabian tribe, was more important than the North Arabian Ma'add in the politics of the Umayyad *ajnad* system; see *ibid.*, p. 85 note 3.

¹³⁷See *supra*, p. 360.

¹³⁸Al-Asad, *Maṣādir*, pp. 552–55; and Sezgin, *GAS*, vol. 2, pp. 36–37.

¹³⁹It may corroborate this view that the *Dīwān of Tanūkh* was not to be found in Syria but in Iraq where Hishām wrote.

¹⁴⁰The Abbasid poet Abū-Tammām (d.846) may have used this collection, *Dīwān Tanūkh*, when he made his famous anthology of Arabic poetry entitled *Al-Ḥamāsa*, since he quotes a pre-Islamic Tanūkhid poem, for which see *infra*, p. 454 and note 165. For *Dīwān al-Ḥamāsa* of Abū-Tammām, see Sezgin, *GAS*, vol. 2, pp. 66–72.

according to another version (presumably the one that reflected their tribal composition after their migration to Syria), so did Fahm, Nizār, and al-Aḥlāf.¹⁴¹ After the loss of their dominant position and during the period of a relative political eclipse for them in the two centuries after the fourth century A.D., it is possible that Tanūkh lost its identity as a confederation,¹⁴² while the individual constituent tribes asserted theirs or rediscovered it. This may have resulted in each of these constituent tribes collecting its own poetry, and this might have happened in pre-Islamic or later Islamic times. This explanation derives considerable support from the scattered references to the *dīwāns* of some of these constituent tribes in the Islamic lists of tribal *dīwāns*. There is (a) the *dīwān* of Taym Allat referred to already;¹⁴³ (b) a *dīwān* of the Azd or al-Asd;¹⁴⁴ (c) a *dīwān* of Jarm;¹⁴⁵ (d) and possibly the *dīwāns* of some of the smaller tribes of Banū-Asad b. Wabara,¹⁴⁶ some of whom may have formed part of Tanūkh in the pre-Islamic period.¹⁴⁷

(4) The noninclusion of the *dīwān* of Tanūkh in the lists admits of another, more likely explanation, one not related to the fact that it is a very old pre-Islamic tribe but to its isolation as a Christian community in Islamic times.¹⁴⁸ Muslim scholars were naturally and understandably not especially interested in this kind or type of poetry, particularly if the *dīwān* was identical with the *Akbbār Tanūkh* of Hishām. It will be remembered that Hishām was in a special relationship to the Caliph al-Mahdi who had that well-known encounter with Tanūkh in Qinnasrīn and forced it to convert to Islam. As to the *dīwān* of Tanūkh known in the eleventh century and mentioned above, it is likely to have favored poems that had no strong Christian complexion in much the same way that the poems of al-Nābigha, the poet of the Ghassānids, who too were fervent and fanatical Christians, contains little of what the poet

¹⁴¹Ibn-Ḥazm, *Jambarat*, p. 453.

¹⁴²An Islamic Tanūkhid poet, Abū-Zakariya, takes pride not in Tanūkh to which he belonged but in the larger group, Quḍā'a, to which Tanūkh belonged; see al-Marzubānī, *Mu'jam al-Shu'arā'*, pp. 491–92.

¹⁴³See *supra*, p. 449.

¹⁴⁴See Sezgin, *GAS*, vol. 2, pp. 38–39; it is included in the two lists of Ibn-al-Nadīm and al-Āmidī. It is noteworthy that the poetry of Jaḍīma, the Tanūkhid, was to be found in *Dīwān al-Asd*, for which see *infra*, p. 454 notes 159–60.

¹⁴⁵Sezgin, *GAS*, vol. 2, p. 39, in the list of al-Āmidī. Jarm belonged to the larger group, Nizār, one of the three constituents of Tanūkh; Ibn-Ḥazm, *Jambarat*, pp. 451–52, 453.

¹⁴⁶Of whom Taym Allat, whose *dīwān* was discussed above, was one; Ibn-Ḥazm, *Jambarat*, p. 453.

¹⁴⁷The collection that goes by the name of *Ash'ār Fahm* in both lists (Sezgin, *GAS*, vol. 2, p. 39) has nothing to do with Tanūkhid Fahm (*supra*, note 141). Fahm in *Ash'ār Fahm* was a tribe of Muḍar, a sister tribe of 'Adwān, which belonged to the tribal group 'Abd al-Qays. For the *dīwān* of Fahm and 'Adwān, see *ibid.*, p. 298. For the two tribes, see Ibn-Ḥazm, *Jambarat*, p. 243.

¹⁴⁸See also *supra*, note 135.

must have said on their Christianity. The only group that could have preserved such poems would have been the Tanūkhids themselves,¹⁴⁹ who were Christians and continued to be so until the reign of al-Mahdi.

(5) The *dīwān* of Tanūkh shared the fate of all the other *dīwāns*¹⁵⁰ listed by Ibn-al-Nadīm and al-Āmidī except one, the *dīwān* of Huḍayl. All of them were lost, presumably with the fall of Baghdad to the Mongols in A.D. 1256. Serious as the loss is for reconstructing much of the history of the Tanūkhids in pre-Islamic times, the mere existence of such a *dīwān* is significant and is a starting point for investigating some important problems of Tanūkhid history in pre-Islamic times.

2

It has been argued in the preceding section¹⁵¹ that the *odai* which celebrated Mavia's victories belonged to the *ayyām* genre and probably formed a cycle of poems; they were transmitted over a relatively long period; and the transmission was probably written as well as oral. Further probing of these data makes possible the following questions and observations:

(1) Did these very early epinician *odai*, which go back to the fourth century, form part of the presumed pre-Islamic collection of the Tanūkhid poetry which in turn formed or may have formed part of the larger *dīwān* in Islamic times?¹⁵² Quite likely they did,¹⁵³ since these poems celebrated their most outstanding exploit, and they would have been included in the *dīwān* as its most striking part, especially in view of the fact that the Tanūkhids shortly after fell from their political eminence, toward the end of the fourth

¹⁴⁹In this connection, one has to make a distinction between a *dīwān* collected and compiled by the tribe itself and one collected by someone unrelated to it and, what is more, one who lived later in Islamic times, such as the scholar al-Sukkari (d.888). The distinctly Christian poems would have been preserved by the Christian Tanūkhids themselves, presumably until the reign of al-Mahdi, while a compiler such as al-Sukkari would not have been especially interested in this type of poetry. He would or could have included, however, poems with a Christian religious tinge but more likely religious poems with terms expressing common monotheistic beliefs, e.g., Allah ("God"), such as occur in the poetry of the Tanūkhid poet al-Muthallam, for whom see *infra*, p. 454.

Thus the *Dīwān of Tanūkh* presents a complex problem for the one who wants to reconstruct it, since apparently it was composed of many layers, as was the confederation itself, composed of many tribes, spread in both sides of the Fertile Crescent, and belonging to both pre-Islamic and Islamic times.

¹⁵⁰See Sezgin, *GAS*, vol. 2, pp. 45–46.

¹⁵¹See *supra*, pp. 443–48.

¹⁵²On the difference between the Tanūkhid *dīwān* possibly compiled by Christian Tanūkhids and the *dīwān* of later Islamic times compiled by a scholar such as al-Sukkari, see *supra*, note 149.

¹⁵³It should be remembered that they were in circulation in the fifth century, when Sozomen heard them or heard of them; poems of the fifth century have survived, such as those of 'Amr b. Qamī'a al-Bakrī, for whom, see the preceding section, *supra*, p. 443 note 113.

century, and another Arab group, the Salīhids, came to the fore, and thus the *ayyām* of the fifth century were likely to be associated with the new dominant group. These Mavian poems, therefore, would most certainly have been included since they commemorated a glorious Tanūkhid past to which a term was placed by the rising power of the Salīhids.

(2) The religious tones that must have informed these *odai* deserve close attention. As has been indicated in various parts of this book, the Tanūkhids were staunchly orthodox Christians who went to the length of fighting the emperor himself, Valens, for the sake of orthodoxy; and after the accord with Valens, they fought the Arian Goths with the same spirit as orthodox soldiers fighting heretics. It is difficult to believe that echoes of their religious and doctrinal positions would not have been recorded in the cycle of poems that they composed on their victories against Valens and against the Goths. For them this was a holy war or a religious war that they fought in behalf of orthodoxy. The Greek historian Sozomen speaks of their *odai* celebrating their victories against the imperial armies;¹⁵⁴ although he is not informative on their content, it is practically certain that these *odai* would have included allusions to religious and doctrinal themes since the war was fought in behalf of orthodoxy. Such echoes are still audible in the few surviving verses, composed for another Christian group, the Ghassānids,¹⁵⁵ and consequently the loss of this poetry is especially regrettable. It would have documented the early rise of Arabic Christian terms in Oriens¹⁵⁶ and would otherwise have corroborated the view that these articulate Arabs who expressed themselves in Arabic verse on their war for orthodoxy would also have worshiped through the same medium, Arabic.

(3) The poetry of the Mavian revolt, or the "Saracen War," as Socrates called it, in behalf of orthodoxy is anonymous, but it is possible to enumerate a few poets¹⁵⁷ who were Tanūkhids and belonged to this pre-Islamic period, flourishing¹⁵⁸ before and after the anonymous poets of the Mavian revolt. With the exception of the first two, who belong to eastern Tanūkh in Iraq, they

¹⁵⁴On the possibility that a phrase in a Greek inscription refers to songs in praise of Arab martyrs, see "Two Greek Inscriptions," *supra*, pp. 232, 235.

¹⁵⁵On this, see *supra*, p. 440 note 101.

¹⁵⁶For the verses attributed to the Tanūkhid 'Amr b. 'Abduljinn, interspersed with distinctly Christian terms, see *infra*, p. 454.

¹⁵⁷The enumeration is based on only two works, al-Marzubānī's *Mu'jam* and al-Āmidī's *Al-Mu'talif*, and so it is not exhaustive and could, no doubt, be increased by consulting other works.

¹⁵⁸For the authenticity of Arabic verse attributed to figures in and around Hīra in Mesopotamia in the second half of the third century, see the observations of the present writer in "The Composition of Arabic Poetry." These observations involve two of the Tanūkhid poets listed below, Jaḍīma and 'Amr b. 'Abduljinn, and one Lakhmid, 'Amr b. 'Adi, the father of Imru' al-Qays of the Namāra inscription.

may belong to either eastern or western Tanūkh. The chances are good that some of them belonged to western Tanūkh in Oriens, and this could derive some support from the anonymous poets of the Mavian revolt, who certainly belonged to western (Syrian) Tanūkh.

(a) Jaḍīma, the famed king of Tanūkh of the second half of the third century, is the earliest Tanūkhid to whom are ascribed some poetic fragments.¹⁵⁹ Al-Āmīdi counts him among the poets, as does al-Marzubānī. Note-worthy is al-Āmīdi's statement that "poems of Jaḍīma may be found in *Kitāb al-Asd*." This could confirm what was said above¹⁶⁰ on how the poetry of the Tanūkhids found its way into the *dīwāns* of the various tribes of which Tanūkh was composed, one of which was al-Asd.

(b) 'Amr b. 'Abduljinn, the contemporary of 'Amr b. 'Adi, the father of Imru' al-Qays of the Namāra inscription,¹⁶¹ is also counted as a poet by al-Marzubānī. The two verses of his poetry that have survived are especially important in view of the references they contain to *rubbān*, "monks," *baykal*, "temple," and 'Īsa b. Maryam, "Jesus son of Mary." His historicity is also supported *inter alia* by a reference to him in a poetic fragment of one of his descendants, Asad, another Tanūkhid poet.

(c) Asad b. Nā'isa: al-Āmīdi in his *Al-Mu'talif*¹⁶² provides some relevant data on him: (1) that he is descended from 'Amr b. 'Abduljinn, whom he mentions in one of his verses, which the author quotes; (2) that he is an old pre-Islamic poet; (3) that his poetry was notoriously difficult, an observation which is consonant with the fact that he is considered a very early pre-Islamic poet;¹⁶³ (4) that it was he who killed the famous pre-Islamic hero, Antar;¹⁶⁴ (5) that his poetry was included in the collection *Asb'ār Tanūkh*; (6) finally, as al-Āmīdi concludes his account of Asad, that he and his people were Christians.

(d) Al-Muthallam b. 'Amr, the Tanūkhid:¹⁶⁵ only five verses have survived of his poetry in which *inter alia* he mentions God, "Allah," and takes pride in his tribe Tanūkh.

¹⁵⁹For Jaḍīma and these fragments, see al-Āmīdi, *Al-Mu'talif*, p. 39.

¹⁶⁰See *supra*, pp. 450–51.

¹⁶¹For 'Amr and his fragments, see al-Marzubānī, *Mu'jam*, p. 18. On the authenticity of the fragments, see *supra*, p. 450 note 135. According to Mas'ūdī, 'Amr was a Tanūkhid (*Murūj*, vol. 2, p. 220); according to Ṭabarī, he was a Jarmid (*Tārīkh*, vol. 1, pp. 620–21), but he is ultimately a Tanūkhid since Jarm formed part of Nizar, which in turn was one of the three constituents of Tanūkh; see *supra*, note 145.

¹⁶²See *Al-Mu'talif*, pp. 299–300.

¹⁶³This is consonant with what has been said on the language of the Namāra inscription and that certain difficult words in it should not argue against its being classical *fushā*; see *supra*, pp. 447–48.

¹⁶⁴If so, 'Amr b. 'Abduljinn could not have been literally his grandfather but must have been one of his forefathers.

¹⁶⁵See Marzubānī, *Mu'jam*, p. 302, which cites three of his verses, while Abū-Tammām in *Al-Hamāsa* cites five; see *Sharḥ Dīwān al-Ḥamāsa*, commentary by al-Marzūqī, eds. A. Amīn and 'A. Hārūn (Cairo, 1951), vol. 1, pp. 478–80.

(e) Al-Hārith ibn Namir al-Tanūkhi: like the preceding poet, al-Muthallam, five of his verses have survived.¹⁶⁶

V. TANŪKH POST TANŪKH

The fall of the Tanūkhids toward the end of the fourth century as Byzantium's dominant federate group did not mean the disappearance of the Tanūkhids or their disappearance as allies of Byzantium from the Arab federate scene in Oriens. They stayed on when the Salīhids became the dominant Arab federate group in the fifth century, and both of these federate groups stayed on when the Salīhids fell and the Ghassānids rose to power in the sixth century. They thus were the oldest group of *foederati* in the service of Byzantium in the course of the three centuries before the rise of Islam, and their survival after their fall as the dominant group added to the complexity of the structure of the federate presence in Oriens, a factor that throws much light on some vexed problems of Ghassānid history and of Arab-Byzantine relations in the sixth century, such as the *basileia* of the Ghassānid king Arethas in A.D. 529 and the course of the battle of Callinicum¹⁶⁷ in A.D. 531.

Although this volume is concerned only with the fourth century,¹⁶⁸ it is of considerable interest to sketch briefly the subsequent phases in the history of this remarkable Arab Christian group in the Islamic period, during which they continued to play an important role in the history of the region and went through another process of acculturation, this time in the ambience of Islamized Oriens. Their history in the Islamic period may be divided into three phases:¹⁶⁹ (1) the period of the Muslim Conquests; (2) the Umayyad period; (3) the Abbasid period.

(1) The Tanūkhids project a strong military and Christian presence in the decade or so of the Muslim Conquest of Oriens in the thirties of the seventh century. They suddenly emerge out of obscurity from the sources that had forgotten them and fight almost ubiquitously in the major encounters of the Byzantine-Muslim conflict of the decade. They fight at Dūmat al-Jandal under the Ghassānid Jabala ibn al-Ayham, encamp south of Zīza before the battle of Yarmūk, and fight at that battle in A.D. 636 under Jabala. Abū-'Ubayda finds them in Qinnasrīn in their *ḥādīr* when he drives to the north and also in the *ḥādīr* of Aleppo, and accepts the tribute from those of them who did not

¹⁶⁶See Balādūrī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, ed. M. Ḥamīdullah (Cairo, 1959), vol. 1, pp. 12–13.

¹⁶⁷On Callinicum, see the present writer in "Procopius and Arethas," esp. pp. 43–48.

¹⁶⁸Whatever data can be extracted from the sources on the Tanūkhids in the fifth and the sixth centuries will be included in the second and third volumes in this series on Byzantium and the Arabs before the rise of Islam.

¹⁶⁹The documentation for their history in the Islamic period may be found in Kindermann, "Tanukh," pp. 229–30. It is important, however, to go beyond the heuristic stage to the periodization of Tanūkhid history in Islamic times. That history is clearly divisible into three phases, each possessed of its own identity.

adopt Islam and remained Christian. In A.D. 639, they join Heraclius when he mounts his counteroffensive for the reconquest of Syria and play an important role in that campaign.¹⁷⁰ With its failure, the Byzantine period in the history of Tanūkh comes to an end.

(2) In spite of their Christianity, to which a part of them remained faithful, the Tanūkhids, like other Arab Christian tribes, fared well under the Umayyads,¹⁷¹ who rested their power on the *ajnād*, an important portion of which were Christian Arabs such as the Kalbites. They fought with the founder of the dynasty at the crucial battle of Šiffin¹⁷² against Ali in A.D. 657. They fought with Marwān, the founder of the second Umayyad line, the Marwānid, at the battle of Marj Rāhiṭ in A.D. 684, and together with the Kalbites they helped secure the caliphate for the Umayyads again. In the tribal politics of the Umayyad period, they naturally aligned themselves with the Yamanites against the Qaysites, the northern Arabian tribes and newcomers to Syria. Consonant with this alignment, they attacked in 744–45, in the region of Qinnasrīn and Khunāšira, the rear guard of the last Umayyad caliph, Marwān II, who favored the Qaysites at the expense of the Yamanites with whom Tanūkh's political allegiance lay. This shift in the tribal policy of the last Umayyads spelled disaster for the Tanūkhids and the other Christian Arab groups in Syria, whose fate was sealed with the fall of the dynasty. That fall virtually marked the end or the beginning of the end of the Tanūkhids as an Arab Christian community in the Syria of the Islamic period.

(3) The fall of the Umayyads and the rise of the Abbasids, a revolutionary turn in the annals of Islam, deeply affected the fortunes of Syria which *inter alia* declined into a mere province, while the center of gravity of Islam shifted with the *translatio imperii* to faraway Baghdad in Iraq. More important for the Christian Arabs was the rise of Abbasid Islamism at the expense of the Umayyad Arabism, and this naturally affected the fortunes of the Christian Arabs in Syria whose sun had set with the fall of the Umayyads. The sources know of the remnants of the Tanūkhids in Syria in the reign of al-Mahdi (775–85) and the period that followed the death of Hārūn al-Rashīd in A.D. 809, analyzed earlier in this book.¹⁷³ The encounter with al-Mahdi has been inten-

¹⁷⁰On this, see *infra*, Appendix, pp. 457–60.

¹⁷¹And they did so immediately after the conquest of Syria was over, since that region was Umayyad not only from the accession of Mu'āwiya to the caliphate in A.D. 661 but also for some twenty years earlier from the time when he was appointed governor of Syria in 640, and remained so for some twenty years after he became caliph. Thus not only the caliphate of Mu'āwiya but also his governorship over Syria was important for the continuity of Arab Christian life in Syria, and it forms an intermediate stage between the Byzantine period and that of the Umayyad caliphate.

¹⁷²On the *kaṭība*, squadron, of Tanūkh at the battle of Šiffin and the Tanūkhid al-Ḥārith ibn al-Mundir, see Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waq'at Šiffin*, ed. 'A. M. Hārūn (Cairo, 1962), p. 355.

¹⁷³See "The Tanūkhids and Christianity," *supra*, pp. 423–32.

sively analyzed because of its importance, and, as has been said, it represents the end of Tanūkh as an autonomous Arab Christian community in the region it had occupied since the third or fourth century. The last mention of the Tanūkhids in the sources after the death of Hārūn al-Rashīd is of some importance in that it suggests that, like other Christian groups who would not tolerate either conversion or living under duress, they chose to migrate to where they could survive as a Christian community, and thus went, among other places, to Armenia where there was a strong Christian presence.¹⁷⁴ Unlike Salīh, the name Tanūkh has tenaciously survived in Syria¹⁷⁵ among those of the Tanūkhids who adopted Islam and were assimilated into the Muslim community mainly since the early Abbasid period; and it is more than conceivable that Tanūkhid blood flows in the veins of some of the Christians of present-day Syria, especially its northern part,¹⁷⁶ even if the Tanūkhid name has not survived among them.

VI. APPENDIX

Tanūkh and the Byzantine Counteroffensive (A.D. 639)

In Ṭabarī's account of the counteroffensive of Heraclius against Emesa¹ in the year 639, there is mention of Tanūkh's role in it.² They appear in al-Jazīra, Mesopotamia,

¹⁷⁴Some of them, according to one view, had emigrated when Heraclius finally retreated from Syria; see Ibn-'Abd al-Barr, quoted by Kindermann, "Tanukh," p. 230. According to Ibn-al-Athīr, Christian Arabs from Ghassān, Tanūkh, and Iyād wanted to join Heraclius in A.D. 637 after his defeat but were overtaken by Maysara ibn-Masrūq al-'Absi, who slaughtered many of them; the rest eventually returned to Syria; see Ibn-al-Athīr, *Al-Kāmil* (Beirut, 1965), vol. 2, pp. 496–97.

¹⁷⁵On this, see the penultimate paragraph in Kindermann, "Tanukh," p. 230, and P. K. Hitti, *History of Syria* (London, 1951), p. 545. The name survives even in present-day Beirut where one of its streets is called Shāri' al-Tanukhiyyīn, "the street of the Tanūkhids." The Muslim Tanūkhids counted among them many a distinguished name, of which perhaps the best known is that of the blind philosopher-poet Abū al-'Alā' of Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān.

¹⁷⁶In spite of the many centuries that have elapsed since then and the many vicissitudes through which the region has gone. It is noteworthy that it is in the northern part of Syria that the strong orthodox Christian presence has been maintained, the confession to which the Tanūkhids, unlike the Monophysite Ghassānids, belonged. On the Christian features of the numerous Nuṣayri sect in northern Syria, see L. Massignon, in *EI*, 4, *s.v.* and Hitti, *History of Syria*, p. 587.

¹It was led by his son Constantine who had raised the Byzantine expeditionary force in Egypt and then landed on the Syrian coast. The bold counteroffensive is reminiscent of the Heraclian strategy that won for the empire the Persian War in the twenties, both in its use of sea power and in carrying the war to the enemy's backyard. The counteroffensive might have succeeded but for the swift reaction of the Caliph Omar who immediately ordered reinforcements from Iraq to march to the relief of Abu-Ubayda, even as his predecessor, Abū-Bakr, had done and in so doing had enabled the Muslims to win the decisive battle of the Yarmūk in A.D. 636. In Ṭabarī and Ibn-al-Athīr there is no mention of Constantine, only of Heraclius. The counter-offensive is dated the seventeenth year of the Muslim Era, that is, 638–39 of the Christian Era.

²Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vol. 4, pp. 50–52. Tanūkh is referred to explicitly only once (p. 51), when Omar orders reinforcements from Iraq against "the Arabs of al-Jazīra (Mesopotamia) who

and, together with others in that region, they were instrumental in inciting the Byzantines to mount a counteroffensive against Emesa. But when they discovered that the Caliph Omar had ordered reinforcements to the rescue of Abū-ʿUbayda at Emesa, some of which made toward Tanūkh and the Arabs of Mesopotamia, these lost heart and did not know whether the reinforcements were advancing against them in Mesopotamia or against Emesa, and so they went their own way and left the Romans in the lurch. Thus the counteroffensive failed and the Romans were defeated. Although the account does mention that “the Mesopotamians”³ abandoned the cause of the Romans, it does also make clear that (a) in spite of Muslim victories before 639 Tanūkh remained pro-Byzantine and loyal to Heraclius since it participated in recommending the counteroffensive and offered its services, and (b) they abandoned the Byzantines only after they realized they were fighting reinforcements that hopelessly outnumbered them. This is roughly the account of the operations of the year 639 against Emesa which Ibn-al-Athīr also accepts.⁴

The editor of this part of the Leiden edition of Ṭabarī’s *Tārīkh* has included in his account of the Heraclian counteroffensive against Emesa another account from the Andalusian traditionist of the twelfth century, Ibn-Ḥubaysh.⁵ In this account it is Heraclius who calls on the Mesopotamians and the Emesenes to rise against the Muslims, and Tanūkh figures more prominently in this than in Ṭabarī’s account and appears as a major factor in the defeat of Heraclius.⁶ But the nature and extent of Tanūkh’s responsibility are basically the same as in Ṭabarī’s account and consist in their abandonment of the Byzantine cause only after they were encircled and outnumbered.

Noel Desvergers’s description of the Heraclian counteroffensive against Emesa is based on this account.⁷ It is a fair résumé of what happened, and the role of the

belonged to Rabīʿa and Tanūkh.” In the rest of the account, there is reference only to “ahl al-Jazīra” (“the people or inhabitants of al-Jazīra”), but from the only explicit reference to Tanūkh on p. 51 it may have been included in the phrase “ahl al-Jazīra.”

³Arabic *ahl al-Jazīra*, and not specifically Tanūkh.

⁴Ibn-al-Athīr, *Al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, pp. 530–31.

⁵On Ibn-Ḥubaysh and his *Kitāb al-Ghazawāt*, see D. M. Dunlop in *EP*, 3, pp. 803–4, *s.v.* His account appears on pp. 2501–3 in the Leiden edition of Ṭabarī, *Annales*, Series I, Tomus V; see also E. Pryn’s introductory note on p. 2501 to this account. Roughly the same account is included in Ibn-al-ʿAdīm, *Zubdat al-Ḥalab min Tārīkh Ḥalab*, ed. S. al-Dahhān (Damascus, 1951), vol. 1, pp. 30–32; although shorter than the one in the *Annales*, it is the clearer and sounder text. Its *ahl Misr* (p. 30) is the better reading than *ahl Hims*, since the expedition started from Egypt against Hims (Emesa), and so is its *akfar* (p. 30) compared to *akthar* of the *Annales*; see *Zubdat*, p. 30, and *Annales*, p. 2501; *al-hādīra* should read *al-hādīr* (*ibid.*).

⁶The account of Ibn-Ḥubaysh seems to be in part more accurate than Ṭabarī’s on the Tanūkhids. In the former, they are rightly associated with Qinnasrīn, while in the latter they are associated with Mesopotamia. His account is also specific on the number of reinforcements that Heraclius received, “thirty thousands from Mesopotamia not counting those of Qinnasrīn from Tanūkh and others” (Ibn-Ḥubaysh, in *Annales*, p. 2501).

⁷See N. Desvergers, *L’Arabie* (Paris, 1847), pp. 234–35. The Kemal-Eddin he cites in the footnote on p. 235 is the proper name of the historian known by the toponymic, Ibn-al-ʿAdīm (A.D. 1192–1262).

Tanūkhids is clearly, fully, and accurately stated. They are mentioned three times, and the author makes it clear that it was only after the defection of the Mesopotamian troops that the Tanūkhids, outnumbered and encircled, opened negotiations with the Muslims.⁸ No terms of treachery or betrayal are used by the author; they are reserved for the governor of Aleppo, Yukinna, while the statement in Ibn-al-ʿAdīm that the Romans were completely annihilated as a result of Tanūkh's flight is carefully examined by Desvergers and shown to be inaccurate.⁹

Desvergers wrote more than a century ago, and thus it would not have been necessary to discuss views expressed so long ago had it not been for the fact that in 1933 he was resuscitated from the obscurity or the oblivion into which he had lapsed by F. Nau,¹⁰ who telescoped two columns of Desvergers's sober history into one brutal sentence in which he spoke of Tanūkh's treachery, which brought about "la défaite totale des troupes impériales." To this prejudicial selectiveness in summarizing Desvergers he adds an animadversion of his own on what he calls their treachery, which, according to him, did not do them much good.¹¹ Then he goes on to describe their fortunes in the early Abbasid period during the caliphate of al-Mahdi and after the death of Hārūn al-Rashīd.¹² Thus, according to Nau, the Tanūkhids make their exit from the pages of history as traitors to the cause of Christianity and of the Christian Roman Empire.

The judgment is harsh and, what is more, unjustified. It is based on a single episode in the history of a Christian Arab group that had for centuries served the cause of both Christianity and the Christian Roman Empire and that were celebrated for their steadfastness in adversity. Furthermore, the details of that episode so fairly and objectively examined by Desvergers preclude the description of the Tanūkhids simply as traitors; there is also Ṭabari's account, which does not paint the same picture of their involvement that Ibn-al-ʿAdīm's does. The fact of their loyalty to Christianity is established in this fateful decade, in the preceding three centuries, and in the century and a half after the Conquests until the reign of al-Mahdi.

It has been necessary to examine Tanūkh's role in the Heraclian counteroffensive in an appendix specially devoted to it because of the importance of that counter-

⁸The author could even be described as sympathetic to the Tanūkhids, about whom he uses the following phrases when he mentions them by name on these two pages: "la grande tribu des Benou-Thenoukh"; "et les Benou-Thenoukh, effrayés de cette défection"; and: "fidèles à la parole qu'ils avaient donnée, les Benou-Thenoukh. . . ." The second phrase makes it clear that it was others who had fled first, and it was then and only then that the Tanūkhids were frightened after they became isolated and were encircled.

⁹Desvergers, *L'Arabie*, p. 235.

¹⁰Nau, *Arabes chrétiens*, p. 108. Nau gives the wrong page numbers in his footnote for Desvergers's account of the Heraclian counteroffensive and changes the orthography of the author's surname; the correct pages are 334–35, not 324–25, and the author's surname is DESVERGERS, not DES VERGERS, for the convenience of those who wish to consult this old work which, however, has not entirely outlived its usefulness.

¹¹"Cette trahison ne les a pas protégés longtemps" (*ibid.*). Cf. Desvergers's avoidance of such a term as *trahison* to describe the Tanūkhids, as noted *supra*.

¹²For an analysis of the sources on the Tanūkhids in the Abbasid period, see "The Tanūkhids and Christianity," *supra*, pp. 427–32.

offensive in the conflict between Byzantium and Islam for what might be termed the struggle for Syria. The bold offensive had a fair measure of success, and it is therefore important to allocate responsibility accurately. Tanūkh's share in that failure was secondary and derivative from the flight of the Mesopotamians, while the Tanūkhid participation in the counteroffensive reflects the important role Tanūkh played in that decisive decade and the dominant one it played in the counteroffensive, even more important than that of the other *foederati* such as the Ghassānids and the Salīhids, who are conspicuous by their absence.

EPILOGUE TO PART TWO

Minor suggestions proposed by Professor Franz Rosenthal have been attended to in various sections of Part Two of this book. Some important points raised by him deserve to be treated at some length, and for this reason, and because they are likely to cross the minds of other readers, they have been assembled in this epilogue. These points involve five of the preceding sections: (1) Hishām al-Kalbī; (2) The List of Kings; (3) The Federate Arab Tribal Groups in Oriens; (4) Tanūkh and Christianity; and (5) Arabic Poetry in the Fourth Century A.D.

1

1. The important inscription of Dayr Hind is to be found not only in the work of Yāqūt but also in the earlier work of al-Bakrī (*supra*, p. 355).

The inscription does, indeed, appear in Bakrī, *Muʿjam*, vol. 2, p. 606. I have cited Yāqūt on the inscription because his *Muʿjam* is the better known of the two geographical dictionaries and the more comprehensive; also because of Yāqūt's admiration for Hishām and the consequent practical certainty that he derived his information on Hīra and its monasteries from Hishām, a matter of some importance in a section devoted to Hishām as the source for the history of the *foederati* and of Tanūkh. Bakrī, too, cites Hishām extensively but without the glowing comment of Yāqūt. However, the inscription as preserved in Bakrī's *Muʿjam* presents variations in three words of the penultimate sentence, and these are important for discussing sixth-century Christianity among the Lakhmids and the Kindites. They will be treated in *BASIC*.

2. Hishām is referred to in this section in three different ways, namely, as Hishām, al-Kalbī, and Ibn al-Kalbī; this may be confusing to the non-Arabist reader (*supra*, p. 349 note 1).

The bewildering variety of names by which this historian is designated is notorious and cannot be helped. Bakrī in the introduction to his *Muʿjam* adds another one that is also used, namely, Abū al-Munḍir. It is because of this that I have suggested the employment of only one of them, the most convenient, his personal name Hishām, with or without al-Kalbī, rather than his

patronymic, Ibn al-Kalbī, or his tecnonymic, Abū al-Mundir, or the one that reflects his tribal affiliation, al-Kalbī. Apparently, Bakrī, too, felt that Hishām was most convenient, for he calls him thus no less than six times in one single page; see his *Muʿjam*, vol. 1, p. 56. “Hishām” is also the easiest to pronounce by scholars unfamiliar with Arabic.

3. A relevant article is that of M. J. Kister and M. Plessner, “Notes on Caskel’s Ġamharat An-Nasab,” *Oriens*, 25–26 (1976), pp. 48–68 (*supra*, p. 351 note 5).

The article, mostly by Kister, the well-known scholar of pre-Islamic Arabia, is important. It is especially valuable for the authenticity of various *nasab* works attributed to Hishām and which had been doubted by Caskel (*ibid.*, pp. 64–65). Kister concludes with a strong approving note on the reliability of Hishām as a historian, a view to which the present writer has always subscribed and as early as the article on Ghassān in *Der Islam*, 33 (1958), p. 239. Hishām will be further discussed in *BAFIC* and *BASIC*, in connection with the Salīhids and the Ghassānids respectively.

2

Concerning an Arabic, not an Ethiopic, derivation for the name of the Tanūkhid king al-Ḥawārī: in Ethiopic, *ḥawārī* is a normal participial formation; what grammatical formation can be suggested for *ḥawārī* as an Arabic lexeme derived from the Arabic verb *ḥāra* (*supra*, p. 379 note 109)?

Two answers may be suggested to this question: (a) the Arabic morphological pattern could be the intensive participial form, *faʿʿāl*, to which the relative *yāʾ* of *nisba* has been suffixed. This process can yield the form *ḥawwārī*, and this rather than *ḥawārī* may be how the name of the Tanūkhid king, unvocalized in the manuscripts, should be read. (b) Alternatively, *ḥawārī* may have passed through a different morphological process, namely, that of the abstract or verbal noun pattern, *faʿāl*, *ḥawār*, to which the relative *yāʾ* of *nisba* has been suffixed. Two semantically identical lexemes that belong to two cognate languages can be formed through two different morphological processes.

3

Assuming that Banū-Ṣālīḥ were located in Sinai during the reign of Justinian, it may be that the Prophet Ṣālīḥ was therefore located in Sinai (*supra*, p. 385).

This is an observation that has some important Qurʾānic implications.

4

On the name Aḥūdemmeh: the name means he resembled his paternal uncle; cf. Palmyrenian “Ababīḥ,” “his grandfather” (*supra*, p. 420 note 10).

I had suggested for Aḥūdemmeḥ (“the brother of his mother”) a different meaning, namely, that he looked like his mother, but that he looked like his paternal uncle is the more convincing explanation of this curious Syriac name.

5

1. There are two aspects to the problem of pre-Islamic poetry: one is the existence of this poetry and the other the authenticity of much of the preserved poetry (*supra*, p. 443).

The laconic statement in the opening paragraph of the section involving Margoliouth and Ṭāḥa Ḥusayn becomes clear after reading the bibliographical items cited in note 111, especially Sezgin’s *GAS*. The bulk of this poetry is pre-Islamic, and the task of scholarship is to attend to such problems as attribution, chronology, etc. One of these problems is treated in this section, namely, the beginnings of this pre-Islamic Arabic poetry.

2. On the employment of Arabic meter in the fourth century in the *odai* composed in celebration of Mavia’s victory: Where does Sozomen state this (*supra*, p. 446)?

Sozomen does not explicitly speak of Arabic meters and it is perhaps extravagant to expect him to do so, to go out of his way and be specific about the difficult metrical structure of a language unknown to him. Consequently, the reality of the Arabic meters in the fourth century has to be inferred from his employment of the term *odai* to describe the literary compositions celebrating Mavia’s victory. In using the term *odai* to describe these, he was as the poet of the *Iliad*, who in the first line of that epic conceived that the Muse of poetry was *singing* the wrath of Achilles. The poets of these Arabic *odai* of the fourth century were not writing intellectual poetry but singing κλέα ἀνδρῶν and the heroic encounters of primitive warriors not unlike those of the *Iliad*, and so their compositions could be described by Sozomen as *odai*. As has been stated above (p. 446), the recitation of these *odai* was *inshād*, and it is also not unlikely that the peculiar metrical structure of Arabic poetry, monometered and monorhymed, may have suggested to the Greek ear of Sozomen that what he was hearing was a song rather than a poem; hence his use of the term *odai*.

PART THREE
FRONTIER AND OTHER STUDIES

I. THE TANŪKHIDS AND CHALCIDICE

The stationing of the Tanūkhids, the chief Arab federate group in the fourth century, in the northern sector of the Syro-Mesopotamian *limes*, this side of the Euphrates, must now be accounted for and discussed in relation to the military history of the oriental *limes* in the fourth century.

1

The Persian Wars of the fourth century¹ are the background against which the stationing by Byzantium of its chief Arab federate group has to be understood and with it the fortifications of the area of Tanūkh's settlements. But this can only have been the remote background; besides, the theater of the Byzantine-Persian conflict was Mesopotamia rather than Syria in the protracted war of the reign of Constantius, while Julian carried the war to Ctesiphon itself. More specific causes must, therefore, have been operative for the stationing of the Tanūkhids in Syria, this side of the Euphrates, however related they may ultimately be to the Byzantine-Persian relationship.

(1) The vast area from the Orontes to the Euphrates and from Palmyra to Antioch within which the Tanūkhids were stationed was an open and partly desert area exposed to the thrusts and inroads of the Saracens who lived to the east and along the Euphrates, in spite of the Roman *castra* and *castella* of the oriental *limes*. This vast area, less inhospitable than Arabia Deserta, would have attracted the unwelcome attention of the Saracens of the latter, but the Romans had to fortify it for other special reasons too: it was here that the capital of the Orient, Antioch, was located, and it was in this very same area that the eremitic foundations sprang up after the rise of monasticism and its spread to northern Syria.² Thus, both these facts might be added to the permanent and hard facts of geography, topography, and climatology for explaining the attraction of this area to the Saracens of Arabia Deserta. Only Arabs familiar with the topography of the desert and the principles of desert warfare, such as the Tanūkhids, could meet this threat adequately.

¹For these and the involvement of the Arabs in them, see *supra*, Chaps. 1-3.

²On the desert of Chalcis as a site for eremitic foundations, see Jerome's *Vita Malchi*, also informative on the threat to security posed by the Saracens in the Trans-Euphratesian regions; for all this, see the analysis of the *Vita Malchi*, *supra*, pp. 284-88. Even more exposed to Saracen raids than Chalcidice was the great Christian center of Sergiopolis well to the east of Chalcidice and thus close to the desert; but whether it had in the fourth century acquired the treasures for which it was famous is not clear. In any case, its protection must have been undertaken at least partly by the Tanūkhids.

(2) Even more important than these factors is one that is related to political geography, namely, the rise and, what is more, the rise to a position of dominance of that Arab urban center on the Lower Euphrates, in the Persian sphere of influence, al-Ḥīra.³ *Inter alia*, Ḥīra, the seat of the Lakhmid kings, became a base whence its Lakhmid rulers, vassals of Persia, mounted their military expeditions, in conjunction with the Persians or separately, against the Roman *limes*.⁴ Although the Lakhmids could range far and wide against the oriental *limes* in its entirety from the Euphrates to the Red Sea, it was this particular sector in northern Syria, this side of the Euphrates, wherein lay Antioch, that was for them the natural gateway to Oriens.

The history of Ḥīra in the fourth century is obscure, especially in that period that followed the defection of Imru' al-Qays of the Namāra inscription.⁵ However, it is almost certain that the energetic rulers of Ḥīra, Lakhmid or other,⁶ campaigned for the equally energetic ruler of Persia, Shāpūr II, throughout his long rule in much the same way that the famed Muḍir of the sixth century campaigned for Kawad and Chosroes, and that the sector in which Tanūkh was settled, this side of the Euphrates, was one of their major fields of operations, as it was to be in the sixth century. The obscurity of this period and the role of the Arabs, Ḥīran or other, in the military annals of the fourth century is brightly illuminated by an incidental reference in the *Res Gestae* when Ammianus introduces the figure of the Persian Arab, Podosacis, a commander in the service of Persia.⁷ What is relevant in this connection is the phrase that describes him as *omni saevitia per nostros limites diu grassatus*. The date is A.D. 363 during Julian's campaign against Persia and *diu* suggests that he had engaged in hostilities against the Roman frontier for a long time; he may not have engaged in these activities as long as Muḍir was to, namely, fifty years,⁸ but the implication is that he had molested the Roman *limites* for a long period. One of these *limites* must have been in northern Syria.

³This is a factor that has not been taken into account by those who have written on the oriental *limes* in the fourth century, no doubt mainly because of the obscurity with which the history of Ḥīra is shrouded, especially in the fourth century. Roman historians are more aware of its role in the sixth century when the data become more plentiful, especially when they involve al-Muḍir, the Alamoundaros of the Greek sources.

⁴This is a new dimension to the importance of the history of Ḥīra in pre-Islamic times, now relevant not only to the Arab historian of an important Arab urban center in the pre-Islamic period but also to the Roman historian of the oriental *limes*.

⁵See Rothstein, *DLH*, pp. 63–65.

⁶On the interregnum in Ḥīra in the fourth century, see *ibid.*, pp. 64–65. Rothstein's question (p. 65) did not admit of an answer then; but with the discovery of the Namāra inscription in 1902 the interregnum becomes intelligible, after the defection of the Lakhmid, Imru' al-Qays, to the Romans and the ascension of non-Lakhmids to the throne of Ḥīra.

⁷On this figure, see *supra*, pp. 119–23, where it has also been argued that he was most probably a Ghassānid, associated with Ḥīra (*ibid.*, pp. 120–21).

⁸Procopius, *Wars*, I.xvii.40.

Thus, in spite of the scantiness of the data on Ḥīra and its rulers and on the Persian Arabs, wherever they were in the fourth century, it is possible to detect in the sources echoes of military expeditions conducted by the Persian Arabs whether on their own initiative or spurred by Persia as part of the Persian war effort against Byzantium in the fourth century. Although the major theater of war of the Byzantine-Persian conflict was Mesopotamia, Syria must have been the target of many a hostile expedition, a situation that was to repeat itself most clearly in the sixth century. No doubt it was against these expeditions and raids that the Tanūkhid Arabs were stationed in Syria in the fourth century.

(3) It remains to account for the fact that the Tanūkhids were settled not in the Trans-Euphratesian but in the Cis-Euphratesian region, in spite of the fact that it was in the former, in Mesopotamia, that the battles of the Byzantine-Persian conflict raged protractedly in the reign of Constantius.

The factors discussed in the preceding sections (1) and (2) go a long way toward answering this question. To them may be added the following observations. After the Diocletianic acquisition of the five Trans-Tigrine provinces, the whole region was very heavily guarded with regular Roman troops, and so the Tanūkhid *foederati* must have been considered more functional in Cis-Euphratesia, where they were permanently settled.⁹ Besides, they could be called upon to do service in Mesopotamia whenever needed, just as they were called by Julian to do service with him in Babylonia and against Ctesiphon itself or by Valens for participation in the Gothic War in Thrace.¹⁰ That they hardly appear in the pages of the *Res Gestae* which describe the Byzantine-Persian conflict of the reign of Constantius in Mesopotamia is accountable by their quarrel with Arian Constantius on doctrinal grounds.¹¹

2

Chalcidice, the principal area of Tanūkhid settlement, immediately brings to mind the work that was devoted exclusively to this region, namely, *Le Limes de Chalcis*.¹² The Tanūkhid military presence in Chalcidice must now be discussed in relation to the positions and conclusions of this controversial book.

⁹In the seventh century, however, the federate tribal trio Taghlib, Namir, and Iyād appears settled in Mesopotamia and fighting with Byzantium against the Muslim Arabs; see *supra*, p. 383 and note 122; p. 397 and note 182.

¹⁰Just as the Ghassānids of the Provincia Arabia and the Gaulanitis were called upon to participate in the Persian Wars of the sixth century fought or waged in the north along the Euphrates, in Assyria, and in Armenia.

¹¹A view expressed in this book (*supra*, pp. 74–82) and which gains in force after their settlements have been precisely located in Chalcidice, so close to Mesopotamia (*supra*, pp. 400–407).

¹²R. Mouterde and A. Poidebard, *Le Limes de Chalcis* (Paris, 1945) (hereafter, *Limes*).

Ever since its publication in 1945, this work has had many critics who have commented on the problems of "precise attributions," "chronological pin-pointing," the palimpsest character of this so-called *limes* of Chalcis,¹³ and even on the authors' understanding of the phrase "*limes* of Chalcis," first used by Malalas in connection with Shāpūr I's campaign in A.D. 256 against Roman Syria.¹⁴ *Le Limes de Chalcis*, however, remains the most detailed account of the region where the Tanūkhid *foederati* were settled in the fourth century, and it would be extremely fruitful to discuss the Tanūkhid military presence in this area with reference to the questions raised in this book. The authors conveniently put together their conclusions in the final chapter of their book, and so the following observations will be made with reference to this concluding chapter and also to the first introductory one.

(1) It is possible that Malalas's use of the term *limes* in his phrase "*limes* of Chalcis" was an anachronism;¹⁵ the chronographer may have been reflecting the military realities of the sixth century and applying them to the third. In the sixth century that region witnessed considerable works of fortification, the so-called *limes* of Justinian,¹⁶ and thus the sixth-century chronographer could easily have indulged in the anachronism, in thinking that the region was heavily fortified in the third century as it was in the sixth.¹⁷

(2) In the chapter "Chalcis dans l'histoire,"¹⁸ the authors enumerate the various campaigns of the Persians and the Lakhmid Arabs against the region. The list of Arab campaigns may be increased by noting that the Lakhmid Mundir conducted two other campaigns in the region: one in A.D. 527 which brought him to the region of Emesa, Apamea, and Antioch,¹⁹ and one in 554 which, however, brought about his death on the battlefield with his Ghassānid adversary in the very region of Chalcis.²⁰ This could fortify the view that

¹³For the more recent critics, see, for instance, E. W. Gray, "The Roman Eastern *Limes* from Constantine to Justinian—Perspectives and Problems," *Proceedings of the African Classical Associations*, 12 (1973), p. 29.

¹⁴See G. W. Bowersock, "*Limes Arabicus*," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 80 (1976), p. 229 note 34. Some relevant material in support of "fortified territory" as the meaning of *limes* may be found in E. Honigmann, "Historische Topographie von Nordsyrien im Altertum," *ZDPV*, 47 (1924), p. 11, *s.v.*

¹⁵*Limes*, p. 3.

¹⁶J. Sauvaget, "Les Ghassanides et Sergiopolis," *Byzantion*, 14 (1939), p. 122 and map opposite.

¹⁷In response to so many Persian and Lakhmid campaigns against it in that century, unlike the fourth during which the battlefields of the Persian-Byzantine conflict were farther to the north in Mesopotamia; for the implication of this for the Tanūkhid military presence in Chalcidice, see *infra*, part 3, pp. 470–76.

¹⁸*Limes*, pp. 5–6.

¹⁹For this, see the present writer in *Martyrs*, p. 242.

²⁰See Nöldeke, *GF*, pp. 18–19. Two other expeditions conducted by Mundir in A.D. 519 and 520 are not recorded with specific topographical indications, but they could have been directed

Justinian depended at least in part on his Ghassānid allies for the defense of the region²¹ and is not inconsonant with the fact that Justinian also chose to fortify the region, since this was in response to the Persian invasion which resulted in the fall of Antioch itself into the hands of Chosroes in A.D. 540.

(3) Especially important and relevant is the section entitled "Les fortifications."²² Of these the authors enumerate seven kinds, with some of which the Tanūkhids could conceivably be associated:

(a) The *villes-refuges* with their polygonal enclosures, among which are numbered Zabad. The enclosures bring to mind Arabic *ḥādīrs*, and Zabad's association with the Arabs and possibly with Tanūkh is established.²³

(b) The *tours* which guided the caravaneers; these or some of these could have been occupied by the Arab *foederati*.²⁴

(c) The *postes*, provided with an enclosure or an observatory, and watching over the watering places; some of these could have had Arab or Tanūkhid occupants.²⁵

The foregoing possible identifications are purely conjectural and only ground excavation can verify what has been uncovered by aerial photography.

(4) Controversial are some of the assertions in the important section that deals with the stages of the organization of the *limes* of Chalcis,²⁶ but they are unrelated to the Arabs,²⁷ with one exception, a reference to the Ghassānids of the sixth century in which the authors join issue with J. Sauvaget, who, however, is likely to have been correct.²⁸

(5) The Arabs, however, appear in the last section entitled "La vie aux confins désertiques";²⁹ these references contain some misconceptions which may be enumerated as follows:

(a) Many of the Arabs were nomads—the *scenitae* of the historians—but the Saracens or all of them were not, since the *foederati* were called Saracens and these cannot be simply called nomads as the *scenitae* were.

against the same region; see the present writer in *Martyrs*, p. 241. Noteworthy in this connection is the Ghassānid counteroffensive against the Lakhmids in their own territory. Thus the desert region along the Lower Euphrates became the battleground of the Ghassānid-Lakhmid confrontation; see Nöldeke, *GF*, pp. 23–24.

²¹On this disputed point, see *Limes*, p. 238 note 4.

²²*Ibid.*, pp. 233–34.

²³See *supra*, p. 404 and notes 210, 211.

²⁴Cf. the *purgos* erected by the Ghassānid Mundir in the sixth century at Dumayr, for which see W. H. Waddington, *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie* (reprinted Rome, 1968), p. 585, no. 2562c.

²⁵The *ḥādīrs* of the Arab lexicographers are often associated with water and watering places; but see also the last paragraph of p. 236, and note 5, in *Limes*.

²⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 235–38.

²⁷On this omission, see *infra*, pp. 473, 475–76.

²⁸See *supra*, notes 10 and 16.

²⁹*Limes*, pp. 238–40.

(b) Of the three languages of the region, Greek, Syriac, and Arabic, the authors think the last is the newcomer, apparently unaware of its antiquity, which went back to Roman times. They are also unaware of the Namāra inscription, a much more important document than the Zabad inscription as the earliest extant document of written Arabic.

(c) Their views on Silvanus's identity and function cannot be accepted.³⁰

(d) Their view on the identity of Mavia, the Arab lady who built the *martyrium* of St. Thomas outside Anasarthā, is questionable, and inaccurate is the statement on the role of the presumed grandmother, Mavia, in the conversion of the Arabs.³¹

3

It is now possible to place the Tanūkhid presence in Chalcidice against the larger background of the Byzantine defense system in Oriens, especially with reference to the so-called *limes* of Chalcis, now that *Le Limes* has also been examined from the point of view of the Byzantino-arabist in the preceding section. Negative as the comments of Late Roman historians have been on *Le Limes*,³² this work has uncovered an important fortified zone in Oriens, and thus it remains the classical work on that region and is indeed invaluable to the Byzantino-arabist. As will be seen in the course of this section, the Arab military presence in Chalcidice may be one of the keys to understanding the military history of the region, which since the publication of *Le Limes* has been known as the *limes* of Chalcis.

A

It will have been noticed from the preceding section that the dominant Arab group among the *foederati* of Byzantium in the fourth century, namely, the Tanūkhids, whose settlements were precisely in Chalcidice, is conspicuous by its absence in *Le Limes*. In view of the importance of Tanūkh in the military history of the fourth century and, what is more, in this very region, the conclusions drawn on them in the present book can contribute substantially to filling the gaps in *Le Limes* and in correcting some of the views expressed therein.

1. The list of toponyms associated with the Tanūkhids in Chalcidice recovered from the Arabic sources may now be added to the toponymy of this

³⁰On Silvanus, see *supra*, pp. 230–32.

³¹On Mavia, see *supra*, pp. 188–90.

³²Hence the choice of the neutral regional and geographical term "Chalcidice" rather than the controversial "Limes of Chalcis" in the titling of this section. But since the phrase "Limes of Chalcis" as a designation for that area has become popular since the publication of *Limes*, it is sometimes used in this section but without subscription to the well-known position of Poidebard.

limes: Chalcis, Beroea, Anasartha, Callinicum, Şawwarān, Zabād, Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān, Epiphania, and Laodicea.³³

2. Of the various types of fortification enumerated in *Le Limes*, three could be fruitfully examined in relation to the Tanūkhid presence in Chalcidice, namely, *villes-refuges*, *tours*, and *postes*.³⁴ It has been pointed out before that two terms in the military terminology of pre-Islamic Arabic, namely, *ḥāḍir* and *ḥīra*,³⁵ are associated with the Tanūkhids. How these two terms can be related to or identified with the three types of fortifications suspected of possible Tanūkhid association is a task that awaits the prospective archeologist of Arab Chalcidice. The two terms stand for characteristically Arab military establishments in pre-Islamic times, as Arab *castra* and *castella* are Roman. Once the Arab layer in the structure of the oriental *limes* emerges or is recognized, their importance in discussions of the *limes orientalis* will become evident.³⁶

3. The historical survey of military operations in the Byzantine period in *Le Limes* is limited to the sixth century, and it is only in this century that there is mention of the Ghassānid Arabs in connection with the system of fortifications. Thus the fourth and the fifth centuries are left out and so is any reference to military operations involving the *limes*. It has been pointed out that the only active military group with important military assignments in the fourth century was probably the Tanūkhid *foederati*.³⁷ This fills in a large *lacuna* in the military history of the *limes*, and the Tanūkhids thus acquire special importance in view of the fact that, as has been pointed out, the scene of the Persian-Byzantine conflict in the fourth century was not Chalcidice, this side of the Euphrates. This leaves the Tanūkhids as the most important watchmen of Chalcidice in that century.³⁸

³³For these localities and the degrees of certainty that have been predicated of them as Tanūkhid, see *supra*, pp. 400–407. The map of Tanūkhid settlements in Chalcidice (Map VIII) may be consulted and compared with the map opposite p. 15 in *Limes*.

³⁴Discussed *supra*, p. 469, in the negative context of the preceding section.

³⁵On these two terms, see "Toponymical Observations," *supra*, p. 403 note 208. Only archeological research can establish the difference between these two types of establishments, reflected in the semantic difference between the two roots from which the two terms derive.

³⁶See *infra*, p. 498, and also p. 496 on Greek *parembolē* as a rendition of the Arabic term *ḥīra*.

³⁷On the Tanūkhids as the defenders of Chalcidice against the Arabs of Ḥīra, see *supra*, part 1, pp. 465–67.

³⁸Thus Byzantium may have left the defense of Chalcidice to the Tanūkhids, just as Justinian, according to one view (*supra*, note 21), left the defense of the same region in the sixth century in the hands of the Ghassānids. The same challenges call for identical responses, and the well-documented campaigns of Muḍir of Ḥīra in the sixth century and the equally well-documented Byzantine response throw light on the ill-documented fourth century, which witnessed the rise of an aggressive Arab military center, Ḥīra, in the service of the secular enemy, Persia, and of an aggressive Ḥīran chief, Podosacis.

4. The strands of continuity in the role that the Arabs played in the defense of the region against the Persians and their Arab allies can now be recovered. In the previous century, the defense of the Orient had fallen in a very large way to Arab Palmyra whose prince Odenathus beat to the very walls of Ctesiphon the very same Persian king, Shāpūr I, who, according to Malalas, crossed the *limes* of Chalcis and captured Antioch. The Tanūkhid Arabs of the fourth century did on a smaller, much smaller, scale what the Palmyrene Arabs had done on a much larger scale. In spite of the war with Arab Palmyra, the destruction of this city, and the subsequent rise of the *Strata Diocletiana*, the Arabs remained indispensable for the defense of the Orient, especially that sector of it that faced the Arabian Peninsula. Hence their reintegration into the Roman defense system, the close examination of which reveals a pattern of response on the part of Rome to the permanent challenges of the Arabs and their Peninsula.

5. The place of the Arabs in the defense of the Orient clearly emerges within the Byzantine-Persian relationship. In the third century, both Rome and Persia bring about the downfall of the Arab military establishment in the Fertile Crescent; the Persians eliminate Ḥatra and Maysān, the Romans Edessa and Palmyra. Out of the ashes of these fallen cities or city-states, two groups of Arabs emerge in the fourth century, the Arabs of Ḥīra, Lakhmid and other, and the Arabs of Tanūkh, but this time controlled by Persia and Byzantium respectively and both pitted against each other, the one based on the Lower Euphrates in Ḥīra, the other in Chalcidice, this side of the Euphrates. And in so doing they establish for some three centuries the pattern of inter-Arab warfare on behalf of the two major powers of the Near East, Persia and Byzantium.

B

The authors of *Le Limes* are aware that the fortifications of the *limes* of Chalcis did not spring up suddenly during one reign or century.³⁹ According to them, the *limes* was already constituted when Diocletian built the *Strata Diocletiana*, and it received accretions in the Byzantine period until the Arab conquests, especially during the reign of Justinian. In view of the problems of chronological pinpointing and precise attribution, already referred to above, and the fact that the authors in their historical survey of the evidence from the literary sources leave large blanks in the history of this *limes* for supporting their views, it is necessary, in the light of the strong Arab and Tanūkhid presence, to make the following observations in the hope that they may be a contribution toward solving the problem of the *limes* of Chalcis:

1. The rise of the *Strata Diocletiana* with its advanced posts along the

³⁹*Limes*, pp. 235–38.

Arabian frontier together with the military *renovatio* undertaken by Diocletian in the whole of Oriens must inevitably raise questions about the subsequent status of the so-called "internal *limites*" of which the *limes* of Chalcis was one. The lack of evidence in the literary sources in support of a justification for a *limes* of Chalcis in terms of a Byzantine-Persian conflict for the fourth and the fifth century points to the conclusion that whatever fortifications there were in Chalcidice are most probably related to an inter-Arab war involving the Tanūkhids of Byzantium and their counterparts in the service of Persia, the Arabs of Ḥīra. The backdrop of the Byzantine-Persian War in that century suggests an inter-Arab war between the two vassals of the respective powers similar to the much better documented one in the sixth century.

2. The density of the fortifications in this century is impossible to measure. The only guide is the list of Tanūkhid localities or toponyms worked out in Chapter X. These may be only a part of what survived. Even so, the chances are that these fortifications were such as to be related to an Arab defense system constructed against the Arabs of the Peninsula and of Ḥīra. The war conducted by the Tanūkhids against these was probably mobile, reminiscent of the famous battle-days of the Arabs, the *ayyām*, which were to be repeated in the sixth century in the Ghassānid-Lakhmid conflict. Solid fortifications could not have been many and probably did not play an important role in this war. This may derive support from Procopius and his accounts of the buildings of Justinian; according to him, Euphratensis was not fortified, compared to Mesopotamia and Osroene.⁴⁰ This, it may be argued, applies to the reign of Justinian and the first half of the sixth century, but the general implication is that it is applicable much farther back, and this could be supported by appeal to the facts of the Persian-Byzantine conflict in the fourth and fifth centuries which did not call for such dense and heavy fortifications.

3. According to the authors of *Le Limes*, the end of the fourth century witnessed a new conception of frontier defense with its withdrawal of the advanced fortified posts and the retention of only the *castella* of the cavalry listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum*.⁴¹ The authors relate this partly to the territorial concessions made to the Persians by Jovian in A.D. 363, but these territorial concessions did not affect the region of Chalcidice.

The two views may be reconciled by placing the fact or the presumption of the withdrawal of advance posts within the wider context of Byzantine-Persian relations in the fifth century, or even the period that elapsed from the Peace of Jovian in 363 and the Settlement of Theodosius in A.D. 387 to the reign of Anastasius, roughly A.D. 500. The most important feature of this middle period in the history of Byzantine-Sasanid relations is the peaceful tone

⁴⁰Procopius, *Wars*, I.xvii.34-35.

⁴¹*Limes*, p. 237.

of these relations with the exception of two minor engagements during the reign of Theodosius II. If these advance posts were indeed abandoned, starting with the end of the fourth century, then the fact may easily be related to the peace that reigned between the two empires, which did not call for a perpetual state of alertness along the frontiers and the manning of these advanced posts. But it must be related also to the fortunes of the new group of *foederati* who served Byzantium in this period, the successors to the Tanūkhids as the dominant federate group, namely, the Salīhids. These were partly settled in the northern sector as the Tanūkhids were, and thus they were involved *inter alia* in the defense of the frontier and almost certainly of Chalcidice too.⁴² Where exactly their settlements in Chalcidice were located is not entirely clear,⁴³ but they maintained a certain presence there.⁴⁴ They may have shared with the Tanūkhids the occupation of some of these localities or posts, but they are likely to have used posts of their own in the region, and so they must have contributed to the density, apparent or real, in fortification that the region presented to the aerial photographer.

Thus the history of the fortification of Chalcidice and the *limes* of Chalcis left blank in *Le Limes* may be recovered at least in part for the fifth century by being related to the facts of the Byzantine-Persian conflict and the rise of a new group of Arab *foederati* in that century, who, too, left some trace in Chalcidice and its military history.

4. Much clearer is the military picture of the sixth century for the *limes* of Chalcis, both in respect of the Persian Wars of that century which, unlike those of the fourth, directly affected it, and in respect of the inter-Arab war between the Ghassānids and the Lakhmids, the vassals of Byzantium and Persia respectively.⁴⁵ Both wars are well documented in the classical and Oriental sources and so is the response of the imperial government to these wars. The valuable chapters on Justinian's fortifications in Euphratensis and Chalcidice recorded by Procopius enable the problem of precise attributions and chronological pinpointing to be answered in the affirmative for this period. What is not so well recorded in Procopius is the role of the Ghassānid Arabs in these wars for the defense of Chalcidice and northern Syria and their contribution to

⁴²Their duties must have included the protection of the caravan routes as well as the monastic establishment in Chalcidice and engaging in wars with the Lakhmids and with the rising power of Kinda in Arabia.

⁴³The problem will be discussed in vol. 2 of this series on Byzantium and the Arabs before the rise of Islam.

⁴⁴They were to be found in the *ḥāḍir* of Chalcis at the time of the Muslim Conquest of Syria; see Balāḍurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, vol. 1, p. 172; apparently they shared it with the Tanūkhids (*ibid.*). One of the monasteries of the region, Dayr Dāwūd, was a Salīhid foundation.

⁴⁵On the Byzantine-Persian conflict, see *Limes*, pp. 5–6; on the Ghassānid-Lakhmid War, see *supra*, pp. 468–69.

the system of fortification, too.⁴⁶ Luckily this role can be recovered from other sources, and an investigation of the role of the Ghassānids in the wars and in the fortification of the region leads to the conclusion that they wrote an important chapter in the history of the *limes* of Chalcis. They are thus the third and the last Arab group of federates to do so, after the Tanūkhids and the Salīhids of the fourth and fifth centuries respectively, and consequently they represent the third layer in the structure of Arab federate presence in the region which must be taken into account in investigating the *limes* of Chalcis.

C

The preceding section has tried to give recognition to the character of the *limes* of Chalcis as a palimpsest of successive layers of systems of fortifications and has tried to disentangle the web for the three centuries of the Byzantine period from the fourth to the seventh. It has investigated the region diachronously from the viewpoint of three successive Arab federate groups—the Tanūkhids of the fourth century, the Salīhids of the fifth, and the Ghassānids of the sixth—studying in a detailed fashion the Tanūkhids of the fourth century who are the theme of this book, with a view toward providing the historian of the *limes* with a number of localities associated with this group in the region of Chalcidice.

What emerges out of this investigation is that what is conspicuous by its absence in *Le Limes* is actually a major factor in the history and development of the *limes* of Chalcis, namely, the Arab federates of the Christian Roman Empire in these centuries, and that the involvement of the Arabs in the defense of the region goes back even to the days of the pagan Roman Empire in the third century when the Palmyrene Odenathus beat back Shāpūr I, whose campaign against Antioch provided Malalas with the occasion for describing as the *limes* of Chalcis what was actually a frontier zone or region the fortification system of which grew gradually in depth as each successive federate group occupied it and defended it throughout three centuries and as it grew in density with the imperial government's responses to the exigencies of the Persian threat to that region. Thus the elucidation of the Christian Arab military establishment⁴⁷ in Chalcidice throughout these three centuries becomes a key to the study of the so-called *limes* of Chalcis before the rise of Islam.

The only group of Arabs who are taken into account in the discussion of the *limes* of Chalcis by Mousterde and Poidebard are the Ghassānids of the sixth century. Although the account in *Le Limes* is far from being adequate in

⁴⁶The trace that the Ghassānids left in this region may be illustrated by the structure in Sergiopolis, on which see Sauvaget, "Les Ghassanides," pp. 115–30.

⁴⁷And with it also the Muslim Arab establishment in Umayyad times, which has been the concern of Islamic art historians.

view of the importance and relevance of the Ghassānid military presence to the problem of this *limes*, the Ghassānids are at least noticed. This is entirely due to the contribution of Nöldeke who elucidated the framework of the history of this Arab dynasty. The elucidation of the history of the Tanūkhids in the present book and that of the Salīhids of the fifth century in the second volume of this series should provide the early Byzantinist and the Late Roman historian with adequate material for a review of the oriental *limes* in the fourth and fifth centuries, as it recovers the role of that element that has been missing in the discussion, namely, the Arabs.⁴⁸

The further refinement of these conclusions on Tanūkhid toponymy and the discovery of new localities rest solely in the hands of the archeologist of this area, who can be guided by these data extracted from the literary sources toward the recovery of the Tanūkhid military presence in the fourth century and hopefully the whole of the federate Christian establishment in Chalcidice in the three centuries before the rise of Islam. How fruitful the hints and signals that come from the literary sources are or can be is fully demonstrated by the excavations in Palestina Prima of the localities associated with the Arab phylarchs of the *parembole* in the fifth century. Guided by references in the *Vita Euthymii*, a dedicated priest, P. Féderlin, was able to discover the site of the fifth-century Arab *parembole* in the Desert of Judaea, west of the Dead Sea.⁴⁹

II. THE ARABS ALONG THE *LIMES ORIENTALIS*

The preceding section has discussed the role of the Tanūkhid Arabs in the so-called *limes* of Chalcis. But the Tanūkhids were only one group of Arabs in the service of Rome in the fourth century—the dominant group. The place of the other Arabs in the Byzantine defense system in the Orient, along the entire line of defense from the Tigris to the Red Sea, must now be discussed.⁵⁰ Little is known about these other tribes, settled in the limitrophe provinces of the Orient from Mesopotamia to Palestina Tertia, but their presence is undoubted, and, in spite of the unavailability of precise data on these federate tribes, it is important at least to arrive at an understanding of their place in the defense system in the Orient, especially as they are far from being conspicuous in the standard works on the oriental *limes*.⁵¹ But together with the

⁴⁸It is possible that Musil's views on the Arab *foederati* as settled in the zone of the *limes exterior* may have misled Poidebard and disinclined him to look for traces of Arab presence in Chalcidice itself and for their participation in the fortification and defense of the region. As will be explained later, the Arab *foederati*, at least the dominant groups—Tanūkhids, Salīhids, and Ghassānids—were settled *intra limitem*.

⁴⁹On this, see R. Génier, *Vie de Saint Euthyme le Grand* (Paris, 1909), pp. 104–11.

⁵⁰On the data that can be extracted from the Arabic sources on these tribes, see "The Federate Arab Tribal Groups in Oriens," *supra*, pp. 381–95.

⁵¹Much has been written on the oriental *limes* but what is most relevant to this discus-

Persians the Arabs constituted the major threat in the Orient against which the system of defense was constructed. And so it is important to determine in what way Byzantium employed other Arabs to deal with this threat from the Arabian Peninsula, especially in sectors of the *limes* where the threat was exclusively or predominantly from the Arabs, not from the Persians. By bringing to bear on the problems of the oriental *limes* just this missing element or factor in the standard works on the subject, it is hoped that a more adequate account or description of this system of defense may be arrived at, even though it may turn out to be mostly a framework within which the problems may be conceived and within which others may in the future be identified and placed, once archeological research has made its contribution.

1

The Two *Limites*

The first of the problems of the *limes orientalis* in which the Arabs are involved is that of the double line, a *limes interior* and a *limes exterior*, the reality of which is accepted by some while denied by others.⁵² Of those who argued for the reality of this double line of defense, two deserve to be singled out because they noticed the Arabs and their place in this system, namely, A. Musil and R. Poidebard.

Musil distinguished the *limes interior* on which Roman forts were located from the *limes exterior*, the outer boundary of the territory that lay beyond the *limes interior*, inhabited by the Arab tribes allied to Rome or Byzantium.⁵³ "The internal *limes* was permanent and therefore strongly fortified; the external *limes*, on the other hand, was not fixed; it contained no permanent Roman garrisons and therefore no fortified camps."⁵⁴

Musil's use of the term *limes* to describe the outer boundary of the territory inhabited by the allied Arabs was unfortunate inasmuch as *limes* is a technical term with many significations and the one given it by Musil was not justified. This led Poidebard to argue that a zone inhabited by allied nomads without Roman posts cannot be dignified with the name *limes*, and thus he concluded that there were indeed two lines of defense, a double *limes*, but that

sion are the following works, which have extensive bibliographies: V. Chabot, *La frontière de l'Euphrate* (Paris, 1907); R. E. Brünnow and A. von Domaszewski, *Die Provincia Arabia*, 3 vols. (Strasbourg, 1904-9); A. Poidebard, *La Trace de Rome* (Paris, 1934); W. Ensslin, "Zur Ostpolitik des Kaisers Diokletian" (Munich, 1942); and L. Dillemann, *Haute Mésopotamie orientale et pays adjacents* (Paris, 1962).

⁵²Notably Bowersock who has argued persuasively against it in "*Limes Arabicus*," pp. 219-29.

⁵³Musil, *Palmyrena*, p. 247.

⁵⁴Musil, *Northern Hejaz*, p. 258; see also the discussion on pp. 258-59.

the outer *limes* was not simply abandoned to the Arabs but was dotted by fortified posts such as Qaşr al-Azraq and Qaşr Burqu'.⁵⁵

G. W. Bowersock has cast very serious doubts on the reality of the two *limites*, interior and exterior,⁵⁶ and he suggested the employment of the term *fortified territory* or region for translating *limes* in the Orient. This simplifies considerably the discussion of the place of the Arabs in this system of defense without reference to such controversial terms as *limes interior* and *limes exterior*. That place may be presented as follows:

(1) The view that the Arab *foederati* were settled only beyond the boundaries of the empire, in the desert, has to be discarded. Some of them no doubt were settled there but others were settled within the boundaries of the empire, as the discussion of the Tanūkhids has shown. Thus the Arab allies of Byzantium were settled on both sides of the *limes*, and this fact could suggest some difference in the status of the two groups vis-à-vis the Romans, depending on the terms of the *foedus* struck with each of these two groups.⁵⁷

(2) Instead of speaking of a *limes exterior* in connection with the Arabs, it is better to resort to such terms as a Roman sphere of influence or area of an indirect Roman presence beyond the Roman frontier. Such general terms are less precise and committing than *limes* and thus they reflect the political and military reality of the Roman presence, which was indeed not precisely located but was related to the abodes of the Arab allied tribes and their settlements, sometimes not permanent or fixed. It could have been a fluctuating frontier.

(3) This indirect Roman presence in a sphere of influence raises the important question of the limits of this sphere not in the sense of a *limes exterior* but in general about its extent. The problem has been touched upon in connection with the southern boundaries of the Provincia Arabia after the annexation of the Nabataean kingdom, and the presence of Roman troops has been noted in such places as Dūmat and Madā'in Šāliḥ.⁵⁸ The same problem confronts the Roman historian of the Palmyrene sector of this Roman *limes*, from Palmyra to the Euphrates, after the destruction of Palmyra, namely, how much of former Palmyrene Arabian territory or sphere of influence did Rome choose to acquire? Here again there are two references to Roman presence in northern Arabia far from the *limes*, namely, Malikān and Ilāha, of some

⁵⁵See his chapter on the *limes exterior* in *Trace*, pp. 95–128, esp. pp. 118–20.

⁵⁶See his "*Limes Arabicus*," pp. 227–29. In the present book the term *oriental limes* is thus not used in the sense of a *vallum*, *fosse*, and palisade line but as it is in the East in the sense of the frontier territory. It is noteworthy that as early as 1909 Musil had drawn attention to Syriac writers who speak of inner and outer *Wüste*; see his communication to E. Kornemann in *Klio*, 10 (1909), pp. 134–35; see also Honigmann, cited *supra*, p. 468 note 14.

⁵⁷On the organization of the Arab *foederati* and the structure of the phylarchate, see *infra*, pp. 498–510, 514–18.

⁵⁸On this, see *supra*, p. 52 note 86.

importance to ascertaining the extent of this indirect Roman presence.⁵⁹ As has been shown in the course of this book, there were still Arab tribes allied to Rome outside the *limes*, and instead of using the term *limes exterior* with its misleading association, it may be better to speak of the "Arab shield" of these tribes or the tribal shield outside the Roman *limes*. This outer shield must be distinguished from the inner one inside the *limes*, consisting of Arab tribes settled within the *limes*. These two terms—the inner and the outer shields—may turn out to be more useful and valid than the terms *limes interior* and *limes exterior* within the latter of which Musil located the Arab tribes allied to Rome.

2

The Transverse Internal *Limites*

In addition to the problem of the double line of the *limites*, *interior* and *exterior*, there is also the problem of transverse internal *limites* which has figured in the discussion of the military history of the oriental *limes* and which may be illustrated by the so-called *limes Palaestinae*, the *limes* of Chalcis, and the *limes* of Singara in Mesopotamia.

Unlike the *limes interior* and the *limes exterior*, these *limites* run transversely to the line of the major *limes*; in Palestine it runs across the northern Negev; in Syria it is in Chalcidice and its principal zone runs perpendicularly to the bend of the Euphrates; in Mesopotamia it is in the vicinity of Singara, in the area that lies between the Tigris and the Khābūr.

Much has been written for and against these transverse internal *limites*. The preceding section on the Tanūkhids in Chalcidice has analyzed intensively the Arab presence in one of these so-called *limites*. That presence may not explain the rise of this system of fortification, if system it was and not a palimpsest. But whatever the truth about that system and the appellation *limes* applied to these lines of fortifications, apparent or real, may turn out to be, a study of one of them, namely, Chalcidice and the so-called *limes* of Chalcis, has demonstrated the importance of the Arab military presence in giving an explanation for the seemingly dense area of fortifications in that region. The Arab presence may or may not be a total explanation, but it certainly is a partial and important one.

In view of the fruitfulness of the discussion of the *limes* of Chalcis in terms of the Arab military presence in Chalcidice, it is now proposed to discuss the problems of the other two transverse *limites* in relation to the Arabs of Oriens, in spite of the fact that the data on the two regions of these two *limites* in the fourth century are scanty and sometimes mostly inferable from

⁵⁹On these two mountains in the territory of the tribes of Ṭayy and Kalb respectively, see *supra*, pp. 416–17. As a Latin inscription turned up in Dūmat al-Jandal, others may also turn up in Samāwa if it is excavated.

data pertaining to the following centuries and in spite of the fact that, as in the case of the *limes* of Chalcis, the explanation of the rise of a line of fortification, if real and not illusory, is not or not necessarily a total explanation. The following paragraphs are thus written with a view toward drawing the attention of the students of the oriental *limes* to certain facts that may prove relevant to solving the problems of these two *limites*.

The Limes of Palestine

The *limes Palaestinae* has been much discussed,⁶⁰ and roughly the same criticism that has been leveled against the *limes* of Chalcis has been leveled against the proponents of the theory of a *limes* in Palestine.⁶¹ The following observations may be of relevance to the problem of the *limes* of Palestine and could explain the rise of a line of fortifications across the northern Negev:

(1) The area witnessed important administrative changes in the fourth century: the withdrawal of legio Fretensis from Jerusalem to Ayla ca. A.D. 300, which thus left Palestine proper without a legion, the various changes in provincial boundaries involving Arabia and Palestine, and the creation of Palestina Tertia as a separate province, in all of which the Arabs were probably involved.⁶²

(2) The same century witnessed the rise of Palestine as the Holy Land of the new Christian Roman Empire and the necessity of giving protection to the new privileged province, its *loca sancta* and places of pilgrimage. The same century witnessed the rise and spread of monasticism in southern Palestine, and this area, too, needed protection. Thus, it is not unlikely that with the withdrawal of the legion from Jerusalem to Ayla, it was felt that both the *loca sancta* of the Holy Land and the monastic establishment in the Negev of southern Palestine needed some protection against the inroads of the Saracens who were roaming southern Palestine and the Sinai Peninsula. The interest of the government in the protection of religious establishments from Saracen raids and incursions is well known and attested, and it must have been especially solicitous about such establishments in the Holy Land itself.⁶³

⁶⁰For a lucid and succinct statement of the problems of the *limes Palaestinae*, see Avi-Yonah, *Holy Land*, pp. 119–22, with reference to the work of A. Alt who first drew attention to the existence of this *limes*. After the publication of *The Holy Land* in 1966, more has appeared on the *limes Palaestinae*; the latest is by M. Gichon, for which see "Research on the *Limes Palaestinae*: A Stocktaking," in *Roman Frontier Studies*, 12 (1979), eds. W. S. Hanson and L. J. F. Keppie, *BAR International Series*, 71 (iii) (Oxford, 1980), vol. 3, pp. 843–64. The article has a comprehensive bibliography on the *limes Palaestinae*; see pp. 860–64, esp. the author's own bibliography on the *limes Palaestinae*, pp. 861–62.

⁶¹See Bowersock, "*Limes Arabicus*," pp. 221, 229.

⁶²On all this, see Chap. 1 on the Namāra inscription, *supra*, esp. pp. 47–53.

⁶³What Procopius says on Saracen incursions from Sinai "into the lands of Palestine proper" while speaking of Justinian's fortification of Mt. Sinai in the sixth century is apposite

(3) That Oriens had pockets of hostile nomads and Saracens is attested in the sources not only in the fourth but also in the following centuries. Some of these pockets have been located and identified with some precision in the Negev and in Sinai⁶⁴ in this period, and it is not unnatural to suppose that they may have been responsible, at least in part, for the rise of a defense line to protect Palestine, which had emerged as a Holy Land, both its *loca sancta* and its monastic establishments in the south.

(4) That there was a problem of internal security in this region of southern Palestine and Sinai is reflected in the fact that the phylarchal system was in force in it, sure sign that there were Arab *foederati* in the region at the head of whom were the phylarchs, those well-known Arab federate officers in the employ of Byzantium.⁶⁵ Since they were far from the border with the Arabian Peninsula, stationed west of the 'Araba and in Sinai, it is certain that they were there for internal security reasons against nomads and Saracens who roamed the arid zones of Oriens as they continue to do even in the twentieth century.

Various answers have been given to the questions pertaining to the period during which these forts that make up the so-called *limes Palaestinae* were built or to the purpose for which they were built. The above paragraphs could suggest a possible Arab involvement in the rise and function of this *limes*; whether some of these forts were manned by Arab federate troops or whether some of these troops were quartered in Arab *ḥādīrs* or *ḥīras* adjacent to the Roman posts, as was the case with the Tanūkhids of Chalcidice, is not clear.⁶⁶ But the role of the Arab phylarchs in maintaining law and order in these arid zones of unrest in southern Palestine and in Sinai is clear from the sources. Unlike the Arab federates in Chalcidice, the tribal affiliation of these phylarchs is unknown but might be related to one or more of the three tribes of the southern sector of the *limes orientalis*, Judām, 'Āmila, and Lakhm.

The Limes of Singara

Sir Aurel Stein employed the technique of aerial photography pioneered by Poidebard and applied it to Mesopotamia where he thought he discovered

here; *Buildings*, V.viii.9. Palestine in this passage almost certainly means Palestina Prima. This could throw some light on why that region was given the name "Palestina Salutaris."

⁶⁴On this, see Chap. 8, "The Arab Presence in Oriens," *supra*, pp. 284–329.

⁶⁵On phylarchal presence in Palestina Tertia, see "Ammonii Monachi Relatio," *supra*; see also the reference to the ἀρχίφυλοι and their κοινόν in A. Alt, "Limes Palaestinae," *Palästina Jahrbuch*, 26 (1930), p. 76. For border unrest, see Gichon, "Research," p. 856, and his forthcoming article, "The Military and Political Developments on the *Limes Palaestinae*: Table of Events."

⁶⁶For the Diocletianic and Flavian origins of the *limes Palaestinae*, see Avi-Yonah, *The Holy Land*, pp. 120–21, and Gichon, "Research," p. 844 respectively. On Arab federate settlements in the Negev, see Gichon, "Research," p. 857.

what might be termed the *limes* of Singara. This, too, has had serious doubts cast on it for reasons similar to those that had been advanced against the *limes* of Chalcis.⁶⁷

The fortified lines with their *castella* north and south of Mt. Singar and in the direction of Ḥatra do exist, however, and they clearly belong to the period antedating the Peace of Jovian when that area was ceded to the Persians. In addition to being constructed for purposes of defense against the Persians, their construction may have been related to the Arabs of Mesopotamia:

(1) It will be remembered that Arab Ḥatra fell to Shāpūr I in the third century, as did Edessa to the Romans. The destruction of these urban centers that had controlled and regulated the Persian and Roman Arabs of the area, sedentary and nomad alike, must have been attended with a certain degree of dislocation and unrest among both types of Arabs, the same as the fall of Palmyra was to cause in the latter half of the same century. This unrest probably continued for a century or so during which these *castella* might have been built. In this region as in Chalcidice the Arab and the Persian problems were related because of Arab proximity to the Persian border, which in this period was also an active front.

(2) That such was the state of unrest in that part of Mesopotamia could derive considerable support from the same state of unrest in the western part of Mesopotamia where, apparently, security deteriorated and unrest reigned for more than a century after the fall of Edessa. This is revealed in the *Vita Malchi* from which it is clear that the whole road from Beroea to Edessa was unsafe due to hostile Saracens. Part of this road was Trans-Euphratesian, involving the province of Osroene.⁶⁸

(3) It is not impossible that the area before the Peace of Jovian, when it was still in Byzantine hands, witnessed an inter-Arab war between the Arab allies of Byzantium and those of Persia in much the same way that Chalcidice witnessed a similar war between the Lakhmids and the Tanūkhids. If so, such *castella* as described by Stein or some of them around Singara might become explicable, even as those of the *limes* of Chalcis and the *ḥāḍīrs* and *ḥīras* of the Tanūkhids have. Echoes of such encounters are audible in the fifth century⁶⁹ when peace reigned between the two empires, and consequently such

⁶⁷See Dillemann, "Haute Mésopotamie," pp. 201–2 for criticism of A. Stein's aerial photography; for the so-called *limes* of Singara, see the map on p. 202; for Stein's articles, see p. 201 notes 3–5; the same chapter also reviews critically works on the *limes* of Mesopotamia and has some useful criticism of some of the basic works on the oriental *limes*, such as those of Chabot and Fabricius, for which see pp. 198–201.

⁶⁸For this, see *supra*, pp. 284–85.

⁶⁹*Synodicon Orientale*, ed. J. B. Chabot (Paris, 1902), pp. 532–34.

inter-Arab wars are even more conceivable in the period before the Peace of Jovian.⁷⁰

Again, as in the case of the *limes Palaestinae*, the Arab profile of this problem does not purport to explain the problem in its entirety, but it could have been an element in the picture. And as the identity of the Arabs in southern Palestine is unknown, so it is in this Trans-Euphratesian region.

Perhaps the preceding sections have shown that in the rise of these internal transverse *limites* the Arabs must be taken into account. A previous chapter has disclosed various places and regions, mainly arid regions in Oriens, where they were still to be found, and thus the two chapters on this ubiquitous Arab presence in Oriens and the rise of internal *limites* may be brought to bear on each other, if not as a total explanation at least as a partial one for the rise of these so-called internal *limites*.

3

The Saracen Enclosures

Perhaps the most important section in Poidebard's *La trace de Rome* for the Arab *foederati* is the one entitled "Participation des Partisans Nomades à la Défense du *Limes*."⁷¹ The author raises a number of important questions about this little-studied theme and, in spite of some misconceptions about the Arab allies being nomadic, the author has contributed a most valuable section on the enclosures that his aerial photography has uncovered. These have been subjected to some criticism, part of the general one against the technique of aerial photography and the illusoriness of some of the conclusions,⁷² but in spite of this, the discussion of these enclosures remains the most solid contribution toward evaluating the role of the *foederati* in the defense of the Orient. His section is divided into two parts, entitled "technique" and "origine":

(1) In the first part, the author explains that these enclosures are different from the shepherds' folds, which are either round or oval; they are also different from the plan of Roman fortifications and are generally polygonal. The enclosures are encircled with walls and the salients are fortified with round towers. The structural features of the whole enclosure point to a strategy of

⁷⁰Traces of an Arab presence were noted by Poidebard when he discovered the Arab *enceintes* along the western extremities of Mt. Singar; see *Trace*, p. 192 note 1. If they are indeed Arab and similar in function to those along the Syrian *limes*, they would be like the *ḥādīrs* of the Tanūkhids constructed for the defense of the region against hostile Saracens or Arabs and Persians alike. These enclosures could be important for attesting a federate Arab presence in Mesopotamia analogous to the one in Chalcidice.

⁷¹See *Trace*, pp. 191–96.

⁷²See Sauvaget, "Châteaux umayyades de Syrie," p. 4. Sauvaget examined the problem as an Orientalist who was dealing with the monuments of Syria in the Umayyad Islamic period.

defense to which the simple nomads were strangers. They are also to be found near a well, a spring, or a wadi or they lie astride them.

According to the author, the function of these enclosures was to form a system of defense intimately allied to the system of Roman *castella*, for warding off the attacks not of the enemy infantry but its cavalry—Parthian or Sasanid.

(2) In the second part ("origine"), he argues that these could not have been simple bedouin structures but Roman ones. After the Arab Conquests they were used as snares or traps for gazelles, but they belong to the Roman period.⁷³

The author raises the question of their function in the Byzantine period and whether it was other than that of the chase. He offers only the hypothesis that when Diocletian organized the *limes*, he made an appeal to the desert nomads to participate in the defense of the Orient against the Sasanids and their Arab allies.

This detailed and informative discussion of these enclosures which aerial photography has revealed immediately brings to mind the *ḥāḍīrs* and *ḥīras* of the Arab *foederati*. Unaware of what the Arabic historians and geographers have to say on the *ḥāḍīrs* and *ḥīras* of the *foederati*, Poidebard was reduced to asking the bedouins about the origin of these enclosures he had photographed. His chapter, however, enables the conclusions drawn from the literary sources to be confronted with his, drawn from archeology, ground as well as aerial. Only the field archeologist is justified in drawing conclusions, not the one who deals with photographs and maps. However, the following observations may be made on the *ḥāḍīrs* and *ḥīras* of the Arabic literary sources in the light of Poidebard's conclusions and of the data that he provides:

(a) There is a striking relation between these enclosures discovered by Poidebard and the fact that, as has been argued, Byzantium had a group of Arab tribes along the oriental *limes*.⁷⁴ These tribes, as has been shown, were quartered in structures called in Arabic *ḥāḍīrs* or *ḥīras*. It is thus possible that what Poidebard discovered was these *ḥāḍīrs* of the Arab *foederati*.

(b) Considerable fortification of this view could derive from the fact that according to Poidebard these enclosures were structurally distinguished from the Roman *castella* and, what is more, were not far from them and were designed to reinforce them.⁷⁵ The Greek form of the term *ḥāḍīr* or *ḥīra*, *parembole*, etymologically could answer to such an auxiliary function as is ascribed to these enclosures by Poidebard.⁷⁶

⁷³*Trace*, p. 195, where he also cites Musil, *Palmyrena*, pp. 3–4, on the enclosures as traps or snares for gazelles, Arabic *gazalīas* or *mesayid*.

⁷⁴For these tribes settled along the *limes*, see "The Federate Arab Tribal Groups in Oriens," *supra*, pp. 381–95.

⁷⁵*Trace*, p. 192.

⁷⁶On the force of *para* in *parembole*, see *infra*, p. 496.

(c) Descriptions of the pre-Islamic *ḥāḍirs* have disappeared from the literary sources; only vague hints of structures near watering places, called *ḥāḍirs*, have survived. These photographs of Poidebard could supply just those missing descriptions of what these *ḥāḍirs* could have been, if indeed his *enceintes* were enclosures for the Arab *foederati*.⁷⁷ It has been suggested that although the two Arabic terms *ḥīra* and *ḥāḍir* both mean military establishments in general and probably came to mean the same thing, their derivation from two different roots could suggest that they were different in structure and function.⁷⁸ Only field inspection can help solve this problem; and if it does, it will be a striking example of how archeology can solve a problem of Arabic lexicography or semantics.⁷⁹

If these enclosures turn out to be what Poidebard thought they were, they will be the most valuable signals and guides for writing the history of the Arab tribes along the *limes*. These locations will help fix the area where these tribes were settled, while epigraphic discoveries there could endow the whole history of the *foederati* in the fourth century with precision, the missing element in our understanding of these federate tribes, with the exception of Tanūkh.

4

The *Notitia Dignitatum*

The *Notitia Dignitatum* is the only official Byzantine document that reflects the contribution of the Arabs to the defense of the Orient. In addition to being an official and reliable document, it has the merit of treating them not in isolation but as an integrated group within the entire complex defense system of the Orient and among the various units of the Roman army which shouldered the responsibility of that defense in the East.

It is also a frustrating document, and various discussions in a previous book have tried to elucidate the history of the various units that are explicitly described as Arab or whose Arab character has been inferred. The difficulties of interpreting the data provided by this document are compounded by the fact that it is or may be a heterogeneous document, a palimpsest which may

⁷⁷They may be seen in the companion volume to the "texte" of *Trace*, the "Atlas," but more accessible are the plates in Sir George MacDonald's review of *La Trace*, "Rome in the Middle East," *Antiquity*, 8 (1934), pp. 373–80; see pls. 3 and 8. These plates are reproduced *infra*.

⁷⁸On this, see *supra*, p. 403 note 208, and "The Etymology of *Ḥīra*," *infra*, pp. 490–98.

⁷⁹It is not impossible that the signification attaching in Islamic times to *ḥayr*, *ḥāʿir*, related to *ḥīra* rather than to *ḥāḍir*, was a development that is explicable by the fact that these *ḥīras*, military establishments in the pre-Islamic period, came to be used in Islamic times as pleasure gardens, game parks, when they lost their original function as military camps; on *ḥayr/ḥāʿir* in Islamic times, see J. Sourdel-Thomine, "Ḥāʿir," *EP*, 3, p. 71, and its bibliography.

reflect conditions that are not related synchronously but diachronously and which employs terms, ethnic and functional, that are not easy to interpret.⁸⁰

Most of the Arab units in this document have been shown to go back to the Roman period, and only a few units have been identified as belonging to the Byzantine fourth and fifth centuries. And yet the preceding sections and chapters have revealed a hitherto unknown wide range or field of operation for the Arabs in Oriens. It is, therefore, desirable to discuss the Arab profile of the *ND* within this new context.

It has been shown in the course of this book that the Arab *foederati* maintained a strong presence in Oriens not only along the *limes orientalis* but also within Oriens in the various zones and along the so-called transverse internal *limites*, and that their contribution was extensive and intensive in the service of Byzantium. And yet they appear in the *ND* represented by two units, perhaps three, not more.⁸¹ Two answers can be given to this problem:

(a) Some of the units in the *ND* have been considered Arabs who were recruited in the Roman period and were granted *civitas*, thus becoming regular troops in the Roman army.⁸² Perhaps this was not true of all those units and some of them may have been federate. This is possible, especially in the case of the Equites Indigenae.

(b) More likely, much more likely, is that the many units of federate Arabs were not mentioned in this official document reserved for the regular Roman troops who were most probably *cives*. The long line of enclosures uncovered by aerial photography could very well have been the camps of these federates, located near the *castra* of the Roman soldiers. The *ND* records the Roman unit and its post but not the adjacent enclosure with its federate Arabs. Thus their noninclusion in the *ND* is not an argument for their non-existence. Students of the *limes orientalis* who depend on the *ND* only, without the aid of other documents, could easily get a distorted picture of the nature and scope of the Arab contribution. How extensive that scope was has been made clear by a study of the Arabic as well as the classical literary sources.⁸³

⁸⁰See *RA*, chap. 5, entirely devoted to the *Notitia Dignitatum*.

⁸¹The two units of Equites Saraceni in Phoenicia and the unit of Equites Saraceni Thaumdeni in *Limes Aegypti*; on these, see *RA*, chap. 5, and other discussions of the two units in various contexts: in chap. 2 in *RA* and twice in this book, *supra*, pp. 393–94 and p. 398. In addition to what has been said in previous chapters on the puzzle of these two Saracen units in Phoenicia, it may be remarked here that they may have belonged to two different tribal groups of *foederati*. The one stationed at Betroclus, east of Emesa, is closer to the Tanūkhid and the Salīhīd settlements; the other, in Thelsee, Ḍumayr, near Damascus, is close to the Lakhmids of the Provincia Arabia. Also, the use of *indigenae* to distinguish the unit at Betroclus from the one at Thelsee may be significant; it could suggest that the unit at Thelsee was not indigenous and was brought there from somewhere else.

⁸²See chap. 5, "*Notitia Dignitatum*," in *RA*.

⁸³See the various chapters in this book on the reigns of each emperor from Constantine to Theodosius and also the following section.

5

Challenges and Responses

It remains to discuss the Arab and Arabian challenges that called for the Roman pattern of response in the organization of the oriental *limes*. Ca. A.D. 300, the *limes Diocletianus* rises against the background of a series of Perso-Arab challenges in the third century.⁸⁴ The Persian profile of this background has received much more attention than the Arab which, however, needs to be disentangled from the Persian and discussed separately so that its nature and scope may become clear.⁸⁵ The salient features of the Arab profile may be presented as follows:

(1) Diocletian reaps the harvest of Palmyra's revolt and Aurelian's victory—Arab unrest which must have obtained in the Fertile Crescent and Egypt after the disintegration of the Palmyrene political and military structure that had pulled the various Arab groups together.⁸⁶

(2) Although the main challenge along the *limes* of the Euphrates came from Persia, the Arabs, too, constituted a challenge along that *limes*, one on which a bright light has been shed by the elucidation of the role of the new Arab urban center on the Euphrates, Lakhmid Ḥīra.⁸⁷

(3) What is not so well known are the challenges from the relatively unknown world of the Arabian Peninsula affecting that segment of the *limes orientalis* from Circesium to Ayla. The pressures on the Lower Danube, in the second half of the fourth century, from the Trans-Danubian world of the Alans, the Huns, and the Goths, are elucidated by Ammianus Marcellinus, and they make the history of that sector of the *limes* and the course of events that led to the disaster of Adrianople in A.D. 378 fairly intelligible.⁸⁸ Not so those from Arabia, couched in general terms of Bedouins and Saracens. What

⁸⁴There is a case for calling the oriental *limes* around A.D. 300 the *limes* of Diocletian or *limes Diocletianus*; the precedent of the *Strata Diocletiana* justifies and commends it since the *Strata* is only a part of the oriental *limes* as reorganized by Diocletian from the Black to the Red Sea. The name will give recognition to the important work of reorganization done by the emperor in the East, an important milestone, nay, the watershed in the historical development of the eastern frontier during the seven centuries that elapsed from Pompey to Heraclius. Only the Syro-Mesopotamian part of the oriental *limes* is relevant to this discussion of the Arab profile.

⁸⁵Although it is not possible to divorce completely the Arab from the Persian problem, especially in discussing the *limes* of the Euphrates and that of Palmyra, or even the southernmost sector, where the neighbors of the empire were the Arabs, not the Persians, as a discussion of the campaign of Shāpūr II in Arabia will fully demonstrate.

⁸⁶When it is realized that for a long time Palmyra had been a stabilizing force in the Syrian desert among its nomadic Arabs, that its Arab troops later invaded and occupied the whole of Syria, then Asia Minor and Egypt, and that these invasions caused movements and migrations of Arabs throughout Oriens, it is not difficult to imagine the degree of unrest among the Arabs that Rome had to deal with after the destruction of the city in A.D. 272.

⁸⁷See *supra*, pp. 466–67.

⁸⁸See *RG*, XXXI.2–9.11.

is needed is more precision in describing the pressures and challenges from the Arabs and the Arabian Peninsula:

(a) Although the Arabs of Ḥīra constituted for the Romans one of the challenges on the *limes* of the Euphrates, their challenge was not limited to that *limes* but extended to the sector from Circesium to Ayla. The rulers of Ḥīra maintained a ubiquitous presence in the Arabian Peninsula, where they functioned as agents for extending the Persian sphere of influence, thus constituting an indirect challenge to Byzantine imperial interests.

The Ḥīran thrusts against Byzantine Syria, it has been argued, were partly met by the Tanūkhids, and it is not altogether unlikely that the rise of a strong Arab federate organization in the fourth century was a response to the challenge posed by the Lakhmids, just as the *basileia* of the Ghassānid Arethas in A.D. 529 was to be a response to the challenge of the Lakhmid Mundir.⁸⁹

(b) Shāpūr II's campaign in Arabia (according to Ṭabarī conducted in A.D. 326) was a military operation of the first importance in this discussion of the oriental *limes* and the challenges to which it was subjected or exposed. This campaign brought Shāpūr to regions adjacent to almost all the segments of the *limes* from Circesium to Ayla.⁹⁰

(c) A new political configuration in South Arabia might also have constituted one of the challenges coming from the Arabian Peninsula. Around A.D. 300, the South Arabian king, Shammar Yuhar'ish, united all the kingdoms of the Arabian South,⁹¹ a matter of considerable importance in the history of that country, Arabia Felix, anti-Roman since the expedition of Aelius Gallus in 27 B.C.

What the response of Byzantium was to the rise of a powerful South Arabian kingdom in the fourth century is not known; but it has been argued in a previous chapter that the campaign of Imru' al-Qays of the Namāra inscription may have been a response to the new threat posed by a united South Arabia to Roman interests in the Arabian Peninsula;⁹² to the same possible challenge may possibly be related, at least in part, the important administrative

⁸⁹See Procopius, *Wars*, I.xvii.47.

⁹⁰On Shāpūr II's Arabian campaign, see *supra*, pp. 66–68.

⁹¹For this significant event in the history of the Arabian Peninsula, see the present writer in "Pre-Islamic Arabia," *CHI*, 1, p. 9. For details on the very controversial Shammar Yuhar'ish and a discussion of his reign supported by important Sabaic inscriptions, see A. Jamme, *Sabaean Inscriptions from Mabram Bilqīs (Mārib)* (Baltimore, 1962), chap. 9, pp. 351–75.

⁹²Only the discovery of more inscriptions can settle this point. Sabaic epigraphy has provided evidence for Shammar's great interest in northeast Arabia and the Persian connection; it is almost certain that northwest Arabia was not outside the range of his plans or designs. Inscriptions bearing on these designs will throw light on the history of the *limes Arabicus* in the early part of the fourth century and on Imru' al-Qays's campaign against Najrān. Cf. the pressures of the South Arabian tribes, Kinda and Ghassān, on the *limes Arabicus*, ca. A.D. 500; see the present writer in "Ghassān and Byzantium," pp. 232–55, esp. pp. 236–38.

changes in the southern part of this *limes*, such as the transference of the Legio X Fretensis from Jerusalem to Ayla and the continual adjustments in the provincial boundaries of Arabia and Palestine.

According to Ammianus Marcellinus, the Provincia Arabia was well fortified in the fourth century, *castrisque oppleta validis et castellis*.⁹³ Although some threat from Persia might have been an element in the combat readiness of the troops manning the *limes Arabicus*,⁹⁴ this *limes* was rather distant from the Persian front, and its readiness must, therefore, be assigned more to the challenges from the Arabian Peninsula noted in the two preceding paragraphs, related not only to South Arabia but also to Shāpūr's campaign in Arabia, which brought him as far west as Ḥijāz, so close to the *limes Arabicus*.⁹⁵

(4) In the light of the preceding discussion, it is possible to recognize three or four segments in the *limes Diocletianus* from Mesopotamia to the Red Sea:⁹⁶

(a) The *limes* of Euphrates: the Arab challenge in this segment exists and is important, but it is the Persian that is the dominant one.

(b) The *limes* of Palmyra or what could be termed such: here the importance of the two challenges, the Arab and the Persian, are reversed, the Arab being more important than the Persian, and the Persian being represented by Arab Ḥīra.

(c) The *limes Arabicus*: this *limes* is far from the Persians and the Persian border and the challenge is more purely Arab and Arabian, possibly emanating from the confines of faraway South Arabia.

(d) The *limes Aegypti* might also be mentioned here as a separate segment because Egypt was still part of Oriens until early in the reign of Theodosius I, when it was separated from it. Here again, the challenges are not Persian but Arab, at least near the Arabian Nome.⁹⁷

⁹³RG, XIV.8.13.

⁹⁴The archeological evidence is supportive of Ammianus; see S. Thomas Parker, "Archeological Survey of the *Limes Arabicus*: A Preliminary Report," *Annual of the Department of Antiquities* (Amman, Jordan), 21 (1976), p. 27; and *idem*, "Towards a History of the *Limes Arabicus*," *Roman Frontier Studies*, 12 (Oxford, 1980), vol. 3, pp. 871–74. On the number of legions and auxiliary units, according to A. H. M. Jones totaling 35,500 men, see *ibid.* The decline in combat readiness along the *limes Arabicus* in the fifth century (Parker, "Survey," p. 28) will be discussed in the second volume of this series.

⁹⁵Perhaps the appointment of Imru' al-Qays of the Namāra inscription to a federate command in the Provincia Arabia rather than near the Euphrates may be related to these challenges from Arabia near the *limes Arabicus*. The theme of challenge and response and its relevance to the history of the *limes Arabicus* in the pre-Byzantine period from Trajan to Diocletian has been ably studied by D. F. Graf in "The Saracens and the Defense of the Arabian Frontier," *BASOR*, 229 (1978), pp. 1–27.

⁹⁶The northernmost part of the *limes orientalis* reaching the Caucasus and the Black Sea is beyond the scope of this book; only the Syro-Mesopotamian part of it is under discussion.

⁹⁷For the Arab presence in Egypt, the Arabian Nome, and Arab units stationed in Egypt, see the relevant part of "Notitia Dignitatum," chap. 5 in RA. These units were almost certainly

(5) The question has been raised by those who have written on the oriental *limes* concerning Arab participation, or rather their unknown contribution.⁹⁸ The question admits now of being answered in the affirmative, and the contribution of the Arab *foederati* to the defense of the Roman and Byzantine Orient may be summarized as follows:

(a) They participated in the campaigns of the regular army of the Orient against the Persians.

(b) In sectors of the oriental *limes* such as the *limes Palmyrenicus* and the *limes Arabicus*, the *foederati* operated mainly against raids from the Arabs and inroads from the Arabian Peninsula.

(c) They also protected the trade routes that ran from the Arabian Peninsula to the Roman part of the Fertile Crescent, especially important after the fall of Palmyra which had protected them.

(d) The rise of monasticism and its spread to Oriens in the fourth century created colonies of eremites and anchorites who lived in arid zones in Oriens which these *foederati* protected.

(e) In addition to the Syro-Mesopotamian *limes orientalis*, there were transverse internal *limites*, and the *foederati* participated in maintaining internal order and security in these zones against roaming nomadic pockets which Oriens undoubtedly had in the fourth and the following centuries.

(f) They might even have participated in the quelling of revolts within the empire, such as that of Procopius in A.D. 365 during the reign of Valens.⁹⁹

In all these endeavors, it was the Arab horse that was in the service of Rome and Byzantium, constituting one element in the general response to the new challenges of the Sasanid cavalry, which revolutionized Roman strategy in the Orient.¹⁰⁰

III. THE ETYMOLOGY OF *HĪRA*

One of the basic terms in the lexicology of classical Arabic is *hīrat* (*hīra*), commonly translated as "camp," "enclosure." The concept it stands for is significant to the cultural anthropologist who wishes to examine that critical phase in the evolution of Near Eastern society from a nomadic to a sedentary

not federate, but the existence of federate Arab troops is not excluded; if more sources had survived or noticed the Arabs, references to phylarchs similar to those in Sinai might have been included in them, thus documenting a federate Arab presence.

⁹⁸See Poidebard, *Trace*, p. 191.

⁹⁹As they were to participate in the quelling of the Samaritan revolt ca. 530 in the reign of Justinian; see the present writer in "Arethas, Son of Jabala," *JAOS*, 75 (1955), pp. 207-9.

¹⁰⁰See Poidebard, *Trace*, pp. 23-24. For an analysis of Roman strategy in the first three centuries of the Christian Era, see E. N. Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire* (Baltimore-London, 1976).

way of life. This significance is most clearly reflected, even for the casual observer of the Near Eastern scene, in the toponymy of the area, where a number of localities are designated by the term *ḥīra* or some other derived form related to it, in much the same way that Latin *castra*, "camp," entered into the composition of the names of towns and cities in Britain after the Roman occupation. For some three centuries before the rise of Islam, one of these *ḥīras* was the most important city in the history of the Arabs, i.e., *Ḥīra*, the capital of the Lakhmids, the Arab allies of Sasanid Persia, which thus became the most celebrated instance of the development of the term from the appellative to the denominative use.¹⁰¹

The term poses linguistic problems relating to the etymology and to the semantics of *ḥīra*, and the burden of this discussion is to contribute toward the solution of one of these problems, namely, the etymology of the term.

1

Semitic philologists have accepted Georg Hoffmann's view that *ḥīra* is a Syriac term, *ḥērtā*, naturalized in Arabic.¹⁰² Hoffmann related *ḥīra* to Arabic *ḥadr* and Hebrew *ḥāšēr* and argued that Syriac *ḥērtā* is a descendant of a word in Aramaic which has lost the consonantal medial /d/. He adduced as a parallel Syriac *ḥanna* and Arabic *ḥiḏn*.

Hoffmann's is an argument from analogy resting on a single example, and this example does not represent a genuine parallel. In the case of /d/ and /n/ in *ḥiḏn* and *ḥanna* respectively, the two consonantal phonemes are close enough from the point of view of articulatory phonetics to admit assimilation, and in this case regressive assimilation. In the case of *ḥērtā* and *ḥadr*, the process is different; it is dissimilation, not assimilation, and indeed Brockelmann¹⁰³ includes the pair in the chapter on the "dissimilation of pharyngals." Furthermore, Hoffmann did not explain how /a/, the short vocalic phoneme in *ḥadr*, became /ē/ in *ḥērtā*, both a long and different vocalic phoneme.

A more formal and elaborate argument from historical phonology is required to describe the stages of phonetic change from an Aramaic root presumed to be *ḥ-^s-r* to Syriac *ḥērtā*.¹⁰⁴ These stages may be summarized as follows: (a) dissimilation from *ḥ-^s-r* to *ḥ-²-r*; (b) syncopation which did away with the dissimilated medial radical /²/; (c) since the vocalic sequence of the Aramaic root *ḥ-^s-r* is not certain, one of two processes could have produced

¹⁰¹For *Ḥīra*, see the article by the present writer in *ET*.

¹⁰²G. Hoffmann, "Bibliographische Anzeigen," *ZDMG*, 32 (1878), p. 753 note 3.

¹⁰³C. Brockelmann, *Grundriss der vergleichenden Grammatik der semitischen Sprachen* (Berlin, 1908), vol. 1, p. 242.

¹⁰⁴I am very grateful to Profs. W. F. Albright and F. Rosenthal for a fruitful correspondence on *ḥīra* and its historical phonology, particularly in relation to stages (a) and (b).

the long vowel of *hērtā*: either diphthongization plus a further reduction of the diphthong to /ē/, or a contraction of the two vowels plus the further prevailing of the timbre of /e/ which resulted in its lengthening to /ē/.

Although these stages follow the rules of historical phonology and thus are formally and theoretically valid, the highly hypothetical nature of the argumentation with the nonattestation of stages (a) and (b) could reduce their historicity.

Lagarde and Rothstein accepted Hoffmann's view and each added to Hoffmann's original argument. Lagarde¹⁰⁵ proposed that *hārīy*, the relative adjective for *hīra*, can be accounted for if the noun from which it is formed is *hāra*. Rothstein¹⁰⁶ fortified the argument by two observations: (1) *hīra* has no derivation in Arabic; (2) its relative adjective fluctuates between *hīrīy* and *hārīy*, and this fluctuation argues that Arabic is trying to reproduce a vowel it does not have, namely, the long Syriac vowel /ē/.

The first observation, that *hīra* has no derivation in Arabic, is rather startling in view of the fact that there are a number of Arabic words which are so closely related to *hīra* semantically, but what is more important, they derive from two well-attested Arabic verbs (-*hāra*, *yahūru*- and -*hāra*, *yahāru*-), one of which is composed of the same radicals as *hīra*. But Rothstein was probably disinclined to entertain an Arabic derivation for *hīra* because he was misled by the then proposed signification of the term *hīra*, i.e., "enclosure." As neither *yahūru* nor *yahāru* connotes "enclose," he was unable to relate verb to noun. But as will be indicated later, the primary notion in *hīra* is not "enclosure."

The second observation is probably related to the first, the assumption that *hīra* has no derivation in Arabic. But even if the assumption is valid, the observation may be rejected independently. The *nisba* in Arabic, i.e., the formation of the relative adjective, is often irregular and sometimes follows the laws of facility or euphony. In the case of *hīra*, there are two relative adjectives; the first, *hīrīy*, is regular, while the second, *hārīy*, is explicable. Nouns in Arabic whose middle radical has a short vowel /i/, e.g., *malik*, change this vowel into another one, /a/, when a relative adjective is formed, following the law of facility, as does the pattern *fa'ila*, which, moreover, loses the long vowel /ī/. It is possible that this was operative in the formation of *hārīy*, reflecting a desire to avoid the sequence of two vowels of the same type (compare *Bahrayn*, *Bahrānīy*). As *hīra* happens to be a noun whose medial radical is not a consonant but the long vowel /ī/, a correspondingly long vowel

¹⁰⁵P. de Lagarde, "Übersicht über die in Aramäischen, Arabischen und Hebräischen übliche Bildung der Nomina," *Abhandlungen der königl. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen*, 36 (1888), pp. 46-48.

¹⁰⁶Rothstein, *DLH*, p. 12.

was felt needed or required for the formation of the relative adjective to represent the medial radical which would otherwise have disappeared in the process; besides, a *nisba*, as *ḥarīy* instead of *ḥārīy*, would have created a homophonic confusion with another Arabic word entirely unrelated to *ḥīra*.¹⁰⁷

Before looking elsewhere than in Aramaic for a possibly different provenance than the one proposed by Hoffmann for *ḥērtā*, a few observations will be made within the framework of Syriac to show that the supposed etymology of *ḥērtā* as an indigenous Syriac word is itself an assumption attended with grave problems.

(1) Since the concept for which *ḥērtā* stands is basic, it is natural to expect Syriac to have a verb from which *ḥērtā* is derived. But Syriac has none, and *ḥērtā* stands in splendid isolation in the lexicology of that language. (2) Old Aramaic, too, does not have *ḥērtā* or a word from which *ḥērtā* could be derived. Neither the Targum nor the Peshiṭta has a cognate for Hebrew *ḥāṣēr*, and both use as a translation of *ḥāṣēr* words of completely different etymology. *Ḥaqrā*, in Palestinian Aramaic, the nearest approximation to this desiderated and hypothetical cognate, is not a Semitic word, but none other than the Greek ἄκρα.¹⁰⁸ (3) Finally, it may be pointed out that *ḥērtā* is far from being a common word in Syriac for the notion it stands for, which is a basic one, namely, "camp" or "enclosure." It occurs only in certain contexts and has a very restricted application which will be presently discussed. This may argue in favor of a non-Syriac provenance and may be a pointer to where *ḥērtā* could have come from. The common Syriac words for camp or enclosure are many: e.g., *masbrīthā*, *ḥādartā*, *siyāgtā*, *maskerā*. They are easy to account for morphologically, and the verbs from which they are formed all derive from well-known Syriac verbs. Neither of these facts can be predicated of *ḥērtā*.

2

Perhaps Part 1 of this discussion has not failed to show that Arabic *ḥīra* may not, after all, be a loan word from Syriac. It will now be argued that its etymological origin may possibly be traced to the Arabian Peninsula.

1. Epigraphic discoveries in South Arabia have established beyond doubt the existence of the term in the Semitic language group of South Arabia. Sabaic inscriptions have both the noun and, what is more important, the verb from which the noun is derived. The context makes it clear that the term is a military one, meaning "camp."¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷For features of *nisba* relevant to this discussion, see W. Wright, *A Grammar of the Arabic Language* (Cambridge, 1933), vol. 1, pp. 154, 159.

¹⁰⁸I owe this note on the Targum, the Peshiṭta, and *ḥaqrā* to the goodness of Prof. Jonas Greenfield.

¹⁰⁹See Jamme, *Sabaean Inscriptions*, pp. 68–69, lines 12–13; p. 132, line 22; p. 143, line 21; and pp. 300, 436. See also *idem*, "Un désastre nabatéen devant Nagran," in *Cabiers*

2. The existence of the term in *epigraphic* pre-Islamic Arabic has been suspected but apparently has not yet been fully established.¹¹⁰ It is quite likely that classical Arabic had it as a native term. The term does not stand alone in Arabic as it does in Syriac but is related to a host of derivatives formed from a verb *hāra*, *yaḥāru*, which suggests that the verb and its derivatives are indigenous to Arabic. Moreover, the verb, like the Sabaic one, is “hollow,” and its long vocalic medial links it very well with *hīra*; thus the phonetic and morphological difficulties encountered in the attempt to derive *hīra* from an Aramaic parent with a consonantal medial disappear.

It is possible that the term, common to both Arabic and Sabaic, was also indigenous to each of them. Alternatively, in its technical and military sense, “camp,” it may have been a Sabaicism in Arabic, one which could easily pass for an indigenous Arabic term derived from the verb *hāra*, *yaḥāru*.

3. Its existence in Syriac may be accounted for as a loan word from Arabic. The term is applied by Syriac authors and is, indeed, restricted to Arab establishments. The instances in John of Ephesus,¹¹¹ the *locus classicus* for this term, are all references to the camps of the Ghassānid Arabs, the allies of Byzantium. This could argue that the word was a term commonly used by the Arabs to designate their own camps and was naturally borrowed by Syriac authors when they wished to refer to these camps. If the ultimate etymology of the term is Arabian, its appearance in Syriac is explicable, geographically and historically, by the migration of Arab groups from the Arabian Peninsula to the Fertile Crescent. The Arabian evidence for a new etymology for *hīra* makes possible and desirable a better understanding of its semantics.¹¹²

(1) The primary notion that *hīra* expresses is not “enclosure”; that notion is expressed by *ḥāṣēr*,¹¹³ witness the verb from which it is derived. It was this association of *hīra* with *ḥāṣēr* that has been the main reason behind associating *hīra* with “enclosure” semantically, and this in turn explains the etymology commonly given to the term *hīra*. It is perfectly possible that the term *hīra* acquired an additional semantic dimension represented by “enclosure,” the

de Byrsa (Paris, 1956), especially pp. 165–66 where there is a discussion of the term in Sabaeen graffiti; see also M. Höfner, “Die Beduinen in den vorislamischen Inschriften,” in *L'Antica Società Beduina* (Rome, 1959), pp. 53–68, which has some related material.

¹¹⁰See Jamme, “Désastre nabatéen,” p. 165 note 4.

¹¹¹For examples, see John of Ephesus, *HE*, *CSCO*, ser. 3, t. 3, textus, p. 175, line 29; p. 177, lines 2, 26, etc.

¹¹²As this discussion is devoted to the etymology of *hīra*, this part on semantics will be necessarily short, since a detailed treatment will only throw the present discussion out of focus. I hope to publish the part on semantics in its entirety at a later date to show the value of Sabaic for solving many a problem in the lexicology of classical Arabic.

¹¹³For parallels to *ḥāṣēr* as a term with the primary notion of “enclosure” which developed into a common toponym in the Near East, one could cite Indo-European parallels, e.g., Eng. *garden*, Ger. *Garten*, and Rus. *góród*.

adjunct to the “camp” or the “settlement,” but this must remain secondary. It was also this involvement with the notion of enclosure that made Semitic philologists¹¹⁴ suspect a semantic development in *ḥērtā* on lines similar to those of Greek μάνδρα, i.e., from “fold,” “enclosure” to “monastery,” the spiritual fold. But it is doubtful whether the few instances cited bear out this contention. Syriac has a number of words commonly used to designate “monastery,” e.g., *dayrā*, *ʿūmrā*, and the Greek term λαύρα, transliterated *labrā*. The *ḥērtā* mentioned in the *Acts of the Syriac Martyrs*, upon which this view is based, cannot be translated *lavra* (“monastery”) but must bear the meaning commonly given to it, i.e., “camp.” Hoffmann¹¹⁵ himself is dubious about translating it as *lavra*, and for this reason he gives the Syriac original, *ḥērtā*, in a footnote to warn or guide the unsuspecting reader.

(2) The Sabaic inscriptions have made perfectly clear that the primary notion of *ḥīra* is “encampment,” not “enclosure,” and the discovery of the verb from which Sabaic *ḥīra* is derived clinches the point. The Sabaic verb has an exact equivalent in the lexicon of classical Arabic, *ḥāra*, *yaḥāru*, from which the Arabic lexicographers derive Arabic *ḥīra*. But the primary meaning of the Arabic verb was not clear to the lexicographers. Apparently it had become obsolete or obsolescent and was survived and superseded by what must have been a secondary meaning (i.e., “to become confused, bewildered; to waver, unable to make a choice”), but what to the lexicographers seemed to be primary, thus making it difficult for the Semitic philologists of later times to derive Arabic *ḥīra* from a verb with such a primary signification. The Sabaic verb now restores to *ḥāra*, *yaḥāru* its primary meaning “to stop,” “to halt,” a connotation which makes the derivation of *ḥīra* from such a verb perfectly possible and intelligible. Echoes of this primary meaning are audible in the lexicology of Arabic although they were not caught by the lexicographers: e.g., instances¹¹⁶ of the verb *ḥāra* in the II form clearly in the sense

¹¹⁴See Nöldeke, *GF*, p. 48 note 2, following G. Hoffmann, “Auszüge aus syrischen Akten der persischer Märtyrer,” *Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, 7 (1880), p. 47.

¹¹⁵Again the question of frequency is important. *Ḥērtā* in the supposed sense of Greek *mandra* is of extremely rare occurrence; and its few instances are such as not to admit of a close inspection of the precise connotation of the term; thus the conclusion is justified that *ḥērtā* in those instances is none other than the secular *ḥērtā*, “the camp” or “the enclosure,” applied to an Arab settlement or to “enclosure” in general. For these references, see R. Payne-Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus*, col. 1264. One of these instances, however, is not so obscure: “from there to the *coenobium* and *ḥērtā* of Beth-ʿAbe” (*Bibliotheca Orientalis*, tomus iii, pars i, p. 471). Unless the author is indulging in pleonasm, it is clear that *ḥērtā* cannot be *coenobium* and is merely the enclosure or the settlement near which the *coenobium* was situated.

¹¹⁶Ṭabarī, *Annales*, ed. de Goeje (Leiden, 1881–82), prima series, vol. 1, pt. 2, p. 910; and Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-Buldān*, ed. F. Wüstenfeld (Leipzig, 1867), p. 375; these instances could be suspected of being denominative verbs from *ḥīra* itself, coined for aetiological reasons; even so, they are noteworthy since they indicate an awareness of the primary meaning of the verb from which *ḥīra* is derived. The noninclusion of these instances supports August Fischer’s

of “stop,” “encamp,” which thus recall the Sabaic verb, presumed to be also in the II form; while the lexicographers’ preoccupation with the secondary meaning, as though it were the primary, has prevented them from noting that one of the meanings they give to the verb *ḥāra* (with water as the subject, *ḥāra al-māʿu*), i.e., “to stop,” is the primary one, and not, as Zabīdī states in *Tāj al-ʿArūs*,¹¹⁷ a metaphorical use of *ḥāra*. The restoration of the verb’s primary meaning makes intelligible the derivation of other related forms, as *ḥāʿir*, *ḥayr*, *mahāra*, inexplicable if derived from a verb *ḥāra* meaning “to waver, be confused.” It also provides the secondary psychological meaning “to waver” with a primary one, a physical connotation, from which the semantic transition is perfectly natural and intelligible, i.e., from “stopping, halting,” to “stopping, not knowing what to do or where to go,” “wavering,” “unable to make a choice.”

(3) Greek authors who had occasion to refer to the Arab military establishments or encampments use for them the term *παρεμβολή*, rather than the more formal and strict term *στρατόπεδον* or *κάστρον*. This is significant and might afford a clue to a better understanding of what these military encampments were. The prefix *παρὰ-* as well as the verb *παραβάλλω* (“put in beside or between, insert”) can convey the notion of an annex or a subordinate structure; and it is possible that these Arab encampments were built beside or between other establishments, possibly the camp of the regular Byzantine troops, to ensure cooperation between these regular troops and the Arab auxiliaries in the event of a military operation.¹¹⁸ It is also possible to infer from the verb *παραβάλλω* that these establishments were less solid or permanent than the ordinary *castra*, and this notion is clearly conveyed by its application to the establishments of the nomads.¹¹⁹ The *παρεμβολή* was thus a movable camp, which could, however, develop into a more permanent establishment;¹²⁰ this semantic dimension of movability is confirmed by the Sabaic inscriptions where verbs of motion are used with the term *ḥīra*.

contention that the classical lexica are incomplete; on Fischer’s worthy project, see Jorg Kraemer, “August Fischers Sammlungen zum arabischen Lexicon,” *ZDMG*, 105, Heft 1, N.F. 30 (1955), pp. 80–105.

¹¹⁷*Tāj al-ʿArūs* (Benghazi, n.d.), vol. 3, p. 164.

¹¹⁸The *parembole* of the phylarchs of Palestina Prima which was founded by the Arab chief Aspebetos was built in close proximity to the lavra of St. Euthymius; for the history of these phylarchs and their *parembole*, see *Vita Euthymii*, Kyrillos von Skythopolis, ed. E. Schwartz (Leipzig, 1939), pp. 18–21; 24–25; 33, 41, etc.

¹¹⁹See the inscription found in the Ḥawrān region carved for the *στρατηγὸς παρεμβολῶν νομάδων*, *PPUAES*, III, A5, p. 347.

¹²⁰*Parembole* has found its way into the idiom of Zacharia Rhetor, where it appears as *farīmbūlā*; see Zacharia Rhetor, *HE*, *CSCO*, ser. 3, t. 6, textus, p. 197; it appears to be a *hapax legomenon* in Syriac. It is also used in the *Martyrium Aretbae*; see *ASS*, tomus decimus, p. 742. The term appears in the New Testament, Acts 21:34. The Authorized Version wrongly translates it as “castle,” but the New English Bible translates it correctly, “barracks,” as had done the Peshīṭta before with its *masbrīthā*.

3

Semitic philologists have given an etymological account of *ḥērtā* assuming it to be a Syriac word. Based upon this assumption their attempt is understandable, and the rules of historical phonology have afforded guiding lines for a perfectly possible historical development of *ḥērtā* from an Aramaic root. Although a note of uneasiness about the proposed etymology is detectable in Lagarde and Rothstein, who thought it fit or necessary to fortify the argument for the Aramaic provenance of *ḥērtā*, the etymology originally proposed by Hoffmann has met with general acceptance¹²¹ in spite of the highly hypothetical nature of the proposed development, involving as it does so many presumed phonetic changes and processes, i.e., dissimilation, and syncopation for the medial consonantal phoneme, and for the vowelizing a diphthongization plus reduction, or a contraction.

This discussion has attempted a reexamination of the proposed etymology by calling into question the very assumption upon which the etymological account has been based, namely, the Syriac character of *ḥērtā*. It has done so by making a number of preliminary observations but more importantly by drawing upon new epigraphic discoveries in Sabaic where both the noun *ḥyrt* and the verb are fully attested.¹²² The new data from South Arabia is of crucial importance and relevance to the etymology of this word. The new evidence will lose its relevance if Sabaic *ḥyrt* turns out to be a loan word from Aramaic, an unwarranted presumption, since this is not the sort of word that Sabaic would have found it necessary to borrow from Aramaic; besides, the verb is attested, and this too will then have to be explained away as denominative from a loan word. Arabic presents the same type of evidence against Hoffmann's original suggestion. Three other words exist in Arabic differing in grammatical pattern but sharing the same root and related to *ḥīra* semantically, i.e., *ḥā'ir*, *ḥayr*, *mahāra*. It is inconceivable that these are derivatives from a verb in Arabic, itself denominative from a word not indigenous to the language but a loan from Syriac, and, what is more, that the verb and many of its derivatives have survived in Arabic and Sabaic but have disappeared

¹²¹S. Fraenkel, who has some right to be heard on the subject, is silent on the matter, and his silence is both eloquent and pertinent. Since his book is especially and exclusively devoted to Aramaic loan words in Arabic, his exclusion of *ḥīra* from his list can definitely be construed as a rejection on his part of the supposed Aramaic origin of *ḥīra*; see S. Fraenkel, *Die aramäischen Fremdwörter in Arabischen* (Leiden, 1886).

¹²²After completing this article, I have come across a Sabaic lexicographical note by A. F. L. Beeston in which he endorses Conti Rossini's disentanglement of *ḥyrt* from *ḥrrt*, but departs from him by equating Sabaic *ḥyrt* with Syriac *ḥirto* (*ḥērtā*) and suggesting *ḥy* as the probable root from which *ḥyrt* is derived. Since the appearance of his note, written in 1954, the verb *ḥyr* in the II form has come to light in Sabaic (see note 109), corroborating his derivation of *ḥyrt* from the root *ḥyr* against Rossini's *ḥrr*, while this study has tried to show that *ḥērtā* is a loanword in Syriac rather than a cognate of Sabaic *ḥyrt*; see A. F. L. Beeston, "Notes on Old South Arabian Lexicography," *Le Muséon*, 67 (1954), pp. 311-13.

from Aramaic. Finally, both Arabic and Sabaic have the two terms *ḥyrt* and *ḥadr*. If *ḥyrt* is a descendant of an Aramaic (ḥ-^s-r), cognate with *ḥadr*, it is difficult to see why Sabaic and Arabic, both of which have *ḥadr*, should have acquired *ḥyrt* and *ḥīra*. The simultaneous existence of the two words would rather indicate that here it is a question of two different roots with two different meanings and not one root which can be reduced to another.

Perhaps these observations have contributed something toward reopening the question of *ḥīra*'s etymology by assembling new evidence from Sabaic and Arabic and arguing for a possible alternative etymology. Incidentally, they have drawn attention to the importance of Sabaic, especially for the future lexicographer of classical Arabic, and to certain principles which may be used for deciding whether a particular word in a given Semitic language is indigenous or not, a rather subtle problem when the two languages involved are quite close to each other and sometimes so close that the benefactor might turn out to be the beneficiary.

In the toponymic history of the Near East, the word *ḥīra* takes its place among those military terms that have made the transition from the appellative to the denominative stage. If proved Arabic, it will represent together with *ḥadr* the contribution of that language to the history of place-names in the Fertile Crescent in the pre-Islamic period, anticipating other Arabic military terms, as *qal'a*, "fortress," which entered the region after the Muslim Conquest. It is in company with other military terms that have become toponyms or formed part of toponyms in the Near East: Semitic terms, as *magdelā*, *shūrā*, *mibṣār*, *karkhā*, and *bīrtā*; and Latin terms, as *castellum* and *strata*.*

IV. THE ARAB *FOEDERATI* OF THE FOURTH CENTURY

Various chapters in this book have dealt with the Arab *foederati* and their role in the reign of each emperor from Constantine to Theodosius. The data collected, examined, and evaluated in the course of this diachronous treatment may now be put together for answering pertinent questions of a technical nature that the military historian and the student of the oriental *limes* must raise, especially as there is little or no discussion of these questions in the standard histories of the period.¹²³ These questions concerning the *foederati* may be listed as follows:

*I must thank Ms. Stella D. Matalas, the rights and permissions manager of the Georgetown University Press, for permission to reprint my article "The Etymology of *Ḥīra*," which appeared in *Linguistic Studies in Memory of Richard Slade Harrell*, ed. Don Graham Stuart (Georgetown University Press, Washington, D.C., 1967).

¹²³The unsatisfactory state of information on the Arab *foederati* (and the Arabs in general) in the fourth and the two following centuries may be examined in such works as: Stein, *HBE*, vol. 1, pp. 67, 73, 130, 281, 352, 357, 362, 560; Piganiol, *EC*, pp. 18, 75, 140, 146, 158, 168; Jones, *LRE*, vol. 1, pp. 154, 278, 294, 611. The Arabs do not fare better in specialized works on military history; see, for instance, Grosse, *RM*, pp. 52-53, 83, 86, 87 A.5, 294.

- (1) The extent of their presence and diffusion in Oriens.
- (2) Their organization and structure.
- (3) Their *foedus* and its terms: (a) duration; (b) the settlements of the *foederati*, *extra limitem* or *intra limitem*; (c) mutual obligations; (d) subsidies.
- (4) Their role in the Byzantine army of the Orient.
- (5) Their legal status.
- (6) Their religious affiliation.

1

The wide diffusion of the Arabs in Oriens, reflected *inter alia* onomastically in the three Arabias,¹²⁴ has been noted in previous chapters. Oriens was full of arid areas and deserts whither the nomads of the Peninsula were accustomed to wander and settle from ancient times. These could be controlled best by other Arabs who also watched the frontier against the Peninsular Arabs. Thus these permanent facts of geography explain the wide diffusion of these *foederati* in Oriens in areas other than those facing Persia.

This a priori reasoning is confirmed by the various references in the sources collected in the previous chapters. Pockets of Arab presence and federate presence were identified in such areas as Euphratensis, Chalcidice, and Sinai.¹²⁵ The paucity of the sources does not admit of more documentation of Arab presence in other areas that have been presumed to have had Arab federates in them. But the presumption is confirmed by references in such documents as the *Narrationes* of St. Nilus, the *Nessana Papyri*, and the *Edict of Beersheba*, which belong to the period following the fourth century.¹²⁶ Surely these references do not reflect an Arab federate presence that suddenly asserted itself in the following centuries but one that must go back to at least our fourth for which the documents happen not to exist.

The sections on the Arabic sources have further advanced the study of this presence by investigating the tribal identity of these Arab *foederati* in the various parts of Oriens.¹²⁷ With the exception of the two Arabias, the one in Egypt and the one in Mesopotamia, it has been possible to identify with some

¹²⁴In addition to the Provincia Arabia there were two other such Arabias, one in Mesopotamia and another in Egypt; the latter belonged to the Diocese of Oriens until A.D. 381, when Theodosius separated Egypt from the Diocese. On the Arab ethnic complexion of many provinces in Oriens, see chap. 5 on the *Notitia Dignitatum* in RA.

¹²⁵See the references in the *Ammonii Monachi Relatio* and Jerome's *Vita Malchi* and *Vita S. Hilarionis*, *supra*, pp. 297–308, 284–93.

¹²⁶The *Narrationes* may even belong to the late fourth century; for the latest defense of the authenticity of the *Narrationes*, see P. Mayerson, "Observations on Nilus' *Narrationes*: Evidence for an Unknown Christian Sect?" *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*, 12 (1975), pp. 51–58; for other views, see Quasten, *Patrology*, vol. 3, pp. 496–97. For the documents pertaining to Nessana and Beersheba, see the references in "Phylarchos," *RE*, Supplementbd. 11 (1968), cols. 1075 and 1078 respectively.

¹²⁷See "The Federate Arab Tribal Groups in Oriens," *supra*, pp. 381–95.

degree of precision the tribal affiliations of the *foederati* deployed along the oriental *limes* from the Euphrates to the Red Sea. The Arab federates of the fourth century in Oriens are no longer one mass of anonymous Saracens but are now divided into various tribes and tribal groups each of which is possessed of its own tribal identity.

2

The tribal affiliations of the Arab federates of Byzantium in the fourth century were most varied.¹²⁸ The question immediately arises as to how these many tribes, each of which was vividly aware of its tribal individuality and loyalty, was related to one another administratively within the Byzantine military system in Oriens and the federate framework. Was federate power centralized in the fourth century as it was to be in the sixth century in the hands of the Ghassānids?¹²⁹

Mas'ūdī says that the Tanūkhids were made kings of the Arabs of Oriens by the Romans.¹³⁰ This is contradicted by Procopius in a well-known passage in his *History* on the centralization of federate power in Oriens as taking place for the first time in the sixth century.¹³¹ Procopius has to be followed on this matter, but there may be an element of truth in what Mas'ūdī says. The two statements may be partially reconciled as follows:

(1) The Tanūkhids in Chalcidice were the most prominent group among the federate groups in Oriens because of their role in the international war of the period, namely, the Persian' war.¹³² Because of this role they probably had some control or supervision over the tribes that were settled along the Euphrates and who participated in the Persian War. Furthermore, Tanūkh was itself a confederacy of tribes, and in this sense one can speak of a Tanūkhid paramourcy in Oriens in the fourth century. Whether it spread to the central and southern regions of Oriens where other Arab federate tribes were settled is not entirely clear and remains to be shown.

(2) In the Provincia Arabia was another Arab tribal federate group, the Lakhmids of Imru' al-Qays of the Namāra inscription. These Lakhmids were a powerful group, but it was not entirely clear how extensive was their jurisdiction over the Arabs in the Provincia. The only evidence for control over other tribes comes from the Namāra inscription itself which speaks of Imru' al-Qays's control of the tribes through his sons.¹³³ Not entirely clear either are

¹²⁸*Ibid.*

¹²⁹See the present writer in "Arethas, Son of Jabala," pp. 211-16.

¹³⁰Although he spoke of the Quḏā'a, the larger tribal group to which, according to him, the Tanūkhids belonged. On the analysis of this passage in Mas'ūdī, see Chap. 10, App. 2, *supra*, pp. 410-11.

¹³¹Procopius, *History*, I.xvii.47.

¹³²On this, see "The Tanūkhids and Chalcidice," *supra*, pp. 465-76.

¹³³For the analysis of the relevant sentence in the inscription, see the section on the

their relations administratively to the Tanūkhids of Chalcidice to whom they were related genealogically.¹³⁴

(3) As has been indicated in a previous chapter, there were federate groups who belonged to tribes other than the Tanūkhids and the Lakhmids.¹³⁵ How these were related to the two groups administratively is not clear. Those in outlying regions such as Sinai may have been administratively independent of them.

The revolt of Queen Mavia must be taken into account in this discussion.¹³⁶ Mavia mounted an offensive against Byzantium along a line extending from Phoenicia in the north to Egypt in the south. This does not necessarily imply that all these Arab *foederati* were under Mavia technically, but the situation implies at least some kind of control over a large number of tribes which attacked along a line extending from Phoenicia to Egypt.¹³⁷

The revolt of Mavia was extraordinary and exceptional. The federate Arabs were perhaps united against Byzantium for this one occasion and for a special reason. If so, no firm conclusion can be drawn on the problem of federate centralization. Possibly because of this revolt and the second one in the reign of Theodosius,¹³⁸ Byzantium may have decided toward the end of the fourth century to abolish the *basileia* and decentralize whatever had been locally centralized of federate power in the Orient, as two centuries later it was to decentralize the power of another Arab federate group, the Ghassānids of the sixth century.¹³⁹

3

None of the *foedera* which were struck between Byzantium and the Arabs in the fourth century are extant.¹⁴⁰ Only bare references to such *foedera* have

Namāra inscription, *supra*, pp. 43–45. On the phrase “king of all the Arabs,” which was most probably applied to the Arabs of the Peninsula, who are enumerated as conquered or vanquished by him, see *ibid.*, pp. 37–43.

¹³⁴On this, see “The List of Kings,” p. 373 and Appendices 2 and 3, *supra*, pp. 410–15. The accommodation of Imru’ al-Qays as refugee from Hīra in Oriens may be paralleled by that of Qays, the Kindite chief, around A.D. 530. On this, see the present writer in “Byzantium and Kinda,” pp. 66–70.

¹³⁵See “The Federate Arab Tribal Groups in Oriens,” *supra*, pp. 381–95.

¹³⁶On this, see “The Reign of Valens,” *supra*, pp. 138–202.

¹³⁷It does not necessarily follow from this that the federates whom Mavia led were settled along the line from Phoenicia to Egypt, which may have been only the front she chose when she opened her offensive against the Romans. The lack of toponymical indications in the sources makes it impossible to state with certainty where her federates were settled and what her tribal affiliation was. On this, see “The Reign of Valens,” esp. Appendix 6, *supra*, pp. 194–97.

¹³⁸On this, see “The Reign of Theodosius,” *supra*, pp. 210–14.

¹³⁹Nöldeke, *GF*, pp. 31–33.

¹⁴⁰Valuable data on the status of the Arabs as *foederati* have survived in the treaty of

survived and some hints on their terms or clauses. The only course open is to attempt a reconstruction of these terms from these hints and references.

A

It is certain that the *foedus* was valid only as long as representatives of the contracting parties were alive. Its duration terminated with the death of one or both representatives of the two contracting parties, the king and the *imperator*, and then it had to be renewed. Thus the *foedus* lapsed with the death of the Arab king, Mavia's husband;¹⁴¹ and from Mavia's revolt and the fact that she chose to strike only on the death of her husband, it may be inferred that when the treaty lapsed the two parties were no longer technically in a state or a relation of *amicitia*. It is also possible to infer that it lapsed again with the death of Valens at Adrianople in A.D. 378 and that this was the occasion for the ruffled course of Arab-Byzantine relations in the early years of Theodosius's reign.

In view of the fact that the Arab federates in Oriens were not centralized in the fourth century as they were to be in the sixth, Byzantium must have concluded different *foedera* with the different Arab federate groups in Oriens.¹⁴² Perhaps the most important were the two *foedera* with the Tanūkhids and the Lakhmids. The other tribes, some of whom were settled in the area from ancient times, may have had with Byzantium less elaborate *foedera*.¹⁴³

B

Were these Arab *foederati* of the fourth century settled within or without the Roman *limes*?

The Arab *foederati* met Julian at Callinicum,¹⁴⁴ but whether their starting point before they joined him was in Roman territory is not clear. The chances are, however, that it was and that they, or at least part of them, were settled within the *limes*. The same applies to the Arab *foederati* who revolted during the reign of Valens under their queen, Mavia.¹⁴⁵

A.D. 561 between the Persians and the Byzantines, which has been preserved by Menander; see the present writer in "The Arabs in the Peace Treaty of A.D. 561," *Arabica*, 3 (1956), pp. 181-213. For the terms of the *foedus* between Byzantium and the Ghassānid Arabs, represented by the Emperor Anastasius and King Tha'laba respectively and preserved by Hishām-al-Kalbī, see the present writer in "Ghassān and Byzantium: A New *terminus a quo*," p. 239. Both treaties will be reexamined in the third volume of this series, *BASIC*.

¹⁴¹On the anonymous king, Mavia's husband, see "The Reign of Valens," *supra*, pp. 140-42.

¹⁴²On this, see the preceding section on organization and structure.

¹⁴³According to Piganiol, the term *foederati* designating the new units of the fourth century, barbarians settled within the empire and fighting under their own chiefs, appears in A.D. 406 in the Theodosian Code and in Olympiodorus; see *EC*, p. 329 note 10.

¹⁴⁴See "The Reign of Julian," *supra*, p. 107.

¹⁴⁵They were most probably the Tanūkhids, and if so, they were settled within the *limes* in the region of Chalcidice.

One group of *foederati*, however, were definitely settled within the *limes*, those of Imru' al-Qays of the Namāra inscription. Namāra was a Roman military station in the Provincia Arabia, and thus the Lakhmids of Imru' al-Qays were *intra limitem*. The same may be predicated of those Arab groups who were to be found well within the Roman frontier in the Sinai Peninsula. As has been said earlier,¹⁴⁶ Oriens had many an arid zone where nomads roamed, and for security reasons within Oriens itself it was necessary to have Arab *foederati* settled near those arid zones who could effectively deal with their congeners. Thus the facts of geography argue for an Arab federate settlement within the *limes*, and this is confirmed explicitly by the sources, literary and epigraphic.

The Goths along the Lower Danube were, therefore, not the only group of *foederati* who were in the fourth century settled on imperial territory, within the *limes*. The Lakhmids of Imru' al-Qays, "the king of all the Arabs," were likewise settled on imperial territory and, according to the incontestable epigraphic evidence, years before the Goths.¹⁴⁷ Other Arabs were also settled in other parts of Oriens, e.g., Sinai, in Palestina Salutaris.

It should be remembered that the existence of so many Arab federate pockets within the frontier in Oriens is largely due to the fact that the Arabs had been in virtual occupation of that region when the Romans appeared on the stage of Near Eastern history in the first century B.C. This explains how many Arab groups remained within the Roman frontier before and after the annexation of Nabataea, Palmyrena, and Osroene, in the second and the third centuries A.D. Other Arab groups, however, were newcomers, such as the Tanūkhids and the Lakhmids of the fourth century.¹⁴⁸

The question arises as to whether the settlement of the Arab *foederati* such as the Lakhmids within the *limes* entailed territorial sovereignty. It is quite unlikely that it did. Territory was allocated by Rome to the barbarians but was not ceded, and it remained Roman territory of which they had only the usufruct.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶See *supra*, pp. 498–500.

¹⁴⁷The Lakhmids were settled certainly before A.D. 328 since their king, Imru' al-Qays, died in that year. Cf. what Piganol says on the settlement of the Goths within the empire during the reigns of Gratian and Theodosius (*EC*, p. 328). However, the Lakhmids of Imru' al-Qays could not have rivaled in numbers the Goths settled by Theodosius, and so their settlement in the Provincia Arabia must recall that of the Salian Franks admitted by Constantius Chlorus into the island of the Batavi between the Lek and the Waal, for whom, see *ibid.*, p. 223.

¹⁴⁸And the Ghassānids of the sixth century. It is noteworthy that it was these newcomers, not the old tribes settled in Oriens before the Romans appeared in the Near East, that achieved paramountcy among the *foederati*.

¹⁴⁹It is possible that the Lakhmids, refugees from Persia, were considered *laeti* and their territory *terrae laeticae*; but whether this status can be reconciled with the tone and substance of the Namāra inscription is not entirely clear. On the *laeti* and *terrae laeticae*, see Jones, *LRE*, vol. 1, p. 620.

Finally, there were those Arab tribes in alliance with Byzantium settled in that ill-defined zone beyond the *limes*, which has been termed the outer federate shield against the Arabian Peninsula.¹⁵⁰

C

What, according to the terms of the *foedus*, were the mutual obligations of the two contracting parties, Byzantium and the Arabs? More is known about the obligations of the Arabs than of Byzantium and these varied according as the federates were important groups such as the Tanūkhids or relatively unimportant ones, such as the various pockets of Arab federates in Sinai. A list of these obligations was compiled in an earlier chapter;¹⁵¹ it remains to attempt an allocation of these obligations to the various federate groups:

(a) Those along the Euphrates, whether in Trans-Euphratesia or Cis-Euphratesia, must have been expected to participate in the Persian Wars of the century, in the defense of the region against raiders from outside the *limes*, especially against the Arabs of Ḥīra,¹⁵² and in the maintenance of law and order against pockets of nomads who could have been roaming those arid zones.¹⁵³ Such were the Tanūkhids of Chalcidice. Because of their geographical location in the north and their participation in the Persian Wars, these *foederati* were perhaps the most important of all the Arab *foederati* in Oriens since their military endeavors were not only inter-Arab but international, involving the secular struggle between the two empires. Their troops were part of the army of the Orient and its mobile striking force.

(b) The Lakhmids of the Provincia Arabia may also have participated in the Persian Wars and possibly formed part of the *reguli* who joined Julian at Callinicum, but their participation is less certain than those in the north, the Tanūkhids. Their assignment was more likely to have been related to law and order in the Provincia and in the adjacent areas of the Peninsula across the *limes*.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰See the discussion in "The Federate Arab Tribal Groups in Oriens," *supra*, pp. 391–94. With what principalities Byzantium contracted alliances in Inner Arabia in this century is not clear, since the history of the Peninsula in this century is obscure and has not yet been illuminated by archeological and epigraphic discoveries or by the literary sources, as the sixth century has been. In that century the power of Kinda in Inner Arabia emerges as a *civitas foederata* and Nonnosus's account is a valuable one for the diplomatic history of Arab-Byzantine relations in the sixth century; see the present writer in "Byzantium and Kinda," pp. 57–73.

¹⁵¹See "The Arabs along the *Limes Orientalis*," *supra*, p. 490.

¹⁵²See *supra*, pp. 467–70.

¹⁵³They probably participated in quelling the revolt of Procopius during the reign of Valens, for which see "The Reign of Valens," *supra*, pp. 169–72.

¹⁵⁴Possibly even participation in the quelling of the Jewish revolt against Gallus Caesar in A.D. 351 in much the same way that the Ghassānid phylarch of Arabia in A.D. 529 participated in the quelling of the Samaritan revolt. For the former revolt, see Avi-Yonah, *Jews*

(c) The various federate pockets in Oriens, e.g., in Sinai, which is known to have had Arabs living there, some of whom were a menace to its settled communities, must have been assigned almost entirely to the maintenance of law and order within the *limes*. They could sometimes be called upon to defend the various areas they lived in against outside marauders, such as those that lived on the other side of the Red Sea, but this must have been a rare occurrence.¹⁵⁵ It was most probably these petty Arab chiefs that were in this century endowed with the title of phylarchs.

(d) As to those Arab tribes that lived outside the *limes* and were in some federate relation to Byzantium, constituting what might be termed the outer Arab shield, perhaps their most important obligation was the protection of the trade routes that passed through their territories into Oriens.¹⁵⁶ Those living in northern Ḥijāz must have risen in importance because of the Persian Wars of the fourth century, when presumably the Mesopotamian route became dangerous and consequently the West Arabian route inherited most of its traffic, as was to happen again in the sixth century and for the same reason.¹⁵⁷

D

In addition to allowing the *foederati* to settle on Roman territory, the most important obligation of Byzantium toward these *foederati* was, perhaps, the payment of the subsidy¹⁵⁸ which they certainly received,¹⁵⁹ and it remains to determine whether it was in gold or in kind and what terms were used to describe the subsidy:

From Ammianus's account of Julian's Persian campaign it is clear that the Arab *foederati* received *salaria* and *munera*¹⁶⁰ from the emperor and also

of Palestine, pp. 176–81; for the latter, see the present writer in "Arethas, Son of Jabala," pp. 207–9.

¹⁵⁵See the section on the *Ammonii Monachi Relatio*, *supra*, pp. 297–302.

¹⁵⁶This protection had become all the more important after the fall of the great caravan city and commercial center in the third century that had performed that function, Palmyra.

¹⁵⁷See the present writer in "The Arabs in the Peace Treaty of A.D. 561" (*supra*, note 140).

¹⁵⁸On pay in the Roman army, see Jones, *LRE*, vol. 1, pp. 623–30.

¹⁵⁹Cf. the Lazi, who did not receive subsidies, in spite of the fact that their chiefs received the emblems of office from the emperor and that they guarded the Caucasus for Byzantium. Apparently they were satisfied with permission to engage in commerce with the Romans of the Black Sea; Procopius, *Wars*, II.xv.1–4. The comparison between the Lazi and the Arab federates of Byzantium is instructive. The latter apparently did not engage in commerce and thus, unlike the Palmyrene Arabs of the third century, were a purely military group. This made them quite dependent on the imperial subsidies, which was perhaps one way of exercising control over the Arab allies, especially after the Roman experience with a wealthy commercial community such as Palmyra was.

¹⁶⁰On these two terms, see "The Reign of Julian," *supra*, pp. 108, 112. The two terms probably correspond to the *stipendia* and the *donativa* of the regular Roman soldier, the annual

from emperors in previous reigns. The term *annona* is not used in any of the documents for the Arab *foederati* in the fourth century.¹⁶¹ The conclusion that may be drawn from the use of the two terms by Ammianus is that the *foederati* did not, at least in Julian's reign, receive rations but money payments.¹⁶²

These presumably were the *foederati* of the north who joined Julian's army; what the situation was in other parts of Oriens is not clear. The Namāra inscription is silent on what the Arab allies of Byzantium in the Provincia Arabia received in return for their services; but a close examination of one of the terms used in the inscription could possibly yield the conclusion that among the Arab *foederati* in the fourth century at least the Lakhmids were paid in kind and received the *annona*.¹⁶³

4

What was the place of these Arab *foederati* in the Byzantine military establishment in Oriens in the fourth century? Not much is known or has been written on their role, tactical or strategic, in the operations of the army of the Orient and on such technical matters as their weapons and armor. The following may be gleaned from the sources for the reigns of Julian and Valens:

(a) A fairly informative account of Arab participation in the Byzantine wars of the fourth century may be found in Ammianus's account of Julian's Persian campaign.¹⁶⁴ They serve as mounted *auxilia* and perform all the duties that go with those tactical units.

(b) The most detailed account of their tactics may be found in the sources that describe their contribution to the wars of Valens, especially during the Gothic siege of Constantinople immediately after the battle of Adrianople.¹⁶⁵

payments and the donatives. Whether the *munera*, the gifts, denoted the gold paid on the accession of the emperor and its quinquennial celebration is not entirely clear. The term is, of course, to be distinguished from the *munera sordida*.

¹⁶¹Jones's unhesitating use of it (his phrase is *annonae foederaticae*, *LRE*, vol. 1, p. 611) is thus questionable and probably derives from the reference to the *annonariis alimentis* in one of the Novels of Theodosius the Younger in the fifth century (*ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 182 note 8). On the *annona militaris*, see the relevant part in A. Serge, "Essays on Byzantine Economic History, I. The *Annona Civica* and the *Annona Militaris*," *Byzantion*, 16 (1944), pp. 393-444.

¹⁶²Also implied in his haughty and well-known answer to the Arabs, "*imperatorem bellicosum et vigilantem ferrum habere non aurum*." However, it is difficult to believe that they did not receive rations, *annona*, for themselves or fodder, *capitus*, for their horses. Ammianus was describing an encounter of the emperor with the Arabs during a campaign, when the *foederati* would probably have been paid in gold, but this does not preclude their having been paid in kind also, under other circumstances.

¹⁶³On this, see the present writer in "Observations," pp. 40-41; on a reference in Syriac to the *annona* which the Ghassānids received in the sixth century, see the present writer in *Martyrs*, pp. 102-3.

¹⁶⁴Their role in the campaign of Julian has been analyzed in Chap. 3, "The Reign of Julian," esp. sec. 2, *supra*, pp. 110-11.

¹⁶⁵See "The Reign of Valens," esp. sec. IX, "The Gothic War," *supra*, pp. 175-83.

They attack in wedge formation, as *cuneus equitum*,¹⁶⁶ the new cavalry unit, and they form a *turma*; their weapon is the long pike,¹⁶⁷ and it was the combination of the fleetness of their horses and the irresistible thrust of their long pikes that won the day against the Goths.¹⁶⁸

Their place and role in the army of the Orient and the new army of Constantine in the fourth century should be clear by now: administratively, they would have been under the *magister equitum per Orientem*,¹⁶⁹ created by Constantine and reflecting the rising importance of the cavalry arm in Byzantine warfare, while their permanent state of readiness as cavalry would have allied them to the *comitatenses*, the mobile striking force of Constantine.¹⁷⁰

5

Much has been written on the legal status of the barbarians who secured a foothold within the *limes* since the fourth century, especially the Germans,¹⁷¹ and the same question may be raised about the Arabs. Were they or were they not considered Roman *cives*?

No text of a treaty or a *foedus* between the Arabs and the Romans in the fourth century has survived that would make possible a definitive answer to this question.¹⁷² The answer must therefore be constructed from hints and

¹⁶⁶On the *cuneus*, the wedge, see Grosse, *RM*, pp. 51–53; Piganiol, *EC*, p. 334 and note 53.

¹⁶⁷There is no mention of their armor, but the presumption is that they wore coats of mail. Not long before the time of these *foederati* in the reign of Valens, the Palmyrene Arabs had the famous *clibanarii* in their armies, and one such unit survived in the *ND*; for this, see chap. 5 on the *Notitia Dignitatum* in *RA*.

¹⁶⁸Unlike most of the Arab units of the *ND*, enrolled regularly in the Roman army, and who were mounted archers (*equites sagittarii*), these *foederati* were mounted lancers. On the former, see chap. 5 in *RA*.

¹⁶⁹For these *magistri equitum* in the fourth century, see the list of *magistri militum* in *PLRE*, vol. 1, pp. 1112–14; also the list of *duces* and *comites rei militaris*, pp. 1118–21.

¹⁷⁰Their participation in the Gothic War, so far from their settlements in Syria, is evidence that they did belong functionally if not technically to the *comitatenses* in the sense that they were always ready and available to join that central striking force. The Ghassānids apparently functioned similarly in the sixth century. Their troops under Arethas fought in the Fourth Armenia and participated in the operations that centered around Martyropolis in A.D. 531; see *The Chronicle of Zachariah of Mytilene*, trans. F. J. Hamilton and E. W. Brooks (London, 1899), p. 228.

¹⁷¹See the discussion involving Stauffenberg, Kornemann, Heuss, and Mommsen concerning the *Reichsanghörigkeit* of the Visigoths on the Lower Danube in B. Stallknecht, "Untersuchungen zur Römischen Aussenpolitik in der Spätantike (306–395 n.Chr.)," *Habelts Dissertationsdrucke* (Bonn, 1969), pp. 16–20 and 88–91.

¹⁷²The only reference to a *foedus* in the fourth century—that with Mavia and her deceased husband—is informative on the lapse of the *foedus* with the death of one of the representatives of the contracting parties, while the accounts of the renewed *foedus* in the ecclesiastical historians have favored only the religious clause. On all this, see "The Reign of Valens," *supra*, pp. 140–41, 152–59.

incidental references and can be presented only tentatively, namely, that the Arab *foederati* of the fourth century were *not* Roman citizens:

(1) A close examination of the relevant documents of the fourth century leads to that conclusion. The Namāra inscription with its resounding phrases on the title, glory, and achievement of the Arab king are expressive of excessive pride in his Arabness rather than in a Roman nationality. And the course of Mavia's war and her relations with the Romans suggest the same conclusion.¹⁷³

(2) The titles of the Arab chiefs could also argue in the same direction. Whether "*basileus*" or "phylarch," these were titles that allied these chiefs to the barbarian world and its political system and not to the Roman world. If the ranks that went with the titles, so familiar for the Ghassānids¹⁷⁴ of the sixth century, were available for examination, they might be reflective of an attempt to integrate at least the chiefs into the Roman system. But there is no evidence that these were applied to the chiefs of the Arab *foederati* in the fourth century. It is not, however, inconceivable that *civitas* was extended to some for distinguished service or an unusual Roman connection.¹⁷⁵

(3) Their non-Roman status is indirectly confirmed by the *Notitia Dignitatum*. The *foederati* are not listed in that document, with the possible exception of the two Saracen units stationed in Phoenicia Libanensis.¹⁷⁶ These two units represent only a symbolic federate presence, if indeed they are units of *foederati*. Since the *Notitia Dignitatum* lists regularly employed units in the Roman army whose members were Roman *cives*, the noninclusion of the *foederati* could thus be expressive of the fact that these were not considered Roman citizens.

(4) More, much more, is known about the Arab *foederati* of the sixth century, the Ghassānids, and the data could throw light on their legal status; such are their titles, their ranks, and their inclusion in the Byzantine-Persian treaty of A.D. 561. In that treaty they are clearly referred to as *Saraceni* and *symmachoi*, and the implication of the terms is that the Ghassānid *foederati* were not Roman *cives*.¹⁷⁷ Their kings may have been rewarded with the citizenship for exceptional services, but the rank and file remained non-*cives*. Retro-

¹⁷³Even the terms used by Socrates to describe Mavia's war with Valens, "the Saracen War," could suggest that the Romans were fighting non-Romans.

¹⁷⁴For these ranks, see the present writer in "The Patriate of Arethas," pp. 321-43.

¹⁷⁵Such as the marriage of Mavia's daughter to Victor, the *magister equitum per Orientem* in the late seventies.

¹⁷⁶These two Saracen units in the *ND* present a well-known crux which has been discussed in various parts of this book and in *RA*.

¹⁷⁷The pertinent clauses of the treaty circumscribe their freedom of action and thus encroach on whatever sovereignty the Ghassānids had, but they do not imply that the Ghassānids were Roman citizens. The clauses are reflective of the paramountcy of the Byzantine partner in the Arab-Byzantine relationship. For the treaty, see the present writer in "The Arabs in the Peace Treaty of A.D. 561," pp. 181-213.

active arguments are not safe, but the presumption is that what was true of the Ghassānids in the sixth century was also true of the Tanūkhids and the Lakhmids in the fourth.

6

Their Christianity distinguished these fourth-century *foederati* from the Arab allies of Rome in the preceding centuries, and it proved to be a powerful force in all aspects of their life and history. Two technical questions may, in this context, be raised in regard to the religious complexion of the *foederati*:

(1) How early or late in the fourth century did these *foederati* adopt their Christianity?

(a) The Arabic sources¹⁷⁸ present the Tanūkhids as already Christian in the Land of the Two Rivers and, what is more, as militantly so and so much so that they were prepared to abandon their territory on which they were settled along the Lower Euphrates and migrate to Roman territory. Thus in the case of the Tanūkhids the question of when they adopted Christianity in the fourth century does not arise.

(b) However, there is a statement in the Arabic sources to the effect that the Romans bestowed on them the kingship and dominion over the Arabs in Syria only *after* they became Christian.¹⁷⁹ Al-Mas'ūdī is thus, generally speaking, right in associating the Tanūkhids with Christianity but may not have been accurate in thinking that they were converted on Roman territory. However, the two sets of data from the Arabic sources may be reconciled by suggesting that not all the Tanūkhids who emigrated had been Christian. This is a phenomenon that is not entirely uncommon among Arab tribal groups, namely, that a part of the group adopts a religion or is influenced by a cultural current, while the remainder is not.

(2) Was adoption of Christianity a condition laid down by the imperial government for the settlement of the Arab *foederati*?¹⁸⁰ As has been indicated, the question does not arise in the case of the Tanūkhids, but it possibly does in that of the Lakhmids,¹⁸¹ and certainly in the case of other groups who had

¹⁷⁸See *supra*, pp. 418–19.

¹⁷⁹For the analysis of the relevant passage in Mas'ūdī, see Chap. 10, App. 2, *supra*, pp. 410–11.

¹⁸⁰The adoption of Christianity as a condition for settling barbarians within the boundaries of the empire has been a vexed question; see the discussion involving the Goths and Arian Valens in A.D. 376 in E. Chrysos, *Tò Βυζάντιον καὶ οἱ Γότθοι* (Thessaloniki, 1972), pp. 122–28, 173. But see also E. A. Thompson, "Christianity and the Northern Barbarians," in *The Conflict between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century* (Oxford, 1963), p. 65, and most recently, K. Schäferdiek, "Germanenmission," in *Reallexicon für Antike und Christentum*, 76 (1977), cols. 492–548; and *idem*, "Zeit und Umstände des westgotischen Übergangs zum Christentum," *Historia*, 28 (1979), pp. 90–97.

¹⁸¹On the religious complexion of Imru' al-Qays, see "The Namāra Inscription," *supra*, pp. 32–35.

not been Christian before they became *foederati*. There is no evidence available for answering the question definitively, but there is circumstantial evidence from the reigns of Constantine and Constantius which could suggest that that was indeed the imperial policy.

Constantius's dispatch of Theophilus Indus to the world of the Southern Semites to spread Christianity does suggest that the *imperator* was aware of the value of Christianity for imperial political ends.¹⁸² If Constantius was aware of the value of Christianity in those distant regions, it is natural to assume that he was aware of its value in closer regions in the Byzantine limitrophe in Oriens with its Arab tribes and *foederati*.

For the reign of Constantine, it might be noted that the Arab *foederati* were already identifiable as a Christian group, and the fact is reflected in the episcopate of Pamphilus, who attended the Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325 as their representative.¹⁸³ The chances then are that the Christianization of federate groups such as the Arabs was probably an imperial policy in the Orient¹⁸⁴ and that Constantius may have been imitating his father when he dispatched Theophilus to the world of the Southern Semites for the extension of Byzantine influence through the propagation of Christianity.

V. THE *BASILEIA*

The sources for the fourth century indicate that the chiefs of the Arab *foederati* or some of them were endowed with the title *basileus*. These sources are not informative on the many questions that may be raised concerning the *basileia*¹⁸⁵ of these Arab *foederati*. One can, therefore, only raise the pertinent questions and attempt partial answers.

The following questions may be asked: Did these Arab kings of the fourth century become such by *appellatio regis*?¹⁸⁶ Did they travel to Constantinople to be invested and crowned kings?¹⁸⁷ What were their insignia or emblems of

¹⁸²On this mission, see *supra*, pp. 86–100.

¹⁸³Cf. the case of the Goths in A.D. 376, *supra*, note 180.

¹⁸⁴This tentative conclusion is based on the Greek rather than the Arabic sources for the history of these fourth-century *foederati*.

¹⁸⁵On the problems involved in this important topic of the Arab federate *basileia*, see Appendix, *infra*, p. 520 and note 1.

¹⁸⁶On this, see P. C. Sands, *The Client Princes of the Roman Empire under the Republic* (Cambridge, 1908), pp. 58–61, 71–73; O. F. Winter, "Klientelkönige im römischen und byzantinischen Reich," *JÖBG*, 2 (1952), p. 36. According to B. Rubin, the *basileia* of the federate king, the Ghassānid Arethas, in the sixth century was by *appellatio regis*; see Rubin, *Das Zeitalter Iustinians* (Berlin, 1960), p. 276.

¹⁸⁷As Tiridates had done in A.D. 66 in the reign of Nero when he traveled to the first Rome, and Tzath, the king of the Lazi, in A.D. 522, in the reign of Justin I, when he traveled to Constantinople; for a vivid description of the two visits, see CAH, 10, pp. 772–73 and A. A. Vasiliev, *Justin the First* (Cambridge, Mass., 1950), pp. 258–64.

royalty?¹⁸⁸ As allies of Byzantium,¹⁸⁹ were they sovereign rulers or vassals who had surrendered a part of their sovereignty?

The few but significant data scattered in the sources may now be examined and set against the background of Roman and Byzantine practice in dealing with allied and vassal kings and of the much more plentiful data on the Ghassānid *basileia* in the sixth century.¹⁹⁰

The documents for the study of this problem are mainly two: the Namāra inscription of Imru' al-Qays and the accounts of the ecclesiastical literary sources on Mavia and her revolt.¹⁹¹

1

The Namāra Inscription

(1) Striking in the inscription is the phrase describing Imru' al-Qays as "the king of all the Arabs." It is unlikely that this is a reference to his kingship over the Arab federates in Oriens, a reflection of his Byzantine connection. His kingship, however, is attested beyond any doubt in his epitaph.

(2) Another phrase in the inscription is informative on his royal *insigne*, his crown, *al-tāj*. This is valuable since it indicates that he was a *malik mutawwaj*, a crowned king, his *insigne* being the *tāj* and not the circlet.¹⁹²

(3) Not only the *tāj* (the crown) but its wearer had come from beyond the *limes*, from the Persian Land of the Two Rivers into Byzantine territory.

¹⁸⁸For a description of these emblems, see Vasiliev, *Justin the First*, pp. 260–61; on these emblems, τὰ σύμβολα τῆς ἀρχῆς, as symbols of rule and legitimacy in connection with the chiefs of the Mauri in North Africa in the sixth century, see Procopius, *Wars*, III.xxv.3–8. It is noteworthy that these chiefs refer to the sending of these emblems as an old tradition, and this raises the question of whether one might not conceivably argue retroactively from the sixth century to an earlier period when discussing the same problem in its application to the Arab *foederati* in Oriens in the course of the three centuries before the rise of Islam. The emblems that the Mauri received from Byzantium consisted of a staff of silver covered with gold, a silver cap, a white cloak, a white tunic, and a gilded boot (*ibid.*). The equally colorful description of the emblems that Tzath, the king of the Lazi, received from Justin I may be compared with this one in Procopius.

¹⁸⁹As the *amici et socii populi Romani* of Roman times; on the use of this phrase in the fourth century by Ammianus to describe the Arab *foederati*, see *supra*, p. 115 and note 34.

¹⁹⁰Retroactive arguments are dangerous and will hardly be employed in this discussion, in spite of what is said on the emblems of royalty and the tradition of sending them to the chiefs of the Mauri; see *supra*, note 188.

¹⁹¹For the Namāra inscription, see *supra*, pp. 35–37; for the ecclesiastical literary sources on Mavia, see *supra*, pp. 138–202, where these sources have already been intensively analyzed. In the present section, some of the data extracted from these sources are put together and placed within a new context in order to elucidate the Arab federate *basileia* of the fourth century.

¹⁹²The employment of the term *tāj*, crown, immediately brings to mind the well-known passage in the *Ecclesiastical History* of John of Ephesus describing the "coronation" in Constantinople in A.D. 580 of the Ghassānid King Mundir by the Emperor Tiberius, for which see

Thus Imru' al-Qays had already been king and a crowned one when he crossed over to the Romans, who only recognized him as such.

(4) The question must remain open of whether or not he went to Constantinople. Other Arab kings and chiefs did so,¹⁹³ and the circumstances then prevailing justified the journey to the capital. In the case of Imru' al-Qays, it is impossible to tell. Furthermore, the Arabic verb *asara* could suggest that he crowned himself.

(5) Was he a sovereign ruler or was he a vassal? The tone of the inscription and the absence of anything in it that might reflect vassalage all suggest that Imru' al-Qays considered himself a sovereign ruler.¹⁹⁴ However, his self-image may not have been an accurate reflection of reality. It is the fact that he was settled on Roman territory and probably received subsidies, which suggest that he must have surrendered part of his sovereignty. It is almost certain that he had no territorial sovereignty since Namāra where he was buried was a legionary post within the boundaries of the Provincia Arabia.

The Ecclesiastical Sources

More informative in some respects but less so in others are the ecclesiastical literary sources on the fortunes of Queen Mavia, the contemporary of the Emperor Valens. There are no references to insignia or to where in Oriens her Saracens were settled, as there are to Imru' al-Qays and his Saracens, but there are these complementary data:

1. The term *basileus* is clearly used to designate the ruler of the Saracen group, and so is the term *basilissa* to describe his queen who ruled after him.

2. The status of the Arab *basileus* is that of a *foederatus*. Both *σπονδαί* (*foedus*) and *ἔσπονδοι* (*foederati*) are used in connection with Mavia, terms that are missing in the Namāra inscription.¹⁹⁵

3. It is not clear whether the *foedus* implied the sovereignty of the Arab

Nöldeke, *GF*, p. 25. Either *tāj* in the inscription does not mean the same as *tāghā* in John of Ephesus or the latter is unaware of Imru' al-Qays and his crown; for a recent treatment of this passage in John of Ephesus, see E. Chrysos in "The Title ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ in Early Byzantine Relations," *DOP*, 32 (1978), pp. 50–51. The passage will be fully treated in the third volume of this series, *BASIC*. On the crown of Imru' al-Qays, see the present writer in "Observations," pp. 34–35, and *supra*, "The Namāra Inscription," pp. 35–37.

¹⁹³Such as Imru' al-Qays, the phylarch who visited Constantinople in the reign of the Emperor Leo in the fifth century, for which see the present writer, "On the Patriarchate of Imru' al-Qays," pp. 74–82; the Kindite chief, Qays, early in the reign of Justinian, for whom see the present writer in "Byzantium and Kinda," pp. 66–70; and Arethas the Ghassānid and his son Muṅḍir who visited the capital in A.D. 563 and 580 respectively; see Nöldeke, *GF*, pp. 20, 25. The last is the most relevant, as Muṅḍir was crowned by Tiberius on that occasion.

¹⁹⁴On the references to the Romans in the inscription, see "The Namāra Inscription," *supra*, pp. 43–47.

¹⁹⁵For Mavia's deceased husband, the *basileus*, see the section entitled "The Anonymous King," *supra*, pp. 140–42.

basileus, which it could if it was the *amicitia* and *societas* of Roman times. The course of the war suggests that the *foedus* had been concluded by the two contracting parties on the basis of legal equality. Thus Mavia appears in the sources not as an insurgent but as a belligerent conducting an international war. Whether this was true in fact is not certain. The unusual circumstances during which Mavia fought her war with the empire and the fact that the peace was negotiated under duress because of the Gothic peril could explain the impression of sovereignty that the reader may gain of Mavia, but it also could have concealed the fact that the original *foedus* with the deceased king was in fact a *foedus iniquum* in spite of all outward appearances.

2

Whether the *basileus* of the ecclesiastical sources and the *malik* of the Namāra inscription are related is not entirely clear. It is, therefore, not certain whether one could assume that the conclusions drawn on the one are valid for the other.¹⁹⁶ In spite of some questions which the examination of these two sets of sources has not resolved, it is possible to make the following general observations on the Arab *basileia* in the fourth century:

(1) The tradition of the Arab *basileia* in the fourth century is established beyond doubt;¹⁹⁷ although some important details on it remain unknown, the sources have yielded enough data to suggest a fairly clear picture of it.

(2) It is noticeable that unlike the Arab Ghassānid kings of the sixth century, only one title, *basileus*, is predicated of Mavia's deceased husband.¹⁹⁸ The sources, which are few and not very informative, may be misleading on this point, but it is possible that the title *phylarch* was reserved for relatively unimportant Arab chiefs in alliance with Rome. Hence the conclusion may be hazarded that these Arab figures in the fourth century, such as Imru' al-Qays and Mavia, who bore the titles *malik* and *basilissa* respectively, were the important ones militarily and politically in the Arab-Byzantine relation-

¹⁹⁶The presumption is that the *basileus*, Mavia's husband, was a Tanūkhid, belonging to the Arab group that attained paramountcy among the Arab groups in Oriens in the service of Rome in the fourth century. It is, of course, not altogether impossible that he was a descendant of Imru' al-Qays, who belonged to the Lakhm. However, the two groups were related to each other, and when the term Tanūkhid is used in this book to denote the dominant group of Arab *foederati*, it is in the sense of a large confederation which Tanūkh in fact was, thus comprising various tribes and tribal groups in Oriens, possibly including the Lakhmids.

¹⁹⁷The *reguli* who joined Julian at Callinicum confirm the reality of the Arab *basileia* in the fourth century, attested by the Arabic Namāra inscription and the Greek ecclesiastical literary sources.

¹⁹⁸Not *phylarch* or *patricius* which, for instance, Arethas, the Ghassānid, was, in addition to being *basileus*; see Nöldeke, *GF*, pp. 12–14. The Byzantine titles of Arethas do not seem to appear in the same documents with *basileus*; this may be significant or it may be due to the paucity of what has survived of the sources.

ship and possibly ruled tribes of various affiliations but who were united as a confederation. This was true of the Tanūkhids and possibly of the Lakhmids. Hence the appropriateness of the title *basileus*.

(3) The *basileia* of these Arab figures was not created for their convenience by the Romans. Unlike other federate groups that had been settled in Oriens even before the Romans appeared on the stage of Near Eastern history, these Tanūkhids and Lakhmids were outsiders and newcomers, hailing from the Land of the Two Rivers and Sasanid Persia's sphere of influence; they brought the concept of the *basileia* with them from the world to which they had belonged.¹⁹⁹ Thus Rome simply allowed them to continue the assumption of such titles, which did not belong to the Roman system but to the world of the barbarians whence they had hailed.

(4) While Odenathus of Palmyra in the preceding century had such flattering titles as *dux Romanorum*, *corrector totius Orientis*, and *imperator*, Mavia's husband had only the title *basileus*.²⁰⁰ Perhaps this was a deliberate policy after the bitter experience with Palmyra, not to confer on the kings of the dominant Arab groups in Oriens titles other than the ones that belonged to the barbarian world, lest Roman titles should whet their imperial appetite.²⁰¹ Toward the end of the fourth century, it seems that even the title *basileus* may have been discontinued and that of *phylarch* appears, applied to the chiefs of the new dominant Arab group in the service of Byzantium, the Salīḥids, and not only to the minor ones.²⁰²

VI. THE PHYLARCHIA

The most important title that described the chiefs of the Arab *foederati* was not a Latin but a Greek term, *phylarch*. As applied to the Arab federate chiefs, the title had a long history. Inherited from the Roman and Hellenistic periods, it endured for some three centuries in the Byzantine period from the fourth to the seventh centuries, during which the institution for which it

¹⁹⁹Imru' al-Qays's father was 'Amr, the famous king of Hira, while the *basileia* among the Tanūkhids is attested by a bilingual inscription, Greek and Aramaic, found at Umm al-Jimāl in southern Syria, and it speaks of Jaḍīma, "the king of the Tanūkh," in the third century A.D.

²⁰⁰Contrast with the Ghassānids, who had Roman titles in the sixth century; thus there may have been a development, unless the conclusion on the *basileia* of the fourth century without Roman titles has been drawn on insufficient evidence—on the few uninformative extant sources.

²⁰¹It is possible that this was related to the two revolts of the Arab *foederati* in the reigns of Valens and Theodosius, for which see *supra*, pp. 142–50, 210–41. The title *basileus* or *basilissa*, allowed to the ruler or the chief of the dominant Arab federate group, may have given the *foederati* a sense of self-importance which disposed them to that self-assertiveness that twice resulted in revolts.

²⁰²See Sozomen, *HE*, VI.38.14, and the following section on the *phylarchia*.

stood evolved, reaching a high degree of complexity in the sixth century.²⁰³ A correct understanding of the Arab-Byzantine relationship in these three centuries depends to a large extent on a correct understanding of the two terms *phylarch* and *phylarchate*, and yet no adequate study of both has appeared so far.²⁰⁴ It is proposed here to discuss whatever can be extracted from the sources on the first phase of the evolution of the term and the institution in the first Byzantine century, the fourth. Concentration on the fourth century is desirable since it is only after the diachronous investigation of its history throughout these three centuries before the rise of Islam that this understudied but important adjunct military institution in the Roman army can be comprehended.²⁰⁵

(1) The first question that arises in connection with the term *phylarch* is why in the Roman military system, the language of which was Latin, a Greek word was chosen to designate the Arab chiefs of the *foederati*? Two related questions also suggest themselves: why it was this particular word that was chosen and why it was not translated into Latin?

(a) In answer to the first question, it may be said that this had been a term that had acquired wide vogue in its application to Arab chiefs in the late Hellenistic period and after it in the Roman.²⁰⁶ It was only natural that it should have been retained in Byzantine times.

(b) In answer to the question why it was this particular term almost to the exclusion of others²⁰⁷ that had acquired vogue and was retained, it may be said that the etymology of the term may have been partly responsible. It implied a tribal structure of Arab society and this corresponded with its image in the mirror of Graeco-Roman historiography, especially in the fourth century, that is, after the destruction of the great Arab urban center that

²⁰³Perhaps three phases in the evolution of the term and the institution may be discerned, each phase being roughly coterminous with each of the three centuries of the Arab-Byzantine relationship before the rise of Islam.

²⁰⁴Two contributions may be referred to in this connection: (a) Nöldeke's discussion of the term in his *GF*, which is now out of date in many ways besides its concentrating only on the sixth century; for a critique of Nöldeke's views on the *phylarchia* and *basileia* of the federate Arabs, see Appendix, *infra*, pp. 520–21; (b) F. Gschnitzer's article on the title *phylarchos*, which treats of the history of the term in classical literature in its application to the non-Greek world; see *RE*, Supplementbd. 11 (1968), *s.v.* Especially welcome and relevant is his section on the application of the term to the Arabs (cols. 1072–78), the value of which to the Byzantinologist is mainly heuristic.

²⁰⁵How little known this institution is may be seen from the fact that A. H. M. Jones telescopes the supportive documentation for his conception of the phylarchate throughout three centuries in one single note; see his *LRE*, vol. 2, p. 1252 note 8, annotating his text in vol. 1, p. 611.

²⁰⁶For this, see Gschnitzer, *op. cit.*, cols. 1072–74.

²⁰⁷Such as πρόεδρος, προνοητής, στρατηγός, ἔθναρχης, for which see M. Rostovtzeff, *The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1957), vol. 1, p. 272.

had controlled the tribes and introduced a certain degree of urbanization and sedentarization among the Arabs of the steppes. The fall of Palmyra brought the Romans face to face with the world of the Arabian Peninsula, full of tribes, while the further bedouinization that set in after the fall of that city must have given an impetus to the reversion and regress toward nomadism already existent in Arabia. After the equation of *Saraceni* with *Scenitae* in the fourth century and the careless use of the term *Saraceni* to designate not only Scenitae but all Arabs, it was easy to conceive of the Arabs as nomads composed of tribes, *phylai*, and thus the term *phylarch*, chosen to designate their chiefs, was in the minds of the Graeco-Roman writers only apposite.

(c) The Latin equivalent of *phylarchos* was *tribunus*, and such a military term might have been translated into the language of the Roman army, Latin, but it was not, and when it was used in Latin it appeared in transliterated form, *phylarchus*.²⁰⁸ Perhaps the reason is that the Arab phylarch would easily have been confused with the Roman tribune.²⁰⁹ The transliteration of Greek φύλαρχος into Latin *phylarchus* thus guarded against such confusion, but in so doing it also practically reserved the use of the term to the Arab chief and thus contributed to the emergence of the phylarchate as a distinctively Arab military office.

Finally, it may be said that the application of the term was also appropriate historically. The term, originally, had been used in ancient Athens for the commander of the cavalry furnished by each tribe; but since the Arab *foederati*, or allies of Byzantium in the fourth century, were horsemen, the old term was appropriate for their chiefs.²¹⁰ The application of the term *phylarch* to the Arab chiefs was, therefore, doubly appropriate in that etymologically it reflected the tribal structure of their society while historically it evoked the Athenian phylarch who was a cavalry commander just as the Arab chief was.

Thus when the Greek term *phylarchos* was applied to the Arabs, it came to have three significations: (a) a tribal chief, the equivalent of the Arabic term *shaykh*; (b) a military commander who crossed the path of the Romans; and (c) an Arab commander *in alliance* with Rome, a *foederatus*. The triple signification of this single term presents problems in the examination of Greek texts pertaining to the Arabs since sometimes it is not clear from the context in which of the three senses the term was being used.²¹¹

²⁰⁸As in Ammianus, *RG*, XXIV.2.4; although there it describes the Lakhmid Mundir, the Arab ally of Persia; for the possible use of the nontechnical term *ductor* to describe an Arab chief during Julian's campaign, see the chapter on Julian, *supra*, pp. 117–18.

²⁰⁹On the correspondence of phylarch to tribune, see Gschntzer, *op. cit.*, cols. 1071–72, 1079.

²¹⁰On Nöldeke's views on the Arab phylarch and his Athenian counterpart, see Appendix, *infra*, p. 521.

²¹¹For examples of this ambivalence, see the reference to the phylarch Zokomos in Sozomen, *HE*, VI.38.14–16. In sec. 14, the term is used in the literal sense of a tribal chief,

(2) Perhaps the term *phylarch* was not applied to the principal Arab chiefs of the *foederati* such as the Tanūkhids and the Lakhmids, who had the title *basileus*. It may have been reserved for the minor chiefs in Oriens, both those who were under the kings of the Tanūkhids and the Lakhmids and those who were not but who were settled in other parts of Oriens, e.g., Sinai,²¹² and who had been in Oriens before the Tanūkhids and the Lakhmids went over to the Romans. The assignment of these lesser chiefs with the title *phylarch* was most probably local; they maintained law and order and policed the arid zones in which or near which they were settled against the inroads of the nomads both from within and without the limes.

However, there may have been a development in the denotation of the term *phylarch* toward the end of the fourth century. Zokomos, the eponymous founder of the second group of *foederati*, the Salīhids, in the fifth century, is referred to by Sozomen²¹³ as “phylarch.” This may be due to the fact that he happened to be the chief of a tribe when Sozomen recounted the story of his conversion to Christianity or to the fact that the title *basileus*, a unifying force among powerful Arab federate groups such as the Tanūkhids, may have proved detrimental to imperial interests.²¹⁴

(3) A third problem that presents itself is whether or not the phylarchal system was developed in the fourth century as it was to be in the sixth. In this latter century, it is almost certain that each province in Oriens, at least the limitrophe ones, had its own phylarch or phylarchs,²¹⁵ and, what is more, these phylarchs were assimilated into the Byzantine system of ranks, the lowest-ranking phylarch having the title *clarissimus*.²¹⁶ What exactly the situation was in the fourth century is not clear, and no definitive answer can be given to this question because of the paucity of the sources.²¹⁷ The chances are,

shaykh, but it is known that he was the eponym of the Zokomids (Salīhids), the clients of Byzantium who succeeded the Tanūkhids, and the fact is even implied in the text itself of Sozomen (sec. 16), which speaks of how these Saracens became formidable to the Persians—sure sign of their participation in Byzantium’s Persian War as her clients.

The ambivalence of the term φύλαρχος might have been guarded against, at least partially, by the use of the term ἀρχιφύλος for the first of the three significations, to denote a tribal chief.

²¹²For such a chief, see “*Ammonii Monachi Relatio*,” *supra*, p. 298, but it is not clear whether he was a phylarch in the sense of an Arab chief or one allied with Byzantium; the chances are that he was the latter.

²¹³*HE*, VI.38.14.

²¹⁴On this, see the section on the *basileia*, *supra*, p. 514 and note 201. The Arabic sources of later times, however, refer to the Salīhid chiefs as *mulūk*, kings. Their titles will be discussed in the second volume of this series, *BAFIC*.

²¹⁵Malalas speaks of the “phylarchs of the provinces,” and the phrase is significant; see *Chronographia*, p. 435, lines 3–4.

²¹⁶On this, see the present writer in “The Patriciate of Arethas,” pp. 323–24.

²¹⁷Not much can be extracted from the accounts of the Saracens of Sinai in the fourth century. However, there is that reference to the *phylarchia* in the *Ammonii Monachi Relatio*, *supra*, p. 298; for Obedianus (Ubayda) of Pharan, see *ibid.*, pp. 301–2.

however, that the system was not very developed in the fourth century. This was the first century of the Byzantine period, the one that witnessed the first phase in the forging of the new Arab-Byzantine relationship after it had been shattered in the preceding century by the Roman-Palmyrene encounter. It is, therefore, natural to presume that in the fourth century this relationship was in its experimental phase during which the Byzantines were groping for a new formula of coexistence with the Arabs.

(4) Finally, the term *phylarch* may be related to the problem of the image of the Arabs in the Byzantine period. The term *Saraceni* has already been discussed in connection with that image, and it has been suggested that its equation with *Scenitae* has projected an image of the Arabs as a nomadic people of tent-dwellers.²¹⁸ As the two terms *phylarch* and *Saraceni* became almost conjugates, the former further distorted the image of the Arabs (already distorted by the latter as the equivalent of *Scenites*) by suggesting that the structure of their society was not sedentary but tribal and nomadic.

VII. ARABS IN THE SERVICE OF BYZANTIUM

In the Roman period, especially in the third century, some Arab figures reached the altitudes of imperial promotion in the military *cursus*. Such were Odenathus of Palmyra, who was *dux Romanorum*, *corrector totius Orientis*, and *imperator*, and Philip, who after being praetorian prefect was elevated to the purple and became the first Arab to attain to the principate.

It is noteworthy that Arabs in the service of Byzantium do not come anywhere near the pinnacle reached by their predecessors in the Roman period, in spite of the important contributions they made to the Byzantine war effort in the fourth and sixth centuries.²¹⁹ Perhaps the sources that told of important Arab figures have not survived,²²⁰ while some Arabs may have reached high ranks but their identity was obscured by their assumption of Graeco-Roman names. Even so, the chances are that no Arab reached the *magisterium*, as did

The fourth century witnessed a provincial reorganization that left Palestine divided into three parts, Prima, Secunda, and Tertia (Salutaris); this may have entailed the increase of the number of phylarchs in the three Palestines or at least their reallocation.

²¹⁸Its Arabic equivalent, *shaykh* (sheik) has functioned similarly in modern times, by projecting roughly the same image in Europe and America, but it also connotes a romantic lover!

²¹⁹Cf. the impressive list of Germans in the service of Byzantium in Waas, "Germanen." The *ecclesia*, perhaps, offered them a more spacious opportunity than the army in the Byzantine period. They could become bishops, as did Moses in the fourth and Aspebetos in the fifth century.

²²⁰It was by the merest chance that the Namāra inscription had miraculously survived before it was discovered some eighty years ago. Without it we should be completely in the dark on the important historical figure it commemorates, whose arms reached Najrān in the South. Had it not been for her orthodoxy, the ecclesiastical historians would not have cared to record the exploits of Mavia, and that important chapter written by her in the reign of Valens would have remained closed.

many of the German chiefs in the fourth and the following centuries.²²¹ The phenomenon may be accounted for as follows:

(1) In the fourth century it was the barbarian group along the Danube, the Germans, not the Arabs along the oriental *limes*, that exercised the attention of Byzantium, and, as is well known, Constantine's policy led to a considerable degree of Germanization in the army. Hence the Arabs recede into the background both as a threat and as a barbarian group that had strong claims on the attention of the emperors.²²²

(2) The bitter experience with Arab Palmyra may have taught the Romans a lesson. Surely the ambitions of Zenobia were whetted by the successes of her deceased husband Odenathus, on whom Rome had conferred so many titles and honors. Perhaps after the Palmyrene experience the Romans were reluctant to place the Arab commanders in high positions from which they might develop imperial ambitions.

(3) The fact that none of the Arab commanders reached the *magisterium* is of course also related to their legal status as *foederati*, nonregular troops in the Roman army whose members were citizens.²²³ They were *foederati*, non-citizens to whom the *magisterium* would not have been open, and their chiefs were kings and phylarchs and thus were outside the strictly military *cursus* which led to that office.²²⁴

(4) Finally, their relations with Byzantium did not mature in the fourth century. It was punctuated by too many disagreements that led to revolts and withdrawals from the service, as happened in the reigns of Constantius, Julian, and Valens.

Even so, the Arab *foederati* contributed two significant figures to the military history of Byzantium in the fourth century, one in the first half, Imru' al-Qays, "the king of all the Arabs," and another in the second half, Queen Mavia.²²⁵

²²¹Perhaps the sixth-century Arab figures, the Ghassānid king, Arethas, and his equally redoubtable son, al-Mundir, represent the ablest Arab military talent at the disposal of Byzantium, which reflected its recognition of their services by awarding them such high ranks and dignities as the gloriosissime and the patriciate; see the present writer in "The Patriciate of Arethas," pp. 321-43.

²²²The pressure on the Danube from the Germans also brought them within striking distance of Constantinople itself.

²²³The *Constitutio Antoniniana* made of the provincials of the Provincia Arabia citizens, and thus the road was open for one of them, Philip, to enter the army and be elevated to the principate.

²²⁴Whether their kings and phylarchs in the fourth century were endowed with the ranks that the Ghassānids were to be endowed with in the sixth is not clear; see the sections on the *basileia* and the *phylarchia*, *supra*, pp. 510-18.

²²⁵The extent of their achievements may be measured by the fact that the arms of the first reached Najrān in South Arabia, while that of the second reached Thrace and defended Constantinople.

VIII. APPENDIX

Th. Nöldeke on the *Basileia* and the *Phylarchia*

Nöldeke did not research the fourth and fifth centuries in the history of Arab-Byzantine relations. As a result, his conception of both the *basileia* and the *phylarchia* in the fourth century is vague and indeed erroneous. It is therefore important to discuss his views, especially as some of them, e.g., on the Ghassānid *basileia*, have been unfortunately accepted and this has created some confusion in a related area of Byzantine studies, strictly Byzantine, namely the *basileia* of the Emperor Heraclius in A.D. 629.¹

Nöldeke notes that the Greek writers apply the term βασιλεύς (*basileus*) to the vassal princes of the empire; but they do so because they want to avoid the application of the term φύλαρχος (*phylarch*) to these vassals, in view of the fact that the latter term had a different meaning in ancient Athens,² and he gives as an example the application of the term βασιλίσα (*queen*) to Mavia in the fourth century.³ The statement comes immediately after another one on the *basileia* of the Ghassānid king Arethas, who, according to Procopius, was invested with the ἀξίωμα βασιλέως in around A.D. 530, but who, according to Nöldeke, did not assume it officially since it belonged exclusively to the Byzantine ruler.

1. Nöldeke's misconception of the Arab *basileia* derives from his misconception of the imperial *basileia* in the sixth century. The latter was never assumed officially by the Byzantine ruler, whose official title was always *imperator*, αὐτοκράτωρ, and it was only in 629 that *basileus* became his title, when the Emperor Heraclius assumed it officially.⁴

2. Thus the premise from which Nöldeke started crumbles and with it his conclusions on both the Ghassānid rulers of the sixth century and the retroactive arguments which he applied to the Arab rulers of the fourth century. These certainly had the title βασιλεύς (*basileus*), of which Nöldeke apparently was unaware. Mavia's deceased husband had it, the Arab chiefs (*reguli*) who met Julian at Callinicum during his Persian campaign had it, and so did Imru' al-Qays of the Namāra inscription.⁵ The Tanūkhid and Lakhmid rulers in the fourth century derived their *basileia* from a tradition of kingship that had existed among the Arabs before they crossed over to the Romans from Persian territory. So when the Greek authors applied the term *basileus* to this or that fourth-century Arab ruler, they were only giving recognition to a dignity that the Arab rulers had already had, deriving from an Arab tradition and not one that was created for them after they migrated to Byzantine territory. Thus the Arab *basileia* in Oriens in this Byzantine period of three centuries before the rise

¹See Chrysos, "The Title ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ," pp. 46–51; for an examination of this section of Chrysos's article, see the present writer, "On the Titulature of the Emperor Heraclius," *Byzantion*, 51 (1981), pp. 288–94.

²Nöldeke, *GF*, p. 13.

³*Ibid.*, note 1.

⁴It appears in one of his Novels dated A.D. 629; see the present writer in "The Iranian Factor in Byzantium during the Reign of the Emperor Heraclius," *DOP*, 26 (1972), pp. 295–320.

⁵Nöldeke must have overlooked the references to these kings in the Greek and Latin sources, while the Namāra inscription was discovered after he wrote on this subject.

of Islam can be accurately grasped only when it is investigated diachronously and methodically, starting from the first Byzantine century, the fourth, and not vice versa, starting from the sixth and reasoning retroactively.

3. Nöldeke's views on the Arab *phylarchia* of the Orient are derivative from his misconception of the Arab *basileia*. Contrary to what he states, the Greek writers did not avoid the application of the term φύλαρχος (phylarch) to the Arab chiefs because the term had been applied to the Athenian phylarchs in ancient times.⁶

His interpretation of a well-known passage in Procopius⁷ in support of his views on the term *phylarch* cannot be accepted.⁸ Surely Procopius expressed himself the way he did because he had started by speaking of the *duces*, and as a purist he naturally chose to use the Greek term ἄρχων, which he had to explain in a clause as the equivalent of the Latin *dux*; then he spoke of φύλαρχοι, and it was partly for stylistic reasons that he had to balance ἄρχων and the clause that followed it with ἡγούμενος and its clause. But more important than stylistic considerations is that Procopius wanted to draw the attention of the reader to the fact that just as *duces* was a technical term for the Roman commanders in the provinces so was the term φύλαρχοι, and this was especially necessary to do because φύλαρχοι may have been taken as a literary locution meaning a tribal chief and because it was not a Latin but a Greek term rather isolated in a technical military terminology that was almost exclusively Latin.⁹

Nöldeke wrote his monograph on the Ghassānids almost a century ago before what might be termed the "epigraphic revolution,"¹⁰ which revealed that Jaḏīma was indeed king of the Tanūkhids in the third century and that such figures in Arab-Byzantine relations as the Lakhmid Imru' al-Qays in the fourth century and the Ghassānid Arethas in the sixth do in fact represent the strong tradition of the Arab *basileia* in pre-Islamic times.

⁶Nöldeke, *GF*, p. 12. His views on the application of the term *phylarch* to the Arabs and on its Athenian counterpart are invalidated by the many references to the Arab chiefs as phylarchs even before the Byzantine period; see Gschnitzer, *RE*, Supplementbd. 11, cols. 1072–74. On the patterning of Arab tribes after the Greek *phylai* in urban centers, see *ibid.*, col. 1071. On the appropriateness of the application of this old Athenian term to the Arab chiefs, see the section on the *phylarchia*, *supra*, p. 516.

⁷Οὐδεις δε οὔτε Ῥωμαίων στρατιωτῶν ἄρχων, οὐς δοῦκας καλοῦσιν, οὔτε Σαρακηνῶν τῶν Ῥωμαίους ἐνσπόνδιων ἡγούμενος οἱ φύλαρχοι ἐπικαλοῦνται; Procopius, *Wars*, I.xvii.46.

⁸Nöldeke, *GF*, p. 13 note 2. He starts his footnote as follows: "S.z.B. Procop a.a.o. . . ἡγούμενος οἱ φύλαρχοι ἐπικαλοῦνται als handelte es sich um ein fremdes oder vulgäres Wort." That ἡγούμενος is often used instead of φύλαρχος cannot argue that the Greek writers were trying to avoid φύλαρχος, as Nöldeke suggests in the same footnote. Ἠγούμενος is the common term for "commander," "leader," and the term was thus used when writers were not being technical. However, ἡγούμενος and ἡγεμονία could be used for a special reason, as in the description of the Kindite Arab chief, Qays, over the Palestines, for which see the present writer in "Byzantium and Kinda," pp. 68–69.

⁹This passage in Procopius is *inter alia* a precious guide to the most important of the three significations of the term *phylarch* discussed in "*Phylarchia*," *supra*, p. 516.

¹⁰The term is inspired by the "archaeological revolution" discussed by Peter Brown in "Religious Dissent in the Later Roman Empire: The Case of Africa," *History*, 46 (1961), pp. 84–85.

PART FOUR
SYNTHESIS AND EXPOSITION

KEY

Although it is not difficult to relate the various sections of this Synthesis to the corresponding chapters of Parts I–III on which it is based, this key will make explicit this relation and will help the reader to better find his way.

I. “Federate-Imperial Relations” is based on Part One, Chapters I–VI.

II. “The Political and Military Organization of the *Foederati*” is based on Part Two, Chapter X, Sec. II; Part Three, Sec. II, 1–3.

III. “The World of the *Foederati* in the Arabic Sources” is based on Part Two, Chapter X, Secs. I–V, and the four Appendices of that chapter.

IV. “The *Foederati* and the Roman Frontier” is based on Part Three, Sec. I, 1–2.

V. “Federate Cultural Life” is based on Part One, Chapter I, Sec. I; Part Two, Chapter XI, Secs. I–V.

VI. “The Arab Episcopate” is based on Part One, Chapter VIII, Secs. I and IV; Part One, Chapter IX and its three Appendices.

VII. “The Rise of an Arab Church” is based on Part One, Chapter IX; Part Two, Chapter XI, Secs. I–II.

VIII. “Christianity and Arabism: Interaction and Reciprocal Influences” is based on the same material as the preceding section.

IX. “The Image” is based on the relevant chapters in *RA* and on Part One, Chapter III, Sec. IV, and Chapter VII, Secs. I–II, IV–V.

I. FEDERATE-IMPERIAL RELATIONS

The Arab *foederati* of the fourth century crossed the paths of six emperors: Constantine, Constantius, Julian, Jovian, Valens, and Theodosius. The watershed that divides this course of Arab-Byzantine relations is the reign of Jovian and the Peace that goes by his name, struck in A.D. 363. Until then the *foederati* had dealt with the house of Constantine, and their main contribution to the Byzantine war effort had consisted of their participation in the Persian Wars of that house. After A.D. 363 they treated with the house of Valentinian and that of Theodosius represented by Valens and Theodosius the Great, and their main contribution consisted of participation in the Gothic War in a new theater of war, in Thrace. A certain unity pervades the first period since the *foederati* had to deal with three members of the house of Constantine, the two Arians and the Apostate, while their theater of war was the familiar terrain of the Syro-Mesopotamian region. The second period abounds with surprises, both military and cultural. The scene of Arab-Byzantine relations is occupied by such colorful figures as Queen Mavia, her princess daughter, and their holy man, Moses, while the *foederati* fight on distant battlefields, in Thrace. The course of Arab-Byzantine relations in the reigns of six emperors of this century, beginning with Constantine and ending with Theodosius, may be presented as follows:

Constantine

The *imperator* who effected the *translatio imperii* from Rome on the Tiber to Rome on the Bosphorus adopted for his faith an eastern religion and contemplated a major war with the eastern secular enemy, Sasanid Persia, obviously had considerable interest in the East. The Arabs formed part of that East and as such they must have fallen within the purview of his designs, both those for Oriens and those for the Peninsula.

The Byzantine period opens in the reign of Constantine with a significant historical fact in the history of Arab-Byzantine relations, namely, the clientship of Imru' al-Qays, who died in A.D. 328 in the Provincia Arabia. He is styled in his epitaph "the king of all the Arabs," a description which although it may be an exaggeration, yet does contain a measure of truth in view of his many conquests in the Arabian Peninsula which the Namāra inscription, the main source of his exploits, documents. In spite of his kingship, he could not have been entirely independent and must have been a client-king, the term that most adequately describes him. He was a king to his people but a client

to Rome, and in strict technical terminology he was a *foederatus*, receiving the *annona* and in return performing certain services for Byzantium.

The inscription gives a glimpse of the structure of this client-kingdom in the Byzantine limitrophe in the reign of Constantine. Imru' al-Qays did not die issueless. He had sons, and these were also in the service of Rome. They were put in charge of certain Arab tribes, as cavalry commanders over mounted tribesmen, and were responsible to him. Just as his sons were subordinate to him, so must Imru' al-Qays have been subordinate to the *dux* of Arabia and ultimately to the *magister militum* in Oriens.

The function of the client-king was mainly military, although he and his *foederati* probably participated in protecting Roman commercial interests when these involved trade routes in the Arabian Peninsula. He participated in maintaining security within the confines of the Provincia and in protecting the Roman frontier from the raids and invasions of the Peninsular Arabs. The precious reference to his sons at the head of the tribes clearly implies that these also maintained an indirect Roman presence in what might be termed a Roman sphere of influence in Arabia, which in turn may have had something to do with the provincial reorganization of the Provincia Arabia and of Oriens in this period.

The strong political and military presence of Imru' al-Qays in Arabia as reflected in the Namāra inscription is attested not only because of references to the tribes he conquered and the position of his sons as chiefs of these tribes; it is attested in a more dramatic way in his campaign against Najrān in the distant Arabian South. If this campaign was conducted from his base in Arabia and if it was sponsored by the Romans, then it would have been a major military operation, one that would have had important implications for Byzantine foreign policy in Arabia, the Red Sea area, and the world of the Southern Semites. It would also make highly probable Constantine's assumption of the *cognomen* "Arabicus," attested in a Latin inscription hailing from Mauretania.

The client-kingship of Imru' al-Qays appears in the middle of important military and diplomatic activities in the reign of Constantine: the campaign of the Sasanid king, Shāpūr, in the Arabian Peninsula around A.D. 326, a campaign that brought him as far west as Ḥijāz and the Roman *limes*, and a diplomatic thrust, echoes of which are audible in the *Vita Constantini*, involving alliances with the world of the Southern Semites, Ethiopia, and South Arabia. Set within this military and diplomatic context, the campaign of Imru' al-Qays against Najrān in South Arabia, if conducted from the Provincia, could demonstrate the important place that the client-king had in Byzantium's scheme of things in the reign of the first Byzantine emperor.

The first attested Arab client-king of the Byzantine period died in A.D. 328 and was buried in Namāra in the Provincia Arabia, the *limes* of which he

had guarded. The sources do not state who his successor was, but it is almost certain that he was one of those sons mentioned in the epitaph as ruling over the Arab tribes in his lifetime. The epitaph unfortunately leaves these sons anonymous, and anonymity indeed plagues the Arab *foederati* and their rulers until the reign of Valens in the latter part of the century.

In the period that elapsed between the death of Imru' al-Qays in 328 and that of Constantine in 337, the Arab *foederati* hardly figure in the annals of Arab-Byzantine relations. One would have expected them to participate in the Persian campaign of Constantine which he opened just before his death, especially as Imru' al-Qays and his sons most probably had had their brushes with the Sasanid king, Shāpūr. Whether or not they did remains an open question, and the sources are sparse and uninformative. They possibly did, unless they had become disaffected because of doctrinal differences with the imperial government after Constantine veered toward the Arian definition of the faith under the influence of Eusebius of Nicomedia.

If they were disaffected toward the end of the reign, this was most probably due to the exile of the Nicene bishops by Constantine in the decade that followed the convocation of the Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325, and one of these bishops was probably Pamphilus (or his successor) who was probably the bishop of the *foederati* and had attended that council. Furthermore, the exile of the leader of the Nicene party, Athanasius of Alexandria, in A.D. 336 may also have been an element in the disaffection of the orthodox *foederati*.

The *imperator* who opted for the *pars orientalis* must also be credited with laying the foundation of a sound Byzantine policy toward the Orient and with it the Arabs. His relations with them apparently were friendly, and in his own territory, the Provincia Arabia, was settled "the king of all the Arabs," a powerful Arab ruler who must have contributed substantially toward the reassertion of Roman political and military presence and influence, both in Oriens and in the Peninsula, and who was not an unworthy successor to Odenathus of Palmyra in the preceding century. Imru' al-Qays is the best representative of the new Arab-Byzantine relationship in the fourth century, that of the *foederati* and the *phylarchi*. Constantine's success in converting barbarian enemies into friendly client-kingdoms was remarkable. But while his success on the Rhine, the Danube, and the Euphrates, with the Franks, the Goths, and the Armenians respectively, is well known, that on the *limes Arabicus* is not so well known and deserves better recognition for a more comprehensive appreciation of the achievement of the first Byzantine *imperator*.

Constantius

Constantius continued his father's policy in his support of Arianism, in the prosecution of the Persian War, and in the cultivation of the Semites.

The *foederati* were in open revolt in A.D. 337, the year of Constantius's

accession. The death of Constantine meant the dissolution of the *foedus*, which had to be renewed between the new sovereign and the *foederati*. Already dissatisfied with Constantine's Arian policy, the *foederati* apparently took advantage of the dissolution of the *foedus* and not only did not renew it, but also revolted. Constantius succeeded in reconciling them the following year, and the reconciliation was most probably made possible when Constantius allowed the exiled Nicene bishops to return, among whom presumably was the orthodox bishop of the *foederati*. Whether they were alienated again by the flight of Athanasius from Alexandria to Rome in A.D. 339 is not clear. The loss of the relevant books of Ammianus's *Res Gestae* for this first period from 337 to 351, the year of the death of the emperor's brother Constans, makes it impossible to know whether the *foederati* participated, however intermittently, in the Persian War. But these books are extant from the year 353, when Ammianus finds them in revolt, till the end of the reign in 361, and yet there is no mention of Arab federate participation in the second Persian War of 359–61. The presumption is that they were in revolt, and this may be related to Constantius's aggressive Arian policy in the fifties.

More successful was Constantius's effort to win over the Southern Semites, of whom the South Arabians formed a part and to whom the historian Philostorgius devotes the best part of his account.

The emperor dispatches a diplomatic mission headed by Theophilus Indus to a South Arabia still in the embrace of paganism but which had a large and influential Jewish community. Theophilus, the miracle-worker, carries gifts to the ruler of South Arabia (referred to as *ethnarch*) consisting of two hundred Cappadocian horses and many other splendid gifts. He succeeds in converting the ethnarch of South Arabia and receives permission to found three churches in that region: one in Zafār, the capital of the Himyarites of South Arabia, another in the port of Aden, and a third near the mouth of the Persian Gulf.

After successfully performing his mission in South Arabia, he crosses to his native island of Dibos and to Indicē where he corrects certain religious customs, and then crosses over to Ethiopia, where he apparently failed to win over its two rulers to the Arian position. It is almost certain that Constantius's well-known letter to the two Ethiopian rulers concerning the recall of Frumentius and his dispatch to George the Cappadocian, the intrusive bishop of Alexandria (February 357–October 358), was carried by Theophilus. The episcopate of George is thus a chronological indication of the date of Theophilus's mission.

The mission served ecclesiastical, commercial, and political purposes. In addition to spreading Christianity in South Arabia and amenability to Byzantine influence, it served Byzantine commercial interests in the Red Sea, Indian

Ocean, and Persian Gulf—the route to India. In the context of the Byzantine-Sasanid conflict, it had clear political and military implications in its acquisition of new friends and allies in the world of the Southern Semites, especially as South Arabia in those days extended as far to the east as the Persian Gulf.

The ecclesiastic who headed the embassy was a remarkable man. He emerges as a link between the reign of Constantine and that of Constantius as far as the world of the Southern Semites is concerned. Sent by the Dibans/Divaeans as hostage to Constantine, he was formed and trained by Eusebius of Nicomedia. In the reign of Constantius, he emerged as an ardent Arian who returned to the region he had hailed from to convert it to Christianity. His career recalls that of his contemporary Ulphilas, the apostle to the Goths, an Arian like himself whose ancestors ultimately had hailed from Barbaria and who returned thither to preach *in partibus infidelium*.

The mission of Theophilus thus represents a strand of continuity with the reign of Constantine, who had perfected the experiment of surrounding himself with a ring of friendly client-states along the *limes* in Europe and had made initial probes with the Southern Semites of the Orient. But it was Constantius who carried these initial probes to a successful conclusion with the dispatch of the miracle-worker, Theophilus Indus. Of the legacy of his father to which he fell heir, the spread of Arianism, the war against Persia, and good relations with the Orient, Constantius failed miserably in the first two and succeeded signally in the third, which must be adjudged a notable success both in its conception and in its execution.

Thus in the late fifties Byzantium's sphere of influence in Arabia was remarkably extensive and firm. Western Arabia had practically been won over. Its northern part was within the Byzantine sphere of influence, and the fact is reflected in Imru' al-Qays's clientship, while the southern part was won recently by Theophilus Indus. Constantine's friendly relations with the Southern Semites reflected in the *Vita Constantini* was raised to a higher power by the missionary effort of Constantius, a comprehensive one which encompassed that southern region in its entirety, from Ethiopia to the Persian Gulf.

Julian

What father and son had accomplished, the nephew undid. Julian's haughtiness alienated the Arabs, while the technical ground of the disagreement that developed between him and the Arabs was not doctrinal but the withholding of their *salaria* and *munera*. Thus, as far as Arab-Byzantine relations are concerned, the reign constitutes a departure of some sort in the pattern of friction and disagreement between the *foederati* and the imperial government.

References to the Arabs in the *Res Gestae* are many, both implicit and

explicit, and, unlike the reference in the sources to the reigns of Constantine and Constantius, they make possible an evaluation of the Arab contribution to Julian's Persian campaign and to the Byzantine war effort against Persia.

These references open with the most important one, the passage in which Ammianus describes how the Arab *reguli* came to pay homage to Julian near Circesium, offered him the *ex auro corona*, and saluted him as *dominus mundi*. These *reguli* provide Julian with Arab *auxilia* who make their appearance at various junctures in the course of his march against Ctesiphon, at Circesium and Anatha. Implicit references find the Arabs between Zaitha and Dura, near Macepracta, near Perisabora, near Coche/Seleucia. The climax of the campaign was the battle for Ctesiphon in which, as has been argued, the Arabs take part. They retreat with Julian after the repulse at Ctesiphon until his death near Sumere.

The contribution of the Arabs to Julian's army was their mounted auxiliaries. As *auxilia*, they functioned throughout the campaign as cover for the legions. As mounted lancers they belonged to the cavalry arm and they also acted as guides and scouts. They most probably took part in the battle of Ctesiphon led by Julian himself, who had been pleased with their previous performance.

Of the three groups of *auxilia* that were associated with Julian's Persian campaign, the Arabs, the Goths, and the Armenians, it was the first that participated effectively in the campaign; the second are mentioned only once, and the third failed to make an appearance.

But Julian's relations with the Arabs were not constant. Disagreements developed after the battle of Ctesiphon during his retreat, when he denied a group of Arab *auxilia* their *munera* and *salaria* and added insult to injury with his famous reply, *imperatorem bellicosum et vigilantem ferrum habere non aurum*. He had been opposed to employing the service of *auxilia* in principle, and after Ctesiphon he felt he no longer needed them. These same Arab *auxilia* whom he had alienated before his death surrounded the Roman cavalry when these were at Dura during Jovian's retreat and after Julian's death.

The Arab involvement in imperial affairs during the reign of Julian was not limited to their participation in the Persian War but also in his death. Since Ammianus wrote "*incertum unde*" of the lance that pierced his side, the question of Julian's death has been the subject of a lively discussion. According to one theory, for which Libanius is mainly responsible, it was an Arab on the Roman side incited by some Christian group that killed Julian. The study of Arab-Byzantine relations in the fourth century and especially in the reign of Julian himself permits the making of a new contribution to this old question, based on new data relating to Arab-Byzantine relations in the fourth century.

It is possible that Julian was killed by an Arab, even as Libanius contends. If so, he could have been killed by one of two groups of Arabs: either a group inspired by a desire to take revenge on him for having denied them their *munera* and *salaria*, or a Christian Arab, one who was outraged by the religious orientation of the Apostate and his anti-Christian policy. The strong fanatic Christian complexion that the *foederati* assumed in the fourth century could easily explain the action of such a Christian Arab.

Julian had an ambivalent attitude toward the Arabs, derivative from his contempt for all allies and *auxilia* and enhanced in the case of the Arabs because of their Christianity. As a result, he did not fully appreciate the value of effective Arab participation in the Persian War. The Arabs were familiar with the terrain of the region and were used to its climate. Above all, they were perhaps the only group that was enthusiastic for this Persian War of his, being revanchists, anxious to settle accounts with Shāpūr. A more sympathetic attitude toward them and a better appreciation of their potential for the war with Persia might have changed the course of his Persian War and his own career; and he might not have died when he did, as he did.

Valens

After their disagreements with Julian, the Arab *foederati* returned to the imperial fold in the reign of Christian Jovian. The emperor did not live long enough for Arab-Byzantine relations to develop significantly during his reign. But these did in the relatively long reign of Valens (364–78), which like that of Julian is the best documented of all the reigns of the fourth century for Arab-Byzantine relations. Unfortunately, this applies only to the last triennium, since little is known about the Arab *foederati* in the ten years or so that preceded that period. However, it is possible to recover some echoes of their activities in the earlier years, implicit as these echoes are.

A

In A.D. 365, during the rebellion of Procopius, the Arab *foederati* may have taken part in military operations against him under the command of the *magister militum*, Lupicinus. This may be inferred from the employment of such terms as *catervae* and *auxilia* to describe the troops under his command, and these terms could very well apply to the Arab *foederati*. Although Arian, Valens did in that year amnesty Athanasius, the hero of the Nicene party, to whom the Arab *foederati* belonged. Since the participation of these *foederati* was related to the theological controversies of the period, it is possible that the period A.D. 367–71, which was a truce in the middle of what was termed “the second Arian persecution,” witnessed their return to the service. In this period there was an outbreak of violence by the Maratocupreni who dwelled

in a village by the same name near Apamea. They ravaged the region but were rooted out by the imperial army in A.D. 369. It has been argued that these were an orthodox group of the same religious persuasion as the Arab *foederati* and that their village was possibly the same that in later Islamic times was known in Arabic as Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān, the seat of the Tanūkhids who had been the *foederati* of Byzantium in pre-Islamic times.

Thus, this decade extending from 365 to 375 is a period of disappointments and uneasy relations, reminiscent of their relations with Constantius and affected by doctrinal differences between the two parties, especially after the orthodox Arabs discovered that Valens, like Constantius, was definitely in the Arian fold. In this decade, the king of the *foederati* would have been that king left anonymous in the sources but made famous through his illustrious wife, Mavia, who comes into prominence in the last three years of the reign.

B

Little is known about this anonymous king other than the fact that he was the king of the Arab *foederati* in the reign of Valens before his death ca. 375. How long he had reigned before he died is not clear, but it is almost certain he was alive in A.D. 363 and was one of the Arab *reguli* who met Julian near Circesium and presented him with the golden crown. The fact that he was succeeded by his wife suggests that he had no male issue or, if he had, they were still minors; but he certainly had a daughter, the future wife of the *magister equitum*, the Sarmatian Victor. On his death, the *foedus* between Byzantium and the federate Arabs was dissolved, apparently automatically.

It was the dissolution of this *foedus* that brought his widow, Mavia, into the limelight. Not only did she not renew it, but she also revolted openly, and this raises the question of the reasons behind her revolt. The ecclesiastical historians are clear on the point. At issue was the consecration of an orthodox bishop acceptable to the orthodox *foederati*, and not an Arian one repugnant to them. The bishop of the *foederati* may have died at about the same time that the anonymous king had, and he was possibly none other than Theotimus, who together with other bishops had signed the homoousian declaration addressed to Jovian in A.D. 363, or who participated in the Synod of Antioch in A.D. 363.

Mavia took the military initiative. She apparently withdrew *extra limitem* and attacked the outlying provinces of Oriens, adjacent to the *limes orientalis*. Rufinus speaks of her assaults against the towns and cities of the Palestinian and the Arabian *limes* and the neighboring provinces, which must have been Phoenicia and Egypt. Sozomen specifically mentions Phoenicia, which must have been Phoenicia Libanensis, and also Egypt. What is striking in her offensive was its wide range from Phoenicia to Egypt and her assault on towns and cities, and, what is more, her engaging the imperial armies in pitched

battles. Sozomen describes in some detail one of these pitched battles in which she first beat the *hēgemōn* of the Phoenician and Palestinian troops and then the *stratēgos* of Oriens himself. The secret of this unusual victory must be sought in two sets of circumstances. The *foederati* had learned how to fight in the Roman manner after their long association with Rome, and thus they could combine both Roman and traditional Arab methods of warfare, especially represented by the *ghazāt*, the swift raid. Then there was the delicate international situation, the preoccupation of Valens with the Persians and the Goths at that juncture. There was also general dissatisfaction in Oriens with his ecclesiastical policy. All this enabled Mavia to count on the support of those communities in Oriens that were orthodox and thus sympathetic to Mavia and her cause, the orthodox cause.

The Roman counteroffensive is also described in Sozomen, and it reflects the strength and impetuosity of Mavia's offensive. In the pitched battle in which the Byzantines were worsted, the *hēgemōn* of the Palestinian and Phoenician troops had to invoke the aid of the *stratēgos* of Oriens for help against Mavia, who had pressed him hard. The implication is that the combined troops of the two provinces proved inadequate for containing Mavia. The *stratēgos*, unlike the commander who appealed to him, is known by name, Julius, the *magister equitum et peditum per Orientem*. He decided to engage Mavia alone without the aid of the *hēgemōn*, but he was defeated by Mavia, who commanded her troops in person. It was only when the *hēgemōn* disobeyed the orders of his superior, Julius, and rushed to his succor that he was able to extricate him. He did so first by throwing in his troops against those of Mavia, thus engaging her and enabling his superior to retreat, while he himself kept Mavia's troops from pursuing the *magister* by yielding ground and shooting arrows at them.

The battle, which like Mavia's husband remains anonymous, was a major military engagement and a signal triumph for the queen of the *foederati*. This is reflected not only in the accounts of the ecclesiastical historians but also in the fact that some seventy years after the event it was still celebrated in victory odes by the Arabs.

After these victories, the Byzantines sued for peace. No doubt it was the darkening skies of the international situation on both the Gothic and the Persian fronts that induced Valens to compound with Mavia. His acceptance of the consecration of an orthodox bishop, Moses, over her *foederati* is also consonant with the fact that his persecution of the homoousians ceased in 377 with his departure for Constantinople to meet the Gothic peril. Thus the entanglement of secular and ecclesiastical history persists throughout the reign. The emperor well knew that he could not afford the fragmentation of the imperial army and its commitment to a provincial war in Oriens when the Goths were posing a threat to Constantinople itself.

The Moses for the sake of whom Mavia revolted and battled the Romans became an important figure in ecclesiastical history and hagiography. He was neither a deacon nor a presbyter before he became bishop, but a solitary, a "holy man" who lived in "a neighboring desert." When he was taken to Alexandria in order that he might be consecrated by Lucius, he refused to be instructed and consecrated by the Arian patriarch, arguing that matters of faith were not in question, only the depositions and banishment of orthodox bishops were. Finally, Moses was consecrated by the orthodox bishops in exile, and he returned to the *foederati* who had asked for his consecration as their bishop. This consecration signaled the end of the federate-imperial confrontation. Moses was an Arab and apparently was the first *Arab* bishop of the *foederati*.

The extraordinary events of Mavia's war against Valens were attended by another extraordinary event, the marriage of Mavia's daughter to the *magister equitum*, Victor. The marriage, involving a princess, followed the conclusion of the *foedus* with Byzantium. Thus the romantic episode enacted by the queen in the annals of Arab-Byzantine relations was transformed into a fairy tale.

The marriage must be adjudged a unique matrimonial transaction in the social history of Arab-Byzantine relations. As it united a *Rhomaioi* and a non-Roman princess, it violated a Constitution issued by Valentinian and Valens prohibiting such intermarriages, and it must have been made possible by special imperial permission. As a political marriage, it cemented the *foedus* concluded after the end of the Saracen War and strengthened the *fides* that obtained between the federates and the imperial government. Victor was the *magister equitum* and his seat was Antioch. That he was both Christian and Orthodox could relieve the matrimonial union of being a marriage of political convenience and could impart to the matrimonial transaction a romantic element. Perhaps the marriage was not only arranged by the queen but was also desired by Victor himself as the surest means of keeping the *fides* alive between the Arab *foederati* and the imperial government. He was, or must have been, a friend of the Arabs who as Master of Horse appreciated the value of the *foederati* as horsemen in the army of the Orient, and it is almost certain that it was Victor who persuaded Valens to conclude peace with Mavia. His stand for orthodoxy, which united him with Mavia, must have been another consideration that inclined him favorably toward Mavia and toward working for a settlement of the Saracen War in a manner favorable to the Saracen queen.

C

The last chapter in the history of Arab-Byzantine relations during the reign of Valens was written in Thrace and associated the Arabs not with

historical events of provincial interest in Oriens, but with those of the capital itself and possibly, even probably, with one of the major battles of this early Byzantine period, the battle of Adrianople in A.D. 378. The traditional account of Arab participation in the Gothic War associates the contingent sent by Mavia only with the aftermath of Adrianople, with the defense of Constantinople against the Goths, but their role was almost certainly much more extensive and may be divided into three phases: before, during, and after the battle:

1. Zosimus explicitly states that Valens brought back with him from Antioch to Constantinople a contingent of Arab *foederati* who participated in the first phase of the Gothic War before the battle of Adrianople was joined. The battlefield was not far from Constantinople and the Arabs vanquished the Goths, and so much so that these had to recross the Danube and surrender to the Huns rather than be massacred by the Arabs. Three factors contributed to the Arab victory: the speed of their horses, the irresistible thrust of their long pikes, and the horsemanship of the riders in wielding these pikes with which they transfixing their adversaries from a distance.

2. It is also possible, even probable, that the *foederati* fought at the battle of Adrianople, since it is quite unlikely that Valens took the trouble of marching these tested horsemen of the south from distant Antioch but did not pit them against the horsemen of the north in the major battle of the Gothic War. The chances, then, are that the Arab *foederati* took part in the historic battle and shared the fate that befell the imperial army.

3. It was most probably the survivors of the carnage at Adrianople who took part in the defense of Constantinople immediately after. Just as Zosimus's description of their participation in the first phase gives important military details that account for their victory over the Goths, so does the account of Ammianus give equally valuable military details, more valuable than the sensationalism about one Saracen sucking the blood of his adversaries and thus frightening the rest and saving Constantinople! It is clear from his account that the Arabs formed a *turma*, which term gives them their correct place in the composition of the Byzantine force before Constantinople, and that as a *cuneus* they employed the wedge-formation tactic.

Thus, of the three engagements with the Goths in the three phases of the Gothic War, the Arab *foederati* were victorious in the first and the third. The reign ends disastrously for *imperator*, *imperium*, and *foederati* with the catastrophe of Adrianople, but before his death in that battle Valens had restored Arab-Byzantine relations to normality, and his reign emerges as a remarkable one in the annals of Arab-Byzantine relations, remarkable *inter alia* for the federate loyalty that shines forth from the havoc of the war—loyalty to the *ecclesia*, loyalty to the *imperium*.

Theodosius

Theodosius inherited from his predecessor Valens a group of Arab *foederati* who were orthodox in doctrinal persuasion and loyal in their allegiance to the empire, the Gothic War of which they had fought with distinction. A harmonious relationship was therefore expected between the orthodox *foederati* and the very orthodox emperor; and yet the reign of Theodosius witnessed the nadir of Arab-Byzantine relations in the fourth century and the fall of the first Arab client-kingdom in the service of Byzantium in this pre-Islamic period, the dynasty of Mavia—the Tanūkhids.

To the first triennium of the reign, A.D. 379–82, may be ascribed various causes of friction between Theodosius and the *foederati*, some of whom may have been still in Constantinople when he became emperor on 19 January 379. The *foedus* between the *foederati* and the empire had lapsed with the death of Valens, and thus there was a period of uncertainty favorable for the development of disagreements. The Arab *foederati*, some of whom may have lingered in Constantinople, probably resented the pro-Gothic policy of Theodosius, but principally their disagreement or resentment must be related to the Settlement of A.D. 382, the terms of which were very favorable to the Goths. The Arabs, who considered that they deserved well of the empire, expected a favorable new *foedus*, similar to that which Theodosius struck with the Goths. But while Theodosius was willing to accommodate the Goths generously, he probably was unwilling to treat the Arabs similarly. In the case of the Goths, he had no choice; in the case of the Arabs, he could ignore their demands since, unlike the Goths, they now posed no threat.

Theodosius hailed from the West and had no experience in dealing with the Arabs. The Germanophile emperor was understandably cool and irresponsible toward them, especially as their image in the imperial mirror was far from attractive, having been conceived as rebels in the last years of the reign of his predecessor, while Libanius distorted their image even further when he addressed Oration XXIV to Theodosius on his accession in A.D. 379. In that oration, the influential orator accused the Arabs openly of having murdered a Roman emperor in the purple, the last member of the house of Constantine, Julian.

The immediate cause of the rapid deterioration of federate-imperial relations must be sought in the dealings of the *foederati* with the Roman commanders in Oriens, in Antioch. The early reign of Theodosius witnessed innovations in the military administration, and Zosimus complains, among other things, of the huckstering of military provisions. This could have been a real cause of discontent; malpractice in the administration of the *annona* is indeed a recurrent theme in the annals of Arab-Byzantine relations.

The *foederati* revolted in A.D. 383, and they were crushed in the same

year. It has been argued that the one who crushed them was none other than the new *magister*, the Frank, Richomer, a friend of Libanius who had preached a gospel of revenge against the murderers of Julian and who had identified these murderers as Arabs.

The signal failure of this second revolt may be attributed to many causes, the most important of which must be two: the international situation had changed since the first revolt; the Persian front was quiet and so was the Gothic front, while the ranks of the *foederati* had been thinned by their participation in the Gothic War. It was therefore an unfortunate conjunction of unfavorable circumstances that brought about the downfall of the Arab Christian *foederati* at the hands of a pagan *magister*, the German Richomer. Their best friend, perhaps their only friend, at the imperial court in Constantinople or at the *magisterium orientale* in Antioch, Victor, had retired the summer before in A.D. 382, possibly after disagreements with Theodosius concerning favorable terms for them. So it is certain that he could not be of help in this revolt as he had been in the first. As a private citizen and one away from the scene of operations in Oriens, there was not much that he could do.

The undoing of the first Arab-Byzantine client-kingdom late in the fourth century during the reign of Theodosius was in one respect a departure from the pattern that unfolds in the examination of Theodosius's life work as a continuation of the work of Constantine—the pursuit of ecclesiastical peace, the conciliation and enlistment of the barbarians, and the unification of the empire. Constantine had Arab *foederati* settled on Roman soil, as he had the Goths, but while the Goths received from Theodosius a favorable settlement and an autonomous state on Roman soil after defeating the Romans, the Arabs of Mavia lost their prestige and position after fighting for Byzantium and in spite of the fact that, unlike the Goths, they belonged to the same doctrinal persuasion as the very orthodox emperor.

The second revolt brought about the downfall of the *foederati* of Queen Mavia, and the effects of the revolt and the downfall may be stated as follows:

1. Weakened by their participation in the Gothic Wars and crushed by Richomer, Mavia's *foederati* must have been greatly reduced in numbers. What is more, they ceased to be the dominant Arab group of *foederati* in the service of Byzantium. Another group arose, the Salīhids, and lasted for over a century. Mavia's *foederati*, the Tanūkhids, however, did not disappear from the federate scene in Oriens; they continued to form part of it until the seventh century.

2. It is possible that the provincial reorganization in Oriens which took place in this period was related to this second revolt of the *foederati*. Theodosius detached Egypt from the Diocese and created two new provinces, Palestina II

and Phoenicia Libanensis, the provinces that had been attacked by Mavia during her first revolt and possibly also during the second.

Mavia and Chasidat

Mavia is not explicitly mentioned in the Greek sources after the siege of Constantinople in A.D. 378, but two Greek inscriptions, one found outside Anasartha and another inside it, may refer to Mavia and her daughter.

The first is dated A.D. 425 and enumerates the virtues of a lady by the name of Mavia and commemorates her erection of a *martyrium* in honor of St. Thomas. If the honorand in the inscription is indeed the queen, then she would have lived to a ripe old age, a pious woman who renounced the world after the failure of the second revolt in the reign of Theodosius.

The inscription could also be valuable for throwing light on the veneration of the *foederati* for St. Thomas, whose cult was widespread in Mesopotamia, whence the Tanūkhid *foederati* had hailed before they joined the Romans; on the area where these *foederati* were settled, namely, in Chalcidice; on their status as noncitizens since their *martyrium* was built *extra muros*; and on the fact that they were not a group of nomads but a sedentarized group who *inter alia* built churches and monasteries.

The other Greek inscription, found inside the walls of Anasartha, speaks of a certain Silvanus who, acting on the suggestion of a young girl famed for her virtues and named Chasidat, built a shrine for the martyrs.

It has been argued that this Silvanus could possibly have been Victor and that Chasidat was Mavia's daughter, left anonymous in the literary sources. If this is indeed the case, then Victor would have returned from Constantinople to Oriens only to find his princess wife dead or about to die and to erect at her wish a *martyrium* for the fallen among the *foederati*.

Conclusions

It is clear from the preceding narrative of the course of Arab-Byzantine relations in the fourth century that continual friction characterized the course of these relations. The pattern of participation and nonparticipation in the imperial wars was a reflection of the deep involvement of the *foederati* in the religious currents and controversies that rocked the century and is thus a clear indication that the *foederati* were not rude soldiers writing a chapter in the history of "trumpets and drums."

The Arab *foederati* took their Christianity seriously and were deeply involved in the theological controversies of the period. They themselves were not theologians, but they were loyal soldiers who followed the lead of their commanders, and these occasionally, as in the case of Mavia, may not have been so superficially involved in the christological controversies of the fourth

century. The *foederati* followed the lead of their priests and bishops, who were Orthodox. Just as the Arian patriarch of Alexandria, Lucius, was known to them, so must Orthodox Athanasius have been. The *foederati* thus espoused the cause of Nicaea and its hero, Athanasius; in the latter part of the century, it was their holy man, Orthodox Moses, who was their hero. Even more important than the theological controversies which these *foederati* could not have comprehended were the depositions and the banishments of the Nicene bishops by the Arian emperors. These represented to the *foederati* concrete evidence for the iniquity of these emperors, and it was, therefore, the ill-treatment of the bishops that must have inflamed them.

The strict Nicene position that the *foederati* took in the christological controversy was the basis of the pattern of their participation and nonparticipation in the wars of the period and their relations with the central government. Although this politico-religious involvement is attested explicitly only for the reign of Valens, the examination of the reign of Constantine has established the fact that this involvement started from the beginning of the Byzantine period in the reign of Constantine himself, when the Arian controversy broke out.

In contrast with the qualified success of the house of Constantine with the Arab *foederati* in Oriens is its success in the extension of the Byzantine sphere of influence in Arabia, first in the reign of Constantine and then in the reign of Constantius. Toward the end of the latter reign, western Arabia and South Arabia were favorably disposed toward Byzantium. And yet these gains made by the first two members of the house of Constantine seem to have been lost after the Peace of Jovian. The two emperors who occupied the throne, Valens and Theodosius, seem not to have continued the Arabian policies of the first part of the century. The two were oriented toward the West, not the East, and had on their hands, especially after the Peace of Jovian, not the Persian problem in the East, but the Gothic problem in the North. It was perhaps owing to this that the strong Christian mission to South Arabia eventually came to naught. Judaism won the upper hand over Christianity in that region toward the end of the fourth century. This continued to be the case in the fifth century and until the first quarter of the sixth when Byzantium and its old ally Ethiopia engaged in a joint expedition that won the country to the Christian fold and returned it to the Byzantine political orbit.

II. THE POLITICAL AND MILITARY ORGANIZATION OF THE *FOEDERATI*

1

Not much is known about the organization and structure of federate life. There was a dominant federate group, the Tanūkhids, settled in Chalcidice

and there was a powerful Lakhmid presence in the Provincia Arabia. How these were related to each other administratively is not clear. There were federate groups in other parts of Oriens, and the relations of these to one another and to either of the two powerful groups, the Tanūkhids and the Lakhmids, are also not clear. The revolt of Mavia could argue that she had some control over many tribes, but this may have been true only of the period of the crisis with the imperial government. The Namāra inscription of Imru' al-Qays gives a glimpse of a family in power; the sons of Imru' al-Qays are in charge of the tribes but subordinate to their father, who is the supreme ruler and commander. Other than these two cases, there is nothing in the sources to suggest a strongly centralized federate organization in Oriens as a whole such as the Ghassānids possessed in the sixth century. All that one can say is that there was a dominant group within the federates of Oriens in the fourth century and that these were the Tanūkhids. This paramountcy of one group, which in the case of the Tanūkhids led to two revolts, one in the reign of Valens and another in that of Theodosius, may even have induced the imperial government toward the end of the century to favor a looser federate presence, even looser than mere paramountcy.

2

None of the *foedera* struck between Byzantium and the several federate groups are extant. So the terms of these *foedera* can only be reconstructed from hints in the sources.

The *foedus* was most probably valid as long as the representatives of the contracting parties were alive. On the death of one of the two parties the *foedus* would lapse, and it would have to be renewed before the state of *amicitia* could be restored between them. Such was the situation when Mavia's husband died and such it was when Valens died. As the Arab allies were apparently not centralized in the fourth century, Byzantium concluded not one *foedus* but several *foedera* with the federates, and it is unlikely that the terms were exactly identical.

The various groups of Arab *foederati* were settled on both sides of the *limes*. The Lakhmids were certainly settled in the Provincia Arabia since Namāra, where their king was buried, is within the boundaries of the Provincia. And so were the Tanūkhids, whose settlements were in Chalcidice. It is quite unlikely that settlement of some of the federates within the *limes* entailed territorial sovereignty.

The mutual obligations of the two contracting parties can only be inferred or partly inferred. Those of the Arab federates mainly consisted of participation in the wars of the empire against Persia and the Arabian Peninsula, in the maintenance of law and order both within and without the *limes*, and in

the protection of trade routes and caravans, and sometimes of monastic establishments in desert and arid areas of Oriens, in Sinai and Chalcidice. Those of Byzantium entailed paying the subsidy, the *annona*, in addition to allowing some of the *foederati* to settle on Byzantine territory. It is a matter of detail whether the *annona* was paid in gold or in kind. Perhaps some were paid in kind, others in gold. Those who participated in Julian's Persian War received *salaria* and *munera*, and so evidently did the federates in the previous reigns.

Their place and function in the Byzantine army of the Orient was that of mounted *auxilia*. The most detailed account of their armor and tactics may be found in the sources that tell of their contributions to the wars of Valens and the defense of Constantinople against the Goths, immediately before and after the battle of Adrianople. The Arab *foederati* attacked in wedge formation; their deadly weapon was the long pike which they skillfully wielded as mounted horsemen riding fleet steeds. They were under the *magister equitum per Orientem*, created by Constantine. And as cavalry, they formed part of the army of the Orient, reflecting the importance of the cavalry arm in the fourth century. Their mobility as cavalry could also ally them on critical occasions, as in the Gothic War of the reign of Valens, to the *comitatenses*, the mobile striking force of the new army created by Constantine.

On the vexed question of whether or not the *foederati* were citizens, a problem that has been raised about other *foederati*, such as the Germans, there is no evidence that can settle this question decisively. The chances are that the Arab *foederati* were not considered *cives*, but it is conceivable that *civitas* may have been extended to some of their commanders for exceptional services to the state.

One of the Arab federate groups, the Tanūkhids, were Christian from their Mesopotamian days before they went over to the Romans. The other federate groups, some of whom had been in the area earlier than the fourth century, were Christianized, and their conversion was most probably a reflection of official imperial policy.

3

The *foederati* of the fourth century appear ruled by kings. Such was the Lakhmid Imru' al-Qays and also Mavia's anonymous husband. "King" rather than "phylarch" seems to have been the political term that described their rulers. Some questions inevitably arise concerning this *basileia* of the fourth-century *foederati*, such as their *insignia* and the measure of their sovereignty.

Information on the royal *insignia* is limited in the sources to Imru' al-Qays who is described as a crowned king. The king came from the Land of the Two Rivers, and so the crown was Persian in origin. Whether the federate kings were sovereign rulers is not clear. The tone of the Namāra inscription suggests

sovereignty for Imru' al-Qays, while the details of Mavia's war suggest that Mavia was not an insurgent but a belligerent. All this may be deceptive. In spite of a certain measure of independence and in spite of the fact that the kings of the *foederati* may have been theoretically sovereign, the chances are that by settling on Roman territory and by accepting the *annona* they did surrender much of their sovereignty and that the *foedus*, in spite of all outward appearances, was in fact a *foedus iniquum*. Apparently the federate kings did not receive strictly Byzantine titles as the Ghassānid kings were to do in the sixth century. This may not have been entirely accidental. The lesson of Palmyra may have impressed on the Byzantines the undesirability of closely integrating the Arabs within the Byzantine system lest this should whet their imperial appetites.

It is possible that the title *basileus* was discontinued toward the end of the century since the chief of the new dominant group that supersedes the Tanūkhids appears carrying the title *phylarch*, although this may have been a nontechnical application of the term on the part of an ecclesiastical historian. Be that as it may, the term *phylarch* is the one that acquires vogue in the fifth and sixth centuries of this pre-Islamic period.

The term had been used in Hellenistic and Roman times, and Byzantium inherited the usage from the immediate Hellenistic and Roman past. The term was not inapposite. Used in ancient Athens for the commander of the cavalry furnished by each tribe, it was appropriately applied to the commander of the Arab federates, who were also horsemen. But it also carried with it an implication that might have been a contributing factor to distorting the image of the Arabs. Many of these federates were certainly not nomads, and yet the etymology of the term *phylarchos* could suggest a tribal nomadic structure for the Arab federates.

The term reached the climax of its development in the sixth century, but in the fourth it was apparently not very developed. The term was not applied to the kings of the federates as it was applied to the kings of the Ghassānids in the sixth, and this could suggest that it was probably applied to the minor commanders in charge of smaller military units. Over these phylarchs was the *basileus*, such as Mavia's husband or Imru' al-Qays. Nevertheless, the term *phylarch* is more revelatory and significant than *basileus* in describing the Arab federate rulers and leaders. These were military figures and cavalry commanders, and the term *phylarch* captures this essential military reality more than the term *basileus* which denoted a political reality. Furthermore, the federate *basileus* was functionally a phylarch, a supreme phylarch.

III. THE WORLD OF THE *FOEDERATI* IN THE ARABIC SOURCES

With the exception of the ecclesiastical historians who noticed the Arabs in the reign of Valens, the Byzantine sources limit themselves to the political

and military aspects of Arab-Byzantine relations and conceive of the Arabs in general as *foederati* or Saracens who thus remain an anonymous people in the sources.

This lack of specificity and inattention to other aspects of Arab-Byzantine relations, as important or even more important than the military aspect, are made good by the Oriental sources, especially the Arabic, which naturally evince more interest in these Arab *foederati* than the Byzantine sources do. It is therefore to these sources that one must turn for these other aspects. The most important of all the literary sources is the chief historian of these *foederati* and of pre-Islamic Arabia, Hishām al-Kalbī (d. *ca.* A.D. 820), a Muslim Arab who belonged to the powerful tribe of Kalb, the tribe that had played an important role in Oriens/Shām in Umayyad as well as in pre-Islamic times, and who thus was in a good position to write on the distant past of these Arab *foederati*. He was the first Arab historian to use epigraphy as an important and sometimes indispensable ancillary to the reconstruction of the pre-Islamic Arab past, and he wrote on the three groups of *foederati*, those of the fourth, the fifth, and the sixth centuries, the Tanūkhids, the Salīhids, and the Ghas-sānids respectively. For the fourth-century *foederati*, he is especially important since he is the chief literary source on the dominant federate group, Tanūkh, and also on the Lakhmids, both the tribal group and Imru' al-Qays, "the king of all the Arabs."

1

The Arabic sources, which ultimately derive from Hishām, are agreed that the first group of Arab *foederati* in the service of Byzantium in the fourth century were the Tanūkhids, a large tribal group that had crossed over from the Land of the Two Rivers and became the dominant Arab federate group. The Lakhmids of Imru' al-Qays of Namāra in the Provincia Arabia were another very important federate group in the fourth century, and since they were related to the Tanūkhids, it is possible to use the term Tanūkhid in this capacious sense to include both these groups and thus to continue to use it for the dominant federate group in the fourth century.

2

According to the Arabic sources, the Tanūkhids had only three kings: al-Nu'mān, son of 'Amr; 'Amr, son of al-Nu'mān; and al-Ḥawārī, son of al-Nu'mān. These three kings have survived as mere names since nothing else is explicitly stated in the sources about them, but something, even much about them could be recovered if Hishām's book on the Tanūkhids were extant. Since the Arabic sources speak of the Tanūkhids and the Lakhmids in the service of Byzantium in the fourth century and since the term Tanūkhid is an inclusive term, it is not altogether impossible that the first Tanūkhid king in

the list, al-Nu'mān, son of 'Amr, is none other than Imru' al-Qays, son of 'Amr, of the Namāra inscription, al-Nu'mān being possibly a nickname of Imru' al-Qays. If so, then the Namāra inscription would shed much light on the first Tanūkhid king, al-Nu'mān. As to the other two, nothing has survived in the Arabic sources about them. If the second or the third in the list can be identified with one of the Arab *reguli* who met Julian at Circesium or with the anonymous husband of Queen Mavia, then this list of three kings will receive some illumination.

3

The Arab federate presence in Oriens in the fourth century was multi-tribal in structure. In addition to the Tanūkhids, there were other groups, some of whom were related to the Tanūkhids and some of whom were not.

The Tanūkhids were the dominant federate group, settled in the north of Oriens, in Chalcidice. As a large tribal group or even a confederation, they included many tribes and were related to many others. Such were the Lakhmids, the tribe of Imru' al-Qays who had been king of Ḥīra on the Lower Euphrates before his defection to the Romans. The emigration of his tribe Lakhm, or part of it, with him from Persian to Byzantine territory is the natural explanation for the sudden appearance in Oriens of this Euphratesian tribe away from its original abode in the Land of the Two Rivers. His epitaph gives the Lakhmid group and its king a considerable degree of specificity: his death in A.D. 328 and the settlement of his tribe, the Lakhmids, in the Provincia Arabia.

Other tribes certainly formed part of this federate presence in Oriens in the vast area extending from the Tigris to the Nile, and these may be presented as follows: (1) there were the two tribes Juḍām and 'Āmila, identified by some with the biblical tribes Edom and Amalec and going back to biblical times; they were settled in the southern part of the Provincia Arabia and in what later became Palestina Tertia; (2) there was also Balqayn, also identified by some with the Kenites, an old biblical tribe, settled in Trans-Jordan; (3) to the south of Juḍām, there was Balī in northern Ḥijāz; (4) Kalb, the powerful and well-known tribe, was settled between Syria and Mesopotamia, and one of its settlements was the strategic Dūmat al-Jandal; (5) Salīḥ, which was to become the dominant federate tribal group in the fifth century, was also already settled in Oriens.

Tanūkh was the dominant group in the federate-imperial relationship but exactly how it was related to the other groups within the federate framework is not entirely clear. There is no clear or explicit statement in the sources on whether the Tanūkhids controlled the other federate tribes as the Ghassānids were to do in the sixth century. As to whether all these tribes enjoyed federate

status, this can only be conjecturally answered, but the chances are good that even such a tribe in the south of Oriens as Balī did enjoy a federate status of some sort, and much depends on how far in Hījāz the southern boundary of the Provincia Arabia extended.

These tribes formed what might be termed the Arab shield in the Roman defense system in Oriens. The new shield superseded the one that had crumbled in the third century with the fall of the last powerful Arab client-state, Palmyra. The vacuum created by that fall is consonant with the dominance of the Tanūkhids in the fourth century. According to the Arabic sources, they were the enemies of the Sasanids and the Palmyrenes—Rome's adversaries—and, what is more, they were Christianized and consequently were doubly welcome in the embrace of the new Christian Roman Empire.

4

Where in Oriens these federate tribes were settled is a matter of considerable importance. The provinces or regions associated with their names have been generally identified. As to the precise localities wherein they were settled, the sources have contributed the following toponyms: Namāra in the Provincia Arabia for Lakhm, Dūmat al-Jandal for Kalb, Thelsee and Betroclus in Phoenicia Libanensis for the two units of Saracen *equites* mentioned in the *Notitia Dignitatum*.

As to the dominant federate group, the following localities or their vicinities were associated with the Tanūkhids, or suspected of an association with them: Thainatha (Umm al-Jimāl), Chalcis, Beroea, Anasartha, Callinicum, Zabad, Şawwarān, and Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān. In Islamic times, the Tanūkhids were associated with Epiphania (Ḥama), Laodicea (Lādiqiyya), and Jabal Bahrā' and Tanūkh, the mountain range that extends from Laodicea to Emesa.

IV. THE *FOEDERATI* AND THE ROMAN FRONTIER

1

The Tanūkhids were settled in Chalcidice, and as *foederati* they naturally played an important role in the defense of that strategic region. The elucidation of their history as Byzantium's *foederati* in the fourth century and the identification of the area of their settlement in Chalcidice make possible a new understanding of certain features of the so-called *limes* of Chalcis and its defense in the Byzantine period. The history of this *limes* has been written without much attention to or knowledge of the place of the federate Tanūkhids in its defense. This place may be summarized as follows:

Just as Arab Palmyra had shouldered much of the defense of the region in the third century, so did the Tanūkhids, settled in Chalcidice, in the fourth but, of course, on a much reduced scale.

(1) Of the various types of fortifications that have been enumerated as belonging to the *limes* of Chalcis, three could have been associated with the Arab *foederati*: the polygonal enclosures; the towers that watched over the caravaneers; and the posts with their enclosures watching over the watering places. The two terms that belong to the military terminology of Arabic in this pre-Islamic period, namely, *ḥīra* and *ḥādīr*, the military encampments and enclosures, may be related to these three types of fortifications noted by the military historians of the *limes* of Chalcis.

(2) Knowledge of the toponymy of the *limes* can be advantaged by the recovery of a number of toponyms associated with the Tanūkhids in both pre-Islamic and Islamic times. These are Chalcis, Beroea, Anasartha, Callicum, Şawwarān, Zabad, Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān, Epiphania, and Laodicea.

(3) The military assignment of the Tanūkhids within this defense system of the *limes* was fourfold. (a) The fourth century witnessed continual wars with the Persians, and the Tanūkhids undoubtedly participated in those wars but mostly in the Trans-Euphratesian region where the Persian Wars of the fourth century were fought. They also had other assignments this side of the Euphrates. (b) Chalcidice protected Antioch itself, the capital of Oriens, from Persian and Saracen attacks. (c) There was also a large eremitic community in the desert of Chalcis and this, too, needed protection. (d) Perhaps more important was their assignment to contain the new threat posed by the rising power of Ḥīra on the Lower Euphrates, the capital of the Lakhmid Arabs, the clients of Persia who mounted offensives against Oriens. This inter-Arab war between the Tanūkhids of Chalcidice and the Lakhmids of Ḥīra, waged this side of the Euphrates, could partly explain the rise of the *limes* of Chalcis as an internal *limes* in spite of the rise of the *Strata Diocletiana* with its advanced posts against the Arabian Peninsula.

2

Federate Arab participation in the defense of Oriens was naturally more extensive than the Tanūkhid defense of Chalcidice. It extended over the whole *limes orientalis* from the Tigris to the Red Sea. The history of this participation lacks specificity, but it is as real as the challenge to which this participation was a response on the part of Rome and Byzantium. The challenge consisted of constant pressure on the long Roman frontier with Arabia and the Arabs in the Orient, especially in sectors of the *limes orientalis* where the threat was more from the Arabs than from the Persians, as in the case of the *limes Arabicus*. The Arab element may be considered relevant in the discussion of the following features of the defense system in Oriens:

(1) The two *limites*, the *limes interior* and the *limes exterior*. These two terms with which historians of the *limes orientalis* had operated have been

superseded by a better one, the fortified territory or region which the *limes orientalis* was. Arab tribes, federate or semi-federate, lived on both sides of this *limes*, and this fact enables the historian of the *limes* to discard the term *limes exterior* completely in favor of such terms as an indirect Roman sphere of influence or presence through the federate relationship with these Arab tribes. How far in Arabia this indirect Roman presence extended depends on the southern boundaries of the Provincia Arabia, which are likely to have been deeper in Arabia than has been realized. Latin and Greek inscriptions have been found in Dūmat al-Jandal and in al-Ḥijr in Ḥijāz respectively, testifying to the presence of detachments from III Cyrenaica, the legion of Bostra in the Provincia. These inscriptions at least document a Roman presence, in the midst of federate or allied Arab tribes. It is practically certain that in addition to the well-known *foederati* who lived within the *limes orientalis* in Oriens there were these tribes of the limitrophe and outside the *limes* who formed the outer Arab shield in the Roman sphere of influence in Arabia.

(2) Internal *limites* that run transversely to the line of the main *limes*. Three of these transverse lines have been discussed by military historians: the *limes* of Chalcis, the *limes Palestinae*, and the *limes* of Singara, and all of them are controversial. However, the new data on the Saracens and on the Arab *foederati* in Oriens could fortify the arguments of those who believe in their reality. As the *limes* of Chalcis has been discussed in connection with the Tanūkhids, it remains to discuss the *limes* of Palestine and the *limes* of Singara:

(a) It is possible that after the withdrawal of *legio Fretensis* from Jerusalem to Ayla ca. 300 that some form of *limes* was wanted to protect Palestine; hence the rise of this *limes* across the northern Negev. The character of Palestine as a Holy Land with *loca sancta* and as a place of pilgrimage to be protected against raiding Saracens could also have been a factor in the rise of this *limes*. The sources have disclosed the existence of pockets of Saracens in southern Palestine and Sinai that could have posed a security problem.

(b) The rise of the *limes* of Singara in Mesopotamia may be partially explained by reference to events in Mesopotamia that involved the Arabs. One of these could have been the fall in the third century of Ḥatra and Edessa, the two Arab fortresses, to the Persians and to the Romans respectively. The consequent nomadization and unrest could have called for a protective line of fortification. The area may also have witnessed an inter-Arab war between the Persian Arabs and the Byzantine Arabs in much the same way that Chalcidice witnessed it between the Tanūkhids and the Arabs of Ḥira. Thus, in accounting for the rise of these internal transverse *limites*, the Arabs have to be taken into account at least as a partial explanation.

Aerial photography, which has uncovered the existence of many enclosures along the *limes orientalis*, may have contributed some solid evidence for the

participation of the Arab *foederati* in the defense of the *limes* and has offered heuristic clues for the excavation of these sites. Although the pioneers of aerial photography as a technique for researching the *limes orientalis* did not think these enclosures were Arab establishments, the chances are that they were indeed Arab, perhaps none other than a line of *ḥīras* and *ḥādīrs*, with which these pioneers were unfamiliar. These enclosures were structurally distinguished from the Roman *castella* which they were designed to reinforce in an auxiliary fashion. This answers to the description of the *ḥīras* and *ḥādīrs* of the Arabs, called in Greek *paremboles*. Thus, these *ḥīras* and *ḥādīrs* must have been spread along the *limes orientalis* and not only in the region of Chalcidice involving the Tanūkhids, to whom reference has already been made.

The challenges that came not only from the Arabs but also from the Arabian Peninsula and that brought about the Roman response that organized the defense of the Orient may be summarized as follows: (a) challenge from the rising power of Ḥīra and its Arabs, the clients of Persia on the Lower Euphrates; (b) pressures from the Arabian Peninsula, affecting that sector of the *limes orientalis* that extended from Circesium on the Euphrates to Ayla on the Red Sea. In addition to inroads from the Ḥīran Arabs, there was Shāpūr's major campaign in the Arabian Peninsula in the third decade of the fourth century, which established the Persian sphere of influence in many parts of that Peninsula and advanced it to within striking distance of the *limes*. A new political configuration in Arabia may have posed a threat to Byzantine security in the fourth century. Toward the beginning of that century, the famous South Arabian king, Shammar Yuhar'ish, united all the kingdoms of the Arabian South, and this could have constituted a menace to Byzantine interests in Arabia. The campaign of Byzantium's client Imru' al-Qays against South Arabia could have been a response to that challenge, as possibly could have been the transference of *legio Fretensis* from Jerusalem to Ayla. The combat readiness of the *limes Arabicus* in the fourth century may be related to all these challenges from Arabia.

In addition to pressures against the *limes orientalis*, extending from Circesium to Ayla, there were pressures against the Byzantine defense system in the Sinai Peninsula sometimes from the Arabs and sometimes from non-Arab tribes such as the Blemmyes. The sources have preserved echoes of such pressures, those of Saracen pagan pockets and of the Blemmyes against the monastic establishments in Sinai. The Pharanite Arabs are specifically mentioned as defenders of the monastic and urban establishments in the south of Oriens, not only in Sinai but also in Egypt, a little-known chapter in the history of the defense system in the Orient.

Thus the Arabs were heavily involved in the history of the *limes orientalis* from Mesopotamia to Sinai, both as its raiders and as its watchmen. This was

inevitable since this *limes* rose mostly in response to their challenges, becoming for centuries the frontier of Arab-Byzantine coexistence. And it was the Arabs, the Muslim Arabs, that finally decreed it out of existence in the seventh century.

V. FEDERATE CULTURAL LIFE

The Arab federate groups in Oriens were not composed of rude soldiers fighting the wars of Byzantium in the fourth century. There was a pronounced and extensive cultural dimension to this presence, and it encompassed allegiance to Christianity and its defense, the composition of Arabic poetry, and the rise of a simple form of a liturgy celebrated in Arabic. This cultural dimension of the Arab federate presence can best be examined in the case of the Lakhmids and the Tanūkhids, or simply the Tanūkhids in the capacious sense of this term. As little or nothing is known about the cultural life of the other tribes that formed the federate shield, the exploration of the federate cultural dimension must, therefore, begin with the Lakhmid "king of all the Arabs."

Imru' al-Qays

The military achievements of "the king of all the Arabs" actually pale before his contribution, however indirect and accidental, to Arabic culture in Oriens in the pre-Islamic period. It is his Euphratesian background that is the key to understanding this contribution which involves the Christian religion, the traditions of literary Arabic, and possibly some impressive architectural remains.

The epitaph that commemorates his death is silent on his Christianity, but the Arabic literary source is not. The chances are that he was Christian, and this is consonant with the religious complexion that the *foederati* of the fourth century—the new type of *foederati*—assumed in this century. The Arabic source states that he converted to Christianity while he was still a client of Persia, that is, before he joined the Romans. The presumption is that his religion was the cause of his decision to leave the service of the Sasanids and join the Romans whose emperor, Constantine, had adopted the same religion.

His building of that imposing structure, the palace of Mushatta in Trans-Jordan, has been suggested by some and denied by others. But more important than his putative construction of Mushatta is his contribution to the rise or development, probably the former, of the traditions of Arabic and literary Arabic in the western half of the Fertile Crescent, in Byzantine Oriens, the future Shām of the Arabs. His funerary inscription carved on his tombstone set up at Namāra is the earliest attested monument of literary Arabic that has survived in the midst of a region the Arabs of which had used non-

Arabic languages, such as Aramaic, Greek, and Latin, as the languages of their inscriptions. The Namāra inscription is striking in its sudden appearance as an Arabic inscription, almost splendid in its linguistic isolation among the multiplicity and variety of non-Arabic inscriptions that are to be found in Oriens. Imru' al-Qays came from an area on the Lower Euphrates that had an important urban center for the tradition of literary Arabic and was to become the great center of that tradition in northern Arabia, namely, Ḥīra, the capital of the Lakhmids for some three centuries before the rise of Islam. It is almost certain that it was this emigration of Imru' al-Qays from Ḥīra and his change of allegiance that gave to the Arabs of Oriens, apparently culturally dominated by non-Arab and non-Arabic cultural currents, a taste of the traditions of literary Arabic. The equally striking phenomenon, noted by the ecclesiastical historian Sozomen, namely, the use of the Arabic language for the composition of the victory odes of Queen Mavia over the Arian emperor, Valens, has in the employment of Arabic in the Namāra inscription an obvious background.

Christianity

The allegiance of the Tanūkhids to Christianity went back to their old Mesopotamian days when they were still living in the Land of the Two Rivers. The monastery of Ḥanna in the Arab city of Ḥīra on the Lower Euphrates could testify to their affiliation with Christianity while still in those regions or to that of their Ḥīran relatives, who, too, were Christian. The sources that recorded the chapter which they must have written in the history of Christianity in Oriens in pre-Islamic times are not extant, but one Syriac source, the *History of Abūdemmeb*, recorded that chapter for the Mesopotamian Tanūkhids in the sixth century, and the story that this *History* tells throws much light on Tanūkhid Christianity in Oriens in pre-Islamic times. *Inter alia*, the *History* describes the process of conversion, the rise of a simple ecclesiastical hierarchy among them, the construction of churches and monasteries, and the generous response of the Arabs to appeals for contributions in support of the poor and of the ecclesiastical structures, especially the monasteries, and finally the zeal of the Tanūkhids for the new faith. This would have been the story of the Tanūkhids and Christianity in Oriens also in the fourth century. Some elements of this picture are paralleled in the sources for the federate Tanūkhids: the zeal they display for Christianity under their queen, Mavia, in the reign of Valens and the building of a *martyrium* for St. Thomas outside the walls of Anasartha, if the Mavia who built it was indeed the queen or one related to her.

As little is known about the Tanūkhids after the fourth century, correspondingly little or nothing is known about their Christianity, but there is

no doubt that it persisted and did so undiluted. In the fourth decade of the seventh century, the Tanūkhids fought with Heraclius against the Muslim Arabs, and their loyalty to their faith is reflected in accounts of their encounter with the Muslim commander, Abū-ʿUbayda, in the district of Chalcis/Qinnasrīn. Only some of them adopted Islam, while those near Beroea/Aleppo remained Christian and paid the poll tax.

Throughout the Umayyad period, the Tanūkhids flourished, forming part of the *ajnād*, the military corps of Arab Oriens/Shām, and retaining their Christianity. In the reign of the Abbasid caliph, al-Mahdī, they were noticed by the sources, during his visit to Syria in A.D. 780. It was a colorful and dramatic episode. The Tanūkhids, five thousand strong, go out to meet the caliph, riding their horses and wearing their turbans. Apparently they had expected good treatment from the new Abbasid caliph on the ground of his matrilineal descent, which related him to them as a South Arabian group, but they were rudely disappointed. Their leader was beheaded, whereupon most of them adopted Islam. The caliph destroyed their churches and inscribed on their hands the word "Qinnasrīn" (Chalcis) in green. Apparently their women did not apostasize and served in the churches of the region for a long time after.

As to their religious foundations and establishments in this fourth century and in subsequent centuries of the pre-Islamic period, they have to be sought in the area where they were settled, this side of the Euphrates in Chalcidice. In addition to churches, they must have built and endowed many monasteries, in view of the spread of monasticism to the region where they settled, the desert of Chalcis, which in the fourth century became a flourishing center for anchorites and eremites. Reference to Tanūkhid establishments in sixth-century Mesopotamia is made in the *History of Aḥūdemmeḥ* and to their churches in eighth-century Chalcidice in the reign of al-Mahdī in the Arabic and Syriac sources. Exactly where in Chalcidice their religious establishment was in the fourth and subsequent centuries of the pre-Islamic period is a matter of conjecture. They probably extended from Maʿarrat al-Nuʿmān in the south to Zabad in the north. The references come from various sources, Islamic and pre-Islamic, Christian and Muslim. They speak of a church in Maʿarrat al-Nuʿmān and a monastery near it. Possibly Tanūkhid also were the monastery of Anasartha, Dayr Khunāṣira of the Arabic sources, the church of St. Thomas outside Anasartha, dedicated or built by Mavia, and finally, "the monastery of the Arabs" in the same region at the time of the Muslim Conquest.

The history of Tanūkh in the fourth century is almost anonymous. Even Mavia's husband, whose death occasioned the extraordinary events in the reign of Valens, has remained so in the sources. But this anonymity is relieved or possibly relieved by two Greek inscriptions found inside and outside Anasartha:

the first records the dedication of a *martyrium* to St. Thomas by a lady presumably of the dynasty of Tanūkh, and it speaks of her virtues; the second records the erection of a shrine for the martyrs at the request of a pious young child by the name of Chasidat. In the Islamic period it is also relieved of this anonymity in the eighth century. The dramatic encounter of Tanūkh as a political and military entity with al-Mahdī, the last scene it enacted in Oriens before it made its final exit, reveals the name of its last martyr-chief, now recovered from the sources, Layth, son of Maḥaṭṭa.

Liturgy

The Tanūkhid allegiance to Christianity had an important dimension that is significant to Arabic culture in pre-Islamic times, namely, the rise of an Arabic liturgy, and it is this that endows the history of these Arab *foederati* with more significance than that of the assimilated Arab *cives*. It is for the benefit of the former that an Arabic liturgy could have been prepared.

The case for the rise of a simple Arabic liturgy in the fourth century to serve the needs of the *foederati* is strong, and it rests on concrete evidence for the state of the Arabic language and its employment in significant forms of self-expression. The Namāra inscription that recites the glories of the deceased "king of all the Arabs" is written in Arabic and so are the epinician odes that celebrate the victories of Mavia over the imperial armies. Unlike the Arab *Rhomaioi*, these *foederati* were possessed of a considerable measure of Arab identity. When it is remembered that Arab Petra, according to St. Epiphanius, celebrated its pagan liturgy in the fourth century in the Arabic language, the chances are that the Arab *foederati*, still closer to Arabia than the assimilated *Rhomaioi* of Petra, are likely to have celebrated the liturgy of the faith to which they had been converted in the Arabic language. In the *Life of St. Hilarion*, one liturgical term, *barech/bārik* ("bless") has survived, and it has been argued that this was the Arabic term "bless" since it was used by the Saracens around Elusa, who, it is natural to suppose, spoke Arabic. If Mavia and her *foederati* fought so hard for orthodoxy and if her people used the Arabic language to celebrate her victories, it is not unnatural to suppose that the short Nicene Creed for which they fought was recited in Arabic. This simple liturgy of the fourth century is most probably the earliest Arabic liturgy to come into existence in the Patriarchate of Antioch.

Poetry

The victories of Mavia over the imperial armies of Valens did not pass unnoticed or remain unsung. Arab poets of the time composed on Mavia's victories *odai* that remained in circulation for a long time to come and were heard by the ecclesiastical historian Sozomen toward the middle of the fifth

century. Those who composed these *odai* have remained anonymous, but at least their tribal affiliations may be conjectured to have been Tanūkhid or Lakhmid, that is, belonging to tribes that had emigrated from the Lower Euphrates and eastern Arabia, where the tradition of literary Arabic was stronger than in the western half of the Fertile Crescent.

These poems, nonextant and anonymous as they are, have great significance since they are the earliest attested in the history of Arabic poetry. The *odai* celebrated victory and thus they were primarily epinician, at any rate those about which Sozomen was informed. Therefore, they must belong to the well-known poetic genre on the *ayyām*, the battle-days of the Arabs, cycles of poems that sang the virtues of the warriors. But it is almost certain that in addition to their epinician character they must have presented Christianity in its orthodox version since this was the issue around which the war was fought. It surely must have been a theme, if not the main theme, of these *odai*. If so, then these *odai* would represent the earliest nonextant instances of Arabic religious poetry or at least poetry that echoed religious and doctrinal positions for which the *foederati* fought. Such odes were composed in the sixth century for another group of *foederati*, the Ghassānids, and in these splendid odes religious terms were used, including the term for orthodox, Arabic *qawīm*, which the Ghassānids, Monophysites as they were, considered themselves to be. But the *odai* composed for Mavia antedate these Ghassānid odes by some two centuries, and they must then be adjudged the earliest attested Arabic poems expressing Christian terms and sentiments to be composed in Oriens.

Dīwān

The *odai* composed to celebrate the victories of Mavia could not have been an isolated phenomenon. They presuppose a tradition of poetic composition earlier than the eighth decade of the fourth century when these *odai* were composed. It is almost certain that other poems were composed before and after in the fourth century and that they were lost in the process of transmission.

That this must have been the case is inferable from the existence of a *dīwān*, a collection of poems for Tanūkh, which was circulating in the Islamic period. There is a reference to it in the work of an Andalusian philologist of the twelfth century and to a *dīwān* of Taym Allāt, a constituent tribe of the confederation that Tanūkh was, which was consulted by the blind Tanūkhid philosopher-poet Abū-al-‘Alā’ in Baghdad in the eleventh century. As the historian Hishām al-Kalbī wrote a monograph on the Tanūkhids, it is possible that this *dīwān* or a portion of the poems included in it formed part of his monograph. If so, the *dīwān* of Tanūkh would not have been composed late in Islamic times, but in the eighth century, not so distant from the pre-Islamic

past. It is, therefore, almost certain that a portion of this *dīwān* contained poems that went back to this pre-Islamic past when Tanūkh was the dominant federate group in the fourth century, and also after that century when it continued to form part of the federate scene in Oriens until the Arab Conquests in the seventh.

VI. THE ARAB EPISCOPATE

In addition to the rise of an Arab client-kingdom, a *basileia* and a *phylarchia* in Oriens, there arose also the rudiments of a twin institution, an Arab federate episcopate, to be distinguished from that of the Arab *Rhomaioi*. The rise of an Arab church in the fourth century has to be related to the federate episcopate rather than to that of the assimilated Arab *Rhomaioi* of the limi-trophe provinces. It is for this very reason that the history of this federate church is important in the history of Arabic culture before the rise of Islam because certain important components of that culture in this distant past can best be discussed in relation to it and in the process, perhaps, be recovered.

1

The extant names of the bishops of the Arab federate episcopate in Oriens within the Patriarchate of Antioch in the fourth century are three: (1) Pamphilus who participated in the Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325; it is almost certain that he was the bishop of the Tanūkhids, the dominant group of Arab *foederati* in the service of Byzantium in the fourth century; whether or not he was Arab ethnically is not clear. (2) Theotimus who participated in the Synod of Antioch in A.D. 363, held during the reign of Jovian; like Pamphilus, he was most probably bishop over the Tanūkhids, but unlike him something is known about his immediate antecedents before he participated in the Synod of Antioch. Apparently he had been won over to the Acacian position a few years before his participation in that synod. (3) Moses, the famed bishop of the reign of Valens, who, it is explicitly stated, was ethnically an Arab. He is the only one among the three in this short episcopal list who is not merely a name in a synodical or a conciliar list. Something is known about his character, beliefs, and encounters in this century of theological controversies.

Moses had been a solitary before he appeared in the limelight of ecclesiastical history in the fourth century, and he is distinguished from the two other bishops in many ways. He had been a holy man and a miracle-worker before he was singled out for the episcopal dignity and was consecrated bishop under extraordinary circumstances—by the orthodox bishops in exile. He also became a missionary and an ecclesiastical diplomat who composed federate-imperial differences. Finally, he became a saint of the universal church, and his feast falls on the seventh of February.

Apparently, the *foederati* in the fourth century were represented in church councils by one bishop only. This does not necessarily imply that they had only one bishop in Oriens. As to the seat of these federate bishops, the chances are that it was somewhere in Chalcidice where the Tanūkhids, the dominant group among them, were settled, possibly in Anasartha. The existence of bishops over the Arabs suggests the existence of an ecclesiastical hierarchy, especially the lower grades such as presbyters and deacons. This is natural to suppose. All these bishops were, of course, orthodox, and so were the Arabs in the fourth century. This list, short as it is, is thus invaluable for making possible the writing of an ecclesiastical history of the Arabs in the fourth century, especially the rise of an Arab church.

2

The Arab Christian presence in the Patriarchate of Antioch is not limited to that of the *foederati*. In addition to the federate presence and that of the assimilated Arabs—the *Rhomaioi* of the Diocese of Oriens and the Patriarchate of Antioch—there was a significant Christian Arab presence in Sinai and in the whole of Palestina Tertia. It is this last presence, reflected in various spots in the province, that has claims on the attention of the ecclesiastical historian of the Arab Christian Orient in the fourth century. The status of some of these Arabs as *foederati*—the Arabs who are the main concern of this book—is not clear, but often they are referred to as Saracens, while those living in an oasis or a town such as Pharan were actually living in Saracen surroundings, in what is called in the sources the *desertum Saracenorum*, and in the Byzantine limitrophe so close to the world of the Arabs as Saracens that their Arab ethos remained strong. So they are quite close to the *foederati* discussed in this book. Because of their isolation and the complete Arab ambience within which they lived, they are likely to have had a simple form of an Arabic liturgy in church services, and thus they are important for the investigation of the rise of an Arabic liturgy in the fourth century.

Palestina Tertia had three main centers of Arab Christianity; one was in the north in the Negev, Elusa, while the two others, Rhaithou and Pharan, were in the southwest of the Sinai Peninsula.

(1) Elusa was the capital of Palestina Tertia; it was there that the garlanded priest of the pagan Saracens was converted by St. Hilarion and became Elusa's first priest, thus signaling the rise of an incipient ecclesiastical hierarchy in Elusa, which became an episcopal see the Arab bishops of which are known for the fifth and sixth centuries.

(2) Rhaithou was the center of an eremitic community, dominated in this century by its holy man, Moses, the hermit of Rhaithou, who according to the *Ammonii Monachi Relatio* spent seventy-three years in the monastic life. His influence in Sinai was extensive and must have extended to the 'Araba

Valley whence he drew to the monastic community of Rhaithou from Ayla and Petra Joseph and Paul, presumably Arab inhabitants of these two Arab cities. He also converted Obedianus, the Arab chief of Pharan, who in turn became the defender and propagator of Christianity in that region.

(3) Pharan's Christianity derived from that of Rhaithou, and it developed quickly into a Christian Arab center. Ca. 400 it appears as an episcopal see, and its first attested bishop, Nathyr, was probably an Arab. Pharan developed into the great center of Arab Christianity in the Sinai Peninsula and was adorned with churches and monasteries.

Thus the centers of Arab Christianity in Sinai may be divided into two categories: (1) the Arab monastic center of Rhaithou and (2) the two episcopal sees of Elusa and Pharan, where was born and developed an ecclesiastical hierarchy.

The ecclesiastical history of the *foederati* is plagued by some anonymity and vagueness as to where in Oriens their episcopal see was. In contrast with this, the history of Christianity in the south of Oriens, in Palestina Tertia, is blessed with some specificity. Its three main centers are well-known toponyms, Elusa, Rhaithou, and Pharan, and so are the figures associated with them, Hilarion of Elusa, Moses of Rhaithou and Pharan, and Obedianus of Pharan.

VII. THE RISE OF AN ARAB CHURCH

The rise of an ecclesiastical hierarchy for the Arab federates in Oriens and the possibility that Moses was not the only one who was ethnically Arab among the bishops of the federate episcopate raise the question of whether or not an Arab church came into being in the fourth century. An examination of the constituent elements of an Arab church leads to the conclusion that such a church did come into existence in the fourth century, forming an Arab component within the Patriarchate of Antioch.

(1) After a long association with the Graeco-Roman world and that of the Aramaeans in Syria, the Arab *foederati* learned the languages of their neighbors. But there is no doubt whatsoever that their first language was Arabic, which they used in their inscriptions and in the composition of the epinician odes commemorating their victories over the Arian emperor, Valens, as explicitly stated by the ecclesiastical historian Sozomen, who himself heard them as late as the middle of the fifth century and who is thus a primary source for this important aspect of their identity—their retention of the use of their own native language in significant forms of self-expression.

It is this basic fact that can lead to the investigation of the difficult problem of a pre-Islamic Arabic liturgy the existence of which is an established fact for other Oriental and Semitic peoples such as the Armenians, the Copts, the Syrians, and the Ethiopians, but which in the case of the Arabs has remained

problematic. These *foederati* in Oriens must have worshiped through an Arabic form of the liturgy, undoubtedly a very simple form of it, since at least for some time after their arrival in Oriens this was the only language they understood.

(2) Only scattered references to their churches and monasteries have survived in the sources, but they are sufficient to suggest that this dimension of institutional Christianity was not lacking in the Arab church of the fourth century. A precious passage in the Syriac *History of Aḥūdemmeb*, the Monophysite bishop of the sixth century who converted the Arabs of Mesopotamia, some of whom were relatives of these fourth-century *foederati*, is very revealing as it describes in detail the process of conversion among the Arabs, involving *inter alia* the churches and monasteries which they endowed and continued to support and some of which carried the names of their chiefs. The explicit Syriac text on their relatives in Mesopotamia and the references in the Arabic sources to the churches and monasteries of the Arab *foederati* in Syria itself suggest that the latter were as enthusiastic as the former in the endowment of ecclesiastical foundations.

(3) Perhaps the most striking datum that can argue for the reality of this Arab church in the fourth century pertains to the reign of the Emperor Valens, during which Mavia, the orthodox Arab queen, fought for the faith of Nicaea against the Arian Valens and finally forced him to sue for peace on her own terms, one of which was that the bishop of her Saracen *foederati* must be an Arab holy man by the name of Moses. Even the most conservative analysis of this crucial passage in the ecclesiastical historian Socrates suggests that there was an element of Arab self-assertiveness in Mavia's insistence on an Arab bishop. If the bishop was Arab, and if the worshipers were Arabs who had not abandoned the use of their own native language, it is only natural to suppose that the lower ranks of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, which were even closer than the bishop to the worshipers, were also Arab or mostly Arab.

The synodical and conciliar lists of the fourth century reveal the names of at least two other bishops of these Arab *foederati*: Pamphilus, who participated in the Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325, and Theotimus, who took part in the Synod of Antioch in 363. Whether these were Arabs remains to be shown, but their names argue for the reality of an Arab episcopate in Oriens, within the Patriarchate of Antioch, in the fourth century. The last in the list, however, Moses, was certainly Arab, and his consecration may suggest either a continuation of a tradition of electing Arab bishops for the Arab *foederati* or a dissatisfaction on the part of the *foederati* with bishops who were not Arabs and a desire to have one who was, thus reflecting the first recorded articulation of an Arab sentiment in ecclesiastical history.

If an episcopate of the Arab federates came into being in Oriens in the

fourth century, if the clergy was, as has been argued, Arab or partly Arab, if the *foederati* spoke their own native language, which they used in significant forms of self-expression, if there existed a simple form of an Arabic liturgy, and if the federates, as has been argued, built and endowed churches and monasteries, then an Arab national church may be said to have come into being in the fourth century in Oriens.

In addition to the rise of an Arab church and an Arab ecclesiastical hierarchy in the fourth century, monasticism spread among the Arabs of Oriens in this century. Again, as in the case of the church of the federates, anonymity plagues the Arab monastic establishment in Oriens in the fourth century. Moses, the bishop of Mavia's Arabs, had been a solitary before he was consecrated bishop, but where in Oriens his desert retreat was is not clear. It is, however, reasonable to suppose that there was an Arab monastic presence in Chalcidice where the Arabs formed an important demographic component. Arab Sinaitic Christianity, however, again provides some specificity for Arab monastic life in the person of Moses, the hermit of Rhaithou, which emerges as an attested Arab monastic center in Oriens in the fourth century.

Finally, Arab Christianity in the fourth century could count among its constituent elements not only an ecclesiastical hierarchy and the rudiments of a monastic establishment but also participation in the community of Christian saints, represented by St. Moses.

VIII. CHRISTIANITY AND ARABISM: INTERACTION AND RECIPROCAL INFLUENCES

In this context of the appearance of an Arab church of the *foederati* in Oriens in the fourth century, the question of the interaction between their Arabness and their Christianity inevitably arises. The Christian religion enriched the lives of all those peoples to whom it was preached, and those peoples in turn enriched Christianity each in their own peculiar way, thus creating that diversity within the unity of Christian church and culture represented by such versions of this diversity in the Orient as the Armenian, the Syrian, the Coptic, and the Ethiopian. Unlike that of other Oriental and Semitic peoples, Arab Christianity could develop freely for only a relatively short period. Nevertheless, the mutual interaction between Arab culture and Christianity was as fruitful as their mutual indebtedness was beneficial.

1

The adoption of Christianity by the Arab *foederati* supplied just that element which had been missing in their ethos and which their own uninspiring pagan pre-Islamic religion had not supplied. The Arab moral order represented by *murūʿa*,¹ Arab *virtus*, was now supplemented by a spiritual one, and thus

¹For *murūʿa* (*muruwwa*), see Nicholson, *Literary History of the Arabs*, pp. 82–87.

their Christianization represents a spiritualization of their ethos and their attainment of a new identity. Christianity created among them new levels of spiritual experience unknown to them before.²

The rise of an ecclesiastical hierarchy and an organized Arab church brought into being new sources of authority, spiritual ones. Obedience to ecclesiastical authority created a new form of discipline, supplementing the other one, that of the phylarchs. Instances in the Islamic period are not lacking to demonstrate the submission of unruly Arabs to the authority of the clergy,³ while the staunch federate support of orthodoxy implied submission to ecclesiastical authority in doctrinal matters.

Christianity gave rise to new human types unknown to them before: the monk, the martyr, and the saint. These Christian types were revered by the Arabs in pre-Islamic times, and all three are represented in the fourth century: the monk by Moses of Rhaithou; the saint by Moses, Mavia's bishop; and the martyrs by those who fell for orthodoxy in battle, possibly attested in a Greek inscription found in Anasartha.

Christianity terminated in a sense the ethnic isolation of the Arab *foederati* and diluted whatever ethnocentric feelings they might have had. The universal character of the Christian *ecclesia* and the community of Christian doctrine and faith affiliated them with the larger Graeco-Roman world and that of the Mediterranean communities among whom Christianity had spread and who consequently all became spiritually related. Thus the old distinction between Greek and Roman on the one hand and barbarian on the other was obliterated, at least to a certain extent. Perhaps there is no better reflection of the sense of new brotherhood to which the *foederati* belonged than the marriage of their queen's orthodox daughter to the very orthodox Master of Horse in Oriens, Victor, and the canonization of their bishop, Moses, whom the Church remembers each year on the seventh of February.

Finally, Christianity had its impact on the Arabic language, the resources of which were thus employed toward the attainment of new and higher levels of literary expression in two important domains:

(a) The rise of a simple Arabic liturgy in the fourth century in Oriens entailed the employment of the Arabic language for accommodating the rites and expressing the truths of the Christian faith. New terms must have appeared in Arabic⁴ under the influence of Christianity, and new motifs must have been employed, expressed through the medium of Arabic.

(b) The composition of the *odai* in honor of Mavia's victory must, as has

²For the speech of the Arab martyr of the sixth century, Arethas (Hārith), see the present writer in *Martyrs*, pp. 50–51.

³See Nicholson, *op. cit.*, p. 240.

⁴For Christian terms that entered Arabic in the pre-Islamic period, see L. Cheikho, *Al-Naṣrānīya wa-Ādābuhā*, vol. 2, pp. 157–226; and Jeffery, *Foreign Vocabulary of the Qurʾān*.

been argued, be considered the earliest instance of the expression of religious sentiments through the medium of Arabic poetry; and in this sense they are the earliest examples of Arabic religious poetry. Thus, like the Arabic liturgy, these *odai* illustrate the interaction between Christianity and the Arabic language. This interaction is especially important for a poetry like that of the pre-Islamic Arabs where the simplicity and monotony of desert life did conduce to a certain exiguity in poetic themes, and this remained the case until the sixth century, just before the rise of Islam when the poets themselves were aware that they were ruminating. This poetry, written under the influence of Christianity, derived not from the Arabian scene, but from an extra-Peninsular spring, and thus it represents an important stage in the thematic evolution of Arabic poetry and the expansion of its expressive range from its constricted pastoral surroundings to the spacious confines of the new spirituality.

2

The Arab ethos responded well to the challenges, the spiritual challenges, of the new faith. All the components of the pagan *murū'a*—courage, hospitality, devotion, and chivalry—the old secular virtues that had been exercised in the service of the old ideals, found now a new field for their application, Christianity. The result of this interaction was the emergence of a new identity and a new loyalty.

The course of Arab-Byzantine relations in the fourth century demonstrates how the pagan Arab ethos, now spiritualized, was enlisted in the service of Christianity. It begins with Imru' al-Qays who probably left the service of Shāpūr on religious grounds. If so, it was the Arab ideal of *wafā'* and *walā'*, faithfulness and devotion or loyalty, that impelled him to leave. The defense of orthodoxy in the wars of the fourth century and the stand of the *foederati* behind their clergy are also examples. One component of federate mores, namely, extending protection to those who seek refuge, is instanced in the account of the orthodox bishops sent into exile by the Arian emperors.

Thus it may be said that the Christianization of the *foederati*, far from representing a retreat from traditional Arab identity, actually enriched that identity and raised it to a higher spiritual level.

IX. THE IMAGE

Christian Byzantium inherited from pagan Rome an image of the Arabs which had been fashioned in the four centuries that elapsed from the Settlement of Pompey to the reign of Diocletian and which formed the substrate of the new Byzantine image that grew in the three centuries before the rise of Islam beginning with the fourth century.

The extension of *civitas* to the Arab provincials by the *Constitutio Antoniniana* and the adoption of Christianity by many of the Arabs in the Roman period had considerably leveled the differences between the Arabs and the Graeco-Roman establishment and had somewhat improved the image of the Arabs in an empire of which they now were citizens and with Christian writers who naturally were well-disposed toward those who shared the same spiritual fold. Yet the image of the Arabs had remained dim in the Roman period, and it was this dim image that Byzantium, Christian as it was, inherited.

Of the various groups of Arabs of whom the Graeco-Roman writers formed an image, only two mattered in the Byzantine period: (1) the new group, the series of *foederati*, who represent the new Arab-Byzantine relationship in the fourth century, and (2) the Arabs who appear in the sources as either raiders of the Roman frontier or of the urban centers within the *limes*. Both are called Saracens. It is these two groups whose image is powerfully reflected in the mirror of Byzantine historiography, both secular and ecclesiastical. The two historiographical currents absorb the old Roman one, each contributing new elements for the growth of a new image.

1

Secular Byzantine historiography inherits from its pagan Roman predecessor the image of the Arabs as *barbari* and *latrones*. The chief exponent of the new secular current is Ammianus Marcellinus. *Inter alia*, he equated the Arab *Scenitae*, the tent-dwellers, with the Arabs in general, both sedentary and nomadic, and called both Saracens, thus obliterating important distinctions between various groups of Arabs who were thus subsumed under this umbrella title of *Saraceni*; confusion was his contribution. The term drew a picture of the Arabs as nomads and as undesirable neighbors or allies of the empire, raiders and marauders. More than any other historian of the fourth century or of this early Byzantine period, Ammianus is responsible for the image of the wandering Arab, the tent-dweller, the *Scenites*, and the raider of the *limes*, which, moreover, was riveted through his literary art, expressed in such graphic phrases as *vita est illis semper in fuga* and *Saraceni tamen nec amici nobis umquam nec hostes optandi*.

The Byzantine perception of the Arabs in the latter half of the fourth century was not such as to correct the image transmitted by the distorting mirror of Ammianus. Because of friction with the imperial government concerning the true definition of the faith, the Arab *foederati* revolted continually in this century, and consequently they gained the reputation of being rebels and unreliable allies who rose up against the central government throughout the century.

The involvement of the Arabs in the death of Julian brought in a new

element in the formation of the image of the Arabs, namely, that of regicides. This was the contribution of Libanius to the growth of the Arab image in the fourth century. In Oration XXIV, dated A.D. 379, addressed to the new emperor, Theodosius, he openly accused the Arabs of having murdered the last member of the house of Constantine. As Julian has never ceased to fascinate posterity, the manner of his death, in which the Arabs were involved, continued to project a regicidal image of the Arabs long after the fourth century. Thus, between the two pagan writers of the fourth century, the last great Roman historian and the influential Greek orator and friend of Julian, an image of the Arabs was formed, which did not cease to influence subsequent Byzantine historiography.

2

Just as Ammianus was the chief creator of the Arab image among the secular historians of the Byzantine period, so was Eusebius among the ecclesiastical historians, and it is to him that the Arabs owe their inclusion in the annals of ecclesiastical history. Eusebius, however, projected an unflattering image of them. He wrote toward the end of the Roman period, and his image is that of the Arabs of three Roman centuries. But as the father of ecclesiastical history, Eusebius's image of the Arabs naturally influenced subsequent ecclesiastical historiography. For him the Arabs of the Old Testament were uncovenanted Ishmaelites, outside the promises, while in Christian times they contributed many a heresiarch.

Even so, Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History* presented an improved image of the Arabs, although somewhat marred by the indelible mark that the Arabs as *Scenitae/Saraceni* had left on the Graeco-Roman mind. But it was an improvement of some sort. The figure of the Emperor Philip, the Christian Arab, provides a good example of how the writers of Late Antiquity were divided in their evaluation of the Arabs according as they were pagan or Christian. To a Christian writer such as Eusebius, Philip the Arab was praiseworthy; to a pagan writer such as Dexippus or Aurelius Victor or Zosimus, he was the opposite, worthy of condemnation that also involved the people to whom he belonged, the Arabs, described as *ethnos cheiriston*.

The major ecclesiastical writer after Eusebius who has contributed to the formation of the image of the Arabs is Jerome. The translator and continuator of his *Chronicon* repeated what his model had written and added something from his own experience, namely, the image of the Saracens familiar to him in the desert of Chalcis and later in southern Palestine in Bethlehem. Jerome had firsthand knowledge of the Saracens/Scenitae because of his sojourn in these two areas in Oriens. In spite of the rise of the *Limes Diocletianus* and the

annexation of all the Arab client-kingdoms by the end of the Roman period, pockets of Saracens remained within the *limes* and of course outside it, and these raided the frontier. What drew the attention of the ecclesiastical writers to the Saracens was that these Saracens happened to be around places of special interest to them, namely, the *loca sancta* and the Holy Land. Hence the picture of Saracens revolving around and attacking monasteries, churches, and monks, all of which was recorded by the ecclesiastical historians, of whom Jerome was one. With the equation of *Saracen* with *Arab*, this image was transferred to the Arabs in general.

Although the Christianization of the Arabs of Oriens, or most of them, contributed to an improvement in their image since they were now part of the *ecclesia* of the new Christian Roman Empire, yet their conversion to Christianity brought with it a new problem. The image of the Arabs as Christians was tarnished by the accusation of heresy, hurled against them by Eusebius but more so by another fourth-century ecclesiastical writer, St. Epiphanius, who in his *Panarion* enumerated the heresies associated with the Arabs and thus indelibly fixed their image as heresiarchs, a view conveyed powerfully through the phrase *Arabia haeresium ferax*.

Linguistic usage, too, contributed to the deterioration of the image of the Arabs in this period. Exactly when *Saracen* was first equated with *Scenites* is not entirely clear, but by the fourth century it was established usage, which operated to the disadvantage of Arab/Saracen groups who were not *scenitae*, including the *foederati*. The term *Saracen*, almost pejorative now because of this equation, experienced further deterioration when it was equated with the biblical term that designated the Arabs, namely, Ishmaelites. This carried with it the biblical signification of uncovenanted Ishmaelites, outside the promises, a semantic dimension made firm by the false patristic etymology given to the term *Saracen* and relating it to Sarah.

The term *Saracen* thus became charged with pejorative overtones, representing the confluence of the two streams of secular and ecclesiastical historiography. From secular historiography it carried the two dimensions of *scenites* and *latro* and from the ecclesiastical, that of uncovenanted Ishmaelite.

In a world won over to Christianity, what mattered more was not what the secular historians said about the Arabs and their image, but what the Bible and the ecclesiastical historians said. The latter were represented in the Greek East by Eusebius whose authoritative voice as the father of ecclesiastical history remained audible on the Arabs. In the Latin West it was carried by the Latin translation of his *Chronicon* and of his *Ecclesiastical History*. The two works spread over the Latin West and dominated its historiography, and with that domination the image of the Arabs transmitted in Eusebius's work reached the Latin West, centuries before the Arabs did.

3

Toward the end of the fourth century there occurred an important development in the image of the Arabs in ecclesiastical history. Even as St. Jerome was writing, there arose a new group of ecclesiastical writers heralded by Rufinus, who had an entirely different attitude to the Arabs and the barbarians of the Byzantine borderland. In the pages of his Latin *Ecclesiastical History* he projected an image of the Arab *foederati* not as heretics but as orthodox and, what is more, fighting for orthodoxy against the heretical imperial government of Arian Valens. In this he was followed by three writers of the fifth century, Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret, who continued the tradition of Rufinus in projecting a somewhat improved image of the Arabs in ecclesiastical history.

EPILOGUE

1

Before the century turned, the Arab federate horse had galloped for Byzantium in various regions of the *pars orientalis* and the Near East, reaching such distant places as Najrān in the South and Constantinople in the north. The *foederati* had taken part in the stirring events of this fourth century, the century of Constantine and Shāpūr, and the highlights of this participation may be reflected in the following enumeration: the mysterious and arduous campaign to South Arabia, which may have brought about the collapse of the newly united Arabian South; possible participation in the battle of Ctesiphon in Julian's Persian War; involvement in the death of the last member of the house of Constantine; possible participation in the fateful battle of Adrianople in A.D. 378; and finally, the successful defense of Constantinople in the aftermath of that battle. Of all these activities, their involvement in the death of Julian is perhaps the most important. That death changed the course of history in the fourth century, and if the Arabs were involved in his death, as is possible, even probable, then the Arabs would have been the agents of that historic change.

If the century is dominated on the Byzantine and the Persian side by Constantine and Shāpūr respectively, on the Arab side and in the context of Arab-Byzantine relations in this fourth century it is dominated by three large historical figures, Imru' al-Qays, the doughty warrior, Mavia, the heroic and romantic queen, and Moses, the holy man, bishop and saint.

(1) In the lapidary style of the Namāra inscription, Imru' al-Qays is described as "the king of all the Arabs." Appropriately enough in this context, he was known to the two sovereigns, Shāpūr and Constantine. He had served Shāpūr before defecting to the Romans and becoming Constantine's ally. He takes his place alongside Tiridates of Armenia and 'Ezānā of Ethiopia as

Christian rulers with whom Byzantium allied itself in this period and who watched Byzantine interests in their respective territories. The Arab king's assignment related to Arabia, the Provincia and the Peninsula.

(2) Just as Imru' al-Qays dominates the scene of Arab-Byzantine relations in the first half of this century, so does Mavia in its second half. Hers was an extraordinary career. She led her troops in person, and her military presence was felt in various parts of the Circumscription of Oriens, indeed in its three continents, represented by its major cities, Alexandria, Antioch, and Constantinople. Ever victorious in battle, even against the *magister utriusque militiae* of the Orient, she lives in the annals of ecclesiastical history as the Arab heroine and defender of orthodoxy in the fourth century against Arian Valens.

(3) The career of her bishop, Moses, is equally extraordinary. A solitary, he stands firm in his orthodox faith against the Arian bishop of Alexandria, Lucius, refuses to be consecrated by him, is consecrated instead by orthodox bishops in exile, becomes a bishop, diplomat, missionary, and finally attains immortality, if immortality consists in being remembered, by becoming a saint of the universal church.

Of these three large Arab historical figures of the fourth century, it is the third that is the best known. While Imru' al-Qays is known to a few epigraphists and Mavia to a few ecclesiastical historians and both to a few specialists on the fourth century, Moses is known to a much wider circle. Millions of Christians throughout the centuries have remembered this Arab of the fourth century while celebrating his feast on the seventh of February. Moses has entered the ecclesiastical calendar of the Christian Church, and in this sense he lives in the consciousness not of a few academics, but of a large segment of humanity as part of *le passé vécu*.

2

The Tanūkhid *foederati* fell from power as the dominant federate group late in the fourth century during the reign of Theodosius. But they did not disappear and remained part of the federate scene in Oriens till the Arab Conquests. Even then they played an important role and an even more important one in Umayyad times in Bilād al-Shām.

(1) Between their fall late in the fourth century and the Arab Conquests in the seventh, they formed part of the federate shield in Oriens and continued to participate in the defense of the Diocese. But they might have contributed to the difficulties of the Ghassānid supreme phylarch in the sixth century because of their orthodoxy and their strong feeling of tribal identity.

(2) In that fateful decade, the fourth decade of the seventh century, they participate in the defense of Oriens against the Muslim Arabs. They fight under the Ghassānid Jabala at Dūmat al-Jandal and in the decisive battle of

the Yarmūk in A.D. 636. The Muslim commander, Abū-ʿUbayda, finds them in the vicinity of Chalcis/Qinnasrīn and Beroea/Aleppo where some adopt Islam, while others remain staunchly Christian. In A.D. 639 they counter-attack with Heraclius, who, however, fails to recover Oriens from the Muslim Arabs.

(3) The Umayyads made of Oriens/Shām the heartland of their Islamic caliphate and rested their power on the *ajnād* system of tribes and tribal groups in Shām, many of whom had been these very *foederati* and of whom the Tanūkhids were one. This ensured for the Tanūkhids and other federates a new lease on life, and they participated in the wars and politics of the Umayyad period and dynasty until its fall in A.D. 750.

(4) The Abbasids transferred the caliphal heartland from Shām to Irāq, and this spelled ruin for the *ajnād*, including the Tanūkhids. It was not long after the fall of the Umayyads that the Abbasid caliph, al-Mahdī, made a visit to Syria in A.D. 780 during which he encountered the Tanūkhids. The encounter effectively brought to an end the life of the Tanūkhids as an autonomous Christian community in Oriens, a position they had occupied since the fourth century. Shortly after, those who did not adopt Islam and were not assimilated into the Muslim community left for other regions where there was a strong Christian presence, one of which was the Caucasus.

Addenda

Part One: Chapter I, i The Namāra Inscription

A welcome addition to the literature on the Namāra inscription is an article by Henry I. MacAdam, entitled "The Nemara Inscription: Some Historical Considerations," which appeared in *al-Abhāth* (Beirut), 1980, pp. 3–16, and is written from the viewpoint of an archeologist and Roman historian. I am entirely in agreement with his interpretation of the most significant part of the inscription on pp. 9–13. The term *al-Bad'*, applied to Imru' al-Qays and discussed on pp. 6–7, may turn out to be *al-Badan*, the new reading in the still unpublished MS *al-Manāqib al-Mazydiyya*.

This is a valuable British Museum MS which, to my knowledge, was first used by M. J. Kister in his fundamental article, "Al-Ḥīra: Some Notes on its Relations with Arabia," *Arabica*, 15 (1968), pp. 143–69. Its most relevant part to *BAFOC* is the one that deals with Imru' al-Qays while he was still king of Ḥīra. His achievements, recounted in the MS, are summarized by Kister on pp. 166–67. On p. 166 he mentions that his title was *al-Badan*, which, according to the MS, is related either to his great height and size or to the fact that he habitually wore coats of mail. The title was also applied to another king of Ḥīra, his grandson and namesake, who according to some authorities was the one who was called *al-Badan*, not his grandfather.

"Al-Badan" could very well have been the correct term which described Imru' al-Qays and which was corrupted into "al-Bad'." It describes him as *clibanarius* or *cataphractarius* and the description rings true in view of his Persian connection while still in Ḥīra. The description is valuable since it indicates that the Lakhmid cavalry were clad in the Persian manner as before them the Palmyrene had been in the third century.

On what is supposed to be the capital of a column found at the site of Imru' al-Qays's tomb in Namāra, crosses or what look like crosses appear engraved on this capital. If so, this should argue for the Christianity of Imru' al-Qays, discussed *supra*, pp. 33–34; for this capital, see Heinz Gaube, *Ein Arabischer Palast in Südsyrien: Ḥīrbet El-Baiḍa* (Beirut, 1974), Tafel I, 3.

Part One: Chapter IV, Appendix vii *Rufinus*

F. Thelamon's doctoral dissertation has appeared as a book, entitled *Paiens et chrétiens au IVe siècle, Études augustiniennes* (Paris, 1981). Her views on Mavia, Moses, and the Church of the Saracens, published in a *résumé* of her dissertation in 1979, have

already been analyzed. The unabridged chapter in the original manuscript is now available in the printed book, pp. 123–47, and it is a sensitive and perceptive analysis of the account of Rufinus, written from the point of view of an ecclesiastical historian of the fourth century. Since I have already commented on her conclusions, expressed in the *résumé*, I shall limit myself to a few more observations, called for by the reading of the relevant chapter in her book:

1. The Arabs of Mavia are presented as nomads throughout the chapter and the influence of Ammianus Marcellinus is clear (pp. 128–30). Various chapters in *BAFOC* have drawn attention to this misconception.

2. The war of Mavia with the empire is presented not as a war of religion that involves a Christian monk and bishop—Moses (pp. 137–39). It remains to be shown, however, that the ecclesiastical historian privileged the religious clause in the *foedus*. No clause is mentioned other than the one pertaining to Moses, and if there had been others, Sozomen would or might have mentioned them in view of his interest in military details pertaining to Mavia's war. The assumption that one of these clauses left implied was the contribution of *auxilia* (p. 136) is only an inference which, moreover, does not take into account that Mavia's Arabs were already *foederati* but in revolt as orthodox Christians against Arian Valens. The military history of the Ghassānids, the Monophysite Arab *foederati* of the sixth century, and their encounters with the Chalcedonian emperors provide instructive typological affinities which will be treated in *BASIC*.

3. The analysis of the case of Aspebetos, the Arab bishop/phylarch of the fifth century, is valuable, but it is doubtful whether it is really a parallel case with that of Moses in the fourth, whether it can justify conclusions on the independence of the church or see of the Saracens, and finally whether this argues for nonacculturation (pp. 139–41). This will be examined in detail in *BAFIC* in which there will be an extensive chapter on Aspebetos and the bishops of the Parembole.

4. The *magister equitum et peditum per Orientem* against whom Mavia battled was not Victor (p. 135). Victor was then *magister equitum* (*PLRE*, vol. 1, p. 958). Julius was the one against whom Mavia fought since it was he who was the *magister equitum et peditum per Orientem* (*PLRE*, vol. 1, p. 481).

5. The authoress subscribes to the view put forward in *Le limes*, pp. 193, 239, that it was normal for Arab princes to give their daughters in marriage to Roman officers (pp. 135–36). It has been argued in this book that this was not so and that the case of Mavia's daughter was unique; see section VI in the chapter on the reign of Valens and also the chapter entitled "Two Greek Inscriptions."

6. The myth of Mavia's Roman origin, discussed by the authoress (p. 131) and to be found in such a late author as Theophanes, goes back to Theodoros Anagnostes as explained in Appendix V of the chapter on the reign of Valens.

7. The authoress rightly corrects R. Devresse (p. 134 note 50), whose error was discussed more elaborately, *supra*, section II of the reign of Valens. Her caution in accepting the view that the see of Pharan was created for Moses around A.D. 371 is also welcome (p. 143 note 81).

Part Two: Chapter XI, iii
Arabic Poetry in the Fourth Century A.D.

Sozomen's account contains the earliest *explicit* reference to the *composition* of Arabic poetry. Before him Bardaiṣan in the early part of the third century A.D. made his well-known reference to poetry and its noncultivation by various peoples. Among these he included the Ṭayāyē and the Sarqāyē, two groups of Arabs who presumably lived in the eastern and the western halves of the Fertile Crescent respectively. Since he recognizes a third group of Arabs, the 'Arabāyē, it is tempting to think that these were not included in his list of peoples who did not cultivate poetry. It is equally tempting to think that he meant by 'Arabāyē the inhabitants of Bēth-'Arabāyē in Mesopotamia, not far from Edessa and the Arab Abgarids, where the composition of Arabic poetry in this early period is not altogether inconceivable in a region culturally so rich and diversified. For these two references to the Arabs and the composition of poetry, see Bardaiṣan, *The Book of the Laws of Countries*, ed. and trans. H. J. W. Drijvers (Assen, 1965), pp. 46, 50; for Bēth-'Arabāyē and the Abgarids, see B. Segal, "Pagan Syrian Monuments in the Vilayet of Urfa," *Anatolian Studies* (London), Vol. III, 1953, pp. 104–7.

Addenda and Corrigenda

Byzantium and Arabs in the Fourth Century, (BAFOC), has benefited from reviews of it, which appeared after its publication in 1984. These may be found on pp. 543–547 in the volume that followed, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century*, (BAFIC), published in 1989.

The most recent reexamination of the Pahlevi Paikuli inscriptions of the Persian king, Narseh, by Helmut Humbach and Prods O. Skjaervo has invalidated the view that the Lakhmids of Ḥīra were related to the Abgarids of Edessa, as argued by Ernst Herzfeld and U. Monneret de Villard in the first half of the twentieth century, a view adopted by the present writer in BAFOC, with reference to the Lakhmid king Imru' al-Qays, the client king of Byzantium during the reign of Constantine, BAFOC: pp.34, n.11; 36, n.20; 46, n.62; 48, n.89; 67, n.151. These two scholars have conclusively shown that the inscription has one 'Amr, the Abgarid, and another 'Amr, the Lakhmid, since the inscription has not one but two 'Amrs. Hence, the Abgarid origin of Imru' al-Qays as expressed in BAFOC has to be changed and possibly related to South Arabia, the view of the Arab geneologists.

Irfan Shahîd, Dumbarton Oaks
 March 2006

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Since this book is neither a history of Byzantium nor a history of the Arabs but of Arab-Byzantine relations, the bibliography has been limited to what is strictly relevant to these relations; hence the exclusion of many works on the fourth century that would otherwise have been included. Comprehensive bibliographies of the sources and literature on the fourth century may be found in such general works as A. Piganiol, *L'empire chrétien* and E. Stein, *Histoire du bas-empire*, I.

I. SOURCES

The two main sets of sources are the literary and the epigraphic. The latter has proved to be exceptionally important in reconstructing the history of Arab-Byzantine relations in the fourth century. In order to reflect this importance, the inscriptions in various languages have been listed together and separately from the literary sources.

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 - II. Armenian: *Agathangelos: History of the Armenians*, with a translation and commentary by R. W. Thomson. Albany: 1976.
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Inscriptions

Greek

- I. Five inscriptions come from Anasartha and its vicinity and they appear in: (a) R. Mouterde and A. Poidebard, *Le limes de Chalcis* (Paris: 1945), pp. 194–95; (b) *ibid.*, pp. 195–96; (c) L. Jalabert and R. Mouterde, *IGLSYR* (Paris: 1939), II, nos. 297, 281, 288.
- II. One comes from al-Ḥijr in Ḥijāz, for which see G. W. Bowersock, "A Report on Arabia Provincia," *JRS*, 61 (1971), p. 230.
- III. The Dumayr inscription appears in W. H. Waddington, *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie* (reprinted Rome: 1968), p. 585, no. 2562 c.
- IV. For the Greek inscription of the Ethiopian Negus, 'Ezānā, see *Journal des Savants* (Oct.–Dec., 1970), p. 265.

Latin

- I. An unpublished inscription found at Dūmat al-Jandal in northern Arabia is noticed by G. W. Bowersock, in "Syria under Vespasian," *JRS*, 63 (1973), p. 139 note 57.
- II. The Latin inscription which has Constantine's *cognomen* "Arabicus" comes from Mauretania, for which see *CIL*, 8, no. 8412, and H. Dessau, *ILS*, I, no. 696. There are other inscriptions related to it; for the most important, see *ibid.*, nos. 576, 579.

Arabic

- I. The most important Arabic inscription of this book is the Namāra inscription; it appeared first in *Rev. Arch.*, 2 (1902), pp. 409–21, and later in *Répertoire chronologique d'épigraphie arabe* (Cairo: 1931), vol. 1, pp. 1–2.
- II. For the inscription that mentions Mu'āwiya, the Kindite, see A. F. L. Beeston, "Nemara and Faw," *BSOAS*, 42 (1979), p. 1.
- III. Two major Christian Arabic inscriptions of Ḥīra, one of Dayr Hind and the other of Dayr Ḥanzala, have been preserved respectively in Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-Buldān*, vol. 2, p. 542 and Bakrī, *Mu'jam ma lsta'jam*, vol. 2, p. 577.

Sabaic

- I. An inscription that makes an explicit reference to Tanūkh appears in J. Ryckmans, "Appendice," *Le Muséon*, 80 (1967), pp. 508–12; for the one that refers to the South Arabian king, Ma'dī-Karib, see *ibid.*, vol. 66, pp. 307–10.
- II. An inscription that makes the first recorded reference to Ghassān appears in W. Müller, "Ergebnisse neuer epigraphischer Forschungen in Jemen," *ZDMG* (1977), Supplement III, 1, p. 732.
- III. For the inscription in which Najrān and Ethiopia are aligned against Ḥimyar, see A. Jamme, *Sabaeen Inscriptions from Mabram Bilqīs (Mārib)* (Baltimore: 1962), pp. 77–79; for the one that mentions Thawr, the Kindite, see *ibid.*, p. 137, no. 635.

Syriac

The inscription that records the encounter of the Tanūkhids with the caliph, al-Mahdī, may be found in J. B. Chabot, "Notes d'épigraphie et d'archéologie orientale," *Journal Asiatique*, n. s., 16, pp. 287–88.

Pahlevi

The Pahlevi inscription involving 'Amr, the father of Imru' al-Qays of the Arabic Namāra inscription, may be found in E. Herzfeld, *Paikuli*, vol. 1 (Berlin: 1924).

Multilingual Inscriptions

There are four multilingual inscriptions, three bilingual and one trilingual:

A

- I. The Greek-Aramaic inscription of Ruwwāfa in Ḥijāz, for which see G. W. Bowersock in *Le Monde Grec (Hommages à Claire Préaux)* (Brussels: 1975), pp. 513–16.
- II. The Greek-Aramaic inscription of the Arab Tanūkhid king, Jaḍīma, found in Umm al-Jimāl; see E. Littmann, *Publications of the Princeton University Archaeological Expedition to Syria in 1904–1905 and 1909*, Division IV, Semitic Inscriptions (Leiden: 1914), p. 38.
- III. The Greek-Latin inscription of Barāqish in South Arabia: see P. M. Costa, "A Latin-Greek Inscription from the Jawf of the Yemen," *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* (London), 7 (1977), pp. 69–72.

B

The Greek-Arabic-Syriac trilingual inscription of Zabad in northern Syria; see *IGLSYR*, II, p. 178.

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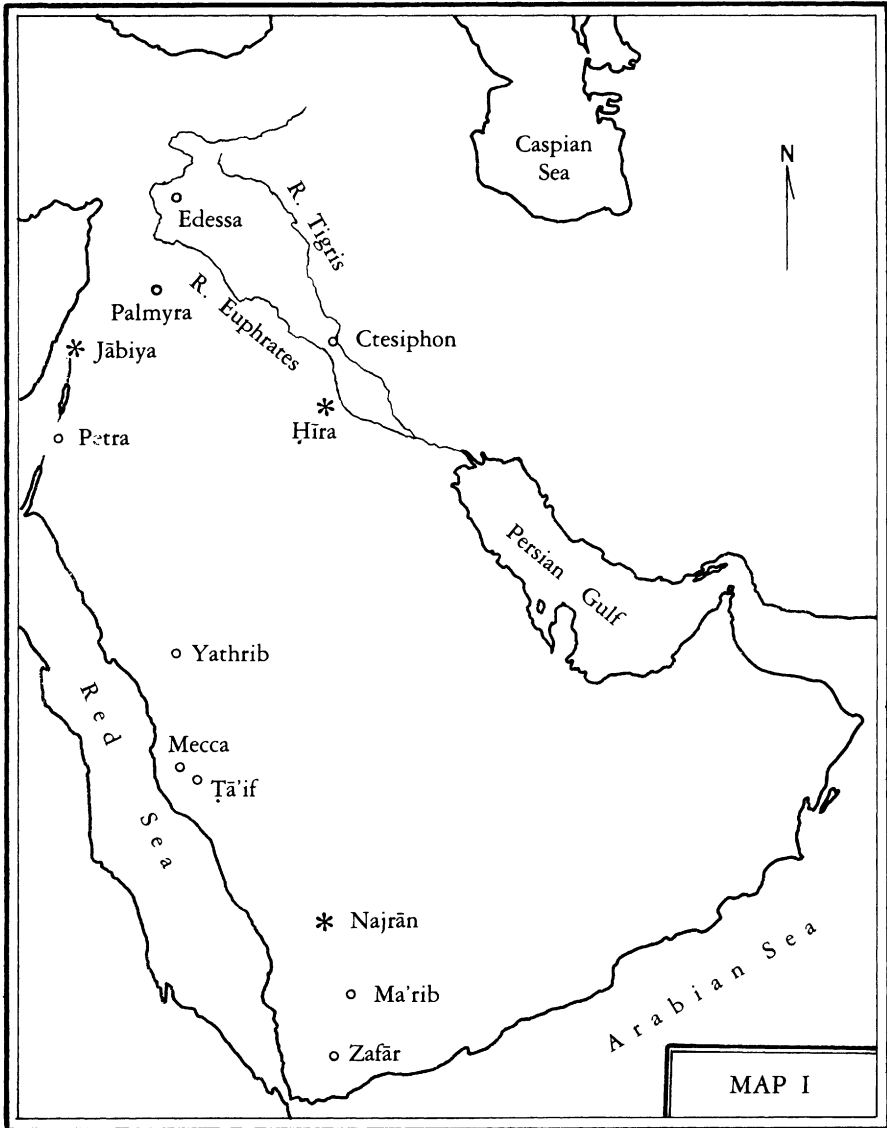
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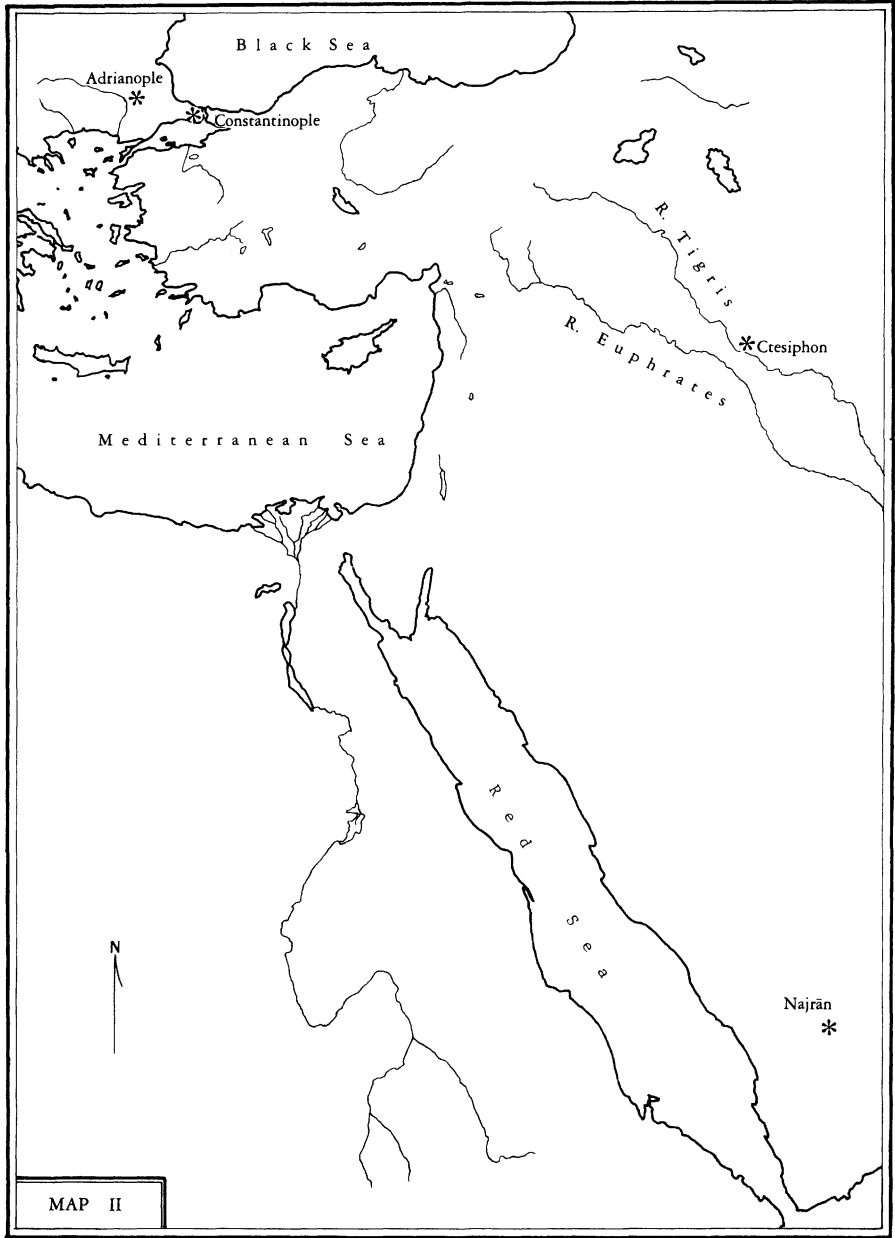
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Maps

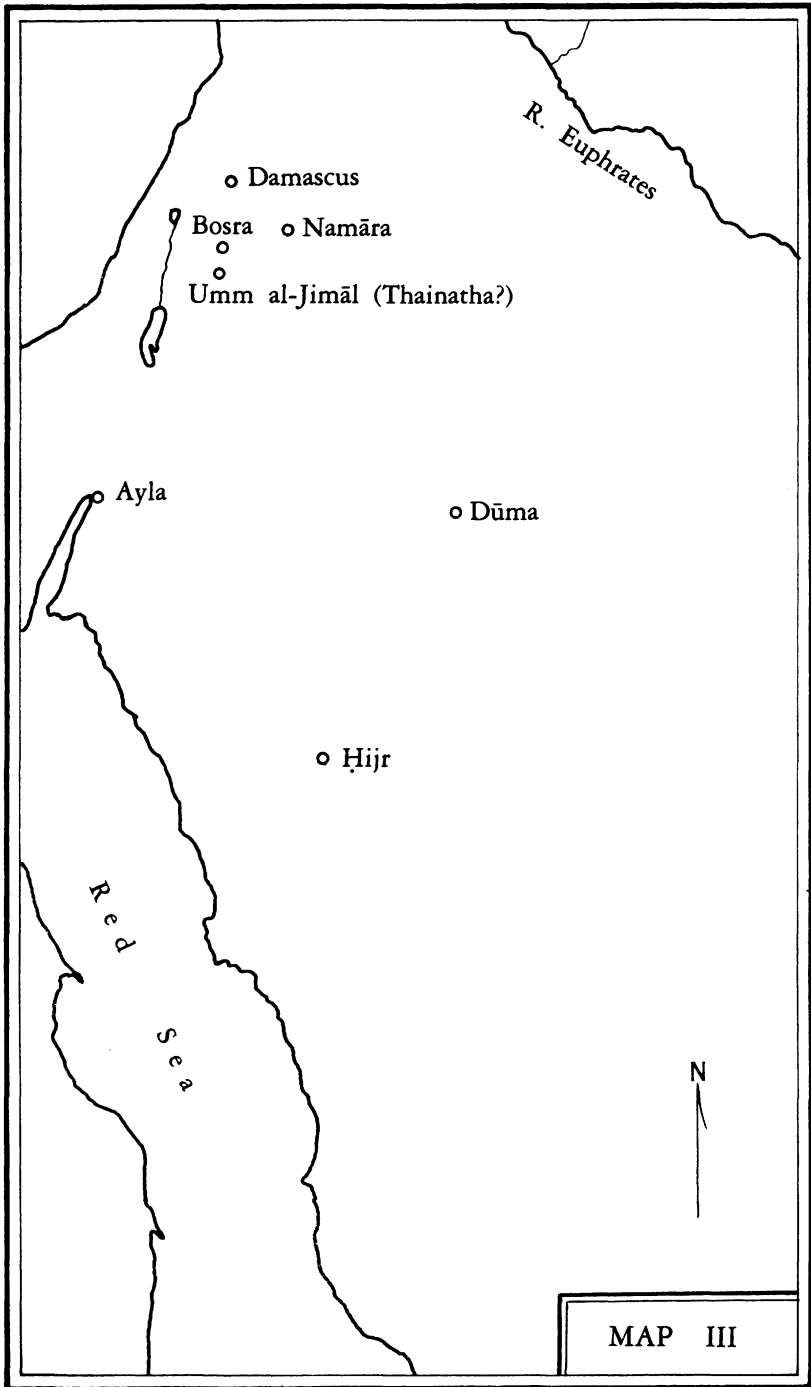
Map I illustrates "Byzantium and the Arabs before the Rise of Islam." It shows the main caravan cities of western Arabia and the western Fertile Crescent as well as three major centers of Arab Christianity, namely, Ḥīra of the Lakhmids, Jābiya of the Ghassānids, and Najrān of the Ḥārithids. Jābiya as a Christian center is not as important as Ḥīra or Najrān and its place is not as clear, but it was the capital of the Ghassānids, who were ardent champions of Christianity.



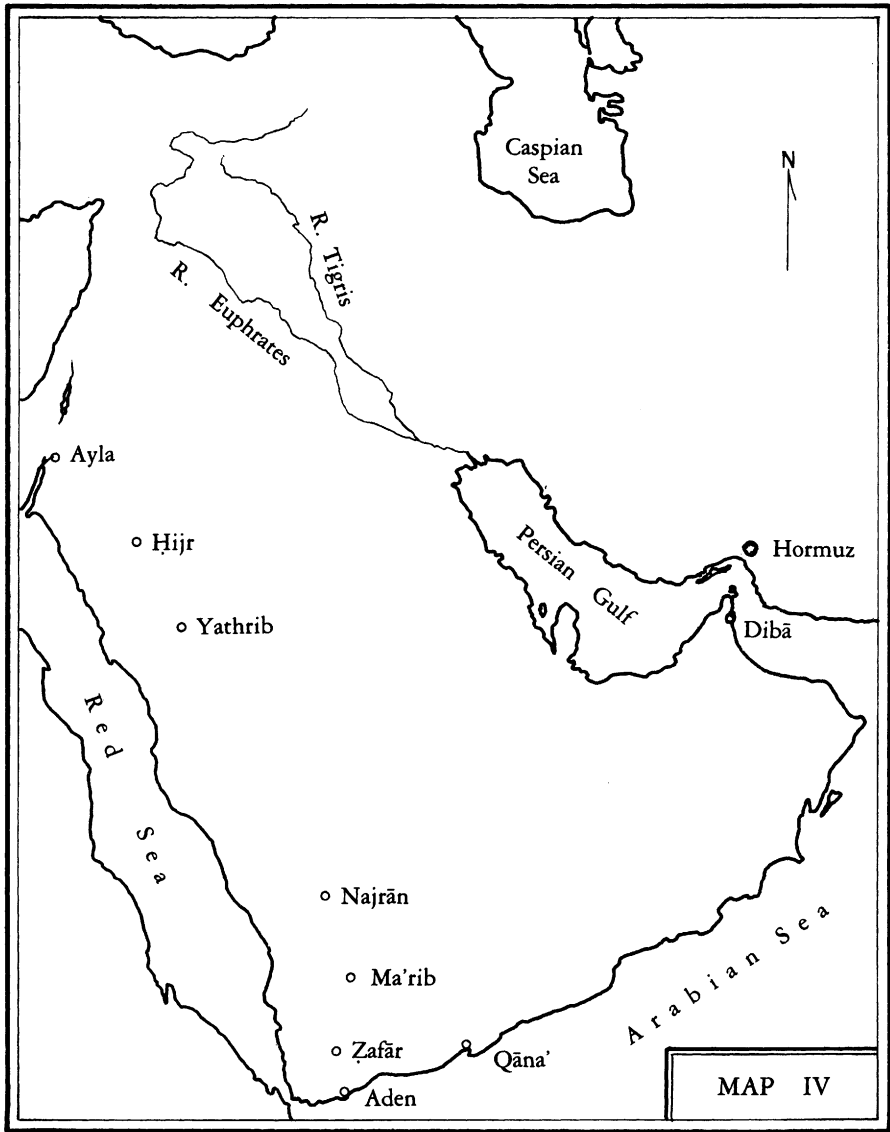
Map II illustrates "The Fourth Century: A Synoptic View." The four toponyms marked on the map represent the farthest points reached, or possibly reached, by the Arab *foederati* in the fourth century, namely, Adrianople, Constantinople, Ctesiphon, and Najrān.



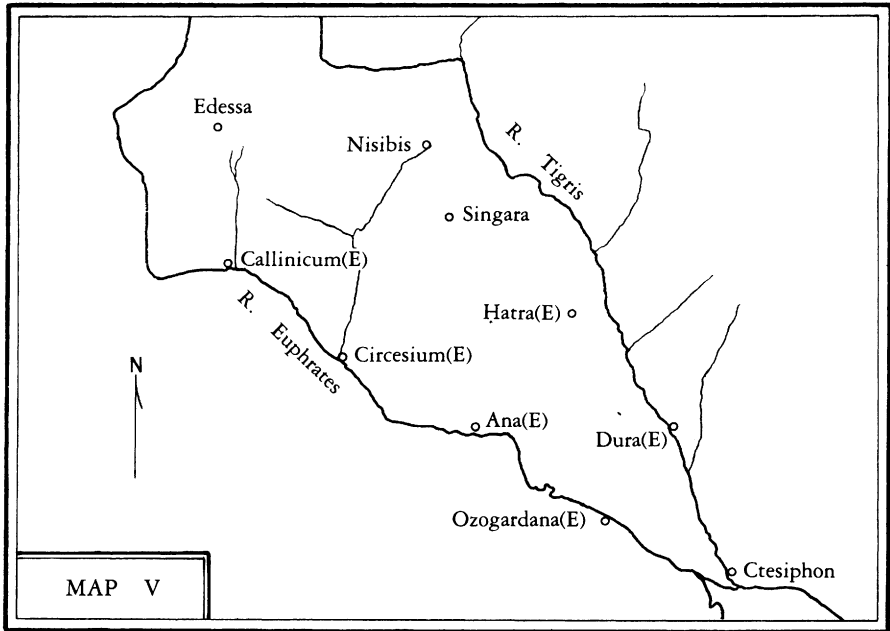
Map III illustrates "The Reign of Constantine." It shows toponyms associated with the Roman military presence in northwestern Arabia and in Oriens. In addition to Namāra, which appears on the map, Ḥīra and Najrān are associated with Imru' al-Qays; but for these two toponyms, see Map I.



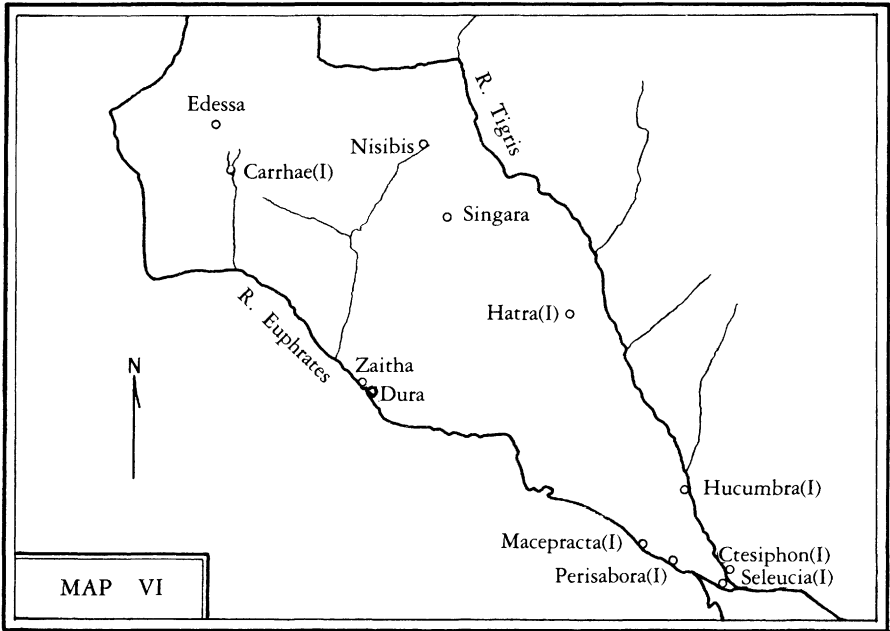
Map IV illustrates “The Reign of Constantius”: the extension of Byzantine influence in South Arabia by the building of churches in Aden, in Ḥafār, and near the Strait of Hormuz, possibly in Dibā.



Map V illustrates "The Reign of Julian" and the participation of the Arabs in Julian's Persian campaign. The letter "E" marks places at which the participation of the Arabs is explicitly attested.

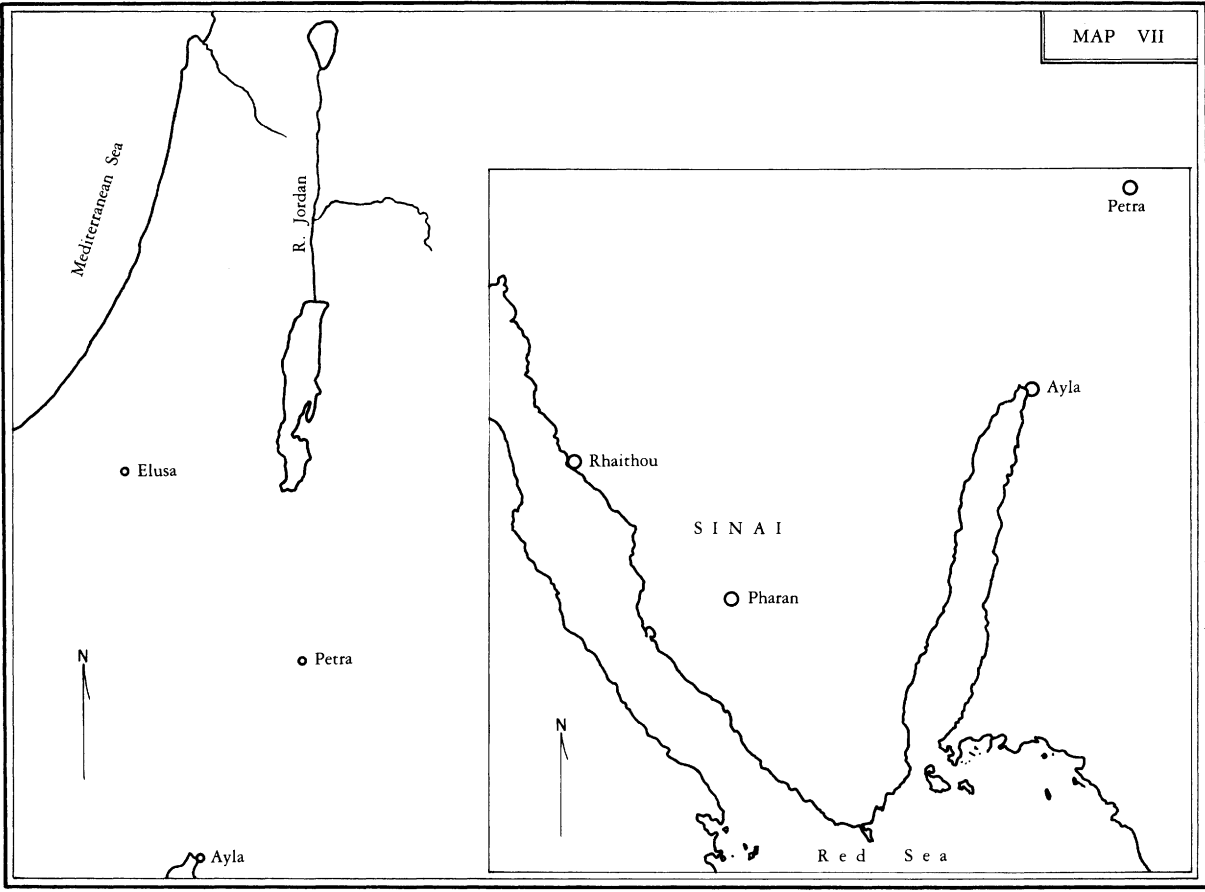


Map VI also illustrates "The Reign of Julian." The letter "I" marks places at which the Arabs are implicitly referred to in Julian's Persian campaign. One of these places lies between Zaitha and Dura but, owing to the small scale of the map, it could not be marked.

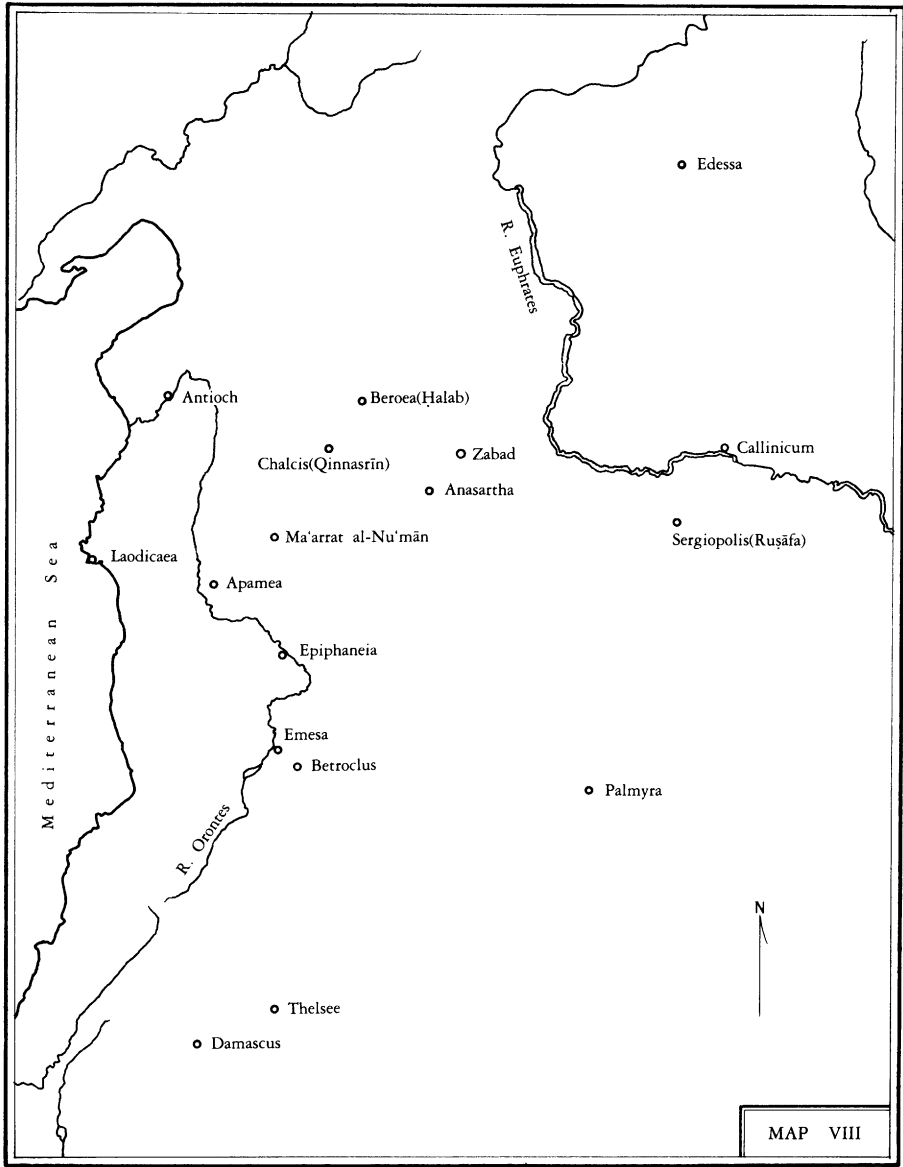


Map VII illustrates "The Arabs in the Works of St. Jerome: *Vita Hilarionis*" and "*Ammonii Monachi Relatio*" in Chapter VIII, "The Arab Presence in Oriens." The map shows places associated with the Arabs in the Negev and Sinai: Elusa, Pharan, and Rhaithou.

MAP VII



Map VIII illustrates "Toponymical Observations." For two toponyms associated with the Lakhmid and Tanūkhid federates, namely, Namāra and Thainatha, respectively, and also for Dūma, see Map III.



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Plates

Key

The “Saracen enclosures” are extremely important to the study of the Arab *foederati* and photographs of them are rare, having appeared in works written a very long time ago. Consequently, two of these photographs are presented in this book for the convenience of the reader to illustrate the section devoted to these enclosures in “The Arabs along the *Limes Orientalis*” (*supra*, pp. 476–90).

The two Plates are reproduced from those of MacDonald’s article in *Antiquity* (*supra*, p. 553 note 77), the plates of which were in turn reproduced from original aerial photographs taken by Poidebard himself. The captions of the two plates in *Antiquity* have been kept, but Plate III appears as Plate I in this book and Plate VIII as Plate II.



Plate I Hân Al-Qaṭṭâr, with cistern and later accretion of Bedouin enclosures

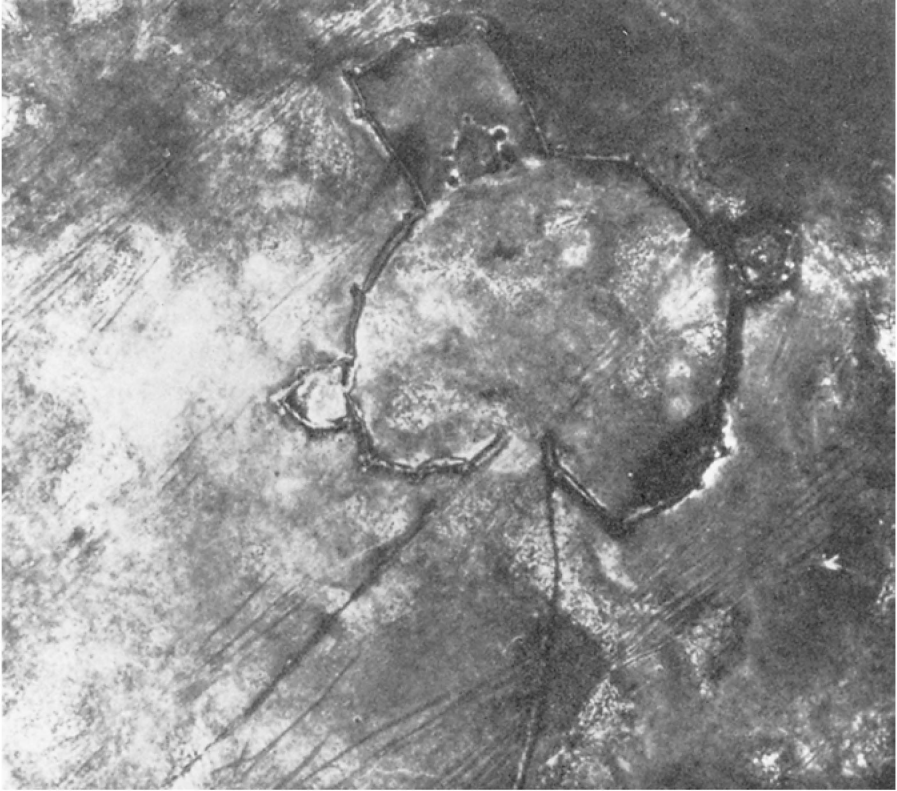


Plate II Bedouin enclosure