

## THEOPHANES THE ARTFUL CHRONICLER FOR A GERMAN AUDIENCE

Johannes Koder: Die frommen Byzantiner und ihre bösen Nachbarn. Das 7. Jahrhundert (582–717) in der *Chronographia* des Theophanes Homologetes. Einleitung, Übersetzung, Kommentar. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 2022. 371 p., 2 maps. € 50.00. ISBN: 978-3-7001-9188-9.

Johannes Koder's translation of 136 years of Theophanes' *Chronographia* (582–717) in a pocket-sized edition takes its place, after almost half a century, in front of that by Leopold Breyer of the final section of the work (717–813).<sup>1</sup> Like its predecessor, its title proclaims its core focus, in this case Byzantine piety and the wickedness of its neighbours. Exactly half the volume is occupied by the translation that is supported by brief annotation; the first quarter contains extended introductory material, while the final quarter consists of 34 pages of bibliography (pp. 277–313), a concordance of Theophanes' dating systems with our *annus domini* method (pp. 316–319), and four indices of Greek and Latin terms (pp. 320–330), People (pp. 331–349), Places (350–367), and Sites in Constantinople (pp. 368–370). The frontispiece and end papers provide maps of the Roman East and the Aegean world respectively, but there is no plan of Constantinople that would have been helpful.

### Introduction

The Introduction (pp. 11–90) comprises eight parts. The first presents what is known about Theophanes, the leader of the monastery of Megas Agros near the Sea of Marmara and touches on the complex question of his relationship with George Syncellus, whose own chronographic work he contin-

1 L. Breyer (ed.): *Bilderstreit und Arabersturm in Byzanz. Das 8. Jahrhundert (717–813) aus der Weltchronik des Theophanes*. 2nd ed. Graz/Vienna/Cologne 1964 (Byzantinische Geschichtsschreiber 6). References to the text of Theophanes cite the page and line of the edition of Carl de Boor (ed.): *Theophanis Chronographia*. 2 vols. Leipzig 1883–1885.

ued in order to create a combined work that stretched from the Creation to his own day (“Theophanes Homologetes und Georgios Synkellos”, pp. 14–20). Part two surveys the manuscript transmission of the work and its influence, including its use by Constantine VII Porphyrogennitus and the important early translation into Latin by Anastasius Bibliothecarius (“Überlieferung und Verbreitung der *Chronographia*”, pp. 20–23). The third part covers the question of sources and receives longer comment below (“Das 7. Jahrhundert in den historischen Quellen”, pp. 23–32). The next two sections respectively deal with Audience, Language, and Organization, including a list of Latin terms in Theophanes and their location in his work (“Publikum, Sprache und Gestaltung der *Chronographia*”, pp. 32–41), and then Chronology, explaining his unusual choice of an era that placed the Creation exactly 5,000 years before the Incarnation (“Die Chronologie in der *Chronographia*”, pp. 41–46). The sixth part (“Inhaltliche Grundzüge der *Chronographia* zwischen 582 und 717”, pp. 46–58) has four subsections: the evolution of the *Oikoumene* or Universal Realm; Peace and War, with the observation that only 27 of the 136 years covered by this volume do not contain some violence, whether external or internal; External Affairs and Non-Christians; and finally Internal Affairs and Ecclesiastical Matters. Part seven (“Weitere inhaltliche Themen”, pp. 59–87), which covers a miscellaneous selection of topics, has even more subdivisions, ten in total: information on weather; three different geographical terms – *ta Romaïka*, or Roman territory, the Slavs (*Sklavoi* or *Skлавинιοι*) and their territory (*Skлавинια*) –, and the themes, the empire’s organizational units that emerged during the seventh Century; the fifth sub-division looks at the secular and religious characterization of rulers, an issue of central importance to Koder’s conception of Theophanes’ construction of the *Chronographia*; the final five discuss punishments, cursing, Greek Fire, the Colossus of Rhodes, and Acclamations by the Circus Factions. The last part of the Introduction presents Koder’s approach to the translation (“Erläuterungen zur Übersetzung”, pp. 87–90).

In his section on sources (pp. 23–32) Koder covers the texts that Theophanes definitely or probably used as well as those that were not used by him but are still relevant as confirmation for, or alternatives to, his account. Thus, in the section on sources in Greek, the *Chronicon Paschale* and the *Breviarium* of Nicephorus, which contain accounts that are parallel to Theophanes but were not used by him, are listed alongside the poems of George of Pisidia and Anastasius of Sinai (pp. 26–27), of whom the former was Theophanes’

main source for much of Heraclius' war against the Persians in the 620s while the latter underpinned Theophanes' excursus on Monotheletes. Considering that James Howard-Johnston devoted over 500 pages to discussing the sources, both extant and lost, for seventh-century events,<sup>2</sup> while Cyril Mango and Roger Scott assigned 31 pages of their introduction to the question of where Theophanes found his information,<sup>3</sup> it is not surprising that Koder can do little more than allude briefly to some key issues in his ten pages (and much smaller ones at that). It might have been better to have focused attention on the texts that Theophanes actually used, not least because some scholars regard his main function as being the repository for information that would otherwise have been lost. Koder could then, for example, have commented on the hypothesis of Howard-Johnston that George of Pisidia composed a hybrid work, in which a prose narrative was interspersed with snatches of verse, which underpinned Theophanes' account of Heraclius' campaigns in the 620s, or summarized current thinking on the exceptionally complex issue of Theophanes' oriental source, a lost text that provided him with substantial information on events involving the empire's eastern neighbours from the 630s. On the latter Koder presents the hypothesis of Robert Hoyland that Theophanes was one of a group of writers who drew on a lost work by Theophilus of Edessa,<sup>4</sup> whereas various contributions to the 2015 collection edited by Marek Jankowiak and Federico Montinaro have argued that the issue is much more complicated, with a text that narrated eastern affairs down to 685 being used directly by Theophanes, after which he had access to information on events down to the mid-eighth century through a source that is shared with texts connected with Theophilus.<sup>5</sup>

- 2 J. Howard-Johnston: *Witnesses to a World Crisis. Historians and Histories of the Middle East in the Seventh Century*. Oxford 2010.
- 3 C. Mango/R. Scott (eds.): *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor. Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284–813*. Oxford 1997, pp. LXXIV–XCV.
- 4 R. Hoyland (ed.): *Theophilus of Edessa's Chronicle and the Circulation of Historical Knowledge in Late Antiquity and Early Islam*. Translated with an Introduction and Notes. Liverpool 2011 (*Translated Texts for Historians* 57).
- 5 M. Conterno: Theophilus, "the most likely candidate"? Towards a Reappraisal of the Question of Theophanes' "Oriental Source(s)". In: M. Jankowiak/F. Montinaro (eds.): *Studies in Theophanes*. Paris 2015 (*Travaux et Mémoires* 19), pp. 383–400.

The chronological range of the volume deserves comment. The end-point is fixed, since Breyer's volume begins at the accession of Leo III and the opening salvoes of Byzantine Iconoclasm, but the start-point, the accession of Emperor Maurice in 582, is much less obvious. The significant break in Theophanes' account of the sixth century is the death of Justinian in 565, not least because his most important source for the previous forty years, the *Chronicle* of John Malalas, ended in that year. Without offering any evidence, Koder comments in passing that Malalas' work extended until 600, but there is no justification for this idiosyncratic view, which is at odds with the close comparison of the accounts of Malalas and Theophanes for Justinian's reign, as well as the views of the Australian team who have done so much to improve our understanding of Malalas.<sup>6</sup> Theophanes did have a chronicle source for the period after the end of Malalas, but it was a different text that offered a much less detailed account of events, at least until *circa* 600, than Malalas had for the final decade of Justinian's reign.<sup>7</sup> This question of the start is relevant to Koder's thesis of pious Byzantines and evil outsiders, since Theophylact Simocatta's *History*, Theophanes' main source for the reign of Emperor Maurice (582–602), included a flashback on the early stages of the Persian war that had been triggered by Justin II's behaviour in 572. Through a combination of Theophylact's criticism of Justin's actions in breaking the Fifty-years' Peace of 561 on the basis that it was disgraceful for the Romans to pay money to the Persians, and the relocation, probably deliberate, of a long account from Malalas of Julian's embassy to Axum (Ethiopia) in 530/531 that ended with the king of Axum attacking the Persians for the benefit of the Romans (Malalas 18.56), Theophanes was able to demonstrate that the Roman emperor was responsible for the renewal of war (245.22–24). In view of Justin's breach of faith, it is no surprise that the war went badly for the Romans, to the extent that Justin became deranged and had to hand over the running of the empire to Tiberius, who was proclaimed Caesar. This is an excellent example of what Koder has identified as the central theme of Theophanes' organization of material, that piety and ortho-

6 Michael Whitby: Justinian's Bridge over the Sangarius and the Date of Procopius' *De Aedificiis*. In: JHS 105, 1985, pp. 129–148, at pp. 136–141; E. Jeffreys/M. Jeffreys/R. Scott (eds.): *The Chronicle of John Malalas. A Translation*. Melbourne 1986 (Byzantina Australiensia 4); E. Jeffreys/B. Croke/R. Scott (eds.): *Studies in John Malalas*. Sydney 1990 (Byzantina Australiensia 6).

7 Michael Whitby: Theophanes' Chronicle Source for the Reigns of Justin II, Tiberius and Maurice (A.D. 565–602). In: *Byzantion* 53, 1983, pp. 312–345.

doxy bring success while their opposites lead to misfortune (pp. 66–73). Justinian’s death in 565 would have been the logical place to begin, in terms of sources, Theophylact as well as Malalas, and of Theophanes’ programmatic organization.

### Translation

The core of the volume is the annotated translation (“Theophanes Homologes: *Chronographia* der Jahre 6074 bis 6209”, pp. 91–276). For this the gold standard has been established by the magisterial work of Mango and Scott, and Koder makes appropriate use of this resource. The extent of his reliance is clear from the notes, where Mango/Scott is the most common citation, with the Geoffrey Greatrex/Samuel Lieu collection of sources on Rome’s eastern wars,<sup>8</sup> Hoyland on Theophilus, and the revised edition of Franz Dölger’s list of imperial documents<sup>9</sup> also being regularly cited where appropriate. Overall, comparison of a random selection of passages from across the volumes reveals that the translation is clear, readable, and accurate. Like Mango/Scott Koder supplies in brackets wording that Anastasius Bibliothecarius included in his Latin version, where he represented the more complete Greek text to which he had access. Disagreements with Mango/Scott are few and far between, but on occasions Mango/Scott pay closer attention to the precise wording of Theophanes:

In AM 6092 for ἀναλαβὼν τὰς δυνάμεις ὁ Πρίσκος ἐπὶ τὴν Σιγγιδόνα παραγίνεται. ὁ δὲ Χαγάνος συναθροίσας τὴν ἑαυτοῦ δύναμιν [...] (Theophanes 278.13–14), Mango/Scott respected both the difference between the two verbs ἀναλαβὼν/συναθροίσας and the identity of the noun δυνάμεις/δύναμιν: “[...] Priscus, taking his forces, moved to Singidunum. The Chagan, having gathered together his own force [...]”.<sup>10</sup> In contrast Koder ignores both, “[...] sammelte Priskos die Streitkräfte und begab sich nach Singidon. Der Chaganos aber sammelte seine Streitmacht [...]” (p. 124). Koder’s translation is not wrong, but could

8 G. Greatrex/S. N. C. Lieu (eds.): *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars. Part II: AD 363–630. A Narrative Sourcebook*. London/New York 2002.

9 F. Dölger/A. E. Müller (eds.): *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches von 565–1453. Teil 1, Halbbd. 1: Regesten 565–867*. 2nd ed. Munich 2009 (*Corpus der griechischen Urkunden des Mittelalters und der neueren Zeit, Reihe A, Abt. 1*).

10 Mango/Scott (n. 3), p. 403.

easily have followed Mango/Scott in representing Theophanes' language more exactly.

p. 148, n. 493. Koder translates *πολιτεύεσθαι* (Theophanes 297.5) as “politisch aktiv sein”, accepting the interpretation of Hans-Georg Beck<sup>11</sup> that this is a technical term which refers to the activities of the circus factions in public life, criticizing Mango/Scott's “holding public office” (p. 426) as conveying a general sense rather than the precise meaning. However, Beck's view that the factions had specified public duties was disproved by Alan Cameron, who also pointed out, on the basis of Malalas' version of Justinian's law against pagans, that *μὴ πολιτεύεσθαι* (Malalas 18.4, p. 377.4, Thurn) was equivalent to *μὴτε στρατεύεσθαι μὴτε τινὸς ἀξιώματος ἀπολαύειν* (CJ 1.5.18.4).<sup>12</sup> Phocas was imposing a meaningful punishment on the Green faction for their hostility and violence, so that the interpretation of Cameron and Mango/Scott is to be preferred.

p. 154, AM 6107. Although Koder translates the manuscripts' reading Charcedon, which is normally identified with Carthage, and might seem possible in view of the preceding mention of Libya in Theophanes (301.12), in n. 516 on AM 6108 it is clear that he accepts the simple correction to Chalcedon,<sup>13</sup> which the Persians under Shahin are known to have reached in AD 615 (AM 6108).

p.196. Koder does not comment on the ambiguity of Theophanes' sentence, even though this was noted by Mango/Scott:<sup>14</sup> the clause *θέλοντες ἐπιρρίψαι κατὰ τῶν Ἀράβων τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῆς εἰδωλοθυσίας αὐτῶν* (335.15–16) might appear to refer to an unknown act of idolatry by the Christian Arabs, but is more likely to refer to worship by the Muslims.

11 H.-G. Beck: *Senat und Volk von Konstantinopel. Probleme der byzantinischen Verfassungsgeschichte*. Munich 1966 (Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-historische Klasse. 1966, 6), p. 49.

12 A. Cameron: *Circus Factions. Blues and Greens at Rome and Byzantium*. Oxford 1976, pp. 288–289.

13 Accepted by Mango/Scott (n. 3), p. 432, without discussion. For the slippage, cf. M. Hurbanič: *Adversus Iudaeos* in the Sermon Written by Theodore Syncellus on the Avar Siege of AD 626. In: *Studia Ceranea* 6, 2016, pp. 271–293, at p.283.

14 Mango/Scott (n. 3), p. 467, n. 4.

p. 239. Theophanes (364.11–12) presents both the names Sklavinia and Bulgaria in the singular, *κατὰ Σκλαυινίας καὶ Βουλγαρίας*,<sup>15</sup> but Koder translates plural “Sklaviniai”, as he had rightly done a couple of lines earlier (364.9). At p. 63, n. 219 he correctly treats *κατὰ Σκλαυινίας* at Theophanes 347.6 as singular (genitive), but this is exactly the same usage as here which he regards as accusative plural.

p. 240. Koder translates both *ἐξ ἀνοίας* and *ἀλόγως* (Theophanes 365.8–9) as “aus Torheit”; Mango/Scott did use different words, albeit from the same basic root, “foolishly [...] in his folly”;<sup>16</sup> “in his stupidity”. *Dummheit* for *ἀλόγως*, for example, would better reflect the different words in the Greek.

There are also, however, a few places, where Koder improves on Mango/Scott:

p. 214. Koder translates Theophanes’ clause, *ἃ καὶ κατ’ ἔπος οὗτοι γεγράφασιν* (347.13–14), literally as “was diese [sc. the two disciples called Anastasius] auch wörtlich niederschreiben”, departing without comment from the interpretation of Mango/Scott “which they composed in dialogue”.<sup>17</sup> Although Maximus did use dialogue form to refute imperial Monotheletism, it is more likely that Theophanes is here referring to the labour of Maximus’ disciples in copying his works accurately, ‘word for word’, “auch wörtlich”, to disseminate his orthodox opinions.

p. 221. Whereas Mango/Scott translated *ἐφ’ ὄρκισεν* (Theophanes 352.21) as “impaled”,<sup>18</sup> Koder more accurately says that the emperor hung the rebel leaders on *phurka*, which are identified in the Index 1 (p. 327) as a form of gallows in the shape of a Y; this form of execution was a variant on crucifixion, whose different configuration avoided insult to Christ’s memory.

I have two minor reservations in terms of the presentation of the text. First, that the page numbers of the Carl de Boor edition are easily lost in their surrounding words, which would not have been the case if they had been printed in bold. This makes it harder to follow up the references in the In-

15 Translated as singular in both Athanasius’ translation and Mango/Scott (n. 3), p. 508.

16 Ibid., p. 509.

17 Ibid., p. 484.

18 Ibid., p. 492.

dices, which are given to the de Boor pagination rather than Koder's own. Second, that the chronological rubric at the start of each annual entry is accompanied by the year of the Incarnation, as calculated by Theophanes from 5492 BC, but not a clarificatory AD date. Granted that Theophanes did not always include the *Annus Mundi* and Incarnation year in his rubrics, the translation already goes beyond the letter of the manuscripts in always supplying these, and it would not have stretched matters much further to have provided the AD date as well, within square brackets. As it is the reader must always remember that what appears to be an AD date for an entry is in fact out by eight or nine years (depending on the month). That said, if the adjustments suggested above and these reservations represent the level of complaint generated by the translation, its quality and reliability are clear.

### Commentary

With regard to the notes, these are useful in pointing readers towards information on other relevant sources, and in providing dates, where possible, for events, but are less helpful in directing them to important modern literature, for example on the overthrow of Hormizd and flight of Khusro II in 589/590.<sup>19</sup> David Olster's book on the reign of Phocas is not in the bibliography;<sup>20</sup> nor, more unfortunately, are the major books published in 2021 on Heraclius by Howard-Johnston, Theresia Raum and Nadine Viermann.<sup>21</sup> In the case of the last two, proximity to the date of Koder's own publication is probably the cause, though it would have been helpful to have discussed

19 M. J. Higgins: *The Persian War of the Emperor Maurice (582–602)*. Vol. I: *The Chronology. With a Brief History of the Persian Calendar*. Washington, D.C. 1939 (*Byzantine Studies* 1); or, more briefly, Michael Whitby: *The Emperor Maurice and His Historian: Theophylact Simocatta on Persian and Balkan Warfare*. Oxford 1988 (*Oxford Historical Monographs*), pp. 291–297.

20 D. M. Olster: *The Politics of Usurpation in the Seventh Century. Rhetoric and Revolution in Byzantium*. Amsterdam 1993.

21 J. Howard-Johnston: *The Last Great War of Antiquity*. Oxford 2021; Th. Raum: *Szenen eines Überlebenskampfes. Akteure und Handlungsspielräume im Imperium Romanum 610–630*. Stuttgart 2021 (*Roma aeterna* 9); N. Viermann: *Herakleios, der schwitzende Kaiser. Die oströmische Monarchie in der ausgehenden Spätantike*. Berlin/Boston 2021 (*Millennium-Studien* 89).



Howard-Johnston's theories about the chronology of Heraclius' campaigns in the 620s and Theophanes' sources on the basis of his earlier articles.<sup>22</sup>

Some specific comments. Most of these relate to the first half of the text, the period up to the death of Heraclius, since these are the years where there are serious issues relating to alternative account of events. From the end of Heraclius' Persian campaigns, the main issue for Theophanes is his relationship with the nexus of oriental sources, which has been clearly set out by both Mango/Scott and Hoyland.

p. 97, n. 340 and elsewhere, including the Index (p. 355), the city of Edessa in Mesopotamia is spelled "Edesa" – though on the map at the front of the volume it is marked correctly.

p. 99. It might have been noted that in the second sentence of the second paragraph Theophanes (257.27–29) had incorrectly changed the subject in his source, Theophylact (2.11.4), from Comentiolus to "they", "sie", namely his subordinates Martin and Castus.

p. 100, n. 347. Although the translation "Widder", "ram" is correct for Theophanes' κριὸν (259.2), the machine described by Theophanes' source, πολιορκητικὸν τι μηχανήμα [...] ἀκροβολίζειν τε παρεσκευάζε τὴν ἐλέπολιν (Theophylact 2.16.10), was clearly a device for launching projectiles from a distance rather than close-quarters assault on the wall; the paper by Paul E. Chevedden cited by Koder identified the siege engine as a counter-weight trebuchet. Koder does not note Theophanes' misunderstanding.

p. 109, n. 371, with reference to the discussion at p. 37. Theophanes' statement that Maurice adopted Khusro, τεχνοποιηθεὶς ὁ βασιλεὺς Μαυρίκιος Χοσρόην (266.13) is clearly an erroneous extrapolation from Theophylact's wording at 5.3.11, παῖδα Χοσρόην ἀποκαλῶν, which refers to the sort of language used in diplomatic exchanges, e.g. Χοσρόης ὁ σὸς υἱὸς (Theophylact 4.11.11), rather than the sort of formal ceremony that Justin I had prepared, in the event unsuccessfully, for the future Khusro I in 525/526.

p. 111. Granted Koder's attention to parallel texts, it is surprising that there is no reference to the notice in the *Chronicon Paschale* (691.14–17) of the coronation of the young Theodosius, apparently by Maurice himself rather than

22 J. Howard-Johnston: Heraclius' Persian Campaigns and the Revival of the East Roman Empire, 622–630. In: *War in History* 6, 1999, pp. 1-44.

Patriarch John, and the fact that this was not reflected in official dating formulae.

p. 111, n. 379. Mango/Scott rightly dated Maurice's expedition to Anchialus to 590/591, while also noting that most of the information that Theophylact (6.1.1–3.4), followed by Theophanes, attached to this expedition in fact belonged to a later campaign, probably in 598.<sup>23</sup> Koder only cites Dölger/Müller's *Regesten*,<sup>24</sup> without acknowledging the complications.

p. 112, n. 383. Koder offers scant comment on the worrying omens and prodigies that beset Maurice's march, though these are relevant to his theme of how Theophanes perceived and presented particular reigns.

p. 113, n. 387. Koder does not comment on the uncertainty about the date of this campaign, which Josef Marquart plausibly connected with events of 588 as described by Michael the Syrian 10.21.<sup>25</sup>

p. 117, n. 395. Mango/Scott in fact offered two alternatives for the date of Philippicus' appointments, either that Theophanes has incorrectly placed this a decade too late or that he was now reappointed *magister militum* and *comes excubitorum*;<sup>26</sup> Koder ignores the latter possibility.

pp. 124–126. Theophanes' account (278.30–280.10) of Comentiolus' dealings with the Avars combines material from Theophylact (8.13.8–15.14) on the general's mishandling of his army near Iatrus and then flight to Dirizipera with a story from a different source of a deliberate betrayal and then imperial refusal to ransom the captives even at a favourable rate. This deserves comment, since it is a good example of how Theophanes shaped his narrative, in this case to explain why Maurice, an emperor of whom his view was essentially very positive in line with that of his source Theophylact, should have come to a terrible end, being overthrown by the 'tyrant' Phocas and then killed after having to witness the executions of his sons. For Theophy-

23 Mango/Scott (n. 3), p. 392, n. 1.

24 See above n. 9.

25 J. Marquart: *Osteuropäische und ostasiatische Streifzüge. Ethnologische und historisch-topographische Studien zur Geschichte des 9. und 10. Jahrhunderts* (ca. 840–940). Leipzig 1903, p. 486, followed by Whitby: *Emperor Maurice* (n. 19), pp. 151–155.

26 Mango/Scott (n. 3), p. 396, n. 4.

lact Maurice's love of money provided a partial explanation, though he saw the main cause as the disobedience of the Roman army and the brutality of its leader, Phocas, which destroyed Maurice's legacy and initiated the disasters of the early seventh century. Theophanes wanted a stronger personal explanation and exploited Theophylact's criticism of imperial avarice, but also in this passage strengthened this by constructing a specific example by rewriting Theophylact's account in the light of information from a different source. This enabled him to produce a narrative that ends with the editorial comment, "From this great hatred was stirred up against the emperor Maurice, and they began to target him with abuse". The other point of interest is that the material used by Theophanes to reshape Theophylact is linguistically very close to an extract from the Great Chronographer that is preserved in the margins to the manuscript of the *Chronicon Paschale*.<sup>27</sup> Although Mango/Scott asserted that the Great Chronographer created its text on the basis of Theophanes' account,<sup>28</sup> the overlap between its language and the words that Theophanes could not have taken over from Theophylact makes this an unlikely coincidence. This is arguably the only passage in the section translated by Koder, indeed in the entire *Chronographia*, where one can observe Theophanes' literary technique at close quarters, how he selected phrases from two extant sources with limited rewriting in order to create a new narrative that fitted his purpose by demonstrating why Maurice deserved his terrible fate.

p. 125, n. 421. The sentence that begins *φασι δέ τινας* (Theophanes 278.32–4) was recognized by Mango/Scott as being derived from a source other than Theophylact,<sup>29</sup> as indeed Theophanes signalled with this opening "Some

27 See Michael Whitby: *The Great Chronographer and Theophanes*. In: *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 8, 1983, pp. 1–20; id.: *Emperor Maurice* (n. 19), pp. 121–123; and Michael Whitby/Mary Whitby (eds.): *Chronicon Paschale 284–628 AD*. Translated with Notes and Introduction. Liverpool 1989 (Translated Texts for Historians 7), p. 200, for a translation of the Great Chronographer passage.

28 Mango/Scott (n. 3), p. XC. Their conclusion is based on a limited comparison of part of Great Chronographer extract 14 with Theophanes 412.6–21, but ignores Theophanes' tendency to change material from his sources into direct speech, for which see Whitby: *Chronicle Source* (n. 7), p. 315. It is certain the extracts 2, 4, and 10 of the Great Chronographer, on earthquakes under Zeno and Justin I and on the plague of 542, were not derived from Theophanes, since there are no parallel passages in the *Chronographia*.

29 Mango/Scott (n. 3), p. 405, n. 8.

people say [...]”. The manuscripts’ reading *πολέμοις* (Theophanes 278.34), “wars”, has to be corrected to *πολεμίους*, “enemies”, the reading of the Great Chronographer, which presents this sentence in almost identical language. Although John of Antioch fr. 316 preserves a story of Maurice’s alleged attempt to betray his army to the Avars, both its details and language are sufficiently different from Theophanes’ version that John is most unlikely to have been his source.

p. 128, n. 434. Here Koder provides some information on Viminacium, but his practice in this respect is inconsistent: nothing is said in the notes about places such as Dara, Martyropolis, or Singidunum, and, where he does provide bibliography in Index 3 on Geographical Names, this is often outdated: for example, on places in Mesopotamia such as Arzamon, Dara, or S<is>arbanon, it would have been better to cite Louis Dillemann, as opposed to earlier works by Ernst Honigmann.<sup>30</sup>

p.129, n. 435. Koder suggests that the first three battles in which Priscus defeated the Avars were fought at the island-fortress in the Danube to which the city of Viminacium had now moved, whereas they took place to the north of the Danube, quite possibly some distance to the north or north-west, since the Khagan is next said to be near the river Tisza that joins the Danube about 100 km upstream from Viminacium.

p. 131, n. 443. The *Chronicon Paschale* (693.3–5) dates the festivities for the wedding of Theodosius to February 602; “502” is presumably a typo.

p. 133, n. 448. John of Antioch is cited, following de Boor and Mango/Scott, as fr. 218b, according to the enumeration of Müller in the *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum V*, whereas in Koder’s bibliography (and indeed in n. 449) the newer edition by Umberto Roberto is given; the citation should be fr. 318.1–5. Same error at p. 139 n. 465, where the correct reference is fr. 318.26–27.

p. 133, n. 449. The reference to John of Antioch is fr. 318.2–5. Mango/Scott posited that only the reference to an icon is a later insertion in the story of Maurice’s vision,<sup>31</sup> not that the whole story was a later creation.

30 L. Dillemann: *Haute Mésopotamie et pays adjacents. Contribution à la géographie historique de la région, du Ve s. avant l’ère chrétienne au VIe s. de cette ère*. Paris 1962 (*Bibliothèque archéologique et historique* 72).

31 Mango/Scott (n. 3), p. 415, n. 17.

p. 137, n. 461. Koder does not note that Anastasius translated the chant against Maurice as ‘Marcionist’, not Marcianist, quite possibly a deliberate change to clarify what he understood to be a reference to the second-century gnostic leader. Koder, following Mango/Scott,<sup>32</sup> accepted this interpretation, but the reading Marcianist, which is confirmed by Theophylact 8.9.3, was identified by Michael Graebner as an allusion to a little-known contemporary heresy that was known for its rejection of standard Christian charity in arguing, for example, against the giving of alms to beggars, widows, or victims of barbarian attack.<sup>33</sup> Granted Maurice’s reputation for parsimony, this interpretation is eminently plausible.

p. 139, n. 466. Maurice’s son Paul is not included in the list of executions at *Chronicon Paschale* 694.4–5, possibly because in the *Life of Theodore of Sykeon* (97.1–5) he is said to have been critically ill with what is referred to as elephantiasis.<sup>34</sup>

p. 145, n. 484. Here and elsewhere cross-references to parallel information in the *Chronicon Paschale* might have been more helpful to readers if the bibliography (p. 279) had included the annotated translation in the “Translated Texts for Historians” series, rather than the extracts printed in Greatrex/Lieu, since that volume, being focused on the eastern frontier, does not include translations of most of the passages cited.<sup>35</sup>

p. 153, n. 512. The possible significance of the incorrect date for Heraclius’ incestuous marriage to his niece Martina is not discussed.<sup>36</sup> This was an exceptionally contentious act, which was strongly opposed by Patriarch Sergius, to whom Emperor Heraclius was supposed to have said that he would accept the consequences on his own head. In its correct location in 623, or possibly early 624, this event would have introduced a discordant overture

32 Ibid., p. 417, n. 41, citing H. Grégoire: Maurice le Marcioniste, Empereur arménien et « Vert ». In: *Byzantion* 13, 1938, pp. 395–396.

33 M. Graebner: “Mavrike Markianitsa”. A Note. In: *Byzantina* 11, 1982, pp. 181–188, accepted by Whitby: Emperor Maurice (n. 19), p. 19.

34 With the emendation of C. Mango: A Memorial to the Emperor Maurice? In: *Delation tes Christianikes Archaialogikes Hetaireias* Ser. 4, 24, 2003, pp. 15–20, at p. 17.

35 Whitby/Whitby (n. 27). Greatrex/Lieu (n. 8).

36 Mango/Scott (n. 3), p. 431, n.2, do not in fact date the marriage to 624 but say that Nicephorus suggests it may have occurred “as late as 623” and that Heraclius “was certainly married to her [Martina] by the spring of 624”.

to the following narrative of Roman victories that culminate in the defeat of Persia, the overthrow of Khusro II in 628, and the restoration of the relic of the Cross to Jerusalem in 630. It is certainly worth considering whether Theophanes deliberately advanced the date by ten years, from AM 6115 (AD 622/623) to AM 6105 (AD 612/613) in order to support the trajectory of his account of Heraclius' reign, with problems and reverses located in the first decade, followed by triumph over the Persians in the 620s, before the emperor's lapse into the Monothelete heresy preceded the Arab invasions.

p. 156, n. 519. The account of the attempt by the Avars to capture Heraclius as he was making his way to Heraclea to discuss peace with the Khagan is another event that has been advanced by Theophanes, in this case to AM 6110, a year for which he appears to have had no other information. Although Koder notes the scholarly consensus that the correct date of June 623 (AM 6116) is that given by the *Chronicon Paschale* (712.12–13), he does not comment on what might appear to have been a deliberate decision about placement by Theophanes. As with the relocation of Heraclius' wedding to Martina, this reordering allowed Theophanes to remove a highly embarrassing personal incident, when the emperor came close to being captured, from his narrative of imperial successes in the 620s and so underpinned his presentation of the reign as a whole.

p. 157. Koder might have noted that Bonus was the correct name of the patrician (Theophanes 303.4–5), and provided a cross-reference to his discussion in his Introduction (pp. 65–66) of *ta themeta* (Theophanes 303.10).

p. 157, n. 522. The events of Heraclius' first campaign in 622 are far from clear, and readers would have been helped by a reference to modern discussions, for example by Howard-Johnston.<sup>37</sup> Further references over the next four years would also have been useful.

pp. 172–173, n. 557. Koder's treatment of the important evidence of Theodore Syncellus on the 626 Avar siege of Constantinople suggests limited knowledge of the text. First, he refers to Theodore's homily on the siege as "Historia brevis" (also p. 173, n. 558), possibly confusing it with Nicephorus' Breviarium, but then quotes from the same text, perhaps without realising

37 E.g. Howard-Johnston: *Heraclius' Persian Campaigns* (n. 22); id.: *The Official History of Heraclius' Persian Campaigns*. In: E. Dąbrowa (ed.): *The Roman and Byzantine Army in the East. Proceedings of a Colloquium Held at the Jagiellonian University, Kraków in September 1992*. Krakow 1994, pp. 57–87.

it, which he calls “the anonymous account in Sternbach 1900”.<sup>38</sup> Granted that Leo Sternbach’s publication is not easy to find, it would have been helpful to have referred to the French translation of the homily by Ferenc Makk since it is accompanied by a reprint of Sternbach’s Greek text.<sup>39</sup> There is no discussion of the surprising brevity of Theophanes’ report of this dramatic event, on which he probably had access to the celebratory account in George of Pisidia’s *Bellum Avaricum*.

p. 183, n. 581. Khusro II was killed on 28th February (*Chronicon Paschale* 729.1–3) 628, not 9th June 630; the latter is the date provided by Tabari for the assassination of Shahrvaraz that Koder has by mistake taken from Hoyland.<sup>40</sup>

p. 185, n. 586. The date of Heraclius’ return to Constantinople after his Persian victory is unclear, but the chronology of Pertusi (late 628 to early 629) that Koder adopts was rightly questioned by Mango/Scott,<sup>41</sup> which he also cites. It is likely that Heraclius only went back to the capital after meeting Shahrvaraz at Arabissus in June 629, probably being present to celebrate the arrival of a relic of the Cross.<sup>42</sup>

p. 204, n. 645. 26th May 641 is unlikely to be correct for the death of Heraclius Constantine, if his father’s death is dated to 11th February (p. 204, n. 644) and Nicephorus (29.25–26) is right to say that he reigned by himself for 103 days: counting inclusively, this gives 24th May as the date.<sup>43</sup>

38 The homily is indeed presented anonymously in the manuscripts, though the catalogue of the Escorial Library, reporting a manuscript that is now lost, ascribes it to a Theodore, and on the basis of style and language the attribution to Theodore Syncellus is secure.

39 L. Sternbach: *Analecta Avarica*. Krakow 1900 (*Rozprawy Akademii Umiejętności*, Wydział Filologiczny 2,15,4). F. Makk: *Traduction et commentaire de l’Homélie écrite probablement par Théodore le Syncelle sur le siège de Constantinople en 626* (*Acta Universitatis de Attila József nominatae*, *Acta antiqua et archaeologica* 19 = *Opuscula Byzantina* 3). Szeged 1975.

40 Hoyland (n. 4), p. 81, n. 132.

41 Mango/Scott (n. 3), p. 458, n. 3.

42 See now Michael Whitby: *The Year 629 and the Chronicon Paschale*. In: P. Booth/Mary Whitby (eds.): *Mélanges James Howard-Johnston*. Paris 2022 (*Travaux et Mémoires* 26), pp. 545–564, at pp. 551–554.

43 As Mango/Scott (n. 3), p. 474, n. 1.

p. 213, n. 676. The possibility of connecting Constans' victorious campaign against Slav territory (*Sklaunia*) with that reported in the *Miracles of St Demetrius* 2.4.278–279, might have been noted. Although the link was rejected by Paul Lemerle, his discussion of the date is not definitive:<sup>44</sup> the Slavs had started blockading Thessalonica when an unnamed emperor was at war with the Arabs, and then assaulted the city in a year that is given as a fifth indiction, for which 647, 662, 677 are the possibilities in the mid-seventh century; emendation of this indiction date to 15 would align the campaign in the *Miracles* with Theophanes AM date of 6149 (AD 656/657). This is obviously highly speculative, but granted the limited evidence that we have for Byzantine actions in the Balkans in the mid-seventh century, the information in the *Miracles* should at least have been noted.

p. 214, n. 678. The phrase ὡς οἱ φιλομαθεῖς γινώσκουσιν (Theophanes 347.14), “as lovers of learning know”, which is appended to the notice of the torture of Maximus the Confessor, is unusually ornate for Theophanes; it might be noted that comparable phrases occur several times in the works of Maximus.

p. 227, n. 728. “steht teilweise Nikephoros” is wrongly in italics.

p. 229. It might have been helpful to have directed readers to the debate concerning the Bulgar leader Krobotos or Koubratos, for example whether he is to be identified with Kouber in the *Miracles of St Demetrius* 2.5.286–291. A reference to the discussion by Lemerle would have sufficed.<sup>45</sup>

p. 258, n. 821. Although it might seem implausible that Justinian II would have given a military command to a man who had been accused of treachery, the interval of over 25 years since the alleged treachery against Constantine IV in the early 680s that is described in the *Miracles of St Demetrius* 2.5.304, not to mention the change of ruler, means that this cannot be ruled out. Alternatively, this patrician Maurus might be the son of the alleged traitor, since he had proved his loyalty to the empire by revealing his father's treachery.

44 P. Lemerle (ed.): *Les plus anciens recueils des Miracles de Saint Démétrius et la pénétration des Slaves dans les Balkans*. Vol. 2: *Commentaire*. Paris 1981 (*Le monde byzantin* 8), pp. 128–133.

45 Lemerle (n. 44), pp. 143–145.



p. 356. Granted the proximity of the Hebdomon to Constantinople and its close connection to events there, it might have been better to have included this in Index 4 along with other places in the capital.

p. 365. Sykai is said to be located on the Golden Horn north of Galata, whereas Janin, who is cited in the discussion,<sup>46</sup> correctly stated that Galata gradually replaced the name Sykai for the settlement immediately opposite Constantinople at the entry to the Golden Horn.

p. 368. The error over the location of Sykai might explain why Blachernae, while being correctly identified with the modern district of Ayvansaray in Istanbul, is said to have been in Sykai whereas it was on the opposite side of the Golden Horn.

### Conclusion

Koder has certainly produced a good translation of his chosen section of Theophanes and supplied notes that will guide readers to other relevant sources. At places the notes would have benefited from closer attention to the sources being referenced as well as from fuller citation of relevant bibliography. Koder's approach to Theophanes as a writer who was in control of his material, reshaping it to fit his agendas, is certainly preferable to the view that he was essentially a passive transmitter of information, whose main role is to preserve material from sources that would otherwise have been lost. This interpretation could have been strengthened if Koder had paid attention to the significant relocations in Heraclius' reign of the marriage to Martina and the Avar surprise, and noticed how for Maurice Theophanes created a narrative that provided a clear explanation of why this emperor, on whom his view was generally positive, merited a gruesome fate. If the volume had started at the natural break in the sixth century, AD 565, Theophanes' treatment of Justin II could have provided a further case study. That said, although Koder's translation does not supersede the Mango/Scott, not least because it only covers part of the text, it still offers a useful supplement and will be welcomed by readers of German.

46 R. Janin: *Constantinople byzantine. Développement urbain et répertoire topographique*. 2nd ed. Paris 1964 (*Archives de l'Orient chrétien* 4A), pp. 466–467.

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