Hansjoachim Andres: Bruderzwist. Strukturen und Methoden der Diplomatie zwischen Rom und Iran von der Teilung Armeniens bis zum Fünfzigjährigen Frieden. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag 2022 (Oriens et Occidens 40). 559 p. € 104.00. ISBN: 978-3-515-13363-0.

In the mid-520s Justin I wrote to Kavadh, his Persian counterpart, to alert him to the possibility of treachery by a Hunnic leader Zilgibi, who had previously been recruited by the Romans, but had now switched sides after receiving a better offer from the Persians (Ioh. Mal. 17.10). Accordingly Justin wrote to Kavadh, ostensibly on other matters but also incidentally informing him that Zilgibi was playing a double game and had agreed to betray the Persians, explaining the revelation on the grounds that the kings as brothers should speak to each other as friends and not permit their states to be exploited by such dogs. This incident, though not in fact discussed in detail in this book, captures some of the key themes in Hansjoachim Andres' substantial study of diplomatic dealings between Rome and Sasanid Persia over almost two centuries between the agreement to partition Armenia in 387 and the conclusion of the Fifty-Years' Peace in 561/562: the role of fraternal language in official communications, the confidence of one king in the word of the other, the opportunity to exploit this trust through misinformation, and the role of peripheral communities in relations between the empires.

After a brief Introduction (pp. 11–18) the book is divided into three parts, first five chapters of Definitions and Scene Setting (pp. 19–43), then four chapters on Structures (pp. 44–139) and nine on Diplomatic Methods (pp. 140–479), followed by a brief Summation (pp. 480–493) and three Appendices (pp. 494–508), comprehensive Bibliographies of Sources (pp. 509–513) and Modern Literature (pp. 514–547), and finally Indices of Names (pp. 548–554), Places (pp. 554–556), and Themes (pp. 557–559). In the modern world, the adjective Byzantine has negative connotations of duplicity and complexity, as Andres notes in his very first paragraph (p. 11), but he sets out to demonstrate that the effective management of interactions between two states of roughly equal power could not be a simple process; it might also have been noted that trickery is a more frequent element of Byzantine dealings with the empire's northern neighbours. The treatment of its chosen period is comprehensive and the whole work is very well signposted, perhaps even to excess since, quite apart from the comments on the book's approach in the Introduction, chapter 4 provides a preview of this,

and then the two large sections on Structures and Methods each has its own introductory chapter on the main concepts. But better too much than too little!

The five chapters in the first part are all short, with four pages on academic research on the topic ("Forschungslage", pp. 29–32), two for the preview ("Vorgehen", pp. 33–34), and five on the available sources ("Quellenlage", pp. 35–39). These are preceded by a useful theoretical discussion of diplomacy and foreign policy and how modern concepts relate to those of the ancient world ("Diplomatie und Außenpolitik", pp. 19–28). The classic period of modern diplomacy in the nineteenth century was clearly different from antiquity, when there were no permanent representatives or embassies in foreign countries, but antiquity is also distinct from the 'new diplomacy' of the century or so after World War I in that the increasing speed of communications and travel means that most diplomats are much more securely tied to their home base than nineteenth-century envoys or ancient diplomats could ever be. Diplomacy in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries is complex with different formats, such as shuttle, twin-track, or summit, and various means, for example sport, pandas, belt-and-road, that the late Roman world cannot match,[1] though Andres does demonstrate the variety of diplomatic methods used by both Rome and Iran to secure their interests. The key message is that ancient diplomacy needs to be assessed on its own terms without the imposition of modern stereotypes.

The discussion of the study's chronological boundaries is also important. The starting point in 387 is clear: the partition of Armenia brought to an end fifty years of conflict over territory and ushered in a long period of peace. Previously both sides had entertained grandiose ambitions, articulated in the so-called *Res Gestae* of Shapur I and Constantine's equally arrogant exposition to Shapur II of the benefits of Christianity (Eus. vita Const. 4.9–10) and put into action in Julian's ill-fated advance to Ctesiphon. Thereafter the frontier remained stable until 591 in spite of temporary gains made during sub-

1 There are in fact examples of ancient summit meetings, though from outside Andres' time frame: in 623 Heraclius arranged to meet the Avar khagan at Heraclea with a full panoply of ancient pomp, only to have to flee ignominiously when the Avars attempted to ambush him near the Long Walls; in June 629 Heraclius' meeting with Shahrvaraz at Arabissus was far more successful, resulting in close links between their families and an agreement that Heraclius would support Shahrvaraz's bid for the Sasanid throne.

sequent conflicts. The end-point at the Fifty-Years' Peace is more debatable. Andres' position is that the end should be marked by a formal agreement between the two parties comparable to that over Armenia (pp. 41–42), for which the peace deal of 561/562 fits the bill in many ways, especially as it is attested far better than any other agreement. However, a case could be made for the study to continue at least until 591 and the redrawing of the frontier after the restoration of Khusro II, or to 629 when Heraclius and Shahrvaraz regularized relations at a summit meeting at Arabissus. There is, moreover, one important way in which the 561/562 settlement differed from that of 387, namely that it did not resolve all issues but rather created a context for future disagreement: the status of the sub-Caucasian region of Suania was set aside for further discussion, which necessitated continuing negotiations and led to resentment, and it was only resolved in 591; furthermore, the Roman peace payments, which comprised two lump sums to cover the first ten years, became annual in 572, thereby raising the prospect that Rome would be presented as a tributary state in Sasanid royal propaganda or at least be fearful of that.

In defence of Andres' position, it would have been possible to point to differences in relations after 561/562 as opposed to his chosen period:

1. There was a desire for territorial change that is exemplified in Justin II's decision to go to war in 572 in the hope of recovering Nisibis more than two centuries after its surrender by Jovian; frontier adjustments were made in Transcaucasia in 591, and Khusro II's victories in the 610s led to a take-over of the Levant. Frontier realignment, or the desire for it, had also been a feature of the century and a half before Andres' period.

2. Envoys also seem to have been treated with less courtesy, with Justin II setting out to embarrass Mahbodh in 567, or even worse the three Roman envoys of 615 being shackled on entering Persian territory and eventually killed.

3. There was interference in dynastic affairs, for which there was precedent in Roman dealings with the Parthians but not the Sasanids: Maurice agreed to support Khusro II, the latter campaigned on behalf of someone claiming to be Maurice's eldest son Theodosius, and Heraclius gave help to Shahrvaraz as he prepared to usurp the Persian throne.

4. Religion, which had rarely featured in previous conflicts, became an issue in the seventh century, first with Khusro II trying to win over Miaphysites

in conquered Roman cities and Jews briefly being favoured in Jerusalem after its capture, then as Heraclius transformed his campaign against the Persians into a clash of religions, and finally when Khusro under terminal pressure issued threats against Christian communities in his realm.

On the other hand, there are strong continuities. Apart from the inevitable negotiations over Suania, many of the mechanisms of Andres' period continued to be employed in the subsequent decades, as the citation of parallels in the discussion of individual chapters below makes clear. Further, the period from 387 to 561/562 was far from homogeneous, since the first 115 years were interrupted by no more than two or three years of conflict whereas over half of the next sixty years experienced fighting somewhere along the borders. The image projected by Sasanid rulers also varied according to current circumstances, with Kavadh deliberately belittling Justinian through astral imagery when congratulating him on his accession in 529 and Khusro I presenting himself as the victorious replacement of Justinian at circus games at Apamea in 540, as opposed to the familial request by Kavadh for Justin I to adopt Khusro in order to smooth his accession. I would have preferred Andres to have extended his treatment, partly because rich details on embassies in the 560s and 570s and on the Sasanid civil war of 589–590 are provided by Menander and Theophylact, partly because his analysis of material is always illuminating and this important evidence would have benefitted from his full scrutiny.

The first two main chapters of the next section on Structures deal with the balance of military forces between the two empires and the consequences for international relations of the acceptance by both sides of this state of affairs. With regard to balance (pp. 140–207), it is difficult for us to calculate the military resources available to the eastern Roman empire, even with the help of the *Notitia Dignitatum Oriens*, especially recognizing that the applicability of its information beyond the second half of the fifth century has been called into question,[2] and the situation is far worse for the Sasanid realm for which we have almost no internal evidence. It may not have been much

2 A. Kaldellis/M. Kruse: The Field Armies of the East Roman Empire, 361–630. Cambridge et al. 2023 (reviewed by C. Whately: Plekos 26, 2024, pp. 77–85, URL: https://www.plekos.uni-muenchen.de/2024/r-kaldellis_kruse.pdf). To my mind, their argument that the *Notitia* system of five eastern armies had broken down by the early sixth century is overstated, but the arrangements recorded in the *Notitia* had undoubtedly evolved.

easier in antiquity, since, although information leaked in both directions, a crucial factor for the disposable force available on either side of the frontier was the nature and extent of the states' other commitments: whenever the Sasanids were subjected to pressure on their most important border, that which separated them from successive neighbours to the north-east, troops had to be diverted from the west, as happened after Kavadh's invasion in 502, and even if the Romans gave priority to their eastern neighbour their ability to focus resources there depended on engagements elsewhere, especially during Justinian's western campaigns. Another significant variable was whether the Persian king was present to command his army: although he had competent commanders, his personal involvement undoubtedly spurred his officers and troops to greater endeavours, whether that was through refusing to countenance the possibility of failure, as Kavadh at the siege of Amida in 502/503, or his ability to overawe the enemy, as Khusro I did in 540.[3] The reality was that the balance of military force could change from one year to the next and would only become apparent through the course of events. Awareness of this uncertainty was perhaps a more potent factor in fostering mutual acceptance than actual knowledge of each other's resources.

The consequences of this situation are explored in the following chapter (pp. 208–238). Whereas in the third century the Romans had regarded the Sasanids as no more permanently established than their Arsacid predecessors and Shapur I articulated major territorial claims in the west, in the late-fourth century, after Constantine's religious arrogance and Julian's adventurism, reality finally dawned on both sides of the frontier. Already in 358 Shapur II addressed Constantius II as his brother, while signalling his superior status by styling himself "partner with the stars, brother of the sun and moon" (Amm. 17.5.3): as Andres notes, the invocation of "brotherliness" (p. 106) did not signal acceptance of absolute equality, with Kavadh's letter to Justinian in 527 quoted above being an excellent example (Ioh. Mal. 18.44). Acceptance of their neighbours' existence brought respect for the force of oaths by their different deities (p. 81) and a place for the rival within their opposing world views: while the Roman empire controlled the οἰκουμένη or *orbis terrarum*, the part of the world that was worth inhabiting, the Persian

3 Cf. Michael Whitby: The Persian King at War. In: E. Dąbrowa (ed.): The Roman and Byzantine Army in the East. Proceedings of a Colloqium [*sic*!] Held at the Jagiellonian University, Kraków in September 1992. Cracow 1994, pp. 227–263.

empire could be assigned the ἀνοικουμένη, while from the Sasanid perspective the Avestan κλίμα of Xwanirah that they ruled was the equivalent of the οἰκουμένη (pp. 88–94). One positive aspect of the language of familial relationship that deserves emphasis is its mutability: the suppliant Khusro II could approach Maurice as his father in 590 but then adopt a paternal role towards the supposed Theodosius in 603 and flatly reject the Roman attempt in 615 to insert Heraclius into the international family as his son. It is also necessary to bear in mind that an event might well be viewed very differently by the two parties: Maurice saw his restoration of Khusro II as the re-establishment of the balance between the two eyes of the world, whereas for the Persian king it entailed the public humiliation of reliance on Roman military support and surrender of significant territory, something that would have to be rectified at some point, just as overturning the territorial transfers of the treaty of Nisibis in 299 had been a priority for Shapur II.

In contrast to its two predecessors, the third chapter on Structures ("Strukturen III: Religiöse Neutralität", pp. 114–133), which provides a survey of Religion in international dealings, treats a topic where there was little similarity between the empires. From the late fourth century Rome was an increasingly Christian empire where non-Christians and heretic groups were progressively marginalized, so that Christian faith became an important underpinning for and companion to empire; even the growth of the Miaphysite schism during the sixth century did not yet affect Christianity's unifying force. By contrast, although the Sasanid realm had its official Zoroastrian faith with a priesthood that kings ignored at their peril, the presence especially in the prosperous Tigris basin of substantial communities of Jews, Christians, and other non-Zoroastrians was a potential source of difficulty. Christians might be seen as a fifth column, and missionary activity, especially among the Iranian aristocracy, was a challenge that could not be ignored. Matters eased in the mid-fifth century when the Council of Chalcedon confirmed a doctrinal split on matters of Christology between the Roman Church and the more Antiochene views, pejoratively labelled 'Nestorian', of the East Syrian Church. In response to the attribution of toleration to the empires, Andres sensibly draws a distinction between "Duldung", "toleration", and "Toleranz", "tolerance", the former a negative or passive quality as opposed to the latter's positive or active nature (pp. 129–132).

The third main section on Methods opens with a discussion ("Diplomatische Methoden: Begriff und Vorgehen", pp. 134–139) of concepts and a preview

that highlights the key questions to be asked about the various methods to be examined, for example how they worked and why they were chosen in particular circumstances, as well as considers how they tie in with the structural elements of the previous section. The first main chapter here (chapter 12, "Methoden I: Verhandlungen, Abkommen und die Bedeutung des Rechts", pp. 140–207) is a long reconstruction of the circumstances of diplomatic proceedings on the basis of Procopius, Agathias, and Menander, hence substantially focused on the sixth century, to understand how two mutually-suspicious sides could reconcile their differences and come to agreements, especially since both were reluctant to take the initiative in seeking a rapprochement, since that would be interpreted as acknowledging weakness. More might have been said about responses to this challenge, developing the observation that total honesty was not the norm in their mutual communications (p. 141), with perceptions being as important as reality: the rhetoric of the virtues of avoiding conflict and espousing peace was always available to those initiating discussions, while the supplicant could take the moral high-ground by magnanimously pretending to overlook the other side's faults in provoking hostilities. A case in point is the one-year treaty arranged in 574: Menander states that Khusro took the initiative since he appreciated that it would be difficult for the Romans as recent aggressors to make a request; as a result, he chose as emissary a man called Jacob, who spoke Greek and was clearly a Christian, and received back a letter from Empress Sophia delivered by the palace doctor Zacharias (Men. Prot. fr. 18). The aim in the chapter is to highlight the methods that will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapters; Procopius' *excursus*, or Thucydidean *Archaeologia*, on key moments in Roman-Persian relations from the early fifth century and Menander's detailed account of the Fifty-Years' Peace and the discussions leading up it are particularly informative in this respect, whereas Agathias had less to say about the contexts of diplomacy.

Andres defends his reliance on narrative sources essentially on the basis their authors knew enough, and were writing for readers who were also sufficiently well-informed, that any marked distortions would be detected (p. 138). I have some sympathy with this stance at a general level, but it runs the risk that the analysis becomes one of historiographical perceptions of diplomatic relations rather than of the actual interactions, and when it comes to specific instances it is unwise to assume that the words attributed to a particular ambassador by a historian can be taken as an accurate record.

Thus, with regard to what was spoken by the doctor Stephanus to Khusro outside Edessa in 544 (Prok. pol. 2.26.31–37), it is unclear how Procopius, who was certainly not in the city at the time but probably in Constantinople, could have known what he said: therefore the conversation presents what Procopius imagined was appropriate or plausible rather then the actual discussion. Much the same applies to the exchange in 540 between Bishop Megas of Beroea and Khusro about the king's offer to Antioch (Prok. pol. 2.7.20–32): Khusro undoubtedly would have placed the blame for what was happening on the Romans, but whether Megas had the courage to reproach the king for his behaviour is another matter, though Procopius chose to represent him in this way, and after the event Megas perhaps also presented his actions thus. The sentiments in the speeches of the two Romans are not impossible, granted the importance that both sides are said to have attached overall to appearing to be in the right, but there is no way for us to distinguish between literary invention and accurate reporting.

Andres then turns to specific methods of interaction. Chapter 13 ("Methoden II: Krieg als Mittel der Diplomatie", pp. 208–238) deals with war as a means of diplomacy. It might seem a truism that wars are fought when diplomacy fails, but in some cases, for example Hitler's invasion of Poland or Putin's of Ukraine, the demands that might avert war are incompatible with the continued independence of the other side. The Sasanids tended to be in the position of the state attempting to secure concessions from the Romans, usually financial payments, and so they were the side that instigated war when their patience ran out: thus Kavadh invaded in 502 after Anastasius rebuffed his requests for funds to contribute to defence of the Caucasus passes. Andres rehearses the events of this Anastasian war at some length (pp. 215–228) before reviewing the main elements of Justinianic conflicts in summary fashion (pp. 229–232). Like Kavadh, Khusro launched his campaign in 540 after failing to secure additional money from Justinian to reflect the benefits that Rome had secured in terms of western conquests thanks to peace with Persia. His actions might be categorized as looting and robbery on a grand scale, though it is impossible to discount the possibility that the capture of a city close to the frontier would have led to territorial change: when Khusro did take Dara in 573, he took care to occupy it securely. The point could have been made that, even within a live war, aggressive action might help to nudge along negotiations for peace: thus in 544, Khusro in-

vaded and besieged Edessa,[4] in part because he had become impatient with the lack of progress towards a new peace agreement though also because of a longer-term desire to disprove Christians' belief in the city's invulnerability.

The next chapter (14, "Methoden III: Beschützerverhältnisse – 'Adoptionen und Vormundschaften'", pp. 239–262) covers the fraternal relationship of the rulers, including the two possible cases of adoption or guardianship of the ruler or heir apparent of one state by his counterpart. Although relations within families are often not perceived to be equal, the frequent use in communications of 'brother' can be taken to indicate a level of mutual acceptance, perhaps even of trust on occasion. It might have been interesting to contrast this language with that used in dealings with other foreigners, where Rome's northern neighbours regularly refer to the emperor as their father, not necessarily sincerely, and then note the occasions when communications between Rome and Persia moved from the fraternal to the filial/paternal, for example when Khusro II begged for help from Maurice as "your son and suppliant" (Theophyl. Sim. hist. 4.11.11) or the letter from the senate to Khusro II in 615 that referred to Emperor Heraclius as Khusro's son, a sign of the empire's desperate position (Chr. pasch. 709.14–17). Much of the chapter is devoted to Arcadius' request to Yazdgard to act as guardian for the infant Theodosius II, which is assessed in relation to Andres' three structural issues. Andres makes the point that it was in Yazdgard's self-interest to support the legitimate heir and ensure a long regency rather than risk the elevation of a usurper, probably an ambitious adult who might feel the need of foreign victories to consolidate his position. This is certainly reasonable, though to my mind does not contradict the interpretation of the arrangement as an exceptional example of international co-operation, which is how Procopius, but not the more sceptical Agathias, viewed it. The attempt by Kavadh to have his third son, Khusro, adopted by Justin is an example of an initiative for which the ground had not been properly prepared, though the fact that Khusro travelled to the frontier in the expectation that the ceremony would proceed points to a considerable, if unjustified, level of trust on the Persian side. The story that Khusro II married Maria, supposedly a

4 Andres accepts the traditional date for these events (p. 230), correctly to my mind, but does not refer to the original argument for the date of 543 by E. Kislinger/D. Stathakopoulos: Pest und Perserkriege bei Prokop. Chronologische Überlegungen zum Geschehen 540–545. In: Byzantion 69, 1999, pp. 76–98.

daughter of Maurice (e.g. Michael the Syrian 10.23), could have been cited as a further instance of inter-generational relationship.

Chapter 15 ("Methoden IV: Informationsbeschaffung und 'Intelligence'", pp. 263–292) discusses information and "intelligence", how each side secured information about the other and transformed that into knowledge about the prospects for conflict at a strategic level or for specific actions at a tactical one, with a summary of the considerable debate about the ability of ancient states to preserve and retrieve stored knowledge when necessary (pp. 267–269). Book 11 of the *Strategicon* of Maurice and, to a lesser extent, the *De Administrando Imperio* of Constantine Porphyrogennitus, texts that are not in the Bibliography, are examples of the practical use to which knowledge could be put. In the absence of resident ambassadors, the role of embassies in both obtaining and conveying information was important, as a result of which envoys might be closely supervised or have their movements restricted, as happened to the envoys Zacharias the doctor and the *excubitor* Theodore in 579 (Men. Prot. fr. 23.9.102–17; Joh. Eph. hist. eccl. 6.22). On occasion conveying information was a major purpose of an embassy, as with that from the Ostrogothic leader Vitigis to Khusro (Prok. pol. 2.2). Ambassadors, however, were merely one element within a wider flow of information across the frontier by means of merchants, interpreters, pilgrims and deserters, and a particular embassy might set off already having a good idea about the conditions it would encounter: thus Yazdgusnasp in 547 had sufficient knowledge about the internal organization of Dara to formulate a plan to spread confusion in the frontier city to facilitate its capture; if this had succeeded, it would have been a signal breach of trust and a challenge to the respect that envoys expected to receive. One consequence of regular travel between the respective capital cities was that Persians were well-informed about events in the Balkans and how they might impact on the Romans' ability to fight in the east, while the Romans secured some knowledge of Persian commitments along their northern frontier. A sign of the importance of this knowledge is the fact that Greek historians from Olympiodorus to Theophylact allocated significant space to diplomacy in their works (p. 289).

As a result of the regular flow of information across the porous frontier both sides might attempt to manipulate the other through indulging in various forms of deception or "Dark Arts", the subject of chapter 16 ("Methoden V: Manipulation und 'Dark Arts'", pp. 293–323). The objective might be

military surprise, as when Khusro took steps to prevent his plan to invade Lazica in 541 from leaking out by restricting the information to a select inner circle and pretending that he was going to confront Huns in Iberia, a report that did reach Belisarius in Mesopotamia (Prok. pol. 2.15.35; 16.3). Alternatively, as in Belisarius' famous deployment of select troops at Europus that supposedly persuaded Khusro to curtail his invasion in 542 (Prok. pol. 2.21), it achieved a military objective without the risk of fighting. Embassies might be deliberately delayed, as the Romans may well have been doing during 543 when they were coping with the effects of plague and perhaps waiting to see what impact it had made on the Persians, or held back as when Khusro at Edessa in 544 did not reveal that the envoy Rhecinarius had arrived from Justinian in order to permit himself one further opportunity to capture the city by assault (Prok. pol. 2.27.24–26). Outright lies might even be told, for example by Hermogenes at Martyropolis in 531, when, in order to avoid an assault on the endangered defences, he pretended that Kavadh was on the point of concluding peace even though he knew that the king had flatly rejected terms (Prok. pol. 1.21.1; 24–26). Sebukht, Khusro's emissary to Justin II in 571, feigned ignorance of the gravity of recent events in Armenia though the emperor called his bluff (Men. Prot. fr. 16.4–5; 31–39). It is also possible that discussions were misrepresented by their participants for their own reasons including rivalry with their associates on an embassy, for example both parties to the failed adoption discussions, Mahbodh and Seoses on the Persian side, Rufinus and Hypatius on the Roman (Prok. pol. 1.11.31, 38). This should be a warning that the information on negotiations available to historians might be distorted: Menander, who had access to a record of what was said by Peter the Patrician and Khusro in 561/562 (fr. 6.2), is probably the exception rather than the rule, and even this knowledge was mediated to him through Peter, who was definitely an interested party.

Chapter 17 ("Methoden VI: 'Track-Two-Diplomacy' und Drittakteure", pp. 324–359) deals with what is termed 'twin-track' diplomacy, by which is meant communications carried out by people such as doctors and bishops who were not diplomats. Granted that the ancient states did not have professional diplomatic corps, it is perhaps problematic to label someone who played a part in international discussions as not a diplomat, but it is the case that some individuals such as Rufinus, Hermogenes, and Peter the Patrician on the Roman side and Yazdgusnasp and Seoses on the Persian had more experience than most others; a family might build up contacts in a particular

area, as Abraham and his son Nonnosus appear to have done with regard to Axum. As men prominent in public life, bishops were a natural choice by both sides as emissaries. Andres' discussion focuses on Marutha and Acacius in the fifth century ("Bischöfe als 'Track-Two-Diplomats'", pp. 327–330), but might have been illuminated by the numerous instances from the sixth century. In local negotiations, a bishop might be seen as an honest broker, for example Candidus of Sergiopolis (Prok. pol. 2.5.29–33), while Persian cities might hope to urge the Romans not to attack their co-believers; if the Romans expected that the bishop of a Persian city would help them, they were regularly disappointed, for example at Dwin in 543 and Chlomaron in 578 (Prok. pol. 2.24.6–8; Men. Prot. fr. 23.7.1–12). Of greater interest is the choice of a bishop or senior member of the clergy for a mission from the centre: in 572 Khusro sent the Christian Sebukht to Justin II in an attempt to preserve the Fifty-Years' Peace, in 590 Maurice sent his relative Domitian of Melitene and Gregory of Antioch to the fugitive Khusro II in the hope of securing his conversion, while in 615 the trio of envoys from the senate to Khusro II included Anastasius, syncellus to the powerful Patriarch Sergius (Men. Prot. fr. 16.1.39–50; Theophyl. Sim. hist. 4.14.5–6; Chr. pasch. 709.7–11).

Chapter 18 ("Methoden VII: Symbolhandlungen", pp. 360–389) reviews symbols and symbolic actions. Some are self-explanatory, as when Anatolius approached Vahram on foot in 441 or Rufinus prostrated himself before Khusro (Prok. pol. 1.2.11–15; 22.13): in each case the envoy was at a disadvantage so that a clear public display of submission might be helpful, as indeed happened on both occasions. Such acts might be accidental, as when Sebukht's cap fell off his head while he performed obeisance to Justin II (Men. Prot. fr. 16.1.17–28). Other symbols are less clear: Peroz's pearl, whose story attracted Procopius (pol. 1.4.17–31) was clearly an object of some symbolic significance, though that was not understood by Procopius and is debated by modern scholars.[5] Khusro's invasion in 540 included symbolic actions to confirm his victories: first he bathed in the Mediterranean at Seleucia with the accompaniment of sacrifices (Prok. pol. 2.11.1), an action that Andres understands as confirmation that he had reached the end of the continent (pp. 376–377) though to my mind it might have a wider astral significance that the king of the rising sun had now reached the western sea

5 For summaries, see pp. 369–371; G. Greatrex: Procopius of Caesarea, *The Persian Wars*. A Historical Commentary. Cambridge 2022, pp. 68–69.

and so traversed the world; second, chariot races were organized at Apamea which Procopius presented as proof of Khusro's desire for applause but that certainly had the greater objective of displaying him as the victorious replacement of Justinian, a goal that was somewhat undermined when Justinian's favourite Blue team threatened to win the race and had to be physically impeded (Prok. pol. 2.11.31–36). The city of Edessa constituted a potent symbol because of its possession of Christ's promise that it would not be captured, which naturally goaded Khusro to attack it twice to prove the fallibility of the Christian religion (Prok. pol. 2.12.6–7; 26.1–4).

The last main chapter (19, "Methoden VIII: Beziehungen zu den Gemeinwesen zwischen den Großmächten", pp. 390–479) is a long discussion of relations with the various communities that lay between the two empires that became increasingly important as places of competition after the balance of military force in the central section of the frontier made significant gains there unlikely. Most space (pp. 394–450) is devoted to the regions south of the Caucasus, especially Lazica, Iberia and Armenia, areas where Christian religion drew communities towards Rome, especially when Persia attempted to promote Zoroastrian practices, though the corrupt realities of Roman control and shared cultural practices with Iran at times made the Sasanids an attractive alternative. There were opportunities for local leaders to pursue successful careers in both empires, and these peoples made significant contributions to their military forces, as did Hunnic tribes from beyond the Caucasus, about whom more might have been said. In second place are the Saracens ("Lage der Sarazenen", pp. 450–470), whose mobility posed problems for settled states, so that this had to be specifically regulated in the Fifty-Years' Peace (Men. Prot. fr. 6.1.320–322, 332–340). Their independence and marginality made them ideal for stirring up trouble for one's neighbour, agents of the 'war as a means of diplomacy' approach, for example the claims made by al-Mundhir against the Roman client Harith before the renewal of war in 540 (Prok. pol. 2.1.1–11). The final area is in the south, Axum and Himyar, roughly equivalent to modern Ethiopia and Yemen. Here the empires engaged in proxy conflicts in which religion played a significant part, with the Persians supporting Jewish leaders and other non-Christians in the south of the Arabian peninsula while Rome relied on the Christian Axumites to promote their interests, both territorially and in terms of trade.

After a brief summary (chapter 20, pp. 480–493) come the appendices. The first, on the diplomatic sources of Malalas ("Die diplomatischen Quellen des

Malalas", pp. 494–500), is essentially a defence of Andres' decision to place much more weight on the contextual accounts of international exchanges in the Greek narrative histories than on Malalas' quotation of several letters from the 520s. I would agree that Procopius in particular often provides rich contextual detail on specific interactions and that Malalas may only have seen matters from the Roman perspective, but he seems to have had access to official documents through his bureaucratic position in Antioch: there is no reason to doubt the accuracy of his citations and they can provide a useful control for Procopius' subjective interpretations of events. The second appendix ("Das Achämenidenerbe", pp. 501–506) deals with the question of the role of an Achaemenid inheritance in Sasanid imagery, concluding that it was not important in the period under discussion. This is certainly the case, not least because the expansionist implications of a claim to Achaemenid territory were no longer relevant after the partition of Armenia. However, the location of the early Sasanid rock reliefs at the Achaemenid display site of Naqsh-i Rustam near Persepolis suggests that in the third century they were aware of this aspect of the Iranian past alongside the mythical Kyanids; it was a theme that could be exploited, when opportune, in diplomatic dealings with the west even if not internally. The third appendix ("Die Mazdakitenbewegung", pp. 507–508) is a brief survey, little more than a single page, of the Mazdakite movement, concluding that as a phenomenon of the Iranian plateau it was of little relevance to interactions with Rome in Mesopotamia.

Errors are rare: I noticed that events at Mindouos are incorrectly dated to 530 rather than 529 (p. 229), Doug Lee, whose various publications on information and diplomacy make an important contribution to Andres' topic, is referred to as "Alan D. Lee" (p. 322), the Indices should have contained an entry for Kayanids, and in the Bibliography (p. 513) Constantine Porphyrogennitus' *De Caerimoniis* is inexplicably inserted between authors or works beginning with 'V' and 'Z'. The Bibliography is comprehensive, and is deployed to the full in the footnotes where there are frequent quotations from relevant modern works, especially those in German and English. It is true that much of the ground covered in the book has been treated by other scholars and that Andres proposes relatively few distinctive interpretations, but his analyses of the structures of international relations and the compilation of such a full survey of the varied methods of ancient diplomacy make

this a most valuable work and an essential starting-point for future work. Andres deserves our congratulations and thanks.

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Empfohlene Zitierweise

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