Lucas McMahon

THE PAST AND FUTURE OF *DE VELITATIONE BELLICA* AND BYZANTINE GUERRILLA WARFARE

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by

Lucas McMahon

(Canada)

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,
Central European University, Budapest, in partial fulfillment of the requirements
of the Master of Arts degree in Medieval Studies.

Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU.

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Thesis Supervisor

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Examiner

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External Reader

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External Supervisor

I, the undersigned, **Lucas McMahon**, candidate for the MA degree in Medieval Studies, declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

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Abstract

Traditionally, Byzantium is said to have adopted a guerrilla strategy along its eastern frontier after the seventh century as a means of dealing with the superior forces of the Muslims. A tenth-century military manual attributed to the emperor Nikephoros II Phokas (r. 963 - 969) known as *De Velitatione Bellica* describes warfare in this manner, emphasizing tactics that minimize risk such as ambushes and indirect engagement. In its preface, the manual claims that since the danger of the Muslims has receded, the sort of tactics described within are no longer necessary but are nonetheless being recorded for posterity. This study examines this claim by looking at *De Velitatione*'s past and future by examining what evidence exists for the Byzantine-Muslim warfare taking place as the manual describes, and whether the text might have had any influence later. This is done through case studies of the eighth and eleventh centuries, which suggests that the tactics described in the manual have a long history in the Byzantine world and remained in use well after the manual claimed that they were antiquated.

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I would like to thank my supervisors Niels Gaul and Volker Menze for their helpful comments and encouragement. The Centre for Eastern Mediterranean Studies should also be thanked for providing me with some research funding. I would also like to extend special thanks to András Németh, curator of Greek manuscripts at the Vatican Library for his help. Zsuzsa Reed and Tom Rooney provided many helpful comments along the way. Any remaining errors of are, of course, my fault alone.

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Introduction

By the death of the emperor Herakleios in A.D. 641, the armies of Islam had deprived the eastern Roman Empire of its easternmost provinces, forever changing its capacity to wage war.[1] A paucity of Greek sources and scattered and difficult eastern materials have led scholars to a tenth-century Byzantine military manual known by the modern Latin title *De Velitatione Bellica*.[2] This manual contains a great deal of seemingly plausible advice on how to engage in low-intensity warfare along the Byzantine-Islamic frontier across the Tauros and Anti-Tauros Mountains.[3] In its opening lines it purports to set down a system of skirmishing warfare (τὴν τῆς παραδρομῆς μέθοδον) but also claims that in the present it is no longer relevant since the danger of the Muslim states to the east has been broken.[4] The author indicates that these skirmishing tactics are being written down in the event that they will be needed in the future.[5] *De Velitatione* has been invoked frequently as a description of how Byzantium fought its Muslim neighbours during the so-called "dark ages", and has recently been examined for its place in the tenth century. Attention will be devoted to examining the stated intention of *De Velitatione*'s claims: what evidence supports the use of the type of

[1] All dates are A.D. unless otherwise specified.

[2] Hereafter *De Velitatione*. For the titles of works in Greek I have attempted to follow the names applied in recent scholarship for ease of use even if some are artificial Latin translations like *De Velitatione*. When possible references are to section numbers rather than page numbers to facilitate the finding of passages in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*. I have not made any attempt to be entirely consistent in terms of citing primary texts, since the editions themselves are not and ease of reference is more important. Thus, for example, I have chosen to cite the Thurn Skylitzes by page and line numbers, separated by a period. In the case of Attaleiates, however, I have cited the section numbers added to the Krallis and Kaldellis translation (with facing text) since the edition is not easily available elsewhere and uses a more difficult pagination system.

[3] Readers should note that the terms "Arab", "Muslim", and "Islamic" are frequently conflated here, in the full recognition that early Islamic armies were not so homogenously Arab or even Muslim as the ninth and tenth century historians would like them to be. Even in the Abbasid period Zoroastrians were serving in the army. See, for example, *The Chronicle of Zuqnin Parts III and IV, A.D. 488-775*, trans. Amir Harrak (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1999), 206. In effect the groundwork for guerrilla warfare in Byzantium has recently been set down: Gastone Breccia, "Grandi imperi e piccolo guerre: Roma, Bisanzio e la guerriglia II," *Medioevo greco* 8 (2008), 49-131. Unfortunately this article reached me too late to have much of an influence on this thesis.

[4] Pseudo-Nikephoros II Phokas, "On Skirmishing," in *Three Byzantine Military Treatises*, ed. and trans. George T. Dennis (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1985), proem.3-7. Hereafter *De Velitatione*.

[5] *De Velitatione*, proem.7-12. The groundwork for Romano-Byzantine guerrilla warfare has recently been set down: Gastone Breccia, "Grandi imperi e piccolo guerre: Roma, Bisanzio e la guerriglia II," *Medioevo greco* 8 (2008), 49-131. Unfortunately this article reached me too late to have much of an influence on this thesis.

tactics it prescribes and what place, if any, did the manual have in the post-tenth-century future? This will be accomplished through two case studies of the eighth and eleventh centuries which follow an introduction the historiography and a discussion of terminology.

The first chapter looks into the evidence for the defence of the eastern frontier for an eighth century that runs from the end of the siege of Constantinople in 717/18 to the assassination of Leo V I in 820. Several reasons are behind this choice. First, no systematic study of the campaigns along the Byzantine-Arab frontier has been conducted.[6] While not a perfect watershed moment, the siege of Constantinople in 717/18 has been used to demarcate a change in the outlook of the Muslim world towards Byzantium, with the defeat opening a new phase of warfare by bringing the "jihad state" to an end.[7] Prior to the siege both Byzantium and the Umayyad Caliphate had remained locked in a struggle that saw the utter destruction of the other as the primary end goal. Constans II and Justinian II both engaged in campaigns in the Caucasus that are reminiscent of those waged by Herakleios against the Persians in the 620s, particularly in connection with their concern in gaining local support and taking advantage of internal unrest to the south.[8] A growing consensus also points to

[6] As Walter Kaegi noted over two decades ago, the focus on Byzantine-Muslim warfare has been on the ninth century and later, and he most notably invokes the voluminous *Byzance et les Arabes*: *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 13. The articles by E.W. Brooks ("The Arabs in Asia Minor (641-750), from Arabic Sources," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 18 (1898), 182-208; "Additions and Corrections to J.H.S. Vol. XVIII: The Arabs in Asia Minor (641-750), from Arabic Sources," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 19 (1899), 31-3; "Byzantines and Arabs in the Time of the Early Abbasids," *The English Historical Review* 16, no. 61 (1901), 84-92) are useful for the eighth century but far too often are just collections of notices from a few major Arabic-language texts. The state of the field is perhaps best illustrated by the heavy use of these articles by the translators of al-Tabari whenever relations with Byzantium comes up. This has also been done as a means of doing some preparatory work for a larger future study.

[7] Khalid Blankinship, *The End of the Jihâd State: The Reign of Hishām Ibn 'Abd al-Malik and the Collapse of the Umayyads* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1994), 117-21. For the siege of Constantinople marking the limit of Arab expansion against Byzantium in more general works: Chris Wickham, *The Inheritance of Rome: Illuminating the Dark Ages 400-1000* (New York: Penguin, 2009), 293. Nadia Maria El Cheikh, *Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2004), 83-4.

[8] Peter Sarris, *Empires of Faith: The Fall of Rome to the Rise of Islam, 500-700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 279-95. For Herakleios's strategy, the most cogent piece is James Howard-Johnston, "Pride and Fall: Khusro II and his Regime, 626-628," in *La Persia e Bisanzio*, ed. Antonio Carile, Leila Cracco Ruggini, Gherardo Gnoli, et al. (Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 2004), 93-114. That Constans was hoping to imitate his grandfather's success is a lot more plausible than Treadgold's suggestion that Constans had some affection for his ancestral homeland: Warren Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 311. Cf. John Haldon, "Political-Historical Survey 518-800," in *The Oxford*

Constans II preparing for a seaborne invasion of the Levant.[9] Nonetheless these campaigns were ultimately unsuccessful and only occasionally extended beyond the frontier region.[10] While a change in strategic outlook begins the period under question, scholarship selects its end. The massive collaborative work of Alexander Vasiliev, Henri Grégoire, and Marius Canard on Byzantium and the Arabs begins with the accession of Michael II in 820.[11]

The second chapter jumps to the eleventh century. The work of Catherine Holmes has placed *De Velitatione* in a political context in the tenth century, where it was a piece of propaganda for the Phokas family.[12] Similarly, the edition, translation, and commentary of Gilbert Dagron and Haralambie Mihăescu has devoted most of its attention to the text's place in the tenth century.[13] However*, De Velitatione*'s eleventh century links have not yet been explored. The general applicability of the text in the eleventh century and what it might have meant to have the name of a Phokas attached to it is explored there, as is the eleventh century evidence of guerrilla warfare. The Phokas house was in disgrace following their defeat in a civil war against Basil II (r. 976-1025), and yet a piece in support of the clan was evidently being copied in the late tenth or early eleventh century.[14] Authors of historical pieces in the

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Handbook of Byzantine Studies, ed. John Haldon, Elizabeth Jeffreys, and Robin Cormack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 257.

[9] Salvatore Cosentino, "Constans II and the Byzantine Navy," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 100.2 (2008): 593-603, and Constantin Zuckerman, "Learning from the Enemy and More. Studies in "Dark Centuries" Byzantium," *Millennium: Jahrbuch zu Kultur und Geschichte des ersten Jahrtausends n. Chr.* 2 (2005): 79, 115-17.

[10] Ioannis Stouraitis, *Krieg und Frieden in der politisischen und ideologischen Wahrnehmung in Byzanz (7.-11. Jahrhundert)* (Vienna: Fassbaender, 2009), 58-61 argues for limited action and the continuing use of Maurikios's *Strategikon* in this period. This is certainly true, and that very nervousness about battle is probably what prevented any invasion of Syria or Mesopotamia during the Arab civil wars.

[11] Alexander Vasiliev, Henri Grégoire, and Marius Canard, *Byzance et les Arabes Tome I: La Dynastie D'Amorium (820-867)* (Brussels: Éditions de l'institute de philologie et d'histoire orientales, 1935). For a recent and applicable summary on this topic in the ninth century: Stouraitis, Krieg, 110-22.

[12] Catherine Holmes, "Byzantine Political Culture and Compilation Literature in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 64 (2010).

[13] Gilbert Dagron and Haralambie Mihăescu, *Le Traité sur la guérilla (de velitatione) de l'empereur Nicéphore Phocas (963-969)* (Paris: CNRS, 1986).

[14] Following the work of Jean Irigoin, Dagron and Mihăescu suggest that the *Vaticanus* might be dated more precisely to around 1020 and is from the monastic scriptorium of Ephrem in Constantinople: Dagron and Mihăescu, *Le Traité*, 16. Also invoking Irigoin, Dain and Foucault suggest that both the *Vaticanus* and *Barberianus* manuscripts may come from Ephrem's workshop: Alphonse Dain and J.-A. de Foucault, "Les Stratégistes Byzantins," *Travaux et Mémoires* 2 (1967), 387. However, recent work has shown this to be problematic since Ephrem did not live in the eleventh century and the manuscripts have more in common with those produced under the Constantinian compilation movement: András Németh, "Imperial Systemization of the

tenth and eleventh centuries typically promoted a particular individual, and this form of writing was endorsed by the Phokas clan extensively.[15] Military texts need not be excluded from this, thus giving some reason to explore the praise given to members of the household in *De Velitatione* and what it might mean.

The tactics that *De Velitatione* describes are not those in favour of conventional battle.[16] Although the manual has sections on training and siege warfare, the bulk of the material can best be described as tactics that seek to damage the enemy while creating minimal risk for one's own forces.[17] Avoiding facing the enemy when they are fresh and just arriving in Roman territory is discouraged since it entails danger, and instead the general is encouraged to hit them when they are returning home burdened with their loot.[18] Intelligence in warfare is a focus of the text.[19] Attrition also plays a role, and the general addressed by the manual is expected to make it difficult for the invaders to get food or water.[20] Using the mountains of the Tauros to hit the enemy from higher ground is encouraged.[21] Much of the space is devoted to following the enemy and attacking when their forces disperse to raid, thus permitted concentrated Byzantine forces to easily defeat smaller detachments of the invaders and gain victory that way.[22] When it comes to fighting, the use of ambushes is the preferred method.[23]

Despite substandard historical materials, the study of Byzantine-Islamic relations during the "dark centuries" still has some work ahead of it. Recent studies have shown the

Past: Emperor Constantine VII and His Historical Excerpts," (doctoral thesis, Central European University, 2010), 69, 94, 120-21, http://www.etd.ceu.hu/2010/mphnea01.pdf.

[15] Athanasios Markopoulos, "From narrative history to historical biography: new trends in Byzantine historical writing in the 10-11th centuries," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 102 no. 2 (2010), 697, 703-5.

[16] Note, however, *De Velitatione* 19.16-18, which encourages the general to engage in a more conventional way if he has five or six thousand troops, but still to use tricks and stratagems to defeat the enemy.

[17] *De Velitatione*, 19, 21.

[18] *De Velitatione* 4, 23.

[19] *De Velitatione* 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 14, 17, 22.

[20] *De Velitatione* 5, 22.

[21] *De Velitatione* 3, 20, 23, 24.

[22] *De Velitatione* 8, 9, 10.

[23] *De Velitatione* 11, 13, 17, 18, 23.

fragility of the traditional political narrative when discussing events as important and close to the political centre as sieges of Constantinople, and a new book has complicated the picture of the civil war between Michael II and Thomas the Slav by plausibly suggesting that Thomas was receiving aid from the Abbasids.[24] If such major events can be totally re-written by modern scholars, the long list of minor campaigns along the eastern frontier deserves some attention again to see what it might add to the question of Byzantine-Muslim warfare along the Tauros and *De Velitatione*'s place in it.

[24] Marek Jankowiak, "The First Arab Siege of Constantinople," *Travaux et Mémoires* 17, 237-322. Juan Signes Codoñer*, The Emperor Theophilos and the East: Court and Frontier in Byzantium during the Last Phase of Iconoclasm* (Ashgate: Aldershot, 2014), 183-214. For a possibility of a siege in 654 that is not part of the traditional narrative: Shaun O'Sullivan, "Sebeos' Account of an Arab Attack on Constantinople in 654," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 28 (2004), 67-88.

Historiography

That Byzantium chose to avoid battle and engage in more limited military action on the eastern frontier has long been posited by scholars, an idea no doubt aided by a tradition that has the emperor Herakleios abandoning Syria permanently and devastating the land to create a new frontier.[25] In many of the following cases, *De Velitatione* has been invoked as an explanation of "normal" Byzantine-Muslim land warfare. John Haldon and Hugh Kennedy argued that although *De Velitatione* described the period around the time of Nikephoros II Phokas's reign, "it can scarcely have been less true of the previous two hundred years."[26] Walter Kaegi, following Haldon and Kennedy, argues that what can be learned from the tactics practiced on the eastern frontier during the seventh and eighth century seem to match the more richly-sourced period of warfare in the ninth and tenth centuries, hinting at *De Velitatione*.[27] Kaegi makes a lengthy quotation from the first-century A.D. strategist Onasander to demonstrate that such tactics could be found in ancient military manuals.[28] Warren Treadgold has suggested that Byzantium "simply accepted" the loss of its territories in the seventh century and made only "essentially defensive" actions prior to the tenth century.[29] This idea has also permeated a recent work designated for a more popular

[25] While the devastation to prevent immediate Arab inroads into Asia Minor is probably historical, Herakleios's dramatic farewell to Syria is more likely a product of a romantic early Islamic tradition that later found its way into Syriac and Greek historiography: Lawrence I. Conrad, "Heraclius in Early Islamic Kerygma," in *The Reign of Heraclius (610-641): Crisis and Confrontation*, ed. Gerrit J. Reinink and Bernard H. Stolte (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 144-52.

[26] Hugh Kennedy and John Haldon, "The Arab-Byzantine Frontier in the eighth and ninth centuries: military organization and society in the borderlands," in *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*, ed. Hugh Kennedy (Aldershot: Variorum, 2006), 97.

[27] Walter Kaegi, *Some Thoughts on Byzantine Military Strategy* (Brookline, MA: Hellenic College Press, 1983), 10-12.

[28] Kaegi*, Byzantine Strategy*, 12. The point of view of the cited Onasander passage is not the same as that of *De Velitatione*. Onasander urges his reader to not pursue a fleeing enemy into difficult terrain, where they might then seize the heights and passes and defeat their pursuers. He assumes a general whose army is prepared for conventional warfare.

[29] Warren Treadgold, "Byzantium, the Reluctant Warrior," in *Noble Ideals and Bloody Realities: Warfare in the Middle Ages*, edd. Niall Christie and Maya Yazigi (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 214-15, 218.

audience.[30] While James Howard-Johnston follows the idea that the siege of Constantinople in 717/18 marked a shift in warfare on the eastern frontier, he argues that it marked the adoption of a new combat doctrine focused on avoiding losses and preserving moveable goods. He sees this as properly codified only in the tenth century in the form of *De Velitatione*.[31]

While the use of *De Velitatione* as a text that can be used to describe a period before it was written has not been thoroughly revised, some problems challenges to the traditional concepts of Arab-Byzantine warfare across the Tauros have been made. The first is the increasing acceptance of the need to postdate the beginning of the lower intensity, raiding style of warfare. Even well before the Arab conquests, the sort of warfare that *De Velitatione* advocates for was practiced in the Roman world with the goal of beating enemies through attrition and avoiding serious losses.[32] Khalid Blankinship see a shift from conquest to raiding after the 717-718 siege he pushes the beginning of low-intensity warfare even further back, noting a number of Byzantine successes against the Muslims into the 720s and 730s which he sees as indicative of an active and aggressive Byzantine policy.[33] This is a point most recently followed by Robert Hoyland.[34] The idea of an aggressive Byzantine policy continuing into the early eighth century is possibly supported by a number of embassies to T'ang China that coincide with campaigns by Türgeş Turks under Chinese influence against the Arabs in Soghdiana.[35] Following this idea but slightly in contrast to Blankinship and

[30] Michael J. Decker, *The Byzantine Art of War* (Yardley, PA: Westholme, 2013), 21-25, 137-52.
[31] James Howard-Johnston, *Witnesses to a World Crisis: Historians and Histories of the Middle East in the Seventh Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 510-11.
[32] Alexander Sarantis, "Waging War in Late Antiquity," in *War and Warfare in Late Antiquity*, ed. Alexander Sarantis and Neil Christie (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 26.
[33] Khalid Blankinship, *The End of the Jihâd State: The Reign of Hishām Ibn 'Abd al-Malik and the Collapse of the Umayyads* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1994), 117-121; 162-63.
[34] Robert Hoyland, *In God's Path: The Arab Conquests and the Creation of an Islamic Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015): 170-71.
[35] Stephanos Kordoses, "Arabs, Turks, and Chinese in Central Asia during the first third of the 8th century, under the light of the Turkic Orkhon inscriptions: War and Diplomacy," in *East and West: Essays on Byzantine and Arab Worlds in the Middle Ages*, ed. Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala, Vassilios Christides, and Theodoros Papadopoullos (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2009), 20-4.

Hoyland, the most recent dedicated study of the frontier by A. Asa Eger argues that Byzantium went on the defensive after the 680s but became increasingly aggressive by the middle of the eighth century.[36] Pushing the date of the first clear evidence even further back, Mark Whittow has also raised questions about the validity of using *De Velitatione* as a historical source for understanding the whole breadth of the Byzantine-Arab wars. He introduces the text in a sub-chapter that only begins in 750, and prior to actually mentioning the text quotes a passage from Theophanes in which the sort of tactics prescribed in the manual are given to generals by Leo IV in 778 in expectation of an Abbasid counter-raid.[37] Whittow goes on to argue that such a strategy was the only viable means by which Asia could be defended given the disparity between Byzantine resources and those of the Caliphates.[38] In a study of Byzantine-Arab warfare in the 960s William Garrood notes that *De Velitatione* refers to the raiding and counter-raiding strategies that took place on the eastern frontier, but coyly avoids giving a date by saying that such things had been going on "for generations."[39] Although arguing that siege and battle remained important throughout the "Dark Age", Leif Inge Ree Petersen follows Whittow in accepting the late eighth-century date of the adoption of a guerrilla strategy.[40] Although choosing not to expand upon the point, the Romanian-American strategist Edward Luttwak notes that *De Velitatione* ascribes the invention of its raiding tactics to Bardas Phokas.[41] While Luttwak hints at a tenth-century context for this manual, his Byzantine "Operational Code" of war is heavily focused on just the sort of

[36] A. Asa Eger, *The Islamic-Byzantine Frontier: Interaction and Exchange Among Muslim and Christian Communities* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 251.
[37] Mark Whittow, *The Making of Byzantium, 600-1025* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996): 175-178.
[38] Whittow, *Making of Byzantium*, 176-81.
[39] William Garrood, "The Byzantine Conquest of Cilicia and the Hamdanids of Aleppo, 959-965," *Anatolian Studies* 58 (2008), 130.
[40] Leif Inge Ree Petersen, *Siege Warfare and Military Organization in the Successor States (400-800 A.D.): Byzantium, the West, and Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 108-9.
[41] Edward Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Byzantine Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2009), 340.

warfare described in the manual, which he sees as beginning around the fifth century.[42] In this sense, Luttwak's conception of Byzantine defensive strategy is rather traditional. The most important disputation of the traditional concept of defensive warfare in the Byzantine "dark age" is presented by Ioannis Stouraitis, who has argued that offensive and defensive modes of warfare are not mutually exclusive categories and that a strand of continuity needs to be seen running through military thought from Maurikios's *Strategikon* in the sixth century to *De Velitatione* in the tenth century and beyond.[43] In this scheme Leo VI's Taktika serves as a step between the precepts described in the *Strategikon* and those in *De Velitatione*.[44] The use of the tactics described in *De Velitatione* is not purely defensive, but rather works to augment offensive strategies.[45]

Further challenges to the traditional place of *De Velitatione* have come from Eric McGeer and Catherine Holmes. McGeer's attention is squarely focused on the *Praecepta Militaria* of Nikephoros II Phokas and the *Taktika* of Nikephoros Ouranos. He convincingly argues that a version of the *Praecepta* was updated in the early eleventh century for fighting the Fatimids in Syria and was included in Ouranos's *Taktika*.[46] He places *De Velitatione* into this scheme of military texts reflecting different eastern frontier realities, arguing that its defensive nature reflects the period of aggressive Hamdanid raiding in the middle of the tenth century, whereas the *Praecepta* then describes the offensive Byzantine response in the 960s.[47] Holmes, on the other hand, takes a broader view of compilation and "practical" texts produced in the tenth century and explores their contemporary political relevance. In the case of *De Velitatione*, she suggests that it may be a collection of earlier texts re-shaped to serve

[42] Luttwak, *Grand Strategy*, 415-418. Five of the seven items on the list could derive directly from *De Velitatione.* These are gathering intelligence (II), attack with small units (III), shadow superior enemies (IV), subversion as a means to victory (VI), and only fight when necessary (VII).
[43] Stouraitis, *Krieg*, 61, 110-14.
[44] Stouraitis, *Krieg*, 115-19.
[45] Stouraitis, *Krieg*, 124-25.
[46] Eric McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth: Byzantine Warfare in the Tenth Century* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1995), 80-81.
[47] McGeer, *Dragon's Teeth*, 172-178, 226-228. In support of McGeer for the use of guerrilla warfare as a preferred defensive tactic in the tenth century, see Stouraitis, *Krieg*, 157-69.

contemporary Phokas interests and that this sort of literature was used to legitimize change in an era of new and aggressive imperial attitudes towards the eastern frontier.[48]

Taken together, these works slightly disagree on the purpose and function of *De Velitatione*. In regards to the tenth-century context, Eric McGeer and Catherine Holmes have argued that the manual served contemporary aims, either as a codification of how the Hamdanids were fought, or as a piece of political propaganda. In the broader historical view, the text's relevance as a source for understanding warfare along the Tauros frontier is certainly disputed at least up to the siege of Constantinople in 717-718, and possibly as late as the last quarter of the eighth century. Clearly, then, a re-evaluation along both these lines is necessary. This study will examine both of these aspects in the second chapter, first as a contemporary piece of tenth-century military literature, and then in the broader historical perspective. The goal of the first part is to examine what role *De Velitatione* played for the Phokas family; essentially engaging with it as a piece of political culture and alongside the Constantinian compilation movement. Once this is established, some tentative suggestions on the text's eleventh-century position in political culture will be set forth.

This is important since no tenth-century manuscript survives, and the three primary manuscripts exist in large compilations alongside other military texts and date from after the defeat of the Phokas house at the end of the tenth century. The second half of this part of the study is concerned with the history, and looks at what evidence is available that indicates the sort of irregular or "skirmishing" warfare that was prescribed in *De Velitatione* was actually carried out along the eastern frontier.

[48] Holmes, "Byzantine Political Culture," 74-6.

Guerrilla Warfare

The manner of warfare described by *De Velitatione* has been called "guerrilla", but this term deserves some brief attention and justification. No solid conclusions are offered here; rather, this short section is designed to highlight some of the terminological problems. One simple description of guerrilla warfare matches *De Velitatione* very well: deception, surprise, mobility, flexibility, and intelligence.[49] At the most basic level, Dagron and Mihăescu describe a guerilla war as one in which a small army is able to neutralize a larger one by fighting in a manner of its own choosing and rarely devoting all of its forces at once.[50] This matches the Byzantine experience on their eastern frontier and is a useful definition, but success for the smaller power is not necessary for the conflict to be described as guerrilla.[51] *De Velitatione* itself recognizes the distinction between outright guerrilla style of warfare and conventional tactics. It states that if the general has five or six thousand men at his disposal he may not need to use the sort of tactics described in the manual but rather can fight the Muslims in a regular engagement.[52] Nonetheless, this does not really solve the issue, and finding a clear definition is problematic. A case taken as an example of guerrilla warfare by Max Boot serves to illustrate one of the difficulties here. During the Peloponnesian War, Demosthenes led his heavy infantry into the Aetolian hills hoping to conquer the cities there.

[49] Barton Whaley, *Strategem: Deception and Surprise in War* (Artech House: London, 1969), 54-5.
[50] Dagron and Mihăescu, *Le Traité*, 237-41.
[51] Stouraitis, *Krieg*, 122.
[52] *De Velitatione*, 19.16-18. Everett L. Wheeler, "Terrorism and Military Theory: An Historical Perspective," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 3.1 (1991), 10-13. Wheeler's discussion of terrorism as a form of war would also satisfy the two categories of Dagron and Mihăescu, but its modern connotation of individuals attacking heavily populated regions in a spectacular manner limits its use here. Wheeler does allow his definition of terrorism to include the general use of terror in warfare: Wheeler, "Terrorism," 13-15. However, as Catherine Holmes has noted atrocities more often took place in the context of aggressive warfare but tend to be exceptions to the Byzantine norm of accommodation for the conquered: "Basil II the Bulgar-Slayer and the Blinding of 15,000 Bulgarians in 1014: Mutilation and Prisoners of War in the Middle Ages," in *How Fighting Ends: A History of Surrender*, ed. Holger Afflerbach and Hew Strachan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 94-5. For the treatment of Muslims in territories taken by Byzantium in the tenth and eleventh centuries, see Catherine Holmes, "How the East was won in the Reign of Basil II," in *Eastern Approaches to Byzantium*, ed. Antony Eastmond (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 41-45.

The Athenians were repulsed by an enemy armed with javelins, and while they were initially able to keep the Aetolians back with their archers, when their ammunition ran out the Athenians were routed and fell back into a forest which the Aetolians promptly set fire to.[53] This scene has a number of characteristics of a classic guerrilla war: a smaller, local power against a larger foreign one, a reluctance to engage in a set-piece battle, and the defenders taking advantage of the terrain. The hoplites did not get the battle that they wanted and were attacked where they were vulnerable; all these are essential components of Mao Tse-Tung's manual on guerrilla warfare.[54] However, it could equally be said that the Aetolians engaged in what they saw as a set battle. The unwillingness to engage in hoplite warfare and thus to call such an action "guerrilla" reveals a pre-disposition towards infantry-focused warfare and a set piece battle.

Asymmetrical warfare is not an ideal term, even if at a fundamental level all it describes is a power differential between opponents.[55] In this sense, however, the term is somewhat misleading, since its implication is that asymmetrical tactics are those adopted by the state which in a quantifiable sense has less power. A weaker Byzantium adopting such tactics against the Umayyads and early Abbasids fits this model. However, Hamdanid Aleppo on a quantifiable scale was much weaker than Byzantium, when guerrilla tactics were Byzantium's preferred means of waging war.[56] In a technical sense asymmetrical warfare fails to provide a comprehensive outline of Byzantine-Hamdanid warfare but in the practical sense it works just fine, with one side using tactics to wear down the invaders and avoid open battle.

[53] Max Boot, *Invisible Armies* (Liverright Publishing Corporation: New York, 2013), 25-27.
[54] Mao Tse-tung, *Mao Tse-tung on Guerrilla Warfare*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Navy, 1989), 46.
[55] Ivan Arreguín-Toft, *How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 2-3. Rory Cox, "Asymmetric warfare and military conduct in the middle ages," *Journal of Medieval History* 38, no. 1 (2012), 100-101. A factor, of course, that each side in a conflict seeks to tip into their favour.
[56] Stouraitis, *Krieg*, 157-65.

"Vegetian" warfare, a form of war in which fortifications, raiding, and shadowing an enemy while avoiding outright battle are key, is a good description of what *De Velitatione* implores its readers to do. Indeed, the manual has been recently described as such.[57] This definition has utility since it puts *De Velitatione* within the long history of Roman imperial border policies. Thinking about the eastern frontier as a managed border is important since it sheds light on continuity in this realm with the later empire, instead of a completely ruptured world brought on by the Arab conquests.[58] The continuity with the late empire that Vegetian warfare implies highlights a frontier policy rather than a supine medieval Roman state that can do nothing other than send small bands of men to chase down the much more powerful Muslim forces.[59] How different the Byzantine troops on the first line of defence were from the *limitanei* of the late empire remains unclear, but the principal of having small forces on a border to deter minor attacks and inform the military command apparatus about larger ones is the same. These troops presumably had some value, as evidenced by Justinian's re-establishment of *limitanei* contingents in Africa after the re-conquest.[60] What is important in the post-Arab conquest period is that despite the creation of a new frontier and the reorganization of the military, the basic low-level system of defence seems not to have evolved substantially.

Vegetian strategy may be a better way of referring to what *De Velitatione* describes than guerrilla warfare does since it refers to a wider policy and not just the sort of tactics used in difficult terrain against a superior enemy. Putting the manual in the Vegetian category can be done for several reasons. First, it advocates the use of pitched battle if sufficient force is

[57] Stephen Morillo, "Battle Seeking: The Contexts and Limits of Vegetian Strategy," *The Journal of Medieval Military History* 1 (2002), 24.
[58] A recent piece sees the adoption of tactics to avoid pitched battle as dating from the fifth century but notes that examples of the Romans using these sorts of tactics go back much further: *The Encyclopedia of the Roman Army*, s.v. "Guerrilla Warfare: Late Empire."
[59] The issue of offensive and defensive warfare in discussed thoroughly in Stouraitis, *Krieg*, 54-62.
[60] Ilka Syvänne, *The Age of the Hippotoxotai* (Tampere: Tampere University Press, 2004), 32.

available.[61] This is in contrast to Leo VI's *Taktika*, which specifically mentions that the Muslims should never be fought in a straightforward manner even if numerical superiority is available.[62] The differing attitudes can be explained by the relative times of composition, as by the late tenth century Byzantium had achieved a number of notable successes in the east and had recaptured Crete. Nonetheless, what should be stressed is the general continuity between the two manuals.[63] Leo VI's approach is cautious and advocates good intelligence and deception, and in this sense *De Velitatione*'s novelty is in a few interesting contemporary references and the high level of specific details provided. Leo advocates attacking Muslim armies once they have dispersed for the purpose of pillaging.[64] He also suggests that ambushes in the Tauros Mountains on the return journey of the Muslims from a raid are very effective.[65] Although the manual implores the general to avoid battle, the *Taktika* can also be subversive in its aggression. One section tells the general to leave the property of certain rulers intact when making a raid so that suspicion might fall upon those whose property was left alone.[66] Christian Raschle defines Roman Imperial defensive warfare as that designed around countering the enemy inside one's own territory, and offensive warfare as encountering the enemy outside one's own territory. However, he notes that in this scheme political influence with frontier polities counts as offensive warfare, a point also supported by Stouraitis.[67] In this sense the tactics described in *De Velitatione* belong to a longer tradition but also a flexible one which is part of a strategy that is broadly defensive, rather than one that is purely defensive and mostly locally organized.

[61] *De Velitatione*, 17.21-23; 19.16-18.
[62] Leo VI, *The Taktika of Leo VI: Text, Translation, and Commentary*, ed. and trans. George Dennis (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2010), 18.121.
[63] Stouraitis, *Krieg*, 115-25.
[64] Leo VI, *Taktika*, 18.120.
[65] Leo VI, *Taktika*, 18.126.
[66] Leo VI, *Taktika*, 20.22. The *Taktika* never specifies how the general should carry this out, but this tactic assumes that frontier intelligence is sufficient to know who owns certain tracts of lands.
[67] *The Encyclopedia of the Roman Army*, s.v. "Defensive and Offensive Wars, Strategies of: Late Empire." Stouraitis, *Krieg*, 124-25.

The historical material that provides information about the Byzantine borderlands is woefully inadequate for understanding the complexities of local organization and identity. Much remains unknown about the frontier districts, particularly about how small local groups were coerced into cooperation with the larger states around them. Nomadic groups seem to have regularly crossed the frontier for pasturage and trade, thus questioning the binary divide of Christian and Muslim and Roman and Umayyad/Abbasid that appears in the literary sources.[68]

The degree to which local interactions belong to state-level conflict when they turn violent is debatable. The epic poem *Digenes Akrites* complicates matters further by describing a poorly-defined border area in which Constantinople is very distant and where the hero is effectively beyond direct control by the emperor.[69] The organization of the *kleisourai* is presumably an attempt by the central government to control more effectively military affairs on the frontier.[70] The degree to which the government functioned here is not clear at all in this period could be a fruitful venture for future research.[71] This is an important point since the incorporation of border polities and strongmen into imperial defences was a longstanding Roman tradition that continued into the Byzantine period.[72]

[68] Eger, *Islamic-Byzantine Frontier*, 280-82.

[69] *Digenis Akritis, The Grottaferrata and Escorial versions*, ed. and trans. Elizabeth Jeffreys (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), GA4 971-984; see especially Basil's remark (εἴθε τοιούτους τέσσαρας εἶχεν ἡ Ῥωναμια) in GA4 1025 which implies that he does not even have one such man like Digenis. In support of the idea of the *akritai* as border landlords largely outside of imperial control, see Ralph-Johannes Lilie, "The Byzantine-Arab Borderland from the Seventh to the Ninth Century," in *Borders, Barriers, and Ethnogenesis: Frontiers in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, ed. Florin Curta (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 18-19. Dagron and Mihăescu, *Le Traité*, 268-71 note a number of parallels between the *De Velitatione* and the poem. Olof Heilo, "The Holiness of the Warrior: Physical and Spiritual Power in the Borderland between Byzantium and Islam," in *Byzantine War Ideology between Roman Imperial Concept and Christian Religion*, ed. Johannes Koder and Ioannis Stouraitis (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2012), 43 calls Digenes a "non-political figure."

[70] John Haldon, *Warfare, State, and Society in the Byzantine World 565-1204* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1999), 79.

[71] For example, the unhappiness and unwillingness of troops from the eastern *kleisourai* to deploy in the west under Michael I Rhangabe in 813: Panos Sophoulis, *Byzantium and Bulgaria, 775-813* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 234-35.

[72] Michael Kulikowski, *Rome's Gothic Wars: From the Third Century to Alaric* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 36-40. Guy Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations and the Roman West, 376-568* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 148-51. Greg Fisher, *Between Empires: Arabs, Romans, and Sasanians in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 72-127. This is particularly evident in the tenth and eleventh centuries when Byzantium worked to manipulate the border states in the east to keep them dependent

Although not in the Tauros frontier itself, the Mardaites provide a good example of the problem in labeling Byzantine strategy against the Muslims as simply guerrilla. James Howard-Johnston has referred to the Mardaites as Byzantine "special forces" sent into the Lebanon Mountains by Constantine IV in 677/78.[73] Why an ethnonym with no clear Greek etymology would be applied to a group of professional guerrillas is never explained. More plausibly the Mardaites were a local semi-nomadic group that rose to prominence through the distribution of Roman gold and objects of culture that were coming by sea.[74] Evidently their manner of fighting made an impression on the Romans since Theophanes refers to the adoption of ambush and shadowing tactics by Leo III in 717/18 as "in the manner of the Mardaites" (δίκην Μαρδαϊτῶν).[75] Ultimately, however, Justinian II and Abd al-Malik cooperated in dismantling them.[76] In this sense, "guerrilla" may be a useful term for the sort of warfare conducted across the frontier but it using it as a general term describing the Byzantine-Muslim conflict is much too simple and a more complex and continuous concept of frontier management is needed as well as a systematic re-evaluation of the campaigns conducted. The point of this section was to highlight some of the problems with many of the terms. An awareness of the issues is more useful than an attempt to create some neologism. The terms "guerrilla" and "Vegetian" will be used throughout for the sake of simplicity.

on Constantinople through titles and threats. See Alexander Beihammer, "Muslim Rulers Visiting the Imperial City: Building Alliances and Personal Networks between Constantinople and the Eastern Borderlands (Fourth/Tenth–Fifth/Eleventh Century)," *Al-Masāq* 24.2 (2012), 163-164, 174-75.

[73] Howard-Johnston, *Witnesses to a World Crisis*, 494. This is followed by Hoyland, *God's Path*, 128, who notes that these "insurgents" were then able to get into the Lebanon Mountains where they convinced a local group known as the Jarajima to revolt against Arab rule.

[74] Eger, *Islamic-Byzantine Frontier*, 295-97.

[75] Theophanes Confessor, *Chronographia*, ed. Charles De Boor (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1883), 397.

[76] Sarris, *Empires of Faith*, 296. Howard-Johnston, *Witnesses to a World Crisis*, 495-97.

Chapter 1 - Guerrilla Warfare on the Eastern Frontier in the Eighth Century

De Velitatione's claim that it was no longer relevant and existed to record the military knowledge of a previous time has been contested. On the one hand, McGeer sees it alongside other tenth-century military manuals and as a piece that recorded the sort of tactics developed in response to Sayf ad-Daula's raiding.[77] On the other hand, Haldon and Kennedy see the tactics as applicable to a much longer period of time.[78] While Haldon and Kennedy give some examples, their argument for this point is very brief and a more systematic examination is needed. Although the material for the annual campaigns between Byzantium and the Muslim states it bordered is often late, chronologically problematic, and short on details, the campaigns themselves deserve more attention than they have been given.[79] This short survey will provide a number of examples to demonstrate that while Byzantine eastern frontier policy is more complex than purely a defensive guerrilla strategy might suggest, some evidence does suggest that tactics akin to those in *De Velitatione* were employed during the "Dark Ages". The patchy evidence requires the use of Geertz-ian thin and thick descriptions to make up for the lack of consistent details across campaigns. This has recently been applied by Petersen in a monumental work on siege warfare in late antiquity and the early middle ages.[80] Since some campaigns have many details while others merit only a bare mention in the literary sources, this method allows for the more judiciously-explained campaigns to provide potential details for understanding those with less detail. This method is not without

[77] McGeer, *Dragon's Teeth*, 172-78, 226-28.
[78] Hugh Kennedy and John Haldon, "The Arab-Byzantine Frontier," 84, 97.
[79] Chronological problems in the Muslim sources can be attributed to the beginning of the ordering of historical materials, which really only began in the 730s: Chase Robinson, *Early Islamic Historiography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 24-25.
[80] Petersen, *Siege Warfare*, 10-14.

problems, however, and still requires close study of individual sources and individual narratives to understand why they are being presented in a particular manner and how this might affect the use of a particular detailed case as an important "thick" example.

A few more caveats must be mentioned. There is no space here for an extensive discussion of the campaigns in question. The chronological problems are very extensive for this period, with the different translators and borrowers from the Theophilos of Edessa tradition adopting varied methods for counting time.[81] This was possibly done because Theophilos's own chronology was felt to be insufficient by those who used his work.[82] Additionally, not all the campaigns are covered here, only those where some sort of tactics that might belong to *De Velitatione* were practiced.

Vegetian tactics appear during the siege of Constantinople in 717/8. The first Byzantine victory during the siege came with Leo sending out siphon-bearing ships against an Arab fleet at anchor in a sheltered bay. He had received such information from Egyptian deserters, and took advantage of it to avoid battle and hit his enemy when they were unprepared. Around the same time concealed Byzantine infantry was able to attack raiding Muslims in north-western Asia Minor at Libos and Sophon, forcing the Arabs to limit their activities in the Asian hinterland of Constantinople. Curiously, this sort of warfare is described as "in the manner of the Mardaites."[83]

While campaigns are listed as taking place almost annually, the next mention of Byzantine resistance was in 731, in which ʻAbd al-Wahhāb b. Bukht is noted as being killed after charging into Byzantine forces after a retreat, and in the following year Byzantine forces

[81] Jankowiak, *First Arab Siege*, 258-59. The original intention was to provide a catalogue of campaigns. However, chronological issues have hindered its completion and extensive further work is needed.
[82] Robert Hoyland, *Theophilus of Edessa's Chronicle and the Circulation of Historical Knowledge in Late Antiquity and Early Islam* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011), 21-22.
[83] Theophanes Confessor, *Chronographia*, 397. This notice is unique to Theophanes.

advanced against the invading Muslims but were defeated.[84] Only later in the 730s during an attack on Synnada does guerrilla warfare make an explicit appearance. The emir of Melitene, Mālik b. Shabīb, along with the frontier warrior ʻAbdallāh al-Baṭṭāl are listed as present and they allegedly brought some 50,000 troops along. While encamped at Synnada Byzantine soldiers surrounded them on all sides and attacked, with only some 5000 making an escape.[85]

In an entry dated to 735, al-Tabari reports that two raids departed that year for Byzantine territory. The leader of one, Sulaymān, departed from Mesopotamia, and the text says that when he arrived in Byzantine lands he spread his raiding parties around.[86] This is notable for matching a detail in *De Velitatione*, with small parties separating out from the larger raid force and thus provides some support for the manual's claim to be preserving the past.[87]

The sources are relatively quiet for the middle years of the eighth century. While they are typically taciturn when discussing frontier warfare, the Abbasid Revolution appears to have limited Muslim campaigning, while Constantine V took advantage of this to dedicate his efforts to fighting the Bulgars and to make a couple of high-profile attacks on Melitene and Germanikeia. In the late 760s some details surface again with a Muslim attack on Kamakhon. While this elicits only a brief acknowledgement in Theophanes, an extensive siege narrative is provided in the *Chronicle of Zuqnin*. Two particularly salient details emerge from *Zuqnin*'s account. The first is that the leader of Kamakhon, a certain Sergios, permitted Syriac Christians to cross the border in search of madder (ܨܒܥܬܐ) after catching some of them.[88] This

[84] Al-Tabari, *The History of Al-Tabari,* vol. 25, *The End of Expansion*, trans. Khalid Yahya Blankinship (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989), 95-96.
[85] Al-Tabari, *End of Expansion*, 102. *The Chronicle of Zuqnin*, 162. This event may have taken place any time between 733 and 740, and is placed by Petersen ca. 740: Petersen, *Siege Warfare*, 717.
[86] Al-Tabari, *End of Expansion*, 111.
[87] *De Velitatione*, 10.1-48.
[88] *The Chronicle of Zuqnin*, 208. Robert Payne-Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1903), 440. Unfortunately, the Payne-Smith does not provide any references to other uses of the word or how the author arrived at such a precise definition as *rubia tinctorum*. That particular plant is associated with the creation of dyes: D. J. Mabberley, *Mabberley's Plant Book: A portable dictionary of plants, their classifications and uses* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 750. Harrak suggests that it was eaten by the poor

attests both to Roman border intelligence and its limits: individuals or small groups could evidently cross without detection, but at risk of capture.[89] It also gives a glimpse into frontier life. There may have been an attempt to create something akin to a hard frontier zone, or at least one that was regularly monitored, as indicated by the apprehension of those trying to cross the frontier.[90] The Syriac term used by the chronicle is unfortunately rather elusive but perhaps points to some degree of transhumance in the region.

The second interesting bit from the chronicle is that during the siege a group of Arabs departed after the fortress had been invested and moved into Byzantine lands to raid. *Zuqnin* reports that the raiders passed through difficult, arid, and mountainous terrain in order to avoid detection.[91] Although they suffered privation, the march was successful for the raiders who then entered into the lands around Kaisareia in Cappadocia, where they apparently found a lack of resistance and available plunder. Having taken much loot the Muslims retreated encamped in a meadow, and set their beasts to pasture while they did not adequately prepare defenses, as *Zuqnin* claims that they already believed themselves to be in Syria.[92] According to *Zuqnin*, a Roman force allegedly composed of 12,000 cavalry just happened to stumble upon the encamped Muslim army. The chronicler then presents a scene in which the unnamed Roman commander cannot believe that the Muslim force is so vulnerable. Once the commander realizes that the situation is real he immediately occupies the pass out of the

and animals in times of need (*The Chronicle of Zuqnin*, 208n3). If indeed this plant was used as fodder for animals, or if ܪܥܝܐ is less specific than the dictionary suggests, then perhaps this is a direct reference to cross-border transhumance. Until further research can be carried out, however, nothing can be said for certain. For the siege narrative: Petersen, *Siege Warfare*, 732-738. For some of the historical problems: Michael Bonner, *Aristocratic Violence and Holy War: Studies in the Jihad and the Arab-Byzantine Frontier* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1996), 62-64. A. Asa Eger, *The Spaces Between the Teeth: A Gazetteer of Towns on the Islamic-Byzantine Frontier* (Yayınları: Istanbul, 2012), 80-81.

[89] Nora Berend, "Medievalists and the Notion of the Frontier," *The Medieval History Journal* 2, no. 1 (1999), 59-61.

[90] Hugh Kennedy and John Haldon, "The Arab-Byzantine Frontier," 114-16 have an interesting reference in an Arabic text to jihad requirements being fulfilled if one's animals ate Byzantine grass, hinting at transhumance in the border regions.

[91] *The Chronicle of Zuqnin*, 209-10. Presumably this raid passed somewhere through the mountains between the Halys and Euphrates rivers and the settlements of Sebasteia, Tephrike, and Tzamandos.

[92] *The Chronicle of Zuqnin*, 211.

meadow. The Muslims then begin negotiations and the prisoners and the loot are given up, but during this time Roman messengers summoned a great army which surrounded the meadow and made a simultaneous night assault which destroyed the invaders and left only a few to escape to Melitene.[93]

A few details from this story raise questions. *Zuqnin* has no idea where the Roman army came from, merely that it was marching from a victory. However, no other Byzantine activity is mentioned in any other source.[94] *Zuqnin*'s information on the Roman army should be treated carefully. He is able to name the commander in Kamakhon (Sergios) and two Muslim leaders, Radād and Mālik b. Tawq, but the Roman general is never named. Given the other information, it seems plausible that if *Zuqnin* knew the general's name he would have included it, and that the story of the general just happening to discover the Muslim force on his way back from some unnamed victory is questionable. The other issue is the timing. *Zuqnin* explicitly states that the general sent for reinforcements while negotiating with the Muslims and that the troops which arrived were a substantial body broken into four divisions. The given figure of the 50,000 men on the raid is probably excessive, but the 12,000 Byzantine cavalry is not, even if it is a bit on the large side.[95]

Whether significant additional bodies of troops came or not is unknown, but another course of action is plausible. The Muslims, caught unaware, perhaps entered negotiations to buy themselves time to get their military equipment in order and prepare to break out. Presumably this is where captives and loot were returned, but whether they were given as a bribe to let the Muslims return home, or whether the precariousness of their position became

[93] *The Chronicle of Zuqnin*, 211-13.
[94] The siege and raid is barely mentioned elsewhere. Theophanes only acknowledges that the siege lasted for a whole summer (Theophanes Confessor, *Chronographia*, 444) and nothing remarkable is noted in al-Tabari other than that some Muslims died in the raid (Al-Tabari, *The History of al-Tabari*, vol. 29, *Al-Manṣūr and al-Mahdī*, trans. Hugh Kennedy (New York: State University of New York Press, 1990), 42.
[95] An estimate for the late eighth century that puts total Byzantine troop numbers around 80,000: Warren Treadgold, *Byzantium and its Army 284-1081* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 67-69. Haldon, *Warfare, State, and Society*, 81-83 is generally in agreement.

evident and such additional baggage would limit the hard fighting to come is unclear.[96] The Roman commander may have used the negotiations for the purpose of buying time to get his army in place around the Muslim encampment. While the numbers are not believable, they are large enough to suggest significant forces present on both sides, and the mountainous terrain likely limited the ability of both groups in their search for pasturage and supplies. It seems unlikely, then, that these negotiations were carried out over the course of weeks, but rather a day or a few days. The surprise arrival of the Muslims in Byzantine territory is a good explanation for why they do not seem to have been harried in their raiding around Kaisareia. Forces were assembled during the raid, and were only able to encounter the raiders on the way out.

Once the Roman forces were in position, they attacked. Although this reconstruction of the battle is hypothetical, the surviving evidence is more easily reconstructed into an understandable battle than some other more famous clashes.[97] The injunctions that would later appear in *De Velitatione*'s seem to have been closely followed, to the extent that this may have been nearly a model response. Of course, this all assumes that *Zuqnin* is preserving some semblance of reliable military data. How much shadowing was conducted is unknown, but the Roman force did manage to gather with something approaching its full strength at a point and time where the Muslims were unprepared, suggesting a degree of coordination and intelligence unless one is inclined to believe *Zuqnin*'s story that a battle-ready force just happened to stumble upon the raiders. The Byzantines also occupied the pass that the Muslims were planning on taking on the way out, and they may have held it successfully

[96] A Roman general was criticized for allegedly accepting a bribe and diverting his army a few decades later: Theophanes Confessor, *Chronographia*, 451. Collusion and bribery were apparently plausible enough that Leo VI advocated leaving the property of certain Muslim border landlords alone so that they would fall under suspicion: Leo VI, *Taktika*, 20.22.

[97] Yarmūk, for example, is deeply problematic, as are the differing traditions on what happened after the Battle of the Masts in 654. The historical issues surrounding Yarmūk are highlighted (but far from solved) in David Woods, "Jews, Rats, and the Battle of Yarmūk," in *The Late Roman Army in the Near East from Diocletian to the Arab Conquest*, ed. Ariel S. Lewin and Pietrina Pellegrini, 367-76.

since those who escaped went eastward rather than into Syria.[98] The Roman force also seems to have been heavily cavalry-based, something suggested by Phokas in the tenth century as ideal for fighting on the eastern frontier.[99] An effort to recover captives and loot taken is also noted by both.[100]

This success of these sorts of tactics evidently led to them being attempted again shortly thereafter. Theophanes reports a Muslim attack on the coastal fortress of Syke.[101] Michael Lachanodrakon, then *strategos* of the Anatolikon, joined forces with the Boukellarion, the Armeniakon, and the Kibyrrhaiotai and blocked the path of the Muslims out. Perhaps having learned from the earlier defeat, the Muslim general went on the offensive. What exactly he attempted to do is obscured by Theophanes's claim that he attacked the troops of the cavalry *themata* (the Kibyrrhaiotai not having joined forces with them) and defeated them, which then permitted the Muslims to raid and march home unmolested. Several of the same elements of the previous action are visible here, with Byzantine forces grouping together when they have the advantage to prevent the invaders from leaving easily and the use of terrain. That it was ultimately unsuccessful does not detract from what was broadly a Vegetian guerrilla strategy for dealing with invaders on the mountainous frontier.

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[98] *The Chronicle of Zuqnin*, 213.
[99] *De Velitatione*, 17.21-23.
[100] *De Velitatione*, 14.17-108. *The Chronicle of Zuqnin*, 210.
[101] Theophanes Confessor, *Chronographia*, 445. Petersen, *Siege Warfare*, 738-39. Syke has been identified as the modern Softa Kalesi, a spectacular and well-preserved castle just to the east of Bozyazı on the south coast of Turkey. How this identification has come about is unknown. Cyril Mango, Roger Scott, and Geoffrey Greatrex, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284-813* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 616n1 identify this castle as Syke. They cite W.M. Ramsay, *The Historical Geography of Asia Minor* (London: John Murray, 1890), 381, which does not attempt to place the castle. However, they also cite the relevant *Tabula Imperii Byzantini* volume, which is unfortunately not available in Budapest. This reading has been taken up elsewhere, such as in Emilie Savage-Smith, "The Book of Curiosities: An Eleventh-Century Egyptian View of the Lands of the Infidel," in *Geography and Ethnography: Perceptions of the World in Pre-Modern Societies*, ed. Kurt A. Raaflaub and Richard J.A. Talbert (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 308n33. The *Digital Atlas of the Roman Empire* is less sure: "The Digital Atlas of the Roman Empire: Softa Kalesi," created July 1, 2008, imperium.ahlfeldt.se/places/22663. I have been particularly interested in this castle since stumbling upon it by chance during a 2011 trip to Turkey, but have not managed to find any concrete information or any sort of serious study.

The importance of these passages for understanding Byzantine guerrilla warfare on the eastern frontier should not be understated. What *Zuqnin* provides is apparently the earliest full account of tactics akin to those in *De Velitatione* being applied. Notably, it takes place a decade earlier than the commonly accepted "early" account of guerrilla tactics in the east. Mark Whittow sees the first evidence of this sort of strategy applied by Leo IV in 778 in a passage in Theophanes and then goes on to claim that this type of warfare developed into a sophisticated military doctrine in the ninth and tenth centuries.[102] Likewise, this is followed by Breccia despite earlier noting the importance of the Kamakhon raid.[103] However, the case of the raiding party that left the siege of Kamakhon does point to a sophisticated defensive system that seems to have already been in place at least by the middle of the eighth century.

Theophanes's account of Leo IV's orders to defend Byzantine territory in such a manner does require some explanation if it is not to be a new strategy rather than the first clear evidence thereof. Leo ordered his generals to avoid meeting the Arabs in the field but rather to take parties of around 3000 men to trail the Arab raiding parties so that the invaders could not raid effectively, while also burning pasture lands so that the Muslim's animals would have nothing to eat.[104] Other events explain Leo's strategy. In the previous year Leo had sent a major campaign into Syria which attacked Germanikeia. Although failing to take the fortress, Michael Lachanodrakon seized the camel herds of the caliph Mahdī's uncle and devastated the surrounding territory.[105] The raid reported in al-Tabari for 777/8 was defeated by Lachanodrakon.[106] This failure is attributed to the raid commander's unwillingness to listen to his scouts. Ibn Wadhih adds that the Muslims were surrounded and defeated on this

[102] Whittow, *The Making of Byzantium*, 176. Whittow's argument has been adopted in recent scholarship: Sophoulis, *Byzantium and Bulgaria, 775-831*, 145.
[103] Breccia, "Piccole guerre," 93, cf. 55-59.
[104] Theophanes Confessor, *Chronographia*, 452. Stouraitis, *Krieg*, 56-7.
[105] Theophanes Confessor, *Chronographia*, 452.
[106] Al-Tabari, *Manṣūr and al-Mahdī*, 198. This "raid" was probably a response to Lachanodrakon's campaign: Bonner, *Aristocractic Violence*, 72.

campaign.[107] Together this hints towards guerrilla tactics and suggests that Lachanodrakon probably did not directly engage the raiders in a set-piece battle. These defeats undoubtedly undermined Abbasid prestige and forced Mahdī to respond with a major campaign against Byzantium.[108] Leo may have been wary about directly engaging a Muslim force sent by the caliph himself, but he may also have wished to conserve his forces. In 776/7 the ousted Bulgarian khan Telerig arrived in Constantinople amid unrest in the khanate.[109] If Leo was intending to take advantage of this by continuing his father's campaigns in Bulgaria, he never did so but the possibility must have been in mind given Constantine V's long-standing strategy of breaking the Bulgar state.

Nonetheless, Constantinople must have recognized the danger to the army and the regime in directly confronting a caliphal raiding army and the possibility of continuing Byzantine intervention in Bulgarian politics, and wisely chose to avoid any serious risks. Another danger came from inside, from the most experienced military man in the east. Recent history had seen military men from the provinces usurping power in Constantinople, with Leo's own grandfather taking the throne in 717, and Leo's father Constantine fighting a rebellious general of the Armeniakon who actually managed to oust him from Constantinople.[110] Theophanes claims that Lachanodrakon took bribes from the Muslims at Germanikeia in order to stave off his assault on the city.[111] Leo perhaps had to walk carefully

[107] Brooks, "Early Abbasids," 735.
[108] Bonner, *Aristocratic Violence*, 71-75. The Byzantine frontier was a source of prestige for rulers and aspiring rulers alike: Robert Haug, "Frontiers and the Early Islamic State: Jihād between Caliphs and Volunteers," *History Compass* 9, no, 8 (2011), 638-640. Hugh Kennedy, "The Mediterranean Frontier: Christianity Face to Face with Islam, 600-1050," in *Cambridge History of Christianity: Early Medieval Christianities c. 600-1100*, ed. Thomas F.X. Noble and Julia M. H. Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 181-184. The use of the Byzantine frontier for political purposes is nicely highlighted by al-Tabari's claim that the caliph al-Manṣūr planned to get the unreliable Khurasani army away from a rebellion by sending them on a raid against Byzantium: Al-Tabari, *The History of al-Tabari*, vol. 28, *Abbasid Authority Affirmed*, trans. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995), 69.
[109] Sophoulis, *Byzantium and Bulgaria*, 148-49.
[110] Treadgold, *State and Society*, 357-59.
[111] Theophanes Confessor, *Chronographia*, 451. This could just be an attempt by the hostile Theophanes to blacken his character: Stouraitis, Ioannis. "Michael Lachanodrakon." In *Encyclopedia of the Hellenic World.* Accessed April 21, 2015, http://www.ehw.gr/l.aspx?id=6939. On the other hand, this story is accepted elsewhere: *Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit* III, s.v. "Μιχαήλ 5027."

around his most able general, who had recently demonstrated that his loyalty to the regime was an open question, assuming, of course, that Theophanes's claim is valid. Should Lachanodrakon's loyalty be suspect, removing him from his post might be dangerous to Leo, but so might be giving him the sort of campaign army necessary to fight Mahdī's forces.

Ultimately, this theory is entirely based upon one potentially spurious statement in Theophanes and precedent from earlier in the eighth century, although in this case Leo did have imperial tagmatic forces that his grandfather and father did not have to face when attacking Constantinople.[112] Another possibility entirely is that Theophanes's account is a reflection of an attempt at military legitimacy by Leo. Like Leo VI with his military works, Constantine VII with his treatises and harangues, or Herakleios sending dispatches back to Constantinople when in the east, Leo IV could be giving orders for the purpose of making his reign known and making his concern for the provinces and the army clear.[113] That Theophanes happened to pick up a communiqué designed for those purposes that has subsequently been viewed as part of a long-term military strategy is not impossible, nor is the possibility that such a dispatch could serve both a military and political purpose. Nonetheless, the overall picture is one in which Leo has several convincing reasons not to take the field, and this passage in Theophanes should not be seen as the creation or application of a new strategy but rather as a specific response to a particular problem that was approached in a way that made sense in the current political climate in Constantinople.

Despite these examples, good evidence of guerrilla warfare on the frontier becomes more shadowy than earlier in the eighth century. In 779/80 Lachanodrakon intercepted and destroyed what is said to be a large Muslim raiding party but no further details are

[112] Haldon, *Warfare, State, and Society*, 78.
[113] Haldon, *Critical Commentary*, 26, 73. Dagron and Mihăescu, *Le Traité*, 137-38. Eric McGeer, "Two Military Orations of Constantine VII," in *Byzantine Authors: Literary Activities and Preoccupations*, ed. John W. Nesbitt (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 115. Athanasios Markopoulos, "The ideology of war in the military harangues of Constantine Porphyrogennetos," in *Byzantine War Ideology between Roman Imperial Concept and Christian Religion*, ed. Johannes Koder and Ioannis Stouraitis (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2012), 55-56.

available.[114] In the following year Eirene deployed the Asian *themata* to guard the Tauros passes.[115] What happened next is unclear. Theophanes claims that the Muslims attempted to raid and were defeated, whereas al-Tabari says that no effort was made to force the passes and the raid returned home.[116] This marshalling of the *themata* is unusual and is a reflection of the heightened state of war between Constantinople and Baghdad in the late eighth and early ninth centuries.

In 781/2 Eirene is reported to have sent the *tagmata* to Bane for the purpose of hindering the movement of Harun al-Rashid's invaders, which is a clear example of an attempt to use guerrilla tactics against a superior force.[117] An effort may have been made in 788 to repeat Lachanodrakon's 779/80 success as forces from the Opsikion and the Anatolikon were defeated by a Muslim raid at what may have been Podandos, just beyond the Cilician Gates.[118] Presumably the Byzantines had some intelligence that Harun al-Rashid had ordered a more substantial raid that year, otherwise it seems unlikely that an important section of the officer corps of two western *themata* would have been present in the Tauros Mountains and bring forces to intercept invaders.

A failed expedition of Constantine VI in 796/7 against the Muslims has the detail that he desired to bring lightly armed troops (μονοζώνων στρατιωτῶν) from the *themata*.[119] This possibly indicates an interest in mountain warfare, although *De Velitatione*'s focus is on cavalry as the main operational arm in guerrilla warfare.

[114] Theophanes Confessor, *Chronographia*, 453.
[115] Theophanes Confessor, *Chronographia*, 455.
[116] Theophanes Confessor, *Chronographia*, 455. Al-Tabari, *Al-Manṣūr and al-Mahdī*, 217. Warren Treadgold, *The Byzantine Revival, 780-842* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 66-67 gives an account that includes details not found elsewhere such as a battle taking place near Kaisareia despite only citing al-Tabari and Theophanes.
[117] Theophanes Confessor, *Chronographia*, 456. Treadgold, *Byzantine Revival*, 69.
[118] Theophanes Confessor, *Chronographia*, 463. Mango, Scott, and Greatrex, *Theophanes Confessor*, 638n1, point out that the reading of this name is uncertain. Podandos is, however, supported by Treadgold, *Byzantine Revival*, 91.
[119] Theophanes Confessor, *Chronographia*, 471.

From this survey of the eighth century, Byzantium was no stranger to guerrilla tactics in its fight against the Muslims. Such things appear as early as the siege of Constantinople in 717/18. The raid that broke off from the siege of Kamakhon is notable for its rather close adherence to tactics that would only be written down in *De Velitatione* two centuries later. This is important, since it lends credence to the manual's own claim that it preserves a manner of fighting from a past time. It also helps to situate the manual more fully inside scholarly opinion. McGeer's placement of *De Velitatione* in the corpus is thus revealed to be both correct and in need of a minor qualification - *De Velitatione* may very well refer to the defensive sort of warfare practiced against Sayf ad-Dawla, but it also refers to a style of war going back centuries. A study of the eighth-century campaigns also reveals Whittow's injunction about a Theophanes passage referring to Leo IV's strategy against the Arabs as the first clear evidence of guerrilla strategy in the east as not true. The raid that broke off from the siege of Kamakhon predated that by a decade and seems to preserve a believable case of guerrilla tactics. A full study of the eighth-century campaigns is still needed, but this short chapter fills in the gaps in the oft-cited article by Haldon and Kennedy in which they assert the practicality and reality of *De Velitatione* but have too large a chronological frame in mind to devote attention to specific campaign detail. Guerrilla tactics appear to have been employed at a level no less sophisticated than those put forth by *De Velitatione* in the tenth century, fully vindicating the claim in the handbook to be preserving the past.

Chapter 2 - *De Velitatione* and the Eleventh Century

Manuscripts and the Political Context

The primary manuscripts of *De Velitatione* are found within compendia containing multiple military manuals. While the survival of texts from the Byzantine world is often a matter of happenstance the placement of *De Velitatione* in compendia raises the question as to the purpose behind the production of these manuscripts at this time since the Phokas household had fallen from grace and the threat from the Arabs in the east was over. *De Velitatione* makes clear its connection to the Phokas household, with the authorship assigned to Nikephoros II Phokas despite doubts being raised about this only a few lines in.[120] Nonetheless, the text goes on to praise the Phokas clan, suggesting that Bardas Phokas perfected the sort of warfare described and mentions a notable success by Nikephoros II Phokas's grandfather.[121] The praise never gets in the way of the author's ability to give authentic-sounding military advice and is set up in such a manner as to have great members of the clan performing exemplary deeds on behalf of the empire against the Muslims in the east. On the other hand, Byzantium continued to wage war aggressively throughout the first half of the eleventh century. This raises the question of why they were copied and what role they might have had, both in terms of practical use and political meaning.

Despite their technical nature, military manuals can be ideologically implicated pieces with political interests, and some brief examples here will serve to set *De Velitatione* alongside some contemporary works. Despite *De Velitatione*'s claim that it served a practical purpose, the less practical *Naumachika* commissioned by Basil Lekapenos, the castrated

[120] McGeer, "Military Texts," 907. The author of *De Velitatione* states that he has been given the task of writing the manual: *De Velitatione* proem.48-51. The author may have adapted some earlier material since beginning in chapter 13 the reader is regularly addressed in the second person, whereas prior to that a more distant third person "general" is the figure ideally heeding the manual's advice. The identity of the author is unknown. Dennis, *Three Treatises*, 139-40 plausibly suggests that it may have been Nikephoros's brother Leo. Leo certainly had the experience with this sort of warfare: Stouraitis, Ioannis. "Battle at the Straights of Andrasus, 960." In *Encyclopedia of the Hellenic World.* Accessed May 11, 2015, http://www.ehw.gr/l.aspx?id=7930.
[121] *De Velitatione*, 20.14-44.

illegitimate son of Romanos I Lekapenos, is not all that different in a political sense.[122] The piece uses classicizing vocabulary and was probably designed with the intention of getting Basil promoted to the naval command in the expedition destined for Crete in 960. The text adopts Homeric quotations to explain nautical terminology in an obfuscating manner.[123] The purpose is for presentation and likely to show Basil's learning and thus qualify him for the leadership of the expedition. Basil had held a number of important titles under Constantine VII including *patrikios* and *parakoimomenos*, but was pushed aside by Romanos II and only returned to power with the accession of Nikephoros II Phokas in 963.[124] Pryor and Jeffreys argue that the extensive planning of the campaign points to the leadership contest taking place under Constantine VII, while W.G. Brokkaar sees the composition of the text as a means to gain a formal position once again.[125] Either way, the text is apparently designed as proof of Basil's fitness to lead the expedition. Through the sponsorship of such a text Basil may also been playing an imperial role.[126] Leo VI and Constantine VII were closely connected to the propagation of certain military texts in the tenth century, and Leo's close interaction with Maurikios's *Strategikon* created an imperial connection with legislating warfare. Basil Lekapenos's pedigree and the connection of previous emperors as creating and disseminating military handbooks suggest a possible reading in this direction, even if Basil was a eunuch and could never sit on the imperial throne. Even military texts with a more scientific appearance can serve a political purpose.

[122] *Ναυμαχικὰ συνταχθέντα παρὰ Βασιλείου πατρικίου καὶ παρακοιμουμένου*, ed. and trans. Elizabeth M. Jeffreys, in Elizabeth M. Jeffreys and John H. Pryor, *The Age of the ΔΡΟΜΩΝ: The Byzantine Navy ca 500-1204* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 522. The text was probably written between November 958 and November 959: Pryor and Jeffreys, *ΔΡΟΜΩΝ*, 184.
[123] Pryor and Jeffreys, *ΔΡΟΜΩΝ*, 530.
[124] Pryor and Jeffreys, *ΔΡΟΜΩΝ*, 184.
[125] Pryor and Jeffreys, *ΔΡΟΜΩΝ*, 184. W.G. Brokkaar, "Basil Lecapenus: Byzantium in the Tenth Century," in *Studia Byzantina Et Neohellenica Neerlandica*, ed. Willem Bakker, Arnold van Gemert, and Willem Aerts (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 217.
[126] Paul Magdalino, "Byzantine encyclopaedism of the ninth and tenth centuries," in *Encyclopaedism from Antiquity to the Renaissance*, ed. Greg Woolf and Jason König (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 224-25.

Furthermore, one of the other tenth-century military manuals authored by an emperor reveals political concerns and interests beyond military matters. A recent study of Leo VI's *Taktika* has argued that it was an attempt to legislate warfare and show the authority of the emperor as mediator between God and his people.[127] The *Taktika* therefore bears some similarities to legal documents. The idea of emperor as mediator and the general as a figure who needed to love God to succeed has origins in the *Ekloga* of the eighth century, and the *Taktika*'s *prooimion* bears similarities to other legal documents associated with Leo VI or his father Basil.[128] More clearly, however, each of the subject headings ("constitutions") in the *Taktika* are *diataxeis*, which is the same heading used in legal *novellae*, making a strong connection between the emperor's role as lawmaker and as the legitimate source of violence in the Byzantine world.[129] The heavy adoption of material from the *Strategikon* of Maurikios also has ideological implications since it provides a connection to the Roman past, and for those who knew their sixth-century history it presents a precedent of a palace emperor who legislated warfare.[130] The availability and general practicality of Maurice's manual probably also had bearing on Leo's decision. Nonetheless, choosing the *Strategikon* provided a warning to those who had some familiarity with the history of the sixth century: the murder

[127] John Haldon, *A Critical Commentary on the Taktika of Leo VI* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2014), 23-33.
[128] Haldon, *Critical Commentary*, 26, 73.
[129] Haldon, *Critical Commentary*, 73. While sharing this line, Shaun Tougher argues against older ideas of Leo's lack of military education or his alleged ill-health as reasons why he remained in the palace: *The Reign of Leo VI (886-912): Politics and People* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 167-168.
[130] Haldon, *Critical Commentary*, 37-38. The extent to which sixth-century history was known in the tenth is a difficult question. Certainly Leo the Deacon was reading Agathias and Constantine VII's team saved material from that period such as Petros Patrikios, but outside that narrow speciality it seems unlikely that historical knowledge was widespread. Kekaumenos suggested that histories ought to be read (Katakalon Kekaumenos, *Sovety i rasskazy Kekavmena: So inenie vizantijskogo polkovodca XI veka*, ed. and (Russian) trans. Gennadiy G. Litavrin (Moscow: Nauka, 1972), 170.23-25) but that does not mean they were being read. Constantine VII's adoption of Theophanes's *Chronographia* in *De Administrando Imperio* and some dubious statements in Genesios (Genesios, *On the Reigns of Emperors*, trans. Anthony Kadellis (Canberra: Australian Association of Byzantine Studies, 1998), 30) raise questions as to just what sort of histories were available in tenth-century Constantinople. Whether Leo opted to use the *Strategikon* as a model because it was imperial or for other reasons cannot be answered.

of such an emperor residing in Constantinople would result in tyranny, purges, and ultimately great damage to the Roman state.[131]

The selection of material within the *Taktika* also betrays political interests. Symeon's Bulgaria was a serious threat to Byzantine interests in the Balkans, and if the *Taktika* was authored around in the first decade of the tenth century then writing a document in which clear prescriptions are set out on how to fight the Bulgars is not politically expedient so long as the possibility is open that the enemy might gain access to the document.[132] Instead, much more attention is given to the Magyars, who had yet to make their major raids of 934 and 943 into Byzantine territory when Leo was writing, and in any case represented a much less important adversary than the neighbouring Bulgars.[133] The *Taktika* itself states that it will not describe how to fight the Bulgars since they are now Christian.[134] However, only two entries prior to this assertion is a record of the 894 campaign in which the Byzantines transported the Magyars across the Danube to fight the Bulgars, a clear case of Byzantium being implicated in violence against the Christian Bulgar state.[135] The apparent contradiction here is clear: Byzantium will not take up arms against the Bulgars, but is still willing to remind the Bulgars of the defeats that the Magyars inflicted on Symeon when Byzantium incited them against the Bulgars.[136] Leo's attitude makes perfect sense when the document is understood as both political and practical. Expecting that peace with the Bulgars was to be the permanent state of affairs is rather unlikely. Instead, it is far more plausible that the attention given to fighting

[131] For the *Strategikon*'s place in the warfare of the fifth and sixth centuries, see Syvänne, *The Hippotoxotai*. The only other base text covering as many aspects of campaigning and warfare as Maurikios that would have been available for Leo to use is that which is now attributed to Syrianos Magister: Philip Rance, "The Date of the Military Compendium of Syrianos Magister (formerly the sixth-century Anonymus Byzantinus)," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 100 no.2 (2007), 703-6.

[132] Paul Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier: A Political Study of the Northern Balkans, 900-1204* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 18-25. Tougher, *Leo VI*, 168. Haldon, *Critical Commentary*, 59-68.

[133] Stephenson, *Balkan Frontier*, 39. Denis Sullivan, "Byzantine military manuals: prescriptions, practice, and pedagogy," in *The Byzantine World*, ed. Paul Stephenson (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 153.

[134] Leo VI, *The Taktika of Leo VI: Revised Edition*, ed. and trans. George T. Dennis (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2014), 18.42.

[135] Leo VI, *Taktika*, 18.40.

[136] Stephenson, *Balkan Frontier*, 39. Tougher, *Leo VI*, 176-77.

the Magyars is a covert means of discussing how to fight the Bulgars, thus granting Leo some distance if the *Taktika* ever made its way to Symeon's court.[137] This concern that sensitive documents would find their way to other courts seems to have been justified, as the *Naumachika* section of Leo VI's *Taktika* appears in the *Al-Ahkam al Mulūkīyah wa'l Dawābit al-Nāmusīyah fī Fan al-Qitāl fī'l Bahr*, a thirteenth-century Arabic naval warfare manual by Muhammad b. Manqali Al-Nasiri, a high courtier in Mamluk Egypt.[138] How and when this section of the *Taktika* was translated into Arabic and made its way to Egypt is unknown, but the parallels in the passage excerpted by Christides are strikingly similar.

As a political piece itself, *De Velitatione*'s most obviously implicated aspect is its invocation of members of the Phokas clan in victories in the east.[139] Perhaps more critical and subtle, however, is how these few examples are linked to the proem. The proem states that in the present state God turned back the power of the Hamdanids and that while formerly the Roman army could not find the strength to set things in order in the east it has now achieved such things.[140] The text than goes to narrate how Bardas Phokas recovered ancient knowledge on how to fight in a manner that brought victory while avoiding risky direct confrontation.[141] The implication is that the Phokades brought security and victory to the empire, and no doubt Nikephoros II Phokas's actions in Crete and in Cilicia were sufficiently recent so as to further connect the clan to imperial victory. This is made clear by the last major claim of the proem: that Nikephoros II had mastered all the techniques of warfare, hinting that his continued existence on the throne is both deserved through his victories which were granted by God and is needed to prevent further inroads.[142] The manual claims that it might be needed in the future, and by extension it might be necessary if the true master of

[137] Tougher, *Leo VI*, 181-82.
[138] Vassilios Christides, "Naval Warfare in the Eastern Mediterranean (6th-14th Centuries). An Arabic Translation of Leo VI's Naumachica," *Graeco-Arabica* 3 (1984), 138-40.
[139] *De Velitatione*: Bardas: proem.31-39; Nikephoros the Elder: 20.21-45.
[140] *De Velitatione*, proem.5-6; 19-21.
[141] *De Velitatione*, proem.31-37.
[142] *De Velitatione*, proem.5-6; 32-50.

such forms of warfare, Nikephoros II, happened to not be around to save the empire again.[143] In this sense the "future" element of the text had a practical and a political purpose: the Phokas clan was present to save the empire from its eastern enemies, but should ungrateful Romans remove them from power the emperor was good enough to his subjects that he left them instructions on how to challenge their foes without him.

This political background to military manuals serves to illuminate their role outside of an immediate military context. *De Velitatione* is curious in this regard since it was composed in the circle of an emperor and thus cannot entirely free itself from politics, and by the dating of its manuscripts, which suggest that someone a generation or two later felt the texts were worth reproducing for military, political, or simply preservation reasons. Both modern editions of the text are based on the same three principal manuscripts: MS *Vaticanus gr*. 1164, *Scorialensis gr*. 281, and *Barberianus gr*. 276.[144] All are from the same scriptorium in Constantinople. The *Scorialensis* can be dated to the first half of the eleventh century, with *Barberianus* to the first decades of the eleventh century. The *Scorialensis* is the only manuscript to have the full text, but is probably a copy of the now-incomplete *Vaticanus*. The *Barberianus* is fragmentary.[145] Dennis has suggested that these manuscripts are quite close to the autograph, with perhaps only two or three copies in between given the types of errors he found.[146]

The *Scorialensis* is made up of 310 folios and contains a variety of military works, including Athenaeus, Biton, Hero of Alexandria, Apollodorus, Philo of Byzantium, Julius

[143] The controversy surrounding Nikephoros's actions as ruler is complex. For contrasting positive and negative views of Nikephoros in contemporary source material, see Rosemary Morris, "The Two Faces of Nikephoros Phokas," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 12 (1987), 85-96. Despite the conflicting traditions, Nikephoros's decision to fortify the palace in Constantinople does indicate security concerns: Leo the Deacon, *Leonis Diaconi Caloënsis Historiae*, ed. Charles Benedict Hasius (Bonn: Weber, 1828), 64D.

[144] The *Vaticanus gr.* 1164 is available online: http://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.gr.1164. The *Barberianus gr.* 276 is as well: http://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Barb.gr.276.

[145] George T. Dennis, *Three Byzantine Military Treatises* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1985), 141. Dagron and Mihăescu, *Le Traité*, 15-16.

[146] Dennis, *Three Byzantine Military Treatises*, 141.

Africanus, Leo VI, and *De Velitatione*.[147] The *Vaticanus* manuscript is currently 281 folios but was originally 392. It contains Onasander, Maurice, Biton, Athenaeus, two works of Hero of Alexandria, two works of Apollodorus, two works of Philo, Julius Africanus, the anonymous tenth-century *De Obsidione Toleranda*, damaged bits of Leo VI, *De Re Militari* and *De Velitatione*.[148] The surviving parts of the *Barberianus* are somewhat shorter, and it contains Maurice, Philo, Julius Africanus, *De Obsidione Toleranda*, the anonymous *Parekbolai*, Leo VI, *De Re Militari*, and *De Velitatione*, although most of the last work is lost and only fols. 235r-240v survive. *De Velitatione* is the final work in that manuscript and thus it runs to a total of 240 folios.

Worth noting briefly at this point is that the other military manual ascribed to Nikephoros II Phokas, the so called *Praecepta Militaria*, never appears alongside *De Velitatione* in the manuscripts. It survives only in one fourteenth-century manuscript connected to Trebizond based on references within to the Megaloi Komnenoi.[149] The *Taktika* of Nikephoros Ouranos uses and adopts the *Praecepta* and lists Nikephoros as a source.[150] The *Praecepta*'s author is listed as Νικηφόρος δεσπότης, and the mention of *kataphraktoi* has suggested to McGeer that it belongs to the circle of Nikephoros II.[151] Unlike *De Velitatione*, the *Praecepta* has no scenes of valour performed by members of the Phokas household or any references to them, and even the name of Nikephoros in the title is without any family connection (Στρατηγικὴ ἐκθεσις καὶ σύνταξις Νικηφόρου δεσπότου).[152] The failure of the eleventh-century commissioners of military texts to put *De Velitatione* and the *Praecepta*

[147] Gregorio de Andrés, *Catálogo de los códices Griegos de la Real Biblioteca de El Escorial* (Madrid: Sucesores de Rivadeneyra, 1965): 157-59. Dain and Foucault, "Les Stratégistes," 386-87.
[148] Dain and Foucault, *Stratégistes*, 385-87.
[149] McGeer, *Dragon's Teeth*, 3-7.
[150] McGeer, *Dragon's Teeth*, 172.
[151] McGeer, *Dragon's Teeth*, 172-74.
[152] Dain and Foucault, *Stratégistes*, 370 suggest that the text was written after the death of Nikephoros II Phokas and thus he had no hand in it. This point is followed by Stouraitis, *Krieg*, 161.

Militaria together may be an important indication of a lack of interest in compiling works that were specifically attributed to Nikephoros II.

Dain and Foucault are rarely enthusiastic about the quality of the production of these manuscripts, and describe the script of the *Vaticanus* as without elegance.[153] Nonetheless, the production of such voluminous parchment codices would have been a costly enterprise. Based on numbers given by Arethas in the tenth century, Nicolas Oikonomides's estimation of the cost of a book is 21-26 *nomismata*, and thus roughly a quarter to a third of the annual salary of a *protospatharios* at this time.[154] His copy of Plato cost him 21 *nomismata*, with the parchment costing just eight and the scribal work thirteen.[155] Despite these costs, private libraries did exist, as indicated by Michael Attaleiates's possession of 54 books, some 78 owned by Eustathios Boilas, some 34 in a Patmos monastic catalogue, or how St. Symeon the New Theologian was able to find a copy of John Klimakos in his family library back in Paphlagonia.[156] While precise costs cannot be known for any of them, volumes of the size of the three manuscripts listed above represented a substantial investment and are unlikely to have existed outside of the highest echelons of society.[157] Unfortunately, the manuscripts have not given up any clues as to who commissioned them or why, but do make it clear that someone felt, for whatever reason, that *De Velitatione* was worth preserving.

After the assassination of Nikephoros II Phokas, John I Tzimiskes had to contend with an army that still had powerful Phokas connections. To help ensure his position, John

[153] Dain and Foucault, *Stratégistes*, 386.
[154] Nicolas Oikonomides, "Writing Materials, Documents, and Books," in *The Economic History of Byzantium*, ed. Angeliki Laiou (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2002), 591.
[155] Ryan Bailey, "Arethas of Caesarea and the Scholia on Philostratus' Vita Apollonii in Laur. 69.33," MA thesis, (Central European University, 2012), 8.
[156] Oikonomides, "Writing Materials," 591. Niketas Stethatos, *Vita Symeonis Novi Theologici*, ed. I. Hausherr (Rome: Pontificum Institutum Orientalum Studiorum, 1928), 6.22; *The Life of St. Symeon the New Theologian*, trans. Richard Greenfield (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2013), 17. Judith Waring, "Literacies of Lists: Reading Byzantine Monastic Inventories," in *Literacy, Education, and Manuscript Tradition in Byzantium and Beyond*, ed. Catherine Holmes and Judith Waring (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 181-83. Speros Vryonis Jr., "The Will of a Provincial Magnate, Eustathios Boilas (1059)," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 11 (1957), 269-70.
[157] Personal communication with András Németh, curator of Greek manuscripts at the Vatican Apostolic Library, May 19, 2015.

dismissed the strategos of Antioch Eustathios Maleinos in 970, and made sure that Bardas Skleros was marginalized in the Rus' campaigns of 970/01.[158] The issue of the political context is important given the revolt of Bardas Phokas against the young emperors Basil II and Constantine VIII. Bardas lost the revolt and his life, and no more Phokades ever held the position of *domestikos* of the *scholai*.[159] The Phokas household was not entirely removed from power after the fall of Bardas Phokas, but its influence was diminished. The son of Bardas Phokas the rebel was Nikephoros Phokas, whose title and dignity are not known but who was important enough to be one of the leading figures in the 1022 revolt with Nikephoros Xiphias against Basil II. In Holmes's reconstruction the revolt was probably incited by concern over who would succeed the aging Basil II, and Yaḥyā of Antioch connected Nikephoros Phokas's imperial lineage to his role in the revolt, although there is no further information and Xiphias seems to have had the leading role.[160]

Another important Phokas appears around the same time: the *patrikios* Bardas Phokas the Younger, the grandson of the rebel Bardas Phokas and possibly the son of the Nikephoros Phokas associated with the revolt of Xiphias.[161] Skylitzes reports that he was a *patrikios* and that he suffered blinding following false charges (παρατρεφομένων συκοφαντῶν τυραννίδος ἐπίθεσιν) invented by Constantine VIII.[162] The testimony of Skylitzes is questionable on this point since the story of the blinding shares a narrative unit with the blinding of Nikephoros

[158] William Garrood, "The illusion of continuity: Nikephoros Phokas, John Tzimiskes and the eastern border," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 37, no. 1 (2013), 30.
[159] The *domestikoi* after Bardas seem to have been a much more restrained group under Basil II, and during the eleventh century the holders of the office reflected the unstable political situation in Constantinople and the office was held briefly by a variety of men. This does seem to have limited the danger from the *domestikoi* to the imperial office until Alexios I Komnenos seized the throne from Nikephoros III Botaneiates as *domestikos* of the *Scholai*. Rodolph Guilland, "Études sur l'histoire administrative de Byzance: Le Domestique des Scholes," *Revue des études byzantines* 8 (1950): 40-49.
[160] Catherine Holmes, *Basil II and the Governance of Empire (976-1025)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005): 517-22. Nikephoros is very obscure: PBW (consulted 3.1.2015) Nikephoros 145 <http://db.pbw.kcl.ac.uk/pbw2011/entity/person/119165>. Yaḥyā Ibn Saʿīd, *Histoire de Yaḥyā Ibn Saʿīd d'Antioche*, ed. Ignace Kratchkovsky, trans. Françoise Micheau and Gérard Troupeau (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997), 95, 97.
[161] Ioannes Skylitzes, *Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis Historiarum*, ed. Ioannes Thurn (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter 1973), 371-372; *A Synopsis of Byzantine History, 811-1057*, trans. John Wortley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 351. Dagron and Mihăescu, *Le Traité*, 360-61.
[162] Skylitzes, *Historiarum*, 372.70-73; *History*, 351.

Komnenos. Skylitzes hints that the charges against Nikephoros Komnenos were excessive, and he makes this point more forcefully by appending the story of invented charges against Bardas Phokas. Skylitzes's narrative continues to follow the unjust behaviour of Constantine VIII, suggesting that those who were punished for killing their "mad" commander George in Naupaktos did not really deserve it, and ends with shorter stories of mutilations and blindings. The writing of Skylitzes's history under Alexios I Komnenos explains the focus of this part of the narrative.[163] From internal evidence alone the story about Nikephoros Komnenos's blinding actually sounds at least somewhat justified. It involves a letter from him to his soldiers in which he requested that the troops bind themselves to him with promises to die fighting against the enemy since they had not proven reliable in holding the battle line previously, and the emperor's reaction to such a contract is understandable. Skylitzes ensures his audience that this was totally innocent since Nikephoros Komnenos had exhorted his soldiers to hold their line when facing the enemy, and was thus being a dutiful commander. The connection of this story to a number of other blindings and mutilations labeled unjust by Skylitzes is a clear attempt to exonerate Nikephoros Komnenos. Skylitzes's testimony needs to be taken very carefully here since the blinding of a *patrikios* and member of the Phokas household is essentially narrative support for the injustice done to a member of the house of Komnenos. Nonetheless, the same sense of injustice towards the blinding of Bardas Phokas appears in Yaḥyā of Antioch.[164] Although Skylitzes's attention is on the Komnenos, Constantine VIII had much more reason to be justifiably worried about a Phokas. Despite the fall of the last two politically prominent members of the Phokades in the 1020s, the evidence of a systematic attempt to exclude them from power by either Basil II or Constantine VIII is lacking.

[163] Holmes, *Basil II*, 80-89, 202-16.
[164] Yaḥyā Ibn Saʿīd, *Histoire*, 115.

After Constantine VIII only a few scattered references to the Phokas clan appear. On his retreat from Syria, Romanos III rested at the Phokas estate in Cappadocia.[165] Whether living members of the Phokas household were still in possession of the land or it had just become associated with the family name is unknown. Thus despite the fall in fortunes of the Phokas house, someone in the first half of the eleventh century went to a significant expense to include a text that was associated with Nikephoros II and served as a minor piece of propaganda in major military compendia. No direct evidence exists of it being unsafe to copy texts associated with a Phokas usurper, but the apparent exclusion of the house from military roles might indicate that they were not the patrons of these texts.[166]

[165] Skylitzes, *Historiarum*, 382.55-57; *History*, 361.

[166] Nikephoros II Phokas received further attention later in the eleventh century when he was written into the genealogy of Nikephoros III Botaneiates in Michael Attaleiates's history: Dimitris Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates and the Politics of Imperial Decline in Eleventh Century Byzantium* (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2012), 147-48. Note also that one of the stated reasons that Nikephoros believed he could win his revolt against Basil II was on account of his illustrious ancestry: Yaḥyā Ibn Saʿīd, *Histoire*, 97.

Guerrilla Warfare in the Eleventh Century

The first half of the eleventh century is a veritable dark age of detailed military information. No historian wrote extensive narratives of the wars in this period, and modern scholars are forced to rely on Attaleiates, Skylitzes, and accounts from outside the Byzantine world for complete coverage. Psellos has very little military detail, and while Attaleiates has more that account on starts in 1034. This paucity of information is illustrated well by recent debate on Basil's campaigns against Bulgaria and the suggestion that perhaps he did not fight continuously for two and a half decades but rather that this period was punctuated by long truces.[167] While parts of this thesis have met resistance, nonetheless it does demonstrate just how poor the source material is. Whether Byzantium fought with Bulgaria each year between 1005-1014 or not is currently a matter of debate.[168] Thus looking for cases of warfare that might be classed as irregular is difficult, and the number is not great. Nonetheless, while the use of *De Velitatione* cannot be proven, a few examples of the sort of warfare it describes took place in the eleventh century.

Michael Attaleiates has the most detailed account in Greek of military action in the eleventh century prior to the wars of Alexios I Komnenos, and several times describes warfare akin to that in *De Velitatione*. A period of Pecheneg raiding in the 1040s was apparently meeting only limited resistance in the Balkans while Byzantine attempts to contain the raids were initially unsuccessful.[169] However, Attaleiates tells a story about how after several defeats the Byzantines gave command to a certain unnamed Latin. This Latin then

[167] Paul Stephenson, *The Legend of Basil the Bulgar-Slayer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 16-27.
[168] Holmes, *Basil II*, 51, 104-106, 495-502.
[169] Miguel Ataliates, *Historia, Introducción, edición, traducción y comentario*, ed. Immaculada Pérez Martín (Madrid: Neuva Roma, 2002); Michael Attaleiates, *The History*, trans. Anthony Kaldellis and Dimitris Krallis (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2012), 7.4; 7.5. This raid has generally been dated to 1047: Timothy Venning, *A Chronology of the Byzantine Empire* (New York: Palgrave, 2006), 372. Precisely why is unclear.

began to monitor the Pecheneg raids and ordered his soldiers to sally forth from the cities (τῶν πόλεων) when the raiders were out plundering so that only small groups would be encountered. This was apparently successful and led to the return of the plunder.[170] Skylitzes has a similar account but no Latin is needed to spur the Byzantines to action. In this account, the Byzantine commander in Bulgaria and the *doux* of Adrianople joined with a Pecheneg rebel who then took command of the imperial army. They then established camps in open country and each day made small attacks from there, which apparently caused some damage to the Pechenegs.[171]

Putting aside the issue of the "cities" in Attaleiates's history for a moment, the anonymous Latin could have been schooled in Byzantine military theory, but could also have picked up such tactics from a variety of sources.[172] *De Velitatione* advocates attacking small groups that have moved out to pillage although it was clearly designed for a different frontier, since the enemy there is "the emir."[173] Key to such tactics is knowing where the enemies are and where they are going.[174] Presumably then Attaleiates's anonymous Latin made an effort to place his troops in locations where they could observe the Pechenegs although no direct evidence of this exists. Freeing prisoners and reclaiming plunder is also one of the stated goals in *De Velitatione* in preparing such attacks, suggesting a parallel between this event and the text.[175] Whether these sallies were taking place from cities is unclear, but the ninth-century *Anonymous Treatise on Strategy* suggests that the essential component of a guard

[170] Attaleiates, *History*, 7.7.
[171] Skylitzes, *Historiarum*, 548.54-56; *History*, 429.
[172] Georgios Theotokis*, The Norman Campaigns in the Balkans, 1081-1108* (Rochester, NY: Boydell and Brewer, 2014), 190-91 argues that steppe tactics were largely unknown in the west prior to the First Crusade. Nonetheless, Theotokis's own arguments concerning crusader adaptation to steppe tactics after the Battle of Dorylaion supports the idea that Latin warfare was rapidly adaptable and that military culture in the west permitted learning from the enemy.
[173] *De Velitatione*, 9.57-77; 17.42-50.
[174] *De Velitatione*, 2.1-31; 8.17-18, 36-41; 10.32-35; 17.42-47; 22.
[175] *De Velitatione*, 14.17-108.

post is a good view, and they can be placed in wooded or swampy areas.[176] In a similar manner, forts (φρουρία) are to detect the advance of the enemy but should also be placed in inconspicuous locations so that the enemy are unable to prevent the men within from coming and going as they please.[177]

The details between the accounts of Skylitzes and Attaleiates cannot be entirely reconciled, but in any case both suggest that the Byzantine army of the mid-eleventh century was fully capable of using complex tactics that had been written up for a different frontier. Near the Danube was a frontier zone with the population kept back with the intention of limiting damage from raids.[178] Presumably small forts existed along the Danube.[179] Many of the larger Roman ones appear to have been renovated and occupied from the last third of the tenth century as evidenced by archaeological work and coin finds.[180] Whether these forts were what Attaleiates had in mind when he referred to cities is unknown, but a plausible suggestion is that Skylitzes and Attaleiates are both telling different parts of the same story: Byzantine frontier troops were able to sally forth and defeat the Pechenegs when they split into smaller groups, and this tactic was repeated from marching camps once regular troops from further inland arrived.

A second story in Michael Attaleiates's history has similarities to *De Velitatione* as well as the additional advantage of taking place on the eastern frontier. A sudden Turkish raid sacked Neokaisareia, and burdened with loot and prisoners the raiders began to make their way home. However, Romanos IV Diogenes received word of the attack and sent his infantry

[176] "The Anonymous Byzantine Treatise on Strategy," in *Three Byzantine Military Treatises*, ed. and trans. George T. Dennis (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1985), 7.13-14.
[177] *Anonymous Byzantine Treatise* 9.11-12. John Haldon, "Information and War: Some Comments on Defensive Strategy and Information in the Middle Byzantine Period (*ca*. A.D. 660-1025)," in *War and Warfare in Late Antiquity*, ed. Alexander Sarantis and Neil Christie (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 381.
[178] Paul Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier: A Political Study of the Northern Balkans, 900-1204* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 81-83, 124.
[179] Some isolated forts on the Danube are said to have lasted into the seventh century: Haldon, *Warfare, State, and Society,* 74.
[180] Alexandru Madgearu, *Byzantine Military Organization on the Danube, 10th-12th Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 102-14.

along with the baggage ahead to Sebasteia while he proceeded with his cavalry into the mountains intending to intercept the Turks. Despite exhaustion, the cavalry were able to make up lost ground and defeat the Turks, freeing all the prisoners. Attaleiates then goes on to praise Romanos's military skills, specifically noting that he managed to cross the mountains and intercept the Turks at an angle, which required the planning and intelligence to hit a moving target across a mountain range eight days' march away.[181]

The importance of this passage should not be understated as several very close parallels can be drawn to the manual. First is Romanos's choice to separate his cavalry from the baggage train and infantry. *De Velitatione* specifically mentions that upon approaching the enemy the baggage should be sent into a fortified place.[182] Alternatively, and perhaps more precisely in this case, prior to departing to shadow an enemy force the baggage is supposed to be sent away and the troops are to take some provisions with them.[183] Although we have no information on numbers, Romanos's choice of cavalry also reflects the manual's claim that with a five or six thousand cavalrymen the general could handle any enemy, to the marginalization of the infantry.[184] Finally, the interception of the Turkish force by Romanos's army is crucial since it reveals that some reality may lie behind some of the most challenging sections of *De Velitatione*: the ability of a Roman army to outmarch and then intercept an invading army. Despite Attaleiates's bemoaning of the state of the provincial troops, the fact that Romanos's army was able to catch up and defeat the Turks indicates the probability that some sort of intelligence-gathering system was functioning in the east.[185] How close Romanos was to the Turks when he learned about the raid is unknown. This cannot entirely discount the possibility that Romanos's own scouts were the ones conducting

[181] Attaleiates, *History*, 17.4-5.
[182] *De Velitatione*, 16.1-3.
[183] *De Velitatione*, 8.9-14.
[184] *De Velitatione*, 17.21-23. cf. 19.16-18 which suggests that if the general has five or six thousand *men* at his disposal he can face the Arabs in a regular battle.
[185] Attaleiates, *History*, 17.2. This does not mean that the old thematic intelligence-gathering system was still working but merely provides an indication that some sort of scouting was taking place.

the intelligence operations, but the entire eastern frontier denuded of any sort of watch posts seems equally unlikely. In the manual, invaders are to be followed, even if the pursuing forces are too small or weak to engage so that information can be reported back to the general.[186] Romanos's army presumably benefited from such a system as well as local knowledge, but no evidence exists to directly corroborate this idea. Thus the army had information on where to go, but they were also able to outmarch and then defeat the Turks, perfectly performing the sort of warfare described in *De Velitatione* with its focus on movement, speed, and surprise

[186] *De Velitatione*, 6.16-19; 16.77-82.

De Velitatione and the crusaders

Material from outside the Byzantine world has some other limited information. The story of Harald Hardrada contained within the *Heimskringla* has material on his campaigns under the Byzantine banner and has some basis in relation to other sources from the eleventh century.[187] At the end of the eleventh century a number of Byzantine military actions suggest if not the influence of *De Velitatione* then the same sort of thinking that inspired it. This is particularly evident during the passage of the First Crusade through the Balkans, during which time the Crusaders were shadowed by Byzantine forces that intended to prevent pillaging.[188] Latin sources emphasize the poor behaviour of their Byzantine hosts.[189] While some of this may be attributed to hindsight in light of Alexios's perceived betrayal of the crusaders at Antioch and his choice not to join the crusade personally, a few specific grievances pertaining to violence done to the crusaders bear the hallmarks of the manner of fighting described in *De Velitatione*.

[187] Magnus Magnusson and Herman Pálsson, trans., *King Harald's Saga* (New York: Penguin, 1996), 53-54. Samuel Hazzard Cross and Olgerd P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, trans., *The Russian Primary Chronicle: Laurentian Text* (Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy of America, 1953), 81. These include cases such as campaigning with George Maniakes in Sicily and the king's injunction that mining the walls was the best way to take a town which matches a statement made by Nikephoros Ouranos. Nikephoros Ouranos, "Taktika," in *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth*, ed. and trans. Eric McGeer (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1995), 62.22. Eric McGeer, "Byzantine Siege Warfare in Theory and Practice," in *The Medieval City Under Siege*, ed. Ivy Corfis and Michael Wolfe (Rochester, NY: Boydell, 1995), 128. These include cases such as campaigning with George Maniakes in Sicily and the king's injunction that mining the walls was the best way to take a town which matches a statement made by Nikephoros Ouranos. However, this sort of story exists alongside one about a ruse in which the king sent burning birds back to their nests in the city, which has curious parallels to the *Russian Primary Chronicle*'s claim of Olga of Kiev doing the same indicating the possibility of a *topos*. Further investigation would be needed to determine what sort of historical value Harald's saga has for military history in Byzantium.

[188] Peter Frankopan, *The First Crusade: The Call from the East* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 114.

[189] Frankopan, *First Crusade*, 126. Note that Frankopan sees the violence along the route as between opportunistic locals and crusaders rather than any sort of Byzantine policy. This is at odds with his earlier statement (Frankopan, *First Crusade*, 126) that Byzantine troops were present to shadow the crusaders and only works if one assumes that none of the shadowing forces ever engaged crusaders caught in the act of pillaging. Frankopan seeks to see a very generous treatment of the crusaders in the Balkans and a pacific passage. While this is generally true (and all the more remarkable for the number of people who moved through Byzantine territory without incident) a few cases of more problematic encounters do exist and are discussed below.

The Provençal historian Raymond d'Aguilers was shocked that Byzantine troops attacked the crusaders despite being there at Alexios's invitation.[190] Set during the crossing of the Balkans, Raymond tells a story where the papal legate on the crusade, bishop Adhemar of Le Puy wandered outside of the main camp of the Provençal contingent. Once he was a short ways outside the Provençal encampment he was attacked by mercenary Byzantine light cavalry and his countrymen were forced to come to the legate's rescue.[191] In a similar manner, Raymond also recounts that Byzantine forces slew and robbed at night those who wandered too far from the camp (*in vicis remotis a castris, quae poterant per noctem furabantur*) after they had entered Byzantine territory.[192] In Robert the Monk's redaction of the *Gesta Francorum*, the author reports that Alexios sent cavalry against the forces of Duke Godfrey who had gone off to forage for supplies when encamped at Constantinople, specifically noting that the goal was "to set an ambush, attack, and kill them."[193]

The first action in Ralph of Caen's *Gesta Tancredi* involves the Norman fording of the Vardar River in the Balkans and the violence that took place on that occasion. Ralph reports that the Norman host was delaying because they were afraid that upon entering the river the Byzantine forces around them would attack, which duly happened. Fighting took place on both banks, but Tancred's heroism saved the day for the Normans. The Byzantines removed their military equipment and fled.[194] Ralph condemns the Byzantine attack on the rear of the Norman crossing, specifically claiming that Byzantine troops were lying in wait

[190] Raymond d'Aguilers, *Historia Francorum Qui Ceperunt Iherusalem*, trans. John Hugh Hill and Laurita T. Hill (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1968), 18. Hereafter abbreviated as *History of the Franks* to avoid confusion with the Latin text which bears the same title.
[191] Raymond d'Aguilers, *History of the Franks*, 21.
[192] Raymond d'Aguilers, "Historia Francorum Qui Ceperunt Iherusalem," in *Recueil des historiens des croisades: historiens occidentaux* III, (Paris: L'académie impériale des inscriptions et belles-lettres, 1866), 236.
[193] Robert the Monk*, Robert the Monk's History of the First Crusade: Historia Iherosolimitana*, trans. Carol Sweetenham (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 94.
[194] Ralph of Caen, *The* Gesta Tancredi *of Ralph of Caen: A History of the Normans on the First Crusade*, trans. Bernard S. Bachrach and David S. Bachrach (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 24-28. Note also the concern expressed by Godfrey before crossing the Sava with his host, since he had learned that Byzantine troops were in the vicinity: Albert of Aachen, Historia Ierosolimitana: *History of the Journey to Jerusalem*, ed. and trans. Susan B. Edgington (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), ii.6.

(*insidior*) for when the bulk of the Norman troops advanced into the river. The Byzantine ambushers then assaulted those last to make the crossing, and to highlight Byzantine cruelty Ralph notes that the Norman rear was made up of lightly armed troops and old or sick infantry.[195]

These independent accounts of different events nonetheless have some basic similarities to each other. They all suggest that the crusaders were being followed closely by mounted Byzantine troops, which is in keeping with *De Velitatione*'s focus on shadowing the enemy and waiting for the proper moment to attack. Worth noting is the focus on cavalry, which the author of *De Velitatione* suggests is all a general needs aside from the help of God.[196] The attack on groups separating from the main army is a crucial part of *De Velitatione* since it describes Arab raiding groups as separating from the main body to raid villages and implores the commander to take advantage of the dispersal of forces to do serious damage.[197] Evidently this worked, given the Norman crossing of the Vardar and Ralph's comment that after Tancred routed the Byzantine troops his soldiers were able to gain many material goods, including things that had been stolen from them.[198] The Byzantine objective here was to keep the crusaders together and to prevent them from pillaging Byzantine territory, which was a requirement made explicitly to Godfrey in Albert of Aachen's history.[199] The potential consequence for groups breaking off from the main crusader hosts is clear from a number of incidents. In a literary sense the story of Adhemar of Le Puy's abuse at the hands of Byzantine soldiers is no doubt designed to discredit the Byzantine claim of being the head of the Christian world, but it remains plausible. The Byzantine troops shadowing the Provençal crusaders saw someone break off from the main

[195] Ralph of Caen, "Gesta Tancredi in Expeditione Hierosolymitana," in *Recueil des historiens des croisades: historiens occidentaux* III, ed. L.A. Muratori (Paris: L'académie impériale des inscriptions et belles-lettres, 1866), 608.
[196] *De Velitatione*, 17.21-23.
[197] *De Velitatione*, 9.71-98;12.49-50.
[198] Ralph of Caen, *Expeditione Hierosolymitana*, 609.
[199] Albert of Aachen, *Historia*, ii.7.

group, and as part of the tactical doctrine assaulted him. Raymond also complains that Byzantine troops attacked Provençals at night who happened to be away from the camp.[200] While simple opportunism on the part of the soldiers cannot be excluded, the two other examples from Ralph of Caen and Robert the Monk provide some further context. The story in Ralph is entirely designed to demonstrate Tancred's resolve and virtue in fighting the Byzantines, but the backdrop is sensible even if no other account of this battle is known. *De Velitatione* makes a number of references to the dangers in crossing rivers, and devotes an entire section to the advantages of breaking an enemy force into two.[201] Robert the Monk's account is similar to that of Raymond: a group breaks off and is attacked. Taken together these complaints by crusaders suggest a dedicated Byzantine policy in containing the crusaders. That policy was based on tactics very similar to those espoused by *De Velitatione* in dealing with hostiles in friendly territory with the goal of mitigating the damage they might be able to do.

While the variety of sources that attest to such tactics being used against the crusaders points towards a high level of veracity, one significant issue remains regarding just how "Byzantine" these troops are and to what degree they may be following Byzantine military doctrine. In the Latin texts, Byzantine troops are occasionally called turcopoles.[202] In one instance Albert of Aachen places turcopoles alongside imperial troops, although both are stated to be sallying forth from Constantinople to engage the forces of Duke Godfrey.[203] In the same incident, the *Gesta Francorum* claims that Alexios used turcopoles and Pechenegs

[200] Raymond d'Aguilers, *History of the Franks*, 18.
[201] *De Velitatione*, 12.21-22; 22.
[202] Albert of Aachen, *Historia*, ii.12. The precise definition of this term is unclear in these texts and the dictionaries are largely unhelpful, with only the *Lexicon latinitatis medii aeui* giving a general definition that suggests the soldiers are lightly armed. Raymond d'Aguilers, *Historia Francorum*, 246 states that turcopoles either were raised (*nutrire*) amongst Turks or were from a Christian mother and Turkish father. Amongst the crusader sources the term seems to be used more generally.
[203] Albert of Aachen, *Historia*, ii.13.

at Constantinople against Godfrey.[204] The attack on Adhemar of Le Puy is similar. Pechenegs (*Pincenati*) are explicitly mentioned as carrying out the attack, as well as lying in wait in the mountains.[205] Although no ethnonym is provided, Raymond claims shortly thereafter that at Rhaidestos the Provençals encountered mercenary troops of the emperor (*milites de roga imperatoris*).[206] The *Gesta Tancredi* is not very specific at the fording of the Vardar, but the *Gesta Francorum* states that the Byzantine troops present were turcopoles and Pechenegs.[207] Guibert of Nogent adds a story about the Normans having taken prisoners at the battle at the Vardar and that they said they would do the emperor's bidding because he paid for it.[208]

The question as to whether these troops were versed in Byzantine military doctrine or just following forms of warfare learned on the steppe cannot be answered concretely, but a few general observations can be made. The degree of Byzantine control over these units is the real question here: were they led by their own leaders or by Byzantine officers, and what does that mean for how they were fighting? The general impression from the Latin sources indicate that when groups separated from the main body of the crusading force they were attacked, but was this being done by poorly controlled mercenaries hoping for some plunder or disciplined troops acting according to a military doctrine akin to *De Velitatione* in containing superior forces? In the case of Latin mercenaries in Byzantium, by the second half of the eleventh century they seem to be operating under their own leaders. Individuals like Hervé and Roussel de Bailleul led their own units, sometimes having important positions such as Hervé did in 1049 when he commanded the left wing (composed of mounted

[204] *Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolymitanorum*, ed. Heinrich Hagenmayer (Heidelberg: Carl Winter's Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1890), 142.
[205] Raymond d'Aguilers, *History of the Franks*, 21. The translators claim that the Provençals were surrounded by "treacherous imperial soldiers" but this stretches the *per insidias* of the text too much. Raymond d'Aguilers, *Historia Francorum*, 237.
[206] Raymond d'Aguilers, *Historia Francorum*, 237.
[207] *Gesta Francorum*, 162.
[208] Guibert of Nogent, *The Deeds of God through the Franks*, trans. Robert Levine (Rochester, NY: Boydell and Brewer, 1997), 59.

Frankish troops) of Katakalon Kekaumenos's army during the Pecheneg Wars.[209] More confusingly, but perhaps more relevant, is the case of Crispin, who despite being a foreigner was given command of Byzantine troops.[210] The list of names of individuals who commanded Byzantine troops under Alexios I but who have names indicating non-Byzantine origins is rather large, and includes individuals like Alakaseus, Aspietes, Bempetziotes, Houmbertoupolos, Komiskortes, Kouleon, Kourtikios, Landulph, Ouzas, Pakourianos, Tatikios, Tzitas, and Xantas. Others have more regular names but written material claims origins outside the traditional imperial elite, such as Argyros Karatzas (a "Skythian") and only have an ethnonym applied elsewhere.[211] A number of new men like Manuel Boutoumites and Eumathios Philokales also appear around this time, possibly coming to power as a result of purges following the Nikephoros Diogenes conspiracy of 1094.[212] Although many of these figures are obscure, Houmbertoupolos, Pakourianos, Landulph, and Tatikios all had high military commands and were put in charge of sensitive operations.[213] While men with foreign names often served in Byzantine armies, the difference here is that rather than leading mercenary contingents of specialized soldiers, many of these commanders appear to be well-integrated into the military hierarchy.[214] The question of identity is much too complex to answer here, but the example of Pakourianos's *typikon* in which he signed his name in Armenian, and yet had the document produced in Greek, Georgian, and Armenian

[209] Georgios Theotokis, "Rus, Varangian, and Frankish mercenaries in the service of the Byzantine emperors (9th - 11th c.) - Numbers, Organization, and Battle Tactics in operational theatres of Asia Minor and the Balkans," *Byzantina Symmeikta* 22 (2012), 143-44.
[210] Theotokis, "Mercenaries," 147-49.
[211] Anna Komnene, *The Alexiad*, trans. E.R.A. Sewter and Peter Frankopan (New York: Penguin, 2009), 230. PBW (consulted 18.5.2015) Argyros 20101. <http://db.pbw.kcl.ac.uk/pbw2011/entity/person/152251>.
[212] Frankopan, *First Crusade*, 84-85. This point deserves a proper study as figures like Tatikios, Argyros Karatzes, and Monastras all appear well before Diogenes conspiracy.
[213] Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, 115, 120, 133, 183-84, 225, 264, 323, 354-56.
[214] For example, Tatikios led Latins, "Turks", unspecified mercenaries, and regular troops: Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, 115, 172, 183, 201, 301.

does give a sense that multiple identities can be held concurrently in the Byzantine military elite.[215]

These officers seem to have been selected or trained on account of their range of military abilities. The Turk Monastras, for example, was active in the Byzantine army throughout almost the whole of Alexios's reign.[216] During that time he participated in a horse-rustling raid against the Pechenegs, was present at Levounion, organized ambushes against the Cumans, led the landward side of the siege of Laodikeia, and was one of the leaders of the van at the Battle of Akrokos.[217]

From these examples Monastras seems to have participated in nearly every form of medieval land warfare. He set ambushes, conducted raids, organized a siege, and fought in pitched battles. While no other examples present such a clear course, Monastras's career does hint towards a certain policy that may have been enacted towards mercenaries or defectors coming into Byzantine service. Monastras's first three recorded tasks are the raid on the Pecheneg horse herds, a deployment outside the Byzantine lines at Lebounion, and then the setting up of ambushes against the Cumans.[218] These three tasks could have been assigned based on Monastras's Turkish heritage and his presumed experience with such forms of steppe or something approximating "guerrilla" warfare. Only later does he perform military tasks that are more closely linked to infantry warfare, notably conducting a siege and leading part of the van in a pitched battle. While nothing suggests that Monastras's career was typical or ideal (from a Byzantine point of view), Tatikios's career makes a good contrast, since he was born into captivity and presumably received some form of military education in Byzantium. His first appearance in the *Alexiad* is leading a contingent of "Turks" on the way

[215] *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents: A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders' Typika and Testaments*, trans. John Thomas Hero and Angela Constantinides Hero, with Giles Constable (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2000), 557.
[216] As a "half-caste" Turk: Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, 303.
[217] Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, 210, 225, 265, 322-23, 328, 416. Despite this illustrious career, he receives only a token mention in Charles Brand, "The Turkish Element in Byzantium," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 43 (1989), 19.
[218] Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, 210, 225, 265.

to fight the Normans at Dyrrachion in 1081.[219] After that he is seen leading and recruiting regular forces, acting as Alexios's representative with the crusaders, fighting in the battle line, and even taking up a naval command.[220] In relation to the tactics used against the crusaders, no direct evidence points to whether mercenary steppe troops were following their own military doctrines or whether they were being guided by Byzantine officers who might have been versed in the tactics in *De Velitatione*. No names are known for the groups that shadowed the crusaders, but given the number of named military leaders who likely originated from outside the empire around the time of Alexios the possibility that some of them may have been involved should not be entirely forgotten. The extent to which these "foreign" elements were versed in Byzantine military customs cannot be estimated, but at least two recent pieces by Georgios Theotokis and Theocharis Alexopoulos have argued for the close adherence to the military manuals by Byzantine forces around the turn of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.[221] The generally competent role of shadowing the crusaders does hint to a close degree of Byzantine control. Combined with the number of individuals whose origins may have been outside of imperial boundaries, there does seem to be some reason to posit that the leaders at least were being trained in Byzantine military practices.

In conclusion, the influence of *De Velitatione* in the eleventh century is a mixed one. While the principal manuscripts date from this period, what (if any) political role or meaning they had cannot be detected. No surviving manuscript suggests that anyone was interested in compiling the works of Nikephoros II since the *Praecepta Militaria* does not appear with *De Velitatione*. Despite the revolt of Bardas Phokas against the young Basil II, the Phokas family

[219] Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, 115. These "Turks of the Vardar" may have been Magyars: Brand, "Turkish Element," 3.
[220] Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, 183, 193, 301, 323. Brand, "Turkish Element," 3-4.
[221] Theotokis, *Norman Campaigns*, 171-74. Theocharis Alexopoulos, "Using Ancient Handbooks to Fight Medieval Battles: Two Stratagems used by Alexios I Comnenos against the Normans and the Pechenegs," *Εωα και Εσπερια* 8 (2008-12), 47-71. While matters of space and topic are not available here, it should be noted that both of these scholars draw heavily on examples from the *Alexiad*. Although Anna Komnene's education, interests, and involvement with her text remains a matter of debate, the possibility that read military manuals for the purpose of creating believable battle narratives cannot be entirely discounted.

does not appear to have been excluded from politics as another Nikephoros Phokas was accused of plotting against the emperor in the 1020s. Later, the image of Nikephoros II was used to justify the military prowess of Nikephoros III Botaneiates through a fictive genealogy suggesting that no permanent state of *damnatio imperii* was set upon the house even though its members disappeared from the historical record.

On the other hand, evidence in Greek and other languages points to the continuing use of the sort of precepts set forth in *De Velitatione*. This cannot, of course, prove that the manual was actually being studied by military leaders. Nonetheless Romanos IV Diogenes appears to have had some familiarity with the tactics described within, and such modes of fighting also appear to have been applied in the Balkans against the Pechenegs. Although the crusaders complained of Byzantine mistreatment, the evidence provided in Latin sources indicate a Byzantine interest in preventing the crusaders from despoiling the countryside through a form of shadowing warfare that was enacted to this end. Taken together, despite a general advance of the Byzantine frontiers, the sort of defensive warfare set out in *De Velitatione* appears to have been used throughout the eleventh century, as the hope set forth in the proem that such tactics would be useful in the west too appears to have been fulfilled.[222]

[222] *De Velitatione*, proem.51-58.

Conclusion

By examining certain aspects of the past and future of *De Velitatione*, a few useful general conclusions have come to light. The first is that a survey of the eighth century has argued that some evidence points to the specific use of guerrilla tactics. While the longstanding use of these tactics has been convincingly posited by Stouraitis, the Kamakhon example is not mentioned in his work. Whittow's influential textbook account suggests that 778 is the first case of clear evidence for *De Velitatione*'s precepts, but a Syriac account discussing the interception of an Arab raid is earlier and contains many of the essential elements described in the manual. A number of other examples from the eighth century point to similar tactics. The second conclusion that can be taken from this is the importance of immediate political context as opposed to grand strategy. Leo IV may have had pressing reasons outside of simply defeating the Arabs to avoid a general confrontation. Similarly, the intensification of Byzantine-Muslim warfare that broke out in the later eighth century is partially dependent upon political factors within the caliphate in which campaigning against Byzantium was an important means of securing legitimacy and prestige. While this point is not original to this study, concerns beyond strategic factors are important for explaining why certain decisions are made in medieval warfare. A further point that can drawn is the difficulty in understanding what regularly happened on the frontier. Some evidence presented by Eger and Haldon and Kennedy point to transhumance in the frontier region, which suggests that perhaps the annual raids were not worth mentioning. On the other hand, however, the case of the raid that departed from the siege of Kamakhon is indicative of an imbalance of information in Constantinople and Baghdad, the two main centre of history writing. The campaign only received cursory mention from the historians centred in those

places, which highlights one of the reasons why the vivid detail presented *De Velitatione* has been used as to form the basis of Arab-Byzantine warfare in this period.

For the eleventh century, no clear link between the *De Velitatione* manuscripts and the Phokas household can be posited. Unfortunately the circumstances of the production of the manuscripts are too obscure to suggest any political connection or interests. However, the sort of tactics set forth in *De Velitatione* play a large role in the warfare of the eleventh century. The author of *De Velitatione* wrote to preserve a certain type of warfare for posterity, and posterity seems to have utilized it. Against the Pechenegs and Turks similar tactics to those advocated for in the manual can be seen. Most clearly, however, is the use of shadowing warfare against the crusaders at the end of the eleventh century, which bears a close resemblance to the shadowing of Muslim raids in earlier centuries.

The author of *De Velitatione* appears to have accurately preserved the past in the text, even if the tactics of that past may have been less novel than he claimed. Also vindicated is the author's claim of preserving this knowledge for future generations in case they might need it. The eleventh century reveals that such knowledge was needed in Byzantium, and it may well have been used again.

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