



Summary :

Since the middle of the 7th century, the Arabs had been constantly raiding the Byzantine lands of Asia Minor. The Byzantines reacted to this threat by organizing a network of information and timely notice, fortifying the cities in the interior of Asia Minor and developing tactics in order to repel the invaders. The raids lasted until the decade of 960, when the Byzantines recaptured the lost lands in Cilicia and Syria and repelled the threat.

Date

Mid-7th century – decade of 960's

Geographical Location

Asia Minor

1. Historical context

In 634 the Arabs invaded the Byzantine **provinces** of Palestine and Syria. By 645 they had already conquered them along with Egypt and **Mesopotamia**. Since 640 they had started **raiding** the interior of **Asia Minor**.

The reasons why the Arabs raided the Byzantine lands of Asia Minor almost annually were, apart from plundering and looting, mainly ideological and strategic. The war against the infidels was a religious duty for the Muslims, and at the same time could be exploited by Arab leaders to raise their status among the Arab population. Moreover, the continuous raids and pillage weakened the Byzantines and offered security to the Arab border regions.¹

Until the beginning of the 8th century these raids were organized by **caliphs** who aimed to weaken the opponent and capture cities and islands in order to use them as military bases for the capture of Constantinople and the Byzantine Empire in general. When the attempts of the **Arabs to capture Constantinople failed** and especially after the middle of the 9th century, the raids continued and became a provincial phenomenon along the stabilized eastern border, starting from **Cilicia** and the mountain range of Taurus, moving to Antitaurus, the west bank of Euphrates and the mountains of **Pontos**, before finally ending in the Black Sea.²

According to the Arab sources, the year was divided into three periods of raids. The winter period provided the opportunity for occasional raids only and lasted from the end of February until the beginning of March. The spring period started on 10 May and continued until 10 June. During the summer period (10 July – 8 September), raids of a bigger scale were organized.³ The mountainous terrain of the eastern border forced the invaders to use a small number of mountainous passes (**kleisoures** or clausurae, as the Byzantines named them – they were later organized into autonomous military units), most important of which were the Cilician Gates, the Adata passage and the **Melitene** passage.⁴

2. War tactics

2.1. First phase: defence

The continuous raids of the Arabs in the Byzantine lands since the 7th century had forged a grid of military organization and tactics designed to repel the invaders, especially those of smaller scale raids. These were more harmful at a regional level than the bigger scale raids, since they were more sudden and caught the Byzantines by surprise.

The defensive zone of the Byzantines started from the border, where some **kleisoures** had already been organized into military units since the 7th century. The duty of a **kleisourarches** or a **tourmarches** was to guard the border and inform his superiors should a raid occurred. Mounted patrols, guards and **kaminoviglion** were placed in neighbouring heights in order to relay information to the



strategos of the [theme](#).⁵

The duty of a *strategos*, apart from the gathering of his troops in order to repel the invaders, was to defend the civilian population. Special officials called *expelatores* were sent to every inhabited region and coordinated the evacuation of the civilian population to fortified cities or mountains. By the 10th century a [network of forts and fortresses](#) had also been organized in order to defend the civilian population.⁶

2.2. Second phase: attack

Apart from evacuating the civilian population to safe locations, the tourmarches of a region followed the invaders upon their heels awaiting reinforcements from the strategos. If he outnumbered them, he attempted to intercept their maneuvers and localize the breadth of their pillage with his cavalry. Otherwise, the Byzantine tactics consisted in the use of infantry and ambush. The Byzantines avoided deploying their forces for a battle and preferred to ambush and annihilate the invaders in mountainous passes.⁷ The Byzantine handbooks of war advised the strategoi not to confront the Arabs as soon as they invaded, but to occupy the border *kleisoures* and wait for the invaders to return. The effectiveness of this tactic was due to the fact that the Arabs had lost a number of their forces during the long campaign, as well as their mobility because of the loot and the prisoners they carried along. That way the Byzantines ambushed and defeated in 950, 958 and 960 (in the [Andrassos](#) *kleisoura*) the Arab leader Sayf ad-Dawlah, returning to Syria after successful raids in Asia Minor. This tactic, however, got the civilian population in a predicament, since the army left them undefended against the enemy raids on purpose.

The Arab raids in Asia Minor ended in the decade of the 960s, when the Byzantines under [Nikephoros Phokas](#) captured Cilicia and a part of Syria, depriving the Arabs of their military bases. What played the most important part in the Byzantine counterattack was the fact that they had successfully changed the military balance after repelling the Arab raids for three centuries.

3. Consequences

The continuous conflicts on the Arab-Byzantine border affected the military organization of the Byzantine Empire. The nature of these conflicts forced Byzantium to distribute its forces throughout all its dominion, introducing the institution of themes. Moreover, the need for larger cavalry forces in order to repel the mobile invaders increased its importance and decreased the importance of infantry. At the same time, the continuous maneuvers decreased the ability of the Byzantine army to deploy its forces.⁸

The consequences on the economy of Asia Minor were more important. Due to the continuous pillage and destruction, as well as the insecurity among the local population, the levels of agricultural production and cattle-raising in Asia Minor fell. The conflicts disrupted transit trade as well and limited it to a regional level. The movements of friendly or enemy military forces, as well as the ever-increasing tax demands of the state in order to repel the invaders, also evoked great damage to the local economies of Asia Minor.⁹

The consequences on the demography of Asia Minor were similarly important. Asia Minor changed radically from the 7th until the 10th century. The population of the regions which were not threatened by the raids, such as the Pontos and Ionia, increased greatly.¹⁰ The population of the rest of Asia Minor, even though they did not abandon their homes massively, decreased. In order to face this problem, some emperors ordered the settlement of new populations in the Byzantine lands, mainly [Armenians](#), and the removal of hostile populations from the border to other parts of the Empire.¹¹ These measures resulted in a change in the demography of the region. The most obvious change occurred in the cities. Some weakened and others disappeared completely. Most of them survived as administrative centres of limited jurisdiction. The demographic damage to the country and the weakening of the cities were the most important consequences of the Arab-Byzantine conflicts on Asia Minor.¹²



1. Canard, M., "Byzantium and the Muslim World to the Middle of the Eleventh Century", in *The Cambridge Medieval History* 4:1 (Cambridge 1966), pp. 696-697; Haldon, J.F. – Kennedy, H., "The Arab-Byzantine Frontier in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries", *Zbornik Radova Vizantoloskog Instituta* 19 (1980), pp. 114-115. Kennedy claims that the smaller scale raids during the summer might have been the armed attempts of Arab cattle-raisers of the plains of Cilicia to gain access to the mountainous pasture of the Byzantines.
2. Lilie, R.J., *Die byzantinische Reaktion auf die Ausbreitung der Araber. Studien zur Strukturwandlung des byzantinischen Staates im 7. und 8. Jhd.* (Miscellanea Byzantina Monacensia 22, Munich 1976), pp. 40-162; Canard, M., "Byzantium and the Muslim World to the Middle of the Eleventh Century", in *The Cambridge Medieval History* 4:1 (Cambridge 1966), pp. 696-698.
3. Canard, M., "Byzantium and the Muslim World to the Middle of the Eleventh Century", in *The Cambridge Medieval History* 4:1 (Cambridge 1966), p. 697; Toynbee, A.J., *Constantine Porphyrogenitus and His World* (London 1973), p. 115.
4. Ahrweiler, H., "L' Asie Mineure et les invasions arabes (VIIe-IXe siècles)", *Revue Historique* 227 (1962), pp. 8-9; Toynbee, A.J., *Constantine Porphyrogenitus and His World* (London 1973), pp. 108-109.
5. *De velitatione bellica*, Dennis, G.T. (ed.), *Three Byzantine Military Treatises* (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 25, Washington 1985), 1.4-17: "Τους των μεγάλων ακριτικών θεμάτων την πρόνοιαν αναδεχόμενους, και υπό την αυτών επικράτειαν τας κλεισούρας έχοντας, πάση μηχανή και προθέσει και αγρύπνω επιμελεία προσήκει σπουδάζειν και αγωνίζεσθαι τας των Ρωμαίων χώρας διαφυλάττειν της των πολεμίων επιδρομής ασινείς και ανεπηρέαστους, βιγλάτορας εφιστώντας ρωμαλέους και επιτηδείς, και τα οδοὺς εἰς ἄκρον επισταμένους, και εἰ μὲν ὄρη εἰσὶν υψηλά και δύσβατα διορίζοντα την πολεμίαν, εν τούτοις τας βίγλας ἰστασθαι· ἀπέχειν δε τας στάσεις δια των βιγλατόρων ἄχρι μιλίων γ' ἢ δ'. και η νίκα τους εχθρούς εξερχομένους θεάσονται, δρομαίως ἀπέρχεσθαι εἰς το ἕτερον στασιδῖον και ἀπαγγέλλειν α ε θεάσαντο, κάκείνους πάλιν προς το ἕτερον στασιδῖον σπουδῆ πολλῇ· και οὕτω καθεξῆς μηνύεσθαι τα των καβαλλαρίων στασιδία εἰς τους εφωμάλους τόπους ἰστάμενα, και δι' αυτών αναμανθάνειν τον στρατηγόν την των εθνών ἐφοδόν".
6. Foss, C. – Winfield, D., *Byzantine Fortifications: An Introduction* (Pretoria 1986), pp. 131-145.
7. See also the description of the tactics of Leo Phokas during the battle of Andrassos: Hase, C.B. (ed.), *Leonis Diaconi Caloensis historiae libri decem* (Bonn 1828), 19.12-20.7: "τούτον τον στρατηγόν Λέοντα Ρωμανός ο αυτοκράτωρ εἰς την Ἀσίαν διεβίβαστο, εἰ πως ἀλλά τας τε των βαρβάρων ἐπιδρομάς ἀναστείλειε, και τας ἀναίδην τολωμένας ἀναχαίτισοι ἐπαγωγάς, ο δε στρατηγός, ἐπεὶ της Ἑυρώπης ἀπάρας την Ἀσίαν κατείληφε, και το αὐθαδὲς και ἀτέραμνον του Χαμβδάν ἠνωτίζετο, και νεὸς και κόμας πευρπολημένας εἶρα, και φρουρίων κατασκαφάς, ἐρημίαν τε των κατοίκων και βιαίαν ἀπαγωγὴν, ἔγνω, μη ες προύπτον κίνδυνον ἐνιέναι την στρατιάν, μηδέ τω βαρβαρικῷ εἰς τουμφανές ἀντιπαράταττεσθαι πλήθει, πολλὰς μὲν ἐπανηρημένω νίκας, ταις δε παρ' ἐλπίδα γαυριώντι τύχαις, μυριανθρώπους τε και ες το ακριβές καθωπλισμένας ἐπιφερομένω τας φάλαγγας· και μάλιστα ευαρίθμητον τε την στρατιάν και οὐκ ἀξιόχρεων αὐτὸς ἐπαγόμενος, κατεπτηχί αν τε τας των Ἀγαρηνών ἐνημερίας και τα καθ' ἐκάστην τρόποια· κατελιφέναι δε μάλλον τα επικαιρότατα και κρημνώδη των χώρων και προλοχίζειν κατὰ ταῦτα, και τας διεξόδους ὑποτηρεῖν· ὑπαντιάζειν τε τους βαρβάρους εν τοις ἐπισφαλέσι και ἀμφιταλάντοις των ἀταρπιτών, και καρτερῶς ἀγωνίζεσθαι, οπήνικα και διοδεύοιεν".
8. Haldon, J.F., *Warfare, State and Society in the Byzantine World 565-1204* (London 1999), pp. 198-199.
9. Ahrweiler, H., "L' Asie Mineure et les invasions arabes (VIIe-IXe siècles)", *Revue Historique* 227 (1962), pp. 13-15; Toynbee, A.J., *Constantine Porphyrogenitus and His World* (London 1973), p. 118.
10. For its most part, the Pontos did not suffer from the Arab raids because it was protected by the pontic mountain range, which made it inaccessible from the South. Ionia was situated far from the main routes of the Arab raids and the invaders rarely managed to advance that far from the border.
11. The Paulicians and the Armenians constitute a characteristic example of the movement of populations to and from the border. Emperor Constantine V (741-775) removed the Paulicians from Melitene and Germanikeia to Thrace. The Armenians, on the other hand, had settled in Cilicia and Mesopotamia since the end of the 9th century. The so called "αρμενικά θέματα" (Armenian themes) were established and the Armenians remained in Cilicia until the 13th century. The presence of the Paulicians in Thrace resulted in the birth of the Bogomile cult in Bulgaria and Serbia
12. Ahrweiler, H., "L' Asie Mineure et les invasions arabes (VIIe-IXe siècles)", *Revue Historique* 227 (1962), pp. 16-22, 28-32.

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	Haldon J.F., Kennedy H. , "The Arab-Byzantine Frontier in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries", <i>Zbornik Radova Vizantoloskog Instituta</i> , 19, 1980, 79-116
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	Warfare, State and Society in the Byzantine World, 565-1204 http://books.google.gr/books?id=-R0G0Enf58AC&printsec=frontcover&hl=en&source=gbs_summary_r&cad=0#PPP1,M1

Glossary :

	caliph The supreme religious and political authority of Muslims, considered successor of Muhammad (Arabic: khalifa = deputy). He was the head of the Caliphate, the religious state of the Arabs.
	expelator



A dignitary of the Byzantine thematic administration in Asia Minor. The expelator was responsible for quickly evacuating civilians in times of raids and securely lead them to safe locations, such as fortresses or mountains.

kaminoviglion

A watch-tower where fire or smoke signals were used to provide early warning on incoming raids.

kleisoura

(lat. clausura) Byzantine military term. Kleisoura initially designated a mountain passage; from the 7th c. onwards it also meant the military unit responsible for the defence of the passage. The term is also used for an administrative division (smaller than the theme). Its base was in a rough site close to the border, and its administration and economy was not necessarily the jurisdiction of the strategos of the theme. It is considered as the evolution of *tourma*.

kleisourarch

(and *kleisouriarch*) a Byzantine term denoting the commander of a *kleisoura* or a *kleisarchy*. These were military units responsible for the defence of mountain passes; the term is also used to desifnate an administrative unit smaller than the theme.

province

An administrative unit in the Roman and Byzantine Empire. Established in the Roman Empire it is radically reformed by Diocletian, who abolishes the distinction between imperial and senatorial provinces and increases their number by dividing large provinces into smaller ones. Moreover, Diocletian divided the State into 12 dioceses, which included groups of provinces. Administrative reformations in the Byzantine era further increased the number of provinces while reducing their size. Provinces survived until the emrgence of the administrative system of the themes, around 7th c. However the term appears on commerciarri seals until the 9th c., and in written sources of the 11th-12th c. as a synonym of the theme.

strategos ("general")

During the Roman period his duties were mainly political. Office of the Byzantine state's provincial administration. At first the title was given to the military and political administrator of the themes, namely of the big geographic and administrative unities of the Byzantine empire. Gradually the title lost its power and, already in the 11th century, strategoi were turned to simple commanders of military units, responsible for the defence of a region.

tourmarch

Civilian and military commander of a *tourma*, subdivision of a *theme*.

Sources

De Boor, C. (ed.), *Theophanis Chronographia* (Leipzig 1883), pp. 348.10-11, 26-27, 372.3-4, 411.14-26, 452.4-17, 456.2-23, 463.15-21.

Hase, C.B. (ed.), *Leonis Diaconi Caloensis historiae libri decem* (Bonn 1828), p. 19.12-20.7.

De velitatione bellica, Dennis, G.T. (ed.), *Three Byzantine Military Treatises* (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 25, Washington 1985), pp. 1.4-17, 2.3-10, 3.4-11, 4.5-9, 7.4-10, 23.4-16.

Quotations

Byzantine historian Theophanes on Arab raids in Byzantine territories:

a. Τούτω τῷ ἔτει ἐπεστράτευσαν οἱ Ἄραβες κατὰ Ῥωμανίας καὶ πολλοὺς ἠχμαλώτευσαν καὶ τόπους πλείστους ἠρήμωσαν.

De Boor, C. (ed.), *Theophanis Chronographia* (Leipzig 1883), p. 348.10-11.

b. Τούτω τῷ ἔτει ἐπεστράτευσεν πάλιν Βουσοῦρ τὴν Ῥωμανίαν καὶ ἐλυμήνατο τὰ μέρη Ἐξαπόλεως, καὶ Φαδαλᾶς ἐκεῖ ἐχειμάσεν.

De Boor, C. (ed.), *Theophanis Chronographia* (Leipzig 1883), p. 348.26-27.

c. Τούτω τῷ ἔτει ἐπεστράτευσεν Ἀβδελᾶς Ῥωμανίαν, καὶ πολιορκήσας Τάραντον καὶ μηδὲν ἀνύσας ὑπέστρεψε καὶ ᾠκοδόμησε τὴν Μομφουεσιάν καὶ ἔθετο ἐν αὐτῇ φύλακας.

De Boor, C. (ed.), *Theophanis Chronographia* (Leipzig 1883), p. 372.3-4.

**Ο χρονογράφος Θεοφάνης περιγράφει τη βυζαντινή αντίδραση στις αραβικές επιδρομές (μέσα 8ου αι.):**

Τούτω τῷ ἔτει μηνὶ Μαΐῳ ἰνδικτιώνος ἡ' ἐπεστράτευσεν Σουλεϊμάν τὴν Ῥωμανίαν ἐν μυριάσιν θ', στρατηγούς τε δ', ὧν Γάμερ ἠγεῖτο λοχίζων ἐν μυρίοις μονοζώνοις τὰ τῆς Ἀσιάτιδος γῆς μέρη, καὶ τούτου ἐχόμενοι Μελίχ καὶ Βατάλ ἐν δισμυριοῖς ἵππευσι περὶ τὸν Ἀκροῖνόν· καὶ μετὰ τούτους Σουλεϊμάν ἐν ἑξακισμυριοῖς περὶ τὴν τῶν Καππαδόκων Ὑάνων. ἀλλ' οἱ μὲν κατὰ τὴν Ἀσίαν καὶ Καππαδοκίαν πολλὴν ἄλωσιν ἀνδρῶν καὶ γυναικῶν καὶ κτηνῶν ποιησάμενοι ἀβλαβεῖς ἀνέστρεψαν, οἱ δὲ περὶ τὸν Μελίχ καὶ Βατάλ ἐν τῷ Ἀκροῖνῳ καταπολεμηθέντες ὑπὸ Λέοντος καὶ Κωνσταντίνου ἠττήθησαν. καὶ οἱ μὲν πλείους ὄπλοις ὤλοντο σὺν τοῖς δυσὶν ἄρχουσιν· ὀκτακόσιοι δὲ που μαχίται ἐξ αὐτῶν πρὸς ἑξ χιλιάδας ἐνστάτες εἰς Σύναδα καταφεύγουσι καὶ διασωθέντες συνήφθησαν τῷ Σουλεϊμάν καὶ ἀνέκαμψαν εἰς Συρίαν.

De Boor, C. (ed.), *Theophanis Chronographia* (Leipzig 1883), p. 411.14-26.

Byzantine tactics against Arab raids, as described by Theophanes:

Τούτω τῷ ἔτει θυμωθεὶς ὁ τῶν Ἀράβων ἀρχηγὸς Μαδὶ πέμπει τὸν Ἄσαν μετὰ δυνάμειος πολλῆς Μαυροφόρων τε καὶ τῶν τῆς Συρίας καὶ Μεσοποταμίας, καὶ κατῆλθεν ἕως τοῦ Δορυλαίου. ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς διετάξατο τοῖς στρατηγούσι μὴ πολεμῆσαι αὐτοὺς δημόσιον πόλεμον, ἀλλ' ἀσφαλίσασθαι τὰ κάστρα καὶ λαὸν εἰσενεγκεῖν πρὸς παραφυλακὴν αὐτῶν, ἀπολύσας καὶ ἀρχοντας μεγάλους κατὰ κάστρον, αὐτοὺς δὲ ἐπᾶραι ἐπιλέκτους στρατιώτας ἀνὰ τριῶν χιλιάδων καὶ παρακολουθεῖν αὐτοῖς πρὸς τὸ μὴ σκορπίσαι κούρσα καὶ προκαίειν πυρὶ τὰς τε νομάς τῶν ἀλόγων, καὶ εἴ που εὐρίσκοιτο δαπάνη. καθεσθέντων δὲ αὐτῶν ἐν τῷ Δορυλαίῳ ἡμέρας ιε' καὶ λειφθέντων αὐτῶν τὰ πρὸς τὴν χρεῖαν, ἐπτώχευσαν τὰ ἄλογα αὐτῶν· καὶ πολλὴ ἄλωσις ἐγένετο εἰς αὐτά. καὶ ὑποστρέφοντες παρεκάθισαν τὸ Ἀμῶριν ἡμέραν μίαν, καὶ ἰδόντες αὐτὸ ὠχυρωμένον καὶ πολλὴν ἐξόπλιον ἔχον ὑπέστρεψαν μὴδὲν ἀνύσαντες.

De Boor, C. (ed.), *Theophanis Chronographia* (Leipzig 1883), p. 452.4-17.

An account of the Arab campaign of 782 and the Byzantine reprisals in Theophanes's work:

τοῦ δὲ λαοῦ τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἀσχολουμένου ἐν τούτοις, ἐξέρχεται Ἀαράων, υἱὸς Μαδὶ, μετὰ δυνάμειος καὶ ἐξοπλίσεως ὑπερβαλλούσης ἀπὸ τε Μαυροφόρων καὶ πάσης Συρίας καὶ Μεσοποταμίας καὶ τῆς ἐρήμου, καὶ ἔρχεται ἕως Χρυσόπολεως, καταλιπὼν τὸν Βούνουσον πολιορκεῖν τὴν Νακώλειαν καὶ φυλάττειν τὰ νῶτα αὐτοῦ. ἀπέστειλε δὲ καὶ τὸν Βουρνηχὲ εἰς Ἀσίαν μετὰ λ' χιλιάδων, ὅς καὶ πολεμήσας τὸν Λαχανοδράκοντα σὺν τῷ θέματι τῶν Θρακησίων ἐν τόπῳ λεγομένῳ Δαρηνῳ, καὶ αὐτῶν λ' χιλιάδων ὄντων ιε' χιλιάδας ἀπέκτεινεν. ἡ δὲ βασίλισσα πέμψασα Ἀντώνιον τὸν δομῆστικόν σὺν τοῖς τάγμασιν ἐκράτησεν τὴν Βανὴν καὶ ἀπέκλεισεν αὐτοὺς. προσέφυγε δὲ αὐτοῖς Τατζάτιος, ὁ τῶν Βουκελλαρίων στρατηγός, μίσει τῷ πρὸς Σταυράκιον, τὸν πατρίκιον καὶ λογοθέτην τοῦ δρόμου, τὸν εὐνοῦχον, πρωτεύοντα πάντων τῶν τηλικαῦτα ὄντων καὶ τὰ πάντα διοικοῦντα. καὶ δούς αὐτοῖς βουλὴν, ἠτήσαντο εἰρήνην. ἐξεληθόντων δὲ ἐπὶ τούτῳ Σταυρακίου καὶ Πέτρου μαγίστρου καὶ Ἀντωνίου δομῆστικου, οὐκ ἠκριβολογήσαντο λόγον λαβεῖν καὶ τέκνα τῶν πρωτεύοντων, ἀλλὰ ἀσκόπως ἐξεληθόντες ἐκρατήθησαν ὑπ' αὐτῶν καὶ ἐπεδήθησαν, καὶ ἐβιάσθησαν ἀμφοτέρω τὰ μέρη τοῦ ποιῆσαι εἰρήνην· καὶ ἐδωρήσαντο ἀλλήλοις ἢ τε Αὐγούστα καὶ ὁ Ἀαράων ξένια πολλά, στοιχήσαντες καὶ <φόρους> κατὰ καιρὸν τελεῖν αὐτοῖς· καὶ γενομένης εἰρήνης ἀνεχώρησαν ἀφήσαντες καὶ τὸ κάστρον Νακωλείας. ἐπῆρε δὲ καὶ ὁ Τατζάτης τὴν γυναῖκα ἑαυτοῦ καὶ πᾶσαν ὑπόστασιν.

De Boor, C. (ed.), *Theophanis Chronographia* (Leipzig 1883), p. 456.2-23.

An Arab raid in 788, according to Theophanes:

Τούτω τῷ ἔτει ἐξῆλθεν κούρσον τῶν Ἀράβων κατὰ Ῥωμανίας μηνὶ Σεπτεμβρίῳ, καὶ εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸ τῶν ἀνατολικῶν θέμα, εἰς τόπον λεγόμενον Κοπιδνάδον. καὶ ἐπισυναχθέντες οἱ τῶν Ῥωμαίων στρατηγοὶ ἐπολέμησαν μετ' αὐτῶν, καὶ ἠττήθησαν, καὶ ἀπέθανον πολλοί, καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἐξορισθέντων δὲ σχολαρίων οὐκ ὀλίγοι. ἔπεσε δὲ καὶ Διογένης, ὁ τῶν ἀνατολικῶν τουρμαρχῆς ἱκανός, καὶ τοῦ Ὀψικίου ἄρχοντας.

De Boor, C. (ed.), *Theophanis Chronographia* (Leipzig 1883), p. 463.15-21.

Leo Deacon describes Leo Phokas's strategy before the battle of Andrassos (960):



τοῦτον τὸν στρατηγὸν Λέοντα Ῥωμανὸς ὁ αὐτοκράτωρ εἰς τὴν Ἀσίαν διεβίβασατο, εἴ πως ἀλλὰ τὰς τε τῶν βαρβάρων ἐπιδρομὰς ἀναστείλειε, καὶ τὰς ἀναίδην τολμωμένας ἀναχαιτίσει ἐπαγωγὰς. ὁ δὲ στρατηγὸς, ἐπεὶ τῆς Εὐρώπης ἀπάρας τὴν Ἀσίαν κατείληφε, καὶ τὸ αὐθαδὲς καὶ ἀτέρραμον τοῦ Χαμβδᾶν ἠνωτίζετο, καὶ νεῶς καὶ κώμας πεπτυρπολημένας ἑώρα, καὶ φρουρίων κατασκαφὰς, ἐρημίαν τε τῶν κατοίκων καὶ βιαιὰν ἀπαγωγὴν, ἔγνω, μὴ ἔς προὔπτον κίνδυνον ἐνέιναι τὴν στρατιάν, μηδὲ τῶ βαρβαρικῶ εἰς τοῦμφανὲς ἀντιπαρατάττεσθαι πλήθει, πολλὰς μὲν ἐπανηρημένῳ νίκας, ταῖς δὲ παρ' ἐλπίδα γαυριῶντι τύχαις, μυριανθρώπους τε καὶ ἔς τὸ ἀκριβὲς καθωπλισμένας ἐπιφερομένην τὰς φάλαγγας· καὶ μάλιστα εὐαρίθμητόν τε τὴν στρατιάν καὶ οὐκ ἀξιοχρεῶν αὐτὸς ἐπαγόμενος, κατεπτηχιῶν τε τὰς τῶν Ἀγαρηνῶν εὐημερίας καὶ τὰ καθ' ἑκάστην τρόποια· κατελιφέναι δὲ μᾶλλον τὰ ἐπικαιρότατα καὶ κρημνώδη τῶν χώρων καὶ προλοχίζειν κατὰ ταῦτα, καὶ τὰς διεξόδους ὑποτηρεῖν· ὑπαντιάζειν τε τοῖς βαρβάροις ἐν τοῖς ἐπισφαλέσι καὶ ἀμφιταλάντοις τῶν ἀταρπιτῶν, καὶ καρτερώς ἀγωνίζεσθαι, ὀπηνίκα καὶ διοδεύειν.

Hase, C.B. (ed.), *Leonis Diaconi Caloensis historiae libri decem* (Bonn 1828), pp. 19.12-20.7.

Byzantine war tactics described in the 10th-C. Byzantine military manual *De velitatione bellica*:

a. Byzantine scouting networks in Arab borderland:

Τοὺς τῶν μεγάλων ἀκριτικῶν θεμάτων τὴν πρόνοιαν ἀναδεχομένους, καὶ ὑπὸ τὴν αὐτῶν ἐπικράτειαν τὰς κλεισούρας ἔχοντας, πάση μηχανῇ καὶ προθέσει καὶ ἀγρύπνῳ ἐπιμελείᾳ προσήκει σπουδάζειν καὶ ἀγωνίζεσθαι τὰς τῶν Ῥωμαίων χώρας διαφυλάττειν τῆς τῶν πολεμίων ἐπιδρομῆς ἀσινεῖς καὶ ἀνεπηρεάστους, βιγλάτορας ἐφιστώντας ῥωμαλέους καὶ ἐπιτηδεῖους, καὶ τὰς ὁδοὺς εἰς ἄκρον ἐπισταμένους. καὶ εἰ μὲν ὄρη εἰσὶν ὑψηλὰ καὶ δύσβατα διορίζοντα τὴν πολεμίαν, ἐν τούτοις τὰς βίγλας ἴστασθαι ἀπέχγειν δὲ τὰς στάσεις διὰ τῶν βιγλατόρων ἄχρι μιλίων γ' ἢ δ'. καὶ ἤνικα τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ἐξερχομένους θεάσονται, δρομαίως ἀπέρχεσθαι εἰς τὸ ἕτερον στασίδιον καὶ ἀπαγγέλλειν ἃ ἐθεάσαντο, κἀκεῖνους πάλιν πρὸς τὸ ἕτερον στασίδιον σπουδῇ πολλῇ· καὶ οὕτω καθεξῆς μνηύεσθαι τὰ τῶν καβαλλαρίων στασίδια εἰς τοὺς ἐφωμάλους τόπους ἰστάμενα, καὶ δι' αὐτῶν ἀναμανθάνειν τὸν στρατηγὸν τὴν τῶν ἔθνων ἔφοδον.

De velitatione bellica, Dennis, G.T. (ed.), *Three Byzantine Military Treatises* (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 25, Washington 1985), p. 1.4-17.

b. The use of smoke signals by the Byzantines:

Ἀναγκαῖα δὲ ἢ τῶν καμινοβιγλατόρων ὑπάρχει ὠφέλεια. καὶ χρὴ τὸν στρατηγὸν καὶ τούτων πολλὴν ποιῆσθαι τὴν ἐπιμελίαν, καὶ ἐν ἐπιτηδεῖσι τόποις ἐφιστᾶν τὰ καμινοβίγλια· ὅπως, ἤνικα κινήσις τῶν ἐχθρῶν γένηται, καὶ οἱ βιγλάτορες ταύτης αἰσθῶνται διὰ τῶν καμινοβίγλων, καὶ ὁ στρατηγὸς τὴν ἐξέλευσιν τῶν ἐχθρῶν προγινώσκει, καὶ ποῖαν ὁδὸν ἐξελεῖν μέλλωσι, καὶ αἱ χώραι δι' αὐτῶν τε καὶ τῶν ἐκσπηλατόρων καταμνησόμεναι, τοῖς ὀχυρώμασι καταφεύγωσι καὶ τὰ τούτων θρέμματα.

De velitatione bellica, Dennis, G.T. (ed.), *Three Byzantine Military Treatises* (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 25, Washington 1985), p. 2.3-10.

c. Ways of confronting the Arab raids:

Ἀναδιδασκόμενος δὲ ὁ στρατηγὸς τὰς τῶν ἐχθρῶν κινήσεις, ὀφείλει καὶ αὐτὸς τὸν ἴδιον λαὸν ἐπισυνάγειν καὶ ἐξοπλίζειν, καὶ πρὸς τὰς ἄκρας παραγίνεσθαι, καὶ τὸ πεζικὸν ἅπαν ἐπισυνάγειν πρὸς τὴν ὁδὸν, καθ' ἣν ὀρμήσουσιν οἱ πολέμοι ἐξελεῖν. καὶ εἰ μὲν μετ' ὀλίγης δυνάμεως τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ἐξέρχεσθαι ἀναμάθη, σπευσάτω προσυπαντήσαι αὐτοῖς, καὶ καταπολεμησάμενοι μετὰ τοῦ πεζικοῦ λαοῦ καὶ τῶν ἰππέων, εἴ γε τὸ τῶν πεζῶν στρατεύμα συναγαγεῖν καὶ συστήσαι δεδύνηται.

De velitatione bellica, Dennis, G.T. (ed.), *Three Byzantine Military Treatises* (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 25, Washington 1985), p. 3.4-11.

d. Tactics used by the Byzantines along the eastern border:

Χρὴ δὲ καὶ τοῦτο διὰ σκοποῦ καὶ μελέτης ἔχειν τὸν στρατηγὸν, καὶ πᾶσαν σπουδὴν τίθεσθαι, λάθρα καὶ ἀδοκῆτως, εἰ οἷόν τε, τὰς



τῶν ἐχθρῶν ἐπιθέσεις ποιῆσθαι. τοῦ γὰρ τοιοῦτου ἐπιτηδύματος τυγχάνων ὁ στρατηγὸς καὶ μετ' ὀλιγοστοῦ λαοῦ πολλοὺς τῶν πολεμίων κατατροπώσεται.

De velitatione bellica, Dennis, G.T. (ed.), *Three Byzantine Military Treatises* (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 25, Washington 1985), p. 4.5-9.

e. How the Arab raids were organized:

Παρασκευὴν δὲ καὶ κίνησιν μεγάλου φοσσάτου ἀκούων, ἐν ᾧ καιρῷ μάλιστα εἴωθει τὰ μεγάλα συναθροίζεσθαι φοσσάτα, ἤγουν τῷ Αὐγούστῳ μηνί. ἐν γὰρ τῷ τοιοῦτῳ καιρῷ ἀπὸ τε Αἰγύπτου, Παλαιστίνης τε καὶ Φοινίκης, καὶ τῆς Κοίλης Συρίας, πλήθη ἀνήρχοντο ἐν Κιλικίᾳ, καὶ ἐν ταῖς χώραις Ἀντιοχείας, τοῦ Χάλεπε, καὶ προσλαμβάνοντες καὶ Ἄραβες τῷ Σεπτεμβρίῳ μηνί τὴν κατὰ Ῥωμαίων ἐποιούντο ἐξέλευσιν.

De velitatione bellica, Dennis, G.T. (ed.), *Three Byzantine Military Treatises* (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 25, Washington 1985), p. 7.4-10.

f. The passages through the borders used by the Arab raiders:

Ὑποστρεφόντων δὲ τῶν πολεμίων καὶ τὴν ἰδίαν ἐπειγομένων καταλήψεσθαι, δέον τὰς πεζικὰς δυνάμεις πρὸς τὰς κλεισοῦρας προαποστεῖλαι, καὶ τὰς ὁδοὺς, δι' ὧν μέλλουσι διελθεῖν, κατασχεῖν. δι' οἷας γὰρ ὁδοῦ διελθεῖν βουληθῶσιν, ἀπὸ τε τῶν ἐν Σελευκείᾳ κλεισουρῶν καὶ τοῦ τῶν Ἀνατολικῶν θέματος, καθὰ τὰ Ταυρικὰ ὄρη τὴν τε Κιλικίαν διορίζουσι, Καππαδοκίαν τε καὶ Λυκαντόν· πρὸς τούτοις καὶ τὰ παρακείμενα Γερμανικεῖαν τε καὶ Ἀδατάν, καὶ τὸ Καησούν καὶ τοῦ Δανουθᾶ, Μελιτήνην τε καὶ τὰ Καλούδια· καὶ τὰ πέραθεν τοῦ Εὐφράτου ποταμοῦ διορίζοντα τὴν τε τοῦ Χανζῆτι λεγομένην χώραν καὶ τὴν πολεμίαν ἄχρι Ῥωμανουπόλεως. ἐν ὅλοις τοῖς τοιοῦτοις θέμασι, δι' οἷας ἂν ὁδοῦ ὑποστρέφοντες διελθεῖν πρὸς τὴν ἰδίαν βουληθῶσιν, ἀδιστακτικῶς τῇ τοῦ Θεοῦ βοηθείᾳ τὸν κατ' αὐτῶν ἐπείχθητι διαθέσθαι πόλεμον, καὶ τὴν νικῶσαν εὐρήσεις τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι.

De velitatione bellica, Dennis, G.T. (ed.), *Three Byzantine Military Treatises* (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 25, Washington 1985), p. 23.4-16.

Chronological Table

Middle of the 7th century: Outbreak of Arab raids in Asia Minor

End of the 7th century: Stabilization of the eastern border

Middle of the 9th century: End of larger-scale raids, organized by the central power. Smaller-scale raids at a regional level

Decade of 960s: The Byzantines take the offensive in Cilicia and Syria. End of Arab raids