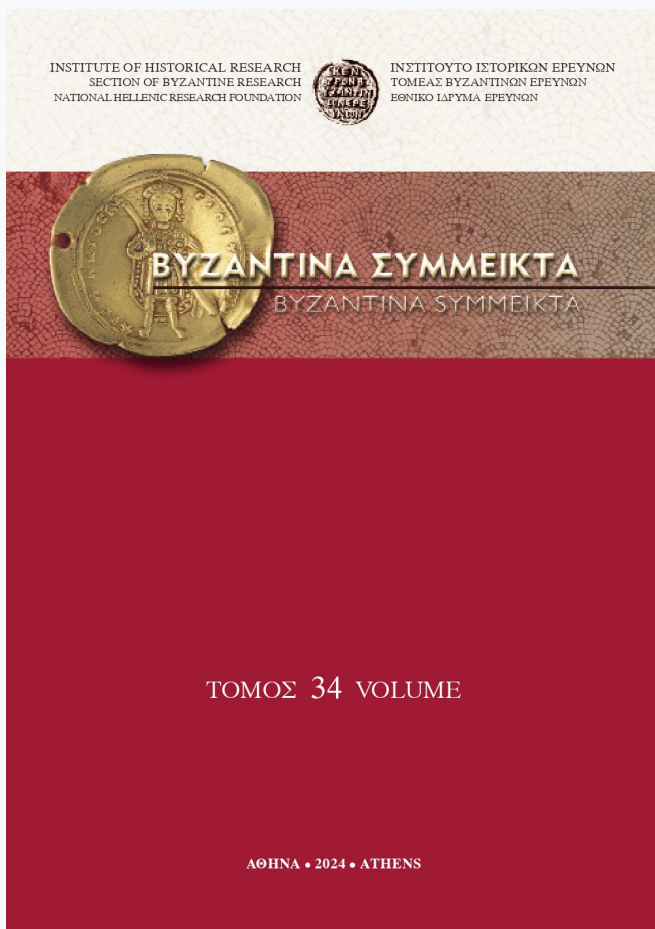


## Byzantina Symmeikta

Vol 34 (2024)

BYZANTINA SYMMEIKTA 34



### The Last Byzantine Military Manuscript: Istanbul TSMK G.İ. 36 and the Taktika of Nikephoros Ouranos

*Philip RANCE*

doi: [10.12681/byzsym.37501](https://doi.org/10.12681/byzsym.37501)

Copyright © 2024, Philip RANCE



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

#### To cite this article:

RANCE, P. (2024). The Last Byzantine Military Manuscript: Istanbul TSMK G.İ. 36 and the Taktika of Nikephoros Ouranos. *Byzantina Symmeikta*, 34, 251–291. <https://doi.org/10.12681/byzsym.37501>

INSTITUTE OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH  
SECTION OF BYZANTINE RESEARCH  
NATIONAL HELLENIC RESEARCH FOUNDATION



ΙΝΣΤΙΤΟΥΤΟ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΚΩΝ ΕΡΕΥΝΩΝ  
ΤΟΜΕΑΣ ΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΝΩΝ ΕΡΕΥΝΩΝ  
ΕΘΝΙΚΟ ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΕΡΕΥΝΩΝ



# ΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΝΑ ΣΥΜΜΕΙΚΤΑ

BYZANTINA SYMMEIKTA

ΤΟΜΟΣ 34 VOLUME

PHILIP RANCE

THE LAST BYZANTINE MILITARY MANUSCRIPT:  
ISTANBUL, TSMK, G.İ. 36 AND THE *TAKTIKA* OF NIKEPHOROS OURANOS

ΑΘΗΝΑ • 2024 • ATHENS

PHILIP RANCE

THE LAST BYZANTINE MILITARY MANUSCRIPT:  
ISTANBUL, TSMK, G.İ. 36 AND THE *TAKTIKA* OF NIKEPHOROS OURANOS\*

In the early 1430s, an unidentified scribe in Constantinople was commissioned to produce a copy of a military treatise. By this date, the Byzantine realm, effectively a city state, with scattered appanage territories and insular outposts, was capable of engaging in only small-scale, localised conflicts. In 1434, the imperial regime in Constantinople even had to wage war across the Golden Horn with the Genoese colony in the suburb of Galata<sup>1</sup>. The text copied by the scribe belonged to an altogether different era: the *Taktika* of Nikephoros Ouranos, a vast compendium of military science, compiled c.1000 by an eminent general, courtier and diplomat, at a time when Byzantine power reached its apogee as an intercontinental empire. The last and by far the longest representative of a florescence of military writing in the late ninth and tenth centuries, Ouranos' *Taktika* selectively incorporates and adapts numerous earlier works of Greek, Roman and

---

\* Research for this paper was supported by a Senior Fellowship at ANAMED, Koç University, Istanbul (2013-14). I am grateful to Zeynep Çelik Atbaş and Ramazan Aktemur for facilitating my research in the Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi in 2013-14 and 2015. For subsequent assistance and advice I thank Michalis Lychounas (Ephorate of Antiquities, Kavala), Elissaveta Moussakova (Institute of Art Studies, Sofia), Hedda Reindl-Kiel (Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn) and Hans Michael Schellenberg (Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf).

1. P. SCHREINER, *Venezianer und Genuesen während der ersten Hälfte des 15. Jahrhunderts in Konstantinopel (1432-1434)*, *Studi Veneziani* 12 (1970), 357-68, at 366-369; N. NECİPOĞLU, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins: Politics and Society in the Late Empire*, Cambridge 2009, 190-191.

Byzantine tactical literature and thereby offers an updated digest of a self-conscious literary tradition stretching back to the fourth century BC<sup>2</sup>. While few new military compositions can be traced in the following four and a half centuries, evidence for book production and ownership in this period points to continuing interest in works of this type, including – and perhaps especially – Ouranos’ *Taktika*, despite the radically altered geostrategic circumstances<sup>3</sup>. In particular, surviving specimens show that several other ancient and Byzantine military texts were being copied in Constantinople during the 1410s-1420s<sup>4</sup>. Moreover, the commander of those operations against the Genoese in 1434, John Laskaris Leontares (c.1380s-1437), was himself the current owner of the most famous collection of Greek, Roman

---

2. The starting point of inquiry remains A. DAIN, *La «Tactique» de Nicéphore Ouranos*, Paris 1937; with refinements and additional observations in A. DAIN, *Histoire du texte d’Élien le Tacticien des origines à la fin du Moyen Âge*, Paris 1946, 147-151; E. McGEER, Tradition and Reality in the *Taktika* of Nikephoros Ouranos, *DOP* 45 (1991), 129-140; ID., *Sowing the Dragon’s Teeth: Byzantine Warfare in the Tenth Century*, Washington DC 1995, esp. 79-86; F. TROMBLEY, The *Taktika* of Nikephoros Ouranos and Military Encyclopaedism, in: *Pre-modern Encyclopaedic Texts (Proceedings of the Second COMERS Congress, Groningen, 1-4 July 1996)*, ed. P. BINKLEY, Leiden 1997, 261-274 (to be read with some caution); L. MECCELLA, Die Überlieferung der *Kestoi* des Julius Africanus in den byzantinischen Textsammlungen zur Militärtechnik, in: *Die Kestoi des Julius Africanus und ihre Überlieferung*, ed. M. WALLRAFF – L. MECCELLA (TU 165), Berlin/New York 2009, 85-144, at 101-107; P. RANCE, The Reception of Aineias’ *Poliorketika* in Byzantine Military Literature, in: *Brill’s Companion to Aineias Tacticus*, ed. M. PRETZLER – N. BARLEY, Leiden/Boston 2017, 290-374, at 338-356; A. M. TARAGNA, Niceforo Urano (*Tact.* 119) metafrasta di Siriano Magistro. Edizione sinottica e traduzione delle norme per la guerra navale, *Medioevo greco* 17 (2017) 211-239; P. RANCE, Late Byzantine Elites and Military Literature: Authors, Readers and Manuscripts (11th-15th Centuries), in: *A Military History of the Mediterranean Sea – Aspects of War, Diplomacy and Military Elites*, ed. G. THEOTOKIS – A. YILDIZ, Leiden/Boston 2018, 255-286, at 275-277.

3. RANCE, Late Byzantine Elites, 255-286.

4. E.g. Istanbul, TSMK, G.İ. 19, copied c. 1410-20, comprises a collection of diverse “scientific” works that include the “interpolated recension” of Aelian’s *Taktikē theoria* (116<sup>v</sup>-152<sup>r</sup>), the so-called *Excerptum* of Leo’s *Taktika* (153<sup>v</sup>-155<sup>v</sup>) and (anonymously) Psellos’ *Περὶ πολεμικῆς συντάξεως* (330<sup>v</sup>-332<sup>v</sup>). See DAIN, *Histoire*, 329-342; ID., Inventaire raisonné des cents manuscrits des «Constitutions tactiques» de Léon VI le Sage, *Scriptorium* 1 (1946/47), 33-49, at 48 (misdated “4e quart du XIVE s.”); RANCE, Late Byzantine Elites, 260-262, 273.

and Byzantine military treatises, the tenth-century codex *Laurentianus Plut.* 55.4<sup>5</sup>.

While nearly all Byzantine military manuscripts – broadly defined as those wholly or partly containing military-scientific texts – later entered western European collections, this one stayed in Constantinople. Known in older studies as *codex Constantinopolitanus* (or *Seragliensis*) *graecus* 36, it is now held in the Topkapı Palace Museum Library (Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi: TSMK), with the classmark G.İ. (Gayri İslami Eserler/ Non-Islamic Works) 36. In several respects, it can be deemed “the last” of its kind. Most simply, it is the last extant copy of any Greek military text executed before 1453 and provides the latest evidence for Byzantine book production in this field of knowledge<sup>6</sup>. It was also the last such manuscript to become available to modern scholarship: although discovered in the Topkapı Palace in 1887, the vicissitudes of G.İ. 36 and its only copy (Freiburg, UB, Hs. 706) continued to hinder access for another half-century. Eventually, around the mid-1930s, G.İ. 36 was recognised as the last piece of a centuries-old puzzle surrounding Ouranos’ *Taktika*. Much of this treatise had been available to western European scholars since the later sixteenth century through an alternative manuscript tradition, but, with a mutilated beginning, a defective text and a spurious imperial ascription, it long remained one of the most poorly understood works of this genre. It was not until Alphonse Dain’s monograph in 1937 that its authorship, period, scope, structure and sources were determined, and serious study could begin. Of the three primary manuscripts, none containing all 178 chapters, G.İ. 36 was crucial to Dain’s textual reconstruction as it alone transmits the correct author and the *pinax* or table of contents, whereby the original contents and arrangement of the *Taktika* can be established and lacunae identified. G.İ. 36 is also a superior and sometimes unique witness to the first

---

5. See, with bibliography, RANCE, Reception, 302-305; ID., Late Byzantine Elites, 278; ID., Finding the Right Words: a Letter to the Emperor (*Laur. Plut.* 55.4, f. 197<sup>v</sup>) – Books, Education and Rhetoric in a Late Byzantine Household, *Παρεκβολαί/Parekbolai* 12 (2022), 27-56, at 28-33, 53-54; ID., A Late Byzantine Book Inventory in Sofia, *Dujčev gr.* 253 (olim *Kosinitsa* 265) – a monastic or private Library?, *BZ* 115.3 (2022), 977-1029, at 992-995, 1009-1018.

6. See the list of Late Byzantine military manuscripts in RANCE, Late Byzantine Elites, 272-273.

third of the treatise. However, Dain never consulted G.Ī. 36 in person, but knew its content only “third-hand” via photographs of a nineteenth-century transcript. In the absence of subsequent scholarly interest, it is today the least studied Byzantine military manuscript. Within the context of a long-term project to produce a complete critical edition of Ouranos’ *Taktika*, the following paper examines the discovery and early investigations of G.Ī. 36, provides a first codicological description, and assesses its textual affinities and editorial significance. In addition, this study offers an opportunity to correct persistent errors, regarding both G.Ī. 36 and Ouranos’ *Taktika*, and to clarify the present state of research and publication, especially given a tendency in some recent publications to rehearse outdated information from older literature<sup>7</sup>.

### *The Discovery of “Number 36” and Early Scholarship*

It is not known how or exactly when G.Ī. 36 came to be in the Topkapı Palace, though previous inquiries assign it to a collection of Greek codices in the private or household library assembled for Mehmed II Fatih (r. 1451-81), following the capture of Constantinople, and reflecting his tastes in historical, philosophical and scientific literature. The nucleus of this collection comprises Greek manuscripts copied specifically for Mehmed after 1453, mostly in a broadly conceived palace “scriptorium”, but also, it seems, by commercial ateliers. In contrast, G.Ī. 36 is one of several codices that predate the Conquest and must have entered the sultan’s possession from a pre-existing stock of books that survived random destruction and large-scale plundering. In any case, its military content is consistent with Mehmed’s recorded interests and activities, and the volume was presumably considered of potential value in this intellectual sphere<sup>8</sup>.

---

7. E.g. remarks of P. RANCE, Review of *Greek and Roman Military Manuals. Genre and History*, ed. J. T. CHLUP – C. WHATELY, London/New York 2020, *Byzantine Review* 3 (2021), 267-287, at 282.

8. Mehmed’s library: J. RABY, Mehmed the Conqueror’s Greek Scriptorium, *DOP* 37 (1983), 15-34; ID., East and West in Mehmed the Conqueror’s Library, *Bulletin du bibliophile* 3 (1987), 296-321; D.R. REINSCH, Greek Manuscripts in the Sultan’s Library, in: *Bibliothèques grecques dans l’Empire ottoman*, ed. A. BINGGELI – M. CASSIN – M. DÉTORAKI (Bibliologia 54), Turnhout 2020, 105-118. Reports of books as booty in 1453: E. JACOBS, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Bibliothek im Serai zu Konstantinopel*, I, Heidelberg 1919, 1-7; RABY, East and West, 298-299.



G.İ. 36 was first reported in 1888 by Friedrich Blass, Professor of Classical Philology at the University of Kiel. His account of an exploratory research trip to the library of the Topkapı Palace over several days in spring 1887 offers fascinating insights into the challenges that researchers faced in accessing the manuscript collections of the “Alte Serail”<sup>9</sup>. Conscious of how few Western scholars had preceded him, Blass conveys the sense of mystery and expectation that accompanied such a visit, inspired partly by the secluded oriental setting – and a Westerner’s orientalisising attitudes – but mainly by the still unknown extent and content of the library’s holdings of Greek and Latin manuscripts. The fact that these turned out to be rather modest in number (now 46 Greek manuscripts), certainly compared to Islamic material, should not detract from the hopes of nineteenth-century scholars that, in the palace’s many chambers and basements, some vestige of the library of the Palaiologan emperors was waiting to be discovered<sup>10</sup>. Deepening strategic alignment of the German and Ottoman Empires favoured academic collaboration: Blass’ distinguished colleague at Kiel, Richard Förster, had recently been granted a rare international loan of a manuscript (G.İ. 19) from the Topkapı Palace in 1883<sup>11</sup>. Nonetheless, Blass required high-level support for an enterprise akin to a diplomatic mission. With the backing of the Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften in Berlin and active assistance from Joseph Maria von Radowitz, the German Imperial ambassador to the Sublime Porte, Blass secured the Sultan’s *irade* authorising his research. The German embassy also provided Dr. Paul Schröder, first *dragoman* to the ambassador, as an official interpreter-guide. On arrival at

---

9. F. BLASS, Die griechischen und lateinischen Handschriften im alten Serail zur Konstantinopel, *Hermes* 23 (1888), 219-233.

10. E.g. BLASS, Handschriften, 232, “Das Hauptinteresse nun, welches sich an die Bibliothek des Serails knüpft, beruht auf der Vermuthung, dass die alte Bibliothek der Palaeologen sich hier wenigstens in Resten noch befinden möchte.” This mirage was conclusively dispelled by JACOBS, *Untersuchungen*. The Greek manuscripts currently in TSMK are listed in A. DEISSMANN, *Forschungen und Funde im Serai; mit einem Verzeichnis der nichtislamischen Handschriften im Topkapu Serai zu Istanbul*, Berlin/Leipzig 1933, 42-79, 84-86, 89-93, 96; and now REINSCH, Greek Manuscripts, 116-117.

11. BLASS, Handschriften, 220 n. 1. See R. FÖRSTER, Eine Handschrift des Serail, *Philologus* 42 (1884), 167-170, at 167.

the Topkapı Palace, they were cordially received by Eşref Efendi, Steward (*Kethüda*) of the Imperial Treasury<sup>12</sup>.

Once through the palace gates, the internal arrangement of book collections, chaotic from a Western viewpoint, posed additional difficulties, particularly with respect to storage and cataloguing. On his first day, Blass was presented with 34 Greek codices that were kept in cabinets in the Ahmed III (or Enderûn) Library, in the Third Courtyard, among a much larger number of Arabic, Persian and Turkish manuscripts. All but one of these 34 volumes were concisely listed in an available inventory handwritten in French. This document, it seems, Emmanuel Miller had compiled for the benefit of future users when he visited in 1864, on a similar assignment commissioned by Napoleon III<sup>13</sup>. Miller's inventory had, in turn, formed the basis of a revised listing of 33 codices compiled by Philipp Anton Dethier, Director of the Ottoman Imperial Museum (1872-81), at the request of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, which had already been published in 1878<sup>14</sup>. Consequently, here Blass could do little more than confirm, correct or supplement details of known codices<sup>15</sup>. His subsequent visits, extending the search to the adjacent Imperial Treasury, discovered six Greek (35-40/40a) and seven Latin codices (41-47), previously unseen and unrecorded. These were found in less than ideal conditions:

“... for the most part in the rooms of the Treasury and there packed into chests together with a very large quantity of printed books of diverse periods and of the most diverse content. From the piles that had been laid out for us on tables in the Treasury, Dr. Schröder and I picked out the Greek and Latin manuscripts and had them brought to us in the

---

12. BLASS, *Handschriften*, 219-220.

13. E. MILLER, *Rapports à l'Empereur sur une mission scientifique en Orient*, *Archives des missions scientifiques et littéraires*, 2e série, 2 (1865), 493-521, at 496-497.

14. Dethier's revised list of the same 33 codices, reconfigured in chronological order, appeared in E. ABEL, *Die Bibliothek des Königs Matthias Corvinus*, in: *Literarische Berichte aus Ungarn*, ed. P. HUNFALVY, II.4, Budapest 1878, 556-581, at 565-567.

15. BLASS, *Handschriften*, 219-223, reproduces the inventory in the Enderûn Library, with his own remarks. The one volume shown to him that was not described in this inventory was an evangelion (DEISSMANN, *Forschungen*, 71: Nr. 34). Miller never referred to the inventory in his own publications, but his authorship was assumed by Dethier (in ABEL, *Bibliothek*, 565) and Blass (*Handschriften*, 222, 228-229).



library building, where we studied and identified them as far as time permitted<sup>16</sup>.”

From this disorder, G.Ī. 36 makes its first appearance. In a brief description, along with details of author, title and initial content (to be examined below), Blass notes: “The manuscript is badly defective, otherwise well preserved; the first leaves loose. The bound part begins with the heading: Τὰ ὀνόματα τῶν κινήσεων τοῦ πεζικοῦ στρατοῦ τὰ σχήματα τῆς φάλαγγος (written in one line). Certainly no older than the 15th century<sup>17</sup>.” This information, though partly inaccurate, will become important for understanding the subsequent fate of the codex and its current state of preservation.

Just after Blass’ account of his research-trip had gone to press, he wrote a short “Nachtrag”, appended to the same periodical issue, to update readers concerning two of the newly discovered codices: “Nr. 36” and “Nr. 40”<sup>18</sup>. Thanks again to the diplomatic mediation of von Radowitz, the Ottoman authorities had consented, via the German Imperial embassy, to loan these two manuscripts to Blass in Kiel, where he could examine them more thoroughly in February-March 1888. He dwells at length on Nr. 40 (TSMK, G.Ī. 40), an important and better-known collection of mathematical and astronomical texts. Regarding “Nr. 36 (Taktik des Nikephoros Ouranos)”, along with basic data regarding its content, condition and dimensions, Blass reports that a complete copy has since been made by his student, Felix Beheim-Schwarzbach. He adds “I have refrained from giving more detailed information here, so as not to pre-empt Herr Beheim-Schwarzbach, who has studied it with the utmost precision<sup>19</sup>.” With no prior experience of

---

16. BLASS, *Handschriften*, 224, “... grösstentheils in den Räumen des Schatzhauses und dort zusammen mit einer sehr grossen Masse gedruckter Bücher verschiedener Zeit und verschiedensten Inhalts in Kisten verpackt. Herr Dr. Schröder und ich suchten aus den Haufen, die auf Tischen im Schatzhause für uns ausgelegt waren, die griechischen und lateinischen Handschriften heraus und liessen sie uns in das Bibliotheksgebäude bringen, wo wir sie soweit die Zeit gestattete untersuchten und bestimmten.” Blass describes the new codices at 224-227.

17. BLASS, *Handschriften*, 225, “Die Handschrift ist stark defekt, übrigens gut erhalten; die ersten Blätter lose. Das Geheftete beginnt mit der Ueberschrift: Τὰ ὀνόματα ... φάλαγγος (in einer Zeile geschrieben). Gewiss nicht älter als das 15. Jahrhundert.”

18. F. BLASS, *Nachtrag*, *Hermes* 23 (1888), 622-625.

19. BLASS, *Nachtrag*, 622, “Eingehenderer Mittheilungen enthalte ich mich hier, um Herrn

Byzantine texts, Blass, a noted expert in Attic orators and New Testament grammar, had apparently decided to hand Nikephoros Ouranos to a promising undergraduate. Nevertheless, barely a year after its discovery, rapid scholarly progress – a rare international loan, a full transcription and a reportedly thorough study – appeared to herald the imminent introduction of Nr. 36 to Western scholars. This was not to be, however, as both the original codex and its transcription went astray.

Despite Beheim-Schwarzbach's longevity (1866-1957), no study of the manuscript or the text it contains appeared. He opted to pursue doctoral research in Attic oratory, after which no further publications are recorded<sup>20</sup>. He became a schoolmaster, ultimately following his father and grandfather as Director of the family-founded Pädagogium in Ostrau/Ostrowo in Posen. In 1919, in now obscure circumstances, he gifted his apograph of Nr. 36 to the Universitätsbibliothek, Freiburg im Breisgau, where it remains as Hs. 706<sup>21</sup>. The meticulous scholarship to which Blass had alluded three decades earlier is evident. Beheim-Schwarzbach did not simply copy the text in Nr. 36, rather he produced a facsimile, which replicates, page by page, line by line, not only the content but also the layout of the original<sup>22</sup>. Another twenty years later, this facsimile, till then as overlooked as its antigraph, would become crucial to Dain's seminal study of the *Taktika* of Nikephoros Ouranos (see below)<sup>23</sup>.

---

Beheim-Schwarzbach nicht vorzugreifen, der sie aufs genaueste untersucht hat." Blass places his inspection of the two codices "im Februar-März dieses Jahres [1888]"; two decades later Beheim-Schwarzbach recalled that he copied Nr. 36 "im Sommersemester 1888" (see n. 21).

20. F. BEHEIM-SCHWARZBACH, *Libellus περὶ ἐρωτηνείας qui Demetrii nomine inscriptus est quo tempore compositus sit* (Diss. inaug.), Kiel 1890.

21. W. HAGENMAIER, *Kataloge der Universitätsbibliothek Freiburg im Breisgau*, Bd. 1.5: *Die abendländischen neuzeitlichen Handschriften der Universitätsbibliothek Freiburg im Breisgau*, rev. K. BOLL, Freiburg 2006, 121-122: Hs. 706. On p. 273 of the apograph an inscription reads: "Nach dem Urtext im Sommersemester 1888 von mir als Studiosus der Universität Kiel abgeschrieben, im Oktober 1919 der Universitätsbibliothek Freiburg i. Br. überreicht. Dr. Felix Beheim-Schwarzbach, Direktor des Pädagogiums Ostrau b. Filehne". The Universitätsbibliothek supplied the present author with a full scan in 2014. See now <http://dl.ulb.uni-freiburg.de/diglit/hs706/0001/image?sid=23630b3f2a35f0d570847d85e29e8a90>

22. DAIN, *Tactique*, 123, "la reproduction mécanique –on serait tenté de dire photographique– du modèle".

23. Although Dain was the first scholar to consult Freiburg, UB, Hs. 706, its location

Meanwhile, the journey of Nr. 36 back to the Topkapı Palace was interrupted by a lengthy detour. Upon its return to Istanbul, the codex was sent to the Yıldız Palace and there rebound in the characteristic Western-type crimson and gold-tooled leather of the imperial bindery. This intervention cannot have occurred before Nr. 36 was sent to Germany: during rebinding, its pages were recut and their outer edges decorated with a contemporary sprinkled design, with the result that the page-size is now smaller than the dimensions recorded by Blass in Kiel in February-March 1888<sup>24</sup>. In particular, the recutting of the top edge sometimes trims pencilled page numbers that can only have been inserted while the manuscript was in Kiel<sup>25</sup>. In addition, Nr. 40, the other of the two codices that the Ottoman government sent to Germany in early 1888, received identical treatment. In a far worse condition than Nr. 36 when likewise discovered in the Imperial Treasury in spring 1887, with no binding and many loose and disarranged leaves at both ends, Nr. 40 was loaned in this precarious state to Blass in Kiel, and thence to Johan Ludvig Heiberg in Copenhagen in 1889, but, upon its return to Istanbul, Nr. 40 too was sent to the Yıldız Palace and rebound<sup>26</sup>. The “restoration” of Nr. 36 presumably sought to remedy physical defects that Blass initially reported, especially “die ersten Blätter lose”. The extent of this problem can be gauged by his remark that the still-bound section “beginnt mit der Ueberschrift: Τὰ ὀνόματα τῶν κινήσεων τοῦ πεζικοῦ στρατοῦ τὰ σχήματα τῆς φάλαγγος (in einer Zeile geschrieben)” – here Blass errs, as [ῶσα] τὰ σχήματα τῆς φάλαγγος in fact forms a second line.

---

was no secret: e.g. already DEISSMANN, *Forschungen*, 72-73 (citing information from Emil Jacobs).

24. Inconsistencies in reported measurements do not affect this conclusion, see below p. 263. See DEISSMANN, *Forschungen*, 72, “Die Differenz erklärt sich dadurch, daß der Codex nach 1888 modern gebunden (Yildizband) und dabei beschnitten worden ist”; with general remarks on the Yıldız Palace bindery at 5-6, 16, 20-21.

25. G.İ. 36 contains a double pagination in the upper outer corners: see below p. 264 for details. The higher-placed sequence in brackets is explicable only as a cross-reference to Beheim-Schwarzbach’s facsimile and cannot therefore predate summer 1888. As the recutting of the pages periodically trims these numbers from above (e.g. 37 (21), 39 (23), 73 (57), 97 (81)), the codex must have been rebound after its return to Istanbul.

26. BLASS, *Handschriften*, 226; ID., *Nachtrag*, 622-623; I[J]. L. HEIBERG, *Apollonii Pergaei quae graece exstant cum commentariis antiquis*, Leipzig 1891, v; DEISSMANN, *Forschungen*, 74-76.

The quoted text occurs at the top of current page 16, as the last two chapter headings (chs. 177-178) in the pinax (pp. 1-16); the rest of this page is blank<sup>27</sup>. However, as page 16 is the verso of leaf 15|16, unless Blass is again mistaken, 16 could have been the front page of the bound section only if this leaf was inverted, as 16|15, perhaps owing to a previous clumsy repair of the loose initial pages. Two features support this possibility. Compared to 15 and other pages, 16 is noticeably dirtier, as if it were once exposed. On page 16 also, just below the two lines of Greek text, is a short Arabic inscription: *Kitābu 'l-cünūd ve iştifā fi hā* (“Book about troops and how to deploy them”), seemingly inserted by a palace librarian as a title or descriptive label for the whole codex, and perhaps an attempt to render or summarise one or both of the preceding lines of Greek, in the belief that they are a general heading. Such a reversal of 15|16 would require that this leaf had become detached from leaf 1|2, with which it forms the outer bifolium of the first quaternion. Confirmation lies concealed within the modern binding, but the lower inner margin of 1|2 shows an obvious repair consistent with such damage. In any case, it seems clear that pages 1-14 were detached when Blass found Nr. 36 and no permanent restoration had been attempted before it returned from Kiel<sup>28</sup>. Most significantly, although the original quires can be traced, the modern binding obliterates evidence of the previous binding(s) and variously obscures other features: original page size, quire numbers and watermarks.

After rebinding at the Yıldız Palace in c.1888/9, it is uncertain when exactly Nr. 36 returned to the Topkapı Palace. It was not found there when Fëdor Uspensky conducted an in-depth survey of holdings of Greek manuscripts in 1907<sup>29</sup>. Nor was it located in more cursory or selective

---

27. From his brief inspection of Nr. 36 in the Topkapı Palace in spring 1887, BLASS, *Handschriften*, 225 wrongly – and improbably – reports that *Tα ὀνόματα ... τῆς φάλαγγος* is all “in einer Zeile geschrieben”. He also omits Ὅσα at the beginning of the second line. It is possible that Blass later misunderstood his notes taken in situ. Subsequently, BLASS, *Nachtrag*, 622, with no such excuse as the codex was then in front of him in Kiel, mistakenly reports that the pinax (“Inhaltsverzeichnis”) occupies pages 1-17, in fact 1-16.

28. The facsimile prepared by Beheim-Schwarzbach (Freiburg, UB, Hs. 72, p. xvi) records the text and layout correctly, and without any indication that leaf 15|16 was then inverted.

29. F. I. USPENSKY, *Константинопольский Серальский Кодекс Восьмикинижия*

investigations by Stephen Gaselee in 1909 and Jean Ebersolt in 1920<sup>30</sup>. In the meantime, Nr. 36 was almost certainly reassigned to the recently created Yıldız Palace Library, where Sultan Abdülhamid II (r. 1876-1909) accumulated selected rebound manuscripts from the Topkapı collections. It was not until 1925-8 that these volumes were transferred back to the now nationalised Topkapı Palace Museum and deposited in its new united Library, housed in the secularised Mosque of the Ağas (Ağalar Camii), back in the Third Courtyard<sup>31</sup>. During this forty-year period, opportunities for scholarly access to Nr. 36 were negligible. Similarly, its former travelling companion, Nr. 40, seems to have remained at the Yıldız Palace. When another international loan request for Nr. 40 was received in 1897, the Topkapı authorities were obliged to admit that they could not locate this codex. It was considered lost or mislaid until “re-discovered” in the new Topkapı Palace Library in 1929<sup>32</sup>. Nr. 36 was also there by 1928-9, when it was seen by Adolf Deissmann, Professor of Theology at the Friedrich Wilhelm University, Berlin. In surveying the current holdings of Greek and Latin manuscripts, Deissmann appears to have made only a cursory examination of Nr. 36, as his short description largely rehearses information provided by Blass (1888), including obvious errors, which in turn became entrenched in later scholarship<sup>33</sup>. Consistent with Blass’ emphatic assessment “gewiss nicht

---

(*Известия Русского археологического института в Константинополе* 12), Sofia 1907, 241-251 (describing 36 codices), who explicitly notes (241 n. 2) the absence of Nr. 36 and 40.

30. S. GASELEE, *The Greek Manuscripts in the Old Seraglio at Constantinople*, Cambridge 1916, 8-10 (listing 33 items); J. EBERSOLT, *Recherches dans la Bibliothèque du Sérail*, in ID., *Mission archéologique de Constantinople 1920*, Paris 1921, 55-65 (details of 12 of 37 codices).

31. General remarks in DEISSMANN, *Forschungen*, 2-7, with historical contexts in F. BERKSOY, *The Cooperation of G.A. Deissmann and E.H. Eldem in the Classification of the Non-Islamic Manuscripts in the Topkapı Sarayı Museum*, in: *M. Uğur Derman Festschrift*, ed. İ.C. SCHICK, Istanbul 2000, 175-185.

32. DEISSMANN, *Forschungen*, 74-75 relates the unsuccessful efforts of the Hauptstaatsarchiv Dresden, with diplomatic assistance, to borrow Nr. 40 throughout 1897. This codex was identified by Deissmann himself in 1929. By this date, it had seemingly been in the Topkapı Palace Library for some years, but remained unrecognised owing to its modern binding. Deissmann (72) presumes that Nr. 36 was likewise “später zeitweilig im Yıldız-Kiosk”.

33. DEISSMANN, *Forschungen*, 72-73. Deissmann follows Blass in listing “17 plus 271

älter als das 15. Jahrhundert”, Deissmann offered “14./15. Jahrh.” His view is still repeated, though watermark evidence has long since proved a fifteenth-century dating<sup>34</sup>. In the absence of a comprehensive catalogue, Deissmann’s inventory remains the main point of reference, though his description is in other respects defective. Since his visit in 1929, the codex has been viewed by a handful of scholars, but no description or study has been published.

By the mid-1930s, Dain had grasped the importance of “*Constantinopolitanus gr. 36*” as a textual witness, but he was unable to examine the codex, in person or photographically. For codicological data, he relied on published descriptions by Blass (1888) and Deissmann (1933), supplemented with his own inferences. His knowledge of the manuscript’s content depended on Beheim-Schwarzbach’s facsimile (1888), though this too he never consulted first-hand but rather via a full photographic reproduction, which Dain’s student, Jacques Viel, prepared *in situ* at the Universitätsbibliothek in Freiburg<sup>35</sup>.

#### *Description of Istanbul, TSMK, G.İ. 36*

CLASSMARK: in older scholarship *Constantinopolitanus / Seragliensis gr. 36*. Number 36, assigned by Blass (1888), is marked on a pasted label on the lower spine and written on II<sup>r</sup> and the rear pastedown. Former classmarks: on discovery in 1887, Blass reported “Türk Nr. 2”, which is found on a pasted

---

gleich 288 Seiten”; and again “Inhaltsverzeichnis auf Seite 1-17 der Handschrift”. In fact, the pinax is on pp. 1-16, the main text on pp. 17-287 (288 is blank). This error is thence repeated by DAIN, *Tactique*, 94, “dix-sept premières pages”, though at 11 and 93 even “xviii-271 p.”; McGEER, *Sowing*, 81, “first seventeen folios” (in fact pages rather than folios).

34. BLASS, *Handschriften*, 225; DEISSMANN, *Forschungen*, 72, noting “Wasserzeichen noch nicht geprüft”. DAIN, *Tactique*, 11, 93-94, “xiv<sup>e</sup>-xv<sup>e</sup> siècle”, reproduces Deissmann’s opinion, though Dain (94) additionally remarks: “Si l’on tient compte du format, c’est au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle qu’on doit plutôt penser: c’est principalement à cette époque que les manuscrits de technique ont été écrits sur ce petit format. Seul un examen du filigrane pourrait dirimer la question”. The evidence of watermarks, published since 1974, showed a date +/-1432 (see below p. 265). Nonetheless, McGEER, *Sowing*, 81, “fourteenth century”; MECELLA, *Überlieferung*, 102, “14.-15. Jh.”.

35. DAIN, *Tactique*, 12-13, 122-123, with remarks at 93-95 on *Constantinopolitanus gr. 36*. In mistakenly noting that “la reliure actuelle porte la date 1888”, Dain seemingly misunderstands Deissmann’s wording.



label on p. 288<sup>36</sup>. A subsequent Ottoman Turkish number 2418 is written on II<sup>r</sup>, as noted by Deissmann<sup>37</sup>.

COMPOSITION: II, pp. 288, II

PAPER: 1-288: Italian, 1430s (see Watermarks). I-II, I'-II': late nineteenth-century.

PAGE SIZE: 209 x 135 mm. On inspection in Kiel in February/March 1888, Blass recorded 207 x 145 mm. After being returned to Istanbul in c.1888/9, the pages were recut on all edges during rebinding at the Yıldız Palace. In 1928/9, in the Topkapı Palace Library, Deissmann reported 207 x 135 mm<sup>38</sup>. These data partly conflict. Clearly rebinding reduced the original page width by 10 mm. However, the prior height of 207 mm reported by Blass cannot have been correctly recorded, as subsequent rebinding recut and decorated the top and bottom edges to their current format of 209 mm. Recutting significantly reduced the upper margin and trimmed page numbers in the upper outer corners that had been inserted while the codex was in Kiel<sup>39</sup>. Trimming of the lower edge occasionally affected original quire numbers in the lower inner corners<sup>40</sup>. This demonstrable reduction in the page height between Blass (1888) and Deissmann (1928/9) makes their reported concurrence impossible. As Deissmann reproduced from Blass other data that autopsy could easily have shown to be incorrect, one can suspect that Deissmann's identical measurement of 207 mm likewise mistakenly replicates Blass. Wide asymmetry between the current upper (12-15 mm) and lower (35-40 mm) margins implies a loss of more than 20 mm from the top during recutting. A corresponding degree of page resizing is documented in G.İ. 40, which accompanied in G.İ. 36 to Kiel in 1888 and was likewise rebound at the Yıldız Palace in c.1889: Blass in 1888 reported 350 x 250 mm, but now 323 x 240 mm, a reduction of c.25 x 10 mm<sup>41</sup>.

36. Blass, *Handschriften*, 225; Id., *Nachtrag*, 622.

37. Deissmann, *Forschungen*, 72.

38. Blass, *Nachtrag*, 622; Deissmann, *Forschungen*, 72.

39. See n. 25.

40. Vestigial quire numbers in lower inner corners, partly lost in the modern binding, are trimmed from below: e.g. pp. 113 (η'), 129 (θ'), 161 (α'), 177 (ιβ'), 193 (ιγ').

41. Blass, *Nachtrag*, 622; Deissmann, *Forschungen*, 76.

PAGE LAYOUT: Text space: 155-160 x 100 mm. Lines per page: 23, rarely 22.

PAGINATION: There are two sequences of Arabic page numbers written in pencil in a modern hand in the upper outer corners. One sequence consecutively numbers all pages: 1-288. Following the pinax on pp. 1-16, another sequence starts on p. 17 (= p. 1), placed in brackets and typically located above the consecutive page number, usually only on rectos, but initially – and rarely thereafter – also on versos. The bracketed sequence, which is always 16 less than the consecutive number (1-272 = 17-288), undoubtedly cross-references the facsimile transcribed by Beheim-Schwarzbach (1888 = Freiburg, UB, Hs. 706), in which pp. 1-16 are paginated using Roman numerals i-xvi, while Arabic numerals commence from p. 17. The relative chronology of the two paginations is uncertain, but their positioning suggests that the sequence cross-referencing Beheim-Schwarzbach's facsimile from p. 17 is the earlier.

CONTENTS: Nikephoros Ouranos, *Taktika*: title, pinax, chs. 1-43 (chs. 33-43 misnumbered 32-42), with lacunae. (p. 1) superscription: βιβλίον στρατηγικ(όν) χρηστικόν; main title and ascription, incorporating an elaborate source-notice: Τακτικὰ ἤγουν στρατηγικὰ [sic] ... συλλεγὲν παρὰ Νικηφόρου μαγίστρου τοῦ Οὐρανοῦ ἀπὸ πολλῶν ὡς εἴρηται ἱστορικῶν ἐν ἐπιμελείᾳ πολλῇ. (pp. 1-16) tit. ὁ πίναξ τοῦ βιβλίου; pinax comprising 254 numbered headings [lacuna: headings 59-122]; (p. 16) two lines only, otherwise blank. (pp. 17-39) ch. 1: tit. α' Ὅποῖον δεῖ εἶναι τὸν στρατηγὸν – ch. 2.13: καὶ ὑπὸ τὸν κόμητα ἐστὶ; (p. 39) seven lines only; (p. 40) blank [lacuna: chs. 2.14-6.2]. (pp. 41-205) ch. 6.2: αὗται γὰρ αἱ σαγίται καὶ εἰς πολὺ διάστημα ῥίπτονται – ch. 30: tit. λ' Πότε βλάπτουσι τὰ φλάμουλα εἰς τὴν συμβολὴν τοῦ πολέμου [lacuna: ch. 30: text]; ch. 31: text, followed by 31: tit. λα' Περὶ τῶν λεγομένων δεποτάτων, to which is appended Περὶ κατασκόπων, apparently substituting missing ch. 32: tit. (pinax: λβ' Περὶ βίγλας ...), then ch. 32: text; all subsequent chapters misnumbered one digit lower. (pp. 205-287) ch. 33[32]: tit. λβ' Περὶ τοῦ ὀφείλοντος προθυμοποιεῖν τὸν στρατὸν ἀπὸ λόχου πρὸς τὸν πόλεμον – ch. 43[42].45: καὶ ὑπὸ τασσομένους σοι τα[πεινός (text damaged at lower margins and bottom). (p. 288) blank.

QUIRES: 18 quaternions (pp. 288).

QUIRE NUMBERS: in quaternions 2-6 visible in the lower inner corner of the first recto and last verso: pp. 32 ( $\beta'$ ), 33 ( $\gamma'$ ), 48 ( $\gamma'$ ), 49 ( $\delta'$ ), 64 ( $\delta'$ ), 65 ( $\epsilon'$ ), 80 ( $\epsilon'$ ), 81 ( $\zeta'$ ), 96 ( $\zeta'$ ), 97 ( $\zeta'$ ). Otherwise not seen or vestiges largely obscured by rebinding: pp. 113 ( $\eta'$ ), 129 ( $\theta'$ ), 144 ( $\theta'$ ), 145 ( $\iota'$ ), 161 ( $\iota\alpha'$ ), 176 ( $\iota\alpha'$ ), 177 ( $\iota\beta'$ ), 192 ( $\iota\beta'$ ), 193 ( $\iota\gamma'$ ), 209 ( $\iota\delta'$ ).

#### WATERMARKS:

- pp. 3|4|13|14, 7|8|9|10: Ciseaux. No exact parallel found: || 58 mm, width 32 mm. Similar to Piccard Online Nr. 122448 (Frankfurt 1430)
- pp. 17-64, 113-224 [= quaternions 2-4, 8-14], 229|230/235|236 [= 3/6 of quaternion 15]: Trois monts = Harlfinger, Monts 64 (Nov. 1432)<sup>42</sup>.
- pp. 65-112 [= quaternions 5-7]: Tête de cerf de profil, three close variants, differing slightly in dimensions and detailed design: A, e.g. 69|70/75|76; B, e.g. 71|72/73|74, 87|88/89|90; C, e.g. 99|100/109|110. No exact parallels found; type C is similar to Piccard Online Nr. 82243 (1435).
- pp. 225-228/237-240 [= 1/8, 2/7 of quaternion 15] and most or all of 241-288 [= quaternions 16-18], e.g. 241|242, 275|276: Ciseaux (avec pivot), similar to Piccard Online Nr. 122393 (Rome 1433); Nr. 122394 (1446); WZIS DE4860-Rep I 68a 1 = 8 (Constantinople/Peloponnese? 1442).

SCRIPT: pp. 1-288: a single, unidentified hand, mostly regular and easily legible, though sometimes inelegant. Variant letter forms often occur in close proximity (especially  $\beta$ ,  $\delta$ ,  $\nu$ ,  $\varphi$ ) and with periodic preference; few ligatures (most commonly  $\epsilon\iota$ , also  $\epsilon\nu$ ,  $\varphi\omicron$ ); contractions used sparingly. Changes of ink coincide with a new quaternion (e.g. pp. 49, 145, 209, 225), rarely mid-page (p. 196).

---

42. D. HARLFINGER, *Wasserzeichen aus griechischen Handschriften*, Berlin 1974-80, II, Index III, p. 27 > Index II, p. 24: Monts 64\*; endorsed by the present author's autopsy. See further HARLFINGER, *Wasserzeichen I*: Index III, p. 13 > Index II, p. 5: Monts 64\* is found in Venice, BNM, gr. Z. 205 (ff. 18/23, 19/22, 17/24, 26-31), which in turn shares Couronne 18\* with Turin, BNU, C. II. 16 (e.g. f. 4), which has a subscription (f. 403) dated Nov. 1432 (copyist Gregorios Bryennios: *RGK* II 108; *PLP* 3252). See also similar watermarks in G. PICCARD, *Wasserzeichen Dreieberg*, Stuttgart 1996, Tl. I, Abt. III, Nr. 987 (Udine 1430; Lienz 1431 = Piccard Online Nr. 151079, 151080).

DECORATION: Rubricated decorative bands precede the pinax (p. 1: wavy line with terminal foliage) and the main text (p. 17: interlaced palmettes), with a large and elaborate initial of ch.1 (omicron from entwined snakes). Rubrication: main heading (p. 1); pinax (pp. 1-16): chapter number and initial letter of each heading; main text (pp. 17-287): up to ch. 8 (p. 50 – headings to chs. 3-6 are missing owing to a lacuna), chapter number and complete heading, and initial letter of each chapter, but from ch. 9 (p. 57), chapter number and only the initial letter of the heading, while the initial letter of each chapter becomes larger and more ornately ornamented. Rubrication is rarely omitted (p. 200, ch. 17: [Π]εϞì), except in the last three chapters (41-43 [40-42]) where it is entirely absent (pp. 211, 219, 271).

STATE OF PRESERVATION AND RESTORATION: Generally well preserved. Repair at lower inner margin on p. 1. The lower half of final p. 287|288 is damaged at the sides and bottom with loss of peripheral text; repair has obscured text visible to Beheim-Schwarzbach in 1888<sup>43</sup>. Water staining, especially on pp. 81-112, 225-228 and 237-287, does not affect legibility. Margins and blank spaces contain random modern pen trials as well as crude attempts at Greek lettering, sometimes sinistroversive and thus pre-1928 (pp. 16, 39-41, 128, 132, 288).

BINDING: Yıldız Palace binding c.1888/9, in crimson leather with gold-tooled ornamentation. The front cover is decorated with the *tughra* of Abdülhamid II, with a star and crescent emblem above. The spine and the rear cover (as if containing a sinistroversive Islamic text) bear the title ΒΙΒΛΙΟΝ ΣΤΡΑΤΗΓΙΟΥ (sic), evidently a misreading of abbreviated στρατηγικ(όν) in the superscription on p. 1. The pastedown and facing flyleaf at both ends are coloured vibrant pink.

POSSESSORS: Presumed collection of Mehmed II Fatih: 1460s-70s. First documented in Topkapı Palace (Imperial Treasury): spring 1887. Loan to University of Kiel: February/March-Summer 1888. Yıldız Palace (bindery and library): c.1888/9-c.1925-8. Topkapı Palace Museum Library: c.1925-8 – present.

---

43. See below p. 281.

COPIES: Freiburg, UB, Hs. 706, facsimile transcribed by Felix Beheim-Schwarzbach at the University of Kiel in Summer 1888, donated to the University of Freiburg in October 1919<sup>44</sup>.

SCHOLARS CONSULTING (date and location of first-hand examination): Blass (1887 Topkapı, 1888 Kiel); Beheim-Schwarzbach (1888 Kiel); Deissmann (1928/9 Topkapı); Harlfinger and Reinsch (1975 Topkapı); Rance (2013-14, 2015 Topkapı)<sup>45</sup>.

*The Editorial Significance of Istanbul, TSMK, G.Ī. 36 (= siglum K)*

Critical investigation of the *Taktika* of Nikephoros Ouranos begins with Dain's monograph (1937). He distinguished three manuscript prototypes in Munich, Oxford and Istanbul<sup>46</sup>:

- M Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, *Monacensis graecus* 452 (158 ff.), c.1350-60
- O Bodleian Library, *Oxonensis Baroccianus* 131, §100 (ff. 282<sup>r</sup>-286<sup>v</sup> + 262<sup>r</sup>-282<sup>r</sup>), c.1250-80 (Dain mistakenly 1300-50)<sup>47</sup>
- K TSMK, *Constantinopolitanus graecus* 36 (G.Ī. 36) (288 pp.), c.1430s (Dain 14/15 century)

---

44. See above p. 258.

45. BLASS, *Handschriften*, 225; ID., *Nachtrag*, 622; DEISSMANN, *Forschungen*, 72-3; HARLFINGER, *Wasserzeichen* II: Index II, p. 24 > Index III, p. 27; REINSCH, *Greek Manuscripts*, 116; RANCE, *Reception*, 342-343; ID., *Late Byzantine Elites*, 273, 276.

46. DAIN, *Tactique*, 11-12, 93-102 (in accordance with his wider system for classifying Byzantine codices with military content, Dain applies sigla N to *Monac. gr.* 452 and Q to *Oxon. Barocc.* 131); summarised A. DAIN (texte mis au net et complété par J.-A. DE FOUCAULT), *Les Stratégistes byzantins*, *TM* 2 (1967), 317-392, at 372, 376-377, 389; J.-A. DE FOUCAULT, *Douze chapitres inédits de la Tactique de Nicéphore Ouranos*, *TM* 5 (1973), 281-312, at 282-284, with additions and refinements in MCGEER, *Sowing*, 81-86; MECCELLA, *Überlieferung*, 102-104; RANCE, *Reception*, 342-343; ID., *Late Byzantine Elites*, 276.

47. DAIN, *Tactique*, 12, 93, 101 dated O palaeographically to “première moitié du xiv<sup>e</sup> siècle”; repeated ID., *Stratégistes*, 389. See correctly N. G. WILSON, *A Byzantine Miscellany: MS. Barocci 131* described, *JÖB* 27 (1978), 157-179. Dain's misdating still lingers, e.g. J. H. PRYOR and E. M. JEFFREYS, *The Age of the ΔPOMΩN. The Byzantine Navy ca 500-1204*, Leiden 2006, 183.

M bears an ascription to an “Emperor Constantine, son of Romanos”, ostensibly Constantine VIII, which is demonstrably a sixteenth-century forgery (c.1570-75). Resulting from a complex tangle of deliberate fabrication and humanist scholarly guesswork, this “Constantinian” label, which had already (post-1564) permeated descendants of M, became a widespread and persistent hinderance to understanding the treatise until the 1930s and beyond<sup>48</sup>. The text in O is anonymous. K alone preserves an authentic ascription. The three codices transmit partly overlapping sections of the text, often disjointed, lacunose and of unequal length. None contains all 178 chapters, and O and K have less than half the text, but collectively they permit an editor to reconstitute the *Taktika* almost in its entirety<sup>49</sup>.

M = chs. 2.42-71, 4.1-8.8, 11.10-49.16, 51.17-94.1, 97, 103-104, 106-113, 116-118, 123-157.1, 159.5-170.5, 171.7-178

O = chs. 4.1-9.32 [ff. 282<sup>r</sup>-286<sup>v</sup>], 65-178 [ff. 262<sup>r</sup>-282<sup>r</sup>]

K = title, pinax, chs. 1.1-2.13, 6.2-29, 31-43.45

Of the chapters not preserved in any witness, the most extensive losses are half of 2 (2.14-41, 71-77), all of 3, and a large – but hitherto unnoticed – lacuna at 49.16-51.17. In each case, basic content can be reconstructed from Ouranos’ known source; the loss of 50 (Περὶ Τοῦρκων) is perhaps the most regrettable<sup>50</sup>. At least 17 full or partial copies of the *Taktika*, executed between the mid-sixteenth and early eighteenth centuries, all descend,

48. DAIN, *Tactique*, 98-100, 107-127, 136-143, with stemma at 131; summarised in MECELLA, *Überlieferung*, 103-104.

49. For the sake of convenience and continuity, I retain the system of numbering chapters/paragraphs devised by Dain (1937). In the following summary only larger lacunae are indicated in chs. 123-171, which comprise thematic collections of excerpted historical exempla; the loss or omission of individual paragraphs is not marked.

50. DAIN, *Tactique*, 93, 128, repeated ID., *Stratégistes*, 371, 389, mistakenly reports only ch. 2.71-77 and 3 missing. Ch. 2.14-41 is lost between a marked lacuna in K (pp. 39-41) and damage to the beginning of M. Previously unnoticed, even by Dain, chs. 49.16-51.17 are lost in a large, unmarked lacuna in the unique witness M (f. 74<sup>r</sup>, lines 8/9: διὰ τῆς σῆς ἐπιμελείας [...] καὶ τῆς εἰρήνης). All three missing sections derive from Leo’s *Taktika*: ch. 2 (= Leo 4.1-77), 3 (Leo 3.1-17), 49.16-51.17 (Leo 18.16-91). Although typically Ouranos closely paraphrases Leo’s text, Ouranos’ reworking of ethnographic material in 49.16-51.17, a century after Leo, might have offered contemporary insights.



directly or indirectly, from M<sup>51</sup>. These *recentiores* have no editorial value, except where the condition of M has since deteriorated (see below).

Older scholarship depended exclusively on M. From the early 1600s up to the 1930s, directly and/or via its descendants, M was the sole known witness. Those parts of the *Taktika* preserved in O, a large and diverse miscellany, remained unrecognised owing to imprecise cataloguing until identified by Dain in 1932. After Dain drew attention to O in 1937, editors could avail themselves of an alternative to M, especially as most critical editions have concerned chapters/sections where M and O at least partially coincide or O is the only witness<sup>52</sup>. As noted above, K, though reported and transcribed in 1888, had no impact for another half-century, partly owing to the continuing inaccessibility of K or its facsimile, but more simply because, with the content of K still unknown, its affinity with the spuriously ascribed text in M could not be recognised. The few reported details about K merely fuelled speculation<sup>53</sup>. Again, it was not until Dain took an interest in this witness, in the mid-1930s, that it became apparent that the *Taktika* of Nikephoros Ouranos discovered in K in 1887 was in fact the same work as that “Constantinian” treatise known for centuries in M, and recently identified also in O. Even so, no part of the text transmitted in K (chs. 1-43) has yet been critically edited and K remains excluded from all text-critical studies<sup>54</sup>. In addition, a fourth witness has lately come to light in Vienna, ÖNB, phil. gr. 120 + 112, originally a single codex compiled in the 1350s, which contains a disordered series of extracts that were not recognised in earlier cataloguing. Although this new material does not include previously unknown content, it provides additional testimony towards the constitution of the text<sup>55</sup>.

---

51. DAIN, *Tactique*, 11-12, 107-123, 131, identifies 14 descendants of M. He omits excerpts in Milan, Bibl. Ambr. C 171 inf. (gr. 870), ff. 1-7, of which Bibl. Ambr. C 192 inf. (gr. 880) is a copy, and Bibl. Ambr. R 106 sup. (gr. 719), ff. 357<sup>v</sup>-358<sup>v</sup>.

52. DAIN, *Tactique*, 100-102. Critical editions: below n. 79.

53. E.g. R. VÁRI (ed.), *Incerti auctoris Byzantini saeculi X Liber de re militari*, Leipzig 1901, ix-xi.

54. DAIN, *Tactique*, 43 offered a provisional edition of ch. 1.1-7 based on K (without apparatus).

55. Details and preliminary observations in RANCE, *Reception*, 343 n. 151; ID., *Late Byzantine Elites*, 276 n. 68. A separate study is in preparation.

Of the three principal witnesses, M preserves by far the largest proportion – more than five-sixths – of the text and, as such, provides the basis of any edition. M is also the unique witness to the whole or larger part of 22 chapters<sup>56</sup>. Nonetheless, long-term reliance on M entailed multiple editorial and interpretative challenges, arising from its textual history, production and state of preservation<sup>57</sup>. For unknown reasons, M was never rubricated: all chapter numbers, headings and paragraph initials were therefore left as unfilled spaces, exacerbating the difficulties modern editors encountered in navigating this long work in the absence of other witnesses<sup>58</sup>. The beginning of M is severely mutilated, with extensive losses from the first three quaternions, while the remnants were further disarranged during rebinding<sup>59</sup>. Apparently with commercial considerations in mind, in c. 1570-75 a “restorer” replaced the resultant initial folio (original f. 10), presumably then dirty and/or damaged, with a fresh re-copy, taking the opportunity to insert a spurious title and imperial ascription<sup>60</sup>. M has also suffered extensive water damage, which in parts renders marginal text hard to read or illegible<sup>61</sup>. For the latter part of the treatise, this difficulty can be partly alleviated by consulting Florence, BML, Laurentianus Plut. 57.31 (= L), the earliest apograph of M (chs. 54-178 only), executed on Corfu in 1564, when it was still possible to read parts of the text that are now obscured<sup>62</sup>.

56. M alone preserves chs. 2.42-71, 30, end of 43.46-49.16, 51.17-64.8.

57. DAIN, *Tactique*, 95-100; ID., *Stratégistes*, 372, 376-377, 389. The most recent catalogue description is of limited value: I. HARDT, *Electoralis Bibliothecae Monacensis codices graeci msc. Continuatio* [8], Munich 1807, 432-435.

58. DAIN, *Tactique*, 16, 96.

59. DAIN, *Tactique*, 97-98 provides detailed analysis.

60. DAIN, *Tactique*, 98-100, 117-119.

61. A catalogue label pasted at M f. I<sup>r</sup> reads “Hinc inde difficilis lectu”. Similarly, F. HAASE, *De militarium scriptorum graecorum et latinorum omnium editione instituenda narratio* (Univ. Progr. Breslau 1846), Berlin 1847, 44-46, “codex difficillimus”.

62. In 1564, M was in the possession of Antonios Eparchos on Corfu. Codex L was copied for him and largely in his own hand (ff. 24<sup>r</sup>-127<sup>v</sup>); a subscription is dated 22 April 1564 (127<sup>v</sup>). See A. M. BANDINI, *Catalogus codicum graecorum Bibliothecae Laurentianae*, Florence 1764-70, II (1768), col. 383-384; A. R. FANTONI (ed.), *I libri del granduca Cosimo I de' Medici: i manoscritti personali e quelli per la biblioteca di Michelangelo (Catalogo della mostra tenuta in Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana dall' 8 marzo al 18 ottobre 2019)*, Florence 2019, 86-87.

Dain's recognition of anonymously transmitted segments of the *Taktika* in O provided an alternative witness for chs. 4.1-9.32 (ff. 282<sup>r</sup>-286<sup>v</sup>) and, more importantly, 65-178 (ff. 262<sup>r</sup>-282<sup>r</sup>), which includes several chapters omitted, by accident or design, from M. Dain observed that the shorter of these two segments, inversely positioned in O, probably equates to the second quaternion of a dismembered exemplar (or the third quaternion, if its first contained the pinax)<sup>63</sup>. Accordingly, the longer segment would represent the final four quaternions of that model. Although the latter segment contains almost two-thirds of the 178 chapters, up to the end of the treatise, these chapters tend to be significantly shorter, sometimes only a few lines, and proportionally this segment amounts to just over one-fifth of the original text<sup>64</sup>. O is the unique witness to the whole or larger part of 18 chapters<sup>65</sup>. Otherwise, the content of O mostly coincides with M<sup>66</sup>. O also transmits the chapter headings and, sometimes, numbering that are missing from M owing to the absence of rubrication<sup>67</sup>.

In terms of progress towards a full critical edition, the initial significance of the discovery of K was its transmission of the authentic ascription and the pinax. Despite a large lacuna, the pinax in K, together with those headings preserved in O, supplies the key for reconstituting the extent and arrangement of Ouranos' work. More broadly, K plays much the same role at the beginning of the treatise as O plays at its end, insofar as K is an alternative to M for chs. 1-43, aside from lacunae. Although these chapters are smaller in number than those transmitted in O, they are typically longer, in some cases vast, and proportionally amount to well over one-third of the total text of the *Taktika*. Dain seems not to have appreciated this comparative length<sup>68</sup>. K is a unique witness to the whole or

---

63. DAIN, *Tactique*, 101-102.

64. Using M (158 folios), the most complete witness, as a gauge, chs. 65-178 occupy ff. 126<sup>r</sup>-158<sup>v</sup>, roughly one fifth, though the loss of several chapters from M means that this segment equated to a slightly higher proportion of the original work.

65. O alone preserves chs. 95-96, 98-102, 105, 114-115, 119-122, 157-158, 170.6-171.6.

66. M and O coincide at chs. 4.1-8.8, 65-94, 97, 103-104, 106-113, 116-118, 123-157.1, 159.5-170.5, 171.7-178. DAIN, *Tactique*, 100 wrongly states that ch. 104 is missing from M (f. 139<sup>v</sup>).

67. DAIN, *Tactique*, 101-102.

68. Again using M as a gauge (see n. 64), the text in K coincides with ff. 1<sup>r</sup>-55<sup>v</sup> of the

larger part of five lengthy chapters, including the beginning of the treatise (1.1-2.13, 9.32-11.10). Otherwise, the content of K mostly coincides with M alone (11.10-29.1, 31.1-43.45), rarely with O alone (8.8-9.32) or with both M and O (6.2-8.8), the only segment of the text where comparison of the three witnesses is possible<sup>69</sup>.

A further editorial challenge arises from a two-stage textual evolution of Ouranos' *Taktika*. Comparative analysis of the three manuscripts of the *Taktika*, in conjunction with its extant sources, reveals that O and K transmit an earlier version of the *Taktika*, presumed to be Ouranos' original composition or at least its oldest surviving redaction. In contrast, the text in M is characterised by selective but consistent paraphrasing, whereby an editor sought to remedy perceived vulgarisms in grammar, diction and syntax, often imported unrevised from source material, and to recast the text in a slightly more polished idiom. Dain termed these two stages the "Oxford" and "Munich" recensions. The date of this linguistic revision –between Ouranos' autograph (c.1000) and the copying of M (c.1350-60)– remains conjectural, though Dain's analysis of the short section preserved in all three witnesses (chs. 6.2-8.8), as well as broader structural differences apparent in the pinax, showed that the archetype of the "Munich" recension and K share a common ancestry, whereas O descends from a separate and, generally, superior tradition<sup>70</sup>. More recent critical editions of selected chapters endorse Dain's analysis: where O and M coincide, and both supply correct but differing readings, O is deemed authoritative, while later modifications in M are registered in the apparatus criticus<sup>71</sup>. However, as M is the sole witness to certain chapters or whole sections, a complete edition of the *Taktika*, following this editorial method, would inevitably become a synthetic patchwork of the "Oxford"

---

current 158 folios in M, to which must be added text lost from this section of M, probably equating to three quaternions (DAIN, *Tactique*, 97-98). DAIN, *Tactique*, 105 considers M and O to be "les deux manuscrits-sources les plus étendus, et qui ont en commun une très grande portion du texte". In fact, more of M coincides with K than with O.

69. DAIN, *Tactique*, 106-107.

70. DAIN, *Tactique*, 102-7, also 29 n. 1, 128-130.

71. E.G. MCGEER, *Sowing*, 85-86 (with apparatus at 152-162: ch. 65); MECELLA, *Überlieferung*, 103, 115 (apparatus at 117-143: chs. 89-94, 97, 103, 106-111); RANCE, *Reception*, 360 (apparatus at 361-363: chs. 104, 112-113, 172-173).

and “Munich” recensions that could never have existed in reality.<sup>72</sup> An alternative editorial approach that treats the two recensions as distinct creative endeavours and edits their texts in juxtaposition would perhaps be more attuned to current scholarly attitudes towards forms of linguistic-stylistic adaptation in Byzantine literature.

Against this background, the editing and publication of Ouranos’ *Taktika* has been unsurprisingly complex, with barely one-fifth of the text available in a critical edition, though recent decades have seen steady if fragmented progress. Given the common rehearsal of inaccurate or incomplete information in recent studies, an up-to-date statement of the publishing history and a “checklist” of edited chapters should prove instructive. Pioneering scholarship, based exclusively on M and/or its *recentiores*, laboured with limited resources and interpretative misconceptions. As an *editio princeps*, Jan van Meurs (Meursius) edited a short, truncated section, based on sixteenth-century Heidelberg, UB, Pal. gr. 393 (ff. 67<sup>r</sup>-95<sup>r</sup>), containing chs. 2, 4-8, 11-14, disarranged and lacunose, and incorporating humanist interpolations. This defective text, printed in 1617 in an assemblage of works ascribed to Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, was the only published part of the *Taktika* for well over a century<sup>73</sup>. In 1745, ostensibly as a revision of Meursius’ *opera omnia*, Giovanni Lami effectively produced an entirely new edition, supplemented and greatly expanded on the basis of early seventeenth-

72. See remarks of DAIN, *Tactique*, 128-129, “une édition hybride”.

73. J. MEURSIUS, *Constantini Porphyrogenetae imperatoris Opera in quibus Tactica nunc primum prodeunt ...* Leiden 1617, §1, 1-58: *Constantini Porphyrogenetae imp. Liber tacticus, terra marique; pugnantium ordinationem continens*. The text ends abruptly at ch. 14.26. Meursius’ use of an unspecified manuscript in the Bibliotheca Palatina in Heidelberg (later Vatican, BAV, Pal. gr. 393) is indicated at [unpag. xi], 1. This manuscript is an exact copy (c.1575) of Vienna, ÖNB, phil. gr. 55, ff. 168<sup>r</sup>-195<sup>v</sup>, which is in turn an interpolated apograph of M, executed c.1570. See DAIN, *Tactique*, 114-119, 123-125, 131, 137 (note at 118, 146 “Palat. gr. 293” should read “393”; note also that Dain’s alternative reference “Heidelbergensis 52” at 11-12, 118, 146, and again DAIN, *Inventaire*, 45, appears to be his misunderstanding of Rezső Vári’s own numbering of this codex in his edition of Leo’s *Taktika* [xxii §52, xxvii §80], see below n. 76). For Meursius’ broader activity in this field see P. RANCE, A Greek Military Manuscript in Poland: Kraków, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Ms. graec. fol. 22 and Early Scholarship on Byzantine Military Literature, in: *Καθηγητής. Studies in Ancient History, Warfare and Art, presented to Nick Sekunda on his Seventieth Birthday*, ed. K. ULANOWSKI – B. BURLIGA (Philippika 171), Wiesbaden 2023, 215-228, at 225-228.

century Verona, Bibl. Capit. MS 127, a more extensive but often lacunose descendant of M (to ch. 53). Lami's text, with Latin translation, comprises chs. 2-53, replicating the lacunae and disarrangement of its model<sup>74</sup>. Although often defective and now mostly superseded, Lami's edition still provides the only printed text of chs. 42.39 to 53 (minus the lacuna in M at 49.16-51.17)<sup>75</sup>. The culmination of this editorial approach was Rezső Vári's meticulous but unfinished edition of Leo VI's *Taktika*, published in 1917-22. In a lower register, beneath Leo's text and its apparatus criticus, Vári placed corresponding derivative passages of Ouranos' *Taktika* (chs. 1-55). In accordance with its conventional "Constantinian" misascription, Vári conceived this section of Ouranos' treatise as a "*Recensio Constantiniana*" of Leo's work. Still unaware of prototypes K and O, Vári based his text of Ouranos' *Taktika* on M (ff. 1<sup>r</sup>-109<sup>r</sup>), for the first time consulted directly, as well as its descendant Heidelberg, UB, Pal. gr. 393, in which Vári mistook sixteenth-century editorial improvements for an authentic tradition. As Vári's project never progressed beyond Leo's *Taktika* 14.38, the parallel text of Ouranos' *Taktika* accordingly terminates at ch. 42.38. Although marred by long-term misconceptions about the manuscript transmission, Vári's text is far superior to Lami's and, until a critical edition incorporating K and O is prepared, it remains the best available text of chs. 2.42-71, 4.1-8.8, 11.10-42.38<sup>76</sup>.

Dain's ambition, as delineated in 1937, to edit the complete text from all three witnesses was not realised by his death in 1964. Nevertheless, his various studies led to "provisional" editions (lacking an apparatus criticus

---

74. J.[G.] LAMI (ed.), *Ioan. Meursi Opera omnia*, Florence 1741-63, VI (1745) 1211-1409. Verona, Bibl. Capit. MS 127 was copied from an unknown apograph of M in the first third of the seventeenth century. See DAIN, *Tactique*, 12, 120-121, 125-127, 131; with detailed description in E. MIONI, *Catalogo di manoscritti greci esistenti nelle biblioteche italiane*, Rome 1965, II 497-498.

75. See chs. 42.39 to 53 (unnumbered and without headings) in LAMI, *Meursi Opera omnia*, 1315|1316: ὀφειλεῖς ὃ στρατηγὲ καὶ τὰ ἐγκρούματα ... - 1409: ... εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. Ἀμήν.

76. R. VÁRI (ed.), *Leonis Imperatoris Tactica* (Sylloge tacticorum graecorum 3), Budapest 1917-22, 2 vols. Vári's editorial method: 66 (lower register) *et passim*, with xxvii, xxxii for stemma codicum (partly obsolete). Heidelberg, UB, Pal. gr. 393 and Vári's flawed methodology: DAIN, *Tactique*, 118-119, 127-128.



and/or based on a limited or uncertain collation) of another 11 chapters or part-chapters, which he prepared for the purpose of demonstrating textual traditions or source relationships. In each case, despite deficiencies, these are the only available published texts<sup>77</sup>. Dain and/or his colleagues also produced editions of other chapters that have since been superseded<sup>78</sup>. Currently, 54 chapters have comprehensive critical editions (54, 56-74, 89-100, 102-115, 119-123, 172-173, 176), dispersed across eight different publications<sup>79</sup>. Even within this selection, comprising chapters found only in M and/or O, the recent discovery of excerpts in Vienna, ÖNB, phil. gr. 120 + 112 may require revisions where one might have confidently thought editorial work was completed<sup>80</sup>. Finally, there remain 62 chapters

77. Provisional editions: DAIN, *Tactique*, 42-43, 57, 59, 79, 84-86, 88, 103: chs. 1.1-7, 83.1-2, 86.3-5, 88.1, 127.1, 131.6[7], 174, 175.2, 177.10-12; A. DAIN, *Le Corpus Perditum*, Paris 1939, 66, 68-69: chs. 78.1-2, 163.1-3.

78. J.-R. VIEILLEFOND, Adaptations et paraphrases du Commentaire d'Enée le Tacticien, *RPh* 6 (1932), 24-36, at 30-31, 33-34: chs. 112-113, based on the defective and lacunose text in M (superseded by RANCE, Reception, 360-362). J.-R. VIEILLEFOND, *Jules Africain: Fragments des Cestes*, Paris 1932, 77-85 (App. II): chs. 89-94, 97, 103, 106-111 (as "pseudo-Constantin Éclogé"), based on defective and lacunose M (superseded by MECELLA, Überlieferung, 115-143). DAIN, *Tactique*, 48, 62-63, 65, 68-70, 72, 82-83, 129-130: chs. 60.5-6, 65.11-17 [= 60.4-5, 65.19-22 McGeer], 95, 104, 115, 119.1, 122.1, 5, 123.12-13, 172 (superseded by McGEER, *Sowing*, 112/114, 160/162; MECELLA, Überlieferung, 131; RANCE, Reception, 362-363). DAIN, *Corpus Perditum*, 66, 68-69: chs. 100, 102 (superseded by MECELLA, Überlieferung, 125, 134). A. DAIN, *Naumachica*, Paris 1943, 69-98: ch. 54 (superseded by PRYOR and JEFFREYS, *Age of the ΔPOMΩN*, 571-605); ch. 119 (superseded by TARAGNA, Niceforo Urano, 20-24). A. DAIN and A.-M. BON (ed.), *Énée le Tacticien, Poliorcétique*, Paris 1967, 102-104: chs. 104, 172-173 (superseded by RANCE, Reception, 360-363). J.-A. DE FOUCAULT, Histiée de Milet et l'esclave tatoué, *REG* 80 (1967) 182-186, at 183-184, prints an unpublished and incomplete text of ch. 116 prepared by the late Dain, of uncertain manuscript authority (see RANCE, Reception, 351-352, with n. 174).

79. Ch. 54: ed. and Eng. trans. PRYOR and JEFFREYS, *Age of the ΔPOMΩN*, 571-605. Chs. 56-65: ed. and Eng. trans. McGEER, *Sowing*, 88-163; chs. 63-74: ed. and Fr. trans. DE FOUCAULT, Douze chapitres, 281-312. Chs. 89-100, 102-103, 105-111: ed. MECELLA, Überlieferung, 115-143. Chs. 104, 112-115, 172-173: ed. RANCE, Reception, 361-363. Ch. 119: ed. and It. trans. TARAGNA, Niceforo Urano, 20-28. Chs. 120-123: ed. DAIN, *Naumachica*, 99-104. Ch. 176: ed. C. ZUCKERMAN, Chapitres peu connus de l'*Apparatus Bellicus*, *TM* 12 (1994), 359-389, at 381-382.

80. See n. 55. Preliminary investigation indicates that one fragment in Vienna, ÖNB, phil. gr. 112 (f. 9<sup>v</sup>) corresponds to ch. 65.1-24. Disarranged excerpts in Vienna, ÖNB, phil.

of which no part has ever been published, mostly in the last third of the treatise<sup>81</sup>.

For a future complete edition of Ouranos' *Taktika*, K will become the base text for much of the first third of the treatise. As previously outlined, G.Ī. 36 contains chs. 1-43, with lacunae. This section derives from a single source, the *Taktika* of Leo VI, which Ouranos revised and incorporated, en bloc, as chs. 1-55 of his own *Taktika*. Composed c.905, Leo's *Taktika*, a bookish and largely derivative compilation of twenty "constitutions" (διατάξεις), is in turn an adaptation of Maurice's *Strategikon* (late 590s), updated and supplemented with new material as well as modified excerpts from ancient authors, chiefly Onasander (AD 49-57/8), Aelian (c.106-13) and Polyainos (c.161-3)<sup>82</sup>. Whether through choice or chance, Ouranos used a copy of Leo's *Taktika* that belonged to the so-called "Ambrosian" recension, a slightly later "revised edition" in which Leo's text had already undergone selective metaphrasis<sup>83</sup>. Aside from some omissions (notably Leo's prologue and constitution I) and occasional rearrangement, Ouranos' modifications to Leo's treatise are essentially lexical and stylistic. The derivative, "metaphrased" character of this section of Ouranos' *Taktika*, and the relatively short time span separating Ouranos' and Leo's texts, may partly explain why chs. 1-55 have attracted little scholarly attention since

---

gr. 120 (ff. 146<sup>v</sup>-147<sup>v</sup>) include material from chs. 61-72. This witness was overlooked in the editions of both DE FOUCAULT, "Douze chapitres" (chs. 63-74) and McGEER, *Sowing* (chs. 56-65); see preceding note.

81. To my knowledge, taking account of all preceding categories of critical editions and "provisional" texts, and excluding sections lost from all witnesses (see n. 50), 62 chapters have not been published, in whole or in part, in any form: 55, 75-82, 84-85, 87, 101, 117-118, 124-126, 128-130, 132-171, 178.

82. Text and Eng. trans.: G. T. DENNIS (ed.), *Leo VI, Taktika* (CFHB 49), Washington DC 2010; Commentary: J. HALDON, *A Critical Commentary on the Taktika of Leo VI*, Washington DC 2014. Leo's sources: below pp. 284-286.

83. The archetype of the "Ambrosian" recension must predate the late 950s. See VÁRI, *Leonis Imperatoris Tactica*, xxx-xxxiii (partly obsolete); DAIN, *Tactique*, 40-46, with conspectus at 19-21; ID., *Inventaire*, 40-42. See further MECELLA, *Überlieferung*, 104-105, n. 101; HALDON, *Commentary*, 55-66; P. RANCE, *The Ideal of the Roman General in Byzantium: the Reception of Onasander's Strategikos in Byzantine Military Literature*, in: *Generalship in Ancient Greece, Rome and Byzantium*, ed. S. TOUGHER – R. EVANS, Edinburgh 2022, 242-263, at 254-260.

Dain's monograph, except for a single chapter on naval warfare (ch. 53)<sup>84</sup>. Recent scholarship, however, has shown the fundamental importance of such adaptive linguistic-stylistic processes, especially successive metaphrasis and paraphrasis, for understanding how works of this type were renewed, transmitted and read. In particular, Eric McGeer's study (1995) of how Ouranos revised Nikephoros II Phokas' *Praecepta*, an even more recent work of the 960s, to form chs. 56-65 of his *Taktika*, demonstrated an approach that combines philological and historical dimensions<sup>85</sup>. In addition, the existence of Vári's "edition" of Ouranos' *Taktika* up to ch. 42.38, in parallel with his edition of Leo's *Taktika* (1917-22), may also have discouraged further editorial engagement with this section. In fact, as Vári's text is essentially a corrective transcription of M, mistakenly incorporating humanist "improvements", it presents, at best, a later version of these chapters as recast in the "Munich" recension. A new edition based on K would make available the text of the original "Oxford" recension of chs. 1-43, excepting lacunae in K (2.14-6.2, 30, 43.45). O is the superior witness for a segment comprising chs. 4.1-9.32, which, fortuitously, covers much of the only major gap in K. Reliance on M is necessary only for the very short ch. 30 (M f. 34<sup>r</sup>) and the final lines of paragraph 43.45 (f. 55<sup>v</sup>). Accordingly, apart from ch. 30, Vári's text becomes redundant except as a printed record of M. Furthermore, those chapters of Ouranos' *Taktika* uniquely preserved in K, and thus never published, are especially valuable where they can clarify obscurities in Leo's text and/or employ hitherto unattested technical vocabulary<sup>86</sup>.

84. PRYOR and JEFFREYS, *Age of the ΔPOMΩN*, 571-605.

85. MCGEER, *Sowing*, 79-167. See TARAGNA, Niceforo Urano, 5-10 for analysis of Ouranos' metaphrastic method in ch. 119; with remarks on language and style in his *Taktika* in MECCELLA, *Überlieferung*, 106-107; RANCE, *Reception*, 343-344 with n. 157. General observations on paraphrasis in military literature: G. CHATZELIS, *Byzantine Military Manuals as Literary Works and Practical Handbooks: The Case of the Tenth-Century Sylloge Tacticorum*, London 2019, 27-36, 72-73, 162-165.

86. Textual obscurities: e.g. since the mid-eighteenth century, readers of Leo, *Taktika* 2.33 (Dennis = Lami 2.52/Vári 2.48) have believed that Leo here alludes to another work, which scholars have struggled to identify: LAMI, *Meursi Opera omnia*, 555 n. 1 (repr. *PG* CVII, 693 n. 17); VÁRI, *Leonis Imperatoris Tactica*, I 41 app. crit.; DENNIS, *Taktika*, 37 n. 16; HALDON, *Commentary*, 134. In contrast, Ouranos, *Taktika* 1.48 (unpub. G.Ī. 36, p. 33) understood this passage as simply an internal cross-reference. Technical vocabulary: e.g. Ouranos, *Taktika* 10.10 (unpub. G.Ī. 36, p. 84), an adaptation of Leo, *Taktika* 7.54 (Dennis =

*The State of the Text in Istanbul, TSMK, G.Ī. 36 (= K)*

The superscription βιβλίον στρατηγικ(ὸν) χρηστικόν, ‘a useful book on generalship’, appears to be nothing more than a descriptive label, phrased in generic vocabulary that Byzantine editors and copyists commonly applied to any work of military content<sup>87</sup>. In contrast, a strikingly elaborate rubricated heading occupies nine lines, about half the text space of the first page. This unparalleled fusion of title, ascription and source-notice will be discussed separately in the following section. Directly below is the heading to a table of contents: ὁ πίναξ τοῦ βιβλίου. Previous studies of the paratextual apparatus of ancient and medieval texts acknowledge the sometimes questionable authenticity of *pinakes* or *indices capitulorum* and their complex interrelationships with in-text headings<sup>88</sup>. Aspects of the pinax in K (pp. 1-16) suggest that it may be a later development or has at least undergone revision<sup>89</sup>. The headings listed in the pinax contain certain late linguistic forms that occur rarely in the corresponding in-text headings in K and never in headings transmitted in O. The pinax also exhibits some terminological divergence or eccentricity<sup>90</sup>. Compositional distance from the original format of the treatise is implied in the indexing of chs. 123-171 and 175, each comprising a thematic assemblage of historical excerpts, which ultimately originate in Polyainos’ *Strategemata*. Here the compiler (or

---

Vári 7.66), attests the previously undocumented usage of γύροϛ in the sense of a shield boss: εἰς τοὺς γύροϛ τῶν σκουταρίων.

87. P. RANCE, Introduction, in: *Greek Taktika. Ancient Military Writing and its Heritage*, ed. P. RANCE – N.V. SEKUNDA, Gdańsk 2017, 217-255, at 23-24.

88. See e.g. the studies collected in J.-C. FREDOUILLE *et al.* (eds.), *Titres et articulations du texte dans les oeuvres antiques. Actes du Colloque International de Chantilly 13-15 décembre 1994*, Paris 1997, especially P. PETTMENGIN, *Capitula païens et chrétiens*, at 491-509.

89. DAIN, *Tactique*, 15-18, 107; summarised by MECELLA, *Überlieferung*, 102-103. See DAIN, *Tactique*, 19-37 for the edited text of the pinax. Leaving aside other minor errors, Dain’s text of the heading to ch. 39: Καὶ μὴ διώκειν αὐτοὺς ἀπάτως omits a preceding clause Περὶ τοῦ ἐρευνᾶν τὰ ἐγκρούματα τῶν ἐχθρῶν, as reported in K in both the pinax (p. 3: ἐγκρούμ-<μ>ατα) and within the text (p. 207), and correctly transcribed by Beheim-Schwarzbach in Freiburg, UB, Hs 706, pp. iii, 191.

90. DAIN, *Tactique*, 16-17. Late forms: e.g. νά for ἴνα. Terminological divergence: e.g. pinax chs. 17, 21-24, 34 read φλάμουλον instead of βάνδον found in the in-text headings; pinax chs. 21 and 23 read ταγματάρχης for τουρμάρχης in the in-text headings.

a later redactor) of the pinax misconstrued the self-contained paragraphs within each chapter as separate chapters, resulting in a vast proliferation of numbered headings up to a total of 254<sup>91</sup>. Furthermore, the pinax in K reproduces minor structural peculiarities found also within the text of M (and thus in the exemplar used by the redactor of the “Munich” recension), but not in O, which otherwise appears to be the more authoritative witness<sup>92</sup>. Accordingly, if a pinax was in fact present in Ouranos’ original composition or affixed early in its textual history, the version of the pinax transmitted in K must represent a later redaction designed to accommodate irregularities that had emerged in a common ancestor of K and M, by harmonising inconsistencies between the pinax and the main text. Alternatively, in the absence of evidence, there can be no certainty that the tradition witnessed by O ever contained the pinax, in which case this feature was particular to the tradition from which K and M descend. Whatever its date and provenance, the text of the pinax in K contains a lacuna that eliminates 64 headings, chs. 59 to 122 inclusive, undoubtedly owing to the loss of a folio from the copyist’s antigraph or a prior ancestor. With respect to chs. 65-122, this lacuna can be filled by in-text chapter headings transmitted in O. Only the headings of chs. 59-64 thus remain lost, as these chapters are uniquely preserved in M, which lacks all headings owing to deficient rubrication<sup>93</sup>.

Overall, the few lacunae and errors in the text in K are primarily due to the copyist’s defective antigraph rather than his mistakes or subsequent damage<sup>94</sup>. Indeed, the copyist appears to have been diligent and alert to certain textual difficulties. Noticing that the text in his model jumped from ch. 2 to 6, he signalled this lacuna by leaving nearly two pages blank (p. 39: seven lines only; p. 40: entirely blank), in the hope that this gap could be

---

91. DAIN, *Tactique*, 17. BLASS, Nachtrag, 622, “von den 264 Capiteln” is an error, thence VÁRI, *Incerti auctoris Byzantini*, ix-x.

92. E.g. in the pinax in K (p. 9, §151-§153) and in the text in M (f. 148<sup>v</sup>), ch. 139 has lost its heading and is conjoined to ch. 138, whereas in O (ff. 275<sup>r</sup>-275<sup>v</sup>) these two chapters are distinct with separate headings. More specifically, in the pinax in K (p. 9, §147, §141) and in the text in M (ff. 148<sup>r</sup>, 147<sup>v</sup>), passage 137.5 is displaced between 136.22 and 23, an error not found in O (275<sup>r</sup>, 274<sup>v</sup>). See DAIN, *Tactique*, 29 n. 1, 107.

93. DAIN, *Tactique*, 15-16. The heading of ch. 55 is also omitted from the pinax and thus uncertain.

94. BLASS, Nachtrag, 622; DEISSMANN, *Forschungen*, 72; DAIN, *Tactique*, 94-95.

filled if another witness were to become available. In fact, the length of the lacuna (chs. 2.14 to 6.2) indicates a much more substantial loss from his antigraph (or its ancestor), probably an entire quaternion<sup>95</sup>. Otherwise, the only significant disruption occurs with the disarrangement of respective headings and content at chs. 30-32 (p. 205), where the text of 30 has gone astray and only its heading is transmitted; the content of 31 is placed under the heading of 30; the content of 32 is placed under the heading of 31 and the correct heading of 32 is omitted. All subsequent chapters are thus misnumbered (33-43 to 32-42)<sup>96</sup>. It seems most likely that this disorder was already present in the antigraph. If the copyist himself had introduced this muddle, he would surely have noticed that thereafter all his chapter numbers, up to the end of the codex, were not synchronised with those in his model.

Occasionally, after certain technical terms, the copyist inserts ἦγουν followed by a one-word blank space. Although this gap resembles a lacuna, the copyist's purpose is seemingly not to indicate his omission of an illegible synonym or gloss present in his antigraph, but rather to signal uncertainty about the transcription, validity and/or meaning of the preceding term and to facilitate, if necessary, a future correction<sup>97</sup>.

95. Although Beheim-Schwarzbach in Freiburg, UB, Hs. 706, pp. 23-24, precisely replicated the blank space in K, pp. 39-40, DAIN, *Tactique*, 94 misunderstood that only “une moitié de page” was left blank. Nonetheless, Dain's intuition is valid: “Cette lacune doit répondre à la chute d'environ un cahier dans un archétype plus ancien”.

96. BLASS, Nachtrag, 622 thought ch. 32 is missing; correctly DAIN, *Tactique*, 95 n. 1. It appears that the copyist or a prior editor sought to alleviate the discrepancy. Apparently noticing that the heading of ch. 31: Περὶ τῶν λεγομένων δεποτάτων, “On so-called medical orderlies”, had no relevance to the following content regarding scouts and sentries (= ch. 32: Περὶ βίγλας ...), someone added to the end of this heading the words Περὶ κατασκόπων, “On scouts”.

97. In six instances, after a *terminus technicus* the copyist places ἦγουν (written in full or in ligature) followed by a blank space: pp. 35 (ch. 2.2-3): εἰς κοντουβέρονια ἦγουν ..., τοὺς δρογγους (sic) ἦγουν ..., τὰς τούμας ἦγουν ... (the first occurrence of each of these three terms); 43 (ch. 6.3): τὸ ἀρμαμέντον ἦγουν ...; 47 (ch. 6.14): τὴν σάρισαν ἦγουν ...; 56 (ch. 8.11): χαρζάνια ἦγουν ...; 100 (ch. 12.4): διὰ ἀδνούμιον ἦγουν .... The last four cases occur in passages that are also preserved in another witness (M or O), which does not contain any additional text that would fill the blank space. Nor do the corresponding passages of Leo's *Taktika* or studies of contemporary military vocabulary give any reason to suspect that the

More rarely, dots or lines above and below words indicate doubts about the received text<sup>98</sup>.

It appears that the text originally ended abruptly at the bottom of p. 287, the recto of the final leaf (8 of quaternion 18), irrespective of subsequent trauma to the lower half of this page. Its verso, p. 288, is entirely blank except for much later annotations. Before discovery in 1887, the lower sides and bottom of this leaf suffered damage, resulting in peripheral loss of text on p. 287, though in 1888 Beheim-Schwarzbach could see some wording that has since been obscured by restoration. His facsimile is thus the better witness. Currently, the last legible text on p. 287 comprises three words at the centre of penultimate line 22. Beheim-Schwarzbach read almost all of this line and much of final line 23: ...]ένους καὶ ὑπὸ τασσομένους σ[οι] τα[...]<sup>99</sup>. As the text of this passage (43.45) is also preserved in M, it is possible to calculate that this last line of p. 287 ended mid-sentence (τα[πρινὸς δέ]), after which should follow approximately another six to seven lines before the chapter ends<sup>100</sup>. As it seems unlikely that the copyist just happened to have reached the bottom of his current page at precisely the point his antigraph also stopped, it must be assumed that, for whatever reason, the termination of the text here, without continuing onto p. 288, relates to the production of G.Ī. 36 and not to a fault in its model<sup>101</sup>.

---

copyist had been unable, in these seven cases, to read a synonym or gloss uniquely found in his antigraph. The same practice is found in the pinax: pp. 2-3: ἰγ' Περὶ τοῦ τοῦλδου ἦγουν ...; κη' Περὶ καταστάσεως κοντουβερνίων (sic) ἦγουν ... (DAIN, *Tactique*, 20: ed. τοῦ κοντουβερνίου), though ἦγουν does not occur in the corresponding in-text headings at pp. 130, 204.

98. E.g. p. 121 (ch. 12.56): εἰς τὴν παραταγὴν {τοῦ πολέμου}; the phrase in parenthesis, which the copyist marks with dots as doubtful, does not occur in M. Also p. 272 (ch. 43.4), where the scribe marks with dots the clause ἐκείνοι δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ τείχους βλέπουσιν, which has been repeated in error from four lines above; compare M f. 51<sup>r</sup>. Similarly, p. 191 (ch. 12.80) the repeated clause κλίνωσιν ἐπὶ σκουτάριον καὶ is marked with lines above and below; compare M f. 30<sup>v</sup>.

99. See Freiburg, UB, Hs. 706, p. 271.

100. See M f. 55<sup>v</sup> (partly obscured by staining); printed, with lacunae, in LAMI, *Meursi Opera omnia*, 1347-1348. See DAIN, *Tactique*, 94.

101. In contrast, DAIN, *Tactique*, 95 leaves open both possibilities: the copyist did not finish his work or his model was mutilated.



*The Title of Ouranos' Taktika and a Scholion to Leo's Taktika (prol. 6)*

For half a century after the discovery of G.Ī. 36 in 1887, the main heading on p. 1 was one of the few published details<sup>102</sup>. Its unusual length, form and content have since elicited modest scholarly interest and speculation<sup>103</sup>. As the nine-line title has never been correctly printed, with an apparatus criticus, the text is presented in full below:

Τακτικὰ ἤγουν στρατηγικὰ Ἀρριανοῦ, | Αἰλιανοῦ, Πέλοπος,  
Πολυαίνου, Ὀνα|σάνδρου, Ἀλκιβιάδου, Ἄρταξέρξου, | Συριανοῦ,  
Ἄννίβα, Πλουτάρχου, Ἀλε|ξάνδρου, Διοδώρου, Δίωνος, Πολυβίου,  
| Ἡρακλείτου, Μαυρικίου, Νικηφόρου | καὶ ἄλλων τινῶν, συλλεγὲν  
παρὰ Νικηφόρου | μαγίστρου τοῦ Οὐράνου ἀπὸ πολλῶν ὡς | εἴρηται  
ἱστορικῶν ἐν ἐπιμελείᾳ πολλῇ.

[Dain = *Histoire*, 150] | στρατηγικὰ Dain : στρατιγικὰ cod. | Ἀρριανοῦ Dain : Ἀριανοῦ  
cod. | Ὀνασάνδρου corr. Rance : Ὀνησάνδρου corr. Dain : Ὀνοσάνδρου cod. | Ἄννίβα  
Dain : Ἄνιβα cod. | Ἡρακλείτου edd. : Ἡρακλήτου cod.]

*Taktika* or *strategika* of Arrian, Aelian, Pelops, Polyainos, Onasander, Alkibiades, Artaxerxes, Syrianos, Hannibal, Plutarch, Alexander, Diodoros, Dio, Polybios, Herakleitos, Maurice, Nikephoros and of certain others, collected by Nikephoros Ouranos *magister* from many historical works, as described, with great diligence.

Generally, the list combines known writers of military treatises, ancient and recent, with classical historians and famous commanders of antiquity. There is no apparent rationale to the sequence, thematic or chronological, except that the latest individual, Nikephoros II Phokas, is named last. Vocabulary and syntax, however, can frustrate the overarching logic. Most problematic is the intended meaning of *τακτικὰ ἤγουν στρατηγικά*, which is not offered as the title of Ouranos' work, but rather describes its contents

102. First published in BLASS, *Handschriften*, 225; thence VĀRI, *Incerti auctoris Byzantini*, ix-xi.

103. Re-edited (via Freiburg, UB, Hs. 706, p. i) in DAIN, *Tactique*, 13, with discussion at 89-90; re-printed in ID., *Histoire*, 150 (partial edited text); ID., *Stratégistes*, 371, 373; recently reprinted in MECELLA, *Überlieferung*, 101 n. 84; RANCE, *Reception*, 346-347 n. 163; TARAGNA, *Niceforo Urano*, 2 n. 7; and Eng. trans. in TROMBLEY, *Taktika*, 271-272 (omitting Dio).

and/or sources<sup>104</sup>. Usually, these two substantives would refer generically to “books on tactics or generalship” or function as the specific titles of works of this type, even if, as previously noted, the application of such labels was often arbitrary and rarely offers a reliable guide to their precise content<sup>105</sup>. While the generic definition applies to extant treatises by Arrian, Aelian, Polyainos, Onasander, Syrianos, Maurice and Nikephoros II Phokas (and, if long-lost *taktika* were included, also Polybios), other authors listed here are not easily accommodated in this category. If we cannot entirely exclude the possibility that now-lost military writings spuriously ascribed to Alexander the Great or Hannibal might have circulated in this period, Alkibiades and Artaxerxes seem improbable choices for pseudonymic compositions. In any case, the contention that historical writers such as Plutarch, Diodoros and Dio wrote “military manuals” would certainly be eccentric and points towards an alternative meaning. All the more so, as the grammatical structure requires that Ouranos “collected” or “brought together” τακτικὰ ἤγουν στρατηγικά “from many historical works” – whether ιστορικῶν is construed as genitive plural of ιστορικοί, “historians”, or of ιστορικά, “historical (books)”, the basic sense is the same. Accordingly, τακτικὰ ἤγουν στρατηγικά cannot refer to specific treatises or collectively to a military-literary genre, but must more broadly signify precepts, principles or methods of tactics and generalship, assembled and extracted from diverse sources<sup>106</sup>. Near-contemporary evidence also warns against a strict application of modern generic categorisations: probably c.952, Constantine VII recommended the works of Syrianos and Polyainos as examples of “historical books” (βιβλία ιστορικά), presumably in reference to the ancient exempla they supply or, more generally, their derivative relationship to classical texts<sup>107</sup>.

104. McGeer, *Sowing*, 79 incorrectly entitles the treatise Τακτικὰ ἤγουν Στρατηγικά Νικηφόρου τοῦ Οὐρανοῦ. Strictly, the text in G.Ī. 36 lacks a title other than the preceding superscription βιβλίων στρατηγικ(όν) χρηστικόν, which is unlikely to be authentic, at least in this form. Dain’s designation “*Tactique*” is a modern convention.

105. See n. 87.

106. See previously Rance, *Reception*, 346, “*taktika* or *strategika*’ is used here in the widest sense of ‘military authorities’ and not with the restricted meaning of technical manuals”.

107. Dain, *Tactique*, 89 n. 1. Const. Porph. Text C.198-9: βιβλία ιστορικά, ἔξαιρέτως δὲ Πολύαινον καὶ Συριανόν, ed. J. F. HALDON, *Three Treatises on Imperial Military*

A unique combination of ascription and source-notice, the heading to Ouranos' work finds no parallel elsewhere in the genre. This peculiarity has prompted uncertainty about whether this title, at least in its received format, could be authorial or the work of a redactor<sup>108</sup>. In either case, it reads more like a scholion than an authentic heading. In fact, an analogous and partially corresponding scholion occurs in one manuscript tradition of Leo's *Taktika*. In his prologue, Leo explains his methodology with respect to available sources<sup>109</sup>:

Ταῖς γὰρ ἀρχαίαις καὶ δὴ καὶ ταῖς νεωτέροις στρατηγικαῖς τε καὶ τακτικαῖς ἐμφιλοχωρήσαντες μεθόδοις καὶ ταῖς ἄλλαις καταλογάδην ἐντυχόντες ἱστορίαις, καὶ εἴ τι κατὰ χεῖρας ἔδοξε χρῆσιμον τῶν ἐν πολέμοις ἀναγκαίων, ἐκείθεν ἀναλεξάμενοι καὶ οἷον ἐρανισάμενοι,

For having spent a long time studying the ancient and indeed also the more recent methods of generalship and tactics, and read in detail other accounts, if anything to hand seemed useful to the needs of war, we gathered it up and, as it were, brought it together.

Like Ouranos' title, Leo describes a process of collection and extraction or abstraction, drawing on both military theory (στρατηγικαῖς τε καὶ τακτικαῖς ... μεθόδοις) and supplementary historical sources (ταῖς ἄλλαις ... ἱστορίαις). His adjectival use of στρατηγικὸς and τακτικὸς with respect to μέθοδοι reinforces the preceding interpretation of substantive τακτικὰ ἦγουν στρατηγικά in Ouranos' title as precepts rather than treatises<sup>110</sup>. This passage of Leo's prologue inspired a marginal annotation found in one manuscript family. Starting beside the words Ταῖς γὰρ ἀρχαίαις ..., the margin contains a list of names: Ἄρριανοῦ, Αἰλιανοῦ, Πέλοπος, Ὀνησάνδρου, Μηνᾶ, Πολυαίνου, Συριανοῦ, Πλουτάρχου<sup>111</sup>. The

*Expeditions* (CFHB 28), Vienna 1990, 106, with commentary at 210-211. Dating: HALDON, *Three Treatises*, 36-69, with RANCE, *Reception*, 302-303 n. 35.

108. E.g. DAIN, *Histoire*, 150, "pour notre stratège, ou tout au moins pour l'auteur de ce titre"; ID., *Stratégistes*, 371, "le rédacteur du titre".

109. Leo, *Taktika*, prolog. 6 (Dennis 6.55-58).

110. Compare Leo, *Taktika*, prolog. 4: ταῖς στρατηγικαῖς μεθόδοις, 8: ταῖς τακτικαῖς τε καὶ στρατηγικαῖς ... μελέταις, 10: γνώμας τινας τακτικὰς τε καὶ στρατηγικὰς (Dennis 4.32, 8.85, 10.110).

111. Leo, *Taktika*, prolog. 6 (Dennis 6.56-57, app. crit., with Eng. trans. at 7 n. 4); see also

chronology and interrelationship of the witnesses, which constitute a branch of the earlier “Laurentian” recension of Leo’s *Taktika*, indicate that this scholion dates back at least to the second half of the tenth century<sup>112</sup>. Evidently intended to specify those authorities to which Leo alludes, the scholion correctly identifies five direct sources of Leo’s *Taktika* (Arrian, Aelian, Onasander, Polyainos, Syrianos) and one indirect source (Plutarch), while two names are enigmatic and possibly corrupt (Pelops, Menas)<sup>113</sup>. This

---

R. VÁRI, *Bölcs Leó császárnak “A hadi taktikáról” szóló munkája* (Értekezések a történeti tudományok köréből XVII.10), Budapest 1898, 66-68; ID., *Überlieferung*, 68; ID., *Leonis Imperatoris Tactica*, I xxxiii n. 1 (read f. 1<sup>v</sup> for 1<sup>r</sup>).

112. Misconceptions in recent scholarship call for clarification. Five manuscripts contain the scholion. The earliest is Vienna, ÖNB, phil. gr. 275, f. 1<sup>r</sup>, which probably dates to the second half of the tenth century, though some scholars have preferred the early eleventh. Subsequent members of this family are thirteenth-century Paris, BnF, grec. 1385, f. 3<sup>r</sup> (of which late fifteenth-/early sixteenth-century Bologna, Bibl. Comunale dell’Archiginnasio, A 21, f. 3<sup>r</sup> is a copy), late fifteenth-/early sixteenth-century Vatican, BAV, Reg. gr. 100 and mid-sixteenth-century London, BL, Add. 15242, f. 2<sup>v</sup>. The four primary witnesses descend independently from a common ancestor that contained the scholion, which necessarily predates Vienna, ÖNB, phil. gr. 275. On this textual tradition see VÁRI, *Leonis Imperatoris Tactica*, I xii, xxx-xxxii; DAIN, *Histoire*, 150-151, “Cette mention remonte, à n’en pas douter, à une note marginale placée dans l’ancêtre de ces cinq manuscrits”; ID., *Inventaire*, 35, with additional remarks in RANCE, *Reception*, 305 n. 40. See further DENNIS, *Taktika*, x-xiii on Vienna, ÖNB, phil. gr. 275 (= W), without mentioning the other manuscripts of this family, even though certainly the *Parisinus* (and potentially the *Vaticanus* and *Londinensis*) is significant for the constitution of the text. Dennis’ inference (7 n. 4) that “perhaps the scribe” of Vienna, ÖNB, phil. gr. 275 was responsible for the scholion is incorrect; likewise HALDON, *Commentary*, 125 (read f. 1<sup>r</sup> for 1<sup>v</sup>), “possibly the copyist himself”. Similarly, HALDON, *Commentary*, 58-59 believes that the later witnesses “deriv[e] directly” from Vienna, ÖNB, phil. gr. 275 (citing DAIN, *Inventaire*, 35, who states the opposite); this is demonstrably not the case.

113. Leo’s sources: DAIN, *Histoire*, 134-147; HALDON, *Commentary*, 39-55, 72-80, 125, 389-92; RANCE, *The Ideal*, 255-257. Pelops (Πέλοψ) and Menas (Μηνᾶς): HALDON, *Commentary*, 125 assumes, without explanation, that they must be respectively third- and fifth-century BC Spartans. Posthumously published DAIN, *Stratégistes*, 371 appears open to the possibility that Pelops might be an authentic author of a lost or anonymously transmitted military text, but there is no obvious gap in our knowledge of Leo’s sources that this conjecture can fill. A. NEFĚDKIN, *Неизвестные античные источники византийских военных трактатов*, *Hypothekai* 5 (2021) 64-82, at 71-72, inconclusively surveys other individuals named Pelops. To date, the most plausible explanation of “Pelops” was offered by VÁRI, *Bölcs Leó*, 68, who deduced that contracted Πέλοπ<sup>ol(s)</sup>, as found in the oldest witness (Vienna,

list of names is strikingly similar, in content and sequence, to the beginning of Ouranos' titular source-notice: Ἀρριανοῦ, Αἰλιανοῦ, Πέλοπος, Πολυαίνου, Ὀνησάνδρου, Ἀλκιβιάδου, Ἀρταξέρξου, Συριανοῦ, Ἀννίβα, Πλουτάρχου ... There are additions (Alkibiades, Artaxerxes, Hannibal), one omission ("Menas") and a transposition (Polyainos and Onasander)<sup>114</sup>. The transmission of Leo's *Taktika*, as currently understood, complicates any assumption of a direct textual connection: as noted, the scholion is particular to manuscripts of one branch of the "Laurentian" recension of Leo's treatise, whereas Ouranos' exemplar of Leo's work belonged to the "Ambrosian" recension, in which this scholion is not known to have occurred<sup>115</sup>. Nonetheless, the correspondence between the scholion and Ouranos' title, in extent and specificity, is greater than can reasonably be explained by chance, while verbal and conceptual parallels with the adjacent text of Leo's prologue suggest that this passage, together with its scholion, inspired the form and content of Ouranos' title.

As Dain was able to identify the source(s), both ultimate and intermediary, of all but a handful of the 178 chapters of Ouranos' *Taktika*, it should be possible to test the validity of this titular source-notice according to reliable criteria<sup>116</sup>. Even so, the issue is complicated and entails some

---

ÖNB, phil. gr. 275, f. 1'), derives from a copyist's misreading of Πολυβ(ίου). In which case, the scholiast may have perceived similarities between the gnomic material in Leo's *Taktika* 20 and Polybios' *Histories* (e.g. Leo 20.27 = Polyb. 10.32.11-12), though Polybios was never Leo's direct source; see HALDON, *Commentary*, 422. The identity of Menas remains puzzling. The glaring omission from the scholion is Maurice, Leo's main source, but Μαυρικίου to Μηνᾶ is an unlikely error. NEFĒDKIN, *Неизвестные античные источники*, 72 seeks to connect this name to the fragmentary *De scientia politica dialogus, Menae patricii cum Thoma referendario* (ed. C. M. MAZZUCCHI, Milan 2002<sup>2</sup>), in my view a conjecture without merit, not least because Leo's *Taktika* exhibits no familiarity with this text.

114. The partial correspondence was noted by e.g. VÁRI, *Incerti auctoris Byzantini*, ix-x; DAIN, *Histoire*, 150-151; ID., *Stratégistes*, 371-373.

115. For the "Ambrosian" recension see above n. 83.

116. For only five chapters (117-118, 120-121, 174) is the ultimate source unknown. See DAIN, *Tactique*, 39-89, with conspectus at 19-37; summarised ID., *Stratégistes*, 350-353, 359-361, 371-373; supplemented or modified in McGEER, *Tradition*, 131-134; MECCELLA, *Überlieferung*, 104-12; RANCE, *Reception*, 338-56. Despite this scholarship, NEFĒDKIN, *Неизвестные античные источники*, wrongly assuming that the content of Ouranos' *Taktika* is still substantially unknown, wishes to fill that supposed vacuum with fanciful and unnecessary speculations about certain names in the titular source-notice.

degree of circularity: to all appearances, the list of 17 names incorporates a core of seven names imported en bloc from a prior scholion to Leo's *Taktika*, which was in turn the exclusive source for chs. 1-55 of Ouranos' *Taktika*. Therefore, if the original scholiast accurately identified seven sources of Leo's *Taktika*, those same seven necessarily became indirect or "second-hand" sources of Ouranos' *Taktika*, whether or not he also consulted them directly. The absence of Leo VI from Ouranos' source-notice is conspicuous but not especially surprising, given a long-term tendency of compilers to suppress the source(s) to which they owe the greatest debt – Leo himself, while citing classical authorities, never names Maurice, his principal model. Of the military theoreticians listed, Ouranos clearly used first-hand Arrian's *Technē taktikē*, Aelian's *Taktikē theoria* and Onasander's *Strategikos*, though, as noted, he also imported material from all three works indirectly via Leo's *Taktika*<sup>117</sup>. Ouranos evidently read the recent treatise of Nikephoros II Phokas<sup>118</sup>. He may also have been familiar with the treatises of Polyainos, Syrianos and Maurice, though all material from their works found in his *Taktika* was demonstrably transmitted via at least one intervening compendium and often several. In these three cases, if the compiler of the title did not simply reproduce these names from a scholion, he was able to identify the unnamed sources behind an intermediary source, even after they had been variously modified in content, arrangement and/or wording<sup>119</sup>. The most suspicious name in this military-scientific category is Pelops, exceptionally rare outside mythology and unknown as a writer in any period or genre. Whether or not older scholarship was correct in explaining Πέλοπο(ς) in the scholion to Leo's prologue as a transcriptional error for Πολυβ(ίου), the recurrence of this peculiar name in Ouranos' title looks like an uncritical rehearsal of that earlier source-notice<sup>120</sup>.

---

117. Aelian (with Arrian): DAIN, *Histoire*, 134-151. Onasander: RANCE, *The Ideal*, 255-260. Ouranos' direct use of Arrian's *Technē taktikē* requires further investigation, especially given its tenuous manuscript transmission.

118. MCGEER, *Tradition*, 132-134; ID., *Sowing*, 80-81.

119. DAIN, *Tactique*, 51-86 (*De re strategica* (anonyme) = Syrianos; Urbicius = Maurice); F. SCHINDLER, *Die Überlieferung der Strategemata des Polyainos* (ÖAW phil.-hist. Klasse Sitzungsberichte 284.1) Vienna 1973, 205-223; MECCELLA, *Überlieferung*, 105-107; RANCE, *Reception*, 327-332, 338-40; TARAGNA, *Niceforo Urano*, 3-10.

120. See n. 113.

In contrast, the names of ancient commanders in Uranos' heading, some obvious choices, others much less so, appear to have been lifted from the long series of exemplary historical excerpts comprising chs. 123-171 and 175, which derive from successive reworkings of Polyainos' *Strategemata*. Among the many exempla of stratagems are found episodes concerning Alexander and Hannibal, unremarkably, but also Alcibiades and Artaxerxes. In the extant witnesses to this section, the names are clearly visible: a new paragraph is signalled by preceding punctuation and a space (in M and O); each excerpt typically starts with the name of the protagonist, potentially with a rubricated initial (intended but not executed in M). The compiler of the titular source-notice could have easily encountered such names by browsing through these chapters without necessarily reading the text<sup>121</sup>. Regarding the listed historians Diodoros, Dio, Polybios and Plutarch (if the last-named was not merely replicated from the scholion to Leo's *Taktika*): an erudite compiler might have been –or thought himself– able to discern their works as the distant source-texts of excerpts in chs. 123-171, 175. If so, as multiple adaptations have transformed the language and style of each passage beyond recognition, such identifications would depend purely on content. As Cassius Dio wrote more than half a century after Polyainos compiled the *Urtext* of this tradition, he cannot actually be the source for any of these excerpts, but Polyainos did draw material from Diodoros, Polybios and Plutarch, or at least they and Polyainos supply corresponding information<sup>122</sup>. In addition, although Polybios was probably perceived above all as a historian, the fact that he was also known to have written a military treatise renders his significance in the list somewhat ambiguous, even if this work, according to scholarly consensus, had been lost for centuries<sup>123</sup>.

121. Hannibal: chs. 123.12, 127.7, 136.11, 141.1, 145.1, 148.2-3, 164.6 (also previously at 73.3); Alexander: 124.2, 126.5, 127.4, 129.3, 131.5, 140.2-3, 152.2, 166.1; Alcibiades: 129.1, 144.2, 147.1, 157.1; Artaxerxes: 167.1-2. This line of reasoning requires that the compiler of the title looked through the text of chs. 123-171, and not merely the pinax (at least as transmitted in K), as this would not have provided the requisite information (for example, Artaxerxes is not named in the pinax). A suggestion of TROMBLEY, *Taktika*, 271, "Artaxerxes (= Xenophon?)" is unfounded.

122. J. MELBER, Über die Quellen und den Wert der Strategemensammlung Polyäns: ein Beitrag zur griechischen Historiographie, *Jahrbücher für classische Philologie* suppl. 14 (1885) 417-688.

123. *Sylloge tacticorum* 47.20, dating to the 930s-940s, adduces Polybios, alongside



Alternatively, from a more cynical viewpoint, the compiler of Ouranos' title may simply have opted to insert some well-known historical authorities. The inclusion of a Herakleitos is left unexplained: as no relevant military author, historian or general of this name is identifiable, inquiry cannot extend beyond conjecture<sup>124</sup>.

Ultimately, if an underlying influence of Leo's prologue and its marginal scholion is hard to deny, the elaborated titular source-notice to Ouranos' treatise is open to multiple interpretations. One could see here genuine erudition of Ouranos himself, a well-read soldier-savant, attuned to the actual content and (direct and indirect) sources of his work. Or a later redactor may have confected a superficial catalogue of mere names, some of them unconnected figures or even *nomina ficta*, a tendency observed elsewhere in tenth-century military literature<sup>125</sup>. The former position, that of sincere scholarly endeavour, finds potential support from Ouranos' intellectual standing, as evidenced by literary attainments in other spheres, including poetry, hagiography and epistolography<sup>126</sup>. Nonetheless, it seems that Ouranos did not know the ultimate origin of at least some of the source material at his disposal, understandably, insofar as ancient texts came into

---

Aelian, as an authority on deployment, but the referential context is unclear. Polybios' lost military treatise: L. POZNANSKI, La polémologie pragmatique de Polybe, *Journal des Savants* (1994) 1: 19-74, at 21-23 (with bibliography); A. M. DEVINE, Polybios' lost *Tactica*: the ultimate source for the tactical manuals of Asclepiodotus, Aelian, and Arrian?, *Ancient History Bulletin* 9.1 (1995) 40-44.

124. Of several Herakleitoi documented in antiquity, ΝΕΦΕΔΚΙΝ, Неизвестные античные источники, 76 favours an obscure Herakleitos of Lesbos (*BNJ* 167), author of a lost history of Macedonia uniquely recorded in Diog. Laert. 9.1.17. This proposal is without merit. Alternatively, I hazard the speculation that Ἡρακλείτου might be read as Ἡρακλείου, whereby the celebrated soldier-emperor Herakleios I is at least found in appropriate company alongside Maurice and Nikephoros II.

125. A propensity to historicise anonymous military precepts by inserting the names of famous generals or even invented persons has been noted in the *Sylloge tacticorum*, compiled around six or seven decades earlier, from substantially the same sources as Ouranos' *Taktika*: see examples and further bibliography in RANCE, Reception, 348-349.

126. McGEER, Tradition, 129-130; TARAGNA, Niceforo Urano, 1-2; C. COCOLA, A repentant sinner: representing the self in Nikephoros Ouranos' catanyctic alphabet, *BMGS* 46.2 (2022), 176-195. TROMBLEY, *Taktika*, 271-272 not implausibly credits Ouranos with knowing "the ultimate provenance of many of the texts he rewrote in ... the *Taktika*", but Trombley's analysis is otherwise marred by misconceptions.

his hands as dismembered, decontextualised and anonymous excerpts via derivative compendia<sup>127</sup>. In either scenario, the conjunction of theorists of war, historians of war and practitioners of war in this partly fanciful, name-dropping list presumably reflects a concern to amass many and different sources of authority, whether to magnify Ouranos' learnedness and reading or to enhance the value – both intellectual and commercial – of this book. Given that the first third of Ouranos' work is an unacknowledged revision of Leo's treatise, the expansion of the original scholion to Leo's prologue might even be construed as conscious emulation or competition.

---

127. RANCE, *Reception*, 344-346.

ΤΟ ΤΕΛΕΥΤΑΙΟ ΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΝΟ ΣΤΡΑΤΙΩΤΙΚΟ ΧΕΙΡΟΓΡΑΦΟ:  
ISTANBUL TSMK G.İ. 36 (OLIM *CONSTANTINOPOLITANUS SERAGLIENSIS GR. 36*)  
ΚΑΙ ΤΑ *ΤΑΚΤΙΚΑ* ΤΟΥ ΝΙΚΗΦΟΡΟΥ ΟΥΡΑΝΟΥ

Το χειρόγραφο Istanbul, TSMK, G.İ. 36 (παλαιότερα γνωστό ως *codex Constantinopolitanus / Seragliensis graecus 36*) αποτελεί σημαντικό και σε αρκετά χωρία μοναδικό μάρτυρα του κειμένου των *Τακτικών* του Νικηφόρου Ουρανού, μιας ιδιαίτερας εκτεταμένης πολεμικής πραγματείας που συντάχθηκε περί το 1000 και παραμένει σε μεγάλο βαθμό ανέκδοτη. Ο κώδικας G.İ. 36, έργο των αρχών της δεκαετίας του 1430, αποτελεί το τελευταίο παράδειγμα βυζαντινού χειρογράφου του είδους και είναι σπάνια περίπτωση ελληνικού κώδικα παλαιότερου του 1453 που διασώθηκε στην οθωμανική σουλτανική βιβλιοθήκη. Αν και εντοπίστηκε στο ανάκτορο του Τοπκαπί το 1887, δυσκολίες στην πρόσβαση εμπόδισαν επί μακρόν την επιστημονική του έρευνα και παραμένει έως σήμερα το λιγότερο μελετημένο χειρόγραφο στον χώρο των βυζαντινών στρατιωτικών πραγματειών. Η παρούσα εργασία είναι η πρώτη συστηματική μελέτη του G.İ. 36. Επιχειρείται μια ολοκληρωμένη κωδικολογική και φιλολογική έρευνα, όπου μελετάται και αναθεωρείται η παλαιότερη βιβλιογραφία, παρέχεται λεπτομερής περιγραφή του κώδικα και αξιολογούνται οι ομοιότητες σε επίπεδο κειμένου και η σημασία του για μια πλήρη κριτική έκδοση των *Τακτικών* του Νικηφόρου Ουρανού.

