

Evidence for the Hun Invasion of Thrace in A.D. 422

Brian Croke

THE HISTORY of the Hun invasions of the Danubian and Balkan provinces of the Roman empire is still not as clear as one would like. We are better informed about the major and most destructive raids of 441, 442 and 447, but even here universal agreement has never been achieved. Still, it was the severe impact of these large-scale and effective incursions in the 440's that overshadowed and blotted out the memory of previous, less destructive ones. It is known, for example, that the Huns broke into Thrace and caused havoc in 422, but little has ever been said about it. The latest discussion of the invasion concludes thus: "Nowhere in the history of the Huns is the one-sidedness of our sources more manifest. Hun bands skirmished with Roman soldiers almost at the gates of Constantinople. Yet no word about it appears in the detailed ecclesiastical histories, no allusion in the vast theological literature of the time."¹ This statement is not entirely correct. There is far more evidence for the Hun invasion of Thrace than has been realised, and it is time these pieces of evidence were fitted together to elucidate the course and consequence of the invasion.

I. Theodoret and Priscus

The only dated record of this Hun incursion into Thrace is found in the chronicle of an Illyrian, Marcellinus *comes*, written in Constantinople shortly after the death of Anastasius (518). Under the year 422

¹ O. Maenchen-Helfen, *The World of the Huns* (Berkeley 1973) 76 [hereafter, MAENCHEN-HELFFEN]; cf. E. A. Thompson, *Attila and the Huns* (Oxford 1948) 31 [hereafter, THOMPSON]: "... the Huns in 422, after a long interval, launched a plundering raid on Thrace. We have no details and know nothing of how they were expelled." The invasion is mentioned only in passing by Le Nain de Tillemont, *Histoire des empereurs VI* (Paris 1728) 46; O. Seeck, *Geschichte des Untergangs der antiken Welt VI* (Stuttgart 1920) 86; E. Stein, *Histoire du Bas-Empire I* (Paris 1949) 281 [hereafter, STEIN]; and F. Altheim, *Geschichte der Hunnen IV* (Berlin 1962) 271. It is overlooked entirely by J. B. Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire* (London 1923).

he notes briefly: *Hunni Thraciam vastaverunt*.² No precise reason is given for this invasion, but it was obviously facilitated by the removal of Roman troops from Thrace to the eastern frontier.³ With the Persians threatening as early as May 420,⁴ reinforcements from the European provinces were urgently required. The massive transfer of troops involved units in Greece, including the future emperor Marcian, and the praesental army under Ardaburius.⁵ Unless replacements of some sort could be found for these troops, Thrace and Macedonia would be left vulnerable. War with the Persians broke out in the earlier part of 421, and by 6 September a Roman victory was announced at Constantinople. It was only a minor success enjoyed by Ardaburius, not a decisive victory terminating the conflict.⁶ A cessation of hostilities ensued.

The consequent Hun invasion of the now under-defended provinces of Thrace late in 421 or early in 422 was obviously severe, for a settlement with the Persians was expedited and troops sent back to Thrace. Before long the returning troops began to overtax the resources of the capital itself. This is clearly implied in a law of 3 March 422, addressed to the Praetorian Prefect of the East, Eustathius. It provides for the quartering of soldiers returning from or setting out for war in the towers of the land walls of Constantinople.⁷ The billeting of troops on private citizens (*hospitalitas*) was normal practice, but this law indicates that the occupants of the towers (over whose land the wall had been built) had come to regard themselves as exempt from the obligations of *hospitalitas* in the light of a previous enactment.⁸ That the law of 422 overrode their presumption indicates the seriousness of the Hun threat by March of that year.

A connection between the Persian war and the invasion of Thrace is

² 422.3, ed. Mommsen, *MGH.AA.* 11 (Berlin 1894) 75.

³ E. W. Brooks, "The Eastern Provinces from Arcadius to Anastasius," *CMH* I (1911) 464; Seeck, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.1) 86; Thompson 31.

⁴ *Cod.Theod.* 7.10.10. For a full discussion of the purpose and course of the Persian war see K. Holum, "Pulcheria's Crusade A.D. 421-422 and the Ideology of Imperial Victory," *GRBS* 18 (1977) 153-72 [hereafter, HOLUM].

⁵ Theophanes, A.M. 5943 (ed. de Boor 104); Socr. *HE* 7.18.

⁶ *Chronicon Paschale* (Bonn ed.) p.579; Holum 168.

⁷ *Cod.Theod.* 7.8.13. Maenchen-Helfen (76) was the first to relate this law to events in Thrace in 422, Holum (169) the first to relate it to troops being transferred from the Persian war.

⁸ *Cod.Theod.* 15.1.51 (4 April 413). Maenchen-Helfen (76) errs in claiming that this law actually "granted immunity" from *hospitalitas* to the new occupants of the land walls. They had merely assumed this immunity themselves.

to be found also in a highly tendentious chapter of the *Ecclesiastical History* of Theodoret bishop of Cyrrhus (423–457). In eulogizing the piety of Theodosius II, Theodoret points out that God rewarded him with victories over both Huns and Persians: the Hun king Rua invaded Thrace and threatened to lay Constantinople low in a siege, but divine intervention put Rua and his army to flight in a blaze of destruction; while the Romans were occupied with “other wars” the Persians invaded, but God sent a flood to cramp the style of the Persian cavalry. These miraculous events were the “fruits” of the “good seeds” sown by the emperor’s devotion to God.⁹

What concerns us here is Theodoret’s description of the death of Rua:

καὶ γὰρ ἠνίκα Ῥωῖλας, Σκυθῶν τῶν νομάδων ἡγούμενος, τὸν τε Ἰστρὸν διέβη μετὰ στρατιᾶς ὅτι μάλιστα πλείστης καὶ τὴν τε Θράκην ἐδήου καὶ ἐληΐζετο καὶ τὴν βασιλίδα πόλιν πολιορκήσειν τε καὶ αὐτοβοεὶ αἰρήσειν καὶ ἀνάστατον ἠπειλεῖ ποιήσειν, κηπητοῖς ἄνωθεν ὁ Θεὸς καὶ πρηστῆρι βαλῶν καὶ αὐτὸν κατέφλεξε καὶ τὴν στρατιὰν κατανόλωσεν ἅπασαν.

This ‘fire and brimstone’ account of Theodoret is certainly rhetorical if not apocalyptic and resembles another version in his *Commentary on the Psalms*, where the “barbarians of the north” are similarly disposed of.¹⁰ Theodoret’s enthusiastic language suggests that a closer scrutiny of the veracity of his statements is needed before they can be accepted as authentic historical evidence. Immediately we are confronted with a deception. Rua was not killed in an invasion of Thrace as Theodoret reports. We have it on the excellent and preferable authority of Priscus that Rua died in Hun territory (fr.1, *FHG* IV 72).

Although Theodoret’s description of Rua’s death is factually incorrect, it is not without parallel. The church historian Socrates tells us that in answer to the prayers of the pious Theodosius Rua was killed by a thunderbolt and his army savaged by a plague and fire from heaven (7.43). Shortly after this, Socrates continues, the patriarch of Constantinople, Proclus, delivered a sermon applying to these

⁹ Theod. *HE* 5.37.4–10. Since Theodoret refers to the reception of the relics of John Chrysostom into Constantinople in 438 as being after these incidents, the two Persian wars cannot be taken as those of 421/22 and 441. Rather, Theodoret is referring to two separate phases of the first war. (I owe this explanation to K. Holum.)

¹⁰ Theod. *Comm. in Psalm.* 17.14–15 (*PG* 80.977): ἐν γὰρ τοῖς ἑναγχοῦ γεγενημένοις πολέμοις, καὶ τοὺς ἀρκτῶους βαρβάρους ἐπελθόντας ἡμῖν χαλάζη καὶ πυρὶ [ὁ Κύριος] κατηνόλωσεν . . .

events the prophecy of Ezekiel 38.2 and 22: “Son of Man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Rosh, Meschech and Tubal and prophesy against him . . . and I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him and his bands and the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire and brimstone.”

The Romans had long since identified the Huns as the ‘Magog’ of Ezekiel.¹¹ Proclus’ equation of Rua (*Ροῦα*) with the Rosh (*Ρώσ*) of Ezekiel was by no means arbitrary and without persuasion. As a result, the new patriarch’s sermon won him instant renown, and it was no wonder that the demise of Rua was thought to have occurred exactly as described by Ezekiel. This is clearly the origin of Socrates’ account as well as that of Theodoret. Although we cannot discount the possibility that Rua was actually struck by lightning like the Roman emperor Carus in 283,¹² the other details of fire, hail and brimstone, as they appear in Socrates and Theodoret, are not to be considered historical. This fact has long been realised.¹³

Although Theodoret is wrong in his description of Rua’s death and in associating it with an invasion of Thrace, the fact remains that the greater part of his account concerns the invasion itself, and this raises the possibility that it may well be an authentic piece of historical information. Theodoret is not engaging here in flights of fancy or rhetoric but providing circumstantial detail: Rua’s Huns crossed the Danube, devastated Thrace and threatened Constantinople. If this information is accurate, it means that Theodoret has conflated two separate events; the death of Rua and his invasion of Thrace.¹⁴

¹¹ See Maenchen-Helfen 4–5 for references.

¹² Aur. Vict. 38.3–5; Eutrop. 9.18.1. The ‘thunderbolt’ is normally taken to be the sword of his praetorian prefect, Aper.

¹³ First established by W. Herbert, *Attila King of the Huns* (Collected Works III, London 1842) 325ff. Thompson (72) thinks that the idea that Rua was the ‘Rosh’ of Ezekiel caught on only after Proclus’ sermon, so that people later assumed that the sermon had been delivered before Rua’s death, thus vindicating the prophecy. This is unnecessary. Since the Huns had often been identified as the ‘Magog’ of Ezekiel before Rua’s time, it seems natural that Rua had been thought of as ‘Rosh’ long before his death. The nature of his demise had been predicted, so it was simply assumed to have occurred as prophesied.

¹⁴ The account of Theodoret cannot be accepted in full as an accurate record of Rua’s death as some have done, e.g., Tillemont, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.1) 54, and W. Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Decline of Rome* (Princeton 1968) 200. The description of the death based on Ezekiel 38.2 and 22 must be rejected, and this leaves two alternatives: either to reject the whole account, both the invasion and the death, as the product of Theodoret’s imagination or, as I suggest, to accept the invasion as authentic, which means that Theodoret has simply

Since the invasion cannot be associated with the death of Rua, it must predate his death in 434. Furthermore, it is quite possible that this invasion is the same one mentioned by Marcellinus under 422. There is no other record of a Hun invasion of Thrace in which Constantinople was threatened between 422 and 434, so the possibility that Theodoret is describing the invasion of 422 must be taken seriously.

To pursue this suggestion I wish to draw into the discussion one other unsolved problem. The historian Priscus (fr.1) tells us that in 434 Rua was once again contemplating action against the Romans if Hun deserters were not returned to him and ransom paid for escaped Roman prisoners. These demands stemmed from a peace treaty Rua had negotiated with the Romans on some previous occasion, whereby the Romans had agreed to pay the Huns 350 pounds of gold annually.

When was this treaty made? Since there is no exact evidence for it, scholars have advanced a variety of dates: Bury (271) opted for 424, Stein (435) thought "about 430," and he was followed by Thompson (75), who agreed that a date around 430 explained the peace on the Danube after 431. Most recently and most radically, Maenchen-Helfen (93) considered that since the Huns were still in possession of Roman prisoners when the new treaty was negotiated (in or after 438 according to him), the previous one must have been arranged "not very long before."¹⁵ All this guesswork seems fruitless and unnecessary.

The treaty which provided for the annual payment of 350 pounds of gold to the Huns must have been agreed to as a result of some previous invasion of Roman territory (donations to barbarians were not given unless necessary), and the only possible candidate, given the state of the evidence, is that mentioned by Marcellinus under 422. There is no evidence that there was another invasion of Thrace by the Huns between 422 and 434. It would be odd that an invasion on such a scale that the Huns were able to extort so large a subsidy finds no mention in any of our sources, particularly Marcellinus, who pro-

conflated it with Rua's death. This implies, therefore, that the reason for the conflation is that in Theodoret's source, either written or oral, the invasion was ascribed to Rua.

¹⁵ It is interesting and, for my purpose here, instructive that Maenchen-Helfen associates the original treaty negotiated by Rua with the invasion described by Theodoret, which, according to his own chronology, would place it immediately before Rua's death. This is absurd and is contradicted by the fact that the treaty was in existence *before* the invasion of Thrace (Priscus fr.1), that is, if one associates the invasion directly with Rua's death as Maenchen-Helfen does.

vides the most complete account of the fifth-century invasions. Consequently, there is good reason to deduce that the original treaty negotiated with the Huns before 434 was the conclusion of the invasion of 422. This would make perfect sense: a desperate situation, with Constantinople itself threatened, was averted and peace ensured by the payment of an annual subsidy. Jones appears to be alone in dating this treaty to 422.¹⁶

To review the argument thus far: if we accept the common interpretation of the evidence already presented, we have three separate invasions of Thrace between 422 and 434: (A) that of 422, result unknown (Marcellinus); (B) an otherwise unknown invasion about 430 which resulted in the Huns being paid 350 pounds of gold annually (Priscus); (C) an otherwise unknown and destructive invasion of Thrace before 434 in which Rua threatened the imperial capital itself (Theodoret). All these uncertainties are simplified if we consider that (A), (B) and (C) all refer to one and the same invasion in 422. This identification is strengthened by the fact that there is no evidence to the contrary.

The invasion of 422 can now be reconstructed in this way: the removal of troops from Thrace to the Persian frontier in 421 left Thrace open to a Hun attack. In due course the Huns did invade Thrace (Marcellinus), and Rua even threatened to besiege Constantinople (Theodoret). The Romans arranged a truce with Persia, and troops were sent back to Thrace (*Cod.Theod.* 7.8.13). Constantinople was spared, and the Huns agreed to retreat and keep the peace for an annual price of 350 pounds of gold (Priscus).

II. The Career of King Rua

If, as I urge, we should accept the date of 422 for the original treaty with Rua, some interesting implications follow. It means, first of all, that Rua must have been Hun king, though perhaps not of all tribes, by 422. The earliest indication of his kingship is otherwise 432, when Aëtius fled to his protection.¹⁷ Can we be certain that Rua was king of the Huns in Pannonia who invaded Thrace in 422?

¹⁶ A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire* (Oxford 1964) 193, 1107.

¹⁷ Prosper, *Chron. a.* 432 (MGH.AA. 9.473): "... profugus ad urbem atque illinc ad Dalmatiam, deinde per Pannonias ad Chunos pervenit . . ."; *Chron.Gall.* 452 112, a. 433 (MGH.AA. 9.658): "Cum ad Chunorum gentem, cui tunc Rugila praeerat, post proelium se Aetius contulisset . . ."

After 379 we find two main groups of Huns in contact with the Roman Empire: those settled with the Sarmatians in Pannonia¹⁸ and those north of the Danube in eastern Roumania. To what extent they were bound together under a single ruler is unknown. In any case, the first Hun king we hear of north of the Danube is Uldin, to whom Gaïnas fled in 400 (Zosimus 5.22.1–3). In 404–405 Uldin led his Huns across the Danube and into Thrace before retreating quickly (Maenchen-Helfen 62–63). In the following year the Huns of Uldin were in Italy as allies of Stilicho against the Goths of Radagaisus (Orosius 7.37.12–16). They have also been given credit for pushing the Vandals and Suevi across the Rhine in the same year.¹⁹ In 408 Uldin was back in eastern Roumania once again, where he launched another attack on Thrace which ended in disaster for the Huns. Uldin was killed, the Huns (and Sciri) were broken up, sold off and resettled (Maenchen-Helfen 65–67). Some years later Sozomen mentions coming across some of them in Bithynia (9.5.2–7). From this time on we no longer hear of the Huns in eastern Roumania but only of those in Hungary (Pannonia).

Who succeeded Uldin as king of the Huns and their Sarmatian allies in Pannonia is not known. In 412/13 Olympiodorus and his faithful parrot travelled to the Huns by way of the Adriatic,²⁰ that is, probably along the Dalmatian coast to Aquileia, thence to Pannonia overland. Their king at that time was Charaton.²¹ Nothing more is heard of Charaton, and no other Hun king is known by name until Rua in 432. So it is not impossible that Rua was king of the Huns as early as 422. In that event, however, he was not the only Hun king. Jordanes mentions that Rua ruled jointly with Octar.²² All that we know of Octar is that he led the Huns in an attack on the Burgundians in 430, and he is generally taken to be ruler of the Huns west of Pannonia.²³ Rua was, therefore, king of the remaining Hun tribes, a confederacy

¹⁸ T. Nagy, "The Last Century of Pannonia in the Judgement of a New Monograph," *Acta Antiqua* 19 (1971) 316–17, and the evidence there cited.

¹⁹ See for example Thompson 28. If this is true, it must mean that Uldin's Huns had retired beyond the Danube soon after the defeat of Radagaisus in April.

²⁰ Maenchen-Helfen 74. Olympiodorus was always accompanied by his parrot, who could dance and sing and even repeat his master's name (fr.36 = *FHG* IV 65).

²¹ Olymp. fr.18 (*FHG* IV 61).

²² *Get.* 180 "germani Octar et Roas, qui ante Attilam regnum tenuisse narrantur." Another brother, Mundzuc the father of Attila and Bleda, was not actually a Hun king himself as is often assumed (Maenchen-Helfen 81).

²³ See Thompson 60 and Maenchen-Helfen 83 and 86.

which dates from about 420 according to Thompson's inference (60). Consequently, there is no reason to believe that Rua was not king of the Huns in 422 and could not have led his Huns and Sarmatians into Thrace in that year and secured an annual subsidy as a result.

After 422 the Huns of Rua returned to Pannonia until they were summoned to Italy by Aëtius to defend the cause of the usurper John in 425.²⁴ Socrates (7.43) makes clear that these were the same Huns ruled by Rua in 434. Although the eastern court cannot have been pleased that the Huns whom the Romans were paying to maintain the peace should rally behind a usurper, it took no immediate action. The Huns were paid by Aëtius and sent back to Pannonia. It was probably as a safeguard against a recurrence of this kind of collaboration between usurpers and barbarians that the court of Theodosius caused the Huns to be expelled from Pannonia in 427.²⁵ They apparently were forced across the Danube and into the Hungarian plain, so that when Aëtius wanted to enlist their support once again he had to travel *per Pannonias* to reach them in their new abode.²⁶ They must have been located north of the Danube in the vicinity of Margus, where there were royal Hun tombs (Rua's?) by 440.²⁷ Margus was the nearest convenient Roman city, so that when the envoys of Theodosius set out to meet the Huns in 434/35 they made for Margus, and Margus it was which became the chief trading post for Romans and Huns (Priscus frs.1, 2).

²⁴ Renatus Frigeridus *apud* Greg. Tur. *Hist. Franc.* 2.8.

²⁵ Marcell. *s.a.* 427 (MGH.AA. 11.76); Jord. *Get.* 166. At this stage a definite answer to this complex problem cannot be given, although it must have had something to do with the cession of the western diocese of Illyricum to the East on the occasion of the marriage of Valentinian III and Eudoxia in 437 (Jord. *Rom.* 329). The reestablishment of Roman rule in Pannonia may have been agreed on as an essential precondition of the eventual transfer when the betrothal was originally arranged in 424 (Bury, *op.cit.* [*supra* n.1] 272; clearly set out by J. Wilkes, "A Pannonian Refugee of Quality at Salona," *Phoenix* 26 [1972] 388). The best technical discussion of this question is still A. Alföldi, *Der Untergang der Römerherrschaften in Pannonien II* (Berlin 1926) 91–95. For more recent views see Nagy, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.18) 342–43; A. Mócsy, *Acta Arch. Hung.* 23 (1974) 358–59, and J. Wilkes, *JRS* 63 (1973) 262. These together constitute an effective rejection of the thesis of L. Várady, *Das letzte Jahrhundert Pannoniens, 376–476* (Amsterdam 1969), who remains unconvinced (*Chiron* 6 [1976] 443 n.2).

²⁶ See *supra* n.17.

²⁷ Cf. A. Mócsy, *Pannonia and Upper Moesia* (London 1974) 349. Attila's camp (at least in 448) was located further east, in Wallachia. For this see R. Browning, "Where was Attila's Camp?," *JHS* 43 (1953) 1–7, reprinted in *Studies on Byzantine History, Literature and Education* (London 1977).

All this fits together neatly. Rua was king of the Huns by 422 and from Pannonia launched his invasion of Thrace and his expedition to aid John in 425. Driven out of Pannonia in 427 the Huns moved into the Hungarian plain lower down the Danube, and that is where they were located at Rua's death in 434.

The death of Rua, however, raises another question which must be settled before we proceed. When did Rua die? The clearest chronological indication we have is contained in a notice from the *Gallic Chronicle of 452*: *Rugila rex Chunnorum, cum quo pax firmata, moritur, cui Bleda succedit.*²⁸ This date (434) accords with the information of Socrates, who tells us that Rua was struck dead by lightning when Proclus was bishop (7.42–43). Since Proclus became patriarch of Constantinople in April 434,²⁹ the *Gallic Chronicle* and Socrates do not conflict on the date of Rua's death.

Despite this agreement, there have been efforts to reconcile the statements of Theodoret, Priscus, Socrates and the *Gallic Chronicle* rather than reject the veracity of any particular one where this is clearly necessary. Most recently, Maenchen-Helfen (93) has argued that Rua's death occurred not in 434 but about 438. He first of all rejects the *Gallic Chronicle* as unreliable by nature—"it is well known how unreliable the Gallic Chronicle is" (91). Yet Maenchen-Helfen himself realised how accurate a source the chronicle actually is for eastern affairs and devoted an appendix to explaining the fact (456–57).

Next, he construes Socrates as a description of events which occurred while Proclus was bishop of Cyzicus in 426. This bizarre interpretation, even if it were correct, contributes nothing to Maenchen-Helfen's own case. He simply tries to exalt the evidence of Theodoret and impugn that of Socrates by attributing to the latter a chronological absurdity. His argument must be rejected on technical grounds. When Socrates, or any Byzantine for that matter, speaks of "the church" without qualification, as he does here, he means essentially 'the great church' Hagia Sophia, the patriarchal church of Constantinople, not some provincial church. Socrates is referring to Proclus as bishop of Constantinople, not of Cyzicus. In any case, although

²⁸ 116, a. 434 (ed. Mommsen, *MGH.AA.* 9.660).

²⁹ Maximian died on 12 April 434 and was replaced more or less immediately by Proclus (Socr. 7.40). Seeck, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.1) 460, dated Rua's death to April 434, that is, just after Proclus' accession.

actually elected bishop of Cyzicus in 426, Proclus was prevented from taking up the position.³⁰ Socrates, therefore, dates Rua's death to a time when Proclus was patriarch of Constantinople ('the city'), that is, in or after April 434.

Having rejected as fanciful the date of the *Gallic Chronicle* and the account of Socrates, Maenchen-Helfen then goes on to consider Theodoret's information (5.37), which, we discovered above, is somewhat suspect. He argues that, since immediately prior to his description of the invasion and death of Rua, Theodoret mentions the law of 14 November 435 (*Cod.Theod.* 16.10.25) permitting the destruction of pagan temples, the death of Rua must postdate November 435; and he proceeds to construct his case on this assumption. Theodoret, however, does not imply this at all.

This passage must be considered in the broader structure of the chapter in which it is contained. Theodoret begins with a general summary of the emperor's virtues and piety (5.36.3–5) and proceeds to illustrate this by specific examples: first, the emperor's insistence on having the ascetic who had excommunicated him revoke the injunction (37.1–2); and, second, the law destroying pagan temples once and for all (37.3). It was as a result not of the law of 435 only but of the emperor's piety as a whole that the invasion of Rua (37.4) and the miraculous events in Persia (37.5–10) occurred. The overall structure of Theodoret's digression on the piety of Theodosius II, not the law of 435, explains the mention of the invasion.

Nevertheless, Maenchen-Helfen concludes, "Theodoret's 'after the end of 435' is in agreement with Priscus" (93). This is what Priscus says (fr.1):

Since the Romans were intending to send a legation to the Huns, Plinthas and Dionysius wished to take part in it, Plinthas being a Scythian and Dionysius a Thracian. Both men were military leaders and had attained the consulship among the Romans . . . When Rua had died and the kingship of the Huns passed to Attila, the Roman Senate decided that Plinthas should go as ambassador to them. When their decision had been ratified for him by the emperor, Plinthas

³⁰ Socr. 7.28: Proclus was appointed bishop of Cyzicus by Sisinnius, patriarch of Constantinople, but the Cyzicenes would not accept him. Tillemont, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.1) 54, dated the death of Rua to 426 and was consequently forced to make 'Roas' a different person altogether who was killed later just as Theodoret describes (136). Gibbon poked fun at Tillemont's credulity in accepting Theodoret literally (*Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ed. Bury, III [London 1897] 417 n.3).

wished Epigenes to accompany him on the embassy, as he was a man with the utmost reputation for wisdom and held the position of quaestor (*καὶ τὴν ἀρχὴν ἔχοντα τοῦ κοιαίτορος*). When approval had been gained for this they both set out on the embassy and came to Margus.

If we consider this passage of Priscus in the light of the date given by Socrates and the *Gallic Chronicle of 452* for the death of Rua (434), these events must have taken place in 434/35. On the other hand, if, as Maenchen-Helfen does, we accept the apparent chronology of Theodoret (which is out of the question), we are still obliged to prove that Priscus contradicts the *Gallic Chronicle* and Socrates and agrees with Theodoret. Maenchen-Helfen's case rests ultimately on two points. First, he claims that in Priscus' account of the embassy Plinthas is *magister militum praesentalis*, whereas in 434 he was only *magister militum per Thraciam*. In fact, he never held the latter office: he was in 434, just as he appears in Priscus, *magister militum praesentalis*.³¹ This reduces Maenchen-Helfen's argument to a single detail: since Priscus refers to Epigenes as *quaestor*, an office he did not hold before 15 February 438 when he was still *magister memoriae*,³² the embassy must have occurred in or after 438, that is to say, Theodoret's chronology is to be preferred to that of Socrates and the precise date of the *Gallic Chronicle* on the strength of this detail.

Yet Theodoret's chronology in *HE* 5.37 is not as precise as Maenchen-Helfen makes out; and, above all, Theodoret's account of Rua's death is *conflated* with an earlier invasion of Thrace. Theodoret should not be exalted above Socrates and the *Gallic Chronicle*, whose accuracy and consistency with Priscus must be upheld. The only obstacle to this is easily dissolved: Thompson (217) saw that the reason that Priscus referred to Epigenes as quaestor at the time of the embassy to the Huns was that he made an easily intelligible mistake of retrospect, forgetting that Epigenes was not in fact quaestor at the time. Rua's death must therefore be maintained in 434, and the embassy of

³¹ A. Demandt, *RE Suppl.* 12 (1970) 746, s.v. "Magister militum."

³² *Nov.Theod.* 1 (15 February 438), not 15 November 438 (Maenchen-Helfen's error, 93). Attention to this discrepancy was originally drawn by W. Ensslin, "Maximinus und sein Begleiter, der Historiker Priskos," *Byz.-neugriech.Jb.* 5 (1926/27) 3, who was followed by Stein 566. I am not sure on what basis William Bayless ("The Treaty with the Huns of 443," *AJP* 97 [1976] 176–79) dates the embassy without question to 438. He cites neither Ensslin nor Maenchen-Helfen. Redating the embassy to 434/35 does not alter Bayless' argument, however. It simply means that the subsidies were being paid from 435.

Plinthas and Epigenes in 434/35. Rua's accession can now be pushed back at least to 422 as well.

III. Olympiodorus and Theophanes

We have seen that a critical examination of the chronology of Theodoret, *HE* 5.37.4, and fr.1 of Priscus provides evidence for the otherwise little known Hun invasion of Thrace in 422. There is, I propose, even more—a fragment of Olympiodorus of Thebes.

To judge from Photius' summary account, Olympiodorus was a very careful and conscientious historian whose account of the Roman empire (mainly in the West) has always been praised for its high standard of accuracy, particularly in matters of chronology and geography.³³ Although he probably made some mention of the Hun invasion of Thrace in 422, no direct statement survives. In an interesting antiquarian piece, however, Olympiodorus narrates the account of a certain Valerius, an ἄρχων of Thrace (either *vicarius* of the diocese or *consularis* of the province) in the time of the emperor Constantius.³⁴

Valerius told the historian that a treasure of statues had been discovered within his jurisdiction, dedicated according to an ancient rite and located on sacred ground. So he contacted the emperor (in Constantinople, that is, since Thrace was part of the Eastern empire) for advice and the emperor ordered that they be dug out. Thereupon, it was discovered that there were three enormous statues of silver,

³³ Appreciative studies of Olympiodorus: E. A. Thompson, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," *CQ* 38 (1944) 43–52, and J. Matthews, "Olympiodorus of Thebes and the History of the West (A.D. 407–425)," *JRS* 60 (1970) 79–97. I have not seen V. Sirago, "Olimpiodoro di Tebe e la sua opera storica," *Ricerche storiche ed economiche in memoria di C. Barbagallo* II (Naples 1970) 3–25.

³⁴ fr.27 (*FHG* IV 63). There has been much confusion concerning the identity of Valerius. Most recently L. Cracco-Ruggini ("Pubblicistica e storiografia bizantine di fronte alla crisi dell'impero romano," *Athenaeum* n.s. 21 [1973] 180) has restated the view that Valerius was *praefectus Thraciae* in 421, which is clearly erroneous. There was no such office in the fifth century. Valerius must have been either *vicarius* of the diocese or *consularis* of the province. If vicar he would be a *vir spectabilis*, if *consularis* a *vir clarissimus*. Olympiodorus' (or rather, Photius') ἄρχων and τις τῶν ἐπιπέμων are not precise enough to suggest a definite solution. In the fifth and sixth centuries τῶν ἐπιπέμων is used to refer to both *spectabiles* and *clarissimi*, although in later Byzantine usage it meant *spectabiles* more or less exclusively (R. Guiland, "La noblesse byzantine. Remarques," *REByz* 24 [1966] 42 n.6 and 45). I see no reason why the informant Valerius and the official in Thrace are not one and the same person (*contra*, W. Ensslin, *RE* 7A [1948] 2298 s.v. "Valerius 17," *cf.* Cracco-Ruggini 180).

barbarian in style of clothing, gesture and hair. They faced north—*τουτέστι κατὰ τοῦ βαρβαρικοῦ χώρου*. As soon as (*πάραινα*) they were excavated, a few days later (*μετ' ὀλίγας ἡμέρας*) the Goths invaded Thrace first of all. Shortly after that (*μικρὸν ὕστερον*) the Huns and Sarmatians commenced an invasion (*ἔμελλε . . . καταδραμεῖσθαι*) of Illyricum and Thrace. Olympiodorus concludes by remarking that the three statues seemed to symbolise a dedication for defence against barbarians.

The veracity of this discovery need not detain us. What is more crucial is its precise chronology. The emperor Constantius has been taken to be Constantius II (337–361). If Olympiodorus meant Constantius II, his informant must have been very ancient indeed when the historian came to know him. If that is the case, Olympiodorus' precise chronology ("a few days later") is meaningless in the context of late fourth-century events—the Goths did not pass into Thrace until 376, the Sarmatians never at all. Since such inaccuracy would be most uncharacteristic of Olympiodorus, something is clearly amiss with this identification. Valens has been unobtrusively suggested for Constantius,³⁵ which is too great a liberty to take with so careful a historian. Olympiodorus is unlikely to have written 'Constantius' if he knew Valerius had been in Thrace in the time of Valens. 'Constantius' must be allowed stand.

If it cannot be Constantius II, it must be Constantius III, who was emperor in the West from 8 February 421 until 2 September 421.³⁶ This gives no room for choice. Valerius must have been in Thrace and the statues discovered in 421, between February and September. In that event the reign of Constantius will have been named by Olympiodorus only for precise dating, and the emperor whose advice Valerius sought about the statues must have been Theodosius II.

There is no explicit evidence for a Gothic invasion of Thrace in 421. A mysterious and neglected passage of the chronicler Theophanes,

³⁵ Matthews, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.33) 96 n.180, and T. D. Barnes, "More Missing Names," *Phoenix* 27 (1973) 154, who would have Valerius governor (*vicar?*, *consularis?*) of Thrace "probably in 375 precisely."

³⁶ As assumed by Haedicke (*RE* 18 [1939] 202), Thompson, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.33) 44, and Kaegi, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.14) 87, none of whom elaborates on the context of fr.27. Thompson later changed his mind and thought this passage referred to a Gothic invasion in the time of Constantius II "before 353, for it is not mentioned by Ammianus" ("Constantine, Constantius II and the Lower Danube Frontier," *Hermes* 84 [1956] 379).

however, describes the settlement of Goths in Thrace in the ‘nineteenth year’ of the reign of Theodosius II (A.M. 5931; 94.19–23 de Boor):

Γότθοι δὲ Πανονίαν ἔσχον πρῶτον, ἔπειτα τῷ ἰθ' ἔτει τῆς βασιλείας, Θεοδοσίου τοῦ νέου ἐπιτρέψαντος τὰ τῆς Θράκης χωρία ᾤκησαν καὶ ἐπὶ νη' χρόνους ἐν τῇ Θράκῃ διατρίψαντες Θεουδερίχου ἡγεμονεύοντος αὐτῶν . . . τῆς ἐσπερίου βασιλείας ἐκράτησαν.

So far as I know, the only scholar to have taken this statement of Theophanes into serious consideration is Alföldi, who dates it to 427 and associates it with the expulsion of the Huns from Pannonia in that year.³⁷ To date the nineteenth year of Theodosius to 427 Alföldi reckons not from 402, when Theodosius became Augustus, but from 408 when he became sole emperor on the death of his father Arcadius. This is admissible, since Theophanes counts events in the reign of Theodosius from both 402 and 408, a reflection of the different dating systems of his sources.³⁸ Nonetheless, Alföldi’s justification is suspect. He argues that this passage represents a conflation of Marcellinus *s.a.* 427³⁹ and Procopius, *BV* 1.2.39–40.⁴⁰ This will not do. Theophanes made no use of Marcellinus’ Latin chronicle, which, be it noted, makes no mention of Goths in 427. Further, although it is quite possible that Theophanes was using Procopius here, he was wrong to conflate the Ostrogoths of Theodoric who later settled in Italy with those planted in Thrace in the nineteenth year of Theodosius II. Theodoric’s Ostrogoths were first settled in Thrace only after 474 (Stein 362).

As a result, the first part of Theophanes’ statement—that Theodosius II settled Goths in Thrace—cannot be related to the second and so must stand as evidence for an historical fact not otherwise recorded. Therefore it has to be explained in the light of events in Thrace in either 421 or 427.

It is difficult to see how it can be related to the problem of the

³⁷ *op.cit.* (*supra* n.25) 95.

³⁸ Theophanes’ account of the transmission of the relics of St Stephen to Constantinople in 421 provides a neat illustration of this (see Holum 163 n.46). Theophanes correctly dates the event to the ‘twentieth year’ of Theodosius II, which must have been the dating of his source. He inserts it, however, under the year 428 in the text of the chronicle, that is, dating incorrectly from 408 (A.M. 5920, ed. de Boor 86.26–87.5).

³⁹ *Pannoniae, quae per quinquaginta annos ab Hunnis retinebantur, a Romanis receptae sunt.*

⁴⁰ *Γότθοι δὲ τὴν ἐπὶ τοῦ Ἰστροῦ διάβασιν ποιησάμενοι Παννονίαν μὲν τὰ πρῶτα ἔσχον, ἔπειτα δὲ βασιλέως δόντος ᾤκησαν τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς Θράκης χωρία. ἐνταυθα τε οὐ πολὺν διατρίψαντες χρόνον τῆς ἐσπερίας ἐκράτησαν.*

removal of the Huns from Pannonia in 427. From Marcellinus *s.a.* 427 we learn that after fifty years the Huns were driven out by the Romans, to which Jordanes (*Get.* 166) adds that the Romans were assisted by the Goths. If anyone was being resettled in 427, it was not the Goths but the Huns, who were removed not to Thrace but beyond the boundaries of the empire altogether. If we date Theophanes' 'nineteenth year' from 402, however, his statement makes good sense in the light of Olympiodorus' evidence that Goths passed into Thrace in 421; but if Olympiodorus and Theophanes are both referring to the same Goths in Thrace in 421, there must be some explanation for their discrepancies: that is, (1) what Olympiodorus characterizes as an 'invasion' Theophanes states to be a resettlement with imperial sanction, and (2) the fact that Theodosius' 'nineteenth year' (10 January 420–10 January 421) does not overlap but precedes the reign of Constantius (8 February–2 September 421).

There can be no doubt that Olympiodorus actually believed the story about the statues told him by Valerius and agreed with the interpretation of their discovery. Moreover, he recounted at least one similar instance in his history—Alaric was dissuaded from crossing to Africa in 410 by a statue at Rhegium (*fr.*15). The power of such symbols to preserve the state from invasion was a widespread belief among pagans and constituted a forceful argument in, for example, Symmachus' plea (*Rel.* 3.3) for the restoration of the altar of Victory to the Senate house at Rome in 384—*quis ita familiaris est barbaris, ut aram Victoriae non requirat!* It was not unusual that a traditionalist pagan like Olympiodorus should seriously regard certain statues as a defence against barbarians (*fr.*28). A complementary component of this pagan interpretation was direct opposition to the settlement of barbarians within the empire. This is strongly voiced by Eunapius and by Zosimus (who used both Eunapius and Olympiodorus) and needs no amplification.

While Eunapius and Zosimus blamed all the empire's ills on the conciliatory policy of certain emperors (especially Theodosius I) towards the barbarians, Olympiodorus' protest is more moderate. Be that as it may, he implies quite clearly in his account of the Thracian statues that by ordering their excavation Theodosius II was to be blamed for the subsequent invasion of Goths, Huns and Sarmatians into Thrace. We can see here Olympiodorus and the pagan Valerius, probably the brother-in-law of Theodosius and son of Leontius for

whom Olympiodorus secured a chair at Athens,⁴¹ as representative spokesmen for the opponents of Theodosius' decision to replace the Roman troops removed from Thrace with barbarians. As an added dimension to this opposition it should be pointed out also that it was at precisely this time that Eunapius was revising his history.⁴²

It is not difficult to see, therefore, why Olympiodorus should describe the emperor's settlement of Goths in Thrace as an invasion. The opponents of Theodosius' policy, like Valerius and Olympiodorus, were not interested in technicalities. The fact is that the emperor invited the Goths into Thrace, and a short time after the Huns and Sarmatians invited themselves, thereby proving the efficacy of the statues as long as they remained inviolate. By dedicating his history to Theodosius, Olympiodorus was making sure that his criticism did not miss the mark and of reminding the emperor that he and Valerius did not approve of the emperor's disrespect for the power of pagan symbols to defend the empire from the barbarians. The emperor might protest that his resettlement of the Goths in 421 was normal and harmless, but to Olympiodorus it was an invasion.

A similar explanation may be postulated for the chronological discrepancy. There is a gap of less than one month between Theophanes' 'nineteenth year' (10 January 421) and Olympiodorus' date (8 February 421). The dates are close enough to arouse suspicion. It is not unlikely that Valerius placed the discovery of the statues prior to the Gothic 'invasion' of Thrace in order to give added point to his interpretation of their discovery and excavation. But perhaps such a liberty is to be blamed on the eagerness of Olympiodorus to point out to Theodosius the direct result of the statues' removal, in contrast to the effect of the statue at Rhegium in turning Alaric away.⁴³ We cannot be sure.

On the other hand, these dates are easily reconcilable if one makes the reasonable assumption that the date of Theophanes refers to Theodosius' *decision* to settle the Goths in Thrace and the date of Olympiodorus to their *arrival* a few weeks later, that is, after 8 February 421. This would make sense of Olympiodorus' chronology and the identification of Constantius with Constantius III. If the discovery of the statues and the Goths' entry into Thrace are placed in

⁴¹ As argued by K. Holum, "Family Life in the Theodosian House," *Kleronomia* 8 (1976).

⁴² For this date: F. Paschoud, *Cinq études sur Zosime* (Paris 1975) 169.

⁴³ Kaegi, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.14) 88.

the middle of 421, the 'short time later' when the Huns and Sarmatians⁴⁴ invaded could be placed at the end of 421 or beginning of 422. This is surely confirmation of the entry of Marcellinus under 422—*Hunni Thraciam vastaverunt*—and the fact that by 3 March 422 Roman troops were back in Thrace to dispel the invaders. The precision of Olympiodorus is here, as elsewhere, to be upheld.

Of further interest is the exact location of these statues, *ἐν μέσῳ γὰρ αὐτῆς τε Θράκης καὶ τοῦ Ἰλλυρικοῦ*. Like his remarkably exact dating, Olympiodorus' geography, as usual, is also accurate. The boundary between Thrace and Illyricum (Dacia) was a very important one, easily definable and immensely effective. It was the celebrated Succi pass (*Succorum angustiae*), a narrow defile just east of Serdica (Sofia) on the great Balkan highway from Singidunum (Belgrade) to Constantinople. The pass was flanked by the 'Gates of Trajan' and it could be described in the strictest sense of the word as the 'gateway' to Thrace.⁴⁵ One fourth-century observer who had travelled over the Succi pass commented on how difficult it was to negotiate "*etiam nullo vetante*."⁴⁶

During the political instability of the fourth century control of the Succi pass was vital. For example, it was the seizure of this pass which forced the emperor Constantius II to realise that the illiterate Vetranio could prove a real danger (Philostorgius 3.24), and which gave Julian the upper hand in his campaign against Constantius (Amm.Marc. 22.10.2,7). Ammianus (26.7.12) was quick to grasp the fact that Procopius' usurpation in 365 was rendered ineffectual as soon as the pass was blocked to him. In 378 when Gratian decided to come to the

⁴⁴ In the fourth century the Sarmatians were to be found along the Danube (*ripa Sarmatica*) opposite Pannonia except for those planted in Thrace by Constantine I (*Anon. Val.* 6.32). From the late fourth century the Sarmatians disappear from view as the allies of the Huns (Mócsy, *op.cit.* [*supra* n.27] 345). Ludwig Schmidt (*CMHI* [1911] 360) considered that the Sarmatians were under the sway of Rua, which would explain their presence in Olympiodorus.

⁴⁵ For the precise location see C. Asdracha, *La région des Rhodopes aux XIII^e et XIV^e siècles* (Texte und Forschungen zur byz.-neugriech. Phil. 49, Athens 1976) 31 n.2. In addition, the following description is worth pausing over: "The entrance to the defile was barred by a high wall with a stone gateway flanked by two forts and perpetually guarded. These were the famous 'Gates of Trajan' often described by travellers (until their demolition by the Turks in 1835), the scene of many a battle for the mastery of the Balkans" (D. Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth* [London 1971] 36–37).

⁴⁶ Amm.Marc. 21.10.4. Ammianus draws a contrast between the gentle approach from the Dacian side and the precipitous one from Thrace, *cf.* 27.4.5 (digression on Thrace): *densetae Succorum patescunt angustiae, Thracias dirimentes et Daciam*.

aid of Valens against the Goths in Thrace, he first made sure that the guard at the Succi pass was strengthened; the reason—“*ne discursatores hostes et leves, tamquam exaestuantés nivi torrentes, per septentrionales provincias fusius vagarentur*” (Amm.Marc. 31.10.21). The definitive boundary between the Eastern and Western churches was determined at Serdica in 349 to be the Succi pass, the boundary between Illyricum and Thrace (Socrates 2.22). The pass which Ammianus found so difficult unhindered, the barbarians found even more difficult, hindered. Prior to 421/22 the Goths and Huns had entered Thrace from the north across the Danube and the less precipitous Haemus. Otherwise, the heavily fortified Succi pass prevented them from entering from Pannonia and Upper Moesia by way of Dacia.

This exact location which Olympiodorus offers makes no geographical sense in relation to the Goths and Huns in the late fourth century, further proof that Olympiodorus is describing a reminiscence not well into the past but within his own lifetime and the timespan of his narrative. Fr.27 is therefore to be considered an accurate account, for reasons both chronological and geographical, of events that took place when Constantius III was emperor. This is yet further support for the general accuracy of Olympiodorus and additional evidence for the Hun invasion of Thrace in 422.

If this interpretation of Olympiodorus and Theophanes is accepted, our understanding of events in Thrace in 421/22 is advanced in two ways. First, we learn that in 421 Theodosius settled Goths in certain areas of Thrace (Theophanes), and the explanation for this must surely be found in a desire to offset the impact of the removal of troops to the Persian frontier in 421. These Goths are not otherwise heard of, unless they were the forebears of Theodoric Strabo, who suddenly appears in the reign of Marcian (451–457) as the leader of subsidised Goths in Thrace (Jordanes, *Get.* 270). Secondly, the path of the Hun–Sarmatian invasion in 422 now becomes clearer. It would seem that Rua’s Huns, whose tribal confederation was then centered in Pannonia, crossed the Danube into the Hungarian plain to bypass Roman defences on the Save, recrossed the Danube (Theodoret) probably near Singidunum, and galloped down the Balkan highway through the Succi pass and into Thrace (Olympiodorus). Beyond that the picture is a blank, except for the fact that the Romans agreed to pay the Huns 350 pounds of gold as a result of this invasion (Priscus).

Perhaps the Hun invasion was sudden and unexpected and caught

the Romans in a militarily disadvantageous position, such that they were forced to buy peace, at least until they could summon troops back from the East. In any case, it seems reasonable to assume that the Huns accepted this peace, spared Thrace further devastation, and returned to Pannonia the way they had come. Consequently, evidence of destruction at the Roman fortress of Sucidava (opposite Oescus) on the Danube, which has been ascribed to the invasion of 422,⁴⁷ does not fit the geography of that invasion. It is better understood as the result of the invasion of Attila in 442, when the Huns plundered precisely this area.⁴⁸

IV. The Hebdomon Inscription

There is yet one further item of evidence which can be related to the Huns' invasion of Thrace in 422 and their subsequent appeasement. At the Hebdomon, seven miles from Constantinople, where in the fifth century each new emperor was proclaimed by the army, stood a granite column topped by a statue of Theodosius II. The statue has disappeared but the column survives. In addition, part of the base bearing fragments of the column's dedicatory inscription is also preserved.⁴⁹ The inscription celebrates Theodosius II as *victor* and indicates that the column was erected by the pious virgin sisters of the emperor. When the inscription was restored by Demangel he took it to be a reflection of the victory of Theodosius II over the Persians in 422. The inscription is fragmentary and is restored thus:

*D(ominus) N(oster) Theodo[s]ius pius felix August[us]
Imperator et [fortissimus triumphato]r
[gentium barbararum, pere]nnis [et ubiqu]e
[victor, pro] votis sororum, pacato
[orbe rom]ano celsus exultat*

According to the conventions of late antique rhetoric and iconography, victory and peace were credited to the emperor. The lost column base of the sedentary Arcadius depicts a parade of various

⁴⁷ O. Toropi, "La frontière nord-danubienne de la Dacie Ripensis depuis l'abandon de la Dacie Trajane jusqu'aux invasions hunniques," *Actes du IX^e congrès int. d'études sur les frontières romaines 1972* (Bucharest 1974) 80.

⁴⁸ I hope to explain this more fully on another occasion.

⁴⁹ R. Demangel, *Contribution à la topographie de l'Hebdomon* (Paris 1945) 33-40; cf. Holum 172.

conquered nations, and Justin II could be cast in a victorious pose without having seen battle.⁵⁰ Since it did not require an undisputed occasion to portray the emperor as *victor*, it is not necessary either to identify a specific victory of Theodosius II as inspiration for the Hebdomon inscription or to explain the monument in terms of a *single* victory. Reality and the exaggerations of imperial propaganda did not always correspond. One such occasion, however, when the advertisement of imperial victory reflected actual circumstances is surely to be found in this memorial erected at the Hebdomon.

In 422 Theodosius could be said to have brought peace to the Roman world (*pacato orbe Romano*) after subduing the empire's enemies in both east and west. I would suggest, therefore, that this inscription be seen as a consequence not only of the peace with Persia arranged in 422, which included the provision of payments to the Persians to guard the Caucasus,⁵¹ but also of the treaty with the Huns made in the same year, whereby the Romans agreed to pay the Huns 350 pounds of gold annually. The payment of subsidies had long been and remained an integral part of Roman diplomacy⁵² and must not be taken necessarily as an indication of capitulation and disgrace that would exclude the settlement being portrayed as a victory.

The facts speak for themselves: it was to be almost another twenty years before either the Persians took up arms against Theodosius or the Huns set foot inside Thrace. In the troubled times of the late Roman Empire this was an exceptionally lengthy respite for the Eastern court, and it was certainly no imposture for Theodosius to be applauded in the terms of the Hebdomon inscription.

V. Conclusion

To summarise: in 421 the Romans instigated a conflict against the Persians in the east, causing troops to be transferred there from the European provinces. As a result the defences of Thrace were weakened, and to bolster them Theodosius II decided to resettle Goths in certain areas of Thrace. They presumably came from the diocese of Dacia, where they had been settled since 382. Later in 421 or early in

⁵⁰ C. Gigliione, *La colonna di Arcadio a Constantinopoli* (Naples 1952), with plates and comment. Corippus, *in laudem Justini Praef.* 1–34 (ed. A. M. Cameron [London 1976] with commentary, 118–22).

⁵¹ Holum 170 for details of the treaty.

⁵² C. D. Gordon, "Subsidies in Roman Imperial Defence," *Phoenix* 3 (1949) 60–69.

422 the Huns and Sarmatians settled in Pannonia invaded Illyricum (Dacia) and broke through the Succi Pass and entered Thrace. Their king Rua even threatened to besiege Constantinople. Faced with this serious situation troops were returned to Thrace and a peace agreed on.

Viewed as a whole the various scraps of evidence adduced here throw further light on the bare fact recorded in the chronicle of Marcellinus, *Hunni Thraciam vastaverunt*. They show how even a seemingly minor and insignificant notice in a late Roman chronicle can mask a massive and important series of events underneath; and how difficult it can be to reconstruct these events without a balanced evaluation of the worth of each piece of evidence. In conclusion, I suggest that we have discovered in the Hun invasion of Thrace in 422 the invasion of Rua contained in Theodoret, *HE* 5.37.4, the treaty mentioned in fr.1 of Priscus and the precise context of fr.27 of Olympiodorus of Thebes, as well as Theophanes' account of Theodosius' settlement of Goths in Thrace in 421.⁵³

CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE, OXFORD, *and* DUMBARTON OAKS
July, 1977

⁵³ My thanks to Kenneth Holum in particular, as well as to John Matthews and the editor, for their considerable assistance with both content and presentation.