

PREPARATION FOR WAR, CONSTITUTION XVIII

About the Practices of Various Peoples and of the Romans in Their Battle Formations

1. Next, I will teach you about the various battle formations employed by other nations, as well as those that the commanders of Roman armies, going back to ancient times, made use of against different peoples. After getting to know these, not only will you make use of the same stratagems at the proper time but you will be able to devise many more in addition. For the shrewd commander, when he seizes an opportunity for military strategies, will not stop only at those but will be able to invent many more.

2. Constant drilling in tactical movements is of great benefit to the soldier.¹ It is easy, however, for the enemy to learn what is going on through the spies they send out or, as is likely, from our men deserting to them. The result is that, although well observed and correctly done, drills are often found to be without effect.

3. Actually, the drill described by us in the constitution devoted to it is sufficient. Its simplicity by itself makes it adaptable to any formation without disclosing our entire plan of battle.

4. If a good opportunity for more extended drilling and exercises presents itself, then it is necessary for each division, that is, each *tourma* or *droungos* or count's *bandon*, to practice various formations and drills by themselves. There is the one prescribed for actual use and those additional ones which, although not always necessary, may be useful on certain occasions.

1. Sections 2-15 derive from *Strat.* 6.praef.

5. Each formation and drill should be identified in a special way so the soldiers who are trained in these movements may recognize the difference between each battle formation. Thus the words will not be strange to them because of ignorance. Whenever a certain battle formation is suddenly announced to them, they will know the plan which the commander intends to implement when the time comes for battle.

6. Now then, there is a threefold division of simulated formations. The first is a useful one that even the Romans were accustomed to use.² In this one the units are not split up, that is, not divided into assault troops, also called *proklastai*, and defenders, also called *ekdikoi*. They are formed in one battle line, not divided into three *moirai* as heretofore but into two. The two flanks move out in an encircling maneuver, heading toward each other, and surrounding an open space. They continue along as in a circle, the right wing on the outside and the left on the inside, and thus ride into the opposite section of each other's line. The cavalry used to play at this sort of thing in March.

7. Another formation has them drawn up into a single battle line, some as assault troops and some as defenders.³ This is divided into *moirai* separated from each other by about two hundred or four hundred feet. The assault troops charge out in pursuit, riding at a gallop, and then turn back. Sometimes they filter into the intervals, that is, the clear spaces in the line, join together with the defenders, and then charge out against the enemy. At other times, they turn around and march out through those same intervals; the assault troops from both divisions then show up on the flanks of the *meros*, each man in his original position.

8. Still another battle formation has the troops drawn up in one battle line, with the middle *moira* composed of defenders and the *moirai* on both sides composed of assault troops.⁴ Maintaining their pace, as though in pursuit, the

2. *Strat.* 6.1.

3. *Strat.* 6.2.

4. *Strat.* 6.3.

middle moira follows along in formation as defenders, the moirai of assault troops on both flanks move out. Then, in turning back the one moira stays in position or slows down on the outside while the other turns and races back as though to the defenders. The wing that had halted begins moving again as though toward the defenders. The other quickly moves out as if to meet it, riding off to one side and, in this way, one moira at a time, they end up facing each other but without colliding.

9. There is another one similar to this in which the troops are drawn up in the opposite manner, that is, the middle moira consists of assault troops and the two wings of defenders, but it follows the same movements.

10. Finally, the formation and drill customary for the Romans is, in our opinion, suitable for use against any people.⁵ It is formed of two lines, a front battle line and a support line, with assault troops and defenders, flank guards and outflankers, ambushers and rear guards, according to the manner described by us earlier.

11. It is, therefore, necessary to accustom the army to the above-mentioned different types of battle lines, so that the truly essential one may not become known <to outsiders>. If the front line is being drilled, do not bring the second line with it, but just the first line and that without flank guards and outflankers, without ambushers and rear guards. This strikes us as the simplest and most basic plan. Moreover, in place of the second line, station a few cavalymen to the rear to represent it, so that the troops in the first line may get used to that distance in seeking safety. Likewise, you may drill the second line by itself if you station or put in front a few troops on the site of the first line, so that the second may get used to receiving the men of the first line if they seek refuge among them.

12. It is possible for the flank guards and outflankers to practice their own formations and drills separately before the time of combat, so that the army may

5. Cf. *Strat.* 6.4; *Const.* 7.

become accustomed to their movements and that the actual battle line to be used is not made known to the enemy.⁶ First, the outflankers, that is, the men stationed by the right meros for the encirclement of the enemy, may either be drawn up under cover behind the right flank or drawn up on the flank even with the line. Whether they are drawn up on the flank or even with the line, when the time comes for their enveloping movement, they incline to the spear and then ride out the necessary distance or as far as is called for. Thus, returning directly to their original position, they move in formation and strive to envelop the enemy line.

13. Again, the flank guards who are drawn up by the left meros should, in like manner, incline to the shield, ride out the required distance as far as necessary, and so return directly to their original position, moving rapidly in order to be on the same line as the opposite wing of the outflankers.

14. We have pointed out these various battle formations to you, O general, so that in time of leisure you may accustom and drill your army in them and acquire a great deal of practical experience of military tactics. Thus, in certain frequently occurring situations, when necessity calls, you will be able to determine what is useful.

15. We will now set forth and propose to you a variety of additional battle formations for you to put in practice, on behalf of your own army and against the enemy. The Romans have come to learn about these formations from experience with various peoples; we hope that you will become familiar with them and make use of them at the proper time on your behalf and that, when the enemy are using them on their behalf, <you will learn> how to devise countermeasures against them.

16. Be well aware, therefore, O general, that it is not you alone who ought to be a serious promoter and lover of the fatherland and defender of the correct faith of Christians, ready, if it so transpires, to lay down your very life, but also all the officers under your command and the entire body of soldiers should be ready to do the same. May those who share the same noble <ideal> remain such. As for those whose training has not led them <to share that ideal>, then, as much as possible, your care and concern <should make sure> that they are not

6. *Strat.* 6.5; "incline to the spear" = right, "to the shield" = left.

found lacking in this very virtue. Rather, they should become lovers of the fatherland and be very obedient to their officers, either through love or through fear.

17. They should endure heavy labor and bear up well in wars for their fatherland.

18. For you, though, it is by planning and strategy that you will attain most of the goals you are striving for and, at the same time, by your concern for discipline in the army under your command rather than by boldness and headlong haste.

19. Accustom everyone, all together, who are engaged in the struggle for Christ our God and on behalf of relatives and friends and fatherland and for the entire Christian people, to bear readily the distress of thirst, the lack of necessities, the burden of cold and heat, and to endure with courage whatever terrible things may chance to fall upon them. For your labors <gain> the rewards stored up <for you> by God himself and by Our God-given Majesty. Indeed, by our steadfast solicitude on your behalf, we too share in your suffering.

20. Even if at times some harmful things happen, for the most part, do your best to conceal them from the enemy. Remain brave and steadfast in <adverse> situations, even turning them around to the opposite; show yourself in good spirits and not suffering.

21. There were certain peoples, such as the Persian tribes, who fought against the Romans.⁷ Whenever they fell into terrible adversity, they did not want to propose means for their salvation that they wished for themselves, but they would receive proposals for it from their enemies. So great was their endurance of adversity.

22. Let us once more briefly recapitulate what we have previously said to you. Provide your army with the weapons according to the regulations already given to you. In particular make sure you have a large number of bows and

7. For §§21–23 cf. *Strat.* 11.1. On the various ethnic groups, see J. Wiita, “The Ethnika in Byzantine Military Treatises” (Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 1977).

arrows. For archery is a great and effective weapon against the peoples of the Saracens and the Kurds, who place their entire hope of victory in their archery.⁸

23. Indeed, against the archers themselves, defenseless at the moment of loosing the arrow, and against the horses of their cavalry, the arrows shot by our army are extremely effective and will cause severe harm to the enemy. When the horses so highly prized by them are destroyed by the continuous archery, the result is that the morale of the Saracens, who had been so eager to ride out to battle, is completely beaten down.

24. For the Saracens do not go on campaign out of servitude and military service but rather for love of gain and freedom or, to put it better, for robbery and for their own faith, rather, superstitious regard for their non-faith. Because of this, when they suffer evil from us, they think God has become their enemy and they cannot bear the injury.

25. When you march out to war, do not set up your camp unless it is strongly fortified, especially if you are near or within enemy territory. Whenever you approach the enemy, dig a ditch and make it more secure with a palisade, fitted together as tightly as possible so it will be a place of refuge from the difficulties in the time of battle.

26. Let me briefly explain some further differences in battle formations for you. One such formation is drawn up in three equal divisions, as we recalled above, that is, middle, right, and left. In the middle division station up to four hundred or five hundred elite troops, according to availability. There is no determined measure for the depth of such a formation. Rather, the cavalrymen in each *tagma* are drawn up in a first and a second line, with the front of each line equal and in close order. Put the equipment and the baggage train behind, to the rear of the battle line. If, when you are drawn up in formation and combat has begun, you find yourself facing enemy lancers, then you ought to draw up your battle line in difficult and rugged terrain and make use of archery. Because

8. On archery, see AnonStrat, 44–47 and p. 4, n. 9. The more reliable MSS, MW, have Kurds (Κούρτοι), whereas the later A has Turks (Τούρκοι). Both were noted for their ferocity and effective archery, and the Byzantines sometimes got them mixed up. See Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, 2.169; McGeer, *Dragon's Teeth*, 237–238. Basil I returned from his victorious Eastern campaign of 876–877 with many Kurdish and Saracen captives: Skylitzes, *Basil. Mak.*

of the difficult terrain the lancers will be widely scattered about and it will not be feasible or easy for them to charge with their spears against your line.

27. If the general should see that he has to face a very warlike people, then, before the day of battle, he ought to postpone and delay combat, setting up camp without fear in places difficult of access, especially if he knows that the enemy are prepared and set for battle. Then, on the very day of battle, especially in summer and around the hottest hour of the afternoon, let him initiate hostilities. The heat of the sun and the heaviness of the season will put an end to the boldness and high spirits of his opponents.

28. This formation, which we have previously described, is effectively opposed by an infantry formation carefully drawn up in line, as well as by level and open terrain for the charge of the lancers, also by hand-to-hand fighting and coming to blows swiftly without delay, because shooting arrows in such close quarters achieves nothing, and the archers do not have spears or shields.

29. If the battle is at close quarters and they are forced back and rush into immediate flight, they will suffer the greatest harm if they do not know how to turn back suddenly against their pursuers.

30. Direct attacks and encirclements by the outflankers against the flanks and the rear of their battle line cause them the greatest harm, unless they have flank guards in that line capable of standing up against a very strong attack.

31. For this reason, therefore, as mentioned, to prevent the formation from being scattered about, it is necessary for battle formations of this sort to choose level, flat, even ground where there are no marshes, ditches, or bushes.

32. When the army is all drawn up in formation, well prepared and ready, on the day of battle, do not defer the engagement, if clashing in pitched battle seems to be the correct decision.

33. It is necessary to regulate the engagements or clashing together in battle in proportion to the pressure exerted by the arrows. Are they steady, thick, and

rapid? Otherwise, the slow pace of the engagement and the constant archery of the enemy may cause a greater number of arrows to fall upon the soldiers and the horses.

34. If, for compelling reasons, the battle occurs in a fairly difficult location, it is well to station some men in infantry formation and others on horses. In such uneven terrain do not draw up the entire battle line with cavalry only.

35. The assaults of lancers against archers, as we have said, unless they are evenly lined up and not dispersed, will sustain great damage from the arrows, and they will be stopped short of contact in battle, for those who use spears require more level ground in combat.

36. But if the general becomes aware that his army is not ready for combat against his adversaries, he must not engage the enemy in a pitched battle. He should, rather, make use of ambushes, raids, and surprise attacks against the enemy. He should do this in a safe and respectable manner on favorable terrain so as not to reveal, either to the enemy or to his own men, his reason for postponing open battle. That would only make the enemy bolder and his own troops more cowardly.

37. Wheeling or turning about or reversing direction should not be made before the enemy's front but to turn back their flanks and to take their rear. Some peoples, such as the Persians, unwilling to break up their formation, sometimes readily exposed their rear to forces wheeling around against them as though fighting in flight. However, if the forces withdrawing and pretending to flee before them should want to turn about and attack the front lines of their pursuers, they will be hurt on running into their well-ordered lines.

38. When it comes to pursuits, some peoples, such as the Turks, are disorderly in attacking those pursuing them, and so they are very easily harmed by a force pursuing them that withdraws and wheels about in good order.⁹

39. Other peoples carry out pursuits cautiously, maintaining their formation. For this reason, forces turning back against them should be careful not to attack them in front but to make their attacks on the flanks and in the rear, as I have said.

40. Since I have mentioned the Turks, we do not judge it out of place <to describe> how they form up for battle and how one should form up to fight against them. Let us put in writing what we have learned from a certain amount of experience when they were our allies. At that time, the Bulgarians had disregarded the peace treaty and were raiding through the Thracian countryside.¹⁰ Justice pursued them for breaking their oath to Christ our God, the emperor of all, and they quickly met up with their punishment. While our forces were engaged against the Saracens, divine Providence led the Turks, in place of the Romans, to campaign against the Bulgarians. Our Majesty's fleet of ships supported them and ferried them across the Danube. <Providence> sent them out against the army of the Bulgarians that had so wickedly taken up arms against Christians and, as though they were public executioners, they decisively defeated them in three engagements, so that the Christian Romans might not willingly stain themselves with the blood of the Christian Bulgarians.

41. The Scythian nations are one, so to speak, in their manner of life and their organization; they have a multitude of rulers, and they have done nothing of value, living for the most part as nomads.¹¹ Only the nation of the Bulgarians, and also that of the Turks, give thought to a similar military organization, which makes them stronger than the other Scythian nations as they engage in close combat under one commander.

42. Since the Bulgarians, however, embraced the peace of Christ and share the same faith in him as the Romans, after what they went through as a result of

9. For §§38–73 cf. *Strat.* 11.2. By Turks, Leo means Magyars, who were raiding, and beginning to settle, in a region called Tourkia by the Byzantines, more or less corresponding to modern Hungary. Skylitzes (*Leon.Phil.*, 3) calls them Hungarians, Ούγγροι.

10. About 894. Skylitzes, *Leon.Phil.*, 12.

11. Scythians: a generic term for the nomadic peoples north of the Black Sea. The *Suda* (Σ 704) calls them Russian (Ρῶς).

breaking their oath, we do not think of taking up arms against them.¹² We now refer any military action against them to God. For the present, therefore, inasmuch as we are brothers because of our one faith and because they promise to yield to our advice, we are not eager to describe either their battle formation against ours or ours against theirs.

43. We will now speak about the disposition of the Turks and their battle formation, which differ from the Bulgarians a little or not at all. The Turks are very numerous and independent. More than on wealth and other forms of extravagance, they focus their attention only on conducting themselves bravely against their own enemies.

44. This nation has a monarchical form of government and is subjected to cruel and oppressive punishments by their rulers for their offenses. They are governed not by love but by fear and they steadfastly bear labors and hardships. They bear up under heat and cold, as well as the further lack of necessities, since they are a nomadic people.

45. The Turkish tribes are meddlesome but keep their plans to themselves. They are hostile and faithless. Possessed by an insatiable desire for riches, they scorn their oaths and do not observe agreements they have made. They are not satisfied by gifts; even before they receive the gift, they are making plans to break their agreement.

46. They cleverly estimate suitable opportunities and they strive to defeat their enemies not so much by brute force as by deceit, surprise attacks, and deprivation of necessities.

47. They are armed with swords, body armor, bows, and lances. Thus, in combat most of them bear double arms, carrying the lances high on their shoulders and holding the bows in their hands. They make use of both as need requires, but when pursued they use their bows to great advantage.

48. Not only do they wear armor themselves, but the horses of their illustrious men are covered in front with iron or quilted material.

49. They devote a great deal of attention and training to archery on horseback.

12. The Bulgarian Khan Boris was baptized in 864 and, despite some resistance, was followed by his subjects. See "Bulgaria" in *ODB*.

50. A huge herd of horses, ponies and mares, follows them, to provide both food and milk and, at the same time, to give the impression of a multitude.

51. They do not set up camp within entrenchments, as do the Romans, but up until the day of battle they are spread about according to tribes and clans. They graze their horses continually both summer and winter. When time comes for battle, they take the horses they think necessary, hobble them next to the Turkish tents, and guard them until it is time to form for battle, which they begin to do under cover of night.

52. They station their sentries at a good distance one after another so as not to be easily subjected to surprise attacks.

53. In battle they do not line up as do the Romans in three divisions, but in several units of irregular size, linking the divisions close to one another although separated by short distances, so that they give the impression of one battle line.

54. Apart from their battle line, they maintain an additional force that they send out to ambush careless adversaries of theirs or hold in reserve to support a hard-pressed section. They keep their baggage train behind their battle line, to the right or the left of the line about a mile or two away, detailing a small guard for it.

55. Frequently they tie the extra horses together to the rear, that is, behind their battle line, as protection for it. They make the depth of the files, that is, the rows, of their battle line irregular because they consider it more important that the line should be thick than deep, and they make their front even and dense.

56. They prefer battles fought at long range, ambushes, encircling their adversaries, simulated withdrawals and wheeling about, and scattered formations.

57. When they force their enemies to take to flight, they put everything else aside and are ruthless in their onslaught. They think of nothing else except the pursuit. They are not content, as are the Romans and other nations, with pursu-

ing their foes a reasonable distance and plundering their goods, but the Turks press on without respite until they have brought about the complete destruction of their enemies, employing every means to achieve this.

58. If some of the enemy they are pursuing should take refuge in a fortified place, they make careful efforts to discover any shortage of necessities for horses and men. They wait patiently so they can wear down their enemies by the shortage of those items or get them to accept terms favorable to themselves. Their first demands are fairly light, but then, when the enemy agrees to these, they impose others that are heavier.

59. These characteristics of the Turks are different from those of the Bulgarians only inasmuch as the latter have embraced the faith of the Christians and gradually taken on Roman characteristics. At that time they threw off their savage and nomadic way of life along with their faithlessness.

60. Hostile Turks are greatly hurt by a shortage of pasturage, because of the large number of horses they bring along with them.

61. When it comes to battle, an infantry force in close formation opposed to their cavalry will inflict the greatest damage on them. They do not dismount from their horses and, since they have grown up riding on horseback, they do not last long on foot.¹³

62. They are also at a disadvantage on level, unobstructed ground, as well as when a cavalry force follows along after them in a dense, unbroken mass.

63. Hand-to-hand combat with weapons also hurts them, as do attacks made safely at night, in such a way that one section of our attacking force maintains its formation while the other section remains in hiding.

64. They are also seriously hurt when some of them desert to the Romans. They realize that their nation is fickle and they are avaricious and composed of so many tribes and for this reason they set no value on kinship and unity with one another.

13. Cf. *Strat.* 11.2.19. Ammianus Marcellinus (31.2.6), writing about the Huns, notes a similar characteristic: "Their shoes are formed on no last and so prevent their walking with a free step. For this reason they are not at all adapted to battles on foot."

65. When a few begin to desert and are kindly received by us, a large number will soon follow them. For that reason they bear a grudge against those who depart from them.

66. Now then, when you wish to advance against them for battle, you must, above all, have frequent watches on the alert and not far apart. Then make your plans and advance preparations in the event of second fortune, that is, in case your forces, fighting against them, should be put to flight. Search for a strong position in the event of an emergency and find provisions for a few days, if possible also for the horses and certainly for the men, especially plenty of water. Then, make arrangements for the baggage train, as we have written in the chapter about it.¹⁴

67. If an infantry force is present, especially in the first engagement, when the army is becoming accustomed to that nation, draw it up according to the method described by us elsewhere, that is, with the cavalry lined up behind the infantry.¹⁵

68. If the troops drawn up for combat against them consist only of cavalry who are ready for battle against their forces, line them up in the manner described in the book on formations.¹⁶

69. Set apart a numerous and capable force on the flanks. To their rear, the cavalry called defenders, or *ekdikoi*, are sufficient. When in pursuit, the assault troops, or *promachoi*, should not distance themselves more than three or four bowshots from the battle line of the defenders, and they should not outrun them. A concerted effort should be made to draw up the battle line, as much as possible, in an open and even place, free of thick woods, marshes, or hollows that could serve as cover for ambushes prepared by the Turks.

70. Post scouts at some distance from all four sides of the battle line.

14. See above, Const. 10.

15. See above, Const. 7 §§41-45.

16. Probably *Sylloge tacticorum*. See Const. 19, n. 15.

71. If it can be done, it is good to have a river that is difficult to ford or marshes or a lake behind the battle line so that the rear is securely protected.

72. If the battle turns out well, do not be too hasty in racing after the enemy or behave carelessly. For, unlike other nations, this one does not give up the struggle when worsted in the first battle but, until they are completely beaten down, they try all sorts of ways to assault their enemies. If the formation is mixed, consisting mostly of infantry, you must still be concerned about finding forage for the horses. For when the enemy are getting close, by no means are the cavalry allowed to send out foraging parties.

73. Therefore, these military practices and characteristics of the Turks differ from those of the Bulgarians, as mentioned, in only a few particulars but are similar in others. We have given you this outline, O general, not because you are preparing to face the Turks in battle, for they are neither neighbors nor enemies to us at present, but instead they are eager to show themselves as subjects of the Romans. Still, O general, you should have a good knowledge of each one of the various formations and military practices and, at the proper time, make use of them without delay against anyone you wish. Experiment with what has been useful among those stratagems and battle formations that a great deal of experience has led some individuals to discover. Then, as the situation requires, after carefully practicing the drills and exercises, take the proper military measures to counter theirs.

74. There are some nations, such as the Franks and the Lombards, who had formerly been bound by impiety, but have now embraced the true faith of the Christians.¹⁷ Some are friendly while others are subject to Our God-given Majesty. They have distinctive military practices, some of which are traditional

17. Sections 74–92 derive from *Strat.* 11.3. Franks was a general name for Western Europeans; Lombards meant those in the various principalities of southern Italy, nominally under Byzantine rule.

among them, while others derive from actual usage. We are transmitting these to you, O general, not because of a military campaign against them—for how <could this be> when they are at peace and are allies, coreligionists, and subjects?—but in order that, from their usages and organization and, if necessary, from their adversaries, you may select whatever might seem useful to you and emulate them. And, when the time comes, you will be well practiced <in facing> absolutely any kind of enemy drawn up in formation against you.

75. Formerly there were the Slavs. When they dwelt across the Ister, which we call the Danube, the Romans attacked them and made war against them. They were then living as nomads, that is, before they crossed the Ister and bent their necks under the yoke of Roman authority. But I will not leave you ignorant of their usual methods in combat and of their other customs. Indeed, as I said, I will gather and explain everything to you, to the best of my ability, so that, like the bee, you may bring together from all sides and collect what is useful.

76. The Franks and the Lombards place great value on freedom. But the Lombards have now lost most of such virtue, although they and the Franks were particularly bold and undaunted, daring and impetuous in battle, regarding any timidity and even a short retreat as a disgrace, considering it just like a rout. For this reason they calmly despise death as they fight violently in hand-to-hand combat either on horseback or on foot.

77. Now, in the event that they are hard pressed in cavalry actions, they dismount from their horses at a single prearranged signal and line up on foot. Although few in number against many horsemen they show no fear and do not shrink from battle.

78. They are armed with shields and lances and rather short swords slung by straps from their shoulders, although at times some carry them around the waist.

79. They take more pleasure in fighting on foot and in making headlong charges.¹⁸ Whether on foot or on horseback, they draw up for battle not in any fixed measure and formation or in moirai or divisions, as do the Romans, but according to clans, their kinship with one another, or some common bond or often leagued together by oath.¹⁹ As a result, when things are not going well and their friends have fallen, they will often risk their lives fighting to avenge them.

80. In combat they make the front of their battle line even and dense.

81. Either on horseback or on foot their charges are impetuous and uncontrollable, hardheaded as they are without any fear at all.

82. They are disobedient to their leaders, especially the Franks, placing freedom above all else. They willingly go on campaign for as much time as they shall determine or that has been determined by their rulers, and only for that period of time. If it happens that they are to remain <beyond that>, they bear the extension of time grudgingly and break up the formation of the expedition and withdraw to their homes.

83. They are easygoing and avoid anything at all complicated and security measures and planning something beneficial. Thus, they despise good order, especially when it comes to cavalry.

84. They are easily corrupted by money, greedy as they are. This we have learned from experience, and we know from those who have frequently come here from Italy on some business or other that by intermingling with them, I think, even these have adopted their habits and become barbarized.

85. They are hurt by suffering and fatigue. Although they possess bold and daring spirits, their bodies are pampered and soft and unable to bear heavy labor easily.

18. Cf. *Strat.* 11.3.3; Procopius, *Bella*, 6.25.12–14.

19. Cf. Tacitus, *Germania*, 7.2.

86. Moreover, they are hurt by heat, cold, rain, and lack of provisions, especially of wine, as well as postponement of battle.

87. When it comes to a cavalry battle, they are hindered by difficult and wooded terrain because they have been trained to charge swiftly with their lances on level ground.

88. They are easily subject to serious damage from ambushes along the flanks and to the rear of their battle line, for they pay no attention whatever to scouts and other security measures.

89. Their ranks are easily broken by a simulated flight, and a sudden turning back against them easily wipes them out.

90. Attacks at night by archers often inflict damage on them since they set up camp all scattered about.

91. In the past, individuals who wanted to assault these people, with their customs and manner of doing things, did not line <their own troops> up for a pitched battle against them, especially in the early stages. Instead, they proceeded against them with well-planned ambushes and sneak attacks, as well as by other clever military actions, or else they delayed combat and kept putting it off. Or they pretended to make an agreement about peace with them, so that the shortage of provisions or else the likely discomforts of heat or cold might put a damper on their boldness and high spirits.

92. Delays and other actions against them could best be carried out at a time when the army opposed to them pitched camp on rugged and difficult ground. Because the Franks relied on lances, they were unable to launch an effective attack against such a place. If <the army opposed to them> did not carry out any

of the above operations against them, but was intent on fighting, it would form its battle line against them, as we explained in the chapter on formations.

93. The Slavic nations have shared the same customs and way of life with each other.²⁰ They were independent, absolutely refusing to be enslaved or governed, especially when they dwelled across the Danube in their own country. And when they crossed over from there to here and, as it were, were forced to accept slavery, they still did not want to obey another person meekly but in some manner only themselves. For they deemed it better to be destroyed by a ruler of their own race than to serve and to submit themselves to the laws of the Romans. Even after they received the sacrament of salvific baptism, up to our own times, they just as strongly retained their ancient and customary independence.

94. They were always a populous and hardy people, readily bearing up under heat, cold, rain, nakedness, and scarcity of provisions.

95. Our father, autokrator of the Romans, Basil, now in the divine dwelling, persuaded these peoples to abandon their ancient ways and, having made them Greek, subjected them to rulers according to the Roman model, and having graced them with baptism, he liberated them from slavery to their own rulers and trained them to take part in warfare against those nations warring against the Romans.²¹ By these means he very carefully arranged matters for those peoples. As a result, he enabled the Romans to feel relaxed after the frequent uprisings by the Slavs in the past and the many disturbances and wars they had suffered from them in ancient times.

96. The tribes of the Slavs—I am not sure how to say this—practiced hospitality²² to an extreme, and even now they judge it wrong to abandon it, but

20. Sections 93–102 derive from *Strat.* 11.4.

21. The conversion of the Slavs, as a whole, is dated to the 860s. See F. Dvornik, *Byzantine Missions among the Slavs* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1970); A. P. Vlasto, *The Entry of the Slavs into Christendom* (Cambridge, 1970). “Made them Greek,” γραικώσας: apparently, they had to adopt Greek customs, including, perhaps, the language, as did the orphans, who came from various ethnic groups. Anna Komnene employs a more classical word to describe the same process: ἑλληνίζω (15.7.9). See T. Miller, *The Orphans of Byzantium* (Washington, DC, 2003).

22. Hospitality toward strangers, φιλοξενία, an aspect of philanthropy praised and practiced by religious Byzantines. See *ODB*, s.v.

hold on to it as formerly. They were kind and gentle to travelers in their land, and were favorably disposed to them. They conducted them safely from one place to another in sequence and preserved them free from harm and always well supplied, commending them to one another. Indeed, if the stranger happened to suffer some harm because of his host's negligence, the one who had commended him would commence hostilities against that host, regarding vengeance for the stranger as a sacred pledge.

97. From former times they held on to another very sympathetic custom. They did not keep those whom they had taken into captivity for an indefinite period, as long as they wished. Rather, they set a definite period of time for their enslavement, and then gave the prisoners a choice: after this set period, if they so desired, they could return to their own homes with a certain assigned recompense or, if they wished to stay with them, they could remain there as free men and friends.

98. Their women manifested particularly strong feelings. Many of them regarded the death of their husbands as their own and would have themselves suffocated, <finding it> unbearable to keep on living as widows.

99. For food they made use of millet. They were truly happy and content with very little and grudgingly bore the labors involved in farming. They far preferred to have a much more independent way of life without any work than to acquire a wide variety of food or money with a great deal of toil.

100. Formerly they were armed with short javelins, or throwing weapons, two to each man, while others had large, thick shields, similar to thyreoi. They also used wooden bows and they had arrows smeared with a drug that was very

effective. If the wounded man did not drink an antidote or take some other remedy to counteract the drug or immediately cut around the wound to keep <the poison> from spreading, it would assuredly destroy the whole body.

101. They love to make their homes in overgrown and difficult land and to take refuge there.

102. Previously, in the constitution dealing with unexpected ambushes, we explained the manner in which the Romans made their attacks and ambushes against them. Now you, O general, even if you are not setting up surprise ambushes against them but against peoples like them or against other barbarians, if indeed you should find something useful in that ordinance, then you will have something right at hand to meet any contingency, as though you had been drilled in it beforehand.

103. Since we have recalled the various foreign battle formations and dispositions, then permit us now to call to mind as best we can the nation of the Saracens that is presently troubling our Roman commonwealth.²³ What are they really like? What weapons do they make use of in military campaigns? What are their practices? How does one arm himself and campaign against them and thus carry out operations against them?

104. The Saracens, therefore, are Arabs by race, who formerly lived near the entrance to Blessed Arabia, but in time came to be scattered about toward Syria and Palestine.²⁴ <They came> originally to find a place to live, but later, when Muhammad founded their superstition, they took possession of those provinces by force of arms. In fact, <they took> Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the other lands at that time when the devastation of the Roman land by the Persians allowed them to occupy those lands.

23. Saracens (Arabic: East) is a generic term for Arabs, implying Muslims.

24. Arabia: the southwest section of the Arabian peninsula, known as Felix Arabia, Εὐδαίμων Αραβία, present day Yemen. Cf. *DAI*, 25.65.

105. As far as the divinity is concerned, they appear to show proper reverence, but their apparent reverence must be recognized as blasphemy. They cannot bear to call Christ God, <although he is indeed> true God and savior of the world. They argue that God is the cause of every evil deed and they claim that God rejoices in war and scatters abroad the peoples that want to fight. They observe their own laws as inviolable, fattening their flesh and bringing dishonor on their souls. Fighting, therefore, against such impiety by means of our own piety and orthodox faith and observing divine and civil laws as all the more inviolate, we wage war against them.

106. They make use of camels, asses, and mules to bear their baggage, instead of wagons and pack animals. They use drums and cymbals in their battle formations, to which their own horses become accustomed. Such great din and noise disturbs the horses of their adversaries, causing them to turn to flight. Moreover, the sight of the camels likewise frightens and confuses horses not used to them, preventing them from advancing.

107. Such hordes of camels and pack animals are often used to give the impression of a great number. They place these in the middle of the multitude of soldiers and raise a thick array of pennants above them to give the appearance of a very large crowd of soldiers.

108. Their temperament is hot because they dwell in such a hot climate.

109. They make use of foot soldiers, Ethiopians they say, drawn up in front of the cavalry, without armament, like light-armed troops.²⁵ They carry bows and, when they shoot, they seem irresistible to their opponents.

110. They transport their infantry either riding on their own horses or sitting behind the cavalymen, when the campaign takes place near their country. They make use of armament, and their cavalry uses bows, swords, lances, shields, and axes. They wear full armor, including body armor, cuirasses,

25. Ethiopians: a generic term for dark-skinned Africans, from Sudan or elsewhere, who appear in Muslim armies on the borders of Syria and Cilicia in the 2nd half of the 9th century. See Dagrón, *Guérilla*, 179. The *Suda* (A1 129) defines Ethiopian simply as “the black man” (ὁ μέλας).

helmets, shin guards, gauntlets, and all the rest in the Roman manner. They decorate their belts and bridles and swords very richly with silver.

111. Neither when they are pursuing nor are being pursued do they break their formation. But if it should happen that they do so, they lose their cohesion and are unable to return, only racing on to save themselves.

112. They are bold at the expectation of victory but very cowardly when victory is denied them. They say that everything comes from God, even if it should be evil. If it happens that they suffer a setback, they do not resist since it has been decreed by God. Overthrown by the onslaught, they are completely undone. They are given to sleep and for this reason have a fear of battle at night and all that is connected with it, especially when they are raiding in a country foreign to them. And so they withdraw to strong places and there set up a guard for the night or else they will securely fortify their camp so as not to be subjected to night attacks by their adversaries.

113. Their native battle formations are both square and oblong and so are very secure and not easily broken up by the attacks of their opponents.

114. They employ this formation while marching and in forming up for battle. They also imitate the Romans in many respects. It is as though they have been trained by experience in the other models of battle formations, so the very things they suffered from the Romans they are now busily putting into practice against them.

115. In their battle formations they are inventive and steadfast and are not frightened by the rapid onslaught of their attackers nor do they become too relaxed by simulated delays.

116. They stand steadfast in their formation, bearing up valiantly under the missiles fired by the forces boldly attacking them. When they observe that their adversaries' energies are drooping, then they rise up and fight strenuously. They do this not only in battles on foot but also in those on the sea, fighting at close quarters on the ships. After those who had been shooting against them have discharged <their arrows>, which they endure by forming a wall of shields, they quickly come together and in a body rise up and start fighting hand-to-hand. In attacking these people it is always necessary to be ready for anything.

117. They are more notable than all other peoples in relying on good counsel and firm adherence to methods of warfare, as we have learned from our subordinate commanders who have often discovered this in launching attacks against them. Indeed, we have read this in the accounts attributed to the emperors before us and, in particular, we have heard it from our most holy father <Basil> who had frequently campaigned against them.

118. This people is hurt by cold, by winter, and by heavy rain. It is best, therefore, to launch attacks against them at such times rather than in good weather. Their bow strings become slack when it is wet and because of the cold their whole body will become sluggish. Often while making their incursions and plundering raids at such times, they have been overcome by the Romans and destroyed.

119. They flourish, therefore, in good weather and in the warmer seasons, mustering their forces, especially in summer, when they join up with the inhabitants of Tarsus in Cilicia and set out on campaign.²⁶ At other times of the year

26. See Skirmishing, 7: "In that month [August] large numbers would come from Egypt, Palestine, Phoenicia, and southern Syria to Cilicia, to the country around Antioch and to Aleppo and, adding some Arabs to their force, they would invade Roman territory in September."

only the men from Tarsus, Adana, and other cities of Cilicia launch raids against the Romans.

120. Therefore, it is necessary to attack them as they are marching out to pillage, especially in winter. This can be accomplished if <our> armies remain in a location out of sight somewhere nearby. When our men observe them marching out, they can launch an attack against them and so wipe them out. <We can also attack> when all of our troops have come together at the same time in large numbers, fully equipped for battle.

121. It is very dangerous, as we have frequently said, for anyone to run the risk of a pitched battle, even when it seems perfectly clear that <our forces> far outnumber the enemy. The result of fortune is unseen.

122. They are not assembled for military service from a muster list, but they come together, each man of his own free will and with his whole household. The wealthy <consider it> recompense enough to die on behalf of their own nation, the poor for the sake of acquiring booty. Their fellow tribesmen, men and especially women, provide them with weapons, as if sharing with them in the expedition. Because their physical weakness does not enable them to bear arms themselves, they consider it a reward to provide armament for the soldiers. These, then, are the Saracens, a barbaric and faithless people.

123. The Romans, of course, must not only take care of these things, but the soldiers too must be resolute in purpose and those <citizens> who have not actually gone off to war must campaign along with them against those people who blaspheme the emperor of all, Christ our God, and they must strengthen those waging war on his behalf against the nations by every means, by arms, gifts, and processional prayers, even doing more than this, kindly looking after the households of the men who eagerly and bravely march off to war and, if the armies are lacking something such as horses, expenses, or suits of armor, providing these through communal solidarity and collaboration.

124. If this is how everything goes, the army of the Romans, well and properly armed, will greatly increase, especially with a large number of men chosen for their courage and nobility, and lacking nothing of what is needed, it

will easily, with God's help, be crowned with victory over the barbarian Saracens.

125. If, in our weaponry, especially our great supply of bows and arrows, our numbers and courage, and our requisite stratagems and machines, we Romans are far superior to the barbarians, and if we have the divinity as our ally in everything, we will easily achieve victory over those peoples.

126. Because of the booty they have reason to expect, and because they do not fear the perils of war, this nation is easily gathered together in large numbers from inner Syria and all of Palestine. Because of such expectations, even the cowardly quickly choose to join up with those marching off to war.

127. If we are well armed and drawn up in formation, with God fighting along beside us, we charge against them bravely and in good spirits on behalf of the salvation of our souls, and we carry on the struggle without hesitation on behalf of God himself, our kinsmen, and our brothers the other Christians, then we place our hopes in God. We shall not fail to achieve, rather, we shall certainly achieve the glory of victory over them.

128. If they ever raid inside the Taurus in order to pillage <the area>, it is necessary for you to deal with them in the narrow passes of that mountainous region, when they are on their return journey and are particularly exhausted, perhaps bearing along some booty of animals or objects.²⁷ Then you must station archers and slingers on some of the high places to shoot at them and thus have the cavalry attack. Or, as the situation requires, lay ambushes or <make use of> other means such as rolling rocks over cliffs or barricading the road with trees and making it impassable, as we have described above. Or make whatever arrangements you deem possible, O general, to deal with the situation at that moment.

129. When they are drawn up for battle, they do not break ranks, even if you charge against them two or three times, up to the point when they either become bold enough to move out in pursuit or become timid enough and rush to escape. It is, therefore, necessary for you to withstand their attack first by archery, with our men stationed in front and those a little behind shooting against them. For in this manner, with their horses, the so-called pharia, being

27. Skirmishing, 20–23.

shot at, as well as the Ethiopians or other archers being wounded because they do not wear armor, they will quickly rush off in flight.²⁸ They will do this for two reasons, namely because of their desire to save their horses, which are highly prized and not easily procured, and because they want to save themselves as well through saving the horses. For when the horses are wiped out by missile fire, especially by poisoned arrows, their riders perish at the same time or, because they know the strength of the poison, they will flee before being hit.

130. The majority of the Saracens do not go on campaign so much to attain glory and fame as for the sake of providing for themselves and gaining material goods. For they do not know how to farm in order to save themselves from poverty, but they are trained from childhood to live or die by the sword alone. And so, just one victory over them will free the Romans from a multitude of dangers. They will no longer be so bold and thoughtless as to march out <against us> again, when they observe that those men who had marched out have not returned, but are being mourned by their own people.

131. The Saracens in Cilicia place great value on thoroughly training all their infantry forces to engage in battle on two fronts, that is, on land along the road leading out from the Taurus mountains and on sea by means of their ships, called koumbaria.²⁹ When they do not campaign on dry land, they sail out to sea, pillaging the towns along the coast and often, if it so happens, engaging in naval battles. When they do not go out to sea, they campaign against the Roman territories on land.

132. You, therefore, O general, must keep an eye on them by means of trusted spies. Find out exactly what is going on with them and be prepared with a strong enough army. When they campaign by sea, you go by land and, if possible, launch an attack against them in their own territory. But if the spies report that it is their intention to campaign on land, then you should advise the commander of the Kibyrraiotai fleet so that, with the dromons under his command he may fall upon the Tarseote and Adanan territories that lie along

28. Pharia, from a Semitic root, designated the so-called Arabian horses, originally bred by the Bedouins, and highly prized in the medieval and modern worlds. Cf. Theophanes *Cont.*, 480.

29. κουμβάρια. Large ships; see *infra* Const. 19; *LBG*, s.v.

the coast.³⁰ For the army of the Cilician barbarians is not very numerous, since the same men are campaigning both on land and on the sea.

133. What most contributes to the downfall of those people is the simultaneous assault of a strong battle fleet and of an infantry force through the Taurus. Together with a good number of your subcommanders, launch your attack against them. In this way you will plunder the land of those bandits, as our most blessed father and autokrator of the Romans once did in his days by his sacred command.³¹

134. In waging war against the Saracens of Syria dwelling near Mesopotamia, adopt the methods employed by the commander, who, a short time ago, recaptured Theodosiopolis, which had been occupied by them, and returned it to our dominion.³² The horses of the Romans are unaccustomed to camels and are even more frightened by the noise of drums and cymbals and they turn around <and move> to the rear. This tactic has often caused the Romans to rush into flight. It is necessary, then, to accustom the horses of the soldiers, especially those of the front line troops and their officers, to the din of the drums and cymbals by using them in drills and also to have camels among them so they will not be scared by the sight of them. There are also other considerations that one could discover by careful investigation of present conditions.

135. To sum it up, all that we have written about tactical theory from the beginning to the end, all that was said about weapons, armament, drills, battle formations, and other military methods in connection with the Saracen people has been transmitted and set forth by us. This people that borders on our commonwealth causes us no less trouble now than the Persian people of old did to former emperors. They cause harm to our subjects every day. It is for this reason that we have undertaken the present task of formulating instructions for war. In addition to what we have already said, we have found other models of battle formations that you may well consider employing, O general, against this barbaric people. They are the following.

136. Vary your battle formation. To give an example, <take> about four thousand picked troops. Let the first battle line, called *promachos*, consist of one

30. The Kibyrraiotai theme, in southwest Asia Minor, furnished a large number of ships and crews for the imperial navy.

31. This probably refers to the expedition of Basil I in 876-877.

32. Theodosiopolis (Arm.: Karin; Turk.: Erzurum), in Armenia, was taken from the Arabs for a brief period in 754, then retaken by the Byzantines in 949. This note must refer to the campaign led by the magister Leo Katakalon, in 902. See *DAI*, 45; *Commentary*, 173.

thousand five hundred men; divide them into three equal divisions, very close to one another, that is, right, left, middle, so each will have five hundred men. When drawn up in formation, these three lines will appear as one line. You will make the second line of one thousand men, and divide it into four divisions separated from one another by one bowshot; these will thus consist of two hundred fifty men. Station them behind the first battle line, so that if the first line happens to retreat, it may find refuge in the empty spaces between the divisions, and with them it will seem to form one battle line. For the four divisions of the second line make three empty spaces in which the men of the first line may take their stand and receive the support of the second line. In addition to these, post five hundred men as rear guards and divide them into two divisions in the rear: right and left. Post them behind the second battle line as a third line, with each section having two hundred fifty men. In time of need have these sections join together and move forward to support the second battle line, which has already received the first. These three lines, then, though we defined them as separate by necessity, nonetheless we still consider them to be united by their closeness and their struggles on behalf of one another, on account of the good arrangement of the model. In addition to these, station the so-called horns close by and, in front of the first line, the so-called outflankers by the right division and the flank guards by the left. These should amount to two hundred men. The outflankers should be prepared to encircle the advancing line of the enemy, while the flank guards on the left are to prevent the encirclement of your line by the enemy, or perhaps they too should be ready to take part in the encircling <of the enemy>. In addition to these, also post two tagmata of two hundred men on each side at a distance to set up ambushes, lying in wait in hidden places on this side and that of your battle line. Or they may be stationed behind the battle line ready to charge out all at once, in what is called a droungos, and attack the flanks of the enemy.

137. In the three empty spaces of the second battle line station between one hundred and three hundred men so that it appears to be one continuous line. If it becomes necessary for the soldiers in the first line to retreat into those three empty spaces, then the men <stationed there> will draw back and, at the same time, restrain the men rushing into flight and make them turn back to their own line. In withdrawing to the rear, they join up with the rear guard. This will be beneficial and of no small importance to the men who are struggling.

138. Station the rest of the one hundred men with the general and his own retinue. Whenever the need arises, they can assist any division under pressure. Because of their numbers, when they are sent out, they may well bring sufficient strength and a respite to such a unit.

139. And so the entire first, second, and third lines of the battle formation, as well as the flank guards, the outflankers, the rear guards, the ambushers, and the men in the middle of the empty spaces, together with the support troops stationed with the general, all these together add up to four thousand men in formation.

140. Let the general have the middle position of the first battle line, where he can see and make arrangements for what is needed. Let him have this support unit so that, if ever a greater force is needed, he may dispatch it together with the tourmarch stationed with him, or the officer formerly called lieutenant general, now known as merarch. A tourmarch ought to take his place in front of each division and the general over all of these.

141. The divisions should have their own droungarioi. The counts under their command and the rest of the officers, each one according to his valor, should be stationed with him to strengthen the soldiers and to arouse them for the impending battle.

142. Divide the number <of men> in the first line, assigning part of it, that is, a third, into the so-called assault troops, men whom you know to be especially brave and courageous. Designate the second part as the so-called defenders. The assault troops are sent against the front. As promachoi they should attack the enemy in irregular order, that is, all together without any formation. If they force them to flee, the defenders, that is, the support troops and ekdikoi, will pursue them without breaking their formation, but riding along in good order. But if the assault troops, also known as proklastai, come under pressure, they will then withdraw so that the defenders may receive them in order and hold back the enemy. But if there is something more, the men in the second line shall move to help, and the rear guard as well, and in this manner they will pursue the enemy, continuously receiving help from many sources. I do not think it is safe to take such great risks with only one battle line. When the first finds itself in difficulties, at that time it also turns to flight. But here <in our scheme> even if the first finds itself in difficulty, the second line is standing there, ready to assist it most vigorously. If this line is in difficulty, the third, still unharmed, will move up. In this way, against three unharmed battle lines the one line of the enemy will be in difficulty, will be easily overcome, quickly break ranks, and turn to flight. The flank guards and the outflankers, of course, must cooperate in this operation, especially in unison with the above-mentioned four thousand men, all elite troops, as they should be, outstanding for bravery and valor in warfare. For this constitution of ours is not intended for an army of slaves but for one that will take weapons in hand and enthusiastically engage in combat.

143. Make the files of such a battle line ten men deep, or thick, so that in each file there shall be two officers, the one called group leader, also dekarch, protostates, or promachos, and the ouragos, who is the last of the row and is called pentarch. It is necessary that these men be particularly qualified and brave, and equipped with the appropriate armor and weapons. With the depth of the files formed in this way, arrange the extent along the front according to width, line by line, as much as is called for, and also by the flank.

144. In this present proposition the first line, divided into three divisions, will have in each division fifty files, ten deep for each row, from the group leader or protostates to the ouragos at the end. Thus, all the files of the three divisions of the first line come to one hundred fifty, totaling one thousand five hundred men. Let the second line have in its four divisions some twenty-five files each, so all the hundred files will total a thousand men. <Let the rear guard, that is, the third line, have some twenty-five files, for a total of five hundred men.> The flank guards will have ten files, one hundred men. Likewise the outflankers ten files, one hundred men. Furthermore, the ambuscades, or ambushes, on this side and that of the two divisions of the battle line <should have> some twenty files: so, forty files or two hundred men. All together, four hundred men. The troops stationed in the empty spaces of the second battle line, who, as said, restrain those who are fleeing, will make up three divisions of ten files, that is, one hundred men, or three hundred all together, as well the one hundred men stationed with the general.

145. With the exception of the assault troops, the three battle lines will be formed by files; the rest of the units, that is, the flank guards and the outflankers who are designated for the encircling movements, as well as those for the ambushes, the ambushers, and the others, will not always take their place in strict formation, but will advance according to need, sometimes in this fashion and sometimes in irregular formation, or as the circumstances of combat require.

146. From these four thousand men in formation all the officers, elite men, will be selected according to their rank, 1,346 in the following manner: 800 pentarchs, 400 dekarchs, 80 pentekontarchs, also called tribunes, 40 kentarchs or hekatontarchs, 20 counts, 4 droungarioi and chiliarchoi, 2 tourmarchs, altogether 1,346 major and minor officers. And in this way, for one theme let brave

soldiers be selected and let what is called the military theme be filled by elite and armed cavalymen, four thousand in number and noble in their qualities. The other troops from the theme should be divided up among other formations and needs, as appears most useful to you, O general, for each situation.

147. These prescriptions stand whether the enemy's army is small, larger than yours, or equal to it. If your adversary is greatly superior in numbers, then <act> in line with the model set forth for you in the battle line just explained, double your army with your fellow commanders from other themes, so that the entire battle line will total eight thousand. The whole army, of course, should be divided according to the prescribed model, except only for the numbers added according to each tagma of the line. But if doubling alone should not be enough, then triple the number, lining up with yourself the two other generals with elite, armed soldiers under them. This results in twelve thousand. In this way, the entire army will be divided according to the above-mentioned model, that is, tripling the soldiers in each line according to the number prescribed above.

148. If you face combat against a small but brave enemy force, then, if this seems helpful to you, draw up one theme and make three battle lines of up to four thousand, as in the model given, or even more thousands according to the quantity <required> for easily provisioning the army. Have one line charge against them or, if they charge, receive them. If they turn away, you will pursue them in safety, but if they resist, then the other line will launch a charge against them, coming from their rear. In this way, the enemy will be overpowered. Even if they hold up against this, the third line can attack either from the rear or the flank and, together with the other lines, having encircled them, they will utterly destroy them. After all, the enemy are not without flesh even though they wear their boldness like their skin.

149. If you are preparing to engage a large enemy force in battle, join together the three battle lines of four thousand men into one, as said, and you will triple the number of the aforementioned formation. Divide it in the regular manner, as laid down, into the first and the second battle lines, into rear guards,

flank guards, outflankers, ambushers or ambushes, and the rest of the units, as already explained. Thus, with good order and a united front, you will have the assault troops, as they are called, or the promachoi of the first line launch their attack, or even the outflankers, or do as need requires, as we have prescribed in the constitution concerning battle. But if the enemy are even more numerous and you need a much larger army, have the remaining generals of the eastern themes stand ready for such a necessity. In like manner, each one should muster his own army of four thousand men from each theme, after having separated the useful troops from the useless, as we said. <This condition> has been brought about by the prevailing lack of training, by carelessness, and by the small number of soldiers these days. All of these <commanders> will stand together by your side against the enemy and will assemble a multitude of trustworthy soldiers, so that those who are obliged to wage war bravely and in good spirits against the enemy add up to more than thirty thousand men.

150. We have presented Your Excellency with these regulations. Perhaps they contain nothing new or extraordinary. As noted above, however, we have gathered together what we came across in older authorities and thence, having harmoniously brought together ordinary experience with those authorities, we have issued <these regulations>. Taking these as your starting point, you will be able to discover many other things in this <book>, things that, as we said, owing to the limitations of space, it is not possible to write about individually or to include conveniently in this present constitution. But it is possible for you, dedicated to this task and reflecting on the broad field of tactics, to devise and put into action such practices, as well as those still more effective than these, with God as your support, because of your faith in him and your love and good disposition toward Our Majesty.