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The great strategy preview of the Byzantine Empire is not as bold in its controversial claims as its controversial predecessor, the Great Strategy of the Roman Empire (1976). The basic idea that the Byzantines preferred persuasion and co-option to decisive battles is well established. The power of the book lies in the conceptual apparatus of the strategic theory that Luttwack brings to Byzantine military textbooks in the third part and will provide an attractive introduction to some aspects of diplomatic and military history. Interest in Byzantium by scholars in other fields is certainly to be encouraged, but Luttwack is not Byzantine (for example, he relies entirely on translations for primary sources, even online translations, and too often on outdated scholarships). The next critical review is written from the point of view of a byzantium that requires closer commitment to the field by anyone who would make a great argument about Byzantium. Part I presents the fundamental axioms of Byzantine strategy and provides a historical argument for its origin. The Byzantines avoided the risks of decisive military confrontations and sought rather to limit or co-opt their enemies, in order to preserve their own soldiers, who would be necessary to rule their next enemy, and because today's enemy was a potential ally against the enemy of tomorrow (given the waves of barbarians that the empire faced during its long history). Ideally, barbarians should be paid to leave or attack others rather than fight. Luttwack follows the emergence of this policy in the confrontation with Attila and the Huns. The Hunnic armies were fast, large and almost impossible to destroy on the ground, given their tactics and the use of the composite reflex arc. That's when Byzantine diplomacy came forward and dominated their strategy afterwards. Moreover, in response to this threat, the Byzantine army became predominantly cavalry-oriented, with the archers on horseback replacing the heavy infantry of the Roman past. Luttwack is generally stronger at formulating strategy principles than making historical arguments. Of course, Attila's experience has shaped the continuous evolution of Byzantine strategy, but the case here leaves too many questions unanswered. First, for a century before Attila the empire had to deal with many Goths in a typical Byzantine way as with the Huns before Attila. Secondly, it is not clear, according to Luttwack (54-55, 61), that the Eastern armies would have lost in the fight against Attila. Luttwack has already described how Western armies (famously) defeated him in 451, though he downplays this as a temporary check (43-45). But his argument (following the Jordanes) that the proto-Byzantine Aetius did not destroy attila, in order to use the Huns as a potential lever against the Goths indicates that it a victory (44). He also ignored the defeat of the Huns before Toulouse in 439, where the losses were so great that Attila could act against the East in 441 only in violation of a treaty and when Theodosius II had sent many units to the West against the Vandals. Trapped, the East must not have regarded Attila as an unmanageable threat (12) or an irresistible force (78). It was cheaper to pay him, but he did not pose a threat to the existence of the empire. This reflects a deeper problem in assessing attila's significance, a point on which Luttwack disagrees with his main sources, E. A. Thompson and O. Maenchen-Helfen, who considered Attila overrated. He became a figure of imagination, but his hand of raids and the ultimate goal (practically extortion) did not change history. Luttwack invokes his presence in the Nibesungenlied and Icelandic saga (18-19), but Attila's contemporary king, Arthur, makes it clear that late medieval literature is not a guide to Roman history. Even he admits that under Attila the Huns remained raiders rather conquerors [sic] (38) and that they avoided fighting, preferring localized attacks to set the stage for . . . extortion (38-39). The so-called Hun empire was recently called a large-scale protective missile, and in direct encounters with the Roman army, the Record of the Huns is not particularly impressive. 1 Another component of Luttwack's argument is open to the objection, namely that, after Attila, the Byzantine army came to rely primarily on cavalry (20-21, 56; cf. 26: the core of the army, 78: primary force, 260: the dominant arm). The doctrine of cavalry arose from the generalizations of the 19th century about the chivalrous culture of the Middle Ages (while antiquity had citizen militias) and is based largely on a single text, the preface to the wars of Prokopios, which Luttwak, like many before, duly quotes (57) and takes at face value. Of course, the cavalry became more important after 500 and was more prominent in certain types of operations, especially against enemies on the chase, but the core of the Roman army remained infantry. This is apparent from the stock exchange which Luttwack appears not to have consulted,2 and is indicated by the evidence which he himself later presents in the Byzantine manuals (300-301, 312, 349, 363-364 and 369-370) which mostly involve infantry armies, and go beyond the concession of 273: even at the height of the cavalry era needed some infantry. Strategikon malekios is about cavalry operations (267), but this is misleading: it refers to a separate work on infantry (2.2), possibly lost. Wars with Avars in Teofilaktos are also cited by Luttwack as evidence of cavalry thesis but the narrative is not explicit and seems to me to refer to the legions of infantry instead. With regard to the Prokopios preface, I argued that it not to be taken at face value, because it was part of his ironic position towards Justinian, to which purpose a fantastic warrior type is conceived.3 This text provides no solid basis on which to reconstruct military history. Prokopios was, moreover, an infantry partisan on the grounds that Luttwak accidentally reveals (293): the enemy cavalry could be easily stopped by the infantry in disciplined rows, as long as there were enough archers to prevent the steppe archers from simply standing in front of them to unload their arrows. Finally, Luttwack overlooks the possibility that the Byzantines may have learned cavalry skills from their eastern neighbors;4 and here he could overestimate Hunic influence. Part II focuses on the tools and context of Byzantine diplomacy. Chapter 3 deals with the sendings, focusing on late antiquity, and repeats the sophistry that there were no professional diplomats... Minister of Foreign Affairs (107, also 6). It would be refreshing for someone to challenge that. A good place to start would be Justinian's long-running officiorum magistrate, Petros Patrikos, who was more of a diplomat and minister of foreign affairs than many modern professionals. Surprisingly, he's not even mentioned in this book. A more rigorous comparison would probably weaken the argument that the magister could not have been a true foreign minister, for lack of time (108-109), given the number of offices under him. The same could be said of many modern ministries, and in some countries the office of foreign minister is held by the Prime Minister. The diplomatic immunity account (101-105) overlooks Theodahad's crucial exchange of Prokopios between Petros. Chapter 4 is a short study of the sacred attractions of Constantinople, but it avoids an analysis of how religion promoted, or was used to promote, diplomacy. Relations between Romanos I and Symeon would have been ideal for this purpose, but they are narrated for the most part untranslated sources. Chapter 5 on Court Ceremonies discusses some excerpts from the Book of Ceremonies. Chapter 6 on dynastic marriages (diplomatic rectums) is transformed into a list of small analyses and misses a recent major monograph.5 Chapter 7 on the geography of power is a selective commentary on the forms of address provided in the Book of Ceremonies for addressing foreign leaders. General background information is provided here and there, but no explanation as to why this moment was chosen, why this text, or exactly how the chapter contributes to the main argument. Only the discussion of Pechenegs (158-161) seems strictly relevant, and here Luttwack returns to De administando imperio. He would be more support for his thesis in this text. Two concentrated discussions, which concern Bulgarians and Muslims (Chapters 8-9) follow. The first is a narrative study of war and diplomacy, sometimes Sources. Luttwack loses sight of his main argument and delights in campaign details (some of which seem to contradict his main thesis: see below). The narrative is discontinuous. It offers snapshots of relations with Symeon and jumps forward to Samuel and Basileios II. Chapter 9 begins by discussing the tax systems of late Rome and Sasanian Iran, and then moves towards the treatment of religious minorities by Byzantium and Muslims. The relevance of this strategy is unclear (nor of the note from 453 n. 24 on Luther's anger against the Jews). Perhaps we are meant to conclude that intolerance has caused minorities to welcome Arabs, although this is not strictly about strategy. Luttwack seems unaware that some of these subsequent narratives of betrayal were intended to favor the Muslim masters.6 We return to strategic analysis only at the end of the chapter, with Seljuks. In general, Part II of the book is the weakest in terms of analysis and originality. Part III is the most successful in the book, consisting of five chapters (10-14) that investigate military textbooks from antiquity to the 11th century, and one (15) that examines the strategic dimension of Herakleios' defeat of Persia. At first glance, the chapters of the investigation might seem to paraphrase the military treaties; in fact, Luttwack uses his expertise as a strategic theorist to have a good effect, removing the logic behind the recommendations of the texts. I recommend discussing the concept and practice of elastic defense (343-345), where comparative evidence is well implemented. At 326 Luttwack rejects the overall value of the Greek fire. At 387-392 he surprisingly omits Kekaumenos' potential betrayal advice to foreign border lords on how he could maintain independence from Constantinople. Unfortunately, Luttwack does not discuss in chapter 13 the naval strategy was integrated into the land war. The book's strengths reflect its author's expertise in strategic theory, but from the point of view of Byzantine studies here there are too many annoying errors throughout.7 More worrying are the problems in the book's methodology. Apart from textbooks, literary sources are taken at face value (after seeing with Prokopios). For example, there is no analysis of the ethnographic conventions behind Amianus's account of Huns.8 Sidonius, we are told, was not led in the wrong paths of poetic needs – he describes [riding skills] quite precisely (28), but elsewhere panic or poetic needs are allowed (43). It is about the extent of the literary refinement brought to the base of the sources. Against 63, the reasons for Priskos's account of Attila's embassy had little to do with the context (personally, or ideological) of Tacitus' Germany. Luttwak's removal of Prokopios' plague account on the grounds that it mimics classic models (87-88) is sixty years out;9 he then paradoxically supports this account, because other sources confirm it. He mischievously rejects Said and all the classicists who study the representation of the Other in literature (448 n. 1) – an evil fashion. At 252 years old, he complains about linguistics taking over philosophy, preferring it to instill peace. There is no linguistic return here in many senses. Nor is there any analysis of the interplay between the structure and strategy of command or of the military organization of the empire and the nature of its units (these are briefly mentioned in 178, with reference to the entry into the Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium). I was left with a vague impression of the army with which the great strategy was implemented. Nor is the criteria for the appointment of officials discussed; the relationship between the army and civilians; of how the Byzantines perceived war in the first place; of their idea of Holy War (mentioned in a parenthesis at 412 and a note to 470), which would certainly influence the strategy; or changes, gradual or dramatic, in strategy between 400 and 1100 (a glimpse only at 369-370, and a confirmation in the last paragraph: 417-418). A passage implies a more evolutionary vision (13: it was only under Herakleios... that great distinctive strategy... has been fully formed), but this methodological challenge is not taken up. At 112 the shift from force to diplomacy is supported as a turning point between (later) Rome and Byzantium, but Luttwack states at the top of the same page that the emperors from Augustus to Augustus preferred gold for iron whenever enemies were bought cheaper than the fighters. So, despite Attila's presentation, the transition from Rome to Byzantium remains unclear. Strategic doctrine prevails over history and is largely static. With the exception of Nikephoros I, who decided to rely entirely on his own military power (177) and thus came to the pain (see 183 for his error), there is no analysis of the generals who ignored what Luttwack postulates as Byzantine strategy, but succeeded. He believes that these were only Justinian and Basileios II (284), but the long recapture produced many of those who preferred war over diplomacy (Kourkouas, Nikephoros Phokas, Ioannes Tzimiskes, etc.). The most important methodological issue, however, is that Luttwack seems not to know that the Byzantines fought civil wars about as often as foreign ones fought.10 and that, consequently, their command structure and strategy were designed to deal with internal threats, both real and imagined. Even the emergence of their distinctive strategic mode could have had more to do with playing against each other gothic warlords absorbed into the system at the end of the century than he did with Attila. The exhibition is punctuated by strange statements and outdated notions. There is no to the claim that Byzantium after 1259 was a Greek kingdom rather than an empire (6, 56, 70, 234). Iconoclasm was not a struggle between the Greek inclination for images and the abstract Jewish monotheism (118). 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which also called Prokopios archer mounted/lancers something of a myth. 4. A. D. H. Bivar, Cavalry Equipment and Tactics at the Euphrates Border, Dumbalongon Oaks Papers 25 (1972) 273-291. 5. A. G. Panagopoulou, Oi diplomatikoi gamoi sto Byzantio (6os-12os aianas) (Athens 2006), 500 pages. 6. Most recently in H. Kennedy, The Great Arab Conquests: The Spread of Islam Changed the World We Live in (Da Capo Press 2007). 7. For example, 34-35: the Hunnic raid through the Caucasus was in 395 not 399, and Luttweack does not know G. and M. Greatrex in Byzantium 69 (1999) 65-75. 36: Rome and Persia did not agree to garrison the Caucasus in 562, but over a century earlier. 78: Theodosius I for Theodosius II, 83: ribs (twice). 84: Justinian's novel was not collected in a separate compilation - which is an illusion created by the modern edition. 86: Justinian was not named Flavius as a child - which was an imperial name. 98: Sodgians. 111: apkrisarion. 128: the first known Byzantine-Arab prisoner exchange was not in 805, but in 769: Teofan, Chronicle a.m. 6261 (p. 444). 131: Stamford Bridge is not in Greater London. 186: 1913 for 913. 237: Strategikon dates back to the last part of Justinian's reign (other, for example, 267, is attributed to the reign of Maurikios). 266: by the end of the 15th century Greek was still an unknown language, even for the most learned scholars in Western Europe. 338: The Byzantine counteroffensive began not in the middle of the 10th century, but two centuries earlier. 391: archenos. 394: Khusbau II never went to Constantinople. 436 n. 23: Averil Cameron Claudian, Poetry and Propaganda be Alan Cameron, Claudian: Poetry and Propaganda. Harald Hardrada's epithet is translated as severe counsel to 155 and tough leader to 131 (and his story is told twice in different chapters). At 40 slave monoxila (= a tree = dugouts), but at 463 n. 20 we get = single trunk. But they weren't dug canoes. At 226 we are told that Mantzikert was a catastrophic strategic defeat, but at 162 that it was not a catastrophic military defeat because the catastrophe came in the wake. 8. See C. King, The Vericity of Ammianus Marcellinus Description of Huns, American Journal of Ancient History 12 (1987) 77-95; C. Kelly, Attila Hun: Barbarian Terror and the Fall of the Roman Empire (London 2009) 17-28. 9. See A. Kaldelis, Procopius of Caesarea: Tyranny, History, and Philosophy at the End of Antiquity (Philadelphia 2004) 26-27, citing relevant studies. 10. For a tabulation, see W. Treadegold, Byzantium, Reluctant Warrior, in N. Christie and M. Yazigi, eds., Noble Ideals and Bloody Realities: Warfare in the Middle Ages (Leiden 2006) 209-233. 209-233.

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