Notes and Documents

The Emperor Leo V and Vardan the Turk

THE story told by Genesius about the prophecies of the monk of Philomelium to Vardan, who in 803 rebelled against Nicephorus I, and his three followers, Leo the Armenian, afterwards Leo V, Michael of Amorium, afterwards Michael II, and Thomas of Gaziura, commonly called the Slavonian,¹ is well known; and though of course no serious historian can accept it as historical fact, attempts have been made to extract information as to the early careers of these three men from it. The object of this paper is to show that in the case of Leo there was a real connexion between him and Vardan, and that the position assigned to him in the story may well be accepted as correct. In the contemporary life of the hermit Joannicius (d. 846) by Peter the monk we find mention of a certain Bryenes 'son of the Turk', to whom Leo was ἐξάδελφος,² while in the parallel life by Sabas he is described as συγκλητικός without record of his parentage, and Leo is called his ἀδελφιδός.³ Now the identity of 'the Turk' can hardly be in doubt, for Theophanes in recording the insurrection of Vardan calls him Βαρδάνης . . . ὁ ἐπικλην Τούρκος,⁴ and Bryenes was therefore Vardan's son. It may indeed be objected that according to the Continuator of Theophanes Vardan after his fall made all his sons enter a monastery,⁵ and a son of his could not therefore be a senator; but, even if the Continuator were a better authority than he in fact is, men who retired into monasteries for political reasons often left them when circumstances changed, and the deaths of Nicephorus and Stauracius made further seclusion unnecessary for the family of Vardan, even if we accept the story of the hagiographers with its prophecy so literally as to suppose that Bryenes was a senator before Leo's accession.⁶

It remains to consider what was the relationship between Bryenes and Leo. The word ἐξάδελφος generally means

¹ p. 8, ed. Bonn.

² ch. 16 (*Acta Sanctorum*, Nov. ii. 392).

³ ch. 16 (*ibid.* p. 347).

⁴ A. M. 8295.

⁵ i. 3, ed. Bonn.

⁶ The title may have been added by Sabas without authority (see below, p. 257, note 7); but, if Bryenes had been a monk, it would probably have been stated.

'cousin', but sometimes 'nephew', while ἀδελφιδός (more usually ἀδελφιδούς) means 'nephew', and no certain instance of its use for 'cousin' is given in the lexicons. Words of relationship at this time were however often used with different meanings (e.g. ἀνεψιός, and in Latin *nepos*), and, if Leo was nephew of Bryenes, he must have been Vardan's grandson, which chronology makes unlikely. Moreover, Sabas not only makes Leo ἀδελφιδός of Bryenes, but also Bryenes ἀδελφιδός of Leo, and therefore, as two men cannot be one another's nephews, we are compelled to take the word to mean 'first cousin'.⁷ Accordingly, as Leo was first cousin of Bryenes, he must have been nephew either of Vardan himself or of his wife Domnica,⁸ and it was therefore natural that he should hold the position in Vardan's army which is assigned to him in the story told by Genesius, though it would be very unsafe to argue from this that Michael and Thomas were also serving under Vardan. The exact form of the relationship cannot be determined. Leo's father is called Bardas,⁹ which represents 'Vard', and two brothers might very well bear these two kindred names, though Leo might equally well have been son of Vardan's sister or nephew of Domnica. Vardan, as his name shows, was, like Leo and a large proportion of the military leaders of the time, an Armenian, and it is hardly necessary to say that the surname Τοῦρκος does not mean that he was really a Turk, though, as in the case of the name Χάζαρος applied to Leo IV, it may mean that he had Turkish (probably Chazar) blood in his veins.

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The Materials for the Reign of Robert I of Normandy

ROBERT I, commonly called Robert the Magnificent or, for no good reason, Robert the Devil, is one of the less known figures in the series of Norman dukes. His reign was brief and left few records, and it was naturally overshadowed by that of his more famous son, yet we shall never understand the Normandy of the Conqueror's time without some acquaintance with the period immediately preceding. The modern sketches¹ are scanty and unsatisfactory, and while the extant evidence does not permit of a full or adequate narrative, they can be replaced only when the available material has been more fully utilized and more

⁷ It is very likely that Sabas had no authority except Peter; but even in this case his version shows that he uses ἀδελφιδός for 'cousin', and therefore understood ἐφ' ἀδελφός in that sense.

⁸ Cont. Theoph., i. c.

⁹ *Script. Hist. Byz.* (Bonn) xxx. 336.

¹ See, besides the older histories of Normandy, Palgrave, *History of Normandy and England*, iii. 141-90; Freeman, *Norman Conquest* (1877), ii. 179-91; Stenton, *William the Conqueror*, pp. 63-72.