



<https://publications.dainst.org>

iDAI.publications

ELEKTRONISCHE PUBLIKATIONEN DES
DEUTSCHEN ARCHÄOLOGISCHEN INSTITUTS

Dies ist ein digitaler Sonderdruck des Beitrags / This is a digital offprint of the article

Brian Croke Mundo the Gepid: from Freebooter to Roman General

aus / from

Chiron

Ausgabe / Issue **12 • 1982**

Seite / Page **125–136**

<https://publications.dainst.org/journals/chiron/1291/5640> • urn:nbn:de:0048-chiron-1982-12-p125-136-v5640.4

Verantwortliche Redaktion / Publishing editor

Redaktion Chiron | Kommission für Alte Geschichte und Epigraphik des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Amalienstr. 73 b, 80799 München

Weitere Informationen unter / For further information see <https://publications.dainst.org/journals/chiron>

ISSN der Online-Ausgabe / ISSN of the online edition **2510-5396**

Verlag / Publisher **Verlag C. H. Beck, München**

©2017 Deutsches Archäologisches Institut

Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Zentrale, Podbielskiallee 69–71, 14195 Berlin, Tel: +49 30 187711-0

Email: info@dainst.de / Web: dainst.org

Nutzungsbedingungen: Mit dem Herunterladen erkennen Sie die Nutzungsbedingungen (<https://publications.dainst.org/terms-of-use>) von iDAI.publications an. Die Nutzung der Inhalte ist ausschließlich privaten Nutzerinnen / Nutzern für den eigenen wissenschaftlichen und sonstigen privaten Gebrauch gestattet. Sämtliche Texte, Bilder und sonstige Inhalte in diesem Dokument unterliegen dem Schutz des Urheberrechts gemäß dem Urheberrechtsgesetz der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Die Inhalte können von Ihnen nur dann genutzt und vervielfältigt werden, wenn Ihnen dies im Einzelfall durch den Rechteinhaber oder die Schrankenregelungen des Urheberrechts gestattet ist. Jede Art der Nutzung zu gewerblichen Zwecken ist untersagt. Zu den Möglichkeiten einer Lizenzierung von Nutzungsrechten wenden Sie sich bitte direkt an die verantwortlichen Herausgeberinnen/Herausgeber der entsprechenden Publikationsorgane oder an die Online-Redaktion des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts (info@dainst.de).

Terms of use: By downloading you accept the terms of use (<https://publications.dainst.org/terms-of-use>) of iDAI.publications. All materials including texts, articles, images and other content contained in this document are subject to the German copyright. The contents are for personal use only and may only be reproduced or made accessible to third parties if you have gained permission from the copyright owner. Any form of commercial use is expressly prohibited. When seeking the granting of licenses of use or permission to reproduce any kind of material please contact the responsible editors of the publications or contact the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut (info@dainst.de).

BRIAN CROKE

Mundo the Gepid:
from Freebooter to Roman General

In the face of declining manpower and morale in the fifth century Roman army, emperors in both East and West were increasingly obliged to look to the various non-Roman tribes inside and outside the empire as a source of recruits. At the same time, and as a natural consequence, many leaders of barbarian contingents became powerful and influential Roman generals.¹ One such figure during the early reign of Justinian (527–565) was 'Moundos' who emerges from the pages of Procopius as successor to Belisarius in the East after 530, is instrumental in suppressing the Nika riots in 532 and is finally killed in Dalmatia during the first stage of the Gothic war in 536.² Justinian had sent 'Moundos' and his son Mauricius to recapture Salona which they duly did.³ Some time later Mauricius was leading his band of men on a reconnaissance mission when they encountered a hostile group of Goths. In the ensuing attack almost all the Romans, including Mauricius, were killed. When the news of his son's death was broken to him 'Moundos' was grief-stricken and enraged. He set out for immediate vengeance but was himself wounded by the Goths and soon breathed his last. It was his death, so Procopius reports, which led some to recall the saying of the Sibylline oracle that: *Africa capta Mundus cum nato peribit*.⁴

This senior and experienced general of the 530's has sometimes been assumed to be identical to the barbarian freebooter named 'Mundo' who took on the imperial army under Sabinianus, the *magister militum* of Illyricum, at Horreum Margi (Čuprija) in 505 and succeeded, with Ostrogothic assistance, in inflicting a humiliating defeat on the Romans.⁵ Since this 'Mundo' is reported as having fled from the

¹ An important phenomenon, on which see: A. DEMANDT, *Der spätrömische Militäradel*, Chiron 10, 1980, 608–636, esp. 610, 619–621, 626–627 and «magister militum», RE Suppl. 12 (1970) 553–788, – esp. 785–786 (both articles with superb stemmata); K. STROHEKER, *Zur Rolle der Heermeister fränkischer Abstammung im späten vierten Jahrhundert*, Historia 4, 1955, 314–330 (= Germanentum und Spätantike, Zürich 1965, 9–29) and M. WAAS, *Germanen im römischen Dienst* (Bonn 1971).

² For detailed references: W. ENSSLIN, *Mundo*, RE 16 (1933) 559–560.

³ Proc. Wars 5. 5. 2–11.

⁴ Cf. Proc. Wars. 5. 7. 4–6 with J. BURY, *History of the Later Roman Empire* (London 1923) I, 174 n. 1.

⁵ BURY, 1923, I, 460; E. STEIN, *Histoire du Bas-Empire* (ed. J.-R. PALANQUE) (Paris 1959) II, 55, 387; ENSSLIN, 1933, 559–560.

Gepids⁶ he is naturally assumed to have been a Gepid himself. Likewise, Justinian's general is recorded as being the son of a Gepid king. The sixth century Antiochene writer John Malalas explains this transition to Roman general from the service of the Ostrogothic King Theoderic as follows:

«During the consulate of Decius (529), Moundos who by descent belonged to the Gepid tribe and was the King's son, went over to the Romans. After the death of his own father he attached himself to Thraustila, his uncle, and lived in Sirmium. When the king of Rome Theoderic, son of Valamer, learnt this he sent messages and won Moundos over. Having been persuaded, Moundos went to him, together with his men, and stayed with Theoderic Valamer fighting on his behalf. When Moundos withdrew from Rome and reached the river Danube, he sent ambassadors to the emperor Justinian requesting that he might become a subject of his empire. Justinian accepted Moundos and his men, made him *magister militum per Illyricum* and despatched him to carry out his duties.»⁷

This statement gives rise to the easy assumption that after fighting as an ally of Theoderic in 505 Mundo stayed on with the Ostrogoths, or at least had joined them when the Gepids were deployed by Theoderic in southern Gaul in 523.⁸ In either event it is a compelling inference that the «Mundo» of 505 and the «Moundos» of 530 are one and the same person.

Despite this straightforward passage of Malalas it has, however, been widely taken for granted that the barbarian bandit Mundo and Justinian's general Moundos were quite distinct individuals. Since this latter opinion has now been reasserted in the major biographical reference work for the period⁹ it is time to examine this problem of identification more thoroughly.

⁶ Jord. Get. 301: *Gepidarum gentem fugiens*.

⁷ Malalas, 450.19 – 451.10 (Bonn): «Ἐπὶ δὲ τῆς ὑπατείας Δεκίου προσεῖρήνη Ῥωμαίοις Μοῦνδος ὁ ἐκ γένους τῶν Γηπέδων καταγόμενος, υἱὸς ὦν ῥηγός, μετὰ τὴν τελευτὴν τοῦ ἰδίου αὐτοῦ πατρὸς πρὸς Θραυστίαν, θείον αὐτοῦ, γεγονώς, καὶ διήγεν ἐν τῷ Συρμίῳ. καὶ γνοὺς τοῦτο ὁ ῥῆξ Ῥώμης ὁ Οὐαλεμεριακὸς ὁ καὶ Θεουδερῖχος, πέμψας προετρέψατο τὸν αὐτὸν Μοῦνδον· καὶ πεισθεὶς ἀπῆλθε πρὸς αὐτὸν μετὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων αὐτοῦ καὶ διέτριψε πρὸς αὐτόν, ὑπερμαχῶν ὑπὲρ τοῦ Οὐαλεμεριακοῦ τοῦ καὶ Θεουδερῖχου. ἀναχωρήσας δὲ Μοῦνδος ἀπὸ Ῥώμης ἀνήλθεν ἐπὶ τὸν Δανούβιον ποταμόν· καὶ πέμψας πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα Ἰουστινιανὸν πρεσβευτὰς ᾗτησεν αὐτὸν ὑπὸ τὴν βασιλείαν αὐτοῦ γενέσθαι. καὶ ἐδέξατο αὐτὸν σὺν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις αὐτοῦ, ποιήσας αὐτὸν στρατηλάτην τοῦ Ἰλλυριῶν ἔθνους, καὶ ἀπέλυσεν αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ στρατηλασίᾳ. Theophanes (A. M. 6032, DE BOOR 218.32) adds that the name of the father of Moundos was Giesmos.

⁸ Cassiodorus, *Variae* V.10.2 with STEIN 1959, II, 250.

⁹ Mundo, PLRE, 2 (1980) 767–768; likewise in BURY, 1923, I 460 T. HODGKIN, *Italy and her Invaders* 3 (1885) 439–442; 4 (1885) 3 n. 1 (acknowledging that the identification is «possible but not probable»).

I

The Huns who launched their devastating raids along the Roman highways of the Balkans in the 440's were a multi-national confederation bound together by a dependence on Attila the Hun king. Among the different barbarian groups inflicting damage on the cities and countryside of the Balkan provinces were the Ostrogoths and Gepids.¹⁰ When Attila later turned his attention to the west the subject tribes remained within his sway. At the famous battle of the Catalaunian Plains in 451, for example, the Hun king's confidence was shared by his loyal ally Ardaric, king of the Gepids.¹¹ On the day before the main encounter the Gepids were successful in battle against the Frankish allies of the emperor.¹²

Not long after this decisive conflict, two years at the most, Attila was dead and his loosely-knit confederation soon began to disintegrate. Originally the Huns, under Attila's three sons, retreated into Dacia and Pannonia retaining overlordship of the Ostrogoths and Gepids,¹³ but before long the subject nations grew restless as Attila's sons were anxious to divide them up among themselves. In 454 the Gepids, under their king Ardaric formerly a loyal supporter of Attila, revolted and shook off the Hunnish yoke after a battle at the river Nedao in which Attila's son Ellac was killed.¹⁴ Subsequently, the Goths occupied Pannonia and the Gepids moved into Dacia¹⁵ while the Huns themselves scattered. Some went as far as the Pontus;¹⁶ the remainder settling in two main congregations: one under Attila's youngest son Ernac in the Dobrudja,¹⁷ the other under his other surviving son Dengizich in Dacia Ripensis¹⁸ whence he attacked the Pannonian Goths in 463 or so and was soundly defeated.¹⁹ In 466 Dengizich and Ernac proposed revised peace terms to the Romans. When their overtures were rejected Dengizich resolved on war but his brother declined and is not heard of again.²⁰ As it turned out Dengizich won favourable new concessions from the emperor Leo²¹ but in attacking the Romans again in 469

¹⁰ Jord. Rom 331.

¹¹ Jord. Get. 199: *eratque et Gepidarum agmini innumerabili rex ille famosissimus Ardaricus, qui ob nimiam suam fidelitatem erga Attilam eius consiliis intererat.*

¹² Jord. Get. 217.

¹³ Jord. Get. 261–262.

¹⁴ Jord. Get. 260 with O. MAENCHEN-HELFEN, *The World of the Huns* (Berkeley 1973) 147 ff.

¹⁵ Jord. Get. 264.

¹⁶ MAENCHEN-HELFEN, 1973, 150.

¹⁷ Jord. Get. 266.

¹⁸ Jord. Get. 272.

¹⁹ Jord. Get. 273–274 with MAENCHEN-HELFEN, 1973, 162 ff.

²⁰ Priscus, fr. 36 (FHG IV, 107).

²¹ Priscus, fr. 38 (FHG IV, 108).

he overreached himself and was vanquished. His head was displayed, in a traditional way, on a pole in Constantinople, a grisly reminder of the end of the Hun menace.²²

Meanwhile, the Gepids remained in Dacia and the Ostrogoths in Pannonia which they occupied with the consent of the emperor Marcian.²³ During the 470's and 480's the Ostrogoths were drawn into the Balkans both by a search for new land on which to settle and as an instrument in the power game being played by the imperial court with the various barbarian groups seeking imperial recognition and favour.²⁴ The vacuum left in Pannonia was then filled by the Gepids moving south of the Danube.²⁵

This new equilibrium was upset in 488 when the Goths began their advance westwards towards Italy. In the Goths' former home territory, at the river Ulca which acted as a protective barrier to the Gepids, the two barbarian nations collided.²⁶ Theoderic and his Goths, desperately short of food and supplies, defeated the Gepids in a muddy encounter. The Gepid king Trapstila (or Thraustila) was killed but his young nephew Mundo who was then under his tutelage was spared.²⁷ With newly won provisions the Goths continued into Italy, where they settled on Roman land and established their kingdom, while the Gepids apparently remained in the area of the Save and retained control of Sirmium.

II

In order to protect his new kingdom in Italy against the Gepids and other likely invaders Theoderic took steps to secure domination of the Save/Drave valley.²⁸ Any disturbance in the region could be interpreted as a threat to the Ostrogoths; likewise, any opportunity to extinguish or diminish the power of the Gepids would be eagerly grasped.

Now that Mundo had grown to maturity he broke away from the Gepids settled around Sirmium, fled to the wilds across the Danube and gathered together a band of outlaws who achieved some notoriety by their depredations; at least they became

²² Marcellinus, Chron. s.a. 469 (MGH.AA, XI, 90); Chronicon Paschale, 598. 3–8 (Bonn).

²³ Jord. Get. 263.

²⁴ For this period: BURY, 1923, 411–422; STEIN, 1959, I, 335–337, 356–357.

²⁵ Ennodius, pan. Theod. XII.60: (*Sirmium*) *postea per regentium neglectum in Gepidarum iura concessit*.

²⁶ W. ENSSLIN, Theoderich der Große (Munich 1947) 67; STEIN, 1959, II, 55; for the location of the river: T. S. BURNS, The Ostrogoths. Kingship and Society, Historia. Einzelschr. H. 36 (Wiesbaden 1980) 74–75.

²⁷ Ennodius, pan. Theod. VII. 28–34 and Paulus Diaconus, Hist. Rom. XV.15 (for the death of Trapstila, despite ENSSLIN, Thraustila 3 RE 6A [1936] 596).

²⁸ BURNS, 1980, 89–93.

a cause of concern to the imperial government which in 505 despatched a large force under the *magister militum* Sabinianus to curb their raids.²⁹ No reason is offered by our sources for Mundo's desertion of the Gepids but it is not unlikely that he was actually driven out. When his father died in the 480's Mundo did not succeed him as king because he was too young. Instead his maternal uncle, Trapstila, became king and Mundo passed into his uncle's care.³⁰ When his uncle was killed not long after the throne was apparently claimed by his own son, Mundo's cousin, Trasaric.³¹ When Mundo grew to adulthood by around 500 and realised his position he may well have appeared too dangerous a rival to tolerate. This is exactly what happened in the 550's when the Gepid king Elemundus died. His son Ustrigothus, although quite young, was forced to flee because Thorisin had pushed him aside in seizing the Kingship.³² A similar situation occurred among the Lombards in 549; King Vaces' nephew Risiulfus was destined to be king after Vaces' death «according to law», that is to say Risiulfus' father must have been king before Vaces. However, in order to enable his own son to succeed, Vaces had Risiulfus banished.³³ If we read <Trapstila> for <Vaces> and <Mundo> for <Risiulfus> then banishment by Trasaric may explain how Mundo came to desert the Gepids for a life of brigandage.

While Mundo's freebooters were on the rampage in the first years of the sixth century the Gothic king, so it seems, was demanding the capitulation of Sirmium and sent his general Pitzias to secure the city's submission. Sirmium surrendered but Pitzias' services were needed by Mundo to tilt the balance against the Romans and their Bulgar allies at Horreum Margi by the Morava river.³⁴ It was surely at this point that Mundo came into the employ of Theodoric.³⁵ His own tribe, the Gepids, had been stood over and Sirmium was now absorbed into Ostrogothic Italy and acquired its own royal official with both civil and military powers.³⁶

With the entry into the service of the Gothic king, Mundo disappears from view.

²⁹ Jord. Get. 300–301. Marcellinus, Chron. s. a. 505 (MGH.AA, XI, 90).

³⁰ Malalas 450.19 ff. (Bonn); Theophanes, A. M. 6032 (DE BOOR, 218.31 ff.).

³¹ Jord. Get. 300.

³² Proc. Wars. 8.27. 19–20.

³³ Proc. Wars. 7.35. 12–15.

³⁴ Ennodius, pan. Theod. XII.60; Jord. Rom. 356; Get. 300; Marcellinus, Chron. s. a. 505 (MGH.AA, XI, 90) with ENSSLIN, 1947, 133–135; STEIN, 1959, II. 145–146 and BURNS, 1980, 92–93.

³⁵ cf. ENSSLIN, 1947, 134 (before 505). Both Malalas and Theophanes (n. 30 supra) say that Mundo was invited to join the Ostrogoths immediately before his uncle's death, that is 488. If this implies active military support on Mundo's part it is impossible in the light both of his young age at the time and his banditry in and before 505. Alternatively, it could mean that he became a royal *hospes* at the Gothic court, just as Theodoric had earlier been at Constantinople.

³⁶ Cassiodorus, Variae 3.23, 24. Although there is no evidence, STEIN (1959, II, 156) makes the interesting suggestion that Mundo may have been recognized in the partition of Illyricum in 510 as being in possession of the Danubian bank of Moesia I.

Indeed it is usually held that nothing more is known about him.³⁷ To maintain this one has to accept that Justinian's general 'Moundos' was a different person and the argument for differentiation normally adduced is nomenclature and nationality – «if it is correct that this Mundo was a Hun, then he can not be identified with Mundus the magister militum of Justinian.»³⁸

It is therefore important to consider first of all the nationality of this Mundo. Descriptions range from «a son or grandson of Attila» (HODGKIN)³⁹ to «a Hun of noble ancestry» (BURNS),⁴⁰ to «a Gepid of Attilanic descent» (MAENCHEN-HELFEN),⁴¹ to a «Gepidenfürst» (ENSSLIN).⁴² The evidence upon which this range of designations is based is a sole passage of Jordanes and since Jordanes was of barbarian descent himself⁴³ it must be held likely that he was well able to differentiate and correctly describe the different barbarian nations of his day. He says of Mundo:

«nam hic Mundo de Attilanis quondam origine descendens Gepidarum gentem fugiens ultra Danubium in incultis locis sine ullis terrae cultoribus divagatus et plerisque abactoribus scumarisque et latronibus undecumque collectis . . . vicinis regem se grassatoribus fecerat.»⁴⁴

It is clear that Jordanes does not say that Mundo was a son or grandson of Attila. What he does divulge is that Mundo traced his origins to what were formerly the *Attilani* and we should take *quondam* to indicate the period of the 440's and 450's. In addition, *Attilani* does not necessarily mean «of the immediate family of Attila» but can stand for the whole Hun confederation which included the Gepids. The only other recorded instance of *Attilani* is part of a general chronological categorisation of the mid fifth century.⁴⁵ Bearing in mind that the direct descendants of Attila were effectively eliminated with the death of Dengizich in 469, and that Jordanes describes Mundo as a refugee from the Gepids, it seems safest to assume that he was in fact a Gepid (and the Gepids were certainly *Attilani quondam*) although it remains possible that he was somehow related to Attila by descent.

That Mundo was, strictly speaking, a Gepid rather than a Hun would also appear to be reinforced by the fact that a contemporary, the Illyrian chronicler Marcellinus,

³⁷ e.g. BURY, 1923, I. 460 n.3; HODGKIN, 1885, 3, 439.

³⁸ PLRE 2, 767.

³⁹ (1885) 3, 439.

⁴⁰ (1980), 93.

⁴¹ (1973), 364.

⁴² (1933) 559 cf. ENSSLIN, 1947, 134: «Dieser Mundo, in dessen Adern hunnisches und gepidisches Blut floß . . .»

⁴³ Jordanes tells us (Get. 266) that he was of mixed Goth/Alan parentage. On his nationality: N. WAGNER, *Getica. Untersuchungen zum Leben des Jordanes und zur frühen Geschichte der Gothen* (Berlin 1967) 3–17.

⁴⁴ Get. 301.

⁴⁵ Nov. Just. 11,1 (a. 535): *autem Attilanis temporibus eiusdem locis devastatis Apraemius praefectus praetorio de Sirmitana civitate in Thessalonicam profugus venerat* (ed. SCHOELL-KROLL, p. 94).

dubs him «Getic» (*Geta*).⁴⁶ This traditional label was more likely to denote a Gepid than a Hun whose equivalent classical title was *Scythicus*. Thus Gepids and Goths were actually closely related and it is important to remember that Romans experienced real difficulty in distinguishing between them. Jordanes carefully described how the *Getae* and *Gepidae* were related⁴⁷ and his contemporary Procopius provides an identical interpretation of current nomenclature: the Gepids, Vandals and Visigoths are all Goths; they used to be called Sarmatians or Malaenchlaeni but now they are known simply as the «Getic races».⁴⁸ The Romans could differentiate between Huns and Gepids, but not so well between Gepids and Goths. So when Marcellinus calls Mundo «Getic» we can be reasonably confident, in the light of Jordanes' evidence, that he means «Gepid» rather than «Hun».

If Jordanes cannot be taken as evidence that Mundo was definitely a Hun, it then becomes highly likely that the «Moundos» in Justinian's service was the very same person at a later stage of his career. This latter Moundos was, as noted above, most definitely a Gepid: the son of a certain king Giesmos and the nephew of the next king Trapstila who was defeated by the Ostrogoths in 488.⁴⁹ The transition to Roman service is explained, as already observed, by Malalas who tells us that in 529 Moundos, the son of the Gepid king, joined the Romans. To this information Theophanes, drawing here as elsewhere on a fuller version of Malalas than we now possess,⁵⁰ adds the name of the Gepid king – Giesmos. Both Malalas and Theophanes go on to say that after his father's death Moundos attached himself to Thraustila and later was talked into joining Theoderic, but after the latter's death in 526 retired to the Danube and afterwards offered his services to Justinian who made him *magister militum* in Illyricum.

III

In the three years between Theoderic's death and his appointment as *magister militum per Illyricum* in 529 Moundos appears to have been settled somewhere in the vicinity of the Danube. Since the Gepids had settled not far away after being driven out of Sirmium in 505 (but on both sides of the Danube) and easily gravitated back to Sirmium when the Ostrogothic grip on it loosened,⁵¹ it is quite possible that

⁴⁶ Marcellinus, Chron. s. a. 505 (MGHAA, XI. 90): *Sabinianus delegatus contra Mundonem Getam*.

⁴⁷ Get. 94–95.

⁴⁸ Proc. Wars 3.2.2.

⁴⁹ Malalas, 450, 19–22, Theophanes, A. M. 6032 (DE BOOR, 218.31 ff.).

⁵⁰ K. KRUMBACHER, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Literatur*² (Munich 1897) 330 and less informatively in H. HUNGER *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner* (Munich 1978) I, 320.

⁵¹ The Gepids returned to Sirmium about this time (Proc. Wars 7.33.8) and were well established there by 535 (ibid. 5.3.15).

Moundos spent these three years amongst the Gepids and this would be further evidence of his Gepid nationality, stated so specifically by Malalas.⁵²

In support of this likelihood is the fact that in the service of the Romans Moundos' contingent consisted of a large group of Eruli.⁵³ Now the Eruli had been settled in Pannonia in 512 by the emperor Anastasius and were direct neighbours of the Gepids.⁵⁴ Although at first relations were strained between these new neighbours⁵⁵ they became friends and allies later.⁵⁶ That the forces offered to Justinian in 529 consisted of Eruli suggests that Moundos had come to take command of them as a leading Gepid warlord. Furthermore, this close relationship between Gepids and the Eruli was later cemented by the marriage of Moundos' granddaughter to one of the commanders of the Erulian units in Roman service, perhaps the one originally under the authority of Moundos himself.⁵⁷

Moundos' appointment as *magister militum per Illyricum* was made in 529 and almost certainly precipitated by the disastrous invasion of the Bulgars in that year. They invaded Illyricum and defeated the Roman generals opposing them. Three new generals were appointed, one of whom was the Caucasian Hunnish king Askoum. They too were eventually captured and a hefty ransom paid to secure the release of Askoum who was *magister militum per Illyricum* at the time of the invasion. Moundos succeeded Askoum and the tables were soon turned. In 530 he defeated the Slavs first of all and later in the year succeeded in turning back another invasion of the Bulgars, scoring a notable victory in the process and capturing the Bulgar king.⁵⁸ The source closest to these events is Marcellinus, an exact contemporary. Living in the imperial capital and having been in the service of Justinian (from c. 520–527)⁵⁹ it is not unlikely that he actually knew Moundos. So when Marcellinus calls both the vanquisher of Sabinianus in 505 and the conqueror of the Bulgars in 530 <Mundo> there can be no question of him confusing the names. In other words, the general of 529/536 whom the Greek sources (Procopius, Malalas, Theophanes) refer to as <Moundos> Marcellinus calls <Mundo>.

Jordanes too calls both the barbarian general of 505 and Justinian's general <Mundo>. Jordanes certainly used Marcellinus and it might be argued that he is simply copying Marcellinus here and cannot be regarded as independent testimony. It is

⁵² Malalas, 450.20.

⁵³ Proc. Wars 1.24.41.

⁵⁴ Marcellinus, Chron. 512.11 (MGH.AA XI, 98); Proc. Wars 6.14.28.

⁵⁵ Proc. Wars 6.14.27.

⁵⁶ Proc. Wars 6.15.36. It appears that they made a joint assault on Sirmium in 527/8 (for the sources: STEIN, 1959, II, 307–308).

⁵⁷ Proc. Wars 8.26.13.

⁵⁸ Malalas, 451.3–16 (Bonn); Theophanes, A. M. 6032 (DE BOOR 219.9–14); Marcellinus, Chron. s. a. 530 (MGH.AA XI, 103) with STEIN, 1959, II, 305–308 and B. CROKE, Justinian's Bulgar Victory Celebration, Byzantinoslavica 41, 1980, 188–195.

⁵⁹ Marcellinus 9, PLRE, 2, 710–711.

equally likely, however, that he was following a source common to both Marcellinus and himself as he often does.⁶⁰ In any event, Jordanes makes reference to Mundo's expedition against the Goths in 535, that is at a point beyond the end of the chronicle of Marcellinus.⁶¹ Jordanes is renowned for his carelessness, a reputation that is not always justified, and there are some who would say that if 'Mundo' (505) and 'Moundos' (530) were distinct individuals then the similarity of names would be enough for Jordanes to coalesce them. This is unfair. It is quite possible that Jordanes also knew Moundos, even more likely that he knew of him, if only as someone of barbarian extraction like himself.⁶² The evidence of Jordanes therefore points to a single Mundo.

Procopius, on the other hand, calls 'Moundos' the man who Marcellinus and Jordanes knew as 'Mundo'. It must be pointed out too that Procopius also may have known this general. He at least had opportunities to observe him at close quarters, both on the eastern frontier when Mundo replaced Belisarius, Procopius' employer, in 530 and in Constantinople during the Nika riots in January 532 when Belisarius and 'Moundos' worked closely together. It is clear that Marcellinus' 'Mundo' was Procopius' 'Moundos' and that the latter is merely employing a declinable Greek form for the barbarian name. When we set down the complete list of sources for Moundos/Mundo from 505–536 the explanation becomes even more apparent:

◀MUNDO▶	◀MOUNDOS▶
Ennodius, pan. Theod. XII, 63	Procopius, Wars 5.5.2
Marcellinus, s. a. 505	5.5.11; 5.75; 4.5;
Marcellinus, s. a. 530	8.26.13; 7.1.36
Jordanes, Rom. 386–387	Malalas, 450.19 (Bonn)
Jordanes, Get. 300	Theophanes, 218.31 (DE BOOR)

It is only the Latin sources who call him 'Mundo' and only the Greek sources who use 'Moundos'. No Latin source employs 'Moundos' (Mundus) and no Greek source 'Mundo'. Consequently, there is no basis for the modern contention that the barbarian general of 505 was called 'Mundo' and the Justinianic general 'Moundos', thereby regarding these as different names implying different individuals. The only reason 'Mundo' is so strongly associated with the 505 battle is that all our sources for the incident (Marcellinus, Jordanes, Ennodius, Cassiodorus) are Latin and naturally use the Latin form of the name.

⁶⁰ For the general problem of the relationship between Jordanes and Marcellinus see: L. VARADY, *Jordanes-Studien. Jordanes und das Chronicon des Marcellinus Comes – Die Selbständigkeit des Jordanes*, Chiron 6, 1976, 441–487.

⁶¹ Rom. 387, perhaps from the source common to Jordanes and the Continuator of Marcellinus (MOMMSEN, MGH.AA. XI, 54–55).

⁶² For Jordanes' nationality: n.43 *supra*.

IV

If, as contended here, we are looking at the career of a single man Mundo over a period of twenty years then we need to be certain that the chronology of his life, in so far as it can be determined, does not vitiate this reconstruction.

We do not know exactly when Mundo was born but his father died before 488 when Mundo passed into the protection of his uncle.⁶³ It is reasonable to expect that he was still only a child at this stage. If he was born about 480/485 he would have been 20–25 years old when he took on Sabinianus in 505. This accords sensibly with the picture of a hot-headed young leader of a band of brigands and adventurers sketched by Jordanes.⁶⁴ Hence, in 530 when he defeated the Bulgars on behalf of the Roman emperor he was 45–50, a normal and mature age for a senior Roman general. It means of course that he would have been 50–55 when he was killed in 536.

We learn from Procopius that Mundo's son Mauricius predeceased him.⁶⁵ Although there is no indication of Mauricius' age in 536 we do know that he left behind him at least two children: a daughter who by 553 had married Aruth king of the Eruli⁶⁶ and a son who is described in 541 as a 'young lad' when he narrowly escaped capture at the hands of the Goths near Treviso.⁶⁷ Since Mauricius had at least two children by 536 it is fairly safe to assume that at the time of his death he was about 25–30 (if he were a few years older this would not materially affect the argument). As a result he will have been born about 505–510 and this in turn would appear to confirm the age of his father (20–30) at that time. If we say that Mundo was 25–30 in 510 he will have been 20–25 in 505, 45–50 in 530 and 50–55 when he died. As we have seen, a youthful Mundo in 505 and a fully mature and experienced general in the 530's is precisely the picture that emerges from the meagre sources.

The career of Mundo can now be fitted together. Born the son of the Gepid king Giesmos c. 480 he lost his father while a child and came under the power of his uncle the new king Trapstila who was himself killed in 488. When Mundo grew up he broke away, or was banished, from his tribal domain, gathered around him a crowd of young freebooters and they engaged in plundering Roman territory. When the imperial army was sent against them in 505 Mundo allied himself with Theoderic and apparently remained in Ostrogothic service for the next twenty years. When Theoderic died Mundo, like the Gepid king Ardaric after the death of Attila, failed to transfer his loyalty to the new Gothic king.⁶⁸ Instead, it seems he returned to his

⁶³ Malalas, 450. 21–22.

⁶⁴ Get. 301.

⁶⁵ Proc. Wars 5.7.3.

⁶⁶ Proc. Wars 8.26.13.

⁶⁷ Proc. Wars 7.1.36.

⁶⁸ Jord. Get. 260

tribe in the Save/Danube region where in 529, now a more experienced general, he offered his services to Justinian who was being hard pressed to defend the Balkan provinces against the Slavs and Bulgars. The Gepid Mundo subsequently proved himself a loyal, diligent and effective Roman general in the Balkans, on the Persian frontier, in Constantinople and finally in Dalmatia.

