



Summary :

Karbeas was born around the early 9th century. At a young age, he served in the Byzantine army. In 843-844 he fled to the Arabs of Melitene in order to escape from the persecutions against the Paulicians launched by Empress Theodora. He organised the Paulician state with its capital Tephrike, the city he founded in the mid-9th century, while in 856 and 859 he repelled Byzantine attacks against his territory. Karbeas launched several raids against the Byzantines. He died in Tephrike in 863.

Date and Place of Birth

early 9th century

Date and Place of Death

863, Tephrike

Main Role

Paulician – official

1. Birth – Family

Karbeas was born on Byzantine land in the early 9th century. His father, perhaps his entire family too, belonged to the [Paulician](#) community and was executed during the persecutions against them launched by the Byzantine [Empress Theodora](#) around 843-844. Karbeas possibly had a sister married to a zealous Paulician that later played a leading part in the struggle against the Byzantines. His nephew [Chrysocheir](#) was born into this marriage.¹ Karbeas had at least one daughter, whom he gave in marriage to his nephew, but probably had no sons given that Chrysocheir was appointed his successor after he died.

2. Upbringing – Education

Little is known about the upbringing and education of Karbeas. In all probability he was introduced to the Paulician doctrine by his father and the rest of his family. The education he received must have been quite higher than the usual [general \("enkyklios"\) education](#), as indicated by the fact that he made a career as a Byzantine officer.

3. Activity

3.1. Karbeas at the Service of the Emir of Melitene

Karbeas first appears in historical sources in 843-844² while serving as [protomandator](#) of [Theodotos Melissenos](#), [strategos](#) of the [theme](#) of [Anatolikon](#). When he learned that his father had been executed (by crucifixion or impalement), during the persecutions launched against the Paulicians by Empress Theodora, Karbeas deserted the Byzantine territories and fled along with another 5000 persecuted Paulicians to the land of the [emir](#) of [Melitene](#) Amr al-Aqta, where he joined other Paulicians who had escaped there in the 810s under [Sergios Tychikos](#), the seventh teacher of the community. Together with other important Paulicians he left Melitene and got to Baghdad to meet the Arab [Caliph](#).

Before long the alliance of the Paulicians with the Arabs came to fruition. Around 844 Karbeas, who had already become the Paulician leader,³ defeated the Byzantine forces and arrested Kallistos, the [dux](#) of Colonea and a fanatical Paulician persecutor. Karbeas gave Kallistos to the Arabs, who killed him a few years later.

The Paulicians continued their raids against the Byzantine Empire while they were settled in the cities of Argauon and Amara in the territory controlled by the Arabs of Melitene. These [raids](#) were staged in cooperation with the Arabs of the emirates of Melitene and



[Tarsus](#). According to the sources, between 851 and 853, Karbeas would raid the Byzantine regions of Asia Minor every year helped by the emir of Tarsus Alī ibn Yahya al-Armanī.

3.2. Head of State

Problems started to appear when the Paulicians settled in the Arab emirate of Melitene. Therefore, between 844 and 856 Karbeas decided to found a new capital for his [state](#). The new city was named Tephrike and was situated to the northeast of [Sebasteia](#) and southwest of Melitene, quite far from the latter so that it could be independent. It occupied a strategic position near the Byzantine border so that it could serve as a Paulician base during the Paulician attacks against the Byzantine regions of Asia Minor (mainly the theme of [Armeniakon](#)) and a refuge of the persecuted Paulicians.

The Byzantines became well aware of the strategic importance of Melitene. In 856 strategos [Petronas](#), who was serving as [domestikos ton scholon](#), [raided against Tephrike](#) and plundered its suburbs, though he failed to capture the city. In this way, Karbeas and his Paulicians became even more powerful.

In the spring of 859, Karbeas hastened to help the Arabs of [Samosata](#), who were suffering from a [Byzantine attack](#) under Emperor Michael III (842-867) and his uncle [Bardas](#), Petronas' brother. Taking advantage of the loose safety measures on the Byzantine side, the Arabs sallied out of the besieged city. In the ensuing battle, the Arabs shattered the imperial forces and Karbeas fought really bravely capturing a large number of Byzantine soldiers and officers.

In 860, Karbeas launched a new attack against the Byzantine regions of the [Pontos](#), possibly in cooperation with the Arabs of Melitene, under Emir Amr al-Aqta, and those of [Tarsus](#), under Emir Alī ibn Yahya. The Paulicians returned to their land with a loot of 5000 animals.

4. Death

Karbeas died of natural death (illness, according to sources) in Tephrike in 863.⁴ His nephew Chrysocheir became the next Paulician leader

5. Evaluation

Nothing is reported in the sources about the opinion the Paulicians had about Karbeas.⁵ It may be supposed that his contemporary Paulicians were satisfied with his leadership, which nobody ever challenged, since no internal disputes are reported with the former students of Sergios Tychikos.

As expected, the Byzantines held a strongly negative opinion about Karbeas, for he was the first Paulician leader that seriously threatened the Byzantine state with his army. Even his decision to found Tephrike is attributed to base motives. On the other hand, the Byzantine sources seem to somehow admire his bravery and fighting qualities. According to some Arab sources, the Christians used to depict Karbeas the Paulician (Karneas Beilakani) in wall paintings together with other brave men. Even though the picture was a representation of an enemy attack against the Byzantine territories rather than the expression of admiration for Karbeas, the fact that he appears in the [acritic epic](#) (as Karoes, the uncle of [Basil Digenes](#)) indicates the great impression the deeds of the Paulician leader made on the Byzantines.

1. Runciman, S., *The Medieval Manichee. A Study of the Christian Dualist Heresy* (Cambridge 1947, reprint. 1955), pp. 41-42, identifies Chrysocheir with the Byzantine official John Chrysocheris, who received three letters from Patriarch Photios. Lemerle, P., "L'histoire des Pauliciens d'Asie Mineure d'après les sources grecques", *Travaux et Mémoires* 5 (1973), pp. 40-42, considers the assumption rather vague.

2. Garsoïan, N., *The Paulician Heresy* (The Hague – Paris 1967), pp. 126-127, believes that Karbeas left in 843 or 844 and disputes the opinions of earlier researchers, who dated the event to before 842.



3. It is unknown whether he exercised absolute power or he had to share it with Michael, Kanakaris, Ioannes Aoratos, Theodotos, Basil and Zosimos, former students and associates of Sergios Tychikos.

4. Runciman, S., *The Medieval Manichee. A Study of the Christian Dualist Heresy* (Cambridge 1947, reprint. 1955), p. 41, and Garsoïan, N., *The Paulician Heresy* (The Hague – Paris 1967), p. 128, are carried away by some Byzantine sources assuming that Karbeas followed the emir of Melitene to his raid against Asia Minor in 863. As a result, the two researchers believe that Karbeas was killed on September 3 of the same year, when the Arabs were heavily defeated by the Byzantines on the Lalakaon River. Lemerle, P., "L'histoire des Pauliciens d'Asie Mineure d'après les sources grecques", *Travaux et Mémoires* 5 (1973), pp. 39-40, adopts the most reliable Arab sources and Peter of Sicily, who clearly report that Karbeas died of illness in Tephrike in 863.

5. The major sources providing information about Karbeas are Peter of Sicily, Patriarch Photios and the major sources for the 9th century, namely Theophanes Continuatus and John Skylitzes. According to Grégoire, H., "Sur l'histoire des Pauliciens", *Académie royale de Belgique. Bulletin de la Classe des Lettres et des Sciences morales et politiques* 22 (1936), pp. 224-226, and Loos, M., "Deux contributions à l'histoire des Pauliciens I: A propos des sources grecques reflétant des Pauliciens", *Byzantinoslavica* 17 (1956), pp. 19-57, Peter of Sicily is identified with Peter the Abbot, the writer of a work on the Paulicians, which is quite similar to the text of Peter of Sicily. According to Grégoire, the historical text of Peter the Abbot on the Paulicians is a summary of the *Ιστορία των Παυλικιανών* (History of the Paulicians) by Peter of Sicily, although this opinion is not accepted by Loos, who thinks that the historical text of Peter the Abbot was written before the *History of the Paulicians*.

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Glossary :

	caliph
	The supreme religious and political authority of Muslims, considered successor of Muhammad (Arabic: khalifa = deputy). He was the head of the Caliphate, the religious state of the Arabs.
	domestikos ton scholon
	Commander of the regiment of <i>scholae</i> . The first officer with this title appears in 767/8. In the 10th C the domesticos became very powerful among the army of the <i>themata</i> ; in mid-10th C the office was divided in two, <i>domestikoi ton scholon</i> of the East and those of the West, commanders in chief of the eastern and the western provinces' army respectively.
	doukas (lat. dux)
	Antiquity: Roman military commander who, in some provinces, combined military and civil functions. Byzantium: a higher military officer. From the second half of the 10th c. the title indicates the military commander of a larger district. After the 12th c., doukes were called the governors of small themes.
	emir
	(from Arabic amir) Emir meaning "commander" or "general", later also "prince". Also a high title of nobility or office in some Turkic historical states.
	enkyklios education
	The secondary education in Byzantium. The students, from 12 years old, were taught grammar, rhetorics and eloquence.
	protomandator
	The senior officer of the corps of messengers (mandatores), at the service of Byzantine military commanders and of the Byzantine Emperors.



strategos ("general")

During the Roman period his duties were mainly political. Office of the Byzantine state's provincial administration. At first the title was given to the military and political administrator of the themes, namely of the big geographic and administrative unities of the Byzantine empire. Gradually the title lost its power and, already in the 11th century, strategoi were turned to simple commanders of military units, responsible for the defence of a region.

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Quotations

Peter of Sicily on Karbeas' activity:

Ὁ οὖν Καρβέας ἐν τοῖς τότε καιροῖς ἀναφανείς, καὶ τοῦ ὀλεθρίου ἐκείνου λαοῦ καθηγησάμενος, εἰς πλῆθος αὐτὸν ἐπηύξησεν, ὥστε, μὴ χωρομένου αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ Ἀργαοῦ, ἐλθεῖν καὶ κτίσαι τὴν Τιβρικὴν καὶ αὐτὴ κατοικῆσαι, ὁμοῦ μὲν καὶ τὴν πρὸς αὐτοὺς τυραννίδα τῶν μελιτηνιατῶν Ἀγαρηῶν ἐκφεύγων, ὁμοῦ δὲ καὶ αὐτὴ ἀνεπιμιξία τῶν ἀνθρώπων τοῖς δαίμοσι τελείως ἐξομοιούμενος, ταῖς Ἀρμενίας τε πλησιάζειν θέλων καὶ τὴ Ῥωμανία· ὥστε τοὺς μὲν πειθομένους αὐτῷ ὑποσπόνδους ποιῆσθαι καὶ ἔχειν αὐτοὺς πρὸς τὸ αἰχμαλωτεῦν συλλήπτορας, τοὺς δὲ μὴ πειθομένους Σαρακηνοῖς ἀπεμπολεῖν, λεηλατῶν τὰς τῆς Ῥωμανίας ἄκρας τὰς πρὸς τῷ Πόντῳ κειμένας, ἅμα δὲ καὶ πρὸς ἔτοιμον καταφύγιον τοῖς ἐν Ῥωμανίᾳ διὰ ταύτην τὴν αἴρεσιν ἀποκτενομένοις τὴν ἐπιτηδειότητα τοῦ τόπου προσπαρασκευάζων· οὐ μόνον δέ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοὺς λιχνοτέρους καὶ ἀκολάστους ἀνθρώπους καὶ ἄφρονας τῶν ἄκρων ἐκείνων προσεγγιζόντων τῇ Τιβρικῇ τῇ ἐλευθερία τῶν αἰσχίστων παθῶν εἰς ἑαυτὸν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ ἐκκαλούμενος. Ζῶντος τοίνυν ἔτι αὐτοῦ, οἱ μὲν ἐκ τῶν μνημονευθέντων μισρῶν αὐτοῦ τὸν ἑαυτῶν βίον κατέστρεψαν, οἱ δὲ ὑπελείφθησαν. Κακείνου τοίνυν τὸ ζῆν ἀπορρηξάντος, αὐθις διαδέχεται τὴν τυραννίδα τοῦ ὀλεθρίου λαοῦ αὐτοῦ Χρυσοχέρης, ὁ ἀνεψιὸς καὶ γαμβρὸς αὐτοῦ.

Peter Siceliota, *Ιστορία*, ed. Astruc, Ch. et al., "Les sources grecques pour l'histoire des Pauliciens d'Asie Mineure", *Travaux et Mémoires* 4 (1970), p. 67.10-26.

Karbeas' activity according to Patriarch Photios:

Ὑπὸ δὲ τοὺς αὐτοὺς ἀναφαίνεται καιροὺς καὶ ὁ τρισαλιτήριος Καρβαίης, ἀνὴρ δεινὸς μὲν ὑπελθεῖν ὄχλον, στεγανὸς δὲ κρύπτειν τὸ ἀνέκφορον, καὶ τοῖς χεῖλεσιν ἄλλα προφέρειν παρὰ τὴν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ μελέτην πιθανώτατος, καὶ πίστιν μὲν οὐδ' ἦντινα στέργων, ἐπεὶ καὶ τὰ τῶν Ἀράβων θειάζειν ἐσχηματίσατο, πλὴν τῆς ἀποστασίας ἐραστής καὶ λέγεσθαι καὶ νομίζεσθαι κλέος ποιούμενος· οὐδὲ τῆς κατὰ πόλεμον ἐμπειρίας ἦν ἀγύμναστος· διὸ καὶ τῆς ἀποστατικῆς ἐκείνης πληθῆος ἤδη πρὸς χεῖρα πολεμικὴν τε καὶ βαρβαρὴν ἀδρυνομένης ἄρχειν ὑπὸ τοῦ πλήθους ἤρεθθη, ὃς ἐπὶ μᾶλλον αὐξῶν τε καὶ κρατύνων τὸ θεομάχον ἄθροισμα, ἐπεὶ τῇ βραχύτητι τοῦ πολιχνίου στενοχωρουμένους εἶδεν τοὺς ὑπὸ χεῖρα, πόλιν ἄλλην εὐρυχωροτέραν ἐγείρει, ἦν ἐπωνόμαζον Τεφρικὴν, καὶ ταύτην τοῖς ἐπομένοις πολιρίζει, ὁμοῦ μὲν καὶ τὴν ἐπιφερομένην τῶν Μελιτινιτῶν ἀποκλίνων τυραννίδα. Καὶ γὰρ εἰ καὶ κατ' ἀρχὰς φιλοφρόνως ὑπεδέξαντο, ἀλλ' οὐκ πλουτοῦντας ὁρῶντες καὶ πλέον ὧν ἠλπιζον ταῖς καθ' ἡμέραν ληστροκαῖς ἐφόδοις εἰς εὐπορίαν ἐπιδιδόντας, οὐκέτι τὸν ὀφθαλμὸν αὐτοῖς ἐπιβάλλειν φθόνου χωρὶς καὶ πλεονεξίας ἠδύναντο· διὸ λαφυραγωγούντες αὐτοὺς τέχναις πολλαῖς καὶ μεθόδοις οὐκ ἐνέλιπον. Μία τοίνυν καὶ αὕτη αἰτία, δι' ἣν ὡς ἀπώτερω τῆς προτέρας οἰκήσεως πολιζειν ἔγνω τὸ ὑπήκοον, ἔτι δὲ καὶ τῷ ἀνεπιμίκτῳ τῶν ἄλλων ἀνθρώπων εἰς τὰς δαιμονιώδεις καὶ ἐκτόπους τῶν πράξεων, ἅτε δὴ καθ' ἑαυτοὺς ὄντας, ἀδεῶς χωρεῖν καὶ σὺν παρρησίᾳ προνοοῦμενος. Ἐκ γειτόνων γὰρ ἔχοντες πρότερον τοὺς Σαρακηνοὺς, ἔσεβον μὲν τὰ αὐτῶν, ἔσεβον δὲ καὶ τὰ ἐκείνων, ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν ἐκείνων θεατριζόντες, τὰ οἰκεία δὲ μυστηριαζόμενοι. Ἐπὶ τούτοις δὲ καὶ ἐπικαιρὸς ἐδόκει πρὸς τὰς καταδρομὰς τῆς ῥωμαϊκῆς ἀρχῆς ἦν ἀνίστη πόλιν· μᾶλλον τε γὰρ ἐπλησιάζειν τοῖς αὐτῆς ὁρίοις· ἀλλὰ καὶ εἰ τις αὐτομολεῖν ἐκείθην ἐβούλετο τῶν τὴν αὐτὴν ἀσέβειαν ἐγκόλπιον φερόντων,



έτοιμοτέραν εύρισκεν διά τὸ γειτόνημα τὴν πρὸς αὐτὸν καταφυγὴν τε καὶ ἀναχώρησιν. Οὐδὲ μὲν οὖν ἐκεῖνος διήνεγκεν οὐκέτι ληστροικούς, ἀλλ' ἐκ παρατάξεως τε καὶ δημοσίους πολέμους καθ' ἑαυτὸν τε καὶ τοῖς Σαρακηνοῖς συνταττόμενος, ἐν οἷς τε τὸ πλέον ἔσχεν καὶ ἐν οἷς ἀπηνέγκατο τὸ ἦττον, ἄλλης τὲ ἐστὶν ὑποθέσεως καὶ ἰδιάζοντος χρόνου. Ὅτι δὲ παντοδαπῶν ἐπλήρωσε συμφορῶν τὰς τῆς ῥωμαϊκῆς ἀρχῆς πλησιαζούσας αὐτῷ χώρῳ, τὸ μέγεθος ἐξαρκεῖ τοῦ πάθους ἀντὶ λόγου τοῖς μεθ' ἡμᾶς παρασχεῖν ἀνεπίληστον τὴν γνώσιν. Πλήν ἀλλ' ὄγε παλαμναῖος ἐκεῖνος, χρόνοις μακροῖς τὰ ἀνήκεστα δράσας, ὄψῃ καὶ μόλις νόσῳ τὸν βίον κατέστρεψεν, καὶ τῆς ἐκεῖνου τυραννίδος καὶ τῆς ἀσεβείας διάδοχος ἀναδείκνυται ἐπὶ παιδὶ μὲν γαμβρός, ἐκ τοῦ γένους δὲ τὸ ἀνεψιὸν ἔλκων καὶ τὸ ἐπώνυμον Χρυσοσχέρης.

Patriarch Photios, *Διήγησις τῆς νεοφανούς τῶν Μανιχαίων ἀναβλαστήσεως*, ed. Astruc, Ch. et al., "Les sources grecques pour l'histoire des Pauliciens d'Asie Mineure", *Travaux et Mémoires* 4 (1970), pp. 171.14-173.14.

Karbeas' escape from the Arabs, according to a chronicle of that period:

Εἶχε μὲν οὖν οὕτω τὰ κατὰ τὴν δύσιν λαμπρῶς τε καὶ ἐτεθρόλητο πανταχοῦ. ἐφ' οἷς ἀγαλλομένη ἐκεῖνη, καὶ οἷον τρόπαια ἐπιθεῖναι μεῖζω δι' ἐφέσεως ἔχουσα, καὶ τοὺς κατὰ τὴν ἀνατολὴν Παυλικιανούς ἐπειρᾶτο μετάγειν ὡς βούλοιο πρὸς εὐσέβειαν ἢ ἐξαιρεῖν καὶ ἀπ' ἀνθρώπων ποιεῖν· ὁ καὶ πολλῶν κακῶν τὴν ἡμετέραν ἐνέπλησεν. ἢ μὲν γὰρ πέμψασά τινας τῶν ἐπ' ἐξουσίας (ὁ τοῦ Ἀργυροῦ καὶ ὁ τοῦ Δουκὸς καὶ ὁ Σουδάλης οἱ ἀποσταλέντες ἐλέγοντο) τοὺς μὲν ξύλω ἀνήρτων, τοὺς δὲ ξίφει παρεδίδουν, τοὺς δὲ τῷ τῆς θαλάσσης βυθῷ. ὥσει δέκα μυριάδας ὁ οὕτως ἀπολλύμενος ἠριθμεῖτο λαός, καὶ ἢ ὑπαρξὶς αὐτῶν τῷ βασιλικῷ ταμιεῖῳ ... ἤγετο καὶ εἰσεκομίζετο. ὑπῆρχεν οὖν τῷ στρατηγῷ τῶν Ἀνατολικῶν (Θεόδοτος οὗτος ἦν ὁ κατὰ τὸν Μελισσηνὸν) ἀνὴρ τις εἰς τὴν ὑπηρεσίαν καταριθμούμενος, Καρβέας ὀνόματι, τὴν τοῦ πρωτομανδάτορος πληρῶν ἀρχὴν, τῇ πίστει τῶν εἰρημένων τούτων Παυλικιανῶν ἐγκραυχόμενος τε καὶ σεμνυνόμενος. ὡς οὖν τὸν ἑαυτοῦ οὗτος ἀκήκοε πατέρα ἀνηρτῆσθαι τῷ ξύλω, πέρα δεινῶν τοῦθ' ἠγησάμενος καὶ τὰ ἑαυτοῦ προσοικονομῶν φυγὰς μετὰ καὶ ἐτέρων πέντε χιλιάδων τῆς τοιαύτης κεκοινωνηκότων αἰρέσεως πρὸς τὸν τῆς Μελιτηνῆς τηλικαῦτα κατάρχοντα Ἄμερα γίνεται, κακεῖθεν πρὸς τὸν ἀμεραμουνῆ παραγίνονται. μετὰ δὲ πολλῆς ἀποδεχθέντες τιμῆς, καὶ λόγον ἀσφαλείας δόντες τε καὶ λαβόντες ὁμοίως, ἐξέρχονται μετ' οὐ πολὺ κατὰ τῆς Ῥωμαίων γῆς, καὶ τῶν τροπαίων ἔνεκεν, ἐπεὶ πρὸς πολυπληθίαν ἐνεδίδουσαν, πόλεις τε κτίζειν ἐπιχειροῦσιν αὐτοῖς, τὴν οὕτω καλουμένην Ἀργαοῦν καὶ τὴν Ἀμάραν, καὶ αὐθις πολλῶν ἐκεῖσε ἐπιρρεόντων τῇ αὐτῇ κακίᾳ ἐνισχημένων καὶ ἐτέρων κτίζειν κατάρχουσι, Τεφρικὴν ταύτην κατονομάσαντες· ἀφ' ὧν ὁρμῶντες πολλοὶ κατ' αὐτὸ γινόμενοι, ὃ τε τῆς Μελιτηνῆς Ἄμερ, ὃν οὕτω πως συμφθειρόντες τὰ στοιχεῖα Ἄμβρον ἐκάλεσαν οἱ πολλοί, καὶ ὁ τῆς Ταρσοῦ Ἀλῆς καὶ αὐτὸς οὗτος ὁ Καρβέας ὁ δειλαιος, οὐκ ἔληγον αὐθαδῶς τῇ τῶν Ῥωμαίων γῇ λυμαινόμενοι. ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν Ἀλῆς ἐν τινὶ τῶν Ἀρμενίων χώρῳ ἄρχειν ἀποσταλεῖς ἐκεῖσε θάττον ἢ βουλῆς εἶχε τὸν βίον κατέστρεψε σὺν τῷ ἑαυτοῦ ἀκαίρῳ στρατῷ· ὁ δὲ Ἄμερ μετὰ τοῦ συνάρχοντος αὐτοῦ τοῦ Σκληροῦ (οὕτως ἐλέγετο) εἰς ἐμφύλιον στας πόλεμον ἐκ φιλονεικίας ἐφθείρετό τε καὶ ἐκεῖνων ἀλλ' οὐ ἄλλοις πολεμῆν ᾤετο δεῖν. εἰς τοσοῦτον δὲ τούτοις ἢ ἔρις ἐπιτύζητο καὶ ἀλλήλοις ἀντεστρατήγουν, ἄχρις ἂν εἰς δέκα μόλις ἔληγεν χιλιάδας ἢ τούτων ἰσχὺς ἐκ πεντήκοντά που καὶ μικρόν τι πρὸς. ἐπεὶ γοῦν οὗτος τῶν ἐχθρῶν ὑπερίσχυσεν, ἔγνω αὐθις θρασύτητι καταστρατηγούμενος κατὰ τὴν Ῥωμαίων ὄπλα κινεῖν, τῷ Καρβέᾳ ἐνούμενος. ἀντεστρατεύετο δὲ αὐτοῖς Πετρωνᾶς, τὴν τοῦ δομestikou τότε ἀρχὴν διοικῶν· λόγῳ μὲν γὰρ Βάρδα ταύτην διέπειν ἐδέδοτο, ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ σχολάζειν οὗτος ἠναγκάζετο ὡς ἐπίτροπος, τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἠξίου, στρατηγὸν ὄντα τῶν Θρακησίων, πρᾶγματι ταύτην διέπειν καὶ διοικεῖν.

Bekker, I. (ed.), *Theophanes Continuatus* (Bonn 1838), pp. 165.11-167.10.

Karbeas participates in the defence of Samosata against the Byzantines (859):

Ὁ δὲ Βάρδας ἦν ὅλος τὰ τῆς βασιλείας ἐπιτροπεύων καὶ διοικῶν, καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν διαφερόντως ὡς συγγενῆς τοῦ βασιλέως ἀγαπώμενος· ἔνθεν καὶ τὴν κουροπαλάτου, οἷον ἄθλον ἐπὶ τῇ ἀδελφῇ, τιμὴν ἀναδέχεται, καὶ κατὰ τῶν Ἰσμαηλιτῶν καὶ τοῦ Ἄμερ, ὡς περ εἴρηται, ἀντιστρατεύονται μετὰ τοῦ Μιχαήλ, ἄρτι τελούντος αὐτοῦ εἰς ἄνδρας ἐξ ἀγενεῖων, δυνάμει πάσῃ τε καὶ χειρὶ. ὡς δ' οὖν τῆς τῶν ἐναντιῶν ἐπέβησαν γῆς, κατὰ πόλιν Σαμόσατα λεγομένην, δυνάμει τε βροίθουσαν καὶ ἰσχυρῇ, ἄγονται, καὶ ταύτην ἐπεχειροῦν πολιορκεῖν. ἀλλ' ἐλελήθεισαν οὐ κατὰ Θεοδώρας αἰρόντες χεῖραν, κατὰ δὲ πολυτρόπων ἀνδρῶν. ὡς μὲν γὰρ ἦν τρίτῃ τῆς ἐφθέρειας τούτοις ἡμέρᾳ, ἢ πρώτη δὲ καὶ κυρία τῶν ἡμερῶν, ἔμελλον δὲ τὴν ἀναίμακτον μυσταγωγίαν ἐκπληροῦν ὡς ἂν τῶν ἁγίων μυστηρίων μετὰσχοιεν, ἐξαίφνης, εἴτ' ἀφυλάκτως τελούντες αὐτὰ, εἴτε καὶ καταφρονητικῶς ἔχοντες πρὸς τὴν πόλιν δι' ἀπειρίαν ὡς μὴ πρὸς βασιλέα Ῥωμαίων ἄρα τολμῶντος χεῖρα τινός, κατὰ τὴν ὥραν ἐν ἣ τῶν θείων ἔμελλον μετασχεῖν μυστηρίων, πάντοθεν μεθ' ὀπλων ἐκπεπηδηκότες τῆς πόλεως, οὐκ ἦν ἰδεῖν τὸν ὅστις Ῥωμαίων οὐκ ἐχρητο φυγῇ. ἔνθα καὶ ὁ Μιχαήλ μόλις που τὸν ἵππον ἀναβάς φεύγων καθωρᾶτο, ἀλλ' οὐ προπολεμῶν· οὕτω που μόγις ἐκέσωστο, σκηνὰς αὐτὰς καὶ τὴν ὄση τούτοις θεραπεία προσῆν ἐκεῖ καταλελοιπῶς. ἔνθα καὶ τὸν προμνημονευθέντα φασὶν ἀριστεῦσαι Καρβέαν τὸν τὴν Τεφρικὴν



οικοδομησάμενον, και πολὺν οὐ μόνον τοῦ χυδαίου φθόρον λαοῦ κατεργάσασθαι, ἀλλὰ και τῶν μεγάλων δὴ στρατηγῶν ζωγραφία λαβεῖν τὸν τε τζαγγότουβον τὸν Ἀβεσαλῶμ και Σηῶν τὸν παλατῖνον, και ἐτέρους ὑποστρατήγους και τουρμάρχας ἄχρι τῶν ἑκατὸν. ἐτηροῦντο οὖν οἱ δηλωθέντες στρατηγοὶ μετὰ τὴν τοῦ πολέμου παραδρομὴν ἐν τῇ φυλακῇ· και δὴ χρήματα ἰκανὰ τῶ Καρβέα ἐδίδοσαν, οἰκοθεν μεταπεμψάμενοι, τὴν αὐτῶν ἀπολύτρωσιν ἐξαιτούμενοι. ὡς δ' ἔλαβεν ἐπὶ χεῖρας ὁ Καρβέας, ἠρώτα τὸν Σηῶν εὐθύς εἰ πρὸς ἀφροδίσια ἔχει ἐρωτικῶς και τὸ ἑαυτοῦ σῶμα κίνησιν ἔχει τὴν ἐμπαθῆ· ὡς δ' ἀπηγόρευσεν ὁ Σηῶν και πάσχειν τι τοιοῦτον ἀπέφησεν, ἠρώτα πάλιν τὰ ὅμοια τὸν Ἀβεσαλῶμ. ὁ δὲ τὴν αὐτοῦ φωράσας κακίαν και μοχθηρίαν, εἶτε και ἄλλως ἀληθῶς, τοῦτό τε πάσχειν και κίνησιν ὑπομένειν εἰπὼν, τούτῳ μὲν «λυτροῦσαι» ἔφη «τῶν δεσμῶν», και ἅμα ἀπέλυεν, τῶ δὲ Σηῶν «οὐ βούλεται σε τὸ θεῖον λυθῆναι δη τῆς φρουρᾶς», και ἅμα ἐδίδου τούτῳ τὰ λύτρα τὰ δοθέντα αὐτῷ ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ, και τῇ φρουρᾷ ἐγκατέκλειεν ἄχρις οὗ τὴν ψυχὴν ἀπεστάλαξεν.

Bekker, I. (ed.), *Theophanes Continuatus* (Bonn 1838), pp. 176.1-177.17.

The historian John Skylitzes refers to the role Karbeas played in repelling the Byzantine attack against Samosata:

Ἐκρινε γοῦν ἅμα τῷ βασιλεῖ κατὰ τῶν Ἰσσηλιτῶν ἐκστρατεῦσαι και τοῦ τῆς Μελιτηνῆς ἀμυρεῦντος Ἄμερ, ἄρτι εἰς ἄνδρας τελοῦντι ἐξ ἀγενείων, ὡς δ' οὖν τῆς τῶν ἐναντίων ἐπέβησαν γῆς και κατὰ τὰ Σαμόσατα ἐγένοντο (πόλις δὲ τὰ Σαμόσατα τῶν παρευφρατιδίων, δυνάμει τε βροίθουσα και ἰσχυρῆ), ταύτην ἐπεχείρουν πολιορκεῖν. ἐμποησαμένων δὲ τῶν Σαρακηνῶν δειλίαν και συγκεκρικλεικότων ἔνδον ἑαυτοὺς και μηδενὸς ἐκπηδῶντος τοῦ τείχους τάχα διὰ δειλίαν τῆς βασιλικῆς δυνάμεως, ἀμελῶς και ἀφυλάκτως οἱ Ῥωμαῖοι διηγον. κατὰ δὲ τὴν τρίτην τῆς ἐφεδρείας ἡμέραν (ἡ κυρία δὲ ἦν και πρώτη τῶν ἡμερῶν) τῆς ἀναιμάκτου θυσίας ἐπιτελουμένης, ἐν ἣ τῶν θεῶν μετασχεῖν ἐμελλον μυστηρίων, τὰς πύλας οἱ Σαρακηνοὶ διαπετάσαντες και μεθ' ὀπλων ἐκπεπηδηκότες πάντοθεν ἐπιτίθενται τοῖς Ῥωμαῖοις. οἱ δὲ τῶ ἀδοκίτῳ καταπλαγέντες τῆς ἐπιθέσεως εὐθύς πρὸς φυγὴν ὤρμησαν. ἐνθα και Μιχαὴλ ὁ βασιλεὺς μόλις που τὸν ἵππον ἀναβάς ἐργωδῶς διεσώθη, τῆς ἀποσκευῆς πάσης τοῦ βασιλέως και τῶν στρατιωτῶν ληφθείσης παρὰ τῶν πολεμίων, τοῦ τῶν Μανιχαίων ἐξηγουμένου Καρβέα μᾶλλον τῶν ἄλλων ἀριστεύσαντος και καταβαλόντος οὐ μόνον πολλοὺς τῶν ἀφανῶν τῆς στρατίας, ἀλλὰ και ζωγραφία λαβόντος οὐκ ὀλίγους τῶν ἐπιφανῶν στρατηγῶν και τουρμάρχας τῶν ἑκατὸν οὐκ ἐλάττους, ὧν οἱ μὲν ἄλλοι λύτρα δόντες ἀπελύθησαν, μόνος δὲ Σηῶν ὁ στρατηγὸς τῇ φυλακῇ ἐναπέψυξε.

Thurn, I. (ed.), *Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis Historiarum* (Berlin – New York 1973), pp. 98.82-99.7.

Chronological Table

early 9th century: Karbeas is born

843-844: Empress Theodora persecutes the Paulicians. Karbeas and other Paulicians escape to the emir of Melitene

844: Karbeas defeats and arrests the Byzantine doux Kallistos

between 844 and 856: Karbeas founds the city of Tephrike as the capital of the Paulician state

851-853: Karbeas attacks the Byzantine territories every year

856: Karbeas repels the Byzantine attack against Tephrike

spring 859: Karbeas participates in the repulse of the Byzantine attack against Samosata

860: Karbeas attacks the Byzantine regions of the Pontos

863: Karbeas dies in Tephrike