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ON THE DEMOGRAPHY OF MEDIEVAL GREECE: A PROBLEM SOLVED

This study is dedicated to my distinguished colleagues of Rutgers University Richard P. McCormick and Richard Schlatter who have ever supported my efforts at scholarship and research.

The “Peloponnese”, wrote Mazaris at the beginning of the fifteenth century, “is inhabited by a great number of ethnic groups forming a mixed society. To classify them exactly is at the moment neither feasible nor urgent; the names, however, that tend to crop up in every conversation as the best known and the most important are these: Laconians, Italians, Peloponnesians, Slavs, Albanians, Gypsies and Jews... If they formed a single race and were encompassed in a single city, troubles would be lighter and of a simple nature, and generally speaking the entire society here would be free from graft, political intrigue and meddling, and business would be carried on with due respect for law and justice. As it is, they are a helter-skelter hotchpotch of everything, and each will inevitably imitate the customs, laws, national character, social behavior—in short, the overall pattern of criminality prevailing in each of the other groups...”¹. Mazaris then goes on to describe the characteristic features of each one of these ethnic groups.

The Laconians, he says, were known for their “vanity and perfidy... their tendency toward slander and blackmail, their bragging and drunkenness, their utter miserliness and low cunning”. The Italians were aristocratic in

1. Mazaris, *Journey to Hades*, edited and translated by Seminar Classics 609, State University of New York at Buffalo, Buffalo, 1975 (=Arethusa Monographs published by the Department of Classics, State University of New York at Buffalo, V), 79f. The page references given whenever Mazaris is cited is to the translation which I used but not without checking with the original. In the passage just cited the Greek text has Lacedaemonians instead of Laconians, Aegyptians for Gypsies and Illyrians instead of Albanians. Mazaris' piece as a literary form is an imitation of Lucian. It is well known, of course, that classical literary and rhetorical forms and models were much imitated by the Byzantines, but in content they concentrated on the contemporary. Cf. Herbert Hunger, “On the Imitation (μίμησις) of Antiquity in Byzantine Literature”, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, nos. 23-24 (Washington, D.C., 1969-70), 15-38.

style, but that style was accompanied by a “greed for money”, by the “small dealer’s mentality”, by a “stuffy and cramped atmosphere”, by “crookedness and trickery”. The Peloponnesians were imitated for their “capacity for double-dealing, their lack of credibility, their falsity, dishonesty, baseness and greed, their inclinations for rebellions, conspiracies, riots, treason, perjury and usurpation”. The Slavs were cruel, savage, brutal, bloodthirsty, known for their “robbery and barbarity, their hatred of the powers that be, their hatred of God”. The Albanians (the text has Illyrians) still maintained the mountain tribe tradition and influenced others by “their deceit and spying, their brutal methods of levying taxes, their soberness in the matter of clothing and luxuries... their thievishness, their fickleness, and their sly, crooked ways”. Endless begging, obtrusive and insolent manners, shamming and evasions, and life-long involvement in quackery, black magic and pilfering characterized the Gypsies. And finally the Jews were known for their “love for rows and brawls among each other, their envy and treachery, ... their asocial and irrational attitudes and their nasty, impure, unholy and godless customs”².

Mazaris had left Constantinople with his family and went to the Peloponnese, hoping to improve his situation there. Things, however, did not turn out well for him and he was left disappointed and somewhat embittered. His characterization of the various ethnic groups which then composed the population of the Peloponnese need not, therefore, be taken seriously, but there is no reason to doubt the actual existence of these groups. They are known from other sources. The Laconians were the particular group of Greek speakers, the inhabitants of the mountain regions of eastern Peloponnese, often referred to by late Byzantine writers also as Tsacones³ and whose origin was associated with the invasion of the peninsula by the Slavs. The Peloponnesians must be identified with the general Greek speaking population found throughout the empire, numerically the strongest element of its population as a whole, the *Romaioi* of the Byzantine texts⁴. The reference to the Italians may include all

2. Mazaris, *op. cit.*, 79.

3. On the Tsacones, their possible relation to the Laconians, their identification with them by late Byzantine writers: Stam. C. Caratzas, *Les Tzacones* (=Supplementa Byzantina, Texte und Untersuchungen, Band 4, Berlin and New York, 1976), 5-78, 130-148; Ch. P. Symeonides, *Οι Τσακωνες και η Τσακωνία. Συμβολή στην Έρμηνεία των όνομάτων και του ομώνυμου βυζαντινού θεσμού των καστροφυλάκων* (*Tsacones and Tsaconia. Contribution to the Explanation of the Terms and of the Homonymous Byzantine Institution relating to the Garrisons of Fortresses*, Thessaloniki, 1972), 17-54. Caratzas has brought together the various texts with reference to Tsacones and Tsaconia, but one need not follow his interpretations; both Caratzas and Symeonides refer to the old bibliography which is considerable.

4. Cf. Peter Charanis, “The Formation of the Greek People” in *The “Past” in Medieval*

the various westerners who had gone to the Peloponnese following the Fourth Crusade, but possibly it means only those who, as merchants and administrators, had become rather numerous in the peninsula by the end of the fourteenth century⁵. The question of the Slavs will be dealt with in detail in the course of this paper. The expansion of the Albanians towards the Greek lands, begun early in the fourteenth century, reached the Peloponnese before that century was over. The settlement of Albanians reported to have been established by Manuel Cantacuzenus sometime when he governed the Byzantine possessions in that peninsula (1349-1380) is somewhat doubtful⁶, but there is no doubt whatsoever about the Albanian settlements promoted by Theodore Palaeologus, probably around 1394. The Albanians involved numbered 10,000 families⁷. A settlement of Albanians in, or just before, 1398 by the Venetian authorities in the region of Nauplion in Argos is also known⁸. The existence of Jewish communities at the time Mazaris wrote his piece is well known⁹, and the evidence for the presence of the Gypsies is very good. The information about the Gypsies in the region of Nauplion and in Modon is particularly detailed¹⁰.

To what extent the Greek speakers of the Peloponnese represented the old native Hellenic stock is a question which is, of course, most difficult, if not impossible to answer, but there can be no doubt that they included the

and Modern Greek Culture, edited by Speros Vryonis (Malibu, Cal., 1978), 88-92.

5. The bibliography on the Latins, including the Italians, in the Peloponnese is considerable, but for this instance I shall cite only one reference: Antoine Bon, *La Morée Franque. Recherches historiques, topographiques et archéologiques sur la principauté d'Achaïe*. Texte (Paris, 1969), 240f.

6. D. A. Zakythinis, *Le Despotat grec de Morée. Histoire politique*. Édition revue et augmentée par Chryssa Maltéizou (London, Variorum, 1975), 101-103.

7. Sp. P. Lampros, *Παλαιολόγεια καὶ Πελοποννησιακά*, 3 (Athens, 1926), 40-41 (The funeral oration of Manuel Palaeologus in honor of his brother, Theodore Palaeologus). Cf. Zakythinis, *op. cit.*, 131f.

8. F. Thiriet, *Régestes de délibérations du sénat de Venise concernant la Romanie I* (Paris, 1958), p. 221.

9. For Jewish communities in the Peloponnese of this period: Joshua Starr, *Romania. The Jewries of the Levant* (Paris, 1949), 63-72; N. A. Bees, "Οἱ Ἑβραῖοι τῆς Λακεδαιμονίας καὶ τοῦ Μυστρᾶ (The Jews of Lacedaemonia and of Mystra)", *Νουμάς (Noumas)*, III (1905), no. 166, p. 10; Thiriet, *Régestes...* II (Paris, 1959), p. 215; D. Jacoby, *La féodalité en Grèce médiévale. Les "Assises de Romanie"*, sources, application et diffusion (Paris, 1971), 180-181.

10. George C. Soulis, "The Gypsies in the Byzantine Empire and the Balkans in the Late Middle Ages", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 15 (1961), 152-154. For a detailed account of the population of the Peloponnese in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries: D. Zakythinis, *Le despotat grec de Morée. Vie et institutions*. Édition revue et augmentée par Chryssa Maltéizou (London, Variorum, 1975), 1-45; 383-385.

remnants of that stock. The other ethnic groups mentioned by Mazaris, with the possible exception of some Jews, were newcomers. Among the newcomers, the Slavs were the earliest to arrive and numerically the most significant.

Ever since Fallmerayer, the question of the settlement of Slavs in the Greek lands, including, of course, the Peloponnese, has been the subject of considerable discussion with results not quite satisfactory. That Slavs did indeed settle in these lands is now generally accepted, but important differences in views still exist on the manner of their arrival, whether it was violent and destructive or gradual and peaceful, and on the magnitude and chronology of their settlement. The reason for this lay in part in the tense national feeling which has often characterized the discussion of the problem, but primarily in the fragmentary nature of the literary sources, a condition which has not been helped to any appreciable extent by the archaeological finds thus far made¹¹.

Two general periods are usually given for the settlement of the Slavs in the Greek lands: the last twenty years of the sixth century¹², and the more extended period covered by the seventh and eighth centuries, more specifically the period extending roughly from about 650 to about 750¹³. The sources

11. For the latest discussion of the archaeological evidence with references to the earlier literature on the subject: Vladislav Popovič, "Les témoins archéologiques des invasions Avaro-Slav dans l'Illyricum byzantine", *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome*, 87 (Rome, 1975), 145-504. Cf. Peter Charanis, "The Significance of Coins as Evidence for the History of Athens and Corinth in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries", *Historia. Zeitschrift für alte Geschichte*, Band IV. Heft 2/3 (1955), 163-172, republished as study XII in P. Charanis, *Studies on the Demography of the Byzantine Empire* (London, Variorum Reprints, 1972).

12. For instance: Lubor Niederle, *Manuel de l'antiquité slave. Tome I: L'histoire* (Paris, 1923), 108-109.

13. For instance: D. A. Zakythinos, *Οι Σλάβοι ἐν Ἑλλάδι* (The Slavs in Greece), Athens, 1945, 47, 55, 81, 88. But cf. p. 13 of his collection, *Byzance: État-Société-Économie* (London, Variorum Reprints, 1973). The implication of his statement here concerning the date of the foundation of Monemvasia is that the Slavs came in the Peloponnese in the course of the ninth decade of the sixth century. According to Ostrogorsky the extensive occupation of the Balkan peninsula by the Slavs did not take place until the beginning of the seventh century. "The stream of Slavic colonization", he writes, "which had begun in some places at the end of the sixth century, had poured in an irresistible flood over the whole Balkan peninsula early in the seventh century, after the failure of the Danubian campaign of Maurice and the complete collapse of the old system in the time of Phocas": G. Ostrogorsky, "The Byzantine Empire in the World of the Seventh Century", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 13 (1959), 4 [=G. Ostrogorsky, *Zur byzantinischen Geschichte. Ausgewählte kleine Schriften*, Darmstadt, 1973, p. 81]. Cf. Ion Nestor, "La pénétration des Slaves dans la péninsule Balkanique et la Grèce continentale", *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européenne* I (1963), 67. Nestor reaffirmed his view that there were no appreciable Slavic settlements in the Balkan peninsula earlier than the seventh century in a paper which he published some years later. He says in that paper that

available are as scarce for the first as they are for the second, and, except for one item relating to the first of these periods, they are as vague.

Among the sources which relate primarily to the second of these two general periods, the most important is the compilation, the first two books of it in particular, known as the *Miracula Sancti Demetrii*, the patron saint of Thessalonica. This compilation has been the subject of a number of studies published in the last thirty years¹⁴ and a new edition of the two books in question undertaken by Paul Lemerle some years ago¹⁵ should appear any day now. In the meantime one will have to be satisfied with the text as published by the Bollandists and reprinted by Migne¹⁶.

The importance of the compilation of the *Miracula Sancti Demetrii* as a historical source lies in its description of the activities of the Slavs in what is now Greek Macedonia and to some extent in the Aegean and in its accounts of the sieges to which they subjected the city of Thessalonica. The Slavs involved in the first two sieges of that city; the second and most serious of which is usually dated¹⁷ in 586, had come from beyond the frontiers of the empire, led into Macedonia by the Avars. But the Slavs who participated in the siege of Thessalonica conducted by one Chazon, placed by some scholars in 616¹⁸,

his view is based on archaeological evidence in that this evidence shows no break in the Graeco-Roman tradition in the Balkan peninsula before the seventh century: "Les éléments les plus anciens de la culture matérielle slave dans les Balkans", in *Simpozijum predslavenski etnički elementi na Balkanu u etnogenezi Južnih Slovena* (= Akademija Nauka i Umjetnosti Bosne i Hercegovine: Centar za Balkanološka Ispitivanja, Knjiga 4, Sarajevo, 1969, 141-147.

14. I cite the most important: P. Lemerle, "La composition et la chronologie des *Miracula S. Demetrii*", *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 46 (1953), 349-361; F. Barišić, *Miracles de St. Démétrius comme source historique* (in Serbian with a summary in French) (= Académie Serbe des Sciences. Monographies CCXIX: Institut d'Études Byzantines No. 2, Beograd, 1953); A. Burmov, "La chronologie des sièges de Thessalonique par les Slaves dans les *Miracula S. Demetrii*", in *Godišnik na filozofsko-istoričeskija Fakultet na Sofijskija Univerzitet* 1952, kn. II, 167-215 (in Bulgarian with a summary in French); E. Chrysanthopoulos, *Tā biblila θαυμάτων τοῦ ἁγίου Δημητρίου, τὸ χρονικὸν τῆς Μομεμβασίας καὶ αἱ Σλαβικαὶ ἐπιδρομαὶ εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα* (Athens, 1954).

15. Lemerle, "La composition...", p. 349.

16. Migne, *S. Demetrii martyris acta*, PG, CXVI (1891), 1082. The text in Migne must be supplemented by L'Abbé A. Tougard, *De l'histoire profane dans les actes grecs des Bollandistes* (Paris, 1874), 80ff.

17. Migne, CXVI, col. 1288; Tougard, *op. cit.*, 90ff. The event took place on Sunday, September 22 during the reign of Maurice. The year, therefore, could be either 586 or 597. For a list of scholars preferring the one or the other of these years: Barišić, *Miracles de St. Démétrius...*, p. 10. Barišić himself prefers (o. 147) the year 586. On the other hand Burmov (*op. cit.*, 215) prefers the year 597, but Popović (*op. cit.*, 151) takes 586.

18. Barišić, *op. cit.*, 149.

are said to have been accompanied by their families¹⁹; by then they had also learned to navigate the Aegean which means that they may have settled on the coastal regions of Macedonia for some time, maybe already before the end of the sixth century²⁰. In the subsequent sieges of Thessalonica all the Slavs involved had been settled in Macedonia for some time.

With one exception, the references in the *Miracula* to the Slavs relate to their activities in Macedonia and in Thessaly. The exception is the raiding expedition in the Aegean whose date is problematical but which is usually put about 615²¹. "It happened, therefore, as it is said", reads the relevant passage of the *Miracula*, "that during the bishopric of John of Blessed Memory, the nation of the Slavs, a countless multitude, was aroused. This multitude was drawn from the Dragubites, Sagudates, Belegezêtes, Bajunêtes, Berzêtes and others. First to invent ships carved out of a single piece of timber, they launched themselves armed on the sea and pillaged all Thessaly, and the islands about it and those about Hellas. They pillaged also the Cyclades, all Achaia, Epirus, and the greater part of Illyricum and parts of Asia, rendering many cities and provinces uninhabited"²². This was obviously a piratical expedition; it led to no permanent Slavic settlements²³, certainly not in the southern Greek lands upon which it had touched. The various Slavic tribes involved in it are found later settled in Macedonia, Thessaly and Epirus²⁴. These are the Slavic tribes also which Chazon had led in his siege of Thessalonica in 616. There is really nothing in the compilation of the *Miracula Sancti Demetrii* which may be said to support the view that Slavs settled in the southern Greek lands at any time during the seventh century.

But there is a western chronicle, the *Chronicon* of Isidore of Seville, which seems to be categoric on the subject. The relevant passage of the *Chronicon* reads: "At the beginning of the fifth year of Heraclius [i.e. 615] the Slavs took

19. Migne, *PG*, CXVI, col. 325; Tougard, *op. cit.*, 118.

20. Cf. Jovan Kovačević, "Contribution archéologique à la précision de la chronologie de l'installation des Slaves dans les Balkans" (in Serbo-Croatian with a summary in French), *Symposium* (for full reference see note 13), 74. I do not read Serbo-Croatian, but I consulted the Serbo-Croatian text with the aid of Mrs. Jelisaveta Allen of Dumbarton Oaks. Cf. A. Avenarius, "Die Awaren und die Slaven in den *Miracula Sancti Demetrii*", *Byzantina* 5 (1973), 9-27.

21. Barišić, *op. cit.*, 149.

22. Migne, *PG*, CXVI, col. 1325; Tougard, *op. cit.*, 118.

23. Cf. Kovačević, *op. cit.*, 76, 79.

24. P. Charanis, "The Slavs, Byzantium, and the Historical Significance of the First Bulgarian Kingdom", *Balkan Studies* 17, 1 (1976), 12-13.

Greece (*Graeciam*) from the Romans”²⁵. The passage is very plain indeed; its interpretation, however, is by no means simple. This is because by Greece (*Graeciam*) Isidore most probably meant Illyricum and as a consequence the Slavic penetration he speaks of may have involved regions of Illyricum in no way related to the Greek lands²⁶. This is indeed the interpretation which may be said to be given by the most recent study of the archaeological finds which relate to the Slavic settlement of the Balkan peninsula²⁷. The author of this study is not aware of the view that *Graeciam* in Isidore most probably means Illyricum; nevertheless he uses the testimony of his *Chronicon* to assert that the massive installation of the Slavs in the Balkan peninsula took place during the early years of the reign of Heraclius. But the regions involved in this particular installation most probably did not include any of the Greek lands. A notice in a later western chronicle, apparently not related to the work of Isidore of Seville²⁸, a passage in John of Nikiu²⁹ and a reference in George of Pisidia³⁰ all relate to the activities of the Slavs in the Illyrian and Thracian regions of the Balkan peninsula and as a consequence do not change the picture drawn. One may be tempted to put the installation of the Croats and Serbs in what would become their permanent home as related in the *De administrando imperio* about this time (c. 615), but most scholars prefer to place it about ten years later³¹.

There is a third text, this one belonging to a work composed in the tenth century, the *De thematibus* of Constantine Porphyrogenitus. This text has often been cited as marking the decisive point in the massive installation of the Slavs in the Peloponnese. The text reads³²: “And the whole country [i.e. the Pelop-

25. Isidore of Seville, *Chronicon*, Migne, *PL*, LXXXIII, 1056; *Sclavi Graeciam Romanis tulerunt*.

26. Charanis, “*Graecia* in Isidore of Seville”, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 64 (1971), 22-25.

27. Popović, *op. cit.* (see n. 11), 488-490.

28. Cf. Barišić, *op. cit.*, 149. The reference is to Willibald. On his statement see further, Charanis, “*Graecia* in Isidore of Seville”, 25.

29. *The Chronicle of John, Bishop of Nikiu*, tr. from the Ethiopic text by R. H. Charles (London-Oxford, 1916), 175f.

30. *George of Pisidia, Poemi. I. Panegirici epici*, ed. Agostino Pertusi (Ettal, 1959), 254f.

31. See the commentary on the relevant chapters of the *De administrando imperio* by F. Dvornik, Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio. vol. II. Commentary*, edited by R. J. H. Jenkins (London, 1962), 93-137.

32. A. Pertusi, editor, *Constantino Porfirogenito de Thematibus* (=Studi e Testi 160, Vatican, 1952), 91. Cf. the passage of John Geometres, second half of the tenth century, who speaks of one who “having seen Greece (Hellas) he has become barbarian in speech and in manners”. John Geometres, *MG* 106: 922. This statement, however, may mean no

ponnese] was Slavonized and became barbarian when the deadly plague ravaged the universe, when Constantine, the one named after dung [Constantine V Copronymus] held the scepter of the Romans”.

There is in this text no chronological problem. The reference to the plague which raged during the reign of Constantine V Copronymus fixes the occurrence described in the years 744-747. But as I have shown elsewhere³³ the text cannot be taken to mean that it was during these years that the Slavs installed themselves in the Peloponnese for the first time. It can only mean the expansion of the Slavs already in the Peloponnese into other regions of the peninsula. Because of the plague, conditions for such an expansion were favorable, favorable not so much because the plague left the country absolutely desolate of all inhabitants (plagues are never so thoroughly destructive) as because of the demoralization which the plague no doubt caused in the ranks of the Byzantine authorities.

It follows from these texts that Slavs did indeed install themselves *en masse* in the Balkan peninsula in the seventh century, that part of it especially covered by the reign of Heraclius, but the regions involved in this installation must be placed in the upper and western sections of the peninsula, in the country between the Danube and the Balkan mountains, in what is now Yugoslav Macedonia, in Serbia, Croatia and the Dalmatian parts of the peninsula. With the possible exception of Thessaly³⁴, none of the classical Greek lands seem to have been involved. The Slavic settlement in the region of Thessalonica whose existence may be readily inferred from the *Miracula Sancti Demetrii* most probably had been established before the seventh century began. It may be also that it is in the years before the beginning of that century that the first Slavic settlements in the rest of the Greek lands should be placed.

The contemporary sources which may be said to attest to Slavic settlements in Greek lands before the end of the sixth century are few and by no means categorical. They reduce themselves to four principal texts.

The historian Menander, writing of the reign of Tiberius (578-582) says

more than this that having been in Greece, a province, the man in question became vulgar (Greek) in speech and manner. I owe this reference to Professor A. Každan.

33. Charanis, "Observations on the History of Greece during the Early Middle Ages", *Balkan Studies* 11, 2 (1970), 21f.

34. About the middle of the seventh century the Slavic tribe of the Belegezêtes are found settled in Thessaly and at peace with the empire (*Miracula Sancti Demetrii*, Tougard, 166). They had been among the Slavic tribes which had participated in the raiding expedition in the Aegean, usually dated in 615, and in the siege of Thessalonica directed by Chazon a year or two later. They may have moved and settled in Thessaly after the failure of that siege.

this in one of the fragments of his work which have survived³⁵: “In the fourth year of Tiberius the people of the Slavs, to the number of 100.000, threw themselves upon Thrace which they devastated and also many other provinces”. And in another fragment³⁶: “While Greece (Hellas) was pillaged by the Slavs and successive perils gathered against her from every side, Tiberius, who did not have capable forces to fight, not even against one detachment of his enemies... sent an embassy to the prince of the Avars”.

Evagrius, whose ecclesiastical history is very important as a source not only for what it says about church matters of the last quarter of the sixth century, but also for his references to secular events of the same period, writes as follows concerning the incursion of the Avars (=Slavs) in the Balkan peninsula during the reign of Maurice (582-602)³⁷: “While the greater part of the forces were engaged in the East, the Avars twice made an incursion as far as the so-called Long Wall, reduced Anchialus, Singidunum and all Hellas as well as other cities and fortresses, enslaving the inhabitants and laying everything waste with fire and sword”.

The third source of evidence consists of two entries in the Latin chronicle of John of Biclar. One of these entries reads³⁸: During the third year of the emperor Tiberius, “the Avars were driven from the borders of Thrace and occupied parts of Greece (Graecia) and Pannonia”. And the other³⁹: “The people of the Slavs devastated Illyricum and Thrace”.

Finally, there is the well-known passage of the Syriac history of the Church by John of Ephesus. The passage reads⁴⁰: “Three years after the death of Justin, during the reign of the victorious Tiberius [that is, in 581], the accursed nation of the Slavs put itself on the move, overran all Hellas, the provinces

35. Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *Excerpta de legationibus*, ed. C. de Boor I (Berlin, 1903), 469.

36. *Ibid.*, 208.

37. Evagrius, *The Ecclesiastical History*, ed. by J. Bidez and L. Parmentier (London, 1898), 228.

38. MGH, *Auct. ant.* XI, 215.

39. *Ibid.*, 216.

40. Iohannis Ephesini, *Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, edited and translated into Latin by E. W. Brooks (= *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium. Scriptorum Syri, Series Tertia*, t. III, versio, Louvain, 1936), 248f. Cf. H. Gregoire, “L’origine et le nom des Croates et des Serbes”, *Byzantion* 17 (1945), 109. For an English translation of the passage: *The Third Part of the Ecclesiastical History of John, Bishop of Ephesus*, tr. by R. Payne Smith (Oxford, 1860), 432. On John of Ephesus and the Slavs there is also the work in Russian by A. P. D’iakonov, “John of Ephesus and the Syriac Chronicles on the Slavs of the VI-VII Cent.”, *Vestnik Drevnei Istorii* 1 (1949), 20-34. I owe this information to Professor A. Každan.

of Thessaly, and Thrace, ravaged numerous cities and properties, devastated, burned, reduced the population to slavery. That lasted for four years during which the emperor was preoccupied with the war against the Persians and all the armies were in the East. This preoccupation gave the Slavs a free hand, they installed themselves as in a conquered country and spread throughout it in accordance with the divine will. They devastated, burned, took prisoners up to the exterior wall of the capital, and seized the imperial flocks, numbering thousands of heads. And still today (584), they are established and installed in the Roman provinces... killing, burning, pillaging, seizing the gold and silver, the flocks of horses... having learned to make war better than the Romans”.

It may be observed that these texts leave no doubt that the Avars and the Slavs did indeed invade and devastate the southern Greek lands during the reigns of Tiberius and Maurice, but on the question whether they also settled permanently in these lands, these texts are by no means decisive. Menander and Evagrius speak only of devastations and while John of Biclar does indeed say that the Avars occupied Greece, his testimony may not be particularly significant because by Greece he may mean Illyricum. John of Ephesus, on the other hand, appears much more categorical. Nevertheless, his testimony is not without problems. This is because expressions in the original Syriac have been viewed differently by different scholars⁴¹, and also because passages of this part of John's work which have survived only as summarized by later writers indicate that he had added to his work before he died the statement that the Slavs finally left the Greek lands⁴². It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that some scholars have denied the existence of any Slavic settlements south of the Danube and the Save before the beginning of the seventh century. R. Roesler, who developed this thesis⁴³, did not know John of Ephesus, but the Rumanian scholar Ion Nestor who revived this thesis with some modifications in 1963 knew John's work very well⁴⁴. On the other hand, A. Bon, following his analysis of these texts in his well-documented history of Byzantine Peloponnese down to 1204, has this to say⁴⁵: These texts “attest to devastations and displacement of peoples, which beginning toward 578-579, reached their

41. For some references to these differences: Ion Nestor, “La pénétration des Slaves dans la péninsule Balkanique...” (see above, n. 13), p. 50, n. 17.

42. *Idem.*, *loc. cit.*

43. R. Poesler, “Über den Zeitpunkt der slavischen Ansiedlung an der unteren Donau”, *Sitzungsberichte d. kais. Akad. Wissenschaften, Philos.-Hist. Klasse*, 73 (1873), 77-126.

44. As cited above, n. 41, pp. 41-67.

45. A. Bon, *Le Péloponnèse Byzantin jusqu'en 1204* (Paris, 1951) 31f, 34.

culminating point in 584... None of these texts cites expressly the Peloponnese; they mention only Hellas, which... may designate only the northern parts of the Balkan peninsula or central Greece". "The contents of these texts cannot be accepted or rejected except insofar as other sources make it possible to judge". The other sources which Bon has in mind consist of evidence drawn from archaeology and such materials as coins, seals and inscriptions, but neither do these sources appear to be decisive⁴⁶.

There is, however, another text, a late text to be sure, but one which is most decisive in its bearing on the question of the settlement of the Slavs in the Greek lands, the Peloponnese especially, during the reign of Maurice. The reference is, of course, to the Iberikon version of the *Chronicle of Monemvasia*, called Iberikon because it was found in the Athonian monastery of Iberon and was first published by Sp. Lampros in 1884⁴⁷. The relevant passage of this text reads⁴⁸:

"In another invasion they [the Avars] subjugated all of Thessaly and all Hellas, old Epirus, Attica and Euboea. They made an incursion also in the Peloponnesus, conquered it by war, and, destroying and driving out the noble and Hellenic nations, they settled in it themselves. Those among the former [the Greeks] who succeeded in escaping from their blood-stained hands dispersed themselves here and there. The city of Patras emigrated to the territory of Rhegium in Calabria; the Argives to the island called Orobe; and the Corinthians to the island called Aegina. The Lacones too abandoned their native soil at that time, some sailed to the island of Sicily and they are still there in a place called Demena, call themselves Demenitae instead of Lacedaemonitae, and preserve their own Laconian dialect. Others found an inaccessible place by the seashore, built there a strong city, which they called Monemvasia because there was only one way for those entering, and settled in it with their own bishop. Those who belonged to the tenders of herds and to the rustics of the country settled in the rugged places located along there and which lately have been called Tzaconiae. Having thus conquered and settled the Peloponnese, the Avars have held it for two hundred and eighteen years, that is, from the year 6096 [A.D. 587] from the creation of the world, which was the sixth year of the reign of Maurice, to the year 6313 [A.D. 805], which

46. For references on this point, see above n. 11.

47. S. P. Lampros, "Τὸ περὶ κτίσεως Μονεμβασίας χρονικόν", in his *Ἱστορικὰ Μελετήματα* (Athens, 1884), 97-128.

48. As translated by me: "The Chronicle of Monemvasia and the Question of the Slavonic Settlements in Greece", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 5 (1950), 148.

was the fourth year of the reign of Nicephorus the Old who had Stavrakios as son. They were subject neither to the emperor of the Romans nor to anyone else. And only the eastern part of the Peloponnesus, from Corinth to Malea, because of its ruggedness and inaccessibility, remained free from the Slavs and to that part a *strategus* [governor] of the Peloponnesians continued to be sent by the emperor of the Romans. One of these governors, a native of Lesser Armenia, and a member of the family called Skleroi came into hostile blows with the Slavic tribes, conquered and obliterated them completely, and enabled the ancient inhabitants to recover their own. When the aforementioned emperor Nicephorus heard these things he was filled with joy and became anxious to renew the cities there, to rebuild the churches that the barbarians had destroyed, and to Christianize the barbarians themselves. And for this reason, having inquired about the colony where the people of Patras lived, he had them reestablished by his order together with their own shepherd [bishop], whose name at that time was Athanasius, on their ancient soil. He also granted to Patras, which was a bishopric before this, the prerogatives of a metropolis. And he rebuilt their city [Patras] and the holy churches of God from the foundations when Tarasius was still patriarch”.

There is here in this passage emphatic testimony that Slavs not only penetrated but also settled in the Greek lands, especially the Peloponnesians, during the reign of Maurice. But this testimony has not been readily accepted because its authenticity has been seriously questioned. Indeed the question of the authenticity of this testimony became so closely related to the question whether Slavs settled in the Greek lands during the reign of Maurice that the answer to the one came to depend upon the answer to the other.

The *Chronicle of Monemvasia* in the earliest version known, the Turin version, was published by Joseph Pasinus in 1749⁴⁹, but it was only after 1845, when Jacob Fallmerayer first used it⁵⁰ to bolster his thesis that “not a single drop of real pure Hellenic blood flows in the veins of the Christian population of modern Greece” that it was subjected to any serious discussion and became related to the question of the settlement of Slavs at the end of the sixth century in the Greek lands. C. Hopf, who scrutinized most thoroughly all the sources then available concerning the settlement of Slavs in the Greek lands at the end of the sixth century and who in the end rejected most emphatically Fallmerayer’s thesis, was the first scholar to subject the chronicle to a

49. *Codices manuscripti bibliothecae regii Taurinensis Athenaei* I (Turin, 1749), 417f.

50. Jacob Ph. Fallmerayer, *Fragmente aus den Orient*, 2nd edition by George M. Thomas (Stuttgart, 1877), p. 508, note 2.

thorough examination⁵¹. He noted the late date of the manuscript which contained it and the vagueness of its possible sources and came to the conclusion that what it says about the Slavs in the Greek lands were late inventions, based on hearsay, and as a consequence not worthy of belief. The Greek national historian Paparrhegopoulo came to the same conclusion, likewise noting the late date of the manuscript of the chronicle and also the similarities in content between it and a letter of Patriarch Nicholas III (1084-1111) to the emperor Alexius I, in particular the statement that the Avars held the Peloponnese for two hundred and eighteen years, a statement whose historical basis he questioned⁵². Lampros⁵³ and Bees⁵⁴ followed suit in their agreement with Paparrhegopoulo. Lampros, however, made an important contribution to the study of the chronicle by his publication, in addition to the Turin version, of two other versions which he had found on Mount Athos. Lampros's publication introduced a new element into the subject in that one of the versions, the Iberikon, records nothing beyond the reign of Nicephorus I, whereas the other two include entries which relate to the thirteenth, and early fourteenth, century. This difference in content between the Iberikon on one hand and the other two versions on the other, led Lampros to the conclusion⁵⁵, rejected later by Bees⁵⁶ but now universally accepted, that the Iberikon is the oldest and basic version of the work. In the meantime the German scholar G. F. Hertzberg had also rejected the chronicle, referring to it as a compilation of unequal value, full of errors and tales⁵⁷. And A. A. Vasiliev, who, some fourteen years after the appearance of Lampros's work, published what was up to then the

51. K. Hopf, "Geschichte Griechenlands vom Beginn des Mittelalters bis auf unsere Zeit", in Ersch and Gruber, *Allgemeine Encyclopädie der Wissenschaften und Künste*, 85 (Leipzig, 1867), 106ff. For a Greek translation of the sections of Hopf's work dealing with the question of the settlement of Slavs in Greece: Ph. Zambaldes, Καρόλου Χόπφ, Οί Σλάβοι ἐν Ἑλλάδι (Venice, 1872). On the *Chronicle of Monemvasia*, pp. 58-64.

52. K. Paparrhegopoulo, "Σλαβικαὶ ἐν ταῖς Ἑλληνικαῖς χώραις Ἐποικήσεις", in *Ἱστορικαὶ Πραγματεῖαι* (Athens, 1858), p. 247, note 25; *Idem.*, Ἱστορία τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ Ἔθνους edited by P. Karolides (Athens, 1925), 3:162. For the text of the letter of Patriarch Nicholas III to the emperor Alexius I: J. Leunclavius, *Juris Graeco-Romani, tam canonici quam civilis, tomi duo...ex variis Europae Asiaeque bibliothecis eruti* (Frankfurt, 1598), 278f.

53. Lampros, *op. cit.*, 117.

54. N. A. Bees, Τὸ «περὶ τῆς κτίσεως τῆς Μονεμβασίας» χρονικόν, in *Βυζαντις I* (Athens, 1909), 83.

55. Lampros, *op. cit.*, 127f: cf. Lampros, «Νέος κώδιξ τοῦ χρονικοῦ Μονεμβασίας», in *Νέος Ἑλληνομνημῶν* 9 (Athens, 1912), 245ff.

56. Bees, *op. cit.*, 74-76.

57. G. F. Hertzberg, *Geschichte Griechenlands seit dem Absterben des antiken Lebens bis zum Gegenwart*, I (Gotha, 1876), 120ff.

most exhaustive study on the question of the Slavic settlements in the Greek lands, cautioned care in the use of the chronicle⁵⁸.

An important step in the direction of demonstrating the historical accuracy of the *Chronicle* was taken in 1912 when the Greek scholar, Socrates Kougeas, published a *scholium* written by Arethas, the scholarly archbishop of Caesarea, in the margin of the Dresden manuscript of the brief chronicle of patriarch Nicephorus (806-815), a manuscript which had been written in 932⁵⁹. The significance of the *scholium* of Arethas lies in this that it states almost verbatim what the *Chronicle* says about the invasion of the Greek lands by the Slavs during the reign of Maurice, the dispersion of the Peloponnesians as a result of that invasion, the defeat of the Slavs at Patras during the reign of Nicephorus I, and the return to Patras on orders from Nicephorus of the descendants of those who had deserted that city more than two hundred years earlier at the time of the Slavic invasion⁶⁰.

In his comments on the relation between the *scholium* of Arethas and the *Chronicle*, Kougeas remarked briefly that the *scholium* (1) supported the view of Lampros that the Iberikon version of the *Chronicle* was the original one and (2) it undermined the other view, generally accepted at the time, according to which the references in the *Chronicle* to the displacement and dispersion of the Peloponnesians during the reign of Maurice and to the return of their descendants under Nicephorus I were later fabrications of a legendary character. The first point of Kougeas's remarks had already before his publication received an element of support by the appearance of a fourth version of the *Chronicle* whose contents include none of those of the Iberikon, being restricted to entries referring to the later events as noted by the other two versions⁶¹. Kougeas's second point remained for years virtually unnoticed, but that too in time found some favor. Thus in 1944 D. Zakythinis accepted as probably historical the notices concerning the dispersion of the Peloponnesians and the subsequent return of their descendants, but at the same time, notwithstanding the *scholium* of Arethas, rejected the authenticity of the *Chronicle* as a whole. In his view the *Chronicle* and the *scholium* had a common source whose "original core—and I quote Zakythinis—must be sought, far from the written tradition, in the oral richness of the Peloponnesian people",

58. For the reference to Vasiliev's work and how I used it: Charanis, *op. cit.*, p. 141, note 1.

59. S. Kougeas, «Ἐπὶ τοῦ καλουμένου χρονικοῦ, Ἐπεὶ τῆς κτίσεως τῆς Μονεμβασίας», in *Νέος Ἑλληνομνημῶν* 9 (Athens, 1912), 473-480.

60. For a translation of the *scholium*, Charanis, *op. cit.*, 152f.

61. See above note 55.

and consequently “the information according to which the Peloponnese was subjected definitely by the Slavs in the year 588 lacks any significance”⁶². Accordingly he rejected the idea that Slavs settled in the Peloponnese during the reign of Maurice and placed the Slavic settlements there after 746.

For years then the publication of the *scholium* of Arethas did not have the effect which might have been expected, that of definitely demonstrating the historical accuracy of the *Chronicle of Monemvasia*. This was the status of the question when in 1946 I published two studies for which the *Chronicle of Monemvasia* served as the principal source⁶³. These two studies were based on a third already completed, but not published until four years later, in which I examined the chronicle in the light of all the other sources available, including, of course, the *scholium* of Arethas, and came to the conclusion that the *Chronicle of Monemvasia* “is absolutely trustworthy and constitutes one of the most precious sources on the Avar and Slav penetration of Greece during the reign of Maurice”⁶⁴.

The immediate reaction to my studies was mixed. In quarters which had already been inclined to accept the chronicle, the reception was good. “Charanis”, wrote G. Ostrogorsky, “rightly stresses the reliability of the information given in the *Chronicle of Monemvasia*”, “he rightly opposes the view widely held today among Greek historians that the Slavs did not take possession of the Peloponnese at the end of the sixth century, as the sources state, but only settled there in any number after the epidemic of 746”⁶⁵. However, in quarters which had already been inclined to reject the chronicle, the reaction against my studies was sharp, the sharpest coming from the distinguished Greek scholar, the late S. P. Kyriakides. In the book which he wrote in response to one of my studies, Kyriakides tried to show that the ultimate source of both the chronicle and the *scholium* was a forged document⁶⁶. This document had been presumably issued by Nicephorus I, following the defeat of the Slavs at Patras, granting certain privileges to the Church of Patras, but in reality, according to Kyriakides, it had been drawn up by the metropolitan of Patras

62. Zakythinos, *Οι Σλάβοι ἐν Ἑλλάδι* (see above, n. 13), 41.

63. Charanis, “Nicephorus I, the Savior of Greece from the Slavs”, *Byzantina-Metabyzantina*, vol. I, Part I (New York, 1946), 75-92; “On the Question of the Hellenization of Sicily and Southern Italy during the Middle Ages”, *The American Historical Review*, 52 (Washington, 1946), 74-86.

64. “The Chronicle of Monemvasia...” (see above, note 48).

65. George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, translated from the German by Joan Hussey (New Brunswick, N.J., 1957), p. 171, note 4.

66. Sp. Kyriakides, *Βυζαντινὰ Μελέται: Οἱ Σλάβοι ἐν Πελοποννήσῳ* (Thessalonica, 1947).

in order to support the rights and privileges which he claimed for his see. As background to the granting of these privileges, in Kyriakides's view, the author of the document no doubt included the legend, reported by Constantine Porphyrogenitus, of how Saint Andrew, the patron saint of the metropolis of Patras, brought about the defeat of the Slavs around Patras during the reign of Nicephorus I and perhaps also the story concerning the emigration of the Lacedaemonians and the people of Patras. With this as a nucleus, some resident of Patras composed a brief historical treatise to which he added, as an introduction, the story drawn from Evagrius and others, about the invasion of the Peloponnese by the Avars and Slavs during the reign of Maurice. This brief historical treatise, still according to Kyriakides, was the source of both the *Chronicle of Monemvasia* and the *scholium* of Arethas. Accordingly, as both derive from a forgery, their testimony has no validity.

The thesis of Kyriakides curiously enough won the support of Romilly Jenkins who stated further that it is not "at all certain that the *Chronicle of Monemvasia*, despite the exactitude of the dates which it gives, is worthy of the confidence which has sometimes been placed in it"⁶⁷. This is the same Jenkins, it may be recalled, who not much later, in his Cincinnati lectures, sought to revive the Fallmerayer thesis in its pure form and with all its implications⁶⁸. The thesis of Kyriakides, however, need no longer be taken seriously. It has been most effectively answered by the recent study of Otto Kresten who showed that the document issued by Nicephorus I in favor of the Church of Patras was indeed genuine⁶⁹. That document, of course, has not survived.

It has already been observed that A. Bon, the specialist on the Peloponnese of the Byzantine period, viewed the various contemporary texts which relate to the question of the settlement of Slavs in the southern Greek lands at the end of the sixth century as indecisive. Bon examined also the *Chronicle of Monemvasia* and the *scholium* of Arethas and said concerning them that their testimony could neither be accepted nor rejected⁷⁰. In actual fact, however, he seems to have rejected that testimony. He wrote: "One may admit, therefore, in the light of the texts, as very probable that the Slavs are in the Pelopon-

67. R. J. H. Jenkins, Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*. vol. II. *Commentary* (London, 1962), 183.

68. R. J. H. Jenkins, *Byzantium and Byzantinism* (The University of Cincinnati, 1963), 21-42.

69. Otto Kresten, "Zur Echtheit des Συγγαλιου des Kaisers Nikephoros I für Patras", in *Römische Historische Mitteilungen*, 19 (Rome-Vienna, 1977), 15-78.

70. Bon, *op. cit.*, 34.

nese in the seventh century and as certain that their number increased in the eighth century”⁷¹.

The comparatively numerous studies devoted to the *Chronicle of Monemvasia* and the related question of the Slavic settlements in the Greek lands published in the first ten or fifteen years since World War II⁷², prompted Paul Lemerle to make the *Chronicle* the subject of a seminar at the *École Normale des Hautes Études*⁷³ and in 1963 he made known his results⁷⁴. These results consisted primarily of a new edition of the Iberikon version of the chronicle, accompanied by a translation in French of its important passages and a long commentary where, among other things, an evaluation of the chronicle as a historical source is made.

Lemerle has made his edition on the basis of the manuscript and the text which he has offered is readily acceptable. His observation that in content the chronicle deals more with Patras and Lacedaemon than it does with Monemvasia and that consequently a more descriptive title for it would be the *Chronicle of Patras* or of the *Peloponnesians* may be considered reasonable. More questionable, however, is his other observation: that the expression in the chronicle, “Nicephorus the old, who had Staurakios as son”, an implication that the author knew another emperor Nicephorus, was a later interpolation and therefore of no significance as a factor in the dating of the chronicle. This observation is important because it makes it possible to date the composition of the chronicle earlier than the reign of Nicephorus II Phocas, thus removing the most serious obstacle to thinking of it as the source of the *scholium* of Arethas, which is indeed what Lemerle concludes. Yet the observation has no basis other than that it is the opinion of Lemerle.

In his evaluation of the *Chronicle of Monemvasia* as a historical source Lemerle makes two points: (1) that the references to the attack of the Slavs against Patras during the reign of Nicephorus I and the action taken by that emperor following the Byzantine victory can be shown to be based on a good

71. *Ibid.*, 37.

72. For a review of the literature relating to the *Chronicle of Monemvasia* one may now consult: Ivan Dujcev, *Cronaca di Monemvasia. Introduzione, Testo Critico, Traduzione e Note* (Palermo, 1976) (=Istituto Siciliano di Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici. Testi, 12), ix-xi.

73. P. Lemerle, *École pratique des hautes études, IVe section: sciences historiques et philosophiques. Histoire byzantine. Annuaire 1962-1963*, pp. 67-71.

74. Lemerle, “La Chronique improprement dite de Monemvasie: Le contexte historique et légendaire”, *Revue des Études Byzantines* 21 (1963), 5-49. Cf. J. Koder, “Arethas von Kaisareia und die sogenannte Chronik von Monembasia”, *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 25 (1976), 75-80.

historical tradition and as a consequence should be accepted as true; (2) the references, on the other hand, which relate to the invasion of the Peloponnese and the occupation of the western part of it by the Slavs during the first decade of the reign of Maurice cannot be authenticated and for that reason they should be considered dubious. "The chronicler", he writes, "basing himself, in the absence of documents, on some local tradition, probably goes too far in putting the greater part of the Peloponnese in the hands of the Slavs as early as 587/8". Again: "It is not established... that the Peloponnese was effectively invaded and occupied by the Avaro-Slavs as early as the end of the sixth century". And finally: "Without entering here in detail into a problem perhaps insoluble, I believe that one must think of a progressive infiltration or of successive waves rather than of a conquest realized at a precise date. I do not think that one can speak of a Slavonization of the greater part of the Peloponnese before the end of the seventh century"⁷⁵.

The reception of Lemerle's work was mixed. A. Každan, while expressing some doubt on Lemerle's view that the expression in the chronicle "Nicephorus the Old, who had Staurakios as son" was a later interpolation, reacted favorably to Lemerle's work as a whole⁷⁶. And Bohumila Zástěrovà accepted his views fully. She wrote: "The results of Lemerle which in my opinion represent the clearest and most plausible interpretation of the nature itself of, and the mutual relations among, the different sources relative to the occupation of the Peloponnese by the Slavs, refute, just as Niederle had done in his time, the extreme dating of the Greek scholars who suggest in this connection the middle of the eighth century. In opposition to P. Charanis, who shares fully the opinion of Niederle, Lemerle accepts the view held by most of the scholars and according to which the occupation of the Byzantine territory *en masse* by the Slavs should be dated only in the seventh century"⁷⁷. There were scholars, however, who took issue with Lemerle. One of these scholars, F. Barišić, scrutinized the *Chronicle of Monemvasia* anew in the light of all the contemporary sources, including the *Miracula Sancti Demetrii*, and came to the conclusion that what it says about the occupation of the Peloponnese by the Slavs during the reign of Maurice must be accepted as true⁷⁸. And

75. *Ibid.*, 35, 36, 48.

76. In *Vizantijski Vremennik*, N.S. 26 (1965), 280-281. I read Každan's review with the aid of Mrs. Jelisaveta Allen.

77. Bohumila Zástěrovà, "Les débuts de l'établissement définitif des Slaves en Europe Meridionale", Académie Tchecoslovaque des Sciences. Institut d'Archéologie: *Origine et Débuts des Slaves VI* (Prague, 1966), 33-52 (quotation on p. 51).

78. F. Barišić, "'Monemvasijska' hronika o doseljavanu Avaroslovena na Peloponez

another, V. Tăpkova-Zaimova, while viewing the work of Lemerle as a whole with favor, insists nevertheless that the Slavic settlements in the Peloponnese must be put at the end of the sixth century⁷⁹.

Lemerle's argument was finally definitely refuted and the historical accuracy of the *Chronicle of Monemvasia* relative to the settlement of the Slavs in the Greek lands was decisively demonstrated by the publication in 1970 by Peter Schreiner of a new datum. This datum is a brief chronological notice which, like the *Chronicle of Movemvasia*, puts the foundation of the city of Monemvasia in the reign of Maurice. The notice is found in a late Short Chronicle, but, as viewed by Schreiner, correctly I believe, the era of dating used by that chronicle is that of Alexandria, and as a consequence its source must go back to at least the early ninth century and must also be independent of the *Chronicle of Monemvasia*. The notice had been available for some time, but no one recognized its historic significance until it was elucidated by Schreiner⁸⁰. Schreiner wrote at the time of the publication of his note relative to the new datum⁸¹:

“The data of the ‘Chronicle of Monemvasia’ on the invasions of the barbarians during the reign of Maurice and the establishment of the Avars and Slavs in the Peloponnese as early as 587 are confirmed by our new source as well as by the researches of M. F. Barišić who, with the aid of a comparison of several historical works (Simocatta, Theophanes, *Miracula S. Demetrii*), has sought to verify the indications of the ‘Chronicle of Monemvasia’. If the foundation of a fortress became a necessity in the first years of the reign of Maurice that is because then and perhaps already in the times of his predecessor, Tiberius, barbarian peoples ravaged the Peloponnese. Their establishment in 587, following the great invasions of 585/86 pointed out by Barišić is a historical datum beyond any doubt”.

The reaction to Schreiner's note was immediate and it was also favorable. Lemerle who sponsored the publication recognized its importance and promised to examine its implication on another occasion⁸². But Bohumila Zástěrová, who has been quoted above as inclined to accept Lemerle's reservations on

587”, *Naučno društvo Bosne i Hercegovine, Godišnjak 3, Centar za balkanološka ispitivanja*, knj. I (Sarajevo, 1965). I consulted Barišić's study with the aid of Mrs. Jelisaveta Allen.

79. V. Tăpkova-Zaimova, “Sur quelques aspects de la colonisation Slave en Macédoine et en Grèce”, *Études Balkaniques* I (Sofia, 1964), 111-123.

80. Peter Schreiner, “Note sur la fondation de Monemvasie en 582-583”, *Travaux et Mémoires* 4 (1970), 471-475.

81. *Ibid.*, 475.

82. In the introductory footnote to Schreiner's note.

the *Chronicle of Monemvasia* relative to the date of the settlement of the Slavs in the Peloponnese, wrote: "Earlier, tending to accept the arguments put forward by Lemerle, I treated with reservations the exact date of Slavonic settlement of the Peloponnese given by the *Chronicle of Monemvasia* and other sources... I now feel that Schreiner's discovery is an important argument in favour of that date"⁸³. And the young English scholar, Judith Herrin, had this to say in her comments on the large-scale emigration from the Peloponnese to Sicily and southern Italy under the pressure of the Avaro-Slav invasion as recorded by the *Chronicle of Monemvasia*: "The scale of this emigration may be exaggerated but there can be no doubt that many Greeks abandoned their homes and settled in southern Italy and Sicily. The Chronicle also records what happened to those who could not escape by sea—they sought refuge in the most inaccessible parts of the Peloponnese, where they built new fortified sites, such as the city of Monemvasia... Recently the foundation of the city has been dated to the years 582-3 by a combination of archaeological and documentary evidence"⁸⁴. In a note the same scholar adds further⁸⁵: "The migration of the city of Patras with its bishop mentioned in the Chronicle... is confirmed by the acts of the Seventh Oecumenical Council held in Nikaia in 787. This Council was attended by bishops from several Aegean islands, including Aigina, Euboea, and Skopelos, but not from the mainland centres, Thessalonike, Larissa, Athens, and Corinth. Patras, however, was represented by Ἰωάννης μοναχὸς καὶ ἐκ προσώπου πατρῶν, who signed after the bishop of Reggio (Calabria) and before the group of Sicilian bishops...". Among the Greek scholars D. Zakythinos has accepted the accuracy of Schreiner's new datum, implying thereby, but not stating it, that he no longer holds to the old view which puts the settlement of the Slavs in the Peloponnese about 750⁸⁶. And Ivan Dujčev, the distinguished Bulgarian scholar, has written in the introduction of his edition of the *Chronicle of Monemvasia* published in 1976⁸⁷: "it can no longer be doubted that this text is basically truthful and that its

83. In *Byzantinoslavica* 35 (1974), 224.

84. Judith Herrin, "Aspects of the Process of Hellenization in the Early Middle Ages", *The Annual of the British School of Archaeology at Athens* 68 (1973), 118.

85. *Ibid.*, p. 118, n. 31.

86. D. Zakythinos, *Byzance: État-Société-Économie* (London: Variorum Reprints- CS 25, 1973), Study IV, p. 13. This study was originally published in 1972.

87. Dujčev, *op. cit.* (see above note 72), XLVI. I manage to read Italian but this translation was made with the aid of Mrs. Francesca Bonaiuto of Dumbarton Oaks. Cf. Michael W. Weithmann, *Die Slavische Bevölkerung auf der griechischen Halbinsel* (München, 1978), 33ff. Weithmann accepts the historical accuracy of the *Chronicle in Monemvasia*.

anonymous author is generally quite objective and possessed of accurate information; in spite of a few unimportant errors and exaggerations, he makes use, on the whole, of excellent written sources and a very reliable oral tradition, never yielding, as one might expect, to the attraction of miraculous and wondrous elements”.

When in 1946 I published my first study based on the *Chronicle of Monemvasia*, I wrote: “it can now be affirmed in unmistakable and unambiguous terms that the *Chronicle of Monemvasia* is absolutely trustworthy and constitutes one of the most precious sources of the history of the Byzantine empire”⁸⁸. My statement was immediately challenged and the discussion which followed lasted for something like thirty years. That discussion seems now to have ended in such a way that I am able to repeat that statement, modifying it somewhat perhaps to read: “The *Chronicle of Monemvasia* is absolutely trustworthy and constitutes, along with the *Miracula Sancti Demetrii*, the most precious source relative to the date of the establishment and the magnitude of the Slavic settlements in the Greek lands”. In any case that question of the evolution of the demography of medieval Greece may now be considered solved.

The Slavs then who settled in the Greek lands, settled there during the reign of Maurice in the 80’s of the sixth century. More Slavs may have come later, but their coming cannot be precisely documented. The Slavs settled in Macedonia, in Thessaly, in Epirus, in central Greece, the Peloponnese, and even in Crete. Their settlements were denser in the western regions than they were in the eastern regions of Greece. They failed to enter the eastern Peloponnese, and while some did establish themselves in Attica and Boeotia, they were apparently not too many⁸⁹.

How numerous were the Slavs who settled in the Greek lands, that is a question to which no precise answer can be given. It is generally believed

88. “Nicephorus I, the Savior of Greece...”, 80.

89. That the Slavic settlements were denser in the western than they were in the eastern regions of Greece is illustrated further by the distribution of toponyms of Slavic origin: Max Vasmer, *Die Slaven in Griechenland (Abhandlungen der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Jahrgang 1941. Philosophisch-historische Klasse, no. 12 (Berlin, 1941))*. In the eastern regions of Greece proper the place names of Slavic origin according to Vasmer and as calculated by me numbered 225 (Corinth, 24; Argolis, 18; Attica, 18; Boeotia, 22; Phokis, 45; Thessaly: Regions of Larissa, 38; Phthiotis, 55; Magnesia, 15; and in the island of Euboea, 19); in the western regions, they numbered 1019 (Epirus, 412; Acarnania-Aetolia, 98; Thessaly: the regions of Trikkala and Karditsa, 122; the western and central Peloponnese, 387). Cf. J. Koder, “Zur Frage der slavischen Siedlungsgebiete im mittelalterlichen Griechenland”, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 71 (1978), 315-331.

that the Slavs had come into the Balkan peninsula in overwhelming numbers. Ostrogorsky refers to their coming as a stream which poured in an irresistible flood submerging the entire peninsula⁹⁰. The fact that by far the major part of the Balkan peninsula was Slavonized may be taken to speak in favor of that view. The few figures scattered here and there in the sources are most probably too high. It is hardly possible, for instance, to believe the author of the *Miracula S. Demetrii* that the forces of Slavs and Avars which besieged Thessalonica in 586 numbered more than 100.000. That this figure is a gross exaggeration may be inferred from the statement of the author to the effect that the forces in question dried up rivers and other sources of water wherever they camped and turned into deserts the regions through which they marched. This reminds one of the stories about the armies of Xerxes at the time of the Persian invasion of Greece. Certain expressions as, for instance, "infinite multitude", "numberless multitude" used by the sources to refer to the Slavs are too indefinite to have any concrete meaning. Nevertheless there is a figure the oddness of which compels acceptance. This is the reference to the 208.000 Slavs whom Constantine V is said to have transferred from the Thracian regions of Europe to Asia Minor. Whatever that figure may mean, it means also this, that the Slavs who settled in the Balkan peninsula as a whole totaled into a number of consequence. Still, the survival of important elements of the ancient peoples of the Balkan peninsula clearly indicates that this number could not have been overwhelming everywhere in the peninsula. This was no doubt the situation in the case of the southern Greek lands⁹¹.

It is, of course, impossible, given the condition of the sources, to trace in detail the cultural evolution of the Slavs who had settled in the Greek lands. In general, however, it may be observed that having settled down they adjusted themselves early to their new environment and gave themselves more and more to the arts of peace. The Velegezêtes, a Slavic tribe settled in Thessaly, were already, by the reign of Constantine IV (668-85) trading with the city of Thessalonica⁹². About the same time another Slavic tribe, the Drogubites, settled in the region of Thessalonica, had accepted to make certain contributions asked of them by the government in Constantinople⁹³. A little earlier Constans

90. Ostrogorsky, "The Byzantine Empire in the World of the Seventh Century", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 13 (1959), 4 (=G. Ostrogorsky, *Zur byzantinischen Geschichte. Ausgewählte kleine Schriften*, Darmstadt, 1973, p. 81).

91. In general, Charanis, "The Slavs, Byzantium, and the Historical Significance of the First Bulgarian Kingdom", *Balkan Studies* 17, 1 (1976), 10ff.

92. *Ibid.*, 13: For references to the sources, see above, note 34.

93. Charanis, "Kouper, the Chronology of his Activities and their Ethnic Effects on

II (641-668) had spent some time in Athens and passed also by Corinth where no doubt his government held sway⁹⁴. Before the end of the seventh century Hellas, which then included Thessaly, had been organized into a *theme*⁹⁵. In the ninth century Drogubites and Sagudates, also a Slavic tribe, living together in what Cameniates calls mixed villages located in the region between Thessalonica and Beroia, paid taxes to the authorities in Thessalonica and carried on commerce with that city⁹⁶. In the meantime the Slavs in the Greek lands began to yield to the Greek language and to the ways of the Greeks. Already about the middle of the seventh century there were Slavs who spoke Greek and dressed like Greeks⁹⁷. Their conversion to Christianity which, except for certain isolated places, was virtually complete by the end of the ninth century increased their trend toward Greek and the ways of the Greeks⁹⁸. But education also helped. One of the best educated men of the tenth century was Nicetas Magister, who, because of his Slavic origin had been referred to by the famous grammarian Euphemius contemptuously as "that wily fellow with Slavic traits". Nicetas was a native of Larissa in Thessaly, but in one of his letters, a letter full of references to Lycurgus and Solon, he refers to himself proudly as Spartiate in origin on his father's side, as Athenian on his mother's. His other letters are replete with allusions to Homer, Demosthenes, Plutarch, Plato, Sappho even⁹⁹. In turning to Greek and to the ways of the Greeks, the

the Regions around Thessalonica", *Balkan Studies* 11, 2 (1970), 231.

94. Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Langobardorum*, edited by L. Bethmann and G. Waitz *Mon. Germ. hist. scr. rer. Langob.* (Hanover, 1878), 146. Cf. J. B. Bury, *A History of the Later Roman Empire* (London, 1889), II, 300.

95. "Observations on the History of Greece during the Early Middle Ages" (see above, note 33, for exact reference), 4f.

96. John Cameniates, *De expugnatione Thessalonicae*, ed. G. Bohlige (Berlin, 1973), 8. It has been recently suggested by implication, that the work of Cameniates as we have it is a fifteenth century composition. Even so, its sources must have been quite earlier. Cf. A. P. Kazdan, "Some Questions Addressed to the Scholars Who Believe in the Authenticity of Kameniat's 'Capture of Thessalonica'", *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 71 (1978), 301-314.

97. Tougard, *op. cit.* (For exact reference, see above, note 16), 154ff.

98. The *ethnikoi*, probably Slavs, of the region of Sparta and the *Milengoi*, certainly Slavs, of the same region, may have been pagans as late as the middle of the tenth century: Sp. Lampros, ed., 'Ο βίος Νίκωνος τοῦ Μετανοεῖτε, *Νέος Ἑλληνομνήμων* 3 (1906), 194, 200. Cf. Marilyn Dunn, "Evangelisation or Repentance? The Re-Christianization of the Peloponnese in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries", Derek Baker, editor, *Papers Read at the Fifteenth Summer Meeting and the Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society* (Oxford, 1977), 71-86.

99. Charanis, "The Slavs, Byzantium and the Historical Significance of the First Bulgarian Kingdom" (see above, note 91, for exact reference), 19f.

Slavs in the Greek lands were influenced by many forces: the state, the army, the church, education. But the force which no doubt exerted the greatest influence on them was the *milieu*, i.e. the native Greek population which had survived their coming.

Paul Lemerle, to whom reference has often been made in this paper, concludes his introductory remarks to his edition of the *Chronicle of Monemvasia* with the following statement: "May I be permitted, in ending, to make a remark. It is by no means wronging Byzantium and Hellenism to recognize, as the sources require, the numerical importance of the Slavic penetration of Greece. For in the end Byzantium converted, civilized, assimilated, and made Greeks out of these Slavs. It is one of the most surprising victories won by the Hellenic genius (*génie hellène*)¹⁰⁰.

A Bulgarian scholar, V. Tăpkova-Zaimova, objected to the expression "Hellenic genius" (*génie hellène*) used by Lemerle in his attribution of the final victory of Hellenism over the Slavs in the Greek lands¹⁰¹. I think the Bulgarian scholar is perhaps right. For after all what is this Greek genius, for that matter the genius of any people, to which concrete historical phenomena may be attributed? If it has any meaning that meaning must lie in the quality or generality of its cultural achievement. What then eventually triumphed over the Slavs in the Greek lands was the quality and generality of the Greek cultural achievement. But that triumph could not have been won unless there were people who shared this cultural achievement and could, therefore, transmit it to the newcomers. This means, of course, that despite the violence which accompanied the coming of the Slavs in the Greek lands, the native Greek population which survived must have been considerable.

This point was seen many years ago by the distinguished Czech scholar of Slavic antiquities, Lubor Niederle. Niederle wrote in the abbreviated French version of his great book¹⁰²: "Despite the establishments of these elements of Slavs in certain regions of the north and south, it will not be exact to conclude from this that the modern Greeks are hellenized Slavs. This old theory of Fallmerayer, summed up in the known sentence: 'The Hellenic race in Europe is completely exterminated', is evidently not justified, or at least more than exaggerated. It suffices in order to refute it to observe that as soon as Byzantine domination was restored in Greece, power being restored to the original

100. Lemerle, "La chronique improprement dite de Monemvasie..." (For exact reference, see above, note 74), 49.

101. Tăpkova-Zaimova, *op. cit.* (For exact reference, see above, note 79), 123.

102. Niederle, *op. cit.* (For exact reference, see above, note 12), I: 111.

element, there was produced a rapid denationalization of the Slavs which ended in their complete obliteration... This is because in Greece the original ancient inhabitants apparently remained established in a measure sufficient in magnitude to enable them to impose themselves on the Slavs, which is precisely what they did. One cannot, therefore, in these conditions, speak of the disappearance of the ancient Greek race". And in 1959 G. Ostrogorsky wrote¹⁰³: "But even though the Peloponnese itself was under Slav control for more than two hundred years, there was no question of any permanent Slavonisation of Greek territory. Little by little the Byzantine authorities in Greece and other coastal regions managed to regain lost ground and to preserve... their Greek character for these areas". This implies, of course, that the native Greek population which had survived the coming of the Slavs in the Greek lands must have been considerable¹⁰⁴.

In a series of serious lectures delivered at the University of Cincinnati in 1962¹⁰⁵, an attempt was made to revive the Fallmerayer thesis in all its ramifications. The attempt fell flat. It fell flat not only because the thesis itself is not based in fact¹⁰⁶, but also because of the serious, indeed flagrant, errors committed in the course of the attempt¹⁰⁷. Slavs, of course, entered, and settled, in the Greek lands. They did this primarily during the last two decades of the sixth century¹⁰⁸. When they came they destroyed and killed and forced many

103. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State* (For exact reference, see above, note 65), 85.

104. Cf. F. Dvornik, *Les Slaves, Byzance et Rome au IXe siècle* (Paris, 1926), 84ff; 99, 100.

105. Romilly Jenkins, *Byzantium and Byzantinism* (The University of Cincinnati, 1963). The principal points made in this lecture were incorporated into another series of lectures which Jenkins gave to undergraduates at Harvard University and later published in book form: *Byzantium. The Imperial Centuries* (New York, 1966).

106. Nevertheless it may be said that the Fallmerayer thesis has served a purpose. It has served to stimulate the study of medieval Greece thereby increasing considerably our knowledge of the Greek lands of this period. It had an effect on me personally. I was born an Ottoman subject, but I was aware that I was a *Romaïos*, i.e. a Greek speaking Orthodox Christian. In time I became more and more conscious of my Greek background and its long historical tradition and I was proud of it. Then I read about Fallmerayer's thesis and I was shocked. I decided to find out for myself to what extent it was based in fact. And so I became a Byzantinist with special emphasis on the ethnography of the empire.

107. See my remarks on this point; Charanis, "Observations on the History of Greece during the Early Middle Ages", 28-34.

108. This is, of course, the thesis of this paper. Some studies emphasizing archaeological evidence, published recently, tend to agree with this thesis, but they are by no means definite. They usually say that the Slavs settled in the Greek lands toward the end of the sixth or the beginning of the seventh century. See for instance: D. W. Mac Dowall, "The Byzantine Coin

of the native inhabitants to abandon their homes. But the number of natives who survived was by no means insignificant, important enough indeed to enable them in time to impose their language and their ways of life upon the newcomers and in the end absorb them completely¹⁰⁹. It may be correct to say that the Greek race did not survive in all its purity, if indeed one may speak of racial purity even among the ancient Greeks, but it is not correct to say that the Hellenic race in Europe is completely exterminated. Besides, it is not really a question of race, but of culture, and of the survival of the Greek culture, as that culture, of course, evolved throughout the centuries, there can be absolutely no question. In this evolution, the Classical tradition, the Roman domination, and Christianity were the principal forces; the settlement of Slavs in Greece was of no decisive significance.

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Hoard found at Isthmia”, *Archaeology* 18 (1965), 264-267; S. Hood, “Isles of Refuge in the Early Byzantine Period”, *Annual of the British School at Athens* 65 (1970), 38-45; R. L. Hohlfelder, “Barbarian Incursions into Central Greece in the Sixth Century of the Christian Era: More Evidence from Corinthia”, *East European Quarterly* IX, 3 (1975), 251-258. On p. 37, note 2, Hood writes: “The basic problems at issue are the extent of the Slav occupation of South Greece, and the date when it began. The view of P. Charanis, expressed in a series of articles over the last twenty-five years, appear most convincing to me. Charanis accepts the evidence of the so-called Chronicle of Monemvasia, and sets the beginning of the Slav occupation in South Greece at the end of the sixth century—instead of in the middle of the seventh century or later, as argued by some others”.

109. Obolensky does not mention the *milieu* as a factor in the Hellenization of the Slavs who had settled in the Greek lands. He puts the emphasis on the Church and the State. Dimitri Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth, Eastern Europe, 500-1453* (London, 1971), 80-81. It should be pointed out, however, that the Byzantine state never tried to propagate directly the Greek language. Cf. G. Tsaras, «Τὸ νόημα τοῦ ‘γραικώσας’ στὰ Τακτικά Λέοντος ΣΤ’ τοῦ Σοφοῦ» *Byzantina* 1 (1969), 135-157.