

## SOME PERSPECTIVES ON THE MIDDLE BYZANTINE PERIOD \*

The Middle Byzantine Period has been the subject of extensive study in recent years. It is, of course, impossible to review every topic and publication which relates to this vast expanse of time, over four hundred years by the reckoning of most scholars. Indeed, within the extensive dimensions of this period scholarly research has concentrated unevenly with regard both to chronology and to subject. Within the past fifteen years particular emphasis has been given to the seventh and eleventh centuries. Compared with earlier research, which often had stressed narrative history and biography, recent research has concentrated upon the nature and development of Byzantine institutions and upon examining the relative importance of economic, social, political and religious forces as causes of events and movements within the period. Historians have been showing an increased readiness to use relatively unexploited types of primary sources—hagiographical works, oracles, sermons and numismatic evidence—to supplement the often cursory information of the Byzantine chronicles and narrative histories.<sup>1</sup>

Similar to scholars working in almost every other field of history, Byzantinists have become increasingly aware of the complexities and uncertainties which surround some of the most fundamental topics. A common trend in much of the recent research (at least from western countries) has been a growing reluctance to attribute economic or social significance or cause to various events or developments without very specific documentation. This has been a natural reaction against a tendency in the immediately preceding decades to view problems too exclusively in economic and social terms. This revisionism has by no means terminated the study of economic and social problems—which is flourishing—but it has sought to apply rigorous tests

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1. For other discussions of research problems, see: J. Karayannopoulos, "Hauptfragen der Byzantinistik der letzten Jahren," *Frühmittelalterliche Studien, Jahrbuch des Instituts für Frühmittelalterforschung der Universität Münster* 1 (1967) 170-185; G. Moravcsik, "Les tâches actuelles de la byzantinologie," "L'Etat et les tâches de la byzantinologie," *Studia Byzantina* (Amsterdam 1967) 23-32, 33-50; S. Vryonis, "Problems in the History of Byzantine

to many earlier generalizations.<sup>2</sup> Some scepticism has arisen about the validity of existing comprehensive formulations of the broad sequence of institutional developments (with particular reference to the *themes*, or provincial military districts). There also has been a new insistence on the employment of very precise descriptive vocabulary in any discussion of all problems, not simply institutional ones. Scholars have come to realize that considerable difficulties and confusion have arisen simply from certain questionable modern formulations and terminology ("Caesaropapism," "race," "nationalism" "oriental," and "farmer-soldier," for example). Furthermore, much revisionist scholarship has tended to point out the deficiencies of previous generalizations on a number of problems without offering many substitute hypotheses. There has been a frequent assertion that, in the face of the extreme scarcity of primary sources, one should simply avoid many positive statements about certain topics. The emphasis has been on caution, on criticizing theories and not on proposing comprehensive new ones. These observations refer to some common traits of some recent scholarship in many different areas of Byzantine studies. By no means, however, has any unanimous consensus of scholars taken place, even among revisionists. In fact, the disagreements over the fundamental course of developments in the Middle Byzantine Period are probably greater than for any other era of Byzantine history. It would be wrong, moreover, to label any particular scholars as consistently "revisionist" or others as consistently defenders of "established" or "status quo" views, because such a broad sweep of Byzantine history is in question. Therefore a given specialist may support and reconfirm accepted theory in one area, while contributing criticism in another. It would be impossible to review all areas of contention in detail here, but one can attempt to note certain common traits and trends.

Much of the controversy has, in the simplest terms, involved the interrelationship of social, economic, political, religious, and military factors. One result of this increasingly institutionally-oriented research, with its stress on processes, on forces, on factors and on movements, has been a tendency (not universally accepted) to de-emphasize the significance or greatness of any

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Anatolia," *Ankara Üniv. D.T.C.Fakultesi Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi* I (1963) 113-132. On eschatology see: P.J.Alexander, "Medieval Apocalypses as Historical Sources," *American Historical Review* 73 (1968) 997-1018.

2. Important works on social and economic history : G. Ostrogorsky, *Pour l'histoire de la féodalité byzantine* (Brussels 1954); *Quelques problèmes de la paysannerie byzantine* (Brussels 1956); "La commune rurale byzantine," *Byzantion* 32 (1962) 139-166; N. Svoronos, *Recherches sur le cadastre byzantin ...* (Paris 1959).

individual emperor, or a tendency to note his inability to create, or at least to control or decisively stem, certain broad historical developments. Thus not only have doubts appeared (rightly, in my opinion) about the alleged importance of Heraclius as conscious creator of a complex of vital, interrelated military, political and social reforms, and in even greater degree about any enlightened reformism of Leo III or Constantine V, but also there has arisen a more modest appreciation of Basil I and even an emphasis on the inability of Basil II himself to alter permanently the course of internal institutional trends.<sup>3</sup>

One important area where there has been considerable discussion of the interrelation of constituent social, religious, economic and political factors has been the study of religious heresies. Different scholars, working separately on Monophysism, Iconoclasm and Paulicianism recently have concluded that each of these movements were primarily genuine religious manifestations. In the absence of sufficient positive sources, there has been a growing tendency to deny that "nationalism" was a fundamental cause and constituent of Monophysism, and also that it was in any primary way a movement of social and economic protest.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, recent studies have increasingly dissociated Iconoclasm and Paulicianism from any substratum of military, social and economic protest, although obviously they had some unquestionable social, economic and political consequences.<sup>5</sup> Yet one must qualify this generalization, for Professor Alexander has shown, convincingly, that certain specific social and economic groups did participate in the Iconoclastic revival (or Second Iconoclastic Period) of 813. I myself have concluded that not even in Anatolia, even among men of Armenian origin, can one show that the army units adhered persistently to an Iconoclastic position during the eighth century. The armies, even in Anatolia, often ready to switch loyalties in response to promises of material gain, were disunited on this question. In general, emperors strove to influence military elements to support their policies on icon worship rather than shape policies to satisfy pressures from the troops and their officers. In contrast to these religious movements, Profes-

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3. P. Lemerle, "Quelques remarques sur le règne d' Heraclius," *Studi medievali* 3. ser. 1 (1960) 347-361; "Esquisse pour une histoire agraire de Byzance," *Revue Historique* 219 (1958) 32-74. Also, on Basil II: R. J.H.Jenkins, *Byzantium: The Imperial Centuries* (London New York 1966) 331.

4. A.H.M. Jones, "Were Ancient Heresies National or Social Movements in Disguise?" *Journal of Theological Studies* N.S. 10 (1959) 280-298.

5. N. Garsoian, *The Paulician Heresy* (Hague 1967); M. Loos, "Le mouvement paulicien à Byzance," *Byzantinoslavica* 24 (1963) esp. 285-286; J. Gouillard, "L'Hérésie dans l'

sor Lemerle has recently argued that the religious schism of 1054 was basically political, not spiritual.<sup>6</sup> One expects further discussion of this.

Similarly, in the case of the revolt of Thomas the Slav, Professor Lemerle has concluded that its primary springs were Thomas' and his partisans' personal and political hostility to Michael II, and much less important were any aspects of general social and economic protest. Moreover, he denies that this civil war and the ensuing destruction had any long-term effects on the social system, in particular it did not contribute to the decline of small-holders and the growth of the large estates of the tenth century (which Bury had contended). Unfortunately, Lemerle does not elaborate. He also concludes that the sources are insufficient for any claim that Iconoclasm had any prominence in the revolt. His conclusions seem plausible to me, but more discussion of the effects of the Civil War would be desirable.<sup>7</sup>

The significance of the deme factions continues to be a controversial topic, yet here there is a clearer case for a relationship with economic, social and religious elements. It has become clear in recent years, moreover, that the factions continued to enjoy prominence for a much longer period than hitherto was assumed. With regard to Constantinople's demes, Jacques Jarry has denied the validity of certain earlier identifications of the Blues with Orthodoxy as opposed to the Monophysism of the Greens. Instead he sees both factions as Chalcedonian in Constantinople, and indeed identifies the Greens of Constantinople with an "extremist Chalcedonianism" of even Nestorianist tendencies and the Blues with a rather moderate Chalcedonianism. Thus he does admit certain religious ties within the factions in Egypt; he concludes that the Greens were primarily Gaianists (together with some pagans in the early period) while the Blues were largely Severianists. He sees both factions as Monophysite in Egypt, and furthermore he states that in the provinces the Blues drew most of their support from the merchants and shippers, and hence predominated in coastal cities, while the Greens were largely land-

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empire byzantin des origines au XII<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Travaux et Mémoires* (Paris 1966) I 308-310, 323-324. On Iconoclasm: C. Magno, "The Heir of Rome," *Dark Ages* ed. D. T. Rice (London 1965) 83-112; Ostrogorsky, "Les débuts de la querelle des images," *Mélanges Diehl* (Paris 1930) I 235-255; W. Kaegi, "The Byzantine Armies and Iconoclasm," *Byzantinoslavica* 27 (1966) 48-70.

6. P.J. Alexander, *Patriarch Nicephorus* (Oxford 1958) 114-123; Kaegi, "Byzantine Armies and Iconoclasm" esp. 68-70; P. Lemerle, "L'Orthodoxie byzantine et l'oecuménisme médiéval: les origines du schisme," *Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé*, Ser. 4, No. 2 (June 1965) 228-246.

7. P. Lemerle, "Thomas le Slave," *Travaux et Mémoires* I 296-297 for denial of too much social and economic import; pp. 262-263, 294 for denial of any decisive religious connections.

owners. This would conflict with previous assertions, by others, referring primarily to Constantinople, which identified the Blues with the landowners and the Greens with merchants and craftsmen. Furthermore, Jarry opposes too much identification of the Greens with "Orientals." It is likely that there will be further debate of this important question before any scholarly consensus occurs. Yet it is significant that Jarry, despite his disagreement with earlier research, still does find a certain religious, economic and social group cohesion within each faction.<sup>8</sup>

With respect to the interrelation of social, political and military factors, no subject has found more attention and controversy than that of the origins of the *themata* or *themes* and their relationship to the problem of the *stratitika ktemata* ("soldiers' properties"). The extremely limited number of sources has permitted a wide divergence of interpretations to develop, especially in the past fifteen years. A growing number (but by no means all) of scholars have come to deny that Emperor Heraclius established both the *themes* and the *stratitika ktemata* as consciously conceived, comprehensive, integrated military and social reform.<sup>9</sup> This revisionism bears some similarity to the other previously mentioned recent interpretations. There is no need to repeat here all of the analyses and conclusions on the *themes*, which can be found elsewhere. But the principal discussion concentrates on whether one can predicate the establishment of the *themes* and the *stratitika ktemata* at this early date in the absence of confirmatory contemporary sources and solely on the basis of indirect evidence from the early ninth-century chronicler Theophanes, certain opinions of the tenth-century Emperor Constantine VII and other even less decisive materials. Such criticisms have not altered the views of Professor Ostrogorsky, who is one of the foremost proponents of the Heraclian theory, as is Hélène Antoniadis-Bibicou in her recent book *Etudes d'histoire maritime de Byzance* (Paris, 1966). There is still great disagreement among those who regard the Heraclius as the creator of the *themes* as to the precise

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8. On prolonged survival of the demes: A. Maricq, "La durée du régime des partis populaires à Constantinople," *Bull. Acad. Royale de Belgique, Classe des Lettres* 25 (1949) 63-74; S. Vryonis, "Byzantine Δημοκρατία and the Guilds in the Eleventh Century," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 17 (1963) 289-314. On their social base: J. Jarry, "Hérésies et factions à Constantinople du V<sup>e</sup> au VII<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Syria* 37 (1960) 348-371, and "Hérésies et factions en Egypte byzantine," *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale* 62 (1964) 173-186.

9. Esp. Lemerle, "Esquisse," *Revue Historique* 219 (1958) 32-74; 254-284; 220 (1958) 43-94; J. Karayannopoulos, *Die Entstehung der byzantinischen Themenordnung* (Munich 1959). Some others listed in n. 1 of Kaegi, "Some Reconsiderations on the Themes," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinischen Gesellschaft* 16 (1967) 39-40.

time in his reign when he would have accomplished this change. On balance, the evidence appears unconvincing for any definite, general "theme system" origin under Heraclius. It is possible, of course, but not certain. Not only am I uncertain that Theophanes' reference to "the lands of the *themes*" during the reign of Heraclius is an actual reference to the existence of *themes* at that (because it may well be simply an interpolation of the ninth-century situation into the seventh), but more important, I find two other arguments particularly weak upon re-examination. Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus' opinion on the origin of the Armeniak Theme in itself does not appear to be a strong support for the *theme* origins under Heraclius. It is not merely that he admits that his is simply an "opinion" when he declares:

Δοκῶ δὲ εἰπεῖν ὅτι ἐπὶ Ἡρακλείου βασιλέως καὶ τῶν κάτω χρόνων τὴν τοιαύτην προσηγορίαν ἐκκληρονόμησεν<sup>10</sup>.

I am aware that disagreement has arisen as to the meaning of δοκῶ δὲ εἰπεῖν in this period. But we can establish, beyond philological proofs, that this was only an "opinion" because—and this has been neglected in discussion of this question—Constantine describes how he reached his conclusion. He says that neither Strabo, Menippos, Skylax, Pausanias nor the writers under Justinian—Procopius, Agathias and Menander—employed this term "Armeniak" and therefore it must be more recent:

οὔτε γὰρ Στράβων ὁ γεωγράφος τῆς τοιαύτης ὀνομασίας ἐμνήσθη, καίτοι Καππαδόκης ὢν τὸ γένος ἐξ Ἀμασειας τῆς πόλεως, οὔτε Μένιππος ὁ τοὺς σταδιασμοὺς τῆς ὅλης οἰκουμένης ἀπογραψάμενος, οὔτε μὴν Σκύλαξ ὁ Καρυανδηνός, οὔτε ἄλλος τις τῶν ἱστορίας γεγραφότων, οὔτε αὐτὸς Πausanίας ὁ Δαμασκηνός. Καὶ φαίνεται νεωτέρα ἢ τοιαύτη ὀνομασία· οὔτε γάρ Προκόπιος, οὔτε μὴν Ἀγαθίας, οὔτε Μένανδρος, οὔτε Ἡσύχιος ὁ ἰλλοῦστριος ἐμνημόνευσαν τοῦ τοιοῦτου ὀνόματος, οἱ τὰ χρονικὰ συντάξαντες ἐπὶ τῆς Ἰουστινιανοῦ βασιλείας.<sup>11</sup>

Constantine VII's conclusions in favor of Heraclius and his successors rest, therefore, not upon any specific positive source, but, as he honestly tells his readers, upon the absence of any reference in the known histories of the sixth century. His is simply an educated guess or conjecture, and no more.<sup>12</sup> The testimony of the ninth-century geographer and historian Al-Baladhuri, which I have discussed elsewhere, does indicate an earlier *terminus ante quem* for the existence of an Armeniak Theme than some scholars had supposed,

10. Theophanes, *Chronographia*, A. M. 6113 (ed. C. De Boor, Leipzig 1883) I 303; Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, *De thematibus* (ed. A. Pertusi, Vatican City 1952) 63.

11. Const. VII, *De thematibus*, 63-64.

12. Const. VII, *De thematibus*, 63.

that is, it must have existed already somewhere between 646 and 654. Al-Baladhuri does not mention other *theme* units.<sup>13</sup> If one may trust Al-Baladhuri, his evidence has an interesting correlation with that of Constantine VII. Constantine VII conjectures the foundation of the Armeniak Theme under Heraclius and his successors, while in speaking of the *themes* as a whole he attributes their foundation to the immediate successors of Heraclius:

οἱ ἀπ' ἐκείνου κρατήσαντες οὐκ ἔχοντες ὅποι καὶ ὅπως καταχρήσονται τῇ αὐτῶν ἐξουσίᾳ, εἰς μικρά τινα μέρη κατέτεμον τὴν ἑαυτῶν ἀρχὴν καὶ τὰ τῶν στρατιωτῶν τάγματα, μάλιστα ἑλληνίζοντες καὶ ῥωμαϊκὴν γλῶτταν ἀποβαλόντες.<sup>14</sup>

Perhaps the Armeniak Theme in some form was the first theme to be established, and subsequently, as one might infer from the testimony of Al-Baladhuri and Constantine VII, the other *themes* followed. Defining the exact date for the creation of the Armeniak Theme depends partly upon clarifying the unsure and hazardous chronology of the initial Arab expedition into Armenia. Hopefully further research will offer more definite conclusions. At any rate, the Armeniak Theme's existence *ca.* 650 or even earlier is more securely attested.

Those who contend that the *stratiotika ktemata* were connected with the thematic organization long before their specific mention in tenth-century sources have pointed to certain eighth- and ninth-century saints' lives which indicate that Byzantine *theme* soldiers were required to furnish their own horses and weapons.<sup>15</sup> Their reasoning is that these references must presuppose the existence of the *stratiotika ktemata*, because otherwise soldiers would have been unable to afford such considerable expenses. According to these scholars the logical point for this institution to have begun would have been in connection with Heraclius' supposed establishment of the *themes*. In my own opinion, this logic is theoretically possible, but not absolutely positive. More important, I believe that too much emphasis has been given to the supposed uniqueness of this requirement that the soldier supply his own mount and arms. Of course it is interesting and significant that such was the case in the eighth and ninth centuries. But the implication is that this was a radical departure from earlier practices. Overlooked, however, is the fact that the pre-Herac-

13. W.E. Kaegi, Jr., "Al-Balādhuri and the Armeniak Theme," *Byzantion* 38 (1968) 273-277.

14. Const. VII, *De thematibus*, 60.

15. H. Antoniadis-Bibicou, *Études d'histoire maritime de Byzance* 105-106, and G. Ostrogorsky, "L'exarchat de Ravenne et l'origine des thèmes byzantins," *VII Corso di cultura sull'arte ravennate e bizantina* (1960) 109-110. The useful review which J. Teall offers

lian Byzantine soldiers, under Emperor Maurice, also furnished their own horses and arms, as several sources indicate.<sup>16</sup> Such a practice was not, therefore, unique to the Middle Byzantine Period, but already was present as early as the reign of Maurice. Therefore, the practices attested for the eighth and ninth centuries could simply have been a continuation of conditions already established in the late sixth century and were not suddenly initiated by any particular seventh-century *Basileus*. The implications of this material from the reign of Maurice need further careful study. One cannot over-emphasize the need for a good critical edition and commentary of the so-called *Taktikon* of Maurice which has suffered neglect for many years.<sup>17</sup> I am not contending that Maurice himself created the *stratiotika ktemata*, but in fact the evidence for the soldiers' obligations to equip themselves under Maurice would have a correlation with Professor Charanis' interesting recent suggestion (in the light of known transfers of subject populations) that perhaps it was Maurice, not Heraclius, who settled the soldiers on lands in the provinces.<sup>18</sup> In sum, I am still unconvinced that Heraclius created a comprehensive military reform which consisted of the simultaneous, interlocking creation of the themes and the *stratiotika ktemata*. Although I believe that the *themes* originally were primarily military, and only later became political units (as do most other specialists), yet I cannot agree with Professor Karayannopoulos that the *themes* had not social significance, for even if the *themes* were basically units of military and political administration, they nevertheless would have had, as basic units of government, important social consequences.<sup>19</sup> It would seem that, without additional new source materials, the discussion of thematic origins has reached the point of diminishing returns. But at least the controversy has illuminated the areas of disagreement and has caused a general reconsideration of the solidity of previously-held assumptions on this

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in his paper "Byzantine Society: Some Comparisons" 3 May 1969, Dumbarton Oaks Symposium, does not really add any new material to this position.

16. See the neglected conclusions, drawn from different primary sources by: M.J. Higgins, "Note on the Emperor Maurice's Military Administration," *Analecta Bollandiana* 67 (1949) 445-446, and F. Aussaresses, *Armée byzantine au VI siècle* (Paris 1909) 11-12 and his comments on Mauricii... *Artis militaris* (ed. J. Scheffer, Uppsala 1664) VII, 17, 173; I, 2, 21.

17. *Arriani Tactica et Mauricii Artis militaris libri duodecim*, ed. J. Scheffer, Uppsala 1664; reprinted Osnabrück 1967. Cf. H. Mihaescu, "Prolégomènes à une édition critique des Τακτικά - στρατηγικά de Maurice-Urbicius," *Revue des Etudes Sud-est Européennes* 5 (1967) 401-417.

18. P. Charanis, "Some Remarks on the Changes in Byzantium in the Seventh Century," *Zbornik Radova, Viz. Inst. Srpska Akad. Nauka* 8. 1 (1963) 73-74, 76.

19. J. Karayannopoulos, *Entstehung* 99.



subject. Regrettably, not enough research has been given to the almost equally obscure problem of the disintegration of the *themes* in the late tenth and eleventh centuries.<sup>20</sup> In fact, there is still opportunity to improve our understanding of the nature, functioning and degree of efficiency of the *themes* at their height.<sup>21</sup>

Whether or not the *stratiotika ktemata* had any direct connection with the army, there is no doubt that military elements did not remain aloof from political questions. I have become increasingly convinced, however, that one must appreciate the general absence of military unanimity on political problems. The army very rarely, even in Anatolia, acted in a monolithic fashion. Individual *theme* and tagmatic (that is, imperial guard) units, either out of conviction or in response to material promises and persuasion, took very different positions in any particular political controversy, whether one is speaking of Iconoclasm or the question of the imperial succession. One of the few generalizations which one can make is that there is a rather consistent tendency of the Anatolic and Armeniak Themes—the two largest—to take opposite sides in almost every civil war of the eighth and early ninth centuries. The other Asian *themes* tended to polarize around these two. Perhaps the explanation is simply unit rivalry, similar to that of the Roman legions in earlier centuries, although expectation of material gains would have played a part. Army units had no permanent political leanings and often were willing, for gain, to shift their support to another individual or faction. In fact, the political disunity of the army helped to limit military influence, and emperors and their advisors exploited these differences to further their own interests. One must distinguish carefully between the activities of individual *themes* and tagmatic units. The tagmatic units deserve special analysis. The obscure and insufficiently studied problem of tensions between European and Asian units deserves a separate treatment. There are indications that in the second half of the obscure seventh century an unwritten understanding developed between the military commanders and the emperor that certain major policy decisions would be taken only after previously securing the adhesion of the individual army commanders. Hence it was necessary for Constans II to secure the army's approval before signing a peace treaty with Muawiya. Simi-

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20. One of the few works is H. Glykatzi-Ahrweiler, "Recherches sur l'administration de l'empire byzantin aux IX-XI siècles," *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 84 (1960-1961) 46-64. Suggestive but out of date is E. Stein, "Untersuchungen zur spätbyzantinischen Verfassungs- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte," *Mitteilungen zur osmanischen Geschichte* 2, fasc. 4 (1925) 19-29.

21. Note the remarks of Kaegi, "Some Reconsiderations" esp. 41-53.

larly, Justinian II found it expedient to demand the signatures of each of the important military commanders to a document, addressed to the pope, which confirmed the decisions of the Sixth Ecumenical Council. Again and again in subsequent years, there frequently were difficulties over the need to hold prior consultations with each of the major commanders before the sovereign embarked on some particular course. Thus Irene initially foundered when she failed to obtain unanimous army consent for her claims of rank *vis-à-vis* her son Constantine VI, and thus Nicephorus Phocas, as Domestic of the Schools had insisted upon the senate's prior consultation with him before making important decisions. Similarly, the principal issue which at least ostensibly drove many military commanders to join in the revolt of Bardas Phocas against Basil II was the emperor's failure to consult with them before he resolved to invade Bulgaria, for they feared that if he were not checked immediately, he would never again consult with the military commanders before deciding upon such major policies. Their resentment partly involved injured pride, not a negligible factor in Byzantium during the Middle Period.<sup>22</sup>

Despite the military's desire for a role in decision-making, disunity on political questions remained the norm. Not even in the tenth and eleventh centuries can one speak too confidently of the unity of the army, or its leadership, even in Anatolia. Divisions continued to riddle it, as in previous centuries. In my own opinion, there has been too much emphasis upon the supposed unity of the military aristocracy in this period. The growing power and ambitions of the Domestics of the Schools, whose emergence coincides with the waning influence of individual *theme* commanders, have been insufficiently studied.<sup>23</sup> The enormous authority concentrated in this office encouraged many of its tenth-century holders, beginning with Leo Phocas, to attempt to usurp the imperial throne itself. This alone was a major cause of civil strife. It was the dismissal of Bardas Skleros and Bardas Phocas from this powerful and coveted post which was the immediate cause of their respective rebellions early in the reign of Basil II. Furthermore, it should be remembered that the soldiers and prominent families of Anatolia did not give unanimous support to the first revolt of Bardas Phocas or that of Bardas Skleros, and so one cannot speak of class solidarity of the military aristocracy in these

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22. See Kaegi, "Byzantine Armies and Iconoclasm" esp. 53-70; on the emperor's need to consult with the army: Kaegi, "Military Intervention in Byzantine Politics" unpub. paper delivered at the University of Wisconsin, 6 March 1968.

23. There is only a general essay on the institution by R. Guiland, "Etudes sur l'histoire administrative de Byzance: le Domestique des Scholes," *Revue des Etudes Byzantines* 8 (1951) 6-63.

two particular revolts. In fact, Bardas Skleros heavily taxed landowners to finance his first revolt and many of them refused to pay his arbitrary assessments and found themselves under arrest. Likewise, Bardas Phocas, who suppressed this revolt of Skleros, employed Georgian mercenaries who harshly treated the Asian landowners, many of whom seem to have been caught, unwillingly, in the middle of this civil war. The broad support which the second revolt of Bardas Phocas received in Asia seems to have been due not simply to the economic considerations (such as oppositions to Basil's attempt to check the growth of large estates), but also, as some sources specifically state, to Basil's failure to consult with other high army officials before undertaking his unsuccessful invasion of Bulgaria.

Crucial to any understanding of the relative importance of military, political and social problems is the lengthy reign of Basil II. The very length of his reign makes significant, and yet there has been no major work on him since Schlumberger wrote his very competent narrative. True, the sources are limited and yet it would seem to be time for a more modern reappraisal. Specifically, I believe that one must make a more modest appreciation of the strength of the state under Basil II (despite his very significant foreign victories). The amount of control which he succeeded in establishing over the military aristocracy has been exaggerated. If one understands this, the events of the eleventh century are no longer so surprising. The terms of the final peace between Basil II and Bardas Skleros, at the end of his second revolt, were not one-sided. In fact, the rebels were confirmed in possession of their lands, including those which Skleros had assigned to them, and they retained any titles or positions to which he had appointed them, even apparently at the expense of Basil's own supporters: "The general and others who had revolted with him were to retain their present ranks, and to enjoy as long as they lived whatever privileges he had conferred upon them; they would be deprived neither of property formerly in their possession, nor of any other advantages which had fallen to their lot."<sup>24</sup> These terms, and the agreement that Bardas Skleros would enjoy precedence only behind that of Basil, indicated a bitter compromise for the emperor. In no way had he at this time broken the power of the Asian aristocracy. Furthermore, I am skeptical of the authenticity of the alleged advice which Skleros—according to the historian Michael Psellus—gave to Basil II on reducing the power of the generals and the powerful. Psellus had not been present at that meeting. Psellus claims that

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24. Michael Psellus, *Chronographie* 1. 26 (ed. Tr. E. Renauld, Paris 1926, I. 16); Sewter tr. (Penguin ed. 1966) 42.

Skleros counselled: "Cut down the governors who become overproud. Let no generals on campaign have too many resources. Exhaust them with unjust exactions, to keep them busied with their own affairs." But such words do not conform at all with the peace terms which Psellus itemized. Are these words Skleros' own, or instead an apochryphal tradition, or most probably, a speech which Psellus—who was not present—composed, after the manner of his classical historical models? The words seem instead an accurate summary of the anti-military policies of Psellus and his fellow eleventh century civil bureaucrats. It would have been useful for them to clothe their policies in the alleged historical precedents of the previous century, especially if they could relate them to the great Basil II. One cannot be certain about this passage, of course, but greater caution should be exercised in accepting Psellus at face value than has been the case.<sup>25</sup>

Another indication of the fragility of Basil's control was the obscure and little-studied revolt of the generals Nicephorus Phocas and Nicephorus Xiphias at virtually the end of Basil's reign, in 1022, when the emperor's power should have been at its maximum. The rebellion found its origins in the resentment of these commanders at Basil for not making them leaders of his expedition into Iberia. Once again, it was the resentment of military commanders of having been bypassed—as they had been in the revolt of the elder Nicephorus Phocas when Basil had neglected to consult with his commanders before invading Bulgaria. Thus even by 1022 Basil had not so firmly consolidated his power. He had not cowed the aristocracy. The revolt failed, it is true, but primarily because the rebels began to quarrel among themselves. Given the restiveness of some of the army leadership in Anatolia at this relatively late date, it is not surprising to find military rebelliousness and troubles in the decades which followed Basil's death. Again, part of this military unrest derived not so much from economic causes, but from injured honor, pride and the desire to be excluded no longer from participation in significant military expeditions. In sum, while not wishing to deny that there were significant economic factors, I believe that the problem of restive military commanders in this period (to the death of Basil II) involved non-economic elements, such as personal pride and ambitions to hold certain posts, to a greater degree than hitherto appreciated. I would favor accepting the primary sources more at face value on this subject.

The problems of the conflict in the eleventh century between the so-called "military party" ((*to stratiotikon*)) and the "civil party" (*to politikon*) also

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25. Michael Psellus, *Chronographie*, I. 28 (17 Renault); Sewter trans. 43.

deserves more study.<sup>26</sup> The use of the modern term "party" in translating the Greek of Michael Psellus may introduce misleading assumptions from our own times, and it should be remembered that Psellus is the only source known to me who employs this terminology.<sup>27</sup> Certainly there was considerable hostility between military officers and some civil bureaucrats, but it seems to me that the antagonism often was especially pronounced between the eunuchs and the military commanders. Such conflict had surfaced periodically in earlier Byzantine history, and it may be that the antagonisms so apparent in the eleventh century were a continuation of the hostilities that were so clear in difficult relationships between the eunuch Joseph Bringas and Nicephorus Phocas and between the eunuch Basil and John Tzimiskes, respectively. Despite unquestioned bureaucratic hostility and fund slashes, the army, even in Asia, rarely if ever constituted a monolithic political bloc during the eleventh century. The clearest example of the cohesion of the military, even in the presentation of Psellus, is supposed to be the revolt of Isaac Comnenus against Emperor Michael VI (1057). Yet the contemporary historian Michael Attaleiates, who was particularly well informed about military affairs, emphasized the disunity of the army, even in Asia, during this civil conflict: "many of the soldiers of the east (Asia) passed over to the side of the emperor so that one—Comnenus—had only easterners for him—while his adversary had both those who came to him from the east and the whole army of the west."<sup>28</sup> Thus this civil war did not involve any simple confrontation of army against Anatolian troops. (More study of regional army rivalries is necessary, however.) The alignments were more complex, as in previous civil wars. Greater care is required in classifying individuals and emperors as members of the "civil" or "military" party. Thus while Professor Hussey terms Nicephorus Botaneiates a member of the military party, the historian Nicephorus Bryennius criticized Boteneiates for neglecting the army when making appointments and promotions. Alexius Comnenus is normally considered a representative of the military, yet he was an important advisor to and supporter of the "civil party" emperor Michael VII. It would be desirable, moreover, to try to ascertain any possible linkage between supposed party groupings in the eleventh century and those which Cognasso saw operative late in the twelfth century.<sup>29</sup> There seem to have been so many divisions among the large land-

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26. See esp. S. Vryonis, "Byzantium: the Social Basis of Decline in the Eleventh Century," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 2 (1959) esp. 161-165.

27. Michael Psellus, *Chronographie* VII. 6 (Renauld ed.) II 86.

28. Michael Attaleiates, *Historia* ed. I. Bekker (Bonn 1853) 54.

29. J. Hussey, *Cambridge Medieval History* 2nd ed. IV pt. 1 pp. 211-212, identifies N.

owning military aristocracy that it would seem worthwhile to reconsider our categorization and identification of individuals and groups in certain factions until we understand better just how these alignments were constituted and most important one should be careful about employing Psellus' terminology too freely without study of whether it is truly appropriate for other decades of the eleventh century. Thus despite hostility to the eunuchs and some other bureaucrats, despite common economic interests, disunity of the military aristocracy—divided by family rivalries, personal ambitions and perhaps other causes not so apparent—rather than class solidarity seems to be frequently characteristic of military officers and their troops in the eleventh century. This political disunity of the army was not a new phenomenon, for it often had occurred in previous centuries, and had in fact prevented the army from achieving any permanent hold over the imperial throne and decision-making.

One of the most important questions in Middle Byzantine History is the cause of Byzantine collapse in the eleventh century. Many of the internal problems which plagued her, such as civil-military tensions, scarcity of funds, poorly trained and inadequate numbers of troops, ethnic tensions, heavy reliance upon foreign mercenaries, treachery of generals on the battlefield because of personal ambitions and jealousies, and civil wars, had existed from time to time, in varying degrees, in earlier centuries. But seldom or perhaps even never before had all these difficulties been present in such intensity, together with the additional problem of lengthy lines of communications to the remote and troubled frontiers. In themselves these troubles did not necessarily or inevitably determine a collapse of the Byzantine government, any more than the internal problems of the Western Roman Empire at the end of the fourth century, as E. Demougeot and A. Piganiol have observed, made inevitable the collapse of the Roman Empire in Western Europe.<sup>30</sup> The critical point was the conjunction of these numerous and serious internal strains with intense external military pressures. The positive role of Turkish military abilities in themselves deserves more appreciation. Thus the synchronization of internal and external crises itself was a significant element. One would not wish to press analogies too closely, but the massive Byzantine territorial

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Botaneiates as a member of the Asia military party, yet on p. 205 she had already claimed that *only* Isaac Comnenus and Romanus Diogenes had been emperors from the military party between 1056 and 1081. Cf. Nicephorus Bryennius, *Commentarii*, 4. 1 ed. Meineke (Bonn 1836) 129. Also see: F. Cognasso, *Partiti politiche e lotte dinastiche in Bizanzio alla morte di Manuele Comneno* (Turin 1912).

30. A. Piganiol, *L'Empire chrétien* (Paris 1947) 411-422 and E. Demougeot, *De l'unité à la division de l'empire romain* (Paris 1951) 561-570.

losses of the seventh century (Syria, Egypt, North Africa) also had occurred when the Arab invaders benefited from similar internal difficulties as the desertion of foreign mercenaries (on the Palestinian frontier) in the face of hostility and parsimony on the part of a eunuch, and rebellion of generals such as Baanes during the defense of Syria and Palestine, both of which contributed to their loss; the contest for the succession to Heraclius, including the rebellion of General Valentinus, which helped to prevent the government from making an effective defense of Egypt and from launching a counter-offensive to recover Syria; the revolts of general *exarch* Theodore Gregory and the revolt of the Cibyrrhaiot Theme under Apsimar which greatly contributed to the loss of Africa.<sup>31</sup> One could cite examples from other periods, such as the treachery of Leontius, which was responsible for a Bulgarian victory in the Battle of Versinicia, and the occasional willingness of Byzantine military commanders to place their own ambitions above the welfare of the state. The continuation of civil strife in the face of great external danger was not unique to the eleventh century, for the empire previously had suffered grave consequences from such conduct. Perhaps a study of the role of personal ambitions, pride, honor, other values and even the psychology of various military commanders, officials, and other members of the elite—although I am not certain whether there are adequate sources—might help to explain at least partially the failure, on several occasions, to cease domestic strife in the face of grave external dangers.

Military history has suffered neglect in recent years in many historical fields, not merely Byzantine studies. The history of the Arab military conquest of Syria and Palestine and the failure of Byzantine resistance has never received adequate treatment (this applies to Cyrenaica and North Africa as well). There has been a tendency to study the problem of the *themes* with more regard for its social and economic aspects, which indeed are interesting, important, and controversial, but without giving adequate attention to the *themes* as fighting units on the battlefield. More attention also should be given not simply to organizational and institutional aspects of the army but to its actual battlefield conduct. Fortunately, a number of relatively neglected Byzantine manuals of military tactics exist and offer valuable data on Byzantine attitudes towards war, tactical and strategical theory, and plan of organization. Byzantium clearly enjoyed considerable benefits from her possession and

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31. Cf. J. B. Bury, *A History of the Later Roman Empire* 1st. ed. (London 1889) II 282-288; A. Pernice, *L'Imperatore Eraclio* (Florence 1905) 292-301; Theophanes, *Chronographia*, A. M. 6123, 6126, 6133, 6136, 6138-39 (335-6, 338, 341-2, 343, De Boor). Revolt of Apsimar: A.M. 6196 (370-1 De Boor).

preservation of ancient military theory, skills and organization, yet a more precise evaluation of the positive and negative effects of the ancient military heritage is desirable. The Byzantines realized, as many of their *tactica* (books of tactics) emphasize, that more important than sheer weight of numbers were well-trained and drilled soldiers, appropriate choice of tactics and timing. The *tactica* therefore contain a pragmatic outlook, reflecting a certain confidence (unusual in the Medieval Period) that victory and defeat are not merely the consequences of divine favor or anger, but careful, conscious human decisions, preparation, organization and conduct in battle. Obviously such emperors as Heraclius, Maurice, Leo VI and Nicephorus Phocas gave great importance to the *tactica*. Heraclius studied them when attempting to reform his armies to fight the Persians, and such emperors as Maurice, Leo VI and Nicephorus Phocas even authorized or commissioned them. A greater appreciation should be reached of the actual decisiveness of battles, Byzantine fighting abilities and military decisions for the course of Byzantine history. Of course I do not mean a return to old fashioned "trumpets and drums" history of the previous century.<sup>32</sup>

There also has been insufficient study of the actual types of weapons and equipment which the Byzantines used at various points in the Middle Byzantine Period. The *tactica* also offer much information on Byzantine weapons and occasionally other sources supply additional data, but art historical sources, such as illuminated manuscripts, may offer additional information as Ada Hoffmeyer has shown in a recent study of a manuscript of Skylitzes. Yet there are very difficult problems in employing this material, because of the traditionalism and ideal representations of various art styles and prototypes, which may in fact not represent the actual state of the army in the artist's time.<sup>33</sup> Unfortunately at present extremely few authentic specimens of Byzantine weapons and armor and equipment have been identified even though examples of iron weapons survive from contemporary or even earlier periods of Anglo-Saxon, Roman, Merovingian, Bulgarian and Islamic history. Hopefully, some day, more Byzantine remains will be discovered, studied and

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32. But on the Arab penetration into Palestine see the convincing paper by P. Mayer-son, "The First Muslim Attacks on Southern Palestine (A.D. 633-634)," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 95 (1964) 155-199. Unfortunately, A. Dain died before he could complete a thorough study of the *tactica*; only an abbreviated work could be published: "Les stratèges byzantins," *Travaux et Mémoires* (Paris 1967) II 317-392. Cf. C. E. Brand, *Roman Military Law* (Austin 1968).

33. Ada B. Hoffmeyer, "Military Equipment in the Byzantine Manuscript of Skylitzes," *Gladius* 5 (1966).



displayed in museums. In sum, military aspects of Middle Byzantine history deserve more study in their own right, and not simply with reference to financial, social or political problems.<sup>34</sup>

Recent research of Ahrweiler, Antoniadis-Bibicou and Alexandris has added considerably to our knowledge of another aspect of Byzantine military activity, the fleet. The most important work has been of course the excellent book by Hélène Ahrweiler, *Byzance et la Mer*, but Antoniadis-Bibicou, *Etudes d'histoire maritime de Byzance*, and the study by Alexandris, 'Η θαλασσία δύναμις εἰς τὴν ἱστορίαν τῆς βυζαντινῆς αὐτοκρατορίας (Athens 1957), also have made contributions. Additional problems, however, remain, it seems to me. But more research on the neglected topic of Byzantine marine activity in the Black Sea (and in the Western Mediterranean during the seventh and eighth centuries) would be desirable. Perhaps the new field of underwater archaeology will provide us with the remains of actual Byzantine ships, in addition to the seventh-century vessel found off the southwest coast of Anatolia. Such discoveries can offer enlightenment not only on ship architecture, but cargoes, trade routes, weapons (especially if a warship were discovered) and other topics. Thus far there has been insufficient coordination of our growing knowledge of the fleet with the problem of Byzantine coastal defense fortifications, and naval bases, even though some of these sites and structures have been identified and excavated, especially in the region of the old Cibyrrhaiot Theme on the southern coast of Anatolia.<sup>35</sup>

Further study of the general geography of the empire is imperative. This should include a greater assessment of the role of physical geography in assisting and hindering Byzantine defenses, and in encouraging regional rebellions and hostilities between different areas of the empire. In addition to Philippon's *Byzantinische Reich als geographische Erscheinung*, there would seem to be room for detailed socio-geographic analyses, similar to the excellent works of C. Courtois, *Les Vandales et l'Afrique* and F. Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*. A remark of the late and eminent Orientalist and Hellenistic archaeologist Carl Kraeling may deserve investigation. He suggested that Byzantinists might gain many insights into such problems as rural and urban settlement and fortification

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34. Prof. Kenan Erim has found a Byzantine sword in the course of recent excavations at Aphrodisias. Almost no weapons are in museums (I can think of only a few objects in Sofia and a few very questionable objects in the Istanbul Archaeological Museum).

35. Cf. George F. Bass, "Underwater Excavations at Yassi Ada: A Byzantine Shipwreck," *Archäologischer Anzeiger. Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts*, (1962) 537-564.

in Anatolia by examining them not merely with reference to Roman or Hellenistic precedents, but also in terms of the patterns of settlement and change in the pre-Hellenistic centuries or even millennia. Thus one might achieve a broader understanding of the significance and place of Byzantine rule and settlement in the much longer scope of the history and fluctuations of pre-industrial Anatolia. His suggestion is especially interesting since almost all Byzantine sites in Anatolia also had undergone earlier habitation. Obviously any such study would require collaboration with various other Orientalists and specialists on the ancient Near East. Likewise, there were many hitherto neglected logistical problems associated with imperial expansion in the Balkans and Asia during the tenth and eleventh centuries. There should be more research on Byzantine road systems, because continuing archaeological work in many areas of Anatolia, for example, is revising our knowledge of routes; yet no synthesis of this new material exists. In fact, given the vast distances and routes which are even difficult to traverse today, together with the large number of fortified positions, it is remarkable that the imperial government did not break down into small feudal units, as in Western Europe. The more one travels within the former regions of the empire, the more one appreciates the extraordinary amount of centralization which the emperors continued to maintain for so many centuries, despite various civil wars and rebellions. One obvious testimony to the power of this centralization was the absence of regional separatist rebellions, for until the end of the eleventh century, rebel generals almost always attempted to achieve control over the entire empire. This is, of course, not only a testimony to the economic advantages of unity to the need to stay united in the face of serious external threats, but also to the unifying power of Byzantine civilization.

The last fifteen years have witnessed particularly marked advances in our knowledge of one important aspect of Middle Byzantine historical geography, namely the size, prosperity and importance of its various cities. Professors Teall and Jacoby also have provided information on the population statistics of the capital city of Constantinople.<sup>36</sup> Due to the relative scarcity and vagueness of the sources on the provincial cities, some conflicting conclusions have been expressed. Fortunately numismatic and hagiographic sources are adding some data. Professor Kazhdan does not appear to have proven his

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36. J. Teall, "Grain Supply on the Byzantine Empire," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* (henceforth *DOP*) 13 (1959) 134-5; D. Jacoby, "La population de Constantinople à l'époque byzantine," *Byzantion* 31 (1960) 81-109; P. Charanis, "Observations on the Demography of the Byzantine Empire," *Proceedings of the XIIIth International Congress of Byzantine Studies* (Oxford 1967) 445-463.

argument for a sharp decline of urban life in the seventh and eighth centuries; Professors Ostrogorsky and Vryonis have made a substantial case for the continuation of a money economy and for the survival of urban life.<sup>37</sup> Archaeological investigation, over a period of years, if coupled with study of literary sources, is critical to clarification of these problems. Excavations should be continued at old sites and not only commenced at hitherto unexcavated Romano-Byzantine sites (such as the very promising site of Anazarbos in Cilicia), but also at sites which are almost exclusively Byzantine, such as Amorion or the "Bin Bir Kilise."<sup>38</sup>

Insufficient space remains to survey properly two other very important areas of Byzantine studies: ecclesiastical and intellectual history. Many opportunities remain in both these fields. A fundamental need is for a detailed study of the Patriarchate of Constantinople (Every's work is only a survey) and a comprehensive work on provincial bishops and an evaluation of the role of the church at the village level. The study of ecclesiastical philanthropy by Constantelos is very helpful. Monastic institutions, too, deserve more attention; the recent essay by Savramis, however, is superficial.<sup>39</sup> Greek Patristics offers research opportunities too numerous to list here, as does Byzantine canon law.

Intellectual history problems are now receiving some attention. This includes, of course, the extremely important edition, translation and study of various literary texts. There also has been considerable analysis of Byzantine imperial ideology and world views (one thinks of recent works by Professors Hunger, Dvornik, Alexander, Baynes, Karlsson and Jenkins).<sup>40</sup> Yet no satis-

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37. A. Kazhdan, *Derevnia i gorod v Vizantii, IX-X vv* (Moscow 1960); G. Ostrogorsky, "Byzantine Cities in the Early Middle Ages," *DOP* 13 (1959) 45-66; S. Vryonis, "An Attic Hoard of Byzantine Coins..." *Zbornik Radova, Viz. Inst. Srpska Akad. Nauka* 8. (1963) 291-300; E. Kirsten, "Die Byzantinische Stadt," *Berichte, XI. Internationalen Byzantinisten-Kongress* (Munich 1958) 1-48.; very fine is the study by Dorothy Zani de Ferranti Abrahamse, *Hagiographic Sources for Byzantine Cities, 500-900 A.D.* Unpub. Diss. Univ. Michigan 1967; M. Siuziumov, "Vizantiiskii gorod (seredina VII - seredina IX v)" *Vizantiiskii Vremennik* 27 (1967) 38-70.

38. W.M. Ramsay and G.I. Bell, *The Thousand and One Churches* (London 1909); M. Gough, "Anazarbus," *Anatolian Studies* 2 (1952) 85-150.

39. D. Savramis, *Zur Soziologie des byzantinischen Mönchtums* (Leiden-Köln 1962); P. Charanis, "The Monks as an Element in Byzantine Society," paper delivered on 2 May 1969 at the Dumbarton Oaks Symposium. D.J. Constantelos, *Byzantine Philanthropy and Social Welfare* (New Brunswick, N.J. 1968).

40. H. Hunger, *Prooimion* (Vienna 1964); F. Dvornik, *Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy* (Washington 1966) I-II; P.J. Alexander, "The Strength of Empire and Capital as Seen Through Byzantine Eyes," *Speculum* 37 (1962) 337-357; N.H. Baynes, *By-*

factory general history of Byzantine thought exists. A very promising more specialized topic is the relatively neglected field of Byzantine historical thought. Some specialized critiques have appeared on such authors as Procopius and Theodore Metochites, but not upon the diverse and common historical assumptions and attitudes of groups of relevant Middle Byzantine chroniclers and historians. Not only *Quellenforschungen* and articles on individual historians are necessary, but also studies of common trends of and changes of thought. The Byzantine chronicle form itself deserves more study. In addition, it would be worthwhile to determine the degree of influence which Byzantine historical works had on the formation and preservation of specific Byzantine political attitudes. The intended readership or audience for these histories and chronicles deserves more examination; did they include emperor (as in Early Byzantine period) and high imperial officials? Also important is further investigation into the Byzantine historical perception of its Roman past, such as the Republic and its fall, the Principate, the proper powers of the senate and the army in Roman history, together with an estimate of the effect of these perceptions upon the contemporary Byzantine situation. Franz Dölger made an early contribution to this subject, but additional research is desirable. Important advances have occurred recently in our knowledge of Roman and Western Medieval historical thought and it would seem opportune to examine the topic in Byzantium.<sup>41</sup>

The related problems of alleged ethnocentrism and isolationism in the Byzantine world view warrant more study. In fact, recent research indicates that considerable contact, to a hitherto unexpected degree, took place between Byzantium and East Central Europe and the lands of the Caliphate. Yet with the exception of the *De administrando imperio* of Constantine VII, there seems to be little literary testimony to Byzantine curiosity about the outside world (such as travellers' reports).<sup>42</sup>

*zantine Studies and Other Essays* (London 1955, r.p. 1960); G. Karlsson, *Idéologie et cérémonial dans l'épistolographie byzantine* (Studia Graeca Upsaliensia 3) (Uppsala 1962); R. Jenkins, *Byzantium and Byzantinism* (Cincinnati 1963); E. von Ivánka, *Rhomäerreich und Gotenvolk. Das Glaubens-, Staats- und Volksbewusstsein der Byzantiner und seine Auswirkung auf die ostkirchlich-osteuropäische Geisteshaltung* (Freiburg 1968).

41. A partial list of Byzantine texts now being edited: *Bulletin d'Information et de Coordination, Association Internationale des Etudes Byzantines* 2 (1965) 14-22. Some recent studies of Western Medieval historiography include: W. J. Brandt, *The Shape of Medieval History: Studies in Modes of Perception* (New Haven 1966) and A. D. van den Brincken, *Studien über lateinischen Weltchronik...* (Dusseldorf 1957). On Byzantium and Rome: F. Dölger, "Rom in der Gedankenwelt der Byzantiner," *Byzanz und die europäische Staatenwelt* (Ettal 1953) 70-115.

42. Cf. H. A. R. Gibb, "Arab-Byzantine Relations under the Umayyad Caliphate," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 12 (1958) 219-233.

Finally, the relationship between Byzantine and classical culture, including the problem of classical survivals, requires much more research. The last few years have witnessed a revisionist tendency—all too extreme in my own opinion—to question or even to reject the thesis that Byzantium played a decisive role in preserving at least some of the classical world, and that at least some Byzantines appreciated classical styles and culture. It is true that much of the Byzantine understanding of classical philosophy and art was shaped by the writers and artists of the fourth century A.D. (that is, *Spätantike*), not so directly by writers of the “Golden Age” of the fifth century B.C., but as I see it, classical influences often were very significant. What does seem important is the absence of very much direct knowledge of Latin literature and Latin Patristics, which did increasingly separate Byzantium from much of its Roman heritage and of course from the medieval west. Whatever basis there may be for a de-emphasis upon classical elements in Byzantium, however, there is no justification for a revival of the antiquated Fallmerayer thesis concerning the alleged disappearance of true Greeks from the Greek mainland. It is regrettable and incorrect to use this disproven thesis in the discussion of classical survivals during the Middle Byzantine Period.<sup>43</sup>

Having noted so many areas of change in interpretation, as well as those views which have survived recent controversies intact, in this admittedly uneven and subjective survey, one may conclude by venturing a brief examination of our periodization. Is the term “Middle Byzantine Period” justified, and, if so, should its chronological limits still be 610-1071 or 610-1025, especially since many scholars now deny that the *themes* and the *stratitika ktemata* commenced under Heraclius? It seems to me that this periodization primarily exists for the convenience of scholar and classroom teachers. Even without assigning the above institutional reforms to Heraclius, there seem to have been sufficient major developments during his reign and those of his immediate successors (Arab Conquest, Hellenization of official language, loss of most of the Balkans) to regard it as a watershed and suitable beginning date. Likewise imperial decline, end of the Macedonian dynasty, Seljuk and Norman conquests do seem to point to a terminal date somewhere in the eleventh century. I would not rigidly insist upon these dates, but they do seem to have

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43. Unpersuasive are: R.J. H. Jenkins, *Byzantium and Byzantinism* pp.21 ff., and C.Mango, “Byzantinism and Romantic Hellenism,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 28 (1965) esp.29-33. In turn, somewhat exaggerated is the response of A. Vacalopoulos, “Byzantinism and Hellenism,” *Balkan Studies* 9 (1968) 101-126. On Byzantium and her classical heritage, see the especially fine and probing articles of Jenkins, Mango and Jones, among others, in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 17 (1963) which is devoted to this topic.

a certain utility.<sup>44</sup> Other than the end of the Iconoclastic Crisis or the commencement of the Macedonian dynasty, there seem to be no particularly satisfactory dates for further chronological subdivision between the seventh and the eleventh centuries, and even 867 no longer seems so significant if one accepts the recent reevaluations of the reign of Michael III (such as Grégoire, "Études sur le neuvième siècle," *Byzantion* 8 (1933) 515-550 and "The Amorians and Macedonians," *Cambridge Medieval History*. 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 1966) IV Pt. 1, 105-115).

The term "Middle Byzantine Period" may leave something to be desired, but as in the case of the chronological limits, I know of no satisfactory alternative and at present see no compelling reason to abandon it.

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44. Still satisfactory, on the whole, to me is the analysis by G. Ostrogorsky, "Die Perioden der byzantinischen Geschichte," *Historische Zeitschrift* 163 (1941) 229-254. Note also the earlier useful definition and use of the term by E. Stein, "Untersuchungen zur spät-byzantinischen Verfassungs- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte" 2-4.