

THE NORTHERN BOUNDARIES OF HELLENISM IN THE 7th AND 8th CENTURIES

In my paper on the northern ethnological boundaries of Hellenism¹, wherein I attempted to establish the line of their extension in the north in the 7th and 8th centuries on the basis of the existing historical evidence, I expressed the view that the cities Serdica, Scupi, Stobi and Castoria were then still in Greek hands. The validity of this statement was recently questioned by G. Ostrogorsky in his paper "Byzantine Cities in Early Middle Ages"² in which he maintains that only Stobi is represented at the Oecumenical Councils of 680 and 692 and as far as the three other cities are concerned, remarks the following.

1. In the case of Serdica I do not offer any evidence in support of my statement.

2. As for Scupi I refer to the signature of John, Bishop of Nova Justinianopolis in the acts of 692, but do not indicate the grounds for identifying Scupi, the modern Skoplje with this town. He further adds that the problem of Nova Justinianopolis deserves more serious study. "It is remarkable", he says, "that the bishop of this town should have signed the acts of 692 immediately after the patriarchs and before the representatives of all the most ancient and powerful metropolitan sees (Mansi, XI, 989 A). This unusual distinction which was not to be repeated at any other council, suggests that the town in question enjoyed the special favor of Justinian II. In any event, it was not the Bithynian Nova Justinianopolis or Nova Justiniana, founded by Justinian I (see below p. 57, n. 43). The bishop of the latter town also signed the acts of 692, together with the other bishops from Bithynia, and is very characteristically styled «ἐπίσκοπος πόλεως νέας Ἰουστινιανῆς δευτέρας τῶν Βιθυνῶν ἐπαρχίας» (Mansi XI, p. 996 D)".

1. The paper which was read in Thessalonike in 1945, was first published in Greek in 1946, and in English translation in 1955, under the title "The Northern Ethnological Boundaries of Hellenism".

2. Dumbarton Oaks Papers, 13 (1959), p. 45 - 66. See p. 55, n. 34.

3. In the case of Castoria he remarks the following: "To these two places he (Kyriakides) also adds Castoria "which we know was Greek and used during Irene's reign as a place of exile for conspirators". This rests on the statement of Cedrenus, II, 24, 10, that Irene, prompted by the counsels of the logothete Stauracius, exiled the Patrician Theodore Camulianus, together with a number of other dignitaries, ἐν Καϊστορίᾳ (i.e. *in quaestorio*), which Kyriakides simply altered to «ἐν Καστορίᾳ». Theophanes refers to the same Camulianus more clearly and in greater detail (whereas Cedrenus unsuccessfully abbreviates their common source) and from his narrative it is clear that Camulianus was not sent to Castoria, but held under arrest in his own house (Theoph. 465, 6; cf. also 464, 23), and soon after that we find him occupying the position of *strategus* of the Armeniac theme (ibid 468, 24)".

I should like to point out that the arguments of Ostrogorsky cannot easily be supported, on the following grounds.

1. Serdica. It is strange for a historian of Ostrogorsky's standing to ask for proof of my statement that Serdica was through the 8th century in Byzantine Greek hands, while he himself, in his *History of the Byzantine State* admits that Serdica as Develtus, Adrianople and Philippopolis were "a barrier against the Bulgar kingdom", and only in the spring of 809 Serdica was overrun by Krum¹. For the above statement no evidence is cited. I would have gladly referred to Ostrogorsky's history had I not already in my *Byzantine Studies* referred to Theophanes² and to my *Thessali-*

1. George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, Rutgers University Press, 1957, p. 173. (cf. *Geschichte des Byzantinischen Staates*, 2e Auflage 1952, p. 158).

2. *Βυζαντινὰ Μελέται [Byzantine Studies] 1937-1939, II-V, p. 114, n. 2. Cf. Theophanes, ed. de Boor, p. 485, «Τῷ δ' αὐτῷ ἔτει πρὸς τῆς ἐορτῆς τοῦ Πάσχα Κροῦμμος, ὁ τῶν Βουλγάρων ἀρχηγός, παραταξάμενος κατὰ Σαρδικῆς ταύτην παρέλαβ' δόλω καὶ λόγῳ, στρατεύματα ῥωμαϊκὰ κατασφάξας χιλιάδας ε' χωρὶς ιδιωτικοῦ πλήθους. Νικηφόρος δὲ δῆθεν κατ' αὐτοῦ ἐξελθὼν τῇ γ' ἡμέρᾳ τῆς ἐβδόμῃδος τοῦ σωτηρίου πάθους ἀξιόλογον μὲν οὐδὲν πέπραχεν, τοῖς δὲ περισωθεῖσιν ἐκ τῆς σφαγῆς ἀρχουσιν αἰτοῦσι λόγον σωτηρίας ἀπαξιώσας δοῦναι, τοῖς ἐχθροῖς προσφυγεῖν ἐβιάσατο, ἐν οἷς ἦν καὶ Εὐμάθιος ὁ σπαθάριος μηχανικῆς ἔμπειρος. Ὁ δὲ Νικηφόρος πρὸς τῇ πολλῇ ἀδοξίᾳ σάκραις ἐνόκοις τὴν βασιλίδαν πόλιν πεῖθειν ἐσπούδαζεν, ὅτι τὴν τοῦ Πάσχα ἐορτὴν ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ τοῦ Κροῦμμου ἐώρτασεν. Τὴν δὲ παραληφθεῖσαν Σερδικὴν οἰκοδομεῖν βουλόμενος, ἀνθιστάμενα τὰ πλήρη φοβηθεῖς ὑποβάλλει διὰ τῶν στρατηγῶν καὶ ἀρχόντων πέισαι τοὺς ὄχλους αἰτήσασθαι τῷ βασιλεῖ περὶ τῆς οἰκοδομῆς». From what Theophanes writes it is evident that the city was destroyed by Crum, but it did not remain in his possession.*

*nikian Studies*¹, where I speak in greater detail about the northern boundaries of the Byzantine Empire in Macedonia. It is from my *Thessalonikian Studies* that I have summarized the part about Serdica contained in my paper, which Ostrogorsky had in mind. Evidently, he did not know of my *Thessalonikian Studies*, which is not strange, since studies published in modern Greek are generally, perhaps for language reasons, inaccessible to foreign scholars.

2. For the identification of Justinianopolis with Scupi, I am aware that there exists an old controversy, going back to Wesseling², the scholiast of Hierokles's *Synecdemus*. But as I could not form an opinion of my own, I adopted the view of Evans, which was also accepted by Duchesne³ and Vulic⁴, by the latter in his article on *Justiniana Prima*⁴. I would be very pleased to obtain a different opinion on the matter from Ostrogorsky.

I do not see why it is remarkable that John, the bishop of Nova Justinianopolis, signed the acts of 692 immediately after the patriarch of Antiocheia and before the representative of Thessalonike. It is, of course, known that in the previous councils after the other patriarchs and before those of Cyprus and Caesarea, it was usual for the bishop of Thessalonike to sign the acts, as prelate of Illyricum and vicarius of the Pope⁵. This was perhaps the reason why he had been described by Theodorus the historian as a patriarch, which Theophanes⁶ refutes as untrue. But on the evidence

1. Αἱ περὶ τὸν Στρυμόνα καὶ τὴν Θεσσαλονίκην Σλαβικαὶ ἐποικήσεις κατὰ τὸν μέσον αἰῶνα [*The slavic immigrations around the river Strymon and Thessalonike in the Middle Ages*] and Διοικητικὴ ἱστορία τοῦ θέματος Θεσσαλονίκης [*Administrative history of the Thessalonike theme*] in my book *Θεσσαλονίκη μελετήματα*, [*Thessalonikian Studies*] Thessalonike, 1939, p. 41, note 24.

2. Cf. his *Commentaria* on Constantin Porphyrogenetus, v.3, p.430, 393,4.

3. Duchesne, *L'Illyricum Ecclesiastique*, BZ, 1, 535.

4. RE, XX, 1309. Cf. also O. Tafrali, *Thessalonique des origines au XIV^e siècle*, Paris, 1919, p. 252 ff.

5. Duchesne, op. cit. p. 549. For example in the acts of 680, line 640, 669 and 688 he signs as follows: «Ἰωάννης ἐλέω Θεοῦ ἐπίσκοπος Θεσσαλονικέων πόλεως ὑπὲρ ἑμᾶντοῦ καὶ τῆς ὑπ' ἐμὲ συνόδου ὑπεσημηνάμην» or «Ἰωάννης ἐλέω Θεοῦ ἐπίσκοπος Θεσσαλονίκης καὶ βικάριος τοῦ ἀποστολικοῦ θρόνου Ῥώμης καὶ λιγγατάριος, ὁρίσας ὑτέγραψα.» But also in the acts of 550, (Mansi IX, 173 and 191, 194) after the patriarch of Jerusalem and before the bishop of Caesarea prima Cappadocia, the bishop of Herakleia of Pelagonia Benignus signs the acts in the name (ὡς ἐκ προσώπου) of Elias, bishop of Thessalonike.

6. Theophanes, 162, 24. «Τὸν δὲ Θεσσαλονίκης ἐπίσκοπον Θεόδωρος ὁ ἱστορικὸς πατριάρχην ὀνομάζει ὀλόγως, μὴ εἰδὼς τὸ διατί».

of the XI novella of Justinian I (535)¹, the place of the bishop of Thessalonike in the northern Illiricum was taken by the bishop of Justiniana Prima, the home-town of the Emperor, who was also appointed to keep «καὶ τὸν τόπον τοῦ ἀποστολικοῦ Ῥώμης θρόνον» by the CXXXI novella². Consequently it would not seem at all strange if he had signed the acts directly after the patriarchs and before the bishop of Thessalonike. Unfortunately we have his signature only in the acts of the Quinisextum. The difficulty lies mainly in the problem as to whether Nova Justinianopolis is Justiniana Prima of Dardania or some other city of those named after Justinian.

G. I. Konidaris in his work on the metropolitan sees and archbishoprics of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and their Order³ maintains that the signature of John in the acts belongs to the archbishop of Cyprus, who had moved to the district of Cyzicus in the settlement founded by Justinian II for the Cypriot refugees, which was later to be called Nova Justinianopolis. This view, based on the XXXIX decree of the Quinisextum (692), is very probable because the name of the bishop (John) and the name of the town (Nova Justinianopolis) are the same both in the decree and in the signature. There are, however, some difficulties, which Konidaris and those who treated of the subject before him⁴ did not observe. These difficulties are the following:

I. Theophanes, the XXXIX decree of the Council in Trullo, and Constantin Porphyrogenetus⁵, our only sources on the immigration of the Cypriots, do not mention that Justinian founded a special settlement for the Cypriot immigrants in the eparchate of Hellespont. Theophanes, moreover⁶, does not even mention the settlement of the Cypriots in the district

1. Ed. v. Lingenthal XIX.

2. Ed. v. Lingenthal CLI.

3. G. I. Konidaris, *Αἱ μητροπόλεις καὶ ἀρχιεπισκοπαὶ τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου καὶ ἡ τάξις αὐτῶν* [*The Metropoleis and Archbishoprics of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and their Order*] Athens, 1934 (Texte und Untersuchungen zur byz.-neugr. Philologie No 13) p. 33, (in Greek).

4. See I. Hakket, *History of the Orthodox Church in Cyprus*, translated into Greek and supplemented by Charilaos I. Papaioannou, v. 1, Athens 1923, p. 64 et f.

5. De administrando imperio, cap. 47 and 48.

6. Theophanes, ed. de Boor, p. 365, 9. «Τούτῳ τῷ ἔτει τὴν πρὸς Ἀβιμέλεχ εἰρήνην Ἰουστινιανὸς ἐξ ἀνοίας ἔλυσεν· καὶ γὰρ τὴν Κυπρίων νῆσον ἀλόγως μετοικίσαι ἐσπούδασε καὶ τὸ σταλὲν χάραγμα παρὰ Ἀβιμέλεχ νεοφανὲς ὄν καὶ μηδέποτε γεγονὸς οὐ προσεδέξατο. Πλήθος δὲ Κυπρίων περὶ τῶν κατεποντίσθη καὶ ἀπὸ ἀρρωστίας ὄλοντο· καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ ἐστράφησαν εἰς Κύπρον». Cedrenus copies this part from Theophanes.

of Cyzicus, but maintains that those who survived the drowning and the plagues returned home. The lack of creditable information in the sources led some of the older scholars (like Allatius, Bervidged and others)¹ to believe that the name Nova Justinianopolis does not denote a new town, but is a new name for Constantia or Salamis of Cyprus given by Justinian II. In any case, the settlement of the archbishop of Cyprus John with the few or many Cypriots around him—(it seems that they were a few rather than many)—in the district of Cyzicus, which was placed under his control, seems a true fact, according to the above mentioned XXXIX decree of the Council in Trullo.

II. The Nova Justinianopolis mentioned in the decree, which gave its name to the ex-archbishop of Cyprus John, cannot be identified with the Bithynian Nova Justiniana, first because in the acts of the Quinisextum the name of the bishop of Nova Justiniana is Theodore—(the bishop signs «Θεόδωρος ἀνάξιος ἐπίσκοπος Νέας Ἰουστινιανῆς δευτέρης τῆς Βιθυνῶν ἐπαρχίας»)²—and second, because the town belongs to the province of Bithynia, and not to that of Hellespont, where Cyzicus belongs.

This Nova Justiniana the Second, of Bithynia, can probably be identified with Nova Justinianopolis or Mele of the same province, whose bishop is also called Theodore and signs the acts of the Council of 680³. It may be noted that the identification of Nova Justinianopolis mentioned in the XXXIX decree of the Council in Trullo with the Bithynian Nova Justiniana is refuted by Ostrogorsky in his note.

These difficulties in the identification of the town brought to my mind Justiniana Prima, the home-town of Justinian I, whose bishop, according to the XI novella of Justinian I (535), preceded the bishop of Thessalonike who, as a matter of fact, did not attend the Council of 692. The difference in the name “Justiniana Prima”—“Nova Justinianopolis” presents, I think, no difficulty in the identification, because the Bithynian Justiniana the Second is also called Nova Justinianopolis⁴.

1. Hakket, loc. cit., p. 65.

2. Mansi, loc. cit. 996.

3. Mansi, ibid., 649. «Θεόδωρος ἐλέω θεοῦ ἐπίσκοπος Νέας Ἰουστινιανουπόλεως ἦτοι Μέλῃς τῆς Βιθυνῶν ἐπαρχίας». The same bishop signs also in 676, where, however, the province is not mentioned, and the characterization “Nova” is lacking. Ramsay in his book *The Historical Geography of Asia Minor*, London, 1890, p. 205 mentions the old name of the city, Mele. The name does not occur in the nominative, as far as I know.

4. The name Justiniana the Second is rather odd for a town of Bithynia,

I have used the archbishopric of Nova Justinianopolis to determine the northern boundaries of the Byzantine Empire during the 7th and 8th centuries. I would also like to add that during the 9th century as well, and notably in the reign of Basil I the Macedonian, if the northern boundaries did not reach as far as Skoplje, they very probably included Stypeion, known as Istip today, as I have shown in my *Thessalonikian Studies*¹.

3. For Castoria. Ostrogorsky in trying to disprove my opinion that Castoria was used during the reign of Irene as a place of exile for conspirators, refers to Theophanes who writes that Camulianus was not exiled, but held under arrest in his own house. I should like to bring to Ostrogorsky's attention the fact that I have dealt in detail about Castoria in my *Thessalonikian Studies* (p. 44, note 23), which is referred to in the *Northern Ethnological Boundaries of Hellenism*, in the passage on Castoria. Had Ostrogorsky noted the reference he would have seen that the relevant passage in Theophanes was not unknown to me². I have moreover pointed out

because it is known from Procopius that this name had been given to Ulpiana of Dardania. What is even stranger is that in the Quinisextum (Mansi 992) there is another bishop who also signs as «Ήλίας ἐπίσκοπος Λασίμων μητροπόλεως δευτέρως Ἰουστινιανῆς». The name Dasima occurs once only, in this signature. I do not think that it denotes Dasima of Western Armenia, because the latter did not bear the name of Justinian. It is probably either a bishopric in the district of Nova Justinianopolis, or a bishopric in the district of Justiniana the Second of Dardania, i.e. Ulpiana.

1. Loc. cit., p. 16, note 33. The origin of this place-name has been explained by Cedrenus, who speaks of him as *Leo from Stypeion* (Bonn II p. 231, 6 «καὶ Λέων πατρίκιος ὁ Θρακῶν καὶ Μακεδόνων ἀρχηγέτης, ὃν ἀπὸ Στυπείου ἐκάλουν». Cf. also 231,20 «τὸν ἀπὸ Στυπείου»). Since Tafel's suggestion (*De Thessalonica ejusque agro*, p. 297), that Stypeion was located on the right bank of the river Axios, is apparently wrong, it is probable that in the time of Basil the I the boundaries of the Byzantine State, and of course of the Thessalonike thema, were extended as far as the home-town of the General. Stypeion is again mentioned by Cedrenus in II, 460, 24 «πέμψας δὲ καὶ στρατιὰν χειροῦται τὸ φρούριον τοῦ Πριλάπου καὶ τοῦ Στυπείου». In the time of John the Vatatzis, Stypeion was again the boundary of the Byzantine State. See *Acropolis*, ed. Heisenberg, 78,18.

2. The relevant passages already mentioned in my study *Θεσσαλονίκια μέλη-τήματα* p. 44, n. 25 are as follows. *Cedrenus*, Bonn II 24, 7. «Ἡ δὲ τοῦτο μαθοῦσα παρὰ τοῦ Σταυρακίου, τοὺς μὲν οἰκείους ἀνθρώπους αὐτοῦ πάντας τύψασα ἐξώρισε, τὸν δὲ μάγιστρον καὶ Θεόδωρον πατρίκιον τὸν Καμουλιανὸν καὶ ἑτέρους τὸν ἐν τέλει ἐξώρισεν ἐν Καίσορίᾳ». Cf. *Theophanes*, De Boor p. 465, 1. «Μηνυθείσης δὲ τῷ Σταυρακίῳ τῆς προφάσεως ταύτης, συγκινεῖ τὴν Αὐγούσταν κατὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ πιάσασα τοὺς ἀνθρώπους τοῦ βασιλέως, πάντας δείρσασα καὶ κουρεύσασα σὺν Ἰωάννῃ τῷ πρωτοσπαθαρίῳ καὶ βαγυλῷ αὐτοῦ, τῷ λεγομένῳ Πικριδίῳ, ἐξώρισεν ἐπὶ τὰ κατωτικὰ μέρη ἕως Σικελίας».

that it is not altogether incompatible with Cedrenus's information, because the difference is limited to the case of Camulianus, whereas for the other conspirators, as for John Protospatharius and Pikridis, Theophanes also agrees that they were exiled «ἐπὶ τὰ κατωτικά μέρη ἕως Σικελίας». The phrase «κατωτικά μέρη» obviously means the western provinces as can be deduced from the fact that Sicily is given as their farthest limit. Also from another reference in Theophanes, where he speaks on the increase of the population of Constantinople during the reign of Constantine V, which had been reduced as the result of a plague, we learn the following: "In the city also, whence the inhabitants had been scattered on account of the plague, he brought whole families from the islands and Greece and the lower regions (καὶ τῶν κατωτικῶν μερῶν) and caused them to inhabit the city, thus increasing its population"¹. By combining this evidence with the fact mentioned above, I think it becomes certain that the "lower regions" can be neither Greece nor the islands; consequently we have only the western provinces to consider. Cedrenus, instead of using this general expression, named a certain city which belonged there, Castoria, either because he drew from another source or because he wished to define the "lower regions" more precisely.

Ostrogorsky however observes that Cedrenus writes the name of the city in the form Καῖστορίαν, which I simply altered to Καστορίαν. I admit to have made this correction, which I think is obvious because the stroke of the letter α in the 12th and 13th centuries comes up so high that it could very easily be mistaken for αῖ, and also because linguistically the pronunciation Καῖστορία instead of Καστορία is not impossible, as the development of an ι before an σ + consonant is not unknown in dialect form, both in antiquity and today². In any case my correction is more probable than Ostrogorsky's correction of ἐν Καιστορίᾳ (i.e. in quaestorio). He was probably misled by the transcription of the word already made by the first editor Xylander, into *Quaestorium*³. I say misled, because I do not believe that Ostrogorsky does not know that *quaestorium* is transcribed by the Byzantine writers into κοιαιστώριον or κβαιιστώριον⁴. Cedrenus himself,

1. Theophanes, 429, 22. «Ὁμοίως καὶ ἐν τῇ πόλει, ὀλιγοθέντων τῶν οἰκητόρων αὐτῆς ἐκ τοῦ θανατικοῦ, ἤνεγκε συμπαμίλους ἐκ τῶν νήσων καὶ Ἑλλάδος καὶ τῶν κατωτικῶν μερῶν καὶ ἐποίησεν οἰκῆσαι τὴν πόλιν καὶ κατεπύκνωσεν αὐτήν».

2. Cf. Ed. Schwyzer, *Gr. Gramm.* I, 276, and St. Kapsomenos, "*Kresphygeton*", in *Athena* 52 (1948), p. 248.

3. *Quaestorium deportavit*.

4. See Ducange, *Glossarium* in. v.

shortly after the part about Castoria mentions a conflagration in Constantinople "whose flames went across to the Milium and the Quaestorium («ἔως τοῦ Μιλίου καὶ τοῦ Κοιμιστωρίου» not Καῖστορίας) raging from all directions, until they had devoured everything"¹.

I do not think that I need more to add in order to prove that the objections of Ostrogorsky are not based on solid ground.

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1. In *Theophanes* p. 467, 5 *κναιστώριον*. «Ἐγένετο δὲ τῷ αὐτῷ μηνὶ ἐμπυρισμός καὶ ἐκὰς ἡ τριάντιος τοῦ Πατριαρχείου, ὁ λεγόμενος Θωμαΐτης καὶ τὸ κναιστώριον καὶ ἄλλαι οἰκίαι πολλαὶ ἔως τοῦ Μιλίου».