

OBSERVATIONS ON THE HISTORY OF GREECE DURING THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

I

HELLAS

Hellas, whatever the territory to which this term may have been originally restricted, came to mean in classical antiquity roughly the country south of the Ambracian gulf and the mouth of the river Peneus, including the Peloponnesus.¹ But by the sixth century of the Christian era this meaning, it is contended, changed. Zinkeisen seems to have been the first one to express this view. In his history of Greece, which he published in 1832, he states that the term Hellas had come to denote all the Balkan provinces of the Byzantine empire.² Zinkeisen sought thus to explain the passage in Evagrius, the ecclesiastical historian who wrote toward the end of the sixth century, according to which the "Avars seized Singidunum, Anchialus and all Hellas and other towns and fortresses." The Greek historian Paparrhegopoulos, discussing this passage and the passage in Menander, another historian of the end of the sixth century, which states that the emperor Tiberius sent an embassy to the Avars while "Hellas was being plundered by the Sclavenians and successive dangers were hanging over her on every side," comes pretty much to the same conclusion.³ Hopf, on the other hand, expressed himself on the matter in his still useful history of Greece as follows: "Only through ignorance of geography could the Syrian Evagrius mention after the known cities of Singidunum and Anchialus 'all Hellas and

1. Concerning the original meaning and spread of the term Hellas in classical antiquity one may consult J. B. Bury, "History of the names, Hellas, Hellenes," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 15 (1895), 217 ff.; A. Chatzis, "'Ελλη-Ἑλλάς-Ἑλλην," in *Ἐπιστημονικὴ Ἐπετηρὶς Φιλοσοφικῆς Σχολῆς Πανεπιστημίου Ἀθηνῶν* (1935-1936), pp. 128-161.

2. J. W. Zinkeisen, *Geschichte Griechenlands*, 1 (Leipzig, 1832), 699.

3. K. Paparrhegopoulos, *Ἱστορία τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ Ἔθνους* edited by P. Karolidēs (Athens, 1932), 3:155, 158 f.

other cities and fortresses'; either he understood by Hellas some city or fortress, and this is most probable, or transferred the ancient name of Hellas proper to the Macedonian and Thracian provinces of the Roman empire."⁴ Although Hopf showed a preference for the first of his suggestions, it is the second that has come to have the widest acceptance. It has been repeatedly affirmed by Amantos⁵ and it has been expressed by other Greek scholars as, for instance, Karolides⁶ and Zakythinos.⁷ But Greek scholars are not alone in holding this view. The American Setton⁸ for instance, wrote sometime ago: "Hellas seems clearly to mean the region from Belgrade (Singidunum) to Anchialus and Constantinople" and the Frenchman Bon⁹ has referred with approval to the publications of Amantos, where the term Hellas as used in the sixth and seventh centuries is considered to apply to the European possessions of the Byzantine empire. Another view, expressed by Ostrogorsky, holds that Hellas as used by the texts of this period means Central Greece only; it includes neither the Peloponnesus nor Western Greece.¹⁰

The truth of the matter is quite different. This was demonstrated by a study in which were brought together all the references to Hellas which are found in the historical literature of Byzantium for the period covered by the sixth, seven, and eighth centuries. The analysis of these references showed clearly that the term Hellas as used by these sources refer to the country south of Thermopylae. This country includes also the Peloponnesus, although in the case of three of the sources, to wit, the second book of the *Miracula Sancti Demetrii*, the chronicle of the patriarch Nicephorus and that of Theophanes, this is open to doubt.¹¹ It follows, therefore, that there is no basis in fact for

4. C. Hopf, *Geschichte Griechenlands vom Beginn des Mittelalters bis auf unsere Zeit*, in Ersch and Gruber, *Allgemeine Encyclopädie der Wissenschaften und Künste*, 85 (Leipzig, 1867), 91.

5. K. Amantos, *Tà Μακεδονικά* (Athens, 1920), 6, 86; "Παρατηρήσεις τινές εις τὴν Μεσαιωνικὴν Γεωγραφίαν", in *Ἐπετηρίς Ἑταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν* 1 (1924) 41-44; "Οἱ Σλάβοι εις τὴν Ἑλλάδα," *Byzantinisch-Neugriechische Jahrbücher* 17 (1944), 210-221.

6. In a letter to Amantos which the latter published in his *Tà Μακεδονικά*, pp. 86-87.

7. D.A. Zakythinos, *Οἱ Σλάβοι ἐν Ἑλλάδι* (Athens, 1945), 19.

8. K.M. Setton, "The Emperor Constans II and the Capture of Corinth by the Onogur Bulgars," *Speculum*, 27 (1952), 361.

9. A. Bon, *Le Péloponnèse Byzantin jusqu'en 1204* (Paris, 1951), 29, n. 2.

10. G. Ostrogorsky, "Postanak Tema Heladai Peloponez", in *Zbornika Radova XXI, Vizantološkog Instituta San Knj*, 1 (Belgrade, 1952), 67 f. I do not read Serbian, but I was able to consult this work in a translation which Michael Petrovich of the University of Wisconsin made for me.

11. Peter Charanis, "Hellas in the Greek Sources of the Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Cen-

the view that the term *Hellas* had come to denote by the end of the sixth century the Macedonian and Thracian provinces of the Byzantine empire. Consequently it can be no longer doubted that when Menander, Evagrius and John of Ephesus speak of the devastation of Greece by Avars and Slavs, and, according to John of Ephesus, the settlement in it of Slavs, it is of Greece proper, including the Peloponnesus, that they speak.

II

HELLADIKOI

The term *Helladikoi*, already known in antiquity, came back into use in the early centuries of the later Roman Empire as an appellation for the inhabitants of Greece, including the Peloponnesus. It came to be so used because the more usual term, that of *Hellenes*, had assumed a theological connotation: it had become synonymous with pagans. This is clearly shown by a reference in Malalas and another in the *Chronicon Paschale* where Athenais, the Athenian girl who became the wife of Theodosius II, is called *Helladike* and *Hellenis*, *Helladike* because she was an inhabitant of Greece, *Hellenis* because she was a pagan. Nevertheless, Bury, and following him, Ostrogorsky are correct in insisting that with the creation of the *theme* of *Hellas*, the term assumed a military and administrative sense and was used to refer to "the soldiers and later even to the inhabitants of the military theme of *Hellas*." The *Helladikoi* then who together with the inhabitants of the Cyclades rebelled against Leo III in 727 when Leo first expressed his hostility to the icons and declared a certain Cosmas emperor were Byzantine soldiers stationed in the *theme* of *Hellas*.¹² This is important information because it shows that *Hellas* in 727 was within the effective administrative system of the empire. The *theme* of *Hellas* was a working administrative entity.

turies," in Kurt Weitzmann, editor, *Late Classical and Mediaeval Studies in Honor of Albert Mathias Friend, Jr.* (Princeton, N.J., 1955), 162 ff.

12. On the *Helladikoi* with references to the relevant literature; P. Charanis, "The Term *Helladikoi* in Byzantine Texts of the Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Centuries," *Επετηρίς Εταιρείας Βυζαντινών Σπουδών*, 23 (1953), 615-620.

III

THE THEME OF HELLAS

The *theme* of Hellas, it is generally agreed, was created sometime after 687 but not later than 695. After 687 because it does not appear in the list of commands contained in the communication which Justinian II addressed to Pope Conon in that year; not later than 695 because a military governor of Hellas is known to have been appointed in that year. Still a point of controversy, however, is the territorial extent of this *theme* since no information exists which makes it possible to fix precisely its limits. It has been supposed that the *theme* included besides eastern-central Greece, Epirus and also the Peloponnesus, but against this view there are two serious objections. Firstly, what little is known concerning the western regions of the Peloponnesus during the seventh and eighth centuries seems to indicate that these regions were not under the effective control of Byzantium. Secondly, when the Peloponnesus and Nicopolis (Epirus) were organized into *themes* their governors came to be ranked higher than the governor of the *theme* Hellas. This fact, in the opinion of Ostrogorsky, indicates clearly that neither the Peloponnesus nor Epirus was ever a part of the *theme* Hellas. Ostrogorsky's opinion is an inference, drawn from the fact that in every case where a *theme* is known to have originally belonged to another, its governor is found to be ranked lower in the hierarchical scale of the bureaucracy than the governor of the original *theme*, but it is not unreasonable.¹³ In view of these objections it seems extremely unlikely that the *theme* of Hellas extended far enough to include the Peloponnesus and the regions which later came to constitute the *theme* of Nicopolis. This much is certain, however. The *theme* of Hellas consisted of eastern-central Greece, including of course, Attica, and extended northward to include Thessaly. The inclusion of Thessaly is attested by the fact that Byzantine chronicles put Demetrius in Hellas,¹⁴ and also by the reference to Akamir of Belzetia who is said to have been induced the *Helladikoi* to help them liberate the sons of Constantine V, who were imprisoned in Athens and put one of them on the throne (799).¹⁵ Alamir was a Slavic chieftain in Thessaly and the appeal to him by the *Helladikoi* can only mean that territorially he was within their jurisdiction.

13. On all this see Charanis, "Hellas...", 173 f.

14. Theophanes Continuatus (Bonn,), 364; John Cameniates, *De Excidio Thessalonicae* (Bonn,) 506, Cf. A. Pertusi, *Constantino Porfirogenito de Thematibus* (=Studi e Testi 160) (Vatican, 1952), 169, 171.

15. Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor (Leipzig, 1883), 1:473.

The fact that Thessaly was included in the theme of Hellas is of some significance in the interpretation of the passage in Theophanes with reference to the expedition of Staurakios against the "nations of the Slavs" in 783. Staurakios, "dispatched by Irene with a large force against the nations of the Slavs, proceeded toward Thessaloniki and Hellas, subjugated them all and made them tributaries to the Empire."¹⁶ The "nations of the Slavs" meant are obviously those located in the regions of Thessaloniki and, of course, those in Hellas, but where in Hellas? One, of course, cannot say for sure, but if he were to choose Thessaly, he would be most probably closest to the truth. That the Slavs in Thessaly may have been indeed those of Hellas subjugated and rendered tributaries to the empire by Staurakios at the command of Irene finds some support in the readiness with which Akamir agreed to cooperate with the *Helladikoi* in their attempt to overthrow Irene in favor of one of the sons of Constantin V.

IV

ΤΑ ΚΑΤΩΤΙΚΑ ΜΕΡΗ

The expression, τὰ κατωτικά μέρη, as used in a geographical sense means, of course, the lower regions, but the problem which arises is to determine as precisely as possible the regions of the empire to which the Byzantines referred when they used it. Theophanes used the expression twice. The empress Irene, he wrote in one place, exiled some of the conspirators who early in 790 were involved in a conspiracy to dethrone her ἐπὶ τὰ κατωτικά μέρη ἕως Σικελίας, *i.e.*, "to the lower regions as far as Sicily."¹⁷ The expression as used here may suggest the Peloponnesus, but this is by no means conclusive. The other passage lends itself to greater precision and has been generally taken to refer to the Peloponnesus. The allusion is, of course, to the reference in Theophanes according to which Constantine V in 755 removed entire families from "the islands and Hellas and the lower regions" in order to repopulate Constantinople which had suffered grievously by the pestilence of 746-747.¹⁸ The rhetorical use of the expression or others similar to it by Nicetas Choniates and others has served to create some confusion,¹⁹ but the matter may be considered settled in a decisive manner by a seal of Euthymius, metropolitan of Neae Patrae, published re-

16. *Ibid.*, 456.

17. *Ibid.*, 465.

18. *Ibid.*, 429.

19. On all this, see Bon, *op. cit.*, 159-60 and the relevant notes.

cently and placed by the editor in the second half of the twelfth century. The legend as deciphered by the editor reads: "Seal of Euthymius, Shepherd of Patrae, the Patrae of the *Helladikoi*, not the one of the lower regions." ²⁰

The *Helladikoi*, as has already been said, was a term used in the early centuries of the empire to refer to the inhabitants of Greece in general, but with the creation of the *theme* Hellas it was applied in a more precise sense to refer to the inhabitants of that *theme*. It follows, therefore, that the Patrae of which Euthymius was shepherd was the Patrae of Central Greece, the ancient Hypata, better known in the Middle Ages as Neae Patrae. But as this Patrae is distinguished from another Patrae, the Patrae of the "lower regions" and as this other Patrae can be only the Patrae located in the Peloponnesus, the expression "lower regions" must necessarily refer to the Peloponnesus. The establishment of this fact is a matter of considerable importance. It shows that in 790 and before that in 755 there were regions in the Peloponnesus which were within the effective administrative system of the empire. If it were not so, no emperor would have been able to remove peaceably entire families or to send exiles there without having definite control of their supervision.

V

THE THEME OF THE PELOPONNESUS

The reference in Theophanes to the removal of people by Constantin V in 755 from "the islands and Hellas and the lower regions" in order to repeople Constantinople which had suffered grievously by the plague implies the existence of strong authority in these territories. Such authority, of course, is known to have existed in Hellas since Hellas had been a *theme* since at least 695. It may be presumed that it existed in the islands and also in the Peloponnesus at least the eastern region of that peninsula, but this is a matter which needs further investigation.

There can be no doubt that there existed, certainly by the second half of the seventh century, if not earlier, a maritime *theme*. The *Carabisiani* as a possible maritime *theme* has been the subject of a recent monograph, prefaced by a series of remarks on the problem of the *themes* in general in which the author develops a line of reasoning which leads her to the conclusion that *themes* as

20. V. Laurent, *Le corpus des sceaux de l'empire Byzantine*, V and V, 2 (Paris, 1965), No. 763.

administrative circumscriptions, developed early in the seventh century.²¹ The same line of reasoning would have lead also to the acceptance of the *Carabisiani* as a *theme* in the administrative sense of that term except that what the author considers in this case to be the capital text is the result of a misconception and as a consequence does not apply. In her view, therefore, the *Carabisiani* cannot be said to have constituted a *theme* in the administrative sense of the term. They were simply a naval command, comprehending the sea forces of Byzantium in the second half of the seventh century. This view is held by other scholars²² including Helene Ahrweiler²³ who has published what is to date the most comprehensive study on Byzantium and the sea.

The text in question is the well known letter which Justinian II addressed to the Pope in 687 and in which he enumerated his various armies. Among the armies listed is one called *Cabarisiiani* a meaningless term, and for this reason it has been amended to read *Carabisiani*, a reading which has been generally accepted. *Antoniadis-Bibicou* now rejects this reading and proposes in its place that of *Calarisiani*, a proposal which had been once suggested by H. Gelzer and subsequently abandoned by him. The reading of *Calarisiani*, she says, is supported by palaeography, the internal structure of the text as a whole and the administrative set up relating to the western provinces of the empire.²⁴

21. H. Antoniadis-Bibicou, *Etudes d'histoire maritime de Byzance. A propos du "thème" des Caravisiens* (Paris, 1966), 63-98.

22. For instance by F. Dölger: *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 51 (1958), 208. Dölger is here reviewing my note: "A Note on the Origin of the Theme of the *Carabisiani*," *Silloge Bizantina in onore di Silvio Giuseppe Mercati* (Rome, 1957), 72-75. Among other things Dölger wrote: "es bleibt jedoch nach wie vor unerwiesen und unwahrscheinlich, dass Herakleios der Schöpfer des Themen-System gewesen sei. Einige nach dem Jahre 1953 zu der Frage erschienene Publikationen scheinen Ch. unbekannt geblieben zu sein." I did not intend to make my brief note a bibliographical compendium.

23. H. Ahrweiler, *Byzance et la Mer* (Paris, 1966), 25. On the other hand Pertusi (*op. cit.* 149 f.) seems to believe the *Carabasiani* existed as a *theme* in the administrative sense of that term. Elsewhere however, he says that this fact remains to be demonstrated: "La formation des thèmes Byzantins," *Berichte zum XI. internationalen byzantinisten-Kongress München 1958* (Munich, 1958), 39, n. 178. In the opinion of Ostrogorsky the *Carabasiani* from the very beginning constituted a *theme* in the administrative sense of the term: *History of the Byzantine State* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1968), 97, 132, 158.

24. Mansi, *Concil.*, XI, 737: "...adduximus...insuper quosdam de Christo dilectis exercitibus, tam ab a Deo conservando imperiali Obsequio, quamque ab Orientali, Thraciano, similiter et ab Armeniano, etiam ab exercitu Italiae, deinde ex Cabarisiianis et Septensianis seu de Sardinia atque Africano exercitu." In changing *Cabarisiiani* to *Carabisiani* Ch. Diehl (*Etudes Byzantines*, Paris, 1905, p. 285, n. 2: the study in question was originally published in 1896) wrote: "Le texte donne: ex Cabarisiianis et Septensianis, seu de Sardinia atque de Africano

In rejecting the generally accepted reading of Justinian's letter, *Antoniadis-Bibicou* has really brought forth no new evidence. Her palaeographical arguments, especially since, admittedly she has not seen the manuscript, are by no means conclusive. The arguments she has drawn from the internal structure of the text and the Byzantine administrative set up in Africa and Sardinia were considered by Gelzer when he rejected his own reading and adopted that of *Carabisiani*. Gelzer summed up the whole matter with the statement that the change from *Cabarisiani* to *Carabisiani* is so simple as to admit of no comment.²⁵

But this question, whether in the letter of Justinian II one should read *Carabisiani* or *Calarisiani*, in its bearing upon the larger one, whether or not there was a *theme* of the *Carabisiani*, is by no means conclusive, certainly not as decisive as *Antoniadis-Bibicou* seems to think. For even if the letter of Justinian were to be rejected as a reference to the *Carabisiani*, there are other evidence, attesting not only to the existence of the *Carabisiani*, but strongly suggesting also that this naval command was not simply a command, but, as in the case of the other military commands, especially in Asia Minor, it was a *theme* in the administrative sense of that term. These evidence consist of three texts, two of which refer directly to the *Carabisiani* and the other most probably

exercitu. Gelzer (ed. de Georges de Chypre, p. XLIII) a fort ingénieusement corrigé *Calarisiani*. On peut remarquer pourtant que le mot *Septensianis* pourrait désigner à lui seul tout ce qui restait de l'exarchat d'Afrique (Afrique et Sardaigne), et au lieu de *Cabarisiani*, on pourrait rétablir, au moyen d'une transposition de lettres qui n'est pas rare, *Carabisiani*." Gelzer in the publication cited by Diehl apparently took Sardinia to be in opposition to *Cabarisiani* and *Africano exercitu* to be in opposition to *Septensianis* and accordingly changed *Cabarisiani* to *Calarisiani*, from Calaris, a city in Sardinia. Diehl on the other hand in the light of the military and administrative set up in the western provinces of the empire, took *Sardinia atque de Africano exercitu* to be in opposition only to *Septensianis* and so found a place for a reference by Justinian II to his fleet in the letter which after all enumerates his forces. It is to Gelzer's original thinking which Gelzer himself abandoned, that *Antoniadis-Bibicou* has now returned.

25. H. Gelzer, *Die Genesis der byzantinischen Themanverfassung* (Leipzig, 1899), 29: "Diese Emendation ist so leicht und so schlagend, dass eigentlich jedes Wort zu ihrer weiteren Begründung überflüssig und mein früherer Vorschlag einfach gegenstandslos geworden ist." In my brief note on the origin of the theme of the *Carabisiani* (see note 22) I said about Justinian's letter (p. 73): "The text from the *Exemplar* (i.e. Justinian's letter in question), aside from the amendment of *Cabarisiani* to *Carabisiani*, an amendment which has been generally accepted, presents no problem." In other words the amendment is a problem. But this is not how *Antoniadis-Bibicou* has understood my remark. She writes (op. cit. 63, n. 3): "l'auteur affirme même que 'l'amendement' fait à la lettre de Justinien ne présente pas de problème." Scholars may of course differ on interpretations but they should be accurate in the statement of fact.

so. These texts are to be found in the *Miracula Sancti Demetrii*,²⁶ the *Liber Pontificalis*²⁷ and the *de Thematribus* of Constantine Porphyrogenitus.²⁸

The event referred to in the *Miracula Sancti Demetrii* and in connection with which there is the mention of the *Carabisiani* has been variously dated, from the last years of the reign of Heraclius to about 680.²⁹ Antoniadis-Bibicou puts it about the middle of the seventh century and she is probably right.³⁰ The reference to the *Carabisiani* is a part of the text of the *Miracula* which deals with the adventures of Kouver. About sixty years after the Avar devastations in the Balkan peninsula described elsewhere in the *Miracula*, we read in this text, a revolt, headed by a certain Kouver broke out in the camp of the Avars. The rank and file of the followers of Kouver consisted of a mixed crowd, descendants of those natives of the Balkan peninsula whom the Avars had carried away and the Avars, Bulgars and other barbarians in the camp of the Khagan with whom they had inter-married. This motley crowd Kouver led toward Thessaloniki and there entered into an intrigue with a certain Mauros in order to take the city. The emperor was apprised of the danger on time, however, and he ordered Sisinnios, who was then *strategos* of the fleet (στρατηγὸς τότε τῶν καράβων ὑπάρχοντι) and was stationed in Greece, to proceed to Thessaloniki with the *Carabisiani* soldiers under his command (μετὰ τῶν ὑπ' αὐτὸν ὄντων καραβισιανῶν στρατιωτῶν) in order to succor the city against the barbarians.

The reference to the *Carabisiani* in the *Liber Pontificalis* is in connection with the voyage of Pope Constantine I in 711. It is said in this text that the Pope, upon his arrival at the island of Keos, was received with honor and ceremony by *Theophilus*, *patricius* and *stratigos Carabisiani*.

Finally, there is the reference in the *de Thematribus* to the *theme*, τῶν πλωϊζομένων, most probably, as J.B. Bury suggests,³¹ the equivalent to the

26. *Miracula S. Demetrii*, P. G. vol. 116, col. 1369.

27. *Liber Pontificalis*, edited, L. Duchesne, 2nd édition (Paris 1955) 1:390. On page 394 of this edition the following note which had been composed by Duchesne himself, has been added: "Théophile porte le double titre de patrice et de stratège, tout comme le gouverneur de Sicile mentionné ci-dessus; c'est, je crois, le commandant d'un thème, de celui qui, au temps de Constantin Porphyrogénète, s'appelait le thème de la mer Egée."

28. Edition of Pertusi, *op. cit.* 81.

29. On this see Charanis, "A Note on the Origin of the Theme of the *Carabisiani*," 74-75.

30. Antoniadis-Bibicou, *op. cit.* 80 ff; by the same author, "A propos de la première mention d'une stratégie des Caravisiens," *Byzantinoslavica*, 27 (1966), 71-91.

31. J. B. Bury, *The Imperial Administrative System in the Ninth Century* (London, 1911), 109: "According to Constantine Porphyrogenetos.... Samos was formerly the capital τοῦ θέματος τῶν πλωϊζομένων (which must be equivalent to the Θ. τῶν καραβισιανῶν)."

theme of the *Carabisiani*. The text reads: "When the empire was divided into themes... they made the island (Samos) the center of the *theme* τῶν πλωϊζομένων."

In the light of these references the point is clear that a naval command had come into existence at least by the second half of the seventh century. But did this command correspond also to an administrative circumscription? No doubt. No doubt not only because of the reference in the *de Thematribus*, but more importantly because of the use of the term *strategos* and the expression *καρabisιανοὶ στρατιῶται* to refer respectively to the commander and the naval forces under his command. These are technical terms used to designate the governor and the military complements of *themes*. Indeed, they constitute in some instances the only criteria for determining whether certain territories were or were not *themes*.

The *Carabisiani* then constituted a *theme* in the administrative sense of that term. As an administrative circumscription the *theme* doubtless included the south and southwestern coast of Asia Minor, the islands of the Aegean, the coastal regions of Greece—in both instances when the *Carabisiani* are mentioned they are found cruising in these regions—possibly Crete and most probably also the eastern regions of the Peloponnesus, regions definitely known to have been under the effective jurisdiction of the empire and where Monemvasia, Corinth and the Argolis afforded harbors too good not to be utilized by the Byzantine naval forces. The headquarters of the *theme* seems to have been Samos.³² At this stage of the development of the *theme* system the old civil provinces did not, of course, immediately disappear. Civil officials continued to exist, but supreme authority was in the hands of the *strategos*.

The *Carabisiani*, like the big thematic circumscriptions of Asia Minor, was eventually broken up into smaller units, but unlike the Asiatic *themes*, it was completely superseded by its parts and as a unit, bearing the original name ceased to exist. This partition began towards the end of the seventh century and was completed most probably by the middle of the eighth. Hellas was a *theme* by 695; by 732³³ the Cibyraeot *theme*, comprising the southern coast of Asia Minor had also come into being. By 780 the Aegean islands constituted a *theme* of their own, erected as such most probably when the Cibyraeot *theme* was created.³⁴

32. Const. Porph., *de Thematribus*, ed. Pertusi, 81.

33. The first mention of a *strategos* of the Cibyraeots: Theoph., *op. cit.*, 410. Cf. Pertusi, *Const. Porf. de Thematribus*, 149.

34. *Ibid.*, 149.

Crete had become a *theme* before 867, probably as early as the reign of Leo III.³⁵ It is known, of course, that the Peloponnesus was a *theme* by 805. But by then it already had a number of governors, i.e. *strategoi*. When it was made into a *theme* is not known, but it is very probable that this was sometime during the first half of the eighth century and in connection with the partition of the *theme* of the *Carabisiani*.³⁶ Before 783 it consisted most probably only of the eastern regions of the peninsula. The expedition of Staurakios in that year may have resulted in its extension north-westward.³⁷ In any case, Patras was within its jurisdiction by 805.

VI

SCLAVINIAS

There is no difficulty at all in understanding what the Byzantines of the eighth and early part of the ninth centuries meant by Scavinia or rather Sclavinias, for apparently there were several of them. Sclavinias were regions inhabited by Slavs under chieftains over whom the administrative control of the empire was more theoretical than real. The difficulty, if any, arises when one tries to determine the location of these Sclavinias.

A perusal of the sources relating to the seventh, eighth and early part of the ninth centuries, has revealed eight passages in which the term Sclavinia appears. The first of these references simply says that in the year 657-658 Constant II made an expedition into Sclavinia, subdued the Slavs and took many prisoners.³⁸ The second relates that Justinian II marched against Bulgaria and Sclavinia and, going as far as Thessaloniki, seized a multitude of Slavs and

35. G. K. Spyridakes, "Τὸ θέμα Κρήτης πρὸ τῆς κατακτήσεως τῆς νήσου ὑπὸ τῶν Ἀράβων," *Ἐπετηρὶς Ἑταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν*, 21 (1951), 59-68. Spyridakes cites a passage in the *Life* of St. Stephanos the Young (Migne, *P.G.* vol. 100, col. 1160) where a *strategos* of Crete is mentioned. Stephanos died in 767. According to Spyridakes (p. 67), Crete as a *theme* was probably founded by Leo III at the same time that he divided the *Carabisiani* into the Cibraeot and Aegean *themes*.

36. Charanis, "Hellas..." 175.

37. On the expedition of Staurakios, Theophanes, *op. cit.* 456-57. Theophanes does not say in what part of the Peloponnesus Staurakios conducted his expedition, but, given the fact that the eastern regions of the Peloponnesus was in the hands of the Byzantines, it must have been in the north-western regions of that peninsula.

38. Theophanes, *op. cit.*, 347.

settled them in the Opsikion *theme* in Asia Minor.³⁹ It is reported by the third that Constantine V subdued the Sclavinias about Macedonia.⁴⁰ The fourth is the well known and oft quoted passage in Theophanes according to which Christians drawn from every province of the empire were settled by order of the emperor Nicephorus I in the Sclavinias (800-810).⁴¹ Two passages drawn from two different texts, texts however, which may be related as to their ultimate source, one referring to the year 811,⁴² and the other to that of 814,⁴³ say that the Bulgar Krum while at war with Byzantium enrolled Avars and Slavs, Slavs drawn from the Sclavinias located in the periphery of his realm.⁴⁴ Then there is the passage in the *Life* of Gregory the Decapolite according to which the Saint, while in Thessaloniki early in the ninth century, predicted an uprising of the chief of the Sclavinia, the latter apparently located not far from Thessaloniki.⁴⁵ Finally, there is the passage in the letter of Michael II to Louis the Pious announcing his victory over Thomas the Slavonian which says that Thomas had drawn his forces from the regions of Thrace, Macedonia, Thessaloniki and the surrounding Sclavinias.⁴⁶ The Sclavinias mentioned in these texts were obviously located in the regions of Macedonia and Thrace. About this there cannot be the slightest doubt.⁴⁷

It is said by the so-called *Chronicle of Monemvasia* and a related scholium of Arethas of Caesarea that Nicephorus I resettled Patras and Lacedaemon: Patras with Greeks brought from Calabria, descendants of the Patrenses who had fled to Rhegium when the Slavs invaded the Peloponnesus during the reign of Maurice; and Lacedaemon with a mixed crowd — "Caferoe, Thracians,

39. *Ibid.*, 364. Cf. H. Grégoire, "Un édit de l'empereur Justinien II date de Septembre 688," *Byzantion*, 17 (1944-45), 119-134a.

40. Theophanes, *op. cit.*, 430.

41. *Ibid.*, 486.

42. Ivan Dujčev, "La chronique byzantine de l'an 811," *Travaux et Mémoires*, 1 (1965), 212.

43. *Scriptor Incertus de Leone Bardae F* (Bonn, 1842, with Leo Grammaticus), 347.

44. Dujčev (*op. cit.* 236) says about the location of the Sclavinias mentioned by these two texts: "Ces Slavinies ne sont pas les 'villageois slaves des alentours' comme le pensait Grégoire, mais les tribus slaves installées sur le pourtour de l'État bulgare et qui, loin d'être subjuguées, entretenaient des rapports d'amitié avec le prince bulgare."

45. F. Dvornik, *La vie de Saint Grégoire le Décapolite et les Slaves Macédoniens au IXe Siècle* (Paris, 1926), 61.

46. Mansi, 14:418. For a more recent edition: *Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Legum Sectio III. Concilia*. T. 2, pt I. Leipzig, 1900), 477: *Thraciae, Macedoniae, Thessaloniae, et Circumiacentibus Sclaviniiis*.

47. Cf. s. P. Kyriakides, *Βυζαντινὰὶ Μελέται*, II-V (Thessaloniki, 1937), 136.

Armenians and others... brought together from various places and cities.”⁴⁸ These texts, put in juxtaposition with the passage in Theophanes according to which Christians drawn from every province of the empire were settled by order of the emperor Nicephorus I in the *Sclavinias* may lead one to infer, as did the present writer some years ago, that one of the *Sclavinias* referred to in the passage of Theophanes may have been the western-central regions of the Peloponnesus. This inference, though it most probably corresponds to the reality of things, remains nevertheless an inference and this fact should be plainly stated.⁴⁹ Nowhere in the Greek sources is there any direct reference to the Peloponnesus as a *Sclavinia*. The inference which may be drawn by the juxtaposition of the texts referred to above in no way, of course, can be made to apply to any other region of Greece.

VII

THE SLAVS IN GREECE

It is a well known fact that the source material for the study of the history of the Byzantine empire as a whole for the period covered by the seventh and eighth centuries is very fragmentary. It reduces itself to a few chronicles, a few legal texts and records of church councils, some inscriptions and a few *Lives* of Saints. If this is so for the empire as a whole, it is much more so for the study of what transpired in Greece proper during this period. The texts available

48. Peter Charanis: "The Chronicle of Monemvasia and the Question of the Slavonic Settlements in Greece," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 5 (1950), 147 f, 152. The entire Iberikon version of the *Chronicle of Monemvasia* has now been re-edited by Paul Lemerle: "La chronique improprement dite de Monemvasie: Le contexte historique et légendaire," *Revue des Etudes Byzantines*, 21 (1963), 8-11. Lemerle thinks (p. 22) this chronicle should really be called: *The Peloponnesian Chronicle*.

49. Peter Charanis, "Nicephorus I, the Savior of Greece from the Slavs," *Byzantina-Metabyzantina*, vol 1, pt. 1 (1946), 82. Note 21 of his study reads: "Hopf (*op. cit.*, 98-99, Παπαρηγοπούλου ('Ιστορία του Ἑλληνικοῦ ἔθνους 3b, 167) and Vasiliev (*op. cit.*, 422) interpreted τὰς Σκλαβινίας of Theophanes to include the Peloponnesus. Most probably it is only the Peloponnesus that is meant." The last sentence of this note is not quite correct. Theophanes speaks of Sclavinias and not just a Sclavinia; we know also a definite region, that around the Strymon, where settlers had been brought by Nicephorus I: Theophanes, *op. cit.*, 496. The work by Vasiliev referred to is his: "The Slavs in Greece," *Vizantiiskij Vremennik*, 5 (1898) (in Russian). I read the work with the aid of Mrs. Nathalis Scheffer. Cf. Lemerle, *op. cit.*, 29. See also the cogent remarks of S. P. Kyriakides, *Οἱ Σλάβοι ἐν Πελοποννήσῳ* (Thessaloniki, 1947) 11-14.

reduce themselves to a few passages and of these some lack chronological precision while others are by no means clear. Nor have the finds of archaeology been of great help. The numismatic finds in Corinth and Athens are subject to different interpretations and as a consequence cannot be said to mark some specific event or development.⁵⁰ Monuments, and that includes archaeological finds, are of course very important in indicating a state of culture, but as evidence for the reconstruction of a historical development, are, unless accompanied by texts, of little definite help. Homer Thompson has recently studied as historical evidence the archaeological finds made in the *Agora* of Athens. In his opinion they may be interpreted to indicate the following.⁵¹ A destructive raid against Athens which should be associated with the attack of the Heruli in 267; a subsequent retrenchment of the area to be defended, beyond which the city, including the *Agora* lay deserted; an expansion of this area, probably towards the end of the fourth century, but certainly in the course of the fifth, with some building in the *Agora*, and finally a second destructive raid, no doubt, in the opinion of Thompson, the work of Slavic invaders in the 80's of the sixth century, followed by a certain degree of recovery. Thompson concludes: "Coins and pottery indicate a certain amount of habitation down into the second half of the seventh century. Then follows a period of well-nigh complete desolation until the area was re-occupied as a residential district in the tenth century. But by this time, to use the words of Archbishop Akominatos, "the glory of Athens had utterly perished; one could see nothing, not even a faint symbol by which to recognize the ancient city." No sane person can, of course, ever pretend that the Athens of the late twelfth century was anything like the Athens of the classical period; but no person either can fail to recognize the exaggerated rhetoric of the learned Archbishop of Athens. After all the Acropolis still stood, a symbol more than faint "by which to recognize the ancient city." The thing however

50. Peter Charanis, "The Significance of Coins as Evidence for the History of Athens and Corinth in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries" *Historia*, 4 (1955), 163-172; Sp. Vryonis, "An Attic Hoard of Byzantine Gold Coins (668-741) from the Thomas Whittemore Collection and the Numismatic Evidence for the Urban History of Byzantium," *Recueil de travaux de l'Institut d'Etudes byzantines* (= *Melanges G. Ostrogorsky I*) (Beograd, 1963), 291-300; D.M. Metcalf, "The Slavonic Threat to Greece Circa 580: Some Evidence from Athens," *Hesperia, The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens*, 31 (1962), 134-157; Id., *Coinage in the Balkans 820-1355* (Chicago, 1966), 1-20; P. Grierson, *Byzantine Coinage as Source Material*, *Proceedings of the XIIIth International Congress of Byzantine Studies*, editors J. M. Hussey, D. Obolensky, S. Runciman (London, 1967), 317-338.

51. Homer A. Thompson, "Athenian Twilight: A.D. 267-600," *The Journal of Roman Studies*, 49 (1959), 61-72, especially 70.

to notice in Thompson's statement is that it refers almost entirely to the *Agora* and that its sketch of the history of Athens from the third century to the twelfth is really based on texts, not all of which were used. One may also ask what does the author mean by "desolation." Does he mean a state of complete destructiveness or the lack of material evidence of life? Probably the latter. Indeed the most that can be said about archaeological finds relating to the Greece of the seventh and eighth centuries is that they are virtually non-existent.⁵² But this, whatever its historical significance, is true of the Byzantine empire as a whole during this period. In what follows, therefore, the emphasis is put on the texts, however fragmentary, and debatable their interpretations they may be.

There can be no doubt at all that Greece was one of the regions devastated and settled by Slavs in the course of the great invasions which began about 578 and continued till about 585. Menander, Evagrius and John of Ephesus are definite on that.⁵³ How far into Greece the barbarians went the Greek authors just mentioned do not say, but John of Ephesus says "all Hellas," specifically mentioning Corinth, if one may judge from a passage in Michael Syrus which no doubt had John as its source. More precise and detailed is the information transmitted by the so-called *Chronicle of Monemvasia* and the related text of a *scholium* of Arethas of Caesarea, two texts whose trustworthiness can, of course, no longer be questioned.⁵⁴ We read in the *Chronicle of Monemvasia*: "In another invasion they' (the Avars-Slavs) subjugated all Thessaly and Greece,

52. Cf. Bon, *op. cit.*, 49-50. Cf. M.S.F. Hood "An Aspect of the Slavic Invasions of Greece in the Early Byzantine Period," *Sbornik Narodniho Muzea v Praze*, 20 (1966): "At Olympia in the northwest of the Peloponnesus a cemetery of Slav cremation burials in handmade clay jars was found during the construction of the new museum near the ancient sanctuary of the Altis... The cremation cemetery at Olympia is therefore as yet the only indisputable trace of the Slav invaders themselves in the archaeological record in Greece."

53. Menander in C. Müller, *Fragmenta historicorum graecorum*, 4 (Paris, 1851), 252 (frag. 48); Evagrius, *The Ecclesiastical History*, ed. by J. Bidez and L. Parmentier (London, 1898), 228; John, Bishop of Ephesus. *The Third Part of the Ecclesiastical History of John, Bishop of Ephesus*, tr. by R. Payne Smith (Oxford, 1860), 432. Latin text of John by Brooks quoted by H. Grégoire "L'origine et le nom des Croates et des Serbes," *Byzantion*, 17 (1944-45), 109 n. 21. Cf. Michael Syrus, *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, ed. and trans. by J. B. Chabot, 2 (Paris, 1901), 362. Also John of Biclar, *Chronicle*, *MGH, Aucti. Anti.* XI, 215. Cf. Bon, *op. cit.* 31-49.

54. On this see Charanis, "The Chronicle of Monemvasia...", 141-166; by the same author, "On the Slavic Settlement in the Peloponnesus," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 46 (1953), 91-103. I see no scientific reason whatsoever for Lemerle's reservations (*op. cit.* 48) concerning the trustworthiness of the part of the *Chronicle*... which relates the invasion and occupation of part of the Peloponnesus by the Slavs during the reign of Maurice. Everything in his study points to the trustworthiness of the *Chronicle*... as a whole.

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." The *Chronicle* goes on to say that the inhabitants of Patras fled to Rhegium in Calabria, while some of the Lacedaemonians went to Sicily, others to the coast of southeastern Laconia where they founded the city of Monemvasia, while still others found refuge in the eastern regions of the Parnon mountains. The Corinthians meanwhile had fled to Aegina while the Argives found refuge in an island which the *Chronicle* calls Orobe. Neither Corinth nor Argolis, however, long remained in the hands of the Slavs, for the *Chronicle* goes on to say that the part of the Peloponnesus which extended from Corinth to the cape of Malia, being clear of Slavs, continued to be administered by Byzantium. In the western and central regions of the peninsula however, the situation was different. There the Slavs established themselves in such a way as to remain independent of imperial authority down to the reign of Nicephorus I when, in 805, they were defeated and forced to recognize the authority of Byzantium. It is not without interest to note at this point that while the *Chronicle* says specifically that Slavs settled in the Peloponnesus, it makes no mention of the establishment of such settlements in the rest of Greece.

To return to the defeat of the Slavs in 805. The *Chronicle* does not specify in what region of the Peloponnesus this defeat of the Slavs took place, but since immediately after this defeat, the emperor took steps to reconstruct and re-people Patras (before the end of 806), it must have been in the region around that city where it took place. A defeat of the Slavs in the region of Patras is also recorded by Constantine Porphyrogenitus.⁵⁵ Whatever the immediate source of the latter may have been, it went back to an oral tradition according to which the Slavs who dwelled in the region of Patras, having rebelled against the provincial authorities, first attacked the dwelling of the nearby Greeks (τῶν γειτόνων οἰκίας τῶν Γραικῶν) and then laid siege to the city of Patras. The Patrenses, reduced to desperation, thought of surrender, but before doing so they decided to send out a scout to see if the governor of the province, (the term *theme* is used) whose seat was in Corinth and who had been appraised of the intentions of the Slavs, was coming to their help. The governor did come, but Patras had already been saved by the intervention of St. Andrew. Constantine gives no date for the event except to say that it took place when "Nicephorus was hold-

55. Const. Porphy. *De administrando imperio* (Bonn, 1840), 217 ff.; edition by G. Moravcsik and R. Jenkins (Washington D.C. 1967), 229 ff.

ing the scepter of the Romans." Two points of this account need to be emphasized: at the time of the rebellion of the Slavs there were Greeks living in the countryside of Patras; and the city itself was not only inhabited, presumably by Greeks, but it had its *archontes*, no doubt landed magnates, who made the city their residence. One gets the impression as one reads the account of Constantine that the Greek society in Patras and the surrounding countryside at the time of the event described by it was not of recent creation.

The historicity of the event described by Constantine, except, of course, the miraculous elements associated with it, has been generally accepted. The problem has been to determine its precise date and for this no decisive evidence has ever been given.⁵⁶ It used to be, before the creditability of the *Chronicle of Monemvasia* had been definitely established, that this event was taken to mark the beginning of the definite subjugation, and eventual absorption, of the Slavs in the Peloponnesus. It is now considered to have taken place sometime after 805, and to be distinct from the event described by the *Chronicle of Monemvasia*.⁵⁷ This is largely because in the account of Constantine there is a walled and inhabited Patras, a Patras which could only be the one rebuilt and repopled by Nicephorus shortly after the defeat of the Slavs and before the end of 806 as is related by the *Chronicle*.

While this view of the matter is very plausible, there are elements in the two accounts which raise questions.⁵⁸ There is first of all the question of the probability of two major defeats of the Slavs, defeats separated in time by at the most six years and taking place under more or less similar circumstances and in the same region. This by itself is, of course, not impossible, but it does make one wonder. In the case of both accounts, it is the governor of the province coming from Corinth who achieved the victory. In both cases too, it may be presumed, it was the governor of the province who conveyed the good news to the emperor. This is specifically stated in the account of Constantine; in that of the *Chronicle* it is simply said that the emperor learned about the victory. Learned from whom? No doubt from the one who achieved it. But more importantly, the emperor, according to both accounts, upon learning of what transpired, proceeded to

56. Hopf (*op. cit.*, 99) whom I followed (Nicephorus I... 84) put the event in 807, but this date has found no general acceptance. Cf. Bon *op. cit.* 45 f.; R. Jenkins, Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, vol. II. *Commentary* (London, 1962), 183. K. I. Amantos puts the event in 805: *Ἱστορία τοῦ Βυζαντινοῦ Κράτους*, 2nd ed. (Athens 1953) 1: 381.

57. For instance by me: "Nicephorus I....," 84.; Lemerle, *op. cit.* 37.

58. Some of these questions had already been raised by Kyriakides in his critique of my article "Nicephorus I...." St. P. Kyriakides, *Οἱ Σλάβοι ἐν Πελοποννήσῳ*, 27.

take measures designed no doubt to consolidate the victory. According to the account of the *Chronicle* he rebuilt and repopled Patras; according to that of Constantine he subjugated the defeated Slavs to the metropolis of that city. As both of those actions could have been taken at the same time, it seems therefore that the *Chronicle* and Constantine are describing the same event.

The objections which may be raised against this point of view are by no means decisive. That there were no Greeks at all in the western regions of the Peloponnesus is a matter which no one can prove. To be sure at the time of the invasion of the Peloponnesus the Greeks, we are told by the *Chronicle*, were either killed or driven away, but this, despite the use of the definite article, cannot be accepted to mean all the Greeks, for to so accept it would mean to ignore the possible. To be sure also the expression ἀνικοδόμησε... ἐκ βῶθρων used by the *Chronicle* with reference to the rebuilding of Patras literally meant "rebuilt or built from the foundations." But this does not necessarily imply that the city thus rebuilt had been for centuries in utter ruins, completely desolate with no inhabitants at all. Rebuilding from the foundations may mean simply repairing, renewing, strengthening in a radical way. That this may be indeed the appropriate interpretation of the expression used in this case finds some support in the amount of time taken to complete the work. The Slavs were defeated in 805; the city was rebuilt with walls and churches before the end of 806. For the steps required to complete this work, the learning by the emperor of the defeat of the Slavs, his finding out that these were descendants of Patrenses in Rhegium, his sending the order to have them removed to Patras, the gathering of workers for the work of reconstruction, the work itself—the time indicated by the *Chronicle* is simply too short. To be sure the transfers of people which the same emperor effected in 809-10 are said to have been completed in six months,⁵⁹ but it is one thing to transfer peasants from one district to another and another to build from scratch an entire city however modest its dimensions, with fortifications and churches and to have in it, within a few years, a well established class of *archontes*. In view of all this, it is much more reasonable, therefore, to suppose that what Nicephorus did in Patras was to reinforce in a major way its fortifications and repair, also in a major way, its principal church and other buildings, rather than rebuild in its entirety a city which for centuries presumably had lain in ruins. It is to be noted in this connection that the *Chronicle* nowhere says that the Slavs held the Peloponnesus until 805. What it says is that they maintained themselves independent of the authority of the emperor or that

59. Theophanes, *op. cit.* 486.

of any one else until 805. That leaves room for the existence of many places, especially along the coast⁶⁰ where Greeks must have dominated. Patras most probably was one of these places.

There is a tendency among some scholars⁶¹ to minimize the extent of the Slavic settlement established in Greece proper especially in the Peloponnesus, towards the end of the sixth century and to emphasize instead a later date or rather two: the first quarter of the seventh century and the middle of the eighth. But the sources for these later dates are as fragmentary, if not more so, and as difficult to interpret as those which relate to the last two decades of the sixth century. They reduce themselves to three texts: a reference in the *Chronicle* of Isidore of Seville; a passage in the *Miracula Sancti Demetrii*, and one in the *de Thematribus* of Constantine Porphyrogenitus.

The text of Isidore of Seville has often been used as decisive evidence showing that Greece proper was overwhelmed by the Slavs.⁶² The text reads: "In the fifth year of the reign of Heraclius (615), the Slavs took away Greece from the Romans."⁶³ This text, however, should not be used, certainly not as a piece of decisive evidence, in connection with the question of Slavic settlements in Greece proper. It should not be used because, as I have shown in another study which I hope to publish in the near future, by Greece Isidore means *Illyricum* and not Greece proper.⁶⁴

The passage in the *Miracula Sancti Demetrii* reads: "It happened, therefore, as it is said, that during the bishopric of John of Blessed Memory, the nation of Slavs, a countless multitude was aroused. This multitude was drawn from the Dragubites, Sagudites, Belegezêtes, Bajunêtes, Berzêtes and others. First to invent ships carved out of single pieces 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,

60. Some objects found in the islet of Pilos near the Bay of Navarino are considered by Hood (*op. cit.* 169) to be of Byzantine origin — late sixth, early seventh centuries — and are interpreted by him as probable evidence that Greeks survived the Slavic invasion.

61. For instance, Bon, *op. cit.*, 37. An old view that no Slavs settled in the Balkan peninsula south of the Danube in the sixth century still has some adherents: St. P. Kyriakides, *The Northern Ethnological Boundaries of Hellenism* (Thessaloniki, 1955), 18; Ion Nestor "La pénétration des Slaves dans la péninsule Balkanique et la Grèce continentale," *Revue des Etudes Sud-est Européenne*, 1 (1963), 41-67: Cf. L. Hauptmann, "Les rapports des Byzantins avec les Slaves et les Avars pendant la seconde moitié du VI^e siècle," *Byzantion*, 4 (1927-28), 169.

62. For instance Bon, *op. cit.*, 35-36.

63. Isidore of Seville, *Chronicon*, Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, 83, 1056.

64. Scheduled to appear in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, probably in 1971.

and the greater part of Illyricum and parts of Asia, rendering many cities and provinces uninhabited.”⁶⁵

There is here in this passage a text of capital importance, but a text which is not without problems. There is first of all the problem of the chronology of the events described. Some scholars, juxtaposing this text with that of Isidore of Seville, place the events described in 615;⁶⁶ others put them more generally in the first quarter of the seventh century,⁶⁷ a general dating which, given the fact that there is no precise chronological data concerning the bishopric of John, is not unreasonable. Then there is the element of exaggeration both as to the destructiveness and the number of Slavs involved. The *Miracula*... is, after all, a hagiographical text in which St. Demetrius is presented as the savior of Thessaloniki. The more numerous and violent the Slavs are made to appear, the more remarkable the miracle of the saint. But more importantly there is the character of the expedition itself. The expedition was by sea with presumably some spot on the Aegean as its starting point. That such an expedition did indeed take place can be accepted without any doubt; that it devastated some of the coastal regions of Thessaly, Hellas, the islands and the Peloponnesus, that too may be beyond doubt. What is very doubtful, however, is that it rendered “cities and provinces uninhabited” and presumably had as a consequence the establishment in Hellas, the Peloponnesus and the islands of Slavic settlements of major significance. For, however numerous, large and seaworthy the ships involved in the expedition may have been, they could not have

65. *S. Demetrii Martyris Acta*, Migne Pat. Gr. 116 (Paris, 1864), 1265.

66. F. Barišić, *Miracles de St. Démétrius comme source historique* (Belgrad, 1953), 149. Barišić relates to the event described by the *Miracula*... a passage from the chronicle of John of Nikiu: *The Chronicle of John, Bishop of Nikiu*, tr. by R. H. Charles (London, 1916) 175-76 (ch. 109). The passage reads:....“The Illyrians devastated Christian cities and carried off their inhabitants captive, and that no city escaped save Thessaloniki only; for its walls were strong, and through the help of God the nations were unable to get possession of it. But all the province was devastated and depopulated.” The Illyrians here are, of course, Slavs, and the province referred to must be Illyricum. John places the event he describes before the overthrow of Phocas.

67. Lemerle, “Invasions et migrations dans les Balkans depuis la fin de l’époque romaine jusqu’au VIII^e siècle,” *Revue historique* 211 (1954), 295 f; Cf. Lemerle, “La composition et la chronologie des *Miracula S. Demetrii*,” *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 46 (1953) 356 f. E. Chrysanthopoulos, *Tà βιβλία θαυμάτων τοῦ ἁγίου Δημητρίου, τὸ χρονικὸν τῆς Μονεμβασίας καὶ αἱ Σλαβικαὶ ἐπιδρομαὶ εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα* (Athens, 1954), 55: 623 or 624. Chrysanthopoulos bases his chronology on an entry in the Syriac chronicle of Thomas: J.P.N. Land, *Anecdota Syriaca* (Lugdum Batavorum, 1862), 1:115; “Anno 934 (A.D. 623) Slavi Cretam ceterasque insulas invaserunt; etque illic pii viri Kenesrinenses comprehensi sunt, quorum fere viginti interfecti.”

carried so many persons as to make possible the establishment or settlements of major importance all along the route which the expedition followed. Nor is it easy to accept, what the text apparently indicates, that the expedition rounded the Peloponnesus and then sailed northward to devastate Epirus and regions farther north. Scholars with this text as a reference and some toponymes, and later texts as the basis have associated the Belegezêtes with Thessaly, the Berzêtes, Dragubites and Sagudites with western Macedonia, and the Bajunêtes with Epirus in that it was in these regions that these Slavic tribes respectively settled.⁶⁸ This is doubtless true. But to associate them or other Slavs with any major settlements in Central Greece and the Peloponnesus and to use as justifying evidence the reference in the *Miracula...*, is to go much beyond the bounds warranted by that text.

The passage in the *de Thematibus* of Constantine Porphyrogenitus, reads⁶⁹ "And the whole country (i.e., the Peloponnesus) was Slavonized and became barbarous when the deadly plague ravaged the universe, when Constantine, the one named after dung (Constantine V) 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 year 744-747. But there is a problem of interpretation. The key word in the text is, of course, ἐσθλαβώθη which has been rendered here "slavonized." This rendering is the only one reasonable but what does it mean? It certainly does not mean that the entire country became Slavic in language and ways of life. For that, the time given—four years at the most—is of course, much, much too short. The reference is obviously to some specific occurrence and as a consequence "Slavonized" must be taken to mean "came under the domination or influence of Slavs." But by what Slavs? The text does not say and there are no other references to which one may turn. There is another word in the text, however, which may help to clarify the matter. That word is πᾶσα, i.e. "all." Two inferences may be drawn from the use of this word: that up to this point the Peloponnesus was only in part dominated by the Slavs and it was at this point that it came to be dominated in its entirety; or that up to this point there were no Slavs in the Peloponnesus and it was now that they came and imposed themselves on the entire peninsula. Between these two inferences obviously the first one corresponds to the truth. And since neither Constantine

68. Max Vasmer, *Die Slaven in Griechenland* (Berlin, 1941), 85 f., 176 ff; 20 ff; Lubor Niederle, *Manuel de l'antiquité Slave* (Paris, 1923) 104 ff.; G. Ch. Chionides, *Ἱστορία τῆς Βεγοίας*, 2 (Thessaloniki, 1970), 9f.

69. Edition Pertusi, *op. cit.*, 91.

nor any other source speaks of new Slavs coming from the north, the most obvious explanation of the extension of the influence of the Slavs to encompass the entire peninsula is to assume that it was done by the Slavs already settled in the Peloponnesus. 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.⁷⁰ The Byzantine authorities however soon regained their morale and were able in 755 to carry out orders of the emperor to transfer entire families from the Peloponnesus to Constantinople in order to help strengthen the population⁷¹ of that city which had grievously suffered from the plague.

Now to recapitulate: The Slavs in Greece proper, including the Peloponnesus settled there at the time of the great invasions towards the end of the sixth century. If additional Slavs came later, in the course of the seventh and eighth centuries, they could not have been numerous. Of massive migration and settlement of Slavs in Greece after the end of the sixth century, there is simply no evidence. They are attested to have settled in every region of Greece.⁷² Their settlements were particularly numerous, much more so than elsewhere in Greece,⁷³ in the interior of Thessaly around Trikkala, in the northern regions of

70. Cf. Vasmer, *op. cit.*, 15: "Es darf unter ἐσθλαβώθη natürlich keineswegs völlige Slavisierung verstanden werden, sondern der Ausdruck ist, wie Krumbacher richtig bemerkt hat (BZ X 368), ähnlich aufzufassen, wie wenn heute jemand von einer deutschen Stadt behauptete, sie sei "ganz verjudet" gewesen." Vasmer further remarks (*loc. cit.*) that Constantine's statement implies that the Slavs were already there and that the devastations of the plague enabled them to stifle the Greek people.

71. Theophanes, *op. cit.*, 429.

72. C. Müller, *Geographi Graeci Minores*, 2 (Paris, 1861) 574: καὶ νῦν δὲ πᾶσαν Ἑπειρὸν καὶ Ἑλλάδα σχεδὸν καὶ Πελοπόννησον καὶ Μακεδονίαν Σκύθαι Σκλάβοι νέμονται: "And now Scythian Slavs inhabit all Epirus and almost all Greece, the Peloponnesus and Macedonia." So wrote an epitomizer of Strabo sometime in the tenth century. His statement has often been taken to prove the utter elimination of the original Greek inhabitants by the Slav newcomers. It proves, of course, nothing of this sort. It simply says that Slavs, i.e., some Slavs, inhabited the countries mentioned.

73. Slavic toponyms in Boeotia and Attika, are very few (Vasmer, *op. cit.*, 18-23), but Slavs did settle there also. Avars (Slavs?) are attested (Vasiliev, *op. cit.*, 416) for the region of Athens in the eighth century, and a registry relating to the country-side of Thebes and Athens of the eleventh century includes a number of families most probably Slavic in origin: N. G. Svoronos, *Recherches sur le Cadastre Byzantin et la fiscalité aux XIe Siècles: Le cadastre de Thèbes* (Paris, 1959), 68 ff. This study was published in its entirety also in the *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 83 (1957).

Epirus, and in the Peloponnesus: in the interior of Achaea in Elis,⁷⁴ in Arcadia and the mountainous regions of the Taygetos in Laconia.⁷⁵ Thus, generally the Slavs settled in mountainous regions away from the sea or where there was difficulty of access by ship.⁷⁶ Greater precision than this cannot be given.⁷⁷ As invaders when they first came the Slavs devastated, killed or frightened some of the original inhabitants to seek refuge elsewhere. But that they emptied the country completely and permanently of all its original inhabitants, that is a view which cannot objectively be maintained. This is so not only because there is no decisive evidence which would warrant such a belief, but also because of the general observation that invasions of inhabited lands very seldom, if ever, have that effect. A good example of this and which relates to the invasion and occupation of the Balkan peninsula by the Slavs, leaving the Greeks aside for the moment, is the survival of Illyrians and Daco-Thracians who emerged later as the nations of the Albanians and the Vlachs.⁷⁸

VIII

THE FALLMERAYER THESIS

The problem of the Slavonic settlements in Greece was first brought to the attention of the scholarly world by Jacob Fallmerayer. That Slavs had

74. Müller, *op. cit.*, 2: 583: Νῦν δὲ οὐδὲ ὄνομά ἐστι Πισατῶν καὶ Καυκῶνων καὶ Ηυλίων ἅπαντα γὰρ ταῦτα Σκυθαὶ νέμονται. This is the place perhaps to cite a passage in the *Life* of Willibald, a western pilgrim who had stopped in Monemvasia towards the end of the third decade of the eighth century, according to which Monemvasia was located in *Slawinia terra*: *MGH, Scriptores*, 15:93. This passage has been often quoted as proof that the Peloponnesus was a land of the Slavs. Most probably, however, the region involved was not the Peloponnesus, but the coast at the eastern end of the Adriatic. See my forthcoming study, as announced in note 62 of this work.

75. Cf. Vasmer, *op. cit.* 317. "Es is aber trotzdem klar, dass der Osten Griechenlands weniger slavische Einflüsse aufweist als der Westen."

76. *Ibid.*, 317. "Wo die küste für Landungen geeigneter war, wie in Ostthessalien, da sind vermutlich die Slaven schneller zurückgedrängt worden. An der schwer zugänglichen epirotischen Küste konnten sie sich länger halten. Auch in den vom Meere entfernten Gebirgsgegenden blieben sie länger, wenn es ihnen einmal gelungen war, dort einzudringen. Daher der schwache slavische Einschlag in den von Euboia, Magnesia, Larissa, der besonders auffällt gegenüber Trikkala-Karditsa, daher auch die vielen slavischen Namen in Arkadien und am Taygetos."

77. Cf. F. Dvornik, *Les Slaves Byzance et Rome au IXe Siècle* (Paris, 1926), 15.

78. I am aware, of course, of the various problems, which relate to the origin and early history of these peoples, but that they were natives of the Balkan peninsula who survived the Slavic invasion, that is a fact beyond any doubt.

settled in Greece during the Middle Ages had been pointed out before,⁷⁹ but it was Fallmerayer who put these settlements into the larger framework of the demography of Greece. In his *History of the Peninsula of the Morea*, the first volume of which appeared in 1830, and in subsequent writings, he went into this matter in the most meticulous way and also with passion and came out with the conclusion that the massive invasions of the Greek peninsula by the Slavs and other barbarians transformed its population so thoroughly as to eliminate every vestige of its ancient Greek inhabitants. He wrote in the preface to the first volume of his history of the Morea:⁸⁰

"The Hellenic race in Europe is completely exterminated. The physical beauty, the sublimity of spirit, the simplicity of customs, the artistic creativeness, the races, cities and villages, the splendor of columns and temples, even the name of the people itself, have disappeared from the Greek continent. A double layer of ruins and the mire of two new and different races cover the graves of the ancient Greeks. The immortal works of the spirit of Hellas and some ancient ruins on native Greek soil are now the only evidence of the fact that long ago there was such a people as the Hellenes. And were it not for these ruins, grave-hills and mausoleums, were it not for the site and the wretched fate of its inhabitants, upon whom the Europeans of our day in an outburst of human emotions have poured all their tenderness, their admiration, their tears, and their eloquence, we would have to say that it was only an empty vision, a lifeless image, a being outside the nature of things that has aroused the innermost depths of their souls. For not a single drop of real pure Hellenic blood flows in the veins of the Christian population of modern Greece. A terrific hurricane has dispersed throughout the space between the Ister and most distant corner of the Peloponnesus a new tribe akin to the great Slavonic race. The Scythian Slavs, the Illyrian Arnauts, children of Northern lands, the blood relation of the Serbs, and Bulgars, the Dalmatians and Moscovites—those are the people whom we call Greeks at present and whose genealogy, to their own surprise we have traced back to Pericles and Philopoemen... A population with Slavonic facial features and with bow-shaped eyelashes and sharp features of Albanian mountain shepherds, of course, did not come from the blood of Narcissus, Alcibiades,

79. As for instance, Kopitar *apud* A. A. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire* (Madison, Wisconsin, 1952) 179.

80. J. P. Fallmerayer, *Geschichte der Halbinsel Morea während des Mittelalters*, 1. (Stuttgart, 1830) III—IV, XII. I used the translation of Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire*, 177. On Fallmerayer and his writings see: H. O. Eberl, *Jakob Philipp Fallmerayer's Schriften in ihrer Bedeutung für die historische Erkenntnis des gräko-slavischen Kulturkreises* (Kiel, 1930).

and Antinous; and only a romantic eager imagination can still dream of a revival in our days of the ancient Hellenes with their Sophocleses and Platos."

It suffices to look at the wording of this statement to be struck by its exaggerations. Nevertheless, the thesis which it embodies, that the Slavs totally exterminated the ancient inhabitants of Greece and that the modern Greeks are Christian Slavs or Albanians of Greek speech, has served as a great stimulant for the study of medieval Greece. It was no doubt a powerful force in the researches of Carl Hopf, who, in his *History of Greece*, gave to the question of the Slavs in Greece the most rigorous and detailed analysis.⁸¹ Serious Greek scholars from Paparrhegopoulos⁸² to the present, men of the calibre of Amantos,⁸³ Kyriakides,⁸⁴ Zakythinos⁸⁵ and others devoted special efforts to its examination. The interest of Russian scholars was also aroused. A.A. Vasiliev⁸⁶ made what was at the time of its appearance the most searching investigation ever to be published and one which has remained fundamental to this day. The same Vasiliev devoted four pages of his general history of Byzantium where he gives valuable references to views on the matter expressed by other Russian scholars.⁸⁷ Indeed the question of the settlement of Slavs in Greece proper and the impact that these Slavs may have had on the formation of the modern Greek people has remained to this day, among students of the Byzantine empire, one of the most vital subjects of discussion.⁸⁸

That Slavs had settled in Greece proper during the Middle Ages was accepted in a general way fairly early in the discussion. What remained and still remain vital questions of discussion are the magnitude of these settlements, the date or dates of their establishments and their impact on the formation of the modern Greek people.

Fallmerayer had associated the occupation of Greece by the Slavs and the

81. Hopf, *op. cit.*, 89 ff.

82. K. Paparrhegopoulos, "Σλαβικαὶ ἐν ταῖς Ἑλληνικαῖς χώραις ἐποικησεις" in *Ἱστορικά Πραγματεῖαι* (Athens, 1858).

83. K. Amantos, "Σλάβοι καὶ Σλαβόφωνοι εἰς τὰς Ἑλληνικὰς χώρας," *Πρακτικά τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς Ἀνθρωπολ. Ἑταιρείας* (1926), 10ff. *Ἱστορία τοῦ Βυζαντινοῦ Κράτους*, I: 266; "Οἱ Σλάβοι εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα," in *Byzantinisch-Neugriechische Jahrbücher*, 17 (1944), 210-221. See also above, note 5.

84. See above, note 47.

85. See above, note 7.

86. See above, note 47.

87. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine State*, 176-179.

88. See for instance the general survey by G.G. Arnakis, "Byzantium and Greece," *Balkan Studies*, 4 (1963), 391 ff.

consequent complete elimination of its original inhabitants with the great Slavic invasions of the Balkan peninsula during the two last decades of the sixth century. In the controversy which followed, the question whether Slavs had indeed penetrated, and settled, in Greece as early as the last two decades of the sixth century, became the central point of contention. Hopf, whose thorough investigation of the sources made a great impression took the position that no Slavs settled in Greece by the end of the sixth century. Others, who saw something unsound in the Fallmerayer thesis, followed suit. No Greek scholar, writing in Greece has, to my knowledge, ever acknowledged that Slavs settled in Greece at time during the sixth century. But Greek scholars are not alone in this matter. A. Bon wrote in his work on Byzantine Peloponnesus, a work, by the way, most deserving of the wide acclaim which it has received: "One may admit, therefore, on the basis of the texts as very probable that Slavs are in the Peloponnesus in the seventh century and as certain that their number increased in the eighth century."⁹⁰ And Paul Lemerle in a recent publication: "It is not established that the Peloponnesus was effectively invaded and occupied by the Avaro-Slavs as early as the end of the sixth century."⁹¹ The extreme view once expressed by Sathas⁹² that no Slavs ever settled in the Peloponnesus during the Middle Ages is shared by none of these scholars; but neither does any one among them accept the Fallmerayer thesis in its exaggerated form.⁹³

Other scholars, however, with the same texts before them, view the question quite differently. This is because they take the testimony of Evagrius and

90. Bon, *op. cit.* 37.

91. Lemerle, "La chronique improprement dite de Monemvasie" 48. It must be said, however, that Lemerle hedges to such a degree as to give the impression that Slavs may indeed have settled in Greece before the end of the sixth century. V. Tăpkova-Zăimova "Sur quelques aspects de la colonisation slave en Macédoine et en Grèce," *Etudes Balkaniques*, 1 (1964) 115: "Pourquoi devrions-nous refuser d'admettre avec M. Lemerle que l'établissement initial des Slaves du Péloponnèse aurait commencé dès la fin du VI^e s., et plus exactement vers 578/8." On the other hand Nestor (*op. cit.*, 65) writes: "Le procès aboutissant au peuplement par les Slaves de régions étendues situées entre la Save, le Danube et les mers Adriatique, Noire et Egée jusqu'à l'extrême sud de la Grèce continentale n'a pu débiter qu'au moment de l'interruption de l'offensive de Maurikios, à cause de cette interruption et non de l'échec de ses campagnes. L'offensive a cessé à son tour à cause de la crise interne de l'empire et des convulsions du règne de Phokas."

92. C. N. Sathas, *Documents inédits relatifs à l'histoire de la Grèce au moyen âge*, I (Paris, 1880), XXVIII: "Il n'y a pas historiquement une question slave, jamais des slaves tels que l'ethnologie moderne les conçoit, n'ayant pénétré dans le Péloponnèse."

93. Bon, *op. cit.*, 27 f: "cette théorie excessive qu'illustra jadis Fallmerayer et suivant laquelle plus une goutte de sang grec ne coulerait dans les veines des habitants de la Grèce d'aujourd'hui... on peut la considérer aujourd'hui comme définitivement abandonnée."

Menander literally (Hellas means Hellas), put greater emphasis on John of Ephesus and take the author of the *Chronicle of Monemvasia* on his word.⁹⁴ In their view the bulk of the Slavs in Greece settled there before the end of the sixth century. The rest came during the first quarter of the seventh century and again about the middle of the eighth century. Scholars who hold this view tend to exaggerate somewhat the magnitude of the Slavic settlements, but on Fallmerayer's main thesis that the Slav invaders of Greece completely exterminated its ancient inhabitants, they are not far apart from those who would minimize these settlements. To quote Lubor Niederle on this matter:⁹⁵ "Despite the establishment of these elements of Slavs in Greece, 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 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." Niederle expressed this view in 1923. For the next forty years the matter stood substantially where Niederle had left it.⁹⁶ In the first edition of his incomparable *History of the Byzantine State*, where he discusses the question of the Slavic penetration of Greece, Ostrogorsky does not even mention Fallmerayer.⁹⁷ In the editions which followed he changed somewhat the wording of that discussion, but his

94. For instance Niederle, *op. cit.*, 109; Dvornik, *Les Slaves, Byzance et Rome...*, 15-16; 41. The *Chronicle of Monemvasia* was used before its creditability had been established; also the synodical letter of the patriarch Nicholas III (1084-1111) to the emperor Alexius; J. Leunclavius, *Juris Graeco-Romani, tam canonici quam civilis...* (Frankfurt, 1596, 278). With the creditability of the *Chronicle of Monemvasia* now established the letter of the patriarch Nicholas is, on this point, no longer important.

95. Niederle, *op. cit.*, 111

96. G. Stadtmüller in the essay on the history of the Peloponnesus which he contributed in a book on that peninsula published by the German command during the German occupation of Greece, while exaggerating somewhat the magnitude of the Slavic settlements in Greece, nevertheless does not go as far as to say that the Slav invaders had exterminated all the Greeks: *Der Peloponnes: Landschaft, Geschichte, Kunststätten*, Herausgegeben von einem General kommando (Athens, 1944), 102 ff.

97. G. Ostrogorsky, *Geschichte des byzantinischen Staates* (Munich, 1940), 55 f.

thoughts on the matter he left substantially the same. Here is how he expresses himself in the second English edition, the last edition of his work to appear:⁹⁸

"Throughout the whole region of the Balkans significant ethnic changes took place owing to the Slav migration. The effects of these invasions were felt down to the most southerly point of the peninsula. But even though the Peloponnesus itself was under Slav control for more than two hundred years there was no question of any permanent Slavonization of Greek territory as was maintained by J. P. Fallmerayer. Little by little the Byzantine authorities in Greece and the other coastal regions managed to regain lost ground and to *preserve*, or in some cases to recover their Greek character for these areas."

Thus matters stood until the Fall of 1962 when Fallmerayer's thesis in all its exaggerations was revived, revived with fury. The man who revived it was the late Romilly Jenkins. "The fact of the matter" he said in the second of the two lectures which he delivered at the University of Cincinnati on November 6, 1962,⁹⁹ "very plainly is that the Slavs had poured, not only as raiders, but also as settlers, into territories—Epirus, Hellas, Peloponnesus—which were virtually swept if not garnished and that they set up their habitations and became the repopulators of the land. All the historical testimony of any value points to this conclusion; and, were it not that Romantic prejudice amounting to monomania recoiled from it in the nineteenth century no historian would ever have questioned it for a moment." And elsewhere in the same lecture: "the two dominant racial stocks in the nineteenth-century Greece, along with many other foreign accretions, were Slavs and Albanians." About Fallmerayer himself, Jenkins had this to say: "It is melancholy to record that Fallmerayer's last years were clouded by a quite unjustified conviction of failure. None of his works satisfied him; none, he thought, had met with acceptance. Posterity judges differently." These are sentences picked at random. The lecture has to be read in its entirety to see how full it is with exaggerations.

An abandoned view concerning some phase of the past, upon re-examination, may be restored in all its vigor and meet with general acceptance only if the integrity of the texts which furnished the evidence for its restoration has been fully respected. It is here where Jenkins has left himself open to serious criticism. There is virtually nothing in his lecture that may not be challenged,

98. *History of the Byzantine State*, tr. by Joan Hussey (New Brunswick, N.J., 1969), 94. *Italics mine.*

99. Romilly Jenkins, *Byzantium and Byzantinism* (The University of Cincinnati, 1963), 21-42. 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).

but the remarks which follow are restricted to points controllable by the texts. Incidentally, Jenkins had no more texts available than did his predecessors.

"By the time of Heraclius, and by the year 615," Jenkins urges "the Balkan peninsula as a whole was regarded as a Sclavinia or Sclaviniae, an area or areas inhabited and controlled by Slavonian tribes."¹⁰⁰ The definition of the term, is, of course, correct, but its extension to cover the entire Balkan peninsula is met with nowhere in the sources. Jenkins, however, needs this extension in order that he might justify his inclusion of Hellas among the Sclavinias in the Balkan peninsula. But as the reader already knows no reference to Sclavinias in the sources can be interpreted to apply to Hellas. At the most and by inference only the term might be applied by a modern scholar to the western regions of the Peloponnesus by the juxtaposition of the two texts to which reference has been made above.¹⁰¹ Jenkins makes no such juxtaposition, but gives the impression time and time again that the Byzantine themselves called Hellas, Sclavinia. This is simply not true.

As Jenkins views the matter Greece by 615 had been completely occupied by the Slavs and for the next forty odd years no attempt was made by the Byzantines to re-occupy the country. He said in his Cincinnati lecture:¹⁰² "An attempt was made at a Roman re-occupation (of Hellas) in the middle of the seventh century by the emperor Constans II, one of the few Byzantine emperors after Justinian whose eyes were turned to the west, but this was without any permanent results." The plain fact is however that nothing of this sort is met with in the sources. Theophanes does indeed report that in the year 6149 (657-658) Constans II made an expedition into Sclavinia and took many prisoners.¹⁰³ Theophanes, however, fails to give the exact location of this Sclavinia and there is no way of determining it. The same emperor while on his way to the west in 662 is said to have passed by and stopped for some time in Athens and probably also in Corinth.¹⁰⁴ But there is nothing in the sources which reports this fact that might possibly be construed to mean that Constans stopped in these two Greek cities for the purpose of retrieving them or the surrounding regions from

100. *Byzantium. The Imperial Centuries.*, 45.

101. See above, notes, 46 and 47, especially the latter.

102. *Byzantium and Byzantinism*, 24.

103. Theophanes, *op. cit.*, 347.

104. Paulus Diaconus, *De gestis Langobardorum*, MPL, 95, 598; Anastasius Bibliothecarius, *Die vitis Roman. Pontificum* in Muratori, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, 3:141; Johannes Diaconus, *Chronicon Venetum et Gradense*, MGH. SS. 7:8. The full texts of these references are cited by K. Setton, "The Bulgars in the Balkans and the Occupation of Corinth in the Seventh Century," *Speculum*, 25 (1950), 541, note 157.

the Slavs. The sources say nothing indeed about Constans' objectives in stopping in Athens and Corinth. They simply report the fact. The fact itself, however, is an important piece of evidence. It is important because it shows for sure that both Athens and Corinth and presumably also the surrounding regions were in the effective possession of the empire at the time when Constans visited them. This is how scholars, men of the calibre of Bury and Ostrogorsky,¹⁰⁵ have always viewed the matter. They are right.

"The '*theme*' of Hellas was founded by Justinian II, no doubt in connection with his policy of Slavonic recruitment."¹⁰⁶ Thus did Jenkins express himself on this important matter. And he was in part right. Justinian II was indeed the founder of the "*theme*" of Hellas. The information for this, however meagre it may be, seems decisive. Nowhere in the sources, however, is there the slightest allusion as to Justinian's motive. Jenkins of course knows this, but he covers himself conveniently by the adverbial "no doubt." His insinuation, however, is clear. What he is saying in reality is this: Justinian II had a policy of recruiting his army among Slavs; Greece was a country of Slavs; therefore Justinian's organization of Greece into a *theme* can be best explained by Justinian's desire to exploit its inhabitants as recruits. Thus the organization of Greece into a *theme* is made to strengthen rather than weaken the view that Greece in its entirety was inhabited by Slavs. Ingenious reasoning, but with no basis in fact!

Reference has already been made to the measures taken by Constantine V (755) to strengthen the population of Constantinople which had suffered grievously by the plague of 744-747. Jenkins' comment about these measures

105. J. B. Bury. *A History of the Later Roman Empire from Arcadius to Irene* (395 A.D. to 800 A.D.) (London, 1889), 300: "On his way to Italy, Constans visited Athens. This mention of Athens as a station of the imperial journey indicates the flourishing condition of the Greek city in the seventh century." Ostrogorsky, *History*..., 122: "To all appearances Constans was planning to visit the most important centers of his European possessions. He made his first stop in Thessalonica, then had a longer stay in Athens, and it was not until 663 that he arrived at Tarentum." Jenkins himself in *Byzantium, The Imperial Centuries*, p. 41, gives quite a different interpretation to the possible activities of Constans in Athens. He writes: "Constans' plan in going to Italy 'was, no doubt, to set up a stable, central system of defence against an imminent Saracen invasion of Europe from Africa. If Italy and Hellas were to go the way of Syria and Egypt, while the Saracen fleets at the same time dominated the Aegean, what was likely to be the fate, at no long interval, of Constantinople herself? That he had this in mind seems to be clear from the fact that on his way to Italy he spent nearly a year in Greece, visiting Thessalonica and Athens and probably Corinth, with the obvious intention of pulling the Roman fortresses in a proper state of defence."

106. *The Imperial Centuries*, 54.

is as follows:¹⁰⁷ "Constantine V, faced with this appalling scourge, applied the same remedy which had been invoked by the house of Heraclius: the wholesale reception of Slav settlers. Many, we are told, came to Constantinople from Hellas." In other words the families which Constantine V had ordered brought to Constantinople from Hellas were Slavs. The best commentary that can be brought to bear on these remarks is to reproduce in full the relevant passage in Theophanes, the only source which reports this transfer. Theophanes wrote:¹⁰⁸

"The emperor Constantine transferred to Thrace the Syrians and Armenians whom he had brought from Theodosioupolis and Melitene. They became the source for the extension of the heresy of the Paulicians. Likewise he brought to the city (*i.e.*, Constantinople), whose population had been lessened by the plague, whole families which he drew from the islands, Hellas, and the lower regions (*i.e.*, the Peloponnesus) and made them settle in it. He thus increased the population of the city."

Where are the Slavs who came to Constantinople from Hellas one may ask? There are, of course, none. But to read, that "we are told" when in reality we are not told that many Slavs from Hellas came to Constantinople, is a matter very disturbing, indeed, to honest scholarship.

But this is not all. Speaking about the situation in Greece proper as it obtained according to him, from about the middle of the seventh century Jenkins says:¹⁰⁹ "From that time, during more than a century, the terrain was abandoned to the invaders. The picture that emerges is one of a loose federation of Slavs under a principal zupan, or chieftain, who, in 799 and in the person of one Akamir of Thessaly, was powerful enough to liberate the brother of Leo IV imprisoned in the fortress of Athens, and to make him an emperor in opposition to his sister-in-law, Irene."

Here again the best commentary on these remarks is to reproduce in full the text on the basis of which they are made. The text reads¹¹⁰: "In the month of March, the seventh indiction, Akamir, the chief of the Slavs of Belzetia (*i.e.*, in southern Thessaly), pushed by the *Helladikoi*, wished to liberate the sons of Constantine (*i.e.*, Constantine V) and proclaim one of them emperor. When the empress Irene learned this, she sent to the patrician Constantine Serantapechon his son (*i.e.*, the son of Constantine), Theophylact, a *spatharius* and a nephew of hers. She blinded all and crushed their plot against her."

107. *Ibid.*, 69.

108. Theophanes, *op. cit.*, 429.

109. *Byzantium and Byzantinism*, 25.

110. Theophanes, 473.

What is one to make of this passage? Certainly not what Jenkins has made out of it. Akamir was simply chieftain of the Slavs of Belzetia; not the chieftain of a federated group of Slavs occupying all Greece. He did not originate the plot, he was pushed to it by the *Helladikoi*. The plot was apparently nipped in the bud and those involved were blinded. If indeed the incident proves anything, it proves the effectiveness of imperial authority in Greece.

The emperor Nicephorus took a series of measures which were branded by Theophanes oppressive. Following are the remarks of Jenkins on two of the measures:¹¹¹ "Two are concerned with the re-occupation of Hellas and the coast of Asia Minor, through compulsory purchase of small holdings and forcible transfer of peasantry." One may again turn to the text and see what it says:¹¹² "In the year 6302 (*i.e.*, 809-810) Nicephorus... gave orders that Christians be removed from every *theme* and brought to the Sclavinias and that their property be sold... He ordered the shipbuilders who dwelled along the coast, especially those of Asia Minor, people who had never lived as farmers, to buy, unwilling though they were, from the estates which he had confiscated at a price fixed by him." The text in relation to Jenkins' statement speaks for itself. No comment is needed.

There is some evidence to the effect that Nicephorus I reconstructed Thebes and presumably, though this is not related by the source, resettled it with colonies brought from elsewhere in the empire. Better known, however, are the colonies which he established in the Peloponnesus. The information for this comes from texts¹¹⁴ other than Theophanes, but, instead of citing these texts, Jenkins, in speaking about these colonies, chooses to put his argument on a quite different basis. He writes:¹¹⁵ "It would seem that a sojourn in Hellas was in those days not so popular as it has since become. When Theophanes says that the Byzantine settlers came 'from every province' he no doubt includes Calabria and Sicily when Saracen incursions were causing a retromigration of Greek speakers to Hellas. Confirmation of this is found in the legend of the miraculous deliverance of Patras from the Slavonic besiegers: for in this legend the Greek speakers are called, not Peloponnesians, or Hellenics or Rhomaioi, but *Graekoi* or Greci, that is Greek speakers from Italy."

111. *The Imperial Centuries*, 119.

112. Theophanes, 487.

113. Cedrenus, Bonn ed. 2:34.

114. Primarily from the *Chronicle of Monemvasia*: Charanis, "The Chronicle of Monemvasia...", 147 f., 154 f.

115. *The Imperial Centuries*, 123.

The narrow definition of *Graikoi* given by Jenkins is, of course, wrong,¹¹⁶ but it served his purpose and this is probably why he used it: it eliminates the text to which he refers as possible evidence that Greeks did indeed survive the Slav invasion.¹¹⁷

In the paper which I submitted to the Thirteenth International Congress of Byzantine studies, held in Oxford in September 1966, I referred to Jenkins' revival of Fallmerayer's thesis as unfortunate,¹¹⁸ unfortunate because that thesis had outlived its usefulness and because it had been rejected, certainly in its extreme form, by scholars. But unfortunately also, I may now add, for the scholarly reputation of the man who revived it. For in his writings about the Slavs in Greece, what Jenkins has done is quite clear: He has in fact assumed that all the original inhabitants of Greece had been exterminated by the Slav invaders and then proceeded to distort¹¹⁹ every text that might possibly furnish

116. See, for instance, Procopius: IV. 27, 38; V 18, 40; V. 29, 11; VII, 9, 12; VII, 21, 4; VII, 21, 12; VII 21, 14; VIII 23, 25; *Anecdota*, XXIV, 7. In this passage of the *Anecdota* by *Graekoi* the inhabitants of Greece proper are meant. Cf. Theophanes, *op. cit.*, 455: Γραικῶν γράμματα; Cf. N. G. Polites, "Ἕλληνες ἢ Ῥωμαῖοι, in *Λαογραφικὰ Σύμμεικτα*, 1, (1920). B.A. Mystakides, *Αἱ λέξεις "Ἕλλην, Γραικός (Γραικύλος), Ῥωμαῖος (Γραικοῤῥωμαῖος), Βυζαντινός* (Tübingen, 1920). The term Γραικία was sometimes applied to Greece proper: Paul Speck, "Γραικία und Ἀρμενία. Das Tätigkeitsfeld eines nicht identifizierten Strategen im frühen 9. Jahrhundert," *Jahrbuch der österreichischen byzantinischen Gesellschaft*, 16 (1967) 83 f.

117. The text in question is of course, the account of Constantine Pophyrogenetus concerning the siege of Patras by the Slavs during the reign of Nicephorus I: See above, note 53.

118. P. Charanis, "Observations on the Demography of the Byzantine Empire," *The Proceedings of the XIIIth International Congress of Byzantine Studies* edited by J. M. Hussey, D. Obolsky, S. Runciman (Oxford, 1967), 462.

119. He is guilty of omissions too. Nowhere does he mention, for instance the reference in Theophanes (*op. cit.*, 440) according to which in c. 766 Constantine V brought to Constantinople from Hellas and the islands 500 *ostrakaroi*, i.e., makers of earthenware pipes, in order to repair the aqueduct of Valens. To have cited this reference would have seriously damaged his view (*The Imperial Centuries...*, 92) according to which "the *theme* of Hellas as a working administrative unit" dates from 783. This was no doubt the reason also for his distortion of the texts of Theophanes and Nicephorus, the Patriarch, according to which the Byzantine forces stationed in Hellas and the islands in 727 rebelled against Leo III, presumably because of his iconoclastic policy. The text in Theophanes (*op. cit.*, 405) reads: "The *Helladikoi* and those of the islands rebelled against him (i.e., Leo III)... Agallianos, tumarch of the *Helladikoi*, commanded the army. There was also a certain Stephanos." The text in Nicephorus the Patriarch (*Opuscula Historia*, ed. C. de Boor, Leipzig, 1880, 57) reads: "Those inhabiting Hellas and the islands rebelled against him.... Agallianos was one of their leaders.... There was also a certain Stephanos." Anyone, reading these texts would conclude that the leadership in the affair was most probably taken by the *Helladikoi* but this is not how Jenkins views the matter. He writes (*The Imperial Centuries...* 66): "The first reaction to its destruction (i.e. the destruc-

any evidence to the contrary. He has indeed done more: he turned these texts around in order to support his peculiar view. By so doing he made an advocate of himself and thereby destroyed the scholarly character of his work.

Slavs did indeed come into Greece. They did not only come but stayed permanently. Of their numbers there is no precise knowledge, but the impression created by the sources is that they were numerous. Their settlements were denser in the western regions of the country than in those of the east. But what is striking about the historical evolution of these Slavs is that they lost their identity and became Greeks. In the complete hellenization of the Slavs the administration, the church, books even, may have played a role. It is hardly possible however, that these forces by themselves could have brought about the thorough denationalization of the Slavs. If eventually the Slavs in Greece abandoned Slavic and made Greek the language of their speech, became indeed Greeks, that was primarily because they found themselves in the midst of Greeks.

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tion of the "picture of Christ in the porch of the Great Palace known as Chalke") was a revolt, in 727 of the great naval command of the Karavisianoi (Seamen), a command which extended from the southern shores of Asia Minor over the whole of the Aegean Sea. The rebels were joined by the Helladics, or garrison troops of the *theme* of Hellas." Cf. *Byzantium and Byzantinism*, 26, where he expresses the same view.