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CUMULATIVE SLAVICITY: CULTURAL INTERACTION AND LANGUAGE REPLACEMENT IN THE NORTH BALKANS DURING THE SLAVIC MIGRATION PERIOD, AD 500-900

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of the Ohio State University

By

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* * * * *

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To My Parents
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The 1990s are witness to a global migration, the magnitude of which evokes comparison with the barbarian invasions of Europe during late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages. The difference between the two is a matter of proportion, for this time, virtually every corner of the globe is affected by a phenomenon which we might loosely call the new-age Volkewanderung. I realize, of course, that this particular term traditionally applies to the migration of various Germanic folk in Europe from the second to the sixth century AD; yet I have deliberately invoked it in order to establish a parallel between today's global migrations, and those of the Slavic migration period in the Balkans.¹

The Drang nach Osten is a classic example of so-called constrained population displacement, a term which I have borrowed from the lexicon of processual archaeology. Some Balkan historians would have us believe that constrained population displacement, which is a recurrent theme in the annals of Balkan history, is responsible for all attested cases of population movements. Indeed, Balkan history is fraught with compelling tales of ethnic communities forced to leave their “ancestral homelands” in the wake of advancing invaders. For example, in this century alone, the Balkans has been the epicenter of several devastating wars that did indeed alter the ethnic complexion of Kosovo and of Western Macedonia.
Some Medieval Balkan historians have adhered to the notion that the “Slavic invasions” of the first millennium AD constituted a prime example of “ethnic cleansing.” The Balkan peninsula became a non-urban society during the Slavic migration period. Many scholars have viewed this transformation as the result of invasion by people who brought with them a lower range of material culture. Moreover, these invasions purportedly originated in some hypothetical Urheimat. Past scholars have spoken of elite dominance or constrained population displacement paradigms, according to which, the appearance of new forms of material culture is indicative of wholesale demographic change. Previous scholarship has held that the Slavic invasions and subsequent land-taking (Landnahme) resulted in the Slavicization of much of the Balkans. However, the Slavicization of the Balkans did not result just from the single phenomenon of invasions. Indeed, the nature and extent of the Slavic “invasions” has been exaggerated. Instead, the Slavicization phenomenon can be better explained by complex socio-linguistic processes which have left their traces in documentary, archaeological, and linguistic evidence. The diffusion of so-called “immigrant farmer” material culture that will be discussed in this study could be achieved through population movement or various diffusionary processes. It is not the purpose of this study to demonstrate the arrival of new populations in the archaeological record. On this contentious issue enough has been said by previous scholarship. Rather, the focus of this study is on the transformation of Balkan culture through a variety of diffusionary mechanisms that do not involve long-distance migration and wholesale ethnic turnover (although in this study the existence of short-term migrations is not being denied—only the scale).
I will be using the "processual model" advanced by Colin Renfrew to examine evidence gleaned from several disciplines, models that make no claim of universal or exclusive truth. A model is an useful heuristic device and not a tautology. Such an approach, using all available evidence, is badly needed in the field of Byzantine/Early Medieval Slavic history, where scholars have long based their reconstructions of the past exclusively on the testimony of the literary sources. Many Byzantinists still scoff at archaeology because they feel its role is to illustrate history and nothing more. This study rejects the subordination of archaeological evidence to textual sources as an outdated vestige of political historiography on the one hand, and of nineteenth-century, *Klassische Archäologie* on the other, in which philologists laid down the rules of archaeological inquiry.2

The extant literary texts paint a bleak picture of conditions in the Balkans in the sixth and seventh centuries, with poleis in ruin, and refugees either on the run or else carried-off beyond the Danube into captivity. On the seemingly incontrovertible testimony of these sources (when considered in aggregate, they still constitute a thin evidential base), many scholars assumed that cultural interaction which took place before the ninth century was irrelevant and ephemeral, since the Slavs were not yet literate, and they did not possess the social structures necessary for the maintenance of high culture. I should point out that these scholars worked exclusively in the realm of high culture, and they equated culture with high culture, that is to say, with literature, monumental architecture, libraries, theaters, and other monuments of high culture. This equation excluded from consideration the so-called lower end of the settlement hierarchy; thus, historians ignored
the various influences that helped to shape the material culture of the
ancient Slavs, mainly because it was once deemed the exclusive preserve of
the archaeologist.

This perspective, once dominant, is beginning to change as historians
are increasingly using archaeological evidence to help reconstruct the past.
Archaeology can place the artifact within a dated chronological framework.
But archaeological evidence alone tells us nothing about the broader culture
of sixth-century migrant farmers in the Balkans because they were
illiterate and left no inscriptions. Late Antique literary sources are
marginally helpful in this regard, and they contain some interesting
toponymic evidence which the Slavic linguists have used to reconstruct
Common Slavic. However, Slavic linguists are hard pressed to date
important developments in Common Slavic. The Byzantine historians on
which most analysis is based seldom concerned themselves about accuracy
when discussing the languages and customs of various barbarian groups. In
many instances they inserted stock themes gleaned from Classical authors.
From Classical times to Late Antiquity the linguistic pattern of the Balkans
remained fairly stable. The principal linguistic groups represented were
Dacian, Greek, Thracian, and Latin. From the sixth to the ninth centuries,
Common Slavic gradually displaced these languages. The mechanisms behind
this phenomenon have yet to be identified.

The correlation of archaeological and linguistic evidence presented a
dilemma: archaeology provides verifiable dating and evidence of cultural
interaction and demographic change, but cannot speak to ethnicity or
language; linguistic evidence speaks to ethnicity but cannot be dated
accurately. The processual approach is well-suited to explore this nexus.
The failure of previous scholarship to effect a synthesis between archaeology and linguistics lay in the fact that no one recognized that interdisciplinary bridges are first built at the methodological level. This study will concern itself with traditional and non-traditional genres of evidence. The processual approach combines archaeological evidence without regarding any of them as paramount.

Anthropologists and archaeologists have been studying culture contact situations and the mechanisms that drive them for several decades. While no two contact situations are alike, the patterns that emerge in specific situations share common features with other situations; therefore, models can be elaborated to account for the patterns in a given context. Some models account for the development and function of social structures, while others seek to identify the mechanisms of change that results from culture contact. Archaeological-linguistic correlation paradigms all share the same set of assumptions: they proceed from the premise that linguistic changes do not take place in a vacuum, and that those changes leave traces in the archaeological record. This premise represents a fundamental departure from many traditional archaeological approaches, which sought to explain changes in the archaeological record solely in terms of migrations and invasions. Many archaeologists now recognize that new pottery types are not necessarily indicative of the arrival of new ethnic groups, and that linguistic groups are not necessarily synonymous with social groups. For instance, the adoption of new pottery techniques may be the result of trade, or innovations may been spread like fashion trends. The point is that indigenous phenomena can be responsible for culture change.
Processual models for language replacement are especially appropriate for the Slavic migration period because they can apply to situations where peoples were thought to be on the move, and they harmonize with the onomastics approach widely espoused today by many linguists. According to C. Renfrew, the goal of processual modeling is "to make general statements in the form of specific models." Renfrew recently elaborated three processual models that account for the phenomenon of language change in specific situations. Deliberate colonization or constrained population displacement is a form of elite dominance; it involves the migration of a group of people who display a higher degree of social ranking, high enough to organize large-scale conquests of new lands where colonies are sometimes established. Thus, for example mounted nomadic warriors carried out a *Landnahme*, and they were able to maintain their dominance over indigenous populations precisely because they possessed new forms of military technology—in this case, heavy cavalry—aided by the invention of the stirrup and the reflex bow. The elite dominance model applies to the Roman Empire (e.g., enclave control in Moesia I) too; the Romans were able to carry out successful language replacement in many parts of the Mediterranean.

Scholars are just beginning to question the validity of existing assumptions regarding sociolinguistic change through constrained population displacement. Elite dominance means that a small group of tightly organized, warriors imposed their authority on sedentary, autochthonous populations. Elite dominance stresses social organization; ruling social groups must display evidence of ranking or social stratification, one of the sine qua nons behind the exercise of effective
political control. Ranking is visible in the archaeological record in a variety of ways, most notably through the detailed examination of funerary goods. The presence of well-endowed burials, for example, is one indication of status differentiation. Archaeological evidence which was traditionally adduced as evidence for classical constrained population displacement regimes included the appearance of new pottery forms. But today archaeologists recognize that populations do not change as rapidly as once thought, for it is possible to have new pottery styles and other new forms of material culture without having hordes of militaristic invaders introduce them.

Demography-Subsistence is a processual model that offers an alternative to the elite dominance paradigm; demography-subistence assumes short distance diffusion rather than long distance movement of migrants who do not display the social-ranking required to carry-out military conquest. Under the demography-subsistence model, language replacement is the product of population diffusion. Certain conditions must be present for demography subsistence to work. The most important of these is demographic growth through the introduction of a new subsistence technology. The demography-subsistence model that will be used in this study was elaborated by A.G. Ammermann and L.L. Cavalli-Sforza: it posits a logistic growth pattern for the Slavic migration period. Under logistic growth, a population density of 0.1 inhabitants per square kilometer increases at an annual rate of 3.9%, resulting in a doubling every 18 years. Population growth tapers-off until it reaches 0 when saturation takes place at 5 inhabitants per square kilometer. This model was selected for the following reasons. First, some archaeologists have been arguing that the
density of Slavic settlement in the Balkans was significantly greater during the sixth and seventh centuries than in other parts of the Slavic world, including the western Ukraine, an area which many experts believe represents the aboriginal homeland of the Slavs. J. Henning and K. Randsborg have recently argued that the sixth and seventh centuries witnessed a substantial demographic rise in the Balkans, despite the unstable political climate. They attributed this phenomenon to the introduction of a new subsistence technology to the region. The demography-subistence model seemed to explain this phenomenon best.

A subset of the demography-subistence paradigm is known as the wave of advance model, which posits random movement by farmers over short distances over time, usually several kilometers per generation of 25 years:

The wave of advance model is concerned with describing situations in which processes of diffusion and growth take place simultaneously...The model was first put forward by Fisher (1937), who was interested in the problem of the spread of an advantageous gene and had the insight of describing the spread in terms of an advancing wave front. Fisher gave a solution for the stationary form of the wave front for the case of the diffusion of an advantageous gene in a one-dimensional habitat. D.G. Kendall (1948) subsequently gave, by another mathematical approach, a model for the spread of a population growing exponentially and with the diffusion process taking place in a two-dimensional space. This work was extended by Skellam (1951), who developed a formulation of the model in which population growth was treated in a logistic manner. Soil exhaustion prompts the migration in the first place, while the introduction of new forms of subsistence technology yields a population increase that follows the aforementioned logistical growth path. Large-scale dispersion of entire groups is not required because the spread of the
new subsistence technology can be achieved by diffusion of innovation. In addition to wave of advance, the phenomenon of in situ language replacement will be explained in terms of a model known as cumulative Slavicity. This study has appropriated this model from C. Hawkes, who recently published a study on the sociocultural development of the Celts which he termed cumulative mutual Celticity.11

Byzantine archaeology has come a long way over the past twenty years. A new menu of theoretically-based approaches is now available to the researcher. The popularity of theoretical modeling in archaeology first gained impetus during the 1960s. Many of its proponents belonged to a movement called the New Archaeology. New archaeology is an omnibus designation that encompasses a number of mini-movements.12 Although some of these mini-movements are at philosophical logger-heads, it is necessary to elaborate upon those differences: suffice it to say that theoretical modeling has both its share of proponents as well as opponents. New archaeology spawned a derivative movement called processual archaeology. Processual archaeology stresses modeling to test the limits of inference. Most processual archaeologists work with pre-historic societies; therefore, the research strategies they have pioneered are admirably suited for studying the lower end of the settlement hierarchy—indeed, herein lies the strength of the approach. By contrast, Classical archaeology's traditional strong suit has been investigating the upper end of the settlement hierarchy.13 Though the situation is changing rapidly, many Classical archaeologists still operate within an out-dated paradigm that stresses the primacy of philology over archaeology, that is to say, the primacy of written sources over material culture. The subordination of
material culture to written texts is a phenomenon rooted in the nineteenth century, when Classical philologists exercised a profound influence within the discipline. This circumstance had the consequence of severing the link between artifact and its stratigraphic context, since the role of material culture was perceived at that time as providing illustration for the written text—processual archaeology seeks to reverse this relationship, and to restore the artifact to its stratigraphic context.

The Classical archaeologist enjoys numerous benefits that his colleagues who study pre-historic Europe do not. For instance, he enjoys the benefit of having at his disposal an enormous evidentiary base, painstakingly compiled by colleagues over decades of fieldwork. Moreover, he deals with sophisticated cultures that left behind written texts. Classical archaeology, in its purest form, placed a great deal of emphasis on the systematic excavation of a site; increasingly, however, the cost of large-scale excavation is becoming prohibitive. Therefore, in recent years, new approaches, such as field survey, have gained in popularity; nonetheless, the Antique polis remains the principal focus of investigation. The fate of the polis in Greece is better understood than its counterpart in the north Balkans, where fewer excavations and field surveys have been carried out. Byzantine archaeologists have tended to avoid studying the lower end of the settlement hierarchy, perhaps because they were skeptical about the applicability of methodologies developed by new world archaeologists. But the fact is that some of these methodologies show great potential, as this study will endeavor to show. Several new processual models, some of which were recently elaborated by C. Renfrew, represent the theoretical framework of this study.
Processual modeling is a useful heuristic device that allows us to view the phenomenon of Slavicization in a new light. The key to solving the problem of Slavicization of the Balkans lies in understanding the phenomenon of language replacement which can occur in a number of ways. The processual models that will be considered in this study will focus on in situ language replacement through wave of advance, and on exponential demographic growth through the introduction of a new subsistence technology by migrant farmers who do not display a high degree of stratification. In this study an explicit attempt will be made to establish new insights into the nature of Byzantine-Slavic cultural interaction during the initial period of contact (i.e., the sixth and seventh centuries). This task has never been attempted before at the synthetic level using processual models. This study will challenge the prevailing orthodoxy of opinion on three fundamental issues. First it will examine the contentious problem concerning the origins of the Slavs (i.e., their ethnogenesis). Second it will address the issue of Slavic invasions and land-taking. Third, it will demonstrate that the Slavs did use cities in the sixth century.

Geography and Culture

In the Balkans, geography influences virtually everything from climate to settlement density. The mountainous hinterland fosters pastoral economies, and cultural isolation; the alluvial plains meanwhile, are host to sedentary populations who have traditionally been in contact with the rest of Europe. From time immemorial, the empire-builders of the Balkan peninsula dwelled in the plains, situated either along the various coastlines, or in the principal river basins. Because of its geographical location intermediate between East and West, Eastern and Western influences both
played a formative role in determining the cultural matrix of the Balkans.\(^{16}\) Today, the cultural fault line that separates East from West, extends from Kordun in western Croatia to Sofia (ancient Serdika). The presence of this cultural fissure essentially corresponds to the so-called Jireček line that separated Latin from Greek-speakers in Antiquity.\(^{19}\) Originally, that line of cultural demarcation extended from Bar to Serdika, but the boundary got displaced to its present location in the wake of the Serb exodus from Kosovo and Ras to Bosnia, Vojvodina, and Croatia during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.\(^{20}\) The collapse of Roman authority coincided with the period of Slavic migrations. The relationship between these two transformative events has long been a subject of scholarly dispute which has found its echoes with public policy debates in Modern Balkan states. The first stage in this process began with the collapse of Roman authority in the Balkans during the sixth and seventh centuries. The surviving literary sources, invaluable as they are, are fraught with gaps. Thus, events of critical importance can not be reconstructed. With few notable exceptions, the written sources are not particularly informative. Byzantine historians merely noted that the Slavs invaded Illyricum—seldom do they inform us how these invasions were executed. Furthermore, modern prejudices about the sterility of late Antique culture also have played a role in coloring our perceptions. This is why some modern historians have considered the reign of Maurice as the last gasp of the moribund Roman empire.\(^{21}\) The proponents of this view detested the sixth-century because it ushered in the Middle Ages which they viewed as a time of economic retrenchment, population decline, and urban contraction.
Approximately five hundred theories pertaining to the "fall" of the Roman empire have been propounded by scholars since Edward Gibbon. Most of those theories can be divided into two, antithetical groups: namely, those which champion the primacy of internal causes, versus those which advocate the precedence of external causes, such as barbarian invasions. A cursory glance at the literature on the subject of Slavic "invasions" in the Balkans reveals the undisputed primacy that migration theories have held. Virtually all of these studies attribute sweeping demographic changes in the Balkans to barbarian invasions. The combination of Slavic invasions on the one hand, and Persian-Arab invasions on the other, sealed the fate of Classical civilization in the eastern Mediterranean—or so we have been led to believe. But the crucial question, often ignored, is why the Slavic invasions succeeded when preceding Germanic and Hunnic invasions failed to effect permanent language replacement? The sixth and seventh centuries are often depicted as the zenith of Slavic colonization; but no compelling evidence exists to support the contention that a wholesale land-taking had in fact occurred, or, that the extirpation of indigenous peoples had taken place. One of the reasons scholars have upheld this distorted perception is that they have been over-reliant on the literary sources.

In this study the expression Slavic migration period pertains chronologically to the sixth and seventh centuries AD, while geographically, it will apply to the Balkan peninsula. According to prevailing orthodoxy, waves of Slavic migrants set off from some notional homeland and violently dispossessed the indigenous populations of the Balkans and Eastern Europe. But this view rests on three faulty premises. First, this study will demonstrate that archaeological evidence has been interpreted mistakenly
as proof of the arrival of a new elite. Second, the family tree approach to linguistics, which posits an aboriginal homeland and an aboriginal common language, has been rejected by many linguists. There is no single, united "Common Slavic" but a complex of "living multidialectal languages" never spoken in the same way by all the ancestors of the modern Slavs. The premodern forms of Slavic languages were not brought in by migrants, but rather developed in situ. Finally, a common language does not imply a common ethnicity or common political program because linguistic groups are not the same as social groups.

The family-tree approach for example posits linguistic diffusion by migration; it is the linguistic equivalent to archaeologie dissocié, or the attribution of new material equipment to the arrival of new peoples through some form of elite dominance. Just as linguists are abandoning the family-tree approach in favor of newer methods like the wave of advance theory, archaeologists in the West are abandoning models of elite displacement in favor of interaction models. That linguistic wave need not have originated from some epi-center in which an Urvolk who spoke Common Slavic set out from some Urheimat in order to conquer new lands—indeed, no particular region constituted the zone of innovation. In fact, the concept of an Urheimat is a derivative of Stammbaumtheorie, which in turn is derived from nineteenth-century German theorists who introduced the term Keimzelle (embryonic cell) into historical linguistics; the introduction of this term sparked a debate over the use of the biological metaphor, or any metaphor for that matter, in linguistic reconstruction. Common Slavic however was not the united idiom A. Meillet and others supposed. The dialectic unity of Common Slavic has been abandoned for several decades,
since it was based on a fallacious analogy with Romance languages—specifically Latin—where scholars in that field once assumed there was an undivided vulgar Latin. In the words of Trubachev, Common Slavic was a “living multidialectal language.” One can trace this old view to the influence of structuralists on Slavic history, Slavic archaeology, and Slavic linguistics; the concept of a united Slavic homeland, and a unitary, dialectless idiom derives from structuralist methodology concerning the search for uncontradictory, underlying patterns embedded in human culture.

The Balkan peninsula is situated at the western terminus of the steppe corridor that stretches from outer Mongolia to the Dobrudja (Roman Scythia Minor). This invasion corridor was extraordinarily busy from the fourth through fourteenth centuries AD, as wave after wave of Turko-Hunnic peoples migrated into Europe. Nevertheless, despite repeated attempts, few of these invaders managed to maintain their ethnic identity among the autochthonous populations of the Balkans.

The case of the Magyars, who in the tenth century effected successful language replacement in the Tisza basin, is the only attested exception to this rule. The only nomads who effected language replacement in eastern Europe are the Magyars. A processual model known as sedentary/mobile boundary shift also accounts for language change. For example, the influx of Magyar nomad pastoralists into Pannonia created an interface separating sedentary, agricultural communities from nomad, pastoralist ones. The conjuncture of climatic, economic, or social conditions caused a displacement of the interface, resulting in language replacement. Nomad pastoralism relies on livestock management (cattle, horses, sheep, etc.):
The traditional explanation is that the mountainous terrain of the Balkans played a key role in blunting the Turkification of southeast Europe during the early Middle Ages. Steppe nomads generally were content to secure in the alluvial plains, especially the Pannonian and Danubian river basins. Within this ecological niche, nomad cavalry could operate safely in the open. According to conventional wisdom, the autochthonous populations sought refuge in the mountainous highlands, where they gradually made the transformation from sedentary, plain-dwellers to transhumant shepherds. D. Obolensky aptly described this interaction between the highlanders and the lowlanders: "The mountains have a rhythmical pulse, absorbing and disgorging whole peoples."26

But if the mountainous interior of the peninsula provided sanctuary against invaders, it also fostered political fragmentation. Indeed, in the Balkans, familial, local, and regional concerns have always taken precedence over broader matters of national interest. For over a thousand years the inhabitants of the Balkans lived under the standard of Rome, Constantinople or Istanbul. Roman authority in south-eastern Europe was concentrated in administrative centers, the poleis, situated in the plains and connected by an intricate network of military roads. Although the extent of Romanization in the Balkan hinterland varied from region to region, the cities in the alluvial plains were more Romanized than upland settlements, where the effects of urban culture remained minimal. This condition obtained until the sixth and seventh centuries, when elemental changes transformed the poleis into medieval kastra. What was the catalyst driving these changes? Should
one characterize the social and cultural history of late Antique/early Medieval Balkans as a continuation of the Antique way of life, or should one speak in terms of a break with the Classical tradition? One way to approach this problem is to examine the fate of the autochthonous populations in selected regions of Roman Illyricum and Scythia Minor after the sixth-century "Slav invasions." Are there cases where autochthonoi and Slavs are attested in urban contexts?

Since the 1960s, scholars have been searching for alternative explanations for some of the aforementioned issues. For example, D. Obolensky, whose seminal work, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, explored the ways in which the Slavs appropriated Byzantine formal culture. Obolensky published this work at a time when acculturation studies had reached their zenith. Since the publication of the Commonwealth, the further nuancing of acculturative models has continued into this decade. One popular theory of culture change, first espoused in the mid-1960s, and still in vogue today, posits reciprocal changes over time after two disparate cultures come into contact. This supposition holds true even if one of the two cultures is an incipient one. Obolensky was one of the first Byzantinists who sought to explore the theme of culture contact between Byzantium and the Slavs; indeed his incisive analysis explored the effects of Byzantinization on many facets of Slavic culture. Obolensky adduced copious examples in support of Byzantinization; in fact, R. Browning asserted that the degree of Byzantinization was so profound among the Serbians and Bulgarians, that he was often hard pressed to distinguish copy from original.27 The rapidity with which South Slavic formal culture changed should, in large measure, be ascribed to geographic proximity with Byzantium. The assimilation of
Byzantine culture by the South Slavs was a process that spanned many centuries. The particulars of this dynamic are better documented for the later Middle Ages. Meanwhile a comprehensive investigation of the early phases of this interaction has yet to be undertaken in earnest.

Cultural historians who equate culture with formal culture and with superstructure err because there is more to culture than this. Obolensky committed the same mistake when he studied the effects of the diffusion of Byzantine culture on the superstructure of Bulgar society, while systematically neglecting to compare corresponding substructures. Obolensky dealt exclusively with the political elites who appropriated Byzantine culture to solidify their control over existing superstructures. He then went on to enumerate his list of Slavic cultural appropriations from Byzantium; this is little more than a taxonomic exercise involving the classification of the elements of high culture according to provenance. The legitimacy of this technique is not being called into question since it does seem to work with certain categories of evidence. With so much disproportionate attention devoted to superstructure, infrastructure has received short shrift over the years. I should point out that Obolensky is not alone in this regard; in fact, the vast majority of extant studies concerning the diffusion of Byzantine culture to the Slavs has always worked within this conceptual framework. In most cases, this approach was coupled with a static definition of culture. The identification of culture with "high" or formal culture leads to unfortunate value-judgements about societies that remained within the primitive/low culture mode of existence longer than other neighboring cultures.
Finally, since this dissertation is a case-study in culture change, I should define what I mean by culture. I will begin by citing E. B. Taylor, who in 1871 defined culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."28 In 1968, D. L. Clarke defined culture as "the cumulative integration of new elements which result in a system transmutation."29 Culture is one of those global terms with an infinity of meanings; indeed, over one hundred sixty-four definitions have been postulated since Taylor. Having surveyed many of these definitions, I have determined that Taylor and Clarke's definitions cohere best with my conception of culture. The advantage to their approach is that culture is not reduced to one or two essential elements. Many cultural historians are guilty of equating culture with political institutions, with political ideology, or with purity of race.30 This study will eschew such partitive definitions of culture because I think they are overly simplistic; I advocate a return to broadly-based definitions like the one advanced by Taylor over a century ago; I also advocate a return to definitions of culture that view the emergence of a new cultural complex the result of social interaction, not social isolation. According to D. L. Clarke, culture is:

...the cumulative integration of new elements which result in a system transmutation.31

The paucity of documentation long provided scholars with an excuse for not delving into this matter. The absence of a systematic methodology that synthesizes the available evidence, literary, archaeological, and linguistic, represents the foremost obstacle to further study. Recently, S. Franklin and R. Browning have attempted to develop broader,
interdisciplinary approaches; yet, in the end, formal culture and written sources were disproportionately represented.

The geographical focus of this study includes areas of the north Balkans where language replacement was carried out successfully. This study also seeks to use archaeological and linguistic evidence to effect a synthesis both at the theoretical and at the methodological levels; it represents one of the first attempts to establish a theoretically-based view of Byzantine-Slavic cultural interaction since the publication of works by Browning and Obolensky. Finally, this study differs from some approaches in one significant way: the geographic and chronological scope will be less ambitious than Obolensky's Commonwealth.

Important internal, social and economic developments were underway in the Balkans during the sixth and seventh centuries; these developments culminated in the emergence of a new cultural matrix. This matrix was in turn the product of a complex interplay between economic and social forces that migrationist theories alone do not adequately explain. Nevertheless, while archaeologists are certainly right in seeking to unearth the internal economic and social causes of this dynamic, they should take care not to overlook the linguistic phenomenon known as language replacement. In the past, it was customary for archaeologists to equate, on an essentially one-to-one basis, the appearance of new types of material culture, such as pottery forms, with the appearance of new ethnic groups. This study, by contrast, will argue that the phenomenon of in situ language replacement played a far more significant role in facilitating the spread of Common Slavic in the Balkans. From the second half of the sixth to the tenth centuries, Common Slavic-Old Church Slavic replaced Greek, Danubian Latin,
and the autochthonous languages of the Balkan Peninsula without large-scale migrations. Migrations took place, although both their scale and their importance must be reassessed. One of the merits of this approach is that it does not posit the virtual extirpation of autochthonous populations, as so many mainstream theories do. It is improbable that entire ethnic groups like the Thracians and the Dacians disappeared from the face of the earth after centuries of existence. Populations in the Balkans remained fairly steady in the Balkans from Antiquity through the Middle Ages. It makes more sense to suggest that these groups became something else, both linguistically and culturally, and I think the dynamic of language replacement played a vital role in this transformation.

Language replacement coincided with the diffusion of a new subsistence technology. The Slavicization of the Balkans, and the subsequent Byzantinization of those Slavs, is a twofold process that must be understood against the backdrop of internal social transformations taking place throughout the Mediterranean basin, beginning in the sixth century. This century marks an important turning point in the history of Southeastern Europe; during this time, the European provinces of the Imperium Romanum endured a series of political crises. While it is true that some poleis did fall to the Slavs, there is no compelling evidence to suggest this was the case everywhere in Illyricum and Scythia Minor.

Under the right set of conditions, political instability can actually foster economic and demographic growth. One such case is the Danubian plain during the Slavic migration period, which was more exposed to barbarian cultural influences than other regions of the Balkans. Some thirty-seven years ago, the eminent Byzantinist, P. Lemerle, observed that
during the Slavic migration period, the Danube frontier was a zone of intense cultural interaction. His work has been overlooked, and the extent and the nature of these contacts has never been systematically investigated. According to Lemerle, the Danube was the principal cultural interface where most of this “market” exchange took place. According to Lemerle, the Danube was the principal cultural interface where most of this “market” exchange took place.3 However, there is now enough archaeological and linguistic evidence to attempt a reconstruction of the processes that led to the Slavicization of the north Balkans. The Danube was at once a political frontier and a cultural interface. Significantly, Roman poleis situated throughout northern Illyricum were the foci of peaceful coexistence between autochthonous inhabitants and immigrant farmers from territories beyond the north bank of the Danube. This study will examine the acculturative mechanisms underwriting this symbiosis over time. These “mixed” settlements were the loci for the diffusion of a new forms of subsistence technology to many parts of the Balkans. This subsistence technology fostered demographic growth during the Slavic migration period, and it facilitated the spread of Common Slavic throughout the Balkans.

1i.e., Modern-day Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, the former Yugoslavia, and, Albania.


12. Lewis Binford, Patty Jo Watson, Kent Flannery, David Clark, and Colin Renfrew are prominent exponents of new archaeology.

13. 19th century German scholarship advocated the systematic collection of facts as a forerunner leading to the pronouncement of generalizations. For a detailed discussion of this, see, S. L. Dyson, "From New to New Age Archaeology: Archaeological Theory and Classical Archaeology," AJA 97 (1993): p. 195 (hereafter cited as Dyson, "Archaeology"). The model classical archaeologists used when organizing a large-scale systematic excavation was the American corporation which fostered specialization, fragmentation, and the cataloguing. Viewed from this perspective, it was not necessary to generate models for culture change. But classical archaeology is situated at a fork in the road: the wholesale excavation of site on the mega scale is financially cost-prohibitive. This approach was once deemed the raison d'être of classical archaeology. Classical archaeology can no longer ignore questions of epistemology and current ideology. Future trends in Classical archaeology include settlement survey, depositional and post-depositional research, among others. S. L. Dyson, "New Methods in the Study of Roman Town-Country Systems," In The Ancient World. 2 vols, 2: 91-95. M. Rautman, "Archaeology and Byzantine Studies," Byzantinische Forschungen 15 (1990): 137-165 (hereafter cited as Rautman, "Archaeology"). J. H. Rosser, "A Research Strategy for Byzantine Archaeology," Byzantine Studies 6 (1979): 152-166. The premise behind field survey is that the distribution of artifacts reflect a sub-soil reality. Less clear are the reasons why classical archaeology has resisted theoretically-based approaches. On the one hand, an aversion toward universal covering laws may lie at the root of the matter, while on the other hand, the special reverence for classical archaeology may be grounded in its ties with Western civilization overall. The positivist influence on archaeology is based on the questionable assumption that historical patterns are "found" not "made" by value-free investigators interested in the facts. Cf. P. Novick, That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988): p.2.

14. In contrast to written texts, archaeology can illuminate features of social life at the micro-level. It can also provide evidence for prosperity and abandonment too. See Rautman, "Archaeology," p. 151.

15. Byzantine archaeology was originally an offshoot of Classical archaeology.

16. The notable exception is R. Browning, Byzantium and Bulgaria, (Berkeley, 1975) (hereafter referred to as Browning, Byzantium).
17. Stašević, Borba za samostalnost katoličke crkve u Nemanjičkoj državi, (Belgrade: Davidović, 1912).


19. In contrast to antiquity, today the displaced Jireček line divides Slavs who were drawn into the cultural orbit of Latin Christendom (some scholars refer to this group as Slavia latina), from Slavs who were drawn into the cultural sphere of Byzantium (Slavia orthodoxa), that is to say, the Croats and Serbs respectively.

20. Following an abortive uprising, many Serbs, under the leadership of the Patriarch of Peć, Arsenije III Crnojević fled, in 1699, to areas under Hapsburg control where they were granted permission to settle. There were subsequent migrations that continued throughout the course of the eighteenth century. In this way, Serbs came to form a majority in certain regions once inhabited by Croatians. The fighting in Croatia today is a direct legacy of the aforementioned migrations. In Bosnia, a different dynamic was at work; Serbs came to form a majority there only after the Ottomans began their razzias into Serbia after the battle of Kosovo in 1389. Before the fourteenth century, Bosnia was an area of mixed, Croat-Serb settlement, although the Croats probably were in the majority.


22. A. Meillet, Obshcheslavianski razuk, (Moscow, 1951).


25. Entirely paragraph closely follows Renfrew, Archaeology, pp. 120-142.


27. A. Browning, Byzantium.

26


31 Clarke, *Archaeology*, p. 106.

CHAPTER II
WHO WERE THE SLAVS?

The ethnic origins of the Slavs has long exercised the imaginations of scholars, for indeed, there is a vast body of literature on this subject. Many prominent Slavists were inspired by nineteenth-century structuralist thought. On the analogy of the Proto Indo-European example, they posited the existence of an aboriginal Slavic people (Urfolk) who dwelled in a racially unified, aboriginal homeland (i.e., Urheimat). Polish Slavists have sought the homeland of the Slavs in the Odra and Vistula basins, while Russian and Ukrainian Slavists have looked to southwestern Ukraine (e.g., Korchak and Penkovka zones), and as central and southeastern European Slavists have tended to view the Carpathian arc-Danubian plain as the ancestral homeland of the Slavs. But past scholars have been laboring under an essential misapprehension: the Slavs of today are not synonymous with the Sklavenoi of the written sources. The simple explanation for this is that social groups are not the same as linguistic groups. Slavic ethnogenesis was the result of convergence or cultural interaction, and not of isolation as structuralists previously maintained. Available archaeological and linguistic evidence places Slavic ethnogenesis sometime in the ninth century—though chronological certainty in this regard is impossible.
Traditional Interpretations of the Ethnogenesis of the Slavs

The traditional scholarship of the ethnogenesis of the Slavs is rooted in the intellectual presumptions and methodologies of the mid-nineteenth century. The first Slavic philologists were driven by the guiding precepts of historical and Classical philology. Many were trained in Vienna by mentors who were heavily influenced by the emerging romantic nationalism of the times. This fact is reflected in the polemical character of their publications. For instance, one of the principal issues that dominated academic debate was whether the ancient Slavs possessed a more primitive social and political organization than the Germans of that same time. Predictably, scholarship usually, though not always, split along nationalist lines. Hence, German scholarship endeavored to show that their forebears had a higher niveau of social organization vis-à-vis the Slavs during the *Volkewanderung*; Pan-Slav theoreticians, meanwhile, reversed that order of precedence. There is no question that the *Zeitgeist* of the nineteenth century played a formative role in shaping the tenor of this polemic. Put another way, the Germanophile-Slavophile exchange had more to do with the political realities of the day than with scholarly inquiry.2 Significantly, structuralist-Romanticist notions concerning the aboriginal homeland and aboriginal common language of the ancient Slavs were never fully questioned by philologists and historical linguists until the last twenty years.

Most of these scholars concluded that the ethnogenesis of the Slavs occurred between the second and third millennia BC. They localized the Slavic ancestral homeland between the Vistula and Dniepr rivers. Archaeologists first joined the debate rather late, just before the turn of
the century; indeed, the 1890s witnessed the first excavation of early Slav settlements on the river Teterev in the Ukraine. The hastily prepared results of this and other excavations typically were used to corroborate, in partisan fashion, the Pan-Slav hypothesis that the Slavs had been around at least as long as the Germans. Slav archaeologists defined the mission of their discipline as being the handmaiden of Slavic philology. By so doing they were merely mirroring a broader trend within Classical philology—Classical archaeology. In retrospect, turn-of-the-century archaeologists and philologists were decades away from formulating methodologies designed to correlate their respective findings. That breakthrough is only now underway, and it is attributable to processual archaeologists.

The seminal research of M. Vasmer played a vital role in broadening our understanding of the Slavic migrations. He espoused an approach known as Ausschliessungsmethode, which led him to conclude that there was no purely Slavic toponymic zone on the one hand, and that Slavic toponyms appeared over a wide and permeable expanse on the other. Vasmer also argued that the period between 400-250 B.C. witnessed the crystallization of Common Slavic, a conclusion reached independently by L. Niederle. However, the Stammbaumtheorie or family-tree approach once used by Slavic linguists, including Vasmer, to establish the date of separation between Slavic and other Indo-European languages such as German is no longer in vogue. In fact, some Slavic linguists have come to reject once popular approaches used by Vasmer to localize the homeland of the Slavs, such as the exclusion method, which seeks to identify areas of purely Slavic toponomy and hydronymy (the antithesis of Ausschliessungsmethode). All of these approaches are predicated on the assumption that every ethnos has an
ancestral homeland, just as every man has a homeland, and every ethnos, a language. In addition, many of these explanations used a questionable biological metaphor, first proposed by German Slavists (e.g., Keimzelle, or embryonic cell, theory), which led to a false impression about linguistic development.

To summarize, three structuralist concepts, Urvolk, Ursprache, and Urheimat inspired the quest for an aboriginal homeland for the Slavs. The silence of Greek and Roman sources on this matter merely solidified the claims of nineteenth-century Slavists that the Slavs must have originated from some homeland. This structuralist approach was adopted by the majority of modern Slavists; indeed, structuralism accounts for the popular interest and publishing frenzy in the nineteenth century on topics concerning the pre-historic migrations of Greeks, Germans, Aryans, and Slavs. In the nineteenth century, two theories localizing the aboriginal homeland of the Slavs were advanced by Slav philologists: the first situated the Slav homeland between the Oder and the Vistula basins; the second focused on the western Ukraine. The noted Slovak philologist, P.J. Šafářik, was the first modern scholar who attempted to localize the Slav homeland (in his case, to Galicia, Volynia, and Podolia). Interestingly, Šafářik and J. Kopitar both argued that Slav communities developed in situ amid larger Illyrian and Thracian enclaves. Kopitar localized the Slav homeland in Pannonia. Some decades later, L. Niederle rejected Šafářik’s hypothesis in favor of the Middle and Upper Dniepr basins. Meanwhile, Niederle’s near contemporary, Vasmer, upheld Šafářik’s views on behalf of Galicia, Volynia, and Podolia, including the middle Dniepr. During the sixth and seventh decades of this century, Polish archaeologists focused their attention on the
Dniepr-Oder basins: they did so because of the heavy concentration of Slav toponyms and hydronyms there bearing the name *slavut, or some variation of it, especially along the Pripiat, Dniester, Vistula, and Oder rivers. K. Moszyński connected these river and place names with early Slav sites.

**The Dynamics of Slav Ethnogenesis**

Much of the scholarly debate on the ethnogenesis of the Slavs has focused around the etymology of the word “Slav.” The origin of the name of the people, it has been argued, speaks to their origin. Myriad etymologies for the word Slav have been advanced over the centuries. Some German scholars advanced the theory that the words “Slav” and “slave” had the same origin. This etymology permitted them to conclude that Slavs were racially inferior, and from the first destined to serve more advanced (e.g. Teutonic) peoples. This etymology, although dubious, has become the norm in popular writings in the West. In the nineteenth century, some scholars derived Slav from slava, meaning glory or from slovo, meaning speech. The implication was that the Slavs possessed a unified language, in contrast to their dreaded enemies, the nemtsy, or dumb ones (i.e., Germans). However, the comparatively late ethnogenesis of the Slavs (i.e., vis-à-vis the Germans) explains why Common Slav and Old Church Slavic remained fairly unified and intelligible among Slav-speaking communities into the later Middle Ages. Recently elaborated isoglosses indicate that Common Slavic appropriated important lexical borrowings from German and Iranian between the sixth and tenth centuries after Christ. The great Slavic linguist M. Vasmer contended that the Slavs absorbed loan words from Germanic and Iranian between 400-250 BC, and at that time they were already a distinct people. While the linguistic adherents of this approach are in the minority today, it
is significant to note that many Slavic archaeologists still uphold Vasmer’s chronology without question. The reason they do so is that it allows them to posit the linear development between specific cultural complexes into the Iron-Age.

In an unorthodox approach to this vexing problem, O. Pritsak rejected previous attempts by Slavic linguists to find a Slavic etymology for the term Sklavenoi. Rather, he argued that οκλάβος was not an ethnic self-ascription, but the name for a particular type of trained slave often used by various steppe tribes as a frontier warrior. Pritsak proposed the following etymology for Slav, which he derived from Hunno-Turkic *saqlaw > *sqlaw (the initial a was elided), with plural *sqlaw-in. *Sqlaw had two meanings: to guard, to watch; a trained slave. The Romans seemingly appropriated the form Sklavenoi from Turkic, merely adding the Greek desinence -oi to form the nominative plural. In Slavic, the consonantal cluster *skl was reduced to sl, while the Turkic suffix -in became Slavic -šn(e), an ending that denoted a social group. According to Pritsak, the oldest reconstructive phase of Slavic directly preceded the written phase (middle ninth century). Some time between 750-800, the Sklavenoi adopted Slav as an ethnomym; significantly, this period coincided with the demise of the Avar pax.8 Pritsak speculated that the Slavs adopted this particular name because they wished to project the image to their Frankish (i.e., nemtsy) neighbors that the Slavs were a people with an established history and language. Moreover, their language was mutually intelligible, unlike the idiom of the Germans which had already undergone extensive differentiation.

Pritsak finds further evidence of the steppe origin of the Sklavenoi in a written source, the Miracula Sancti Demetri. It contains important
references to individual Sklavenoi tribes. The author of the first book, which contains fifteen Miracles, was Archbishop John I of Thessaloniki, who was an eye-witness to the Avar-Sklavenoi siege of in 614. The name of the author of the second book has not survived. In the first miracle of book two, the anonymous author mentions the names of five Sklavenoi "tribes": ραπιονηται, βελγεζηται, βερζηται, δρουγουβηται, and σαγουδηται. Pritsak suggests that these names are of steppe origin. Except for the σαγουδηται, the first four tribal names contain the Altaic suffix -it, meaning "an adherent of." Baioun is derived from Old Turkic *bayun, meaning rich merchant; Belegez is derived from Hunnic belegeč, meaning elder sister of the clan; Berz is derived from Barč, the name of a Bulgar clan; Drougouw is derived from a combination of Old Turkic *tur, meaning to stand upright or to fight, and *gug, meaning he who stands still or is shy. Drougouw was thus a nickname applied jocularly to the leader who founded this particular "tribe." Sagudat is derived from East Iranian *saka-dat, meaning gift of the stag (the stag was a Scythian totem). Therefore, the meaning of Sagudat is he who bore the totem of the stag.

Pritsak asserted that the five "tribes" did not yet designate an ethnos, but rather racially mixed confederations under the leadership of Turkic headmen. While Pritsak's etymologies remain unproven, resting as they do on reconstructions of hypothetical originals, his contention that the Slavic languages and the Slavic people emerged from steppe warrior confederations deserves careful consideration. According to O. Pritsak, late Antique authors' "Sklavenoi" referred not to a nationality or ethnic group, but to a social category. Pritsak held that late Antique historians used the term Sklavenoi in a technical sense, referring to specially-trained, frontier
warriors. These Sklavenoi were formed from disparate social groups and
cultural complexes. The matrix of their ancient culture included both rural
and urban, as well as autochthonous communities of central and
southeastern Europe. The racial origins of these groups can not be
determined in every instance, but they must have included Dacian, Thracian,
and Illyrian groups resident in the Balkans during the Slavic migration
period. As regards the problematic debate over the etymology of the word
Slav, in the absence of new evidence the issue remains insoluble.

The emergence of Common Slavic was the result of cultural
interaction, some of it possibly developed in the military camps referred to
by Pritsak. These camps may have accelerated the development of a supra-
hamlet idiom, with a newly developed lexicon that could be used to carry out
the administrative and military needs of the pax. In this way, the camps
were a catalyst for socio-linguistic development of the Slavs. The
Slavicization of the Balkans was a complex process, involving social
interaction and linguistic convergence. But the Sklavenoi presence in the
Balkans was not large enough to effect the displacement of existing
languages. Although ancient historians and modern scholars in their works
have emphasized invasions and military conquest, sites throughout the
Balkans indicate we should give precedence to internal, local, and regional
interactions and transformations. As we shall see, those responsible for
the transformation of the Balkans were not Pritsak’s Sklavenoi shock
troops, but immigrant farmers who introduced a new form of subsistence
technology to the region.

Whatever the “racial” origins of the Sklavenoi, this study will argue
that it was the immigrant farmers who effected the Slavicization of the
Balkans. The presence of immigrant farmer social groups from the silvo-steppe zone of the Ukraine to the Carpathian arc is indicated only in the archaeological record. It was their gradual diffusion south of the Danube that Byzantine and Slavic archaeologists are finding increasing evidence for in the archaeological record. The evidence supports two distinct groups: farmers and the Sklavenoi warrior bands whose military operations were often closely associated with various steppe nomads.

The written sources reveal four distinct usages of the word "Slav." The word sometimes refers to a people whom the Arabs, Byzantines, and Germans designated by that term. In addition, certain people called themselves "Slavs." Third, the word Slav refers to a language group as modern linguists define it. Finally, the word Slav, used by scholars, refers to a relatively homogeneous cultural complex that spawned numerous variants throughout Eastern Europe and the Balkans. The second and fourth definitions cohere with the definitions of "race" and culture espoused by V. Gordon Childe, whose seminal work, *The Danube in Prehistory*, defined culture as a constantly recurring assemblage of artifacts. It is noteworthy that Childe also equated culture with race on a one-to-one correspondence; Childe was thus one of the principal architects of archéologie dissociée. Significantly, many east European anthropologists and archaeologists still espouse the Childian view of ethnos, as a recent example, from Kozlov and Bromley, clearly demonstrates:

[ethnos is] a firm aggregate of people, historically established on a given territory, possessing in common relatively stable particularities of language and culture, (italics mine) and also recognizing their unity and difference from other similar formations
(self-awareness) and expressing this in a self-appointed name (ethnonym).\textsuperscript{13}

Despite its overwhelming popularity, cracks in the Childian edifice were beginning to show in the early 1970s. For example, in a significant theoretical departure from Childian anthropology, the noted Georgian cultural anthropologist, T. Dragadze, proposed a so-called two-dimensional view of ethnos, according to which human social development passed through horizontal and vertical strata over time. Dragadze's view of ethnos represented a fresh way of looking at an old problem; it impinged on the question of Slav ethnogenesis in two distinct ways. At the core of Dragadze’s definition lay the idea that ethnic awareness takes generations, if not centuries, to achieve, and that a social group reaches an important stage of social development when it began to perceive of itself as socially or linguistically distinct from its neighbors. The primary marker of development was language, although before it was attained, language played a less vital role. Hence, an ethnos becomes an ethnos only when its members perceive themselves as such. Though Dragadze strove for greater theoretical precision, he failed to press his ideas to their logical conclusion.

It was C. Renfrew who put forward the premise that language, political organization, and material culture need not coincide.\textsuperscript{14} For instance, according to Renfrew, language development assumed two principal forms: several different languages might arise within a single, ethnic group (i.e., divergence), or separate ethne might speak a single language, as in the case of Arabic (i.e., convergence). Besides language, there are other ways to define ethnos. One approach that is popular among cultural anthropologists interested in pre-modern societies is to look at kinship
relations rather than at political institutions. This was an important revelation, because steppe empires were often little more than confederations consisting of disparate social groups with divergent levels of social development, often existing side-by-side. For example, some ethnic groups, such as the Avars, possessed a highly structured, political-territorial organization, while other groups within their confederation displayed modest evidence for social ranking. One of these egalitarian social groups, the Sklavenoi, became self-aware only after the dissolution of the Avar Khaganate in the ninth century. In the Dragadzian sense, social groups attained self-awareness through a series of internal dynamics. There was, however, another type of social development that yielded identical results: ethnicity that was conferred from above. Perhaps to a limited extent, as will be demonstrated later, the ethnogenesis of the Slavs was conferred from above.

To avoid confusion, the term Sklavenoi here designates a group of pax-style warriors. The term does not denote an ethnic group in the modern sense of the word. By contrast, in specific contexts, this study will use the word Slav to designate an ethnos in the modern sense. The adoption of Christianity by many Sklavenoi chiefs probably was a catalyst in solidifying Sklavenoi awareness that they belonged to a broader social and linguistic community. Later in this Chapter, reference will be made to various phases of Slavic social development. The term Proto-Slav, for example, will refer to cultural complexes that have generic similarities with Sklavenoi sites located between the Ukraine and the Balkans. This usage is a departure from previous scholarship in the sense that a generic
connection between Proto-Slavs, Sklavenoi, and Slavs is not being assumed in the analogy.

**Pritsak and the Altaic School**

Once formally constituted, the Sklavenoi went on to established military colonies throughout the Balkans and Eastern Europe in the sixth and seventh centuries. Although Pritsak's assertion that Kotrigur Bulgars were responsible for the formation of the Sklavenoi units remains open to discussion, it was the Avars who fostered their political development. Since steppe nomads played a vital role in the formation of Sklavenoi units, a brief discussion of the socio-political structure of these societies is in order.

The so-called Altaic school that emerged in the early twentieth century developed a markedly different approach to the question of Slavic ethnogenesis. Nomad-pastoralists have dwelled on the steppes for millennia. They mastered steppe ecology by allowing depleted pasturages to replenish as they moved about from site to site in a fixed, seasonal rotation among established pastures to which they zealously protect their claims. Geographically, the steppe is divided into two zones, the eastern highland or mountain steppe of Mongolia, and the western, flat steppe. Topographically, several different kinds of steppelands exist, but only yellow-earth or loess is of concern to us, because it is found in the southern Ukraine, the immediate staging ground for pastoralist migration into Central Europe and the Balkans. Two subsistence economies are possible on the steppe: pastoralism and hunting. Archaeologists once believed that nomad-pastoralist economies represented an intermediate phase between hunter-gatherers and agriculturists; however, agriculture is now thought to
have developed before pastoralism.\textsuperscript{17} Pastoralism includes the management of sheep, horse, and cattle which provide food, fuel, and clothing for the community. Nevertheless, the distinction between farming and herding is not always clear-cut: often they are inextricably intertwined because nomads need bread and plant products too. In fact, settlements with mixed herding and farming/transhumance economies were probably the norm in yellow-earth eco-zones.\textsuperscript{18}

Politically, nomadic-pastoral societies functioned like state societies as long as the ruling clans maintained their charisma, and their unilineal kin corporations retained their patrilineal-agnatic bonds.\textsuperscript{19} There are two components to steppe-pastoral societies: consanguineal or patrilineal-agnatic, and political. Authority in societies organized along agnic lines is determined by generation, and by seniority of birth; a man’s social status is therefore fixed in terms of his collateral rank in a descent line. The \textit{aul} is the fundamental microstructure of a pastoral society: at its head stands an elder who is the senior member of a descent line. \textit{Auls} coalesced into lineages, which converged into clans: the latter merged into clan confederations. Clan confederations in turn melded into hordes. Some Altaicists use the useful term \textit{pax} to refer to the political super-structure of steppe empires.\textsuperscript{20} Membership in a pax was defined by consanguineal bonds; even when a pax disintegrated, these bonds remained essentially intact, and they continued to form the basis of political functions, such as the collection of tribute, or the raising of military auxiliaries, until a new pax was established.

The social and political structures of pastoral societies was quite fluid. Some observers have dubbed this feature as “flat” for two reasons:
first, in certain pastoral societies, corporative kin groups have no hierarchy, that is to say, they are not stratified; second, most of the scholars who discovered flat societies were Western Europeans, whose social structure, like those of Ancient Greece or Rome, consisted of political-territorial units, and not corporative-consanguineous structures. L. Krader, defined the specific conditions that led to the formation of flat societies as follows:

"... corporative kin groups that are groups of extended unilineal families or kin-villages, each forming an exogamous unit, joined with other such units in a common territory recognizing a common tribal name for all." \(^2\)

Krader studied the evolution of Turkic tribal organization through various stages of social development—he placed stratified societies at the apex of the pyramid. Throughout each phase of social development, "classic," pastoral societies maintained their common agnatic bonds. The fusion of kinship unity with political-territorial communities comprised the superstructure of steppe-pastoral societies. Furthermore, the idea of vassalage was foreign to steppe societies: the khagan was the supreme ruler, provided he managed to maintain his charisma, which success on the battlefield often determined.

O. Pritsak studied the role played by Kotrigur Bulgars and Avars in the ethnogenesis of the Slavs. He observed that the ruling strata consisted of the khagan and a consortium of merchants, shaman priests, and warriors: the latter were the bearers of a religion he called the \textit{Männerbünde}. Pritsak traced the origins of the first recorded pax system to the tenth century BC. Typically the members of the ruling stratum of a pax were not pastoralists:
in the event the khagan and the charismatic clans that supported him were forced to migrate from their habitat by enemy pressure, the pax leadership merely sought to re-establish the pax elsewhere. While the territorial location of a pax mattered little to the ruling elites, when possible, pax-builders preferred to establish habitats in close proximity to sedentary empires, because of the skilled craftsmen, farmers, and material wealth which they could appropriate. Merchants played an important role in the perpetuation of a pax; indeed, the relationship between warrior and merchant was inextricably intertwined. The latter bore the responsibility of choosing a new khagan when a pax dissolved. Arguably, the driving force behind the pax was the merchants, for they underwrote the expenses of military conquest incurred by the khagan and his retainers. In exchange for their support, the khagan permitted those merchants to trade, duty-free, throughout the pax. In some cases, merchants even collected the tribute owed to the khagan and to his retainers. In keeping with their cyclical view of time, the dissolution of a pax featured either the replacement of one charismatic clan by another, or the outright substitution of one pax by another; in many documented instances, vanquished tribes assumed the name and the language of the victors.

The khagan’s army consisted of cavalrymen recruited principally from among the charismatic clans; however, pastoralist and sedentary tribes with reputed hunting skills were highly sought-after as important commodities. Depending on the geographic extent of a particular pax, these recruits might be gathered from diverse social groups—some of them came from communities as far afield as Central Asia on the one hand, and eastern Europe on the other. Once herded into regional centers (the officina gentium
of Jordanes), military recruits received training in the tactics of guerrilla warfare. Upon completion of training, these warriors joined pillaging forays or razzias that the khagan directed against sedentary empires. A cavalry unit that consisted of ten thousand men was known as a tüman; tümanın were stationed in administrative-military formations called “arrows” or oqs.

An interesting organizational feature of steppe empires is their division into inner and outer administrative zones. Each zone was subdivided into arrows. According to Pritsak, conscripts who attended military training camps were acculturated in the ways of the pax at a rapid pace; this cultural interaction facilitated the emergence of a lingua franca throughout the pax. The use of Turkic among pastoralists throughout east-central Asia, or of Hunnic among pastoralists resident in west-central Asia from the fifth through the tenth centuries AD, represent two well-known examples of this phenomenon. In the western terminus of the steppe corridor, German and Iranian dialects, by contrast, played important roles as languages of instruction within the military training camps.

Pritsak argued that Salian Franks who underwent specialized military training were known as *vinideri.* Pax-builders in direct contact with Germanic tribes inhabiting the south Ukrainian steppe from the fourth through fifth centuries used these vinidari warriors to train their own military recruits. The De Origine Actibusoue Getarum or Getica of Jordanes, a Romanized Goth who lived in the middle of the sixth century, explicitly referred to the vinidari training centers of the Bulgars, Antes, and Sklavenoi either as a “vagina nationum,” or as an “officina gentium.” Jordanes described the origins of the vinidari as “ex diversis nationibus adgregati,” who in “unum asylum collecti sunt et gentem fecisse
noscuntur." Explicit metaphors such as "vagina nationum" referred to the military training camps discussed above.

These warriors belonged to larger military formations. When the khagan needed to raise an army, he usually amalgamated smaller, disparate tribes into larger ones; alternatively, larger tribes might be broken-down into smaller ones, depending on the tactical needs of the situation. Roman historians corroborated these practices among the Avars and the Onogur Bulgars. For instance, Theophanes the Confessor referred to the consolidation of numerous Sklavenoi units into τὰς λεγομένας ἑπτὰ γενεὰς (i.e., the so-called seven tribes):

δὶ δὲ βουλγαροί τοῦτο λεγομένοι ἐπεδίωκαν ὅπισώ αὐτῶν καὶ τοὺς πλείστους ξίφει ἀνείλον, πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ ἑτραημότησαν. καὶ καταδιώξαντες αὐτοὺς μέχρι τοῦ Δανουβίου καὶ τοῦτον περάσαντες καὶ ἔλεγοντες ἐπὶ τὴν λεγομένην βάρναν πλησίον ὄθόσσον καὶ τοῦ ἐκείστι μεσογαίῳ, τὸν τόπον ἑωρακότες ἐν πολλῇ ἀσφαλείᾳ διακείμενον, ἐκ μὲν τῶν ὅπισθεν διὰ κλεισοῦρὸν καὶ τῆς Ποντικῆς σαλάσσης, κυριευόμενων δὲ αὐτῶν καὶ τῶν παρακείμενων Σκλαυνῶν (sic) ἐθνῶν τὰς λεγομένας ἑπτὰ γενεὰς, τοὺς Σέβερεις κατόρχισαν ἀπὸ τῆς ἐμπροσθεν κλεισοῦρας βερεγάβων ἕπὶ τὰ πρὸς ἀνατολήν μέχρις Ἀβαρίας τῶν ὑπολοίπους ἑπτὰ γενεὰς ὑπὸ πάκτων ὀντας.
Pritsak argued that γένεώς (i.e., the Greek word for tribe) is equivalent to Turkic oq. If one accepts this identification, then all such textual references, as for instance, in the Chronographia of Theophanes the Confessor, the Breviarium of Patriarch Nikephoros, and the Miracula Sancti Demetri, should be interpreted in a new light, since they do not refer to the presence of Slavic tribes, but rather steppe nomadic warrior units. The following analogy, for example, represents a prime illustration of this phenomenon. Many Bulgar tribal names contained the suffix oq. In Hunnic, *onno means ten, and the suffix -gur (according to Pritsak it is the Hunnic equivalent of Turkic oq) means "the ten arrows" (i.e., military formations). This is a reference to a military formation that was once part of the Onogur pax; in time, it became a tribal self-ascription used not only by the actual warriors, but also by the inhabitants of the settlements subject to them—the apellative also applied to captives. Pritsak has suggested that the Slavs formed by the same process: warrior associations of Sklavenoi banded together to conquer the Balkans.

After the death of Attila in 453, the pax he headed fragmented. Germanic kings and their "comitatus" had played a vital role both in the training and in the recruitment of frontier warriors. However, the subsequent departure of the Ostrogoths, Franks, and Alans to Italy and to Gaul left a power vacuum that forced later pax-builders to make adjustments to the sudden man-power shortage. According to Pritsak, when Kotrigur Bulgars reached the north bank of the Danube, they introduced to Europe a solution to this problem—a new brand of warrior units which Greek-speaking historians called Σκλάβοι–Σκλαβηνοί. He held that these units were attested for the first time in Roman sources during the
first half of the sixth century. Pritsak viewed them as professionally trained slaves who were culled from diverse regions of Eastern Europe and the South Ukrainian steppe.

**Sklavenoi Organization**

Some historians have attempted to reconstruct Sklavenoi social and political formations on the basis of the written texts. For instance, references in Byzantine sources to ἔξαρχοι or ἀρχῶντες led some historians to posit a higher level of social organization for certain groups of Sklavenoi, such as the Runchinoi. According to these scholars, Sklavenoi settlements belonged to larger territorial circumspections the Romans called γενεά (nominative singular γένος), above the γένος lay the σκλαβηνία. Roman historians referred to entire frontier regions under Sklavenoi control as ἡ σκλαβηνία / αἱ σκλαβηνίαι. Sklaviniae were territories of varying size. While the leadership of some of Sklaviniae were subject to the Avars, or later to the Onogur Bulgars, others entered into alliance with the Romans—some even became foederati. Theophylakt, who first employed the term Sklavinia in reference to Sklavenoi colonies situated on the left bank of the Danube, writes:

ο μὲν οὖν Πέτρος κατὰ τῆς Σκλαβηνίας (sic) πλησύος
(sic) στρατοπεδεύσαοι παρασκεύαξεν...26

Romanian archaeologists, for example, recently have discovered the presence of early sixth-century settlements clustered along the left bank tributaries of the Danube. These settlements seem to have been abandoned near the turn of the seventh century, when the Sklavenoi razzias into Illyricum reached fever pitch.27 Modern historians continue to debate the
precise sequence and chronology of Sklaviniae formation in the Balkans. G. Ostrogorsky and F. Dvornik each advanced the view that Sklaviniae existed in Transylvania, Dalmatia, Thrace, Moesia, Macedonia, and in the Peloponnesos.28 But as we shall see in the next chapter, the numismatic and written sources that historians have used to confirm the establishment of Sklaviniae south of the Danube before 578-584, is problematic.

The testimony of written sources, although valuable ought not to be accepted uncritically; later Byzantine authors frequently lifted literary topoi from Classical authors. B. Zasterova has painstakingly identified many topoi, but ultimately concluded that Prokopios, Theophylakt, the Miracula, and Pseudo-Maurice present a fairly accurate picture of social, technical, and military developments within Sklavenoi society.29 Vryonis published a study based on literary sources, that reconstructed technological advances in Sklavenoi poliorcetic capabilities. Vryonis cites a passage from Theophylakt in which a Roman engineer from Appiaria, Bousas by name, was captured by the Sklavenoi outside the walls of the polis. When the inhabitants of Appiaria refused to pay Bousas’ ransom, he defected. According to Vryonis, Bousas applied his engineering skills to help the Sklavenoi develop sophisticated siege engines that helped them take fortified cities—this the Sklavenoi could not do before the defection of Bousas.30 This scenario is implausible precisely because it is a disguised topos, in the sense that it echoed a stock theme common to Classical historiography, namely, since the barbarians were inherently incapable of developing their own technology, they had to appropriate it from the Romans.
There is no question that the Avars could, and did, take cities. The Sklavenoi were specialists in amphibious/frontal assault, and in guerrilla warfare. Consequently, the Sklavenoi preferred to build their settlements within certain ecological niches, such as river valleys or on heavily-wooded, marshy terrain. M. Whitby echoed this supposition by arguing that the Sklavenoi did not establish settlements near Roman poleis, many of which were concentrated in the Danubian plain. However, neither Pritsak nor Whitby's assertion on this point holds up to scrutiny as we shall see later in subsequent chapters.

Pritsak argued that the departure of the Ostrogoths for the west created a shortage of specially-trained warriors in the Balkans. The Bulgars managed to solve the problem by modeling their Sklavenoi units in the image of the renowned Antae warriors, who were created by a confederation of Sarmatian Alans and Ostrogoths in the fifth century A.D. According to Jordanes, Antae colonies were scattered throughout the Dniester-Dniepr basin. The ethnic origins of the Antae has been the subject of speculation for quite some time. Both Prokopios and Theophylakt noted physical resemblances between the Antae and Sklavenoi; moreover, they wrote that the two groups spoke the same language: these passages led some Slavists to conclude the Antae and the Sklavenoi were both racially and linguistically Slav. Some Slavists have argued that the Antae were the ancestors of the Eastern Slavs. V. N. Zlatarsky, for example, advanced this premise one step further by arguing that the Bulgarian and Macedonian Slavs are the modern descendants of the Antae.

Like the Sklavenoi, the Antae were warriors, and not an ethnos. Prokopios, Agathias, Menander, Pseudo-Maurice, Theophylakt, and
Theophanes the Confessor each placed them in a narrow chronological framework, from 535 to 602. The Avars destroyed the Antae after the latter refused to submit to Baian's authority. The aforementioned authors tell us nothing about the origins of the Antae—Jordanes remains the only extant source to place them in an early (i.e., fifth-century framework). According to his account, the Huns had used the Antae to facilitate their conquests of the South Ukrainian steppe and central Europe circa, 375. After the break-up of Atilla's pax, the Utigur and Kotrigur Bulgars established their own confederations, which included the Antae. According to Prokopios, they inhabited territory on the left bank of the Danube when Justinian was proclaimed senior emperor in 527. Around 545, they probably were enrolled as imperial foederati, and Justinian attempted to settle them in the vicinity of Turris on the Danube (i.e., Ister) which then lay abandoned. The case is instructive because it indicates that the Romans were interested in harnessing Antae military skills. Since the literary sources do not expressly mention the presence of Sklavenoi foederati along the Danubian limes in the late sixth and early seventh centuries, historians will have to turn to archaeology, a source they have traditionally neglected, for some answers.

**Proto-Slavic Subculture**

The Sklavenoi military units were drawn from diverse sources, but chief among them were the farmers who occupied the Carpathian arc in the fifth century. Their culture is known only from the archaeological finds. These "Proto-Slavic" cultural complexes are still poorly understood, and their connection to Sklavenoi and to later Slavs remains controversial. Archaeologists once downplayed regional variations because it was believed
that the Slavs spoke a unified idiom, and came from a single, unified homeland. However, in the light of a better understanding of the in situ emergence of the Slavs, regional variations in Slavic sites take on new significance.

During the 1970s, M. Gimbutas argued that fourth-century AD North Carpathian arc cultural complexes represented the forerunners of Korchak-Prague cultures. Settlements in the Carpathian arc consisted of hill-forts associated with open villages. Dwellings consisted of small, rectangular, semi-subterranean houses with pitched roofs and ovens constructed of a series of small-sized, stone courses. The pottery assemblage consisted of unpainted wares made of coarse clay mixed with sand and shell fragments; their decoration consisted of a method called pitting (pitted-ware), while other vessels displayed evidence of decoration by cord-impressions. Gimbutas argued that "Proto-Slav" enclaves existed within the Carpathian arc as early as the reign of Augustus. In her view, the "Proto-Slavs" remained an ethnic sub-stratum eclipsed by Sarmatian and Germanic overlords until their Diaspora in the sixth and seventh centuries AD. Simply put, the Slavs were a substratum of farmers, who for centuries left few traces in the archaeological record. According to Gimbutas, the principal reason why we know so little about the antecedents of Korchak-Prague cultures is that archaeologists simply have not been interested in studying farmers whose material culture was deemed more "primitive" than the more "advanced" Scythian, Sarmatian, or Lusatian urnfield cultures. Moreover, Gimbutas contended that the "Proto-Slavs" remained agriculturists longer than their neighbors; this is why their material culture and technology remained primitive (or conservative). In the late nineteenth and early
twentieth centuries, German nationalists pointed to this evidence in support of Nordic superiority over the Slavs.\textsuperscript{42}

Gimbutas elaborated the following periodization of Proto-Slav culture. Early Bronze Age kurgan culture arose sometime around the beginning of the second millennium BC., and it collapsed ca. 1500 BC; Kurgan culture gave way to Komarov culture, from 1500 to ca. 1200 BC; Komarov culture was succeeded by Bilogrudvika or the so-called "culture of ash accumulations" sometime during the Late Bronze Age (c. 1200-750). Before Gimbutas, some archaeologists traced the Proto-Slavs back to Bilogrudvika culture.\textsuperscript{43} Unfortunately, the transition from the Bronze to the Early Iron Age (c. 750-c. 500 BC.) in the Carpathian arc remains poorly understood. Gimbutas demonstrates that some Proto-Slav cultures share certain attributes with various Carpathian arc cultural complexes, but, the evidence is too ambiguous to draw a direct connection. There is no evidence to substantiate the view that the "Proto-Slavs" saw themselves as a distinct, broad social community during the Sarmatian period. In point of fact, many of the cultural complexes in the Carpathian arc shared similar forms of material culture, but there is no valid reason to posit a correlation between cultures simply on the basis of shared life-styles. Furthermore, there is no need to posit a correspondence between a particular language and a particular life style—for linguistic groups are not synonymous with social groups.\textsuperscript{44}

Iron Age cultures in Eastern Europe have not received the same attention that has traditionally been accorded the Scyths. For example, comparatively little-known societies such as Chernoles culture (c. 750-c. 500 BC.) also used metal implements, although for agriculture rather than
for war. The problem for the archaeologist of eastern Europe is that North Pontic cultural influences remained dominant over the sub-cultures that existed c. 700 B.C. to the fourth century AD. Since the material culture of the Scythian ploughmen of Herodotos remains poorly understood, the relationship between the Slavs of the ninth century AD. and the bearers of Late Bronze Age kurgan cultures remains obscure, at best. The Scythian-Sarmatian period lasted almost an entire millennium; Sarmatian tribes, including Izzygians, Roxolani, Aorsians, Siraces, and Alans, displaced the Scythians ca. 200 B.C. Their settlements have been identified by archaeologists as far afield as the lower Danube. The infiltration of Germanic tribes such as the Bastarnae, Goths, and Gepids into the South Ukrainian steppe during the third century AD. seems to have been a relatively peaceful phenomenon (in contrast to the earlier Sarmatian conquests), and co-habitation between Germans and Sarmatians is widely attested in the archaeological record. Unhappily, the paucity of documentation (i.e., literary and archaeological) makes it difficult for scholars to determine the overall effect of these demographic movements on the Proto-Slavs. Something like an archaeological palimpsest, comprising layers of socio-linguistic groups, with Proto-Slavs agriculturists occupying the "lowest rung" on the totem pole, has been surmised. This view, however, is overly simplistic and it is in need of thorough revision.

When the tenuous links between distant Bronze, and early Iron-Age cultures attributed to the Proto-Slavs were finally exposed, many Slav archaeologists subsequently tried to establish a direct link between Cherniakhovo, Przeworsk, and Zarubinets cultural complexes, which flourished from ca. 200 BC. to ca. 400 AD., and succeeding Korchak-Prague
complexes. Cherniakhovo culture derives its name from a settlement discovered near the village of Cherniakhovo (in Kiev district) on the river Bug. Archaeologists first excavated Cherniakhovo in 1899, and since that time, numerous excavations have since been carried out; indeed, Cherniakhovo remains one of the few well-studied, "Proto-Slav" sites in all of Eastern Europe. Cherniakhovo culture extended from the Bug to the Danube estuary, and the number of settlements known today numbers 2,500: the surface areas of these settlements varied from 2-3 km to 300-400m. Two types of house-plans were attested at Cherniakhovo: semi dug-outs, and ground-level dwellings. In addition, approximately 350 excavated necropoleis have been discovered throughout the geographic extent of Cherniakhovo culture: archaeologists confirmed the coexistence of inhumation and cremation-rite burials, with inhumation-rite predominating. The ceramic assemblage from Cherniakhovo sites included several vessel types, although a high-quality, blackish-grey ware, thrown on a wheel is particularly worthy of mention. Finally, contacts between the bearers of Cherniakhovo culture and the Mediterranean are attested by the presence of Roman coins (silver), found in large numbers, across Cherniakhovo sites. Cherniakhovo civilization abruptly ended around AD. 400; many scholars link its decline with the rise of the Hunnic pax under Atilla. Numerous attempts have been made at establishing an ethnic attribution for the bearers of Cherniakhovo culture. However, even Russian scholars have abandoned the attribution of Cherniakhovo exclusively to the Proto-Slavs: rather, scholarly consensus favors an Ostrogothic ascription, for it was they who forged a large confederation centered on this territory which included Sarmatians as well as the bearers of Zarubinets and Przeworsk cultures (middle Dniepr and
The presence of Korchak-Prague material culture is attested on the territory of Cherniakhovo culture only after the latter's collapse (followed by a brief caesura).

Przeworsk is the name Polish archaeologists have given a cultural complex that was centered geographically in present-day Poland, between the Vistula and the Elbe. Slav archaeologists have divided Przeworsk culture into two typological groups: Eastern Przeworsk, whose ceramic assemblage is noted for its distinctive, hand-made cooking pots, often found associated with cremation burials in simple pits. Eastern Przeworsk culture has two variants. The first is often referred to as Bell-Beaker-Ware culture or sépultures sous cloche; the second variant is noted for its hand-made ceramic vessels that are similar to Prague-ware.

By contrast, the ceramic ware of Western Przeworsk culture, was wheel-thrown; its closest parallels should be sought with late La Tène or provincial Roman forms from the Carpathian arc. Grave goods from Western Przeworsk nekropoleis yielded a large percentage of Roman imports (viz., luxury metal vessels of bronze and silver), which points to contacts between the bearers of Western Przeworsk culture and the Roman world during Late Republican-early Imperial periods. Further evidence for commercial contacts between the Mediterranean world and Western Przeworsk culture is attested by the appearance of amber in the Roman Empire at this time. Western Przeworsk settlements were usually built on high ground; the semi dug-out, with clay-trodden floors, was the predominant dwelling type. Cutting-edge, iron agricultural implements indicated the existence of a developed metallurgy. Archaeologists have sought to explain the East-West regional differences in Przeworsk culture.
in terms of a Proto-Slav/Germanic symbiosis, during which time Common Slavic appropriated Germanic loan words. Two forms of burial rites are documented throughout both Przeworsk complexes: cremation burials in simple, oval pits without tumuli or ritual offerings; cremation burials with the calcified remains placed in funeral urns—sometimes covered with a shallow dish—and deposited in pits, containing ritual offerings of weapons or of sacrificed animals. The economy of both Przeworsk cultures was based on agriculture and on animal husbandry. Some archaeologists maintained the Przeworsk cultures are the oldest identifiable, Proto-Slav civilization, but this supposition has since come under increasing challenge by detractors who insisted the nucleus of Przeworsk culture was ethnically Pommeranian-Balt. In each of the aforementioned cases, the problem is that ethnic attributions are made on the basis of outdated assumptions which posit the simultaneous rise of Common Slavic as an autonomous language with the rise of Przeworsk culture.

Archaeologists have dated Zarubinets civilization from the second century BC. to the second century AD. Its geographic epi-center lay in the middle Dniepr basin, which encompassed Southern Belo-Rus and the Western Ukraine. The bearers of Zarubinets culture cremated their dead in simple, oval pits analogous to the sous cloche type attributed to Eastern Przeworsk culture in Pomerania. The bearers of this culture also produced a coarse, hand-made ware, grayish-red in color—some known examples even had polished surfaces. Glass-paste beads of late La Tene-type and Roman fibulae have been found throughout Zarubinets sites: the presence of Roman fibulae clearly indicate contact with the Mediterranean world. The available evidence indicates that the economy of Zarubinets culture was based on
agriculture and animal husbandry. A single house-type predominated—the semi dug-out, whose method of construction has direct analogues with the sixth and seventh century kasa attributed to the Sklavenoi.55

Slav archaeologists have relied heavily on comparanda (ceramic, burial rite, etc.) in order to establish linear connections between the bearers of Zarubinets culture and Scythian ploughman. This methodology is conceptually flawed, because cultural complexes, in the archaeological sense, do not always correspond to races in an ethnographic sense. Furthermore, the stratigraphy of some sites belonging to some of the above-mentioned "Proto-Slav" complexes did not always indicate continuity of occupation. Significantly, ceramic typologies elaborated for so-called "Proto-Slav" complexes like Przeworsk culture are in need of further nuancing.56 In their zeal to place the Slavs far into the distant past, some prominent Slav archaeologists have assigned improbable chronologies to the archaeological evidence. In light of these considerations, there is no compelling reason to continue to posit the existence of an unbroken chain of Proto-Slav cultural complexes from the Bronze Age to the seventh and eighth centuries AD. Those antecedent cultures are diverse and still poorly understood. But from various Carpathian Arc (such as Prešov) through Korchak culture, it is possible to identify a submerged stratum of farmers whose material culture bears some of the characteristics of the future Slavs. However, it is another matter to establish generic connections between them on the basis of comparanda. There is another theoretical flaw in the methodology of those archaeologists who maintain the traditional paradigms. Since the material culture of the early Slavs is better understood than their hypothetical "Proto-Slav" antecedents, archaeologists
have attempted to reconstruct the individual links in the chain through retrospective deduction. In doing so, they have unwittingly retrojected seventh-century realities onto a distant Iron and Bronze Age scene. Baldly stated, traditional paradigms have over-generalized on the basis of too little evidence, and this error has produced a marked bias in scholarship favoring the view that Slavic linguistic and ethnic consciousness existed earlier than was actually the case. In some cases, the motivation for doing this was blatantly political; after all, the political origins of this polemic were rooted in nineteenth century experiences. The avowed purpose of this brand of scholarship was to demonstrate the autonomy and distinctiveness of the Slavs vis-à-vis their neighbors, particularly the Germans.

Zhitomir-Korchak-Prague (sometimes referred to as Przeworsk-Prague) and Penkovka cultural complexes are considered by many archaeologists as the earliest Slavic complexes. Russian and Ukrainian scholars tended to view Korchak and Penkovka settlements as the epicenter of the great migrations (i.e., their Urheimat). The cultural assemblage from these two groups of settlements were attributed to the Sklavenoi and to the Antes. The geographic extent of Korchak/Prague-ware was vast: it encompassed Poland, the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, Western Ukraine, including the Teter river basin in Volynia (the Teter is a tributary of the Dniestr). Korchak-type settlements were not fortified, and they were clustered along the tributaries of the south Pripet, the upper Bug, and south Dniestr; in fact, river terraces were the preferred locations for settlements. The thin cultural horizons attested at these sites indicates a relatively short period of occupation. Korchak/Prague-ware was dominated by a single vessel type—the cooking pot. These vessels were hand-made,
asymmetrical in form (usually ovoid), with slightly everted rims, coarse fabrics, and no ornamentation. Some archaeologists have held that the Proto-Slavs adopted the controversial wavy-line motif on their pottery sometime during the late sixth century. But since this motif was indigenous to many cultures throughout Europe during the Early Middle Ages, it is impossible to establish which ethnic group first introduced it.⁵⁷ The inventory of finds associated with this culture from western Ukrainian sites included millstones, clay spindle-whorls, and advanced, iron agricultural implements (knives, axes, awls, belt clasps), domestic animal bones, and clay figurines.⁵⁸

Penkovka settlements were concentrated along the river terraces of the Dniepr and Middle Prut: the name Penkovka is the name of a village in the former Kirovgrad district of the Ukraine. A thin cultural horizon, attested at all Penkovka sites, suggests a relatively brief period of occupation. Houses types were semi dug-outs, square in plan, with a stone oven situated in one corner. Thus both Korchak and Penkovka complexes shared virtually identical settlement features. Significantly, archaeologists have adduced this evidence in support of their contention that this zone represented the ancestral homeland of the Slavs, who were compelled to migrate west and south due to pressure exerted by steppe nomads. Interestingly, Penkovka ceramic wares included a vessel-type not registered among Korchak/Prague inventories, namely large, bi-conical vases made by hand—though some examples of wheel-thrown vases also survive. Penkovka-culture funeral rituals consisted of cremation burials in covered urns, which were subsequently deposited in shallow pits; in many instances, fibulae or belt-
buckles with zoomorphic motifs were deposited with the remains of the deceased, possibly as ritual offerings.59

The semi dug-outs from Korchak and Penkovka complexes shared common construction techniques. The first step in construction was the excavation of a pit; some houses lined those pits with horizontal logs, while others had wattle-and-daub walls with vertical posts to support the roof. Two roof-types are attested, flat and double-pitched; in either case, no chimneys for ventilation were attested. Floors were typically clay-trodden. Ovens were constructed of stone courses and sometimes their interiors were lined with clay. As regards those entrances, they typically faced the rivers along which individual settlements were located—some huts even had wooden staircases hewn from tree trunks that provided easier access into the house. Archaeologists have argued that the Slav semi dug-out or kasa lasted an average of six years without requiring significant repair; meanwhile, the average life expectancy of a kasa did not exceed twenty years. Scholars have estimated that an average dwelling housed between six to seven people. Cone-shaped silo pits with wooden covers have been discovered at numerous cultural complexes attributed to the Slavs. The bearers of Korchak/Zhitomir and Penkovka cultures were principally farmers, but archaeologists confirmed that they also raised pigs, sheep, goats, cattle, horses, and fished nearby rivers.60

A detailed discussion of so-called Slav Urheimat sites lies beyond the scope of this study; however, it is important to remember that Korchak and Penkovka artifacts formed the basis of typologies that have been used to date Slav finds in the Balkans. The earliest known examples of Proto-Slav artifacts ascribed to the Slavs south of the Danube have been dated,
generally using Prague-ware typologies, to the second half of the sixth or early seventh centuries. This is why scholars used to affirm the relative uniformity of Balkan Slav material culture—a view that gave rise to the expression “Slavic cultural unity.” Although there are indeed many similarities between Korchak-Prague and Penkovka cultures, recent ceramic studies point to the existence of regional variations within these complexes that escaped notice when the Korchak-Prague typologies originally were formulated. Even though refinements in these typologies have since been published, in no case should Korchak-Prague typologies be used as an exclusive means of dating Slav-ware found across the Balkans, from Caričin Grad to Isthmia.

How did these farmers who, despite their primitive social organization, possessed advanced, iron-technology agricultural tools, intersect with the warrior Sklavenoi? Both groups migrated throughout the Balkans, but were not the same. According to some archaeologists, the impetus for their migrations is tied to the disintegration of Przeworsk, Zarubinets, and Cherniakhovo cultural complexes in the fourth and fifth centuries. This is an oblique way of saying that pressure from pastoralist tribes forced the bearers of these cultures to migrate. For example, on the testimony of Priskos of Panion, some scholars argued that the Hunnic invasions were the immediate catalyst for their migrations. Some scholars have hypothesized successive waves of migration by Korchak-Prague-Zhitomir bearers into the Balkans: the first wave penetrated the Wallachia plain via the upper western Bug, the Dniestr, and the Prut; other groups used the Carpathian passes to gain access into the Hungarian plain. Thence, they moved south into the Banat and Oltenia; some archaeologists
believed these groups crossed the Danube into Moesia Secunda around Dorostolon and settled in the vicinity of the village of Popina.\textsuperscript{64} Migrations did not constitute conquest, but, archaeological evidence from Romanian sites like Ipotesti-Cindesti-Ciurel\v{u} (to be discussed in detail in Chapter 6) suggests a pattern of peaceful co-habitation between the new-comers and the indigenous peoples. Ceramic and funerary evidence point to the co-existence of autochthonoi and immigrant farmers during the late sixth and seventh centuries. In addition, the migration of these immigrant farmers was not necessarily uni-directional (i.e., from the western Ukraine to Romania). This rapprochement between immigrant farmers and autochthonoi in Wallachia was disrupted by the arrival of new peoples from the east: the Onogur Bulgars.

To scholars such as Pritsak, this new movement represents deliberate colonization by a dominant elite, namely warrior merchants, who expanded their European trading networks to the Balkans. They see the invaders in which a group of people, who possess a hierarchical society, set off in search of new lands to conquer, they dominated and ultimately displaced the indigenous population. The direction of such migration was usually from areas of low prosperity into ones of high prosperity, or from areas of high population density into ones of low population density. The leadership of such groups exercised hegemony over lesser stratified societies because their "higher" form of social organization. Viewed from the perspective of archaeologists who advocated elite dominance models, the appearance of new pottery forms were associated with military invasions, which in turn led to language displacement in the Balkans from the late sixth to the ninth centuries. Thus the advocates of a warrior Sklavenoi ultimately share the
view of traditional scholars of Slavic pre-history: a new population, whether Sklavenoi or Slavs, overtakes and displaces the autochthonous population of the Balkans. There is a problem with this view. The population did not change as rapidly, as the archaeological data attest. Although "Proto-Slavs" became dominant among the population of the Balkans, the process cannot be reduced to mere conquest and displacement, as the next chapter will demonstrate.


7M. Vasmer, "Urheimat,", pp. 38-42. For more recent attempts at deriving a Slav etymology for Slav, see Tuuno Pekkanen, "L'origine degli Slavi e il loro nome nella letteratura greco-latina," Quaderni Urbinati 11 (1971): 51-64, who posits slave from slab, meaning weak. Georg Korth, "Zur Etymologie des Wortes 'Slavus' (Slave)," Glotta 48 (1970): 143-153, who suggests a derivation from Greek skulon. For recent efforts to return to the Latin sclavos derivation, see H. Kopstein, "Zur Bedeutungswandel von sklavos/sclavus," BF 7 (1979): 67-88. All putative references in Classical sources—Herodotus, Tacitus, Pliny the Elder, and Ptolemy—to the Slavs should be dismissed. However, in theory these mystery peoples may have been some of the progenitors of the future Slavs. Archaeologists have neglected this group for too long in favor of more "developed" peoples like the Scyths and Sarmatians.


11A. Kollautz, H. Miyakawa, Geschichte und Kultur eines völkerwanderungs-


13T. Dragadze, “The place of "ethnos" theory in Soviet Anthropology,” In

14C., Renfrew, Archaeology and Language: The Puzzle of Indo-European

Lunt, “Slavs, Common Slavic, and Old Church Slavonic,” In ed. J. Reinhart,
Litterae Slavicae Medii Aevii (FS F. V. Mareš), (Munich, 1985): 185-204. L.
Novák, “Slovenske a podkarpatotuske narecia vo svetle europske fonetickoe
geografie. Synchronicke a diachronicke poznanstky k porovnavacej jazykovede

16L. Krader, “The Ecology of Central Asian Pastoralism,” South Western
Journal of Anthropology 4 (1955): 301-326 (hereafter cited as Krader,
“Ecology,”). L. Krader, “Principles and Structures in the Organization of the
67-92 (hereafter cited as Krader, “Principles,”). C. Wickham, “Pastoralism and
Underdevelopment in the Early Middle Ages,” Settimane di Studio del Centro

18Ibid., p. 302.
19Ibid., pp. 305-309.
20I am referring to the seminal work of O. Pritsak, “The Slavs and the
Avars,” Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull’alto medioevo 30

21Krader, “Principles,” 82.

23Jordanes, De origine actibusque getarum, Th. Momsen (ed), MGH AuctAnt 5
with Russian translation see, Jordon, Oproiskhozhdenii i daianiiskh getov, ed.
E. Skrzhinskaja, (Moscow, 1960).
24 "When the Bulgars saw this, they did pursue, putting many to the sword and wounding others. They chased them to the Danube, crossed it, and came to Varna near Odysso and its hinterland. They saw that it was securely located: from behind because of the river Danube and from the front and sides because of the mountain passes and the Black Sea. When the Bulgars became masters of the seven tribes of Sklavinoi in the vicinity, they resettled the Severais from the mountain passes before Bergava to the lands to the east, and the remainder of the seven tribes to the south and west up to the land of the Avars. Since the Bulgars were pagans at that time, they bore themselves arrogantly and began to assail and take cities and villages under the control of the Roman Empire."


25 Slav ХУПАН was an Avar honorific that the "dynatoi" of Mediaval Serbia, the First Bulgarian Empire, and Croatia used. Its appropriation by these groups is evidence for Avar influence on the political development of the Slavs.


29 For a critical study of topoi in these sources, see the B. Zasterova, "Les Avares and les Slaves dans la Tactique de Maurice," Rozpravy československe akademia vied, rada spolecenskich vied 81.3 (1971): 4-82. Though the attribution of the Strategikon to Maurice remains uncertain, this military treatise is a valuable source on the social formation of the Avars, Antes, and Sklavonoi. It was probably compiled before 630, since there is no mention of Arabs. See Das Strategikon des Maurikios, eds., G.T.Dennis and E. Gamillscheg, Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 17, (Vienna, Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaft, 1981).


32. Alternative explanations will be discussed in subsequent chapters.


36. For the account of the Avar annihilation of the Antae, see Theophylact, Historia, 8.5.10-13, p. 293.
Some scholars have argued that Justinian was named co-emperor already in 517 by his uncle Justin I. The particulars of this debate, however, need not concern us.

The Chilbudiass affair occurred in 546, and refers to the Antas, see Prokopios, Wars, pp. 262, 264, 268, 270, 272, 274. Cf. observations of Manander in connection with the Mezhamir affair, The History of Manander the Guardsman, ed. and trans. R. C. Blockley, Classical and Medieval Texts, Papers and Monographs 17, (Liverpool: Francis Cairns, 1985): 5.3 p. 51 (hereafter cited as Manander, History). With respect to the question of the Antas becoming foederatoci, some scholars have sought further confirmation for this in Justinian’s titulature, with the addendum “Anticus” to his imperial style.

In Chapters 5 and 6, I will discuss the archaeological evidence that some scholars attribute to the Sklavenoi foederati. The issue whether Sklavenoi were granted foederate status remains a contentious one; it too will be addressed in specific Chapters below. D. Obolensky, The Byzantine Commonwealth: Eastern Europe. 500-1453. (New York: Praeger Press, 1971): pp. 47ff (hereafter cited as Obolensky, Commonwealth), flatly rejects the idea that foederate status was conferred on the Sklavenoi, although he does admit that the Antas were conferred that status, while J. Fina, The Early Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Sixth to the Late Twelfth Century, Ann Arbor, 1983, pp. 28-29, admits the possibility.

43s. Vaklinov, Formirane na Starobulgarskata Kultura, (Sofia: BAN, 1977): p. 14 (hereafter cited as Vaklinov, Formirane). On the other hand, Czech and Polish archaeologists attempted to connect the Slavs with Lusatian urnfield culture. This question remains hotly contested. In opposition to the Czech-Polish schema is the periodization advanced by W. Hensel, who traced the Proto-Slavs back to the second and third millennia B.C., with Proto-Slavs and Balts inhabiting the Vistula-Dniepr Mesopotamia. But this part of Hensel's reconstruction is based entirely on linguistic evidence. According to Hensel, the Proto-Slavs assimilated the Venedi, making the entire Oder-Dniepr region their homeland, c. 900-700 B.C. Thus, Lusatian urnfield culture, which was Illyrian in origin, should be placed in the period anterior the arrival of the Proto-Slavs and their subsequent assimilation of the Venedi. See W. Hensel, "L'ethnogénèse des Slaves," S 18 (1971): 29-47.


47Giabutas, Slavs, p. 64

48V. V. Sedov, Proiskhozhdenie i rannia istoria slavian, (Moscow, 1970): 78-100.


50Sedov, Proiskhozhdenie, 1-53.

51Ibid., 53-74.

52Sedov, Proiskhozhdenie, pp. 74-78.

53s. Vaklinov, Formirane, p. 18. For proponents of the Baltic background for Przevorsk culture, see I. Sorlin, Slaves et sklavenes avant les miracles de saint Demetrius, in Miracula, P. Lemerle (ed). vol. 2, pp. 219-234.
54 Ibid., p. 230.

55 Hallstatt and La Tene are two sites in Austria and Switzerland. In 1872 a Swedish archaeologist named Hildebrand assigned these terms to pre-Roman iron-age sites bearing similar features throughout Central and Eastern Europe.


61. J. Eisner, "Archäologie o kulturni jednote slovanske," Pamatky Archeologické 2 (1961): 459-64. His bibliography on this topic is indispensable. Cf. Hester, "Penetration," p.41, illustrations 1-2. Cf also Teodor, "La penetration," p. 29. The study of this pottery and fibulae has led archaeologists to speak in terms of successive waves of Slav migration. See J. Werner, "Slawische Bugelfibeln des 7. Jahr.," in Reinecke Festschrift, (Mainz, 1950): pp. 150-172. Werner argued that his so-called niprovian fibula (types I and II in his typology) were Slav, although their stylistic antecedents were North Pontic. Examples of this fibula have been found in the Balkans at Piatra Frecatei in Dobrudja; Edessa in Macedonia; Kruje in Albania; Nea Anchialos in Thessaly. D.I. Pallas, "Donnees nouvelles sur quelques boucles et fibules consideree comme avares et slaves et sur Corinthe entre le VIe et le IXe siecles," ByzantinorumBulgarica 7 (1981): 295-318. Pallas considers these fibula as derived from Byzantine prototypes thereafter cited as Pallas, "Donnees."


63. Obolensky, Commonwealth, p.43. Obolensky states that he is unsure why the Slavs migrated from their homeland, though he tends to accept Priskos' account.

CHAPTER III
LAND-TAKING REVISITED

The Sklavenoi razzia made a substantial impact on Balkan political events in the sixth-century. However, scholars disagree on every aspect of it. The major issues have been the nature of Slavic penetration into the Balkans, and whether the Sklavenoi displaced the indigenous population—what in the scholarly literature has been called Landnahme. A careful reading of the literary sources, combined with the new understanding possible through the application of the methodology of processual archaeologists, sheds new light on this subject.

The appearance of the Slavs south of the Danube and Sava rivers has been the subject of intense debate since the 1840s. This very subject divided nineteenth-century Byzantinists into two irreconcilable camps: those who viewed the Slavicization of the Balkans largely as a peaceful process, and those who viewed the Slavicization of the Balkans as violent. P. J. Šafařík laid the foundations of the debate when he argued that the Slavs were peaceful farmers who migrated only short distances from their homeland which he placed in central Europe.¹ This thesis met with staunch criticism, which set the tone for subsequent debates which continued to rage into the twentieth century.

Šafařík did not have at his disposal important literary sources such as the Miracula or John of Ephesus, sources his detractors ultimately used
to refute his arguments; the former source provided crucial information on
the activities of the Slavs during the sixth and seventh centuries, while the
latter contained important, but controversial, passages regarding large-
scale Slav razzias conducted during the reigns of Tiberios and Maurice. In
1873, R. Roesler published his refutation of the Šafařík thesis. Roesler
argued that there were no permanent Slav settlements south of the Danube
before the reign of Phokas (602–610), although he did concede the existence
of razzias as early as Justinian’s reign. In his view, the Slavs continued to
live on the left bank of the Danube until the first quarter of the seventh
century. After that time, the wholesale colonization of the Balkans
effectively got underway and was not checked by the Byzantines until
Constans’ II expedition of 657, the success of which secured a measure of
imperial control over the cities of Moesia Secunda, until the arrival of the
Onogur Bulgars. According to Theophanes the Confessor:

τούτῳ τῷ ἔτει ἐπέστράτευσεν ὁ βασιλεὺς κατὰ
Σκλαυνινίας καὶ ἤχμαλωτευσε πολλοὺς καὶ
ὑπέταξεν.²

Roesler’s theories were upheld in this century by N. Iorga. Meanwhile K.
Setton revived some aspects of the Šafařík thesis, notably those tenets
regarding the peaceful nature of the Slav settlements.³

Both sides in the debate were hampered by a lacuna in Roman
historiography from the History of Menander to the Breviarium of Patriarch
Nikiforos. This gap in the historiographical record is responsible for the
dearth of knowledge concerning the crucial question of Slavic settlement in
the Balkans during the late sixth and early seventh centuries. Modern
Byzantine historians have naturally relied on extant literary sources as
their principal means of reconstructing the sequence and chronology of the so-called Slavic Landnahme and razzias. However, these sources are fraught with problems. There are numerous contradictions and omissions of essential detail. Furthermore, the written sources are filled with topos, usually culled from Classical authors. Finally, late Antique authors frequently exaggerated the extent of the barbarian depredations, again for literary effect.

For the better part of this century, historians have vacillated between the Šafařík and Roesler theses. No one has attempted to effect a synthesis between the two positions. Since the turn of the century, the Roesler thesis slowly has gained the upper hand at Šafařík’s expense; the former has since won the general approval of mainstream historians, albeit in revised form. This shift in scholarship has ramifications that impinge on every level of historical inquiry. For instance, all extant chronologies for the Slav installations of the Balkans are based on the theoretical foundations laid by Roesler. But the Roeslerian proponents remain necessarily preoccupied unduly with the themes of invasion and migration. One such migrationist theory was advanced by the noted Bulgarian academician, V. N. Zlatarski, who argued that Maurice allowed some Slav tribes to settle south of the Danube and enrolled them as foederati. Zlatarski, however, argued that this brief period of peaceful relations was not the norm, and that by the first quarter of the seventh century the Slavs had conquered virtually all of the Balkan peninsula.4

The issue of the existence of Slav settlement south of the Danube has been somewhat less contentious, because recent advances in research have enriched our understanding. However, many scholars still cling to the old
stock themes raised by Roesler and Šafařík. G. Ostrogorsky and P. Lemerle, for example, were proponents of limited Slavic occupation south of the Danube. They dated this installation, which was military in nature, to the eighth decade of the sixth century. By contrast, F. Barišić posited massive Slav settlement in Bosnia-Hercegovina (i.e., Roman Dalmatia) during the middle of the sixth century -- an occupation that was the direct result of the Slav razzia of 550-551. Barišić argued that the first "Sklavinia" to be established south of the rivers Danube and Sava was centered in Bosnia. In support of his contention, Barišić pointed to the discovery of Prague-like ceramic sherds from the Byzantine Dark Age settlement at Mušić near Višegrad. V. Popović argued the first Sklavinia south of the Danube was established not in Roman Dalmatia, but in the Macedonias, as a result of the razzias of 576-584. However, due to the poor stratigraphy at Mušić, many archaeologists voiced misgivings about Cremošnik's precise dating; they also questioned the link Barišić posited between the Mušić pottery assemblage and the Slav razzia of 550-551. Some scholars refused to acknowledge any degree of Slav settlement before the seventh century. B. Ferjančić and I. Nestor are regarded as the foremost exponents of this group: the former is a Byzantine historian, the latter a Slavic archaeologist. Ferjančić denied Slavic settlement before the disintegration of the Danubian limes during the reign of Phokas. However, Ferjančić conceded that the razzias of the last quarter of the sixth century directly paved the way for the large-scale, permanent settlement of the seventh century.

The Ferjančić thesis has been called into question by V. Popović, who argued that the first Sklavinia south of the limes was established not in Bosnia, but in Macedonia during the last quarter of the sixth century.
contrast to Barišić, Popović argued that a modest Slav settlement in Macedonia had occurred in the last quarter of the sixth century. If the epicenter of the first Sklavlnia lay somewhere within the geographic confines of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, as Popović asserted, then some traces of Slavic settlement should have been found there to date. In reality, barely a trace of Slavic settlement in Macedonia has been found; the partial remains of two nekropoleis with cremation burials and Slav ware have been discovered at Tito's Veles, and at Vinići. While Popović posited limited Slavic settlement in Macedonia, he argued for massive Slav colonization in the seventh and beyond. Popović also contended that the Slav razzias of ca. 578 did not result in the total collapse of the Danubian limes, for many the fortified settlements or kastra remained in imperial hands until the 580s and 590s, when the Avars launched a fresh set of offensives against the empire. The problem is that few scholars have attempted to locate and to study Slav settlements in the first place. Serbian and Macedonian archaeologists have devoted most of their time excavating classical monuments.

Popović also recommended that archaeologists should look for Slav settlements in eastern Serbia, the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia, and Greek Macedonia. Archaeologically, Macedonia and northern Greece are important areas because some of the earliest Slav settlements should be located there. It is likely that these sites would reveal evidence of close cultural contact with Byzantium and the Mediterranean in general, as do the excavations carried out by Bulgarian, Serbian, and Romanian archaeologists along the Danubian limes (see Chapters 5 and 6).
Not surprisingly, the most ardent exponents of the Slav land-taking scenario have been historians and archaeologists who based their assertions exclusively on the literary sources. However, the testimony of the textual sources has its own limitations and therefore should not be taken at face value. At the same time, those scholars who have used archaeological evidence, even on a limited basis, are guilty (in most cases, unwittingly) of making unsophisticated use of that evidence. They regard the primacy of written sources as sacrosanct. The processual method provides a guide to balancing the two types of evidence, giving each its due weight.10

Traditionalist historians have viewed the sixth and seventh centuries as a period of chronic political instability, demographic and economic decline. They cite the razzias alone for the widespread cultural transformation of North Balkan society in the sixth and seventh centuries.11 Some scholars are questioning these assertions. According to K. Randsborg, this period was one of explosive demographic growth and economic vitality, despite the chronic political instability. Although the primary focus of Randsborg's study centered on conditions and developments in the West, he did make a concerted effort to discuss some interesting demographic trends in the Balkans that are directly relevant to this study. Randsborg's thesis also suggests that cultural interaction and political instability need not be mutually exclusive.12 Randsborg's thesis repeats what A. Lemerle voiced long ago to an unaccepting audience. Lemerle viewed the Danubian limes as a zone of intense cultural interaction, and not a fixed barrier that was hermetically sealed.13 The first step in a reevaluation of the issue of Landnahme then is a reexamination of the political and demographic situation in the sixth century.
When Attila died in 453, his pax extended from the Caspian Sea to the river Rhine. The Huns possessed poliorcetic technology; this enabled them to capture Singidunum, Viminakion, Margum, Ratiaria, Neissos, Sardike, as well as many other poleis in Illyricum. These Roman settlements lay abandoned until the reign of Anastasios, which marked a period of general recovery and relative prosperity in the north Balkans. The Hunnic empire was a volatile confederation that disintegrated quickly after Attila’s death; while the fate of all the tribes within Attila’s pax is not of direct concern to us, the subsequent movements of specific groups within that confederation is because of the role they played in the subsequent political history of the Balkans. These specific groups included Germanic tribes, such as the Gepids and the Lombards, who established themselves in Pannonia, as well as the Bulgars, who dwelled in the south Ukrainian steppe. As long as the latter remained in the steppes, they posed no immediate threat to Roman interests in Illyricum; indeed, after the fall of the Hunnic confederation, Germanic tribes re-emerged as the principal threat to imperial interests in the Balkans. During the fifth century, many Gothic foederati settlements were attested near Novae and Marcianopolis. Zeno even offered Theodoric land in the vicinity of Pautalia, but in 489, Theodoric chose to move on to Italy. The departure of the Ostrogoths created an opportunity for the empire gradually to reassert its authority in northern Illyricum. The Roman strategy was to play one barbarian group off against another. For example, by playing off the Gepids against the Lombards, Justinian was able to reoccupy Singidunum and Sirmium without shedding a drop of Roman blood. Just when it appeared that Justinian’s diplomacy was beginning to pay dividends, a new and formidable
group of steppe warriors, the Avars, arrived on the Danube. Their intervention in Balkan politics once again altered the balance of power. Sometime between 567 or 568, the Avars and Lombards forged a political alliance against the Gepids, whom they virtually obliterated; after this war, the Gepids disappeared from the political map of Europe. Having defeated their mortal enemies, the Lombards grew nervous about Avar intentions towards them; thus, the menacing proximity of the Avars compelled Alboin, the Lombard king, to abandon the Balkans for Italy in 568.15

In addition to the Avars, another barbarian tribe merits discussion. The Bulgars were a Hunnic people who had established a pax of their own, after 453. Roman historians identified two Proto-Bulgar groups, the Kotrigurs and the Utigurs, who in the late fifth century dwelled in the steppe north of the Black Sea between the Dniepr and the Don. Thus, according to Prokopios:

Πάλαι μὲν Οὐννων, τῶν τότε Κιμμερίων
calouménων, πολίς τις ομιλος τά χωρία ταῦτα
ένέμοντο ὅπερ ἐμνήσακαι, βασιλεύς τε εἰς
ἀπασαν ἐφειστήκει. καὶ ποτὲ τις αὐτῶν τὴν
ἄρχην ἔσχεν, ὥ δὴ παῖδες ἐγένοντο δύο, ἄτερος
μὲν Οὐτιγοῦρ ὄνομα, Κοτριγοῦρ δὲ ὁ ἄτερος.

οὔτε, ἐπειδὴ αὐτοῖς ὁ πατὴρ τὸν βίον
συνεμετρήσατο, τὴν τε ἄρχην ἄμφω ἐν σφίσιν
αὐτοῖς διεδάσαντο καὶ τὴν ἐπωνυμίαν τοῖς
ἄρχομένοις αὐτοῖς ἐδοσαν· οἱ μὲν γὰρ
Οὐτιγοῦρι, οἱ δὲ Κοτριγοῦρτε καὶ ἐς ἐμὲ
Politically, Kotrigur and Utigur relations with Constantinople oscillated between war and peace; for example, some Bulgar contingents (we do not know precisely whether they were Kotrigurs or Utigurs because the sources don’t specify) entered Roman service under Zeno (474-491) as foederati, whom the Romans used against the Goths. Other Bulgar contingents preferred to raid the empire for its wealth and skilled labor. Roman sources mention frequent Bulgar razzias directed against targets in Thrace and in Illyricum during Anastasios’ reign (491-518): in 493, for example, the Magister Julianus was killed in combat, while in 499 the Magister Militum per Illyricum, Aristos, suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of a Bulgar expeditionary force. According to some scholars, these razzias prompted Anastasios to order the construction of the Long Wall across Thrace, ca. 503. The Bulgars occasionally supplied recruits to the armies. In 513 Bulgar contingents were well represented among the rebel Vitalic’s army.

It was not until the middle of the sixth century that the frequency and severity of these raids increased. During the course of their sojourn in the Balkans, the Kotrigurs managed to capture numerous Roman fortresses in
Illyricum, a fact that underscores their knowledge of poliorcetic skills, a skill which they may well have imparted to the Sklavenoi. Around 551, the Kotrigurs again raided the Balkans, but were compelled to withdraw when Justinian summoned the Utigurs to attack them in the rear: the emperor resorted to this expedient since he did not wish to divert imperial troops from Italy. Around 558-559, the Kotrigurs crossed the frozen Danube and mounted a three-pronged invasion of the Balkans: one group, under the command of Zabergan, drove toward Constantinople but was defeated under the city walls by a motley force of Romans defenders commanded by the aged Belisarios. Timely action by the imperial fleet also helped to relieve the pressure on Constantinople, as Roman warships sailed up the Danube in an effort to cut off the Bulgar retreat. This brilliant maneuver compelled the Bulgars to sue for peace. Meanwhile, the Utigurs intervened by attacking the remnants of Zabergan’s force. While all this was happening around Constantinople, the second Bulgar horde had already converged on the Thracian Chersonese at the same time that the third horde ravaged Greece as far as Thermopylae. Thus we read in Agathias:

κατίόντες δὲ ὑμώς οἱ Ὀλυννοὶ ἐς τὰ πρὸς νότον ἀνεμὸν οὐ πόρρω τῆς ὅχλης τοῦ Ἰστροῦ ποταμοῦ ἡμιέξοντο, ἦνικα ἦν αὐτοῖς βουλομένοις. τότε δὴ οὖν τοῦ χειμῶνος ἐπιλαμβανόμενοι, τὰ μὲν ρεῖμα τοῦτο τοῦ ποταμοῦ κατὰ τὸ εἰσάκει ὑπὸ τοῦ κρύους ἐπήγαγο ἐς βάσος καὶ ἦσαν ἤδη σκληρὰ καὶ βάσιμα καὶ ὑπῆλατα. Ζαβεργάν δὲ ὁ τῶν Κοτριγούρων Ὀλυννῶν ἡγεμών σὺν πλείστοις ὄσοις ἵπποις
Avar intervention on behalf of the empire brought an end to the Bulgar raids; indeed, the Avars wasted no time in subjugating the Kotrigurs and Utigurs, and incorporating them into their new pax. As a result, many Kotrigurs accompanied the Avars into Pannonia, which became the nucleus of the Avar pax. According to Menander, whose narrative covers the years 558-582, the Avars received their initial audience with Justinian through the good offices of the Alan King, Sarosios, sometime in 557-558. We read in Menander, *Περὶ Ἀβάρων, ὡς πολλὰ περινοστήσαντες ἦκον ἐς Ἀλανοὺς καὶ ἕκται ἐγένοντο Σαρασίου τοῦ Ἀλανῶν ἤγοιμένου, ὡς δὲν διὰ αὐτοῦ γνώριμοι ἔσοιντο Ὄμαιόεις.*21 The Avar envoys sought land on which to settle and a military alliance with the empire. Although Justinian refused to give them land, he did grant them annual subsidies, in exchange for which the Avars
were charged with the task of protecting the empire's interests both in the Caucasus as well as in the steppe north of the Black Sea.22

In the year 561 the Avars, in contravention to their agreement with Justinian, had migrated to the lower Danube, having already established a large confederation of subject peoples under their authority, including numerous Kotrigur, Utigur, and Antae (i.e., those resident in Bessarabia) tümäns. Initially, the Avars set their sights on Scythia Minor (Dobrudja), because they had eyes on the fertile grazing grounds of Thrace. In 561/562, the Avars dispatched a second embassy to Justinian, demanding land south of the Danube; again, the emperor refused to accede to their demands, for he had hoped to harness Avar military prowess against the Ostrogoths, who at that time occupied Italy. However, the failure of this particular embassy to Justinian did nothing to deter the ambitions of Balan, the energetic Avar Khagan, who in defiance of imperial authority, led his people across the Danube into Roman territory. Balan's actions represented the first step in the extension of the Avar pax south of the Danube, a campaign that got under way in earnest during the seventh and eighth decades of the sixth century. In concert with the Lombards, the Avars waged war against the Gepids, who resided in Dacia and Eastern Pannonia. When the Lombards subsequently abandoned their alliance with Balan and fled to Italy, the nucleus of the Avar pax shifted northward to the Tisza river valley. Significantly, the Avars used this region to subjugate many Sklavenoi units. From this point on, the Sklavenoi razzias against the empire resumed, many (though not all) of these raids were under Avar direction.

When Justin II was raised to the purple, the imperial coffers were empty because of decades of protracted fighting in Italy. Moreover, the
policy of doling out largess to barbarian chieftains further drained the reserves of the exchequer. Critics have charged Justinian with seeking the reunification of Italy at the expense of sacrificing Illyricum to the barbarians. Although there is some truth to this, it should be noted that Justinian's policy of aggressive diplomacy, which combined the elements of military pressure (when available), agent provocateurs, bribery, and religious propaganda, was working quite well until the Avars arrived. Justinian's detractors noted that the payment of lavish subsidies only encouraged further extortion. Admittedly, there is some truth to these allegations; however, it was not until the war with Persia in 572, and the transfer of imperial troops from Illyricum to the east (which stripped the Danube of garrisons at a critical moment), that the balance of power in the Balkans began to shift in favor of the barbarians. Though he had fewer financial and military resources at his disposal, Justin II sought to deal with Baian from a position of strength; for example, he steadfastly rejected Avar demands for renewed annual subsidies, and for a while, Justin's get-tough policy successfully appeased the Avars, compelling Baian to turn his attention away from the Mediterranean in order to consolidate his hold over Pannonia. But, in the long run, as John of Ephesos confirmed, Baian's activity in Pannonia only strengthened the Avar pax, whose center of gravity now lay in the north-west Balkans.

The Avar occupation of Pannonia afforded the Romans an opportunity to recover Sirmium, which had been in Gepid hands. Sirmium was once the seat of the Praetorian Prefect of Illyricum, and it guarded an important crossing over the Sava. In essence, Sirmium prevented the Roman defenses along the south bank of the Danube from being outflanked. But the Avars
coveted Sirmium too; initially, the Roman garrison at Sirmium successfully repulsed numerous Avar assaults and repeatedly rejected Avar embassies demanding the surrender of the city. Menander, describing these events which occurred sometime in 569 writes:

'Ὅτι ὁ Βαυανός, μετὰ τὴν τεῖχομαχίαν στέλλει τινὰς ὀμφι τῆς εἰρήνης διαλεξαμησομένους. Ἐνιοὶ δὲ τῶν ἐν Σιρμίῳ ἀνὰ τὸ ἡλιβατὸν τοῦ βαλανεῖου, ὃ δὴτα τῷ δήμῳ ἐτύγχανεν ἀνεμένον, ἐπὶ κατασκοπή τῶν πολεμίων κατὰ τὸ σύνηθες ἐνυξάνοντες καὶ ἐν ὀμότητι καραδοκοῦντες τε καὶ θεώμενοι, εἰ ποι ἐπήλυσις ἔσται βαρβαρική, ὡς κατενόησαν τοὺς τῶν Ἀβάρων ἀγγελαφόρους ἤδη προστούντας...

But Roman political fortunes in the Moesia I took a turn for the worse when, in the following year, an Avar victory over imperial forces ended in the renewal of Roman subsidies. Suddenly, the Avars began to call Justin's bluff. Some historians have argued that the next two decades witnessed the virtual collapse of Roman authority in Illyricum, as Avars and Sklavenoi plundered at will. The onset of the Persian war in 572 further accelerated the collapse, for in that year, not only was Justin's successor, Tiberios I Constantine, forced to transfer troops from Europe to Asia Minor, but in 574, he also conducted a recruitment drive in the Balkans that siphoned off badly needed manpower—an act that engendered much ill-will among the Roman inhabitants of Illyricum. Tiberios was in desperate straits because he was confronted with the reality of fighting a two-front war; furthermore, he could do little to check the Avar advance in the Danubian
plain. Sklavenoi participation in the Avar campaigns of the 570s and 580s increased markedly; Avar-Sklavenoi military operations focused on two principal regions: the Sklavenoi were assigned the task of pillaging Dardania and the Macedonias, while the Avars directed their operations against the Roman fortifications situated in the Danubian plain, where their heavy cavalry could operate in the open. Sklavenoi military tactics and technology underwent subtle, but important refinements during this period as a result of contacts with the Avars, as well as the Romans.

Meanwhile, when the Bulgars began menacing imperial territory at the turn of the sixth century, Sklavenoi units must have played a supporting role. After all, they were created to function like the Alanic Antae, who were the frontal assault troops and guerrilla warfare specialists of their day. Indeed, such a military force would have been indispensable to the Bulgars, since their strategy was to establish a pax centered in the Balkans. Archaeological finds confirm this; there is a dense concentration of Sklavenoi/immigrant farmer settlements in Moldavia along the upper Siret, Prut, Dniester, upper southern Bug, and the southern Pripet during this approximate time-frame (i.e., middle the sixth century). Prokopios, describing an encounter between certain Sklavenoi and Heruli when a group of the latter decided to return to their ancestral homeland (Thule) in Scandinavia, ca. 512, writes:

'Ἡνκα Ἑρουλοι Δαγγοβαρδῶν ἣςημεντες τῇ μάχῃ ἐξ ἡμῶν τῶν πατρίων ἀνότησαν, οἱ μὲν αὐτῶν, ὡσπερ μοι ἐμπροσθεν δεδηγηται, ἔκήσαντε οὐ τὰ ἐν Ἰλυρίοις χωρά, οἱ δὲ δὴ ἄλλοι ἱστερον ποταμὸν διαβαίνειν οὐδαμῇ ἑγνωσαν, ἀλλ' οἱ αὐτῶς ποιο
Prokopios wrote that the incident took place on the north bank of the Danube; since there is no reference to Sklavenoi military activity around the Danube at this time, most historians simply glossed over the passage altogether:

...τοῦτον Βασιλείους (i.e., Justinian) τὸν Χιλβούδιον, ὅτε δὴ τέταρτον ἔτος τὴν αὐτοκράτορα εἶχεν ἀρχήν, θράκης στρατηγὸν ἀνετύτω, ἐπὶ τῇ τοῦ Ἰστροῦ ποταμοῦ φιλαθῆ κατεστήσατο, φυλάσσειν κελεύσας ὡς μηκετί τοὺς ταύτης βαρβάρους ὅ ποτε μόνον διαβάτας ἔσται, ἐπὶ αὐτοῦ τὴν διάβασιν πολλῆς ἴδη Οὐάννοι τε καὶ Άνται καὶ Σκλαβηνοὶ πεποιημένοι ἀνήκεστα Ἡρωαδίους ἐργά εὑρίσκαντο. 31

Many historians regarded the Antae invasion of 517, described by Prokopios, as the first solid reference to Sklavenoi military activity on imperial soil. But the passage in question, reproduced below, explicitly states that the Antae carried out that raid, not the Sklavenoi. A closer examination of this passage reveals why some scholars got confused: in the first place,
Prokopios inserted his narrative about the Antae foray in a broader discussion describing the Sklavenoi razzia of 550—in effect it is a digression, and some scholars failed to take proper note of that. Meanwhile, other scholars, who were cognizant of the digression, believed the Antae were ethnically Slav. At any rate, Prokopios wrote that Justinian's nephew, the Magister Militum per Thracias, Germanos, annihilated the Antae force that had crossed the Danube, and that the memory of that Roman victory had been celebrated, even among the Sklavenoi, who lived in awe of Germanos because of it.

Γερμανοῦ δὲ τὸ στρατεύμα ἐν Σαρδικῇ, τῇ Ἑλληνίδον πόλει, ἄγειραντός τε καὶ διόποστος, ἀπαντά τε ἰσχυρότατα ἐξαρτυομένον τὰ ἐς τὴν τοῦ πολέμου παρασκευήν, Σκλαβηνῶν ὑμίλος ὅσος σὺπω πρότερον ἀφίκετο ὡς Ῥωμαίων τὴν γῆν: Ἰστρον τε ποταμὸν διαβύτες ὁμφί Νάισον ἔλευν. ὡν δὲ ὀλίγονς τινᾶς ἀποσκεδαστέντας μὲν τοῦ στρατοπέδου, πλανωμένους δὲ καὶ κατὰ μόνας περιόντας τὰ ἐκείνη χωρία τῶν τινὲς Ῥωμαίων καταλαβόντες τε καὶ ξυνθήσαντες ἀνεπυξάνοντο ὅτου δὴ ἕνεκα οὕτως δὴ ὁ τῶν Σκλαβηνῶν στρατὸς καὶ ὁ τι κατεργασόμενοι διέβησαν ποταμὸν Ἰστρον. οἳ δὲ ἰσχυρίσαντο ὡς θεσσαλονίκην τε αὐτὴν καὶ πόλεις τὰς ἀμφ᾽ αὐτῆν πολιορκίαν ἐξαιρήσοντες ἦκοιεν. 33
Germanos' victory secured a temporary respite for the empire, since Prokopios wrote that in the year 531, one year later, Chilbudios, the Magerister militum per Thracias, was charged with the defense of the Danube frontier, the Antae and Sklavenoi made numerous forays into imperial territory, which wrought much damage in parts of Illyricum. The fourth decade of the sixth century witnessed a steady rise in the number of barbarian raids south of the Danube. For example, two Sklavenoi incursions into imperial territory during this time warrant our attention. Thrace provided the backdrop for the initial raid, which took place in the autumn of 545. Narses, the celebrated eunuch general, had spent the winter in Thrace with a force of Heruli whom he recruited for service in Italy; Narses had orders to rendezvous with Belisarios in Italy during the following spring. As the Roman army was marching to its winter camp, it was attacked by Sklavenoi who had crossed the Danube and pillaged the surrounding countryside, taking many captives. Despite being outnumbered, the Romans prevailed, taking many barbarian prisoners of their own. The second Sklavenoi razzia occurred in the year 548; it penetrated deep into the heart of Illyricum and reached Epidamnos on the Adriatic (i.e., Dyrrachion). L. Maksimović has plausibly argued that these Sklavenoi forded the Danube in the vicinity of the Iron Gates; therefore, this particular group came from Wallachia, either Muntenia or Oltenia. Numerous Roman strongholds in Illyricum fell to these invaders who roamed about the countryside and plundered at will. An expeditionary force of Illyrian archontes pursued them, but its commander did not have the stomach for a head-on battle. The Sklavenoi chose a propitious moment to strike, since the imperial army was in Italy fighting under Belisarios' standard. These two
incursion paved the way for further Sklavenoi raids into Prevalitana and Epiros Nova (modern Montenegro and Albania) in the years to come; the nature and extent of these settlements in those provinces will be discussed in chapter 5.

In the spring of 550, the Sklavenoi launched a massive attack; from the moment when they forded the rivers Danube and Hebros (Marica), they encountered no formal imperial resistance. Prokopios noted that they entered Thrace through Moesia II; however, Maksimovic rejected this statement on the grounds that it would have been difficult for an enemy column to march from Thrace to Epidamnos on the Adriatic without encountering any formal resistance. Furthermore, he argued that the Sklavenoi used the fords at the Iron Gates to reach the Hebros and thence, Thrace and the interior of Illyricum, because it would have taken half the
time. Prokopios estimated the size of the barbarian force at just under three thousand men; by the standards of the age, it was quite large. Of course it is difficult to say how reliable Prokopios' troop estimates are in this particular instance. At any rate, the Sklavenoi split off into two groups: the first group ravaged Thrace, while the other plundered Illyricum. It is noteworthy that on several occasions the Sklavenoi routed numerically superior Roman forces dispatched to engage them in combat. Furthermore, the barbarians laid siege to, and captured numerous fortresses, including Topiros, even though they had little previous experience in conducting siege operations (the raid of 548 by Sklavenoi from Wallachia).

The fall of Topiros is instructive for a number of reasons; in the first place, the manner in which the fortress was taken sheds light on the military tactics used by the Sklavenoi. Fortunately, Prokopios' provided a detailed narrative of this particular siege. He stated that a group of Sklavenoi artfully concealed themselves under the battlements of Topiros, while their comrades got the attention of the Roman sentries. The garrison commander was deceived into thinking that the enemy force was few in number; meanwhile, the Sklavenoi who were out in the open feigned flight when the Roman garrison sallied forth from the gates. As soon as the Romans put some distance between themselves and Topiros, the Sklavenoi who had concealed themselves under the kastron's ramparts emerged from their hiding places, and attacked the Romans in the rear, just as their comrades wheeled to attack the Romans. The Roman were caught in a pincers and were cut down to the last man. Having taken Topiros, the Sklavenoi turned their attention to a nearby, unnamed kastron which they captured with considerable difficulty, since the civilian inhabitants took to the
ramparts themselves, and inflicted considerable losses on the enemy. But the skilled Sklavenoi archers were able to place a deadly hail of arrows on the defenders who were forced to retreat from the ramparts. The Sklavenoi then placed their scaling ladders into position and, in this fashion, they captured the fortress. Prokopios says the entire civilian population of Topiros was either put to the sword or carried off beyond the Danube. Whether this account is true or an exaggeration can not be ascertained.

L. Waldmüller argued that the siege of Topiros reflected a turning point in Sklavenoi military strategy, because it proves they knew how to take cities through the use of various stratagems. His cogent observations need to be placed within the broader context of sixth-century Sklavenoi military operations. Sixth-century Roman literary sources indicate a pattern of gradual, but steady improvements in Sklavenoi military expertise. Waldmüller rightly points to the razzia of 548 as representing a
turning point in the course of this complex evolution. Sklavenoi expertise in laying ambushes is noted by numerous late Antique authors, including Prokapios.

With the aid of Jordanes, we can now reconstruct some of the missing pieces to the puzzle concerning the evolution of Sklavenoi military tactics and capabilities. The term, *vagina nationum*, used by Jordanes clearly refers to the multi-ethnic character of the military recruitment centers where the Sklavenoi underwent training in the arts of guerrilla warfare. For the period between 531 and 550, Prokapios wrote that the Sklavenoi warred on foot, and did not possess body armor, although Sklavenoi warriors did carry heavy shields, spears, and bows with poisoned-tipped arrows. They specialized in conducting lighting-quick raids, and in general, they preferred not to engage their enemies in open battle; rather, the Sklavenoi preferred to fight in forests where the terrain worked in their favor.
Between June 549 and July 550, a throng of Sklavenoi (ὦμαλος) crossed the Danube near Naissos (modern Niš), and proceeded south down the Morava-Vardar furrow (Margus-Axios) toward Thessaloniki. Again the point of entry was in all likelihood the sector around Kladovo (Castellum Caput-Bovis or modern Karataš) near the Djerdap gorge, where in the Wallachian plain, Romanian archaeologists have confirmed the presence of large agglomerations of Sklavenoi settlements. Some of these settlements must have belonged to the Sklavenoi, while others belonged to immigrant farmers from whom the Sklavenoi were recruited. These immigrant farmers were from Dacia, and they were not necessarily allied with the Sklavenoi.\textsuperscript{41}

Thessaloniki was an important city with a formidable circuit wall. Although the Sklavenoi had enjoyed success in capturing minor strongholds, they did not yet possess the poliorcetic technology to take a major polis like Thessaloniki. They probably intended to take the city by ruse as they did Topiros; according to the \textit{Miracula}, we know that as they tried this stratagem against Thessaloniki during the seven-day siege. At any rate, Justinian’s nephew, Germanos, was in Serdika at that time making preparations for the next campaign in Italy. Justinian ordered him to delay his plans until the barbarian advance against Thessaloniki had been repulsed. When news of Germanos’ approach reached the Sklavenoi, they were overcome by fear since they had prior knowledge of his military prowess against the Antae in 517. Hence, the Sklavenoi abandoned their plans to attack Thessaloniki, and in this manner, the city was spared. Since Germanos had cut off their retreat, the Sklavenoi scattered into the mountains of Illyricum, then proceeded west toward Dalmatia. Germanos
made no effort to pursue them further, since his services were required in
Italy.42

Historians used to view the 550 razzia as a single incident, but that
interpretation is no longer tenable because it is based on a careless reading
of Prokopios, who wrote that the Sklavenoi who fled from Germanos to
Dalmatia were joined by additional detachments that had crossed the Danube
in the meantime. In fact, Prokopios suspected that Totila had bribed the
Sklavenoi to attack Illyricum and Dalmatia in order to distract Germanos.
The razzias of 549-550 represented the first recorded instance of Sklavenoi
actually wintering on imperial soil; they split up into three columns and
pilaged the countryside:

Justinian even set an army under the command of Scholastikos against them;
the Romans and Sklavenoi fought a fierce battle in which the former were
beaten decisively—even the military standard of a Roman general was
captured. This victory emboldened the Sklavenoi, who with their enormous
booty of captives and livestock, advanced unopposed through Thrace all the
way to the walls of Constantinople itself. But the Roman army managed to
redeem itself from the earlier defeat by firmly trouncing the Sklavenoi,
whose ranks were swollen by vast numbers of captives. Although the
Romans liberated many prisoners, many others were carried off beyond the
Danube by those Sklavenoi who had managed to escape the clutches of the
imperial army. Finally, in March of 559, the Kotrigurs and Sklavenoi invaded Thrace and advanced to the Long Walls, which guarded the approaches to Constantinople. They managed to breach the Long Walls along a section that was in a poor state of repair, and they proceeded south beyond the Wall toward Constantinople before encountering effective imperial resistance.

**Avars in the Balkans**

Roman Illyricum underwent rapid political change during the second half of the sixth century, as the entry of the Avars onto the stage of European history affected the political history of the Balkan Peninsula in manifold ways. In fact, the period between 558 and 572 marked a major turning point in the history of Roman-Avar relations, as many Sklavenoi units, formerly under Kotrigur direction, were drawn into the orbit of the newly established Avar pax centered in Pannonia. Before their subjugation by the Avars, many Sklavenoi from Vojvodina continued to raid Illyricum; however, by this time their overlords, the Kotrigurs, were conspicuous by their absence. The fate of the Kotrigurs remains obscure; Roman sources hint that some sort of Avar-Bulgar integration took place, but they do not provide any concrete details regarding the specifics of this process. The installation of the Avars in the Pannonian plain came about at the expense of the Gepids who were annihilated. This in turn made the Lombards so uneasy that they preferred to migrate to Italy—an event which changed the history of Rome and the empire in the West. In the East, the Avars filled the power vacuum the departing Lombards left behind. For our purposes, the most significant feature of Avar settlement in Pannonia was their
subjugation of the Sklavenoi, both in terms of their subsequent social
development, and in terms of subsequent Sklavenoi military organization.

During the years 578-584, Sklavenoi raids into Illyricum reached
fever pitch; in response, Tiberios (578-582) sent a delegation to Baian
requesting Avar military assistance. Baian wasted little time in complying
with the emperor's request, since it gave him the opportunity to chastise
the Sklavenoi of Wallachia, and to move against the Roman kastra situated
in the Danubian plain. In fact, Baian had a grievance with the Sklavenoi of
Wallachia, because they refused to submit to his authority. Sometime just
before Tiberios' overture, Baian had dispatched emissaries to the Wallachian
Sklavenoi demanding submission and tribute from a chief named Daurentios.
A heated exchange between the emissaries and Daurentios ensued. In the
end, the Sklavenoi grew so incensed at the audacity of the Avars that
Daurentios and his followers murdered the envoys.

'Η δὲ τῶν Ἀβάρων κίνησις κατὰ Σκλαβηνῶν
<ἐγένετο> οὕτως τῷ τοῦ Καίσαρος ἐνεκα
πρεσβείας καὶ τῷ βούλεσαν τὸν βαῖανόν 'Ρωμαίοις
ἐκτίσασι χαίρειν, ἀνα τὸς τὰ μάλιστα
ἐφιλοφρονεῖτο γε αὐτὸν ὁ Καίσαρ, ἀλλ' ὅτι γε αὐτῶ
καὶ ἐμαυτοὶ ὑπήρχον ἰδίως ἔκατο δυσμενείας.
ἐστειλε γὰρ ὡς αὐτὸν Δαυρέντιον καὶ τοὺς ὑσοι ἐν
tέλει τοῦ ἐκανοὺς ὁ τῶν Ἀβάρων ἣγούμενος σφός τε
ὑπακούειν κελεύων Ἀβραώ καὶ ἐς φόρου ἀπαγωγήν
ἐσέσασαι ἀναγράφτων. Δαυρέντιος δὲ καὶ οἳ γε ξὺν
αὐτῶ ἠγεμόνες καὶ τῆς ἅρα, ἔφασαν, οὕτως πέφυκεν
ἀναρώπων καὶ ταῖς τοῦ ἥλιου σέρεται ὁκτίσιν, ὡς τὴν καὶ ἡμῶν ὑπήκουν ποιήσηται δύναμιν; κρατεῖν γὰρ ἡμεῖς τῆς ἀλλοτρίας εἰδαμένευ, καὶ σὺν ἔτεροι τῆς ἡμεδαπής. καὶ τούτα ἡμῖν ἐν βεβαιῷ, μέχρι πόλεμοι τε ὡσ εἰ καὶ ξύφη. οὕτως ἀπανθαδισμεῖν τῶν Σκλαβηνῶν, σικά ἄλλως καὶ εἰ Ἀβαροὶ διετέλειν χρόμενοι μεγαληγορίας. εἶτα εκ τούτου προπηλακίσμοι καὶ ÿβρες, καὶ ὅτε βάρβαροι τῷ σκληρῷ τε καὶ ὄγκώδῃ φρονήματα ἔχειν τὴν ὡς ἄλληλους ἀνεσόβησαν ἔριν. καὶ οἱ Σκλαβηνοὶ τὸ σφῶν αὐτῶν ὄργυλον σικά οἴοι τε ὄντες ἐρχαλινώσαι τοὺς ἐκεῖσε ἀφιγμένους πρέσβεις ἀναροῦσιν, ὡς ἔτερωθεν ὦμέλει ἐκπυθτα γενέσθαι τούτα βαϊανῷ. τοῦτο τοιγαροῦν κατὰ Σκλαβηνῶν ἐπίκλημα ποιούμενος εκ πολλοῦ ὁ βαϊανος καὶ ὑποκρύπτων ἔχων ὡς αὐτοῖς τὸ ἔχως καὶ ἄλλως ἀσχάλλων, ὅτι αὐτῷ ὑπήκουσι σικὰ ἐγένοντο, μήτι γε πρὸς αὐτῶν καὶ τὰ ἀνήκεστα πεπονησε, καὶ ἀμα μὲν χάριν εἰδέναι βοηλόμενος τῷ Κοίσαρι, ἀμα καὶ πολυχρήματον τὴν χώραν εὐφήσειν οἰόμενος, ὅτε εκ πολλοῦ τῆς Ἁρμαίων ὑπὸ Σκλαβηνῶν εὐφήσειν οἰόμενος, ὅτε εκ πολλοῦ τῆς Ἁρμαίων ὑπὸ Σκλαβηνῶν
Once the Avars consolidated their position in the Wallachian plain, they came to represent a threat to the very existence of the Roman empire. Their military skills were formidable, and it included expertise at siege craft. By contrast, the Sklavenoi represented a different kind of threat to the Romans because they were specialists in guerrilla warfare, and they preferred both to live in and to fight in certain ecological niches, namely river valleys and forests. The elements of speed and surprise were crucial in launching a successful razzia. Sklavenoi raids forced the Romans to adopt a policy of aggressive, year-round defense. The immediate goal of a razzia was to acquire booty or captives. Captured cities were useful as places to hoard wealth: Prokopios remarked that the Sklavenoi used the kastra of Adina and Ulmetum as bases of operation. In 572, the Byzantine Empire and Persia were once again at war, and Tiberios was forced to conclude a treaty with Baian which gave the Avars territory around Sirmium, except for the city itself. With the bulk of the Roman army busy fighting in Asia Minor, the Wallachian Sklavenoi (i.e., those not under tight Avar overlordship) launched devastating raids deep into Illyricum, some of them settling there permanently. Significantly, before 578, Sklavenoi forays always concluded with their withdrawal from imperial territory, and the archaeological record reveals no Sklavenoi settlements in Serbia or in former Yugoslav Macedonia dating to before this time. Because Sklavenoi bands attacked the Roman Empire multiple times, traces of their raids in the written sources are scattered. Some of the Sklavenoi were seeking to distance themselves from the Avars. And perhaps some Sklavenoi hordes were even enrolled as
foederati by the Romans to fight other invaders, although the evidence for this is much disputed.48

**Slavic Settlements South of the Danube**

The issue concerning the Sklavenoi incursion of 578 and its aftermath is one of the most contentious of all, especially in Serbian scholarship. Some scholars once viewed this incursion as a single event in which the Sklavenoi attacked en masse. But a fundamental disagreement arose over the related question of whether this incursion resulted in the permanent or temporary settlement of the Slavs. One camp led by Ferjančić denied any permanent settlement before the seventh century. Ferjančić did not admit permanent Sklavenoi settlement south of the Danube until 604. If there were, he contended, Maurice would have focused the brunt of his campaign in those regions of Illyricum where Popović alleged the first Sklavinia was established, before venturing into the Danubian plain. In my view, Ferjančić’s interpretation is conceptually flawed. He rightly pointed out the problems associated with the dating of context pottery retrieved from findspots which precluded accurate dating, but his objections cannot be applied to the Slavic ware discovered in numerous Danubian castra from Singidunum to Scythia Minor.49 In the Danubian plain, Sklavenoi/hybrid wares have been found in sufficient quantities, and in mid-sixth-century contexts.

Another camp, that of Popović, argued that the Slav razzias of the late 570s led directly to the foundation of the first Sklavinia no later than the year 584, the year of the seven-day siege of Thessaloniki. Thus, the years 576-584 represent the first crucial phase in the Slaavicization of Roman Illyricum. The large-scale migrations that took place under Heraklios
(610-641) represent the secondary phase, which was marked by the arrival of the Croats and the Serbs.\textsuperscript{50} Thus, Popović and his allies see multiple-wave migration, and locate the first Sklavenia on imperial territory between Stobi and Thessaloniki.\textsuperscript{51}

Maksimović refined Popović's argument that the Sklavenoi mounted two separate attacks against Illyricum. He suggested that the Sklavenoi attacked first in 578-579, launched from Wallachia, and subsequently returned there again in 581. After the second razzia, they sojourned several years on imperial territory, but did not settle permanently, as Popović had argued. The razzias of 578-581 are recorded by Menander and John of Ephesos; with respect to the razzia of 579, scholars once believed these two sources referred to the same event, but that view now has been rejected by Popović.\textsuperscript{52} The razzia of 578 is mentioned by Menander, who wrote that in the fourth year of the reign of Tiberios (i.e., 7 Dec. 577 to 7 Dec. 578), 100,000 Sklavenoi from Wallachia laid waste Thrace and other areas.\textsuperscript{53} Popović argued that Menander made a mistake when he wrote that Thrace was the theater of Sklavenoi military operations on this particular occasion: in his opinion, Menander was actually referring to events that occurred elsewhere in the Balkans (viz., the Macedonias). According to John of Ephesos, in the year 581:

three years after the death of Justin II under Tiberios, the cursed nation of the Slavs campaigned, overran all Hellas, the provinces of Thessaly and all of Thrace, taking many towns and castles, laid waste, burned, pillaged, and seized the country. And dwelt there in full liberty and without fear, as if it belonged to them. This went on for four years, and until the present, because the emperor was involved with the Persian war and the armies were in the East...today they still are established and installed in Roman provinces, killing,
burning, and pillaging, having learned to make war better than the Romans.54

In order to make a case for Sklavenoi settlement south of the Danube in the wake of these razzias, Popović had to draw upon evidence gleaned from ancillary disciplines. He argued that the numismatic evidence points to the foundation of the first Sklavlnia no later than 585-586. He noted that the mint at Thessaloniki was barely represented among coin finds from certain regions traditionally tied to this city. Furthermore, the marked reduction in the number of coins struck at Thessaloniki corresponded to a rise in the number of coins struck in Constantinople.55 Coin hoards from Dacia Ripensis to the Macedonias point to the existence of multiple incursions carried out by separate groups of Sklavenoi. For example, Popović associated coin hoards from Boljetin (577/78), Tekija (579), Veliko Orašije (579), Veliko Gradište (580-581), and Sadovets (582-583) with the fall of Sirmium in 582. By contrast, hoards recovered from Bargala (584-585) and Baba, which is near Prilep (584; 582-585) are linked with entirely separate Sklavenoi offensives in the south. On the basis of this evidence, Popović localized the first Sklavlnia in the Macedonias.55

John of Ephesos suggested that the Sklavenoi incursions of 579 were carried out not under Avar aegis, but as a reaction against Avar attacks. John wrote that the Avar campaigns against the Wallachian Sklavenoi (in 578), the cruelty of Avar rule, and the intervention of the Antae (at imperial behest) against the Sklavenoi played important roles in compelling many of them to cross the Danube and to settle in Illyricum. Moreover, in the same year, the imperial warships ferried sixty thousand Avar horse across the Danube in a joint military campaign designed to punish the Sklavenoi of Wallachia for their raids. During one encounter, the Sklavenoi fled to the
surrounding forests, leaving all their possessions behind, rather than engage
the Avars in open combat.\textsuperscript{57} Baian's campaigns against the Sklavenoi of
Wallachia was a failure, since their raiding expeditions against the empire
continued virtually unchecked throughout the decade.

The first years of Maurice's reign witnessed widespread Sklavenoi
pillaging throughout Illyricum, particularly in the Macedonias. In 582
Sirmium fell to the Avars after a two-year siege,\textsuperscript{58} aided by Roman
engineers, who constructed a bridge across the Sava downstream from
Sirmium. As a result, the Avars had an opportunity to turn the Roman flank
along the Danube, and to shut down Roman naval operations along the Danube.
The interior of Illyricum lay open to attack at a critical juncture, with
Maurice still preoccupied with the Persians in the east. One scholar dated
the permanent installation of the Sklavenoi south of the Danube and Sava to
the fall of Sirmium.\textsuperscript{59} Theophylakt recorded five major campaigns mounted
by the Avars after the fall of Sirmium: 583-584; 586; 595; 597—most
of these expeditions were centered in the Danubian or Thracian plains,
where Avar cavalry could operate more freely in the open. Tactically, Avar
strategy appears to have been twofold: to subjugate the Sklavenoi of
Wallachia, and to reduce the Roman kastra in the Danubian plain. Theophylakt
suggested that Baian enjoyed greater success against the Romans, for
between 586-587, the Avars captured Aquis, Bonnoria, Ratiaria, Dorostolon,
Tropaion, Zaldapa.

\textit{οἱ δὲ ὁμφὶ τὸν Χαγάνον τῶν Σκυλαῶν καὶ Μυσῶν
τοὺς περιοίκους ἐλυμήναντο πάντας εἰλὸν τε πόλεις,
τὴν τε Ἔρατηρίαν καὶ βονώνειαν καὶ Ἑκύς καὶ}
As a result of the Avar offensives, the political frontier shifted from the Danube to the Haemus (i.e., Balkan Mountains); the cities of Thrace, including Constantinople, were suddenly exposed to enemy action. The gravity of the situation was not lost on Maurice, who ordered the construction of a linear earthwork ditch in the winter of 585–86, as a means of securing the hinterland of Constantinople from continued Avar pillaging. Maurice’s ditches extended from the Gulf of Mandra on the Black Sea to Harmenli on the Hebros (i.e., Marica). Meanwhile, the Avars who continued to lay waste to Thrace south of the Haemus with impunity, successfully outflanked the under-garrisoned ditch in 588, and drove on to Thracian Heraklea. Flushed with victories that exposed the hollowness of Roman military strength in the Balkans at this time, the Khagan turned to the task of subjugating the Wallachian Sklavenoi and the Antae (Roman foederati) in Thrace and Moldavia. Faced with the prospect of fighting two enemies, many Sklavenoi crossed the Danube and settled on imperial soil, including the Macedonias, where they founded the first Sklavinia south of the Danube. Others penetrated into the Peloponnesos where, within a decade, they too may have been enlisted foederati, and charged with protecting the Hexamillion and the fortress at Isthmia.

In 584, Sklavenoi from Wallachia (viz., Oltenia) and Thrace raidied the Macedonias, then converged upon Thessaloniki, which between 577-ca.630 witnessed three sieges. These seiges are attested in the Miracula of St. Demitrios. Two of the three sieges occurred in the year 586, and subsequently in 615-618. The Miracula is an important source because of
the light it casts on the history of Thessaloniki during the late sixth and seventh centuries. However, the limitations associated with this type of evidence (i.e., hagiography) should be borne in mind. Book I, for instance, was written by Archbishop John early in the reign of Heraklios (610-641), when Thessaloniki was besieged by Avar-Sklavenoi hosts (ca. 615-616); it contains fifteen miracles that St. Demetrios performed on behalf of the citizens of Thessaloniki. As regards the controversy regarding the dating of the seven-day siege, Lemerle’s dating of 22 September 586, rather than Vryonis’ dating of 597 is more convincing. First, coin production from the mint at Thessaloniki dropped significantly during the eighth decade of the sixth century. Second, the Sklavenoi had been raiding the Macedonias since the late 570s, just as the Avars were campaigning in the Danubian plain, especially in Moesia I and in Dacia Ripensis; therefore, a siege of Thessaloniki during this period would have been a natural consequence of these military operations. Third, according to Theophylakt (Historia 1.6.1-7, p. 53), the so-called Bookolabra incident occurred at this time. Fourth, the correspondence of Pope Gregory and the testimony of Theophylakt indicate that a general recovery was underway in the Macedonias during the 590s. As regards the nocturnal attack described in Miracle 2, Lemerle dated the event to 26 October 610 because the saint’s feast fell on the “Monday of the festival in the middle of the night,” a dubious translation of the following disputed passage, meaning “on the second day of the festival, suddenly, in the middle of the night:

...τῇ δευτέρᾳ ἡμέρᾳ τῆς ἑορτῆς ἀφοῦ μέσης νυκτὸς...
In this context, the Greek word ἡμέρα can mean either day or night. By reading Monday into the text Lemerle was able to make the case for 604. The significance of this arcane reconstruction is as follows. Lemerle had argued for large-scale Slavic installation during the last quarter of the sixth century, specifically, between the seven-day siege of 586, as recounted by miracles 13-15, and the brief Slavic siege of 26 October 604. According to Lemerle the *Miracula*, which is the only extant source to mention these two attacks on Thessaloniki, provides evidence for the installation of the Slavs in the Macedonias before the seventh century.57 Fifth, virtually the entire edifice of Vryonis’ argument rests on the Bousas passage (Theophylakt, Historia, 2.15.13-16, pp. 101-103) which is suspect because the information he provided the enemy did little to facilitate subsequent enemy conquests. Furthermore, Theophylakt denigrated Sklavenoi poliorcetic technology for literary effect in order to underscore Roman superiority. Furthermore, the Avars had access to Roman military expertise since their arrival on the Danube. One can hardly accuse the Avars of possessing primitive military technology.58

Miracles 12-15 are of particular interest. Miracle 12 described the controversial nocturnal attack, during which some 5,000 elite Sklavenoi warriors attempted to capture Thessaloniki by surprise:

...διὰ τὸ παντὸς τοῦ τῶν Σκλαβίνων ἐξονος τὸ ἐπιλεκτών ἄνως...59

The timing of the attack was hardly fortuitous, since the Sklavenoi had hoped to catch the Thessalonians off-guard while they celebrated the feast of St. Demetrios (i.e., 26 October). Unfortunately, Archbishop John forgot to
note the date of the attack, and this omission has led to endless, and heated, dispute. Suffice it to say, that in the absence of additional evidence, this issue, like so many others, may well remain insoluble. Fortunately, we are on slightly firmer ground when it comes to dating the seven-day siege. News of the impending Sklavenoi approach was announced on Sunday, 22 September to the inhabitants of the city, who were surprised by the rapidity of the enemy advance. This was the first time the Thessalonians had heard enemy war-cries beneath their city's walls. This incident further underscores Sklavenoi proficiency at mounting lightning-quick assaults. Evidently, the barbarian pretext for the attack was Maurice's refusal to pay an earlier Avar embassy to Constantinople the protection money they demanded. Hence, the Khagan mobilized the Sklavenoi, whom John noted, came from different bands (i.e., oqs). Significantly, on this occasion, the Praetorian Prefect of Illyricum, whose seat had been transferred from Sirmium, was away tending to urgent matters in Greece which required his immediate attention; it is tempting to link the prefect's absence with Sklavenoi military operations in the Peloponnesos, as some scholars have. After seven days, the barbarians lifted the siege of Thessaloniki, having wrought much devastation to the surrounding countryside. Just three months before this event, the Macedonias were visited by the plague. As if things were not bad enough, an outbreak of famine compounded the misery of the Thessalonians; unhappily for them, conditions deteriorated further when the grain ships from Egypt failed to arrive (false rumors had been circulating throughout the empire that the city had already fallen).

Scholars have argued that the miracles compiled by John in Book I were delivered as edifying sermons before the denizens of the city; that is
to say, the Archbishop’s goal was to boost civic morale during the siege of 615-615. Hence, one cannot dismiss the possibility that he intentionally projected details regarding early seventh-century barbarian military capabilities onto the accounts of previous siege(s) (viz., 586). John strove to convince his audience that conditions had been just as bleak before, and yet the Romans prevailed—with the aid of their heavenly patron. The decrease in coin production at the mint in Thessaloniki between 585 and 586 lends credence to the arguments of those who support the 586 dating for the seven-day siege. Indeed, the early 580s witnessed a relentless onslaught of Sklavenoi and Avar raids throughout Illyricum: this time-frame was simply more propitious for the barbarians to strike Thessaloniki than the late 590s. Furthermore, the correspondenda of Pope Gregory to the bishops of Illyricum seems to hint that a gradual recovery was under way in the Macedonias during the late 590s, a time that also witnessed a series of stunning Roman victories over the Avars in the Danubian plain.72

For Illyricum, the after-effects of the siege of Thessaloniki were profound, since they constituted the first phase in the Slavicization of the Balkan Peninsula. Interestingly, the Miracula noted that some of the barbarians defected to the Romans just before the lifting of the seven-day siege; it is tempting to date the establishment of the Sklavenoi community in Thessaloniki with this event. The Sklavenoi of Thessaloniki came to play an important role in municipal affairs; the earliest references to them as inhabitants of the city are found in the Miracula. Scholars have argued that the Sklavenoi who attacked Thessaloniki in 586 advanced on the city from a considerable distance. In the seventh century, by contrast, Sklavenoi settlements had already encroached upon the suburbs of the city. The
Miracula provided some insight into this process: in the early seventh century, some Romans still had property outside the city walls; whereas during the 670s, Sklavenoi settlements were located virtually beneath those walls: moreover, and they could impose a blockade on Thessaloniki either by land or sea, at will. However the Sklavenoi who arrived in the Macedonias during the razzias of 578–584 and those who attacked Thessaloniki in 586 were not necessarily one and the same. There is no confirmation in the sources that they collaborated then or on this or any other occasion. The Sklavenoi who attacked Thessaloniki were probably vassals of the Avars, but the Sklavenoi who settled in the Macedonias, Prevalitana, and Dardania sought to distance themselves from the Avars and their allies. Consequently they were probably not on the best of terms with the pro-Avar Sklavenoi, and had no motivation to carry out Avar directives passively. Ethnic affinity—even if the Sklavenoi shared it—would hardly create common military or political interests among the Sklavenoi.

One question often ignored by scholars is the motivation behind the Sklavenoi razzias. The simple answer is quest for booty, but the written texts suggest the possibility that other motives lay behind the incursions of the 570s and 580s (which should be distinguished from earlier incursions). In the second half of the sixth century many Sklavenoi were merely trying to distance themselves from the Avars; therefore, we need to distinguish between Sklavenoi operating south of the Danube under Avar direction, and Sklavenoi who were hostile to the Avars. Conceivably, this latter group may have become Roman foederati in the 590s. Avar campaigns directed against these Sklavenoi of Wallachia, as well as the Antae continued throughout the 570s and 580s. Menander confirmed that the Antae viscerally hated the
Avars, and that both groups were frequently at war with each other until 602, when the Antae were literally wiped out. The point is, the Avars did not succeed in subjugating the Sklavenoi colonies of Wallachia until the first two decades of the seventh century. Archaeologists have found evidence for extensive Sklavenoi settlement along the rivers Orsova, the Danube, and the Olt in modern Romania.

**Imperial Recovery**

The year 592 marked a turning point in the Avar-Roman struggle over political hegemony in the Balkans; it also witnessed the beginning of the Imperial recovery in Illyricum, short-lived as it was. The reasons for the reversal in Roman fortunes were twofold: in 591, Maurice prosecuted the Persian war to a successful conclusion; this event enabled him to transfer seasoned troops from the eastern front to the Balkans. Maurice entrusted this task to several generals of varying abilities, who were largely victorious in their campaigns first against the Wallachian Sklavenoi, and subsequently, over the Avars. The imperial counter-offensive lasted until Maurice was deposed in 602. Roman strategy was aimed at securing the Danube frontier as a buffer against Sklavenoi raids. For the first time since Justinian's reign, the Roman army campaigned on the north bank of the Danube: such aggressive imperial policy could be undertaken only with the manpower the Romans then had at their disposal. In the first phase of the offensive, the Romans embarked on a search-and-destroy mission directed against Sklavenoi settlements within reach of the Danube, as these colonies were the immediate staging grounds for razzias into Illyricum. Overall, the Roman counter-offensives fell into two periods: the first campaign got underway between 593-595, the second between 597-602.
In 587, the Romans fielded a large army in the Balkans for the first time in over two decades. But manpower shortages hampered the effectiveness of the Roman campaigns until the transfer of seasoned troops from the east. The sequence and chronology of these events are provided by Theophylakt, whose Historiae covers the reign of Maurice (582-602). When the Romans first launched their attacks against the Sklavenoi in 593, Avar envoys complained to the Roman commanders about the presence of imperial forces on the north bank of the Danube; yet, the Avars did not attempt to intervene on behalf of the Sklavenoi.

This passage has been the focal point of debate among scholars; some have argued that it proves the Sklavenoi of Wallachia and the Banat managed to preserve some degree of independence from the Avars as late as the 590s; other scholars cite conflicting passages in Theophylakt that indicate the Sklavenoi of these regions had become Avar subjects as a result of the campaigns of the 570s. The proponents of the second approach cite passages from Theophylakt and Paul the Deacon (the Lombard historian), both of whom noted specific cases in which the Khagan issued orders...
directing the Sklavenoi to carry out specific military obligations on his behalf. The most celebrated of these episodes is found in the History of Paul the Deacon, and it refers to the presence of Sklavenoi contingents in Italy who assisted the Lombards in the siege of Cremona in 599. Another often-quoted passage is found in Theophylakt, who wrote that in the year 593, the Khagan ordered the Sklavenoi to ferry Avar horse across the Danube so that the latter could lay siege to Singidunum. Perhaps the contradiction is only apparent. The Sklavenoi for Banat and Pannonia who ferried the Avars across the Danube in order to attack Singidunum may have been those resident in areas under direct Avar authority.

One can only speculate that the Avars found the Sklavenoi as difficult to rein in as the Romans did. Egalitarian societies that practiced primitive democracies were difficult to control because they were so fragmented—there was no higher authority above the tribal chief. Moreover, the Romans found it difficult to deal with the Sklavenoi because treaties concluded with one group were not necessarily binding on neighboring groups. The relationship between Avars, Romans, and Sklavenoi must have been quite fluid during the second half of the sixth century: many Sklavenoi from Wallachia fled to Illyricum during the 570s when the Avars tried to impose their authority over them; yet, during the 590s, when the Romans were threatening Sklavenoi settlements north of the Danube, the latter sought the assistance of the Khagan. Consequently, it is anachronistic to posit direct Avar hegemony over the Wallachian Sklavenoi as early as the year 582, because this assumption projects seventh-century political realities on an uncertain sixth-century scene.
The dramatic Avar successes of the 570s and 580s were followed by equally dramatic reverses in the late 590s and early 600s. Aggressive Roman campaigning against the Avars and the Sklavenoi restored some measure of imperial authority along the limes from Dorostolon to Singidunum. The campaigns of the early to mid 590s focused on territory that lay between the Black Sea and Novae; these campaigns secured the Thracian plain from the threat of barbarian invasion. Priskos' drive up the Danube in 595, which kept the Sklavenoi effectively at bay, was one of several notable Roman achievements. The fate of urban populations living in the Danubian plain during the last two decades of the sixth century is now better documented, thanks to recent studies that will be discussed in the next two chapters; Theophylakt informed us that the Avars expressly sought to deport them to Pannonia. Conceivably, the Khagan may have suspected that he could no longer trust the civilian population of poleis under Avar occupation—especially since the Roman army was advancing up the Danube. At any rate, the Khagan's actions represented a shift in Avar policy, for in the 570s and 580s the urban inhabitants in question were spared the sword or deportation, and were permitted to remain in their poleis unmolested, albeit under watchful Avar supervision.

The second phase of the imperial recovery began with the ratification of the Roman-Avar peace-treaty in 598. This treaty restored the south bank of the Danube to the Romans. Furthermore, one of its stipulations permitted the Romans to cross to the north bank, at their discretion, in order to attack the Sklavenoi. A crucial phase in the struggle for hegemony over the Danubian plain began in the summer of 599, when the Roman army, under Priskos and Komentiolos, attacked the Avars in the Tisza
basin. Priskos won signal victories over the Avars whose ranks were seriously depleted by an outbreak of plague; moreover, the Roman victories produced serious fractures within the Avar confederation. For instance, scholars have connected the so-called perpetual peace concluded between Avars, Lombards, and Franks in 601, with the weakening of Avar authority at this time.

Along some sectors of the limes, Maurice's counter-offensive actually led to further Sklavenoi migrations into Illyricum. These migrations appeared to have been linked with the aggressive campaigns of the Roman general, Peter, in 597, along a two hundred mile stretch from Novea to the Black Sea. Some historians have argued that the first Avar-Sklavenoi settlements in Roman Dalmatia were a direct result of Peter's offensive, which displaced many Sklavenoi and Avar communities from the Danubian plain. It should be remembered, however, that in the sixth century Dalmatia encompassed not only the Adriatic littoral, but also a large portion of interior lands (present-day Bosnia-Hercegovina). Although the Roman victories in the Danubian and Pannonian plains temporarily relieved pressure on Thrace, the Moesias, and Dacia Ripensis, it did little to prevent barbarian settlement in other parts of Illyricum and Dalmatia. The precise sequence and chronology of barbarian installations in Dalmatia remains a contentious issue, but the general outlines of this phenomenon can be reconstructed on the basis of the literary, numismatic, and toponymic evidence.

The fall of Sirmium in 562 first exposed Dalmatia to Avar-Sklavenoi raids. This fact may also help explain why the Avars did not attempt to turn the Roman flank when they captured Sirmium—Dalmatia was ripe for plunder. A coin hoard from Narona has been linked with Avar offensives in
Dalmatia during the 580s; but these operations did not result in permanent Avar settlement, which began in earnest in 597.90 J. Kovačević has argued that the Avars followed the Servitium-Castra-Salviae-Andertium-Salona route—in effect they used the Roman road network to facilitate their conquests. Indeed archaeologists have identified several Avar settlements along this route.91 Theophylakt wrote that the Avars used siege engines to destroy some forty cities during this invasion, laying waste the surrounding countryside as far as the kastron of Bójκεις, which Kovačević identified as modern Boloie, southeast of Banja Luka, near Stražica-Čadjavica.92 There is scattered evidence, written and archaeological, for Sklavenoi penetration of the Adriatic littoral during this time as well, but it is not clear whether their movements should be associated with Balan’s expedition. Belt buckles, earrings, figurines, and fibulae attributed to the Slavs have been discovered at various sites along the Adriatic coast, including Novi Banovci, Stenjevac, Čadjavica, and Biskupija.93 The De Administrando Imperio is of limited value in helping scholars to reconstruct the Avar advance, because the chapter concerning the fall of poleis in Dalmatia, such as Salona and Epidamnos, reflected an oral tradition that was handed down through the centuries, much of which was legendary.94 The written and epigraphic sources indicate Dalmatia became a refuge for Romans fleeing Pannonia after the fall of Sirmium; for example, an inscription from the sarcophagus of Abbess Ioanna, (d. 612), a refugee from Sirmium, has been used to establish a terminus post quem for the fall of Salona and neighboring cities.95 The Sklavenoi settlement at Mušići and other sites in Bosnia may well date to the incursions of 597 because political circumstances in Roman Dalmatia at this time were more
conducive to permanent Sklavenoi settlement. During the 590s, the Romans were exerting intense pressure on the Sklavenoi to vacate the Danubian plain by attacking their settlements on the north bank, and by summoning the Antae to harry the Sklavenoi whenever possible. This combination compelled many Sklavenoi to migrate into Dalmatia, Central Illyricum, and peninsular Greece. Dalmatia in particular lay largely unprotected, though there is fragmentary evidence indicating the existence of provincial defense forces, organized by local archontes.

Between 596 and 602, the Roman army was poised to destroy the Avar Khaganate. Priskos and Komentiolos won signal victories over Balan that weakened the Avar grip over subject peoples within the confederation, indeed, Theophylakt even noted that several revolts had occurred by subject groups against Avar rule. As Roman foederati, the Antae must have had a hand in these affairs, for in 601, the Avars turned on them with a vengeance; the ensuing struggle culminated in the extirpation of the Antae in 602. Perhaps it was the annihilation of the Antae that led to further Roman reliance on certain Sklavenoi communities as foederati. Meanwhile, a mutiny by the European army in 602 led to the deposition and murder of Maurice, and to the accession of Phokas as emperor. There is no compelling evidence to suggest Phokas allowed the Danubian limes to collapse through willful neglect, though he did attempt to buy off the Avars with renewed subsidies; in fact, the Danubian limes remained the frontier until the Herakllian revolt and subsequent civil war.

Archaeologists have generally dated the massive installation of the Sklavenoi in the north Balkans to the first quarter of the seventh century; many historians have viewed these migrations as the wave that altered the
ethnic and cultural make-up of south-east Europe. The first two decades of
the seventh century also witnessed the zenith of Avar power in the Balkans.
They had successfully imposed their domination over most of the Balkan
Sklavenoi by this time, and their influence remained considerable, even
after 626. However, the arrival of the Croats, Serbs, and Onogur Bulgars
gradually altered the political balance in the Balkans. By founding their own
paxes, these newcomers deprived the Avars of opportunities to mount
predatory raids against Byzantium, and to collect tribute south of the
Danube. These elements were the driving forces behind Avar power;
henceforth, the Khaganate underwent a gradual transformation from a
nomad-pastoral to a sedentary economy. After 681, the Avars retained the
allegiance only of the Sklavenoi of Pannonia. As for Roman authority in the
Danubian plain, after 610, the Danube ceased being the northern frontier of
the Roman Empire until its restoration centuries later under Basil II in
1018. Although the demise of Roman authority in Illyricum and Scythia
Minor unquestionably facilitated large-scale Sklavenoi settlement, the first
stage in this process began with the limited settlement that took place
during the 580s.

Thus the literary sources paint a picture of wholesale destruction,
economic, and demographic decline in the Balkans over the duration of the
Slavic migrations. These sources attribute the loss of Roman authority in
the north Balkans to the Sklavenoi, and often exaggerate the scope of
barbarian destruction. The archaeological evidence (to be discussed
subsequently) however, paints a decidedly different picture: a pattern of
demographic growth, relative prosperity, and peaceful coexistence during
the sixth and seventh centuries.
The debate over the nature and extent of the Slav invasions has focussed on the issues of peaceful settlement versus settlement by military conquest. Historians have remained divided into two camps. One postulated limited Slav installation south of the Danube during the last quarter of the sixth century. The second refused to countenance the idea even of limited settlement, but only temporary sojourns on imperial territory in the years 549-550 and 578-584. Slavic settlement took place only after Phokas transferred his European army to the East in 604. When archaeologists first joined the debate, they accepted the conquest model, and accorded primacy to invasions as the significant factor behind the ethnographic transformation of the Balkans. Dark age pottery, for example, was seen as the "visiting-card" of new peoples. But since the 1970s, archaeologists have shifted away from the invasion/migration paradigm toward the study of internal phenomena, such as peaceful co-habitation between in-comers and autochthonoi.

There is no convincing evidence for a land-taking in the classical, Roeslerian sense of the word. The Sklavenoi communities were far too few, even after their purported early seventh century influx to displace the indigenous populations of the region. The transformation of the Balkans had less to do with external events, such as barbarian invasions; indeed, internal processes, such as those that transformed the Roman Empire into the Medieval Byzantine Empire, should be accorded precedence.\textsuperscript{102} Migrations took place, but gradually and piecemeal. They were related only indirectly to the tumultuous raids that rocked the Roman Empire in the Balkans in the sixth and early seventh centuries. The Sklavenoi invasions alone did not change the fabric of Roman life in the Balkans. Immigrant
farmers diffused a new subsistence technology to the Balkans; they played a
far greater role in the Slavicization of the Balkans than the vaunted
Sklavenoi. And as we will see in the next Chapter, some of the poleis in the
Danubian plain continued to exist into the mid-seventh century, often beyond
the horizon of imperial vision.

1P. J. Šafarík, Slavische Altertumer, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1843-44).

2"In this year (1 September 657-31 August 658) the emperor campaigned
against Sklovina, and he took many prisoners and brought them under control."
This campaign marked the first, modest stage in the imperial recovery of the
Balkans. Additional gains were made under Constantine V and Nikaphoros I.
According to some Slavic linguists, these counteroffensives initiated a reverse
migration of Sklavenoi from the Balkans to Central and Northern Europe. The
evidence for this migration is presented by Heinrich Kunstmann, Beiträge zur
Geschichte der Besiedlung Nord- und Mitteldeutschlands mit Balkanslaven,
(Munich, 1987). Theophanes the Confessor, Chronographia, ed. C. de Boor, 2 vols.
Zeitpunkt der slavischen Ansiedlung an der unteren Donau," In Sitzungsberichte

3N. Iorga, "Epoque and caractere de l'établissement des Slaves dans la
H. Setton, "The Bulgars in the Balkans and the Occupation of Corinth in the

4U.N. Zlatarski, "Die Besiedlung der Balkan-Halbinsel durch die slaven,"
Revue Internationale des Etudes Balkaniques 2 (1935): 372. For a detailed study
of the Slav migrations into the northwestern Balkans, see G. Labuda, "Die
Ein wanderungen der Slaven auf den Balkan im 6.-7. vahrhundert," In XII Congres

5G. Ostrogorsky, History of the Byzantine State, (New Brunswick: Rutgers
de l'époque romaine jusqu'au VIIIe siecle," Revue historique 211 (1954): 265-305
(hereafter cited as Leserle, "Invasions, "). F. Barisić, "Procès Slovenses
Kolonizacje istočnog balkana," Simposium predslavenski etnički elementi na
Balkanu u etnogenezi južnih slovena, (Novi Sad, 1965), pp. 11-27. (hereafter
cited as Barisić, "Process, ").


In ancient times a vast throng of the Huns who were then called Cimmerians ranged over this region which I have just mentioned, and one king had authority over them all. And at one time the power was secured by a certain man to whom two sons were born, one of whom was named Utigur and the other Cutrigur. These two sons, when their father came to the end of his life, divided the power between them, and each gave his own name to his subjects; for the one group has been called Utigurs and the other Cutrigurs even to my time. All these now continued to live in this region, associating freely in all the business of life, but not mingling with the people who were settled on the other side of the lake and its outlet; for they never crossed these waters at any time nor did they suspect that they could be crossed, being fearful of that which was really easy, simply because they had never even attempted to cross them, and they remained utterly ignorant of the possibility.” Prokopios, Wars, 5: 8.5.2-7, pp. 86-88; English translation by Dewing, pp. 87, 89.


Ibid., p. 284.

Concerning the Avars: after many wanderings they came to the Alans and begged Sarosius, the leader of the Alans, that he bring them to the attention of the Romans." Menander, The History of Menander the Georgopole, ed. and trans. R.C. Blockley, (Liverpool, Francis Cairns, 1985), fragment 5.1.1-3, p. 48; English translation is on p. 49.


Lemerle blamed Justinian for the demise of imperial authority in Illyricum. For a fuller discussion see Invasions, p. 287. V. Popović rejects this view; he sees the collapse of imperial authority as a gradual process that began with the onset of the Persian war and continued into the reign of Heraklios. See his remarks in "Slavisation," pp. 230-257.


26 "...after the assault upon the walls (of Sirmium) Baian sent envoys to discuss peace. Some of the inhabitants of Sirmium were stationed as usual on the roof of the public bath to keep watch on the enemy. As they were keeping out of sight waiting and watching for any barbarian attack, they noticed the Avar messengers approaching..." Menander, *History*, 12.4-7, pp.132-142. English translation is on p. 133.

27 Ibid., 15. 5, p. 150; Evagrios, *History*, 5. 11, 25-30 p. 207.


29 The Sklavenoi seemed to have used the Morava (Margus)-Vardar (Aksios) furrow as an invasion route into the Macedonias and Peloponnese.


31 When the Eruli, being defeated by the Lombards in the above-mentioned battle, migrated from their ancestral homes, some of them, as has been told by me above, made their home in the country of Illyricum, but the rest were overe to crossing the Ister River, but settled at the very extremity of the world; at any rate, these men, led by many of the royal blood, traversed all the nations of the Slaveni one after the other, and after next crossing a large tract of barren country, they came to the Varni, as they are called." Prokopios, *Hors*, 3: 6.15, p. 414. English translation on p. 415. According to Pritsak, the next reference is not until 531, *Hors*, 4:7.14, p. 262.
32-This Chilbudios was appointed by the emperor, in the fourth year of his reign, to be General of Thrace (531 A.D.), and was assigned to guard the river Ister, being ordered to keep watch so that the barbarians of that region could no longer cross the river, since the Huns and Antae and Scloveni had already made the crossing many times and done irreparable harm to the Romans." Prokopios, Wars, 4: 7.13. p. 262; English translation is on p. 263.

33-But while Germanos was collecting and organizing his army in Sardice, the city of Illyricum, and making all the necessary preparations for war with the greatest thoroughness, a throng of Scloveni such as never before was known arrived on Roman soil, having crossed the Ister River and come to the vicinity of Naissus. Now some of these had scattered from their army and, wandering about the country there alone, were captured by certain of the Romans and made prisoners; and the Romans questioned them as to why this particular army of the Scloveni had crossed the Ister and what they had in mind to accomplish. And they stoutly declared that they had come with the intention of capturing by siege both Thessalonice itself and the cities around it." Prokopios, Wars, 5:7.34, pp. 36-38; English translation is on p. 39.

34-Prokopios, Wars, 4:7.14, p. 262. Chilbudios was thought to have been an Antes. He gave a good account of himself while in the service of the Romans, for during his watch there were no successful Kotrigur, Antae, or Sklavenoi incursions south of the Danube. Chilbudios was eventually killed in action against the Sklavenoi somewhere north of the Danube. In my view, this incident represents further proof that Justinian did not hesitate to use military force in an aggressive, offensive posture when it suited his interests, and when he had the forces available at his disposal.


37 "At about this time an army of the Scloveni crossed the river Ister and spread desolation throughout the whole of Illyricum as far as Epidamnus, killing or enslaving all who came in their way, young and old alike, and plundering their property. And they had already succeeded in capturing numerous strongholds of that region, which were then quite undefended, but which previously had been reputed to be strong places, and they continued to roam about searching out everything at their own pleasure. And the commanders of the Illyrians kept following them with an army of fifteen thousand men, without, however, having the courage to get close to the enemy." Prokopios, Wars, 4:7.28, pp. 398-400; English translation is on pp. 299, 401.
"But finally the barbarians overwhelmed them by the multitude of their missiles and forced them to abandon the battlements, whereupon they placed ladders against the fortifications and so captured the city by storm. Then they slew all the men immediately, to the number of fifteen thousand, took all the valuables as plunder, and reduced the children and women to slavery. Before this, however, they had spared no age, but both these and the other group, since the time when they fell upon the land of the Romans, had been killing all who fell in their way, young and old alike, so that the whole land inhabited by the Illyrians and Thracians came to be everywhere filled with unburied corpses." Prokopios, Wars. 5:7.38, pp. 20-26; English translation is on pp. 25, 27.


40. They live in pitiful hovels which they set up far apart from one another, but, as a general thing, every man is constantly changing his place of abode. When they enter battle, the majority of them go against their enemy on foot carrying little shields and javelins in their hands, but gathering their trees up as far as to their private parts they enter into battle with their opponents. And both the two peoples have also the same language, an utterly barbarous tongue. Nay further, they do not differ at all from one another in appearance." Prokopios, Wars, 4:7.14, p. 270; English translation is on p. 271. Cf Prokopios reference to scattered Sklavenoi settlements with that of the Strategikon, which states that "The settlements of the Slavs and the Antes lie in a row along the rivers very close to one another. In fact, there is practically no space between them, and they are bordered by forests, swamps, beds of reeds." trans. G. T. Dennis, Maurice's Strategikon: Handbook of Byzantine Military Strategy. (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984): pp. 120-121. See pp. 372, 374, Das Strategikon des Maurikios, G.T. Dennis, (Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie Der Wissenschaft, 1981). Regarding the agrarian nature of these settlements, the Strategikon states that "They possess an abundance of all sorts of livestock and produce, which they store in heaps, especially common millet (kenchos=panicum miliaceum) and Italian millet." p.120. See p.372 of critical edition. This discussion will be elaborated in the conclusion.

41. Popović, "Temoins," p. 473. The kastron at Caput Bovis guarded the approaches to the Timok (Timacus) river valley which in turn leads to strategic points south and west like Caricin Grad. In fact the kastron is regarded by many archaeologists , including Popović, as the point of diffusion of bow-fibulae with mask-foot (les fibules digitees a humain masque=Bugelfibeln mit maskenfuss). I am suggesting that Caput Bovis had a Sklavenoi garrison which was settled there as foederati sometime after the razzia of 578.

42. Prokopios, Wars, 5:7.40, pp. 36-40.
"These barbarians did, in any case, irreparable damage in all Europe, not merely plundering that country by sudden raids, but actually spending the winter as if in their own land and having no fear of the enemy." Prokopios, Wars, 5:7.40, p. 48; English translation is on p. 49.

Prokopios, Wars, 5:7.40, pp.50-52.

Malalas, Chronographia, p. 490.

The Avar attack on the Slavs arose not only out of the embassy from the Caesar and the desire of Baian to return a favour to the Romans in exchange for the great generosity which the Caesar had shown to him, but also because Baian was hostile to them out of a personal grievance. For the leader of the Avars had sent to Daurentius and the chiefs of his people ordering them to obey the commands of the Avars and to be numbered amongst their tributaries. Daurentius and his fellow chiefs replied, "What man has been born, what man is warmed by the rays of the sun who shall make our might his subject? Others do not conquer our land, we conquer theirs. And so it shall always be for us, as long as there are wars and weapons." Thus boasted the Slavs, and the Avars replied with a like arrogance. After this came abuse and insults, and because they were barbarians with their haughty and stubborn spirits, a shouting match developed. The Slavs were so unable to restrain their rage that they slew the envoys who had come to them, and Baian received a report of these doings from others. As a result he nursed his grievance for a long time and kept his hatred concealed, angered that they had not become his subjects not to mention that he had suffered an irreparable wrong at their hands. Moreover, thinking both to win favour with the Caesar and that he would find the land full of gold, since the Roman Empire had long been plundered by the Slavs, whose own land had never been raided by any other people at all..." This is one of the earliest references to a Sklavenoi chieftan. Menander, History, 21, p. 194.


This issue will be discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.


V. Popović, "Slavisation," p. 230. See also Lj. Maksimović, "O hronologiji slovenskih upada na vizantisku teritoriju krajem 70-tih i početkom 80-tih godina VI veka," ZAVI 8 (1964): 263-269. There is no formally established school which refers to itself in such terms. I merely wish to point out that the wave-theory of Sklovian settlement began its ascendancy during the late 60s. Proponents of this view, like V. Popović, posit Slav settlement by numerous waves of in-comers, as opposed to the view of L. Hauptman, who sees Sklavenoi settlement during the razzia of 579 as a single, large-scale event. Though both men agree that the attack took place in 579, in contrast, Hauptman believes John of Ephesus and Menander are talking about a single event. For the account of this razzia, see Menander, History, p. 190, and John of Ephesus, History, p.449 for 581. Popović says these two Roman sources reflect at least two different events, "Témoins," p. 450. Other prominent exponents of gradual settlement include Haldon, Byzantium, p. 44, who identifies two waves of Sklavenoi invasions for Greece: 576-586; 509-620s. Cf. M. Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou, "Les Slaves dans l'empire byzantin," In 17th International Byzantine Congress, Major Papers, (Washington, D.C.), p. 350 (hereafter cited as Pelekidou, "Slaves, ").


I will discuss the archaeological evidence linking this razzia with the Wallachian Slavs later in this chapter.


On the issue of Sklavenoi settlement south of the Danube, I am in agreement with Popović.
The literary sources are replete with references to large numbers of Roman captives living among the Sklavenoi. I will discuss the archaeological evidence in chapters seven and eight; for the moment, I wish to point out that there is ample literary evidence to support the view that Sklavenoi-autochthonoi interaction occurred almost from the onset when the Sklavenoi began to raid Illyricum. I do not think that interaction was restricted to captives living among the Slavs, for not all autochthonoi fled. Indeed, many autochthones became Sklavenoi themselves. Thus, in my view many people who came to call themselves Slav were originally indigenous peoples like the Dacian, the Illyrians, et al. Furthermore, there were fewer migrations than previously thought; the emphasis of future research should be on internal transformations.

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Menander, History, 25.1-2, pp. 216-226; 27.2 p. 238; Theophylakt, Historiae, 1.3. 22-24, p. 44.


For references to the Sklavenoi presence in Thracian during the 580s, see Theophylakt, Historiae, 1.6, p. 51f. The Sklavenoi even managed to penetrate even further south, for Maurice led his personal body-guard along with the demes to the Long Walls in anticipation of an attack on Constantinople, see Theophylakt, Historiae, 1.7, p.52. Theophanes Chronographia, A.M. 5076, 3-7, p. 254. Sklavenoi gains in Thrace were ephemeral, as Komentiolos managed to drive out many Sklavenoi from the Thracian plain (Theophylakt, Historiae 1.7, pp. 52-53). As concerns the issue of Sklavenoi foederati in the Peloponnese (i.e.,along the Hexamilion and in the Justinianic fortress), at present it is only possible to hypothesize; however, I believe that future excavation at the site of the Justinianic fortress at Isthmia may shed further light on this dynamic. Slav pottery has already been discovered at the Roman bath there. T. Gregory has documented evidence for peaceful co-habitation between autochthones and Sklavenoi, see "A Dark Age Settlement," pp. 1-21. For the Sklavenoi military activities in the Peloponnese, see John of Ephesus, History, 6.25, p.450; For descriptions of the sack of Corinth, see Michael the Syrian, x.21,p.362; Cronaca di Monemvasia, ed. I. Duichev, (Palermo: n.p., 1976): pp. 88-121.

Although Archbishop John wrote his account in the second decade of the seventh century, Miracles 13-15 recount events that had occurred during the episcopate of Eusibios.
The use of hoard evidence will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Bokolabra was an Avar shaman who had seduced one of Baian’s wives and subsequently had taken refuge among the Avars. Baian used this incident as an excuse to attack Roman territory.


Lemerle, Miracula, 2.102, p. 125. For further discussion regarding Lemerl’s dating of this event, see the remarks of M. Whitby, Maurice, pp. 119-120. Cf. Barišić, Čuda Dimitrija Solunskog kao istoriski izvori, (Belgrade: SAN, 1953): 44ff.


Miraçula, Book II, miracle 2, 197.15, p. 185; Book II, miracle 2, 212.4, p. 189; Book II, miracle 4, 253.1, p. 214; Book II, miracle 4, 243-244, pp. 211-212. Whitby, Maurice, p. 185.


Theophylakt, Historiae, 8.5.10-13, p. 203.
Then, after the termination of this speech, although the force was
distressed by the address, Priscus granted pardon to boldness and forgiveness to
barbarian words. Therefore, he offered no rebuttal to rashness, but declared
that he was undertaking war against the Slovenes, for the agreement and truce
with the Avars had not in fact concluded the Getaic war as well.

Theophylakt, Historia, 6.6, p. 230; English trans in Whitby, History, p. 108. See also de

Paul the Deacon, Historia Langobardum, ed. Georg H. Pertz. (Hannover,

Theophylakt, Historiae, 6.3, p. 225. Theophylakt remarks that the Avars
advanced into Thrace as far as Tzouroulon, and that they and even tried to force
the Long Walls, before retiring beyond the Danube. Politically the Balkans where
in a state of flux, with Avars and Romans using the Antae and Sklavenoi as
pawns. The scholarly debate over the degree of Avar suzerainty over the
Sklavenoi raises the question of Theophylakt's reliability. Overall, he is
chronologically unsound, and he is ignorant of Balkan geography. Yet Theophylakt
remains an important source covering events not treated by any contemporary.

Historians have proposed various alternative dates for the conclusion
of this treaty: 599, 600, 601. I accept M. Whitby's dating. Cf. Lemelre,

Theophylakt, Historiae, 7.7.3, p. 256

Michael the Syrian, Chronique, ed. J.B. Chabot, 4 vols. (Paris, 1899-
1924), 10.21, p. 363 (hereafter cited as Michael the Syrian, Chronique).

Theophylakt, Historiae 8.5.10-3, p. 293, for references to upheavals
and defections in the Khaganate. See 8.1 through 8.8, pp. 283-293, for details
concerning Roman victories over the Avars.

Paul the Deacon, 4.24.28, p. 293.

Michael the Syrian, Chronique, 10.21, p. 363.

Theophylakt, Historiae, 7.5.3-5, p. 253.

91. J. Kovačević, "Avari," p. 77, notes the dense distribution of toponyms of -obar type in this area which he considered to be Avar.

92. Ibid., p. 68; Theophylakt, Historiae, 8.12, p. 265.

93. M. Čorović-Ljubinković, "Les slaves du centre Balkanique du VIe au IXe siècle," Balcanoslavica 1 (1972): p. 48 (hereafter cited as Čorović-Ljubinković, "Slaves,"). Among the objects she ascribes to the Sklavenoi are boucle d'oreille à pendeloque en forme d'étoile; boucles d'oreille à pendeloques étoilées. Needless to say there are a host of problems connected with this sort of one-to-one correspondence. I will discuss this problem further in chapters 5 and 6. See the correspondence of Pope Gregory the Great (particularly his letter to Bishop Maxia of Solona) which spoke of Sklavenoi raids along the coast. Fejancič, "Invasions," p. 107.

94. Constantine Porphyrogentos, DAI, pp. 122-24; 134; 142.


96. As regards the pottery assemblage from Bosnia, which is dated to the middle of the sixth century, I would argue that dating pottery solely on the basis of surface treatment is flawed methodologically, especially where poor stratigraphy is involved. Cf. the remarks of F. Barisić in "Procès," p. 27. For Sklavenoi pottery in Greece see S. Vryonis, "The Slavic Pottery (Jars) from Olympia, Greece," in Byzantine Studies, pp. 14-42, and Gregory, "A Dark Age Settlement," pp. 15-21.


98. Theophylakt, Historiae, 8.2.7ff, p. 286.

99. Ibid, 8.5.11ff, p. 293.

100. These events are narrated by Theophylakt, Historiae 8.6.10-7, p. 293. Although Theophylakt says that financial considerations were the cause for the rebellion, I accept Whitby's contention that Maurice was trying to get more service for the money from his troops. See Whitby, Maurice, p. 165.
The Romans temporarily regained the Danube as the frontier in 619 by treaty with the Avars. This would account for the presence of a strategos at Singidunum when the Serbs arrived on the scene. Cf. DAI, chapter 32, pp. 19-20; 33. The question concerning the presence of Roman garrisons along the Danube during the seventh century and beyond can only be reconstructed with the aid of archaeology. The peaceful co-existence of Sklavenoi and Romans at Singidunum is now documented, and it will be the subject of detailed discussion in chapter 5.

101 See J.F. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century: the Transformation of a Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), for his insightful remarks regarding the dynamics of this process. His study raises some interesting questions about the diffusion of Mediterranean culture to the Sklavenoi before the seventh century as opposed to after it when significant social changes were underway.
CHAPTER IV

URBAN CONTINUITY/DISCONTINUITY AND THE SLAVS

From Augustine to Gibbon and beyond, no single issue has haunted scholars more than the fall of the Roman Empire. Since Gibbon, this question has exercised the imaginations of historians to the present day. Not long ago, most Roman historians associated the fall with various fifth-century political events, such as the Vandalic sack of Rome, or the deposition of Julius Nepos. This assumption was misleading, for the Roman empire dribbled away one province at a time in a process that began in the second century and ended in the fifteenth, with the capture of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks. It is not my intention here to provide an explanation detailing why the pers orientalis survived beyond the fifth-century Hunnic and Germanic invasions, since this subject has been the focus of recent studies. It is important, however, to mention why Western historiography ignored the survival of the Eastern Roman Empire. In essence, prominent historians such as Gibbon, Toynbee, Jenkins, and Mango had much to do with cultivating the image that the Byzantine empire was the degenerate and unworthy successor to the mantle of Rome. Toynbee, for example, argued that Byzantium failed to develop along the lines of the barbarian successor states of the West because it could not complete the transition to the Middle Ages, which was a prerequisite to modernity. This last point was crucial, for Toynbee attributed this phenomenon to Byzantium's conservative and immutable social structure. Byzantium's social structure prevented it from becoming a modern European state.
In its classical form, Toynbee’s celebrated “fossil thesis” is no longer in vogue in Western scholarship, but the issue he raised concerning the nature of change in Antiquity remains in dispute. The notion of a grande brèche is, as concerns the East, inaccurate, because the East did not collapse until the seventh century, which was the defining moment for the East. Modern historians have tended to view the changes in the structure of the polis as paradigmatic for the decline of Antique civilization. Some scholars viewed the decline of the polis empire-wide as marking the downfall of the Roman empire. Europe subsequently experienced a cultural decline in the Middle Ages, a time when cities and all that they stood for virtually disappeared.

Many Byzantinists consider the sixth and seventh centuries after Christ a watershed in the history of the East Mediterranean because the fabric of Classical Antiquity seems to have unraveled at this time. Indeed, every level of Antique society felt its effects. Despite the growing fascination among Byzantine historians with sixth-century structural change, political history remains the most studied feature of this particular century. During this time, the empire lost most of its Balkan and Near Eastern provinces to various invaders. Every facet of life from social mores to public worship underwent change in the sixth century. It is true that the first signs of structural change manifested themselves in the third century, reaching fruition only during the sixth and seventh centuries. With the accession of the Isaurian Dynasty, the pattern of Antique life was dead, and a new cultural matrix arose in its stead. The matrix that emerged in the eighth century was markedly different from the one that had existed before.

In this century Byzantine historians have been striving to identify the processes that led to the demise of Antiquity. The debate over this issue is
both complex and contentious. Most of the explanations that scholars have advanced to date can be divided into two groups. The first group attributed the collapse of Antiquity to external events such as barbarian invasions. Meanwhile, the second group accorded precedence to internal developments. The fate of the ancient polis has figured prominently in this exchange, since its existence was considered paradigmatic for the health of Classical civilization. For the East, the issue is not so much the physical survival of urban centers—because many continued to exist beyond the seventh century without interruption—but rather the loss of Classical culture, which had been maintained for centuries by the urban aristocracy. Traditional historiography has emphasized the decline of poleis in the East as the mark of the loss of Ancient civilization.

Thus it becomes critical to determine to what extent urban centers in the Balkans actually ceased to exist, and what role the new migrants in the sixth and seventh century played in the fate of Balkan cities. Twenty years ago, scholarly consensus favored the view that the north Balkans underwent complete urban collapse after the sixth century; in other words, repeated barbarian invasions fostered urban, and by extension demographic, decline in the Balkans. The consensus among Balkan scholars was that the Slavs destroyed both the rural and urban infrastructure of Illyricum so thoroughly that a significant demographic decline occurred and several centuries passed before a general recovery took place. However, some Byzantine archaeologists recently argued that a few poleis in Moesia I, Dacia Ripensis, Moesia II survived the Slavic invasions relatively unscathed, indeed, archaeological evidence indicates a general pattern of urban vitality for the sixth century. Poleis situated along the limes from Singidunum to the
Danube estuary flourished at this time, regardless of the political instability caused by repeated waves of barbarian incursions. In addition, as will be demonstrated below, the northern Balkans underwent exponential demographic growth during the Slavic migration period.

Scholars of the traditional persuasion have explained the urban decline by arguing that the Slavs not only destroyed poleis, but also that their society was not developed enough socially to use them. This reading of the evidence depends on two questionable assertions. First, it equates the "city" with monumental architecture only. But cities consist of more than massive public buildings and centers for governmental administration. For an agricultural society, huge buildings are of little practical use. In a society governed by kinship structures, governmental administration takes different forms. Second, this assertion ignores the distinction, demonstrated earlier, between the Sklavenoi, a military group, rooted in steppe traditions, and the immigrant farmers. The Avars, another military group did use poleis—although not in the same way as the Romans, as the case of Sirmium indicates.

The Balkan poleis of the early sixth century had already undergone significant structural changes before the Sklavenoi appeared on the scene. Despite these changes, the cities remained centers of Roman formal culture throughout the Slavic migration period. The fate of poleis in Illyricum is diagnostic because they were first exposed to contact with various cultures beyond the Danube. In this sense, developments in Illyricum foreshadowed what was to come in the Peloponnesos. Barbarian invasions alone do not account for the phenomenon of the Slavicization of the north Balkans, for internal changes in the social structure of late Antique society also played
a vital role in this process. During the Slavic migration period, two separate social processes overlapped: the Sklavenoi invasions on the one hand, and the transformation/decline of Antiquity, on the other. The former was obviously an external, the latter, an internal phenomenon.

The litany of military defeats that the Balkan army of the Roman empire suffered at the hands of various invaders, who applied unrelenting pressure on the Danubian frontier, are well documented. Military defeats, however, do not speak directly to the issue of urban vitality in the north Balkans, especially when the exaggeration of extant accounts is considered. After the military reorganization of the empire under Constantine I, the defense of Illyricum rested on twin pillars: the praesental forces, and the fortified settlements/refugiums situated in the Danubian plain, as well as the adjacent river valleys. Some scholars have referred to the fortified settlements that extended from to the Danube delta to Singidunum as the Danubian limes. The Danubian limes were part of a broader defensive strategy known as perimeter defense; limites had been established in Britain, in upper Germany, along the middle and lower Danube, in North Africa, and in the Middle East in the second century. Diocletian had undertaken the refortification of the Danubian limes with kastra of the so-called quadriburgia type, but the available archaeological evidence indicates that most of these settlements were destroyed after Adrianople. They lay abandoned until the late fifth century, when Anastasios I began to restore them. The Roman recovery was short-lived, for the Slavic and Avar invasions sounded the death-knell of Antique poleis in the north Balkans, and only in the eleventh century did this region witness an urban recovery.
A leading exponent of the discontinuity thesis is A. P. Každan. At a time when Byzantinists were firmly wedded to the dogma of continuity, Každan was among the first to raise a skeptical voice. As early as 1954, Každan argued that the ancient polis disappeared in the seventh century. But he went even further by arguing that the polis had already begun to decline before the Slavic and Persian invasions of the sixth and seventh centuries. Každan's views helped pave the way for the elaboration of subsequent discontinuity theories, such as those of C. Mango, and C. Foss. The fundamental thesis behind Každan's argument was that the later Roman and Medieval Byzantine empires became two structurally distinct societies. Some scholars have erroneously exaggerated Každan's contentions to make them fall in line with those of more extreme, discontinuity adherents, who may be termed the "caesura school." proponents. The latter posit a definitive break between Antiquity and the Middle Ages, and they place that break in the sixth and seventh centuries. But Každan resisted attempts to portray Antiquity as a cultural monolith, and he accepted that Byzantium underwent structural changes (Strukturwandel) gradually, over the course of its centuries-long existence. The sixth and seventh centuries merely witnessed the culmination of many of these long-term processes.

Some of the key tenets inherent in the discontinuity thesis, as espoused by Každan, included the leveling of the complex social hierarchy of the ancient polis, a process he ascribed to internal forces. The barbarian invasions merely accelerated this dynamic further. According to Každan, the decline in the social bonds of Antique urban life was so gradual that a precise date cannot be established for it. Some of the distinctive features of Antique life were a monistic cosmography that embraced political and
religious pluralism, as well as civic and personal obligations. These latter two aspects paved the way for the extroversion of urban life.

In Antiquity, a polis encompassed not only the city itself, but also its surrounding hinterland, including outlying "rural" villages. Beyond the settlements under direct civic authority, lay rural settlements. In terms of acculturation these settlements may have been characterized by their low degree of Romanization and social stratification. According to Každan, the autonomy of poleis such as Korinth (whose fate in Late Antiquity will be discussed in greater detail below) was seriously jeopardized when, beginning in the fourth century, the imperial administration began to confiscate both civic as well as privately-owned lands, thus shrinking the tax-base and the local revenues on which poleis traditionally relied. The tax burden was shifted to the curiales, who in time, could no longer shoulder their civic and imperial burdens, thus prompting many to seek tax exemptions from Constantinople. Other curiales meanwhile, shirked their civic responsibilities outright by joining the burgeoning ranks of the Christian clergy. By the sixth-century, the local bishop had usurped the authority of the boule. Finally, the decline of the polis also witnessed the collapse of social ties and a monetary economy. The latter was gradually replaced by a barter system. Každan recognized that in certain regions barbarian invasions played an important role, though in the overall scene of things he accorded primacy to internal forces that slowly altered the fabric of Classical civilization.

Archaeologists began making their own contribution to the continuity/discontinuity debate during the 1950s. The excavation of classical poleis has provided historians with a wealth of physical evidence
that pointed to changes in the urban tissue of poleis. For example, urban contraction has been well attested in the archaeological record. But contraction does not necessarily represent decline. As regards Korinth, some scholars argued its surface area contracted in the late fourth century as a result of barbarian attacks, especially after the Visigothic sack of 396. But recent studies have shown that Korinth recovered. Indeed, fifth-century Korinth arose from its ashes, complete with a new circuit wall that protected the agora and civic center. Significantly, the agora continued to function as the locus of public life. The citadel at Akrokorinth also underwent fortification, although some scholars do not regard this building activity as contemporaneous with that of the lower city circuit wall. While Každan grants that Korinth survived, he held it constituted an exception to the overall trend of urban decline, for by the eighth century the pattern of Antique life in Byzantine Korinth had been altered so thoroughly that it became, structurally speaking, a fundamentally distinct civilization where new microstructures such as the nuclear family replaced the ancient bonds of the past. J. C. Russell, who, like Každan is an exponent of the discontinuity thesis, argued the contracted surface area of a polis represented also its geographic limits. Russell attempted to calculate population densities for contracted settlements as a means of establishing urban demographic decline. Similarly, other poleis in Illyricum successfully weathered the barbarian threat, and these poleis played an acculturative role analogous to that of Korinth, even though in Illyricum, Slavic culture ultimately won out.

The proponents of the continuity "school," though never formally constituted by that name, could boast their own lineup of intellectual
heavyweights, including G. Ostrogorsky, G. Weiss, and S. Vryonis. Each of these men downplayed, to varying degrees, the structural differences between Antiquity and the Middle Ages. Proponents of the "continuity" thesis often espoused opinions in conflict with each other. For example, Weiss posited a static concept of social change. In contrast, Ostrogorsky argued on behalf of urban continuity—at least in Anatolia. Ostrogorsky viewed Byzantium as a Medieval state that emerged from the crisis of the sixth and seventh centuries—a crisis that witnessed the downfall of the Roman Empire—with new administrative, ideological, and social concerns: namely, the Slavic village, absolute monarchy, and Orthodoxy. Weiss, in contrast, an ardent continuity advocate, claimed the social fabric of Antiquity underwent no major change—though Weiss did concede that some minor changes set in over time, in the scheme of things, they were insignificant (unwesentlicher Wandel). For this reason, he regarded the Byzantine Empire as the continuation of the Roman Empire without interruption.

The primary source that "continuity" advocates cite is the middle Byzantine episcopal notitiae. In theory these episcopal lists point to the continued existence of poleis beyond the seventh century. "Continuity" proponents such as Ostrogorsky regarded the lists as accurate reflections of the ecclesiastical geography of their time. However, the episcopal notitiae are fraught with anachronisms, such as the names of absentee bishops. They often presented a theoretical state of affairs rather than the actual residences of bishops. For this reason, other "continuity" advocates—particularly some of Ostrogorsky’s students—focused attention on the Acts of the Oecumenical councils of 680 and of 691/92. B. Ferjančić, for
instance, used the *Acta* of the Quinisextum Council of 691-692 to argue that signatures came from still-extant cities. However, conciliar *acta* and *notitiae* both equate episcopal sees with poleis—a problematic assertion itself. Furthermore, even evidence of urban continuity begs the question of the nature of the settlement, whether an Antique *polis* or a Medieval *kastron*. For example, Stobi, whose bishop appended his signature to the Acta of the Trullan council, could have been either an urban center in the late Antique sense, or a fortress in the Medieval sense. Continuity of name does not necessarily translate into continuity of function.

Scholars on both sides of the continuity/discontinuity divide have made extensive use of numismatic evidence, although to different ends. The standard procedure used by archaeologists and numismatists has been to count the number of coins retrieved from the excavation of an urban settlement. The underlying assumption has been that a prosperous economy will yield a high number of issues, whereas a low yield was considered symptomatic of economic impoverishment, or settlement abandonment. While it is true that a decline in the number of issues empire-wide may be interpreted as an expression of general urban collapse, that same evidence tells us nothing about the state of local conditions. Furthermore, the absence of coins at a particular site does not necessarily indicate that the settlement was abandoned, or that the local market economy collapsed. In point of fact, recent settlement surveys conducted in Greece indicated that poleis such as Athens, Karinth, and Patras were far from depressed, economically, during the Slavic migration period. Another potential problem associated with the unsophisticated use of numismatic evidence concerns the establishment of a *terminus post quem* for a stratigraphic
level: if a level is sealed, which is not always the case where late Antique strata are concerned, and if the coins retrieved from those levels are legible, a terminus post quem can be established. But site-strata conflation can be a genuine problem for archaeologists who typically work with Byzantine dark age levels. For example, previous excavators at Sardis, Athens and other sites were notorious for removing Byzantine layers in their zeal to reach Classical levels. Consequently C. Foss’ conclusions concerning conditions at Sardis—and even more his generalizations to other parts of the Byzantine Empire—were questionable.

Ostrogorsky and Každan both used numismatic evidence in their research, and both reached diametrically opposite conclusions. Ostrogorsky argued that gold coins discovered by archaeologists at numerous Byzantine dark age sites pointed to urban continuity, especially in Asia Minor. In response, Každan argued that the striking of gold coinage had little to do with market activities, since it reflected the administrative needs of the state to collect taxes. In other words, there were two kinds of coinage in late Antiquity: precious and base metal issues. Low denomination coinage was struck by the state in order to meet the demands of the “market economy.” According to Každan, the state restricted significantly the striking of copper or bronze coins after Constans II. Gold coins, by contrast continued to be struck throughout the middle Byzantine period, but it was not intended to be used in everyday commercial exchanges. M. Hendy has argued that the sudden decline in the number of low-denomination issues represented an attempt by the imperial government to institute sweeping economic reforms in the aftermath of the Arab victories. The loss of lucrative provinces such as Egypt and Syria translated into dramatic
revenue losses for the imperial fisc. Consequently, in order to offset this loss, the state decided to recompense soldiers, whose units had been withdrawn to Asia Minor, with land.

The contributions of T. Gregory have also helped to nuance further the debate over urban continuity. Gregory argued that internal processes, rather than external forces, determined the vitality of the rural/urban infrastructure of a specific region. In the case of the Balkan hinterland, Gregory argued that poleis first appeared during the Macedonian expansion of the fourth century BC, though it was not until the Roman era that this region established more intimate cultural bonds with Mediterranean civilization. Gregory attributed the Romanization of the Balkan hinterland to imperial policy, but he also pointed to internal factors, bringing together the oppositional arguments of two earlier scholars. For example, T. Ivanov argued that local factors were paramount in this dynamic, while Condurachi contended that poleis were largely imports from the outside. Gregory tipped the balance toward internal social and economic transformations, rather than imperial policy initiatives. Inland Balkan poleis did not survive the barbarian invasions because Classical civilization failed to establish firm roots there. Poleis would have been the most effective weapon in the Roman arsenal in acculturating the Sklavenoi, but by the sixth century AD, the aristocracy of the north Balkans had lost much of its civic allegiance. They preferred to live on fortified villas situated away from urban centers. While their grave goods indicated that they were Romanized, beneath them lay a largely unstratified social group. To Gregory then, the decline of poleis in the north was a consequence of local and regional conditions, which the barbarian migrations merely exacerbated.
contrast, poleis such as Athens or Korinth, which were located farther south, maintained their cohesion because the aristocracy in those cities still identified itself with the civic traditions of the past, and they maintained their estates near or within the urban walls.

Scholars have yet to explore more fully the reasons why poleis in regions long exposed to Mediterranean culture maintained greater cohesion during the Sklavenoi migrations. One traditional assumption has focused on the weakness of Roman settlement in the north, where the distribution of poleis was sparse. In accordance with this view, poleis could not sustain themselves without extensive imperial intervention. With the advent of the barbarian invasions, imperial authority evaporated, leaving poleis in the north to fend for themselves. In the end, poleis withered because they could neither afford to feed themselves, nor shoulder the prohibitive cost of resupply through overland transportation—something only the imperial fisc could afford to do. However, this interpretation is contradicted by a vast body of evidence; indeed, literary and archaeological sources furnish ample testimony that many dioceses in Illyricum yielded ample surpluses, including a variety of crops.

While Gregory presented a compelling argument for the survival of poleis in regions where Mediterranean culture long had been entrenched, he argued that north Balkan poleis failed to respond to the challenge of the Slavic invasions because the urban aristocracy no longer identified itself with Classical traditions. Gregory's assertion that inland cities had received only a veneer of Classical civilization remains, to a large degree, conjecture based on a thin evidentiary base. The lack of evidence is due in part to the absence of wide-scale excavations in the north Balkans. But
existing archaeological finds suggest that many important urban centers successfully weathered the Slavic invasions. For example, excavations conducted at Serdika—to be discussed in greater detail below—revealed the presence of villas, *intra muros*. Even so, the evidence still points to urban decline, and Gregory argued that fortified estates took the place of the Antique polis with its monumental architecture, formal culture, and civic amenities. The trend toward fortified estates in the north may represent a shift toward dispersed settlement regimes. This shift is attributable to internal structural changes in Antique society: by setting up such a system, the Romans were able to control strategically important areas without maintaining a large and costly presence. Typically, these regions (e.g., Dacia Mediterranea, at the Ister-Margus confluence) were populated by communities that were not highly stratified. Furthermore, under dispersed settlement, the Romans could acculturate from the bottom up. The density of settlement in the Danubian plain was, during the Slavic migration period, far greater in the sixth century Balkans than in other parts of the Roman empire, where Mediterranean culture was well entrenched. Some of these poleis had ateliers, churches, and baths, while others had tents and semi-dug-outs.

As concerns the issue of urban contraction, Gregory has argued that the fortification of poleis in late Antiquity represented evidence for civic vitality. The function of a circuit wall was threefold: to protect areas vital to the conduct of civic affairs, to control urban populations, and to protect the urban and surrounding population in times of peril. In some poleis such as Sparta, many inhabitants lived outside the walls. Sparta is not alone in this regard. Indeed, the archaeological evidence from numerous
sites, including Korinth, indicates the presence of houses outside city walls. Thus, Gregory argued that one should not attempt to deduce population estimates on the basis of contracted urban surface areas, because there is no correlation between urban contraction and demographic decline. Consequently, Gregory viewed fortification walls in a positive light—an active response to urgent political crises, yet another indication that the civic allegiance of Antiquity endured in some regions. In other words, fortifications were built with the intention of allowing urban life to proceed unmolested by invaders.29

No discussion of the urban continuity/discontinuity issue would be complete without considering the views of J.F. Haldon which defy simple classification. On the one hand, he asserted that there were some important continuities between Medieval Byzantium and the Eastern Roman Empire. For example, in terms of the method of surplus expropriation that both civilizations utilized, Haldon argued for continuity.30 On the other hand, Haldon argued that in most every other sphere of existence, the differences between the Later Roman empire and Medieval Byzantium were considerable; indeed, in the larger scheme of things, the similarities were rather superficial.31 Like Každan, Haldon viewed underlying structural changes in the matrix of Greco-Roman civilization as the driving force behind the transformation of Classical civilization. Indeed, the cardinal features of this process were the introversion of social life, formerly noted for its open or public character, and the quest for security, which he defined as the need to maintain strict adherence to Chalcedonian Orthodoxy. He viewed the sixth and seventh centuries as the twilight of Antiquity. Two crucial features defined this dynamic: the decline of the curiales, and the
irrelevance of poleis, as fiscal intermediaries for the state. Thus according to Haldon:

The structural and functional position of the 'city' in the totality of social and economic relationships of the late Roman state was changing, and that it was these changes in function which lie at the heart of any development—whether of decline or continuity—in the history of the seventh and early eighth century city.32

Haldon also argued that the Persian and Slavic invasions played a negligible role in the decline of Antique civilization, although they did affect the physical morphology that surviving poleis subsequently assumed, (the shift from large, open settlements to small, fortified, settlements dispersed throughout the empire).

Haldon, unlike many modern scholars, carefully avoided the negative perception of the Middle Ages that is rooted in the writings of Renaissance humanist scholars, who revered the Classical tradition, and loathed the "dark ages" as an execrable social backslide. The force of this perspective has carried over into twentieth-century scholarship. In response to this view, N. Kardulias noted that poleis should be viewed as adaptive communities that responded to challenges, whether environmental or social. Kardulias rightly viewed people as active participants in their environment, removing pejorative connotations from the notion of social change.

In the last decade, for example, there has been a gradual shift in the debate over the nature and function of poleis away from the questions of urban contraction or urban continuity, in favor of studies aimed at acquiring a fuller understanding of the fate of autochthonous populations (both rural and urban) beyond the sixth century. For example, an incisive study published by J.D. Howard-Johnson covered specific regions of the north Balkan
hinterland. Her thesis is that autochthonous, urban populations were transformed into transhumant Vlachs in a peaceful process that required centuries to complete. Sedentary, urban populations were thus transformed into pastoralist ones, amidst a sea of Slavs. In contrast to traditionalist historiography, Howard-Johnson argued that some north Balkan poleis survived the Byzantine dark age, and that generally speaking, the Slavs were not necessarily hostile to poleis. By contrast, the destruction of some poleis was largely a function of Avar military policy. In poleis that survived the Slav invasions, Roman-Slavic symbiosis stimulated further trade between the two groups. The divergent social development and lifestyles of these two communities acted as a catalyst to further interaction. Several examples of this phenomenon are attested in history during the early Middle Ages: Venice is one, Dorstolon (i.e., Silistria) on the Danube is another. Dorostolon survived the Slavic migrations. It became an important entrepôt in the eleventh century. Howard-Johnson mentioned two obscure, but interesting textual references to poleis that survived the collapse of imperial authority. According to Theophylakt, the civic spirit among the inhabitants of Novae and Asemus actually perked up as a result of the collapse of imperial authority.

Naissos and Serdika showed continued occupation throughout the Byzantine dark age, as archaeological excavations attest. Even the place name, Naissos, survived as the modern Serbian Niš. Serdika, according to Theophanes, fell in 809 to Krum, and its garrison was put to the sword. Serdika's subsequent political status remains obscure, as some historians have argued that it reverted immediately to imperial control, while others have argued that Krum retained possession of it for some time. In any case,
Serdika, Medieval Sredec, was in Bulgarian hands under Boris I. Significantly, Serdika’s municipal center continued to function from Antiquity to the Ottoman conquest in 1382. Far from showing abandonment, archaeological evidence indicates the presence of reconstruction efforts throughout Serdika during the Byzantine dark age. For example, the formidable walls were maintained in good repair throughout the Middle Ages, as were numerous churches, such as the basilica of St. Sofia (which lay outside the walls). Moreover, structures associated with Roman pagan cult practices were still in use at this time. In addition, archaeologists discovered the presence of villas in some of the outlying quarters of Serdika. The ceramic assemblage from Serdika/Sredec included Byzantine and Slavic pottery. Assorted kitchen wares (i.e., pots, pans, and bread baking dishes) were discovered at various locations along the ramparts of Serdika, providing additional proof of habitation. The absence of evidence indicating destruction or conquest indicates a pattern of peaceful co-existence between the inhabitants of Serdika and the immigrant farmers well beyond the Byzantine dark age. It would appear that the Avar campaigns of 584 did not deal a mortal blow to all the poleis in the Danubian plain.

Howard-Johnson, like so many of her predecessors, assumed that the Sklavenoi mentioned in various textual sources were a broad social community when they arrived in the Balkans, not distinguishing between the warriors--invaders and the farmer migrants from territories north of the Danube. In addition, she argues that the emergence of supratribal institutions among the Balkan Slavs in the ninth century was a consequence of surviving north Balkan, urban influences. Since the beginning of the barbarian invasions in the fourth century, Roman populations, either captive
or willing immigrant, were attested living side by side among the barbarians. Priskos of Pannion provided one of the earliest textual references to this phenomenon. For subsequent periods, many similar cases can be cited. Archaeological evidence from Romania and the Slovak Republic indicate that some of these immigrants had been in contact with provincial Roman culture for some time. The presence of Romans living among the barbarians north of the Danube should be considered as an integral part of the future Slav cultural matrix. In the sixth century, the Romans continued to rely on poleis to acculturate barbarians, but after the collapse of imperial authority, poleis had to fend for themselves. The archaeological evidence indicates that many poleis entered into peaceful relations with the incomers when the latter arrived. Since a large percentage of poleis in the north were situated in the Danubian plain, rapprochement between the two groups first took place there. However, it is true that these poleis lacked many of the amenities that the inhabitants of Thessaloniki or Korinth enjoyed. However due to structural changes in the fabric of Antique society, many of those amenities were no longer germane to every-day life. Nevertheless, some urban amenities did linger on into the early Middle Ages. They were even adopted by Byzantium's neighbors. The Bulgars, such as the one at Tsar Krum in Shumen District, is attributed as a residence of Khan Omurtag. It contained baths as well as central heating ducts.

In conclusion, the shift in focus by scholars such as Gregory and Haldon to transformation rather than decline or continuity does not speak directly to the question of demographic trends. One traditional view on this matter, espoused by Russell, posits a trajectory of demographic decline for
the Balkans beginning with the barbarian invasions of the fourth century. But the voices of dissent are steadily gaining ground, thanks to the research of M. Hendy. Relying upon a variety of non-textual sources, Hendy maintained that population patterns from Antiquity to the present remained fairly constant. His contention can now be confirmed by archaeological evidence. K. Randsborg argued that the Slavic migration period was one of intense cultural and economic interaction, and the density of Roman settlement in the Danube plain reflected "urban" vitality. These new settlements replaced the Classical polis. Randsborg furthermore held that the density of settlement in Bulgaria and Serbia was higher during the Slavic migration period than in the West during the same time frame. He perceptively noticed that our interest in the fate of poleis is derived from the fact that our modern society is urban-based, but this should not prejudice our outlook toward other forms of settlement structures. Thus, different societies used cities in different ways. For all its architectural grandeur, the Classical polis was foremost an object of investment, in which the local aristocracy displayed and invested its wealth. Privately-based trade, though widely attested in Antiquity, was far less important to the ancient economy overall, which was grounded in primitive agriculture.

Randsborg drew extensively upon the work of Bulgarian archaeologists, including Zhivka Vuzharova, who excavated Slavic settlements and nekropoleis south of the Danube, specifically in Moesia II. She played an instrumental role in the elaboration of early Slav-ware typologies; furthermore, she pioneered new methodologies for the study and identification of Slavic and Proto-Bulgar burial rites. Vuzharova studied Slavic metallurgy, including agricultural implements. Randsborg was one of
the first scholars to notice the implications of some of Vuzharova's findings, namely the harvesting tools and ploughshares. But Randsborg, more interested in economic than cultural and linguistic transformations, merely noted that subsistence technology "facilitated cereal cultivation instead of ranching and pig farming." While the implications of Randsborg's research on north Balkan subsistence technologies awaits further discussion in chapter 7, chapters 5 and 6 will demonstrate that many cities in Illyricum played a vital acculturative role during the Slavic migration period and beyond. The list of Roman poleis that survived the sixth-century Slavic invasions continues to grow, shedding new light on the dynamics of Byzantine Slavic cultural interaction.

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6 Haldon, Byzantium, pp. 436-458.

7 For a detailed exposition of this matter, see T. Gregory, "Cities."

8 Randsborg, Millennium, pp. 178-179.

9 Browning, Bulgaria, pp.53-67.

10 The Avars used Sirmium as a place to hoard their wealth.


12 This was the theory. In practice, however, local initiatives often took precedence over imperial directives. In a relatively recent study, Wozniak, "Justinianic," pp.200-201, has argued that the defense of Illyricum was undertaken on an ad hoc basis, with little input from Constantinople. Thus, Wozniak concludes it is a mistake to refer to this system as defense-in-depth in the classic Constantinian sense. After 535, Illyricum's defense was undertaken by local dynatoi and their bucellaroi, despite the illegality of their existence.

13 For more on this subject, see J. Garbsch, Der spätromische Donau-Illyr-Rhein-Limes, (Stuttgart, 1970).


17. P.N. Kardulias, The Byzantine Fortress at Istiaio, Greece and the Transition From Late Antiquity to the Medieval Period in the Aegean, Ph.D Dissertation, (Columbus: Ohio State University, 1988). (Hereafter cited as Kardulias, Fortress).


25 Ibid, p. 269. E. Condurachi, Vol. 2, In Actes de la congrès international des études balkaniques et sud-est européennes, (Sofia: Bulgarian Academy, 1969): 539-541. Gregory assumes a higher level of Romanization in the Danubian plain, in contrast to other regions geographically closer to areas in the traditional orbit of Mediterranean civilization. This supposition must now be qualified, for recent studies indicate that some localities in proximity to the Danubian plain underwent little Romanization, despite its strategic importance to the imperial army, and the presence of Roman military camps in the area. I concur with Gregory that imperial policy created an "urban" aristocracy based on local tribal settlements and villages, although I essentially side with Ivanov against Condurachi.

26 The trend toward large villas in the Balkan interior began in the fourth century and continued well into the sixth, when it reached its zenith. See Velkov (1969), A. Moscy, Pannonia and Upper Moesia, (London, 1974).

27 According to a study by P. Mijović, Arheološki Vestnik 29 (1978), a high percentage of Roman villas gradually were transformed into monasteries.

28 Fortification activity fell into three periods: middle third; early fifth; early sixth

29 Gregory, "Fortifications," p.57

30 Haldon, Buzantium, and Hendy, Studies, agree that the size and extent of long-distance trade and of urban industrial output has been grossly exaggerated by some scholars. With few exceptions, antique cities were not centers of industrial production—their existence depended more on the exploitation of their hinterlands. It follows therefore that commerce represented a small percentage of imperial revenues, and that taxes from land accounted for the bulk of the state's revenue.

31 Haldon, Buzantium, 449.

32 Idem, p. 95


Last literary reference to Antique Naissos is found in the *Miracula* Anonymous *Miracle* 2. 200. 4, p. 186.


Cf Koučević, "Arheološki," p. 64.


A total of 92 Proto-Bulgarian inscriptions survive, of which, 88 were written in a debased Greek by Byzantine captives or Byzantine subjects who freely elected to live among the barbarians. V. Beshevliev, *Purvobulgarski Nadpisi*, (Sofia: BAN, 1979).


The particulars of this debate are not relevant to this discussion. See M. Hendy, “Economy.”


eds P. Garnsey et al, Trade in the Ancient Economy, (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1983).

CHAPTER V
LOCII OF INTERACTION

We have examined the different ways that Byzantinists approached the question concerning the fate of the Ancient polis. Many scholars viewed the polis as paradigmatic for the Byzantine economy, but the polis was also the site for Byzantine-Slavic acculturation, just as the cities in the Middle Eastern areas of the empire provided foci for Arab acculturation. Like the Arabs, the Sklavenoi and immigrant farmers supposedly had no predilection for the amenities of the Classical polis. However, they did not destroy cities; instead they incorporated them into a new pattern of intensive, peaceful, and reciprocal cultural interaction between the indigenous inhabitants of north Balkan poleis and immigrants during the Slavic migration period. Throughout western Illyricum, Moesia I, Dacia Ripensis, Dacia Mediterranea, Dardania, Prevalitana, and Epiros Nova (modern Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia), archaeological evidence from Roman fortified settlements to cultural interaction.

In his examination of grave goods from fourth-century nekropoleis located in the vicinity of the Danube-Morava confluence (Ister-Margus), B. Bartel found little evidence for Romanization among the inhabitants of this strategically vital region. He concluded that the Romans avoided formal contact with the inhabitants of the Moesian countryside because their communities remained fairly egalitarian. Instead, the Romans sought to
contain them by employing a strategy known as enclave control, which allowed Rome to maintain its grip over this region without requiring a massive military presence. Given the simplification of the late Roman social structure that took place between the fourth and the seventh centuries, a process that made the Classical polis less relevant to the administrative needs of the state, the north Balkan fortified estate began to assume a more active role as an intermediary, both economically and culturally, in relation to the autochthonous and to the newly arriving immigrant populations both. Unlike Bartel, Lemerle contended that in the sixth century, the Danubian plain was a zone of intense economic and cultural interaction. Lemerle’s detractors viewed the Late Antique polis as an expression of urban decline. In addition, they held that it was the precursor of the Medieval kastron. Archaeologists have long known that some Roman settlements in the Danubian plain were destroyed during the Avar offensives of the 580s and the imperial counter-offensives of the 590s. Using numismatic evidence, V. Popović dated the collapse of Roman authority along the Danubian limes between 593-596. But coin hoards alone do not tell the whole story; a decline in the number of coins retrieved from a site does not necessarily mean that the particular site in question was abandoned. In some cases, for example, archaeology can establish that a site was still inhabited, even in the absence of coins. There is now ample evidence to prove that many Roman settlements in Dacia Ripensis, especially those near the Danube-Morava (Ister-Margus) and Danube-Timok (Ister-Timakos) confluences, survived well beyond the Byzantine dark age.
While some scholars have faced the fact that some urban settlements persisted, they have continued to operate under false assumptions concerning the Slavic presence. All of the scholars who have written previously about this have fallen into the same pitfalls. They failed to define ethnos; they assumed the Slavs saw themselves as a distinct, broad social community, and had migrated from some hypothetical Urheimat; they assumed that the autochthonous, rural inhabitants of Illyricum were likewise self-aware. None of these positions is tenable. The autochthonous inhabitants of Dacia Ripensis, Dacia Mediterania, and Dardania included Thracian, Celtic, and Illyrian-speaking groups, some of which may not have seen themselves as a distinct, broad social community either. Thus, in social terms it is artificial to distinguish between immigrant and indigenous farmers. Since linguistic groups are not synonymous with social groups, the differences between autochthonoi and immigrant farmer (except for Sklavenoi war parties) are minimal. These circumstances facilitated rather than impeded cultural interaction. In Dacia Ripensis region archaeological evidence suggests that interaction between autochthonoi and incomers might have accelerated the social evolution of the latter. Although this question has yet to be studied more fully, the case of the Sklavenoi archontes, who are attested in the De ceremoniis, represents a case in point. These archontes are among the first attested by a Byzantine source south of the Danube. That same source also enumerates several ninth-century fortified settlements in the Timok river valley. These “power nodes” suggest the existence of territorial communities in this region. Regional territorial communities represent a more complex form of social organization, since some measure of centralized control over local
resources is required to maintain the system. Communities belonging to such a network should display higher social ranking in terms of grave goods. The Sklavenoi of Braničev and the Timok valley appear to have made the transition to a territorial community earlier than Sklavenoi in other parts of Europe. According to some scholars, only through close interaction with autochthonous populations could the incomers of this region have stratified fast enough for an aristocracy to filter out so quickly. The case of the Smoliani, who lived in the Strymon basin near Christoupolis, represents another interesting example of rapid social change and Byzantinization as a result of peaceful contact. We now turn to a discussion of the archaeological evidence.

Singidunum

The Roman polis of Singidunum (Σιγιδονός), located in Moesia I, represents the best example of Byzantine-Slavic acculturation. The fate of Singidunum between 395 and the late fifth century remains uncertain. Many scholars believe the major urban centers of Moesia I, Dacia Ripensis, and Dacia Mediterania were destroyed by the Huns. Singidunum formally reverted to imperial control around 510 under circumstances that remain unclear, but according to the archaeological evidence, the recovery began somewhat earlier. From the late sixth century to the ninth, Singidunum was a bishopric; it was also the seat of a strategos in the early seventh century. The chronology of Singidunum's recovery is a contentious issue. F. Barišić, for example, has argued that much of the credit for the renovation should go to Anastasios, while his detractors preferred to nominate Justinian. Stratigraphically, both Ancient and Medieval Singidunum are located beneath the urban expanse of modern Belgrade; this circumstance
has hampered the scope of archaeological research there, just as it has at Sofia. Nevertheless, a number of excavations and sondages have been carried out over the past twenty years. According to V. Kondić, analysis of Singidunum's sixth-century levels indicated alternating periods of destruction and reconstruction. Thus the archaeological evidence confirms the rather detailed information in the written sources. Theophylakt informed us that Baian permitted the inhabitants of Singidunum to remain in the polis, even though it had fallen into Avar hands, for a period of ten years (i.e., 582-592). Singidunum changed hands several times during the fierce fighting that followed in the wake of the imperial counteroffensives of the 590s. In 596, the Avars were successful in taking the polis. The Khagan ordered Singidunum's wall demolished. On this occasion, Baian attempted to deport the inhabitants to Pannonia, but the timely arrival of Priskos and the Roman fleet forced the Avars to retreat without their captives. Between 599 and 602, the kastron was again in Roman hands; in fact, Theophylakt noted that an important meeting between Komentiolos and Priskos took place there. After Theophylakt, Singidunum is not mentioned again in a Byzantine source for several centuries. Today, scholars see the reign of Heraklios, specifically the civil war between Heraklios and Phokas, as more destructive to the fabric of urban culture in northern Illyricum than the reign of Phokas. Previously, the year 602 was considered the beginning of the imperial collapse and the beginning of large-scale Sklavenoi settlement. With the aid of the archaeological evidence, however, it is now possible to reconstruct the fate of Singidunum during the Byzantine dark age, when the literary sources fall silent.
Singidunum survived the Avar-Sklavenoi incursions of the first quarter of the seventh century. The archaeological evidence will demonstrate that Medieval Singidunum was inhabited from the seventh through the eleventh centuries. Serbian archaeologists have identified three cultural horizons at an important site called the Sava-slope. Its earliest horizon is dated to the early seventh century. The second horizon is dated to the second half of the ninth century, the third to the eleventh century.16 With one exception, the archaeological inventory at Sava Slope, which includes ceramic wares, the remains of several houses, and assorted tools belong to the same cultural complex. The settlement pattern at the Horizon I settlement (i.e., the earliest level, chronologically) at Sava slope did not conform to any discernible arrangement; it was protected by palisades, and the houses originally faced the Sava river. One possible explanation for this orientation is that the settlement was dependent on the river for its subsistence. Confirmation for this supposition is found among the inventory of artifacts, where large numbers of fishing weights made from Roman bricks were discovered. Alternatively, the immigrant farmers who settled at Sava Slope may have had their smelters located along the banks of the river, as has been documented at other “Slavic” sites. Other artifacts in the inventory from Singidunum include worked bone tools, spindle whorls, astragals, polished awls, unspecified agricultural implements, and mace heads.

The significance of the agricultural implements discussed in this study have yet to be assessed. This subject represents uncharted waters for in Slavic archaeology there is no K.D. White.17 The profusion of light-weight (2.5 to 3.5 kg) iron to shoe a variety of agricultural implements represented
a shift away from existing, heavier Late Roman tools used on the large fortified estates of the Balkans during the Slavic migration period. Immigrant farmer ore-smelting and iron-mongery is widely attested in the Carpathian arc and southeast Europe by the presence of furnaces, slag blocks, clay molds, crucibles, and blacksmith tools such as hammers with pointed edges, choppers, punches, platemarks, points and files. Immigrant farmer iron metallurgy was often concentrated near ore sources. In the case of the Carpathian arc some nineteen sites have been investigated. These settlements, concentrated in the Slovakian Ore Mountains, Low Tatras, and North Carpathian range, yielded evidence of smelting. Some of the more important sites include Spiš, Vrbov, Vyšný Kubin, and Liptovský). South of the Danube, several examples of migrant farmer iron metallurgy have been found in Moesia I and Dacia Ripensis in the form of reaping tools such as large bow-shaped sickles and short scythes. These finds will be discussed below. The region of the Ister-Margus confluence was particularly rich in raw materials, including iron ore. In theory one would expect to find large numbers of immigrant farmer settlement enclaves in this region. However such settlements have yet to be discovered in this region through field survey.

Following J. Henning, Randsborg noted a rise in specific types of agricultural implements such as hoes, spades, sickles, and scythes in Slavic migration period settlements: 8 for AD 0-400, 23 for AD 400-700, 40 for AD 700-1000. Meanwhile he noted a decline in the use of iron implements associated with animal husbandry (cattle and sheep rearing) on fortified estates: 22 for AD 0-400, 13 for AD 400-600, 5 for AD 600-1000. The introduction of this new technology transformed the linguistic make-up of
the Balkans. It led to the intensive cultivation of grains so widely attested in the First Bulgarian and Great Moravian Empires and attested by crop residues. It also fostered the transformation of Late Antique fortified villas which specialized in cattle and craft production. In the Balkan hinterland this transformation was effected by migrant farmers. The sheer numbers of these iron implements is impressive when compared to the inventory from one estate in the West, the Carolingian manor of Annapes. Written sources from Annapes indicate that the manor possessed 200 head of cattle, but only 2 scythes, 2 sickles, and 2 iron spades. By comparison, Bulgarian archaeologists retrieved 6 sickles, 3 pruning knives, 3 iron-shod spades, 1 ax, and 1 "Celtic-style" ax at one settlement alone—Georgieva considered this inventory meager in contrast to other migration period Balkan settlements. The inventory from Novi, a settlement near Preslav yielded 5 sickles, 1 pruning knife, and 1 ax. The sickles measured 40cm in length and 3cm in width; their handles measured 13cm in length. These implements fostered the exponential population growth through demography—subsistence, linguistic wave of advance, and cumulative Slavicity.

Singidunum was located on a hilltop at the confluence of the Danube and Sava rivers. In the late fifth or early sixth century, the settlement shifted to higher ground toward the river Sava, just the west of the confluence. The previous settlement (fifth century?) had been located south and east of this position, and lay abandoned. The situation at Nikopolis ad Istrum, where the inhabitants of the Antique settlement abandoned the polis for a smaller, more defensible site adjacent to the original settlement presents an appropriate analogue. The Sava Slope settlement was located below the walls of the sixth-century Roman polis. Only six Byzantine dark
age semi dug-outs, which had clay-trodden floors (7 to 10 cm thick) and stone ovens were excavated. Subsequent excavations carried out along neighboring sectors of the Sava and Danube slopes at Singidunum pointed to a dense settlement throughout the early Middle Ages. Although palisades protected the settlement at Sava Slope, no attempts were made to integrate its defenses with those of the Byzantine settlement until the Komenian age; this suggests that the two settlements began as segregated communities early in the seventh century. During the Komnenian period, Belgrade had two, separately fortified settlements. Before the findings of recent excavations were published, scholars had argued that the Slav-speakers first settled inside the Byzantine settlement, but new evidence has disproved that hypothesis.

The ceramic assemblage at Singidunum is an important index of cultural interaction between the new settlers and the local inhabitants. The spatial distribution was fairly wide-spread—although some clustering had been discovered around food storage pits and ovens, but this is considered normative. Archaeologists in the Mediterranean have used the terms fabric and ware in different, often conflicting, ways. These terms are broad defining characteristics. Fabric relates to the materials used in the manufacture of pottery such as clay and tempering elements. The latter contain trace elements that are demonstrable scientifically through chemical analysis. Fabric also tends to involve firing techniques, methods of preparation, and attempts to make certain clays look the same. A particular manufacturing technique will tend to use the same or similar looking fabric. But fabric says nothing about shapes. Ware goes beyond fabric—it involves shapes. Ware refers to the manufacture of pottery that
will tend to use related fabrics and a distinct repertoire of shapes. Similar shapes that contain different fabrics probably are not the same wares. This approach represents a departure from previous usage in the Balkans. Previous archaeologists often equated fabric either with vessel shape or surface treatment. Ware has been defined either as an assemblage of pots, or as vessels found at a number of independent sites that have a single origin (i.e., come from the same factory or clay bed). Though Mediterranean archaeologists have tended to focus on vessel shapes, fabric increasingly is becoming more important. Many archaeologists are abandoning surface decoration as the principal criterion for ceramic analysis. The ubiquitous wave-patterned combing and horizontal grooving of pottery found not only in Central and Southeast Europe but also in Northwest Europe should no longer be ascribed to the Slavs any more than grey Minyan ware should be attributed exclusively to the Proto-Indo-Europeans. Thus there are problems of definition since archaeologists have often used terms such as Danubian Ware or Prague Ware, although they have not always defined them. At least four issues have to addressed: shape, decoration, fabric, and method of manufacture. Decoration has been the traditional defining characteristic, but the wavy line motif is widespread in Medieval Europe, as are certain vessel shapes. Fabric is an important determining factor but it has not always been carefully categorized. The term Danubian Ware will appear often throughout the remainder of this study, which is dependent on previous scholarship. It was not possible to explore the aforementioned distinctions in shape, decoration, fabric, and method of manufacture in any detail. That task will be the goal of future research. Danubian Ware will be defined as pottery which appears to be similar in both shape and in fabric to
wares found throughout the Danubian plain and beyond. Danubian ware does not necessarily contain the same fabric. Although the fabrics are similar in appearance this does not mean they are not derived from the same bed (geologically). However, this similarity in appearance suggests a deliberate effort was made to imitate clay manufactured in specific factories.28

What previous scholarship has called "Danubian Ware" has been found throughout the Balkans, although the largest percentage of finds come from the Danubian plain. Jan Eisner was one of the first to elaborate a typology for Danubian Ware.29 Since 1952, additional discoveries of this pottery have been made, leading to further nuancing of Eisner's typology: surface decoration was the principal criterion on which it was based. Dj. Janković recently published a study on Danubian ware in Dacia Ripensis; this investigation is based on the results of excavation from a total of thirty Slavic migration period settlements in the vicinity of the Djerdap gorge.30 Of the thirty sites in question, six yielded examples of Danubian ware—an important index of peaceful cultural interaction.

Two distinct types of pottery are represented at Singidunum: globular Roman amphorae commonly found in sixth-century contexts, and cooking pots with surface treatment comprising incised, vertical and horizontal wavy lines. T. Gregory has aptly dubbed this pottery the kitchen koine of the Byzantine dark age, since it is found throughout the Balkans, and even in some parts of Italy and northwestern Europe. The bottoms of some sherds from Sava Slope contained potter's marks, pointing to the existence of a rudimentary craft industry. Other wares, by contrast, were made by hand. The vessels were already broken when the site was abandoned. This fact points to a deposition history different that of military conquest.
Although one particular vessel type predominated at Sava Slope, namely the ubiquitous cooking pot with slightly everted rims, high shoulders, and flat bottoms, some bowls, lids, and lamps were also represented, though in smaller percentages relative to the pots. Marjanović's analysis of the Sava Slope assemblage is based primarily on vessel type, shape, and surface treatment. She described the fabric of these wares in general terms only, and did not seek to establish how many different fabric types were present. In general terms that fabric was made of well-prepared clay which contained an admixture of fine sand: in a few rare cases sherds contained clay with coarse stones and small shell fragments. It would appear that the pottery assemblage at Sava slope is, judging from Marjanović's cursory description, much less "primitive" than some of the coarse pottery found elsewhere in the Balkans, including the Roman bath at Isthmia.\(^3^1\)

The ceramic evidence indicates that the immigrants who settled at Sava slope not only were in close cultural contact with Byzantine civilization, it also indicates that those cultural influences were indeed reciprocal.\(^3^2\) Nowhere is this phenomenon more evident than in the sphere of ceramics. The migrant farmers adopted pottery techniques indigenous to the Roman world, such as the adoption of the potter's wheel. Indeed some scholars have created entire typologies on the basis of decoration alone.\(^3^3\) But the ubiquitous wavy-line motif usually ascribed to the Slavs is no longer viable because this motif was indigenous to numerous cultures across Europe. Hence, the wavy-line motif should not be attributed to one specific ethnic group, and the discovery of new pottery forms at Sava Slope need not signal the arrival of peoples from distant homelands.
The identification of the settlers at Sava Slope has remained in dispute. J. Janković has argued that they were Sklavenoi foederati. Alternatively, the incomers may have been autochthonous (i.e., from the Balkans), immigrant farmers from Dacia or Pannonia, who had no affiliation with the Sklavenoi. Sixth-century Singidunum, then, consisted of a dual settlement of Byzantines and immigrant farmers who had settled peacefully beside them. They were not Sklavenoi, nor were they Slavs, for that ethnos had not yet come into being. But by the ninth century, the region was indisputably Slavic in the ethnic sense.

The toponymic evidence affords some insight into this process by providing us with a terminus post quem for the transformation of the toponym Singidunum to Slavic Belgrade. On 16 April 878, Pope John VIII dispatched a letter to Sergios, bishop of Belgrade pertaining to a conflict within the church at Belgrade. This letter is important because the Pope addressed Sergios as the bishop of Belgrade (i.e., in the Slavic form), and not the bishop of Singidunum. The second textual reference to Belgrade is in a tenth-century source, the De Administrando Imperio, which uses the terms Η ἑλεγρᾶδα, τὸ ἑλεγρᾶδον. Because Constantine borrowed freely from various official sources, it is conceivable that he took the references from some official reports from the bureau of barbarian affairs. Some scholars equate toponymic change with demographic change: that is, the Slavs had replaced the previous Byzantine population. However, it does not follow that all cases of onomastic change in the Balkans were the outcome of population displacement. Both the archaeological and the onomastic evidence from Singidunum and numerous other sites in the Balkans, such as Sofia or Naissos, calls into question the very foundations
of these assumptions. Yet, how does one account for toponymic change at a site that was continuously inhabited during the early Middle Ages? An alternative explanation for this phenomenon must be sought.

The toponymic evidence alone does not provide any insight into the acculturative processes behind the Slavicization of Singidunum. The traditional explanation for Slavicization posited a deliberate colonization by a military elite. This models assumes that the newcomers must display a high degree of social ranking in order to achieve a Landnahme. It is essential for the invaders to have a hierarchical society because that is how they exercised control over indigenous populations. The archaeological and literary evidence confirms that the Avars were hierarchically organized; for example, Hungarian and Yugoslav archaeologists have argued that the complex belt-sets discovered at many sites in Pannonia and the Vojvodina were important markers of social ranking: the more complex the belt-set, the higher one's ranking within Avar society. Moreover, the literary sources confirm that the Avars possessed a centrally-organized army: they made treaties, they even made limited use of poleis.

Unlike the Avars, the Slavs were barely stratified, as the archaeological finds in nekropoleis demonstrate. For the advocates of the Slavs as invaders who effected a Landnahme, this revelation is a dilemma, because it indicates these people were not stratified enough to accomplish well coordinated, large-scale invasions. The standard response that some scholars have given is that many Slavic tribes were under Avar or Bulgar direction; undoubtedly in some cases—as we have seen—this was true. The adherents of Slavic invasion theories have adduced evidence for at least
partial settlement in the last quarter of the sixth century—this settlement coincided with the razzias that wrought havoc in the Balkans.

The archaeological record does not demonstrate the presence of Avars or Bulgars at Singidunum, or even of Sklavenoi warriors. These are only farmers, and the settlements were accomplished gradually and peacefully, not by conquest. They were not warriors whose raison d'être was to pillage and burn; instead, they were socially undifferentiated farmers in search of virgin land. This sort of migratory activity is limited both in scope and in distance, and therefore can hardly be called an invasion or a land-taking especially when the farmers lived right beside the Roman settlement. If war-like, chiefdom societies were indeed responsible for suffusing the whole dynamic of Slavicization, then some form of peer-polity interaction must have been operative. Stratified societies always leave reflections in the archaeological record because chiefdom societies required a constant influx of prestige goods acquired through trade or war to be distributed by headmen to their retainers in reward for their services.37 If Sklavenoi warriors and their dependents had been settled as foederati at the Sava Slope—with imperial permission as the De Administrando Imperio noted—then they would have had to give up pillaging for farming, fishing, and some soldering. One would expect such a group to display some evidence for ranking; yet, the funerary evidence at Singidunum indicates the presence of no princely or well-endowed burials like those found in Pannonia and in the Vojvodina.38 In fact, the nekropolis at Sava Slope yielded no grave goods at all. Thus the new settlers at Singidunum were not military invaders such as Avars or Bulgars.
As regards the identity of the invaders/immigrants who settled at Sava Slope, several possibilities exist. Some of them may have been Sklavenoi who fled across the Danube from Muntenia and Oltenia, whose communities were largely independent of each other, who were led by headmen whose forebears received special training in the arts of guerrilla warfare, who were fleeing relentless Avar pressure, and who may have become foederati after they crossed the Danube. These communities practiced various forms of military democracy. The literary sources attest the existence of such communities in the Balkans; the taktikon of Pseudo-Maurice is fraught with references to the Sklavenoi and to the problems the Romans had in subduing them, because treaties made with one group were not considered binding on other groups. Pseudo-Maurice also stated that the Sklavenoi had many kings who were constantly at war either with the empire or with each other. Some of these groups may have participated in the razzias against Korinth and other poleis, while others may have been in alliance with the empire against those groups. But the archaeological record gives little evidence that the settlers pursued a military occupation and none that they had high-ranking leaders. The evidence for social ranking at Singidunum, or lack thereof for the early Middle Ages, agrees with Z. Vuzharova’s findings throughout Bulgaria. Finally, there is no evidence that the settlers thought of themselves as a distinct ethnos.

The evidence from Singidunum indicates a sedentary community engaged in peaceful coexistence with the urban Byzantine community. If these immigrants came from areas north of the Danube where cremation burials were the norm, then the burials at Sava slope represent important
evidence for cultural interaction, because all five excavated graves, containing four adults and one child, were inhumation burials.\footnote{42}

In summation, the evidence from Singidunum provides valuable insight into the fate of one polis after the collapse of Roman authority. Singidunum came to terms with the new immigrants in ways that were mutually beneficial. The evidence from Singidunum also indicates that poleis continued to acculturate, just as they had before, but given the low level of status differentiation among the incomers, the mechanisms of that acculturation assumed a different guise. The directional flow of that acculturation was from the bottom up, and it left its most telling marks on the household culture of the immigrants. There has been a tendency among scholars to depict acculturation as the appropriation of high culture only, as though the farmers and fishermen at Sava slope would immediately seek to read Homer and discuss rhetoric at the baths. That kind of acculturation affects political elites, whose sons often were sent to Constantinople as hostages. The masses of people remained unaffected by Byzantine high culture. Moreover, the acquisition of high culture often came with a hefty political price (namely, submission to Byzantine authority, and acceptance of Christianity). Popular culture, by contrast, was not always encumbered by ideological considerations. The absence of an overt ideological component may account for the intensity of interaction between the two communities; in this regard, the absence of imperial authority may have played an important role. The inhabitants of Singidunum, left to their own devices, decided to come to terms with the incomers because they realized Constantinople was in no position to restore the status quo ante. Evidence from other sites in Illyricum lends further credence to this supposition. At
Singidunum, we see a community that made active choices to cooperate with the “enemy” rather than to flee or to oppose them at every turn.

Reciprocal influences noted at Sava Slope went far beyond exchanges in pottery fashions. While their social organization was simple and egalitarian, they were not “primitive” technologically—the iron agricultural implements they introduced there were on the cutting-edge because their light weight translated into less back-breaking work for the farmer who used them. Immigrant farmer skill in agriculture transformed the face of the Balkans. Their contribution was far more significant than anything done by the marauding Sklavenoi. Indeed, in the end, it was the immigrants who acculturated the inhabitants of Singidunum through the phenomenon of language displacement. Significantly, that linguistic process was completed by the middle of the ninth century, as evidenced by the change in toponomy.

Funerary goods from subsequent periods (the eleventh century in particular) provide solid evidence for social ranking, as well as the emergence of an elite that moved progressively up the Sava slope toward the Byzantine settlement. This process reached its apogee during the Komnenian period, where these archontes established their settlement just outside the walls of Byzantine Belegradon. This Slav settlement became the outer city, which was separated from the inner city by a wall. It is no mere coincidence that sites such as Singidunum, Naissos, and Serdika underwent important social transformations at the same time that other significant developments were unfolding in the north Balkans, namely, the dissolution of the Avar khaganate, and subsequently, the embassy of Constantine the Philosopher and Methodios to Moravia.
The Danubian Limes

The case of Singidunum was not an anomaly. The evidence from Moesia I and Dacia Ripensis points to a pattern very similar to that attested at Singidunum. The difference between the former and the latter rests in the fact that Singidunum survived the Avar offensives of the seventh century. Field surveys from the Iron Gates region have yet to the carried out; until that time, the precise relationship between the Roman settlements and the surrounding countryside remains obscure. Yet, Serbian archaeologists are of the opinion that some of these settlements survived into the seventh century and beyond: regional field surveys would provide a clearer picture into the fate of these settlements during the time in question. Despite the political instability in the Danubian plain, some Roman settlements flourished there. In certain instances, the barbarians were responsible for the destruction of individual settlements—this is undeniable; however, many towns survived, and even prospered. The same general trend of peaceful coexistence is attested elsewhere in Moesia I and Dacia Ripensis, although site-specific evidence differs slightly.

From Singidunum to the Iron Gates, the Romans constructed a series of kastra, refugiae, and watchtowers to keep watch over enemy movements. Since the Danube was also the boundary between Romanitas and Barbaricum, it is natural that scholars viewed these settlements as having primarily a military function. The application of the term kastron to these settlements is somewhat misleading, because it implies they had a strictly military function. For example, V. Popović has argued that the Danubian kastra served a twofold function: to serve as bases for the mobile army, and to serve as refugiae for local populations in times of peril. However, Wozniak has
demonstrated that during Justinian's reign, defense-in-depth had, for all intents and purposes ceased to exist. Similarly the policy of perimeter defense had been abandoned by Constantine I in the fourth century. However important the military function was to the Byzantine central authorities, these settlements also served as local artisanal and commercial centers, where barbarians and Romans learned about each other.

The principal difference between Singidunum and the Danubian kastra is that we know the fate of the former into the early Middle Ages; by contrast, we know little about the fate of the Djerdap gorge kastra beyond the sixth and seventh centuries. While the sixth and seventh century levels at some Djerdap settlements have been explored, there has been little systematic excavation of Medieval levels at those sites. There are approximately twenty-four Roman settlements along the Danube from Golubac (Cuppae) to Prahovo (Ad Aquas) near the Djerdap Gorge (a 180 kilometer stretch). Some of the Roman fortifications in question had long settlement histories that pre-dated the Roman period, while other settlements were purely Roman foundations. When Dacia was evacuated by Aurelian in 272 AD, the Danube became the frontier. During the Tetrarchic period, many of these fortifications underwent extensive renovation, while in other cases, the Romans added new settlements to integrate further the defenses of the Danube. After the battle of Adrianople, some of these settlements, including Singidunum, were occupied by the Goths; the remainder seem to have fallen under Hunnic control. Through skillful diplomacy, the Romans slowly reasserted their presence in Dacia Ripensis. Although the question remains open to debate, some scholars argued that the Roman restoration began under Anastasios, while others contended Justinian
should be credited. Some of these settlements had small garrisons stationed in them, while others were important administrative and ecclesiastical centers. As regards some of these settlements, the archaeological and numismatic evidence points to continuity of inhabitation into the early seventh century and beyond, despite intense pressure from outside forces. From the middle of the sixth to the first quarter of the seventh century, the numismatic evidence suggests a pattern of peaceful interaction with barbarian settlements located just across the Danube in Muntenia and Oltenia.45

Ad Aquas was the most important kastron in the Djerdap Gorge.46 It was the seat of a bishopric in the middle of the sixth century.47 Excavations there uncovered the remains of several churches, two of which had baptisteries, they were the only stone buildings within the settlement. Semi dug-outs, spaced at regular intervals, occupied much of the surface area.48 Much of the remaining surface area was given over to farming or livestock rearing: this evidence underlines the sedentary nature of the settlement.

The Roman fortified settlement at Dornje Butorke was excavated in 1972 by A. Cermanović-Kuzmanović, D. Srejović, and Dj. Janković.49 The settlement measured 58 by 57 meters; a total of five towers projected from the ramparts: four angle towers (the southern and western ones were circular) were reinforced with pilasters, while a fifth tower, situated along the eastern rampart, terminated in an apse. The entrance was located along the west wall. A praesidium occupied the center of the complex; its dimensions were 18.5 by 19 meters: on the basis of a surviving inscription, Cermanović-Kuzmanović dated it to Diocletian's reign.50 The Roman
settlement at Donje Butorke underwent extensive renovation during the reign of Justinian.

Pottery was discovered at Donje Butorke in securely dated sixth-century levels. Some of the wares were hand-made, while others were wheel-thrown (both fast and slow wheel are attested). Assemblages of handmade and wheel-thrown pottery were unearthed in the south-west angle tower, while the largest concentration was discovered along the southeast rampart along with coins from the reign of Justin I. In terms of overall percentages, wheel-turned pottery was better represented than hand-made vessels. In addition to Prague-like wares with wavy line motifs, archaeologists working at Donje Butorke also recovered examples of a wheel-thrown, burnished-ware: archaeologists attributed this ware to the Goths, who still had communities scattered about the Balkans in the sixth century.51

Gothic burnished ware also was present at the Roman settlement at Veliki Gradac (Taliata). Taliata had a square ground plan, measuring 134 by 126 meters. The interior of the settlement underwent successive phases of reconstruction, first during the Tetrarchic period, and subsequently in the sixth century restoration under Justinian I. Three of four entrance gates received blocking walls at this time—only the north gate remained in use. The foundations of several churches were discovered; one of them had a baptistery. In the southeast angle tower, Janković found examples of "Danubian ware" in sixth-century levels mixed together with Roman pottery. In terms of surface decoration, vessel shape, and fabric description, the examples from Taliata are similar to some of the wares found at Gamzigrad (Felix Romiliana), and at Mušići in Bosnia. The "Danubian ware" from Taliata
bears many similarities with Ipotești-Cindești-Ciurelu wares from Muntenia, Oltenia, southern Moldavia.52 Both the shapes and the surface treatment of the Taliata assemblage appear to be similar to pottery found in the Djerdap Gorge and elsewhere in the north Balkans. The fired color ranges from dark red to dark gray; dark gray vessels are better represented. Interior colors were not provided. In some cases the fabric contained clay with numerous inclusions and voids (the latter are due to uneven firing), while in other cases, the fabric contained fewer inclusions and was relatively well fired. The surface decoration of the assemblage was varied, as some vessels contained wavy or zig-zag lines incised along the neck or the bodies of pots.

In Dacia Ripensis, Danubian ware was discovered at the retirement villa of Galerius, Felix Romuliana, dedicated in memory of his mother.53 Archaeologists documented five cultural horizons, dating from the fourth through the seventh centuries. Gamzigrad was well-fortified, and it contained several pagan temples, and two churches—one with a baptistery. Gamizigrad was sacked during the Hunnic-Bulgar razzia of 501; A. Lalović claimed it was first rebuilt first during Anastasios' reign. The archaeological inventory included numerous examples of light weight iron agricultural implements such as sickles and scythes, as well as products made of glass and bone.54 Archaeologists also discovered evidence for pottery production on a considerable scale; both hand-made and wheel thrown wares were discovered in the southwest corner of a ground-level house from horizon 4 (which is dated to the last quarter of the sixth century. The south wall of this house, known as building 7, was preserved to a height of 6 meters, while only 2.5 meters of the west wall survived. These
walls were constructed of mortared rubble; the entrance was along the south wall. Due to the poor state of preservation, archaeologists could not determine the measurements of the east wall with any degree of certainty. The floor of building 7 consisted of two layers of trodden clay; building 7 also had a square oven built against the western wall, and positioned in the middle of the room. In building 7, archaeologists discovered various types of pottery mixed together: sherds of hand-made vessels were found scattered about the perimeter of the oven; other sherds were wheel-thrown (fast and slow wheel attested). The fabrics of these vessels contained a large admixture of mica. In addition of the ceramic evidence, archaeologists discovered semi-circular whorls, and combs decorated in a motif consisting of incised circles with dots in their centers. The late sixth-century settlement at Gamzigrad was destroyed by the Avars sometime between 582 and 591—although some habitation continued at that site.

The kastron at Gamzigrad is deeper inland than some of the others discussed. Gamzigrad is situated in the Timok (Timakos) river valley; both the Timok and the Morava (Margus) rivers were important communication arteries that linked the Danubian kastra with Serdika, Naissos, and Thessaloniki. Recent studies of Roman settlements in Dacie Mediterranea, Dardania, Prevalitana, and Epiros Nova provide further insight concerning the processes of Slavicization in northern Illyricum.

The sixth-century polis known as Caričin Grad is located near the modern town of Libane in south-west Serbia, approximately 45 kilometers south of Niš (Naissos). Though the issue is still debated by some experts, most scholars accept the identification of Caričin Grad with Justiniana
Prima (Ἰουστινιανή Πρήμα), which Justinian founded near his native village of Taurision.⁵⁹

Some scholars have argued that construction on the polygonal akropolis at Justiniana Prima was completed around 530, while construction on the lower city continued for several more years beyond this date. There is some written evidence that indicates Justinian contemplated making Justiniana Prima the seat of the Praetorian Prefect of Illyricum, but that evidence is problematic, which is why this particular matter remains in dispute. We do know, however, that Justinian established an archbishopric at Caričin Grad; in fact, Justiniana Prima was promoted to the lofty status of ecclesiastical capital of western Illyricum.⁶⁰ Justinian’s foundation did not last long, however; it fell to the Avars and Sklavenoi some time after 615: after 602, Justiniana Prima is not mentioned in any extent notitiae or conciliar lists. Numismatic evidence recovered during excavations included a hoard dated to 613, although a single coin, discovered in a separate findspot and dated to 615, was subsequently found.⁶¹ On the basis of this evidence, most archaeologists dated the collapse of Caričin Grad and Roman authority in western Illyricum to the year 615.

But as the case of Singidunum demonstrates, the collapse of Roman authority in western Illyricum did not result in the total collapse of Roman settlements there; Caričin Grad, for example, was inhabited beyond 615, perhaps for several decades. Artifacts attributed to Slavs have been associated with late sixth-century and early seventh-century levels. Kondić and Popović discovered several poorly-constructed,⁶² ground-level huts in mid-to-late sixth-century contexts. Light weight technology agricultural implements such as sickles and scythes were also present at Caričin Grad.
Indeed, not long after its foundation, large tracts of urban free space in the lower city were devoted to livestock grazing, while the inhabitants of the lower city seem to have moved their houses next to the akropolis walls. Cooking pots similar to those found at the Djerdap gorge castra were discovered at Caricin Grad, one particular vessel, a pot measuring 22 cm in height was discovered near the so-called double basilica. The decoration of this pot consisted of a series of incised, horizontal and wavy lines situated between the neck and the shoulders of the vessel. Other examples of pottery provisionally called Slavic or Danubian were published by Mano-Zisi; they contained coins from the reign of Maurice.

Popović described the transformation of the public spaces of Justiniana Prima into grazing pastures as the ruralization of the polis; while on the other hand, the presence of artifacts of Slavic provenance represented evidence for what he called the barbarization of Justiniana Prima. According to Popović, these two phenomena marked the first phase in the Slavicization of the Balkans south of the Danube.

Serbian historians and archaeologists remain at loggerheads over the problematic question of whether Caricin Grad had a mixed ethnic population consisting of autochthonoi and Slavs coexisting harmoniously, or whether those inhabitants were purely autochthonoi. For example, V. Kondić argued that the determining factor in the transformation of life at Caricin Grad was the settlement of Slavs in the polis, whereas Popović, as we have just seen, argued that the phenomenon of ruralization was the distinguishing characteristic. The difference between these positions can be summarized as follows. According to Popović, ruralization, as distinct from barbarization, was an internal phenomenon in which the barbarians played a
negligible role, for internal, structural changes were responsible for the transformation of life at Caricin Grad. As regards the appearance of new forms of material culture (i.e., elements that caused the phenomenon of barbarization)—including new pottery forms, Popović argued this evidence pointed to peaceful contacts between the Slavs and the inhabitants of Caricin Grad—contacts that culminated in the adoption of Slavic fashions by those very inhabitants.

Janković, who studied the numismatic evidence from Oltenia, Muntenia, and Moldavia on the Romanian side of the Danube concluded that it indicates a general pattern of peaceful relations. The chronological parameters of Janković’s sample spanned the reigns of Anastasios and Heraklios. His goal was to compare the number of bronze denominations per reign for Muntenia and Moldavia on the one hand, against Oltenia on the other. His findings indicated that Slavic migration period settlements in Oltenia were closely tied to Roman settlements on the south bank of the Danube. In Muntenia and Moldavia, issues declined sharply during the reign of Tiberios I Constantine; Janković attributed this decline to the Avar military campaigns against the Sklavenoi of the Wallachian plain, which occurred between 578–579. In Oltenia and the south bank (i.e., from the Iron Gates to the confluence of the Timok river), by contrast, the number of issues rose over preceding reigns. During the reign of Phokas, however, the number of issues for each of the aforementioned provinces, north and south of the Danube, fell to zero.

Janković concluded that the ceramic and numismatic evidence represented evidence for the existence of Slavic foederati; he dated the beginning of this important phase of Byzantine–Slavic cultural interaction
to the middle of the sixth century. He based his argument on the premise that the Slavs were a distinct social community, and that the primary function of the Djerdap Gorge kastra was military. This may have been the case in the late third century, when the army employed static defense. Between the fourth and sixth centuries, however, these sites were transformed from fortified military camps to fortified estates. However, the function of the settlement had also evolved: the archaeological evidence indicates that new iron technology agriculture had begun to play an important role. Yet, Janković may be right in asserting that Slavic foederati were garrisoned in some of these settlements; in return for their service to the empire, they would have been given land on which to settle in the surrounding hinterland. These particular Sklavenoi settlements in the Wallachian plain would be the ones against whom the Romans and Avars had allied. But once the Romans realized that the Avars posed the more formidable threat, they made overtures to these Sklavenoi. While no literary sources place the Sklavenoi foederati in this region, there are numerous references in Prokopios to the campaigns of Sklavenoi foederati in Italy during the Gothic wars.

Janković and other scholars have maintained that the settlers at Djerdap Gorge were Sklavenoi foederati, who moved in by forcing the native Romanized population out through constrained population displacement. The issue of wholesale population flight in the north Balkans remains problematic. While it is true that some Roman settlements in Illyricum and Scythia Minor were abandoned at this time, it does not follow that all their inhabitants sought refuge in distant places. The arrival of refugees from Naissos and Serdika to Thessaloniki, related in the Miracula, and often cited
by scholars as evidence for urban collapse in northern Illyricum, provides a distorted picture of sixth-century realities. In times of danger, most of the autochthonous inhabitants of Illyricum probably sought refuge wherever they could, but within their native localities. Although the written sources describe numerous instances of flight, it is implausible to suggest that all the inhabitants of whole provinces fled to distant places like Thessaloniki. Furthermore, the archaeological evidence from northern Illyricum points to a pattern of continued inhabitation throughout the Slavic migration period. Moreover, the rich simply had too much to lose by fleeing, so many of them probably reached some sort of rapprochement with the invaders. The poor could not afford to flee to distant places. In addition, the Sklavenoi had little reason to force the autochthonous rural population to leave. Steppe nomads viewed farmers as essential to the maintenance of a pax, since they provided the agricultural surpluses that the nomads needed in order to perpetuate the system. In point of fact, both the rich and the poor of the Balkans probably reached an understanding with the new political authorities, and subsequently went about their lives as before.

In any case, the Sklavenoi were not responsible for the Slavicization of the Balkans. The immigrant farmers whose settlements south of the Danube were not identical with the Sklavenoi, although some Sklavenoi may have been recruited from among them. These farmers possessed a new subsistence technology that led to exponential population growth Balkan-wide. This technology and the threadbare farmers who introduced it were the agents of change: the role they played was essential to the diffusion of a new culture and a new language. This technology was not limited to one particular ethnic group—it belonged to a number of cultures from the
Carpathian arc to the silvo-steppe zone; within these territories, a variety of cultures coexisted with each other. During the Middle Ages, many new ethnic groups would filter out from these cultural complexes, including the Albanians.

Dardania, Prevalitana, Eprios Nova

The Raška river valley is known today as the Sandjak, or alternatively, as Ras. The town of Novi Pazar, an Ottoman foundation, lies in the center of the Raška basin. In the thirteenth century the Raška valley became the nucleus of the Nemanjid Serbian state; that is why the Serbs refer to this region not as the Sandjak, which is a vestige of the Turkokratia, but as Ras—the "cradle" of Serbian civilization. The Raška river valley is surrounded by mountains that vary from 1000 meters (Pešter) to 1834 meters (Golija). Ras is a fertile region with lush mountain pastures; it was an important mining area on which both Romans and Serbs relied. In addition, the Raška valley was an important communications nexus: it connected the Danubian plain (via the Ibar and Morava valleys) with the Adriatic coast. In fact, six rivers have their headwaters in the Raška valley. The etymology of the word Ras has been much discussed in Serbian scholarship; today, most experts believe that Ras derives from Arsa, having undergone metathesis sometime during the early Middle Ages. According to Prokopios, Arsa was a Roman kastron renovated by Justinian. Some scholars maintain that Arsa is of Thracian derivation, while others insist that it is of Illyrian derivation. The Slavic form of Arsa, ʻPášć, first appeared in the De Administrando Imperio in a passage concerning the military campaigns of the Bulgarian Khan, Boris, against the Serbs in 880. This passage is instructive, for like the letter of Pope John VIII, it
indicates that the Slavicization of the Raška river valley was underway at a time when Roman settlements in neighboring areas were first being called by their new, Slavicized names (e.g., Serdika>Sredec; Naissos>Niš).

Scholars have sought to determine the precise geographic location of Late Roman Arsa. Archaeologists concluded that the Roman castra in the valley were abandoned between the late sixth and early seventh centuries. They noticed that many castra within the Raška valley have names in gradište or gradina. J. Kalić claims these terms were applied by the Slavs of this region to settlements that were abandoned at the time of their installation in the Balkans; the term grad, by contrast, was applied to a settlement that was occupied (e.g., Belgrade) by autochthonoi when they arrived. Arsa has now been identified with the gradina near Postenje near Novi Pazar. It is the only fortress that protected all the roads into the valley; in terms of surface area, Postenje is the largest site. The foundations of two Christian basilicas were discovered inside the settlement. Stratigraphically, most of the horizons at Postenje belonged to the sixth century, although one has been dated by archaeologists to the first half of the seventh. The archaeological inventory from Postenje includes unspecified agricultural implements. The Roman settlement at Arsa came to an abrupt end sometime during the middle of the seventh century; it lay abandoned until the Byzantine reoccupation of Dardania under Basil II after 1018.

The archaeological evidence from Ras indicates that the sixth century was one of relative prosperity. What happened afterwards remains a point of contention. The collapse of the Roman castra in the Raška basin does not mean that the surrounding rural settlements were abandoned as well,
although some evidence points to a limited exodus from Ras and Dardania into Epiros Nova. However, the collapse of fortresses may not have had much effect on the overall demographics of the region. There are no traces of Slavic settlement in this region until the tenth century, when the first agglomerations, replete with semi dug-outs and stone ovens, appear in the archaeological record. Unlike the Danube region, the Raška river valley does not exhibit the new forms of material culture, except for the agricultural implements, until the tenth century.

The argument for Slavic replacement of the autochthonous population is based largely on complicated references from Albanian linguistic evidence. V. Georgiev noted that the onomastics of Epiros Nova do not obey modern Albanian phonetic laws. This is strange, for if the Albanians were the descendants of the ancient Illyrians, one would expect to find a high percentage of Greek loan words in the maritime terminology of the modern Albanians; in reality, Albanian maritime terminology is derived from other languages, including Danubian Latin. The implication is that the Adriatic littoral was not part of the “Albanian homeland.” He concluded that the phonetic system of modern Albanian is derived from Daco-Moesian, and that the original homeland of the Illyrians was in Dardania and Dacia Mediterranea. In further support of his contention, Georgiev argued that the percentage of Slav toponyms in Dacia Mediterranea and in Dardania, the Illyrian “homeland,” was high; indeed, on the basis of the toponymic evidence provided by Prokopios, the distribution of Slavic place names was most dense in the Timok (Timakos) and Morava (Margus) valleys, between Naissos and Serdika in western Illyricum, and the Dobrudja in eastern Scythia Minor.
Georgiev's linguistic evidence, taken with the archaeological evidence from Kalić and associates, indicates that in some areas populations were on the move in the seventh century. However, migrations from Dardania to Epiros Nova continued over a period of two hundred years. Ultimately, in the tenth century, Dardania was Slavicized; meanwhile, the Daco-Mysians who emigrated from the Roman kastra in Dardania to Epiros Nova became one of several social groups who formed the nucleus of the future Albanian ethnos. Michael Attaleiates was the first historian to mention the Ἀλβανοί or Ἀρβανίται. During the Middle Ages, additional social groups melded with this Daco-Moesian element; those groups included some of the non-Romanized populations of Epiros Nova, as well as some of the Romanized populations of Epiros Nova.

If Daco-Mysians gradually abandoned Ras between the seventh and tenth centuries for Epiros Nova and Prevelitan, what does the archaeological evidence for these two regions indicate? According to V. Popović, kastra with new technology agricultural implements and richly adorned churches are attested throughout Prevelitan and Epiros Nova during the Slavic migration period; many archaeologists referred to these settlements and the artifacts recovered from them as Komani-Kruje culture. Koman and Kruje are the names of two archaeological sites, (i.e., nekropoleis) dated to the seventh and eighth centuries. Koman is situated on the river Drin, while Kruje is located on the Tshani river; Komani-Kruje civilization extended from the Ukraine to Sicily: within the Balkans, the number of archaeological sites belonging to this cultural complex include Kalaia Dalmakes, Sarda, Lissos, Bukël in northern and central Albania, Aphiona on Korfu, Saint-Erasme and Radolište around Lake Ohrid, and Mijela
near Lake Scodra. In some areas of southeastern Europe, Komani culture lasted well into the ninth century. Most of the koimoiteria discovered in Komani-Kruje civilization were associated with nearby Roman kastra and Justinianic/post-Justinianic churches. Popović observed that the burial rite and the manner of grave construction was consistent with provincial Roman techniques common throughout this region. The grave goods from these sites included weapons and utensils of iron for males, and jewelry for females. Fibulae were common to both genders in Komani culture; they fall into two distinct categories: large fibulae with upturned feet (retourne type) in bronze or iron—the retourne type is common throughout the Danubian plain during the sixth century. The second type of fibula common to Komani-Kruje culture is often referred to as plates discoidales and is considered of Roman/Byzantine manufacture: many of these fibulae bear Christian iconographic motifs. Gold earrings with Christian motifs similar to those of the discoidales-type fibula are well attested among Komani funerary inventories.

According to Popović, in terms of material culture all Komani sites (i.e., kastra and koimoiteria) in Prevalitana and in Epiros Nova were connected with important poleis, especially Dyrrachion. A community of economic and religious interests thus bound these settlements together. The Komani-Kruje cultural complex was in close contact with the Sklavenoi/immigrant farmers, whose settlement in Epiros Nova began in the late sixth and seventh centuries. These settlements were clustered on the south bank of the river Shkumbi, in the Black Drin river valley, and around Skodra. Overall the percentage of sixth/seventh century settlement is much higher than scholars once thought.
The Bulgar-Byzantine treaty of 863 recognized Bulgarian authority over much of southern Albania. This transfer of territory would explain the missionary activity of Clement of Ohrid in the areas around Glevintza (Balsh) and Deavolis at the end of the ninth century. K. Jireček, whose opinions in this matter were once widely accepted, had argued that the river Drin represented the farthest extent of Slavic infiltration in the western Balkans. It now appears that these areas became cultural interfaces separating two civilizations and social groups. For example, the De Administrando Imperio used the term Ἐπισκόποι to designate Romanized, Latin-speakers who withdrew from the Balkan interior (viz., Dardania?) for the Adriatic littoral before the Avar advance. In response to the expansion of the Bulgarian state in the western Balkans, and the regular appearance of the Arab fleet in the Adriatic, the Byzantines set in motion a complex series of events that culminated in the emergence of Albanitae of Attaliae's time (i.e., eleventh century). The first step in this process was the establishment of the theme of Dyrrachion around 815. The Byzantines drew on the indigenous populations for manpower; in so doing, they fostered the social and political development of the Albanitae in the same way that Pritsak has argued the Avars fostered Slavic social and political development.

In Popović's view, Komani-Kruje culture consisted of disparate socio-linguistic groups. The first group consisted of the Romanized population of Epiros Nova who abandoned their settlements in the plains for hilltop kastra when the Slavs arrived. The second group consisted of an admixture of pastoralists native to Epiros Nova and Daco-Moesian immigrants, many of whom also fled to the mountains. This latter group lived above the Sklevenoi who dwelled in the plains and river valleys. All of these groups, and others
who arrived centuries later, formed the nucleus of the Albanians. Popović argued that Komani-Kruje was Byzantine in material culture, and Rhomanoi (i.e. the Latin-speakers of the De Administrando Imperio) in ethnicity. They also lived side-by-side with the emergent Slavs. A distribution map of Komani sites with a distribution map of Slavic toponyms reveals that the Arsen, upper Shkumbi, Mati and Black Drin river valleys were the foci of interaction. Slavic figurines analogous to those found at Biskupija and Nea Anchialos have been recovered by archaeologists from sites located along these interaction corridors.

Komani settlements did not follow the pattern noted by scholars in Ras or in the Danubian plain, for reasons that remain unclear. The maintenance of imperial authority throughout this region may have sustained this. More likely, the proximity of Komani settlements to the Adriatic sea gave the bearers of Komani culture the strength to assimilate incomers from beyond the Danube, and the creation of the theme of Dyrachion was a turning point in this process. But just as importantly, the Mediterranean climate of the Adriatic littoral, with its thinner soil, may have negated the edge that the bearers of the new subsistence technology enjoyed farther inland, where Continental climates and thicker soils prevailed. Furthermore, the influx of immigrants from Dardania, which was not Slavicized as quickly as Dacia Mediterranea or Moesia I, probably strengthened Roman culture in Eprios Nova, even if many fled to the highlands. Komani culture held its own against powerful social forces that transformed many provinces in western Illyricum. It was even able to establish “urban” outposts at Radolište, near Lake Ohrid, which made this settlement an island of Romanitas amidst a sea of immigrant farmers.


5. Bartel, "Acculturation," pp. 173-185 has argued that this was not the case in areas of Moesia I during the fourth century, therefore, why should we assume the situation had changed since that time? I am suggesting that it is probably artificial to distinguish between the immigrant farmers and the indigenous farmers, at least in social terms. Dj. Mono-Zisi, Glasnik SAN 6 (1954): footnote 96, p. 180 argues, rightly in my view, that the ruralization of Coricin Grad was an internal phenomenon that had nothing to do with either Avars or Sklavenoi. Cf. Kondić and Popović, Coricin Grad, p. 183.


7. Vana, Ancient Slavs, p. 47. See also M. Gimbutas, Slavs, pp. 140-148.

Priskos says that the Huns sacked Siraiua, Viminacium, and Naissos. See Prisci Fragma. Dindorf ed, fragment 2, p. 280-281. See Marcellini, Chronicon, 11. 80, for references to the Hunnic sack of Singidunum in 441: "Hunnorum reges numerosis suorum cum militibus Illyricum irruerunt: Naisum, Singidunum aliasque civitates oppidoque Illyrici plurima exciderunt." On the basis of Jordanes, Borisic, "Singidono," p.2, argued that the Romans recovered Singidunum from the Huns after Attila's death, and restored it. But they seem to have lost it again to Sarmatians loyal to a king named Babai. In 471, Theodoric captured Singidunum from the Sarmatians: (Jordanes, Getica, p. 282) "Singidunum dehinc civitates, quam ipsi Sarmatae occupassent, invadens, non Romanis reddidit, sed, suae subdedit dicioni."

See Izvori, I. pp. 92-93.

Borisic, "De Singiduno Sub Byzantinis," ZBVI 3 (1955): p.6 (hereafter referred to as Borisic, "Singiduno, "). This issue may well prove to be insoluble without additional archaeological evidence. We know that restoration efforts were undertaken by Justinian because Novella II, dated to April 535 mentions rebuilding activity at Singidunum.


For references to the sklavenei assault on Singidunum (at Baian's order), see Theophylact, Historia, 6.4, p. 226. See Theophylact, Historia, 7. 10, p. 262. For references to the meeting of Priskos and Komentiolos. see Theophylact, Historia, 8.1, p. 285; Theophanes, Chronographia, A.M. 6093, p. 281. After the Avar defeat of 596, Baian mounted pillaging operations against Dalmatia.

For references to the Sklavenei assault on Singidunum (at Baian's order), see Theophylact, Historia, 6. 4, p. 226. In 596, the Avars were successful in taking the polis. The Khagan order Singidunum's walls demolished. On this occasion, Baian attempted to deport the inhabitants to Pannonia, but the timely arrival of Priskos and the Roman fleet forced the Avars to retreat without their captives. See Theophylact, Historia, 7. 10, p. 262. For references to the meeting of Priskos and Komentiolos, see Theophylact, Historia, 8.1,p. 285; Theophanes, Chronographia, A.M. 6093, p. 281. After the Avar defeat of 596, Baian mounted pillaging operations against Dalmatia.

I am alluding to Constantine VII, DAI, chapter 32, pp. 19-20. But we are not completely certain what sources Constantine used. Some scholars have argued that he used no longer extant sources once housed in the imperial archives The passage refers to the presence of a strategos in Singidunum during the arrival of the Serbs in the Balkans, circa 630. Constantine's passage is the last extant source to refer to the poise by the name Singidunum. Centuries later, the toponym reappears in the form of Velegrodon, see the Vita Clementis, PG 126, col. 1222.
Sondages at Sova Slope were first carried out in 1961. A series of more detailed excavations subsequently were carried out in 1970 and 1971. The results of those investigations were published by G. Marjanović-Vujović; her findings form the basis of my discussion. The dating of these horizons was established on the basis of Roman pottery and Roman coins found mixed together with “Slav” pottery in several findspots. The dating of horizon one is difficult due to stratum conflation with later levels. The publications I have used are somewhat vague about this important point. Regardless of the problems associated with the dating of level one, levels two and three are sealed and securely dated. For the purposes of this study, that evidence is invaluable. The third horizon is far and away the most securely dated by numismatic evidence. Coins from the reign of John I Tzimikes have been recovered through excavation. After a brief gap that coincides with the expansion of Samuel’s empire, Byzantine coins once again are represented. From this point on, there is a continuous sequence of issues into the Komnenian period. The excavators of horizon one regard the presence of the nekropolis as a temporary abandonment in settlement. The burial pits of sub-level protruded through the floor of level one. The floors of level three were discovered above the burial pits of level two, which in turn lay above the floors of the three level one houses. Funerary goods, namely earrings and rings from the aforementioned nekropolis were used to date this sub-level. Typologically, the earrings belonged to the Belo Brdo group. G. Marjanović-Vujović, “The Latest Research From Slavic Beograd,” Balkanoslavica 5 (1976): p. 150 (hereafter cited as Marjanović-Vujović, “Latest”).


23 G. Dzhingov, "Prinos kum materialnata kultura na preslav i negovata okolnost," *Arkheologija* pp. 52-54. Note photographs on page 54.


26 Petalographic analysis is rarely used in Mediterranean archaeology because it is expensive.


Constantine VII, *DAI*, 40.29, p. 176; 42.2, 16, p. 182 (Belegrada); to Belegradon, 32.20, p. 152.


The author of this portion of the text considered this an advantage that the Romans could exploit by playing one group off against another.


Marjanović's assertion that there was little social ranking at Singidunum, agrees with Vuzharova's findings throughout Bulgaria. Zh. Vuzharova, *Slavičani*.


Marjanović, "Latest," p. 150, claims this represents evidence for the failure of the two "ethnic" groups to integrate fully. An alternative explanation, however, is Singidunum had been Slavicized by the tenth century, and that the grave goods reflect the typical process of social differentiation at work, as different groups filtered-out from the two former settlements. Social standing was more important in the Middle Ages than ethnic affiliation.


Sondages were carried out before the excavations of 1972 by Cermanović-Kuzmanović, "Donje Butorke, Antički kastel," *Arheološki Pregled* 5 (1964): p. 52. The inner towers are a regular architectural feature of the Danubian kastra; scholars refer to them by various terms: prae sidium, centenarium, quadriburgium.


Gamzigrad is located on the outskirts of Zaječar, a city in eastern Serbia approximately 9 kilometers from the Bulgarian frontier.

In the case of Caricin Grad, there is no mistake that this fortified settlement was a polis in the antique sense of the term, replete with monumental architecture, baths, villas, and a peculiar circular forum. See Prokopios, Buildings, 4.1.17-27, p. 224.

Professor Tomovski, of Skoplje University, rejects this claim. He is of the opinion that Justiniana Prima was located on the territory of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Unlike Gamzigrad, where a dedicatory inscription with specific reference to Felix Rumuliana was found during the excavation of the site, no inscriptions have been discovered at Caricin Grad. However, it is the only polis of its size in the region.

I will not seek to address the contentious issue concerning Justinian's decision to make the archbishopric of Justinian Prima autocephalous because the particulars of this problem lie beyond the scope of this study. Suffice it to say, this debate rages-on, and in the absence of new literary sources, may well prove to be insoluble. See Granić, Byzantium (1925-26): 123-140.

On the fall of Caricin Grad to the Avars, see Davidson, Hesperia 6 (1937), who argued that the Avars may have used the city for a while. The argument for the presence of Avars rests on a thin evidential base, three-barbed arrows of Suceava or Histria type, which was widely used by steppe nomads, including the Avars. In addition, some scholars cite the amount of free space as evidence for the presence of pastoralists within the city. For details, see U. Kondić, V. Popović, Caricin Grad—Utvrdjeno mesto u vizantijskom Iliriku, (Belgrade-Rome, 1984) (hereafter cited as Kondić and Popović, Caricin Grad). D. O. Mano-Zisi, Caricin Grad—Justiniana Prima (Leskovac, 1979). B. Bavant, "La ville dans le nord Illyrique," in Villes et peuplement dans l'Illyrique protobyzantin. (Rome, 1984): pp. 272-285.
Value-judgements like these abound in descriptions of Late Antique and Slavic migration period settlements. Such pronouncements should be avoided in future because they mislead students into thinking society had retrogressed socially, that more complexity is better than less, that monumental architecture and amenities make up a polis—and that anything that deviates from that norm is Medieval.


A fuller treatment of the ceramic assemblage at Ćarićin Grad is in press. Lj. Bješajac, La ceramiche di Ćarićin Grad.

The vessel found near the double basilica is catalogued as item #166 by Kondić and Popović, Ćarićin Grad. p. 183. Other examples, all pots, include items 167, 168, and 170. For further details on the wares found in pits, see Dj. Mano-Zisi, Starinar. n.s. 5/6 (1954/55), p. 167; Starinar. n.s. 3-4 (1952-53): p. 165.


Janković, "Gračanica," pp. 94-96.


Kalić, "Region," 136.


Prokopios, Wars, 7.29.1, p. 398, informs us that the Sklavenoi first reached Dyrrhachion around 548.

One method linguists use to distinguish sixth from ninth century settlements is to look for the absence of the third palatalization in the placenames of this region.

Constantine VII, DAI, chap. 32, 21-25.


CHAPTER VI
CONTACT SITUATIONS: DACIA, ILLYRICUM ORIENTALIS AND SCYTHIA MINOR

The contact situations we have examined in the previous chapter point to the existence of two separate and distinct phenomena that led to the Slavicization of the north Balkans: one violent, the other peaceful. Scholars have traditionally have been unduly influenced by the testimony of the literary sources that speak of one atrocity after another; yet, upon closer examination, those very sources reveal that Byzantine authors repeatedly mentioned the presence of Roman populations among the barbarians. Some of these Byzantines freely chose to live outside the confines of the empire, and this phenomenon is well attested by Late Roman/Byzantine historians.

This chapter will examine the archaeological evidence from Dacia, eastern Illyricum, and Scythia Minor. Many, though not all, of these sites were Roman poleis; their continued existence into the seventh century and beyond represents proof that urban life did not collapse entirely in these regions during the Slavic migration period.

Dacia

In many ways, Dacia represents ground zero, for it was there that the Slavicization of the Balkans first got underway. Many immigrant farmer settlements were located near those of the indigenous inhabitants of Dacia.
The material culture of Slavic migration period settlements in the Wallachian plain displayed strong ties with local cultures.

Immigrant farmer cultural influences did not radiate in one direction, from some putative homeland in the western Ukraine, as Šafarik and his successors hypothesized. Instead directional flow was reciprocal, and various diffusionary processes, excluding long-distance migration, may have facilitated its spread. The bearers of Zhitomir or Prague cultures may indeed have migrated to southeastern Europe, but gradually over time as peaceful agriculturists. These short-distance migrations resulted in contact with peoples long exposed to the influence of Mediterranean culture, and some of those influences made their way back to the Carpathian arc or the silvo-steppe zone. The evidence from Dacia, for example, indicates that the material culture of the immigrant farmers was profoundly influenced by Byzantine culture; those cultural influences radiated from the Balkans to central and eastern Europe. And every facet of life was affected, including fashions, house construction techniques, ceramic-making technology, funerary rites, even social structure. Therefore, it is possible to speak of reciprocal cultural influences during this initial and intense phase of cultural interaction between Byzantines and immigrant agriculturists.

Previous scholarship held that the cultural interactions that took place between these groups were irrelevant because they affected isolated communities on an individual basis. Ion Nestor, the distinguished Romanian archaeologist, was one of the leading exponents of this perspective. Nestor's views influenced scholarship in the West, as R. Browning and D. Obolensky each proceeded from the premise that initial contacts between Byzantium and the Slavs produced nothing of consequence. In this respect,
Browning and Obolensky, whose theories regarding Byzantine-Slavic cultural interaction stand diametrically opposed to each other, are in essential agreement. Both Obolensky and Browning dealt only with the perceived effects of formal culture. Both Obolensky and Browning failed to consider the archaeological evidence from the Slavic migration period.

In his study entitled *Byzantium and Bulgaria*, Browning explained that the First Bulgarian empire exhibited little Byzantine cultural influence because its cultural matrix sharply diverged from Byzantine ideological, political, and legal institutions, which were rooted in the Classical past. Indeed, when immigrant farmer culture emerged in the sixth century AD, it was unique and distinct from that of neighboring cultures, including Byzantium. But Byzantine influence was ultimately profound. The earliest contacts were also significant because they played a formative role in determining the general shape that newly-formed matrix assumed, particularly in the Balkans. Byzantine material culture played a formative role in the decisive early phases of South Slavic cultural development; material culture is an important index of social development, no less than formal culture. Significantly, besides the autochthonoi of Dacia, many Byzantines chose to live freely among the Sklavenoi, while in other attested cases, Byzantine captives were carried off either by Avars, or Sklavenoi, or by Bulgars (e.g., Krum).

But while Byzantine material culture shaped the newcomers' culture, the newcomers also changed Byzantine material culture. It is important to remember that the early contacts between Byzantines and immigrants was reciprocal. The introduction of a new subsistence technology was a decisive factor in this exchange, since in the process many Romanized or partially
Romanized autochthonous communities throughout the Balkans became Slavicized. In the final analysis, the farmer immigrants were the ones who effected successful language replacement, and with that replacement came the trappings of material culture discussed in this study.

The Slavicization of extensive regions of Dacia was a gradual process, and not the result of a large-scale migration by warriors intent on seizing land, as was previously supposed. Immigrant farmer settlements dating from the sixth century have been discovered in Muntenia and Moldavia. By contrast, artifacts typically ascribed to these groups are not recorded in Transylvania until the second quarter of the seventh century. M. Comșa finds that some of these settlements bear strong similarities to settlements in Moravia, western Slovakia, and southern Poland, while others have analogues with communities in the Dniester-Dniepr region. For example, the inventory from the nekropolis at Sarata Monteoro bears close parallels with inventories from sites in the Dniester-Dniepr region.

Excavations of Slavic migration period settlements, both immigrant and autochthonous, have been underway throughout Romania since 1945. The results of these excavations are instructive, for this evidence now can be synthesized into a broader, Balkan-wide study that permits some macro-level conclusions to be posited. The archaeological evidence from Dacia points to peaceful cohabitation between immigrant agriculturists and autochthonous communities. Only those settlements in the path of the razzias suffered destruction. The Sklevenoi incursions of the first half of the sixth century were confined to the upper Siret, the Pruth, the Dniester, the upper south Bug and Pripet rivers; between these invasion routes lay communities unscathed by razzias, with dense inhabitation. For instance,
excavations conducted at Dulceana, published by S. Dolinescu-Ferche, point to the existence of a mixed settlement in which Dacian dwellings and ceramic wares were discovered together with immigrant farmer semi dug-outs and pottery (Prague and Penkova wares). Significantly, the Sklavenoi razzias did not interrupt the symbiotic relationship that developed in communities like Dulceana or Ipotești-Cindești-Ciurelu. The archaeological inventory from Radovanu, Bucareșt, and Soldat-Chivan even yielded Roman coins from the reign of Heraklios. The density of settlement from these sites points to significant demographic growth, which only the development of a new subsistence technology could stimulate.

Some of the oldest Sklavenoi/immigrant farmer settlements in Romania were located in Moldavia between the Prut and Sereth rivers. These sites, for example Suchava—the Medieval capital of Moldavia—date from the second half of the sixth century. The inventory from Suchava indicates a settlement in close contact with the silvo-steppe zone of the Ukraine, as evidenced by the material remains, including many artifacts of Martinovka derivation. But the inventory also points to close contact with Byzantium, as confirmed by numismatic evidence, including numerous issues from Justinian. The migration of Sklavenoi/immigrant farmers into the Banat, Oltenia, and Muntenia was extensive, more so than was the case in Scythia Minor; these Romanian provinces were the immediate staging areas for migration to Illyricum.

When the immigrants entered the Wallachian plain, cultural contacts with local populations and Byzantium intensified significantly. Between the geographic extent of Șipot-Monteșru and Ipotești-Cindești-Ciurelu cultural complexes, lay a newly discovered zone, with a pattern of dense settlement,
whose artifacts indicate close cultural relations between immigrants and autochthonoi. Archaeologists attribute the appearance of Danubian as well as other wares in Wallachia to interaction between the inhabitants of the Wallachian plain and the newcomers. J. Eisner and Comșa both posited provincial Roman (i.e., Thraco-Dacian) origins for the surface decoration manifested on these vessels which appears to be the same as the "Danubian Ware" discussed above. This hybrid pottery synthesized Slavic with provincial Roman stylistic motifs, and they are indigenous to Dobrudja, Wallachia, Oltenia, Muntenia, and north-east Moesia II. One form of ceramic ware often cited by some scholars in support of close interaction is the so-called pitted-ware. Pitted-wares are usually found in pots decorated with small, pit-shaped depressions formed by the fingers, along the necks or the shoulders of the vessels. Nestor and Teodor both ascribed this type of decoration to the autochthonous inhabitants of Romania. They contended that the immigrants adopted it when they arrived in Dacia. Comșa, however, rejected this attribution, arguing that pitted-wares are well attested in settlements from the Don to the Carpathians. Some recent examples of pitted-wares have been discovered in Pannonia, too. Comșa did not, however, ascribe this decorative motif to the autochthonoi; rather, she attributed it to the arrival of the Severiani into the Balkans, as a consequence of the expansion of the Khazar Khaganate. This intrusion by the Severiani disrupted the symbiosis that had been germinating since the sixth century.

The arrival of the Onogur Bulgars under Asparukh in 680 further disrupted the symbiotic relationship in the Wallachian plain. For example, the settlement at Sarata Monteori was abandoned shortly after this date. In the Wallachian plain and southern Moldavia, areas belonging to Ipotești
culture, settlements collapsed and were abandoned. In Scythia Minor, the initial zones of Bulgar migration south of the Danube, the equilibrium between Sklavenoi/immigrant farmers and autochthonoi shifted against the farmer. The arrival of the Bulgars, coupled with the timely reorganization of imperial defenses in Scythia Minor (between 641-679), and in portions of Moesia II (i.e., key naval installations along the lower Danube like Dorostolon), prevented the Slavicization of Scythia Minor outright, and delayed that process along certain portions of the lower Danube for some time. In Scythia Minor, the evidence suggests that after 602, the assimilation of immigrant agriculturists by the autochthonous populations, the proto-Romanians, was actively underway. The emergence of the proto-Romanians is a highly problematic issue, and it does not fall within the scope of this investigation. However, recent studies indicate that both the retention of imperial authority in the aforementioned areas, and the final collapse of the First Bulgarian Empire in 1018, turned the linguistic tide against Slav-speakers in Romania.

Suchava

Though the issue remains contested among Romanian archaeologists, Suchava-Şipot, Sarata Monteoru, and Balta Verdi are considered the oldest immigrant farmer nekropoleis in Romania. The modern city of Suchava, like many cities in Europe, is divided into quarters; immigrant farmer settlements were discovered in three separate quarters of Suchava. In the quarter known as Şipot, archaeologists discovered the remains of several semi dug-outs, and several full dug-outs--these house types are usually ascribed to the Slavs. M. Matei dated the settlement to the second half of the sixth, early seventh centuries. Şipot is the oldest of the three
settlements discovered at Suchava (the chronological order is Şipot, Kurtia Domianske, and Drumul Nacional). Sondages were first carried-out at Şipot in 1951, and they were followed by a series of excavations that began in 1953. Three semi dug-outs were located at the foot of a hill, in poor state of preservation. The houses were rectangular in plan, but due to their condition, it was not possible for the excavators to establish precise measurements. The floors of these houses were dug to a depth of 1.10 meters from the surface. The ceramic assemblage at Şipot consisted of cooking pots, mostly of Zhitomir-Korchak type, although some Prague wares were also found. The presence of archaic forms of Prague ware led Matei to date the settlement at Şipot to the second half of the sixth century.

In house no. 2, archaeologists discovered postholes that were dug at a depth of 1.80 meters; the position of these postholes indicates that the house once had a gabled roof. Unlike many houses attributed to the immigrant farmers elsewhere in Romania (i.e., Wallachia which are slightly later, chronologically speaking), the houses at Şipot had neither clay-trodden floors, nor walls covered with clay. At Suchava, these particular features appeared in later cultural horizons, that is, beginning with the eighth century. The heating system of the Şipot houses consisted of small ovens positioned in the corners opposite the entrance. The ovens were constructed of several courses of small to medium-sized stones piled on top of each other; one side was left open for access. The size of the ovens averaged 1 by 1.10 meters. Strewn about the perimeters of each oven, excavators discovered pottery sherds and animal bones.

A single vessel type is found at Şipot—the cooking pot. The clay has a coarse texture, with many voids and inclusions, and is reddish-brown in
The pots were fired unevenly, in small pits. The average height of each vessel is 1.5 cm. Matei classified the pots according to vessel profile, specifically the bottoms of pots and the body walls. Only two of the vessels were decorated. The first vessel had a series of concentric circles incised at a depth of 6 cm along its neck. The second vessel had decoration consisting of incised, wavy lines. This vessel was found in a thick layer of ash, and was it thrown on a potter’s wheel. Matei considered it an intrusion from a later level. Matei classified the bottoms of the pots according to two groups: those with flat bottoms, and those with convex bottoms. He argued that the presence of Prague and Zhitomir wares reflected the work of different artisans, while Nestor contended that it reflected slightly different periods of inhabitation within the same cultural horizon.

Other artifacts recovered from Șipot included unspecified fragments of agricultural implements, glass-paste beads, one radiate fibula made of cast bronze, as well as assorted bone tools and ornaments. The aforementioned fibula measured 3.7 cm in length, and its closest analogues are found at Sarata Monteoru. The archaeological evidence from Șipot is significant, especially when compared with the inventory from Sarata Monteoru—a community in closer contact with Byzantine culture because of its location in the Danubian plain. Nevertheless, Nestor has argued that the presence of so-called three-sided ovens at Șipot represents the first tangible evidence for cultural interaction between Sklavenoi/immigrant farmers and autochthonous populations, for he attributed the three-sided oven to various Dacian cultures, who introduced it to the immigrants when they arrived in Moldavia. Nestor also contended that the technique of smearing floors with clay was also indigenous to Dacia, and borrowed by the
incomers, since after Ţipot, they are present at other, chronologically later Romanian sites.\textsuperscript{24}

**Sarata Monteoru**

Sarata Monteoru is a nekropolis located in Buzau district. Preliminary excavation began in 1943, but work was interrupted until 1955-56. 2,000 burials, dated from the late sixth to the seventh centuries, were discovered at Sarata; unfortunately, site strata-conflation made dating difficult. The nekropolis at Sarata was associated with a large immigrant farmer settlement, which has not yet been located. Archaeologists attributed their failure to locate this settlement to erosion in the surrounding terrain by the Sarata river. Of the 2,000 recorded burials, 1,081 were of cremation-rite. On the basis of the grave goods and the presence of inhumation burials, Nestor concluded that Sarata had an ethnically “mixed” population.

The graves at Sarata consisted of pits, 30 by 58 cm in diameter, 8 to 30 cm in depth. They must have been distinguished by some sort of marker, for instance a small mound, because no two graves encroached on each other. Instead, they were concentrated in neatly-arranged clusters that reflected social groupings: smaller clusters point to the burial of individual families.\textsuperscript{25} Among the immigrant agriculturists who practiced cremation-rite burial, the dead were first cremated on a pyre, which was usually located at a separate location, away from the nekropolis. The funeral pyre at Sarata was never found; however, its existence can be posited on the basis of reconstructions made by Vuzharova, who studied numerous Slavic nekropoleis in Moesia II. Once cremated, the remains of the dead were conveyed to the nekropolis, and buried according to various rites. Four distinct rites, in fact, were noted at Sarata. The first rite involved the
simple deposition of the cremated remains in a pit, without urns or offerings of any sort. The second method was identical to the first, except that an urn was deposited in the pit as an offering. The third method entailed partial deposition of remains in an urn, and partial deposition in a pit. The fourth method involved the deposition of the remains in an uncovered urn. Some archaeologists speculated that these rites represent early evidence for status differentiation, while other scholars suggested that it reflects a transition from simple burial in a pit to urn burials. Either way, the existence of these burial rites represents a unique look into the cultural development of the immigrants.26

The grave goods from Sarata included bow fibulae with mask-feet (a design derived from Gotho-Gepid prototypes),27 glass-paste beads, Byzantine-style bronze and silver earrings with granulation, bronze and iron belt buckles, iron knives, and iron three-barbed arrows of Pontic derivation. The arrows came from tomb No. 331. One gold piece, a cross, was recovered. Nestor attributed the manufacture of some of these artifacts to local ateliers; on the other hand, items such as beads of pearl and glass-paste, filigree jewelry and certain belt buckles were classified as foreign objects. The absence of princely or warrior burials underscores the sedentary nature of the community at Sarata.28 Pots constituted the only vessel type recovered there. Most of the wares were hand made, but others were thrown either on a slow or a fast wheel.

The necropolis at Sarata is the largest in the Slavic world. It technically belongs to a broader cultural complex Romanian archaeologists call Ipotești-Cindești-Ciurelu. Judging from the number of burials, the settlement that the necropolis accommodated must have been quite large.
That settlement did not belong to warriors who conducted razzias against the empire; on the contrary, the settlers coexisted peacefully with the Byzantines. Moreover, the population density of this and other immigrant farmer settlements, was greater in the Balkans than elsewhere in Eastern Europe.29

Ipotești-Kindești-Ciurelu Cultural Complex

This complex once encompassed much of the Wallachian plain (parts of Oltenia, all of Muntenia, south-east Transylvania and Moldavia).30 Ipotești culture exhibited several regional variations, especially during the early (late fifth century) phases of its development. The Ipotești complex replaced the preceding Sintana de Mureș-Cherniakhovo cultural complex (i.e., provincial Roman, Germanic, Sarmatian-steppe) which the Huns and Alans gradually destroyed in the fourth and early fifth centuries. Although Romanian archaeologists have tended to use the term Ciurelu to designate a specific group of settlements based in the central Wallachian plain that were attributed to autochthonoi (i.e., Romanized Christians, proto-Romanians), as a whole, Ipotești culture is considered one of mixed socio-linguistic groups.

Ipotești settlements were in close contact with Byzantine culture, but Romanian scholars have disagreed sharply over the interpretation of this evidence. Some experts maintained that the numismatic evidence,31 the pottery, and the jewelry recovered from Ipotești sites—which bear the undisputed stamp of Byzantine influence—either were produced by Roman captives, or else were acquired as booty during raids south of the Danube. This group of scholars downplayed the significance of the archaeological evidence that pointed to peaceful interaction.32 However Janković's study,
which focused on the distribution of bronze coinage in Wallachia, indicated that trade was brisk. Unlike gold coins, bronze denominations were used in commodity exchange, a fact confirmed by the exhaustive studies of M. Hendy on the Byzantine monetary economy. Moreover, the scholars who rejected the theory of intense cultural contacts in Wallachia did not study the excavation reports and published monographs on Ipotești particularly closely, for that evidence clearly underscored the sedentary nature of these agricultural communities.

Theodorescu divided Ipotești culture into four phases. Phase I is dated to the second half of the fifth century. Its ceramic assemblage consisted of a wide variety of vessel-types, all thrown on a fast wheel. Phase II is dated to the middle of the sixth century. Here, Dacian/provincial Roman pottery was discovered mixed together with immigrant farmer cooking pots of Korchak provenance. Phase III is dated to the end of the sixth, or beginning of the seventh centuries. Its ceramic assemblage indicates that the cultural symbiosis was intensifying, as refined examples of Danubian wares were found in large quantities throughout Ipotești sites. The hybrid pottery of phases III and IV acquired the status of luxury wares in the regions concerned. Phase IV was the final phase of Ipotești culture, and it is dated from the mid to late seventh century. The archaeological inventory from Phase IV indicates that the Dacian element was beginning to reassert itself. The causes of this shift remain uncertain, but some scholars have argued that the rapprochement between autochthonoi and immigrant agriculturists was interrupted in the last quarter of the seventh century, when new immigrants, the bearers of Hlincea I culture, descended into the Wallachian plain. These scholars attributed this influx of immigrants from
the east to the movements of the Onogur Bulgars, who in turn, were compelled to flee because of pressure from the Khazars. Phases II and IV coincide with the migration of agriculturists to the south bank of the Danube into Moesia II, and Dacia Ripensis. Their entry into imperial territory is marked by a corresponding rise in the percentage of Danubian wares.\[33\]

The criteria archaeologists used to classify monuments and artifacts belonging to Ipotești culture included settlement patterns, house types, oven types, pottery types, and burial rites. Matei regarded the three-sided Suchava ovens as hybrids because traditional Dacian ovens, although three-sided in form, were typically hollowed out of a single block of clay, and not constructed of a series of stone courses. Furthermore, often they were dug into an incline which shored up the walls of Dacian, ground-level houses. In other words, the oven shapes at Suchava were consistent with Dacian shapes, but the construction technique was consistent with immigrant farmer methods. Ipotești settlements with "mixed populations" contained separate house-types, oven types, not to mention distinct pottery traditions, coexisting side-by-side.\[34\]

Illyricum: Nova Cherna

The Roman kastron at Nova Cherna is located near Voivoda in Shumen district. Nova Cherna was excavated in 1970. Bulgarian archaeologists have dated the settlement from the middle to the second half of the sixth century.\[35\] The Roman name of this kastron on the Danube is not preserved. The pottery assemblage is identical to that found along the Serbian sector of the Danubian limes, Gamzigrad and Caričin Grad. Excavators uncovered the foundations of numerous structures, including a semi dug-out with a food storage pit containing a bronze radiate fibula and mixed, Roman and
Prague-like ceramic wares.\textsuperscript{36} The Roman wares consisted of amphorae, pots, and jugs; one vessel contained a relief mark bearing an inscription similar to those noted by P. Barnea at Dinogetia in Romania.\textsuperscript{37} The ceramic assemblage at Nova Cherna included other wares too: three sherds of burnished-wares, attributed to the Gepids, as well as Penkovka-type pots made by hand, found in separate find spots along the western rampart. The Penkovka wares are divided into three groups: tall, narrow biconical pots; low, wide biconical pots; conical pots with wide bottoms and uneven walls. Near the western rampart of the kastron, two oval-shaped structures were unearthed. Some scholars have argued that these buildings were ateliers because of the types of artifacts recovered from them, such as hammers, pliers, and metal slags. Located next to these oval structures were three ovens used for baking bread; the ovens were built into an incline buttressing the rampart.

A later settlement, dated to the eighth/ninth centuries, arose at Nova Cherna as evidenced by the presence of yurts, a dwelling type indigenous to many steppe cultures, including Onogur Bulgars. The ceramic assemblage from this later cultural horizon bears no resemblance to the Danubian/Penkovka wares found in Slav migration period contexts, but rather resembles the Hlincea I wares, of mixed Slavic-Dacian communities.

Some Bulgarian archaeologists have argued that Nova Cherna contained a mixed garrison of Sklavenoi-Gepid foederatae. The presence of Danubian wares, along with Roman coins, points to close contacts between the empire and barbarian groups, including Sklavenoi. Like their Serbian counterparts, Bulgarian archaeologists also maintained that the evidence from Nova Cherna indicates the barbarization of Roman culture had
effectively occurred there during the second half of the sixth or early seventh centuries. Other sites in Shumen district where Danubian ware has been discovered include Voivoda, and in eastern Silistria district, a Roman bath which was destroyed in the second half of the sixth century. The primitive, hand-made wares of Dacia and the Carpathian arc are increasingly regarded by scholars as provincial Roman in provenance. The decorative motifs commonly ascribed by Borkovsky and other pioneers of early Slavic archaeology to the Sklavenoi are also believed to be derived from various provincial Roman cultural complexes.

**Dzhedzhovi Lozia (Popina)**

The immigrant farmer settlement at Dzhedzhovi Lozia is located near the remains of a sixth-century Roman kastron that guarded an important ford across the Danube. Dzhedzhovi Lozia is situated on the outskirts of the modern village of Popina in Silistria district. Topographically, D. Lozia occupied a hilltop, but was not fortified. Stratigraphic evidence indicated that there were three cultural horizons. The earliest horizon, culture I, is dated to the late sixth/early seventh centuries. The pottery assemblage from D. Lozia is considerable, making this site one of the most important in Slavic archaeology.

The remains of 63 semi dug-outs were discovered at D. Lozia. Of these, 17 belonged to culture I, although Vuzharova posited a total of 40 houses for this level because the surface area of culture I comprised some three hectares. The settlement at D. Lozia was part of a larger cluster of five settlements along the Danube: Momchila, D. Lozia, Garvan, and Opashka in the Silistria district, and Pechena Mogila in the Mikhailovgrad district. Whether this agglomeration of settlements reflects the social structure of
the immigrant farmers is a question that remains open to discussion. The material culture of each of these sites is identical. These five settlements were located three to four kilometers apart, and they occupied a combined surface area of 3,000 square meters. With the exception of the settlement at Momchilo, the remaining four sites are located on or near settlements that were inhabited, without interruption, since the beginning of the Classical period—in this case, with Thracian settlements. This cluster-type settlement pattern is consistent with the description of Slavic settlements provided by Pseudo-Maurice. Menander referred to these settlements as къмъц. The precise meaning of this term remains hotly disputed: Cankova-Petkova argued that къмъц were villages, while Zasterova countered that it was a tribal-territorial community, analogous to that of Ardagast, the Sklavenoi chief whose community was mentioned by Theophylakt. A nekropolis at D. Lozia contained exclusively cremation-rite burials. The ashes were deposited in pots, and the pots were then placed in shallow pits.

Semi dug-outs constituted the only house-type documented at D. Lozia. They were spaced 12 and 17 meters apart. Most were rectangular in plan, but the foundations of ovoid-shaped houses were also attested. The average dimensions were 3.20 by 4 meters. The houses had clay-trodden floors, either one or several layers thick (average depth, 5-8 cm). The depth of the dug-outs varied from 0.40 to 1.60-2 meters. From the topsoil Vuzharova attributed the differences in floor depth to the surrounding topography, which rose toward the nekropolis which occupied on the highest elevated point. The houses were grouped into rows without any apparent order to their arrangement. Vuzharova classified the houses according to three criteria: roof-types, oven-types, and pottery types.
Ovens at D. Lozia consisted of two basic types: those situated in corners and constructed of rocks; those situated in corners but dug into the ground. Both types of ovens were rectangular in plan, and their average height was 0.50 meters. Culture I ovens at D. Lozia were situated either in the southeast or in the northeast corners. Since they did not have chimneys to provide ventilation, smoke escaped through the entrances of the houses. The ovens fulfilled a twofold function to provide heat, and to provide a means for cooking food. A number of grain-storage and pottery storage pits were discovered during excavation; they were scattered about the settlement. The inventory from D. Lozia included a large number of pots, bread baking dishes, animal bones, spindle whorls, bone instruments, knives, and advanced iron technology agricultural implements. The presence of advanced agricultural tools permitted a number of grains to be cultivated: wheat, barley, peas, oats, millet, lentils, hemp.

Several potters' kilns were found during excavations in 1955 in sector A; these are the earliest attested kilns in the Slavic world. The foundations of kiln no. 1 were circular, and they contained twelve ventilation channels whose diameters ranged from 3, 6 or 12 cm. Kiln no. 1 is 0.53 meters in height. Another kiln measured 2.80 by 3 meters, and contained a large number of sherds. The sherds, when mended, yielded 70 pots, some of which were wheel-thrown. A third, pear-shaped kiln with dimensions 1.20 by 0.90 meters in length had nine ventilation channels, varying 8 to 14 cm in diameter: sherds were found along the perimeter of this kiln. A fourth kiln was discovered a few meters south of house No. 57; it had five ventilation channels, and a large number of sherds thrown on a wheel were recovered along the perimeter of this kiln. A few meters south
of house No. 48, a fifth kiln was discovered in a poor state of preservation. Vuzharova noted that the method of construction differed from those of the previous three kilns. A pit was dug into the earth, a portion of which served as an oven; there was a cover over the pit with air channels for circulation and clay vessels were fired in the upper chamber. Pottery production also seems to have been concentrated in several houses. In house No. 17, for example, circular pits, 1.20 meters in diameter, were discovered during excavation. The pits were filled with layers of ash as well as sherds and clay fishing weights.53

Typologically, these ceramic wares are closest to those from Hlinchea I settlements in Moldavia, or Luka-Raikovetskaia settlements in the western Ukraine.54 Vuzharova classified them according to five categories, two of which (group A and B) are of direct concern to this study. Group A vessels were hand-made, while group B vessels were thrown on a slow wheel. Although the cylindrical and spherical-shaped pot is the principal vessel type represented at D. Lozia, cups, bread-baking dishes, and pans are also attested. The fabric of these wares is coarse with large inclusions; it ranges from dark gray to dark-red in color. Vuzharova's typology is predicated on differences in neck profile, and secondarily on decoration. The pans have slightly everted rims, and ranged from 8 to 25cm in diameter. The cups, many of which were found in house No. 19, are approximately 16cm wide at the mouth, and 2.6cm thick. The bread-baking dishes are classified by Vuzharova under cups; they are circular and rectangular in shape, 60 cm in length, 10cm in height, and 10cm in thickness. There remains a small percentage of primitive sherds made by hand that are unidentified. The fabric is identical to that of Group A wares,
both of which are unevenly fired. Decoration of group A wares consisted of incised, wavy lines situated either at the necks or at the shoulders of pots. Some vessels had an additional motif consisting of a row of coils situated just below the series of incised lines. Group B (wheel-thrown) wares were evenly fired, probably in the kilns at D. Lozia. Pots make-up the largest percentage of wares in this group. Their decoration consisted of straight, wavy, or horizontal lines (or alternating bands of each) incised only on the shoulders of vessels; in contrast to Group A wares, they contained ornamentation on the necks only. Most of Group B wares were recovered from the kiln in sector A; these pots range from 15, 18, 19, 20 cm in diameter. They all have potters' marks on their bottoms, which range from 6, 10, 11, 16, 20 cm. The walls of these pots are 0.7 cm thick. Group B pots are dark-red in color, and they have relatively smooth surfaces. Vuzharova sub-divided Group B wares into four groups, according to their profiles.

The necropolis at D. Lozia occupied the highest point of the plateau, approximately 500 meters south of the settlement and it comprised a surface area of 350 square meters. Seven cremation burials were uncovered. The remaining burials were destroyed by deep ploughing sometime during this century. The burial pits were spaced 0.50 to 0.40 meters apart. The burial urns consisted of hand-made wares (corresponding to Group A), and wares thrown on a slow wheel (corresponding to Group B). Only one burial did not contain an urn.

The archaeological evidence from culture I at D. Lozia is similar to that of other finds from Romania, Central Europe, western Ukraine, and Russia. This settlement, and the ceramic wares used by its inhabitants, appeared at roughly the same time that Danubian ware made its appearance.
elsewhere in the Balkans. The relationship between D. Lozia and the nearby Roman kastron has yet to be explored. Some scholars have argued that D. Lozia was a colony of Sklavenoi foederati, but until a relationship, if any, between the settlement and the Roman kastron is established further, all hypotheses are speculative. Vuzharova rejected the foederati hypothesis because she remained firm in her conviction that Byzantium played no formative role in the development of Slavic material culture, particularly of the future Bulgarian Slavs. This position, however, is not viable, for the presence of kilns, the first in the Slavic world, bears eloquent testimony to the influence of Byzantine ceramic technology on the immigrant settlement. The incomers at D. Lozia were probably autochthonoi from Dacia, whose idiom was probably Common Slavic. Alternatively, the inhabitants of D. Lozia could be autochthonoi from Moesia II, whose ancestors had lived there for centuries, but who adopted the new forms of material culture, and with that adoption, Common Slavic, during the late sixth/early seventh centuries.

**Abritos**

Abritos had been occupied continuously between the fourth century BC and the late sixth, early seventh centuries AD. Pre-Roman Abritos was a Thracian settlement that Rome annexed in 45 AD under Claudius. Written sources attested the existence of the polis into the middle of the sixth century. Archaeology indicated that the dark age settlement was built over some of the remains of Late Antique Abritos. Bulgarian archaeologists have debated whether Antique Abritos should be identified with Hisarlık or Razgrad. In 1905, Karel Škorpil published the plans of Abritos' fortifications. Škorpil identified Abritos with modern Hisarlık. In 1930, Anani Javašov published a monograph which identified a Byzantine dark age
settlement at nearby Razgrad, situated some 2 kilometers due east of Hisarlâk. Ivanov's investigations at Razgrad established that it overlaid the eastern quarter of antique Abritos, two inscriptions bearing the name Abritos were found. Excavations of the Late Antique horizon (i.e., mid to late sixth century) at Abritos revealed the presence of new technology agricultural implements (discussed below) and Danubian wares mixed together with traditional Roman pottery. A single vessel type, the pot, predominated the ceramic inventory. These vessels are light gray in color; their fabric consisted of clay that was evenly fired. Some vessels contained handles, while others did not. Many of these pots had polished surfaces.

Antique Abritos was destroyed sometime during the second half of the sixth century. It probably fell to the Avars during their campaigns in the Danubian plain during the seventh and eighth decades of the sixth century. Abritos lay abandoned until the end of the sixth century, when the dark age settlement, which was concentrated in the eastern quarter of the polis, arose. The fall of Abritos did not, however, put an end to the peaceful coexistence between immigrant farmers and autochthonoi from Moesia II that had been underway for several decades.

Over the foundations of the eastern circuit wall, excavators uncovered the remains of several ground-level houses, and twelve ovens in house VII. The houses were made of clay and straw, and their foundations incorporated the remains of the circuit walls. The foundations of oven no. 10, for instance, was circular, and measured 0.8 meters in diameter. It was lined with a wall of smeared clay, 5 cm thick. All twelve ovens were circular. The inventory from the dark age settlement at Abritos consisted of agricultural implements: hoes, spades, scythes, sickles, axes, pliers, knives,
and equipment used in cattle breeding (the remains of pigs, goats, cattle, and sheep were found in large numbers). Some of the animal bones were subsequently used to make combs, needles, and decorative ornaments. Ornaments of copper and iron included rings, bracelets, and belt buckles. Several inhumation burials (orientation west-east) were discovered outside the Medieval settlement at Hisarlâk.63

The ceramic assemblage from Razgrad indicates that the inhabitants quickly adopted the potter’s wheel. At first, the vessel shapes preserved the traditional Prague-type forms, but soon these wares underwent rapid transformation, due to contact with local inhabitants. The Razgrad ceramic assemblage has analogues with wares discovered at Dinogetia, and at the Late Roman kastron at Pančevo in Vojvodina.64 Georgieva and her associates divided the ceramic evidence into two groups: group A is dated to the seventh century; group B is dated to the late eighth/ninth centuries. Group A pottery is further divided into four categories, based on several criteria: method of production, vessel shape, and decoration. Most Group A pottery has no handles, and their decoration consists of combing—vertical, horizontal, slanting, or semicircular lines. The average height of each vessel is 0.10–0.40 m. A small percentage of Group A pottery was made by hand; their fabrics contained large amounts of quartz. This group was not well-fired, and decoration, when present, consisted of wavy or horizontal lines.

The archaeological evidence from Razgrad can be read two ways. Perhaps it reflects a continuity of indigenous populations. But more likely it reflects an influx of immigrants who lived peacefully among natives, even after the Avars sacked the polis. The archaeological inventory from Abritos included a bronze enkolpion with the Virgin orans depicted on the obverse—
the busts of two evangelists are located just above the Virgin’s shoulders. The discovery of the inhumation burials suggests the presence of autochthonoi, although an alternative explanation might be that the immigrants abandoned cremation burial for inhumation (having become Christians?). Either way, the evidence from Abritos points to continuity of settlement, and indicates that poleis in the north Balkans were in close contact with their neighbors beyond the Danube. Roman pottery techniques differed from the Danubian plain, the locus of interaction, to points north and north east. Not only was the first pottery kiln unearthed in the Danubian plain, but also, the adoption of the potter’s wheel is first attested among the Sklavenoi of the Balkans.

An important recent study of Slavic settlement patterns by S. Kurnatowska indicates that Slavic settlements in Romania and northern Bulgaria (e.g., D. Lozia) had a greater settlement density than in sites traditionally regarded the aboriginal homeland of the Slavs. The agglomerations studied by Vuzharova in Silistra district represented, according to Kurnatowska, the nucleus of small territorial units. The population density of exceptionally large Slavic agglomerations that have been studied in Wallachia and dated during the sixth century, approached 500 to 800 inhabitants. In such cases, four to five villages occupied a surface area of several dozen kilometers square. A large settlement occupied a surface area of 1.5 to 3 hectares, and contained seventy-five dwellings, accommodating one hundred inhabitants. Four to five such settlements contained approximately one hundred fifty to two hundred inhabitants. A modest settlement in Wallachia occupied a surface area of 0.5 to 1 hectare, and had eight dwellings; this translates into an average of
forty inhabitants. Kurnatowska concluded that the differences in the size and arrangement of settlements in these areas reflected rapid changes in social structures and social organization. She went on to argue that the Slavs in the Balkans had stronger social bonds than elsewhere in the Slavic world. This circumstance Kurnatowska attributed to interaction between the Slavs and the autochthonous populations of the Balkans.  

Scythia Minor

Many of the principal Roman poleis of Scythia Minor suffered heavily during the period of the Sklavenoi and Avar razzias. Geographically, Scythia Minor was directly exposed to the western terminus of the Central Asian steppe; both Avars and Onogur Bulgars used the marshy terrain of this terminus as a sanctuary which protected them against attack by imperial forces. According to Theophylakt, barbarian razzias in Scythia Minor reached their zenith circa 580.  

Antique Histria, located on Lake Sinoe near the Black Sea, was rebuilt circa 491. V. Parvan, one of the first archaeologists to excavate Histria, Ulmetum, and other sites in the Dobrudja (Scythia Minor), argued that the Sklavenoi had occupied Scythia Minor in large numbers, and that urban life had collapsed circa 602. But after 1945, Parvan’s theory fell into disfavor with the intellectual and political elite of Romania. In archaeological digs, several cultural horizons were verified. Brick stamps from Dinogetia and Histria indicated that that restoration work was begun during Anastasios’ reign. Excavations also confirmed that a general recovery was underway—an extra muros settlement was discovered. Agriculture within the settlement played an important role. But Histria assumed a profoundly rural character. Histria was destroyed a century later, sometime around 602, as
is attested in the archaeological record by a layer of ash, burnt soil, and scattered debris such as broken tiles. The Antique settlement was destroyed by this conflagration; however, the inhabitants of Histria did not abandon their polis. A large house (a villa?) was discovered outside the walls in the eastern sector of the polis. The reconstruction effort at Histria utilized spolia from the Antique settlement. The remains of several basilikas were discovered in horizon II. They continued to function throughout the first half of the seventh century. After the destruction of the agora, the civic center at Histria was rebuilt. A new curtain wall with towers was built around the agora, blocking several of the Antique streets. Streets within the walls were repaved, the bath at the civic center remained in use, and the adjacent temple precinct yielded thirty-eight coins spanning the reigns of Justin II to Maurice, pointing to inhabitation at Histria until 641. Horizon II at Histria represented the final phase of inhabitation. The ceramic assemblage from the agora represents a continuation of the pottery traditions of the Roman past, including typical amphorae, but hybrid, Danubian wares were also discovered.

The archaeological evidence from these sites points to peaceful cohabitation between the immigrants and the autochthonous inhabitants of Scythia Minor. The changes in toponomy at Axiopolis (Chernavoda) and Petra (Kamena) clearly indicate that the process of Slavicization was underway. Although Prokopios confirmed the presence of Sklavenoi at Ulmetum and Adina, this particular case constitutes an exception, for Prokopios wrote that the Sklavenoi were clearly using the sites as bases from which to conduct their razzias (i.e., during the first half of the sixth century).
The nekropolis at Berhoe, modern Piatra Frecatei, in Macin district provides further evidence of the Slavicization of Scythia Minor. The nekropolis is dated to the late sixth/early seventh centuries, and contains over one thousand inhumation/cremation burials. Inhumation burials constituted the predominant form of burial rite; urns used in the cremation burials were of Danubian/Prague-Zhitomir type. The grave goods from Berhoe included numerous fibulae, including two bronze radiate types with analogues at Sarata Monteoru (dated to the early seventh century), belt buckles (four of which are comparable to belt buckles found at Sarata Monteoru), and Byzantine-style earrings. The funerary inventory from Berhoe also included harnesses and other accouterments used by cavalry.

Petre argued that Berhoe and other poleis in Scythia Minor and Moesia II were reorganized by Haraklios into themes early in the seventh century, as evidenced by bronze seals at Dorostolon and Tomis. Few scholars have questioned the retention of imperial authority at the aforementioned sites; of course, they could be resupplied relatively easily by the imperial fleet.

Despite incontrovertible evidence pointing to the progressive Slavicization of Scythia Minor, ultimately, that process failed to take root. Unlike Greece, where the new subsistence technology was not efficacious in the thin soils, the climate and soils of inland Scythia Minor could support the new technology. Why then did the autochthonoi maintain their language as well as their way of life? One explanation seems to lie in the maintenance of imperial authority. The geographic proximity of Scythia Minor to Constantinople, and presence of the imperial fleet, made all the difference. The Iron Gates region, by contrast, was not accessible by boat because of the cataracts. Dorostolon seems to have been the northern-most
extent of imperial authority, although even there, as we have seen, the
surrounding countryside became Slavic. Alternatively one might argue that
the demography-subistence model was operative in Scythia Minor, except
that the dynamics of the model worked against the migrant farmers who
spoke Common Slavic. In other words, Latin-speaking communities
underwent exponential demographic growth. This assertion, however, is
little more than idle speculation. More site-specific evidence is needed to
substantiate it. In the final analysis, there is much to be said for the power
of geography and climate to influence cultural development.

The archaeological evidence reveals an important distinction between
Sklevenoi warriors, who plundered everything in their path, and immigrant
agriculturists, whose migrations were gradual and took generations to
complete. The razzias often struck deep into imperial territory, indeed, as
far afield as the Poponnessos—some of these forays even resulted in
limited installations in Greece. By contrast, the slow influx of immigrant
agriculturists first began in the Danubian plain, then spread to the Iron
Gates region of Dacia Ripensis (the Djerdap region of eastern Serbia), the
ford at Dorostolon, and the Dobrudja. Peaceful relations were the norm in
these areas. In the sixth century, the kastra of the Danubian limes shed
their purely military function, and became centers of acculturation, trade,
and agriculture. Ironically, the collapse of imperial authority seems to have
led to more intense interactions. The difference is that in the end this
collapse resulted in the Slavicization of autochthonous populations long
resident in the Balkans for centuries. When possible, the empire went over
to the offensive in order to reclaim lost territory it regarded as Roman.
That offensive was not confined to the realm of military operations; indeed,
the weapons at the empire's disposal included a formidable array of peaceful inducements. The reappearance of the bishopric at Stobi, noted in the Concilier acts of 680-681, and in the acts of the Quinisextum in 691, has been construed as an effort on the part of the empire to pacify through conversion Kouver and his Sirmienses followers, as well as the Sklavenoi who lived in the surrounding countryside.\(^{81}\)

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2 This helps us understand why Obolensky's Commonwealth formally began it discussion on the diffusion of Byzantine culture to the Slavs with the Cyrillic-Methodian mission, when the Slavs became literate, and were capable of assimilating Byzantine formal culture. All preceding discussion in the Commonwealth is mostly geographic in scope, and the author has little to say of substance about cultural interaction or the mechanisms that drive it for the Slavic migration period.

3 Besheliev, Purvobulgarski, p. 71.

4 Romanian archaeologists began to shift gears in this regard around 1962, when enough data had accumulated suggesting the old theory of a single-wave invasion, was no longer tenable. For further details about this development in Romanian scholarship, see Comșa, "Directions," p. 9. Idem, "Slaves et autochtones sur le territoire de la R. P. Roumaine aux VIe-VIle siecles," Atti del VI Congresso Internazionale delle scienze Preistoriche e Protoistoriche, Rome, 1962, vol 3, pp. 162-166. D. Teodor, La population autochtones dans les regions est-carpathiques de la Roumaine pendant les Ve-Ve siecles de n.e., (Prague, 1966).


6 Teodor, "Origines," p. 70. Teodor has spent much time reconstruction the invasion routes. See his detailed study on this problem, "Penetration," p. 39.


8 Comșa, "Direction," p. 22.
Petre insists that the degree of Slavic penetration in Dobrudja has been exaggerated. The actual extent of that infiltration is greater than he is prepared to admit, though it certainly is not as massive as once supposed. Petre went too far in trying to discredit the scholarship of pre-1945 archaeology. It is time to restore some balance to Romanian scholarship by suggesting a solution that takes full account of the existing evidence, and suppresses nothing. For a detailed explication of his views, see Petre, "Quelques donées archéologiques concernant la continuité de la population et de la culture Romano-byzantine dans la Scythie Mineure aux VIIe et VIIIe siècles de notre ère," Dacia 5 (1963): 34 (hereafter cited as Petre, "Archaeologiques,").


Only approximate measurements were cited by Matei—3.80 by 3.50 meters. The full dug-outs are attested at Sipot and at Kurtia Domniaska, while at Drumul National, semi dug-outs are the only form of house type. See Matei, "Slovianskie," pp. 345-394.
This entire paragraph closely follows Matei, "Slavišanske," p. 378. For detailed information about Dacian houses and ovens, see S. Morintz, "Novi oblik dikkisoi kul'tury v rimskoi epokhu (otkrytiia v Kilii)," Dacia n.s. 5 (1961): 401.


Coins from the reigns of Justin I and Justinian were recovered during excavation of many Ipoteesti sites. Angelova, "Rannoslavianska," p. 2.

Ibid., p. 6.

Ibid., p. 9.
Comşa, "Directions," p. 12. For a detailed study of these construction techniques, and the methodology used by Romanian archaeologists to distinguish between the two, see Comşa, "Contribution à la question de la penetration des slaves as sud du Danube durant les VIe-VIIe siècles d'après quelques données archéologiques de Dobroudja," I Miedzynarodowy kongres arkeologii słowiańskiej. Tome III, Warsaw, 1970, p. 356 (hereafter cited as Comşa, "Contribution,"


A. Milchev, p. 23, for cross reference, see Angelova, "Rannoslaviânska kultura," p. 2.

Barnea, "L'incendie," pp. 244, 250.


Angelova, "Rannoslavianskata," p. 4; destruction of the Roman bath was dated by coins from the sixth century. Unfortunately, the excavator, P. Donevski, has yet to publish this material.


Other important sites south of the Danube include Vraz, near Vidin in western Bulgaria; Dvorovi, Batkovci, Zabljak and Musici in Bosnia; Olympia in Greece.


If one includes other neighboring Sklavenoi settlements, numbering 20 to 30 in all the surface area increases to 7,000 meters square. See Baratte, "Presence," p. 169.

Taktikon, p. 284. See also Zasterova, Avaras, p. 65. However, archaeology has yet to confirm the existence of the fortified settlements stated in the Taktikon.


House #5 from cultural horizon II had a floor laid with Roman bricks and pottery sherds surmounted by a layer of clay. See Vuzharova, Selishte, p. 88.

Among the third catagory, Vuzharova made further distinctions: houses with wares made by hand (pots and bread bedding dishes); pots and bread baking dishes thrown on a slow wheel; pots and jars thrown on a slow wheel with polished surfaces.

Culture II ovens did not have any orientation to them; some were positioned in corners, while others were burrowed into an embankment within the house. Culture II ovens range from square to elipsoidal in form. Vuzharova, Selishte, p. 88.


Ibid., p. 90.

Rusanova,"*Poselenie*," p. 194. See also Angelova, "Rannoslavianska," p. 9.


Ibid., 108.

In Romania, the closest analogues come from the nekropolis at Sarata Monteoru, and Sucheava-Șipot, dated to the late sixth/early seventh centuries.

There was a Bulgar-Slav settlement at Razgrad, dated to the eighth-ninth centuries. That settlement was concentrated in the eastern quarter of antique Abritus, where the terrain slopes uphill. Houses were constructed of wattle and daub, with clay-trodden floors, and ovens placed in corners. See S. Georgieva, "Srednovekovnovo selishte nad razvalinite na antichniia grad Abritus," *IAI* 24 (1961): pp 9-36 (hereafter cited as Georgieva, "Srednovekovnovo").

Georgieva, "Srednovekovnovo," p. 34.

Britus), pp. 15-16.

62Ibid., p. 33.

63Ibid., p. 36.


65Ibid., p. 17.

66Kurnatowska, "Structure," pp. 90-95. The necropolis at Sarata Monteoru in Romania is the largest in the known Slavic world. 2,000 excavated graves have been recorded. The excavators maintain that Sarata Monteoru accommodated the needs of a mixed Slavic-Dacian population. See Nestor, "Sarata," pp. 1-8; See also Idem, "Etablissement," pp.

67Patriarch Nikephoros, Breviarium, 35.25, p. 88.


69It was excavated in several phases, beginning in 1914-41: after the war, excavations resumed, 1949-1953.

70A. Petre, "Quelques donnees archeologiques concernant la continuite de la population et de la culture romano-byzantine dans la scythie minaura aux VIe et VIIe siecles de notre ere," Dacia (19??): 8.


72The Slav artefacts from Histria were surveyed in a broader study focusing on Suchava by M. Matei, "Contributii la cunoasterea ceramicii slave de la Suceava," SCIV 10.2 (1959): 428-429. The Slav artefacts from Histria have yet to be published fully.
The distribution of coins from the hoard from the temple sector breaks down as follows: 14 coins from Justin II and Sophia; 3 for Tiberios II, 10 for Maurice. The remaining eleven were published in a separate monograph from the first twenty-seven issues break down as follows: Justin II-4; Tiberios-3; Maurice-4. See A. Petre, "Population," p. 5. The second hoard, from the agora contained twelve coins, not all of which have been published: Justin II and Sophia-7; Tiberios-1; Maurice-2.

Romanian archaeology has been busy trying to demonstrate the continuity of Roman authority into the Middle Ages. Professor Petre's ingenious revision of the stratigraphy at Capidava is a celebrated case in point. He attempts to re-date the previously established stratigraphy by showing that the late antique citadel at Capidava (constructed after the destruction of the site, circa 602) was inhabited continuously from the sixth through the eleventh century, whereas previous excavators of the site had posited an hiatus from the sixth to the eleventh century. See Capidava, Vol. 1, Bucarest, 1958. See also Petre, "Population," p. 23. According to the numismatic evidence, there are no issues prior to the reign of John Tzimiskes (969). The revisionism engaged-in by Romanian archaeologists is a legacy of the political regime of N. Ceausescu, and began in 1945. The efforts of pre-Communist, Romanian archaeologists was systematically discredited because the results of most excavations undertaken before 1945 indicated that there was a break in the continuity of settlement throughout Romania, including the Dobrudja, where a massive Slavic settlement was initially posited by scholars like V. Parvan. Since the deposition of Ceausescu, one sees a shift in emphasis in Romanian archaeology. many experts now seek to rehabilitate, at least in part, the findings of the pre-1945 generation of scholars. Today the emphasis is less on the survival of Roman populations into the Middle Ages, but rather, on the continuity of autochthonous populations which were Romanized to various degrees. By contrast, Slavic archaeologists have attempted to underscore the discontinuity with antiquity in places like Scythia Minor. See, for example, Vaklinov, Formirone.

Excavations at Axiopolis were first carried out in 1912. A tremesis from Heraklios was uncovered during those digs. See I. Dimian, "Cîteva descoperiri monetare bizantine in P. R.R. (Bucharest, 1973): p. 195.


Petre, Materiale 8, p. 583, fig.s 20-1-10.

H. Metaxa, "Plumburi de marca de la Tomi," BCMI 8-9 (1915): p. 34. At Tomis, a series of coins from Heraklios to Constantine IV have been recovered by excavation: Heraklios and Heraklios Konstantine-3 coins; Constans II and Constantine IV-1 coin; Constantine IV (struck between 670-680)-1. See I. Dimian, op. cit., p. 197, and Petre, "Population," p. 32.
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CHAPTER VII
CONCLUSION

This study has called into question fundamental assumptions concerning the Slavic migrations and installations in the Balkans. These assumptions posited untenable, nineteenth-century norms of ethnicity, aboriginal homeland, land-taking, and migration. The reexamination of the nature and extent of Byzantine-Slavic cultural interaction in the Balkans during the Slavic migration period leads to conclusions that redefine Slavic ethnic origins. The primary cause of transformation in the Balkans was the gradual influx of immigrant farmers and the introduction of a new agricultural technology that facilitated the spread of cereals and the abandonment of cattle ranching. Barbarian invasions played a secondary role in the transformation of the Balkans. The Slavic invasions did not foster economic and demographic decline in the Balkans; on the contrary, the sixth and seventh centuries were a period of intense cultural, economic, and demographic interaction, despite the political instability documented in the literary sources. With the exception of the Slavic migration period, which witnessed dramatic population growth, the population in the Balkans remained fairly constant from the fourth through the eighth centuries.

The archaeological evidence used in this study pertains to the lives of ordinary, peasant farmers. The Slavicization of the Balkans was a much more complex process than the rapid spread of new peoples and the
extirpation of indigenous peoples once asserted by many scholars. Slavic cultural complexes were the result of peaceful interactions at the local level, not constrained population displacement.

While the Sklavenoi certainly constituted a dominant group, and they constrained and displaced local populations in a few places, their communities were fairly egalitarian: only in Pannonia does funerary evidence—warrior graves and burials with horses and armaments—demonstrate social ranking. The relationship between the Sklavenoi and the immigrant farmers has yet to be fully discussed. While the Sklavenoi may have recruited from among the migrant farmers, the presence of Sklavenoi in Central Europe and in the Balkans were not significant enough to effect the Slavicization of the Balkans. This was accomplished by immigrant farmers, who emerged from the autochthonoi, who moved peacefully into the Balkans over multiple generations independently of the Sklavenoi, and not by invasion.

The Magyars, who were constrained to move because of pressure from the east, significantly deforested the Pannonian plain to facilitate further their pastoral lifestyle. Indeed, as late as the turn of this century, Hungarian cowboys were still attested. By deforesting Pannonia, the Magyars altered the ecological balance between sedentary farmers and pastoralists: the result is appropriately known as sedentary/mobile boundary shift. The Avars, by contrast, did not alter substantially the ecosystem of the Tisza river basin, giving agriculturists the edge until the Magyars arrived. By all indications, the Avars were well on their way to becoming Slavicized when the Magyars appeared on the scene. Farther south in the Balkans, the arrival of nomadic warriors such as the Onogur Bulgars
resulted in their assimilation by the Slavs, because the Slavs, as farmers, possessed an inherent advantage, namely their agricultural base. The Sklavenoi/immigrant agriculturists were not highly stratified, therefore some process other than elite dominance must have been operative.

The immigrants who did arrive south of the Danube occupied an ecological niche that made them compete for resources with indigenous populations. Significantly, the inhabitants of poleis like Singidunum never were able to expand beyond a certain population density because the surrounding farmers enjoyed an edge that actually fostered the spread of their lifestyle. It resulted in the ruralization of the polis which, through the action of internal dynamics peculiar to the Late Roman/Medieval Byzantine empires, already was regarded by the state as irrelevant.

Before the arrival of the Sklavenoi/immigrant agriculturalists, the linguistic pattern of the Balkans was fairly stable, and had been for centuries. Greek, Dacian, and Thracian had been spoken in southeast Europe for at least a millennium before the Slavic migration period, while the spread of Latin-speaking colonies began with the reign of Augustus. Language displacement is the result of competition for local resources between the incomers and the existing population: the advantage, which goes to the farmers, is gained when the immigrants (who arrive via short-distance migration) consolidate their hold over the new ecological niche. Put another way, the rich dialectal differentiation of the Slavic languages may have been the result of a linguistic wave of advance, in which linguistic patterns were accumulated without long-distance movement of peoples. The linguistic origins of the Slavic language goes back much further; some linguists seek its beginnings in the separation of Balto-Slavic from Proto-
Indo-European, circa 3000 BC. But the crystallization of Common Slavic did not occur until the fifth century AD—in fact Slavic linguists date the oldest reconstructable phase of Common Slavic to this time. The first cultural complexes attributed to the Slavs date to the middle of the sixth-century. Clearly the late fifth and sixth centuries represent an important phase in the socio-linguistic development of the future Slavs. However, this does not mean that the bearers of Korchak–Prague culture viewed themselves as Slavs—that stage in their development was not reached until the ninth/tenth centuries. It seems hardly likely that the sixth century bearers of Korchak–Prague culture, whose language and material culture had recently crystallized, viewed themselves as a broad socio-linguistic community that used the macro-ethnonym "Slav."

Linguistic groups are not synonymous with social groups. The crystallization of Common Slav, the ethnogenesis of the Slavs in the ninth/tenth centuries, and their sociocultural development is the result of convergence and interaction where innovations developed within the Balkans as a whole, but did not extend too far beyond the locus of the wave of advance. Theoretically the diffusion of the new agricultural technology should have occurred hand-in-hand with the spread of the Slavic languages. One method of establishing whether this was the case is to conduct a word study of critical agricultural terms. The goal would be twofold: to ascertain whether the new terminology possesses native Slavic forms, and to determine whether they entered Albanian, Hungarian, Romanian, and Greek (especially dialects indigenous to the Macedonias). This endeavor however lies beyond the immediate scope of this study. It is not possible at this stage to determine the precise rate of demographic growth in the Balkans
during the Slavic migration period. In addition, it is possible to establish neither the variance of migratory activity, nor the velocity of the spread of cereal agriculture. These specific tasks will be the goal of future study.

Common Slavic developed over an extensive and mobile area that included various linguistic groups and overlapping, permeable cultural complexes. It took place after groups have settled, and not while they are on the move, for migrations actually tend to smooth-out linguistic differences. Thus the assumptions of a unitary Slavic homeland, a unitary Common Slavic idiom, an ethnogenesis that occurred millennia ago, a large-scale, long distance migration, and population decline in the Balkans during the Slavic migration period do not sustain scrutiny.

The theory of cumulative mutual Slavicity was the gradual accretion of Slavic qualities over an extended period of time, spanning centuries of peaceful interaction with indigenous populations. Under cumulative Slavicity there is no need to posit the wholesale extirpation of Dacians, Thracians, and Greeks in the north Balkans. Rather than viewing the Balkans as the recipient of Slavic culture from a racially and linguistically pure donor or nuclear zone (i.e., Urheimat in its classic nineteenth-century sense), we should think of the Balkans as representing a level playing field in which the qualities of Slavicity were developed as a result of cultural contact between immigrant farmers and indigenous groups, virtually in situ. Under these circumstances, there is no need to posit rapid and large-scale expansion from a racially and linguistically pure aboriginal Slavic homeland, since broadly speaking that homeland encompassed those areas where Slavic languages were subsequently attested. However within this extensive zone of socio-linguistic development in central and southeast Europe, we may
speak of the Carpathian arc as representing the primary zone for the diffusion of Common Slavic and immigrant farmer ore smelting/iron-mongery technology, including the light weight agricultural tools discussed in this study. In the late fifth and sixth centuries, the Carpathian arc was home to several cultural and linguistic complexes. Therefore this primary zone for the diffusion of Common Slavic and immigrant farmer metallurgy should be viewed not as a cultural and linguistic monolith, but rather a cultural and linguistic palimpsest.

Yet does not the testimony of Late Roman/Byzantine written sources, with their emphasis on invasions, contradict this supposition? First, this study does not deny the prospect of invasion or migration. However, it does make a fundamental distinction between migration and razzia. The scale and significance of those migrations, as asserted by previous scholars, must be questioned. The presence of wares whose analogues lie in Korchak-Prague-Penkovka cultures, does not establish proof of large-scale invasions, since the users of this pottery south of the Danube need not have spoken Common Slavic. Cumulative mutual Slavicity began in the late fifth century, as a result of political developments; significantly, those developments coincided with the rise of specific cultural complexes referable to the Slavs in an archaeological sense. The speakers of Common Slav were known by a variety of tribal names, most of which went unrecorded. This is why there are no specific references to the Slavs in the Classical sources (i.e., Herodotos, Tacitus, etc.) by that ethnonym. Attempts by some scholars to connect the Slavs with the Scythian ploughmen of Herodotos are no longer viable.8
Instead the peak period for Byzantine-Slavic cultural interaction stands at the beginning, with the appearance of immigrant farmers and the formation of Sklavenoi-type warrior frontiersmen. Many disparate elements went into its formation of the Slavic cultural matrix. Although Byzantine culture exerted a profound influence on the formal culture of the post ninth-century historical Slavs, that diffusion was largely relegated to the realm of superstructure, where it was appropriated by the elites who projected their power in Byzantine terms, or used the trappings of Byzantine culture as a counterpoise to the centrifugal tendencies of local dynatoi. The net effect of this diffusion on the Slavic peasant always was quite negligible. During the Slavic migration phase households were important acculturative loci for the diffusion of Byzantine culture. They played an important role in determining which elements of Byzantine material culture would be appropriated. There must have been other foci above the level of the household, but these have yet to be identified. After the conversion of the South Slavs to Christianity in the ninth century, monastic scriptoria assumed a greater role in filtering Byzantine high culture.\(^9\)

There is no doubt that the Balkans experienced the effects of foreign invasions; but the influx of Germanic and steppe groups was quite distinct from that of the immigrant farmers. For example, the well documented cases of long-distance migration by Germanic groups like the Goths, who traversed the expanse from the Crimea to Italy, has led scholars to the false conclusion that the Slavs must have traversed long distances as well. This study has made a distinction between immigrant farmers and Sklavenoi raiders. The mechanisms driving these two phenomena are completely different. The Sklavenoi phenomenon should be regarded as a form of elite
dominance. There may have been some overlap between the two groups because the Sklavenoi recruited from among the inhabitants of central, eastern, and southeastern Europe. Furthermore, the ranks of the Sklavenoi were undoubtedly supplemented by Romans who either freely joined them, or were carried off as captives. At the political level, the Sklavenoi catalyzed the ethnogenesis of the Slavs in the sense they helped to meld disparate groups into a relatively cohesive confederation whose interests did not always coincide with their Alan, Koutrigur, or Avar organizers. Moreover, the Sklavenoi transformed Common Slavic into a language with a technical vocabulary that served as the foundation for a society attempting to make the transformation from a chieftdom to a centralized state.

The Sklavenoi failed to create a centralized state in the Balkans because of the imperial counter-offensives that began in the last quarter of the seventh century, counter-offensives that ended in the ninth century with the campaigns of Nikephoros I, the "savior of Greece." Moreover, the arrival of the Onogur Bulgars altered the balance of power in the Balkans. A recent study by H. Kunstmann (1987) indicates that there was a seventh-century reverse migration of Sklavenoi toward central and northern Europe. In reference to this study, H. Birnbaum remarked:

These relatively small Slavic groups, who took firm shape and achieved individual character only during their stay in the Balkans, would have subsequently moved north, carrying with them their ethnic and geographic names. These names are therefore said to echo their Balkan past, brought to an end by Byzantium’s drive and counteroffensive initiated around 800 A.D. While much of Kunstmann’s conception needs further corroboration and clarification, its main thrust, underpinned by an impressive array of thoroughly verified linguistic, textual, historical, and archaeological data, is certainly worth considering inasmuch as it would dramatically change our previous notions of the Slavic invasions and indeed land taking of the
Balkans. This new conception, in one variety or another recently endorsed by such authorities as the Croatian historian Nada Klaić and the East German archaeologist Joachim Herrmann, would imply that we no longer conceive of the Slavic invasion of the Balkans as momentous, massive events but rather view the arrival of the Slavs in these regions as a gradual, limited penetration and infiltration of initially relatively small and isolated groups whose clear-cut ethnolinguistic identity and self-consciousness may well have been fully formed only at that time, presumably under the pressure of the Avars. At any rate, according to this view, the Slavic tribal entities would not have conceived of themselves as forming part of some larger, unified ethnic whole prior to the Avar-Slavic symbiosis...the fact that Slavs, in alliance with Avars as well as in part with Bulgars and the Germanic tribe of the Gepids, did militarily assail Byzantium should not lead us to believe that at that time vast regions of Byzantine territory--other than presumably the environs and hinterland of Salonica--were as yet solidly and permanently settled by a Slavic-speaking population only.12

Having failed to create a pax of their own in the Balkans, the Sklavenoi left behind a series of disparate, and inchoate Sklaviniae. Only in the ninth century were these entities able to consolidate into larger, regional territorial units.

In the end it was the immigrant farmers who went virtually undetected in the written sources, and who played a far more crucial role in the transformation of the Balkans than Baian or Asparukh. Although further evidence is needed in order to confirm the hypothesis, the migrants appear to have changed the course of Balkan history by introducing a new subsistence technology that resulted in exponential demographic growth, which gave them an adaptive advantage over the speakers of Greek and of Latin, but only in areas where continental climates obtained. Certain regions of central and southeastern Europe experienced significant demographic growth during the transition from Antiquity to the Middle Ages, as a result of the introduction of a new subsistence technology.13 The spread of a
cereal farming economy through local migratory activity led to increased food supplies which in turn may have led to a reduction in mortality rates, at least for some segments of the farming population. These changes may have influenced fertility patterns, fostering shorter birth intervals and hence more children during reproductive years. Higher population density may also have been achieved through a combination of other relevant factors such as an improvement in mortality rates, or ecologically speaking, through more efficient use of space and arable land. In areas where thin soils and Mediterranean climate prevailed, this technology was not efficacious—hence, Slavicization failed because outside their ecological niche, the immigrant farmers did not enjoy the adaptive edge, resulting in their gradual assimilation by indigenous Greek speakers, who were periodically reinforced by other Greek speakers through the imperial policy of population transfers.

The Byzantines did not seem to appropriate this technology in areas that remained under firm imperial authority. A. Bryer has held that they were “culturally unsuitable or beyond the capabilities of Byzantine smiths, since scythes and iron spades are rare.” But A. Harvey has countered that many of these implements such as iron ploughshares were simply not suited for the thin soils of Mediterranean climates. The Bryer thesis does not stand up to scrutiny when applied to sixth and seventh-century conditions because the autochthonous inhabitants of the Balkan interior, many of whom were subjects of the Roman Empire, appropriated the new technology.

Regionally-based, archaeological studies conducted recently by Kurnatowska and others throughout northern, central, and southeastern Europe have identified scores of settlements with unusually high population
densities; these settlements yielded new technology iron agricultural implements. Those settlements are concentrated in the river valleys of the Carpathian arc, Dacia, and the Wallachian plain. By far and away, the largest agglomerations of immigrant farmer/Sklavenoi settlements occur in southeastern Europe. In Poland by contrast, a general pattern of settlement collapse and abandonment obtained for the late fifth and early sixth centuries: the earliest assemblages of Prague ware were found in the Vistula basin, and are dated to the late-sixth century. The population density in parts of central and southeast Europe appears to have reached its saturation point in the eighth century. Henning, for example, noted a decline in the settlement density of Bulgaria during the eighth century. This drop in settlement density was noted by Henning, and it is predicted by the demography-subsistence model. Bulgaria and central Europe subsequently witnessed two centuries of steady demographic growth. An important ninth-century source known as the Bavarian Geographer provides independent confirmation of this. The treatise was compiled sometime around 873 by an anonymous monk from the monastery of St. Emeramn at Ratisbonn, and it includes information on the names and tribes of the Slavs in various places, including the Danube, culled by the author from Slav merchants to the West and German missionaries. According to the geographer:

Isti sunt, qui propinquiores resident finibus Deneorum, quos vocant Nortabrezii, ubi regio, in qua sunt civitates LIII, per duces suas partitae. Vuilci, in qua sunt civitates XCV et regiones III...Beheimare, in qua sunt civitates XV. Marhardi habent civitates XI. Vulgarii regio est immensa et populus multus, habens civitates V, eo quod multitudine magna, ex eis sit et non sit eis opus civitates habere. Est populus, quem vocant Merahanos, qui habent civitates XXX. Ista sunt regiones, quae terminant in finibus nostris. Iste sunt, qui juxta istorum fines

Increasingly scholars are beginning to view the ninth and tenth century population density of central/southeastern Europe as being higher than previously thought. Twenty years ago the Anonymous Geographer would have been dismissed as unreliable. Research into this question continues. Randsborg has argued that the surface area of Pliska, the first residence of the Bulgarian Khans, had a surface area of 26 square miles. For comparative purposes, Pliska had a larger surface area than Constantinople in the ninth century.21 The findings of Kumatowska and the testimony from the Anonymous Geographer on behalf of dense settlement in central and southeastern Europe are supported by Randsborg who has argued that the migration period was indeed one of general recovery, political instability notwithstanding:

Archaeological evidence from Gamzigrad, the Iron Gate, and Justiniana prima] points to the existence of Late Antique castra in a broad zone stretching from the Middle Rhine across the Alps through the regions south of the Danube and on to Bulgaria...From this perspective it seems that Late Antiquity did not imply decline everywhere.22

With the collapse of imperial authority and centralized organization in the seventh century, the Slavicization of the Balkans south of the Danube intensified, without interference, thanks to the introduction of the new subsistence technology. According to Randsborg:
The development from the iron tools introduced in the second half of the first millennium BC through the very heavy ones of the Late Roman times and Late Antiquity to somewhat lighter and less expensive but still effective tools can also be followed in other types of implement—iron spades and hoes, for instance. At the same time, the sickle and scythe are more frequent than tools for cattle and sheep raising. The agriculturally intensive forms of management with special emphasis on grain production were associated with the Early Bulgarian and the Great Moravian realm, where a large number of iron agricultural implements of the above-mentioned types from the end of the first millennium have also been found.

These structural changes in the Balkans produced conditions that favored the diffusion of Common Slavic in situ without wholesale displacement of indigenous groups. This dynamic might well have been succeeded, or even complimented by, other processes such as small-scale population displacements (i.e., Dardania to Epiros Nova); however, the existence of small-scale displacements in no way invalidates the long-term effects of demographic and linguistic changes.

The matrix of Slavic civilization consisted of diverse cultural and linguistic components that required a period of several centuries to coalesce. Once the migrants saw themselves as a broad, distinct social community in the eighth century, a new phase of cultural development was born. As is well known, some of the south Slavs came into the political orbit of Byzantium, while others fell under the political sphere of the Latin West. Slavia Orthodoxa and Slavia Romana were conceived as a result of this political bifurcation; at the interface, lay the Serbs and the Croats, who during the early Middle Ages, vacillated between East and West. This interface arose on the same spot as the Jireček line that separated Latin from Greek speakers in the Balkans. But Latin culture or Greek culture did
not overwhelm the Slavic elements. The First and Second Bulgarian empires, for example, were not mere carbon copies of Byzantium, though in terms of formal culture, the second empire was somewhat more Byzantinized than the first.24 Byzantine high culture had little effect on Slavic farmers. Only during the migration period did Byzantine culture affect the Slavic farmer, but this was Byzantine household culture. These Byzantine elements formed an essential admixture in the making of early Slavic culture. Once formed, that Slavic matrix rapidly developed an identity distinctively its own that was zealously protected.25

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5Entire paragraph closely follows Renfrew's discussion of demography-subsistence, in Renfrew, Archaeology, pp. 133-163.

7 This word study will be the object of future research.


9 Obolensky, Commonwealth, pp. 202-236.


11 The evidence for this movement is the appearance of Danubian ware in Bohemia and middle Elbe, as well as the Moravian Gate region. See H. Kunstmann, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Besiedlung Nord-und Mitteldeutschlands mit Balkanslawen, (Munich, 1987). See also the seminal study of Macinskij and Tichanova (1976): 87, 90-91.

12 Birnbaum, "Settlements," p. 5

13 In the Spring of 1987, A. Bryer delivered a lecture at the Ohio State University on this very topic. Bryer argued that a new subsistence technology had been introduced in the north Balkans. Bryer's arguments have formed the basis of this study. His views are supported by A. Harvey, Economic Expansion in the Byzantine Empire, 900-1200, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989) (hereafter cited as Harvey, Expansion).


15 Bryer, " Implements," p. 47.


M. Parczewski, "Origins of Early Slav Culture in Poland," *Antiquity* 65.248 (1991): 676-683. For an elaboration of fifth through seventh-century assemblages in Poland, see Idem, "Początki kultury wczesnosłowiańskiej w Polsce" *Krytyka i datowanie zrod archeologicznych,* Prace Komisji Archeologicznej 27 (1988): 93. See also the important study of K. Godlowski, "The Chronology of the Late Roman and Early Migration Periods in Central Europe," *Prace Archeologiczne* 11 (1970): 234. Many Slavists, particularly Polish Slavists, consider the Vistula and Odra basins as the nuclear zone of the ancient Slavs, so Parczewski’s study is especially important. If this region were the nuclear zone, one would expect to find a high level of density settlement. Instead, one finds evidence for the collapse of existing settlement patterns. When Prague culture appears, the settlements associated with that culture are much smaller and of dispersed type than is the case in southeastern Europe for the same period, see, p. 90. Korchak and Penkovka sites in Russian and in the Ukraine are not reliably dated, due to poor stratigraphy. Moreover, the settlement density at these sites, which according to Russian and Ukrainian archaeologists, represents the nuclear zone of the Slavs, is comparatively less dense than in the Carpathian arc and the Danubian plain.

The manuscript of the anonymous geographer is housed in the National Library at Munich (Clm 550, folia 149-150). For a critical edition with Czech translation and commentary, see B. Horak and D. Travnicke in *Rozpravy ceskoslovenske akademie ved.* sp. ved., 66 (!952): pp. 1-62. V. Giuzelev dates the treatise to 830-843 because the Avars, who were defeated by Charlemagne by 814, are not mentioned "Varvarskišat geograf i niako vuposi na bulgarskata istorija at kraša na IX v.," GSWIF 58 (1965): 282-284.

Latin text is also reproduced by Chankova-Petkova, "Etablissement," p. 150.


Ibid., p. 63.

Ibid., pp. 178-179.

The aristocracies of Byzantium and of Bulgaria had begun to intermarry in considerable numbers; many of these families were fluent in Greek and Old Middle Bulgarian. See I.Bozilov, "La famille des Asen (1166-1460): Genealogie et Prosopographie," *Bulgarian Historical Review* 1-2 (1981): 135-156. The interesting aspect about Byzantine-Serbian cultural interaction is that the prestige of Byzantine culture and its appropriation by the Serbs paradoxically increased as relations between the Nemanjids and Byzantium became more hostile. B. Krekić, "Medieval," pp. 43-52. Only in the fourteenth century, relations between the two states assumed a close and friendly footing.
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