

Bojana Krsmanović

THE BYZANTINE PROVINCE IN CHANGE
(On the Threshold Between the 10th and the 11th Century)



**BELGRADE
ATHENS
2008**

The lead seal of Ashot

patrikios anthypatos and *strategos* of Varna

11th century (W. Seibt)

Bojana Krsmanović

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INSTITUTE FOR BYZANTINE STUDIES
SERBIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND ARTS
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and the 11th Century)

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*To the memory of my late friend
Srdjan Rajković
(1970–2006)*

EDITORS' PREFACE

This book is one of the fruits of cooperation, which has become official in the course of nearly fifteen years, between the Institute for Byzantine Research of the National Hellenic Research Foundation (*IBE/EIE*), and the Institute for Byzantine Studies of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (*SANU*). In the past few years, this cooperation has been developed through a joint project, dealing with the last century of Byzantine and Serbian medieval history. However, now, within the scope of this cooperation, a monograph has appeared for the first time, which represents a joint edition of our two institutions. Although the book is the work of a Serbian author and came into being within the frame of the research project — *The Byzantine World in Change (10th — 13th Century)* — of the Institute for Byzantine Studies in Belgrade, it is profoundly connected to the results of some research projects which have been conducted at the Byzantine Institute in Athens. The idea occurred almost spontaneously to produce this joint edition, which could be a symbolical link, connecting the research being done on both sides. The high opinion, which the consulting editors have unanimously expressed about the scientific value of the book written by Bojana Krsmanović instills the hope that this publishing project will be warmly greeted among the scholars dealing with Byzantine studies.

Athens/Belgrade, June 2008

Taxiarches Kolias

Ljubomir Maksimović

This book is a shorter, edited version of the manuscript for my doctoral thesis *Byzantine Provincial Administration at the End of the 10th and in the 11th Century*, which I presented to the Commission at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, on July 18th, 2006. The Commission members were Prof. Dr. Ljubomir Maksimović, corresponding member of the SANU, Academician Sima Ćirković and Prof. Dr. Radivoj Radić and, I am deeply grateful to them. I would like to express my particular thanks to Prof. Dr. Ljubomir Maksimović, who was my supervisor and whose idea it was for me to focus my work on Byzantine provincial administration, a theme fostered through many generations at the Belgrade school of Byzantine studies.

I commenced my research in Athens, first as the holder of a scholarship from the Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation (1999–2000), and then with a stipend from the Ίδρυμα Κρατικών Υποτροφιών — IKY (2000–2001). In the very beginning, I had the good fortune to collaborate with the late Prof. Nicolas Oikonomides, on whose advice I directed my research to the *Taktikon of Escorial*.

During my work on my thesis and the organisation of my book, my friends and colleagues from the Institute for Byzantine Studies SANU — the late Ninoslava Radošević, Mirjana Živojinović, Srdjan Pirivatrić, Bojan Miljković and Dejan Dželebdžić — provided me with their valuable assistance, and to them I would like once more to express my warmest thanks. It is a special honour and obligation for me that this book represents the fruit of cooperation between two institutes — the Institute for Byzantine Studies SANU in Belgrade and the Institute for Byzantine Research in Athens. I take this opportunity to express my gratitude for the support given to me by the director of the latter, Prof. Dr. Taxiarches Kolias, who entered this book in the publishing plan of the Athens institute.

Thanks to the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation I used my visit to the University in Mainz to complete the literature that I lacked. I would like to thank Prof. Dr. Günter Prinzing, Dr. Lars Hoffmann and Martin Vučetić, who were kind enough to discuss certain research problems with me, once again. I would also like to thank PD. Dr. Klaus-Peter Todt for allowing me to use the map of the *doukaton* of Antioch (with his corrections to the map by E. Honigmann), presented in his Habilitationsschrift.

For the translation of the manuscript into English, credit goes to Tamara Rodwell-Jovanović, and also to Davor Palčić, my longtime collaborator, for the technical layout of this book.

My friends, Vladimir Jovanović and Dejan Matić, as well as my family, also contributed, in more than one way, to my writing this book.

Mainz, June 2008

Bojana Krsmanović

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Ahrweiler</i> , Administration	<i>Hélène Glykatzi-Ahrweiler</i> , Recherches sur l'administration de l'empire byzantin aux IX ^e –XI ^e siècles, Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique 84 (1960) 1–111 (VR= Études sur les structures administratives et sociales de Byzance, London 1971, VIII).
<i>Ahrweiler</i> , Frontière	<i>Hélène Ahrweiler</i> , La frontière et les frontières de Byzance en Orient, Actes du XIV ^e Congrès International des Études byzantines I, Bucarest (1974) 209–230.
<i>Ahrweiler</i> , Mer	<i>Hélène Ahrweiler</i> , Byzance et la mer. La marine de guerre la politique et les institutions maritimes de Byzance aux VII ^e –XV ^e siècles, Paris 1966.
Alex.	Annae Comnenae Alexias, ed. <i>D. R. Reinsch</i> , <i>A. Kambylis</i> , CFHB XL/1, Series Berolinensis, Berlin–New York 2001.
Aristak.	Aristakès de Lastivert, Récit des malheurs de la nation arménienne. Traduction française avec introduction et commentaire par <i>M. Canard</i> et <i>H. Berbérien</i> d'après l'édition et la traduction russe de <i>K. Yuzbashian</i> , Bibliothèque de Byzantion 5, Bruxelles 1973.
Arménie et Byzance	L'Arménie et Byzance. Histoire et culture, BS 12, Paris 1996.
<i>Artjunova</i> , Edessa	<i>Viada A. Artjunova</i> , Vizantijskie praviteli Edessy v XI v., VV 35 (1973) 137–153.
Attal.	Michaelis Attaliatae Historiae, ed. <i>I. Bekker</i> , Bonn 1853.
Αυτοκρατορία σε κρίση	Αυτοκρατορία σε κρίση (;). Το Βυζάντιο τον 11 ^ο αιώνα (1025–1081), Αθήνα 2003. The Empire in Crisis (?). Byzantium in the 11 th Century (1025–1081), Athens 2003.
<i>Bănescu</i> , Duchés	<i>N. Bănescu</i> , Les duchés byzantins de Paristrion (Paradounavon) et de Bulgarie, Bucarest 1946.
Bleisiegel II	<i>Alexandra-Kyriaki Wassiliou</i> — <i>W. Seibt</i> , Die byzantinischen Bleisiegel in Österreich II: Zentral- und Provinzialverwaltung, Wien 2004.
BMGS	Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, University of Birmingham.
<i>Braunlin</i> — <i>Nesbitt</i> , Selections	<i>M. Braunlin</i> — <i>J. Nesbitt</i> , Selections from a Private Collection of Byzantine Bullae, Byz. 68/1 (1998) 157–182.
BS	Byzantina Sorbonensia, Paris.
BSI	Byzantinoslavica, Prague.

- Bulgakova*, Osteuropa *Victoria Bulgakova*, Byzantinische Bleisiegel in Osteuropa. Die Funde auf dem Territorium Altrußlands, Wiesbaden 2004.
- Byz. Byzantion, Bruxelles.
- Byzantine Aristocracy The Byzantine Aristocracy, ed. *M. Angold*, Oxford 1984.
- Byzantium *J. Ferluga*, Byzantium on the Balkans. Studies on the Byzantine Administration and the Southern Slavs from the VIIth to the XIIth Centuries, Amsterdam 1976.
- Byzantium in the Year 1000 Byzantium in the Year 1000, ed. *P. Magdalino*, Leiden–Boston 2003.
- ByzF Byzantinische Forschungen, Amsterdam.
- BZ Byzantinische Zeitschrift, München–Leipzig.
- Canard*, Date des expéditions *A. Canard*, La date des expéditions mésopotamiennes de Jean Tzimiscès, *Annuaire de l'Institut de Phil. et d'Hist. Or. et Slav.* 10 (1950) 99–108.
- CBHB Corpus Bruxellense Historiae Byzantinae.
- CFHB Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae.
- CSHB Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae.
- Charanis*, Armenians *P. Charanis*, The Armenians in the Byzantine Empire, Lisboa 1963.
- Cheyne*, Basil II and Asia Minor *J.-C. Cheynet*, Basil II and Asia Minor, in: *Byzantium in the Year 1000*, 71–108.
- Cheyne*, Diogénai *J.-C. Cheynet*, Grandeur et décadence des Diogénai, in: *Αυτοκρατορία σε κρίση*, 119–137.
- Cheyne*, Du stratège au duc *J.-C. Cheynet*, Du stratège de thème au duc: chronologie de l'évolution au cours du XI^e siècle, *TM* 9 (1985) 181–194.
- Cheyne*, Ducs d'Antioche *J.-C. Cheynet*, Les ducs d'Antioche sous Michel IV et Constantin IX, *Novum Millennium. Studies on Byzantine History and Culture* dedicated to Paul Speck (2001) 53–63.
- Cheyne*, Effectifs *J.-C. Cheynet*, Les effectifs de l'armée byzantine aux X^e–XII^e s., *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* X–XII siècles, XXXVIII/no. 4 (1995) 319–335.
- Cheyne*, Épiskeptai *J.-C. Cheynet*, Épiskeptai et autres gestionnaires des biens publics (d'après les sceaux de l'IFEB), *SBS* 7 (2002) 87–117.
- Cheyne*, Frontière *J.-C. Cheynet*, La conception militaire de la frontière orientale (IX–XIII siècles), in: *Eastern Approaches to Byzantium*, ed. *A. Eastmond*, 2001, 57–69.
- Cheyne*, Nouvelle hypothèse *J.-C. Cheynet*, Nouvelle hypothèse à propos du domestique d'Occident cité sur une croix du Musée de Genève, *BSI* 42 (1981) 197–202.
- Cheyne*, Phocas *v. Dagron*, *Traité* (Appendice).
- Cheyne*, Politique militaire *J.-C. Cheynet*, Le politique militaire byzantine de Basile II à Alexis Comnène, *ZRVI* 29/30 (1991) 61–74.
- Cheyne*, Pouvoir *J.-C. Cheynet*, Pouvoir et contestations à Byzance (963–1210), Paris 1990.
- Cheyne*, Sceaux *J.-C. Cheynet*, Sceaux byzantins des Musées d'Antioche et de Tarse, *TM* 12 (1994) 391–477.

<i>Cheyne</i> , Skyl.	Jean Skylitzès. <i>Empereurs de Constantinople</i> , trad. <i>B. Flusin</i> , annoté <i>J.-C. Cheynet</i> , Paris 2003.
<i>Cheyne</i> , Trois familles	<i>J.-C. Cheynet</i> , <i>Trois familles du duché d' Antioche</i> , in : <i>Études prosopographiques</i> .
<i>Cheyne</i> — <i>Vannier</i> , Argyroi	<i>J.-C. Cheynet</i> — <i>J.-F. Vannier</i> , <i>Les Argyroi</i> , ZRVI 40 (2003) 57–90.
Chron. I–II	Michel Psellos, <i>Chronographie I–II</i> , ed. <i>E. Renauld</i> , Paris 1926, 1928.
Collection Zacos	<i>J.-C. Cheynet</i> , <i>Sceaux de la collection Zacos</i> (Bibliothèque nationale de France) sa rapportant aux provinces orientales de l'Empire byzantin, Paris 2001.
Corpus I–II	<i>I. Jordanov</i> , <i>Corpus of Byzantine Seals from Bulgaria</i> , I: <i>Byzantine Seals with Geographical Names</i> ; II: <i>Byzantine Seals with Family Names</i> , Sofia 2003, 2006.
<i>Dagron</i> , Traité	<i>G. Dagron</i> — <i>H. Mihăescu</i> , <i>Traité sur la guérilla</i> (De velitatione) de l' empereur Nicéphore Phocas (963–969), Paris 1986.
DAI	Constantine Porphyrogenitus <i>De Administrando Imperio</i> , ed. <i>Gy. Moravcsik</i> , transl. <i>R. J. H. Jenkins</i> , CFHB I, Washington 1967.
<i>Darrouzès</i> , Épistoliers	<i>J. Darrouzès</i> , <i>Épistoliers byzantins du Xe siècle</i> , Paris 1960.
De Cer. I	Constantini Porphyrogeniti imperatoris <i>De Cerimoniis aulae Byzantinae libri duo</i> , I, ed. <i>J. J. Reiske</i> (CSHB), Bonn 1829.
De Them.	Constantino Porfirogenito, <i>De Thematibus</i> , ed. <i>A. Pertusi</i> , <i>Studi e Testi</i> 160, Vatican 1952.
De Vel.	<i>Dagron</i> , Traité.
Diac.	Leonis Diaconi Caloënsis <i>historiae libri decem</i> , ed. <i>C. B. Hase</i> (CSHB), Bonn 1828.
<i>Dinić</i> , Gradja I–II	<i>M. J. Dinić</i> , <i>Gradja za istoriju Beograda I–II</i> , Beograd 1951.
<i>Djurić</i> , Foke	<i>I. Djurić</i> , <i>Porodica Foka</i> , ZRVI 17 (1976)189–296.
DOP	Dumbarton Oaks Papers, Washington.
DOSeals I–V	Catalogue of the Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art, 1–5, ed. <i>J. Nesbitt</i> — <i>N. Oikonomides</i> (1–3, 5); <i>E. McGeer</i> — <i>J. Nesbitt</i> — <i>N. Oikonomides</i> (4), Washington, D. C. 1991, 1994, 1996, 2001, 2005.
<i>Dussaud</i> , Syrie	<i>R. Dussaud</i> , <i>Topographie historique de la Syrie Antique et Médiévale</i> , Paris 1927.
EEBS	Epetiris Hetaireias Byzantinon Spoudon, Athens.
Études prosopographiques	<i>J.-C. Cheynet</i> — <i>J.-F. Vannier</i> , <i>Études prosopographiques</i> , Paris 1986.
<i>Falkenhausen</i> , Byzantine Italy	<i>Vera von Falkenhausen</i> , <i>Between Two Empires: Byzantine Italy in the Regn of Basil II</i> , in: <i>Byzantium in the Year 1000</i> , 135–159.
<i>Falkenhausen</i> , Beamtenurkunde	<i>Vera von Falkenhausen</i> , <i>Eine byzantinische Beamtenurkunde aus Dubrovnik</i> , BZ 63 (1970) 10–23.

- Falkenhausen*, Untersuchungen *Vera von Falkenhausen*, Untersuchungen über die byzantinische Herrschaft in Süditalien vom 9. bis 11. Jahrhundert, Wiesbaden 1967.
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- Ferjančić*, Vizantijski pečat iz Sirmijuma *B. Ferjančić*, Vizantijski pečat iz Sirmijuma, ZRVI 21 (1982) 47–52.
- Ferluga*, Drač *J. Ferluga*, Drač i dračka oblast pred kraj X i početkom XI veka, ZRVI 8/2 (1964) 117–132. (=Byzantium 225–244)
- Ferluga*, Niže jedinice *J. Ferluga*, Niže vojno-administrativne jedinice tematskog uređenja, ZRVI 2 (1953) 61–98 (=Byzantium 21–70).
- FK *Kleterologion of Philotheos*, v. *Oikonomidēs*, Listes 65–235.
- G. Monachos–Muralt *Georgios Monachos dictus Hamartolos*, Chronicon, ed. *E. de Muralto*, Sankt-Peterburg 1859.
- Gelzer*, Ungedruckte *H. Gelzer*, Ungedruckte und wenig bekannte Bistümerverzeichnisse der orientalischen Kirche, BZ 2 (1893) 22–72.
- Georg. Monach. Cont. v. *Theophanes Continuatus*, ed. *I. Bekker* (CSHB), Bonn 1838, 761–924.
- Guilland*, Recherches I *R. Guilland*, Recherches sur les institutions byzantines I, Berlin–Amsterdam 1967.
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- Hild* — *Hellenkemper*, Kilikien und Isaurien *F. Hild* — *H. Hellenkemper*, Kilikien und Isaurien, TIB 5, Wien 1990.
- Hild* — *Restle*, Kappadokien *F. Hild* — *M. Restle*, Kappadokien, TIB 2, Wien 1981.
- Hist. Syn. *Michaelis Pselli Historia Syntomos*, ed. *W. J. Aerts*, CFHB XXX, Berlin 1990.
- Holmes*, Basil II *Catherine Holmes*, Basil II and the Governance of Empire (976–1025), Oxford 2005.
- Honigmann*, Ostgrenze *E. Honigmann*, Die Ostgrenze des byzantinischen Reiches von 363–1071 nach griechischen, arabischen, syrischen und armenischen Quellen, CBHB 3, Bruxelles 1935.
- Howard-Johnston*, Crown Lands *J. D. Howard-Johnston*, Crown Lands and the Defence of Imperial Authority in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries, ByzF 21 (1995) 75–100.
- ISN I *Istorija spskog naroda I*, Beograd 1981.
- Iviron I *Actes d'Iviron I: Des origines au milieu du XI^e siècle*, Archives de l'Athos XIV, ed. *J. Lefort*, *N. Oikonomidēs*, *Denise Papa-chryssanthou*, avec la collaboration d' *Hélène Métrévélis*, Paris 1985.

- Iviron II Actes d'Iviron II: Du milieu du XI^e siècle à 1204, Archives de l'Athos XVI, ed. *J. Lefort, N. Oikonomidès, Denise Papachryssanthou*, avec la collaboration de *Vassiliki Kravari* et *Hélène Métrévéli*, Paris 1990.
- J v. *Jordanov*, Preslav.
- Jireček*, Rimska cesta *K. Jireček*, Rimska cesta od Singidunuma za Vizant, Zbornik Konstantina Jirečeka I, Beograd 1959.
- JÖB Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik, Wien.
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- Laurent*, Thème *V. Laurent*, Le thème byzantin de Serbie au XI^e siècle, REB 15 (1957) 185–195.
- Lavra I Actes de Lavra I: Des origines à 1204, Archives de l'Athos V, ed. *P. Lemerle, A. Guillou, N. Svoronos*, avec la collaboration de *Denise Papachryssanthou*, Paris 1970.
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INTRODUCTION

The emperor Nikephoros annexed many cities of Syria and Phoenicia, and John, his successor, fortified what had been taken and extended his rule as far as Damascus. His successor Basil, initially occupied with civil wars and later busy with the campaigns against Samuel, had no opportunity to secure the situation in the East properly, as he should have done. He appeared there when circumstances required, restored the situation and then went back because the subjugation of the Bulgars was his constant task and concern. This paved the way for some of the more powerful cities to cast off the yoke and seek their freedom. However, while he was alive, insurrection was prepared in secret, not publicly.

*John Skilitzes, Synopsis historiarum*¹

Commencing his record of the Syrian expedition of Romanos III Argyros in 1030, John Skylitzes uses the above words to describe the reign of the three emperors — Nikephoros II Phokas, John I Tzimiskes and Basil II — attributing credit to the first two men for the conquests and for consolidating Byzantine rule in Syria, meanwhile criticising the third for neglecting the East for the sake of the Balkans. In observing the development of the provincial administration in Byzantium on the threshold between the 10th and the 11th century, one can say that Skylitzes was right, at least to some extent.

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We are informed about the changes that swept through the Byzantine Empire in the closing decades of the 10th century, primarily thanks to the *Taktikon Escorial*

¹ Scyl. 378₃₄₋₄₄: Τοῦ γὰρ βασιλέως Νικηφόρου τὰς πλείστας Συρίας καὶ Φοινίκης πόλεις παραστησαμένου, καὶ τοῦ μετ' αὐτὸν Ἰωάννου τὰ ἐαλωκότα κρατυναμένου καὶ μέχρι Δαμασκού τὴν ἐπικράτειαν παρατείναντος, ἐπεὶ περὶ ὁ μετ' αὐτοὺς Βασίλειος πρότερον μὲν ὑπὸ τῶν ἐμφυλίων ἀσχολούμενος πολέμων, ὕστερον δὲ καὶ τοῖς κατὰ τοῦ Σαμουὴλ ἔργοις προσλιπαρῶν οὐκ ἔσχεν εὐκαιρίαν καλῶς καὶ ὥς ἐνεδέχετο τὰ ἐν τῇ ἐφ'α κατασφαλίσασθαι, ἀλλ' ὅσον ἐν φαντασίᾳ γενόμενος ἐκέισε, καὶ ὥς ὁ καιρὸς ἀπῆτει ταῦτα καταστησάμενος, εἴθ' ὑποστρέψας καὶ ἀσχολίαν ἔμμονον ἔχων καὶ φροντίδα τὸ τῶν Βουλγάρων ὑποτάξαι γένος, ἀφορμὴ γέγονε τοῦ τὸν ζυγὸν ἀπορρίψαι τὰς δυνατωτέρας τῶν πόλεων καὶ τὴν ἐαυτῶν ἀναζητεῖν ἐλευθερίαν, ἀλλ' ἕως μὲν οὗτος περιῆν, ἐμελετᾶτο μὲν ἡ ἀπόστασις, κρύβδην δὲ καὶ οὐ φανερώς. Cf. Zon. 575 9-13.

(edited in 971–975).² This was the list of Byzantine officials in Tzimiskes' epoch, most of which illustrates the changes in the whole of the state apparatus that occurred during the reigns of Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos, Romanos II, Nikephoros II Phokas and John I Tzimiskes. Judging by the TE, the most striking transformation was experienced in the Empire's military system, both centrally and in the provinces. The increase of military functions, ostensibly, simply reflected the Empire's military expansion that took place mainly in the Phokas–Tzimiskes period. Still, the first stage of the reforms Byzantium experienced in the course of the 10th and 11th centuries (until the new reorganisation of the state apparatus under the Komnenoi dynasty) was completed under Basil II, after the frontiers of the state territory had been defined during his reign. The reoccupation of the Balkans brought a new administrative and military arrangement of the Balkan regions, the majority of which came under imperial rule for the first time, after the Slav migrations. The fact that we have no official list of the ranks of Byzantine functionaries from Basil's period or from the time of his successors has made the *Taktikon Escorial* a source of invaluable importance. The said *taktikon* did not only enable the transformation of institutions in the state apparatus that began in the middle of the 10th century, it also served as a point of reference for estimating the value and significance of the changes carried out in the subsequent period (primarily in the 11th century).

Generally speaking, the TE depicts the Byzantine military organisation as a hierarchically complex system, within which military functions were ranked according to the territorial range of their bearers' competences (at the highest level, this involved a division into the Byzantine East and the West³), based on the nature of the prerogatives that proceeded from them (command functions and military-administrative positions). As the said reform evolved as a result of the changes in military organisation, reflected in the gradual replacement of the thematic army by a tagmatic, i.e. professional army, it is understandable that the last *taktikon* from the 10th century registered a significant increase in the number of new military functionaries, whose command powers extended over the tagmatic units. A first glimpse already reveals the change that swept through the institutions of the supreme, i.e. central command of the Empire: instead of the previously unified function of the *domestikos ton Scholon*, the TE mentions five command positions of the most senior rank (the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East and of the West, the *stratopedarches* of the East and of the West, and the *stratelates*). The most senior commanding officers were followed by the tagmatic commanders — the *doukes* and the *katapano* — whose competences were restricted to a particular region or city, with the reform of the provincial military organisation. This involved one of the most visible alterations in the domain of provincial administration or, to be more exact, in the domain of the frontier military organisation. The *taktikon* also contains data about the bearers of

² The *Taktikon of Uspenskij* (TU), the *Kleterologion of Philotheos* (FK), the *Taktikon of Benešević* (TB) and the *Taktikon Escorial* (TE) were published by N. Oikonomides, *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IX^e et X^e siècles*, Paris 1972. The inner structure of the TE (ibid. 255–277) poses numerous dilemmas and attention will be drawn to some of them, in the further text.

³ K. Amantos, *Ἀνατολή καὶ Δύσις*, *Hellenika* 9 (1936) 32–36; cf. DOSeals I, pp. 1–2.

the title *strategos*, whose number increased significantly in relation to the previous *Taktikon of Benešević* (edited in 934–944).⁴ The fact that the majority of *strategoi* from the TE were linked to a city/fortress or to a smaller region indicated the fragmentation of the administrative-military entities, which led to serious changes in the structure of the thematic organisation: parallel to the old *themata* from the classical period of the thematic order, there were new, so-called *small themata*, which had a different internal organisation. Furthermore, the continued reform of the tagmatic organisation was recorded, which had begun in the earlier period under Romanos II, with the division or duplication of the function of the *domestikos ton Scholon*, and hence the *tagma ton Scholon*, one of which was connected with the East and the other with the West of the Empire. The *tagma ton Exkoubiton* was divided according to the model of the reform of the *tagma ton Scholon*, but the *taktikon* mentions three *domestikoi ton Exkubiton* (one was connected with the East, the other with the West, and the third is assumed to have been linked with the capital).⁵ The seals have shown that the same happened to the *tagma ton Hikanaton*,⁶ although that change was not registered in Tzimisces' *taktikon*. Besides, the lists in the TE (271–273) confirm the appearance of new tagmatic units — the *tagma ton Stratelaton*, the *tagma ton Athanaton (Immortals)*, as well as detachments consisting of foreigners, who were under the command of *satrapes* and *ethnarches*.

The presentation of the Byzantine state machine at the end of the 10th century, given in the TE is largely supplemented by and controlled against the data from narrative sources, important for that epoch (they were principally Leo the Deacon's *History*, John Skylitzes' *Synopsis historiarum*, John Zonaras' *Epitome historion*, and Yahya of Antioch etc.). The sphragistic material is also of great importance, leaving valuable testimony, for instance, of Byzantium's occupation of the Balkans during the time of Tzimisces.⁷ On the other hand, the seals indicate the further progress of the reform, which can be followed from the period of Basil II: this refers to the affirmation of the civil provincial functionaries (the *kritai*, the *praitores*, the *anagrapheis*, the *kouratores*, etc.) — a process that was impossible to examine based on the TE.⁸

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⁴ *Oikonomidēs*, Listes 237–253.

⁵ *Ibid.* 270 et n. 27.

⁶ Cf. *Seibt*, Reliquiarkreuz 306 et n. 17. On the development of the Constantinople's *tagmata* in the 11th century, v. *Oikonomidēs*, *Évolution* 142–143.

⁷ This involves the seals from the Preslav Collection, published by *I. Jordanov*, *Pečatite ot strategijata v Preslav (971–1088)*, Sofia 1993. The seals of the Preslav Collection have also been presented in the *Corpus of Byzantine Seals from Bulgaria I–II*, Sofia 2003, 2006.

⁸ Illustrative data on the emancipation of the civil structures of authority is also preserved in the documents of the monasteries on Mount Athos (published in the series *Archives de l'Athos*). However, they are limited to the development of the civil administration in the broader area of Thessalonike, in whose jurisdiction Mount Athos belonged.

Considering the military character of the changes registered in the TE, this book is divided into two basic thematic units. The first deals with the development of the institution of the Empire's central (supreme) command and the second, with the reform of the provincial (frontier) administration.

The first section covers the period from the middle of the 10th century till the end of the rule of Basil II, seeing that the changes in the way the central command functioned must already be examined from the independent rule of Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (944/5–959), although officially it began with the arrival on the throne of his son, Romanos II (959–963). If one sets out from the fact that, from the chronological aspect, the first changes in the development of the Byzantine military system were observed in the domain of the supreme command and subsequently, continued from the central level to the provincial level (the creation of the positions of the district *doukes/katepano*), then one can understand why the organisation of the supreme military command was considered as a separate thematic ensemble. The exposition ends with the rule of Basil II because that period demonstrated the basic results of the new military command system shaped under his predecessors. The fundamental characteristic of the development of the Empire's supreme command was, on the one hand, the increased number of top-ranking officers, who commanded the army on campaigns and, on the other, the limitation of the powers arising from functions of that type. What one should say to begin with, is that the reform of the supreme military command was the work of renowned military commanders, men with experience, who were well-versed in the military circumstances in the Empire (Nikephoros II Phokas and John I Tzimiskes).

The second part of this work, divided into two thematic and chronological chapters,⁹ discusses the provincial administration based on registering and analysing the changes that occurred in the frontier regions of the Empire, primarily in the East and in the Balkans. Less attention has been devoted to the development of the state administration in Byzantine Italy,¹⁰ considering that it was impossible, due to the specific features of the military organisation, to make an adequate parallel with eastern and Balkan circumstances. The specific characteristics of Italy, compared with the military organisation in the East and in the Balkans, were reflected in the functioning of the institutions of the supreme command (the absence of a *domestikos ton Scholon*), as well as in the fact that in the realm of provincial administration, a parallelism existed between the *katepano* of Italy (whose competences primarily

⁹ *The Organisation of Provincial (Frontier) Authority (On the Threshold Between the 10th and the 11th Century) and Digressions from the Thematic System.*

¹⁰ *Vera von Fakenhausen* published several works, offering a detailed account of the development of the state administration in Byzantine Italy. On this occasion, I would single out *Vera von Fakenhausen*, *Untersuchungen über die byzantinische Herrschaft in Süditalien vom 9. bis 11. Jahrhundert*, Wiesbaden 1967; *eadem*, *A Provincial Aristocracy: The Byzantine Provinces in southern Italy (9th–11th Century)*, in: *The Byzantine Aristocracy*, ed. *M. Angold*, Oxford 1984, 211–235; *eadem* *Between Two Empires: Byzantine Italy in the Regn of Basil II, Byzantium in the Year 1000*, ed. *P. Magdalino*, Leiden–Boston 2003, 135–159. Also, *Catherine Holmes*, *Basil II and the Governance of Empire (976–1025)*, Oxford 2005, gave a new retrospective of how political circumstances developed in that region.

involved the district of Longobardia) and the *strategos* of Calabria. Moreover, themes of the new type, characteristic for the Byzantine East and the Balkans, were not established in that part of the Empire.

The principal characteristics of the new frontier administration referred to the formation of a special type of theme (this were the so-called small themes or *strategides*, at the head of which were *strategoi*), as well as the creation of new provincial positions — the *doukes/katepano* — through whom the homogenisation and centralisation of authority was carried out in the frontier regions. Chronologically viewed, the changes in the Byzantine provincial organisation first of all encompassed the frontier regions to the East, and the first evidence of the new concept of the Byzantine frontiers could already be noticed at the beginning of the 10th century, in the time of Leo VI (886–912). They subsequently unfolded during the 10th century with the foundation of themes of the new type in the frontier regions to the East. This referred to a phenomenon that witnesses of the changes at that time designated with a specific term — *armeniaka themata*. This process reached its culmination in the period of the rule of Nikephoros II Phokas (963–969) and John I Tzimiskes (969–976). The more enduring homogenisation of authority in the frontier regions (which in the 10th century in the East had mainly been established through the *domestikos ton Scholon*, and which led to the extraordinary prolongation of the mandate of certain bearers of that function), among other things, was assured by the formation of provincial command centres, at the head of which were men who had until then been tagmatic commanders, who bore the titles of *doux/katepano*. Their connection with a particular territory (their principal region of jurisdiction) undermined the prevailing administrative division of the Empire: the borders of the autonomous districts (*thema, strategis*) till that time depended on the creation of big military systems, within which a new, more complex hierarchical structure of military administration was established.

In the time of John I Tzimiskes, the experience from the eastern frontier was transmitted and soon applied to the Balkan regions that had been under Byzantine rule earlier on (otherwise called the old frontier belt), and in the regions the Empire had acquired unexpectedly after the Byzantine-Russian war for Bulgaria (970/971). Still, the achievements of his reforms were short-lived. The picture of Balkan military organisation the TE conveys, further illustrated by the sphragistic material that has survived, leaves us with the idea of a temporary state of affairs. The second reoccupation of the Balkans, under Basil II (976–1025), points to the weaknesses of the Balkan frontier established under Tzimiskes, as well as the true scope of his reforms.

The final section is devoted to the military administration of Basil II, which was founded on the same principles his predecessors had established. One could describe his greatest contribution in short, as the subjugation of the Balkans — the last great military venture of the Byzantine Empire. Gradually establishing its rule in parts of this territory during a forty-year long war of varying intensities, against Samuel and his successors (976–1018), Basil II managed to repeat the history of his predecessors, who had carried out that process systematically in the East, from the

beginning of the 10th century. The changes in the structure of governing raised new dilemmas in the study of Byzantine provincial administration. The emancipation of civil functionaries (*kritai*), for which Leo VI had opened the way, acquired a new quality in the time of Basil II. One can single out the affirmation and even the temporary domination of the civil structures of authority in the provinces, and this perhaps represented the greatest digression from the thematic organisation of the traditional type, as the most impressive result of the Empire's military expansion and the reform of its entire military organisation (central and provincial) conducted in the 10th century. From the time of Basil II, parallel to the large military systems created during the Phokas–Tzimiskes epoch, the civil structures of authority in the provinces became homogenised. The provincial administration in the 11th century was marked by the creation of big civil systems, which led to the problem of defining an autonomous administrative district, which has not lost its topicality even today. Although there is no testimony of that process in the last surviving *taktikon* from the 10th century, in order to understand its beginnings, it is necessary to examine the tendency of the reform presented in the *Taktikon of Oikonomides*.

THE ORGANISATION OF THE SUPREME MILITARY COMMAND

The Middle of the 10th Century — 1025

I

THE DISTRIBUTION OF MILITARY FUNCTIONS AND THE CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMAND AUTHORITIES

Regular and extraordinary military authorities

A supreme military command embodies the authorities and functions from which military power of an accumulative nature is derived. In Byzantium, the top echelon of the military hierarchy embodied duties with the potential to unify at a high or at the highest level the commands of military units belonging to different services and geographical regions. Depending on the epoch, the Empire's supreme command personified different duties.

The classification of military functions can be done in two ways: based on whether their bearers were mentioned in the *taktika* (τακτικά, κλητορολόγια, κλητοροθέσια)¹ or in keeping with the nature of the authorities the military dignitaries exercised.

In the literature, it was common for military functions whose bearers were mentioned in the official rank lists (*taktika*), to be designated as *formal*, whereas the term *unofficial* implied authorities conferred on the basis of extraordinary circumstances.² The *strategoï* of the themes and the commanders of the tagmatic army belonged to the so-called formal category and this, evidently, included their subordinate officers, who also were mentioned in the *taktika*. In the category of formal functions, we distinguish two kinds of military authorities: the *strategoï* of the themes, who possessed authorities of a military-administrative nature and, as such, appeared in the role of military commanders and as governors of administratively and territorially defined districts (*themata*), whereas it was characteristic for tagmatic officers only to be granted command powers.

In the category of so-called unofficial functions, we include extraordinary appointments that were conferred in the event of extraordinary circumstances. As a rule, officers who were awarded a special mandate possessed command powers. The most representative and certainly the most controversial powers in this group were those of the *monostrategos* and of the *strategos autokrator*.³ The belief exists that

¹ For terminology v. *Oikonomidēs*, *Listes* 27.

² *Ibid.* 333–334.

³ *Ahrweiler*, *Administration* 57; *Guilland*, *Recherches* I, 381–384.

so-called unofficial powers were not functions in the true sense of the word, from which it follows that the terms used to designate them did not have a technical but rather were of a literary content.⁴ This actually means that these terms implied a descriptive explanation of the powers exercised by a Byzantine official. However, the rigidity of this kind of viewpoint is brought into question for several reasons.

We know that one of the more striking characteristics of the Byzantine state apparatus was its flexibility by virtue of the fact that this rested — figuratively speaking — on the discretionary right to appoint any functionary: the granting of authorities, functions or titles to Byzantine officials depended solely on the emperor's will.⁵ For that reason, their power, whether it derived from a so-called official function (known from the *taktika*) or from some extraordinary authority, was not an invariable. The influence of the ruler's interventions in the functioning of the state apparatus became much more obvious when creating new appointments and honorary titles. In those circumstances, the emperor changed the existing order of official titles and the formal hierarchy, personified in the rank lists of the Byzantine dignitaries, which still survive today. It was the emperor's will that dictated whether certain functions would become more or less powerful. The abolition or limitation of authorities that were characteristic for certain posts, as time passed, led to them becoming honorary titles. On the other hand, the authorities that proceeded from some functions could be expanded if the emperor so wished. For this reason, we may conclude that every Byzantine function possessed a certain *potential* that could be fully realised if the emperor saw to it that it should be, by awarding the official more powers than were customary for the office he had been holding up to that point.⁶

The flexibility of the Byzantine state apparatus was particularly visible in the domain of the supreme command's organisation, given that military power did not necessarily proceed from a military function (although such a concurrence could be considered normal practice). In other words, in Byzantium there was a distinction between awarding military powers, i.e. military authorities (*ἀρχή, ἐξουσία*), and appointments to a particular and adequate military function of a formal or unofficial nature.⁷

One of the results of the flexibility of the Byzantine state apparatus was that day to day circumstances often dictated the way in which it functioned. It was not unusual in some cases for the emperor to resort to appointing people to posts, i.e. granting them authorities that did not proceed from the functions registered in the *taktika*.⁸ These were special mandates that could be of a civil nature (e.g. diplomatic

⁴ Ahrweiler, *Administration* 57; *Oikonomidēs*, *Listes* 334.

⁵ *Ibid.* 281–282.

⁶ One can illustrate the potential of a function with the example of the development of the function of *domestikos ton Scholon*, Krsmanović, *Potencijal* 401–426.

⁷ For instance, the *logothetes tou dromou*, who acquires the power of commander in chief over the army on campaign; for this function v. D. A. Miller, *The Logothete of the Drome in the Middle Byzantine Period*, *Byz.* 36/2 (1966) 438–470; R. Guillard, *Les logothètes. Études sur l'histoire administrative de l'Empire byzantin*, *REB* 29 (1971) 31–70; *Oikonomidēs*, *Listes* 311–312.

⁸ In more detail Krsmanović, *Potencijal* 394–401.

missions) or equally, of a military nature. Since the nature of a military campaign, military expedition or, generally speaking, even a state of war, are the result of extraordinary circumstances, the functioning of the Empire's military organisation was often secured by awarding *ad hoc* authorities.

One should underline that the study of the Byzantine state apparatus is largely hindered by the terminology one encounters in the sources. We know that Byzantine authors were reluctant to use so-called technical terms. One can establish this fact most often from the expressions they used for functions (i.e. when describing the true powers of a particular individual), but it did not apply only to that sphere. Thus, in Byzantine histories and chronicles, a military-administrative district was more rarely defined as a *thema* (θέμα) — a term of undoubtedly technical content — and more often defined by expressions such as *ἐπαρχία*, *γῆ*, *χώρα*.⁹ In designating the commanders in chief of the imperial army during a campaign, expedition or a war, sources, especially the narrative ones, demonstrate a great variety in the use of terminology: *strategos* (but not *strategos tou thematos*), *stratopedarches* (but not the *stratopedarches* — one of the highest-ranking officers in the Byzantine army known in the TE, a function created by Nikephoros II Phokas), *stratelates* (but not the *stratelates* — the commander of a *tagma ton Stratelaton*, also one of the most senior officers in the Byzantine army, mentioned in the TE), *katarchon*, *archon* (but not the *archon* who administered the *archontia* — the smaller unit of a thematic organisation), *exarchos*, etc.¹⁰ The tendency of Byzantine authors to express an officer's function descriptively or use an archaic term for it, or a term from their own epoch, and not use the words that actually designated it, makes it difficult to pinpoint the possible official names of the commanding functions. That is why the simplest solution was to define them by means of the rank lists that have been preserved. The terms designating the functions known from the *taktika* certainly had a technical meaning: this involved expressions that in a given period had a specific content. Nevertheless, the value of the technical term should arise from a particular and clearly defined authority. A good example is the title of Nikephoros Phokas the Elder — “*monostrategos* of the Western Themes, Thrace and Macedonia and Kephalaria, Longobardia and Calabria” (G. Monachos–Muralt 757): the source precisely described over which troops the commander in chief's military power extended, so one can hardly say that in this case the term *monostrategos* did not have a technical meaning.¹¹

Regardless of whether it was regulated by a function known in the *taktikon* or with the awarding of some extraordinary appointment, all power flowed from the

⁹ For instance, we know from the *Vita Basilii* (Theoph. Cont. 212), that Basil I came from the “land” of the Macedonians (αὐτοκράτωρ βασιλείος ὁρμάτο μὲν ἐκ τῆς Μακεδόνων γῆς), i.e. from the theme of Macedonia. The great changes that swept through the thematic organisation from the second half of the 10th century, which would be particularly striking in the following century, would lead to the term θέμα losing its technical meaning, *Ahrweiler*, Administration 79; *Maksimović*, Palaiologoi 34.

¹⁰ A list of the terms denoting the commanders in chief appears in *Guilland*, Recherches I, 380–404 (with a prosopographic list).

¹¹ This, apparently, refers to military detachments, not districts, v. p. 167.

emperor (ἐξουσία ἐκ βασιλέως):¹² the emperor's interventions had an equal bearing on how the state apparatus functioned both in the official domain and in the sphere that one can only provisionally call unofficial (e.g. when he circumvented the official hierarchy by granting special authorities). The emperor's bestowal of a particular power, either military or civil, on one of his subjects made it possible for the ruler to reduce or extend authorities at will (and so, for instance, not every *domestikos ton Scholon* possessed equal powers). For these reasons, it would be more accurate to classify functions and authorities as *regular* and *extraordinary* (*irregular*). The functions known from the *taktika* were foreseen and traditionally registered in the rank lists, therefore, as such, they were regular; it did not matter if this referred to positions that in some particular period may have temporarily been vacant. Extraordinary or periodical authorities were awarded in specific and, frequently, extraordinary situations (the imminent threat of an external enemy, crushing a rebellion against imperial power). The bearers of such authorities were given some kind of special mandate which, as a rule, was of limited duration and purpose. The periodicity or irregularity and unpredictability of awarding such authorities resulted in their bearers not being mentioned in the official rank lists. Besides, in many cases it remains questionable whether these extraordinary authorities meant only the temporarily expanded military powers of an official or dignitary, or whether it involved functions in the true sense of the word.

And finally, one should stress the most notable and essential difference between regular (formal) and extraordinary, so-called unofficial powers and functions. It was based on the fact that a number of lower-ranking functionaries were subordinated to the bearer of every function known in the *taktika*.¹³ Philotheos enumerated 60 dignitaries from the group ἀξίαι διὰ λόγου, who were assigned to the so-called category of officials "with a beard" (οἱ βαρβᾶτοι). They were at the head of the state apparatus — in the capital or the provinces — and through them the ruler regulated the state's entire civil and military administration.¹⁴ It was from these functions that power generated over clearly designated, subordinate functionaries, who also had a defined place in the official hierarchy (and accordingly, they too were mentioned in the *taktika*). To put it more simply, the duties and ranks of officers subordinated to a thematic *strategos* or to a commander of tagmatic units constituted part of the said functions. Such a clearly defined and designated hierarchical division of authorities proceeding from top level, formal military functions (thematic *strategoi* and tagmatic commanders), however, did not ensue from extraordinary appointments. Evidently, this did not mean that a particular *strategos autokrator* or *monostrategos* did not have his own subordinates. Under his command

¹² Scyl. 320.

¹³ Three of the four preserved *taktika* from the 9th–10th century point to the said difference: the TU, the FK and the TB. The TE is the exception.

¹⁴ Apart from the dignities in the group ἀξίαι διὰ λόγου, there were also titles in Byzantium that belonged to the group ἀξίαι διὰ βραβείων; this category mainly consisted of honorary titles. Philotheos also distinguished titles from the group ἀξίαι διὰ λόγου, which were reserved for eunuchs but, in time, some of them also became accessible to officials "with beards", FK 101–103; 125–135; 282.

were military functionaries known from the official *taktika*, however, their participation in a campaign depended on the circumstances, needs and possibilities.

Characteristics of the most senior command authorities

In the period following the introduction of the thematic system (7th century) and prior to the reforms of the supreme command that began in the middle of the 10th century, the following dignitaries or officials: the *strategos* of the theme, the *domestikos ton Scholon* and the *monostrategos* represented the top echelons of the military hierarchy. In order to make this discussion easier to follow, I would add to this group the *strategos autokrator*, with the remark that this was a term which, ostensibly, did not signify a function in the true sense of the word; in addition, the revival of its use in Byzantine sources coincided with the period when the reform started of the institution of the supreme command (the second half of the 10th century).

Strategos tou thematos — Since the introduction of the thematic system (the 7th century) until the 9th century, the *strategoï* of the themes dominated the military hierarchy. The primary military authority of the *strategos* was territorially limited to the district he was entrusted with administering and, from that time, he appeared for the most part in his capacity as commander of the units from his theme. However, the military powers of the *strategos* of a theme could, if necessary, be temporarily broadened; there are signs which indicate that during a campaign, in which *strategoï* and troops from different themes took part, supreme command was entrusted to one of them (without any additional, official appointment to this second, relevant function), which meant that he possessed temporary military powers over the units from the other themes and their *strategoï*.¹⁵ Sources do not specify the criterion according to which a *strategos* was given precedence in command over his colleagues — the participants in a campaign. Nevertheless, the data shows that the sequence in the official hierarchy (as presented in the *taktika*) could influence the choice of commander in chief, as could the favour of the monarch. Also awarding the post of supreme command of the armies and *strategoï* from two or more themes depended on the territory where the war was being waged.¹⁶

At the same time as the thematic *strategoï* dominated the military hierarchy (until the middle of the 9th century), the practice also existed of granting extraordinary powers (see *monostrategos*).

The affirmation of the *domestikos ton Scholon* that followed under the Amorian dynasty (in the mid 9th century) reduced the command powers of the *strategos* to the troops of his own theme. However, the sources show that this was

¹⁵ R. J. Lilie, Die byzantinische Reaktion auf die Ausbreitung der Araber. Studien zur Strukturwandlung des byzantinischen Staates im 7. und 8. Jhd., München 1976, 167; Μικρά Ασία 207 et n. 46 (V. N. Vlyssidou).

¹⁶ Theoph. 445, 451, 500–501. In more detail Krsmanović, O problemu 90–95.

not based on a rule but on customary practice. In the time when the Byzantine military organisation relied on thematic and not tagmatic troops, the command powers of the thematic *strategos*, if necessary, could extend over unified units from several districts. It was the professionalisation of the Byzantine army, which became more obvious from the middle of the 10th century, that would gradually lead to narrowing down the authorities as a whole — both military and civil — of the thematic *strategoi*.¹⁷ The professionalisation of the army required the affirmation of a new staff of officers, which at the end of the 10th century brought about changes in the provincial military hierarchy. From the epoch of Nikephoros II Phokas and especially John I Tzimiskes, the positions of the new military functionaries in the provinces, the *doukes* and the *katepano*, became official. Because their command powers covered extensive territories, in the new military systems the thematic *strategoi* were given a lower place, given that they were subordinate to the regional *doukes* or *katepano*.¹⁸

Domestikos ton Scholon — We know that the *taktika* of the 9th and the 10th centuries enumerate four top-ranking commanders of the tagmatic units. These were officers who possessed command powers: the *domestikos ton Scholon*, the *domestikos ton Exkoubiton*, the *droungarios tes Viglas* / τοῦ ἀριθμοῦ and the *domestikos ton Hikanaton*. Each of them, along with their appointments, was given one of four *tagmata* that were originally stationed in the capital or its environs. In addition to their appointment to these functions the said officers also had subordinates assigned to them as their staff (for instance, the *topoteretes* was a characteristic lower-ranking officer of the tagmatic army).¹⁹ However, not all the mentioned tagmatic commanders represented the Byzantine military leadership in the true sense of the word, for the simple reason that their military powers, albeit of a command nature, were limited to a particular *tagma* — *ton Scholon* or *ton Exkoubiton* or *tes Viglas* or *ton Hikanaton* — and to particular lower-ranking officers. As time passed, the *domestikos ton Scholon* was singled out and, with the thematic *strategoi*, accordingly included in the top military hierarchy.

Right until the middle of the 9th century, the need to unify the military commands during a campaign was resolved either by means of granting extended authorities to the thematic *strategoi* or by awarding powers to a *monostrategos*. In the time of the Amorion dynasty, certain changes came about in the organisation of the supreme command of the Empire. The military power of the *strategoi* was reduced with the division of the vast so-called themes of Herakleios (610–641). On the other hand, the centralisation of the supreme command was carried out by means of the function of the *domestikos ton Scholon*: in the time of Michael III (842–867), and it

¹⁷ Ahrweiler, Administration 36 sq.

¹⁸ Krsmanović, O problemu 108–110.

¹⁹ Philotheos stated that the functionaries were the staff of the aforesaid four tagmatic commanders, FK 111 (staff of the *domestikos ton Scholon*); 111–113 (staff of the *domestikos ton Exkoubiton*); 115 (staff of the *droungarios tes Viglas*); 119 (staff of the *domestikos ton Hikanaton*). On the *tagmata* of the capital, v. J. B. Bury, The Imperial Administrative System in the Ninth Century, London 1911, 47–64.

is possible that this already occurred during the reign of his father, Theophilus (829–842), the functioning of the supreme command was finally regulated in such a way that the *domestikos ton Scholon* was designated as the supreme commander of the army during a campaign (in the absence of the emperor). The transformation of the *domestikos ton Scholon* from an officer of the capital to a provincial officer was gradual. As the most reputable tagmatic commander of the capital, first of all, he was entitled to unite, if necessary, all four *tagmata* of the capital under his command. From the middle of the 9th century, his command powers were even extended to the thematic units and so sources from that time onwards mention him as the commander of “the *tagmata* and the *themata*”. His competences were primarily connected to the East and in exceptional cases to the Balkan region (during the intense military conflict with Symeon). One may say that in terms of prestige, the *domestikos ton Scholon* eclipsed the *monostrategos* (particularly in the eastern part of the Empire), and that he reduced the command power of the *strategos* to the troops recruited in the frontiers of his theme.²⁰

Monostrategos — The appointment of a *monostrategos* belonged to the category of extraordinary powers. For that reason, this term was often considered to have no technical meaning. However, according to what we have learned so far, *monostrategos* was a title encountered on seals,²¹ which could run in favour of the view that it referred to an official (formal) term. Nevertheless, narrative sources have left certain dilemmas regarding the nature of the military powers the *monostrategos* held. The term μονοστράτηγος itself indicates that this referred to the powers of “one/single *strategos*” (μονότατος στρατηγός).²² Still, the question remains open as to what meaning the word “*strategos*” had in this Greek compound — whether it simply referred to the commander of an army on a campaign or to a military dignity connected with a certain military-administrative district (*thema*), whose command powers had been expanded temporarily to include the troops from another *themata*?

It has already been observed that in the 8th century, the term *monostrategos* was used in a more precise sense.²³ From that time, it did not only signify a military commander, i.e. the chief *strategos* (which would be the most general definition of this notion throughout all the Byzantine epochs), but the term was used to designate the commander of the army in a campaign, which consisted of troops from different military districts, i.e. *themata*. It follows from the aforesaid that the introduction of the thematic arrangement and the changes in military organisation gave the function

²⁰ On the affirmation of the *domestikos ton Scholon* as the highest ranking command officer of the Byzantine army v. Krstanović, Potencijal 407–417.

²¹ The seal of Nikephoros Melissenos from the 11th century, with the titles *protoproedros* and *monostrategos* τῶν Ἀνατολικῶν, V. Laurent, Documents de sigillographie byzantine. La collection C. Orghidan, Paris 1952, 106–107, no. 196. W. Seibt, BZ 89/1 (1996) 135–137, recommended changes in the reading of the three inscriptions on the seals, belonging to the so-called Preslav Collection, published by I. Jordanov (J nos. 191; 193; 476; cf. Corpus II, no. 638).

²² Cf. Ahrweiler, Administration 57.

²³ Guiland, Recherches I, 382.

of the *monostrategos* a more precise content, which was adjusted to the new military organisation.

After the supreme command was centralised, during the rule of the Amorian dynasty, the term *monostrategos* acquired yet another meaning. An officer who was given this title gradually became connected with the Byzantine West, in other words, to the army recruited in the western themes. He was perceived, in a manner of speaking, to be a colleague of the *domestikos ton Scholon*: since the command powers of the *domestikos ton Scholon* were linked almost as a rule to the eastern troops that took part in the conflicts in the eastern part of the Empire and, when needed, in the Balkans as well,²⁴ a command of the same type was regulated over the so-called western troops by creating an appointment with the title of *monostrategos*. Hence, the term *monostrategos* is attached to the phrase “western themes” (τὰ δυτικά θέματα).²⁵

Strategos autokrator — The term *strategos autokrator* itself emphasised the military power that proceeded from the granting of this authority. In the most general sense, until the demise of the Empire, the *strategos autokrator* designated the commander in chief of the army on a campaign.²⁶ Like the *monostrategos*, the *strategos autokrator* represented an extraordinary title and so it did not appear in the Byzantine official rank lists. Neither was this appointment considered to have the value of a technical term.²⁷ Still, narrative sources confirm that it was a widespread practice to grant the authorities of a *strategos autokrator* during certain epochs. It was remarked that the term was in widespread use in the early Byzantine period; with the transition to a thematic military organisation, the term *strategos autokrator* temporarily disappeared from the sources only to reappear in use in the second half of the 10th century.²⁸ Bearing in mind that the Empire was expanding militarily in the course of that century, the revival of this term in Byzantine authors’ manuscripts should also be observed as a consequence of the need to make a distinction when explaining the level of command powers exercised by the most senior-ranking military commanders.

The information that can be found about the *strategos autokrator* leaves numerous dilemmas. One could formulate them briefly in the question of whether this referred to a separate function, a synonym for some other duty, or simply whether it referred to the temporary expansion of already existing military powers. Sources from the second half of the 10th and from the 11th centuries show that the term *strategos autokrator* was most often used to designate the *domestikos ton*

²⁴ Krsmanović, Potencijal 425.

²⁵ In more detail Krsmanović, O problemu 95–101.

²⁶ Cf. Ahrweiler, Administration 52 n. 3; Guillard, Recherches I, 382–384.

²⁷ Oikonomides, Listes 334. For the seal of the *strategos autokrator* (?) v. N. Bănescu, Les sceaux byzantines trouvés à Silistrie, Byz. VII (1932) 329–330.

²⁸ As one can see from the prosopographic list given by Guillard, Recherches I, 382–384, the use of this term in the sources was frequent in the early Byzantine epoch, as well as later, from the middle of the 11th century, or more precisely, from the reign of Constantine IX Monomachos (1042–1055).

Scholon, the officer who even in regular circumstances possessed command powers of the highest rank. However, it is indicative that data regarding the *strategos autokrator* is most often linked to the complex military-political circumstances (ambitious expeditions, the establishment or defence of the Byzantine presence in a particular area, the crushing of rebellions against the central government). It is the extraordinariness and the unusual political context which accompanied the *strategos autokrator* that made impossible to equate this term fully with the *domestikos ton Scholon*.²⁹

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All the said titles — whether they belonged in the category of regular posts registered in the *taktika* or to the group of extraordinary authorities — were characterised by accumulative military powers, i.e. the ability to have command over different types of military units (provincial and from the capital, land or naval forces). Their authorities were connected with the army, that is to say, with the organisation and administration of the army in a campaign. The difference between them was the duration of the mandate and the level of command powers.

²⁹ The term *strategos autokrator* designated the military power of the Byzantine emperor and the military nature of the ruler: for Michael Psellos, the *strategos autokrator* was the same as the στρατιώτης αὐτοκράτωρ, Chron. II, 18, 86. The term *strategos autokrator* was also used as a synonym for “emperor autokrator” and so Michael Attaleiates designated the two usurpers from the 11th century, Leo Tornikios and Isaac Komnenos, as *strategos autokrator*, Attal. 23, 54; in more detail *Krsmanović*, O problemu 101–108.

II

SHAPING THE SYSTEM OF THE SUPREME MILITARY COMMAND (The Middle of the 10th Century — 976)

In the domain of *regular (formal)* military functions of a command nature, the TE registered a very striking difference in relation to the rank lists of earlier epochs. While the TU, FK and TB mention only one representative of the supreme command over the army in a campaign — the *domestikos ton Scholon*, in the TE (263₂₃₋₂₇), five functionaries of this type are mentioned; these were the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East and of the West, the *stratopedarches*³⁰ of the East and of the West and the *stratelates*.³¹

It is considered that the reform of the organisation of the Empire's supreme military command officially began in the time of Romanos II (959–963), when there was a duplication or a division of the functions of the *domestikos ton Scholon*; this process formally ended with the institutionalisation of new posts, the *stratopedarches* and the *stratelates*. Both terms were widely used among Byzantine historians and chroniclers and designated a high-ranking military commander. But the meaning of these terms was of a literary nature until the reform of the institution of the supreme command — a process that unfolded during the reign of Nikephoros II Phokas (963–969) and his successor John I Tzimiskes (969–976) — when it became technical. Needless to say, increasing the number of formal functions of a command nature did not lessen the frequency of awarding extraordinary appointments.

At a first glimpse already, the impression one has of the command personnel listed in the TE imposes the simple question of how and why the expansion of command duties came about among the most senior ranks and instead of the one formal function of that type, five appeared. Understandably, the answer must begin with the story about the *domestikos ton Scholon*.

³⁰ *Guiland*, Recherches I, 498–521; *Oikonomidès*, Listes 334–335.

³¹ *Ahrweiler*, Administration 28, 42, 56, 58; *Guiland*, Recherches I, 385–392; *Oikonomidès*, Listes 332.

**The case of the Phokas family:
an example of the privatisation of a function**

The 10th century represents the great epoch of the *domestikos ton Scholon*³² when this officer was fully affirmed. The position of the *domestikos ton Scholon* became the source of great power and, in the second half of the 10th century, the impression existed that it was a stepping stone to imperial power. The intensification of Byzantium's expansionist policy in the East, obviously from the beginning of the century, resulted in the monarch transferring the prerogatives of supreme command to the *domestikos ton Scholon*, who was at liberty to conduct operations on the battlefield as he thought fit. The protracted and intense war Byzantium waged against the Arabs in the East was also the reason why personnel changes were not made frequently in the case of the *domestikos ton Scholon*. That fact brought a new quality to this function — unusually long mandates: thus John Kourkouas under Romanos I Lakapenos (920–944) performed the duties of the *domestikos ton Scholon* in a continuous period of 22 years and 7 months (Theoph. Cont. 426; Scyl. 230). Still, the affirmation of the *domestikos ton Scholon* was nevertheless most visible in the example of the renowned of the Phokas family, whose members throughout four generations were appointed to this post.³³ It is precisely in the case of the Phokai, who were active at the time of Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (913–959) and Romanos II (959–963), that one realises how great a source of power the function of the *domestikos ton Scholon* could offer; meanwhile, on the example of the Phokas family, one can see to what extent the distribution of the most senior-ranking command and military-administrative positions could be linked to particular individuals.

When Constantine VII began to rule in his own right (944/945), Bardas Phokas was awarded the title of *magistros* and appointed to the post of *domestikos ton Scholon* (Theoph. Cont. 436; Sym. Mag. 753).³⁴ A little later,³⁵ his sons were awarded appointments: the eldest, Nikephoros, was appointed *strategos* of the theme of Anatolikon in the rank of *patrikios*; the younger, Leo, also a *patrikios*, became the *strategos* of Cappadocia, while Bardas' youngest son, Constantine, was appointed *strategos* of Seleukeia (Scyl. 238). In this way, the Empire's entire eastern policy came into the hands of representatives of the Phokas family. In addition, the said mandates were not short-term: Bardas Phokas held the post of *domestikos ton Scholon* for the period of one decade. At the end of the year 954 or the beginning of 955, a kind of "silent coup" took place in the Phokas family:³⁶ *magistros* Bardas withdrew from the position of *domestikos ton Scholon*, passing it on to his eldest son,

³² Guiland, Recherches I, 429. A partial prosopographic list of the *domestikoi ton Scholon* of the 9th and 10th centuries was given by Cheynet, Phocas 312–313; in more detail Kühn, Armee 73–92.

³³ The position of *domestikos ton Scholon* was held by Nikephoros Phokas the Elder, his sons Leo and Bardas, and subsequently Bardas' sons, Nikephoros (the future emperor) and Leo (the future *kouropalates*) as well as Bardas, the son of the *kouropalates* Leo. On the Phokas family v. Djurić, Foke; Cheynet, Phocas.

³⁴ Cf. Scyl. 238: *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East.

³⁵ The promotion of the Phokas family did not occur simultaneously, Djurić, Foke 249.

³⁶ Ibid. 251.

Nikephoros, a *patrikios* and till then the *strategos* of Anatolikon; the vacant post of the *strategos* of Anatolikon went to Leo Phokas (Theoph. Cont. 459, 462), while in Cappadocia a close relative of the Phokas family, Constantine Maleinos was appointed to the post of *strategos* in Cappadocia.³⁷

As for the honorary titles that accompanied the appointment of the new *domestikos*, sources provide different data. According to Theophanes Continuatus, Nikephoros Phokas, till then the *patrikios* and *strategos* of Anatolikon, did become the *domestikos ton Scholon* under Constantine VII, but he was only granted the rank of *magistros* by his son, Romanos II (Theoph. Cont. 472). From Leo the Deacon and John Skylitzes, one may conclude that Nikephoros received the title of *magistros* simultaneously with his new post, which means already in 954–955 (Diac. 7; Scyl. 249). Since the *domestikos ton Scholon* was registered as second in rank to the *strategos* of Anatolikon in all the rank lists of Byzantine functionaries, evidently the appointment of Nikephoros Phokas to the position of *domestikos* could, even in the formal sense, be understood as a promotion in the hierarchy (he replaced his father who had withdrawn “by virtue of his years and age”) only if Nikephoros had a title that was senior to that of his brother, the *patrikios* Leo, and *de facto* his successor to the post in the theme of Anatolikon.³⁸

The formal beginning of the reform of the institution of the supreme command (and its further progress) was also linked to the Phokas family.

In the time of Romanos II, the hitherto single function of the *domestikos ton Scholon* was divided into two: in 959/960 the duties of the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East and the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the West were instituted formally (Theoph. Cont. 472).³⁹ The competences of the first were linked to the so-called eastern army while the other had supreme command in the West.⁴⁰ The TE (263_{23–24}) attests that these were regular (formal) functions, in which two officers were registered. Evidently, an order had to be established between them — the East had precedence,

³⁷ According to Sym. Mag. 755, the *patrikios* Leo was appointed *strategos* τῶν δυτικῶν. Cf. Djurić, Foke 252 et n. 66; 254; Cheynet, Phocas 300–302, 314.

³⁸ An individual's place in the official hierarchy was defined according to his honorary titles and duties. In the *taktika*, the *strategos* of Anatolikon had precedence in relation to the *domestikos ton Scholon*. The change in the order of those two functions was due to the title that accompanied them. It would proceed from the previously mentioned that the *strategos* of Anatolikon would have precedence in the case when he and the *domestikos ton Scholon* both held the rank of *patrikios*; if the *domestikos ton Scholon* was a *magistros*, then this title would have given him precedence in relation to a *patrikios* and *strategos* of Anatolikon. However, actually, the example of the *domestikos ton Scholon* shows that the importance of his duties did not represent the criterion based on which his position in the rank list was determined: the *strategos* of Anatolikon traditionally held a higher rank than all the other provincial military and civil functionaries. He also retained this precedence in relation to the five most senior commanding officers mentioned in the TE, even though the sources indicate that the order was different in reality, cf. Oikonomides, Listes 285–288.

³⁹ Cf. Ahrweiler, Administration 56–58; Kühn, Armee 136–138.

⁴⁰ It is believed that in the 10th century, the Byzantine army was divided into two large armies, eastern and western; the first was stationed in the region of Asia Minor, and the second, in the European part of the Empire, *Dagron*, Traité 255; *Lefort*, Rhétorique 274. The core of the western army consisted of units from the Byzantine districts of Thrace and Macedonia; from Tzimiskes' time, they were joined by the troops assigned to the region of the Thessalonike theme, i.e. the *doukaton* of Thessalonike.

considering that it was more important for Byzantium (which can also be seen from the order of the *strategoi* of the themes of Asia Minor and Europe). Thus, the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East held a higher rank than his western counterpart.

The belief prevails that the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East was the true successor of the old *domestikos ton Scholon*,⁴¹ whose primary competences had extended over the eastern military units ever since the times when the supreme military authorities were centralised. At least two questions are linked to instituting the function of the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the West: Which region was in the jurisdiction of this new Byzantine army officer? And secondly — what were the reasons for the institutional regulation of the command system in the West of Byzantium coming so late, when it was evident that in the earlier period, the need had already existed for centralising the supreme command?

As it would transpire, the competences of the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the West were connected almost exclusively with the Balkans and the Balkan army.⁴² Therefore, it turns out that the definition “of the West” in this case had a limited geographical meaning. We know that Byzantium’s most important military problem in the Balkans were the Bulgars. In the period before the post of *domestikos ton Scholon* of the West was created, the unified military command was secured in several ways. In that region, an emperor like Nikephoros I (802–811), for instance, could lead the army in a campaign; however, the chief burden of the Byzantine-Bulgarian war was shouldered by the *strategoi* and the armies of the themes of Thrace and, particularly, Macedonia. In the period when the conflict became more intense, as in the war with Symeon, the supreme command was entrusted to the old *domestikos ton Scholon*. Needless to say, he was accompanied on the Balkan battlefields by military units recruited in the East. In large scale expeditions in the other western parts of the Empire, the supreme command was organised through the local *strategoi* or by awarding the powers of a *monostrategos* (as shown in the examples connected with Byzantium’s engagement in the area of southern Italy and Sicily).

Evidently, there was a need to centralise the supreme military command in the West even before the division of the function of the *domestikos ton Scholon*. The Byzantine West needed a centralised command system at the time when the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East had overshadowed the thematic *strategoi* and taken over command of the eastern troops. Evidence of this is the data about the division of military power in the period of the reign of Michael III: the emperor rewarded the two sons of the *caesar* Bardas by appointing the elder to the post of *domestikos ton Scholon* and the younger as “*monostrategos* of the western armies/themes” (μονοστράτηγος τῶν δυτικῶν) (Sym. Mag. 665).⁴³ However, these were temporary appointments. The institution of the *regular position* of commander in chief over the western army did not

⁴¹ Ahrweiler, Administration 57–58.

⁴² According to Yahya I, 778, Nikephoros Phokas headed the Cretan expedition in 960/961 as *domestikos* of the West, v. further text.

⁴³ Ahrweiler, Administration 57 et n. 4. One should mention an earlier record from the rule of the empress Eirene (797–802), when the eunuch Actios attempted to establish control of the army by retaining

come about until the beginning of the rule of Romanos II, even though at that time, Byzantium was not exposed to any significant pressure in its western territories, as it had been during the long-lasting war with Symeon.

According to Leo the Deacon, Leo Phokas, the brother of Nikephoros Phokas, was appointed “*katarchon* of the armies of Europe” (τῶν τῆς Εὐρώπης στρατιωτικῶν καταλόγων κατάρχοντα) — “the authority which the Rhomaioi call the *domestikos* of the West” (Δομέστικον δύσεως Ῥωμαῖοι τὴν τοιαύτην ἀρχὴν ὀνομάζουσι). His appointment was apparently connected with an incursion by the “Skythian army” (“a tribe they call the Huns”⁴⁴) across the Danube into Byzantine territory which the *domestikos* (or “*strategos*”) successfully repelled (Diac. 18–19). Leo remained briefly in this post: because his brother was occupied with the Cretan expedition, he was re-assigned to Asia in order to take over command in the war against the Arabs.

Because Leo Phokas was the first (?) *domestikos ton Scholon* of the West,⁴⁵ it is likely that the ambitions and needs of the powerful representatives of the Phokas family at least partly explain the creation of the new function. The mere enumeration of the functions that Nikephoros and his brother held in the brief reign of Romanos II indicate the extraordinary dynamism in the organisation of the supreme military command. This dynamism was the result of intense campaigns and was reflected in the numerous appointments to different positions of command. Meanwhile, one should pay attention to the fact that in the sources, different terms were used to designate supreme command functions, some of which represented a formal function, while we do not know whether others were used in a technical or a literary meaning.

Nikephoros Phokas is known to have occupied the position of *domestikos ton Scholon*, apparently in the rank of *magistros*, when the change on the throne occurred in 959. By the year 960, he had been sent against the Cretan Arabs in a war that would end with the conquest of this island in 961. A discrepancy exists in the sources regarding his rank at that time. According to Theophanes Continuatus, he conducted the Cretan expedition as the *domestikos ton Scholon* (Theoph. Cont. 473–481; Sym. Mag. 758–760), while according to Leo the Deacon, he received

for himself command over the eastern themes (of Anatolikon and Opsikion), while his brother, Leo, was appointed *monostrategos* in Thrace and Macedonia, Theoph. 475. On the military significance of Opsikion v. *Lounghis*, Opsikian Domesticates 27–36; for the history of the theme v. *idem*, Μικρά Ασία 163–200.

⁴⁴ Presumably, this refers to the Pechenegs or Ungars, *Djurić*, Foke 253–254.

⁴⁵ Ambiguities exist regarding the name of the first *domestikos ton Scholon* of the West because Theophanes Continuatus in one place (472) refers to Leo Phokas and, in another (480), he mentions that in the time of Romanos II, Marianos Argyros as “*monostrategos* in the theme of Macedonia and *katepano* of the West” repelled the Ungar assault on Thrace. Since the *katepano* of the West was considered to be similar to, or the same as the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the West (*Ahrweiler*, Administration 58, 65; cf. *Kühn*, Armee 145 n. 42), different views were expressed about the name of the first *domestikos ton Scholon* of the West: *Lounghis*, Commandement suprême en Italie, 155, dates the mandate of Marianos Argyros to the time around 959, that is, before the mandate of Leo Phokas. *Cheyne* — *Vannier*, Argyroi 63, attribute Marianos’ mandate to 959 but no connection is established with the mandate of Leo Phokas. *Cheyne*, Nouvelle hypothèse 199, mentions Leo Phokas as the first *domestikos ton Scholon* of the West in 959/960, followed by Nikephoros Phokas, who headed the Cretan expedition of 960/961 in that capacity and, subsequently, Marianos Argyros — 961/962.

special authorities. So, he was described as “*strategos autokrator* in the war against the Cretans” (Diac. 7: αὐτοκράτορα στρατηγὸν τῆς πρὸς τοὺς Κρήτας μάχης κεχειροτόνηκεν). The Arabian author, Yahya of Antioch (I, 778), describes him as the *domestikos* of the West.⁴⁶

We know that under his command was a fleet of more than 3,000 ships, as well as tagmatic and thematic troops and their commanders (Theoph. Cont. 475; 481: τῶν ταγματῶν καὶ τῶν θεματικῶν ἀρχόντων). In addition, taking part in the campaign on Crete were a variety of troops (domestic and mercenary), gathered from various parts of the Empire: there is mention of troops and commanders from Thrace and Macedonia, and also some Slav troops, for whom it was impossible to tell where they had been recruited (Theoph. Cont. 474: ἐπιλέκτου στρατοπέδου Θρακικῶν Μακεδονικῶν καὶ Σθλαβησιάνων; 476); then, there was a separate account of the participation of Russian troops (infantry and cavalry?), who must have been mercenary soldiers (Theoph. Cont. 476); Armenians played an important role in the Cretan war (Theoph. Cont. 481; Diac. 14: τὸ τῶν Ἀρμενίων στίφος; 28), as well as other troops, who had come from the theme of Anatolikon (Theoph. Cont. 476) and from the theme of Thrakesion, under the command of the *strategos Nikephoros Pastilas* (Diac. 8–9).⁴⁷

As the command authorities of the five functionaries mentioned in the TE was exercised principally through the ground forces, it seems that in this case, Nikephoros Phokas was awarded a special mandate. The said quotations show that the Cretan expedition (above all because of the necessary participation of the fleet) was a vast and expensive venture of a specific character; therefore, it must have been a campaign that exceeded the scope of the regular activities of the *domestikos ton Scholon*. Namely, it was not usual for this officer to have command powers over the fleet. So, it seems there are grounds to assume that, even as *domestikos ton Scholon* (of the East or the West?), the prerogatives of Nikephoros Phokas were increased, which Leo the Deacon could express by using the term *strategos autokrator*.⁴⁸

And while *magistros Nikephoros* was occupied on Crete, his brother Leo, whom Romanos II had first appointed *domestikos ton Scholon* of the West in the rank of *magistros* (Theoph. Cont. 472; Sym. Mag 758),⁴⁹ was re-assigned to the East, seeing that the Emir of Aleppo had taken advantage of Byzantium's

⁴⁶ Cf. Cheynet, Nouvelle hypothèse 199 et n. 17; Dagron, Traité 153; 313 (Cheynet, Phocas).

⁴⁷ On the Cretan expedition, v. Ahrweiler, Mer 112–115; in more detail, D. Tsougarakis, Byzantine Crete. From the 5th Century to the Venetian Conquest, Athens 1988, 53–74.

⁴⁸ In the *History* by Leo the Deacon, it emerges that Phokas was the *domestikos ton Scholon* at the time of the change on the throne in 959, and was later awarded the powers of *strategos autokrator* and sent to Crete. After the conquest of Crete, in 961, Romanos II rewarded him and “gave him power over Asia”; after he was “again granted the honour of *domestikos*”, Phokas crossed the Bosphoros and set out against the Arabs, Diac. 29. Cf. Krsmanović, O problemu 103.

⁴⁹ W. Seibt, BZ 67 (1974) 568, proposed a correction in the reading of the inscription on the seal of a certain *magistros* Leo (J. Touratsoglou, Les sceaux byzantins en plomb de la collection Michel Ritsos au Musée de Thessaloniki, Byzantina 5, 1973, 281), to Leo, *magistros* and *domestikos ton Scholon*. Furthermore, Seibt, Reliquiarkreuz 305 et n. 11, assumes that this seal could have belonged to Leo Phokas. Cf. Z II, no. 1077.

engagement on Crete and attacked the eastern regions. In the year 960, Leo successfully pushed back the attack of Sayf al-Daula and returned to the capital where he celebrated a triumph. However, an explanation is still required regarding what function he had. According to Theophanes Continuatus, “the *patrikios* and *domestikos* of the East was sent instead of his brother” (Theoph. Cont. 479: ἐκ προσώπου τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ αὐτοῦ)⁵⁰ to the East, while Leo the Deacon (Diac. 19, 20, 24) describes him as “the *strategos*” in Asia — obviously a literary term. A later source, John Skylitzes, mentions that on that occasion, Leo was elevated to *magistros* and honoured with the title of *domestikos* (Scyl. 250), perhaps with the function of *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East.⁵¹

Data referring to the career of Nikephoros Phokas after the conquest of Chandax (Kandia) testifies that the brothers, apparently, succeeded each other in the position of *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East. According to Leo the Deacon, after the successful termination of the Cretan expedition, the emperor rewarded Nikephoros with gifts and “gave him power over Asia and again honouring him (αὐθις ὑποζωσάμενος) with the title of *domestikos*” (Diac. 29). And so it happened that Nikephoros Phokas as the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East lived to see the beginning and the end of Romanos’ reign.

A summary review of the service of both Phokas brothers fully justifies the assertion by Theophanes Continuatus that the emperor Romanos “entrusted care of the army to the brothers” (Theoph. Cont. 472: τὴν φροντίδα τοῦ στρατοῦ τοῖς ἀνταδέλφοις καταπιστεύσαντα). During his rule, the Phokas brothers fully controlled the Empire’s eastern policy, chiefly through their positions as the *domestikoi ton Scholon* of the East and the West and their special authorities. Meanwhile, one should stress that at issue was not only the fact that the members of the Phokas family were commanders in chief of the army for many years (even though not one Phokas outlasted John Kourkouas, who spent more than two decades in the post of *domestikos ton Scholon*), but that they held these posts continually for several generations and, from the period of the independent rule of Constantine VII, they

⁵⁰ Firstly, Theophanes Continuatus, here, designates Leo Phokas as a *patrikios*, even though earlier (472), he mentioned that Romanos II had elevated him to the rank of *magistros* when he appointed him *domestikos ton Scholon* of the West — a function he had performed before he received command over the eastern army in 960. Secondly, it is not entirely clear how one should interpret the expression ἐκ προσώπου τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ αὐτοῦ, given that the institution *ek prosopou* officially existed in Byzantium. According to the TU, FK and TB, it designated a thematic *strategos*: namely, the emperor could appoint the *ek prosopou tou strategou*, a functionary who was not a *strategos* but possessed his authority (as shown by the example in the DAI 50^{174, 178, 180}). This category of functionary was omitted in the TE but seals show that the institution of the *ek prosopou* also survived in the 11th century, though it referred mainly to civil functionaries. Essentially, the institution of the *ek prosopou* consisted of the emperor being able to grant a dignitary the authorities deriving from a function, without officially appointing him to the function itself. Although the competences of functionaries *ek prosopou* have not been fully clarified (Ahrweiler, Administration 39–40; Oikonomides, Listes 342; Kühn, Armee 144), this institution should be interpreted as an attempt to render official, a widespread practice, that was characteristic for the functioning of the Byzantine state apparatus, which relied on the difference between the awarding of powers and nomination to an adequate function.

⁵¹ Yahya I, 778: *domestikos* of the East. The name of the function of Leo Phokas depends on the interpretation of the function his brother, Nikephoros, had when he was leading the Cretan expedition.

actually succeeded one another, a practice unknown in Byzantium and never legalised:⁵² after the father, Bardas Phokas, the power of the *domestikos ton Scholon* was conveyed to his eldest son, Nikephoros, and then the two brothers succeeded each other in that position. If one can say that in the second half of the 10th century, the Phokas family waged, as it were, semi-private wars in the East,⁵³ broadening the power of the state they served and, at the same time, the power of their own family, several arguments arise for considering at least two questions. Firstly, did the so-called Phokas case involve the phenomenon of the privatisation of a function?⁵⁴ And secondly, in the period of their domination, can one discern the beginnings of the degradation of the function of the *domestikos ton Scholon*, reflected in its division (duplication) and increasing resorting to special authorities (enabling identical or similar powers), and in the fact that the competences of the *domestikos ton Scholon* would become limited in the time that lay ahead?

Pretenders

One could interpret the increase in the number of the most senior commanding officers registered in the TE from one to five primarily as the Byzantine state's true need to formalise the new command duties and enable the more efficient management of military operations. For it was no coincidence that these changes in the organisation of supreme command powers took place at a time of Byzantine military expansion and the significant enlargement of state territories. As a rule, in a situation of intense warfare, changes had to be made on the spot — as the result of immediate circumstances, necessity and the requirement for more efficient solutions. On the other hand, the increased number of top-ranking military functions also signalled the expansion of the high aristocracy, whose representatives aspired to the leading positions in the state for the sake of their own personal and family affirmation. Events linked to the usurpation of Nikephoros Phokas and his rise to power in 963 illustrate the manner in which the hierarchy was established among the Byzantine military leaders and members of the class of magnates.

When Romanos II died in March 963, the formal successors to the throne were his sons, Basil II and Constantine VIII, who were both minors. At the time of the emperor's death, the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East, Nikephoros Phokas was returning to Constantinople from a successful Syrian campaign "having captured over 60 Arabian fortresses" (Diac. 30), among them Berroia (Aleppo) — the capital of Byzantium's long-standing enemy, Sayf al-Daula (Scyl. 253; Zon. 492).⁵⁵ With the celebration of a triumph in Constantinople (in April, 963), the mission of the

⁵² Cf. Μικρά Ασία 81 (V. N. Vlyssidou).

⁵³ Djurić, Foke 249, 253.

⁵⁴ One can say that the "privatisation" of the thematic armies (Haldon, Military service 48) preceded the privatisation central command system.

⁵⁵ In the course of 962, the *domestikos* Nikephoros defeated the inhabitants of Tarsos, and captured the fortresses of Anazarbos, Germanikeia, Telouch and others. He conquered Aleppo, the capital of northern Syria, at the end of 962, though the Byzantines failed to take control of the city's acropolis.

domestikos ton Scholon officially came to an end. In the complex political circumstances caused by the struggle for power, the former *domestikos* endeavoured — by legal means! — to retain command of the troops, which would enable him to protect his own interests. With the patriarch Polyeuktos acting as a mediator, a *synkletos* was convened and Nikephoros Phokas was proclaimed “*strategos autokrator*” at a meeting of the *synkletos* and given command of the “army of Asia” to wage war against the barbarians. Before he was awarded these extraordinary powers, he swore an oath of allegiance to the legitimate emperors: the *strategos autokrator* pledged to do nothing that would oppose their authority; the members of the *synkletos* vowed not to allow anyone access to the highest dignity in the Empire (Diac. 34).

The extraordinary powers of the *strategos autokrator* represented the ultimate honour awarded to Nikephoros Phokas before he would be crowned emperor and *autokrator* of the Rhomaioi in August 963.⁵⁶ However, other dignitaries were also defending their own interests in the political upheaval at that time. Understandably, the positions of the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East and the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the West became the means for the opposing sides to try and secure supporters.

Informations in the sources indicate that in the Byzantine military leadership at that time, three people were seen to be in positions that enabled them to play the role of desirable allies:

- the *strategos* of Anatolikon, John Tzimiskes, in the rank of *patrikios* (Diac. 37–38; Scyl. 256; Zon. 496–497);⁵⁷
- the commander of the Italic armies (τῶν Ἰταλικῶν στρατευμάτων ἡδη κατάρξαντα), the *patrikios*, Marianos Argyros (Diac. 37);
- “the then *stratelates* of the East”, *magistros* Romanos Kourkouas (Scyl. 256; Zon. 496–497).

John Tzimiskes could have been appointed to succeed Leo Phokas in the post of *strategos* of Anatolikon after the latter had been appointed *domestikos ton Scholon* of the West (in 959 or most probably in 960).⁵⁸ The sources clearly state that in the military hierarchy, Tzimiskes was second in rank only to Nikephoros Phokas (Diac. 37; Scyl. 256). This order was not based on formal reasons alone (because Phokas as *magistros*, *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East and subsequently *strategos autokrator* was higher in rank than the *strategos* of Anatolikon in the rank of *patrikios*), but on

The military success in Syria was only temporary. Byzantium would finally establish its rule in Cilicia and part of Syria in the reign of Nikephoros II Phokas and John I Tzimiskes.

⁵⁶ It is possible that Leo the Deacon uses the term *strategos autokrator* in the literary sense, from which it proceeds that in 963, Phokas’ mandate as *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East was merely renewed, *Krsmanović*, O problemu 103.

⁵⁷ Later authors mistakenly ascribe the title of *magistros* to Tzimiskes, when he was the *strategos* of Anatolikon (Scyl. 256; Zon. 496); that title belonged to him along with the position of *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East, which he received from the usurper and, subsequently, from the emperor, Nikephoros Phokas.

⁵⁸ The mandate of John Tzimiskes apparently lasted from 960 to August 963, *Cheyne*, Skyl. 216 n. 12.

the reputation Tzimiskes enjoyed as a military commander. Evidently, the rival parties (and Joseph Bringas, who was designated by the deceased emperor Romanos to be the protector of his legitimate successors, and Nikephoros Phokas) offered him the position of *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East, a rank that not only satisfied his ambitions but also represented a natural step on the upward path of the *strategos* of Anatolikon (a practice the Phokas family had employed successfully during the 10th century⁵⁹). Tzimiskes was elevated to the new title and duty by the usurper Phokas and this title would be formally recognised and verified after his coronation.

Leo the Deacon mentions the *patrikios* Marianos Argyros as the other contender for the position of *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East.⁶⁰ The term designating his function, “commander of the Italic armies”, is not precise and leaves room for different interpretations,⁶¹ particularly if one considers the previous service of Marianos Argyros. Under Constantine VII, he had occupied the post of *strategos* of Calabria and Longobardia but he had also commanded the troops from the themes of Thrace and Macedonia (Theoph. Cont. 453–454); therefore, it is assumed that in his case, an accumulation of functions had come about — a characteristic and frequent phenomenon in the Byzantine command and military-administrative system.⁶² During the rule of Romanos II, Marianos was mentioned as the “*monostrategos* in the theme of Macedonia and the then *katepano* of the West” (Theoph. Cont. 480: μονοστρατηγούντος ἐν τῷ θέματι τῆς Μακεδονίας καὶ κατεπάνω ὄντος τῆς δύσεως). The combination of appointments the source enumerates is interesting. The term “*katepano* of the West” most probably implies the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the West,⁶³ the post to which Marianos was appointed at the time when Leo Phokas (the first *domestikos* of the West⁶⁴) was re-assigned to Asia (960–961). However, the term “*monostrategos*”, which signifies the sole military commander in a particular region or of particular military units, is questionable. Its use in this place could be explained by the literary ambitions of the author and his effort to stress the domain of command powers of “the *katepano* of the West”. Evidently, in this case, it

⁵⁹ From the second half of the 9th century, the order of elevation — from the *strategos* of Anatolikon to the *domestikos ton Scholon* — was characteristic for the majority of officers, who became *domestikoi ton Scholon*, Cheynet, Phocas 297 n. 27, 313. However, the first to ascend by such a hierarchical order was Manuel the Armenian, the *domestikos ton Scholon* from the time of Theophilos, Krstanović, Potencijal 408–410.

⁶⁰ About the career of Marianos Argyros v. Vannier, Argyroi 30–32; Lounghis, Commandement suprême en Italie 154–157; Cheynet — Vannier, Argyroi 62–63.

⁶¹ The position of *katepano* of Italy was established during the reign of Nikephoros II Phokas (Falkenhausen, Untersuchungen 49, 83; Oikonomidēs, Listes 354), therefore, it is not a question of that function, here. The task of Marianos Argyros may have been connected with the units from the region of southern Italy, which belonged to the themes of Longobardia and Calabria. The dilemma also exists about whether Marianos had command over the “Italic troops” at the time when Joseph Bringas appealed to him, or whether this was a description of his former function, Lounghis, Commandement suprême en Italie 157; Cheynet — Vannier, Argyroi 63.

⁶² Falkenhausen, Untersuchungen 28, 81 no. 20; 99 no. 73; 165–166; Vannier, Argyroi 30; Cheynet — Vannier, Argyroi 63.

⁶³ Ahrweiler, Administration 58, 65; Falkenhausen, Untersuchungen 81 no. 20; Vannier, Argyroi 31; Kühn, Armee 145 n. 42.

⁶⁴ V. p. 23 et n. 45.

does not refer to the accumulation of two (almost equivalent) command positions but to a description of the function of the “*katepano* of the West”, whose jurisdiction extended to the troops from the themes of Macedonia and Thrace.⁶⁵

In the events connected with the usurpation of Nikephoros Phokas, Marianos was mentioned as *patrikios* and “commander of the Italic armies” on two occasions. He was the first person Joseph Bringas addressed for support, offering him in return the position of *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East. Marianos allegedly rejected the promotion and sent the *parakoimomenos* to John Tzimiskes, “the second *strategos*” in repute, after Nikephoros Phokas. From other reports, we learn that Marianos remained loyal to Joseph Bringas’ party. And, with the *patrikios* Paschalios, he commanded the “Macedonian *phalanga*” that were stationed in the capital and he was killed in street fighting (Diac. 37, 45–46).

According to the later author, John Skylitzes, the position of the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the West was also the subject of negotiations: Joseph Bringas offered the position to “the then *stratelates* of the East”, *magistros* Romanos Kourkouas, who occupied the last place in the hierarchical order of the three personalities who represented the military leadership of the Byzantine army at that time (Nikephoros Phokas, John Tzimiskes, Romanos Kourkouas). The expression that designates his official position is interesting because the *stratelates* was one of the four new officers mentioned in the TE. Meanwhile, this was the sole function of the supreme military command which was not divided at that time, so that the official rank list does not register the *stratelates* of the East — a term belonging to the later period, when Skylitzes was writing.⁶⁶ Since, for certain reasons, it is accepted that the *stratelates* was first mentioned as a formal function in connection with Bardas Skleros, who was appointed to this position during Tzimiskes’ time, it turns out that in the case of Romanos Kourkouas, it involved a literary description of some other function.⁶⁷ However, it is striking that in this place, Skylitzes expressed himself accurately with respect to the function of John Tzimiskes, using the technical (*strategos* of Anatolikon) and not the literary expression. In addition, Kourkouas had the lofty title of *magistros*, which would lead one to conclude that his position must have belonged to the group of higher command functions, which Skylitzes, perhaps, expressed by the term used in his epoch. There are no more details about him in the narrative sources, but the seal of a certain Romanos, *magistros* and *domestikos ton Scholon* of the West, was recently published (Bleisiegel II, no. 247). In the opinion of the publisher, it belonged to this very Romanos Kourkouas. The possibility was left open that Kourkouas took over the position of *domestikos ton Scholon* of the West either at the intervention of Bringas (to whom Skylitzes refers) or after Nikephoros Phokas’ accession to the throne, and the seal is thus dated to the period 963/969.

⁶⁵ V. pp. 63–64.

⁶⁶ *Oikonomides*, *Listes* 332.

⁶⁷ Following Skylitzes’ system, *Cheyne*, *Skyl.* 217 n. 13, suggested that Kourkouas was the commander of some large eastern theme, to all intents and purposes, the theme of Armeniakon, given that its *strategos* came after the *strategos* of Anatolikon (John Tzimiskes).

The *domestikos* under control

Data on the awarding of titles after the accession of Nikephoros II (963–969) illustrates that the position of the *domestikos ton Scholon* had lost significance for the Phokas family. Since the new emperor looked for support within his own family, the highest honours were conferred on his father, the old Bardas Phokas, who received the title of *caesar* and thus, at least formally, he became the second man in the Empire. The emperor's brother, Leo, received a real share of power, and was honoured with the title of *kouropalates* and the position of *logothetes tou dromou*.⁶⁸ When Nikephoros sent an expedition against the Sicilian Arabs at the beginning of his reign (963), he entrusted the *patrikios* Manuel, the illegitimate son of Leo Phokas (the *domestikos ton Scholon* from the year 917⁶⁹), with command of the land forces. The eunuch Basil Lakapenos, formerly the *parakoimomenos* of Constantine VII, was granted the title of *proedros*.⁷⁰ The fact that this was a dignity Nikephoros II had created for him, and that Basil was mentioned in the place where the promotions of the emperor's closest relatives were recorded, eloquently illustrates the significance of this eunuch's role in the events in the capital in July–August of 963. And finally, the title of *magistros* and the rank of *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East, which Nikephoros, in the time when he was the pretender to the throne, had conferred on the emperor's nephew and comrade in arms, John Tzimiskes, were verified (Diac. 49).

For Nikephoros Phokas, the position of the *domestikos ton Scholon* had opened the way to the throne. This was one of the factors that influenced the changes in the organisation of the supreme command. It is noticeable that the arrival of Phokas on the throne heralded the degradation of the function of the *domestikos ton Scholon*. After the year 963, the competences of this officer became increasingly limited. This change was facilitated by the fact the emperor himself was an experienced soldier so that he personally commanded the majority of campaigns in his epoch. There was no longer any need for the ruler to transfer the prerogatives of supreme military power (entirely) to some other person as had been case in the times of Constantine VII and Romanos II. Consequently, in the reign of Nikephoros II, *magistros* John Tzimiskes, the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East, appears in military operations that one could qualify as limited expeditions, in terms of purpose, territory and duration.

Towards the end of 963, he commanded an expedition in Cilicia and on that occasion, before the well fortified Adana, scored a brilliant victory over the Arabs, which Skylitzes estimated as “the beginning/cause of the fall of the Sarakenoi” (Scyl. 268; Zon. 501). According to Leo the Deacon, Tzimiskes also took part in the campaign that ended in the conquest of Tarsos (on August 16th, 965). This campaign was commanded by the emperor himself and Tzimiskes was mentioned as the commander of the left wing of the Byzantine army, designated as δοῦξ (Diac. 59) —

⁶⁸ Liudpr. 188, 193. The titles of Leo (Phokas) are attested on the seal, Z II no. 1081; cf. Cheynet, Phokas 302 et n. 41.

⁶⁹ Scyl. 261; Zon. 501.

⁷⁰ *Oikonomides*, Listes 299.

a term for the commander of the tagmatic troops.⁷¹ One should add that Skylitzes made no reference at all to Tzimiskes in the third Cilician campaign but claimed that it was commanded by the emperor Nikephoros Phokas and his brother, the *kouropalates* Leo (Scyl. 268–269).

Stratopedarches instead of domestikos

It is not known exactly when John Tzimiskes was divested of his duties as *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East and demobilised. Sources refer to his demobilisation as the explanation and the prelude to the story of a conspiracy against Nikephoros II, which was to end in the emperor's murder (in the night between December 10th and 11th in 969) and the ascent to power of John I Tzimiskes. Leo the Deacon, John Skylitzes, Michael Psellos and John Zonaras insist that Tzimiskes' discontent resulted from being deprived of his military powers and distanced from all affairs (Diac. 88: ἡ τῶν στρατευμάτων ἀρχή; Scyl. 279–280). Psellos' and Zonaras' testimony is particularly interesting, as they attribute the blame for Tzimiskes' degradation to the *kouropalates* Leo: allegedly, the latter had slandered the *domestikos* to the emperor; as Tzimiskes had become suspicious, the emperor "withheld his military powers and granted him civil authority instead, appointing him as the *logothetes tou dromou*"; Tzimiskes did not view this appointment as promotion but as a severe punishment; he was then imprisoned and banished from his estates (Hist. Syn. 100, 102; Zonaras 516–517).⁷² In Psellos' and Zonaras' account, evidently some confusion had occurred. The *kouropalates* was the *logothetes tou dromou* and it is not clear why Phokas would offer Tzimiskes that position.

In the literature, his dismissal and demobilisation is linked with the appointment of the eunuch Peter to the post of *stratopedarches*,⁷³ a function that was the equivalent of the *domestikos ton Scholon* as regards content: this was a high-ranking commander of the army on campaign, where in contrast to the *domestikos ton Scholon*, the position of *stratopedarches* was accessible to eunuchs. In time, this practice would change so that the said difference between the *domestikos ton Scholon* and the *stratopedarches* would disappear. The TE (263_{25–26}) listed two *stratopedarchai* — one for the eastern and one for the western part of the Empire. In the official hierarchy, the position of these officers was below that of the *strategos* of Anatolikon and the *domestikoi ton Scholon* of the East and the West. Still, despite

⁷¹ Ahrweiler, Administration 58–59; *Oikonomidēs*, Listes 344.

⁷² Quoting Theophanes Continuatus, Kühn, Armee 147, mentions that in the list of *domestikoi ton Scholon* of the East, after Tzimiskes, the *patrikios* Theophilos Kourkouas, brother of the *magistros* and *domestikos ton Scholon* John Kourkouas from the time of Romanos I Lakapenos, occupied this position (around 966/969). However, it is clear from the sources that the said Theophilos, *patrikios* and *strategos* of Chaldia, also active in the time of Lakapenos, left a "grandson" (ἐκγονος), John Tzimiskes, the *domestikos ton Scholon* in the time of Nikephoros II Phokas, Theoph. Cont. 428; in other words, the data about the *magistros* and *domestikos ton Scholon* from Phokas' time, refers to Tzimiskes and not to Theophilos Kourkouas.

⁷³ *Oikonomidēs*, Listes 335. Tzimiskes was demobilised around either 965 (*V. N. Vlyssidou*, Μικρά Ασία 82) or 967 (*Cheyne*, Skyl. 228 n. 54).

two officially established *stratopedarchai* in the period of the rule of Nikephoros II, John I Tzimiskes and Basil II, we know for certain about the activities of one, whose authorities when needed covered the eastern and the western zones of war.

The eunuch Peter was a *doulos* (Scyl. 272), a servant or an escort (Zon. 508; Yahya I, 816) of Nikephoros II Phokas, whom the emperor nominated as *stratopedarches* in 967 in the rank of *patrikios* (Diac. 81).⁷⁴ Initially, his activities were territorially limited to the region of Cilicia (according to Skylitzes, he was actually appointed as *stratopedarches* in Cilicia: ὃν δὴ καὶ στρατοπεδάρχην πεποίηκεν ἐν Κιλικίᾳ, Scyl. 272; Zon. 508–509). Peter had the task of finding accommodation and preparing the army to spend the winter of 968/969 so that it would be ready for military operations in the region of Syria, the principal objective of which would be the conquest of Antioch. In order to take up positions in the direction of Antioch, Nikephoros II erected the fortress of Maaron Oros (φρούριον Μαῦρον ὄρος) in the Amanos Mountains.⁷⁵ Its first *strategos* was the *patrikios* Michael Bourtzēs⁷⁶ (Scyl. 271; Zon. 508), who, according to Leo the Deacon, “served as the *taxiarchos*”⁷⁷ (Diac. 81). Contrary to the emperor’s orders, Bourtzēs launched an attack on the city, after calling the *stratopedarches* Peter to his aid. The two military commanders managed to conquer Antioch by the end of October 969 (Diac. 81–82; Scyl. 271–273; Zon. 509–510), but Bourtzēs was dismissed from his post for disobedience (as a result of which he would take part in John Tzimiskes’ conspiracy), while the *stratopedarches* Peter, despite being “accused” (Scyl. 273; Zon. 510; Yahya I, 825), would resume the campaign after the conquest of Antioch, and continue the advance towards Aleppo (ibid. 823–824). The *stratopedarches* Peter was not divested of his duties and survived two changes on the throne in this same position, performing his duties both under Tzimiskes and Basil II until he died in 977.

The limitation of authorities

The connection between John Tzimiskes’ dismissal from the post of the *domestikos ton Scholon* and the establishment of the function of the *stratopedarches* shows that the state did not need to have a *domestikos ton Scholon*. Therefore, this was a planned and as such a regular position which did not have to be filled, in any case like all the functions known in the *taktika*. And, once again, this proved the emperor could formalise a new function if required or give extended powers to an already appointed functionary. Data on the commanders of campaigns from the period of the rule of Nikephoros II Phokas indicates that the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East (John Tzimiskes) and the *stratopedarches* (Peter) did not deserve so much credit for the conquests that significantly extended the eastern Byzantine border.

⁷⁴ *Oikonomidēs*, Listes 334 n. 273. Kühn, Armee 265.

⁷⁵ Cf. pp. 98, 113–114.

⁷⁶ *Laurent*, Antioche 229–231; *Études prosopographiques* 18–24 (*Cheyne*).

⁷⁷ The *taxiarchos* commanded a military detachment of 1,000 men, *Oikonomidēs*, Listes 335–336; *J. –C. Cheyne*, Note sur l’axiarque et le taxiarque, *REB* 44 (1986) 233–235. Cf. Yahya I, 816, according to whom Bourtzēs, the commander of a unit of 1,000 men, was linked to the Bagras/Pagras fort.

Sources indicate that the activities of these two highest-ranking commanding officers were primarily linked to the region of Cilicia, where intense operations were conducted from 963 to 965, culminating in the conquest of Mopsuestia and Tarsos. However, these campaigns were commanded by the emperor: in 964, with an army consisting of "the Rhomaioi and allies, the Iberians and Armenians", he destroyed Anazarbos, Rossos and Adana, and "a large number of other fortresses" (Scyl. 268); after wintering in Cappadocia, in the spring 965, he continued subjugating Cilicia, and captured Mopsuestia and Tarsos; Leo the *kouropalates* took part in the final campaign (Scyl. 268–270),⁷⁸ sharing the supreme command with his brother, apparently without an appointment to any particular military function that would define his position. After the subjugation of the Cilician fortresses, the emperor turned his sights on Syria and its metropolis of Antioch. His operations in this area had already been recorded in 966. In the sequence of events, it appears that the nomination of Peter as *stratopedarches* (967), i.e. placing the army (in Cilicia?) under the single command of an officer with broad powers, was primarily intended to cement the conquests in Cilicia and establish a front for the assault on Syria. The first operation in the region of Syria was personally commanded by Nikephoros II Phokas. The sources note that he found himself beneath the walls of Antioch on two occasions: in spring "in the third year of his rule" (966), he appeared before the city, but instead of attacking it, he led the expedition into the interior of Syria (εἰς τὰ ἐνδότερα μέρη τῆς Συρίας ἐχώρησε), "subjugating many cities and regions (χώρας) in the vicinity of Lebanon or the coast" (Scyl. 270–271); in the year 968, on returning from an expedition in northern Syria, Nikephoros again stood before the walls of Antioch, consolidating the positions he had captured before returning to his capital.

In the record of other areas where Byzantium was endeavouring to expand its rule, operations were commanded either by officers whose appointment was closely connected with a particular expedition or the military-administrative personnel of a province. The special expedition that was sent to Sicily in 964 was commanded by the *patrikios* Manuel, who was accompanied the eunuch, *patrikios* Niketas, *droungarios* of the fleet (Diac. 65–66; Scyl. 261–267). In the time of Nikephoros Phokas, Byzantium established its rule on Cyprus (965) and, according to Skylitzes, the emperor "drove out the Hagarenoi from there thanks to the *patrikios* and *strategos* Niketas Chalkoutzes" (Scyl. 270).⁷⁹

The *stratopedarches* and the *stratelates*

The Byzantine-Russian war for Bulgaria marked the imperial rule of John I Tzimiskes (969–976). Although the conflict was terminated in 971, that is, during

⁷⁸ The "doux" John Tzimiskes took part in the conquest of Tarsos, Diac. 59. Cf. pp. 30–31.

⁷⁹ The Cypriots were neutral and paid tribute to the Muslims and to the Byzantines; the island was taken without much effort in 965, *Ahrweiler*, Mer 115, 119 n. 5. For the earlier period cf. C. P. Kyrris, *The Nature of the Arab-Byzantine Relations in Cyprus from the middle of the 7th to the middle of the 10th Century A.D.*, Graeco-arabica 3 (1984) 149–175.

the second year of the rule of the successor of Nikephoros II, its effects in terms of expanding the Empire's frontiers made a profound impression on Byzantine authors. On the subject of provincial administration, the subjugation of one part of the territory of the Bulgarian Empire and the organisation of Byzantine rule in the said area is illustrative for several reasons.

The organisation of the military campaigns against Svjatoslav, the distribution of functions, and the classification of the participants mentioned in the sources make it possible, at least in part, to follow and reconstruct the organisation of the supreme military command and to gain an insight into the way it functioned both in conditions of war and once Byzantine authority had been established. From the sources, it is also obvious that this war unfolded in two stages and that the second was conducted on a larger scale by John Tzimiskes himself, with the support of the Empire's most renowned officers.

Given that Tzimiskes took over on the throne in December 969, after the murder of his predecessor, it is clear that he was obliged to concentrate on strengthening the power he had gained. Consequently, first of all, he began to carry out personnel changes in the administration of the capital and the provinces, appointing his own people to the most senior offices of state (Diac. 95: ταῖς μεγίσταις τῆς πολιτείας ἀρχαῖς οἰκείους ἄνδρας ἀποκαθίστησι; 96: τοὺς τε τοπάρχας τῶν χωρῶν ἀπάντων μεθίστησι, καὶ οἰκείους ἀντ' ἐκείνων ἀποκαθίστησι). Thus, it came to pass that in the first year of his reign, the problem of Russian-Byzantine relations, which John I had inherited from his predecessor, was in the jurisdiction of the reliable military commanders whom he trusted.

Preparations for war with the Russians commenced, it seems, immediately after Tzimiskes' coronation. The importance attached to the impending struggle for Bulgaria is evident, among other things, from the reports that the emperor formed a special unit for the war with the Russians, which consisted of trained and experienced soldiers called *Athanatoi/Immortals* (Diac. 107). This unit, created at the very beginning of his reign, was also assigned to strengthen the emperor's personal guard.⁸⁰

We know that the first stage of the war took place during the year 970 and that it was limited to the theme of Macedonia and Thrace, where the Russians had penetrated. The sources, however, provide contradictory data regarding the organisation of supreme military authority. According to Leo the Deacon, a dual

⁸⁰ After his brother's murder, the *kouropalates* Leo could have attempted to win over the inhabitants of the capital and avoid bloodshed, since people appointed by Nikephoros II occupied state functions (οἱ τὰς τῆς πολιτείας ἐγκχευρισμένοι ἀρχὰς πρὸς τοῦ Νικηφόρου ταύτας εἰλήφεσαν). Besides, the army, which he commanded, was in the city, Diac. 95. In such a set of circumstances, understandably, Tzimiskes must have had armed men with him. The *tagma ton Athanaton* (*Immortals*), founded at the beginning of Tzimiskes rule, is also mentioned in *De re militari*, a military treatise from the time of Basil II that examines the period of 991–995, v. Three Byzantine Military Treatises, Campaign Organization and Tactics 250₁₀₀, 252₁₆₁. It soon disappeared from the sources, only to reappear under Michael VII Doukas. The presence of that detachment would be attested on several occasions at the end of the 11th and beginning of the 12th centuries, *Oikonomidēs*, *Listes* 332–333; Kühn, *Armee* 243–246. The TE (271₀₂; 273₂₅) also registered the functionaries connected with the *tagma ton Athanaton*: the *domestikos ἀθανάτων* and his subordinate *topoteretes*.

command was established over the army: *magistros* Bardas Skleros and *patrikios* Peter, *stratopedarches* (appointed to this function by Tzimiskes' predecessor) were designated as the leaders of the *Immortals* and other military troops. They were sent to the frontier with Bulgaria to spend the winter at the beginning of 970 and prepare the army for the coming war (Diac. 107). According to another relevant but later source, John Skylitzes, Tzimiskes mobilised "the armies of the East", ordering them to cross over to "the West" and, on that occasion, appointed the *magistros* Bardas Skleros as the "*archon*" of the army, "whom he called the *stratelates*" (Scyl. 288). Skylitzes would only mention the *stratopedarches* Peter in the second stage of the Russian-Byzantine war.⁸¹ Leo the Deacon also claimed that Skleros had been appointed as the *stratelates* (a function attested in the TE), however, he linked the said appointment to the rebellion of Bardas Phokas.⁸² According to that source, it transpires that Skleros was appointed to lead the unit of the *Immortals*, but also to command of the armies in Thrace (Diac. 117: τοῦτον ἐν μαγίστροις τελοῦντα καὶ τῶν ἐπὶ Θράκης στρατευμάτων ἐπιστατοῦντα). When the emperor recalled him from the Balkan battlefield because of the rebellion of Bardas Phokas, and ordered him to make his way with the troops to the East, he appointed him "*stratelates* against the rebels" (Diac. 117: στρατηλάτην ἀνακηρύξας κατὰ τῶν στασιωτῶν). After Skleros' withdrawal to the East, *magistros* John Kourkouas, Tzimiskes' relative (Diac. 148), remained in Adrianople "to whom the army there was entrusted" (Diac. 126: τοῦ τὴν ἐπιστάσιαν τῆς ἐνταῦθα στρατιᾶς ἐγχειρισθέντος).

From the data about the engagement of the *magistros* Bardas Skleros, the dilemma arises as to whether his appointment to the post of *stratelates* was connected with the Russian-Byzantine war or involved crushing the rebellion of Bardas Phokas. If we pay attention to the data Leo the Deacon offers, we see that Skleros was the commander of the troops stationed in Thrace-Macedonia, but it is still unclear whether, in such a case, he possessed authorities of an administrative nature in that area (which, on the one hand, was threatened by Russian incursions while on the other, it served a Byzantine base facing Bulgaria). Which army Skleros commanded is also questionable; according to Leo the Deacon, this would have been the unit of the *Immortals* and the army that was in Thrace-Macedonia; on the other hand, Skylitzes mentions him in several places (from the start of the war) only as the commander of the eastern *tagmata* (Scyl. 288: τὰς ἐφ' ὧς δυνάμεις; 300–301: μετὰ τῶν ἐφ' ὧν δυνάμεων; 308: μετὰ τῶν ταγμάτων). It is also revealing that Leo the Deacon repeatedly called Skleros a *stratelates* while writing about the events related to the rebellion of Bardas Phokas (Diac. 117, 120, 121, 125, 126); yet, in the part of his *History* where he resumes his account of the Russian-Byzantine conflict (the second stage of the war for Bulgaria), he would call him a *magistros* just as consistently (Diac. 137, 155).

⁸¹ After conquering Antioch, the *stratopedarches* Peter continued his expedition against Aleppo, so that at the end of 969 and at the beginning of 970, he was at the eastern front, cf. p. 37 and n. 86.

⁸² The Phokai launched two rebellions under Tzimiskes, of which the one Bardas organised required a greater engagement of military forces to crush, *Djurić*, Foke 273–274; *Cheyne*, Pouvoir 24–26.

Skylitzes mentions Bardas Skleros as a *stratelates* on two occasions: first, in the already mentioned part of his work, where he speaks about the beginning of the war (and even then he mentions Skleros as a *stratelates* — the commander of the eastern army) and a second time, in the section dealing with the beginning of the rule of Basil II, where he describes Skleros as “the *stratelates* of all the East” (Scyl. 314: στρατηλάτης ... πάσης ἀνατολῆς). This suggests that either Skleros performed the duties of *stratelates* throughout John Tzimiskes’ entire reign or that he was appointed to this post on two occasions. In that case, where Skylitzes territorially limits Skleros’ function (“the *stratelates* of all the East”), it represents either an example of the anachronous use of the term (as in the case of Romanos Kourkouas, mentioned earlier), or the desire to point out that the military power of the *stratelates* Skleros extended over the eastern *tagmata*. Also, it should be said that the expression πάσης ἀνατολῆς was exaggerated: Skleros, obviously, could not have been the commander of “all the East” but in the customary manner of Byzantine authors, Skylitzes was thereby saying that this was the dominant function in relation to the others connected with the eastern army.

The question of whether Skleros was appointed to the position of *stratelates* is important because it involved an officer the TE (263²⁷) mentioned last among the five supreme military commanders. Skleros’ promotion to the rank of *stratelates* for the first time confirmed the technical use of this term: it meant the commander of a *tagma ton Stratelaton* (Scyl. 315: τάγμα τῶν στρατηλατῶν). We know that Bardas Skleros used this *tagma* in his rebellion in 976, which means that it had been formed earlier.⁸³

When commanding the army on campaign, in essence, the authorities of the *stratelates* were similar or identical to the powers of the *domestikos ton Scholon* or the *stratopedarches*. The information Leo the Deacon offered, suggests that the appointment of the *stratelates* was connected with expeditions of a very specific nature: the suppression of the rebellion of Bardas Phokas that broke out in Cappadocia. Once it was crushed, Bardas Skleros was deprived of the powers of a *stratelates* and reassigned to the Balkan war zone, where he joined in the Byzantine-Russian war. The source did not specify his function but recognised his title of *magistros*, which did not imply the performance of any duty, especially not military, though in a certain sense it was significant. A similar example is presented in the already mentioned engagement of Leo Phokas in the Cilician war. The sources, as a rule, recognised him according to his title of *kouropalates*.

In contrast to Leo the Deacon, Skylitzes’ data suggests that during Tzimiskes’ entire reign Skleros performed the duties of a *stratelates* (or perhaps that he was appointed twice to the same position). This author defined this duty, explaining the

⁸³ In more detail *Oikonomidēs*, *Listes* 332–333; *Kühn*, *Armee* 247–249. Otherwise, from the word στρατός — *army* and the verb ἐλαύνω — *to move*, the verb στρατηλατέω is formed, the basic meaning of which is *to conduct the army*; hence στρατηλάτης means *military commander*, i.e. one who leads the army on an expedition. It is possible that this referred to an elite *tagma*, the more so, as John Skylitzes mentions that Michael Bourtzes (who was certainly not an ordinary soldier), at the end of Tzimiskes’ rule and the very beginning of Basil’s reign (976), was a member of “Skleros’ *hetaireia*” and the commander of one *tagma*, Scyl. 315; v. p. 46.

reasons why Basil II at the beginning of his reign in 976 degraded Skleros, by appointing him *doux* of the *tagmata* in Mesopotamia: "the emperor was fearful of him (sc. Skleros) who at that time commanded the entire Rhomaic force, and led it with ease, transferring it wherever he wanted — because he had been proclaimed the *stratelates* of all the East. He believed it was advantageous and safe for the Empire to decimate the majority of (sc. his) forces and lessen his power to commit the rebellion he suspected" (Scyl. 314).⁸⁴ From the above, it would follow that the *stratelates* was the commander in chief of the entire army — in Skleros' case — of the East, that the numerical strength of his troops (which could not have been reduced to one *tagma ton Stratelon*) represented a danger to the central authority (because of which Basil gave him power over limited troops, with the function of *doux* of the *tagmata* in Mesopotamia) and finally, that the units under the command of the *stratelates* were extremely mobile. John Skylitzes consistently mentions the mobility of the armies and commanders in his account of the military engagement of Bardas Skleros: one of the commanders in chief in the Balkan war and subsequently the commander of the army that crushed the eastern rebellion; after circumstances in Asia Minor settled, he returned to the Balkans and joined in Tzimiskes' offensive in the region of Bulgaria. And during all that time, he was followed by the eastern units, i.e. the eastern *tagmata* (Scyl. 288, 294, 300–301, 308; Diac. 126).⁸⁵

While Skleros' appointment is questionable inasmuch as one cannot definitely tell when or how long he performed the duty of a *stratelates* (moreover, in Tzimiskes' time, the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East was also active), narrative sources provide data conveying an entirely different picture about the *stratopedarches* of that time. After the murder of Nikephoros II, the eunuch Peter, though very close to the Phokas family, did not share the fate of its members nor of the close associates of the deceased emperor. In a situation of personnel changes in the imperial administration, when Tzimiskes installed "his own people" in prominent positions in the capital and the provinces (Diac. 95: οἰκείους ἄνδρας), Peter kept his post — as a *stratopedarches* in the rank of *patrikios*. At the time of Nikephoros Phokas' assassination, he was far away from the capital, given that after the conquest of Antioch, on campaign, he was advancing towards Aleppo (Yahya I, 823–824).⁸⁶ It is quite certain that he had no part in John Tzimiskes' conspiracy, so his survival as *stratopedarches* can be explained by the confidence the new emperor had in his great military abilities, as the sources confirm (Diac. 107; Scyl. 272, 315; Zon. 508–509). Besides, it was not without importance that his influence in the army did not represent a danger to central authority by nature of the fact that he was a eunuch. The fact that Peter retained the position of *stratopedarches* even under Tzimiskes' successor, Basil II, would appear to confirm that he maintained some sort of distance where politics were concerned.

⁸⁴ Cf. Zon. 539: ... στρατηλάτην ὄντα καὶ πάσας ὑφ' ἑαυτὸν ἔχοντα τὰς ἐφ' ἑαυτὸν δυνάμεις.

⁸⁵ The similarity of duties of the *domestikos ton Scholon* and the *stratelates* led to some authors attributing the function of *domestikos ton Scholon* to Skleros, which would mean that they understood *stratelates* as the literary word to describe his official position, *Seibt*, Skleroi 31; *Kühn*, *Armee* 148.

⁸⁶ A treaty was signed with the Emir of Aleppo in December 969/January 970, in which the Emir pledged to pay tribute to Byzantium, *Farag*, Aleppo 45–46.

The engagement of the *stratopedarches* Peter in the time of Nikephoros II Phokas was linked to the eastern regions (Cilicia and subsequently Syria) whereas during John Tzimiskes' rule, he was mentioned only in connection with the Balkan operations. According to Leo the Deacon, the *stratopedarches* was one of the two commanders in chief in the first stage of the Russian-Byzantine war (Diac. 107). In the second phase, in 971, in the siege of Dorostolon, Peter was mentioned as commander "of the Thracians and the Macedonians" (ὁ στρατοπεδάρχης μετὰ Θρακῶν καὶ Μακεδόνων), who were assigned to guarding the eastern gate of the city, while Bardas Skleros was responsible for guarding the western gate (Scyl. 300–301). We do not know whether Peter inherited the command of the said armies, apparently the troops (tagmatic or thematic?) of the two most important Balkan themes — Thrace and Macedonia — from *magistros* John Kourkouas. At the time when Bardas Skleros was reassigned to the East, to suppress the rebellion of Bardas Phokas, Kourkouas was given command over the army stationed in the region of Macedonia, with headquarters in Adrianople. We know that because of his drinking, carelessness and incompetence, the emperor personally had to procure supplies of food and weapons for the army (Diac. 126–127). The impression of the unreliability of John Kourkouas, who, in the course of 971, escorted the emperor on his campaign through Bulgaria, and was finally killed in the battle against the Russians at Dorostolon, is substantiated by a brief description of his destruction and looting of the many Bulgarian churches that he came across during the war (Diac. 148; Scyl. 304).⁸⁷

The order and question of precedence

After the termination of the war in the Balkans and the consolidation of power, Tzimiskes turned to the East. The record exists of an expedition in the region of Mesopotamia, in 972/973, which was commanded by a certain Melias, a *domestikos ton Scholon*. The imperial army was defeated in a battle with the Hamdanidic army outside Amida, and Melias was taken prisoner and died in captivity (Yahya II, 353–354; Matthew of Edessa 16–17).⁸⁸ This refers to the only item of information referring to the *domestikos ton Scholon* in Tzimiskes' reign, whose activities involved an expedition of limited character. Since the emperor would personally take command in the successful campaigns in the East in 974, and particularly in 975, understandably, there would no longer be any information about the *domestikos ton Scholon*.

According to the Greek sources, in Tzimiskes' time, two officers dominated in the military hierarchy — the *stratopedarches* and the *stratelates*. In the TE, the *stratelates* was second in command to the *stratopedarches* of the East and the

⁸⁷ *Stamatina McGrath*, *The Battles of Dorostolon (971): Rhetoric and Reality, Peace and War in Byzantium*, 158–159, 164.

⁸⁸ In more detail *H. Grégoire*, *Notes épigraphiques*, Byz. 8/1 (1933) 79–88; *Canard*, *Date des expéditions* 99–108; *Seibt*, *Skleroi* 35; *N. Thierry*, *Un portrait de Jean Tzimiscès en Cappadoce*, TM 9 (1985) 477–484; *Kühn*, *Armée* 148. A seal exists of Melias, *strategos* of the theme of Chortzine, dated to the late 10th century (Z II p. 147–148, no. 227); for a discussion about the inscription on the other seal, whose owner was George Melias v. p. 109 n. 154.

stratopedarches of the West (TE 263₂₅₋₂₇). However, did the order among these Byzantine officers correspond to the situation in the field? The contradictory data of Leo the Deacon and John Skylitzes regarding the appointment of Bardas Skleros as *stratelates* precludes a definite reply to this question, as well as to the question of the limiting the command authorities of these two officers. It is obvious that the narrative sources devote more attention to Bardas Skleros. The reason for this may lie in the fact that Skleros, as the brother of Tzimiskes' first wife, Maria (Diac. 107; Scyl. 288), represented one of the closest and most loyal associates of the emperor, who was entrusted with the command in the war for Bulgaria and also with the task of crushing the dangerous rebellion of Bardas Phokas. According to the TE, the *stratopedarches* Peter should have occupied a higher rank than that of *stratelates* in the military hierarchy. However, Bardas Skleros was a *magistros* and the *stratopedarches* Peter, a *patrikios*, so formally viewed, the order between the two of them could have been changed in the same way as the change between the *strategos* of Anatolikon and the *domestikos ton Scholon*.

The TE registered the function of the *stratopedarches* of the East and the *stratopedarches* of the West, while the position of the *stratelates* was mentioned as a single title. The narrative sources do not specify which of the said two positions of the *stratopedarches* was occupied by the *patrikios* Peter, therefore we may conclude that in the time of Tzimiskes, there was no division of these functions in the field. The engagement of the *stratopedarches* Peter shows that he was transferred from the East to the West of the Empire and back whenever the need arose (from the region of Cilicia and Syria to the Balkans and, in the time of Basil II, he was one of the commanders entrusted with the task of suppressing the rebellion of Bardas Skleros in Asia Minor). Throughout that time, he was known simply by the term *stratopedarches*, even when he was in command of "the Thracians and Macedonians", that is, of specified western troops.

The *stratelates* mentioned in the form of a single function in the TE indisputably represented the highest-ranking military commander whose powers extended over the eastern army. However, the report about Melias — the *domestikos* of the East — and the problematic data referring to the duration of the mandate of Bardas Skleros prevent a proper interpretation of how the supreme command over the eastern army was organised in the time of John Tzimiskes.

Eunuch as *domestikos*?

According to the FK, several dignities from the group ἀξίαι διὰ λόγου could not be granted to eunuchs; this refers to the *eparchos*, the *quaestor* and the *domestikoi* (FK 135₉₋₁₀: Ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ αἱ ἄλλαι πᾶσαι, ὅσαι καὶ τοῖς βαρβάτοις, προσγίνονται, πλὴν τῆς τοῦ ἐπάρχου καὶ κυαίστωρος καὶ δομεστίκων ἀξίας). It was considered that there was no breach of this rule, at least in terms of the *domestikos ton Scholon*, until the 11th century.⁸⁹ However, the source material leaves

⁸⁹ *Oikonomidēs*, *Listes* 302, 334–335.

room to question this, in the sense that one could shift this chronological limit to an earlier period. The sources refer to seals whose owner, a certain Peter, performed the duties of the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the West, as *protospartharios*, and later, as *patrikios*. The publisher, I. Jordanov, dated the said seals to the seventies of the 10th century. He also suggested that their owner should be identified as the eunuch Peter, whom narrative sources mention exclusively and consistently as a *stratopedarches* in the rank of *patrikios*.⁹⁰

On this occasion, I would not go into the details of the argumentation that Jordanov presented in favour of their identification except to note that it was based on the homonymy, on the similarity of authorities that proceeded from the function of *domestikos ton Scholon* and the *stratopedarches*,⁹¹ and the fact that the *stratopedarches* Peter was active in the region where the said seals were discovered.

The fact that until he lost his life in 977, all the narrative sources designated the eunuch Peter as the *stratopedarches*, (whether he performed this function in the Balkans in the war with the Russians, or in the East, in the reigns of Nikephoros II Phokas and Basil II), precludes a better argumentation. Another problem is presented by the title of *protospatharios*, which on one seal accompanies the function of the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the West. This title was lower in rank to the title of *patrikios* and *magistros*, i.e. the honorary dignities which at the time usually accompanied the function of *domestikos ton Scholon*.⁹² If the seal did not belong to the eunuch Peter but to some unknown namesake of his, who was active in the seventies of the 10th century (?), it would proceed that in the time of Tzimiskes (or possibly at the beginning of Basil's reign) this title may have been conferred on a less prominent figure.

Considering that the identification of the eunuch Peter as the owner of the said seals is unreliable, it is hard to tell whether the position of the *domestikos ton Scholon* had become accessible to eunuchs as well, even before the 11th century.⁹³

⁹⁰ In both publications, I. Jordanov revealed the possible *cursus honorum* of the eunuch Peter, but with a different argumentation, *Jordanov*, *Domestiques des scholes* 203–206; *idem*, *Preslav* nos. 148–157, 158 (pp. 85–86, comment.; *Corpus I*, 26.1; 26.2; cf. *W. Seibt*, *BZ* 89/1, 1996, 135). According to *Oikonomides*, *Problems of Chronology* 9, the seals of the *domestikos ton Scholon*, Peter, can definitely be dated to the period after 971.

⁹¹ An example from the time of the empress Theodora (1055–1056) led to confusion over the same question in the interpretation of Skylitzes' text, where he mentions that Theodora appointed the eunuch Theodoros as the *domestikos ton Scholon*, "after dismissing the *magistros* Isaac Komnenos from the position of *stratopedarches*", *Secl.* 479. Given the direct link the source established between the *stratopedarches* and the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East, numerous research workers believed that Isaac Komnenos was not the *stratopedarches* but the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East. However, Isaac's titles were confirmed on a seal, describing him as *magistros*, *vestes* and *stratopedarches* of the East (*ZV* no. 2680), in more detail *Cheyne*, *Pouvoir* 341 n. 15; *Krsmanović*, *Uspon* 158 n. 44. Otherwise, during the 11th century, the term *stratopedarchia* referred to the duty of the *domestikos ton Scholon*, v. p. 67 n. 154.

⁹² This is confirmed by the titles of the *domestikoi ton Scholon* from this period — Nikephoros and Leo Phokas, John Tzimiskes, and later, in the time of Basil II, by Stephen-Kontostephanos, Nikephoros Ouranos and Leo Melissenos.

⁹³ The first eunuch — *domestikos ton Scholon* was attested in narrative sources in the time of Constantine VIII (1025–1028); after his accession to the throne, this emperor appointed his eunuch Nicholas as the "*domestikos ton Scholon* and *parakoimomenos*", *Secl.* 370.

Nonetheless, one should bear in mind that in the second half of the 10th century the command functions of the army on campaign were expanded, as it were, which could have led to a change in the nature and, in a manner of speaking, the degradation of one of them,⁹⁴ in this case the *domestikos ton Scholon*, so that it became accessible to eunuchs. This referred to a specific category of functionary who, in the ensuing period as sources show, would move outside the imperial palace services⁹⁵ and through different appointments, for a variety of reasons, acquire the role of a military commander. The assumption also exists that the degradation of the said function commenced with the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the West, while the position of the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East preserved its initial character right until the rule of Constantine VIII.⁹⁶ And finally, one should say that in the time we refer to, there was still not enough evidence in the sources that would enable us to define the *stratopedarches* as an officer who replaced the *domestikos ton Scholon*.⁹⁷ Only the equation of these functions would explain the terminological differences that occurred in the sources, making the discrepancy between the inscriptions on the seals and the data from the narrative sources more comprehensible.

That the line in treating “men with beards” (οἱ βαρβᾶτοι) and eunuchs was sometimes almost impossible to distinguish clearly, is demonstrated in the case of the *patrikios* and eunuch, Nicholas. He is mentioned in connection with the events from 970/971, when the Arabs launched a siege lasting five months in an attempt to retrieve Antioch.⁹⁸ The attack on Antioch, i.e. its elite suburb of Daphne, came about in the time when Tzimiskes was commanding the campaign against the Russians. At that time, the *stratopedarches* Peter and Bardas Skleros had been officially appointed to serve in the Balkans. That is why the defence of Antioch was entrusted to other personalities.

According to Leo the Deacon, on hearing the news of the siege of Antioch, the emperor sent his eunuch, the *patrikios* Nicholas, who he had appointed “commander of the eastern armies” on that occasion (Diac. 103: τῇ τῶν Ἐφῶν στρατευμάτων παρατάξει ἀνεχαίτισε, Νικολάου τοῦ πατρικίου στρατηγούντος). Skylitzes, however, mentions that in a letter, the emperor ordered a certain “*strategos* of Mesopotamia” (πρὸς τὸν στρατηγὸν Μεσοποταμίας) to “gather the forces there” (τάς ἐκεῖσε κελεύοντα δυνάμεις ἀθροῖσαι) and go to the assistance of the

⁹⁴ In Byzantium, eunuchs were not favourably regarded when they appeared in the role of military commanders. In his account of the events connected with the rebellion of Bardas Skleros in 976–979, Skylitzes drew a comparison between the eunuchs and the then *domestikos ton Scholon*, Bardas Phokas. He described the latter as a “warrior” (ἄνδρα πολεμιστὴν), and a courageous man, experienced in military tactics, and the eunuchs as castrated dwarfs, growing fat in the shadow of the *gynaikion*, Scyl. 324: ἀνδράρια ἐκτετιμημένα θαλαμευόμενα καὶ σκιατραφί.

⁹⁵ Palace duties were primarily reserved for eunuchs, who served the emperor’s person; among these positions, the most prestigious were the *parakoimomenos* and the *protovestiaris*, *Oikonomidēs*, *Listes* 365–307. On the role eunuchs had in Byzantium v. *Guilland*, *Recherches* I, 165–380.

⁹⁶ Μικρά Ασία (V. N. *Vlyssidou*) 82–83. Cf. *eadem*, Jean I^{er} Tzimiskēs 22 n. 27.

⁹⁷ According to *Oikonomidēs*, *Évolution* 142, those two duties “sont interchangeables”. V. p. 67 et n. 154.

⁹⁸ *Walker*, *Byzantine Victory* 431–440.

besieged; similarly, as “*archon* of the entire army and with other forces (sc. reinforcements)” (ἄρχοντα τοῦ ὅλου στρατοῦ μετὰ καὶ δυνάμεων ἄλλων), he sent one of his eunuchs, the *patrikios* Nicholas (Scyl. 287). By successfully breaking the siege, Nicholas had performed his task and, to all intents and purposes, completed the duty he had been given.

But, what was this duty? Did it refer to a function known from the *taktika* or some power of an exceptional nature? In any event, he appeared in the role of the commander in chief of an army on campaign, which was a clearly defined and territorially limited assignment (the defence of Antioch). Meanwhile, there is an evident consistency with which Leo the Deacon and John Skylitzes speak about Nicholas' appointment in relation to the data describing the career of Bardas Skleros.⁹⁹

According to Leo the Deacon, Skleros was appointed commander of the *Immortals* and, simultaneously, it transpired, as commander of the army stationed in Thrace–Macedonia (Diac. 107, 117, 126); subsequently, in the spring of 970, he was appointed the “*stratelates* against the rebels” — a function he held only until the termination of the rebellion of Bardas Phokas (the beginning of the summer 970),¹⁰⁰ after which he returned to the Balkan battlefield. From the aforesaid it turns out that during the siege of Antioch (which is dated to the beginning of 971), Nicholas could have been appointed commander of “the eastern armies”. The fact that he was a eunuch allows us to assume that of the official functions, the position of *stratopedarches* of the East was accessible to him not only because it was registered in the TE but because the other *stratopedarches* (Peter) was serving on the battlefield in the West at that time.¹⁰¹

On the other hand, according to John Skylitzes, *magistros* Bardas Skleros, as *stratelates* of the East, commanded the eastern army throughout the entire reign of John Tzimiskes; that army went to war with him in the Balkans and when he crushed the rebellion in Cappadocia. For that reason the defence of Antioch could have been entrusted to a military-administrative functionary — in this case, the *strategos* of Mesopotamia — who went to the aid of the besieged, leading the army most probably from his own region; the eunuch Nicholas, in joining the reinforcements to the Mesopotamian troops (we do not know which or how many of these units there were), became the commander in chief of the entire campaign. This means that in the military hierarchy, he was above “the *strategos* of Mesopotamia” and his appointment could have been designated by the official function of *stratopedarches* of the East or one of the so-called extraordinary functions/appointments.

The data about “the *strategos* of Mesopotamia” also raises a dilemma, considering that in the TE two military functionaries appear in so-called Mesopotamia of the East. The first was the *doux* of Mesopotamia, who occupied a very high rank,

⁹⁹ As a *stratelates*, Skleros the eastern military units under his command. However, the duration of his mandate remains controversial.

¹⁰⁰ After the battle at Arkadiopolis, Skleros was reassigned to the East, to terminate the rebellion of Bardas Phokas. On the problem of dating the battle v. *Cheyne*, *Pouvoir* 24 (no. 6); *idem*, *Skyl.* 245 n. 33.

¹⁰¹ Cf. *Vlyssidou*, *Jean I^{er} Tzimiskès* 22 et n. 26.

second only to the *strategos* of Anatolikon, the five commanding officers and the *doux* of Antioch (TE 263₂₉); the other functionary bore the title of *strategos* of Mesopotamia and was lower in rank than the *strategoi* of the best known themes of Asia Minor but also the *strategos* of Thrace and Ioannoupolis (TE 265₁₂). In the narrative sources, the first *doux* linked with Mesopotamia was mentioned in 976;¹⁰² this refers to Bardas Skleros, whom Skylitzes claims was dismissed by Basil II from the position as “*stratelates* of all the East” and appointed “*doux* of the *tagmata* in Mesopotamia” (Scyl. 314). In this place, I would question why the defence of such a notable city as Antioch was entrusted to a *strategos* and not to the *doux* of Mesopotamia. The explanation may be that the function of the *doux* of Mesopotamia was established in the wake of events in which the eunuch Nicholas and the *strategos* of Mesopotamia took part.¹⁰³ In addition, one should bear in mind that the sources do not mention the role the *doux* of Antioch played in those events because he, primarily, would have had jurisdiction over the defence of the city. Although the first reliable mention of the *doux* of Antioch dates from the year 976, it is also possible that the eunuch Nicholas was assigned to this duty and, as the newly appointed *doux* of Antioch he commanded the army.¹⁰⁴ In keeping with the order of the functionaries in the TE, he would in that case officially have (a command) position, giving him seniority over the *strategos* (and even over the *doux*) of Mesopotamia in the East.

The chain of command in the Byzantine-Russian war

As a rule, changes in the chain of command occurred at the point when the emperor joined in the war. Tzimiskes' engagement precluded the more precise hierarchical assignment of officers, who possessed command powers in the Byzantine-Russian war for Bulgaria.

For Byzantium, the first stage of the war, in 970, had a defence character. The Russians descended with their troops to Arkadiopolis where the Rhomaioi would defeat them in the spring of 970 (Diac. 107–111; Scyl. 287–291). The war took on an offensive character in 971, in the second year of Tzimiskes' reign, when the emperor personally joined in the military operations that were being conducted in the territory of Bulgaria, in the area between Megas Preslav and Dorostolon. Besides the already mentioned military commanders, *magistros* (and *stratelates*?) Bardas Skleros and the *stratopedarches*, *patrikios* Peter, and other figures, who possessed terminologically undefined though significant military powers, took part in the war.

¹⁰² V. pp. 120–121.

¹⁰³ Skylitzes uses the term *strategos* to designate a functionary in the rank of *doux* (e.g. he called Constantine Diogenes, who succeeded Theophylactos Botaneiates as *doux* of Thessalonike, Scyl. 352). One can see similar confusion in the terminology in the case of the *doux* of Antioch, v. p. 80 et n. 21.

¹⁰⁴ Laurent, Antioche 228 et n. 2, allows for the possibility that, after breaking the Arab siege, the eunuch Nicholas could have stayed in Antioch as the governor of the city and its environs. However, Laurent begins the list of the *doukes* of Antioch with Michael Bourtzes, who was appointed to this function in 976, in the time of Basil II.

For instance, the data of Leo the Deacon tells us that, according to his function, *magistros* John Kourkouas occupied a lower rank in the military hierarchy than that of Bardas Skleros. The data testifies that Kourkouas stayed on in Adrianople as the successor of Bardas Skleros, who was commander of the units that were stationed in the area of the theme of Macedonia with headquarters in Adrianople (Diac. 148).¹⁰⁵ Also, at the time of the Byzantine siege of Dorostolon, Kourkouas was entrusted with the sector where the siege devices were installed (Scyl. 304).

In the advance on Preslav, after Tzimiskes, the eunuch Basil, *proedros* and *parakoimomenos*, played the most important role, according to Skylitzes, leading the major body of troops in the rear (Scyl. 296: μετὰ τοῦ κατόπιν παντὸς πλήθους). Leo the Deacon mentions that accompanying the emperor were the *Immortals*, the hoplites and others, while the *proedros* Basil was in command of the remainder of the army, with the siege and other apparatus, bringing up the rear (Diac. 132: τὸ δὲ λοιπὸν στρατιωτικὸν μετὰ τοῦ θητικοῦ, φέρον τὰς ἐλεπόλεις καὶ τὰς παντοδαπὰς μηχανὰς, βάδην ἐξόπισθεν εἵπετο). Although there is no data about Basil's military function, his powers were of a command nature (though limited to the part of the army of which he was in charge). His significance in the Byzantine-Russian war may have depended informally on the personal position he held with the emperor, whilst formally it might have been due to the title of *proedros*, created in the time of Nikephoros II Phokas, as well as his position as *parakoimomenos*.¹⁰⁶ In other words, since the *parakoimomenos* Basil did not lead the campaign on his own but was in the imperial suite, his military authority over one part of the Byzantine troops might not have been defined in official terms.¹⁰⁷

The data on the dignitaries who unquestionably possessed significant military power in the Byzantine-Russian war for Bulgaria, verifies that since the times of Nikephoros II Phokas, limits were set on the authorities of the functionaries who belonged to the supreme command. The competences of the *domestikos ton Scholon*, the *stratopedarches* and the *stratelates* were scaled down in such a way that their activities were specified in terms of objectives and territory. On the other hand, the practice still survived of awarding broad prerogatives to personalities whose official positions did not involve military powers; but the source of their power and influence rested upon their personal relationship with the monarch, from whom all power flowed in the Empire. These characteristics would also be visible in the development of the institutions of the supreme command in the rule of Basil II, the last in the series of soldier-emperors, who would succeed each other to the throne in the period from 963 to 1025.

¹⁰⁵ This refers to the period when Bardas Skleros was transferred from the Balkans to the East, to crush the rebellion of Bardas Phokas.

¹⁰⁶ The position of *parakoimomenos* was a reward to the *proedros* Basil, who supported the new emperor in 969, Diac. 94. On the duties of the *parakoimomenos*, v. *Oikonomides*, *Listes* 305.

¹⁰⁷ Apparently, this was an example of awarding powers, which was not accompanied by an adequate function; it often happened that eunuchs from the imperial palace, who were close associates of the emperor, were awarded temporary military powers but not a military function, *Krsmanović*, *Potencijal* 399 et n. 26.

III

THE ORGANISATION OF THE SUPREME COMMAND IN THE TIME OF BASIL II

The fact that Basil II (976–1025) spent most of his fifty-year reign on the battlefield, personally conducting a series of campaigns, must also have reflected on the organisation of the Empire's supreme military command. The first thing we can say based on the data narrative sources offer is that during this extremely dynamic fifty-year period in the military sense, relatively few appointments to the highest functions were recorded in the army. One often encounters terms in the sources that signify provincial functionaries, *doukes/katepano* and *strategoï*, more often than those signifying representatives of the central command. It is also striking that the awarding of the highest command positions was closely linked with the events caused by the rebellion of Bardas Skleros (976–979), the war in the Balkans against Samuel and his successors (976–1018), and developments in the region of Syria.

Stratopedarches, “dictator” or strategos autokrator

For the first decade of Basil's rule (976–986) — the period which preceded his direct engagement in the war against Samuel — the sources record all the commanding officers of the highest rank registered in the TE: the *domestikos ton Scholon*, the *stratopedarches* and the *stratelates*. According to Skylitzes, the emperor inherited the last two from his predecessor Tzimiskes: we refer to the *stratopedarches* Peter and the *stratelates* Bardas Skleros.

The limited powers of the *stratopedarches* Peter at that time can be perceived as the result of the dismissal of the *stratelates* and *magistros* Bardas Skleros. Discontented with his appointment to the post of “*doux* of the *tagmata* in Mesopotamia” in 976, Skleros organised a rebellion and usurped the imperial title and the prerogatives of imperial power (collecting taxes, awarding positions and honorary titles, appointing the administrators of the themes and cities).¹⁰⁸ After the

¹⁰⁸ Scyl. 316: Skleros acquired money by arresting the tax-collectors — τούς τε τῶν δημοσίων πράκτορας φόρων κατέχων καὶ τὰ κοινὰ εἰσπραττόμενος χρήματα (Yahya II, 372, mentions that Skleros arrested the *basilikos* of Melitene and seized 600 *kentenaria* of gold, and then proclaimed himself emperor); subsequently: he tried to confiscate the tax, which the Emir of Aleppo paid Byzantium (Scyl. 321); he granted positions (ibid. 318, 320, 323); he punished the supporters who had defected from his side (ibid. 322), etc.

rebellion broke out, the *stratopedarches* and *patrikios* Peter's rank and title were confirmed, and so he is mentioned exclusively in the events connected with eliminating the usurpation, until he was killed in 977. Unquestionably, he was the leader of the eastern army, but one cannot take Skylitzes' words literally that Peter was the commander of "all the eastern *tagmata*" (Scyl. 315). Crushing the rebellion of Bardas Skleros was not exclusively in the authority of the *stratopedarches* because apart from him, other personalities are mentioned who played a notable role. Skylitzes even states that Peter had orders not to wage a civil war — ἐμφυλίου μὲν μὴ κατάρχειν πολέμου — but to secure the roads and defend himself if anyone attacked him (Scyl. 317–318). The other personalities are described with the words οἱ τῶν βασιλικῶν κατάρχοντες στρατευμάτων and ἄνδρες ἀρχικοί (Scyl. 318, 322). They included functionaries with broad powers, such as Michael Bourtzes and Eustathios Maleinos.

After Basil II took power in 976, Michael Bourtzes was appointed to head the *doukaton* of Antioch. The emperor conferred this important function and the title of *magistros* on him, with the intention of separating him from the then *stratelates* Bardas Skleros: according to Skylitzes, Basil suspected Bourtzes and tried to distance him from Skleros' *hetaireia* (διαστίῃσαι τοῦτον τῆς τοῦ Σκληροῦ ἐταιρείας σπουδάσας) because with him Bourtzes commanded a military *tagma* (συνὴν γὰρ καὶ οὗτος αὐτῷ τάγματός τινος κατάρχων στρατιωτικοῦ) (Scyl. 315). From Yahya, we learn that immediately after the outbreak of the rebellion, the emperor actually gave Bourtzes the task of opposing Skleros in Mesopotamia, by combining his troops with the army of *patrikios* Eustathios Maleinos, the administrator (*strategos*) in Tarsos; after experiencing defeat, the Byzantine military commanders soon separated and Bourtzes swiftly defected to the side of the usurper, who granted him the title of *magistros* as a reward (Yahya II, 372–373). That the *doux* of Antioch supported Skleros for some time is also authenticated by Skylitzes (Scyl. 319–321, 324). This Byzantine author mentions Eustathios Maleinos as a *magistros* and "the commander of one part of the imperial army" (Scyl. 318: μέρει τῆς βασιλικῆς στρατιᾶς ἐντυχόντες ἄρχοντα ἐχούσης; 324) in the region of Cappadocian Caesarea.¹⁰⁹ However, Yahya notes that he withdrew to his native Cappadocia only after he was defeated with Bourtzes in the battle with Skleros (Yahya II, 373). Also, after his initial victories, Skleros was joined by the *patrikios* and *doux* (?) Andronikus Lydos and his sons.¹¹⁰ One should add that, according to Yahya, the engagement of the *stratopedarches* Peter followed only after the emperor had lost Antioch and had ordered him to join up with the troops of Eustathios Maleinos in Cappadocia and advance against the rebels (Yahya II, 374).

¹⁰⁹ The *parakoimomenos* Basil mobilised people closely associated with the Phokas family against the rebels of Bardas Skleros — the *stratopedarches* Peter and the relative of the Phokas family, Eustathios Maleinos, and this was before Bardas Phokas was appointed to head the imperial army as the *domestikos ton Scholon*, Cheynet, Skyl. 266 n. 21.

¹¹⁰ It remains unclear whether Andronikus Lydos was a member of the Doukas family (which I doubt), or the expression ὁ δοῦξ, or τοῦ δουκός (Scyl. 319, 328) designated a function, *Polemis*, Doukai 8, 26; Cheynet, Pouvoir 172, 216 n. 63; Krsmanović, Uspon 163. Anyway, Andronikos Lydos is mentioned among the defectors, who changed sides after Skleros' victory at Lykandos in Cappadocia.

That the powers of the *stratopedarches* Peter were of a limited nature is confirmed by data referring to the role of the *protovestiaros* Leo in these events, whose appointment changed the order in the chain of command. This was an official who had enjoyed the great trust of Basil's predecessor, John Tzimiskes.¹¹¹ Unfortunately, Skylitzes did not mention the name of his function but he described its content: after the defeat of the imperial troops in Cappadocia, Basil II decided to send one of his close aides (τῶν τῷ βασιλεῖ ὀκειωμένων τινά) to whom he gave unlimited powers — "similar to tyrannical powers, without the obligation of accountability to anyone" (ἔδοξε ... ἰσοτύραννον εἰληφότα ἀρχὴν καὶ ἀνεύθυνον)¹¹² and "the power to reward those who approach him with honours and rich gifts" (ἐξουσίαν ἔχοντα τιμαῖς τε προβιβάζειν καὶ δόροις καταπλουτίζειν τοὺς προσχωροῦντας). And Leo the emperor's *protovestiaros* was sent, who had received "power from the emperor to use all the imperial prerogatives, without hesitation" (ἐξουσίαν ἐκ βασιλέως δεξάμενος πάντα ἀδιστάκτως ποιεῖν, ὅσα ἐξεσι βασιλεῖ); a certain *patrikios* John was attached to him as an advisor, who was a dignitary (ἄνδρα ἐπίσημον) renowned for his learning (Scyl. 320).

According to the aforesaid description, the authorities granted to Leo would mainly correspond to the powers of a *strategos autokrator* — a supreme military commander, whose power on the battlefield was equal to that of the emperor *autokrator*.¹¹³ In that sense, John Zonaras, quoting from Skylitzes, expressed his view of the said, obviously extraordinary powers: Leo was entrusted with "unlimited power" (ἄκρατον ἐξουσίαν) and "received permission to do everything that emperors do (one could say in the language of the Latins — a *dictator*)" [Zon. 542: πάντα πράττειν ὅσα καὶ βασιλεῦσιν ἀνεῖται ἄδειαν εἰληφώς (εἶπεν ἂν τις τῇ Λατίνων φωνῇ τὸν ἄνδρα δικτάτορα)]. However, it is striking that both Skylitzes and Zonaras exclusively use the term *protovestiaros*, to designate the eunuch Leo, which suggests that Leo was given a new duty of a temporary nature, without being relieved of his original function.

In the military hierarchy, the *protovestiaros* Leo occupied a higher position than the *stratopedarches* Peter, who participated under his leadership in the further operations to crush the rebellion of Bardas Skleros. The imperial army was defeated in a battle with the rebels, in the autumn of 977. The *stratopedarches* Peter and the *patrikios* John, the *protovestiaros*' advisor, were killed, while the commander in chief, Leo, was captured along with other commanders (μεθ' ἐτέρων ἀνδρῶν ἀρχικῶν) (Scyl. 321–322; Zon. 542–543).

¹¹¹ The *patrikios* Leo was appointed immediately after Tzimiskes was awarded the powers of *droungarios tou ploimou*, Diac. 95, 147; Scyl. 295.

¹¹² The expression ἀνεύθυνος means *irresponsible* but, in the political context, it means a person who is not obliged at the end of his mandate to submit a report, εὐθύνη. The word ἰσοτύραννος (*equal, equal to a tyrannos*) is used here in the ancient meaning of *autocratic*, so it does not have a negative connotation.

¹¹³ Guillard, *Recherches* I, 382; Krsmanović, *O problemu* 104–105.

The *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East

After the victory over the imperial army in 977, Skleros achieved another remarkable success: he seized Nikaia, which opened his way to the capital.¹¹⁴ In that situation, at the beginning of 978, the authorities in Constantinople recalled a rebel from Tzimiskes' time, Bardas Phokas, from banishment. On that occasion he was elevated to the rank of *magistros* and appointed to the position of *domestikon ton Scholon* of the East (Scyl. 324; Zon 542: *magistros*, 548: *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East; Yahya II, 374: *domestikos ton Scholon*). The data indicates that Phokas, as opposed to his predecessors, made use of the power he had been given with that function, and conducted the war in Asia Minor with complete independence and as he saw fit.

According to Skylitzes, initially he set out against the rebels from Thrace,¹¹⁵ apparently taking with him some troops from that region, and later he managed to join up with the Byzantine armies stationed in his native Cappadocia, in the region of Caesarea, the traditional stronghold of the Phokas family. It is not without significance that a segment of that army was led by the *domestikos*' close relative, *magistros* Eustathios Maleinos, while the other part was under the command of Michael Bourtzes, who had abandoned the rebels in the meantime and had returned to the emperor's side. Phokas then made his way towards Amorion where, initially, he suffered a defeat in clashes with the troops of Skleros. From there, he proceeded to Charsianon, where, "in the emperor's name" (ἐκ βασιλέως) he distributed honours (τιμαῖς) and benefits (εὐεργεσίαις) to those who had joined him (Scyl. 325), which indicates that the *domestikos* had authorities equal to those the emperor had awarded earlier on to the *protovestiarios* Leo. After a second defeat, the *domestikos* appealed to the *archon* of Iberia, David, with whom, Skylitzes says, he had been friends since the days when he had performed the duty of the *doux* of Chaldia (Scyl. 326).¹¹⁶ After receiving considerable military aid from him, he made his way towards the Pankaleia Plain, where the rebellion would end in Skleros' defeat and his flight (in 979).

The mandate of Bardas Phokas very soon restored the importance that had previously belonged to the *domestikos ton Scholon*. For instance, on the example of the last *domestikos ton Scholon* from the Phokas family, one can see to what extent the personality of a dignitary could influence — albeit, in an unofficial way — the rise or decline in the importance and reputation of a position. Indisputably, the

¹¹⁴ Manuel Erotikos was the defender of Nikaia. Anna Komnene (Alex. 324⁶⁶) mentions that Basil II proclaimed Manuel "strategos autokrator of all the East", thus exaggerating the role of the progenitor of the Komnenos family in these events. K. Barzos, *Ἡ γενεαλογία τῶν Κομνηνῶν I*, Βυζαντινὰ κείμενα καὶ μελέται 20, Thessaloniki 1984, 38, viewed him as the *domestikos ton Scholon*, while Cheynet, *Pouvoir* 29 n. 12, assumes that this referred to the position of *komes* of Opsikion; cf. *Krsmanović*, *Uspon* 152–154.

¹¹⁵ Cf. Cheynet, *Skyl.* 271 n. 41.

¹¹⁶ Bardas Phokas held the post of *doux* of Chaldia and Koloneia towards the end of the rule of his uncle, Nikephoros II, and was dismissed immediately John Tzimiskes came to the throne. His personal friendship with the Iberian ruler testifies to the independence of action the commanders of large themes or frontier katepanates enjoyed, Cheynet, *Skyl.* 272 n. 46.

important function of the *domestikos ton Scholon* enabled the Phokas family to join the very top echelon of the Byzantine elite but it is also indisputable that, for their part, with the experience they had gained through several generations, the Phokas members' exceptional military abilities contributed to the prestige of this office. The rise of Nikephoros Phokas, which repeated itself in a way, in John Tzimiskes' rise to power, among contemporary and especially among later writers (who also recalled the example of Bardas Phokas), created the image of the *domestikos ton Scholon* as a position that was a step away from acquiring imperial power (Diac. 37–38).

Bardas Phokas was rewarded for his victory over Skleros but, in the sources, there is contradictory data about the function he performed after 979. Skylitzes and Zonaras mention him as the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East in the events linked with the first campaign of the emperor Basil II against Samuel in 986 (Scyl. 330; Zon. 548). This suggests that either Phokas remained in the same position for almost a decade (978–987) or that he was appointed *domestikos* on two occasions. Yahya of Antioch mentions that Phokas as the *domestikos ton Scholon* waged war successfully against the Arabs in the East but that in 986, he was dismissed from that position and appointed “*doux* of the East, governor of Antioch and all the eastern regions” (Yahya II, 417);¹¹⁷ a little later, because of the return of Bardas Skleros to Byzantium and his second rebellion (in 987), he was restored to his previous rank, i.e. to the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East (Yahya II, 421: *domestikos*). Michael Psellos does not specify what position Phokas held, save that at the beginning of Basil's reign, honours of a more exalted and then of a lesser nature were bestowed on him (Chron. I, 8). One may conclude from the sources, therefore, that Phokas' career was not interrupted in the period from 977 to 987. However, we do not know whether he held the position of *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East throughout all that decade.

It is more essential to stress that, after 979, once the civil war with Bardas Skleros had ended, the sole commanding officer of the highest rank active in the East was actually the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East. Although his military powers were territorially limited to Antioch and the Syrian region, data indicates he enjoyed a considerable amount of independence of action.¹¹⁸ However, after the end of the civil war of 987–989/991, there were fewer appointments of this kind, which is particularly evident in the eastern part of the Empire. The explanation probably is in the efforts by Basil II to maintain greater control over all the more important offices of state in future, primarily military positions. For that reason, representatives of the aristocratic families, who had traditionally been assigned to the East — due to their origins and career — were distanced from them. From the point of view of internal policy, at the

¹¹⁷ According to *Laurent*, Antioche 233, Bardas Phokas held the post of *doux* of Antioch in the period from 986–987, i.e. until he proclaimed himself emperor. *Djurić*, Foke 279, interprets Yahya's account as an attempt to degrade Bardas Phokas, whose governorship of the doukate of Antioch was expressed in his impressive titles. *Cheyne*, Phocas 308, 313, assumes that the dismissal of Bardas Phokas from the position of *domestikos ton Scholon* was due to the support Phokas gave to the *parakoimomenos* Basil. Be that as it may, judging by Byzantine sources, in 986/987, Phokas was acknowledged as an officer whose military power over the eastern army was dominant.

¹¹⁸ V. pp. 105–107.

beginning of the nineties in the 10th century, circumstances settled in that area and the Empire then focused on consolidating and expanding its rule in the frontier regions. The Syrian region was of crucial importance and so the largest amount of information from the sources refers to events there. “Power over the East” was transferred to the *doux* of Antioch, i.e. a provincial functionary, and the need for the presence of an officer from the central command was personally met by the emperor appearing periodically in the East with the army.

The organisation of the supreme military command in the Balkan war (976–1018)

It is evident that functionaries from the top-ranking military command staff were very rarely mentioned as participants in the more than forty-year long war against Samuel and his successors (976–1018).

Sources indicate that at the time when Basil II was preparing his first independent campaign against Samuel in 986, both *domestikoi* were active, but only one of them took part in the battle at Trajan’s Gates on August 17th 986. It was Stephen-Kontostephanos, who occupied the position of the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the West.¹¹⁹ Skylitzes records that because of “false accusations” by the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the West at the expense of *magistros* Leo Melissenos — left behind in the rear in Philippoupolis to guard the straits and ensure the emperor’s return — Basil II decided to withdraw from Serdica. During the withdrawal, which Samuel believed to be “flight”, the Romaic army was suddenly attacked. The emperor “scarcely managed to flee to Philippoupolis” and Samuel seized the entire camp with the luggage, the imperial tent and flags (Scyl. 330–331; Zon. 548–549).¹²⁰

In examining the organisation of the supreme military command, it is far more interesting to establish who *did not* take part in the campaign on Serdica. Skylitzes and Zonaras clearly state that the emperor excluded the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East and “other eastern *dynastai*” (Scyl. 330: ἑφ’ ὧν δυνάστας) from the campaign, that is to say, “the eastern military commanders” (Zon. 548: τῶν τῶν ἑφ’ ὧν στραταρχούντων δυνάμεων). Skylitzes’ statement that the emperor had set out on the campaign “without so much as informing” (μηδ’ ἀξιώσας λόγου) either Bardas Phokas, the *domestikos ton Scholon*, or the other eastern dignitaries, and Zonaras’ words — that the emperor had gone to war “without saying a word about the venture” even to the *magistros* Phokas, despite the fact “that he was the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East”, or to any of the other commanders of the eastern military forces, leads us to believe that in practice it was customary for the emperor to consult with his military commanders about an impending campaign, and especially with the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East, whose function implied

¹¹⁹ Most probably, the seals, ascribing to Stephen the titles of *anthypatos*, *patrikios* and *domestikos ton Scholon* of the West, belonged to this Stephen, *Jordanov*, *Domestiques des scholes* 207–208; *idem*, *Preslav* no. 159–160; *Corpus* I, 26.3.

¹²⁰ In more detail *Pirivatrić*, *Samuilova država* 93–94.

command over the elite eastern army. Although the campaign was conducted in the Balkans — which means that the commander of the western *tagmata* must have had an important role — the eastern military dignitaries were equally interested in it, just as they had been in the case of the Russian-Byzantine war for Bulgaria in the time of John I Tzimiskes.

It is not known whether Basil's decision to exclude the commanders of the eastern armies from the campaign on Serdica was based on his momentary estimate of the need to engage them. It is possible that the emperor did not wish to cede supreme command to a member of the Phokas family, but formally and essentially, to keep the top position in the chain of command for himself. However, it seems that this decision was made during a clash between the ruler and the representatives of the military leadership: *magistros* Eustathios Maleinos, who had commanded a military unit in the region of Cappadocian Caesarea at the time of the rebellion of Bardas Skleros and, under the command of his relative Bardas Phokas, had defended the imperial authority in Asia Minor — was “dishonourably discharged from the campaign” (ἀτίμως ἀπὸ τῆς ...ἐκστρατείας ἀποπεμφθῆναι) in 986, which resulted in his support of the usurpation of his relative Phokas in the following year (Scyl. 332).

The emperor crushed the rebellion of Bardas Phokas and the representatives of the military leadership assigned to the East of the Empire according to their functions and origins (987–989/990), with the help of troops sent by Knez Vladimir of Kiev.¹²¹ On the one hand, this shows that Basil II did not have a significant military force under his command that was capable of crushing the resistance of the grandees of Asia Minor and their evidently numerous supporters; on the other hand, the Russian troops gave him a degree of independence from the members of the then highest circle of the military aristocracy he had inherited from his predecessors, Nikephoros II Phokas and John I Tzimiskes.¹²² In the period following the suppression of the rebellion of 989/991, the members of that military leadership seldom occupied positions that would afford them more important or independent military authorities. In any case, a striking characteristic of Basil's reign is that not only did he curtail the power of the Byzantine magnates but kept them away from active service, but through his own direct engagement on the battlefield he succeeded in controlling the power of his military functionaries. In the continuation of the war against Samuel and his successors (976–1018), this was reflected in only two reliable examples ever being recorded of the supreme military command awarding the broadest command powers. In both cases, those powers were connected with the position of the *doux* of Thessalonike — a function linked to the provincial military organisation. A third example exists — the mandate of Leo Melissenos — but without reliable confirmation about the period when it occurred.

¹²¹ Cheynet, *Politique militaire* 63 et n. 8.

¹²² From the titles of the participants in the rebellion of Bardas Phokas and Bardas Skleros (987–989/991), one can see that they were people who occupied high positions in the official hierarchy. That means their rise to high office began earlier and that they undoubtedly represented the elite layer of Byzantine society in the time of Basil II, cf. Cheynet, *Pouvoir* 27–34.

Nikephoros Ouranos — The first example refers to the *magistros* Nikephoros Ouranos, who was “*archon* of all the West” (Scyl. 341: πάσης δύσεως ἄρχων; Zon. 558: τῆς δύσεως ἄρχων). The literary term used by Byzantine chroniclers in fact represented a description of the function of the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the West.¹²³ However, in two charters from the archives in the Vatopedi monastery dating from 998 and 1001, Nikephoros Ouranos was designated as a *magistros* and a *domestikos ton Scholon*, without specifying the territorial region of his competences (Vatop. no. 2, l. 2–3; no. 3, l. 10), and on a seal (J no. 163), assumed to have belonged to this very Nikephoros (namely, the surname was not recorded). The Arabian author, Yahya of Antioch (II, 446), also refers to him only as the *domestikos*.

Therefore, it is indisputable that Nikephoros Ouranos was a *domestikos ton Scholon* and that he performed this function in the West, but the question remains open as to whether in his case, it was the position of the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the West. In a study devoted to the development of the Byzantine administration in the period from the 9th to the 11th century, Ahrweiler underlines that in the term *domestikos ton Scholon*, *domestikos* meant the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East and that the terms used for his western counterpart were those that mentioned the West, the western army (“il ne s’appelle pas δομέστικος τῶν σχολῶν”).¹²⁴ The fact that Nikephoros Ouranos is mentioned in official documents as the *domestikos ton Scholon* can be interpreted in different ways: either he was appointed as the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East, which primarily designated his military powers over the eastern tagmas, in this instance he employed in the West, i.e. the Balkans,¹²⁵ or that at the end of the 10th century, the difference in the terminology, ordinarily used until then to designate the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East and the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the West, was lost. Furthermore, one should allow for the possibility, as Cheynet did, that in the time of Nikephoros Ouranos’ mandate, the function of the *domestikos ton Scholon* became temporarily unified, once again.¹²⁶

The appointment of Nikephoros Ouranos as the *domestikos ton Scholon* was a direct repercussion of events in the *doukaton* of Thessalonike, when the *doux* of Thessalonike, *magistros* Gregory Taronites (991–995) was killed in the conflict with Samuel and his successor, *patrikios* John Chaldos, was taken prisoner soon after. The emperor, owing to the powerful Bulgarian pressure on Thessalonike (which was left without two commanders of the most senior rank), appointed Nikephoros

¹²³ Cheynet, Basil II and Asia Minor 87 n. 74, considers that Nikephoros, as the *archon* of all the West had command over the *tagmata* of Macedonia–Thrace, and that that command in principle was not connected with that of the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the West. One should mention that Skylitzes described the *magistros* and *doux* of Adrianople, Constantine Arcianites, as *archon* of the West, Scyl. 466. For the western army v. p. 64 et n. 149.

¹²⁴ Ahrweiler, Administration 57–58.

¹²⁵ The eastern troops also took part in the war in the Balkans, which was seen in the Byzantine-Russian war for Bulgaria in 970–971; also, the sources provide evidence of the interest the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East, Bardas Phokas, and the eastern military commanders had in taking part in the campaign of 986. The participation of the eastern troops is attested in the titles of John Chaldos, “*doux* of Armeniakon, Boukellarion and Thessalonike” (Ivion I, no. 8, l. 1–2).

¹²⁶ Cheynet, Basil II and Asia Minor 87 et n. 74.

Ouranos as the “*archon* of all the West”. His activities initially were not territorially limited to the *doukaton* of Thessalonike, but his operations were primarily in the function of its protection. We know that after the death of the *doux* Taronites and the capture of John Chaldos, Samuel launched campaigns on a wider scale, which threatened the western provinces. This refers to the period from 995 to the autumn of 997, prior to the battle at the Spercheios (in the autumn of 997). Samuel crossed the plain of Thessaly and through the Tempe valley (linking the region of Thessalonike with Thessaly), crossed the Peneios River, advancing through Boeotia, Attica and across the Isthmus of Corinth, fell upon the Peloponnesian Peninsula, devastating and looting the said Byzantine regions. The further threat he posed to the western regions of the Empire was supposed to be prevented by the newly appointed *domestikos*, Nikephoros Ouranos. He set out in pursuit of Samuel by the route the latter had already traveled, and through the valley of the Tempe he emerged onto the Plain of Thessaly, leaving his field supplies behind in Larissa.¹²⁷ In order to facilitate his progress, he took with him only lightly armed troops, with whom he reached the Spercheios River, by way of Thessaly. After crossing the river, he attacked Samuel’s camp downstream. In the battle Samuel and his son, Gavrilko Radomir, were seriously wounded but they managed, nevertheless, to flee to “the hills of Aitolia and from there travel across the the Pindos Mountains ridges, finding refuge in Bulgaria” and thus reached “home” (τὰ οἰκεῖα) safely. After his victory, Ouranos returned to Thessalonike with the spoils of war (Scyl. 341–342).

John Skylitzes, the most important source for this epoch, did not explicitly call Nikephoros Ouranos either *domestikos ton Scholon* or *doux* of Thessalonike, but later he would mention the *patrikios* David Areianites as the successor of Nikephoros in Thessalonike (ibid. 345: διάδοχον αὐτοῦ τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης πεποιηκώς τὸν πατρίκιον Δαβίδ τὸν Ἀρειανίτην), just as he would say in the case of Theophylaktos Botaneiates, who was clearly designated as the “*doux* of Thessalonike” (ibid. 350: τὸν δοῦκα Θεσσαλονίκης) that, after Areianites, he was sent to govern Thessalonike (ibid. 350: ἄρχειν Θεσσαλονίκης μετὰ τὸν Ἀρειανίτην πεμφθέντος).

The said Vatopedi documents give a more reliable presentation of the nature of the powers of Nikephoros Ouranos in the region of the *doukaton* of Thessalonike. We know that Mount Athos came under the jurisdiction of the administrator of Thessalonike,¹²⁸ which can explain the participation of Nikephoros Ouranos in a dispute between the monks of two monasteries on the Mount Athos — Vatopedi and Philadelphou.¹²⁹ In documents dating from 998, we learn that the monk Joseph, the

¹²⁷ The sources did not confirm when the Byzantines recaptured Larissa — before the mandate of Nikephoros Ouranos or during this campaign of his; for more details *Pirivatrić*, *Samuilova država* 103–104.

¹²⁸ *Kyriakidis*, Βυζ. Μελ. IV, 143; *Papachrysanthou*, *Μοναχισμός* 202. The document of John Chaldos, *doux* of Thessalonike, dated to September 995, confirms this, v. p. 150 et n. 329.

¹²⁹ It is a fact that the career of Nikephoros Ouranos was an exception in the time of Basil II, who endeavoured to limit the military power of his generals, *Cheynet*, Basil II and Asia Minor 87. For that reason *Neville*, Authority 20, 108, attributes the civil authorities of Nikephoros Ouranos to his personal

hegoumenos of Philadelphou, asked Basil II for assistance in the dispute with the Vatopedi monastery. The emperor ordered Nikephoros Ouranos to investigate the case, and so he sent the monk Theophylaktos to acquaint himself with the dispute and brought a verdict in favour of the Vatopedi monastery, which the *protos* of Mount Athos verified with this document (Vatop. no. 2). Although *magistros* Nikephoros Ouranos is exclusively mentioned in this document as the *domestikos ton Scholon*, his arbitration in the said dispute was probably due to his function as governor of Thessalonike, because as the *domestikos ton Scholon* he had competences only in the domain of military matters. However, since the position of the *domestikos ton Scholon* was senior in rank to that of the *doux* of Thessalonike, according to the TE (263), it is understandable that Ouranos was described in that way.

The accumulation of the functions of Nikephoros Ouranos represents a particular problem. In other words, one should explain how the combination of the functions of *domestikos ton Scholon* and *doux* of Thessalonike came about and what the relation was between those two duties. As the sources show, in the period from 976–1018, the Thessalonike region was a base for organising the campaigns against Samuel and his successors. However, it is much more important to say that Byzantium's secure position in the *doukaton* of Thessalonike made it easier to set up and maintain power over a broader area, primarily in the regions that extended north-west and south-west of Thessalonike. After the victory of the Byzantine army at the Spercheios River, Samuel undertook no more campaigns through Thessaly southwards to the Peloponnesian Peninsula.¹³⁰ As for the region of Thessalonike, it would be under strong pressure later, particularly in 1014, but in different circumstances inasmuch as Byzantium had managed in the meantime to restore or conquer a series of regions that had been under Samuel's control at the time before and after the battle at the Spercheios.

The imminent threat to Thessalonike made it necessary to appoint a commanding officer with the broadest powers (and additional military units) to protect it. As soon as he was appointed, Nikephoros Ouranos arrived in Thessalonike and acquainted himself with the situation there; from Thessalonike he launched a campaign through Thessaly. Yahya informs us that after the battle at the Spercheios, Ouranos raided Samuel's territory for three months (Yahya II, 446–447), from which it would ensue that the *magistros*' activities exceeded the borders of the theme of Thessalonike on several occasions.

The *magistros* Nikephoros Ouranos remained in Thessalonike until the end of 999,¹³¹ when, owing to trouble in Syria, he was reassigned to the East in the capacity of *doux* of Antioch (Scyl. 345; Yahya II, 459–460). We do not know whether he held the function of *domestikos ton Scholon* besides the position of the *doux* of

relationship with the emperor, and not as the result of a certain function. However, it is essential to say that the activities of Nikephoros Ouranos were nevertheless connected to Thessalonike.

¹³⁰ Pivovarić, Samuilova država 103–104.

¹³¹ Laurent, Antioche 235, dates Ouranos' departure for Antioch to December 999; cf. Cheynet, Skyl. 289 n. 146.

Thessalonike during the entire period from 996–999. From the documents of the *protos* of Mounth Athos (Vatop. no. 2), we do know for certain that in September 998, he was *domestikos ton Scholon*. The second act of Vatopedi, dated to the year 1001 (Vatop. no. 3) — therefore, in the time when Ouranos was already in the position of *doux* of Antioch — is not relevant for these considerations. Here, there is also mention of the *domestikos ton Scholon* Nikephoros Ouranos, but this is in the section referring to the events that took place before September 998, and so from the phrase τὸ τινικαῦτα δομέστικος ὦν τῶν σχολῶν (Vatop. no. 3, 1. 10–11), we gather that it meant the former *domestikos ton Scholon*.¹³²

David Areianites — The second record about the most senior commanding officer from the period 976–1018 refers to David Areianites, the successor of Nikephoros Ouranos to the post in Thessalonike. At the very end of the war, in 1018, he was proclaimed the *strategos autokrator* in Skopje and the *katepano* of Bulgaria.

The data about the career of David Areianites shows that he was continuously engaged in combat in the Balkans from the beginning of the year 1000, when he succeeded Ouranos, till 1018. We know of several stages in his movement up the official hierarchy. The fact that the first mention of the *patrikios* David Areianites is connected to the position of *doux* of Thessalonike (Scyl. 345) implicitly leads us to assume that he deserved this significant function for the military abilities he had previously demonstrated, about which, unfortunately, there is no information. Before 1014, he was recalled from the position of *doux* of Thessalonike, where he was succeeded by Theophylaktos Botaneiates (ibid. 350). It is known that in the continuation of the war, he performed command assignments in the army, which were not terminologically defined precisely in the sources: as military commander (Scyl. 354: ἡγεμών), he conducted the operations in the region of Strumica at the end of 1015, and Skylitzes mentions that he captured the fortress of Thermitza; a little later, in the spring of 1017, he led a campaign with Constantine Diogenes in Pelagonia (Scyl. 355).¹³³

After the death of John Vladislav and the surrender of the majority of the Bulgarian nobles (1018), Basil II, having arrived in Skopje, “left the *strategos autokrator*, the *patrikios* David Areianites in the city”; Michael of Devol supplemented Skylitzes’ explanation from which it follows that Areianites was appointed *katepano* of Bulgaria on the same occasion (Scyl. 358). His name is not mentioned again so it is impossible to say anything definite about the authorities he was granted. They were undoubtedly great, but it seems that they were limited to the part of the region which would soon be included in the so-called theme of Bulgaria with its centre in Skopje. In any case, the supplement by Michael of Devol specifies the region over which Areianites’ powers extended. They were, it is considered, of a temporary nature: in the still troubled circumstances of a newly formed

¹³² Jordanov, Preslav 90–91, is mistaken and guided by the Vatopedi monastery’s document from 1001, he dates the seal of Nikephoros, *magistros* and *domestikos ton Scholon* to 1001, to the time when he had already been withdrawn from Thessalonike.

¹³³ In more detail Pirivatrić, Samuilova država 125–127.

administrative district the authority of the *strategos autokrator*, which gave him full military powers (of the kind that belonged to the emperor), had precedence; in time, as the situation calmed down, those powers grew into the function of the *katepano* of Bulgaria.¹³⁴

However, the authority of the *strategos autokrator* is easier to understand in a situation when the emperor was absent from the battlefield, which was not the case here. The data of Skylitzes shows that Basil II, after he had appointed Areianites *strategos autokrator* in Skopje, spent some time in the neighbouring regions that had constituted the core of Samuel's state, that is the core of the future district of Bulgaria. It is not known exactly when David Areianites was appointed to the said functions but it is quite certain that this followed after the death of John Vladislav, near Dyrrachion, in 1018. Also, we know that Basil remained in the Balkan war zone right until the winter of 1018/1019 and, in the spring of 1019, he celebrated a triumph in Constantinople to mark his victory (Scyl. 365). From the aforesaid, it proceeds that the emperor spent almost the entire year of 1018 in the West of the Empire. From Skopje (where he left Areianites), he set out for Ochrid where he stayed long enough to collect the treasure from Samuel's treasury, to distribute wages (πόγα) to the soldiers, to appoint a governor in the city, to receive and reward the widow of John Vladislav with her relatives, and attend the surrender of some of Samuel's grandees. From Ochrid he next set out towards Prespa (erecting two fortresses on his way, between the lakes Ochrid and Prespa); from Prespa, he reached Devol, where he received the eldest son of John Vladislav, Prousianos, with his brothers; in Devol, among other things, he spent 55 days, corresponding with Ibatzes; he also lived to see Ibatzes being tricked into captivity organised by the then "archon of Ochrid" Eustathios Daphnomeles on the feast of the Dormition of the Blessed Virgin (August 15th). Basil II subsequently took measures to consolidate his power in the western regions: he appointed Eustathios Daphnomeles as the *strategos* in Dyrrachion and sorted out the situation in the themes of Koloneia and Dryinoupolis. Later, he departed for Kastoria (where he received the remainder of Samuel's relatives), and then made his way southwards through Thessaly to Athens. Finally, by way of Thessalonike (where he was engaged in investigating the charges against Gabras and Helinagos, for conspiracy), he finally returned to the capital (Scyl. 358–364).

A summary of Basil's activities shows that they focused on the areas that extended south-west of Skopje. Viewed from that perspective, one can explain the awarding of the extraordinary military powers of a *strategos autokrator* to David Areianites; he truly did replace the emperor in one section of the battlefield, which, among other areas, would become part of the new district of Bulgaria. It is possible, therefore, that those powers directly preceded, indeed contributed to structuring Byzantine power in the so-called katepanate/doukate. Unfortunately, there is no information about his activities as *katepano* of Bulgaria or as *strategos autokrator*,

¹³⁴ VIINJ III, 127–128 n. 165 (*J. Ferluga*).

so one cannot say anything precise about the real nature of or how the powers granted to him — military (and administrative?) — were expressed.

However, given the new concept of provincial authority, which was applied in the Balkan regions and before that in the frontier regions in the East of the Empire, in the *strategos autokrator* of Skopje one can recognise an officer whose powers were not merely of a command nature. It may be that Areianites' function secured the unity of smaller sub-units, Balkan themes-fortresses headed by *strategoï*.¹³⁵ This view certainly can be taken into consideration, provided that David Areianites as the *strategos autokrator* in Skopje acted simultaneously with the emperor (who was occupied in settling the situation in Ochrid, Prespa, Devol and Kastoria), and with Eustathios Daphnomeles, who was appointed “*archon* in Ochrid” — Samuel's capital and then the seat of the Archbishopric — who held this position until Basil II rewarded him with the position of *strategos* of Dyrrachion. In any case, immediately after his appointment, the territorial prerogatives of David Areianites — as *strategos autokrator* in Skopje or/and *katepano* of Bulgaria — were restricted, seeing that the emperor with his other commanders were operating in areas that were slightly later included in the district of Bulgaria.

Domestikos ton Scholon of the West, Leo Melissenos — Sphragistic material fills in the picture about the organisation of the supreme military command in the reign of Basil II but it has raised new questions. In this case, they refer to Leo Melissenos, well-known in the narrative sources, who is mentioned on seals as the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the West, first in the rank of *anthypatos patrikios* and then as *magistros*.

On several occasions, sources mention the name of Leo Melissenos as a participant in the war in the Balkans, as a military commander in the East and as a supporter of the usurper, Bardas Phokas. From all the records of the Byzantine authors that refer to him, only one is questionable: Skylitzes mentions that in 976, Samuel's brother, Moses, was killed in the siege of Serres, and Michael of Devol in his text adds that Moses was killed “by one of the subordinates of the *doux* Melissenos” or, according to another manuscript version, “by one of the followers of the *doux* Melissenos” (Scyl. 329).¹³⁶ In the literature, the question arose as to which

¹³⁵ Stephenson, *Balkan Frontier* 74. *Idem*, *The Balkan Frontier in the Year 1000*, 115, 120, mentions that the *strategos autokrator* of Bulgaria, stationed in Skopje, at least for some time after peace was restored in 1018, had authority in the region of the lower Danube, and that David Areianites, as *strategos autokrator* in Skopje, was senior to the commander of Sirmium, Constantine Diogenes. However, the sources do not contain explicit details that would point to the region of the jurisdiction of *strategos autokrator* David Areianites (nor to that of the *katepano* of Bulgaria, cf. p. 194). Moreover, in view of the different meanings of the term *strategos autokrator* (Krsmanović, *O problemu* 101–108), the question is which meaning it had in this place in Skylitzes' account. Stephenson's interpretation gives a specific content to the expression *strategos autokrator*, from which it would proceed that at least in this case, *strategos autokrator* had the weight of a technical term.

¹³⁶ Since he attributes the death of Moses, according to one manuscript, to a person “subordinated to the *doux* Melissenos” (Scyl. 329^{81/82}: ὑπὸ τινὸς τῶν ὑπὸ τὸν δοῦκα Μελισσηνόν), the question arises as to whether the *doux* Melissenos was in Serres at all, at the time of these events. There is no explicit proof of this because here he speaks of the hierarchical relationship between the two functionaries — *doux*

Melissenos this referred to, seeing that two Melissenos brothers, Leo and Theognostos, had been active in the time of Basil II. Since the latter is mentioned in sources only in connection with the rebellion of Bardas Phokas, one usually thinks about the “*doux* Melissenos” as his elder and better-known brother Leo.¹³⁷ The rank of *doux*, which is attributed to Melissenos, is also questionable, given that according to the TE, only two functionaries in the rank of *doux* were connected to the Balkan region at that time — the *doux* of Thessalonike and of Adrianople (TE 263_{33–34}). As Serres was not promoted to being the seat of the *doux/ katapano*, (it was not even registered in the TE as a separate military-administrative unit under the authority of a *strategos* because it was part of the theme of Strymon), it was assumed that the said Melissenos defended this city, arriving from nearby Thessalonike where he performed the duties of the *doux*.¹³⁸ Evidently, it is possible that the term *doux* in the said place does not designate a provincial functionary but simply the military commander of a tagmatic army.

In considering the organisation of the supreme military command, another dilemma arises from the verified fact that during the reign of Basil II, Leo Melissenos performed the duty of *domestikos ton scholon* of the West in the rank of *magistros*, evidence of which is in the seal from the Preslav Collection (J no. 162; Corpus I, 26.4). Based on other seals and the data narrative sources provide about Leo Melissenos, it is possible to reconstruct at least some stages of his obviously successful service in the eastern and western parts of the Empire. And so, on one seal he is mentioned as the *patrikios* and *strategos* of Anatolikon (J no. 201; Corpus I, 8.3). Jordanov allows for the possibility that the inscription on the seal can be read differently: *patrikios* and *stratopedarches* of the East.¹³⁹ Seeing that the seal was discovered in the vicinity of Preslav, the question remains open as to whether it is evidence only of the correspondence of the *strategos* of Anatolikon (or the commander of the eastern *tagmata*) with some western colleague, or of Melissenos’ personal presence in the Balkans at a time before the narrative sources recorded this. Likewise, in the rank of *anthypatos* and *patrikios* he also performed the duty of the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the West (J no. 161). Given that sphragistic material is involved, it is impossible to determine exactly when these duties were entrusted to him but it would seem to involve the period before 985, when the sources record him with the title of *magistros*. Jordanov dates the said seals to the seventies or eighties of the 10th century.¹⁴⁰

and his subordinate, who was certainly in Serres. Another manuscript, in which the death of Moses is ascribed to a person who belonged to *doux* Melissenos’ suite, implies that the *doux* himself was in Serres (Scyl. 329₈₄: ὑπὸ τινος τῶν περὶ τὸν δοῦκα Μελισσηνόν).

¹³⁷ VIINJ III, 76–77 n. 21 (J. Ferluga); Jordanov, Preslav 89–90; Pirivatrić, Samuilova država 80 et n. 19.

¹³⁸ Jordanov, Preslav 91; Pirivatrić, Samuilova država 80.

¹³⁹ Jordanov, Preslav 112: πατρικ[ίω] (καὶ) στρατ[η]γ[ῶ] τ(ῶν) Ἀνατ[ολ]ικ(ῶν); 113: πατρικ[ίω] (καὶ) στρατ[ο]π(εδάρχῃ) τ(ῆς) Ἀνατολ(ῆς).

¹⁴⁰ Jordanov, Preslav 90, though uncertain of the dating, assumes that Melissenos held the position in the theme of Anatolikon in around 980, and the function of the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the

We know reliably that before Basil's campaign against Serdica in 986, Leo Melissenos was promoted to *magistros*. Yahya mentions that in 985, the emperor appointed *magistros* Leo Melissenos as administrator of Antioch; but he did not hold that position for long because according to the same source, in the following year, in 986, Bardas Phokas was already proclaimed "*doux* of the East, governor of Antioch and all the eastern regions" after being relieved of his duties as *domestikos ton Scholon* (Yahya II, 416–417). The *magistros* Leo Melissenos was one of the rare high-ranking officers from the East, who took part in the emperor Basil's first campaign against Samuel. In the summer of 986, he was entrusted with guarding Philippoupolis, but there is no precise data regarding his function (Scyl. 330, 331). It is possible that after Basil's conflict with the then *domestikos ton Scholon* of the West, Stephen-Kontostephanos, Leo Melissenos was appointed as his successor and in this way, the seal on which he is mentioned as the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the West in the rank of *magistros* can be explained and dated (J no. 162).¹⁴¹ He is known to have supported the rebellion of Bardas Phokas but there is no information that would confirm that he took part in it from the very beginning (987). In any case, after the death of the usurper (989), he was the only person who was pardoned for his role in the rebellion (Scyl. 338). Also, he is known to have participated in the operations in the region of Aleppo in 993/994, as a military commander in the rank of *magistros* (Yahya II, 440–441).

Although it is impossible to give a more accurate estimate of the time when Leo Melissenos performed some of the aforesaid functions, the fact remains that during the reign of Basil II, he occupied the position of commander in chief of the western troops as a *magistros*, and perhaps as *patrikios*, even before the rule of Basil II.¹⁴² As circumstances in the Balkans caused by the war against Samuel and his successors justified and required the appointment to a function of this type, the attempt to date the aforesaid seals to that time is understandable. If Melissenos was appointed *domestikos ton Scholon* of the West before 986 (when the dispute arose between the emperor and the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the West, Kontostephanos), he would have been the most senior-ranking officer to whom the defence of Byzantium's positions in the Balkans were entrusted in the first decade of the rebellion of the *kometopouloi* (in the period which was neglected by the narrative sources). In that sense, the data about the "*doux* Melissenos" from 976 could warrant a different interpretation. The term *doux*, primarily designating a commander of the tagmatic army, may also have been used to describe the *domestikos ton Scholon* (of the West). Still, one should not rule out that Melissenos, the *doux* of Thessalonike held this function at the same time as the position of *domestikos ton Scholon* of the

West in the rank of *patrikios*, in the period up to 985; Corpus II, 459–461. Cf. Μικρά Ασία 85, 358 (V. N. Vlyssidou).

¹⁴¹ In more detail Pirivatrić, Samuilova država 90 n. 57; 94; cf. Jordanov, Corpus II, p. 289.

¹⁴² Considering Tzimiskēs' engagement in the region of Bulgaria, the possibility remains that Melissenos was already appointed to that function in the rank of *patrikios* during his rule, and later, under Basil II, performed this duty as a *magistros*. Judging by the rank he occupied in the official hierarchy during Basil's reign, Leo Melissenos' service must have begun considerably before 976.

West, all the more so because circumstances at that time justified such appointments. However, if his appointment to the function of *domestikos ton Scholon* of the West was a consequence of the emperor's dispute with Kontostephanos, it is certain that Melissenos did not occupy that position for long nor did he play a notable role in the war because in the following year, he supported the usurpation of Bardas Phokas. Although John Skylitzes is the most detailed source for the epoch of Samuel, he summarised several important stages of the war in general outlines, thus leaving us the possibility of attributing the activities of the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the West, Leo Melissenos, to a later period of the war in the Balkans.

IV

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE REFORM OF THE INSTITUTIONS OF THE SUPREME COMMAND

The reform of the supreme command that evolved in the sixties and the seventies of the 10th century was the outcome of the Byzantine military organisation's development. The most important change that spread through the Byzantine army was its professionalisation.

It has already been observed that units of a professional type existed in the scope of the classical thematic army, which were designated by the term *ταξῆσται*, *ταξάτοι* or *ταξιαῖνες*.¹⁴³ The essential feature of these units is that they consisted of soldiers, who were permanently under arms and received a part of their wages from the state treasury; these were professional detachments recruited and stationed in a particular theme, and were its most mobile contingent. It is reasonable to assume that the supreme command was centralised by the function of the *domestikos ton Scholon* in the time of the Amorian dynasty. In this, the process of centralisation relied for support in the provinces on units of that very type. They could swiftly be placed at the disposal of the *domestikos ton Scholon* and their active service depended on the duration of a campaign.¹⁴⁴ However, in terms of numbers and the way they were financed, they did not exceed the framework of the thematic army, the military organisation until the mid-10th century.

The intensification of the Empire's military strategy (and the beginning of this epoch is attributed with good reason to the first emperors of the Macedonian dynasty, Basil I and Leo VI¹⁴⁵) would gradually lead to changes in the organisation of the military, which was actually adjusted to the manner of conducting the campaigns in the East. The need for the permanent presence of the Byzantine army in the East could be ensured over a longer period only through its professionalisation, i.e. by forming an ever increasing number of mercenary military units. The professionalisation of the army required changes in the system of command. A new feature

¹⁴³ *Martha Grigoriou-Ioannidou*, *Θέματα et τάγματα*. Un problème de l'institution de thèmes pendant les X^e et XI^e siècles, *ByzF* 19 (1993) 35–41 (especially pp. 38, 39 et n. 22; 40). Cf. *Haldon*, *Military service* 65–66.

¹⁴⁴ *Krsmanović*, *Potencijal* 424.

¹⁴⁵ *Ahrweiler*, *Administration* 46; *Oikonomides*, *Organisation* 285.

in the organisation of the supreme military command was already observed in the time of Romanos I Lakapenos and finally became established in the reigns of Constantine VII and his son Romanos II. At issue was the exceptionally long mandate of the *domestikos ton Scholon*, at that time the sole representative of central command over the army on campaign. It must be that the static quality of the personnel in the supreme command (unprecedented in Byzantine history) contributed to its centralisation in the beginning. However, in the end, it was transformed into a particular example of decentralisation, the more so because the *domestikos ton Scholon* stood between the ruler in Constantinople and the (professional) army on the eastern border, not as a loyal subject (John Kourkouas) but as the initiator and organiser of eastern policy, who was only formally dependent on the emperor (the representatives of the Phokas family).

The prestige of the function of the *domestikos ton Scholon* was also visible owing to its division (or duplication), which occurred under Romanos II. Still, did the creation of the command system in the West of the Empire truly represent the mainspring for reforming the institution of the supreme command? The final answer depends on defining the aims of that reform. One may judge it on the basis of the TE and the data left by the narrative sources about the activities of the newly established functionaries (both the representatives of the central command and those linked with the provinces). The question is, however, in what measure the knowledge of the continuation of the reform burdens the interpretation of its beginnings. That is why it is better to start with the question of what the division of the function of the *domestikos ton Scholon* shows us and what preceded the first change in the system of the supreme command.

The need to centralise the supreme command in the West of the Empire existed even before the position of the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the West was created. This need was satisfied with the extraordinary appointment of a *monostrategos* or with the engagement of the *domestikos ton Scholon* in the western (i.e. Balkan) regions. The use of the term *monostrategos* since the 8th century was adjusted to the new thematic arrangement. Thus, it designated either a military commander of units recruited in different themes or a commander of the western army/western themes. In the latter case, the *monostrategos* was in actual fact assigned as an officer, who, according to his command powers corresponded to the *domestikos ton Scholon*, the commander of the eastern army. But the competences of the *domestikos ton Scholon* (primarily linked with the East) could also extend to the Balkan region, where the main body of the Byzantine forces were made up of units from Thrace and Macedonia until the epoch of Basil II.¹⁴⁶ Thus, a protracted war was waged with Symeon (894–927) under the command of the *domestikos ton Scholon*. One should stress that the eastern troops also took part in it, as well as the officers from that part of the Empire. To put it briefly, ever since he became the supreme commander of the army on campaign (the middle of the 9th century), the powers of the *domestikos ton Scholon* had to include command over the eastern units, to whom the units from the western parts of

¹⁴⁶ At the time of Leo VI, the said two themes belonged among the eastern themes, v. p. 130 et n. 266.

the Empire could be attached. But, if the army recruited in the western themes acted independently, as a rule, the *domestikos ton Scholon* was not appointed to lead it, but a *monostrategos* or a *strategos* with extended military powers over units from other themes, instead (similar to the way in which the supreme command was organised in the area of southern Italy, on several occasions).

Based on this explanation, one can say that Romanos II simply organised the system of the supreme command in the West after the eastern model. Still, was the change that had already occurred in the military organisation in the West (principally in Thrace and Macedonia) sanctioned in this, or did the transition to a tagmatic army in that region spread swiftly only after the function of the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the West had become a formal one? The changes in the military organisation in the East were the result of Byzantium's military engagements over a long period; this intensity did not exist in the West in such an uninterrupted span of time. In the area of southern Italy and Sicily the Empire periodically launched offensive expeditions, whereas the state's frontiers in the Balkans were not in any significant danger after the epoch of wars with Symeon. The mandate of the first *domestikos* in the West, Leo Phokas, was short-lived and the very awarding of authority expressed in the new function was due to what one could say was an ordinary incursion by the Skythian/Hunic army (the Ungars or Pechenegs) in the Byzantine region (Thrace or Macedonia?). This incursion was successfully repelled, after which the commander in chief from the West was reassigned to the East. Still, the function even afterwards was filled: it was awarded to Marianos Argyros, an officer whose command powers, at least on three occasions and by means of different appointments, extended to the Macedonian-Thracian troops.¹⁴⁷ Byzantium's first serious military efforts in the region of the Balkans are recorded to have begun in the time of Tzimiskes but they were provoked by the Russian army advancing. In the time of this emperor, too, in the military respect, Byzantium's focus was on the East. Also, it is essential to highlight that, besides the army of the Thracians and the Macedonians who traditionally shouldered the burden of the war in the area south of the Danube, the sources also mention the eastern units as participants in the Byzantine-Russian war for Bulgaria, and not any particular, western army. Besides that, the detail on Marianos Argyros' function is indicative, whom Theophanes Continuatus mentions as the "*monostrategos* in the theme of Macedonia and the then *katepano* of the West". Did this have to do with a literarily complicated series of titles or was it clarification by a contemporary of Romanos II,¹⁴⁸ that the said *katepano* of the West (or hitherto *monostrategos*) was in fact assigned only to the army of Macedonia (and Thrace)? We are sure that the tagmatic organisation included the European themes,

¹⁴⁷ Under Constantine Porphyrogenetos, he was the *strategos* of Calabria and Longobardia and the commander of the troops from the themes of Thrace and Macedonia; under Romanos II he was the *monostrategos* in Macedonia and *katepano* of the West, and in 963, during the civil war, he defended the interests of Joseph Bringas in Constantinople, by commanding the "Macedonian phalanga", v. p. 29.

¹⁴⁸ Theoph. Cont. 480. The data originated from the sixth volume of the Chronicle by so-called Theophanes Continuatus, from the section dealing with the reign of Romanos II, the author of which is assumed to have been Theodoros Daphnopates, *Ja. N. Ljubarskij, Prodolžatel' Feofana. Žizneopisanija vizantijskikh carej*, Sankt-Peterburg 1992, 219.

primarily Thrace and Macedonia, but there could scarcely have been some special western army organised in *tagmata* in the time of Romanos II, who had (at last) been given a commander. It would rather be that the authority of the *domestikoi ton Scholon* of the West referred to European, i.e. Thracian-Macedonian strike units.¹⁴⁹ Consequently, one can conclude that the division of the function of the *domestikos ton Scholon* that occurred at the beginning of the rule of Romanos II was the expression of the state's need to organise the supreme command in the West as this had been done in the East — in the region where the old *domestikos ton Scholon* had real authority — but in a manner that did not weaken or limit Byzantium's military capabilities in the East.

The creation of the position of the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the West should also be viewed from the aspect of the personalisation of the Byzantine state apparatus. Although the new function cannot merely be comprehended as a concession Romanos II made to the Phokas family, one should not overlook the fact that the members of this family had *de facto* succeeded one another to the leading military positions from the mid 10th century.¹⁵⁰ The breakthrough towards the Byzantine military leadership unfolded in actual fact through two positions of a different nature: functions of a military-administrative nature personified in the *strategos* of the renowned Byzantine theme of Anatolikon, and the exclusive command duties of the *domestikos ton Scholon*. The first thing one notices is that in the middle of the 10th century, the *domestikos ton Scholon* finally suppressed the *strategos* of Anatolikon. It was remarked that Nikephoros Phokas, the future emperor, was the last *strategos* of Antolikon (945–955) who had command over the armies from other themes.¹⁵¹ Still, from the aspect of command authorities, even at that time, the *domestikos ton Scholon* was a more senior position, as revealed by the data that the said Nikephoros was promoted to the rank of *domestikos* after the dismissal of the then first Byzantine general, his father Bardas. In any case, the fact that the position of the *domestikos*

¹⁴⁹ This refers to units, which were extremely mobile during the domination of the thematic army, and were used in various parts of the Empire — in the Balkans, southern Italy and, in the East, *Krsmanski*, Potencijal 424–425. The connection of the function of the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the West with the (Thracian)-Macedonian *tagmata* was also attested in the 11th century. In that sense, the inscription on a cross, mentioning a certain *patrikios* Leo, *πρωτάρχης Μακεδόνων*, and the *domestikos ton Scholon of the West*, is indicative. The surname of that particular Leo is questionable (Damokranites or from Damokranicia), and so he was identified, for example, with Leo Phokas, the first *domestikos ton Scholon* of the West (*Laskarina Bouras*, Étude de la Croix-reliquaire, Genava N. S. 28, 1980, 119–122) or with Leo Tornikios (*Cheyne*, Nouvelle hypothèse 200–202); it is possible that this referred to Leo Sarakenopoulos, who performed several assignments in the Balkans, in the time of John Tzimiskes (*Seibt*, Reliquiarkreuz 307; cf. p. 138 et n. 297). That Thracian-Macedonian troops constituted the nucleus of the “Western army” is also suggested in the speech by John Mauropous, written to mark the victory over the usurper, Leo Tornikios (1047), *Iohannis Euchaitorum Metropolitae*, quae in Codice Vaticano Graeco 676 supersunt, ed. *P. de Lagarde*, Göttingen 1883 (repr. Amsterdam 1979) no. 186 § 7; 16; 61; cf. Scyl. 439, 441; in more detail *Krsmanski*, Uspon 113–114, 135.

¹⁵⁰ From the independent rule of Constantine Porphyrogenetos (944/5–959), the positions of the *domestikos ton Scholon* and the *strategos* of Anatolikon were in the hands of the Phokas family without interruption, while the themes of Cappadocia and Seleukeia were either under their command or that of their relatives or allies.

¹⁵¹ Μικρά Ασία 83–84 (*V. N. Vlyssidou*).

ton Scholon was constantly occupied for a lengthy period, as well as the fact that the representatives of the Phokas family take the credit for this, contributed to making a distinction between the function of the *strategos* of Anatolikon and the *domestikos ton Scholon*, with the latter indisputably occupying the dominant position in relation to all the duties of a military-administrative nature. The first *domestikos* of the West, Leo Phokas, had previously been the *strategos* of Anatolikon (955–960/961). Ordinarily, the next stage in progress up the military hierarchy would be the position of the *domestikos ton Scholon*, which at that time belonged to his elder brother, Nikephoros Phokas. Judging by the testimony the sources have left about the reign of Romanos II, by awarding the functions of the *domestikoi ton Scholon*, the new emperor organised the supreme command in the Empire in a way that enabled him literally to leave “the care of the army” to the brothers. Nevertheless, the further sequence of events indicates that this novelty was introduced under the influence of the two Phokas brothers.

The importance of the *domestikos ton Scholon* (and the function of the *strategos* of Anatolikon) was demonstrated in the fact that two rulers in succession had attained the imperial title through this function. It involved a function that engendered tremendous military power, and which enabled, at least the Phokas’ brothers, to exert their influence over the army throughout many years, and also afforded them great independence of action. Therefore, it is not surprising that Nikephoros Phokas himself, the successor of Romanos II, introduced essential changes in the organisation of the supreme command by creating the position of *stratopedarches*.

The newly established position indicates the aim of the supreme command’s reform, one of its characteristics being to downgrade and curtail the military powers of the highest-ranking officers. This tendency characterised the rule of Nikephoros II Phokas, just as it did the rule of his successors, John I Tzimiskes and Basil II. All three personally took part in campaigns, thereby establishing an essentially different chain of command in the army. This fact alone diminished the authorities of the members of the central command. Their powers were more limited than the ones generated from military functions in the times of Constantine VII and Romanos II. This policy change first became tangible in the position of the *domestikos ton Scholon*, and sources contain only one reliable item referring to the independent action of such an officer in the time of Nikephoros II Phokas (John Tzimiskes conducted a campaign against the Arabs in 963, in which he scored a notable victory at Adana). However, it was more significant that Nikephoros II Phokas had ensured that the changes in the organisation of the supreme command became permanent, by introducing the *stratopedarches* in the order of regular duties, mentioned in the *taktikon*.

The TE (263_{25–26}) records two *stratopedarchai* of the East and the West, who, in the official hierarchy were second in rank to the *domestikoi ton Scholon* of the East and the West. Accordingly, the contribution of Nikephoros II Phokas to the supreme command reform merely consisted of imitating the model of the duplicated function of the *domestikos ton Scholon*. Unfortunately, however, it is not known

whether Nikephoros Phokas deserves the credit for creating two positions of the *stratopedarchai*. Narrative sources speak of the activities of one and it is only in the TE compiled under Tzimiskes that two such positions were mentioned. Therefore, one could attribute the duplication of the function of *stratopedarches* to Tzimiskes, just as one could to Phokas.

One notices that when this function was created, two basic features distinguished it from the *domestikos ton Scholon*. The narrative sources pointed to the first one: from the start, the position of the *stratopedarches* was open to eunuchs. Nikephoros II Phokas designated his *doulos*, the eunuch Peter, to be the first to hold this function. It seems that in the reign of this emperor, the rule still prevailed, as Philotheos records, that the function of *domestikos* was reserved only for “men with beards”. We know for certain that this rule was ignored after Constantine VIII came to the throne (Scyl. 370). Viewed more broadly, the formalised function of the *stratopedarches* should be interpreted primarily as the expression of a state interest (this refers to the period of Byzantium’s military ventures); however, the fact that with this new position the institution of the central supreme command became accessible to eunuchs — a politically more reliable category of subjects — could be explained by the endeavour of Nikephoros Phokas in future to prevent a repeat of his own career (*domestikos ton Scholon* — emperor). Hence, it is understandable that he required two officers of this type — for the East and for the West of the Empire — as a worthy replacement for the *domestikoi ton Scholon*.

The TE points to the other, more interesting aspect concerning the function of the *stratopedarches*: lower-ranking officers, most of whom were commanders of the tagmatic army, such as *topoteretes*, were omitted in this rank list. The *stratopedarches* was actually the sole top-ranking commanding officer, whose subordinates the TE did not mention at all.¹⁵² This led to defining him as the commander of the army on campaign (just like the *domestikos ton Scholon* and the *stratelates*), providing that this function did not include authority over a particular *tagma* (as opposed to the *domestikos ton Scholon* who was given command of a *tagma ton Scholon* on his appointment or the *stratelates*, who had command over a *tagma ton Stratelaton*¹⁵³). This, understandably, did not mean that the *stratopedarches* was not acknowledged as a tagmatic commander. The narrative sources referring to Peter, the sole bearer of this rank who was active during the time of Nikephoros II Phokas, John I Tzimiskes and Basil II, show that his command authorities were fulfilled equally in the East and the West of the Empire. It encompassed “the Thracians and the Macedonians” (in the Russian-Byzantine war for Bulgaria, Scyl. 300–301), and “all the eastern *tagmata*” (at the beginning of the reign of Basil II, Scyl. 315). During the domination of the tagmatic (professional) army, when intensive campaigns were

¹⁵² Accordingly, the *stratopedarches* was similar to the provincial tagmatic commanders — the *doukes* and *katepano* — whose subordinates were not mentioned in the TE (v. p. 179). Admittedly, the TE (273₁₄) was the sole rank list that mentioned the *topoteretai ton thematon*. At the beginning of the 10th century the *topoteretai ton thematon* were considered to be part of a *tourma*, and that those mentioned in the TE need not have been subordinated to the *doux/katepano*, *Oikonomidēs*, Listes 345 et n. 327.

¹⁵³ *Oikonomidēs*, Listes 334–335.

being conducted, the *stratopedarches* was the commander of the tagmatic army recruited in the Byzantine provinces. In that respect, he was in a position that rivaled the *domestikos ton Scholon*, even more so because in the time of Peter's mandate, the position of the *domestikos ton Scholon* (of the East) was vacant. The establishment of this function was even linked with the dismissal of John Tzimiskes, the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East from the time of the rule of Nikephoros II.

However, a dilemma exists as to what happened to the *tagma ton Scholon* in the period when the position of the *domestikos ton Scholon* was vacant, because the *stratopedarches* would have been the equivalent officer to the *domestikos ton Scholon* only in the case when the *domestikos'* original unit, the *tagma ton Scholon*, as well as the members of his staff found themselves under his command.¹⁵⁴ This question is important because the answer would help explain the nature of the function of the *stratopedarches* and also pinpoint the motives for its creation. In the ensuing period, the position of *stratopedarches* was rarely awarded, and data referring to the time immediately after the establishment of this function only allows us to define the *stratopedarches* as the commander of an army on campaign. He represented a substitute for the *domestikos ton Scholon* (there is no reliable confirmation of the simultaneous appointment of two officers¹⁵⁵) but his military authority would, nevertheless, have been more limited than the one which traditionally proceeded from the function of the *domestikos ton Scholon*, who used to have command over a number of lower-ranking officers in his staff. Still, during the 11th century, the function of the *domestikos ton Scholon* did not exhibit the same features as when it had been created. In the 11th century, it appears, the position of the *domestikos ton Scholon* and the *stratopedarches* were equated in terms of command authority so that the *domestikos ton Scholon* began to resemble the *stratopedarches* from the TE: it is certain that in the period following Basil's rule, the *tagma ton Scholon* was no longer placed under the direct command of the *domestikos ton Scholon* but under the command of lower-ranking officers from his staff (*topoteretes ton Scholon*, *chartoularios ton Scholon*). Meanwhile, this officer, designated by the terms *domestikos* of the East or *domestikos* of the West, simply took over supreme command of the army on a campaign, but not of the elite *tagma ton Scholon*.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ Cf. *Oikonomidēs*, *Évolution* 141–142. Also, the same author (Listes 334 et n. 275), underlines that in the 11th century, the term *στρατοπεδάρχια* was used to designate the function of the *domestikos ton Scholon*, believing that the term itself was significant even though it had a literary and not a technical meaning.

¹⁵⁵ The data on Melias, *domestikos ton Scholon* in 973, on the contrary, could have confirmed the simultaneous occupation of the position of *domestikos ton Scholon* (of the East) and *stratopedarches* in Tzimiskes' time, on condition that Peter held this function uninterruptedly (that is, from 967 until his death in 977). However, in that case, the question would arise as to which army Peter's authorities applied.

¹⁵⁶ *Oikonomidēs*, *Évolution* 142 et n. 106. The removal of the *tagma ton Scholon* from the command of the *domestikos ton Scholon* already began at the end of the 10th century, as illustrated by the activities of the *topoteretai ton Scholon* from 978 and 992 in the region of southern Italy, *Falkenhausen*, *Untersuchungen* 117, 122.

With the introduction of the *stratopedarches* in the order of the regular functions, the ruler also formally acquired the possibility to circumvent the appointment of the *domestikos ton Scholon*. Data about the activities of the *stratopedarches* Peter during the reigns of all three soldier-emperors indicates that his subordinates were not defined, that the choice of troops to be placed under his command depended on current circumstances and on the objective of the campaign he was leading. From the abovesaid it transpires that the circumstances surrounding the appointment of the *stratopedarches*, as well as his command authorities, were comparable to appointments of an extraordinary nature. The only difference was that the place of this officer was defined precisely in the official hierarchy, from the time of Nikephoros Phokas and John Tzimiskes.

The institution of the supreme command was formed for a longer period under John I Tzimiskes. This emperor added one more to the four commanding officers. The TE (263₂₇) registered the *stratelates* in the form of a single function, and narrative sources from that period mention the *stratelates* of the East. This involves describing the units over which the then *stratelates* Bardas Skleros had command authority (which were also used in the Balkan war). Byzantine writers from the later period (John Skylitzes and John Zonaras) denoted his function with the term *stratelates* of the East or *stratelates* of all the eastern forces. An analogy with the *domestikos ton Scholon* and the *stratopedarches* has led to the assumption that the duty of the *stratelates*, regardless of the form mentioned in the TE, was soon duplicated, so the formulation from the narrative sources can be understood as a transfer of later terminology, which was common in the times when these authors were writing. However, it is because of the similarity that exists between the functions of the *domestikos ton Scholon* and the *stratelates* from the TE, that I would now draw attention to certain circumstances linked with the institutionalisation of this position.

Firstly, just like in the case of the *domestikos ton Scholon*, part of the function of the *stratelates* consisted of a particular *tagma* (τάγμα τῶν στρατηλατῶν), which John Skylitzes mentions (Scyl. 315). Therefore, one assumes that the establishment of a new command duty was linked to the formation of a new *tagma*. Nevertheless, Leo the Deacon mentions that once Tzimiskes came to the throne, Bardas Skleros was one of the commanders of the *Immortals*, a *tagma* that was founded by the new emperor, whereas the detail mentioning the *tagma ton Stratelaton* originates only from the time of Basil II, when Skleros had raised a rebellion. However, the TE (273₂₂) mentions a lower-ranking officer from the staff of the *stratelates* — a *topoteretes* τοῦ στρατηλατοῦ. He had a significantly lower rank compared to the *topoteretes ton Scholon* of the East and the West but he was at the head of a group of *topoteretai* from all the other *tagmata* and even above the *topoteretes* of the *tagma ton Athanaton*.¹⁵⁷ However, according to the form in which it was mentioned, the said *topoteretes* was

¹⁵⁷ In the sequence of the tagmatic commanders and their *topoteretai*, the TE indicates yet another illogical point concerning the order of officers connected with the *tagma ton Athanaton* and the old *tagma ton Hikanaton*; thus, the *domestikos ton Hikanaton* was mentioned in a position before the *domestikos* of the *tagma ton Athanaton*, whereas the *topoteretai* were mentioned in the reverse order, TE 271₀₁₋₀₂; 273₂₅₋₂₆.

connected with the *stratelates* (Sg: τοῦ στρατηλατοῦ) and not with the *tagma ton Stratelaton* (Pl: τῶν στρατηλατῶν)¹⁵⁸. Secondly, it seems, the command powers of the *stratelates* acquired an accumulative nature immediately after the establishment of the function, which means that the *stratelates*, just like the *domestikos ton Scholon*, had command over a particular *tagma* as well as over a diverse provincial army.¹⁵⁹ Finally, the command powers of the *stratelates*, Bardas Skleros (and Romanos Kourkouas in 963), is connected with the eastern army, which the authors from the later period specified with the appropriate expression: “the *stratelates* of (all) the East”. In time, once this function was created, i.e. introduced into the order of so-called regular functions, it appears that the *stratelates* represented an officer of the supreme command, whose authorities referred to the eastern army. Mentioned in the form of a single function in the TE, without any geographical specification of the territorial origin of the army over which he had command (East or West), the *stratelates* from the TE, reminds one of the old *domestikos ton Scholon*, whose domain of authority, as the highest-ranking command officer of the Byzantine army, though geographically undefined, referred primarily to the eastern thematic, and subsequently tagmatic units. The assumption that the central command in the East was strengthened with the creation of a new military position in the time of Tzimiskes, is substantiated by the fact that in the epoch of Phokas and Tzimiskes, Byzantium had fixed its military focus on the eastern frontier, where campaigns were under way against the Arabs, and on the reform of the frontier military administration. Their successor, Basil II would devote his attention to the Balkans and to the West.

In judging the true importance of the said functions, it seems that the order registered in the TE did not fully reflect the true state of affairs. This is corroborated primarily by the fact that this rank list also kept to the traditional and not the true precedence of the *strategos* of Anatolikon in relation to the *domestikos ton Scholon* (of the East). All we know for certain is that among the five most senior officers with command authorities, the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East took precedence. As for his colleague in the West, one could rather say that his position was overestimated because the sources show that the *stratopedarches* and the *stratelates* had more important authorities, particularly in the case when they exercised them in the East or over the eastern troops. His rank simply rested on the fact that this function came into being by duplicating the function of the *domestikos ton Scholon*. Also, the order between the *stratopedarches* and the *stratelates* that was registered in the TE did not necessarily define the importance of the two said functions.¹⁶⁰ Evidence of the

¹⁵⁸ The same applies to the *topoteretes tou ethnarchou*, TE 273₂₉.

¹⁵⁹ Understandably, the difference lies in the fact that the *domestikos ton Scholon* was the capital's most prominent officer during almost an entire century (from the second half of the 8th century till roughly the middle of the 9th century), and subsequently, with the development of the function, became the supreme commander of the provincial army. The *stratelates* was granted that kind of authority immediately after the position was institutionalized.

¹⁶⁰ For example, it is obvious from the sources that the *stratelates* and *magistros* Bardas Skleros was more important than the *patrikios* and *stratopedarches* Peter.

significance of the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East is the fact that the emperors preferred to grant appointments to the position of *stratopedarches*, *stratelates* or even award extraordinary powers. As none of the formal command functions had to be conferred regularly, the position of the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East was often vacant in the course of this half century.

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In principle, the changes in the domain of the organisation of the supreme command over the army on campaign that took place from the middle of the 10th century till the end of the reign of Basil II were visible in two basic segments: 1) in the increase in the number of regular command functions, whose bearers occupied a position in the official hierarchy; 2) in limiting the competences of the most senior-ranking military commanders.

As basic characteristics of the implemented reform I would single out the following:

Firstly, the military power of all the highest-ranking officers, whether it originated from regular (so-called formal) or extraordinary appointments, was significantly limited when Nikephoros Phokas arrived on the throne. The all appeared in expeditions which were restricted in terms of objectives, territory, and duration. Hence, from the viewpoint of Constantinople, the increase in officers of this rank led to the centralisation of the institutions of the supreme command, which was largely undermined in the epoch when the *domestikoi ton Scholon* from the Phokas family were active. Control of the functions that generated vast military power was established by the emperor being able to appoint several military commanders of the most senior rank at the same time.

Secondly, the centralisation of the supreme command by introducing two positions for the *domestikos ton Scholon*, made it possible to circumvent appointments to this function, and limit the authority of the previously uncontested supreme commander of the Byzantine army. This process was undertaken by three soldier-emperors in conditions when Byzantium was intensely engaged in military conflicts, and when by the nature of the situation, commanding officers had great importance. This lasted for half a century, unfolding in stages, and it terminated in making the position of the *domestikos ton Scholon* (of the East) accessible to eunuchs (1025/1026). As for the prestige the function of the *domestikos ton Scholon* (of the East) had at that time, John Skylitzes left picturesque testimony. In describing the organisation of the command against the rebel Bardas Skleros, he established a kind of progression of officers who were entrusted with suppressing the usurpation: from the *stratopedarches* (Peter), to awarding the extraordinary powers of the *strategos autokrator* (*protovestiaros* Leo) to the appointment of the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East (Bardas Phokas). In all this, one should emphasise that Bardas Phokas was the last *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East who enjoyed a great degree of independence in organising and conducting not campaigns, but the Empire's military

policy, as his activities in the Syrian region illustrate. The majority of his colleagues in the 11th century, would appear in the role of commanders in chief of campaigns, in which their powers would not differ very much from those proceeding from other command functions of the regular or extraordinary type. It was the similarity or even the identity of competences that led to the frequent disparities in the Byzantine authors' accounts when terminologically defining the functions of some of the highest commanding officers.

Thirdly, the reform of the institutions of the central command cannot be viewed separately from the changes that unfolded in the provinces, that is to say, in the frontier regions in the East and the West of the Empire (the Balkans and southern Italy). One of the novelties in the military organisation also included the reform of the provincial command personnel (the creation of the positions of the *doux* and *katepano*), which, from the time of John Tzimiskes, led to the partial transfer of command authorities from the central to the provincial level.

THE ORGANISATION OF PROVINCIAL
(FRONTIER) AUTHORITY

On the Threshold Between the 10th and the 11th Century

The emphasis on the formation of a tagmatic, i.e. professional, army led to the reform of the entire Byzantine command system, both central and provincial. The changes in the Empire's military organisation elicited the creation of new, more complex structures of governance in the Byzantine provinces. The new military-administrative organisation was initially (in the closing decades of the 10th century) characteristic for the frontier territories. From the epoch of Basil II, the new system of authority began to expand farther inland, as well.

The TE has left the most data on the earliest phase of the reform of provincial administration. One can register two features by which the TE differed essentially from the *taktika* of Byzantine officials from previous epochs. On the one hand, there was a striking increase in the number of provincial authorities, while on the other, important changes in their ranks and titles can be seen. The reform reflected in the TE, which spread through the Byzantine Empire, in time led to a substantial change in the particular technical terms (e.g. *strategos*, *doux*, *thema*).

Still, before estimating the value of the data in the TE in greater detail, as regards how to use it, one should stress that this source raises numerous questions. This is partly due to the fact that the TE (edited in 971–975) illustrates only one, brief stage of the reform the Byzantine state experienced. As this refers to a period about which synchronous sources have left little testimony, one can judge the original value of the data from the TE from a shifted chronological perspective.¹ Apart from that, the lack of internal logic in this source suggests that the TE was not an official *taktikon*, but some kind of draft.

The *Taktikon Escorial* as a source for the provincial administration

It would be appropriate to begin describing the provincial administration on the threshold between the 10th and the 11th century, by saying that, based on the TE, it is impossible to establish even the approximate number of military-administrative districts, into which the state territory of Byzantium had been divided. In the previous *taktika*, one notices that a balance was achieved between the expansion of

¹ The majority of data on the provincial reform carried out in the time of Nikephoros II Phokas and John I Tzimiskes originates from the period of the rule of Basil II.

state territory and the development of the thematic organisation (personified in the provincial functionaries mentioned in the rank lists).² In contrast to them, the TE more often illustrates the changes in the structure of military-administrative authority than enabling one to gain a clear impression of the district where that authority was organised at the regional level. Thus, the TU (edited in 842–843) registered 19 thematic *strategoï* and, with them, several lower-ranking functionaries, governors in the units of so-called lesser forms of the thematic system, such as the *archon* of Dalmatia or the *kleisourarches* of Charsianon or the *doux* of Calabria, etc. (TU pp. 47–49, 53–57).³ In the FK (from 899), one notices that Byzantium had expanded its territory in the meantime, and had consolidated its power: the functionaries in the lower administrative units had been elevated to the rank of *strategos* of a theme, and military and civil authority had been organised in 25 thematic units (FK pp. 137–139).⁴ In the TB (edited in 934–944), 31 thematic functionaries were mentioned in the rank of *strategos* (pp. 245–247). But, in the TE (pp. 263–269), the number of provincial functionaries grew to 90, indicating that in the few decades that had elapsed since the edition of the TB and the TE, as many as 59 new positions had been created in the Empire's administrative units. Data from other sources, primarily seals, supplements what we know about the new military functionaries who were assigned to the Balkans and the frontier territories in the East.

However, the impressive growth in the number of provincial functionaries, seen in the TE, did not adequately reflect the geographical expansion of state territory. While in the previous *taktika*, the creation of a new thematic functionary in the rank of a *strategos* was mainly the result of incorporating a broader region into the state's territory, in the TE, the majority of the mentioned *strategoï* were assigned to cities or fortresses with the surrounding lands.⁵ Understandably, in some cases, the competences of the so-called *strategoï of the cities* extended over a far wider area than it seemed, at first. Besides, the same source also recorded changes in the domain of military-administrative organisation in the regions of the old themes, which poses some dilemmas in the case of e.g. Macedonia.

The appearance of a large number of *strategoï of cities*, or so-called *small strategoi*,⁶ had to bring about changes in the content of this function. Research has

² Before the TE appeared, the Empire's administrative system developed gradually, reflected in the balanced rhythm of the appearance of new themes, without striking changes in the system, Maksimović, *Tradicija i inovacija* 13.

³ On lower-ranking units of the thematic system v. *Ferluga*, Niže jedinice.

⁴ One manuscript of the FK mentions the *strategos* of Longobardia, but this refers to a later interpolation, *Oikonomidēs*, Listes 75–76. Among the functionaries in the lower-ranking thematic organisation, the FK mentions the *kleisourarchai* (147₀₄), *katepano* or *kleisourarches* of Paphlagonia (231₂₅).

⁵ The TE records 12 *strategoï* of the so-called old themes — larger regions in the geographical sense (Anatolikon, Armeniakon, Thrakesion, Opsikon, Boukellarion, Cappadocia, Charsianon, Koloneia, Paphlagonia, Thrace, Chaldia, Optimatoi), in contrast to whom there were 71 functionaries, whose competences were definitely, geographically connected with a city/fortress, *Oikonomidēs*, *Taktikon* inédit 180 et n. 11.

⁶ *Ahrweiler*, *Administration* 50.

already shown that one of the characteristics of the reform of the administrative system was to limit the authorities of the *strategoi*, who at the end of the 10th century appeared ever more frequently in the role of commanders of cities, or fortresses with their neighbourhoods.⁷ From the end of the 11th century, the result of that process would be for the term *strategos* to be encountered more rarely in the sources (the belief prevails that it did not survive the reform of the Komnenoi). In time, it would be replaced by the term *kastrophylox*.⁸ However, another process unfolded parallel to the degradation of the function of *strategos*, and it regarded the affirmation of the *doux* and the *katepano*,⁹ as the *taktikon* from Tzimiskēs' epoch testifies.

Ever since the early Byzantine period, the term *doux* signified a military commander with a designated place in the then official hierarchy. The nature of the competences of the *doux* would remain the same even in later times, even though this function evolved, like many others in Byzantium. There was still room for the position of the *doux* in a state that had been reformed by the introduction of the thematic system: during the 8th–9th centuries, this term signified the commanders of the so-called lower units of the thematic organisation.¹⁰ These were functionaries whose rank in the official hierarchy was below that of the thematic *strategoi*.¹¹ The TU (53₀₄, 57₁₄) registered most of the commanders of the lower thematic units.¹² With the development of the thematic organisation, which gathered momentum through the intense military policy of the 10th century emperors, the terms *doux* and *katepano* were used to signify commanders of tagmatic, i.e. professional military units. Since administrative competences became combined with military competences sooner or later in the kind of militarised system the Byzantine state apparatus embodied, the *doux* and *katepano* gradually took over the function of the former thematic *strategos* — the functionary who possessed the highest military-civil

⁷ From the second half of the 10th century, the term *strategos* acquired a dual meaning: either it referred to a provincial military-administrative governor of the traditional type or to the commander of a garrison, stationed in a city/fortress (that category dominated in the TE). In the last case the *strategos* had less military authority, resembling the authority of the *kleisourarchai* in the previous period, *ibid.* 36–52.

⁸ *Ahrweiler*, Administration 52. *Oikonomidēs*, Évolution 148, mentions that the *kastrophylox* appeared for the first time as the commander of a fortress in 1078. Attaleiates recounts that in 1049, during the clashes with the Pechenegs, Constantine IX Monomachos stationed the troops in the fortresses, thus turning them into *kastrophyloxes* (καστροφυλακτοῦντας ἀποδείξας αὐτούς), appointing them as special commanders (ἀρχηγός), Attal. 35. In the Late Byzantine Period, the *kastrophylox* was the military aide of the *kephale*, *Maksimović*, *Palaiologoi* 175–177.

⁹ The term δοῦξ originates from the Latin *dux* and is known from the Early Byzantine Epoch, as opposed to the term κατεπάνω which was of Greek origin and one comes across it from the 9th century; for basic references, v. ODB 1, p. 659 (*doux*); ODB 2, p. 1115 (*katepano*). For a more detailed account of the meaning and evolution of these terms v. *Ahrweiler*, Administration 52–55, 58–64 (*doux*); 64–67 (*katepano*); *Kühn*, Armée 158–170.

¹⁰ *Ferluga*, Niže jedinice 74–76, 85–88.

¹¹ Lower-ranking functionaries of the thematic organisation (*archontes*, *droungarioi*, *kleisourarchai*, *katepano*, *doukes*) possessed both military and civil competences, *ibid.* 62; cf. *Oikonomidēs*, Listes 342.

¹² The TU omits the *katepano* of Mardaites and *katepano* of Paphlagonia, who are known from other sources, *Ferluga*, Niže jedinice 74–75. Among the lower-ranking functionaries of the thematic organisation, the *kleisourarches*, included in the TE, survived the longest, Listes 271₃₁; 342 (comment.).

powers in his province.¹³ The beginning, or, to be more precise, the first stage of that process was recorded in the TE, which illustrates the provincial administrative changes of this type from the period of Nikephoros II Phokas and John I Tzimiskes.

The degradation of the *strategos* was not only reflected in the fact that the territorial (and thereby all other) competences of most bearers of this title were drastically reduced, but also that among the Byzantine provincial functionaries — the *strategoi*, *doukes* and *katepano* — a new hierarchical order was established. But it will not always be easy to supply an answer to the question of whether they were subordinate or superior to, or independent of any higher instance.

The hierarchical structure of the new provincial organisation cannot be understood, without first clarifying which type of functionary the *doukes* or *katepano* mentioned in the TE belonged to: a governing (i.e. military-civil) or a military? At a first glimpse, one can already tell that the TE does not offer a clear answer to this crucial question. That rank list mentions a group of seven functionaries that are defined by the synonymous terms *doux* (the term used for five) and *katepano* (the term used for two).¹⁴ They were the *doux of Antioch*, the *doux of Mesopotamia* (of the East), the *doux of Chaldia*, the *katepano of Mesopotamia* (of the West),¹⁵ the *katepano of Italy*, the *doux of Thessalonike* and the *doux of Adrianople* (TE 263₂₈₋₃₄). Among the thematic governors, only the *strategos* of Anatolikon was senior to them, by virtue of traditionally holding the first place among the provincial functionaries; then followed the group of the five most senior officers of the Byzantine army, whose authorities were exclusively of a command nature (the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East and of the West, the *stratopedarches* of the East and of the West and, finally, the *stratelates*); after them came the *doukes* and *katepano*, and the list continued, enumerating the governors in the themes, starting with the *strategos* of Armeniakon (TE pp. 263–265).

Even though it is obvious that the *doukes* and the *katepano* occupied very high positions in the official hierarchy of Byzantine ranks and titles, the place that belonged to them in the TE does not explain the nature of their powers: they were inserted between the command and the military-administrative functionaries and, therefore, could belong to either one or the other category.

¹³ The *strategoi* were replaced in two ways: on the one hand, they gave way to the provincial *doukes/katepano*, while the *strategoi* of the cities/fortresses were replaced by *kastrophylakes*, Ahrweiler, Administration 52.

¹⁴ For the synonymous meaning of the terms *doux* and *katepano* v. Ahrweiler, Administration 64–65; Oikonomides, Listes 344 et n. 326; Cheynet, Du stratège au duc 181 et n. 7; Maksimović, Organizacija 33 n. 10. Against identifying the said terms with each other: T. Wasilewski, Les titres de duc, catépan et de pronœtes dans l'empire byzantin du IX^e au XI^e s., Actes XII Congrès International des Études byzantines II, Beograd 1964, 233–239.

¹⁵ The TE mentions functionaries linked with Mesopotamia in four places, whereas, only in one does it give a geographical definition, from which we learn that a military unit existed that was defined by the expression Mesopotamia of the West (TE 263₂₉, 31, 265₁₂, 269₁₆). Since the rank list mentions the *doux* of Mesopotamia and *katepano* of Mesopotamia, and then the *strategos* of Mesopotamia and the “*strategos* of Mesopotamia of the West” (ibid. 269₁₆), presumably the data about the *doux* of Mesopotamia refers to the eastern region, because the eastern functionaries traditionally had precedence over their western colleagues.

Certain problems arise in connection with establishing the nature of the authorities of the functionary in the rank of *doux/katepano*, among which, on this occasion I would single out the following:

1) The creation of the position of provincial *doux* and *katepano* led to changes in the territorial conception of the provincial administrative districts. In the time of the so-called classical thematic organisation, an autonomous administrative district was defined according to the *strategos* — the functionary who wielded supreme military and civil authority. Such a district was designated in two ways: by the term *thema/θέμα* — according to the military detachments stationed in the territory of the district, or *strategis/στρατηγίς (strategaton/στρατηγᾶτον)* — according to the title of the most senior military-civil governor of the district.¹⁶ Since the Phokas–Tzimiskes epoch, districts of a new, complex type had been created, which were rarely designated in the sources but almost regularly in literature by the terms *doukaton* or *katepanate*.¹⁷ In the technical sense, this would refer to more important, territorially larger districts, headed by a functionary bearing the title of *doux/katepano*. However, it is not clear whether we can already speak of autonomous military-administrative units of the *doukate/katepanate* type from the Phokas–Tzimiskes epoch because dilemmas exist in connection with the nature of the authorities of the *doux/katepano*. It is usually maintained that they were the highest ranking, regional military commanders, who only began to assume civil competences in their district from the middle of the 11th century.¹⁸ Also, it is recorded that during the 11th century, parallel structures of military and civil authority were set up in such districts, personified by two functionaries — the *doux/katepano* and the judge (*κριτής*) or *praitor* (*πραίτωρ*). However, it is noteworthy that the TE does not register provincial civil functionaries of the highest rank — the *kritai* and the *praitores* — attested in large numbers in 11th century sources.

It is impossible to assess the nature of the powers of the *doux/katepano* according to the TE. That is why the narrative (and other) sources are valuable here as they enable one to survey the broader context surrounding the appointment of those functionaries, as well as their activities. Still, this information refers to the period following Tzimiskes' rule, and so on that basis one can draw more conclusions about the further development and progress of the reform of the state apparatus, and fewer about the circumstances in the times when these positions were instituted in the manner attested in the TE. I would like to add that one should make a distinction

¹⁶ On the problem of the civil authority of thematic *strategos* v. Haldon, *Military service* 10 et n. 19.

¹⁷ Byzantine writers were familiar with the term *doukaton* (DAI 28⁴⁷, 49; 50⁸⁸; Alex. 421: *δοῦκατον Ἀντιοχείας*), as opposed to the term *katepanate* (*qatabāniyyat*), which was used by Yahya of Antioch III, 407, when speaking of the organisation of authority in Bulgaria after 1018, cf. *Cheyne*, *Du stratège au duc* 183 n. 17. From the title *katepano* we have the term *katepanikion*, known from Greek sources, which was characteristic for the Late Byzantine epoch and it refers to the administrative units, headed by a *kephale*, *Maksimović*, *Palaiologoi* 70–83; cf. *idem*, *Organizacija* 33 n. 10.

¹⁸ More and more often in the sources one comes across data indicating that from the second half of the 11th century *doukes* and *katepano* took over civil functions, so that by the 12th century, they are referred to as functionaries whose authority was unquestionably of a military-civil nature, v. *Ahrweiler*, *Administration* 62–63; *Oikonomides*, *Évolution* 149. However, I would leave the matter open, with regard to the nature of the powers of the *doukes* and the *katepano*, who were active in the time of Nikephoros II Phokas, John I Tzimiskes and Basil II.

between the commander of the new type of military command and the territory where it was set up: the position that belonged to the provincial *doux/katepano* in the official hierarchy does not necessarily illustrate the rank and significance a particular territory had as an administrative district.

2) Specifying the character of the function of *doux/katepano* is also important because of the phenomenon one can describe as the *parallelism* or *duality* of military authority.¹⁹ It was reflected in two ways: in the relation of the *doux* with the *strategos* of the same district/city and in the relation of the *doux* with the so-called small *strategoi*.

In four cases, parallel to the provincial *doux/katepano*, the TE indicates the *strategoi* of the same districts or cities: the *doux* and the *strategos* of Mesopotamia in the East (TE 263₂₉; 265₁₂), the *doux* and the *strategos* of Chaldia (ibid. 263₃₀; 265₁₀), the *katepano* of Mesopotamia of the West and the *strategos* of "Mesopotamia of the West" (ibid. 263₃₁; 269₁₆), and finally, the *doux* and the *strategos* of Thessalonike (ibid. 263₃₃; 265₃₅). There is an interpretation that in these cases it was a question of the separation of military competences: the *doukes/katepano* were the commanders of heavily armed cavalry, organised according to the tagmatic principle and stationed in the area of jurisdiction of a *strategos* — i.e. the military-administrative governor of a particular military-administrative district.²⁰ However, the sources note the synonymous use of the term *strategos* and *doux/katepano*. Such is the case with the *doux/strategos* of Thessalonike or the *doux/strategos* of Antioch or the *doux/strategos* of Iberia (Scyl. 352; 377; 438).²¹ Data about the two provincial military functionaries — the *doux/katepano* and the *strategos* of the same region — may be evidence of the reform that was under way, because of which the representatives of the old structures of authority were mentioned parallel to the new ones. But, the question remains open as to whether they were positions that were, actually, occupied at the same time.

The other aspect of the parallelism or duality of military authority was reflected in the official relationship established between the *doux/katepano* and the so-called small *strategoi* stationed in the fortresses that were located in the area of his military jurisdiction. The institution of the position of the provincial *doux/katepano* led to the formation of a new type of military district, where a hierarchically more complex structure of authority was established. In the time of Nikephoros II Phokas, John I Tzimiskes and the first part of the rule of Basil II, such districts featured in the Empire's frontier territories. The most illustrative example of that kind of parallelism or duality of authority was the structure of military authority in the so-called *doukate* of Antioch.

The creation of the position of the *doux* of Antioch, the city conquered at the very end of the rule of Nikephoros II Phokas (in October 969), pointed to the formation of a new military-administrative district. It could be defined by the term *doukaton* because, according to the TE, the only functionary connected with the metropolis of Syria was, in fact, the *doux* of Antioch (whose importance is attested

¹⁹ For the parallelism of the military and civil authorities, v. pp. 206–210.

²⁰ *Oikonomidēs*, Organisation 301; *idem*, Bulgarie 584–585.

²¹ For *doux/katepano* one could use the term *strategos*, but for a *strategos* the term *doux/katepano* would not be used.

by the fact that he occupied the first place in the group of *doukes/katepano*). The *taktikon* does not record the presence of a *strategos* of the city nor any other functionary, which suggests that the *doux* of Antioch not only possessed military but also administrative competences.²² From a much later source than the edition of the TE, we learn that according to its organisational structure, the district with its centre in Antioch had a composite military-administrative system made up of smaller units (cities and fortresses with their neighbourhoods) headed by *strategoi* (Alex. 419–420). There is sufficient data to indicate that the situation at the beginning of the 12th century largely reflected the circumstances at the time when Byzantine authority was introduced and organised in the Syrian region.²³

That the TE does not offer an integral presentation about the progress of the administrative reform can be seen in the example connected with the function of the *doux* of Adrianople. Namely, the TE does not mention the *strategos* of Macedonia (the functionary all the known *taktika* from the previous epochs record regularly), nor does it refer in any way to a district by that name. But, the TE does register the *doux* of Adrianople, the functionary whose seat was in the metropolis of the theme of Macedonia. It is an open question as to whether the copyist omitted the *strategos* of Macedonia by mistake or the reform in the said administrative units brought a new organisation of authority, in which the *doux* of Adrianople was to have taken over all the competences (both military and civil?) of the former *strategos* of this region.²⁴ Slightly later sources testify that the function of the *strategos* of Macedonia did nevertheless survive.²⁵ If one adds to the aforesaid that during the war against the state of Samuel and his successors, the narrative sources left out any mention of the activities of the *doux* of Adrianople and that, on the other hand, those describing the activities and role of the *strategos* of Philippoupolis (who was not mentioned in the TE!) were numerous, it is clear that some organisational solutions from Tzimiskes' time applied in the Byzantine provinces, refer more to the tendencies in the reform of the state apparatus, which, due to various circumstances, acquired a different character from the one presented in the TE.

One should include among the said examples the case of Italy: apart from the *katepano* of Italy, the TE mentions the *strategoi* of the districts over which he had jurisdiction (*de facto* or nominally): at issue were the *strategoi* of Longobardia, Calabria, but also Sicily (TE 263₃₂; 265_{29–31}).²⁶ The aforesaid suggests that the so-called katepanate of Italy was a district of a composite nature, and consisted of the old Byzantine themes. Still, one of the specific characteristics of the

²² The *strategos* of Antioch and Lykandos was attested. But, this involved a temporary accumulation of military powers, v. pp. 98–99. On the civil functionaries of Antioch v. pp. 117–120.

²³ Cf. Ahrweiler, *Administration* 48 n. 22; Cheynet, *Du stratège au duc* 182 n. 8.

²⁴ The *strategos* of Macedonia could be designated as the *strategos* of Adrianople, Theoph. Cont. 404: Ἀδριανουπόλεως στρατηγούντος.

²⁵ V. p. 134 et. n. 277.

²⁶ The data on the *strategos* of Sicily in the TE, like in the TB, did not reflect the real situation because at the end of the 8th century, Byzantium lost control of the island (its last stronghold Taormina fell in 902.) Nevertheless, in the period when operations were launched for the Empire to retrieve control of this island (in the first half of the 11th century), Sicily fell within the military jurisdiction of the *katepano* of Italy, v. pp. 164, 165, 167, 169; cf. Maksimović, *Tradicija i inovacija* 15; *idem*, TE 364.

circumstances in southern Italy was that the *katepano* of Italy was most often brought into connection with Longobardia, whereas in fact he only took over the competences of the former *strategos* of that Byzantine province.²⁷

3) Finally, bearing in mind that the authority of the *doux* and the *katepano* was primarily military in nature, it should be said that there was a link between the reform of the provincial (military) authority and the reform of the supreme military command, which was discussed in the previous chapter. The fact that the TE mentioned the *doux* and the *katepano* of a particular city or region rendered the process of establishing command over the tagmatic army at the regional level official. That is why specifying the competences of these functionaries more closely becomes more important: if it involved high-ranking military commanders, whose command powers (of an accumulative nature) were linked not only to a narrower territory where the provincial command centre was based, then the formal confirmation of those positions most certainly curtailed the powers of the five highest-ranking officers in the Byzantine army — the representatives of the central command.

*

Of the seven *doukes* and *katepano* mentioned in the TE, four were assigned to the western part of the Empire (the Balkans and southern Italy), and three to the eastern regions. Was this an expression of the Byzantine government's intention in future to pursue a more aggressive policy in the West than had been the case until Tzimiskes epoch? By creating the position of *katepano* of Italy, steps were taken to consolidate the military positions in southern Italy, but it is hard to believe that they did not implicitly involve a plan for the return of Sicily under Byzantine rule. If one interprets the creation of the positions of the provincial *doukes* and *katepano* as being a measure of an offensive nature, the fact that three tagmatic army command centres were formed in the narrower region of the Balkans (and the seal of the *katepano* of Ras would permit increasing this number to four²⁸) heralded Byzantium's readiness to fight for supremacy over the interior regions of the Peninsula. However, in contrast to the eastern regions, the reform of administration in the Balkan provinces did not unfold continuously: the result of Tzimiskes conquests, presented in the TE, would largely be annulled by the foundation of the state of Samuel and his successors. Byzantine authority would not be organised in the territory of the Balkans again, till after four decades of warfare. In principle, we can say that the provincial organisation from the time of Basil II basically represented the further evolution of the system commenced at the end of the 10th century. However, the more peaceful political context, which, in the last few years of his reign, replaced the Empire's intensely aggressive policy, brought changes in the activities and competences of the *doux/katepano* and other provincial functionaries.

²⁷ V. p. 167 et n. 396; p. 169.

²⁸ V. pp. 135, 140, 143.

THE REFORM OF PROVINCIAL AUTHORITY IN THE EAST

Two basic characteristics accompanied the reform of the provincial organisation in the east of Byzantium and distinguish it from the reform carried out in the Balkan region. It involves the gradual and continued development of the new military administration.

In the East, digressions from the so-called classical system of themes were already heralded at the beginning of the 10th century. The changes became more numerous, and thereby more obvious in comparison to the times of the independent rule of Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos. In the times of Nikephoros II Phokas and John I Tzimiskes, the changes in the provincial system took on a new aspect, which consisted in the hierarchy in the provincial structure of authority in the frontier regions becoming increasingly complex. As opposed to the Balkan regions, where a new provincial organisation was established after 1018, in the East, during the reign of Basil II, the already installed structure was only developed and applied in the regions this emperor had incorporated in the frontiers of the Empire. However, it is essential to stress that the epoch of Basil II demonstrated the true achievements of Phokas and Tzimiskes' reforms in provincial authority both in the East and in the Balkans.

I

THE CREATION OF A NEW EASTERN FRONTIER

The new type of the organisation of authority: the *armeniaka themata*

The expansion of the thematic organisation in the East is attested in the TB registering five *strategoi* not mentioned in the previous rank list of Philotheos. This refers to the *strategos* of Mesopotamia, of Lykandos, Sebasteia, Leontokome and Seleukeia. They were mentioned one after the other as the last in the group of eastern *strategoi*, before the military administrative governors of the districts in the West (TB 247₁₁₋₁₅).

It is interesting to note that the increased number of *strategoi* in the TB did not result from expanding the state territory (i.e. new conquests), but from administrative-military reorganisation in the eastern frontier belt: the regions of the new themes belonged to the Empire even before their *strategoi* were mentioned in the TB (the edition of which dates from 934–944). Also, the high rank the new *strategoi* were granted did not proceed from the size of the territory they were given to administer — on the contrary, with the exception of the *strategos* of Mesopotamia, four of them relied on a city/fortress — but from the fact that they were at the head of the outlying frontier themes.

From other sources, we know that these new administrative units were already organised in the first half of the 10th century. In the time of Leo VI, Mesopotamia²⁹ and Sebasteia³⁰ were granted the status of themes, and then around the year 916, the existence of the *strategos* of the theme of Lykandos, probably established a little earlier, is attested.³¹ In the time of Romanos I Lakapenos, the former *kleisourai* were

²⁹ The territory of the Armenian principality was annexed to the Empire in the time of Leo VI; originally, it was organised as a *kleisoura*, and then elevated to the rank of a theme (between 899 and 901 or 911, at the latest, *Ferluga*, Niže jedinice 83–85; *Oikonomidēs*, Listes 349; Μικρά Ἀσία 315–319 (*T. Lounghis*). For the seal of the imperial *spatharios* and *strategos* of Mesopotamia, dated to the early 9th century (810/811?) v. DOSeals IV, 55, 15; cf. ZV no. 284; *W. Seibt*, BSI 36 (1975) 210; *W. Brandes*, Überlegungen zur Vorgeschichte des Thema Mesopotamien, BSI 44/2 (1983) 171–177. Cf. et Corpus I, 48.1 (the seal of the *strategos* of M., from the 9th/10th c.). The seal of the *ek prosopou* of Mesopotamia, from the 9th/10th c. (Corpus I, 48.3) probably refers to Mesopotamia of the East, and not Balkan Mesopotamia, which did not appear in the record until the TE, v. p. 78 et n. 15; pp. 80, 133.

³⁰ The *kleisoura* of Sebasteia was created before 908, and became a theme in 911, *Ferluga*, Niže jedinice 81; *Oikonomidēs*, Listes 349; *Hild — Restle*, Kappadokeien 274–276; Μικρά Ἀσία 331–335 (*E. Kountoura-Galake*).

³¹ The founder of Lykandos was the renowned Melias the Armenian. According to the DAI 50, p. 240, the theme of Lykandos, formed in the time of the regency of Zoe Carbonopsina, and its first

organised as themes: Seleukeia (in the period between 927–934)³² and Leontokome, i.e. Tephrike (after 934), the Paulician centre that had been incorporated within the borders of the Empire during the reign of Basil I.³³

The TB merely intimated that a new principle of arranging the frontier was under way, which finally became established in the TE. Still, before the Phokas–Tzimiskes epoch, there was an intense wave of the new frontier organisation during the autonomous rule of Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos (944/5–959).

While the conquests of John Kourkouas, the *domestikos ton Scholon* under Romanos I, mostly corresponded to the already established provincial organisation,³⁴ with the independent reign of Constantine VII, new *strategoi*, at the head of a fortress or city with its surrounding countryside, appeared in increasing numbers in the region of the eastern border. The majority of them would find a place in Tzimiskes' *taktikon*, thereby confirming the continuity in the development of the new military system along the eastern border.

First of all, the theme of Charpezikion (established before 949)³⁵ was attested in the Cappadocian region, whose *strategos* was mentioned in the TE (267₁₄). In the period around 951/2, five more cities/fortresses in the East acquired the rank of themes: **Chozanon**, conquered after 938, was separated from the theme of Mesopotamia and organised as a separate military-administrative unit headed by a *strategos*³⁶ who is attested in the TE (267₁₆) under Constantine VII; on the border with Armenia, to the west of Taron, was the theme of **Asmosaton**/**Ἀσμόςατον** (a city conquered after 938), whose *strategos* was not registered in the TE.³⁷ In the region of Armenia, **Theodosiupolis** (conquered in 949)³⁸ and **Der-**

strategos was the *patrikios* Melias, therefore, the foundation of the theme is dated to 913, *Ferluga*, Niže jedinice 83. The *strategos* was attested, for the first time, around 916, *Oikonomidēs*, Listes 350; *Hild — Restle*, Kappadokeien 224–226; *Dagron*, Traité 241–242; Μικρά Ἀσία 307–313 (*T. Lounghis*). For the problem of the whereabouts of Lykandos v. p. 86 n. 41.

³² *Ferluga*, Niže jedinice 80; *Oikonomidēs*, Listes 350; *Hild — Hellenkemper*, Kilikien und Isaurien 402–406.

³³ The foundation of the *kleisoura* and subsequently, the theme of Leontokome, falls in the time of Leo VI, *Ferluga*, Niže jedinice 85; *Oikonomidēs*, Listes 350; *Hild — Restle*, Kappadokeien 294–295; Μικρά Ἀσία 337–341 (*A. Savvides*).

³⁴ *Oikonomidēs*, Organisation 286.

³⁵ The *strategos* of the theme of Charpezikion took part μετὰ παντός τοῦ θέματος αὐτοῦ in the Cretan expedition in 949, consequently, one may also assume that the theme was formed earlier, De Cer. I, 662; 666–667, 669. *Oikonomidēs*, Organisation 287 et n. 7; Μικρά Ἀσία 343–345 (*A. Savvides*). For identification v. *Hild — Restle*, Kappadokeien 86 et n. 260. Cf. p. 176.

³⁶ DAI 50₁₁₁. *Oikonomidēs*, Organisation 287 et n. 9; *Hild — Restle*, Kappadokeien 92; Μικρά Ἀσία 347–348 (*A. Savvides*).

³⁷ DAI 50₁₁₂. The TE mentions the *strategos* of Samosata; however, the question remains open as to whether this regards Samosata on the Euphrates (founded in 958), or the Armenian city of Asmosaton/Šimšat, conquered after 938, recorded as a theme in the DAI, *Oikonomidēs*, Organisation 287 et n. 10; 289 n. 28; *idem*, Listes 360.

³⁸ In the DAI 45₁₃₄ Theophilos Kourkouas is mentioned as the *patrikios* and *strategos* of Theodosiupolis. Theophanes Continuatus 428, refers to him as the (*mono*)*strategos* in Chaldia, who captured Theodosiupolis and the neighbouring fortresses. *Oikonomidēs*, Organisation 287 et n. 11; *idem*, Listes 360.

zene/Δερζηνή³⁹ were placed under the authority of the *strategoi*, both attested in the TE (265₁₉; 267₁₂). A theme called **Tziliapert** was formed in the northernmost area, on the Armenian-Iberian border, whose *strategos* was not recorded in the TE.⁴⁰

These were territorially small themes in the frontier regions, for which contemporary authors used the common term ἀρμενιὰκὰ θέματα (De Cer. I, 486; De Velit. p. 39₀₈), to distinguish them from the old, large themes — μεγάλα ῥωμαϊκὰ θέματα, denoting the border-lying ones also with the term μεγάλα ἀκριτικὰ θέματα (De Cer. I, 486; De Vel. pp. 37₀₃; 47₂₉₋₃₀; 115₄₁). In that way, the Byzantine frontier region to the East had a two-layered military organisation, different from the one that was characteristic of the central Asia Minor areas. The second frontier layer extended from the old Byzantine frontier themes such as Anatolikon, Cappadocia and Lykandos, and consisted of the so-called *armeniaka themata*, military units of the new type.⁴¹

It is already possible on the example of the small themes, formed in the period until and during the reign of Constantine Porphyrogennetos, to observe some of the basic characteristics of the new frontier belt, which would take on its final form in the time of Phokas–Tzimiskes:

1) At issue were territorially reduced districts that most often encompassed a city or a fortress and its neighbourhood. Irrespectively, these administrative-military units were known by the traditional term *thema* and parallel to this, *strategis* and *strategaton*, because the functionary heading them bore the title of *strategos*.

2) The new type of theme was formed in the frontier regions where Byzantium did not hold territorially compact land. In the beginning, when the formation of such a unit was only starting to gather momentum, most of these small theme-fortresses were isolated and were enclaves under Byzantine rule.

3) In the earliest stage of establishing this new type of theme, their *strategoi* held a very high rank (as shown in the TB), which was disproportionate to the size of the territory they administered.⁴² This rank proceeded from the significance the Empire attached to the new organisation of the eastern frontier. The creation of autonomous units of this new type depended on the strategic importance of their centres (fortress/city or smaller area).

³⁹ DAI 53₅₀₇. *Oikonomidēs*, Organisation 287 et n. 12.

⁴⁰ DAI 53₅₁₀. *Oikonomidēs*, Organisation 287 et n. 13; 288 et n. 14.

⁴¹ Lykandos was considered the last among the Byzantine frontier lying themes (*rhomaika themata*), beyond which were the *armeniaka themata*, Diac. 169: ... ὅτε κατὰ τὴν Λάπαραν τὸ πεδῖον (μεθόριον δὲ τοῦτο τῆς χώρας τῶν Ἀρμενίων). There are differences regarding the whereabouts of Lykandos — it was either near Cappadocian Caesarea (*Oikonomidēs*, Organisation 290 et n. 29; *idem*, *Listes*, Carte I) or more eastwards, near present-day Elbistan (*Hild — Restle*, Kappadokien, 224–226; *Dagron*, *Traité* 242 n. 15). On the new concept of the Byzantine frontier and the phenomenon of the Armenian themes v. *Ahrweiler*, *Administration* 47, 80 et n. 3; 82; *Oikonomidēs*, Organisation 287–301; *Dagron*, *Traité* 151, 239–245; *Kühn*, *Armee* 61–64 (with the list of *armeniaka themata*); *Seibt*, *Ἀρμενικὰ θέματα* 134–141; *DOScals* IV, p. 143.

⁴² The new themes in the East, registered in the TB, were not considered Armenian but they differed from the themes in Central Asia Minor. For the frontier belt according to De Vel. v. *Dagron*, *Traité* 151, 241–243.

4) While the rank of the *strategos* in the official hierarchy depended largely on the military potential of the theme he administered, in the period of the so-called classical thematic organisation, in the new system of the organisation of authority, the number of troops did not represent a decisive factor for the rank of the so-called *small strategos*. In most cases, he was at the head of the garrison of a city/fortress and his military task was of a defensive and not of an offensive nature.⁴³

5) The themes of the new type differed from the classical themes both with respect to internal organisation (we know for instance that in 949, the theme of Charpezikion had an exceptionally large number of *tourmarchai*) and with regard to the amount of *roga* the soldiers and the officer personnel of small themes received.⁴⁴

The TE mentions a specific number of *strategoi* of cities/fortresses for whom no earlier confirmation exists in the sources. There is reason to believe that these functionaries were already appointed to head small, autonomous frontier units around the mid-10th century, that is, before the Phokas-Tzimiskes epoch, when the system of new themes reached its culmination. During their reigns, the foundations were laid for the new frontier organisation in the East, as well as in the west of the Empire (in Italy and the Balkans). The reform of the provincial frontier system did not merely entail the creation of small themes, it also involved the establishment of a special type of military administration, personified in functionaries with titles such as *doux* and *katepano*. The creation of these positions actually led to the homogenisation of military authority in the frontier regions. Nevertheless, one should stress that the *armeniaka themata* represented a unique ensemble within the new provincial organisation, as attested by the seals from the 11th century. The seal of a certain Michael, *anthypatos, patrikios*, and *vestes* and *strategos τῶν ἁρμενικῶν θεμάτων* (Z II, no. 844), which is dated to the sixties-seventies of the 11th century is indicative,⁴⁵ for instance. Likewise, a large number of seals belonging to civil functionaries τῶν ἁρμενικῶν θεμάτων (judges, *anagrapheis*, *kouratores*, *asekretai*, *protonotarioi*) have survived, confirming that the further development of the *armeniaka themata* was unified through the system of military and civil authority.⁴⁶

The frontier zones according to the *Taktikon Escorial*

The conquests of Nikephoros II Phokas expanded Byzantine rule to the region of Cilicia, northern Syria, and the Mesopotamian and Armenian regions. The frontier to the east established during his reign was partly altered during the time of John I Tzimiskes, whose military successes brought several coastal Syrian cities under Byzantine rule.

⁴³ As time passed, the new system of frontier authority would develop. Certain *strategides* that became sub-units of large military systems were also more important, owing to the size of their territory and for their military role. Their military units were engaged in other parts of the Empire (e.g. units from the themes of Mauron Oros, Telouch), v. p. 114.

⁴⁴ V. p. 176 et n. 12.

⁴⁵ *Seibt*, Ἀρμενικὰ θέματα 134 et n. 2.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 134–137. Cf. Collection Zacos, pp. 39–45; DOSeals IV, pp. 143–147; Bleisiegel II, pp. 182–183 (comment.). V. p. 209.

During the reign of Nikephoros Phokas, campaigns were undertaken on several occasions with the objective of annexing the Cilician and Syrian regions to the territory of the Empire. From the narrative sources, we learn that three Cilician campaigns were organised (963–965). In the first year of the rule of Nikephoros II, at the end of 963, the then *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East, *magistros* John Tzimiskes, already scored a significant victory over the troops of Sayf al-Daula at Adana, one of the most strongly fortified Cilician cities (Scyl. 267–268).⁴⁷ In the course of the next year, in 964,⁴⁸ the campaign on Cilicia was personally commanded by the emperor who, in the words of Leo the Deacon, captured “more than 20 fortresses” (Diac. 52); on that occasion, Anazarbos and Adana — the fortresses defending the approaches to Mopsuestia and Tarsos, as well as Rossos in the Syrian region⁴⁹ — were either destroyed or captured (Diac. 52; Scyl. 268). The conquests in Cilicia ended in 965, in the capture of Mopsuestia and Tarsos (Diac. 53–61; Scyl. 268–270). Parallel to the Cilician campaigns, operations were also conducted in Syria, to which the emperor could devote himself more freely only after the annexation of Cilicia was completed. Skylitzes mentions that before the fall of Antioch, the nearby fortresses of Pagras,⁵⁰ Synnephion,⁵¹ and Laodikeia on the Syrian coast fell to Byzantium (Scyl. 271). We know that in 966, after the failure of the assault on Antioch, Nikephoros Phokas penetrated the region of Mesopotamia (Diac. 70–71). Also, a record exists of a campaign on Tripoli and the capture of the nearby fortress of Arka (Diac. 71). In summarising the conquests of Phokas, Skylitzes mentions that the emperor seized “over 100 cities and fortresses in Cilicia, Syria, and Phoenicia Libanisia”, and included Tripoli and Damascus among the cities that paid tribute to Byzantium (Scyl. 271).

During the time of John I Tzimiskes, the cities on the Syrian coast (Antarados, Balaneus, Gabala and Laodikeia), which he conquered in 975, became more lasting possessions of Byzantium. The campaigns waged against the Armenian cities in the region of Mesopotamia and southern Armenia (such as Edessa, Emessa/Amida and Martyropolis) in the course of the previous year, consisted of seizing plunder.⁵²

Some of the cities/fortresses were also mentioned in the TE as administrative units under the authority of *strategoi*. However, though they had been conquered in the campaigns of Nikephoros Phokas, the question is, to whom one should attribute the creation of the new frontier themes: to Phokas or his successor?

Based on the sources, it appears that Tzimiskes' campaigns in the East also covered cities in Cilicia, Phoenicia and Coele-Syria. These were possessions that had been seized by the Arabs in the meantime because Nikephoros Phokas had not had

⁴⁷ Hild — Hellenkemper, Kilikien und Isaurien 154–158.

⁴⁸ For dating the campaign, v. Cheynet, Skyl., 225 n. 33.

⁴⁹ Hild — Hellenkemper, Kilikien und Isaurien 392–393.

⁵⁰ Cf. Yahya I, 816, 822. The *strategos* of Pagras is not recorded in the TE, but the *Treaty of Devol* mentions the *strategaton* of Pagras, v. p. 32 n. 77; p. 98 n. 103; p. 114.

⁵¹ Hild — Hellenkemper, Kilikien und Isaurien 423.

⁵² For Tzimiskes' campaigns v. Canard, *Date des expéditions* 99–108; P. E. Walker, *The “Crusade” of John Tzimiskes in the Light of New Arabic Evidence*, Byz. 47 (1977) 313–327.

enough time to secure them (Scyl. 286: μὴ σχόντος τοῦ Νικηφόρου καιρὸν τὰ κατ' αὐτὰς διαθέσθαι καλῶς καὶ ἀσφαλίσασθαι); "the cities that Nikephoros had conquered earlier, and they had agreed to pay tribute... mutinied and overthrew the authority of Byzantium so the emperor embarked on a campaign against them and advanced all the way to Damascus" (Scyl. 311: Τῶν δ' ὑπὸ τοῦ βασιλέως Νικηφόρου προσκτηθεισῶν πόλεων καὶ τῶν ὑποφόρων γενομένων Ῥωμαίοις, ... ἀραμένων πτέρναν καὶ τὴν Ῥωμαϊκὴν ἀποσεισαμένων ἐξουσίαν, ἔξεισι κατ' αὐτῶν ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ ἄπεισιν ἄχρι Δαμασκοῦ). Another source, closer to Tzimiskes' epoch, Leo the Deacon, does not mention the mutiny of the subjugated cities/fortresses, briefly stressing that Tzimiskes "with the entire army" criss-crossed Syria and, in this process not one enemy opposed him (Diac. 99). However, the fact of the Arabian, five-month siege of Antioch, confronting the emperor at the start of his reign in 970/971,⁵³ illustrates the unsettled circumstances in the East. There are at least two facts that had some bearing on the Byzantine presence weakening in the regions that Nikephoros Phokas had conquered. Firstly, because he had attained imperial power by means of his predecessor's murder, it was of the utmost importance to John Tzimiskes to secure his position on the throne. Personnel changes came about in the state administration as a result. Thus, provincial functionaries were dismissed from their positions. The military-administrative personnel of Nikephoros Phokas were replaced by Tzimiskes' new personnel. Secondly, the most important foreign political problem that Tzimiskes inherited from his predecessor was the presence of the Russian army in north-eastern Bulgaria, that is, in the Empire's neighbourhood. The new emperor settled accounts with Svyatoslav's aspirations through war with Bulgaria. It was waged in the course of 970 (during which the territories of the Byzantine themes of Thrace and Macedonia were singled out as the war zones) and in 971 (with Tzimiskes personally in command). Troops brought from the East took part in those campaigns. Therefore, Tzimiskes' concentration on the East followed after the subjugation of Bulgaria, because of which it is possible that in the area of the eastern frontier, at the beginning of his reign, there was no proper consolidation of Byzantine rule in the regions that Nikephoros Phokas had conquered. The Arabian siege of Antioch, in any case, proves that the Arabs were not reconciled with their loss.⁵⁴

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The TE offers the most data about the changes in the frontier regions. While the TB mentioned five new functionaries in the rank of *strategos* whose authorities applied to the eastern part of the Empire, in the TE this number was enlarged by 39 (or 41) more.⁵⁵ The majority of them were attached to a city/fortress. Apart from

⁵³ V. p. 99.

⁵⁴ After the conquest of Tarsos, the Arabs attempted to recapture the city. The fleet sent from Egypt failed to accomplish anything because Nikephoros II had secured the coastline, Scyl. 269–270.

⁵⁵ The 39 *strategoi* include the *strategoi* of Mesopotamia and Chaldia. Moreover, the TE records the two *strategoi* (267₀₅; 269₁₂) who are assumed to have been linked with the East because the toponyms

that, the rank list from Tzimisces' epoch mentions three *doukes* in the frontier region — in Antioch, Mesopotamia and Chaldia.

Based on the geographical distribution of the small themes whose *strategoi* are mentioned in the TE,⁵⁶ we noted four frontier zones formed in the eastern frontier regions:⁵⁷ the so-called Cappadocian, Cilician, Syrian and Mesopotamian-southern Armenian frontier regions (see Map I).

I) The first frontier zone, which extended in the eastern part of ancient Cappadocia, between the River Halys in the west and the Euphrates in the east, was the oldest one. It mainly consisted of smaller districts or city/fortresses, some of which had already been included in the borders of the Empire during the second half of the 9th century. In the following century, before and during the independent reign of Constantine VII, they were divided into separate administrative units. In that territory, running from west to east, the TE mentions the *strategoi* of the following themes: **Sebasteia**, a theme formed in 911, whose *strategos* is mentioned in the TB (247₁₃; TE 265₁₃); **Kymbaleos** — the original *tourma* of Charsianon, after which the city became a separate theme (TE 267₃₂);⁵⁸ **Lykandos** — the *strategos* was attested around 916 and mentioned in the TB (247₁₃; TE 265₁₄);⁵⁹ **Larissa** — originally within the theme of Sebasteia and then some time in the middle of the 10th century, it was elevated to the rank of a theme (TE 267₁₁);⁶⁰ **Taranta** — exactly when it became a theme is not known (TE 267₂₀);⁶¹ between Melitene and Lykandos, there was **Hexakomia**, but when it was organised as a theme is also unknown (TE 267₂₅);⁶² **Tephrike/Leontokome** — organised as a theme after 934, and mentioned in the TB (247₁₄; TE 267₁₃);⁶³ **Charpezikion** — attested as a theme in 949 (TE 267₁₄);⁶⁴ **Koptos** — the

have not been read, cf. *Oikonomidès*, Listes 266 et n. 24; 268 et n. 26. The TE omitted the *strategoi* of Tzamandos and Mauron Oros, as well as the *strategoi* of the cities along the southern Syrian coast (ibid. 355 n. 381). Also, during the 11th century, the existence is attested of other *strategoi*, who were linked with the fortresses known to have been conquered in the Phokas–Tzimisces period (e.g. Telouch).

⁵⁶ *Oikonomidès*, Listes 399, Carte I: La frontière orientale de Byzance au X^e siècle (d'après le *Scorialensis*).

⁵⁷ *Oikonomidès*, Organisation 294, registers three basic frontier zones in the East: in northern Syria (where the frontier was demarcated according to the line of Antioch–Artach–Palatza–Eirenoupolis–Germanikeia–Adat–Samosata), in Mesopotamia and in southern Armenia (Limnia–Chasanara–Zermion–Erkne–Romanoupolis–Chantiarte–Taron–Chouit) and in Armenia (Chouit–Taron–Chauzizin–Melte–Theodosioupolis–Artze).

⁵⁸ As the *tourma* of Charsianon, Kymbaleos was mentioned in the DAI 50₁₃₄. *Oikonomidès*, Listes 361; *idem*, Organisation 290 et n. 30. Cf. *Hild — Restle*, Kappadokeien 197–198 (Kamulianai).

⁵⁹ V. p. 84 et n. 31.

⁶⁰ Larissa was a *tourma*, then a *kleisoura* and, once again, a *tourma* of Sebasteia, DAI 50_{134–135}, 144, 149–150. *Oikonomidès*, Listes 358; *idem*, Organisation 291 et n. 35; *Hild — Restle*, Kappadokeien 221.

⁶¹ *Oikonomidès*, Listes 359; *idem*, Organisation 290 et n. 34; *Hild — Restle*, Kappadokeien 290–291. The *strategos* is attested on a seal (10th c.), DOSeals IV, 70.1.

⁶² *Oikonomidès*, Listes 360; *Oikonomidès*, Organisation 290 et n. 33. *Hild — Restle*, Kappadokeien 190–191. The *strategos* is attested on a seal (10/11th c.), DOSeals V, 62.1.

⁶³ *Oikonomidès*, Organisation 291 et n. 38.

⁶⁴ V. p. 176. The last piece of data on the theme is from the TE, *Hild — Restle*, Kappadokeien 86 n. 257.

Paulician city conquered in the 9th century (TE 267₁₉);⁶⁵ **Abara/Amara** — a city conquered in 871, which till the middle of the 10th century was a *tourma* and then a *kleisoura* of Sebasteia (TE 267₂₃);⁶⁶ **Melitene** — conquered in 934 and originally organised as an imperial *kouratoreia* (TE 265₂₁);⁶⁷ **Kaloudia** — a city located south-east of Melitene, and when it was organised as a theme is unknown (TE 267₂₂).⁶⁸ East of the theme of Mesopotamia was the theme of **Chozanon** — a place that was initially in the theme of Mesopotamia and later, around 951/2, was organised into an autonomous unit (TE 267₁₆);⁶⁹ **Mesopotamia** — founded at the beginning of the 9th century and attested in the TB (247₁₁; TE 265₁₂), and, to the south, **Mouzarion**, a theme for which the time when it was established is unknown (TE 269₀₂).⁷⁰

I would like to draw attention to the changes in the relative rank of these *strategoi* that can be noticed if one compares the order in the TE with that of the TB. Firstly, the *strategos* of Mesopotamia occupied the most eminent place among the *strategoi* of this region and he remained in the same position as he had in the TB. Still, the importance of eastern Mesopotamia is to be seen rather more in the fact that a functionary in the rank of *doux* was connected to it. The *strategoi* of Sebasteia and Lykandos changed places: in the TE, precedence was given to the theme of Sebasteia, which was followed by Lykandos, whereas in the TB, the situation was the other way round (TB 247₁₂₋₁₃; TE 265₁₃₋₁₄).⁷¹ It is more significant, however, to say that the *strategos* of Tephrike/Leontokome, which occupied a very high position in the TB, had a visibly lower rank in the TE, ceding its position among other things to the *strategoi* of the majority of the western themes. Of the *strategoi* from this frontier belt, the *strategos* of Melitene stands apart, by virtue of the fact that he occupied a very prominent position in the TE.

II) Although the Cilician region was incorporated as a whole within the borders of the Empire, in the time of Nikephoros Phokas, and it was protected by the Byzantine possessions in Syria, authority in this region was also organised according to the system of themes-cities/fortresses. In the Cilician zone, the TE registered several small themes: with the exception of **Seleukeia**, whose *strategos* was mentioned in the TB (247₁₅; TE 267₀₄), and **Podandos**⁷² (TE 267₂₆), which was

⁶⁵ *Oikonomidès*, Listes 359; *idem*, Organisation 291 et n. 37; *Hild — Restle*, Kappadokiëen 209.

⁶⁶ Abara was a *tourma* of Sebasteia and under Romanos I, it was organised as a *kleisoura*, DAI 50₁₆₇₋₁₆₈. *Oikonomidès*, Organisation 291 et n. 36; *Hild — Restle*, Kappadokiëen 139.

⁶⁷ After its conquest, Melitene was organised as an imperial *kouratoreia* (κουρατώρεια), i.e. an imperial estate, from which the taxes flowed into the imperial treasury, Theoph. Cont. 416–417. The first mention of the theme originates from De Vel. 125. *Oikonomidès*, Listes 356; *idem*, Organisation 290 et n. 31; *Hild — Restle*, Kappadokiëen 233–237.

⁶⁸ De Vel. 125. *Oikonomidès*, Organisation 290 et n. 32; *Hild — Restle*, Kappadokiëen 197.

⁶⁹ The *strategos* is attested on a seal (10/11th c.), DOSeals IV, 60.1.

⁷⁰ For identification v. *Oikonomidès*, Listes 361; *idem*, Organisation 292 et n. 43.

⁷¹ In TB, there is a mistake in the ordering of the *strategoi* of Lykandos and Sebasteia, since the usual order was Sebasteia, Lykandos, Seleukeia and Leontokome, as it is in TE, *Oikonomidès*, Listes 246 n. 21.

⁷² This involves a fortress that was geostrategically orientated to the Cilician region because the passage north of Tarsos was controlled from there, *Oikonomidès*, Listes 360; *idem*, Organisation 288 et n.

mentioned as a frontier city in the theme of Cappadocia from the thirties of the 10th century, though when it was separated into an autonomous unit is unknown, the themes of **Tarsos**, **Anazarbos**, **Mopsuestia** and **Eirenoupolis** were established as themes-cities, which Nikephoros had conquered in the campaigns of 964–965 (TE 265_{15, 20}; 267₂₁; 269₀₈).⁷³ Among them, the *strategoi* of Tarsos and Anazarbos were singled out: the former occupied an extremely high position in the TE (coming after the most important, old Asia Minor themes and the three *strategoi* the TB mentions — Mesopotamia, Sebasteia and Lykandos),⁷⁴ while the latter was given a slightly lower place, after the *strategoi* of Theodosiopolis, Taron and Melitene. Mopsuestia, the conquest of which narrative sources devote particular attention to, occupied a rather average position.

III) In the Syrian region where Phokas and Tzimiskes extended their rule, the dominant place belonged to **Antioch**, at the head of which was a *doux* (the *strategos* of the city was not registered, TE 263₂₈).⁷⁵ In Syria, Byzantium did not hold compact territory but individual cities/fortresses and so in this region small themes were organized: in the northernmost area **Germanikeia** (TE 267₂₈),⁷⁶ **Adat** (TE 267₁₈)⁷⁷ and **Samosata** (TE 267₂₄), cities that had come under Byzantine rule in the earlier period (Adat 957, Samosata 958, Germanikeia 962), assumed to have been organised as separate themes before the Phokas–Tzimiskes epoch. Their *strategoi* were given a mediocre position in the TE. Of the new *strategoi*, the TE also mentions the *strategos* of **Palatza** — a theme located north of Antioch,⁷⁸ and the *strategos* of **Artach** (TE 269₀₅; 269₁₁), who defended the approach to Antioch from the east.⁷⁹ They were conquered in around 966 and their *strategoi* were to be found among the last on the list.

The data on the organisation of authority in the region of Syria is incomplete. The TE does not mention the *strategoi* of the towns on the Syrian coast, where rule was established by Tzimiskes: Syrian **Laodikeia**, **Gabala/Zebel**, **Balaneus** and

19; *Hild — Restle*, Kappadokeien 261–262. In the civil domain, the theme of Podandos was linked to the themes of Tarsos and Seleukeia, *M. Braunlin — J. Nesbitt*, Thirteen Seals and an Unpublished Revolt Coin from an American Private Collection, Byz. 69/1 (1999) 197 no. 11.

⁷³ *Oikonomides*, Listes 355, 356, 359, 362; *idem*, Organisation 288–289 et nn. 20–23; *Hild — Hellenkemper*, Kilikien und Isaurien 428–439 (Tarsos); 351–359 (Mopsuestia); 178–185 (Anazarbos); 245–248 (Eirenoupolis 2).

⁷⁴ The high rank of the *strategos* of Tarsos was due to the strategic importance of the city and the military potential of this theme, cf. pp. 109–110.

⁷⁵ The titles of Eustathios Maleinos, *strategos* of Antioch and Lykandos, indicate the temporary accumulation of command powers, v. p. 98.

⁷⁶ Germanikeia is mentioned as a theme in De Vel. p. 125. A seal of the *strategos* of Germanikeia exists, which is dated to the second half of the 10th century, Z II, no. 265.

⁷⁷ The city was conquered in 957, and the theme of Adat is mentioned in De Vel. p. 125. *Honigmann*, Ostgrenze 86–87; *Oikonomides*, Listes 359.

⁷⁸ The whereabouts of the fortress is uncertain, *Honigmann*, Ostgrenze 127 n. 9; *Oikonomides*, Listes 362; *idem*, Organisation 289 et n. 24; *Todt*, Antiocheia 245; *idem*, Region von Antiocheia 407. Palatza was mentioned as a *strategaton* in the *Treaty of Devol*, v. p. 114.

⁷⁹ *Honigmann*, Ostgrenze. 117 et n. 8; 127; *Oikonomides*, Listes 363; *idem*, Organisation 289 et n. 25. V. p. 113.

Antarados/Antarto.⁸⁰ However, the Byzantine presence in them would be confirmed in other sources (primarily in seals and in the *Alexiade*).⁸¹ Thus, it is known that along the Syrian coast, authority was also organised by means of small themes/*strategides*. It is hard to say anything about their position in the official hierarchy.

IV) Viewed from the perspective of Constantinople, the themes from the so-called Mesopotamian-Armenian belt formed the last frontier defence network. A dense line of fortifications was erected in the area of southern Armenia and northern Mesopotamia. In the Armenian part, two parallel lines of themes fortresses actually existed, whose *strategoi* were registered in the TE.

The forward most frontier line commenced in the north with the theme-fortress of **Artze** (TE 269₁₃), which was north-east of Theodosiupolis, and about whose foundation there is no data.⁸² There is also no data about the theme of **Melte**, whose exact whereabouts is uncertain (TE 269₁₀).⁸³ Then, the frontier line descended to **Chauzizin**⁸⁴ conquered after 940 (TE 267₃₀); it encompassed the district of **Taron**, annexed in 966/7 in the time of Nikephoros Phokas and then organised into a separate theme (TE 265₁₅).⁸⁵ The forward most frontier line ended south-east of Taron in the theme-fortress of **Chouit**, about which there is no data on its foundation (TE 269₀₆).⁸⁶

To the west of that frontier line, another extended, beginning in the north in Armenian Theodosiupolis and ending in Mesopotamian Limnia, encompassing ten themes-fortresses, the majority of which had become Byzantine possessions before the Phokas–Tzimiskes epoch and whose *strategoi* were mentioned in the TE: **Theodosiupolis** (conquered in 949) and **Derzene** were already organised as a theme by around 951/2 (TE 265₁₉; 267₁₂); as for **Kama**,⁸⁷ **Chortzine**⁸⁸ and

⁸⁰ Antarados (Tortosa) was in ruins at the end of the 10th century; Basil II reconstructed the fortress and manned it with an Armenian garrison, Yahya II, 443.

⁸¹ V, p. 111.

⁸² *Oikonomidēs*, Listes 363; *idem*, Organisation 293 et n. 52. The existence of this theme is attested on a seal; it is assumed that the position of the *strategos* of Artze was an earlier stage in the service of Theodorokanos, the future *doux* of Adrianople, *Holmes*, Basil II, 405 et n. 19. A seal from the 10th/11th century confirms the existence of the imperial *kourator* of Artze, DOSeals IV, 57.1.

⁸³ *Oikonomidēs*, Listes 362; *idem*, Organisation 293 et n. 51.

⁸⁴ *Oikonomidēs*, Listes 361; *idem*, Organisation 293 et n. 50. An 11th century seal confirms the existence of the *megas kourator* of Derzene, Rachaba and Chauzizin, DOSeals IV, 59.1.

⁸⁵ *Oikonomidēs*, Listes 355–356; *idem*, Organisation 293 et n. 49; *Yuzbashian*, Administration 140–148. About the seal of the *tourmarches* and the *kleisourarches* of Taron (10th/11th century) v. DOSeals IV, 76.4; for the seal of the *strategos*, *ibid.* 76.5 (11th c.) Taron would rely on the command centre in Vaspurakan, which is confirmed by the seal of the *doux* of Vaspurakan and Taron (11th c.), *ibid.* 76.2. In the civil domain, it could have been linked with Chaldia and Derzene, *ibid.* 76.1. Towards the end of the rule of John Tzimiskes, Derzene and Taron were unified through the function of the *strategos*, *Holmes*, Basil II, 318.

⁸⁶ *Oikonomidēs*, Organisation 293 et n. 48.

⁸⁷ The location is uncertain, *Oikonomidēs*, Listes 360; *idem*, Organisation 292 et n. 47. The *strategos* was attested on an 11th century seal, DOSeals IV, 64.1.

⁸⁸ *Oikonomidēs*, Listes 359; *idem*, Organisation 292 et n. 46. A seal exists of the *strategos* of Chortzine, dated to the late 10th century (Z II pp. 147–148, no. 227), belonging to Melias. If it belonged to

Chantiarte,⁸⁹ it is not known when they were elevated to the rank of a theme (TE 267₂₇; 267₁₇; 269₁₅). This line then reached Asmosaton, a theme attested in the time of Constantine Porphyrogenetos, whose *strategos* was not found in the TE.⁹⁰ **Romanoupolis**, after being conquered in 942, was included in the theme of Mesopotamia and subsequently, before the rule of Nikephoros II, separated into an autonomous unit (TE 267₁₅).⁹¹ The cities of **Erkne**,⁹² **Zermion**⁹³ and **Chasanara**⁹⁴ found themselves within the borders of the Empire after 956 (TE 269₁₄; 269₀₁; 269₀₇). In the south, the border ended in **Limnia** (TE 267₃₃). We do not know when it was conquered or elevated to the rank of a theme.⁹⁵ Edessa remained beyond this frontier line, an important Arabian centre that Byzantium would not conquer until the year 1031.

The rank of *strategos* of a theme from the Mesopotamian-Armenian belt was not a prominent one. An exception to this were the *strategoï* of Theodosiupolis and Taron, who came after the *eparchos* of Constantinople (TE 265₁₉; 20), while the rest were awarded a modest position.

Far in the north-eastern area, in the frontier region of Iberia, was a solitary theme, **Soteroupolis** or **Bourzo**/Βουρζώ, a small district whose centre was in the city of Soteroupolis.⁹⁶ In the TE, its *strategos* is mentioned in one of the last groups (TE 269₀₃).

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An imposing number of about 46 themes of the new type⁹⁷ that stretched across the Cappadocian, Cilician, Syrian and Mesopotamian-Southern Armenian regions, as well as their geographical distribution, requires an explanation of least some of the reasons that affected the new type of frontier organisation.

Firstly, it was defined by the nature of the several decade-long Byzantine-Arabian conflict. The expansion of Byzantium that had commenced under the leadership of the *domestikos ton Scholon*, John Kourkouas, and had continued under the *domestikoi ton Scholon* from the Phokas family, simply became a battle for the

Melias, the *domestikos ton Scholon* in 972/973, it would follow that the theme of Chortzine was created long before the edition of the TE. About the seal of George Melias v. p. 109 n. 154.

⁸⁹ *Oikonomidès*, Listes 363; *idem*, Organisation 292 et n. 45.

⁹⁰ V. p. 85.

⁹¹ Romanoupolis is mentioned as a theme in De Vel. 125. *Oikonomidès*, Listes 359; *idem*, Organisation 292 et n. 44.

⁹² *Oikonomidès*, Listes 363; *idem*, Organisation 292 et n. 42.

⁹³ *Oikonomidès*, Listes 361; *idem*, Organisation 292 et n. 41.

⁹⁴ *Oikonomidès*, Listes 362; *idem*, Organisation 291 et n. 40.

⁹⁵ The location is uncertain but the existence of the theme of Limnia in this area in 1108, was confirmed (Alex. 421), *Oikonomidès*, Listes 361; *idem*, Organisation 291 et n. 39.

⁹⁶ *Oikonomidès*, Listes 362; *idem*, Organisation 293 et n. 54; 294.

⁹⁷ In the number of frontier *strategoï* mentioned in the TE, one should also include the *strategoï* of the cities on the Syrian coast, conquered by Tzimiskes and attested in slightly later sources.

fortresses.⁹⁸ Oikonomides already assumed that the phenomenon of the so-called *armeniaka themata* was at least partly the result of the enduring presence of the Phokai and the family lineages associated with theirs on the eastern frontier.⁹⁹ Regardless of the successes they achieved, it was not until the epoch of Nikephoros II Phokas and John I Tzimiskes and the conquests in Cilicia, Syria and the Armenian region that the Empire came into the possession of larger territories. The new organisation of the frontier — which relied on the chain of fortresses — made it possible to retain Byzantine rule in them over a longer period.

The geographical characteristics of the mountain range of the Tauros and the Antitauros, intersected by the rivers along which lay the *armeniaka themata*, required the concentration of power in a fortified city. Although they held the title of *strategos*, their commanders possessed limited powers similar to the *kleisourarches* in the previous period — the functionary of a minor thematic organisation, at the head of a *kleisoura*. This was the form of organisation characteristic for frontier regions with the said geographical features (a mountain massif, intersected by river courses). The *kleisourai* represented frontier defence posts and the authority of the *kleisourarches* was principally of a military nature.¹⁰⁰

Since their territory was small, the new themes were not an important source of recruiting potential. Their military forces consisted of numerically small units, capable of defending individual fortresses exposed in a forward position to the enemy. Understandably, not every fortress was elevated to the rank of a *strategis*. As time passed, those that were in a strategically better position were administratively defined by being singled out, as a rule, from territorially larger themes; others, based on the same criterion, were granted the status of autonomous districts, as soon as they were conquered. Still, the impenetrability of the new frontier depended on their number so that one can rightfully say that in the new organisation, quantity gradually brought a new quality.¹⁰¹ What did this quality consist of?

First, by the closing decades of the 10th century, Byzantium had gradually managed to build a dense network of fortresses in the eastern frontier regions. This was a process that lasted almost two centuries: the signs of the new phenomena in the system of frontier administration, already visible since the reign of Leo VI, were confirmed in the TB and, in the ensuing period, from the independent rule of Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos, became much clearer. Units of the new type were formed more frequently from that time onwards, testimony of which we find in the TE.

⁹⁸ Djurić, Foke 250 sq.

⁹⁹ Oikonomides, Organisation 87. The members of the Phokas family and their relatives, the Maleinoi, did not only hold the position of *domestikos ton Scholon* but also the function of *strategos* in the most important Asia Minor themes — Anatolikon, Cappadocia, Charsianon, for further details Djurić, Foke 249–253.

¹⁰⁰ On *kleisourai* v. Ferluga, Niže jedinice 76–85; *idem*, Le clisure bizantine in Asia Minore, ZRVI 16 (1975) 9–23; cf. Ahrweiler, Administration 81–82; *eadem*, Frontière 217.

¹⁰¹ Maksimović, Tradicija i inovacija 13.

The belts of the themes-fortresses secured an effective defence along the established borders. The fortress theme became a symbol of (stable) Byzantine authority even in regions where Byzantium did not hold compact territory (and one can say that that was the case, with the exception of Cilicia, in all the frontier regions to the East). To put it simply, a well-positioned fortress secured strategic control over a border area.

Therefore, if the new themes with their *strategoi* and the garrisons under their command primarily had a defensive function, how was the other — offensive — segment of life on the frontier secured? This was a period of Byzantine military expansion, which could be seen in the rapid increase of frontier themes-fortresses, among other things. The sources indicate that the homogenisation of Byzantine rule over the frontier organised in this way was exercised through the command functions of the *domestikos ton Scholon*. It is no coincidence that the 10th century, viewed from the aspect of the institution of the Empire's supreme command, is described as the great century of this officer.¹⁰² His full acknowledgement is illustrated in the data describing the unusually long mandates of the holders of that rank, John Kourkouas and especially Bardas Phokas and his son Nikephoros, the *domestikoi ton Scholon* in the times of Constantine VII and Romanos II.

If one accepts Oikonomides' assumption that the creation of the *armeniaka themata* resulted at least partly due to the influence of the longstanding presence of the Phokas family on the eastern frontier, then there are even stronger grounds for the question of how much influence the frontier war experience of these highest commanding officers, who were successful and highly experienced commanders of the tagmatic army, exerted on the growing complexity of the structure of authority in the region of the eastern frontier. One cannot believe it to be a coincidence that the creation of the new provincial functionaries, the *doux* and the *katepano*, is linked to the name of Nikephoros Phokas and his longstanding comrade in arms, John Tzimiskes, during whose reigns the new organisation of authority along the eastern frontier was finally shaped.

¹⁰² Guillard, *Recherches* I, 429.

II

THE NEW STRUCTURE OF MILITARY AUTHORITY ON THE EASTERN FRONTIER

The TE lists the groups of provincial *doukes* and *katepano* beginning with the *doukes* of Antioch, Mesopotamia and Chaldia (TE 263₂₈₋₃₀). In the two latter regions, the *taktikon* from Tzimiskes' epoch registered the *strategoi* (TE 265_{10, 12}) known from the earlier preserved *taktika*. At the end of the 10th century, therefore, as in the case of the Balkans, in the East a parallel structure of authority was established, personified in two provincial functionaries — the *doux/katepano* and the *strategos*.

The introduction of these new positions in the frontier areas to the East is reliably known to have started in the time of Nikephoros II Phokas. The reform, the foundations of which he had laid, were continued by his successor, John I Tzimiskes, during whose rule the frontier in the East took shape as it did, and temporarily, in the Balkans. Basil II also contributed to the new structure of military authority that was characteristic for the state's peripheral regions under Phokas and Tzimiskes, applying the same organisation in the area that he conquered in Iberia and in Vaspurakan.

We learn more about the activities of the new functionaries in the East — the *doukes* of Antioch, Chaldia and Mesopotamia — from sources referring to the reign of Basil II. Most of the data is connected with the *doux* of Antioch while the other two appear only sporadically in the sources. This fact itself is indicative inasmuch as it refers to the significance of Antioch and its *doux* in a region that constituted one of the most important segments of Byzantium's foreign policy over a longer period. And so, in explaining the establishment of the new structure of military authority in the East, one should start with Antioch.

THE *DOUKATON* OF ANTIOCH

Formation

As the TE shows, the *doux* of Antioch occupied the most prominent position in the order of functionaries with the title of *doux* or *katepano*. The narrative sources referring to the initial period of the reign of Basil II corroborate the institution of this post.

The *doux* of Antioch was the sole provincial functionary with authority in that city. The *strategos* of Antioch was omitted from the TE, and the existence of a functionary of that rank is attested only in the form of a “*strategos* of Antioch and Lykandos”. This is an example of a temporary accumulation of functions. The sources did not confirm that the *doux/katepano* and the *strategos* coexisted in the Syrian metropolis, as was the case in Mesopotamia and Chaldia.

Antioch came under Byzantine rule at the very end of Nikephoros II Phokas’ rule (October 28th, 969). Credit for the conquest of the “third largest city of the *oikoumene*” (Diac. 73) went to the *patrikios* Michael Bourtzes and the *stratopedarches* Peter. Skylitzes describes the former as the *strategos* of Mauron Oros, the fortress Nikephoros II Phokas erected on Mount Amanos, which was of great strategic importance in the preparatory operations for the conquest of Antioch. Nevertheless, the *strategos* of Mauron Oros was not mentioned in the TE but the existence of a *strategis* under this name was attested in other sources.¹⁰³

In the first days after its conquest, the city was entrusted to the care of the emperor’s close relative Eustathios Maleinos. An inscription on the Aachen Reliquary describes the said Eustathios as “the *anthypatos*, *patrikios* and *strategos* of Antioch and Lykandos”.¹⁰⁴ He could have held the position in Antioch from October until December 969 or, possibly, until the beginning of 970.¹⁰⁵ Certainly more interesting than the date of Eustathios’ mandate is the organisational form attested in the titulature on the reliquary. Data from the *Vita* of Christophoros, the patriarch of Antioch, helps define his function more closely, where it mentions that Eustathios Maleinos, the *patrikios* and *strategos* of Cappadocia, was in Antioch after this city was captured.¹⁰⁶

According to the TB and the TE, the positions of the *strategos* of Cappadocia and Lykandos were not joined; both one and the other theme were under the authority of a different *strategos*. The theme of Lykandos was in the Cappadocian region, to which the Phokas and the Maleinos families were traditionally linked — both by origin and according to function.¹⁰⁷ The organisational form of the “*strategos* of Antioch and Lykandos” mentioned in the inscription must have been of a temporary nature. Although Antioch was the objective Phokas’ intense Syrian campaigns from 966, the fall of the city was nevertheless unexpected. After the demobilisation of Michael Bourtzes, the emperor temporarily entrusted the city for safekeeping to a reliable functionary, in this case, his relative, who then held the position of *strategos* of Lykandos. It is essential to stress that Eustathios was not mentioned as the *doux* of Antioch, from which it proceeds that the function of *doux* had not yet been introduced

¹⁰³ V. p. 114. According to Yahya I, 822, Elpidios Brachamios also took part in the conquest of Antioch; Arab authors link Michael Bourtzes to the fortress of Pagras/Bagras (Yahya I, 816, 822; *Zayat*, Vie du patriarche 357).

¹⁰⁴ W. B. R. Saunders, The Aachen Reliquary of Eustathius Maleinus, 969–970, DOP 36 (1982) 211–219.

¹⁰⁵ Cheynet, Trois familles 19 et n. 16; Collection Zacos 22. Eustathios’ mandate was brief because Tzimiskes, after he became emperor, dismissed the functionaries of Phokas in the capital and in the provinces.

¹⁰⁶ *Zayat*, Vie du patriarche 358–359.

¹⁰⁷ Cheynet, Pouvoir 214–215.

at that time. After its conquest, a functionary in the rank of a *strategos* should have been placed in the charge of Antioch, on the model of the other frontier cities/fortresses.¹⁰⁸ Nikephoros Phokas' murder (on December 10th/11th 969) checked his efforts to organise Byzantine rule in Antioch on a more enduring basis, and this task fell to his successor John I Tzimiskes.

The Arabian siege, which took place in the first year of Tzimiskes' rule, when the emperor was on the Balkan battlefields (970/971),¹⁰⁹ illustrates that Byzantine rule was not yet secured nor were circumstances settled in the region of Antioch. It was mentioned that the defence of Antioch was entrusted to the eunuch Nicholas, a specially appointed officer sent from the capital,¹¹⁰ but also to the "*strategos of Mesopotamia*" (Diac. 103; Scyl. 287). The sources did not record that the *doux* of Antioch or some other dignitaries from that city took part in those events. Also, the record that military forces were sent from the region of Mesopotamia to protect Antioch, and from the capital, does not bolster the conclusion that Antioch at that time was an important tagmatic command centre.

We also know that in 971, Tzimiskes sent 12,000 men to rebuild the walls of Antioch, which had been severely damaged in an earthquake (Yahya II, 351). At that time, Michael Bourtzes, one of John Tzimiskes' most reliable supporters and his accomplice in the murder of Nikephoros II Phokas, controlled the city.¹¹¹ However, the available data does not make it possible to define his function with the term *doux*. It is not known when he was recalled from Antioch, but it is certain that this came about during the reign of Tzimiskes. At the very beginning of the rule of Basil II, this Byzantine military commander acquired the title of *magistros* and the position of *doux* of Antioch (Scyl. 314).

As the *doux* of Antioch is mentioned in the TE and confirmed in records referring to the year 976, it follows that this function was most probably established after the Arabian siege in 970/971. The creation of the position of *doux* meant that Antioch had been planned as a command centre of the tagmatic army, responsible for conducting military operations in a wider area.¹¹²

The significance and competences of the *doux* of Antioch

One can follow more detailed data, shedding light on the competences of the most important Byzantine provincial military functionary from the beginning of the

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Holmes, Basil II, 331–334. According to Kühn, Armee 170, after its conquest, Antioch became the seat of functionaries in the rank of *doux*.

¹⁰⁹ Regarding the five-month siege of Antioch, Yahya II, 350–351. Walker, Byzantine Victory 431–440.

¹¹⁰ Laurent, Antioche 228 et n. 2, allows for the possibility that the *patrikios* Nicholas was the first *doux* of Antioch, and became its governor after the defence of the city.

¹¹¹ It is possible that Bourtzes was also entrusted with the defence of Antioch during the Arab siege, Cheynet, Trois familles 20.

¹¹² For a prosopographic list of the *doukes* of Antioch v. Laurent, Antioche 229–231; Kühn, Armee 171–184; DOSeals V, pp. 21–22 (list of commanders of Antioch in the period 969–1084); Collection Zacos (Cheynet) 22–23; Todt, Region von Antiocheia 284–339.

reign of Basil II. For his two predecessors, it was characteristic for the most important provincial position in the East to be entrusted to their closest aides or even relatives.¹¹³ Basil II, on the other hand, used the position of the eastern *doukes* to secure central authority. He entrusted the function of *doux* in Mesopotamia to the disloyal Bardas Skleros, hitherto “*stratelates* of all the East”, and the position of the *doux* of Antioch to Tzimiskes’ experienced associate, Michael Bourtzes, a member of Skleros’ *hetaireia* (Scyl. 314–315).¹¹⁴ This concerns the first part of Basil’s reign, when he had not yet imposed his control over the ambitious military leaders, the *dynastai* of Asia Minor. For a long period, Antioch, and with it the whole of Syria, was left to the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East or the *doux* of Antioch, as testified by the long-lasting mandate of Bardas Phokas (978–987).

The political importance of the *doux* of Antioch soon emerged in the civil wars the emperor waged against Bardas Skleros (976–979) and subsequently, against Bardas Phokas (987–989). The sources note that the *doukes* of Antioch calculated whether to support the emperor or the usurpers. On the other hand, the rebels endeavoured at all costs to keep the city under their control.¹¹⁵ One can say that it was not till after his victory over the Asia Minor aristocracy that Basil II finally took control of Antioch in the proper sense of the word.

Indirect authority over Antioch — Thanks to the function of the *doux* and not to his origin, several Byzantine families were to become closely linked with Antioch. This fact is one of the striking characteristics of Byzantium’s earliest rule in the region of Antioch.

The attachment of the Bourtzes family to Antioch can be followed from the time when the city came under Byzantine rule.¹¹⁶ During the reigns of three emperors, Nikephoros II Phokas, John I Tzimiskes and Basil II, the presence was recorded of the progenitor of the family, Michael Bourtzes, in Antioch, on several occasions (969, 971). At least on two occasions, his engagement was secured by his appointment to the function of *doux* of the city (976, 989–995/6).¹¹⁷ The descendants

¹¹³ In the time of Nikephoros II Phokas, his nephew Bardas was the *doux* of Chaldia, and Eustathios Maleinos was entrusted with newly conquered Antioch. Tzimiskes placed Antioch under the authority of his loyal aide, Michael Bourtzes.

¹¹⁴ These were disloyal but experienced military commanders, which must have also had some bearing on the choice of functions they would have been entrusted with. *Holmes*, Basil II, 339, considers that with the said appointments, the emperor secured experienced frontier commanders in the war against the Hamdanids from Mosul (*doux* of Mesopotamia) and the Fatimids in the Syrian regions (*doux* of Antioch).

¹¹⁵ *Laurent*, Antioche 231–233; *Holmes*, Basil II, 341–347.

¹¹⁶ The origin of the family is debatable. It is assumed that they were of Arab (*Laurent*, Antioche 230 n. 4; *Cheyne*, Trois familles 16) or Armenian origin (*Charanis*, Armenians, 45; *Každan*, Armjane, 85); they are also believed to have come from the region around the Euphrates (*N. Adontz*, Études arméno-byzantines, Lisbonne 1965, 176). The members of the Bourtzes family were connected with the region of the theme of Anatolikon, which is confirmed by data about the *vestarches* Michael Bourtzes, a participant in the rebellion of Isaac Komnenos (1057), Scyl. 483, 488; cf. *Krsmanović*, Uspon 189–191.

¹¹⁷ *Laurent*, Antioche 233–234; *Cheyne*, Trois familles 19–23; DOSeals V, p. 21; Collection Zacos 22. It is also probable (based on the account by Asolik of Taron) that, for a short while (990–991), Romanos Skleros was *doux* of Antioch, *Seibt*, Skleroi 63–64; DOSeals V, p. 21; cf. *Cheyne*, Trois familles 21–22.

of Michael Bourtzes were attached to Antioch, right until the middle of the 11th century.¹¹⁸

The Phokas family also understood the importance of Antioch. Immediately after its conquest, the emperor Nikephoros' closest relative, Eustathios Maleinos, was put in charge of the city. During most of his mandate as *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East, Bardas Phokas was attached to Antioch, which served as his base for his Syrian campaigns (980–987). According to Yahya (II, 417), he held the function of *doux* of Antioch for a short while (986–987).¹¹⁹ When he usurped the imperial title, Bardas entrusted Antioch to his younger son, Leo.¹²⁰ Leo retained control of Antioch even after the death of his father, right until November 989, when the city's inhabitants rebelled against him. After that, Basil secured his power by sending the experienced *magistros* Michael Bourtzes, to be *doux* of Antioch (Yahya II, 425, 428).

In the time of Basil II, thanks to their service, the Dalassenoi were also linked with Antioch.¹²¹ This primarily refers to the progenitor of the family, Damian, who succeeded Michael Bourtzes in the position of *doux* of Antioch in 995/996.¹²² The *doux* Damian was killed in a battle at Apameia in 998 and his sons (Constantine and Theophylaktos?) were taken prisoner (Yahya II, 443–444, 455).¹²³ When they were released after ten years in captivity, Damian's sons would confirm their family links with Antioch: Constantine Dalassenos was attested as *katepano* of Antioch at the very end of Basil's reign in 1024/1025 (Yahya III, 471, 477),¹²⁴ and his brother Theophylaktos performed the same duty in the thirties of the 11th century.¹²⁵ It is

¹¹⁸ *Laurent*, Antioche 237; *Cheyne*, Trois familles 25, 35; *idem*, Sceaux no. 48; DOSeals V, p. 21.

¹¹⁹ Bardas Phokas was the *domestikos ton Scholon* from 978. After he had crushed the first rebellion of Bardas Skleros (979), he was transferred to the East, to Syria. He continued to hold the post of *domestikos ton Scholon* until 986, when he was dismissed and appointed *doux* of Antioch. His mandate lasted a short while and, in 987, he was already re-assigned to his previous post.

¹²⁰ The mandate of Leo Phokas lasted from 987–989, *Laurent*, Antioche 233; DOSeals V, p. 21.

¹²¹ There are assumptions about the Armenian origin of the Dalassenoi, based on data regarding the origin of Constantine Dalassenos, a prominent figure from the first half of the 11th century; according to Michael Psellos he came from Dalassa (Chron. I, 122; II, 141), which *N. Adontz*, Notes Arméno-byzantines, Byz. 10/1 (1935) 181–185, identified with the monastery at Talaš, in the region east of Melitene; cf. *Charanis*, Armenians, 45–46; *Každan*, Armjane 92–93. However, *Cheyne*, Trois familles 75–76, draws attention to the fact that the names of the well-known members of the Dalassenoi were not Armenian. In the first half of the 11th century, the Dalassenoi were connected with the theme of Armeniakon, and also with Antioch.

¹²² *Laurent*, Antioche 234; *Cheyne*, Trois familles 76–78; DOSeals V, p. 21.

¹²³ *M. Canard*, Les sources arabes de l'histoire byzantine aux confins des X^e et XI^e siècles, REB 19 (1961) 299–300.

¹²⁴ *Mercati*, Epigrammi 458–461. *Laurent*, Antioche 238; *Cheyne*, Trois familles 80–81; DOSeals V, p. 21.

¹²⁵ On one seal, dated to 1032–1034 (DOSeals V, p. 21; Collection Zacos 23), Theophylaktos is described as *anthypatos*, *patrikios*, *vestes* and *doux* of Antioch, *Cheyne*, Trois familles 84; Seyrig no. 156: *anthypatos*, *patrikios* and *doux* of Antioch. *Laurent*, Antioche 237, 254, dates Theophylaktos' mandate to the period before 1022. According to narrative accounts, the Dalassenoi are known to have been opponents of Michael IV, and based on that, it is believed that Theophylaktos could have held the position in Antioch before his arrival on the throne in 1034, *Cheyne*, Trois familles 83–84. On the conflict between the Dalassenoi and the Paphlagonians, v. *Krsmanović*, Uspon 64–82.

assumed the connection of the Dalassenoi to Antioch can be followed until the middle of the 11th century.¹²⁶

The Paphlagonian family also realised the importance of Antioch. After succeeding the throne, Michael IV (1934) awarded the position of *doux* to his brother, Niketas.¹²⁷ As the latter already died in the same year, the emperor's other brother, Constantine, was sent to Antioch and he performed this function in the period from 1034–1037 and, in 1037, combined this duty with the position of *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East.¹²⁸ The efforts by the Paphlagonian family to establish firm control in the Antioch region was provoked by a rebellion in the city. It broke out at the very end of the rule of Romanos III Argyros because of the tax burden but, as soon as Michael IV Paphlagon arrived on the throne, it grew into a political rebellion, in favour of the aspirations of Constantine Dalassenos.¹²⁹

The Armenian Brachamios family was also linked with Antioch. Its first representative, Isaac, took part with Michael Bourtzes in the conquest of Antioch in October 969 and, in 978, as a supporter of the usurper Bardas Skleros, he tried to capture the city by laying a siege.¹³⁰ It is likely that Elpidios, mentioned in 1034 as the leader of the eleven rebels from Antioch “who were renowned for their wealth and family reputation” (Scyl. 395), was a member of the Brachamios family.¹³¹ The enduring influence of this family in the Antioch region was attested in the late 11th century, when Philaretos Brachamios, who also held the position of *doux*, rebelled against the authority in Constantinople. In the time of Michael VII Doukas, he had independent control of the region of Antioch, Edessa and Melitene, for a long time.¹³²

¹²⁶ Cheynet, *Trois familles* 87, considers that a certain Adrianos, *doux* of Antioch, was a member of the Dalassenos family, perhaps the son of Theophylaktos Dalassenos; cf. *idem*, *Ducs d'Antioche* 61. Adrianos' mandate is dated to 1059, *DOSeals* V, p. 22; *Collection Zacus* 23.

¹²⁷ Laurent, *Antioche* 240. Aristak. 33–34, mentions that the brother of Michael IV was appointed *domestikos* and sent to Antioch.

¹²⁸ Laurent, *Antioche* 240. There are two seals attributed to Constantine, the brother of Michael IV. On the first, he is mentioned as *patrikios*, *praipositos*, *vestarches* and *domestikos* of the East (*DOSeals* III, 99.5), and on the second, which could attest to the accumulation of two functions, as *proedros*, *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East and *doux* of Antioch (*Seibt*, *Bleisiegel* I, no. 35). The title of *proedros* indicates that the second seal belonged to a later date. Constantine held the position of *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East till the end of the reign of his brother (December 1041), and he may already have retired from the function of *doux* of Antioch after 1037. Cheynet published the seal of Basil Padiadites, *vestes* and *katepano* of Antioch, whose mandate fell in the period after 1037 and before 1040, *Ducs d'Antioche* 54–55, 61; *Collection Zacus* 23.

¹²⁹ The rebellion in Antioch began with the murder of Salibas, a tax official (*phorologos*), and ended when the *doux* of Antioch, Niketas Paphlagonas (1034) entered the city. After restoring peace, Niketas punished the rebels harshly, executing about a hundred people and sending eleven of the most prominent participants, whose leader was a certain Elpidios (Brachamios?), in chains to Constantinople. Niketas believed that the rebellion was an expression of political support for Constantine Dalassenos, who opposed the ascent to imperial power of Michael IV, a person of lowly origin, Scyl. 395–397; Zon. 588–589; for further details v. *Krsmanović*, *Uspon* 71 sq.

¹³⁰ On the origin of the Brachamioi and its first well-known representative v. Cheynet, *Trois familles* 56–59.

¹³¹ Cheynet, *Trois familles* 59–60.

¹³² *Ibid.* 66–73; *idem*, *Pouvoir* 82 no. 103.

The presence of certain families in the region of Antioch, attested through several generations, can be explained by the efforts of their representatives to secure social prestige for themselves with the prominent and militarily important function of *doux* of Antioch.¹³³ However, this situation can be followed in the early period of the history of Antioch under Byzantine rule (during the first half of the 11th century). Was it estimated in Constantinople to be more effective for this strategically important centre in the farthest point in the East, in a frontier region that represented a military hotbed, to be controlled indirectly — through loyal families? In the initial period of the administration of Antioch, Constantinople allowed the *doukes* of that city a measure of autonomy in their actions, which resulted in its retaining a firmer hold both on Antioch and the Syrian region. Because they were commanders of an important army in a volatile region, they were primarily expected to be loyal. The emperor secured this by permitting certain families to create their own economic and political strongholds in the region of Antioch (as was the case with the Bourtzai,¹³⁴ the Dalassenoi and the Brachamioi). This information is all the more indicative because after the suppression of the Antioch rebellion of 1034, eleven of its most prominent citizens were taken away “in chains” to Constantinople. This actually involved the temporary taking of hostages, an unusual measure, by means of which the capital secured control of an important part of the state territory.¹³⁵

The domain of military authority of the doux of Antioch — The primary duty of the *doux* of Antioch was the defence of the city and its neighbourhood. However, viewed more broadly, his competences extended to the region of Syria and he was therefore most frequently mentioned as the leader of the Syrian campaigns.

Initially, after the conquest, the commander of Antioch's predominant role (he was not immediately granted the title of *doux/katepano*) was the defence of the city, the loss of which the Arabs were unable to reconcile themselves to. After the siege

¹³³ The Bourtzai, Dalassenoi and Brachamioi families belonged to the so-called new Byzantine aristocracy. Accounts about their ancestors connect them to the military expansion of the Empire, which commenced in the reign of Nikephoros II Phokas, *Krsmanović*, *Uspun* 286–289.

¹³⁴ Michael Bourtzes had a castle in a place known as Imm, which belonged in the region of the *strategis* of Artach (Yahya II, 438), *Todt*, *Antiocheia* 245; *idem*, *Region von Antiocheia* 408; cf. *Cheyne*, *Trois familles* 22.

¹³⁵ The taking of hostages was characteristic for the regions that were autonomous political entities, which was not the case with Antioch. But, even though the city was under the jurisdiction of the Empire, the local dignitaries wielded powerful influence: during the rebellion of Bardas Skleros (976–979), the position of the *doux* of Antioch was in the hands of Kouleïb and Oubeïdallah. The first was a *basilikos* in the time of Tzimiskes, and he held the position of *doux* of the city in 976 or 977. After the defeat experienced by Michael Bourtzes, *doux* of Antioch, and Eustathios Maleinos, *strategos* of Tarsos, in the conflict with Skleros, Bourtzes withdrew to the theme of Anatolikon; he left Antioch to his elder son, who handed over the city to the *basilikos* Kouleïb, Yahya II, 373; *Laurent*, *Antioche* 231; *Cheyne*, *Trois familles* 21, 25. Oubeïdallah was appointed by the usurper Skleros, who granted him the title of *magistros* (977); Basil II, with the help of Agapios, the then bishop of Aleppo and future patriarch of Antioch, won him over and thus returned the city to Byzantine rule (978), Yahya II, 375–377. The duration of Oubeïdallah's mandate is not known; he is believed to have retired from the post of *doux* of Antioch after 978, *DOSeals* V, p. 21; cf. *Collection Zacos* 22. The next *doux*, the sources mention, was Leo Melissenos (985/6), *Laurent*, *Antioche* 231–232; *DOSeals* V, p. 21.

of 970/971, the region of Antioch was reorganised into a frontier command centre of the tagmatic army under the command of the *doux*. But while we can say very little about the organisation of the military (and administrative) authority in the Antioch region or about the competences of the *doux* in the time of Tzimiskes, data from the time of Basil's reign shows that Byzantium introduced a military and administrative reform in that frontier region.

The fact that Byzantine rule in Syria did not encompass compact territory influenced not only the military role of the *doux* of Antioch but the entire organisation of military authority. Numerous records exist, showing that in Syria there was no real demarcation line between Byzantine and Arabian territories. Two dominant centres, Byzantine Antioch and the Hamdanid Aleppo, the sources mention a series of fortresses in the Syrian region that were the subject of defence or attack by each of the opposing sides.¹³⁶

The *doux* of Antioch was given the task of maintaining Byzantine sovereignty over Aleppo guaranteed in the treaty from December 969/January 970, under which the Hamdanids pledged to pay annual tribute.¹³⁷ In the eighties of the 10th century, Byzantine military operations mainly focused on Aleppo because the Empire was trying to secure adherence to the earlier signed peace treaty. The Byzantine positions were strengthened by the conquest of the fortresses in the Aleppo region; the imperial army also penetrated into the region south of Antioch. Data that the campaign was led by the then *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East, the *magistros* Bardas Phokas, testifies to the military significance attached to the events in Syria.¹³⁸

However, developments in Syria were determined by the relations between Byzantium and the Fatimid Caliphate. After the conquest of Egypt (969), the Fatimids set out to conquer Syria. We have already mentioned their failure to reconcile themselves with the Byzantine conquest of Antioch and that they began a five-month siege of the city in 970/971. John Tzimiskes temporarily halted their progress with his campaigns in 974, and particularly with the one he conducted during 975. The Fatimids and the Byzantines resumed their struggle in the 90s of the 10th century, during the reign of Basil II, and in these events, the *doux* of Antioch played the major role — as commander of the chief Byzantine military base in Syria. The pressure Antioch was exposed to in the period of the Fatimid offensives is illustrated by the personnel changes among the officers in the *doukaton* of Antioch,¹³⁹ as well as by the appearances of Basil II on the Syrian battlefield (in 995, and 999).

¹³⁶ For a chronological presentation of Byzantine-Arab battles in the region of Syria, on the threshold between the 10th and the 11th century v. *Farag*, Aleppo 42–60; *Holmes*, Basil II, 306–313.

¹³⁷ *Farag*, Aleppo 45–46.

¹³⁸ In the period from 981–986, the campaigns of the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East, Bardas Phokas, focused on Aleppo and the region north of Aleppo (the fortress of Killiz), on the Arab possessions in southern Syria (the fortress of Hims), and on the broader neighbourhood of Apameia (Kafartāb), Yahya II, 407, 413, 415–416.

¹³⁹ Michael Bourtzes 989–995; Damian Dalassenos 995/6–998, who was killed during the siege of Apameia; the situation became stable once more, in the mandate of Nikephoros Ouranos 999/1000–1007, *Farag*, Aleppo 51–57.

When necessary, the military engagement of the *doux* of Antioch also extended outside Syria. Data connected with the mandate of Nikephoros Ouranos (December 999 – approx. 1007) testifies to this.¹⁴⁰ It records that in his capacity as *doux* of Antioch, Nikephoros Ouranos helped Basil II set up his authority over the territory of Iberia: when the emperor learned of the *kouropalatos* David's death (in the year 1000), he set out for Armenia to take control of his region and was escorted by the *doux* of Antioch and his troops on that occasion (Yahya II, 460).¹⁴¹ He also intervened in the Mesopotamian region: in 1006/1007, he arrived in the region south-west of Edessa, where the rebel al-Aṣfar had entrenched himself. Nikephoros Ouranos went after him with the district troops. He crossed the Euphrates and advanced to the city (Kafar 'Azūn), next laying a 28-day siege and then conquering it (Yahya II, 466–7).¹⁴² The *doux* of Antioch also intervened in the Mesopotamian region in the time of Michael IV, in 1036, when the Arabs from Mesopotamia attempted to restore their power in Edessa¹⁴³ and so they laid siege to the city. The then *doux* Constantine, brother of Michael IV, sent his troops from Antioch to the city's aid and, for his success, was awarded the rank of *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East (Scyl. 400).

The doux of Antioch and the domestikos ton Scholon of the East — The position of the *doux* of Antioch was interpreted as “power over the East”. This fact does not only testify to Syria's importance in Byzantine foreign policy but also to the importance of Antioch as a command centre on the eastern frontier. Records about the activities of the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East, who were partly or completely assigned to Antioch during their mandates, confirm that their military competences did not differ from those proceeding from the function of *doux* of Antioch: both the *domestikos* and the *doux* protected the Byzantine fortresses in Syria and attacked and laid siege to the Arabian fortresses. This is corroborated by the data referring to *magistros* Bardas Phokas, who spent most of his mandate in the function of *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East in Antioch (after 979 to 986). Immediately before Phokas' dismissal, which Yahya claims happened in the year 985, Leo Melissenos was appointed *doux* of Antioch and entrusted with the task of retrieving the Syrian city of Balaneus.¹⁴⁴ Melissenos' brief mandate ended in 986 when the emperor relieved Bardas Phokas of his position as *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East and appointed him “*doux* of the East, governor of Antioch and all the

¹⁴⁰ Laurent, Antioche 235; DOSeals V, p. 21.

¹⁴¹ Cf. Darrouzès, Épistoliers no. 19; pp. 45, 226. Honigmann, Ostgrenze 156.

¹⁴² The rebel al-Aṣfar previously attacked the commander of Artach, and moved on to Antioch, after which the *doux* of Antioch soon launched a counter attack. For more details about the rebellion, v. Felix, Byzanz 52–54; Holmes, Basil II, 349, 477–478.

¹⁴³ George Maniakes conquered Edessa in 1031, and it became the seat of the *katepano* (v. pp. 183–184). When he assumed imperial power in 1034, Michael IV dismissed Maniakes from his post, and assigned him to Vaspurakan, appointing the incompetent Leo Lependrenos to replace him in Edessa, Scyl. 397.

¹⁴⁴ It is indicative that the prosopographic list of the *doukes* of Antioch is incomplete for the time that coincided with the engagement of the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East, Bardas Phokas, in Antioch; this involves the period from 978–985, Laurent, Antioche 231–232.

eastern regions", only to restore him formally in the following year to the rank of *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East (Yahya II, 416–417, 421). The Dalassenoi also had power over the East: Damian as *doux* of Antioch (995–998) was given "administration over the East" (Yahya II, 444) in the same manner as his son, Constantine, who governed both the city and "the eastern lands" (γῆς κρατοῦντι τῆς ἑω), as *katepano* of Antioch (Yahya III, 471, 477).¹⁴⁵ Furthermore, the position of Nikephoros Ouranos, *magistros* and *doux* of Antioch, was interpreted as authority over the East, as attested on a seal where he is described as κρατῶν τῆς Ἀνατολῆς (DOSeals III, 99.11).¹⁴⁶

The identification of Antioch with the East was also due to the fact that Antioch was the sole continuously maintained command centre in the East, where the troops stationed there were used in the broader region; besides, this was a developed religious and administrative centre of traditional importance. However, although the military competences of the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East linked to Syria and of the *doux* of Antioch were identical, at least in terms of the extent of territory, one can nevertheless ask oneself where the distinction lay in the nomination to one or the other function. What we can say for sure is that in the military sense, the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East had seniority in relation to the *doux* of Antioch. This is not only confirmed by the order of functionaries attested in the TE but also in the data from the narrative sources, indicating that appointment to the position of *domestikos ton Scholon* from the function of *doux* of Antioch meant a promotion to a higher rank. We notice that the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East was connected with Antioch in situations when Byzantium undertook operations of an offensive nature in the region of Syria, regardless of whether they were the result of a new military initiative by the Empire in that region or were necessary in order to mount an effective defence to an Arabian offensive. The arrival of the *domestikos ton Scholon* in the Syrian region must have been accompanied by the arrival of additional military units that did not belong to the *doux* of Antioch's military contingents. Similarly, the arrival of the emperor Basil in this theatre of war, when he took over the role of commander in chief, entailed the temporary military strengthening of the Antioch command centre. Yahya of Antioch's data about the events in northern Syria in the 90s of the 10th century says that the *doux* of Antioch did not have sufficient troops at his disposal: on two occasions — in 995 and in 999 — Basil left the Balkan battlefield to launch offensive operations aimed at defending the Byzantine positions in Syria (Yahya II, 442–443, 457–459);¹⁴⁷ in 992, the *doux* of Antioch, Michael Bourtzēs avoided open conflict with the Arabs, reckoning them to be militarily superior and, in 994, he gained the military support of the units under the command of Leo Melissenos (Yahya II, 439,

¹⁴⁵ Mercati, Epigrammi 458–461 (particularly pp. 460–461).

¹⁴⁶ E. McGeer, Tradition and Reality in the *Taktika* of Nikephoros Ouranos, DOP 45 (1991) 131.

¹⁴⁷ In 995, when Basil II arrived in Antioch, he was accompanied by an army of 40,000 men, Cheynet, Effectifs 330. His troops consisted of Greek, Russian, Bulgarian and Georgian contingents. In 999, he also arrived in Syria with the army, which included Russian mercenaries, Farag, Aleppo 52 et n. 28; 56.

440–441).¹⁴⁸ In cases when the position of the *doux* of Antioch was interpreted as “power over the East” it probably involved the extended command powers of the particular functionary over the military units that, as a rule, did not belong to the *doukate*.¹⁴⁹ It is likely that these extended powers signified a temporary combination of two positions — of the *doux* of Antioch and the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East — but without a formal appointment to the function of *domestikos ton Scholon*. However, the rank that belonged to the *doux* of Antioch did not, as it seems, solely proceed from this functionary’s command power (i.e. the numerical status of the troops placed under his command), but from the fact that he was the head of Antioch, which from its conquest (in 969) till the late 11th century was one of the most important strategic centres on the Byzantine eastern frontier, and the military base from where, according to its capabilities, the Empire protected its interests in the Syrian region.

Military-territorial structure of the *doukate* of Antioch

In order to define the territory belonging to the *doukaton* of Antioch we have to determine what a *doukaton* or *katepanate* was and it is impossible to do so without specifying the competences of the functionary with the title of *doux/katepano*. In the introductory chapter devoted to the reforms of the Byzantine frontier military organisation, I mentioned that the *doukate* and the *katepanate* were known from the sources, bearing in mind that the term *doukaton* exclusively was used by the Greek authors.¹⁵⁰ In the literature, as a rule, territories where the presence was recorded of a *doux/katepano* were designated as *doukates* or *katepanates*. The use of those terms suggests a special type of a district, which, owing to its more complex structure of authority (*doux/katepano* and the *strategoi* subordinate to him) differed from the classical thematic units. Still, the Byzantine militarised state apparatus calls for one to draw a comparison with the classical thematic organisation: was the *doukate/katepanate*, like the district-theme of the traditional type, an administratively defined unit both in terms of the borders and competences (military and civil) of a *doux/katepano*? Unfortunately, the lack of sources makes it impossible to provide a more complete answer to that question. Compounding this difficulty is also the fact that the available data mostly refers to the command powers of the *doux/katepano*, which, if necessary, could eventually extend beyond the limits of a district of the so-called *doukata*. However, what is certain is that in the first phase of the reform already (the Phokas–Tzimiskes epoch), the borders of the hitherto traditional *themes* —

¹⁴⁸ Taking part in the conflict with the Fatimids in 994, when the Byzantines tried to protect Aleppo, was the *doux* of Antioch, Michael Bourtzes, and Leo Melissenos and their allies from Aleppo, but they were defeated. Five thousand Greek soldiers were killed in that war but it is certain that not all of them belonged to the military forces of Antioch, (*Farag*, Aleppo 51).

¹⁴⁹ It is believed that the garrison of Antioch had 4,000 soldiers, and that the army of the *doukate* at the time of the Byzantine-Fatimid conflict exceeded the number of 10,000 *Cheynef*, Effectifs 327. According to *Todt*, Antiocheia 241, the cavalry that was active in the *doukate* numbered 5,000 to 10,000 horsemen.

¹⁵⁰ V. p. 79 et n. 17.

military-administrative units — became relative: with the creation of the post of the provincial *doux/katepano* both in the East and the West of the Empire, a single command was established over more extensive territories, which covered two or more *strategides*, as a rule. Accordingly, the terms *doukate* and *katepanate* did not only signify the central area where a command centre was located since the military authority of the *doux* and the *katepano* extended beyond its borders.

It is pertinent to draw attention to these dilemmas in this section that discusses the territory of the *doukate* of Antioch. This was the only region under the authority, in other words, controlled by a *doux*, for which data exists, confirming firstly that it was more clearly defined geographically, and secondly, that the *doukate* of Antioch was a district that had a more complex territorial-military structure of authority. The data came from the so-called *Treaty of Devol*, signed between Alexios I Komnenos and the Prince of Antioch, Bohemund, in the autumn of 1108. Anna Komnene inserted its text in the *Alexiade* (Alex. 413–422).¹⁵¹ The treaty indicated the territory to be ceded to Bohemund and the territory to be restored to the Byzantine emperor's control. Geographically speaking, the *Treaty of Devol* dealt with the regions of Cilicia and Syria, as well as the regions in the wider area of Edessa (see Map II).

Some conclusion can be drawn about the territory that came under the jurisdiction of the *doux* of Antioch at the threshold between the 10th and the 11th century from the data dealing with the military engagement of that functionary, particularly if one compares it to the data about the *strategoï* mentioned in the TE. The *Treaty of Devol* reflects the situation from the later period (the end of the 11th and beginning of the 12th centuries), therefore, based on the data in the *Alexiade*, one can say more about the direction in which the administrative reform developed in the area of Byzantine Syria and Cilicia than anything else. Still, despite that, the data is valuable especially in the cases where the text of the *Treaty of Devol* coincides with the records in the narrative sources from the end of the 10th and the first decades of the 11th century, and with the data from the TE. In addition, the sphragistic material related to the territory of Cilicia and Syria enables one to supplement in a good measure or verify the data from the narrative sources.

According to the *Treaty of Devol*, the region of Cilicia was removed from the authority of the *doux* of Antioch, that is to say, from the “authority of Antioch and the *doukate* of the city” (Alex. 420: ἀπὸ τῆς δουκικῆς ἀρχῆς; 421: ἐκ τῆς ἀντιοχικῆς ἀρχῆς καὶ τοῦ δουκάτου τῆς πόλεως) in 1108 and awarded to the Byzantine emperor. This included the cities and administrative units designated by the terms *thema*, *strategaton* or *polis* (Alex. 420: θέμα, στρατηγᾶτον, πόλις):

¹⁵¹ For a geographical analysis of the data from the *Treaty of Devol*, v. Honigmann, Ostgrenze 125–129. For further details about the political context that led to signing the agreement, as well as its feudal and geographical components v. Ljubarskij — Frejdenberg, Devol'skij dogovor 260–274. For the territorial and administrative structure of the *doukate* of Antioch v. Todt, Antiocheia 244–247; *idem*, Region von Antiocheia 390–426.

- The *thema* of **Podandos**: its *strategos* was mentioned in the TE (267₂₆), and on a seal dating from the 11th century.¹⁵²
- The *strategaton* of the city of **Tarsos** (τὸ στρατηγᾶτον τῆς Ταρσοῦ πόλεως): the *strategos* of Tarsos was attested in the TE (265₁₅); the narrative sources mention the cooperation of the *strategos* of Tarsos and the *doux* of Antioch at the beginning of the rule of Basil II in 976, in the time when the rebellion of Bardas Skleros, the *doux* of the *tagmata* of Mesopotamia, broke out (Yahya II, 372–373). The *strategos* of Tarsos militarily supported the *doux* of Antioch.¹⁵³
- The *polis* of **Adana**: the TE does not mention the *strategos* of Adana, so one can assume that on the threshold between the 10th and the 11th century, Adana was not organised in a separate administrative unit but was under the control of one of the Cilician *strategoi*. Skylitzes mentioned that the victory that John Tzimiskes won against the Arabs at Adana, at the end of 963, was the beginning/cause of the downfall of the Saracens (Scyl. 268). A seal dated to the middle of the 11th century confirms that the position of the *strategos* of Adana was created much earlier than when the *Treaty of Devol* was signed.¹⁵⁴
- **Mopsuestia**: the *strategos* was mentioned in the TE (267₂₁); although the *Treaty of Devol* does not refer to Mopsuestia either as a theme or as a *strategis/strategaton*, it was undoubtedly under the command of a *strategos*, proof of which is a seal from the 10th/11th century.¹⁵⁵ It is interesting to mention that the seal of the *katepano* of Mopsuestia dates from the second half of the 11th century.¹⁵⁶
- **Anazarbos** and, to put it briefly, “the entire land of Cilicia surrounding the (sc. rivers) Kydnos and Ermon”:¹⁵⁷ although there is no mention of the status that Anazarbos had, its *strategos* was registered in the TE (265₂₂) and on seals dating from the 11th century.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵² DOSeals IV, 54.1.

¹⁵³ Cheynet, Effectifs 327; *idem*, Frontière 61. For the seal of the *strategos* of Tarsos from the 11th/12th century, Byzantinische Bleisiegel in Berlin II, mit Unterstützung durch P. Speck, bearbeitet von Claudia Sode, Bonn 1997, no. 385.

¹⁵⁴ This refers to the debatable inscription on the seal published by Schlumberger, Sigillographie, p. 274: George Melias, *strategos* of Mamistra (Mopsuestia), Anazarbos and Tzamandos. Schlumberger identified the owner of the seal as Melias the Armenian, the founder of Lykandos. Questions were raised about the reading of the seal, by K. M. Konstantopoulos, Τὸ Λεγόμενον μολυβδοβούλλον τοῦ στρατηγοῦ Μελίου, EEBS 15 (1939) 98, who considered that the owner was not Melias but Melissenos. St. Kyriakidis, Βυζ. Μελ. I (1933) 25, dated the seal to the period of the Komnenoi. According to Seibt, Bleisiegel I, 261, it was Adana and not Tzamandos, and the seal can be dated to the period from 1050–1060. The *strategos* of Adana, Mopsuestia and Anazarbos *de facto* represented the military commander of Cilicia, Cheynet, Frontier 61. Still, this involved the temporary accumulation of commander powers.

¹⁵⁵ DOSeals V, 3.1.

¹⁵⁶ Cheynet, Sceaux 423 no. 55. Cheynet (p. 424) assumes that the *katepano* of Mopsuestia could have been subordinate to the *doux* of Antioch; it involved a function of a temporary nature.

¹⁵⁷ Honigsmann, Ostgrenze 128 n. 4; Hild — Hellenkemper, Kilikien und Isaurien 327–328.

¹⁵⁸ Z II, no. 737; J. W. Nesbitt, Overstruck Seals in the Dumbarton oaks Collection: Reused or Counterstamped, SBS 2 (1990) no. 23; Collection Zacus nos. 3; 4 (a–b); p. 16: prosopographic list of the known *strategoi* of Anazarbos; DOSeals V, 1.1.

The data from the TE indicates that among the Cilician *strategoi*, the *strategos* of Tarsos held the most prominent place, which suggests that his authority was more independent than the authority of the *strategoi* elsewhere in that region. From the military viewpoint, one may assume that the command centre in Tarsos could, if necessary, absorb soldiers from other Cilician *strategides*.¹⁵⁹ Given the military significance of Tarsos and its *strategos*, it is interesting to note that the seals we know indicate that a civil not a military functionary was most often connected with Tarsos: the majority of seals are testimony of *kouratores* of Tarsos and not *strategoi*; on the other hand, so far, most of the data refers to the *strategos* of Anazarbos. Be that as it may, the *strategos* of Tarsos supported the *doux* of Antioch. The most essential thing, however, is to stress that the region of Cilicia, which Nikephoros Phokas included within the borders of Byzantium, belonged to the doukate of Antioch in the reorganisation of the frontier region to the East in the time of Tzimiskes. Not only does the *Treaty of Devol* (which was not a completely reliable source for reconstructing circumstances during the transition from the 10th to the 11th century), suggest such a conclusion, but also the fact that after its conquest, the Cilician region was not organised as a single military-administrative district.¹⁶⁰ The TE indicates that authority was entrusted to several *strategoi* of cities/fortresses, guarding the rear frontier line of the doukate of Antioch. In other words, thanks to the expansion of Byzantine authority to the region of northern Syria, Cilicia lost the status of a forward frontier region in the Empire. The passage through the so-called Cilician Gate, leading to the interior of Asia Minor, was defended by the *doux* in Antioch. In the period before the Phokas–Tzimiskes epoch, the burden of defence against the Arabian attacks from the Cilician region (from the region of Podandos, through the Cilician Gate, the attacks from Tarsos and Adana) fell upon the shoulders of the *strategoi* of the Asia Minor themes — Anatolikon, Opsikion and Cappadocia (De. Vel. XX, 2; 6). Narrative sources from the time of Basil show that after its annexation to the Empire, the region of Cilicia did not represent a theatre of war or a region under threat. The troops of the Cilician *strategoi* primarily had a defence function, except those commanded by the *strategos* of Tarsos, which could appear as reinforcements to the *doux* of Antioch in the Syrian operations. However, one should note that in the region of Cilicia one could not identify its military with its civil organisation. There is no data for a unified military district under the name of Cilicia because individual *strategoi* of cities/fortresses appear in the sources, but in the civil domain (in this case it referred to a tax functionary) the name of *Cilicia* was preserved, testimony of which exists in the seal of John, the imperial

¹⁵⁹ While Tarsos was still under Arab rule (ca. 950) its offensive troops numbered roughly 4,000–5,000 men, but the question is whether this refers to soldiers who belonged to Tarsos or to the region of Cilicia; moreover, the number of defensive troops is known to have been far greater, *Cheyne*, *Effectifs* 327 et n. 63; cf. *Todt*, *Region von Antiocheia* 391.

¹⁶⁰ That Cilicia belonged to the doukate of Antioch can be seen from the correspondence of the judge of Tarsos, Philetos Synadenos, with the patriarch of Antioch, and the *doux*, Nikephoros Ouranos, *Darrouzès*, *Épistoliers* no. 10, p. 256: ... ἐπεσχέ με ἡ σὴ καταλαβούσα γραφή, ἐπιμελῶς προστάττουσα τὰς φαμιλίας τῆς Κιλικίας ἐγκατοικίζειν; cf. no. 6, pp. 253–254.

spatharios and *dioiketes* of Cilicia, which is dated to the 10th/11th century (Collection Zacos no. 24).¹⁶¹

The *Treaty of Devol* specified the possessions of the Byzantine emperor and of Bohemund in the territory of Syria, as well. Bearing in mind the mentioned data regarding the military role of the *doux* of Antioch during the transition from the 10th to the 11th century, there is no doubt that Syria as a whole can be considered as the principal region over which the authorities of the *doux* in Antioch extended, whether it referred to the defence of Byzantine possessions or attacks on the Arabian fortresses.

According to the text of the treaty from 1108, the coastal cities in southern Syria, indicated by the terms *strategaton* or *strategis* (στρατηγίς), belonged to Alexios I Komnenos. These were cities where Byzantium established its rule either in the time of John Tzimiskes or a little later, in the reign of Basil II. Their *strategoi* were not mentioned in the TE. Running from north to south along the Syrian coast, it enumerated the following military-administrative units under the command of the *strategos*:

- The *strategis* of Syrian **Laodikeia** (Alex. 420); its *strategoi* were attested on seals from the 10th to the 11th century.¹⁶²
- The *strategaton* of **Gabala/Zebel**: its *strategos* was attested on a seal from the 11th century.¹⁶³
- The *strategaton* of **Balaneus**: we know of the seal with *protospatharios* and *strategos*, which was dated to the 10th–11th century.¹⁶⁴
- The *strategaton* of **Marakeus**: the city became a Byzantine possession in 1021,¹⁶⁵ and its organisation as a theme may be attributed, possibly, to Basil II or his successors.
- The *strategides* **Antarados/Antarto** and **Arados** (city and sland).¹⁶⁶

Although those cities were not mentioned in the TE, the narrative sources from the period of Basil II show that the *doux* of Antioch was responsible for them: in

¹⁶¹ It is assumed that the *dioiketes* was a tax official. In the 11th century, the *dioiketai* belonged to the administrative-military districts (i.e. the *dioiketes* of Boleron, Strymon and Thessalonike); for basic references v. ODB 1, pp. 627–628. There was no mention of a *doux* of Cilicia until the time of Manuel I Komnenos, *Hild — Hellenkemper*, Kilikien und Isaurien 71 et nn. 435–436.

¹⁶² Collection Zacos no. 39; *Todt*, Region von Antiocheia 415–416.

¹⁶³ DOSeals V, 13.1. (cf. *Schlumberger*, Sigillographie, p. 318 no. 2). A seal from the 11th/12th century confirms the *krites* of Gabala/Zebel, in the rank of *kouropalates*; the owner of the seal was Abdallah, i.e. Abdallah, Collection Zacos no. 51. Since the cities/fortresses on the eastern frontier were unified through judicial authority (the judges of the *armeniaka themata*), Cheynet (p. 97) considers it very unlikely that this referred to a judge of the theme of Zebel, but rather to a *cadi*, active in the time of Norman rule, when Antioch was the centre of a Norman duchy.

¹⁶⁴ DOSeals V, 15.1.

¹⁶⁵ *Todt*, Antiocheia 247; *idem*, Region von Antiocheia 420.

¹⁶⁶ This involves a controversial place in the text of Anna Komnene (Alex. 420): ἡ Ἀντάρδος μετὰ τῆς Ἀνταρτοῦς στρατηγίδος γὰρ καὶ ἀμφοτέρω. It refers to the city (i.e. *strategis*) of Antarados or Antarto or Tortosa, and the small, strategic island of Arados, *Honigmann*, Ostgrenze 128, n. 6; *Ljubarskij — Frejdenberg*, *Devol'skij dogovor* 273 n. 53; *Todt*, Antiocheia 247, 267. The fortification of Antarados was renewed by Basil II, cf. p. 93 n. 80.

985, Leo Melissenos had the task of retrieving Balaneus, which the Arabs had captured in the meantime, and the *magistros* and *doux* Michael Bourtzes crushed the rebellion of the Muslims in Laodikeia in 992 (Yahya, II, 416–417; 439). Apart from that, the military expeditions in the south of Syria, to Tripoli and Damascus, were conducted by either the *doux* of Antioch or the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East, or the emperor (if he happened to be in there) and Antioch served them all as a base for military operations in Syria.

The list continues with the estates of Bohemund in Syria. The majority of his possessions were also designated by the terms *strategaton*, *strategis*, *thema* or *polis*. (Alex. 419). What one should stress is that the Syrian *strategides* were of a composite nature; the *Treaty of Devol* mentions regions (χώρα), areas (περιοχή), possessions (διακράτησις), *polichnia* (πολίχνιον)¹⁶⁷ and *kastra* (κάστρον) that belonged to particular administrative districts, i.e. *themata* or *strategides*, *strategata*.

- The *polis* of **Antioch** “with its region and its possession, and **Suëtion** itself” (μετὰ τῆς περιοχῆς αὐτῆς καὶ τῆς διακρατήσεως σὺν αὐτῷ Σουετίῳ): Suëtion (ancient Seleukeia Pieria) was a port on the Syrian coast near the delta of the River Orontes and, undoubtedly, it belonged to the doukate of Antioch since its foundation.¹⁶⁸
- **Doux** (τὸ Δούξ)/ or **Daphne** (?) “with its entire possession” (μετὰ τῆς διακρατήσεως αὐτοῦ πάσης),¹⁶⁹ with **Kaukas**¹⁷⁰ and **Loulon**.¹⁷¹
- **Thaumaston Oros**: the mountain and the monastery in the region south-west of Antioch.¹⁷²
- **Phersia**, “along with all the region under its jurisdiction” (μετὰ τῆς ὑπ’ αὐτὰ πάσης χώρας); the identification is uncertain.¹⁷³
- The *strategis* of **Hagios Elias** with its subordinate *polichnia* (μετὰ τῶν ὑπ’ αὐτὴν πολιχνίων): the identification is uncertain.¹⁷⁴

¹⁶⁷ Anna Komnene uses the term *polichnion* in the sense of fortress, fortlet, *Ljubarskij* — *Frejdenberg*, *Devol'skij dogovor* 271 n. 11.

¹⁶⁸ Ancient Seleukeia Pieria, *Dussaud*, *Syrie* 431–432; *Honigmann*, *Ostgrenze* 124 n. 5; *Ljubarskij* — *Frejdenberg*, *Devol'skij dogovor* 272 n. 23; for more details v. *Todt*, *Region von Antiocheia* 410–411.

¹⁶⁹ According to *Todt*, *Region von Antiocheia* 411 et n. 450; 412, *Doux* should be identified with the suburb of Daphne, which was 8 km south of Antioch.

¹⁷⁰ Ancient Kasios, *Dussaud*, *Syrie* 429, 441; *Honigmann*, *Ostgrenze* 126 n. 5; *Todt*, *Region von Antiocheia* 412.

¹⁷¹ The identification is uncertain. According to *Dussaud*, *Syrie* 441, this referred to the mountain chain between Antioch and Aleppo; *Honigmann*, *Ostgrenze* 126 et n. 6. *Todt*, *Region von Antiocheia* 413, assumes that Loulon was situated between Kaukas and Phersia.

¹⁷² The monastery of St. Symeon was located on the Wondrous Mountain, 16 km south-west of Antioch, ODB 3, p. 2204 (Wondrous Mountain); *Todt*, *Region von Antiocheia* 921 sq.

¹⁷³ This was the port of Mina al-Fasri, which was situated between Suëtion and Laodikeia, *Dussaud*, *Syrie* 417–418; *Todt*, *Antiocheia* 246–247; *idem*, *Region von Antiocheia* 413. *Honigmann*, *Ostgrenze* 126 n. 8, identifies Phersia with ancient Litarbai.

¹⁷⁴ *Dussaud*, *Syrie* 149, locates the *strategis* of Hagios Elias in the area between Laodikeia and Apameia; *Honigmann*, *Ostgrenze* 126–127, considers that this refers to the area in the southern Amanos

- The *strategis* of **Borze** and “the *polichnia* in its jurisdiction”/τὰ ὑπὸ ταύτην πολίχνια; this referred to a district on the central course of the Orontes.¹⁷⁵
- “all the region around the *strategis* of **Sezer/Larissa**“ (ἡ περὶ τὴν στρατηγίδα τὸ Σέζερ ἅπανσα χώρα): a city in the valley of the Orontes, south-east of Apameia, which Basil II conquered in 999.¹⁷⁶
- The *strategides* of **Artach** and **Telouch**, “each with its area” (μετὰ τῆς ἐκάστης περιοχῆς); the *strategos* of Artach is known from the TE (269₁₁) and on the basis of the seals, dated to the 11th century.¹⁷⁷ This was a fortress, captured in about 966, that protected the north-eastern approach to Antioch, which was described as the “door to Antioch”,¹⁷⁸ and there is no doubt that Artach had belonged to the territory of the Antioch doukate since its foundation. According to the account of Yahya (II, 438) the area surrounding Artach was a district, where the fortress Imm was located and which belonged to Michael Bourtzes. As for Telouch, the city was conquered in 962, however, the *strategos* of Telouch was not mentioned in the TE, so it is possible that the theme was founded in the time of Basil II.¹⁷⁹ The *strategis* was attested on an 11th century seal.¹⁸⁰
- **Germanikeia** and “the *polichnia* in its jurisdiction” (τὰ ὑπὸ ταύτην πολίχνια): the formulation that was used also permitted Germanikeia to be considered as a *strategis*, even more because the *strategos* of that city was attested in the TE (267₂₈), and most probably the theme of Germanikeia was founded even before the Phokas–Tzimiskes era.¹⁸¹
- **Mauron Oros (Amanos)** and “all the *kastra* in its jurisdiction, and the entire valley that lies beneath it” (τὸ Μαῦρον Ὄρος καὶ πάντα τὰ ὑπ’ ἐκεῖνο ταττόμενα κάστρα καὶ ἡ ὑποκειμένη τούτῳ σύμπασα πεδιάς), with the exception of the estate of the brothers Rhoupenioi:¹⁸² it is known that the fortress of Mauron Oros was erected in the time of Nikephoros Phokas, on

mountains. *Todt*, Region von Antiocheia 413–414, assumes that the centre of the *strategis* was located in the region north-west of the *strategis* of Borze (v. further text).

¹⁷⁵ *Dussaud*, Syrie 151–152; *Honigmann*, Ostgrenze 127 n.1; *Todt*, Antiocheia 248. The fortress became a Byzantine possession under Tzimiskes, *idem*, Region von Antiocheia 422–423.

¹⁷⁶ *Dussaud*, Syrie 199–200; *Todt*, Antiocheia 248; *idem*, Region von Antiocheia 425.

¹⁷⁷ They were the seals of Theodorokanos and Kemaless Tzotzikes, dated to the 11th century, DOSeals V, 11.1 et p. 11; cf. *Todt*, Region von Antiocheia 407 et n. 422.

¹⁷⁸ *Ljubarskij* — *Frejdenberg*, Devol'skij dogovor 273 n. 32.

¹⁷⁹ Telouch (Dulāk) was conquered by Nikephoros Phokas in 962; the first evidence of the *strategos* originates from 1030, but it is certain that the *strategis* was formed in an earlier period, *Todt*, Region von Antiocheia 403–404. Cf. pp. 184–185.

¹⁸⁰ *Cheynet*, Sceaux 426 no. 58.

¹⁸¹ *Todt*, Region von Antiocheia 402–403. It is possible that Germanikeia and Telouch were part of the territory of the doukate of Edessa, *Kühn*, Armee 196. Maybe the annexation of Germanikeia and Telouch to the territory of the doukate of Antioch was connected with the rebellion and autonomy of Philaretos Brachamios in the Mesopotamian-Syrian region. For details on the rebellion v. *Cheynet*, Pouvoir 82 no. 103.

¹⁸² The possessions of the Rhoupenioi brothers, Leo and Theodoros, were located in the region of the Amanos mountains; they were Armenians who acknowledged Byzantine imperial rule when the

Mount Amanos, and entrusted to the *strategos* Michael Bourtzes (Scyl. 271; Zon. 508) or *taxiarchos* (Diac. 81). Arab sources mention that Nikephoros II reinforced the fortress of Pagras/Bagras, from where one could control the passage towards the Amanos, and appointed Michael Bourtzes as its commander.¹⁸³ The formation of military units in the region of the Amanos was part of the preliminary operations for the conquest of Antioch. The *strategoi* of Mauron Oros and Pagras were not mentioned in the TE, but the existence of these *strategides* is attested in the sources. Mauron Oros had a military-administrative identity before this was attested in the *Treaty of Devol*: a) Its *strategoi* were attested on seals;¹⁸⁴ b) The soldiers from that *strategis* took part in defending the Balkan provinces from the Pechenegs in 1050, along with troops from the themes of Telouch and of Karkaron¹⁸⁵ (Scyl. 471); c) The *Treaty of Devol* mentioned Mauron Oros and the *strategaton* of Pagras separately, but no specific term was used to define the administrative-military status of Mauron Oros. Beside Mauron Oros, there was no definition such as *strategis*, *strategaton* or *thema*, but it is obvious that this referred to a military-administrative district of a composite character.

- The *strategaton* of **Pagras/Bagras**, the *strategaton* of **Palatza**, the *thema* of **Zoume** “and all the *kastra* and *polichnia* under their jurisdiction, with the regions that belong to each of them”(καὶ τὰ ὑπὸ ταῦτα πάντα κάστρα τε καὶ πολίχνια καὶ ἡ ἐκάστῳ προσήκουσα χώρα). The *strategos* of Pagras is not mentioned in the TE, but it refers to the fortress situated to the north of Antioch;¹⁸⁶ Pagras was captured in the time of Nikephoros Phokas and, with Mauron Oros, was in the zone of responsibility of the *doux* of Antioch. The *strategos* of Palatza¹⁸⁷ was mentioned in the TE (269₀₅), and the fortress came under Byzantine control in around 966; it was north of Antioch, and one can certainly assume that it belonged to the territory of the doukate since its foundation that it was in the doukate's n the time of Nikephoros Phokas, on Mount Amanus. The theme of Zoume was located in the region north-east of Antioch, in the frontier region facing the Emirate of Aleppo; its *strategos* was not attested in the TE.¹⁸⁸ The said *strategata* and the *thema* of Zoume had a composite character.

Treaty of Devol was signed, Alex. 419. For the Amanos, v. Hild — Hellenkemper, Kilikien und Isaurien 174–176.

¹⁸³ Cf. p. 98 et n. 103.

¹⁸⁴ Seyrig no. 183: the seal of Kemaes, *protospatharios* and *strategos* of Mauron Oros, dated to the 11th century. For the seal of Sulikios, who was also a *strategos* of Mauron Oros in the rank of *protospatharios*, v. Todt, *Region von Antiocheia* 406, 407 et n. 413.

¹⁸⁵ Karkaron (Gerger) was situated on the Euphrates, Honigmann, *Ostgrenze* 116, 133 n.3; 135.

¹⁸⁶ For identification v. Todt, *Region von Antiocheia* 406.

¹⁸⁷ Identification is uncertain, v. p. 92 et n. 78.

¹⁸⁸ Dussaud, *Syrie* 223, 229–231 (Djouma); Honigmann, *Ostgrenze* 128 n.1: al-Čūma; Todt, *Antiocheia* 245; *idem*, *Region von Antiocheia* 407.

Based on the data presented about the territory, which was militarily subject to the authority of the *doux* of Antioch, like the details mentioned in the *Treaty of Devol*, one may assume that the territory of the *doux* of Antioch, on the threshold between the 10th and the 11th century, encompassed the Cilician region, the broader area of the city of Antioch (northern Syria and the region of the Amanos), the region west of the middle and lower course of the Orontes and the Byzantine possessions on the southern Syrian coast. As opposed to Cilicia, Byzantium did not have geographically compact territory in the region of Syria. For that reason the borders of the *doukate* could not be demarcated, but were fluid. The Empire maintained stable control in the cities and the fortresses. It depended on the abilities of the so-called little *strategoi*, as well as on the *doux* of Antioch to what degree control would be achieved in the broader region.

The hierarchical structure of military authority in the *doukate* of Antioch

The fact that the Byzantine territories were not geographically compact on the eastern frontier required the organisation of a more complex structure of power in that region. The majority of regions mentioned in the *Treaty of Devol* came under Byzantine rule in the time of Nikephoros II and John I; some fortresses are known to have been captured in the time of Basil II. The question is in what measure Byzantine authority was consolidated on the threshold between the 10th and the 11th century. The fact is that the Byzantine fortresses in Syria were exposed to Arab attacks, which led to the temporary loss of power; also, the population put up resistance, like in the case of, e.g. the rebellion in Laodikeia.

In the region under the control of the *doux* of Antioch (regions of Cilicia and Syria), the sources registered several types of administrative units, the majority of which were designated by technical terms. Thus, the *Treaty of Devol* mentions *doukaton*, *thema*, *strategaton* and *strategis*. Nevertheless, the terminological diversity does not indicate the differences in the organisational forms that were evident in that part of the frontier territory: at the head of a *thema*, *strategis*, or *strategaton* was a *strategos*, therefore, the said terms are considered to have been used as synonyms. Ostensibly, the said cases did not refer to themes of the traditional type, but to new, small districts, whose administrative status depended on their strategic importance. Also, the possibility has been left open (interestingly, but the question is how justified it is), that the terms *strategaton* and *strategis* did not convey completely identical notions, if the *strategaton* was understood to be the area around a city/fortress (for instance “the *strategaton* of the city of Tarsos”), while the term *strategis* referred to the centre of the administrative unit itself (like the *strategis* of Laodikeia, Artach, Telouch, etc.).¹⁸⁹ However, both the *strategides* and the *strategata* from the *Treaty of Devol* had their centres (fortress/city) and their possessions, which were designated by different terms (e.g. the *strategis* of Hagios Elias with its subordinate *polichnia*; or the *strategides* of

¹⁸⁹ Attention to the said difference in the meaning of the terms *strategaton* and *strategis* was drawn by Ljubarskij — Frejdenberg, *Devol'skij dogovor* 272 n. 29.

Artach and Telouch, “each with its own area”; or the *strategata* of Pagras/Bagras, Palatza and all the *kastra* and *polichnia* under their jurisdiction, with the regions that belong to each of them, etc.).

Based on the *Treaty of Devol*, it transpires that the administrative units of the *strategis/strategaton* type consisted not only of the city/fortress by which they were named, but also of a region — *chora, perioche* (like Phersia, Sezer, Artach, Telouch). Also, in particular cases it was decidedly stated that there were *polichnia* (Hagios Elias, Borze, Germanikeia), *kastra* (Mauron Oros) or *kastra* and *polichnia* (Pagras, Palatza, Zoume) within the framework of some *strategis/strategaton* or administrative region. A particularly interesting use of the term διακράτησις, designating the possessions of Antioch and Doux/Daphne, illustrates the complex territorial structure of the doukate. Ahrweiler noted that this expression was often used as a synonym for χωρίον or even for an estate.¹⁹⁰ In any case, the formulation from the *Alexiade* conveys the idea that the city of Antioch itself had its own more immediate surrounding territory, like in the case of other cities/fortresses headed by a *strategos*.¹⁹¹ One should mention the seals of the imperial *spatharokandidatos* and *tourmarches* of Paltos that are dated to the 10th–11th century (*Schlumberger*, *Sigillographie* 318 no. 3; *DOSeals* V, 14.1). This is a small fortress that was south of Gabala/Zebel, and it is assumed to have belonged to the *strategis* of Gabala, that is to say, the *tourmarches* of Paltos was subordinate to the *strategos* of Gabala.¹⁹²

In some cases, in the *Treaty of Devol*, the terminological definition of certain districts is missing, but as we know that according to the TE and the preserved seals, a functionary in the rank of a *strategos* was connected to Anazarbos, Mopsuestia and Germanikeia one can take it that at the beginning of the 12th century also, this referred to military units of the *thema* or the *strategaton/strategis* type. Also attested on the seals are the *strategoï* of Syrian Laodikeia, Balaneus, Zebel, Mauron Oros, Telouch, who were omitted in the TE although they came under Byzantine rule in the Phokas–Tzimiskes period.

Since the *Treaty of Devol* specifies the territory that was left to or withdrawn from the authority of the *doux* of Antioch, i.e. “*doukaton* of the city”, it remains for us to give a closer definition of the relation of the *doux* and the so-called small *strategoï* from the domain of his authority. However, since this is a question of data illustrating circumstances in the doukate of Antioch at the end of the 11th and the beginning of the 12th century, i.e. much later than the period when Byzantine military organisation was introduced in the regions of Cilicia and Syria, it remains open as to what the *strategides* mentioned in the *Treaty of Devol* meant.

¹⁹⁰ Ahrweiler, *Administration* 86 et n. 4.

¹⁹¹ According to the TE, only one functionary was connected with Antioch — the *doux*. However, on one seal, there is evidence of a *merarches* of Antioch, *Collection Zacos* 20 et n. 25; the *merarchai* were sometimes identified with *tourmarchai* (*Oikonomidès*, *Listes* 108 n. 65). Although their competences are not so clear, the data on the *merarches* shows that parallel to the new structure of military authority in Antioch, the old one that was characteristic for the classical thematic organisation, also existed.

¹⁹² *Todt*, *Antiocheia* 247; *idem*, *Region von Antiocheia* 418 et nn. 502–503.

Undoubtedly, during the transition from the 10th to the 11th century, these sub-units were of a military character (so-called small military themes). In that period, the territory of the doukate of Antioch was not compact, so that a certain hierarchical order had to be established in the frontier structure of authority. It is certain, according to the available data, that the *doux* of Antioch had the highest command authorities in the region with which his activities were connected. In the military respect, the *strategoi* of the Syrian cities/fortresses and regions were subordinate to the commander of Antioch. However, the lack of compactness of the territory that Byzantium held in Syria, as well as the constant clashes with the Arabs, were conducive to the *strategoi* of its cities/fortresses having a high degree of autonomy in the regions they were in charge of. Since Byzantine authority in fact relied on maintaining control of fortified settlements, the local *strategoi* mainly had a defensive function, while the offensive role belonged to the *doux* of Antioch (or the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East). As for the Cilician region, according to the *Treaty of Devol*, it was a component part of the doukate of Antioch; but the data indicates that apparently from the very institution of the doukate, Cilicia came under the jurisdiction of its *doux*. In that region, the dominant military role belonged to the *strategos* of Tarsos (or Anazarbos?).

There is not enough data in the sources to shed light on the problem of the possible civil authorities of the *doux* of Antioch, in the time of the consolidation of Byzantine rule. The logic of the Byzantine militarised state apparatus entailed the unification of military and administrative authority. The functionaries in the rank of *doux/katepano* unquestionably, above all, held supreme military power in the territory to which they were assigned. As for the civil domain, and here it primarily involves judicial authority, we may suppose that the *doux* of Antioch could have civil authority over the city and the surroundings that belonged to it. It is necessary to point out that at the end of the 10th century, military administration was introduced in the frontier regions and, in such conditions, one could expect the domination of military over civil authority. However, such a situation could scarcely have survived after Basil's reign. Although the Syrian region was a territory of Arabian-Byzantine conflict from the beginning of the 11th century, civil institutions were strengthened in the Empire and in Antioch, as the numerous seals of civil functionaries show.

Representatives of civil authority in Antioch and its region

As opposed to Balkan circumstances in the period of the first occupation, when the lack of data about civil functionaries suggests that Byzantium's presence in the regions of the annulled Bulgarian Empire was exclusively of a military nature,¹⁹³ we have evidence that the organisation of civil authority existed in the frontier regions in the East, in addition to that of military authority. Yahya of Antioch (II, 372) mentions the presence of a *basilikos* in Antioch and Melitene (the data refers to

¹⁹³ V. p. 140.

the years 976/977). The powers of this functionary presumably were of an economic nature primarily but they could be extended if necessary and so in 11th century sources, he is mentioned as a financial functionary.¹⁹⁴ The data shows that a *doux* was most often connected with Antioch and, as for civil functionaries, most of the data refers to a *kourator* or *megas kourator*. Seals confirmed the presence of the *kourator* from the conquest of the city.¹⁹⁵ Given the attested parallelism of the military and civil structures of authority, which can be observed in a more significant measure after the rule of Basil II,¹⁹⁶ one should point out that not even the region of Antioch was bypassed, where top civil functionary was assigned, such as the *praitor* (Seyrig no. 163). However, the *praitor* of Antioch has so far been attested only on one seal, dated to the 11th century. Particularly interesting is the seal (perhaps it referred to the future *praitor* of Antioch), of a certain Katotikos, the *pronoetes tes megales kouratoreias* of Antioch, dated also to the 11th century (Collection Zacos no. 9). The meaning of the function *pronoetes* is somewhat debatable, but in any case it referred to the manager of a district's estates (sometimes the district coincided with a military-administrative unit, as indicated in the data on the *pronoetes* of Bulgaria).¹⁹⁷ John Skylitzes mentions the *phorologos* of Antioch who was active in 1034, whose jurisdiction included collecting taxes (Scyl. 395). The seals also confirm the existence of *protonotarioi*, *kommerkiarioi* and functionaries from the category of ἐκ προσώπου.¹⁹⁸

The territorial jurisdiction of the Antioch civil functionaries' competences is hard to establish. The narrative sources make it possible to establish how far the command authorities of the city's *doux* extended, but the reform of the provincial authorities conducted during the transition from the 10th to the 11th century, did not imply that the territorial jurisdiction of the civil and military authorities coincided.¹⁹⁹ In the region of the doukate, the existence of civil functionaries was attested, and their competences applied to Antioch (that is, to the narrower region of the city) or to the single Cilician and Syrian *strategides/strategata*. The reform brought more complexity to the structure of civil organisation, so that one cannot draw any definite conclusions about the hierarchical relation established between the civil functionaries who were active in the doukate. Analogous to the situation in other parts of the Empire, the *praitor* of Antioch should be an exception, whose

¹⁹⁴ With Yahya, this term does not have a precise meaning, but it certainly refers to functionaries with extensive powers. For example, the same sources tell us that after subjugating Samuel's state, Basil II appointed *basilikoi*, i.e. stewards to deal with all affairs and estates (Yahya III, 407).

¹⁹⁵ This refers to seals dated to the 10th or the 10th/11th centuries, DOSeals V, 9.10; 9.12; 9.11 (11th c.). For the function of the *kourator* v. *Oikonomidēs*, Listes 318 et n. 180. The *megas kourator* was attested on 11th century seals, Collection Zacos nos. 8–9. The *megas kourator* was the steward of a private imperial estate, who had his own subordinate officials, *Oikonomidēs*, Listes 318; *Cheyne*, *Épiskeptitai* 91–92.

¹⁹⁶ V, pp. 206–210.

¹⁹⁷ *Cheyne*, *Épiskeptitai* 96–97.

¹⁹⁸ Collection Zacos no. 7. As *Cheyne* emphasises, this refers to the sole piece of data about the *ek prosopou* of Antioch. The question is, however, what the competences of the *ek prosopou* of a city were (similar examples exist for Adrianople, Philippoupolis).

¹⁹⁹ V, pp. 197–200, 209–210.

competences could extend to all the areas of the doukate. However, the sources confirmed the presence of judges, whose jurisdiction referred to the region of Cilicia. That region, divided into smaller military units — *strategides*, in the military sense, relied on the *doux* of Antioch. Tarsos (or Anazarbos?) was the military centre of Cilicia and, Seleukeia bore great significance in the civil domain. The characteristic civil functionary linked with Tarsos was the *kourator*²⁰⁰ (like in Antioch), although sources also confirm the presence of a judge (e.g. Philetos Synadenos, a contemporary of Nikephoros Ouranos, *doux* of Antioch²⁰¹). The sphragistic material indicates that Seleukeia and Tarsos were unified in the civil system of authority through the function of a judge,²⁰² a judge and *kourator*²⁰³ or judge and *megas kourator*.²⁰⁴ Other Cilician *strategides* could have been assembled around Seleukeia and Tarsos, as shown on the seal of Nikephoros Karbonas, judge of Seleukeia, Podandos and *kourator* of Tarsos (11th century).²⁰⁵ Besides that, individual forms were preserved, proved by the existence of several seals belonging to functionaries connected to Seleukeia (a judge,²⁰⁶ an *anagrapheus*,²⁰⁷ a *krites* and *megas kourator*,²⁰⁸ and a *kommerkiarios*²⁰⁹). Also of particular interest is an example of the accumulation of military and civil functions in the inscription on the 11th century seal — Leo Blangas, *strategos* and *anagrapheus* of Seleukeia (DOSeals V, 6. 1).²¹⁰ Individual and common forms of this type are also confirmed in the case of the Balkan themes.²¹¹ The seal of the imperial *spatharios*, John, the *dioiketes* of Cilicia

²⁰⁰ DOSeals V, 5.2; 5.4 (both seals are from the 11th century). It is believed that an imperial *kouratoreia* was formed from the possessions that the Arab inhabitants of Tarsos abandoned after its conquest in 965, *Oikonomides*, *Listes* 355; *idem*, *Organisation* 288 et n. 20. The prosopographic list of *kouratores* of Tarsos with the reference bibliography is given in Collection Zacos 87 (*J.-C. Cheynet*).

²⁰¹ *Darrouzes*, *Épistoliers* 48–49.

²⁰² E.g. the seal of Eustathios, *asekretes* and judge of Seleukeia and Tarsos, dated to the 10th century, DOSeals V, 5.1; or the seal dated to 1040–1060, which belonged to the *patrikios* and thematic *dikastes* of Tarsos and Seleukeia, *W. Seibt — Marie Luise Zarnitz*, *Das byzantinische Bleisiegel als Kunstwerk*. Katalog zur Ausstellung, Wien 1997, no. 2. 2. 9.

²⁰³ In the accumulation of functions of the civil functionaries of Cilicia, the position of judge was linked with Seleukeia, and with Tarsos — the position of *kourator*: e.g. the inscription on the seal of John Heksamilites, judge of Seleukeia and *kourator* of Tarsos, from the 11th century, indicates that the *kourator* of Tarsos also assumed the position of judge of Seleukeia, *Braunlin — Nesbitt*, *Selections* 171 no. 13. Cf. Collection Zacos, p. 87; DOSeals V, 5.3 (11th c.): John Helladikos, *vestes*, judge of the Velum and Seleukeia and *kourator* of Tarsos.

²⁰⁴ Collection Zacos no. 44 (the middle of the 11th c.): Nikolas Serblias, *kensor*, *krites* and *megas kourator* of Tarsos and Seleukeia; cf. *ibid.* p. 87 n. 183.

²⁰⁵ *M. Braunlin — J. Nesbitt*, *Thirteen Seals and an Unpublished Revolt Coin from an American Private Collection*, *Byz.* 69/1 (1999) 197 no. 11 (the middle of the 11th c.).

²⁰⁶ *Braunlin — Nesbitt*, *Selections* 167 no. 10: George Heksamilites, judge of Seleukeia (11th c.); *Bleisiegel* II, nos. 203–205; DOSeals V, 6.7, 6.8: judge of the Velum/Hippodrome and of Seleukeia.

²⁰⁷ DOSeals V, 6.2 (11th c.).

²⁰⁸ It is possible that in the said case, the function of *megas kourator* refers to Tarsos and not to Seleukeia, DOSeals V, 6.20; p. 16 (comment.)

²⁰⁹ DOSeals V, 6.16–6.19 (seals from the 10th and the 11th century).

²¹⁰ For a similar seal, with the same inscription, but from a different boulloterion v. *Cheynt*, *Sceaux* 426 no. 57.

²¹¹ V. p. 207.

(Collection Zacos no. 24), attests the unification of the Cilician region by means of civil (fiscal) authority.

THE *DOUX* OF MESOPOTAMIA: Formation and authorities

The TE (263₂₉; 265₁₂) mentions the *doux* and the *strategos* of (eastern) Mesopotamia, which confirmed that the reform of the military administration included this province. The foundation of the theme of Mesopotamia dates to the time between 899–901 (and 911 at the latest).²¹² The importance attached to this frontier region can be seen by the position its administrator occupied in the official hierarchy: in the TB, the first *taktikon* in which he is mentioned, the *strategos* of Mesopotamia occupied a very high 13th place in the order of thematic *strategoi* (TB 247₁₁), while in the TE, he occupied the 12th position among the *strategoi*.

In the narrative sources, the *doux* of Mesopotamia is mentioned for the first time in the events at the beginning of the rule of Basil II: in 976, the emperor dismissed Bardas Skleros from his position as *stratelates* “of all the East” and appointed him “*doux* of the *tagmata* in Mesopotamia” (Scyl. 314: δοῦκα ... τῶν ἐν Μεσοποταμίᾳ ταγμάτων), that is “*doux* of Mesopotamia” (Zon. 539: δοῦκα ... Μεσοποταμίας; cf. Yahya II, 372). The data mentioned earlier regarding the engagement of the *strategos* and not the *doux* of Mesopotamia in breaking the Arabian siege of Antioch²¹³ leaves room for the assumption that the position of the *doux* was created after 971, to be more exact, just before rule of John Tzimiskes ended.²¹⁴ However, in the TE, the coexistence is recorded of a *doux/katepano* and a *strategos* in Mesopotamia in the East and Chaldia, as well as in Balkan Mesopotamia and in Thessalonike. The mentioned parallelism of authorities in the region of eastern Mesopotamia is also confirmed by sphragistic material. It is precisely because sources confirmed that the position of the *strategos* of Mesopotamia was not abolished with the creation of the function of *doux*, that the engagement of the “*strategos* of Mesopotamia” in the region of Antioch cannot be taken as indisputable proof for dating the creation of the position of the *doux* of Mesopotamia. The fact that the Byzantine authors used the terms *doux/katepano* and *strategos* in a synonymous meaning precludes any precise dating.²¹⁵ Nevertheless, it is essential to stress that the *doux* of Mesopotamia appeared for the first time in the TE and that since Tzimiskes’ epoch, the data about this function appears sporadically in the course.²¹⁶

²¹² V. p. 84.

²¹³ V. pp. 41–43.

²¹⁴ Kühn, *Armee* 182–183, the formation of the katepene of Mesopotamia is attributed to Nikephoros II; Holmes, Basil II, 327 et n. 57, considers that the position of the *doux/katepano* of Mesopotamia was novel at the time Skleros was appointed.

²¹⁵ Scyl. 377.

²¹⁶ According to Cheynet, *Du stratège au duc* 189, the co-existence of the *strategos* and the *doux* of Mesopotamia can be followed until around the middle of the 11th century; it was not until the second half of the century that only a *doux* was assigned to Mesopotamia.

The few records about Mesopotamia (whether this concerned the theme or the geographical region²¹⁷) and its *doux/katepano* in the period immediately following Tzimiskes' rule makes it difficult to explain the competences of this functionary exactly. The first *doux* of Mesopotamia, Bardas Skleros, took advantage of his new position to incite a rebellion against the emperor, so one cannot say anything more detailed about the nature of the function to which he was appointed. The formulation used by John Skylitzes could be indicative, in which he says that Skleros was appointed "*doux* of the *tagmata* in Mesopotamia", implying the command nature of Skleros' function. On the other hand, John Zonaras speaks of the "*doux* of Mesopotamia" therefore neither should one exclude the likelihood that the authorities deriving from this function were connected to territory, which need not necessarily have been limited to the domain of military affairs.²¹⁸

Given the twofold use of the term Mesopotamia among the Byzantine authors, one questions whether the tagmatic army entrusted to the *doux* of Mesopotamia was stationed in the administrative unit of the same name or whether this referred to the geographical region. As Skylitzes expressed it, with the said appointment, Bardas Skleros was ordered to "be vigilant and guard" Mesopotamia (?) from the Saracen attacks (Scyl. 314). If we consider that the administrative district of Mesopotamia was protected by a dense line of fortifications (the Mesopotamian-southern Armenian frontier belt), which closed the passage into the region around the upper and partly around the middle course of the Euphrates River, one should not exclude that Mesopotamia implied the geographical and not the administrative region. Also Byzantine-Arabian developments on the threshold between the 10th and the 11th century referred to the broader area of Edessa until Byzantium's conquest of the city in 1031, after which it became the seat of the *katepano*.²¹⁹

Data from Yahya of Antioch (II, 372) could indicate the territorial jurisdiction of the *doux* of Mesopotamia, which says that Skleros incited the rebellion only after he attacked Melitene and captured the *basilikos*, from whom he confiscated six *kentenaria* of gold. The *basilikoi* of Melitene were attested on seals.²²⁰ In these events the *strategos* of Melitene, attested in the TE (265₂₁), is not mentioned so we do not know what kind

²¹⁷ The fact that the term Mesopotamia is used in the sources to designate a geographical region, and also a theme (military-administrative district), poses difficulties in following the development of the reform in the region of Mesopotamia; unfortunately, the most frequent records about Mesopotamia in 11th century narrative sources refer to the geographical region.

²¹⁸ The function of Bardas Skleros is considered to have been connected with the *thema* of Mesopotamia, not to the geographical region of the same name, v. for example, *Ahrweiler*, Administration 59; *Cheyne*, Skyl. 264 n. 6. According to the data offered by Yahya of Antioch II, 372, it is assumed that Skleros' function did not refer only to the region of the *theme* of Mesopotamia but also to Kaloudia (a *strategis* located south of Melitene) or to Chaldia, *Seibt*, Skleroi 36. Such an interpretation of Yahya's data is also substantiated by the seal of the *katepano* of Chaldia and Mesopotamia (v. further text), cf. *Holmes*, Basil II, 326 et n. 56.

²¹⁹ Immediately after the creation of the position, the military task of the *doux* of Mesopotamia consisted of offensive and defensive operations against the Hamdanids from Mosul, with whom John I Tzimiskes and his *domestikos ton Scholon*, Melias (defeated in 973 at Amida) fought in the region of Mesopotamia, *Holmes*, Basil II, 327–328.

²²⁰ *V. Laurent*, La Collection Orghidan, Paris 1952, no. 212; DOSeals IV, no. 68.1. Particularly interesting is the seal of the *protospatharios* John, judge of the Hippodrome and *basilikos* of Melitene and of the *armeniaka themata*, dated to the 10th/11th century (ibid. no. 56.2).

of relationship distinguished the two provincial functions.²²¹ One could create an analogy with the circumstances in the doukate of Antioch, where the *doux* was senior in the military sense to the small *strategoi* from the region of Cilicia and Syria.

The scarcity of data in the narrative sources is somewhat remedied by the preserved seals. Based on their inscriptions, we know that in the first decades of the 11th century, the *strategos* and the *doux/katepano* were connected to Mesopotamia.²²² Particularly interesting is the inscription on the seal in which a certain Nicholas is mentioned as *patrikios* and *katepano* of Chaldia and Mesopotamia (DOSeals IV, 55.10, 11th century); his title could testify to the temporary combination of command authorities over the tagmas stationed in the two regions — Chaldia and Mesopotamia.

The scarcity of data on Mesopotamia makes it difficult to illustrate the progress of the reforms that encompassed this region on the eastern frontier of the Empire. All we know is that one of three command centres over the tagmatic army was connected to Mesopotamia. The *tagmata* under the command of the *doux* of Mesopotamia was assigned to protecting the central part of the eastern frontier, that is, the area between the territory of the doukate of Antioch in the south and the territory in the north, which came under the authority of the *doux* of Chaldia. However, it is impossible even roughly to indicate the border of the mother region over which the *doux* of Mesopotamia had military authority.²²³ The unification of Mesopotamia and Melitene through civil functions is attested but we are not sure civil and military organisation coincided territorially. The analogy with the doukate of Antioch would allow us to attribute the establishment of a more complex structure of power to the central part of the eastern frontier. The military authority of the *doux* of Mesopotamia may have encompassed the *strategides* that surrounded the territory of the old Byzantine theme of the same name.

The foundation of a theme covering the cities in the Euphrates Basin influenced the fate of the reforms in the Mesopotamian region during the rule of Basil II. This referred to a district of composite character, which encompassed several

²²¹ Melitene and Mesopotamia could have been linked through civil functionaries, *Ahrweiler*, *Administration* 85.

²²² In the sources from the first half of the 11th century, the function of the *doux/katepano* of Mesopotamia is attested continually, throughout a sufficient span of time. After Bardas Skleros, this task was performed by Constantine Parsakoutenos, *protospatharios* and *katepano*, known on the basis of a seal dated to the period around 1020–1035 (Bleisiegel II, no. 276); Leo, *anthypatos*, *patrikios* and *strategos* of M., is most probably identical to the namesake of the owner of the seal, *anthypatos*, *patrikios* and *katepano* of M., dated to the time around 1037–1040 (DOSeals IV, 55, 8; Bleisiegel II, p. 266; cf. *Cheyne*, *Du stratège au duc* 189); also known is the seal of Gregory Pahlawuni, *doux* of M., active around 1045 (his seal is particularly interesting, where he is described as *katepano* of Mesopotamia, Taron and Vaspurakan, DOSeals IV, 76. 2); around 1055, this function was performed by a certain Peter, as well as Theognostos Melissenos and, in 1059, Aaron is recorded as *proedros* and *doux* of M.; for the prosopographic list v. *Kühn*, *Armee* 183–184; Μικρά Ἀσία 480–481 (*T. Lounghis*).

²²³ The region of the doukate of Antioch, where the *strategos* or *doux/katepano* of Mesopotamia was periodically engaged, did not represent his basic zone of responsibility; likewise, the activities of the *doux* of Antioch in the Mesopotamian region, in the area around Edessa, exceeded the limits of the territory under his (military) control. However, the fact that the army of the *doux* of Antioch defended Edessa from the Arab attack in 1036 (Scyl. 400), raises doubts about the numerical standing of the troops made available to the *doux/katepano* of Mesopotamia at this time.

cities, dominated by Samosata. It is not known when a command centre was established in the region, which was headed by a *doux/katepano*. After the Byzantine conquest of Edessa (1031), this theme was reformed and Edessa became the seat of the *katepano*.²²⁴ Geographically viewed, the theme of the cities along the Euphrates, that is, the katepanate of Edessa, took over the role of the primary frontier region in the Mesopotamian region. If the *doux* of Mesopotamia was linked to the theme of the same name, it would follow that this district was a frontier region for a short time. With the creation of a new theme, that is, a tagmatic command centre in the Euphrates Basin (the cities along the Euphrates, that is, the katepanate of Edessa, and after the regions in Vaspurakan and Iberia were annexed and placed under the jurisdiction of the *katepano/doux*), Byzantium acquired a new frontier zone and the theme of Mesopotamia found itself in its hinterland.²²⁵ With this development perhaps one can explain the relatively little information that sources give about the activities of the *doux/katepano* of Mesopotamia.

Various inscriptions on 10th–11th century seals illustrate the developed civil administration of Mesopotamia: apart from a judge²²⁶, they attest to a judge and *anagrapheus*,²²⁷ a *kourator*,²²⁸ and an *episkeptites*.²²⁹ Besides a *basilikos*, in Melitene the existence was confirmed of a judge,²³⁰ and that function could be linked with that of a *kourator/megas kourator*,²³¹ or *anagrapheus*.²³² In the 11th century, Melitene was unified in the civil and military domain with the theme of Lykandos.²³³

THE *DOUX* OF CHALDIA: Formation and authorities

The first data in narrative sources about changes in the provincial military administration in the east refer to Chaldia: after attaining imperial power, at the very end of 969, John Tzimiskes dismissed the “*doux* of Chaldia”, *patrikios* Bardas Phokas, the nephew of the deceased Nikephoros II and son of the *kouropalates* Leo, and banished him to Amasia (Diac. 96). A slightly later source, John Skylitzes, mentions

²²⁴ V. pp. 183–184.

²²⁵ The consolidation of Byzantine rule in Vaspurakan did not affect the frequency of the appearance of seals of the *katepano/doux* of Mesopotamia, Holmes, Basil II, 329. Nevertheless, the burden of frontier defence in the zone of the Mesopotamian region would be shouldered by the theme of “the poleis on the Euphrates”, i.e. the katepanate in Edessa.

²²⁶ DOSeals IV, 55.5: the judge of M. (10/11th c.); 55.6: the judge of M. (11th c.); Bleisiegel II, nos. 198–199 (the judges of M.). The seal of Constantine, *patrikios*, *hypatos*, judge and *katepano* of Mesopotamia (11th c.), DOSeals IV, 55.7.

²²⁷ DOSeals IV, 55.3: judge of the Velum and of the Hippodrome and of M., and *anagrapheus* (11th c.).

²²⁸ The seal of the *chartoularios* and *kourator* of M., DOSeals IV, 55.2 (11th c.).

²²⁹ DOSeals IV, 55.1 (11th c.).

²³⁰ Collection Zacos no. 42 (middle of the 11th century); DOSeals IV, 68.3.

²³¹ DOSeals IV, 68.2 (11th c.: judge of the Hippodrome of Melitene and *megas kourator*); 68.6 (11th c.: judge, *anagrapheus* and *kourator* of Melitene).

²³² An interesting example of the accumulation of military and civil functions: the seal of the *vestarches* Constantine, *katepano* of Melitene and *anagrapheus* (11th c.), DOSeals IV 68.5.

²³³ An interesting inscription on the seal of the *vestes* Basil Machetaris: judge and *katepano* of Melitene and of Lykandos (DOSeals IV, 53.5), from the 11th century.

Bardas Phokas as “the *doux* of Chaldia and Koloneia” and in another place only as “*doux* in Chaldia” (Scyl. 284: δοῦξ Χαλδίας καὶ Κολωνείας; 326: δοῦξ ... ἐν Χαλδίᾳ).

The administrative districts of Chaldia and Koloneia are attested in the 9th century. The TU (49₁₀, 53₄, 55₂) mentions the *strategos*, *doux* and *archontes* of Chaldia. One can interpret the data on the functionaries of different rank linked to the same region in different ways. For instance, it is probable that they testify to earlier forms of Byzantine power and were mechanically transferred to *taktikon* that were actually outdated at the time when the edition of the TU was done (842–843). It is also possible that both the *doux* and the *archon* of Chaldia, or at least one of them,²³⁴ were subordinate functionaries to the *strategos* of that region, however, one cannot specify their competences.²³⁵ In any case, the FK (101₁₇, 105₀₉, 139₀₄) and the TB (247₁₀) mention the *strategos* of Chaldia as the sole representative of the provincial military administration in that region. This functionary was also to be found in the TE but with him, the *doux* of Chaldia is mentioned last in the group of eastern *doukes/katepano*. Like in Mesopotamia, Chaldia also retained a parallel structure of military authority.

The *strategos* of Koloneia was left out of the TU but he is mentioned as one of the participants in the battle at Poson (863) under the command of Petronas, the uncle of Michael III (Theoph. Cont. 181). It follows from the aforesaid that the region of Koloneia was organised into a theme earlier.²³⁶ The *strategos* of Koloneia is mentioned in the FK (101₁₃, 105₀₅, 137₂₈), the TB (247₀₆) and in the TE (265₀₇) and in all the said *taktika*, he occupied a more prominent position than the *strategos* of Chaldia.

Although the *taktika* of the 9th and 10th centuries, as well as other sources, attest to Chaldia and Koloneia being autonomous military-administrative districts under the administration of a *strategos*, the data of John Skylitzes about “the *doux* of Chaldia and Koloneia” indicates that new command solutions were introduced on the eastern frontier. It appears that civil organisation, at least in this case, accompanied the military organisation; a seal dating from the 10th–11th century points to the combination of the said districts (DOSeals IV, 48, 2: Constantine, the *protopatharios*, *kensor* and *krites* of the Hippodrome of Chaldia and Koloneia).

The creation of the position of the *doux* of Chaldia (and Koloneia) confirms that the foundation of the reforms in the provincial system of authority in the East was laid during the rule of Nikephoros II Phokas and then taken over and developed by his successors, John I Tzimiskes and Basil II. The fact that this only just established position awarded to the emperor’s close relative and that it was accompanied with the title of *patrikios* indicates the importance that was attached to the provincial

²³⁴ For more details v. *Oikonomidēs*, Listes 54 n. 33. For the theme of Chaldia v. Μικρά Ασία 287–297 (*A. Savvides*).

²³⁵ If the data about the *doux* of Chaldia does not reflect circumstances in the period prior to Chaldia acquiring the status of a theme (i.e. its *strategos*), the term *doux* could point to the presence of tagmatic units in this region; in that case, their commander — the *doux* of Chaldia — would, nevertheless, have been subordinate to the *strategos* of that theme, *Oikonomidēs*, Listes 349 et n. 350.

²³⁶ For the theme of Koloneia v. Μικρά Ασία 321–329 (*A. Savvides*).

doukes and *katepano* from the very beginning. The question of the competences of the new functionaries was topical in the case of Chaldia as well given that the *strategos* of this theme is attested on the seals dated not only to the 10th but also to the 11th century,²³⁷ that is in the time when he coexisted with the *doux*.²³⁸

Developments in the region of Chaldia resemble those connected with Mesopotamia: on the one hand, there is practically no data in the sources about the reforms and, on the other, both regions had lost the status of forward frontier districts in the time of Basil II by virtue of the fact that Iberia and Vaspurakan had been annexed to the Empire. However, Chaldia differed from Mesopotamia and the doukate of Antioch in that the system of themes-fortresses that were characteristic of the Mesopotamian, Armenian and Syrian regions had not been erected in that region.

The first known record about the *doux* of Chaldia (and Koloneia) refers to the dismissal of this functionary so we are unable to draw any accurate conclusions about the nature of his powers. It is only known that during his mandate, Bardas Phokas established friendly ties with David of Iberia, which he made use of as *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East, when fighting the usurper Bardas Skleros.²³⁹ Byzantine practice demonstrated great flexibility in the organisation of command authority, hence command over the troops from different districts was temporarily combined: besides the combination of Chaldia and Koloneia under the command of the *doux* of Chaldia, we know that such an accumulation of powers could link Chaldia with Mesopotamia (DOSeals IV, 55.10).

Given the omission of themes-fortresses in the region of Byzantine Chaldia, whose *strategoi* may have been subordinate, regarding their command powers, to the *doux* of Chaldia, one should draw attention to the impressive number of seals of civil functionaries, whose powers were connected to Chaldia and Derzene, the *strategis* formed in the time of Constantine Porphyrogennetos.²⁴⁰ Those two districts were unified through the function of the judge and other civil positions (the *asekretes*, *anagrapheus*, *protonotarios*, *chartoularios*, etc.), which is confirmed by 11th century seals.²⁴¹ The civil system of authority unified the district of Taron with Chaldia and Derzene. Of particular interest is the seal of a certain Michael, with the title of *protospatharios*, *epi tou Chrysotriklinou*, *logariastes tou megalou kouratoros*, *artoklines* and *anagrapheus* of Chaldia, Derzene and Taron, from the mid-11th century (Collection Zacus no. 29).²⁴² In the same century, Taron could have been unified

²³⁷ DOSeals IV, 48.7; 48.9 (10th c.); Seyrig no. 174.

²³⁸ In the time of Basil II, the *patrikios* Basil was mentioned as the *doux* of Chaldia and Trebizond, Holmes, Basil II, 318. The *katepano* of Chaldia is attested on a seal from the 10th or 11th century. More data about the *doux* of Chaldia refers to the second half of the 11th century, Kühn, Armee 186; Μικρά Ασία 462, 465 (A. Savvides).

²³⁹ V, p. 48.

²⁴⁰ V, pp. 85–86.

²⁴¹ DOSeals IV, 61.1–61.6; Collection Zacus nos. 27–28 (for the prosopographic list of judges of Chaldia and Derzene v. *ibid.* p. 55).

²⁴² Cf. DOseals IV, 76.1: Michael *spatharios epi tou Chrysotriklinou*, *logariastes tou megalou kouratorikiou*, *artoklines* and *anagrapheus* of Chaldia, Derzene and Taron.

with Vaspurakan, through the military authority, i.e. the function of *doux/katepano* (DOSeals IV, 76.2).

The lack of more detailed information makes it impossible to establish whether data on the organisation of the civil structures of authority in the 11th century offer at least some indication of the possible extension of the authorities of the *doux* in the territorial sense? One should remember that sources from the period prior to the creation of the position of the *doux* of Chaldia show that the *strategos* of this theme took part in the operations to conquer Theodosioupolis and the surrounding fortresses, and that the first *strategos* of the theme of Theodosioupolis (founded in around 951/2) was Theophilos Kourkouas, until then the *strategos* of Chaldia.²⁴³ In the period prior to the formation of the command centre in Iberia, the *doux* of Chaldia was senior in the military hierarchy to the *strategos* of Theodosioupolis and the commanders of the neighbouring *strategides* (e.g. Artze).²⁴⁴ However, in the second half of the 11th century, the position of the *doux* of Theodosioupolis represented a synonymous function for the *katepano* of Iberia.²⁴⁵ In the time of Basil II (1022), a certain Basil, the *doux* of Chaldia and Trebizond was active.²⁴⁶ As for civil authorities, the presence of judges was confirmed separately in Chaldia²⁴⁷ and in Iberia. However, in the civil domain, Iberia may have relied on Chaldia and Derzene. Evidence of this is a seal from the middle of the 11th century, which belonged to John, *spatharokandidatos*, judge of Chaldia and Derzene and *chartoularios* of the "Iberian bureau". Its inscription indicates that Iberia may have come under the administration of Chaldia whose centre was, probably, in Trebizond (Collection Zacos no. 37).²⁴⁸

Prosopographic data on the *doux* of Chaldia is very scarce,²⁴⁹ which prevents us from accurately determining the region placed under his jurisdiction. The organisation of the tagmatic centre in Chaldia heralded Byzantium's offensive policy towards the region of the Caucasus.²⁵⁰ However, there is a great deal of data in the sources, referring to the *strategos* and not the *doux* of Chaldia, which can be explained by the fact that Chaldia lost its status as a forward frontier region under Basil II, when the tagmatic centres in Iberia and Vaspurakan were created.²⁵¹ Byzantium formed districts in the rank of doukate/katepanate in these regions, about which 11th century sources would provide much more data.²⁵²

²⁴³ DAI 45. Theoph. Cont. 428, indicates that Theophilos Kourkouas was engaged militarily in the regions of Theodosioupolis and Mesopotamia.

²⁴⁴ DOSeals IV, p. 148.

²⁴⁵ Kühn, Armee 187–191.

²⁴⁶ Holmes, Basil II, 318 et n. 35.

²⁴⁷ Numerous 10th and 11th century seals belonged to judges of Chaldia, DOSeals IV, 32.6–32.9; 32.11–32.13; 32.10: judge of the Hippodrome and of Chaldia. Otherwise, the number of seals of the *kommerkiarios* of Chaldia is striking, *ibid.* 32.15–32.29 (9th–11th c.).

²⁴⁸ Cf. p. 182.

²⁴⁹ Kühn, Armee 184–187.

²⁵⁰ Chaldia, it seems, had the same importance even in the late 11th century, Vannier, Paléologues 133, 134 et n. 7.

²⁵¹ Cf. Holmes, Basil II, 319.

²⁵² V. pp. 181–183.

THE REFORM OF PROVINCIAL AUTHORITY IN THE WEST

Several features are characteristic for the reform Byzantium carried out in the region of the Balkans. Firstly, it was provoked by the unexpected Byzantine victory in the war with the Russians, which led to the conquest of one part of the territory of the Bulgarian Empire. As a result, in the Balkans one can follow the digression from the classical thematic organisation only from the time of John I Tzimiskes. Secondly, in the development of the Balkan provincial administration, there was no continuity, as the case was in the East. The foundations for the development of the frontier military administration laid by Tzimiskes were disrupted by the outbreak of Samuel's rebellion and the creation of a new Bulgarian state in the Balkans. Thus, military reform in the Balkans unfolded in two stages, under Tzimiskes and under Basil II. However, the organisational solutions of Basil's administration differed from those his predecessor had established. Finally, both in the East and in the Balkans, the reform brought about the creation of complex military systems in the frontier regions. The growing complexity of the hierarchical structure in provincial authority would also extend to the civil administration under Basil II.

THE FIRST BREAKTHROUGH TO THE INTERIOR OF THE BALKANS: THE EPOCH OF JOHN TZIMISKES

Thrace and Macedonia

The problem of establishing Byzantine authority in the Balkans was historically conditioned by Bulgarian-Byzantine relations. The settlement of the Bulgars was the decisive factor that had prevented Byzantium for centuries from reoccupying the Balkan region. As opposed to the *Sklaviniai*, who were undefined in terms of status and laws, the Bulgars managed to form an organised state entity recognised by Byzantium, which in varying intensities throughout a long period threatened the Empire both territorially and ideologically.²⁵³ In a word, Bulgaria was the real obstacle to the expansion of Byzantine rule in the interior of this Peninsula. Therefore, it is no coincidence that the breakthrough of Byzantium into that region took place first through a struggle to defeat the first Bulgarian Empire and, subsequently, the state of Samuel and his successors. Three preserved *taktika* from the 9th and the first half of the 10th century — the TU, FK and the TB — offer a picture of the frontier regions towards the interior of the Peninsula, which Byzantium gradually managed to organise into themes. These administrative units had a predominantly defensive role. Moving from Constantinople westwards, just before the outbreak of the Byzantine-Russian war for Bulgaria, the state interests were defended by the following frontier themes: Thrace,²⁵⁴ Macedonia,²⁵⁵ Stry-

²⁵³ The settlement of the Slavs led to the thematic system developing more slowly in the west of the Empire than in its eastern part. The two oldest Balkan themes — Thrace and Hellas, formed in the last decades of the 7th century, were organised in those regions inhabited by the fewest Slav settlers and where there was a strong Greek element, *J. Ferluga*, O nekim aspektima izgradnje tematskog uređenja na Balkanskom poluostrvu, ZFFB 8/1 (1964) 136. However, it was only when the Bulgars settled in the region south of the River Danube that Byzantium was obliged to wage a real struggle for domination over the Balkan Peninsula. With the creation of the Bulgarian state, the Empire was driven from the eastern part of the Peninsula, meanwhile, it was forced to fight for supremacy over its western areas, *D. Obolensky*, The Byzantine Commonwealth: Eastern Europe, 500–1453, London 1971, 57–68. *S. Čirković*, Obrazovanje srpske države, ISN I, Beograd 1981, 146–155. The fact that the Byzantine Balkan frontier could be defined only towards Bulgaria and through Byzantine-Bulgarian relations illustrates the significance of the Bulgars and their state, *V. Stanković*, Karakter vizantijske granice na Balkanu u IX i X veku, Treća jugoslovenska konferencija vizantologa, Beograd–Kruševac 2002, 277–297.

²⁵⁴ TU 49₀₈; FK 101₁₅; 139₀₂; TB 247₀₈; v. further text.

²⁵⁵ TU 49₀₉; FK 101₁₆; 139₀₃; TB 247₀₉; v. further text.

mon,²⁵⁶ Thessalonike,²⁵⁷ Hellas,²⁵⁸ Nikopolis,²⁵⁹ Dyrrachion²⁶⁰ and Dalmatia.²⁶¹ The TE provided a fundamentally changed picture of this part of the Byzantine western border, which was edited after Tzimiskes' conquests in the Balkans. The Byzantine-Russian war for Bulgaria (970–971) expanded the Empire's territory and the thematic organisation in the region of the north-eastern part of the dissolved Bulgarian state.

The war for Bulgaria took place in two stages. The first stage of the war was of a defensive character: according to the sources, the Russian army threatened Thrace and Macedonia — the themes, of which the origin and development was affected by events on the Balkan Peninsula. For centuries, the armies of these districts had traditionally born the heaviest burden imposed by Byzantine-Bulgarian strife.²⁶²

The theme of Thrace, the oldest military-administrative unit in the Balkans (De Them. 84, 85), was formed in the time of Constantine IV (668–685).²⁶³ As its

²⁵⁶ The *strategos* of Strymon was attested for the first time in the FK (101₂₅; 139₁₃) and was confirmed in the TB (247₂₃). By the end of the 7th century, the region of Strymon was already organised as a *kleisoura*; therefore, along with Thrace and Hellas, Byzantium's earliest organised presence in the Balkans was recorded in Strymon. According to *Kyriakidis*, Βυζ. Μελ. IV, 133–140, Strymon was organised as a theme, with its seat in Serres, roughly at the time when the theme of Macedonia was formed, that is, between 789–802. Also, the author allows for the possibility that Strymon could have very briefly been a *kleisoura* of the theme of Macedonia, cf. *Ferluga*, Niže jedinice 78–79; *Mila Rajković*, Oblast Strimona i tema Strimon, ZRVI 5, 1958, 1–7.

²⁵⁷ TU 49₁₆; FK 101₂₇; 139₁₅; TB 247₂₅. *Kyriakidis*, Βυζ. Μελ. IV, 142, dates the foundation of the theme of Thessalonike to 828; the author relies on the TU, which she dates to between 809–828 (*idem*, Βυζ. Μελ. V, 235–241). According to *Oikonomides*, Listes 45–46, the last edition of the TU was done in 842/843 (for the discussion v. *ibid.* 45–46). The *strategos* of Thessalonike was attested for the first time in about 836, and perhaps the theme was already formed in 824, *ibid.*, 352 et n. 365.

²⁵⁸ The theme of Hellas was, most probably, created between 687–695, and the first *strategos* was attested in 695 (it was Leontios, who would ascend the throne in 695); cf. TU 49₁₃; FK 101₂₃; 139₁₀; TB 247₂₁; 351 (comment.).

²⁵⁹ The *strategos* was registered in the FK 101₂₁; 139₀₈; TB 247₁₉. The district of Nikopolis was organised as a theme during the second half of the 9th century and, after the FK, the *strategos* was attested in around 901, *Oikonomides*, Listes 351.

²⁶⁰ The *strategos* was attested in all three *taktika*, TU 49₁₇; FK 101₂₈; 139₁₆; TB 247₂₆. The TU indicates the presence of the *archontes* (57₁₁), so-called lower functionaries of a thematic organisation, who co-existed with the *strategos* in the theme of Dyrrachion. It is possible that the theme was already founded at the beginning of the 9th century, *J. Ferluga*, Sur la date de la création du thème de Dyrrachium, Actes du XII^e Congrès international des études byzantines II, Beograd 1964, 83–92; *Oikonomides*, Listes 352.

²⁶¹ As the TU shows (57₁₂), first, Dalmatia was under the administration of an *archon*, and then a functionary in the rank of a *strategos*, attested in the FK (101₃₁; 139₁₉) and in the TB (247₂₉); 353 (comment.). The theme was formed in the time of Basil I, most probably in 871/2, after breaking the Arab siege of Dubrovnik in 868. *J. Ferluga*, Vreme nastanka teme Dalmacija, ZFFB 3 (1954) 64 sq.; *idem*, Vizantijska uprava u Dalmaciji, Beograd 1957, 69–70; *B. Ferjančić*, Vasilije I i obnova vizantijske vlasti u IX veku, ZRVI 36 (1997) 16–18.

²⁶² Theoph. Cont. 181: καὶ γὰρ εἰρηνευόντων τῶν Βουλγάρων νόμος ἦν αὐτοῖς μετὰ τῶν Ἀνατολικῶν συγκινδυνεύειν καὶ συστρατεύειν.

²⁶³ The theme of Thrace was officially mentioned for the first time in a letter from Justinian II to Pope Conon in 687, but its foundation dates from the period of the first Byzantine-Bulgarian war, Constantine IV waged from 679–680 and in the summer of 681. However, the data about Theodoros, *komes* of Opsikion and *hypostrategos* of Thrace from 680/681 (v. *W. Brandes*, Philippos ὁ στρατηλάτης τοῦ

foundation was the result of the arrival of the Bulgars on the Balkan Peninsula (De Them. 64), from the very onset, the theme of Thrace became a Byzantine base for the defence from Bulgarian incursions and for the offensive campaigns the Empire periodically undertook, when necessary and possible, against its northern neighbour. On the threshold between the 8th and the 9th century, the western regions were singled out from the theme of Thrace and organised into a separate theme of Macedonia.²⁶⁴ The formation of this military-administrative unit is linked to Staurakios' campaign against the Slavs in 783/784,²⁶⁵ which illustrates the role that the theme of Macedonia had played since its formation.

The importance of these themes is evident from the rank its governors occupied in the official hierarchy. Because of the changes the TE would bring, one should say that in the *taktika* from the 9th and the first half of the 10th century, the governor of Thrace was always one position ahead of his colleague from the theme of Macedonia. This fact is understandable if one remembers that Thrace was the mother theme. In the TU (49₈₋₉), a very prominent 8th or 9th position belonged to the *strategoï* of Thrace and Macedonia: they were second only to the military-civil administrators of the most important Asia Minor themes: Anatolikon, Armeniakon, Thrakesion, Opsikion, Boukellarion, Cappadocia and Paphlagonia. The 10th that is the 11th position in the FK and the TB, belonged to them (139₂₋₃; 247₈₋₉). Still, this shift was not the result of the said functionaries' declining importance but because two new themes had been formed in the East — Charsianon and Koloneia — in the meantime, which automatically changed the order of all of the themes that came from Paphlagonia. From the said *taktika*, the most interesting is the FK (105₇₋₈), in which the Byzantine themes were divided into eastern and western themes, with Thrace and Macedonia being mentioned last among the twelve eastern themes.²⁶⁶

βασιλικού Ὀψικίου: Anmerkungen zur Frühgeschichte des Thema Opsikion, *Novum Millennium, Studies on Byzantine History and Culture* dedicated to Paul Speck, 2001, 22 et nn. 8–9; cf. et pp. 28–30, 33, 36), shifts the date of its foundation to after the war and before 687, *Kyriakides*, *Βυζ. Μελ.* IV, 118, 122–123, 125; *Lemerle*, *Philippe* 121 et n. 2; *R.-J. Lilie*, “Thrakien” und “Thrakesion”. Zur byzantinischen Provinzorganisation am Ende des 7. Jh., *JÖB* 26 (1977) 18–9, 27; *Soustal*, *Thrakien* 76 et n. 131.

²⁶⁴ The first confirmation of the theme of Macedonia originated from 802, but the theme must have been formed earlier, apparently, between 789 and 802, *Kyriakides*, *Βυζ. Μελ.* IV, 126–127, 132, 140; *Lemerle*, *Philippe* 122–123; cf. *Soustal*, *Thrakien* 82.

²⁶⁵ This refers to the beginning of the process of the re-Hellenisation of the Balkans, which is linked to the time of the autonomous rule of the empress, Eirene (797–802). The *logothetes tou dromou*, Staurakios, in 783/4, waged a big campaign against the Slavs settled in the Greek regions, starting his mission in the region of Thessalonike and expanding it to central Greece and the Peloponnesos. His campaign was successful because he managed to win recognition of Byzantine sovereignty and the pledge of the Slavs from the Peloponnesos that they would pay tribute, *N. Oikonomides*, A Note on the Campaign of Staurakios in the Peloponnese (783/4), *ZRVI* 38 (1999/2000) 61–66.

²⁶⁶ It is possible that Thrace and Macedonia were included in the eastern themes because their regions previously belonged to the praefectura praetorio per Orientem (DOSeals I, p. 1). Apart from that, Thrace was the oldest theme founded in the region west of Constantinople, therefore, in the first wave of the development of thematic organisation, when new military-administrative districts were formed in Asia Minor. The connection of Thrace with the eastern regions is also obvious from the data about the *komes* of Opsikion and the *hypostrategos* of Thrace (v. p. 129 n. 263). Thrace and Macedonia were also designated as eastern themes in De Cer. I, 714–715: ἀντα ὅν αἱ στρατηγίαι τοῖς Ἀνατολικῶς θέμασιν ἀριθμοῦνται. Since this refers to the section describing the reign of Leo VI (886–912), during

Although the *taktika* of the 9th–10th century enumerate each of the governors of Thrace and Macedonia, the other sources often mention these themes together — as “Thrace and Macedonia” and describe their inhabitants or soldiers as “Thracians and Macedonians”, just as they refer to the settlements in that region as “Thracian and Macedonian”. For some reason, the terminological inaccuracies certainly contributed to the lack of a clear picture of the territorial and administrative division of these themes, the districts of which had been unified within the borders of one administrative region of Thrace, earlier on. Hence, the confusion referring to the capitals of these themes,²⁶⁷ and so Macedonian Adrianople is often confused with (the geographical?) notion (of the old theme?) of Thrace.²⁶⁸ These terminological inaccuracies indicate that, in practice, the competences of some functionaries (both military and civil) extended over the territory of both themes.²⁶⁹

The above is confirmed by data on the Byzantine-Russian war for Bulgaria, from which it is evident that the said administrative units in the time of the first stage of the war (970) had the traditional role of a defence belt. The invasion by the Russian army on Byzantine territory led to the unification of the command in Thrace and Macedonia: according to Leo the Deacon, Bardas Skleros was appointed commander of the army in Thrace (and Macedonia?), to be succeeded shortly by *magistros* John Kourkouas who, we know, resided in Adrianople (Diac. 117, 126, 127). Moreover, in the second — from the Byzantine viewpoint — offensive phase of the war, the troops of these themes were under a single command: the *stratopedarches* Peter is mentioned as the commander of the “Thracians and Macedonians” the soldiers engaged in the fighting at Dorostolon (Scyl. 300).

Among the cities of Thrace and Macedonia, which could represent the key positions on the Byzantine defence belt in this region, Arkadiopolis was distinguished in the first phase of the war — as the place where Skleros threw back the Russian attacks in the spring of 970 (Scyl. 288)²⁷⁰ as well as Adrianople — the military base and residence of Skleros’ successor, John Kourkouas, where the emperor himself would dispatch military supplies (Diac. 126–127).²⁷¹ The data of Leo the Deacon that refers to the second stage of the war, according to which the emperor set

whose life Philotheos compiled the *Kleterologion*, one may assume that Thrace and Macedonia were officially included in the eastern themes, at that time. Nevertheless, as a rule, the Byzantine writers would include them in the western themes, as in De them. 84, 86.

²⁶⁷ The capital of the theme of Thrace was probably Arkadiopolis and of Macedonia — Adrianople, *Kyriakidis*, Βυζ. Μελ. IV, 126, 130; *Pertusi*, De Them. 159; cf. DOSeals I, p. 123 (comment.); *Corpus I*, p. 39 (comment.).

²⁶⁸ *Lemerle*, Philippos 123.

²⁶⁹ Most of the data about the unification of Thrace and Macedonia originated from the 11th century (*Ahrweiler*, Administration 73, 75), v. p. 207. The seals from the first half of the 9th century confirm the unification of those two districts through the function of the *kommerkiarios*, DOSeals I, 43.17; 43.18; for the *kommerkiarios* v. *Oikonomides*, Listes 313).

²⁷⁰ This refers to the victory after which the war would move from Byzantine to Bulgarian territory.

²⁷¹ Tzimiskes sent wheat and animal feed to Adrianople, as well as a sufficient quantity of weapons for the troops. This indicates that the military command and troops were stationed in the region of Adrianople and they would take part in the spring offensive of 971 under the emperor’s personal command.

out from this city to conquer the Bulgarian capital, indicates that Adrianople represented the military centre of this region (Diac. 130).²⁷²

The first breakthrough into the interior of the Balkans (971)

In using the themes of Thrace and Macedonia as a base in the war for Bulgaria, Tzimiskēs established Byzantine rule in the region that extended north-east of the said administrative-military districts. However, the nature of this war, like the manner in which it was waged, was directly stipulated by way in which the Russians established control over certain parts of the Bulgarian state. To put it simply, in establishing Byzantine rule in some areas of the interior of the Balkan Peninsula, Tzimiskēs followed in the wake of the Russian army. The main bases, that is, the Russian centres of authority in the region of the first Bulgarian Empire, were Megas Preslav and Dorostolon (Dristra) on the Danube.

Launching the campaign in the spring of 971, in Adrianople, Tzimiskēs decided first to set out for Megas Preslav, the capital of Boris, which was under the command of Sphengelos (Diac. 131, 135). That the foremost objective of the Byzantines was to drive out the Russian army is illustrated by the fact that after the conquest of Preslav, Tzimiskēs liberated the Bulgarian ruler Boris (at the same time hailing him as “emperor of the Bulgars”), his family and “all the Bulgars”, in view of the fact that he recognised only the Russians as his adversaries (Scyl. 297). In honour of the conquerors, the name of the Bulgarian capital was changed to Ioannoupolis (Diac. 138; Scyl. 298; cf. TE 26509). Tzimiskēs left a sufficient contingent of troops in the city and then he advanced with the whole army towards the second base in the Balkans — Dorostolon.

On the way from Megas Preslav/Ioannoupolis to Dristra, Pliska and Dineia²⁷³ were taken, as were many other cities, which overthrew Russian rule and joined the Byzantines (Diac. 138–139). Skylitzes mentions Tzimiskēs’ conquests along the way in general terms: advancing to Dorostolon, the emperor conquered cities (πόλεις) that were on his route, and here he appointed *strategoi*, and many “fortresses and small towns” (φρούρια καὶ πολίσματα) and once taken, he left them for his soldiers to loot (Scyl. 298). It is known that during the siege of Dorostolon, emissaries came to him from Constantia and “other fortresses on the opposite side of the Danube”; he accepted their surrender and sent troops in sufficient numbers to secure those fortresses (Scyl. 301; Zon. 530).

Besides the Thracians and the Macedonians, the eastern land troops took part in the conquest of Dorostolon; the fleet played a significant role, which sealed off the city’s outlet on the Danube. After the surrender of the Russian army, Dorostolon, according to Leo the Deacon, was renamed Theodoroupolis, in honour of St. Theodoros Stratelates, who had allegedly helped the Byzantine army (Diac. 158).²⁷⁴ Before he

²⁷² According to Skylitzes (295), the emperor set out from Rhaidestos towards Preslav.

²⁷³ Toponym which can perhaps be identified with the fortress Dinion, 184 n. 51, *Alice-Mary Talbot, D. F. Sullivan, The History of Leo the Deacon*, Washington, D. C. 2005.

²⁷⁴ John Skylitzes’ data about Theodoroupolis does not refer to Dorostolon but to Euchaneia in Asia Minor, or, to be more precise, to the church (ναός) in Euchaneia, Scyl. 309; cf. *Oikonomidēs*,

would return to the capital, the emperor secured the positions on the Danube, "securing the fortresses and the cities situated on the river-bank" (Scyl. 310: τῶν παρὰ ταῖς ὄχθαις φρουρίων τοῦ ποταμοῦ καὶ πόλεων πρόνοιαν θέμενος).

The reorganisation of the frontier belt in the Balkans according to the TE

The expulsion of the Russian army from Bulgaria resulted in the establishment of Byzantine rule in the north-eastern regions of the former Bulgarian Empire. The TE represents the basic source that gives an idea of the expansion of state territory through the creation of new (military) themes, about their organisation, as well as the reorganisation of the already existing districts in the Balkans. However, one should not lose sight of the fact that the TE was a list of functionaries; based on this source, one can gain a more precise insight into the creation of new provincial positions, but not military-administrative districts. Likewise, according to the TE, it is only possible partially to reconstruct of the internal structure of the Balkan frontier districts (see Map III).

In principle, one can say that the TE presents several models of the changes in the frontier zone: 1) the organisation of the conquered areas into separate military-administrative units; 2) the inclusion of the newly conquered cities and areas within the borders of the already existing, so-called old themes; 3) the separation of certain regions from the old themes and their organisation into separate administrative entities; 4) the establishment of new structures of authority in the frontier regions (the creation of the so-called *doukates* or *katepanates*).

The Byzantine penetration into the interior of the Balkan Peninsula is confirmed by the appearance of new provincial functionaries in the region where Byzantium had not been present until then: this refers to the north-eastern area of the dissolved Bulgarian Empire, which the Danube delta had closed off to the north. This was Byzantium's first breakthrough onto the Danube River, following the settlement of the Slavs in the Balkans. The TE (263₃₁, 269₁₆) registered the *katepano* of Mesopotamia (of the West) and besides him "the *strategos* of Mesopotamia of the West" — functionaries whose competences, presumably, were linked to the district in the region of the Danube delta.²⁷⁵ The Byzantine frontier on the Danube was defended by the *strategos* of Dristra (TE 269₀₉). The districts in the immediate vicinity of the old Bulgarian capitals, Pliska and Preslav, were not organised into a separate administrative district but, it seems, were included in the old theme of Thrace. The territorial expansion of this Byzantine theme resulted in shifting its centre towards the north: the TE (265₀₉), mentions the *strategos* of Thrace and Ioannoupolis (former Preslav), because of which it is assumed that Boris' capital

Bulgarie 587 et n. 20. The contradiction in the sources gave rise to different interpretations connected with the whereabouts of Theodoroupolis, which is also mentioned on a seal as the headquarters of the *katepano* (v. p. 139).

²⁷⁵ On the whereabouts of Mesopotamia of the West v. *Oikonomides*, *Recherches* 57–79. Cf. *Tăpkova-Zaimova*, *Administration* 96; *Stephenson*, *Balkan Frontier* 56–57.

became the seat of the *strategos* of the theme of Thrace after Tzimiskes' conquests. The *strategos* of Beroë/Βερόης (present-day Stara Zagora)²⁷⁶ was based in central Bulgaria, between Philippoupolis and Great Preslav (Ioannoupolis), which the TE mentions for the first time (267₃₄).

After Tzimiskes' victories in Bulgaria, the old frontier belt was reorganised in the Balkans. Besides the theme of Thrace, whose stronghold had shifted to the north-east with the new territorial expansion of Byzantium, changes came about in the organisation of the old theme of Macedonia. It was not mentioned under this name in the TE but the *doux* of Adrianople was registered (263₃₄). Later records indicate that the position of the *strategos* of Macedonia survived, like the name of the district.²⁷⁷ It is assumed that the absence of this functionary in the TE could be the result of an omission by the copyist²⁷⁸ or that the function of the *strategos* of Macedonia was abolished in the time of Tzimiskes, only to be reinstated later.²⁷⁹ This means that the competences of the *strategos* of Macedonia were taken over temporarily by the *doux* of Adrianople.²⁸⁰ Considering that Thrace and Macedonia would be joined together again in the 11th century, it is worth noting that the continued survival of these two separate administrative military districts was officially attested in the TE, albeit under another name, like they were in the *taktika* from the preceding period.

West of the area administered by the *doux* of Adrianople was the region of Strymon, which was entrusted, as it emerged in the TE, to two *strategoi*: the *taktikon* registered the *strategos* of Strymon or Chrysaba/Kruševo (265₃₃) and the *strategos* of New Strymon (269₀₄). The whereabouts of the district of responsibility of the *strategos* of New Strymon is not certain but, to all intents and purposes, this may have been in the future Boleron, which in the 11th century would be registered as a separate administrative unit. The opinion also exists that this referred to the area north of Chrysaba,²⁸¹ or the territory that extended west of Strymon, around the lower course of that river.²⁸² The theme of Thessalonike also underwent organisational changes in that the city of Thessalonike became the seat of the functionary in the rank

²⁷⁶ *Soustal*, Thrakien 203–205.

²⁷⁷ The *patrikios* and *strategos* of Larissa and Macedonia is mentioned in an inscription from 1006/7, *Lemerle*, *Prolégomènes* 26–27; *Cheynet*, *Du stratège au duc* 191 et n. 78. The *strategos* of Macedonia was attested on 10th–11th century seals: e.g. Goudelios (?), *imperial protospatharios* and *strategos* of M. (*Corpus* I, 46.7); Theophylaktos, *patrikios* and *strategos* of M. (*ibid.* 46.8; cf. et. 46.12–13); Isaac, *patrikios* and *strategos* of M. (J no. 279; *Corpus* I, 46.9); Michael Saronites, *protospatharios* and *strategos* of M. (*DOSeals* I, 43.30); Symbatikios, *imperial protospatharios* and *strategos* M. (*ibid.*, 43.34; a seal dated to the 10th/11th century); Nicholas, *protospatharios* and *strategos* M. (*Bulgakova*, *Osteuropa* 1.2.9). Also interesting is the seal of George, *doux* τῶν Μακεδόνων, from the first half of the 11th century, *Bleisiegel* II, no. 255.

²⁷⁸ *Oikonomidès*, *Listes* 355.

²⁷⁹ E.g. *Jordanov*, Preslav 138.

²⁸⁰ One should bear in mind that in the previous period the *strategos* of Macedonia could be designated as the *strategos* of Adrianople, *Theoph. Cont.* 404: Ἀδριανουπόλεως στρατηγούτος.

²⁸¹ *Oikonomidès*, *Listes* 387, proposed the two said identifications. For Boleron v. *Kyriakidis*, *Βυζ. Μελ.* IV, 99; *Soustal*, Thrakien 93. Cf. p. 158.

²⁸² *Tăpkova–Zaimova*, *Frontières* 114.

of a *doux*; besides him, the TE lists the *strategos* of Thessalonike (TE 263₃₃; 265₃₅). The district north of the theme of Thessalonike was placed under the authority of the *strategos* of Drougoubiteia, a functionary attested for the first time in the TE (267₀₆). The approach to Thessalonike from the west and the north-west was defended by the *strategoi* of two fortresses — Berroia and Vodena/ancient Edessa (TE 265₃₂; 267₂₉). The theme of Hellas did not undergo any organisational changes — it remained under the authority of a *strategos* and apparently within the same borders. Finally, the TE (267₀₇) also added the *strategos* of Jericho, whose competences extended to the area between the themes of Nikopolis and Dyrrachion, to the ranks of functionaries connected with the frontier districts in the western part of the Balkans, the *strategoi* of Dalmatia, Dyrrachion and Nikopolis.

The sphragistic material completes the picture of the new functionaries in the Balkan provinces. According to the seal of a certain *protospatharios* John, *katepano* of Ras, dated to the end of the 10th century (DOSeals I, 33.1), in Tzimiskes' time, the area of Ras is believed to have been included within the borders of Byzantium and organised as a command centre. The Byzantine military presence in that district was also confirmed in the *Letopis popa Dukljanina*, according to which the imperial army took possession of Ras after the death of the Bulgarian emperor Petar (927–969): the Byzantine emperor conquered Bulgaria and returned to Constantinople (971), having left his military commanders on the battlefield, who “conquered the entire province of Raška”.²⁸³

The seal of the *strategos* of Morava, Adralestos Diogenes is also interesting (DOSeals I, 36a), the dating of which is unreliable, therefore, the creation of that function is linked to Tzimiskes' war in the Balkans or to the subjugation of Samuel's Empire.²⁸⁴ If this is a seal from Tzimiskes' epoch from it we would learn more about the nature of Byzantine rule along the Danube (Mesopotamia of the West — *doux* and *strategos*; Dristra and Morava — *strategos*). The whereabouts of the *strategis* of Morava is uncertain. This toponym is most often linked with ancient Margum.²⁸⁵

²⁸³ Hi autem qui praecrant exercitui, venientes cum exercitu, ceperunt totam Rassam provinciam, Letopis popa Dukljanina, ed. F. Šišić, Beograd–Zagreb 1928, 324; cf. Maksimović, Tradicija i inovacija 13; idem, TE 363. W. Seibt, BZ 84/85 (1991/2) p. 549 (33.1); BZ 92/2 (1999) p. 765, brought into question the correct reading of the toponym Ras on the seal, but without the accompanying argument.

²⁸⁴ The publishers J. Nesbitt and N. Oikonomides date the seal to the 10th–11th century. Pirivatrić, Morava 173–201, links the seal with Tzimiskes' epoch; cf. DOSeals I, pp. 196 (comment.); Oikonomides, Bulgarie 589. W. Seibt, BZ 92/2 (1999) pp. 764–765, considers that the seal of the *strategos* of Morava belonged to the early 11th century. Cheynet, Diogénai 122–123, also dated the seal to the period after Tzimiskes, by virtue of the fact that the *strategos* of Morava was not mentioned in the TE. However, the omission of that functionary does not mean that the *strategis* was not created in the time of Tzimiskes, nor is that the case with the cities on the Syrian coast (e. g. Laodikeia, Balaneus).

²⁸⁵ The *sigillion* of Basil II, from 1019, mentions the settlement τὸ Μορόβισκον which was part of the episcopal centre of Braničevo, Gelzer, Ungedruckte 43. John Skylitzes (409) also mentions the Morava (Μοράβος) fortress in the events linked with the revolt of Peter Deljan. A list from an eparchy in the time of Alexios I Komnenos, which mentions the episcopal centres under the jurisdiction of Justiniana Prima, cites the bishop τοῦ Μοράβου ἡτοῦ Βρανιτζίβης, Notitiae episcopatum ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae, ed. J. Darrouzès, A. A, Paris 1981, 138₄₅. It is interesting to note that a *foliis* of John I Tzimiskes was unearthed in a necropolis in the archaeological locality in Orašje (near the

However, since neither the *katepano* of Ras nor the *strategos* of Morava are mentioned in the TE, the dating of the records referring to them remains a puzzle. Understandably, the absence of these functionaries in the TE in itself does not refute the military presence of Byzantium in the said regions. This rank list does not give a comprehensive picture of the military-administrative reform in Tzimiskes' time. It only testifies to a passing stage in the intense changes Byzantium was experiencing in the period from the middle of the 10th century till the end of the rule of Basil II.

The impression one can gain on the basis of the TE, regarding the Byzantine frontier belt towards the interior of the Balkan Peninsula, in principle, is that was a significant increase in the number of provincial functionaries. In relation to the TB, which registered 8 thematic functionaries in the rank of *strategos* in this part of the frontier belt,²⁸⁶ the TE mentions 18, three of whom were in the rank of *doux/katepano*.²⁸⁷ However, while we can also determine the number of frontier administrative districts where a military-civil administration was organised in that part of the Empire according to the TB, the rank list from Tzimiskes' epoch leave that question unanswered. To put it simply, it is not clear how to define a theme on the basis of the TE. Because of the changes in the military structure of authority, one cannot specify whether the data on the provincial *strategoi* linked to a city/fortress or some district confirms the existence of themes in the traditional meaning of an autonomous administrative district. The provincial reform both in the East and in the Balkans resulted in the creation of complex administrative-military districts. Within their borders, they had smaller units headed by *strategoi*, who were subordinate to the local *doux/katepano*. However, the question is whether these Balkan agglomerates were already created in Tzimiskes' time, given the features of Byzantine administration in that region.

The characteristics of the first Byzantine reoccupation of the Balkans

The majority of data about the characteristics of Tzimiskes' administration in the Balkans is to be found in sphragistic material. But, the seals from Tzimiskes' epoch testify rather more to the unstable organisation of authority in the only just re-occupied Balkan territory than to its structure. This sphragistic material belongs to the period of the so-called first Byzantine occupation of the Bulgarian regions (971—approx. 986).²⁸⁸ It is essential to stress that the seals from the Preslav Collection

confluence of the Morava and the Danube), V. S. Jovanović, *Prilozi srednjovekovnih nekropola Jugoslavije i Bugarske I*, Balcanoslavica 6 (1977) 147–148. For further considerations on Byzantine Morava, v. Pirivatrić, *Morava*, 173–199, particularly pp. 178–182.

²⁸⁶ This refers to the frontier districts encircling the territory south of the Danube, which was outside Byzantine jurisdiction, v. pp. 128–129.

²⁸⁷ It involves the *katepano* and *strategos* of Mesopotamia of the West, the *strategos* of Dorostolon, the *strategos* of Thrace and Ioannoupolis, the *doux* of Adrianople, the *doux* and *strategos* of Thessalonike, the *strategos* of Beroe, the *strategoi* of Strymon/Chrysaba and New Strymon, the *strategoi* of Drougoubiteia, Berroia, Edessa, Hellas, Nikopolis, Dyrrachion, Jericho and Dalmatia.

²⁸⁸ *Oikonomidès*, *Bulgarie* 581–582.

verify the existence of the majority of functionaries in the new frontier belt, who were registered in the TE.²⁸⁹ The combination of titles and functions marked in the inscriptions allows for the probability that the development of Byzantine authority in particular areas on the Balkan frontier, in Tzimiskes' time, was gradual. The unfortunate thing, however, is in that the dating of the seals is not accurate enough. The shaping of the frontier belt in the Balkans lasted only a number of years and in those circumstances, Byzantine often resorted to temporary solutions.²⁹⁰

The instability of Byzantine authority in the region of the north-eastern Balkans is testified primarily in the combination of functions of the owners of the seals. For instance, the seals exist that belonged to a certain Damian Dobromir, *anthypatos*, *patrikios* and *doux* of Thrace and Mesopotamia (J nos. 237–238; Corpus I, 35A.14). The seals are dated to the time when the Byzantine army penetrated into the region of the Danube delta (971),²⁹¹ suggesting that in that phase of the war with the Russians, the Empire relied on the support of the Bulgarian grandes. The Slav name of the owner of the seal is conducive to such an interpretation.²⁹² Since the

²⁸⁹ Confirmation exists about the military functionaries assigned to Mesopotamia (of the West?), Adrianople, Ioannoupolis, Dorostolon/Dristra, Drougoubiteia, Berroia, New Strymon, *Jordanov*, Preslav pp. 108–110 (Adrianople), 115–117 (Berroia), 118–119 (Dorostolon), 120 (Drougoubiteia), 128–131 (Thrace and Ioannoupolis), 134–135 (Ioannoupolis), 136–137 (Ioannoupolis and Dorostolon), 142–143 (New Strymon), 127–128 (Thrace and Mesopotamia of the West?), cf. Corpus I, 18.1 (Berroia); 23.1–5 (Dorostolon); 24.5 (Drougoubiteia); 38.1–2 (Ioannoupolis); 53.1 (New Strymon). The majority of the *strategoi* had the rank of imerial *protospatharios*. On the sigillographic material of the Preslav Collection, v. *Tăpkova-Zaimova*, Administration 95–98; *Oikonomides*, *Bulgarie* 581–589. Also, for the *doux* of Adrianople v. Corpus I, 3.3; cf. DOSeals I, 44.1. The seals are known of the *strategos* of Jericho, from the 10th/11th century (DOSeals I, 13.1), of Strymon, from the 10th (ibid. 37.5, 37.7, 37.8) and 11th century (ibid. 37.4), as well as the seal of the *strategos* of Chrysaba from the 10th century (ibid. 40.1) and Berce (ibid. 64. 1).

²⁹⁰ Regarding the problem of dating the seals from the Preslav Collection v. *Oikonomides*, Problems of Chronology.

²⁹¹ As John Tzimiskes launched an offensive in the region of Bulgaria in the spring of 971, Mesopotamia of the West could only have been formed in that year. If one traces the route traveled by the Byzantine army, it is possible that the district in the region of the lower Danube came under the Empire's control at the time when Megas Preslav was taken, and definitely before the conquest of Dorostolon.

²⁹² *Oikonomides*, *Bulgarie* 585. One should note that the titles of *anthypatos* and *patrikios* were of a very high rank. That would suggest that Damian Dobromir had been in Byzantine service earlier on, or that he was one of the most prominent nobles of the First Bulgarian Empire, whom Tzimiskes had won over and rewarded with exalted titles. This policy was characteristic of Basil II, who honoured a large number of Samuel's nobles — commanders of Balkan fortresses — with the title of *patrikios*. One of them was Dobromir, the commander of Berroia, who surrendered to Basil II in 1000/1001 and was granted the title of *anthypatos* (Scyl. 344). *Madgearu*, Paradounavon 422, 430, identifies Damian Dobromir as the Dobromir from the time of Basil II (cf. *Cheyne*, Skyl. p. 287 n. 137), dating the seal in the period after 1000/1001; from the aforesaid it would follow that Mesopotamia of the West also existed at the beginning of the 11th century. However, the question is whether the seals refers to Mesopotamia of the West or of the East (for the discussion v. Corpus I, pp. 98–99). Skylitzes (344, 359) mentions two Dobromirs, Samuel's commander of Berroia, to whom Basil II awarded the title of *anthypatos*, and the young Dobromir (νέος Δοβρομύρος), who surrendered to Basil II at the end of the war. Evidently, this involved the members of one family, who inherited the name Dobromir in each generation (cf. VIINJ III, 67 n. 69, *J. Ferluga*). Be that as it may, several interpretations of the inscriptions on the seals and of Skylitzes' data are possible; one of them is that Damian Dobromir, a member of the ruling Bulgarian class, supported Tzimiskes' occupation of Bulgaria for a while, and subsequently joined Samuel; after the

rule about mentioning the titles and duties of a functionary required that his current and, at the same time, highest title be mentioned in the first place, and that the duty that he performed be mentioned in the last place,²⁹³ it emerges that Damian Dobromir, in the function of the *doux* of Mesopotamia (of the West?) took over military (and administrative?) authority in Byzantine Thrace. The nature of his function was not perfectly clear; whether it only referred to the unification of command authority over the armies in the district of the theme of Thrace and the troops that were under the authority of the *doux* of Mesopotamia.²⁹⁴ Although the seals belong to the Preslav Collection, it is not even certain whether the term *doux* of Mesopotamia was connected with so-called Balkan Mesopotamia or whether it meant the commander of the troops brought in from the East, who were engaged in Tzimiskes' war in the Balkans.

Another interesting point are the seals on which each of the *strategoi* of Ioannoupolis are mentioned individually (J no. 252–256: Katakalos; no. 257–258: Peter)²⁹⁵ and Dorostolon (J no. 215–216: Leo Sarakenopoulos; no. 217: Arkadios),²⁹⁶ as well as a group of 20 seals dated to the period from the conquest of Dorostolon till 975, which belonged to Leo Sarakenopoulos, the imperial *protospatharios* and the *strategos* of Ioannoupolis and Dorostolon (J no. 259–277; no. 271a).²⁹⁷ Because the sphragistic material also confirmed the existence of the *strategos* of Thrace and Ioannoupolis (mentioned in the TE),²⁹⁸ the question arises of whether the said combination of functions is evidence of organisational forms that existed before the district of Thrace and Ioannoupolis was formed.

The remaining seals from the Preslav Collection that refer to the region of Thrace indicate that the district under the name of Thrace and Ioannoupolis survived perhaps even for a whole decade (till 986).²⁹⁹ Samuel's uprising and subsequently

surrender of Berroia, the title he received from Basil's predecessor was confirmed (for an example of confiscating and restoring a title, v. Scyl. 364: *patrikos* Helinagos).

²⁹³ *Oikonomidēs*, Listes 284–285.

²⁹⁴ It is possible that in 971, or a little later, the army of Thrace was sent to joined the units of Mesopotamia of the West, *Oikonomidēs*, Bulgarie 585. This may, therefore, have been a brief accumulation of functions due to the current wartime needs.

²⁹⁵ Cf. Corpus I, 38.1; 38.2.

²⁹⁶ Cf. Corpus I, 23.1; 23.2; three seals of the *strategos* of Dristra, dated to the 10th–11th century: 23.3: Basilakes (?), imperial *protospatharios*; 23.4: Theodoros, *primikerios*; 23.5: Peter, imperial *protospatharios* and *strategos*.

²⁹⁷ For seal no. 271a, v. *Jordanov*, Preslav, p. 232. There are seals dated to 971 or to the period after 975 on which Leo Sarakenopoulos is mentioned as the imperial *protospatharios* and *domestikos ton Hikanaton* of the West (?), J no. 168–174; Corpus I, 26.10 et pp. 82–83; cf. *Seibt*, Reliquiarkreuz 306 et n. 17; 307. This refers to an official whose career was linked with the Balkans over a lengthy period of time.

²⁹⁸ This refers to a group of seals dated to the period until and after 975 (J no. 239–244: Leo Sarakenopoulos; no. 245–248: Theophanes; no. 249: Staurakios; no. 250: Nikephoros Xiphias); cf. Corpus I, 35B.15; 35B.16; 35B.17; 35B.18; 35B.19: seal of Adralestos, imperial *protospatharios* and *ek prosopou* of Thrace and Ioannoupolis (last quarter of 10th century).

²⁹⁹ Byzantium is believed to have lost the regions around the old Bulgarian capital after the defeat of Basil II at Trajan's Gates (986) or a little earlier. A seal is known, which is dated to 986/7 or 1000/1001, mentioning David, *protospatharios* and *strategos* of Thrace and Dristra, Corpus I, 35C.20.

Basil's conquests would change the picture of the frontier belt so that in the first decades of the 11th century, the theme of Thrace would be established within the old borders.³⁰⁰ The area around Preslav would be included in the borders of the district of Bulgaria or Paradounavon, after 1018.³⁰¹ During the 11th century, the sources would often mention the term "Thrace and Macedonia", creating new dilemmas about the provincial administration in that region.³⁰²

As for the organisation of authority in the frontier belt on the Danube — which was represented by the *katepano* and *strategos* of Balkan Mesopotamia, the *strategos* of Dorostolon and perhaps even Morava in Tzimiskes' time — one should say that Byzantium set up more stable authority, it seems, only in Dorostolon. The absence of other information about Balkan Mesopotamia in the sources can only be explained by Byzantium's short-lived presence in the region of the Danube delta.³⁰³ That is why the seals of the imperial *protospatharios* Sisinius, *katepano* of Theodoroupolis, a functionary unknown in other sources, are all the more interesting (J no. 228–231; Corpus I, 33.1). The seals were dated to the beginning of the seventies of the 10th century, so they belonged to Tzimiskes' time. Several attempts were made in literature to establish the whereabouts of Theodoroupolis, the city was identified with Presthlavitz³⁰⁴ and even sought in the region of Asia Minor (in Euchaneia).³⁰⁵ Nor should we overlook the data of Leo the Deacon, in which he identified Theodoroupolis as Dorostolon (Diac. 158); Oikonomides assumed that this referred to the earliest stage of the Byzantine presence in this city, whose name was initially changed to Theodoroupolis shortly after the war ended, only to revert to its old name of Dorostolon/Dristra, as this toponym had remained registered in the TE.³⁰⁶ Even

The inscription could refer to the temporary unification of Thrace and Dorostolon under the authority of one *strategos*, in the time when Byzantium lost the old Bulgarian capital, so the seal is dated either to the period after 986, or around 1000, *Tăpkova–Zaimova*, Administration 97–98; Corpus I, p. 102. In any case, the dating of David's mandate should be viewed in the context of the service of Nikephoros Xiphias, who is believed to have been transferred from the function of the *strategos* of Thrace and Ioannoupolis in 1000/1001, to the position of *strategos* of Philippoupolis, cf. p. 161 et n. 370.

³⁰⁰ Seals are known of the *strategoï* of Thrace, dated to the 10th or the first half of the 11th century: J no. 232–233 (*patrikios* Basil Argyros, cf. *Cheyne* — *Vannier*, Argyroi 72); J no. 234–236 (*protospatharios* Isaac); cf. Corpus I, 35.9; 35.10.

³⁰¹ V. p. 196.

³⁰² V. p. 207.

³⁰³ The Preslav Collection contains the seal of a certain Michael, *vestarches* and *katepano* of Mesopotamia, J no. 282, which is dated to the sixties or seventies of the 11th century (cf. Corpus I, 48.2). It is certain that this refers to Mesopotamia of the East, *Jordanov*, Preslav 141–142; *Oikonomides*, Bulgaria 585 et n. 15.

³⁰⁴ *Jordanov*, Preslav 124, 150, initially identified Theodoroupolis with Presthlavitz; in another publication he distanced himself from this claim, stating that Skylitzes (309) mentioned St. Theodoros Stratelates in connection with the conquest of Dorostolon/Silistria, Corpus I, pp. 88–89; (for Presthlavitz v. *ibid.* pp. 145–154). The *strategos* of Presthlavitz was attested on the seals of the 10th and the 11th century, DOSeals I, 78.4; Corpus I, 63.1, 63.2 (the *strategos* of Great Preslav or Presthlavitz); 63.3–63.9.

³⁰⁵ P. Diaconu, OÙ se trouvait Théodoroupolis, nom consigné sur certains sceaux de la Grande Preslav?, Deuxième Congrès International d'Études Bulgares, Dokladi 6, Sofia 1987, 437–448.

³⁰⁶ *Oikonomides*, Bulgaria 586–587, attempted to combine contradictory accounts by Leo the Deacon and Skylitzes: after the victory of 971, Tzimiskes renamed Dorostolon as Theodoroupolis, and the seal of the *katepano* Sisinius originates exactly from that time. After the war in the Balkans, he

though there are grounds for seeking Theodoroupolis in the region of Bulgaria (Dorostolon or Presthlavitz?), Sisinius' function of *katepano* remains unexplained. Did the toponym indicate a place where the *katepano* resided³⁰⁷ or was it some organisational form that directly preceded the creation of the post of *katepano* of Mesopotamia of the West?

The accumulation of functions noted in the seals testifies to the circumstances that prevailed in the region of the newly established Balkan frontier in the time of Tzimiskes. It is indicative, as Oikonomides already stressed, that the Preslav Collection from the period of the so-called first Byzantine occupation does not contain a single seal belonging to civil functionaries that would testify to the unsettled circumstances — of war — or unconsolidated rule.³⁰⁸ The said *strategoï* were the commanders of the garrisons stationed in the cities and fortresses along the new frontier belt as guarantors of the Byzantine presence. The turbulent situation caused by the ongoing war operations is illustrated in the *Letopis popa Dukljanina*, who describes the activities of Tzimiskes' military commanders in the region of Ras following the emperor's departure for Constantinople.³⁰⁹

The absence of seals belonging to civil functionaries in the Preslav Collection, as well as data from other sources that would give at least some intimation of how authority functioned in the civil sector in the new Balkan frontier belt, suggests that during Tzimiskes' time, in a large part of the frontier, a military administration was set up that gave the *doukes* and *katepano* broad competences. Tzimiskes' organisation of the Balkan frontier, along with the formation of top level tagmatic command centres in the manner attested in the TE, represented a good basis for some future (and final) re-occupation of the interior of the Peninsula. During his rule, the frontier line was defined in the shape of a ring, which in the north-east began in the regions of the *katepano* of Mesopotamia (of the West) and then descended to the south, running through Adrianople and Thessalonike; in the western part of the Peninsula, its chief centre was in Ras, while in the north, the frontier was demarcated by a natural obstacle — the River Danube. An enormous territory was wedged in this ring, beyond the reach of Byzantine authority. But, the offensive army's new command centres heralded an impending re-occupation. However, because authority in the newly conquered regions was not consolidated nor was the reform completed in the old, reorganised themes (like, for instance in Adrianople), Byzantium was unprepared for the arrival of Samuel's era, and this demonstrated all the weaknesses of the Balkan frontier. The Empire would wage war for several decades against the renewed Bulgarian state, making use of the military-administrative system formed in Tzimiskes' time, only in part.

dedicated himself to the task of building in Euchaneia (in Asia Minor), and changed its name to Theodoroupolis, at the time when the Danubian city restored its old name of Dristra/Dorostolon. In the 11th century, Dristra became the seat of the *katepano*, DOSeals I, 65.1.

³⁰⁷ *Tăpkova-Zaimova*, Administration 96.

³⁰⁸ *Oikonomidēs*, *Bulgarie* 588.

³⁰⁹ V. p. 135.

On the problem of the Balkan agglomerates

There is no explicit data in the sources about the existence of Balkan administrative districts of a more complex type. However, an analogy with the organisation of military authority in the doukate of Antioch allows us to make some assumptions. The TE indicated that in the frontier regions in the Balkans, military authority was concentrated in the hands of the *doux/katepano* and the so-called small *strategoi*, the commanders of the garrisons in the cities/fortresses or a smaller district.

However, it hard to say precisely what the territorial and military competences of the Balkan *doukes* and *katepano* were, during the time of Tzimiskes. No detailed accounts of the events in that region appeared till the reign of Basil II. Only the inscriptions on the seals from Tzimiskes epoch could eventually complement what we know about the function of the command centres at the time they were established.

One may also assume that the *strategoi* stationed in the fortresses in the region of the lower Danube (for instance, the *strategos* of Mesopotamia of the West, and of Dorostolon) were subordinate to the *katepano* of Mesopotamia. The position of the *strategos* of Thrace and Ioannoupolis is questionable. The seal of Damian Dobromir, the *doux* of Thrace and Mesopotamia, or of Leo Sarakenopoulos, the *strategos* of Ioannoupolis and Dorostolon, at least testify to the unification of command authority over the armies from those districts (in that case, the *doux* of Mesopotamia would have been senior to the *strategos* of Thrace).³¹⁰ However, the data from Basil's time runs in favour of the combination of Thrace and Macedonia. The creation of several new functions linked with the Thessalonike region leads us to conclude that a military district with a complex internal structure was formed in that part of the frontier. The *strategoi* of Edessa and Berroia, fortresses that defended the approach to Thessalonike, Drougoubiteia, Strymon and New Strymon must have been subordinate to the *doux* of Thessalonike. Presumably, such a hierarchical relation could also have existed between the *katepano* of Ras and the *strategos* of Morava.³¹¹

Balkan circumstances in Tzimiskes' reign can hardly provide a tangible picture of how far the authority of the *doukes* and the *katepano* from the TE extended territorially. In the north-east of the Peninsula, Byzantium partly established control and concentrated on seizing the strategically important fortresses. In the period from 971, when Bulgaria was formally subjugated, till 976, when the uprising of the *kometopouloi* broke out, it was impossible to consolidate authority to a sufficient degree. The absence of data on Balkan Mesopotamia and Ras, the questionable information that refers to the organisation of (military) authority in the theme Macedonia in the rule of Basil II, vastly limits the applicability of the data from the TE. The conclusions on the reform John Tzimiskes commenced in the Balkan frontier belt should certainly not be prejudged. It was not enduring and, in its given

³¹⁰ The region of Thrace was strategically connected to the frontier *strategides*, formed in the region of the lower Danube, evidence of which is also the seal of David, *protospatharios* and *strategos* of Thrace and Dristra; v. p. 138 n. 299.

³¹¹ DOSeals I, 196 (comment).

form, it did not even survive his epoch. However, what is fundamentally important is the principle on which it was based, and which was characteristic also for the East.³¹² It refers to establishing new structures of authority in the frontier zones, which relied on the *strategos* of a fortress/city or smaller district, and a provincial *doux/katepano*. Regardless of the fact that after 1018, the frontier regions in the Balkans would be organised in a form that was different from the one planned by Tzimiskes, his successor, Basil II, would not abandon this principle on which the new structure of provincial power relied.

The rank and importance of the Balkan frontier functionaries

In the category of the *doux/katepano*, the TE respected the precedence of the East in relation to the West and thus the three eastern *doukes* (of Antioch, Mesopotamia and Chaldia) were mentioned before their western colleagues. Among the Balkan (and western) *doukes/katepano*, the first position went to the *katepano* of Mesopotamia (of the West).³¹³ Still, the question is whether this precedence justifies the conclusion that Balkan Mesopotamia as an administrative district had acquired the highest rank among the Balkan provinces if one bears in mind that the *strategos* of Mesopotamia of the West occupied only the second to last place in the order of *strategoï*.³¹⁴ Generally speaking, what significance did Byzantium attach to the Danubian frontier belt, when even the *strategos* of Dristra, hardly positioned any better than the *strategos* of Mesopotamia of the West (TE 269₀₉; 16), was preceded by all the other Balkan *strategoï*? If one accepts the assumption that in the time of Tzimiskes a military administration was established in the area of the new frontier belt in the Balkans, then it would be more accurate to explain the rank of *katepano* of Mesopotamia with the importance that was attached to the tagmatic command in this region. However, this interpretation must be provisory because nothing is known in actual fact about the fate of this area, so the data from the TE may be understood as some sort of plan for an impending reorganisation of the Balkan frontier belt that, nevertheless, failed to take place.

The reform of the administrative system conducted in Tzimiskes' time brought changes to the rank of the theme of Thrace. This first European theme lost the primacy it had possessed in the Balkans since its foundation. With the establishment

³¹² On the specific features of the reform in Byzantine Italy v. p. 164–170.

³¹³ *Oikonomides*, *Recherches* 74, allowed for the possibility that the order of the *doukes/katepano* in the TE depended on the territorial distance of their districts from the centre of the Empire, i.e. that the more remote *doukates/katepanates* had greater importance because their exposure to enemy attacks was greater. For that reason the *katepano* of Balkan Mesopotamia preceded the *katepano* of Italy, and only then the *doukes* of Thessalonike and Adrianople — the city closest to Constantinople. *Oikonomides* explains the advantage the *katepano* of Mesopotamia of the West had in relation to the *katepano* of Italy, with the lesser threat to Byzantine authority in the region of southern Italy, which became its possession at an earlier date, compared to the only just conquered territory entrusted to the *katepano* of Mesopotamia.

³¹⁴ The rank of *strategos* of Mesopotamia of the West confirms that this involves the garrison of a fortress located in the zone of responsibility of the *katepano* of Balkan Mesopotamia, cf. *Stephenson*, *Balkan Frontier* 56.

of the position of *katepano* of Mesopotamia, as well as *doux* of Thessalonike and *doux* of Adrianople, the reform of military organisation in the Balkans bypassed the region of Thrace. In addition, the traditional order between Thrace and Macedonia changed. Although the *strategos* of Macedonia was not mentioned under that name in the TE, which registered the *doux* of Adrianople instead, it is nevertheless clear that the reform of the military-administrative apparatus in the provinces envisaged a larger military role for the functionary who resided in Adrianople, that is, in the territory that belonged to the district of Macedonia.³¹⁵ But the events after 976 showed that the reform in the region of Byzantine Macedonia did not unfold according to the sequence envisaged in the TE.

The rank of the Thessalonike theme was determined by the fact that it became the seat of the *doux*. For a short while, the *doux* of Thessalonike was the third most senior functionary in rank, in the West of the Empire (he was second only to the *katepano* of Mesopotamia and Italy). Bearing in mind events during the reign of Tzimiskes' successors, one can say that Thessalonike justified its elevation to the rank of a *doukate*, when it took on the role of the most important military base in the Balkans during the war from 976 to 1018. It would retain this importance even in the period after 1018.

As the *katepano* of Ras was not mentioned in the TE, it is hard to determine his rank or position in the Byzantine official hierarchy. Still, if the dating of the seals is correct, and the data from the *Letopis popa Dukljanina* runs in favour of this, the commander of Ras could have occupied the rear position in the list of the said Balkan *doukes/katepano*.³¹⁶ Like in the case of Balkan Mesopotamia, the absence of any other data concerning developments in the Raška region leads us to believe that here, the Byzantine military presence was only in passing and there was no question of any organisation of authority.

The order of the Balkan *strategoi* in the TE shows that the new functionaries were simply inserted in the *taktikon* so that in many cases the order known from the previous *taktika*, primarily from the TB, was preserved. The *strategos* of Thrace and Ioannoupolis occupied the highest position. Although this involved an old Byzantine district, with extended borders, it is interesting to note that the position of the governor of Thrace formally corresponded to the position, which had earlier belonged to its *strategos*. In the TB, the *strategoi* of Koloneia and Paphlagonia came before the *strategos* of Thrace, and he was followed by the *strategoi* of Macedonia and Chaldia; the TE je omitted the *strategos* of Macedonia, and the *strategos* of Thrace remained in the same group of eastern *strategoi*, with Ioannoupolis coming under his jurisdiction (TB 247; TE 265). The *strategoi* of Drougoubiteia and Jericho

³¹⁵ The data shows that the attribution of greater significance to the Adrianople region would produce results only around the middle of the 11th century. However, the advantage of Macedonia, achieved through Philippoupolis and not Adrianople, admittedly, would also be confirmed during the war between 976–1018, v. pp. 157–163.

³¹⁶ If, however, one should proceed from the assumption of N. Oikonomides (v. p. 142 n. 313), in the order of Balkan *doukes/katepano*, the *katepano* of Ras could have been second only to the *katepano* of Mesopotamia of the West.

acquired a high place in the TE (behind the *strategoi* of Thessalonike and Dyrrachion), before the *strategos* of Dalmatia (TE 267). The *strategoi* of Strymon, Thessalonike and Dyrrachion *de facto* retained their positions in the group of *strategoi* where they had been, earlier (TB 247; TE 265–267). The creation of the position of *doux* of Thessalonike, thus, did not lead to elevating the rank of *strategos* of Thessalonike (at least the TE does not register this). On the contrary, a new functionary — the *strategos* of Berroia — had precedence (sic!) in relation to the *strategoi* of the old themes of Strymon and Thessalonike (TE 265). The *strategos* of Strymon/Chrysaba stayed in the group of *strategoi* where he had belonged earlier — before the *strategoi* of Kephalaria and Thessalonike (TB 247; TE 265), but the *strategos* of New Strymon was given a low position; he had a slightly better position compared to the *strategoi* of Dristra and Mesopotamia of the West (TE 269). Finally, the *strategoi* of Edessa and Beroe were given a very mediocre position (TE 267).

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Bearing in mind how the borders were set up towards the interior of the Peninsula, one should stress at least two factors that influenced the nature and degree of the Byzantine presence in the conquered regions. The problem is primarily to find out what measure of territorial continuity was established in the region of the Balkan frontier. The data indicates that Byzantium did not control a geographically compact territory in the north-eastern region of the dissolved Bulgarian state and concentrated its authority in several fortresses and cities that to some extent secured communications between the newly established command centres.

The consolidation of Byzantine power in the region of the former Bulgarian state undoubtedly relied on the relations, which the Byzantine army managed to establish with the local inhabitants. We know that during the Byzantine-Russian war, Tzimiskes insisted on a policy of alliance with the Bulgars (Scyl. 297) and that after the banishment of Svjatoslav to the other side of the Danube, he simply dissolved the Bulgarian state by reducing its ruler Boris to the rank of a Byzantine subject, replacing his imperial title with that of *magistros*. Including the Bulgars in the structures of the newly established authority would have certainly contributed to the consolidation of the Byzantine positions, but adequate data about this does not exist in the sources.³¹⁷ Judging by the events following the death of John Tzimiskes, we may conclude that Byzantium left local power in some areas to the Bulgar greeks. Nevertheless, it seems they were not dependent or orientated to the Byzantine state apparatus in any significant measure. This, among others things, can account for the restoration of the Bulgarian Empire that came about under Samuel and his successors.

And finally, one should stress that the reform of the military system in the Balkans produced better results in the regions that had been under Byzantine rule

³¹⁷ The earlier mentioned seal of Damian Dobromir, *anthypatos*, *patrikios* and *doux* of Thrace and Mesopotamia is assumed to have belonged to the wartime phase.

earlier on. Events during the reign of Basil II indicated that Byzantine power had reached a significant degree of consolidation in the area of the old frontier, where organisation had been completed under Tzimiskes; this particularly applied to the doukate of Thessalonike.

II

THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF TZIMISKES' REFORM: THE EPOCH OF BASIL II

The sources hardly even mention circumstances on the Balkan Peninsula in the first decade after Tzimiskes' death. This region would not become the focus of the Byzantine authors' interest till after the outbreak of Samuel's uprising or, to be more exact, from the moment when the emperor Basil II personally joined in the war in the Balkans (986). That is why the fate of Tzimiskes' reforms in this area can only be reconstructed indirectly, on the basis of later records. Data on the role and activities of individual provincial functionaries in the war against Samuel enable us to gain a clearer picture of the organisational solutions Byzantium resorted to in the region of the Balkan frontier.

Reconstruction: the frontier belt in the decade 976–986

The so-called second uprising of the *kometopouloi* in 976 is considered to have resulted in the creation of the new state in the Balkans — the state of Samuel and his successors (976–1018).³¹⁸ This movement was directed against Byzantine power, which meant that Samuel's state expanded at the expense of the territory of the Byzantine Empire. Only a summary account exists about the first decade of the uprising, from the death of John Tzimiskes (in 976) to the defeat of Basil II (in the Ikhtiman in 986), so all we have is a general picture of the districts controlled by Byzantium when the war started.

If we remember the frontier belt Byzantium had organised during Tzimiskes' time, it is evident that neither John Skylitzes, the most important source on the epoch of Basil II and Samuel, nor the other Greek writers, dealt with the fate of the Byzantine administrative units that had been established in the region of the defeated Bulgarian Empire. The scanty data that does exist refers either to the frontier belt, which the Empire had built towards the interior of the Peninsula before Tzimiskes' epoch, or to the districts that were beyond the reach of Byzantine jurisdiction, and which represented the core of Samuel's state.

³¹⁸ On the problem of the first uprising of the *kometopouloi* (969) v. *Pirivatrić*, *Samuilova država* 66, 68–71.

According to Skylitzes, in the first decade of the uprising, Samuel devastated “the entire West, not only Thrace and Macedonia, and the neighbourhood of Thessalonike, but also Thessaly and Hellas, and the Peloponnesos” (Scyl. 330); apart from Thessalonike, the Byzantine cities and fortresses that were in jeopardy were mentioned by name, and they were Serres and Larissa (Scyl. 329, 330). Leo the Deacon reduces his description of circumstances before the battle at Serdica, to the statement that the Bulgars laid waste to “Macedonia, exterminating all the adult male population” (Diac. 171). John Zonaras generally mentions the danger to the Byzantine western areas, which Samuel not only looted but also subjugated, along with the cities (Zon. 548).

Viewed from the aspect of the thematic organisation, in the first decade of the uprising, the conflict concentrated along the so-called frontier belt towards the interior of the Balkans. Samuel threatened the region of the theme of Strymon/Chrysaba — illustrated by the fact that during the siege of Serres, Samuel’s brother, Moses was killed (Scyl. 329; Zon. 547) —, the theme of Thessalonike, the region of Thessaly and its main fortress Larissa, which belonged to the administrative district of Hellas (Kekaum. 266). The Peloponnesos was not a frontier theme; the Byzantines indisputably held on to this region throughout the entire war because Samuel’s campaigns in the south were brief and mostly consisted of raids. There is no substantial data about a threat to the themes of Thrace and Macedonia. During the rebellion of Bardas Skleros (976–979), Basil II is known to have traveled around Thrace (Scyl. 329_{70–71}: ἐπὶ Θράκην χωρία ἐξιόντος), which may have been linked with the uprising of the *kometopouloi*.³¹⁹

The sources partly record which areas Byzantine did not control: these were areas that constituted the nucleus of the new Bulgarian state, throughout the entire war from 976 to 1018. Based on data about the palaces of its rulers, which are known to have existed in Prespa,³²⁰ Pelagonia/Bitola, Ochrid, Setena near Voden, and the tombstone Samuel dedicated to his parents and brother, David, which was discovered in the village of German, as well as the Bitola inscription by John Vladislav, it emerges that the core of Samuel’s state was in south-western Macedonia.³²¹ From this region, the *kometopouloi* set out on campaigns towards the neighbouring Byzantine territories — primarily Thessalonike and the region east and west of the Thessalonike theme.

The data about the first campaign Basil II launched against Samuel indicates that in 986, Byzantium controlled the region from Constantinople to Philippoupolis and that Samuel’s army was concentrated in the vicinity of Serdica at that time. It is

³¹⁹ The assumption exists that the *komes* Nicholas, the father of the *kometopouloi*, governed the district around Serdica, v. *Pirivatrić*, Samuilova država 59 et n. 94 (with bibliography). In that case Byzantine Macedonia and Thrace could have been exposed to attacks by the *kometopouloi* in the earliest stage of the rebellion.

³²⁰ Samuel’s brother, David, was killed between Prespa and Kastoria, at the very beginning of the rebellion in 976, Scyl. 329_{79–80}.

³²¹ This refers to the geographical district and not the theme. For more details on the origin and the native region of the *kometopouloi* v. *Pirivatrić*, Samuilova država 57–71, 78.

believed that the Empire lost the old Bulgarian capitals, that is to say, the regions in the north-east of the Peninsula, after the defeat of Basil II at Serdica, though no reliable data exists about this.³²² We do know, however, that Byzantium would retrieve this region in 999/1000.

As for the Danubian frontier belt, it has already been mentioned that the sources do not describe the fate of Balkan Mesopotamia. That means the Byzantine military presence in the areas around the lower Danube did not last long and probably did not survive Tzimiskes' epoch. It was certainly simpler for Byzantium to maintain power in the fortresses, therefore we may assume that a crew remained in Dorostolon even after the uprising of the *kometopouloi*. Skylitzes would mention Dorostolon in connection with later events in the war, describing it as a city under Byzantine rule.

Finally, there is still the unsolved problem of Byzantium's presence in Ras and Morava. Since there is no information in the narrative sources about their functionaries — the *katepano* and the *strategos*, it is impossible to say anything about the nature of Byzantine rule in the western part of the Peninsula. Even if military units had been formed in the said area during Tzimiskes' epoch, their survival would have been difficult because the Byzantine frontier in the interior of the Peninsula was not compact. During the first decade of the war with Samuel, it was already evident that Byzantine rule was more resilient in nature in the areas which had been included in the Byzantine organisation of themes before Tzimiskes' epoch: the sources indicate that it was the themes from the so-called old frontier belt, reorganised during the reign of Tzimiskes, which were the target of Samuel's attacks or they were bases for Byzantium's offensive operations. The most important military centre in that region was Thessalonike.

The role and importance of the *doux* of Thessalonike in the 976–1018 war

Two regions were envisaged as Byzantine military centres in the so-called old frontier belt towards the interior of the Peninsula. The TE indicates this, by mentioning the *doux* of Thessalonike and the *doux* of Adrianople among the provincial functionaries. However, the fate of these districts and their functionaries was different.

The district of Thessalonike was distinct from the other Byzantine Balkan territories because its military commander was frequently changed, in the course of the war against Samuel and his successors. John Skylitzes has left reliable testimony about six *doukes* of Thessalonike, who were active in the period from 976 to 1018. They were Gregory Taronites, *magistros* and *doux* of Thessalonike (991–995), *patrikios* John Chaldos (995–996), *magistros* Nikephoros Ouranos, who combined the position of *domestikos ton Scholon* with his function as *doux* of Thessalonike (around 996–999), the *patrikios* David Areianites (1000–1014?), the *patrikios* Theophylaktos/Nikephoros Botaneiates (around 1014) and the *protospatharios* Constantine Diogenes

³²² Pirivatrić, Samuilova država 95 et n. 70.

Philomas/Philomates (1014–1017?). Given Skylitzes' concise portrayal of certain stages of the war, as well as the fact that more substantial examples of the circumstances in the doukate can be followed only from the nineties of the 10th century, it would probably be justified to enlarge this number. The list of *doukes* of Thessalonike could begin with a certain "*doux* Melissenos" who was active in the first decade of the uprising, of which just brief accounts exist. It is known that the Thessalonike region at that time lived under the threat of an attack by Samuel: the data of John Skylitzes shows that the direction of the *kometopouloi* advance was towards the region south of their original territory so that the burden of the pressure was borne by Thessaly and the neighbourhood of Thessalonike.³²³ Testimony of the death of Samuel's brother, Moses, which occurred during the siege of Byzantine Serres, refers to this (Scyl. 329). There has already been mention about Michael of Devol's account of the "*doux* Melissenos", who is assumed to have been in Serres on that occasion.³²⁴ Because of the various interpretations of the term *doux*, the question as to what his function was remains open: was he the commander of a tagmatic army or a provincial functionary at the head of a larger district, i.e. *doux*. As Serres was a part of the theme of Strymon under the administration of a functionary in the rank of a *strategos*, it is also possible that the "*doux* Melissenos" was sent from neighbouring Thessalonike to assist the besieged Serres. Such an interpretation would suggest that the theme of Thessalonike, reorganised under Tzimiskes, was already operating as the most important military base in the Balkans in the first years of the *kometopouloi* uprising, from where Byzantium defended its rule in the broader region, to all intents, beyond the traditional frontiers of the Thessalonike theme (see Map IV).

It was not until after it had suppressed the rebellion of Bardas Phokas (987–989) and the death of the usurper that the Empire stepped up its operations in the war against Samuel.³²⁵ After having relieved himself of the pressure in Asia Minor, Basil sought to consolidate his rule in the West. The steps he took were linked to the region of Thrace and Macedonia and also the theme of Thessalonike (Scyl. 339), which had again become the target of Samuel's army at the beginning of the nineties in the 10th century. Thessalonike would be under intense pressure right until the defeat of Samuel at Spercheios (997) so that events would impose dynamic personnel changes among the commanders of this theme. In 991, the emperor appointed a new *doux* of Thessalonike, the *magistros* Gregory Taronites, to whom he left "an army prepared for battle which would prevent and halt Samuel's attacks" (Scyl. 339).³²⁶ There is little data in the sources about the four years of warfare that

³²³ In more detail *Pirivatrić*, Samuilova država 90.

³²⁴ V. pp. 57–58.

³²⁵ In taking advantage of Byzantium's preoccupation with the civil wars (due to the usurpations of Bardas Skleros and Bardas Phokas), the Bulgars caused "by no means little damage to the Rhomaioi" (Scyl. 339). Based on data connected with later events, Samuel is known to have expanded his territory with the conquest of Berroia, and perhaps even Serbia, a fortress located to the west of Thessalonike; for more details VIINJ III 87 n. 40 (*J. Ferluga*).

³²⁶ According to Skylitzes' formulation, this involves the army which reached Thessalonike with the emperor, and was then placed under the command of the *doux* of Thessalonike. Judging by later data,

followed, after 991. However, until his death in 995, the *doux* of Thessalonike is believed to have participated in the campaigns that Basil II conducted in the neighbourhood of Thessalonike. After the emperor's departure for the East,³²⁷ Samuel intensified his attacks on Thessalonike so that a detachment of his army managed to penetrate to the city walls. After capturing the son of the *doux*, Ashot, Gregory Taronites was ambushed and murdered (Scyl. 341).

Evidence of the instability of Byzantine rule in the region of the theme of Thessalonike, is also the fact that Taronites' successor, the *patrikios* John Chaldos, was soon captured (Scyl. 357).³²⁸ He was the governor of Thessalonike in the brief period of 995–996. Narrative sources contain no evidence of his activities but a document has survived, which the *doux* of Thessalonike issued to the Kolobou monastery near Hierissos, the contents of which offer more data about the nature of his function. The document in question is dated to September 995; it relieves the 40 *paroikoi* of Kolobou from fiscal and other obligations, whereby it actually confirms the rights this monastery had previously been awarded in the chrysobull of Romanos II.³²⁹ The first thing that one should emphasise is that John Chaldos held the title of “*doux* of Armeniakon, Boukellarion and Thessalonike” (Ivion I, no. 8, l. 1–2) and that he signed the document as “*doux* of Thessalonike”. It is assumed that the said titulature did not represent the *curriculum vitae* of this functionary but a description of his duties at the time: John Chaldos was the commander of the troops from two themes in Asia Minor, Armeniakon and Boukellarion, who had been transferred to the West, adjoined to the local troops, and placed under the command of the *doux* of this city, for the defence of Thessalonike.³³⁰

The mobility of the military troops, primarily the tagmatic troops, represents one of the more striking characteristics of the epoch of Nikephoros II Phokas, John I Tzimiskes and Basil II. We have already discussed the engagement of the eastern tagmas in the Russian-Byzantine war for Bulgaria. The presence of the eastern armies in the Balkans, in the time of Basil, was justified for several reasons. Firstly, the war against Samuel and his successors lasted for more than forty years and, undoubtedly, there was a need in this period to replace military detachments, bring in reinforcements, and equip the rested units, who went into battle. Secondly, it is a

one could assume that they were troops brought in from the East, and not units recruited and stationed in the endangered western themes.

³²⁷ The emperor arrived in Antioch at the end of the winter in 995.

³²⁸ John Skylitzes did not explicitly state that John Chaldos was the direct successor of Gregory Taronites in the position of *doux* of Thessalonike, but he does say that he was released in 1018, after spending 22 years in Bulgarian captivity, from which it emerges that he was captured in 996.

³²⁹ The Kolobou monastery was located inside the fortress of Hierissos and was named after its founder, John Kolobos. In the beginning, it was independent of Athos. Several emperors took care of the monastery's privileges and estate: Basil I, Leo VI and Romanos II. Under a chrysobull in 959/960, the last emperor granted the monastery 40 *paroikoi* as compensation for the land the “Slavs and Bulgars” had confiscated. By a decision of Basil II, the Kolobou monastery was awarded to Ivion before 979/980; for more details, v. *Papachrysanthou*, Μοναχισμός 123–131. And so, in 995, at the time when John Chaldos verified the privileges of Kolobou, this monastery was already a *metochion* of Ivion.

³³⁰ *Ahrweiler*, Administration 35; Ivion I, no. 8, p. 153; *Holmes*, Basil II, 405 et n. 18.

fact that the Balkan troops were unable to shoulder the burden of warfare, on their own. That is why mobile tagmas, i.e. professional troops, intended for offensive operations, were sent to various sections of the battlefield periodically to help the local troops.³³¹ Thirdly, the war against Samuel's state consisted of taking the fortresses and cities that had remained under Byzantine rule, thanks to the garrisons. These troops had a defensive role and it was impossible to use them for a different purpose.³³² Since the threat to Thessalonike was such that it required the presence of a more significant number of troops in the region of the theme, no doubt they were brought in from the East. The sources clearly note that the eastern army was occupied with suppressing the usurpation of Bardas Phokas. But, after his death and the consolidation of power in the eastern provinces, the troops from that region were used either in the war in the Balkans or in the campaigns that Basil II undertook in the East, primarily in Syria.

The titles of John Chaldos are noteworthy because of the emphasis on the command nature of his function. He exclusively had command, i.e. military power over the eastern troops, who had been recruited in the themes of Armeniakon and Boukellarion, transferred to the Balkans and temporarily adjoined to the troops of Thessalonike. However, the question is whether he also had an administrative role in Thessalonike. In other words, how can one explain his act of issuing the said document to the Kolobou monastery? There must be an explanation as to whether the right of John Chaldos to issue the document to the Kolobou monastery proceeded from his military or the military-administrative functions of the *doux* of Thessalonike.

The said document represents verification of the contents of the earlier chrysobull issued by Romanos II, whereby the Kolobou monastery and its 40 *paroikoi* were exempt from the tax contributions and other obligations connected with supporting the troops in the region of Hierissos. The document issued a ban, prohibiting the functionaries of the theme of Thessalonike — the *tourmarchai*, the *merarchai*, the *chartoularioi tou thematos*, the *komes tes kortes*, the *droungarokomites* and the *domestikos*³³³ and to their representatives, from burdening the monastery and its 40 *paroikoi* with the obligation of assisting in the maintenance of the military troops in the region of Hierissos. This referred to building and maintaining the

³³¹ Russian mercenaries also took part in the war in the Balkans. Skylitzes' description of the division of prisoners after the conquest and torching of the Longon fortress, is illustrative: Basil II gave some to "the Russian allies, others to the Rhomaioi and kept the rest for himself", Scyl. 355.

³³² Skylitzes mentions in several places that Basil II manned the conquered fortresses with strong crews, v. e.g. Scyl. 344, 345, 346, 351.

³³³ For the staff of the thematic *strategos* v. FK (109–111). The *tourmarches* — the military and civil functionary of a *tourma*, the smallest unit in a theme; he was subordinate to the *strategos*, *Oikonomides*, Lists 341; the *merarches*: an officer in the staff of a *strategos*, whose competences were similar to those of a *tourmarches*, as a result of which the *merarches* was often equated with him, *ibid.* 108 n. 65; the *chartoularios tou thematos*, one of the subordinate functionaries of the thematic *strategos*, who was directly subordinate and dependent on the *logothetes tou stratiotikou*, *ibid.* 314, 341; *komes tes kortes*: assumed to have been a civil functionary in the *strategos*' staff (v. ODB 2, 1139); the *droungarokomes* — belonged to the group of commanders of a detachment that represented the sub-unit of a *tourma*; the *domestikos tou thematos* — the commander of a *tagma* placed under the command of the thematic *strategos*, *ibid.* 341.

fortresses (*kastruktisia*),³³⁴ supplying *chorton* (animal fodder) and paying *prosodion*,³³⁵ giving *mitaton*³³⁶ (Iviron I, no. 8, 6–21).

The monks' need to verify the rights awarded earlier to this *metochion* of Iviron must have been connected with the situation at that time. The mounting pressure on Thessalonike required taking steps to defend it. In that context, the additional troops, recruited in the East and stationed in the western regions, were being equipped. Probably, the troops from Armeniakon and Boukellarion were stationed in the broader area of Hierissos and, in an effort to avoid the obligation to support them during the coming winter of 995–996, the monks had hastened to get verification of their earlier granted privileges, because of which they addressed John Chaldos "the *doux* of Armeniakon, Boukellarion and Thessalonike".

Since the subject of the said document refers exclusively to military affairs, it remains for us to consider the question of what the actual act of issuing the document tells us about the nature of the function of the *doux* of Thessalonike. In the belief that it was not until the second half of the 11th century that the *doux/katepano* began to assume administrative competences, Ahrweiler interpreted the said document as the document of an officer whose authorities applied only to the military domain.³³⁷ However, one should underline that the said charter was issued to a monastery, i.e. to the monks of Kolobou, which makes the said interpretation relative.

It is interesting too, that John Chaldos pronounced the ban to the functionaries of the Thessalonike theme, who were the regular staff of the thematic *strategos*, and not to the tagmatic commanders. Hence, the question follows why would the *doux* issue such a document (who allegedly had only command authority), and not the thematic *strategos* — in this case, the *strategos* of Thessalonike, who was listed in the TE — and whose subordinates did this refer to? Did the *doux* of Thessalonike completely replace the *strategos* of Thessalonike at that time (implying that this function had not been filled), which means that he also took over his competences (military and administrative) in the region of the theme of Thessalonike? If this were so, already on the example of John Chaldos, one could construe that a functionary in the rank of *doux/katepano* could have acquired broader authorities, and that they were not exclusively in the realm of command powers.³³⁸

³³⁴ S. Trojanos, Einige Bemerkungen über die finanziellen Grundlagen des Festungsbaues im byzantinischen Reich, *Byzantina* 1 (1969) 40–57; *Oikonomidès*, *Fiscalité* 110–111.

³³⁵ This is assumed to have been a fiscal contribution that covered the maintenance of a functionary or soldier, v. Iviron I, no. 8, 153. *Oikonomidès*, *Fiscalité* 89–90; 245 n. 37.

³³⁶ This refers to an unpopular obligation imposed on the local population for the maintenance of the army during the winter, v. in more detail A. Solovjev, *V. Mošin*, Grčke povelje srpskih vladara, Beograd 1936, 466–467; *Oikonomidès*, *Fiscalité* 91–92; 264 sq.

³³⁷ Ahrweiler, *Administration* 62.

³³⁸ *Oikonomidès*, *Fiscalité* 285, assumed that the taxes and obligations mentioned in the act were in the jurisdiction of the *doux* of Thessalonike, while others existed, which came under the authority of the central administration in Constantinople; however, he too mentions (n. 92) that, in exceptional circumstances, the usual powers of a functionary could be extended.

Concerning the competences of the *doux* of Thessalonike, an even more illustrative example is the case of the *magistros* Nikephoros Ouranos, which we examined earlier. The data about his engagement in the war of 976–1018 confirms that the *doux* of Thessalonike, on several occasions acquired increased military powers. In the concrete case, this involved the combination of the functions of *domestikos ton Scholon* and the position of *doux* of Thessalonike. These increased military authorities were reflected in command over different kinds of troops, which the position of *domestikos ton Scholon* formally enabled him to have, but also in the fact that Ouranos' military powers extended to the area beyond the borders of the theme of Thessalonike. The period of his administration (around 996–999) is marked by the strikingly offensive Byzantine military operations. After the victory at Spercheios, which actually defended the position of the Empire in the southern regions of the Peninsula covered by the themes of Hellas and the Peloponnesos, the pressure of the insurgents against Thessalonike was repelled for a longer period. Afterwards, as Yahya (II, 447) records, Ouranos managed at least to shift the conflict temporarily into Samuel's territory, probably in the area north-west of Thessalonike.³³⁹

The military power of Nikephoros Ouranos — whether it was based on the function of the *domestikos ton Scholon* or the position of *doux* of Thessalonike — is not debatable, but the Vatopedi documents show that he possessed civil powers, as well. It was said that Nikephoros Ouranos was engaged in the dispute between the monks of Philadelphou and the Vatopedi monasteries, which concerned establishing ownership of the buildings that were located, as it transpired, on the land belonging to the Vatopedi monastery (Vatop. nos. 2, 3), by order of the emperor Basil II.³⁴⁰ The subject of the dispute, therefore, was not linked to military affairs, but fell exclusively within the so-called, civil domain. The fact that two military functionaries linked to Thessalonike, John Chaldos and Nikephoros Ouranos,³⁴¹ were involved in solving the problems of the monks suggests that in the time of Basil II, the most senior military functionaries in the province had already assumed civil authorities in the region where they were appointed. It was inevitable that the state of war in the region of Thessalonike resulted in the concentration of authority in the hands of the highest military officer in that region, and that was the *doux* of Thessalonike. Understandably, the process of extending the powers of the *doux/katepano* to include the administrative sphere did not evolve in the same way or with equal speed in all those regions where the presence of functionaries of that rank were registered. Therefore, the case in the doukate of Thessalonike does not

³³⁹ According to Yahya II, 446–447, Basil II sent Nikephoros Ouranos to war against the Bulgars on two occasions.

³⁴⁰ V. p. 52.

³⁴¹ John Chaldos was the *doux* of Thessalonike and Nikephoros Ouranos acted in that region as the *domestikos ton Scholon* (of the West?). But, in his case, there was an accumulation of two functions — *doux* of Thessalonike and *domestikos*, which also occurred on several occasions in Antioch. According to Neville, Authority 20, 108, the role Nikephoros Ouranos played in the dispute between the two monasteries did not proceed from his function, but from his personal relationship with the emperor; cf. p. 53 n. 129.

explain the nature of the authority of the *doux/katepano*, in principle, but it is indicative and points to the tendencies in the reform that unfolded nevertheless within the framework of a militarised administrative system.

The consolidation of Byzantine rule in the Thessalonike region, which Nikephoros Ouranos carried out, is best illustrated by the fact that his successor spent a long time in the post of *doux* of Thessalonike. Ouranos was relieved of his duties, owing to trouble brewing in the East and the emperor appointed this successful and capable military commander as *doux* of Antioch (December 999), while entrusting command of Thessalonike to the *patrikios* David Areianites (Scyl. 345). We know that Areianites was succeeded by the *vestes*, Theophylaktos (Nikephoros)³⁴² Botaneiates (Scyl. 350; Attal. 230), who did not appear in the records till the events linked with 1014.³⁴³

The settlement of the situation in the doukate led to Thessalonike affirming itself in the continuation of the war, in the true sense, as a military centre from where campaigns were launched in several directions — (south-)west, north and (north-)east of the city. Although there are no details about the activities of the *doux* of Thessalonike, David Areianites, we know that operations of a significant scale were already being launched in the neighbourhood of Thessalonike, around 1001. The Byzantine troops captured Berroia, Servia and Kolydros³⁴⁴ — the fortresses that were located south-west of Thessalonike, which actually opened the way to the city (Scyl. 344). After the attempt by the Bulgars to retrieve Servia, the emperor took steps for its defence. Subsequently, he departed for Thessaly, where he captured a number of fortresses and rebuilt others that had been destroyed. This campaign by Basil II ended in a breakthrough into the heart of Samuel's state and the conquest of Vodena,³⁴⁵ after which the emperor returned to his base, that is, to Thessalonike (Scyl. 344–345).

Although the next mention of the theme of Thessalonike refers to the year 1014, and to the *doux* Theophylaktos (Nikephoros) Botaneiates, we may assume that the army of the *doux* of Thessalonike spent the first ten years of the 11th century in protecting the neighbourhood. We know that under the command of Nestoritzes, Samuel's army renewed its fierce attacks on Thessalonike in 1014. After the victory over the Bulgars, the *doux* took part with the emperor in the siege of a fortress in the Kleidion gorge and, after the battle of Belasica, he was ordered to secure communications in the area between Thessalonike and Strumica. However, Bota-

³⁴² Both Skylitzes and Attaleiates described the activities of Botaneiates, *doux* of Thessalonike, in the events in 1014, with the former calling him Theophylaktos and the latter, Nikephoros.

³⁴³ Botaneiates' appointment, most probably, came about before 1014, but it is certain that David Areianites held the position of *doux* of Thessalonike much longer than his three predecessors (Gregory Taronites, John Chaldos and Nikephoros Ouranos).

³⁴⁴ Samuel's relative and the commander of the fortress, Dobromir, handed over Berroia to the Byzantines, while Demetrios Teichonas surrendered Kolydros (the fortress located south-east of Berroia); Servia surrendered in a siege and its inhabitants were moved out.

³⁴⁵ The population of Vodena was resettled in the region of Boleron. Draxanos, the commander of the fortress of Vodena, took up residence of his own will in Thessalonike.

neiates was killed in an ambush,³⁴⁶ because of which the emperor decided not to take Strumica, and instead made his way towards the fortress of Melnik, which surrendered to him (Scyl. 350–351).

In the final stage of the war, the incursions into the central parts of Samuel's state, which became more frequent after his death (in October 1014), were almost exclusively organised from the Thessalonike district. Hearing the news of Samuel's death, which he learned in Mosynopolis, the emperor hastened to Thessalonike, and there he organised a raid into the region of Pelagonia, where he set fire to the palace of Gavrilō Radomir in Boutele; he then sent the army to seize Prilep and Stypeion (Štip), while he returned to Thessalonike by way of Vodena (Scyl. 351). Since the inhabitants of Vodena had rebelled against Byzantine rule in the meantime, Basil launched a new campaign in the spring of 1015: after a siege, Vodena surrendered and in the reprisals, its inhabitants were resettled in the region of Boleron. After securing the region by building new fortresses, the emperor returned to Thessalonike (Scyl. 352).

It is not known whether Constantine Diogenes (Philomas/Philomates)³⁴⁷ took part in the siege of Vodena, who succeeded Botaneiates as "*strategos*"/*doux* of Thessalonike" (Scyl. 352).³⁴⁸ However, we do know that he commanded the campaign in the Moglena area in the same year and, while laying siege to Moglena,³⁴⁹ that he was joined by Nikephoros Xiphias, *patrikos* and *strategos* of Philippoupolis, and the emperor (Scyl. 352).

Skylitzes does not mention the role of the *doux* of Thessalonike in the conquests at the very end of the war in the Balkans (1015–1016), when Ochrid was captured and intense fighting was in progress in the region of Pelagonia. However, the emperor was in that part of the war zone at the time and after the death of two of his military commanders, George Gonitzates and Orestes, he returned to Thessalonike (Scyl. 354). Besides that, we know that the governor of Thessalonike, Constantine Diogenes, along with David Areianites, undertook a successful campaign in the Pelagonia region (Scyl. 355).

Skylitzes' final report mentioning the activities of the *doux* of Thessalonike in this period dates from 1017 and, in its own way, it presents an illustrative example of

³⁴⁶ The untimely death of Thessalonike's two, most senior military commanders explains the pressure on Thessalonike during the war of 976–1018, and also the role of the *doukes* of Thessalonike, who were in charge of defending the broader region. However, one notes the similarity of Skylitzes' accounts of the fate of these two Thessalonike governors — Gregory Taronites and Theophylaktos Botaneiates: both of them were ambushed and were killed; both men went into battle with their sons, Ashot Taronites and Michael Botaneiates.

³⁴⁷ Lately, much more has been learned about the career of Constantine Diogenes. To him, one may attribute the seal that mentions the name Diogenes Philomates, *protospatharios* and *katepano* of Thessalonike. Also, it is assumed that the same person was mentioned on an inscription from 1015, which reveals that Diogenes Philomas, *protospatharios* and *katepano* of Thessalonike, erected a fortress in Thessaly, *Cheyne*, Diogénai 123–127, 136 (no. 1). Cf. p. 199.

³⁴⁸ Constantine Diogenes held the position of *doux/katepano* of Thessalonike on two occasions: 1014–1017 and 1029/1030, at the beginning of the rule of Romanos III Argyros.

³⁴⁹ For the seal of the *tourmarches* of Moglena v. Corpus I, 50.1 (11th c.).

Byzantine military organisation. After the conquest of Setena, where Samuel's palace was located, on hearing that John Vladislav was in the vicinity, the emperor sent against him "a *tagma ton Scholon* of the West and one from the theme of Thessalonike" under the command of Constantine Diogenes (Scyl. 356). In this way, the *doux* of Thessalonike temporarily acquired extended command powers without any special appointment over a *tagma* that in previous times had exclusively been subordinate to the authority of the *domestikos ton Scholon*. Two decades earlier, through the function of the *domestikos ton Scholon*, which took precedence over the *doux* of Thessalonike, Nikephoros Ouranos had unified the military command over the troops stationed in the region of the *doukate*.³⁵⁰ It is not known whether the units of an offensive character that belonged to the contingent of the *domestikos ton Scholon* (and which were most often commanded by Basil II in the course of the war from 976–1018) were stationed only in the vicinity of the theme of Thessalonike or whether they covered other important parts of the war zone. Still, judging by the intensity of the operations being conducted from Philippoupolis, the other military centre in the Balkans, as well as the mobility of Basil II, who was always at the head of significant military units, one may assume that these mobile troops were used whenever needed. Anyway, one of the characteristics of the reform of the military organisation was the provincialisation of the army of the capital: on several occasions the presence was recorded of *tagmata* from the capital (*ton Scholon, Exkoubiton, Hikanaton*) in the Byzantine provinces — Italy, Hellas, Thessalonike.³⁵¹

Based on the picture the TE gives about the administrative organisation in the Balkans, it turns out that the districts where functionaries in the rank of *doux/katepano* were assigned were planned as military bases with significant assault troops organised in *tagmata*, at their disposal. As opposed to other regions, the reform of the military organisation in the region of the theme of Thessalonike was completed: a sufficient period of time elapsed for one to be able follow the activities of the *doux* of Thessalonike in the events from 976–1018, and the role of Thessalonike as a military base that covered the war zone in an area stretching from Serres towards the central parts of Samuel's state in south-western Macedonia, also encompassing northern Thessaly, thereby protecting the southern part of the Balkan Peninsula. However, in this instance, we are not referring to the territory of the theme of Thessalonike with clearly defined administrative borders, but to the area over which the military powers of the *doux* of Thessalonike temporarily extended. After the war ended in 1018, the Balkans would undergo a new administrative organisation, and the part of the region that had been under the authority of the *doux* of Thessalonike for its duration would belong to the theme of Bulgaria.

³⁵⁰ The circumstances in which Nikephoros Ouranos was appointed *domestikos ton Scholon* (and *doux* of Thessalonike) differed from those in which Constantine Diogenes operated. In the first case, the emperor was absent from the battlefield so that the defence of the region of Thessalonike was in the hands of one military commander, who received the broadest powers through his functions. In contrast to that, Diogenes, *doux* of Thessalonike, collaborated with the emperor, who, during Diogenes' mandate, personally commanded operations, using Thessalonike as his base.

³⁵¹ *Oikonomidès, Évolution* 143 sq.

**The military organisation of Byzantine Macedonia:
The *doux* of Adrianople or the *strategos* of Philippoupolis (976–1018)?**

While the development of the situation in the Thessalonike region confirmed the changes in the military and also in the administrative organisation of this theme, the data that refers to Adrianople raises a series of questions about the duration and the outcome of the reforms of the administrative and military system in the oldest military themes — Thrace and Macedonia (see Map IV).

It has been mentioned several times that the TE did not register the *strategos* of Macedonia, nevertheless, it is assumed that this functionary replaced the *doux* of Adrianople. Hence, the conclusion is that the so-called doukate of Adrianople, which included the old theme of Macedonia, was formed during the rule of John Tzimiskes.³⁵² The creation of the function of *doux* of Adrianople was confirmed in a seal from a time that fell close to but was not synchronous with Tzimiskes' rule: it is the seal from the Preslav Collection that belonged to the *patrikios* Theodorokanos, the military commander of Basil II. He is believed to have performed the function of *doux* of Adrianople at the very beginning of the 11th century (J no. 194).³⁵³

However, there is a noticeable absence of data about the *doux* of Adrianople in the narrative sources that refer to the rule of Basil. Although we might conclude from the TE that Adrianople was envisaged as a military centre concentrating a certain number of tagmatic, that is, assault troops, it was not mentioned as such in the narrative sources that describe the epoch of the wars with Samuel and his successors. In that light, one should stress that this not only involves the absence of data about the *doux* of Adrianople but reference to Adrianople as a military centre. Apparently, the number of military troops stationed in this region was not significant: we know, for instance, that during Basil's siege of Vidin (1002), Samuel took advantage of the emperor's preoccupation in the north and "in a swift advance" reached Adrianople and attacked the city on the day of the Dormition of the Blessed Virgin (on August 15th) during the feast that was traditionally celebrated each year. On that occasion, he seized "enormous plunder" and then returned to "his own land" (Scyl. 346).³⁵⁴ This episode, which is simultaneously one of the three references to Adrianople in the section of Skylitzes' *Synopsis historiarum* referring to the war of 976–1018,³⁵⁵ suggests that

³⁵² The omission of the *strategos* of Macedonia in the TE is mainly interpreted in the manner described in the text, but the possibility still remains that this is an error, v. *Oikonomides*, *Listes* 355.

³⁵³ On the problem of dating *Jordanov*, Preslav 109; *Corpus* I, 3.2. *Jordanov* permits two alternatives in dating Theodorokanos' mandate: either in the period 975–979 or in 1000–1006, *ibid.* p. 31. Ostensibly, the two previous stages in the career of this Theodorokanos can also be established on the basis of the seals that belonged to his namesakes: the *strategos* of Artze and *archegetes* of the East, *ibid.* p. 30; *Holmes*, Basil II, 405 et n. 19. We are also familiar with seals belonging to a certain Theophylaktos, *anthypatos*, *vestes* and *doux* of Adrianople, dated to the 10th–11th century, *DOSeals* I, 44.1; *Corpus* I, 3.3.

³⁵⁴ John Zonaras (560) also describes Samuel's campaign on Adrianople and says "since a *panegyris* was taking place outdoors (sc. outside the city), he seized a vast amount of merchandise and took a multitude of prisoners, and then he returned".

³⁵⁵ There are only three details connected with Adrianople in the period of 976–1018: Skylitzes first mentions Adrianople when describing the dignitaries from that city, who defected to Samuel's side

Adrianople had not been reformed into a military base, regardless of the data in the TE. Understandably, it does not imply that the changes in the military organisation bypassed the entire region of the theme of Macedonia. The data of John Skylitzes and in other narrative sources shows that Philippoupolis and Mosynopolis were singled out as important Byzantine military bases in the eastern part of the Balkans. During the war of 976–1018, these centres were not under threat of Bulgarian attack, which unequivocally testifies to the firmly consolidated Byzantine rule in that region.

Given that the borders of Samuel's state, which actually stretched across the entire interior of the Peninsula, at one time included the region of the former Bulgarian Empire,³⁵⁶ Philippoupolis and Mosynopolis were the military bases from where the war operations were conducted primarily in the north-east part of the Balkans. In the Byzantine attempts to seize Serdica or the area around the old Bulgarian capitals, Preslav and Pliska, Philippoupolis and Mosynopolis functioned as military centres from where expeditions set out and where the troops returned afterwards. These cities were also mentioned in connection with the operations conducted in the regions that extended westwards of the theme of Macedonia.

However, in the organisational sense, there was a fundamental difference between Philippoupolis and Mosynopolis. It is known that a *strategos* was in charge of Philippoupolis.³⁵⁷ As opposed to this, the sources do not contain any data about functionaries, military or civil, who were connected with to Mosynopolis during the war.³⁵⁸ Besides that, it is not clear which military-administrative district Mosynopolis belonged to. In the time of Tzimiskes, the theme of New Strymon was created, which is assumed to have been in the region east of the River Nestos, i.e. in the region that would be organised as the district of Boleron in the 11th century.³⁵⁹ The *strategos* of New Strymon was mentioned for the first time in the TE (269₀₄) and confirmed on seals, dating from the 10th century.³⁶⁰ After Tzimiskes' epoch, this functionary was never mentioned in the sources. Therefore, one may assume that Tzimiskes' military-civil organisation of the Strymon district was of a short duration. Samuel's rebellion and the circumstances of war would lead to the reorganisation of

before the battle at the Spercheios; the second record refers to Samuel's attack in 1002; and the third time — at the end of the war — in his description of the surrender of Krakras and Samuel's other grandees, who went to meet Basil II in Adrianople, Scyl. 343, 346, 357. Therefore, not one campaign was organised from Adrianople, nor did the city serve as a Byzantine military base in the war from 976–1018, like Thessalonike, Mosynopolis and Philippoupolis.

³⁵⁶ On the character of the frontier of Samuel's state v. *Pirivatrić*, *Samuilova država* 96–100.

³⁵⁷ The *strategos* of Philippoupolis was confirmed on the seal: Constantine Peter, imperial *protospatharios* and *strategos* of Philippoupolis. That person is not known in the narrative sources, while the seal is dated to the 10th/11th century, J no. 321; Corpus I, 77.1.

³⁵⁸ The seal of Eusthathios, *protospatharios* and *topoteretes* of Mosynopolis, dated to the 11th century, Corpus I, 51.1 The seal could have belonged to the military commander, who served during the reign of Basil.

³⁵⁹ V, p. 134. Mosynopolis was the capital of Boleron; 1083. Mosynopolis was mentioned along with Peritheorion, as a *bandon* of Boleron, *Soustal*, Thrakien 212–213 (Boleron); 369–370 (Mosynopolis); cf. *ibid.* p. 93.

³⁶⁰ This involves several seals that belonged to Stephen, imperial *protospatharios* and *strategos* of New Strymon, J no. 283–288 (dated to the epoch of Tzimiskes); Corpus I, 53.1.

power in the Byzantine regions in the Balkans. In a later period, Mosynopolis would become part of Boleron. However, it is not known what kind of administrative position Mosynopolis had during the war of 976–1018, nor is there any data about the name of the district to which it belonged (New Strymon/ Strymon/Macedonia). All the facts about this town are connected with the movement of Basil II. Thus, the sources mention Mosynopolis in the following contexts: as a roadside station on the *Via Egnatia*, along which the emperor traveled when returning from the Balkan battlefields to the capital; as a base where the imperial troops could winter and regroup for new campaigns; and finally, as a military centre from where the emperor set out on campaigns in the region of Serdica or west of the Nestos River (Scyl. 343, 351, 354–355, 357).

Philippoupolis was more important in considerations regarding the problem of organising authority in the region of the theme of Macedonia. As the *strategos* of Philippoupolis was not registered in the TE, the creation of this function is dated to the time of Basil II.³⁶¹ However, whether the data on the *strategos* of Philippoupolis can be interpreted as the creation of a separate *strategis* that represented a sub-unit of the military district of Macedonia, or whether it perhaps involved a functionary, who assumed the competences of the former *strategos* of Macedonia in the war of 976–1018, remains an open question. Without doubt, the system of military administration was reorganised in the theme of Macedonia but the available data does not clarify how it was carried out. In the first place, the following controversial issue arises: who took over the competences of the former “*strategos* of Macedonia” — the *doux* of Adrianople or the *strategos* of Philippoupolis?

The creation of the position of *doux* of Adrianople in the time of Tzimiskes could be interpreted as a result of the true importance this traditional centre had in the only just terminated Byzantine-Russian war for Bulgaria and, from Byzantium’s viewpoint, particularly in its first, defensive phase.³⁶² Also, its importance was verified during the reform of military authority in the Balkans; the concept of the Byzantine frontier belt towards the interior of the Peninsula entailed the organisation of three military strongholds — Mesopotamia of the West, Adrianople and Thessalonike and perhaps even Ras as a fourth — under the jurisdiction of a *doux/katepano*. These were the most important positions in the Empire’s frontier system of defence and offence. However, by dint of circumstance, these organisational solutions were temporary and short-lived. Ostensibly, Byzantium, under the pressure of wartime conditions, entered a phase of dynamic change in the state system, so it found new solutions that were often the result of momentary circumstances. In any case, the promotion of Philippoupolis to the status of a military base can be viewed through the prism of its geostrategic position. This was a city through which the

³⁶¹ *Oikonomidès*, *Bulgarie* 582, dates the creation of the position of *strategos* of Philippoupolis to after the edition of the TE and before 986; the author considers that this function was recorded for the first time in narrative sources, in 997 (it involved Theodorokanos, mentioned by Scyl. 343). This refers to the campaign of Basil II, which *Pirivatrić*, *Samuilova država* 115, dates to 999. In this place, Skylitzes does not explicitly describe Theodorokanos as a *strategos*, v. further text.

³⁶² V. pp. 34, 35, 131.

well-known *Via Militaris* passed, linking Constantinople to Belgrade.³⁶³ Although Adrianople occupied a more prominent place on this communication route,³⁶⁴ the region of Serdica could directly be approached from Philippoupolis, which had been one of Samuel's more important bases,³⁶⁵ like the former capitals of the Empire, Pliska and Preslav in the north-eastern regions of Bulgaria.

One can see the importance of Philippoupolis from the initial reference to it in the war: from the time of Basil's campaign against Serdica in 986, Philippoupolis guarded the Byzantine army's line of retreat (Scyl. 330–331).³⁶⁶ It is not known whether the city was under the administration of a functionary in the rank of a *strategos* by that time, though it was not until the events after the year 1000 that the sources explicitly say so. At that time, the emperor appointed *patrikios* David Areianites as the "successor" of Nikephoros Ouranos in Thessalonike, and *protospatharios* Nikephoros Xiphias as the "*strategos* in Philippoupolis" (Scyl. 345: ἐν δὲ Φιλιππουπόλει τὸν πρωτοσπαθάριον Νικηφόρον τὸν Ξιφίαν στρατηγεῖν ἔταξε) because his predecessor, *patrikios* Theodorokanos, had refused this position due to his age (Scyl. 345: διὰ γῆρας παραιτησαμένου). Skylitzes did not explicitly say that Theodorokanos was the *doux* or *strategos*, but he used a formulation, whereby it was obvious the latter's military authorities extended to Philippoupolis: in the summer of 999, the emperor "made an incursion into Bulgaria through Philippoupolis" in the region of Serdica, where he destroyed numerous fortresses³⁶⁷ and, on that occasion, ordered the *patrikios* Theodorokanos to guard the city (Scyl. 343: τούτην φρουρεῖν τάξας). He expressed himself similarly, a little earlier, in describing the function of the *magistros* Leo Melissenos, whom we know to have "conscientiously completed the watch he had been entrusted with" in Philippoupolis, in 986 (Scyl. 331: φυλακὴν ἐπιμελῶς τηροῦντα).

Evidence of the importance of Philippoupolis and its *strategos* is established by the fact that he was able to appear in the role of a military commander who could lead a more important campaign independently. It was Theodorokanos together with

³⁶³ The *Via Militaris* ran from Constantinople, through Adrianople, Philippoupolis, the region of Serdica, then along the valley of the Nišava and the Morava Rivers, and emerged on the River Danube, in Belgrade, for more details, *Jireček*, *Rimska cesta* 73–166. On the geo-strategic position of Philippoupolis in ancient times, as well as the importance this city had in the Middle Ages v. *ibid.*, 101–104, 106, 137–139; *Catherine Asdracha*, *La région des Rhodopes aux XIII^e et XIV^e siècles. Étude de géographie historique*, Athènes 1976, 154–162; *Soustal*, *Thrakien* 399–404.

³⁶⁴ Adrianople — the third city of the Empire (after Constantinople and Thessalonike), surpassed the other cities on the *Via Militaris* in wealth and trade, *Jireček*, *Rimska cesta* 141; *Soustal*, *Thrakien* 161–167. Judging by Zonaras' account (560) of the sack of Adrianople in 1002, when Samuel seized a considerable amount of goods and prisoners, it emerges that this centre survived the war of 976–1018 as a city of trade, although it was not attested as a military base.

³⁶⁵ To the south-west of Serdica lay the fortress of Pernik, which Basil II failed to conquer. It was not until the formal end of the war that Krakras, the commander of Pernik, surrendered that fortress and 35 more with it, to the emperor, Scyl. 347, 355, 357.

³⁶⁶ According to Skylitzes' formulation, the emperor left *magistros* Leo Melissenos "in the rear", in Philippoupolis, with the order to "guard the gorges". After the defeat, Basil II, with the remainder of the army fortunately escaped to the safety of Philippoupolis.

³⁶⁷ In more detail *Pirivatrič*, *Samuilova država* 115.

Nikephoros Xiphias, who deserve the credit for the restoration of the old Bulgarian capitals to Byzantine control in 999/1000: Basil sent them out at the head of "heavily armed forces" (δύναμιν βαρεῖαν) and they conquered Great and Little Preslav and Pliska in such a way that the Byzantine army returned from that campaign "without losses and with trophies" (Scyl. 343–344).³⁶⁸ Skylitzes does not specify who of these two held the position of *doux* or *strategos* at the time, designating them by the term ἀρχηγοί.³⁶⁹ But, this data precedes the information that speaks about Theodorokanos' dismissal and the appointment of Xiphias as *strategos* of Philippoupolis.³⁷⁰

After conquering the old Bulgarian capitals, the region of Byzantine Macedonia and Thrace were safe from possible attacks from the north-east.³⁷¹ As it was said, Samuel's breakthrough to Adrianople in 1002 was more in the nature of a raid and did not leave any significant consequences. The successes of the Byzantine army in the heartland of the former Bulgarian Empire also reflected on the dynamics with which Theodorokanos' successor, *protospatharios* Nikephoros Xiphias continued

³⁶⁸ According to the seals that belonged to the *strategoí* of Preslav (DOSeals I, 69.1; Corpus I, 63.3; 63.6; cf. J nos. 291–297; 298–302), Presthlavitz (Corpus I, 63.1.A–D.; 63.5; 63.7–63.9, cf. J nos. 304–307; 309–310; 311; 312; DOSeals I, 78.4), Preslav or Presthlavitz (Corpus I, 63.2; 63.4; cf. J nos. 303, 308–308a) and Pliska (Corpus I, 62.1), the majority of which were dated to the first half of the 11th century, one may assume that the mentioned cities were turned into *strategides*, as soon as they came under Byzantine rule.

³⁶⁹ According to Zonaras, 559, Basil II began to rule the old Bulgarian capitals "through the *strategoí*" (διὰ στρατηγῶν), but the term *strategos* is used here in the sense of *military commander*.

³⁷⁰ The functions of Theodorokanos and Nikephoros Xiphias were attested on 10th–11th century seals, which have been discussed in some measure. It is assumed that Theodorokanos, the military commander from Basil's time, had a seal bearing the inscription *patrikios* and *doux* of Adrianople (v. p. 157 et n. 353), and Xiphias had the seal of the imperial *protospatharios* and *strategos* of Thrace and Ioannoupolis (J no. 250; Corpus I, 35B.18). Moreover, there is data on John (Yovhannēs), for whom a certain priest named Kirakos in Adrianople, in 1007, copied the *Tetraevangelion* (that is, the only reliable thing is that Kirakos was in Adrianople, in 1007). In a note at the end of the manuscript, John is mentioned as the imperial *protospatharios* and *proximos* of the *doux* Theodorokanos (*I. Spatharakis*, The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts, Leiden 1976, 56; *H. C. Evans — W. D. Wixom*, The Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843–1261, New York 1997, no. 239, pp. 357–358). The "*doux* Theodorokanos", the military commander from the time of Basil II, and the owner of the seal bearing the same name, inscribed as *patrikios* and *doux* of Adrianople, are believed to have been one and the same person. The data in the note suggests that Theodorokanos' mandate in Adrianople could have lasted at least till 1007 (cf. e.g. Corpus I, pp. 30–31; *Holmes*, Basil II, 404–405, 415). In that case, the discrepancy with the data of John Skylitzes and his dating of events could be resolved only if one accepts that Theodorokanos held the position of *strategos* of Philippoupolis until 1000, when he was replaced by Nikephoros Xiphias "because of his age", yet at the same time he was promoted (sic!) to the more important position of *doux* of Adrianople. One should also take note of the fact that in the narrative sources, Theodorokanos' name, after he was replaced in Philippoupolis (after the year 1000), was no longer connected with military operations in the Balkans.

As for Xiphias, he is believed to have been the imperial *protospatharios* and *strategos* of Thrace and Ioannoupolis in the period till 1000 (when he replaced Theodorokanos in Philippoupolis). In that case, Xiphias' function could not have included Ioannoupolis/Preslav, after 986, because Samuel conquered it right before or after the battle at Trajan's Gates. However, the position of *strategos* of Philippoupolis could have been senior to the position of *strategos* of Thrace only if Xiphias had had powers in the district of Macedonia.

³⁷¹ With the conquest of Preslav and Pliska, the central areas of Samuel's state (in the region of Macedonia) were cut off from those he held in the east, in the regions between Mount Balkan and the River Danube, v. VIIINJ III, 96 n. 66–67 (*J. Ferluga*).

his service as a *strategos*. The data shows that Xiphias retained the position of commander of Philippoupolis for longer than a decade and during that period, took part in the military campaigns waged outside the theme of Macedonia. Thus, for instance, we know that in 1014, during the battle of Belasica (Kleidion) Xiphias still occupied this position because Skylitzes describes him as “the then *strategos* of Philippoupolis” (Scyl. 348: τῆς Φιλιππουπόλεως τότε στρατηγῶν), who commanded one part of the army. More precise information is missing as to the composition of his troops but we learn from John Zonaras (563) that these were tagmatic, that is, assault units, which most probably belonged to the military contingent from the theme of Macedonia. According to Skylitzes, Xiphias deserved the most credit for the Byzantine victory in the battle at Belasica.³⁷² Most probably that is why he was rewarded with the title of *patrikios* and, in that rank he conducted a campaign with Diogenes, the “*strategos*” (sc. *doux*) of Thessalonike, in 1015, against the Moglena region, taking part in the siege of Moglena (Scyl. 352). Xiphias’ further activities indicate that he was extremely mobile, which testifies not only to his abilities as a military commander but implicitly conveys that he had assault troops under his command. Although Skylitzes continues his account without explicitly describing Xiphias as the *strategos* of Philippoupolis, it is worthwhile noting that in his capacity as a commander (ἑξάρχος), most probably in the same year, 1015, he led the troops in a campaign on the fortresses in the region of Serdica, which ended in the capture of the Boion fortress (Scyl. 354: Βοϊόν), in the section of the battlefield that was most often in the *strategos* of Philippoupolis’ zone of responsibility.³⁷³ Likewise, at the very end of the war in 1018, after the surrender of the widow of John Vladislav and Samuel’s other relatives, Xiphias was sent to demolish the fortresses in the neighbourhood of Servia and Soskos (Scyl. 364). His presence in the region south-west of Thessalonike fell in the time when Basil, according to Skylitzes, had already made a fair amount of progress in the changes in the administrative organisation of the subjugated Balkan regions, which also consisted of appointing the Byzantine military commanders to new positions, for instance as the *katepano* of Bulgaria. Whether Xiphias was among them, unfortunately, is not known.³⁷⁴

Developments in the theme of Macedonia, according to the accounts in the narrative sources, indicate an altered picture of the military organisation if one compares it to the situation registered in the TE. The temporary inclusion of the old Bulgarian districts between the Danube and Mount Balkan within the borders of Samuel’s state, led to strategically shifting the centre of the theme from Adrianople to Philippoupolis, which most probably happened around 986. The transformation of Philippoupolis into a military base — in the rank of a *strategis* — was linked to

³⁷² According to Skylitzes, 348, Xiphias advised the emperor to circumvent Samuel’s army and attack him from the rear. Zonaras, 563, mentions that Basil II sent a *strategos* “with his *tagma*” to find a detour so that the imperial army could encircle the Bulgars; he crossed the mountains and gorges unnoticed, and attacked the enemy from the rear.

³⁷³ *Pirivatrić*, Samuilova država 126 n. 169.

³⁷⁴ After the end of the Bulgarian-Byzantine war, Xiphias is known to have resumed his career in the east of the Empire (the *strategos* of Anatolikon). Although these accounts only date from 1022, it does not mean that he was withdrawn from the Balkans immediately after subjugating Samuel’s empire in 1018.

Basil's campaign against Serdica. The Byzantine defeat in 986, heralded the Empire's impending, exhausting and protracted struggle to subjugate the areas in the interior of the Peninsula.

Despite the absence of detailed information that would shed light on the course of events in the first decade of the *kometopouloi* uprising, one may conclude that the regions of the theme of Macedonia and Thrace were exposed exclusively to campaigns, the purpose of which was to plunder, which did not have any significant effect on Byzantine rule in that area. In its earliest phase, Samuel's state extended to the territory, stretching south of Prespa and Ochrid. Viewed from that aspect, Byzantine Macedonia and Thrace were areas of peripheral importance. Changes would occur with Samuel's penetration into the north-eastern regions of the Peninsula, which would force Byzantium to transfer its military command from Adrianople to the frontier-lying Philippoupolis. In the strategic sense, this city represented a more suitable centre for the organisation of both the defence of the region of the theme of Macedonia and also for offensive operations. However, it is essential to stress that the removal of the command from Adrianople to Philippoupolis was not accompanied by abolishing the position of *doux* of Adrianople³⁷⁵ or by creating the function of *doux* of Philippoupolis.³⁷⁶ The fact that the position of *doux* was not linked to Philippoupolis perhaps underlines the connection of the first *doukes/katepano* to a specific territory or city. Still, could a *strategos* (temporarily) replace a functionary in the rank of *doux*? In any case, the data concerning the war of 976–1018, as well as the seals mentioning the *ek prosopou* of Adrianople, and of Adrianople and Philippoupolis, confirm that on the threshold between the 10th and the 11th century, there was some equivocation regarding the military status of Adrianople.³⁷⁷

³⁷⁵ The first report in narrative sources about the *doux* of Adrianople originates from 1046/1047 and refers to the *magistros* Constantine Arcianites, whom the same source designates in another place as the "archon of the West", Scyl. 458; 466–467. Besides the seals that belonged to Theodorokanos and Theophylaktos, we know about a seal of the *vestarches* and *katepano* of Adrianople and Mesembria, dated to the seventies of the 11th century, Corpus I, 3A.9.

³⁷⁶ The position of *doux* of Philippoupolis was created at the end of the 11th century: Gregory Kourkouas is known to have been the *doux* of Philippoupolis in 1090/1091, *Jordanov*, Preslav 54, 158; Corpus I, p. 162. His successor was Argyros Karatzas, *ibid.* 77.2.

³⁷⁷ Three seals mention the *ek prosopou* of Adrianople (Basil Solomon, *protospatharios* and *ek prosopou* of A., DOSeals I, 44.2; probably another seal that mentions Basil, *protospatharios* and *ek prosopou* of A., also belonged to him; John, *asekretes* and *ek prosopou* of A.), and one seal, Nicholas, *ek prosopou* of Adrianople and Philippoupolis. Since all the seals date from the late 10th or early 11th century, it is possible that the appearance of several of these functionaries in such a short period points to the uncertain military status of Adrianople — would the city be the seat of a *doux* or a *strategos*? Cf. *ibid.* pp. 124–125.

III

THE SPECIFIC FEATURES OF MILITARY ADMINISTRATION IN BYZANTINE ITALY

The Escorial *Taktikon* is testimony that the reform of provincial authority encompassed southern Italy. In relation to the previous *taktika*, the TE (263₃₂; 265₃₁) registered two new functionaries assigned to that region: the *katepano* of Italy and the *strategos* of Calabria. They coexisted with the *strategoi* of the old themes of Longobardia (TB 247₃₁; TE 265₃₀)³⁷⁸ and Sicily (TU 49₁₄; FK 101₂₄; 105₁₆; 139₁₁; TB 247₂₂; TE 265₂₉). It signifies that a partial reorganisation of authority occurred in the region that had become a Byzantine possession, earlier. Through the function of the *katepano* of Italy, it became possible for Constantinople to homogenise military authority in the districts of Longobardia and Calabria. Likewise, Sicily too fell within his jurisdiction.³⁷⁹ The *strategos* of Sicily was mentioned in the official rank lists of the 10th century (the TB and the TE) even though Byzantium had lost control of the island in the 9th century.³⁸⁰ Nevertheless, this island was of the greatest strategic importance for maintaining the Byzantine positions in the southern part of the Apennine Peninsula. That is why the expeditions against the Sicilian Arabs were, from a military aspect, closely linked with the military-administrative structure of southern Italy.

From the earliest times, the way in which Byzantium had organised and developed the thematic system in the region of southern Italy, verifies to us how flexible its state apparatus was. The oldest theme in that part of the frontier was Sicily, established at the end of the 7th century.³⁸¹ It included the Calabrian *doukaton*, and so both functionaries — the *strategos* of Sicily and the *doux* of Calabria — were mentioned in the TU (49₁₄; 57₁₄).³⁸² In addition, the TU (49₁₅) also

³⁷⁸ A manuscript of the *Kleterologion* of Philotheos mentions the *strategos* of Longobardia (FK 139₁₂), but this concerns a later interpolation, *Oikonomidès*, *Listes* 75–76. In the TB, the *strategos* of Longobardia occupied an unusual position, *ibid.* 247 n. 22.

³⁷⁹ *Ahrweiler*, *Mer* 124–126.

³⁸⁰ The last Byzantine stronghold, Taormina, fell in 902. Narrative sources in the first half of the 10th century mention the *strategoi* of Calabria, but in official documents, they bear the title, *strategoi* of Sicily, *Falkenhausen*, *Untersuchungen* 28–29; *Oikonomidès*, *Listes* 356.

³⁸¹ *Oikonomidès*, *Listes* 351.

³⁸² *Ferluga*, *Niže jedinice* 86–87; *Oikonomidès*, *Listes* 356. Many seals belonging to the *doux* of Calabria, and dating from the period in the 8th–9th centuries, have been preserved, *DOSeals* I, 4.1–4.8.

listed the *strategos* of Kephalaria, who had an important role in the earlier phase of the development of the thematic system, with regard to maintaining Byzantine rule in the region of southern Italy.

The theme of Kephalaria, which included the Ionic islands, was most probably created at the beginning of the 8th century.³⁸³ This district was the chief Byzantine naval base from where military operations were launched in the region of southern Italy. The significance of the theme grew in particular when Byzantium began to lose its positions in Sicily (during the rule of Michael II and his son Theophilos), given that the fleet of Kephalaria secured maritime communications between the Byzantine possessions in southern Italy and the other parts of the Empire.³⁸⁴

After the Byzantine conquest of Bari (in 876), Longobardia, organised as a *tourma* of Kephalaria, was annexed to that theme.³⁸⁵ At the end of the 9th century, Longobardia was granted the status of a theme so its *strategos* obtained his place in the TB (247₃₁). In the period after 876, on several occasions, sources attributed the title of “*strategos* of Longobardia” to particular personalities even though we know that the region was not organised as a *strategis* until the end of the 9th century. In those cases, it was mainly a question of command authority over military units from different themes and regions.³⁸⁶ However, it is interesting to note that in the earliest history of Longobardia as a Byzantine theme, this district was still linked with Kephalaria, as the titles of the first *strategoï* of Longobardia show. Thus, the titles of the imperial *protospatharios*, Symbatikios, from 891, were *stratigos Macedonie, Tracie, Cephalonie atque Longibardie*, while those of his successor, the imperial *protospatharios*, George (892), were *stratigos Cephalonie atque Longibardie*.³⁸⁷ Although Longobardia was an independent administrative unit, it was linked in the command sense, even during the 10th century, with the commands of other themes — primarily with Kephalaria,³⁸⁸ and then with Calabria, as well.³⁸⁹

³⁸³ The first *strategos* was attested in 809 but the theme is believed to have been formed in an earlier period. According to DAI 50_{85–87}, Kephalaria was a *tourma* of Longobardia, which was reorganised under Leo VI into a separate *strategis*; from other sources, however, we learn, that it was the other way round — Longobardia was initially a *tourma* of Kephalaria, and subsequently became a separate theme, *D. Zakythinos*, Le Thème de Céphalonie et la défense de l'Occident, L'Hellénisme Contemporain, 4–5, 1954 (=Byzance: Etat–Société–Economie, VR, London 1973, VIII) 303–312; *Pertusi*, Contributi 3 sq.; *Oikonomidès*, Céphalonie et Longobardie 118–123; *idem*, Listes 351; *Soustal* — *Koder*, Nikopolis und Kephallēnia 175–177.

³⁸⁴ Regardless of the loss of the island, the *strategos* of Sicily had precedence in all four *taktika* from the 9th and 10th centuries, in relation to the *strategos* of Kephalaria and, later, in relation to the *strategoï* of Longobardia and Calabria, TU 49_{14–15}; FK 105_{16, 18}; 139 11, 14; TB 247_{22, 24, 31}; TE 265_{29–31, 34}.

³⁸⁵ *Oikonomidès*, Céphalonie et Longobardie 119, 123.

³⁸⁶ *Falkenhausen*, Untersuchungen 74–76; *Oikonomidès*, Listes 75–76; 351–352.

³⁸⁷ *Pertusi*, Contributi 7, 14; *Oikonomidès*, Céphalonie et Longobardie 121–122; *Falkenhausen*, Untersuchungen 24; 76 no. 8; 77 no. 9.

³⁸⁸ *Oikonomidès*, Céphalonie et Longobardie 121–122. That Longobardia and Kephalaria in the 10th century were under the command of a *strategos* is also confirmed by the seals, DOSeals I, 3.3; 3.4; Bleisiegel II, no. 321.

³⁸⁹ Longobardia and Calabria were connected through the function of the *strategos* (e.g. the mandate of Marianos Argyros, *Falkenhausen*, Untersuchungen 81, 99, 165) and, subsequently, through the function of the *katepano*.

In the last stage of development of the thematic organisation in the region of southern Italy, the *doukaton* of Calabria, formerly part of the theme of Sicily, was organised as an autonomous military-administrative district under a *strategos*. The earliest data about the theme of Calabria originated from the times of Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (DAI 50⁸⁸⁻⁸⁹: ἡ Καλαβρίας στρατηγίς δουκάτον ἦν τὸ παλαιὸν τῆς στρατηγίδος Σικελίας).³⁹⁰ The creation of the new *strategis* was also attested in the TE.³⁹¹

Data about the way in which the government in Constantinople organised several expeditions, aimed at retrieving its lost possessions and providing security in the areas where it had managed to retain control, points to the specific features of the situation in southern Italy. Ostensibly, the responsibility of defending Byzantine interests in that part of the Empire lay with the neighbouring districts, which were joined by military units from Thrace and Macedonia on several occasions. Supreme command was not entrusted to the *domestikos ton Scholon*,³⁹² it was regulated either by awarding extraordinary powers (through the function of *monostrategos*) or by granting additional powers to one of the local, thematic *strategoi*.

The operations conducted in the time of Basil I are indicative in that respect. At the beginning of the eighties in the 9th century, the *protospatharios* Prokopios was active in the region of southern Italy “with all the western *themata*” (μετὰ πάντων τῶν δυτικῶν θεμάτων).³⁹³ They were troops recruited in Sicily, Kephallonia, Dyrrachion and the Peloponnesos. (Georg. Monach. Cont. 845). Leo Apostypes, “the then *strategos* of the Thracians and Macedonians” (ὁ τῶν Θρακῶν καὶ Μακεδόνων τότε στρατηγός), who was sent (in the aforesaid capacity?) to southern Italy where he met up with the local troops (Theoph. Cont. 305), shared the assignment with him. Apostypes’ activities were only part of the large-scale operations the *droungarios tou ploimou*, Nasar, was conducting at that time.³⁹⁴ Apostypes was succeeded by Stephen Maxentios, the Cappadocian, who was appointed “*strategos* of the army in Longobardia” on that occasion (προσαγορευόμενος ... στρατηγὸς τῶν ἐν Λαγοβαρδία δυνάμεων), and sent to southern Italy with “Thracians and Macedonians and selected Charsianites and

³⁹⁰ The edition of the DAI is dated to the period 948–952, *Oikonomidès*, Listes 356. The *strategos* of “Calabria and Longobardia” is mentioned in a document from 956, *Falkenhhausen*, Untersuchungen 28 et n. 208.

³⁹¹ In the TE (265²⁹⁻³¹), the *strategos* of Calabria was lower in rank than the *strategos* of Sicily (even though that function was nominal at the time) and the *strategos* of Longobardia.

³⁹² Nevertheless, the presence was recorded of lower-ranking officers from the staff of the *domestikos ton Scholon* in the region of southern Italy, such as the *topoteretai ton Scholon*, Theodoros and Smaragdus in Taranto in 978 and 992, for more details, v. *Falkenhhausen*, Untersuchungen 117, 122. This was the period following the reforms of the institutions of the supreme military command. One of their consequences was the separation of the *tagma ton Scholon* from the function of the *domestikos ton Scholon*.

³⁹³ *Falkenhhausen*, Untersuchungen 74 no. 2.

³⁹⁴ The operations mentioned here were described in detail in *Vita Basilii* (Theoph. Cont. 305–308): Nasar, the *droungarios* of the imperial fleet waged a war in 880 against the Arabs from northern Africa, in which he also used the troops stationed in the Peloponnesos. The conflict soon spread to the region of southern Italy and Sicily, where Nasar also engaged in operations with land forces, *Gay*, L’Italie méridionale et l’Empire byzantin depuis l’avènement de Basile I jusqu’à la prise de Bari par les Normands (867–1071), Paris 1904, 113, 305; *Falkenhhausen*, Untersuchungen 119 n. 720.

Cappadocians“ (Theoph. Cont. 312).³⁹⁵ According to Theophanes Continuatus’ formulation — that Maxentios “arrived in the country placed under his authority“ (ὅς τὴν ἀποδειχθεῖσαν τῆς ἀρχῆς χώραν καταλαβόν) — one might believe that he had been appointed *strategos* of the theme of Longobardia; however, at that time, the region of present-day Apulia was not organised in a theme. It is possible that this may have been a later interpretation of his function or that the use of the term Longobardia meant the region of southern Italy.³⁹⁶ Maxentios was succeeded by Nikephoros Phokas the Elder, “*monostrategos* of the western *themata*, Thrace, Macedonia, Kephalaria, Longobardia and Calabria“ (G. Monachos–Muralt 757).³⁹⁷ His titles confirm that troops from the theme of Macedonia, Thrace and Kephalaria were ordered to the region of southern Italy. However, since all the regions mentioned in the titles of the *monostrategos*, Nikephoros Phokas, nevertheless, were included in the thematic organisation (at that time, Sicily had the status of a theme, and Longobardia and Calabria were lower-ranking administrative units of a different kind — the first was a *tourma* of the theme of Kephalaria and the second was a *doukaton* of Sicily), one can draw the conclusion that Phokas’ military prerogatives actually referred to the military detachments (*themata*) recruited in the said areas.³⁹⁸ The expedition under the command of Nikephoros Phokas the Elder, temporarily contributed to improving the Byzantine positions in the region of southern Italy; still, owing to the war with Symeon, he was transferred to the Balkans and appointed *domestikos ton Scholon*.³⁹⁹

The reorganisation of Byzantine authority in the region of southern Italy came about in the time of Nikephoros II Phokas, who created the position of *katepano* of Italy. Thus, the old Byzantine frontier districts — in southern Italy and in Chaldia in the East — were first caught up by the reform of the system of provincial military administration. The creation of the position of *katepano* of Italy heralded a change in policy in that part of the Empire. This concerned the reorganisation of military power carried out to unify the two existing administrative districts in southern Italy, Longobardia and Calabria. In addition, from the aspect of command, the *katepano* of Italy was to secure the Empire’s future combat readiness in the struggle against the Sicilian Arabs.⁴⁰⁰

³⁹⁵ Cf. Scyl. 160, who omits the Charsianites. According to *Falkenhausen*, *Untersuchungen* 74–75 no. 3, Stephen’s mandate lasted from 882/883 until 885, when he was replaced by Nikephoros Phokas the Elder.

³⁹⁶ On the synonymous use of the terms Longobardia and Italy v. *Falkenhausen*, *Untersuchungen* 49, 84, 86–87; *Lounghis*, *Commandement suprême en Italie* 154 n. 8; *Holmes*, *Basil II*, 436.

³⁹⁷ *Falkenhausen*, *Untersuchungen* 75 no. 4.

³⁹⁸ Officers, whose military competences included the Thracian and Macedonian army or the army of Kephalaria and Longobardia, also operated in southern Italy during the rule of Leo VI, *Falkenhausen*, *Untersuchungen* 76–77.

³⁹⁹ More intense clashes were resumed on the Apennine Peninsula, during the reign of Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos, when more dynamic personnel changes took place in the two themes — Longobardia and Calabria, *Falkenhausen*, *Untersuchungen* 98–99.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ahrweiler*, *Mer* 124–126. Without Sicily, Byzantium could not secure its control in southern Italy, *Falkenhausen*, *Byzantine Italy* 159. That is why, from the very formation of the so-called katepanate of Italy, Sicily came under the command authority of the *katepano* of Italy. This was also confirmed by the activities of George Maniakes in the time of Michael IV, which were the Empire’s last attempt to retrieve control of the island.

The exact time when the position of *katepano* of Italy was created has not been determined. It is believed that the first *katepano* was the *patrikios* Eugenios, who was active at the very end of the reign of Nikephoros Phokas.⁴⁰¹ What is certain is that the position of *katepano* was established in the period after 964. That year, Nikephoros II organised an expedition against the Sicilian Arabs. Command over the land forces was entrusted to the *patrikios* Manuel Phokas (the illegitimate son of Leo Phokas, the *domestikos ton Scholon* in 917) and the *patrikios* and eunuch, Niketas, the *droungarios tou ploimou* (Diac. 65–68; Scyl. 261–262; 267). We know that after the failure of this expedition, Nikephoros II nominated the *magistros* Nikephoros Hexakionites,⁴⁰² who was granted authority over “Italy and Calabria” in 965 (Vita S. Nili, PG 120, 105 A: ἐκράτει ἀμφοτέρων τῶν χωρῶν, Ἰταλίας τε καὶ τῆς καθ’ ἡμᾶς Καλαβρίας), i.e. over Longobardia and Calabria.⁴⁰³

One finds more reliable data about the *katepano* of Italy from the very beginning of the rule of John Tzimiskes.⁴⁰⁴ It confirms that the just created function was also awarded even in the earliest period. However, the way in which circumstances unfolded in that region nevertheless depended on internal political events, as well as on those at the frontier in the East and in the Balkan region, as data from the time of Basil II indicates. The civil wars Basil II waged against Bardas Skleros and Bardas Phokas, the Empire’s increased military engagement in the region of Syria, as well as the war against the state of Samuel in the Balkans, also had an effect on the Byzantine military presence in southern Italy.⁴⁰⁵ For that reason, the view was expressed that it is possible to learn more about the *katepano* of Italy and thereby, the situation in that part of the Empire, from the data referring to the second half of the rule of Basil II or, more precisely, to the last two decades of his imperial reign.⁴⁰⁶ The position of the *katepano* of Italy was also actively occupied during the eighties of the 10th century.⁴⁰⁷ The vacuum in the sources refers to the nineties, to the period when the conflicts intensified between Byzantium and the Fatimids in Syria, and with the Bulgars in the Balkans. An account exists that, at that time, a senior officer of the *tagma ton Exkoubiton* stationed in Bari, in addition, it would seem, to his civil authorities, headed the military command.⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰¹ Falkenhausen, Untersuchungen 83 no. 28; Kühn, Armee 214; Holmes, Basil II, 432.

⁴⁰² Falkenhausen, Untersuchungen 81 no. 21.

⁴⁰³ The view exists that Hexakionites, and not Eugenios, was the first *katepano* of Italy, Ahrweiler, Mer 124; Loungis, Commandement suprême en Italie 159–160, 162, 164. Cf. Kühn, Armee 214.

⁴⁰⁴ This refers to the *patrikios* Michael Abidelas, Falkenhausen, Untersuchungen 83 no. 29; 167 no. 16. Under John Tzimiskes, the Empire’s military priority was connected with the East. In that sense, the Byzantine-Russian war for Bulgaria represented a digression from Tzimiskes’ chief preoccupation, which was to consolidate power in the eastern frontier districts and resume his conquests. He endeavoured to secure Byzantine interests in Italy by diplomatic means, Falkenhausen, Byzantine Italy 141; Holmes, Basil II, 433.

⁴⁰⁵ Falkenhausen, Byzantine Italy 141–159. Cf. Holmes, Basil II, 433–440.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid. 434.

⁴⁰⁷ Falkenhausen, Untersuchungen 83–84.

⁴⁰⁸ About the *tagmata*, stationed in the region of Apulia, v. ibid. 122; eadem, Byzantine Italy 152. Holmes, Basil II, 434 et n. 89, leaves the possibility that the mandate of an officer of the *tagma ton Exkoubiton* belonged to the decade between 989–998, because there is no record referring to the *katepano*

The fact that culturological, ecclesiastical, linguistic and, in a certain sense, political differences existed between Greek Calabria and Latin Longobardia, influenced the specificities of Byzantine administration in Italy.⁴⁰⁹ Connecting the position of *katepano* of Italy to Bari and Longobardia should be comprehended as Constantinople's attempt, by centralizing the military administration, to establish a more direct link with that district from where, among other things, it controlled the Adriatic coast.⁴¹⁰ In that respect, it is indicative that the majority of *katepano* of Italy did not come from the territory where they performed their function.⁴¹¹

In the foreign political sense, Italy represented the periphery of the Empire, whose vital interests were connected to the East and, from the time of Basil II, to the Balkan region. In the period of intense military efforts and campaigns, which led to expanding the frontier in the East and subjugating the interior of the Balkans, Byzantium was unable to secure a constant military presence, leading to the consolidation of its positions in southern Italy and the reoccupation of Sicily. Apart from that, control of the possessions in southern Italy and the struggle against the Sicilian Arabs required the support of maritime forces.⁴¹²

Nevertheless, in the time of Basil II and his brother, Constantine VIII, Byzantium engaged in more offensive action in this region. The lengthy mandate of the *katepano* of Italy, Basil Boioannes (1017–1028) confirms this.⁴¹³ Towards the end of his rule, Basil II himself intended to organise an expedition that would restore Sicily under the Empire's rule. However, owing to circumstances, a fresh offensive to retake Sicily would not follow until the reign of Michael IV.⁴¹⁴

The fact rendering the situation in southern Italy specific was that the *katepano* of Italy was most often brought into connection with Longobardia. It is believed that he, in fact, took over the competences of the *strategos* of that district and that he coexisted with the *strategos* of Calabria, who still existed even in the 11th century.⁴¹⁵ This reliance by the *katepano* on one theme is testimony of Byzantium's defensive policy in this region because the competences of the *katepano* of Italy were principally directed to the defence of Byzantine possessions.

of Italy in the sources from that time. The TE registered three *domestikoi ton Exkoubiton* (265_{16–17}, 271₁₈) — of the East and of the West, and only one, whose competences, presumably, were connected with Constantinople, *Oikonomides*, Listes 270 et n. 27. Cf. *Falkenhausen*, *Untersuchungen* 123.

⁴⁰⁹ *Falkenhausen*, *Byzantine Italy* 139–140, 150–152, 155–156.

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.* 152.

⁴¹¹ On the characteristics of the mandates of representatives of the central command in southern Italy, v. *Vera von Falkenhausen*, *A Provincial Aristocracy: The Byzantine Provinces in southern Italy (9th–11th Century)*, in: *Byzantine Aristocracy*, 211–213; cf. *Holmes*, *Basil II*, 439–441, 445.

⁴¹² In order to secure support for the fleet, Basil II signed a treaty with Venice in 992, *Falkenhausen*, *Byzantine Italy* 143–144, 159.

⁴¹³ *Falkenhausen*, *Untersuchungen* 86 no. 40; *eadem*, *Byzantine Italy* 147–150. *Holmes*, *Basil II*, 506 sq.

⁴¹⁴ This refers to the expedition headed by George Maniakes, “*strategos autokrator*” and Stephen, commander of the fleet, *Krsmanović*, *Uspon* 92–97.

⁴¹⁵ *Falkenhausen*, *Untersuchungen* 99–102; cf. *Holmes*, *Basil II*, 436.

In the TE, the *katepano* of Italy ranked second among the western functionaries of that rank (preceded only by the *katepano* of Mesopotamia of the West). However, this order was not a true reflection of the significance that was attached to the frontier territories on the Apennine Peninsula. It is possible that precedence in the official hierarchy was because the position of the *katepano* of Italy was established under Tzimiskes' predecessor, Nikephoros Phokas. Further developments in the Empire and the extending institution of the *doux/katepano* indicate that the *doux* of Thessalonike, unquestionably, had precedence in the West.

Finally, Byzantine Italy was specific with regard to the changes in the structure of provincial authority, as themes of the new type (so-called small themes), one of the basic characteristics of the military provincial reform conducted on the threshold between the 10th and the 11th century in the frontier region in the East of the Empire and in the Balkan districts, were not created in that territory.⁴¹⁶

⁴¹⁶ In the first quarter of the 11th century, Byzantium was busy fortifying the cities in the northern region of Apulia, which constituted a defence zone preventing incursions from the north (the so-called region of the *Capitanata*, J.-M. Martin, Une frontière artificielle: La *Capitanate* italienne, Actes du XIV^e Congrès International des Études byzantines II, Bucarest 1975, 379–385). It has been noted that the region of southern Italy largely retained the classical thematic organisation, but also the existence of a large number of *tourmarchai*, Falkenhausen, Untersuchungen 109–112; Oikonomidès, Organisation 301 n. 96.

DIGRESSIONS
FROM THE THEMATIC SYSTEM

I

THE NEW CONCEPTION OF THE BYZANTINE BORDERS (The Epoch of Phokas and Tzimiskes)

At the end of the 10th century the reform of the provincial state apparatus initially encompassed only the frontier territories in the East, the Balkans, and Byzantine southern Italy. However, from the epoch of Basil II, the new system of administration already began to spread to the interior regions. That process would continue in the 11th century. In a manner of speaking, its end would signal the beginning of a new reform of the state apparatus, launched by the Komnenoi.

The most striking characteristic of the reform, which is only partly reflected in the TE, was the establishment of a new, more complex structure of military and administrative government in the frontier regions. One may conclude that in the East and in the Balkans, the new conception of the Byzantine borders relied on two basic elements: on so-called small *strategoi* and provincial *doukes/katepano*. The names of the new military districts — *strategis*, *doukate* and *katepanate*, derived from the title of the functionary who governed them, confirm that this transformation unfolded within the frame of the thematic system. However, the competences of the new provincial officials changed the hierarchical structure of authority in the Byzantine provinces. In time, the changes led to some digressions from the classical thematic organisation: 1) the formation of a new type of *strategis*; 2) the creation of large military districts; 3) the emancipation and subsequently the domination of the civil structure of authority (11th century).

The new type of *strategis*

The first visible digression from the classical thematic organisation was the foundation of military units of a new type. Although they were under the administration of a *strategos*, the frontier *strategides* differed from the traditional autonomous administrative districts in the size of their territory, the ethnic composition of the population, internal military organisation, military potential and, finally, in terms of the strategic role they were intended to fulfill.

In the East, the first changes were already visible in the time of Leo VI and their signification was indicated in the TB, the *taktikon* dating from the first half of the 10th century. It is essential once again to stress that this was a question of the

reorganisation of authority in the frontier regions that were included in the Byzantine thematic system earlier on. It involved the *kleisourai* that were elevated to the rank of themes, while their *strategoï* were given a very senior position in the official hierarchy. Of the five new *strategoï* from the TB — Mesopotamia, Lykandos, Sebasteia, Leontokome and Seleukeia — four were at the head of territorially smaller districts, concentrated in a city/fortress. From the TB, it emerges that in the Asian part of the Empire, in the first half of the 10th century, authority was organised through a total of 16 administrative units with the status of themes,¹ most of which encompassed larger districts. Accordingly, one can understand the appearance of the new *strategoï* only as an intimation of the impending changes.² But, this was nevertheless the earliest confirmation about the new organisation of the Byzantine frontier. The result of that process was demonstrated in the TE, which registered 39 (and possibly even 41) new themes in the East, headed by *strategoï*. Still, even before the final edition of the *Taktikon* from Tzimiskes' epoch, a special, also new, common term ἀρμενιὰκὰ θέματα (De Cer. I, 486; De Vel. 39₀₈) was used in the sources for the *strategides* of the new type. In that way, the contemporaries of the changes that occurred (albeit still unfinished at that time) in the organisation of the frontier administration indicated that it involved a new phenomenon within the existing thematic system. In contrast to the new themes, the old ones were indicated by the term μεγάλα ῥωμαϊκὰ θέματα, or, if they were frontier-lying ones — μεγάλα ἀκριτικὰ θέματα (De Cer. I, 486; De Vel. pp. 37₀₃; 47_{29–30}; 115₄₁).

Byzantium's frontier in the East was built up gradually. The largest territorial expansion came about under Nikephoros II Phokas. Compared to the previous epoch, when Byzantine rule expanded with the conquest of individual fortresses, the strategic position of which, in the majority of cases, secured control over the broader neighbourhood (hence increasing the number of new themes), under Phokas, a more compact territory was included in the Empire's possessions. This refers to the Cilician region, which lost the status of a forward frontier region with the Byzantine penetration into Syria (in the epoch of Phokas and Tzimiskes). Still, in Cilicia too, military authority was organised in small themes: Tarsos, Anazarbos, Podandos, and Mopsuestia, just as it was in the territory east of the River Halys, in Syria and the Mesopotamian-Armenian region.

Why did the Empire chose precisely such an administrative-military organisation on the frontier? There are several reasons for this and attention has already been drawn to them in literature.³ Apart from the geographical features of the regions where the themes of the new type were founded (where the importance of the

¹ This involved the themes of Anatolikon, Armeniakon, Thrakesion, Opsikion, Boukellarion, Cappadocia, Charsianon, Koloneia, Paphlagonia, Chaldia, Kibyrrhaiotai, added to which were five more districts, mentioned in the text, TB 245–247.

² The Byzantines included those themes in the *akritika rhomaika themata* because the *armeniaka themata* were situated east of Lykandos, p. 86 et n. 41. However, they differed from the themes in the interior of Asia Minor and, Lykandos represented a kind of paradigm for the new type of theme.

³ V. e.g. *Oikonomidēs*, Organisation 285–302; *Ahrweiler*, Frontière 209–230; *Cheyne*, Frontière 57–69.

fortified place, from which the broader countryside could be controlled, grew, with a relatively limited number of troops), one should single out the demographic problem as the second factor. The territory where the new themes were formed was, in fact, the terrain of constant Byzantine-Arab conflict over a longer period, where a garrison in a fortified location (which was thus difficult to capture), signified not only the military but also the administrative presence of one or the other side. The turbulent situation and the inability to install more enduring Byzantine or Arab authority resulted in the demographic devastation of those regions.⁴

After the victory of Basil the Macedonian over the Paulicians, a large swathe of territory between Byzantium and the Emirate, with its centre in Melitene, was abandoned by the population.⁵ The Empire overcame the problem of depopulation in the area east of the River Halys, as well as in the areas around the Tauros and the Antitauros, by accepting an Armenian immigration, which resulted in the reorganisation of authority in the frontier regions (a process commenced by Leo VI). The Arab penetration into Greater Armenia (at the end of the 9th and in the first half of the 10th century) caused a large number of Armenians to seek refuge in the territory of the Empire.⁶ Byzantium received them and during the 10th century, they settled in large numbers along the eastern Byzantine frontier (in the region east of the River Halys, around Sebasteia and the area around Lykandos). The Armenians were recruited in the Byzantine army and, under the command of their countrymen, they joined in successfully in the Byzantine-Arab conflict.⁷ This ethnic element strengthened: starting with the annexation of Mesopotamia and the areas east of it, the conquests in the region of Cilicia and especially Syria incorporated numerous cities within the Empire's frontier, the populations of which were largely Armenian (this refers to the regions extending east of the Sebasteia-Caesarea-Podandos-Tarsos line).⁸

The ethnic heterogeneity of Byzantium's eastern frontier brought a different internal military organisation in the new themes. Based on data from the year 949,

⁴ *Oikonomidēs*, Organisation 295–297. For ethnic circumstances in the East v. *G. Dagron*, Minorités ethniques et religieuses dans l'Orient byzantin à la fin X^e et au XI^e siècle : l'immigration syrienne, TM 6 (1976) 177–216; *E. McGeer*, The Legal Decree of Nikephoros II Phokas Concerning Armenian *Stratiotai*, Peace and War in Byzantium, 123–137.

⁵ The characteristic Greek term for that kind of territory was ἔρημος, or ἔρημία, ἐρημότοπος, ἐρημόκαστρα, *Ahrweiler*, Frontière 218–219.

⁶ The presence of Armenians on the Byzantine eastern frontier was recorded even before the Arab invasion in the region of Armenia, *Oikonomidēs*, Organisation 296. It has been confirmed that the Armenian elite already became part of the Byzantine aristocracy in the 9th century. Evidence of this was found in the history of numerous Byzantine families of Armenian origin, who were connected with the region of Asia Minor and the Byzantine themes of Cappadocia, Armeniakon, Paphlagonia, Charsianon, Chaldia, *Isabelle Brousselle*, L'intégration des Arméniens dans l'aristocratie byzantine au IX^e siècle, in: *Arménie et Byzance*, 43–54.

⁷ The military successes of Melias the Armenian, the founder of the *kleisoura* of Lykandos, attracted a large number of his compatriots (cf. *Ferluga*, Niže jedinice 83). Campaigns against the Arabs, which consisted mainly of looting, gave them the opportunity to strengthen their economic position. The Armenians represented the first line of defence to the east. The *strategoí* of the so-called small themes along the eastern frontier belt were recruited among prominent local figures, Armenians, Iberians, and Christianised Arabs, *Oikonomidēs*, Organisation 295–296, 300; *Ahrweiler*, Frontière 223–224.

⁸ *Oikonomidēs*, Organisation 296.

we know that the military organisation of the theme of Charpezikion (founded during the rule of Constantine VII) relied *de facto* on the officers' ranks. Of a total of 706 soldiers, who took part in the Cretan expedition, 278 belonged to the category of officers of different ranks in the hierarchy: a *strategos*, 69 *tourmarchai* — 22 "great" (προκριώτεροι, μεγάλοι) and 47 "small" (ἐλαττώτεροι, μικροί), a *merarches* of the theme, a *komes tes kortes*, a *domestikos tou thematos*, 205 *droungarioi* and 428 soldiers (De Cer. I, 662, 667, 669). Subordinate to the *strategos* of Charpezikion were the same officers who had served in the commands of *strategoî* of classical themes,⁹ coupled with the fact that in the case of Charpezikion, the number of *tourmarchai* was drastically increased (it was customary for a theme to have 2–4 *tourmai*, hence the number of *tourmarchai*).¹⁰ The military potential of the theme of Charpezikion lagged considerably behind the military potential of the old themes,¹¹ but one should leave room for the possibility that, if necessary, the staff of officers could assemble a larger corps of ordinary soldiers. Also, the *roga* the officers from the theme of Charpezikion received was considerably lower than that of their colleagues from the classical themes (e.g. the naval *tourmarchai*, who took part in the expedition of 949, received 30 *nomismata*, while the "great" *tourmarchai* of Charpezikion were given five, and the "small" *tourmarchai* received four, etc.).¹²

The data about the military potential of the small theme of Charpezikion is indicative for comprehending the organisation characteristic for the *armeniaka themata*. However, it cannot be taken as relevant for the other themes of this type. Between 949 and the period to which the edition of the TE is dated (971–975), around two decades elapsed during which the new frontier system evolved. A considerable increase in the number of small *strategides* limited the numerical composition of their garrisons. Meantime, the multiplication of the new type of theme led to curtailing the powers of their *strategoî* and the degradation of this office. If the small *strategoî* had a more offensive role in the Arab-Byzantine conflicts, in the initial phase (because of which Byzantium intensified the formation of this new type of theme), in the final stage, as the TE shows, in most cases these *strategoî* became mainly static and tied to the theme-fortress/city and its vicinity, which they headed; they were responsible for defence, whereas the offensive role was given to the regional commanders, the *doukes*

⁹ For the staff of the thematic *strategos*, v. FK (109–111). Cf. Ahrweiler, Administration 2–3; Oikonomides, Listes 341.

¹⁰ The number of *tourmai* depended on the significance of a particular theme, Ahrweiler, Administration 80; Falkenhausen, Untersuchungen 110; Oikonomides, Organisation 297–298, the exceptionally large number of *tourmarchai* is interpreted as the Byzantine attempt to maintain control and discipline among the troops in the so-called small themes that were ethnically mixed.

¹¹ According to the research of W. Treadgold, Byzantine States Finances in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries, New York 1982, 107, around 842, the theme of Anatolikon had 15,000 troops, Thrakesion — 10,000, Boukellarion — 8,000, Armeniakon — 9,000 and Opsikion — 6,000; cf. Cheynet, Effectifs 321–322.

¹² In more detail Oikonomides, Organisation 298. Nor was this reduction of the *roga* for the *tourmarchai* of Charpezikion any less of a burden on the state treasury, because the sum of 298 *nomismata* alone had to be set aside for the "great" (110 *nomismata*) and "small" *tourmarchai* (188 *nomismata*).

and *katepano*, who sidelined the representatives of the central command.¹³ However, the new themes, formed in the Phokas–Tzimiskes period, were not uniform in terms of military potential, therefore, nor in terms of importance; Tarsos has already been mentioned, whose *strategos* apparently commanded offensive units, consisting of 4,000–5,000 men and, among other things, provided military support to the *doux* of Antioch.¹⁴ Similarly, the data about the Syrian *strategides* or *strategata* and *themata* indicates that they were districts of a more complex military-territorial structure, whose military potential primarily had a defensive function, but it was sufficient for the units from those districts to be used in other parts of the Empire, as well.¹⁵

The epoch of Nikephoros II Phokas and particularly John I Tzimiskes ended the first stage in the organisation of the new frontier administration developed in the East during several previous decades. The Byzantine eastern frontier system based on themes-fortresses, distributed in four belts, was reorganised under the rule of these two emperors. The introduction of the hitherto tagmatic commanders — the *doux* and the *katepano* — into the ranks of provincial functionaries changed the structure of authority in the frontier regions. This refers to another, extremely important digression from the classical thematic organisation.

Doukes and katepano: the creation of large military systems

In the thematic system of the classical type, the term *thema* signified an area with more or less fortified borders, in which the *strategos*, the governor of the theme, combined both military and civil authority. Regardless of the appearance of the smaller *strategoi* and districts of the new type, this meaning of *thema* and *strategos* is not questionable in any significant degree. However, the appearance of provincial *doukes* and *katepano* resulted in the unification of military authority over a broader territory. The formation of large military systems represented the first step in relativising and fragmenting the borders of what until then had been autonomous administrative districts. The new territorial conception of the frontier districts brought a different distribution of the military functionaries' competences.

The creation of the function of the provincial *doukes* and *katepano* secured the more lasting homogenisation of military authority in certain frontier-lying parts of the Empire.¹⁶ The *doukes* and *katepano*, commanders of tagmatic military units, were the representatives of the central command in the provinces. The TE mentions a geographic definition (district or city) next to all seven of them, thereby specifying the locations of the provincial command centres over the tagmatic troops. They were

¹³ According to *Oikonomides*, Organisation 300–301, the presence of Constantinople was secured by the tagmatic cavalry under the command of the *doukes/katepano*, while the small *strategoi* had infantry troops, which prevented them from seriously threatening the rule of the Empire.

¹⁴ V. p. 110 et n. 159.

¹⁵ E.g. units from the themes of Mauron Oros, Telouch, etc., Scyl. 471; cf. p. 114.

¹⁶ Until the provincial *doukes/katepano* appeared, military authority was homogenised through the function of the *domestikos ton Scholon* (of the East), supported in the long years of campaigning by the *strategoi* of Anatolikon, Cappadocia.

the so-called mother districts, over which the new provincial officials had jurisdiction. It was according to this territorial scheme that the *doukes* and *katepano* differed from the representatives of the central command — the *domestikos ton Scholon*, the *stratopedarches* and the *stratelates*.¹⁷ Therefore, this was a question of provincial command over the tagmatic army, which took root, as it were, parallel with the reform in the domain of the central command. The division of the function of *domestikos ton Scholon* belonged only to the rule of Romanos II. The creation of the functions of *stratopedarches*, and *stratelates*, the limitation in principle of the jurisdiction of representatives from the central command, as well as the definition of the territorial competences of the *doux* and *katepano*, constitute the result of the policies of Nikephoros II Phokas and John I Tzimiskes.

When one refers to the period in which the reform of the provincial administration unfolded in Byzantium, one should emphasise that the only change that occurred simultaneously in the East and the West was the creation of the position of *doux/katepano*. All functionaries of that rank mentioned in the TE belonged to the Phokas–Tzimiskes epoch. For the first time, the Balkans did not lag behind the East in that respect. It is impossible to establish the exact year when each of the said positions were instituted because in other sources, the first confirmation of their existence mostly originated in the time of Basil II. Nevertheless, the available reports indicate that the new structure of frontier administration was initially established in the areas that had been Byzantine possessions earlier on, in the district of Chaldia and in southern Italy, where the new category of functionary was attested at the end of Phokas' rule. Tzimiskes expanded the new model of military organisation to the other frontier-lying regions, either by carrying out a reorganisation of authority in the old Byzantine themes (Thessalonike, Macedonia and Mesopotamia in the East) or by adjusting the just conquered regions to the new organisation (the Syrian region and the conquered territories in the Balkans).

Connecting the tagmatic commanders, the *doux* and *katepano*, to a particular territory indicated the start of creating large military systems or districts — *doukates/katepanates*. According to their territorial conception and internal structure of authority, they differed essentially from classical themes.

The data about the military activities of a *doux/katepano* points to the borders of the mother region of his competences. However, those borders were flexible for at least two reasons. First of all, Byzantium did not control geographically compact territory in the frontier regions to the East nor in most of the Balkans. Secondly, the tagmatic command centres in the provinces were not maintained constantly. The sources indicate that the positions of certain regional *doukes/katepano* could remain unoccupied over a longer period. It is not only because, as circumstances would have it, we do not possess data about the new functionaries, which renders the prosopographic lists of provincial *doukes/katepano* incomplete. Maintaining a

¹⁷ The competences of representatives of the central command were distributed according to territory, in keeping with the general division of the Empire into East and West, K. Amantos, Ἀνατολή καὶ Δύσις, Hellenika 9 (1936) 32–36.

command centre implied the presence of a specific number of military units in the region. Byzantium did not have such a military potential to secure the constant presence of troops in all of its frontier regions. Consequently, the troops of one doukate operated when necessary in other parts of the Empire, as well, often in neighbouring regions (data from the time of Basil II and from the 11th century points to this).¹⁸ It is worth noting that Byzantium endeavoured to secure a continued military presence in the regions of major strategic importance. In that respect, one can single out Antioch in the East and Thessalonike in the Balkans. The significance of those command centres lies in the fact that the positions of the *doux* of Antioch or Thessalonike, were interpreted as “power in the East” or, in the “West”.¹⁹

The flexibility that existed in the territorial scope of the competences of the *doux* and the *katepano* also existed in the hierarchical structure of authority established within the large military systems. As regional commanders of the highest rank, the *doux* and the *katepano* were the most senior military functionaries in the district of their basic competences. On the basis of the available sources, it is impossible to determine whether regional *doukes/katepano* were allotted staff by virtue of their appointment to this function (as, for example, in the case of a thematic *strategos*). One may assume that as tagmatic commanders they would have a *topoteretes*²⁰ and the *proximos*.²¹ The TE did not specify their subordinates, which already suggests that flexibility in the hierarchy depended on the current circumstances. However, this state of contingency was limited by the fact that the provincial *doukes/katepano* were connected to a particular command centre, i.e. territory (the so-called mother region of their competence). In any case, the sources confirm that they were senior to the district *stratego*i and officers from their command.²² For that reason, the terms doukate and

¹⁸ That is the reason why the unification of the commands of one or more neighbouring/geographically close tagmatic provincial centres came about: Chaldia–Mesopotamia (DOSeals IV, 55.10); Chaldia–Koloneia (Scyl. 284); Taron–Vaspurakan (DOSeals IV, 76.2); Ani–Iberia (ibid. 75.1); Thrace–Mesopotamia of the West (J no. 237; 238; Corpus I, 35A.14) Thessalonike–Bulgaria (Z II, no. 969; Lj. Maksimović — M. Popović, Les sceaux byzantins de la région danubienne en Serbie, SBS 3, 1993, 128 no. 15); Sirmium–Bulgaria (Scyl. 373); Thessalonike–Bulgaria–Serbia/Σερβίας; for Serbia v. pp. 198–199.

¹⁹ The situation in the Balkans would change to some extent around the middle of the 11th century. Due to the penetration of the Pechenegs, other military centres would gain importance. E.g. Skylitzes described the *magistros* and *doux* of Adrianople, Constantine Arcianites, as *archon* of the West, Scyl. 466.

²⁰ *Oikonomidēs*, Listes 345.

²¹ E.g. this is shown in the inscription about John, *proximos* of the *doux* Theodorokanos, v. p. 161 n. 370. The *proximos/proxemos* is mentioned in the TU (63₃₁) and in the FK (111₁₂; 157₂₇; 171₂₆), as a member of the staff of the *domestikos ton Scholon*. This functionary was omitted in the TB and the TE, but one may assume that the provincial centralisation of military command, carried out through the tagmatic commanders the *doux* and the *katepano*, probably led to partly replicating the staff that belonged to the members of the central command.

²² Subordinate to the *doux* of Antioch were the commanders of the Syrian *strategides*, which was confirmed, for instance, in the case of Balaneus, Laodikcia. In the same sense, the activities of the *doux* of Thessalonike in the war of 976–1018 are indicative (and act of John Chaldos). After 1018, a series of small *strategides* would be formed in the Balkans, the majority of which would rely on the command centres in Thessalonike and Skopje.

katepanate can be used to designate a particular type of military district with flexible borders, which were defined according to its supreme commander.

The homogenisation of military authority carried out at the provincial level did not only herald the Empire's new offensive policy at the frontier. The provincialisation of the tagmatic command was carried out primarily in order to protect and consolidate the conquered territories. With the exception of the *katepano* of Italy and the *doux* of Chaldia, the other positions of regional *doux/katepano* were created at a time when the shifting of the frontiers had mostly been terminated. The fact that Constantinople introduced a military administration in the only just conquered frontier areas through them, also led to expanding the competences of the *doux* or *katepano* from the military to the administrative sector.²³ Of course, this was a temporary status. In the ensuing period, the institution of the *doux/katepano* developed, and the new political context also determined their competences.

The Phokas–Tzimiskes reform resulted in the creation of two types of district in the Byzantine frontier regions. The *doukates/katepanates* were districts of a composite type that incorporated smaller units — *stratigides*. The powers of their *strategoi* could imply a vast degree of independence. The old Byzantine themes continued to exist parallel to the new military systems. Strikingly, the classical territorial-administrative organisation was retained in the interior of Asia Minor,²⁴ however, even the old Byzantine themes would undergo changes in the structure of both military and civil authority in the course of the 11th century.

²³ E.g. the introduction of military administration is confirmed by the absence of data on civil functionaries active in the Balkans during the time of Tzimiskes, v. p. 140.

²⁴ Ahrweiler, *Administration* 85.

II

THE ADMINISTRATION OF BASIL II

The contribution Basil II made to the reform of Byzantine provincial administration could be described briefly through the expansion of state territory: the new conception of frontier authority established during the rule of his two predecessors was applied in the conquered regions in the East — Iberia and Vaspurakan, as it was in the Balkans. However, the claim that there were no fundamental digressions in relation to the Phokas–Tzimiskes epoch is limited only to the sphere of military organisation. The rule of Basil II brought significant changes in the structure of civil provincial administration. They occurred simply because the epoch of big conquests ended in his time: a period of peace began in the Balkans in 1018/1019 and in the East, the situation became stable at the beginning of the twenties in the 11th century. The new political context contributed to the development of the civil administration, which would sideline the representatives of military authority in the Byzantine provinces during the next few decades.

Developments in the East

Continuity in relation to the Phokas–Tzimiskes epoch was reflected during Basil's time in the new military structure being applied in the region of Iberia and Vaspurakan. One should underline that taking possession of those regions was the result of Byzantium's diplomatic activities and not of its military efforts. Also, the establishment of its rule in those regions did not in any way highlight the military role of the *doux* of Chaldia or Mesopotamia.

Iberia — The first reliable data on the *doukes/katepano* of Iberia did not appear till the beginning of the reign of Constantine VIII (1025–1028). Speaking about the changes in the administration that regularly accompanied a change on the throne, John Skylitzes mentioned that Niketas of Pisidia was appointed *doux* (Scyl. 370).²⁵ Still, there is no doubt that this position was created during Basil's time,²⁶ but it is

²⁵ Cf. Aristak. 27. The seal of Niketas, *patrikios* and *doux* of Iberia (Z II no. 1026) is assumed to have belonged to the Niketas from the time of Constantine VIII, cf. Holmes, Basil II, 362 et n. 148.

²⁶ There are different views regarding the name of the first *katepano* of Iberia. According to Yuzbashian, Administration 156–157, Niketas succeeded Romanos Dalassenos in Iberia, who was probably holding that position in 1022, cf. Cheynet, Trois familles 85. Holmes, Basil II, 362 et n. 148,

not known whether authority was organised in Iberia after the death of the *kouropalates* David (1000) or only in 1021/1022.²⁷ Be that as it may, the region of Byzantine Iberia was designated as the seat of the *doux/katepano*, and the prosopographic lists indicate that this position was almost regularly occupied during the 11th century.²⁸ The centre of Byzantine Iberia was in Theodosiupolis, and so the *doux/katepano* of Iberia was also described as the *doux* of Theodosiupolis during the second half of the 11th century. One may assume that a number of the “Armenian” themes were aligned militarily with the Iberian command centre.²⁹

Civil administration in Iberia was under the control of a judge/*praitor*, which was confirmed on 11th century seals (DOSeals IV, 75.2; 75.4). A seal from the middle of the 11th century indicates that Iberia could have come under the administration of Chaldia: the owner of the seal was a certain John, *spatharokandidatos*, judge of Chaldia and Derzene and *chartoularios* of the “Iberian bureau” (τοῦ ἰβηρικοῦ σεκρέτου), which is assumed to have been located in Trebizond.³⁰ It is also illustrative that Constantine IX Monomachos disbanded the “Iberian army” (τὸν Ἰβηρικὸν στρατὸν), which numbered roughly 50,000 men and that instead of troops, he imposed heavy taxes on that district (Scyl. 476; cf. Attal. 44–45).³¹

Vasporakan — Byzantium gained possession of the area south of Lake Van by diplomatic means, most probably in 1021/1022.³² Skylitzes (354–355) mentioned that Senacherim, the “*archon* of Upper Media”, i.e. Vasporakan, handed over “the entire country” to the emperor and in return received the title of *patrikios* (Kekaum. 298: *magistros*) and the position of *strategos* of the theme of Cappadocia;³³ he also gained possession (κτηῖσιν ἀντιλαμβάν) of several Byzantine cities — Sebasteia, Larissa, and Abara — and many other estates (ἄλλας κτήσεις πολλὰς).³⁴ All three

however, it is assumed that one can identify Niketas as the *katepano* who returned the Byzantine hostage, Bagrat, the son of George of Abasgia, from Byzantium to his own land in 1025.

²⁷ In more detail *Holmes*, Basil II, 361 sq.

²⁸ For the prosopographic list v. *Kühn*, *Armee* 188–191; cf. DOSeals IV, p. 166 (comment.).

²⁹ For the list of *strategides* who possibly came under the command authority of the *doux/katepano* of Iberia v. *Kühn*, *Armee* 187–188. For the *strategos* of Artze, cf. DOSeals IV, p. 148 (comment.).

³⁰ Collection Zacos no. 37 et p. 73 (comment.).

³¹ At issue is the fiscalisation of the *strateia*, *Oikonomidēs*, Fiscalité 119; *Cheyne*, Skyl. 393 n. 202, considers that the said roughly 50,000 troops should not be interpreted as the real number of soldiers active in the district of Iberia, but that it may have involved families registered in the military lists.

³² The section in which Skylitzes gives an account of these events is dated to the year 1016 (Scyl. 354–355), but it actually refers to 1021/1022, cf. *Holmes*, Basil II, 483–484. Aristakes 19, dates this event to the time before the rebellion of Nikephoros Xiphias and Nikephoros Phokas (August 1022, cf. *Cheyne*, *Pouvoir* 36 no. 21). *Seibt*, Vasporakan 61–62, 65, dates the formation of the katepanate of Vasporakan, that is, the beginning of the mandate of the first *katepano* of V., Basil Argyros, in the first half of 1022; at the end of that same year, Basil II came to Vasporakan, which represented a kind of military demonstration.

³³ According to *Seibt*, Vasporakan 53–55, 65, the title of *patrikios* and the position of *strategos* of Cappadocia was granted to Senacherim's elder son, David, who entered Byzantine service in May 1018–1019; in 1022, he supported the rebellion of Nikephoros Phokas and Nikephoros Xiphias. As Kekaumenos recounts, Senacherim was awarded with the higher title of *magistros*.

³⁴ For a detailed presentation of the history of the katepanate of Vasporakan v. *Yuzbashian*, Administration 148–154; *Valentina S. Šandrovskaja*, K istorii femy Vasporakan, VV 55/1 (1994)

cities were organised in themes and their *strategoi* were mentioned in the TE (265₁₃; 267₁₁, 23). They were certainly not given to Senacherim as permanent possessions (it was probably only the tax income from the aforesaid themes that he was awarded),³⁵ but the distinction Skylitzes makes between the old theme of Cappadocia and the Armenian themes is interesting: in the first case, the function and honorary title defined the position in the official hierarchy of Byzantine dignitaries,³⁶ whereas in the case of the three small *strategides*, their military importance was lost and so, to all intents and purposes, they were treated as fiscal units.³⁷

According to Skylitzes, Basil II entrusted power in Vaspurakan to the *patrikios* Basil Argyros,³⁸ whom he soon dismissed for bad management, replacing him with the *protospatharios* Nikephoros Komnenos (Scyl. 355). The same writer describes Komnenos as the “*archon* of Vaspurakan”, but also as a “*strategos*” (Scyl. 371–372).³⁹ The first reliable data about the *katepano* of Vaspurakan is to be found on the seal of Theophylaktos Dalassenos,⁴⁰ who probably succeeded Nikephoros Komnenos in 1026. The aforesaid would suggest that in the district of Vaspurakan, a command centre in the rank of a doukate/katepanate had been organised even in the time of Basil II. Sources in the 11th century sporadically mention these functionaries,⁴¹ confirming that the district of Vaspurakan under the military administration of a *katepano/doux* had assumed the role of an important frontier region.

The poleis on the Euphrates — Most probably, one should attribute the foundation of the theme of “the poleis on the Euphrates” (Scyl. 382: Lower Media), as

152–161; cf. Holmes, Basil II, 360, 363–367; 483–487. For a prosopographic list of the *katepano* of v. Kühn, Armée 192–195. It appears that Senacherim's concession of the territory of Byzantium followed immediately after John Smbat, ruler of the principality of Ani, bequeathed his principality to Basil II in the winter of 1021/1022. The principality of Ani would not be included in the Empire until the time of Constantine IX Monomachos, in 1044; about the doukate of Ani v. Kühn, Armée 202–204.

³⁵ During the second half of the 10th and in the 11th century, records exist of several instances in which concessions were made of Byzantine cities and districts to foreign rulers, *Yuzbashian*, Administration 154; *Artjunova*, Edessa 138. *Oikonomides*, Fiscalité 221–222, mentions that Basil II also granted Bardas Skleros the right to collect taxes, once the latter ended his rebellion in 989, and that this practice was more common in the period of the Komnenoi.

³⁶ The belief exists that the personnel changes in the theme of Cappadocia, where the Phokas family traditionally wielded influence, were due to the disloyalty of its aristocracy, who supported the rebellion of Nikephoros Xiphias and Nikephoros Phokas at that time (1021), *Howard-Johnston*, Crown Lands 97–98; cf. *Cheyne*, Basil II and Asia Minor 94 et n. 107.

³⁷ *Howard-Johnston*, Crown Lands 96–97.

³⁸ Kühn, Armée 193; *Cheyne* — *Vannier*, Argyroi 72.

³⁹ The data on Nikephoros Komnenos originates from 1026, when a conflict arose between him and Constantine VIII. Komnenos was accused of conspiracy against the emperor. Allegedly, confronted with the desertion of his troops, he made them pledge “to die with him, fighting the enemy”; from his soldiers, he obtained guarantees in the form of a “written document”, substantiated by them vowing to fight and die with their “*strategos*”, Scyl. 371–372. According to Aristakes (26–27), the suppression of the rebellion was entrusted to the army of Cappadocia, which can only be assumed to have been stationed in the region of Vaspurakan at that time. Cf. *Cheyne*, Pouvoir 380 no. 24; *Krsmanović*, Uspon 38–4; Holmes, Basil II 363, 364 et 150.

⁴⁰ *Cheyne*, Trois familles 83.

⁴¹ For a prosopographic list v. Kühn, Armée 193–195; Collection Zacos 93–94 (*J.-C. Cheyne*); cf. Holmes, Basil II, 365–366.

well as the small theme of Telouch to Basil II. The commanders of these districts were left out of the TE but the territories themselves had belonged to Byzantium earlier. In both cases this refers to military units of tremendous strategic importance, which differed in their internal structure. The first was of a composite character and encompassed several cities on the banks along the upper course of the Euphrates, dominated by Samosata.⁴² The rank of the commanders of “the poleis on the Euphrates” is controversial.⁴³ We know that in 1030 George Maniakes, the then *strategos* of Telouch, defended his *strategis* from an Arab attack. Romanos III rewarded him with the position of “*katepano* of Lower Media” (Scyl. 382), a district whose seat was in Samosata. On another occasion, Skylitzes mentioned that Maniakes, the “*strategos* of the poleis on the Euphrates” conquered Edessa in 1031 (Scyl. 387). In later sources, it emerged that Edessa became the new seat of the district and that a *doux/katepano* was assigned to this city. Although reliable evidence about the *doukes/katepano* of Edessa originated in the middle of the 11th century,⁴⁴ the strategic importance of Edessa justified the assignment of a military functionary of the highest rank to that city, as soon as it became a Byzantine possession. Apart from that, based on the geographical position of the district of “the poleis on the Euphrates”, and Skylitzes’ already attested use of the term *strategos* to designate a *doux/katepano*, suggests that even before the conquest of Edessa, Byzantium had formed a tagmatic command centre under the command of a *doux* in the region of the Euphrates.⁴⁵

Telouch was a possession of Byzantium from the year 962. It was a small theme under the command of a *strategos*. However, he was not mentioned in the TE, which suggests that this *strategis* was formed a little later.⁴⁶ The earliest data about the *strategos* of Telouch refers to George Maniakes and the rule of Romanos III

⁴² In the first half of the 4th century, the province of Augusta Euphratensis was formed, encompassing at least about twenty cities in the region of Coele-Syria, e.g. Hierapolis, Telouch, Samosata etc., ODB 2, 748.

⁴³ The dilemmas connected with the status of “the poleis on the Euphrates” can to some extent be compared with the dilemmas raised by the military organisation of Paradounavon/Paristrion, v. pp. 194–198.

⁴⁴ This refers to Aaron, *doux* of Edessa, whose mandate *Artjunova*, Edessa 140, dates from the period 1057–1059; according to *Cheyne*, Du stratège au duc 186, Aaron held that position in around 1050. In the Collection Zacus no. 30, the seal was published of an anonymous member of the Apokapes family, a *patrikios*, *vestes* and *katepano* of Edessa; his mandate *Cheyne* (p. 61) dates to 1025–1050, and the seal to the middle of the 11th century. *Idem*, Du stratège au duc 186 n. 34, mentions that a certain Barasbatze, about whom Skylitzes (403) says that in 1038, he was the *strategountos* in Edessa, was most probably the *doux*, seeing that this Byzantine writer used the same words to describe the function of the *doux* of Antioch (and the *doux* of Thessalonike, etc.). For a prosopographic list, v. *Kühn*, Armée 198–202; the more recent one is given in the Collection Zacus p. 59 (*J.-C. Cheynet*).

⁴⁵ The *Treaty of Devol* mentioned the districts that Bohemund was to receive in exchange for the possessions he lost in the doukate of Antioch. Among other things, two themes were mentioned in the vicinity of Edessa, the themes of Limnia (τὰ Λίμνια) and Aetos (though it was not specified whether they belonged to Edessa), as well as the annual taxes from that region, which were conceded to Bohemund. In addition, it said that he was given the “*doukaton*” with all the fortresses and regions belonging to it, or which constituted it (Alex. 421). Although the name of the doukate was not explicitly mentioned, one can assume from the context that it involved the territory of the doukate Edessa.

⁴⁶ The possibility that the *strategos* of Telouch was omitted from the TE is not to be excluded.

Argyros. According to the *Treaty of Devol*, Telouch and its neighbourhood came under the jurisdiction of the doukate of Antioch.⁴⁷

An eastern model on the example of the Balkans

As opposed to the East, where the frontier organisation in Basil's time merely consisted of continuing the reforms commenced by his two predecessors, Balkan circumstances were characterised by continuity and discontinuity, at the same time, in relation to Tzimiskes' epoch. The renewal of the Bulgarian state in the Balkans (in 976) erased Tzimiskes' victories from 970/971. The new administrative arrangement of the conquered areas in the interior of the Peninsula did not come until after 1018/1019. The discontinuity with the previous epoch was reflected in the territorial distribution of Byzantine authority: on the one hand, in the time of Basil II, the Empire expanded into the interior of the Peninsula and, on the other, the new organisation brought a different territorial conception of the regions that had been under Byzantine rule since earlier on.

If one proceeds from the claim that the organisation of Byzantium's eastern frontier relied on two elements — on so-called small themes headed by *strategoi* and regional *doukes/katepano* — the question arises as to whether a parallel can be drawn with Balkan circumstances and, if it can, in what degree did the eastern model reflect on the conception of the borders in the Balkans in the time of John I Tzimiskes and, especially, Basil II. Of course, not all of the positions of the eastern *doukes/katepano* had to have been established before the Balkan ones to speak of the model that was applied in the reoccupied Balkan regions, first of all under Tzimiskes and subsequently under Basil II. In this case, the essential thing was the principle on which the new structure of authority relied and which consisted of the said two elements. The *Taktikon Escorial* shows that Tzimiskes' organisation of the borders in the Balkans, which followed after the Russian-Byzantine war for Bulgaria, relied on that principle. However, the differences in the conception of the two frontiers are much more indicative in examining the essence of the reform.

The second reoccupation of the Balkans, carried out under Basil II, placed the spotlight on the fundamental weaknesses of the Balkan borders during Tzimiskes' epoch: a) the insufficiently developed system of themes-fortresses; b) the unconsolidated command centres; c) the insufficient population of the Balkan regions.

The system of themes-fortresses — While the frontier belt in the East gradually developed in the course of several decades with the foundation of individual *strategides* in the areas where Byzantium had partly established its authority, in the Balkans the frontier belt of this type was formed in a matter of years. The appointment of Byzantine *strategoi* in the cities and fortresses in the territory of the annulled Bulgarian state followed immediately after the conquest of those areas (970/971), as attested in the TE, the sphragistic material and the narrative sources: in

⁴⁷ Cf. p. 113.

the north, in the Danubian region, the sources registered a *strategos of Morava* (only the dating of the seal is not certain), the *strategos of Mesopotamia of the West* — (the precise whereabouts of the fortress is uncertain) and the *strategos of Dorostolon*. In the interior, the small *strategis of Beroe* (present-day Stara Zagora), as well as the *strategis of Ioannoupolis* (Great Preslav), whose territory was joined to the old district of Thrace. The region of the old frontier belt was occupied with territorially smaller, new themes, and thus the TE lists the *strategoï of New Strymon* and *Strymon/Chrysaba*, in the area between Byzantine Macedonia and Thessalonike. The *strategides of Drougoubiteia*, *Berroia* and *Edessa* were formed in the region of Thessalonike. And the small theme of *Jericho* was created on the Adriatic coast, in the region between the old themes of Dyrrachion and Nikopolis.

Although the new military-administrative organisation did not rely on the territorial compactness of the conquered areas, Byzantine rule in the East was sufficiently consolidated thanks to the gradual and ever-growing number of *strategides* of the new type. This lack of geographical compactness of the Byzantine possessions was also characteristic for the Balkans, where a frontier belt was established with a relatively small number of fortified positions, while a large area in the interior remained beyond the reach of Byzantine rule. Judging by the order of the tagmatic army command centres attested in the TE (in Balkan Mesopotamia, in Adrianople and Thessalonike), as well as the seal of the *katepano* of Ras, the future offensive policy of the Empire should have focused precisely on that unconquered territory in the interior of the Peninsula. The Balkan frontier, planned in such a way, was in actual fact penetrated *from the inside*: in 976, a rebellion broke out in south-western Macedonia,⁴⁸ which would for a short while obliterate Tzimiskes' and — it would be opportune to mention on this occasion — for the Byzantines, unexpected success.⁴⁹

The war Basil II waged with Samuel and his successors confirmed the weak point in the Balkan frontier. This several-decade long war was rightly described as *the war for the fortresses*: John Skylitzes' *Synopsis historiarum*, the most detailed source for the epoch of the Byzantine-Bulgarian war (976–1018), mainly contains descriptions of the sieges and surrenders of the fortresses in the interior of the Peninsula.⁵⁰ The second reoccupation of the Balkans consisted of seizing the fortresses where the garrisons had remained — as guarantees of Byzantine rule. It was not until after the war ended that the new military-administrative organisation was carried out, in which the conquered cities/fortresses were integrated into larger military units, headed by *doukes/katepano* or *strategoï*. Hence, one should interpret the term *boulgarika themata* (βουλγαρικά θέματα) which was known only from the

⁴⁸ For the native region of the *kometopouloi* v. p. 147.

⁴⁹ Diac. 159; cf. *Pirivatrić*, *Samuilova država* 31–32.

⁵⁰ *Kyriakidis*, *Βυζ.* *Μελ.* IV, 148–151, 161, 173. The war of 976–1018 was waged by the Bulgarian overlords, most of whom were the commanders of the Balkan fortresses. That fact influenced the nature of warfare, which boiled down to capturing and defending fortified positions, with the two armies rarely engaging in open battle (at Trajan's Gate, at the Spercheios River, at Belasica/Kleidion), *Pirivatrić*, *Samuilova država* 98, 168–180.

middle of the 12th century (1152),⁵¹ as a kind of equivalent of the already common term in the East — *armeniaka themata*.⁵² In that sense, the internal structure of the so-called doukate of Bulgaria, formed after 1018, is indicative. It had a composite character, which meant that within its (admittedly, questionable) borders, there were smaller *strategides*, and homogenisation, at least in the military respect, was carried out through the position of the *doux* of Bulgaria/Skopje. Comparing the data from Skylitzes' *Synopsis historiarum* and the *sigillia* of Basil II defining the territory of the Ochrid Archbishopric, with the data from the chrysobull of Alexios III Angelos (1198),⁵³ Kyriakidis assumed that the majority of the small (fiscal) themes mentioned in Alexios' Charter were formed just after the war ended, in 1018.⁵⁴ His assumption could be substantiated by the numerous seals of the *strategoi* of the cities dating from the 11th century. They confirm that the establishment of the new frontier organisation in the interior of the Peninsula was carried out on the model of the one applied from the beginning of the 10th century in the eastern frontier regions. The inscriptions on them testify to the foundation of small *strategides* in Kastoria,⁵⁵ Naissos,⁵⁶ Traianoupolis,⁵⁷ Preslav,⁵⁸ Anchialos,⁵⁹ Presthslavitz, ⁶⁰ Philippoupolis,⁶¹

⁵¹ The expression βουλγαρικά θέματα originates from the *praktikon* of Michael Tzagkitzakes to the Eleousa Monastery (Veljusa), located in "the theme of Strumica"; in this place, the term designates small themes in the neighbourhood of Strumica. The monastery was founded in the time of Nikephoros III Botaneiates and enjoyed the assistance of the emperors from the Komnenoi dynasty, *Archive de l'Athos XVIII, Actes d'Iviron III, de 1204 à 1328*, ed. J. Lefort, N. Oikonomidès, D. Papachryssanthou, V. Kravari, avec la collab. H. Mèrèvèli, Paris 1994, no. 56, p. 79, l.128. Also, the expression *boulgarika themata* was used by Niketas Choniates for the themes in the region of Serres, Nicetae Choniatae *Historia*, rec. J. A. van Dieten, CFHB, XI/1, Series Berolinensis, Berlin–New York 1975, 465₂₄: τοῖς περὶ τὰς Σέρρας Βουλγαρικοῖς θέμασι.

⁵² Ahrweiler, *Administration* 80 et n. 2. The *boulgarika temata* were far less important than the *armeniaka themata*. This can be seen from the fact that the *armeniaka themata* were united through the system of civil and military authority (v. p. 209), which suggests that the common term designating the small eastern themes points to the appearance of a new institution in Byzantium, cf. Maksimović, *Tradicija i inovacija* 15 et n. 38.

⁵³ The Chrysobull of Alexios III Angelos (1195–1203), issued in November 1198, regulated the trade privileges to the Venetians (I tratti con Bisanzio 992–1198, ed. M. Pozza et G. Ravegnani, *Pacta Veneta* 4, 1993, 119–137). It has survived in the Latin translation, and expresses the earlier state of affairs regarding provincial administration, Maksimović, *Palaialogoi* 34, 35 et n. 12.

⁵⁴ Kyriakidis, Βυζ. Μελ. IV, 153–159, 161–166, 173. The author primarily gives military reasons for the creation of small military themes in the East and in the Balkans, *ibid.* 148–151, 161, 173. For the appointment of the *strategoi* of the new themes of Dryinoupolis and Koloneia, cf. Scyl. 363.

⁵⁵ DOSeals I, 23.1 (11th c.)

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 32.2 (11th c.).

⁵⁷ Maksimović, *Trajanupolj* 63–67; Lj. Maksimović — M. Popović, *Les sceaux byzantins de la région danubienne en Serbie*, SBS 2 (1990) 233.

⁵⁸ DOSeals I, 69.1; Corpus I, 63.3; 63.6 (cf. J nos. 291–297; 298–302). The seal of the imperial *spatharokandidatos* and *tourmarches* of Preslav, dated to the 10th century, is interesting (DOSeals I, 69.2). After 971, Preslav was renamed Ioannoupolis, and Basil II probably restored the city's old name, therefore, one could attribute this seal to his epoch.

⁵⁹ A seal dated to the 10th–11th century, DOSeals I, 73.1.

⁶⁰ Corpus I, 63.1.A–D.; 63.5; 63.7–63.9 (cf. J nos. 304–307; 309–310; 311; 312; DOSeals I, 78.4).

⁶¹ J no. 321; Corpus I, 77.1 (Constantine Peter).

Varna⁶² etc. If one delves a little deeper into the past, one inevitably notices that this organisation was characterised by continuity over a longer span of time. Samuel's state relied on the commanders of fortresses and the adjacent territory. They were representatives of the ruling Bulgarian classes, for whom the Byzantine authors used different expressions to describe (κατάρχων, φυλάττων, κρατῶν, φύλαξ, ἄρχων τοῦ κάστρου, κεφαλὴ, τοπάρχης, ὁ τῶν ἐνδοτέρω κάστρων τοπάρχης, etc.). The Empire established its authority in the Balkans only after a sufficient number of Samuel's fort commanders had been replaced by Byzantine commanders.⁶³

It seems that the new Byzantine administrative-military organisation did not entail a change in the administrative structure of the conquered state but a change of personnel and of a territorial nature (if the borders of the Byzantine *strategides* could differ from the borders of the former regions that belonged to Samuel's grantees). In any case, Basil's reoccupation of the Balkans was largely based on preserving the situation as he found it, which the Empire adjusted to, allowing a unified Church organisation in the territory of the former Bulgarian state, taking control of the structure of military-administrative rule and retaining the tax system, which the Byzantine chroniclers emphasised.⁶⁴

Command centres in the Balkans — The problem of the reform in the Balkans should be examined from yet another angle: can the data from the TE regarding the Balkan *doukes* and *katepano* be interpreted as real evidence that command centres were created over tagmatic troops in that region? Or to put it differently — what was the true range of Tzimiskes' reform of the military administration in the Balkans?

An analogy with circumstances in the East in this domain, too, establishes a significant difference between the Balkan and the eastern frontiers. To put it simply, it boils down to the statement that the sources regardless of the scarcity of data, nevertheless testified to the continued survival of three eastern command centres over the tagmatic army — in Antioch, Mesopotamia and Chaldia. In contrast, in the Balkans, the partial suppression of Byzantine authority came about in the course of one decade (976–986) in the area of Tzimiskes' frontier belt.⁶⁵

It is indicative that Byzantium managed to retain control over the old themes — Thessalonike, Macedonia and Thrace — and that it lost the regions conquered in the war of 970/971 during the first decade of the war with Samuel. Tzimiskes' reform changed the order among the Balkan military districts. The sources record that in the military respect, the districts of Thrace and Macedonia still retained a dominant position in the Balkans in the time of the Byzantine-Russian war for Bulgaria. The

⁶² Bleisiegel II, no. 304. Varna came under Byzantine rule in the time of Tzimiskes but the position of *strategos* was created later, perhaps after 1043, Corpus I, pp. 44–45 (*Jordanov*).

⁶³ *Pirivatrić*, *Samuilova država* 169, 170–173. The basic “unit” of rebellion in the strategic sense was the commander of a fortified city, so that the end of the war was decided by his individual subjugation or surrender, *ibid.* 192.

⁶⁴ *Seyl.* 412; *Seyl. Cont.* 162.

⁶⁵ After the fall of the old Bulgarian capitals to Samuel's rule (ca. 986), the Byzantine Balkan frontier was almost identical in the territorial respect to the so-called old frontier belt, formed before Tzimiskes' rule.

reform, which in all likelihood was conducted after the war ended, affirmed Thessalonike as the most important military and, what would soon turn out to be, administrative centre of the Balkans (which the order of Balkan military functions confirms in the TE).⁶⁶ As a result of the new situation, the reform of the military structures in the theme of Macedonia evolved in a different direction from the one suggested in the TE and so in the war against Samuel, Adrianople under the command of a *doux* was not selected as the military centre of this region but Philippoupolis, which was headed by a *strategos*. Apparently, this was a temporary situation, because after peace was restored in 1018, Adrianople kept its position as the military centre from where the homogenisation of authority was carried out in the district of Thrace–Macedonia. If one adds that data about the *katepano* (or the *strategos*) of Danubian Mesopotamia is missing, as well as data about the *katepano* of Ras, we may conclude that Tzimiskes' reform in the Balkans was carried out from "above". It was not the result of long years of development of frontier administrative organisation (like in the East) but a new model of military administration, the effectiveness of which had been confirmed by the successful conquests in the region of Cilicia and Syria, simply adapted to the limited, unexpected and volatile consequences of the Byzantine-Russian war for Bulgaria. For that reason, the image of the Balkan tagmatic centres presented in the TE cannot be taken as a true picture of the reform. The survival and consolidation of authority in the command centres was secured by the presence of a sufficient number of tagmatic army units and uniformity did not exist either in the East or in the Balkans, in that respect.⁶⁷ The sphragistic material is testimony of an authority that had not been consolidated and to Byzantium's need to rely in the circumstances of war on the local, Bulgarian population (the seal of Damian Dobromir). The question is, however, how many troops the Empire was ready, in future, to place under the command of a hitherto subject of a Bulgarian monarch.⁶⁸ To put it simply, the survival of the command centres in Mesopotamia of the West or in Ras could be secured by a significant presence of Byzantine military forces in those areas. However, after having swiftly subjugated Bulgaria, Tzimiskes turned his sights to the war in the East, and the eastern military units — participants in the Byzantine-Russian war — were also withdrawn from the Balkans and transferred to the East. If the data from Basil's rule confirms that it was a great effort for Byzantium to wage war on two fronts — in Syria and in the Balkans — then it is clear that in the time of Tzimiskes, when the conquests in the East were neither terminated nor secured,

⁶⁶ The preference for Thessalonike began in Tzimiskes' time but the war of 976–1018 enabled that centre to win true affirmation 976–1018.

⁶⁷ E.g. the sources indicate that in Tzimiskes and Basil's time, Byzantium continually endeavoured to secure a permanent military presence in Antioch and, more broadly viewed, in the region of Syria. Despite that, it was confirmed that in the circumstances of the Fatimid offensive, the *doux* of Antioch required military support, which he obtained from the Cilician region (Tarsos) and from the central command (in the latter case, the additional military units were under the command of either the *domestikos ton Scholon* of the East or the emperor). However, Byzantium did not maintain a permanent military presence in Mesopotamia and Chaldia.

⁶⁸ The rebellion of the *kometopouloi* in 976 and the creation of the new Bulgarian state confirmed the strength of the tradition of the First Bulgarian Empire. It emerged that the Bulgarian elite only partly and temporarily supported Tzimiskes' invasion of the Balkans.

strengthening the command centres in the region of the Balkan frontier was simply impracticable. The lack of troops demanded carrying out the reform both in the East and in the Balkans, hence its progress depended on the strategic significance attached to it in the particular region.

The demographic problem — The flexibility that Byzantium demonstrated after 1018 in the organisation of the territory it had conquered, was largely stipulated by the geographical features of a region and insufficient population, as a result of which life in the Balkan provinces centred around fortified places. The distribution of the known fortresses indicates that their number was greater in the more accessible areas where there were enough natural communication routes (in the territory east and west of the Vardar River Valley and in the plains of Thessaly). As for the geographical features and the demographic difficulties in the Balkans, there is more data that originates from the period after Basil's rule.⁶⁹ Thus, when speaking about the expedition of Michael IV against Peter Deljan (1040/1041), Attaleiates mentions that after having penetrated from Serdica into "Illyricum",⁷⁰ he subjugated the land of the Bulgars, which was "spacious, large and with many gorges" (τὴν χώραν αὐτῶν πολλὴν καὶ μεγάλην καὶ στενόπορον οὖσαν), with "impassable ravines" (τὰ δυσεξίτητον τῶν ἐν αὐτῇ ἀλόνων), which made it difficult for the previous Byzantine rulers to try to establish their rule over it (Attal. 10). Byzantium endeavoured to resolve its demographic problems by settling the Pechenegs.⁷¹ The first large group under the leadership of Kegen settled in the region south of the Danube in the period between 1043–1045.⁷² They entered military service and the Empire used them to fight their own compatriots, or the Uzes. The second group, under the leadership of Tyrach, most

⁶⁹ The geographical disadvantages of the Balkans, or "the land of the Bulgars" (χώρα τῶν Βουλγάρων) were, so to speak, a commonplace in Byzantine sources, v. e.g. Three Byzantine Military Treatises, Campaign Organization and Tactics 288₆₋₉.

⁷⁰ By the term Illyricum, the Byzantine authors could mean one of the regions that once belonged to the prefecture of Illyricum, *Oikonomides*, *Listes* 288; *J. Nesbitt — N. Oikonomides*, *DOSeals* I, p. 1–2 (Δύσις, the West); cf. *ODB* 2, p. 987.

⁷¹ On two occasions in the time of John I Tzimiskes, the Armenians were deported to the Balkan region, to the area of Philippoupolis, *Kyriakides*, *Βυζ. Μελ.* IV, 163; *Zakythinos*, *Μελέται* II, 60. We know that the resettlement of the population was a side-effect of the war of 976–1018: Basil II deported the inhabitants from the Servia fortress, but it is not known to which region, *Scyl.* 344; the population of Thessaly and Vodena to the region of Boleron, *ibid.* 344–345. On the other hand, at the beginning of the war, Samuel deported the population from Larissa "to the interior of Bulgaria", *ibid.* 330; similarly, he resettled a large number of Rhomaioi and Armenians in the regions around Bitola, Prespa and Ochrid, *ibid.* 363. Meantime, the sources described the deportation of the Balkan population to the East: from the Moglena fortress to Vaspurakan, *ibid.* 352, and the family members of John Vladislav and other prominent Bulgars, who were connected through their possessions and functions with the east of the Empire, after 1018.

⁷² *A. P. Každan*, *Ioann Mavropod, pečenegi i russkie v sredine v., ZRVI* 8/1 (1964) 180, 182, the settlement of the first group of Pechenegs is assumed to have taken place after the defeat they suffered in 1036 at the hands of the Russian Knez Jaroslav, when they set out for the West, and arrived in the region of the Danube; from there, possibly, after the Russian-Byzantine conflict of 1043, they settled in the region south of the Danube. Before they settled, the sources note on several occasions, the Pechenegs crossed the Danube and laid waste to the Byzantine regions: in 1026, when Constantine Diogenes opposed them; around 1035 and 1036, when they penetrated through Bulgaria all the way to Thessalonike, and when they devastated the territory in the districts of Bulgaria, Thrace and Macedonia.

probably settled at the end of the winter of 1046/1047,⁷³ after having previously clashed with the imperial army. After its victory, Byzantium allowed them to settle “in the deserted plains of Bulgaria” (ἐν ταῖς ἐρήμοις τῆς Βουλγαρίας πεδιάσι), imposing on them the obligation to pay tribute and, when necessary, to perform military service. The sources confirm that Basil Monachos, “the *archon* of Bulgaria”, received an enormous number (μυριάδας) of Pechenegs and settled them in the plains around Serdica, Naissos, in Ονče Polje (Scyl. 459) and around Prosek (Attal. 35: οἱ ἐντὸς τῆς Σιδηρᾶς λεγομένης).⁷⁴ John Zonaras described the land of the Bulgars as mostly deserted, also using the characteristic term for such a type of territory — ἔρημος (Zon. 643: ἔρημον οὔσαν τὴν πλείονα).

Basil's military organisation in the Balkans

How many autonomous military-administrative units did Basil II form in the Balkans, after conquering Samuel's state in 1018/1019 and establishing the northern Byzantine frontier on the Danube? Or, to put it more simply, according to which functionary was a military-administrative district to be defined?

It is this question that leads one to examine the scale on which the reform of the state apparatus changed the appearance of the Byzantine province. The new structure of military and civil authority, fundamentally different from the one that was characteristic for the thematic organisation of the classical type, also brought new dilemmas with respect to interpreting the content of particular expressions. Here, primarily, I am thinking of the definition of an autonomous administrative-military district. In the time of the classical thematic organisation, it was determined according to the military functionary — the *strategos* — the bearer of supreme military and civil authority in the territory of his *strategis*, i.e. theme. The appearance of the provincial *doukes/katepano* relativised the frontiers of the *strategides* in certain parts of the Empire, and so data on the new functionaries (analogous to those referring to the *stratego*i of the previous epoch) was interpreted as confirmation of the foundation of districts of the new type — *doukates/katepanates*. Thus, according to the military dignitaries on the threshold between the 10th and the 11th century, two categories of districts could be registered — *doukates* (in whose composition there were *strategides* of limited independence), and *themes/strategides* of the classical type. However, the question of the functionary according to which one could define each administrative district became more topical with the expansion of the civil provincial functionaries — the judges and the *praitores*.

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There is reliable evidence in the sources that after 1018/1019 in the Balkans, there were three command centres of the highest rank: Thessalonike, Adrianople and

⁷³ For dating the settlement of Tyrach's Pechenegs v. *Lefort*, *Rhétorique* 274–275, 284, 303.

⁷⁴ The Prosek fortress is situated near present-day Demir Kapija on the Vardar.

Skopje. The first two were formed under Tzimiskes and only the establishment of the third can be attributed to Basil II. The question is what does the absence of data tell us regarding the activities and rank of other Balkan military commanders. Like in the case with Tzimiskes' reform, Basil's epoch is also viewed from a shifted chronological perspective because one can arrive at a judgement about his administration primarily based on data originating from the time of his successors' reigns.

Bulgaria — The victory of Basil II in 1018/1019 and penetration into the interior of the Peninsula were fundamentally and symbolically expressed first in the organisation of the district of Bulgaria.⁷⁵ The city of Skopje was designated as the military centre of the new district, whose first commander was David Areianites — the "*strategos autokrator* in Skopje" or *katepano* of Bulgaria (Scyl. 358).⁷⁶ Samuel's capital, Ochrid, became the ecclesiastical centre of the largest part of the reoccupied territory of the former Bulgarian state.⁷⁷ One could assume that in 1018, Ochrid became the seat of the *strategos*, if one were to interpret the data on the appointment of Eustathios Daphnomeles as the "*archon tes poleos*" in that way (Scyl. 359, 361). The *strategos* of Ochrid was attested in the later period, but it was mentioned that in 1072, that city had been left unfortified ever since the time when Basil II demolished its fortifications (Scyl. Cont. 164).

The district of Bulgaria was of a composite character. The commanders of the small *strategides* that had been formed during the 976–1018 war, or after it ended, were subordinate to the *doux/katepano* of Skopje/Bulgaria. They were the sub-units of the big military system of Byzantine Bulgaria. In 1072, the *doux* of Skopje, Nikephoros Karantenos, assembled the *strategoï* under his command; among them were the *strategos* of Ochrid, the *patrikios* and *anthypatos* of Devol and the *strategos* of Kastoria (Scyl. Cont. 163, 164). The *strategos* of Kastoria was attested on a seal dated to the 11th century (DOSeals I, 23.1). Although this concerns data from a later period, we may reasonably assume that they were commanders of the garrisons in the Balkan themes-fortresses, formed after 1018.

⁷⁵ After 1018, the term Bulgaria would not be used to denote the old Bulgarian lands between the Balkans and the Danube, Mullett, Theophylact of Ochrid 54; cf. Stephenson, Balkan Frontier 78. For the katepanate of Bulgaria v. Bănescu, Duchés 118–174; Kühn, Armee 227–233 (a prosopographic list); Cheynet, Du stratège au duc 183–184; Maksimović, Organizacija 37 et n. 21; 38; Mullett, Theophylact of Ochrid 53–69; Stephenson, Balkan Frontier 77–79; 135–138; 141 sq.

⁷⁶ Data about the *doux/katepano* of Skopje/Bulgaria became more frequent from the second half of the 11th century (Kühn, Armee 229–231). Linked to Byzantine Bulgaria during the first half of the century, were David Arcianites (1018–?), Christopher Burgaris, perhaps to be identified with Christopher, *katepano* of Bulgaria and Thessalonike, (Z II, no. 969; Stephenson, Balkan Frontier in the Year 1000, 125), Constantine Diogenes (1026); Basil Monachos (1046/7–1053). For the disputed seal of Leo Drimys, *vestes* and *katepano* of Bulgaria, v. Bleisiegel II, no. 278 (middle of 11th c.); cf. Bănescu, Duchés 151; Moravcsik, Byzantinoturcica I, 505; V. Laurent, Byz. 5/2, 1920–1930, 611–614. In addition, there are two seals whose owners are believed to have held the function of "*strategos* of Bulgaria" but serious corrections were proposed in reading their inscriptions: Laurent, BZ 60 (1967) 238, no. 6; cf. Cheynet, Du stratège au duc 183 et n. 18; 184 et n. 19.

⁷⁷ The possessions of the Ochrid Archbishopric were defined in three *sigillia* of Basil II (1019, 1020, 1020–1025), Gelzer, Ungedruckte 42–46; cf. I. Snegarov, Istorija na Ohridskata arhiepiskopija I, Sofia 1924 (19952) 55–59.

As for civil functionaries, the sources attest to the existence of a judge and *praitor* of Bulgaria.⁷⁸ However, the function of the *pronoetes* is a much more interesting function, which apparently represented a specific feature of Byzantine administration in Bulgaria. According to 12th century sources, the *pronoetes* was an official to whom the ruler provisionally granted assets — land or the right to collect taxes, along with the obligation of performing a certain assignment, most often military. Furthermore, they confirmed that the *pronoetai* had broad judicial and fiscal authorities.⁷⁹ Strikingly, the expression πάσης Βουλγαρίας is mentioned on some 11th century seals, next to the term *pronoetes*, and the term *anagrapheus* (a compiler of tax lists⁸⁰).⁸¹ We come across the form “of all Bulgaria” on the seals of the Archbishop of Bulgaria and this expression applies to the extensive territory where the episcopal centres under the jurisdiction of the Archbishopric of Ochrid were located. Bearing in mind the aforesaid, Oikonomides allowed for the possibility that the *pronoetai* “of all Bulgaria” were stewards of church estates, who could accumulate military duties.⁸² That would mean that the territorial jurisdiction of the *pronoetes* “of all Bulgaria” coincided with the borders of the Ochrid Archbishopric and, as such, exceeded the borders of the existing military districts (v. further text). The function of the *pronoetes* was not combined with military duties only in Bulgaria (Basil Monachos, *pronoetes* of Bulgaria, and commander of the Bulgarian army),⁸³ as shown in the example of with Samos (Eusthathios Charsianites, *pronoetes* of Samos and *strategos*).⁸⁴ Cheynet expressed the assumption that, perhaps, *pronoetes* did not represent a technical term in the real sense of the word, all the more so because it was traditionally used for particular regions, as in the case of Bulgaria.⁸⁵

⁷⁸ John, *proedros*, judge of the *Velum* and *pronoetes* of Bulgaria, Schlumberger, Sigillographie no. 3, p. 240–241 (11th c.); no. 6, p. 241: judge of the *Hippodrome* and Bulgaria. For a partial prosopographic list v. Moravcsik, Byzantinoturcica I, 506. The seals of the *praitor* of Bulgaria, whose owners held the rank of *protoproedros* (Schlumberger, Sigillographie no. 5, p. 241; DOSeals I, 29.4) probably belong to the second half of the 11th century because the title *protoproedros* did not appear before 1066, Oikonomides, Listes 299.

⁷⁹ For the *pronoetes* v. N. Bănescu, La signification des titres de πραιτωρ et de προνοητής à Byzance aux XI^e et XII^e s., Miscellanea Giovanni Mercati III, Studi e Testi 123, Vaticano 1946, 387–398; Ahrweiler, Administration 50 n. 4; Litavrin, Bolgarija 245, 266; *idem*, Kekavmen 392 n. 266; Oikonomides, Évolution 149–150; Cheynet, Épiskeptitai 96–97.

⁸⁰ As later sources show, the *anagrapheus* did not belong to the group of civil functionaries subordinate to the provincial judge/*praitor*; the emperor appointed them and they performed their duties in the provinces on his orders.

⁸¹ Schlumberger, Sigillographie no. 2, p. 240: Constantine, *vestarches* and *pronoetes* πάσης Βουλγαρίας; DOSeals I, 29.1: Constantine, *anthypatos*, *patrikios*, *vestes*, *logariastes* and *anagrapheus* πάσης Βουλγαρίας; cf. Bleisiegel II, no. 112, pp. 130–131, which shifts the dating of the seals to the middle of the 11th century.

⁸² Oikonomides, Évolution 150.

⁸³ Different terms are used in the sources to designate the function of Basil Monachos: *pronoetes* (Kekaum. 180); *hegemonas* of the Bulgarian army, *archon* of Bulgaria, *synkellos* (Scyl. 458, 459, 471, 475); *satrapes*, *archegos* of Bulgars, Attal. 37–39.

⁸⁴ Βυζαντινά έγγραφα τῆς μονῆς Πάτμου II: Δημοσίων Λειτουργῶν, ed. Maria Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou, no. 52; 53 (1089); cf. Oikonomides, Évolution 149–150; Cheynet, Épiskeptitai 96 et n. 53.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 96 et n. 52; 97 et n. 57.

The problem of the border of the military district of Bulgaria (i.e. principal region of *doux/katepano* of Skopje/Bulgaria) has not lost its topicality even today. The ambiguities surrounding the size of the territory of Byzantine Bulgaria preclude defining the rank of other command centres, whose military independence was indisputably confirmed in the period following the rule of Basil II.

The assumption is that the so-called katepanate of Bulgaria encompassed the central region of the Peninsula (the area along the Morava/Vardar River Valleys), as well as the central area of Samuel's former state (the territory around Ochrid, Prilep, Prespa, Bitola, Kastoria), which was under the military jurisdiction of the command centre in Thessalonike in the 976–1018 war.⁸⁶ The biggest dilemma involves the northern border of the military district of Bulgaria. Namely, it has not been confirmed whether the territory of the future Paradounavon (Paristrion) was initially incorporated in Byzantine Bulgaria, and only later became separate unit.⁸⁷ Dilemmas also exist regarding the administrative-military status of Sirmium and the fortresses that constituted part of the western *limes* on the Danube (primarily the regions of Belgrade and Braničevo).

Paradounavon — The opinion that a separate military district was formed in the region between the Danube and Mt. Balkan would be substantiated by the attested continuity with Tzimiskes' military organisation in the Balkans (in the so-called Mesopotamia of the West),⁸⁸ as well as by the fact that the *doux/katepano* during the time we are dealing with was linked primarily to the frontier regions. Byzantium is assumed to have renewed its rule in the north-eastern regions of the Balkans around the year 1000, when Theodorokanos and Nikephoros Xiphias conquered Preslav and Pliska. A little later, Basil II (1002) conquered Vidin.⁸⁹ Furthermore, Dorostolon, the military centre of the future Paradounavon, is known to have been under the

⁸⁶ The possible territorial limitation of authority of the military commander of Thessalonike and Skopje is particularly interesting given that in the 11th century, the *doux* of Thessalonike would also be active in the area he had controlled from the Thessalonike military base during the war with Samuel and his successors (v. pp. 204–205). Also interesting are the positions the old Byzantine possessions of Berroia and Servia had in Basil's civil and military organisation. After 1018, their episcopal centres came under the jurisdiction of the Ochrid Archbishopric (Servia was mentioned in the first, and Berroia in the third *sigillion* of Basil II, *Gelzer*, *Ungedruckte* 42–46). However, in the strategic respect, those fortresses relied on the Thessalonike command centre. Berroia was attested as a *strategis* in the TE, and in Tzimiskes' time, as well as during the war of 976–1018, it was a sub-unit of a larger military system, controlled from Thessalonike. Servia would only be attested as a *strategis* in the 11th century (*Zakythinos*, *Μελέται* I, 227), but its creation could be dated to the period of Basil II. This fortress was part of the theme of Thessalonike before the reform introduced at the end of the 10th century.

⁸⁷ Considering that information about the rank and role of the military commanders of Paradounavon, Dyrrachion and Hellas originated from the period after the rule of Basil II, it is possible that the administrative-military organisation of the Balkan provinces in the first half of the 11th century was carried out in two stages: under Basil II, and then in the period between the end of the thirties and the beginning of the fifties of the 11th century, when the sources registered the *doux/katepano* of Paradounavon, Dyrrachion and, in the middle of the century, the *doux* of Hellas.

⁸⁸ *Bănescu*, *Duchès* 54; *Oikonomidès*, *Recherches* 75.

⁸⁹ Vidin was a strongly fortified city and Basil II conquered it after an eight-month siege, *Scyl.* 346.

command of the *strategos* of Tzotzikios (1016/1017), before the end of the war (Scyl. 356).⁹⁰

However, explicit reports about the *doukes/katepano* of Paradounavon do not appear until the second half of the 11th century.⁹¹ But, even before the middle of the century, sources confirmed that a military district of a composite character, unifying several *strategides*, was established in the north-eastern part of the Balkans. The name of the district itself points to this, which in the narrative sources appears in the form of τῶν παρὰ τὸν Ἰστρον πόλεων καὶ χωρίων, τῶν Παριστρίων πόλεων, τῶν παρὰ τῷ Ἰστρῷ φρουρίων (Scyl. 433, 456, 469), τῶν περὶ τὸν Ἰστρον πόλεων (Attal. 97).⁹² All the mentioned expressions were used for the *archontes* of Paradounavon — Katakalon Kekaumenos, who in 1043 defended Varna from a Russian invasion, Michael, the son of Anastasios, active from 1046/1047,⁹³ and Romanos Diogenes, whose mandate fell in the time before 1067, when he was attested as *doux* of Serdica in the rank of *vestarches* (Attal. 97; Scyl. Cont. 121).⁹⁴

It is certain that Paradounavon was treated as a separate military district from the forties of the 11th century (or, more exactly, from the period before 1043, when the first “*archon*”, Katakalon Kekaumenos was recorded). The manner in which Byzantine writers described the function of Katakalon Kekaumenos, of Michael (son of Anastasios) and Romanos Diogenes points to their accumulative military powers: “*archon*” of the cities/fortresses in the Danubian region. The data of John Skylitzes

⁹⁰ Dorostolon/Dristra probably remained under Byzantine rule during the war of 976–1018. The *strategos* was attested on the seals: David, *strategos* of Thrace and Dristra, dated to 986/7 or to the very beginning of the 11th century (Corpus I, 35C.20); Theodoros, *primikerios* and *strategos* of Dristra, dated to the 10th–11th century (ibid. 23.4), cf. p. 138.

⁹¹ The seals of the *doukes/katepano* of Paradounavon are dated to the second half of the 11th century, *Jordanov*, Katepanate of Paradounavon 68–71; Corpus I, nos. 58.1–3. In the narrative sources, the commanders of that rank were mentioned only in the events of the seventies in the 11th c., Scyl. Cont. 166; Attal. 205. DOSeals I, no. 65.1, presents the seal of the *katepano* of Dristra, which the publishers dated to the 11th c.; *Madgearu*, Paradounavon 422, 430, dates the seal to the first/second decade of the 11th c., to the period when the *strategos* Tzotzikios was attested. Cf. more recent work by *M. Meško*, Vývin obranného systému Byzantskej ríše v 11. storočí — príklad témy Paradounavon, Byzantinoslovaca 1 (2006) 128–143 (pp. 131–133: the prosopographic list of the commanders of the theme of Dristra and the theme of Paradounavon).

⁹² Cf. *Maksimović*, Organizacija 36 et n. 27. The seals dated to the second half of the 11th century mention the *katepano* of Παράδουνάβον or τῶν Παραδουνάβτων. In the narrative sources referring to the same period, beside the *doux/katepano* either Dristra would be mentioned, or the form τῶν Παριστρίων (Zon. 713), would be used. Obviously, at that time it became unnecessary to stress the plural form of the cities and fortresses (τῶν πόλεων or φρουρίων).

⁹³ Skylitzes' section referring to Michael bears the date 1048, but the dating of the settlement of Tyrach's Pechenegs is shifted to the winter of 1046/7 (*Lefort*, Rhétorique 274–275), as a result of which one can also shift the date of Michael's mandate. A seal exists that belonged to Michael, *vestarches* and *katepano* of Paradounavon (Z II, no. 602), which *Madgearu*, Paradounavon 424, attributes to Michael, son of Anastasios. *Jordanov*, Katepanate of Paradounavon 65–66, opposes this identification and dates the said seal to the sixties of the 11th century. *Stephenson*, The Balkan Frontier in the Year 1000, 115, suggests that the seal belonged to Michael Dokicianos (Attal. 9).

⁹⁴ The mandate can be dated to the fifties of the 11th c. or before the end of the rule of Constantine X Doukas, *Bănescu*, Duchés 81–84, 171; *Kühn*, Armee 225; *Madgearu*, Paradounavon 431; *Jordanov*, Katepanate of Paradounavon 65. In more detail *Cheyne*, Diogenai 129–131, 137 (no. 7).

about the Byzantine-Pecheneg clashes in 1046/1047 and in the course of the first half of 1047, when a tripartite command was established in actual fact — the commander of the armies of Bulgaria (Basil Monachos), the *doux* of Adrianople (Constantine Areianites) and the “archon” τῶν Παριστρίων πόλεων (Michael, son of Anastasios)⁹⁵ — also confirm the military independence of Paradounavon. Although dilemmas may be left regarding the interpretation of the term *archon* (e.g. whether this was a *doux/katepano* or not), indubitably, the military authority of the “archon” of the Danubian cities and fortresses was above the authority of the commanders of certain *strategides*.

The seals testify that after the conquest of the north-eastern Balkan regions (around 1000) Byzantine rule was organised by forming small *strategides*, (this refers to the seals of the *strategoï* of Preslav, Presthlavitz, Pliska and Varna⁹⁶). Most of them belong to the first half of the 11th century, while the seals of the *katepano/doux* of Paradounavon, or the *ek prosopou* of Paradounavon, or *tourmarches* of Paradounavon date from the second half of that century.⁹⁷ In any case, this involves *strategides* that were the sub-units of a larger military system. But, the lack of information about the region of Paradounavon in the period between 1016/1017 and 1043 allows for the possibility that the *strategides* of that region were initially incorporated in the district of Bulgaria.⁹⁸

The development of political circumstances in the Balkans in the thirties and forties of the 11th century led to the second stage of reorganisation in the military administration in that part of the Empire. For instance, the creation of the post of *doux/katepano* of Dyrrachion was connected with the separation of Duklja: the expedition against Stephen Vojislav, in 1042, was conducted by the *patrikios* Michael, “archon” (Scyl. 424; Zon. 618), that is the “*katepano*” of Dyrrachion (Kekaum. 184). The later reorganisation of military rule in the theme of Dyrrachion resulted from the fact that that city was not singled out as a more important Byzantine/Bulgarian military base during the 976–1018 war.⁹⁹ The strategic role of Dyrrachion was established only in 1040/1041 (in the rebellion of Peter Deljan). At

⁹⁵ Scyl. 456–458.

⁹⁶ Cf. p. 161 n. 368; p. 188 n. 62.

⁹⁷ Z II, nos. 956; 530. The said seals of the *ek prosopou* of P. and *tourmarches* of P., Jordanov, Katepanate of Paradounavon p. 71, nos. 5, 6, are dated to the fifties-sixties, or to the sixties of the 11th century.

⁹⁸ According to Jordanov, Katepanate of Paradounavon 71, the region of Paradounavon was initially part of the district of Bulgaria, so that the seals of the *strategoï* of the cities in the north-eastern part of the Balkans illustrate the internal structure of the katepanate of Bulgaria; creating the position of *katepano* of Paradounavon led to the homogenisation of authority within Paradounavon so the *strategides*, attested on the seals dated to the first half of the 11th century, were simply dissolved. This argumentation is not logical enough because those same *strategides* were not dissolved when they (may possibly have) belonged to the so-called katepanate of Bulgaria, where the homogenisation of military authority was already conducted through the *doux/katepano* in 1018.

⁹⁹ As the sources show, during the war of 976–1018, not one Byzantine army campaign was organised from Dyrrachion, cf. *Ferluga*, Drač 123. From 1005, Dyrrachion would remain a permanent possession of Byzantium, regardless of attempts by the Bulgarian army to retrieve it. The attacks on the city were particularly intense under John Vladislav, who was killed at Dyrrachion in 1018 (Scyl. 357).

that time, the sources confirmed the existence of a *strategos*,¹⁰⁰ which means that the position of *doux/katepano* was created most probably after the suppression of Deljan's rebellion. One can also view the development of military organisation in the north-eastern part of the Balkans in the same context. The reorganisation of authority in that region and the creation of the position of *doux/katepano* of Paradounavon may have been due to the ever more frequent incursions by the Pechenegs.¹⁰¹ However, the question arises as to whether this means that after 1018, the territory of Paradounavon was part of the military district of Bulgaria (it should be said that there is no explicit confirmation for this claim in the sources). The small *strategides* were not necessarily unified through the function of the *doux/katepano*, evidence of which exists in the data about the functionaries of the *armeniaka themata*. An interesting point in that respect is the seal of the *strategos ton armeniakon thematon*, which belonged to the *anthypatos*, *patrikios*, and *vestes*, Michael (Z II, no. 844), dated to between the sixties and seventies of the 11th century.¹⁰² Although this refers to a later period, when the centralisation of authority was confirmed on several occasions in the region of the *armeniaka themata*, it is indicative that in the said case, accumulative military powers proceeded from the function of the *strategos*, which unified several *strategides*. Moreover, there are signs that the theme of Dyrrachion also had a composite character, prior to the creation of the post of *katepano* (perhaps, the *hypostrategos* subordinated to the *strategos* Basil Senadenos,¹⁰³ Scyl. 410). The composite nature of the district was confirmed in the events of 1042, when the said armies from the neighbouring themes were subordinated to the *archon/katepano* of Dyrrachion (ibid. 424; Kekaum. 184), but the question is whether this relates to a new state of affairs.¹⁰⁴

Apart from the dilemmas concerning the military status of Paradounavon in the period from 1018–1043, there is also the problem of how the civil system was organised in that region. According to what we already know, there was no *judge/praitor* or any other civil functionary linked with Paradounavon,¹⁰⁵ not even in

¹⁰⁰ At the very end of the war, the position of *strategos* of Dyrrachion was held by the *patrikios* Niketas Pegonites (Scyl. 357; J no. 225). After the war ended, Basil II consolidated circumstances in Dyrrachion, Koloneia and Dryinoupolis, and manned the themes with crews and *strategoi*; Dyrrachion was handed to the *strategos* Eustathios Daphnomeles, until then the *archon* of Ochrid (ibid. 363). At the start of Peter Deljan's rebellion, the *strategos* of Dyrrachion was Basil Senadenos (ibid. 410), who held this position in the rank of *protospatharios* (DOSeals I, 12.8).

¹⁰¹ V. e.g. Stephenson, *The Balkan Frontier in the Year 1000*, 114–115.

¹⁰² Seibt, Ἀρμενικά θέματα 134 et n. 2. For the functionaries of the *armeniaka themata* v. p. 209.

¹⁰³ This refers to Michael Dermokaites, with whom Senadenos quarrelled a conflict at Debar (between Dyrrachion and Skopje) and who soon succeeded him in the post of *strategos* of Dyrrachion. The term *hypostrategos* can have different meanings — e.g. a lower-ranking military commander in the staff of the thematic *strategos*, Ahrweiler, *Administration* 40.

¹⁰⁴ Ferluga, Drač 125, assumes that Dryinoupolis and Koloneia could be found among those themes. In the earliest times, the theme of Dyrrachion encompassed 30 cities-fortresses, *Oikonomidēs*, Listes 352.

¹⁰⁵ The seal of the *ek prosopou* of Paradounavon (Z II, no. 956) is not relevant because the competences of that functionary are unclear.

the period when the presence of a *doux/katepano* was attested in that region. Does that mean that Paradounavon had (or, as time passed, gained) military autonomy, which was not accompanied by the autonomy of the civil structures, and so that district remained under the jurisdiction of the judge/*praitor*, and possibly of the *pronoetes* “*pases Bulgarias*”? Or, perhaps, did the *doux/katepano* of Paradounavon also take over civil competences? Besides, the Bishopric of Dorostolon (which was the military centre of Paradounavon) was attached to the Archbishopric of Ochrid.¹⁰⁶ After the middle of the 11th century, Dorostolon became the seat of the Metropolitan, who was under the jurisdiction of the patriarch of Constantinople.¹⁰⁷ However, Preslav and Pliska never belonged to the Archbishopric of Ochrid. Regardless of whether the old Bulgarian capitals were *strategides* within the military system of Bulgaria or Paradounavon, it emerges from the aforesaid that there was no conformity in the organisation of the ecclesiastical, civil or military systems of authority in the Balkans.

Sirmium — The problem of the military district of Sirmium and/or Serbia has been debated in literature on several occasions. Apart from the interpretation, according to which a vast district consisting of all the territory of Samuel's state was formed in the interior of the Balkans immediately after 1018,¹⁰⁸ there are views that two separate themes, Serbia and Sirmium,¹⁰⁹ or one, Sirmium–Serbia,¹¹⁰ were formed in the north-western part of the Peninsula. These differing views are due primarily to the fact that there is no precise data about the hierarchical rank of the military governor of Sirmium (*doux* or *strategos*?).¹¹¹ John Skylitzes indicated both the Bulgarian and the Byzantine commanders of Sirmium with the terms which have no technical meaning in these cases: *kraton* — Nestongos' brother, Sermon (?)¹¹² and

¹⁰⁶ This refers to the second *sigillion* of Basil II, *Gelzer*, Ungedruckte 45.

¹⁰⁷ N. A. Oikonomidēs, Un décret synodal inédit du patriarche Jean VIII Xiphilin concernant l'élection et l'ordination des évêques, *REB* 18 (1960) 57–59; 60–61; the document is dated to March 14th, 1072.

¹⁰⁸ V. N. Zlatarskij, *Ustrojstvo Bolgarii i položenie bolgarskogo naroda v pervoe vremja posle pokorenija ih Vasiljem Bolgarobojceju*, *Seminarium Kondakovianum* 4 (1931) 49–68; cf. *Ahrweiler*, *Administration* 84 et n. 3.

¹⁰⁹ *Mohov*, *Cursus honorum* 32–37; *Maksimović*, *Organizacija* 39–42; *idem*, Βυζάντιο και Σέρβοι 80–82.

¹¹⁰ The majority of studies advocate the idea about the existence of a single theme of Sirmium–Serbia, or the brief existence of the theme of Serbia is linked with the conquest and organisation of the authorities in Sirmium, v. e.g. *Wasilewski*, Sirmium–Serbie; *Falkenhansen*, *Beamtenurkunde* 16–18; *Cheyne*, *Du stratège au duc* 184; *Mullett*, *Theophylact of Ochrid* 61, 63 n. 266; *Stephenson*, *Balkan Frontier* 66; *idem*, *The Balkan Frontier in the Year 1000*, 120, 125–126; *Holmes*, *Basil II*, 192, 234, 423.

¹¹¹ In a Latin chronicle from the 14th century, Diogenes is mentioned under the year 1031, *dux Symensis*, *Wasilewski*, Sirmium–Serbie 477 et n. 65; cf. *Kühn*, *Armee* 235. The information connected with the Magyar-Byzantine conflicts in 1071/2 and 1096, suggests that in the late 11th century, Sirmium was the seat of functionaries in the rank of *doux*, v. p. 200 n. 117.

¹¹² I. Dujčev, *Poslednjat zaštitnik na Srem v 1018. g.*, *Izvestija na Instituta za istorija* 8 (1960) 309–321, assumes that the name Sermon is not a personal name but a metathesis of the toponym Srem. Even in the case of the administrative (and terminological) identification of Sirmium with the theme of Serbia, Nestongos' brother, Sermon, certainly cannot be described as “the Serb ruler” of Sirmium, as in *Holmes*, *Basil II*, 425.

The term *kraton* is not among the usual terms Skylitzes uses to describe the Bulgarian commanders of the Balkan fortresses, but it is also used to denote the commander of the less important fortress of Rakova (Skyl. 364), *Pirivatrič*, *Samuilova država* 131 n. 195.

the *archon* — Constantine Diogenes Philomates (Scyl. 365–366). The *strategos* of Serbia was separately attested on two (?) seals, one of which belonged to the *patrikios* (?) Constantine Diogenes and the other, to *protospatharios* Nicholas.¹¹³

Data on the conquest of Sirmium (1019),¹¹⁴ and particularly records from 1026, corroborate the view that Sirmium had a special military identity that was independent of the district of Bulgaria. Due to the Pecheneg incursions of 1026, command of the military centres of Sirmium and Bulgaria is known to have been unified, because Constantine Diogenes, the “*archon*” of Sirmium, was also appointed *doux* of Bulgaria temporarily, and afterwards returned to his earlier position (Scyl. 373; Zon. 571).¹¹⁵ It is possible that Diogenes’ accumulation of functions in 1026 was attested on the seal that belonged to Constantine, *anthypatos*, *patrikios*, *doux* of Thessalonike, Bulgaria and *Serbias* (ΘΕΧΑΑΩΝ/ΡΣΑΓΑΡ’ S/CEPRAC).¹¹⁶

¹¹³ *Laurent*, Thème 190 et n. 1: Constantine Diogenes; cf. DOSeals I, 34.1: Constantine Diogenes (it is assumed that this is the same seal, whose inscription *Laurent* published without a photograph). Z II, no. 628: the seal of the *protospatharios* Nicholas. Serbia is also mentioned in a *sigillion* of Ljutovit, *protospathaios epi tou chrysotriklinou*, *hypatos* and *strategos* of Serbia and Zahumlje (1039), *Falkenhansen*, *Beamtenurkunde* 10–23.

¹¹⁴ Sirmium was the last Bulgarian stronghold in the Balkans, which came under Byzantine rule only after the surrender of John Vladislav’s widow and sons. Sirmium with the territory that belonged to it, is assumed to have been more independent from the Bulgarian rulers, primarily because of Sirmium’s geographical distance from the central regions of Samuel’s state, *Pirivatrić*, Samuilova država 131 et n. 195. Constantine Diogenes deserves the credit for the conquest of the city; he was the *archon* of the region neighbouring on Sirmium (τὸν ἐκέισε μερὸν ἄρχων), Scyl. 365–366. For the assumption that Diogenes set out from Belgrade to conquer Sirmium, v. *Wasilewski*, Sirmium–Serbie, 474 (from *Paristron braničevien*); *Kalić*, *Beograd* 36; *Pirivatrić*, Samuilova država 132 (from the region of the fortresses of Morava and Belgrade). On the other hand, it is believed that Skylitzes’ expression τὸν ἐκέισε μερὸν ἄρχων can mean the theme of Serbia, *Mohov*, *Cursus honorum* 35; *Maksimović*, *Organizacija* 39–42; *idem*, Βυζάντιοι καὶ Σέρβοι 81 sq.

¹¹⁵ Considering that there is no confirmation of the rank of the military commander of Sirmium, the question is whether the eventual *strategos* of Sirmium, who temporarily took over the duty of *doux* of Bulgaria, would return to the position of *strategos*, which was lower in the official hierarchy than the position belonging to the *doux/katepano*. However, even that variant cannot be excluded, bearing in mind the data about the career of Constantine Diogenes. For instance, he held the position of *katepano/doux* of Thessalonike as a *protospatharios* (*Cheyne*, Diogenes 124–125), and on the seal where he is mentioned as the *strategos* of Serbia, he had, we assume, the more elevated title of *patrikios*. Narrative sources did not confirm this title till the time of Romanos III Argyros, when Diogenes became a monk (Scyl. 384; cf. *ibid.* 352, where the title of *patrikios* applied directly to Nikephoros Xiphias but, apparently, not to Diogenes). Diogenes ended his Balkan career in Thessalonike (*ibid.* 376): this involved promotion to a higher position than the one he had held in Sirmium.

¹¹⁶ *I. Swiencickij*, Byzantinische Bleisiegel in den Sammlungen von Lwow, *Sbornik v pamet na prof. Petăr Nikov*, Sofia 1940, 339 (photograph); 440 no. 11 (inscription without accompanying interpretation). There are different variants in reading the last toponym in the inscription. *Laurent*, Thème 189, decidedly stated that this was *Serbia* (cf. *idem*, BZ 58, 1965, 220). Another solution was *Serres* (*F. Dölger*, BZ 43, 1950, 493, which *Laurent* rejected, Thème 189) or *Servia* (τὰ Σέρβια, Gen.: τὸν Σερβίων !) near Thessalonike (v. e.g. *Litavrin*, *Bolgarija* 271, 273). I am unable, here, to give a more detailed presentation of the problem connected with the theme of Serbia and/or Sirmium, but I would like to draw attention to several things. Firstly, I believe that in the accumulation of the most senior military functions in the Balkans (the *doux* of Thessalonike and Bulgaria), there was no need to mention the commander (*strategos*) of the fortress of Servia, which did not even have the significance that, for instance, belonged to Berroia (a *strategis* formed in the time of Tzimiskes). Secondly, whether this referred to a temporary accumulation of functions or a *curriculum vitae*, the order of the honorary titles and names of the administrative-military districts in the inscription shows that at the time the seal was

What is unclear is Sirmium's position in the civil system of authority, in relation to Byzantine Bulgaria. Just like Paradounavon, there is no confirmation of the existence of a judge/*praitor* whose competences actually referred to the region of the military district of Sirmium. Even so, in the system of church organisation, Sirmium was within the Archbishopric of Ochrid from 1019, like Belgrade and Braničevo. These episcopal centres were mentioned in the first *sigillion* of Basil II.¹¹⁷

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The strategic position of Sirmium and the fact that it was the only important Byzantine fortress, not only on the River Sava but also in the north-western part of the Balkans, also justifies the formation of a new command centre in that region from the aspect of defence. The unknowns connected with the northern border of the district of Bulgaria (whether it stretched to the Danube, encircling Sirmium, Belgrade, Morava, Braničevo and the future Paradounavon) precludes a more reliable definition of the military organisation of the Byzantine *limes* in the north — along the bank of the Danube and around the lower course of the River Sava. But, geostrategically, it consisted of fortified positions distributed in three sectors that represented a forward frontier line, which relied on the military systems in the interior: in the north-east, Dorostolon–Vidin (included in the district/theme of Paradounavon, which was, for its part, adjacent to Macedonia–Thrace, on which it also relied militarily), Braničevo–Belgrade (from where the communication routes along the Morava River Valley were controlled from the north, through which a direct link was established with the

issued, Constantine's function was attached to the last toponym (*Serbia*?) and that the title of *anthypatos* accompanied that position (for the usual order of titles and functions in inscriptions of this type, v. *Oikonomides*, *Listes* 284; *Cheyne*, *Collection Zacos*, p. 74). Thirdly, although there is no patronym, the seal is attributed to Constantine Diogenes, the military commander of Basil II (*Bănescu*, *Duchés* 124; *Laurent*, *Thème* 189–190; *Cheyne*, *Diogénai* 124). Evidence favouring this option is the presentation of St. Demetrios, an iconographic motive often encountered on seals of the members of the Diogenes family (*Bănescu*, *Duchés*; *Cheyne*, *Diogénai*). Moreover, St. Demetrios was the patron of both Sirmium and Thessalonike, the military centres to which Constantine Diogenes was officially assigned, *M. Vickers*, *Sirmium or Thessaloniki? A Critical Examination of the St. Demetrios Legend*, *BZ* 69 (1974) 337–350; *ODB* I, 605–606. Cf. *Ferjančić*, *Vizantijski pečat iz Sirmijuma* 48, 50–51.

¹¹⁷ *Gelzer*, *Ungedruckte* 43. Pressure on the Byzantine Danubian *limes*, which intensified from the middle of the 11th century, led to the military reorganisation of the Balkans and territorially regrouping the command centres. During the Byzantine-Magyar conflicts in 1071/1072, Belgrade was designated as “Alba Bulgarie” (*Dinić*, *Gradja* I, 8–9; II, 10), which does not necessarily imply its administrative status, *Kalić*, *Beograd* 37–38. Attached to Belgrade at that time was an official in the rank of *doux* (Niketas/Nikotas), but apparently this was the *doux* of Sirmium (in 1072, the *doux* of Bulgaria was Nikephoros Karantenos, and than, Damian Dalassenos, *Scyl. Cont.* 163), which Byzantium temporarily lost at that time, *Ferjančić*, *Vizantijski pečat iz Sirmijuma* 50–52; *Kühn*, *Armee* 235. In addition, some twenty years later, in 1096, Belgrade was defended from Magyar attacks by the *dux*, or, *princeps Bulgarorum*, *Kalić*, *Beograd* 36–37; 346 n. 7. This refers to a certain Niketas, to whom we attribute the seal of Niketas Karikes, (*proto*)*proedros* and *doux* of Bulgaria, *Laurent*, *Bulletin de sigillographie byzantine*, *Byz.* 5/2, 1929–1930, 591–592, 610; *H. Hunger*, *Zehn unedierte byzantinische Beamten-Siegel*, *JÖB* 17 (1968) no. 9; *Bleisiegel* II, no. 250. For more details, v. *G. Prinzing*, *Zu Odessos/Varna (im 6. Jh.)*, *Belgrad* (1096) and *Braničevo* (um 1163). Klärung dreier Fragen aus Epigraphik, Prosopographie und Sphragistik, *BSI* 56 (1995) 220–224.

military centre of the district of Bulgaria, and farther on to the south, with Thessalonike) and, in the extreme north-west, the region around the fortress of Sirmium, which relied on the Byzantine possessions extending from the River Drina to the south and the east, in the direction of the Morava River Valley.

Despite the shortcomings of the data in the sources for estimating the military status of the frontier regions along the Danubian *limes*, it is essential once again to emphasise that in the time of Phokas–Tzimiskes, the institution of *doux/katepano* was characteristic for frontier-lying districts. The only change that the rule of Basil II lies in the fact that the command centres of that rank spread towards the interior. In the East, for instance, after the formation of the so-called *doukates* of Iberia, Vaspurakan and possibly, Samosata, i.e. “the poleis on the Euphrates”, a new frontier zone was formed, in reepresented relation to which the command centres of Phokas and Tzimiskes in Chaldia and Mesopotamia the rear frontier region. In the Balkans, this novelty was even more visible with the formation of a tagmatic centre in Skopje, which, in relation to the new Byzantine northern frontier completely receded to the interior. Where the Balkans are concerned, one should remember that the Danube did not represent a serious natural obstacle, proof of which, among other things, were the Pecheneg incursions into the interior of the Peninsula in the wintertime, when people crossed the frozen river as if it were an ordinary land frontier.¹¹⁸ In that context, the organisation of military centres in the interior of the Peninsula must have had more importance for Byzantium.

The choice of Skopje as the military capital of the district of Bulgaria is highly indicative for considering Basil’s military organisation of the Balkans. This refers to one of the cities that secured part of the main communication route in the Peninsula, the Morava–Vardar valley. From the fortified Belgrade and Braničevo on the Danube, through Naissos in the Morava River Valley and Skopje on the Vardar River, the central Balkan communication route emerged at Thessalonike and the shore of the Aegean Sea, dividing the Peninsula into an eastern and western part, and joining the Byzantine possessions in the north (along the Danube) and in the south. From Skopje, Byzantium gained the opportunity to control the south-western part of the Peninsula, regions that extended eastward, westward and, primarily southward from that city.¹¹⁹ This was an area with a strikingly large number of fortified places compared to that which the Empire had e.g. in the north-western part of the Balkans. And so, the choice of Skopje as the seat of the *doux/katepano* could be explained by the fact that the provincial military centres of the new type required a base in small themes and districts that were more densely populated.

The sources in the first half of the 11th century confirm the new reorganisation of authority in the Thessalonike district but it is not certain that this can be attributed

¹¹⁸ E.g. Scyl. 399: ἀφορήτου δὲ παγετοῦ γενομένου καὶ τοῦ Ἰστροῦ κρυσταλλωθέντος οἱ πατζινάκαι περαιωθέντες οὐ μικρῶς τὴν Μυσίαν καὶ Θράκην μέχρι Μακεδονίας ἐκάκωσαν.

¹¹⁹ Skopje was an important hub of communication, linking several routes: from the Morava River Valley and from Kosovo, towards the Vardar River Valley and the lake district in the south of Macedonia, and also in the valley of the Strymon, G. Škrivanić, *Putevi u srednjovekovnoj Srbiji*, Beograd 1974, 9.

to Basil II. The first reorganisation of authority in the region that either belonged or was in the neighbourhood of the theme of Thessalonike was confirmed in the TE. Besides the *strategos* and *doux* of Thessalonike, the *taktikon* of Tzimiskēs' epoch registered the *strategoi* of Berroia, Drougoubiteia, Edessa (Vodena), Strymon/Chrysaba and New Strymon. Regardless of the military importance the command centre in Thessalonike enjoyed in the period of 976–1018, the borders of that district after 1018 did not extend to the regions that in wartime fell under the jurisdiction of the *doux* of Thessalonike (e.g. the former central parts of Samuel's state were inside the borders of Byzantine Bulgaria). The second reorganisation of administration in that region was based on the unification of districts, which was confirmed in the domain of civil authority. Through the function of the judge/*praitor*, Thessalonike was linked to Strymon and Boleron and so the sources most often mentioned that area as the theme of Boleron–Strymon–Thessalonike.¹²⁰ That administrative form was attested in 1037, but its formation can be attributed to an earlier period.¹²¹

The district of Boleron was initially in the theme of Strymon.¹²² As a theme it was explicitly mentioned in the *Typikon* of Gregory Pakourianos (1083).¹²³ Still, the foundation of the separate administrative district apparently belonged to the earlier period. Any possible continuity with Tzimiskēs' epoch may be followed from the organisation of New Strymon (if one accepts his whereabouts in the region east of the River Nestos).¹²⁴ However, the importance that Mosynopolis, the centre of Boleron, had in the war from 976–1018 could have led to the reorganisation of the district in which that city was located. It is indicative that on two occasions, Skylitzes mentions the resettlement of the population in the district of Boleron (Scyl. 344, 352). This step was primarily an attempt to separate the rebellious inhabitants from their native regions, which Basil had endeavoured to keep under control; there

¹²⁰ The homogenisation was confirmed of Strymon, Thessalonike and Drougoubiteia (November 996), Ivron I, no. 10.

¹²¹ *N. Oikonomides*, *A Collection of Dated Byzantine Lead Seals*, Washington, D. C. 1986, 83. On the seal of a document belonging to the archive of the Zographou monastery the titles were mentioned of Andronikos, "judge of Boleron, Strymon and Thessalonike"; however, the dating of the said document is questionable because it is possible that it may have originated in 1023 or 1038, *Actes de l' Athos IV*, *Actes de Zographou*, ed. *W. Regel, E. Kurtz, B. Korabiev*, VV 13 (1907), *Priloženie 1*, no. 2, p. 7. Cf. *Lemerle*, *Philippe* 161 n. 2; *Lavra I*, 49 et n. 191. A seal, recently published, which belonged to John, *spatharokandidatos*, *asekretes* and judge of Boleron, Strymon and Thessalonike was dated to the period from around 1030 to 1050, so that it could support the assumption that this kind of administrative form existed in the thirties of the 11th century, *Bleisiegel II*, no. 182.

¹²² The seal exists of a certain Paulos, imperial *kandidatos* and *archon* of Boleron, dated to the late 9th or beginning of the 10th century (*Bleisiegel II*, no. 120), which could be evidence of the particular administrative individuality of Boleron within the theme of Strymon.

¹²³ *Kyriakidis*, *Βυζ. Μελ.* IV, 166.

¹²⁴ *V. p. 134*. The assumption also exists that Boleron and Strymon can be interpreted as one theme, *J. Nesbitt — N. Oikonomides*, *DOSeals I*, p. 2–3, no. 1.1 (cf. et 1.4): in the commentary about the inscription on the seal of George, imperial *spatharokandidatos* and *anagrapheus* of the West, the authors referred to the document signed by Leo, *anagrapheus* of the West, that is, "of four themes" (*Ivron II*, no. 32, l. 30) which are not named; it is possible that these were Thrace, Macedonia, Boleron, Strymon and Thessalonike, with Boleron–Strymon representing one of the four themes, defined by the common term Δύσις.

is reason, however, to assume that this step was also taken in order to improve the demographic situation in the region east of the River Nestos. In that sense, it could be interpreted as the first step aimed at the (new) administrative organisation of Boleron. The administrative identity of Boleron was confirmed on several occasions in the signatures of the civil functionaries of the district of Boleron–Strymon–Thessalonike.¹²⁵

The functioning of the Balkan command centres — The settlement of circumstances in the Balkans after 1018 also determined the role of the military centres and their commanders. Prosopographic data on the *doukes/katepano* of Thessalonike, Skopje, Adrianople and Paradounavon became more frequent from around the middle of the 11th century. That fact cannot be explained merely by the absence of reports in the sources. It is more likely that these positions were not regularly awarded in the first half of the century. More frequent reports about the Balkan military commanders were linked to the level of the threat to the Byzantine frontiers. Thus, for instance, the increasing Pecheneg incursions from the forties of the 11th century led to more dynamic changes in personnel in the Byzantine command centres. One can also observe that there was a certain regularity in the activation of the Balkan command centres.

Defence from the Pechenegs was usually the military task of the *doukes* of Adrianople, Paradounavon and Bulgaria. The districts of Macedonia and Thrace represented the rear to Paradounavon and so the position of the *doux* of Adrianople, as a rule, was activated during the existence of a threat to the region of Paradounavon, from where the Pechenegs could penetrate to the south into Thrace and Macedonia. However, if they advanced in the direction of the Morava–Vardar River Valley, the commander of the Bulgarian command centre, who was able to obtain support in the army of the doukate of Thessalonike, played a greater role. In the thirties of the 11th century, the political situation in the Balkans began to change. The process of independence of Duklja led to the activation of the military command in Dyrrachion, which resulted in creating the position of the *doux/katepano* of Dyrrachion.

The sources also indicate that during the first half of the 11th century, Byzantium did not maintain the constant presence of the necessary number of military units in the Balkan command centres. In that respect, data referring to the rebellion of Peter Deljan (1040/1041) is particularly illustrative.

Peter Deljan reached Skopje, where he proclaimed himself emperor from the north (from Magyar territory) through the region of the fortress of Belgrade and the Morava. On the basis of his movements one gains the impression that no significant military units were stationed in the region of the theme of Bulgaria at that time, nor

¹²⁵ E.g. Ivron I, no. 27 (1042); no. 29 (1047); Pantéléémôn no. 3 (1044?); Lavra I no. 39 (1047); Ivron II, no. 31 (1056); no. 34 (1062); no. 35 (1062); no. 37 (1063). The chrysobull of Constantine X Doukas in 1060, explicitly mentions the ban delivered to the “*doux* or *katepano* or *strategos* or *krites* of Boleron, Strymon and Thessalonike”, Lavra I, no. 33, 1.76–77; cf. Bleisiegel II, p. 187 (comment.). The unification of Boleron–Strymon–Thessalonike was carried out through the function of the judge, *anagrapheus*, *asekretis*. Cf. DOSeals I, 18.24; 18.25; 18.26.

was the function of the *katepano* occupied.¹²⁶ A similar situation prevailed in the Thessalonike command centre. Thus, the first troops to be sent against the rebels came from the theme of Dyrrachion, then governed by the *protospatharios* and *strategos* Basil Senadenos. When the rebels attacked Thessalonike, the emperor was in the city's neighbourhood and with him there were "only his escorts/palace bodyguards because he was traveling through a friendly land" (Attal. 9: μόνους τοὺς ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ σωματοφύλακας ἔχοντα ὡς διὰ φιλίας παροδεύοντα γῆς). We learn from Skylitzes that during Alousianos' siege of Thessalonike (1041), the city was defended by its inhabitants and the "*tagma ton Megathymon*" (Scyl. 413: τὸ τάγμα τῶν μεγαθύμων), who were mentioned for the first and last time in Byzantine sources.¹²⁷ If one adds to the aforesaid that the *patrikios* Constantine, the emperor's nephew, was in Thessalonike at that same time, and that, after the outbreak of the rebellion and the emperor's flight from the city, he was appointed *doux* of Thessalonike, it emerges that apart from the said *tagma*, no special troops of Thessalonike were stationed in this region. Nevertheless, Kekaumenos (188–190) confirmed the military significance of Thessalonike, claiming that the inhabitants of Demetrias in Thessaly, which Peter Deljan had defeated before Alousianos attacked Thessalonike, had sent emissaries to the *doux* of Thessalonike (Constantine?). They requested military assistance to be sent from Thessalonike in order to capture the fortress which at that time was commanded by Ljutovoj of Devol, the Bulgarian *čelnik/strategos*. The *doux* sent ships and troops; the presence of the fleet (of Thessalonike?¹²⁸) in the vicinity of the city port encouraged the inhabitants, who captured the Bulgarian *strategos* and his guards (φύλακας) and handed them over to the Byzantines.

Although, administratively, Demetrias belonged to the district of Hellas,¹²⁹ the region of Thessaly could have found itself under the military authority of the most important commander of the south-western Balkans, in the same way as it had been in the time of the war from 976–1018.¹³⁰ A certain number of local units were stationed in the region of Hellas but it is not certain which command centre they were subordinated to:¹³¹ before the summer of 1040, one portion of the rebel army engaged in battle in Hellas, near Thebai,¹³² with the Byzantine commander, Alekasseus¹³³ and on that occasion "a multitude of Thebans were killed" (Scyl. 411).

¹²⁶ Skylitzes, admittedly, mentions that the rebels killed the Rhomaioi they came across (in the region of the district of Bulgaria), Scyl. 409–410.

¹²⁷ Kühn, *Armee* 249–250; *Cheyne*, Skyl. 342 n. 91, assumes that the *tagma ton Megathymon* was formed in the time of Michael IV and that it did not survive the rule of the members of this family.

¹²⁸ The theme of Thessalonike did not have a significant fleet nor was it a naval base for the provincial fleet, like the theme of Dyrrachion or Hellas, *Ahrweiler*, *Mer* 104–105, 111, 121.

¹²⁹ *Koder — Hild*, *Hellas und Thessalia* 144–145.

¹³⁰ E.g. during the campaign of Nikephoros Ouranos.

¹³¹ We know about the activities of the *doux* of Peloponnesos–Hellas only from the middle of the 11th century, Kühn, *Armee* 240–241.

¹³² It probably refers to Thebai Phthiotides, *Lemerle*, *Prolégomènes* 66. Cf. *Koder — Hild*, *Hellas und Thessalia* 271–272.

¹³³ For the Alekasseus family, which appeared under Tzimiskes v. Scyl. 289; cf. *Cheyne*, *Pouvoir* 228, 239.

The rebellion of Peter Deljan was crushed with the troops the emperor had only managed to organise when he reached the capital from Thessalonike. Attaleiates recounts that the troops were assembled “from all the provinces” (Attal. 10: ἐξ ἀπασῶν τῶν ἐπαρχιῶν συνεστήσατο στρατιάν), which means that they were sent to the region of the Balkans from other parts (from the eastern regions, including mercenary detachments¹³⁴). The Byzantine attack on the rebels was strategically organised in the same way as in the time of Basil’s war: the army invaded the region of Serdica, where it captured the Boion fortress (Attal. 10; Kekaum. 196); from where the emperor penetrated into “Illyricum”, that is into the interior of the Peninsula; according to Skylitzes, Michael arrived from Constantinople in Mosynopolis (where he accepted the surrender of Alousianos) and subsequently made his way to Thessalonike, from where he crossed into “Bulgaria”, captured Deljan near Ostrovo and resumed the campaign in the “interior” (τὰ ἐνδότερα) — in the region of Prilep. Then, just as Basil II had done in 1018, he settled the situation in Bulgaria and appointed *strategoi* in the themes (Scyl. 414; cf. *ibid.* 363).

The events in the first half of the 11th century show that the military command in Thessalonike, just as during the war with Samuel, covered the territory south-west of Thessalonike (Thessaly), and that that city could have served as a base for penetrating into the previously central areas of Samuel’s empire. Thus, Aristakes interpreted the authority of the *doux* of Thessalonike as “administration (pronoia) over Bulgaria and the western region”.¹³⁵

Unstable military organisation was characteristic both for the East (with the exception of the doukate of Antioch) and for the Balkans. Among other things, it was reflected in the unification of the command of two or more command centres in the hands of one person. The accumulation of functions, attested both in the narrative sources and on seals, shows this: *doux* of Thessalonike and Bulgaria, *archon* of Sirmium and *doux* of Bulgaria, and *doux* of Mesopotamia and Chaldia.¹³⁶ It signified the temporary unification of command authorities because of a threat to Byzantine positions in a broader region.

This presentation regarding the functioning of the command centres justifiably poses the question of the definition of autonomous administrative-military entities according to their military functionary. Still, this flexibility and the instability that can be observed in the domain of military organisation in the period after peace was established was not, however, so characteristic for the civil structures of authority.

¹³⁴ Kekaum. 298. According to Matthew of Edessa 103, because of the rebellion, units were mobilised from Sebasteia, Taron and Vaspurakan.

¹³⁵ Aristak. 33. He similarly describes the function of Niketas in Antioch (*ibid.* 34): the emperor appointed his brother *domestikos* and sent him to Antioch, entrusting him with the administration (pronoia) in the region of Tačkastan (the Armenian name for Syria, which the Arabs had conquered, 34 n. 2, *M. Canard, H. Berberian*).

¹³⁶ Cf. p. 179 n. 18.

The affirmation and domination of civil functionaries

(Third digression from the classical thematic system)

The rule of Basil II brought significant changes in the structure of civil provincial administration. They occurred simply because of the fact that during his reign, the epoch of intense conquest had ended: a period of peace began in the Balkans in 1018/1019 and, in the East, the situation was consolidated at the beginning of the twenties of the 11th century. Thus, the marginalisation of the *strategos* — the functionary who personified the thematic organisation of the classical type — was also reflected in the civil domain: with the affirmation of the provincial judge, the judicial and financial competences of the thematic *strategoi* became limited.¹³⁷ The affirmation of judges, which one can already note in the time of Leo VI, became more noticeable during the second half of the 10th century, at the time of the Empire's military expansion.¹³⁸ That process was reflected in the TE in as much as the judges of the Constantinople court were classified in two categories — κριταὶ τοῦ βήλου and κριταὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ Ἱπποδρόμου. The title of *protospatharios* accompanied their function and they did not have a prominent position in Tzimiskes' *taktikon* (TE 273₁₅, 19). They could become judges in the provinces on the basis of a mandate.¹³⁹ However, the judges or *paitores*, mentioned in 11th century sources as the civil governors of a district,¹⁴⁰ were not to be found in the TE, the *taktikon* that registered and testified to the military character of the reforms in the state apparatus. It may be that this was an omission, like in the case of the functionaries from the categories of ἐκ προσώπου, who were omitted in the TE but are attested on numerous seals from the end of the 10th, and especially during the 11th century. Still, it is more likely that the affirmation of civil provincial personnel in the official domain, nevertheless, was a later change in relation to those attested in the military system of authority at the end of the 10th century.

Be that as it may, the result of those changes already appeared during the reign of Basil II. From his time, the provincial administration — civil and military — relied on two functionaries: on the judge (κριτής, δικαστής) or *paitor* (πραίτωρ)¹⁴¹ and the *doux/katepano* or *strategos*, in those areas where the old military structure was retained. The state carried out the homogenisation of authority in the provinces through the said dignitaries in the judicial, financial and military domains. The

¹³⁷ Ahrweiler, Administration 50–52.

¹³⁸ Ibid. 68–69; Vassiliki N. Vlyssidou, Quelques remarques sur l'apparition des juges (première moitié du X^e siècle), Η Βυζαντινή Μικρά Ασία (6ος–12ος αι.), Athens 1998, 59–66.

¹³⁹ Oikonomidès, Listes 322–323. On the other hand, the provincial (thematic) *paitores* were registered only in the TU (53₀₃: οἱ प्राίτωρες τῶν θεμάτων), but it is assumed that this refers to the successors of the *paitores* — the provincial governors from the early Byzantine period, ibid. 344.

¹⁴⁰ According to Oikonomidès, Évolution 148, functionaries with the title of judge, many of whom were attested on seals, probably, were not professional lawyers, as in the case of the judges of the Velum and of the Hippodrome.

¹⁴¹ On the provincial judge/*paitor* v. Ahrweiler, Administration 67–78; Oikonomidès, Évolution 148–149.

competences of the judge and the *praitor* were of a judicial and financial nature (they supervised the provincial tax services they were in charge of).

The affirmation of civil functionaries unequivocally attested in the sources of the 11th century resulted in creating a more complex civil administration. Namely, we remark that the authority of the provincial judge or *praitor* unified two or more districts that had been independent military-administrative units in the previous period. Thus, at the end of the 10th century, even during the war with Samuel, there was mention of the Nicholas “judge of Strymon and Thessalonike” (in the act from December 995) or the “judge of Strymon, Thessalonike and Drougoubiteia” (in the document from November 996).¹⁴² This refers to the same person, whose titles are evidence of the gradual development of civil organisation in the Thessalonike region. At the time when the said documents were issued, Boleron was not yet organised as a separate administrative unit. During the 11th century, new, complex administrations were established of the type Boleron–Strymon–Thessalonike or Thrace–Macedonia or Peloponnesos–Hellas. It seems that they represented a characteristic of the civil administration in the Balkans to a higher degree than was the case in the eastern region. At the same time as these complex civil forms, individual forms survived, as well — the judge of Macedonia¹⁴³ (or the *praitor* of Macedonia and Adrianople¹⁴⁴), Thrace,¹⁴⁵ Drougoubiteia,¹⁴⁶ or in the East — the judge of Mesopotamia, Seleukeia, etc.¹⁴⁷ The independent unification of Strymon and Thessalonike was also confirmed in a seal dated to the second quarter of the 11th century, the owner of which bore the title of *imperial protospatharios*, and *megas kourator* of Strymon and Thessalonike (Bleisiegel II, no. 169).¹⁴⁸ There is an explanation that an abbreviation, which was customary for more complex forms, depended on the content of the decisions by the judge and other civil functionaries: if they did not refer to all the administrative (sub)units, then the entire name of the composite district was not mentioned.¹⁴⁹ Still, it is more essential to stress that in complex and so-called abbreviated forms, the administrative individuality of the district was respected, most of which were attested as such in the earlier period.

¹⁴² Ivron I, nos. 9–10. For the *epoptes* and *anagrapheus* of [Strymon and] Thessalonike v. Lavra I, nos. 2–3 (from 941).

¹⁴³ E.g. DOSeals I, 43.3: judge of the Velum and the Hippodrome of M.; 43.5; 43.9: judge of the Hippodrome and M.; 43.14: *asekretis* and judge of M.; 43.15: judge of Macedonians (from the 11th/12th c.); Bleisiegel II, no. 195: judge of the Hippodrome and M.

¹⁴⁴ DOSeals I, 44.8: judge of the Velum, *praitor* of Macedonia and Adrianoupolis (10th/11th c.); Bleisiegel II, no. 214: *praitor* of Macedonia and Adrianoupolis (ca. 1040–1060).

¹⁴⁵ The judge of Thrace, DOSeals I, 71.10–12; Bleisiegel II, no. 184; no. 185: *dikastes* of T.; DOSeals I, 71.13: judge of the Velum and T.; 71.14: judge of the Hippodrome and T.

¹⁴⁶ For the judges of Drougoubiteia v. DOSeals I, 21.3: judge of the Hippodrome and of Drougoubiteia; Corpus I, 24.1–24.4, 24.7. Other functionaries were also attached to Drougoubiteia, *Oikonomides*, Listes 358 n. 390. Apart from the *strategos* (the seals of Isaac, dated to the 10th–11th c., Jordanov, Preslav nos. 220–221; Corpus I, 24.5), there is also evidence of an *archon* (11th c., DOSeals I, 21.2), *anagrapheus* (DOSeals I, 21.1; J no. 224; cf. Corpus I, 24.6; 24.8; 24.10).

¹⁴⁷ V. pp. 119, 123, 125.

¹⁴⁸ For the assumption that Boleron–Strymon represented one theme, v. p. 202 n. 124.

¹⁴⁹ Ahrweiler, Administration 83.

Within the composite civil systems, the hierarchy of a complex structure of authority must have existed. It seems that the criterion according to which it was established, nevertheless, proceeded from the military significance of the district: in the form Boleron–Strymon–Thessalonike, ostensibly, Thessalonike dominated, having previously affirmed itself as a military centre; Macedonia with Adrianople was dominant in relation to Thrace. The same can be said in the case of the civil unification of Hellas and the Peloponnesos because the strategic importance of Hellas was demonstrated in the war from 976–1018. A *tagma ton Exkoubiton* was stationed in that region during the rule of Romanos II (?) and Basil II; Kekaumenos, namely, mentions the *domestikos ton Exkoubiton* of Hellas (Kekaum. 296: τὸ δομεστικῶν τῶν ἐξκουβίτων τῆς Ἑλλάδος; δομέστικος τῶν ἐξκουβίτων Ἑλλάδος), but one would assume that this was a question of the function of the *domestikos ton Exkoubiton* of the West, attested in the TE (265₁₇).¹⁵⁰ A new command centre in the rank of a doukate would be linked to that district after the middle of the 11th century.¹⁵¹

With the affirmation of the civil officials in the Byzantine provinces, a parallelism of authority was established in relation *doux/strategos* vs. judge/*praitor*. However, the military unification of a district, which we learn of through the activities of the *doux/katepano*, was of a provisory nature (in terms of the territory where the *doux/katepano* exercised their military competences, the composition of the troops they commanded and the duration of their mandate), in the very period when the sources speak of the consolidation of the civil institutions and forms of civil organisation in the provinces. The flexibility of the military organisation depended on the demand for the military system to function efficiently. In peacetime and when the threat to the Empire's frontiers evidently lessened, and when it suspended its offensive policy, the activities of the regional command centres, headed by the *doukes/katepano* or *strategoi*, were directed at coping with current developments in the interior. It was this provisionality and changeability in the military organisation that led to the new provincial system being defined in a different way. Kyriakidis, for instance, established the existence of the *thema* of Boleron–Strymon–Thessalonike, which was administered by the *doux* of Thessalonike and the judge of the theme (τοῦ θέματος) of Boleron–Strymon–Thessalonike.¹⁵² Meanwhile, if one bears in mind that during the first half of the 11th century, the *doux* of Thessalonike operated in the territories south-west and north-west of Thessalonike (the territory of the theme of Hellas and the district of Bulgaria), it would emerge that the competences of the military functionaries of a district did not necessarily

¹⁵⁰ DOSeals I, 1. 17; pp. 1, 9.

¹⁵¹ Kühn, *Armee* 240–241. And in the case of Peloponnesos–Hellas, there is evidence of civil functionaries of a composite administrative form (e.g. judge of P. and H.; *praitor*/judge of P. and H., Bleisiegel II, nos. 179, 183, 215–217; judge of the Hippodrome, P. and H., *ibid.* nos. 180, 181; cf. DOS II, 8.13–8.23, 8.25–8.26, 8.28, 8.32), as well as of single administrative units (judge of the Hippodrome and P., Bleisiegel II, no. 201; judge of P., *ibid.* no. 202; DOSeals I, 8.12: *anagrapheus* and judge of H.; *ibid.* 8. 24; 8.27: judge of H.).

¹⁵² Kyriakidis, Βυζ. Μελ. IV, 100.

coincide territorially with the jurisdiction of the civil authorities.¹⁵³ Ahrweiler presented a list of 23 autonomous administrative districts, which she based on the data about the provincial judges–*praitores*. Today, this list could be enlarged because, for instance, the seals of the *praitor* of Antioch and the judge of Iberia have been published in the meantime, which were not known when her study was published (in 1960).¹⁵⁴

Homogenisation was carried out through civil functionaries in the region of the *armeniaka themata*. This is attested on the seals that belonged to the judges/*praitores* of the *armeniaka themata*, *anagrapheis*, *kouratores*, *asekretai* and *protonotarioi*.¹⁵⁵ It is interesting to note that unification in the military domain was achieved through the function of the *strategos* (Z II, 844).¹⁵⁶ A problem exists in the interpretation of the data about the judges in the “Armenian themes” because, in that case, the expression “Armenian themes” should imply a single administrative unit, i.e. a theme in the technical sense of the word. Parallel with the form “Armenian themes”, it was established that some small themes in the East could rely for support in the civil and military domain on other, more important military-administrative centres (e.g. the *strategos* of Artze, who was subordinate to the *doux* of Chaldia; or the theme of Derzene, which was linked in civil affairs with Chaldia);¹⁵⁷ also, there is evidence of individual cases of small themes becoming unified (DOSeals IV, 59.1: *megas kourator* of Derzene, Rachaba and Chauzizin). Besides that, there is evidence that quite specific functionaries were characteristic for particular districts, e.g. a *kourator* (and not a judge) was most often assigned to Melitene and Tarsos; for Bulgaria — it was a *pronoetes*, etc.¹⁵⁸

The problem, which I have presented in summary form, gives rise to another one: if we know that in the time of Basil II, the state territory expanded in the region of the East and in the Balkans, how can one explain this expansion from the administrative point of view? A good example is the discussion about the borders of the district of Bulgaria. Since the sources do not refer to the existence of the judges of Paradounavon, Sirmium and Serbia but only to the judge of Bulgaria, does it therefore follow that a *thema* was formed in the Balkans in 1018, i.e. an autonomous administrative district of Bulgaria governed by the *doux* of Skopje and the judge or *pronoetes* of Bulgaria? Or, did Paradounavon perhaps have a military but not a civil individuality? One should add that the classical thematic structure was retained in certain regions of the Balkans during the first half of the 11th century, that is, the

¹⁵³ The region of the themes of Strymon and Boleron certainly belonged in the jurisdiction of the *doux* of Thessalonike.

¹⁵⁴ Ahrweiler, Administration 83–85.

¹⁵⁵ Seibt, Ἀρμενικὰ θέματα 134–137; DOS IV, pp. 143–148; Bleisiegel II, nos. 176, 177.

¹⁵⁶ This refers to the seal of Michael, *anthypatos*, *patrikos*, *vestes* and *strategos* of the *armeniaka themata*, dated to between the sixties and seventies of the 11th century, Seibt, Ἀρμενικὰ θέματα 134.

¹⁵⁷ V. pp. 125–126.

¹⁵⁸ The said connection of certain functionaries and regions is also visible regarding military assignments, and so a *doux* was most often connected with Antioch and a *katepano* with Italy, cf. Cheynet, Ἐπισκεπταί 96–97.

district (and this does not mean a small theme), which was under the command of a *strategos* and, in that case, the presence or absence of a judge/*praitor* becomes irrelevant for defining an administrative unit (e.g. the theme of Dyrrachion).¹⁵⁹

Considering these dilemmas, it is more important to establish whether the so-called *civil districts* had their equivalent in the military domain. Although there is not enough data in the sources, the logic of the state machine inferred the Byzantine districts' orientation to military centres, regardless of whether the position of the military commander was occupied at a given moment, or not. This was a question of functions that had been planned, which were activated in keeping with the requirements of the state.

However, the real question is what relation in the official hierarchy was established between the provincial *doux/katepano* and the judge/*praitor*? The absence of an official rank list from the 11th century precludes answering that question only at first. The Byzantine state apparatus had been and remained militarised, which all the available *taktika* from the 9th and 10th centuries (the TU, the FK, the TB and, finally, the TE) verified. In the formal respect, this parallelism of military and civil authorities could be observed in the official titles of the military commanders, who, from the 11th century, already began to take over civil competences in their districts, at the same time mentioning each of their functions — both as judges and *doukes/katepano*.¹⁶⁰ The interpretation of the Byzantine 11th century as being the period of the supremacy of the civil aristocracy¹⁶¹ is substantiated by the development of the administration only to a certain degree. Nevertheless, the fact is that it was the military reform that paved the way for the affirmation of civil functionaries: in transforming its state apparatus, Byzantium was guided by military criteria. For that reason, finally, the parallelism of the military and civil structures of authority in the provinces would end with the unequivocal affirmation of the *stratitikon genos*.

¹⁵⁹ I have no insight into whether the first known record of the *praitor* of Dyrrachion originates from the letter of Theophylaktos of Ochrid, which Mullett, Theophylact of Ochrid 294, assumes was written in the summer of 1095. The letter was not dated in the edition Théophylacte d'Achrida Lettres, ed. P. Gautier, Thessalonique 1986, no. 435; cf. p. 83; Katičić, VIINJ III, 270 et n. 46 (review of earlier bibliography), dates it to the time after 1095.

¹⁶⁰ E.g. the seal of Constantine, *patrikios, hypatos*, judge and *katepano* of Mesopotamia (11th c.), DOSeals IV, 55.7; cf. Ahrweiler, Administration 71 n. 7. *Oikonomidēs*, Évolution 149, note that a difference existed between the *doukes* and the judges/*praitores* throughout a large part of the reign of Alexios I Komnenos, but that in practice, the *doukes* more and more often undertook the duties of the *praitores*, and that this accumulation of functions finally led to the disappearance of the judge/*praitor* as a provincial governor.

¹⁶¹ G. Ostrogorsky, Byzantinische Geschichte (324–1453), München 1996², 266 sq. For the discussion about the *genos stratitikon* and the *genos politikon* v. W. E. Kaegi, The Controversy About Bureaucratic and Military Factions, ByzF 19 (1993) 25–33.

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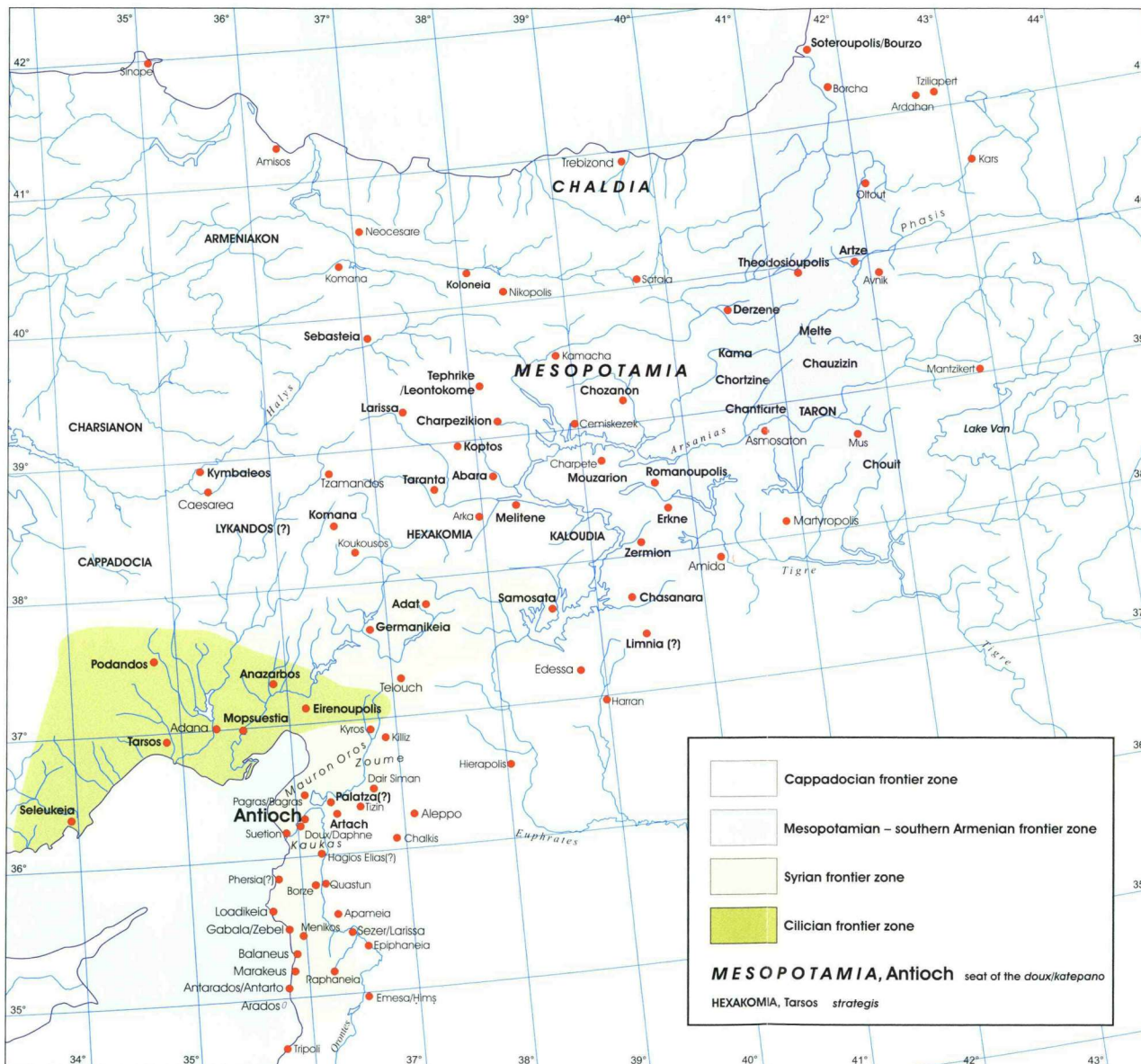
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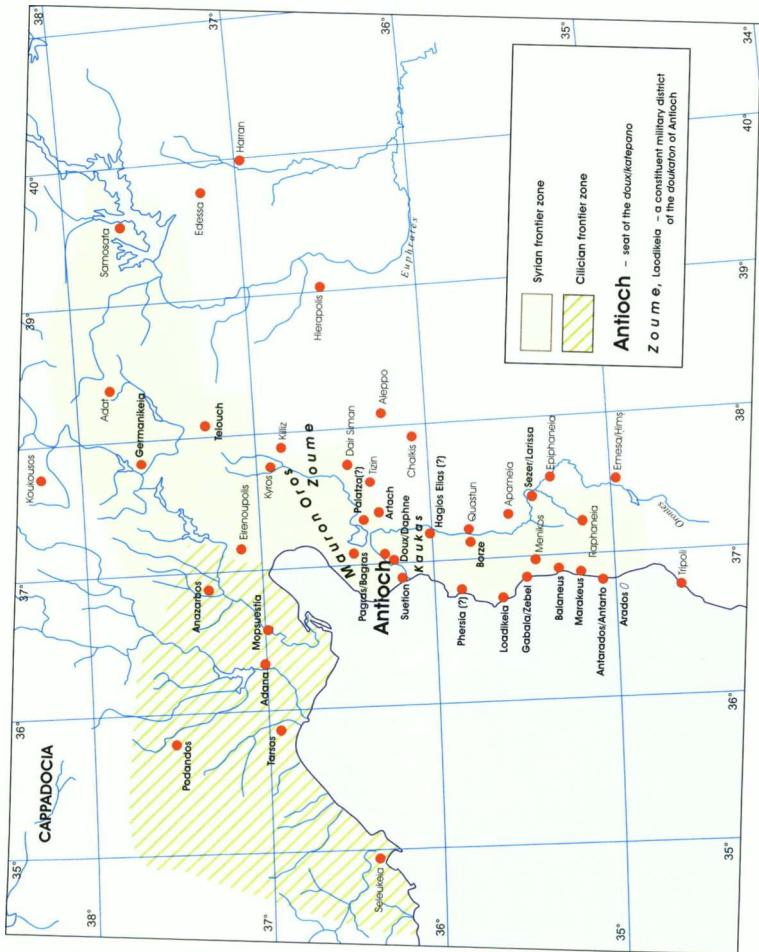
**Map I:
The Frontier Zones in the East
of Byzantium in the Late 10th Century**

(Drawn according to *N. Oikonomides*,
Les listes de préséance byzantines
des IX^e et X^e siècles, Paris 1972, Carte I)



The territory of the Doukate
of Antioch According
to the *Treaty of Devol* (1108)

(Drawn according to the map by *K.-P. Todt*, Region und griechisch-orthodoxes Patriarchat von Antiocheia in mittelbyzantinischer Zeit (969–1204), BZ 94/1 (2001) p. 267, with corrections that *K.-P. Todt*, Region und griechisch-orthodoxes Patriarchat von Antiocheia in mittelbyzantinischer Zeit und im Zeitalter der Kreuzzüge (969–1204) I, Habil-Schrift, Wiesbaden 2005, Karte Nr. 15, made to the map by *E. Honigmann*, Die Ostgrenze des byzantinischen Reiches von 863–1071 nach griechischen, arabischen, syrischen und armenischen Quellen, CBHB 3, Bruxelles 1935)



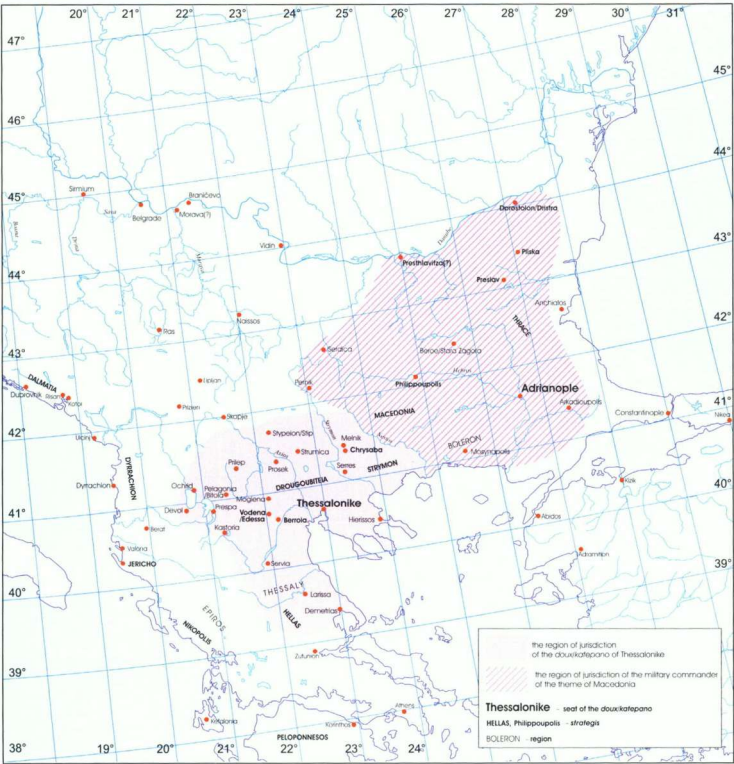
**Map III:
The Frontier Belt in the Balkans in the Late 10th Century**

(Drawn according to *N. Oikonomides, Les listes de présence byzantines des IX^e et X^e siècles*, Paris 1972, Carte II)



Map IV:
The Region of Jurisdiction of the Military Commanders of Thessalonike and Macedonia (976–1018)

(Drawn according to *N. Oikonomides*, *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IX^e et X^e siècles*, Paris 1972, Carte II, and *S. Pirivatrić*, *Samuilova država. Obim i karakter*, Beograd 1996/1997)





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