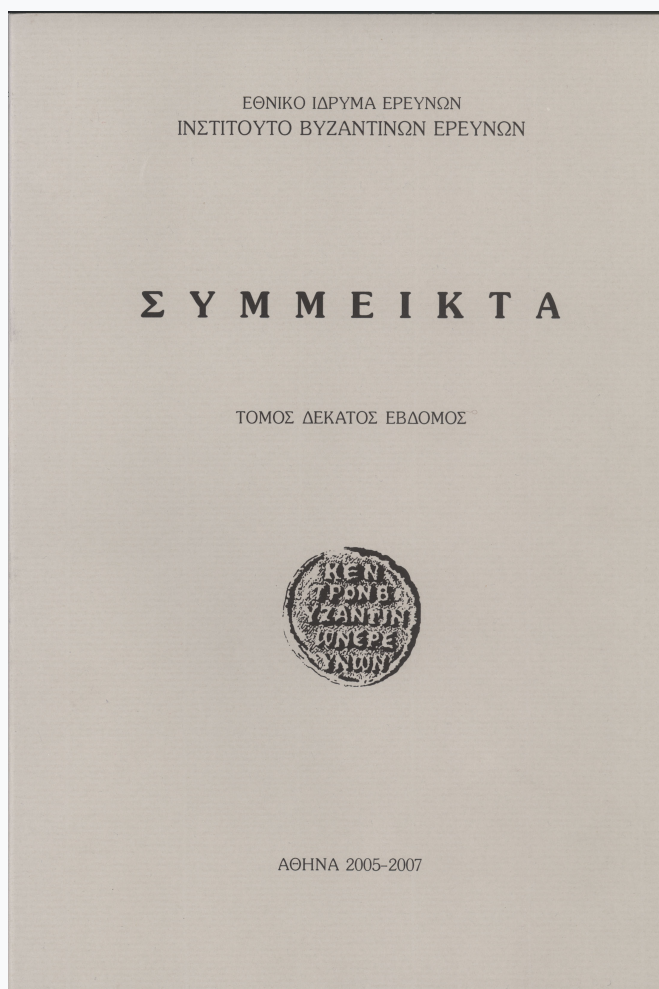


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### Uspenskij's Taktikon and the Theme of Dalmatia

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*USPENSKIJ'S TAKTIKON AND THE THEME OF DALMATIA*

The work which has had the decisive influence on the dating, accepted by historians today, of the creation of the *theme* of Dalmatia is Uspenskij's *Taktikon* (UT), in which the incumbent *archon* and the former *archontes* of Dalmatia are mentioned for the first time in an official source<sup>1</sup>. That implies that the *theme* of Dalmatia was created some time before the composition of UT. It is on the dating of UT, i.e. on the time when Dalmatia was still only an *archontia*, that the dating of the creation of the *theme* of Dalmatia also depends. Two basic views have been suggested concerning the time of the origin of the *theme* of Dalmatia -one that it became a *theme* in the time of Basil I (867-886), and the other that it was created at the very beginning of the reign of Michael III (842-867)<sup>2</sup>. An earlier third view, according to which Dalmatia became a

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1. N. OIKONOMIDÈS, *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IXe et Xe siècles*, Paris 1972 (henceforth: OIKONOMIDÈS, *Listes*), 57.12, 59.8; V. BENEŠEVIĆ, Die byzantinischen Ranglisten nach dem Kletorologion Philothei und nach den Jerusalemer Handschriften zusammengestellt und revidiert, *BNJ* 5, 1926, 157, where the author points out that in the case of the former archontes of Dalmatia the letter Δ of Δαλματίας is written over the letter X: Χαλδίας ?

2. J. FERLUGA, *Vizantiska uprava u Dalmaciji*, Belgrade 1957 (henceforth: FERLUGA, *Uprava*), 70, determined the period between 867 and 878 as the time of the origin of the *theme* of Dalmatia. This conclusion is accepted by most scholars. A different view, according to which Dalmatia became a *theme* between 842 and 846, was advanced by J. POSEDEL, Pitanje dalmatinskog temata u prvoj polovici IX stoljeća, *Historijski zbornik* 3, 1950, 217-219. Posedel's view is endorsed by D. A. ZAKYTHINOS, Le thème de Céphalonie et la défense de l'Occident, *L'hellénisme contemporain* 4-5, 1954, 310, who dates the origin of the *theme* of Dalmatia into the period around 840, and by L. MARGETIĆ, «Provincijalni arhonti» Taktikona Uspenskog (s osobitim obzirom na arhonta Dalmacije), *ZRVI* 29-30, 1991 (henceforth: MARGETIĆ, «Provincijalni arhonti»), 47. N. Oikonomides has recently suggested that that the *theme* of Dalmatia may have existed (for a limited time?) in the first half of the ninth century; cf. J. NESBITT - N. OIKONOMIDES, *Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art*, vols 1-3, Washington DC-Dumbarton Oaks 1991-1996 (henceforth: NESBITT - OIKONOMIDES, *Seals*), vol. 1, 46.

*theme* after the fall of the Ravenna *exarchate* in 751, has now been discarded as unfounded<sup>3</sup>.

The following writings provide the initial basis for the dating of the origin of the *theme* of Dalmatia: *De administrando imperio* by Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *Uspenskij's Taktikon*, *Einhard's Annals*, and the notes of Gottschalk, a Frankish preacher who lived at the court of Prince Trpimir of Croatia from 846 to 848. Of some help are also several seals of Byzantine officials who served in Dalmatia. Since there is no Latin or Byzantine record which states explicitly when Dalmatia became a *theme*, an answer to this question must be attempted by an examination, comparison and critical analysis of the information gleaned from the above sources.

The Byzantine administration was careful in keeping track of all the changes in the internal organization of the Empire. The documents recording them and giving detailed rosters of high imperial officials, listed according to their rank, are known as *taktikons*. Four documents of this type are known today: *Uspenskij's Taktikon*, *Kletorologion of Philotheos*, *Benešević's Taktikon* and the *Escorial Taktikon*<sup>4</sup>. These valuable records contain important information on the internal organization of the Empire, on its provincial administration, and on the position of its officials. An analysis of their content makes it often possible to deduce some chronological evidence essential for the tracing of the history of the internal organization of the Empire, such as the date of the creation of individual *themes*, *archonties*, and *kleisourai* or of the establishment of new court or administrative titles and offices.

*Uspenskij's Taktikon* was first published by F. I. Uspenskij, who, however, did not tackle the question of its dating on that occasion<sup>5</sup>. This was done by Bury, who set the chronological limits of the origin of UT between 842 and 856, basing himself mostly on the headings in UT, which contain references to Emperor Michael and his mother Theodora<sup>6</sup>.

The dating proposed by Bury was challenged by St. Kyriakides, who argued for a date between 809 and 828<sup>7</sup>. Not long afterwards Ostrogorsky refuted Kyriakides's

3. See FERLUGA, *Uprava*, 45, n 31, for this view and the earlier studies.

4. They have all been published by OIKONOMIDIS, *Listes*, *passim*.

5. F. I. USPENSKIJ, *Vizantijsk' tabel' o rangah*, *IRAİK* 3, 1898 (henceforth: Uspenskij, *Tabel'*), 109-129. It is Manuscript no 39 of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem (12th-13th century).

6. J. B. BURY, *The Imperial Administrative System in the Ninth Century*, London 1911 (henceforth: BURY, *Administrative System*), 12 ff. A survey of the arguments advanced so far for the dating of UT is given in G. OSTROGORSKY, *Taktikon Uspenskog i Taktikon Beneševića*, *ZRVI* 2, 1959 (henceforth: OSTROGORSKY, *Taktikon*), 38-48 and OIKONOMIDIS, *Listes*, 45-47.

7. St. P. KYRIAKIDES, *Buzantinai μελέται* 2-5, *Θεσσαλονίκη* 1937 (henceforth: KYRIAKIDES, *Μελέται*), 235-241. Kyriakides correctly takes 809 as the lower chronological limit of the origin of UT, deducing it

arguments and supplied further evidence supporting Bury's dating. He also narrowed down the proposed period (842-856) to 845-856, basing himself on the fact that the title of UT does not mention the Emperor's sister Thekla, who is known to have been Michael's and Theodora's co-ruler until 845<sup>8</sup>. Finally, Oikonomides suggested that UT originated in 842-843, since the text mentions the *droungarios* of the Aegean Islands, who was superseded by the *strategos* of the Aegean Islands from 843 on<sup>9</sup>. As regards the argument adduced by Ostrogorsky, i.e. that the title does not mention the Emperor's sister Thekla, Oikonomides points out that the title of *Kletorologion of Philotheos* mentions only Emperor Leo VI, and makes no reference to his brother Alexander, although they are known to have been co-rulers in 899, when that *taktikon* was composed. This shows, concludes Oikonomides, that Thekla's name may have also been omitted from the title of UT although the text originated in the period of her joint rule with Michael and Theodora<sup>10</sup>.

The opinion of all the scholars who have studied UT, apart from Kyriakides, is that the key evidence for its dating is contained in the very title of the work: *Τακτικὸν ἐν ἐπιτόμῳ γενόμενον ἐπὶ Μιχαὴλ τοῦ φιλοχρίστου δεσπότη καὶ Θεοδώρας τῆς ὀρθοδοξοτάτης καὶ ἁγίας αὐτοῦ μητρός*, from which it follows that the text was compiled at the time of «Michael, the Christ-loving Emperor, and Theodora, his most pious and saintly mother». Since Michael and Theodora were co-rulers from 842 to 856, any analysis of the text which might point to a dating outside that period is rendered problematic by the weight of the evidence contained in the title<sup>11</sup>. Nevertheless, we shall have to return to the title of the text after a survey of some other facts of essential importance for the dating of UT.

According to the present state of research, the basic positive elements for the dating of UT into the period 842-856 boil down to the following: 1. a reference to the *strategos* of Klimata (= Cherson); 2. the non-existence of the *theme* of Coloneia; 3. a reference to the *kleisoura* of Charsianon; 4. a mention of the *theme* of Chaldia. The

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from the service of *δομέστικος τῶν ἱκανάτων* the commander of the guard of Emperor Nikephoros I's son, which was composed of young men of noble stock, and which Nikephoros I founded precisely in 809; cf. OIKONOMIDÈS, *Listes*, 53.2; 332.

8. OSTROGORSKY, *Taktikon*, 47-48.

9. OIKONOMIDÈS, *Listes*, 46-47.

10. OIKONOMIDÈS, *Listes*, 45. Leo and Alexander are referred to as corulers in the main text of *Kletorologion of Philotheos*; cf. OIKONOMIDÈS, *Listes*, 83.31.

11. W. T. TREADGOLD, Notes on the Numbers and Organization of the Ninth-Century Byzantine Army, *GRBS* 21/3, 1980 (henceforth: TREADGOLD, Notes), 269-288 has pointed out a number of disputable passages in UT.

basic negative element is a reference to the *strategos* of Crete, but there are also some other indicators, which will be discussed later.

1. The *theme* of Klimata mentioned in UT has usually been identified with the *theme* of Cherson<sup>12</sup>. A differing view is that by St. Kyriakides, who argues that the reference to Klimata is not connected with the *theme* of Cherson, which was created in the time of Emperor Theophilos, c. 833/834, as testified by Constantine Porphyrogenitus, who is our sole authority on this point<sup>13</sup>. St. Kyriakides omitted to pursue his interpretation of the *theme* of Klimata to its logical conclusion and to state clearly what exactly he had in mind when he pointed to the possible difference between Klimata and Cherson. Ostrogorsky took up Kyriakides's lead, and reached the conclusion that the *theme* of Klimata mentioned in UT was identical with the later *theme* of Cherson and that, consequently, UT reflected faithfully the circumstances in Cherson produced by the creation of the *theme* of Cherson: «a *strategos* of the *theme* of Cherson - the *strategos* of Klimata - is cited among the thematic *strategoï*, and *archontes* of Cherson are mentioned among the officials subordinated to the *strategos*»<sup>14</sup>. Ostrogorsky's view is not based on a consistent reading of the text of UT, but on a subjective interpretation of evidence, since the *archontes* of Cherson are not described as subordinated to the *strategos* and are accorded the same status as the *archon* of Dalmatia, the *archontes* of Dyrrachium, the *archon* of Cyprus or the *doux* of Calabria.

Kyriakides's objection seems, however, valid, for the later Byzantine sources mention always and exclusively the *theme* of Cherson. The explanation is that the *theme* of Klimata was created before 833/834, and that Cherson was a town under Byzantine rule, governed by a local *archon* and outside the jurisdiction of the *strategos*

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12. BURY, *Administrative System*, 12.

13. CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *De administrando imperio*, ed. Gy. MORAVCSIK - R. J. H. JENKINS, vols 1-2, Washington 1967 (henceforth: *DAI*), vol. 1, 42.39-54. According to Porphyrogenitus, the first *strategos* of Cherson was *spatharocandidatos* Petronas, the man who suggested to Emperor Theophilos to replace the former *archontes* in Cherson with *strategoï* appointed from Constantinople. A seal of Petronas, *antypathos*, *patrikos*, *imperial protospatharios* and *genikos logothetes* from the 9th century has been preserved; cf. I. V. SOKOLOVA, Les sceaux byzantins de Cherson, in N. OIKONOMIDES (ed), *Studies in Byzantine Sigillography* 3, Washington DC 1993 (henceforth: SOKOLOVA, *Sceaux*), 104.

14. OSTROGORSKY, *Taktikon*, 43. It should be mentioned that in the case of Cherson it is not clear whether the reading should be *archon* or *archontes* since the original text is οἱ ἀρχόντες, as MARGETIĆ («Provincijalni arhonti», 53) points out. He opts for the singular -the *archon* of Cherson. However, USPENSKIJ (Tabel', 124), settles for the plural -*archontes* of Cherson.

of Klimata<sup>15</sup>. Constantine Porphyrogenitus himself, speaking of the time when the decision was made by the authorities in Constantinople to appoint a *strategos* in Cherson, makes not a single reference to Klimata. Moreover, he quotes *spatharokandidatos* Petrona, who suggested to the Emperor: «if you wish to establish complete control and rule in the town of Cherson and the adjacent places, so that they do not slip out of your hands, you should install there your own *strategos* and not trust their chiefs and leaders»<sup>16</sup>.

UT contains very clear information on the *strategos* of Klimata<sup>17</sup>, but it also gives some evidence of the *archontes* (or *archon*?) of Cherson<sup>18</sup>. It is true that the sources often say that Klimata and Cherson are the same place, or, as it is usually put, ἐν Χερσῶνι καὶ τοῖς κλίμασιν<sup>19</sup>, εἰς Χερσῶνα καὶ τὰ κλίματα<sup>20</sup> or ὑπὸ τε τῶν Χερσωνιτῶν καὶ Βοσφοριανῶ καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν κλιμάτων<sup>21</sup>. Elaborating on Petrona's words, Porphyrogenitus explains that before the time of Emperor Theophilos no *strategos* was sent to Cherson from Constantinople, so that the entire government was in the hands of the so-called primates and the officials styled the city fathers<sup>22</sup>. In conclusion, Porphyrogenitus writes that the Emperor promoted Petrona to the rank of *protospatharios*, appointed him *strategos*, and sent him to Cherson (εἰς Χερσῶνα) commanding the primates and all the others to obey him. Porphyrogenitus's report refers to the city of Cherson and its immediate surroundings and not, it is quite clear, to the entire region from the Cimmerian Bosphorus to Cherson and the *klimata*. Consequently, what we have here is an administrative measure introduced in 833/834, which placed the city of Cherson under the direct control of Constantinople and which

15. TREADGOLD, Notes, 278, thinks that the *archon* of Cherson was replaced by the *strategos* of Klimata in 839 or 840.

16. DAI, 1, 42.41 - 44.

17. OIKONOMIDÈS, *Listes*, 49. 19.

18. OIKONOMIDÈS, *Listes*, 57.13. A number of seals of the *archontes* of Cherson have been preserved.. The most frequent title is: *the imperial spatharios and archon of Cherson*; cf. Elena STEPANOVA, New Seals from Sudak, in N. OIKONOMIDÈS (ed.) *Studies in Byzantine Sigillography* 3, Washington DC 1993 (henceforth: STEPANOVA, *Seals*), nos 11-13, 15. See also, NESBITT - OIKONOMIDÈS, *Seals*, vol. 1, no 82.1-2, and no 82.3, «*Sabbas hypatos and archon of the Cherson*». However, an *imperial spatharokandidatos* and *archon* of Cherson is also known, cf. STEPANOVA, *Seals*, no 14.

19. THEOPHANIS, *Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor [CSHB], vols. 1-2, Leipzig 1883, vol. 1, 332.4.

20. THEOPHANIS, vol. 1, 451.1.

21. THEOPHANIS, vol. 1, 377.25-26; cf. also, CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *De thematibus*, ed. A. Pertusi, Vatican 1952 (henceforth: *De them*), 12.3.

22. DAI, 1, 42.44-47.

may have led -in the course of the following years or even decades- to the renaming and reorganization of the *theme* of Klimata into the *theme* of Cherson.

Speaking of the *theme* of Cherson in his work *De Thematibus*, Porphyrogenitus remarks: «it is said that in old times Cherson was not a theme nor had the metropolitan status, and that Cherson and the other klimata, i.e. inhabitants of Bosphorus, were under the royal rule of those in power in Bosphorus»<sup>23</sup>. Later on, Porphyrogenitus says, referring himself to classical authors, that these rulers were the kings of Bosphorus, i.e. of the classical Pontic Kingdom in the time of the Roman Empire<sup>24</sup>. There is no direct connection between the first sentence and the later statement, but it is clear that the first sentence, too, refers in fact to the Pontic kings from the classical times. It follows, therefore, that Porphyrogenitus's conclusion that Cherson was not a *theme* in old times refers to the Third and Fourth centuries. Therefore, this statement reveals something else, i.e. that Constantine Porphyrogenitus *did not know* when the *theme* of Cherson was created.

The term *regions* (*klimata*) refers to the area fairly clearly defined by Constantine Porphyrogenitus: ἀπὸ δὲ Χερσῶνος μέχρι Βοσπόρου εἰσὶν τὰ κάστρα τῶν κλιμάτων τὸ δὲ διάστημα μίλια ι.<sup>25</sup> That is, from (the Cimmerian) Bosphorus way up to Crimea there are the towns of the *Regions*, i.e. *klimata* extending over an area 300 miles in length<sup>26</sup>. This entire belt was called *klimata*, and Cherson was merely one of the numerous towns in it. The same chapter in *DAI* contains a reference to the passage of the Pechenegs through Cherson, (Cimmerian) Bosphorus and the *klimata*.<sup>27</sup> It is, accordingly, obvious that the geographical concept of *klimata* was complex, while its meaning in the administrative sphere underwent certain changes in conformity with the administrative development of the entire region of Crimea. It follows that it is not impossible that the *klimata* of (Cimmerian) Bosphorus and Cherson were differently organized in this respect.

It is most likely that the original *klimata* were organized as a *theme* and that the district of Cherson was incorporated into this *theme* only later, when the Byzantine presence became stronger. It was probably then that the city itself, as the most

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23. *De them*, 12.1-4.

24. *De them*, 12.13-16.

25. *DAI*, 1, 42.72.

26. CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS (*DAI*, 1, 42.81-83) says that the extent of the region between Cherson, Klimata and the Cimmerian Bosphorus is approximately slightly over 1000 square miles.

27. *DAI*, 1, 42.85-86. Cf. *DAI*, 1, 11.10: «καὶ τὰ κλίματα καὶ Χερσῶνα».

important in the whole region, became the seat of a *strategos*<sup>28</sup>. That would mean that originally there had been a *theme* of Klimata, which was later, as the Byzantine influence increased, reconstituted as the *theme* of Cherson, but which was in fact the *theme* of Klimata with an enlarged territory. Perhaps the only proof that the incorporation of the original *klimata* into the *theme* of Cherson followed this pattern is a seal dating from the ninth century: ...α...τον Πέντε Κλιμάι(ων)<sup>29</sup>. The seal seems to indicate that the imperial official, whose name and title have not been preserved, served in «The Five Regions», presumably the original organizational unit constituted in the area between (Cimmerian) Bosphorus and Cherson - possibly precisely that which Porphyrogenitus discusses in *De Them.*

The account of the course of administrative changes in the Crimean area offered above is corroborated by the finds of coins and seals of Byzantine officials. I. Sokolova has recently pointed out that the coins with the inscription πόλης Χερσῶνος represent an exceptional occurrence in the otherwise centralized monetary policy of the Empire and that no other mint (e.g. Syracuse) uses the term πόλης. The above inscription on the coins disappears in the time of the joint rule of Basil I and Constantine (869-879), precisely in the period when the *archontes*' seals go out of use and those of the *stratego*i of Cherson begin to appear<sup>30</sup>. Not a single seal of the *strategos* of Cherson is known before the eighth decade of the Ninth century. These facts seemed quite sufficient for Sokolova to conclude that the *theme* of Klimata was created first, and that the *archon* of Cherson exercised his office in the city of Cherson only. The appearance of the term πόλης Χερσῶνος is testimony that the town enjoyed self-government, which lasted until the rule of Basil and Alexander (869-879), and its disappearance probably coincides with the reorganization of the *theme* of Klimata as the *theme* of Cherson<sup>31</sup>. The long tradition of self-government in Cherson was

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28. The earliest known seals of the *stratego*i of Cherson date from as late as the eighth decade of the 9th century; cf. Sokolova, Sceaux, 100; G. ZACOS - A. VEGLERY, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, vols 1-3, Basel 1972 (henceforth: ZACOS - VEGLERY, *Seals*), vol. 2, no. 191 - «John, the imperial spatharokandidatos and strategos of Cherson»; NESBITT - OIKONOMIDES, *Seals*, vol. 1, published the seals of Nikephoros, imperial spatharokandidatos and strategos of Cherson (9th/10th centuries) and Sergios, imperial spatharokandidatos and strategos of Cherson (9th/10th centuries) nos. 82.19; no. 82.21. A 9th century seal of an unknown «spatharokandidatos and strategos of the Klimata of Cherson» has been published recently by STEPANOVA, *Seals*, no 16. There is also another seal of an unknown official of the *klimata* of Cherson published by I. V. SOKOLOVA, Pecati arhontov Hersona, ZRVI 18, 1978 (henceforth: SOKOLOVA, Pecati), 93, note 65.

29. NESBITT - OIKONOMIDES, *Seals*, vol. 1, no 81.1.

30. SOKOLOVA, Pecati, 92-93.

31. SOKOLOVA, Pecati, 96.



asserted in 896, when a rebellion broke out and the *strategos* was assassinated<sup>32</sup>, and again in the time of Emperor Alexander (912–913), when the term *πόλης Χερσῶνος* was reintroduced<sup>33</sup>. That the populace of Cherson was easily stirred seems to have been well known, since Constantine Porphyrogenitus found it advisable to include in *DAI* detailed instructions for the *strategoi* of the adjacent Black Sea *themes* (Paphlagonia and Boukellon) how to proceed in the case of a rebellion in Cherson<sup>34</sup>. All these facts indicate that the *theme* of Cherson was of a comparatively recent origin, and consequently precludes the terminological identification of the *theme* of Klimata with the *theme* of Cherson.

The question of the centre of the original *theme* of Klimata represents a separate problem. There were a number of towns in the region and each of them might have been the seat of the *strategos*. Porphyrogenitus himself recommends that in the case of a rebellion of the inhabitants of Cherson the *strategos* should seek refuge in some other town and continue to reside in it<sup>35</sup>. In 1819 the famous Hellenist Charles Benoit Hase edited the *History* of Leo Diaconos, and incorporated into the philological commentary of Book X three unpublished fragments containing, as he thought, a statement associated with the capture of Cherson by Prince Vladimir of Russia in 980. In these fragments an unknown (Byzantine?) commander says that he serves in a town called Klimata (*τὰ Κλήματα...τοι γὰρ φρούριον...*, Lat. *castrum Clematum*), which is not adequately protected because the barbarians have recently destroyed its defence walls<sup>36</sup>.

I. Ševčenko also devoted great attention to these fragments and finally concluded that the famous Hellenist had faked them<sup>37</sup>. None of these fragments, however, contains any essential information that might alter our picture of the developments in the Crimea from the Ninth to the eleventh centuries. Besides, one wonders why should Hase have taken not a little trouble to forge the statement of an unknown military commander without even bothering to name the barbarian invaders he mentions.

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32. THEOPHANIS CONTINUATUS, IOANNES CAMENIATA, SYMEON MAGISTER, GEORGIUS MONACHUS, ed. I. Bekker [CSHB], Bonn 1838, (henceforth: THEOPH. CONT.), 360.14–16.

33. SOKOLOVA, Pecati, 96.

34. *DAI*, 1, 53.52–529.

35. *DAI*, 1, 53.528–529.

36. LEO THE DEACON, *Historia*, ed. C. B. Hase, Paris 1828, 258B; cf. I. ŠEVČENKO, The Date and Author of the So-called Fragments of Toparcha Gothicus, *DOP* 25, 1971 (henceforth: ŠEVČENKO, Fragments), 126. See also Maria C. NYSTAZOPOULOU, Note sur l'Anonyme de Hase improprement appelé toparque de Gothie, *BCH* 86/1, 1962, 324, note 7.

37. ŠEVČENKO, Fragments, 117–188, and the extensive literature cited there.

Nevertheless, an aggravating circumstance is that the manuscript had disappeared from the Royal Library in Paris (where Hase was in charge of Greek manuscripts) before the 1819 edition of Leo Diaconos saw the light of day. It should be remembered, however, that between 1797 and 1815 several hundreds of Greek manuscripts had been brought to Paris, which were restored to their original depositories after the final fall of Napoleon<sup>38</sup>. It is not impossible, therefore, that some manuscripts never reached their former owners<sup>39</sup>. Ševčenko's denouncement of Hase as a forger remains a hypothesis only for the time being, and the reference to the town of Klimata, however vague, should not be lost sight of in the further researches.

We should turn again to Constantine Porphyrogenitus's account of Petrona and his installment as the *strategos* of Cherson in the time of Emperor Theophilos. As it has been pointed out, Porphyrogenitus speaks of the town of Cherson only, not the *theme* of Cherson, and one should keep this fact in mind in the further discussion of this problem. It is well known that Porphyrogenitus was in the habit of applying the terminology of his day to former times, when these terms either had a different meaning or did not even exist. Thus he mentions the *theme* of Thessalonike in the time of the migration of the Serbs to the Balkan Peninsula, or the *strategos* of Belgrade in connection with the same event<sup>40</sup>. One wonders whether here, too, Porphyrogenitus used inconsistently the term *strategos* or whether Petrona, promoted to a *protospatharios*, was sent to Cherson as a βασιλικός. This title was widely used and its holder might be a *mandator*, *kandidatos*, *strator*, *spatharios*, *spatharokandidatos*, *protospatharios* or an official of some other rank<sup>41</sup>. Porphyrogenitus himself says that a βασιλικός may also be the commander of a fort, instead of a *tourmarches*<sup>42</sup>. He could even be the commander of a battleship<sup>43</sup>. The purport of all this is that a βασιλικός was an official in charge of a special mission, which might have been either military or diplomatic<sup>44</sup>. Finally, one might ask, if Porphyrogenitus was so sure that the *strategos* of Cherson was sent regularly from Constantinople from the time of Theophilos on, why he did not say so in the chapter on the *theme* of Cherson in the later *De them.*?

38. ŠEVČENKO, *Fragments*, 131.

39. ŠEVČENKO, *Fragments*, 132 and note 22.

40. *DAI*, 1, 32.11; 32.19-20.

41. For this term see T. C. LOUNGHIS, *Les ambassades byzantines en Occident depuis la fondation des états barbares jusqu'aux croisades (407-1096)*, Athens 1980, 299-303.

42. *DAI*, 1, 45.80-83.

43. *DAI*, 1, 8.7-8.

44. *DAI*, 1, 7.1.

He did not omit to mention that the *themes* of the Anatolikoi and Armeniakoi were created during the reign of Heraclius (610 - 641) or that the *theme* of Thrace was established at the time of the migration of the Bulgarians across the Danube (680)<sup>45</sup>. Porphyrogenitus offers no information on the date of the creation of the other (older) *themes* and only mentions that the *theme* of Strymon was a *kleisoura* at the time of Emperor Justinian II (685-695, 705-711)<sup>46</sup>.

Constantine Porphyrogenitus concludes his account of the fortress of Sarkel, of Petrona and Emperor Theophilos by saying that from that time on a *strategos* from Constantinople was sent to Cherson because he seems to have associated this event with the creation of the *theme*. But the same author records in *DAI* that Cephalonia was a *tourma* of the *theme* of Longobardia, and that it was created in the time of his father Leo the Wise<sup>47</sup>, while that detail is not found in the later *De them.* Fortunately, there is evidence of the *strategoi* of Cephalonia from as early as the 8th century<sup>48</sup>, and we know that Porphyrogenitus was wrong here. If he made such a serious mistake reporting on the period of his father's reign, it is quite possible that he made an even graver blunder writing on a similar event, associated with the *strategos* of Cherson, from the time of Emperor Theophilos.

2-3. As regards the argument, advanced by Ostrogorsky and Bury, that UT makes no mention of the *theme* of Coloneia, which is first attested in 863<sup>49</sup>, it merely shows that UT was compiled before 863, but it cannot be taken by any means as decisive proof that it dates from 842-856 or 845-856. The same holds good for the *theme* of Charsianon, which is mentioned as a *kleisoura* in UT, and first attested as a *theme* in 873<sup>50</sup>. Moreover, Charsianon was certainly a *kleisoura* until 863, when it is mentioned by the Continuator of Theophanes<sup>51</sup>. It is not clear, however, why this should be taken as evidence supporting the dating of UT into the period suggested by Bury, Ostrogorsky or Oikonomides. The real question is: what is the earliest possible date of the creation of the *kleisoura* of Charsianon? It is first mentioned by the Arabic writers

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45. *De them.*, 1.20-21; 11.3-4; 1.6-7.

46. *De them.*, 3.1-5.

47. *DAI*, 1, 50.85-87.

48. Cf. the comment in *De them.*, 174-175.

49. THEOPH. CONT., 181.12.

50. J. GENESIOUS, *Regum libri quattuor*, ed. A. LESMUELLER-WERNER - I. THURN [CFHB 14], Berlin-New York, 1978, 86.90.

51. THEOPH. CONT. 181.15; 183.9.

Al Diarmi (845/846) and Ibn Hardadbeh (d. 912/913)<sup>52</sup>, «*Charsianon, on the road to Melitina, with a seat in Harshan, where there are four more fortresses*»<sup>53</sup>. Ibn al Fakih also refers to Charsianon as a *kleisoura*, adding that it has 4 000 soldiers at its disposal<sup>54</sup>.

4. The *theme* of Chaldia, created after the division of the *theme* of Armeniakoi<sup>55</sup>, is mentioned both in UT and in the works of the Arab geographers. Bury associated its creation with the victorious expedition of Emperor Theophilos in the Pontic region in 837<sup>56</sup>. This conclusion is untenable, for Chaldia had certainly existed as a *theme* in 824, as it has been pointed out by Oikonomides<sup>57</sup>. There is no decisive evidence of the origin of this *theme*. Of equal validity would be Theophanes's passage concerning the great victory won over the Arabs by Leo, the *strategos* of Anatolikoi in August 811<sup>58</sup>. It should be borne in mind that a civil war was being waged in the Caliphate at that time, which gave Byzantium an opportunity to strengthen its position in the East<sup>59</sup>. In any case, a late 8th century seal of Christopher, «*the imperial spatharios and doux of Chaldia*», has been known for some time<sup>60</sup>. UT shows that the territory of Chaldia had an exceptionally complex administrative structure; it mentions a *strategos*,

52. N. OIKONOMIDÈS, Une liste arabe des stratèges byzantins du VIIe siècle et les origines du theme de Sicile, *Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici* n.s. 1 (XI), Rome 1964 (IDEM, *Documents et études sur les institutions de Byzance*, London 1976, VII) (henceforth: OIKONOMIDÈS, *Strategos*), 121. On Ibn Hardadbeh and Al Diarmi, see *Źródła arabskie do dziejów słowiańszczyzny*, I, ed. T. LEWICKI, WROCLAW - KRAKÓW 1956, 43 - 47, 59 - 60 (henceforth: *Źródła*) .

53. H. GELZER, *Die Genesis der byzantinischen Themenverfassung*, Leipzig 1899, 83.

54. E. W. BROOKS, Arabic Lists of the Byzantine Themes, *JHS* 21, 1901 (henceforth: BROOKS, Arabic Lists), 76.

55. Cf. J. FERLUGA, Niže vojno-administrativne jedinice tematskog uređenja, *ZRVI* 2, 1953 (henceforth: FERLUGA, Nize jedinice), 87.

56. J. B. BURY, *A History of the Eastern Roman Empire from the Fall of Irene to Acession of Basil I (A.D. 802-867)*, London 1912, 261.

57. MANSI, XIV, 419A; OIKONOMIDÈS, *Listes*, 349. On the other hand, TREADGOLD (Notes, 280), doubts the evidence on which Oikonomidès bases his case, i.e. a letter of Michael II (820-829) to the Frankish Emperor from 824, in which the *ducatus* of Chaldia is mentioned. Chaldia was certainly a *theme* at that time for in the same letter the Emperor also calls the *theme* of Anatolikoi - *ducatus*, so the problem should be actually explained by the inadequacy of the Latin translation of Byzantine terms: «*totum Armeniae ducatum simul et ducatum Chaldae...*»; MANSI XIV, 419A.

58. THEOPANIS, 1, 497.6-9.

59. THEOPANIS, 1, 497.9-14.

60. ZACOS - VEGLERY, *Seals*, no 3088A. The seal of an unknown *imperial protospatharios and doux of Chaldia* from the 9th century is also known, cf. ZACOS - VEGLERY, *Seals*, no 3226A.

a *doux* and *archontes*, which implies a long period of Byzantine rule in that region and, presumably, its recent elevation to the status of a *theme*. Although a reference from 824 remains the earliest evidence for the dating of the origin of the *theme* of Chaldia, it should be pointed out that that reference, though written down in 824, concerns an event from 821, for Thomas the Slav operated in the Eastern provinces of the Empire in that year and left for Thrace only some time later. It is to be inferred from this that the *theme* of Chaldia had existed before the outbreak of the Thomas the Slav's rebellion.

The Arab geographers, primarily Al Diarmi and Ibn Hardadbeh, are frequently cited as authors who give a reliable picture of the administrative organization around the middle of the Ninth century. Their works show, however, that the basic text they (or, rather, Al Diarmi) used was much earlier and probably dated from the period between 692 and 695<sup>61</sup>. Ibn Hardadbeh mentions *strategoi* of the following provinces: Anatolikoi, Armeniakoi, Thrace, Sicily, Sardinia and Amria (*exercitus Orientalis*). He also says that there are twelve *patrikioi* in Byzantium, six of whom reside in the provinces mentioned above, and six in Constantinople<sup>62</sup>. Accordingly, the lists of the provinces found in the works of the earliest Arab geographers were largely based on a much earlier record, dating from the end of the seventh century, while the notes concerning the provinces added later were written in their own time, although the exact date of the origin of these provinces is not known. What can be concluded without doubt is that Charsianon was a *kleisoura* in 845/846, when Al Diarmi was composing his work.

The *theme* of Cappadoce poses a special problem. Uspenskij's edition contains no reference to a *strategos* of Cappadoce, but it does mention a *tourmarches* of Cappadoce<sup>63</sup>. This induced Oikonomides, who observed the order of *tourmarchai*, to introduce a *strategos* of Cappadoce between the *strategoi* of Boukellon and of Paphlagonia<sup>64</sup>. Oikonomides saw an additional reason for this emendation in a passage in the Continuator of Theophanes, where a *strategos* of Cappadoce is mentioned as early as 830<sup>65</sup>. Another reason is that there is an unambiguous reference to Cappadoce as a military province already in Theophanes, i.e. in 812/813<sup>66</sup>. On the other hand, the

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61. OIKONOMIDÈS, *Strategos*, 1.

62. *Žródła* 71.

63. USPENSKIJ, *Tabel'*, 124.

64. OIKONOMIDÈS, *Listes*, 49.6 (with an explanation in note 24).

65. THEOPH. CONT., 120.10.

Ninth century Arab sources refer to Cappadoce both as a *kleisoura* (Ibn Fakih) and a *theme* (Masoudi)<sup>67</sup>, which understandably led Oikonomides to conclude that Cappadoce had been a *kleisoura* before it was elevated to the status of a *theme*<sup>68</sup>. The problem is that UT contains no reference to a *kleisourarches* of Cappadoce and mentions only a *tourmarches*. However, according to a detailed report of the *Scriptor incertus de Leone*, Cappadoce is referred to as a *kleisoura* in the time of Emperor Michael I, or more precisely in the winter of 813<sup>69</sup>, exactly as Licaonia, which UT also describes as governed by a *tourmarches*, but which does not exist as a *theme*<sup>70</sup>. Constantine Porphyrogenitus notes briefly that Cappadoce was a *tourma* of the *theme* of Anatolikoi<sup>71</sup>. The clue for the solution of the problem why there is no *strategos* of Cappadoce in UT probably lies in this testimony of Porphyrogenitus. Namely, the *tourma* of Cappadoce had belonged to the *theme* of Anatolikoi until 830 at the latest, after which it became a *theme*, so that it is necessary to adjust the dating of UT in accordance with this<sup>72</sup>.

As the above discussion shows, the arguments adduced in favour of the dating of UT on the basis of the reference to Michael and Theodora (842–856) in its title are far from adequate. Even when one examines the date of creation of the other *themes*

66. THEOPHANIS, 1, 500.13-14

67. OIKONOMIDÈS, *Listes*, 48, note, 24.

68. Ibid.

69. SCRIPTOR INCERTUS DE LEONE ARMENIO, ed. I. BEKKER [CSHB], Bonn 1842, 336.19-21.

70. See OIKONOMIDÈS, *Listes*, 343, for the specific character of Licaonia.

71. DAI, 1, 50.83-84.

72. According to OIKONOMIDÈS (*Listes*, 56.16-57.3), UT mentions *tourmarchai* (οἱ τουρμάρχαι) of the *themes* of Anatolikoi (emend. Armeniakoi), Thrakesion, Opsikion, Boukellon, Cappadoce, Paphlagonia, Thrace and Macedonia. This definitely means that Cappadoce was a *theme*, which is also indicated by the fact that several *tourmarchai* were under their *strategos*. USPENSKIJ (Tabel', 123-124), however, uses the plural form only when he speaks of the *tourmarchai* of Anatolikoi, Thrace and Macedonia (οἱ τουρμάρχαι) while those of Opsikion, Boukellon, Cappadoce, Paphlagonia and Thrace are referred to in the singular (ὁ τουρμάρχης). Oikonomides disagrees with Uspenskij also on the question of *kleisourarchai*. Thus OIKONOMIDÈS (*Listes*, 55.5-6) uses the singular form for the *kleisourarches* of Charsianon and Sozopolis (i. e. Seleucia) (ὁ κλεισουργάρχης), while USPENSKIJ (Tabel' 123) refers to them in the plural (οἱ κλεισουργάρχαι). The only leads for the solution of this problem can be found at present in the Arabian sources, above all in the text of Ibn al Fakih, who explicitly mentions three *tourmarches* of Anatolikoi, three *tourmarches* of Armeniakoi; and two *tourmarches* of Chaldia. In the case of the other *themes*, he does not mention *tourmarchai* subordinated to the *strategoi*. The same source refers to the *kleisourarchai* of Seleucia and Charsianon in the singular form. It is interesting that the commander of Cappadoce is also called *kleisourarches*; cf. BROOKS, Arabic Lists, 74-76.

mentioned in UT one finds that all of them had existed before the reign of Michael III<sup>73</sup>. It is not necessary to enter here into a discussion of the dating of the creation of the *themes* of Macedonia<sup>74</sup>, Thessalonice<sup>75</sup> or Dyrrachium<sup>76</sup>, for no definitive answer to this question has been reached so far. Suffice it to say that they were all probably created in the late eighth or early Ninth centuries.

The creation of the *themes* of Macedonia and Thessalonice is certainly chronologically associated with the creation of the *theme* of Strymon, which was an outpost towards Bulgaria along the Strymon -Mesta- the southern foothills of Rhodope -the Aegean line. Although this *theme* is first mentioned in *Kletorologion of Philotheos* in 899<sup>77</sup>, there is strong evidence that its creation should be pushed well back, to the beginning of the Ninth century. Since this *theme* is not mentioned in UT, and since UT is assumed to date from 842-856, or 845-856, 842/843, all the attempts to establish the date of the creation of the *theme* of Strymon have been hindered by that assumption. The problem of the *theme* of Strymon has recently been brought up by Oikonomides, who refers to a seal of Leo(?) «*imperial spatharios and strategos of the Strymon*»<sup>78</sup> which is «definitely dated before the mid-Ninth century»<sup>79</sup>, which brings into question the dating of UT, where the *strategos* of Strymon must have been

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73. The following *themes* are listed in UT: Anatolikoi, Armeniakoi, Thrakesion, Opsikion, Boukellon (emend. Cappadoce), Paphlagonia, Thrace, Macedonia, Chaldia, Peloponnesus, Kivireota, Hellas, Sicily, Cephalonia, Thessalonice, Dyrrachium, Crete and Klimata; cf. OIKONOMIDÈS, *Listes*, 47.14-47.19.

74. TEOPHANIS, 1, 475.22, mentions a *monostrategos* of Thrace and Macedonia in 802. It is usually considered that the *theme* of Macedonia was created between 789 and 802; cf. P. LEMERLE, *Philippe et la Macédoine orientale à l'époque chrétienne et byzantine*, Paris 1945, 122. G. OSTROGORSKY, *Istorija Vizantije*, Belgrade 1969 (henceforth: OSTROGORSKY, *Istorija*), 199; OIKONOMIDÈS, *Listes*, 349.

75. It seems quite justified to put the creation of the *theme* of Thessalonice in the years immediately following the campaign of *logothetos* Stauracios in 783. Alkmene STAVRIDOU-ZAFRAKA, *Slav Invasions and the Theme Organization in the Balkan Peninsula*, *Buzavniaká* 12, 1992, 172, considers even a dating before 783. OIKONOMIDÈS, *Listes*, 352, mentions that this *theme* probably existed before 824. OSTROGORSKY, *Istorija*, 199, no. 3, leaves this question open and warns that the *theme* of Thessalonice appears in sources for the first time in 836. W. TREADGOLD, *The Byzantium Revival 780-842*, Stanford 1988 (henceforth: TREADGOLD, *Revival*), 190, disagrees with these views and argues that the *theme* of Thessalonice was created during the reign of Emperor Nikephoros I (802-811).

76. The *theme* of Dyrrachium existed certainly in 826, and probably before 815; cf. J. FERLUGA, *Sur la date de la création du thème de Dyrrachium*, *Actes du XIIe congrès international d'études byzantines, Ochride 10-16 septembre 1961*, vol. 2, Belgrade 1964, 91.

77. OIKONOMIDÈS, *Listes*, 139.13.

78. NESBITT - OIKONOMIDES, *Seals*, vol. 1, no. 37.3.

79. *Ibid.* 104.

mentioned if that dating is correct. A seal of Basil, the «*hypatos and protonotarios of the Strymon*», also dates from this period<sup>80</sup>. A number of seals of thematic *protonotarioi* have been preserved, and almost all of them date from the latter half of the Ninth century<sup>81</sup>. UT does not list thematic *protonotarioi*, and they are first included in the official lists in *Kletorologion of Philotheos*<sup>82</sup>. The absence of thematic *protonotarioi* in UT shows beyond doubt that the work dates from before the middle of the Ninth century.

Constantine Porphyrogenitus reports that Strymon was originally organized as a *kleisoura* and that this took place during the reign of Justinian II (685–695; 705–711), who settled the Scythes<sup>83</sup> (Slavs) there, probably in 688/689. This was in conformity with the policy of protecting the Aegean basin from the incursions of the Bulgarians from the north by settling there the Slav tribes from the neighbourhood of Thessalonice, who were loyal to the authorities in Constantinople and could be relied on as allies<sup>84</sup>.

Theophanes reports that there was a sudden onslaught of the Bulgarians on the «*army in Strymon*» in 808/809, and that the *strategos* and a considerable number of officers from «*the other themes*» were killed in battle<sup>85</sup>. On the same occasion the Bulgarians seized 1.100 pounds of gold -i.e. the soldiers' pay about to be disbursed at that time<sup>86</sup>. Theophanes's report clearly shows that the *strategos* who is mentioned was the *strategos* of Strymon, since he says that officers from «*the other themes*» also perished<sup>87</sup>. In February 811 the Arbas seized 1 300 pounds of gold, designated for the payment of the army of the *theme* of Armeniakoi<sup>88</sup>. This figure shows that in the former case, too, a thematic army was in question.

The later attempt of Emperor Nikephoros I to restore the military strength of the

80. Ibid. no. 37.2.

81. ZACOS - VEGLERY, *Seals*, nos. 1956A, 1969, 2057, 2067, 2097, etc.

82. *Kletorologion of Philotheos* mentions *protonotarioi* of the *themes* (πρωτονοτάριοι τῶν θεμάτων); cf. OIKONOMIDÈS, *Listes*, 121.6. UT makes mention only of *protonotarios* of *dromou*, but not *thematic protonotarios*; cf. OIKONOMIDÈS, *Listes*, 57.24; 59.19. The office of the *protonotarios* of the *theme* was introduced in mid-9th century at the latest, as is shown by the seal of the *protonotarios* of Strymon mentioned above.

83. *De them.* 3.1–5.

84. T. ŽIVKOVIĆ, *Sloveni i Romeji*, Belgrade 2000, 90 and note 280.

85. THEOPHANIS, 1, 484.29–485.3.

86. TREADGOLD, *Revival*, 157 reckons that this sum was sufficient for about 12.000 soldiers.

87. THEOPHANIS, 1, 485.1–2; M. RAJKOVIĆ, *Oblast Strimona i tema Strimon*, *ZRVI* 5, 1958, 3, thinks that the reference is to the *strategos* of some other *theme*, for example Macedonia.

88. THEOPHANIS, 1, 489.17–21.



Western provinces of the Empire, which certainly included Strymon, by settling there *stratiotai* from other *themes*<sup>89</sup> failed because in June 812 the colonists from Strymon fled to their old homesteads before Khroum's advancing Bulgarians<sup>90</sup>. A note in Theophanes saying that the Emperor sent the colonists to the Sclavinias<sup>91</sup> –that is, the territory which had been under the control of the Slavonic tribes until a short time previously– also indicates that the region of Strymon may be meant here. A further testimony that the Byzantines put pressure to bear on the area of Strymon and the Slavs settled there, which might have eventually led to the creation of the *theme* of Strymon, can be found in the so-called *Chronicle of Leo Isaurian*, which contains a short note saying that «war was waged against the Slavs from Strymon» in 797<sup>92</sup>. The testimony of the existence of the *theme* of Strymon in 808/809 also marks the *terminus post quem non* of the origin of UT. Thus, the original *theme* of Strymon was created between 797 and 808/9 and lasted until June 812 at the latest<sup>93</sup>.

The thirty-year peace treaty which Byzantium and Bulgaria concluded after Khroum's death in 814, recorded in an inscription and therefore an absolutely reliable document, shows that the boundaries between the two states were restored to those from the time of khan Terbel – from Develtos to Makro Livade, that is, from the Hebros to Chemus (Mount Balkan)<sup>94</sup>. That means that the region of Strymon remained in Byzantine possession and it is possible that the *theme* of Strymon was re-established a short time afterwards. Consequently, since UT does not list the *theme* of Strymon, the origin of this *taktikon* should be placed at some time between June 812, when the *theme* of Strymon fell before the invading Bulgarians<sup>95</sup>, and before the end of the fifth decade of the Ninth century, i.e. the date of the seal of the imperial *spatharios* and *strategos* of Strymon, which was published by Oikonomides<sup>96</sup>. Moreover, since Byzantium concluded the thirty-year peace treaty with the Bulgarians

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89. THEOPHANIS, 1, 486.10-13.

90. THEOPHANIS, 1, 496.5-6.

91. THEOPHANIS, 1, 486.12.

92. *Die Byzantinischen Kleinchroniken*, ed. P. SCHREINER, vols 1-3, Vienna 1975-1979, vol. 1, 49.16. This testimony should be supplemented by a passage in THEOPHANIS (1, 464.1-2), which mentions the stay of the *strategos* of Thrace in Strymon (geographical area) in 789, the sudden Bulgarian assault and his death.

93. KYRIAKIDES, *Μελέται*, 137, has also suggested, basing himself on Theophanes's report of the attack of the Bulgarians on the army of Strymon, that Strymon became a *theme* before 809.

94. V. BEŠEVLEV, *Die Protobulgarischen Inschriften*, Berlin 1963, no. 41.4-8.

95. In June 812 Khroum occupied Develtos and extended the Bulgarian rule to «Thrace and Macedonia». As a consequence of the expansion of the Bulgarians, Byzantium abandoned a number of towns and fortresses, including Anchialos, Nicea, Probaton, Philippopolis; cf. THEOPHANIS, 1, 496.2-5.

96. See above, note 78.

after Khroum's death, it had sufficient time to restore the *theme* of Strymon during that period. Accordingly, if UT had originated after 842, it could not have omitted to mention the *theme* of Strymon as well.

Oikonomides has pointed out a detail in UT which he considers of decisive importance for the dating of UT into the short period 842/843. According to him, since UT contains a reference to the *droungarios* of the Aegean islands<sup>97</sup>, and since the first *strategos* of Lesbos, which was a part of the *theme* of the Aegean Sea<sup>98</sup>, is attested already in 843, UT originated in 842/843, immediately before this administrative change was put into effect and the *droungarios* of the Aegean Islands replaced by the *strategos* of the Aegean Islands. As regards the lower chronological limit of the origin of UT, Oikonomides's conclusion is quite acceptable; if one seeks to determine the upper chronological limit, however, one could rather argue for 842/843, and possibly considerably earlier. The *droungarios* of the Aegean Sea appear already on late eighth and early Ninth century seals<sup>99</sup>, and possibly even about 763, in the *Hagiography* of Theophanes, whose father Isaac held that office<sup>100</sup>.

The above reasons and arguments, according to which the composition of UT should be dated into the period 842–856 seem rather tenuous in the light of recent interpretations. The text itself contains evidence which indicates that UT may have been composed several decades previously. This evidence consists primarily of the references to the *strategos* of Crete<sup>101</sup>, the *archon* of Crete<sup>102</sup>, and the *archontes* of Crete<sup>103</sup>. They were Kyriakides's key argument in his attempt to date UT into the period between 809 and 827/8.

The earliest, rather dubious, reference the *strategos* of Crete dates from before

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97. OIKONOMIDÈS, *Listes*, 53.18.

98. *An. Boll.* 18, 1899, 253, 258; OIKONOMIDÈS, *Listes*, 46–47. However, the earliest seals of the *strategoi* of the Aegean Islands date from the 10th century; cf. NESBITT – OIKONOMIDES, *Seals*, vol. 2, 40.27: *Demetrios, the imperial spatharocandidatos and strategos of the Aegean Islands*; *Ibid.* 40.29: *Leo, the imperial protospatharios and strategos of the Aegean Islands*; *Ibid.* 40.31: *Michael, the imperial protospatharios and epi tou chrysotrikliniou and strategos of the Aegean Islands*; *Ibid.* 40.32: *Nicholas the protospatharos and strategos of the Aegean Islands*.

99. NESBITT – OIKONOMIDES, *Seals* vol. 2, nos 40.5; 40.7; 40.8–10.

100. *Žitie prep. Theofana Ispovednika*, ed. V. V. LATIŠEV', *Žapiski Rossiskoj Akademij nauk', Po istoriko-filologičeskomu otdeljenju*, vol. 13, no. 4, 1918, 4.7.

101. OIKONOMIDÈS, *Listes*, 49.18.

102. *Ibid.* 53.5.

103. *Ibid.* 55.2–3.

767 (probably 764/765)<sup>104</sup>, which theoretically places the earliest possible dating of UT within the same chronological framework. The *theme* of Crete ceased to exist in 827/828, when the island was taken by the Arabs and kept by them until 961, when the Byzantine military commander Nikephoros Phokas (Emperor 963–969) restored it to the Byzantine rule<sup>105</sup>. Basing himself on the indisputable fact that Crete was under the Arab rule from 827/828 on, St. Kyriakides simply concluded that UT had been composed before that time. The scholars who date UT into the period 842–856 usually solve this problem in two ways. According to the one proposed by Bury, Byzantium organized an expedition against Crete in 843. It was led by *logothetes* Theoktistos<sup>106</sup>, whom the imperial government appointed, anticipating the taking of the island, the *strategos* of Crete<sup>107</sup>. To accept this line of thought would mean, however, to assume that the imperial government had also appointed in advance all the subordinate officials of the future *strategos*, including the *archon* of Crete as well as the *archontes* of the same island. This does not seem likely, of course, and represents in fact Bury's ingenious attempt to explain away the chronological problem posed by the reference of a *strategos* of Crete at a time when the island had already been under the Arab rule for almost two decades.

Ostrogorsky refuted Bury's hypothesis by pointing out that the Byzantines were reluctant to erase the lost regions from the official lists of their provinces and provincial governors<sup>108</sup>. Ostrogorsky did not explain, however, the references to the *archon* and the *archontes* of Crete in the same text. Are we to understand that the Byzantines still kept all the officials on the payroll two decades after the loss of the island in the hope that it would be eventually restored to their rule? That would be a unique example indeed. Ostrogorsky points out, it is true, that a *strategos* of Sicily figures in Benesevič's *Taktikon* (the text of which is dated 923–944) in spite of the fact that the

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104. The *strategos* of Crete appears in the *Hagiography of Stephen the Younger*, which was compiled from earlier sources in 808; cf. OSTROGORSKY, *Taktikon*, 44. Theophanes Lardotiros appears in the *Hagiography* as ἀρχιστρατάρχης τῆς νήσου and ἄρχων; cf. PG 100, col. 1164 E–D. The inconsistent use of terms is really a problem – is the person in question an *archon* or a *strategos*?

105. D. TSOUGARAKIS, *Byzantine Crete from the 5th Century to the Venetian Conquest*, Athens 1988, 170–178, argues that before 827/828 Crete was not a *theme*, but an *archontia*.

106. For this abortive expedition see GEORGIUS MONACHUS, 814.14–815.7. It should be borne in mind, however, that Theoktistos is called *logothetes*, not *strategos* in this source.

107. BURY, *Administrative System*, 14. Bury also considered the possibility that some of the Aegean Islands were incorporated into the *theme* and that after the conquest of Crete by the Arabs they were governed, as the remaining parts of the former *theme* of Crete, by the *strategos* of Crete.

108. OSTROGORSKY, *Taktikon*, 45.

last Byzantine stronghold there had been lost as early as 901<sup>109</sup>. A *strategos* of Sicily is even mentioned by Porphyrogenitus in *De them.*, although he says that the island is not under the Byzantine rule<sup>110</sup>. Moreover, Porphyrogenitus explains that the island had been lost in the time of Leo the Wise and that only Calabria, governed by the *strategos* of Calabria, had remained in the Christian hands,. In the same chapter he concludes, however, that twelve cities were under the *strategos* of Sicily<sup>111</sup>.

To quote Constantine Porphyrogenitus in support of the assumption that the *strategos* of a province is mentioned several decades after the loss of that province is not a particularly convincing argument, for no definitive assessment of the value of his texts as historical sources has been made yet. It was long thought, for example, that *De thematibus* was earlier than *De administrando imperio*, and it has been shown only comparatively recently that the latter work is in fact earlier<sup>112</sup>. In *De them.* Porphyrogenitus gives lists of the towns in individual provinces, which are obviously copied from Hierocles' *Synecdemus* and do not correspond at all to the contemporaneous situation<sup>113</sup>. Such examples show the chronological diversity of the sources used by Porphyrogenitus in the compilation of his works. Finally, *De them.* is not an official list of imperial provinces, so that it is not necessary to attach the same importance to the information given in that work as to the facts found in official documents such as the *taktikons*. In a short account of the *theme* of Cephalaria, Porphyrogenitus says that it had been a *tourma* of the *theme* of Longobardia in former times, and that it became a *strategias* (*theme*) in the time of the «Christ-loving Emperor» Leo<sup>114</sup>. The known sources show that this account is only partly correct.. The *theme* of Longobardia was created considerably after the *theme* of Cephalaria, and its earliest known *strategos* is mentioned in 911<sup>115</sup>. The reference to the *strategos* of Sicily may have been associated with an expedition in the time of Roman Lacapenos (938/939), when Byzantine rule was temporarily restored in a part of the island<sup>116</sup>, as well as with the

109. OIKONOMIDÈS, *Listes*, 247.22; Ostrogorsky, *Taktikon*, 45.

110. *De them.* 11.33–40.

111. *De them.* 11.40.

112. T. C. LOUNGHIS, Sur la date du *De thematibus*, *REB* 31, 1973, 299–305; Hélène AHRWEILER, Sur la date du *De thematibus* de Constantine VII Porphyrogénète, *TM* 8, 1981, 1–5.

113. Cf. *De them.* 9.4–8, where the provinces of Dacia, Dardania and Pannonia are listed with the number of towns as found in Hierocles's *Synecdemus* although these towns and provinces had ceased to exist three centuries previously. Cf. HIEROCLES, *Synecdemus*, ed. G. PARTHEY, Amsterdam 1967, 16.

114. *DAI*, 1, 50.85–87.

115. OIKONOMIDÈS, *Listes*, 75–76, 351–352.

fact that the Byzantines recaptured Taormina in 912/913 and continued to hold it, just as they did Rameta, until 962 at least<sup>117</sup>.

The need for the compilation of a *taktikon* of the provinces and provincial governors or commanders arose primarily after important changes had taken place in the administrative structure. Consequently, if there is any dilemma concerning the dating of a document of this kind, it is always more advisable to push the chronological limit further down into the past, when the changes which had caused the court to revise the existing *taktikons* were most likely to have occurred, than to raise it, as it has been generally done so far.

Ferluga pointed out long ago, in a study dealing with a different subject, that TU did not mention certain administrative units definitely known to have existed in the first half of the Ninth century, and possibly in the latter half of the eighth century or even earlier. Two cases in point are the *katepano* of Mardaites and *katepano* of Paphlagonia. In TU Paphlagonia is a *theme*, and there is no mention of a *katepano*, who, however, figures in *Kletorologion of Philotheos*<sup>118</sup>, as does the *theme* of Paphlagonia<sup>119</sup>. Nevertheless, that *katepano* is not mentioned in UT. More importantly, UT makes no mention of the *katepano* of Mardaites, who had existed since the time of Justinian II, and who is attested in the time of Leo VI in connection with a dispute between the *strategos* of Kivireota and the *katepano* of Mardaites over certain administrative prerogatives<sup>120</sup>. Similarly, the *kleisoura* of Seleucia is omitted in UT<sup>121</sup>, although it was created in the first half of the Ninth century<sup>122</sup>, as testified by the Arab writers Ibn Hardadbeh and Ibn Al Fakih<sup>123</sup>. The compiler, who wrote in the time of

116. W. TREADGOLD, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society*, Stanford 1997, 483-484.

117. *LUPI PROTOSPATARII Annales*, ed. G. PERTZ, MGH Scriptores, vol. 5, Hannover 1829, 54: *et Trabomen capta est a Saracenis*; *La Cronaca Sicula-Saracena di Cambridge con doppio testo Greco*, ed. G. COZZA-LUZI, Palermo 1890, 38; *Ibn al-Atir*, ed. M. AMARI, Biblioteca arabo-sicula, versione italiana vols 1-2, Turin-Rome 1880, vol. 1, 424 ff.; cf. Vera VON FALKENHAUSEN, *Untersuchungen über die byzantinische Herrschaft in Süditalien vom 9. bis ins 11. Jahrhundert*, Wiesbaden 1967, 26.

118. OIKONOMIDÈS, *Listes*, 231.24-25; CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *De cerimoniis aulae byzantinae*, ed. I. REISKE, vols, 1-2, Bonn 1829 (henceforth: *De cerim.*), 788.10-11.

119. OIKONOMIDÈS, *Listes*, 105.6.

120. *DAI*, 1, 50.182-187; cf. the comments of FERLUGA (*Niže jedinice*, 74-75) and the opposite view of OIKONOMIDÈS (*Listes*, 231, note 289).

121. UT mentions a *kleisoura* of Sozopolis (OIKONOMIDÈS, *Listes*, 55.6), which is attested nowhere else, and Oikonomidès suggests that the original reference was in fact to Seleucia (OIKONOMIDÈS, *Listes*, 54, n. 35).

122. BROOKS, *Arabic Lists*, 75; OIKONOMIDÈS, *Listes*, 350.

Leo VI, as it can be deduced from a payroll in *De cerim.*, was aware of the fact that Seleucia had previously been a *kleisoura* and that it was a *theme* in his time<sup>124</sup>. Therefore Oikonomides's suggestion that the intended reading in UT was Seleucia, not Sozopolis<sup>125</sup> seems sound. Another problem is presented by the *kleisourai* of Cilicia, Isauria, Cappadoce<sup>126</sup> and Galatia, attested at the end of 811<sup>127</sup>, but never mentioned in the later sources. It is possible that the *kleisourarchai* of these *kleisourai* are listed in UT under the joint heading *κλεισουργάρχαι*<sup>128</sup>, and that only two *kleisourarchai*, those of Charsianon and Sozopolis (i. e. Seleucia), are listed by name. Another explanation is based on the fact that the *kleisourarchai* of Charsianon and Sozopolis (i.e. Seleucia) are mentioned in the plural in Uspenskij's edition of UT<sup>129</sup>, which may imply that the *kleisourarchai* of Charsianon and Sozopolis (Seleucia) referred to by Theophanes in 811 or even earlier, in 697/698, were their subordinates<sup>130</sup>.

The above remarks render the dating of UT considerably more difficult, for they open a number of questions to most of which no easy answer can be given. The clue for the dating of UT may lie in fact in its title, which, however, cannot be interpreted as it has been done so far if we bear in mind the above comments.

The basic import of the title of UT: *Τακτικὸν ἐν ἐπιτόμῳ γενόμενον ἐπὶ Μιχαὴλ τοῦ φιλοχρίστου δεσπότη καὶ Θεοδώρας τῆς ὀρθοδοξοτάτης καὶ ἁγίας αὐτοῦ μητρός*, is that the text was compiled during the reign of Michael and his mother Theodora, i.e. in the period 842–856 or possibly 845–856, as Ostrogorsky suggested. That is what the transcriber from the eleventh/thirteenth century says. A detail shows clearly that he slightly modified the title and gave the epithet *saint* to the Emperor's mother. Theodora was actually canonized, so this designation is accurate<sup>131</sup>. However, since she

123. Cf. *De them.* 147 (comment).

124. *De cerim.* 697.6-7; FERLUGA, *Niže jedinice*, 80.

125. See note 121.

126. It seems that Cappadoce became a *kleisoura* quite early. One mention in Theophanes (THEOPHANIS, 1, 350) from 666/667 may be interpreted as a reference to Cappadoce as a *kleisoura*. In 694/695 Theophanes (THEOPHANIS, 1, 368.27) mentions Gregory Cappadocian who was a *kleisouraphylax*. Three years later, in 697/698, Theophanes (THEOPHANIS, 1, 371.11-12) mentions Cappadoce and the adjacent *kleisoura*. The references to Cappadoce and Galatia by the same writer (THEOPHANIS, 1, 473.10) 797/798 may be also understood as relating to *kleisourai*.

127. SCRIPTOR INCERTUS DE LEONE ARMENIO, 336.20-21.

128. OIKONOMIDES, *Listes*, 55.4; Uspenskij, *Tabel'*, 123.

129. USPENSKIJ, *Tabel'*, 123.

130. THEOPHANIS, 1, 371.11-12.

was canonized after her death<sup>132</sup>, it is not possible that the original title of the work was worded as it has come down to us. Two explanations are possible. First, the transcriber may have used a text which was itself a transcript of the original, made later, at a time when the Empress had been canonized. Second, the transcriber may have copied the original, adding the designation *saint* because he knew that Empress Theodora was canonized after her death. In that case, the evidence for the dating is not substantially altered, for the transcriber merely inserted the epithet *saint* without changing the main meaning of the title, which states that the work was compiled in the time of Michael and Theodora, i.e. not later than 856.

The *Synaxarium* of the Church of Constantinople, which dates from the time of the Macedonian dynasty, adds the epithet «*the most orthodox*» to Theodora's name three times<sup>133</sup>. Leo Grammaticus (Symeon Logothetes) also mentions Theodora's orthodoxy - *πιστὴ καὶ ὀρθόδοξος*, which is normal in view of the fact that he is a later author<sup>134</sup>. The compiler of Theodora's Hagiography, which was written after 867 and preserved in a transcript from 1111<sup>135</sup>, notes in the title *Βίος σὺν ἐγκωμίῳ τῆς μακαρίας καὶ ἁγίας Θεοδώρας τῆς βασιλίδος*<sup>136</sup>. Her contemporary George the Monk does not add the epithet *saint* to her name<sup>137</sup>, neither does any secular or spiritual source

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131. The Church of Constantinople celebrates her feast on February, 11th; cf. *Synaxarium ecclesiae constantinopolitanae*, ed. H. DELAHAYE, Bruxelles 1902 (henceforth: *Synaxarium*), 458.27: *μνήμην Θεοδώρας τῆς βασιλίσσης*.

132. It is well known that the Emperor of Byzantium was considered a saint from the moment of his coronation, as is shown in *On Ceremonies* (*De cerim.* 193.4), but the use of the term depended on the circumstances and on the type or purpose of the text; cf. I. GOSCHEV, *Zur Frage der Kronungszeremonien und die zeremonielle Gewandung der byzantinischen und der bulgarischen Herrscher im Mittelalter*, *Byzantino-Bulgarica*, vol. 2, 1966, 145-168. In the case of Theodora, we do not have a text dealing with solemn occasions on which she might have been appropriately designated as a saint. In any case, the source (the title of UT) uses the term *saint* only for Theodora, and not for Emperor Michael. Had the author wanted to use the solemn formula, he would have also called Emperor Michael *saint*. For the usage of the term *saint* for Byzantine Emperors see G. DAGRON, *Empereur et prêtre*, Paris 1996, 159-168, especially p. 166.

133. *Synaxarium*, 444.27-28; 521.3-4 (εὐσεβεστάτης); *Synaxarium*, 936.35-36 (together with her son Emperor Michael, εὐσεβεστάτων).

134. LEO GRAMMATICUS, *Chronographia*, ed. I. BEKKER [CSHB], Bonn 1842 (henceforth: LEO GRAMM.) 228.12-13. For Simeon Logothetes's work and its variants ascribed to various authors see A. K[AZH DAN], *ODB*, vol. 3, 1982-1983, and F. USPENSKIJ, *Očerki po istorij vizantiskoj obrazovanosti*, St. Petersburg 1891, 15-18.

135. Cf. A. MARKOPOULOS, *Βίος τῆς αὐτοκράτειρας Θεοδώρας* (BHG 1731), *Symmeikta* 5, 1983, 255.

136. *Ibid.* 257.2-3.

from the second half of the Ninth century or the entire tenth century<sup>138</sup>.

The term *Μιχαὴλ τοῦ φιλοχρίστου δεσπότου*, should refer to the reigning Emperor, for the designation *despotes* coupled with the emperor's name is generally used in historical records for the reigning emperor. However, this usage can be hardly taken as an argument because in Constantine Porphyrogenitus, for example, Basil I, Leo VI the Wise, Romanos I Lacapenos and himself are all called *despotes*.<sup>139</sup> Porphyrogenitus uses the term *basileus* much more frequently - but that term, too, is used for both living and deceased Emperors. The title of *Kletorologion of Philotheos* contains, in addition to the exact year, the *indictos* and the month of writing, the following *ἐπὶ Λέοντος τοῦ φιλοχρίστου καὶ σοφωτάτου ἡμῶν βασιλέως*. In BT, for example, the late Emperor Leo VI, is referred to as *τοῦ φιλοχρίστου δεσπότου*<sup>140</sup>. In *De Cerim.* the late Emperor Basil I is referred to in a passage describing his mother's tomb as *μήτηρ βασιλείου φιλοχρίστου δεσπότου*<sup>141</sup>. When Emperors Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus and his son Romanos II address foreign sovereigns (for example, the rulers of the Russians, Pechenegs, Hungarians) the formula is *μεγάλοι βασιλεῖς Ῥωμαίων*<sup>142</sup>, but when they (or their predecessors) send letters to the rulers of the Balkan principalities, the sender is designated as *φιλοχρίστων δεσποτῶν*<sup>143</sup>. It cannot be, therefore, said that *φιλοχρίστου δεσπότου* always refers to the Emperor reigning (i.e. living) at the time of the writing of the text<sup>144</sup>. In this case there can be no serious objection to the supposition that the transcriber wrote the title when Michael and Theodora had already been dead.

A particular question that remains to be considered is whether the transcriber attributed the work to Michael and Theodora for some particular reason, as St. Kyriakides supposed. Ostrogorsky posed the question why anybody should do so<sup>145</sup>. Of course, we do not know the answer why someone should decide to ascribe a text to the time of Theodora and Michael, but we think that it is not a very relevant question, since there may have been many reasons indeed. For example, during their

137. cf. GEORGIUS MONACHUS, *Chronicon*, ed. C. DE BOOR [CSHB], vols 1-2, Leipzig 1904, vol. 2, 801.6; 801.15: *Τῇ μητρὶ αὐτοῦ Θεοδώρα; τῇ μητρὶ Θεοδώρα*.

138. GENESIUS, 55.17, 55.34, 56.63, 61.90, etc. THEOPH. CONT., 148.9; 149.16; 160.16; 162.16

139. DAI, 1, 26.68, 72; 50.86 - 87, 92, 101, 131, 50.133, 51.7-8, 51.137, et passim.

140. OIKONOMIDÈS, *Listes*, 249.14 - 15.

141. *De cerim.*, 648.11-12.

142. *De cerim.*, 691.1-7.

143. *De cerim.*, 691.12.

144. On the terms βασιλεὺς, δεσπότης, see G. RÖSCH, *Όνομα βασιλείας*, Vienna 1978, 37-40.

145. OSTROGORSKY, *Taktikon*, 40-41.



rule the cult of icons was established, and the scribe may have wanted to attribute to them also something else he considered noteworthy. It is also possible that the original manuscript may have been part of another manuscript which really belonged to the time of Theodora and Michael. There may have been many such reasons and it would be injudicious to proclaim any of them for a fact. Suffice it to note that Theodora is referred to as a *saint*, an appellation which could not have been applied to her during her lifetime<sup>146</sup>. This is sufficient proof that the scribe made arbitrary alterations in the text or that he transcribed from copies already tampered with. This would also explain the omissions of some *katepanoi* or *kleisourai* noted above. Oikonomides himself admits that the manuscript of UT is *de qualité très médiocre*, and that *elle comporte des lacunes, des interpolations, des fautes de transcription, sans doute plus nombreuses que celles que j'ai relevées dans l'annotation*<sup>147</sup>.

It should be recalled that Uspenskij published several leaves of *Kletorologion of Philotheos*, which formed a part of Manuscript No. 39 of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and which the transcriber began with *τόμος β'* – that is, without a title. Uspenskij collated the text of *Kletorologion of Philotheos* preserved in *De cerim.* with that in Manuscript No. 39, and found that the transcriber was extremely careless<sup>148</sup>. Medieval manuscripts often lack a title and it was not unusual for a later copyist to supply a title he thought appropriate.

It seems, however, that scholars have overlooked an essential piece of information which can be gleaned the title itself of the text. Namely, the title refers to the emperor as Emperor Michael, not as Michael the Younger or Theophilos's son, as the Byzantines usually distinguished their emperors bearing the same name. He is called simply Emperor Michael, which means that he was the only emperor of that name known to the compiler of UT. This, in turn, means that he had in mind Emperor Michael I Rangabe (811–813). This seems even more likely in view of the fact that Michael I and Michael III were orthodox Emperors – followers of the cult of icons, so that a later transcriber might have thought that the reference was to the far better

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146. The Continuator of Theophanes, writing in the middle of the 10th century, mentions Empress Theodora several times, but he never calls her *saint*. For example *πρὸς τὴν Θεοδώραν, τῆς βασιλίδος Θεοδώρας, Θεοδώρα*; cf. THEOPH. CONT. 148.9; 149.16; 151.20; 160.16; 174.2. Neither does Leo Grammaticus use this designation when he refers to Empresses Theodora, Theophano or Zoia Zauces (Leo VI's wives) Procopia, the wife of Michael I; cf. LEO GRAMM., 213.18, 229.13, 234.19 – 20; 270.14; 270.19, 270.22; 335.3, 337.1, 337.4.

147. OIKONOMIDES, *Listes*, 41.

148. USPENSKIJ, *Tabel'*, 102 – 108.

known Emperor Michael III, «*the orthodox Emperor*», not to Michael I, whose brief reign had left no notable trace in Byzantine history. This seems quite possible if we bear in mind that the extant transcript of UT dates from the twelfth or thirteenth century. In Leo Grammaticus, the chapter on each emperor has a brief heading which gives the emperor's name and, in most cases, the epithet which distinguishes him from the other emperors of the same name. Thus, Leo I is described as τοῦ μεγάλου, Leo III is given a series of epithets ὁ Ἰσαυρος, ὁ Σύρος, ὁ καὶ Κόνων, ὁ εἰκονομάχος, Leo IV is called τῆς Χαζάρας, Leo V ὁ Ἀρμένιος, while Leo VI is given no epithets, but the preceding text makes it clear that he is the son of Emperor Basil I<sup>149</sup>. The Emperors named Michael are distinguished in a similar way. Thus Michael I is ἰκουροπαλάτας<sup>150</sup>, Michael II ὁ Ἀμορραῖος<sup>151</sup>, and Michael III is without epithets, but it is made known in the previous text that he is the son of Emperor Theophilos<sup>152</sup>. Constantine Porphyrogenitus adds τοῦ υἱοῦ Θεοφίλου to the name of Michael III<sup>153</sup>.

The studies of UT, particularly in Serbian historiography, have been focused so far on the evidence concerning the *archon* of Dalmatia, which was used to prove that the *theme* was created in the later years of the reign of Basil I (867-886). It has been assumed that the *archontia* of Dalmatia certainly existed in 842/3-856, and that the *theme* was created around 870. However, if the origin of UT is pushed further back into the past, the things begin to look quite different and bring into question not only the duration of the *archontia* of Dalmatia, but also necessitate a revision of the dating of the creation of the *theme* of Dalmatia.

The earliest mention of the *archontia* of Dalmatia occurs on a seal of the *spatharios and archon of Dalmatia*, which is dated into the late eighth or early Ninth century<sup>154</sup>. A seal of George, *imperial spatharios and archon of Dalmatia* dates from the early ninth century<sup>155</sup>. There is another seal of the *imperial spatharios and archon of Dalmatia* from the middle of the ninth century<sup>156</sup>, as well as a seal with the same

149. LEO. GRAMM., 113.2; 116.1; 173.17; 190.6; 207.6; 262.13.

150. LEO. GRAMM., 206.3.

151. LEO. GRAMM., 211.7.

152. LEO. GRAMM., 228.9; 227.12-13.

153. *DAI*, 1, 50.9-10.

154. W. SEIBT, *Jadran Ferluga, L'amministrazione bizantina in Dalmazia*, Venice 1978, *JÖB* 30, 1981, 338. The same seal was published by ZACOS – VEGLERY, *Seals*, no. 2637 and NESBITT – OIKONOMIDES, *Seals*, 1, no. 14.2.

155. NESBITT – OIKONOMIDES, *Seals*, 1, no. 14.1.

inscription which is dated roughly into the ninth century<sup>157</sup>. All four seals testify that the *archontia* and of the office of *archon* lasted for more than a century.

In addition to these four seals of the *archon* of Dalmatia, a seal of *Euthymios, imperial spatharokandidatos and doux of Delmatia*, dated into ninth/tenth century, has been preserved<sup>158</sup>. It was not unusual in Byzantine practice to appoint a *doux* in addition to the *strategos* of a *theme*. A number of such examples has been pointed out by Ferluga in his discussion of the lower administrative units of the Empire<sup>159</sup>. The *doux* had special duties, and he was directly subordinated to the *strategos* of the *theme* in which he served. Thus the occurrence of this seal might be taken as a proof that Dalmatia was a *theme* in the latter half of the ninth century. It may also be regarded as another testimony that UT originated before the second half of the ninth century. There is another seal, belonging to *Eustathios, imperial protospatharios and strategos of Delmatia*, also from the ninth/tenth century<sup>160</sup>.

The seals mentioning the *strategos* of Dalmatia which have given rise to the greatest disputes of scholars were published at the end of the nineteenth century and have been variously dated. Thus Schlumberger published a seal of Bryenas, the *spatharios* and *strategos* of Dalmatia, which he dated into the middle of the ninth century. He also mentioned another seal of Bryenas, designated as the *protospatharios* of Dalmatia, which had been reportedly seen in a bazaar in Istanbul<sup>161</sup>. Ferluga later dated the published seal of the *spatharios* and *strategos* Bryenas into the second half of the ninth century (after 870). Recently, however, Oikonomides has argued that Schlumberger's dating was more accurate<sup>162</sup>.

It should be borne in mind that the *strategoi* of *themes* in UT are almost all *patrikioi*, while the seal of the *strategos* of Dalmatia mentions *spatharios* or *protospatharios*. The conjunction of this lower title with the function of the *strategos* is rare during in the early stages of the thematic organization and its occurrence should be

156. G. R. DAVIDSON, *The Minor Objects*, Corinth XII, New Jersey 1952, no. 2697.

157. NESBITT - OIKONOMIDES, *Seals*, 1, no. 14.3. It is interesting that Porphyrogenitus's *DAI*, written around the middle of the 10th century, mentions Dalmatia exactly 23 times, always with the expression ἡ Δελματία; cf. *DAI*, 1, 29,1,3,5,5 et passim; 30.1,6,8, et passim; 31.3,56;32.24;36.5.

158. NESBITT - OIKONOMIDES, *Seals*, 1, 14.4. F. WINKELMANN, *Byzantinische rang - und Ämterstruktur im 8. und 9. Jahrhundert*, Berlin 1985, 117, dates this seal into the second half of the 9th century.

159. FERLUGA, *Nize jedinice*, 85-88.

160. NESBITT - OIKONOMIDES, *Seals*, 1, 14.5.

161. G. SCHLUMBERGER, *Sigillographie de l'empire byzantin*, Paris 1882 (henceforth: SCHLUMBERGER, *Sigillographie*) 206-207.

162. NESBITT - OIKONOMIDES, *Seals*, 1, 46

associated with the later rather than the earlier periods<sup>163</sup>. In UT all the *strategoi* are *patrikioi*, while not all *patrikioi* are *strategoi*<sup>164</sup>.

A seal of the *protomandator* of Dalmatia is known in addition to the two seals of the *strategos* of Dalmatia<sup>165</sup>. It should be pointed out that persons holding the rank of *protomandator* in the provinces were always subordinated to either the *strategoi* or the *tourmarches*<sup>166</sup>, which is an indirect indication that this *protomandator* resided in a province which was a *theme* at that time. Moreover, if he was subordinated to a *tourmarches* it would mean that Dalmatia was divided into at least two *tourmai* in the middle of the ninth century, which is date of this seal.

The Frankish sources provide some additional information which should be compared with that provided by the seals mentioned above and the officials recorded on them. The most important Western sources which provide information on Dalmatia in the early years of the ninth century are *Einhard's Annales* and the *Venetian Chronicle* of John the Deacon. John the Deacon relates that the doges of Venice, Obelarius and Beatus, «*navalem exercitum ad Dalmaciarum provinciam depopulandam destinaverunt*»<sup>167</sup>. It was an action which Venice undertook against the Byzantine possessions in Dalmatia as a Frankish ally. The outcome of the expedition is made clear in Einhard's notes, who writes that Obelarius and Beatus, the doges of Venice, Paul, the *dux of Jadera*, Donatus, the bishop of Jadera and the emissaries of the Dalmatians came to the court of Charles the Great in 806. The envoys brought gifts to the Emperor and were confirmed as rulers in Venice and in Dalmatia<sup>168</sup>.

The embassy from Venice and Jadera set out for the Frankish Empire in a specific political moment, when Byzantium had temporarily lost its predominance in that part of the Adriatic, and the visit of the envoys to Didenhofen was connected with the expansion of the Frankish influence. They continued to rule as Frankish subjects.

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163. Theophanes, for example, mentions fourteen times *strategoi* who were also *patrikioi* in the period from 607/8 to 812/813. Only in two cases (THEOPHANIS, 1, 398.7-8, 445.21-22) the *strategos* has a lower title -Sergios, the *protospatharios* and the *strategos* of Sicily (717/718) and Petronas, the *spatharios* and *strategos* of Kivireota (770/771).

164. FERLUGA, *Uprava*, 67.

165. SCHLUMBERGER, *Sigillographie*, 206 (also from the first half of the 9th century).

166. Cf. *De cerim.* 663.8-9, 663.16-17; OIKONOMIDÈS, *Listes*, 111.4-5.

167. *La cronaca Veneziana del Diacono Giovanni*, Fonti per la Storia d'Italia, Scrittori, secoli X-XI, ed. G. MONTICOLO, Rome 1890 (henceforth: *Diac.*) 102.1-4.

168. *Einhardi Annales*, MGH Scriptores, v. 1, ed. G. H. PERTZ, Hannover 1829 (henceforth: *Einh.*) 193.11-14.

Ferluga argues that Paul's title *dux* shows that he was a Frankish, not Byzantine official, and that the visit itself was connected with the reorganization of Frankish Dalmatia<sup>169</sup>. The following year the Byzantine general Niketas came to Venice to recover the Byzantine towns<sup>170</sup>. Having concluded peace with King Pippin of Italy in 807, he set out for Constantinople, taking Beatus as a hostage, and leaving Obelarius, on whom he conferred the title of *spatharios*, to govern Venice<sup>171</sup>. Soon afterwards Beatus returned to Venice with the rank of *hypatos*<sup>172</sup>. Thus Venice fell under Byzantine rule again. Pippin's military response of 810 was not successful, for John the Deacon says explicitly that the Italian King was defeated<sup>173</sup>. Although the Franks were unsuccessful in Venice, they reimposed their dominance in Dalmatia between 807 and 810<sup>174</sup>, so that Paul, the *praefectus* (i. e. *strategos*) of Cephalaria, was sent to Dalmatia to restore the Byzantine rule. Two years later the Frankish Empire and Byzantium concluded peace in Aachen. According to the peace treaty, the Franks retained the hinterland (Croatia), while the Dalmatian towns were ceded to Byzantium<sup>175</sup>.

This survey of the developments in Dalmatia in 806–812 raises the question of the way Dalmatia was organized. The reaction of the Empire to the expansion of the Franks in 806 is a certain proof that Dalmatia was under the Byzantine dominance and that its rule was seriously jeopardized by the passing of the port of Jadera under the suzerainty of the Frankish Emperor. The immediate dispatch of Niketas's fleet is a clear sign that Dalmatia had been a constituent part of Byzantium before 806. The appellation *dux* used for the official based in Jadera, the centre of the province of Dalmatia, may be explained as Einhard's loose translation of the term, but then one wonders what the original Byzantine title of that official was. Our supposition is that he was in fact the *archon* of Jadera, or rather of Dalmatia, which would mean that the *archontia* of Dalmatia existed even before 806. The temporary Frankish successes in 810 and the return of the *praefectus* (*strategos*) of Cephalaria are merely episodes

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169. FERLUGA, *Uprava*, 48-49.

170. *Einh.* 193.37 - 40.

171. *Diac.* 103.12 - 16.

172. *Diac.* 103.21-104.2.

173. *Diac.* 104.5 - 15.

174. According to *Einh.* 197.16-18, Pippin seems to have sacked the Dalmatian coast in 810 and restored his rule in the Dalmatian towns.

175. *Einh.* 199.26-39; *Einhardi Vita Karoli imperatoris*, MGH Scriptores, 2, ed. G. H. PERTZ, Hannover 1829, 451.8-10, notes that Dalmatia was a part of Charles's state, *exceptis maritimis civitatibus, quas ob amicitiam et iunctam cum eo foedus Constantineopolitanum imperatorem habere permisit*.

indicating a brief suspension of the Byzantine rule. As soon as 812 the peace of Aachen defined the frontier between the Byzantine possessions in Dalmatia and the Franks. The *archontia* of Dalmatia also got stabler boundaries at that time. Five years later, in 816/817, Emperor Leo V sent a certain Nikephoros to settle the boundaries between the Dalmatian Romans and the Slavs<sup>176</sup>. The concern of the Empire for the definition of the borders in this region shows not only that the Byzantine rule was established there, but also that that territory was clearly defined as a province.

Latin sources mention a certain John, *praefectus of the province*, based in Jadera, who received Bishop Forutnatus, a supporter of Ludovicus Posavski in his struggle against the Franks and their vassals, the Dalmatian Croats (819-822)<sup>177</sup>. John's title, *praefectus* of the province, is quite different from Paul's appellation, *dux* of Jadera, mentioned fifteen years earlier by the same Frankish author. He not only holds a different title, but his authority is enlarged to include not only Jadera, but the entire province.

The province referred to may be only one - Dalmatia. That would further mean that an administrative change took place in Dalmatia between 806 and 821, when it grew from an *archontia* into a *theme*. Einhard gives the same title to Paul, the *praefectus* of Cephalonia, who operated along the Dalmatian coast against the Franks in 810, and it is well known that Cephalonia had been a *theme* since the last decades of the eighth century. It would be odd indeed if the same source used the same title for two different functions. In both cases the reference is to the *strategos* -of Cephalonia and of Dalmatia.

Gottschalk, a Saxon who was at the court of Prince Trpimir of Croatia between 846 and 848, provides an exceptionally important testimony of the existence of a *strategos* of Dalmatia. According to the report of this Frankish preacher, Trpimir made war against the Greeks and their *patrikios*, whom he defeated<sup>178</sup>. Ferluga thought that this *patrikios* may have been the *strategos* of Cephalonia, not Dalmatia, and that he may have led an expedition against the Croatian Prince<sup>179</sup>. This interpretation is at variance with the source, which says that it was Trpimir who attacked the Byzantines,

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176. *Thegani Vita Hiudowici imperatoris*, MGH Scriptorum, 2, , 621.13-16.

177. *Einhard*. 208.10-11: *Iohanni praefecto provinciae*.

178. L. KATIĆ, Saksonac Gottschalk na dvoru kneza Trpimira, *Bogoslovski smotra* 4, 1932, 10: *contra gentem Grecorum et patricium eorum*.

179. FERLUGA, *Uprava*, 67; cf. also, V. KOŠČAK, Pripadnost istočne obale Jadrana do splitskih sabora 925-928, *Historijski zbornik* 33-34, 1981, 306-307.

not *vice versa*. Although all the *strategoi* in UT are *patrikios*, not all *patrikios* are *strategoi*, as it has been pointed out<sup>180</sup>. However, this Byzantine *patrikios* in Dalmatia had military units under him, which means that he had the rank of a military commander. The high title of *patrikios* consequently puts him into the highest military rank – *strategos*.

Gottschalk's mention of the Greek *patrikios* is an indubitable proof that in 846–848 Dalmatia was a *theme* governed by a *strategos*. In the light of the arguments discussed above, this testimony supports an earlier dating of UT and makes it possible to set the year 846 as the latest date of its origin.

Finally, Constantine Porphyrogenitus observes in *DAI* that the entire Dalmatia and the peoples in its neighbourhood ... *were under Byzantine rule*<sup>181</sup>, until the time of Emperor Michael II, when the situation began to deteriorate seriously. At the same time the Dalmatian towns, as well as the adjacent Slav tribes, ceased to recognize the Byzantine rule. This state of affairs persisted, according to Porphyrogenitus, until the reign of his grandfather Basil I, who restored the Byzantine rule over the Slav tribes and sent them priests to convert them again. As for the Dalmatian towns, Basil subjected them to the Byzantine rule after the successful operations of the Imperial fleet near Ragusa, which was besieged by the Arabs in 866/867<sup>182</sup>. Porphyrogenitus specifies in the next chapter of his work, which is in fact a revised and improved version of the preceding chapter, that the inhabitants of Dalmatia were paying tribute to the *strategos*, and that Basil ordered them to give the Slavs what they had been previously giving to the *strategos*<sup>183</sup>.

Although it may be inferred from Porphyrogenitus's text that there was a *strategos* in Dalmatia even before Basil I, we should bear in mind that this author often uses contemporary terminology and thinks in terms of the current situation when speaking of things belonging to the distant past. In other words, the anachronistic use of terms is a feature of Porphyrogenitus's style, and the researcher must use him rather warily. The essential fact is, however, that even before Basil I there existed a high Byzantine official to whom the inhabitants of the Dalmatian towns were paying tribute.

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180. FERLUGA, *Uprava*, 67.

181. *DAI*, 1, 29.56 – 58. The text marked by italics is missing, but nearly all the editions of *DAI* agree that the Emperor wanted to say that Dalmatia had been under the power of the *Romans* until the time of Emperor Michael II (820–829).

182. *DAI*, 1, 29.110–111, where the Dalmatian towns under the Byzantine rule at the time of the siege of Bari in 870 are mentioned.

183. *DAI*, 1, 30.124 – 132.

He may have been an *archon*, but it is also possible that he was a *strategos*. It is more likely that he was a *strategos*, for he collected revenues from an extensive territory from Spalato to Jadera and Traugirium and further on as far as the northern islands of Dalmatia. This would be a very difficult, if not impossible task for an *archon* relying on the town militia of Jadera only. Besides, Porphyrogenitus does not mention that Basil introduced any administrative reforms in Dalmatia, so that it is reasonable to suppose that the reference is to same title or rank as it existed before Basil's reign. In that case it must be concluded that there had been a *strategos* of the *theme* of Dalmatia even before the reign of Basil I. This seems the more likely as the total sum paid by the towns amounted to 710 nomismas – and that was equivalent, if we ignore the 72 nomismas the Ragusans were paying to the Zachloulmians and Travounians, to the salary of a *strategos* – 10 pounds of gold = 720 nomismas<sup>184</sup>. This is in fact a certain testimony that the *strategos* of Dalmatia existed before Basil I and that he was paid a salary of 10 pounds of gold accruing from the revenues from the Dalmatian towns, since the *strategoi* of the Western *themes* did not receive their pay from the central imperial treasury<sup>185</sup>.

A detail preserved in *DAI* also points to the antiquity of the *theme* of Dalmatia: Porphyrogenitus says that the province of Dalmatia is «*the most famous of all the Western provinces*»<sup>186</sup>. As noted by R. Novaković<sup>187</sup>, and elaborated by B. Ferjančić<sup>188</sup>, that statement could have been made only by one looking at things from Constantinople, which indicates that the final revision of the material used in this chapter of *DAI* was made in Constantinople. It is not necessary to regard this statement as a certain proof that the *theme* of Dalmatia had existed long before the origin of *DAI*, for Porphyrogenitus uses contemporaneous terms anachronistically, but it is noteworthy that this view was current in Constantinople and that it must have had some real basis in times past. Indeed, the further narration shows that the author looks at the time prior to the fall of Salona and the arrival of the Slavs<sup>189</sup> as the period in

184. *DAI*, 1, 30.130, mentions that the towns contribute, in addition to the sum paid to the Slavs, a small amount (βραχύ) to the *strategos*. That might have been the 10 nomismas which would add up to the total of 720 *nomismas*.

185. FERLUGA, *Uprava*, 74-75; *De cerim.*, 697.10-12. The *strategoi* of Kiverota, Samos and the Aegean Islands received ten pounds of gold from the *strategoi* of the Eastern *themes*; cf. *De cerim.*, 697.8-10.

186. *DAI*, 1, 30.12.

187. R. NOVAKOVIĆ, Neka zapažanja o 29. i 30. glavi De administrando imperio, *Istorijski časopis* 19, 1972, 12 ff.

188. B. FERJANČIĆ, Dalmacija u spisu De administrando imperio - vrela i putevi saznanja, *ZRVI* 29-30, 1991, 17-18.



which Dalmatia was «*the most famous of all the Western provinces*». Yet, a later Latin source (1308) describes Dalmatia as the most famous province under the «good» Constantinopolitan emperors<sup>190</sup>.

The renouncement of the central authority by the Dalmatian towns in the time of Michael II was most likely associated with the Narentans and their expansion to the Adriatic islands - Pharos, Korkyra, Meleta and Brachia. It was precisely at the beginning of the 9th century that the Narentans took possession of these islands - a development also testified in some Western sources, where they are referred to as the lords of these islands<sup>191</sup>. Thus John the Deacon relates that an envoy from the Narentan islands came to Venice, made peace with the doge and was also baptized by him on that occasion<sup>192</sup>. Recent research has shown that the Narentans began the conquest of these islands at the end of the eighth century<sup>193</sup>, which resulted in the weakening of the Byzantine position in Dalmatia and a kind of split of the regions under the Byzantine rule into a northern and a southern segment. Thus during the last decade of the ninth century Ragusa and southern Dalmatia were virtually cut off from the remaining part of Byzantine Dalmatia and its seat in Jadera. The conclusion of Constantine Porphyrogenitus that the Byzantine rule in the territory of Dalmatia collapsed in the time of Michael II may have been based on these developments, when the Narentans became completely independent in their relations with Byzantium and Venice, extended their rule both on the mainland and on the sea, severed the links between southern and northern Dalmatia and effectively isolated the Byzantine towns. Consequently, the towns could rely on their own forces only and had to manage their relations with the Slavs on their own. That might be why Porphyrogenitus wrote that the towns had become independent<sup>194</sup>.

The administrative reforms in individual territories were always prompted by

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189. *DAI*, 1, 30.13-60.

190. *Anonymi Descriptio Europae Orientalis*, ed. O. GORKA, Cracoviae 1916, 20.12-14: *que quidem prouincia cum adiunctis regnis tempore bonorum imperatorum de Constantineopoli, erat prima prouincia grece*.

191. For the dating of the invasion of the Narentans on the islands of the Adriatic - Brachia, Pharos, Korkyra and Meleta, see Lj. MAKSIMOVIĆ, O vremenu dolaska Neretljana na dalmatinska ostrva, *Zbornik Filozofskog fakulteta* 8/1, 1964, 145-152.

192. *Diac*. 110.6-8.

193. A short text from 1405 giving an account of the struggles of the inhabitants of Brachia with the Narentans during the 8th/9th centuries has been preserved - *Braciae insulae descriptio*, *Legende i kronike*, ed. V. GLIGO - H. MOROVIĆ, Split 1977, 219

194. *DAI*, 1, 29.60 - 63.

some developments in the immediate surroundings of the particular region. Thus the Byzantines set up a series of *kleisourai* and *doucates* in the East in order to facilitate the defence of the border zone from the Arab incursions, and they eventually grew into *themes*. A similar principle was applied in the other parts of the Empire, and Dalmatia was certainly no exception in this respect. The *theme* of Peloponnesus was created in a moment of worsened relations with the Franks, and its development was concurrent with the strengthening of the Frankish influence in Italy<sup>195</sup>. Following the same policy, the Byzantines created the *theme* of Dyrrachium in the early ninth century. The creation of the *theme* of Dalmatia was a logical result of the reorganization of the westernmost regions of the Empire, and it might have taken place in 810 at the earliest and in 821 at the latest. A more precise date should be looked for in the period between 817, when the Byzantine mission was defining the borders between the Byzantine possessions and the Slavs in the hinterland, and 821, when Einhard mentioned the *praefectus* of the province based in Jadera. Some time later, the attacks of the Narentans undermined the Byzantine dominance in Dalmatia, so that Porphyrogenitus's comment concerning the weakening of the Byzantine rule in that territory might have been partly drawn by the consequences of the expansion of the Narentans. The Narentans caused damage not only to the Byzantines, but also to Venice, whose powerful fleet seems to have failed to intervene on time.

The *theme* of Dalmatia probably existed in 817/821. In that case, UT, which was compiled, according to its title, in the time of Michael and Theodora, originated considerably earlier, which means that we should reconsider Kyriakides's suggestion that it should be dated into the period 809–821. Because of the same reason, the *theme* of Klimata, which figures in UT and which has been used as the key clue for the dating of UT into a time after 833/834, is not in fact identical with the *theme* of Cherson, but its precursor created after 809. In all the extant *taktikons* –UT, BT, *Kletorologion of Philotheos* and *Escorial*, the *strategos* or the *archon* of Dalmatia is listed before the *strategos* or the *archon* of Cherson<sup>196</sup>. It is known that the lists of *themes* in the *taktikons* followed an established pattern and that were arranged in the order of both importance and the date of creation<sup>197</sup>. When new *themes* were created by the detachment of a region from a previously existing large *theme*, it was added below the parental *theme*, so that such lists make it also possible to follow the geographical

195. T. ŽIVKOVIĆ, The Date of the Creation of the Theme of Peloponnesus, *Symmeikta* 13, 1999 (henceforth: ŽIVKOVIĆ, Date of the Creation), 141–155.

196. It is interesting that none of the Arabian lists of Byzantine provinces, and five of them are extant, contains either the *theme* of Klimata or the *theme* of Cherson; cf. BROOKS, Arabic Lists, 67–77.

197. ŽIVKOVIĆ, Date of the Creation, 145–146.

distribution of the *themes*. On the other hand, the *themes* which were never divided were recorded in the chronological order. In that case, the older *theme* preceded the more recent one. In UT the *archon* of Dalmatia is listed before the *archon* of Cherson, just as in the later *taktikons* the *strategos* of Dalmatia always precedes the *strategos* of Cherson. This can mean only one thing – that the *theme* of Dalmatia was older than the *theme* of Cherson, and the *theme* of Cherson was created under that name in the time of Emperor Theophilos at the earliest (possibly already in 833/834, if Constantine Porphyrogenitus's statement<sup>198</sup> is understood in that sense), but most likely several decades later. This approach also shows that the *archontia* of Dalmatia originated already in the eighth century, for several seals of the *archontes* of Cherson dating from the eighth century have been preserved.

In 826 Theodore Stoudite wrote a letter to *strategos* Bryenas<sup>199</sup>. It cannot be inferred from the content of the letter where the *strategos* served, but there are indications that he was in Dalmatia<sup>200</sup>. Thus, for example, *strategos* Bryenas from Schlumberger's seal may have been precisely the *strategos* to whom Theodore Stoudite wrote. It is indicative that the Bryennios family, whose members served as the *strategoi* of Dalmatia and Peloponnesus<sup>201</sup>, owed its rise in the imperial administration to the Amorion dynasty, that it lost its eminence in the time of the Macedonian dynasty. If we therefore view the seal of Bryenas, the *strategos* of Dalmatia, in this context, it may be concluded that the seal dates from the time of the Amorion (820–867), not Macedonian dynasty. The reference to Theoktistos Bryennios, who led an expedition against the Ezeritai and Milingoi on the Peloponnesus in 842, at the very beginning of the reign of Michael III, can also be very important, for he is designated as *protospatharios*. Namely, if UT originated in 842/843, his proper appellation would have been *patrikios*, not *protospatharios*, for UT refers to the *patrikios* and *strategos* of Peloponnesus<sup>202</sup>.

The proposed dating of UT into the time of Michael I provides an answer to

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198. *DAI*, 1, 42.39 – 54. However, since the seals of the *strategoi* of Cherson date from as late as the eighth decade of the 9th century, one should tread cautiously here. The material evidence, coins and seals, points to the early years of the rule of Basil I as the period when the *theme* of Klimata was renamed Cherson.

199. THEODORE STOUDITE, ep. no. 509, ed. G. FATOUROS, *Theodori Studitae Epistulae*, vol. 2, Berlin 1992, 755.

200. NESBITT – OIKONOMIDES, *Seals*, 1, 46.

201. Theoktistos Bryennios the *protospatharios* and *strategos* of Peloponnesus; cf. *DAI*, 1, 50.10–11.

202. One should bear in mind, of course, that the *taktikons* show the disposition of officials according to an ideal pattern, which does not mean that there were no occasional departures from it. Thus it was

another important question which has been much debated in historiography. It has been noticed that provincial *archontes* figure in UT only, and attempts have been made to explain what their role was in the region which already had a *strategos*. Oikonomides briefly mentions these *archontes* without going into a detailed explanation of their role. He disagrees, however, with the explanation suggested by H. Ahrweiler that they were commanders of naval squadrons in the maritime regions of the Empire<sup>203</sup> and concludes merely that they represented the remnants of the municipal administration and of the semi-independent status of these regions in former times<sup>204</sup>. We shall not discuss here the interpretations suggested by previous scholars, but we shall only point out the explanation which is the only possible one once UT is dated into the time of Michael I.

It is a fact that the *archontes* of Chaldia, Crete and Dyrrachium figure in UT in addition to the *strategoi* of these provinces<sup>205</sup>. Moreover, in the case of Crete there appears a particular *archon* in addition to the *archontes* who are mentioned jointly. It is remarkable that the *strategoi* of the older *themes* have no subordinate *archontes*. The evidence of the complex administrative structure in the three *themes* mentioned above - *strategos*, *archon*, *archontes* - is in fact an indicator of the continuance of the state as it existed previously, immediately before the creation of the *theme*. In this case, that would be a reliable sign that Crete, Chaldia and Dyrrachium were recently elevated to the status of a *theme* and that the former administration was partly preserved. This is the explanation already suggested by Bury, but since it seemed to him that the previous administrative division of authority persisted too long, and since he dated UT into the period from 842 to 856, he concluded that the scribe was tardy in updating the lists of imperial officials<sup>206</sup>. Thus, according to his view, the *archontes* were listed besides the *strategoi* by mistake. In this paper it is assumed that Chaldia may have become a *theme* immediately after 811 (and possibly earlier), that in all likelihood Dyrrachium became a *theme* at about the same time, and that, consequently, the same explanation holds good for Crete. The fact that there are no extant seals of the *strategoi* of Crete before the tenth century corroborates in fact the view that the

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possible to fill the post of a *strategos*, which presupposes the rank of *patrikios*, with an official of lower rank - *protospatharios* or *spatharios*.

203. Hélène AHRWEILER, *Byzance et la Mer, La marine de guerre, la politique et les institutions maritimes de Byzance aux VIIe-XVe siècles*, Paris 1966, 72-73.

204. OIKONOMIDES, *Listes*, 342-343, with notes, 316-317 and the references cited there.

205. OIKONOMIDES, *Listes*, 53.2;53.5;57.11;57.15.

206. BURY, *Administrative System*, 13.

*theme* had existed for a very short time before it fell to the Arabs –not more than fifteen years (810/811–826/827)<sup>207</sup>. The appearance of the *archontes* beside the strategos of a *theme* can be taken as reliable evidence of the recent elevation of a province to the status of *theme*. The explanation is not that the scribe forgot to leave them out of the list of imperial officials, but that the Byzantines preserved the previous administrative organization for some time after the creation of a *theme*. As time went on, this organization was completely abandoned, and *Kletorologion of Philotheos*, for example, makes no mention of provincial *archontes*.

All the evidence for the dating of the creation of the *theme* of Dalmatia discussed so far indicates that UT could not have originated in the time of Michael and Theodora. Virtually the only testimony that it dates from their time is contained in the title of the work, and that was, as we have shown, altered by the scribe. According to the above discussion, UT may have originated after June 812 (the peace of Aachen) and before July 813 (end of the reign of Michael I). The changes which took place at that time, not only as a result of the peace of Aachen and the weakening of the Arab pressure caused by the civil war in the Caliphate, but also, and primarily, as the outcome of the extensive administrative reforms carried out by Nikephoros I, made it necessary to compile a new *taktikon* in which these administrative changes would be recorded<sup>208</sup>. These changes were very important: the disappearance of the *theme* of Strymon (809–811/812); 2) the reestablishment of the *archontia* of Dalmatia (formally as early as 810); 3) the creation of the *theme* of Dyrrachium (by 811/812 at the latest); 4) the creation of the *theme* of Chaldia (around 811); 5) the creation of the *theme* of Crete; 6) the creation of the *theme* of Klimata. What is more important, the majority of these changes did not take place during the reign of Michael I, but in the time of Nikephoros I, which clarifies the term γενόμενον in the title of UT, for the new Constantinopolitan government made a survey of the situation after the unexpected death of Emperor Nikephoros I, who was probably not able to carry into effect all his plans for the

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207. A seal of John, imperial *spatharios* and *tourmarches* of Crete, reliably dated into the first half of the 9th century; corroborates the view that Crete had been a *theme* before the Arab conquest; cf. ZACOS –VEGLERY, *Seals*, no. 2059 (cf. also the same authors' comment on no. 1782). TREADGOLD, *Notes*, 281, note 48, unnecessarily speculates that this *tourmarches* was a subordinate of the *archon* of Crete.

208. We have an identical case in the *Escorial Taktikon*, which had been compiled even before the generals of John Tzimiskes completed the conquest of the Balkan interior; cf. S. PIRIVATRIĆ, *Samuilova Država*, Belgrade 1998, 55, note 85. OIKONOMIDIS (*Listes*, note 20) has an interesting remark on the expression γενόμενον in the title of UT; he thinks that it indicates that the text originated *lors d'une occasion particulière*.

reorganization of the provincial administration. Finally, it is significant that the *themes* of Thessalonice, Dyrrachium, Crete and Klimata were entered at the very end of the list of *themes*, which shows that they had been created recently - or more precisely in the first years of the ninth century.