

CANADIAN INSTITUTE OF BALKAN STUDIES

**THE FATE AND FORTUNES OF THE LEGACY
OF SAINTS CYRIL AND METHODIOS
IN THE BALKANS DURING THE PERIOD OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE
(FOURTEENTH-EIGHTEENTH CENTURY)**

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**The Fate and Fortunes of the Legacy
of Saints Cyril and Methodios in the Balkans
during the Period of the Ottoman Empire
(Fourteenth-Eighteenth Century)**

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The magnitude of the subject is obvious in that it deals with the culture of Byzantium as well as of those Balkan peoples or portions thereof who were profoundly affected by this Byzantine culture. The matter has been studied in great detail for the periods between the ninth and fifteenth centuries and this scholarship occupies an important place in Byzantine, Balkan and religious scholarship today.¹ The tracing of the fate and fortunes of this legacy in the Ottoman Balkans, however, is still in a state of infancy, and is fraught with methodological, conceptual and textual difficulties of equally great magnitude.² For apart from the inherent complexity of the nature of the political and military encounter of the Muslim Ottoman Empire with the Orthodox Byzantine Empire and Balkan states, and the effects that

¹ Much of this scholarship has been summarized in the extensive national histories of Bulgaria, Greece, former Yugoslavia, Serbia, and Roumania: *Ιστορία του Έλληνικού Έθνους* (Athens, 1979) VIII-IX; *Istorija na Bylgarija* (Sofia, 1981-82), II-II; *Istorija Naroda Jugoslavije* (Zagreb, 1953), I; *Istorija Srpskog Naroda*, ed., Srpska Knjizhevna Zadruga (Belgrade, 1953), II; A. Otetea, ed., *The History of the Roumanian People*.

² *Ιστορία του Έλληνικού Έθνους*, vols. X, XI; *Istorija na Bylgarija*, vol. IV; *Historija Naroda Jugoslavije*, vol. II; *Istorija Srpskog Naroda*, vols. III-IV; *Istoria Romíniei*, ed. Roumanian Academy (Bucharest, 1964), vol. III; Otetea, as in note 1 above.

this had at the level of formal culture,³ there is the infinitely more garbled and variegated question/picture of what transpired on the level of popular culture.⁴ Indeed this is, institutionally, a much older historical question which has not been sufficiently addressed for the Byzantine period.⁵ For when one speaks of the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition in Byzantium the matter has been addressed, principally, at the level of formal written culture.⁶ What was the nature of the encounter of the formal Cyrillo-Methodian tradition with the popular - very often pagan - culture of the earlier Byzantine period?

One poses these broad questions at the beginning of our probe as they are among the most crucial inquiries if we wish to approach this important matter in a way that will yield fundamental understanding of the subject of our investigation. Since this understanding has both a very broad scope and a view to some depth, perforce we shall only touch upon a very small portion of the subject. Still, I think that the search and groping will sensitize us to the general structure of the fate and fortunes of the legacy of Saints Cyril and Methodios in the Ottoman Balkans.

As the matter of how a scholar sees or comprehends what he or she is about, it is to this extent a very personal or individual matter for it has to do with the fundamental question of defining his/her relation to the object of study and clarification. When one undertakes to study and to explain to oneself such broad historical phenomena the involvement is not only historiographical, it is also existential. It is existential in the first instance in that one's waking hours are dominated by the efforts to understand and these efforts demand one's time and energies.

And so in speaking about the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition I am revealing, in part, also the thoughts and energies that I expended in an effort to understand it and to incorporate it into the broader structure of my own

³ For the complex details cf. notes 1 and 2 above.

⁴ S. Vryonis, "The Byzantine Legacy in Folk Life and Tradition in the Balkans," in L. Clucas, *The Byzantine Legacy in Eastern Europe* (Boulder-New York, 1988), 107-148.

⁵ Ph. Koukoules, *Βυζαντινῶν βίος καὶ πολιτισμὸς* (Athens, 1948-52), I-VI (8 vols.).

⁶ H. Birnbaum, "The Lives of Sts. Constantine-Cyril and Methodius Viewed against the Background of Byzantine and Early Slavic Hagiography," in *To Ellenikon. Studies in Honor of Speros Vryonis, Jr.*, (New Rochelle, 1993), II, 3-23; F. Dvornik, *Les légendes de Constantin et de Méthode vues de Byzance* (Prague, 1933); V. Vavřínek, *Staroslovenské životy Konstantina a Metoděje* (Prague, 1963); G. Soulis, "The Legacy of Cyril and Methodius to the Southern Slavs," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 19 (1965), 19-44.

limited knowledge and historical understanding of historical phenomena which are in some cases much broader, and in other cases much narrower than this specific matter.

Upon first entering college, a small Presbyterian school in Memphis, Tenn., as a major in chemistry, I decided, simultaneously to study the ancient Greek language, literature, history and art as what I considered to be my most ancient past had always exercised a great fascination on me. With this excellent four year introduction behind me, there followed a fifth year in the American School of Classical Studies in Athens, where my classical training finished and at the same time spilled over into the realm of Byzantium. This corresponded to a desire to know what came after the ancient period and how could one understand modern Greece and its inhabitants. I began to read in the rich library of the American School and made my first visits to Istanbul, Ankara, Cairo, Luxor, Rome, Ravenna, Venice and soon thereafter to Yugoslavia (Croatian, Dalmatian, Serbian). Thus I experienced directly not only Greece (ancient, Byzantine, Turkish and modern), but also Byzantium, the Balkan Slavs, Arabic and Turkish Islam. This desire to know the proper sequence of all the events that created this rich historical variety and to sort out the interrelation of all these entities to each other, and to establish in a reasonable manner the socio-culture political peculiarities of each were intoxicating, indeed overpowering.

These early years of classical studies and life abroad in the fifth year had such a powerful influence on my intellectual, aesthetic and emotional formation that the subsequent years of sterile and deadly graduate study were in the end insufficient to asphyxiate the creative impulse generated within me before entering the Harvard graduate school in the fall of 1951. The one positive result of this graduate training was a dissertation on the Byzantine Time of Troubles in the Eleventh Century, the study of an era which enabled me to come to terms with the essence of Byzantium and which pointed the way to an understanding of the long decline in the political death of the Byzantine state at the hands of the Ottoman Turks.

I could find no satisfactory answers to these questions either in the scholarly books or in the courses taken at Harvard. These all were stifling in their conventionality, though essential in mastering the details of what Byzantinology has accumulated. It was at that time that I began to comprehend the basic presuppositions of historical knowledge as it had evolved in modern European and American historiography and so about one-half century ago I realized that what Germans, English and Americans wrote they did as the conscious or unconscious mouthpieces of modern western society and that they viewed modern history as modern western European history. I realized that in this western historiography (at least as it was

presented at that time) only those people or classes who possessed a political state were entitled to possess a history. Inasmuch as the Byzantine state was destroyed in 1453 Byzantium had come to its final end and there could be no history of Byzantium after 1453. My later views on this subject were presented in two public lectures (at the American Historical Association and at the Modern Greek Studies Association), during the first half of the decade of the 1970's and later in the 1990's, in which I characterized this historiographic model as: static, racist, colonialist, and, indirectly, as Eurocentric in character. These two studies in particular underlined the importance of the study of culture, in the broader sense, as the primary form of historical investigation, as in contrast to the narrower category of political history.⁷ Though this study was essentially a methodological analysis, it was also firmly grounded in the historical data and on a careful examination of what leading historians and philologists had said about the ancient Greek, Byzantine, and modern Greek phenomena.

Much of what had been pointed out in this earlier essay, has been copiously said in the last decade of American and European scholarship in the realm of historical research, and it has become a commonplace today because:

- a) The time for the attack on the conventional Eurocentric historiography was overripe;
- b) The evil doctrines of racism and anti-semitism of Hitlerian Germany had had time to permeate American and European consciences thoroughly and to arouse them;
- c) The number of blacks who have been immorally deprived of their own history and of their human rights is so great that their awakening has had a profound political effect in American society.

When, however, I had thus concerned myself with matters of Eurocentrism, racism, colonialism and static political theory, the above mentioned change had not yet transpired in America academe, and my Greek name and ancestry were found to be the "explanations" for my criticism. Professors were then publishing their classroom and other lectures, at Harvard, Cincinnati, London and elsewhere, which explained ancient Greece and Byzantium as due to the 'biology of blood', and which sought Byzantinological 'answers' for problems besetting the dissolution of the

⁷ Vryonis, "The Byz. Legacy in Folk Life," as in note 4 above; also, *idem*, "The Byzantine Legacy in the Formal Culture of the Balkan Peoples," in J. Yiannias, *The Byzantine Tradition after the Fall of Constantinople* (Charlottesville and London, 1991), 17-44.

British Empire.⁸ Dumbarton Oaks, the hallowed institution of Byzantine studies, was for years an institution which was unfavorable to Greek presence. The question remains whether today it has completely freed itself from this heritage.

Once my thoughts had crystallized as to the nature and presupposition of so much of the scholarly material and classroom lectures encountered in these earlier years, the first and most important step in trying to penetrate the labyrinth of the complex interrelations among ancients, Byzantines, Turks and Slavs had been made.

History is not merely, or even primarily, the story of military conquests and defeats. Second, an important key or concept is culture, in the broadest anthropological sense, for it goes far beyond political conquests and the state. Though it is true that the Byzantine state ceased to exist after the Ottoman conquests,⁹ that is not the same as saying that Byzantine culture had ceased to exist. There was, therefore, and very obviously a history of Byzantium even after its political collapse, for its culture and or civilization did not come to an end after the political collapse of Byzantium.¹⁰

This first step, the realization of the static, colonialist, racist and Eurocentric presuppositions of much of the historical discipline in the 1950's and 1960's, may seem to one banal today when the revolutions in this discipline have transformed it beyond recognition, but it was not such a simple matter in the coercively and austere conservative atmosphere of my earlier student days. I had, all along, sensed the strong irrationality of these presuppositions on all counts. During the period of these graduate studies my late mother was preparing her doctorate¹¹ at Columbia in the fields of sociology and what was then called cultural anthropology. During visits with

⁸ R. Jenkins, *Byzantium and Byzantinism. Lectures in Memory of Louise Taft Semple* (Cincinnati, 1963); *idem, Byzantium. The Imperial Centuries A.D. 610-1071* (New York, 1966); *idem, The Dilessi Murders* (London, 1961); C. Mango, "Byzantinism and Romantic Hellenism," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 28 (1965), 29-43; Vryonis, "Recent Scholarship on Continuity and Discontinuity of Culture: Classical Greeks, Byzantines, Modern Greeks," in Vryonis, *The "Past" in Medieval and Modern Greek Culture* (Malibu, 1978), 237-256.

⁹ On the anthropological concept of culture, the comprehensive (for its times) survey of A.L. Kroeber and C. Kluckhohn, *Culture, a Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* (New York, nd).

¹⁰ N. Iorga, *Byzance après Byzance* (Bucharest, 1935, reprint, 1971) for the aspect of continuity in the realm of formal culture, and Koukoules, as in note 5 above, for continuity in the realm of popular culture.

¹¹ Helen Halley, *A Historical Functional Approach to the Study of the Greek Community of Tarpon Springs* (Columbia University, 1952).

her in New York I began to peruse the books in her small library and there found the basic works of Alfred Kroeber and Ralph Linton, both of whom were her mentors.¹² On reading and upon comprehending the presuppositions of the social science of anthropology I discovered the central function that they attributed to the concept and phenomena of culture. They defined it most broadly, making of it something all-comprehensive, and something that possessed both the static and dynamic dimensions. Thus my mother's books provided me with an anthropological confirmation and explanation of what I had already sensed in the woefully inadequate presuppositions of the historical works to which I had been exposed. This new (to me) definition of culture was something comprehensive, which in possessing both static and dynamic dimensions had, paradoxically, both continuity and change wed inseparably. One did not preclude the other.

The matter of culture is crucial to our subject today, that is the fate and fortunes of the legacy of Sts. Cyril and Methodios in the Ottoman Balkans, and so it is important to understand what it is that I mean in using the term.

On becoming more curious as to what anthropologists were writing I noticed that the tendency in those days was to treat non-literate societies and that the anthropological studies dealing with Greek and related phenomena were woefully inadequate, tending to repeat familiar but hollow generalizations as an easy way out of explaining the phenomena they were studying. Very often anthropological studies dealing with our area are primitive and erroneous once they venture into historical waters. This is due to the effort to promulgate laws of behaviour without a sufficiently rich basis of historical data.

Second any attempt to deal with ancient Greeks, Byzantines, Balkan peoples, Turks, Arabs and Persians, presupposes the ability to read the primary sources and also to take into account the vast body of scholarly literature in eight such languages, to say nothing of the literature in the languages of western Europe and Russia. Unfortunately a great proportion of European and American scholarly works is based on only a very partial linguistic knowledge of what one must read.

What was the nature of Byzantine civilization or culture in the broadest sense in the era of Cyril and Methodios when the great conversionary missions were sent out from Byzantium, and the conversion of much of the southern and eastern Slavic world was effected within two to three

¹² A. Kroeber, *Anthropology. Race, Culture, Psychology, Personality* (New York, 1948); R. Linton, *The Tree of Culture* (New York, 1957); C. Kluckhohn, H. Murray, M. Schneider, *Personality in Nature, Society, and Culture* (New York, 1953).

centuries?¹³ It is convenient to look at it, though only partially, for it will facilitate the understanding of what kind of culture was available in Byzantium for borrowing and creative imitation. In considering culture we shall look at it briefly from two points of view.

First there is the realm of formal culture, and by this one refers to the cultural manifestations of the groups or classes which control the political, economic and religious life of Byzantine society and therefore not only control economic patronage but also aesthetics. The realm of formal culture, which is thus the domain of some 5 to 10% of the population, was quite well formed by the late sixth century. In the realm of language, literature, sciences and medicine it consisted of the school curriculum of the late schools of Byzantine Alexandria that featured the teaching of a basic curriculum of classical texts: Homer and the elegaic poets, the tragedians and comedy, the philosophers, historians, rhetoric, mathematics, geometry, astronomy, geography, medicine and musical theory.¹⁴ Though this system became disorganized and underwent a drastic decline in the latter seventh and eighth centuries, it never disappeared completely and in the ninth century showed signs of a revival which intensified in the tenth and eleventh centuries.¹⁵ This represented an archaic element in the formal culture of the educated. Parallel to this was the newer, vital element of Christian education and literature which was grafted on to the ancient language and its concepts. After a long and fruitful period of encounter of Christianity with Greek letters in the hands of such Alexandrian Christian scholars as Clement and Origen, St. Basil¹⁶ canonized the relation of the two by stating that no one could understand the ultimate Christian mysteries without a Hellenic education. Thus the language of the Second Sophistic became the acknowledged instrument of the church fathers, as did a pagan Greek

¹³ Dvornik, *Byzantine Missions among the Slavs: SS Constantine-Cyril and Methodius* (New Brunswick, 1970); A.P. Vlasto, *The Entry of the Slavs into Christendom. An introduction to the Medieval History of the Slavs* (Cambridge, 1970); P. Lemerle, *Byzantine Humanism: The First Phase* (Canberra, 1986); H. Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner* (Munich, 1978), I-II; H.G. Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im Byzantinischen Reich* (Munich, 1959).

¹⁴ As in footnote 13 above.

¹⁵ Lemerle, as in note 13 above; R. Browning, *Studies on Byzantine Literature and Education* (London, 1977).

¹⁶ St. Basil, *On Greek Literature*, ed. N. Wilson (London, 1973); P. Fedwick, ed., *Basil of Caesarea: Christian, Humanist, Ascetic* (Toronto, 1981), I-II; H. Crouzel, *Origène* (Paris, 1983); W. Jaeger, *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia* (Oxford, 1969); Vryonis, *The Orthodox Church and Culture* (Berkeley, 1990).

education. The literary production had, however, different pedagogic goals and moral values, most important of which was the reversal of order of faith and logic. Theology, polemic, hagiography, canon law, liturgics and religious poetry were the primary literary productions of this aspect of formal culture, and the primary source of authority became the church fathers, the holy scriptures, the proceedings of the ecumenical synods, and canon law.¹⁷ This symbiosis of pagan and Christian in this aspect of Byzantine formal culture culminated in the institutions of the Byzantine emperor and the patriarch of Constantinople, in the double institution of the Orthodox Byzantine *basileia*.

Devotion to a popular level of culture characterized all other classes or groups in Byzantine society, and here we are speaking of some 90% or so of the populace, a populace which was probably largely illiterate, that relied for its daily sustenance on the tilling of the soil and fields, and the husbanding of herds. The smaller groups of merchants and craftsmen hovered somewhere in between these two extreme ends. Mass culture was essentially a popular culture that was much more affected by the beliefs that people entertained centering on the cultivation of the soil and the threats to their very existence which were entailed in bad climate, onsets of parasites, drought, excessive rains, freezing weather, the disturbance of public order, and fluctuations in the markets. Of much greater concern were also such questions as fertility of the flocks, health of the herdsmen and farmers, successions of children to inherit and to facilitate the work of production.¹⁸ They were not interested in, nor could they comprehend the more complex formal theological doctrine. Education certainly came to be a peripheral phenomenon in most agrarian domains, and the beliefs, mores and versions of Christianity were heavily shaped by the popular beliefs that had been

¹⁷ Beck, as in note 13 above.

¹⁸ Vryonis, as in note 4 above; Ch. Vakarleski, *Etnografija na Bylgarija*, 2nd edition (Sofia, 1977); *idem*, *Bulgarische Volkskunde* (Berlin, 1969); *idem*, *Bylgarski pogrebalni obichai* (Sofia, 1990); *idem*, *Etnografija na Bylgarija* (Sofia, 1980) vols. I-III; V. Butura, *Etnografia poporului roman. Cultura materiala* (Cluj-Napoca, 1978); O. Buhociu, *Die rumänische Volkskultur und ihre Mythologie, Totenklage-Burschenbunde und Weihnachtslieder-Hirtenphänomen und Heldenlieder* (Wiesbaden, 1974); E. Schneeweis, *Serbokroatische Volkskunde* (Berlin, 1961); G. Megas, *Greek Calendar Customs* (Athens, 1958); *idem*, *Ζητήματα Ἑλληνικῆς Λαογραφίας* (Athens, 1950), I-III; D. Loukatos, "Λαογραφικαὶ περὶ τελευτῆς ἐνδείξεις παρὰ Ἰωάννη τοῦ Χρυσσοστόμου," *Epeteris tou laographikou archeiou* (1940), 30-117, and also his volumes on the seasons of the year.

tightly tied to the agricultural cycle from pagan times.¹⁹

Thus when the church embraced the countryside, it embraced it in its entirety, popular superstitions, pagan beliefs in the fertility rites and the like. In short the tall theological forests presided over a thick underbrush of pagan belief. Accordingly the Christian society of Byzantium was characterized by its double nature: that of the high formal theological church, and that of the low, rustic paganizing church goes. All of this was consecrated in the local cults of the saints, and much that went on there did so despite the condemnation of the canons of the church.²⁰ Indeed the former continued a vigorous life until the full effects of the industrial revolution were felt in those regions in the twentieth century.

In this brief and superficial analysis of the two levels of cultural differentiation an effort has been made to give a very brief glimpse into an analytical device which will assist us in the further analysis of our question. I include this, here, as a part of my own quest which, as indicated in the beginning, had to be carried out in an effort to establish the interrelations of the various cultural and ethnic strains involved in the Balkans and Asia Minor in Byzantine and Ottoman times.

With this substantial theoretical commentary as to procedure let us now look at the historical encounters, conquests, defeats, and cultural changes that occurred among Arab Islam, pagan Slavs in the Balkans, Orthodox Byzantines and Slavs in the Ottoman Empire, and thus finally the fate of the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition.

The ninth century constitutes an era not only of the political, economic and urban revival of the Byzantine state,²¹ but also a period particularly

¹⁹ D. Constantelos, "Paganism and the State in the Age of Justinian," *Catholic Historical Review* 23 (1978), 217-34; *idem*, "Canon 62 of the Synod in Trullo and the Slavic Problem," *Byzantina* 2 (1970), 23-35. See now the massive and incisive work of F.R. Trombley, *Hellenic Religion and Christianization c. 370-529* (Brill, 1993-94), I-II.

²⁰ Vryonis, as in note 4 above.

²¹ G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, rev. ed. (New Brunswick, 1969), 210-315; Vryonis, "Byzantine Society and Civilization," in H.C. Evans and W. D. Wixom, editors, *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era* (New York, 1997), 5-19; W. Treadgold, *The Byzantine Revival 780-842* (Stanford, 1988); A. Vogt, *Basile Ier empereur de Byzance (867-886) et la civilisation byzantine à la fin du IXe siècle* (New York, 1972); A. Rambaud, *L'empire grec au dixième siècle. Constantin Porphyrogenète* (Paris 1870); A. Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus and His World* (London, 1979).

crucial in the affairs of the Arab caliphate²² in the east and of the Slavic world of the Balkans²³ and in the kingdom of Kiev to the northeast.²⁴ Though the relations of Byzantium with these regions had 'enjoyed' a long period of military, economic and cultural interaction from the seventh century, it was in the ninth-eleventh centuries that there ensued a new and marked contact which was to have profound effects both on the Slavs and the caliphate. The ninth century was, of course, the era of the missionary activities of Sts. Cyril and Methodios,²⁵ a period in which, as we saw, Byzantine civilization was seen as a prestigious phenomenon both in the caliphate and in Slavdom.

It is of particular interest to analyze, briefly, those Byzantine elements which were adopted by Islamic civilization and Slavic society from the ninth century, and the reasons for their adoption and their adaptive functionality. The most spectacular aspects of this ninth-tenth century culture were two: The caliphal inauguration of a cultural policy that involved the translation into Arabic of a fundamental portion of the classical Greek texts that had formed the matrix of the educational contents of the late Alexandrian educational system; And, the Bulgarian, Serbian, and Russ adoption of Byzantine Christianity, the Byzantine political concepts and art, and finally the literary and ecclesiastical oeuvre of Sts. Cyril and Methodios.²⁶

The caliph al-Mamun (813-33) took the momentous decision to have many of the ancient Greek texts translated into Arabic, and founded the famous

²² G. von Grunebaum, *Classical Islam. A History 600 A.D.-1258 A.D.* (Chicago, 1970); H. Kennedy, *The Early Abbasid Caliphate. A Political History* (London, 1981); W. Montgomery Watt, *Islam. The Majesty that Was* (New York-Washington, 1974), 93-190.

²³ F. Dvornik, *The Slavs in European History and Civilization* (New Brunswick, 1992); *idem*, *Les Slaves, Byzance et Rome au IXe siècle* (Hattiesburg, 1970); *Istorija na Bylgarija*, II, 93-210; *Historija Naroda Jugoslavije*, I, III-320; N. Klaić, *Povijest Hrvata u ranom srednjem vijeku* (Zagreb, 1971), 191-473.

²⁴ C. Vernadsky, *Kievan Russia* (New York, 1973), 19-47, and *passim*; B.A. Rybakov, ed., *Očerki istorii SSSR, III-IX vv* (Moscow, 1956); S. Franklin and J. Shepherd, *The Emergence of Rus 750-1200* (London-New York, 1996); A.P. Novoseltsev, et al, *Drevneruskoe gosudarstvo i ego mezhdunarodnoe znachenie* (Moscow, 1965).

²⁵ Dvornik, *Les légendes de Constantin et de Méthode vues de Byzance* (Hattiesburg, 1969); *idem*, *Byzantine Missions among the Slavs* (New Brunswick, 1970); V. Vavřínek, *Staroslovenské životy Konstantin a Metoděje* (Prague, 1963).

²⁶ Vryonis, "The Impact, of Hellenism: Greek Culture in the Moslem and Slav Worlds," in R. Browning, ed., *The Greek World. Classical Byzantine and Modern* (London, 1985), 253-62.

(short lived) Bayt al-Hikma, the House of Wisdom, richly financed to collect the rare Greek manuscripts and to translate them, via Syriac, into Arabic so that the Muslim world could reap not only educational but practical benefits from this new knowledge.²⁷

The question immediately arises as to what was translated. This is very clear. The near eastern translators chose a substantial portion of the Greek medical corpus, concentrating primarily on the vast body of writings of the second century physician Galen. To this were added texts of the Greek geographers, astronomers, mathematicians, theoreticians of music. Most of Aristotle and Porphyry's *Eisagoge* to the former's *Organon*, were also translated, though only a small part of the Platonic dialogues.

Thus the process of Arab translations was highly selective and omitted as a body ancient Greek poetry, i.e. Homer, the elegiacs, tragedians and comedy. This is the first and most striking omission in the Arab translations of those texts that constituted the corpus of late Alexandrian education. Greek poetry remained an impenetrable literary genre for two reasons: First its contents and aesthetics had no appeal to an Arab reading or listening public which already had its own rich poetic tradition (both pre-Islamic and Islamic) which was founded on very different aesthetic and socio-historical references. Second, as one contemporary Arab author pointed out, poetry, when translated from one language into another, loses its inherent aesthetic value. The ancient historians are also absent from the Arabic translations no doubt because their contents were irrelevant to the geography of Islamic historical memory. Finally very little of Byzantine Christian literature was translated as Islam was already developing its own rich religious literature and thus not only had no functional need of borrowing Byzantine religious literature, but it would have been offensive to Muslim religious sensibilities.²⁸

We see therefore that Islamic civilization in the ninth-tenth centuries was extremely selective in its borrowings from Byzantine civilization, taking all that body of material which the Muslims thought would have a salutary function in their own society. Medicine was of particular interest in court

²⁷ *The Fihrist of al-Nadim. A Tenth-Century Survey of Muslim Culture*, translated by B. Dodge (New York-London, 1970), II, 584, and passim.

²⁸ Vryonis, "Byzantium and Islam, Seventh-Seventeenth Century," *East European Quarterly* 2 (1968), 205-240; F. Rosenthal, *The Classical Heritage in Islam* (Berkeley, 1965); M. Steinschneider, *Die arabischen Übersetzungen aus dem Griechischen* (Graz, 1960).

and governing circles as its benefits were obvious;²⁹ geography was of use to an empire and ruling class which ruled and administered a great variety of peoples, geographical and climatic regions from Gibraltar to India;³⁰ astronomy, musical theory and other such domains of Greek literature were each in its own way seen to have practical application.³¹

How did the Muslim world come to know about the contents of the late Alexandrian school system? The original Arab conquests were rapid, quickly integrated into a conservative centralized state which largely replaced the older Persian and Byzantine control structure in this vast new empire, but changed little else. Like Alexander the Great before them, they fell heir to a pre-existing congeries of societies which remained relatively intact. Among these older local societies was that of the Nestorian and Monophysite Syriac speaking Christians who preserved intact their own Syriac versions of the late Alexandrian educational system based on the classical Greek texts and with their translations and studies in Syriac as well.³²

In short, during the ninth-tenth centuries, Islamic civilization entered upon that part of the pagan Greek educational system which had enjoyed uninterrupted continuity from Byzantine to Islamic times in the Near East. In so doing the caliphs consciously chose a portion from the rich ancient Greek heritage that was one of the basic pillars of Byzantine formal culture. They rejected the Byzantine Christian legacy as it would have been dysfunctional in their own society. The partial adoption of the ancient Greek/Byzantine educational texts was to take on a new life in the realms of philosophy, medicine, mathematics, astronomy and musical theory first

²⁹ G. Bergstrasser, *Hunain ibn Ishaq und seine Schule* (Leiden, 1913); Vryonis, *The Medical Unity of the Mediterranean World in Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Herakleion, 1991); Bergstrasser, *Hunain ibn Ishaq über die syrischen and arabischen Galensüberstzungen* (Leipzig, 1925); M. Ullmann, *Islamic Medicine* (Edinburgh, 1978); De L. O'Leary, *How Greek Science Passed to the Arabs*, 2nd edition (London, 1951).

³⁰ A. Miquel, *La géographie humaine du monde musulman jusqu'au milieu du IIe siècle* (Paris-The Hague, 1967-88), I-III.

³¹ von Grunebaum, "Parallelism, Convergence, and Influence in the Relations of Arab and Byzantine Philosophy, Literature and Piety," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 18 (1964), 91-111; *idem*, *Islam. Essays in the Nature and Growth of a Cultural Tradition, "Islam and Hellenism,"* (Menasha, 1955), 159-67; Montgomery Watt, *Islamic Philosophy and Theology* (Cambridge, 1962), 44-89, 93-142; R. Walzer, *Greek into Arabic. Essays on Islamic Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1962); H.G. Farmer, *History of Arabian Music to the Thirteenth Century* (London, 1929); von Grunebaum, editor, *Logic in Classical Islam. Proceedings of the First Giorgio Levi Della Vida Biennial Conference* (Wiesbaden, 1970).

³² O'Leary, as in note 29, *passim*. A. Baumstark, *Aristoteles bei den Syrern von V. bis VIII. Jahrhundert* (Leipzig, 1900).

in the caliphate and later was to enter Europe via Muslim Spain.

The cultural relation of Byzantium and the Slavic world in the ninth and tenth centuries was to take on a completely different nature both as to content and form.

When the Slavs invaded and began to settle in the Balkan regions to the south of Danube in the sixth and seventh centuries they constituted an essentially unsophisticated society of larger and smaller tribal groups who lived scattered about, in their small villages, under the leadership of their various tribal chieftains. They had no concept of the centralized state, were non-literate possessing neither an alphabet nor a written literature nor a system of schools/education proper. Still in their religious "infancy" they believed in an Indo-European pantheon of deities and nature spirits, their technology in matters of land and maritime warfare, as well as in the crafts, remained primitive. The nature of this tribal society not only reveals a people still in the epic stage of its development but also explains much of the destructive nature of the multi-varied tribal Slavic conquest of the Balkan peninsula. When the initial furor slavicus of the sixth-seventh centuries began to subside much of the Balkan region, down to the Greek geographical regions (but often even beyond) constituted a vast ruin of late Graeco-Roman (or early Byzantine) society and civilization. Most towns had disappeared, as had most of Christianity and many aspects of Byzantine society and culture among which the late ancient system of education and urban centers.³³ This is the first striking contrast that one observes between the Slavic settlements in the Balkans and the rapid, orderly Arab conquests of the Near East. The one was destructive and disruptive, the other conservative and constructive.

By the late seventh century, in the case of the Bulgars, but by the ninth century in the case of the Bulgaro-Slavs, Serbs, Croats and eastern Slavs, this picture had begun to alter irrevocably as we see the emergence of the first Slavic efforts to create centralized states, with the passage of time, and as a partial consequence of the intensification of a fuller spectrum of political and economic relations with the more 'advanced' Byzantine, Carolingian and Scandinavian societies, fructified. Crucial in this matter was

³³ Vryonis, "Ἡ ἀρχαία κοιτίδα καὶ ἡ ἐθνογενετικὴ πορεία τῶν ἀρχαίων σλαβικῶν φύλων," in *Ἡ καθ' ἡμᾶς Ἀνατολή*, (Thessalonike 1993), 11-82; Ph. Malingoudes, *Σλάβοι στὴν μεσαιωνικὴ Ἑλλάδα*, 2nd ed. (Thessaloniki, 1991); *Istorija na Bulgarija* II, 23-28; *Historija Narode Jugoolavije*, I, 63-110; Z. Vyzahrova, *Slaviani I Prabylgari po dannii na nekropolite ot VI-XI v. na teritorijata na Bylgarija* (Sofia, 1976); Vryonis, "The Evolution of Slavic Society and the Slavic Invasions in Greece: The First Major Slavic Attack on Thessaloniki, A.D. 597," *Hesperia* 50 (1981), 378-90.

the political decision of the Bulgarian ruler Boris to adopt, ultimately, the Byzantine form of Christianity, between 864 and 867. The creation of a specifically Slavic missionary enterprise had been initiated a few years earlier when the Moravian prince Svatopluk had requested missionaries from the Byzantine ruler to implement the Christian religion in his domains. This called for the labors and mission of Cyril and Methodios, which though short lived in Moravia, were to be continued by the disciples of the two saints, in Bulgaria. Cyril and Methodios had prepared an entire religious, liturgical and theological panoply, in Old Church Slavonic, for the Moravian mission. First they had had to create an alphabet, the glagolitic, and then chose a particular form of Slavic which seems to be based on the dialect spoken in the district of Thessaloniki for the vehicle of translation of the basic religious books and works from the Greek texts into Slavic. Their work of translation had to be functional in terms of the needs of ninth century Slavic societies, and so centered about the translations of the liturgy, the Scriptures, the calendar of the saints, and certain aspects of canon law.³⁴

With the retirement of Boris from the Bulgarian throne in 893, and after the bloody repression of the pagan revolt of his older son and the Bulgar pagan aristocracy, he was succeeded by his brilliant son Symeon,³⁵ who down until his death in 927 promoted an intensive program of Christian culture throughout his domains, but especially in Preslav and the district of Ohrid. Symeon had early, in his youth, been sent to Constantinople as a hostage and placed in a monastery there to be educated and to return as head of the newly created Bulgarian church. His education and maturation in Constantinople had included not only the Christian literature and arts, but also the pagan Greek authors, his favorite ancient texts having been Aristotle and Demosthenes. He was also heavily influenced by the Byzantine institution of the Orthodox basileia, the Byzantine Orthodox kingship. On his return he was, as one western contemporary author commented, a 'Half-Greek'.³⁶

³⁴ I. Ševčenko, *Byzantium and the Slavs in Letters and Culture* (Cambridge-Naples, 1991); *idem*, "Remarks on the Diffusion of Byzantine Scientific and Pseudo-scientific Literature among the Orthodox Slavs," *Slavonic and Eastern European Review* 19 (1981), 321-45; V. Velchev, E. Georgiev, P. Dinkeov, editors, *Istorija na bylgarskata literatura*, 1 (Sofia, 1962), 23-253.

³⁵ V. Gjuzelev, *Kniaz Boris Prvi, Bylgarija prez vtorata polovina na IX vek* (Sofia, 1969); I. Bozhilov, *Tsar Symeon Veliki (893-927): Zlatnijat vek na Bylgarija* (Sofia, 1983).

³⁶ Bozhilov, as in note 35 above.

The remainder of Symeon's long reign is a spectacular chronicle of the semi-Byzantinization of an entire nation, the Bulgaro-Slavs. Symeon attempted repeatedly to conquer Constantinople and to establish himself as emperor of the state there. When this failed he took the imperial title of Basileus, and succeeded in creating his own independent Bulgarian patriarchate, as the institution of the basileus could not exist without an independent patriarchate.³⁷ At the level of literate culture and education he concentrated the literary activities of this first Bulgarian golden age of Slavic literature at the monastery of St. Panteleimon in Preslav where under the direction of its abbot St. Naum and of himself, the new Bulgaro-Byzantine literature bloomed.³⁸ Based in the first instance on translations from Greek theological, hagiographical, homiletic texts, the Bulgaro-Slavs began to create and to write their own Slavic compositions in these typically Byzantine literary genres. The body of literary forms increased as this new Slavic literature developed and came to include the Byzantine chroniclers and other traditions as well. In the far-off district of Kutchmitseva St. Clement, himself a Slav born in that district, created a school for the formation of Slavic priests, and turned them out in large number.³⁹

Though there is much else to say about this conversion of the Bulgaro-Slavs to Byzantine Christianity and civilization, one must cut short the analysis at this point. If one compares the Bulgarian borrowings, from the panoply of Byzantine formal culture (with its double armory of pagan classical and Byzantine Christian forms) with those of the Arabs, one observes a remarkable difference. Whereas the Arabs borrowed only from ancient Greek written culture, the South Slavs borrowed from the domain of Byzantine literary and political culture. The reasons for this difference are obvious. Slavic society was in a far less developed state when it came into intimate contact with the rich treasures of Byzantine civilization. It had only recently emerged from a tribal state, had no tradition of schools that had been carrying on the advanced traditions of education. All this had been destroyed. The content of classical Greek education had no functional relevance to the needs of a people who had yet to conquer illiteracy. What they needed were the more immediate tools for the reorganization of their societies: a new sophisticated religion, its religious texts so essential for

³⁷ S. Runciman, *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus and His Reign: A Study of 10th-Century Byzantium* (Cambridge, 1988); V. Zlatarski, *Istorija na bylgarskata dyrzhava prez srednite vekove* (Sofia, 1971), I, pt. 1, 210-494; *Istorija na Bylgarija*, II, 278-336.

³⁸ *Istorija na bylgarskata literatura* (as in note 37, above, vol. 1, 77-241. Soulis as in note 6 above).

³⁹ As in note 38 above, 96-111.

their daily life and for the afterlife. This brought with it also the Byzantine political concepts of the state, the unique religious nature of the Basileia, and the like. These were all immediately adopted and adapted. Bulgaria thus became the political and cultural model for the later Slavic societies of the Balkans and had an unquestioned influence in the development of the Russians.⁴⁰ We thus see that in the ninth century, and therefore roughly contemporaneously, Arabs and Bulgars who though they had access, both of them, to the double cultural baggage of Byzantine civilization (i.e. the classical pagan and the Byzantine Christian and political) chose each only one of the two elements for incorporation into its own society. Their difference of choice was to have great consequences for future history.

In these brief remarks and analysis I have tried to set the historical framework for the more specific discussion of the fate and fortunes of the tradition of Cyril and Methodios in the Ottoman Balkans. The very term or phrase "The Legacy of Cyril and Methodios" is specific and refers to a particular combination of Byzantine political and religious cultural institutions that was passed on to the Slavs and which was instrumental in the formation of their formal culture. But if we were to speak of the cultural traditions of Cyril and Methodios, then we would be referring to the much broader scheme of Byzantine formal and informal culture which included within them the narrower Slavic institutions of the "legacy" of Cyril and Methodios. Since the former is the greater and includes the latter, I shall be speaking not only of the fate of the Slavic legacy of Cyril and Methodios, but also of the broader question of the fate of this larger Byzantine civilization in the Ottoman Balkans. In doing so we go back to one of the earlier questions set at the beginning of this essay: Did Byzantium die in 1453? Were the Balkan peoples of today generated out of a historical vacuum in the nineteenth century?

The nature and effects of the Turkish conquests of the two large peninsulas of the Balkans and Asia Minor, wherein Byzantine civilization had been largely decisive down to the Turkish conquests, have preoccupied me for the major part of my scholarly life. I became interested in this very broad historical problem as it seemed to contain the answers of continuity and disruption of civilization or of cultural development, and because as mentioned earlier, I wished to grasp the outlines and forms in the history which followed the collapse of Byzantium. In a long series of studies I focussed on demographic, ethnographic, religious, linguistic, cultural and

⁴⁰ D. Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth. Eastern Europe 500-1453* (New York, 1971); Vryonis as in note 26 above.

political institutions and changes, groping after the structures and inner dynamics that might present us with an understanding and identity of the historical processes at work. Simultaneously I focussed on the two great peninsulas as the basic geopolitical entities that were, historically almost self-contained and as undoubtedly reflecting two different historical experiences in these processes of cultural change.

In my first long and very detailed study of the impact of the Turkish conquests and settlement of Byzantine Asia Minor from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries and of the dehellenization and Islamization of much of the peninsula the following conclusions were put forth:

1. "Anatolian Hellenism was quantitatively and qualitatively significant during the Byzantine period, and thus the Turkish conquests and Islamization of large parts of Asia Minor represent something more than a historically negative event, for the invaders had to overcome and absorb a vital society.
2. The Turks did not completely subdue the peninsula and subject it to political unification until the latter fifteenth century.
3. The nature of the conquests which lasted for the better part of four centuries, and the tribal settlements caused major destruction and dislocation to Byzantine society during much of these four centuries as the one stable Byzantine state was replaced by a large congerly of smaller political principalities that were in a state of almost continuous war with one another. This politically turbulent condition and Islamic hegemony corroded the social cohesion of the Christian communities and thus prepared them for religious conversion.
4. The political and historical events of the Turkish conquests in Asia Minor destroyed the Greek church as an effective social, economic, and religious institution and its sharp decline was an unqualified disaster that led to the large scale disappearance of the church in Asia Minor.
5. Christian society, subjected to destruction and dislocation in the wake of the Turkish conquests, was isolated from the heartbeat of its own cultural center in Constantinople and deprived of ecclesiastical leadership in the peninsula, was now ripe for absorption into the Islamic society being created by the Islamic conquests. The Muslim institutions, based on the economic possessions and revenues formerly belonging to the Byzantine church and to its followers, consummated the cultural transformation, through

conversion, of the Christians into Muslims.

6. On the other hand, Byzantine culture in Anatolia, though effaced on the level of formal culture by Islamic formal culture, exercised a determinant role in much of the everyday and seasonal life of the Anatolian Muslim population."⁴¹

This long and detailed study, though limited to Asia Minor, provided me with the basic understanding of the nature of the politico-cultural encounter between the societies of Turkish Islam and Byzantine Orthodoxy. In Asia Minor the encounter was such that a peninsula that had been largely Orthodox Christian religiously and Greek and Armenian linguistically, by the fifteenth century it had become overwhelmingly Muslim and Turkophone. At least this was much was clear within the realm of formal culture, though I perceived that within the domain of popular or folk culture the massive Islamization of much of the Byzantine population had brought much of its Byzantine popular culture within the daily life of the Anatolian Muslim Population. Thus we see this fundamental opposition and apposition between the fates of Byzantine formal and popular culture in Asia Minor. The former largely, but not completely, disappeared, the latter survived in a vigorous form.

I pass on to the next major question which had so much absorbed my thoughts and research in the search for answers to the problems of cultural continuity and change in the major encounter of Turkish Islam and Byzantine Orthodox civilization in the Balkans.

The massive body of over 250 primary sources, in a variety of local Anatolian languages, had testified clearly to the large scale absorption of Anatolian Christian populations and to their Islamization. Even the most cursive view of the religious configuration of the Balkans in modern times had revealed to me that the massive Islamization which had taken place in Asia Minor had been, *grosso modo*, absent from the Balkan peninsula for the majority of the Balkan populations had remained Christian and the adherents of Islam composed a numerical minority, albeit a historically

⁴¹ Vryonis, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century* (Berkeley-Los Angeles-London, 1971), 497-99. A Greek translation appeared, Athens, 1997.

important minority.⁴²

In two comparative studies of the Ottoman tax registers of the sixteenth century an attempt was made to estimate the proportions of Christian and Muslim hearths that were registered for purposes of taxation by the Ottoman authorities. Whereas there is considerable doubt whether these figures are complete in terms of demography, still the proportions of the taxable Christian, Muslim and Jewish hearths must surely be some indication, *grosso modo*, as to the question of proportion of Muslims to Christians. The figures reported in the massive studies of the Turkish scholar Ömer L. Barkan yielded the following results for the sixteenth century:⁴³

ASIA MINOR							
Provinces	MUSLIMS		CHRISTIANS		JEWS		Total
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	
Anadolu	517,813	98.3	8,511	1.6	271	0.1	526,595
Karaman	134,452	97.9	3,172	2.1	---	---	137,579
Zulkadriye	64,102	96.0	2,631	4.0	---	---	66,733
Diyarbakir	70,858	85.28	11,938	14.36	288	0.36	83,084
Rum	116,772	68.3	51,662	31.7	---	---	168,434
Total	903,977		77,869		599		982,425

⁴² Vryonis, "The Experience of Christians under Seljuk and Ottoman Domination, Eleventh to Sixteenth Century," in M. Gervers and R. Bihazi, *Conversion and Continuity: Indigenous Christian Communities in Islamic Lands, Eighth to Eighteenth Centuries* (Toronto, 1990), 185-216.

⁴³ O.L. Barkan, "Essai sur les données statistiques des registres de recensement dans l'empire ottoman au XVe siècle," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* I (1958), 9-36; *idem*, "Tarih demografi arařtırmaları ve osmanlı tarihi," *Türkiyat Mecmuası* 10 (1932- 33), 1-28.

In the Balkans the situation of the taxable hearths was exactly the opposite:

BALKANS							
MUSLIMS		CHRISTIANS		JEWS		TOTAL HEARTHES	
Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
194,958	18.0	832,707	80.7	4,134	0.5	1,031,799	100

Thus this comparison of the taxable hearths of Muslims, Christians and Jews reveals that in sharp contrast to Asia Minor, where Islamization had been massive, in the Balkans it was limited to a minority.

Why such a great disparity in terms of the change of the formal cultures in the Balkans and Asia Minor? I shall not here discuss the question as to further regional differentiation in each of the two large peninsulas as to the encounters between Byzantine Orthodox and Turkish Muslim culture, though I have done so elsewhere, with interesting conclusions.⁴⁴

Here it seemed that historical differences in the conquests, settlements and politico-economic organization by the Turks of these two peninsulas were fertile aetiological ground.

In a brief analytical study (1970) I examined three conditions in an effort to find plausible historical reasons for the contrasting conditions of cultural change in the Ottoman Balkan and Anatolia:

- a) The state of Christian societies in Anatolia and the Balkans at the time of the Turkish conquests;
- b) The nature of the Turkish conquests in Anatolia and the Balkans;
- c) The nature of the events after the conquest during the long centuries of Ottoman rule.⁴⁵ Both the Balkans and Anatolia, at the time of the Turkish conquests, present a picture of local Christian political entities and societies which though in a state of political decline, were possessed of socially and

⁴⁴ Vryonis, as in notes 42 and 43, *passim*.

⁴⁵ Vryonis, "The Conditions and Cultural Significance of the Ottoman Conquest in the Balkans," *Rapport at the IIe Congrès international des études du sud-est européen* (Athens, 1970), 3-10.

culturally cohesive cultures. So there was no difference, between Asia Minor and the Balkans.

As for the second category under examination, this revealed again certain similarities in both regions: The conquests destroyed the local Christian dynasties and aristocracies and absorbed the economic demographic resources into the system of exploitation of the Muslim ruling classes.

But alongside these similarities in the Turkish conquests of the Balkans and Asia Minor, the examination revealed four significant differences in the two conquests:

i. The conquests in Asia Minor were long term, repeated, destructive and disruptive, as they were carried out by many smaller principalities, and carried out often by the disruptive society of the Turkish nomads.⁴⁶ In contrast, the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans did not last nearly so long, beginning only in the mid-fourteenth and finishing in the mid-fifteenth centuries. The Turks who had entered the Balkans at that time had undergone three centuries of partial but significant sedentarization, and so the nomads who entered the Balkans, though important, were much smaller than those who had decided the fate of Asia Minor. Further, conquest was effected by a powerful centralized state which effectively centralized military and administrative power. The conquest of the Balkans was shorter and more conservative of Christian life, property and institutions.

ii. The conquest of Anatolia did not immediately destroy the Byzantine political state. Consequently the Greek church of Asia Minor was, inseparably, unified with the Byzantine emperor and with the Byzantine patriarch in Constantinople until 1453, a condition which placed the Anatolian church in a dangerous political situation. When the Turkish conquests of the Balkans destroyed all the local Orthodox states, the church no longer entertained dangerous and suspect political liaisons with the foes of the Ottomans.

iii. As we saw earlier the Turkish conquests largely destroyed the Anatolian Greek church. In contrast the briefer and more conservative Ottoman subjugation of the Balkans did not destroy the Orthodox church, and after 1453 this church no longer had damaging relations with an enemy state.

⁴⁶ Vryonis, as in note 41 above, 258-86; "Nomadization and Islamization in Asia Minor," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 29 (1975), 42-71.

iv. The conquests of Asia Minor were often carried out by larger and smaller nomadic tribes. Thus these invasions were not only conquests but also an ethnic migration in which the nomads manifested a political turbulence that was inimical to the sedentary societies whether Christian or Muslim. In the Balkans the number of nomads who accompanied the conquest was much smaller and the entire taxable nomadic hearths of the sixteenth century were but 37,435. In the western Anatolian province of Ottoman Anadolu alone there were registered, in the sixteenth century, some 77,268 nomadic hearths, without taking into account the remainder of Asia Minor.

These four categories of broad historical differences help us to understand why Islamization and Turkification were so much more thorough in Asia Minor and much less so in the Balkans.

During the remainder of these long preoccupations with such broad socio-cultural consequences of the encounter between Byzantine and Ottoman institutions I attempted to make much more specific several analyses of the manner in which the imposition of a Turkish Muslim political entity affected the Byzantine contents of the culture of the Balkan peoples.

In one of the earlier studies, entitled "The Greeks under Turkish Rule" (published in 1976, but written in 1971), an effort at a structural analysis of the entire experience of the Greeks, but by extension of many other Balkan peoples as well, was attempted. This analysis was succinctly summarized as follows:

"Turkokratia, as one of the great periods of Greek historical experience, is thus characterized by eight major developments: political disenfranchisement, simplification of class structure, economic impoverishment, ethnic dilution, religious retreat, legal disenfranchisement, popularization or deformatization of culture (and) cultural isolation. The Greek revolution was a central and momentous event because it altered, irreversibly, all these eight conditions of Turkokratia among a portion of the Greek people."⁴⁷

In two subsequent studies, that appeared much later (1988 and 1991) I turned to the matter of continuity of elements from both Byzantine popular and formal culture in the institutions and life of the Ottoman Balkans. There could be no question of an exhaustive treatment of these vast subjects, and

⁴⁷ Vryonis, "The Greeks under Turkish Rule," N. Diamantouros et al, editors, *Hellenism and the First Greek War of Liberation (1821-1830)* (Thessaloniki, 1976), 45-58.

so the approach followed representative examples that would point to the larger lines of evolution in the realms both of popular and formal culture.

In the first of these essays attention was turned to the simplification of the social structure of the Balkan Christians as a result of the Ottoman termination of the principle ruling dynasties and their respective aristocratic classes. The economic impoverization was concomitant with this aspect of Ottoman policy. Thus the patron classes and economic supporters of the Byzantino-Balkan formal culture largely disappeared, the formal culture of the region underwent atrophy, and the Balkan Christians emerge as a people primarily with a popular culture. But at this level of popular culture of the Ottoman Balkan Christians one sees a fundamental survival of the pre-existing popular culture of the Christian masses. In the realm of religious practice and belief this is most obvious in the popular cults of the saints, wherein earlier Graeco-Roman and Slavic paganism have been embraced by the church, and have been systematized in a plethora of rituals that include animal sacrifice, incubation, miracle cures. This popular Orthodox religiosity is institutionalized in such things as the regular pilgrimages to their shrines, the votive offerings to the cults for services rendered to the villagers and city folk alike, and above all in the popular beliefs that had, in Byzantine times, grown up around each saint: Greeks, Bulgars, and Serbs believed that the Prophet Elijah inhabited the heights of hills and mountains, that he was the "thunderer", etc; The cult of St. George was celebrated at the time of the fertility and litter bearing of the sheep, with sacrificial meals; belief in the nymphs of woods and waters continued. But the formal acceptance of this popular religiosity by the church is to be noted in its calendar of the saints which included a solid base and substratum that derived from the agricultural calendar and rural observances intended to guarantee the productivity of the fields and the health of the flocks. The preparation and eating of the holy kollyva, a pagan practice, was universal among the Balkan Christians, and indeed often passed into local Muslim practice where large scale conversion of Christians to Islam took place. Both Serbs and Greeks worshipped St. Tryphon as guardian of the grapevines and referred to him as the "pruner." The relation of the Balkan Christian to this world and to the world beyond were, it is true, shrouded in the ultimate Christian mystery. But Greeks, Serbs and Bulgars believed, firmly, in the pagan three fates (moirai, oriznici) who came into the house on the third day after the birth of the infant and decided his or her fate, and as a result of which belief, these peasants would serve them meals and gift them. Common to all three peoples were the ancient Galenian principle of salting

and watering the child.⁴⁸ Finally one need mention also the religious commercial fair known as the panegyris, an ancient Greek institution which passed into Byzantine Christianity and was then adopted by Serbs, Bulgars, and Muslim Turks (see Evliya Chelebi), and survived into the twentieth century.⁴⁹

These common practices and belief in the popular Christian culture were based on older agricultural, maritime, craft industrial, technologies and cycles. With the massive survival of the Balkan Orthodox peasantry as a result of the conservative Ottoman conquests of the Balkans, they survived and continued in rigorous force throughout the era of the *Ottoman Empire*. These institutions and beliefs had already crystallized in Byzantine times, and their survival is proof of that proposition that there is a history of Byzantine culture after the Ottoman conquests in the Balkans.

A further example of the influence of Byzantine popular culture on that of the Balkan peoples is the diffusion of the Alexander Romance, the highly imaginative and unhistorical written and version account of the exploits of Alexander the Great which have little to do with the historical facts of his life. By the sixteenth century there were versions of this Romance not only in vernacular Greek, but also in Serbian, Bulgarian, Roumanian and Ottoman. Its widespread nature in the Balkans was but a portion of the much wider diffusion of this Romance in over 35 languages. But that which is of interest here is that the manuscript and printed versions that circulated in the Balkan tongues seem to go back to Byzantine prototypes. Further there is every indication that these were read aloud in gatherings of people who were likely to be illiterate.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Vryonis, as in note 41 above, 481-97; "Religious Changes and Patterns in the Balkans, 14th-16th Centuries," in H. Birnbaum and S. Vryonis, editors, *Aspects of the Balkans* (The Hague-Paris, 1972), 152-60, 172-76.

⁴⁹ Vryonis, "The Panegyris of the Byzantine Saint: A Study in the Nature of a Medieval Institution, its Origins and Fate," S. Hackel, editor, *The Byzantine Saint: University of Birmingham 14th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies* (London, 1981), Sobornost incorporating Eastern Churches Review, 196-227; S. Faroqi, "The Early History of the Balkan Fairs," *Sudost-Forschung* 38 (1978), 59-68; Ö. Şen, *Osmanlı panayirlari (18.-19. yuzyil)* (Istanbul, 1996).

⁵⁰ Vryonis, "The Byzantine Legacy in Folk Life," as in note 4 above, 137-42; G. Veloudis, *Der neugriechische Alexander Tradition in Bewahrung und Wandel* (Munich, 1968); H.-G. Beck, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Volksliteratur* (Munich, 1971), 133-35; F. Pfister, *Alexander der Grosse in der Offenbarung der Griechen, Juden, Mohammedaner und Christen* (Berlin, 1956); *Alexander der Grosse in der byzantinischen Literatur und in der neugriechischen Volksbüchern. Probleme der neugriechischen Literatur III* (Berlin, 1960); R. Marinković, *Srpska Alexandrida. Istorija osnovnog Teksta*

From the earlier analysis that I had made on the Byzantine Legacy in the folk life of the Balkan peoples and in which the concept of imperial Constantinople-Istanbul, man's relation to human life and to the unknown, the agricultural and pastoral cycles and calendars, the panegyris, and the legend of Alexander the Great we see that the Byzantine experience of the Balkan peoples was a profound one with enduring influences on their popular culture.

"In effect, Iorga's concept of 'Byzance après Byzance' is more nearly applicable to the layer of popular culture in the Balkans than to the political domain where Iorga had sought to find it."⁵¹

Having been led to the conclusions, in these studies that the Turkish conquests constitute a kind of truncation in the cultural development of the Balkan peoples, I had differentiated between the levels of formal and popular culture. The former depended largely on the existence of a substantial patron class of dynasts and aristocrats, as well as of a flourishing church, and since the Turkish conquests did away with the Balkan kingly families and their aristocracies, and since the conquests also made ruinous financial inroads on the church's economic resources, the formal cultures of the Balkan Christians underwent a severe process of atrophy well into the eighteenth century. This is manifested in practically every aspect of their culture. In contrast, the popular culture of the Balkan Christians remained very vital, and preserved much of its Byzantine content. It is as a result of this historical circumstance that at the time of the Balkan national revivals, Greeks, Bulgars, Serbs appear as peoples with a popular rather than with a formal culture, and their political constitutions, upon liberation, forbade titles of nobility.

Nevertheless certain fundamental traditions going back to the formal culture of Byzantium are also to be observed and may be said to have constituted a kind of rudimentary formal culture common to the Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Balkans. One can, upon close analysis, detect these deeply rooted elements of Byzantine survivals in the formal culture of the Ottoman Balkans in the domains of: Law, the religious calendar,

(Belgrade, 1969); "Ahmedi," *Islam Ansiklopedisi*, 218; F. Babinger, *Die Geschichtsschreiber der Osmanen und ihre Werke* (Leipzig, 1927), 11-12; *Istorija na Bylgarskata Literatura*, vol. 1, 166-67; M. Murko, *Geschichte der alteren sudslawischen Literatur* (Leipzig, 1908), 95-96; I. Köhler, *Der neubulgarische Alexanderroman. Untersuchungen zu Textgeschichte und Vorbereitung* (Amsterdam, 1973); G. Dancev, "Traduceri ale Alexandriei din limba romana in limba bulgara moderna," *Romanoslavica* 15 (1967), 109-116.

⁵¹ Vryonis as in note 4 above; Iorga as in note 10 above.

religious painting, the cultural life and influence of Mount Athos, and the Balkan literatures.

The Byzantine legal system represents a remarkable complex of differing legal traditions among which that of Rome was foremost, but which was enriched by the church canon law, and various customary legal systems. Much of this spread, at various times, to the Syrian Christians of the east, to Bulgars, Serbs, Roumanians and of course the Greeks in the west. "The closer the medieval Balkan states drew to Byzantine civilization, the more did their legal structures reflect the influence of Byzantine law. The shock of the political decapitation of these medieval states at the hands of the Ottoman conquerors undoubtedly relaxed the hold of the Byzantine legal system, and superimposed upon it the sharia and the legislation of the sultans."⁵²

The existence and very survival of Byzantium rested on control of the land and the sea and accordingly the emperors were constantly exercised to regulate their exploitation. A close analysis of two legal institutions, that of protime (in land relations), and of the maritime loan, and the vlysidion in maritime commerce is instructive. Protime, in Ottoman times, was the legal concept that in the purchase and sale of land certain categories of buyers had a hierarchically structured preemptive right in the transaction. This consisted of two categories of buyers: (i) Those who were related to the seller, and (ii) thereafter those who had land adjacent to that being sold. This right of preemption in the sale and purchase of lands in the Ottoman lands of the Aegean and Greece, called protime, is nothing more nor less than the much older Byzantine institution of protimesis which functioned in the exact same manner. This basic legal framework in land relations was not abolished until in the 1850's the modern Greek kingdom terminated it.⁵³

In the domain of maritime commerce two institutions in particular dominated such transactions in Ottoman times: The special characteristics of the maritime loan (*riziko maritimo*), and the legal rights-obligations of the sailors to shares in both the profit and losses of any given overseas commercial venture. Thus in the Ottoman Empire the prevailing maritime law established as a legal principle that no maritime loan was absolutely and completely secured by collateral, for the unforeseen dangers of the sea could

⁵² Vryonis as in note 7 above, 21-28.

⁵³ Vryonis, "Local Institutions in the Greek Islands and Elements of Byzantine Continuity during Ottoman Rule," *Godishnik na Sofijskija Universitet 'Sv. Kliment Ohridski'*. Nauchen Tsentur za slavjano-vizantiiski prouchvanija 'Ivan Dujcev', 83 (1989), 85-144.

inflict losses on the merchants and ship captains that were beyond their control. Thus the maritime loan was a much riskier economic venture for the investors and correspondingly maritime loans brought higher interest. All this is right out of the so-called Byzantine Rhodian sea law, despite the Ottoman and Italian *termini tecnici* which sprinkle the notarial and other documents that record such transactions. The second striking similarity is to be seen in the rights and obligations of the crew. In Ottoman times they shared in both the profits and losses of the venture, and had a right to make their own cash investments as well. But the former was accorded them simply from their physical participation in sailing. This is nothing more nor less than the Byzantine maritime institution known as *vlysidion*, and which appears in the Rhodian Sea Law. Finally the wrecks of ships and their contents remain the possession of the original holders in both Byzantine and Ottoman legal practice. These first two contents of the sea law remained in effect until the late eighteenth century when the new French maritime code came to be employed by the Greek ship owners and captains of the Aegean. The fact that these land and maritime institutions survived in such crucial domains during the Ottoman Empire only to fall into disuse in the eighteenth and nineteenth century points to the fact that the really great changes are those that came with modernity.⁵⁴

Inasmuch as I had spoken of the seasonal and religious calendar as a primary manifestation of the popular culture of the Balkan Christians in Ottoman times, how is it possible that it is here included among the surviving institutions of Byzantine formal culture?

Above, in the discussion of the survival of Byzantine influence in the popular culture of the Balkan peoples, I had interpreted the calendar as a manifestation of Byzantine popular culture referring as it did to ancient agricultural and other pagan practices. The calendar constituted a temporal or chronological structure into which the Byzantine state and church tied the society's popular and formal cultures thus bonding such diverse phenomena as theology and ancient seasonal observations connected with agricultural technology. Further the state imbued this variety of events with a kind of sacral or ceremonial taxis that gave a uniform but distinct form to everyday life in the broader Orthodox domain thereby expanding a kind of cultural homogeneity far beyond imperial boundaries. A calendrical system is much like a standard of measurement and it is primary in the cultural orientation of any pre-modern society. The Byzantine state and church succeeded in fusing these diverse popular and formal, as well as pagan and Christian,

⁵⁴ As in note 53 above.

elements into a calendar system that survived the Ottoman conquests and the imposition on the Balkan Muslims of the Ottoman Empire of a Muslim calendar. Indeed many elements of the Byzantine calendar were carried over into the popular life of the Balkan Muslims, especially those who had been converted to Christianity.⁵⁵

The great economic transformations that western commercial activity generated created once more an extensive 'class' of Greek, Serbian, Bulgarian, and Vlach merchants who brought a new economic affluence to their respective domains with significant results for the domains of architecture, painting, and education. The emergence of such indigenous, Christian wealth provided the communities and churches with a new and substantial 'class' of patrons who in turn began to subsidize the building and ornamentation of churches and monasteries. The vigor of this evolution is seen in the fact that a large proportion of the painters were of rustic background with little formal training, who increasingly depicted scenes from everyday life in the church frescoes and icons. Often these products were of a popular or folk character, as the number of known painters increased fourfold.⁵⁶

With this rapid rise of patronage and the increase in new ecclesiastical *foundations and renovations of older ones*, one is not surprised to see a reaction to the popularization or vulgarization of painting by the sudden influx of self-taught village painters. Almost simultaneously and somewhat early in the eighteenth century two Greek authors attempted to set standards, each very differently, for this traditional art. The first of these, Dionysios ek Phourna, born in mainland Greece and very active on Mount Athos, composed the famous *Ἑρμηνεία τῆς Ζωγραφικῆς Τέχνης* (1728-1733) in which he gave a veritable catalogue of the iconographic manner in which the numerous themes of Orthodox dogma and history should be composed, and he describes as well all the elements to be used in preparing the basis for the painting and importantly, the constituent elements in making the paints. It is interesting to note that he describes the Byzantine manner as well as the 'natural' manner of painting in the west. His contemporary Panayiotes Doxaras, from the Venetian held Ionian Islands long exposed to Renaissance and Baroque art influence, translated Leonardo de Vinci's

⁵⁵ Vryonis, "Religious Changes in the Balkans," as in note 48 above, 172-176; Vakarelski, "Altertümliche Elemente in Lebensweise und Kultur der bosnischen Mohammedaner," *Zeitschrift für Balkanologie* 4 (1966), 149-72; Schneewis, as in note 18 above, passim; G. Stadtmüller, "Die Islamisierung bei den Albanern," *Jahrbuch für Geschichte Osteuropas*, N.F. 3 (1955), 404-29.

⁵⁶ *Ἱστορία τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ Ἔθνους*, II, 243-66.

treatise on painting. These two handbooks or manuals were intended to serve as guides to aspiring painters in the Greek speaking regions and as such wrote down the two manners of painting acceptable in the Greek world.⁵⁷

Though western influences began to appear in late Byzantine culture, in the domains of economic, political, maritime institutions, and in art and literature (Bessarion had recommended to the emperor that the latter send young Greeks to study western technology in Italy),⁵⁸ nevertheless the most intense phase of Italo-western influence on Greek painting is not manifested until the fifteenth-eighteenth centuries in the schools of Cretan and Ionian Islands painting where the existence of a Greco-Venetian aristocracy patronized it. Dionysios, in studying the older Byzantine frescoes on Mount Athos was inspired by the 'purity' of this older tradition and urged aspiring painters to model their work on that of the fourteenth century Greek master Panselinos. Simultaneously he found older Greek manuscripts on the art of painting which he incorporated into his own treatise. In this manner he was urging a return to the older Byzantine tradition of painting.

The text and example of Dionysios were thus to have a great effect in renewing a knowledge of the Byzantine traditions of painting in Asia Minor, Russia, as well as Balkans.

This is not the place to enter into a descriptive analysis of the contents of his manual, but rather I wish to point, very briefly, to this widespread diffusion from its Greek original into a model constituting either translation or variant reworkings in Bulgarian, Serbian, and Roumanian.⁵⁹ Thus we see in this case not only the pan-Balkan nature of Byzantine influence and its survival into the twentieth century, in the realm of art, but also a late revival.

The coupling of the names of Mount Athos and Dionysios reminds us of the central role played by the spiritual and intellectual life of the Holy Mountain in the lives and institutions of not only the Greeks, but also of the Balkans and eastern Europe, which continued long after the political life of

⁵⁷ Vryonis, "The Formal Culture," as in note 7 above, 29-36; Διονυσίου ὁ ἐκ τοῦ Φουρνᾶ Ἑρμηνεία τῆς Ζωγραφικῆς Τέχνης καὶ αἱ κύρια αὐτῆς ἀνέκδοτοι πηγαί, ἐκδομένη μετὰ πρωτοτύπων αὐτοῦ κειμένων, ed. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus (St. Petersburg, 1909); V. Grecu, "Byzantinische Handbücher der Kirchenmalerei," *Byzantion* 9 (1934), 675-701; *idem*, *Carti de pictura biserieasca bizantina* (Cernauti, 1936); A. Vasiliev, *Ermenii: Teknologija i ikonografija* (Sofia, 1976).

⁵⁸ A.G. Keller, "A Byzantine Admirer of 'Western' Progress: Cardinal Bessarion," *The Cambridge Historical Journal* 11 (1953-55), 343-48.

⁵⁹ As in note 50 above.

the Byzantine Empire had come to an end. Indeed among the most prominent patrons of Mount Athos in Byzantine times had been Slavic knezes and Byzantine emperors, who were to be replaced by the Roumanian and Moscovite princes of the post-Byzantine era. Its role in the radiation of Byzantine culture, and therefore of the tradition of Saints Cyril and Methodios, remained prominent in Ottoman times. Joseph Georgirenes writing in the latter seventeenth century informs us that in his day there were some 6,000 monks on Mount Athos, including about 800 Serbs in the Serbian monastery of Chilandar and some 200 Bulgars in the Bulgarian monastery of Zographou.⁶⁰

We see, from these brief remarks, that in Byzantium the formal and popular strains of Byzantine civilization, as well as its pagan-Hellenistic-Roman and Christian institutions present the major aspects of its culture in the ninth century. Those Balkan peoples who accepted the mission, teachings, and translations of Saints Cyril and Methodios created their own versions and/or concepts of Byzantine culture and so became absorbed into the politico-cultural sphere of the Byzantine basileia and church. Inasmuch as these two Byzantine institutions had institutionalized a substantial portion of pre-Christian popular culture (through hagiolatry, the calendar, agricultural, pastoral and maritime technologies) as well, the Byzantine Balkans inherited a substantial portion of this Byzantine popular culture through their conversion to the church of Constantinople from the ninth century onward.

Though the Ottoman conquests of the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries destroyed two major aspects of this Byzantine legacy in the Balkans (that is the Basileia and the indigenous aristocracies), the church, much of the laws, art, and religious institutions survived, in an atrophied state, as the ongoing formal culture of the Orthodox peoples in the Balkans and so differentiated the Orthodox peoples from their new Muslim rulers. Their popular culture, previously incorporated into the religious and secular life of Serbs, Bulgars, Vlachs, Roumanians and Greeks, survived and continue in a vigorous form as an aspect of the living legacy of Saints Cyril and Methodios.

Today, in an era when the effects of the European Enlightenment, European systems of education, scholarship, art, literature, monarchy, democracy, dictatorship, marxism, technology, and industrialization have prevailed, the Cyrillo-Methodian legacy has survived in the realms of

⁶⁰ Vryonis, "The Formal Culture, as in note 7 above, 36-37; H.W. Lowry, "A Note on the Population and Status of the Athonite Monasteries under Ottoman Rule (ca. 1520)," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 73 (1981), 115-35.

practically all these modern institutions and in the ceremonial survival of the popular culture (folklore) and history in their respective nationalisms.*

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