Cyrillomethodianum

VII

Thessalonique

1983
TOPONYMY AND HISTORY.
OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING THE SLAVONIC TOPONYMY
OF THE PELOPONNESE*

Phaedon Malingoudis

The holiday-maker from Central Europe who crosses the whole of Yugoslavia, Northern and Central Greece and arrives in the Peloponnese may be struck by the names of certain villages there, such as Μπελιγκράδια in Gytheion, or Μπελιγράδι in Messenia; villages, that is, with the same name as the Yugoslavian capital, Belgrade. If, indeed, the traveller happens to be a Slavist who has specialised in Slavonic place-names, on comparing the name of the Thessalian town Καρδιτσα with that of the Austrian town Graz, he may come to the correct conclusion that both these names have the same etymology, being from the Slavonic *gordce. Moreover, if our Slavist happens also to have a lively imagination, even if he lacks the most elementary knowledge of Greek, he may — just as Fallmerayer once did — link the name of the Peloponnese (Morea) etymologically with the Slavonic appellative more (sea). He might also be tempted to believe that all the place-names in Greece which happen to be Slavonic or of Slavonic origin, or merely seem to him to be Slavonic, originate exclusively from one specific Slavonic language — Modern Bulgarian — and thus arrive at conclusions concerning Greece’s ethnological character in the past.

This last case, extreme as it is, is neither imaginary nor, regrettably, uncommon. Let us quote just one of the many examples of such interpretations, an example which eloquently typifies the quality of the whole work from which it is taken. A two-volume monograph, which was published fourteen years ago in Sofia under the title The Settlement of the Bulgarian Slavs in the Balkan Peninsula, informs its readers of the etymology of the place-name Макрпяновна as follows:

"Village in the north-west of Crete. From the Slavonic Mokriane (i.e. from the adjective mokrs: ‘damp’), the unstressed o being rendered in Greek by a, a phenomenon encountered in all the older Bulgarian place-names in Greece. It is difficult to link this place-name etymologically with the Greek μακρός, μακρύς: ‘large’ (sic; recte: ‘long’), because in that case it should have the phonetic form Макрпяноvη. The -να-, which is the rendition of the Bulgarian -Ja- indicates precisely that the place-name is not Greek." ¹

99
This work was a landmark, since the conclusions it drew had a great impact which was evident not only in Bulgaria (which is only to be expected) but also in recent works by western scholars. For instance, in a doctoral thesis accepted by the School of Philosophy of the University of Munich and published in 1978 under the ambitious title *The Slav Population of the Greek Peninsula*, we read:

"In Crete one observes a concentration of Slavonic place-names in the mountainous western part of the island. Slavonic place-names are particularly numerous in the Rhodopes Peninsula."  

In support of his assertion the writer refers to no other source or study than the monograph mentioned above, in particular its accompanying maps, on which the Bulgarian linguist has taken care to place a black dot against every place-name for which he has managed to contrive a Bulgarian etymology. Impressed by the numerous black dots to be found on the map, the writer of the thesis has drawn hasty conclusions which ethnomatically distort part of medieval Greece.

Another West German historian, too, has reached certain conclusions with regard to Greece’s medieval history. In one of the recent issues of *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* he attempts to determine those regions of the Peloponnese in which Slavs settled during the Middle Ages, basing the greater part of his argument not on historical evidence but exclusively on etymologies of place-names in Greece taken from a linguistic work.

It will now be clear that the primary object of this study concerns the recent manifestations of the old problem of the Slavs’ descent into Greece during the Middle Ages, as they are presented in modern research in both the East and the West. Using the Peloponnese as an example, we shall endeavour to deal with matters relating to two principal questions:

1. Of what value are the Slavonic place-names in existence today as historical sources? There are two parts to this question: a) what kinds of place-names in Greece can be described as Slavonic? b) to what extent can these place-names allow a purely objective researcher to draw purely historical conclusions?

2. Can the original Slavonic place-names in the Peloponnese be characterised as Bulgarian, or — to follow the example of many of our northern neighbours by turning the question around — are these place-names Bulgarian just because the Slavs who came down to the Peloponnese belonged both linguistically and ethnomatically to that group of Southern Slavs who later formed the Bulgarian nation?

Let us consider the first question: which place-names in the Peloponnese can unreservedly be described as original Slavonic names, and what kind of information can the historian draw from them? This, of course, is a fairly old problem; 150 years ago — at the same time as the Modern Greek State was established — the
notorious Fallmerayer, using etymologies that were naive even in his own time, attempted to produce yet another argument to back up his theory. At this point it should be stressed that although many historians still refer to his works today and even try to resurrect his theories, no Slav linguist has ever taken Fallmerayer's etymological derivations seriously. In a severe criticism B. Kopitar was the first to indicate the superficiality of Fallmerayer's knowledge of Slavonic languages. Complete ignorance of the Slavonic linguistic family led Fallmerayer to form the unfortunate notion that the Peloponnesian Slavs had their origins in the regions of Vladimir-Suzdal, Moscow, Jaroslavl' and Kostroma; areas, that is to say, in which the Eastern Slavs came to live long after Slavs had settled in the Peloponnes, and which, as Vasilev proved, had previously been occupied exclusively by Finno-Ugrian tribes. From the time of Fallmerayer's theory until the outbreak of the Second World War the question of the Slavonic place-names in Greece continued intermittently to make an appearance in scholarly works, which were all more or less products of their age. With the exception of F. Miklosich's memorable work *Slavonic Personal Names and Place-names*, in which, however, only a few of Greece's place-names are examined, and then only cursorily, researchers during this period, influenced either by the spirit of the school to which they belonged or by the political circumstances of their time, selected and dealt with only those place-names which usefully served for them to prove their views. Bearing in mind the factors influencing these researchers' methods, the studies of Slavonic place-names in Greece published between 1830-1940 may generally be grouped in the following three categories:

a) Studies published in Russia when the romantic intellectual Slavophile movement was reigning supreme in all areas of the humanities. The St Petersburg Slavicist A. Hilferding's work is a typical example; his Slavophile ideas are clearly evident in all his studies, and in order to magnify the number of Slavs supposed to have settled in Greece he had no hesitation in presenting a great many Modern Greek place-names (such as Μηλώ, Κρανά, Ράμινα, Άχλαιδα, Πηγαδίτσα etc.) as Slavonic. Hilferding's studies were also made use of by later Slavicists in Tsarist Russia (such as I. Sozonović and A. Pogodin, for example), who, though ideologically they were no longer Slavophile, nevertheless included in their lists all the Greek place-names which Hilferding had wrongly described as Slavonic.

b) In the second category are the works of the, mainly Greek, linguists who, though setting out from contradictory positions, did prove the Greek etymology of the allegedly Slavonic place-names, but did not deal with the genuinely Slavonic place-names in Greece, many of which they attempted to etymologise from dialect forms of Ancient Greek.
c) Finally, in the third category we find all the works by Bulgarian linguists, who, without managing to avoid erroneous etymologies, describe the place-names not simply as Slavonic, but as Bulgarian. This tendency was particularly marked during the inter-war years and was encouraged by the conflict between Bulgarian and Serbian linguists concerning the linguistic (and by extension the national) identity of the inhabitants of present-day Southern Yugoslavia. A good number of Serbian linguists during this period (such as A. Belić, for example) considered the inhabitants of this region — who have called themselves “Macedonians” since the Second World War — to be Serbs, and though none of the rest of the scholarly world shared this view, they also endeavoured to prove that various place-names in Greece are Serbian; thus provoking a series of studies in Bulgaria proclaiming the Bulgarian identity of these place-names.

A study by the German Slavicist M. Vasmer marked a new stage in the study of the Slavonic place-names in Greece. Published in 1941, it is the most fundamental and systematic treatment of the problem to be produced hitherto. Everything written by Slavists on the Slavonic place-names in Greece prior to Vasmer seems in comparison to be merely pre-scientific attempts, while the few studies produced by Slavists afterwards — those, that is, which do not expound extreme views, such as the work mentioned at the beginning of this article — are content to repeat the great German Slavists’s conclusions.

The great value of Vasmer’s work lies in the fact that he was the first to collect and interpret a very large number of (in his opinion) Slavonic place-names from all over Greece. Thus both the linguist and the historian may ascertain from his work the number and location of place-names anywhere in Greece, from Macedonia to Crete, which, according to Vasmer at least, are Slavonic. Let us see, then, what sort of picture Vasmer’s material gives us of the Peloponnese:

The Slavonic place-names he lists for this region number 428, distributed as follows: 24 in Corinthia, 18 in the Argolis, 95 in Achaia, 34 in Elis, 42 in Triphylia, 93 in Arcadia, 41 in Messenia and 81 in Laconia. As one can see, the material is classified statistically and thus can also be of use to the historian, who either is not in a position to check the individual etymologies or is not even concerned with these. In the aforementioned article in Byzantinische Zeitschrift, an attempt was made to determine the extent of the regions which were inhabited by Slavs and the degree of penetration achieved by the Slav element, all on the basis of the density of the Slavonic place-names to be found in these regions according to Vasmer’s catalogue. The fact that many of these place-names are not Slavonic, as Georgakas’ studies later proved, in the words of the author “is only of minor significance as far as the aims of the statistics are concerned, numerically at least.”
The methodological assumptions from which this writer sets out are, in our opinion, false; a fact which, of course, prejudices the outcome of his whole argument. The reasons for this are as follows:

1. Vasmer's 428 place-names do not reflect the actual number of Slavonic place-names in the Peloponnese either quantitatively or qualitatively, since no complete inventory of these place-names has ever been made. In one small area of the Peloponnese, Messenian or Outer Mani for example, there are some 400 Slavonic place-names — as many, that is, as Vasmer gives for the whole of the Peloponnese. Quite clearly, therefore, any statistical computation based on Vasmer's information does not correspond to the true facts, for he himself gives only nine Slavonic place-names for Outer Mani. If one carried out a more detailed check one would find that the conclusions reached by the writer of the article contradict the evidence of historical sources: on the basis of Vasmer's ratio of 15 Slavonic place-names in Corinthia to 9 in Messenian Mani, one would have to agree that the Slav population of Corinthia (for which no information is to be found in historical sources) was denser than that of Outer Mani, where, as we know, the Slav tribe of the Melingi settled and preserved their linguistic identity until the middle of the XVth century. If, despite the complete absence of historical information, one insisted that Corinthia was more densely populated by Slavs than Outer Mani, one would then have to prove that there were many more Slavonic place-names in Corinthia than the 400 in Outer Mani which have recently been interpreted as Slavonic. The toponymical material collected by Vasmer, therefore, should in no circumstances be considered to reflect the actual extent of Slav penetration into various Greek regions.

2. The second methodological error on the part of all the historians who automatically transfer Vasmer's place-names onto their maps is that they do not check whether these place-names really have been formed directly from the language of the Slav settlers.

Let us see which categories of place-names listed by Vasmer are not Slavonic:

a) Place-names formed directly from loan-words in Modern Greek. Such loan-words, of Slavonic etymology, can still be heard in Greek regions where neither Fallmerayer nor any other imaginative historian has yet dared to discover toponymical traces of Slav settlements. What Vasmer and other scholars did not know is that these are the type of appellatives from which place-names are commonly formed; for example, geographical terms (βουνός, βάλτος, λόγγος, παγανείδα, πολιάνα, σοποτό), names of plants and trees (τοπόλι, τσέρος, γρανίτσα, βούζι, σανός, λίπα), names of animals (γουστέρα, κοινάβι), technical terms con-
nected with animal-rearing (στάνη, στάλος, δβορός) etc. In this group we may also include those place-names formed from loan-words of an idiomatic nature, i.e. from appellatives which are encountered only in individual Modern Greek dialects. Thus Vasmer, followed of course by all the later foreign historians and linguists, included in his catalogue a whole series of place-names without realising that the appellatives from which they were formed are still to be found in the Modern Greek dialects of their respective regions.

Let us use the example of the idiomatic μοῦσγα, which still exists in dialects of the South-West Peloponnese with the meaning of ‘mud, muddy place, small bog’ and, quite naturally, is also to be found as a place-name in this region: in Olympia, Triphilia and Pylia alone 25 minor place-names (microtoponyms) have been recorded which were formed from this particular appellative. The fact that the etymology of μοῦσγα is Slavonic is of no significance to an objective researcher into the Slavonic toponymy of the region, since the speakers of the language from which the 25 names were formed (and this number could easily double in the future, since the word is still in use in the dialect of the region) were not Slavs. A meticulous researcher ought indeed to proceed even farther and check whether the place-names which today appear to us to be Slavonic also derive from loan-words which are no longer in use in the dialect of the region he is studying. If, for example, the researcher is aware that in XVIIth-century documents from Dimitsana the appellative γκόλαριά ('bare, dry ground') is to be found, though it is no longer heard in the region, and if he then encounters Arcadian place-names with the same etymology, he will hesitate to consider them to be Slavonic names rather than Greek names formed from a loan-word which has been forgotten today. In Messenian Mani our researcher would also find the place-name Ρεμπρή which he might describe as Slavonic (Slav. rebro) if he did not know from documents that its inhabitants used to use the word reμπρή synonymously with the word πλευρή ('side') to denote 'mountainside'.

So where we have proof that certain place-names were formed from loan-words, even though these loan-words may be of Slavonic etymology, these place-names are not Slavonic but Greek.

b) A second, fairly large category of place-names wrongly described as Slavonic comprises those place-names formed from the genitive of Modern Greek surnames, such as τοῦ Ράδου, τοῦ Ράικου, τοῦ Βρανά, τοῦ Στάικου, etc. Even if it were proven that such Modern Greek names were of Slavonic etymology, it would be inadmissible to maintain that all the place-names formed from these Modern Greek surnames according to the rules of Greek morphology are Slavonic. Equally unscholarly is an assertion encountered in various publications in our
neighbouring countries — i.e. that all Modern Greeks who bear names of foreign etymology are themselves of foreign descent. If one were to leaf through the Vienna telephone directory one would soon find that a great many of the names listed therein are not German but Slavonic. Nevertheless, the present author has never heard of any Czech or Polish historian or linguist maintaining that the bearers of these names share his own nationality. We must point out, then, in closing this section, that etymology is not a useful guide for those historians who declare in this day and age that Eugene Voulgaris and Markos Botsaris were not Greeks, and who maintained in a voluminous tome which was brought out on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the Greek Revolution of 1821 that all the revolutionary fighters with names not of Greek etymology were Bulgarians.

c) The third category of Vasmer’s place-names which are not Slavonic comprises all the compound names of which one part is Greek and the other Slavonic. It is not necessary to produce a detailed argument to prove that it is impossible for such place-names to have been formed from the language of the Slav settlers. That they are Greek from a morphological point of view is also indicated by the fact that the tendency to form compound words is much more marked in Greek than in Slavonic. In our opinion, then, Vasmer was incorrect in describing as Slavonic a whole series of Greek place-names, such as: Ποδογορά (πόδι [foot] + gora [mountain], cf. etiam the synonymous подобовно, рицбовано), Габролими (gabr [beech] + λίμνη [lake]), Λιποχόρι (липа [lime tree] + χωρι [village]) etc.

d) The fourth category, finally, comprises the place-names of Slavonic etymology which cannot be described either as Slavonic or as Greek. These are the place-names which, either from their phonetic forms or from their endings, are indisputably Albanian or Aromanian. A large number of Wallachian or Albanian place-names of Slavonic etymology are described as Slavonic in Vasmer’s catalogue.

If, to the categories mentioned above, one also adds all the place-names which Vasmer describes as being of uncertain etymology or for which he gives no etymology at all, then the original number of entries in his catalogue is reduced by 50% or more. The answer, then, to the first part of our question must be: we may describe as Slavonic only those place-names in Greece which a) are of Slavonic etymology, and at the same time b) do not belong to one of the five categories mentioned above. As far as the Peloponnese is concerned, it must be stressed here that of the 428 place-names upon which the recent statistics referred to above are based, 213 are not Slavonic. It thus becomes clear just how valuable are statistical calculations which start out with an error quota of 50%!
Let us now proceed to the second part of our question and see to what extent the historian may use the original Slavonic place-names as a source. There are three basic categories of information upon which the historian may draw in order to evaluate the Slavonic place-names:

1. Indications as to the extent and boundaries of those areas within the Peloponnese where large groups of Slavs settled and remained permanently, preserving their linguistic identity for a period of time.

2. Details concerning the chronology of the Slav areas’ course towards linguistic hellenisation.

3. Information concerning the extent of the Slav settlers’ technological development during the period of their settlement.

1. It is quite clear, from what has been said above, that Vasmer’s toponymical material, as he collected and classified it, is of no use to the historian. If one likened even those 215 Peloponnesian place-names in Vasmer’s catalogue which can be considered as Slavonic (scattered all over the Peloponnese as they are) to archaeological finds, then the only certain observation one could make is that these finds are not of Greek but of barbarian origin. For the historian it is impossible — and herein lies the chief methodological error on the part of all those who have attempted to make historical use of them — to reach definite conclusions concerning the extent and boundaries of the Slav areas from such a small number of such scattered finds. Indeed, the problem becomes insuperable if one takes into account the fact that the majority of these few finds were not made in situ: for the most part the place-names collected by Vasmer are names of settlements (villages or townlets) which were names by the transfer of minor place-names from their immediate vicinity. The place-name Καλάβρυτα, for example, is the Slavonic hydronym Kolovrētō, which is encountered in Russia as well as in Bohemia and Croatia; originally, as a Slavonic name, it did not denote the present-day town, but the river near which it is situated, i.e. the River Κερυνίτης mentioned by Pausanias, which is the present-day River Καλαβρυτύβ. To locate the regions in which Slavs settled, then, extensive linguistic investigations are necessary; a complete collection, if possible, of minor place-names from all over the Peloponnese, to be evaluated by Slavicists with (the necessity is clear from what has been said above) a perfect knowledge of Modern Greek dialects. Only in this way can definite conclusions be reached.

Let us now refer specifically to the conclusions reached by the author of this study, following his recent research into the minor place-names of Outer Mani, a region in which, as we know, the Slav tribe of the Meligi settled during the Middle Ages. 24 In this region are to be found not only Greek names of Slavonic
etymology, but also Slavonic place-names — that is, place-names which not only have Slavonic etymology but also have Slavonic suffixes, i.e. endings formed according to the rules of Slavonic morphology. The study of these primary Slavonic place-names, which account for some 20% of the total number of minor place-names in the region, led us to the conclusion that all those which derive from appellatives or adjectives belong to the broad semantic field of the natural environment of an agricultural society, while giving a picture of a relatively large variety of semantically kindred meanings. The 400 Slavonic place-names in the region are in fact formed from 81 different personal names in Common Slavonic and 133 appellatives. These latter belong to the following eleven semantic categories: terrestrial environment, aquatic environment, peculiarities of the natural environment, flora, fauna, dwelling-places or settlements, agriculture, animal-rearing, wood-cutting, hunting, natural products. What especially impresses the researcher, however, is the particularly specialised vocabulary which has been preserved in the toponym, a vocabulary which disposes of two or three appellatives for semantic categories which we today could express only periphrastically. One example is that the notion *spring* can be expressed by the following six, semantically specialised, words: *izvor* (spring), *obl* (spring), *ps* (spring), *nev* (spring which does not gush), *soltina* (salt-water spring), *nomina* (spring of fragrant or mineral water).

The study of the toponymy of this region led us to the final conclusion that a few etymologies are not enough to prove that a region was occupied in the past by Slavs; one has to uncover and re-establish a whole toponymical network, which, preserved within the general toponymy of the region, has survived until the present day. The uncovering and re-instatement of a toponymical network in Outer Mani can, in our view, lead a historian to much more certain conclusions than those reached by the writer of the article referred to earlier. If one examines the toponymy of the Messenian Plain, one will observe that the place-names there are almost exclusively Greek, which clearly shows that the Slavs who came down from the north during the Middle Ages avoided the Messenian Plain, preferring to settle on the unapproachable slopes of Mount Taygetus. If, then, we compare the toponymy of these two regions, it is possible roughly to define the north-eastern boundary of the region colonised by the Slavs of Mount Taygetus. This method makes it possible, once all the minor place-names of the whole Peloponnese have been collected, to ascertain whether toponymical networks have been preserved in other regions too, and thus to determine the positions of the Slavonic ‘islands’ in this part of Greece in the past.

2. A comparative study of the Slavonic place-names puts linguists in a position to gather information concerning their chronological arrangement. Their mor-
ological and phonological characteristics can lead the linguist, not, of course, to
date the place-names themselves, but, by comparing them, to determine which are
more recent and which are older. When the linguist has evaluated them chronolo-
gically, the historian then has at his disposal the second category of information
which concerns him, since he may now with certainty surmise that in those regions
where the newer Slavonic place-names are not to be found, the spoken Slavonic
language had already disappeared, and he may thus gather information concerning
a historical process; that is, the gradual hellenisation of the Slavs of the Pelopon-
nese, which, as we are able today to gather from historical sources, had taken
place before the Peninsula was finally enslaved by the Turks.

3. The study of the Slavonic toponymy and of the loan-words in Greek al-
 lows us, finally, to gather information about certain aspects of the Slav settlers’
internal history. From the Slavonic technical terms connected with agriculture,
animal-rearing, wood-cutting and metallurgy, which have been preserved in the to-
ponymy of the Peloponnese, we may surmise that during the period of their set-
tlement, at the end of the VIIth century, the Slavs were neither a nomadic people
(as were the Avars, for example, and other Turanian tribes) nor semi-nomadic
herdsman (transhumers), like the Vlachs of the Balkans. The relatively large vari-
ety of Slavonic technical terms connected with agriculture, animal-rearing, the
mining industry etc. which is reflected in the toponymy, is a weighty indication
that these settlers were essentially an agricultural people with a mixed economy,
who, accustomed to being permanently settled, came down to the south of the
Greek Peninsula to rebuild homes and cultivate the land once more, as they had
done before pressure from other peoples forced them to abandon their distant
homeland.

Let us not omit to mention here, however, the kind of information these
place-names cannot provide us with. Contrary to what many historians maintain,
we cannot learn anything about the social structure, the religion, or the system of
government practised by the Slav settlers. These semantic categories have nothing
to do with the creation of place-names, and even if they were used some time in
the past, they were lost once and for all when the spoken Slavonic language died
out. Just as the archaeologist, on opening a tomb, does not expect to find the
body’s garments untouched by time, so for the linguist those Slavonic place-names
in Greece which supposedly denote the ‘lawcourt’, ‘place of the Boljars, the žu-
pans’, ‘agora’ etc. are no more than fantasies produced by erroneous and impro-
vised etymologies.

Let us now move on to the second question posed at the beginning: Can we
consider the place-names of the Peloponnese to have been formed from the lan-
guage of speakers who could ethnologically be described as Bulgarian?
An objective historian would maintain that an affirmative answer to this question was based on literally preposterous reasoning. As the Bulgarian historian D. Angelov has proved very convincingly 26, the genesis of the modern Bulgarian nation is a historical phenomenon which evolved in the region of Lower Moesia, in part of Thrace, and possibly (here one may leave the Bulgarian and Southern Yugoslavian historians to come to some agreement on their own) also in that region which is occupied by the confederate republic which has unluckily named itself ‘Macedonia’. The objective historian also knows very well that there is not even the faintest indication in the sources that the Slavs of the Peloponnese continued, once they were permanently settled, to maintain communications with those Slavonic-speaking northerners who later formed the medieval South Slavonic States of the Balkans. Those subjects of the Byzantine Emperor, who during the centuries after their settlement in the Peloponnese preserved their Slavonic linguistic identity, were surrounded by Greek-speaking Πωμαδι, who, as the sources explicitly state, outnumbered the Slavs at all periods of their co-existence. The obligations of the Slavonic-speaking Peloponnesian peasant towards Byzantine authority during this period were neither lighter nor heavier than those of his Greek-speaking neighbour. Together they faced the Frankish conqueror and later the Albanian nomads who came down as far as the Peloponnese; together they lived through the last splendours of the Greek Empire, the Despotate of the Morea, and finally bowed their heads together beneath the Turkish yoke. When the time of national uprising came, the period when some Balkan peoples discovered and others invented their past, when Fallmerayer’s theories were launched from the entire philhellenic Hesperia, by then there were only Neo-Hellenes in the Peloponnese, who, regardless of whether they bore names such as Staikos and Rados, or Odysseus and Aristotle, were fighting for the freedom of their nation. The objective historian, then, knows very well that the Slav settlers in the Peloponnese were absorbed by the denser Greek element many centuries before the process of the ethnogenesis of Greece’s modern neighbours, the Bulgarians, had begun. Nevertheless, this ethnological smoothing-out is not, in our opinion, to be ascribed to that transcendent, metaphysical civilising power of Hellenism, which many modern historians invoke, but rather it was the objective course of events and, most important, the numerical superiority of the Greek element in the Peloponnese which caused the ethnological disappearance of the Slavs.

Nevertheless, more concrete data exist, linguistic evidence which one may draw from the Slavonic toponymy of the Peloponnese and which refutes the theories of the Bulgarian linguists. From this evidence the impartial researcher may
Phaedon Malingoudis

conclude that the Slavs of the Peloponnese may be described linguistically as anything but Bulgarian. 27

The study of the Slavonic place-names in Greece, which is once more engaging scholarly attentions, is still in its early stages and therefore it is above all a linguistic problem. Future research will of course also bring to light information to interest the historian and will contribute to the solution of the complex problem of the “Slavs in Greece”.

University of Thessaloniki

*  The material for this study is taken from two lectures given by the author: the first was a paper presented at a symposium entitled “The Role of Greece in South-East Europe” (Bonn, 6th - 8th November 1980) and the second a lecture given in the Byzantine Seminar Room of the University of Cologne on 29th January 1981. While writing the present study the author was in receipt of a fellowship from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation.


2. A good example is one of the most recent Bulgarian historical works, a lengthy article by I. Božilov entitled Les Bulgares dans l'empire byzantin, Godišnik na Sof. Universitet, Istoričeski fakultet, Vol. 69 (1975), Sofia 1980, p. 145-190. Although on p. 147 the author writes that «l'identification totale des Slaves et des Bulgares (scil. in Byzantium), est, bien sûr, inexacte, et je suis loin de la pensée de fonder ma recherche sur elles», nevertheless, with Zaimov's work as his basis, he does nothing less than identify the Slavs who came down to Byzantium with the Bulgarians. In connection with this, cf. our extensive criticism to be published in the forthcoming issue of Balkan Studies.


8. A. A. Vasilev, Slavjane v Grecii. In: Vizantijski Vremennik V (1898) p: 404-438 and 626-670. Concerning the ethnological composition of the regions in which the East-Slavonic languages (i.e. Russian, Ukrainian and Byelorussian) are spoken today, cf. W. P. Schmid's


11. A complete bibliography of the Greek works in this category is to be found in D. Vayakakos’ work Σχεδίασμα περί τῶν τοπωνυμικῶν καὶ ἀνθρωπωνυμικῶν σπουδῶν ἐν Ἑλλάδi Athens 1964, p. 334-341.


16. Cf. nota 5 supra.


