

The identity of Thomas the Slavonian.

The civil war between the Emperor Michael II and Thomas the Slavonian has never been fully treated in detail. I hope, with the permission of the Editor, to contribute an account of this episode to a future number of the *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*. In the meantime this preliminary paper deals with some difficulties, which meet us at the outset, touching the early career of the hero of the rebellion.

In reading the biographical statements of our authorities concerning him, it is almost impossible to know where one is. One is never sure that one has really got him. Sometimes one is tempted to adopt, as a desperate expedient, the suggestion thrown out by Finlay that two distinct persons were confounded. Even three Thomases would not surprise us.

The first question touching this Proteus is his race. It is distinctly stated by Genesisius (p. 8 ed. Bonn.) that he was born by the waters of lake Gazûrus. This doubtless means that his birthplace was Gaziura on the river Iris in Pontus, a town to the southeast of Amasia, and to the west of Komana.¹⁾ But while Genesisius goes on to tell us in the same passage that Thomas was an Armenian, in another place he states that he was a „Scythian“ (*σκυθίζων τῷ γένει*, p. 32), in other words, of Slavonic origin. The latter statement is confirmed by the Continuer of Theophanes (p. 50 ed. Bonn.):

ἐξ ἀσήμεων τε γουέων καὶ πενιχρῶν, ἄλλως δὲ καὶ Σκλαβογενῶν, τῶν πολλάκις ἐγκισσευθέντων κατὰ τὴν Ἀνατολήν,

where the last words are intended to explain the presence of Slaves in Pontus. But what does Genesisius mean by saying that Thomas was an Armenian? May it have been that his mother's family was Armenian? Or was Genesisius guilty of an error when he wrote the earlier passage? Or were there two Thomases, one an Armenian, the other a Slave? On this point the Letter²⁾ of Michael II to Lewis the Pious

1) See Kiepert's *Πίναξ τοῦ μεσαιωνικοῦ Ἑλληνισμοῦ κατὰ τὴν δεκάτην ἑκατοταετηρίδα* published 1883 by the Syllogos at Athens for the Diffusion of Hellenic literature.

2) See Baronius, *Annal. Ecclesiast.* XIV 62—66.

(whose authority would have been decisive) does not help us. From it we only learn that Thomas was a disciple of the old devil and a ready performer of his work. Nor can we draw any inference from Simon Magister's 'Ρωμαϊος¹'), which would apply to any Roman subject, whether Armenian or Slave.

The next difficulty concerns the career of Thomas before his revolt. Here the Letter of Michael gives us a detailed story. According to this document, he was the servant of a great Patrician in the days of the Empress Irene, and proved treacherous to his master, and lay with his master's wife. When this became known, fearing punishment he fled to the „Persians“, as the Saracens of the East were usually called in Western Europe. He abode among the unbelievers until the reign of Leo the Armenian, and during that time was recreant to the christian faith, becoming a Mohammedan in order to gain influence with the Saracens and „other nations“. Further he persuaded them that he was Constantine the son of Irene, that another had been blinded in his stead, and that he had escaped with his eyesight.

In regard to this sketch of the tyrant's career by the Emperor who subdued him, the following points may be noted. (1) The name of the great Patrician whom Thomas served is not given. (2) Thomas is said to have actually committed adultery with the Patrician's wife. (3) The length of his sojourn among the Saracens is not stated. (4) No mention is made of the position which he held under Leo V. (5) No reference is made to his having played a part in the revolt of Bardanes under Nicephorus.

Let us now turn to another source, Genesisius. Here we must distinguish two different accounts which he gives in different parts of his work. It will be convenient to designate them as A and B.

(A). On p. 35, in his account of the reign of Michael II, he records that Thomas, sprung of humble parents, went to the City of Constantine to seek his fortune. He attached himself there to the Patrician Bardanes, but, having attempted to commit adultery with his lady and being charged of the treachery, he fled to Syria, where he denied the faith of Christ and abode twenty five years. Genesisius also makes the extraordinary statement that the disloyalty of Thomas to his master was prompted by the then reigning Emperor Nicephorus, who was jealous of the virtues of Bardanes.

It is clear that this story does not hang together. A man who fled to Syria in the very first month of the reign of Nicephorus (De-

1) ed. Bonn, p. 621.

ember 802)¹⁾ and remained there five and twenty years could not be in Romania rebelling against Michael in the year 821. Therefore, either it is untrue that Thomas fled to Syria in the reign of Nicephorus owing to treachery to his master, or he did not remain there so long as a quarter of a century.

It would be easy enough to assume that some error in the date had crept in, but there is another nest of contradictions in Genesisius, and these must be pointed out before we compare his evidence with the story of the imperial Letter.

(B). In an earlier passage of his work, where he digresses to record the revolt of Bardanes, Genesisius explicitly states (p. 10) that Thomas not only served Bardanes in that unsuccessful enterprise, but distinguished himself from his two comrades Leo and Michael, the future Emperors, by faithfully clinging to his master, while they deserted to Nicephorus. This story is hopelessly at variance with that told in the later passage (A). In the one story, Thomas is conspicuous by his faithfulness to his master in the hour of need; in the other account, he distinguishes himself by perfidy and flees — we must suppose, before the revolt breaks out — to Syria. The only fact common to the two accounts is that he was in the service of Bardanes, and to this fact we may safely hold fast. And in either case he cannot have been twentyfive years in Syria or anything like it.

We may now compare the two conflicting accounts in Genesisius with the Letter of Michael. (1). The tale of Genesisius, which I call (A), gives the name of the Patrician, who is not named by Michael. (2). While Michael says that adultery was committed, it is expressly stated in (A) that Thomas tried to commit the act but did not succeed.²⁾ (3). The time of the sojourn of Thomas in Syria, not stated by Michael, is given in (A) as 25 years. (4). Genesisius states in the 1st Book of his work that Leo V created Thomas turmarch of the Federate troops and his words at least suggest that this appointment was made immediately after that Emperor's accession (813).³⁾ (5). The part played by Thomas in the rebellion of Bardanes is described in (B), but is inconsistent with (A).⁴⁾

1) I am here taking the story on its own merits, without regard to the fact, otherwise known, that Thomas aided Bardanes in his revolt in 803.

2) *Φεύγων δὲ τὴν ἐπὶ τῇ μοιχείᾳ δίκην ἦν καταπράξασθαι μὲν ἐπειράθη, οὐκ εἰς ἔργον δὲ προέβη, εἰς Συρίαν ἀπέδρα.*

3) p. 12. *ἀναρρηθεὶς δὲ δημοσίᾳ λέων ὁ βασιλεὺς Θωμᾶν κ. τ. λ.*

4) For the connexion of Thomas with the revolt of Bardanes see also Life of Leo V in Theoph. Contin.

It is evident that the testimony of Michael agrees with (A) except in a minor point, and that neither squares with (B). When Michael says that Thomas entered the service of the Patrician in the reign of Irene this is not inconsistent with the statement of (A) that he left the service of his master in the reign of Nicephorus. The only point in which the stories are slightly inconsistent is that according to Michael the adultery was consummated, according to (A) it was not. Here we naturally give the preference to Genesisius, even though Michael's testimony in that of a contemporary. But the difference is of no importance. If we had only these two accounts before us we should have no difficulty in reconstructing the career of Thomas. We should say that he fled to Syria early in the reign of Nicephorus, owing to the discovery of an intrigue with the wife of his master Bardanes and that he remained among the Saracens until some time in the reign of Leo. We should say that the „25 years“ in Genesisius was a slip of the writer or an error in the Ms.

But we cannot get rid of these 25 years so easily. The same period is mentioned in the Continuation of Theophanes (p. 51, *ἔτος γάρ πον διηνύετο τοῦτο πεμπτὸν καὶ εἰκοστὸν*). The compiler, who put together the history of Michael the Amorion by the orders of Constantine Porphyrogennetos, felt, like us, considerable perplexity as to the facts about Thomas. He states that there are two different stories about the tyrant (*διττὸς λόγος φέρεται*) and declares in favour of that which corresponds to (A) of Genesisius. But he tells us one important fact about this version, which we do not learn from Genesisius. He tells us that he derived it from a written source, — *ἐξ ἔγγράφων τινῶν ἔχων τὸ βέβαιον* (p. 50). We might have suspected this, but we could not have known it, from Genesisius' *ἀκριβέστερον διεξιτορεῖσθαι*

But there is one very important difference between the account of the Continuer and that of Genesisius. The Continuer writes thus of the connexion of Thomas with Bardanes:

*καὶ δὴ τινι τῶν συγκλητικῶν ἐξυπηρετεῖν τε καὶ λειτουργεῖν
κολληθεῖς κ. τ. λ.,*

not stating, or seemingly knowing, who the *συγκλητικός* or Senator in question was. Genesisius, on the other hand, knows that he was Bardanes. Yet the word *κολληθεῖς*, which both writers use, betrays that they got their facts from a common source — the *ἔγγραφα* mentioned by the Continuer. Genesisius puts it thus:

*καὶ κολληθεῖς τινι τῶν πατρικίων (Βαρδάνης οὗτος ἦν ὁ
λεχθεῖς) κ. τ. λ.*

Here, I believe, we have the key to unlock the true story of

Thomas. The author of that common source was as ignorant of the name of the master whom Thomas wronged, as were the authors of the Continuation of Theophanes. It was only Genesisius who knew that. The parenthetical way in which he introduces the name Bardanes is significant. It would be too much to say that this identification was entirely due to Genesisius himself; he may have supplemented what he found written by some popular story, in which, as is the way in popular stories, different people were confused. The introduction of Bardanes into the tale brought with it as a matter of course the introduction of Nicephorus.

The key to the problem is that the Patrician from whose vengeance Thomas fled to Syria was not Bardanes. It is expressly stated by Genesisius and the Continuer that Thomas was an old man when he rebelled.¹⁾ Supposing him to have been sixty years of age in 820, he would have been born in 760. We might suppose that he came to the City when he was about twenty years old and entered the service of the nameless Patrician at the beginning of Irene's reign (780); that he was soon obliged to flee to Syria, where he spent the rest of that reign among the Saracens, and, at the accession of Nicephorus returned to Romania and attached himself to the fortunes of Bardanes, so as to take part in the rebellion of 803. The difficulty still remains that the period of twenty five years is not completely accounted for. If he fled to Syria in 781 and returned in the first months of 803, twenty three years would be an accurate description; but twenty five would not be a very serious exaggeration in a case of the kind. If such an exaggeration seem unlikely — to me, for one, it seems by no means unnatural —, we have the alternative of supposing that Michael was inaccurate in stating in his Letter to Lewis that the incident of the adultery took place in Irene's reign. Either mistake might have been made; but the number given by the later writers is more likely to be wrong, as Michael who had known Thomas when they both served Bardanes, probably knew the fact more accurately and had no motive to misrepresent the date. Yet another alternative is possible. After the suppression of the revolt of Bardanes, Thomas may have returned to his Saracen friends. Indeed it seems almost certain that he found a refuge there, for, as he had supported Bardanes to the end, he was not safe within the borders of the Empire. If so, the period of twenty five years may represent the sum total of the lengths of both his sojourns in the dominions of the Caliph.

1) Genesisius p. 32, *πρὸς δὲ καὶ γηραιὸς ὢν.*

To sum up. The accounts of Thomas given in (1) the Letter of Michael to Lewis, (2) Genesisus, Book I, and the Life of Leo V in Cont. Theoph., (3) Genesisus Book II and the Life of Michael II in Cont. Theoph., can be brought into general harmony, if we recognize that the identification of Bardanes and the Patrician whom Thomas wronged was due to the inconsiderate fancy of Genesisus.

J. B. Bury.

Demetrios Kydones.

Ein Demetrios Kydones hat seinem unmündigen Neffen Johannes testamentarisch als Legat 50 Hyperpyra vermacht. Der Patriarch von Konstantinopel Matthaïos I bestimmt im Mai 1400, daß diese Summe Johannes' Mutter, der Protomaïstorisse, übergeben werde. Er bestimmt dies auf Veranlassung eines der Testamentsvollstrecker, des Michael Gabalas, welcher Höfling des Kaisers Manuel II Palaiologos war — *οικεῖος τῷ κρατίστῳ καὶ ἀγίῳ ἀντοκράτορι*. Vergl. Fr. Miklosich et Ios. Müller, Acta patriarchatus Cpolitani, tom. II pag. 390 f. Ich glaube in jenem Demetrios Kydones den berühmten „Essayisten“ wiederzuerkennen. Auch er ist ein Höfling. Noch im letzten Jahrzehnt des 14. Jahrhunderts stand er mit seinem Schüler und Freunde, dem Kaiser Manuel II, in Briefwechsel, und dieser Briefwechsel ist überhaupt die letzte Thatsache, welche wir aus seinem Leben kennen. Vergl. K. Krumbacher, Gesch. der byz. Litteratur S. 205. Wir werden also schwerlich irren, wenn wir annehmen, der bekannte Demetrios Kydones sei im ersten Drittel des Jahres 1400 gestorben. — In jenen Akten werden noch zwei Leute Namens Kydones erwähnt, beide ohne Vornamen: der eine war 1394 Protonotar in Christopolis (dem alten Amphipolis), der andere, der Schwiegervater des Bäckers Theotokes, starb, wohl auch im Jahre 1400, *ἐν Ἀνατολῇ*. Vergl. jene Akten S. 204 und 416.

Breslau.

Max Treu.