

APSTRACT

The region of Southeastern Europe has a multi-ethnic and linguistic structure due to the successive migrations it witnessed, including the migration of Slavic tribes to it, which changed the demographic character of the region after several stages after it was attracted by the nature of the geographical region, which is one of the most important vital regions from the economic, political and military aspects.*

It includes important sea ports, including the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. It also includes the most important international straits, the Straits of Bosphorus and Dardanelles, which control the Sea of Marmara, including the gateway that connects Europe to Asia Minor. It also has important river ports, including the Danube River, which provides it with an opportunity for river transport in Western Europe and one of its northern borders, so we had a share in Studying an era in the history of this extended region (517-823 AD) due to the important historical events that this stage brought about. Our study focused on the Slavic tribes and the Balkan region, which represents southeastern Europe.

The Slavs participated in several attacks on the Byzantine Empire and settled in its cities after they had emptied them of their inhabitants. Many of them were organized as mercenaries in the armies of the empire's enemies at times, and at other times in the ranks of its armies, fighting alongside it.

In addition, the Byzantine emperors sought to contain these tribes as much as possible after they became part of the entity of the Byzantine Empire and to benefit from them to meet its various needs and try to integrate them into Byzantine society and make them melt in the crucible of Byzantine civilization, after they settled them in its lands and what they did to preserve them in order to limit attempts The rest of the other peoples, such as the Bulgarians, were to be included in their kingdoms by expanding into the areas they settled, so that their situation would develop later and among them would be prominent figures who would interfere in their internal affairs and work to achieve their interests.

Hence, the researcher raised a number of questions, trying to answer them through the study, including:

- What was the first stage of their settlement in the Balkan Peninsula during the second half of the sixth century AD?*
- When did the Slavic-Byzantine conflict over southeastern Europe begin?*

-What is the position of the Byzantine Empire towards the infiltration of Slavic tribes into its provinces?

-Were the Slavs the target of the ambitions of competing powers?

- What were the conditions of the Slavs in the Balkan Peninsula during the late eighth and early ninth centuries AD?

- What was the political and military role of the Slavs in the first quarter of the ninth century AD in southeastern Europe ?

The researcher followed the historical sequential approach in writing the study due to the nature of the topic and its problems, as well as the time period over which the study was concerned and the events that characterized it, relying in this on the analytical approach wherever it was needed to clarify historical events.

The nature of the study required it to be divided in this way to facilitate its study, including an introduction, a preface, three chapters, and a conclusion, in addition to the appendices, a list of sources, and a summary in English. Accordingly, the introduction consisted of two points: the first explained the geographical nature of southeastern Europe, while the second dealt with successive migrations over the region until The arrival of the Slavs there.

The first chapter was entitled (The Presence of the Slavs in Southeastern Europe 517-602 AD) and included three sections, the first of which was devoted to (The appearance of the Slavs in the region of Southeastern Europe 517-549 AD). The study focused on the first arrival of the Slavs to the Byzantine Balkan region, despite They did not settle there, as they were attracted by its wealth to plunder it, taking advantage of the deterioration of its internal conditions at times, and the measures that Byzantium followed towards them. While the second topic was titled (The penetration of the Slavs into the Byzantine provinces 550-587 AD), in which we explained how the Slavic tribes subject to the Khagan of the Avars intensified their raids on the cities. The rich Byzantine Empire, especially the coastal one adjacent to the Danube River, was greedy for Roman gold, taking advantage of its preoccupation with its war in Italy, with an explanation of the policy followed by the Byzantine emperors regarding these raids. As for the third section (the increase in the Slavic-Byzantine conflict over its provinces in southeastern Europe 578-602 AD), which explained the nature of relations. Between the Slavs and their allies, the Avars, with the Byzantines, and how they began to change their orientations from conquest and plunder to the desire for stability. However, the Byzantine Empire made an effort to restore its sovereignty over its lands and preserve its borders with the Danube River.

The second chapter, entitled (Slavic-Byzantine relations 602-657 AD), consists of three sections. The first section deals with (the formation of the first

Slavic settlements in southeastern Europe and the position of the Byzantine Empire towards them 602-626 AD), explaining how the Slavs exploited internal and external conflicts in the Byzantine Empire. To gain a foothold in the northern provinces overlooking the Adriatic Sea until the situation developed into them threatening the capital and imposing a siege on it, while the second section, which was entitled (The Emergence of Slavic States in Southeastern Europe 627-641 AD), focused on the development of the situation within the Byzantine Balkans. How did its geography contribute to the formation of some Slavic states, such as Serbia, Croatia, Moravia, and Bulgaria, after the Byzantine civilization influenced them and they became independent ruling dynasties and had friendly relations with the Byzantine Empire? The third section, entitled (Byzantine-Bulgarian rivalry to annex the Slavic tribes 657-783 AD), dealt with Byzantium's efforts. And the Bulgarians extended their authority over the Slavic tribes. The Byzantine emperors were careful not to let the Slavic people escape from their control, because that would make them lose their provinces in southeastern Europe. So their policy was different with them, at times using military campaigns to subject them to their authority and at other times defending them by repelling the Bulgarians. In addition to that, they By settling the Slavs, giving them a land to live in the empire, and recruiting thousands of them into its armies.

Finally, the third chapter was devoted to (the political and military intervention of the Slavs in the affairs of the Byzantine Empire 799-823 AD), and thus it consisted of two sections. The first section took up (the conditions of the Slavs in the Byzantine Empire 799-819 AD). It talked about the impact of the process of displacement and settlement of Slavs in the Byzantine provinces and the emergence of personalities. A prominent person trying to interfere in the affairs of government and how Byzantium benefited from these new elements in its entity, and the continuation of the struggle between it and the Bulgarian khans to annex these peoples to them, while the second section was concerned with talking about (the struggle between Thomas the Slavic and Michael the Amory for power 820-823 AD) as it pointed to the development The political situation in Byzantium and the fact that one of the Byzantine leaders in the region of Asia Minor led a rebellion against Emperor Michael II, mobilizing forces from all ethnicities, especially the Slavs, and imposing a siege on the Byzantine capital that ended with his elimination, killing, and the exile of the leaders participating with him in 823 AD.

Among the most important results reached by the researcher during the study are:

- *The Slavs were not one tribe or one name, but they were a group of tribes and multiple names and their ambitions differed when they entered southeastern Europe (Byzantine Balkans), some of them wanted to live under Byzantine rule and some wanted to live without order or chaos and others wanted after being influenced by the Roman system and cultural civilization to establish monarchical systems of government, principalities or duchies, each according to what suits him within the Byzantine Empire and sometimes encouraged by the Byzantines to Establish regional autonomy for them in its territory such as Serbs and Croats .*
- *In the middle of the sixth century AD, the Slavs became an existential threat to the Byzantine Empire after they penetrated deep into the Byzantine and reached the commercial ports on the Aegean Sea in Greece, especially after their alliance with the regional enemies of the empire, then a major shift took place in relations between the Byzantine Empire and the Slavs, which is a stage of real clash.*
- *After the Slavs became part of Byzantine society and began to possess a sense of citizenship and that they have rights and duties, their interests and ambitions were formed, so they took up the political, administrative and military fields and became influential in Byzantine society, so they intervened in politics and went far to achieve their goals of reaching power.*

Keywords: Slavs, Byzantine Empire, Southeast Europe.