



LE SAINT, LE MOINE ET LE PAYSAN

Mélanges d'histoire byzantine offerts à Michel Kaplan



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Mélanges d'histoire byzantine offerts à Michel Kaplan

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Wooring the petty elite: Privilege and imperial authority in Byzantium, 13th-mid 14th century*

Kostis SMYRLIS

The extensive concession of revenues or property by the state to a variety of beneficiaries was a characteristic feature of late Byzantium. Apart from salary type grants ceded on a large scale to compensate military or civil employees for their regular services, the emperor also awarded privileges or lands to individuals, institutions or communities for various other reasons. There is no comprehensive treatment of the latter kind of concessions in modern historiography. Scholarship tends to focus on grants made to members of the aristocracy and great monasteries, connecting the concessions to the relative influence of the beneficiaries. The most nuanced, albeit brief, discussion of the matter comes from Nikos Oikonomides. Commenting on eleventh-century evidence, he notes that the grants offered political benefits to the emperor thanks to the bonds they created between him and the elite. Concessions to ecclesiastical institutions obtained prayers and political support for the rulers and grants to laymen of high or middle standing (*laïcs de la haute ou moyenne société*) rewarded loyalty, political support, or military achievement. At the same time, powerful elites wrested from the state concessions that were not justified by any kind of service.¹

From the late Byzantine period there is abundant evidence of concessions to relatively influential institutions and individuals, especially certain well-documented and exceptionally favored great monasteries. Nevertheless, in spite of our documentation's emphasis on grants to powerful beneficiaries, it is clear that the practice was much wider in that it also concerned people of very limited, if any, influence or distinction. I am referring, in part, to the well-known thirteenth and fourteenth century chrysobulls issued to provincial cities, by virtue of which all of their residents acquired privileges, especially if they owned immovable property. Less known, but clearly widespread, were the grants made to individuals who, although relatively

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1. OIKONOMIDÈS, *Fiscalité*, p. 219-220, 262. Évelyne Patlagean adopts a simpler classification, distinguishing between grants in exchange for service to the state and, from the time of the Komnenoi, concessions to imperial relatives and aristocrats, which did not compensate any service: *Un Moyen Âge grec. Byzance, IX^e-XV^e siècle*, Paris 2007, p. 242-246, 358-363, 371.

prosperous, can not be seen as members of even the lower level of the aristocracy.² Land owning laymen, monks, and priests, including church officials, low or mid-ranking soldiers, and a layman with commercial interests, appear in our sources as recipients of grants from the emperor. These people were not particularly distinguished. If they had any influence it would have been limited to their localities. This evidence reveals the insufficiency of the idea that privileges were reserved for the powerful and underlines the need for a more comprehensive description of the reasons that prompted imperial concessions. At the same time, it calls for a reconsideration of the significance of privilege in political, social and economic terms.

GRANTS TO COMMUNITIES

The most numerous category of beneficiaries were the inhabitants of cities that had been awarded collective privileges. Although our information on such concessions largely comes from the period after 1204, it is clear that the practice was older. The city of Ani, on the eastern frontier of Byzantium, had received a chrysobull conceding limited tax exemptions to its inhabitants towards the middle of the eleventh century.³ In 1077, it was expected that the inhabitants of Raideustos would distance themselves from the rebellion of Nikephoros Bryennios if a chrysobull was issued, no doubt conferring privileges to the town.⁴ Finally, there is evidence that several cities, including Athens and Corinth, enjoyed some sort of privileged status in the late twelfth century.⁵ In the course of the thirteenth and the early fourteenth century many cities in Europe were given privileges by the so called “common chrysobulls” upon being annexed by Byzantium.⁶ We know specifically that Melnik, Thessalonike and Berroia in Macedonia, Kroai in Albania, Monemvasia in the Peloponnese, Ioannina in Epiros and, apparently, also Phanarion in Thessaly received such imperial acts. In almost all cases, the concessions were awarded to cities that were not taken by force but opened their gates to the imperial troops. An exception was Monemvasia that was handed over to Byzantium by the Franks of Achaia following an agreement. There can be little doubt that privileges were

2. I am following here D. Kyritses' definition of this group: *The Byzantine Aristocracy in the 13th and Early 14th Centuries*, Doctoral dissertation, Harvard University, 1997, p. 7-74.
3. This concession is known from an Armenian inscription. It seems that the main exemption regarded the tax burdening the houses of the city: J.-P. MAHÉ, Ani sous Constantin X, d'après une inscription de 1060, *TM* 14, 2002, p. 405; additional privileges were conceded to the city a few years later: *ibid.*, p. 407. Another case of collective grant is known from the same period; the pretender Leo Tornikios had awarded tax exemption to the soldiers who followed him in 1047: OIKONOMIDÈS, *Fiscalité*, p. 187.
4. MIGUEL ATALLATES, *Historia*, ed. and trans. I. PÉREZ MARTÍN, Madrid 2002 (Nueva Roma 15), p. 177-178 (I owe this reference to Dimitris Krallis). In the winter of 1077-1078, emperor Michael VII issued a chrysobull promising “pleasing things” to the Constantinopolitans in an effort to maintain their loyalty (*ibid.*, p. 185).
5. J. HERRIN, Realities of Byzantine Provincial Government: Hellas and Peloponnesos, 1180-1205, *DOP* 29, 1975, p. 259-260, 268-269; P. MAGDALINO, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143-1180*, Cambridge 1993, p. 151 n. 162; PATLAGEAN, Thessaloniciens, p. 598.
6. KYRITSES, “Common Chrysobulls”; PATLAGEAN, Thessaloniciens.

conceded to every city that voluntarily accepted Byzantine rule, in particular during the autumn of 1246, when roughly all towns east of Philippoupolis all the way to Skopje and from Skopje all the way south to Berroia were swiftly incorporated into the empire.⁷

The content of the privileges is known from preserved chrysobulls in the case of Kroai, Monemvasia, and Ioannina, and thanks to indirect documentary or literary evidence in the case of Melnik, Thessalonike, Berroia and Phanarion. In the case of Thessalonike, it seems that the chrysobull of 1246 confirmed existing privileges of the city, some of which may have dated from the twelfth century.⁸ We do not know whether John III made additional concessions to the Thessalonians. Monemvasia, too, seems to have enjoyed significant fiscal exemptions already since the time of the Franks if not earlier.⁹ Limited information and ambiguous vocabulary often render obscure the exact nature and extent of the privileges. Although they clearly varied from place to place, it seems that the minimum concession was exemption, often from the basic tax and some, if not all, additional taxes. The terms “freedom” (*eleutheria*) or “free” (*eleutheron*) were regularly used to indicate tax exemption, both in the case of collective and individual grants.¹⁰ In the fourteenth century, the same term could also mean that an estate was transmissible, not burdened with any service obligation.¹¹ Though the terms could have several other meanings, in what follows I will be referring to them whenever I consider them to denote exemption from tax or services.¹² In the case of Thessalonike and Berroia, the privilege covered lands, fields and vineyards near the cities, as well as houses

7. GEORGE AKROPOLITES, *Opera*, ed. A. HEISENBERG, Stuttgart 1978² (Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana), t. 1, p. 77-78. On the cities acquired by John III Vatatzes at this time, see certain precisions by R. MACRIDES in GEORGE AKROPOLITES, *The History*, Oxford 2007 (Oxford Studies in Byzantium), p. 234-235.
8. There is evidence suggesting that the *eleutheria* Akropolites says was granted to the city in 1246 (*Opera* [cited in n. 7], t. 1, p. 80) was already enjoyed by the Thessalonians; an act of 1240 shows a man of that city possessing a tax exempt vineyard in Kalamaria: LEMERLE et al., *Lavra II*, no. 70, l. 31: ἐλεύθερον καὶ ἔξω βάρους τελεσματικοῦ. On this point, cf. KYRITSES, “Common Chrysobulls”, p. 230-231; PATLAGEAN, Thessaloniciens, p. 598.
9. D. JACOBY, Les archontes grecs et la féodalité en Morée franque, *TM* 2, 1967, p. 443-444 (repr. in ID., *Société et démographie à Byzance et en Roumanie latine*, London 1975 [Variorum Collected Studies Series 35], no. VI).
10. See below.
11. Cf. KYRITSES, “Common Chrysobulls”, p. 232-234, 241.
12. *Eleutheros* appears in official documents since the late eleventh century denoting *paroikoi* who belonged to no one and were not registered in any fiscal or private document; *eleutheron* was used with the same meaning for immovable properties since at least the early thirteenth century: Βυζαντινὰ ἔγγραφα τῆς μονῆς Πάτμου. Α', Αυτοκρατορικά, ed. E. BRANOUSE, Athens 1980, no. 18 (1099 or 1114); Βυζαντινὰ ἔγγραφα τῆς μονῆς Πάτμου. Β', Δημοσίων Λειτουργῶν, ed. M. NYSTAZOPOULOU-PELEKIDOU, Athens 1980, no. 61 (1216). Related to this is the use of *eleutheron* or *eleuthera* to indicate monasteries that were under nobody else's authority but the monks'. The meaning “tax exempt” of *eleutheros* apparently led to the semantic confusion seen in certain documents where the term means “rent free”, indicating properties on which the private rent had been relinquished: e.g., ŽIVOJNOVIĆ et al., *Chilandar I*, no. 22 (1304), l. 20, 55.

and other properties within city walls.¹³ The chrysobull awarded to Melnik in 1246 must have also granted tax exemption to its citizens as in the case of Thessalonike and Berroia.¹⁴ Apparently at a later point, the people of Melnik were issued an imperial *horismos* conceding them the exceptional and surprising permission to alienate lands originating in military *oikonomiai*.¹⁵ Apart from immunity for their properties, the citizens of Monemvasia were also exempted from the *kommerkion* levied on commercial transactions.¹⁶ The same concessions were made to the people of Ioannina in addition to several other privileges; some inhabitants also received donations of real estate.¹⁷ The inhabitants of Kroai had been given less impressive privileges, in particular exemption from certain secondary taxes and commercial dues.¹⁸

Grants or promises of grants to cities or villages were apparently common during the civil war between Andronikos II Palaiologos and his namesake grandson. In the Easter of 1321, Andronikos III awarded tax exemption (*eleutheria kai ateleia*) to villages and towns of Thrace trying to win their support.¹⁹ In 1327, the young emperor issued acts promising tax exemption (*ateleia kai phoron eleutheria*) to people throughout the empire.²⁰ In the same year, the inhabitants of the town of Rentina at the northeastern limits of Chalkidike were given a large piece of land (which, they claimed, belonged to no one), likely as a reward for their loyalty to Andronikos III.²¹

13. The documents that mention the common chrysobulls usually only indicate a property's status of being *eleutheron*, without further precisions; e.g., *Actes de Vatopédi*. 1, *Des origines à 1329*, ed. J. BOMPAIRE, J. LEFORT, V. KRAVARI and C. GIROS, Paris 2001 (Archives de l'Athos 21), no. 62 (1324); PETIT, *Chilandar*, no. 62 (1321). Other examples from Thessalonike clarify the content of *eleutheron*, albeit without reference to the chrysobulls: e.g., *ibid.*, nos. 58 (1321), l. 22: μη ὑποκείμενα τέλει καὶ δουλείᾳ τινί; 84 (1322), l. 55-56: ἐλευθέρα ὄντα καὶ ἀκαταδούλωτα πάσης ζητήσεως τελεσματικῆς; 125 (1335), l. 24-25: ἐλεύθερον παντοίου βάρους καὶ ἀκαταδούλωτον.
14. See above n. 7.
15. *Actes de Vatopédi*. 2, *De 1330 à 1376*, ed. J. LEFORT, V. KRAVARI, C. GIROS and K. SMYRLIS, Paris 2006 (Archives de l'Athos 22), no. 88 (1344). On the date of this concession and the problems that it implies: BARTUSIS, *Pronoia*, p. 472-474.
16. MM, t. 5, p. 154-155 (1284).
17. *Ibid.*, p. 77-84 (1319). As recipients of the donated estates are mentioned "certain *kastrenoi*" of the city; *kastrenoi* were also awarded privileges in addition to those conceded to everybody else. This term seems to indicate a distinct group of citizens of higher standing: KYRITSES, "Common Chrysobulls", p. 237-238; cf. PATLAGEAN, Thessaloniciens, p. 596.
18. *Grčke povelje srpskih vladara*, ed. A. SOLOVIEV and V. MOŠIN, Belgrade 1936, no. 41, p. 316-318. On Phanarion, see KYRITSES, "Common Chrysobulls", p. 232.
19. NIKEPHOROS GREGORAS, *Byzantina Historia*, ed. L. SCHOPEN, Bonn 1829 (CSHB), t. 1, p. 319; cf. *ibid.*, p. 300: *kouphismos kai eleutheria*.
20. GREGORAS, *Historia* (cited in n. 19), t. 1, p. 397. See also the promises, no doubt of privileges or other grants, given to inhabitants of towns in Thrace by both parties in 1321-1322: *ibid.*, p. 353; JOHN KANTAKOUZENOS, *Historiarum libri IV*, ed. L. SCHOPEN, Bonn 1828 (CSHB), t. 1, p. 139; cf. p. 143.
21. LEFORT, *Esphigménou*, nos. 17, 18, 19 and p. 131-133.

Significant exemptions from commercial dues and other privileges were also given to the people of Monemvasia living in the town of Pegai in Asia Minor by Andronikos II and Andronikos III. Later on, the Monemvasiots living in the Peloponnesian town itself also seem to have been awarded commercial privileges.²²

It is clear that landowning citizens were the beneficiaries of the exemption from property taxes. This group included not only the wealthy and powerful aristocrats but also middle and lower rank proprietors. This is shown by the fact that the chrysobulls and other documents usually speak of inhabitants or citizens (*epoikoi*, *oiketoires*, *politai*) without distinction.²³ It is also suggested by the documentary evidence coming from Thessalonike, which reveals undistinguished inhabitants of the city alienating tax exempt plots of land, vineyards and houses. These same examples show that the privilege was maintained well into the fourteenth century.²⁴ Though the common chrysobulls benefitted powerful and non-powerful alike, there is little doubt that they were most valuable for the more modest inhabitants who would not have been able to obtain such extensive privileges otherwise. Few of these inhabitants would have been able to reach the emperor's ear at all, whereas members of the aristocracy sooner or later would have managed to acquire individual privileges by applying directly to the emperor.²⁵

INDIVIDUAL GRANTS

As already stated, individual imperial grants were not only awarded to aristocrats. There is considerable evidence of grants made to middle or low ranking soldiers as well as to non-aristocratic civilians. Grants could be made both by simple orders (*prostagmata* or *horismoi*) as well as by chrysobulls. A common feature of these acts was that they all bore writing by the sovereign's "imperial and divine hand."²⁶ Chrysobulls were the most prestigious imperial act and were considered to be offering greater guaranties than *prostagmata* or *horismoi* as people with such acts often sought to confirm their grants by obtaining chrysobulls. The multiplication of properties that enjoyed some sort of privilege or had been donated by virtue of a chrysobull explains the appearance of an entire category of properties called *chrysoboullata* as well as of a type of beneficiaries called *chrysoboullatoi*. *Chrysoboullata* estates are mentioned in certain *praktika* registering the possessions of institutions

22. P. SCHREINER, Ein Prostagma Andronikos' III. für die Monembasioten in Pegai (1328) und das gefälschte Chrysobull Andronikos II. für die Monembasioten im byzantinischen Reich, *JÖB* 27, 1978, p. 207-213, 217-225. The chrysobull seems to be essentially authentic; see its most recent discussion: E. KISLINGER, Die zweite Privilegienurkunde für die Pegai-Monembasioten – Eine Fälschung?, *JÖB* 53, 2003, p. 205-227.
23. The obvious exception is the chrysobull for Ioannina, where the *kastrenoi* receive special treatment; there too, nevertheless, all citizens are awarded many and important privileges.
24. See above n. 13.
25. Cf. KYRITSES, "Common Chrysobulls", p. 242; PATLAGEAN, Thessaloniciens, p. 596-597. For a somewhat different opinion, see M. J. ANGOLD, Archons and Dynasts: Local Aristocracies and the Cities in the Later Byzantine Empire, in *The Byzantine Aristocracy, IX to XIII Centuries*, ed. ID., Oxford 1984, p. 246.
26. This expression is found in copies of imperial acts: e.g., MM, t. 4, p. 247.

or individuals. Assessors of the fisc sometimes began these acts by listing the different types of properties they encountered in a province. An example of this practice is found in a *praktikon* of 1297 enumerating the properties of a monastery to the north of Mount Pangaion:

While assessing, in accordance to an imperial order, the theme of Boleron and Mosynopolis, Serres and Strymon, and establishing the amount [of properties or taxes] belonging to *prosopika*, *archontika*, ecclesiastic, monastic, military, *chrysoboullata* and to all other estates (*ktemata*) situated in this [theme]...²⁷

Prosopika probably refer to the estates of the highest aristocracy (*prosopa*) while *archontika* to aristocrats (*archontes*) of a somewhat lower status.²⁸ These are followed by the properties of churches, i.e. bishoprics, and monasteries, then by the lands in the possession of soldiers, that is the military *pronoiai*. Towards the end, come the *chrysoboullata* estates and at the very end all the remaining real estate.²⁹ Leaving aside this last group of properties, one notes that whereas all earlier categories of lands are defined by the status of their owner – *prosopon*, *archon*, church, monastery, soldier – the *chrysoboullata* estates are instead defined by these properties' quality of being included in a chrysobull. Found in documents beginning in the late twelfth century, the term *chrysoboullaton* or *chrysoboullatos* was used for properties, including *paroikoi*, that enjoyed some sort of exemption or had been donated by virtue of a chrysobull.³⁰ A document of 1318 suggests that

27. BOMPAIRE et al., *Vatopédi I* (cited in n. 13), no. 25.

28. *Actes de Docheiariou*, ed. N. ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΙΔΗΣ, Paris 1984 (Archives de l'Athos 13), p. 106. It has been suggested that *prosopika* and *archontika* refer to non-privileged or non-*chrysoboullata* properties belonging to middle-class persons and *archontes*, respectively: BARTUSIS, *Pronoia*, p. 531 (cf. p. 270, however, where Oikonomides' definition of *prosopika* is accepted). What we know about *prosopika* is inconsistent with this theory; and, as with *prosopika*, it is improbable that there would be many *archontika* not covered one way or another by a chrysobull. That *archontika* estates were normally privileged in terms of taxation is indicated in a document of 1327: REGEL et al., *Zographou*, no. 26, l. 61-63.

29. The ambiguous or confused expressions found in the preambles of certain *praktika* issued by assessors Konstantinos Pergamēnos and George Pharisaios or by Pharisaios alone has led the editors of the documents to believe that the term χρυσοβουλλάτων modifies *archontes* (not *ktemata*): LEFORT et al., *Iviron III*, no. 79; *Actes de Xénophon*, ed. D. ΠΑΠΑΧΡΥΣΣΑΝΘΟΥ, Paris 1986 (Archives de l'Athos 15), nos. 13, 15, 16; LEFORT, *Esphigménou*, nos. 15, 16. That this is not the case is shown by another *praktikon* of Pharisaios: P. SCHREINER, Zwei unedierte Praktika aus der zweiten Hälfte des 14. Jahrhunderts, *JÖB* 19, 1970, p. 37, with the remarks in N. ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΙΔΗΣ, Notes sur un *praktikon* de pronoiaire (juin 1323), *TM* 5, 1973, p. 337. A similarly ambiguous preamble occurs in a *praktikon* of Nikolaos Tzeremogites: ΠΑΠΑΧΡΥΣΣΑΝΘΟΥ, *Xénophon*, no. 22; again here χρυσοβουλλάτων should be understood to modify the word *ktemata*, which is missing.

30. *Actes de Lavra*. 1, *Des origines à 1204*, ed. P. LEMERLE, A. GUILLON and N. SVORONOS, Paris 1970 (Archives de l'Athos 5), no. 67 (1196), l. 73: *chrysoboullata ploia*. Μ. ΖΙΝΟΙΝΟΝΙĆ et al., *Chilandar I*, no. 7 (1265): l. 1: χρυσοβουλλάτου ἡμῶν χωρίου; l. 16: ἐκ δωρεᾶς βασιλικῆς διὰ χρυσοβούλλων προσόντος ἡμῖν χωρίου. LEMERLE et al., *Lavra II*, no. 98 (1304), l. 5, l. 23: *chrysoboullatoi paroikoi*.

the term was also applied to properties originally forming part of a *pronoia* which were made hereditary by a chrysobull. The same document also implies that all *chrysoboullata* properties normally enjoyed partial tax exemption.³¹ In brief, any property donated or exempted by a chrysobull could be called *chrysoboullaton*.³²

In the context of the *praktika* preambles, however, the term has a more limited signification. In the case of important churches and monasteries, all, or almost all, of their properties would enjoy some degree of tax exemption by virtue of a chrysobull and many would originate in imperial donations made by chrysobulls.³³ As noted, the same was no doubt true also with regard to the *prosopika* and *archontika* estates. In other words, most if not all of the properties in the first four categories could be considered *chrysoboullata* according to the wide acceptance of the term noted above. I would suggest that in the *praktika* preambles the term refers to estates of proprietors who did not belong to any of the other categories, or, in the case of soldiers owning *chrysoboullata* estates, to properties not connected to their owners' military obligation. If this interpretation is correct, it means that there existed in the countryside a significant number of privileged properties that did not belong to ecclesiastical institutions or to people of high standing. It would seem that the inclusion of the *chrysoboullata* among the different types of properties mentioned in *praktika* preambles only took place in the late thirteenth century suggesting a proliferation of such estates in this period.³⁴ It is worth mentioning here a passage providing a semi official list of the types of recipients of chrysobulls. It comes from the *typikon* for Saint Michael on Mount Auxentios in which the monastery's re-founder, Michael VIII Palaiologos (1259-1282), asks from future rulers to respect his endowments to the establishment invoking his own attitude:

Because we too, having assumed the imperial power, have respected and confirmed, without any change, the donations that the revered emperors who preceded us made by chrysobulls to monasteries, churches, cities, *archontes* and other persons (*prosopa*), and, with God's help, we have also increased most of these [donations].³⁵

It seems to me that the *prosopa* of this passage have nothing to do with the *prosopika* estates indicating the properties of high ranking persons but that they rather refer to people who were below *archontes* in social terms.

31. *Les archives de Saint-Jean-Prodrôme sur le mont Ménécée*, ed. A. GUILLOU, Paris 1955 (Bibliothèque byzantine. Documents 3), no. 8.
32. It is uncertain if the term could also be used for properties whose possession was simply confirmed to the owner by a chrysobull.
33. Indeed, the *chrysoboullata* estates said to belong to the monastery of Lavra probably refer to the totality of its properties: LEMERLE et al., *Lavra II*, no. 107 (1319), l. 4.
34. Though we have few *praktika* or other official documents listing types of properties before the late 13th c., it is interesting to note that while a 1279 list only includes ecclesiastic, monastic, *prosopikai* and military *pronoiai* (REGEL et al., *Zographou*, no. 53), all known lists after 1297 also include *chrysoboullata*.
35. A. DMITRIEVSKIĬ, *Opisanie liturgiĭeskikh rukopisej hranjaščihsj v bibliotekah pravoslavnago vostoka*. 1, *Typika*, Kiev 1895, p. 792.

But let us turn to concrete examples of grants. Our evidence is mostly indirect, obtained from sources that simply mention such concessions, and less commonly direct, coming from preserved imperial acts in favor of individuals. There are also many occasions where no grant is mentioned but only individuals owning tax exempt property the status of which must have originated in an imperial concession.³⁶ In these instances, we usually ignore whether the concession had been made to the landowners in question or if the latter had acquired an already tax exempt property. The privileged status of a land was apparently transmissible without any previous authorization in the case of city privileges. Things may have been different with individual grants; we have examples where the emperor is asked to sanction the transmission of the tax exempt status.³⁷ In any case, privileged lands changed hands frequently by donation, purchase or bequest. It follows that many of the concessions implied by this evidence may have been made to relatively influential persons who later alienated the privileged property to less distinguished people. This type of acquisition of privileged properties is well documented. Although these cases do not necessarily reveal imperial grants made to relatively modest individuals, they show that a portion of the privileged property in the countryside was in the hands of such people.

As stated, middle and low ranking soldiers are among the documented beneficiaries of imperial grants. In 1260, the *kaballarios* *syr* Nikolaos Adam possessed thanks to an imperial grant a chapel and a land plot with three olive trees in the region of Smyrna fully tax exempt; he donated these to the monastery of Lembiotissa clearly with the same fiscal status.³⁸ In this case, and in several others, the privilege may have been conceded to reward the soldier's performance in battle. There is evidence, however, that grants could be unrelated to martial excellence. In 1342, a group of soldiers settled in Serres obtained a *chrysoboullon sigillion* from John V Palaiologos conceding to them the right to transmit a part of their *oikonomiai* to their sons.³⁹ The next year, a *chrysoboullos logos* was issued awarding the same privilege to *syr* Manuel Mesopotamites, a *kaballarios* in the region of Zichna.⁴⁰ Nothing in these chrysobulls suggests that the concessions rewarded military achievement. And although rulers tended to be generous during civil wars, as was the case in both of these grants, it is nevertheless significant that relatively modest individuals could petition the emperor and receive the most prestigious acts his chancery issued. We do not know exactly how the petitioning worked, but it is safe to assume that in many cases an influential intermediary was involved in the process.

36. In the case of properties described as tax exempt there is another possibility. We have examples of lands sold to monasteries whose "tax exempt" status is not owed to any imperial privilege but to the fact that the old owners or other private individuals decided to assume the payment of the taxes as a pious gift: MM, t. 4, p. 94-96, 396-399, 391-393.

37. See below and KYRITSES, "Common Chrysobulls", p. 234.

38. MM, t. 4, p. 91: ἀτελῶς πάντη καὶ ἀβαρῶς; πανεξκουσάτα. Adam is identified as a *kaballarios* by the scribe of the cartulary of the monastery of Lembiotissa: p. 79. On the status of this type of soldiers in this period, see M. BARTUSIS, *The Kavallarioi of Byzantium*, *Speculum* 63/2, 1988, p. 347.

39. LEMERLE, *Kutlumuş*, no. 20.

40. PETIT, *Chilandar*, no. 132.

This is sometimes explicitly stated. In 1318, Manuel Garianos, a member of the *mega allagion* of Serres, obtained a chrysobull rendering free from service and tax certain properties of his. The chrysobull states that the grant was conceded to Garianos as a favor to hieromonk Kallinikos, an emissary of the Serbian king Milutin to Andronikos II.⁴¹

At least as remarkable as the grants to more or less modest soldiers are those awarded to individuals who were neither public servants nor aristocrats but who seem to have belonged to what may be considered the middle or upper middle class. For Byzantine standards, the examples of such beneficiaries are plentiful for both the thirteenth and fourteenth century. Information coming from the twelfth century shows that the phenomenon was older.⁴² Members of a Jewish family from Attaleia who had converted to Christianity requested and received on several occasions the protection of John II and Manuel I Komnenos in relation to a judicial conflict, in which they were involved. Manuel I also contributed financially to the foundation of a monastery by the ex-Jews.⁴³ If this patronage may be attributed to the special value the emperors ascribed to conversion, the case of John Palanites seems ordinary. A *kouboukleisios* from Phygella in western Asia Minor, Palanites no doubt enjoyed a degree of distinction in his little town, as suggested by his church title and relative wealth. Already before 1201, he possessed a house and a courtyard that had somehow been exempted from the tax. In that year, Palanites obtained from emperor Alexios III Angelos a chrysobull that allowed him to donate the privileged properties to the monastery he had founded awarding him in addition a tax exemption for the four *paroikoi* he was planning to settle on the estate.⁴⁴

In the thirteenth and fourteenth century our cases multiply, as does, of course, the number of surviving archival documents. We have examples of grants to more or less modest people or of privileged properties in their possession from practically all parts of the empire: towns and villages of Macedonia, western Asia Minor, and Thessaly as well as Constantinople. In some of the cases discussed below, there remains a degree of uncertainty regarding the standing of the individual beneficiaries because their lack of official position and non-aristocratic status can only be surmised from the silence of the texts.

In 1246, in the village of Bare north of Smyrna, a monk called Matthaïos Chiotes donated a seemingly modest field to a certain priest Stephanos so that he may erect a church on the grounds. Chiotes declares that the field is donated to Stephanos tax exempt.⁴⁵ Apart from the privileged property in the possession of Chiotes, it is

41. Ζίνογινονιέ et al., *Chilandar I*, no. 37: ἐλευθέραν καὶ ἀκαταδούλωτον, ἐκτὸς τοῦ ποσοῦ τῆς οἰκονομίας αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἀνωτέραν παντὸς τέλους καὶ βάρους.

42. Cf. the remarks of Oikonomides on the generalization of personal privileges before 1204: *Fiscalité*, p. 187.

43. ΖΕΡΟΣ, t. 1, p. 373-375.

44. BRANOUSE, Ἐγγράφα (as in n. 12), no. 12. On the title *kouboukleisios*, see *ibid.*, p. 117.

45. MM, t. 4, p. 204: χωρὶς τινὸς βάρους καὶ συζητήσεως καὶ ἐλεύθερον ἀπὸ πάσης καὶ παντοίας ἐπιτηρείας. Priest Stephanos is likely the same as priest Stephanos Leukates, scribe of two acts: *ibid.*, p. 201, 205.

also noteworthy that an apparently ordinary priest like Stephanos had received an imperial *horismos* allowing him to construct a church. It is true that Chiotēs' monastic identity could conceal any elevated status he may have had as a layman, but what we see of his family does not suggest anything more than a relatively prosperous provincial household. This is one of the cases where we do not know if the exemption had been awarded to the owner of the land or if he had acquired a property already privileged.⁴⁶ The same is true for the following case. Towards the end of the thirteenth century, five men, Lykommates, Sideras, Kyriakos Melissenos, John Mylonas and George Koutroules, most likely all inhabitants of the little town of Hierissos, sold fields to the monastery of Chilandar by four acts of sale that are now lost. In 1299, what appear to be the same fields are described as having been purchased by the monastery totally *eleuthera*.⁴⁷ A George Lykommates, possibly the same as ours, and a Michael Mylonas, who may be related to John, were among the 30 "better men" (*kreittones*) of Hierissos documented in 1267.⁴⁸ There are good chances that the *eleuthera* fields were acquired from a third party, given the relatively low status of the owners. Another case of likely acquisition of properties that were already privileged comes from the region of Trilission to the north of Serres. In 1310, a certain Theodore bequeathed to the monastery of the Theotokos, founded by himself and his hieromonk father, tax exempt properties that he possessed by virtue of acts of assessors (*apographikai apokatastaseis*). The patriarch confirmed Theodore's bequest forbidding fiscal agents to demand anything from the properties.⁴⁹ The fact that only *apographikai apokatastaseis* are mentioned in the patriarchal letter suggests that Theodore did not possess any imperial act concerning the properties. It seems more likely that Theodore or his father had acquired the privileged properties from some other individual. Apart from lands in the countryside, urban properties are also recorded as tax exempt. In 1301, a certain Manuel Lygaras and his family, all of them illiterate, sold a building in Serres to hieromonk Isaac Kydones for the modest sum of 14 *hyperpyra*. The house is said to be *eleutheron*, *akatadouloton*, not subject to any imperial *dosis*.⁵⁰ Unlike the previous examples, there are cases where we do know the origin of the privilege. A document of 1305, for example, mentions the purchase of a *chrysoboullaton* property in the region of Serres.⁵¹

Let us turn to cases where both the imperial grant and its beneficiary are known. In 1301, a certain Germanos Kladon, who apparently held no office and was illiterate, donated to the monastery of the Prodomos three *zeugaria* of land in

46. See also above n. 36 for a third possibility.

47. ŽIVOJINOVIĆ et al., *Chilandar I*, p. 18 (list of documents nos. 92-93, 95-96) and no. 17, l. 72-75; cf. p. 46-47.

48. REGEL et al., *Zographou*, no. 7; Kyriakos Melissenos and George Koutroules are known as landowners near Hierissos: *PLP*, nos. 17820, 13661.

49. BÉNOU, *Prodrome*, no. 135.

50. LEFORT, *Esphigménou*, no. 9.

51. LEMERLE, *Kutlumis*, no. 7 (1305), l. 14-15.

the region of Serres originating in a donation of Andronikos II.⁵² In a similar case, John and Manuel Dishypatos, deacons and officials of the metropolis of Serres, held a land of 200 *modioi* in the vicinity of the city thanks to a donation by empress Eirene.⁵³ Another instance of donation is known from Thessaly. Around 1333, “a certain man called Michalakes” received a *prostagma* of Andronikos III awarding him a property of the fisc in the region of Trikala. The way our document calls Michalakes, simply by his name, contrasts with the way it refers to the person who succeeded him in the possession of the property, called “*kyris* Leon Spigges.”⁵⁴

The correspondence of Gregory II of Cyprus, patriarch from 1283 to 1289, reveals one more case where an individual was able to enjoy the imperial favor thanks to the services of a powerful patron. In one of his letters, Gregory says that he had obtained from the emperor the exemption from the *kommerkion* for a certain Nikolaos Chatzykes, most likely a merchant.⁵⁵ Chatzykes seems to have born no title nor held any significant office since the patriarch simply refers to him by his name. This case has the added significance of showing that privileges to relatively undistinguished people could relate to commercial activities, in addition to land. No doubt, such privileges were more common than our documentation suggests. It is probably no coincidence that we hear about the exemption from the *kommerkion* from a patriarchal letter and not a monastic document, a type of source primarily concerned with property rights.

Certain elements suggest that over time privileged properties proliferated in the countryside. I have already noted that the expression *chrysoboullata – ktemata* – seems to have appeared in *praktika* preambles for the first time towards the end of the thirteenth century. An increase of the number of privileged properties is also

52. BÉNOU, *Prodrome*, no. 18.

53. This is reported by a document of 1365: *Actes de Lavra*. 3, *De 1329 à 1500*, ed. P. LEMERLE, A. GUILLOU, N. SVORONOS and D. PAPACHRYSSANTHOU, Paris 1979 (Archives de l’Athos 10), no. 143: γονικόθεν προσούσαν ἡμῖν γῆν [...] ἀπὸ εὐεργεσίας τῆς τρισμακαρίστου καὶ ἀοιδίμου δεσποίνης ἡμῶν κυρᾶς Εἰρήνης. The land, which John and Manuel seem to have inherited, was most likely donated to an ancestor of theirs by Eirene-Yolanda of Montferrat who exercised authority in Serres at least since 1304 and probably until her death in 1317; her activity in the region was long remembered afterwards: cf. BÉNOU, *Prodrome*, nos. 160, 20, 127, 120, 201; LEMERLE, *Kutlunus*, no. 11; PETIT, *Chilandar*, no. 150. On Eirene’s rule see also F. BARIŠIĆ, *Povelje vizantijskih carica*, *ZRVI* 13, 1971, p. 159-165, 197. The Dishypatoi were apparently a family of church officials; in 1355, a certain Konstantinos Dishypatos was *dikaio* of the metropolis of neighboring Zichna: BÉNOU, *Prodrome*, no. 174.

54. SOLOVIEV, MOŠIN, *Grčke povelje* (cited in n. 18), no. 31 (1359), p. 222, 226; Michalakes had already been awarded rights on the property before 1333 by the ruler of Thessaly, Stephanos Gabrielpoulos. Spigges is identified as an *archon* in a document of 1340: *PLP*, no. 26546. Cf. F. DÖLGER, *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches von 565-1453*. 4, *Regesten von 1282-1341*, Munich 1960, nos. 2798, 2800.

55. Τοῦ σοφωτάτου καὶ λογιωτάτου καὶ οἰκουμενικοῦ πατριάρχου κυροῦ Γρηγορίου τοῦ Κυπρίου ἐπιστολαί, ed. S. EUSTRATIADIS, *Ἐκκλησιαστικὸς Φάρος* 3, 1909, p. 294-295. On the intercession in favor of the less powerful by Gregory of Cyprus, see A. ΛΑΙΟΥ, The correspondence of Gregorios Kyprios as a source for the history of social and political behavior in Byzantium or, on government by rhetoric, in *Geschichte und Kultur der Palaiologenzeit*, ed. W. SEIBT, Vienna 1996 (Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Byzantinistik 8), esp. p. 97-108.

indicated by the comparison of the data of the cartulary of the Lembiotissa, concerning the region of Smyrna in the last three quarters of the thirteenth century, with that of the cartulary of the Prodomos on Mount Menoikion, mainly regarding the regions of Serres and Zichna during the first half of the fourteenth century. With the obvious reservation that we are dealing with two different regions of the empire, it is noteworthy that tax exempt properties appear much more frequently in the codex of the Prodomos although the cartularies offer comparably rich information for their respective periods.

The regions of Serres and Zichna seem to have contained a good amount of privileged property even for the standards of the first half of the fourteenth century. We have about as many mentions of *eleuthera* properties from Serres and its vicinity as we have from Thessalonike and its neighboring areas. This is remarkable because Serres had not been awarded a common chrysobull in 1246. Unlike Thessalonike, it had not surrendered but had been taken by force by John III. It is unlikely that such a privilege was conceded to Serres later as that would have been mentioned in some document. The same can be said about Zichna. To a large extent this phenomenon must be attributed to the fact that Serres and Zichna are among the best documented areas of late Byzantium. The properties of the Prodomos were largely situated there and are recorded in the monastery's substantial cartulary. Additional information comes from the archives of several Athonite monasteries that also had possessions in the region. Nevertheless, this evidence suggests that, thanks to the individual grants they obtained, the better-off inhabitants of Serres and Zichna managed to cover a lot of the ground that separated them from the citizens of the privileged cities that existed in the European lands of the empire.

We have mentions of properties possessed by virtue of a chrysobull being sold in the regions of Serres and Zichna. In 1321, the metropolitan of Serres requested from the emperor that the properties his sons had purchased from clerics and other inhabitants (*oiketores*) of Serres who held them thanks to chrysobulls (*dia chrysoboullon*) be tax exempt.⁵⁶ It is also from these regions that we have most mentions of the already noted appellation *chrysoboullatos*, a term obviously referring to individuals who had received a chrysobull awarding them property rights and / or tax exemption. The term seems to have come into use later than *chrysoboullaton* used for properties donated or exempted from the tax by a chrysobull. In the first half of the fourteenth century, several documents concerning Zichna mention *chrysoboullatoi*.⁵⁷ The first mention of the term comes from Serres. In an act of sale drafted in 1310 two individuals appear bearing the title of *primikerios ton chrysoboullaton*; the same title is mentioned in 1326, also in Serres.⁵⁸ This title, which is only attested to in Serres, was probably an unofficial one that may be rendered as "chief

56. LEMERLE, *Kutlumas*, no. 10; I understand that the metropolitan requested a confirmation of the tax exempt status of the properties. For a *chrysoboullaton* property from the same region, see above n. 51.

57. BÉNOU, *Prodrome*, nos. 112 (1328); 181 (1339?), l. 82; 178 (c. 1355), l. 267.

58. *Ibid.*, no. 66: the *andrikotatos* kyr Andronikos Lypenares, buyer of a workshop, and kyr John Kardames, witness of the act of sale. PETT, *Chilandar*, no. 108: *primikerios ton chrysoboullaton*, kyr Michael Kaphoures, witness of an act of sale.

of the *chrysoboullatoi*.⁵⁹ Clearly in 1310 there was more than one such chief in Serres. This evidence shows that in that town *chrysoboullatoi* were numerous and had a basic organization likely aiming at protecting or advancing their interests. *Chrysoboullatoi* also appear as a more or less distinct group of people in documents of the 1340s concerning the Thessalian towns of Trikala and Phanarion.⁶⁰

Certainly, not all persons who had received a chrysobull were called *chrysoboullatoi*. It is hard to imagine the title being applied to an aristocrat. Rather, it seems that the appellation was used for persons who, although privileged, were not of a very high standing. The mere fact that they were called with this name and nothing better is a strong indication of this. The limited information we have about the known *chrysoboullatoi* does not contradict this. One of them, a certain Gazes, vineyard owner in Dratzobitza near Zichna and deceased before 1328, could be the same as *syr* Goulielmos Gazes, landowner in Dratzobitza, whose western European origin suggests he was a soldier.⁶¹ Another *chrysoboullatos*, called Theophanes, had given a house in Zichna as dowry to his daughter who was married to a *paroikos* of the monastery of the Prodomos.⁶² Apparently, the two *primikerioi ton chrysoboullaton* present in Serres in 1310 belonged to more prominent families than the simple *chrysoboullatoi* from Zichna. *Kyr* Andronikos Lypenares was called “most brave” (*andrikotatos*) indicating that he was also a military man. The same person, most likely, is seen in documents of the late 1320s selling vineyards; he appears to have been illiterate. The father of Andronikos Lypenares was no doubt the Lypenarios who before 1287 had founded in Serres a monastery dedicated to Christ. The monastery was apparently still independent in 1341, even after Andronikos and his father had died.⁶³ The family of *kyr* John Kardames seems to have been at least as distinguished. It included an imperial servant active in the 1320s and 1330s,⁶⁴ and other well-off and literate individuals recorded in documents of the 1330s and 1340s.⁶⁵

59. On the title *primikerios*, see ODB, s.v., and E. TRAPP et al., *Lexikon zur byzantinischen Gräzität, besonders des 9.-12. Jahrhunderts*, Vienna 1994-2011, s.v. πριμ(μ)ικήριος. *Primikerios* is an unofficial title in the *typikon* for the Pantokrator (1136) where it is used to denote the chief doctors: P. GAUTIER, Le *typikon* du Christ Sauveur Pantocrator, *REB* 32, 1974, p. 85, l. 946 and *passim*.

60. N. BEES, Σερβικά καὶ βυζαντινὰ γράμματα Μετεώρου, *Βυζαντίς* 2, 1910-1911, p. 64; D. SOPHIANOS, Τὸ ὀρκωμοτικὸν γράμμα (Ἰούν. 1342) τοῦ Μιχαὴλ Γαβριηλοπούλου πρὸς τοὺς Φαναριώτες τῆς Καρδίτσας, in *Πρακτικά Ἀ' Συνεδρίου γιὰ τὴν Καρδίτσα καὶ τὴν περιοχὴ τῆς*, Karditsa 1996, p. 40.

61. BÉNOU, *Prodrome*, nos. 112 (1328) and 120, l. 62. The *chrysoboullatos* Gazes may have been related to Michael Gazes, landowner in the same region, active in the 1330s: *ibid.*, nos. 115; 148, l. 20; 153. On the appellation *syr* being used for western European *kaballarioi*, see M. BARTUSIS, *The Late Byzantine Army. Arms and Society, 1204-1453*, Philadelphia 1992, p. 28, 383; see also the case of the *kaballarios syr* Goulielmon Ntekalabrias, active in Zichna in the same period: BÉNOU, *Prodrome*, nos. 102, 120, l. 53-54.

62. *Ibid.*, no. 181 (1339?), l. 82. See also the case of *chrysoboullatos* Zisteads who sold a vineyard to a *paroikos*: *ibid.*, no. 178 (c. 1355), l. 267.

63. *Ibid.*, nos. 66 (1310), 50 (1328), 51 (1329); LEMERLE, *Kutlumas*, nos. 4, 19, 32-34.

64. Nikolaos Kardames, *oikeios* PETIT, *Chilandar*, no. 87 (1322); BÉNOU, *Prodrome*, nos. 56, 122.

65. Eirene Komnene, wife of Theodore Kardames: *ibid.*, nos. 70 (1333), 69 (1340), 166, l. 55. Boilas Kardames: *ibid.*, nos. 76-77 (1347). Cf. also the *megas tzaousios* Kardames present in Serres in 1365: LEFORT, *Esphigménou*, no. 27.

We have a relatively good idea of the position *chrysoboullatoi* occupied in the social hierarchy of Trikala and Phanarion thanks to two documents concerning these towns. In 1340 we are told that an enquiry committee included, apart from prelates, nine *archontes*, all of them named, as well as “many of the *stratiotai* and *chrysoboullatoi* from Trikala.”⁶⁶ A document of 1342 lists the distinguished citizens of Phanarion in this order: *archontes*, greater and lesser, *klerikoi*, *chrysoboullatoi* and *exkousatoi*.⁶⁷ This evidence demonstrates that *chrysoboullatoi* were different from and inferior to the *archontes*. Things are less clear when it comes to the relation of *chrysoboullatoi* with *stratiotai*. The overlapping between the two categories we have seen in Serres and possibly Zichna suggests that soldiers possessing chrysobulls could be characterized by either of the two terms, depending on the context. The same may have been true of the *klerikoi*.

Though not of the highest social standing, *chrysoboullatoi* must have been well-off, at least at the moment when they received the grant, if for no other reason, because obtaining an imperial act was a costly affair. It seems reasonable to assume that this endeavor would often involve travelling and making gifts to people whose help was essential. The actual process of issuing the act by the imperial chancery certainly had a cost. Parchment and paper were not cheap, the golden bull had to be paid for, and the secretary drafting the acts was apparently well remunerated. In *Mazaris' Journey to Hades*, written in the early fifteenth century, Manuel Holobolos claims that as imperial undersecretary (*hypogrammateus*) he quickly became very rich by writing chrysobulls and *prostagmata*.⁶⁸ In addition, it may be assumed that in many cases the people ordering the imperial acts to be issued, the emperor and his ministers, also extracted a fee.⁶⁹ It is also possible that some cash was paid to the imperial treasury. I know only one case where the cost of an imperial act is indicated. In 1320, the Athonite monastery of Chilandar apparently paid 36 *hyperpyra* in order to obtain a *prostagma*.⁷⁰ That money would buy a middle- to low-range shop in Serres at the time. Normally, chrysobulls would have been more expensive.

66. BEES, Γράμματα Μετεώρου (cited in n. 60), p. 63-64.

67. SOPHIANOS, Ὁρκωμοτικὸν (cited in n. 60), p. 40. *Klerikoi*, *chrysoboullatoi* and *exkousatoi* are distinct groups rather than an analysis of the term *archontes*.

68. *Mazaris' Journey to Hades*, ed. J. N. BARRY, M. J. SHARE, A. SMITHIES and L. G. WESTERINK, Buffalo 1975 (Arethusa Monographs 5), p. 12; cf. p. 28, 66. Apparently, imperial secretaries (*grammateis*) could gain even more if they wrote things other than what the emperor had sanctioned: *ibid.*, p. 24. Cf. the commentary in N. ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΙΔΗΣ, La chancellerie impériale de Byzance du 13^e au 15^e siècle, *REB* 43, 1985, p. 171-172. I thank Helen Saradi for pointing out to me Mazaris' information.

69. The keenness of Theodore Metochites, Andronikos II's main minister, to receive payments is well known: E. DE VRIES-VAN DER VELDEN, *Théodore Métochite : une réévaluation*, Amsterdam 1987, p. 80-81. It is also interesting to note that Thomas Magistros, in a speech to the same emperor, asks with insistence that the ruler makes benefactions without receiving gifts: PG 145, col. 453, 456.

70. ΠΕΤΤΙ, *Chilandar*, no. 53, note on the verso: ἐδόθη [...] εἰς τὸ πρόσταγμα τῆς αὐτῆς ὑποστάσεως ὑπέρπυρα τριάκοντα ἕξ. The *prostagma* in question is no doubt no. 52; see below on the Modenos family. That those obtaining imperial acts had to pay can also be seen in the Life

THREE GRANT BENEFICIARIES

In order to better demonstrate the category of relatively undistinguished beneficiaries of imperial grants, I present here three cases of such individuals, which are known in some detail. They concern a layman turned monk who founded a monastery in Chalkidike and two church officials of low and middle rank, active in the regions of Zichna and Kaisaropolis in the lower Strymon valley.

1. *Theodosios Skaranos*

Theodosios Skaranos was made famous in modern Byzantine scholarship by an article of Jacques Lefort who studied the way his middle-range fortune was exploited.⁷¹ Most of our information on this individual comes from two documents, a *praktikon* issued in 1262 to the monastery of Ivion and the will of Skaranos dating from 1274.⁷² In 1262, our individual was already a monk no doubt settled in the modest monastery of Theotokos Archontissa, near Hermeleia, which he restored and endowed.⁷³ The *praktikon* of 1262 also informs us that Skaranos had a son- or brother-in-law (*gambros*) named John Ouggros and possibly also a son called Xenos; both of them were *paroikoi* of Ivion.⁷⁴ Our documentation suggests that before 1262 Skaranos had become a protégé of despot John Palaiologos and, probably through him, of Michael VIII who donated to the monastery an *oikonomia* including the taxes of a mill and of at least eleven *paroikoi*, as well as the property and taxes of more than 150 *modioi* of land.⁷⁵ Having been denounced of possessing more properties than he was entitled to, Skaranos apparently lost the *oikonomia*; this was surrendered to Ivion in 1262. The affair is not entirely clear, but it seems that the handing over of the properties to Ivion was actually done as a favor to Skaranos since it was to him that two *horismoi*, one of Michael VIII and one of despot John, were issued regarding this matter.⁷⁶ In any case, Skaranos had recovered most or all of the properties by 1274. In that year, being sick and fearing death, Skaranos wrote his will by which he donated to Xeropotamou his monastery with all its possessions including almost 300 *modioi* of arable and vineyard.

of Leontios. According to this text, the monks of Patmos acquired the chrysobull awarding tax exemption to their boats (1186) by paying an unspecified amount of electrum coins: *The Life of Leontios Patriarch of Jerusalem*, ed. D. TSOUGARAKIS, Leiden 1993 (The Medieval Mediterranean 2), p. 144.

71. LEFORT, Une exploitation, p. 201-209; in what follows, I insist only on issues not discussed by Lefort or where our understanding diverges.
72. LEFORT et al., *Ivion III*, no. 59; BOMPAIRE, *Xéropotamou*, no. 9. See also *ibid.*, no. 11.
73. LEFORT, Une exploitation, p. 202-203; BOMPAIRE, *Xéropotamou*, no. 11.
74. LEFORT et al., *Ivion III*, no. 59, l. 91.
75. That the donation was made to the monastery emerges from BOMPAIRE, *Xéropotamou*, no. 9A, l. 63-65. Skaranos' early connection to despot John can be surmised by the mention in 1262 of an *horismos* of the latter apparently in his favor: see the following note and BOMPAIRE, *Xéropotamou*, no. 9A, l. 7, 72-75 on John being the protector of Skaranos.
76. LEFORT et al., *Ivion III*, no. 59, l. 82-83, 90-91.

This document reveals the people who were close to Skaranos. One of them was a monk called Daniel Skoutariotes, likely living in the vicinity, whom Skaranos calls “his beloved brother in the Lord” and names as executor of his will, and in charge of overseeing the completion of the church’s decoration. Despot John is also named executor of the will. Skaranos’ spiritual father was Arsenios, *hegoumenos* of the prestigious Thessalonian monastery of Akapniou. Moreover, Skaranos had some sort of close relation, most likely godparenthood, with a certain Michael, no doubt a local.⁷⁷ Skaranos had two protégés, John and Demetrios, none of whom is identified as his relative.⁷⁸ For John, the will reserved a place in the monastery as *kanonarches*. Skaranos had other plans for Demetrios. He ought to be taken care of by the monastery until he grew up. Escorted by Arsenios of Akapniou, he would then ride the black horse Skaranos had bequeathed him and go to the emperor and the empress in Constantinople. The imperial couple would place Demetrios “in the hands” of the *porphyrogennetos*, that is no doubt Constantine, third son of Michael VIII.⁷⁹

We do not know where Skaranos came from, what his profession was as a layman or what his exact position was in society. Clearly he was not an aristocrat. Although he was in the position to restore a monastery and ensure the subsistence of several people, his properties were not very extensive. The movable possessions mentioned in his will are typical for a small rural monastery serving as center of an agricultural unit. No information regarding Skaranos suggests anything but the owner of a farm. He acquired or exchanged properties, had vineyards planted, and directed their exploitation by the peasants. He held a mill together with a partner called Arkles. He was connected with familial bonds to at least two locals, one of whom was certainly a peasant. For reasons unknown to us, despot John Palaiologos became the patron of Skaranos and his monastery. As suggested, it was probably the despot who secured Michael VIII’s donation of a modest *oikonomia* to the monastery. In 1274, Skaranos still considered the despot and the emperor as his protectors and he apparently expected the latter to extend his patronage to his protégé Demetrios by associating him to the *porphyrogennetos* Constantine.⁸⁰

77. Skaranos calls him his *synteknos*; he acquired a land of one *modios* from him: BOMPAIRE, *Xéropotamou*, no. 9A, l. 24.

78. It seems unlikely that John is John Ouggros, the *gambros* of Skaranos, because the latter indicates no relation to John’s mother whom he simply calls “the *hegoumene* mother of John”: *ibid.*, no. 9A, l. 40.

79. *Ibid.*, no. 9A, l. 45-47, 58-59; 9B, l. 68-70, 84-85. Cf. the different understanding *ibid.*, p. 73, and in LEFORT, *Une exploitation*, p. 203.

80. In 1274, Constantine was probably presumed to be the future despot; cf. KYRITSES, *Aristocracy* (cited in n. 2), p. 315.

2. *Modenos*

Our second individual is priest Modenos, Christian name unknown, who owned lands at Zdrabikion, a village of the lower valley of the Strymon, to the south of Zichna.⁸¹ His place of residence is also unknown but it may well have been Zdrabikion itself. He was active in the reign of Michael VIII and, probably, also in the early part of the reign of his successor Andronikos II. Before 1281, he is called priest (*papas*) and in 1281 hieromonk.⁸² A document of 1321 calls Modenos *protopapas*, a low-ranking church office he may have held before he became a monk.⁸³ Under Michael VIII, Modenos obtained more than one imperial *horismos*, awarding his possessions at Zdrabikion complete freedom from taxes.⁸⁴ Later, Modenos requested and obtained from the same emperor a chrysobull confirming that his properties would remain free from all tax. Modenos would be free to transmit these lands to his sons who would enjoy the same exemption. Modenos' properties are referred to as *stasis* and *hypostasis*, terms typically used for farms of either dependent or independent peasants. In addition, the *stasis* is exempted both from the state tax and from the obligations of the *paroikoi*.⁸⁵ This data suggests that Modenos was thought of as an independent peasant who could in the future become a *paroikos* of another landowner or as a peasant who had been a *paroikos* in the past. By the same chrysobull, Michael VIII granted another request of Modenos, namely that the properties of his son-in-law, priest Michael Borkinos, also remain free from all obligations of *paroikoi* and from the obligations towards the fisc. Towards the end of 1281, Modenos, by now a monk, obtained one more chrysobull, this time from

81. Modenos and his family are known from a number of documents preserved in the monastery of Chilandar: ŽIVOJINOVIĆ et al., *Chilandar I*, nos. 26, 27; cf. also nos. 37, 41, l. 26, l. 32; PETIT, *Chilandar*, nos. 52, 53, 59, 62, 69, 118. Several scholars have commented upon them. See, in particular, M. ŽIVOJINOVIĆ, Hilendarski metoh Zdravik i njegovi raniji posednici, ZRVI 20, 1981, p. 90-95, 97; C. KRAUS, *Kleriker im späten Byzanz*, Wiesbaden 2007 (Mainzer Veröffentlichungen zur Byzantinistik 9), p. 75-76; A. LAIOU, Priests and Bishops in the Byzantine Countryside, Thirteenth to Fourteenth Centuries, in *Church and Society in Late Byzantium*, ed. D. ANGELOV, Kalamazoo 2009 (Studies in Medieval Culture 49), p. 44: "an extraordinary case of a priest"; BARTUSIS, *Pronoia*, p. 423-424.

82. ŽIVOJINOVIĆ et al., *Chilandar I*, nos. 26, 27.

83. PETIT, *Chilandar*, no. 59. At least in the region of Smyrna in the 13th c., a *protopapas* did not necessarily belong to the church hierarchy of a town: cf. M. ANGOLD, *A Byzantine Government in Exile. Government and Society under the Laskarids of Nicaea (1204-1261)*, Oxford 1975, p. 261-262. For Macedonia, see KRAUS, *Kleriker* (cited in n. 81), p. 76-77, 111.

84. ŽIVOJINOVIĆ et al., *Chilandar I*, no. 26: κέκτηται δι' ὀρισμῶν τῆς βασιλείας μου καὶ δι' ἀποκαταστάσεως [...] τὴν εἰς τὸ Σδραβίκην στάσιν αὐτοῦ ἐλευθέραν πάντῃ καὶ ἀκαταδούλωτον. I do not think that we should understand this passage to mean that the emperor had also donated the *stasis* to Modenos; cf. BARTUSIS, *Pronoia*, p. 423.

85. ŽIVOJINOVIĆ et al., *Chilandar I*, no. 26, l. 7: ἐλευθέραν καὶ βάρους ἐκτὸς παροικικοῦ παντός; l. 13-14: ἐκτὸς βάρους καὶ τέλους δημοσιακοῦ παντός. I understand that the *eleuthera* of l. 7 corresponds to the exemption from all *demosiakon baros kai telos* of l. 13-14 while *paroikikon baros* refers to the obligations, in particular the *angareiai*, dependent peasants had towards their landlords. Cf. F. DÖLGER, *Aus den Schatzkammern des Heiligen Berges*, Munich 1948, p. 57.

co-emperor Andronikos II, confirming his existing privileges and extending the exemption to cover the hieromonk's new son-in-law, John Porianites.⁸⁶ After this chrysobull, we lose sight of Modenos and his family for almost 40 years. They reappear in 1320, when they start alienating Modenos' properties at Zdrabikion to Chilandar. In the meantime, Modenos died having bequeathed the estate to his three sons. The *hegoumenos* of Chilandar requested the emperor to confirm the privileged status of Modenos' lands that his monastery wanted to buy.⁸⁷ Through a series of sales and donations the three branches of the family alienated between 1320 and 1321 all the lands they had inherited from the priest. What in 1281 was called a *stasis* or *hypostasis* was now termed *zeugelateion* or *ge*. Indeed, the descendants of Modenos sold or donated to Chilandar parts of an estate of a surface of 3,000 *modioi* including vineyards, orchards, gardens and mills; its value was over 900 *hyperpyra*.⁸⁸ It seems certain that the estate we see in the 1320s had already been created before the death of Modenos.⁸⁹ In spite of the terms used in the reign of Michael VIII, it is also likely that the priest's properties were already as large before 1281.⁹⁰ Chilandar acquired, together with the estate, the chrysobulls conferring the privileges to Modenos, documents that up to then had been preserved in the family's archives.

A simple priest, or, at best, a *protopapas*, Modenos had become a rich man holding a significant estate in the lower Strymon valley.⁹¹ For unknown reasons, Michael VIII and, for a while at least, his son, Andronikos II, favored him. The family does not seem to have been able to build upon the imperial support and apparently failed to expand its wealth or improve its social standing. The selling of the estate in 1320-1321 suggests diminished resources. Moreover, none of Modenos' descendants or their husbands appears to have been particularly distinguished. As far as we can see, the only notable individuals were priest Michael Borkinos, married to one of Modenos' daughters, and the soldier Manuel Garianos, married to one of Modenos' grand-daughters.⁹²

86. ŽIVOJINOVIĆ et al., *Chilandar I*, no. 27.

87. PETIT, *Chilandar*, no. 52; see also above n. 70.

88. *Ibid.*, nos. 53 (327 *hyp.*), 59 (18 *hyp.*), 69 (222 *hyp.* and one *adelphaton* whose normal cost was 100 *hyp.*, see below n. 105), 118 (260 *hyp.*). The sale of the last third portion of the estate mentioned in no. 118 (1329) took place before June 1321: cf. no. 62, l. 4-14.

89. *Ibid.*, no. 53: the third portion of the lands bequeathed by the priest is 950 *modioi*.

90. This is indicated in 1321: "A certain priest called Modenos held a land of 3,000 *modioi* free and not subject to any burden or tax by virtue of a chrysobull" (*ibid.*, no. 62, l. 4-6). It is also logically necessary as the tax exemption would only cover those lands indicated in the *apokatastaseis*, to which both the chrysobull of Michael VIII and that of Andronikos II refer: ŽIVOJINOVIĆ et al., *Chilandar I*, nos. 26 and 27.

91. Modenos probably had additional properties that he gave as dowry to his two daughters.

92. On Garianos see above, n. 41.

3. *Iakobos Mpalaes*

An inhabitant of Zichna, Iakobos Mpalaes, lived in the same region as priest Modenos and knew some at least of his descendants.⁹³ He first appears in our documentation in March 1328, when emperor Andronikos III awarded him a chrysobull in recompense for the loyalty he had shown “by the deeds he accomplished” during the civil war.⁹⁴ By virtue of this chrysobull, Mpalaes was to receive the patriarchal monastery of Theotokos Ostrine and the church of Saint Anastasia outside Zichna, a land of 200 *modioi* in the vicinity as well as the right to collect the 20 *hyperpyra* of tax the Jews of Zichna paid annually.⁹⁵ From other documents, we know that Mpalaes had held the middle-range ecclesiastical office of *protonotarios* in the neighboring town of Kaisaropolis from after 1320 up to apparently sometime before he was awarded the chrysobull in 1328, which only refers to him as “monk Iakobos.”⁹⁶ The imperial donation was substantial. Besides the taxes of the Jews and the 200 *modioi* of land, the monastery of Ostrine with its dependencies possessed six *paroikoi* and almost 700 *modioi* of land of all types, as we can see from later documents.⁹⁷ Four years after the donation, in 1332, Mpalaes decided to cede Ostrine and the 200 *modioi* of land to the monastery of the Prodomos in exchange for an *adelphaton*, that is an annual pension and / or the right to withdraw to the monastery. This agreement was sanctioned by another chrysobull issued to Mpalaes by Andronikos III.⁹⁸ No doubt in accordance to his agreement with the Prodomos, Mpalaes remained in charge of Ostrine / Saint Anastasia up until the early 1350s, defending the monastery’s rights and acquiring small plots of land.⁹⁹ Within

93. PETIT, *Chilandar*, no. 118.

94. BÉNOU, *Prodrome*, no. 154. Mpalaes may have played a role in the surrender of Zichna to the young emperor in January 1328; cf. KANTAKOUZENOS, *Historiarum libri IV* (cited in n. 20), t. 1, p. 262. The bishopric of Zichna was later promoted to *metropolis*: J. DARROUZÈS, *Les registres des actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople*. 1, *Les actes des patriarches*. 5, *Les registres de 1310 à 1376*, Paris 1977, no. 2147.

95. The monastery is called patriarchal in a later act of the patriarch: BÉNOU, *Prodrome*, no. 158 (1342). The list of the Jews and their taxes is partially preserved: *ibid.*, no. 125. Saint Anastasia appears to have emerged as the main establishment of Iakobos; called church in 1328 and 1332, it is termed *metochion* from 1338 and monastery from 1340: *ibid.*, nos. 154, 155, 148 and 150. In 1339, there appears a third *metochion*, Saint George Tzeperes inside Zichna (*ibid.*, no. 148; cf. no. 159, l. 53-54).

96. In 1320 / 1321 the *protonotarios* of Kaisaropolis was Niketas Meles (*PLP*, nos. 17764, 20290). Mpalaes appears twice in PETIT, *Chilandar*, no. 118 of April 1329. He is mentioned in the text of the act as *protonotarios* of Kaisaropolis, witness of a payment: l. 69-70; he also signs the act, established after the payment, simply as monk Iakobos Mpalaes: l. 110. The writer of the act may have referred to Mpalaes as *protonotarios* even though he no longer held this office; or, the text of the act may have been drafted while he still was *protonotarios* (before March 1328), the signatures having been placed afterwards. The act is also signed on the verso by a certain Athanasios, *protonotarios* of Kaisaropolis.

97. BÉNOU, *Prodrome*, nos. 147, 148.

98. *Ibid.*, no. 155.

99. *Ibid.*, nos. 149, 150, 152, 153.

approximately one year after the death of Andronikos III in 1341, Iakobos obtained a *prostagma* of John V and a patriarchal act confirming his rights on the monastery.¹⁰⁰ Following the Serbian conquest of the region in 1345, he received a *prostagma* from king Stephen Dušan donating to his monastery a peasant farm, free of tax. In 1352, the Serbian ruler issued another *prostagma* confirming the properties of Saint Anastasia; the king also appointed his *logothetes*, George, as protector of the monastery.¹⁰¹ By this time, Mpalaes was apparently approaching the end of his life. In April 1353, he wrote his will which entered the archives of the Prodromos soon after along with his documents concerning Ostrine / Saint Anastasia.¹⁰² This will is a most valuable document as it allows us to have a closer look at Mpalaes. It mentions few immovable assets – five fields in the vicinity of Zichna, a house and some building lots inside that town – since the landed property of Ostrine / Saint Anastasia had already been donated to the Prodromos in 1332. The act shows that the former *protonotarios* and later superior of a monastery was essentially a farmer. He held three oxen in common with his brother Demetrios and one more ox together with Konstantinos, son of Photeinos, probably the second husband of Mpalaes' sister-in-law Kale. Mpalaes also possessed 50 *modioi* of wheat, kept in his brother's silo, 36 *modioi* of rye, held in common with his brother, and 7 *modioi* of millet. He also had a barrel of wine likely containing much more than the 18 *metra* mentioned. Some of this wine he sold, as suggested by the mention of a person owing him 4.5 *hyperpyra* for wine. Probably, the significant quantities of grain were also largely destined for sale because in 1353 Mpalaes ordered that they be given to the poor or spent for his commemoration. The will also mentions a donkey, beehives, some additional barrels and his collection of agricultural tools. The stored produce came from the exploitation of the lands he still held in 1353 and likely also from other lands of Ostrine / Saint Anastasia of which he may have retained the usufruct.¹⁰³ At the same time, the former *protonotarios* was literate and held a small library including 15 books, apparently all liturgical.¹⁰⁴ The beneficiaries of his will are the members of his family, his servant (*hypocheiria*) Maria, and the monastery of the Prodromos. His nephew Nikodemos and the son of Kale and Konstantinos may have been literate as well since they were to receive some of Mpalaes' books. His single most important bequest was his right to the *adelphaton* owed to him by the Prodromos, normally worth 100 *hyperpyra*, which he ceded to

100. The *prostagma* is mentioned in the patriarchal act as having been issued soon before: *ibid.*, no. 158 (1342).

101. *Ibid.*, nos. 156, 157; according to the last *prostagma* the properties were tax exempt (*eleuthera kai akatazeteta*).

102. *Ibid.*, no. 159. The will and other acts were copied in the monastery's chartulary when this was created, no doubt soon after 1353; cf. André Guillou's introduction, *ibid.*, p. 2.

103. The will mentions no vineyards although Mpalaes was apparently producing wine.

104. The will is preceded by his *signon*, something that would normally mean that he could not sign his name. However, Mpalaes signed, apparently by his own hand, PETT, *Chilandar*, no. 118.

his nephew Demetrios.¹⁰⁵ Mpalaes had a respectable amount of cash at his disposal, 47 *hyperpyra* in all, 30 of which he gave to his spiritual father and executor of the will, Gabriel, to be spent for his funeral and annual commemoration. Mpalaes distributed the remaining 17 *hyperpyra* to his family, to the metropolitan of Zichna and to six officials of the metropolis.

A middle-ranking church official of a small Macedonian town, Iakobos Mpalaes offered his support to Andronikos III during the civil war, which the young emperor deemed worthy of a substantial reward in 1328. The reward allowed Mpalaes to become the head of a monastery with significant wealth, a position he held for the last 25 years of his life. From this position he petitioned emperor, patriarch and king for protection and gifts for his institution. His relatively elevated status did not hinder him, however, from being directly occupied with the exploitation of the land and the management of its products. His will, finally, shows that he remained closely allied to the local church and its officials.

CONCLUSION

The evidence presented here shows that imperial privileges and donations had become a generalized phenomenon and did not only concern a few powerful institutions and the individuals at the top of the social hierarchy. Apart from the usual suspects, namely, the aristocracy, great monasteries, and churches, large numbers of people belonging to the middle or lower segments of society also benefitted from grants. The inhabitants of many cities enjoyed collective privileges. Well-off and sometimes literate provincials, landowners or clergy, and soldiers of lower or middle rank, solicited the emperor and obtained concessions for their properties. Many such people also possessed privileged properties having acquired them from third parties. What we see most clearly in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries seems to have been well under way in the twelfth century. Nevertheless, it seems that imperial grants became more widespread in the later period, especially in the second half of the thirteenth century and the first half of the fourteenth century.

How is this phenomenon to be explained? In the case of the cities that surrendered to the imperial troops, it may be said that the concessions were wrested from the emperors who would have otherwise spent precious time and resources besieging them with uncertain results. The political instability and fragmentation of the Balkans during the first half of the thirteenth century obviously increased the bargaining power of the cities, making practically all of them acquire strategic significance. The empire still stood to gain from the agreements with the citizens since it annexed significant new territories. Nevertheless, the concession of privileges to cities was not a thirteenth-century innovation. In the case of Thessalonike, which surrendered, and in that of Monemvasia, which was ceded to the empire by the Franks, it seems

105. On the price of an *adelphaton* in this period, see K. SMYRLIS, *La fortune des grands monastères byzantins, fin du x^e-milieu du xiv^e siècle*, Paris 2006 (Centre de Recherche d'Histoire et Civilisation de Byzance. Monographies 21), p. 141-143.

that we are not dealing with altogether new concessions but, to some extent at least, with the confirmation of existing ones. The eleventh- and twelfth-century evidence suggests that the cases of Thessalonike and Monemvasia may have not been entirely exceptional and that other cities too may have had already a tradition of privileges when they were issued chrysobulls by Laskarid or Palaiologan emperors. The concessions awarded or promised to cities or villages during the civil war of 1321-1328 were motivated by concerns similar to those of the time of the reconquest. The strife between the two emperors made the allegiance of the cities precious. Obviously, the precedent set by the existing concessions was important in this respect. The extensive commercial privileges to the Monemvasiots, which replicated those given to western merchants, probably reflect the emperors' appreciation of the naval support these people could offer and may have also been an attempt to support their economic prosperity.

In the case of individuals, things are more complex and often less clear. The proliferation of concessions, especially after the granting of the common chrysobulls to cities, must have played a significant role. In a country where privileges and grants multiply everyone wants to get some for himself. In part, this is because nobody wants to be a "sucker." But it also has to do with the fact that increased numbers of exemptions would have meant a greater burden for those without privileges since taxes would fall on fewer tax payers.¹⁰⁶ Undoubtedly everybody wanted privileges and many would have tried to obtain them. Nevertheless, in the case of the relatively undistinguished beneficiaries it is hard to maintain that the state conceded privileges to them because it could not resist their pressure. What kind of pressure could an individual like the priest Modenos exercise?

There were certainly additional reasons and mechanisms at play. For one thing, the patronage of these relatively modest individuals by people with influence and access to the emperor must explain many of the concessions. The emperor made a favor to persons whose loyalty was useful to him allowing the latter to maintain a clientele which in turn meant increased influence for them. One also suspects that on several occasions the financial benefits accompanying the issuing of imperial acts may have contributed in making the emperor, or at least his close associates, more willing to concede privileges.

However, these factors may not always fully explain the concessions. For this we need to turn to the traditional function of the imperial grant, which was to reward services to the state. Apart from services of a military nature, loyalty and political support to the ruler were also considered worthy of compensation, as the preambles of imperial grants so often indicate. While this might seem obvious in the case of powerful aristocrats or monasteries, it is less so when it comes to individuals like Skaranos, Modenos and Mpalaes. Their cases, in addition to the others presented here, suggest that the emperors desired to secure the support of a wide

106. N. ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΙΔΗΣ, Αγροτικό περίσσειμα και ο ρόλος του κράτους γύρω στο 1300, in *Manuel Panselinos and His Age*, Athens 1999, p. 202-203 (repr. in *Id.*, *Society, Culture and Politics in Byzantium*, ed. E. ZACHARIADOU, Aldershot 2005 [Variorum Collected Studies Series 824], no. XXVII).

segment of society beyond the upper levels. The rulers sought to incorporate petty elites into their service because of the influence the latter enjoyed in their respective localities. Through the concession of grants, which were revocable and required regular confirmation, the beneficiaries became in a way state employees at the command of the emperor. The numerous *chrysoboullatoi* and other people holding *prostagmata* or *horismoï*, were in a sense the emperor's men, physically connected to him through the imperial acts bearing the ruler's writing, which they kept at home. There is little doubt that the emperors realized full well the political potential of the concession of grants to a wide spectrum of individuals. This is not to say that this was a planned or well-thought strategy. As noted, the emperors of the thirteenth century were not the ones who had begun the practice of conceding privileges on a large scale. Rather, they had inherited an established practice which they gradually allowed to expand.

What was the significance of the concessions? In political terms, they offer additional proof of the continued centralism of Byzantium. Of course, this was a centralism of a "medieval" character, where an individual's connection to the capital involved a personal bond with the emperor. It also often entailed the intercession by unofficial intermediaries. It remains, however, that a great number of people in the provinces was linked with and controlled from Constantinople thanks to an administrative mechanism that issued documents, measured lands and taxes and kept track of the extent of privileges.

The significance of the widespread concession of tax exemptions and land grants for state finances is hard to evaluate. In theory, every privilege and donation meant diminished fiscal revenues or resources. The relative ease with which emperors made concessions and the long duration of the practice suggest that the final result may have not always been detrimental to the state. It is unlikely that the emperors would continue making concessions if they observed reduced revenues or resources. Barring periods when their rule was insecure, emperors must have made grants they believed would not affect their finances.¹⁰⁷ How could this happen? To some extent at least, the grants recycled properties or privileges taken from others. This basic principle of Byzantine fiscal purity was enunciated in 1272 by none other than Michael VIII. In a document addressed to his son and successor Andronikos II, the emperor instructs that no vacant *pronoiai* and no imperial taxes ought to be used to reward soldiers but only lands held without right – i.e. confiscated lands.¹⁰⁸ Logically, this principle would also be followed for grants made to other beneficiaries. In case this ideal was not respected, and one suspects that this was not rare, there were additional techniques that allowed the state to

107. Michael VIII, for example, was very liberal in the early days of his reign trying to secure a throne he had usurped; two years later, when his position was safe, he revoked the concessions: GEORGES PACHYMÉRÈS, *Relations Historiques*. 1, *Livres I-III*, ed. A. FAILLER, trans. V. LAURENT, Paris 1984 (CFHB 24/1), p. 139.

108. A. HEISENBERG, Aus der Geschichte und Literatur der Palaiologenzeit, *Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-philologische und historische Klasse* 10, 1920, p. 40-41 (repr. in Id., *Quellen und Studien zur spätbyzantinischen Geschichte*, London 1973 [Variorum Collected Studies Series 22], no. 1).

make up for the deficit. What one hand gave the other could take. Arbitrary confiscation of monastic and church properties was not rare in the Palaiologan period. New taxes and demands undermined the value of existing privileges and replenished the treasury. Besides, abusive taxation was common. Irrespective of the new exemptions emperors conceded, the state could expect to receive the same taxes each year by relying on tax farmers. They would extract the necessary sums by not respecting the privileges or by passing some of the tax burden onto the shoulders of the less privileged.

The less privileged people were certainly losing out in the long term. Given that the powerful would often obtain more extensive privileges and be more resistant to the tax officials' pressure, the process described above likely favored the concentration of wealth in their hands or the sharpening of social inequality. In other terms, in the case of people belonging to the middle layers of society, it could be argued that their privileges only slowed down their relative impoverishment. In spite of these reservations on the financial significance of the concessions, we ought not overlook that they favored individuals who were not aristocrats and who often were of very humble origins. At least some of these persons, the more enterprising ones, would have been able to profit from this relative openness in order to increase their wealth and obtain official functions, thus joining the ranks of the aristocracy. To some extent, therefore, one may consider these concessions as a mechanism of social mobility.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BARTUSIS, *Pronoia*

M. BARTUSIS, *Land and Privilege in Byzantium: The Institution of Pronoia*, Cambridge 2013

BÉNOU, *Prodrome*

Le Codex B du monastère Saint-Jean-Prodrome (Serrès) (XIII^e-XV^e siècles), ed. L. BÉNOU, Paris 1998 (Textes. Documents. Études sur le monde byzantin, néohellénique et balkanique 2)

BOMPAIRE, *Xéropotamou*

Actes de Xéropotamou, ed. J. BOMPAIRE, Paris 1964 (Archives de l'Athos 3)

KYRITSES, "Common Chrysobulls"

D. KYRITSES, The "Common Chrysobulls" of Cities and the Notion of Property in Late Byzantium, *Symmeikta* 13, 1999, p. 229-243

LEFORT, *Esphigménou*

Actes d'Esphigménou, ed. J. LEFORT, Paris 1973 (Archives de l'Athos 6)

LEFORT, Une exploitation

J. LEFORT, Une exploitation de taille moyenne au XIII^e siècle en Chalcidique, in Id., *Société rurale et histoire du paysage à Byzance*, Paris 2006 (Bilans de recherche 1), p. 201-209

LEFORT et al., *Iviron III*

Actes d'Iviron. 3, De 1204 à 1328, ed. J. LEFORT, N. OIKONOMIDÈS and D. PAPACHRYSSANTHOU, V. KRAVARI and collab. H. MÉTRÉVÉLI, Paris 1994 (Archives de l'Athos 18)

LEMERLE, *Kutlumus*

Actes de Kutlumus, ed. P. LEMERLE, Paris 1988² (Archives de l'Athos 2²)

LEMERLE et al., *Lavra II*

Actes de Lavra. 2, De 1204 à 1328, ed. P. LEMERLE, A. GUILLOU, N. SVORONOS and D. PAPACHRYSSANTHOU, Paris 1977 (Archives de l'Athos 8)

OIKONOMIDÈS, *Fiscalité*

N. OIKONOMIDÈS, *Fiscalité et exemption fiscale à Byzance (IX^e-XI^e s.)*, Athens 1996

PATLAGEAN, Thessaloniciens

É. PATLAGEAN, Les immunités des Thessaloniciens, in *Εὐψυχία. Mélanges offerts à Hélène Ahrweiler*, Paris 1998 (Byz. Sorb. 16), t. 2, p. 591-601

PETIT, *Chilandar*

Actes de Chilandar. 1, Actes grecs, ed. L. PETIT, VV 17, Priloženie 1, 1911 (Actes de l'Athos 5)

REGEL et al., *Zographou*

Actes de Zographou, ed. W. REGEL, E. KURTZ and B. KORABLEV, VV 13, Priloženie 1, 1907 (Actes de l'Athos 4)

ŽIVOJINOVIĆ et al., *Chilandar I*

Actes de Chilandar. 1, Des origines à 1319, ed. M. ŽIVOJINOVIĆ, V. KRAVARI and C. GIROS, Paris 1998 (Archives de l'Athos 20)

LISTE DES ABRÉVIATIONS

<i>AASS</i>	<i>Acta Sanctorum</i>
<i>An. Boll.</i>	<i>Analecta Bollandiana</i>
<i>Annales HSS</i>	<i>Annales. Histoire, Sciences sociales</i> [avant 1994 <i>Annales ESC (Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations)</i>]
<i>B</i>	<i>Basilicorum libri LX, series A</i> , éd. H. J. Scheltema et N. Van der Wal, <i>series B</i> , éd. H. J. Scheltema et D. Hohlwerda
<i>BCH</i>	<i>Bulletin de correspondance hellénique</i>
<i>BHG</i>	<i>Bibliotheca hagiographica graeca</i> , 3 ^e éd., et <i>Auctarium</i>
<i>BHL</i>	<i>Bibliotheca hagiographica latina</i>
<i>BHO</i>	<i>Bibliotheca hagiographica orientalis</i>
<i>BMGS</i>	<i>Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies</i>
<i>BSl.</i>	<i>Byzantinoslavica</i>
<i>Byz.</i>	<i>Byzantion</i>
<i>Byz. Forsch.</i>	<i>Byzantinische Forschungen</i>
<i>Byz. Sorb.</i>	<i>Byzantina Sorbonensia</i>
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>CArch.</i>	<i>Cahiers Archéologiques</i>
<i>CFHB</i>	<i>Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae</i>
<i>CJ</i>	<i>Corpus iuris civilis</i> , t. 2, <i>Codex Iustinianus</i> , éd. P. Krüger
<i>CLAp</i>	<i>Clavis apocryphorum Novi Testamenti</i> , éd. M. Geerard
<i>CPG</i>	<i>Clavis patrum graecorum</i> , éd. M. Geerard
<i>CRAI</i>	<i>Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres</i>
<i>CSCO</i>	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium</i>
<i>CSEL</i>	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i>
<i>CSHB</i>	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae</i>
<i>D</i>	<i>Corpus iuris civilis</i> , t. 1, <i>Digesta</i> , éd. Th. Mommsen et P. Krüger
<i>DACL</i>	<i>Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie</i>
<i>DChAE</i>	Δελτίον τῆς Χριστιανικῆς Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἑταιρείας
<i>DHGE</i>	<i>Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques</i>
<i>DOP</i>	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i>
<i>EEBS</i>	Ἑπετηρίς Ἑταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν
<i>EHB</i>	<i>The Economic History of Byzantium. From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century</i> , éd. A. Laiou
<i>EI et EI²</i>	<i>Encyclopédie de l'Islam</i> , 1 ^{re} et 2 ^e éd.
<i>EO</i>	<i>Échos d'Orient</i>
<i>GCS</i>	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte
<i>GRBS</i>	<i>Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies</i>
<i>IRAİK</i>	<i>Izvestija Russkogo arheologičeskogo institute v Konstantinopole</i>
<i>JÖB</i>	<i>Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik</i> [avant 1969 <i>JÖBG</i>]

MANSI	<i>Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio</i> , éd. J. D. Mansi
MGH	<i>Monumenta Germaniae historica</i>
MM	<i>Acta et diplomata graeca medii aevi sacra et profana</i> , éd. Fr. Miklosich et J. Müller
<i>Néos Hell.</i>	<i>Νέος Ἑλληνομνήμων</i> , éd. Sp. Lampros
<i>Nov.</i>	<i>Corpus iuris civilis</i> , t. 3, <i>Novellae</i> , éd. R. Schoell et G. Kroll
OCA	<i>Orientalia Christiana Analecta</i>
OCP	<i>Orientalia Christiana Periodica</i>
ODB	<i>The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium</i> , éd. A. Kazhdan
PG	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus</i> , series Graeca, éd. J.-P. Migne
PL	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus</i> , series Latina, éd. J.-P. Migne
PLP	<i>Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit</i>
PLRE	<i>The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire</i>
<i>PmbZ</i>	<i>Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit</i>
PO	<i>Patrologia orientalis</i>
RALLÈS-POTLÈS	<i>Σύνταγμα τῶν θείων καὶ ἱερῶν κανόνων</i> , éd. G. A. Rallès et M. Potlès
RE	<i>Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i>
REArm.	<i>Revue des études arméniennes</i>
REB	<i>Revue des études byzantines</i> [avant 1946 <i>EB</i>]
REG	<i>Revue des études grecques</i>
RESEE	<i>Revue des études sud-est européennes</i>
RH	<i>Revue historique</i>
RHM	<i>Römische historische Mitteilungen</i>
RHR	<i>Revue de l'histoire des religions</i>
RN	<i>Revue numismatique</i>
ROC	<i>Revue de l'Orient chrétien</i>
RSBN	<i>Rivista di studi bizantini e neoellenici</i>
SC	<i>Sources chrétiennes</i>
SEG	<i>Supplementum epigraphicum graecum</i>
Subs. Hag.	<i>Subsidia Hagiographica</i>
<i>Syn. CP</i>	<i>Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae</i> , éd. H. Delehay
TIB	<i>Tabula Imperii Byzantini</i>
TM	<i>Travaux et mémoires</i>
TM, Monogr.	<i>Travaux et mémoires, Monographies</i>
VV	<i>Vizantijskij Vremennik</i>
ZEPOS	<i>Jus Graecoromanum</i> , éd. J. et P. Zepos
ZRVI	<i>Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta</i>

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

AVANT-PROPOS	VII
<i>TABULA GRATULATORIA</i>	IX
LISTE DES TRAVAUX DE MICHEL KAPLAN	XI
Ilias ANAGNOSTAKIS	
Trois raisins de Dionysos byzantin	1
Marie-France AUZÉPY	
Liturgie et art sous les Isauriens : à propos de la Dormition de Nicée	29
Michel BALARD	
Les Génois dans l'Empire byzantin	59
Jean-Claude CHEYNET	
Intrigues à la cour de Constantinople : le délitement d'une faction (1057-1081)	71
Estelle CRONNIER	
Le saint, sa Vie, sa relique : l'exemple du bienheureux David de Thessalonique	85
Nathalie DELIERNEUX	
Les moniales à Byzance, entre clôture et vie publique (viii ^e -début xii ^e siècle)	101
Olivier DELOUIS	
La profession de foi pour l'ordination des évêques (avec un formulaire inédit du patriarche Photius)	119
Vincent DÉROCHE	
Notes sur le vii ^e siècle	139
Stéphanos EFTHYMIADIS	
L'incubation à l'époque mésobyzantine : problèmes de survivance historique et de représentation littéraire (viii ^e -xiii ^e siècle)	155
Raúl ESTANGÜI GÓMEZ	
Richesses et propriété paysannes à Byzance (xi ^e -xiv ^e siècle)	171

Bernard FLUSIN

L'hagiographie chypriote et le modèle de la sainteté épiscopale 213

Jean-Pierre GRÉLOIS

Saint Constantin, les Caramaniens et les Anasténarèdes 229

John HALDON

A context for two "evil deeds":

Nikephoros I and the origins of the *themata* 245

Buket KİTAPÇI BAYRI

Deux logothètes et un empereur. *Martyria* et propagande impériale

à l'époque d'Andronic II Paléologue 267

Bénédicte LESIEUR

Les higoumènes « ecclésiastiques » dans les sources palestiniennes (v^e-vi^e siècle) ... 281

Paul MAGDALINO

The House of Basil the Parakoimomenos 323

Élisabeth MALAMUT

L'impératrice byzantine et le cérémonial (viii^e-xii^e siècle) 329

Smilja MARJANOVIĆ-DUŠANIĆ

L'écho du culte de Nicéphore Phocas chez les Slaves des Balkans 375

Athanasios MARKOPOULOS

Notes et remarques sur la *Vie de saint Pierre d'Atroa* 395

Jean-Marie MARTIN

*Petri Diaconi Altercatio pro Romana Ecclesia**contra Graecum quendam* (1137) 407

Bernadette MARTIN-HISARD

L'ange et le pape :

le témoin géorgien d'une Vie grecque perdue de Grégoire le Grand 457

Sophie MÉTIVIER, Cécile MORRISON

Un peu de l'or de Byzance.

Le trésor de Pınarbaşı en Cappadoce (enfoui vers 654) 503

Benjamin MOULET

Gourmandise et excès alimentaires à Byzance 523

Paolo ODORICO

Le *Bios* de Kékauménos 537

Arietta PAPACONSTANTINOÛ	
« Choses de femme » et accès au crédit dans l'Égypte rurale sous les Omeyyades	551
Inmaculada PÉREZ MARTÍN	
La sécularisation du monachisme byzantin à l'époque macédonienne : l'évidence manuscrite	563
Vivien PRIGENT	
Des pères et des fils. Note de numismatique sicilienne pour servir à l'histoire du règne de Constantin IV	589
Renaud ROCHETTE	
Les martyrs de l'Union sur le mont Athos	617
Georges SIDÉRIS	
Bassianos, les monastères de Bassianou et de Matrônès (v ^e -vi ^e siècle)	631
Kostis SMYRLIS	
Wooin the petty elite: Privilege and imperial authority in Byzantium, 13 th -mid 14 th century	657
Jean-Pierre SODINI	
L'eulogie de saint Syméon Stylite l'Ancien aux cavaliers	683
Michel STAVROU	
Théodore II Lascaris fut-il associé au règne de son père Jean III Doukas Vatatzès ?	689
Alice-Mary TALBOT	
Caves, demons and holy men	707
Pablo UBIERNA	
Apocalyptique et ascétisme. L' <i>Apocalypse d'Élie</i> et le monachisme égyptien dans l'Antiquité tardive ...	719
Constantin ZUCKERMAN	
On a bountiful harvest at Antioch of Pisidia (with special regard to the Byzantine <i>modios</i> and to the Mediterranean diet)	731
LISTE DES ABRÉVIATIONS	753

Le saint, le moine et le paysan. Voilà trois figures de l'homme byzantin auxquelles Michel Kaplan, au long d'une carrière menée à l'université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne de 1969 à 2015, aura consacré une part notable de ses recherches. Professeur d'histoire byzantine depuis 1988 à la suite de Paul Lemerle et d'Hélène Ahrweiler, Michel Kaplan a porté haut les couleurs du byzantinisme français. Historien du monde rural ouvert aux sources religieuses, enseignant soucieux de ses étudiants qu'il a su entraîner dans son sillage, promoteur de Byzance aux concours nationaux de l'enseignement du second degré et du supérieur, homme de convictions et de pouvoir qui présida au destin de son université de 1999 à 2004, passeur enfin d'une discipline exigeante vers un public averti ou simplement curieux de *Tout l'or de Byzance* (1991) : c'est à plus d'un titre qu'il a semblé nécessaire de présenter à Michel Kaplan, pour ses 70 ans, un volume d'hommage.

Ces 35 contributions, que les éditeurs ont voulues substantielles et fondées sur des sources neuves ou reprises à nouveaux frais, sont l'œuvre d'élèves, de collègues français et étrangers, d'amis et de compagnons de route dont les préoccupations répondent aux intérêts du dédicataire. De l'Antiquité tardive au monde des Paléologues, de la campagne à la ville, de l'impératrice à la moniale et de l'empereur à l'évêque, de la monnaie à l'icône mais aussi de l'Italie à la Géorgie, chaque lecteur trouvera dans ce volume au moins une réponse supplémentaire à la question que Michel Kaplan vient à nouveau de nous poser : *Pourquoi Byzance ? Un empire de onze siècles* (2016).

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