

**THE LATE BYZANTINE CITY: SOCIAL,
ECONOMIC AND INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE**

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to contribute to the discussion of late Byzantine urban centres by researching four important cities for which written, archaeological and numismatic sources are available, and by creating a profile for each. Conclusions drawn from the study of Monemvasia, Ioannina, Arta and Thessalonike have then been used to draw a wider picture about late Byzantine cities in general.

The period 1204-1460 saw the territorial collapse of the Byzantine Empire, followed by its partial reconstitution and then final fall. The political fragmentation of the Balkans and an increasingly integrated Mediterranean economy placed the Byzantine city at the heart of the politics and the economy of its region, and connected it to the wider world more than at any time since the seventh century. The profile of cities such as Monemvasia, Ioannina, Arta and Thessalonike was shaped by their function both as centres of wealth and international trade, and the residence of the imperial administration and the provincial elite.

The study is divided into four chapters, each dedicated to a particular city. Each chapter analyses the politics, built environment, society, population, privileges and economy of the individual urban unit, and combines each section to draw conclusions. The concluding chapter of the thesis highlights common trends and developments in the socio-economic profiles of the four cities, and makes more general observations about late Byzantine urban civilization.

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For my Mum

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis concerns the socio-economic and institutional profile of the late Byzantine city. The aim of the study is to use profiles of individual cities to draw broader conclusions about urban entities in the late empire as a whole. Each of the cities considered in this thesis presents a different type of socio-economic and institutional profile allowing general conclusions to be made about various ‘categories’¹ of city. The surviving sources for the chosen cities shed light on the social stratification of the population and the involvement of each group in running the city, the city’s relationship with the provincial and central government, how the internal economy of the city operated and how this was linked to the hinterland, the empire and the wider Aegean and Mediterranean economy. The thesis presents conclusions, drawn from individual cases, about the urban life of Byzantium as a whole and tackles questions of decline which permeate the scholarship of all areas of the late Byzantine Empire.

There have been many modern studies on the late Byzantine Empire. The following section aims to use some of the more well-known works to highlight trends in how the late empire is generally viewed today. One of the most prolific authors on the late Byzantine Empire was Donald Nicol who wrote two seminal works: *The Last Centuries of Byzantium 1261-1453* and *The Despotate of Epiros, 1267-1479: A Contribution to the History of Greece in the Middle Ages*.² While combining politics, religious history, cultural history and

¹ See below

² Nicol 1993 and Nicol 1984 respectively. Nicol produced many studies on late Byzantium. I have selected two to mention here because they are the ones which have the broadest scope in terms of chronology, geography and focus. See also on this subject by the same author: Nicol 1986; Nicol 1988; Nicol 1979a; Nicol 1979b and Nicol 1992

diplomacy, the topic of the role of cities and discussion of the Byzantine economy is only briefly considered or simply not addressed in both of these works.³ One of the overarching themes of Nicol's two works is the decline of Byzantium. In these works the despotate of Epiros is described as a symptom of the decline of the Byzantine Empire and the Byzantine recovery of Epiros in the 1340s is considered too late to achieve a lasting unity. It was no longer possible for Byzantium to recover lost territories and reintegrate them into the fabric of the empire.⁴ The empire had, perhaps '...died of old age and decay, like the ancient tree trunk whose younger branches still put forth leaves but whose heart is hollow, so that it falls when the great gale comes.'⁵ According to Mango, Byzantium was a society of anti-Western and anti-innovation individuals; a people who wish to die with their way of life and traditions intact.⁶ Some historians, such as Ostrogorsky and Maksimović, identify a growing feudal nature of the Byzantine Empire, particularly under the Palaiologoi, and blame this development for the decline of the state, with the central government becoming weaker as the lower classes became the serfs of a corrupt aristocracy which oppressed the people and leached the wealth of the state for little return.⁷

³ For an overview of the late Byzantine economy and currency see Laiou and Morriison 2007; Morriison 1991; Laiou 2002a, 2002b; Laiou 1980-1; Hendy 1985; Hendy 1999; Grierson 1999. For information from archives and notarial documents on prices see J.CL. Cheynet, E. Malamut & C. Morriison 2002

⁴ Nicol 1984:250

⁵ Nicol 1993:441 Nicol admits that the idea that Byzantium was doomed because of the growth of Italian dominance and the opening of new markets in the west was not borne out by the Ottoman experience. The final paragraph of *The Last Centuries of Byzantium* encapsulates the traditional Byzantinists view of the decline of the empire, 'One may wonder what might have happened if Byzantium had belied the predictions of some of its own prophets and survived beyond the end of the sixth millennium...It died before the dawning of the new age of discovery and technology, before the widening of men's horizons. Its historians, philosophers and theologians were the last of their kind who had to transmit their thoughts and ideas in manuscript alone. If they had been spared to set up a Greek printing-press at Constantinople they would have found a ready and profitable market for editions of the treasures of classical literature that they had preserved through the centuries. But in other respects the Byzantines would probably not much have enjoyed or participated in the new world. By the fifteenth century it had been amply proved that they could neither stomach their dislike of the westerners nor survive without their help...They would rather submit to infidels whose ways, though unpleasant, were familiar, than prolong their agonies by soliciting the charity of foreign Christians who had never understood what it meant to be a Roman...When the end came in 1453 they were ready for it. It is surprising that it had not come sooner. It is perhaps as well that it came when it did.' Nicol 1993:411-412

⁶ Mango describes the Byzantines as "...people of the land, distrustful and unenterprising." Mango 1980:83

⁷ Maksimović 1988; Ostrogorsky 1954

The decline of the Byzantine economy is seen to go hand in hand with the decline of the state. The Palaiologan system of grants has been blamed for weakening the finances of the state.⁸ Furthermore, according to Angeliki Laiou, the integration of Byzantium into the wider Mediterranean trade network and the dominant role which Italians took in the Byzantine economy resulted in circumscribing ‘...the role of the Byzantines, since the initiative and the important mechanisms lay outside their control. As a result, the Byzantine economy of the second half of the thirteenth century and the first half of the fourteenth was vulnerable not only to its own, internal dynamic, but also to the limitations, crises, and inefficiencies of other states and economies.’⁹ This had the double effect of weakening both the state and private finances. The final century was one of calamities outside and inside of Byzantium all of which combined to ruin the economy; although certain individuals became rich this was not something that can be related to positive trends in the Byzantine economy.¹⁰ Many of these calamities struck Byzantium and Europe in the middle of the fourteenth century; the 1350s are seen as a turning point. The plague, the Serbian invasions, a second prolonged civil war, the collapse of the Mongolian Khanate north of the Black Sea and the first Ottoman invasion of Europe all occurred within twenty years of each other.

Many of the modern works on Byzantium observe the fall of the empire in 1453 and attempt to explain why this happened. The most common way of approaching this is to look for events or policies which weakened the state and trace their development up until the inevitable fall. This has led many scholars to start in 1204 or 1261 and look for changes in imperial policy or the general situation of the empire and then blame these for

⁸ Laiou 2002a:1160

⁹ Laiou 2002a:1160

¹⁰ Laiou 2002a:1161 ‘Thus there is little light in the bleak picture of the last hundred years.’ Nicol 1996:167 states that even though the Byzantine aristocracy might have become involved in trade after the mid-fifteenth century, Byzantine trade as a whole was strictly local in its scope and never rivalled that of the Italian cities.

imperial decline. Thus, works on late Byzantine history develop into, in one form or other, works on Byzantine decline. Developments that are seen to be positive, such as the involvement of Byzantine merchants in trade, or the recovery of Epiros, are dismissed as ephemeral.¹¹ According to the authors discussed above and many others, by the time of the Ottoman siege of Constantinople in 1453 Byzantium was ready to die. A revisionist study of the socio-economic and institutional profile of the late Byzantine city may find much that stands contrary to this view. In this thesis I have argued that there were positive elements to the late Byzantine city which when seen elsewhere, as in Italy, are viewed as progressive. These trends cannot be dismissed as unimportant or ephemeral. Instead they should be seen as demonstrating that Byzantine civilization was progressive and open to developments imported from the west until the end. My argument, based on the evidence of the cities, is that Byzantium did not fall because of an inevitable and inexorable decline brought about by a moribund and stagnate state, economy and society, but because the progressive and innovative elements that operated within the empire were destroyed when the empire was conquered by a stronger enemy before they could bear fruit.

Before continuing, it is necessary to define exactly what constituted a 'city'. This term is somewhat ambiguous in Byzantine studies.¹² Certain places, such as Constantinople and Thessalonike, are always termed cities in modern studies. Constantinople is always granted a unique status by Byzantinists with "...the unequivocal contrast between mid-sized towns and the empire's singular megalopolis..."¹³ being a matter of general agreement and referring not only to size but to culture, economic life and political significance. Thessalonike is often accorded much of the same deference but with clear emphasis on its

¹¹ See above.

¹² Many of these settlements were cities in antiquity and the reference to them as such has continued from classical to Byzantine studies.

¹³ Dagron 2002:395

position in second place. After the seventh century all other Byzantine cities present a problem when it comes to terminology and description. The Byzantines themselves have not made things easier for modern scholarship. The modern view of Constantinople as unique, justified as this may be, is the direct result of the way in which the Byzantines themselves described their capital. Byzantine descriptions of provincial cities are not particularly helpful as they present a wide variety of terms for them: *polis* (rarely), *kastron*, *polismata*, *phourion*, *asty*, and *chora*. Kazhdan has discussed how one author can use multiple terms to describe the same place at different points in the narrative.¹⁴ So while the metropolis of Constantinople and perhaps that of Thessalonike can be distinguished from all places of habitation below them and villages of the type recorded in the Athonite archives can be distinguished from those above them, the dividing line between fortress/towns and middle rank cities is blurred, perhaps beyond distinction.¹⁵ Many modern studies avoid defining what is meant by town, city or *kastron* and the authors pick and choose as they consider appropriate for each individual case.¹⁶

A set of defining characteristics of a city which may help are the twelve criteria developed by Martin Biddle, a scholar of western medieval urban archaeology. Biddle's criteria are: a circuit wall, street planning, markets, a mint, some degree of legal autonomy, a role as a focus for the surrounding area, a large dense population, economic diversification,

¹⁴ Kazhdan 1998:345-360. In this article Kazhdan outlines the changing nature of the way urban units in the Byzantine Empire were referred to by the inhabitants of the empire. Kazhdan uses the year 610 as the dividing line for his study. When discussing cities in the time before 610 Theophanes uses the word *polis* to refer to cities. However, for cities which appear in his narrative after 610 he used *kastron*. Other authors considered by Kazhdan are Nikephoros I who does not use the term *kastron*, instead using *polismata* and Theophanes Continuatus, Genesisios and Leo the Deacon all of whom use various terms, *polis*, *kastron* and *asty* to describe the towns of the empire. Kazhdan does show that there was a distinction in the Byzantine mind between the *poleis* of the sixth century and the *kastra* of the seventh century, however, his work also notes that the understanding of this distinction blurred over time so that by the tenth century the various terms for town/city were virtually synonymous. This lack of distinction has been evident in my own research on the late empire.

¹⁵ For a detailed discussion of rural life and society in late Byzantine Macedonia see Laiou 1977 and Laiou 2003:311-375

¹⁶ This is the theory which Haldon proposes, Haldon 1990:101 following the collapse of the old legally defined status of city in the seventh century.

‘urban’ house-types, social differentiation, complex religious organisation and judicial functions.¹⁷ Although these criteria were applied by Biddle to Anglo-Saxon England, they are universal and comprehensive enough, with minor adjustments, to be used as a framework for the study of the late Byzantine city. Using Biddle’s criteria as a starting point, Wickham has identified three characteristics which he used to differentiate urban and rural settlements from one another: demographic concentration, markets and economic activities that are structurally different from those of the countryside.¹⁸ The difficulty of using Biddle’s criteria to define the late Byzantine city is that not all of them are applicable to a Byzantine context, either because of the differences between the empire and Anglo-Saxon England or because there is a lack of evidence. For instance it is not always possible to discuss the street plan of a city due to the lack of sufficient archaeological evidence. This is particularly true of modern cities in the Balkans and Turkey which so often overlie their Byzantine predecessors. Similar considerations must be made when considering the presence of ‘urban’ house types. Biddle’s criterion of legal autonomy is also one that cannot be universally applied to Byzantine cities.¹⁹ The granting of royal charters to cities in Western Europe and the recognition of the growing class of burghers and their place in municipal administration has no parallel in Byzantium. For all that an individual *kephale* might act in the interests of the city which he ruled; this man was still appointed from Constantinople and was not an example of local legal autonomy or government. Thus the checklist of criteria used to determine the urban nature of a settlement in this thesis is a mixture of the three characteristics outlined by Wickham and my own modification of a number of those developed by Biddle, taking into account the particular nature of Byzantium. My criteria are demographic concentration, markets and

¹⁷ Biddle 1976:100. By Biddle’s definition if any four of these twelve criteria were present in a settlement then it could justifiably be called urban.

¹⁸ Wickham 2006:593

¹⁹ See individual profiles of arguments related to specific cases.

economic activities that are structurally different from those of the countryside, the presence of an administrative and/or judicial authority, diverse social differentiation and buildings of a type usually associated with urban settlement.²⁰ I consider that an urban unit which fulfils all of these criteria can truly be termed a city in the late Byzantine Empire.

The term 'Byzantine' needs clarification as the cities which I have chosen are not always considered to have been Byzantine. By Byzantine I mean those cities which, whatever their practical political situation, were affiliated with the Byzantine government in Constantinople and drew a certain amount of legitimacy and authority from this connection. As well as political considerations, the belief within a city that it was part of a larger whole is important even if the rulers of a city paid no more than lip service to the authority of the emperor. Therefore under the heading of 'Byzantine city' I not only include those urban centres directly administered by imperial officials, but those under the rule of the despots of the Morea, those governed by the rulers of Epiros²¹ and any city where the inhabitants considered an Emperor of the Romans to be the ultimate (if powerless) arbiter of their political identity.²²

Chronologically this study encapsulates the period 1204-1460. However, not every city will be considered for the entire period. Certain cities were not under Byzantine rule for the whole of this period. Much of the Empire was under Latin rule for the first half of the thirteenth century and was then only gradually recovered before being lost again to new enemies, foremost amongst these being the Serbs and the Ottomans. The period is that in which the empire recovered from a shattering blow only to gradually fall apart again in the

²⁰ This incorporates one or more of the following: fortifications, civic buildings and installations such as palaces, courts, markets, harbours and a dense concentration of religious buildings.

²¹ In their various guises as rulers of Epiros, despots of Epiros and Emperors and despots of Thessalonike.

²² Individual cases will be made for each of the four cities which I have chosen. At some point in its history each city was politically independent from the Byzantine emperor but always acknowledged the imperial system and political hierarchy.

face of new threats. As this happened the cities of the empire became refuges which often held out for longer than the surrounding countryside, particularly during the Ottoman conquest.²³ Thus, it could be argued that during the last centuries of Byzantium, and particularly the final hundred years, the cities of the empire were more significant to the empire and held a greater percentage of the population than they had at any time since the seventh century. Financially the period saw great changes with Italian influences and practices transforming Byzantium for good or ill.²⁴ The provincial city had never before been as prominent in the economic life of the empire as it was after the mid thirteenth century.²⁵ The geographical scope of this study requires further comment. It is limited to the Balkan provinces of the Byzantine Empire, particularly those which constitute modern Greece. The choice of this region was dictated by the territorial fortunes of late Byzantium. The area of study is the one which the Byzantine Empire managed to retain for the greatest period of time during the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In order to trace long term socio-economic and institutional trends the chosen cities had to demonstrate a continuity of operation within the Byzantine system.

Taking into account the above criteria for appropriate case studies the four urban centres selected for discussion in this thesis are Monemvasia, Ioannina, Arta and Thessalonike. Each of these social and economic units meets all of the criteria outlined above. Furthermore, each city was Byzantine for a considerable period of time. Thessalonike was ruled by the Komneno-Doukai from 1224-1246, the Empire of Nicaea in 1246-1261 and the restored Byzantium until 1423, with the exception of the first Ottoman

²³ An obvious example is Philadelphia in Asia Minor but the same is true of Constantinople, Thessalonike, Nicaea and Adrianople as well as many others.

²⁴ The effect of the Italians on the economy of Byzantium has been much debated over the years. The individual effect on each city will be discussed in the relevant chapter.

²⁵ The twelfth century had seen an economic reorientation away from the capital to the provinces, a feature which was exacerbated by the crusader sack of Constantinople in 1204, Harvey 1989:11.

conquest of the city, 1387-1403. Monemvasia was independent from 1204 until its conquest by the crusaders in the mid-thirteenth century and then reverted to more or less constant Byzantine control from 1259. Ioannina and Arta had a looser political association with the emperor in Constantinople; however, with the exception of the period of Serbian rule²⁶ Ioannina was under some form of Byzantine domination (either political or ideological) from 1204 to 1430 and Arta was in a similar position from 1204-1449.²⁷ A more detailed argument will be made in the individual profiles as to why each city can be considered Byzantine.

Each of these four cities presents a different 'type' of socio-economic and institutional profile. Thessalonike has the most diverse profile of the four cities which have been considered. The city had a large population that was varied ethnically, socially and in the occupations that were pursued. The city was a scholarly, spiritual, artistic and architectural centre, its influence in these areas stretching across the Balkan Peninsula. The economy of Thessalonike was also varied with the city fulfilling a number of roles as a centre of consumption in its own right and as a point for the collection of the region's resources for redistribution both locally and internationally. In contrast, Monemvasia was a mercantile settlement with little evidence of artisanal activity. The city was primarily a maritime entity and this is demonstrated by the different types of social distinctions which can be viewed in contrast with Thessalonike. Ioannina was entirely landlocked²⁸ and trade played little part in its economic life. The city was the archetypal country town dependent on and central to its own agricultural hinterland with both city and countryside dominated by the urban aristocracy. Ioannina was politically important because of its position on the

²⁶ Even then the city owed allegiance to the Emperor of the Serbs and Romans, Stefan Dušan and then his half-brother the Emperor of the Romans and Serbs Symeon Uroš.

²⁷ Again with the possible exception of the period of Serbian rule but with the same qualification as above, a further exception may be the period of Albanian rule but this technically operated under Serbian suzerainty.

²⁸ Unless one counts the presence of Lake Ioannina.

border of Byzantium, Serbia, Epiros and the Italian dominated coastal zone. Arta provides a mixture of the three other profiles with an ever-changing population brought in by different conquerors whilst finally being transformed into an important international market. Finally, it is important to highlight that each of the four cities considered in this thesis can be studied using a variety of sources of different types (written, architectural, archaeological, and numismatic) which has allowed for the construction of a more detailed and varied profile. The four cities I have chosen to study can be taken as the ultimate embodiment of their 'type'. Nevertheless, a study of the extreme expression of a 'type' does allow general conclusions to be drawn about the late Byzantine city, as long as the exaggerated characteristics of the case studies are taken into account.

An in-depth study of the socio-economic and institutional profile of the late Byzantine city requires a synthesis of a broad range of written, archaeological and numismatic evidence. Byzantine official documents are an important source and come in a number of forms; some issued by the state or the church and others drawn up for private individuals or institutions such as monasteries. The most important collection of state and church documents for this study is found in the six volumes of Franz Miklosich and Joseph Müller's *Acta et Diplomata Graeca Medii Aevi Sacra et Profana* 1860-1890. Miklosich and Müller's magisterial work contains the majority of the imperial *chrysobulls*, despotic *argyrobulls* and Church documents which have been consulted for the creation of the four city profiles. A notable exception is the *chrysobull* in favour of the Monemvasiots which is contained in Pseudo-Phrantzes. Imperial *chrysobulls* in favour of some of the cities of the empire have been studied by Kyritses and Patlagean.²⁹ The 'common' *chrysobulls*³⁰ reveal a great deal about the cities to which they were granted. The information contained in each

²⁹ Kyritses 1999 and Patlagean 1998.

³⁰ This term is applied to *chrysobulls* granted to the residents of a city as a group, as opposed to documents for individuals.

individual document varies, but generally speaking the chrysobulls demonstrate the economic character of the city. It will be argued below that the tax exemptions granted to each city speak directly about the economic priorities of that city's inhabitants. This has allowed conclusions to be drawn about the relative importance of mercantile, as opposed to artisanal or agricultural, activities of the people of the city. Furthermore, official documents shed light on the social makeup of a city, which groups were privileged and how, which sectors of society exerted influence and who held power within the city. On occasion imperial and church documents allow a glimpse of how the city was connected both to its immediate hinterland and to the Byzantine state.

Official documents of the western powers offer a different perspective on Byzantine cities. Those which have been used in this study are from the archives of Venice, Ragusa, Genoa and Angevin Naples.³¹ Although the archives of these cities provide useful, though often supplementary, information on the politics of the period, both internal and international, their main use is as evidence for mercantile activities, banking and trade. Using the archives of Venice, Genoa and Ragusa it is possible to follow the careers of individual merchants, trace patterns of trade throughout the Aegean and the Mediterranean, and see shifting patterns of supply and demand and the trade in specific goods. The documents highlight Byzantine involvement in trade and the late Byzantine city's place in the wider European economy.

The Athonite archives provide a unique insight into life in late Byzantine Thessalonike. As well as recording the names of countless officials, *archontes*, churchmen

³¹ Thomas and Predelli *Diplomatarium*; Thiriet, *Régestes* 3 vols; Cessi, *Deliberazioni*; Musso, *Documenti*; Otten-Froux 1987; Iorga, *Notes et extraits*, 5 vols. Large parts of the archives of Angevin Naples were destroyed during the Second World War and those documents which concern Byzantium and Epiros survive only in the work of I. A. Romanos (Romanos 1895). Although the surviving Angevin archives have been steadily published since the 1950 these works contain no references to Ioannina, Arta, Thessalonike or Monemvasia. See Filangieri *I registri della Cancelleria angioina* (Naples, 1950)

and lower class laymen these documents supply information on the built environment and topography of Thessalonike, the location of now buried churches, descriptions and locations of houses, shops and workshops, the names of districts and occasionally their location. The Athonite archives also help reveal the changing nature of the economy of Thessalonike and Macedonia and the effects that events such as the civil wars of the fourteenth century, the Serbian conquest and the plague had on the city and its hinterland. These documents also allow a guarded glimpse of the activities of the different sections of Thessalonican society; how they invested their money, the improvements that they made to rural and urban property and grants of estates to monasteries in return for pensions. Different actions at different points in the history of Thessalonike imply varying levels of confidence in the future of the city and the security of its hinterland.

The histories produced by Byzantine authors are of only occasional use in constructing a socio-economic profile. The vast majority of these works rarely consider any city outside of Constantinople in great detail. The most frequent exception is Thessalonike which does receive more regular mention. There are a small number of other exceptions to this generalisation: Katakouzenos is particularly useful when recording his activities in Epiros in the 1340s, and Chalkokondyles and Pseudo-Phrantzes were interested in the events in Monemvasia inasmuch as they affected the wider history of the Morea in the 1390s. The histories concern themselves mostly with political events. Only very occasionally do histories provide information about the built environment of a city or about its population.³² Exceptions to this statement are the two Epirote chronicles produced in Ioannina, the *Chronicle of Ioannina* and the *Chronicle of Tocco*. These two works have a local focus and offer a wealth of information about the internal workings of, and the

³² One of the chief exceptions to this statement is Katakouzenos who provides some useful information on the location of certain buildings within Thessalonike and discusses the Zealot movement within the city.

people living in, Ioannina and Arta. One crucial piece of evidence which the histories do provide is the opinion of the authors about the cities in question, for instance what type of place they were and how the city fit into the wider world.

The numismatic evidence can be divided into two categories: single finds and hoards (both in the form of either stray or excavation finds). Single finds tend to be lower value coins, and are therefore more likely to represent the medium of daily exchange, while hoards usually represent the higher denominations which were available. Of course in an area with a limited number of values and denominations it is possible that both single finds and hoards comprise the same types of coin. These two types of find (single and hoard) are likely to present different pieces of the numismatic puzzle for consideration. Single finds are useful both as indicators of which coins were in use in a city and for the circulating patterns of the output of the mints operating in at least two of the four cities under consideration. For the purposes of this study hoards can provide a sample of the coinage in circulation at the time of concealment. Another use for the evidence of coin hoards is to fill in the gaps left by single finds. As stated earlier single finds tend to be low value coins; thus, alone they provide a distorted view of the circulating coinage. Hoards can provide a sample of the higher value currency, which although it may not have been as common as the low value denominations did circulate alongside them in some form.³³ Foreign high value coinage used in trade is represented mainly in hoards. This material can be particularly useful as supporting evidence for the written sources. As with any historical source numismatic data has certain drawbacks. As Grierson said, "The coins available for study are only a sample of those that have been found. The coins that have been found are only a sample of those which were lost. These in turn were only a sample of those that had

³³ For the numismatist hoards obviously have a great number of uses such as the dating of coins and assessment of coinages by examining which coins are hoarded together etc. The uses outlined above are those which are of particular use for this study.

originally been in circulation. Those that had been in circulation in the area for which information is available would be only a sample of the total number of coins issued.³⁴ Further problems arise because of the limitations imposed on archaeological work on Byzantine Thessalonike, Ioannina and Arta, which are beneath the modern city, and Monemvasia, which has not been the subject of systematic archaeological investigations. There are also difficulties when using the material which has surfaced during archaeological work, either through problems of access to the objects themselves or because of the variable nature of the publication of numismatic data by archaeologists.

Of the cities which have been studied Thessalonike, Arta and perhaps Monemvasia possessed a mint at some point during the late Byzantine period. The mint of Thessalonike functioned until the late fourteenth century, while that of Arta produced silver trachea which appear to have been ceremonial issues under the first Komneno-Doukai and then operated as a regular mint under Michael II Komnenos Doukas. The mint output provides useful information for understanding how the city which housed the mint interacted with other centres. The iconography used in the coin designs both influenced and was influenced by the coinages of other areas. For example the early coinage of Theodore Komnenos Doukas at Thessalonike can be seen to directly influence the emerging Serbian coinage of Stefan Radoslav (1228-1234). Such influence, in whatever direction it flowed, reveals prolonged contacts between areas and a sharing of ideas. The influence of the output of the mint of Thessalonike over the iconography of the Serbian coinage ceased with the decline of the Empire of Thessalonike following the battle of Klokotnitza in 1230. Serbia found other models on which to base its coinage. The political and economic strength of the home city of a mint and its interaction with its hinterland and other centres is also revealed through the geographical spread of the coins struck there.

³⁴ Grierson 1965:v

Archaeological evidence and studies of surviving buildings have been used in my work to provide information on the built environment of the city. An assessment of the built environment is necessary for an understanding of the relationship between the buildings, secular and religious, public and private, and the function of the individual zones of the city. Excavation finds offer a great deal of information about the material culture of the city. Items such as pottery, metal work and glass objects can highlight the presence of artisanal production in the city or demonstrate a mercantile link between the city and the place where the goods were manufactured. Each of the different types of source outlined above provides very different information about late Byzantine cities and the people who lived in them. By combining all of the different types of evidence it is possible to create a picture of the physical, social and economic fabric of a city.

Of all the aspects of Byzantine history, the fate of the ‘city’ has proved to be a controversial topic. The early period of Byzantine history has attracted most attention in this respect. The changing nature of the Byzantine city from ancient *polis* to medieval *kastron* has received much attention since the early 1950s, when the previously held notion that the late antique city continued unchanged through the dark ages was finally laid to rest.³⁵ After this point two differing schools of thought developed, one suggesting that there had been a reduction in the scale and scope of urban life, but a continuity of habitation and function at many sites,³⁶ and the other arguing for a complete collapse of urban civilization.³⁷ The seventh century is seen as the point of change although there have been some opinions to the contrary.³⁸ Generally speaking the ‘continuitists’ have based

³⁵ See Kazhdan 1954. On the city in the Byzantine Dark Age see Haldon 1985

³⁶ Notably Ostrogorsky 1959; Lopez 1959; Haldon and Kennedy 1980; Bouras 1981 and Haldon 1990.

³⁷ The most notable proponent of this view has been Clive Foss. See Foss 1975a; Foss 1975b; Foss 1976; Foss 1977a; Foss 1977b and Foss 1979.

³⁸ See Dunn 1994 where Dunn places the beginning of this change to a new type of urban centre in the third century with the growing insecurity in the Balkans. Dunn argues that this new, smaller fortified settlement

their arguments on the literary evidence, whilst the ‘catastrophists’ on the archaeological evidence. Since the publication of Haldon’s *Byzantium in the Seventh Century* the idea that internal factors led to the decline (but not general abandonment) of the city has become the more widely accepted view.³⁹ The ‘recovery’ of the city and its resumption of a central role in the economic and social life of the empire from the tenth century has also been the focus of much research.⁴⁰ A key feature noted by modern scholars is the apparent demographic rise suggested by the creation of extramural suburbs and the building over of previously empty intramural areas such as the agora of the town.⁴¹ The late Byzantine city by contrast has attracted much less attention.⁴² There has been some work on the Frankish Greek cities which later returned to Byzantine rule.⁴³ Most of these works refer to the city in general. Late Byzantine Thessalonike has been the subject of a volume of the *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*.⁴⁴ This work contains papers on a wide variety of topics, from the numismatic output of the city, to the built environment and the artistic influence of the city’s architects.⁴⁵ However, there has been no attempt to draw together the various aspects of the late Byzantine city, or individual cities, to form a synthesis.

Ten city profiles were produced for the *Economic History of Byzantium*, some of which focus on the late period. Four of these are of particular interest for the purposes of this study. Sanders produced an archaeological profile of Corinth in which written material and

was the type of urban unit required in the Balkans at this time and that insecurity spread so did the need for this type of settlement. See also Dunn 1998 and Dunn 1995.

³⁹ For a recent appraisal based on this approach see, Dagron 2002 and Haldon 1990, where Haldon talks about the ruralisation and fortification of sites, “The defensive properties of “urban” sites, their direct relevance to military, administrative or ecclesiastical needs, and so on, now played the key role in whether a “city” survived or not.” Haldon 1990:229.

⁴⁰ See Hrochová 1976, Kazhdan and Wharton Epstein 1985, Mango 1980, Angold 1985, Bouras 2002 and Dagron 2002.

⁴¹ For examples see Frantz 1961 and Setton 1975.

⁴² See Maksimović 1981, Bryer 1986 and Matschke 2002. Mango 1980, dedicates one quarter of a page to the Byzantine city post 1204.

⁴³ Sanders 2002; Williams and Zervos 1993; Sanders 1987; Gerland 1903

⁴⁴ *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 57 (2003)

⁴⁵ Ćurčić 2003

numismatic data are used as a supplementary source of evidence to support the findings of archaeology.⁴⁶ This profile considers the evidence of building activity, manufacturing, excavated residential areas, and trade goods to draw conclusions about the economy of Corinth; numismatic data is dealt with only in a cursory manner.⁴⁷ The finds of trade goods provide direct evidence of links with the wider world. Conclusions about society and the population are hampered by the lack of archaeological data which appears to come from more wealthy areas of medieval Corinth. This had left Sanders with evidence of poorer areas only, which somewhat hinders the drawing of general conclusions. Dochev's profile of Tŭrnovo is a balanced combination of archaeological evidence, written sources, and numismatic material.⁴⁸ Dochev begins by placing Tŭrnovo in its geographical setting and follows this with a description of the building activity on the site and what this reveals about the activities of the people of Tŭrnovo. Archaeology provides evidence of a wide range of manufacturing industries taking place in the city, and reveals the goods that were imported into Tŭrnovo. Numismatic data is used to illustrate the connections with lands outside of Bulgaria, as well as to illustrate the wealth of the city and the production of its own mint. Jordanov has written an equally balanced profile of Preslav, again combining written sources, archaeology, and numismatic detail.⁴⁹ Jordanov presents the history of the site and then its location. This survey is followed by an assessment of the archaeology, resulting in a description of the layout of the city and the functions of its various quarters. Preslav's hinterland is discussed in terms of the produce that it supplied to the city for its

⁴⁶ Sanders 2002. This work is a synthesis of the archaeological reports; see for instance Scranton 1957, Blegen et al. 1930, Williams et al. 1976, Morgan 1942, Davidson 1952, Edwards 1933, with further details from the annual excavation reports found in *Hesperia*.

⁴⁷ A separate chapter of the Economic History of Byzantium is dedicated to numismatic circulation in Corinth from 976 to 1204. Penna 2003.

⁴⁸ Dochev 2002 For more on the numismatic evidence from Tŭrnovo see Dochev 1992; for the archaeological investigations of the site see Petrov 1986, for metal finds see Popov 1984, Valov 1991, for pottery and glass production at Tŭrnovo see Georgieva 1974 and Valov 1975.

⁴⁹ I. Jordanov 2002. For more on Preslav see Ovcharov 1980, *Pliska-Preslav* 6 vols 1979-93, *Preslav*. 5 vols 1968-93; for pottery see Mijatev 1936; for numismatic data see Jordanov 1980 and Jordanov 1984.

consumption and to be sold at the market. Manufacturing and trade are investigated through a range of archaeological finds (trade goods) and numismatic evidence, suggesting continual trade links with Byzantium and an uncharacteristically monetised economy for Bulgaria at that time. The profile for Monemvasia is by far the longest and most detailed in the *Economic History of Byzantium*.⁵⁰ It begins with a description of the geographical position of the city, followed by a description of the layout of the city and the location of its various districts. Next, the surviving monuments are considered and the evidence gained is used to produce a partial street plan and a list of buildings, along with their probable functions. This leads on to an outline of the uses of various parts of the city. After this the hinterland of Monemvasia is discussed, its economic relation to Monemvasia, and the routes of communication between the city and outlying settlements. Kalligas uses the density of buildings within the occupied areas to make estimates of the size of the population of Monemvasia. Kalligas then uses written sources to assess the institutions and privileges of the city, its commerce, and the maritime activities of its inhabitants. This profile also contains a summary of the leading Monemvasiot families and their political and commercial careers. The studies of Turnovo, Preslav and Monemvasia in the *Economic History of Byzantium* provide a blueprint for my own study, the balanced source approach of the Turnovo and Preslav profiles and the breadth of the Monemvasia profile as a model.

The exact structure of the individual profiles varies according to the requirements of each city, but in general will follow the same basic template. Each case study begins with an historical survey of the city in question which provides a backdrop against which the

⁵⁰ Kalligas 2002. The observations on the built environment and development of Monemvasia presented by Kalligas are based on the research and observations of the author. Most of the written sources discussed by Kalligas can be found in Kalligas 1990. Three general works on Monemvasia are Kalligas and Kalligas 1986, Nicol 1994, and Miller 1921. Additional discussion of the exemptions and privileges granted to the Monemvasiots can be found in Binon 1938, Schreiner 1978, For works on the Church and Monemvasia see; Lambros 1915. For studies involving or encompassing mercantile activity in Monemvasia or by Monemvasiots see; Morgan 1976 and Gasparis 1988.

socio-economic and institutional profile of the city can be set. As has been explained above, the chronological extent of this survey will vary from city to city. The history will place each city in its geographical setting and assess the routes of communication between the city and neighbouring settlements and regions. Following this there will be a synopsis of the political history of the city, incorporating a discussion of the sources which provide the information used to create the narrative.

The second part of the discussion of each city consists of an analysis of the physical characteristics and the built environment of the city, as both are key to our understanding of the city itself. The geographical zone in which a city is built directly affects the built environment and can influence the society and economy of the settlement as well. The most striking example in the present study is Monemvasia and the extent to which the rock itself has shaped the history and economy of the city. The built environment of a city also supplies a great deal of information about the city. Buildings constructed or renovated during the period in question speak directly about the economic situation prevailing in the city, the priorities of the inhabitants, what types of buildings (religious, utilitarian, defensive) were constructed and when. They can also reveal information about the patrons who sponsored particular works. By mapping standing monuments alongside those that have been revealed through archaeological work we can create a picture of the relationship between these buildings and begin to understand the uses of various parts of the city; whether residential, commercial, administrative, defensive or religious.

The third part of the discussion focuses on the population and society of the city. It is always very difficult to determine the size of the population of the Byzantine city. There is no way of translating the area covered by a settlement into an approximate population figure and the contemporary sources do not give any information which can help to

estimate the number of people living in a city. The social structure of the cities in question can, however, be assessed. The upper classes appear in the sources more frequently, both as a class and as individuals. Various groups appear in the lists of privileges which have been analysed along with narrative accounts to assess the role which all of the constituent parts of the population played in the political and economic life of the city.

The final part of the profile concerns trade and production. This will be an analysis of the production of the city and its hinterland, questions about the markets for its goods and the role of merchants, both foreign and domestic, in the economy of the city. Special attention will be paid to these merchants. What was the range of the native merchants and what relationship did their activities play with relation to the foreign merchants present in the city? Numismatic data will be incorporated into this section along with finds of trade goods, such as pottery and glass ware.

There are several exceptions to the general profile structure outlined above. The profiles of Monemvasia and Ioannina will need to be varied slightly. The administration of Monemvasia and the city's fleet both receive individual consideration in their own sections. The variation in the profile of Ioannina comes in the form of a section to analyse the civil, judicial and military privileges which are peculiar to the city and thus deserve comment independent of the general structure. Arta provides the exception to the statement above that official documents are a more fertile source of information than histories. For this city there exist no imperial or church documents, only Western records (Venetian, Ragusan and Angevin), so the two chronicles which concern Epiros, the *Chronicle of Ioannina* and the

Chronicle of Tocco, will assume a more central role than narrative sources have in the other three profiles.⁵¹

The development of the town in Byzantium did not take place in isolation and a theme of this study will be to examine parallels between the Byzantine city and its European neighbours. Throughout much of Western Europe the towns of the Middle Ages had developed a complex identity, set of institutions and self-government. From the late eleventh century this process affected most of Europe.⁵² The development of urban institutions was at first accompanied by charters granted by the lord or king to the inhabitants of the town. Many of these treated the town as an individual which could therefore have a legal identity and protection from feudal dues.⁵³ The towns of Europe took advantage of the political troubles of their overlords to extend their autonomy and privileges. Thus the English towns were granted rights under King John and during the civil war of 1258-1267.⁵⁴ In the French possessions of the English crown Henry II granted the towns charters as a way to ensure their aid against the French.⁵⁵ While the gradual decline of the power of the German Emperor, first in Italy and then north of the Alps, resulted in varying degrees of urban autonomy in Italy and Germany. The level of autonomy gained by the towns and the methods by which this was achieved varied from region to region. Some cities became effectively independent states, while others were granted varying degrees of autonomy. In Northern Italy where the power of the German Emperor was waning throughout the period the cities began, from the eleventh century, to

⁵¹ The two chronicles will be supplemented by the works of Akropolites, Chalkokondyles and occasional mentions in Kantakouzenos but the chronicles are the primary narrative source for Arta.

⁵² Reynolds 1977:91

⁵³ Pounds 2005:102. This was so particularly in the north of Europe, 'A charter guaranteed the freedom of the citizens who had received it. They could travel, pursue a craft, and do business without fear of being dragged back to the village from which their ancestors had come.' Pounds 2005:106.

⁵⁴ Reynolds 1977:108-109

⁵⁵ Reynolds 1977:106

dominate their hinterland both financially and politically.⁵⁶ Such was also the case in much of the German Empire north of the Alps but in the case of England and France the towns found themselves with a stronger ruler who in the case of England was the direct lord of many of the towns: in France the king appointed officials to sit alongside the town council as his representatives.⁵⁷

During the eleventh century the councils of the towns of much of Europe began to take more and more of the decisions which concerned the daily running of the town. The composition of such councils remained linked to the ownership of land, even in towns where mercantile interests were of growing importance.⁵⁸ The growth of the importance of trade was accompanied by an increasing interest in mercantile activities on the part of the landed elite. At the same time rich merchants were buying estates in the countryside of the cities and thus opening up the way for their families to enter the higher echelons of society.⁵⁹ This later process became more prevalent over time and is frequently seen in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries throughout Europe.⁶⁰ In fact although in some areas, such as England, Flanders and the Netherlands, the merchant guilds dominated the town councils from the twelfth century it is not until the 1270s that these councils contained merchants who did not also have considerable interests in landed estates.⁶¹

The members of the majority of the councils of northern Italy were drawn from the different regions of the city, a practice seen in northern Europe only in London. By the thirteenth century the cities of Italy were moving away from the communal identity which still prevailed in the rest of Europe. The legal make up of Italian cities was becoming more

⁵⁶ Nicholas 1997:3

⁵⁷ Nicholas 1997:111-112

⁵⁸ Nicholas 1997:3

⁵⁹ Nicholas 1997:3. This process accelerated after c. 1270. Nicholas 1997:15

⁶⁰ Nicholas 1997:3. Although the distinction between the landed elite and nobility was more pronounced in northern Europe than in Italy. Nicholas 1997:14

⁶¹ Nicholas 1997:5

complicated with differently defined groups residing in the city.⁶² One element of this was the rise of the *popolo* which rather than being a group composed of the poorer members of the urban population was a union of the inhabitants who had been excluded from power in the commune, whether for financial or political reasons.⁶³ Many of the excluded were members of the craft (as opposed to merchant) organizations. Many of the towns of Europe began admitting members of these guilds to the town councils in the later part of the thirteenth century, and nearly all had done so by the 1370s.⁶⁴ The fourteenth century also saw the rise of the *signor* and the beginning of the gradual transformation of many of the cities of Italy from republican communes into city states ruled by a hereditary leader.

Civil disturbances were common in Western European towns in the middle ages. Many of these, beginning with the struggle to create the communes themselves and the rise of the *popolo* grew out of the rising disaffection of those unrepresented in the government of the city. After this the pattern was set of periodic uprisings of those excluded from power, either to try and gain representation on the city council or as a protest against the frequent feuds between the elite families which racked the cities of Italy in particular.⁶⁵ What is important is that these struggles were not class based; both sides usually contained a broad representation of the inhabitants of the city.⁶⁶ Nevertheless with the growth of guilds and craft associations the population of the cities of Western Europe became organised and therefore able to demand that its voice be heard, or to be manipulated by those who needed supporters to gain power themselves.

⁶² Nicholas 1997:7

⁶³ Nicholas 1997:7 It is wrong to see the civil disturbances which took place in the thirteenth century with the rise of the *popolo* as a struggle between artisans and merchants, rich and poor or merchants and landed elite.

⁶⁴ Nicholas 1997:21. The admission of the craft guilds into the corridors of power was not instant and was not seen in the whole of Europe at the same time. For example Florence allowed them representation on the council in 1270 while the process took until c.1330 to be common in Germany.

⁶⁵ For example in 1336 the inhabitants of Zurich revolted, gaining equal representation for the craft guilds on the city council which had been dominated by the old merchant families. Nicholas 1997:118.

⁶⁶ For instance one riot, in Florence, of the *popolo minuto* was led by Salvestro de Medici. Nicholas 1997:131-132.

The historical backdrop against which the history of the late Byzantine town was acted out can be seen to have many parallels with events which had led to the development of many of the features of urban autonomy in the west. The Balkan towns of the Byzantine Empire following 1204 were all recovered from other foes, be they westerners or other Byzantine factions. This allowed the towns to demand rights and privileges. Furthermore the Palaiologan period saw the imperial government becoming increasingly impoverished and less able to force its will upon the provinces. One key question to be addressed in this thesis is how the economic and social developments which took place in the late Byzantine city compare with those happening in their western counterparts and if there is a sense that like circumstances led to the creation of like institutions and developments.

Before continuing it would be helpful to place the numismatic data which I will consider into context. To do this I will briefly outline the numismatic systems which were in place throughout this period in the Peloponnese and Epiros, the situation in Thessalonike is difficult to summarize and will be considered in the chapter relating to that city. The Peloponnese had a very varied history in terms of coin usage after the crusaders began infiltrating the area after 1204 up until the end of the period under consideration in 1460. Out of the coinage of the old Byzantine Empire the most widely circulating was that of the Latin Emperors. Only a few individual examples of the issues of the Komnenou-Doukai of Thessalonike have been found in the peninsula.⁶⁷ Nicaean coins are more common than Thessalonican ones with hyperpyra being found in seven hoards. The crusaders introduced the English silver penny and the deniers tournois, both of which are found in hoards dated to after 1204. From the middle of the thirteenth century the use of English silver declined and the denier tournois continued as the most important coin in the Peloponnese, especially after the opening of a mint producing these coins in Achaia in

⁶⁷ These were found at Sparta and Corinth.

c.1300. The denier tournois began to become less popular after the Venetians ordered that the soldini should be used in the city's colonies in 1333. The result of this was that the Achaian mint closed in 1353, the billon coinage being replaced by a new Venetian coin, the tornesello. The Morea possessed its own system of accounting based on a local hyperpyron, taking into account the denier tournois. The exception to this was the Byzantine province which tried to maintain the Constantinopolitan standard of accounting.⁶⁸

Epiros, like the Peloponnese, has a complicated numismatic history. The area has always been more open to the west and the Adriatic than to the east and the rest of the Balkan Peninsula. As a result Epiros was incorporated into the Venetian and western monetary system which linked Epiros to Greece and the Aegean islands. At an early date in the thirteenth century Epiros became integrated into the Venetian grosso system.⁶⁹ Having said this there is evidence of a number of Byzantine issues in Epiros, namely from the thirteenth century mint of Arta, the Byzantine mint at Thessalonike and then a smaller number of issues from Constantinople. It is by no means certain that these Byzantine issues ever formed a large part of the circulating medium and the context in which they were introduced to Ioannina and Arta will be examined in the relevant chapters. From the mid-thirteenth century the production of deniers tournois at Naupaktos, in the Peloponnese by the principality of Achaia and at other points in southern Greece, notably Thebes and Athens, these billon coins also came to dominate the region and very quickly supplanted the Byzantine billon trachea. As with the Peloponnese Epiros possessed its own hyperpyron of account, seen in Epiros and Corfu distinct from that operating in either the Peloponnese or in Constantinople.

⁶⁸ See Monemvasia chapter below. Much of this section has relied on the unpublished thesis of Julian Baker. Baker 2002.

⁶⁹ Touratsoglou and Baker 2002:220

A number of terms and words which will make frequent appearances throughout the thesis require clarification at this point. The word *archon* and the plural *archontes* should in general be taken to mean the elite section of the city in question's inhabitants. These people controlled a large portion of the wealth in the city and their estates often dominated the rural hinterland as well. These men should be distinguished from the centrally appointed office holders who, although resident in the city temporarily, will not be considered as a part of the permanent population. The exceptions to this general definition are Monemvasia and Thessalonike. In Monemvasia there was an official with the designation *archon*. The role of the Monemvasiot *archon* will be discussed in the chapter dealing with that city. When discussing Thessalonike the *archontes* are to be defined in the general sense outlined above. However, in one case, the Zealot revolt, there were two officials described as the *archon*. It will be made clear in the relevant section of the discussion where this individual is meant instead of the class as a whole. The so called 'common *chrysobulls*' were issued by the Byzantine authorities, usually the emperor but occasionally by a despot,⁷⁰ to the inhabitants of a town in common. There have been two recent studies of these documents by E. Patlagean and D. Kyritses respectively. Patlagean demonstrated that these documents were issued earlier than had previously thought and should not be linked to the civil wars of the fourteenth century but to the earlier reconquest of the Balkans by the Nicaean and restored Byzantine Empires, and perhaps to an even earlier period. These documents constitute the major written source for Monemvasia and are important for the study of Ioannina and Thessalonike; unfortunately there are no known common *chrysobulls* for Arta.

The officials of the central administration of the Byzantine Empire will frequently appear in this thesis, particularly the *kephale*. The *kephale* was the governor either of an

⁷⁰ But in this case an *argyroboullon*.

individual town and its immediate hinterland or of a number of small towns and the surrounding region.⁷¹ The roles of head of the civil administration, armed forces and judicial system were united in the *kephale*.⁷² As such the *kephale* is often mentioned in the common *chrysobulls*, either to ensure that he respects the privileges which are granted in the document, or to limit his powers in favour of the inhabitants of the city. In the early Palaiologan period there are mentions of 'general' *kephale* with a wider geographical region of authority but these references tend to cease with the appointment of members of the imperial family to appanages which made the 'general' *kephale* unnecessary.⁷³ One exception to this, I would suggest, are the three *kephale* appointed in the Morea under the administrative reforms of Constantine Palaiologos (the future Constantine XI), but this will be considered during the discussion of the *kephale* of Monemvasia.

The above discussion has provided a brief introduction to the aims of the thesis as well as an indication of the methodology that has guided the decisions in researching and structuring my argument. The following chapters will investigate the society, economy and institutions of each city. It will be demonstrated that the late city existed in many diverse forms and was frequently innovative and progressive. Finally, my thesis will use the late Byzantine city to tackle issues of decline and stagnation within the Palaiologan Empire.

⁷¹ Maksimovic 1988:129-130

⁷² Maksimovic 1988:146

⁷³ Maksimovic 1988:145

CHAPTER ONE: MONEMVASIA 1204-1460

Monemvasia under the Palaiologoi¹

Following the Fourth Crusade, the Peloponnese gradually fell to the crusaders, becoming the crusader principality of Achaia. Relations between the Monemvasiots and Franks seem, at first, to have been almost cordial.² Kalligas proposes that there were two factions in Monemvasia: one pro-crusader, led by a member of the Chamaretos family; one pro-Byzantine, occasionally led by a member of the Daimonoianis family.³ Monemvasia remained independent until the rule of the fourth Prince of Achaia, William II Villehardouin. It is generally accepted that Monemvasia fell to the crusaders in 1248 after a three year siege.⁴ However, the length of the siege of the city has been disputed with a revised date of 1252-53 being suggested for the crusader conquest.⁵ The *Chronicle of the Morea* describes the surrender of Monemvasia where the heads of the three chief families of the city (Paulos Mamonas, Georgios Daimonoianis and Ioannes Sophianos) surrendered Monemvasia to William, who granted the inhabitants a number of privileges.⁶ The *Petition to the Patriarch* meanwhile describes how, prior to the surrender, those who did not wish to submit (including the *rex* in their number)⁷ left Monemvasia for Nicaea, where they were allowed to settle in Pegai, thus

¹ Byzantine Monemvasia has received only three specific studies all by Kalligas: Kalligas 1990, a book concerning the written sources for the history of Monemvasia from the foundation of the city to 1460 and Kalligas 2003 a general study of the city produced for the *Economic History of Byzantium*, and most recently Kalligas 2010. Other works concerning the city focus on the questions arising from one document, such as Schreiner 1978, Lambros 1915 and Binon 1938; or are actually concerned with the wider history of the region and mention the city only as it effected broader events, not for its own sake, Bon 1971, Laiou 1980-1, Loenertz 1943 and Zakythinis 1975. Therefore as far as secondary literature is concerned the student of Monemvasia must rely heavily on the work of Kalligas.

² Kalligas 1990:71-79

³ Kalligas 1990:81. Kalligas also postulates that one generation of the Chamaretos family had pro-crusader sympathies. For my views see below, pp.48-50.

⁴ Bon 1971:72-73; Miller 1921:232-3

⁵ The date of 1248 is based on the testimony of the *Chronicle of the Morea*. The revised date was suggested because of the information provided in the fifteenth century *Petition to the Patriarch*. It has been suggested that this work used official documents from the Principality of Achaia and was thus a more reliable source than the *Chronicle of the Morea*, Kalligas 1990:88-92.

⁶ Kalligas 2010:29 believes that the city did not fall before 1252; Kalligas 1990:87

⁷ See below, pp.40-55.

becoming the first Monemvasiot colonists. Following the battle of Pelagonia in 1259, William II agreed to surrender Monemvasia to Michael VIII as part of his ransom; this had taken place by 1262.⁸

Monemvasia is absent from the Byzantine histories of the period between the Byzantine recovery of the city and the civil war between John V Palaiologos and John VI Kantakouzenos. The city was obviously experiencing a prosperous early fourteenth century as the imperial *chrysobulls* issued for the city demonstrate.⁹ Monemvasia received eight grants of privileges from the Palaiologoi, three of which also concerned Monemvasiots living in other cities of the empire.¹⁰ An additional document was also issued for the Monemvasiots of Pegai.¹¹ It has been argued that the *chrysobull* of Andronikos III, issued in 1336, is not a genuine document, but a forgery created by Makarios Melissenos, the author in whose work it is preserved.¹² After consideration I believe that

⁸ Lambros 1915:287-90

⁹ See below, pp.55-81.

¹⁰ The first of these documents was issued by Michael VIII Palaiologos and only survives in an abbreviated form in the first *chrysobull* for Monemvasia which was issued by Andronikos II (1285), see MM V:154.18-20, 155.1-4 for the extract from the *chrysobull* of Michael VIII, MM V:154-155 for the full document of Andronikos II. There is evidence that Andronikos II issued a second *chrysobull* for the Monemvasiots contained in a document issued by Andronikos III. In his *chrysobull* Andronikos III references privileges granted to Monemvasia by his father (Michael IX) and grandfather (Andronikos II) which are not included in the 1285 *chrysobull*. Pseudo-Phrantzes:538.39-40.

¹¹ This document was issued by Andronikos III in 1328.

¹² That the document is a forgery is argued by Dölger and Schreiner, Dölger 1934 and Schreiner 1978:215, while Oikonomides, Laiou and Kalligas believe that the *chrysobull* is genuine, Oikonomides 1979:88, Laiou 1980-81:206-7, Kalligas 1990:117-119. The argument against the authenticity of the document points to the problem of dating the document and the signature which concludes the text. The *chrysobull* is dated to 1316 (Indiction ιε' year Ϸωκε') yet was written in the name of Andronikos III and signed with the signature of Andronikos II. Dölger himself indicated that Makarios Melissenos habitually confused κ and μ in his history and that by changing the date appropriately, to take this into account, and correcting the indiction the date became November 1336. This revised date would coincide with the reign of the stated author of the text, Andronikos III, Dölger 1934:127. The signature itself presents more of a problem, why would a document of Andronikos III be signed with the signature of his grandfather? Kalligas proposes that Melissenos had access to two documents, one of which was issued by Andronikos II and ended in his signature and the *chrysobull* in question which ended without a signature. To add authenticity (an ironic motive when one considers the current argument) Melissenos copied the signature from the earlier document onto the end of his account of the *chrysobull* of Andronikos III, Kalligas 1990:130. Another possibility is that Makarios simply forged the signature. Schreiner argued that Makarios, who was the metropolitan of Monemvasia, forged the document to add prestige to his See and that the text is a copy of the genuine document which Andronikos III granted to the Monemvasiots of Pegai, Schreiner 1978:215. Schreiner does not state how Makarios knew the contents of the *prostagma* issued for the Monemvasiots of Pegai, nor how a list of obsolete taxes would have added to the prestige of his See (the document does not even contain the usual flattering *proimion* which the other documents concerning the Monemvasiots do). The See of Monemvasia had received numerous privileges from the Palaiologoi and these would surely have formed a better prototype on which to base any forgery. As Kalligas says, the document reads like a 'tortuous effort of a half-literate prelate to read a text written two centuries earlier' rather than an elaborately constructed forgery, Kalligas 1990:130. Bartusis also noted that the

there is more evidence to support the fact that this document is genuine, or at least a faithful copy of an authentic *chrysobull*. It has been argued that the Monemvasiots were sympathetic to John VI Kantakouzenos in the civil war 1342-1347, but there is no evidence that they sent him any aid.¹³ John VI Kantakouzenos appointed his son, Manuel, as the first despot of the Morea c.1349.¹⁴ Monemvasia may have been one of the few cities to support despot Manuel Kantakouzenos¹⁵ during his rule in the Peloponnese. This was possibly because he aimed to create a local fleet, which would have provided security for Monemvasiot merchants.¹⁶ When John V Palaiologos tried to remove Manuel Kantakouzenos in 1355, either Monemvasia or Mystras helped Manuel in defiance of the emperor's command.¹⁷ Manuel Kantakouzenos continued to rule in the Peloponnese until his death when his elder brother, Matthew Kantakouzenos, took over the rule of the province. John V Palaiologos sent his son, Theodore, to bring the province back under the rule of Constantinople some time before 1383.

When the new despot, Theodore I Palaiologos, arrived in the Peloponnese he found considerable support for the Kantakouzenoi, and little for himself. Theodore travelled to Coron where he offered Monemvasia to the Venetian authorities.¹⁸ The Venetians never occupied the city, but perhaps the offer was made in exchange for a joint conquest of the rebellious Peloponnese, with the Venetians taking a share of the conquered rebel territory.¹⁹ There seems to have been reconciliation between the city and the despot, but soon Monemvasia was again in

two documents (1442 and 1450) which mention the repair and extension of the fortifications of the city do not mention the *kastroktisia*, the tax which would normally have been collected to fund such works, Bartusis 1992:288-289. As such it must be assumed that the Monemvasiots had received an exemption from this tax. The only place where such an exemption is mentioned is in the *chrysobull* of Andronikos III. As an addition to the arguments cited above it should be noted that the *argyroboullon* of despot Theodore I Palaiologos issued in 1391/2 states that the Monemvasiots had enjoyed a complete exemption from the *kommerkion* 'for some time' MM V:171. This privilege is not included in the *chrysobulls* of either Michael VIII or Andronikos II and therefore must have been granted in a document issued between 1285 and 1391/2. Complete exemption from the *kommerkion* is included in the *chrysobull* issued by Andronikos III.

¹³ Kalligas 1990:138. John VI later issued a chrysobull in favour of the See of Monemvasia.

¹⁴ Kantakouzenos III:85

¹⁵ Manuel was the grandson of John VI and son of Matthew Kantakouzenos, the first despot of the Morea.

¹⁶ Kalligas 1990:140; for the fleet see Kantakouzenos III:86-88

¹⁷ Kantakouzenos III:89. Kalligas 1990:141 is in favour of Monemvasia because the city had always supported the rule of Manuel in the Peloponnese and because a Kantakouzenos, believed to have held the rank of emperor was buried in Monemvasia. Mystras on the other hand is known to have rebelled against Manuel early in his reign. Kalligas 1990:142

¹⁸ Thiriet *Regestes* I:no.668. The castellan of Coron was authorised by the Venetian Senate to accept the offer.

¹⁹ Kalligas 1990:147

rebellion against Theodore and did not reach an agreement with him until 1391-2, when the *archon* Mamonas was expelled from the city.²⁰ Following this conflict between the despot and Monemvasia the city seems to have become depopulated.²¹ Mamonas fled to Sultan Bajezid, who demanded Monemvasia and Laconia from Theodore.²² The city was occupied by the Ottomans in 1394.²³ However, with Venetian aid the city was recovered before the end of 1394.²⁴ After the sale of the majority of the Peloponnese to the Knights of St. John, Theodore I moved to Monemvasia.²⁵ Negotiations for the return of the Peloponnese to Byzantine control were taken place 1402-1404 as a result of the hostility of the native population to Hospitaller and Mystras again became the capital city.²⁶ After the death of Theodore I in 1408 his nephew, Theodore II, was crowned despot by Manuel II. Monemvasia is not seen in the historical sources of this period. It is possible that it had fallen under the sway of the Eudaemonianni family. The Monemvasiots understandably felt insecure following the fall of their city to the Ottomans and asked the despots for permission to divert funds to the strengthening of the cities fortifications.²⁷ The next time that Monemvasia appears in the sources is as the refuge of Despot Demetrios, a brother of Emperor Constantine XI, when the Ottoman Sultan Mehmet invaded the Peloponnese in 1456.²⁸ Demetrios later returned to Mystras where he surrendered to Mehmet in 1460, but Monemvasia refused to follow suit, even when presented with a joint demand to do so from the despot and the Sultan.²⁹ Following this act,

²⁰ Pseudo-Phrantzes:198 for expulsion. See administration section below. It was following the expulsion of Mamonas that Theodore I issued an *argyroboullon* granting privileges to the Monemvasiots.

²¹ See city population section below on page 32.

²² Manuel II:143.15-17. Theodore was at this time a prisoner of the Sultan, Monemvasia was the price of his freedom. Manuel does not actually name Mamonas, merely referring to deserters. Manuel II:133.1-6. Chalkokondyles I:74-5 for Mamonas at the court of Bajezid.

²³ Manuel II:142-3. Before this event the people of Monemvasia tried to surrender their city to the Venetians, but the offer was rejected. Thiriet *Regestes* I:no.844

²⁴ Thiriet *Regestes* I:no.858; Manuel II:159.13-18; Kalligas 1990:155

²⁵ Manuel II: 205.10-11. Manuel nowhere mentions Theodore moving to Monemvasia, but does state that when he resumed his rule over the whole Peloponnese he moved back from Monemvasia to Sparta (Mystras). Kalligas 1990:157 states that it is uncertain whether Theodore lived in Monemvasia or Lakonia. This is puzzling as Manuel II clearly identifies Monemvasia as the residence of Theodore, if not for the whole period of Hospitaller rule then certainly before the return of the province to Theodore.

²⁶ Barker 2002:54

²⁷ The Monemvasiots made two requests, both granted, to the despots the first in December 1442 to Theodore II Palaiologos (MM V:174-5) and the second in 1450 to despot Demetrios Palaiologos (MM V:170-171).

²⁸ Kalligas 1990:190, Zakythinis 1975:258,268

²⁹ Pseudo-Phrantzes:536. The people and the governor Manuel Palaiologos refused to surrender and the troops accompanying the envoys were unable to make them do so.

the Monemvasiots renounced Demetrios and placed themselves under the rule of his brother, Thomas.³⁰ In September 1460 the Monemvasiots asked to be taken under the protection of Pope Pius II, and so passed out of Byzantine hands.³¹

The Physical Description, Built Environment and Population of Monemvasia

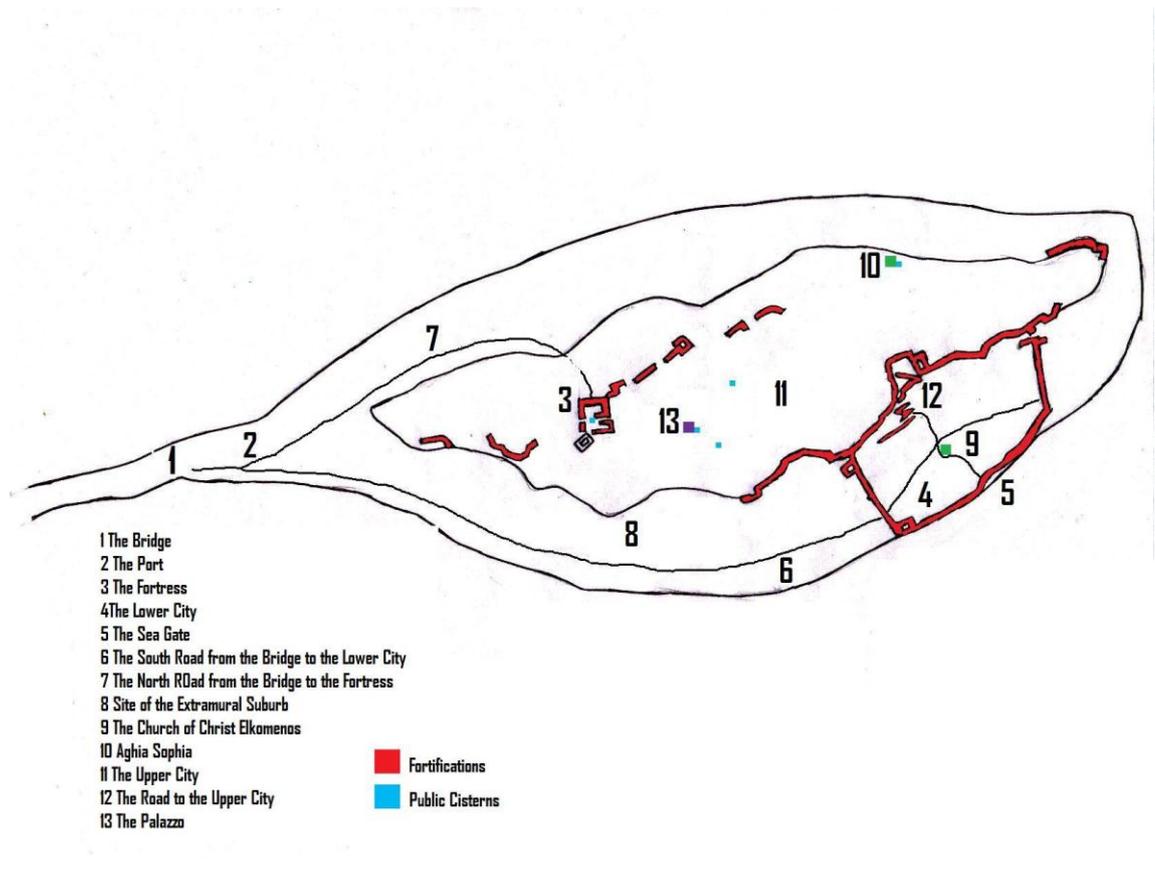


Figure 1: Monemvasia

The city of Monemvasia can be said to have three constituent parts: an upper city, a lower city, and a port area. The upper city sits on the flat top of the rock; sheer cliffs drop approximately 200 meters down to the sea.³² The fortified area of the upper city is fifteen hectares in size.³³ Based on

³⁰ Pseudo-Phrantzes:536

³¹ The Monemvasiot audience with the pope was recorded in his memoirs.

³² Kalligas 2003:879

the location of the surviving cisterns, Kalligas hypothesises, that the upper city had a regular street plan.³⁴ Two large streets have been discovered parallel to the fortifications of the south of the upper city.³⁵ None of these cisterns is of a late Byzantine date, yet they remained in use into the late period and it is reasonable to conclude that they continued to have some influence on the street plan. These cisterns would have been the only water supply for the upper city. Although there are fortifications around much of the upper city in most places these function more to protect inhabitants from falling over the cliff edge rather than from attacking enemies. Only at three points



Figure 2: The west wall of the lower city and the approach to the upper city (author's picture)

were more substantial fortifications constructed: at the entrance to the upper city from the lower city where there is a large vaulted gatehouse; above the western entrance to the lower city, where there are two towers; and at the far eastern tip of the rock.³⁶ It is likely that the upper city was the location of the residences of the majority of the inhabitants of Monemvasia, particularly the wealthy

³³ Kalamara 2001:62. The Theodosian walls of Constantinople contain an area of 1300 hectares, those of Thessalonike 320 hectares, Mystras 20-22 hectares and Servia 10 hectares. It should be noted that this total for Monemvasia does not include the lower town and the area between the lower town and the port, all of which were occupied when Monemvasia was at its greatest extent. See below, p.36.

³⁴ Kalligas 2003:880

³⁵ Kalamara 2001:63

³⁶ Kalligas 2010:112

citizens. The standard pattern for the houses of the upper city is that of a limestone building with vaulted ceilings. The majority of the upper city's residential zone was organised along the same lines. To quote the study by Kalligas, 'The house was the dominant element in a group of buildings, which in most cases was surrounded by a stone fence, often fortified.'³⁷ The more affluent families lived within their own self-contained fortified units. No workshops or commercial buildings have been discovered in the upper city.³⁸ The inhabited zone of the upper city is located on the eastern half of the plateau. The rocky, western end is occupied by the fortress.³⁹

The fortress of Byzantine construction stands at the western end of the upper city, away from the residential area which is located to the east. The fort is a rough square with towers in three corners. The walls of the fortress stand approximately seven metres high, are almost two metres thick and are constructed of stone and brick.⁴⁰ It has been suggested that while Theodore I was resident in Monemvasia he modified the fortress and created '...a 'palation' in the fortress, a large residence in accordance with his rank, which had incorporated his monogram by the gate.'⁴¹ The monogram is on the wall of a large hall that can be dated later than the fortress itself. This hall was constructed against the east wall of the fortress. Kalligas has noted the similarity between this hall and others which formed the residences of feudal lords in Frankish Greece. There is at least one free standing building in the centre of the fort which contained a cistern. A road ran along the northern side of the rock from the bridge straight to the fortress.⁴²

³⁷ Kalligas 2003:881

³⁸ Kalamara 2001:63

³⁹ Kalligas 2010:110

⁴⁰ Andrews 1978:206. Kalligas 2010:110 believes that the stone used in the fortress was quarried directly from the rock itself.

⁴¹ Kalligas 2010:42. There seems no reason to suppose that the Theodore mentioned in the monogram must be Theodore I or that Theodore I lived in the fortress which has little evidence of being a residence. Equally likely is the possibility that Theodore restored part of the fortress or that the inscription refers to the well-documented restoration carried out by Theodore II Palaiologos, see MM V:174-175.

⁴² Kalligas 2010:109-110



Figure 3: the fortress and the palazzo(author's picture)

Only five public buildings have been identified in the upper city. These include the Hodegetria, a twelfth century church, three other ruined churches and a large secular building. It is possible that there were once many other churches in the upper city, but that these were ruined and eventually demolished during the period of Ottoman rule.⁴³ The large secular building has been proposed as the seat of the administration.⁴⁴ The building, the largest yet discovered in the upper city, measures approximately 25 metres square and was at least two stories high. This building contained a large water cistern, measuring 10 metres by 17 metres.⁴⁵ The building contained an impressive vaulted room with a colonnade overlooking the sea. Kalligas has identified this with the “Palazzo” on the 1541 woodcut, the oldest surviving picture of the city.⁴⁶ While this is suggestive of the building’s use under the Venetians it does not necessarily mean that there was a continuity of use stretching back to the late Byzantine times. Nevertheless, this is the most likely candidate for the residence of the *kephale*.⁴⁷

The lower city or *proasteion* is located at the foot of the southern road that leads to the upper city. The lower city is not visible from the mainland, and like the upper city is fortified. The fortifications of the lower city are post Byzantine. Andrews believes that the style of construction

⁴³ Kalligas 2003: 880

⁴⁴ Kalligas 2010:116; Kalligas 2003: 880

⁴⁵ Kalligas 2003: 880, the cistern is comparable in design and construction to others of Byzantine date in the upper city Kalligas 2010:116.

⁴⁶ Kalligas 2010:116; Kalligas 2003: 880

⁴⁷ For the *kephale* of Monemvasia see below, p.48. Kalligas 2010:116 has no doubt that this building was the palazzo of the Venetians and that it dates back to the Byzantine period. It would certainly be logical for the new Venetian governor to set up residence in the house of his Byzantine predecessor.

and the lack of any Venetian symbols point to an Ottoman origin for the walls,⁴⁸ which he believes could have been built to replace damaged or ruined Byzantine fortifications. There is however, no evidence that the lower city was fortified in Byzantine times.⁴⁹ Fortifications would help to explain how the city successfully resisted Arab raids and the Norman attack of 1147.⁵⁰ It is possible that in the early Byzantine period there was no lower city. The impenetrability of the upper city would certainly explain the city's survival in the face of Arabs attacks. Even if there was no lower city in the early Byzantine period, by the time of the Norman attack Monemvasia was a significant city with a significant fleet.⁵¹ The city is likely to have expanded by this time to cover much of the south side of the rock of Monemvasia, not just the walled area of today's city.⁵² Even with a large fleet Monemvasia was still vulnerable and it would seem logical that the lower city was fortified, as was fitting for such an important point in the maritime defences of the empire. The one piece of solid evidence comes from 1292 when Roger de Lluria attacked Monemvasia and sacked the lower city.⁵³ Whether this means that the lower city was unfortified or that the Monemvasiots were taken by surprise is impossible to determine. On reflection it is more likely that by the twelfth century the lower city was fortified, possibly in roughly the same way that it is today.

Two main streets cross the lower city: the street from the port, and the street from the upper city down to the sea gate of the lower city's fortifications. The two roads cross near the centre of the lower town. The lower city does not cover a great area and Kalligas believes that the surviving evidence points to a high density of buildings. Houses often contained their own water cisterns on a lower level and in fact the house seems to have formed the basic unit consisting of a combination of some of the following: cistern, workshop, shop, storeroom, terrace and living area. These houses were usually taller than two storeys, perhaps because of the scarcity of space. There is

⁴⁸ Andrews 1978:202-3. To date this study of the fortifications of various sites in the Morea is the only published study of the fortifications of Monemvasia.

⁴⁹ Andrews 1978:202-3

⁵⁰ Kalligas 2003:880 n.3. The Norman attack is better documented than earlier attacks. In 1147 the Normans of Sicily attacked Greece, sacking Corinth, Thebes and Athens, only Monemvasia managed to fight off the raiders. Choniates:281

⁵¹ See below, pp.83-84.

⁵² Kalligas 2003:883.

⁵³ Bartolomeo de Neocastro:133-134; Airdi 1996. The inhabitants fled to the upper city.

no evidence for the existence of stables in the entire city. The seat of the metropolitan was probably located in the lower city at the church of Christ Elkomenos.⁵⁴ There are remains of 26 churches in Monemvasia today, although not all of these date back to Byzantine times. Two churches survive, partially built into houses on the Agora near the west gate, one of which has a fifteenth century fresco.⁵⁵ Ruins of the tenth century monastery of the Theotokos exist in the upper part of the lower city and incorporate a cistern.



Figure 4: the lower city (author's picture)

The port area of the city was located next to either side of the bridge linking Monemvasia to the mainland. The date of the bridge itself is unknown.⁵⁶ Whilst there are ruins around the old port, there has been no study as to the date or possible uses of these buildings.⁵⁷ However, it is likely, given their proximity to the port, that the ruins were once linked to the harbour and perhaps to trade. There is no evidence of masonry piers at the port on either side of the bridge. The north

⁵⁴ Kalligas 2003:881

⁵⁵ Kalligas 2010:143

⁵⁶ Kalligas however, believes that the current bridge dates to the reign of Justinian I, Kalligas 2010:107. Kalligas also points out that a bridge of some kind is implied in the name of the city and therefore is likely to have existed since the foundation of Monemvasia.

⁵⁷ Kalligas 2010:107; Kalligas 2003:880.

basin is deeper and more protected from tides and weather than the south basin. As such it was probably the main area of the harbour.⁵⁸ The port area of Monemvasia was not limited to the port of the rock itself, but consisted of other, subsidiary harbours located near to the city at Yerakas, Pavlos, Kochylas and Monemvasia Epidavros.⁵⁹

Kalligas has suggested population figures for Monemvasia based on estimates of the size of the built up area of the city. The estimates vary between a low of 7,200 citizens after 1390 when Kalligas suggests the city occupied only the area around the port and the section inside today's fortifications and a high point, from 1262 to 1390, when the land between the port and the lower city seems to have been occupied.⁶⁰ A population of 20,000 has been suggested by Kalligas for the city at its height before the crusader conquest.⁶¹ It is likely that the population was probably smaller following the crusader conquest and must therefore have been somewhere between 7,200 and 20,000 during the early Palaiologan period.⁶² Kalligas reaches these figures through her study of the remains of houses in Monemvasia. A number of written sources do provide hints about the demography of Monemvasia. The *Petition to the Patriarch* records that a number of Monemvasiots fled the city after the crusader conquest to form a colony at Pegai. Monemvasiots are found fighting in the Byzantine fleet based in Anaea in Asia Minor in the 1260s and 1270s.⁶³ Other colonies were founded in Constantinople and Herakleia by the time of the *chrysobull* of Andronikos III in 1336.⁶⁴ All of these groups removed population from the city. Nevertheless Monemvasia shows no obvious sign of having suffered from the emigration of so many people. The only source which suggests depopulation during the Palaiologan period is the *argyroboullon* of despot Theodore I. As mentioned above this document was issued after a period of civil war in which Monemvasia had been in

⁵⁸ Kalligas 2010:107

⁵⁹ Kalamara 2001:65. Pachymeres makes reference to these other harbours. Pachymeres II:504

⁶⁰ Kalligas 2003:884

⁶¹ Kalligas 2003:884

⁶² The method used for calculating the population figures for Monemvasia which Kalligas uses is to take the number of houses revealed during her investigations in the city and multiplying by four. Obviously there are a number of problems with such a method. We can never know exactly how many houses were occupied in which periods. Furthermore the height of a ruined building is open to debate, as is the number of people resident in any house. In 1928 the entire population of Lakonia was 129,927; this had risen to 148,499 by 1938. Overall these figures, while useful as a guide, have a very wide margin for error.

⁶³ Morgan 1976

⁶⁴ Pseudo-Phrantzes:538-542

rebellion against the despot and had been occupied by the Ottomans. The privileges of 1391/2 were issued to all Monemvasiots living in the city, those who had fled during the civil wars and wished to return, and those who simply wished to move to the city.⁶⁵ The fact that people who had fled (suggesting accomplices of the rebel Mamonas?) and *paroikoi* were allowed to settle in Monemvasia and be considered free and enjoy all of the privileges of Monemvasiots suggests a certain desperation to restore the population of the city.⁶⁶ Although criminals were allowed to settle in Monemvasia the inhabitants of Vatica, Tzakonia, Molaoi, Esopos, Elos, Ierakion, Apideai, Seraphon, Tzitzina, Reon, Prastos, Kastanitza and Aghios Leonidas had to seek the permission of the despot to relocate to the city.⁶⁷ These towns are located in the area around Monemvasia. Kalligas suggests that as these cities formed a defensive ring around Monemvasia the despot was trying to ensure that the people of these towns did not abandon them for a privileged life in Monemvasia, leaving the rest of Lakonia defenceless.⁶⁸ Another factor in the despot's decision to prevent emigration from these towns could be that they had become depopulated in the civil war because of their position on the border between the lands controlled by Theodore and those controlled by Mamonas. Whether or not the attempts of Theodore to encourage settlement in Monemvasia were successful is difficult to determine.⁶⁹ There was probably an ever-changing population of merchants from outside of the city resident in Monemvasia. There is no evidence that a permanent foreign population existed but that merchants were present for varying amounts of time seems certain.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ MMV:171.1-5

⁶⁶ MM V:172.17, 173.23-33, 174.1-7

⁶⁷ MM V:172.24-29

⁶⁸ Kalligas 1990:153

⁶⁹ As mentioned above Kalligas believes that the built up area of the city shrank in the 1390s.

⁷⁰ Roger of Lauria, before sacking Monemvasia, promised to leave all of the native inhabitants alive, but assured the Monemvasiots that he would kill any Franks that he found within the city walls. Airdi 1996:19

The Administration of Monemvasia

As mentioned above the only theory put forward about the administration of Monemvasia is that of Kalligas. Briefly, she believes that Monemvasia was administered by two officials, one local and one imperial, analogous to the dual monarchs of ancient Sparta. This constitution was founded upon the autonomy of the city within the Byzantine Empire.⁷¹ It is necessary to briefly review the argument of Kalligas and the evidence upon which it is based. Three pieces of evidence support this theory: the *Partitio Romaniae*; the *argyroboullon* of 1391/2 and the *Petition to the Patriarch*. Monemvasia was not included in the *Partitio Romaniae* drawn up in 1204. This has led Kalligas to conclude that Monemvasia must have been autonomous and so was not included in the tax register upon which the *partition* was based.⁷² The *argyroboullon* of despot Theodore I for the Monemvasiots⁷³ lists those people who were in positions of power within the city; the *kephale*, the *archon* and finally anyone else in authority.⁷⁴ Kalligas argues that this is an official record of a system of dual government dating back to ancient Sparta. The *Petition to the Patriarch*, written in the 1430s by a monk and resident of Monemvasia, Isidore, relates the entire history of the city and mentions a continuity of government going back to Roman times.⁷⁵ The *Petition* describes the Monemvasiots as *ὑπόσπονδοι* and *σύμμαχοι τῆ βασιλείᾳ Ρωμαίων*. Later in the text the “Spartan freedoms” and “well-known, customary and ancient Dorian freedoms” of the city are also mentioned.⁷⁶ Kalligas cites extensive studies on the position of Greek allied cities within the Roman Empire and

⁷¹ For the most up to date working of this argument see Kalligas 2010.

⁷² It is further suggested that the omission of Monemvasia from the *Partitio* must mean that contemporaries generally considered the city to be autonomous, including the leaders of the fourth crusade, Kalligas 2008:885.

⁷³ MM V: 171-74. This document was issued by Theodore in 1391/2 for the city and is a renewal of the existing privileges of the city, these will be dealt with in the individual sections with which they are concerned.

⁷⁴ MM V: 172.3.

⁷⁵ Kalligas 1990:35-37; Kalligas 2008:884

⁷⁶ Lambros 1915: 289.17-23

their semi-autonomous government.⁷⁷ Based on a reference in the *Petition*, Kalligas believes that before the conquest of Monemvasia by the crusaders the locally chosen “king” held the title of *rex*. The place of the other king (of the dual system of Sparta) would have been taken by an imperial representative.⁷⁸ The *Petition* records how the *rex* refused to surrender Monemvasia to the crusaders and fled with his supporters to Pegai, founding the Monemvasiot colony there.⁷⁹ Kalligas believes that the traditions of local autonomy and of a Spartan constitution continued following the Byzantine recovery of the city by Michael VIII. As evidence she cites the *archon* from the *argyroboullon* of Theodore I. Kalligas theorises that the *rex* of the pre-crusader period had been renamed as *archon* by the time of the Palaiologan period.⁸⁰ A final change of title for this position is proposed sometime in the fifteenth century. In the *argyroboulla* of 1442 and 1450 the only official mentioned in Monemvasia was the *kephale*.⁸¹ This has led Kalligas to propose that by the 1440s the *kephale* was the equivalent of the older *archon* (head of the city authorities) and that the imperial representative in the city, whatever his new title, was not mentioned.⁸² To support this change of name Kalligas cites the reform of despot Constantine which mentions three *kephalai*, not one of whom was resident at Monemvasia. In 1446 Constantine reformed the administration of the Peloponnese, dividing the province into three, with a *kephale* at Mystras, Corinth and Patras. ⁸³ Between them these three *kephalai* were responsible for the administration of the entire despotate. No *kephale* of Monemvasia was mentioned. According to Kalligas the *kephale* mentioned in the *argyroboulla* of 1442 and 1450 was a local, not imperial, official because the city of Monemvasia enjoyed local autonomy and this is the reason why a *kephale* of Monemvasia was not incorporated into the administrative reforms of despot Constantine.⁸⁴ Thus Kalligas builds a picture of an autonomous city preserving some of the privileges of ancient Sparta under first a *rex*, then an *archon*, and finally a *kephale*.

⁷⁷ Kalligas 1990:36-37

⁷⁸ Kalligas 1990:51

⁷⁹ Lambros 1915:287-90

⁸⁰ Kalligas 1990:51

⁸¹ MM V:175.5 (1442); 170.18 (1450)

⁸² Kalligas 1990: 188-90. Oddly on page 190 Kalligas returns to referring to the *kephale* as the imperial governor of Monemvasia.

⁸³ Pseudo-Phrantzes:342; Sphrantzes:68-70

⁸⁴ Kalligas 1990:189

There are a few problems with this theory. The *Partitio Romaniae* was drawn up by the crusaders following their conquest of Constantinople in 1204.⁸⁵ It is generally accepted that the *Partitio* was drawn up using the final tax returns of the provinces to reach the capital before the crusaders arrived.⁸⁶ Although the *Partitio Romaniae* does not mention Monemvasia,⁸⁷ it also does not mention Corinth, Trebizond, Cyprus much of the Peloponnese, central Boiotia, western Thrace, eastern Macedonia, Crete, and the Thrakesion theme in Asia Minor. No one reason explains why all of these regions were omitted from the *Partitio*. Oikonomides suggested that the areas which were omitted were either in rebellion against the emperor in Constantinople, so did not pay taxes, or had already been assigned to the crusaders by the Angeloi⁸⁸ Although some of the missing regions, parts of the Peloponnese, Trebizond and Cyprus, were effectively independent before 1204 other areas were not. Thus allegiance to the Angeloi in Constantinople did not guarantee inclusion in the *Partitio* and rebellion against Constantinople must not have been the only reason for exclusion. Thus, it seems fair to conclude that Monemvasia was not absent from the *Partitio* because of the crusaders' subtle understanding of the niceties of centuries old privileges granted at the time of the Roman Republic and Dorian freedoms, but because of the shortcomings of the document itself.⁸⁹

The *Petition to the Patriarch* is not an impartial text. It was written by Isidore, the future Metropolitan of Kiev, in 1427-8 as part of an on-going dispute between the metropolitan of Monemvasia and the bishop of Maina which grew to involve the despot and the metropolitans of

⁸⁵ For the text of the *Partitio* see Carile 1965:125-305, text on 217-305. Oikonomides has dated this document to March 1204. Oikonomides 1976:5-7

⁸⁶ September 1203. Oikonomides 1976:22

⁸⁷ There has been no clear agreement on this fact. Carile 1965 when publishing the text of the *Partitio* was under no doubt that Monemvasia was not included in the document. Oikonomides 1976 on the other hand does not list Monemvasia as an omission from the text. Magdalino 1977, following on from Oikonomides also states that Monemvasia was included in the *Partitio*. The document mentions only one province in the Peloponnese, Lakedaimonia, and a number of cities: Kalabrita, Ostrovos, Patras and Methoni Carile 1965:219.45-69. No mention was made of Monemvasia or Lakonia. Oikonomides must have taken the reference to the region of Lakedaimonia to include much of the southern Peloponnese, including Monemvasia. Although the mention of other cities in the Peloponnese individually suggests that this was not the intent of the crusaders.

⁸⁸ Oikonomides 1976:22

⁸⁹ Lakedaimonia is mentioned in the *Partitio* which suggests that the archon/dynast of Monemvasia only ruled Lakonia at the time that it was written. **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Lakedaimonia and Corinth.⁹⁰ The *Petition* was written after the metropolitan of Monemvasia had lost the dispute. To prove that this judgement was unfair Isidore compiled all of the facts from the history of Monemvasia which he believed would help with an appeal into the *Petition*. Although the *Petition* is mostly concerned with the ecclesiastical history of the city, Isidore also included information that he thought would be useful concerning the history of the city itself, from its foundation until his own time. The circumstances in which the *Petition* was written strongly suggest that the author was emphasising the continuity of Monemvasiot institutions and local government. Thus any claims which it contains about the government of the city must be viewed sceptically. The title of *rex* which the *Petition* assigns to the local leader of the Monemvasiots is also problematic. Why would thirteenth-century Monemvasia, or ancient Sparta, use the Latin *rex* rather than the Greek *basileus*? The early thirteenth century had seen a crusader *rex* at Thessalonike,⁹¹ but this was a very different circumstance to that outlined in the *Petition to the Patriarch*. It seems strange that the Monemvasiots would use such a title, but equally odd that Isidore should simply conjure the word up out of thin air. Furthermore, the particular state of affairs described in the *Petition to the Patriarch* took place in the early thirteenth century. This was precisely the time when Monemvasia was actually independent, not just locally autonomous. The city rebelled either just before 1204 or simply became independent in the vacuum caused by the fall of Constantinople. Thus one possibility is that Isidore needed to create a title for the technically illegal ruler of Monemvasia and could not use an official Byzantine title, especially not *basileus*, for a man who was at best a local lord and at worst a rebel.⁹²

Further caution should be taken when consulting the *Petition to the Patriarch* because of the nature of the text. As stated above the *Petition* was written as part of a long running dispute between the metropolitans of Lakedaimonia and Monemvasia. This may help to explain why the Spartan origins of the city of Monemvasia were emphasised and the Dorian

⁹⁰ Lambros 1915:258-272; Kalligas 1990:250-251

⁹¹ Akropolites §8; Macrides 2007:123

⁹² A different yet equally archaic solution to this problem was found by the contemporary Niketas Choniates. See below, p.49.

freedoms stressed in such great detail. The *Petition* explained how the immemorial civic rights of Sparta/Lakedaimonia had been transferred to Monemvasia when the city was founded by Spartan refugees and now the metropolitan of the new city (in the person of the author of the *Petition*) was arguing that the ecclesiastical rights and powers of Lakedaimonia should follow suit.

The *argyroboullon* of Theodore I is the only official text to mention a *kephale* and an *archon*, which is proposed by Kalligas as the Palaiologan version of the two ruler constitution. However, it is also the first imperial document to mention the government of Monemvasia at all. The *kephale* is clearly the imperial representative.⁹³ The conclusion that the *archon* was a specific official and not just any title holder is indicated by the final part of the sentence, ‘and anyone else in authority’.⁹⁴ If Theodore I was just trying to ensure that his orders were carried out when the *kephale* was not present, this blanket clause would have sufficed without mentioning the *archon*. Thus in the late fourteenth century there is evidence that a local had a position of power. Linking this fact with the *Petition to the Patriarch* and claiming that the *archon* of 1391/2 was the equivalent of the *rex* of the 1240s is not plausible. This argument relies on the *Petition* being reliable in this case, which is unlikely.⁹⁵

Furthermore, suggesting that the title of the local leader changed from *rex* to *archon* to *kephale* ignores the evidence of the sources. The reason that the *kephale* of Monemvasia was mentioned in the *argyroboulla* of 1442 and 1450, but not in the reforms of Constantine in 1446, has more to do with the nature of the documents than Monemvasiot autonomy or any change in terminology from *archon* to *kephale*. Constantine was organising the administration of his realm

⁹³ See Maksimović 1988

⁹⁴ MM V:172.3. The term *archon* is used in the list of Pseudo-Kodinos to indicate any holder of a title. If this was what was meant by the term *archon* then the final clause would be redundant as anyone in authority would also be a title holder.

⁹⁵ See above.

under his three most senior *kephalai*. The fact that the *kephale* of Monemvasia was not mentioned simply means that Monemvasia was not one of the three new administrative headquarters, not that Monemvasia was autonomous. This becomes apparent when one notices that Constantine does not mention any *kephale* except those of Mystras, Corinth and Patras.⁹⁶ That a document did not concern the *kephale* of Monemvasia does not mean that he did not exist. The two *argyroboulla* of 1442 and 1450 prove that the title of the local ruler of Monemvasia had not changed from *archon* to *kephale*. Both documents were granted by the despot at the request of the Monemvasiots, to allow them to collect funds for the repair of the city fortifications.⁹⁷ The two important points here are the context in which the *kephale* of the city is referred to by the despots and that the Monemvasiots asked for the document to be drawn up. The *kephale* was mentioned in two ways in both documents: as the overseer of the tax collectors⁹⁸ and in a stipulation that the *kephale* must not interfere with the collection of taxes or the construction of the fortifications in any way.⁹⁹ The *argyroboullon* of the despot Demetrios adds that work should only be undertaken with the consent of the *kephale*.¹⁰⁰ Even if the taxes mentioned (the *aviotikion*¹⁰¹ and the *kommerkion*¹⁰²) had been collected previously by the city authorities, the fact that these funds were now being used for the building of fortifications proves that the term *kephale* was not now synonymous with *archon*. The building of fortifications was still very much under the control of the emperor or despot and could not be undertaken without their permission.¹⁰³ Hence it is entirely reasonable that the imperial representative in Monemvasia should have been put in charge of overseeing the works and should have been reassured by the *argyroboulla* that the works had the approval of the despot. The two *argyroboulla* state that the Monemvasiots themselves (presumably including the *archon*) requested permission for the work on the fortifications of their city. Overall, the failure to give specific

⁹⁶ Pseudo-Phrantzes:342; Sphrantzes:68-70

⁹⁷ MM V:170-171, 174-175 for the documents.

⁹⁸ MM V:175.2-6, 9-14 (1442); 171 (1450)

⁹⁹ MM V:175.7-9 (1442); 171 (1450)

¹⁰⁰ MM V: 171

¹⁰¹ The *aviotikon* was a tax on the estate of those who died intestate and without children.

¹⁰² The *kommerkion* was a ten percent tax on traded goods. See Antoniadis-Bibicou 1963:102-107

¹⁰³ Bartusis 1992:317

mention to the *archon* in these two documents almost certainly has more to do with the nature of the documents than any change in terminology.

Kalligas believes that imperial grants actually state that Monemvasia was autonomous. The main piece of evidence cited is the grant of *exkousseia* by Michael VIII.¹⁰⁴ This was renewed by Andronikos II and Andronikos III and the equivalent grant of *akatadoulosia* was issued by Theodore I.¹⁰⁵ Although usually interpreted as a fiscal privilege, Kalligas believes that, when applied to a city, *exkousseia* meant release from overall imperial control.¹⁰⁶ There do not seem to be any other references to the use of *exkousseia* as a grant of civic autonomy. Kalligas suggests two supporting pieces of evidence for the autonomy of Monemvasia: firstly that, 'the Emperor acknowledged the existence of self-government and this must be the reason why the officials of the central administration in charge of the Peloponnese did not settle in Monemvasia, but in Mystras'¹⁰⁷; and secondly the reform of the administration by despot Constantine mentioned above.

The idea that Monemvasia was not chosen to be the capital of the Byzantine Peloponnese because of some form of civic autonomy is questionable. It is equally likely that Mystras was chosen for its own merits and Monemvasia rejected for its shortcomings. Monemvasia was obviously a more secure city than Mystras, with good communications with the rest of the empire. The fact that the despots fled there in times of invasion proves these points.¹⁰⁸ However, the city did not have particularly good land communications with the rest of the Peloponnese. In this respect Mystras was far superior to Monemvasia. For the Byzantine rulers of the Peloponnese, especially the first rulers who decided on Mystras as the seat of government, the capital city would need to be a place in the centre of their province, from where they could react quickly to the expected crusader counterstroke and be able to strike easily at the crusaders. For these reasons alone Mystras was a far more logical choice for a capital city than Monemvasia. The final point which undermines the

¹⁰⁴ The text of this *chrysobull* has not survived in its entirety. A summary of the document can be found in the later *chrysobull* for the Monemvasiots issued by Andronikos II in the 1280s.

¹⁰⁵ MM V:154.20 (Michael VIII); 155.9 (Andronikos II); Pseudo-Phrantzes: 540.11 mentions *exousia*. (Andronikos III); MM V:171.5-6 (Theodore I)

¹⁰⁶ Kalligas 2010:31, 34; Kalligas 1990:98

¹⁰⁷ Kalligas 1990:98; the same argument is presented in Kalligas 2010:31

¹⁰⁸ See above.

argument of Kalligas is the ease with which the despots did move their centre of operations to the city. After the sale of the majority of the Peloponnese to the Hospitallers, Theodore I moved to Monemvasia.¹⁰⁹ Despot Demetrios fled to Monemvasia when Mehmet invaded the Peloponnese in 1456.¹¹⁰

Trying to ascribe an ancient Spartan constitution to the late medieval city of Monemvasia is not easy, and is stretching the sources too far.¹¹¹ It is much more likely that during the Palaiologan period there was always an imperial representative called the *kephale* and that at times a local man either filled this post, or operated alongside the *kephale* and was referred to as the *archon*. The post of *archon* was not a relic from the ancient past, but a position very much in keeping with the Byzantine traditions evident from the eleventh century onwards. What does seem to have happened is that whenever imperial authority was weak successive men assumed power, becoming what, in earlier Byzantine history, would have been termed a dynast.¹¹² There is no indication as to how a man became the dynast of Monemvasia, whether through some form of local consensus, or by simply being the most powerful man in Monemvasia at that time. Magdalino has suggested that Leo Chamaretos, dynast of Monemvasia at the turn of the thirteenth century, may have based his position on his place in the Komnenian military.¹¹³ As with the dynasts recorded in the eleventh and late twelfth/early thirteenth centuries it is probable that their equivalents in Monemvasia

¹⁰⁹ Manuel II: 205.10-11. Manuel nowhere mentions Theodore moving to Monemvasia, but does state that when he resumed his rule over the whole Peloponnese he moved back from Monemvasia to Sparta (Mystras). Kalligas 1990:157 states that it is uncertain whether Theodore lived in Monemvasia or Lakonia. This is puzzling as Manuel II clearly identifies Monemvasia as the residence of Theodore, if not for the whole period of Hospitaller rule then certainly before the return of the province to Theodore.

¹¹⁰ Kalligas 1990:190

¹¹¹ Of course it is not impossible that Spartan titlature did continue in use, after all there is a strong argument for the continuity of the populace after the transfer from Sparta. The locally selected head of the town could have continued to use the title of *rex*, up until the crusader conquest. If this was so why the title was not resurrected following the Byzantine recovery of the town remains a mystery. However, the survival of not just an archaic term but an entire system of civic autonomy dating back to the Roman Republic is too much.

¹¹² Magdalino 1993: 155 describes dynasts thus, "When local separatism from Constantinople became really serious, it was likely to coalesce around the figure of a secular 'strong man' (*dynastes*), either a pre-eminent local archon or an influential outsider, who had gained a reputation as an effective arbiter of local disputes or an effective opponent of unpopular government policies. Since the power of dynasts was entirely unofficial, and was recorded only when it got out of hand, it is not clear whether it was essentially a regular or an irregular phenomenon." Examples of dynasts from the twelfth and early thirteenth century are the Gabrades in Trebizond, Theodore Mangaphas in Philadelphia and the Sgouroi in the Argolid.

¹¹³ Monemvasia was an important link in the maritime defence network of the empire under Manuel I. Magdalino 1993:257-8

existed throughout Byzantine history, as the *archon*, but only become visible to the modern researcher when the central authority was weak enough for them to play a more independent role. In this respect Monemvasia is interesting for two reasons. Firstly there were a number of families with an almost equal standing jockeying for the position of dynast, and secondly the location and vitality of the city presented a number of opportunities to operate outside of imperial control.

Before considering the *archon/dynast* we will turn to what we know of the imperial administration within the city. In the whole Palaiologan period only three or four *kephalai* are mentioned. The first named ruler was a Kantakouzenos in the years immediately following the Byzantine recovery of the city in the mid-thirteenth century. He was the last named *kephale* until Nikephoros Cheilas in the mid-fifteenth century.¹¹⁴ The final *kephale* of Monemvasia was Manuel Palaiologos.¹¹⁵ Kalligas suggests that Manuel governed during the period of papal rule and eventually oversaw the transfer of the city to Venice. Nicol believes that Nicholas, the son of Manuel succeeded his father before the Venetian takeover of the city.¹¹⁶ As has been discussed above, occasionally the despots resided in Monemvasia. What role they played in the administration of the city at these times is unknown.

Let us now turn to the *archon/dynast*. In the years immediately preceding and for over half a century following 1204, there was no imperial power in the Peloponnese. This situation provided a perfect opportunity for the rise of a dynast in Monemvasia. As mentioned earlier there existed in Monemvasia at the beginning of the thirteenth century a pro-Crusader and a pro-Byzantine faction.¹¹⁷ Geoffrey de Villehardouin, nephew of the crusader chronicler landed in the Peloponnese and allied himself with a Byzantine ruler in the south-eastern corner of the peninsula. If Monemvasia was not recorded in the *Partitio* because it was independent this makes it likely that the

¹¹⁴ Kalligas 1990:190. See the following section for the career of later *archons*, particularly Palaiologos-Mamonas and the possibility of one man holding both the post of *kephale* and *archon*.

¹¹⁵ Pseudo-Phrantzes:536

¹¹⁶ Kalligas 1990:193; Nicol 1994:66

¹¹⁷ See Monemvasia Under the Palaiologoi above. The terms pro-crusader and pro-Byzantine are perhaps misleading. The pro-crusader activities of the rulers of Monemvasia stretched to using the crusaders as allies to secure the independence of Monemvasia and the conquest of as much of the Peloponnese as possible. The pro-Byzantine faction (in this case pro-Nicaean) had exactly the same aims but this time with the Nicaeans as allies and the crusaders as those most likely to threaten the position of Monemvasia.

city was the base of the Byzantine ally of Villehardouin. After a brief period of cooperation the ally of Geoffrey de Villehardouin died and was then replaced by his son as ruler of Lakedaimonia and Lakonia.¹¹⁸ The new ruler did not support the crusaders in the Peloponnese and attacked Villehardouin.¹¹⁹ Choniates said that Leo Chamaretos, a member of one of the leading Monemvasiot families at the time, ruled over the south-eastern Peloponnese and resisted the crusaders.¹²⁰ Kalligas postulates that Leo was the son of the ally of Geoffrey de Villehardouin and that father and son held the position of *archon* of Monemvasia.¹²¹ If Choniates was correct then either Chamaretos (in alliance with the crusaders) or Leo Chamaretos (in spite of the crusaders) must have conquered Lakedaimonia, which was still an imperial possession at the time of the drawing up of the *Partitio*. The second decade of the century saw no hostilities between the crusaders and the Monemvasiots and Kalligas suggests that Leo Chamaretos had died, and was replaced by an *archon*, of unknown family who supported the crusaders, or at least did not fight them.¹²² In the early 1220s Ioannes Chamaretos became *archon* of Monemvasia and by his own testimony instituted an anti-crusader policy.¹²³ Magdalino has suggested a different chronology, placing Leo Chamaretos as the *archon* who allied with the crusaders and Ioannes as the son who turned on his father's allies.¹²⁴ The problem with this is that Leo fought the crusaders, while the first Chamaretos was an ally of Geoffrey de Villehardouin.¹²⁵ The most likely solution seems to be that Geoffrey de Villehardouin allied with a Chamaretos who was pro-crusader (or at least saw their

¹¹⁸ Villehardouin II:134-137 The region under consideration is Lakedaimonia (conquered after 1204) and Lakonia (the original territory of the *archon*).

¹¹⁹ The Byzantine *archon* died in the winter of 1204-5. Kalligas 1990:75

¹²⁰ Choniates 638, calls Leo the tyrannos of the lakones and ruler of Lakedaimonia, probably in 1206.

Magdalino has suggested that the *mesazon* of Manuel I, Theodore Mavrozomis, started his career as dynast of Monemvasia. Magdalino 1993:491-2. The Mavrozomis family had a long lived connection with Monemvasia despite the success in Constantinople of Theodore. In 1185 John Mavrozomis led forces from Monemvasia to aid the defenders of Thessalonike during the Norman siege. Kalligas 2010:25 (see Eustathios:88)

¹²¹ Villehardouin was the nephew of the chronicler of the same name. Kalligas 2010:27; Kalligas:1990:73

Kalligas cites Choniates who describes how the tyrannos of the Lakones had set up an independent territory in the Peloponnese following the fall of Constantinople. Kalligas 1990:73 Kalligas believes that the use of the word tyrannos was an imperfect translation of the title rex. It seems more likely that tyrannos was in fact a more correct, if classicising, term for the rebel/independent leader.

¹²² Kalligas 2010:27 states that Leo is not heard from after 1209; Kalligas 1990:78-9

¹²³ Pitra VI:no.22, col.90

¹²⁴ Magdalino 1970:319 Although Magdalino states that any attempt to draw conclusions about the relationship between Leo and Ioannis is conjecture.

¹²⁵ It is not impossible for the initial Chamaretos to have been first an ally and then an enemy of the crusaders. However, no such change of policy is recorded and that Chamaretos and Leo Chamaretos were two different men seems likely.

potential as allies) and ruled Monemvasia. When Chamaretos died he was succeeded by his son, Leo, who was anti-crusader. Leo died c.1210 and was succeeded by Ioannes Chamaretos.¹²⁶ Ioannes Chamaretos was forced out of Monemvasia by his father-in-law, Georgios Daimonoianis, holder of the impressive court title of *protopansevastohypertatos*.¹²⁷ The overthrow of Ioannes Chamaretos ended what seems to have been nearly a quarter century of rule by this family in Monemvasia.¹²⁸ Even if, as Ioannes Chamaretos claimed, Georgios Daimonoianis was a member of the pro-crusader party, the politics of Monemvasia were not changed by his ascendancy and the city fell to the crusaders.¹²⁹ When Monemvasia surrendered, a Mamonas, a Daimonoianis¹³⁰ and a Sophianos represented the city before the Prince of Achaia.¹³¹ The *Petition to the Patriarch* records that an

¹²⁶ Chamaretos is referred to as the *paneuychestatos despotes*, an imperial title. So the question is how did Ioannis get this title? Magdalino 1970: 321, has suggested that a likely source would have been Alexios III, and a date of 1207/8. Alexios III had already given the title to Leo Sgouros so it was possible that he had done the same to another independent ruler in the Peloponnese. As Ioannis possessed his title before the coronation of Theodore Komnenos Doukas in 1224 the only other possibility is that he received it from Theodore I Laskaris. This is the option favoured by Kalligas 2010:27 and Kalligas 1990:84. Either way a date earlier than the 1220s for the rise to power of Ioannis (as suggested by Kalligas) is more probable. Kalligas 2010:27 says that as Monemvasia was open to sea communications with Nicaea an alliance with this power is more likely than a connection with Alexios III. Supporting evidence for this argument could be that those who chose to leave Monemvasia rather than live under Frankish rule chose to flee to Nicaea, not Arta. Kalligas 2010:28 cites the *Chronicle of the Morea*:148-149 which states that Monemvasia was used by the *Basileus* of the Romans as port for the unloading of provisions and troops sent to the Morea. At this point there was only one emperor, Theodore I Laskaris of Nicaea.

¹²⁷ Pitra VI:no.22, col.91. It is not known whether this was the same Georgios Daimonoianis who was later one of the three leading citizens of Monemvasia to surrender the city to the crusaders or merely a relation. For title see Magdalino 1993:180-184

¹²⁸ Kalligas 1990:82 suggests that the manner in which Ioannis was outwitted and exiled by Georgios suggests that he was young and inexperienced in politics. That the Chamaretoi were based in Monemvasia is suggested by the fact that Ioannis's wife moved all of his property from his house to that of her father, a known Monemvasiot, which suggests that the two properties were near to each other. Initially Magdalino did not agree, Magdalino 1970:322, however, later changed his mind, Magdalino 1993:155

¹²⁹ Kalligas 2010:28 believes that Daimonoianis was pro-crusader and that this is why Chamaretos was expelled. Rather than pro-crusader and pro-Byzantine I believe that the internal politics of Monemvasia had more to do with the rivalries of the Byzantine successor states than those between Byzantines and Latins. Monemvasia was open to Nicaea, however, communication with Epiros would have been far less easy. If Ioannes and his Chamaretos predecessors were allies of Nicaea and this explains his title of despot then the fact that Georgios Daimonoianis was the son-in-law of Theodore I Komnenos Doukas could mean that he was expelled in 1222 because of a dispute over which successor state Monemvasia should back. Monemvasia would certainly have been a useful ally to the Epirote ruler as he planned his conquest of Thessalonike which took place in 1224. An alliance between Epiros and Monemvasia may have been as a way of covering Theodore from aggression from Achaia while he was away fighting in the north.

¹³⁰ Perhaps this man was Georgios, father-in-law of Ioannes Chamaretos?

¹³¹ Kalligas 1990:87. These men are described as representatives of the three chief families of the city; it seems that with the *rex* in exile there was no single replacement.

unnamed *rex* fled Monemvasia at this time, taking with him the refugees who would found the colony at Pegai.¹³²

The next prolonged period of weakness for the central authority was in the latter half of the fourteenth century, during the transfer of power from the administration of the Kantakouzenoi to the new despot Theodore I Palaiologos. Again a man rose to prominence who could be termed either *archon* or *dynast* of Monemvasia¹³³. At this time the rule of Monemvasia was in the hands of a member of the Mamonas family. The Chronicon Maius records that before 1394 the Mamonas family had ruled Monemvasia ‘...for a number of years...’¹³⁴ How many generations of the Mamonas family had ruled Monemvasia is not stated, but the many years of Mamonid rule hints at a longer ascendancy for this family, and crucially proves that the *archon* was a permanent feature of the city’s life, not a man appointed to deal with a crisis. Sphrantzes mentions that his brother-in-law, Gregory Palaiologos-Mamonas, was the son of the former *megas dux* and ruler of Monemvasia, Mamonas.¹³⁵ It has been proposed that Melissenos’ recording of the ruler of Monemvasia as Paul Mamonas may be a corruption of the double barrelled surname Palaiologos-Mamonas.¹³⁶ The Funeral Oration given by Manuel II for his brother, Theodore, where the emperor states that a rebellious *archon* was a relative by blood of the Palaiologoi has been cited in support of this argument.¹³⁷ Monemvasia

¹³² Lambros 1915:287-90

¹³³ It should be noted that neither term is used in the sources discussing his career, but the nature of his power, a local man rising to become the ‘first man’ in Monemvasia fits the pattern of earlier *dynastes* and the proposed meaning of the term *archon* from the *argyroboullon* of Theodore I.

¹³⁴ Pseudo-Phrantzes:248

¹³⁵ Sphrantzes:6. Necipoğlu has proposed that the father of Gregory Palaiologos Mamonas was the rebellious *archon* of Monemvasia whom Melissenos records as Paul Mamonas. Necipoğlu 2009: 246. Pseudo-Phrantzes:248

¹³⁶ Kalligas 1990:147. Necipoğlu certainly doubts that the first name of Mamonas was Paul. Necipoğlu 2009:243. It seems equally likely that the individual concerned was called Paul and that he married a Palaiologina, hence the surname of Gregory Palaiologos-Mamonas. Either way there is enough evidence to suppose that the rebel *archon* Mamonas was related to the Palaiologoi, either by birth or by marriage.

¹³⁷ Kalligas 1990:149, *Funeral Oration*:125.22-27. Manuel II does not mention the place of origin of this *archon*. The *archon* in question was an ally of the Prince of Achaea and was in fact one of a number of *archontes* captured by Theodore after the surrender of the army of the Prince of Achaea. We do not know if Mamonas was ever captured by Theodore so it remains a mystery as to whether the *archon*, recorded by Manuel II as, related to the emperor by blood was Mamonas. The *Funeral Oration* was written by Manuel II for his brother Theodore. In recording the events of his brother’s life Manuel describes many of the events which took place in the Peloponnese during his brother’s reign. These include Theodore’s frequent clashes with the rebellious Peloponnesian *archontes*, the occupation of Monemvasia by the Ottomans, the sale of the Morea to the Hospitallers and Theodore’s residence in Monemvasia. Unfortunately Manuel mentions very few individuals by name.

probably supported the Kantakouzenoi against despot Theodore¹³⁸ and (Paul?) Mamonas may have been a compromise governor, installed with the backing of the new despot following the end of hostilities sometime after March 1384. Another possibility is that the son (Paul?) of the rebel *archon*, Mamonas, was given a Palaiologan bride, producing a son, Gregory Palaiologos-Mamonas: (Paul?) Mamonas eventually succeeded his father and himself rebelled against the Palaiologoi.¹³⁹ Whatever the date at which he became *archon/dynast*, as a Mamonas with links to the imperial family, the new ruler represented all of the interested parties in 1384. If this was so, it is possible that Mamonas fulfilled both the role of *kephale* and *archon* and that the rule of Monemvasia was not always undertaken by two men. Mamonas soon rebelled against the despot. In 1391 he was expelled from Monemvasia and fled to the court of the Ottoman Sultan.¹⁴⁰ It is clear from the testimony of Mamonas, that Theodore I instigated his overthrow using diplomacy rather than military force. Rivals within Monemvasia may have been responsible for the act itself, encouraged by the despot. This would be parallel with the events leading to the downfall of the last *archon* to be exiled, Ioannes Chamaretos. That Theodore issued an *argyroboullon* for the Monemvasiots immediately after the civil war also suggests that the new leaders of the city were complicit in the eviction of Mamonas. As such it is possible to see the *argyroboullon* in the terms of a reward given to the city for allying with the despot and ending the war. Necipoğlu however, does not see the overthrow of Mamonas in such terms. The *archon* was simply another landlord defeated by Theodore and then deprived of his lands, in this case Monemvasia.¹⁴¹ Mamonas, now in exile, instigated the Ottoman capture of Monemvasia in 1394, although whether he returned to the city as *archon/dynast* is unknown.¹⁴² The revolt of Mamonas is usually considered to be a small part of the civil war in the Peloponnese, only significant because of the opportunity that it presented to the Ottomans to occupy the city. However, the career of Mamonas also supports the view of Monemvasia as a city with a number of

¹³⁸ Kalligas 2010:39; Kalligas 1990:148. See above on page 28.

¹³⁹ If Pseudo-Phrantzes is correct then the new *archon* succeeded another member of his family.

¹⁴⁰ Pseudo-Phrantzes:198; Chalkokondyles: 74-5; Manuel II:133.1-6 records that more than one deserter fled to Bajezid and does not mention Mamonas by name.

¹⁴¹ Necipoğlu 2009: 25. For dispossessed rebels see Manuel II: 95-7.

¹⁴² For the intrigues of Mamonas-Palaiologos at the court of the Ottoman Sultan see Pseudo-Phrantzes:198; *Funeral Oration*:142-146 and Chalkokondyles:75

powerful families jockeying for position.¹⁴³ The Mamonas family had clearly ruled for some years and their enemies within Monemvasia used support from outside to overthrow them. Mamonas then contrived to return, he himself using outside support to remove his rivals.¹⁴⁴

No *archon* of Monemvasia is named in the sources following the fall of Mamonas. This should not be surprising as the city remained loyal to the despots and thus, did not intrude in the history of the Peloponnese as it had done under the rebel leader.¹⁴⁵ The Eudaimonoianis family became increasingly important and are the family most likely to have assumed the leadership of the city.¹⁴⁶ Certainly the career of Nicholas Eudaimonoianis in the fifteenth century suggests that he was by far the most powerful Monemvasiot in the Peloponnese and probably the empire as a whole.¹⁴⁷ Nicholas Eudaimonoianis combined wealth, intelligence and imperial favour and at no point were he, or his family expelled from Monemvasia. Nikolaos died in 1423 and it is not known if his family remained ascendant in Monemvasia, though certainly they continued to serve the despots in high office.¹⁴⁸

What the various imperial documents do suggest is that there was some sort of authority within Monemvasia which spoke on behalf of all the citizens. All of the secular documents discussed above were specifically requested from the imperial authorities by the 'Monemvasiots'. Such requests would have required a person or body of people to do the requesting, and in such a way that they would be successful. Whether this suggests an individual, such as the *archon/dynast*, a council of some kind or a general assembly is impossible to conclude as, apart from the one reference to the term *archon* and the recording of the careers of the various *archontes/dynastes* of Monemvasia in the sources, there is no mention of any civic institutions or government. However,

¹⁴³ Necipoğlu however views Monemvasia as an outright possession of the Mamonas family. Necipoğlu 2009:247

¹⁴⁴ Members of the Mamonas family are mentioned at a later date in the Peloponnese and Constantinople, although not in Monemvasia.

¹⁴⁵ We do know that Mamonas was not the last man to hold this position as the *argyroboullon* of 1391/2 specifically mentions the *archon* which proves the institution continued under the rule of the despot.

¹⁴⁶ Kalligas suggests that Nicholas Eudaimonoianis may have succeeded Mamonas as *archon/dynast* of Monemvasia. Kalligas 1990:156

¹⁴⁷ Mazaris 8-9.13-24. See Kalligas 1990 chapter V.2. for the career of Eudaimonoianis.

¹⁴⁸ George, his second son, became *mesazon* under Constantine Palaiologos.

those making the request are always referred to in the plural, but this could simply mean that in the eyes of the ruler one man was acting on behalf of the whole, so the language of the documents is not in itself an argument for the existence of some kind of city council. The only explicit reference to a council comes from the memoirs of Pius II, where the Monemvasiot ambassadors recount the calling of a council to decide whether or not the city should be offered to the pope.¹⁴⁹

Overall, I argue that Monemvasia was neither the possession of one man, as suggested by Necipoğlu, nor a survivor from antiquity enjoying civic autonomy, as argued by Kalligas. Monemvasia was at the same time something both more complex and more dynamic than these two theories suggest. Rather, the city produced a number of powerful families all trying to claim political ascendancy. The current “first man in Monemvasia” was almost certainly the *archon* hmentioned in the *argyroboullon* of Theodore I. That the *archon* was a locally appointed official is a sign of both the sense of unity and common identity shared by the Monemvasiots. It is perhaps possible to see parallels with the mayors of the contemporary English or French town. These officials were locally appointed and initially in England and always in France worked alongside the representative of the king, much as we see the *kephale* and the *archon* in position together.¹⁵⁰ At times the *archon* would work in concert with the imperial *kephale* and at times against him.¹⁵¹ Furthermore, in other examples the two offices may have been united in a single person. The competition between rival families is never clearer than when the city made a bid for independence under its *archon*. Both Ioannes Chamaretos and Mamonas fought against the dominant power in the Morea, and both were not defeated by siege, but by a rival faction within Monemvasia, which saw the respective wars as an opportunity to oust the *archon* and try to take his place. Both exiled/deposed *archontes* attempted to return with the aid of outsiders. What the *argyroboullon* of Theodore I proves is that the *archon/dynast* did exist during times of imperial strength. After all

¹⁴⁹ Kalligas 1990:192. A similar council may have taken place in 1394 when the Monemvasiots offered their city to the Venetians. Thiriet *Regestes* I:no.844. Both of these examples occurred in emergency situations. As such it is not possible to conclude whether the council operated on a permanent basis or was only summoned in a crisis.

¹⁵⁰ Nicholas 1997:111-112

¹⁵¹ Mamonas for instance.

Theodore could not have legislated for a position that only a rebel could hold.¹⁵² Theodore I also exempted the Monemvasiots from the *kritikon*, a tax used to pay for the cost of courts, and at the same time allowed them to set up a court of justice in Monemvasia.¹⁵³ Although we do not know who sat in judgement in this court when we take into account the exemption from the *kritikon* and the position of the *archon* it is likely that, at the least, duties were shared between the *kephale* and locally chosen judges, perhaps in the same way envisaged in the *chrysobull* for Ioannina of 1319.¹⁵⁴ It is thus probable that Monemvasia enjoyed a certain amount of legal autonomy. In contemporary western towns, particularly in England and the north of Europe, the assumption of partial or complete control over the local courts is seen as an important step on the road to urban autonomy.¹⁵⁵ The internal politics of Monemvasia thus have much in common with the dynamic politics that helped to define the contemporary Italian city states. Unlike the Italian states the Monemvasiot faction that gained the upper hand was the imperial faction and Monemvasia remained part of the empire, almost until the end. However, in 1460 the Monemvasiots broke away from the crumbling empire.

Trade, Merchants and Production: The Economy of Monemvasia and its Hinterland

Almost every study that comments on Monemvasia in one way or another has made reference to the merchants from the city. Scholarly interest in Monemvasiot merchants stems from the many commercial privileges that were issued by successive Palaiologoi. Further information about the places visited by Monemvasiot merchants and the goods that they traded can be found in the documents of Venetian and Genoese officials. Using the imperial and Italian documents Laiou has drawn a picture of Monemvasiot merchants trading in a number of goods in a range of

¹⁵² It is not possible to extend this theory to other cities. However, it is logical to assume that the same pattern would apply to other cities and that dynasts existed all of the time.

¹⁵³ MM V:171.5-11, 172.1-12

¹⁵⁴ See below, *The Population and Society of Ioannina*.

¹⁵⁵ Reynolds 1977:119

locations.¹⁵⁶ Laiou was concerned with the whole of the empire, either with the creation of a general picture of the late Byzantine merchant¹⁵⁷ or assessing how Byzantium interacted and was included in the wider Mediterranean trade system.¹⁵⁸ In an addendum to this last paper Laiou states that Monemvasiot merchants should probably have formed a larger part of her argument.¹⁵⁹ In many ways this section of the present study is an attempt to build on this comment and demonstrate that the Monemvasiots were active in trade throughout the Black Sea, Sea of Marmara and Northern Aegean, in the north, as well as in the Peloponnese and Crete in the south. Using imperial and Italian documents it is possible to trace the mercantile fortunes of Monemvasia (in a geographical sense) during the last two centuries of the empire. These fortunes are also expressed in the imperial privileges granted to the merchants of Monemvasia and their continual expansion by different generations of Palaiologoi. As these privileges form the foundations on which the Monemvasiots built their commercial success we shall consider them before turning the activities of the merchants themselves.

Commercial Privileges

The privileges granted to the Monemvasiots highlight the extent to which their society was a commercial society. The repeated renewal and extension of these privileges suggests that Monemvasia continued to be a significant mercantile force throughout the Palaiologan period. There is evidence that the Monemvasiots actually expanded their activities to the point that they were able to request new and more extensive privileges from the central government. It seems to be logical to assume that when the Monemvasiots requested specific privileges it was because these were the exemptions which would benefit them the most. As a result an investigation of the individual tax exemptions of the Monemvasiots reveals which goods they traded in and reinforces the impression of Monemvasia as a primarily mercantile city.

The *kommerkion*

¹⁵⁶ Laiou 1980-1

¹⁵⁷ Laiou 1982

¹⁵⁸ Laiou 1980-1

¹⁵⁹ Laiou 1980-1:217

Arguably the most significant and far reaching commercial privilege that the emperor could grant was exemption from the *kommerkion*.¹⁶⁰ This privilege was granted by Michael VIII, and covered exchanges involving a Monemvasiot within the city of Monemvasia.¹⁶¹ Andronikos II renewed this grant in 1284, again limiting it to transactions taking place within Monemvasia.¹⁶² In the second *chrysobull* of Andronikos II, c.1300, the Monemvasiots had the *kommerkion* reduced from ten percent to two percent in the cities of Constantinople, Selymbria, Herakleia, Raideustos, Kallipolis and in the cities of Macedonia, whilst retaining their exemption within Monemvasia and gaining complete exemption in the remainder of the empire.¹⁶³ In 1328 Andronikos III issued a *prostagma* for the Monemvasiots of Pegai, at their request. This repeated the grant of the same exemption from the *kommerkion* described above, to these colonists from Monemvasia.¹⁶⁴ Later in c.1336 a *chrysobull* was issued to "...all Monemvasiots, inhabitants of the God-protected city of Monemvasia and those from Pegai and others from wherever they live and those who live in God-protected Constantinople..."¹⁶⁵ Andronikos clearly states that he is extending the privileges previously granted to the Monemvasiots of Pegai to all the Monemvasiots, because the people of Monemvasia themselves asked him to do so.¹⁶⁶ After the issue of this document all Monemvasiots were exempt from the *kommerkion* no matter where they resided, except in Constantinople where the rate of taxation was reduced from two percent to one percent for imports and the same for exports.¹⁶⁷ In 1347-8 John VI Kantakouzenos universally reduced the *kommerkion* to two percent.¹⁶⁸ This reduction greatly reduced the lead that the Monemvasiots had over their Byzantine rivals.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁰ The *kommerkion* was the ten percent tax on traded goods extracted by the imperial government. All Byzantines were exempt from the equivalent tax in Venetian ports. See Antoniadis-Bibicou 1963:102-107.

¹⁶¹ MM V: 154-5.2-4

¹⁶² MM V: 154-5.12-14

¹⁶³ Pseudo-Phrantzes:538.38-540.3. It is odd that this document does not specify the names of the cities in Macedonia, when it does so for Thrace. Kalligas 2010:35 believes that this grant made Monemvasiot merchants almost the equal of their Venetian rivals.

¹⁶⁴ Schreiner 1978:206-213. 207.12-18. At the beginning of this document Andronikos III mentions two earlier grants, a *prostagma* and a *chrysobull* issued for the Monemvasiots of Pegai by Andronikos II. The exemption from the *kommerkion* except in certain named cities carried over from these documents. Perhaps these documents were issued at a similar time to the c.1300 *chrysobull* for Monemvasia. See Schreiner 1978:207.1-9

¹⁶⁵ Pseudo-Phrantzes:538.35-7

¹⁶⁶ Pseudo-Phrantzes:540.4-12

¹⁶⁷ Pseudo-Phrantzes:540.12-17

The despot of the Morea, Theodore I Palaiologos, issued more privileges for the city in 1391-2.¹⁷⁰ The privileges were for all Monemvasiots and exempted them from payment of the *kommerkion* in any villages or towns of the despotate.¹⁷¹ The *argyroboullon* of the despot Demetrios, c.1450, was the last Byzantine document to mention the *kommerkion*.¹⁷² In this document the despot Demetrios states that the *kommerkion* was still collected in Monemvasia, and that this was a long-standing custom.¹⁷³ All other documents mentioning the *kommerkion* discuss the exemption of Monemvasiots. Kalligas resolves this discrepancy by proposing that the exemption merely cut out the imperial authorities, and that the city authorities continued to collect the tax.¹⁷⁴ Citing the clause which stipulates that the city authorities must not interfere with the collection and spending of the tax on the fortifications, Kalligas presents it as evidence that the civic officials had previously collected the tax from all traders in the city, including Monemvasiots.¹⁷⁵ However, Kalligas does not mention what the city authorities had spent over two hundred years of taxes on. There are other possible ways of explaining this apparent discrepancy in how different documents describe the Monemvasiots' privileges with regards to the *kommerkion*. Firstly, the *kommerkion* could have been taken by the inhabitants from non Monemvasiots trading in the city. Although to extract the

¹⁶⁸ See Antoniadis-Bibicou 1963:102-103 for discussion.

¹⁶⁹ Kalligas 1990:139 suggests that this change in the tax level had little effect on the Monemvasiots as they enjoyed other specific exemptions, such as *exkousseia*, and *defendensis* which would still have given them an edge over any other Byzantine rivals. For these exemptions see below, pp.60-62.

¹⁷⁰ MM V:171-4

¹⁷¹ MM V:171.6-8. Obviously the despot could only legislate for the lands under his control. This document is effectively a reiteration of existing privileges, with respect to the *kommerkion*, with a new geographical constraint. There is no evidence for privileges which benefitted the Monemvasiots operating outside of the Morea. The *argyroboullon* was issued following the civil war in the Morea, during which Monemvasia supported the losing side. That there seems to have been no subsequent renewal of privileges outside of the Morea may suggest that the civil war either curtailed Monemvasiot activity outside of the Morea, or that the Imperial authorities in Constantinople were not willing to issue new privileges. However, when Monemvasiots returned to imperial favour, as they did under Manuel II only a decade after the end of the civil war, no new privileges were issued, perhaps suggesting that there was no lapse in the Imperial privileges and that this *argyroboullon* was simply a way for the new despot to bestow his favour on a newly subserviant and loyal city.

¹⁷² MM V:170-1. This document was issued in answer to a request from the Monemvasiots for the allocation of funds for the construction and repair of the fortifications of the city.

¹⁷³ MM V:170.1-3

¹⁷⁴ Kalligas 2010:47-48; Kalligas 1990:188 Kalligas does mention that no seals of *kommerkiarioi* have ever been found in Monemvasia, from any period. However, when we consider the scarcity of numismatic and sigillographic material from Monemvasia this is perhaps not surprising.

¹⁷⁵ For clause see MM V:171.1-3, for argument of Kalligas see Kalligas 1990:188. Obviously the city authorities would potentially interfere with the new arrangement for the tax, which would effectively deprive the city of a source of income. The clause actually says that the *kephale* of Monemvasia should not interfere with the collection of the *kommerkion*. For my concerns over whether the *kephale* was a city or imperial authority see the Administration section above.

kommerkion in such a way would be in defiance of imperial commands, such acts are recorded.¹⁷⁶ The Venetians had their own exemption from the *kommerkion*, yet were repeatedly charged in various ports of the empire in the late thirteenth century.¹⁷⁷ It also seems unlikely that the emperor would have given the civic authorities permission to collect taxes in this way; certainly there is no proof that this was so. Secondly, the tax could have been resumed at some point between the last mention of an exemption in 1391-2 and the issue of the *argyroboullon* in 1450. This is certainly possible and it would explain why the document suggests that the *kommerkion* had been collected in Monemvasia as a long standing custom. The final possibility is that the tax was resumed in 1450 and the old custom mentioned in the *argyroboullon* referred to a general, empire wide custom concerning uses of the *kommerkion* rather than a peculiarly Monemvasiot custom relating to collection. Unfortunately, as with the theory proposed by Kalligas, it is not possible to prove any of these theories. However, as it has been demonstrated that the *kephale* was not a locally chosen official, but the imperial governor, the latter two of the arguments suggested above are the most plausible.¹⁷⁸

The exemption of the Monemvasiots from the *kommerkion* is very significant for understanding Monemvasia. Initially covering only their own city, then eventually the whole empire in one form or another, the continual growth and extension of this exemption throughout the period speaks directly about the importance of Monemvasiot trade to the empire. These merchants were so important that they were able to request and receive numerous extensions of privilege. For Monemvasia the exemption must have had significant effects. Other cities were exempted from the

¹⁷⁶ The Monemvasiot privilege of *defendensis* granted an exemption from the *kommerkion* to those doing business with the Monemvasiots.

¹⁷⁷ Morgan 1976:435, cases 235-53. Although none of these exactions took place in Monemvasia they do show the kind of abuses that took place and which could theoretically have been perpetrated by the Monemvasiots.

¹⁷⁸ The Monemvasiots could have lost their exemption from the *kommerkion* following the rising of Mamonas in the 1390s. Following the recovery of the city by Theodore I there is no record of the reissuing of privileges as there had been in 1391-2 following the civil war (the last occasion when Monemvasia and the despot disagreed). However, the disruption of imperial rule in Monemvasia in the later 1390s was complicated by Ottoman interference, so it could be argued that the Monemvasiots did not need to be treated as rebels returning to the fold, but liberated Romans and that therefore that the old privileges were still valid. It seems very likely that the imposition of the *kommerkion* in 1450 could have been a temporary measure and that the exemption still applied up until this point and would again once the work on the fortifications was completed.

kommerkion.¹⁷⁹ However, Monemvasia was able to turn this tax exemption into something that ensured that the merchants of Monemvasia, in terms of privilege, were equal to merchants of Venice and the other Italian city states.¹⁸⁰

Exkousseia, eleutheria and other tax exemptions

As well as exemption from the *kommerkion*, Michael VIII granted complete *exkousseia*,¹⁸¹ *eleutheria*¹⁸² and complete freedom from taxation on their inherited property (*gonika*).¹⁸³ *Eleutheria* was a general exemption from taxation, while *exkousseia* was an exemption from taxes and *corvéés*.¹⁸⁴ In 1284, at the request of the Monemvasiots, Andronikos II renewed the grant of *exkousseia*. The exemptions on patrimonial property were limited to property purchased up to the issue of this *chrysobull*. Any new purchases would be subject to taxation, but the property already possessed by the Monemvasiots (*gonika* and *hypostatika*) was to be completely free from all *baros* (obligations) and *telos* (tax), preserving the freedom that they had previously enjoyed.¹⁸⁵ Kalligas believes that this limitation was placed on property because the Monemvasiots had become

¹⁷⁹ See MM V:77-84 for the exemptions of Ioannina granted by Andronikos III where Ioannina was granted exemption from the *kommerkion* throughout the empire, this giving the people of this city greater exemptions than the Monemvasiots. It is tempting to see here a rather shrewd policy on the part of the Palaiologoi. Rather than viewing this as a sign that merchants from Ioannina were more significant, and therefore able to demand greater privileges from the emperor, than their Monemvasiot counterparts, I would argue that it in fact proves the opposite. Perhaps we should see the lowering but not cancelling of the *kommerkion* in some cities as a sign that the Monemvasiots were particularly prevalent in those areas, and that the government would stand to lose a lot of money if a complete exemption was granted. Ioannina by extension may not have been as trade oriented, so granting a complete exemption would appear generous without losing the government much money.

¹⁸⁰ The possible change in the nature of the exemptions of the Monemvasiots some time in the late fourteenth or fifteenth century remains purely speculative and does not detract from this overall picture.

¹⁸¹ A grant of exemption from taxes. In this case from all taxes but sometimes from specific taxes where stated. When not linked to a specific tax *exkousseia* is generally taken to mean an exemption from all taxes.

¹⁸² Literally freedom in this case *eleutheria* meant freedom from taxes and *corvéés* and from the actions of any state officials who might try to attack the rights of the individual or group in question. Kyritses 1999:233.

The term is virtually synonymous with *exkousseia*, but with the added protection from imperial officials.
¹⁸³ MM V: 154.19-20-155.1-2. The *gonika* of the Monemvasiots was exempted from tax (*telos*) and burdens (*baros*).

¹⁸⁴ Ostrogorsky has argued that *exkousseia* during the Palaiologan period also gave the holder judicial privileges and immunity and that this created a system akin to feudalism. Ostrogorsky 1958:235 For more on *exkousseia* as a none financial privilege see Administration section above.

¹⁸⁵ MM V:155.9-12

significantly richer in the twenty years since Michael VIII issued his *chrysobull*.¹⁸⁶ Instead of granting *eleutheria* Andronikos II granted *anochlesia*,¹⁸⁷ an equivalent exemption from imperial taxation and official interference and exactions. In the *chrysobull* of c.1300 Andronikos II renewed the grant of *exkousseia* and *eleutheria*, but no mention was made of the earlier grant on the exemption from taxes of patrimonial property.¹⁸⁸

In 1328 Andronikos III issued a *prostagma* for the Monemvasiots of Pegai, who had requested a more specific grant than an all-encompassing exemption from taxation. The result of this appeal was a list of every individual tax that the Pegai Monemvasiots were exempt from.¹⁸⁹ The resulting document makes no mention of *exkousseia* but does mention *defendensis*,¹⁹⁰ and *anochlesia*,¹⁹¹ as well as listing thirteen specific taxes from which the Monemvasiots of Pegai were exempt.¹⁹² The Monemvasiots of Pegai were also given the right to pay any taxes or dues, incurred through trade anywhere in the empire, in Constantinople.¹⁹³ In the *chrysobull* recorded by Makarios Melissenos, Andronikos III extended these privileges to all Monemvasiots in 1336.¹⁹⁴ Andronikos clearly states that he is extending the privileges previously granted to the Monemvasiots of Pegai to all the Monemvasiots because the people of Monemvasia asked him to do so.¹⁹⁵ Andronikos also modified the document granted to Pegai by adding additional taxes to the list of specific exemptions and mentioning exemptions that stretched into the newly reconquered Bulgarian cities

¹⁸⁶ Kalligas 1990:105

¹⁸⁷ *Anochlesia* was one of a number of words used in the common *chrysobulls* (*adiaseistos*, *anaphairetos*, and *anapaspastos*) used which had the same meaning as *eleutheria*. Kyritses 1999:233, 237

¹⁸⁸ Pseudo-Phrantzes:538-40. Of course patrimonial property could have been exempted from taxes and obligations under the renewed grant of *exkousseia* and *eleutheria*.

¹⁸⁹ The text of this document can be found in Schreiner 1978:207-213.

¹⁹⁰ The grant of *defendensis* exempted those trading with the Monemvasiots from the *kommerkion*. Schreiner 1978:209.23-6, 209.26. See Kalligas 1990:123 for discussion.

¹⁹¹ Schreiner 1978:211.31-2, 209.22

¹⁹² Schreiner 1978:209.19-21. See below, pp.62+63. The exemption said that the Monemvasiots of Pegai were to enjoy the status of holders of *anochlesia* and *adiaseistos* with respect to the taxes listed in the document. Schreiner 1978:209.22-23

¹⁹³ Schreiner 1978:209-211.26-31 . Kalligas points out that this would put the money straight into the emperor's coffers. Kalligas 1990:123. As such this should not really be seen as a privilege granted for the Monemvasiots.

¹⁹⁴ Pseudo-Phrantzes:538-42 for the text of the *chrysobull*, 540.7-12 the for extension of the privileges to all Monemvasiots.

¹⁹⁵ Pseudo-Phrantzes:540.7-10

and the Peloponnese.¹⁹⁶ The grant of *exkousseia*, omitted from the *prostagma* for the Monemvasiots of Pegai, was included in this new grant.¹⁹⁷ Andronikos states that the Monemvasiots should be exempt from taxes in towns and villages, harbours and markets, islands and mainland.¹⁹⁸ Crucially the exemptions granted by Andronikos III covered not only taxes in existence, but taxes which may be created in the future,¹⁹⁹ and not only the Monemvasiots of his day, but their descendants for as long as their families survived.²⁰⁰

The specific tax exemptions mentioned above would seem to be redundant. After all the Monemvasiots were already the recipients of a varied combination of *eleutheria*, *exkousseia*, *defendensis* and *anenchlesia*. Theoretically these grants gave the Monemvasiots a blanket exemption from all taxes and dues. At the very end of the *chrysobull* Andronikos III states that he had listed the exemptions of the Monemvasiots point by point to add force and strength to his pronouncements.²⁰¹ Examining the exemptions to which Andronikos chose to add extra emphasis, supports the view that the Monemvasiots were mainly concerned with mercantile activities.²⁰² The Monemvasiots were exempt from the *kampanistikon* (weight charge), the *mesitikon* (Commission),²⁰³

¹⁹⁶ 38 exemptions instead of the 13 contained in the *prostagma*. For the list of exemptions see Pseudo-Phrantzes:540.22-27, for Bulgaria see Pseudo-Phrantzes:540.41-44, 542.2, for the Peloponnese see Pseudo-Phrantzes:542.6-9.

¹⁹⁷ Pseudo-Phrantzes:540.11. In this case *exkousseia* is mentioned in direct relation to tax exemption, and does not seem to have any wider connotations. However, Kalligas makes much of the lack of a grant to the Monemvasiots outside of Monemvasia of *exkousseia*, and argues that *exkousseia* was not granted to all Monemvasiots in 1336, only those from Monemvasia itself, Kalligas 2010:36. Clearly in the c.1336 *chrysobull* this grant was made, and in fact the wording of the grant suggests that the Monemvasiots of Pegai enjoyed *exkousseia* before this 1336 or at least some equivalent privilege by a different name. See Pseudo-Phrantzes:540.10-12. As the new document of 1336 was for all Monemvasiots, without exception, if *exkousseia* really did mean autonomy from the imperial government then Pegai, the Monemvasiots of Constantinople and Herakleia became autonomous in 1336. It is far more likely given the wording of the document that *exkousseia* was a fiscal privilege only.

¹⁹⁸ Pseudo-Phrantzes:542.5-6

¹⁹⁹ Pseudo-Phrantzes:540.29-30

²⁰⁰ Pseudo-Phrantzes:542.24-28 It is interesting that the Monemvasiots requested a *chrysobull* listing individual tax exemptions rather than quoting their privilege of blanket exemption. Perhaps, unlike the document of Andronikos III, earlier documents left some doubt as to how to deal with new taxes, although it is extremely unlikely that all 38 taxes contained in the second *chrysobull* were enacted in the first quarter of the fourteenth century. Of course there is the qualification at the end of the list of taxes “and any other taxes” just to cover any holes left by the list. Pseudo-Phrantzes:540.28-30

²⁰¹ Pseudo-Phrantzes:542.24-28

²⁰² As stated above, the Monemvasiots requested these privileges, and it would not be too great a leap of logic to suggest that they asked for extra emphasis in certain areas, namely the areas with which they were the most concerned.

²⁰³ Antoniadis-Bibicou 1963:136

the *metretikon* (Measuring fee),²⁰⁴ the *modiatikon* (A tax on the measurement of the *modios*, this implies a charge on trading grains), the *opsnoion*, the *skaliatikon*, the *dekateias*, the *alientikes tetramoirias* (a tax on fishing), the *orikes*, the *kastroktisia*, the *magerireia* (kitchen or butcher tax was perhaps a surcharge on the sale of livestock or perhaps meat), the *antinaulon*, the *kormiatikon*,²⁰⁵ the *zugastikon*,²⁰⁶ the *metriatikon* (a general tax on the measurement of goods)²⁰⁷, the *pachiatikon* (thickness)²⁰⁸, the *gomariatikon*,²⁰⁹ the *Vigliatikon*, the *xylachyron* (a tax on the trade of wood), the *kateryoktisia*, the *exoprasia* (a tax on imports sold to strangers)²¹⁰, the *kosmiatikon*, the *kapeliatikon* (a tax on the sale of wine),²¹¹ the *meniatikon*, the *ergasteriatikon*, the *metaxiatikon* (a tax on the sale of silk), a further tax (the meaning of which is disputed)²¹² and the requirement to carry grain for the state in a ship.²¹³ The *kastroktisia* has already been mentioned, this was the tax used to pay for fortifications. The *antinaulon* was a payment to buy exemption from the requirement for ship owners to carry people or goods for the government.²¹⁴ The *Vigliatikon* was a charge paid for the protection from pirates.²¹⁵ The *kateryoktisia* was a corvée for the building of ships.²¹⁶ The remaining taxes (where identified) are all taxes collected by regional officials for local use.²¹⁷ Without exception these taxes were surcharges on the trade, either the carriage or sale of goods, or taxes on the use or mooring of ships. The vast majority of the taxes listed above were charges for the

²⁰⁴ Antoniadis-Bibicou 1963:136-137

²⁰⁵ The preceding privileges are found in both the *prostagma* for the Monemvasiots of Pegai and the 1336 Chrysobull for the Monemvasiots, with the exception of the *modiatikon*, the *orikes* and the *kormiatikon* which are only found in the *prostagma*. The following tax exemptions are found only in the *chrysobull*.

²⁰⁶ Anoniadis-Bibicou 1963:137

²⁰⁷ Unlike many of the other surcharges listed in the *chrysobulls* this one does not seem to be linked to a specific product. Perhaps rather than a surcharge for the weighing and measuring of each type of goods there existed a certain number of common or luxury goods which had their own level of taxation, the remainder fell under the scope of this tax. Kalligas 1990:122 A tax on wine or olive oil.

²⁰⁸ The exact nature of this tax is unknown. Antoniadis-Bibicou 1963:137

²⁰⁹ Antoniadis-Bibicou 1963:137

²¹⁰ This may have been a tax charged when a product from outside of the empire was sold on to a merchant from abroad, taking advantage of Byzantium's position at a crossroads of international trade.

²¹¹ Bartusis 1992:147

²¹² Schreiner 1978:220 n.34 states that this might be a tax on textiles; Kalligas 1990:121 n.80 believes that it may have been a tax on certain naval activities.

²¹³ For the definitions of the taxes quoted here see Oikonomides 2002 and Oikonomides 1996.

²¹⁴ Oikonomides 2002:1051; Antoniadis-Bibicou 1963:134

²¹⁵ Oikonomides 2002:1038. Bartusis 1992:147. Describes this as a tax to pay for guard duty.

²¹⁶ ODB 536 says corvée for the building of ships.

²¹⁷ Oikonomides 2002:1051

measuring and weighing of goods.²¹⁸ It will be noted that the list of exemptions outlined above covers a number of the trade goods also listed in the *chrysobull*. The *skaliatikon* was paid to allow a ship to use a landing stage.²¹⁹ The Monemvasiots managed to preserve their exemptions under the despots of the Morea. despot Theodore I issued his *argyroboullon*²²⁰ to all Monemvasiots and renewed the grant of *eleutheria* and *akatadoulosia*,²²¹ the equivalent of *exkousseia*.²²² These grants covered the property and possessions of the Monemvasiots and at first suggest that the exemptions are more structured for a property owning, rather than mercantile society. However, later in the *argyroboullon* the despot exempts the Monemvasiots from taxes at markets and fairs in the Morea.²²³ Property, as in earlier documents, was free from tax and could be freely sold, gifted or bequeathed by the owner to whomever he wished.²²⁴ The despot extended this last privilege to include property purchased after the issue of the *argyroboullon*.²²⁵ As with the *chrysobull* of Andronikos III, this *argyroboullon* also grants exemption from any future taxes.²²⁶

The story told by the varied commercial privileges of the Monemvasiots is the same as that told by the pattern of exemption from the *kommerkion*. The Monemvasiots repeatedly requested and received privileges from the imperial government, which while not solely intended to boost their trade and mercantile activities, were certainly weighted very much in favour of such endeavours. However, grants such as *eleutheria* and *exkousseia* and their counterparts were more far reaching, in fiscal terms, than purely commercial privileges such as exemption from the *kommerkion*. This gives rise to the question, what benefits did the imperial government derived from owning Monemvasia? Michael VIII initiated limited privileges for the city; Andronikos II did likewise, putting for instance a limit on the *gonika*²²⁷ which would be covered by the *chrysobull*. Under

²¹⁸ The *mesitikon*, *miniatikon*, *metretikon*, *zygastikon* *kampanistikon*, and *gomariatikon* fall into this category. Oikonomides 2002:1052. See each tax for the specific nature of the exaction.

²¹⁹ Oikonomides 2002:1052; Antoniadis-Bibicou 1963:103-135

²²⁰ MM V:171-74

²²¹ MM V:171.5-6

²²² Kalligas 1990:149

²²³ MM V:171.10-11. For fairs and markets in the Peloponnese at this time see Lambropoulou 1989.

²²⁴ MM V:172.7-10

²²⁵ MM V:172.7-10

²²⁶ MM V:172.1-2

²²⁷ Patrimonial property.

Andronikos III the pattern changed as privileges and their application become more universal. Andronikos III granted complete exemption from imperial taxation, except for a greatly reduced *kommerkion* in Constantinople to all Monemvasiots throughout the empire. The process of extension was carried through to a natural conclusion under the despots with all property (currently owned and yet to be purchased) and all transactions exempt from existing, and future taxes. It would be easy to say that these privileges, rather than illustrating the rise of Monemvasia, actually chart the decline of imperial control. However, whilst this may be true for the first Palaiologoi, to whom Monemvasia was a far away city on the edge of empire,²²⁸ Monemvasia was at the very heart of the despotate. Furthermore, the privileges granted by the despot in 1391-2 were granted after the defeat of Monemvasia by the despot in a civil war, which was surely not a time of imperial weakness. Therefore, while it may be possible to see a partial decline in imperial authority by looking at the privileges of Monemvasia, it is equally possible to see the vibrancy and mercantile strength of the city itself.

Merchants and Trade Goods

From the imperial grants and privileges to the Monemvasiots and Italian documents it is possible to reveal the goods in which the Monemvasiots traded.²²⁹ Furthermore using the same documents it is possible to trace the activities of the Monemvasiots century by century on a map of the empire and draw broad conclusions about the range of their trade.

The two documents of Andronikos III list the merchandise that the Monemvasiots traded in. It is reasonable to assume therefore, that these were the items which were carried in Monemvasiot ships.²³⁰ Specifically mentioned in the *prostagma* were: wheat, wine, wood, straw and four-legged animals from Thrace and wheat and wine from the empire in general and the Black Sea

²²⁸ Of course it should be noted that the Monemvasiots of Pegai and Constantinople were not at the periphery of empire, but at the heart.

²²⁹ Laiou 1980-1 used the *Prostagma* for the Monemvasiots of Pegai for this purpose.

²³⁰ Laiou 1980-1:218

coast.²³¹ The *chrysobull* mentions wheat, wine, salted meat, wool, leather, linen, straw and four legged animals as being imported into Constantinople.²³² As in the *prostagma* wheat and wine are mentioned for the empire and Black Sea, with the addition of animals from Bulgaria.²³³ In the *chrysobull* of Andronikos III the Monemvasiots were exempted from taxes related to grain, meat, wood, wine and silk.²³⁴ Apart from silk all of these goods are amongst those listed in the *chrysobull* as those carried by the Monemvasiots. The *argyroboullon* of Theodore I also mentioned Monemvasiots trading meat, wine and fish in the Peloponnese.²³⁵ In addition to this a Monemvasiot merchant is recorded in the *Life of Isidore* as travelling from Monemvasia to Constantinople to sell oil.²³⁶ The only document that provides a clue as to the produce of the hinterland of Monemvasia is the *chrysobull* of Andronikos II, confirming the properties of the metropolitan See.²³⁷

The limited nature of the archaeological investigation into Monemvasia has meant that only the upper city has been studied. However, no thorough surveys have taken place, and little of the material that has been found has been published, but the rejuvenation of the lower town of Monemvasia has led to the discovery of examples of late Byzantine pottery. Almost all of the examples found were intended for domestic use.²³⁸ The great majority of the pottery discovered was wheel-made with external, but no internal glazing, and was probably of local manufacture.²³⁹ A mixture of simple glazed and sgraffito wares have been discovered.²⁴⁰ It has been suggested that one group of vessels with yellow or green glaze and sgraffito decoration were locally produced in

²³¹ Schreiner 1978:207.15-17 for Thracian merchandise, 211.28 for Black Sea merchandise, particular emphasis was given to the mention of Thracian wheat.

²³² Pseudo-Phrantzes: 540.17-20

²³³ Pseudo-Phrantzes:540.34-39, 41-44. There is no specific mention of the other towns of Thrace as in the *prostagma*. It is possible that these towns were encompassed in the section concerning goods bought and sold in Constantinople; however, this does not seem in the spirit of Andronikos' stated aim of being specific. It is not clear whether the Monemvasiot presence in the newly recovered territories in Bulgaria was the result of the conquest or existed earlier.

²³⁴ See above.

²³⁵ MM V:172

²³⁶ Papadopoulos-Kerameus 1905:88

²³⁷ MM V:161-165.

²³⁸ Kalamara 2001:41

²³⁹ Kalamara 2001:42. One pot, dated to the fifteenth or sixteenth century would seem to prove local production as it was left unfinished before being abandoned. Kalamara 2001:58.

²⁴⁰ Kalamara 2001:53

the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries.²⁴¹ A great number of the pottery artefacts that have been discovered are water jugs, used for transporting water from the large public cisterns to homes.²⁴² However, no evidence has been discovered which provides proof of pottery workshops nor have any of the usual pottery vessels associated with the production of olive oil or wine been discovered, or even large storage jars for agricultural produce.²⁴³ The majority of the pottery discovered in Monemvasia which cannot be attributed to local production is “...the product of provincial centres and of mediocre quality.” Very few pieces demonstrate characteristics which are associated with the major centres of Byzantine pottery production.²⁴⁴

Two documents provide a sense of the size of the hinterland of Monemvasia: a *chrysobull* of 1301 issued by Andronikos II to confirm the possessions of the See of Monemvasia, and the *argyroboullon* of 1391/2 of Theodore I Palaiologos.²⁴⁵ The 1301 *chrysobull* lists the property of the see as village of Ganganeas with its *paroikoi* and *hypostatika*,²⁴⁶ the village of Nomia and its *paroikoi*,²⁴⁷ the *autorgia* at Taireia,²⁴⁸ the *agridion* of Lyra with its *paroikoi* and *hypostatika*,²⁴⁹ the *autorgia* at Sion,²⁵⁰ the Church estates and *paroikoi* at the village Episkopeia,²⁵¹ the land near Elous with four watermills built by the Church and a vineyard,²⁵² the field of St. Kournoutos with its *paroikoi*,²⁵³ the field of Kamara with its *paroikoi* and *hypostatika*,²⁵⁴ the monastery of St. George in Prinikos with its *paroikoi*, *autorgia*, a lake,²⁵⁵ and the village of the Peziameni with its *paroikoi* and *hypostatika*,²⁵⁶ the village of

²⁴¹ Kalamara 2001:58

²⁴² Kalamara 2001:50

²⁴³ Kalamara 2001:49,51,55. Kalamara notes that the lack of pottery workshops in the city could be because they were located in the uninvestigated upper city where there was more space than in the lower city or because the continuous habitation of the lower city has erased all of the remains of the workshops that once existed. Kalamara 2001:55. It should be noted that no evidence has been found in the upper city of any kind of production or commercial buildings. Kalamara 2001:63

²⁴⁴ Kalamara 2001:59. One reason for this lack of luxurious pottery could be the lack of excavation in the upper city where the residences of the upper classes were located.

²⁴⁵ MM V:161-165 (1301 *chrysobull*); MM V:171-74 (1391/2 *argyroboullon*)

²⁴⁶ MM V:163.29-30

²⁴⁷ MM V:163.31

²⁴⁸ MM V:163.32

²⁴⁹ MM V:163.32, 164.1

²⁵⁰ MM V:164.1

²⁵¹ MM V 164.2-3

²⁵² MM V:164.6-8

²⁵³ MM V:164.8-9

²⁵⁴ MM V:164.9-10

²⁵⁵ MM V:164.10-12

Philodendron with its *paroikoi* and *hypostatika*,²⁵⁷ the monastery of the Prodromos at Saraphonos with its *paroikoi*,²⁵⁸ a vineyard at Phota,²⁵⁹ twenty-five hyperpyra from the village of the Pollon Zenion,²⁶⁰ in Monemvasia the property formerly belonging to Ares,²⁶¹ the Ripiai and the land near Kalamion and the Dikasterion,²⁶² the proasteion of Laimones,²⁶³ and the *autorgia* at Sorakas, Koulendia, Koumaraia, Voulkane, Mese, Dodaia, and Nodys including a lake, a tower and an old fortress.²⁶⁴

The *argyroboullon* of despot Theodore of 1391/2 gives some indication as to the territory directly dependent on Monemvasia. The despot lists thirteen settlements in a clause limiting emigration to Monemvasia. These settlements were Vatika, Tzakonia, Molaoi, Esopos, Elos, Ierakion, Apideai, Seraphon,²⁶⁵ Tzitzina, Reaon, Prastos, Kastanitza and Agios Leonidas.²⁶⁶ These settlements can be placed on a map and can be seen to surround Monemvasia.²⁶⁷ This territory comprises roughly the eastern half of modern Lakonia. It seems logical to conclude that the area dominated by these thirteen settlements formed the “territory” of Monemvasia. The fact that the western border of this territory falls approximately half way between Monemvasia and Mystras supports this conclusion. Kalligas has suggested that the territory of the city may have coincided with the extent of the metropolitan See, and therefore grew or shrank along with the See.²⁶⁸ At

²⁵⁶ MM V:164.17-18

²⁵⁷ MM V:164.18-19

²⁵⁸ MM V:164.19-20

²⁵⁹ MM V:164.20-21

²⁶⁰ MM V:164.21-22

²⁶¹ MM V:164.22

²⁶² MM V:164.22-23

²⁶³ MM V:164.24. Kalligas suggests that this could also be translated as Daimones. Kalligas 1990:224

²⁶⁴ MM V:164.24-27. Very few of these sites have been identified. Ganganeas is located near Molaoi, Prinikos is near Helos, Saraphon is in northern Lakonia, to the east of Mystras, Leimonas is either the town of that name in Helos or Daimones to the west of Monemvasia, Kalligas 1990:224 n.112, Nomia is located to the south of Monemvasia, Taireia is near to Monemvasia, Sorakas is to the south of Monemvasia, Koulendia is modern Hellenikon, Kalligas 1990:224 n.117, Lyra is located to the south of Monemvasia, St. Kournoutos is a church near Helos, Kalligas 1990:224 n.120, Kalligas proposes that Mountouson is near Phiniki, and that Ripiai may have been near to Hagios Nikolaos and that Kalamion might be Kalami, to the northwest of Monemvasia, Kalligas 1990:226 n.121, Phota is to the south of Monemvasia.

²⁶⁵ Seraphon is the only place mentioned in both the 1301 chrysobull for the Metropolis of Monemvasia and the 1391/2 *argyroboullon* for Monemvasia.

²⁶⁶ MM V:172.24-29

²⁶⁷ It is not possible to identify the modern location of Tzakonia.

²⁶⁸ Kalligas 1990:140. The exact date at which bishopric of Monemvasia was raised to metropolitan rank is uncertain. No document has survived which actually records the year of elevation. One assumption is that

various points the Metropolitan of Monemvasia oversaw vast areas of the Peloponnese and it seems unlikely that the city itself could have possessed such a large territory.

The hinterland of Monemvasia must have produced many of the goods which the Monemvasiots carried in their ships. Unfortunately there are few Byzantine references to the production of Lakonia. The one great exception is the local wine. The 1301 *chrysobull* for the Metropolis of Monemvasia does not specify the exact nature of the estates owned by the church. However, vineyards are mentioned near Elous, at Phota and in general later in the document.²⁶⁹ The Monemvasiots were twice exempted from taxes on wine.²⁷⁰ A now lost Venetian record mentioned in the 1828 census states that most of the land around the city was given over to vineyards²⁷¹ and that one tenth of the annual wine production of the area came to 32,000 barrels.²⁷² Kalligas has calculated that this would have meant a total of 16,000,000 litres a year from 640 km² of vineyard.²⁷³ There are no specific references to Monemvasiot wine in the Venetian sources of the late Byzantine period.²⁷⁴ The British Naval Intelligence Handbook records that the hinterland of Monemvasia was a producer of figs, olives, wine and wheat.²⁷⁵ In 1937 approximately one third of the cultivated land in Lakonia was devoted to wheat, a further third to vines and the remainder to a mixture of other crops and fruit bearing trees.²⁷⁶ The pottery from Monemvasia has produced no evidence of wine production in the city or in fact of large pottery vessels for the “...systematic harvesting, assembling and distribution...” of goods or amphoras for the transport of oil or wine.²⁷⁷

this happened under Michael VIII following the recovery of the city from the crusaders. However, no document mentions Michael VIII in connection to the See. Kalligas has argued that Andronikos II stated that he re-promoted the See to metropolitan rank. The proposal is that the metropolitan fled to Pegai with the refugees from the crusader conquest and following the Byzantine recovery of the Peloponnese the metropolitan could not be in two places, and therefore Andronikos II re-promoted Monemvasia to metropolitan status. Kalligas 1990:208-215

²⁶⁹ See previous paragraph for Phota and Elous, MM V:164.30 for vineyards.

²⁷⁰ Pseudo-Phrantzes:540; MM V:172. Of course there is no reason that this exemption proves that the wine was from Monemvasia, it was just being sold by Monemvasiots.

²⁷¹ Kalligas believes that this statement is supported by the terracing still visible in the region around Monemvasia and the ruined winepresses that can be found throughout the area. Kalligas 2003:889 n.33

²⁷² Kalligas 2003:889

²⁷³ Kalligas 2003:889

²⁷⁴ The documents which reference Monemvasiot wine do not mention Monemvasia but usually Crete as the region of origin. For example the documents of Zaccaria de Fredo nos.63 (1352), 108 (1357), 131 (1366)

²⁷⁵ Greece III:181

²⁷⁶ Greece III:57

²⁷⁷ Kalamara 2001:49

However, it should be noted that barrels were in common use in the Palaiologan period, though they were by no means the sole means for transportation.²⁷⁸ Animals and their by-products are recorded in the *chrysobull* of Andronikos III and the *argyroboullon* of Theodore I (which also mentions fish)²⁷⁹ although whether these products were from the territory of Monemvasia or elsewhere is not known.²⁸⁰ Andronikos III describes the trade in wool, salted meat and four-legged animals as does Theodore I.²⁸¹ The *chrysobull* of Andronikos II of 1301 for the See of Monemvasia mentions water mills and orchards as well as a wood which produced acorns.²⁸² Woods may have been common in Lakonia, yet planks were imported in 1419 from Crete.²⁸³ As with animal produce it is not known whether the textiles mentioned in the imperial documents (an exemption from the silk tax) were produced locally or elsewhere.²⁸⁴ Silk was exported from Monemvasia in the fourteenth century to Florence.²⁸⁵ Certainly textiles and dyes were traded by Monemvasiots, and were produced widely in the Peloponnese. Kermes were also found in the region around Monemvasia.²⁸⁶

Recently the suggestion has been made of the possibility that there may have been a temporary mint located in Monemvasia.²⁸⁷ The argument is based on what is believed to be a Peloponnesian coinage, possibly produced by despot Theodore I. Two hundred and fifty one coins of this type have been identified by Baker: 248 were found at Sparta in 1926, one at Delphi in 1894, one at Thebes and one at Chalkida in Euboia.²⁸⁸ Baker has suggested that the greater concentration of these coins at Sparta may be the result of a concerted effort to gather them to take them out of

²⁷⁸ Kalamara 2001:49

²⁷⁹ It is reasonable to assume that a city with such a close connection to the sea would include fishing amongst its industries.

²⁸⁰ Kalligas certainly believes that the *chrysobull* refers to the produce to Lakonia. Kalligas 2003:891

²⁸¹ Certain of the taxes which the Monemvasiots were exempted from may suggest goods which were produced in the hinterland of the city. See below *Commercial Privileges*. Unfortunately there is no proof that these goods were produced locally.

²⁸² MM V:164,166

²⁸³ See below, *The geographical reach of Monemvasiot trade*.

²⁸⁴ Again Kalligas is of no doubt that textiles were produced in Monemvasia. Kalligas 2003:891

²⁸⁵ Jacoby 1994:46. The document seen by Jacoby is dated to 1320.

²⁸⁶ For Venetian documents relating to dyes see above. For Kermes see MM V:164.32, 165.1-4

²⁸⁷ Baker 2006

²⁸⁸ Baker 2006:401

circulation.²⁸⁹ A Peloponnesian origin has been proposed for this coinage for two reasons: the places of discovery of the known specimens and their style. Stylistically the handling of the figures depicted on the coins, the emperor and Christ, resemble western rather than Constantinopolitan traditions.²⁹⁰ The design of these coins shows Christ in a *mandorla* on the obverse with the emperor on the reverse. Christ is nimbate, with a book in his left hand and his right hand raised in blessing. The emperor is shown wearing a *loros*, stemma with pendilia, holding a cross topped sceptre in his right hand and occasionally an *akakia* in his left hand and flanked by the legend M/N H/Λ.²⁹¹ The coins are copper and their average weight is 0.58g.²⁹² Baker suggests that at some point after 1367 the Byzantines in Peloponnese minted a coinage with one billon denomination and one copper denomination, the *tournesion* and the *folles* respectively. The Peloponnesian coinage under discussion (like the *tornese* struck in Constantinople after c.1367) was of the *tournesion* type, the coins are of a similar weight to contemporary Venetian *torneselli* and every specimen has been found alongside at least one Venetian *tornese*.²⁹³ This perhaps suggests that the Byzantines were trying to integrate themselves into the existing *tournois/tornesello* system.²⁹⁴ The exact use to which these coins were put is unknown. A specific use seems likely and the striking of the coins could be associated with either Manuel's time in the region or the sojourn of his family in Monemvasia while the emperor himself was in the west.

The location of the mint that produced these coins depends heavily on their date. The figure is named as Manuel, yet is shown as an emperor, therefore he cannot be Manuel Kantakouzenos, and must be Manuel II Palaiologos.²⁹⁵ It would thus be reasonable to date the coins to within the years of the reign of this emperor, 1383-1425. Another indication as to the date

²⁸⁹ Baker 2006:413

²⁹⁰ Baker 2006:397 However, western styles had effected Thessalonican coins before the Palaiologan period so the location of finds seems to be a more convincing argument.

²⁹¹ Baker 2006:396

²⁹² Baker 2006:397

²⁹³ Baker 2006:402 One *tornese* of Doge Michele Steno was found with the Sparta hoard, the single Byzantine finds from Thebes, Chalkida and Delphi were found in hoards of Venetian *Torneselli*.

²⁹⁴ While this is almost certainly so in the case of the Constantinopolitan coinage it is not beyond possibility that the Peloponnesian *tornesi* were struck for a particular purpose and were never intended to become a regular coinage. Baker 2006:412

²⁹⁵ Baker 206:405

may be the treaty between Venice and Theodore in 1394 in which Theodore agreed not to strike coins which imitated those of Venice.²⁹⁶ Baker does not believe that this was a particularly long-lived coinage, in spite of the number of variations that are evident.²⁹⁷ As such it has been suggested that the coins were minted for a specific purpose.²⁹⁸ What form this could have taken is unknown. Monemvasia must be seen as a possible place for the home the mint which struck any coins dating to 1394-1425. Monemvasia was the residence of the despot 1400-1404²⁹⁹ and played host to the imperial family while Manuel was in the West during the same period. It is possible that the coins were minted in Monemvasia during the stay of the imperial family. However, without more information it is impossible to arrive at a definite conclusion.

There is no published numismatic material from Monemvasia. The limited material that it has been possible to study is in the hands of a private collector.³⁰⁰ The material from Monemvasia is purely from chance finds, often surfacing in the upper city after heavy rains or discovered during the renovation of houses in the lower city. Coinage dating from early imperial Rome through to modern times has been discovered in the city. Only one late Byzantine coin has been found in Monemvasia. This was a Palaiologan trachy discovered during the renovation of a house on the northern side of the main street of the lower town, near the main gate of the city. The house in question contained remnants of a late Byzantine church in which the coin was found. Unfortunately this coin was lost shortly after it was given to the archaeological service in Sparta. The majority of the late medieval coins in the private Monemvasiot collection are deniers tournois. These coins demonstrate the connection between Monemvasia and its crusader neighbours. The collection contains five deniers tournois, two of which can be identified. The first is a denier tournois of Isabelle de Villehardouin (1297-1301) minted at Clarentia, 1299-1300.³⁰¹ The second is a

²⁹⁶ Baker 2006:406. No one could have mistaken the Peloponnesian coins for Venetian coins even though the obverse at least was certainly inspired by Venetian designs.

²⁹⁷ Baker 2006:399. There is one type divided into a number of variations.

²⁹⁸ Baker 2006:412

²⁹⁹ Theodore I lived in Monemvasia following the sale of the majority of the Byzantine territories in the Morea to the Knights Hospitaller. See above.

³⁰⁰ This collection contains the majority of the known stray finds from the city and numbers under 30 coins.

³⁰¹ See Schlumberger 1954:316. The obverse of the coin shows a cross with the inscription +*YSABELLA·P·Ach* and the reverse shows a castle with the inscription DECLARENIA.

denier tournois of Philip of Taranto (1307-1313) also struck at Clarentia.³⁰² A third denier tournois can be seen to come from the Clarentia mint, but the obverse of the coin is too worn to enable the identification of the issuing prince.

Finds from the region of Monemvasia can be used to expand the picture painted by the few coins from the city itself. A fractional denomination of the Duchy of Athens has been found in Lakonia.³⁰³ A number of stray finds have been found at Tigani in Lakonia. These consist of deniers tournois, other Frankish denominations, soldini and torneselli.³⁰⁴ At Palaiochora, near Tigani, four deniers tournois of France and one short-cross sterling of England were found in a grave.³⁰⁵ At Sparti a large number of stray finds have been discovered.³⁰⁶ These consist of a mix of a few Byzantine coins (one billon trachy of Michael VIII and two follari of Manuel II), and rather more Achaian (21 petty denomination coins from the Corinth mint and 3 deniers tournois,³⁰⁷ plus one of France³⁰⁸) and Venetian (one soldino³⁰⁹ and 20 torneselli³¹⁰) coins. A hoard from Mystras also points to a significant presence of Venetian coins in the Byzantine Morea. The hoard consists of 449 torneselli.³¹¹

Clearly the currency most commonly in circulation in Palaiologan Monemvasia was initially the deniers tournois of the princes of Achaia and then, in line with the remainder of the Peloponnese, of the Venetian Republic from the mid-fourteenth century. Having said this there is evidence that the Byzantine province, including Monemvasia, did not break all of its financial or fiscal ties with Constantinople. When the Catalan Grand Company was hired by Andronikos II the

³⁰² See Schlumberger 1954:317. The obverse of the coin shows a cross with the inscription +P^hS.P.Ach^hTARDR and the reverse shows a castle with the inscription D·CLARENCIA.

³⁰³ Baker 2006:335

³⁰⁴ Baker 2006:351; AΔ 32:2; AΔ 34:1; AΔ 35:1; AΔ 39:1

³⁰⁵ AΔ 30:4. 2 deniers tournois of Philip II of France (1165-1223) and one denier tournois of Louis VIII or IX (1187-1226, 1226-1270), one feudal issue and a short-cross sterling of England.

³⁰⁶ Baker 2006:344-346

³⁰⁷ One of Isabella de Villehardouin (1289-1307), one of Philip of Savoy (1301-1307) and one of Mahaut of Hainaut (1316-1318).

³⁰⁸ Louis VIII or Louis IX (1187-1226, 1226-1270).

³⁰⁹ Lorenzo Celsi (1361-1365)

³¹⁰ one of Lorenzo Celsi (1361-1365), 2 of Marco Cornaro (1365-1368), 1 of Andrea Contarini (1367-1382), 8 of Antonio Venier (1382-1400), one of Tommaso Mocenigo (1413-1423) and five unidentified.

³¹¹ The identified torneselli date to the reigns of Andrea Contarini (1368-1382) and Antonio Venier (1382-1400). British Coin Hoards 59; Baker 2006:110

emperor agreed to pay the Catalans four months wages in advance upon their arrival in the empire, at the city of Monemvasia.³¹² As the major port in the region it is likely that money arriving in the Morea from Constantinople did so at Monemvasia. The Byzantine province continued to use the Constantinopolitan system of accounting based on the gold hyperpyron. Evidence for this can be seen in the report of the Venetian claims commission which specifically uses the Constantinopolitan system for Peloponnesian claims.³¹³ This differentiates the area from the remainder of the Morea which used a system based on a Peloponnesian hyperpyron of account. As Baker has demonstrated in spite of this fiscal connection the Byzantine authorities in the area were adept at using local or western systems of accounting when it suited them or when they were dealing with westerners.³¹⁴

The geographical reach of Monemvasiot trade

The merchants who benefited from the privileges granted to the Monemvasiots have left very little evidence as to their activities. However, by using the imperial documents and mentions of individual merchants, it becomes clear that the Monemvasiots were a major faction in the trade of the Balkan peninsula with wide ranging interests which existed alongside, and at times worked in rivalry with, their Italian counterparts. Furthermore, it is possible to chart the commercial activities of the Monemvasiots over the final two centuries of the empire, which has been attempted below. The two sources of evidence, imperial and Italian, provide very different types of information. The Italian documents provide pictures of a set point in time, when a particular Monemvasiot was in a particular place. The imperial documents, I would argue, present a more general picture of the places where the Monemvasiots commonly traded.

³¹² Muntaner records that the Catalans were welcomed by the Monemvasiots, but as Baker 2006:410-411 records Pachymeres suggests that the Catalans actually received their first pay in Constantinople, Pachymeres

³¹³ Morgan 1976:412-438

³¹⁴ Baker 2006:411. Baker provides the examples of Theodore I using ducats during his negotiations with the Hospitallers for the sale of Corinth and Theodore II's use of nomismata in 1435. The final piece of evidence cited is a strange accounting record which combines a mixture of western and Byzantine (Constantinopolitan) accounting practices.

Although Michael VIII and initially Andronikos II limited the scope of the Monemvasiot privileges to Monemvasia alone, I believe that this had more to do with the granting of purposefully limited privileges, than indicating that the Monemvasiots were engaged in trade in their city alone.³¹⁵ It is possible that Monemvasiot trade may have expanded to fill some of the vacuum caused by the Byzantine-Veneto war of 1282-1285.³¹⁶ Either way, in the *chrysobull* of c.1300 Andronikos II mentions specifically the cities of Constantinople, Selymbria, Herakleia, Raideostos, Kallipolis and other Macedonian (Thracian?) cities.³¹⁷ The Emperor granted exemptions in other cities under the blanket clause “and any other places”. These named cities were where the Monemvasiots would still have to pay the *kommerkion*. It would seem to be reasonable to suspect that one motive for this would be the known volume of trade in the hands of Monemvasiots in these ports. As these ports were important grain ports in Thrace, trade in them was crucial for the export of wheat to Europe, Italy in particular, and for the supply of the capital.³¹⁸ Genoese documents show two Monemvasiot merchants in Caffa in 1290, Nicolaus de Marvasia (buying fish) and Michael Marvasiatus. Caffa was an important grain port at the time as well as a gateway to the east.³¹⁹ In 1300 Dimitri Sevasto de Malvasia was recorded in Crete by the notary Pietro Pizolo.³²⁰ Thus, for the thirteenth century there is evidence for Monemvasiot merchants operating in the Aegean and the Black Sea.

The fourteenth century seems to have been a century of expansion for the activities of Monemvasiot merchants. The *prostagma* for the Monemvasiots of Pegai repeats the names of the towns cited by Andronikos II, with the addition of Ainos.³²¹ The following *chrysobull* of Andronikos III demonstrates the growing extent of Monemvasiot activities. Trade with Bulgaria received a specific clause, as did trade in the newly recovered cities of Sozopolis, Agathopolis, and Midia.³²² A

³¹⁵ Obviously this is merely guess work, but if Monemvasiot trade was limited to Lakonia in 1285, it expanded very quickly in the following fifteen years.

³¹⁶ Kalligas 1990:102

³¹⁷ Pseudo-Phrantzes:538.41-42

³¹⁸ For references to the grain trade with Italy see Laiou 1980-1

³¹⁹ Balard Caffa I:nos.438 and 529. Laiou 1980-1:206

³²⁰ Pietro Pizolo I:no.676 (4 August 1300)

³²¹ Schreiner 1978:207.15

³²² Pseudo-Phrantzes:540.41-44, 541.1-3. I would argue that the inclusion of the newly conquered cities and their Bulgarian hinterland is not simply keeping the privileges of the Monemvasiots up to date with the geographical extent of the empire, but an actual indication of the trading activities of the Monemvasiots. If

similar clause mentions the Peloponnese.³²³ As stated above I suggest that places were specifically mentioned in a document because Monemvasiots traded there.³²⁴ It should also be remembered that Andronikos III was emphasising certain points in his *chrysobull* specifically to add weight to the blanket exemptions which he had granted. These points include specific regions of the empire and must be the privileges which the Monemvasiots requested on top of the renewal of their pre-existing all encompassing privileges. In addition to this a Monemvasiot merchant is recorded in the *Life of Isidore* as travelling from Monemvasia to Constantinople to sell oil.³²⁵



Figure 5: Geographical extent of Monemvasiot trade c.1266-c.1300

the Bulgarian cities had been included in the new *chrysobull* simply to keep the document up to date with the expansion of the empire then Epirote cities, such as Arta, should have been included too as Epiros was conquered by Andronikos III shortly before the document was written.

³²³ Pseudo-Phrantzes:542. Kalligas suggests that the Peloponnese was not mentioned the prostagma for the Monemvasiots of Pegai because they did not trade in this region. Kalligas 1990:125

³²⁴ It is logical to expect that the Monemvasiots traded in their own hinterland. That the Peloponnese is included in the *chrysobull* thus supports the argument that places or goods which are mentioned specifically in the text were particularly important.

³²⁵ Papadopoulos-Kerameus 1903:88

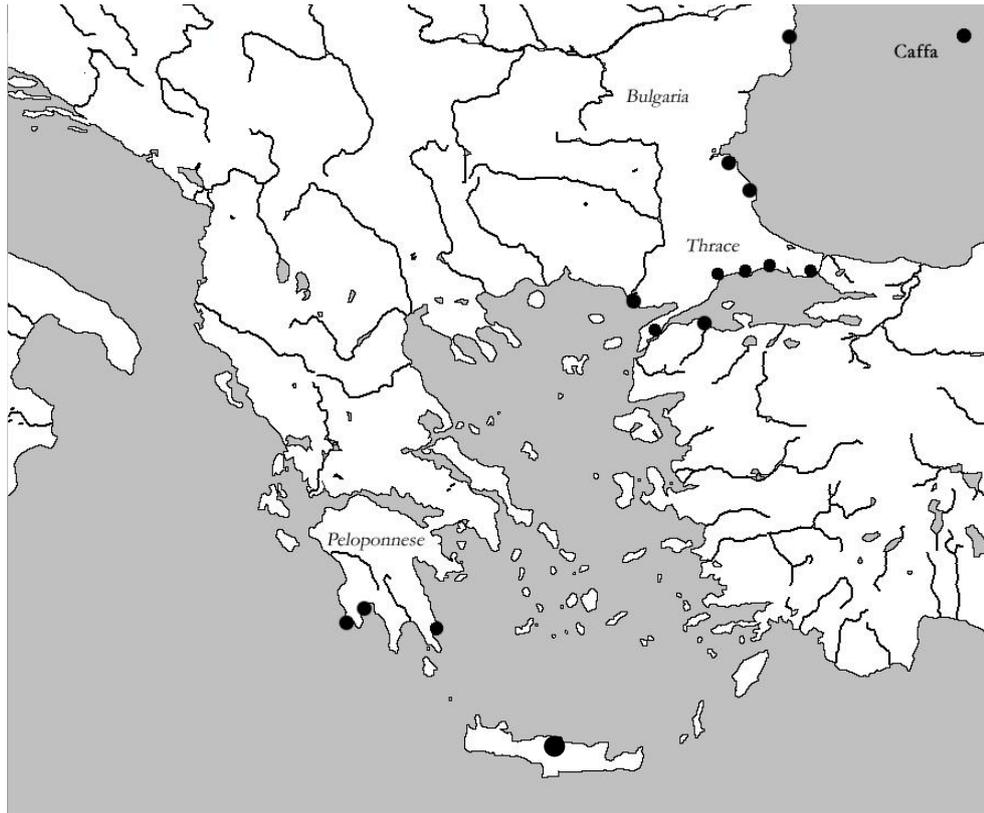


Figure 6: Geographical extent of Monemvasiot trade c.1300-c.1400



Figure 7: Geographical extent of Monemvasiot trade c.1400-1460

Venetian documents mention Byzantine merchants trading in Modon and Coron in the fourteenth century, but there is little more specific information about the place of origin of these traders.³²⁶ Paulus Piphani de Malvaxia is recorded in Corone in 1371 where he had business with local man in the name of another Paulus de Malvasia. The pair were linked to a resident of Canea named Basileios Biomates.³²⁷ One Monemvasiot was mentioned by the Venetian authorities in this century, by the name of Maurosumi. (Mavrozomes?). In 1319 a Byzantine claim for compensation to the Venetian Senate for merchandise lost to piracy mentions that Maurosumi had lost 2,200 hyperpyra worth of cloth, oil, arms and bullion.³²⁸ What becomes apparent from the deliberations of the Venetian Senate is that the Byzantine presence in the Peloponnese was an irritant to the Venetian authorities. In 1376 the senate advised the governors of Modon and Coron to work against Byzantine merchants.³²⁹ Also in the fourteenth century, the Senate tried to discourage Venetian merchants from using Byzantine ports in the Peloponnese, presumably in an attempt to boost traffic through Modon and Coron.³³⁰ Monemvasia must have been one of the Byzantine ports (possibly even the major port) that were drawing trade away from the Venetian, to the Byzantine Peloponnese. There is continued evidence of a Monemvasiot presence in both the grain trade and the Black Sea; one of the ships sailing between Constantinople and Caffa to supply the authorities of the besieged Genoese city with grain had a Monemvasiot *patronus* in 1386.³³¹ The name of the *patronus* was Jane Monjane, which Laiou suggests may have been a corruption of the Monemvasiot surname Daimonoianis or Eudaimonoianis.³³²

Evidence for the fifteenth century is sparse. The *argyroboullon* of 1391-2, while not itself fifteenth century probably represents the situation as it was in the early decades of the 1400s and

³²⁶ Thiret *Regestes* I:nos.237, 342, 578, 782. Laiou 1980-1:208

³²⁷ Nanetti 1999:no.3.22 (1371)

³²⁸ Thomas and Predelli *Diplomatarium* I:no.72, Laiou 1980-1:206

³²⁹ Thiret *Regestes* I:no.578 Laiou 1980-1:208

³³⁰ Thiret *Regestes* I:no. 578, Laiou 1980-1:208

³³¹ The ship itself belonged to the emperor. It is unknown whether the Monemvasiot in question from Monemvasia itself or from a colony. Laiou 1980-1:219 suggests that he may have been a Monemvasiot of Constantinople.

³³² Laiou 1980-1:219

can be taken to suggest that the Monemvasiots were still active in trade in the Peloponnese.³³³ It seems safe to assume that the late fourteenth century documents represented a situation that continued for the first decades of the fifteenth century with regards to the rest of the empire. In 1405 Manuel II asked the Venetians to respect the Byzantine-Venetian trade agreements in Crete, and although no specific merchants are mentioned Monemvasiots are known to have traded in Crete.³³⁴ In 1411 a member of the Mamonas family is recorded as a ship owner in Coron, and another Mamonas was recorded in Caffa in the same year.³³⁵ In 1430 the Venetian Senate enacted a law which placed an extra tax on silk and cochenille bought in the despotate, again probably to encourage merchants to go to Modon and Coron rather than Byzantine ports.³³⁶ However, the timing of this legislation suggests that it was more likely to have been the result of the Byzantine capture of Patras and Clarentza in 1428 than activities already underway in existing Byzantine ports, although such activities should not be disregarded. Monemvasiots certainly had connections with the Venetian possessions in the Peloponnese at this time. A member of the Sophianos family had his possessions seized by the Venetian authorities in Modon and Coron in 1418 and again in 1430.³³⁷ These links extended to Venetian Crete. For example Nicholas Eudaimonoianis asked the Venetian Senate for permission to import wood from Crete for the construction of a church in Monemvasia in 1419.³³⁸ Also in 1430 a member of the Mamonas family was recorded as a broker between the Venetian merchant Badoer and his Byzantine business partners.³³⁹

³³³ MM V:171

³³⁴ Thiriet *Regestes* II:no.1733 in 1419.

³³⁵ Sathas *Documents* II:no.527; Iorga I:no.19

³³⁶ Thiriet *Regestes* II:no.2202, Laiou 1980-1:208. This measure was not successful.

³³⁷ Sathas *Documents* III:nos.178 (1418); 366 (1430). Necipoğlu 2009:263, believes that Sophianos had placed so many of his possessions in the Venetian colonies to protect them from any Ottoman attacks which might threaten Monemvasia. While there are certainly examples of Byzantines securing their possessions by placing them in Italian colonies it is likely that a trading link existed at this time as well. The Eudaimonoianis family placed some of their valuables in Modon and Coron for safe keeping. Iorga *Notes* III:nos.21-2 (1437); 255-6 (1450)

³³⁸ Thiriet *Regestes* II:no.1733. Why Nicholas should have chosen to import wood from Crete is a bit of a mystery since Lakonia has long been known as a heavily wooded area. Dr Lymberopoulou, who is currently preparing a paper on Cretan wood production, believes that wood would have taken up to six months to travel from the point of production, to a suitable Cretan harbour then on to Monemvasia. Why Nicholas chose Cretan over Peloponnesian wood is a mystery.

³³⁹ Badoer:nos.79, 133, 139, 229, 276, 521, 582, 647, 651, 725

What this section demonstrates is that Monemvasiot merchants were active over a wide area, selling a range of goods throughout the Palaiologan period. From at least the beginning of the fourteenth century, but likely substantially earlier, Monemvasiots were sailing throughout the Aegean and into the Black Sea in the north, and to Crete to the south. Their port was such a magnet for traders that the Venetian Senate legislated to decrease its pull on merchants at least once (maybe twice) and undertook more numerous, less direct actions for the same aims.³⁴⁰ The fact that these actions were repeated demonstrates their unsuccessful nature. Monemvasiots traded in textiles and foodstuffs, and in one case arms.³⁴¹ Pottery is noticeably absent. There does not seem to have been much, if any, Monemvasiot trade west of the Peloponnese, but aside from this Monemvasiot merchants operated over a geographical area usually described as dominated by Italian merchants. The wide range of Monemvasiot trade also seems contradictory to the usual view of an Aegean/Black Sea area where long distance trade was handled by Italians, with the Byzantines limited, for whatever reason, to local activities.³⁴² While this may have been true of the majority of merchants from the majority of cities Monemvasia was an exception. As we have seen Monemvasiots were active over the entire Aegean and Black Sea region for the majority of the Palaiologan period. The scope of Monemvasiot trade was anything but local and I would suggest that for a time the Monemvasiots represented a major trading force in the Aegean and Black Sea; a field of activity similar to that of their Italian competitors.³⁴³ The activities of the Monemvasiots do not seem to have suffered over time; in fact the opposite may be true. There is always the possibility that the individual merchants recorded above were not only from Monemvasia, but from Monemvasiot colonies. However, this should not be taken as proof that each group of Monemvasiots traded only in their locale. The *prostagma* and *chrysobull* of Andronikos III demonstrate a widespread trade emanating from Monemvasia. This does not mean that the Monemvasiots traded goods produced in their hinterland, in fact as has been mentioned there is

³⁴⁰ See previous paragraph.

³⁴¹ See above.

³⁴² Laiou 1980-1

³⁴³ While there is no proof that the Monemvasiots ever traded in Italy this does not mean that they were local traders. As merchants involved in trade throughout the Aegean and Mediterranean the Monemvasiots were trading everywhere the Italians did, except Italy.

little evidence for the presence of large scale local agricultural production or artisanal activity. While some of the products listed in the documents could have come from Lakonia it is more likely that the Monemvasiots acted more frequently as intermediaries. It seems likely that the Monemvasiots would have travelled between ports buying and selling goods from all over the region, exploiting their extensive privileges and their link to the Monemvasiot communities which existed in some of the chief ports of the empire.³⁴⁴

The surnames of a number of individual merchants should be noted. The Mavrozomes³⁴⁵ family had provided a *mesazon* for Manuel I Komnenos. The Daimonoiannis, Sophianos and Mamonas families were all important and at some point each provided a *dynast/archon* for the city. What this demonstrates is that the ‘nobles’ of Monemvasia were committed to and involved in trade throughout the Palaiologan period. For other areas of the empire it has been suggested that ‘nobles’ turned to trade when forced because of the loss of their estates. The ‘nobles’ of Monemvasia prove that not all high born Byzantines were averse to trade or resorted to it out of desperation.

Colonies

I have referred to the Monemvasiots of Pegai, Thracian Herakleia and those of Constantinople as ‘colonists’. This requires some justification and perhaps rather than colony, quarter might be less controversial. There seems to be very little difference between the Monemvasiots who left their city to settle in other parts of the empire and their Italian counterparts, who were to be found at the bases belonging to Venice and Genoa across the Balkan Peninsula, Aegean islands and in a number of Byzantine cities. It will be seen that just like their Italian counterparts the Monemvasiot colonists were legally linked to their homeland and considered as separate from the people amongst whom they lived, even after generations away from their home city. There is no document describing how the authorities recorded exactly who

³⁴⁴ The olive oil merchant from Monemvasia recorded by Isidore in Constantinople would seem to fit this picture.

³⁴⁵ One member of this family had been a *dynast* in Asia Minor in the early thirteenth century.

was a Monemvasiot or outlining what qualified a person to be a Monemvasiot, but it seems safe to assume that a family link, through one or both parents, would have been required. Clearly residence in Monemvasia was not a requirement. Also like those of the Italians, the Monemvasiot quarters provided a centre for Monemvasiots visiting from the home city and contacts for travelling merchants. Some of the Monemvasiots who lived outside of their own city could become very rich. Caloiani Sofiano (Kaloioannes Sophianos) was the third richest banker with whom Giacomo Badoer had dealings with a turnover of 10,751 hyperpyra.³⁴⁶

Three texts mention Monemvasiots as more than just those living in Monemvasia: the *prostagma* and the *chrysobull* of Andronikos III and the *Life of St. Isidore*.³⁴⁷ The *prostagma* is important because it is a document of privileges issued for the people of a colony in their own right. The Monemvasiots of Pegai had become integrated into the trading network of the north Aegean/Black Sea region to such an extent that they were able to request and receive their own privileges. Outside of the area of fiscal exemptions³⁴⁸ the privileges granted in both documents are the same. The main difference being that the *chrysobull* covered not only the Monemvasiots of Pegai, but all Monemvasiots, including by name the colony in Constantinople.³⁴⁹ The privileges granted to the colonies in this case were the right (for the Monemvasiots in Constantinople) to be considered separate from the people of Constantinople with respect to the collection of the *koinophelais synkeroteseis*.³⁵⁰ The Monemvasiots in Constantinople also had the right to have their legal cases referred to the imperial *sekretion*.³⁵¹ This last privilege is important as all other Byzantine residents of Constantinople had their cases heard by the civil or ecclesiastical judges before getting access to the imperial court as the supreme court of appeal. While this is different from the privilege granted to the Italian residents of Constantinople who had their cases judged by their own courts this could

³⁴⁶ Badoer:74

³⁴⁷ Schreiner 1978:207-213 for the text of the *prostagma*; Pseudo-Phrantzes:538-542 for the text of the *chrysobull*. The *prostagma* of Andronikos III mentions an earlier *prostagma* and *chrysobull* granted for the Monemvasiots of Pegai by Andronikos II containing a grant of exemption from the *kommerkion*. Papadopoulos-Kerameus 1905 for the *Life of Isidore*.

³⁴⁸ See above. The *chrysobull* for all Monemvasiots granted more extensive tax exemptions.

³⁴⁹ Pseudo-Phrantzes:538.35-40

³⁵⁰ Schreiner 1978:213.48-55; Pseudo-Phrantzes:542.18-22

³⁵¹ Schreiner 1978:213.54-55; Pseudo-Phrantzes:542.22-24

perhaps be explained by remembering that the Monemvasiot were still Byzantines, if a privileged group of Byzantines, and therefore were still subjects of imperial law. Schreiner points out that such a provision for Monemvasiot court cases would only have been practicable if there were records detailing the ancestry of those of Monemvasiot descent.³⁵² If this was the case the Monemvasiots always retained a distinct community within the greater population even after almost two centuries away from their home city.

The Monemvasiot Fleet

Monemvasiots formed a large part of the official fleet in the Palaiologan period. The Tzakones were one of the two units recruited by Michael VIII to man his ships.³⁵³ The Tzakones are equated with Lakonians by Pachymeres.³⁵⁴ Although it is not clear how long the Tzakones retained their identity as Lakonians, the unit was initially recruited from this area. As they were given land to settle on near Constantinople and service may have been a hereditary duty linked to the land, it is possible that Lakonian traditions could have remained strong for generations.³⁵⁵ The question arises as to why the Monemvasiot fleet did not help to defend the city from the crusaders in the mid-thirteenth century when the city was under siege. Considering the strength of the fleet in the twelfth century it does seem odd that it did not help Monemvasia when the city was under siege by crusader forces. That the Monemvasiot fleet still existed is demonstrated by its reappearance after the surrender of Monemvasia to the prince of Achaia when it transported those who were unwilling to submit to the crusaders to Pegai. Kalligas suggests that the fleet was caught unawares in permanent dock at one of the ports surrounding Monemvasia by the forces of the prince of Achaia and was only released after the surrender of Monemvasia.³⁵⁶ It is known that the Monemvasiots provided ships and sailors for the fleet of Manuel I,³⁵⁷ and the new units recruited by Michael VIII built on this tradition. Morgan notes that most of the names of captains of the

³⁵² Schreiner 1978:214

³⁵³ Pachymeres I:309; Geanakoplos 1959:126; Ahrweiler 1966:449-450

³⁵⁴ Pachymeres I:253, 277, II 401-403. Gregoras agreed with Pachymeres. Gregoras I:188

³⁵⁵ Certainly other Monemvasiots in colonies retained their distinct heritage.

³⁵⁶ Kalligas 2010:28-29

³⁵⁷ Magdalino:257-8

ships serving in the Byzantine fleet who appear in the records of the Venetian claims commission of 1277 seem to have been Italian; few were Byzantine, but most of those that were, were Monemvasiots.³⁵⁸ They included Gyrakis, admiral of the fleet, and members of the Daimonoianis, Mamonas and Sophianos families. A number of the captains operating out of Monemvasia had foreign names: Bernardus of Monemvasia and Gulielmo of Monemvasia are two examples.³⁵⁹ Their participation in Byzantine attacks on Venetian shipping certainly highlights the extent to which the Byzantines used foreign captains and ships within their own fleet. Thus, there seems to have been a fine line between piracy and official action and perhaps ‘privateers’ would be a better way to describe the Monemvasiots recorded in the Venetian report, rather than pirates. In 1273/4 Monemvasia became a base for the Byzantine navy and it seems that the Monemvasiot captains who had been attacking Venetian commerce from Anaea, the main Byzantine fleet station in Asia Minor,³⁶⁰ (with the exception of Gyrakis) moved back to their home city.³⁶¹ Although before the northern European naval revolution of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it was common for warships to be supplemented with merchantmen during times of conflict, such an explanation only accounts for part of the Monemvasiot activity within the Byzantine fleet. The other part can be explained through the use of privateers by Michael VIII. Certainly it seems that apart from the campaign of reconquest being undertaken in the Aegean, in which the Tzakones played a large part,³⁶² there was a separate supplementary campaign aimed at disrupting Venetian trade. It was in this campaign that the ships of the Monemvasiots proved useful to the empire.

Monemvasiot sailors often engaged in piratical attacks, as is shown by the Venetian claims commission of 1277.³⁶³ This commission was set up to produce a request for damages from Michael VIII for losses suffered at the hands of Byzantine pirates between 1268 and 1277.³⁶⁴ The

³⁵⁸ Morgan 1976:424

³⁵⁹ Morgan 1976:nos.34, 86 (Bernardus), 133 (Gulielmo)

³⁶⁰ Morgan 1976:423; Ahrweiler 1966:437

³⁶¹ The locations of the piratical attacks carried out by the majority of Monemvasiots suggest that they had relocated to Monemvasia.

³⁶² Pachymeres I:309

³⁶³ Morgan 1976

³⁶⁴ Morgan 1976:411

commission produced a report outlining 339 claims from 257 separate attacks.³⁶⁵ Of these 257 attacks, 17 were carried out by Monemvasiots at sea and two on land. The usual area of operations was the trade route between Crete and the Venetian possessions in the Peloponnese or Negroponte.³⁶⁶ However, incidents off the coast of Epiros and near Acre were also recorded.³⁶⁷ The names of those recorded as the perpetrators of these attacks suggest that the leading families of the city were engaged in piracy. Daimonoiannis, Mamonas and Sophianos are all names that are mentioned. Overall the Monemvasiots were responsible for the theft of 3465 hyperpyra, almost one tenth of the 35,000 hyperpyra requested by the Venetians as compensation. Monemvasiot piracy is not mentioned in the Venetian claims for compensation lodged in the fourteenth century. Why this should have been so cannot be determined with certainty. The disbandment, by Andronikos II, of the imperial fleet, a part of which was stationed in Monemvasia and the activities of which would have supported the Monemvasiot privateers, may have been a contributing factor to the decline of Monemvasiot piracy. Another possibility is that the Monemvasiots, taking advantage of their privileges, turned to potentially more profitable and less risky maritime activities such as trade.

Conclusion

Between 1204 and 1460 Monemvasia exhibited all the characteristics of a vibrant city-state. The city acted independently of the imperial government on many occasions; the longest period of independence beginning before the crusader conquest of Constantinople and continuing until the Prince of Achaia forced the surrender of Monemvasia in the mid-thirteenth century. Even when the imperial authority was restored in the Peloponnese following the battle of Pelagonia, the Monemvasiots continued to demonstrate an independent streak which manifested itself as rebellion in the 1380s and 1390s, the latter

³⁶⁵ Not all of these attacks took place at sea as the term pirate would suggest, a good number took place far in land although more common was robbery in ports. A smaller number are actually claims where the Venetians were charged tax illegally by Byzantine officials.

³⁶⁶ See Morgan 1976:Table I and II for a complete list of piratical attacks.

³⁶⁷ Morgan 1976:no.88 (Acre); no.117 (Epiros)

under the leadership of Mamonas, the man responsible for bringing the Ottomans into the politics of the Morea. The government of Monemvasia was often in the hands of a local ruler. That this man held the title of *rex* is likely to have been a fifteenth century fabrication, but the leader of the city was almost certainly called the *archon* in the fourteenth century. During the city's numerous flirtations with independence the *archon* ruled the city and the office continued to exist when Monemvasia returned to the imperial fold alongside, and perhaps on occasion united with, the role of the *kephale*. The internal politics of Monemvasia are reminiscent of stories from renaissance Italy or classical Greece. One family rose to the top, the leading member of this family became *archon*. Perhaps the family ruled for a number of generations, as was the case with the Chamaretos and Mamonas families. Eventually both of these families fell to internal pressure; Chamaretos was overthrown by a rival family, the Daimonoioannoï, and Mamonas by a faction allied to the imperial despot Theodore I Palaiologos. As has been stated above there may have been a deeper motive behind the overthrow of Ioannes Chamaretos involving Monemvasia's support for the Nicaean emperor over the Komneno-Doukai rulers of Epiros. In true classical style the expelled *archon* Mamonas enlisted outside help to return him to Monemvasia and the city was duly occupied by the Ottoman sultan. How the *archontes* of Monemvasia were selected is unknown. Perhaps one man naturally rose to the top out of the wealthier inhabitants of the city or perhaps there was some form of selection process involving a council of some kind. That there was a collective identity is demonstrated by the frequency with which the Monemvasiots demanded privileges and the great success they had at obtaining them. Only an organised body could have managed this.

While it is not possible to argue that Monemvasia was an autonomous ally of the Byzantine Empire, or had a communal organisation on an Italian model it is possible to make some general comparisons and perhaps conclusions about the governmental structures within the city. The first

half of the thirteenth century demonstrates that Monemvasia had the resources to function as an independent state, which remained true into the late fourteenth century. In this way the city compares favourably with many of its Italian counterparts. The government of the city seems to have been a mixture of oligarchy and tyranny with the leading families vying for the top spot, a situation also seen in Italy. However, this is where the comparison with Italy must end. Monemvasia was not to continue as an independent state but was absorbed firstly by the Principality of Achaia and then by the restored Byzantine Empire. Although there were two late fourteenth century attempts to break the city's bond to the empire these were ultimately unsuccessful and the Monemvasiot system had to be adapted to life as part of a greater whole again. In this way the Monemvasiots have less in common with their Italian neighbours than they do their contemporaries in northern Europe who were also struggling for autonomy (although in a less bloody way than Monemvasia under the Mamonas family) within a system where a strong central power still exercised authority. The compromise which was reached seems to have involved some level of autonomy in judicial matters and a place for a member of the elite of Monemvasia, the *archon*, in the rule of the city. There may even have been a limited amount of fiscal autonomy with the Monemvasiots being allowed to collect some of the taxes from which they were exempt, although the picture is far from clear. In short Monemvasia had the position, the wealth and the ambition to develop into an autonomous commune on the Italian model, but the city did not possess the freedom from the presence of a strong state enjoyed by the cities of Tuscany and Lombardy.

Monemvasia was a merchant city. The inhabitants were actively engaged in a long distance trade linking the Peloponnese to Crete, Constantinople and to the Black Sea. The Monemvasiots do not seem to have produced a great deal and the hinterland of their city was certainly not rich. The most famous export of the city, wine, makes only a very limited appearance in the sources for this period and it is difficult to assess whether the wine carried by Monemvasiot merchants was actually from Lakonia. What archaeological

evidence there is from the city provides no indication of wine production in Monemvasia and although there is evidence of vine cultivation around the city it is impossible to conclude what period this dates from.³⁶⁸ What is interesting for understanding Monemvasia is that the richest and most influential families in the city are all recorded as being involved in trade and as trading themselves and captaining ships. The elite of Monemvasia was a merchant aristocracy. This point is further emphasised by the privileges granted to Monemvasia which only superficially touch upon land ownership, yet go into great detail on the trade privileges of the city. Clearly the elite of Monemvasia were far more concerned with trade than owning estates. It is the imperial privileges which supply information on the wide range of Monemvasiot trade and the numerous types of goods which they carried. Even if the Monemvasiots did not ship large amounts of their own produce they were certainly significant secondary carriers. Monemvasia may have operated as a secondary export market, perhaps like Negroponte for the Venetians. Monemvasiot traders may have collected merchandise from the southern Aegean area in Monemvasia for re-export. Although the political fortunes of the city changed over time the privileged position of the merchants of Monemvasia was a constant feature from c.1284 until 1391/2 and presumably until the Venetian occupation of the city. From a number of “standard” grants Monemvasia used its strengths to gain imperial consent to extensions of these privileges. These pushed the city (economically at least) into a potentially unique, but certainly important position within the Byzantine trading network. Monemvasia became the only city capable of competing with its western counterparts on an equal footing. The unique nature of the Monemvasiots in the trading network of the Aegean world can be seen in the founding of colonies. There is no argument that these colonies were a conscious piece of

³⁶⁸ One document for the Metropolitan See of Monemvasia does mention vineyards. However, this is just one reference among a long list of properties which does not suggest that viticulture was a major factor in the rural economy in the hinterland of the city, this is certainly true for the estates of the Church.

policy on the part of some central body in Monemvasia (as was the case in Venice). However, even a more organic origin for the colonies does not detract from the fact that the Monemvasiots in these far flung regions themselves benefitted from the privileges of the home city and thus retained a link to Monemvasia. They provided a safe haven for Monemvasiot merchants as well as a direct and permanent link to the local market.³⁶⁹

Some general conclusions can be made about late Byzantine Monemvasia and Monemvasiot society. Monemvasia was not an autonomous city; the sole survivor of the patchwork of city-states that constituted the ancient Aegean. It is true that Monemvasia operated independently when the empire was weak and it seemed to be in the best interests of some Monemvasiots to rebel. However, such attempts must be seen as the power plays of the individual currently on top in the competition for rule of the city. Monemvasia always returned to the imperial fold, and did so because of pressure from within just as much as from pressure without. To put it more simply, when independent action was no longer profitable it rapidly lost support within the city. The citizens repeatedly requested and received privileges from the Empire; in short Monemvasia was better off in the imperial system than she would have been outside of it. At least some segments of the community within Monemvasia possessed a communal identity, as demonstrated by their interaction with the imperial government. From the nature and far reaching scope of the privileges granted by successive Byzantine rulers it becomes clear that Monemvasia possessed an energetic mercantile class, and that the elite of the city were members of this class. Monemvasia was something less well defined, yet more dynamic than an ancient relic.

³⁶⁹ The case of the Genoese possessions in the Aegean provides an interesting parallel. These were not administered by Genoa and were rarely conquered by the central government but they came loosely under the auspices of that city and provided a safe haven for Genoese merchants.

CHAPTER TWO: IOANNINA 1204-1430

Ioannina from 1204 to the Ottoman conquest

The city of Ioannina is located at an important crossroads with routes linking the Adriatic, Thessaly, Macedonia, southern Epiros and the central Balkans all passing through the city. The Metsovon pass descends from the Pindos Mountains near Ioannina. This route links Epiros with Thessaly, heading to Trikkala. As well as turning south into Thessaly the pass through the mountains offers a connection to the highlands of Macedonia and north to Berrhoia and Thessalonike beyond. As the road continues to the west of Ioannina it reaches the coast opposite Kerkyra at Saiata (modern Sagiada). On the same route, slightly north of Saiata is the once important port of Buthrotos (modern Butrint). Ioannina is also on the major north-south route with one fork running south from Ohrid and the other from Kastoria, joining in the city and continuing to Arta. Thus for Balkan powers such as Byzantium, Serbia and the Ottomans Ioannina provided the perfect staging ground for further conquests in Epiros or a move to control the Adriatic coastline. In fact the city acted in this role for Andronikos III, Stephan Dušan, Carlo I Tocco and later Ottoman Sultans. The same could also be true in reverse. Carlo I Tocco moved from Cephalonia to Ioannina from the coast.¹

Before the Fourth Crusade Ioannina was a modest *kastron*. It was one of a number of fortified settlements, such as Arta, which grew following the decline of the traditional

¹ Initially Carlo Tocco ruled the Adriatic islands, he acquired Ioannina after the overthrow of Eudokia, Arta at this point was a separate territory with its own despot. Thus Carlo's expansion programme began by moving inland from the islands then back to the coast again from Ioannina to Arta, ostensibly uniting the old despotate for the last time.

urban sites in Epiros such as Nikopolis. In the aftermath of the crusader conquest of Constantinople Michael Komnenos Doukas (a cousin of Isaac II and Alexios III Angelos) became ruler of Epiros,² with his capital at Arta.³ Under Michael I Komnenos Doukas (1204-1216) Ioannina was transformed from a fortress next to a road into a fortress controlling the border between Epiros and the crusader Kingdom of Thessalonike, Serbia and Bulgaria whilst also sitting astride the overland route from Italy to the new crusader states in Greece. Before the foundation of the state of Epiros, Ioannina consisted of a *kastron* with a fortified lower town and two citadels. During the Norman invasion of the Balkans Bohemond camped at Ioannina in 1082 and built a second citadel within the *kastron*, as he was unhappy with the one which already existed in the city.⁴ The next phase of building work in the city was under Michael I Komnenos Doukas who greatly enhanced Ioannina. It is now believed that he reformed the city, building a new outer wall to protect the settlement and then encouraged new settlement of the enlarged town.⁵ Some of these new settlers were refugees from the lands to the east, now under crusader rule, including Constantinople.⁶ The status of the city had risen to the point where Akropolites mentioned it as one of the two chief cities ruled by Michael I Komnenos Doukas.⁷ It is difficult to

² The state of Epiros at this time consisted of the regions of Nikopolis, Aitolia, Akarnania, Thesprotia and Ioannina and the theme of Dyrrachion. Nicol 1984:1

³ The foundation of the state of Epiros receives contradictory treatment in the Byzantine sources. Akropolites does not describe how Michael Komnenos Doukas came to rule the area, (Akropolites §8) while Kantakouzenos states that the Angeloi (meaning the Komneno-Doukai) had ruled in Epiros before 1204 by an annual command of the emperor and that they usurped power there after the fall of Constantinople in 1204, Kantakouzenos I:520.15-521.2. The state founded by Michael I is often referred to as the despotate of Epiros. However, this term is incorrect for this period. Michael himself took no title to justify his power, his successor Theodore I Komnenos Doukas had himself crowned emperor after capturing Thessalonike in 1224. The realm of Epiros only truly became a despotate after the Nicaean conquest of Thessalonike when the Komneno-Doukai were forced to relinquish the imperial title and accept the lesser title of despot from the emperor of Nicaea. Nicol 1984:2 believes that Michael Komnenos Doukas was no different to Leo Sgouros in Corinth or any other warlord, carving out a piece of the disintegrating empire for himself. Certainly Michael had no legitimate right to rule Epiros.

⁴ Anna Komnene:149

⁵ Konstantinos 2000:7

⁶ Papadopoulou-Kerameus 1889:454-455

⁷ Akropolites §8: Macrides 2007:124. The other city mentioned by Akropolites was Arta. These are in fact two of only three cities in the whole of 'Old Epiros' mentioned by Akropolites.

determine exactly what happened inside of Ioannina following the battle of Pelagonia in 1259, although Akropolites says that the city fell to the victorious Nicaean forces.⁸ The Nicaean army passed by Ioannina leaving a covering force to prosecute the siege of the city while the main force moved on to Arta. The city had reverted to Epirote control by 1261.⁹ Andronikos II attacked Ioannina in 1292 but failed to capture it.¹⁰

Ioannina finally returned to Byzantine rule in 1318. Thomas, last of the Komneno-Doukai was murdered by his nephew, Nicholas Orsini of Cephalonia.¹¹ Ioannina refused to accept the rule of Nicholas who took over the despotate and the city submitted to Byzantine rule,¹² to be rewarded with a *chrysobull*. Syrgiannes Palaiologos, the Byzantine commander in Northern Epiros, took possession of Ioannina and granted the city numerous privileges. In 1319 Andronikos II issued a *chrysobull* in which he ratified and extended the privileges granted to the city by Syrgiannes Palaiologos.¹³ The *chrysobull* is a unique and important document which can be seen as a reward to Ioannina for surrendering to the empire without any attempt by the imperial authorities to force the city to do so. Debate has arisen over just who benefitted from these privileges. Mention was made of the Church, the *epoikoi* and the *kastrenoi*. The difficulty arises over who is meant by the word *kastrenos*.¹⁴ The *chrysobull* outlines the exemptions of the inhabitants from a number of taxes on property and livestock as well as from the *kommerkion*.¹⁵ The document also defines the limits of imperial authority over the city in regard to the conduct of the *kephale*, military service, the billeting of troops on the inhabitants of the city and prevents

⁸ Akropolites §82; Macrides 2007:365

⁹ Akropolites §82; Macrides 2007:365

¹⁰ Nicol 1984:39. See below, p.142 for a consideration of the numismatic material from Ioannina in the context of the aftermath of the battle of Pelagonia.

¹¹ Gregoras I, 318

¹² Nicol 1984:83. Nicholas refused to accept this and tried to conquer Ioannina while the emperors Andronikos II and III fought a civil war. He was unsuccessful. MM I:171

¹³ MM V:77-84

¹⁴ See below *The Population and Society of Ioannina*.

¹⁵ For this tax see Antoniadis-Bibicou 1963.

the emperor from ceding the city to another power. The *chrysobull* also mentions the judicial rights of the Ioanniniotai, specifically mentioning a number of offences for which the proscribed punishment for Ioanniniotai was to be different from the norm, and the inhabitants right to select their own judges. Finally Andronikos II also insisted that the rights of the Jews of Ioannina should be respected and that they would benefit from the privileges which he was granting in the same way as the other *epoikoi*. In 1321 a further *chrysobull* was issued for the Church by Andronikos II.¹⁶ This is concerned mostly with outlining the estates and sources of income of the Church of Ioannina, although brief mention is made of the extent of the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan See. This document was probably issued for similar reasons as that of 1319, to reward the Church for supporting the city's return to Byzantine rule. Although a brief mention had been made of the rights of the Metropolis in the 1319 document this was done in only general terms. The 1321 *chrysobull* lists every village and property of the Church and may be seen as a follow on from and elaboration of the earlier document. A patriarchal document of 1337/8 relates the Constantinopolitan view of political events in Ioannina, such as the rule of John II Orsini, from the Byzantine recovery of the city in 1318 up until 1337.¹⁷ The exact status of Ioannina over the following twenty years is unclear. The city remained nominally Byzantine but the Epirotes took advantage of the civil war between Andronikos II and Andronikos III to assert their rights over the city. The despot Nicholas (whose unpopularity in Ioannina had led to the city's surrender to Byzantium) was himself murdered by his brother John Orsini, who took over the rule of the despotate in Arta.¹⁸ John Orsini assured the people of Ioannina that if they submitted to him he would rule them as the *kephale* of

¹⁶ MM V:84-87

¹⁷ MM I:171-4

¹⁸ Gregoras I, 536, MM I:171

Andronikos II, respecting all of the privileges of the city.¹⁹ Ioannina promptly admitted John Orsini and Andronikos II was forced to ignore John's usurpation of the title and officially recognise him as *kephale* in 1323.²⁰ Another *chrysobull* was issued in 1330 for the Church in Ioannina by John Orsini. Technically, John could not issue a *chrysobull* as he only held the rank of despot; however, this did not prevent him from doing so. This document was once in the possession of I. A. Romanos but has since been lost. The only analysis of the document itself is in the book about the despotate by Romanos.²¹ The *chrysobull* lists a number of church properties and tax exemptions. It has been suggested that John Orsini was familiar with the text of the 1321 *chrysobull* of Andronikos II as the privileges which they contain are similar.²² His grant to the Church of Ioannina has been seen as a way of assuring the compliance of the ecclesiastic authorities of the city to this act.²³ Ioannina switched sides in the civil war, between Andronikos II and Andronikos III, but was effectively independent under the rule of John II Orsini; Byzantium only secured the city after his death in 1336/7.²⁴ Andronikos III appointed his own *kephale* for the city, a relative with the rank of *pinkernes*.²⁵ This *kephale* was probably John Angelos, a cousin and friend of John Kantakouzenos and later governor of Thessaly.²⁶ How subservient Ioannina was to the empire is debatable. We know that the clergy of the city excommunicated anyone who had dealings with the new *kephale*.²⁷ Eventually Andronikos III marched in person to deal with Epiros in 1337. This campaign resulted in the whole of Epiros falling to Byzantium.²⁸

¹⁹ MM I:171

²⁰ MM I:171

²¹ Romanos 1895

²² Nicol 1984:96

²³ Nicol 1984:96

²⁴ Nicol 1984:107

²⁵ MM I:172. Originally the emperor's cup bearer by the time that Syrgiannes Palaiologos held the title *pinkernes* was a high ranking title.

²⁶ Nicol 1984:107

²⁷ MM I:172. Nicol suggests that this proves that the inhabitants of Ioannina were unhappy with the imposition of the new *kephale*. Nicol 1984:108

²⁸ Gregoras I:553-4,

The conquests of Andronikos III Palaiologos did not remain for long in Byzantine hands. Epiros and Thessaly supported John VI Kantakouzenos in the civil war which followed the death of Andronikos III;²⁹ however, Serbian exploitation of the divisions within Byzantium meant that by 1346 Ioannina had fallen to the armies of Stefan Dušan.³⁰ Epiros and Thessaly were governed for Stefan Dušan by his half-brother Symeon Uroš.³¹

The history of Ioannina 1344-1391 is recorded in the *Chronicle of Ioannina*.³² This work was written c.1440 by an anonymous Greek, living in Ioannina and exists in both a demotic and a literary version.³³ Despot Thomas Preljubović rose to power in Ioannina during the period of Serbian domination 1346-1385. Following the death of Stefan Dušan his half-brother Symeon ruled the southern part of the former Serbian Empire from Trikkala in Thessaly, as Emperor of the Romans and the Serbs. His lands included Ioannina, which voluntarily submitted to him and recognised him as emperor.³⁴ The people of Ioannina asked the Serbian emperor to provide a governor who would protect them from Albanian attacks and Emperor Symeon appointed Thomas Preljubović.³⁵ According to the *Chronicle of Ioannina* Thomas made himself unpopular by exiling many *archontes* and two metropolitans of Ioannina, promoting Serbs to high office and increasing taxes.³⁶ Ioannina suffered from the plague in 1368 and in 1375,³⁷ these outbreaks may have been linked to the fact that the city was blockaded for much of the time, 1367-70, by

²⁹ Kantakouzenos II:297

³⁰ Nicol 1984:131

³¹ Kantakouzenos III:30; Gregoras III: 557. Nicol records that Gregoras incorrectly describes Symeon as Dušan's son. Nicol 1984:131

³² The *Chronicle of Ioannina* was once attributed to the monks Komnenos and Proklos, however, Vranousis proved that this was due to a misreading of the title of the literary version of the chronicle which included the surnames of the despot Thomas, Komnenos Preloubos, Vranousis 1962b:23-9.

³³ Vranousis 1962a:57-115, texts 74-101. One of the main themes of the chronicle is what the author saw as the tyrannical rule of Thomas Preljubović in Ioannina.

³⁴ Chron Ioan:77

³⁵ Chron Ioan:79-80. Thomas' title as governor of Ioannina is unknown. He was granted the title of despot in 1382 by Manuel II, but whether he had the title earlier is unknown.

³⁶ Chron Ioan:80-81 for the exile of Metropolitan Sebastian; Chron Ioan:93-4 for the exile of Metropolitan Matthew.

³⁷ Chron Ioan:84-6

Albanians.³⁸ Thomas spent much of his reign fighting the Albanians and many of the new taxes which he created were probably intended to pay for the defence of the city and its territory.³⁹ Thomas won a victory over the Albanians in 1377 when Gjin Phrates attacked Ioannina. Phrates was captured and paraded through the streets of Ioannina in Thomas' victory triumph.⁴⁰ In 1379 the Albanians attacked Ioannina in boats from the lake and seized one of the city's two citadels. Eventually the Ioanniniotai defeated the Albanians on the lake and those in the citadel never succeeded in breaking out of their foothold and surrendered.⁴¹ Thomas became the first of the rulers of Ioannina to request Ottoman aid. On two occasions, in 1380 and 1382, Ottoman troops helped Thomas against the Albanians, each time they took territory from the despot as the price of their support.⁴² In December 1384, after Thomas Preljubović had been murdered by his bodyguard, his widow Maria Angelina Doukaina Palaiologina was acclaimed ruler of Ioannina in the city cathedral.⁴³

Maria instituted the final stage in the history of Ioannina, that of the Italian lords, by marrying Esau Buondelmonti, member of a rich Florentine family in 1385.⁴⁴ The new ruler immediately made himself popular by allowing the return of those exiled by Thomas, lowering taxes and restoring Metropolitan Matthew to his See.⁴⁵ In response to the siege of Ioannina by the Albanian despot of Arta, Gjin Spata, Esau became a vassal of the Ottoman

³⁸ Chron Ioan:84-85

³⁹ Nicol 1984:145

⁴⁰ Chron Ioan:86

⁴¹ Chron Ioan:87-8. The Albanians seized the smaller of the two citadels, where the Municipal Museum is now.

⁴² In 1380 the Ottomans took Boursina, Krelzounista, Dragomi, Beltista and Arachobitsa. In 1382 the Ottomans took Dryinoupolis and Vagenetia.

⁴³ Chron Ioan:93-4. For a more detailed history of the Serbian domination of Ioannina see Soulis 1984:122-129.

⁴⁴ Chron Ioan:94

⁴⁵ Chron Ioan:94-6

sultan in 1389.⁴⁶ Esau spent over a year in Adrianople returning with Ottoman troops and through his submission to the Ottomans gained four years of peace for the city.⁴⁷ This peace was cemented in 1396 when Esau married the daughter of Gjin Spata, his former wife Maria had died in 1394.⁴⁸ In 1408 Esau Buondelmonti issued a document of privileges for the Church of Ioannina. Esau asked the Metropolitan Joseph to examine all previous grants to the See so that he could codify them into a single document. As with the *chrysobull* of 1330 this document, now lost, was once in the possession of I. A. Romanos.⁴⁹ After Esau died his widow Eudokia sent an embassy to Serbia to find herself a suitable husband,⁵⁰ but the *archontes* of Ioannina were unhappy about the prospect of another Serbian ruler. Under the leadership of the captain of the city the *archontes* ousted Eudokia and invited Carlo Tocco, Duke of Cephalonia, to rule Ioannina.⁵¹

The rule of Carlo I Tocco and his nephew Carlo II is recorded in the *Chronicle of Tocco*.⁵² This was written, by an anonymous Greek author, in Ioannina and, as the name suggests, records the actions of the Tocco family up to 1429, which was likely the date of its completion.⁵³ The *Chronicle of Tocco* has a different focus to that of the *Chronicle of Ioannina*; the earlier chronicle was concerned with the city itself, whereas the latter is a record of the actions of the Tocco family, particularly Carlo I and his brother Leonardo.⁵⁴ The *Chronicle of Tocco* states that Ioannina was the capital of the despotate and Arta was the

⁴⁶ Chron Ioan:97

⁴⁷ Chron Ioan:97-8

⁴⁸ Chron Ioan:98-100

⁴⁹ Romanos 1895:168-9

⁵⁰ Chron Tocco:314 §9

⁵¹ Chron Tocco:316 §10. For a more detailed account of the rule of Esau Buondelmonti see Soulis 1984:129-13133.

⁵² Schiro 1975

⁵³ Schiro 1975:123-142. Similarities have been noted between the *Chronicle of Tocco* and the *Chronicle of the Morea*, there is one difference: the *Chronicle of Tocco* praises Carlo Tocco, the Italian hero and his Italian companions. However, unlike the *Chronicle of Morea*, the native Greeks are not villains and the Byzantine traditions of the despotate are celebrated, Magdalino 1989:90.

⁵⁴ Nicol 1984:164

winter hunting residence of the despots.⁵⁵ Carlo I Tocco died in July 1429.⁵⁶ In his will Carlo I split his domain between his nephew (who inherited the majority of the despotate including Ioannina) Carlo II, his widow and his illegitimate sons Ercole, Menuno and Torno.⁵⁷ Menuno and Ercole asked the Sultan to help them oust their cousin Carlo II.⁵⁸ One version of the subsequent events records that troops from Ioannina prevented the Ottomans from reaching the city and actually forced them to retreat to Thessalonike. However, Murad wrote to the citizens of Ioannina asking them to remember the fate of Thessalonike which he had recently conquered.⁵⁹ Chalkokondyles records a different series of events: Ioannina was besieged by the Ottoman general Karatzias and eventually Carlo II and the citizens of Ioannina asked for terms and the city surrendered.⁶⁰ Nicol believed that the two accounts can be reconciled. The letter from Murad to the people of Ioannina could easily have been written during the siege recorded by Chalkokondyles and may have been one of the reasons that the city asked for surrender terms.⁶¹ The account of Chalkokondyles is perhaps verified by the horismos of Sinan Pasha which records that the city surrendered whilst under siege.⁶² This document was issued by Sinan Pasha as a

⁵⁵ Chron Tocco:332 §14

⁵⁶ Pseudo-Phrantzes II:266-268. Nicol sums up the life of Carlo thus “He had lived from moment to moment and when he died the Despotate which he had almost accidentally recreated was quickly proved to be an illusion. Neither in Arta nor in Ioannina is there any sign or monument of his rule. An inscription in the charming little monastery church near Monodenri in Zagori records that it was founded in 1413-14 by the ‘voivode’ Michael Therianos in the reign of the most exalted Despot Karoula the Duke. It seems to be the sole surviving memorial to the long and colourful career of Carlo Tocco, who made so much stir but left so little mark on the history of Epiros.” Nicol 1984:194-195

⁵⁷ Chalkokondyles II:15

⁵⁸ Thiriet *Regestes* no.2201

⁵⁹ Epirotica:240-6,

⁶⁰ Chalkokondyles II:15-16

⁶¹ Nicol 1984:202. Nicol describes the account of Chalkokondyles as shorter and less detailed than that recorded in the short Epirote chronicle but possibly more accurate also.

⁶² Lambros 1908:62-4. For a discussion of the different dates presented in the sources for the fall of Ioannina see Mertzziou 1938:117-122. The conclusion of this work is that Chalkokondyles presented the most likely account for the fall of the city.

demand to the citizens of Ioannina for the surrender of the city.⁶³ The citizens accepted the Ottoman offer and in 1430 Ioannina was added to Ottoman Empire.

The Physical Description and the Built Environment of Ioannina

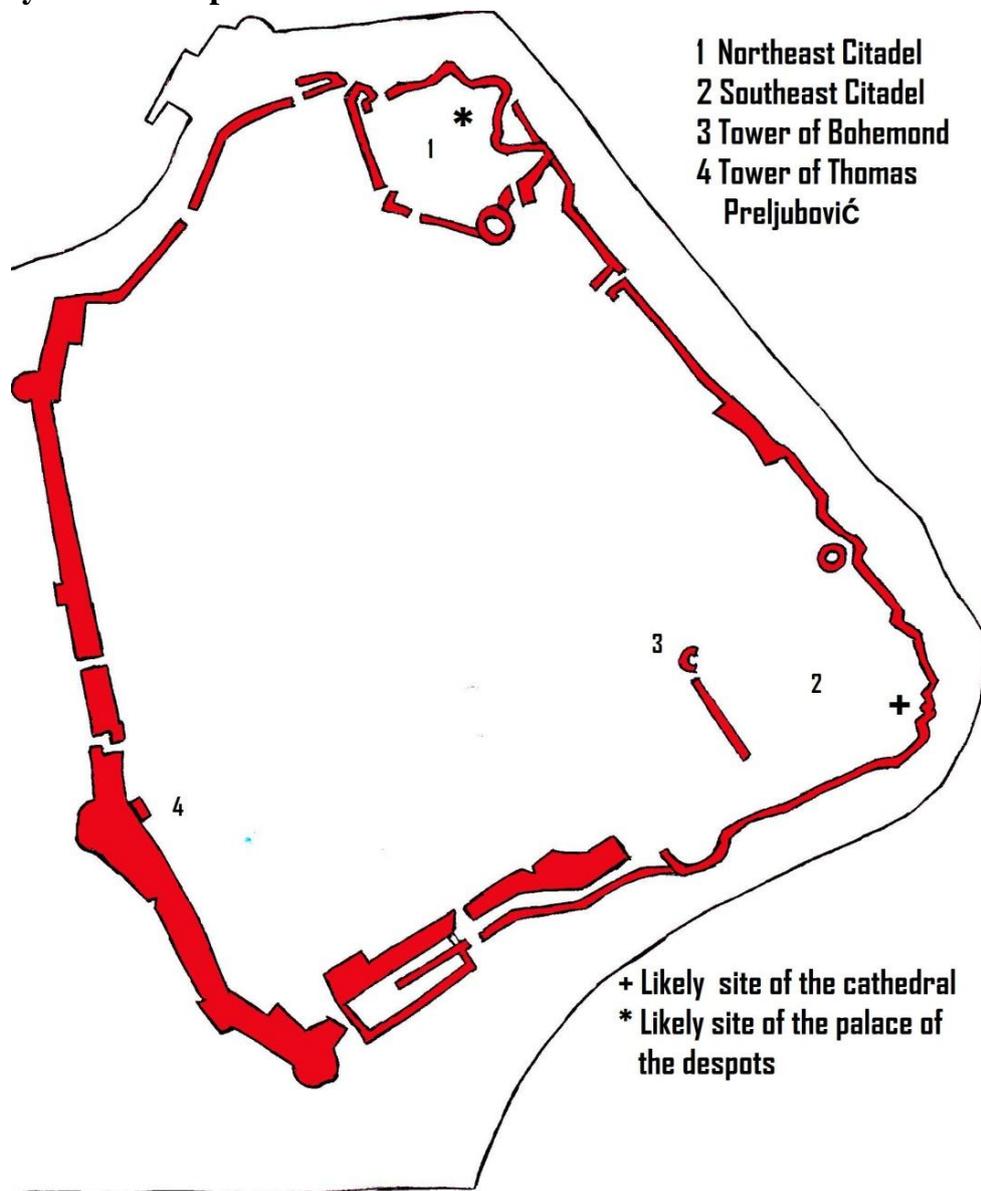


Figure 8: Ioannina

In the fifteenth century *Chronicle of Tocco* there is praise for the beauty of Ioannina and its clear water and air.⁶⁴ In the same work Ioannina is described as the best city in the

⁶³ The text of the horismos is reproduced in Amantou 1930:208-209 and Lambros 1908:63

region.⁶⁵ The city of Ioannina can be said to have four constituent parts, the town itself, which contained the north east and the south east citadels and the island situated in the lake which formed a monastic suburb. Understanding the built environment of Ioannina is challenging, especially when one takes into account modern constructions and the many layers of building work which have modified and altered the site since Byzantine times, particularly the large scale building program of Ali Pasha in the early nineteenth century. The town of Ioannina is situated on a peninsula surrounded on three sides by the lake of the same name. Before modern irrigation works the fortified area of Ioannina was almost cut off from the mainland by the marshes which extended inland from the lake.⁶⁶ The city was probably fortified before 1204. Anna Komnene recorded that in 1082 Bohemond found Ioannina to be a *kastron* with a citadel.⁶⁷ It is not clear whether Anna used the term *kastron* to mean that Ioannina was a fortified settlement with a citadel or just to mean any town, fortified or not. Tsoure believes that Anna meant that Ioannina had a citadel and a circuit wall to protect the town.⁶⁸ Vranousis has argued that before 1204 Ioannina was an unimportant and small town which owed its later prominence and size solely to the constructions of Michael I Komnenos Doukas (1204-1216).⁶⁹ When Michael I Komnenos Doukas enlarged and refortified Ioannina it is likely that he either rebuilt the circuit wall of the town or fortified it for the first time.⁷⁰ However, no elements which can be firmly ascribed to the thirteenth century survive in the existing fortifications of the town.⁷¹ The

⁶⁴ Chron Tocco:476 §6. However, the author was comparing his city to the depressing environment in Arta. It is hard not to get the impression from the Chronicle of Tocco that Arta was perhaps the favoured city of Carlo I in Epiros and that the author is trying to hide this and present Arta in a negative light.

⁶⁵ Chron Tocco:450 §5

⁶⁶ Konstantinos 2000:16

⁶⁷ Anna Komnene:149

⁶⁸ Tsoure 1983:146

⁶⁹ Vranousis 1968:13

⁷⁰ Konstantinos 2000:7

⁷¹ Although there have been improvements in the dating of masonry in recent years the situation at Ioannina is such as these are almost useless, except where Tsoure has managed to identify pieces of late medieval fortification, because of the rebuilding of almost the entire defensive wall of the city by Ali Pasha. It is

walls and towers which can be seen today were mostly constructed by Ali Pasha and were completed in 1815.⁷² The Byzantine walls must have followed the same path as they have not been found in excavations and there are elements of Byzantine masonry incorporated into the nineteenth century fortifications.⁷³ That no other walls have been found has led Tsoure to question exactly how much Michael I did enlarge the city as it seems that his fortifications must have been on top of those existing in the middle Byzantine period.⁷⁴ The surviving late medieval elements in the circuit wall of the city are built of coarse masonry with bricks and rubble. One complete tower survives in the outer wall from this period.⁷⁵ This tower is of a rubble construction with a cloisonné upper section. The inner face of the tower has an inscription formed of brick which reads ΘΩΜΑΣ. The Thomas in question has been identified as Thomas Preljubović.⁷⁶ The *Chronicle of Tocco* describes how

conceivable that if the eighteenth century walls were demolished, or layers peeled off that the medieval masonry may be beneath, but for now this is not possible.

⁷² Tsoure 1983:134

⁷³ Tsoure 1983:134

⁷⁴ Tsoure 1983:155

⁷⁵ This tower was first discussed by A. Orlandos. Orlandos 1930:7-9

⁷⁶ Konstantinos 2000:20; Tsoure 1983:150; Vranousis 1968:75; Orlandos 1930:8. Orlandos compared this inscription with that of Manuel II on the walls of Thessalonike Orlandos 1930:8



Figure 9: Tower of Thomas Preljubović (author's picture)



Figure 10: Detail of the inscription on the tower of Thomas Preljubović (author's picture)

Carlo I fortified his realm because of the threat of Ottoman attack. Although the despot went to Ioannina to organise the fortification, Ioannina itself is not mentioned as a site that benefitted from Carlo's building program.⁷⁷ A number of inscriptions, which were incorporated into the walls of the city, were observed by seventeenth and eighteenth

⁷⁷ Chron Tocco:452 §8

century visitors to Ioannina.⁷⁸ These inscriptions recorded the names Michael, Ioannes or Anna and Thomas. Vranousis took the inclusion of inscriptions bearing the name of Michael as proof that Michael I Komnenos-Doukas was largely responsible for the building of Ioannina.⁷⁹ However, the inscription could refer to Michael II Komnenos Doukas. As has been recorded earlier Tsoure dated masonry in the palace/citadel of Ioannina to the reign of Michael II.⁸⁰ It is equally possible that the inscription thus dates to the fortification works of Michael II Komnenos Doukas (1230-1268/9). The Thomas in question could be either Thomas Komnenos Doukas or Thomas Preljubović. Thomas Preljubović is known to have made additions to the fortifications of Ioannina and to have left inscriptions.⁸¹ Three inscriptions of Thomas Preljubović survive and while none in the name of Thomas Komnenos Doukas are known. Therefore, it is more likely that the inscription seen in the eighteenth century was dedicated by Thomas Preljubović. It is possible that the fragmentary inscription read as Ioannes could be interpreted instead as saying Anna. As such this inscription would be proof of building work under the patronage of the mother of despot Thomas Komnenos Doukas who was resident in the city for some years.⁸²

Very little survives of the late medieval town within the walls. Evidence of a bath house from this period has been found under Soufari-seraglio.⁸³ Konstantinos has suggested that the market, Jewish quarter and the area where new settlers in Ioannina settled were outside of the city.⁸⁴ While the usual practice in Byzantium was for the Jewish community to live outside of the city walls there is no evidence for extramural suburbs at

⁷⁸ Vranousis 1968:71-72. One of the visitors was a cleric called Ignatios.

⁷⁹ Vranousis 1968:72

⁸⁰ Tsoure 1983:148-9. This dating was the result of the similarity between the surviving medieval masonry in the citadel and the fortifications of Arta which were built by Michael II.

⁸¹ See above.

⁸² However, if the inscription was actually Ioannes it must refer to John Orsini in his capacity of imperial *kephale* or John Angelos, the possible imperial governor for Andronikos III.

⁸³ Konstantinos 2000:6

⁸⁴ Konstantinos 2000:9

Ioannina, and much of the land outside of the walls was, as mentioned above, covered in swamp. Furthermore although many sieges are recorded in the *Chronicle of Ioannina* and the *Chronicle of Tocco* there is no mention of a suburb being burnt or attacked.⁸⁵ It seems that the population of Ioannina was housed inside the walls of the town, which still contains a sizable settlement today. When taking into account that houses were almost certainly smaller and higher than today; and with the south eastern citadel being smaller than it is now the outer walls could have contained enough people for Ioannina to have been a major town. As for markets the *Chronicle of Tocco* records that shortly after entering the city Carlo I walked through the squares of the city.⁸⁶ While these do not have to have been market squares, it would be logical to assume in keeping with the evidence from other medieval cities all over Europe and the Near East that the larger squares were used for this purpose. The only market which may not have been held within the walls is that of the Fair of the Archangel Michael,⁸⁷ which could have attracted a large number of merchants. The monastery of St. Paraskevi once existed on the site of the modern Nomarchia building.⁸⁸

Ioannina has two citadels built into its fortifications. Originally both citadels stood much higher above the city than they do today. The north east citadel was the original citadel of Ioannina and is by far the smaller of the two. A tower and a gateway survive from the late medieval period. Nothing of the buildings inside of the citadel survived the reconstruction of the fortifications by Ali Pasha, and as with the outer wall of the town Ali Pasha seems to have built his fortifications over the earlier Byzantine structures.⁸⁹ A tower in the wall which separates the citadel from the town is now believed to date from the

⁸⁵ Nevertheless there is no evidence to suggest exactly where the Jews lived.

⁸⁶ Chron Tocco:336 §17 The Duke is described as having walked through the *πλάτσαν*.

⁸⁷ See below, *Trade, Production and Financial Privileges: The Economy in Late Medieval Ioannina*

⁸⁸ Papadopoulou 2004:60

⁸⁹ Konstantinos 2000:22

thirteenth century.⁹⁰ Previously this tower was identified with the building works by Bohemond in 1082. Salamangas believed that this tower was built by Thomas Preljubović as part of his renovation of the city walls.⁹¹ Tsoure argues that the masonry shows evidence of post twelfth century building techniques,⁹² similar to those seen in the fortifications of Arta, which are generally considered to have been built by Michael II Komnenos Doukas (1231-68/69).⁹³ The tower, constructed from rubble, has a brick vaulted roof to the ground level and would probably have had a timber roof for the level above.⁹⁴ The gateway to the north east citadel shows similar masonry and techniques to those employed in the tower of Thomas in the circuit walls of the city, implying a mid to late fourteenth century date for the gatehouse.⁹⁵ The highest quality surviving Byzantine masonry can be seen in the fortifications of the north east citadel; this would seem to support the hypothesis that this was the location of the palace of the despots.⁹⁶ The palace, where Thomas Preljubović was murdered by his bodyguard, is mentioned in the *Chronicle of Ioannina*,⁹⁷ and in the *Chronicle of Tocco*.⁹⁸ The north east citadel was referred to in the *Chronicle of Ioannina* and the *Chronicle of Tocco* as the *apano goulan*.⁹⁹ According to Vranousis the term *goulas*, which was only used for this area of the city referred both to a large tower and to the citadel itself, which contained the palace of the despots, the tower forming a part of this palace or being next to it.¹⁰⁰ In the *Chronicle of Tocco* the *goulas* is mentioned frequently. After the death of

⁹⁰ Tsoure 1983:148; Konstantinos 2000:7

⁹¹ Salamagkas 1958:13

⁹² Tsoure 1983:148-9

⁹³ Orlandos 1936:157

⁹⁴ Konstantinos 2000:19-20

⁹⁵ Tsoure 1983:150; Konstantinos 2000:22

⁹⁶ Konstantinos 2000:9

⁹⁷ Chron Ioan:94 §28, and earlier as the residence of the despot Chron Ioan:81.

⁹⁸ The term used is *παλάτια*. This was the location of the wedding described in Chron Tocco: 416 §23

⁹⁹ The origin of this word is unknown. There is a possibility that the word is a corruption of the Turkish for castle or tower. The editor of the text suggested this etymology but it remains speculation.

¹⁰⁰ Vranousis 1968:20-24. Vranousis stated that it was unlikely that the despot actually lived in the tower as the *Chronicle of Ioannina* records that the Albanians took the *goulas*, (Chron Ioan:87) and as the author took every opportunity to attack the despot, surely he would have recorded the sack of his home. Vranousis

Esau Buondelmonti his widow and her children were seized in the *goulas*.¹⁰¹ At some point between the overthrow of Eudokia and the arrival of Carlo I the *goulas* was ransacked by the people of Ioannina.¹⁰² Following his acclamation in the cathedral Carlo I Tocco (1416-1429) went to the *goulas*.¹⁰³ After becoming lord of the city Carlo I Tocco was described as meeting with the *archontes* in the *palati apano*.¹⁰⁴ It seems clear that the smaller of Ioannina's two citadels was occupied by the palace of the despots. The particular citadel is not large and the ground is not even. There are only two buildings today, a mosque which is now the Municipal Museum and the medresé. The palace of the despots would likely have been at least partly incorporated into the surrounding fortifications including the *goulas*. The palace should not be viewed as a collection of buildings surrounded by a wall, as with the Great Palace at Constantinople, but perhaps as a fortified citadel/palace as in the case of many western European royal castles;¹⁰⁵ the *goulas* of the *Chronicle of Ioannina* and the *Chronicle of Tocco* forming the Epirote equivalent of a donjon, not a tower next to the palace but an integral part of it, both residence and fortification. A fragmentary inscription was discovered in the citadel and may have formed part of the palace. The three pieces have been put together and the inscription reconstructed as [Θω]μας ὁ καὶ Ἀλβανητ[οκτόνος ἐπικλ]ηθείς.¹⁰⁶

1968:25. However, this could be working on the assumption that the intended readership of the chronicle just thought of the *goulas* as a tower. As there was only one building with this name in the city everyone would know that it was part of the palace, so in fact the chronicler did say the despot's house had been captured by Albanians.

¹⁰¹ Chron Tocco:316 §10

¹⁰² Chron Tocco:318 §1 εἰς τὸν γουλαῖν ἀπάνω

¹⁰³ Chron Tocco:336 §16 εἰς τὸν γουλαῖν ἀνέβην.

¹⁰⁴ Chron Tocco:338 §18

¹⁰⁵ Also, as suggested by Dr Macrides, the Blachernae palace in Constantinople.

¹⁰⁶ Vranousis 1968:64-74; Nicol 1984:154. Three inscriptions dated to the despotate have been discovered in Ioannina and they were all created for despot Thomas, the inscription in the acropolis, the inscription on the tower in the lower city which is named after him and his tombstone.

Traditionally the creation of the south east citadel (modern Its Kale) has been attributed to Bohemond, based on the testimony of Anna Komnene.¹⁰⁷ This hypothesis has been questioned based on the argument that as Bohemond was only resident in Ioannina



Figure 11: The tower of Bohemond

for three to four months he did not have time to construct a citadel.¹⁰⁸ It has been argued that the large circular tower in the centre of Its Kale was built 1384-1430, but it has been suggested that this tower is actually the tower of Bohemond.¹⁰⁹ The style of this tower is not similar to any other Byzantine fortifications. However, similar towers do exist in Italy and they date to the eleventh and twelfth centuries.¹¹⁰ Tsoure suggests that although Bohemond did not have time to complete a citadel during his occupation of Ioannina,

¹⁰⁷ See above; Anna Komnene:149; Konstantinos 2000:30

¹⁰⁸ Vranousis 1968:12 Vranousis believed that Anna exaggerated Bohemond's actions. This would certainly not be the only case of exaggeration in the Alexiad. Vranousis also believed that the northwest citadel was that constructed by Bohemond.

¹⁰⁹ Tsoure 1983:147

¹¹⁰ Tsoure 1983:148. The attribution of this tower to Bohemond is now generally accepted.

there is no reason that he could not have started construction, which was completed, perhaps by the same craftsmen which he employed, after the Norman's defeat. Excavations undertaken since the study of Tsoure have revealed the foundations of another round tower near the 'tower of Bohemond' and a wall joining the two.¹¹¹ This evidence suggests that the Byzantine citadel was significantly smaller than modern Its Kale.¹¹² During the construction work of Ali Pasha all of the late medieval buildings inside of the citadel were destroyed.¹¹³ Unpublished archaeological excavations, one of which took place in 1983, have revealed no signs of buildings or habitation anywhere between the surface and the bedrock of the acropolis.¹¹⁴ The north east citadel is known to have contained the cathedral of the Taxiarchs, built by Michael Philanthropenos.¹¹⁵ In 1795 the tombstone of Thomas Preljubović was discovered in Its Kale, presumably where the cathedral once stood.¹¹⁶

What the physical remains of the two citadels reveal is that the most secure sections of the city were divided between the despot and the church. The *Chronicle of Tocco* suggests that when the elite of the city met they met in the cathedral, and many of them perhaps lived in the citadel around the cathedral.¹¹⁷ Of the four cities considered in this thesis this makes Ioannina unique in that its elite controlled and inhabited their own fortified zone separate from that of the governor or ruler of the city. This would have provided the *archontes* of Ioannina with a strong base from which to deal with the despot and to a small

¹¹¹ Although unpublished these can be seen when visiting the site.

¹¹² The proposed outline of the late Medieval citadel can be seen on the map which accompanies this section.

¹¹³ Konstantinos 2000:30-1. Ali Pasha desired to create a level platform for his new palace and used large amounts of earth to level out the previously uneven ground.

¹¹⁴ Konstantinos 1992:78. These findings, or lack thereof, are summarised by Konstantinos.

¹¹⁵ Konstantinos 2000:9. Xyngopoulos believed that the mosque in Its Kale was built directly above the old cathedral, Xyngopoulos 1926b:296

¹¹⁶ Vranousis 1968:49-63; Xyngopoulos 1962b:296; Nicol 1984:154. The surviving inscription on this tombstone read Thomas Prealipos Despotes, the tombstone has since been lost.

¹¹⁷ See below, p.125.

degree increased their independence from their ruler.¹¹⁸ I believe that the existence of these two citadels can be taken as symbolic of the relationship between the *archontes* of Ioannina and their despot.

The island of Ioannina has an area of 0.2 km². The town which exists today on the island was only created in the sixteenth century; under the despotate the island was home only to monastic communities.¹¹⁹ Two of these monasteries were either restored and rededicated, or founded in the late medieval period: the monastery of St. Nicholas Philanthropenos was restored in 1291/2 and the monastery of St. Nicholas Strategopoulos or Nilios was founded at a similar time.¹²⁰ The Philanthropenon consisted of the main church, a refectory (now ruined) and monks' cells, although the current monks' cells are of a post Byzantine date; the whole complex was surrounded by a stone wall.¹²¹ A local tradition, which has no supporting textual evidence, believes that a later school which was attached to the Philanthropenon was founded in the Byzantine period.¹²² The building is of simple construction with no exterior decoration. The interior is a simple three aisled basilica, roofed by a later barrel vault, with a narthex and exonarthex. There is no surviving Byzantine decoration, the majority of the frescoes of the church date to 1531/2, with some later additions.¹²³ The inscription above the west door records that Michael Philanthropenos priest and steward of Ioannina was responsible for the 1291/2 restoration of the monastery. A portrait of Michael kneeling along with four other Philanthropenoi

¹¹⁸ An example of this would be the *archontes* reception of Carlo I Tocco in their citadel, not his palace, see below, p.125.

¹¹⁹ In this respect the island in lake Ioannina functioned in a similar way to Mt. Athos.

¹²⁰ Papadopoulou 2004:19

¹²¹ Xyngopoulos 1926a:143 believed that the Philanthropenon was eleventh century in origin based on churches with a similar construction in Bulgaria and another near Kastoria built in 1006. Papadopoulou 2004:25

¹²² Papadopoulou 2004:27

¹²³ Xyngopoulos 1926a:138-139; Papadopoulou 2004:27. There are signs of earlier fresco fragments in amongst the sixteenth century decoration, but the date of these is not known.

who were benefactors of the monastery records that Michael died in 1342. Another benefactor recorded in the same fresco, George, died in 1357. The Strategopoulos



Figure 12: The Philanthropon Monastery

monastery, also dedicated to St. Nicholas was built close to the Philanthropon. The Strategopoulos monastery consisted of a complex of buildings, now partially ruined, surrounded by a stone wall. The masonry of the church consists of layers of stone and brick. The interior of the church is of an aisleless construction, with frescoes dating from the sixteenth century.¹²⁴ Both monasteries were founded by families which fled Constantinople following the fourth crusade. The family monasteries which they built on the island of Ioannina could be seen in the same tradition as those founded in the eleventh and twelfth century in Constantinople. These monasteries demonstrate the wealth of at least two of the families resident in Ioannina and are examples of the kind of patronage

¹²⁴ Papadopoulou 2004:19

that was in the gift of these families. These two refugee families greatly altered the built environment of the island of Ioannina and the Philanthropenon and the Strategopoulos monastery provide a glimpse of the way in which they probably changed the urban fabric of the city itself.



Figure 13: The Strategopoulos Monastery

The Population and Society of Ioannina

Before discussing the size, social make up and occupations of the citizens of Ioannina it is necessary to tackle the difficulties of understanding the *chrysobull* of 1319 which has caused much debate over the social structure of Ioannina. In this document the inhabitants of Ioannina are referred to by six different words, οἱ τοπικοὶ, οἱ καστρηνοὶ, αἱ

πολίται, οἱ ἔποικοι οἱ ἄρχοντες and οἱ πάροικοι. The words *archontes* and *paroikoi* are well documented from other sources.¹²⁵ *Politai*, citizens, occurs only once, likewise *topikoi* only occurs in a clause related to the impressing of locals not from the city itself to perform guard duty. The two most common words used for the inhabitants of Ioannina are *kastrenoi* and *epoikoi*.¹²⁶ The use of these two words in the *chrysobull* raises three questions: are these terms for two different social groups and are they synonymous for the same group of citizens and if so, is the reference to the inhabitants as a whole or to a specific socially distinct sector of the population? Firstly I will outline the clauses relating to the *kastrenoi* in the 1319 *chrysobull*, then discuss the scholarly theories about the meaning of the term.

The privileges granted by Andronikos II mention either the *epoikoi* or *kastrenoi* as the recipients. The privileges can be divided into two categories, civil/judicial and financial. Overall the privileges granted to the *kastrenoi* are more specifically defined while those granted to the *epoikoi* are more general, granted to the city as a whole. However, this is not always the case, as can be seen with the judicial privileges of the *epoikoi*. The term *epoikoi* is used in the *chrysobull* in a number of places in a general sense, when the entire city is to be affected by the privilege being granted. Thus it is the *epoikoi* who request that Andronikos II should never surrender their city to the rule of the Franks.¹²⁷ The first judicial privilege of the *epoikoi* is that used to define those protected from exile and deportation. This clause does hint at a distinction between the social groups in the city, “...τινὰ μικρὸν ἢ μέγαν ἀπὸ τῶν ἐποίκων...”¹²⁸ However, the term *kastrenoi* is never mentioned. The specific crime of murder and its punishment is mentioned in just a single clause applicable to all the

¹²⁵ *Archontes* appears twice, MM V:78.24 and 83.18 and *paroikoi* twice also MM V:79.32 and 83.21.

¹²⁶ *Epoikoi* is the term which is usually used for the recipients of privileges in the so called ‘common’ chrysobulls. Kyritses 1999:229

¹²⁷ MM V:80.5

¹²⁸ MM V:80.28-29

Ioanniniotai.¹²⁹ The *epoikoi* are again mentioned as the group who should elect a court and a judge from the ἄνθρωποι καλοὶ.¹³⁰ Although the two terms could be synonymous it could also be significant that ‘good men’, not *kastrenoi*, was the term used here. The later clause covering the proper procedure to be followed should the *kephale* exceed his authority and become oppressive seems to protect all the inhabitants of the city.¹³¹ The *epoikoi* were the recipients of the privileges concerning commercial transactions and blanket tax exemptions.¹³² The privilege of tax exemption on property is similarly universal in its application,¹³³ as is that concerning the *kastroktisia*.¹³⁴ The same seems to be true of the exemption from the *mitaton*, although the exemption applies only to those who own property.¹³⁵

The *kastrenoi* were also given financial grants and, in addition, military privileges. Following the large initial section of the *chrysobull* the privilege of freedom from military service outside of Ioannina itself, except for those enrolled in the *allagia*, was granted to the *kastrenoi* alone.¹³⁶ The clause mentioning the fate of those convicted of treason does not mention a specific group, but any who should be found guilty.¹³⁷ However, this privilege was placed in the documents between two clauses which specifically mention the *kastrenoi*. This could suggest that the punishment of exile for those found guilty of committing treason applied only to the elite and that another penalty existed for the general population. After all exile was preferable to other more severe punishments which could be inflicted on

¹²⁹ MM V:82.28-29

¹³⁰ MM V:81.6-10

¹³¹ MM V:81.28-35, 82.1-11

¹³² MM V:81.10-17

¹³³ MM V:82.11-21

¹³⁴ MM V:82.25-28

¹³⁵ MM V:82.22-25

¹³⁶ MM V:81.17-20. The justification for this exemption was that such duties should be undertaken by salaried soldiers employed specifically for military duties. The implication is that the *kastrenoi* would not have been paid for such service.

¹³⁷ MM V:81.20-27

those found guilty of treason. This would explain why the inhabitants of Ioannina were asking for a renewal of an existing guarantee of exile which probably represents a reduction in the usual punishment for treason. The next clause in the *chrysobull* states that troops could not be billeted on the property of the *kastrenoi* without the owner's permission.¹³⁸ That this clause specifies *kastrenoi* implies that the *epoikoi* could be subjected to the compulsory billeting of troops. The financial privileges and tax exemptions of the *kastrenoi* would seem to be superfluous as all of the inhabitants were granted a blanket exemption in the *chrysobull*. However, as with Monemvasia, it should be assumed that any specific exemption which is technically included in an earlier blanket exemption was emphasised as the result of a request from the effected group; in other words it was so important that they asked the emperor to say it twice. Thus although all of the lands and possession of the Ioanniniotai were exempted from taxes in a general exemption, the *kastrenoi* not only had their own exemption repeated, with the listing of individual taxes, but they had the locations of their estates listed as well.¹³⁹ These estates consisted of a number of villages which had been traditionally associated with Ioannina, before the return of the city to imperial control in 1318, and also in new villages granted to Ioanniniotai for the first time in the 1319 *chrysobull*. The grant came initially from Syrgiannes Palaiologos and was later extended by Andronikos II. *Kastrenoi* could sell their privileged property only to other *kastrenoi*, which ensured that the privileges remained with the descendants of the original inhabitants of Ioannina.

The *kastrenoi* have been defined in four different ways by modern scholars; as an urban bourgeoisie/patriciate,¹⁴⁰ as an ethnically defined group of *archontes*,¹⁴¹ as the

¹³⁸ MM V:81.27-28

¹³⁹ See below, p.134-135.

¹⁴⁰ Kyritses 1999

¹⁴¹ Osswald 2006

decedents of high status refugees fleeing from the crusader conquest of Constantinople in 1204,¹⁴² and as a group synonymous with the *epoikoi*.¹⁴³ It has been suggested that the ‘common’ *chrysobulls* were not drawn up for the inhabitants of a city in general but for the ‘urban patriciate’ ‘those who were important and rich enough to possess lands outside the city but were not yet in a position to enter the imperial service and profit from the grants of property that accompanied it.’¹⁴⁴ Although grants of land are more traditionally associated with an aristocracy Kyritses describes the *kastrenoi* as ‘an organised bourgeoisie’¹⁴⁵ The estates which Kyritses saw as grants made to a bourgeoisie have also been interpreted as gifts to the highest ranking men in the city.¹⁴⁶ Both Osswald and Vranousis believe that the *kastrenoi* were a closed group; Vranousis argued that this group of high aristocrats protected itself with privileges to preserve the ‘closed circle of the aristocracy’¹⁴⁷, while Osswald suggests that the *kastrenoi* were the original indigenous *archontes* of Ioannina who were protecting themselves from different ethnic groups who were also *archontes*, but could never be *kastrenoi*.¹⁴⁸ Much of Osswald’s argument is based on the occurrence of the term *archontes* in the *Chronicle of Ioannina* and the *Chronicle of Tocco*. The *Chronicle of Ioannina* also uses the terms ἐπισημότατοι, εὖ γεγονότες and εὐγενεστέροι.¹⁴⁹ Osswald considers the infiltration of Serbs and Italians into the upper echelons of the society of Ioannina and thus draws the distinction between *archontes*, who could be from any origin and *kastrenoi* who were

¹⁴² Vranousis 1968:17. Vranousis in fact states that Ioannina was enlarged by Michael I specifically to provide a place to settle these refugees. Vranousis 1968:13

¹⁴³ Nicol 1984

¹⁴⁴ Kyritses 1999:242

¹⁴⁵ Kyritses 1999:243. This statement seems to contradict the earlier statement describing the *kastrenoi* as an urban patriciate. Of course an urban patriciate may have owned less land and have a lower position than the great aristocracy. Such men are seen in Thessalonike and Berrhoia.

¹⁴⁶ Vranousis 1984:31

¹⁴⁷ Vranousis 1984:34

¹⁴⁸ Osswald 2006:101. ‘It would be a mistake to see the ἄρχοντες as nobles and the καστρηνοί as bourgeois, as if they were two different social classes. Perhaps we should view the ἄρχοντες as a political elite around the Despot, and the καστρηνοί as a different kind of elite more numerous, but composed of indigenous families, so that the indigenous ἄρχοντες were probably καστρηνοί as well, while a foreign ἄρχων could never become καστρηνός.’

¹⁴⁹ Chron. Ioan. §8

Byzantine natives of Ioannina dating back to before the beginning of Serbian or Italian domination.¹⁵⁰

The definition of the *kastrenoi* as a bourgeoisie, an ambiguous term but perhaps akin to *mesoi* or somewhere between *mesoi* and *archontes*, is possible. This group could have been rewarded by Andronikos II, perhaps for handing over the city to the empire, although this is never stated in the document. However, Ioannina had a number of wealthy aristocrats and it seems unlikely that a middle class coup and surrender of the city to Byzantium would have gone unrecorded. It seems that Vranousis' definition of the *kastrenoi* as an aristocracy coincides more with the evidence than the definition of the group as bourgeois. Furthermore, the military privilege of not being forced to serve in the army suggests a higher, wealthier class than the general inhabitants, even the *mesoi*. The *kastrenoi* held land as a grant from the empire, yet this was not to be confused with a *pronoia* grant. *Pronoia* holders were by no means all aristocrats but the cumulative effect of grants of estates, military privileges and also the different punishment for at least one crime inflicted on the *kastrenoi* suggests a higher social position than that of merely a *mesoi* middle class. If the *kastrenoi* were an aristocracy who exactly were they? Osswald's theory that the *kastrenoi* were a native Ioanniniote elite, excluding foreign notables,¹⁵¹ is based upon a mixing of evidence from different types of source (the 1319 *chrysobull*, *The Chronicle of Ioannina* and *The Chronicle of Tocco*) written in different periods in the city's history. The *kastrenoi* are not mentioned in the *Chronicle of Tocco* or the *Chronicle of Ioannina*, only in the *chrysobull* of 1319 and thus it seems to have been a local technical term incorporated by the chancellery of the emperor into his grant of privileges for the city. Non Byzantines must have formed a very small or even negligible group in 1319. When the two Chronicles were written Ioannina had been

¹⁵⁰ Osswald 2006:101

¹⁵¹ See above.

subjected to Serbian and Italian rule and the number of non indigenous *archontes* must have been much higher. In fact we know of a number of Serbians introduced by Despot Thomas and Italians brought to Ioannina by Esau Buondelmonti and Carlo I Tocco.¹⁵² It seems unlikely that foreign infiltration could have been seen as such a problem in 1319 that it would be included in a *chrysobull*. Comparing the language of the two chronicles with the *chrysobull*, divided from each other by the turbulent events of half a century and by genre, is not a valid method for drawing conclusions about the social structure of Ioannina.

The identity of the *kastrenoi* may be revealed by examining who they were not. In the 1319 *chrysobull* the *kastrenoi* were distinguished from three groups, *topikoi archontes*, *stratiotes* and *epoikoi*. The first of two of these groups are only mentioned once in the same clause. This clause was included at the request of the *kastrenoi* themselves and stated that the lands owned by a *kastrenos* (the same lands listed earlier in the *chrysobull*) could only be sold to another *kastrenos* not a local *archon* or a soldier.¹⁵³ The only other place that the word *topikoi* occurs is in the clause preventing locals from being forced to perform guard duty.¹⁵⁴ Locals are clearly distinguished in this document from actual inhabitants of the city. If the *kastrenoi* were in fact *archontes* then this clause was inserted to distinguish them from other *archontes* who were from the region around Ioannina, but not the city itself. That the *kastrenoi* were not soldiers has been discussed elsewhere.¹⁵⁵

The term *kastrenoi* could have two origins: it could mean *archontes kastrenoi* (*archons* of the castle) as opposed to *archontes topikoi* (*archons* of the region), or for some reason at a point before 1319 some or all of the *archontes* of Ioannina had been accredited with a different title. The desire to distinguish between *archontes* from Ioannina and other *archontes*

¹⁵² See below, p.122-123.

¹⁵³ MM V:83.14-21

¹⁵⁴ For a discussion of this clause see below, p.145.

¹⁵⁵ See below, p.145.

could have stemmed from the desire to protect the land-based privileges outlined in the *chrysobull*. As Kyritses has demonstrated by examining property documents relating to other cities, *archontes* from the area, but not from the city, could buy up property covered by privileges granted to the city and thus themselves benefit from privileges to which they technically had no right.¹⁵⁶

The other possibility for the need to distinguish between different groups of *archontes* was the arrival of the high class refugees from Constantinople in the wake of the crusader conquest of the city; the Philanthropenoi and the Strategopouloi were among them.¹⁵⁷ Michael I Komnenos Doukas (1204-1216), Theodore I Komnenos Doukas (1216-1230) and Michael II Komnenos Doukas (1230-1268/9) are known to have actively encouraged refugee relocation in Ioannina. It is also known from two letters of John Apokaukos that the indigenous inhabitants resented these refugees and on at least one occasion tried to evict them from the city.¹⁵⁸ Perhaps the indigenous *archontes* took the label *kastrenoi* to distinguish themselves from the refugees who were not properly residents of the city in their eyes, or it could have been a label applied to the refugees for the same reason. If the term *kastrenos* was used to distinguish one group of *archontes* within the city from another it is impossible to know how this group would have evolved by the fourteenth century. After over a century of cohabitation could the refugees and the native elite still be distinct? Or would the differences have been blurred by long acquaintance and intermarriage? It is possible that the term was fading in meaning by 1319 but that the

¹⁵⁶ Kyritses 1999:242. The examples given by Kyritses of local *archontes* who were from the region but not the actual city and therefore who benefitted from privileges only because they bought land covered by them are Theodore Sarantenos and Theodore Soutanos in Berrhoia and the Athonite monasteries of Chilandar and Xenophon in Thessalonike.

¹⁵⁷ These two families must have settled in Ioannina before the end of the thirteenth century when both patronised monasteries to St. Nicholas on the island in Lake Ioannina. Given that such foundations would have required considerable wealth it seems likely that the Philanthropenoi and Strategopouloi had been established in Ioannina for some time.

¹⁵⁸ Vranousis 1968:13; Papadopoulou-Kerameus 1889:454-455

submission of Ioannina to the empire again roused the fear of outsiders coming to the city. Thus the term *kastrenoi* was given new life to protect the rights of the elite of Ioannina against encroachments by the *archontes* from the Byzantine Empire.¹⁵⁹ One possibility as to why the term *kastrenos* was used for either of these two examples is that the *archontes* of Ioannina lived in or near the citadel which is today known as Its kale. Whatever its origin, by 1319 the use of *kastrenoi* was established enough to find acceptance in an imperial document.

The *kastrenoi* were an aristocracy based in Ioannina with large estates in the country. This is proved by the statement that although some of the estates in certain villages had been newly bestowed upon the *kastrenoi* by Syrgiannes, others formed part of the traditional lands of this group.¹⁶⁰ This demonstrates that the *kastrenoi* were not an urban middle class given the particular gift of landed estates in the countryside, but an already landed elite, receiving a renewal and extension of their existing estates and privileges. Nor were the *kastrenoi* Greek *archontes* desperate to defend their privileges against foreigners. Rather the distinction is between *archontes* from Ioannina and those from outside. The *kastrenoi* were not attempting to secure the privileged position of their Greek elite group against outsiders from Italy or Serbia, they were preserving their particular groups privileges from the threat of other Byzantines. That this was foremost in the minds of this group is proved by the clause limiting the sale of the estates mentioned in the *chrysobull* to other *kastrenoi*. By ensuring that no outsider could ever own the privileged lands, the *kastrenoi* of Ioannina ensured that they were privileged themselves.

¹⁵⁹ These Byzantine *archontes* need not be from far away in the empire. By 1319 Ioannina was located near to the border between Byzantium and Epiros; a local *archon* could easily have been someone who until 1318 was on the other side.

¹⁶⁰ See below, pp.134-135.

If the deciphering of the meaning of *kastrenoi* is challenging attempting to determine the size of the population of Ioannina in the thirteenth-fifteenth centuries is even more so. Matschke has suggested that the population of Ioannina may have increased in the early Palaiologan period but does not give any justification for this statement.¹⁶¹ It is possible however, to speculate what the composite elements of this population were and how they changed over time. The vast majority of the information which we possess about the inhabitants of Ioannina concerns the elite of the city. There is almost no information about the majority of the inhabitants who were not numbered amongst the *archontes*. The different elements of the population of Ioannina were involved in the running of the city in different ways. Ioannina seems to have possessed a more or less permanent council, the so called ‘senate’, composed of *archontes* and a *boule* or assembly of all the people which met occasionally. In this respect Ioannina can be seen to be similar to other towns in the Balkans, but with the exception that the references to the meetings of the ‘senate’ of Ioannina are unusually frequent when compared with other cities in the Balkans. The history of Ioannina, in spite of numerous regime changes, offers some remarkable examples of families remaining in prominent positions throughout the late medieval period. The people of Ioannina were directly responsible for the fate of their city’s government. Time and again the people, led by their *archontes*, chose who should rule them.

In the discussion of the fortifications of Ioannina, above, it was noted that Michael I Komnenos Doukas refortified Ioannina.¹⁶² It is also recorded that he enlarged the city.¹⁶³ As the evidence proves that the walls built by Michael I were in fact constructed over the earlier fortifications Michael cannot have enlarged the city in this way, but he could have increased its population. We know that Michael settled refugees from Constantinople in

¹⁶¹ Matschke 2002:465

¹⁶² See above

¹⁶³ See above

Ioannina.¹⁶⁴ In a letter, the Metropolitan of Naupaktos, John Apokaukos, compared Ioannina to Noah's Ark.¹⁶⁵ The Philanthropeni and Strategopouloi were amongst the highest ranking of these exiles from Constantinople. In 1230 at a time of weakness for the rulers of Epiros following the disastrous battle of Klokotniza, the original inhabitants of Ioannina tried to expel the refugees.¹⁶⁶ However, they were unsuccessful and the refugees seem to have flourished. The two families that we know of in Ioannina, the Philanthropeni and the Strategopouloi, both created family monasteries in the 1290s,¹⁶⁷ and remained influential in the city throughout the period of the despotate.¹⁶⁸ The last Philanthropenos recorded in the monastery on the lake island died in 1534. The Strategopouloi are not visible to history between the foundation of their monastery in the late thirteenth century and the death of Esau Buondelmonti in 1411. Symeon Strategopoulos occupied the post of captain (καπετάνος) of the city in 1411 and was instrumental in convincing the population to accept Carlo Tocco as their new lord.¹⁶⁹ Symeon's son Paul also took part in this event¹⁷⁰ and his son-in-law Stephen Vouisavos was made the leader of the troops of the city.¹⁷¹ In 1430 all three men are named in the letter from the Ottoman general Sinan Pasha to the people of Ioannina encouraging the surrender of the city.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁴ See above

¹⁶⁵ Papadopoulos-Kerameus 1889-1891:451-455

¹⁶⁶ Papadopoulos-Kerameus 1889-1891:451-455. Osswald sees this as the first instance of the Ioanniniotai protecting their place in the city, Osswald 2006:98.

¹⁶⁷ See above

¹⁶⁸ There is reference to a Constantine Vatatzes in Ioannina in the 1360s (Chron Ioan:81) however, it is not clear how long his family had been resident in Ioannina. By the 1360s the family was grouped with other high ranking families.

¹⁶⁹ Chron Tocco:320 §4. Nicol 1984:222 suggests that the title captain may be synonymous with or the successor of *prokathemenos*.

¹⁷⁰ Paul and the other sons of the captain were made kephalades. Chron Tocco:338 §17

¹⁷¹ Chron Tocco:332 §14

¹⁷² Amantou 1930:208; Lambros 1908:63

The power and resilience of the aristocracy of Ioannina may have been the result of the settling of Constantinopolitan refugees in the city.¹⁷³ These men certainly had an outlook and upbringing which would have been completely alien to the native inhabitants of Ioannina. The refugees had been born expecting a privileged position at the centre of power. Over the next two centuries the aristocracy in Ioannina, the senate, would time and again assert their independent nature and right to choose their ruler. The Fourth Crusade was not the only event to induce refugees to seek shelter in Ioannina. Albanian expansion into Epiros meant that refugees, including displaced *archontes*, took shelter in Ioannina from the Vagenetia and Thesprotia regions to the west of Ioannina. The *Chronicle of Ioannina* calls these immigrant *archontes* ἄνδρες ἐπισημότεροι and εὖ γεγονότες, the same terms used later in the verse for the elite of Ioannina. Later in the same verse these same *archontes* from outside of Ioannina are called οἱ ἔξωθεν, yet were still included in the council which asked Symeon Uroš to appoint a ruler for the city.¹⁷⁴ Whilst it is clear that while the refugees from the crusader-occupied Balkans were initially disliked and seen as outsiders the continued prominence of the Philanthropenos and Strategopoulos families suggests that at least some of them became integrated with the local elite and in fact rose to the very pinnacle of Ioanniniote society.¹⁷⁵ Other outsiders became important in the city by either gaining the favour of the ruling lord or being invited to the city by him to secure his position.¹⁷⁶ This was certainly the case with the Serbs brought to the city by despot Thomas Preljubović.¹⁷⁷ Despite the strong anti-Serbian opinions of the author of the *Chronicle of Ioannina* a strong pro-Serbian party is likely to have survived Thomas's murder and the reign of Esau

¹⁷³ Vranousis 1984:37

¹⁷⁴ Chron Ioan:79 §8

¹⁷⁵ For the possibility that the refugee *archontes* from Constantinople were originally distinguished by a different term from those native to the city, see above.

¹⁷⁶ This could be an explanation for why Michael I Komnenos Doukas settled refugee grandees in Ioannina. By doing so he created an aristocracy in the city which owed everything to him.

¹⁷⁷ Chron Ioan:83 §12. Thomas is said to have forced Greek widows to marry his Serbian followers.

Buondelmonti. Esau's widow tried to find a new husband in Serbia and although Serbian herself it is unlikely that she would have done so if there had not been a group in the city which was pro-Serbian or actually Serbian. This of course explains Esau's marriage to a Serbian in the first place. Although there is no mention in the *Chronicle of Tocco* of a Serbian group in the city this is easily explained by the fact that the chronicle is highly pro-Italian and pro-Simeon Strategopoulos, Carlo's chief supporter in Ioannina. Esau Buondelmonti is known to have invited at least one Italian to the city.¹⁷⁸ Carlo and Leonardo Tocco each had a retinue which came to the city with them and must have resided in the town. However, at least under Esau and the Tocco the numbers of high level immigrants does not seem to have upset the status quo. Thomas Preljubović was reviled for introducing Serbs into Ioannina in the *Chronicle of Ioannina* but no similar criticism was made of Carlo I in the *Chronicle of Tocco*. Furthermore the Greek Strategopoulos family was dominant at the beginning of the reign of Carlo I and still held its preeminent position at the end of the reign of his successor, Carlo II.

It is likely that the refugees from Constantinople would have been classed with the *archontes* of the city. The *Chronicle of Tocco* frequently mentions the 'great and small archontes' as does the *horismos* of Sinan Pasha. This group dominated the countryside around the city and took most of the major decisions concerning the fate of Ioannina. The *Chronicle of Tocco* records that the senate of Ioannina was composed of the *archontes* and the leading clergy of the city. Furthermore, the *archontes* certainly took a leading role in larger assemblies as can be seen in the episode when Eudokia was overthrown and Carlo I Tocco invited to rule the city. Throughout the history of Ioannina it was the *archontes* who dictated the fate of the city. The singling out of the *kastrenoi* for special treatment in the *chrysobull* of

¹⁷⁸ Chron Tocco:308 §4 This man was Matteo Libardi, an *archon* originally from Florence who was imprisoned following the death of Esau by the *basilissa* Maria.

1319 could be explained by their having a leading role in the surrender of the city to the Byzantine Emperor in 1318.¹⁷⁹ Clearly the leading men of the city did not want to be ruled by Nicholas Orsini, the murderer of the last of the Komneno-Doukai rulers of Ioannina and it is likely that it was the senate which sent an embassy to Sygiannes Palaiologos inviting him to take possession of the city in the name of Andronikos II. We do not know who decided to recognise John Orsini as *kephale* of Ioannina, however, he agreed to respect the rights of the inhabitants, again suggesting that the senate was at the very least not opposed to his assumption of power in the city.¹⁸⁰ Furthermore, when Ioannina was without a protector or ruler following the death of Stefan Dušan and the collapse of his empire it was the *archontes* who sent some of their number to ask the Serbian emperor Symeon to appoint a ruler for their city.¹⁸¹ When Thomas Preljubović was killed in 1384 a *boule* was called by Joseph, brother of the *basilissa* Maria which was made up of the *archontes* of the city and is probably synonymous with the senate recorded elsewhere, but does not seem to be the same as the wider assembly of the inhabitants which is commonly referred to as a *boule*.¹⁸² It was this council which decided upon Esau Buondelmonti as the new husband of Maria.¹⁸³ When Esau Buondelmonti died in 1411 Matthew of Naples wrote to the *archontes* to urge them not to surrender to the Albanians.¹⁸⁴ Initially the *archontes* supported the widow of Esau, the *basilissa* Eudokia,¹⁸⁵ however, she forfeited their good will by trying to kill the captain of the city and confiscating the lands and possessions of a

¹⁷⁹ See above.

¹⁸⁰ MM I:171

¹⁸¹ Chron Ioan:79-80 §8

¹⁸² Chron Ioan:94 §29

¹⁸³ Rather than being a new type of council it could simply be that Joseph summoned the senate, which seems to have usually met in the cathedral, to the palace.

¹⁸⁴ Chron Tocco: 306:1175-7. The author says that this was unlikely to happen as the *archontes* of Ioannina had always hated the Albanians. Chron Tocco: 308:1183-9

¹⁸⁵ Chron Tocco:310 §5

number of *archontes*.¹⁸⁶ When Eudokia decided to find herself a Serbian husband the *archontes* moved to overthrow her.

The *Chronicle of Tocco* mentions a senate made up of *archontes*, and also a *boule* made up of the great and small *archontes*.¹⁸⁷ After the overthrow of Eudokia, Symeon Strategopoulos summoned the great and small *archontes* to a meeting with the Duke the next day in the cathedral. When at the church Duke Carlo met with ‘the *archontes* the cleric, the archbishop and the priests of the city.’¹⁸⁸ Perhaps this group composed the senate mentioned earlier in the text? This meeting is significant as it took place in the citadel which was largely under the control of the *archontes* of the senate and the church. It is difficult to see whether this first acceptance of Carlo took the form of his being received in the heart of the *archontes* ‘region’ of the city, or whether the proposed despot was summoned there for approval. Either way the people in general were excluded from this meeting and it was the senate that took the decision to recognise Carlo as the new ruler of Ioannina. Later this situation was reversed when the *archontes* met with the duke in the palace to demand that the lands confiscated by Eudokia were returned to them. This was granted and Carlo also distributed titles to members of the Strategopoulos family. When Sinan Pasha demanded the surrender of the city to the army of the Ottoman sultan his letter was not addressed to Carlo II, but to the metropolitan, Captain Simeon Strategopoulos, kyr Paul Strategopoulos, the *protostrator* Bouesavon, the *protaseskretis* Stavitzes and the small and great *archontes* of Ioannina, the group which, as we have seen, constituted the senate of the city.¹⁸⁹ All of these examples clearly show that the *archontes* and their senate were the real power in Ioannina. In the case of Carlo II this was even so when

¹⁸⁶ Chron Tocco:308 §3-4

¹⁸⁷ Chron Tocco:314 §9

¹⁸⁸ Chron Tocco:332 §14. This passage presents the possibility that the senate of Ioannina held its meetings in the cathedral.

¹⁸⁹ Lambros 1908:63; Amantou 1930:208

he was resident in the city. The *archontes* of Ioannina chose who ruled them and at times of crisis it was their council which prevailed in the choosing of a new ruler. After the extinction of the Komnenos Doukas family only two of the changes of ruler in Ioannina, the Serbian conquest and the accession of Carlo II Tocco, were not orchestrated by the city's *archontes*.¹⁹⁰

The real strength of the *archontes*, apart from their wealth, was that they were organised and met in a more or less permanent senate, located in their own fortified citadel. There is much to be said for a comparison with the cities of Italy in this case with particular emphasis on the podestà. In northern Italy it had become common from the twelfth century for the communes to begin appointing an outsider who could rule the city with greater impartiality than a local candidate could.¹⁹¹ However, the cities of Lombardy were, by this time, developing into tyrannies ruled by a signoria so perhaps this later stage has more in common with the situation in Ioannina. In both cases the council chose the ruler and in some cases, at least at first, the Italian communal institutions survived and operated alongside the signoria in much the same way that the Ioanniniote senate did.

Only a few of the *archontes* of Ioannina are known by name. Under Carlo I Tocco they are mostly the relations of Simon Strategopoulos,¹⁹² but the earlier *Chronicle of Ioannina* mentions a number of *archontes*. The reason that these men were named was either because of their resistance to, or support for, the despot Thomas Preljubović. In opposition to the despot were Constantine Vatatzes,¹⁹³ Manuel Philanthropenos¹⁹⁴ and Nikephoros Batalas

¹⁹⁰ Including the failed attempt of Nicholas Orsini to capture the city there were ten changes in ruler.

¹⁹¹ Tabacco 1989:223

¹⁹² See above.

¹⁹³ Chron Ioan:81. The aristocratic surname of Vatatzes may suggest that Constantine's family were among the refugees which fled from the crusaders in 1204.

¹⁹⁴ Chron Ioan:90

who were exiled,¹⁹⁵ the *kaballarios* Myrsioannes Amiraes¹⁹⁶ and the *protokathemenos* Constantine¹⁹⁷ who were imprisoned, Bardas who rebelled and held Hagios Donatos (Photiki), as did John Kapsokovades at Arachobitsa, and Elias Klausen punished because Thomas wanted his possessions and money.¹⁹⁸ Thomas' supporters, the villains of the *Chronicle of Ioannina*, were Chouchoulitzas,¹⁹⁹ Koutzotheodoros, Manuel Tziblos, and the *protovestiaros* Michael Apsaras.²⁰⁰ Apsaras in particular belonged to an important Epirote family. Theodore Apsaras was one of the advisors of the *basilissa* Maria following the murder of Thomas, as was a man called Meliglavas.²⁰¹ This list of *archontes* in the *Chronicle of Ioannina* demonstrates the continued use of Byzantine titles by the elite of the city and the power that certain *archontes* had in the countryside if they could take towns or villages and hold them in defiance of the despot in Ioannina.

That individual *archontes* could hold villages in defiance of the despot may have been a symptom of what has been seen as the feudal nature of Ioanniniote society. A number of historians have pointed to growing feudal nature but there is no general agreement as to the cause of this evolution.²⁰² Two possible alternatives have been proposed, that feudalization was the result of Western or Serbian influence, or that it was the natural devolution of imperial power that had been gradually developing in Byzantium for centuries and was not limited to the areas which were ruled by Latins but was related to the physical geography of the region and the looser administrative structure of the despotate.²⁰³ Whilst I agree that there is no proof that the feudal characteristics of Ioanniniote society

¹⁹⁵ Chron Ioan:82

¹⁹⁶ Chron Ioan:81

¹⁹⁷ Chron Ioan:90

¹⁹⁸ Chron Ioan:81-82

¹⁹⁹ Chron Ioan:90

²⁰⁰ Chron Ioan:82

²⁰¹ Chron Ioan:94

²⁰² Magdalino 1989:90; Zachariadou 1990:93; Konstantinos 2000:9

²⁰³ Zachariadou 1990 believes the former, Magdalino 1989 the latter.

were inspired by western models, and in fact the *chrysobull* of 1319 suggests that the a type of feudalization existed long before the first Italian or Serb ruled in Epiros, I do not think that it is possible to see the physical geography of Epiros or the administrative structure of the despotate as factors in social development. The institutional structure of the despotate is unknown. Michael I Komnenos Doukas ruled over a region which had not suffered western conquest and thus had an administrative continuity going back to the Komnenian system. Whether he adapted the existing administration or simply preserved it is a mystery. It is therefore impossible to prove that the administrative structure of the despotate of Epiros was looser than that which had existed before. We do know that the despots collected much the same taxes as the Byzantine emperors.²⁰⁴ Thomas Preljubović also collected taxes, for which he was demonized by the author of the *Chronicle of Ioannina*.²⁰⁵ Esau Buondelmonti cancelled some of these taxes on taking power. With the maintenance of a tax gathering system from 1204 up until at least 1385 but probably up until 1430 and all of the requirements of census compilation and administration that this implies it is likely that the Epirote system operated in Ioannina was at least based on its Byzantine, pre-1204, predecessor. Thus a looser system in operation in Epiros is unlikely to explain the perceived growth of feudalization. Physical geography can exaggerate an existing condition but as it does not change it cannot itself be responsible for change. That much of the land around Ioannina was in the hands of the major families and the Church is amply demonstrated by the *chrysobulls* of 1319 and 1321.²⁰⁶ As has been suggested above the *archontes* who resisted despot Thomas had significant power bases in the hinterland of the city, probably centring on their estates. An example of one of the Italian rulers of Ioannina furthering the development of a 'feudal' character in the region is the gift by Carlo I Tocco

²⁰⁴ MM V:83 The 1319 chrysobull makes particular reference to the taxes collected by the despot.

²⁰⁵ See below, p.138.

²⁰⁶ For a list of the properties contained in these documents see below, pp.134-135.

of a castle to Simeon Strategopoulos.²⁰⁷ However, the process began earlier as at some point between 1319 and 1321 Sgouros the *prokathemenos* of the city, was given hereditary possession of the monastery at Merdeastana.²⁰⁸ How feudal did this situation make Ioannina? The *archontes* of the city clearly possessed much of the land around the city which was worked by their *paroikoi*.²⁰⁹ The grants of land or castles recorded in the sources were all outright possessions but even if the state reserved the right to withdraw property which it had granted, the frequency with which the rulers of Ioannina changed and the role played by the *archontes* in appointing a new ruler could easily have transformed temporary or limited rights over property or income into outright possession.²¹⁰ However, the concentration of much of the productive land in the hands of an elite does not constitute feudalisation. There is no evidence of the *archontes* of Ioannina usurping the legal or judicial rights of the despot either within the city or on their lands or over the *paroikoi* who worked them. The organised nature of the aristocracy of Ioannina, which managed to assert itself during any period of crisis in the city, coupled with the agricultural nature of the economy²¹¹ gave the *archontes* a great amount of wealth and power but this should not be confused with the legally defined system of feudal rights, privileges and obligations that existed in much of western Europe.

The Jewish community of Ioannina was mentioned in the 1319 *chrysobull*. In the relevant clause the Jews are stated to possess the same rights as the other inhabitants of the city.²¹² Since the word used is *epoikoi* not *topikoi* it can be supposed that the Jews of

²⁰⁷ Chron Tocco:338 §17

²⁰⁸ MM V:86

²⁰⁹ Mentioned in the 1319 chrysobull. MM V:79.32 and 83.21

²¹⁰ Unfortunately there is no record of the extent of the estates of the *archontes* after the *chrysobull* of 1319. It seems likely that with the frequent changes of ruler and dynasty in particular that the aristocracy would become more and more powerful, their position being consolidated with each change of lord.

²¹¹ See below, *Trade, Production and Financial Privileges: The Economy in Late Medieval Ioannina and its Hinterland*.

²¹² MM V:83.33-35

Ioannina lived inside, or at least immediately outside of the city itself.²¹³ Vranousis has suggested that the Jewish community was small and therefore the remainder of the inhabitants were not concerned that they had been given privileges.²¹⁴ However, the Jewish inhabitants of Ioannina must have been numerous and organized enough by 1319 to request inclusion in the *chrysobull* of 1319, or at the very least important enough to be recognized by the emperor without their requesting such recognition.

Trade, Production and Financial Privileges: The Economy in Late Medieval Ioannina and its Hinterland

The economy of Ioannina has received some small comment in general works on the Byzantine economy. Zachariadou stated that the exemption from the *kommerkion* given to Ioannina in 1319 must signify that the city had a large number of merchants.²¹⁵ This argument seems directly related to that of Vranousis who believed that as the clause exempting Ioanniniotai from the *kommerkion* mentioned Constantinople, this proved that merchants from the city had reached the Byzantine capital, trading over the land and the seas around the Balkans.²¹⁶ Vranousis saw the *kastrenoi* as something akin to the merchant aristocracy of Venice and the Italian city states.²¹⁷ Most recently Laiou and Morriison, with reference to the arguments of Zachariadou, stated that there was a significant mercantile class in Ioannina trading in agricultural products.²¹⁸ Matschke has taken a different approach suggesting that although the Ioanniniotai had received an exemption from the

²¹³ See above for the identification of *topikoi* as inhabitants of the region around Ioannina, not the city itself. See above for the difficulty of identifying the existence of extramural suburbs at Ioannina. It is impossible to state with certainty exactly where the Jewish population lived.

²¹⁴ Vranousis 1986:36

²¹⁵ Zachariadou 1990:93

²¹⁶ Vranousis 1986:31

²¹⁷ Vranousis 1986:36. Further saying that the developed level of urban society discernable in Italy and Ioannina was what distinguished these places from feudal Western Europe.

²¹⁸ Laiou and Morriison 2007:206

kommerkion, a situation which he compares to that in Monemvasia, the merchants from the city did not take advantage of it. It has been suggested that the reason that the merchants of Ioannina did not use their exemption to trade in the Byzantine Empire was because their economic outlook was to the west, not to the east. In support of this Matschke lists three documents that give evidence of Ioanniniote trade with the west, namely Venice and Ragusa.²¹⁹

The above arguments, however, are incomplete. The exemption from the *kommerkion* alone does not prove extensive trade. An exemption from the *kommerkion* not only benefitted the merchants of a city, but anyone who was engaged in commercial activity. This included the *archontes* who sold the surplus agricultural produce from their estates in the markets of Ioannina. When considered in conjunction with the other tax exemptions which were requested by the Ioanniniotai, which are all linked to agricultural production or the ownership of land, it seems likely that the particular circumstance which the Ioanniniotai had in mind when they requested an exemption from the *kommerkion* was the sale of the produce of the hinterland in the city's markets. This conclusion is supported by comparing the overwhelmingly agricultural exemptions requested by the Ioanniniotai with the trade focused tax exemptions granted to the Monemvasiots. Thus, the argument that a large merchant community from Ioannina existed, trading as far as Constantinople, is without support.²²⁰ The documents cited by Matschke do not prove that Ioanniniote merchants travelled outside of their own city or in fact even existed, and they further undermine the view of Vranousis, Zachariadou, Laiou and Morrisson. Nor do they prove

²¹⁹ Matschke 2002:797. I do not believe that the parallel with Monemvasia is particularly helpful when one compares the whole list of tax exemptions that the two cities were granted. The view that the merchants of Ioannina did not take advantage of their exemption from the *kommerkion* was also expressed by Nicol. Nicol 1984:226

²²⁰ Again this is unlike the situation in Monemvasia where we have independent accounts of Monemvasiots in other cities, mentioned in the *chrysobulls* for the city.

that other merchants ever went to Ioannina. Two of these documents are Ragusan, one from 1423 authorising merchants from Ragusa to purchase grain from the despot of Arta, and one from 1436 when a trading company was formed to trade with Ioannina and Arta.²²¹ The document of 1423 was actually the first of three dealing with this particular purchase of grain. In the first (the document cited by Matschke) Carlo I Tocco was referred to as the despot of Arta, in the second as the lord and despot of Ioannina and in the third as the despot of Romania.²²² Obviously no conclusions about the origins of the grain can be drawn from the title used by the Ragusans to describe Carlo I. However, it seems likely from the pattern of grain purchases by Ragusa from Epiros that Arta was the destination of these merchants. Either way there is no mention of Ioanniniote merchants. The document concerning the trading company in 1436 had a base in Arta but not in Ioannina. Arta was the main base for merchants; no one from Ioannina was mentioned. The third document cited by Matschke is Venetian and dated to 1444, fourteen years after the fall of Ioannina to the Ottomans.²²³ This document states that possession of Ioannina, Valona and Argyrokatron would be profitable for the Venetians because of the great value of the trade in grain and salt in these cities. Again no merchants from Ioannina were mentioned. Nicol has pointed out that a number of times when Ioannina is mentioned (Janina in the document) that the city which is meant is Kanina not Ioannina.²²⁴ The only two merchants from Ioannina which are mentioned are Spanos Stamates and Stephen Lykoudas. These men are not mentioned in relation to trade, but as the receivers of stolen property.²²⁵ Some level of trade must have taken place at Ioannina if only to allow for the redistribution of the surplus produced on the estates of the *kastroi* and the Church.

²²¹ Krekić *Dubrovnik* no.852

²²² Krekić *Dubrovnik* nos.683 (22 June 1423), 684 (5-14 October 1423), 687 (23 February 1424)

²²³ Thiriet *Regestes* III:no.115

²²⁴ Nicol 1984:207. Thiriet *Regestes* III:nos. 2623, 2659, 2670 all say Ioannina when they mean Kanina. This is particularly obvious when one considers that at least one of these documents seems to be speaking of a port.

²²⁵ MM III:109

However, the lack of evidence for this trade suggests that it operated on a small scale with much of the produce being consumed locally rather than entering the Adriatic trade network. The few merchants which Ioannina possessed were unimportant to the city's economy. At best they had a small part in the carrying trade taking the produce of the city's hinterland to the ports of Epiros. The only inhabitants of Ioannina to be mentioned in the Ragusan documents are a domestic servant and a thief, both living in Ragusa.²²⁶ While this does prove that at least two Ioanniniotai travelled as far as Ragusa it does not reveal any information about trade contacts between the city and Ioannina.

From the above discussion of the available sources the image of the economy of late medieval Ioannina that emerges is that of agricultural production and exploitation. Although there are Greeks with no specific origin listed in these records it would be pure speculation to suggest that they came from Ioannina. Furthermore, there is no record of western merchants actually travelling to Ioannina or buying goods specifically from Ioannina.²²⁷ There is mention in the *chrysobull* of 1321 of an annual fair held in honour of St. Michael.²²⁸ This fair lasted for fifteen days from the 26th October, feast day of St. Demetrios until the day of the Archangels, the 8th November.²²⁹ None of the mercantile documents of the fourteenth and fifteenth century from Venice and Ragusa mention the fair. It could be argued that even this fair highlights the agricultural nature of the Ioanniniote economy, being timed to coincide with the period after the harvest. Unfortunately we do not know whether the fair of the Archangel Michael attracted merchants from beyond the hinterland of Ioannina or whether it was intended as a local fair for the distribution of the harvest before the onset of winter. Overall the evidence

²²⁶ Krekić *Dubrovník* nos.124, 758

²²⁷ However, with respect to goods, particularly grain, the produce of the hinterland of Ioannina could have been labelled in a more generic way.

²²⁸ MM V:85.27. For the fairs of Epiros see Asdracha 1982.

²²⁹ MM V:86.1-2. Half of the income from this fair went to the Church of Ioannina and half to the clergy.

points to Ioannina being a regional distribution centre. Although roads existed communications between Ioannina and the coast were not easy as the city is located at some distance from the sea. The condition of the roads in the late middle ages is not known but the difficulty of moving bulk goods, such as grain by land was often prohibitively expensive. Therefore it is unlikely that the road connection to the coast played a significant role in the economy of the city.

The *archontes* within the city and the church owned vast estates in the hinterland.²³⁰ The *kastrenoi* were granted property in twenty four villages, all of which are located within 20km of the city, by Syrgiannes Palaiologos and Andronikos II. These villages formed two groups, those which had been traditionally associated with Ioannina and new villages added to the territory by Syrgiannes Palaiologos. The first group²³¹ consisted of Botibista,²³² Zelochohista,²³³ Pseada,²³⁴ Sandobitza,²³⁵ Adrichobista,²³⁶ Gloxiani,²³⁷ Gardiki,²³⁸ Leausista,²³⁹ Tristianikos,²⁴⁰ Treabobidista,²⁴¹ Nobosele,²⁴² and Ardomista.²⁴³ The new

²³⁰ MM V:82-3 for the estates of the *archontes*, 84-6 for the estates of the Church. The hinterland of Ioannina will be taken as the area directly dependent on the city, in which the urban elite possessed estates and which relied upon the city as a centre for consumption and distribution of its goods. During much of the late medieval period Ioannina was also the capital of a despotate. This state which stretched as far south as the Peloponnese at one point and to the Ionian Islands and even into Thessaly at others cannot be considered the hinterland of the city, thus this section concerns the territory dependent on the city itself, not the state of Ioannina. Of course these documents do paint an incomplete and misleading picture of the hinterland of Ioannina. Syrgiannes Palaiologos and Andronikos II had accepted the surrender of Ioannina but it is not clear how far to the south of the city the lands governed by Byzantium extended. Thus it is likely that there were villages and towns still within the despotate which formed part of the hinterland of Ioannina but which go unrecorded in the sources.

²³¹ MMV:82.35, 83.1-4

²³² Location unknown.

²³³ TIB 3:281

²³⁴ Location unknown.

²³⁵ TIB 3:254

²³⁶ Location unknown.

²³⁷ Location unknown.

²³⁸ TIB 3:154

²³⁹ TIB 3:192

²⁴⁰ TIB 3:273-4

²⁴¹ Location unknown.

²⁴² Location unknown.

²⁴³ TIB 3:111

villages granted by Syrgiannes Palaiologos²⁴⁴ were Sipka,²⁴⁵ Radotobe,²⁴⁶ Dreanobon,²⁴⁷ Phreastona,²⁴⁸ Lipitza,²⁴⁹ Kopantzin,²⁵⁰ Strome,²⁵¹ Dreabopsa,²⁵² Psathoi,²⁵³ Kopane,²⁵⁴ Krechobon,²⁵⁵ and a field called Skoupitza in Vagenetia.²⁵⁶ This property was to be held free from taxes and obligations to the state,²⁵⁷ the only restriction being that a *kastrenos* could only sell the land to another *kastrenos*.²⁵⁸ In the same document the Church of Ioannina had its possessions confirmed by the emperor, these included villages, vineyards, fields, mills and *paroikoi*.²⁵⁹ The *chrysobull* of 1321 granted possession of or rights over part of or the whole or the inhabitants of a further twenty two villages, two fishponds and five mills.²⁶⁰ These places are the villages of Paroikion, Poblista, Aroula, Goplista, Repsista, Beltzista, Lozetzi, Sostrouni and the mountain of Moutzoukelos, the villages of Biliani, Serbianon, Phreastanon, Ioanista, Mosmedena, Baltriston, Lakkos, kourbeta, Phonista, Elis, Rasobista and Soucha.²⁶¹ The income and produce of these estates had the potential to make their owners virtually self-sufficient. It can be argued that landlords collected the income from their estates in a mixture of cash and kind if we employ the pattern presented in the *chrysobull* of 1321 for all estates. The clergy of Ioannina took their income from the church lands in 300 *modioi* of mixed wheat and barley, a cask of wine and fifty hyperpyra

²⁴⁴ MM V:83.6-12

²⁴⁵ Location unknown.

²⁴⁶ TIB 3:248

²⁴⁷ Location unknown.

²⁴⁸ TIB 3:237-8

²⁴⁹ Location unknown.

²⁵⁰ Location unknown.

²⁵¹ Location unknown.

²⁵² TIB 3:145-6

²⁵³ Location unknown.

²⁵⁴ TIB 3:184

²⁵⁵ Location unknown.

²⁵⁶ TIB 3:260

²⁵⁷ MM V:83.13-15

²⁵⁸ MM V:83.15-20

²⁵⁹ MM V:79.30-32. No specific villages were named.

²⁶⁰ MM V:84-87

²⁶¹ MM V:84-7

trikephala.²⁶² In addition to lands and rights over moneys, the great landowners of Ioannina, including the Church also possessed numerous *paroikoi*. The 1319 *chrysobull* includes a clause to protect the ownership of *paroikoi* and prevent one *kastrenos* from taking another's *paroikos* as his own.²⁶³ Such a clause implies that manpower was important to the landowners of Ioannina and may have been in short supply.²⁶⁴

It has been argued before that when specific taxes are listed in a *chrysobull* which has already granted a blanket exemption that these individual taxes represent the real interests of the group to which the *chrysobull* was granted.²⁶⁵ The 1319 *chrysobull* of Ioannina supports this argument and the taxes listed emphasise the agricultural nature of the Ioanniniote economy. The specific tax exemptions given to the city were exemption from the *biologion*, (a tax on livestock), the *kapnologion*, (perhaps related to the hearth tax) the *nomistron*, (a tax on pasture) the *limnaion pakton*, (a tax on fishing in lakes) the *zeugologion*, (a tax paid by *paroikoi* who possessed a pair of oxen)²⁶⁶ the *orike*, (a tax on the exploitation of forests)²⁶⁷ the *melissoennomion* (a tax on bee keeping) and the *choirodekatia*, (a tax on keeping pigs).²⁶⁸

Another exemption granted in 1318 was that from the *mitaton*. Traditionally this had been

²⁶² MM V:86.2-7 The *trikephala* was another name for the silver aspron trachy which at this point was the second highest denomination struck by the Byzantines after the gold hyperpyron. Laiou has researched the various occurrences of the *trikephala* in the sources pertaining to the early despotate of Epiros. Laiou 2001:208-209. Although the documentary sources could refer to either the hyperpyron or an electrum/silver coin Laiou demonstrated that, in all of the examples that have survived, that the *trikephala* were not gold coins. Initially the electrum *trikephala* were valued at one-third of an hyperpyron (in the late eleventh century). By the time of Manuel I (1143-1181) the *trikephala* were still 21 percent gold. However, by the early thirteenth century the value of the *trikephala* had declined to one-tenth or one-eleventh of the hyperpyron.

²⁶³ MM V:83.20-21

²⁶⁴ When the British Naval Intelligence Geographical Handbooks were produced Epiros was a land with poor roads, no railways or industrialisation and without modern agricultural techniques. As a result of these conclusions, it is argued that the observations contained in the Handbooks can, with caution, contribute to a discussion of late Medieval Ioannina. Although the city of Ioannina itself, with a population in 1938 of 20,000, was large and this was the result of the fertility of the basin in which the city was located the economy of the region was predominantly centred on the rearing of animals, cereal production being a definite second place (Greece III:25). There was some fruit and vine cultivation but the region was sparsely populated and as such it is unlikely that there was a significant surplus; there was just enough to allow Ioannina itself to flourish (Greece III:27).

²⁶⁵ See Monemvasia chapter.

²⁶⁶ Oikonomides 2002:998

²⁶⁷ Oikonomides 2002:1004

²⁶⁸ MM V:83.23-24

the obligation to provide winter quarters for mercenaries and state officials.²⁶⁹ However, the text of this *chrysobull* led Maksimović to conclude that by the fourteenth century it had transformed into a requirement to sell the local government grain at a reduced price.²⁷⁰ Unlike the exemptions listed for Monemvasia, which were aimed at mercantile activity, these taxes are purely agricultural.²⁷¹ From their location in the *chrysobull*, immediately following the clauses concerning the estates of the *kastrenoi*, it could be argued that these exemptions applied only to this particular group. However, the *zeugologion* is a tax more usually associated with *paroikoi*. This suggests that the privileges granted in the *chrysobull* were for all Ioanniniotai, but would have benefited the *archontes* more than anyone else because of the extent of land and livestock which they owned.

The Church was exempted from five of the same taxes recorded in 1318 in the *chrysobull* of 1330 issued by John Orsini.²⁷² A new addition in this document was exemption from the *sitarkia*, the requisitioning of grain for the use of the garrison of a fortress.²⁷³ That these privileges were specifically requested by the people of Ioannina and were therefore the exemptions from which they felt they would derive the greatest profit is suggested by the circumstances in which they were granted. The 1319 *chrysobull* states that the tax exemptions which it includes were being renewed by Andronikos II but had originally been granted by Syrgiannes Palaiologos when Ioannina submitted to the empire.²⁷⁴ This event offered a perfect opportunity to the people of the city to make demands from Syrgiannes, after all they were not a conquered foe, nor had they been surrendered to the empire in a peace treaty as had Monemvasia or betrayed their previous rulers at the approach of a

²⁶⁹ Oikonomides 2002:1037

²⁷⁰ Maksimović 1988:157-60

²⁷¹ As has been argued above exemption from the *kommerkion*, although not an agricultural tax, in this instance was likely to have been requested to benefit landowners rather than merchants.

²⁷² These were the *nomistron*, the *choirodekatia*, the *kapnologion*, the *orike* and the *melissoennomion*, all agricultural taxes.

²⁷³ Oikonomides 2002:1037

²⁷⁴ MM V:83.21-23

Byzantine army as had the inhabitants of Thessalonike in 1246. So with this opportunity the Ioanniniotai asked for exemption from eight taxes which would benefit those involved in agriculture. When John Orsini issued a *chrysobull* ²⁷⁵ in 1330 for the Metropolis of Ioannina, the Ioanniniotai again requested privileges to benefit their agricultural income. In this document John listed the specific taxes from which the lands of the Church were to be exempted. These taxes had previously been mentioned in the *chrysobull* of 1319: the *nomistron*, the *choirodekatia*, the *kapnologion*, the *orike*, the *melissoennomion* and the *sitarkeia*. This document emphasises the Ioanniniote landowners desire to protect their agricultural estates, and agricultural produce was at the centre of the economy of Ioannina. Thomas Preljubović became unpopular after he placed extra taxes on wine, corn, meat, cheese, fish and vegetables and made the sale of these goods a state monopoly.²⁷⁶ Thomas was aiming to make money to pay for the defence of Ioannina, that he chose these goods to tax and monopolise supports the supposition that the economy of the city was mainly agricultural. Vineyards were mentioned by John Apokaukos and quite frequently in the *Chronicle of Tocco*, usually in the context of their being ransacked or burned by Albanians attacking the city. Yet we cannot be sure who owned these vineyards.²⁷⁷ Laiou has demonstrated that in Macedonia many peasants owned vineyards.²⁷⁸ The *Chronicle of Tocco* mentions the severe disruption caused to the harvest and the hardship that this caused to the region when the threat of Ottoman attack scared the farmers from the fields for a prolonged period of time.²⁷⁹ Even so, large areas must have been given over to pasture, particularly in the

²⁷⁵ As a despot and not an emperor he should not have done so. Nicol says that “It was an extraordinary advertisement for the pretensions to Byzantine imperial authority of an Italian count who made himself a big fish in a small pond.” Nicol 1984:96. The manuscript itself does not survive and the only account of its contents is a summary by I. A. Romanos, Romanos 1895:132

²⁷⁶ Chron Ioan:83

²⁷⁷ Chron Tocco:312 §8

²⁷⁸ Laiou 1977

²⁷⁹ Chron Tocco:460 §5. Carlo I sent his brother Leonardo with troops to secure the countryside and to protect the harvest gatherers.

mountain lands and there was ample game for hunting. The *Chronicle of Tocco* records that the despot Carlo I and his brother Leonardo hunted deer, wild boar, foxes, hares, bears, crane, partridges, pheasants, quail and many other types of birds.²⁸⁰ Kantakouzenos describes the plunder from the expedition of Andronikos III to Epiros in 1337/8. In his account he lists the livestock taken by the emperor from the inhabitants of Epiros during the campaign as 300,000 oxen, 5,000 horses and 1,200,000 sheep.²⁸¹ These huge numbers, while exaggerated, do suggest that animal husbandry was an important occupation in fourteenth-century Epiros.²⁸² Lake Ioannina was a rich source of fish.

Conclusions about the economy of Ioannina can be drawn from a study of the numismatic evidence relating to the city. Nicol, working from textual sources, has proposed that the currency circulating in Ioannina up until c.1318 was that of the Byzantine emperors.²⁸³ At some time after 1318 Byzantine coinage was supplanted by that of Venice.²⁸⁴ In support of this view Nicol shows that the textual sources record that hyperpyra were used to pay the dowry of Thamar, who married Philip of Taranto, and Anna Palaiologina's bribe of Guy of Athens²⁸⁵ and the settlement of a debt with Venice in 1312.²⁸⁶ Later texts describe the use of florins to pay the ransom of Esau Buondelmonti,²⁸⁷ and florins were given out by Carlo I Tocco to mark his entry to the city.²⁸⁸ Nicol points out that although the money for the ransom of Esau came from Florence not Ioannina, it

²⁸⁰ Chron Tocco:476 §7. Carlo and Leonardo usually preferred to hunt near Arta, but the chronicler, ever the proud Ioanniniote emphasised that the land around Ioannina was just as good for hunting as that around Arta. Arta simply had better weather in the winter.

²⁸¹ Kantakouzenos I:497-98

²⁸² Andronikos III did not attack Ioannina itself as the city was already under his control, at least nominally. However, the account is important for what it suggests about the importance of animal husbandry in Epiros, presumably including Ioannina and its hinterland.

²⁸³ Nicol 1984:223

²⁸⁴ Nicol 1984:224

²⁸⁵ Both recorded in the *Chronicle of the Morea*.

²⁸⁶ Nicol 1984:223; Thiriet *Regestes* I:no.24

²⁸⁷ Chron Ioann:91.29. Florins and ducats were interchangeable and either coin could have been used.

²⁸⁸ Chron Tocco:338 §17. As the *Chronicle of Tocco* was written to aggrandise Carlo I Tocco the author's claim that the duke distributed gold coins could have been part of this agenda rather than an accurate record of the actual coins given out by Carlo.

would hardly have been accepted by his captors unless it was valid locally.²⁸⁹ This point would seem to be supported by the description of the distribution of florins in the *Chronicle of Tocco*.²⁹⁰ The main problem with the use of these texts to ascertain the circulating medium in Ioannina at this time is that the hyperpyron was a unit of account in Epiros which bore no relation to the physical coin itself, or to the hyperpyron of account used by the imperial government in Constantinople.²⁹¹ Thus although the unit of account bore a Byzantine name this does not mean that the coins themselves were Byzantine or that the Epirote hyperpyron of account was in any way valued according to an existing, circulating Byzantine currency. Galani-Krikou, in a survey of coin finds in Epiros, on the other hand suggests that western currencies circulated in Epiros alongside of and for longer than that of Byzantium, with Italian influence becoming stronger as more of Epiros and the Ionian Islands passed under Italian rule.²⁹² However, coins and influence do not go hand in hand, for example there is no great influx of Byzantine coinage to Epiros during the decades of Imperial rule in the fourteenth century. I believe that both the textual evidence and the coins suggest that Venetian coins, supplemented by a large number of Frankish Greek and a very small number of Byzantine coins made up the majority of the circulating medium in Epiros, at least until the mid-fourteenth century, at which point the dominance of the Venetian currency began to become almost complete. In both periods this suggests that Ioannina was integrated into the Frankish/Venetian system which to some extent united much of Greece and the Aegean islands and Crete. The acceptance of this system in Epiros had little to do with the rule of Italians in the area as it predates this by well over a century.

²⁸⁹ Nicol 1984:225. It is difficult to see how a gold coin like the florin would not be accepted, whether they were in circulation or not.

²⁹⁰ As mentioned earlier these coins could easily have actually been the equivalent ducat.

²⁹¹ See Introduction.

²⁹² Galani-Krikou 1990:129-130. No evidence of this is cited except for the number of Italian and Frankish coins found in Epiros and Ioannina itself is not considered independently, so Nicol is not directly contradicted.

The majority of the published coin material from Ioannina is not Byzantine or Epirote in origin, but western.²⁹³ Only two Byzantine stray finds from Ioannina have been published, one a single find from the Byzantine bath complex and the other found during the 1983 excavations in Its Kale.²⁹⁴ Both coins are Thessalonican trachea, one of John III Vatatzes²⁹⁵ and one of Michael VIII Palaiologos.²⁹⁶ A number of hoards have been found in and close to Ioannina. The Ioannina, 1821 hoard consists of 441 grossi dating from 1205-1268.²⁹⁷ The Lake Ioannina hoard, discovered in 1965, contains 134 grossi dating from 1205-1339, and two ducats dating from 1312-1339 and one florin.²⁹⁸ A hoard of Frankish coins found on the island in Lake Ioannina contains 58 deniers tournois, 31 from the Principality of Achaia, 21 from the Theban mint of the Duchy of Athens, two from Naupaktos and two unidentified coins.²⁹⁹ Another hoard of Frankish coins was found in 1986 and contains 309 deniers tournois.³⁰⁰ Two hoards have been found which contain Byzantine coins, one discovered in 1983 included six billon trachea of John III Vatatzes of Thessalonike and the other contained a mixture of Byzantine billon trachea of a number of

²⁹³ Oikonomidou et al. 1990; Galani-Krikou 1990

²⁹⁴ Oikonomidou et al. 1990:101

²⁹⁵ Oikonomidou et al. 1990:119

²⁹⁶ Oikonomidou et al. 1990:114.

²⁹⁷ Galani-Krikou 1990:141. The hoard includes 27 grossi of Pietro Ziani (1205-1229), 98 grossi of Jacopo Tiepolo (1229-1249), 41 grossi of Martino Morosini (1249-1253) and 275 grossi of Ranieri Zeno (1253-1268)

²⁹⁸ Galani-Krikou 1990:145. The hoard consists of 1 grosso of Pietro Ziani (1205-1229), 2 grossi of Jacopo Tiepolo (1229-1249), 31 grossi of Ranierir Zeno (1253-1268), 20 grossi of Lorenzo Tiepolo (1268-1275), 14 grossi of Jacopo Contarini (1275-1280), 9 grossi of Giovanni Dandolo (1280-1289), 26 grossi of Pietro Gradenigo (1289-1311), 1 grosso of Mario Zorzi (1311-1312), 16 grossi of Giovanni Soranzo (1312-1318), 13 grossi of Francesco Dandolo (1329-1339), 1 ducat of Giovanni Soranzo (1312-1328) and 1 ducat of Francesco Dandolo (1329-1339) and 1 florin of Vanni Bandini (1332).

²⁹⁹ Galani-Krikou 1990:143-4. The hoard includes deniers tournois from Achaia: Guillaume de Villehardouin (1245-1278), 1; Charles I d'Anjou (1278-1285), 1; Charles II d'Anjou (1285-1289), 1; Florent de Hainaut (1239-1297), 4; Isabelle de Villehardouin (1297-1301), 3; Philippe de Savoie (1301-1307), 5; Philippe de Tarante (1307-1313), 10; Ferdinand de Majorque (1315-1316), 1; Mahaut de Hainaut (1316-1318), 5; Jean de Gravina (1318-1333), 1: from Thebes: Guillaume I de la Roche (1280-1287), 10; Guy II de la Roche (1287-1308), 11: from Naupaktos: Philippe de Tarente (1294-1313), 2 and two unidentified deniers tournois.

³⁰⁰ Baker 2002:31. The hoard contains 146 deniers tournois from Achaia: 10 of Guillaume de Villehardouin (1245-1278), 15 of Charles I or II of Anjou (1278-1285, 1285-1289), 12 of Florent de Hainaut (1239-1297), 22 of Isabelle de Villehardouin (1297-1301), 41 of Philippe de Savoie (1301-1307), 39 of Philip of Taranto (1307-1313), 1 of Louis of Burgundy and 6 of Mahaut de Hainaut (1316-1318); 105 deniers tournois of the Duchy of Athens; 55 of Philip of Taranto as despot of Romania at Naupaktos; 1 of John II Angelos of Thessaly; 1 French tournois and a counterfeit.

rulers.³⁰¹ The first of these two hoards, being of one type of John III suggests that they were brought into Epiros as part of a military expedition. After the Nicaean conquest of Thessalonike the two realms shared a border which was often the scene of violence and Ioannina was not located far from the boundary between the two realms. The second of these two hoards was almost certainly hidden in during the Nicaean invasion of Epiros which followed the battle of Pelagonia in 1259. It demonstrates that there was some presence of Byzantine billon coinage in Epiros.³⁰² However when weighed against the evidence of western coin types it seems like the Byzantine coinage was probably minimal or at least in the minority at this point.

The presence of coins from Venice and Frankish Greece clearly shows that Ioannina had contact with the Italian trade networks of the Adriatic. However, when it is considered that there are no records of trade it seems unlikely that merchants brought these coins to the city. What does seem possible is that the currency travelling through the Adriatic had been the medium of exchange in Ioannina since the thirteenth century. It would not be surprising that coinage would concentrate in Ioannina, one of the two major urban centres of the despotate and frequent residence of the despot, in this period. The hoards could represent a long process of transmission from the Adriatic coast to Ioannina or revenue collected together or distributed in the city by the government or carried by the armies which travelled across the region throughout the late medieval period. It seems that Ioannina occupied a place not only on the physical border between the eastern and western Balkans but a monetary border as well. Venetian, Byzantine and Frankish currency

³⁰¹ Oikonomidou et al. 1990:119; The latter hoard contained billon trachea of the empire pre-1204, Bulgarian copies, coins of Theodore I Laskaris from the Magnesia mint, billon trachea of Theodore Komnenos Doukas and John Komnenos Doukas of Thessalonike and of Theodore II Laskaris of Thessalonike as well as from the reign of Michael VIII and Ivan II Asen. Baker 2002:83-4.

³⁰² Touratsoglou 2001 suggests that simultaneous concealment of a number of hoards throughout Epiros is the result of the friction between the despotate and Byzantium after the latter's promulgation of the Union of Lyon in 1274.

circulated in the city, with the emphasis almost certainly being placed on that of the Venetian Republic and the Frankish states in Greece. One piece of textual evidence supports my theory that the coinage circulating in Ioannina was not primarily Byzantine in 1318 and that is the *chrysobull* of 1319. There is a clause in this document which asks the emperor to guarantee that the coinage used in Ioannina would continue to be that which had circulated before the return of the Byzantine authorities.³⁰³ If the coinage referred to had been Byzantine this would be a redundant clause as the emperor would certainly have been in favour of his own coins being used in his own territory. However, if the coinage used in Ioannina before 1318 was largely Italian and Frankish Andronikos II and his officials would have tried to promote the official imperial currency after the return of the city to Byzantium. That the people of Ioannina did not want this suggests that the economic outlook of the city remained the Adriatic and Venice even as the city aligned itself politically with Byzantium.³⁰⁴ Touratsoglou and Baker have noted how Epiros in general was incorporated in the Venetian system based on the grossi at an early date in the history of this coin.³⁰⁵ The Venetians traded in Epiros from an early date and it seems likely that even before the fourth crusade that Epiros was becoming ever more entwined in a system which was centred on Venice not on Constantinople. It is certainly no accident that although Byzantium recovered Ioannina in the early fourteenth century that no Byzantine coins dating from after the reign of Michael VIII have been found in or near to Ioannina. By this time with the increased circulation and output of grossi and the opening of the

³⁰³ MM V:82.20-21. Nicol 1984:85 presents the view that this clause refers to actual currency, not monies of account. However, he goes on to state that he believes the coins were those of the Byzantine Empire, not Frankish Greece and the Venetian Republic.

³⁰⁴ The *chrysobull* of 1321 does mention Byzantine coins when discussing the income that the clergy derived from the lands granted to them by Andronikos II. The clergy could take 50 trikephala. MM V:86.7. While this could be taken as supporting the argument put forward by Nicol, it must be remembered that it is unlikely that the Byzantine government would issue a document in which it used foreign units of currency. Trikephala was not used as a value for a non-specific payment in kind as this clause already contains the amount of wheat, barley and wine to be distributed to the clergy. However, just because cash was meant does not mean that it had to originate in a Byzantine mint.

³⁰⁵ Touratsoglou and Baker 2002:220. Grossi were first struck in 1194.

denier tournois mints in southern Greece Ioannina had become part of a monetary system linking the entire of southern Greece³⁰⁶ which owed nothing to Byzantium.

What is odd is the lack of numismatic evidence from the city following c.1340. There is every reason to suppose that the oncoming Serbian invasion may have caused the concealment of at least one of the hoards but what happened after the Serbian conquest? The Serbians struck their own version of the grosso from 1276 but none of these have been found in Ioannina. Particularly strange is that there have been no finds of the coinage of the Italian lords from either the mint of Arta or linked to the possessions of the Tocco family. The deniers tournois of John Orsini have been found at locations the south and north of Ioannina so it is highly unlikely that they did not circulate in the city.³⁰⁷ As with the later Venetian soldino and tornesello it seems likely that these coins did reach Ioannina and the explanation seems to be that the numismatic evidence is incomplete. In all likelihood the soldino and tornesello came to replace the grosso and denier tournois in Ioannina in the period following the Serbian domination of the city.

The coin evidence from Ioannina does not contradict the view that the economy of Ioannina was primarily concerned with the collection, consumption and distribution of the agricultural produce of its own hinterland. Rather than pointing to an active trade network the foreign currency circulating in Ioannina demonstrates the extent to which Italian coinage dominated exchange within the despotate. It has been argued above that rather than being brought to the city by merchants trading with Ioannina, the Venetian and Frankish coinage entered the city through a mixture of government action, such as tax

³⁰⁶ Demonstrated by the presence in both hoards of deniers tournois from multiple locations in southern Greece,

³⁰⁷ A single coin has been found at Ohrid and a number are included in the Salonica Hoard. See Arta and Thessalonike chapters below.

collection or military activities, and gradual dispersal from the Adriatic coastal zone to the inland areas.

Civil, Judicial and Military Privileges of Ioannina

When compared to other cities for which grants of privileges have survived Ioannina has a large number of civil, judicial and military privileges. The Ioanniniotai were granted three military privileges, one concerning service in the army outside of the city, one about the garrisoning of the city and the final in reference to the support of the army in Ioannina. Andronikos II stated that no *kastrenos* was to be forced to perform military service outside of the city unless he was enrolled in the *allagia* and held an *oikonomia*.³⁰⁸ Bartusis has seen this as limiting military service to those who held a *pronoia* grant from the emperor.³⁰⁹ The second military privilege in the 1319 *chrysobull* states that *topikoi* must not be forced to undertake garrison duty unless there is a pressing need, by implication a siege or other emergency.³¹⁰ The clause also states that there was already a group which performed the function of a town watch. This clause could be seen to be protecting the occupation of a group of Ioanniniotai or perhaps ensuring that the guard duty of the city remained in the hands of those who lived there, and could be trusted, as opposed to those forced to take temporary shelter in the city. *Kastrenoi* were also exempted from the requirement to have troops billeted upon them without their permission.³¹¹ That this clause

³⁰⁸ MM V:81.19-20

³⁰⁹ Bartusis 1992:165

³¹⁰ MM V:83.30-33 Bartusis has suggested that 'Ioannina had evidently developed a municipal organisation whereby some of the inhabitants undertook guard duty as an occupation.' Bartusis 1992:310. Thus this privilege was intended to protect the livelihood of a group of the inhabitants of Ioannina, not to guard those from outside of the city against enforced service in the city watch.

³¹¹ MM V:81.27-28

specifically mentions *kastrenoi* and not *epoikoi* suggests that the government reserved the right to billet troops on the less influential inhabitants of the city.³¹²

One area that the 1319 *chrysobull* outlines in some detail is the limit of the power of the imperial *kephale*. The *kephale* was not permitted to deport the *epoikoi* or settle them in other lands except for criminals.³¹³ Furthermore, the *kephale* had to rule in Ioannina in a just and merciful fashion. If he should become tyrannical in any way the people were to submit a petition to the emperor who would then rebuke or recall the governor.³¹⁴ The inhabitants of Ioannina were granted certain judicial rights and legal privileges. The Ioanniniotai had the right to select judges from among the good men of the *epoikoi* of the city to judge cases alongside the *kephale*.³¹⁵ The inhabitants asked that anyone found guilty of treason should be exiled as this was the traditional punishment in Ioannina.³¹⁶ It is difficult to see how this was a ‘privilege’ unless the punishment elsewhere was even more harsh. This clause seems to refer to the *kastrenoi* and not the *epoikoi* as a whole. Murderers were to be punished according to the traditions existing before the Byzantine restoration; unfortunately these traditions are not outlined in the *chrysobull*.³¹⁷

These non-financial privileges of Ioannina demonstrate that the Ioanniniotai were deeply concerned with their legal rights and in preserving a certain degree of control over their city, even though they were submitting to the imperial authority. By asking for the right to select their own judges the Ioanniniotai preserved a part of their autonomy even as they submitted to the empire. Judicial autonomy was seen as one of the key elements of

³¹² This clause would have allowed the imperial government to billet troops on the majority of the inhabitants of the city. As Ioannina was an important foothold on the western side of the Pindos Mountains for Byzantium at this time it is likely that the imperial government was preparing for the day when the city could be used as an advanced base for the invasion of the remainder of Epiros.

³¹³ MM V:80

³¹⁴ MM V:81-82

³¹⁵ MM V:81.6-10 The court however, was not to try cases falling under the jurisdiction of the Church.

³¹⁶ MM V:81.20-27

³¹⁷ MM V:82.28-29

urban identity in the west and forms a fundamental part of many of the charters granted to towns by the kings and lords of northern Europe in particular. These grants ensured that the Ioanniniotai retained a say in the dispensing of justice within their city and also some control over the behaviour of the *kephale*. This last effectively gave the Ioanniniotai a veto over the governor appointed by the emperor.³¹⁸ Ioannina was also conscious of its position as an important military post. No *kastrenos* would be impressed into the army or forced to give hospitality to troops.

Conclusion

Over the period 1204-1430 Ioannina was transformed from a modest fortress to the second city of the Epirote realm and finally into a capital city. The society of Ioannina changed along with the city. Overall Ioannina was a city dominated by its aristocracy organised into a senate and participating in the occasional general councils of the people. From the early thirteenth century, when Michael I Komnenos Doukas of Epiros settled aristocratic refugees from Constantinople in the city, up until 1430 the elite of Ioannina played an important role in the economic and political life of the city. The Philanthropenoi and Strategopouloi founded monasteries and it is possible that other *archontic* families sponsored building programmes which are not known to us. The *chrysobull* of 1319 provides evidence of the vast estates owned by the *archontes* described in the document as *kastrenoi*. A castle was granted to Simeon Strategopoulos and members of his family were amply rewarded by Carlo I Tocco for their support. This kind of grant to aristocrats must have meant that entire villages and fortresses became the property of individuals or families.

³¹⁸ There are no records of the inhabitants of Ioannina exercising the right to have the *kephale* removed. However, the civil war following the surrender of the city to the empire along with the submission to John Orsini probably meant that the Ioanniniotai never had chance to do so. Of course as John Orsini ruled Ioannina as *kephale* for the emperor, yet was chosen by the Ioanniniotai it could be argued that they not only exercised their right to expel tyrannous governors but went further and chose their own governor.

Something of this may be seen in the resistance of certain *archontes* based in villages surrounding Ioannina to the rule of Thomas Preljubović. Despite the overwhelming aristocratic emphasis of the document of 1319 and the frequently aristocratic focus of the *Chronicle of Ioannina* and the *Chronicle of Tocco* there are a few hints that the non-aristocratic inhabitants of the city had some say in the fate of their home. The 1319 *chrysobull*, while issuing many privileges focused on the *kastrenoi* issued as many for the *epoikoi* in general. Furthermore, the Jews of Ioannina are mentioned in the *chrysobull* as having the same privileges as the *epoikoi*. This suggests that both the wider citizen body and the Jewish community were organised enough or important enough to be represented in an imperial document and perhaps requested their privileges. The people of the city rioted before the accession of Carlo I Tocco in 1416 and the people in general had to be rewarded by the despot with florins and ducats.³¹⁹ While this is not an example of official participation in government or the choosing of the new despot it does show a politicisation of the inhabitants. The *kastrenoi*, while clearly the dominant group within the city and the controllers of much of the land outside of Ioannina, were not the only group of inhabitants of Ioannina to have power. Merchants must have lived in the city but there is no evidence of their activities. The produce of the city and its hinterland must have been consumed locally. Quite what the occupations of the *epoikoi* were remains a mystery. As stated earlier there is no evidence of artisanal activity in the city. Nevertheless there must have been some, if only for local consumption by the inhabitants of both the city and the hinterland. Some inhabitants may have been engaged in work in the countryside close to the city as was seen in other cities in the Balkans.³²⁰ Many of the inhabitants were probably engaged in activities related to serving the aristocratic families of the city.

³¹⁹ Chron Tocco:338 §17

³²⁰ Such as Thessalonike, Adrianople and Philippopolis.

The political organisation of Ioannina, with its almost permanent senate and occasional assembly shows a marked similarity to the institutions of the cities of northern Italy. It is easy to believe that when Esau Buondelmonti arrived in Ioannina he would have found a political situation reminiscent of his native Tuscany. There is no suggestion that the Ioannina copied the Italians and the existence of the senate and assembly obviously predate the era of Italian rule. It is more likely that the towns of Italy and the west, with their councils, and Ioannina were on parallel tracks of development. That the situation in Ioannina mirrored that of much of Tuscany and Lombardy which saw the elite choosing a lord rather than the patterns of institutional development found in northern Europe is more likely to be the result of like circumstances leading to like developments than because of any direct influence. This strong sense of the right of at least the elite and the people to a say in government can be seen in the right of the *epoikoi* in the 1319 *chrysobull* to select their own judges.³²¹ While this provision was granted by a Byzantine Emperor who did not rule Ioannina for long, subsequent rulers agreed to respect the rights of the Ioanniniotai and we can reasonably surmise that this judicial privilege survived, especially when we consider the continuity not only of the existence of an elite group formed into a senate but of the individual families which made up this group. While the people of Ioannina were not organised into a fully-fledged commune as were the Italian cities and we have no record of the senate being composed of guild or regional representatives, as was the case in much of Europe at this time, it is clear that the 'representative' bodies, senate and *boule*, operated in a way that has a lot in common with their western counterparts and it may be possible to see Ioannina's governing system as a Byzantine version of the western model, developed in the shadow of Epirote and Imperial power and coming into its own with the political fragmentation of the region after c.1350.

³²¹ See above

The economy of the city was clearly based around animal husbandry and agriculture and the city's economic outlook was more westwards to the Adriatic than eastwards to Byzantium. Ioannina acted as a centre of distribution and consumption of the produce of the hinterland of the city. The predominance of western coins in the numismatic data related to Ioannina coupled with the clause in the 1319 *chrysobull* insisting that the coinage should remain that in use, not that of the Byzantine emperor, supports the argument that Ioannina looked west not east.

In spite of its western oriented economic outlook Ioannina remained at heart a Byzantine city. Its inhabitants (as the two chronicles written in the city proudly state) remained predominantly Byzantine Rhomaioi. From the mid-fourteenth century there must have been communities of first Serbians and then Italians living in the city; but these remained in the minority and even under the Serbian despot Thomas most of the names of the *archontes* of the city were Greek. The rulers of Ioannina governed in the Byzantine tradition even when they were Serbian or Italian. Symeon Uroš Palaiologos was the self-proclaimed emperor of the Rhomaioi and Serbs and his representative in the city, Thomas Preljubović, could claim the name Komnenos.³²² Thomas received his title of despot from the emperor in Thessalonike in 1382, Esau Buondelmonti sent to Constantinople for the despotic regalia in 1385 and Carlo I Tocco sent his brother Leonardo to the Peloponnese to receive his crown from Manuel II Palaiologos. Both Carlo and Leonardo were also made Kantakouzenatoi.³²³ Only an emperor could legitimately confer the rank of despot and a legitimate title was a serious concern for the rulers of Ioannina. The title was certainly viewed as important by the inhabitants of Ioannina according to the two chronicles.

³²² The only surviving example of Thomas' signature reads Thomas Despotes Komnenos Prejub. Lavra III:no.147. This is not to argue as Vranousis does that there was no Serbokratia, there was, but the traditions of the new Serbian state founded in northern Greece relied heavily on Byzantine traditions and forms.

³²³ Chron Tocco §2 p382. 'effectively members of the clan of Cantacuzenus.' Magdalino 1989:94

Despot Thomas Preljubović was called despot only three times before he received the title from the Byzantine emperor. As Nicol pointed out, however, it is unlikely that Thomas ruled Ioannina for so long without this title; he probably received it, along with the city from Symeon Uroš.³²⁴ The *archontes* of Ioannina demanded that Carlo I Tocco send ambassadors to Constantinople to ask for a stemma and the regalia of a despot.³²⁵ After his investiture Carlo I Tocco was never called duke again by the author of the *Chronicle of Tocco*.³²⁶ In true Byzantine fashion Carlo I Tocco signed his letters in red ink ‘as was always the habit of the despot’ according to the records of Ragusa.³²⁷ The Italian rulers of Epiros also followed the Orthodox faith; John Orsini became Orthodox and married Anna Palaiologina.³²⁸

Culturally Ioannina remained Byzantine. According to Magdalino although ‘In no other part of the Aegean world did Latins and Greeks collaborate so closely on equal terms, or were Greek princely courts both so close and so open to Latin centres of power.’³²⁹ there was no hybrid culture. There must have been a mixing of the cultures of east and west to some extent, especially during the rule to the three Italian despots.³³⁰ But there is little evidence of a hybrid literature. The one element where Italian influence is seen is in the title Kapetanos. This was a title commonly held in the Italian communes and it is tempting to see its introduction as one of the acts of the Florentine Esau Buondelmonti. The people of Ioannina were clearly open to the rule of outsiders so long as they respected

³²⁴ Nicol 1984:143. The occasions were Chron Ioan:84, 86, 92. This may have been just as related to the authors dislike of Thomas as much as to who granted the title. However, Thomas is called despot after 1382 so the fact that his new investiture was at the command of a Byzantine Emperor must have been seen as significant to the author of the chronicle.

³²⁵ Chron Tocco 378 §1

³²⁶ Magdalino 1989:88

³²⁷ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:no.722

³²⁸ Kantakouzenos I:499

³²⁹ Magdalino 1989:88

³³⁰ It is likely that Ioannina was not subjected to a great deal of Italian influence under the Komneno-Doukai as was almost certainly the case in Arta. This is likely to have been because of the lack of a significant Italian presence in Ioannina at this early point in history.

the rights of the Ioanniniotai and westerners were not disliked in Ioannina as they were in other Byzantine cities.³³¹ The one exception to this generally open attitude was the hatred of Albanians. This dislike present time and again in the pages of the *Chronicle of Ioannina* and the *Chronicle of Tocco*.

Overall Ioannina was an agricultural and aristocratic city. The aristocrats were organised into a council which guided the fate of the city, chose its ruler, they owned the land near the city and ensured their privileged position through an imperial *chrysobull* which every succeeding ruler of the city, at least up until the Serbian conquest, swore to uphold. As Vranousis noted, at the core of this aristocracy were the descendants of refugees from Constantinople, members of the great families from before the fourth crusade.³³² The *archontes* of Ioannina were above all an urban aristocracy. Their estates may have been in the provinces but they remained men of the city. As such the hinterland of Ioannina could never break down in the same way that is seen in early medieval feudal societies in the west; the seat of power was still the city. Although the countryside took on feudal characteristics a strong ruler like Thomas could still dominate the aristocracy. These aristocrats were Byzantine and Byzantine titles and offices were sought after. Even the ruler of the city craved official recognition from the Byzantine emperor long after Byzantium had ceased to matter politically to the inhabitants of northern Greece.

³³¹ After all the city was ruled by three Italians.

³³² Vranousis 1986:37

CHAPTER THREE: ARTA 1204-1449

Arta from 1204 to the Ottoman Conquest

With the decline of the ancient city of Nikopolis its position as the administrative and economic centre of Old Epiros or the theme of Nikopolis was usurped by the city of Arta. Arta is located on a number of transport routes which connect the coast of Epiros to the hinterland. The River Arachthos which runs through the plain of Arta is navigable as far as the city and connects Arta to the Gulf of Ambrakia and thus to the open sea.¹ Although the city was connected to the sea by the river it also possessed the ports of Salagora (modern Salaōra) and Koprina (modern Kopraina).² The road south from the city ran to Naupaktos, while the north road ran through the fortress of Voblina (modern Kastri, 14 km from Arta) and on to Ioannina. The west road to the coast passed through Rogoi (a walled town, now ruined) and then forked, either south to the old centre of Nikopolis or north to Phanarion. Two of the three routes across the Pindos from Trikala in Thessaly met near Arta. The above communication channels served both peaceful and aggressive ends. The armies of the *sebastokrators* of Thessaly marched across the Pindos to attack Arta and when Carlo I Tocco attacked the city from Ioannina he marched through the pass of Dema to Stribina (close to modern Philippiada), and earlier had entered the plain of Arta from Topliana.³ The plain of Arta has always been one of the more densely populated areas of Epiros. Indicatively in 1938 when the whole of Epiros had an average

¹ This gulf was frequently referred to by the Venetians and Ragusans as the Gulf of Arta.

² A fortress, Phidokastron, was located between these two ports to guard the mouth of the Arachthos. The exact date of this fortress has not been determined. Soustal and Koder 1981:233

³ Chron Tocco:406-408 §14

population density of 98 people per square mile, the plain of Arta had one of 263 people per square mile.⁴

Following the Fourth Crusade Arta was ruled by a relative of Michael Komnenos Doukas who settled in the city and married the governor's daughter.⁵ The *Life of St. Theodora* states that Michael was summoned to Epiros to rule and was recognised by Alexios III but no mention is made of his receiving a title from the emperor.⁶ Michael soon became leader of the Byzantines of Epiros, with his capital at Arta. In 1215 Michael I was assassinated, he was succeeded by his brother Theodore. Theodore campaigned rigorously to recover as much territory from the crusaders as possible and in 1224 took Thessalonike where he was crowned emperor. With the capture of Thessalonike in 1224 Arta ceased to be the capital of the western successor state of Epiros and for a time the city drifted into a provincial obscurity. It is indicative that there is almost no mention of the first two Komneno-Doukai in Arta, the city may have always been intended as a temporary capital while the western Byzantines recovered and mobilised before mounting a campaign of reconquest in the east.

A new phase for Arta began in 1230 with the return to the city of Michael II Komnenos Doukas, the son of Michael I. Michael II had lived in exile in the Peloponnese following the murder of his father while his uncle Theodore Komnenos Doukas ruled. However, following Theodore's defeat at Klokotniza in 1230 Michael returned to Arta and 'inherited his father's rule.'⁷ Michael II Komnenos Doukas ruled Epiros, while his uncle

⁴ This figure is for 1938. Greece III:36

⁵ Akropolites does not explain how Michael came to rule over Epiros, merely mentioning that he did. Akropolites §8; Kantakouzenos I, 520.15-521.2 states that the ancestors of Michael I had held an annual rule over Epiros from the imperial government in Constantinople which they had usurped in the aftermath of 1204, for a discussion of the foundation of the state of Epiros as portrayed in the sources see Macrides 2007:95-96

⁶ *St. Theodora*:42-43

⁷ *St. Theodora*:44; PG 127.905 A-B

Manuel and then his cousins John and Demetrios ruled in Thessalonike.⁸ It is commonly held that in 1249 Michael II and his son Nikephoros were granted the title of despot by John III Vatatzes.⁹ The new understanding between John III and Michael II was cemented by a marriage between John's granddaughter and Michael's son Nikephoros.¹⁰ However, whilst Michael II submitted to John III in 1248/9 there is evidence that he held the title of despot at an earlier date. Akropolites calls Michael despot in 1246 and the charter issued by Michael, in which he is called despot, for the Makrinitissa monastery is dated to the same year.¹¹ With the loss of Macedonia to Nicaea Epiros became less secure and more open to attack from its neighbours. In 1257 Manfred of Sicily invaded northern Epiros and took Dyrrachion, Valona, Kanina and Berat from Michael II.¹² Michael agreed to become a vassal of Manfred's and Manfred married the despot's daughter, Helena.¹³ Arta itself was not harmed by the attack of Manfred. However, the city was captured by the rampaging Nicaean forces in 1259 following the battle of Pelagonia.¹⁴ Michael II recovered his capital in 1261, helped by the disaffection of the people of the city who had been badly treated by the occupying Nicaean army,¹⁵ and signed a peace with the new emperor Michael VIII

⁸ Theodore 1224-1230, Manuel 1230-1237 and John 1237-1242 ruled as emperors in Thessalonike, in 1242 John accepted the title of despot from John III Vatatzes and ruled as such until 1244 when he was succeeded as despot in Thessalonike by his brother Demetrios 1244-1246.

⁹ Nicol 1984:6. Nicol proposes that Michael may have been given the title earlier by Manuel in his capacity as emperor in Thessalonike.

¹⁰ Akropolites §49; Macrides 2007:249

¹¹ Akropolites §46; Macrides 2007:97; MM IV:345-9. Macrides has pointed out that the document in question was drawn up by a scribe in Constantinople after 1261 yet records that Michael had received the title of despot from the imperial authority before 1248/9. As any scribe in Palaiologan Constantinople would only have considered a legitimate emperor to be one of the Nicaean rulers this suggests that Michael received his title from John III but at a date earlier than his official submission. This is supported by the evidence from Akropolites. While there is the chance that Michael was not granted his title by an imperial power, he could have usurped it, it would be unlikely for the scribe or Akropolites to validate this action by repeating his claims as genuine.

¹² Nicol 1984:6

¹³ Nicol describes this as the beginning of a connection to Italy which was only severed with the Ottoman conquest.

¹⁴ Akropolites §82; Macrides 2007:365

¹⁵ Akropolites §82; Macrides 2007:365

Palaiologos in 1264.¹⁶ Michael's son Nikephoros Komnenos Doukas travelled to Constantinople in 1265 where he married Anna, granddaughter of Michael VIII Palaiologos, and had his title of despot confirmed.¹⁷ It is under Michael II that large-scale building works are first recorded in Arta and under him the city seems to have been viewed as a more permanent residence for the Komneno-Doukai.¹⁸ In 1267 Nikephoros succeeded his father as despot in Arta and ruler of Epiros, while his brother John became ruler of Thessaly with the title of *sebastokrator*. Relations between the siblings were not always cordial and in 1284 John sent ships to attack Arta from the sea supported by troops who crossed the Pindos Mountains to attack the city from the land.¹⁹ Eight years later the city was attacked by a Byzantine fleet and the city was besieged by Charles II of Naples in 1304. This last attack is the only one where damage is known to have been done to the city. Only the citadel was defended, the lower town was abandoned to the forces of Charles II and some houses, bordering the citadel, were even demolished by the order of Anna Palaiologina, mother of despot Thomas Komnenos Doukas (1296-1318).²⁰ Thomas had succeeded his father Nikephoros I in 1296 and married Anna Palaiologina a daughter of Michael IX. There was a further Byzantine attack on Arta in 1315 led by Syrgiannes Palaiologos.²¹ This attack damaged the city including the property of at least one Venetian merchant.

¹⁶ Nicol 1984:8

¹⁷ Pachymeres I:242-3; Gregoras I:109-110

¹⁸ I am not arguing that if the opportunity had presented itself following a different outcome at Pelagonia that Michael II would not have retaken Thessalonike or Constantinople. However, Michael developed his capital and saw his 'state' as part of the west Balkan world and important and permanent in its own right rather than as a stepping stone to greater things. The vigorous diplomatic activity which Michael undertook and the numerous marriage alliances which he contracted with the western regional powers hints at this transition.

¹⁹ Thiriet *Assembles* I no.90, 91.

²⁰ Chron Mor I 8792-3 for the Byzantine attack, Chron Mor fr. 384-5 for the Neapolitan siege.

²¹ Thomas *Diplomatarium* I:136

The beginning of the rule of non-Byzantines over Arta began in 1318 when Thomas was murdered by his cousin Nicholas Orsini, Count of Cephalonia and Zante.²² Nicholas promptly married the widow of Thomas and took over Epiros. While Arta accepted the rule of the Italian Nicholas, Ioannina did not and the despotate split in two and was not to be reunited as an independent state until 1416.²³ Nicholas was granted the title of despot by his grandfather-in-law Andronikos II Palaiologos.²⁴ The new despot became preoccupied with the recovery of Ioannina and while he was campaigning in the north his brother John took control of Arta and rebelled. Following a civil war John II Orsini replaced his brother as ruler of Epiros in 1323, with his capital at Arta although he was not given the title of despot until after 1328.²⁵ At some point following this John became a vassal of the Angevin kings of Naples.²⁶ John II Orsini died in 1336/7 and in 1338 the despotate, including Arta, surrendered to Andronikos III.²⁷ Almost as soon as the emperor had left Epiros the area rose in rebellion. Nikephoros Basilitzes took control of Arta and arrested the imperial governor, while Alexios Kabasilas seized the castle of Rogoi.²⁸ Nikephoros II, son of John II Orsini returned to Epiros and led the rebellion from Thomokastron.²⁹ The revolt did not spread further than these three towns. Nikephoros chose not to base himself in Arta. It is impossible to know what he would have done if he had achieved some form of independent Epiros for in 1340 Andronikos III returned to Epiros and besieged the three rebel strongholds. Arta was besieged for six months until

²² Gregoras I:283;I:318

²³ Ioannina and Arta would of course both be ruled by the Byzantine and Serbian Empires.

²⁴ MM I:171

²⁵ MM I:171

²⁶ The job of subduing John Orsini was given to John of Gravina in his role as Prince of Achaia. Although John planned a number of attacks on Epiros and on his way to Achaia from Italy he did seize a number of islands and a few cities on the mainland there is no certainty that he ever attacked Arta. John Orsini certainly resisted John of Gravina's attacks.

²⁷ Kantakouzenos I:501-2. The governor of Epiros based in Arta during the period of imperial rule was Theodore Synadenos. Kantakouzenos I:504.1-2; Gregoras I:546.10.

²⁸ Kantakouzenos I:509-10

²⁹ Kantakouzenos I:510; Gregoras I:540. Thomokastron has been identified as modern Riniasa a fortress located on the coast directly to the west of Arta. Nicol 1984:115

John Kantakouzenos persuaded the city to surrender.³⁰ After the rebellion was defeated John Angelos the *pinkernes* ruled Arta until 1341 when he left to join the cause of John Kantakouzenos in the civil war between John V Palaiologos and John VI Kantakouzenos. During the civil war Anna, wife of John II Orsini escaped from exile in Thessalonike and returned to Arta but Kantakouzenos states that the provinces of Epiros and Thessaly supported him throughout the civil war so it does not seem that Anna tried to ferment a rebellion in the region.³¹ Even so when John Angelos was given the rule of Thessaly in the name of John VI he raised an army and marched to Arta to apprehend Anna which he promptly did and added Epiros to his domain.³²

The Byzantine recovery of Epiros was short lived. By 1348 Epiros had become a province of the Serbian Empire of Stefan Dušan.³³ There is no account of whether Arta resisted the Serbian advance or was damaged during the change of ruler. The governorship of Epiros and Thessaly was given to Symeon Uroš, half brother of Stefan Dušan.³⁴ When Stefan Dušan died in 1356 Nikephoros II Orsini decided to try to recover his father's territory one more time. He arrived in Thessaly and then marched to Epiros, both areas proclaiming him as their ruler.³⁵ When Nikephoros reached Arta he divorced his wife Maria Kantakouzene, imprisoned her in the city and married a Serbian lady.³⁶ John Kantakouzenos records that the Albanians living in Epiros threatened to rebel against the rule of Nikephoros unless he divorced his Serbian wife and married Maria Kantakouzene again. Despite agreeing to this Nikephoros attacked the rebellious Albanians and was killed

³⁰ Kantakouzenos I:520-525

³¹ Gregoras II:658 for the escape of Anna and Kantakouzenos II:239,297;III:318 for the support shown to John VI.

³² Gregoras II:657-8

³³ Kantakouzenos III:147. Nicol believes that Arta itself may have fallen in 1347. Nicol 1984:129.

³⁴ Kantakouzenos III:30; Gregoras III:557. Nicol records that Gregoras incorrectly describes Symeon as Dušan's son. Nicol 1984:131

³⁵ Chron Ioan:75; Gregoras III:556-7; Kantakouzenos III:314-15

³⁶ Kantakouzenos III:315-17. Maria was rescued from her imprisonment by her brother Manuel, despot in Mystras.

during a subsequent battle.³⁷ When Symeon Uroš decided to found a new empire in Thessaly and Epiros rather than press his claim to the throne of Serbia he chose to rule in Thessaly, using vassals to govern Epiros. Arta was given to the Albanian Peter Losha, who was granted the title of despot by Symeon.³⁸ The Albanian domination of Arta continued under the Spata family which with a brief interlude under the adventurer Bokoi ruled the city from 1374-1416.³⁹ During this time the city was attacked many times but only in a few cases is there any information about the nature of the attack and the effect that it had on the city. Bokoi attacked the city from without and captured it following the death of Gjin Spata in 1399. Although he ruled only for a matter of months he was a harsh ruler.⁴⁰ In 1405 Carlo I Tocco began a prolonged campaign against the city and its territory during which the area around the market was plundered.⁴¹ After repeated campaigns and the city's change of hands a number of times the last Albanian ruler of Arta, Ya'qub Spata was killed in 1416 and Carlo I Tocco became lord of the Arta.⁴²

The Tocco family succeeded in conquering the city by strategically severing the links between Arta and its hinterland. By seizing Voblina Carlo I controlled the road leading out of Arta to the north. The *Chronicle of Tocco* describes Voblina as 'the key to Arta', and that Carlo I Tocco knew that if he could take the fortress then Arta could not resist him.⁴³ From Voblina Carlo organised daily raids of the lands around Arta.⁴⁴ The importance of this route to the city of Arta was demonstrated by the numerous efforts

³⁷ Kantakouzenos III:317-19; Chron Ioan:76-77

³⁸ Chron Ioan:79

³⁹ Gjin Boua Spata (1374-1399), Muriki Spata (1399-1414) and Ya'qub Spata (1414-1416). Bokoi ruled for only a few months and apart from a few character traits (all bad) nothing is known about him.

⁴⁰ Chron Ioan:101

⁴¹ Chron Tocco:244-246 §27

⁴² Chron Tocco:438 §16

⁴³ Chron Tocco:272-274 §14

⁴⁴ Chron Tocco:274 §15

made by Ya'qub to retake Vobliana.⁴⁵ Carlo I exploited the importance of this place to lure Ya'qub out of the Arta by tricking him into thinking that the inhabitants of Vobliana were willing to submit to his rule and oust the men of Tocco.⁴⁶ Carlo's plan worked and Ya'qub was captured and killed. In conjunction with the conquest of Vobliana Carlo I blockaded Arta from a second point, the fortress of Rogoi. Leonardo, brother of Carlo Tocco, attacked the fortress. Although Rogoi did not surrender until after Arta the route that it controlled was cut by the presence of the army under Leonardo.⁴⁷ As a result Arta was isolated from the Adriatic coast.⁴⁸ The policy of severing Arta from the coast was continued by Carlo who took Thomokastron (usually called Riniasa, modern Riza), an important port and fortress.⁴⁹ In 1416 Carlo I Tocco secured the surrender of Arta.⁵⁰ Even though the *Chronicle of Tocco* speaks at length about the reunification of the despotate and the restoration of the old order, Arta did not resume its place as the capital city, it had been replaced by Ioannina.⁵¹ This situation was altered by the fall of Ioannina to the Ottomans in 1430 and for the last nineteen years of the Despotate of Epiros Arta once again became its capital city. Carlo II Tocco lived in the city until his death in 1448 as a vassal of the Ottoman Sultan. In 1449 Ottoman troops marched unopposed into Arta.

⁴⁵ The very first act of Ya'qub recorded by the *Chronicle of Tocco* was his demand for the return of Vobliana. Chron Tocco:376 §17

⁴⁶ Chron Tocco:420-422 §4

⁴⁷ Rogoi surrendered after an important relic of St. Luke fell from the battlements and was captured by Leonardo's troops. Chron Tocco:406 §13

⁴⁸ Nicol believes that the account of the siege of Rogoi in the *chronicle of Tocco* is that of an eye witness. Nicol 1984:186

⁴⁹ Chron Tocco:400 §9. The site is described as a *kastron* on a hill by the sea. See Soustal and Koder 1981:250-251.

⁵⁰ Chron Tocco:436 §16

⁵¹ Chron Tocco:332-334 §14

The Physical Description and the Built Environment of Arta

The author of the *Chronicle of Tocco* was not flattering about the city of Arta. He was obviously in favour of his home of Ioannina and seems to have been ready to criticise the old capital of the despotate whenever he could. When Carlo I Tocco was taken ill the chronicler bemoans Carlo's fate at having been taken ill at Arta, a city in a miserable, flat region with an unpleasant fortress.⁵² The city of Arta was built between a rocky hill and a bend in the river Arachthos. This river protected the city from the north, east and west with the hill partially blocking the approach to Arta from the south. It has been suggested that the rise to prominence of Arta, which was built on the site of ancient Ambrakia, was in direct proportion to the decline of nearby Nikopolis. The ancient city of Ambrakia was fortified with an impressive city wall, some sections of which survive to this day. The extent to which this played a role in determining the topography of the city in the Late Middle Ages and whether it protected the city is unclear. The exact position of the walls is mostly unknown as they lie under the modern city. According to Papadopoulou the citadel was too small to accommodate even a small population so the majority of the inhabitants must have lived within the ancient city walls.⁵³ Orlandos believed that the city was fortified by Michael II Komnenos Doukas who improved the fortifications of Arta as his father, Michael I, had at Ioannina. Papadopoulou points out that Michael I Komnenos Doukas (1205-1214) was unlikely to have fortified Ioannina and left his capital without walls.⁵⁴ What seems probable, from this brief discussion, is that Michael I found imposing ancient walls at Arta. There is no evidence of Byzantine interventions in the walls as no sections

⁵² Chron Tocco:476 §6

⁵³ Papadopoulou 2007:19

⁵⁴ Papadopoulou 2007:18-19

survive to their full height and it is most likely that Byzantine additions would have been made to heighten or repair the more easily damaged upper section of the fortifications. That the Arta resisted the various attacks it suffered in the thirteenth century suggest that it could be defended. In 1284 and 1292/3 the city was unsuccessfully attacked and it was not until the troops of Charles II of Naples besieged the city in 1303 that the citizens of Arta had to retreat to the citadel.⁵⁵ All subsequent attacks are known to have damaged property

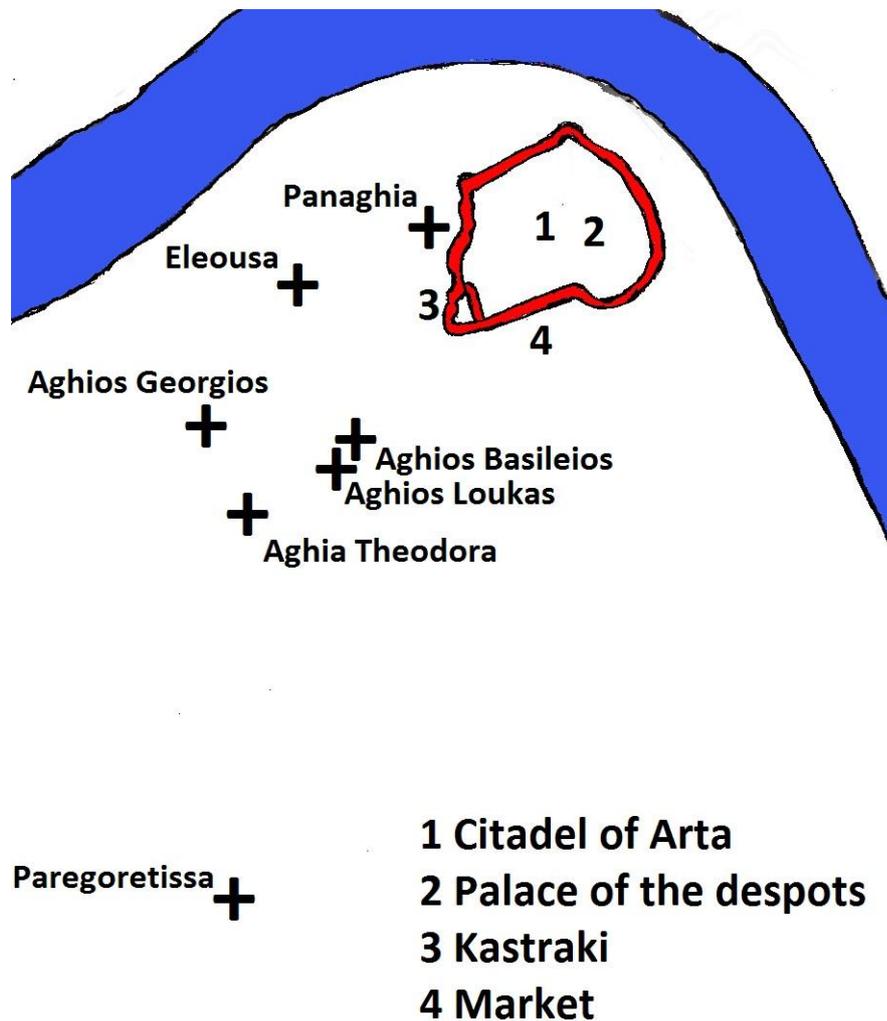


Figure 14 Late Medieval Arta

⁵⁵ Chron Mor 8792-3 for the Byzantine attack, Chron Mor fr. 384-5 for the Neapolitan siege.

within Arta.⁵⁶ This suggests that the ancient walls no longer provided adequate protection for the city. It is possible that the ancient city walls had deteriorated to such an extent that although they could defend Arta from raiders they were incapable of resisting a determined siege such as that of 1303/4 or that the walls were damaged during this siege and remained partly ruined thereafter. The city certainly proved to be vulnerable to further attacks in 1315, 1331, 1339, 1399, 1405-1416.⁵⁷ By the time of Carlo I Tocco his troops were able to ride into the city at will and were denied admittance only to the citadel. The physical remains of the citadel of Arta are impressive. Unfortunately much of the existing masonry is the work of Ali Pasha in the seventeenth century. However, a significant amount of Byzantine and ancient stonework has survived and the outline of the walls marks the extent of the Byzantine citadel.

If the city walls present an outline for the Byzantine city then the churches and monasteries within these walls must have formed the nuclei of the neighbourhoods of Arta.⁵⁸ The majority of the building work of the early despots was undertaken by the Komneno-Doukai. It is perhaps no accident that the majority of these churches were founded during the first century of the despotate, as the population of the city and its hinterland increased, and that new foundations ceased in the fourteenth century when the city was repeatedly attacked and captured and the surrounding lands devastated. Inside the city there may have been ten late Byzantine churches, five of which are still standing, the remains of two more have been found in excavations and three lie under their modern successors. The core group of the extant churches are located to the west and southwest of the citadel. The Panaghia Eleousa and Aghios Loukas have been extensively rebuilt and only possess medieval facades about which little can be said.

⁵⁶ See above.

⁵⁷ See above.

⁵⁸ This view was expressed by Papadopoulou 2007:19



Figure 15: The apse of Aghios Vasileios, showing the decorative brickwork (author's picture)

The medieval churches of Arta which survive largely intact possess a uniquely Artan combination of elaborate exterior decoration and signs of Italian influence and craftsmanship. These features can be used to demonstrate that in terms of its architecture Arta was quite an individual city and under the early despots and its later Italian rulers was developing the beginnings of a hybrid style of decoration and possibly a hybrid architectural form.

The church of Aghios Vasileios, dated to the late thirteenth century,⁵⁹ is the prime example of the Artan highly decorated exterior. Every façade of the church is decorated in extremely elaborate brickwork of a kind that was often reserved for the eastern façade in other areas of the Balkans. An example of this more reserved style can be found in the church of Aghia Theodora, originally the twelfth century Aghios Georgios, built before the flowering of the highly decorated style of the despotate. However, St. Theodora made a

⁵⁹ A. Orlandos originally dated this church to the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century (Orlandos 1936a:115-130), however, Papadopoulou has recently questioned this, arguing for a date in the late thirteenth century, Papadopoulou 2007:127. The debate remains very much open. There has been a tendency to shift all of the dates of the Byzantine monuments in and around Arta to an earlier period, when the Komnenou-Doukai were the rulers of the despotate.

number of additions to the church in the late thirteenth century which exemplify the new style.⁶⁰ The two gables and the west façade are both decorated with the elaborate brickwork of Arta. Both churches also contain evidence of Italian influence. Inside Aghia Theodora is the tomb of the saint in the form of a large marble monument. One side of this monument is a rather low quality relief depicting the saint and her son.⁶¹ However, the other side is a highly decorated and elaborate relief which is of a much higher quality and in its style is certainly Italian influenced, and probably of Italian craftsmanship.⁶² The west façade of Aghios Vasileios contains two ceramic icons which are considered to be of Italian craftsmanship,⁶³ although the Greek lettering suggests that they were produced locally. These icons were added to the building during the period of Tocco rule and are a unique example of patronage in this period.



Figure 16: Aghia Theodora showing the raised gables and the portico (author's picture)

The most important foundation of the period was the Paregoretissa which demonstrates the features noted in the previous two churches. This monastery is located at

⁶⁰ Papadopoulou 2007:47-48

⁶¹ Papadopoulou 2007:51-52

⁶² Papadopoulou 2007:52

⁶³ Papadopoulou 2007:127

some distance from the other Byzantine monuments. This suggests that it was either built in a sparsely inhabited region of the city away from the citadel or outside of the city walls. Building work for the Paregoretissa began in the mid-thirteenth century although the form in which it survives today is largely the work of Nikephoros I Komnenos Doukas.⁶⁴ The Italian influence is immediately visible; the church has been compared to early renaissance palaces because of its cube like appearance.⁶⁵ Both the exterior and interior decoration are a blending of Italian craftsmanship and the Byzantine style of Arta. The exterior features a high level of decorative brickwork with western style sculptural decoration on the capitals of the columns on the façade which often takes the form of vines, fleurs de lis, or grapes.⁶⁶ The interior combines a mixture of traditional Byzantine style, marble panels on the lower wall and mosaic decoration above, with features not found in any other Orthodox church. The arches below the dome are decorated with stone sculptures of western type. The scene on the north arch depicts the Nativity flanked by saints and angels. The west arch shows the Lamb of God flanked by the apostles and prophets.⁶⁷ The representation of Christ as a lamb and the evangelists by their symbols is a western design not seen in the Orthodox Church. A donor inscription survives in the lintel of the west which was reconstructed by A. Orlandos as: KOMNHNOΔΟΥΚΑC ΔΕCΠΟΤΗC ΝΙ[ΚΗΦ]ΟΡΟC ΑΝΝΑ ΒΑCΙΑ[ΙC]CΑ ΚΟΜΝΗΝ[ΟΔΟΥΚΑΙΝΑ] ΚΟΜΝΗΝΟΒΛΑCΤΟC Δ[ΕCΠΟΤΗC Θ]ΩΜΑC ΜΕΓΑC followed by either ΚΟΜΝΗΝ[ΟΙ ΕΛ]ΛΑΔΟC Α[ΥΤΑΝΑΚΤΕC] or ΚΟΜΝΗΝ[ΩΝ Κ]ΛΑΔΟC Α[ΓΓΕΛΩΝΥΜΩΝ].⁶⁸ This inscription can be used to date

⁶⁴ It has been suggested that the original monastery was one of the two which Michael II Komnenos Doukas built as penance for his ill treatment of his wife, St. Theodora. Papadopoulou 2007:138. The vita of St. Theodora states that Michael built one monastery of the Pantanassa and one of the Virgin. PG 127:l 904-908

⁶⁵ Papadopoulou 2007:136; Orlandos 1963

⁶⁶ Papadopoulou 2007:139

⁶⁷ Papadopoulou 2007:145-147

⁶⁸ Orlandos 1963

the second phase of construction to the period after 1294 when Thomas was granted the title of despot and before the death of Nikephoros possibly in 1296.⁶⁹

When considering the decoration of the churches of Arta, and in the case of the Paregoretissa its architectural style, it is possible to detect a mixing of an elaborate native style with the influence of Italian art. The surviving examples of this took place during the years of the rule of the Komnenos Doukas family and while it is impossible to know what happened when the city was under Albanian control it seems reasonable to suppose that this pattern of the mixing of styles continued under the rule of the Orsini brothers and under the Tocco lords.



Figure 17: The Paregoretissa exterior (author's picture)

The neighbourhoods around the churches must have been where the majority of the Artinoi lived. Houses are mentioned in the various sources. Venetian and Ragusan

⁶⁹ Nicol 1984:241

property was often damaged in attacks on the city or by the Artinoi themselves.⁷⁰ A number of houses from the Byzantine period have been excavated in the city. In all of the available examples there is rarely conclusive evidence of an upper floor and the houses appear to have been mostly built of rubble incorporating occasional pieces of stone or brick alongside ancient spoils. A number of houses excavated on Kommenou Street do show evidence of an upper floor and earth or pebble floors.⁷¹ John Apokaukos described two and three-storied buildings in the city and Papadopoulou believes that supporting evidence for this can be seen in the fresco depicting the Litany of the Icon of the Virgin Hodegetria in the narthex of the Vlacherna church near Arta.⁷² That there were houses clustered around the citadel is suggested by the actions of *basilissa* Anna in 1303. When Charles II of Naples besieged Arta *basilissa* Anna Palaiologina ordered the houses around the citadel to be demolished, presumably to create a clear field of fire and deny the besiegers cover from which to assail the citadel.⁷³ During this attack the town itself was abandoned, the people seeking refuge in the citadel. The *Chronicle of Tocco* says that τὸ γένος τῶν Σπαταίων lived in the citadel at the time of the final attack on the city by Carlo I in 1416.⁷⁴ This suggests that at least in the fifteenth century some of the most important citizens lived in the kastro. Little is known about the street plan of late Medieval Arta. A passing reference is made in the *Chronicle of Tocco* which says that after the fall of Arta to the

⁷⁰ Thomas & Predelli *Diplomatarium* I:135, 136; ActAlb:nos.619,620; ActAlbVen I:nos. 24, 48; Krekić Dubrovnik:no.1011. Ylafkovic was attacked by Francesco Pitti and his nephew Thomas in 1443 in the Burgo of Arta and chased back to his house. Foreigners were not specifically targeted in these attacks which were by enemy armies trying to conquer Arta.

⁷¹ Papadopoulou 2007:21

⁷² Papadopoulou 2007:21-22. The scene which is depicted in the fresco is a procession in Constantinople. However, Papadopoulou argues that the artist would have used local buildings as the basis for his work. Of course it is equally possible that the artist exaggerated what he saw around him to make his fresco correspond with the grandness of Constantinople.

⁷³ Chron Mor fr:384-5

⁷⁴ Chron Tocco:420-422 §4

armies of Carlo I Tocco the lives of the people of the city improved under their new ruler. One of these improvements was that the streets of the city were cleaned and widened.⁷⁵

It has been suggested that the market of Arta was located outside the city walls and was surrounded by the houses of merchants.⁷⁶ Certainly such an assumption is supported by the ease with which the market was attacked and plundered on numerous occasions.⁷⁷ However, the exact location of the market depends on what we take to have been meant by outside of the walls, the walls of the citadel or the ancient circuit of walls which must have provided some protection. When describing the market (μπορίο) the *Chronicle of Tocco* states that it was near the walls of the *kastron*.⁷⁸ The difficulty arises in deciding just what was meant by the word *kastron*. Did the author mean the city itself, or the citadel? In other areas of the text Arta is called the χώρα. Therefore the *kastron* of the *Chronicle of Tocco* could have been the citadel.⁷⁹ However, in other parts of the text the citadel is referred to as *apano* or *goula*, which could mean that the word *kastron* described the city itself or that all three words were used interchangeably to mean the citadel.⁸⁰ Evidence that the *kastron* was the citadel or *goulas* comes from other passages of the *Chronicle of Tocco* in which Carlo I Tocco took control of the *chora* and the *kastron* of Arta, the town and the citadel.⁸¹ Thus it seems as if the *kastron* was the citadel and that the market place which was so easily attacked was within the confines of the town. This suggests that the walls of the town itself were

⁷⁵ Chron Tocco:448 §4. This gives little clue as to whether any of the ancient cities paved streets had survived, whether the Byzantine streets themselves were paved or dirt or exactly what was meant by cleaned.

⁷⁶ Nicol 1984:229

⁷⁷ Chron Tocco:246 §27, 408-410 §15

⁷⁸ Chron Tocco:246 §27, 408-10 §15. There is no evidence that there was another market which was not near the walls, although the repeated description of this market as that near the walls may suggest another market in Arta.

⁷⁹ Chron Tocco:372 §12. Or, of course, the *chora* could have been the hinterland of the city. However, from the context in which the word is used I believe that *chora* is a word used to mean the city itself in the *Chronicle of Tocco*, see also Chron Tocco:306. When describing the area around the city the author of the chronicle uses the word *topos*, Chron Tocco:308.

⁸⁰ Chron Tocco:388 §5, 420-422 §4, 436-438 §16, 440-442 §20

⁸¹ Chron Tocco:440-442 §20. This phrase is used in the *Chronicle of Tocco* at a point in the narrative when the hinterland of Arta had already been in the possession of Carlo Tocco for quite some time.

incomplete or ruined by the fifteenth century. The ease with which the town of Arta could be attacked may help to explain why Carlo I kept his capital at well-fortified Ioannina instead of moving his seat to Arta which was located at the centre of his domains and had better communication links to his other possessions in the Ionian Islands.

The *goulas* was certainly the seat of the rulers of Arta. Ya'qub Spata had promised to turn the *goulas* over to the Ottomans as long as he could then rule as the *kephale* of the Sultan.⁸² When Ya'qub Spata returned to Arta following his deposition, he occupied the city and besieged Carlo Marchesano in the *goulas*.⁸³ That Ya'qub was secure doing this when Carlo I Tocco was nearby suggests that Arta still possessed some defences other than the citadel.⁸⁴ Later when Carlo I sent a messenger to Ya'qub he was living in the *goulas*.⁸⁵ The *Chronicle of Tocco* says that those living in the *kastron* were τὸ γένος τῶν Σπαταίων.⁸⁶ This would seem to support the conclusion that by *kastron* the author of the *Chronicle of Tocco* meant citadel. It seems logical that the citadel would have been occupied by members of the clan of Spata.⁸⁷ After the death of Ya'qub his mother Eirene Spata was living in the *goulas* when the people took control and forced her out.⁸⁸ When Carlo entered the city it was on the '*goulas apano*' that his *archontes* raised his banner, and it was here that Carlo and his brother were united after their victories.⁸⁹

⁸² Chron Tocco:384 §2, 388 §5

⁸³ Chron Tocco:388 §5

⁸⁴ If the town itself had been completely unfortified then Ya'qub would have found himself defenceless and pinned between Marchesano in the citadel and the Tocco brothers outside of the town.

⁸⁵ Chron Tocco:420-422 §4

⁸⁶ Chron Tocco:420-422 §4

⁸⁷ Furthermore it is unlikely that the clan of Spata was numerous enough to populate the whole city.

⁸⁸ Chron Tocco:438 §16

⁸⁹ Chron Tocco:440: §20, 442 §21



Figure 18: The castle of Arta from the town (author's picture)

The citadel encloses an area of nine hectares which though not small for a citadel is not large enough to have been the town which Benjamin of Tudela recorded as housing 100 Jews.⁹⁰ Orlandos proposed that the citadel and the city were refortified by Michael II Komnenos Doukas when he made Arta his capital in the mid-thirteenth century.⁹¹ The centre of the citadel has not been subject to excavation and was extensively landscaped when the Xenia hotel was constructed in the 1950s. This construction flattened or removed most of the surface evidence of Byzantine (and Ottoman) occupation. Only one Byzantine building partially survived the redevelopment of the area. This measures 10.90m by 45.50m although it does not survive to a great height. The building was constructed of high quality cloisonné masonry with a small chapel attached at the northern end. It has been proposed

⁹⁰Benjamin of Tudela:9-15 Nevertheless 9 hectares was not small for a Byzantine city. The walls of Servia enclosed an area of 10 hectares, those of Mystras 20-22 hectares while the upper city of Monemvasia measures 15 hectares. The Late Roman walls of Thessalonike enclose 320 hectares and the Theodosian walls of Constantinople contain an area of 1300 hectares. However, it can be seen that for a late Byzantine town the citadel of Arta was actually a fair size, especially when we consider that the kastro was only a part of the inhabited area.

⁹¹ Orlandos 1936b:151-160



Figure 19: The remains of the 'Palace of the despots' (author's picture)

that this building was the palace of the despots.⁹² This assumption is based on the quality of the construction and the size of the building.⁹³ However, if, as in Ioannina and Monemvasia, the *archontes* of the city lived in the citadel, this building could have been the residence of a particularly important official or *archon*. Furthermore there is a citadel within the citadel (the *kastraki*), which overlooks the town and which has been dated back to the Byzantine period, although it has been altered over the centuries most notably by Ali Pasha.⁹⁴ There is evidence of elaborate brickwork in this citadel and the remains of a number of Byzantine buildings. It is impossible to conclude whether the *kastraki* could have been a fortified palace as was seen at Ioannina, but was certainly an added layer of defence for the despots.⁹⁵

⁹² Papadopoulou 2007:111

⁹³ What is interesting is that the author of the *Chronicle of Tocco* never refers to this building as a palace, unlike its counterpart in Ioannina.

⁹⁴ Papadopoulou 2007:111

⁹⁵ It is tempting to suggest that as at Ioannina the despots here lived in their own fortified enclosure rather than in a palace which is located at the heart of the citadel. However, there is no proof and the large building located at the centre of the citadel remains the most likely contender for the role of palace. A palace was recorded by Evliya Çelebi in 1670. This building was of several stories with a ruined church (Papadopoulou 2007:106). This description could refer to the ruined building described above.



Figure 20: The *Kastraki*, entrance and brickwork (author's picture)

The Population and Society of Arta

Little is known about the native population of Arta. It is assumed that the city was not large before 1204, but that it grew when it became an important centre in the successor state of Epiros. It could be suggested that the *archontes* who led the revolt against Andronikos III were from important families from the city. The majority of the inhabitants of Arta for whom we have sources were merchants, a small number of whom were native Greeks. This is obviously a symptom of the nature of the surviving material, not an indication that merchants formed a particularly large sector of the population. Greek natives of Arta who were involved in trade were Dimus/Dimchus Kavallaropoulos,⁹⁶ Nicola de Calemani,⁹⁷ Georgius Fumo, Georgius Teucer,⁹⁸ John Helisei, probably a Greek

⁹⁶ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:nos.939, 963

⁹⁷ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:nos.99, 173. In these documents he is variously called Calenda, son of Nicolaus the Greek and Caemani Nicola of Arta.

⁹⁸ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:nos.762, 926

called Elissaios,⁹⁹ and Dimus Amirali.¹⁰⁰ All of these men lived after the thirteenth century; before this date no individuals are known.¹⁰¹

The majority of the inhabitants of the city about whom we have knowledge were foreigners settled in the city on a more or less permanent basis. Arta seems to have had a resident Venetian population which may not have been large in number, but was significant financially, both in the financing of trade and in extending loans to the government of the despots. The Venetian residents of Arta also owned property in the city. Members of the Contareno and Moro families of Venice settled in Arta in the late thirteenth century. These families owned property in Arta and the surrounding countryside. Jacopo Contareno owned land at Vrastova. Niccolo Moro and his sons owned houses in the city and ships which conducted trade between Arta and Venice.¹⁰² Another member of the Moro family, Moreto Moro, owned property in Arta which was looted by the troops of the despot following a fire in the city.¹⁰³ In 1315 the property of Pietro Moro in Arta was damaged when Syrgiannes Palaiologos attacked the city.¹⁰⁴ These Venetian residents in Arta also lent money to the despots. In c.1315 Pietro Moro and the Contareno family lent *Basilissa* Anna Palaiologina 500 and 1,500 hyperpyra respectively.¹⁰⁵ In spite of the difficulties that the Contareno family experienced in recovering their money in this instance they lent 2,000 hyperpyra to John II Orsini which the Venetian Senate demanded be repaid in 1328 and 1330 which was finally repaid in 1332.¹⁰⁶ Of course the only time when loans made to the government of Epiros by Venetian citizens are recorded in the proceedings of the Venetian

⁹⁹ Krekić *Dubrovník*:no.683. The attribution of the name Elissaios to Helisey was made by Nicol. Nicol 1984:232

¹⁰⁰ Krekić *Dubrovník*:no.704

¹⁰¹ For the mercantile activity of these men see the following section.

¹⁰² Thomas & Predelli *Diplomatarium* I:136: ActAlb :nos.619, 620

¹⁰³ Thomas & Predelli *Diplomatarium* I:135: ActAlb :no.619; ActAlbVen I:no.48

¹⁰⁴ ActAlbVen I:nos.24, 48

¹⁰⁵ ActAlbVen I:nos.48,49,55; ActAlb I:nos.619,620,625,657,669,670. There was a long running dispute over this money which had still not been paid back in 1320.

¹⁰⁶ ActAlbVen I:nos.97 (1328), 102 (1330), 112 (1332); Thiriet *Regestes* I:no.24

Senate when they were not promptly repaid. It should probably be assumed that loans were more frequent than they appear in the sources and that the majority were repaid in a timely fashion. This is particularly likely when one considers that the Contareno family made at least two loans to different despots. This suggests that Venetians played a part in financing the despotate and that there perhaps existed some form of government debt. Moreover, the Contareno loan to John Orsini followed a change in the ruling family and the murder of two despots. Clearly instability at the top of the despotate did not result in financial disruption. Only once is a permanent consul recorded in the city, Marco Venerio, who was consul in 1315.¹⁰⁷ At all other times the consul in Corfu was responsible for the Venetians in Arta. The Venetian presence in the city vanishes from the sources after the conquest of the city by Carlo I Tocco in 1416. The Venetians had complained that the new ruler favoured the Ragusans with his laws concerning the export of wheat from the city.¹⁰⁸ It seems unlikely that this alone could have driven the Venetians out of the city. The rise of Ragusan traders may have done so. From the late fourteenth century there was a permanent Ragusan population living in Arta. These men were, like the Venetians, involved in trade and usually operated as agents for companies or families involved in trading between Arta and Ragusa. An example of this are the Djurđević family. Marinus Djurđević is recorded in Arta in 1393, Nalchus Djurđević appears in the records of Ragusa living in Arta in 1393 and was still to be found there in 1424 and Matthieu Djurđević was trading in Arta in 1452.¹⁰⁹ Vitko Ylafkovic from Ragusa owned or rented a house in Arta and acted as a wheat merchant.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Thomas & Predelli *Diplomatarium* I:136

¹⁰⁸ See below, *Trade and Production: The Economy and Hinterland of Late Medieval Arta*.

¹⁰⁹ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:nos.443, 704, 722, 1237

¹¹⁰ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:no.1011. Ylafkovic was attacked by Francesco Pitti and his nephew Thomas in 1443 in the Burgo of Arta and chased back to his house.

Another factor for the declining Venetian presence in the city may have been the influx of Italians into Arta which followed the conquest of the city by the Italian Carlo I. Italians were resident in Arta both as merchants and as artisans and as general inhabitants under the Tocco family. There was also a small Florentine community. These men were involved in trade between Arta and Ragusa and had probably travelled to Ragusa from Florence rather than Arta but became agents for trade between the Adriatic Republic and the despotate.¹¹¹ Carlo I Tocco placed many of his Italian or western followers in positions of power once he had captured the city.¹¹² Antonellus Barges, a Catalan was the *procurator* and *familiaris* of Carlo II in 1436 and 1438. Johannes Richi acted as the ambassador of Carlo I to Ragusa in 1425.¹¹³ The position of captain of the city seems to have been only filled by Italians. Mateus de Nandolfi was captain in the 1420s and 1430s and Jacobus Rubeus was captain in the 1440s and ambassador to Ragusa in 1448.¹¹⁴ Even lower positions such as notary seem to have been awarded to Italians. Leone Raynaldus was recorded as a notary of Arta in 1436, although this notary wrote a document which held the personal seal of the despot, which may suggest that he was more important than his recorded title suggests.¹¹⁵ Benedictus of Arta acted as the ambassador of Carlo II in Ragusa in 1443, and he died there in 1445.¹¹⁶ His property was entrusted to two men, Nicolus de Ausloona of Catania, resident of Arta and Johannes Expartieri, a Catalan living in Ragusa.¹¹⁷ In the early despotate Italian influence in the city was strong as can be seen in

¹¹¹ One such man was Francesco Pitti. Krekić *Dubrovnik*:nos.848, 852, 876, 921, 961, 983, 985, 1074, 1101 for Pitti, nos.937, 1090, 1343 for other Florentines.

¹¹² It must be noted the distinct difference between this case and that of Ioannina where all of the highest jobs were filled by Greeks, particularly by the family of the captain, Stephan Strategopoulos. See previous chapter.

¹¹³ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:no.722

¹¹⁴ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:nos.921, 1021, 1136

¹¹⁵ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:no.873

¹¹⁶ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:nos.1004, 1006, 1010, 1087 in this final document recording his death Benedictus is recorded as Benedictus of Catania, inhabitant of Arta.

¹¹⁷ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:no.1087

the Italian style of some features in the churches of the city.¹¹⁸ It has been argued that Italian craftsmen lived in the city as permanent residents.¹¹⁹ In the late despotate Italians or other westerners dominated the higher social positions and offices of state.

It is not known whether there was a permanent Serbian population in Arta. The city had fallen to the armies of Stefan Dušan before 1348.¹²⁰ Although the initial governor appointed by Stefan was his half-brother Symeon Uroš, after the death of Dušan his brother appointed Peter Losha an Albanian as governor and the *Chronicle of Ioannina* states that this was because Peter was already the effective ruler of the city.¹²¹ Furthermore the same source says that when Nikephoros II returned to Arta he found that the land was full of Albanians who had driven off the native populace.¹²² Thus it seems that with the withdrawal of Symeon to Thessaly the dominant group remaining in the city were Albanians, not Greeks or Serbs. When Nikephoros II claimed Epiros a revolt by the Albanian populace was a serious enough threat to force the despot to divorce his Serbian wife and recall his abandoned former wife Maria. Furthermore these same Albanians were numerous enough to defeat the army of Nikephoros II and kill him.¹²³ By the time Bokoi seized control of Arta in 1399 the city seems to have had a cosmopolitan population. Bokoi took the name Serbalbanitoboulgarovlachos, and Nicol has suggested that this was the result of the conqueror's desire to gain the loyalty of the various groups living in the city and its hinterland.¹²⁴ It should be noted that the adopted name of Bokoi does not incorporate the Greek population. Thus it seems unlikely that Bokoi assumed this name to

¹¹⁸ See above.

¹¹⁹ Papadopoulou 2007:127-128, 145-148

¹²⁰ See above.

¹²¹ Chron Ioan:79

¹²² Chron Ioan:76. It should be noted that the author of the chronicle was passionately opposed to the Albanian infiltration into Epiros. As such it is possible that he exaggerated the level of Albanian infiltration to emphasise the difference between his city of Ioannina and Arta, the old and new capitals of the despotate. Nevertheless Peter Losha was governor and he was an Albanian.

¹²³ Chron Ioan:76-77; Kantakouzenos III:317-19.

¹²⁴ Chron Ioan:101; Nicol 1984:164-5

appeal to all of the ethnic groups living in Arta. The only Albanian resident of Arta known by name, apart from the rulers of the city, is Dimitri Schilier who was sent by Muriki Spata to Venice as his ambassador in 1410.¹²⁵ Under Ya'qub Spata the citadel seems to have been the home of the members of the clan of Spata or at least the *archontes* of the clan.¹²⁶ The fate of the Albanian population following the fall of the city to Carlo I is unknown, certainly no Albanian names appear in the sources connected with the city.

There is no evidence as to the size of the population of Arta in this period. It is likely that the population grew after 1204 when the city became capital of a successor state. Whether this process was halted or indeed reversed by the transfer of the capital to Thessalonike in 1224 is not know, but the fact that Arta was again an important city from 1230 only six years later probably means that the population did not decline. With the return of the Komneno-Doukai in the person of Michael II and Arta's renewed place as a capital city the population of the city must have grown, a process which was certainly helped by the relative peace which existed for much of the middle of the thirteenth century. However, the population of Arta must have suffered from the frequent attacks on and captures of the city as well as from outbreaks of disease. Although Arta surrendered to the armies of Andronikos III in 1338 the subsequent rebellion led to a six month siege of the city which must have caused much hardship and death amongst the population.¹²⁷ Kantakouzenos claimed that the Serbian conquest of Epiros resulted in great damage to the land and to the population and that there was famine in the region.¹²⁸ We can assume this effect to have been felt in Arta and the weakening of the pre-Serbian population may help to account for the apparent domination of the region by Albanians by the late

¹²⁵ Thiriet *Regestes* II:no.1368

¹²⁶ Chron Tocco:420-422 §4

¹²⁷ For the siege see above.

¹²⁸ Kantakouzenos III:147. Of course Dušan was taking Epiros from Kantakouzenos so it is unlikely that he would extol the benefits of Serbian rule.

1350s.¹²⁹ There was an outbreak of disease (plague?) in Arta in 1374 which killed the despot Peter Losha.¹³⁰ A Ottoman attack in 1384 resulted in many of the inhabitants of the city being led away as captives.¹³¹ When Bokoi seized control of the city in 1399 he proved a vicious ruler and a tyrant.¹³² Carlo I Tocco burnt some of the town in 1405 but is unclear whether the population had already sought refuge in the fortifications or not.¹³³ The *Chronicle of Tocco*, an admittedly partial source, claims that the city and its people revived under the rule of Carlo I.¹³⁴

Mention is made in the *Chronicle of Tocco* about the *archontes* and people of Arta having some say in the rule of their city. The *archontes* were often consulted when the ruler of the city needed to make an important decision. Nevertheless they feature far less prominently in the sources than their counterparts in Ioannina. The people on the other hand feature in an official capacity as part of a city council far more frequently than those of Ioannina. Following the death of Muriki Spata his mother assumed the rule of Arta. There was a council of the people assembled by Eirene Spata. She asked them to accept her second son Ya'qub as ruler of Arta whilst giving the rule of Rogoi to the son-in-law of Carlo I Tocco, Carlo Marchesano.¹³⁵ The people in general were fearful that Ya'qub, being a Muslim, intended to turn their city over to the Ottomans and therefore they, along with the *archontes*, imprisoned him and invited Carlo Marchesano from Rogoi to become lord of Arta.¹³⁶ When Ya'qub escaped and returned with a Ottoman army the majority of the

¹²⁹ See above.

¹³⁰ Chron Ioan:84-86

¹³¹ Chron Ioan:93-4

¹³² Chron Ioan:101

¹³³ Chron Tocco:244 §27

¹³⁴ Chron Tocco:448 §4

¹³⁵ Chron Tocco:374-376 §16

¹³⁶ Chron Tocco:384 §2. By overthrowing Ya'qub then letting him escape the people of Arta brought about the very fate that they had wished to avoid. Ya'qub returned with a Ottoman army and retook the city. Chron Tocco:386-388 §5. Carlo Tocco had feared the link between Ya'qub and the Ottomans some years before the citizens of Arta grew to be worried. Chron Tocco:384 §1. Both Carlo and the Artinoi were correct to fear the

people and the assembly of the city went to Ya'qub and offered him the rule of Arta.¹³⁷ Following the death of Ya'qub Carlo I Tocco demanded the surrender of Arta from its *archontes*.¹³⁸ In this instance the people (Artinoi) went to the *goulas* and confronted Eirene Spata, declaring that God had taken power from her sons and delivered it to the despot Carlo. Eirene was evicted from the *goulas* which was taken over by the people and the town was surrendered to Carlo.¹³⁹ It was agreed that the rights and privileges of the people of Arta should be respected by Carlo and the *archontes* and the council of the city submitted to Tocco rule.¹⁴⁰ This incident is interesting for two reasons; it is the only time when the privileges of the people of Arta are mentioned and the entire citizen body was involved in the decision to surrender.

This situation should be compared with the assumption of power of Carlo Tocco in Ioannina. In Ioannina the *archontes* convinced the people to accept Carlo Tocco as their ruler.¹⁴¹ In Arta however, it seems that the people were more directly involved in the decision making process. The discrepancy could be the result of the author being in Ioannina at the time of the expulsion of Eudokia from the city and the admittance of Carlo Tocco whilst he was (if Nicol is correct) camped outside of Arta at the time of its surrender and thus not party to the political manoeuvrings inside of the city. However, the account of the surrender of Arta is detailed and perhaps the author of the *Chronicle of Tocco* had access to information about what was happening inside of the city. After the fall of the city the leaders of the citizens were honoured by Carlo I Tocco.¹⁴² However, many of the highest

intentions of Ya'qub. The Chronicle of Tocco records that Ya'qub had an arrangement with the Ottomans to turn the city over to them and then rule as the *kephale* of the Sultan. Chron Tocco:384 §2

¹³⁷ Chron Tocco:388 §5 τὸ δὲ πλεθὸς τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ τὸ κοινὸ τῆς χώρας

¹³⁸ Chron Tocco:436 §16

¹³⁹ Chron Tocco:438 §16

¹⁴⁰ Chron Tocco:440 §19 οἱ ἄρχοντες καὶ τὸ κοινὸν τῆς χώρας

¹⁴¹ Although the emphasis in the source for this episode is on the Captain of Ioannina's efforts to convince his fellow *archontes* to accept Carlo, the people fell into line once this was achieved.

¹⁴² Chron Tocco:448 §4. The *archontes* of Carlo Tocco were rewarded, as were those who already lived in Arta.

jobs in the city were placed in the hands of the western followers of Carlo.¹⁴³ No mention is made of different ethnic groups being involved in the decision to surrender to Carlo I. As such it is impossible to determine whether the native, Greek Artinoi were at the forefront or if the Spata clan had lost the confidence of the Albanian population. As noted above the *Chronicle of Tocco* describes the Spata clan as living in the kastro, a suggestion that they were numerous. That no individual could be found to lead the clan following the death of Ya'qub could indicate the extinction of the ruling line. That the Artinoi went to the *goulas* to demand the surrender of Eirene Spata suggests that those responsible were not of the Spata clan who were already in the kastro. As such those demanding surrender could have been other Albanians or the remaining Greeks. Certainly no Albanians are mentioned in the city after the conquest by Carlo Tocco, but Greeks were known, perhaps the surrender of Arta took the form of the ousting of the Albanian population. What is interesting is that in the *Chronicle of Tocco's* description of Carlo I Tocco's rise to power in Ioannina although the *archontes*, particularly the Strategopoulos family, took the majority of the decisions, the clergy played an important part as well.¹⁴⁴ In the historical sources concerning Arta the bishop and his clergy are noticeably absent. In fact not a single bishop is known by name for the period 1267-1449.¹⁴⁵

Trade and Production: The Economy and Hinterland of Late Medieval Arta

Arta was both an international and regional market, thanks to the good land and sea communication routes which connected it to its own hinterland and other urban centres. The beginning of a substantial Venetian presence in Arta came in 1271 when an

¹⁴³ See above.

¹⁴⁴ See previous chapter.

¹⁴⁵ Nicol 1984:234

earthquake damaged the port of Dyrrachion so badly that the Venetian Senate ordered traders to travel to Arta instead.¹⁴⁶ Few documents actually speak of Venetians trading in Arta. However, we can view this trade indirectly through the presence of Venetians in the city and by observing the declarations of the Venetian Senate ordering the suspension of trade. Venetian trade in Arta was disrupted numerous times, either by foreign attacks on the city or by the actions of the despot and his subjects against Venetian merchants and the despot's subsequent refusal to pay compensation to the injured parties. When John Komnenos Doukas of Thessaly attacked Arta the Venetian authorities ordered the consul in Corfu who was in charge of overseeing the Venetian presence in the city, to suspend all trade with Arta.¹⁴⁷ In 1297 when Constantine, the ruler of Thessaly, attacked Arta two Venetians lost their property, which the Republic thought the ruler of Thessaly should compensate them for.¹⁴⁸ In 1284 an envoy was sent from Venice to claim compensation for property stolen from Venetians in Arta. The despot refused to pay any damages and forbade his subjects from dealing with the Venetians.¹⁴⁹ The despots themselves confiscated (the Venetians said stole) Venetian property and ships.¹⁵⁰ In 1318 trade was again suspended on the orders of the Venetian Senate because of the number of outstanding debts owed by the despot to Venetian citizens and outstanding claims for compensation.¹⁵¹ There was further suspension of trade in 1330 (for two years) and 1391 (for five years).¹⁵²

In 1417 the Venetian Senate complained that Carlo I Tocco had prohibited the export of wheat from the city without his permission. The Venetians believed that this act

¹⁴⁶ Thiriet *Deliberations* I:35

¹⁴⁷ Thiriet *Assemblies* I:no.90,no.91

¹⁴⁸ Thiriet *Assemblies* I:no.75. The two Venetians in question were Lorenzo Mengulo and Pietro Savonario. The Senate was still demanding compensation in 1317. ActAlbVen I:nos.34, 35, 37, 38.

¹⁴⁹ Thiriet *Assemblies* I:48-9

¹⁵⁰ Thiriet *Assemblies* I:59,65-66

¹⁵¹ ActAlbVen I:no.42

¹⁵² Thiriet *Regestes* I:nos.24, 883, 886, 905

had two aims, to encourage the export of salt from Arta and to allow Carlo to favour the Ragusans over their Venetian rivals.¹⁵³ Although the reign of Carlo I Tocco marks the point at which the Ragusans became the dominant group in the mercantile life of Arta they had traded in the city for a number of years. The earliest reference to the city of Arta is in a Ragusan document of 1272, although this does not concern trade.¹⁵⁴ In 1313 the Ragusans chartered a ship to travel to Arta, load supplies and merchandise then travel to Venice to sell their goods.¹⁵⁵ The majority of the Ragusan merchants travelling to Arta went there in search of grain.

From the documents of Ragusa it is possible to get a sense of the trading careers of Ragusan merchants in Arta.¹⁵⁶ The Djurdević family were involved with trade in Arta from the fourteenth to fifteenth centuries. In the late fourteenth century Marinus Djurdević and his family were involved both in shipping goods from Arta to Ragusa and as middlemen, resident in Arta and purchasing goods in the city and preparing them for shipment back to Ragusa. In 1393 Marinus Djurdević chartered a ship to travel to Arta.¹⁵⁷ Marinus chartered another ship to go to Arta and transport wheat to Ragusa.¹⁵⁸ Twice in 1406 another member of the family, Nalchus Djurdević, purchased wheat at Arta and delivered it to an incoming Ragusan ship.¹⁵⁹ In 1424 despot Carlo demanded the repayment of a debt owed to him by Nalchus. When repayment was not forthcoming the son of Nalchus was arrested in Arta and his property confiscated.¹⁶⁰ In 1425 the despot was still involved with the Djurdević family who had in their possession a large quantity of millet owned by the

¹⁵³ Thiriet *Regestes* II:no.1660

¹⁵⁴ Krekić *Dubrovník*:no.10

¹⁵⁵ Krekić *Dubrovník*:no.95

¹⁵⁶ There are many merchants who are mentioned only in one document, the following paragraph concerns only those for whom we have evidence for a prolonged association with Arta.

¹⁵⁷ Krekić *Dubrovník*:no.443

¹⁵⁸ Krekić *Dubrovník*:no.448

¹⁵⁹ Krekić *Dubrovník*:nos.528, 529.

¹⁶⁰ Krekić *Dubrovník*:no.704

despot.¹⁶¹ In 1435 Luko Djurđević chartered a ship in Ragusa to buy wheat in Arta.¹⁶² The final member of the family mentioned in connection with Arta is Matthieu Djurđević who exported linen to the city in 1452.¹⁶³ Although not a native of Arta Franciscus Pitti had a long running connection with the city. A native of Florence Franciscus was a resident of Ragusa. As well as forming at least two companies,¹⁶⁴ Franciscus was involved in individual mercantile acts. In 1436 he purchased wheat in Arta for sale in Ragusa, and in 1439 he became the partner of Antonellus Barges of Arta for the same reason.¹⁶⁵ Franciscus chartered another ship to buy wheat in Arta in 1441.¹⁶⁶

During the period of Ragusan dominance of trade with Arta a number of companies were created to trade with the city. What is interesting is that although based in Arta or Ragusa neither of the two companies for which we have extensive records were dominated by natives of either city. The first was set up in 1435 by Franciscus Pitti of Florence, Nicolaus Nicoli of Castrodurante, Annellus Zechapessi of Naples and three unnamed Ragusans.¹⁶⁷ The company was created to bring wheat from Arta to Ragusa and each investor contributed 200 ducats. The second company was created in 1436 and features three of the same individuals as the previous company, Franciscus Pitti, Annellus Zechapessi and Nicolaus Nicoli in addition to Thomaso Polus.¹⁶⁸ These four men purchased the right to collect customs duties of Arta from the despot for one year from April 1436 until the end of March 1437. Each investor contributed 600 ducats to the venture and the company embarked on the trade of unidentified goods as well as the

¹⁶¹ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:no.722

¹⁶² Krekić *Dubrovnik*:no.847

¹⁶³ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:no.1237

¹⁶⁴ See following paragraph.

¹⁶⁵ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:nos.876, 918

¹⁶⁶ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:no.961

¹⁶⁷ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:no.848

¹⁶⁸ Called Franceschus Pitti of Florence, Annellus Cichapesse of Naples and Nicolaus Nuzoli of Castro Durante in this document. Krekić *Dubrovnik*:no.851. All of these four merchants are recorded as being residents of Ragusa.

collection of customs duties. Pitti was sent to Arta to supervise the activities of the company in the city. By April 1436 1146.5 ducats had been invested in the company and 1999.5 ducats had been made by the investors.

Merchants from Arta itself are to be found in Ragusa in greater numbers than may have been expected. Almost half of the merchants named travelling between Arta and Ragusa were from Arta, the remainder being mostly from Ragusa. However, not all of these merchants were Greek. In fact the names of the merchants originating in Arta demonstrate just how cosmopolitan the city had become during the years of Italian rule and possibly earlier under Albanian or even Byzantine rule. Greeks involved in trade were Dimus/Dimchus Kavallaropoulos who traded using the ships of the despot and the despot's subjects.¹⁶⁹ Kavallaropoulos also owned property in Ragusa. When it was looted in 1439, Carlo II demanded and received compensation for his *familiaris*.¹⁷⁰ In 1441 Kavallaropoulos, in partnership with Jacobus Rubeus, was given a one-year exemption from certain customs' dues to import goods to Ragusa.¹⁷¹ Nicola de Calemani, a Greek of Arta, lived in Ragusa in 1336.¹⁷² Calemani was involved in trade with the Ragusans. In 1313 he was owed 43 grossi by a Ragusan and in 1336 he sold nine jars of wine from Ortona for 29 ducats to another Ragusan.¹⁷³ Georgius Fumo and Georgius Teucer, Greeks of Arta, were in Ragusa in 1428 and 1438 respectively.¹⁷⁴ Georgius Fumo was to buy 134 ducats worth of flax in Arta for Niksa Vlatovic. Of these 67 ducats were guaranteed by the despot's ambassador in Ragusa, Johannes Richi.¹⁷⁵ John Helisei was the procurator of Carlo

¹⁶⁹ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:nos.939, 963

¹⁷⁰ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:no.939

¹⁷¹ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:no.963. He was still in Ragusa acting as the ambassador of Carlo II in 1448, Krekić *Dubrovnik*:no.1136

¹⁷² Krekić *Dubrovnik*:nos.99, 173. In these documents he is variously called Calenda, son of Nicolaus the Greek and Caemani Nicola of Arta.

¹⁷³ Krekić *Dubrovnik*: nos.99, 173

¹⁷⁴ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:nos.762, 926

¹⁷⁵ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:no.762

I Tocco in Ragusa in 1423 and was probably a Greek called Elissaios.¹⁷⁶ Helisei was selling wheat in Ragusa. Dimus Amirali was also likely a Greek and was the representative of the captain of Arta in Ragusa in 1424 and 1436. In 1436 Amirali was in Ragusa to trade and seems to have travelled there in his own ship. The municipal officials eventually loaned Amirali 100 hyperpyra to buy wheat for shipment to Ragusa.¹⁷⁷ It is not clear whether Amirali ever completed this last commission, as he died in Ragusa in April 1437 and donated all of his possessions to the people of Ragusa.¹⁷⁸ A Catalan from Arta trading in Ragusa was Antonellus Barges, procurator of Carlo II Tocco in Ragusa in 1436, 1439.¹⁷⁹ In 1436 Barges was trading wheat in Ragusa and Dimus Amirali served as guarantor for Barges. In 1439 Barges was a partner of Franciscus Pitti in a venture to chart a ship to bring wheat from Arta to Ragusa.¹⁸⁰ An Italian involved in trade, Galasius Rubeus, son of the previously mentioned Jacobus, was in Ragusa in 1443 and 1448.¹⁸¹

Many of the goods sold in the market place of Arta came from the hinterland of the city. All of the goods listed are raw materials not manufactured goods. The hinterland is mentioned in a number of sources. After seizing Vobliana Carlo I Tocco's forces daily raided the plain around Arta. The *Chronicle of Tocco* describes how Carlo I destroyed vineyards and fields.¹⁸² Carlo was particularly careful to try to avoid destruction to the vineyards as he knew that he was damaging his future property. No mention however, is made of the fields.¹⁸³ Although grain is often recorded in the sources as the major export of

¹⁷⁶ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:no.683. The attribution of the name Elissaios to Helisey was made by Nicol. Nicol 1984:232

¹⁷⁷ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:nos.870, 879

¹⁷⁸ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:no.904. This act was authorised by Carlo II.

¹⁷⁹ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:nos.873 in this document Barges is described as a *familiaris* of Carlo II, 918, 921, 1021, 1136

¹⁸⁰ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:no.918

¹⁸¹ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:nos.873, 918, 921, 1021

¹⁸² Chron Tocco:244 §26, 246 §26, 406-408 §14

¹⁸³ Chron Tocco:410-412 §16

Arta it must be noted that wine is never mentioned. As such it must be assumed that the vineyards destroyed by Carlo Tocco must have supplied a local demand only.¹⁸⁴

It is known that Carlo I Tocco hunted at Arta during the winter; perhaps some of the animals he pursued provided the skins which are mentioned in trade documents.¹⁸⁵ Animal husbandry seems to have formed a major part of the economy of the hinterland of the city. The *Chronicle of Tocco* records that Arta was located in a 'sea of livestock'.¹⁸⁶ Animals specifically mentioned were sheep, buffaloes, cattle, beasts of burden¹⁸⁷ and horses,¹⁸⁸ Kantakouzenos claimed that the Serbian conquest of Epiros resulted in great damage to the land and that there was famine in the region.¹⁸⁹ Whether there was a recovery under Albanian rule is not known however, the *Chronicle of Tocco* states that agriculture revived once Carlo I Tocco took control of the region, suggesting the situation had not improved since the death of Stefan Dušan.¹⁹⁰ One non-agricultural or animal-based product which was exported from Arta was salt from the nearby saltpans.¹⁹¹ The lack of security for much of the late middle ages must have affected the productivity of the

¹⁸⁴ Nicol 1984:230 suggests that the wine produced in Epiros was not to the taste of the Venetians. The British Naval Intelligence Handbooks were compiled before the irrigation projects which greatly changed the face of the plain of Arta had taken place. They also predate the introduction of heavy machinery and modern farming methods to Epiros. As such they provide a sense of the situation existing in late medieval times. It is worth noting that these handbooks record that just under eighty per cent of the cultivated land in Epiros was devoted to cereal production, with only ten per cent being given over to vines. Greece III:57. These figures are for 1937. Vineyards accounted for 6.3% of the cultivated land, Greece III:69.

¹⁸⁵ Chron Tocco:332-334 §14

¹⁸⁶ Chron Tocco:270-272 §2

¹⁸⁷ Chron Tocco:432 §12. These animals were all within site of the city itself as the people witnessed Carlo I Tocco plundering them.

¹⁸⁸ Chron Tocco:270-272 §2. There is no mention of exporting livestock. However, as the surviving sources do not cover trade within Epiros or between Arta and the remainder of the Balkans, places which animals could walk to, this does not mean that the region was not an exporter of animals.

¹⁸⁹ Kantakouzenos III:147. Of course Dušan was taking Epiros from Kantakouzenos so it is unlikely that he would extol the benefits of Serbian rule.

¹⁹⁰ Chron Tocco:448 §4

¹⁹¹ See below, pp.189-190.

hinterland of Arta. One of the boasts of the *Chronicle of Tocco* was that after the fall of Arta to Carlo I it was safer to travel through the hinterland and that agriculture recovered.¹⁹²

The commodity most often recorded in the sources is grain, either wheat or millet and from at least the mid-fourteenth century this was the major product exported from the city. Laiou has suggested that this grain came not only from Epiros but from Thessaly and Macedonia as well.¹⁹³ While this is certainly possible I could not find textual evidence which mentions grain being brought to Arta, only grain leaving the city. Although there are no documents which directly concern the export of wheat to Venice from Arta, in 1417 the Venetian Senate complained that Carlo I Tocco had prohibited the export of wheat from the city without his permission.¹⁹⁴ This suggests that the Venetians had been engaged in the wheat trade in Arta and that their dominant position was being threatened by the new ruler of the city. That the hinterland of the city had long produced a surplus is hinted at in the terms of the treaty by which John II Orsini became the vassal of Philip of Taranto. John agreed to provide the principality of Achaia, another of Philip's vassals, with wheat.¹⁹⁵

Wheat and millet were exported to Ragusa from the fourteenth century onwards.¹⁹⁶ Arta was one destination among a number which provided wheat for Ragusa. There are a number of Ragusan documents which say that the first port of call when buying grain should be Arta; should there be none available in the city, then the ship should head to the Peloponnese, to either Clarenza¹⁹⁷ or Patras¹⁹⁸ or, occasionally, return north to Kanina.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹² Chron Tocco:448 §4. However, it should be noted that for almost a decade the insecurity from which the region of Arta had suffered was caused by Carlo I Tocco.

¹⁹³ Laiou 1980-81:185

¹⁹⁴ Thiriet *Regestes* II:no.1660

¹⁹⁵ This treaty survived in a now lost Angevin document quoted in Romanos 1895:136.

¹⁹⁶ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:nos.448 (1393), 528 (1406), 529 (1406), 704 (1424), 847 (1435), 848 (1435), 870 (1436), 871 (1436), 874 (1436), 875 (1436), 876 (1436), 877 (1436), 879 (1436), 885 (1436), 918 (1438), 935 (1439), 937 (1439), 940 (1439), 961 (1441), 1004 (1443), 1250 (1452) for wheat: nos.683 (1423), 722 (1425), 870 (1436), 871 (1436), 885 (1436), 886 (1436) for millet. In all of these documents Arta or the Gulf of Arta is listed as the only destination.

¹⁹⁷ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:no.902 (1437)

Only once was Arta the second destination after Valona,²⁰⁰ and once it was included in a triple itinerary taking in Valona, Corfu and finally Arta.²⁰¹ The despots themselves were involved in the trade of grain, at least during the period of Tocco rule. In 1424 Carlo I was selling grain in Ragusa using Mateus Nandolfi as his representative and Nalchus Djurđević as his Ragusan contact.²⁰² The heirs of Nalchus had millet of the despot in their possession in 1425.²⁰³ In 1436 Dimus Amirali was acting for Carlo II in Ragusa, in the same way that Nandolfi had for his uncle Carlo I.²⁰⁴ In the same year Antonellus Barges, familiaris of Carlo II, arrived in Ragusa to arrange the sale of grain on behalf of the despot.²⁰⁵ Wheat is the only product which is recorded being exported from the city in the fourteenth century. Documents which concern the trade in all other commodities date to the fifteenth century. Skins were exported, suggesting the importance of animal husbandry and possibly hunting to the economy of the city and its hinterland.²⁰⁶ Wax was also exported frequently enough to suggest that it may have been an important commodity.²⁰⁷ Of less importance were cotton and flax.²⁰⁸ Despite the fact that salt pans were located close to Arta the city is only rarely mentioned as a source for the export of salt and then only once as the primary destination for the ship in question.²⁰⁹ Imports to Arta are far less commonly recorded. Nicol suggested that the fourteenth century economy of Arta operated on a barter system with ships arriving from Ragusa laden with textiles which were then exchanged for grains

¹⁹⁸ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:nos.827 (1435), 842 (1435), 844 (1435) for wheat: nos.842 (1435), 909 (1437) for millet.

¹⁹⁹ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:no.826 (1435)

²⁰⁰ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:no.726 (1426)

²⁰¹ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:no.903 (1437)

²⁰² Krekić *Dubrovnik*:no.704

²⁰³ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:no.722

²⁰⁴ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:nos.870, 871. It is noteworthy that Amirali travelled to Ragusa in his own ship.

²⁰⁵ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:no.873

²⁰⁶ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:nos.1309 (1454), 1343 (1456), 1372 (1458)

²⁰⁷ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:nos.854 (1436), 1191 (1450), 1309 (1454), 1343 (1456), 1404 (1459) tallow

²⁰⁸ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:no.1191 (1450) for cotton: nos.762 (1428), 1242 (1452) for flax.

²⁰⁹ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:no.648 (1418) for a salt buying expedition which took in Arta, Santa Maura and Sancto Nicolo: no.826 (1435).

or salt.²¹⁰ However, the earliest reference to Ragusan textiles being traded in Arta is half a century after the first recorded purchase of wheat. It is not until 1446 that mention was made of textiles and in none of the documents is there reference to bartering with them for other goods.²¹¹ It would seem reasonable to suppose that the merchants coming from the west to Arta to buy goods also brought things to sell as well, however, there is no evidence as to what these items might have been.²¹²

Working from textual sources, Nicol has proposed that the currency circulating in Arta up until c.1318 was Byzantine, concluding that at some time after c.1318 Byzantine coinage was supplanted by that of Venice.²¹³ In support of this view Nicol cites the dowry of Thamar, who married Philip of Taranto; a bribe paid to Guy of Athens by Anna Palaiologina;²¹⁴ and the settlement of a debt with Venice in 1312.²¹⁵ All of these were paid in hyperpyra.²¹⁶ The coinages of the Italian city states were recorded in the written sources. Gjin Spata, lord of Arta, was paid 8,000 florins as a ransom for the Grand Master of the Knights Hospitaller in 1378.²¹⁷ Galani-Krikou, in a survey of coin finds in Epiros, on the other hand, suggests that western currencies circulated in Epiros alongside and for longer than that of Byzantium, Italian influence becoming stronger as more of Epiros and the Ionian Islands passed under Italian rule.²¹⁸ I believe that the evidence of the coins supports Nicol's conclusions to a point, but with the date of transition shifted much earlier, probably

²¹⁰ Nicol 1984:231

²¹¹ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:nos.1108 (1446), 1152 (1449), 1191 (1450), 1237 (1452), 1247 (1452), 1252 (1452), 1255 (1452), 1256 (1452), 1309 (1454), 1311 (1454), 1387 (1458, Florentine linen to Arta): no.1104 (1446) linen to Valona and then Arta.

²¹² Saradi has studied the question of a barter economy of Byzantium. Although such an economy certainly existed throughout Byzantine history almost all of the examples discovered by Saradi involve transactions involving the sale of land and it is almost invariably a peasant who receives the payment in kind. There is no evidence for an area reverting solely to barter or for the use of barter in trade. Saradi 1995b:413

²¹³ Nicol 1984:223-224

²¹⁴ Both recorded in the Chronicle of the Morea.

²¹⁵ Thiriet *Regestes* I:no.24

²¹⁶ Nicol 1984:223

²¹⁷ Chron Ioan:86

²¹⁸ Galani-Krikou 1990:129-130. No evidence of this is cited except for the number of Italian and Frankish coins found in Epiros and Arta itself is not considered independently, so Nicol is not directly contradicted.

at around the beginning of the period under consideration in this thesis. A small number of Byzantine coinage from Thessalonike, Constantinople and Nicaea supplemented the Venetian, and Frankish Greek coins which made up the majority of the circulating medium in Epiros until the mid-fourteenth century when the coinage of Venice likely began to dominate completely as the hoard of torneselli (first struck in c.1353) suggests. During the reign of Michael II Komnenos-Doukas these coins were supplemented by Epirote coins produced in Arta but it was never intended that the native coins should replace the others to become the sole medium of exchange in Arta.

As has been noted earlier, the reference to hyperpyra in written sources for the period is not surprising. During the fourteenth century the hyperpyron was part way through the process of changing from a circulating currency into a money of account. Nicol's written evidence comes from the *Chronicle of the Morea*, some Venetian documents and the *Chronicle of Ioannina*. It is unlikely that the author of the *Chronicle of the Morea* would have known about the currencies circulating in Epiros, while the Venetian sources were probably referring to the hyperpyron in its function as a unit of accounting. That Italian coinages are mentioned in written sources suggests that Nicol was correct to hypothesise the eventual domination of these coinages in Epiros. Having said this Nicol believed that with the decline of the Venetian presence in Arta (and the banking and money lending which they had practiced in the city) and the rise of Ragusa that commercial transactions involving money were generally replaced by a barter system where Ragusan manufactured products, usually linen, were traded for grains or salt from Arta.²¹⁹ However, the Ragusan documents are full of accounts in which merchants were permitted to import a certain amount of grain by value in the accounting currency, hyperpyra and sou or circulating and

²¹⁹ Nicol 1984:231

accounting currency, the ducat or gros.²²⁰ Of course these three currencies were units of account as well as circulating currencies. However, in the documents which mention the foundation of companies for trading in Arta actual amounts of cash are mentioned which were taken by the representative of the company to Arta. In 1435 each party gave 200 ducats for the purchase of wheat from Arta.²²¹ In 1436 another company was formed and each investor contributed 600 ducats, 853 ducats were taken to Arta by Franciscus Pitti in cash; the remainder was forwarded later in either cash or goods. Furthermore, in 1435 Rastisa Bogojević was given 1000 ducats by the municipal officials of Ragusa to buy wheat in Arta, or if he could not find enough there, from Patras as well.²²² Barter is not mentioned at all in the Ragusan sources. However, this is not surprising. An explicit mention of barter would have been unusual in a society like Ragusa which was fully monetised both in its accounting methods and in the daily market economy. The argument against barter is most conclusively provided by the evidence that Ragusa possessed a monetised economy and it can be supposed that Arta did also, in spite of the gaps in the numismatic evidence. It would be odd for two economies where coins circulated and which operated a degree of developed accounting practices to have resorted to barter. Documents which specifically mention cash in transactions between merchants from Ragusa and Arta support this contention. Certainly the ships of Ragusa, when their outward cargo is mentioned, which is not always the case, carry goods. However, this is surely simply a case of best mercantile practice. To sail to Arta with an empty boat would not have been

²²⁰ Wheat is the commodity which is valued in hyperpyra, Krekić *Dubrovnik*:no.448 (1393), 528 (1406),529 (1406), 722 (1425), 870 (1436), 879 (1436): Wine, salt, wheat, flax, wool and linen were valued in ducats, Krekić *Dubrovnik*:no.173 (1336), wine; no.648 (1418), salt; nos.704 (1424), 827 (1435), 848 (1435), 852 (1436), 874 (1436), 885 (1436), 886 (1436), wheat; no.762 (1428), flax; no.1104 (1446), wool; no.1104 (1446), linen: wheat was valued in sous, Krekić *Dubrovnik*:nos.683 (1423), 704 (1424), 874 (1436): wheat was also valued in grossi, Krekić *Dubrovnik*:nos.722 (1425), 827 (1435), 844 (1435), 902 (1437).

²²¹ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:no.848

²²² Krekić *Dubrovnik*:no.827

financially feasible and it has always been the practice of merchants to carry goods in both directions to maximise profit.

Some comment should be made concerning the Arta mint. The mint operated in some form from the reign of Michael I Komnenos Doukas until the end of the reign of Michael II Komnenos Doukas, 1204-1268. The most recent assessment of the output of this mint was made by Michael Hendy. His conclusions are by far the most convincing.²²³ Michael I Komnenos Doukas, Theodore Komnenos Doukas and Manuel Komnenos Doukas struck only one denomination of coin in Arta, namely electrum trachea of only one design.²²⁴ These coins are more likely to have been occasional issues rather than actual currency. This raises the question of whether there was really a mint at Arta in the traditional sense before c.1237. Michael II Komnenos Doukas (1230-1268) struck a mixed coinage of electrum/silver and billon trachea (one type for the former, at least two for the latter).²²⁵ Hendy has suggested that the two types of billon trachea minted by Michael II were produced before and after 1248.²²⁶ This date marked the submission of Michael II to John III Vatatzes of Nicaea and has been proposed as the date of Michael's coronation as despot by John III.²²⁷ The event was commemorated by a coinage of its own. This coin had previously been assigned to Arta but Hendy reassigned it to Thessalonike based on the sigla which appear on the coins and on their style.²²⁸ Baker has suggested that a reattribution of this type to the mint of Arta cannot be discounted when the arguments of Protonotarios and Oikonomidou and others are taken into account. He further argues that the date given

²²³ DOC IV,II:621-626.

²²⁴ DOC IV,II:623-4

²²⁵ DOC IV,II:624. Hendy believes that only two types of billon trachea can be firmly attributed to Michael II, Oikonomidou et al. 1990 all suggest a higher number.

²²⁶ The former (Type A) depicts a beardless bust of Christ on the obverse and a standing Michael II and the archangel Michael on the reverse; the later (Type B) depicts a half-length figure of the archangel Michael on the obverse and a standing Michael II crowned by John III Vatatzes on the reverse.

²²⁷ See above, for the submission of Michael II to John III and the probability that Michael held the rank of despot from an earlier grant.

²²⁸ DOC IV,II:625-626

by Hendy of 1248 must be broadened to post 1248.²²⁹ One final design should be mentioned; Hendy's type 3 of Thessalonike. This type cannot be definitively attributed to either the mint at Arta or that at Thessalonike, nor can the figures be positively identified.²³⁰ It was suggested by Bendall that this design belonged to Michael II and was struck at Arta.²³¹ Nicol has suggested that the coins of Michael II were never minted in sufficient quantities to have been used for taxation or for commerce.²³² Overall the conclusions of Baker seem to be the most reasonable considering the current state of knowledge, namely that there were two phases of minting in Arta under Michael II, one in which Michael is depicted alone as an independent ruler (pre-1248/9) and a second following his submission to John III Vatatzes (1248/9-1266/7).²³³ If the variety of types struck at Arta is extended to include those which Hendy labelled as questionable, and also that suggested by Bendall, then the coinage of Michael II can be seen to have been a more regular coinage than was once thought.²³⁴ With the almost complete incorporation of Epiros into a Venetian/Frankish monetary system it is perhaps puzzling why the Komneno-Doukai struck coins of Byzantine type. This should perhaps be seen less in light of the coins as money and more in terms of the Komneno-Doukai stating their place in the Byzantine world. Theodore Komnenos Doukas, with his ambitions to the throne in Constantinople, could hardly be seen to be striking a western coin, the money of those who

²²⁹ Baker 2002:123

²³⁰ DOC IV,II:625-626. For the purposes of this study I have attributed the coins to the mint of Arta.

²³¹ Bendall 1996:3-5

²³² Nicol 1984:223

²³³ Baker 2002:125

²³⁴ Baker 2002:125 suggests that the coinage of Michael II possessed 'more of an air of a regular coinage' after his typological and chronological rearrangements and that the output of Arta therefore bares more of a similarity to that of Thessalonike under the Komneno-Doukai and John III than had previously been thought. The exact number of issues both pre and post-1248/9 remains open to debate. Michael's coinage has been found in a hoard at Arta (Oikonomidou et al.1990:117-120) and as single finds at Arta, Ioannina, Agios Achilleos, (Galan-Krikou 1990:155-157; Oikonomidou et al. 1990:117-120; Metcalf 1979:134), Ohrid (Oikonomidou et al. 1990:104) and Sardis (Baker 2002:386-389).

had shattered the empire in 1204. Similarly although Michael II was more comfortable in Arta he certainly had ambitions further afield in the Byzantine heartland.

After a gap of fifty-five years a new mint was created at Arta by John II Orsini (1323-1335/6) which operated for his lifetime. John is given the title despot on his coins, a title which he was not granted until 1328.²³⁵ Whether John minted these coins after his recognition by Andronikos II as despot or before is not known. The evidence collected and analysed by Baker proves that striking of the coins began before 1330/1331.²³⁶ John produced only one denomination of coin, namely deniers tournois. Within this coinage Tzamalis has identified two major variants (IOA and IOB) and ten different designs.²³⁷ It is indicative of the continued importance of western coins and the subsequent decline of Byzantine power (and the imperial ambitions of the rulers of Epiros) since the reign of Michael II Komnenos Doukas that John decided to use a western prototype for his coinage.²³⁸

The published numismatic material from Arta includes both hoards and single finds. Five hoards have been found in or near Arta.²³⁹ The latest issues in three of these hoards were struck during or shortly after the reign of Michael VIII Palaiologos, one

²³⁵ See above.

²³⁶ Baker 2002:267; see also Baker 2001:231.

²³⁷ Tzamalis 1994:65-74. For a transcription of the legends of the denier tournois and the variation in the design see Baker 2002:354.

²³⁸ It seems that John's coins were accepted into the body of circulating deniers tournois. Certainly they have surfaced in a number of hoards and as single finds in Italy, Greece, Macedonia and Bulgaria. John Orsini's deniers tournois were found in 18 hoards, 9 of which were studied by Baker. These hoards were found at Atalandi, Ermitsa, Patra (2 hoards), Romanos Dodonis, Roussaiika Agriniou, Thesprotia, Corinth, Delphi (two hoards), Elis, Cephalonia, Thessalonike, Manduria, Naples, Taranto Celestini, Naupaktos and a final hoard of unknown origin. There have been single finds at Arta, Pantanassa, Thebes, Burgas, Nesebur, Ohrid, Pepeline, Trnovo, Corinth and Athens. Baker 2002:264. It is likely that the coins of John were forged in large numbers in Bulgaria, Baker 2001:231.

²³⁹ These are Arta, 1923, Arta, 1983, Arta, 1985a, Arta, 1985b and Kirkizates Artas, 1915 which was found so close to Arta that it is valid to include it here.

during the reign of Andronikos II Palaiologos and only one in the fifteenth century.²⁴⁰ The Kirkizates Artas hoard of 1915 contains 182 grossi dating 1192-1268 and 1 hyperpyron dating to 1222-1254.²⁴¹ The Arta 1923 hoard is made up of 74 billon trachea, 1 from the Latin Kingdom of Thessalonike, 5 from the Empire of Thessalonike, 32 from the Empire of Nicaea, 32 from the restored empire, 1 from the despotate of Arta and 3 from the Bulgarian Empire.²⁴² The Arta 1983 hoard contains 142 billon trachea, 2 from the Latin Empire, 16 of the Empire of Thessalonike, 59 from the Empire of Nicaea, 58 of the restored empire and 2 imitatives.²⁴³ The Arta 1985a hoard consists of 6 grossi dating from

²⁴⁰ These hoards are: (Michael VIII), Kirkizates Artas 1915, Arta 1923, Arta 1983; (Andronikos II) Arta 1985a; (fifteenth century) Arta 1985b. It is perhaps helpful to speculate on the reason behind the burial of these hoards. Three of the hoards contain no coins minted after 1272 when Michael VIII began including his son Andronikos II on his coinage. As such a burial between the 1260s and the early 1280s would seem likely. That three of the five known hoards were hidden during this time suggests that the reason behind this was a common phenomenon rather than a situation specific to each individual hoard. In 1284 Arta was attacked in force by the army and the fleet of the sebastokrator of Thessaly and this may have been the catalyst for the concealment of these hoards. Furthermore it has been suggested to me by Julian Baker that the hoards could be evidence of a Byzantine attack on the city around 1264 which has gone unrecorded in the written sources. That these three hoards were hidden at this time, not during the later attack on the city by John of Thessaly, is suggested by the dating of the hoard of billon trachea and hoard of grossi from Ioannina discussed above which have a similar terminus post quem and contain a similar mix of coins. Similarly the Arta 1985a hoard has a cut off date of 1311 and Arta was attacked in 1315 by the armies of Syrgiannes Palaiologos. We know that the city itself was damaged in this attack from the claims for compensation from a Venetian resident of Arta (see above). The final hoard Arta 1985b has a cut-off point of 1423. There were no major upheavals in the life of the city in the 1420s and indeed all was quiet until the Ottoman conquest of 1449. The final doge represented in the coinage of the hoard is Tommaso Mocenigo (1414-14123) by 35 grossi. His immediate predecessors, Michele Steno (1400-1413) and Antonio Venier (1382-1400) are represented by 219 and 927 grossi respectively. As the reign of Tommaso Mocenigo was not significantly shorter than those of Antonio Venier and Michele Steno it could be suggested that one reason for the small number of coins of his reign is that the hoard was buried during not after his reign. If this is the case then the final attack on the city by Carlo I Tocco in 1416, two years into the reign of Tommaso Mocenigo is a likely time. Of course it has been argued above that the role of Byzantine coinage declined in Arta following c.1272 which could explain the lack of any Byzantine coinage after this date in the hoards of the time and thus affect the estimated burial dates for the hoards, but I do not believe that my proposed dates have too great a margin of error.

²⁴¹ Galani-Krikou 1990:141. The hoard includes 3 grossi of Enrico Dandolo (1192-1205), 20 grossi of Pietro Zianni (1205-1229), 43 grossi of Jacopo Tiepolo (1229-1249), 12 grossi of Marino Morosini (1249-1253), 104 grossi of Ranieri Zeno (1253-1268) and one hyperpyron of John III Vatatzes (1222-1254).

²⁴² Oikonomidou et al. 1990:117-120. The hoard contains one billon trachea of Latin Thessalonike (1204-1224), 2 billon trachea of Theodore I Komnenos Doukas (1224-1230), 2 billon trachea of Manuel Komnenos Doukas (1230-1237), 1 billon trachea of John Komnenos Doukas (1237-1244), 22 billon trachea of John III Vatatzes (1222-1254), 2 billon trachea of Theodore II Laskaris (1254-1258) from the Magnesia mint and 8 from the Thessalonike mint, 3 billon trachea of Michael VIII from the Constantinople mint (1261-1282) and 29 from the Thessalonike mint (1259-1282), 1 billon trachea of Michael II Komnenos Doukas (1248-1268), 2 billon trachea of Ivan II Asen (1218-1241) and 1 imitative billon trachea.

²⁴³ Oikonomidou et al. 1990:117-120. The hoard contains 1 billon trachea of Latin Constantinople (1204-1261), 1 billon trachea of Latin Thessalonike (1204-1224), 11 billon trachea of Theodore I Komnenos Doukas from the mint of Thessalonike (1224-1230) and 1 from the mint of Arta (1216-1230), 3 billon trachea of Manuel Komnenos Doukas (1230-1237), 1 billon trachea of John Komnenos Doukas (1237-1244), 1 billon

1280-1311.²⁴⁴ The final hoard, Arta 1985b, is made up of 1700 torneselli dating from 1343-1423.²⁴⁵ The single finds in Arta consist of 1 electrum trachy of Manuel Komnenos Doukas (1230-1237), 303 billon trachea, 7 tetartera,²⁴⁶ 19 deniers tournois,²⁴⁷ 5 grossi,²⁴⁸ 2 soldini,²⁴⁹ 1 tornesello²⁵⁰ and 1 penny.²⁵¹ Almost one third of the 303 billon trachea, (96 examples) are from the Empire of Nicaea,²⁵² 74 more come from the restored empire.²⁵³ Of the remaining 133 billon trachea 60 were produced by the Latin Empire,²⁵⁴ 56 by the Empire of Thessalonike,²⁵⁵ 16 by the despots in Epiros²⁵⁶ and one by the Bulgarian Tsar Ivan II Asen (1218-1241).

trachea of Theodore I Laskaris (1206-1222), 1 billon trachea of John III Vatatzes from the Magnesia mint (1222-1254) and 37 from the mint of Thessalonike (1242-1254), 24 billon trachea of Michael VIII Palaiologos from Constantinople (1261-1282) and 34 billon trachea from the mint of Thessalonike (1259-1282).

²⁴⁴ Galani-Krikou 1990:142. The hoard contains 1 grosso of Giovanni Dandolo (1280-1289) and 5 grossi of Pietro Gradenigo (1289-1311).

²⁴⁵ Galani-Krikou 1990:149-150. The hoard contains 1 tornesello of Andrea Dandolo (1343-1354), 1 tornesello of Marino Falier (1354-1355), 2 torneselli of Giovanni Gredenigo (1355-1356), 3 torneselli of Giovanni Dolfi (1356-1361), 15 torneselli of Lorenzo Celsi (1361-1365), 31 torneselli of Marco Corner (1365-1368), 297 torneselli of Andrea Contarini (1368-1382), 7 torneselli of Michele Morosini (1382), 927 torneselli of Antonio Venier (1382-1400), 219 torneselli of Michele Steno (1400-1413), 35 torneselli of Tommaso Mocenigo (1414-1423) and 162 unattributable torneselli.

²⁴⁶ One example of Michael VIII from Constantinople (1261-1282) and six of Theodore I Komnenos Doukas (1224-1230).

²⁴⁷ 7 from the principality of Achaea, 3 deniers tournois of Guillaume II de Villehardouin (1246-1278), 2 of Charles of Anjou (1278-1285), 1 of Florent of Hainaut and one of Philip I of Savoy; 1 from the county of Provence under Charles I of Anjou (1246-1285); 8 from the Duchy of Athens; 1 from Naupaktos and 2 of John II Orsini of Epiros (1323-1335/6).

²⁴⁸ 1 grosso of Giacomo Tiepolo (1229-1249), 1 grosso of Renier Zeno (1253-1268), 1 grosso of Lorenzo Tiepolo (1268-1275) and 2 grossi of Pietro Gradenigo (1289-1311).

²⁴⁹ 1 soldino of Andrea Dandolo (1343-1354) and 1 soldino of Antonio Venier (1382-1400).

²⁵⁰ Antonio Venier (1382-1400)

²⁵¹ Of Manfred Hohenstauffen (1258-1266) from Corfu.

²⁵² 1 example from the mint of Magnesia under Theodore I Laskaris (1206-1222), 82 from the reign of John III Vatatzes (1222-1254), 6 from the magnesia mint (1222-1254), 65 from Thessalonike (1246-1254) and 11 commemorating the coronation of Michael II Komnenos Doukas as despot (1248), 12 from the reign of Theodore II Laskaris (1254-1258) all from the Thessalonike mint and one of Michael VIII from the Magnesia mint (1259-1261).

²⁵³ 71 of Michael VIII, 25 from Constantinople (1261-1282), 45 from Thessalonike (1259-1282) and 1 from his joint reign with Andronikos II (1272-1282) from Thessalonike and 3 from the joint reign of Andronikos II and Michael IX (1294-1320) 1 example from Thessalonike and 2 from Constantinople.

²⁵⁴ 8 billon trachea from Constantinople, 2 billon trachea from Thessalonike and 50 billon trachea of uncertain attribution.

²⁵⁵ 25 billon trachea of Theodore I Komnenos Doukas (1224-1230), 25 billon trachea of Manuel Komnenos Doukas (1230-1237) and 6 billon trachea of John Komnenos Doukas.

²⁵⁶ 16 billon trachea of Michael II Komnenos Doukas.

Individual coin finds from Arta are rather problematic. The data has not been published in relation to the stratigraphy of the excavations in Arta.²⁵⁷ Thus it is not known if the coins were all discovered in the same historic layer. Also the majority of the coins found are from Byzantium or the successor state (Nicaea, Thessalonike and Epiros) and only very few are Venetian or Frankish Greek. The vast majority of the single coins found at Arta are billon, the exception being one electrum trachy, five grossi and two soldini. Although the relatively small numbers of coins do not allow for accurate rates of loss to be calculated nevertheless such rates can be used as comparative data. From the rates of loss it becomes apparent that the mint of Thessalonike was of particular importance to the monetary supply of Arta. With the exception of the billon trachea of Michael VIII from Constantinople, the only coins whose rate of loss is higher than one coin per regnal year are from Thessalonike. This is to be expected under the first two rulers of the Empire of Thessalonike as Theodore I Komnenos Doukas (rate of loss 5.17 coins per regnal year) was also ruler of Arta and Manuel Komnenos Doukas (3.71 coins per regnal year) was, at least nominally, the overlord of Michael II Komnenos Doukas of Arta. It was only when the city of Arta became effectively independent from the Empire of Thessalonike, in the reign of John Komnenos Doukas of Thessalonike (1237-1244) that the rate of loss drops to 0.86 coins per regnal year. With the establishment of the Nicaean suzerainty over Arta the coinage of John III Vatatzes from Thessalonike restored the dominance of Thessalonikan coinage in Arta, 8.13 coins per regnal year. From this high point the rate of loss drops to 3 coins per regnal year under Theodore II Laskaris and 3.46 coins per regnal year under Michael VIII Palaiologos, although as noted above the coins of Michael VIII from

²⁵⁷ The plots on which the coins were found have been published along with the material itself. However, as with all excavations undertaken in a built up area, it is impossible to determine whether the coins all came from the same historical layer.

Constantinople achieved a rate of loss of 1.24 coins per regnal year.²⁵⁸ The coinage of Thessalonike faded quickly from this point and the joint reign of Michael VIII and Andronikos II registered a rate of loss of 0.1 coins per regnal year, with that of Andronikos II and Michael IX achieving only 0.04 coins per regnal year for Thessalonikan coins and 0.08 coins per regnal year for Constantinopolitan coins. What these rates of loss prove is that until c.1272 the vast majority of the new Byzantine coinage arriving in Arta, and of the coinage in circulation in Arta was struck at Thessalonike, under the Empires of Thessalonike, Nicaea and Byzantium, with a marked decline during the reign of Michael VIII Palaiologos which was only partly offset by the increased role played by the coins of Constantinople.²⁵⁹ The drop in the number of coins after c.1272 could be linked to the end of the threat from Charles of Anjou and the likely decrease in military expenditure which resulted from the preoccupation of Charles in Sicily.²⁶⁰ The two phases of the output of the mint of Arta registered 0.75 coins per regnal year for the period c.1236-1248 and 0.9 coins per regnal year, 1248-1268. The dominance of the coinage of Thessalonike over that of other mints in the Byzantine world can be seen in the following chart.

²⁵⁸ It should be noted that the coinage of Michael VIII's predecessors which did not come from the Thessalonikan mint achieved a rate of loss of 0.06 (Theodore I, Magnesia mint), 0.19 (John III, Magnesia mint) and 0.04 (Michael VIII, Magnesia mint). So although under Michael VIII there was a decline in the overall dominance of the coinage of Thessalonike in Arta the decline of the coinage of Byzantium in Arta is not as pronounced as it at first seems.

²⁵⁹ Mention has not been made of the billon trachea of Tsar Ivan II Asen. One of these has been discovered as a stray find, two were found in the in the Arta 1923 Hoard. I believe that these coins should be seen as the less of proof of sustained contact between Arta and Bulgaria and more in the context of Bulgarian expansion following their victory over Theodore I Komnenos Doukas in 1230.

²⁶⁰ The rebellion in Sicily post-dates the decline in coin numbers by a decade but still may have contributed to the dwindling of the supply of new money to Epiros.

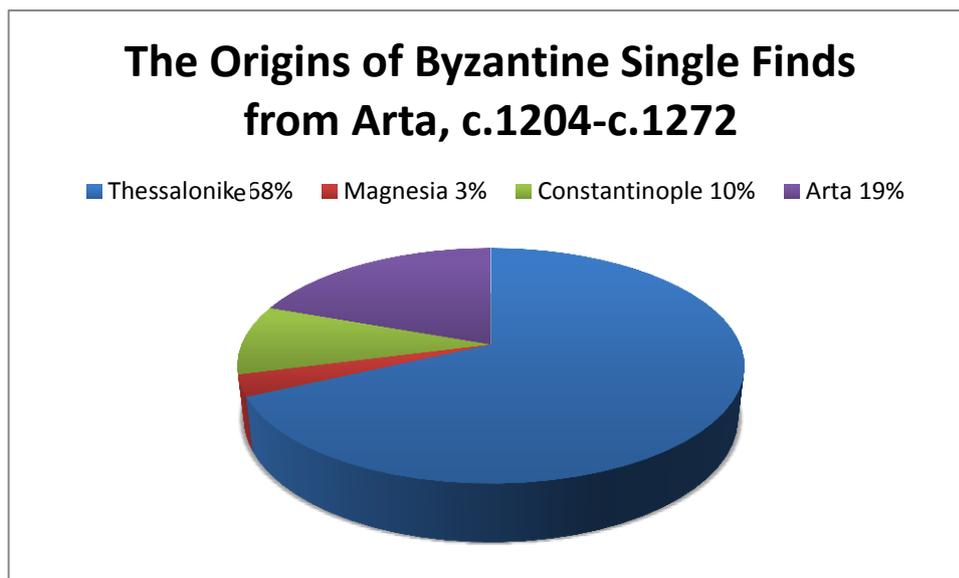


Figure 21: The Origins of Byzantine Single Finds from Arta, c.1204-c.1272

After c.1272 there is little evidence of new Byzantine coins reaching Arta, and there is no evidence of the military activities of Andronikos III in the area. What is surprising about Arta is the lack of evidence of the circulation of the Frankish Greek tournois which are seen throughout the rest of Epiros.²⁶¹ As has been noted above there is ample evidence that Epiros was a part of the grosso/denier network which united southern Greece. The finds of grossi in Arta demonstrate that the city was, as was the case with Ioannina, an early member of the Venetian system. The hoard of 1700 torneselli seems to be the ‘standard’ find from sites in this region where the Frankish deniers tournois were eventually supplanted by the Venetian tornesello. The dearth of material from the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries is perplexing. The documentary evidence suggests that trade continued and we know that John Orsini operated a mint in the city so coin circulation must have continued. It seems likely that there is a gap in the numismatic evidence rather than a break in coin circulation just as the documentary evidence for trade becomes more prevalent.

²⁶¹ There are a small number of deniers tournois and a single tornesello from the Principality of Achaia, the County of Provence, Naupaktos, the Duchy of Athens and Venice respectively. None of these coins achieved a rate of loss of over 0.29 coins per regnal year. See Ioannina chapter for examples.

The hoards discovered in Arta support the general conclusions outlined above. For the four hoards of Byzantine billon coinage the mint of Thessalonike is represented by the greatest number of coins. I would suggest that the Arta 1923 and Arta 1983 hoards should perhaps be seen in the context of the military activities of Michael VIII in the western Balkans following the battle of Pelagonia and during his rivalry with Charles I of Anjou. These two hoards replicate the patterns which can be seen in the excavation finds, namely the predominance of the coinage of Thessalonike with a slight increase in the number of coins from elsewhere (Constantinople) under Michael VIII.

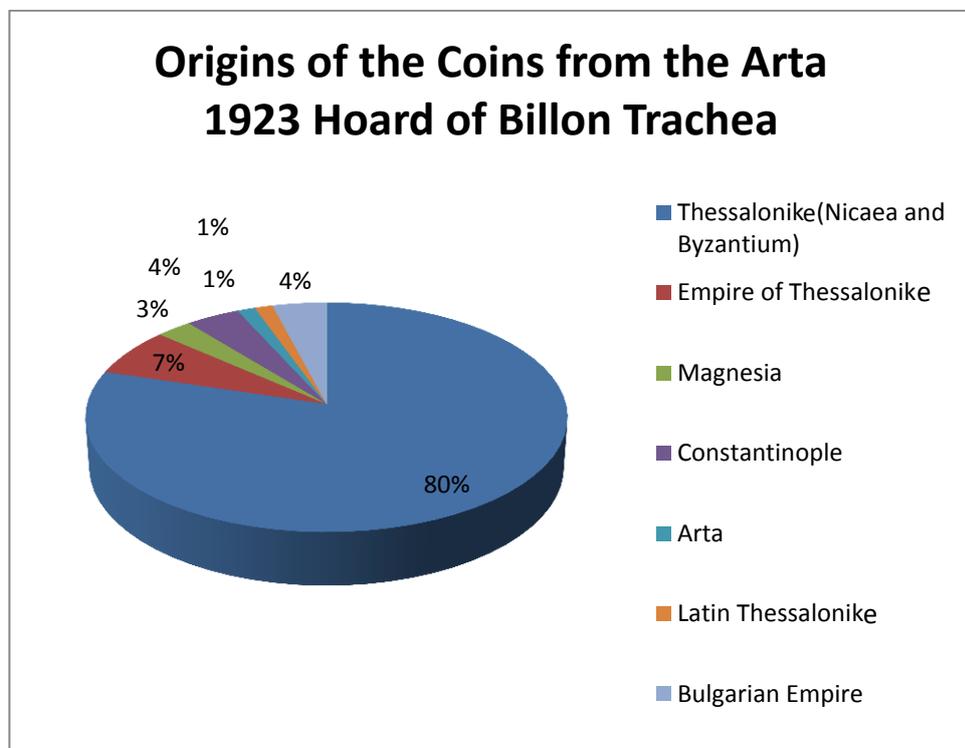


Figure 22: Origins of the Coins from the Arta 1923 Hoard

The chronological distribution of the coins across the emperors represented in the hoard and the number of coins present suggests that they were hidden in the period between the mid-1260s and the early 1270s. The two hoards of grossi, Kirkizates Artas 1915 and Arta 1985a have cut off dates of 1268 and 1311 respectively and I would suggest that both were buried before these dates. The similarity of the terminus post quem for the Kirkizates Artas

hoard and the two billion trachea hoards suggests a possible single event which led to the concealment of all three hoards.

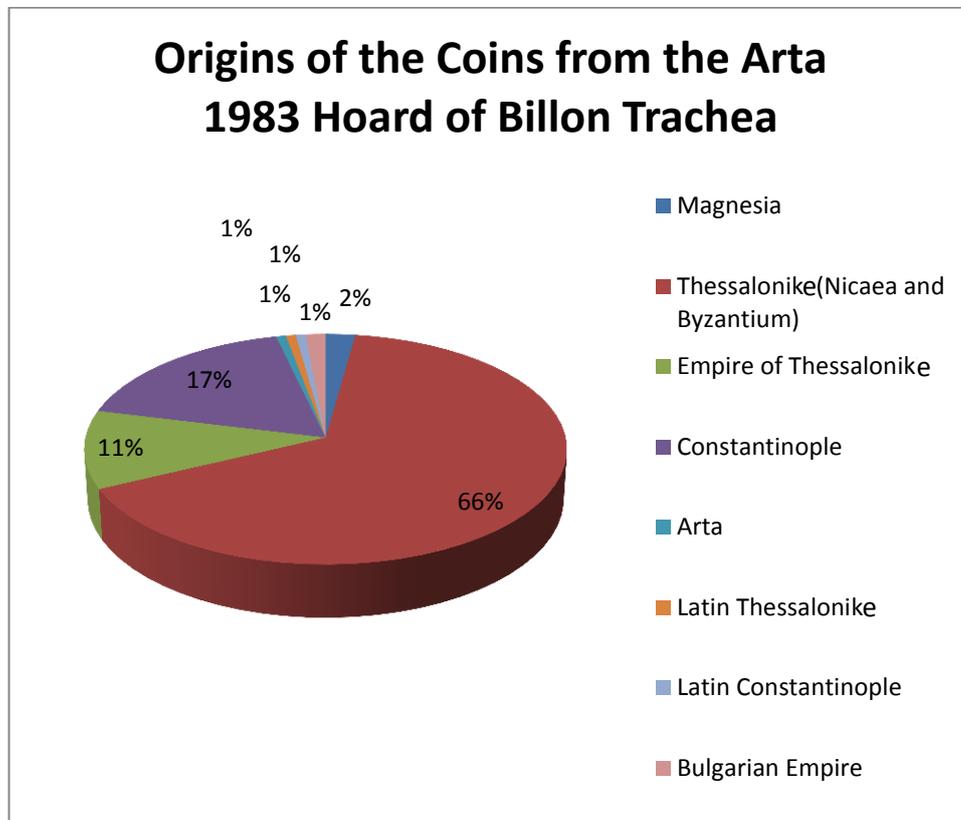


Figure 23: Origins of the Coins from the Arta 1983 Hoard

The numismatic evidence, whilst useful, has limitations. The apparent gaps in the numismatic sequence may have more to do with the imperfect nature of the available evidence than the actual situation in Arta and the realities of coin circulation. As with all built areas the excavation evidence is extremely selective and the same is also true of the hoard evidence. It is futile to speculate over what remains hidden under the modern city of Arta but reasonable to hope that future excavations will reveal evidence which can be used to fill some of the gaps in our knowledge. It seems unlikely that the dearth of late fourteenth and fifteenth century material actually proves that the monetary economy shran

during these years, although there is the possibility that Arta witnessed a shortage of low value currency at this time, which would explain the gap in the numismatic record. By creating a synthesis of our current knowledge with regard to the numismatic evidence and the surviving documents it is possible to draw some tentative conclusions about the economy of late medieval Arta. Although evidence for the economy of the city under Albanian rule is almost none existent, for the period before this (1204-1352) and following the Italian conquest of the city (1416) there is ample evidence. The pattern from the early period shows a city whose international trade was in the hand of the Venetians. The merchants were resident in the city as well as itinerant and they were intricately connected with both the trade of the city and the financing of the household and maybe the government of the despots. Arta was clearly well integrated into the system linking Venice and southern Greece by means of the *grosso* from an early date.²⁶² During this period the main currency in circulation in the city was almost certainly that of the Venetian Republic and Frankish Greece. The billon coinage of the mint of Thessalonike under its Komnenodoukai, Nicaean and Palaiologan rulers should be viewed in terms of the activities of the Empire in Epiros. However, the stray finds and sheer number of coins found in Arta suggest that these coins may have supplemented western types. The Venetians were still in Arta when Carlo I Tocco entered the city in 1416 and this may suggest that little changed under the Serbian and Albanian lords of the city. Under the Tocci the Venetians largely withdrew from the city to be replaced by the Ragusans. This change was accompanied by an appearance of a number of Artinoi, Greek, Italian and Catalan, acting as merchants and occasionally money lenders. The hinterland of the city acted as the producer of goods which were sold in the city. Chief among these goods was wheat, with animal products coming in second place.

²⁶² See Touratsoglou and Baker 2002.

Conclusion

Between 1204 and 1449 the city of Arta changed radically many times, both politically and in terms of population, yet from the mid-thirteenth century its economic profile remained remarkably consistent even if the coinage underpinning the market exchanges did not. The Arta of 1204 was a provincial backwater which was transformed into a refuge rather than a capital. The city was soon abandoned in favour of Thessalonike and it was not until the return of the Komneno-Doukai in 1230 in the person of Michael II that we can talk about the city becoming a true capital. Even so it has been stated that Arta remained a provincial backwater.²⁶³ This assumption seems unfair. Arta did not produce any great works of literature and has generally been considered not to have fostered a hybrid culture blending Byzantine and Italian into something new. However, the early despotate produced a number of fine churches and the nearly exceptional Paregoretissa monastery which demonstrate influences from Greece, Macedonia and Constantinople blended with others from Italy which did fall short of becoming a true fusion of architectural styles but is still suggestive of the openness of the culture of Arta to western civilization. The international character of the city and its deep connection to Byzantium defined the city in the late medieval period. The proximity of Epiros to Italy and the Italian-dominated Ionian Islands is inextricably linked to the marriage alliances contracted

²⁶³ Nicol 1984:246; Magdalino 1989:89. Magdalino states that although the church of the Paregoretissa demonstrates the beginning of a hybrid culture it is a singular example and the literary evidence does not support the conclusion that Arta was fostering a mixed civilization.

between the despots and their neighbours and settlement of Italians in Arta which must have been the root cause of much of the western influence in the city.

The economy of Arta was also tied up with those of its western neighbours. We can only guess what the lost Angevin documents would have revealed. It is fair to presume, in light of those which survive second hand in the work by Romanos (in conjunction with the archives of Venice and Ragusa), that Arta formed one port in a network which joined the Adriatic, Ionian and central Mediterranean seas. Arta acted as a market for the produce of its hinterland, supplying agricultural produce to the more highly urbanised neighbours of the despotate, firstly Venice and from the early fifteenth-century, Ragusa. Although we can assume that this market was a local one for redistribution to the surrounding area international trade seems to have been central to the local economy. There is little evidence for artisanal production in Arta and none for the export of manufactured goods. The numismatic evidence for the city provides some evidence of western activities in the city, particularly the higher value *grosso* which can be linked to the presence of Venetian merchants. As for daily use the numismatic evidence is incomplete or suggests a gap in new monies entering circulation in Arta. The vast majority of the coins in circulation before c.1272 came from the mint of Thessalonike. After the recovery of Constantinople by the Byzantines in 1261 there was an increase in the number of coins entering Arta from somewhere other than Thessalonike but the Thessalonikan issues still dominated as the medium of exchange in Arta. This changed c.1272 and either no new issues entered the city in great numbers until the 1320's when John II Orsini began striking *deniers tournois* or there is a gap in the numismatic evidence. The Arta 1985b hoard of *torneselli* may provide an answer to the question of what type of currency filled the vacuum left by the closing of the mint on the death of John II Orsini. However, this is a conclusion based on inadequate

evidence. Thus we have another aspect of the dual personality of Arta, a city which looked to the west for a market for the produce of its hinterland, but east for its monetary supply.

The population of Arta changed to a greater or lesser extent with every conquest. We do not know whether Nicholas and John Orsini brought followers with them and whether they settled in Arta. There is evidence that the Albanians settled in the city, the clan of Spata for instance.²⁶⁴ To what extent the Albanian conquest changed the economic profile of Arta is not known. The Venetians were still trading in the city and it is possible that although the scale of the trade in agricultural products changed, the substance did not. As for the population there are no references to Albanians following the conquest of the city by Carlo I Tocco. Carlo rewarded his own followers and the vast majority of the office holders recorded in Arta after 1416 as well as most of the ambassadors appointed by Carlo I and Carlo II to treat with Ragusa were westerners. It is of course possible that he rewarded them with the property and title previously held by the Albanian elite. However, the *Chronicle of Tocco* is unlikely to highlight any actions taken by the hero of the epic which had even the slightest chance of being perceived as tyrannical, even if they were aimed at Albanians. Although Greeks are mentioned in the Ragusan documents of the fifteenth century as the holders of some high positions in the city it is likely that every time the city was conquered the Greeks suffered. The Albanians replaced the Greeks as the rulers of the city when the Serbs conquered Arta in the mid-fourteenth century and Italians replaced the Albanians under Carlo I after 1416. By the fifteenth century, in contrast to the *archontes* of Ioannina, it is highly likely that there were few if any survivors among the upper echelons of society from the days of the Komneno-Doukai. While the Ragusan evidence proves that new Greeks rose to become important in the city these men were beholden to Carlo I and the Tocco family, again in stark contrast to the Greeks of Ioannina.

²⁶⁴ See above.

For almost its entire history after c.1230 Arta acted as a regional and an international centre of trade and possessed some elements of a cosmopolitan city. This diversity seems to have existed at all levels from craftsmen to merchants to bankers to state officials and rulers. Nevertheless, the city remained in many key ways a Byzantine city. The first of the Italian rulers, Nicholas Orsini, converted to Orthodoxy after his usurpation of the rule of Arta.²⁶⁵ It is likely that John Orsini did the same. He also took the surnames Komnenos, Angelos and Doukas to highlight his connection to the original ruling dynasty of the despotate.²⁶⁶ John Orsini particularly desired recognition by the emperor in Constantinople as despot. Orsini acted every inch the Byzantine ruler, even issuing a *chrysobull* for the Church of Ioannina in 1330.²⁶⁷ The Serbian emperor Symeon Uroš gave Peter Losha the title of despot and although there is no evidence that the Spata rulers of Arta were despots as successors of Losha they were still connected to the Serbian emperor (of the Romans and Serbs) in Thessaly. The Ragusans recorded that Carlo I Tocco always signed his letters in red ink.²⁶⁸ Under pressure from his *archontes* Carlo I Tocco sent his brother Count Leonardo to ask Manuel II to make Carlo a despot. Manuel II made Carlo and Leonardo *Kantakouzenatoi*.²⁶⁹ The importance of this event was more than merely symbolic. Following his coronation as despot Carlo I Tocco was never called duke (the title by which he had been known consistently) again by the author of the *Chronicle of Tocco*.²⁷⁰ The author of the *Chronicle of Tocco* speaks with great delight about the **μοναφεντία** following the reunification of the despotate by Carlo I in 1416.²⁷¹ We do not know how

²⁶⁵ Raynaldus *Annales ecclesiastici* V (Lucca, 1750) anno 1320 §XLVIII p.149 'Neopatrasi vero archiepiscopo procinium dedit (John XXII), ut ad Cephaloniae comitem, qui ad Graecorum schism defecerat, ad Latinum ritum reuocandum operam defigeret.'

²⁶⁶ Signature of a lost Angevin document recorded, Romanos *Despotate*:132. Gregoras I:536 calls John, John Doukas.

²⁶⁷ See Ioannina chapter.

²⁶⁸ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:no.722

²⁶⁹ Chron Tocco §2 p382. "...effectively members of the clan of Cantacuzenus." Magdalino 1989:94

²⁷⁰ Magdalino 1989:88

²⁷¹ Chron Tocco:442 §22

this event was received in Arta but it is safe to assume that the Greek inhabitants shared the opinion of their counterparts in Ioannina. While these examples of continuing Byzantine influence in Arta may seem small they are nonetheless important survivors of the Byzantine traditions of the early despotate over a hundred years after the last Byzantine had ruled the city.

For the greater part of its history after 1204 and before the Ottoman conquest, Arta was an international city in many respects, its art was open to outside influence, in financial terms it welcomed westerners and integrated them into its fabric as residents, merchants, money lenders and rulers.

CHAPTER FOUR: THESSALONIKE 1224-1423

Thessalonike in the Later Middle Ages

Thessalonike is located at the head of the Thermaic Gulf. The city's port connected it with the wider Aegean and Mediterranean world whilst land routes connected the city to its Balkan hinterland. The city sat astride the Via Egnatia. From the date of its construction up until the present day this road has been the major east-west artery of military activity and trade across the Balkans, running from Dyrrachion and Apollonia on the Adriatic coast to Constantinople on the Bosphorus. The importance of the Via Egnatia decreased over the late Byzantine period due to the political fragmentation of the region and the resultant instability. There is no reference to the use of the western half of the road after c.1300. Although political fragmentation has been blamed for the decline of the western section of the Via Egnatia, western Macedonia was under Byzantine control for much of the period 1259-c.1350.¹ The increased regularity, and safety, of sailing from the western Mediterranean to the Aegean may also have contributed to the decline of the route. The eastern part of the Via Egnatia continued in use until the mid-fourteenth century. There are no references to the Via Egnatia being used at all after 1341.²

Thessalonike was on the main route from Constantinople to Greece and became a major base for frequent attempts by various members of the Palaiologos dynasty to extend Byzantine rule into Thessaly, Epiros and the highlands of Macedonia. Andronikos III used Thessalonike as a base from which to launch his invasion of the lands of Michael II

¹ One reason for the fall into disuse of the western half of the route was the proximity of the Serbian border. This continued to move south slowly yet steadily into the mid-fourteenth century when Stefan Dušan's armies surged south conquering much of Macedonia and Greece.

² Laiou 1995:183-94

Kommenos Doukas in 1338.³ Various routes linked Thessalonike to central and southern Greece. One road led to the west from Thessalonike by way of Edessa then Kastoria and then either south to Thessaly via the fortress of Elasson, south west to Ioannina or west to Avlona (Valona). The second road led to Berrhoia and then south to Thessaly through the Tempe pass or to the north of Mt. Olympus.⁴ The hinterland of Thessalonike was also accessible from the north via the Axios river valley which passed through the Rupel defile, a narrow five mile long gorge.⁵ The Axios river valley linked Thessalonike with Skopia and Nis and further to the Danube valley and central Europe. As has been noted above this route became particularly important after c.1300 for contact between Thessalonike and the Adriatic. Certainly there is evidence of merchants travelling from Thessalonike using the Axios valley to communicate with Serbia.

Following the Fourth Crusade Thessalonike became part of the domain of Boniface of Montferrat, customarily called the first crusader King of Thessalonike.⁶ However, there is no contemporary evidence for his having used this title, the first recorded holder of which was his son, Demetrios, who was crowned in 1209.⁷ In 1224, after a series of successful campaigns which had brought Thessaly under his control, Theodore Komnenos Doukas, the ruler of Epiros, entered Thessalonike and the city became the capital of his realm. Shortly after he entered the city Theodore was crowned

³ Kantakouzenos I:96-9 where Thessalonike was the emperor's base for the conquest of the area to the north and south of Ioannina; Gregoras I:544-5.

⁴ Greece III:91-92; TIB 4:91-93

⁵ Greece III:152

⁶ Akropolites §8; Macrides 2007:123

⁷ Macrides 2007:126 has suggested that authors such as Akropolites applied the title of rex to Boniface anachronistically because his son held it. The title of rex was formally submitted to the Byzantines with the marriage of Yolanda of Montferrat to Andronikos II in 1284. Maria's father was the holder of the title Pachymeres II:87-8; Gregoras I:167-8. The sigillographic evidence supports the conclusion that Baldwin did not take the title of King of Thessalonica. On an example of a seal from after his assumption of power in Thessalonike he is referred to as Boniface Marquis of Montferrat. Schlumberger, Chalandon and Blanchet 1943:193-194.

Emperor of the Romans.⁸ For a brief period Thessalonike was the capital of an empire which incorporated Macedonia, Epiros, Thessaly and much of Thrace, almost reaching the walls of Constantinople. In 1230 Theodore invaded the Bulgarian Empire, possibly as a prelude to an attack on Constantinople, and was defeated and captured at the battle of Klokotnitsa.⁹ Following this battle the empire based on Thessalonike rapidly fell apart. The Bulgarians took much of the territory to the north of the city, while Epiros and eventually Thessaly recognised the rule of Michael II Komnenos Doukas in Arta. Manuel, brother of Theodore, took his brother's place as emperor of Thessalonike.¹⁰ While Manuel Komnenos Doukas ruled in Thessalonike he was nominally the overlord of Michael II Komnenos Doukas in Epiros. However, this weak association lapsed following Manuel's deposition when Theodore returned from captivity and took control of his old realm ruling through his son John Komnenos Doukas.¹¹ Thessalonike was twice besieged by John III Vatatzes of Nicaea. Vatatzes had to abandon his first siege when news reached him from Asia Minor of a Mongol invasion of the Seljuk Sultanate. However, he did persuade John Komnenos Doukas to give up his imperial title and bestowed on him the rank of despot.¹² Technically this event marked the end of independence of the city and the beginning of its integration into the imperial system of Nicaea. On a practical level little changed. When John Komnenos Doukas died he was succeeded as despot by his brother, Demetrios.¹³ John III returned to besiege Thessalonike to secure the submission of the city. In this he was helped by a group of *archontes* who were plotting against Demetrios.¹⁴ When John III besieged Thessalonike the conspirators opened a gate and the Nicaean troops poured in. Demetrios

⁸ Akropolites §21; Macrides 2007:162

⁹ Akropolites §25; Macrides 2007:178

¹⁰ Akropolites §26; Macrides 2007:182

¹¹ Akropolites §38; Macrides 2007:206-7

¹² Akropolites §40; Macrides 2007:215

¹³ Akropolites §42; Macrides 2007:222. Akropolites says that Demetrios was granted the title of despot by John III Vatatzes Akropolites §45; Macrides 2007:236

¹⁴ Akropolites §45; Macrides 2007:236

was captured and deposed. John appointed Andronikos Komnenos Palaiologos, the father of the future Michael VIII as *praitor* of the city.¹⁵

With the Nicaean conquest of the city in 1246 Thessalonike returned to its familiar position as a second city. The frequent campaigns of the Nicaean rulers and the restored Byzantine Emperors in the western Balkans led to Thessalonike taking on the role of base for their armies.¹⁶ Under Andronikos II Thessalonike developed a role as a post for junior members of the imperial house. The empress of Andronikos II, Yolanda/Eirene, set up a court in Thessalonike in 1303 in rivalry with that of her husband in Constantinople,¹⁷ whilst in the city she managed to fend off an attack by Guy II of Athens and Nicholas III, Marshal of Achaia.¹⁸ There is no record of Eirene's activities in Thessalonike, but it can be assumed that as a member of the imperial house she wielded significant power and was the ruler of the city.¹⁹ Sometime after the death of Eirene the city was governed by Constantine Palaiologos who arrived in Thessalonike in 1321.²⁰ This pattern of giving the governorship of this important city to an imperial relative continued under Andronikos II who made his nephew, John Palaiologos, governor of the city some time before 1326. During the civil war between Andronikos II and Andronikos III, John Palaiologos declared himself and Thessalonike to be independent.²¹ John had the support of the Serbian king, but died soon after his declaration. In late 1327 Andronikos III received a message that Thessalonike was willing to switch sides if he came to the city with his supporters. The young emperor subsequently travelled to the city and was admitted by the population, although some

¹⁵ Akropolites §45; Macrides 2007:45-46; Macrides 2007:237-242 Andronikos died after only a few years in office and was replaced by Theodore Komnenos Philes Akropolites §46; Macrides 2007:242

¹⁶ Pachymeres I:285-95 recounts how John Palaiologos was recalled from his station in Thessalonike to repel an Ottoman invasion of Asia Minor.

¹⁷ Pachymeres II:377-9

¹⁸ Chron Mor. fr.§§912-18 p.359-62

¹⁹ The only activities of Eirene that are recorded whilst she was resident in Thessalonike are her repeated attempts to secure territories for her sons. Pachymeres II:377-9; Gregoras I:233-8, 240

²⁰ Kantakouzenos I:129; Gregoras I:355

²¹ Pachymeres II:424, 517; Kantakouzenos I:209; Gregoras I:390.

supporters of his grandfather held out in the acropolis for a time.²² The submission of Thessalonike was a great success for Andronikos III in the civil war against his grandfather Andronikos II. Before this the civil war was at a stalemate. After becoming the ruler of the second city of the empire Andronikos III became a more serious rival to his grandfather and soon after was recognised as co-ruler by Andronikos II. The city was placed under the governorship of Syrgiannes Palaiologos, who was replaced in 1333 by Michael Monomchos.²³ The *basilissa* Anna of Epiros was exiled to Thessalonike after Andronikos III had conquered the despotate of Epiros.²⁴ The fact that the emperor thought Thessalonike was a secure place of exile for Anna proves that the link between the house of the Komneno-Doukai and the city had been successfully severed.

Thessalonike was to play a similar role in the civil war between John Kantakouzenos and the regency council acting on behalf of John V Palaiologos to that which it had performed during the war between Andronikos II and Andronikos III, only this time in reverse. With the regency in control of Constantinople, the allegiance of Thessalonike was of primary concern to John VI.²⁵ In 1342 John Kantakouzenos received a message from his old friend, Theodore Synadenos, the governor of Thessalonike offering to surrender the city to him. Kantakouzenos hurried to the city only to find that his friend had been expelled along with many of those who had proclaimed their support for John VI Kantakouzenos over John V Palaiologos.²⁶ In this example Thessalonike's resistance to a rebel prolonged the civil war with disastrous consequences. It is impossible to say that John VI would have entered Constantinople sooner if he had owned Thessalonike. However, it

²² Kantakouzenos I:259-72; Gregoras I:544-5

²³ Kantakouzenos I:473-4. Michael led an attack from Thessalonike into Thessaly after the death of Stephen Gabrielpoulos in 1333 and was rewarded with the governorship of the reconquered province later in the same year.

²⁴ Gregoras II:657-8

²⁵ As Nicol put it 'The man who controlled Thessalonica might be thought to control almost half of what was left of the Empire' (Nicol 1993:194).

²⁶ Kantakouzenos II:233-5; Gregoras II:634-5

was his unsuccessful attempt on Thessalonike which denied John VI Kantakouzenos a secure base of operations against the regency, precipitating his flight to Serbia. This act involved the Serbian King Stefan Dušan in the civil war for the first time.²⁷ The Zealot government of Thessalonike was recognised by the regency in Constantinople and the Grand Duke sent his son John Apokaukos to govern the city. After the murder of his father John attempted to assassinate the leader of the Zealot movement and declared his support for Kantakouzenos. The power of the Zealots had not waned in the three years since the expulsion of Theodore Synadenos from Thessalonike and they killed Apokaukos and the remaining supporters of Kantakouzenos rather than allow him to submit to John VI.²⁸ The Zealots continued to rule in Thessalonike and for the next five years there was no imperial representative in the city, even after the end of the civil war between John VI and John V. Feuds within the group led to the leadership coming into the hands of a single individual, Alexios Metochites.²⁹ Metochites was afraid that Serbian expansion into Macedonia, to the point where Thessalonike was surrounded, would result in the fall of the city. He asked Kantakouzenos to help. John VI rushed to the city with John V sailing there and receiving the acclamation of the people in 1350.³⁰ During the Zealot period the land routes from Thessalonike to the wider world became ever more insecure. By 1333 Stefan Dušan had conquered Ohrid and Kastoria followed in 1341/2, as did Edessa. It is interesting to note that although these events greatly reduced the security of the hinterland of Thessalonike, trade continued much as before.³¹ By 1345 Serres, Christoupolis and the Chalkidike peninsula had fallen to the Serbs, cutting the land communications with Thrace,

²⁷ For the early career of Dusan see Soulis 1984.

²⁸ Kantakouzenos II:568-81; Gregoras II:740-741. This happened in 1345.

²⁹ Metochites had replaced Andreas Palaiologos who had been the leader of the Zealots 1345-1350. Kantakouzenos II:573-581, III:104 for Palaiologos who was no relation to the imperial family.

³⁰ Kantakouzenos III:108-18

³¹ See below, pp.273-276.

Berrhoia fell in 1347 severing the city from Thessaly.³² These conquests isolated Thessalonike and must have severely disrupted communication between the city and its hinterland with all of the resultant negative effects on trade that this entailed.³³

When John VI Kantakouzenos returned to Constantinople he left his junior colleague John V Palaiologos to rule Thessalonike.³⁴ This act began the last stage in the history of Thessalonike under Byzantine rule; namely that of the city as an autonomous part of the empire ruled by a junior member of the imperial house. In the case of John V Palaiologos this was a mistake, at least as far as John VI was concerned. John V Palaiologos plotted with the Serbian Emperor Stefan Dušan to attack John VI Kantakouzenos. While the ostensible aim was to return John V to his rightful position as senior emperor it is naive to think that Dušan would not have aimed to profit from a second civil war between the Palaiologoi and the Kantakouzenoi. John VI asked the dowager empress Anna, the mother of John V, to go to Thessalonike and speak to her son. Anna achieved far more than this, she convinced Stefan Dušan, who was encamped near to the city, to return to Serbia and John V was relocated to Didymoteichon in Thrace. Anna remained in Thessalonike as the new ruler.³⁵ Anna ruled Thessalonike as her part of the empire until her death in c.1365 when the city was given to the despot Manuel, the son of John V. Manuel returned to Thessalonike as emperor in 1382.³⁶ He succeeded in extending the influence of the empire into Thessaly and Epiros.³⁷ Despite early successes, by the autumn of 1383 Thessalonike

³² Soulis 1984:26, 35. It was following the fall of most of western Macedonia that Dušan declared himself emperor, Soulis 1984:29.

³³ The isolation of Thessalonike from the rest of the Byzantine Empire must have been of benefit to the Zealot regime in the city, at least in the short term.

³⁴ Kantakouzenos III:161-2. Although Nicol believed that the real power in Thessalonike was intended to be John VI's father-in-law, Andronikos Asen. Nicol 1993:229

³⁵ Andronikos Asen travelled to Constantinople to warn John VI in 1351. Kantakouzenos III:200-209; Gregoras III:147-50

³⁶ Dennis 1960:75

³⁷ Both Thomas Preljubović of Ioannina and Alexios Angelos of Thessaly paid homage to Manuel in Thessalonike and received the titles of despot and Caesar respectively.

was under siege by the armies of the Ottoman Sultan.³⁸ Manuel made great efforts to encourage the citizens to resist, which they did for four years. However, eventually Manuel was forced to leave the city by the inhabitants who wished to negotiate a settlement with the Ottomans.³⁹ As the city surrendered, Thessalonike was not sacked when the Ottoman army poured through the gates in April 1387.

In 1403 Thessalonike was returned to Byzantine rule by the terms of a treaty that was signed following the battle of Ankara.⁴⁰ John VII, Manuel II's nephew, was given the rule of Thessalonike with the title 'Emperor of all Thessaly'. John died in 1408 and Manuel decided to put Thessalonike under the rule of his son, Andronikos, giving him the title of despot. Andronikos ruled Thessalonike until 1423 when he surrendered the city to the Venetians.⁴¹ The despot took this step because of the Ottoman siege of the city which had begun in 1422. Conditions in the city had become so serious that famine had spread and the population was suffering.

The Physical Description and the Built Environment of Thessalonike

Thessalonike can be said to have three constituent parts: the acropolis, the upper city and the lower city.⁴² The acropolis sits on a hill overlooking the city below. This area was not an original part of the Late Roman fortifications of the city. This is demonstrated by the fact that the towers on the wall dividing the city from the acropolis face into the acropolis, not the city. It has been suggested that the acropolis was constructed after the

³⁸ Dennis 1960:76

³⁹ Manuel II no.4; Chalkokondyles I:42

⁴⁰ Although it has been proposed that Thessalonike was recovered by the Byzantines before 1403 and lost again. However, this theory does not seem to be likely. Dennis 1964; Vakalopoulos 1968

⁴¹ Thiriet *Regestes* II:nos.1891, 1892

⁴² The only reference to survive describing the suburbs of Thessalonike is from the pen of Demetrios Kydones who described the ruined suburbs in 1384/1385. Kydones II:no.299

Arab sack of Thessalonike in 904.⁴³ The wall between the upper city and the acropolis contains two late Byzantine interventions. The first is an inscription which dates to the reign of Andronikos III and overlooks the city; ΑΚΠΛ.⁴⁴ The second is a gate linking the acropolis to the upper city constructed during the reign of Anna of Savoy (1351-1367), in 1355/56. The accompanying inscription records how the gate was built at the orders of Anna under the direction of Ioannes Chamaetos, *koiaistor* and *kastrophylox* of Thessalonike: Ἀνηγέρθη ἡ παροῦσα πύλη ὀρισμῶ τῆς κραταιᾶς καὶ ἀγίας ἡμῶν κυρίας καὶ δεσποίνης κυρᾶς Ἄννης τῆς Παλαιολογίνης, ὑπηρετήσαντος καστροφύλακος Ἰω[άννου] Χαμαετοῦ τοῦ κοιαιστ[ορος] τῶ ζω[ξδ'ἔτει] ἐν[δικτιῶνι] θ. The final notable feature of the fortifications of the acropolis is the Eptapyrgion. This citadel stands at the extreme edge of the acropolis away from the city itself and was constructed by walling off the tip of the existing acropolis to create a new citadel.⁴⁵ The Eptapyrgion contained its own cistern in the north east triangular tower.⁴⁶ The walls of the citadel are pierced by two gates, the main gate which leads to the acropolis and a smaller gate which provides access to the land beyond the city.⁴⁷ The buildings inside the Eptapyrgion have been rebuilt many times and it is now impossible to determine what buildings existed there in the late Byzantine period, if any, and to what use the space was put. The building could simply have a last refuge in times of attack; however, Curcić has suggested that the Eptapyrgion formed a fortified palace.⁴⁸ A fortified palace would correspond with the evidence of a similar building in the citadel of Ioannina and maybe others in the *kastraki* of Arta as well as the fortress in the

⁴³ Velenis 1998:133; Bakirtzes 2003:43-44

⁴⁴ Tafrafi 1913:46; Velenis 1998:50

⁴⁵ Eptapyrgion 2001:30; Kourkoutidou-Nikolaidou & Tourta 1997:26

⁴⁶ Eptapyrgion 2001:42

⁴⁷ Eptapyrgion 2001:49, 44

⁴⁸ Curcić 2000:37-39

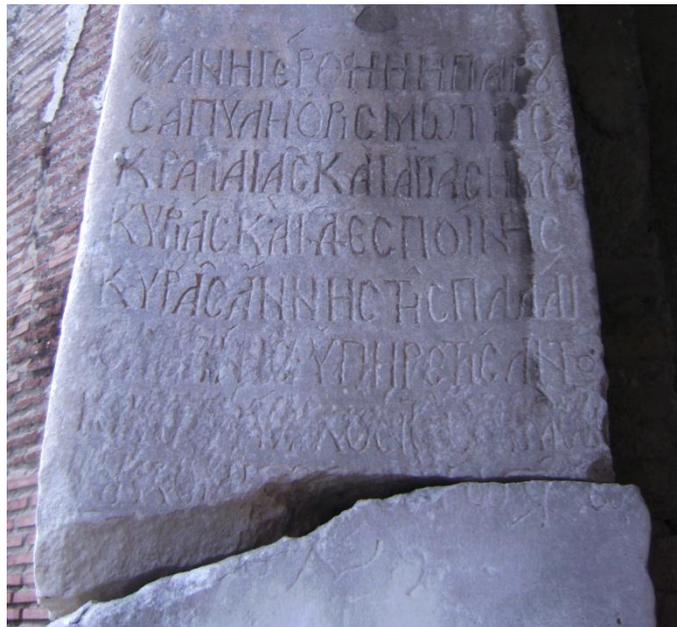


Figure 24: The Anna Gate with dedicatory inscription (author's picture)

upper city of Monemvasia. However, there is no evidence that the Eptapyrgion was used as a residence and without systematic excavations inside of the citadel all such theories must

remain in the realm of speculation. The interior of the acropolis is only slightly better documented than that of the Eptapyrgion. There was a cistern near to the Eptapyrgion⁴⁹ which provided some of the water for the population of the citadel. This cistern was connected to both a spring on Mt. Chortiates and another cistern located close to the Vlatadon monastery.⁵⁰ The acropolis was certainly inhabited during the late Byzantine period. John Kantakouzenos said that the Acropolis had its own citizens and was in appearance, a small city.⁵¹ Choumnos had said much the same earlier in 1310.⁵² Kantakouzenos also described the functions of some of the buildings in the acropolis, namely a stable for cavalry horses, houses and a barracks.⁵³ Excavations have revealed the remains of houses, cisterns and churches on the acropolis. Symeon Metropolitan of Thessalonike (1416/17) recorded that the Ottomans destroyed the churches of the acropolis during their occupation 1387-1403.⁵⁴

Late Byzantine Thessalonike was protected by its Late Roman fortifications which, at approximately 8 kilometres in length, enclosed an area of 260 hectares.⁵⁵ When John III Vatatzes first attempted to capture Thessalonike from the Komneno-Doukai he could not assault the city's walls because of the size of the city and therefore had to resort to raiding and plundering the countryside around the city while attempting to maintain a blockade of the gates.⁵⁶ When John III returned to Thessalonike in 1246 he still did not have enough troops to encircle the city. All that the emperor could do was set troops to watch some of the gates to guard against the possibility of a surprise attack on his camp.⁵⁷ The four largest

⁴⁹ Kourkoutidou-Nikolaidou & Tourta 1997:27

⁵⁰ On Water in Byzantium:53

⁵¹ Kantakouzenos II:576

⁵² Choumnos:139

⁵³ Kantakouzenos II:579-580

⁵⁴ Symeon:26-29

⁵⁵ Velenis 1998:173

⁵⁶ Akropolites §40; Macrides 2007:215

⁵⁷ Akropolites §45; Macrides 2007:237

gates of the city are located at either end of modern Egnatia and Agiou Dimitriou streets. These were the Golden Gate at the western end of Egnatia Street and a corresponding gate in the east wall. To the north the main gates were the Letaia gate in the western wall and its opposite number in the east.⁵⁸ The late Byzantine period saw a number of repairs and attempts to strengthen the walls of the city, the earliest recorded repair dates to 1316. This is only known from a surviving inscription, now in Istanbul, from the demolished sea wall. The inscription records that the wall was rebuilt by the *pansébastos* the *logothete tou stratiotikou* Hyaleos who was *kephale* of Thessalonike: [Αν]εκτίσθη ἐκ βάθρων τόδε ... τοῦ τείχους διά συνδρομῆς καὶ συνεργίας τοῦ πανσεβάστου λογοθέτου τοῦ στρατιωτικοῦ τοῦ Ὑαλέου, κεφαλατικεῦοντος ἐν τῆδε τῇ πόλει Θεσσαλονικῆ κατὰ τὸν χρόνον τῆς ἰδ' ἰνδ[ικτιῶνος] τοῦ ζωκδ ἔτους. Two more inscriptions from the late Byzantine period are known. The first inscription is a monogram from a tower on the sea walls, which has been interpreted as belonging to Andronikos III Palaiologos. The second inscription records the building work of Manuel II Palaiologos. This last inscription faces out from the city and records how the tower on which it is located was built from the foundations by the *doux* Georgios Apokaukos under the orders of Manuel II: Σθένει Μανουήλ τοῦ κρατίστου δεσπότη, ἤγειρε τόνδε πύργον, αὐτῶ τειχίῳ, Γεώργιος δούξ Ἀπόκαυκος ἐκ βάθρων. Σθένει Μανουήλ τοῦ κρατίστου. It is generally accepted that the inscription dates to Manuel's first rule in Thessalonike, 1369-1373, when he held the title of despot.⁵⁹ Although the walls of Thessalonike were kept in good repair throughout the Byzantine period the Palaiologan rulers of the city continued to develop and strengthen them. The works carried out at the order of Andronikos III should be viewed as part of his wider fortification efforts in Macedonia. The gatehouse of Anna, although of modest dimensions, improved

⁵⁸ Velenis 1998:173-174

⁵⁹ Papazotos 1985:33; Kourkoutidou-Nikolaidou & Tourta 1997:22

communication between the city proper and the acropolis. Manuel's tower was built to strengthen an exposed point of the northern wall. Overall the last Palaiologan rulers of the city enhanced its fortifications almost up until the first Ottoman conquest.



Figure 25: The inscription of Manuel II Palaiologos (author's picture)

Within the walls the city is divided into upper and lower parts. The upper city is furthest from the sea, beginning above modern Kassandrou Street, and is characterised by uneven ground with steep slopes leading up to the acropolis and the north wall of the city. The lower city has a more gentle geography, the land levelling out before reaching the sea. This Hippodamian street plan almost certainly never extended into the upper city, but was preserved with some modification from antiquity throughout the Byzantine period.⁶⁰ Late Byzantine Thessalonike was supplied with water through a number of means. Part of the late Roman Palace of Galerius, in the lower city, operated as a large open cistern.⁶¹ Further cisterns existed close to the church of the Holy Apostles⁶² and at modern Igoumenou, Olympiados and Iasonos Streets.⁶³ The modern Lagodiani or Laodigitria, a metochion of the Vlatadon monastery, had an eight-domed cistern in its complex, which was fed by an

⁶⁰ Bakirtzis 2003:42. The most notable modifications are the division of insulae into smaller blocks and encroachment of buildings onto the road.

⁶¹ Bakirtzis 2003:57

⁶² This cistern was fed by springs in Avestocheri and Retziki, to the north of Thessalonike. Bakirtzis 2003:60

⁶³ Kourkoutidou-Nikolaidou & Tourta 1997:27; Nalpantis 1991:174

underground conduit.⁶⁴ Another cistern also existed near to this church.⁶⁵ Three further cisterns were located within the limits of the Vlatadon monastery, near the north wall of the city, collected water from an aqueduct from Mount Chortiates, from whence it was distributed to the city by a number of conduits which ran to public and private buildings (dwellings, baths, and public utility buildings).⁶⁶ Whether this aqueduct was that which has been found on the mountainside is not clear. The metochion of St George was located close to the aqueduct which brought water into the city from Mt. Chortiates.⁶⁷

Late Byzantine Thessalonike inherited a large number of impressive religious foundations from earlier centuries. The most important was the basilica of St. Demetrios, the patron of the city, which is situated at the border of the upper and lower city. The church of Aghia Sophia and the Rotunda were also functioning buildings in the late Byzantine period. The Palaiologan period saw the construction and decoration of many impressive religious foundations in Thessalonike. That the early Palaiologan era was a time of artistic and architectural achievement in the city is well known. However, it can be demonstrated that there is no noticeable break in this tradition after the troubles of the mid-fourteenth century and that the situation prevailing before the Zealot revolt continued after it as well.

The churches built or decorated before the Zealot period show a surprising variety in both architectural styles and modes of decoration and a wide range of patrons. The Acheiropoietos is an early example of the flourishing of art in Palaiologan Thessalonike. The church, located in the centre of Thessalonike, is a fifth century three aisled basilica, which remained in use until 1430.⁶⁸ In the south aisle mid-thirteenth century paintings depict 18 of the Martyrs of Sebastea; their style has

⁶⁴ Kourkoutidou- Nikolaidou & Tourta 1997:87

⁶⁵ Nalpantis 1991:176

⁶⁶ Bakirtzis 2003:60; Kourkoutidou-Nikolaidou & Tourta 1997:27-8

⁶⁷ Chilandar I:no.33. The aqueduct was operating at least as late as 1316.

⁶⁸ Nikolaidou 1985:59

been described as being the forerunner of “...new trends towards a renaissance in art.”⁶⁹ St. Catherine’s church (c.1320-30) is decorated with frescoes depicting the life of Christ dated to 1315.⁷⁰ These frescoes are in a ‘Macedonian’ style common in Thessalonike and the surrounding area and resemble those in the near contemporary church of St. Nicholas Orphanos (c.1320) and in some of the decoration at the church of St. Panteleimon (c.1295-1315) and the frescoes of the chapel of St. Euthymios (1303).⁷¹ The frescoes of the church of St. Nicholas Orphanos are of a particularly high quality and they are linked with the celebrated artists Georgios Kalliergis, Michael Astrapas and Eutykhios.⁷² The only pre-c.1350 church which does not conform to the decorative style associated with Macedonian art of this period is the church of the Holy Apostles. The Holy Apostles is one of the most impressive Palaiologan churches in Thessalonike. The church is dated to the patriarchate of Niphon I, 1310-14, who was the founder of the monastery.⁷³ The interior decoration consists of frescoes around the lower half of the walls and high quality mosaics on the upper half and also the ceiling.⁷⁴ The more expensive mosaics have been dated to the years of patriarchal sponsorship.⁷⁵ The style of the mosaics is unlike Macedonian art of the period and the mosaics are said to resemble those of the church of St Saviour in Chora in Constantinople.⁷⁶

⁶⁹ Nikolaidou 1985:67

⁷⁰ Tampaki 1998:70; Tourta 1985:118; Kourkoutidou-Nikolaidou & Tourta 1997:120. The church was originally a katholikon of a monastery dedicated to Christ, Tourta 1985:118; Bakirtzis 2003:59.

⁷¹ Kourkoutidou- Nikolaidou & Tourta 1997:120. Not all of the frescoes at the church of St. Panteleimon are of a high quality or in the style that would come to define Macedonian art of the period. They are generally considered to be transitional works undertaken at the point when styles were changing, Kourkoutidou-Nikolaidou & Tourta 1997:47.

⁷² Kourkoutidou-Nikolaidou & Tourta 1997:86

⁷³ Kourkoutidou-Nikolaidou & Tourta 1997:121

⁷⁴ Tsioumi 1985:102

⁷⁵ Tampaki 1998:73

⁷⁶ Tampaki 1998:77. However, this is not universally accepted; Tsioumi 1985:104



Figure 26: Frescos from St. Euthymios (author's pictures)

The exterior decoration of the churches of Thessalonike is typified by an elaborate brick decoration which can be found on all of the churches mentioned above, the exceptions being the chapel of St. Euthymios which was built of roughly dressed stone and the church of St. Nicholas Orphanos which was built of finely dressed layers of stone and brick, but without elaborate decoration. The church of the Holy Apostles has six exterior inscriptions grouped into two pairs of three which read Niphon, Patriach , Founder.



Figure 27: Dedicatory plaques from the church of the Holy Apostles (author's pictures)

One important piece of information to not about the churches of pre-Zealot Thessalonike, especially when comparing them to the period after the Zealots, is to note who was the patron of each building, and therefore where the money came from to build and decorate the church. Of the buildings discussed above only the church of St. Panteleimon can be reliably said to have had a patron from the city itself. St. Panteleimon has been identified as the *katholikon* of the Peribleptos monastery.⁷⁷ It is traditionally said that the Peribleptos monastery was founded by Kyr Issac, a monk, formerly the Metropolitan of Thessalonike, Jacob 1295-1314.⁷⁸ However, it has recently been shown that the Peribleptos dates back to the eleventh century.⁷⁹ The effect that this has on the identification of St. Panteleimon with the Peribleptos is still under discussion. However, it is entirely possible that Kyr Issac refounded the monastery and constructed a new *katholikon*, the modern St. Panteleimon.

⁷⁷ Theocharides 1970:437-59; Janin 1975:386-388

⁷⁸ Tampaki 1998:112

⁷⁹ Tampaki 1998:112-113



Figure 28: The church of St. Panteleimon (author's picture)

The chapel of Saint Euthymios was added to the south east corner of St. Demetrios in 1303.⁸⁰ The building was built and decorated by Michael Tarchaneiotēs, which he recorded on the north wall.⁸¹ Tarchaneiotēs was not a native of the city but was a resident of Constantinople and returned home shortly after the creation of the chapel. The church of St. Nicholas Orphanos, built near to the east wall, has generated much controversy as to the identity of the patron. The church and its decoration have been dated differently. Xyngopoulos dated the frescos to the 1320s, while Velmans believed that they were executed in the 1340s.⁸² There are four possibilities concerning the dedication of the church itself: the first possibility is that it was named after a member of the Orphanos family; or the second is that that it was dedicated to St. Nicholas the Orphan; or alternatively to St. Nicholas the protector of orphans; or finally that the church was once

⁸⁰ Tampaki 1998:84; Gouma-Peterson 1976:168-184

⁸¹ Marki 1985:58

⁸² For a summary of the arguments relating to the frescos of the church see Tsitouridou 1986:27-29. Xyngopoulos believed that the artist responsible for the frescos was Kallierges which would mean an earlier date.

the at the centre of an orphanage complex. Xyngopoulos proved that the church was not dedicated to St. Nicholas the Orphan as the name of the church would be in the nominative, when in fact it is in the genitive plural.⁸³ This leaves two possibilities: either the church was founded by a member of the Orphanos family, or was dedicated to St. Nicholas the protector of orphans. Xyngopoulos believed that the first option was correct based on his reading of a monogram which he identified on a tombstone inside of the church stating that it belonged to Nikona Skouterios Kapanorites Orphanos.⁸⁴ However, there is no evidence of a burial beneath the tombstone which could have been spoila. A more recent reading of the monogram has failed to identify an 'O' on the monogram at all.⁸⁵ When also taking into account the complete lack of evidence for the existence of an Orphanos family at this time, Xyngopoulos' theory begins to look unlikely. The second hypothesis about the identity of the patron is that the church had two founders, the initial building under St Savvas followed by a second benefactor in the fourteenth century, King Milutin of Serbia.⁸⁶ Although Milutin's biographer does mention a church to Saint Nicholas that the king built in Thessalonike, the monastery of Saint Savvas is not mentioned and as this monastery was dedicated to Christ, the link between St. Nicholas Orphanos and St. Savvas seems tenuous. There is no written evidence that Milutin was the patron of St. Nicholas Orphanos, yet Tsitouridou believes that the iconography of the frescos proves a connection. Within the church there is a fresco of St. Georgios Gorgos, the only example in a Byzantine church. All other examples of depictions of this saint in churches from the early fourteenth century are in buildings patronised by Milutin.⁸⁷ A further iconographical link to the Serbian king is

⁸³ Xyngopoulos 1952:20

⁸⁴ Xyngopoulos 1952:32

⁸⁵ Tsitouridou 1986:38

⁸⁶ Tsitouridou 1986:38, the theory that the church of St. Nicholas Orphanos was founded and then refounded later was first proposed by two Serbian scholars. See Tsitouridou 1986:38 for a summary of their arguments.

⁸⁷ With the exception of a church in Kastoria which is Serbian but it is not known whether Milutin was its patron. Tsitouridou 1986:41

the fresco of St. Klemes, archbishop of Ohrid. St Klemes had been a common feature of the decoration of churches in his native Ohrid, yet only appears in churches further afield in the 1320s and only in churches sponsored by Milutin.⁸⁸ As a result of this it is fair to say that St. Nicholas Orphanos (building and decoration) dates to c.1320 and was sponsored by the King of Serbia.



Figure 29: St. Nicholas Orphanos (author's picture)

The Holy Apostles is one of the most impressive Palaiologan churches in Thessalonike. The church is dated to the patriarchate of Niphon I, 1310-14, who was the founder of the monastery.⁸⁹ However, a dendrochronological study of the building, places the construction in 1329.⁹⁰ Nevertheless, the inscriptions referred to above tell a different story. The church seems to have remained unfinished in 1314. The work was completed by

⁸⁸ Tsitouridou 1986:43

⁸⁹ Kourkoutidou-Nikolaidou & Tourta 1997:121

⁹⁰ Kuniholm & Striker 1990:1-26; Bakirtzis 2003:60. This discrepancy probably arises from the fact that the wood sampled came from the ceiling of the church which could easily have been added after the initial construction of the building.

Paul Hegoumenos of the monastery, as recorded in an inscription below a fresco of Paul in the narthex, in which Paul is named as the second founder of the monastery.⁹¹ The Holy Apostles is a cross-in-square church with a three-sided ambulatory. The exterior is decorated with ornate brickwork. The roof of the church has five domes. The monastery attached to the Holy Apostles, which has been identified as the monastery of the Theotokos Gorgoepekoos.⁹²



Figure 30: St. Catherine's church (author's picture)

What this brief summary demonstrates is that even before the troubles of the mid-fourteenth century when the economy and artistic production of late Byzantine Thessalonike were generally considered to be at their height that the most impressive

⁹¹ Tsioumi 1985:100

⁹² Janin 1975:352-354; Nikonanos 1986:99-107, Kourkoutidou-Nikolaidou & Tourta 1997:121-135; Tampakki 1998:71; Velenis 1983:23-36

buildings in terms of quality of decoration were not funded by members of the Thessalonican elite, but by outsiders.

Of the four churches built and decorated after c.1350 three have very high quality frescoes. The exception is the church of Sotiras in the lower city dated to post c.1340 by the find of a coin of this date set into the concrete of the dome. The paintings have been dated to 1350-70 and they have been described as having “none of the artistic virtues evident in the wall paintings of the first two decades of the fourteenth century in Thessalonike.”⁹³ The interior decoration of the church of the Vlatadon monastery shows Gregory Palamas, who died in 1359, therefore the frescos must have been produced after this date. Stylistic analysis has attributed them to the period 1360-80. The paintings were badly damaged by the Ottomans, but those that have survived are of a very high quality.⁹⁴ The same has been noted of the frescoes of the church of the Taxiarchs.⁹⁵ The frescoes of the late fourteenth century church of the Prophet Elijah are perhaps the finest late Byzantine frescoes in Thessalonike, described as having “...an impressive richness and unprecedented realism in some of the scenes and figures...”⁹⁶. As with the interior of the decoration the only post-1350 church in the city which does not have a great deal of exterior brickwork is that of the Sotiras.

⁹³ Papazotos 1985:122. Obviously this church lends support to established view of decline following the civil wars.

⁹⁴ Tsioumi 1985:127

⁹⁵ Kourkoutidou-Nikolaïdou & Tourta 1997:90-91

⁹⁶ Kourkoutidou-Nikolaïdou & Tourta 1997



Figure 31: Church of the Prophet Elijah (author's picture)



Figure 32: Detail of the church of the Prophet Elijah showing the elaborate decorative brickwork (author's picture)

The identity of the founder of the monastery attached to the church of the Taxiarchs is unknown. However, for the other two churches built in this period in the upper city we do have some information. The Vlatadon monastery was founded between 1351 and 1371, by the Thessalonican brothers Dorotheos and Markos Vlatades.⁹⁷ The Katholikon has an unusual cruciform shape with a three-sided ambulatory. The shape of the church was influenced by an earlier building which was partly incorporated into the new church.⁹⁸

The church of the Prophet of Elijah was the last known church built in Thessalonike before the Ottoman conquest. The church is of a triconch design with a square extension attached on the western face to form the shape of a crucifix. There are four small domed chambers, two of which were *typikaria*, to hold the monasteries documents.⁹⁹ There is also a three sided ambulatory and a large gallery over the nave.¹⁰⁰ The plan of the church is very similar to those of Athonite *katholika*.¹⁰¹ The ground plan and features of the building suggest that the church was the *katholikon* of a monastery and the Prophet Elijah has traditionally been associated with the monastery of Nea Mone, built 1360-1370 by Makarios Choumnos.¹⁰² Nea Mone was built on the ruins of a Byzantine palace, intended for occupation by fifteen monks and was dedicated to the Virgin.¹⁰³ However, the church of the Prophet Elijah was not constructed on the ruins of a palace, was far larger than the needs of fifteen monks would dictate and the iconography of the surviving internal decoration suggests that the church was dedicated to Christ, not the

⁹⁷ Tampaki 1998:150; Janin 1975:356-7

⁹⁸ Bakirtzis 2003:60

⁹⁹ Papazotos 1985:130; Papazotos 1991:125. This feature appears on buildings dated to post c.1350.

¹⁰⁰ Papazotos 1985:134

¹⁰¹ Papazotos 1991:122; Kourkoutidou-Nikolaidou & Tourta 1997:113

¹⁰² Mango 1976:277; Voctopoulos 1987:111; Djurić 1972:284

¹⁰³ Laurent 1955:60-71; Papazotos 1991:122. Papazotos suggests that a monastery the size of Nea Mone would require a *katholikon* similar in size to the church of St. Nicholas Orphanos, not the large church of Prophet Elijah.

Virgin.¹⁰⁴ Fourteenth century Thessalonike possessed two known monastic complexes dedicated to Christ: the monastery of Philokales and that of Akapniou, neither of which have left a written record of a fourteenth century restoration.¹⁰⁵ The Philokales monastery was linked to the royal house of Serbia; the Akapniou monastery was connected to the Palaiologoi.¹⁰⁶ The high quality of the construction, the interior decoration and the presence of a *katechoumeron* gallery above the nave, a feature “frequently related to the imperial services and is therefore found in churches that were either imperial foundations or connected with members of the imperial family.”¹⁰⁷ This makes an association with the Palaiologoi more likely in the case of the church of the Prophet Elijah. The church is built in alternating layers of well-cut white stone and brick. This style is uncommon in Macedonia but was frequently employed in Constantinople, a further link to the imperial family. The exterior brickwork is also highly decorative. Thus it seems likely that Prophet Elijah was the Akapniou monastery. There is no known imperial patronage towards this monastery until the rule of Anna of Savoy in Thessalonike.¹⁰⁸ Thus the most likely patrons are Anna, 1351-65/6, or her grandson Manuel II, 1369-73 and 1382-7.¹⁰⁹ The frescos were produced in the late fourteenth century, another piece of evidence supporting a date of construction c.1351-1387.¹¹⁰ Papazotos says that it is unlikely that the church was built after 1371 following the victory of the Ottomans at the Marcia, when the entire region except Thessalonike passed into Ottoman hands. However, the mortar used to construct the

¹⁰⁴ Papazotos 1991:122-123. Papazotos compares the decoration of the church of the Prophet Elijah to that of the Chora in Istanbul, itself once the katholikon of a monastery dedicated to Christ.

¹⁰⁵ Philokales; Janin 1975:347-349; Theocharides 1981:319-350; Akapniou; Janin 1975:418-419; Papazotos 1991:123

¹⁰⁶ Tsitouridou 1979:263; Papazotos 1991:124. The monastery of Akapniou is twice referred to as imperial in Athonite archives. Xenophon:no.20; Chilandar no.36.

¹⁰⁷ Kourkoutidou-Nikolaidou & Tourta 1997:116. This feature can also be found in SS. Sergios and Bachos, the Pantokrator Monastery and the Pantepoptes Monastery in Constantinople; the Parigoritissa in Arta; the Hodegtria in Mistra; Hagia Sophia in Thessalonike; the Vatodedi Katholikon on Mt Athos; St Sophia in Ohrid and the Chrysokephalos in Trebizond. All churches associated with imperial patronage. Papazotos 1991:126

¹⁰⁸ Papazotos 1991:124

¹⁰⁹ Papazotos 1991:127

¹¹⁰ Papazotos 1991:124

church is not mortar at all, but mud. Papazotos believes that this is an indication that the building was constructed cheaply during a period of poverty.¹¹¹ The highly decorative brickwork, size of the church and paintings of exceptional quality, described as having “...an impressive richness and unprecedented realism in some of the scenes and figures...”¹¹² hardly seems to support this theory. Prophet Elijah is a large expensive church built without lime. Instead of assuming that this was a strange money saving technique, in a church which in every other way is extremely opulent, is it not possible that political factors prevented the builder from gaining access to the lime for the mortar? While this theory is impossible to prove it seems more logical an explanation for the lack of lime than saving money in this area which was potentially dangerous, when money could have been saved on both the interior and exterior decoration of the building without risking the very existence of the structure.¹¹³

All of the churches built in Thessalonike after the troubles of the mid-fourteenth century demonstrate that the high artistic traditions of the early fourteenth century did not collapse as a result of the Zealot interlude, the ravages of the plague and the Serbian invasions but continued uninterrupted into the latter part of the century. Even though the church of the Prophet Elijah was almost certainly an imperial foundation, it was built in the time when the city of Thessalonike formed part of an appanage assigned to a member of the imperial house, in the case of this church likely Anna of Savoy or perhaps Manuel II Palaiologos. Either way by this point it is unlikely that money from Constantinople was reaching the city in great amounts and financially the rulers of the city were probably expected to be self sufficient. If this supposition is correct both of the large and impressive

¹¹¹ Papazotos 1991:127 ‘the building itself in witness to the poverty of the times, although this poverty was veiled in a superficial splendour, as was the splendour of the Palaeologan dynasty during this period.’

¹¹² Kourkoutidou-Nikolaidou & Tourta 1997

¹¹³ Papazotos 1991:127 records that if the Ottomans had not heavily buttressed the building it would have fallen down because of the use of mud rather than mortar in the construction.

post-c.1350 churches about which we have information were built using local funds. Whilst this does not prove that Thessalonike as a whole continued to flourish after c.1350 it does suggest that the inhabitants of the city, both public and private, could and did raise significant amounts of money which they used to build impressive, high quality buildings and decorate them with magnificent frescoes.

The number of monasteries located in the upper city suggests that large areas were either sparsely populated or uninhabited at this time. Although by no means presenting a complete record of the inhabited areas of the city the Athonite archives do mention houses in the possession of the various monasteries, none of which can be positively identified as being in the upper city.¹¹⁴ The possibility that this may have been the case throughout the history of the city perhaps explains why the Hippodamian street plan did not extend far into the upper city. Although it is reasonable to assume that the upper city was home to dependents of the many monasteries located there, excavations have uncovered very few examples of pottery or other artefacts of daily life.¹¹⁵ The monasteries themselves probably covered a large area, before the fire of 1917 the Peribleptos monastery covered 1000m.squ.¹¹⁶ The monastery attached to the Holy Apostles, which has been identified as the monastery of the Theotokos Gorgoepekoos,¹¹⁷ has mostly vanished, but the remains of a cistern and a gateway, which is located 115m distance from the church, give an impression of the size of the courtyard.¹¹⁸ Before the fire of 1917 the monastery complex

¹¹⁴ See the following section on the lower city for a discussion of the location of the houses mentioned in the various monastic archives from Mt. Athos.

¹¹⁵ Bakirtzis 2003:61

¹¹⁶ Bakirtzis 2003:59

¹¹⁷ Janin 1975:352-354; Nikonanos 1986:99-107, Kourkoutidou-Nikolaidou & Tourta 1997:121-135; Tampakki 1998:71; Velenis 1983:23-36

¹¹⁸ Kourkoutidou-Nikolaidou & Tourta 1997:123

covered 10,000m².¹¹⁹ Both of these monasteries covered a very large area of land in the comparatively densely populated lower city.

Information on the populated areas of Thessalonike relies solely on the finds from rescue excavations, the results of which are only sporadically published with varying degrees of detail and analysis. The areas of the lower city which have yielded evidence of dense habitation are the harbour area and the insulae surrounding the cathedral of Aghia Sophia, while further excavations in Dioikritiriou Square and close to the Acheiropoietos basilica have revealed evidence of late Byzantine dwellings. The findings of the rescue excavations undertaken in Thessalonike have been summarised by Bakirtzes and in general the pattern of dwelling falls into two categories: large multi-story houses and closely packed buildings with small rooms often clustered around a courtyard with each insula or group thereof forming a self-contained neighbourhood.¹²⁰ The archaeology corresponds well with the surviving descriptions of houses in Thessalonike which are to be found in the Athonite archives. All of the houses recorded in these documents had access to a courtyard, the majority of which contained a communal well and occasionally an oven.¹²¹ In some cases the houses shared the courtyard with shops or workshops. In 1314 the Iviron monastery on Mt. Athos acquired a house and a shop which shared a courtyard and in 1320 the same monastery purchased, as well as residences, a bakery, two presses (either olive or wine) and an orchard with six mulberry trees.¹²²

¹¹⁹ Bakirtzis 2003:60

¹²⁰ Bakirtzis 2003:55-56

¹²¹ Lavra II:no.70; Vatopedi I:no.65; Iviron III:nos.60, 78; Chilandar I:nos.30, 34; Giros 2003:268, 269 from unpublished acts of Vatopedi;

¹²² Iviron III:nos.73 (1314) the properties cost 100 hyperpyra, 76 (1320), these properties were located near to the Golden Gate.

The Athonite archives also suggest which areas of the city were populated.¹²³ Houses in three areas in particular occur in a number of documents: the area from the Golden Gate to St. Menas next to the harbour, the hippodrome and the region between the agora, the Acheiropoietos Church and the Rotunda. A number of the houses were grouped around the Golden Gate and the St. Menas area, believed to have been next to the harbour in accordance with the modern district of that name. Vatopedi received four houses from two brothers who then became monks at the monastery. These houses were located in the quarter of St. Menas.¹²⁴ In 1314 the monastery of Chilandar was bequeathed twelve houses in the area, all grouped around courtyards¹²⁵ The Chilandar monastery owned houses in the St. Paramonas area, near to the Golden Gate and in 1322 purchased three houses from Alexander Doukas Sarantenos for 90 hyperpyra. Two years later the monastery acquired two more houses in the same district for 40 hyperpyra.¹²⁶ In 1320 the Iviron monastery on Mt. Athos acquired a bakery, two presses (either olive or wine) and an orchard with six mulberry trees close to the Golden Gate.¹²⁷ Kantakouzenos tells us that the sailors lived in their own district near the gates in the sea walls which led to the harbour. The population of the district was large and was one of the main supports for the Zealot regime.¹²⁸ There is further evidence that the harbour district remained one of the most densely populated areas of the city up until 1430.¹²⁹

¹²³ Although it cannot be proven that the archives present an accurate cross section of the inhabited areas of Thessalonike the houses mentioned in the documents do prove that the area was inhabited and as the majority of the houses fit the pattern outlined by Bakirtzes above the documents prove that this pattern of habitation was not limited to the small numbers of excavated insulae but was spread across the city.

¹²⁴ Giros 2003:268 from an unpublished act of Vatopedi.

¹²⁵ Chilandar I:nos.30, 34

¹²⁶ Giros 2003:273; for the documents regarding these houses see Chilandar I:no.25 (1322), Petit Chilandar nos.84 (1322), 106 (1326). The Chilandar also purchased empty land in the district of St. Paramonas in 1335, no.125

¹²⁷ Iviron III:no.76, these properties were located near to the Golden Gate.

¹²⁸ Kantakouzenos II: 575

¹²⁹ Anagnostes:507

The area to the east of the agora was known as the Kataphygi district, which has been associated with aristocratic families because of the names of the individuals who either donated or sold property to the Athonite monasteries or because of the owners of property which bordered the monastic possessions. The Vatopedi had received the house of Anna Tzemplakon which had fallen into ruin due to civil disorder.¹³⁰ This house and an adjoining church were sold by the monastery to the *archontes* Michael and Constantine Kyprianos for 100 hyperpyra; the brothers were intending to repair the church which was on the site and build new houses on the area occupied by the ruined buildings.¹³¹ Vatopedi possessed open land in the centre of Thessalonike in the area of Kataphygi which it rented out for the construction of two houses. The contract was to last for 25 years with an annual rent of 1.25 hyperpyra per year.¹³² The pattern of monasteries renting out dilapidated property to laymen who developed the site is repeated in 1358 with a group of houses in the Kataphygi district.¹³³ These houses repeated the now common features of arcade facing onto a communal courtyard containing a well, with the outer faces of the houses opening onto the street. This courtyard was located in an area of aristocratic property, the block itself had once belonged to a Kantakouzene and members of the Tarchaniotes family owned the blocks to the south (split between this family and the monastery of the Gorgoepekoos) and west of the courtyard. The Vatopedi monastery owned seven more houses in the district of Kataphygi, which were grouped around a court containing a well and a mulberry tree.¹³⁴ The same monastery also owned a perfumery in this region of the city.¹³⁵ The Xenophon monastery owned houses and shops near to the Asomatoi church.¹³⁶

¹³⁰ Vatopedi II:no.107 (1356). It is possible that this residence was damaged during the Zealot period.

¹³¹ Vatopedi II:no.139 (1373)

¹³² Unpublished act of Vatopedi, Giros 2003:269

¹³³ Unpublished act of Vatopedi, Giros 2003:269

¹³⁴ Vatopedi II:no.145

¹³⁵ Vatopedi II:no.134a

¹³⁶ Xenophon no.33, the Rotunda of St. George.

A man called Dadas rented five shops and three houses from the Xenophon monastery which he converted into a wine shop.¹³⁷ Further houses were owned by the Akapniou monastery close to the metochion of the Prodromos which it exchanged with the Iviron in 1318.¹³⁸ The Iviron monastery continued to buy property in this area acquiring more in 1320 from the Paxamandas family. These houses were as usual constructed around a courtyard and adjoined the Iviron's metochion of the Prodromos.¹³⁹ It is interesting to note that the district contained open land and dilapidated houses as well as extant buildings. As the region is known to have been an area with a number of aristocratic properties it is tempting to attribute the ruinous state of a number of the buildings and the single mention of civil disturbance with the anti-aristocratic policies of the Zealots. This argument is supported by the date of the documents which all come from the period 1350-1375. The final district which is mentioned multiple times in the sources is the area around the hippodrome. The Vatopedi monastery purchased a house near to the hippodrome for 46 hyperpyra. The monastery already owned the other two houses which connected to the courtyard overlooked by their new acquisition. By making this purchase the Vatopedi secured ownership of the whole unit; three houses and the courtyard. At least one of the houses had two doors, one opening onto the courtyard at the rear of the house, the other connecting with the street in front of the building.¹⁴⁰ Four more houses were purchased by Iviron in 1326 near to the metochion of St. Barbara for a cost of 100 hyperpyra.¹⁴¹ There is also evidence of residential property in the district of St. Pelagios. In 1327 the Zogaphou monastery was sold a house in this region for 250 hyperpyra, and c.1370 the Vatopedi

¹³⁷ Xenophon no.32 (1419)

¹³⁸ Iviron II:no.75

¹³⁹ Iviron III:no.78, the three houses which the Iviron purchased cost 60 hyperpyra.

¹⁴⁰ Vatopedi I:no.65 (1327)

¹⁴¹ Iviron III:78

owned a house around a court with a well and a tree.¹⁴² In 1374 the Vatopedi added to its property portfolio in the area by buying two houses from John Rammatas for 170 hyperpyra.¹⁴³ The large houses of Thessalonike were praised by Choumnos and their burning by the Zealots was lamented by Kantakouzenos.¹⁴⁴ The only area of the lower city's population to receive specific mention in the sources is that of the harbour district, where the sailors lived near the gates in the sea walls.¹⁴⁵ Although there is much evidence for residential zones spread across the city Kantakouzenos describes areas of Thessalonike which did not contain any houses.¹⁴⁶

The lower city also contained the metochia of the Athonite monasteries. Metochia often consisted of an enclosure containing a church, a residence for visiting monks and usually a well.¹⁴⁷ The income from metochia usually came from urban rents and the produce of vineyards located close to Thessalonike.¹⁴⁸ The Lavra owned a number of metochia in Thessalonike. By 1298 the monastery possessed three in the city, those of the Trinity, SS. Athanasios and Euthymios.¹⁴⁹ The Iviron owned a number of metochia in Thessalonike during the thirteenth century. These included one dedicated to St. John the Baptist, Saint Clement, St. Paramonos, Saint Basil, Saint Barbara and Saint Nicholas.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴² Zographou no.25; Vatopedi II:no.134a

¹⁴³ Vatopedi II:no.140. This document reveals that the Vatopedi also owned aother houses in the area close to the new property.

¹⁴⁴ Choumnos:141; Kantakouzenos II:234

¹⁴⁵ Kantakouzenos II:575

¹⁴⁶ Kantakouzenos III:659, the implication being that these areas were empty. There are a number of houses in the Athonite archives which are not identified as being in a specific area. In 1287 the Lavra took possession of a number of houses in Thessalonike which had previously belonged to a rival monastery, Lavra II:no.79; three further houses owned by the Lavra were built to surround a courtyard which contained a well. At least five more houses were acquired in the area all of which were built around courtyards, Lavra II:no.70; in 1264 the Iviron monastery signed over a church and six out buildings to a group of four men on condition that they repair the buildings at their own expense. The group had to pay an annual rent of 4 hyperpyra, in return they could keep the profits deriving from the property. It is not known to what use they put the buildings, but one of the number was a saddler, Iviron III:60; Iviron acquired three houses and a shop for 110 hyperpyra in 1314, Iviron II:no.73.

¹⁴⁷ Giros 2003:266

¹⁴⁸ Giros 2003:266

¹⁴⁹ Lavra II:no.89

¹⁵⁰ Iviron II:no.58 (1259)

Giros locates these metochia throughout Thessalonike; the Prodomos close to the Acheiropoietos church and St. Barbara and St. Nicholas near to the hippodrome.¹⁵¹ The Zographou monastery owned a metochion in the area of St. Pelagios close to St. Sophia.¹⁵² The Athonite monastery of St. Panteleimon owned the metochion of St. Zinaida in the fourteenth century.¹⁵³ In 1326 the monastery of Philotheou owned two metochia in Thessalonike, one of which had eight *modioi* of vineyards, a number of orchards and houses which it rented out.¹⁵⁴

The question of the location of the administrative and government buildings in Thessalonike is open to debate. These must have included offices for the administration, places where courts of law could be housed, the mint building, the governor's residence and barracks for the city garrison. The barracks have already been mentioned as situated in the acropolis, which as the militarily most significant part of the Thessalonike is certainly logical.¹⁵⁵ There is indirect evidence that Demetrios Komnenos Doukas, the last ruler of Thessalonike before the Nicaean conquest of the city, lived in the lower city. When the troops of John III Vatatzes entered Thessalonike through an open gate Demetrios fled to the safety of the acropolis.¹⁵⁶ A century later John Apokaukos, the son of the grand duke Alexios and technical governor on behalf of the regency during the first years of the Zealot period, lived in the lower city at the beginning of his time in Thessalonike, but moved to the acropolis when the activities of the Zealots became threatening.¹⁵⁷ Nea Mone is often described as being built on the site of a ruined imperial palace. Perhaps this palace was the

¹⁵¹ Giros 2003:270

¹⁵² Giros 2003:274, Zographou no.9 (1240)

¹⁵³ St. Panteleimon nos.10, 11

¹⁵⁴ Giros 2003:276; Philotheou nos.6, 9

¹⁵⁵ Kantakouzenos II:579-580

¹⁵⁶ Akropolites §45; Macrides 2007:236-237. Akropolites does not say that Demetrios fled from his residence to the acropolis but the implication is that he was in his residence and fled to the militarily secure area of the acropolis.

¹⁵⁷ Kantakouzenos III:571

residence of the governor before the Zealot uprising forced the administration to relocate to the acropolis. It is conceivable that following the murder of John Apokaukos by the Zealots the old governor's residence was destroyed, the land being used some time later for the construction of Nea Mone. As mentioned above the Eptapyrgion has been suggested as the site of a fortified palace in the late Byzantine period. Exactly when in the Palaiologan era the structure was built is unclear, but it could have been by the returning imperial authorities in the 1350s, although whether the Eptapyrgion ever functioned as a residence is unknown. As to the other official buildings there is no evidence of their location. The palace may have fulfilled some of the functions of a law court and perhaps housed the mint as well, but this must remain speculation until such time as the site is discovered and excavated.

The harbour of Thessalonike now lies under the modern city and nothing is known of its layout in the late Byzantine period. That there was a quarter dedicated to the harbour which had a large population of sailors suggests that it remained a vibrant zone within the city. The lower city also possessed the largest public spaces in the city. It is likely that some form of square remained attached to the larger churches of Aghia Sophia and Aghios Demetrios, but the most important open space in the city was the Agora. The ancient Agora had been greatly modified by the late Byzantine period; the underground porticoes had been filled with earth, as had the theatre.¹⁵⁸ Bakirtzes believes that the ancient Agora and the Byzantine Agora were the same and that the space had survived largely

¹⁵⁸ Bakirtzis 2003:58. A similar fate had befallen the hippodrome which had fallen into decay long before the late Byzantine period and was used for burials.

undeveloped since antiquity.¹⁵⁹ The Agora was used for public meetings until at least the 1350s.¹⁶⁰

The built environment of Thessalonike demonstrates a number of things. The quality and style of buildings constructed right up until the Ottoman conquest of the city shows that Thessalonike recovered more quickly from the troubles of the mid-fourteenth century than has been previously thought. While this recovery may not have taken the city back to the level it attained c.1300-1342 it was a significant achievement for a city which had experienced violent internal upheavals for almost a decade and which had been cut off from its hinterland for almost the same period. The fourteenth century saw the construction of a number of cisterns in the upper city. This shows the continued care lavished on the water supply infrastructure of the city and could be seen as linked to the strengthening of the fortifications of the city under at least two of the Palaiologoi. That some of these constructions took place after the recovery of the city from the Zealots demonstrates that there was still the political will and more importantly the resources for such major public works and, in the case of the religious institutions, private patronage. New monastic complexes were founded in the upper city after c.1350. This could be taken to suggest that the lower city was still more densely populated than the upper city in spite of the supposed desolations of the Zealot period.

¹⁵⁹ Bakirtzis 2003:57

¹⁶⁰ Kantakouzenos II:571, Gregoras II:675

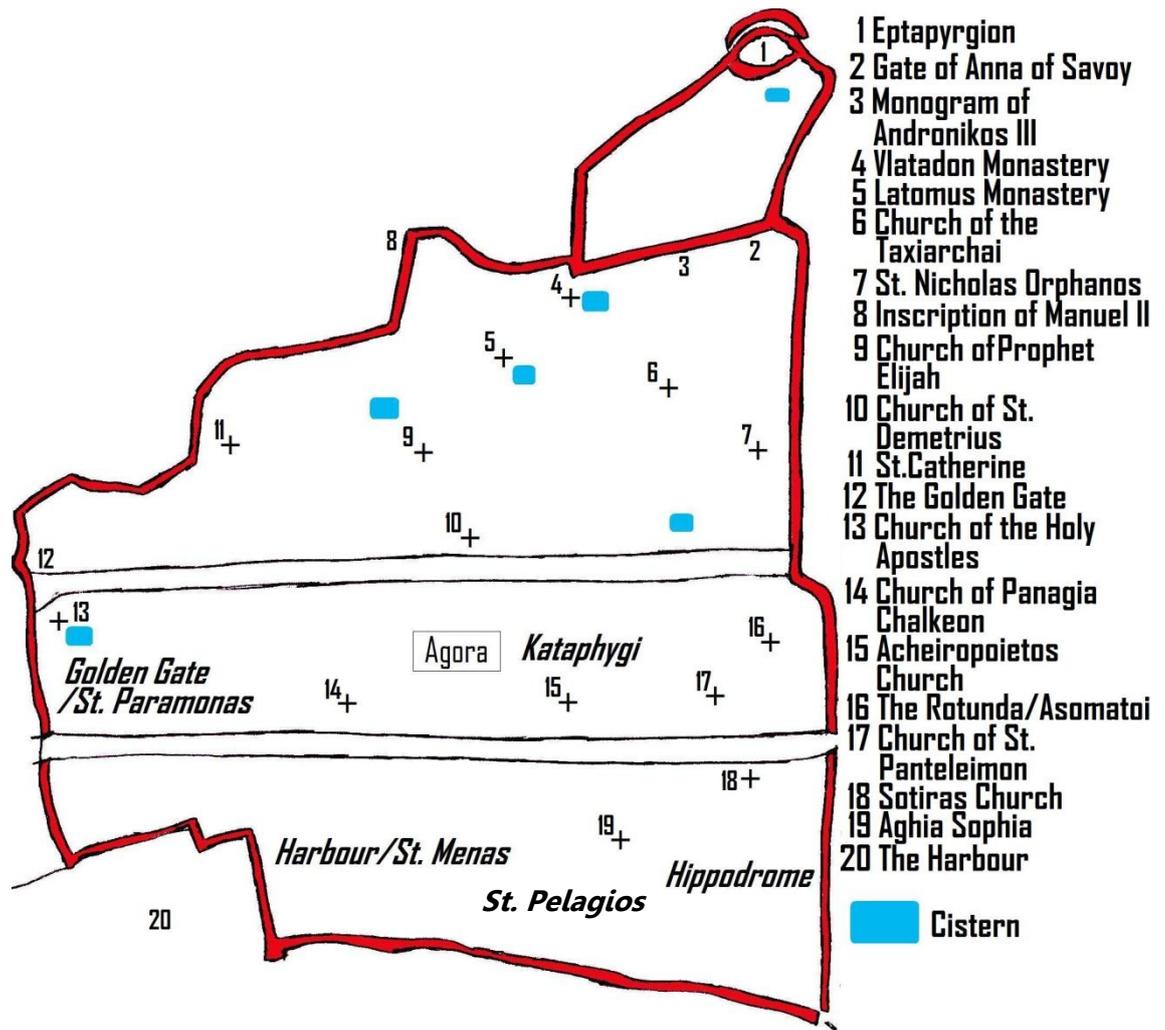


Figure 33: Thessalonike, showing the residential areas mentioned in the Athonite archives

The Population and Society of Thessalonike

It is rather difficult to calculate the size of the population of Thessalonike over the two centuries from the Byzantine recovery of the city until its transfer to the Venetians.¹⁶¹ Although the areas for which we have documentary and archaeological evidence were densely populated with closely packed buildings grouped around courtyards, there is no

¹⁶¹ Matschke has suggested a figure of 40,000 for the population of the city in 1423, declining throughout the Venetian period until the Ottoman conquest of 1423. Matschke 2002:465

way of knowing how widespread these areas were and how much of the city they occupied.¹⁶² Furthermore there is little evidence for habitation in the upper city and documentary sources speak of open ground in the lower city, either without buildings or given over to orchards or vines.¹⁶³ Therefore no calculation is possible based on an assessment of the built up area.¹⁶⁴ There is no record of how the many sieges which took place affected the city. Very few of these were of sufficient length to have seriously harmed the population. Those of John III Vatatzes, and Stefan Dušan in particular, were not closely pressed or lengthy.¹⁶⁵ The most serious sieges which the city faced were those of the Ottomans in the 1380s and 1420s. The siege of the 1420s in particular has left evidence of the difficulties facing the people of the city, with wheat being shipped to Thessalonike from Crete, Corfu and Italy and a system put in place to distribute grain to the poorest inhabitants.¹⁶⁶ All of this implies that the population was under strain and probably decreased during this final siege. The Metropolitan Symeon recorded food shortages as early as 1417/1418 and during the final Ottoman siege the people were reduced to eating bread made from linseed as there were no vegetables or regular bread.¹⁶⁷ There is also no evidence as to the effects of the plague on the city which is not mentioned at all in the sources. It can be assumed that the epidemic was very damaging to Thessalonike, if only in the short term. Thessalonike's food supply must have been reduced, if only temporarily, by the devastation of the hinterland of the city which accompanied the depredations of Catalan, Serbian and Ottoman armies in the region as well as the damage caused by the two

¹⁶² As noted above Katakouzenos describes areas of the city where there are no houses. Katakouzenos III:659

¹⁶³ See built environment section.

¹⁶⁴ Even though such a calculation would be highly speculative it would provide an approximate number with which to work.

¹⁶⁵ See above, Thessalonike in the Later Middle Ages

¹⁶⁶ Thiriet *Regestes* II:nos.1964 (December 1424 the Duke of Thessalonike was ordered to distribute wheat to the poorer inhabitants of the city), 1995 (July 1425 the Venetian senate agreed to give the poor of Thessalonike 2,000 measures of wheat per month)

¹⁶⁷ Symeon 50, 59, 63-4

civil wars in the fourteenth century. However, as the trade documents show Thessalonike still exported wheat into the late thirteenth century and during the Ottoman occupation which implies that although damaged the hinterland of the city still produced a surplus and therefore presumably enough food to feed the city.¹⁶⁸

The *archontes* of Thessalonike were numerous and influential and were possibly organised into a senate. This senate is referred to as both the *gerousia* and the *synkletos* and also the *boule*.¹⁶⁹ Tafrali believed that the senate was led by the imperial governor, at least until the Zealot period.¹⁷⁰ Although there are numerous references to the senate in addresses and speeches, when actual action is taken the sources refer to the elite of the city in general, not actions undertaken by a sitting council of senators. However, this does not mean that the elite *archontes* who plotted and schemed the fate of their city were not members of the senate and perhaps the elite and the senate should be seen as synonymous in the accounts of Byzantine historians. However a meeting is recorded in 1375 which included the *archontes* of the senate and the *archontes* of the city.¹⁷¹ Exactly what these two groups were is unclear, but it does suggest that membership of the senate was not an automatic right granted to all of the city's elite.¹⁷² As a result we should be careful when assuming that the actions of the *archontes* of Thessalonike were in any way 'officially' sanctioned by a municipal senate. The events during the second siege of Thessalonike by John III Vatatzes prove this point. At this time a group of *archontes* plotted to surrender the city to John. Akropolites records the names of six of these men, Spartenos, Kampanos,

¹⁶⁸ See below *Trade and Production: The Economy of Late Medieval Thessalonike and its Hinterland*.

¹⁶⁹ Tafrali 1913:71-72. For original references see Kantakouzenos I:149; Papadopoulos-Kerameus V:174

¹⁷⁰ Tafrali 1913:73

¹⁷¹ Vatopedi II:no.144 (1375)

¹⁷² Tafrali 1913:76, states that the *archontes* of the city were those chosen by the people to represent them, as opposed to those of the senate chosen by the imperial governor and point to Michael Palaiologos as an example of this. This seems an unlikely explanation and it is risky to draw conclusions about the workings of Thessalonike either before or after the Zealot period using that period itself as a guide.

Iatropoulos, Koutzoulatos, Michael Laskaris and Tzyrithon.¹⁷³ These men were the ring leaders, but the conspiracy went further and must have included a good proportion of the upper levels of Thessalonican society. Akropolites makes it clear that the conspiracy was headed by *archontes*. From his description it did not include all of the *archontes* of the city, and some who later supported the conspiracy did not know of its existence until the gate of Thessalonike had been opened to John's troops. Certainly the people were not aware of the pro-Nicaean plot and it is difficult to see how the senate could have been involved as well. The *archontes* of Thessalonike repeatedly tried to determine the political affiliation of their city. When war broke out between the regency council acting for John V Palaiologos and John Kantakouzenos the *archontes* of Thessalonike, in league with the governor, Theodore Synadenos, unsuccessfully tried to surrender the city to Kantakouzenos. Following the death of Alexios Apokaukos in 1345 his son, John, invited John VI Kantakouzenos to assume control of the city, along with the *archontes* who had survived the first attempt to do so by Synadenos.¹⁷⁴ In 1375 a case was heard to settle a dispute involving the monastery of Vatopedi. The meeting included the *archontes* of the senate and the *archontes* of the city.¹⁷⁵ When Manuel II ruled Thessalonike for the second time (1382-1387) the inhabitants of the city forced him to abandon the siege.¹⁷⁶ It is almost certain that it was the *archontes* who made his position untenable and forced him to leave the city so that they could reach an accommodation with the Ottomans who were besieging the city.¹⁷⁷ In 1403 the citizens of Thessalonike were loath to cooperate with the returning Byzantine government, and the *archontes* continued to oppose the men from Constantinople. This ill will was reciprocated

¹⁷³ Akropolites §45; Macrides 2007:236

¹⁷⁴ See the following paragraphs which examine the Zealot controversy.

¹⁷⁵ Vatopedi II:no.144 (1375)

¹⁷⁶ Manuel II nos.4, 67; Chalkokondyles I:42. Manuel claimed that the people were unwilling to fight or suffer hardship.

¹⁷⁷ Necipoğlu 2009:46 believes that Manuel was forced out of the city by the faction amongst the *archontes* who wished to reach an accommodation with the Ottomans.

and the courtiers and officials in the city disliked the citizens.¹⁷⁸ The *archontes* held positions of power in a senate in the fifteenth century.¹⁷⁹ In 1423 the despot Andronikos Palaiologos took the advice of the upper classes of Thessalonike, those involved in the administration of the city, when deciding to cede the city to the Venetians.¹⁸⁰ What these last examples demonstrate is that the *archontes* had clearly recovered their position of power and influence in the city by the 1380s, which they had lost under the Zealots (1342-1350).

Further down the social spectrum the majority of the population have left little record of individuals, but some intriguing evidence of communal or guild structures. The chief of the Mason's Guild was responsible for estimating the value of houses in Thessalonike.¹⁸¹ However, in the case of a court in the district of Kataphygi which the monastery of Vatopedi purchased in 1375 expert *archontes* were called in to value the property.¹⁸² The holder of the post of head of the masons' guild could be George Marmaras who is described as *πρωτομαίστωρ τῶν οἰκοδόμων*.¹⁸³ During the Zealot period two groups are mentioned; the sailors and the dockworkers.¹⁸⁴ These professions seem to have had a group identity, perhaps akin to that of the masons. The participation of the dockworkers and sailors in the Zealot uprising suggests group organisation, which must have been in place before 1342. They certainly possessed leaders, Michael and Andreas Palaiologos respectively, who were important members of the Zealot movement.¹⁸⁵ There

¹⁷⁸ Symeon 44, 53. The courtiers disliked the *astoi*.

¹⁷⁹ Docheiariou no.54

¹⁸⁰ Symeon 55-57

¹⁸¹ Zographou no.25

¹⁸² Vatopedi II:no.146. This could imply that the head of the mason's guild was an *archon*. However, the head of the mason's guild is not referred to as such and the expert *archontes* mentioned in the document held by the Vatopedi monastery are not explicitly associated with the mason's guild.

¹⁸³ PLP 7:17102

¹⁸⁴ Kantakouzenos II:575

¹⁸⁵ Matschke has suggested that rather than being leaders of occupation based groups, Michael and Andreas Palaiologos were the leaders of the neighbourhoods which housed these groups, Matschke 1991:26-27.

was also an association of saltworkers,¹⁸⁶ perfumers (Theodore Brachmos was *exarchos ton myrepson* in 1320)¹⁸⁷ and butchers.¹⁸⁸ The people only occasionally demonstrated their ability to control events. In 1322 the people had driven the governor of Thessalonike, Constantine Palaiologos the son of Andronikos II, out of the city for failing to adequately support his father against Andronikos III.¹⁸⁹ In 1326 during the civil war between Andronikos II and Andronikos III the governor of Thessalonike, John Palaiologos, the nephew of Andronikos II, declared himself and Thessalonike to be independent.¹⁹⁰ This independence did not last long, but it does contribute to the pattern of separatism evident in Thessalonike which was noted by Barker.¹⁹¹ It is not known who inside of the city supported John Palaiologos, but considering the fate of Constantine Palaiologos only four years before it seems unlikely that the people were against him. The people were occasionally called into an assembly. As Tafrafi notes this appears to have been done when a particularly important decision was being taken concerning the fate of the city.¹⁹² For example John Apokaukos called an assembly to denounce his fellow *archon* Michael Palaiologos;¹⁹³ John VI called an assembly in 1351 to denounce the Zealots as did Manuel II when he delivered his address to the people before leaving the city to the Ottomans. This assembly achieved a more permanent function during the Zealot period.¹⁹⁴

The most famous and significant example of the ordinary people of Thessalonike rising up to take control of events is the Zealot uprising of 1342. Kantakouzenos implied

¹⁸⁶ Dionysiou no.14

¹⁸⁷ Kugéas 1914-1919:153, Dölger *Aus den Schatzkammern*:no.111

¹⁸⁸ Kugéas 1914-1919:145

¹⁸⁹ Gregoras I:356-57, the mob surrendered the city to a governor of Andronikos II's choosing.

¹⁹⁰ Pachymeres II:424, 517; Kantakouzenos I:209; Gregoras I:390.

¹⁹¹ Barker 2003

¹⁹² Tafrafi 1913:73-74

¹⁹³ Kantakouzenos III:573. As Tafrafi notes this assembly was considered invalid according to Kantakouzenos because it did not contain all of the citizens, only the nobles, the military leaders, and the nearby citizens, Tafrafi 1913:75.

¹⁹⁴ Possibilities concerning the importance of the assembly and its role in the Zealot government are discussed in the following paragraphs.

that the original Zealots were of a lower class when he stated that after the initial anti-Kantakouzenos rampage the revolutionaries won over the *mesoi*.¹⁹⁵ The Zealot movement possessed the support of the sailors and dockworkers, and when Kantakouzenos discusses the actions of the Zealots he often refers to the Zealots and the demos together. When Theodore Synadenos tried to surrender Thessalonike to John Kantakouzenos in 1342 the Zealots, among whom were the sailors (ναυτιόν), resisted and drove out the Kantakouzenists.¹⁹⁶ When the city accepted John Apokaukos, son of the grand duke Alexios, it did so on condition that the leader of the Zealots, Michael Palaiologos, was his equal.¹⁹⁷ Both men held the title of *archon*. There was also a *boule*.¹⁹⁸ Barker believes that John Apokaukos held no real power in the city which was actually ruled by the Zealot party.¹⁹⁹ Three years after the initial revolution John Apokaukos had Michael Palaiologos murdered as the prelude to his seeking a rapprochement with John Kantakouzenos. Apokaukos was overthrown by Andreas Palaiologos and George Kokalas who were the new leaders of the Zealots and of a constituent part of the group called the παραθαλάσσιοι or dockworkers.²⁰⁰ Apokaukos and 100 of his supporters were killed by the rioters who pillaged and burned large parts of the city. After the murder of Apokaukos and his supporters Andreas Palaiologos and George Kokalas ruled the city, on behalf of the Zealots, along with a city council.²⁰¹ The final two *archontes* of the Zealot regime were Andreas Palaiologos and Alexios Metochites who held the rank of *epi tes trapezes* and

¹⁹⁵ Kantakouzenos II:235

¹⁹⁶ Kantakouzenos II:231-234

¹⁹⁷ Matschke sees this arrangement as similar to that of the pre-existing division of powers between a *kephale* and a *kastrophylox*, Matschke 1994:22

¹⁹⁸ Barker 2003:17

¹⁹⁹ Barker 2003:17. Matschke has suggested that the Zealots had no internal 'party' organisation and could have been a loose group held together by the personality of their leaders, Matschke 1991:24

²⁰⁰ Kantakouzenos II:566-581, 577 for the dockworkers. This involvement of dockworkers in the Zealot movement, coupled with the sailors' central role in the first overthrow of the supporters of John VI suggests the importance of the shipping industry in Thessalonike. Matschke believes that Andreas Palaiologos belonged to a moderate wing of the Zealot party, Matschke 1991:26.

²⁰¹ Kantakouzenos II:581-582

protosebastos respectively.²⁰² Metochites succeeded in having Palaiologos exiled from Thessalonike by the council by presenting Palaiologos as a traitor against the Roman people because of his overtures to the Serbs.²⁰³ Metochites then invited Kantakouzenos to come and assume control, and John VI Kantakouzenos and John V Palaiologos immediately sailed to Thessalonike. Once there John VI called an assembly of the people in which he denounced the Zealots accusing them of being traitors who sided with the Serbs and enemies of the rich.²⁰⁴

Exactly what the Zealots were and how they fit into the greater tapestry of Byzantine history has been a source of debate amongst scholars for the last hundred years. Modern commentators on the Zealots have often tried to attribute proto-modern revolutionary motives to the group's actions. Tafrali relied on the Anti-Zealot discourse of Nicholas Kabasilas which he believed described how the movement confiscated monastic properties and presented them as social reformers.²⁰⁵ This view dominated scholarship for half a century and was given renewed impetus by Marxist historians.²⁰⁶ Ševčenko demolished this theory by proving that Kabasilas was not discussing the Zealots, but the actions of Manuel II while despot in Thessalonike over a decade after the fall of the Zealots.²⁰⁷ That Kabasilas was not attacking the Zealots is now generally accepted by many, if not all, scholars even if there is no agreement on who was the aim of the work.²⁰⁸ While

²⁰² Kantakouzenos III:104

²⁰³ Kantakouzenos III:108-109

²⁰⁴ Kantakouzenos III:117

²⁰⁵ Tafrali 1913:225-272

²⁰⁶ Barker 2003:29-30. Barker notes that Diehl 1928, Charanis 1940-41, 1948, Barker 1957, Browning 1950, Kordatos 1928, Gorjanov 1946, Levčenko 1949, and Kazhdan 1952, 1982 were all supporters of Tafrali's overall view of the Zealots. Barker 2003:29-33 contains an analysis of the modern works on the Zealots which is summarised here.

²⁰⁷ Ševčenko 1957 first argued that Kabasilas wrote the work as a criticism of Alexios Apokaukos in the 1340s but later shifted this to the 1370s and Manuel II, Ševčenko 1960, 1962.

²⁰⁸ Barker 2003:30. Charanis and Dennis while agreeing that the Zealots were not the target have disagreed over how critical the discourse was of Manuel II. Charanis 1971, Dennis 1977. For a list of those who still adhered to the views expressed by Tafrali see Barker 2003:31.

the idea that the Zealots were proto-revolutionaries gained ground in the old Eastern Block countries, this theory has been progressively discredited over time. Nicol believed that the Zealots who initially ousted Theodore Synadenos were not a street mob but more of a political party, who transformed Thessalonike into an independent commune or republic.²⁰⁹ Tafrali was the first man to try to connect the Zealot movement with the civil disturbances of cities in Western Europe.²¹⁰ Despite attempts, mainly by Marxist historians, to view the Zealots as part of a widespread proletarian uprising Barker is almost certainly correct when he says that ‘The best perspective on the problem is that the Thessalonian phenomena were just vaguely parallel to the Western ones, but were neither identical to nor connected with them.’²¹¹

If the discourse of Nicholas Kabasilas is discounted as a source for the Zealot period in Thessalonike then there are few references to what the group did in Thessalonike and how they governed the city. These references come solely from the works of anti-Zealot individuals, John VI Kantakouzenos, Nikephoros Gregoras, Gregory Palamas and Demetrios Kydones. Kantakouzenos accuses them of murdering and exiling his supporters, burning and looting their property and plotting to surrender Thessalonike to the Serbs.²¹² Gregoras presents an almost identical description as does Palamas. Kydones, by writing about the greatness of the city before Zealot rule and the depths to which

²⁰⁹ Nicol 1993:194-195

²¹⁰ Tafrali 1913:256-257

²¹¹ Barker 2003:33, as Barker notes Browning also dismisses any such link while Ševčenko said that ‘Conditions prevailing in the Empire since the beginning of the fourteenth century furnish a sufficient explanation for the Zealot revolution.’ Ševčenko 1953/1981:616-617

²¹² See Kantakouzenos III:117 for his denunciation of the Zealots following his recovery of Thessalonike. Matschke has pointed out that as many of the confiscations of *archontic* property took place while John Apokaukos was one of the two leaders of Thessalonike, and as he was appointed in the name of John V Palaiologos the confiscations were legal acts enacted by the government, Matschke 1991:31.

Thessalonike had fallen since, says the same things in a different way.²¹³ Gregoras implies that the Zealots ruled through the use of force.²¹⁴ It is interesting to note that the activities of the Zealots, imprisoning, exiling and murdering of rivals and the confiscation and destruction of their property were not dissimilar from those enacted by Alexios Apokaukos and the regency in Constantinople towards John Kantakouzenos.²¹⁵ In fact the actions of the Zealots are only remarkable in one way, rather than two opposing groups of the elite fighting, the Zealots represented the lowest sections of society.

The activities of the Zealots in Thessalonike should not be seen in isolation.²¹⁶ The anti-aristocratic movement began in Adrianople in 1341 when the *dynatoi* of the city assembled the people to read a declaration from, and express support for, John Kantakouzenos against the regency in Constantinople. That a worker called Branas and two accomplices encouraged the people to riot, attacking the aristocracy and burning or looting their properties.²¹⁷ The regency recognised the new order in Adrianople and Alexios Apokaukos sent his son Manuel to govern the city. As the *archontes* of cities across Thrace and Macedonia declared their support for John Kantakouzenos so a wave of lower class disaffection swept through those same cities with similar results to in Adrianople.²¹⁸ Kantakouzenos himself described the wave of rebellion as anti-aristocratic and spoke of the massacre of his supporters.²¹⁹

²¹³ Palamas CLI cols 12-13 accused the Zealots of ruling Thessalonike like an occupying force which destroyed houses and murdered people. It is perhaps no accident that Kantakouzenos described the rule of the Zealots in almost identical terms. Kantakouzenos II:234-235

²¹⁴ Gregoras II:796

²¹⁵ Presumably Kantakouzenos acted much the same way to, but was loath to record it in his history.

²¹⁶ For the wider context and discussion of the civil disturbances during the mid-fourteenth century see Matschke 1971.

²¹⁷ Kantakouzenos II:175-179; Gregoras II:620-2

²¹⁸ Nicol 1993:193 believes that these towns only declared for the regency in Constantinople to legitimise their revolutionary actions.

²¹⁹ Kantakouzenos II:178

The Zealot movement was arguably a more successful rebellion than those in the other cities of Thrace and Macedonia. It certainly managed to sustain independence for Thessalonike for eight years where all other cities were quickly brought back under central control.²²⁰ In fact Thessalonike only accepted the return of the imperial government when the situation in Macedonia had deteriorated to the point where the choice was between being ruled by John VI or Stefan Dušan. As has been noted above the Zealots ruled Thessalonike through two *archontes* and a *boule* or *ekklesia*.²²¹ We have no indication about who sat on the council or as to how the *archontes* were chosen. Certainly John Apokaukos was the choice of the central government in Constantinople, but his colleague, Michael Palaiologos was a local man and leader of the Zealots. Kantakouzenos' connecting of Andreas Palaiologos to the dockworkers seems significant; perhaps he was the leader of this group, which was an influential part of the revolutionary movement. The structure of the government of Thessalonike under the Zealots seems to have been revolutionary only in the degree to which it empowered the lower citizens at the expense of the *dynatoi*. However, it is not clear to what extent the Zealots did exclude the *dynatoi* from power. John Apokaukos was the son of the most influential man in Constantinople and a member of the aristocracy. Although John was the government *archon*, not the local appointee he did manage to remove his Zealot counterpart and rule Thessalonike alone for some time. John was only murdered himself when he was caught conspiring with John Kantakouzenos. At this point, as was recorded above, Apokaukos and other *dynatoi* were slaughtered and their houses plundered or destroyed. This account provides two pieces of information, that the initial expulsion of *dynatoi* from Thessalonike had by no means been universal and that a

²²⁰ While obviously this had much to do with the isolated geographical position of the city, especially after the conquests of the Serbs in Macedonia this cannot have been the whole story.

²²¹ Kantakouzenos II:573; Gregoras II:675. A situation which has its parallel in Monemvasia. The initial settlement with one *archon* chosen locally and one appointed from Constantinople is particularly resonant of Monemvasia at this time. Matschke suggests that the Zealot leaders who were exiled from Thessalonike by John VI Kantakouzenos in 1350 were members of the *boule*.

portion of the remainder were still involved in municipal politics. Even after this second culling of the *dynatoi* in Thessalonike George Kokalas, a member of a Thessalonican aristocratic family²²² and Alexios Metochites, son of Theodore Metochites and a high ranking aristocrat, became one of the two *archontes* of Thessalonike.²²³ He successfully carried out the same coup as attempted by John Apokaukos, removing his Zealot counterpart and then surrendering the city to John VI Kantakouzenos and John V Palaiologos. The tale of Metochites proves that after nine years of Zealot rule there were still *dynatoi* in Thessalonike and that a member of this group could still rule the city. The careers of John Apokaukos and Alexios Metochites in Thessalonike force us to question the accounts of the aristocratic authors who have left us a description of the activities of the Zealots. It seems that the revolutionaries were not as anti-aristocratic as they at first seemed to be. The expulsion of Theodore Synadenos, and the death of John Apokaukos were very similar both in form and motive to the eviction of Constantine Palaiologos, when the populace disagreed with the choices he made during the civil war between Andronikos II and Andronikos III. It could be argued that Constantine Palaiologos, Theodore Synadenos and John Apokaukos were removed from power in Thessalonike not because they symbolised the interests of the aristocracy as opposed to those of the lower classes but because they did not represent the feelings of the Thessalonicans when it came to imperial politics.²²⁴ Further evidence that the Zealot regime was not as destructive as the sources state is that trade continued to flourish between Thessalonike, Venice and

²²² For the Kokalas family see Necipoğlu 2003:140. Matschke believes that Kokalas had designs on the position which Apokaukos had held as the central government's representative in Thessalonike, Matschke 1991:37 (based on Kantakouzenos III:575).

²²³ Metochites was not appointed by the government in Constantinople which had no representative in Thessalonike from 1345 until 1350.

²²⁴ Matschke has stated that it would be wrong to view the Zealot period as a dispute between two different groups of the aristocracy, Matschke 1991:37-38. While this is so it would clearly be equally wrong to view the aristocracy as either the victims of the Zealots or as a helpless group forced to ride the tide of popular opinion in the form of the Zealots.

Genoa.²²⁵ The documentary evidence for this trade ends in 1345 the year in which the Serbs cut Thessalonike's contact with its hinterland. That previous to this contact had continued, suggests that the countryside around Thessalonike was connected to the city and that Thessalonike was open to people from the surrounding region who wished to use it as a market at which to sell their goods.

It would be cowardly to leave the topic of the Zealots without proposing some theories as to what nature of regime they created in Thessalonike, however suppositional these theories might be. Clearly, as argued above, the accounts of the likes of Gregoras, Kantakouzenos and Palamas cannot be trusted or considered to be accurate concerning the method of rule used by the Zealots. It seems that the Zealots modified the existing system of municipal administration in Thessalonike and to a greater or lesser extent weakened and then removed the imperial government from the picture. The senate and assembly almost certainly continued to exist and it seems certain that there was continuity of membership of both, with many of the elite surviving in place throughout the period. Perhaps the two councils were partially merged or perhaps members of the guilds were admitted to the senate. Either way those members of the population who had been previously excluded from power, like the dockworkers, were admitted or forced their way in. It is unlikely that we will ever know how the two *archontes* or members of the senate were chosen. Clearly John Apokaukos was a the appointee of the central government in Constantinople, but Michael and Andreas Palaiologos, John Kokalas and Alexios Metochites were internally selected from a mixture of aristocratic and probable guild backgrounds. The origins of the leaders is a clue to the probable origins of the movement itself, a mixture of aristocratic and guild people who disagreed with the policies of Theodore Synadenos and the sections of the senate which supported him. When ousting Theodore the new ruling group

²²⁵ See below, pp.273-276.

instituted a new form of government which was able to survive for a decade. While the mixture of aristocratic and popular elements to the revolt allows comparison with the *popolo* movement in Italy, where the disenfranchised guilds were led by members of the elite to a position of power in the commune, there was certainly no direct influence and Thessalonike was not a commune on the Italian model. While similar circumstances had perhaps led Thessalonike and the cities of northern Italy to the same revolutionary ends Thessalonike was still trying to decide what it was when the imperial government was invited back in 1351 and the old system was restored. Perhaps Thessalonike is a case of a commune which was not given time to mature and fully develop.

As well as the native Byzantine population Late Medieval Thessalonike was also home to an ever changing number of people who were not Byzantine Greeks. These people can be divided into foreigners, both transient and settled in the city and Jews. The majority of the westerners who were living in Thessalonike in this period were merchants.²²⁶ It will be demonstrated below that from 1277 there was a permanent Venetian presence in the city, including a consul, although it seem reasonable to assume that this was interrupted during times of war.²²⁷ The majority of the westerners who were residents in the city were Venetian. Certainly all of the Genoese citizens who are recorded in the city were visiting merchants, not settlers.²²⁸ There is no evidence of Pisans in the city, but Jacoby suggests that this may have been the result of the destruction of Pisan documents in various wars.²²⁹ When the Ottomans conquered Thessalonike in 1387 they converted two of the city's churches into mosques, the church of the Saviour in the

²²⁶ Jacoby 2003:88

²²⁷ See the section 'Trade and Production: The Economy of Late Medieval Thessalonike and its Hinterland' below.

²²⁸ Venetian residents in Thessalonike are mentioned in 1418/1419, Thiriet *Regestes* II:no.1725

²²⁹ Jacoby 2003:113

acropolis and the monastery of St. John south of the acropolis.²³⁰ It is likely that the Ottomans involved in the administration and defence of Thessalonike were based in the acropolis and the remainder, who transferred to the city as settlers, lived in the centre of the lower city. Jacoby has done extensive research into the Jewish community of Thessalonike, demonstrating that it almost certainly had its own quarter of the city.²³¹ This community existed throughout the Palaiologan period but the exact location of the district and the crafts undertaken by its inhabitants are unknown. There is however, one document which may shed light on the location of the Jewish quarter. This source claims that the Jews had, in ancient times, lived near to the church of the Forty Martyrs, near the Leophoros.²³² However, it is not clear whether this area was still inhabited by the Jewish population or whether they had moved out of their ancient neighbourhood for another one.²³³ The Jews as a group had to pay the Byzantine government a special annual tax of 1,000 hyperpyra.²³⁴

Trade and Production: The Economy of Late Medieval Thessalonike and its Hinterland

The surviving evidence for the economy of Thessalonike presents a picture of a more diversified economy than for the other cities which have been discussed in the present study. The evidence suggests a variety of income sources for the people of Thessalonike: estates in the hinterland of the city, urban properties and trade. The economy

²³⁰ Symeon:251-253

²³¹ Jacoby 2003:123-125

²³² Dionysiou:no.19

²³³ Jacoby 2003:127

²³⁴ Jacoby 2003:128; unpublished document ASV, Senato Misti, reg. 55, fol. 142r, §19. This document dated to 1425 was a request from the Jews of Thessalonike to the Venetians for a reduction of the tax.

of Thessalonike also shows greater change throughout the late medieval period than is the case with the other three cities in this study. In both the areas of trade and agricultural production the economy of Thessalonike had to develop and adapt to different circumstances, both those forced on the city from outside and those which developed out of the internal social and institutional evolution of the city. The fact that Thessalonike did adapt and quite successfully to all the changes which occurred in the last two centuries of its existence as a Byzantine city is a testament to the resilience of the inhabitants.

The privileges of Thessalonike were mentioned by Villehardouin and Choniates at the time of the crusader conquest of the city and later by Akropolites.²³⁵ Kampanos, an *archon*, of Thessalonike went to John III Vatatzes and offered to surrender the city to him if he would create a *chrysobull* in which he guaranteed traditional customs and rights of the city.²³⁶ It seems that such a *chrysobull* existed and that the Thessalonians continued to enjoy privileges up until the first Ottoman conquest and probably beyond into the Venetian occupation. That the *epoikoi* of Thessalonike enjoyed special financial privileges in the fourteenth century has been demonstrated by Lemerle, Patlagean and Kyritses. Patlagean used the documents of the Athonite archives to prove, contrary to the arguments put forward by Lemerle that privileges were not granted to Thessalonike as a result of the civil wars of the fourteenth century, but in fact had their origins much earlier in history.²³⁷ Kyritses uses much the same documents to assess the question of property ownership and tax exemption in late Byzantium and the ‘common’ *chrysobulls*.²³⁸ Patlagean records a number of *chrysobulls* which grant either tax exemption to the property of Thessalonians or

²³⁵ Villehardouin §280; Choniates 599.35-40

²³⁶ Exactly what the nature of the vast majority of these privileges was is unknown. I have discussed the financial privileges below. Tafrahi believed that the inhabitants of Thessalonike received a number of privileges with respect to municipal government, these have been discussed above.

²³⁷ Patlagean 1998:591; Lemerle 1965:218-298

²³⁸ Kyritses 1999

which mention that the city possessed a *chrysobull* of privileges.²³⁹ The land mentioned in the documents is described as *ἐλεύθερα* because of the *chrysobulls* that exist for the Thessalonians.²⁴⁰ What is interesting is that the property remained ‘free’ even when it passed out of the hands of Thessalonians.²⁴¹ Furthermore, the houses which the Vatopedi purchased in 1374 were exempt from taxation.²⁴² During the Ottoman siege of the city Manuel II mentioned the financial privileges of the city in general terms.²⁴³ The privileges of the Thessalonians continued to exist until 1424, and probably 1430, in some form. This is proved by the promise of the Venetians to respect the privileges of the city, and by the order of the Venetian Senate to the Duke of Thessalonike to hold courts every day in accordance with the customs of the city.²⁴⁴ Although the majority of the evidence about the privileges granted to the Thessalonians concerns the right for those who own land to do so without fear of taxation or limitations on who they could leave, give or sell their property to, from the other cities studied here, it seems unlikely that this was the full extent of the privileges granted to the *epoikoi* of Thessalonike. That the Thessalonians enjoyed more far reaching privileges is suggested by the Venetian document of 1424 which contains a judicial privilege. As such it seems logical to suppose that Thessalonike was in receipt of

²³⁹ Vatopedi II:no.89 (1344) mentions the right for patrimonial property to pass to a son without being subject to taxation; the document published by Lemerle 1965, references the immunity of the inhabitants of Thessalonike from taxes on their *gonika*; Xenophon nos.17 (1332) mentions an exemption from tax because of the *chrysobull* which had been granted to the Thessalonians and 25 (1338) mentions the existence of a *chrysobull*; Chilandar nos.72 (1316) mentions that property in Thessalonike is ‘free’ because of the *chrysobull* which had been granted to the Thessalonians and 146 (1321) mentions an exemption from tax because of the *chrysobull* which had been granted to the Thessalonians.

²⁴⁰ Kyritses 1999:234. Kyritses suggests that the *chrysobulls* must have granted an ‘unlimited right of transmission’ with respect to the property of the Thessalonians.

²⁴¹ Kyritses 1999:234. For the means by which the inhabitants of a city could overcome this loophole see Ioannina chapter.

²⁴² Vatopedi II:no.140

²⁴³ Manuel II Συμβουλευτικός:296-298

²⁴⁴ Sathas *Documents* I:no.86; Thiriet *Regestes* II:no.1962 (December 1424)

privileges which were comparable to any number of cities for which the documents survive a mixture of financial, civil and judicial concessions from the imperial government.²⁴⁵

The people of Thessalonike owned estates in the countryside around the city and continually invested in these properties. The majority of the investments were intended to increase the productivity and output from the land in question and, occasionally, to restore land damaged by the actions of rampaging enemies. Both those residents of the city who owned estates and the people in the hinterland itself invested in their properties, from the *paroikoi* up to the imperial government. There is ample evidence of *paroikoi* planting vines in the region around Thessalonike. The people of the village of Avramiton cleared and planted 400 *modioi* of vines c.1300.²⁴⁶ Most of this type of investment was on a considerably smaller scale, such as that made by Glykys, a *paroikos* of the Iviron who rented 10 *modioi* from that monastery and planted it with vines c.1323.²⁴⁷ Vines made a good investment for *paroikoi*, they could be planted on ground which was too uneven or rocky for ploughing and in the first half of the fourteenth century cost 5.5-10 times more than the equivalent amount of arable land, and their fiscal value was 8-12 times higher.²⁴⁸ It has been argued that during the fourteenth century the *paroikoi* of Macedonia became increasingly poor, the amount of vines and the number of sheep owned per household decreased consistently.²⁴⁹ In contrast to this view the recent study of Moustakas argues that the Serbian occupation of south eastern Macedonia only affected the great lay landowners, the monasteries, mid-

²⁴⁵ With the Zealot period in mind it would be interesting to know if there was a clause similar to that in the *chrysobull* for Ioannina which protected the city from being transferred to the rule of another person against the citizens' wishes.

²⁴⁶ Xenophon:no.3

²⁴⁷ Iviron III:no.67

²⁴⁸ Laiou and Morriison 2007:176

²⁴⁹ Laiou 1977:208. Laiou compares the documents of 1300-1, 1320-1 and 1338-41, tracing the development of villages recorded at more than one date. However, it should be noted that these villages are not evenly distributed across Macedonia, nor are they located close to Thessalonike (the villages are in south east Macedonia). There is every chance that the documents which survive represent an area that was particularly unlucky with respect to Catalan attacks and the countermarching of the armies during the civil war between Andronikos II and Andronikos III.

level landowners and *paroikoi* remaining unaffected.²⁵⁰ Whether the *paroikoi* were gradually becoming poorer or not there is evidence that they suffered due to the insecurity that gripped the Macedonian countryside during the fourteenth century. Both Pachymeres and Kantakouzenos record how the *paroikoi* fled their lands for the safety of the cities at times of trouble.²⁵¹ Furthermore during the Ottoman siege of 1383-1387 Thessalonike was cut off from the countryside which was ravaged by the Ottomans.²⁵²

Mid-level and great landowners living in Thessalonike invested in much the same things as the *paroikoi* but with the additional investment in *autourgia*.²⁵³ Theodore Sarantenos, invested in 210 *modioi* of land in Skoteinou, and also built 3 mills.²⁵⁴ In c.1296 Manuel Biblodontes sold 61 *modioi* of vineyards that he himself had planted to Theodore Karavas, a resident of Thessalonike.²⁵⁵ Theodore Skaranos died owning 3 buffaloes, 2 oxen, one donkey, and 2 horses in livestock; c.270 *modioi* of arable land and c.24 *modioi* of vineyards.²⁵⁶ A similar case is that of Theodore Karavas who died in 1314 and left 61 *modioi* of vineyards and 10.5 *stremmata* of arable land, one cow and one ox.²⁵⁷ There is evidence of quite large scale planting of vineyards continuing as late as 1405 when Radosthlabos gave the monastery of St. Paul half of the vineyards he had planted himself.²⁵⁸ In the early

²⁵⁰ Moustakas 2001:28. Moustakas uses the same monastic archives as Laiou but compares these to the initial Ottoman land registers and discovered that in terms of population and the occupation of sites there was little difference between the period pre-1350 and the late fifteenth century. Seventy two of the ninety two villages which appear in the various sources of the fourteenth century were still inhabited in the mid-fifteenth century, Moustakas 2001:192. The population figures for both periods also demonstrate that the losses to the plague were recovered and built upon in under a century.

²⁵¹ Pachymeres I: 482, 484, 529, 552, 590 records how the people of the countryside fled to Thessalonike to escape the Catalans; Kantakouzenos I:137-138 describes how taxes could not be collected during the civil war between Andronikos II and Andronikos III because the *paroikoi* had abandoned their land.

²⁵² That the countryside suffered from the presence of the Ottoman army is suggested by one of the letters of Kydones. Kydones II:no.299

²⁵³ *Autourgia* were properties which required minimal outlay in terms of money and manpower after an initial investment. Examples of this are salt pans, mills and even vineyards and olive groves.

²⁵⁴ Vatopedi I:69-78

²⁵⁵ Chilandar appendix I:no.27

²⁵⁶ Ivion III:no.59

²⁵⁷ Chilandar app. I:no.27

²⁵⁸ Lefort 1982:25

fourteenth century Georgios Kalameas, a soldier, built a mill.²⁵⁹ These mid-level land owners must account for a good number of the people in Thessalonike at the time. Both Skaranos and Karavas left a large supply of wine in their wills which must have been the produce of their estates. Skaranos left 900 measures of wine, 600 of which had already been sold and Karavas left 300 measures of wine. These amounts are too high to have been for individual consumption and it seems likely that the estates of both men were geared towards the production of a marketable surplus, which as there is no record of wine being exported from Thessalonike must have been to satisfy a purely local demand.²⁶⁰ Karavas also owned 12 properties within Thessalonike.

The great lay landowners also owned large properties and invested in their improvement. The Kantakouzenoi lost a great amount of livestock during the civil war between John VI and John V. Kantakouzenos records the amounts as 1,000 pairs of oxen, 2,500 mares, 5,000 cattle, 200 camels, 300 mules, 500 asses, 50,000 pigs, 70,000 sheep.²⁶¹ Using records of prices this livestock would have had a market value of approximately 351,300 hyperpyra.²⁶² Even allowing for exaggeration it is clear that the Kantakouzenoi approached, if they did not surpass, the wealth of the great monasteries. Alexios Laskaris Metochites (the last ruler of Zealot Thessalonike and the man responsible for the submission of the city to John VI) donated 13,000 *modioi* of arable land at Kassandreia to the monastery of the Vatopedi in 1369.²⁶³ This land would have produced a net yield of approximately 26,000 *modioi* of wheat, half of which would have gone to Metochites and presumably to the market in Thessalonike.²⁶⁴ John and Anna Asanina Kontostephania

²⁵⁹ Iviron III:no.71, no.72

²⁶⁰ In these cases the distinction between land owner and merchant is not easy to define.

²⁶¹ Kantakouzenos II:192

²⁶² Prices used in this calculation are from Morrisson and Cheynet 2002. This calculation does not include the 200 camels for which no price could be found.

²⁶³ Vatopedi II:no.130

²⁶⁴ For the method of this calculation see the following paragraph.

invested in vineyards to return them to cultivation after they had been abandoned during the troubles of the mid-fourteenth century.²⁶⁵ Other *archontes* of Thessalonike were not as fortunate as John and Anna Asanina Kontostephania. The Deblitzenos family lost almost all of its possessions due to Serbian and Ottomans incursions into the hinterland of Thessalonike.²⁶⁶ The family claimed to have lost at least 3,500 *modioi* of arable land by 1387.²⁶⁷ Constantine Prinkips had been a land owner in Thessalonike before the Ottoman siege of the 1380s, but lost his estate because of the Ottomans.²⁶⁸ In 1404 the aristocratic Argyropoulos family from Thessalonike rented a garden from the Iviron monastery for an annual rent of 39 hyperpyra. The Argyropouloi irrigated the garden and sublet it for 86 hyperpyra per annum, which was later raised to 115 hyperpyra. During a later legal dispute the monks of Iviron claimed that the cost of the improvements made to the garden was 44 hyperpyra, which would mean a return on investment of 193%. However, the Argyropouloi claimed that they had spent 1199 hyperpyra on improvements, reaping a 7% return. The contract ran for 17 years so both possible returns would have produced a net profit for the Argyropouloi.²⁶⁹ With such high returns it is not surprising that people invested in improvements to their land, or rented land which could be improved.²⁷⁰ Monasteries also invested in *antourgia* such as mills.²⁷¹

In 1407, John VII, ruling in Thessalonike, built a wall to seal off the Kassandreia peninsula. He then invested considerable sums of livestock, money, and manpower in bringing the land under cultivation.²⁷² Laiou and Morrisson say “We know of imperial

²⁶⁵ Pantokrator:no.9 in 1374

²⁶⁶ Oikonomides 1980:176-198

²⁶⁷ Docheiariou no.58

²⁶⁸ MM II:221-223

²⁶⁹ Iviron IV:no.97, no.98 for a discussion of this episode see Laiou 2002:358-9

²⁷⁰ A mill was taxed at the same rate as 100 *modioi* of arable land, a clear incentive to invest in the construction of these *antourgia*. Laiou 2002:360

²⁷¹ For example, Chilandar:no.115

²⁷² Lavra III:no.159 John placed the land under the care of the monasteries of Mt Athos.

efforts in the Chalkidike and in Lemnos to restore lands to productive capacity, attract a labour force, and entrust the subsequent management to large economic units, that is, monasteries. But it was much too little, and much too late. The Byzantine state had only a few decades to live, and its own resources were, by now, negligible.”²⁷³ This statement seems unfair. The region of Thessalonike now consisted of the city itself and Chalkidike. The monasteries were the only units remaining in the area with expertise in running large estates. The fortification of the Kassandreia peninsular and its cultivation represented a major undertaking for the beleaguered city-state of Thessalonike. For Thessalonike at this time the investments were certainly not negligible, nor were these efforts unsuccessful. John VII attempted to secure a supply of food for the city of Thessalonike which had only recently been recovered from the Ottomans. John was making a long term plan for the future of the city under Byzantine rule. This plan also seemed viable to the Venetians who took over the city in 1423. In the peace offer which was made to the Ottomans the Venetians requested that the Kassandreia peninsula be included as one of their possessions in the terms of any peace treaty.²⁷⁴ The Venetians retained some control over the Kassandreia peninsula during the siege of Thessalonike and both the senate in Venice and the people of Thessalonike were interested in fortifying it, presumably to emulate John VII and provide a secure source of food for the city.²⁷⁵

The greatest landowners in the region around Thessalonike, for whom we have extensive information, are the monasteries of Mt. Athos.²⁷⁶ The Athonite archives demonstrate that it was these estates which must have produced most of the grains which

²⁷³ Laiou and Morrisson 2007:182

²⁷⁴ Thiriet *Regestes* II:no.1980

²⁷⁵ Thiriet *Regestes* II:nos.1943 (June 1424), 1980 (July 1425), 2004 (July 1425), 2027 (July 1426)

²⁷⁶ See Smyrlis 2006 for monastic estates.

were traded in Thessalonike.²⁷⁷ Angeliki Laiou has calculated the approximate yields of the estates of the great monasteries. In 1321 the Lavra monastery owned 54,000 *modioi* of arable land in the theme of Thessalonike.²⁷⁸ Laiou calculated that the Lavra would have taken 54,000 *modioi* of wheat from the produce of this land, the remainder going to the *paroikoi* and for next year's seed. As this represents a far higher figure than the monks could possibly have required, most of the grain would have been sold. The value of 54,000 *modioi* of grain in 1321 was 4,860-4,320 hyperpyra.²⁷⁹ The property of the monastery of Vatopedi in the Theme of Thessalonike was confirmed by Andronikos III in a *chrysobull* of 1329. This amounted to 9,284 *modioi* of land.²⁸⁰ According to the methods of Laiou this land would have yielded 27,852 *modioi* of grain. Out of this total 5,802.5 *modioi* would be required for the seed of next year's crop and 7,349.8 *modioi* would go to the monastery as its one third share.²⁸¹

Thessalonike was an important centre of trade. For much of the late Byzantine period the city acted as an international market place as well as a regional and local centre. Kydones claimed that Thessalonike was a commercial city which contained merchants from the whole world.²⁸² The profile of the city changed as the political situation affected access to the city's Balkan markets and its own hinterland. In this respect the city's international role began to suffer even before the city was cut off from its hinterland. The trade economy of Thessalonike can be divided into two periods before and after the first Ottoman conquest of the city. The first period can itself be divided into when Thessalonike was an international market, the international trade centre of the western Aegean,

²⁷⁷ It seems reasonable to suppose that the great aristocratic estates would have played a similar role in producing a large marketable surplus but unfortunately there is no surviving proof.

²⁷⁸ Laiou 2002:350. The total land owned by the monastery amounted to nearly 185,000 *modioi*.

²⁷⁹ Laiou 2002:349

²⁸⁰ Vatopedi I:no.68

²⁸¹ For the basis of this calculation see Laiou 2002:349

²⁸² Kydones *Monodia* PG, 109 col.641 'Ἀγορά τε τοὺς ἐξ ἀπάσης γῆς ὑποδεχομένη καὶ τοὺς συνιόντας, οὗ γῆς εἶεν, ἀπορεῖν ἀναγκάζουσα'

counterpoint to Constantinople in the east and when the city operated as a regional centre of export and redistribution. I do not believe that the Zealot period in Thessalonike, nor the mid-fourteenth century troubles in the hinterland of the city, had any damaging effect upon the substance of the trade conducted in Thessalonike or the goods being exchanged. The only negative effect which was felt concerned quantity not substance.²⁸³ The second period begins in 1403 with the Byzantine recovery of Thessalonike from the Ottomans. From this date onwards the city possessed an ever changing and diverse economic profile. The period when Thessalonike operated as an international and then a regional centre is characterised by an export and import of the same types of goods, the difference was in how the market was connected to the wider world. Therefore, it is reasonable to consider the period c.1224-c.1387 as a unified whole with a separate assessment for 1403-1423.

For much of the thirteenth century Thessalonike operated as an international centre of trade from which the produce of the northern Balkans was exported, most notably to the Venetian Republic. The importance of Thessalonike to the Venetians can be seen in the inclusion of the city, by name, in a number of treaties between Venice and Byzantium. There is no evidence that the Venetians were trading in Thessalonike until 1268.²⁸⁴ However, in 1265 the Byzantine authorities proposed a treaty which would allow Venetians to live outside of the *kastron* of Thessalonike, although the Venetian senate refused to ratify the treaty.²⁸⁵ In 1277 a treaty was agreed between Michael VIII and the Venetians which, although it applied to the whole empire, illustrates the special position that Thessalonike held in the trading networks which spanned the Aegean and the eastern

²⁸³ Laiou 2000:199 believes that the 1350s marked a dividing line in the economic profile of the city. While this is not purely to do with trade, but also the heath of the agricultural hinterland, trade is still a major factor of her argument. That the quantity of trade likely declined is a supposition based on the cumulative effects of the plague and the Serbian invasions.

²⁸⁴ Jacoby 2003:93

²⁸⁵ Jacoby 2003:96. Jacoby notes that the two surviving versions of the text, one in Latin and one in Greek specify different things, the Greek text says that the Venetians may reside beyond the walls, the Latin text states that they may build lodgings outside of the walls.

Mediterranean. The Byzantine-Venetian treaty of 1277 granted the Venetians a number of privileges in Thessalonike. Visiting merchants and officials were allowed to use the church of the Armenians for the Latin rite and three houses in the surrounding neighbourhood were given over to their use: one for lodging the Venetian consul, one for his councillors and a final house to be used as a warehouse for the goods of Venice. Merchants from Venice were granted up to 25 houses in which to stay whilst in the city.²⁸⁶ Jacoby stresses that Michael VIII did not grant the Venetians a permanent quarter in the city and nor did he give them the houses in which the Venetians resided.²⁸⁷ This argument is supported by a comparison between the clauses relating to Constantinople with those for Thessalonike and other cities. In the imperial capital the Venetians were given a defined area as a quarter. No such definition was provided for the location of the Venetians' lodgings in Thessalonike. In all of the cities of the empire where the Venetians traded, except Constantinople and Thessalonike, the Italians had to pay rent for the use of houses and warehouses.²⁸⁸ The treaty of 1277 was renewed in 1285, 1302 and 1310. What is interesting with regards to Thessalonike is that the privileges given to the Venetians fall half way between those granted with respect to Constantinople and other provincial cities. It could be concluded that Thessalonike, in terms of Venetian trade, was second only to Constantinople and was far more important to the Republic than the other cities of the empire. Further evidence of the importance of Thessalonike to the Venetian Republic is the presence of a consul in the city from the 1270s onwards.²⁸⁹ Thiriet stressed the fact that the consul in Thessalonike was only of similar rank to those in Arta and Clarentza, ranking

²⁸⁶ MM III:88-89

²⁸⁷ Jacoby 2003:99; Geanakoplos 1959:301; Laiou 1972:63; Nicol 1988:199-200; Nicol argued that the Venetians were granted a permanent quarter.

²⁸⁸ Jacoby 2003:99, the clause can be found on MM III:88

²⁸⁹ Carentano Zane was the first known consul in the city and is attested in 1273/1274, TTh 3:279-280, this document also records that Zane was involved in the wheat trade; other consuls include Pietro Michel (1276) TTh 3:270, Jacopo Ansaldo (1277) TTh 3:271-272, Emanuele Mazamano (1313/1314) Thiriet *Deliberations* I:no.326, Maco Celsi (1316) Thiriet *Deliberations* I:no.354, Giuliano Zancaruol (1318) Thiriet *Deliberations* I:no.400

far below the baile in Constantinople and Negroponte.²⁹⁰ The consul was free to trade, was not paid a salary and was an appointee, not an elected official.²⁹¹

The foreign merchants who are represented in the sources before any others are the Ragusans who were given freedom of trade in the domains of Manuel Komnenos Doukas, emperor of Thessalonike, in a *prostagma* of 1234 because of the help that the city of Ragusa had given to his niece and her husband, the ruler of Serbia. This freedom excluded the export of wheat during times of bad harvest. Furthermore, the Ragusans were exempted from all taxes.²⁹² Ragusan contact remained constant throughout the first half of the fourteenth century as evidenced by the number of men contracted to carry messages from the commune to Thessalonike.²⁹³ The Genoese were only occasionally active in Thessalonike as far as we can tell from the surviving records, although there are hints at what could have been a more developed trade between the two cities than has been thought. Notably Thessalonike was not mentioned in the treaty of Nymphaion, between Michael VIII Palaiologos and the Genoese, of 1261. The Genoese were instead given permission to use Kassandreia as a base.²⁹⁴ Jacoby has pointed out that there is no evidence of the Genoese ever actually taking advantage of this concession and trading in Kassandreia.²⁹⁵

At some point towards the end of the thirteenth century the status of Thessalonike's market as the western Aegean's international hub began to slip, the city

²⁹⁰ Thiriet 1952:325, in fact the consul in Thessalonike was the subordinate of the baile in Constantinople.

²⁹¹ Thiriet 1952:326

²⁹² Krekić *Dubrovnik* no.3

²⁹³ Krekić *Dubrovnik* nos.172 (a courier was paid 12 hyperpyra to carry letters to Thessalonike, January 1336), 197 (Franciscus Serianus was paid 7 hyperpyra to carry mail to kyr Nicola Barigianus a Venetian noble and merchant who was settled in Thessalonike), 119 (another courier was paid 10 hyperpyra for a 16 day outward journey to Thessalonike and a 20 day return journey, November 1323), 178, 179 (Franciscus was sent to Thessalonike with letters and was paid 20 hyperpyra, June 1339), 191, 193 (The same courier was engaged to carry letters to the Venetian consul in Thessalonike and was paid 10 hyperpyra to do so in 1340)

²⁹⁴ Dellacasa *Repubblica di Genova*:no.749

²⁹⁵ Jacoby 2003:114

being supplanted by Negroponte. This is not to say that there were no merchants from Venice or other Italian cities trading in Thessalonike and the Venetians retained a consul in the city throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. However, during the late thirteenth century there were a decreasing number of Venetians travelling to Thessalonike from Venice and an increasing number from Negroponte. An ever increasing percentage of the goods of the Balkans, which previously entered the international market at Thessalonike, must have been shipped to Negroponte, the new centre of trade in the western Aegean, as there is no reason to suppose that the Balkan hinterland of Thessalonike ceased to produce a marketable agricultural surplus, or that this was distributed from another location. One contributing factor in this shift in trade patterns could have been the war which erupted between Venice and Byzantium at the end of the thirteenth century. Peace was not restored until 1303. Not all of this trade was in the hands of Venetian residents in Thessalonike or Negroponte; there is evidence of Byzantines Thessalonike trading in Negroponte in the early fourteenth century.²⁹⁶ The rise of Chios can be seen to parallel that of Negroponte for the Genoese, though less important for the history of Thessalonike. In this case the island acted as an international centre and the goods of Thessalonike and its hinterland had to be transported to Chios from which they entered the international market. However, the importance of Chios and the Genoese in general in the economy of Thessalonike should not be exaggerated as there are very few references to Genoese merchants in the city. The shipping routes which crossed the Aegean were the chief factor in determining Thessalonike's place in the Mediterranean trade network. As Thiriet noted, in the fourteenth century the Black Sea and Constantinople were the main foci of trade and Thessalonike was not on the main route to

²⁹⁶ Thomas and Predelli *Diplomatarium* I:no.127

these places.²⁹⁷ As a result the great state galley convoys from Venice did not pass through the city. Through no fault of its own Thessalonike had declined as an international trade centre. Much the same goods still reached the city from much the same sources, but Thessalonike now acted as a transit point. Balkan merchants sold their goods in Thessalonike to either Byzantines or Italians (usually resident in the Aegean area) who transported them on to the international markets at Negroponte, Constantinople or Chios.²⁹⁸

The goods sold in Thessalonike were mostly grown in the lands around the city. The vast majority of the records involving goods being exported from Thessalonike, until the mid-fourteenth century are concerned with wheat or other grains. Two early fourteenth century trade handbooks specifically mention wheat from Thessalonike.²⁹⁹ This is particularly so with respect to produce exported to the Italian city states, particularly Venice. Wheat was exported to Venice from Thessalonike throughout the early years of the fourteenth century.³⁰⁰ Ragusa also purchased grain from Thessalonike. In November 1339 the commune was 20,000 hyperpyra in debt to merchants of Genoa and Romania for wheat which it had bought from them through its trustees in Constantinople and Thessalonike.³⁰¹ However, after this event there are no more records of the Ragusans purchasing wheat from Thessalonike. There are frequent examples of the wheat of Romania in the Ragusan archives, but there is no evidence of where in the Balkans this

²⁹⁷ Thiriet 1952:327-328

²⁹⁸ It has been noted by Mazzaoui 1981:48 that while the development of larger ships (the cog and great galley) greatly aided maritime trade by increasing the amount of merchandise that could be carried at a lower cost than the new ships were so large that the number of international trade harbours declined to those that could accommodate the larger vessels. Perhaps Thessalonike was simply a victim of this advance in technology.

²⁹⁹ Stussi 1967:69; Pegolotti, 93, 153, 203

³⁰⁰ Thiriet *Deliberations* I:nos.272, 327, 346, 351, 376, 418, 434, 440, 447, 453, 456; Thiriet *Regestes* I:nos.156, 347. In 1315 the senate laid down the regulations which governed the import of wheat from Thessalonike. Thiriet 1952:329

³⁰¹ Krekić *Dubrovnik* no.186 (Jacoby (2003) states that this debt was accrued in 1347, not 1337 as Krekić says. It is unclear whether Jacoby has redated this document based on his own research in the archives of Venice. If so then it provides fascinating evidence of trade in the Zealot period.

grain originated. Laiou believed that although the grain of Romania in the Ragusan sources was bought in Arta, the grain itself came from Thessaly and Macedonia.³⁰² However, the sources do not specify where the grain of Romania originated and there is no indication of grain travelling between Arta and other areas of the Byzantine world or who would have carried it.

The other product which was exported from Thessalonike was cotton. In the early fourteenth century developments in the cotton industry in Northern and Central Italy led to a greater demand for raw material. As a result the Italians began importing cotton which had previously been considered of inferior quality from Greece, Asia Minor and the Black Sea coast.³⁰³ From the fifteenth century the Venetians in particular greatly increased the amount of cotton they were importing from Greece.³⁰⁴ It is unclear from the sources, except in a minority of cases, exactly what form this cotton was in when it left Thessalonike; raw, spun or as cloth. The same Italian trade manuals which were mentioned above also describe how cotton and silk were exported from Thessalonike.³⁰⁵ Jacoby makes reference to an unpublished document which mentions the presence of silk from Berrhoia in Lucca in 1284, concluding that this silk was likely to have been shipped from Thessalonike to Genoa.³⁰⁶ In the mid-fourteenth century Thessalonican cotton was to be found in both Pisa and Florence.³⁰⁷ There is further evidence which suggests that during this period the Italians operated a system of importing finished textiles to Thessalonike and exporting grains from the city. This can be seen in 1277 when Jacopo Ansaldo, a Venetian, rented a house in Thessalonike in which he not only lived, but stored wheat which he had

³⁰² Laiou 1980-1:185

³⁰³ Mazzaoui 1981:43, 46.

³⁰⁴ Mazzaoui 1981:54

³⁰⁵ Stussi 1967:69; Pegolotti, 93, 153, 203

³⁰⁶ Jacoby 2003:115

³⁰⁷ Pegalotti, 203, it is likely, particularly in the case of Florence which possessed its own highly developed textile industry that Thessalonike provided the raw products for the Florentine workshops.

bought, and sold textiles to the Byzantines.³⁰⁸ As Thiriet noted, Thessalonike did not attract the large convoys of state galleys or the armed galleys of the patrician families, but the smaller galleys of individual merchants.³⁰⁹ The size of the trade conducted by the Italians in Thessalonike is suggested by the claims for compensation lodged by the Venetian and Genoese representatives in the empire to the Byzantines authorities. A request for compensation from the empire for goods taken by the governor of Thessalonike in 1294 amounted to 3,684 hyperpyra.³¹⁰ A further claim for compensation was for a horse belonging to a Genoese in Thessalonike.³¹¹ Andronikos III paid more compensation to the Venetians in 1332.³¹² However, claims for compensation prove that trade was not all conducted by the Italians. In 1319 the emperor demanded 29,300 hyperpyra in compensation from the Venetians for goods stolen from Byzantine merchants, 10,000 hyperpyra of which was claimed for merchants from Thessalonike.³¹³ In 1329 a trade deal with a value of 24 pounds of silver took place between a native of Kotor, Thoma Pauli, and Baldovinus Grecus of Thessalonike. The document suggests that Baldovinus had travelled to Ragusa, although no details of the deal have survived apart from its value.³¹⁴ Further documents dated to the mid-fourteenth century show how Byzantines from Thessalonike

³⁰⁸ TTh 3:271-272, two more examples of this practice of importing textiles and exporting grain can be found in 1271 and 1277, TTh 3:nos.6-11 (1277), no.12 (1272). Jacoby 2003:98 believes that this pattern of importing manufactured products to Thessalonike from Venice and exporting wheat was a common one.

³⁰⁹ Thiriet 1952:328. It is also possible that the harbour at Thessalonike was not suitable at this point for the new, larger ships, especially the cog. The introduction of larger ships has been seen as one reason for the decline in the number of large international ports and the concentration of long distance trade into a smaller number of regional hubs, such as Negroponte. See Mazzaoui 1981:48.

³¹⁰ G. Bertolotto 1897:512

³¹¹ G. Bertolotto 1897:531

³¹² Thomas and Predelli *Diplomatarium* I:230-231

³¹³ Thomas and Predelli *Diplomatarium* I:no.72

³¹⁴ Another case of a Byzantine from Thessalonike in Ragusa is Anna, who was in the city in 1318 where her slave died. Krekić *Dubrovnik* no.108

were involved in selling and shipping grain, silk and cotton which had been produced in Chalkidike.³¹⁵

Special consideration should be given to the period of Zealot rule in Thessalonike. As the only sources which survive are emphatically anti-Zealot, an assessment of trade produces a counterpoint from which to assess the years 1342-1350. What the trade documents prove is that little changed under the Zealots. Jacoby believes that, like the Church, the Venetians were not affected by the plundering and burning of property in the city. 'Industrial production, including the manufacturing of textiles, trade, the movement of ships in Thessalonike's harbor, as well as medium-range traffic with Negroponte, Chios, and Constantinople continued.'³¹⁶ Certainly there are documents which suggest that this was the case. In 1349 Thessalonican cloth, worth 1,900 hyperpyra, was purchased on the Genoese possession of Chios for shipment to Constantinople.³¹⁷ There is further evidence that trade continued throughout the Zealot period.³¹⁸ These references only concern the years 1340-1345. In 1345 the armies of Stefan Dušan had conquered Serres, Christoupolis, Berrhoia and the Chalkidike peninsula, severing Thessalonike from its agricultural hinterland as well as from the rest of the Balkan Peninsula. The effects on the city of the Serbian occupation of Macedonia can be seen in the request made by John VI Kantakouzenos to the Venetians asking them to supply Thessalonike with grain.³¹⁹ It was the Serbian conquest of Macedonia and the instability that this caused, not the Zealots, which changed the economy of Thessalonike; disrupting it and forcing it onto a new path.

³¹⁵ Schreiner 1991:79-106, no.3 dating and siting 80-81. For cotton especially see Schreiner 1991:85, no.3.69, with commentary on 102-3.

³¹⁶ Jacoby 2003:106

³¹⁷ Argenti 1958:no.47; Matschke 1989:70-72 believes that the linen reached Chios by way of another port, Jacoby (2003:116) does not believe that this was so but is not sure whether the goods were taken to Genoa by Thessalonican merchants travelling to Chios or by Genoese merchants from Chios.

³¹⁸ Thiriet 1952:328-329; Blanc 1896:80, 86, 96, 106, 119

³¹⁹ Thiriet *Regestes* I:no.237 (1350)

Following the Byzantine recovery of the Thessalonike in 1350, trade in the city attempted to return to the patterns seen before the conquest of much of Macedonia by the Serbs. However, further disruption in the hinterland from the 1360s onwards caused by the expansion of the Ottomans hindered attempts at reconstruction. The documents dated after 1350 do demonstrate that whenever Thessalonike had regular, secure access to the surrounding countryside trade resumed, much as it had before, if on a reduced scale. In 1356-1357 Nicholas Prebezianos, an *archon* of Thessalonike was operating as a textile merchant, as was his brother, Manoles.³²⁰ The trade book which records the involvement of the aristocratic Prebezianos in trade was written by a member of the *archontic* Kasandrenos family and shows that members of the equally high born Tzakandyles and Gazes families were also involved in trade.³²¹ Tzakandyles traded in grains, caviar, fish and textiles.³²² In spite of the destruction which had been wrought in the hinterland of the city there is evidence of the export of grain to Pisa in the 1380s.³²³ The wheat trade from Thessalonike to Negroponte resumed under the first Ottoman occupation of the city.³²⁴ This suggests that the lack of evidence for a trade in cereals in the latter fourteenth century has less to do with the devastation of the hinterland at the hands of raiding enemies and more to do with the imperial authorities' inability to provide a secure environment in which agricultural production could flourish. After all within just six years of the city being reunited with its hinterland Thessalonike was exporting wheat to Venice. Even earlier than this there was frequent contact between Negroponte and Thessalonike, with Venetian merchants sailing to the city. Unfortunately the records of the merchants have not survived. Their activities are only known from requests for protection from Ottoman

³²⁰ Schreiner 1991:85, 84. For a commentary on the *archontes* of Thessalonike engaging in trade see Necipoğlu 2003:148-151

³²¹ Necipoğlu 2003:149

³²² Schreiner 1991:83, 84, 87, 88

³²³ Jacoby 2003:114; Ciano 1964:52

³²⁴ Thiriet *Regestes* I:no.838 see also no.857

pirates.³²⁵ As Thiriet noted, Thessalonike did not attract the large convoys of state galleys or the armed galleys of the patrician families, but the smaller galleys of individual merchants.³²⁶ The trade between Negroponte and Thessalonike was obviously split between natives of both cities, at least in the second half of the fourteenth century. In 1360 the baile of Negroponte wrote to the Venetian senate to tell them that Niccolo Manolesso had extorted 100 hyperpyra from some Thessalonican merchants. The baile advised that the Byzantines should be reimbursed and an apology issued to avoid reprisals against Venetian merchants in Thessalonike.³²⁷ In 1363 the Venetians threatened to withdraw all the citizens of the city, whether settlers or merchants, from the lands of the Byzantine Empire. Thessalonike was specifically mentioned as one of the cities containing both groups.³²⁸ Later in 1375 the Venetian ambassador to John V Palaiologos complained about the treatment that merchants of Venice were receiving in Thessalonike.³²⁹

The Ragusans remained in the city, although there is little evidence of what they were trading. George Pović died in Thessalonike in 1368. His will was witnessed by both Serbs and Ragusans: providing proof of the presence of different ethnic groups in Thessalonike.³³⁰ In 1377 a letter from the commune of Ragusa to the Dragas brothers and Constantin Dejanović asked them to negotiate, along with Junius Bunić, for the sale of millet and wheat. The negotiations concerned the amount of grain which could be bought and where in Macedonia it could be purchased, although there is no record of a sale

³²⁵ Thiriet *Regestes* I:nos.347 (1359), 1265 (1407). In every case where merchants requested protection from the military galleys stationed at Negroponte this protection was granted and trade continued. This situation should be contrasted with the situation on land under Byzantine rule where the authorities were unable to protect merchants.

³²⁶ Thiriet 1952:328

³²⁷ Thiriet *Regestes* I:no.453. This document does not have a date but the editor placed it sometime during the 1360s.

³²⁸ Thiriet *Deliberations* I:no.698

³²⁹ Thiriet *Regestes* I:no.551

³³⁰ Krekić *Dubrovnik* nos.271, 272

actually happening.³³¹ Whether the deal was done or not the Ragusan presence in Thessalonike continued into the 1380s as demonstrated by the couriers which continued to travel from Ragusa to the city.³³² In a poorly preserved document there is evidence that the Ragusans used Thessalonike to ship goods to the interior of Serbia, specifically Novo Brdo. In June 1373 there was a dispute between the Ragusan merchant, Junius Bunić, and another Ragusan, Junius Sorkocević, who either worked for the despot Dragasses, or lived in his territory. Bunić accused Sorkocević of stealing five loads of merchandise which contained a great number of textiles in a variety of colours, 500 pieces of fustian, pearls weighing four pounds, two silver belts weighing ten pounds, 50 pounds of pepper, 14 pounds of saffron and five horses. These goods left Thessalonike a little after the harvest and were stolen in the lands of the despot Dragasses on their way to Novo Brdo. The total value of the stolen merchandise was claimed as 270 pounds of silver, although the value was later increased to 300 pounds.³³³ That the lost merchandise was valued in pounds of silver and the fact that they were being transported to Novo Brdo opens up the possibility that they were being traded directly for the silver mined there.

There is evidence that other merchants, seeking the silver from Serbia were not as enterprising as Bunić. Instead of travelling to Novo Brdo these men used Thessalonike as a bullion market, bringing their goods to the city and trading it for silver brought from the north. The documents which demonstrate that Thessalonike operated as a bullion market all date from after the Byzantine recovery of the city in 1403. It could be that the difficulties imposed on the city due to the proximity of the Ottoman border and the opportunities opened up by the rich Serbian mines necessitated a change in the nature of

³³¹ Krekić *Dubrovnik* no.321

³³² Krekić *Dubrovnik* nos.367 (12 October 1382), 368 (19 October 1382)

³³³ Krekić *Dubrovnik* nos.306, 307

the Thessalonican economy away from cereals.³³⁴ The evidence from the fifteenth century suggests that the Venetians took textiles to Thessalonike along with ducats which they exchanged for silver, almost certainly from Serbia. A document of 1407 discussed the transport of textiles to Thessalonike and the possible export of silver from the city.³³⁵ In this document Jacoby sees a connection between the Venetian operations in the city and the Serbian silver mines at Novo Brdo.³³⁶ 'By 1407 Thessalonike had become a bullion market in which Venetians exchanged their gold ducats for silver, which was shipped to areas using silver-based currencies...'³³⁷ Jacoby suggests that the high level of state control over the bullion market in Venice resulted in cheaper purchase prices in Thessalonike.³³⁸ When the city submitted to Venetian rule in 1423 there is further evidence of the trade of textiles for silver and Thessalonike's bullion market. An agent of Guglielmo Querini bought 200 and 450 ducats worth of silver in Thessalonike in 1428 and 1429 respectively for transport to Trebizond. In 1430 Querini's brother travelled to Thessalonike to sell textiles and purchase silver.³³⁹ As Jacoby points out, the trade in silver suggests that Thessalonike was not entirely severed from its hinterland.³⁴⁰ What it does suggest is that the siege of Thessalonike by the Ottomans was not always a complete blockade, but the need for Thessalonike to import food from elsewhere proves that, although merchant convoys may have been able to travel between the Balkan interior and the city, the hinterland was not safe for the inhabitants of Thessalonike with respect to cultivation. After all fields could not avoid Ottoman patrols and agricultural production requires much more time than trade, time during which the field could be discovered and burned or pillaged.

³³⁴ One of the problems of the much smaller size of the province dependent on Thessalonike is that the cereal production was likely to have been needed to feed the city.

³³⁵ Sathas *Documents* II:no.410

³³⁶ Jacoby 2003:109

³³⁷ Jacoby 2003:109, as Jacoby notes Matschke spoke of a currency market, not a bullion market.

³³⁸ Jacoby 2003:109

³³⁹ Jacoby 2003:111; from Luzzatto 1954:177-178

³⁴⁰ Jacoby 2003:112

One agricultural activity which did survive the Ottoman infiltration into the countryside around Thessalonike was the cultivation of cotton.³⁴¹ There are two different ways in which the export of cotton from Thessalonike is recorded: documents concerning the purchases of merchants and requests to extend the period in which cotton could be imported into Venice. Cotton from the region of Thessalonike was sold to Venetian merchants in 1405.³⁴² Later in 1409 the season during which cottons from Thessalonike might be sailed to Venice was extended.³⁴³ The late fourteenth and early fifteenth century documents from Venice contain frequent references to the export of cotton from Thessalonike.³⁴⁴ The seriousness with which the trade in cotton from Thessalonike was viewed by the Venetian senate demonstrates its importance. Some of the sums of money involved in trade following 1403 were quite large. In 1407 Ordelafo Falier, who had received an assurance of safety for his trade with Thessalonike from the Ottoman governor, fell foul of the Ottoman authorities outside of Thessalonike following the Byzantine recovery of the city and when he died his property and goods at a value of 4,000 ducats were seized.³⁴⁵ There is evidence of the involvement of Byzantine *archontes* in trade and finance into the fifteenth century. Members of the Chalazas and Platyskalites families acted as moneylenders.³⁴⁶ Fifteenth century money lenders are recorded in the district of St. Menas.³⁴⁷ The proximity to the harbour would have made the area of St. Menas a logical

³⁴¹ For documents relating to the sale of cotton 1405-1412 see Sathas *Documents* II:nos.357, 364, 395, 410, 460, 472, 520, 533; Thiriet *Regestes* II:nos.1193, 1204, 1340, 1440

³⁴² Thiriet *Regestes* II:no.1193, the merchants were still awaiting the delivery of this cotton a year later, no.1204

³⁴³ Thiriet *Regestes* II:no.1340

³⁴⁴ Sathas *Documents* II:nos.357, 364, 395, 460, 472, 520, 533. While these documents only record the decision of the Venetian senate to extend the shipping year from Thessalonike to Venice, rather than recording actual trade, they do highlight the importance of the cotton trade to Venice.

³⁴⁵ Thiriet *Regestes* II:no.1243

³⁴⁶ Kugéas 1914:153

³⁴⁷ MM II:525-527 (1400)

location for bankers and money lenders to operate.³⁴⁸ At some point in the fifteenth century Andreas Argyropoulos was involved in a trade venture to Wallachia.³⁴⁹

Although the period following the transfer of power in Thessalonike to the Venetians does not fall within the scope of this study the difficulties which the city faced can be compared to the situation under Byzantine rule. The most obvious difference between the fifteenth century Byzantine and Venetian city is the lack of food after 1423. Frequently the Venetian Senate had to authorise the purchase of wheat to feed the inhabitants of Thessalonike who could not gain access to food from Macedonia because of the Ottoman siege.³⁵⁰ By December 1423 the first document had been issued, ordering the baile of Negroponte and the Venetian authorities on Crete to supply wheat to Thessalonike.³⁵¹ Over the next seven years the Venetian Senate issued repeated orders either for the supply of the city or for the reimbursement of those who had shipped wheat to Thessalonike.³⁵² Although the city was under siege, the blockade was not complete as suggested by a request made by the people of Thessalonike in 1425 for three galleys to protect merchant shipping.³⁵³ At least one inhabitant of Thessalonike was involved in trade during the blockade. Necipoğlu has identified the man referred to as Teodorus Grecus, Theodorus Chataro and Cataro in Ragusan documents (and in Ragusa itself) as Theodore

³⁴⁸ Schreiner believed that these financiers ranged from major banking outfits to individuals with a single table. Schreiner 1991:410 n.353

³⁴⁹ MM II:374-375

³⁵⁰ The Venetians took control of Thessalonike on 19 September 1423. Thiriet *Regestes* II:no.1908

³⁵¹ Thiriet *Regestes* II:no.1914

³⁵² Thiriet *Regestes* II:nos.1923 (465 ducats were paid for wheat imported to Thessalonike, February 1424) 1950 (the lord of Karystos was reimbursed for supplying wheat to Thessalonike), 1957 (Venetian Corfu was ordered to supply wheat for Thessalonike, October 1424), 1967 (Giorgio Querini and Giorgio Valaresso reimbursed 250 and 890 ducats respectively for importing wheat from Crete to Thessalonike, February 1425), 2012 (Wheat was sent from the Veneto and Corfu to Thessalonike, December 1425), 2015 (1426, wheat sent from Crete to Thessalonike), 2033 (July 1426 the authorities on Crete were ordered to ship wheat to Thessalonike), 2035 (the baile of Corfu shipped 1,500 staia of wheat to Thessalonike, August 1426)

³⁵³ Thiriet *Regestes* II:no.1995 The request was to protect merchant vessels, which of course could mean ships which were brining wheat to the city, not ships exporting goods from the city but there is no way to be certain.

Katharos, an *archon* of Thessalonike.³⁵⁴ Katharos was acting on behalf of John Rhosotas, another Thessalonican *archon*. While in the city Theodore acted as a textile merchant exporting cloth to Serbia.³⁵⁵ The Venetians also granted the people of the city the right to leave Thessalonike to tend their vines. In spite of the negative picture which the supply problems of Thessalonike paint the Venetians had high hopes for their city should peace be restored. This is demonstrated from the figures which the Venetians were willing to deduct from the income they hoped to derive from Thessalonike and were subsequently willing to spend to assure either their possession of the city or peace. The Venetians promised the despot Andronikos Palaiologos an annuity of 20,000-40,000 aspres in 1423 as part of the deal by which they acquired the city.³⁵⁶ However, a later document states that the despot received 100,000 aspres.³⁵⁷ When the Venetians offered to pay tribute to the Ottomans in return for peace they frequently offered to pay either the sultan or his officials money taken from the income of the city. The first recorded offer from the Venetians to the Ottomans offered a yearly tribute of 1,000-2,000 ducats from the income of the city.³⁵⁸ In return for peace the Venetians offered the pay the sultan the 100,000 aspres that they currently paid to the despot Andronikos. A further offer of 15,000-20,000 aspres taken from the income derived from Thessalonike was offered to the Grand Vizier Ibrahim.³⁵⁹ In 1426 the Venetians offered to pay the Ottomans 100,000 ducats annually from the income of the city, the document does not say that this was the money which had been promised to the despot as is the case in the document of 1425. The sultan was also promised the income from the sale of salt as had been the case in the time of the despot.³⁶⁰ All of this

³⁵⁴ Necipoğlu 2003:149; Krekić *Dubrovnik*:nos.686, 688, 690, 691, 699, 702, 708, 709, 718, 721. Theodoros Chataro is said to be a Greek of Thessalonike in no.688.

³⁵⁵ Krekić *Dubrovnik*:no.695

³⁵⁶ Thiriet *Regestes* II:no.1896 (July 1423)

³⁵⁷ Thiriet *Regestes* II:no.1980 (April 1425)

³⁵⁸ Thiriet *Regestes* II:no.1931 (April 1424)

³⁵⁹ Thiriet *Regestes* II:no.1980 (April 1425)

³⁶⁰ Thiriet *Regestes* II:no.2018

demonstrates that no matter how difficult the siege was for the city, the Venetians believed that within only a short time of peace being declared ‘the gates of the city will be open and commerce will flow between the city and its hinterland.’³⁶¹ Furthermore, the amounts of money involved in the Venetian overtures to the Ottomans gives some suggestion of the resources available to even the last Byzantine ruler of the city.

There is evidence that late Byzantine Thessalonike contained both pottery and textile workshops. Reference has already been made to the export of cotton and silk to Venice and Chios and it seems that at least some of this material had been processed, either into thread or cloth, before being shipped. Although western textiles were an important import it has been proposed that production of finished articles of clothing continued in late Byzantine Thessalonike to supply the demand from those who could not afford the high quality textiles of Italy.³⁶² Furthermore, the quantities carried by the individual merchant galleys which travelled from Negroponte to Thessalonike may not have carried enough textiles to undermine the local industry.³⁶³ A priest from Ragusa purchased a finished garment in Thessalonike in 1348.³⁶⁴ As Matschke has said, it is not possible to determine whether there was a significant textile industry in Thessalonike from the sources, but it impossible to say that this industry did not exist, especially as the city was an important centre of textiles production both immediately before and after the Palaiologan period.³⁶⁵

³⁶¹ Thiriet *Regestes* II:no.2018

³⁶² Matschke 1989:67. Matschke suggests that the number of sheep living in Macedonia would have provided abundant resources for a native textile industry. He has also demonstrated that a textile industry operated in Thessalonike in middle Byzantine times, Matschke 1989:71-72.

³⁶³ Matschke 1989:66

³⁶⁴ Krekic *Dubrovnik* no.221. Matschke sees this as proof that at least some of the raw materials from the hinterland of Thessalonike were processed in the city, Matschke 1989:69.

³⁶⁵ Matschke 1989:73. Matschke does suggest that during the frequent periods when there was an imperial resident in Thessalonike there would have been a manufacturer of purple imperial costumes in the city, Matschke 1989:80-81.

One industry which is well attested in Thessalonike is pottery production.³⁶⁶ Pottery workshops and kilns have been found in Thessalonike.³⁶⁷ The pottery production of Thessalonike is characterised by the use of good quality red clay and by a number of designs, a popular one being a bird between two plants. Thessalonican pottery has been found in Istanbul, Varna, Venice and throughout Macedonia and Thrace.³⁶⁸ The region of Macedonia was something of a pottery centre in the Palaiologan period with a significant workshop in Serres. Some of the products of the Thessalonike craftsmen may have been based on prototypes from the Serres workshops, or there is always the possibility that the artisans from Serres may have moved to the larger market of Thessalonike, bringing their techniques with them. Obviously the pottery of Thessalonike was of a high enough quality, and produced in a great enough amount to have had a sizable circulation, at least in the northern Balkans. Unfortunately we have no documentary evidence for this trade, which itself may suggest that it was in the hands of the local Byzantines not Italians.

During much of the late Byzantine period Thessalonike had a mint. The mint operated under the Komneno-Doukai, the Laskarids and the Palaiologoi until the Zealot period in Thessalonike.³⁶⁹ Until the Zealot period the quality of the inscriptions and the images on the output of Thessalonike was often higher than that produced at the mint of Constantinople. Following the resumption of activity in c.1350 the standard of production had drastically declined.³⁷⁰ The stylistic and quality differences which has been observed between the coins of Andronikos III and those of Anna of Savoy in Thessalonike have led

³⁶⁶ A large number of wasters, items which were discarded before completion, have been found in the city.

³⁶⁷ *AD* 33.2 (1978):239

³⁶⁸ Papanikola-Bakirtzi 1999:188-189

³⁶⁹ It is possible that Theodore II Laskaris closed the mint of Thessalonike in 1255/56, Hendy 1999:130.

³⁷⁰ Nicol and Bendall 1977:99; Grierson 1982:281; Protonotarios 1990:121. An example of the stylistic differences which help to distinguish the post Zealot coins of Thessalonike from those struck before 1342 is that the later coins have a different way of rendering the letters A and B. Another example would be rounded features of the emperor John V and empress Anna as opposed to the elongated treatment of Andronikos III and his predecessors.

to the conclusion that there was a break in minting activity under the Zealots. Following the imperial recovery of the city the mint was reopened and functioned until the first Ottoman conquest of Thessalonike in 1387. There is no evidence for the operation of a mint in the city after the resumption of Byzantine rule in 1403.

The metallic values and denominations struck at Thessalonike varied over the long course of the mint's history. Under the Komneno-Doukai and Laskarids Thessalonike continued to mint coins in the Komnenian tradition. Throughout the thirteenth century the number of denominations struck in the city decreased: under Theodore Komnenos Doukas (1224-1230) the mint of Thessalonike struck silver and billon trachea, copper tetartera and possibly half tetartera; under Manuel Komnenos Doukas (1230-1237) the mint produced silver and billon trachea; while during the reign of John Komnenos Doukas (1237-1244), only billon trachea and copper half tetartera were struck. The Laskarids reduced the denominations produced by Thessalonike further; John III struck silver and billon trachea while his son, Theodore I, struck only a single issue of billon trachea.³⁷¹ In the Palaiologan period there is no clear evidence as to which metals were used for the striking of coins in the city. It is possible that the city struck issues in gold at particular times. Simon Bendall has suggested that on stylistic grounds and on the type and location of sigla on the coins that a number of hyperpyra of Andronikos II and of Michael IX should be attributed to the mint of Thessalonike.³⁷² The stylistic argument is on the surface quite convincing but more material would be useful before conclusions are made. Even if these coins were struck in Thessalonike they do not appear to have been part of the mint's usual repertoire but coins struck to meet a specific need. Under Michael

³⁷¹ DOC IV.II:130. There are no known coins of Demetrios Komnenos Doukas (1244-1246).

³⁷² Bendall argues that hyperpyra were struck in Thessalonike in the reign on Michael VIII and Andronikos II and that one type of basilikon was struck in the city, (Bendall 1987, Bendall 1981a, Bendall 1981b, Bendall 1982); Grierson does not believe that this was certain, particularly in the case of the hyperpyra, Grierson 1999:60, 105.

VIII Palaiologos the mint of Thessalonike may have struck hyperpyra and certainly struck copper trachy.³⁷³ With the currency reforms of Andronikos II Thessalonike began to strike the new assarion³⁷⁴ and continued to mint the copper trachy (stamenon), but not the billon tornesi.³⁷⁵ Simon Bendall has suggested that Thessalonike struck the silver basilikon, however, Morrisson and Grierson do not agree. This pattern of denominations continued until the Zealots halted the activity of the mint of Thessalonike. Following the resumption of imperial rule in 1350 the mint of Thessalonike struck only copper assaria and later follari and the billon tornese.³⁷⁶ However, there are references to the doukatopoulon or ducatello, which Grierson suggested was not a Turkish coin but the one eighth stavraton of approximately 1g.³⁷⁷ The final issue of the mint dates to the reign of Manuel II.³⁷⁸

Gold	Silver	Billon	Copper	
Hyperpyron	Aspron trachy, Trikephalon	Stamenon, Aspron trachy	Tetarteron	Half Tetarteron
Occasional issues under Michael VIII and Andronikos II	1224-1237; 1246-1254	1224-1304	1224-1230	1224-1230; 1237-1244

Numismatic output of the mint of Thessalonike c.1224-c.1304

³⁷³ There are currently no silver aspers or copper tetartera of Michael VIII attributed to Thessalonike, DOC V.I:105.

³⁷⁴ A flat coin of the same metal (copper) and weight (approx. 2.1g) to the tetarteron of the preceding period. The copper trachy was a heavier, concave coin of approximately 4.2g in weight.

³⁷⁵ DOC V.I:127, 147

³⁷⁶ The limited number of denomination struck at Thessalonike should not be taken to indicate that the issues of post-1350 coinage were of limited size. The coinage of Anna of Savoy in Thessalonike is represented predominantly in two hoards, the Pella Hoard and the Serres Hoard. The coins in these two hoards were struck using a combination of seven obverse and six reverse dies which were combined to produce fourteen distinct designs. Protonotarios 1990:127. The great variety of designs present in the coinage of Anna of Savoy at Thessalonike has been seen by Protonotarios as evidence that coins were struck in great numbers during her reign in the city.

³⁷⁷ DOC V.I.42. Grierson believed this because the new stavraton coinage was struck in denominations of half (4g) and eighth (1g) but not quarter, which would have corresponded to the Venetian grosso, or silver ducat (2g), thus in the sources the little ducat could very well refer to the one eighth stavraton.

³⁷⁸ This coin is an assarion which shows the emperor mounted on horseback. For a discussion and ordering of the designs and types struck at Thessaloniki by the Palaiologoi see Touratsoglou 2001.

Gold	Silver		Billon	Copper	
Hyperpyron	Basilikon	Half Basilikon	Tornese	Stamenon	Assarion
Occasional issues under Andronikos II	Occasional issues of silver.			1304-134	1304-134

Numismatic output of the mint of Thessalonike c.1304-c.1342

Silver	Copper	
Doukatopoulon/Ducatello	Tornese	Folaro
	1352-1387	1352-1387

Numismatic output of the mint of Thessalonike c.1352-c.1387

The output of the mint of Thessalonike is remarkable for its great diversity. It has been argued that there existed an annual change in the design of the coinage in certain periods.³⁷⁹ One of the characteristic designs of the coinage of Thessalonike is the image of St. Demetrios or the ruler of the city, holding a model of Thessalonike. Other common motifs were stars, winged emperors or objects, flowers, lilies and large crosses.³⁸⁰ St. Demetrios was also a common feature on Thessalonican coins, both enthroned, on horseback, and standing.³⁸¹ Only on Thessalonican coins is the ruler shown on the same side of the coin as both the saint and the city.³⁸²

The produce of the mint of Thessalonike is found throughout the Balkan Peninsula. The evidence of the coin finds from a specific period can be used to demonstrate the economic zone within which the currency circulated and therefore, allow conclusions to be made about Thessalonike's economic and political power and influence

³⁷⁹ DOC IV.II:545-6; DOC V.I:116

³⁸⁰ DOC V.I:60. It has been suggested that at least some of these designs were inspired by western influences. For instance the large flower or lily depicted on Thessalonican coins may have been Florentine in origin and the practice of showing winged objects is similar to the iconography on German coins of the period, Bertelè, 1951, Morriison 2003:185 rejects this. See also Touratsoglou 2001:281-285 for the comparison between German and Thessalonican designs and for the variety of designs.

³⁸¹ However the image of St Demetrios was not exclusively a Thessalonican design: the saint featured on Constantinopolitan coins.

³⁸² Morriison 2003:181

in the Balkans. The evidence of the single finds and hoards suggests that until the 1270s the coinage of Thessalonike formed a part of the circulating medium over much of the Balkan Peninsula. As can be seen in the accompanying map the geographical spread of the currency of Thessalonike incorporated Macedonia, Bulgaria, Epiros, Boiotia and parts of Serbia and western Thrace.³⁸³ In the fourteenth century the coinage of Thessalonike circulated over an ever decreasing area, becoming in effect a local coinage for the city and its immediate hinterland.³⁸⁴

The influence of Thessalonican coinage over the city's Balkan neighbours can be seen in the design of the emerging Serbian coinage of Stefan Radoslav, which took as a prototype the trachea of Theodore Komnenos Doukas.³⁸⁵ Furthermore Hendy has suggested that the mints in Serbia and Bulgaria, the coins of which seem to have been influenced by Thessalonican designs, actually received dies cut in Thessalonike for their own use.³⁸⁶ With the decline of the political power of Thessalonike following the battle of Klokotnitsa (1230) and into the thirteenth century, the influence of its coinage over those of the neighbouring powers faded. When the Serbians began striking a regular coinage in the mid-thirteenth century they turned to Venice for inspiration, not Thessalonike.³⁸⁷

³⁸³ The evidence used to construct this map suffers from the uneven availability of numismatic evidence both in geographical spread and chronologically. For example hoards from Bulgaria containing coins struck before 1261 are particularly thoroughly published, (Jordanov 1984) while hoards from later in the Palaiologan period are not.

³⁸⁴ See below, pp.287-292 for an examination of the hoards which contain Thessalonican coins dating to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries discovered in Macedonia. A few coins of the later Palaiologoi have been found outside of Macedonia. The First Belgrade Gate Hoard from Istanbul consists of 1,218 (mostly small copper follari of John VII) among which is one coin of Thessalonike, a copper assarion depicting the martyrdom of St. Demetrios. This hoard was used to date this type of assarion to the reign of John V, DOC V.I:17; a trachion dating to the joint rule of Anna of Savoy and John V was discovered during the excavations at Turnovo, (Georganteli 2001:72); finally a copper coin of Manuel II struck at Thessalonike was found in the Ohrid region, (Razmovsk-Bačeva 2001b:126).

³⁸⁵ For the coins of Kral Stefan Radoslav and the influence which Thessalonike played in their development see, Ivanišević 2001:87-9; Georganteli and Cook 2006:35-36.

³⁸⁶ DOC IV.II:130

³⁸⁷ Razmovsk-Bačeva 2001a:115

Very few single finds of coins and only a small number of hoards have been found in Thessalonike and subsequently published. However, it is possible to use the numismatic evidence from the region close to Thessalonike to supplement that from the city itself. The excavations at the basilica of St. Demetrios revealed 25 coins; 20 of which date to before the period covered in the current study. Of the remaining five there is one billon trachea of uncertain date, one copper coin of Manuel II Palaiologos from Thessalonike, three deniers tournois, one of Philip of Savoy (1301-1307) from the Principality of Achaia, one from the Duchy of Athens and a counterfeit.³⁸⁸ Georganteli published one of the coins from the Dioikitirion Square excavations which was found in a graveyard which occupied the site in the twelfth to fourteenth centuries.³⁸⁹ To this number can be added one assarion and possibly two more deniers tournois.³⁹⁰ The evidence of the single finds is thus very limited. With caution it is possible to conclude that the city maintained a link with southern Greece, as demonstrated by the deniers tournois, and may have been a northern link in the numismatic system which united southern Greece at this time, this seems particularly certain when we consider the evidence of the hoards below..

The hoards discovered in and near to Thessalonike can be used to add to this picture and gain a more complete understanding of the coinage circulating in Thessalonike during the late middle ages. They can also provide further evidence for the extent of the Venetian presence in the region. Three hoards, which were possibly concealed before the Nicaean conquest of the city, offer a glimpse of the coinage of central Macedonia in this

³⁸⁸ Sotiriou and Sotiriou 1952:244-245; Baker 2002:393

³⁸⁹ Georganteli 2001:71

³⁹⁰ These three coins are exhibited in a new display in the crypt of the basilica. The assarion was not seen by Julian Baker and therefore the coins, including the deniers tournois may represent new finds. Unfortunately the coins are not labelled, or illuminated making identification of the deniers tournois difficult. The assarion is from the mint of Thessalonike and belongs to the reign of Andronikos III. See DOC V,II,921; Bendall 1984:no.13; Bendall LPC:236, no.4 and Longuet 190:no.13 for the coin type.

period. These hoards, one found at Thessalonike and two at Serres,³⁹¹ contained 214,³⁹² 52³⁹³ and nine billion trachea respectively.³⁹⁴ One hoard, discovered in Serres,³⁹⁵ dates to the period of Nicaean rule in Thessalonike (1246-1261). This hoard contained 133 billion trachea.³⁹⁶ This is the last hoard concealed in the region around Thessalonike before the reign of John V. The three hoards listed above suggest that the coinage circulating in Thessalonike in the early years of the Komneno-Doukai was that of the Latin Empire, supplemented by the coinage of the Byzantine rulers of the city. As is perhaps to be expected, over time the proportions of Latin and Byzantine coins became more even; by the time of the concealment of the Serres 3 hoard approximately half of the coins were struck by the Latin Empire, half by the Komneno-Doukai. How the patterns of circulation changed after the recovery of Constantinople by the Byzantines and the restoration of its mint is impossible to determine from the numismatic evidence which now exists. The low value coinage circulating in Thessalonike in the mid-fourteenth century is represented in Longuet's Salonica Hoard, published by Henry Longuet in 1960 and again by Simon Bendall in 1984. The hoard is composed of 73 coins, five of which are deniers tournois, the remainder are Byzantine copper assaria.³⁹⁷ The composition of this hoard makes it highly

³⁹¹ Serres 1 and 2.

³⁹² 23 small module trachea of the Latin or Nicaean Empires, 2 of Theodore I Laskaris(1205-1221) and 189 unidentified, *Coin Hoards* 1978:64.

³⁹³ *Coin Hoards* 1978:65

³⁹⁴ 5 small module trachea of the Latin or Nicaean Empires, 1 of Manuel Komnenos Doukas (1230-1237), 1 unidentified Thessalonican trachea, one unidentified trachea, 1 Bulgarian imitative and one tetarteron from the Byzantine Empire pre-1204, *AA* 31 1976:38-39.

³⁹⁵ Serres 3.

³⁹⁶ 1 trachy of the Byzantine Empire pre-1204, 62 of the Latin and Nicaean Empires, 5 of Theodore I Laskaris 1205-1221), 1 of Theodore Komnenos Doukas of Thessalonike (1224-1230), 13 of Manuel Komnenos Doukas (1230-1237), 40 of John Komnenos Doukas (1237-1244), 8 unidentified trachea and 2 Bulgarian imitatives, *AA* 31 1976:39-48.

³⁹⁷ The denomination of the coins is by no means certain, Bendall identified them as stammina, Grierson as assaria neither the variable weight of the coins nor their curvature allows a positive identification. The same must be said for attributing these coins to a particular reign. The deniers tournois were all identified by Bendall as belonging to John Orsini at Arta, however, two of the five are so worn that no certain reading of the inscription can be made. The Byzantine coins are all from the reign of either Andronikos II or Andronikos III, except for eight from that of John V, but where the dividing line should fall is unclear. Contrary to the arguments put forward by Longuet and Bendall (37 and 26 respectively) I identify 22 distinct types of coin within the hoard plus two mules and a variant.

likely that it was lost or hidden at the time of the initial Zealot uprising in Thessalonike, and represents the coinage then in circulation in the city. The three coin types which clearly show John V must date to the very early months of his reign; the frequent changes in the way the emperor was depicted perhaps hinting at the unsettled nature of events as the mint struggled to find a suitable iconography for the new design. What this hoard implies is that by the mid-thirteenth century the coinage of the Latin Empire, the Komneno-Doukai and even Michael VIII, had either passed out of general circulation in Thessalonike, or was rare.³⁹⁸ That the hoard includes deniers tournois of John II Orsini is also of note, even more so as a number of these coins were overstruck with Thessalonican designs. The tournois are from different periods of the Artan mints' production, hinting at, but not proving, a prolonged period of integration into the circulating medium of Thessalonike, rather than introduction to the city by a single event. Their inclusion in the hoard raises the possibility that, in spite of its own, not insignificant coin production, Thessalonike was a part of the tournois network that unified much of southern Greece. Julian Baker also examined the collection of the Archaeological Museum in Thessalonike that includes a hoard of seven grossi and one billon trachy.³⁹⁹ This hoard further hints at Thessalonike's integration in the southern Greek, Venetian monetary system.

The coinage of Thessalonike struck after the Zealot period is represented by three hoards, two dated to the decade following the recovery of the city by John VI

³⁹⁸ The deniers tournois of John Orsini contained in this hoard are problematic. It is of course possible that they reached Thessalonike through the military campaigns of Andronikos III against Epiros in the mid-fourteenth century. That a number of the assaria were struck over deniers tournois perhaps indicates that they had circulated in Thessalonike.

³⁹⁹ Baker 2002:393-394. The grossi are; 1 grosso of Raniero Zeno (1253-68), 1 of Giovanni Dandolo (1280-1289), 3 grossi of Pietro Gradenigo (1289-1311), 1 grosso of Giovanni Soranzo (1312-1328) and one of either Francesco or Andrea Dandolo (1329-1339, 1343-1354). The billon trachy falls outside of the scope of this study.

Kantakouzenos and the third to the early fifteenth century.⁴⁰⁰ The Pella Hoard was found in the 1960s near Pella in Macedonia. One of the coins in this hoard corresponds with the type from the Longuet Hoard which depicts the emperor on horseback and is dated to the reign of Andronikos III.⁴⁰¹ The remainder of the coins (*assaria*) were identified as having been struck after the Zealot period, during the reign of Anna of Savoy in Thessalonike (1351-1365).⁴⁰² The Serres Hoard,⁴⁰³ discovered in the mid-1980s, has been described as being of similar composition to the Pella Hoard, but four times the size.⁴⁰⁴ The hoard consists of 34 *assaria* and two blank flans. Of these coins, three belong to the reign of Andronikos III,⁴⁰⁵ two to the joint reign of John V and Anna of Savoy in Thessalonike (1351-1352) and 29 to the sole reign of Anna in the city (1352-1365).⁴⁰⁶ These two hoards suggest that Zealot Thessalonike continued to use the coinage struck under Andronikos III. The Thessalonica 1950 Hoard consisted of an unknown number of coins, forty of which were published.⁴⁰⁷ This hoard is the only one to contain Byzantine silver issues.

The second group of hoards found in and close to Thessalonike are made up of Venetian *grossi*. They demonstrate a consistency of Venetian currency entering Thessalonike and its region from the mid-thirteenth century until at least the mid-fourteenth century. The first hoard, found at Thessalonike, consists of 41 *grossi*, 36 of the

⁴⁰⁰ It must be remembered that this sample is unlikely to be truly representative cross section of the whole of the coinage in circulation, but does supply an idea about a part of this coinage. In the case of Thessalonike we are fortunate to have two hoards which both corroborate the evidence provided by the other.

⁴⁰¹ Nicol and Bendall:1977:99

⁴⁰² Including the coin of Andronikos III there are three different types represented in the hoard. See above for a discussion on the stylistic differences of the coins struck at Thessalonike before and after the Zealot period.

⁴⁰³ Serres 4.

⁴⁰⁴ Protonotarios 1990:119

⁴⁰⁵ Protonotarios 1990:123-124, nos.1-3. Coins of the same type as numbers two and three are also found in Longuet's Salonica Hoard and number three was found in the Pella Hoard.

⁴⁰⁶ Protonotarios 1990:123-126

⁴⁰⁷ Guadan 1978:159-179. The published coins from this hoard are 2 *stavrata* of Manuel II (1391-1425), 17 half *stavrata* of Manuel II, 18 *stavrata* of John VII (1399-1403) and 3 half *stavrata* of John VII.

Venetian Republic and five unidentified.⁴⁰⁸ The latest issue which is contained in the hoard is of Giovanni Soranzo (1312-1328). It is tempting to attribute the concealment of this hoard with the civil disturbances which accompanied the civil war between Andronikos II Palaiologos and Andronikos III Palaiologos.⁴⁰⁹ Two further hoards also contain grossi dating up until the reign of Giovanni Soranzo.⁴¹⁰ The final hoard of Venetian grossi from this region was discovered at Pydna in 1985 and consists of seven grossi, the latest issue dated to the reign of Francesco Dandolo (1328-1339).⁴¹¹

What is clear is that the mint of Thessalonike had a regional (Balkan) role in the thirteenth century, but by the fourteenth the city supplied coinage to the local area (Macedonia) alone. The numismatic evidence for the circulation of western types (grossi and deniers tournois) in Thessalonike and the hinterland suggests that the area was to some degree incorporated into the numismatic world of southern Greece. What seems likely is that the city and its immediate surroundings used, for everyday transactions, a mixture of the coinage of the Komneno-Doukai, the Nicaean rulers and the early Palaiologoi with a smaller number of western types, particularly grossi for large transactions, perhaps up until the beginning of the fourteenth century. Certainly these issues were hoarded together, which, with some caution, can be taken to imply that they circulated together too. Longuet's Salonica hoard is a sample of the coinage which circulated in the city in the mid-fourteenth century, by which time it seems that the earlier coinage had passed out of use. The same can be said for the Pella and Serres hoards, the coins which were produced after the Zealot period.

⁴⁰⁸ The hoard consists of 2 grossi of Lorenzo Tiepolo (1268-75), 5 of Jacopo Contarini (1275-1280), 2 of Giovanni Dandolo (1280-1289), 17 of Pietro Gradenigo (1289-1311), 10 of Giovanni Soranzo (1312-1328). Galani-Krikou 1988:172-173

⁴⁰⁹ Two events in particular during this civil war caused disturbances in Thessalonike, the expulsion of Constantine Palaiologos and the surrender of the city to Andronikos III.

⁴¹⁰ The first was discovered near to Thessalonike and contains 5 grossi and one basilikon of John V (Baker 2002,II,157); the second found at Servia contains four Venetian grossi, Galani-Krikou 1988:172-173.

⁴¹¹ Galani-Krikou 1988:172-173

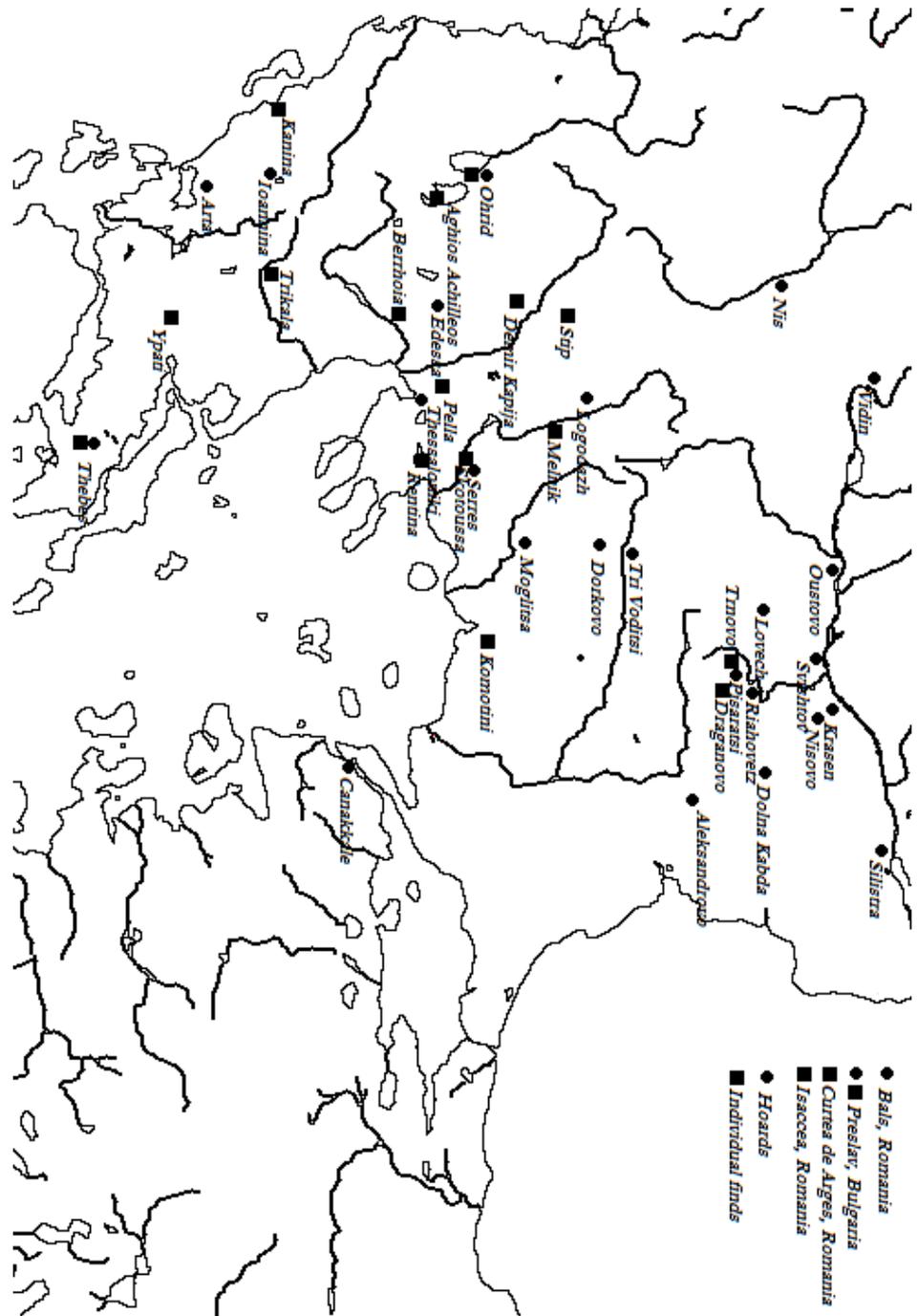


Figure 33: Map of finds of coins struck at Thessalonike before c.1270⁴¹²

⁴¹² The information used to create this map is as follows: Agnios Achilleos, Oikonomidou et al. 1990, Galani-Krikou 1990; Aleksandrovo, Jordanov 1984:136-137; Arta, Galani-Krikou 1990, Oikonomidou et al. 1990; Bals, *Coin Hoards* 4 1978:64; Berrhoia, Mitsos 1965:7, Touratsoglou 1994:14; Canakale, Mandic and Ananiev 1991; Curtea de Arges, Iliescu 1976:194; Demir Kapija, Aleksova 1966:61; Dolna Kabda, Jordanov 1984:159; Dorkovo, Bendall 1978:106; Dragonovo, Batchvarov 1984; Edessa, Jordanov 1984:163-164; Ioannina, Galani-Krikou 1990, Oikonomidou et al. 1990; Isacceca, Jordanov 1984:128-130; Kanina, Komata 1991:101-104; Komotini, Karamesini-Oikonomidou 1977:3; Krasen, Jordnov 1984:176-178; Logodazh, Jordanov 1984:185-186; Lovech, Jordanov 1984:185; Melnik, Jordanov 1984:130-132; Moglitsa, Jordanov 1984:189-90;

Conclusion

Unlike the other cities presented in this study it is not possible to say that Thessalonike was dominated by any one segment of its population throughout its history. The *archontes* were probably the most powerful group in the city, yet at times even they had to bow to the will of the people. The power of the *archontes* to take action alone and decide the political fate of their city is recorded only in 1246, when a conspiracy of the city's leading men contrived to betray Demetrios Komnenos Doukas and open the city gates to John III Vatatzes of Nicaea. From this point all, but one, of the internal political upheavals which beset Thessalonike are ascribed to the people as a whole, not just the *archontes*.⁴¹³ When Constantine Palaiologos was expelled from the city in 1326 it was because of the protests of a mob of the people, since they disagreed with his policy towards Andronikos III during the civil war between the two Andronikoi. The Zealot period is traditionally seen as the low point for the *archontes* of Thessalonike. However, I believe that the aristocracy of Thessalonike played an integral part in the rule of the city between 1342 and 1350. Of the leaders of Thessalonike during this period John Apokaukos, Laskaris Metochites and possibly George Kokalass were all high ranking *archontes*. The first two were from two of the

Nis, Hristovska and Jordanov 2006; Nisovo, Jordanov 1984:193-194; Ohrid, Razmovska-Braceva 2000, Baker 2002, Hristovska and Jordanov 2006; Oustovo, Jordanov 1984:219-220; Pella, Nicol and Bendall 1977; Petrich, Hristovska and Jordanov 2006; Pissaratsi, Jordanov 1984:197-198; Preslav, Jordanov 1984:122-124, 202, *Coin Hoards* 7 1985:240-241; Prilep, Hristovska and Jordanov 2006; Rentina, Galani-Krikou 1988:176, Galani-Krikou and Tsourti 2000; Riahovetz, Batchvarov, 1990; Serres, Protonotarios 1989, Touratsoglou and Loverdou-Tsigarida 1976:38-48 *Coin Hoards* 4 1978:65; Silistra, Pentchev 1987, Jordanov 1984:206-207; Skotoussa, Touratsoglou 1995:14; Stara Zagora, Jordanov 1984:127-128; Stip, Metcalf 1979:210, Metcalf 1965:201; Svishtov, Jordanov 1984:203-204; Thessalonike, Georganteli 2001, *Coin Hoards* 4 1978:64; Thebes, Oikonomidou 1985, Karamesini-Oikonomidou 1966:13; Trikala, Oikonomidou 1962, 1966, 1992; Tri Voditsi, Bendall 1978:106; Jordanov 1984:216-217; Trnovo, Dotchev 1992; Vidin, Gerasimov 1979:140; Ypati, Baker 2002.

⁴¹³ Andronikos Palaiologos was advised to surrender to Thessalonike to the Venetians by the *archontes* of the city. See above.

most important families in the empire.⁴¹⁴ Although perhaps not leaders of the Zealots themselves (the Zealot leaders were Michael and Andreas Palaiologos), these three *archontes* all held one of the two positions of *archon*, the rulers of Thessalonike in the Zealot period.

One possible explanation for the politicisation of the people of Thessalonike and their participation and leadership in the revolts against Constantine Palaiologos in 1326 and John VI Kantakouzenos in the Zealot period of 1342-1350 is the professional organisations which existed in the city. The two most politically active workers' groups were the sailors and the dockworkers; which provided leaders for the Zealots, Michael Palaiologos and Andreas Palaiologos respectively. That groups such as the butchers and the perfumers also had some form of guild structure implies that these were widespread in the city and encompassed a range of occupations. The organisation and leadership which these guilds provided for the people of Thessalonike would have made it easier for them to become involved in municipal politics.⁴¹⁵

Thessalonike was a large centre of consumption, both for the goods produced in its Balkan hinterland and for the merchandise of Venetian traders. Furthermore the city acted as a centre of trade and redistribution. Goods flowed into Thessalonike from the Balkans for re-export to the West and the empire, and western goods brought to the city were distributed throughout the hinterland by merchants travelling to and from Thessalonike's markets. Although Thessalonike (and Byzantium) is usually, and quite rightly, seen as an exporter of primary produce, the city contained a number of workshops and exported pottery and spun cloth. The cloth of Thessalonike was distributed over a wide area; during

⁴¹⁴ The exact position of George Kokalas is uncertain. He was certainly an ally of Andreas Palaiologos at the time of the overthrow of John Apokaukos. Whether Kokalas ever held the position of *archon* alongside Andreas Palaiologos is not known but seems likely.

⁴¹⁵ The popular riots which took place in Palaiologan Thessalonike, aided by the guild organisations, are perhaps comparable with the urban riots of the fifth-seventh centuries which were centred around the racing factions. Both types of organisation gave the people focus and leadership.

the thirteenth-fifteenth centuries a number of north Italian cities imported textiles of some description from the city. The pottery of Thessalonike has also been discovered in Greece, Bulgaria, Venice and Constantinople as well as in very large amounts in Macedonia. This implies that the pottery workshops of Thessalonike operated on a large scale. Clearly Thessalonike was not simply a market for the export of the primary produce of its hinterland, but a centre of varied artisanal production. The economy of Thessalonike showed great resilience throughout the troubles of the mid-fourteenth century. The goods which were exported from the city (wheat, fabrics and pottery) did not vary until the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries when the wheat of the dwindling Byzantine territory was consumed in the city rather than exported from it. There is little indication in the documents as to the quantities involved and it is possible that these decreased even though the goods which were exported from Thessalonike remained the same. One of the figures which we do have comes from a period when we would expect production to have suffered. In 1349 Genoese merchants purchased 1,900 hyperpyra, worth of cloth.⁴¹⁶ This was a very large amount at a time when the region was suffering from the plague, Serbian occupation of the countryside and the internal unrest of the Zealot revolt.

As demonstrated above there is evidence both for and against the conclusion that parts of the Macedonian countryside declined during the fourteenth century. What is certain is that the trade taking part in Thessalonike did not. One area of innovation in the last period of Byzantine rule was the development of a bullion market which formed part of a chain which included Italy in the west and Trebizond in the east. Money lending and banking are also recorded in Thessalonike, demonstrating that the inhabitants of the city took advantage of advanced economic practices.

⁴¹⁶ Argenti 1958:no.47. Matschke 1989:70-72 believed that the linen reached Chios by way of another port, Jacoby 2003:116 does not believe that this was so but is not sure whether the goods were taken to Genoa by Thessalonican merchants travelling to Chios or by Genoese merchants from Chios.

As was the case with another two of the cities considered in this thesis, Thessalonike received privileges from its rulers. There is evidence that these dated back to before the crusader conquest of the city. Even if this is not the case, John III Vatatzes issued a *chrysobull* for the inhabitants of the city which respected their customary rights and privileges. The privilege most commonly described in the surviving sources is that of the freedom of the inhabitants of Thessalonike to dispose of their patrimonial property without government interference and exemption from taxation on the same property. That the *chrysobull* for Thessalonike went further than this is proved by the Venetian decision to hold courts every day, in line with the traditions of the city. This reference also proves that the privileges of Thessalonike survived into the fifteenth century.

Overall Thessalonike was a city with a diverse, developed economy and a population of equal variety. That the city continued to operate as a centre of distribution and production at a time when the international trade routes did not incorporate the city and the market was flooded with cheap Italian wares is a testament to the vitality of Thessalonike. The society of Thessalonike demonstrates just how developed the city was. The organisations which united and politicised certain craft and artisanal groups can surely be seen as parallel to those which were developing in western Europe at the same time. Although there is no proof that Thessalonican society was influenced in any way by the Italian communes, this does not mean that the development of worker associations or their participation in the Zealot uprising can be dismissed as different to contemporary Italy and therefore, not as advanced. On the contrary if there was no Italian influence, this is further evidence that Thessalonike was a vibrant city capable of developing its own institutions and political agenda. This is far more important than merely copying the Italians. Rather than being viewed as a symptom of the collapse of imperial authority in the mid-thirteenth century, or an overflowing of hatred for the elite, the Zealot movement, and the

politicisation of the working groups, should be seen as a truly important stage in the evolution of the Byzantine city and a sign that Byzantine urban civilization was vibrant and alive even as the empire was falling apart. The promising developments seen in both the economy and society of Thessalonike demonstrate that perhaps Byzantine urban society was developing into something new, but the failure of the imperial government to protect the city during this process led to it being cut short.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to study the society, economy and institutions of individual late Byzantine cities with the intention of not only reaching conclusions about the separate cases, but combining the information gathered into a set of proposals about how late Byzantine urban civilization in general should be viewed. A further aim was to examine how the picture of the late Byzantine city revealed by this study could contribute to the history of the decline and fall of the Byzantine Empire. I have taken four case studies which I believe represent the ultimate expression of particular characteristics, social and economic, which were present in Byzantine urban centres.

In the first chapter I considered Monemvasia, the archetypal merchant city; dominated by a group of powerful families jockeying for position. Sometimes this group acted in concert, such as when the city was surrendered to the crusaders, but more frequently they acted against one another. Ioannes Chamaretos was expelled from Monemvasia by his father-in-law and fellow ‘aristocrat’¹ George Daimonoianis. The *archon* Mamonas was forced out of Monemvasia not by the army of Theodore I Palaiologos but by rivals from inside the city. All of the known aristocrats of Monemvasia were members of families which were involved in trade. Mercantile activities dominated the city’s economy. The frequent grants which include only passing references to tax exemptions on land and property, list in painstaking detail the trade privileges of the Monemvasiots; from

¹ The particular titlature of Monemvasia where the local leader was called the *archon* means that it is confusing to call the group usually termed *archontes* as *archontes*. Aristocracy is unsatisfactory but the intended meaning is hopefully clear.

individual tax exemptions to the goods that were carried in their ships and where they were transported to.

Ioannina, the subject of my second chapter, presented a different picture. It was, like Monemvasia, a city where power rested firmly in the hands of the *archontes* but their power came from their ownership of estates in the countryside, not through trade. In Ioannina, more than in any of the other of the cities considered in this study, there is a sense that the *archontes* were organised and acted together in the best interests of the group. The *chrysobull* of 1319 suggests that the *kastrenoi* (the *archontes*) were instrumental in handing their city over to a new ruler, and were duly rewarded. This pattern can be seen many times in the history of the city. The *archontes* asked Syrgiannes to take over the city in 1318; just five years later they turned to John II Orsini and both times they were rewarded. The *archontes* asked Symeon Uroš to send them a governor, Thomas Preljubović, and chose a new husband for his widow after Preljubović was murdered. When Esau Buondelmonti died it was the *archontes* who ousted the *basilissa* Eudokia and invited Carlo I Tocco to rule the city. Finally it was the very same men who abandoned Carlo II to save their city from the Ottomans. The economy of Ioannina was linked inextricably to the countryside where the elite had their estates. Merchants were a minor group in Ioannina, power and money were in the hands of the *archontes*.

Arta, considered in chapter three, seems to have been more firmly under the control of its ruler than the other three cities; it is the only one which was never betrayed to a conqueror by its *archontes*. The economy of Arta was centred on its function as a market of international importance for the produce of the fertile plain which surrounded the city. What makes Arta unique among the cities which are discussed here is that not only was it conquered (as all four were at some time during the thirteenth-fifteenth centuries) by a

foreign force, but also the population of the city seems to have changed radically as a result of these conquests. In 1403 there were few Turks living in Thessalonike. No Turks remained in Monemvasia after Theodore I recovered the city from the Sultan and the same families who were important in Ioannina in 1204 were still important in 1430 and beyond in spite of the Serbian occupation of the city and the three Italian lords. Only in Arta is there evidence of a great upheaval with every conquest. No important Greeks from established families are heard of after the Serbian conquest of the city. Albanians clearly dominated Arta in the second half of the fourteenth century, but after the conquest of the city by Carlo I Tocco not a single Albanian inhabitant is mentioned in the sources. This ever changing population may help to explain why the rulers of Arta seem to have been more secure on their thrones than those of the other cities. Each new dominant group was only important so long as its leader ruled the city.

Thessalonike was by far the largest and most important city which I have considered, and it is therefore not surprising, that it is also the most complex. No one group dominated Thessalonike as is the case with the three other cities presented here. In some cases it was the *archontes* who directed the fate of the city, surrendering to John III Vatatzes and forcing Manuel II to abandon his defence of the city in 1387 for example. At other times though the people of Thessalonike forced the *archontes* to include them in the decision making process, or simply took it upon themselves to exclude the *archontes* from power altogether. Thus when Constantine Palaiologos was expelled from the city it was by a mob of the people. The politicisation of the craft and occupational associations is nowhere more evident than during the Zealot uprising when the *archontes* of the city were forced to share power on an equal basis with representatives of the city's workers' associations. Thessalonike was a rich city for most of the late medieval period. Even as the city's hinterland dwindled its inhabitants kept investing in the remaining lands, and goods,

particularly cotton and wheat, were exported from the city's markets. Uniquely among the cities considered in this thesis Thessalonike was also a manufacturing centre.

It is possible to take the social and economic conclusions drawn about each city, mix and match them and apply them to any city in Byzantium, and in fact to a very great many cities from across pre-industrial Europe. What is also evident from the above summaries of the four cities considered in this study is that if the city's name is removed we could easily be discussing an Italian city.² For example a city with an important class of wealthy families, jockeying for position within the city, with expelled leaders returning with the help of their foreign friends, could easily be Medici Florence or Athens in the time of Peisistratos. Although I think that it is right to dismiss the idea that the Zealot movement was influenced by events in contemporary Italy the similarities are evident and might be suggestive of parallel social evolution taking place both in Thessalonike and some of the cities of Italy. The tale of Ioannina, with its powerful landed elite dominating its politics, deciding who should rule the city (and inviting outsiders to do so), is also a familiar tale in areas with developed urban centres. It cannot be argued that the cities considered in this study were the equals of the trend setting cities of Italy. However, this is also the case of many cities in Italy itself. What is important is, once we exclude places like Venice, Florence and Milan, that many Byzantine cities of the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries would have seemed familiar places to contemporary Italians. Byzantine cities were not just another component of the traditional view's dying and moribund empire; they were part of the vibrant, increasingly unified, urban culture of the Mediterranean.

The geography of Greece, with its rugged terrain and difficult communications had always encouraged the development of city-states: in the late Byzantine period this was

² Or even an ancient Greek *polis*.

combined with the political fragmentation of the Balkans and an economic situation which placed the city at the heart of the economy of its region and connected it to the wider world more than at any time since the seventh century. The political collapse of the Byzantine Empire from the mid-fourteenth century provided an opportunity for the inhabitants of Byzantine cities to express themselves and become involved in politics in a way, and to a degree, that had not been possible before. Already in the 1320s we see examples of this in Thessalonike with the short lived independence of John Palaiologos, who must have had the support of the populace, and the expulsion of Constantine Palaiologos who most certainly did not have their backing for his policies. A further example is that of the people of Ioannina, transferring their allegiance to John Orsini during the civil war between Andronikos II and Andronikos III. By the time of the civil war between John V Palaiologos and John VI Kantakouzenos there are examples of the citizens of cities across Thrace and Macedonia ignoring the elite and taking matters into their own hands.

What is interesting is how in the different cities it was different groups that were politicised. In Thessalonike the *archontes* and the people uneasily 'shared' power while in Monemvasia and Ioannina it was the *archontes*, however, different their economic outlooks, who dominated the city's politics. This could be down to the relative differences in the size of the cities populations. A smaller city could be influenced by a group of people who would struggle to do the same in a larger centre. A large city is also more likely to have developed the professional associations which allowed the people of Thessalonike to express their opinions. If this is the case then the degree to which the population was involved in diverse occupations, in perhaps non-agricultural areas, may also have been a determining factor in the politicisation of the citizens.

Allusion was made above to the similarity of events in these four cities to those in other European cities. It is time to revisit some of the points outlined in the individual chapters and draw the four cities into a general conclusion. As was discussed in the introduction to this thesis many of the towns of Western Europe developed a degree of communal identity and civic autonomy during the Middle Ages. This autonomy seems to have grown out of a mixture of the decline of the power of the rulers of the city and the states within which they were located and the growing size, importance, confidence and economic prosperity of the cities themselves which forced their rulers to reach an accommodation with the populace. The main features of this autonomy have been seen as the election of local officials and/or a council involved the government of the city, and a degree of judicial and financial autonomy.³ It can be seen that Ioannina and Monemvasia, to varying degrees, fit these criteria. First let us turn to the broad historical parallels. A similar pattern is clearly visible in the successor states and Byzantium after 1204 and particularly in the areas recovered by the Nicaeans in Europe. The Byzantine state was weakening, and the emperors found themselves needing to negotiate with the towns they wished to rule. At the same time the cities themselves had changed since 1204. Ioannina and Arta had become used to ruling themselves, as had Monemvasia for a time, and Thessalonike had been a capital since Boniface of Montferrat had conquered the city in the wake of the fourth crusade. The cumulative effect of these events was that the Byzantine emperor needed the support of the people of the city more than at any other time before and in some cases this resulted in the issuing of privileges.⁴ These documents are often

³ Reynolds 1977:109; Nicholas 1997:9

⁴ I believe that one possible reason that this was so in the Balkans was because for the first time there was an alternative to the rule of the emperor in Constantinople, and of course there was no empire in Constantinople until 1261. The cities which the Nicaeans sought to rule were, for the most part, already ruled by a Byzantine Emperor and later by a despot who could claim as much right to the imperial throne as the Laskarids or the Palaiologoi. Thus the option was not between Romans and foreigners (a situation which clearly still worried the citizens of Ioannina in 1319) but between two groups of Romans. This is a situation which is unique in

financial in character but the privileges for the people of Ioannina and Monemvasia record degrees of judicial independence and placed limits on the *kephale*, in Ioannina giving the people the power to get him dismissed and in Monemvasia by (in 1391/2 at least) recognising that a local man, the *archon*, should sit alongside him. The *argyroboulla* of the last two despots of the Peloponnese even hint that Monemvasia may have had some level of financial independence. In Western Europe the issuing of judicial privileges is seen as a particularly important step in the growth of urban autonomy, both in terms of the recognition of such autonomy by the ruler and because it suggests the towns themselves were to some degree self-aware. That judicial privileges were granted to Ioannina in 1318 and Monemvasia in 1391/2 suggests that at least these two towns were beginning to develop a distinct identity. While the 1319 *chrysobull* and 1391/2 *argyroboullon* do not grant Ioannina and Monemvasia the complete freedom enjoyed by the cities of Northern Italy they are remarkably similar to the more limited privileges which the kings of France and England granted to their towns. In England particularly the later Middle Ages saw a growing attainment of a balance between the powerful monarchy and the aspiration of the towns towards autonomy. This situation can be seen to closely mirror that of Monemvasia under the Mamonas family. Monemvasia made one last bid for independence, failed, but was rewarded with a greater degree of autonomy, its own court and official recognition of the position of the *archon*. After this point the city remained loyal to the despots in Mystras.

At the same time that these developments were taking place there is evidence of the activities of town senates and assemblies which more than ever affected the fate of their city. These bodies can be seen to represent, to some extent, the communal identity of the

Byzantine history and as such the emperors needed to bargain for the loyalty of a number of the cities and towns of the Balkans.

city.⁵ The importance of these bodies should be seen in the context of the growing independence of the cities and their new place within the empire. This is clearly the case in Ioannina where the *archontes/kastrenoi*, organised into a senate, offered the rule of their city to five outsiders from 1318.⁶ Such an act was common in the cities of Lombardy and Tuscany where the cities often needed an impartial ruler to adjudicate between members of the elite and where an outsider could bring his own resources to protect the city. This Italian practice of appointing a *signor* is very similar to events in Ioannina. At much the same time as Esau Buondelmonti was being invited to Ioannina as its lord many Italian cities were developing into principates ruled by an invited *signor* who transformed his personal rule in a hereditary one.⁷ In a city such as Ioannina which had such a powerful aristocracy perhaps the appointment of an outsider was designed to save the city from internal strife. Even the seemingly all powerful Simeon Strategopoulos called for the appointment of Carlo I Tocco as lord of the city instead of proposing himself even though his family dominated the offices of the city. There is no evidence that the senate was in anyway elected or that the people were involved in the government of their city in any except the most extreme of circumstances. This does not render comparison with the Italian cities void however, as a number of the communes of Italy began as a union of landowners which then developed in the more familiar commune.⁸

The government of Monemvasia clearly demonstrates the sort of disputes which were avoided the Ioanniniotai. The position of *archon*, a local head man, was important to

⁵ By this statement I am not implying that the senates and assemblies of the Byzantine town in any way equate to the communes of Italy and their government, but that a communal, group identity had clearly developed in certain cities.

⁶ Andronikos II, John II Orsini, Thomas II, Esau Buondelmonti and Carlo I Tocco. This number could perhaps be raised to six with the inclusion of Andronikos III who may have been invited to rule the city following the death of John II Orsini.

⁷ Tabacco 1989:285, 292. There is no suggestion that the Ioanniniotai did not always intend the lordship of Ioannina to be hereditary, although it is interesting to note just how rarely father succeeded son, as was initially the case in Italy.

⁸ Tabacco 1989:189

the city and perhaps grew out of the independence which the city enjoyed from the beginning of the thirteenth century and survived into the fifteenth century. The city had a number of important families, three of which, the Chamaretoi, Mamonids, and Eudaimonoioanoi, provided at least one *archon*, the first two families ruled the city as an independent state. Both the Chamaretoi and the Mamonids ruled for a number of generations and both families were expelled from the city by their aristocratic rivals. Nevertheless the post of *archon* survived and operated alongside the imperial representative and for the last 70 years as a Byzantine city Monemvasia was reconciled with the imperial government. What is clear is that both Ioannina and Monemvasia found a way to assure that at least the elite among their inhabitants had some say in government and enjoyed a degree of judicial autonomy.

Thessalonike presents by far the most complicated picture. This city also had a senate and an assembly. While it is known that Thessalonike possessed documents of privileges, these have not survived. The privileges of Thessalonike are mentioned by historians in a general sense and in a handful of monastic archives we see the exemption from taxation and freedom of possession that has been found in the privileges granted to other towns. To what extent Thessalonike enjoyed judicial or administrative privileges is unknown. What becomes clear is that the Thessalonians grew more and more resentful of the squabbles of their *archontes* and governors. While this culminated in the Zealot revolt this was not an isolated incident. Earlier during the war between Andronikos II and Andronikos III Constantine Palaiologos, governor of Thessalonike, was expelled from the city for not supporting his father, Andronikos II. Later in 1327 the city offered itself to Andronikos III, but supporters of Andronikos II held the acropolis for some time. The lack of interest the Byzantines showed in two events covers over the serious internal disputes that existed in the city, with mobs in favour of one candidate forcibly ejecting the

supporters of another and with the city swinging between both Andronikoi in just five years. On the surface the Zealot revolt was initially another example where some of the ruling elites support for John VI Kantakouzenos was not supported by others in the elite and by a large portion of the populace and so they were expelled. The city then nominally submitted to John V's regency council. What is interesting is that the revolt included representatives of guilds and associations.⁹ Obviously such groups immediately draw comparison with contemporary Italy (and many scholars have commented on this) and also towns in Northern Europe. In fact that similar events were happening all over Europe surely precludes direct influence but does suggest that there is a case of parallel development, of which Thessalonike was a part, across much of the continent. Many of the civic disturbances which had affected European cities from the 1270s, but particularly in the fourteenth century, had at their base the desire of the craft associations to be admitted to power. This does not mean that the struggles were between artisans and merchants as the divide was not so clear cut. Many of the disaffected were led by rich men and members of the urban elite. Nevertheless one of the results was that by the 1370s most of the towns of Western Europe had granted greater representation to the craft associations in the city council.¹⁰ The Zealots could have been a part of this common trend. A desire of the organised, but powerless, guilds and associations for a say in the running of their city coupled with the ambitions of the *archontes* who did not support Theodore Synadenos and John Kantakouzenos. These two strands of disaffection combined and produced eight years of Zealot rule.

⁹ Of course there is no reason that the mobs which were involved in the expulsion of Constantine Palaiologos and the groups which would have participated in the surrender of the city to Andronikos III in 1327 could not have included such associations. In fact it is highly likely that they did but because of the limited nature of the sources they were not recorded. The reason that there is a record of these events in the 1340s is because of the elite social status to our chroniclers who were all on the 'other' side in the civil war.

¹⁰ Nicholas 1997:108. Many Italian cities allowed the crafts some representation in the 1320s, German cities in the 1330s and the remainder of Northern Europe by the 1370s.

To what extent were the cities discussed in this thesis communes? For Arta there is not enough information to decide either way. For Monemvasia, Ioannina and Thessalonike the answer seems to be that they possessed some elements of communal organisation, although different elements in each case. Clearly all three cities were capable of functioning independently, life, trade and defence did not collapse because of the lack of an imperial representative or ruler and at least Monemvasia and Thessalonike decided that it was in their best interests to be independent at least once in this period, the cities could administer themselves. That Ioannina, Monemvasia and Thessalonike also clearly had a communal identity is clear both from the way in which the inhabitants asked for privileges (and in the case of Monemvasia repeatedly had them extended). There were certainly judicial and administrative which were devolved to the senates or town representatives by the imperial government. Comparison with the independent city states of Italy is only fair in the case of Ioannina, and then only after the extinction of the Komneno-Doukai rulers. Monemvasia and Thessalonike had to deal with the presence a weakening yet still powerful state which was always strong enough to bring these cities back into the fold. The accommodation that was reached does bare comparison with the towns of much of north-western Europe. In this context it is possible to say that Monemvasia and Thessalonike exhibited elements of communal organisation but that this existed (mostly) within the imperial system.

The degree to which the four cities which have been studied were integrated into the wider Mediterranean economy varies city to city. Ioannina hardly seems to have had any economic contacts outside of its own hinterland, while Thessalonike and Arta acted as regional and international markets of some importance. The merchants of Monemvasia travelled widely and have often been seen as unique, but their counterparts in Thessalonike and Arta were active, if over a smaller distance. Even if there is little evidence of Byzantine merchants travelling to the West those from Thessalonike and Arta did travel to Ragusa

and the Thessalonians frequently travelled to Venetian Negroponte. Merchants from three of the four cities considered here played an important role in the local and regional economy which may be suggestive of the case with traders from other cities. The numismatic evidence proves that the late Byzantine city was becoming integrated not only into the trade networks of the West but also into the western monetary system. This was even so in the case of Ioannina, an inland town, at a great distance from the nearest Western possession and with no recorded economic ties to a western power. Byzantium certainly operated as a source of supply of raw materials for Italy and as an importer of Italian goods. Although this position may have been unequal, the evidence from these four cities suggests that it was not disastrously so. The Artinoi demonstrate that the inhabitants of Byzantine cities could become involved in directly supplying Western demand, cutting out Western merchants entirely. The evidence from Thessalonike suggests that Byzantine manufacturing did not necessarily collapse in the face of Italian imports and in fact processed fabrics were even exported to Italy.¹¹ Overall the economic intergration of Byzantine cities in the Italian trading networks may not have been all bad for the Byzantines.¹²

Was the growth in the independence of the Byzantine city a symptom of the decline of the imperial authority? It could equally be seen as a sign of urban development. In the end it is probably a mixture of both. A strong and domineering empire would have been unlikely to have granted quite so many privileges to its cities; yet at the same time a city which had no type of communal organisation and was socially and economically backwards could not receive and demand such privileges either. Furthermore, we must

¹¹ This may also have been the case with some of the cotton exported from Arta, but it is impossible to determine with any certainty.

¹² It is even possible that some of the investment that we see in the countryside around Thessalonike to make more land productive and to increase yields, was in response to the enhanced demand for agricultural produce from Italian merchants.

remember that the Byzantium which granted privileges to Monemvasia and Thessalonike was not weak; it was expanding on all fronts.¹³ The Byzantine cities of the thirteenth-fifteenth centuries may have benefitted from the fragmentation of the empire after 1204, and the long wars of reunification, but they also profited from their own development in the years before 1204 which meant that the citizens of these cities were organised enough, and their home was important enough in economic terms, to demand grants of privileges from the imperial government.

The social and economic developments occurring in the late Byzantine city were destined to be derailed. The weakness of the emperor in Constantinople may not have been the sole factor determining the evolution of the Byzantine city, but it was certainly the reason that this development stopped. Byzantium was too weak to prevent its lands, and then its cities falling to the Ottoman Sultans. The cities of the Balkans continued to evolve and develop, but their evolution had been moved onto a different track. After the Ottoman conquest the cities operated within a different system, with different values and aims to that which had existed before. Even though the end of the story is an unhappy one (for the Byzantines at least) it is possible to see, in the last two and a half centuries of the Byzantine Empire, a brilliant urban civilization. These cities were independent minded, vital, greedy, open to innovation, but most importantly dynamic and Byzantine to their core. They represented the best in an empire which had failed to defend them and was itself passing into history.

¹³ In this I speak of the initial two *chrysobulls* given to the Monemvasiots, that of Michael VIII and the first of Andronikos II.

Appendix

One

The Archontes/Dynates of Monemvasia

The following table lists the men from Monemvasia who rose to the position where they ruled the city, possibly holding the position of *archon*. Names in normal type are those who are known to have ruled Monemvasia, names in italics are those who may have done so. Relationships and dates which are in italics are likewise conjectural.

Name	Dates
Chamaretos	?-c.1206
Leo Chamaretos (son of Chamaretos)	c.1206-c.1210
Ioannis Chamaretos (<i>Son of Leo Chamaretos</i>)	c.1210-before 1222
<i>Georgios Daimonioiannis</i> (father-in-law of Ioannis Chamaretos)	c.1222-?
<i>Kantakonzenos</i>	1262-?
Mamonas	Before 1384
(Paul?) Mamonas (son of Mamonas, <i>father of Gregory Palaiologos Mamonas</i>)	c.1384-1391
<i>(Paul?) Mamonas</i>	1394
<i>Nicholas Eudaimonioiannis</i>	1394-1423
<i>Manuel Palaiologos</i>	Before 1460-?
<i>Nicholas Palaiologos</i> (son of Manuel Palaiologos)	?-?

Appendix

Two

The Rulers of Ioannina

The following table lists the men from Ioannina who rose to the position where they ruled the city. Names in normal type are those who are known to have ruled Ioannina, names in italics are those who may have done so. Dates which are in italics are likewise conjectural. Titles and offices which are in italics are known to have been held by the individuals listed.

Ruler	Date	Territory	Title
Michael I Komnenos Doukas	1205-1214	Epiros	No title.
Theodore Komnenos Doukas	1214-1230	Epiros and Macedonia from 1224.	No title 1215-1224 Emperor from 1224
Michael II Komnenos Doukas	1230-1268	Epiros	No title 1230-c.1249 Despot from c.1249
Nikephoros I Komnenos Doukas	1267-1296	Epiros	Despot
Thomas I Komnenos Doukas	1296-1318	Epiros	Despot
Sguros	1318-1321?	Ioannina	<i>Kephale</i> , governor for Andronikos II Palaiologos,

			<i>Prokathenemos</i> of Ioannina and <i>sebastos</i> . ¹
John II Orsini	1323-1336/7	Ioannina as imperial <i>kephale</i> . Ruler of much of Epiros in his own right.	Kephale, despot from c.1328 officially governor for the Byzantine emperor but in fact independent. ²
<i>John Angelos</i> ³		Most of Epiros and Thessaly. Initially as an imperial governor but following the Serbian conquest of much of northern Epiros and Macedonia effectively independent, although a supporter if John VI	Kephale, governor for Andronikos III Palaiologos

¹ MM I:86

² John's brother Nicholas had unsuccessfully tried to conquer Ioannina during the civil war between Andronikos II and Andronikos III. John more cleverly asked the citizens to accept him as the official governor for Andronikos II and agreed to respect the privileges granted by Andronikos. For John II's acquisition of Ioannina see MM I:171.

³ Governor in Arta and probably responsible for the whole of Epiros.

		Kantakouzenos against John V Palaiologos.	
Simeon Uroš Palaiologos	1348-1371	Ioannina submitted to Symeon after the death of Stefan Dušan. Emperor of Epiros and Thessaly.	Despot 1348-1355 ⁴ Emperor 1355-1371
Thomas Preljubović	1367-1384	Ioannina, made governor by Simeon Uros Palaiologos when the city submitted to his rule.	Governor for Simeon Uroš Palaiologos. Granted the title of despot in 1382 by Manuel II. ⁵
Maria Angelina Doukaina Palaiologina	1384-1385	Ioannina	<i>basilissa</i>
Esau Buondelmonti	1385-1411	Ioannina, married Maria Angelina Doukaina	Despot from late 1385 ⁶

⁴ Symeon was granted the rule of Epiros by his brother. Kant IV.19:IIIp130: Greg xxxvii.50:III p557

⁵ Chron Ioan: It is possible that Symeon gave Thomas the title of despot but the only source for this period is the Chronicle of Ioannina which is anti Serbian and refuses to acknowledge the fact.

⁶ Esau requested the title from John V who sent Palaiologos Vryonis with a crown to Ioannina where the coronation took place. Chron Ioan:96

		Palaiologina.	
Giorgio Buondelmonti	1411	Ioannina, a minor at the time of his father's death, unsuccessful attempt by his mother, Eudokia, initially supported by Simon Strategopoulos to set up a regency.	No title.
Carlo I Tocco	1411-1429	Count of Kephalaria and Duke of Leukas, Invited to rule the Ioannina by its <i>archontes</i> , led by Simon Strategopoulos. Later conquered Arta.	Duke 1411-1415 Despot 1415-1429 ⁷
Carlo II Tocco	1429-1430	Nephew of Carlo I, bequeathed Ioannina by his uncle.	No title.

⁷ Carlo I was invested by Manuel II Palaiologos in 1415 in the Peloponnese. Chron Tocco:382 §2

Appendix

Three

The Rulers of Arta

The following table lists the men from Ioannina who rose to the position where they ruled the city. Names in normal type are those who are known to have ruled Ioannina, names in italics are those who may have done so. Dates which are in italics are likewise conjectural. Titles and offices which are in italics are known to have been held by the individuals listed.

Ruler	Date	Territory	Title
Michael I Komnenos Doukas	1205-1214	Epiros	No title.
Theodore Komnenos Doukas	1214-1230	Epiros and Macedonia from 1224.	No title 1215-1224 Emperor from 1224
Michael II Komnenos Doukas	1230-1268	Epiros	No title 1230-c.1249 Despot from c.1249
Nikephoros I Komnenos Doukas	1267-1296	Epiros	Despot
Thomas I Komnenos Doukas	1296-1318	Epiros	Despot ⁸
Nicholas Orsini	1318-1323	Arta and Southern Epiros.	No title.

⁸ Thomas was given the title of despot by Andronikos II Palaiologos.

John II Orsini	1323-1336/7	Arta and southern Epiros as an independent ruler, Ioannina as imperial <i>kephale</i> .	Ruler of Arta and Southern Epiros from 1323. <i>Kephale</i> of Ioannina officially governing for the Byzantine emperor but in fact independent. Despot from c.1328. ⁹
<i>John Angelos</i> ¹⁰	1340-1342 1345-1348	Most of Epiros and Thessaly. Initially as an imperial governor but following the Serbian conquest of much of northern Epiros and Macedonia effectively independent, although a supporter of John VI	<i>Kephale</i> , governor for Andronikos III Palaiologos

⁹ John's brother Nicholas had unsuccessfully tried to conquer Ioannina during the civil war between Andronikos II and Andronikos III. John more cleverly asked the citizens to accept him as the official governor for Andronikos II and agreed to respect the privileges granted by Andronikos. For John II's acquisition of Ioannina see MM I:171.

¹⁰ Governor in Arta and probably responsible for the whole of Epiros.

		Kantakouzenos against John V Palaiologos.	
Symeon Uroš Palaiologos	1348-1371	Ioannina submitted to Symeon after the death of Stefan Dušan. Emperor of Epiros and Thessaly.	Despot 1348-1355 ¹¹ Emperor 1355-1371
Nikephoros II Orsini	1356-1359	Arta and Thessaly	Despot from 1347, although his title was not linked to his being the ruler of Epiros.
Peter Losha	1359-1374	Arta, made governor by Simeon Uroš Palaiologos.	Governor for Simeon Uroš Palaiologos with the title of despot
Gjin Spata	1374-1399	Ruler of Arta	No title.
Muriki Spata	1399-1414	Ruler of Arta	No title.
Ya'qub Spata	1414-1416	Ruler of Arta	No title.

¹¹ Symeon was granted the rule of Epiros by his brother. Kant IV.19:IIIp130: Greg xxxvii.50:III p557

Eirene Spata	1414, 1416	Ruler of Arta. The mother of Muriki and Ya'qub Spata, Eirene briefly ruled Arta twice, once whilst waiting for her son Ya'qub to arrive and once following his death.	No title.
Carlo I Tocco, governed by Leonardo Tocco, 1416- ¹²	1416-1429	Count of Kephalaria and Duke of Leukas, Invited to rule the Ioannina by its archontes, led by Simon Strategopoulos. Conquered Arta in 1416.	Duke 1411-1415 Despot 1415-1429 ¹³
Carlo II Tocco	1429-1449	Nephew of Carlo I, bequeathed Arta and Ioannina by his uncle.	No title.

¹² Chron Tocco:452 §7

¹³ Carlo I was invested by Manuel II Palaiologos in 1415 in the Peloponnese. Chron Tocco:382 §2

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