

This is an extract from:

## *Dumbarton Oaks Papers, No. 55*

Editor: Alice-Mary Talbot

Published by

*Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection*  
*Washington, D.C.*

Issue year 2001

© 2002 Dumbarton Oaks

Trustees for Harvard University

Washington, D.C.

Printed in the United States of America

[www.doaks.org/etexts.html](http://www.doaks.org/etexts.html)

# The Domain of Private Guilds in the Byzantine Economy, Tenth to Fifteenth Centuries

GEORGE C. MANIATIS

The role of the private guilds in the late Byzantine Empire remains controversial. Three unsettled issues in particular deserve reexamination: the scope of the guilds' sectoral activities in the capital, their presence in the provinces, and their fate after the twelfth century. Putting the role of the guilds in proper perspective is important, as it defines the degree of state control and intervention in key constituent elements of the Byzantine economy including the organization of the private sector, the production and distribution of goods, price formation, domestic and foreign competition, and the configuration of the supporting institutional framework. At issue is the reach of the long arm of the government and the entrenched view of the pervasiveness of the guild organizational form in the Byzantine economy. In addressing these issues, this study establishes criteria and draws clear distinctions among the various organizational forms in place, critically reviews long-standing theories, identifies misreadings of or unwarranted readings into narrative sources, and puts forward new hypotheses that help define more definitively the extent of the guilds' actual involvement in the economic activity in the capital and the provinces, in light of the evolving economic and political realities of the times.

## THE SCOPE OF PRIVATE GUILD ACTIVITIES IN THE CAPITAL

The *Book of the Eparch*<sup>1</sup> defined the economic activities that had to be undertaken by private enterprises mandatorily organized into guilds (συστήματα)<sup>2</sup> and thereby established

<sup>1</sup>The *Book of the Eparch* (Ἐπαρχικόν Βιβλίον; hereafter *BE*), promulgated in 911 or 912, codified earlier decrees concerning the private guilds located in the capital. The piecemeal issue of these decrees suggests that the guild organizational structure described in the *Book of the Eparch* apparently existed already in the late 9th century. The Greek text was published with emendations by J. Nicole, *Le Livre du Préfet ou l'édit de l'Empereur Léon le Sage sur les corporations de Constantinople* (Geneva, 1893), and was reprinted in Zepos, *Jus Graecoromanum*, 2:371–92. English translations are by A. E. R. Boak, "The Book of the Prefect," *Journal of Economic and Business History* 1 (1929): 597–619, and E. H. Freshfield, *Roman Law in the Later Roman Empire: Byzantine Guilds, Professional and Commercial* (Cambridge, 1938). A recent critical edition of the Greek text and a German translation is by J. Koder, *Das Eparchenbuch Leons des Weisen* (Vienna, 1991), which includes a commentary on the origin of rules and regulations, the likely procedure followed for the compilation of the *Book of the Eparch*, and date of publication (*ibid.*, 20–23).

<sup>2</sup>In economic activities undertaken by firms mandatorily organized into guilds, membership was a precondition for the practice of a craft or trade. See A. P. Christophilopoulos, Τό Ἐπαρχικόν Βιβλίον Λέοντος τοῦ

statutorily their sectoral sphere of operation in the capital. In these specified instances, the practice of a craft or trade by unorganized outsiders was prohibited.<sup>3</sup> It would be simplistic to suggest that a mandatory guild system was instituted only to allow the parallel conduct of the same economic activities outside the purview and control of the authorities,<sup>4</sup>

Σοφοῦ καὶ αἱ Συντεχνίαι ἐν Βυζαντίῳ (Athens, 1935), 4, 36, 50; G. Mickwitz, "Die Organisationsformen zwei byzantinischer Gewerbe im X. Jahrhundert," *BZ* 36 (1936): 72–74; A. D. Sideris, Ἱστορία τοῦ οἰκονομικοῦ βίου (Athens, 1950), 264; B. Mendl, "Les corporations byzantines," *BSI* 22 (1961): 301–2, 304, 312–18; G. G. Litavrin, *Vizantiiskoe obshchestvo i gosudarstvo v X–XI vv: I problemy istorii odnogo stoletia 976–1081 gg* (Byzantine society and state in the tenth and eleventh centuries: Historical problems of one century, 976–1081) (Moscow, 1977), 130, 151. However, guild membership was obligatory only for the proprietor of a business establishment or the individual running the business; craftsmen were employed as hired laborers and were denied admission. Nevertheless, the view is held that guild membership was not compulsory, and that the same crafts were also practiced outside the guild system by unorganized craftsmen. J. Nicole, "Notices détachées pour servir à la critique et l'exégèse de l'édit de Léon le Sage," *Livre du Préfet* (London, 1970), 80; A. Stoeckle, *Spätromische und byzantinische Zünfte* (Leipzig, 1911), 8; H. Gehring, "Das Zunftwesen Konstantinopels im zehnten Jahrhundert," *Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und Statistik* 38 (1909): 580; Boak, "Book of the Prefect," 608 n. 5; G. Zoras, *Le corporazioni bizantine* (Rome, 1931), 172; S. Runciman, "Byzantine Trade and Industry," in *Cambridge Economic History of Europe* (Cambridge, 1987), 2:154 n. 12, 156; A. P. Kazhdan, "Tsekhi i gosudarstvennye masterskie v Konstantinople v IX–X vv" (Guilds and state workshops in Constantinople in the ninth and tenth centuries), *VizVrem* 6 (1953): 138–39, 144, 146–47, 153; idem, *Derevnia i gorod v Vizantii IX–X vv* (Country and town in Byzantium in the ninth and tenth centuries) (Moscow, 1960), 334, 336, 342, 344; D. Simon, "Die byzantinischen Seidenzünfte," *BZ* 68 (1975): 36–39; P. Horden, "The Confraternities in Byzantium," in *Voluntary Religion* (London, 1986), ed. W. J. Sheilds and D. Wood, 35; M. Angold, "The Shaping of the Medieval Byzantine 'City'," *ByzF* 10 (1985): 29–30; idem, *The Byzantine Empire 1025–1204* (London, 1997), 94; A. Muthesius, "Byzantine Silk Industry: Lopez and Beyond," *JMedHist* 19 (1993): 32. R. S. Lopez, "Silk Industry in the Byzantine Empire," *Speculum* 20 (1945): 15–16, articulated this notion best: these outsiders were craftsmen and traders who could not join or had dropped out of their respective guilds because they could not afford to pay the entrance fee or underwrite their share in the collective purchase of imported materials.

This hypothesis is untenable. First, as discussed in the text, the coexistence of guild-controlled and non-guild-controlled economic activities in the same sector made no sense in the state's framework of industrial and commercial policy. Second, there is no indication in the *Book of the Eparch* that these groups operated outside the guild system. In fact, the practice of certain crafts by nonguild members was explicitly forbidden; see note 3. Third, these groups have been mistakenly perceived as poor: they were of servile status and hence ineligible to take part in the wholesale collective purchases (*BE* 7.2). Fourth, the existence of guild members unable to participate in the wholesale common purchase (*BE* 6.9) or of members thought of as eligible to join (*BE* 7.5) only confirms the varying size distribution of firms in their respective guilds and the concomitant diverse financial strength of the membership, not the existence of unorganized and needy craftsmen and traders operating outside the parameters set by the guild system. Finally, manufacturing and trading activities required adequate financial resources (self-financing, credit availability). Indeed, one of the conditions of entry was adequacy of financial means (εὐπορος; *BE* 2.10, 8.13), which suggests that craftsmen with insufficient resources could not set up shop to begin with. Hence those who lacked the wherewithal to operate as independents had to seek employment as hired workers, while those who had the financial resources to establish themselves as independent businessmen surely could afford the one-time nominal entrance fee. Certainly, the fee levied by the guilds was not intended to forestall new entry and thereby deter competition between existing and new members, as Christophilopoulos (Ἐπαρχικόν Βιβλίον, 54) asserts. For more detail on the status of these groups, see G. C. Maniatis, "Organization, Market Structure, and Modus Operandi of the Private Silk Industry in Tenth-Century Byzantium," *DOP* 53 (1999): 271–72, 279–81.

<sup>3</sup>*BE* 9.6, 11.8, 12.4, 6, and 13.4.

<sup>4</sup>Guild members were forbidden to supply raw materials and finished goods to nonguild members (*BE* 6.16, 7.1, 12.4, 6, 7), buy imported raw materials on behalf of influential or wealthy persons (*BE* 6.10, 7.1), act as procurement agents for members of another unauthorized guild, barter or purchase goods they were not authorized to handle (*BE* 9.6, 11.8, 12.7), or sell such materials unprocessed (*BE* 6.13, 7.1). The imposed restrictions aimed further to deter dissipation of supplies to low-priority uses through sales to unauthorized

whether by noblemen,<sup>5</sup> wealthy enterprising individuals, or small-scale traders and craftsmen, as has been argued.<sup>6</sup> It would serve no purpose to set up an organizational structure, designate operational functions at each stage of the productive process and distribution, and enact elaborate regulations concerning admission, obligations, and conduct, only to let the assigned activities be conducted outside the guild system. Had this happened, the guild system effectively would have been scuttled.

In analyzing the business organizational structure in Byzantium, it is all-important to draw a sharp distinction between the *mandatory* organization into guilds (συστήματα) of

---

persons or in minuscule quantities, thereby depriving high-priority (guild-organized) producers of adequate raw materials (*BE* 6.10, 13, 16, 7.5). On the other hand, the stipulation that raw materials cannot be sold to traders who intended to export them unprocessed (*BE* 6.16) reflects the state's primary concern to avoid unwarranted shortages and consequent price increases. It also points to a conscious policy of exporting only finished goods from the capital, which generated employment opportunities locally and a much higher value added. In short, the purpose of these restrictions was to forestall the growth of manufacturing and trade activities outside the guild system in those sectors deemed important to the capital's economy and welfare. Moreover, by funneling all commercial activity through a controllable setting, the emergence of monopolistic market structures and the concentration of economic power in a few hands could be thwarted.

<sup>5</sup>It has been argued that, despite the prohibition, the nobility, in collusion with guild members, managed to have silks produced for their account or at their homes, which in turn they sold on the market. Mickwitz, "Organisationsformen," 75–76; idem, "Un problème d'influence: Byzance et l'économie de l'Occident médiéval," *Annales d'histoire économique et sociale* 7 (1936): 27; Kazhdan, "Tsekhi," 153; M. I. Siuziumov, "Remeslo i trgovlia v Konstantinopole v nachale X v." (Crafts and trade in Constantinople at the beginning of the tenth century), *VizVrem* 4 (1951): 29–30; Lopez, "Silk Industry," 16. Similarly, provision *BE* 16.4, which prohibits pork dealers from hiding pigs in nobles' houses, has led to the inference that dignitaries were illicitly involved in the livestock trade: Siuziumov, "Remeslo," 30. However, the notion that the powerful would be involved in an illicit activity and that guild members would be willing to cooperate amid the ubiquitous presence of informers and the severe penalties that were inflicted is strained. The law's cautionary provisions cannot be construed as *proof* of a prevalent pattern of unlawful actions by dignitaries. The very purpose of the introduction of the law was precisely to frustrate possible transgressions. Besides the powerful did not have to resort to underhanded and risky deals, flout the law, and be humiliated if caught—a virtual certainty, as illegal conduct and flagrant transgressions of the law could hardly elude the attention of the vigilant chiefs. They could openly and profitably invest their capital in silk manufacturing (or any other activity for that matter) by lending to guild members, by entering into a partnership with a guild member, or by setting up shop by sponsoring a slave. The nobility was free to exploit business opportunities, but in particular sectors they had to operate through the guild system.

To be sure, the law (Βασιλικά, ed. I. D. Zepos (Athens 1896–1900), 6.1.23 (hereafter *Basilics*) established the incompatibility of the status of high-ranking state officials with direct or indirect involvement in business. But except for the few dignitaries occupying positions of the highest authority in the capital, to whom the law was strictly referring, there were many rich persons who had purchased their dignities without corresponding obligation to discharge administrative functions. These, as well as numerous members of the powerful Byzantine aristocratic families, some among the emperor's close relatives (οικείοι), were actively involved in commercial activities, particularly during and after the twelfth century. P. Lemerle, "Roga' et rente d'état aux Xe–XIe siècles," *REB* 25 (1967), 77–100; A. Andréadès, "De la monnaie et de la puissance d'achat des métaux précieux dans l'empire byzantin," *Byzantion* 1 (1924), 105; Litavrin, *Vizantiiskoe obshchestvo*, 164–68; A. E. Laiou-Thomadakis, "The Byzantine Economy in the Mediterranean Trade System; Thirteenth–Fifteenth Centuries," *DOP* 34/35 (1980–81), 188, 199, 201, 204–5, 212, 220–21; A. E. Laiou, "The Greek merchant of the Palaeologan period: A collective portrait," in eadem, *Gender, Society and Economic Life in Byzantium*. Variorum Reprints (Hampshire, 1992), VIII, 105, 108, 112–13; J.-C. Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations à Byzance (963–1210)* (Paris, 1990), 296; idem, "Dévaluation des dignités et dévaluation monétaire dans la seconde moitié du XIe siècle," *Byzantion* 53 (1983), 453–54, 457–58, 477; M. Hendy, "The Economy: A Brief Survey," in *Byzantine Studies*, ed. S. Vryonis Jr., (New Rochelle, New York, 1992), 146.

<sup>6</sup>The authors that hold this view are cited in notes 2, 5, and 23.

manufacturing and trade establishments operating in designated sectors, because the state felt it needed to supervise their activities closely,<sup>7</sup> and the *voluntary* associations (σωματεῖα) of craftsmen and traders and societies (σύλλογοι) of professionals and charities,<sup>8</sup> whose activities the state had no particular interest in regulating. Guilds were official organizations instituted by the state and under its direct control, effected through the eparch and the chiefs he appointed. Fundamentally, the state's organs enforced the government's economic policy and the stipulated rules of business conduct; they did not act as stewards of the professional interests of the guild members.<sup>9</sup> Associations and societies, on the other hand, were independent, self-governed organizations initiated and formed by their own members and run by elected members and their own instituted by-laws. Voluntary associations could be established in the provinces as well,<sup>10</sup> but mandatory guilds operated only in the capital and only in a limited number of designated economic activities.<sup>11</sup>

The *Book of the Eparch* deals exclusively with the organizations that operated in the capital. It sets forth the rules governing the society (σύλλογος) of the notaries, a quasi-judicial body subjected to singular entrance requirements, *numerus clausus* on mem-

<sup>7</sup>To be able to keep a check on the guilds, the eparch appointed their chiefs (*BE* 5.1, 14.1, 2). Stockle, *Byzantische Zünfte*, 84; Christophilopoulos, 'Επαρχικόν Βιβλίον, 47–48, 49 and n. 1; S. Runciman, *Byzantine Civilization* (London, 1933), 175; Boak, "The Book of the Prefect," 599; Siuziumov, "Remeslo," 39; and N. Oikonomidès, "Entrepreneurs," in *The Byzantines*, ed. G. Cavallo (Chicago, 1997), 155, maintain that the chiefs of the guilds, though official organs of the state, were chosen from among their members. However, this is true only for the society (σύλλογος) of the notaries (*BE* 1.22) who, because of their legal training, distinct quasi-judicial function, and high ethical standards were subject to a different set of rules. This ad hoc procedure of selecting their chief cannot be applied by analogy to the other guilds, which were involved in totally unrelated industrial and trade activities. In dealing with the guilds proper (συστήματα), the *Book of the Eparch* nowhere indicates that the chiefs were chosen from among the guild members or alludes to the process of their selection. This is understandable, as the authorities could not trust active guild members to perform their duties impartially because of their vested interests.

<sup>8</sup>E.g., κολλέγιον τῶν πενήτων: *Basilics*, 60.32.3 scholium; welfare societies: *Georgius Cedrinus*, ed. I. Bekker, vol. 2 (Bonn, 1839), 641; Ph. Koukoules, *Βυζαντινῶν Βίος καὶ Πολιτισμός*, 6 vols. in 7 pts. (Athens, 1948–57), 2A:80 n. 4, 102.

<sup>9</sup>Cf. Christophilopoulos, 'Επαρχικόν Βιβλίον, 38; idem, "Ζητήματα τινά ἐκ τοῦ 'Επαρχικοῦ Βιβλίου," Ἑλληνικά 11(1939): 134; Boak, "The Book of the Prefect," 597–98; Mendl, "Les corporations byzantines," 318; G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State* (Oxford, 1968), 254; Runciman, "Byzantine Trade," 154; E. Francès, "La disparition des corporations byzantines," in *Actes du XIIe Congrès International d'Études Byzantines, 1961* (Belgrade, 1964), 2:97; Litavrin, *Vizantiiskoe obshchestvo*, 134, 140–41, 147–48, 151. Contra: C. M. Macri, *L'Organisation de l'économie urbaine dans Byzance sous la dynastie de Macédoine (867–1057)* (Paris, 1925), 73–74; P. Charanis, "On the Social Structure of the Later Roman Empire," *Byzantion* 17 (1946), 50; Kazhdan, "Tse-khi," 144; A. Anréadès, "Byzance, paradis du monopole et du privilège," *Byzantion* 9 (1934), 172. G. Mickwitz, *Die Kartellfunktionen der Zünfte und ihre Bedeutung bei der Entstehung des Zunftwesens* (Helsinki, 1936), 207–23, 228–31, 234, and esp. 229. Mickwitz (229) argues that, besides the protection of the public from gouging in foodstuffs, the law, actually initiated by the traders themselves, aimed to thwart all competition among members or from outside and thereby safeguard the guilds' monopolies. The statutory monopolies granted the guilds hardly served the interests of the state. For a refutation of this latter notion, that the state wished to advance the interests of the members of the guilds, see Maniatis, "Private Silk Industry," 269–70, 303–19, 323–26.

<sup>10</sup>*Basilics*, 54.16.16.

<sup>11</sup>The only craftsmen required to be organized into guilds (συστήματα) were the jewelers (*BE* 2), those involved in silk manufacturing (*BE* 4–8), the candlemakers (*BE* 11), the soapmakers (*BE* 12), and the tanners and saddlers (*BE* 14). See also note 25 below.

bership admissions, and a special procedure for the selection of their chief exclusively from their members (*BE* 1. 1–26). The society of notaries could hardly be classified as a guild *qua* guild, as its constitution and special functions set it apart from the guilds proper, which were involved in unrelated activities. The *Book of the Eparch* also designates occupations whose activities were deemed vital for the local economy or essential to the provisioning of the city that were required to be organized into guilds (συστήματα). Furthermore, it alludes to several crafts in the construction industry, referred to generically as contractors without any mention of their being organized into guilds,<sup>12</sup> some of which may have been voluntarily organized into informal groups or formal associations (σωματεία).<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup>The provisions of the *Book of the Eparch* regarding the construction trades (*BE* 22.1–4) simply reiterate earlier provisions of common law outlining the responsibility of these groups in the exercise of their craft: *CIC, Dig* 6.1.39, 11.6.7, 19.2.51; *CIC, CI* 8.12.8, *Basilics*, 15.1.39, 20.1.22. These provisions stipulate the course of action to be taken when, having made an agreement and received earnest money, craftsmen quit their undertaking to begin another before the former is completed; the responsibility of employers who, having contracted craftsmen for a project, fail to provide them with the necessary materials and thus force them to abandon their work; and the steps to be taken to resolve disputes over fair compensation or reprehensible conduct of the parties, including remedial action. Also, to ensure fulfillment of contractual obligations and exclude the involvement of third parties in ongoing work, contractors and craftsmen were forbidden to enter into an agreement with one another to complete work already in progress. *Synopsis Basilicorum*, T. 8.1.

That the *Book of the Eparch* does not refer to these crafts as guilds is not an accident. In fact, the tenor of the relevant provisions of the *Book of the Eparch* strongly suggests that they were not organized into guilds and that their activities were not monitored by the state. Cf. Sideris, *Ἱστορία*, 227; Siuziumov, “Remeslo,” 16, 18, 19, 23; P. Schreiner, “Die Organisation byzantinischer Kaulfleute und Handwerker,” in *Untersuchungen zu Handel und Verkehr der vor- und frühgeschichtlichen Zeit in Mittel- und Nordeuropa* (Göttingen, 1989), 4:52; I. P. Medvedev, *Problema manufaktury v trudakh klassikov marxisma-leninisma i vopros o tak nazyvamoii vizantiiskoi manufakturē. V. I. Lenin, i problemy istorii* (The problem of manufacture in the studies of classics of Marxism and Leninism, and the question of Byzantine manufacture. V. I. Lenin and problems of history) (Leningrad, 1970), 402. Stoeckle, *Byzantinische Zünfte*, 54, and Christophilopoulos, *Ἐπαρχικόν Βιβλίον*, 92, maintain that our present knowledge does not allow us to accept or reject the notion that the construction workers were organized into guilds. On the other hand, F. Dölger, *Aus den Schatzkammern des Heiligen Berges* (Munich, 1948), 269, believes that this was a well-regulated guild-type (*Zunftordnung*) organization. Gehring, “Zunftwesen,” 580, Zoras, *Corporazioni bizantine*, 203, Macri, *Organisation*, 106–7, and Kazhdan, *Derevnia*, 366, also maintain that the building trades had adopted guild organizational forms. Certainly, the mere mention of construction trades in the *Book of the Eparch* does not mean that they were organized into guilds, as stated by N. Oikonomidēs, *Hommes d'affaires grecs et latins à Constantinople (XIIIe–XVe siècles)* (Paris, 1979), 112 n. 242. Also, his view (*ibid.*, 111–12) that the construction workers in the capital and in Thessalonike formed “une organisation corporative,” i.e., a guild, headed by a chief (πρωτομαῖστωρ) during the 13th and 14th centuries, is untenable, as construction workers traditionally formed small gangs headed by a leading technician. Inferring the existence of a guild organizational structure from a designation pertaining to foremen of crews is hardly conclusive. See also note 13 below. Finally, his assertion (*ibid.*, 112) that all construction workers and joiners residing in the capital were subject to the authority of the palace’s steward (παλατοφύλαξ) needs to be qualified. Only those who had undertaken to offer their services (οἱ δηλωθέντες) fell under his jurisdiction. C. N. Sathas, *Bibliotheca graeca medii aevi* (Venice, 1877), 6:649.

<sup>13</sup>The notion that the building trades, whether in the capital or in the provinces, were not organized into mandatory guilds (συστήματα) in the 10th century is strengthened by the absence of historical precedent. Thus the Declaration of the association of building craftsmen in Sardis to the city’s imperial magistrate as early as A.D. 459, prompted by frequent complaints of unfinished work, outlines the obligations of the employers and craftsmen and sets forth the commitment of the association of builders and artisans to complete the work left unfinished and pay for damages in case of nonperformance out of the association’s funds,

A large number of craftsmen were involved in a wide spectrum of manufacturing activities of the artisanal type in the capital,<sup>14</sup> working singly or with a few helpers or apprentices and without extensive division of labor. Articles were produced for the most part one at a time, with individual variations, often to the requirements of a particular customer. The craftsmen sold their products themselves or through middlemen (e.g., grocers)<sup>15</sup> under conditions of atomistic competition, and hence there was no particular concern that they might act in concert and thereby exploit the consumer; their lines of production did not include prohibited articles; and their dealings and infractions fell under the common law.<sup>16</sup> In these circumstances, close state supervision would be pointless. The same holds for the numerous small traders.<sup>17</sup> Besides, their limited number per craft and small turnover would hardly justify their induction into countless mandatory guilds (συστήματα) and the concomitant inordinate augmentation of the requisite bureaucracy to oversee their activities. The state therefore had no compelling reason to enjoin this multitude of craftsmen and traders to organize themselves into guilds, and this explains why there is no reference to them in the *Book of the Eparch*.<sup>18</sup> Rather, the state allowed these unorganized crafts to form voluntary associations (σωματεία), usually in fields designated by law and provided their members qualified,<sup>19</sup> if they thought that this

---

provided the hired craftsmen belonged to the association. For the text and commentary, see W. H. Buckler, "Labor Disputes in the Province of Asia Minor," in *Anatolian Studies Presented to W. M. Ramsay* (Manchester, 1923), 36–45. Buckler (41) maintains that this is the earliest example known of a trade union. However, the condition that the craftsmen involved should be "one of us" in order for the association to take action suggests that not all craftsmen in the building trades were organized, and that those organized more likely had formed a voluntary association of a cooperative nature (σωματεῖον) rather than a trade union. Similar provisions are found in CIC, *CI* 6.62.5, 11.10.5. Incidentally, the *Book of the Eparch* contains no provision for collective obligation for indemnification. In the same vein, Siuziumov, "Remeslo," 19, points out that in the hagiographic literature of the 8th through the 10th century itinerant builders are described as hired workers organized into *artels*. Litavrin also maintains that the builders referred to in the *Book of the Eparch* formed cooperative associations (*artels*): *Vizantiiskoe obshchestvo*, 130.

<sup>14</sup>An incomplete list of more than fifty crafts are enumerated in *Basilics*, 54.6.6 and *BE* 22.1. For additional crafts and trades, see Koukoules, Βυζαντινῶν Βίος, 2A:179–243; Oikonomidès, *Hommes d'affaires*, 100–103; Schreiner, "Organisation," 59 and n. 74. Important industries located in the capital or its outskirts, e.g., metalworking, woodworking, glassmaking, woolen and linen, pottery, grain milling, and building materials, operated outside the guild regime.

<sup>15</sup>*BE* 13.1.

<sup>16</sup>The relevant provisions include: *Basilics*, 20.1.22 scholium, 10.4.16[4], 60.22.6, 60.44.2, 19.10.68, 19.10.17, 10.3.1, 2; *Ecloga*, 15.25, 16.30, *Synopsis Minor*, M.4, E.45, Π.18, 42; *Synopsis Basilicorum*, Δ.37.3, Π.24.3, 5; *Peira*, 38.29, 30; Attaleiates, *Ponema*, 11.2,7; *Hexabiblos*, 3.3.70, 3.3.19 and scholium, 3.3.72, 6.15.7, 6.14.12, 13, 16. The unorganized craftsmen were also under the eparch's jurisdiction: Ὁ ἐπαρχος ἐξουσίαν ἔχει ἐπὶ πᾶσι τοῖς συστηματικοῖς καὶ ἰδιώτας τέχνην οἰανδήποτε μετερχομένους; *Ecloga Basilicorum*, 2.2 in K. E. Zachariae von Lingenthal, *Geschichte des griechisch-römischen Rechts* (Berlin, 1892), 36f n. 311; οἱ τῶν τεχνῶν τῷ ἐπάρχῳ τῆς πόλεως ὑποκείνται; *Peira*, 51.29. Cf. also N. Oikonomidès, "L'évolution de l'organisation administrative de l'empire byzantin au XIe siècle (1025–1118)," *TM* 6 (1976): 133. If so, the provisions of the *Book of the Eparch* pertaining to business conduct (cited in notes 123–26 below) in all probability were applicable to them as well.

<sup>17</sup>See note 25 below.

<sup>18</sup>Siuziumov, "Remeslo," 18, and Kazhdan, "Tsekhi," 138, *Derevnia*, 308, also maintain that the bulk of the crafts were not organized into guilds.

<sup>19</sup>In the capital, associations (σωματεία) were registered with the eparch, and their activities fell under his jurisdiction: Πάντα τὰ ἐν Κωνσταντινπόλει σωματεία . . . τῷ ἐπάρχῳ τῆς πόλεως ὑποκείσθωσαν (*Basilics*, 6.4.13; *Synopsis Basilicorum*, A.66.32). In the provinces, jurisdiction over associations was assigned to the local authorities. Entry was conditioned on evidence presented by the association to the competent authorities about the

vehicle served their purposes. Conceivably, some crafts had formed associations, particularly those that felt that their being organized could advance or protect their interests in dealings with state authorities, help solve problems they faced in the practice of their craft or profession (e.g., shipowners, shipwrights),<sup>20</sup> or impress self-discipline and probity among fellow craftsmen.<sup>21</sup> The upshot is that there were many crafts whose practice did not require their induction into a mandatory guild organizational structure and whose compulsory enrollment into guilds not only would have served no purpose but also would have been impractical.

Whether or not there were other guilds not included in the *Book of the Eparch* has been much debated. Some argue that, based on our present knowledge, it is not possible to give a definitive answer to this question.<sup>22</sup> Others maintain that there were crafts that were not organized into guilds,<sup>23</sup> while many assert that the *Book of the Eparch* does not

---

age, gender, and technical proficiency of the candidate (*Basilics*, 54.16.16). The registration of the associations facilitated the task of the authorities in repairing the walls of the city, recruiting combatants for its defense, fighting fires, arranging for the participation of their heads or members in official ceremonies and processions, and in keeping an eye on their political activities, as gatherings having political character were not permitted (*Basilics*, 60.32.1 and scholia; *Synopsis Basilicorum*, Σ.12.2). The guild organization also was a convenient vehicle for the discharge of public services in times of emergency: ἕκαστον τούτων τῶν συστημάτων φυλάξει τὴν πόλιν ἐν καιρῷ ἐπιδημίας ἐχθρῶν (Constantine Porphyrogenetos, *De Cerimoniis Aulae Byzantinae*, ed. I. Reske (Bonn, 1829), 449. See also, S. Vryonis Jr., "Byzantine Δημοκρατία and the Guilds in the Eleventh Century," *DOP* 17 (1963), 300; Schreiner, "Organisation," 47–48, 58.

<sup>20</sup>It is telling that the *Book of the Eparch* does not include the gold and silver embroiderers among the silk guilds of the capital, as it does not deal with the wool and linen weavers or the smiths, despite the importance of their respective crafts. Cf. Mickwitz, *Kartellfunktionen*, 226; D. Jacoby, "Silk in Western Byzantium before the Fourth Crusade," *BZ* 84/85 (1991–92): 463. Similarly, the shipowners' guild (*navicularii*), so important, among other things, for the empire's trade and so prominent in earlier periods, also is not mentioned in the *Book of the Eparch*. Apparently, their guild had disappeared by the 7th century: "the shipowners were comparatively free agents, plying the seas for their own personal gain": Charanis, "Social Structure," 49, and the sources cited therein; A. R. Lewis, *Naval Power and Trade in the Mediterranean, A.D. 500–1100* (Princeton, N.J., 1951), 40, 82–83. Contra: M. I. Siuziumov, *Kniga Eparkha* (The Book of the Eparch) (Sverdlovsk, 1949), 114–15; Litavrin, *Vizantiiskoe obshchestvo*, 132, 148–49. To be sure, in times of emergency the state requisitioned ships, as it did pack animals, supplies, or services, whether the persons affected were organized into guilds (e.g., the saddlers, *BE* 14.1) or not. But this is hardly tantamount to their activities being "regulated," because the provisioning of the capital was one of the deepest concerns of the central government, as has been suggested: Charanis, *ibid.*, 49–50; G. I. Bratianu, "La question de l'approvisionnement de Constantinople à l'époque byzantine et ottomane," *Byzantion* 5 (1929–30): 91; J. Durliat, "L'approvisionnement de Constantinople," in *Constantinople and Its Hinterland*, ed. C. Mango and G. Dagron (Aldershot, 1995), 22, 29. In normal times the government could (and did) employ the services of the shipowners on a contractual basis which obviated the need for direct control of their activities.

<sup>21</sup>Such mandated or voluntary commitments (see note 19) necessitated some form of organization of the members of a craft, be it a mandatory guild or a voluntary association. Thus, since they were not enjoined by law to form a guild, the coppersmiths apparently were organized into an association (σωματεῖον) in order to fulfill their obligation to watch each other because they were collectively liable for the transgressions of any one of them: ἐνὸς παΐσαντος τῶν χαλκῆων, εἰς πάντας ὁ κίνδυνος ἄρχεται, ὡς ὀφείλοντας ἀλλήλους κατασκοπεῖν (*Basilics*, 54.17).

<sup>22</sup>Stoeckle, *Byzantinische Zünfte*, 8; Christophilopoulos, Ἐπαρχικόν Βιβλίον, 8 n. 4; Koder, *Eparchenbuch*, 23, 33; *idem*, "Delikt und Strafe im Eparchenbuch," *JÖB* 41 (1991): 114.

<sup>23</sup>Nicole, *Livre du Préfet*, 11–12; Gehring, "Zunftwesen," 580; S. Lampros, Ἱστορία τῆς Ἑλλάδος (Athens, 1898), 4:262–63; H. Monnier, *Les Nouvelles de Léon le Sage* (Paris, 1923), 60 n. 4; Sideris, Ἱστορία, 264, 267–68; Runciman, "Byzantine Trade," 154 n. 12; Mendl, "Corporations," 303; Angold, "Medieval Byzantine 'City,'" 29; Kazhdan, *Derevnia*, 308, 334; *idem*, "Tsekhi," 138; Siuziumov, "Remeslo," 18–19; W. Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society* (Stanford, Calif., 1997), 574.

exhaust the existing guilds in the capital as the guild system was far-reaching.<sup>24</sup> But as already shown, there was no compelling reason for every single craft or trade to be organized into a compulsory guild (σύστημα).<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, it is unlikely that economic activities the state was keen on regulating would have been left out of the compilation of edicts included in the *Book of the Eparch*. Besides, crafts engaged in activities that could not be entrusted to the private sector (e.g., minting, weaponry, high-quality silk manufacturing for the exclusive use of the court) were mentioned in legal texts and narrative sources, and the respective craftsmen worked in imperial workshops.<sup>26</sup> The notion that the guild system was pervasive is born of the failure to put the regulatory system into proper perspective.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup>Nicole, *Le Livre du Préfet*, 3, 11; Ch. Diehl, *Études byzantines* (Paris, 1905), 143; Mendl, "Corporations," 303; Zoras, *Corporazioni bizantine*, 153, 207; Macri, *Organisation*, 33; Sideris, *Ἱστορία*, 269; Boak, "The Book of the Prefect," 599; Kazhdan, "Tsekhi," 137–38; Ostrogorsky, *History*, 253–54; Freshfield, *Roman Law*, xii–xiii; Schreiner, "Organisation," 51; S. Vryonis Jr., "Guilds," *DOP* 17 (1963): 297 n. 26; A. Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus and His World* (London, 1973), 41; Litavrin, *Vizantiiskoe obshchestvo*, 148–49; Mickwitz, *Kartellfunktionen*, 226, 230. Mickwitz (229) maintains that only guilds dealing with basic staples and those whose monopoly rights the state wished to protect were included in the *Book of the Eparch*. He explains the omission of, in his view, other important guilds from the *Book of the Eparch* as follows: they were not interested in establishing monopolies; they did not seem as threatening as the guild of the construction workers; or their activities did not affect consumer welfare (*ibid.*, 229–30).

<sup>25</sup>A number of basic staples were handled by guilds: bread (*BE* 18), fish (*BE* 17), meat (*BE* 15), wine (*BE* 19), groceries and hardware (*BE* 13), for which the *Book of the Eparch* did not fix wholesale or retail prices but only capped profit margins. On the implications of this policy for the price formation process, see below, pp. 356, n. 34, ll. 26–30; 361, ll. 17–21; 365; ll. 9–12 and Maniatis, "Private Silk Industry," 311 and n. 180. Yet many trades dealing in heavily marketed basic consumer goods of equal importance to the public, such as milk, eggs, fruits, vegetables, clothing, medicines, firewood, shoes, furniture, utensils, timber, bricks, tiles, and lime, remained unorganized. This suggests two things: the guild system was confined to activities the state was keenly interested in keeping in check; and the guild system and the regulatory restrictions were not as pervasive as has been thought (see note 27 below). J. Koder observes that there is no mention of guilds dealing in milk, eggs, fruits, and vegetables in the *Book of the Eparch* (he also includes dairy products, e.g., cheese and butter; but these products were handled by the grocers' guild, *BE* 13.1): 'Επαγγέλματα σχετικά μέ τόν ἐπισιτισμό στό 'Επαρχικό Βιβλίον,' in 'Η καθημερινή ζωή στό Βυζάντιο. Τομές καί συνέχεια στήν ἑλληνιστική καί ρωμαϊκή παράδοση. Α' Διεθνές Συμπόσιο, 1988 (Athens, 1989), 366. Not surprisingly, Koder attributes the omission to the fact that the sale of these goods took place in *fora* "without the intermediation of any special organization" (*ibid.*), implying the absence of a guild organizational structure dealing with perishable commodities marketed largely by a multitude of small traders, many of them itinerant. In fact, citing narrative sources, Koder states that the monasteries of the capital produced fruits which they sold at very high prices: 'Επαγγέλματα,' *ibid.*, which is suggestive of the absence of price controls. For the provisioning of the capital with fresh vegetables and their great variety, see Koukoules, *Βυζαντινῶν Βίος*, 2A:208–9; J. Koder, "Fresh Vegetables for the Capital," in Mango and Dagron, *Constantinople and Its Hinterland* (as above, note 20), 49–56. Interestingly, although Kazhdan argues that handicraftsmen (χειροτέχναι) did not have their own guilds ("Tsekhi," 138; *Derevnia*, 308), relying on the chronicle of Pseudo-Symeon, ed. E. Weber, *CSHB* (Bonn, 1838), 616, he argues that the designation πρεσβύτερος τοῦ τσαγγαρίου suggests the existence of a shoemakers' guild. But, as already indicated, it would be unrealistic to assume that the state would be interested in overseeing the doings of a slew of cobblers.

<sup>26</sup>*Basilics*, 57.9.1, 56.16.1,2, 19.71, 19.1.84; *Synopsis Basilicorum*, O. 7.1; *Theodori Scutariotae Additamenta*, in Georgii Acropolitae, *Opera*, ed. A. Heisenberg (Leipzig, 1903), 1:285; Macri, *Organisation*, 14–18; Andréadès, "Byzance, paradis du monopole," 177; Siuziumov, "Remeslo," 26–28; Kazhdan, "Tsekhi," 150–53 and the sources cited therein; *idem*, *Derevnia*, 338–42; J. W. Thompson, *Economic and Social History of the Middle Ages* (New York, 1928), 168; Runciman, "Byzantine Trade," 151, 153.

<sup>27</sup>The following sweeping, albeit unsubstantiated, statements are indicative. "Free trade and free production were unknown in the Byzantine Empire": A. A. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire* (Madison, Wisc.,

In this context, it has been further argued that, in the legal texts, for example, the *Basilics*, the *Book of the Eparch*, the *Peira*, and in the writings of the chroniclers, the terms σύλλογος, ἔταιρεία, σωματεῖον, σύστημα, ἐργαστηριακοί, and οἱ τῶν βαναύσων τεχνῶν all refer to guilds (συστήματα), and all these entities, however labeled, comprised the vast guild system of the capital.<sup>28</sup> Thus, the argument goes, *Basilics* 11.1.14 “equates ἔταιρεία with σύστημα and κολλέγιον”; *Basilics* 8.2.101 “equates ἔταιρεία with σύστημα and σωματεῖον.”<sup>29</sup> The assertion that the statutes lump together and equate diverse and clearly distinguishable organizational forms is inaccurate, stretched, and misleading. It derives from a misperception of the provisions of the law and overlooks the animus and the fine legal differences between them all, and particularly the fundamental difference between the mandatory guild (σύστημα), the voluntary association (σωματεῖον), and such a private business entity as the partnership (ἔταιρεία). When the law stipulates that οὐ πᾶσιν ἐφεῖται ποιεῖν ἔταιρείας ἢ συστήματα ἢ σωματεῖα (no one may establish a partnership, a guild, or an association),<sup>30</sup> it certainly did not mean to imply that these organizational forms are legally and functionally identical, but rather that they can only be used in those activities as defined by the law (ἀπὸ νόμου βεβαιωθέντων) in the private sector (e.g., bakeries) or the public domain (e.g., saltworks). The fact that the chroniclers paid no attention to such subtle legal distinctions, used descriptive terms loosely or interchangeably, or lumped together the organizational structure of the entire business community under the word “guild” is no proof that all crafts, particularly those of the βαναύσων τεχνῶν or

1958), 1:344. “There was no economic freedom in Byzantium, everything was regulated”: R. Guerdan, *Byzantium, Its Triumph and Tragedy* (New York, 1958), 88. “[T]he larger part of the ordinances included in the Book of the Eparch was aimed at limiting competition between guilds and also among members of the same guild”: Lopez, “Silk Industry,” 18. “[W]hen the executive power of the state was at its height, . . . control [by the eparch] was far-reaching in the extreme. . . . The fact that even notaries, money-changers and goldsmiths were organized in special corporations shows how far-reaching the Byzantine guild system was. . . . The government regulated the amount of goods to be bought, supervised their quality and fixed a buying and market price”: Ostrogorsky, *History*, 253–54.

<sup>28</sup>Vryonis, “Guilds,” 293–94, 295 and nn. 16–18, 19a, 304, 306 and n. 66, 309 n. 84, 310 and n. 91, 311 and nn. 98 and 101, 312–13 and nn. 104–8, 114. The chroniclers cited by Vryonis are Attaleiates, Theophanes, Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos, Kedrenos, Psellos, Zonaras, and Bryennios. Choniates could be added to the list: Nicetae Choniatae, *Historia*, ed. E. Weber (Bonn, 1835), 305. M. F. Hendy, *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy c. 300–1450* (Cambridge, 1985), 572; Koder, *Eparchenbuch*, 67–68; and Litavrin, *Vizantiiskoe obshchestvo*, 132, concur with the view that all these entities are lumped together.

<sup>29</sup>Vryonis, “Guilds,” 313 n. 110.

<sup>30</sup>*Basilics*, 8.2.101; *Synopsis Basilicorum*, Σ.12.1. It is noteworthy that, under the rubric of ἔταιρεία, and κοιωνία were subsumed commercial undertakings and an array of property relations governed by civil law: *Basilics*, 11.1.14, 12.1.1–89, 12.2.1–36, 82, 12.3.1–13; Rhodian Sea Law, 21, 28, 32, in Zepos, *Jus Graecoromanum*, 2:100–1; W. Ashburner, *The Rhodian Sea Law* (Oxford, 1909), ccxxxiv, ccxxxvii, ccxli–ccxlv; Attaleiates, *Ponema*, 6.1–5; *Peira*, 21.1–7; *Prochiron Auctum*, 20.1–29, 21.1, 7, 10, 11, 27; *Epanagoge Aucta*, 25.1–20, 26.1–4; *Synopsis Minor*, K.1–3; *Hexabiblos*, 3.3.10.5–9; contractors (ἐκλήπτορες) of public or private works, state concessions (e.g., exploitation of saltworks), and concessionaires or farmers responsible for tax collections: *Synopsis Basilicorum*, Σ.12.1; and mandatory partnerships: e.g., when an owner’s waterfront property (θαλάττιος νομή) was short of the prescribed length and hence insufficient for the establishment of an integral fixed net fishery, and the owners of the contiguous properties could not agree voluntarily to form a joint operation (a conventional κοιωνία), then a mandatory κοιωνία had to be formed in which the neighboring owners could not refuse to participate (Novel 102 of Leo VI, still in force in the 14th century). For details, see G. C. Maniatis, “Organizational Setup and Functioning of the Fish Market in Tenth-Century Constantinople,” *DOP* 54 (2000): 14–18.

professions, belonged to guilds. In this respect, the interpretation of the law and differentiation between organizational forms by jurisprudence was equally infelicitous. Thus the *Peira's* distinction between *σωματεῖον* (crafts using manual work) and *σύστημα* (activities involving no processing and hence no use of hands) is inoperative, as it identifies the former with manufacturing and the latter with trading.<sup>31</sup> Clearly, the distinction and the criterion employed are in direct contradiction with the *Book of the Eparch*, where both crafts and trades are referred to as guilds (*συστήματα*).

The fundamental distinction between guilds (*συστήματα*) and associations (*σωματεῖα*) lay not in the nature of an occupation per se but rather in the state's interest in regulating a particular economic activity, which in turn defined the mandatory or voluntary character of these organizational forms. Those crafts and trades that the state singled out for control were enjoined to take the form of guilds as a matter of legal compulsion;<sup>32</sup> all others were allowed to form their own professional associations as they saw fit, since the state had no interest in overseeing them.<sup>33</sup> Guilds and associations were second-tier legal entities,<sup>34</sup> and private businesses (crafts and trades), run either by a single person (sole

<sup>31</sup> Σωματεῖον καὶ σύστημα διαφέρει. Σωματεῖον μὲν γὰρ ἐστὶ πᾶσα τέχνη, ἥτις διὰ χειρὸς ἔχει τὴν ἐργασίαν, οἷον ἡ σκυτοτομικὴ ἢ βαπτικὴ. Σύστημα δὲ ἡ μὴ ἔχουσα διὰ χειρῶν τὴν ἐργασίαν, οἷον οἱ πρᾶνδιοπῶλαι καὶ οἱ μεταξοπράται καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ, οἵτινες αὐτοὶ οὐκ ἐργάζονται. *Peira*, 51.7. Cf. Schreiner, "Organisation," 46; P. Lemerle, *Cinq études sur le XIe siècle byzantin* (Paris, 1977), 292 n. 95.

<sup>32</sup> Although they were not merchants *stricto sensu*, the corps of overseers of the livestock market (βόθροι) were also mandatorily organized into a guild. Their duties were to tend to the drainage and disposal of sewage; to detect and point out animal defects to would-be purchasers; to serve as appraisers, brokers, or arbiters; to find buyers for unsold animals; to recover stolen animals; and to ensure that no deals were made outside the designated market. They were expressly forbidden to trade on their own account or to belong to any other guild, and they were entitled to certain fees for services rendered. *BE* 21.1–10. See also Christophoroulos, *Ἐπαρχικὸν Βιβλίον*, 40 n.2, 49, 63, 89–91; J. Koder, "Die Bezeichnung βόθρος im 'Eparchikon Biblion,'" in G. Prinzing and D. Simon, ed., *Fest und Alltag in Byzanz* (Munich, 1990), 71–76, 194–97. In view of the importance of the βόθροι for the orderly functioning of the livestock market, the state deemed it necessary to keep an eye on their actions, and, to do so more effectively, they were mandated to organize themselves into a guild.

<sup>33</sup> Hence the host of artisans and craftsmen (οἱ τῶν βαναύσων τεχνῶν) could not belong to "lower guilds," as Vyronis has argued, "Guilds," 313.

<sup>34</sup> Litavrin maintains that guilds were created by the state as the obligatory form for engaging in a craft or trade activity in certain sectors of the economy, and that guilds are a particular variety of *κοινωνία*: *Vizantiiskoe obshchestvo*, 129, 151. Thus he does not establish the link between business organizational forms and the legal system, nor does he identify the fine distinctions between guilds (*συστήματα*), associations (*σωματεῖα*), partnerships (*ἔταιρεῖαι*, *κοινωνία*), and societies (*σύλλογοι*). Hence, the larger institutional and economic connections are not drawn. Rather, he emphasizes the primary objectives of the state, which were to secure the interests of the state and the *fiscus* (levying and collecting taxes through the unremitting control of the guilds), the fulfillment of public service obligations, and the domination and police control over the business community and the townspeople (*ibid.*, 132, 134–35, 138–39, 143–44, 147–48, 150–55, 289). These objectives are nowhere reflected in the provisions of the *Book of the Eparch*. On the contrary, the thrust of the regulatory framework was geared primarily to ensuring correct business conduct. Concerning the alleged goal of price stability of basic staples (*ibid.*, 142–43, 145), retail prices remain stable only as long as wholesale prices remain stable, since the latter were determined by market forces. Fixed profit margins do not necessarily ensure stable profits and prices: when wholesale prices rise, the profits of the retailers increase as well, because demand is inelastic and the fixed margins are calculated on a higher cost basis resulting in higher retail prices.

In the same vein, Siuziumov and Kazhdan dwell upon the internal organization, functions, divergent privileges, relations with the state, the court, and the aristocracy, and the degree of independence of the state-controlled guilds, on the one hand, and voluntary associations, on the other. Siuziumov, "Remeslo," 18, 24–25, 31, 39, 41; *idem*, *Proizvodstvennye otnosheniia v vizantiiskom gorode-emorii v period genezisa feodalizma* (The

propriatorships) or as partnerships (ἐταιρείαι, κοινωνίαι, συντροφίαι),<sup>35</sup> could belong to a guild or an association depending on the state's designation of their activity. A typology of the relationships among the various organizational forms is presented schematically in Figure 1.

In the same vein, titles of physicians cited in narrative sources have been taken as an indication that doctors in Byzantium were organized into guilds in order to guarantee the quality of their services and the reasonableness of their fees.<sup>36</sup> The evidence adduced to support this allegation is the designation of their chief as *χαρτουλάριος*,<sup>37</sup> *ἀρχίατρος*,<sup>38</sup>

relations of production in the Byzantine town-emporium in the period of the genesis of feudalism), abstract of thesis (Sverdlovsk, 1953), 18, 20, cited by Kazhdan, *Derevnia*, 305–6 and nn. 19 and 20; Kazhdan, *Derevnia*, 304–8, 323, 325–26, 330–31, 336, 343–44; idem, “Tsekhi,” 143–49. However, they do not probe the key defining elements that differentiate these two organizational forms: in what instances, if at all, was it compulsory to join a guild in order to engage in a craft? How did business organizational forms mesh with the legal system?

<sup>35</sup> *Συντροφία* was another term for partnership used during the Palaiologan period. This organizational form was employed by businessmen (which might also include foreign partners) to undertake usually business ventures of a more permanent nature. MM 2:326, 372, 373, 375, 473, 475, 481, 546; H. Hunger and K. Vogel, *Ein byzantinisches Rechenbuch des 15. Jahrhunderts* (Vienna, 1963), 20, nos. 9 and 10; *Actes de Dionysiou. Archives de l'Athos*, ed. N. Oikonomidès (Paris, 1968), 4:92, 94, 96; Schreiner, “Organisation,” 60 n. 78; Oikonomidès, *Hommes d'affaires*, 69 and n. 94, 77, 112; K.-P. Matschke, “Situation, Organisation und Aktion der Fischer von Konstantinopel und Umgebung in der byzantinischen Spätzeit,” *Byzantinobulgarica* 6 (1980): 288; idem, *Die Schlacht bei Ankara und das Schicksal von Byzanz* (Weimar, 1981), 149–51; Laiou-Thomadakis, “The Byzantine Economy,” 199, 201–2. Besides industrial and commercial undertakings, the contractual form of *συντροφία* was also used in an array of agricultural activities, usually for a period of one to five years. For details, see H. Gasparis, *Ἡ γῆ καὶ οἱ ἀγρότες στὴ Μεσαιωνικὴ Κρήτη. 13ος–14ος αἰῶνες* (Land and farmers in medieval Crete. 13th–14th centuries) (Athens, 1977), 44, 88 n. 20, 91 n. 33, 121–23 and n. 37, 130, 168–75, 178–79, and contracts cited in pp. 388–95. A form of partnership quite distinct from the *ἐταιρεία* (*societas*) is the *κοινοπραξία* (*communio*). In the latter instance, two or more persons agree to undertake a particular project or venture. Contrary to *ἐταιρεία* which is of a more formal and lasting nature, *κοινοπραξία* is informal, is confined to a single undertaking, and is of limited duration. Other features differentiating these two organizational forms include the following: relations in *ἐταιρείαι* are contractual, but not so in *κοινοπραξίαι*; *κοινοπραξίαι* can be terminated at will by a partner, not so by a *socius*; in *ἐταιρείαι* the interests of the *socii* are indistinguishable, whereas in *κοινοπραξίαι* the interests of the partners remain distinct; in *ἐταιρείαι* action can be brought against *socii* by the *actio pro socio*, whereas in *κοινοπραξίαι* action can be brought by the *actio communi dividundo*. *Basilics*, 12.1.1, 12.1.32 scholium, 12.1.33, *Synopsis Basilicorum*, K.21.1–25; *Synopsis Minor*, K.3; Attaleiates, *Ponema*, 6.5; *Hexabiblos*, 3.10.3.

A business organizational form which resembled *κοινοπραξία* was the *colleganza* contract used in partnerships between Latin and Greek merchants. Generally, it involved a sedentary partner, who put up two-thirds of the capital, and a traveling partner, who contributed one-third of the funds and managed the business. Profits were divided equally. S. Borsari, *Il dominio veneziano a Creta nel XIII secolo* (Naples, 1963), 100 and n. 136; F. Thiriet, *La Romanie vénitienne au moyen-âge. Le développement et l'exploitation du domaine colonial vénitien (XIIe–XVe siècles)* (Paris, 1959), 48, 281; Laiou, “The Greek merchant,” 117; eadem, “Quelques observations sur l'économie et la société de Crète vénitienne (ca. 1270–ca. 1305),” in eadem, *Gender, Society and Economic Life X*, 188–89, 194–97; eadem, “Venetians and Byzantines: Investigation of Forms of Contact in the Fourteenth Century,” *Θησαυρίσματα*, 22 (1992), 34–35; D. Gofas, “Ἐμπορικὲς ἐπιχειρήσεις Ἑλλήνων τῆς Κρήτης γύρω στὸ 1300,” *Ἐπιθεώρησις Ἐμπορικοῦ Δικαίου* 41 (1990), 1–34.

<sup>36</sup> P. Charanis, “Some Aspects of Daily Life in Byzantium,” in idem, *Social, Economic and Political Life in the Byzantine Empire* (London, 1973), XI, 67; Kazhdan, “Tsekhi,” 138; idem, *Derevnia*, 307; Siuziumov, *Kniga Eparkha*, 114–15; Litavrin, *Vizantiiskoe obshchestvo*, 148–49; H. J. Magoulias, “The Lives of the Saints as Sources of Data for the History of Byzantine Medicine in the Sixth and Seventh Centuries,” *BZ* 57 (1964): 128.

<sup>37</sup> Vita S. Sampsonis, PG 115:304AB.

<sup>38</sup> Theodore of Stoudios, PG 99:1509(B); *Varia Graeca Sacra. Miracula S. Artemii*, ed. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus (St. Petersburg, 1909), 28, 30.

or κόμης.<sup>39</sup> Perusal of the sources cited does not support this assertion. Thus the plural in the passages *ιατροὶ πάντες, καὶ οἱ οὕτω καλούμενοι χαρτουλάριοι* and *μετακαλείται τινὰ τῶν χαρτουλαρίων* is hardly descriptive of *the* chief of the guild, since there could not have been so many doctors bearing the same title in the same location. Also, *χαρτουλάριος* was the title of a state official exercising a supervisory function over the *πορφυροπῶλαι*.<sup>40</sup> Quite possibly, the designation is a reference to trained, certified, well-thought-of doctors in contradistinction to empiricists. *Ἀρχίατρος*<sup>41</sup> was a designation conferred upon the head of the emperor's personal physicians,<sup>42</sup> as well as the chief physician in the capital's hospitals<sup>43</sup> and in the army.<sup>44</sup> Besides, this title, changed into *πρόεδρος* by the end of the eleventh century and into *ἀκτουάριος* after the twelfth century,<sup>45</sup> was a generic term applied to physicians with high skills and experience, as doctors in Byzantium were ranked according to their perceived competence, the most prominent being the professors of medicine.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, there was sharp distinction between medically trained physicians<sup>47</sup> and empiricists of nonprofessional status with amateurish knowledge of medicine as well as quacks of whom there were plenty, whose services were widely sought after by the populace given the shortage of doctors.<sup>48</sup> Finally, the inference that *κόμης τῶν ἱατρῶν* is suggestive of the person in charge of the doctors' guild,<sup>49</sup> as being the most experienced of the lot,<sup>50</sup> is inconclusive: the *ἀρχίατροι* of the palace as well as the governors of the provinces were also given the title of *κόμης (κόμητες πρώτου τάγματος)*.<sup>51</sup>

The absence of any direct reference to doctors' guilds in the law and the narrative sources; the fact that in the capital, let alone the provincial towns and villages, the number of practicing physicians was rather small; the lack of administrative capability and knowledge to exercise meaningful oversight over the doctors' practice, since the practice of medicine at that time did not lend itself to conclusive review; and the constant upbraiding and mockery of doctors as incompetent, negligent, failures, providers of coun-

<sup>39</sup>L. Deubner, *Kosmas und Damian. Texte und Einleitung* (Leipzig, 1907), 160.

<sup>40</sup>See below, p. 350, ll. 6–9.

<sup>41</sup>Magoulias, "History of Byzantine Medicine," 128.

<sup>42</sup>*Basilics*, 6.26.1, 57.5.8; G. Schlumberger, *Sigillographie de l'empire byzantin* (Paris, 1884), 441; L. Bréhier, *Le monde byzantin. Les institutions de l'empire byzantin* (Paris, 1949), 114, 117, 126; Koukoules, *Βυζαντινῶν Βίος*, 6:25.

<sup>43</sup>T. S. Miller, "Byzantine Hospitals," *DOP* 38 (1984): 55–56, 59.

<sup>44</sup>*Basilics*, 57.3.5; Koukoules, *Βυζαντινῶν Βίος*, 6:13.

<sup>45</sup>Bréhier, *Institutions*, 117, 126; Miller, "Byzantine Hospitals," 58.

<sup>46</sup>Koukoules, *Βυζαντινῶν Βίος*, 6:13. Replying to a letter from the deceased Holobolos, Nikephoros Doukas Palaiologos Malakes wonders whether his former colleague was ranked among the top physicians: *Mazaris' Journey to Hades* (Buffalo, N.Y., 1975), 94. Interestingly, the church found it inadmissible for clerics to become *ἀρχίατροι*, wearing lay clothes and being in charge of secular doctors. G. A. Rhalles and M. Potles, *Σύνταγμα τῶν θεῶν καὶ ἱερῶν κανόνων* (Athens, 1853), 3:344.

<sup>47</sup>On evidence regarding the medical training and certification of Byzantine doctors, see J. Duffy, "Byzantine Medicine in the Sixth and Seventh Centuries: Aspects of Teaching and Practice," *DOP* 38 (1984): 21–27; Miller, "Byzantine Hospitals," 61; A. Hohlweg, "John Actuarius' *De Methodo Medendi*: On the New Edition," *DOP* 38 (1984): 124; V. Grumel, "La profession médicale à Byzance à l'époque des Comnènes," *REB* 7 (1949): 42–46.

<sup>48</sup>Koukoules, *Βυζαντινῶν Βίος*, 6:13–14, 23.

<sup>49</sup>Magoulias, "History of Byzantine Medicine," 128–29.

<sup>50</sup>Deubner, *Kosmas und Damian*, 160.

<sup>51</sup>*Basilics*, 6.26.1, 2, A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire, 284–602* (Oxford, 1964), 2:1012.

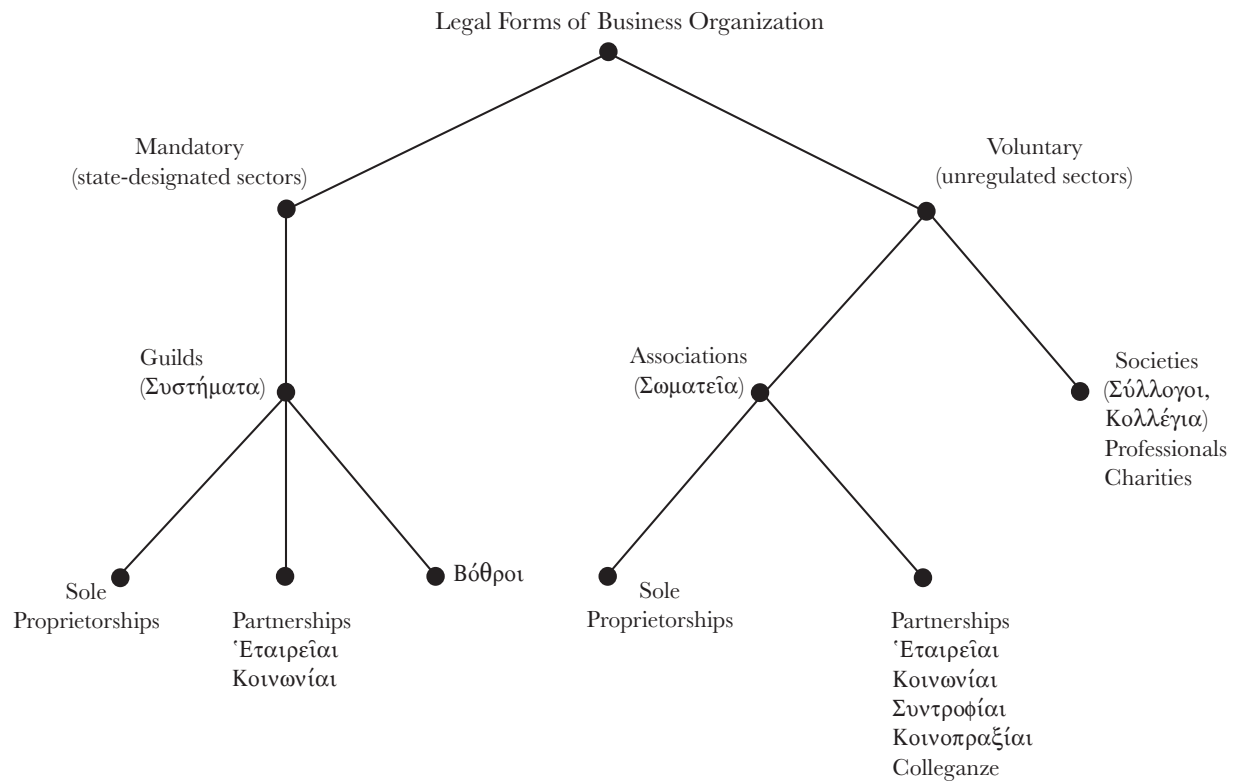


Fig. 1 Typology of Byzantine Business Organization

terfeit medicines, and greedy professionals charging exorbitant fees<sup>52</sup> undermine the validity of the advanced hypothesis, and strongly suggest the nonexistence of doctors' guilds and the absence of any state supervisory function. Very likely, in the largest cities doctors, and possibly dentists and veterinarians, had formed professional societies (σύλλογοι)—an organizational form quite distinct from that of the guild. The moral is that associating titles with chiefs of institutions can be misleading.<sup>53</sup>

#### THE ISSUE OF PROVINCIAL GUILD ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES

Some scholars hold the view that, in addition to the capital, guilds (συστήματα) were well represented in other towns of Greece at least during the tenth to twelfth centuries, for example, Thessalonike, Thebes, Corinth, Euripos, Athens, and Andros.<sup>54</sup> The leading argument derives from the development of the silk industry in the provinces of Greece and is based on the following notions. First, because murex purple dyes could be used only by the imperial silk workshops and the enterprises commissioned by the imperial court to produce prohibited silks, the state had to monitor and control the production and distribution of these dyestuffs. Second, the production and delivery of silks commissioned by the imperial court in the provinces was a collective obligation and had to be effected by quotas allocated among the individual producing units either by the entrepreneurs themselves or by an imperial official. Since the guild organizational structure had been proven to be one of the most effective instruments used to regulate the silk industry in the capital, there is good reason to believe this was also the case in twelfth-century

<sup>52</sup>*Supplementum ad Acta S. Lucae Iunioris*, ed. E. Martini, *AB* 13 (1894): 106–7, 117–18; G. Podesta, “Le satire Lucianesche di Teodoro Prodromo,” *Aevum* 21 (1947): 12–25; Magoulias, “History of Byzantine Medicine,” 131–32; B. Baldwin, “Beyond the House Call: Doctors in Early Byzantine History and Politics,” *DOP* 38 (1984): 16–19; Duffy, “Byzantine Medicine,” 24–25, 27; A. Kazhdan, “The Image of the Medical Doctor in Byzantine Literature of the Tenth to the Twelfth Centuries,” *DOP* 38 (1984): 45–51; A. P. Kazhdan and A. Wharton Epstein, *Change in Byzantine Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Berkeley, Calif., 1985), 155–56.

<sup>53</sup>Indicatively, the chiefs of the jewelers (*BE* 2.6) and innkeepers (*BE* 19.1), who were appointed by the eparch, bore the title of προεστώτες. But so did persons managing a workshop, who could even be slaves, acting as agents of the principals (προεστώτες ἐργαστηρίων): *Basilics*, 18.1.3, 7, 18, 20; *Synopsis Basilicorum*, Y.4.1–4; *Ecloga*, 9.13; *Prochiron Auctum*, 39.8; *Hexabiblos*, 1.2.49.

<sup>54</sup>Christophilopoulos, Ἐπαρχικόν Βιβλίον, 37–38; Stoeckle, *Byzantinische Zünfte*, 3; Lopez, “Silk Industry,” 23 n. 2; Jacoby, “Silk in Western Byzantium,” 457 and n. 25, 490–92 and n. 230, 499; P. Tivchev, “Sur les cités byzantines au XIe–XIIe siècles,” *Byzantinobulgarica* 1 (1962): 173; E. Francès, “La féodalité et les villes byzantines au XIIIe et au XIVe siècles,” *BSI* 16 (1955): 86; Oikonomidès, *Hommes d'affaires*, 111–12; Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus*, 41; Laiou-Thomadakis, “The Byzantine Economy,” 209; P. Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143–1180* (Cambridge, 1993), 158, 167; Ostrogorsky, *History*, 253; A. Harvey, *Economic Expansion in the Byzantine Empire, 900–1200* (Cambridge, 1989), 158; Angold, *The Byzantine Empire*, 284; Schreiner, “Organisation,” 51–52; A. Konstantakopoulou, “L'éparque de Thessalonique: Les origines d'une institution administrative, VIIIe–IXe siècles,” in *Communications grecques présentées au Ve Congrès International des Études du Sud Est-Européen. Belgrade: 11–17 Septembre 1984* (Athens, 1985), 161; A. Guillou, “Functionaries,” in Cavallo, *The Byzantines* (as above, note 7), 198; Litavrin, *Vizantiiskoe obschestvo*, 149. Contra: Sideris, Ἱστορία, 266–67, 277, 296 n. 2; K. Dieterich, “Zur Kulturgeographie und Kulturgeschichte des byzantinischen Balkanhandels,” *BZ* 31 (1931): 37–57; Runciman, “Byzantine Trade,” 161; G. Makris, *Studien zur spätbyzantinischen Schifffahrt* (Genoa, 1988), 142–46. On the other hand, A. Kazhdan and G. Constable point out that we do not know whether the guild system extended to the provinces: *People and Power in Byzantium* (Washington, D.C., 1982), 32; Kazhdan, “Tsekhi,” 141.

Thebes, as well as in other manufacturing and trading centers whose economic activities the state was interested in controlling. Third, for the same reasons, a guild system could effectively be used to enforce the restrictions on the production and trade of certain types of silks to secure adequate supplies for the needs of the imperial court. Fourth, guilds existed in neighboring Athens, one of them being the purple fishermen's guild.<sup>55</sup> Finally, by the tenth century, the purple fishermen in the Peloponnese were already organized into a state-mandated guild (σύστημα) along lines similar to the silk industry in the capital. This is evidenced by the exemption the purple fishermen were granted by Emperor Romanos I Lekapenos (919–944) from contributing horses to the military on the occasion of a planned expedition, along with the holders of imperial dignities, seamen, and parchment makers. Although there is no mention of guilds in the source,<sup>56</sup> it is argued that the very enumeration of these groups and their collective exemption are suggestive of guild membership; their exemption signifies the importance of their craft to the state; and since it is unlikely that the purple fishermen kept horses, their guild was naturally exempted from this obligation. Following the same line of reasoning, the seamen and the parchment makers were very likely organized into guilds as well.<sup>57</sup>

The exemption of the purple fishermen, and of the other craftsmen for that matter, does not in itself provide convincing evidence of their being organized into guilds. First, purple shell fishing was carried on in many fishing grounds along the coast of the Peloponnese (e.g., Lakonia and Argolis), Euboea, the Aegean islands, Crete, and the Levant,<sup>58</sup> and one would have expected that the purple fishermen operating in these places would also have been organized into guilds. Yet there is no such evidence, apparently because no such organizational form existed. Second, shell fishing took place in various noncontiguous parts of the Peloponnese shoreline, and it is unlikely that the purple fishermen were involved in the processing and marketing of the dyestuff, as these were separate activities requiring special skills and were concentrated in a few locations not very far from the fishing grounds.<sup>59</sup> Possibly, the purple fishermen brought the shells to the nearest town where they were processed;<sup>60</sup> but this activity may well have been undertaken by the processors themselves or by itinerant merchants who collected the shells from the fishermen and sold them to the processors. These circumstances are hardly conducive to grouping together the scattered purple fishermen and forming a guild. Besides, given the traditional functional division of labor among guilds, distinct guilds would have to

<sup>55</sup>Jacoby, "Silk in Western Byzantium," 490–92, 499–500.

<sup>56</sup>*Constantine Porphyrogenitus. De Administrando Imperio*, ed. G. Moravcsik (Washington, D.C., 1967), 256.

<sup>57</sup>Schreiner, "Organisation," 51–52; Jacoby, "Silk in Western Byzantium," 455–57 and n. 25.

<sup>58</sup>Jacoby, "Silk in Western Byzantium," 455–56, 481; K. M. Setton, "Athens in the Later Twelfth Century," *Speculum* 19 (1944): 195–96; Koukoules, Βυζαντινῶν Βίος, 2A:180–81, B:38–39.

<sup>59</sup>Jacoby, "Silk in Western Byzantium," 456. Large quantities of shells were required to produce tiny quantities of murex purple dye, the process of obtaining the dye was elaborate, and the processing called for a quantum of investment in production facilities. On the method of production of the dye, see D. S. Reese, "Palaikastro Shells and Bronze Age Purple-Dye Production in the Mediterranean Basin," *BSA* 82 (1987): 203–4.

<sup>60</sup>For instance, shells fished off the island of Gyaros were processed in Athens. Setton, "Athens," 196; Μιχαήλ Ἀκομινάτου τοῦ Χωνιάτου τὰ Σωζόμενα, ed. S. Lampros (Groningen, 1968), vol. 2, letter 135.2; E. Granstrem, I. Medvedev, and D. Papachrysanthou, "Fragment d'un praktikon de la région d'Athènes (avant 1204)," *REB* 34 (1976): 27–28; *Scriptores Originum Constantinopolitanarum*, ed. Th. Preger (New York, 1975), 2:254, para. 118.

be established at each stage of production and distribution and replicated in different locations. However, the spatial distribution and small local membership of the practitioners of these crafts would have hardly justified such an elaborate, unwieldy, and costly organizational structure—state intervention would be impractical. Third, certainly the purple fishermen could not have been excused from contributing to the campaign because they did not own horses. In this instance, the horse was used as a unit of account in lieu of money, as is evidenced by the assessment of two monasteries to contribute one horse between them:<sup>61</sup> each party would pay half the price and a horse would be bought. Fourth, there was no need to institute a mandatory guild system in the provinces to control the production and use of the murex purple dye as long as the dyestuff could not be retailed freely,<sup>62</sup> and the sole buyers were the imperial silk workshops,<sup>63</sup> the private workshops in the capital and in the provinces which were commissioned by the imperial court to produce large pieces of murex purple-dyed silks,<sup>64</sup> and those private producers of very small purple-dyed pieces of silk.<sup>65</sup> These end users procured the murex purple dye from the πορφυροπῶλαι, who were either civil servants or licensed private vendors whose activities were closely supervised by a state official, the χαρτουλάριος τῶν πορφυροπωλῶν.<sup>66</sup> Apparently, the πορφυροπῶλαι traveled to the sites of production to buy the murex purple dye and in turn sold it to the end users. Finally, the view that a purple fishermen's guild existed in twelfth-century Athens similar to the one in tenth-century Peloponnese<sup>67</sup> is based on a misunderstanding of the source cited. The evidence adduced is a letter from Michael Choniates to Emperor Isaac II Angelos in 1185–86: βραχεῖα γὰρ ἡ τῶν συστημάτων ποσότης καὶ οὐδ' αὐτὴ κοινωφελής.<sup>68</sup> However, σύστημα in this context certainly does not mean “guild.” The archbishop complains that the city of Athens, though devastated and hence more deserving, did not benefit from the imperial generosity as much as other cities. Not only the amount of the assistance was inadequate, but the method (σύστημα) by which it was allocated did not help the public at large, because it favored the haves rather than the have-nots.<sup>69</sup> In sum, since the sale of murex purple dye to unauthorized silk manufacturers by the producers was prohibited and severe penalties were inflicted on transgressors, while effective control over shipments of illegally manufactured and distributed murex purple-dyed silks could be exercised at the exit and entry points by customs officers, it is hard to see the imperative for central control of the production, processing, and marketing of murex purple dye through an intricate guild organizational structure.

<sup>61</sup> *De Administrando Imperio*, 256.

<sup>62</sup> Μηδεὶς βαπτέτω ἢ πιπρασκέτω πορφύραν. *Basilics*, 19.1.80; *Ecloga*, 16.50; *Peira*, 40.11.12. See also note 65 below. Inferior quality dyestuffs were imported (e.g., from Syria) and traded freely. In the capital, they were handled by the guild of the dealers in spices, medicines, and dyes (*BE* 5.4; 10.1).

<sup>63</sup> B. Koutava-Delivoria, “Les ὀξέα et les fonctionnaires nommés τῶν ὀξέων. Les sceaux et les étoffes pourpres de soie après le 9e siècle,” *BZ* 82 (1989): 181–82.

<sup>64</sup> E.g., Thebes: Jacoby, “Silk in Western Byzantium,” 488, 490–91.

<sup>65</sup> A restriction (*Basilics*, 19.1.80) that Leo VI eased: Novel 80 in Zepos, *Jus Graecoromanum*, 1:148–49.

<sup>66</sup> Koutava-Delivoria, “Les étoffes pourpres,” 181–82, table 3, no. 39 on p. 190.

<sup>67</sup> Lopez, “Silk Industry,” 23 n. 2; Jacoby, “Silk in Western Byzantium,” 492 and n. 230; Magdalino, *Empire*, 167.

<sup>68</sup> Lampros, *Χωνιάτου τά Σωζόμενα*, vol. 2 letter 32.8.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, paras. 8 and 9. Lampros understands σύστημα as a collection of gifts: *ibid.*, *Basilics*, 54.14, p. 570. See also Lampros, *ibid.*, *Basilics*, 54.15, p. 570.

Nor is the allocation among prospective producers of the production of silks commissioned by the imperial court sufficient justification for setting up a guild. The treasury could conveniently provide specifications and either invite competitive bids or negotiate with individual producers, pitting the one against the other and thereby obtaining lower prices and suitable time deliveries. Also, if the bulk of production in the provincial silk manufacturing centers consisted of middle- and low-priced silks for the domestic and external markets and there was no shortage of raw silk, as has been alleged,<sup>70</sup> there would be no difficulty and hence no concern about filling imperial orders, which always took priority, and no apparent need to police the doings of the workshops in the silk manufacturing sector. Moreover, the fact that there was a high concentration of very skilled Jewish craftsmen involved in the intermediate and advanced stages of production of high-grade silks,<sup>71</sup> some of whom very likely owned their workshops and operated in a vertically integrated fashion, militates against the existence of guilds in Thebes, as the participation of Jews as independent operators within the guild system was prohibited.<sup>72</sup> Indeed, it was the very absence of guild regulations that enticed them to Thebes instead of settling down in the capital.<sup>73</sup>

More importantly, if a guild organizational structure was in force in the provinces, it surely would have been cited in the existing legislation, as it had been in the earlier centuries of the empire in important cities.<sup>74</sup> In particular, if the Byzantines had been so keen on controlling all industrial and trade activity in the provinces through a guild organizational form, they would have to have instituted an elaborate national regulatory system. This would have entailed the development of a vast administrative apparatus and would have to take some legal form. Yet the legal texts, or the narrative sources for that matter, provide no such evidence. Furthermore, given the regional dispersion of economic activity—preponderance of villages and small towns, production in and marketing of surpluses from outlying lay and monastic domains, numerous fairs in towns and the countryside, itinerant artisans, traders, and peasants peddling their wares<sup>75</sup>—it made no sense to institute an expansive network of guilds in the provinces. Even the few towns that had one to two thousand inhabitants<sup>76</sup> could support only a limited number of craftsmen and traders, and these were spread over a wide range of activities—hardly an inviting situation that would have prompted the state to set up a nationwide guild organizational structure. Besides, a perennially strapped administration, having to resort

<sup>70</sup>Jacoby, "Silk in Western Byzantium," 500.

<sup>71</sup>M. A. Adler, *The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela* (London, 1907), 10; J. Starr, *The Jews in the Byzantine Empire, 641–1204* (Athens, 1939), 29; Jacoby, "Silk in Western Byzantium," 466–67, 485–87; Angold, *The Byzantine Empire*, 86, 281–82.

<sup>72</sup>The fact that dealers in raw silk in the capital were not allowed to sell to Jews (*BE* 6.16) is a clear indication that they could not become guild members. See also, Lopez, "Silk Industry," 23; Muthesius, "Byzantine Silk Industry," 10; Maniatis, "Private Silk Industry," 280 n. 66.

<sup>73</sup>Cf. Angold, *The Byzantine Empire*, 87.

<sup>74</sup>*CTh* 12.1.162, 12.6.29, 13.1.9, 13.5.1, 2, 14.3.2,5,8, 14.4.9,10, 14.7.1,2, 14.8.1, *Codex Justinianus* 11.9.4,7, 11.17.1.

<sup>75</sup>*Actes de Lavra*, ed. P. Lemerle, A. Guillou, N. Svoronos, and D. Papachrysanthou (Paris, 1970), 1:58–68; N. Svoronos, "Remarques sur les structures économiques de l'empire byzantin au XIe siècle," *TM* 6 (1976): 65; Harvey, *Economic Expansion*, 234–41; Kazhdan, "Tsekhi," 153–54; idem, *Derevnia*, 343–44 and sources cited therein; Tivchev, "Cités byzantines," 159–65, 170–71, 181.

<sup>76</sup>Harvey, *Economic Expansion*, 199.

to confiscatory tax measures and *epereiai*, could ill-afford to sustain an expensive guild apparatus of questionable practicality. Finally, comprehensive state control over the economic activity of the provincial towns would have been difficult in practice, as rigorous implementation of rules and regulations would have necessitated a substantial degree of administrative decentralization and town autonomy in economic matters, features that were not manifest at that time. The potency of the centralized bureaucratic apparatus endured over the centuries.<sup>77</sup>

The so-called guild of the seamen in Thessalonike<sup>78</sup> in all probability was a voluntary association (*σωματεῖον*), as is clearly evidenced by its organizational structure: ἔχουσι δὲ καὶ ἰδιάζουσιν ἀρχὴν αὐτοῖ [τὸ ναυτικόν] παρὰ τὴν τῆς ἄλλης πόλεως ([the seamen] have a *sui generis* form of administration which is independent of that of the city).<sup>79</sup> Such a degree of autonomy and the attendant right of self-government would be incompatible with the typical guild organizational form. Still, it has been argued that, although the guild of the seamen was not established by its members and its head was designated by the government, the guild probably was a continuation of an older organization which became more or less autonomous as the power of the central government declined during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.<sup>80</sup> This view is unpersuasive, since autonomy implies voluntary association and self-rule effected by officials elected by the membership of the organization, not arrangements whereby an organization is set up by mandate and run, or even closely supervised, by government appointees. It has also been aptly observed in this context that ναυτικόν (sometimes also referred to as παραθαλάσσιοι, “coastals”)<sup>81</sup> is an all-inclusive term encompassing all those who had anything to do with the sea, for example, shipowners, skippers, seamen, and longshoremen, and hence such a group cannot be understood as a guild.<sup>82</sup> Nevertheless, the fact remains that this dissimilar group had formed an organization that was not subject to state control. This suggests that these heterogeneous elements had impelling reasons to organize themselves. Indeed, they were interconnected and bound together professionally; they needed to safeguard their interests, especially since they faced a corrupt judicial system that could not

<sup>77</sup>On the centralization of the Byzantine administration and the absence of local autonomy, see Kazhdan and Constable, *People and Power in Byzantium*, 35, 38, 40–41, 146–47, 149–50; Guillou, “Functionaries,” 197–99; H. Ahrweiler, “Recherches sur l’administration de l’empire byzantin au IXe–XIe siècles,” in eadem, *Études sur les structures administratives et sociales de Byzance* (London, 1971), VIII, 89–91; L. Maksimović, *The Byzantine Provincial Administration under the Palaiologi* (Amsterdam, 1988), 10–31; A. Kazhdan and A. Cutler, “Continuity and Discontinuity in Byzantine History,” *Byzantion* 52 (1982): 469.

<sup>78</sup>O. Tafrali, *Thessalonique au quatorzième siècle* (Paris, 1913), 32–34; Christophilopoulos, Ἐπαρχικόν Βιβλίον, 4 n. 2; D. A. Zakythinos, *Crise monétaire et crise économique à Byzance du XIIIe au XVe siècle* (Athens, 1948), 45; P. Charanis, “On the Social Structure and Economic Organization of the Byzantine Empire in the Thirteenth Century and Later,” *Byzantinoslavica* 12 (1951), 152; idem, “Economic Factors in the Decline of the Byzantine Empire,” *JEH* 13 (1953): 423; Oikonomidès, *Hommes d’affaires*, 78, 112–13; Siuziumov, *Kniga Eparkha*, 114–15; Litavrin, *Vizantiiskoe obshchestvo*, 132, 148–49.

<sup>79</sup>*Ioannis Cantacuzeni eximperatoris historiarum libri IV*, ed. J. Schopen (Bonn, 1828), 2:575.

<sup>80</sup>P. Charanis, “Internal Strife in Byzantium during the Fourteenth Century,” *Byzantion* 15 (1941): 212 n. 15; idem, “Economic Organization,” 152; idem, “Economic Factors,” 423.

<sup>81</sup>Tafrali, *Thessalonique*, 34.

<sup>82</sup>Schreiner, “Organisation,” 60. M. I. Siuziumov, “Protivorechia mezhdru plebeiskimi massami i zilotami v 1342–1348 v Fessalonikakh” (Conflict between Plebes and Zealots in 1342–1348 in Thessalonike), in *Abstracts of the Seventh State Conference on Byzantium in Tbilisi* (Tbilisi, 1965), 35, maintains that the organization of the seamen was an association of entrepreneurs.

be trusted;<sup>83</sup> and the strictness of the law in case of infractions (e.g., severe corporal punishment was inflicted on seamen if they quit before serving out the time they were hired for)<sup>84</sup> called for an internal mechanism to handle disciplinary matters. Therefore, groups in competition (e.g., shipowners) or with conflicting interests (e.g., shipowners or skippers and seamen) may well have been inclined to team up voluntarily, setting up rules regarding rights, obligations, conduct, and disciplinary action, the better to advance their mutual interests and facilitate the process of conflict resolution either among themselves (e.g., wage disputes, breach of contractual obligations, dereliction of duty) or disputes with the local authorities and foreign traders.<sup>85</sup>

In addition, services rendered to the city (e.g., freight for the transport of grain) could be negotiated more profitably from a position of strength. Hence an organizational form such as an association (σωματεῖον) could have conveniently served these ends<sup>86</sup> and would have been consonant with the legal framework in place and consistent with Kantakouzenos' comment that the seamen's organization (he does not refer to them as being organized into a guild) enjoyed a high degree of autonomy. In short, although O. Tafrali acknowledged that the seamen's "guild," as he called it, was organized by the members themselves, he employed the term *guild* (*corporation*, σύστημα) undiscerningly, as did others,<sup>87</sup> ignoring crucial nuances among different organizational forms and thereby creating misperceptions regarding the true nature of this organization.<sup>88</sup> As has been observed: "[i]n ports, such as Thessalonica, . . . there was no organized gild system as in the capital. When later, about the late fourteenth century, trade corporations appeared they were bodies founded by the tradesmen themselves in self-defense against the magnates."<sup>89</sup>

That the mandatory guild organizational structure (σύστημα) was confined to the capital is further attested by a passage in the ordinance of Michael VIII Palaiologos issued in the mid-thirteenth century.<sup>90</sup> The emperor commands that civilian and military authorities in the provinces ensure that merchandise is sold at fair prices: shopkeepers should not overcharge buyers, nor should they buy up edibles and potables in quantities exceeding their normal turnover in order to hoard and sell them for illicit gain (καπηλεύειν δι' αἰσχροκέρδειαν). To this end, the persons in charge should set the just selling price (δικαίαν διάπρασιν) of necessities, taking into account production levels and marketable

<sup>83</sup>Tafrali, *Thessalonique*, 33–34, 63, 65; Ostrogorsky, *History*, 503. "The law was strong and severe, but enforcement was indulgent and practice was compliant": Kazhdan and Constable, *People and Power in Byzantium*, 161.

<sup>84</sup>Tafrali, *Thessalonique*, 34 n. 1.

<sup>85</sup>E.g., sometimes merchandise was not unloaded promptly, or merchants were mistreated and abused: Zakythinos, *Crise monétaire*, 45. The governor of Thessalonike was accused of having appropriated money and goods from Genoese merchants: A. E. Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins* (Cambridge, Mass., 1972), 72.

<sup>86</sup>The selection of a reputable individual, especially if influential in the city's politics, to head the association would ensure respect, bargaining power, cohesion, and impartial arbitration of disputes.

<sup>87</sup>Vryonis, see notes 24 and 25 above; Christophilopoulos, *Επαρχικόν Βιβλίον*, 4; Oikonomidès, *Hommes d'affaires*, 112–13.

<sup>88</sup>L. Maksimović, "Charakter der Sozial-wirtschaftlichen Struktur der spätbyzantinischen Stadt (13.–15. Jh.)," in *XVI. Internationaler Byzantinischerkongress, Wien, October 1981*, *JÖB* 31 (1981): 161, and E. Francès, "Ischeznovenie korporatsii v Vizantii" (The disappearance of Byzantine corporations), *VizVrem* 30 (1969): 47, also view the seamen's group as an organization altogether different from a guild.

<sup>89</sup>Runciman, "Byzantine Trade," 161.

<sup>90</sup>L. Burgmann and P. Magdalino, "Michael VIII on Maladministration," *Fontes Minores* 6 (Frankfurt, 1984): 382.

quantities of such goods (τὴν εὐφορίαν τοῦ καιροῦ καὶ τῶν πραγμάτων), to which both vendors and buyers must adhere with no deviations either way (καὶ μήτε ὑπερβαίνειν [τὴν δικαίαν διάπρασιν] μήτε ὑποσκάζειν αὐτῆς). Clearly, the ordinance affords the regional authorities unprecedented regulatory power over the prices of basic staples, which betokens the absence of guilds in the provinces, as such regulatory function would have already been assigned to them had they been in existence. Significantly, the ordinance does not institute a guild organizational structure for the establishment and enforcement of just prices, apparently because this was not common practice in the provinces.

#### GUILD ACTIVITY BEYOND THE TWELFTH CENTURY

The existence of guilds in Byzantium until the late twelfth century is well documented.<sup>91</sup> However, their survival beyond the twelfth century is an issue that has yet to be resolved. Most scholars maintain that the guilds of the old order had virtually disappeared, on grounds that the rules and regulations leave no trace in late Byzantine times; no reference is made to guilds in the narrative sources during this period; competition from provincial towns diminished the importance of manufacturing in the capital; the economic institutions of the capital were transformed following the ascendancy of the Latins; and the decline of state authority resulted in the breakdown of the earlier strict controls.<sup>92</sup> Others acknowledge the coexistence of guildlike organizational forms in particular sectors with other forms that do not fit the guild model but rather that of unions (*Vereinigung*) of small-scale producers, which lack the solidity and permanence of guilds;<sup>93</sup> or recognize certain elements of guild organization but see them as residues of the disintegration of the early and middle era Byzantine corporations.<sup>94</sup> Finally, others argue that guilds continued to exist in the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries as unofficial bodies but had adopted a western style, in the sense that their chiefs were not appointed by the government, they represented the entire membership before the authorities, and state

<sup>91</sup>Constantine Porphyrogenetos, *De Ceremoniis*, 449; Alexios I Komnenos' Novel 23 (1098 or 1113, Zepos, *Jus Graecoromanum*, 1:645–46), whereby the emperor ruled that guild members (συστηματικοί) could not take an oath in their homes; reference to the *Book of the Eparch* in the *Tipoukeitos*, 19.10.27 (end of 11th century), cited by Koder, *Eparchenbuch*, 39; reference to one of the litigants as βεστιοπρατῶν ὁ ἔξαρχος (chief of the guild of *vestiopratai*, i.e., traders of domestically produced silks); Sathas, *Bibliotheca graeca* 5: 209; mention of the *Book of the Eparch* in Manuel Komnenos' Novel 55 (1148); participation of guilds in the 1182 revolt against the *protosebastos* Alexios Komnenos, Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, 305; observation of the 12th-century letter-writer I. Tzetzes, *Epistulae*, ed. P. A. M. Leone (Leipzig, 1972), letter 57.81–82, that the fish merchants were coerced by the eparch's staff and the chiefs of their guilds to pay them part of their earnings; and Kekau-menos' advice to the emperor's attendants to place informers in every guild (εἰς πάντα τὰ συστήματα), Στρατη-γικόν, annotated modern Greek translation D. Tsougarakis (Athens, 1993), 39.

<sup>92</sup>Charanis, "Economic Organization," 150–52; idem, "Economic Factors," 422–23; idem, "Internal Strife," 212 and n. 15; G. I. Bratianu, "Nouvelles contributions à l'étude de l'approvisionnement de Constantinople sous les Paléologues et les empereurs ottomans," *Byzantion* 6 (1931): 645; Francès, "Disparition," 93–101; idem, "L'état et les métiers à Byzance," *BSI* 23 (1962): 248; Siuziumov, *Kniga Eparkha*, 10; Medvedev, *Problema manufaktury*, 402 ff; idem, *Mistra. Ocherki istorii i kultury pozdnevizantiiskogo goroda* (Mistra. Studies on the history and culture of a late Byzantine city) (Leningrad, 1973), 84; Kazhdan and Constable, *People and Power in Byzantium*, 32; Kazhdan and Epstein, *Change in Byzantine Culture*, 52; Maksimović, "Charakter," 160–64; Schreiner, "Organisation," 59–60; Makris, *Studien*, 142–46.

<sup>93</sup>Matschke, *Die Schlacht*, 156–57.

<sup>94</sup>A. P. Kazhdan and G. G. Litavrin, *Ocherki istorii Vizantii i iuzhnykh slavian* (Studies in the history of Byzantium and southern Slavs) (Moscow, 1958), 138.

control had eased under the influence of the Latins;<sup>95</sup> or their endurance is inferred from provisions of the *Book of the Eparch* contained in compilations dating to the mid-fourteenth century and the second half of the sixteenth century.<sup>96</sup>

The viewpoint that guilds continued to exist in one form or another after the twelfth century in a phoenixlike rebirth unwittingly works against itself, because it slights the original purpose of the guild system and fails to appreciate the serious implications of the very changes that allegedly (and correctly) had taken place: the changes referred to are patently incompatible with a guild organizational structure. Specifically, the statutory guilds (συστήματα) of the tenth-to-twelfth-century form had lost their earlier legal status and controlling function and had taken on an altogether different organizational form, as the state effectively had relinquished direct control over their activities formally exercised by appointing their chiefs. Even in the West, the guilds served as official organs of the town authorities in advancing their industrial and commercial policies and appointed or approved their chiefs. More importantly, the affirmed evolution signifies a radical transformation in the constitution and modus operandi of the new organizations of craftsmen and traders: they were de jure and de facto unlinked from the regulatory regime; as state regulations pertaining to the guilds' activities were no longer applicable; participation ceased to be mandatory, and as a result these organizations were not all-inclusive; the elected head of the organization did not represent or speak for all practitioners of the trade; and the titles of their representatives lost their former honorific distinction and became more mundane (e.g., πρωτομακελλάριος, the representative of the butchers). These consequential developments render the guild system a hollow shell, and referring to these organizations as guilds during this period is a misnomer.

Further, references to such designations as πρωτομαΐστωρ,<sup>97</sup> πρωτομακελλάριος,<sup>98</sup> and ἔξαρχος<sup>99</sup> are no proof that these individuals were chiefs of guilds, as has been alleged.<sup>100</sup> When undertaking major jobs, construction workers were known to organize themselves into small gangs, which usually included various skills and were headed by a master craftsman (πρωτομαΐστωρ).<sup>101</sup> Moreover, as already indicated, historically they had never been organized into guilds. The notion that πρωτομακελλάριος (referred to in Giacomo Badoer's *Libro dei Conti*),<sup>102</sup> and more generally the prefix πρωτο- suggest the existence of a hierarchical structure in the butchers' and other craftsmen's organizations similar to

<sup>95</sup>Oikonomidès, *Hommes d'affaires*, 108–14; idem, “Entrepreneurs,” 169; Th. N. Vlachos, *Die Geschichte der byzantinischen Stadt Melenikon* (Cologne, 1967), 106; Angold, “Medieval Byzantine ‘City,’” 31–32, 34; idem, *The Byzantine Empire*, 279; Horden, “Confraternities,” 33–34; Christophilopoulos, “Ἐπαρχικόν Βιβλίον,” 4 and n. 2; Andréadès, “Byzance, paradis du monopole,” 176; S. Runciman, *Byzantine Civilization*, 176; H. Antoniadis-Bibicou, “Démographie, salaires et prix à Byzance au XIe siècle,” *Annales: Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations* 27 (1972), 239 n. 107.

<sup>96</sup>Koder, *Eparchenbuch*, 40, 43, 52.

<sup>97</sup>Dölger, *Schatzkammern*, 306; S. P. Lampros, *Νέος Ἑλλ.* 10 (1913): 127.

<sup>98</sup>S. Kougeas, “Notizbuch eines Beamten der Metropolis Thessalonike aus dem Anfang des XV. Jahrhunderts,” *BZ* 23 (1914–19), 145, para. 14; *Il Libro dei Conti di Giacomo Badoer*, ed. V. Dorini and T. Bertelè (Rome, 1956), 414.

<sup>99</sup>Dölger, *Schatzkammern*, 303.

<sup>100</sup>Kazhdan, *Derevnia*, 336; Oikonomidès, *Hommes d'affaires*, 111–12; Francès, “Disparition,” 101. Contra: Maksimović, “Charakter,” 162.

<sup>101</sup>Koukoules, *Βυζαντινῶν Βίος*, 4:256.

<sup>102</sup>Badoer, *Libro dei Conti*, 363, 414, 445.

the guilds in the West<sup>103</sup> is not conclusive. All organizations, including business entities, have to have an elemental hierarchy. Thus designations with this prefix were common for persons managing partnerships (συντροφίαι), for example, πρωταλκάριος, heading a business company set up to operate state-owned saltworks farmed out to the private sector,<sup>104</sup> or church officials (e.g., πρωτέκδικος, leading advocate; πρωτονοτάριος, principal notary).<sup>105</sup> The society of the beggars in the capital was headed by a πρωτομάγιστρος.<sup>106</sup> In a status-conscious society, it is unlikely that high-ranking officials in positions of authority, such as the heads of guilds, would suddenly bear prosaic titles. A notable change had taken place: whereas before the chiefs of the guilds were government officials, now they were members of their association. The very change in provenance of the heads and in their titles is reflective of an institutional change as well. The prefix πρωτο- itself conveys the notion of collegiate status, that of *primus inter pares*. Hence the view that such designations are evidence of the existence of authoritative guild organizational forms is not persuasive. In all probability, the πρωτομακελλάριος referred to was just a spokesman for the butchers' association. The fact that these designations appear in Thessalonike where no guilds seem ever to have existed reinforces this view. Finally, in light of the preceding arguments, the allusion to ἔξαρχος as being the chief of the guild dealing in perfumes, spices, and dyes in Thessalonike is not convincing either. Ἐξαρχος was an appellation of distinction used profusely among high- and low-ranking clerics.<sup>107</sup> The person in question was probably the prolocutor of a group of traders who had formed an informal association or was a local government inspector (*Kontrollbeamter*).<sup>108</sup> On the other hand, the reference to the "guild" of notaries as proof of the continued existence of guilds<sup>109</sup> is beside the mark, because the society (σύλλογος) of the notaries, given its *sui generis* constitution and functions, was not a guild proper.

More importantly, the assertion that "each trade had been organized into a western-style guild"<sup>110</sup> is not persuasive either, given the fundamental differences between the western and Byzantine guilds. Unlike the practice in the West, the Byzantine guild system did not aim to maintain or raise prices through concerted action among members of the same guild, since such conduct ran counter to the procompetitive and antimonopoly tenor of the law. The *Book of the Eparch* did not impose price discipline to thwart intraguild competition in order to protect an individual member's share in the total business, as is evidenced by the fact that it did not fix prices for any commodity. The *Book of the Eparch* set reasonable profit margins for only a few necessities and only at the retail level,<sup>111</sup>

<sup>103</sup>Oikonomidès, *Hommes d'affaires*, 111.

<sup>104</sup>While the production of salt was a state monopoly, the exploitation of the saltworks was farmed out to private undertakings, usually partnerships (ἐταιρεῖαι, συντροφίαι). *Basilics*, 8.2.101; *Synopsis Basilicorum*, Σ.12.1; K.-P. Matschke, *Fortschritt und Reaktion in Byzanz im 14. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 1971), 134–36. Harvey, *Economic Expansion*, 158, asserts that the salt merchants were organized into a guild. Apparently, he mistakes συντροφίαι for guilds.

<sup>105</sup>*Actes de Dionysiou*, 93; MM, 1:440.

<sup>106</sup>Koukoules, Βυζαντινῶν Βίος, 2A:102.

<sup>107</sup>The designation ἔξαρχος was used in the instance of a bishop, a teacher of the Bible, and ecclesiastical advocates and notaries. MM, 1:368–70, 390.

<sup>108</sup>Maksimović, "Charakter," 162.

<sup>109</sup>Oikonomidès, *Hommes d'affaires*, 109–10; Francès, "Disparition," 101.

<sup>110</sup>Oikonomidès, "Entrepreneurs," 169.

<sup>111</sup>See above, note 25.

which meant that the wholesale price structure of these consumer goods—the bedrock for retail price formation—was allowed to reflect the prevailing demand and supply conditions. There were no internal regulations aiming at ensuring uniformity in the scale of operations of individual industrial or commercial enterprises, since there were no restrictions on the quantity or quality of inputs and the number of workers that could be employed or on the amount and type of equipment that could be installed. New entry into the industry or trade was not legally impeded, while economic barriers to entry were low, suggesting ample opportunities to augment the ranks of the guilds. On the other hand, the exit of inefficient firms under normal competitive conditions was not hindered. Furthermore, there were no import controls to shield domestic producers from external competition, while apprehension of incipient or potential competition provided a powerful deterrent to any restrictive agreements to fix prices. Fundamentally, competition, unimpeded entry and exit, free trade, and equality of opportunity rather than equality of economic results among guild members were the foundation of the state's industrial and trade policy, which contrasted sharply with the respective policies in the West.

At the same time, some of the arguments advanced to support the view that the guilds had been eclipsed even during the twelfth century are not flawless either. In his Novel 71 (1152 or 1167), whereby he intervened to prevent clerics from occupying bankers' stalls, Manuel I Komnenos directed that the stalls be returned to trustworthy Byzantines.<sup>112</sup> The inference drawn from this directive—that the guilds had disappeared<sup>113</sup>—is stretched, since the persons selected were to be presented to the eparch, who would then approve their induction into the bankers' guild in accordance with standing procedures.<sup>114</sup> The eparch's approval would not have been necessary had the bankers' guild not existed. Also, entries in Badoer's *Libro*<sup>115</sup> allude to a *πρωτομακελλάριος* as being concurrently involved in the wool trade. Since no guild member was allowed to practice another trade at the same time,<sup>116</sup> some have argued that the master's involvement in the wool trade confirms the view that the butchers' guild, as well as all others, had virtually disintegrated,<sup>117</sup> while others maintain that this suggests only a deviation from the *status quo ante*.<sup>118</sup> Nevertheless, the fact remains that hides and pelts are by-products produced jointly in the process of obtaining the mutton and, in consequence, the butchers have to dispose of them in the marketplace. This side-activity must always have been an inseparable and essential part of the butcher's trade and a source of revenue. In this particular instance, to increase his earnings in the face of high wool prices, the enterprising *πρωτομακελλάριος* apparently took one step further: instead of selling sheepskins, he clipped

<sup>112</sup>Zepos, *Jus Graecoromanum*, 1:416.

<sup>113</sup>Angold, *The Byzantine Empire*, 279.

<sup>114</sup>*BE*, 3.1.

<sup>115</sup>See above, note 102.

<sup>116</sup>*Basilics*, 60.32.1. The prohibition is repeated in the *Book of the Eparch*: 2.1, 4.1, 7, 5.1, 6.14, 15, 8.6, 9.6, 10.1, 5, 6, 11.2, 12.4, 6, 13.1, 14.2, 15.1, 21.7. The remaining crafts dealt with by but not explicitly mentioned in the *Book of the Eparch* were subject to the blanket prohibition of provision, 18.5: "no one may enter the craft of another and practice both concurrently; he must choose one and give up the other, informing the eparch of his choice." The formulation of provision 18.5 makes it abundantly clear that the simultaneous practice of two crafts infringed on the guilds' inviolable right to practice *exclusively* their legally designated craft.

<sup>117</sup>Maksimović, "Charakter," 162.

<sup>118</sup>Oikonomidès, *Hommes d'affaires*, 111; Schreiner, "Organisation," 60.

the wool and sold it separately. The small quantities involved in a few transactions in the month of July in one particular year (1438) seem to indicate that he sold only his own clip and not that of others, which certainly did not make him a “trader” in wool, in the sense that he was actively involved in buying and selling wool as his main parallel activity. It follows that this incident alone cannot be adduced as conclusive evidence that guilds had disappeared by that time, albeit the designation of *πρωτομακελλάριος* does signal deep market and institutional organizational changes.<sup>119</sup> *Πρωτομακελλάριος* more likely was a reference to the elder of the butchers’ association or, possibly, to the largest butcher’s shop in the capital, judging from the fact that he had formed a partnership.

In the same vein, during his sojourn in the capital Ibn Battuta observed that “[l]es gens de chaque profession y occupent une place distincte, et qu’ils ne partagent avec d’aucun autre métier,”<sup>120</sup> which would suggest that the rule of separation of trades was in force and, by extension, the guild organizational structure was still in effect in the fourteenth century. The argument, therefore, that “this fact alone does not justify any inference that each trade was organized and controlled by the government and that the members of one trade could not at the same time practice another trade, as was the case in the tenth century”<sup>121</sup> does not settle the question, since the *Hexabiblos* (6.14.12) repeats the prohibition of the *Book of the Eparch*: “no one should enter the trade of another and work at both, and . . . violators will be severely punished.”<sup>122</sup> Writing in the mid-fourteenth century, it is unlikely that the author of the *Hexabiblos* would have included a tenth-century provision that was out of date—the ruling surely must have been in effect. Also, the selectivity of the *Hexabiblos*, based on what was indispensable and useful for the dispensation of justice, suggests that the rule had not fallen into desuetude. Hence the inclusion of the one-man, one-trade rule of the *Book of the Eparch* in the *Hexabiblos* is not accidental and cannot be dismissed out of hand. The more so, since the *Hexabiblos* also includes other provisions of the *Book of the Eparch*, which set forth rules of business conduct concerning crafts and trades organized into guilds. For instance, merchants were not allowed to purchase another’s wares at a price below that agreed upon, under some pretext such as a subsequent price decline in the market;<sup>123</sup> hoard imported commodities in times of scarcity in order to raise prices and exact unfair profits;<sup>124</sup> bid up deceitfully the rent of another;<sup>125</sup> or sell alloyed jewelry.<sup>126</sup> Were these legal provisions inoperative as well? Not likely, given their importance for the orderly functioning of the markets. If the rule on the separation of trades, originally applicable only to guild members,<sup>127</sup> was

<sup>119</sup>See below, 359, ll. 38–361, l. 16.

<sup>120</sup>*Voyages d’Ibn Batoutah*, ed. and trans. C. Defrémery and B. R. Sanguinetti (Paris, 1914), 2:431.

<sup>121</sup>Charanis, “Economic Organization,” 152.

<sup>122</sup>See above, note 116.

<sup>123</sup>*BE* 18.5; *Hexabiblos*, 6.14.12, 6.15.7.

<sup>124</sup>*BE* 10.2, 11.3, 13.4, 20.3; *Hexabiblos*, 6.14.13.

<sup>125</sup>*BE* 4.9, 9.4, 10.3, 11.7, 13.6, 18.5, 19.2; *Hexabiblos*, 6.14.12.

<sup>126</sup>*BE* 2.5; *Hexabiblos*, 6.14.16. Interestingly, the *Hexabiblos* contains provisions of the *Book of the Eparch* pertaining to the construction trades (3.8.40–43), which were not organized into guilds, apparently because they were still in force. The *Hexabiblos* also includes provisions of the *Basilics* regarding business conduct; on puffing and fraud: *Basilics*, 19.10.68; *Hexabiblos*, 3.3.19 and scholium, 66; on coercion: *Basilics*, 19.10.65; *Hexabiblos*, 3.3.68; on concealment of defects in sales: *Basilics*, 19.10.1, 19.1.33 [2], 43, 19.6.9, 19.8.4, 6, 13; *Hexabiblos*, 3.3.57–59, 61–63.

<sup>127</sup>*Basilics*, 60.32.1: ἐνὸς δὲ μόνον ὀφείλει συστήματος εἶναι καὶ ἀναχωρεῖν τῶν λοιπῶν.

still in force, as is likely, but the guild organizational structure had disintegrated, as is also likely, the inclusion of the rule in the *Hexabiblos* must be explained, particularly since no hard evidence has been produced to rationalize the disappearance of the guilds after the twelfth century.

The inclusion of the provision can be explained by the proposition that jurisprudence had extended the rule to *all* trades in order to prevent crossovers in the expanding market of the capital—and for a good reason.<sup>128</sup> The rule was intended to curb the vertical or horizontal integration of firms and thereby prevent enterprise growth unrelated to market demand, dominant occupancy of the market by a limited number of firms, and weakening or elimination of competition based on sheer market power—in short, monopolization or lessening of competition. Put differently, the prohibition of parallel practice or union of two trades in whatever form was an essential part of the antimonopoly legislation.<sup>129</sup> The rule would not impede the growth of individual firms within their circle of activities, since there were no restrictions on the scale of a firm's activity, and more efficient enterprises could increase their market share by exploiting the growth of demand and by chipping away at the shares of their less efficient competitors through price and nonprice (e.g., terms, quality) competition. The policy aim was to restrain the growth of firms in sheer size at the expense of other enterprises operating upstream, downstream, or laterally, a development that was not the outcome of genuine competition and market growth but of downright market power. Increased demand would be met by existing firms within each trade and/or new entry. In this way, market growth would be shared by as many firms as possible, while the creation of integrated multistage firms, which could have inimical effects on competition, would be thwarted. The suggested explanatory hypothesis, by stressing the antimonopoly character of the rule, not only provides legitimate grounds for broadening the application of the rule, but is also compatible with the notion that the guild system had gradually disintegrated from the thirteenth century onward, as its indispensability in instilling market discipline had weakened.

Analogously, the inclusion of provisions of the *Book of the Eparch*, basically dealing with matters of business conduct, in the codices Genavensis and Serdicensis, compiled in the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries respectively,<sup>130</sup> does not attest to the preservation of the guild system beyond the twelfth century, just as the inclusion of similar provisions in the *Hexabiblos* does not, as already pointed out. Furthermore, the admission<sup>131</sup> that there is not even a hint in the sources of any direct impact of the *Book of the Eparch* on the political reality of the capital during its disappearance for two and a half centuries is telling: there was no apparent use for it in the absence of guilds to be regulated by the

<sup>128</sup>In this context, Bratianu, "Approvisionnement," 645, hypothesizes that certain provisions of the *Book of the Eparch* pertaining to the unorganized grain dealers and bakers might have been enforced by the Palaiologoi in response to patriarch Athanasios' pleas to emperor Andronikos II to put an end to their unconscionable practices. On Athanasios' appeals, see below, 362, ll. 7–363, l. 10.

<sup>129</sup>*Basilics*, 19.18.1; *Synopsis Minor*, M.4.

<sup>130</sup>Koder, *Eparchenbuch*, 40, 43, 50. It should be mentioned that Koder does not address the issue of the existence of guilds after the end of the 11th century; rather, he traces the fate of the *Book of the Eparch* after the alleged revisions during the 11th century (*ibid.*, 37–39, 42–57).

<sup>131</sup>Koder, *Eparchenbuch*, 40.

state. Also, the explanation offered for the disappearance of the *Book of the Eparch*<sup>132</sup>—that during this long hiatus the guilds observed or passed down orally those provisions that were of current interest—does not square with the Byzantine administration's legalistic bent and authoritative style in its dealings with the guilds. In short, post-twelfth-century compilations containing provisions of the *Book of the Eparch* only confirm that vital rules pertaining to business behavior had become part of the common law and were applicable to all private business entities. They hardly reinforce the view about the continuity of the guild system.

Further potent arguments pertaining to the erosion of the usefulness and the unworkability of the guild system can be advanced, which add support to the view that the guild system had faded out. First, the deep penetration of the capital's market by Latin entrepreneurs, the weakening of the executive power of the government in the face of the endless power struggle between powerful rival groups and the attendant political uncertainty, and the distinct possibility that particular regulations justifying state oversight in earlier times had outlived their original purpose changed the dynamics of the market, defined new economic and political parameters, and provided an opportunity to businessmen to challenge the status quo and assert themselves. Second, the changing economic and political environment provided fertile ground for the emergence of voluntary associations (σωματεῖα) along the same professional lines (not necessarily representing the entire trade), which supplanted the old guild organizational structure.<sup>133</sup> Involuntary participation in an organizational entity headed by government appointees and cumbersome regulations, even though they did not result in the micromanagement of individual firms, have always been unwelcome and annoying to freewheeling businessmen—guild members. Finally, the preservation of competition and enforcement of market discipline was entrusted to a legal framework comprising antimonopoly legislation, antihoarding rules, the one-man, one-trade directive, and norms of business conduct ensuring fairness in business dealings, thereby assuaging a major concern of the Byzantines.

The deep-seated implications of these political and economic developments need to be examined in some detail. First and foremost, the profile of the market players in the capital had changed dramatically after the twelfth century following the growing penetration of the wholesale and even manufacturing and retail markets by the Latins, who became so entrenched that they virtually controlled the commercial life of the city.<sup>134</sup> The fact that the Latins operated outside the guild system and the eparch's oversight, defied state rules and regulations, took advantage of commercial privileges secured by treaties, enjoyed the prerogative of extraterritoriality, had their own courts to adjudicate grievances, and at times availed of judicial powers extending to Byzantine subjects, led

<sup>132</sup>Ibid.; idem, "Delikt und Strafe," 114.

<sup>133</sup>When John VI Kantakouzenos (1347–55) assembled the capital's merchants, artisans, and representatives of the army and the clergy to solicit contributions for the treasury, no mention is made of chiefs of guilds. Kantakouzenos, *Historiae*, 3.34–41.

<sup>134</sup>Charanis, "Economic Organization," 149–51; idem, "Economic Factors," 422; Lopez, "Silk Industry," 40; Siuziumov, "Remeslo," 35; Francès, "Disparition," 98, 100; Angold, "Byzantine 'City'," 32; Oikonomidès, "Entrepreneurs," 165.

to the development of a dual market organization, discriminatory treatment of the two ethnic groups, unfair competition, and resentment within the indigenous business class.<sup>135</sup> In the circumstances, state control and regulation of identical economic activities became one-sided and unfair; cooperation by disgruntled guildsmen whose commercial interests had been ignored by the state was bound to be less forthcoming, making the effective implementation of the still enforceable regulations problematic; and the institutional apparatus came to be hollow and dysfunctional. Furthermore, the increased participation of the powerful Byzantine aristocracy in commercial activities with economic ties to the Latins and the emperor, the weakening of state authority during the Palaiologan period,<sup>136</sup> and the justified concerns of the Byzantine business community coalesced with the traditional hostility of businessmen against any form of restrictions, their grudge due to their disadvantageous competitive position and unequal treatment, and mounting pressure on the state to placate its nationals and put both communities on an equal footing, bringing about dramatic changes in the dynamics of the Byzantine economy and society. The confluence of these influential forces in turn contributed to the erosion and eventual demise of the institution of the guild, paving the way for the transition to an entirely voluntary organizational form unencumbered by central control—the association (σωματεῖον), which elected its own representatives and could more effectively protect and advance its participants' interests.

As already noted, the *Book of the Eparch* did not fix wholesale or retail prices; it only set profit margins at the retail level for selected basic staples.<sup>137</sup> However, setting profit margins did not preclude competition, as vendors might be inclined to accept lower than the maximum allowed margins in order to increase the volume of their sales, aiming to maximize total instead of unit profits. Besides, rules of business conduct were in the books, and, from the government's perspective, they were enforced evenly and consistently, thereby safeguarding the consumer's interests. On the other hand, the close supervision and reporting requirements imposed on silk manufacturing and trade—the only

<sup>135</sup>Georgii Pachymeris *de Michaelae et Adronico Palaeologis libri trecedem*, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn, 1835), 2:243–44; Nicephorus Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, ed. L. Schopen (Bonn, 1830), 2.841 ff; Kantacouzenos, *Historiae*, 3.81; *The Correspondence of Athanasius I, Patriarch of Constantinople*, ed. A.-M. Maffry Talbot (Washington, D.C., 1975), letter 93; Bratianu, “Étude,” 645; idem, “Approvisionnement,” 95–96; Oikonomidès, *Hommes d'affaires*, 43–46; idem, “Entrepreneurs,” 165–69; M. E. Martin, “The Venetians in the Byzantine Empire before 1204,” *ByzF* 13 (1988): 209–10; J. Chrysostomides, “Venetian Commercial Privileges under the Palaeologoi,” *StVen* 12 (1970): 274–76, 298–311; S. Borsari, “Il commercio veneziano nell'impero bizantino nel XII secolo,” *RSI* 76 (1964): 982–1011; idem, “Per la storia del commercio veneziano col mondo bizantino nel XII secolo,” *RSI* 88 (1976): 104–26; Angold, “Byzantine ‘City,’” 26–28, 32–34; idem, *The Byzantine Empire*, 279–80; Laiou, “The Greek Merchant,” VIII, 112–13, 115; eadem, “The Byzantine Economy,” 215–16; D. Jacoby, “From Byzantium to Latin Romania: Continuity and Change,” *Mediterranean Historical Review* 4 (1989): 28, 32; Ostrogorsky, *History*, 389–90, 394–96; Francès, “Disparition,” 98–100; idem, “Constantinople byzantine au XI<sup>e</sup> et XV<sup>e</sup> siècles,” *RESEE* 7 (1969): 412; Kazhdan and Constable, *People and Power in Byzantium*, 48–49, 139.

<sup>136</sup>Charanis, “Internal Strife,” 208–30; Laiou, “The Greek Merchant,” 105, 108, 112–13, 119–20; eadem, “The Byzantine Economy,” 188, 199, 201, 204–5, 210–11 and n. 131, 212–13, 215, 218, 220–21, and the sources cited therein; eadem, *Constantinople and the Latins*, 64–72; Ostrogorsky, *History*, 482–83. In fact, the authority of successive emperors had already weakened during the 11th century due to the circumstances in which they gained the throne. S. Vryonis Jr., “Byzantium: The Social Basis of Decline in the Eleventh Century,” *GRBS* 2 (1959): 159–75; A. Harvey, “The Land and Taxation in the Reign of Alexios I Komnenos: The Evidence of Theophylakt of Ochrid,” *REB* 51 (1993): 140.

<sup>137</sup>See above, note 25.

major industry to be organized into a guild—aimed basically at preventing the production and sale of forbidden silks,<sup>138</sup> essentially a political and not an economic objective. Yet the increased production of silks in provincial towns from the middle of the twelfth century and their ability to compete with producers in the capital diminished the importance of this industry<sup>139</sup> and hence the need for its regulation, while the production and export of forbidden silks, even if such a concern still existed during this period which is doubtful, could be stemmed by the control exercised by customs officials. These observations suggest that, in the face of the political, economic, and social developments of the times, the rationale for maintaining a guild organizational structure in the capital was greatly attenuated. And as the role of the guilds waned over time, so did the justification for their existence.

The complaints of Patriarch Athanasios to Emperor Andronikos II (late 13th century) that the grain market was cornered, that grain was illicitly exported,<sup>140</sup> that it was often mixed with chaff and rotten grain, and that grain and bread were sold underweight and at exorbitant prices; his plea to set up a commission to supervise the procurement and distribution process to ensure honest practices in the purchase of grain and preparation of bread; the emperor's decision that grain transport and grain dealers and bakers be closely supervised; and particularly his interest in identifying those who practiced the bakers' trade, ascertaining their actual number, and establishing the conditions under which they bought and sold,<sup>141</sup> has led to the conclusion that there was not even a semblance of state control over the bakers' trade and, since this was probably also true of the other trades, the guild system had virtually ceased to exist by the end of the thirteenth century.<sup>142</sup> An unsuccessful attempt has been made to refute this assertion on the grounds that these were times of famine, that in the circumstances the government's decision to

<sup>138</sup>BE 4.1–4, 8, 6.10, 12, 13, 16, 7.1, 8.1–5. The forbidden silks (κεκωλυμένα), produced in imperial workshops and occasionally under contract by private manufacturers, were not tradable items. They satisfied the needs of the court and were offered as presents to high-ranking government officials and foreign dignitaries, and as tribute to hostile foreign leaders.

<sup>139</sup>Jacoby, "Silk in Western Byzantium," 498. Andros, Corinth, and especially Thebes produced and exported high-grade silk fabrics to the West. Jacoby, *ibid.*, 452, 460–62, 464, 466–67, 493–97; *idem*, "Silk Production in the Frankish Peloponnese: The Evidence of Fourteenth-Century Surveys and Reports," in *Travellers and Officials in the Peloponnese*, ed. H. A. Kalligas (Monemvasia, 1994), 48–49; Lampros, Χωνιάτου τά Σωζόμενα, 2:83; Tzetzes, *Epistulae*, letter 71, 101–3; *Pseudo-Luciano. Timarione*, ed. R. Romano (Naples, 1974), 53–55; Angold, "Byzantine 'City,'" 23–25; *idem*, *A Byzantine Government in Exile: Government and Society under the Laskarids of Nicaea (1204–61)* (Oxford, 1975), 109; G. I. Bratianu, *Recherches sur le commerce génois dans la Mer Noire au XIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1929), 110–11; W. Heyd, *Histoire du commerce du Levant au moyen-âge* (Leipzig, 1936), 2:701; M. Balard, *La Romanie génoise (XIIe-début du XVe siècle)* (Rome, 1975), 723–25; Thiriet, *La Romanie vénitienne au moyen-âge*, 44, 49; K.-P. Matschke, "Tuchproduktion und Tuchproduzenten in Thessalonike und in anderen Städten und Regionen des späten Byzanz," Βυζαντικά 9 (1989): 47–86. Characteristically, in negotiations with Emperor Alexios III in 1195, the representative of the sultan of Iconium requested an annual tribute of silks made in Thebes: Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, 608–9. Furthermore, direct exports of silks to the West have been mentioned even during the 10th century: F. L. Ganshof, "Note sur un passage de la Vie de Saint Géraud d' Aurillac," in *Mélanges N. Jorga* (Paris, 1933), 305 and n. 3.

<sup>140</sup>Since 1282, the Venetian government guaranteed traders higher than free market prices to ensure sufficient supplies of grain. Jacoby, "From Byzantium to Latin Romania," 30. This could explain the unlawful exports of grain from the capital.

<sup>141</sup>Talbot, *Correspondence of Athanasius*, letters 72, 73, 74, 93, 100, 106.

<sup>142</sup>Charanis, "Economic Organization," 151–52; *idem*, "Economic Factors," 138–39; Bratianu, "Étude," 642–46.

establish a commission as an organ of control is not an unusual act, and that the letters do not indicate whether the grain dealers and bakers would be supervised individually, or whether the surveillance would be effected through the guilds already in place. In short, the letters neither prove nor disprove the existence of guilds.<sup>143</sup>

The rebuttal, particularly in light of its hedging and agnostic conclusion, lacks credence for several reasons. In the first place, the fact that such egregious practices were taking place strongly suggests that the guild system was inoperative. The chief(s), being charged with the responsibility of watching over the members' actions, would have detected and intervened to stop such reprehensible conduct.<sup>144</sup> Second, no mention of a guild is made in the letters and, more important, no criticism is leveled against the chief(s) for dereliction of duty as would be expected, since they had primary responsibility for monitoring the members' activities. Third, the notion that the supervision of the bakers by the commission could be entrusted to their own guild, which had been grossly ineffective and had failed to take disciplinary action against the culprits, does not make sense. Finally, if there was a bakers' guild in place, there would be no reason to set up a new supervisory body at a higher level to oversee them. Such a decision would have been against the grain and would have undermined the existing guild organizational structure. The very institution of a new supervisory organ clearly suggests that no close official supervision was exercised over the all-important baking trade and apparently over other, less vital trades. In short, the view that guilds continued to exist beyond the twelfth century cannot be convincingly defended.

#### CONCLUSION

This study set out to investigate three unresolved issues concerning the sphere of activity of the private guilds in the Byzantine economy from the tenth to the fifteenth centuries. With regard to the guilds' extent of economic activity in the capital, the preceding analysis suggests that their domain was rather narrowly bounded. Their sectoral sphere of operations was statutorily limited to activities viewed as vital to the local economy or essential to the provisioning of the city. Only manufacturing and trade establishments operating in state-designated sectors were mandatorily organized into guilds, because the government deemed it necessary to oversee their activities closely. By design, a multitude of business firms was left outside the state's purview, as the authorities had no particular interest in regulating their activities: their small scale of operations would have rendered their supervision unmanageable, their lines of production did not involve prohibited articles, and they operated in a highly competitive environment. Hence their compulsory induction into an array of guilds would have served no purpose and would have been impractical. In short, there were many crafts and trades, spanning a cross section of economic activities, whose practice did not require their enrollment into the guild organizational structure.

The assertion that the statutes lump together and equate such diverse and clearly

<sup>143</sup>Oikonomidès, *Hommes d'affaires*, 108 n. 231.

<sup>144</sup>Certainly, there was nothing the chief(s) could do about prices, as wholesale prices were determined by market forces. They could only check on the bakers' profit margins, which were capped, and the size of the loaf. *BE* 18.1, 4. See above, p. 356, ll. 19–30.

distinguishable organizational forms as guilds (συστήματα), associations (σωματεία), societies (σύλλογοι, κολλέγια), and partnerships (έταιρεία, κοινωνία) is inaccurate. The notion derives from a misperception of the provisions of the law and overlooks the fine legal and functional differences between all these organizational forms. Moreover, the fact that the chroniclers paid no attention to subtle legal distinctions, used terms interchangeably, or labeled the organizational structure of the entire business community as guilds is no proof that all crafts and trades belonged to guilds. In particular, a sharp distinction should be made between guilds and associations. These two organizational forms are not interchangeable. The fundamental distinction between guilds and associations lay not in the nature of an occupation but in the state's interest in regulating a particular economic activity, which in turn defined the mandatory or voluntary character of these organizational forms. Those crafts and trades the state singled out for close supervision were mandated to form guilds; all others were free to form their own professional associations as they saw fit. Guilds and associations were upper-level legal entities—superstructures—and private businesses run by individuals or partnerships could belong to a guild or an association, depending on the state's designation of their activity.

Concerning the presence of guilds in the provinces, the arguments put forward to justify their existence are not convincing. At the same time, evidence is adduced that strongly suggests their absence from the regional economy. Besides, if the Byzantines were determined to establish rigorous control over all industrial and trade activity in the provinces through a guild organizational structure, they would have set up an elaborate national regulatory system. This would have necessitated the building up and operation of a vast and costly administrative apparatus and would have taken some legal form. Yet legislative (and narrative) sources provide no clue that such instrumentality ever existed. Given the pervasive bureaucratic officialism, it would be odd that such a mechanism would have been in operation without leaving any trace. Significantly, the one legal document pronouncing on this matter attests to the very absence of guilds in the provinces. Furthermore, few, if any, towns had developed an industrial and commercial base that could sustain the number and size of enterprises in each activity to form a critical mass that would prompt the state to set up a nationwide guild system. Finally, implementation of a comprehensive scheme of state control over the economic activity of the provinces would have entailed a high degree of town autonomy which is not evident. In sum, key decisive factors lead to the inference that the guild organization was confined to the capital.

As for the survival of the guild system after the twelfth century, the minority view—that guilds continued to exist but had adopted a western style—is found wanting on several grounds. Even in the West, the guilds were organs of the city authorities, who either appointed or approved their chiefs. More importantly, unlike the practice in the West, the Byzantine guild system did not aim to fix prices or thwart intraguild competition. Profit margins were set only for a few necessities and only at the retail level, which implied that the wholesale price structure of these consumer goods was allowed to reflect market conditions. Setting profit margins did not preclude competition, as vendors could set their prices lower to increase the volume of their sales, maximizing total instead of unit profits. There were no internal regulations aiming to secure uniformity in the scale of the firms' operations, new entry into the industry was not legally impeded, and ineffi-

cient producers were not shielded. Fundamentally, internal and external competition, unobstructed entry and exit, and equality of opportunity rather than equality of economic results were the foundation of the state's industrial and commercial policy, which contrasted sharply with the policy objectives in the West.

Further, the admission by the adherents to this view that the state effectively relinquished direct control over the guilds' activities, formally exercised by appointing their chiefs, betokens a radical transformation in their constitution and *modus operandi*, which is incompatible with the typical guild organizational form and suggests a devolution into quite a different organizational form, that of a voluntary not all-inclusive association, which is further attested by the loss of the earlier honorific titles of their chiefs. Such prosaic designations as *πρωτομαῖστωρ*, *πρωτομακελλάριος*, and *ἔξαρχος* hardly substantiate the claim that these individuals were heads of guilds; rather, they are suggestive of elders of associations—*primi inter pares*.

The notion that the guild system had gradually disintegrated from the thirteenth century onward is reinforced by evidence that it had outlived its usefulness and had become unworkable. The commercial domination of the Latins, the weak state authority in a rump empire, and the declining role of the guilds in important sectors (e.g., the silk industry) changed the dynamics of the market, defined new economic and political parameters, and enabled the indigenous business community, traditionally hostile to any form of restrictions, to challenge the status quo. Inroads into the capital's market by the Latins, who operated outside the guild system and enjoyed commercial and legal privileges, led to market dualism, discriminatory treatment of the market players, unfair competition, and resentment within the Greek business class. As state control and regulation of the same economic activities became one-sided, cooperation, much less compliance, by the disgruntled guilds was bound to be less forthcoming, adversely affecting the implementation of regulations and rendering the guild system a hollow shell. The realization that neither price stability nor control of profit levels could be achieved in times of major demand/supply imbalances by fixing profit margins further undermined the serviceability of the guild system. In the face of these developments, and with the goals of preserving competition and enforcing market discipline entrusted to statutory provisions, the rationale for maintaining a dysfunctional guild organizational structure was greatly attenuated, the more so since the role of the guilds had waned over time. The fact that egregious practices were taking place in the all-important baking trade, and the institution of a new supervisory organ in answer to complaints, suggest that no close official supervision was exercised over the bakers, nor over other trades of lesser importance. In sum, the available evidence, such as it is, and the vicissitudes of the late empire suggest that the notion that guilds continued to exist beyond the twelfth century cannot be persuasively defended. The enabling environment was simply not there. The changing economic and political environment fostered the adoption of organizational forms that were more in tune with the times and could more effectively protect and advance the interests of the business class—the voluntary association free from state control, which eventually displaced the old guild organizational structure. Compelling circumstances shaped not only attitudes but institutions as well.

Critical review of these outstanding issues reveals that the guild system was not as pervasive or enduring as had been thought—apparently it began to fade out after the

twelfth century. This finding, coupled with the procompetitive thrust of the state's industrial and commercial policy, suggests that the guilds played a far less determining role in the organization and operation of the economy from the tenth to the twelfth centuries than ascribed to them. The regulatory regime did not interfere with the strictly technoeconomic dimensions of the firms' operations, thereby affording entrepreneurs ample room for independent action. As a result, state intervention did not perceptibly affect economic incentives, discourage private initiative, or impede the growth of enterprises. Once in place, the regulatory framework provided a set of nonshifting parameters that clearly defined the rules of the game and allowed guild members and those dealing with them to conduct their affairs with a considerable degree of certainty.

Bethesda, Md.