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Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents:

A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders' Typika and Testaments

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CHAPTER NINE

Independent and Self-Governing Monasteries of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries

“Yet I do not intend to devise some novel regime for you, nor things which no one has proposed or done until now, so as to incur the charge not only of innovation, but also of disobedience . . .” (60) *Charsianeites* [B1]

“If we do not straightaway arouse the monks to observe every one of the original regulations, it does not mean that these things are being overlooked but that we must take care to correct the [transgressions] which remain [to be corrected] also.” (59) *Manuel II*, Prologue

“Neither should the superior govern with arrogance and insolence, considering himself the master of the monks, and them his servants, believing that his leadership is not a spiritual leadership, but some secular authority, which came to him as if from a paternal inheritance.” (60) *Charsianeites* [B9]

“It would be right to have nothing affecting the monastery determined without the counsel of the leading monks.” (59) *Manuel II* [6]

A. General Characteristics

This chapter includes seven documents that illustrate the fortunes of independent monastic foundations during the last centuries of the Byzantine Empire. Unlike the documents of chiefly monastic authorship found in Chapter Eight, these were nearly all written by members of the ruling Palaiologan dynasty and the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Two, (56) *Kellibara II* and (59) *Manuel II*, were written by emperors, Andronikos II (1282–1328) and Manuel II (1391–1425) respectively. Another, (57) *Bebaia Elpis*, was written by a Palaiologan princess, Theodora Synadene, and added to by her daughter Euphrosyne Palaiologina. Two documents, (55) *Athanasios I* and (60) *Charsianeites*, have patriarchal authorship—the only ones, along with (5) *Euthymios*, from this source in our collection. (58) *Menoikeion* was written by a metropolitan, Joachim of Zichna. Only one document, (61) *Eleousa Inv.*, comes from a specifically monastic source, the monks of the venerable *Eleousa* monastery, and even this document was drawn up to meet a canonical requirement and was subsequently certified by the local bishop of Stroumitza. Thus this collection of documents provides us with an unusual opportunity to observe the treatment of familiar issues in monastic life and governance by the empire’s public authorities.

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The documents in this chapter are contemporaries of many of those written for private religious foundations that are to be found in Chapter Eight. Chronologically, they cover the last one hundred fifty years of Byzantine history, with four dating from the fourteenth century and three from the fifteenth century. All of the fourteenth-century documents are clustered in the first third of that century, though there were later additions to (57) *Bebaia Elpis* and a part of (60) *Charsianeites* (itself an early fifteenth-century compilation), the *Rule* of Mark and Neilos [B], dates back to circa 1380.

Given the public authorship of most of these documents, it is inevitable that they should have been written for foundations located within the much-diminished boundaries of the Byzantine Empire. With the exception then of *Athanasios I*, a special case, the foundations for which these documents were written were less geographically dispersed than their counterparts in Chapter Eight. (56) *Kellibara II*, (57) *Bebaia Elpis*, and (60) *Charsianeites* were written for Constantinopolitan foundations, while (58) *Menoikeion* and (61) *Eleousa Inv.* were written for monasteries located near the Empire's northern Greek frontier. Both (59) *Manuel II* and (55) *Athanasios I* are addressed to the monasteries on Mount Athos, though the latter document also has universalist aspirations for its validity throughout the empire. Only (57) *Bebaia Elpis* was specifically written for a convent.

B. Typology of the Documents

1. Categorization

Five of the documents are self-described as *typika* or rules.¹ (61) *Eleousa Inv.* is a free-standing inventory, like its near contemporary, the inventory included in Chapter Eight as an appendix to (54) *Neilos Damilas*. (60) *Charsianeites* is formally titled by its author, Patriarch Matthew I, as his testament, though it incorporates the earlier *Rule* of his predecessors Mark and Neilos [B] as well as what he modestly titles *Subsequent Chapters* [C], both of which are in the traditional format of founders' *typika*. (57) *Bebaia Elpis* includes a supplementary *typikon* by the author's daughter [146] ff. as well as even later additions providing for commemorative services down to 1402. (56) *Kellibara II* is a fragmentary document, like the contemporary (47) *Philanthropos* in Chapter Eight with which it has been preserved in the work of a sixteenth-century excerptor. The text of (58) *Menoikeion* as we have it is a re-edition of an earlier version, now lost, that has left its traces in a table of contents that no longer coincides with the document's chapters.

2. Normative and Occasional Documents

Four of our documents, (56) *Kellibara II*, (57) *Bebaia Elpis*, (58) *Menoikeion*, and (60) *Charsianeites*, are normative texts in the fashion typical for founders' *typika*. The extraordinary (55) *Athanasios I*, with its bold attempt to supersede existing founders' *typika* in the monasteries of the empire, must be seen more as an ambitious political program rather than as an exemplar of the more usual type of a prescriptive *typikon*. (59) *Manuel II*, like the much earlier imperial documents also issued for Mount Athos, (12) *Tzimiskes* and (15) *Constantine IX*, as well as (21) *Roidion*, belongs in a small group of non-normative documents in our collection. Like its predecessors, it

¹ (55) *Athanasios I*, (56) *Kellibara II*, (57) *Bebaia Elpis*, (58) *Menoikeion*, and (59) *Manuel II*.

announces a reform program designed to deal with actual conditions of monastic life that were considerably at variance with the ideals so often prescribed in our normative documents.

3. Utilization of Earlier Documents

In an apparent acceptance of the argument for an intergenerational obligation for founders to respect the wishes of their predecessors that had been advanced in (37) *Auxentios* [15] and (40) *Anargyroi* [1], most of our authors show their respect for relevant prior legislation by incorporating it in one way or another in their own rules. Thus, (59) *Manuel II* makes explicit reference to the provisions of a “*Rule of Athanasios*” that is apparently not our (11) *Ath. Rule*, though there is unacknowledged use of (12) *Tzimiskes*. The author of (58) *Menoikeion* makes extensive use of (32) *Mamas* or perhaps a subsequent document descended from that twelfth-century *typikon*, while the author of (57) *Bebaia Elpis* [85] apparently employed an Evergetian *typikon* as a model.

As noted above, the author of (60) *Charsianeites* takes the extraordinary step of simply incorporating the whole of his predecessors’ regulation into the text of his own document. The authors of (56) *Kellibara II* [1], (57) *Bebaia Elpis* [79], (58) *Menoikeion* [16], and likely also (60) *Charsianeites* [C17] all refer to and endorse as valid for their own foundations the liturgical *typikon* of St. Sabas. Finally, the authors of (61) *Eleousa Inv.* cite (incorrectly as it happens) a requirement of (10) *Eleousa*, their foundation’s eleventh-century *typikon*, as their authority for drawing up their inventory.

The failure of Andronikos II to mention his father’s (38) *Kellibara I* in his own (56) *Kellibara II* may only be apparent, due to the very fragmentary nature of the latter document, or else reflect the opprobrium in which Michael VIII was held for his Unionist policies.² Only the author of (55) *Athanasios I*, with his own political objective of establishing a measure of universal patriarchal control over all of Byzantium’s monasteries, implicitly rejects any obligation to make his legislation consonant with earlier founders’ *typika*.

C. Relation of the Documents to the Monastic Reform Movement

This group of documents shows a much stronger connection to the by now rather remote monastic reform movement than those written for the private foundations of Chapter Eight. In addition to the founders’ *pietas* seen in the unattributed use of documents in the Evergetian tradition by the authors of (57) *Bebaia Elpis* and (58) *Menoikeion*, there is the strongly pro-cenobitic stance of these authors and that of (56) *Kellibara II*, that has its ideological origins in the reform movement. (55) *Athanasios I*, even though its universalist pretensions are unique, was influenced by earlier cenobitic traditions including that of the monastic reform movement. The “*Rule of Athanasios*” cited approvingly by the author of (59) *Manuel II* appears to have been another product of the monastic reform movement rather than a document reflecting pre-reform conditions like the genuine tenth-century (11) *Ath. Rule*. Likewise, the custom of drawing up an inventory of monastic property was not, as the authors of (61) *Eleousa Inv.* [8] believed, a requirement imposed by their founder Manuel of Stroumitza, the pre-reform author of (10) *Eleousa*, but rather became firmly

² For the posthumous reputation of Michael VIII, see Alice-Mary Talbot, “Empress Theodora Palaiologina, Wife of Michael VIII,” *DOP* 46 (1992), 295–303, esp. 298.

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established in Byzantine monasticism thanks to the efforts of various founders of the monastic reform in the early decades of the twelfth century.

To be sure, our founders, along with many of their predecessors, show a curious reluctance—or perhaps a simple inability—to attribute the sources of their ideological and customary inheritance correctly some two to three hundred years after the creative era of the reform movement in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries. Instead, what we find in Palaiologan times are anachronistic attempts by authors like those who wrote (59) *Manuel II* and (61) *Eleousa Inv.* to read institutions that were actually fundamental achievements of the Evergetian reform back to the times of the founders of their own monasteries. In the case of (60) *Charsianeites*, a more recent foundation of the fourteenth century, this was not necessary, but instead we are presented with a document so militantly pro-cenobitic and imbued with classic reform ideology that it may justly be termed “neo-Evergetian,” along with (to a lesser extent) the extracts of (47) *Philanthropos* and (56) *Kellibara II*. Indeed, (60) *Charsianeites* takes positions on many issues that are more extreme than those found in any of the earlier documents in our collection, even (22) *Evergetis* and the other reform documents textually linked to it.

D. Other Concerns of the Authors

There is a considerably larger base of common concerns among the authors of the documents in this chapter than among their counterparts who wrote for the geographically scattered group of private foundations discussed above in Chapter Eight.

1. Support for Larger Monasteries

Only (57) *Bebaia Elpis* [147], sets a limit on the number of ascetics to be supported at the foundation (fifty nuns), but one’s overall impression is that the foundations represented by these documents were generally larger than their contemporary private counterparts.

2. Lack of Interest in Liturgical Regulation

Probably because of the widespread endorsement of the liturgical *typikon* of St. Sabas, our authors generally show little interest in liturgical matters. (57) *Bebaia Elpis*, written for a convent whose *raison d’être* was the performance of commemorations for the souls of the founder and her family, is an exception. (58) *Menoikeion* [16] provides for the celebration of the liturgy four times a week.

3. Limited Practice of Manual Labor

(57) *Bebaia Elpis* [95], where there was a traditional division of the community into choir sisters and those dedicated to services, provides an endorsement of manual labor. A similar arrangement is implied in (58) *Menoikeion* [12]. The *Rule* of Mark and Neilos, encapsulated in (60) *Charsianeites* [B20], leaves the regulation of manual labor to the superior.

4. Treatment of the Novitiate and Entrance Gifts

Only (60) *Charsianeites* [B15], [C1], which sets the term at the usual three years, discusses the novitiate directly. The convent described in (57) *Bebaia Elpis* [9] may have relied on orphan girls for its staffing. (55) *Athanasios I* [7] orders that potential entrance gifts not be taken into consideration in admissions, while (60) *Charsianeites* [B16] condemns the exaction of entrance fees as an act of hypocrisy for a foundation advocating monastic poverty.

5. Strong Cenobitic Bias

As noted above, this group of documents is strongly pro-cenobitic, particularly in the cluster of documents from the early fourteenth century. The outlook of (55) *Athanasios I* [1] is uncompromisingly cenobitic. The neglect elsewhere of the (Evergetian) notion of equality in food and drink is identified in (56) *Kellibara II* [3] as one of the precursors of idiorhythmism, which is treated more as a dangerous behavioral disorder than as an alternative form of monasticism. Idiorhythmic monasticism was certainly known to Euphrosyne Palaiologina, daughter of the author of (57) *Bebaia Elpis* [149], but not endorsed by her either. Joachim of Zichna, author of (58) *Menoikeion* [11], simply repeats the prohibition against kelliotic monasticism that he found in his late Evergetian model shared with (32) *Mamas* [26].

6. Acknowledgement of Cenobitic Alternatives

Despite this bias, by the fifteenth century there is evidence of a grudging acceptance of the existence of cenobitic alternatives even by authors who themselves preferred communally-based monasticism. The *Rule* of Mark and Neilos incorporated in (60) *Charsianeites* [B2] is unusually open-minded in its discussion of the issue although both the author of the encompassing document and his predecessors agreed on the superiority of cenobiticism. Only in (59) *Manuel II* is the author, confronted with the reality of many monks on Mount Athos already living idiorhythmically off private incomes, prepared to make concessions intended to effect a gradual restoration of the cenobitic lifestyle.

7. Preference for Independent Constitutions

Four of our documents, (57) *Bebaia Elpis* [15], cf. [14], (58) *Menoikeion* [3], (60) *Charsianeites* [C18], and (61) *Eleousa Inv.* [4], describe the foundations for which they were written as independent monasteries. The excerpts that have been preserved of (56) *Kellibara II* do not discuss the foundation's constitutional status. Though this same foundation is described as independent and self-governing in (38) *Kellibara I* [15], there is external evidence that its status had changed to that of an imperial and patriarchal monastery perhaps even before 1315.³ The remaining documents, (55) *Athanasios I* and (59) *Manuel II*, moreover, illustrate the public authorities, the patriarch and the emperor respectively, attempting to extend their authority over the monasteries of Mount Athos, many of which had long been recognized as independent foundations. In the case of (55) *Athanasios I*, the author appears to have intended to include other private and independent foundations in the scope of his regulation as well.

8. Dilution of the Meaning of Institutional Independence

In Palaiologan times, assertions of institutional independence were both more commonplace and less meaningful than in the era of the monastic reform of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In (57) *Bebaia Elpis*, for instance, the author Theodora Synadene, despite her formal claim for the institutional independence of her convent, hails [124] her daughter Euphrosyne as its “mistress and heir,” while later Euphrosyne herself would refer [159] to it as her “ancestral convent.” Similarly, Joachim of Zichna, author of (58) *Menoikeion*, asserts [3] that his monastery is both “independent” and “patriarchal,” while also conceding [22] certain traditional rights of imperial patron-

³ See discussion below in (56) *Kellibara II: Analysis*.

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age and allowing [21] a protector the authority of an old-fashioned private founder. In both of these “independent” foundations, especially the latter, the traditional notion of monastic independence seems to have been considerably attenuated. Moreover, the authors of (55) *Athanasios I* and (59) *Manuel II* were unwilling to allow the claims of traditionally independent monasteries to obstruct the exercise of patriarchal and imperial rights, respectively. (60) *Charsianeites*, however, seems to have been an independent monastery on the traditional Evergetian model, thanks to the willingness of its founder to forego his rights to own and manage it.

9. Endorsement of Collaborative Rule

Though particular prescriptions for self-governance vary, the authors of the documents in this chapter generally oblige the superior to rule collaboratively with the leading monks of his institution. Thus the authoritarian tendencies prominent in many earlier monasteries, both those within the reform tradition and without, seem to have fallen into disfavor. The imperial author of (59) *Manuel II* [6] even draws on an Aristotelian argument for the supposedly self-evident superiority of aristocratic government over tyranny or democracy to support consultative rule. In (55) *Athanasios I* [5] the superior is told to consult with three or four of the “more pious monks” for oversight of finances and for making appointments to offices. (57) *Bebaia Elpis* [73] is unusual in providing for selection of the convent’s officials through a general community-wide election. Here also the convent’s “leading nuns” play [55] a role in financial oversight. (58) *Menoikeion* [22] obliges the superior to govern in conjunction with “four brothers.” (59) *Manuel II* [6] formalizes the governing role of the leading monks who were to meet [7] every day or two and be responsible for electing [3] the superior and, along with him, selecting new officials. A comparable institution is lacking in (60) *Charsianeites*, but Mark and Neilos’ *Rule* [B9] warns the superior not to govern the monastery arbitrarily as if it were some sort of inherited secular authority.

10. Limitation of Patronal Privileges

As one might expect in an age when the patriarchs of Constantinople were striving to limit patrons’ rights while simultaneously holding them to defined responsibilities, there are few explicit claims to patronal privileges in these documents. The authors of (57) *Bebaia Elpis* [113] ff. and (58) *Menoikeion* [16] both claim the right to commemorative services. More tangibly, the founders of the monastery for which (58) *Menoikeion* was written thought it within their rights to bequeath [1], [21] it as “a kind of inheritance.” In (60) *Charsianeites* [A7] the original founder is said to have chosen the first superior before resigning any further patronal rights over his foundation. Subsequently, it became the custom for the superior to name [A5], [C18] his own successor.

11. Interest in Matters of Financial Management

Our authors, especially Theodora Synadene in (57) *Bebaia Elpis*, show a greater interest in financial affairs than their contemporary counterparts in private religious foundations (for which see Chapter Eight). The administration of these matters was one of the responsibilities the superior was to share with his principal advisors in those institutions with collaborative government.

Record-keeping procedures endorsed long ago by the reform monasteries in the Evergetian tradition appear in (57) *Bebaia Elpis* [55], where the steward is a nun “with great experience in

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practical affairs,” in (58) *Menoikeion* [5], and in (59) *Manuel II* [7]. (61) *Eleousa Inv.* owes its very existence to one such procedure for safeguarding the monastery’s movable properties.

Landed properties constituted a major element of financial support for the foundations described in (56) *Kellibara II* [7], (57) *Bebaia Elpis* [121] ff., (58) *Menoikeion* [2], [21], and (60) *Charsianeites* [A8] ff. Entrance gifts played a role in the endowment of the foundations governed by (57) *Bebaia Elpis* [159], (58) *Menoikeion* [11], and (59) *Manuel II* [12], but both (55) *Athanasios I* [7] and (60) *Charsianeites* [B16] are critical, the latter actually banning them. (60) *Charsianeites* [C8] is unique in cheerfully accepting the obligation of paying state taxes on its landholdings.

12. Acceptance of Aristocratic Privilege

Our authors were generally willing to accord privileges to aristocratic postulants, provided these could be accommodated within the cenobitic system. Several of the foundations governed by the documents in this chapter permitted certain of their monks or nuns to have servants. (57) *Bebaia Elpis* [94] allows this as a special privilege to nobly born nuns. (58) *Menoikeion* [11], drawing on a late Evergetian custom represented by (32) *Mamas* [26], does likewise for monks from “an exalted station in life.” (59) *Manuel II* [2] permits all monks with the means to pay for them to have servants. Servants are not mentioned, however, in (60) *Charsianeites*, which is generally hostile to the notion of special privileges for members of the nobility or anyone else, though even there the deposed Emperor John VI Kantakouzenos was given the superior’s cell and permitted to renovate it during his residence at the monastery.

13. Reluctance to Concede Rights to the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy

Interestingly, despite the public authorship of most of these documents, their authors are not significantly more generous in their concessions of rights over their foundations to the local church officials. The exception is the ambitious (55) *Athanasios I*, whose author, in asserting patriarchal rights of overlordship over the empire’s monasteries, is not acting as a founder conceding these rights to an external authority but rather as a public official eager to establish his entitlement to them. In (57) *Bebaia Elpis* [26] Theodora Synadene allows the patriarch of Constantinople only the right to bless a newly elected superior and to bestow on her the pastoral staff. Though Joachim, as metropolitan of Zichna, was himself a prelate, in (58) *Menoikeion* [3] he denies the local metropolitan of Serres any rights of overlordship over the foundation. In (60) *Charsianeites* [C12] Patriarch Matthew I requires only that the superior of his foundation visit the current patriarch twice a year in order to demonstrate that he (the superior) is in communion with the leader of the church in Constantinople.

14. Neglect of Institutional Philanthropy

As seems to have been the case with most independent foundations in the thirteenth century (for which see Chapter Seven), the foundations described by the documents here in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries seem to lack the interest in institutional philanthropy shown by their predecessors in the twelfth century. (57) *Bebaia Elpis* [89] is archetypical, endorsing a perfunctory form of philanthropy, the daily distribution of leftovers to the poor at the gate, justified with a self-centered rationale. The most substantial donations of food mentioned in (60) *Charsianeites* [C14],

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[C15] were limited to special feast days. Only the monastery represented by (58) *Menoikeion*, influenced by the late Evergetian tradition seen earlier in (32) *Mamas* [12], seems to have made a commitment to a substantial charitable distribution of food to all comers at its gate.

E. Historical Context

1. The Reform Program of Patriarch Athanasios I

The first document in this chapter, (55) *Athanasios I*, was issued during the early years of the second patriarchate of its author (1303–1309). During Athanasios I's first patriarchate (1289–93), he succeeded in alienating the empire's monastic communities by his insistence on strict discipline and his willingness to seize monastic funds.⁴ After his restoration in 1303, he reportedly encouraged Emperor Andronikos II to confiscate monastic property to provide landholdings for the support of soldiers.⁵ Naturally, there was a substantial core of opposition to the patriarch in monastic circles, augmented by die-hard Arsenite supporters of the late Nicaean Patriarch Arsenios Autoreianos (1255–60).⁶ Yet the patriarch had sought to secure a guarantee that the emperor would support him in all his ecclesiastical reforms.⁷ It is against this background that the daring program of (55) *Athanasios I*, an attempt to enforce a uniform code of monastic usages in monasteries throughout the empire, should be considered.

2. Continued Patriarchal Activism

Although this effort was clearly a failure, Athanasios I ushered in an era of patriarchal activism that would endure through the next hundred years. For instance, in December 1315, the patriarchal synod met under the leadership of Patriarch John XIII Glykys (1315–19) to consider a charge of sacrilege and decided to depose Theodore, superior of the monastery of St. Demetrios “of the Palaiologans,” that is, the independent monastery for which (56) *Kellibara II* was written.⁸ This latter document, which cannot be precisely dated, may have been issued in connection with a subsequent administrative reorganization of its monastery that sometime before the end of the fourteenth century had become reclassified as an imperial and patriarchal foundation.⁹

3. The Patriarchal Campaign to Curtail Patronal Rights

Beginning with Patriarch Isaias (1323–32), a series of patriarchs began to curtail longstanding

⁴ Pachymeres, *De Andronico Palaeologo*, ed. I. Bekker, *CSHB*, vol. 2 (Bonn, 1835), pp. 148–49, with A.-M. Talbot, *The Correspondence of Athanasios I, Patriarch of Constantinople* (Washington, D.C., 1975), p. xix.

⁵ Pachymeres, *De Andronico Palaeologo*, ed. Bekker, vol. 2, pp. 388–90, with Talbot, *Correspondence*, p. xix.

⁶ Pachymeres, *De Andronico Palaeologo*, ed. Bekker, vol. 2, pp. 519, 618, with Talbot, *Correspondence*, p. xxiv.

⁷ V. Laurent, “Le serment de l'empereur Andronic II Paléologue au patriarche Athanase I^{er}, lors sa seconde accession au trône oecuménique (Sept. 1303),” *REB* 23 (1965), 135–38, with Talbot, *Correspondence*, p. xiii.

⁸ Vitalien Laurent, *Les registes des actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople*, vol. 1, fasc. 4: *Les registes de 1208 à 1309* (Paris, 1971), no. 2053 (December 1315), ed. MM 1.42.

⁹ So MM 2.325–26 (1400).

patronal rights in private religious foundations. A decree of this patriarch dated to 1325 prohibits the sale of ecclesiastical foundations.¹⁰ The *typikon* of Theodora Synadene, niece of Michael VIII, (57) *Bebaia Elpis* [7], which probably dates from the patriarchate of Isaias, contains the tart command that the patriarch should be accorded only canonical prerogatives and “keep his hands off the rest,” a timely reminder of the contemporary conflict between patrons and the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

Even the bitter controversy over hesychasm¹¹ did not distract later patriarchs from the continuing effort to curtail the traditional rights of patrons and transform them into a strictly regulated set of duties and (revocable) privileges. Patriarch John XIV Kalekas (1334–47) was an opponent of Gregory Palamas and an anti-hesychast. It was apparently during his patriarchate that a decision was taken to forbid the traditional practice of lay patrons deriving an income from private religious foundations, for in a case brought before his synod in 1334, the patriarch had alluded without adverse comment to a lay woman who received a pension from a church’s income, while some eight years later in 1342, he denied a founder’s right to personal enjoyment of parishioners’ offerings made to a church on Chios.¹²

4. The Civil War between John V Palaiologos and John VI Kantakouzenos

Hesychast partisans found support from the successful usurper John VI Kantakouzenos (1347–54), who in 1332 had served as the protector of the monastery of St. John the Forerunner for which (58) *Menoikeion* [21] was written. In 1347 he took Constantinople from Empress Anne of Savoy, who had been acting as regent for the legitimate emperor, the young John V (1341–91). A new patriarch, Kallistos I (1350–54), presided over a council in 1351 that recognized the hesychast position as orthodox, endorsed the supportive doctrines of the mystic Nicholas Kabasilas, and excommunicated the principal partisans of the opposing side, the Calabrian monk Barlaam and Gregory Akindynos.¹³

Also in 1351, Patriarch Kallistos I presided over the most important case on private foundations ever to reach the patriarchal synod.¹⁴ This concerned the convent of St. Mary of the Mongols, once an independent monastery, but which had lost its autonomy to a series of protectors related to the imperial family (cf. similar arrangements made in (58) *Menoikeion* [21]). One of these protectors, Isaac Palaiologos, an uncle of John V, had badly neglected many of the foundation’s properties, sold off others, and burdened the convent with fellowships (*adelphata*) for lay appointees. The patriarch simply disregarded patronal privileges by abolishing the protectorate and restoring the foundation’s independent status.

John V, with Genoese help, was emboldened to attempt to overthrow John VI Kantakouzenos

¹⁰ Jean Darrouzès, *Les registres des actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople*, vol. 1, fasc. 5: *Les registres de 1310 à 1376* (Paris, 1977); fasc. 6: *Les Registres de 1377 à 1410* (Paris, 1979), no. 2126, ed. MM 1.138–39.

¹¹ See John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Hesychasm: Historical, Theological, and Social Problems* (London, 1974).

¹² Darrouzès, *Regestes*, no. 2171, ed. MM 1.568–69; no. 2234, ed. MM 1.231–32.

¹³ Darrouzès, *Regestes*, no. 2324.

¹⁴ Darrouzès, *Regestes*, no. 2330, ed. MM 1.312–17.

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and to seize Constantinople in 1354. John VI was forced to abdicate and find refuge in the monastery of the Mother of God *Nea Peribleptos*, whose founder John Charsianeites, a supporter of his, was also disgraced at this time. The former emperor's residence at the monastery as a monk is recalled in (60) *Charsianeites* [A8]. Philotheos (1354–55), the patriarch Kantakouzenos had chosen to replace Kallistos I earlier during the course of the civil war, was deposed on John V's restoration and Kallistos I (1355–63) was returned to office. Philotheos (1364–76), however, also had a second term as patriarch, being recalled to office after Kallistos' death.

5. The Controversy over John V's Confiscation of Monastic Properties

In 1367, when John V attempted to settle soldiers on lands belonging to the patriarchate along the coast between Constantinople and Selymbria, Philotheos rejected his promise to compensate the church with other lands, and declared that he had no authority to allow even a temporary alienation of church property of which he was only the guardian.¹⁵ After the Turkish victory at Maritza in 1371 over the Serbs, John V decided to disregard Philotheos' objections and took the even more drastic step of confiscating half of the lands of Byzantine monasteries in order to grant them out as *pronoiai* to soldiers.¹⁶

This action may have stimulated the discourse of the hesychast theologian Nicholas Kabasilas on the illegal exactions of the government and the ecclesiastical hierarchy at the expense of the great monasteries.¹⁷ In it Kabasilas makes use of traditional arguments for the respect of private property rights and the sanctity of a testator's will in order to defend the great independent monasteries against the government's requisitions. He echoes the arguments of lay patrons for whom the cause of private property rights was so dear. Kabasilas' arguments are based on a secular justification of private property rights, not on canon law, as was the case with the advocates of the monastic reform movement in the twelfth century and more recently, with Patriarch Philotheos. Like most private benefactors, he was also hostile to the claims of the ecclesiastical hierarchy to the exercise of rights over Byzantium's monasteries.

6. Impact of the Ottoman Conquest of Byzantium's European Territories

The Ottoman conquests in Europe also seriously affected the monasteries on Mount Athos and elsewhere in Greece.¹⁸ Even before the Ottomans made their first permanent settlements in the Byzantine Empire's former European dominions, Turkish pirates based in coastal emirates in Asia Minor had forced the larger Athonite monasteries to surround themselves with fortifications (for

¹⁵ Darrouzès, *Regestes*, no. 2534, ed. MM 1.507–8, with Mark Bartusis, *The Late Byzantine Army: Arms and Society, 1204–1453* (Philadelphia, 1992), pp. 106, 165, 168–69, on confiscations of monastic property for military purposes.

¹⁶ Recalled by Manuel II, *Prostagma* (1408), ed. V. Moshin, "Akti iz svetogorskikh archiva," *Spomenik* 91 (1939), 165 ff., with George Ostrogorsky, "Byzance, état tributaire de l'empire Turc," *ZRVI* 5 (1958), 49–58, at 51.

¹⁷ For Nicholas Kabasilas, see Ihor Ševčenko, "Nicholas Cabasilas' 'Anti-Zealot' Discourse: A Reinterpretation," *DOP* 11 (1957), 80–171.

¹⁸ For the consequences, see Nicolas Oikonomides, "Monastères et moines lors de la conquête ottomane," *SF* 35 (1976), 1–10, with bibliography cited therein, reprinted in *Documents et études sur les institutions de Byzance (VII^e–XV^e s.)* (London, 1976).

which see (51) *Koutloumousi* in the 1370s), while kelliotic and solitary monks had to flee to them for safety. A combined Byzantine and Venetian naval force barely saved Mount Athos from conquest in 1372/73, shortly after the disaster at Maritza, but the Ottomans established their control peaceably in 1383. Sensing the inevitable Ottoman victory beforehand, the monks of the monastery of St. John the Forerunner, for which (58) *Menoikeion* had been written, obtained assurances of its independence and a promise of protection from Sultan Murad I (1362–89) in late 1372 or early 1373, even though the foundation was then in territory that remained under Byzantine control until 1382.¹⁹ It is thought that the monks of Mount Athos may have taken the same precaution.

The Byzantines were unexpectedly able to recover Thessalonike, the Chalkidike, and Mount Athos in 1403 after the crushing defeat of Sultan Beyazid I (1389–1402) by the Mongols under Timur at the battle of Angora (Ankara) in 1402. (59) *Manuel II*, the last of the imperial *typika* for Mount Athos, was issued in 1406 and belongs to the interval of restored Byzantine control over the Holy Mountain. The disordered conditions depicted in that document, and the emperor's willingness to tolerate significant divergences from a cenobitic standard dear to him, reflect the economic difficulties the Athonite monasteries were experiencing in these troubled times. Thessalonike, handed over by the Byzantines to the Venetians in 1423, was finally conquered by Sultan Murad II (1421–51) in 1430. Even earlier, the monks of Athos had submitted to the sultan and agreed to pay tribute, in exchange for which they received his promise to let them keep their properties in Macedonia.

7. Final Activities of the Surviving Constantinopolitan Monasteries

Six Constantinopolitan monasteries represented by documents in our collection either certainly or very likely continued in operation down to the fall of the city to the Turks in 1453.²⁰ Another five monasteries in the capital for which our collection supplies documentary evidence may also have lasted down to the end of the empire.²¹ Among these eleven institutions, the relatively recently founded *Nea Peribleptos* monastery of Charsianeites played an especially important part in the religious life of the empire. Neilos, its second superior, was elevated to the patriarchate of Constantinople (1380–88), a diversion of leadership that (60) *Charsianeites* [A9] informs us had an ill effect on the economic well-being of that monastery. Its endowment was completely ruined as a result of the long Turkish siege of Constantinople in 1394–1402. In the midst of that siege, Matthew I, another superior of Charsianeites, likewise became patriarch (1397–1410).

8. Matthew I, the Last Reform Patriarch

Matthew I, author of (60) *Charsianeites*, was the last reformer who served as patriarch of

¹⁹ Elizabeth Zachariadou, "Early Ottoman Documents of the Prodromos Monastery (Serres)," *SF* 28 (1969), 1–12.

²⁰ The monastery of Stoudios: (3) *Theodore Studites* and (4) *Stoudios*; the *Pantokrator* monastery: (28) *Pantokrator*; St. Demetrios-Kellibara: (38) *Kellibara I* and (58) *Kellibara II*; the convent of Lips: (39) *Lips*; the *Anastasis* monastery: (46) *Akropolites*; and the *Nea Peribleptos* monastery: (60) *Charsianeites*.

²¹ The male monasteries for which (22) *Evergetis* (see discussion below) and (32) *Mamas* were written, and the convents for which (27) *Kecharitomene*, (47) *Philanthropos*, and (57) *Bebaia Elpis* were written.

CHAPTER NINE

Constantinople in Byzantine times, following in the footsteps of his predecessors Isaias, John XIV Kalekas, Kallistos I, and Philotheos. Matthew I's register for the years 1399 to 1402 serves as an impressive record of his activity presiding over the patriarchal synod.

For our purposes, perhaps the most interesting case heard by the synod during these years was that brought by George Synadenos Astras against Nicholas Makrodoukas.²² At issue was the attempt by the former to oppose the latter in the exercise of his rights of ownership, as *ktetor*, of a church on the island of Lemnos. Makrodoukas had inherited a half share in this church from its original founder and later bought the other half share (in violation of the patriarchal ban on sales of ecclesiastical foundations, or so Astras claimed) from the monks of a monastery of the Mother of God *Evergetis*, quite likely (though not certainly) the famous reform monastery of the eleventh century. The monastery had been subordinated to Astras as its *ktetor*, who sought the patriarchal synod's assistance in reclaiming its rights in the church that Makrodoukas meanwhile had completely rebuilt.

The case was a difficult one, but the patriarch and his synod resolved it with characteristic skill. They rejected Astras' claim on behalf of *Evergetis* and confirmed Makrodoukas in his founder's rights, but sternly warned the latter to avoid any diversion of consecrated property for his personal use. The ideological justification of this decision can be traced back ultimately to Leo of Chalcedon's declaration of the fundamental inalienability of ecclesiastical property in the late eleventh century. It is a profound irony, however, that it was the Evergetian monastic reform tradition which had succeeded in gaining a general acceptance of this position in the course of the twelfth century and had played an indispensable role in its transmission down to Matthew I's own times at the beginning of the fifteenth century. The neo-Evergetian content of the patriarch's (60) *Charsianeites* thus is no surprise, given his reformist activities as leader of the Byzantine church.

²² Darrouzès, *Regestes*, no. 3082, ed. MM 2.322–23.