

This is an extract from:

*The Economic History of Byzantium:  
From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century*

*Angeliki E. Laiou, Editor-in-Chief*

*Scholarly Committee*

Charalambos Bouras

Cécile Morrisson

Nicolas Oikonomides<sup>†</sup>

Constantine Pitsakis

Published by

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

in three volumes as number 39 in the series

Dumbarton Oaks Studies

© 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 Late Byzantine Urban Economy, Thirteenth–Fifteenth Centuries

Klaus-Peter Matschke

---

It is still widely believed that the late Byzantine period was a time when urban developments that had begun earlier simply continued and eventually petered out. That was by no means the case. We now have compelling reasons to think that this period was a special phase of development with many unique and some novel expressions of urban life. The spectacular event of the capture of Constantinople by the Latin forces gave the cities of the Byzantine provinces at the very outset of this period an unprecedented opportunity to fall back on their own strengths and resources. Evidently they put this opportunity to very good use, for Constantinople's return to the empire's fold did not mean a return to the old status quo, precisely because the provincial cities did not vanish again into the shadow of an almighty capital. Some cities, taking advantage of particularly favorable conditions, created remarkable footholds of urban autonomy; others left the Byzantine imperial fold altogether while continuing to be linked to it with multifarious ties. But Constantinople also showed that it could be more than a giant devouring the empire's resources: at least there were hints of the city's potential, hints that it was perfectly capable of discovering and mobilizing its own powers against varied and constantly growing threats, of reacting with remarkable flexibility to ever new challenges. And as far as society as a whole was concerned, the role of the late Byzantine city did not diminish. If anything, compared to other periods of Byzantine history, it grew: in the end the empire consisted almost entirely of various cities and their constantly shrinking environs and hinterlands.

The urban economy greatly influenced these phenomena and developments and was in turn strongly influenced by them. However, the precise details of how this reciprocal influence worked can rarely be seen clearly; often we can do no more than conjecture, and most of this development is still shrouded in obscurity.

## *Economic Aspects of the Late Byzantine City*

The economic character of the Byzantine city did not undergo any fundamental change during the late period. However, we can assume, and in part demonstrate, that

there were shifts in the balance of elements and factors that shaped this economic character; shifts in how they interrelated and interconnected.

From an economic point of view, the late Byzantine city was, first of all, a concentration of consumers, a center of demand for and consumption of material goods. Late Byzantine cities also remained centers of state and church administration. After 1261 Constantinople became once again the focal point of the imperial court and the orthodox patriarchate. This also made it the main seat for a bewildering array of governmental and ecclesiastical officials and dignitaries, and the place where they preferred to satisfy their varied and sophisticated material needs. However, already during their exile in Asia Minor, the late Byzantine emperors had resided not only in the official capital of Nicaea; they may have spent just as much time in two other cities of their empire: Nymphaion and Magnesia. At first the emperors of the Palaiologan dynasty continued this practice; it was not rare for them and their court to spend longer periods of time in Thessalonike and Didymoteichon, and for a brief time they were also forced to reside in Adrianople. The result was that at least Didymoteichon experienced for a time a noticeable economic upswing.

What made late Byzantine cities centers of individual and collective consumption was also the fact that most of the late Byzantine aristocracy continued to reside there. To be sure, quite a few *archontes* and *dynatoi* from the capital and various larger provincial cities, such as Thessalonike, sometimes spent a considerable portion of the year on their domains, in their residential towers and manor houses near the cities. Even so, they kept their chief urban residences to which they retired, at least during the winter, along with their retainers and the products of their estates. And throughout the year they used their close ties to the city and urban markets to pursue a variety of commercial activities that offered profit of every kind.

The needs of the common city dwellers were modest and much the same winter or summer; the needs of most people were limited to a minimum of food—some bread, vegetables, fish (but not everywhere), very little meat—and a few simple pieces of clothing. But since the middle and lower classes were generally much more numerous than all the resident officials, aristocrats, military men, and intellectuals combined, they shaped the character of the cities as centers of consumption at least as much as did the much more sophisticated and varied needs of the upper class.

The function of the late Byzantine city as a center of consumption was noticeably affected, however, by the fact that the weakening of the empire and the shrinking of its territory necessitated a successive dismantling of the administrative apparatus of the state and the church. To the very end, governmental offices and sinecures figured prominently in the considerations of the upper class; for some, indeed, they were of existential importance. Yet the attraction of government service waned with the declining profitability of state sinecures. Another factor that had more negative repercussions than before is that the late Byzantine aristocracy as a whole was not highly developed; in some cities it seems too small in sheer numerical terms to secure economic stability and create a well-funded demand for material goods.

Moreover, the numerical weight of the other groups of urban consumers also did

not increase over the long run. Rural dwellers who fled into the late Byzantine cities were demographically offset by urban dwellers who fled to foreign lands or switched sides to join the victorious enemies of the empire. Constant military pressure led to additional population losses. Finally, we must add epidemics that began with the great plague of 1347/48 and troubled the empire to the very end; as in the West, the impact was probably more severe in the cities than in the countryside.

Thus, despite the growing importance of the city in late Byzantine society, population figures for the cities generally declined. Only two cities during this period are known to have had more than 10,000 inhabitants. The population of Constantinople may have even exceeded 100,000 during the early Palaiologan period, though shortly before the city fell to the Turks the number was barely half that. The population figures for Thessalonike were on the same order of magnitude—about 40,000—when the city came under Venetian administration in 1423, and they continued to decline until the final occupation by the Turks. Didymoteichon, Serres, and Ioannina may have experienced a short-term population growth during the early Palaiologan period, and the population of Mistra may have continued to grow even into the fifteenth century. But none of these cities is likely to have crossed the ten thousand mark during Byzantine times, and the basic negative trend, which amounted to a diminution of the role of the late Byzantine city as a center of consumption, was not substantially affected by these scattered and short-lived countervailing developments.

In principle, the late Byzantine city also continued to be the place where society's material resources were gathered and concentrated—society's treasuries. The late Byzantine court was not only a center of consumption. It also disposed of all essential commodities and many luxury articles that made this consumption possible. The residences of late Byzantine city governors had warehouses of foodstuffs, grain, oil, salt, and wine. These provisions were used to supply local demand, secure the city's needs in times of crises and war, and engage in commercial and speculative activities during war and peace. The urban residences of the aristocracy included large storehouses, clothing stores, and stables. In preparation for lengthy sieges, the population of the capital, and perhaps of other cities as well, was required to lay in a stock of foodstuffs with governmental subsidies or at their own expense.

In addition to products of the soil, foodstuffs, and luxury articles, the wealth in precious metals—coined and uncoined—was also concentrated in the cities. Revenue from taxes, tariffs, and other state prerogatives such as confiscations, treasure finds, and certain inheritance rights flowed into government coffers. Members of the aristocracy deposited their money and valuables in wooden boxes, chests, and copper vases, sometimes under their own beds in the chambers of their city palaces. Some members of the imperial family and the ruling family clan even had treasurers in their retinue. In times of political crises and threats of confiscation, those at risk tried to bury their wealth or deposit it with friends and acquaintances; evidently the possibility of concealing it in bank accounts did not exist yet. In the early years of the Palaiologan period, however, we notice a trend among aristocrats: they left the restless and dangerous cities with their material assets and sought safety in specially constructed treasure strong-

holds close to the city. From there they also exerted pressure on rival factions during intercity conflicts. However, from the mid-fourteenth century, at the latest, the occupation of the open countryside by Serbs and Turks all but destroyed this option of dealing with private wealth. In the late Byzantine period we then see a growing number of Byzantine aristocrats and men of wealth who transferred their movable assets to Latin colonies such as Negroponte, Korone/Methone, and Crete. Eventually they even deposited them in Italian banks or invested in the public debt of Venice, Genoa, and Caffa. While state finances shrank drastically during the last century of the empire, while the last Byzantine emperors had increasing difficulties making basic payments and were deprived, not least, of the ability to distribute largesse with a generosity appropriate to their self-conception, some Byzantine residents of Constantinople and a few other cities of the empire continued to amass huge private fortunes. They even managed to preserve these fortunes beyond the fall of the empire and its capital, and this secured, at least in part, the role of the late Byzantine city as a center of society's material resources.

Finally, the late Byzantine city continued as a center for the production and distribution of material goods, home to workshops, stores, money-changing tables, market squares or market streets, commercial harbors, public scales, and customs stations. Yet at the same time the late Byzantine city had many elements of a large village. The aristocracy that owned vast tracts of land and lived in the city brought some of the countryside and of agriculture into the city. There were many places with an urban character where residents were predominantly peasants and small landholders. And many other city dwellers also engaged in agricultural activities part-time. Urban life was very profoundly shaped by the rhythm of agricultural work. The two late Byzantine *metropoleis*, in particular, had gardens, vineyards, fields, and pastures or wasteland within their city walls and fortifications. A Latin source tells us that, already in the early fourteenth century, only a third of the capital was still inhabited. However, this is not necessarily and unequivocally a sign of urban decay. At this time the cities in the Latin West, as well, still had close ties to agriculture. Western cityscapes of the high and late Middle Ages show not only tall houses and narrow streets behind the city walls, but also gardens and open space. Sowing and harvesting played a central role also for most city dwellers in the West.

Moreover, during this period we can also observe opposite trends, at least temporarily, that is, the urbanization of territories lying outside the walls of some cities. These territories became more densely settled, were partially fortified, and were no longer used exclusively for agriculture. In Didymoteichon this kind of development came to an abrupt halt during the civil war of 1342; in a few other cities, such as Mistra, it may have lasted longer and continued. Conversely, the ruralization of urban territory, also in the case of Constantinople, did not actually reach the point where the city dissolved into individual villages that were isolated from one another and had their own fortifications. Notwithstanding the shrinkage and reductions, Constantinople remained to the very end a place where people not only sowed and harvested but traded, both foreign products and goods from the city's own artisanal production.

*The Economic Typology of Late Byzantine Cities and Settlements*

We have very few late Byzantine descriptions of cities that yield information about the economic profile of the cities and their classification according to various economic types. Rarer still are urban tax registers with precise population figures, concrete structures of activities, and a careful breakdown of economic activities. As far as late Byzantine Constantinople is concerned, however, we can draw on various descriptions to gain some impression of the city's everyday economic life. A letter by the metropolitan Matthew of Ephesos from the 1330s or 1340s describes how an unnamed man had to run the gauntlet in an unnamed city, which can only be Constantinople. Matthew does not tell us why the man, who was not poor and probably had some standing, became the laughingstock of the citizens and the victim of their persecution. But he does mention that people παντός . . . τῆς πόλεως μέρους, under the arcades, in the markets, and in the boulevards were engaged in what the metropolitan considered reprehensible behavior. The victim could not appear in the market, go to the harbor, or enter the court building or a church without being verbally and physically abused by smiths, tavern keepers, cobblers, shipbuilders, and construction workers. The poor wretch could neither buy nor sell anything, his tormentors would rob him of money and goods under the pretense of a cruel sport.<sup>1</sup>

Very different, and much more concrete, was the parading and foraging of an urban notable, one Demetrios Katablattas Katadokeinos, a judge of the *velum*, who became the target of a literary invective by the humanist John Argyropoulos in the capital during the last years of the Byzantine empire. Argyropoulos described his arrogant promenading in his official attire "through the marketplace and the other city streets" (διὰ μέσης τῆς ἀγορᾶς καὶ τῶν ἄλλων τῆς πόλεως ἀγυιῶν), followed by a foray with a knapsack through the city's commercial section at the Golden Horn to the fish market, the vegetable market, past the cheese vendors, caviar sellers, and pork and fruit merchants. Other forays took him through the quarters of the artisans and merchants, who worked on the street and offered their wares, with a stop among the potters and in various merchant shops, where he either had vendors slip him much sought-after victuals and artisanal products free of charge or purchased them at greatly reduced prices with dubious tricks. At the end of the expedition he enjoyed some wine free of charge at the tavern of a well-known wine seller.<sup>2</sup>

Both accounts depict a city with a very lively economic life, diverse trades located in different quarters (the mention of potters, cobblers/leatherworkers, shipbuilders, and construction workers is perhaps more than coincidental), busy market activities that seem to have been centered especially along the shores of the Golden Horn, while the Mese, the main street through the center of the city, seems to have been devoted more

<sup>1</sup> D. R. Reinsch, *Die Briefe des Matthaios von Ephesos im Codex Vindobonensis Theol. Gr. 174* (Berlin, 1974), 120–23.

<sup>2</sup> P. Canivet and N. Oikonomides, "La Comédie de Katablattas: Invective byzantine du XVe siècle," *Δίπτυχα* 3 (1982–83): 53ff.

to display than to practical economic activity. Only an early fourteenth-century Latin list of activities in the capital mentions *fossatores* (agricultural laborers) explicitly alongside “*piscatores aut mercatores, seu marinarii, vel artifices*”;<sup>3</sup> in the eyes of contemporaries, the picture of Constantinople was not dominated by agricultural activities. For Byzantines and Latins alike, the city was and is the κοινὸν ἐμπόριον γῆς ὁμοῦ (καὶ) θαλάττης (“the common emporium of land and sea”),<sup>4</sup> the “*opportunum totius orientis emporium Christianitatis*,”<sup>5</sup> where “*concurrunt fere omnes nationes mundi*.”<sup>6</sup>

The only city that was at least roughly and for a time comparable to the capital in the late Byzantine period was Thessalonike in Macedonia. It was variously described as a μεγαλόπολις and occasionally also as an ἀγορά (marketplace) that offered goods from everywhere.<sup>7</sup> Until it was lost to the Byzantine Empire, in the late fourteenth century, and even thereafter, the πόλις or *civitas* of Ainos in the delta of the Hebros (Marica) was surely representative of the medium-sized port city. According to Kritoboulos of Imbros, it was “important for many different reasons: because of large revenues, a favorable location, the fertility of the soil, and many other things.” Its inhabitants guided seagoing vessels through the Aegean and rivergoing vessels up the Marica. They carried on trade especially with the hinterland and the offshore islands. They lived from agriculture, fishing, and hunting, and they grew wealthy, particularly from the intensive production of and wide-ranging trade in salt.<sup>8</sup> The shipyard that is attested in the fifteenth century<sup>9</sup> may have already existed during Byzantine times. Leaving aside Ainos’ favorable river links with the hinterland and the particularly rich maritime saltworks, the late Byzantine Empire had, at least for a time, a few other port cities comparable in type and size: Smyrna on the western shore of Asia Minor, Mesembria on the western shore of the Black Sea, and Monemvasia on the east coast of the Peloponnese, to mention a few. Rhaidestos and Herakleia on the northern shore of the Sea of Marmara, Agathopolis and Medeia south of Mesembria, and Christoupolis west of Ainos were probably cities of the same type, though surely somewhat smaller. Saltworks of at least local importance were found at some of these cities. Smyrna and Herakleia are known to have had shipyards,<sup>10</sup> and smaller ship repairs

<sup>3</sup> (Ps.-) Brocardus, “Directorium ad Passagium faciendum,” in *Recueil des historiens des croisades: Documents arméniens* (Paris, 1906), 2:455.

<sup>4</sup> *Actes de Lavra*, ed. P. Lemerle, A. Guillou, N. Svoronos, and D. Papachryssanthou, Archives de l’Athos, 4 vols. (Paris, 1970–81), 3:23 (hereafter *Lavra*).

<sup>5</sup> P. Herde, “Politik und Rhetorik in Florenz,” *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 47 (1965): 190, excerpt from a letter of Coluccio Salutati to Pope Boniface IX, dated 11 October 1397.

<sup>6</sup> F. Thiriet, *Délibérations des assemblées vénitiennes concernant la Roumanie*, 2 vols. (Paris-The Hague, 1966–71), 2:325 (no. 1460).

<sup>7</sup> *Das Register des Patriarchats von Konstantinopel*, ed. H. Hunger and O. Kresten (Vienna, 1981–), 1:248 (no. 27) (hereafter *PRK*); “Demetrii Cydonii Occisorum Thessalonicae Monodia,” PG 109:641; L. Maksimović, “Charakter der sozial-wirtschaftlichen Struktur der spätbyzantinischen Stadt (13.–15. Jh.),” *JÖB* 31.1 (1981): 152.

<sup>8</sup> *Critobuli Imbriotae Historiae*, ed. D. R. Reinsch (Berlin-New York, 1983), 103f (12.1ff).

<sup>9</sup> *Lavra*, 3:178f.

<sup>10</sup> G. Makris, *Studien zur spätbyzantinischen Schifffahrt* (Genoa, 1988), 158; B. S. Pseutonkas, Φιλόθεου Κόκκινου Λόγοι καὶ Ὁμιλίαις (Thessalonike, 1981), 248.

and rebuilding may have been done at Mesembria, contrary to current opinion.<sup>11</sup> All these cities also had agrarian interests, with agricultural facilities and peasant inhabitants; however, this agrarian component did not dominate the urban economy but was subordinated to it.

Clearly distinct from these cities is the type of the small country town, which appears in another letter by the metropolitan of Ephesos. In 1332 Matthew was appointed administrator of the metropolis of Brysis in Thrace. He described his first encounter with the city in a letter to a correspondent: it is small in size and its houses are low—which probably means single-story—and not very numerous. The inhabitants are peasants and cattle farmers, but also artisans, meat sellers, and grocers. Fish and fish-mongers, however, are completely unknown. Nor does there seem to be a physician. Often the city's inhabitants are forced to eat the fruits of the fields while they are still unripe, with unsalutary effects on their health.<sup>12</sup>

The portrait we get is thus of a country town that lived above all from agriculture and livestock breeding, but that also had a variety of artisans and merchants. The complete absence of fish on the local market and the utter dependence on the local harvest seem to indicate that economic ties to other towns and regions were poorly developed. The only thing that does not quite fit into this picture is the special mention of meat vendors, for the local demand is unlikely to have been large enough. However, the capital was only a few days' journey from Brysis, and perhaps this small inland city was among the outlying towns that supplied Constantinople with food. The young Demetrios Kydones gives us a very fragmentary description of a similar small town in Thrace, where he spent a very short time at the beginning of September 1346. He mentions its market and reports on the daily events: an oxcart that gets stuck in the muck of the street, a quarrel over borrowed money and the interest demanded, a sale of slaves who were surely war captives.<sup>13</sup>

Both reports were penned by intellectuals from the big city: in their eyes the civilized world ended right outside the gates of Constantinople or Thessalonike. In fact, the late Byzantine Empire seems to have had other larger, and especially more attractive, inland cities such as Philippopolis, Adrianople, Serres, and of course Mistra: with more to offer, more civilization, livelier contacts with the outside world, though not necessarily with less agriculture. By contrast, the fortress of Sakkos near Selymbria, destroyed by fire in 1322, seems to have had little in common with a city. The place had a wall (though already dilapidated) with a single gate, the houses were of wood, its inhabitants were exclusively peasants and completely uneducated. The flames killed a total of 133 residents, mostly women, children, and old people. The inhabitants also lost all their livestock and other movable property. Extrapolating from the number of victims,

<sup>11</sup> G. L. Tafel and G. M. Thomas, *Urkunden zur älteren Handels- und Staatsgeschichte der Republik Venedig*, 3 vols. (Vienna, 1856–57), 3:244f.

<sup>12</sup> S. I. Kourouzes, *Μανουήλ Γαβαλάς εἶτα Ματθαῖος μητροπολίτης Ἐφέσου, (1271/2–1355/60)*, vol. 1, *Tà Βιογραφικά* (Athens, 1972), 271ff.

<sup>13</sup> *Démétrius Cydonès, Correspondance*, ed. R.-J. Loenertz, 2 vols. (Vatican City, 1956–60), 1:26ff (no. 5).

scholars have estimated the total population at 500.<sup>14</sup> Still, Sakkos is called only a χωρίον and φρούριον; it is not even a πολίχτιον.

What is striking is that the typology of late Byzantine urban culture is impoverished, a result of the fact that the urban economy was very uniform. Contemporary western Europe had a great variety of urban economies: from centers of long-distance trade and centers of production for export trade with a complex or one-dimensional economic orientation, to residence cities and farming towns (*Ackerbürgerstädte*). In Byzantium these clear qualitative differences in urban types are largely reduced to quantitative differences, to differences in the ratio of agrarian to nonagrarian components and, at most, to a certain degree of differentiation between inland cities and port cities. Western differences between seats of lordships and cities with civic self-government were modified in Byzantium: every larger city, and many smaller ones, as well, were centers of a regional administration, even if these regions shrank in the later years and their administrative tasks were reduced. This uniform picture of Byzantine cities undoubtedly has a lot to do with the still inadequate state of our knowledge, but it could also be the result of specific urban structures in Byzantium and of urban development in the late Byzantine period.

#### *The Economic Topography of Late Byzantine Cities*

A specific economic topography for late Byzantine cities is visible only in outlines and for the larger towns. Although it is very likely that many city dwellers did not live where they worked, we cannot detect anywhere a spatial separation of urban living and working spaces. The usual work space of an artisan or merchant was also in late Byzantine times the workshop, the ἐργαστήριον. Only an added explanatory word (καπηλικόν), or the replacement of the general term with a specialized one (μαγκιπεῖον [bakery], σιτοπωλεῖον [grain shop], σαρδαμαρεῖον [general store], σαπωνάριον [soap maker's and seller's], and so on) reveal whether we are looking at the production or sale of goods. Even then, some vagueness can remain, as we see from the word τζοχαρεῖον, which usually describes the shop of a cloth merchant but does not entirely rule out a workshop for the production of cloth. Alongside these solid buildings, sometimes furnished with additional storehouses for raw materials and finished goods, there were also simple tables and primitive huts and tents that provided money changers, grocers, sellers of prepared food, and probably also some small artisans with a more or less permanent and secure place of work (τραπεζοτόπια, καμάραι, μέλαθρα, σκηναί). Many, if not most, of the artisans and merchants did not own their workshops and places but only leased them, paying house and land rent to the landowning aristocrats, churches, monasteries, or the state. However, this arrangement was not unique to the Byzantine city, nor did it necessarily impede the development of trade and commerce in all late Byzantine cities.

<sup>14</sup> *Ioannis Cantacuzeni Historiarum libri quattuor*, ed. J. Schopen, 3 vols. (Bonn, 1828–32), 1:136, 144f (I.28, 30) (hereafter Kantakouzenos).

Workshops and stores were occasionally grouped with residential houses and other buildings around a shared court, and the whole assemblage formed a small economic unit. Such units are attested in the small town of Peritheorion and in various quarters of the large cities of Thessalonike and Constantinople.<sup>15</sup> Special artisanal quarters are mentioned only very occasionally and vaguely. From around 1330 comes information about a *τοποθεσία τῶν καλιγαρίων* (“quarter of the bootmakers”) undoubtedly located in the Blachernae quarter at the gate of the same name.<sup>16</sup> However, we can at best conjecture that soldiers’ boots were actually manufactured there, and that the producers may have been settled there by the founder of the Palaiologan dynasty as part of his program to secure the recaptured capital militarily. From the same source comes a reference to a *περίορος, ἔνθα καταμένουσιν οἱ κοσκινάδες*, probably located in the Hep-tascalon quarter.<sup>17</sup> We have nothing else to confirm or substantiate this reference, even though it is easy to imagine that there was a demand for the products of sieve makers in the late Byzantine economy. By contrast, there certainly was a *ὁδὸς τῶν ζωνάρων* or *via currigianorum* (street of belt makers)<sup>18</sup> and a *ruga pelipariorum*<sup>19</sup> (street of furriers) both also in the early Palaiologan period. However, both of these artisanal centers were located either at or inside the Venetian colony at the Golden Horn, which means that they were more likely set up and named as a result of Latin activities and initiatives. Patras in the Peloponnese also had a quarter or street of cobblers (*vicus seu ruga Cerdonum*),<sup>20</sup> though it, too, dated from the time of Venetian administration of the city, and we cannot say whether it continued to exist after the city passed into Byzantine hands again much later. We also hear about a *χαλκευτικὴ στόα* in Thessalonike,<sup>21</sup> a portico of the coppersmiths, but that is virtually all we have. Although the naming of a quarter or a street after a trade does not necessarily mean that only or primarily artisans of this trade worked there, the lack of relevant references, especially when contrasted with the relatively frequent attestations from the Latin colonies after 1204, may in fact indicate a relatively low density of artisanal establishments and activities in late Byzantine cities.

What is attested, however, is a stronger concentration of urban economic life around city gates, along the harbors, and in the market squares. Various port gates of Constantinople along the Golden Horn were, in the early Palaiologan period, centers of diverse economic activity, and some of them evidently remained so until the end of the empire. Around 1340 one could find at the gate of St. John the Baptist, or in the area around this gate at the edge of the quarter of Kynegos (τῶν Κυνηγῶν), numerous money-changing booths, various shops, vegetable stalls, sites for grain selling, in addition to

<sup>15</sup> See Ch. Bouras, “Aspects of the Byzantine City, Eighth–Fifteenth Centuries,” *EHB* 515ff.

<sup>16</sup> H. Delehay, “Deux typica byzantins de l’époque des Paléologues,” *Memoires de l’Académie de Belgique, Classe des lettres*, ser. 2, 13/4 (1921): 93.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>18</sup> *MM* 3:88; Tafel and Thomas, *Urkunden*, 3:139.

<sup>19</sup> R.-J. Loenertz, “Notes d’histoire et de chronologie byzantine,” *REB* 17 (1959): 162.

<sup>20</sup> E. Gerland, *Neue Quellen zur Geschichte des lateinischen Erzbistums Patras* (Leipzig, 1903), 203.

<sup>21</sup> Bouras, “Byzantine City,” 518.

workshops, storehouses, and residential houses. At the same time at and around the gate of St. Anastasia, which is probably identical with the Μικρὰ Πύλη, the Small Gate, there were money-changing offices or booths, workshops, and some wooden houses on the offshore beach.<sup>22</sup> At this gate began also one of the capital's large grain markets,<sup>23</sup> where grain coming from across the sea was unloaded. Around 1360 this area also had a bakery, in addition to other workshops.<sup>24</sup> The planned or already completed expansion of the houses situated there, their conversion into workshops and stores, and their use as money-changing stalls attest to the economic prosperity of these locations and to the efforts to make effective use of them.

The shoreline in front of this gate and other gates to the Golden Horn was virtually one continuous economic area: one specialized market abutted another, there were landing sites with storehouses, food stalls, and taverns, where ships were unloaded and loaded, where ship captains could buy provisions and shipping supplies and sailors could make their port stay a pleasant one. Behind these gates, especially in the Petriion and in the Phanari and the Kynegos quarters, were many splendid homes of the rich and noble, as we learn from the fires of 1291 and 1308. One reason these houses were so easily destroyed was that the local cisterns were being used as warehouses and treasuries, which meant there was no water to put out the flames.<sup>25</sup> The harbor of Kontoskalion on Constantinople's other seaward side and the adjoining quarter of Vlanga were surely smaller in size and much less important to the city's economic life. This port was used chiefly to build warships and to station a modest war fleet. However, merchant ships did land there, and in 1350 captain Nikolaos Petrogourgouros, who was a friend of the captain of the fleet, Phakeolatos, and had once used his commercial contacts in the suburb of Selymbria to clear a way into the capital for the rival emperor Kantakouzenos, rented a house for four years from a Venetian resident of Constantinople. Perhaps he did so to get involved in another fleet-building program of Kantakouzenos, but surely also to secure a base at the port for his own commercial activities.<sup>26</sup>

Around the middle of the fourteenth century, the port of Thessalonike was also called the other, the second, city,<sup>27</sup> and the area along the seashore (τὸ πρὸς θάλατταν) was still the most densely populated part of town in the early fifteenth century.<sup>28</sup> However, it certainly could not compete with the economic zone at the Golden Horn of Constantinople, since Thessalonike's harbor still had typically medieval dimensions. It comprised only part of the city's seashore and could be accessed by no more than two

<sup>22</sup> *Lavra*, 3:20ff (no. 123).

<sup>23</sup> J. Chrysostomides, "Venetian Commercial Privileges under the Palaeologi," *StVen* 12 (1970): 343 (no. 11), and cf. 323.

<sup>24</sup> *MM* 1:391ff.

<sup>25</sup> *Georgii Pachymeris De Michaelē et Andronico Palaeologi libri tredecim*, ed. I. Bekker, 2 vols. (Bonn, 1835), 1:178 (2.25), 2:582f (7.10) (hereafter Pachymeres).

<sup>26</sup> A. E. Laiou, "Un notaire vénitien à Constantinople: Antonio Bresciano et le commerce international en 1350," in M. Ballard, A. E. Laiou, and C. Otten-Froux, *Les italiens à Byzance* (Paris, 1987), 127 (no. 29f); Kantakouzenos 2:601 (III.97).

<sup>27</sup> "Cydonii Monodia," 641.

<sup>28</sup> *Ioannis Anagnostae De extremo Thessalonicensi excidio*, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn, 1838), 507 (13).

city gates. We hear virtually nothing about shops, workshops, and storehouses, although they must have existed to a certain extent. Ships could be landed *infra murum*,<sup>29</sup> but we cannot say whether the shipyard that must have existed was located there. It is also an open question whether the *φόρον τοῦ Σταυρίου* in the nearby quarter of Hagios Menas<sup>30</sup> was somehow connected with the activities at the port. And we know even less about the circumstances of other city ports. The port of Glarentza, called Hagios Zacharias, was not protected by walls but may have been secured by two towers.<sup>31</sup> Presumably it had some warehouses and wine depots or wine taverns, where in 1446 the crew of a galley from Ragusa drank ten *caratelli* (small kegs) of wine to make its stay more pleasant, though the *armiraglius Chiarentiae* refused to supply them with wine for the return voyage.<sup>32</sup>

Compared with the lively economic life at the port gates and the shoreline zones, the economic function of the gates in Constantinople's landward walls was more weakly developed; in fact, compared to earlier phases in the city's development, it may have even declined. However, there are good indications that the *porta comerci*,<sup>33</sup> mentioned in Latin sources from the early fourteenth century, was a gate to the immediate hinterland, surely identical with the gate where Byzantine residents of the city had to register and pay dues on the products of their suburban vineyards and gardens. There are also some indications that another large public grain market, the *locus secunde Raybe*, was not located at the gate near Pegai at the Golden Horn, but at the civic gate of Pege, its chief purpose being to receive grain supplies from the Thracian hinterland.<sup>34</sup> Some of the economic installations along the land wall and its gates presumably combined civilian and military functions, as for example the smithy near the gate of Charisios or Adrianople gate, whose proprietor complained about bad business during the siege of the city in 1402.<sup>35</sup> In the early Palaiologan period there were also many booths and tents in front of the city wall, and they formed, also on the land side, something like suburban settlements with certain economic functions, though we are not able to determine their character more precisely. During the final decades before the fall of Constantinople, the landward side, and especially the Adrianople gate, seem to have attained once again greater economic importance: trading links with the Ottoman capital that was beginning to thrive in the Thracian interior functioned reasonably well from time to time and offered the Byzantine customs authorities opportunities for additional revenue.

<sup>29</sup> Tafel and Thomas, *Urkunden*, 3:177.

<sup>30</sup> *Actes de Chilandar*, ed. L. Petit (= *VizVrem* 17 [1911], appendix; repr. Amsterdam, 1968), 60, 62 (no. 27).

<sup>31</sup> *Cronaca dei Tocco di Cefalonia di anonimo*, ed. G. Schirò (Rome, 1975), v. 587f and 596, 262: εἰς τὰ Δίπρυγα; cf. O. J. Schmitt, "Zur Geschichte der Stadt Glarentza im 15. Jahrhundert," *Byzantion* 65 (1995): 123f.

<sup>32</sup> B. Krekić, *Dubrovnik (Raguse) et le Levant au Moyen Age* (Paris, 1961), 352 (no. 1119).

<sup>33</sup> G. M. Thomas and R. Predelli, *Diplomatarium Veneto-Levanticum*, 2 vols. (Venice, 1880–99), 1:165 (no. 80).

<sup>34</sup> Chrysostomides, "Venetian Commercial Privileges," 343 (no. 11), and cf. 323.

<sup>35</sup> MM 2:326ff.

The few bits of information about the gates of Thessalonike do not yet provide a coherent picture regarding their role in the city's economic life during the late Byzantine period. Gates may have had even more economic importance for landlocked cities without communication links across the sea and without ports and port gates. That is certainly the case for the βασιλικὴ πύλη, which separated the ἐμπόριον τῶν Σερρῶν from other parts of the city. The city's main street ended here, and here were also various workshops and bakeries, assuming that the "imperial gate" was identical with the πύλη τοῦ φόρου ("market gate").<sup>36</sup> We can say even less about the gate τοῦ Βαρέως, which separated the city (ἄστυ) of Adrianople from the *emporion* (τῶ κατ' αὐτὴν ἐμπορίῳ); in 1307 the residents themselves torched and destroyed it when the Catalans were approaching.<sup>37</sup>

Of economic importance to the late Byzantine cities were also the settlements of various socioethnic subgroups, especially those of the Jews. Although the Jewish subjects of the empire suffered some legal and social restrictions, they clearly participated in the economic life of the state.<sup>38</sup> Jewish immigration after the end of Latin rule may have been part of Emperor Michael VIII's efforts to resettle his capital and revive it economically.<sup>39</sup> Under the first Palaiologan emperors, the Jewish quarter of Constantinople was moved back into the interior of the city, to the Vlanga section, in the part of the city facing the Sea of Marmara. In the early years of the Palaiologan period, the Jewish quarter, with a synagogue and its own walls and gates, made a name for itself especially as a center for the processing of furs and skins;<sup>40</sup> however, since the foul odors emitted by this type of work plagued the surrounding Christians—clerics and laity—the Jews who engaged in this trade made many influential enemies. Certainly not all residents of the Jewish quarter were tanners and furriers, but we have no concrete evidence for Jewish textile production from the late Byzantine period. Nor can we say with certainty whether the Byzantine Jews who are attested in the early fifteenth century in Constantinople as moneylenders and merchants still lived in the Vlanga.

Jewish communities are also attested in other late Byzantine cities, for example in the port cities of Ainos and Mesembria and in the inland cities of Adrianople, Zichna, and Mistra. However, we know next to nothing about the type of settlements they were and the kind of activities their residents pursued. Thessalonike had a special Jewish quarter similar to that in Constantinople. Probably located in the western quarter of Omphalos, it was destroyed by fire prior to 1420.<sup>41</sup> While we hear complaints from the

<sup>36</sup> Cf. A. E. Laiou, "Κοινωνικές δυνάμεις στὶς Σέρρες στὸ 14ο αἰώνα," in *Οἱ Σέρρες καὶ ἡ περιοχὴ τους ἀπὸ τὴν ἀρχαία σὴ μεσαβυζαντινὴ κοινωνία* (Serres, 1998), 8, 15.

<sup>37</sup> Pachymeres 2:603f (VII.19).

<sup>38</sup> D. Jacoby, "Les Juifs de Byzance: Une communauté marginalisée," in *Οἱ περιθωριακοὶ στὸ Βυζάντιο* (Athens, 1993), 133.

<sup>39</sup> D. Jacoby, "The Jews of Constantinople and Their Demographic Hinterland," in *Constantinople and Its Hinterland*, ed. C. Mango and G. Dagron (Aldershot, 1995), 228.

<sup>40</sup> D. Jacoby, "Les quartiers juifs de Constantinople à l'époque byzantine," *Byzantion* 37 (1967): 168–83.

<sup>41</sup> N. Oikonomides, *Actes de Dionysiou* (Paris, 1968), 112 (no. 19).

city's bishops in the twelfth century that Jews were spreading beyond the confines of this quarter, in the early fifteenth century, at least, the number of Jews in Thessalonike declined sharply,<sup>42</sup> and the remnants of the community that lasted beyond Venetian rule were resettled to Constantinople by Mehmed the Conqueror in 1453 or shortly thereafter.<sup>43</sup> In Thessalonike, much as in the capital, there was a special official for litigation between Jews or for legal demands against Jews.<sup>44</sup> As in Constantinople, these legal quarrels no doubt also concerned economic matters, deliveries of goods, and demands for money. However, there is no concrete mention of or evidence for either Jewish merchants or Jewish artisans during the various periods of late Byzantine rule over Thessalonike.

The economic life of the late Byzantine capital was much more strongly influenced, and in many respects even dominated, by numerous Latin bases and quarters. To be sure, after the Byzantines regained control of the capital, the dominant position of the Venetians in the city at the Golden Horn was seriously shaken up for a brief moment, and its very survival was at stake. But as early as 1277 the Venetians were able to regain through a treaty their old quarter between the Drungarios and Perama gates: it included a *palatium* as the seat of their *bailo*, a *loggia* or *banchus juris*, several churches, among them a church of St. Mark as the parish church for the Venetian community and its representatives and a church consecrated to St. Akindynos, in which the official weights and measures for their commercial activities were deposited, and twenty-five houses provided free of rent and others for rent.<sup>45</sup> Supported by renewed exemptions from tolls and free trading areas, and by a core of permanent residents, the Venetians were able to turn this colony into the center of their economic activities in Constantinople and its environs. Through this colony they played a very significant role in shaping the economic rhythm of the city, especially through trade but also artisanal activities, pursued chiefly by naturalized and protected groups of people from all over the Levant and Romania.<sup>46</sup> Venetian *cives* and *fideles* did not restrict themselves to the colony but owned and rented houses all over the city.

From the end of the thirteenth century, Jewish newcomers were living under the protection of the Venetians in or near the Venetian quarter. Some time before 1319 they were able to negotiate an agreement with the Byzantine Jews in the Vlanga quarter on how to divide the labor in the exercise of their trades, and to obtain from the Byzantine authorities permission to resettle in the quarter at the Sea of Marmara (the quarter of the Byzantine Jews) and work "in eorum curiis siue locis." They were

<sup>42</sup> N. Jorga, *Notes et extraits pour servir à l'histoire des croisades au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1899), I:496.

<sup>43</sup> H. W. Lowry, "From Lesser Wars to the Mightiest War': The Ottoman Conquest and Transformation of Byzantine Urban Centers in the Fifteenth Century," in *Continuity and Change in Late Byzantine and Early Ottoman Society*, ed. A. Bryer and H. Lowry (Birmingham-Washington, D.C., 1986), 333f.

<sup>44</sup> *PRK* 2:104–17 (no. 111); cf. F. Dölger, "Zur Frage des jüdischen Anteils an der Bevölkerung Thessalonikes im XIV. Jahrhundert," in *Παρασπορά* (Ettal, 1961), 378–83.

<sup>45</sup> *MM* 3:88.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. D. Jacoby, "Les Vénitiens naturalisés dans l'Empire byzantin: Un aspect de l'expansion de Venise en Roumanie du XIII<sup>e</sup> au milieu du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle," *TM* 8 (1981): 217–35.

probably also given land to build their own houses.<sup>47</sup> However, the Byzantines soon began repressive measures against the “Venetian” Jews: imperial officials (*factores Imperii*) confiscated their work material, destroyed some of their skins and furs, and exported the rest.<sup>48</sup> Eventually the victims of these attacks withdrew once again to the protection of the Venetian colony. The reason for these measures, apart from the exemption of the “Venetian” Jews from dues, was growing profit for the Byzantine Jews at the expense of the Byzantine treasury, and behind it all was the perhaps even greater danger of an expansion of Venetian influence to more parts of the city at the expense of Byzantine sovereignty. However, the Jewish section in the Venetian quarter flourished in the late Byzantine period, so much so that the houses of the Jews and their wealth, in particular, caught the eye of the plundering Turks in 1453.<sup>49</sup>

In addition to the Venetians, the Pisans, Catalans, and other cities and states of the Latin West also had bases in the late Byzantine capital, through which they exerted influence on the economic life of the city. These foreign communities, too, were governed internally and represented externally by their own consuls, exarchs, and so on. Their members, too, had commercial privileges that gave them an advantage over native trade and commerce. They, too, were in contact with their home cities and countries through intensive maritime traffic and organized ship convoys. Their presence further constricted the Byzantine sphere of action, though they never became serious competition for the Venetians.

All these western communities and their bases inside Constantinople were overshadowed in their influence on the city’s economy by the Genoese settlement outside the city boundaries on the other shore of the Golden Horn. The Byzantines had laid out this settlement with the intention of keeping this more recent ally at a greater distance than the Venetians, and playing the two great Latin competitors off against each other by having them face each other across the narrow inlet. With the allocation of the area of Galata around the year 1268, the Genoese in fact had the chance to build up a separate colony in immediate proximity to the capital. This colony soon grew beyond the usual ensemble of *loggia*, church, bakery, and a limited number of houses, and developed into a fortified suburb where merchants and artisans settled permanently and another Jewish community found a home under Genoese protection. Outside the colony was an ideal place for a harbor, and as early as the middle of the fourteenth century, more ships were dropping anchor here than at the capital’s landing sites.

As a result of this development, the entrance to the Golden Horn was dominated and shaped by Latin colonies with economic structures that had a strong western imprint. Byzantine economic forces, facilities, and institutions, meanwhile, were pushed into the back section of the port, and some moved to the urban regions along the shore of

<sup>47</sup> Thomas and Predelli, *Diplomatarium*, 1:142f (no. 77); cf. E. Kislinger, “Jüdische Gewerbetreibende in Byzanz,” in *Die Juden in ihrer mittelalterlichen Geschichte*, ed. A. Ebenbauer and K. Zatloukal (Vienna, 1991), 107.

<sup>48</sup> Thomas and Predelli, *Diplomatarium*, 1:153 (no. 78).

<sup>49</sup> Nicolo Barbaro, *Giornale dell’assedio di Costantinopoli 1453*, ed. E. Cornet (Vienna, 1856), 56.

the Sea of Marmara. In this way the increasing dependence of Byzantine merchants and artisans on western wares and trading convoys, on western capital, connections, and economic rhythms also manifested itself topographically. At the same time, however, this created special opportunities to purchase such wares, use these ships, participate in the movement of capital, insert oneself into these commercial connections, and adapt to these rhythms. And before the empire fell, at least some Byzantine economic powers were able to take advantage of these opportunities, even if only to a limited extent.

Western economic forces were not able to secure the same kind of advantageous positions in the city of Thessalonike. The Venetians clearly had the strongest presence and position. The city had consuls of the Venetian Republic nearly throughout the entire late Byzantine period. Venetian merchants owned city houses in which they pursued their activities with their employees (*pueri*).<sup>50</sup> They controlled their own measures (and weights) in the city's harbor.<sup>51</sup> Venetian *fideles* were also found in this large Macedonian city.<sup>52</sup> However, the Venetians do not seem to have had a separate quarter or their own church. In response to demands for (more) housing and shops, the Byzantine authorities offered them only "domus parve": according to the Venetian spokesmen, these places were not fit for living and could only be rented to people who sold fish and similar goods. The export of grain, peas, beans, and other produce was not permitted. The Venetian consuls were blocked in various ways in their efforts to gain control of the trade with certain foodstuffs and raw materials and had to take large financial losses. Their legal jurisdictions and authorities were not respected by the Byzantines and were constantly undercut.<sup>53</sup>

Even contacts with the Ragusans, who were at times very active in the city, do not seem to have substantially improved the position of the Venetians in Thessalonike. It appears that the Genoese, however, were able to gain even less influence in the city, even though it has now been shown that they did build up a small colony in Thessalonike, that they had their own consul in the city at least for a time, and that they made various investments in local businesses.<sup>54</sup> By contrast, no concrete evidence has so far been found for the establishment of a consulate in the small town of Kassandreia, reserved for that purpose by the treaty of Nymphaion.<sup>55</sup> Apparently other Latins were not able to form ethnic communities in Thessalonike. We cannot entirely rule out the possibility that Venetians, Ragusans, and Genoese settled permanently in the city either individually or even in groups, and that they pursued artisanal activities alongside commercial work much as they did in Constantinople, but this is not very likely.

<sup>50</sup> Tafel and Thomas, *Urkunden*, 3:168.

<sup>51</sup> Thomas and Predelli, *Diplomatarium*, 1:134: "mensura Veneta, que permanet ad portum dicte terre" (i.e., Thessalonike).

<sup>52</sup> Thiriet, *Délibérations*, 1:305.

<sup>53</sup> Thomas and Predelli, *Diplomatarium*, 1:134 (no. 75) and 166 (no. 80).

<sup>54</sup> M. Balard, *La Romanie génoise: XIIe-début du XVIe siècle*, 2 vols. (Rome, 1978), 1:164.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. I. Ševčenko, "The Zealot Revolution and the Supposed Genoese Colony in Thessalonica," in Προσφορά εις Στ. Κυριακίδην (Thessalonike, 1953), 603-17.

The empire's second city was thus spared the domineering western influence on its economic life and was able to preserve a larger sphere of action for domestic economic elements. During the Palaiologan period, Thessalonike was, more so than Constantinople, the center for a genuine Byzantine economic development, a refuge for Byzantine independence and Byzantine pride. However, the consequence of this seems to have been that the city's economic life took on stronger conservative features, that the new opportunities and forms of economic activity were less readily accepted and embraced, and that the city at the foot of Mount Chortiates did not exude the same kind of economic energy one could feel on the shores of the Golden Horn.

Finally, commercial elements from the Islamic world also played a traditional role in Byzantine cities. When Constantinople reverted to Byzantine control in 1261, the first Palaiologan rulers evidently did not have much difficulty granting Muslim merchants permission to build a new mosque<sup>56</sup> and assigning them a separate quarter in the city,<sup>57</sup> over the opposition from some circles in the Orthodox church. Over the course of the fourteenth century, this colony seems to have taken on an increasingly Turkish flavor and was eventually entirely directed by the Ottomans. However, Ottoman involvement in the life of the capital tended to be political rather than economic in nature; from the end of the fourteenth century, it was above all sailors and soldiers alongside merchants who stood under Ottoman protection in the city and its Byzantine environs.<sup>58</sup> We cannot say yet to what extent Islamic commercial practices were established and enforced in Constantinople with the Turkish *kadi*. Whether Islamic commercial installations spread in Constantinople before 1453 also remains an open question.

The first Turkish interlude in Thessalonike from 1387 to 1403 undoubtedly left behind stronger traces in the city's economic life, but we do not know as much about that as we do about the *axappi* and *janisperi* who lived in the city already before the final Turkish conquest in 1430.<sup>59</sup> The economic infiltration of a Byzantine city prior to its conquest by the Turks had undoubtedly progressed farthest in Philadelphia in Asia Minor, but that was the result of very special circumstances, discussed below.

#### *The Urban Hinterland and Its Importance for the Economy of Late Byzantine Cities*

Turkish pressure on the late Byzantine urban economy was more likely to come from the countryside than from within the city and to be much stronger when it did so. Late

<sup>56</sup> A.-M. Talbot, *The Correspondence of Athanasius I, Patriarch of Constantinople: Letters to the Emperor Andronicus II, Members of the Imperial Family, and Officials* (Washington, D.C., 1975), 84 (no. 41), 350; M. M. Tahar, "La mosquée de Constantinople à l'époque byzantine d'après un manuscrit arabe (BN de Paris)," *Βυζαντικά* 11 (1991): 117–27.

<sup>57</sup> M. Izeddin, "Un texte arabe sur Constantinople byzantine," *JA* 246 (1958): 453–57.

<sup>58</sup> K. Kreutel, *Vom Hirtenzelt zur Hohen Pforte. Frühzeit und Aufstieg des Osmanenreiches nach der Chronik: Denkwürdigkeiten und Zeitläufe des Hauses Osman vom Derwisch Ahmed, genannt 'Aşik Paşa-Sohn* (Graz, 1959), 100 (chap. 61), 113 (chap. 67).

<sup>59</sup> Jorga, *Notes*, 1:439.

Byzantine cities remained tied to the countryside legally because no real urban civic rights had developed by the end of the empire. Cities were linked to the countryside administratively since the authority of the city governors also extended to more or less large segments of the surrounding lands. Cities had social ties to the countryside especially because the big aristocratic landowners lived in the cities, but there were other links as well. Finally, cities were linked with the land economically because the division of labor between city and countryside was relatively weak, and because the peasants produced most of the state taxes from which the cities also lived, since that is where they were spent.

The hinterland was therefore precious to Byzantine cities, but it was fundamentally and permanently threatened by the westward expansion of the Turks and the occupation of land by nomads and peasants of new Turkoman tribes, as early as the end of the thirteenth century in western Asia Minor, and from the middle of the fourteenth century also in the Balkans. For example, as early as 1290 the city of Bilecik, probably Byzantine Belokoma, was so thoroughly surrounded by the Turks of the *beg* Osman that even his wife was not able to reach the city for the wedding of the city's governor. On the other hand, the women of the city's potters and their wares were welcome visitors at the market of the Ottoman-ruled city of Dorylaion/Eskişehir. They enjoyed direct protection from the lord of the market and were effectively shielded against Turkish harassment. Turkish interest in the craft products of the Byzantine city secured its artisans a continued market for their wares; in fact, it seems to have motivated them to expand their production. It is possible that cloth making also profited from this interest, since the white caps in which Osman dressed his soldiers were ordered from Bilecik; although this probably did not happen until after the Turkish occupation of the city, there was undoubtedly continuity with a local artisanal tradition. At times seminomadic Turkoman cattle herders and warriors also used the fortified Byzantine city to store their tools and valuables while they were out on summer pastures.<sup>60</sup> Thus there was not only a heightened demand for artisanal products, but also an increased concentration of material goods in the Bithynian city.

The Lydian city of Philadelphia in the fourteenth century also shows that relations between Byzantine city dwellers and Turkish land dwellers were not necessarily characterized only by hostility and armed conflict. They could also be influenced by multifarious economic and social contacts. In a letter from the 1320s, Manuel Gabalas, a church official from Philadelphia and the future metropolitan Matthew of Ephesos, gave two reasons why towns (πολίσιματα) in this far-off region in the midst of Turkish enemies were still under Byzantine control: "first, because of their fortifications, and (second) because they always find a way to get along with their enemies. This has created such a relationship of trust between them that our people for a very long time now have been holding all the gold and silver the others own in trust for them, all their Persian

<sup>60</sup> Kreutel, *Vom Hirtenzelt*, 32, 65, 23. A. Gallotta, "Il 'mito oguzo' e le origine dello stato ottomano: Una riconsiderazione," in *The Ottoman Emirate, 1300–1389*, ed. E. Zachariadou (Rethymnon, 1993), 52.

belts, rugs, precious mantles, and robes. And there is agreement that neither the emperor nor the military commanders who are appointed from time to time are allowed to appropriate these things.”<sup>61</sup> Fifteenth-century Turkish statements about Belokoma/Bilecik, not entirely unproblematic from a historiographical point of view, are thus confirmed by a Byzantine source that is much closer chronologically. Moreover, what also becomes visible is a very specific economic dimension to the limited autonomy of these cities: the Byzantine emperor and his military officials had no right to question or destroy the economic basis of cooperation between Byzantine subjects and Turkish occupiers. The Byzantine state, pushed out of Asia Minor, subsequently had very little choice but to ask Turkish rulers for a peaceful relationship with the enclave of Philadelphia and plead for an exemption from tribute payments. However, the success of these diplomatic interventions was extremely limited in substance and duration. Much more important to Philadelphia’s continued existence as a Byzantine city was a continually revived will to resist repeated attempts to conquer it, combined with an intensification of cooperation on various levels, especially the economic one. The construction of a mosque in Philadelphia indicates that from the middle of the century the city served not only as a depository for Turkish property but also as the residence of Muslim subjects of Turkish rulers. It was probably this cooperation that made possible the upswing in the city’s textile production and was in turn strengthened by it. Red silk from Alasehir (Philadelphia) gained fame in a larger economic sphere already toward the end of the fourteenth century,<sup>62</sup> but many of the people who bought it surely came from among the Turks who lived in the surrounding area. There are also traces of leatherworking and references to the production of military paraphernalia,<sup>63</sup> and the Turkish countryside was undoubtedly interested in both. In the words of the historian Doukas, for more than a century the city shone like a star in a cloud-darkened sky, remaining unusually large and populous.<sup>64</sup>

Difference in size and a stronger will to resist are not the only reasons why Philadelphia outlived Belokoma as a Byzantine city for nearly one hundred years. It also had to do with the fact that at the end of the thirteenth century the Bithynian city lay right in the path of the main thrust of expansion by the young Ottoman emirate, while the Lydian city, from the middle of the fourteenth century, at the latest, found itself in the shadow of that expansion. The Turkish expansion in Europe that began at this time was driven by a much more consolidated and enlarged Ottoman state. This state did not bother much longer with encircling Byzantine cities and undermining them economically, but moved swiftly to absorb them politically. Being cut off from their hinterland was a profound shock to the Thracian and Macedonian cities, so much so that

<sup>61</sup> Reinsch, *Die Briefe*, 391 (A 18).

<sup>62</sup> I. Beldiceanu-Steinherr, with P. Năsturel, “Notes pour l’histoire d’Alasehir (Philadelphie) au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle,” in *Philadelphie et autres études* (Paris, 1984), 17–37.

<sup>63</sup> Theodore II Laskaris, “Encomium on the City of Nicaea,” PG 140:1345; G. Fatouros, *Die Briefe des Michael Gabras, ca. 1290–nach 1350*, 2 vols. (Vienna, 1973), 2:118 (no. 72), 142f (no. 87). Cf. P. Schreiner, “Zur Geschichte Philadelphieas im 14. Jahrhundert (1293–1390),” *OCP* 35 (1969): 411f.

<sup>64</sup> *Ducæ Historia Turcobyantina*, ed. by V. Grecu (Bucharest, 1958), 41 (IV.3).

many of them surrendered without putting up much resistance for any length of time. But in the European parts of the empire, as well, strategic military goals affected the course of city conquests and the duration of resistance. For while fewer than twenty years separate the first appearance of the Turks outside the walls of Thessalonike from the first Turkish conquest of the city, the same interval lasted more than a century in the case of Constantinople. Among the many reasons for this difference is the fact that the Ottomans ignored the capital after their initial attempts to take it had failed. Eventually they got so used to its presence that Sultan Mehmed had to impose his plans of conquest over strong opposition from within his own ranks. For some of the opponents of the plan, the city had by now also become an access point to the economic world of the Italians, and, like a small circle of late Byzantine entrepreneurs, they tried to participate in it. These entrepreneurs had long since bid farewell to a flourishing urban hinterland, to large estates with many peasants, concentrating entirely on the city and the sea and its economic energy. At least for a short time, this would prove a viable basis on which to carry on, for some even a basis for their very survival.

#### *Banking and Its Role in the Late Byzantine Cities*

As I have already emphasized, in the late Byzantine period the city continued to be the place where the material goods of society flowed together, where the struggle over their distribution took place and decisions about their allocation were made. All propertied classes of late Byzantine society made active use of the possibility of lending money at interest: officials and landowners, clerics and monks, but also merchants and artisans and even servants and peasants. At the same time, however, there also existed during this period a group of professional money dealers and moneylenders. The terms that are used in the sources to describe them—*καταλλάκτης*, *κερματιστής*, *ἀργυροκόπος*, *ἀργυραμοιβός*, and *δανειστής*<sup>65</sup>—indicate that these individuals were primarily money changers and usurers. The classic term *τραπεζίτης*, which describes the money dealer proper in his late Roman and even early Byzantine incarnation,<sup>66</sup> is known only from one literary source in the late Byzantine period;<sup>67</sup> it thus appears to have fallen completely out of use in economic life, like the term *ἀργυροπράτης* before it. In the Latin sources, Byzantine *bancherii* appear as early as the late thirteenth century,<sup>68</sup> though we are not able to determine whether these individuals were simple money changers or more.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. S. Kugeas, "Notizbuch eines Beamten der Metropolis von Thessalonike aus dem Anfang des XV. Jahrhunderts" *BZ* 23 (1914–15): 150, 153; *Ioannis Canani De Constantinopoli anno 1422 oppugnata narratio*, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn, 1838), 464; *Manuelis Philae Carmina*, ed. E. Miller, 2 vols. (Paris, 1855/57), 2:181; 1:457f; *PRK* 1:428, 438, 450, 452; 2:440, 442.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. *ODB* 1:250.

<sup>67</sup> *Philae Carmina*, ed. Miller, 2:181. The alleged *logothetes tou genikou* and *trapezites* Jannis Androuses around 1380 is, according to E. Trapp (personal communication, February 1984), misplaced in *PLP, Addenda*, 10 (no. 90111).

<sup>68</sup> Cf. G. I. Bratianu, *Actes de notaires génois de Péra et de Caffa de la fin du XIII siècle* (Bucharest, 1927), 164.

Late Byzantine society was highly critical not only of usury<sup>69</sup> but also of money changing. For example, the writer Alexios Makrembolites, in a poem from the mid-fourteenth century, denounced the fraudulent practices of a money changer (in the capital) and at the same time mocked his ingratiating “si” and constant “fatte,” which he had acquired in his close dealing with Italian clients and used to show off in front of his own people.<sup>70</sup> So-called καταλλακτικὰ τραπέζια or τραπεζοτόπια, already known from the middle Byzantine period,<sup>71</sup> were found in Constantinople at various city gates, on the Mese, and perhaps in other business thoroughfares as well,<sup>72</sup> and in Thessalonike near the port of the city in the quarter of St. Menas.<sup>73</sup> Some belonged to members of the urban middle class, but for the most part they were in the hands of various aristocratic families and large monasteries, which generally rented them out.<sup>74</sup> It appears that these “money-changing tables” or “places” for them were small, more like booths or add-ons to other buildings rather than permanent houses or larger rooms inside such houses.<sup>75</sup> Professional money dealers on a larger scale and with greater influence are mentioned by the usurper John Kantakouzenos when he seized power in the capital in early 1347: a number of the money changers who did business in their shops (ἐκ τῶν ἐν ἐργαστηρίοις ἐμπορευομένων ἀργυραμοιβῶν) tried to sabotage

<sup>69</sup> Cf. M. A. Poliakovskaia, *Portrety vizantiiskikh intellektualov* (Ekaterinburg, 1992), 129ff, where the findings of older works about the treatises of Nicholas Kabasilas against usury are summarized. Cf. also A. E. Laiou, “The Church, Economic Thought and Economic Practice,” in *The Christian East: Its Institutions and Its Thought. A Critical Reflection*, ed. R. F. Taft, S. J. (Rome, 1996), 454ff, who shows that the Orthodox Church in the 14th century, in the face of an intensifying social crisis and social polarization, developed positions on money lending, trade, profit, and the involvement of clerics and monks in these spheres of economic activity that were even more rigorous than they had been in earlier periods of Byzantine history.

<sup>70</sup> *Philae Carmina*, ed. Miller, 1:457f. On the back of the folio from the 15th-century Florentine manuscript that contains this poem, we find the name Ἀλέξιος ὁ Ἀτζικαντίλης. Cf. A. M. Bandini, *Catalogus codicum manuscriptorum bibliothecae Mediceae Laurentianae* (repr. Leipzig, 1961), 2:172. This might be a reference to the identity of the anonymous individual attacked in the poem, especially since a Tzykandyles is attested around 1340 as the owner of a money-changing booth at one of the gates to the Golden Horn. *Lavra*, 3:24.

<sup>71</sup> Rhalles and Potles, *Σύνταγμα*, 4:469; Zepos, *Jus* 3:492f; Dölger, *Regesten*, 2:69 (no. 1384); cf. A. E. Laiou, “God and Mammon: Credit, Trade, Profit and the Canonists,” in *Tó Βυζάντιο κατά τόν 12ο αιώνα*, ed. N. Oikonomides (Athens, 1991), 290f. On the middle period, see G. Dagron, “The Urban Economy, Seventh–Twelfth Centuries,” *EHB*, 424ff.

<sup>72</sup> *Lavra*, 3:24f; P. Merimée, *Etude sur les arts au Moyen Age* (Paris, 1843), 356; cf. M. J. Siuziumov, *Vizantiiskaia kniga Eparkha* (Moscow, 1962), 144.

<sup>73</sup> MM 2:525 (no. 664).

<sup>74</sup> The money-changer booths and locations that came into the possession of the monastery of Lavra in 1342 had earlier belonged to individuals with very “middle-class” names. However, among the sellers was also one Pinkernissa Palaiologina, a relative of the imperial house. *Lavra*, 3:24f.

<sup>75</sup> P. Schreiner, *Texte zur spätbyzantinischen Finanz- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte in Handschriften der Bibliotheca Vaticana* (Vatican City, 1991), 410 n. 353, believes that these were places of work for both money changers and “real” bankers. However, according to A. Kazhdan (*ODB* 1:250), these shops were small. Around 1400 in Thessalonike, the leaseholder of two changing tables (τραπέζια) that were located next to an ointment shop or perfumery connected them to the shop by creating an access to the tables from the shop καὶ ποιήσῃ μίαν προβολήν, καὶ ἀντὶ καταλλακτικῶν μυρμηκικῆν προβολήν ἀποτελέσῃ αὐτά (MM 2:516 [no. 666]).

his plan to levy a special tax on his new subjects.<sup>76</sup> The passage clearly seeks to say that these “money changers” were not people behind simple changing tables, but owners or operators of banking businesses, who had very specific business premises, one could almost say they had real business offices. The fact that the chronicler and former emperor does not speak of *τραπεζίται* in this passage supports the conjecture that this traditional occupational term was in fact no longer in use in his day. The reason for the noticeable absence of this term could only have been that the traditional meaning of the term no longer corresponded to the concrete circumstances in the middle of the fourteenth century, and no longer did justice to the realities of financial business in the empire, which had been changed by the presence of the Italians.

These late Byzantine bankers become more clearly visible toward the end of the fourteenth and in the early fifteenth century. A banker named Manoli Frangalexies was active in Constantinople and Pera between 1391 and 1402. On various occasions he sold gold and silver bullion to the Genoese authorities. He was evidently well-off, for he had his own church or chapel with a priest who received, or was supposed to receive, a house from him in return for his services.<sup>77</sup> The official from the metropolis of Thessalonike who has been mentioned above, and whose identity is still unknown, had dealings with a woman pawnbroker from the well-known and influential Rhadenos family and with two money changers (*καταλλάκται*), also from respected circles in the city, in connection with his work for the church and in his private life.<sup>78</sup> When the Venetians took over Thessalonike, he resettled in Constantinople, while his family initially stayed behind. From the capital he sent his family the funds it needed by way of cashless transfers. These transfers were handled by two *archontes* from the capital, in whose shops the official had to appear several times, and by their business partner in Thessalonike, of whom, however, we know nothing beyond his name.<sup>79</sup> The income from a new benefice in the capital, granted by the emperor himself, was occasionally delivered by a money changer named Mankaphas acting on behalf of an *archon* named Galiotos. The latter seems to have been active as a secretary (*γραμματικός*) and had an important role in the distribution of the income of the benefice without receiving any profit himself.<sup>80</sup> In order to fulfill his official obligations and take care of his family's needs, this interesting late Byzantine anonymous official was able and forced to call on the services of a woman pawnbroker, several money changers, and various bankers in Constantinople and Thessalonike.

<sup>76</sup> Katakouzenos, 3:40 (IV.6).

<sup>77</sup> Balard, *La Romanie génoise*, 1:271; MM 2:339 (no. 541); cf. A. E. Laiou, “The Byzantine Economy in the Mediterranean Trade System: 13th–15th Centuries,” *DOP* 34 (1980): 221.

<sup>78</sup> On the Rhadenos family, cf. K.-P. Matschke, *Die Schlacht bei Ankara und das Schicksal von Byzanz* (Weimar, 1981), 167f. A Platyskalites may have been city commander in Thessalonike when the city was handed over to the Venetians in 1423; cf. A. Vacalopoulos, *A History of Thessaloniki* (Thessalonike, 1972), 64. The second *katallaktes*, named Chalatzes, had family ties with the Platyskalites; cf. Kugeas, “Notizbuch,” 153.

<sup>79</sup> Kugeas, “Notizbuch,” 148f; cf. Schreiner, *Texte*, 409 n. 348.

<sup>80</sup> Kugeas, “Notizbuch,” 150.

The Venetian merchant Giacomo Badoer also handled his business dealings in Constantinople between 1436 and 1440 through various Greek bankers. Much like Badoer's Venetian house bank Carlo Capello and other banks operated by Italians in the Byzantine capital, they functioned primarily as *banchi di scrit(t)a*,<sup>81</sup> transferring funds from his debtors into accounts he held with them and receiving payment on account from his customers. In addition, they also helped him with exchange transactions and provided all the essential services that the modern banking business as developed by the Italians had to offer by this time.<sup>82</sup> Badoer had simultaneous commercial relations especially with "chir Chostantin Critopulo [Kritopoulos] dal banco" or "de la zeca":<sup>83</sup> he sold him soap from Gaeta and cloth imported from different places and of varied quality, and procured from him a large batch of raw silk.<sup>84</sup> When the Greek banker (and merchant) went bankrupt in early 1439, a seven-year schedule of compensation for his creditors was set up in accord with a decision by the Venetian *bailo* in Constantinople.<sup>85</sup> When Badoer left the Byzantine capital prior to the end of this seven-year period, he ceded his claim to the Greek banker Nicolo Sufiano for 30% of its nominal value.<sup>86</sup> It was with Sufiano that Badoer had set up an account immediately upon his arrival at the Golden Horn. Among the Greek bankers in Badoer's account book, Sufiano held first place in terms of the volume of his business transactions, and he was a respectable fourth in the list of all money dealers with whom Badoer had business ties.<sup>87</sup>

Apart from the banking entrepreneurs Sophianos, Sardinios, and Kritopoulos, a variety of smaller bankers (*più bancharoti*) also appear in Badoer's business records,<sup>88</sup> among them one Franchopulo (Phrangopoulos) and one Xatopulo (Xanthopoulos). However, it seems that they, too, were not simple money changers, but performed other services for their clients as well.<sup>89</sup> Finally, Badoer took out larger sums from local moneyed men as loans (*per imprestado* or *oxura*): for instance, 600 hyperpera from a certain Lascari Teologo at a yearly interest rate of 10%,<sup>90</sup> and about the same sum from the Jew Elia de David at 12 or 14%.<sup>91</sup> In each case he deposited as a security several

<sup>81</sup> Occasionally Badoer himself uses this term; see G. Badoer, *Il libro dei conti: Costantinopoli, 1436–1440*, ed. U. Dorini and T. Bertelè (Rome, 1956), 362 (hereafter Badoer).

<sup>82</sup> Cf. N. Oikonomides, *Hommes d'affaires grecs et latins à Constantinople: XIIIe–XVe siècles* (Montreal, 1979), 66f.

<sup>83</sup> On his role in late Byzantine minting see K.-P. Matschke, "Münzstätten, Münzer und Münzprägung im späten Byzanz," *RN* 152 (1997): 191–210.

<sup>84</sup> On the business activities of Kritopoulos, see M. M. Shitikov, "Konstantinopol' i venetsianskaia trgovlia v pervoi polovine XV. v. po dannym knigi shchetov Dzhakomo Badoera," *VizVrem* 30 (1969): 55f.

<sup>85</sup> Badoer, 584.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 796.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. the list in Shitikov, "Konstantinopol'," 55.

<sup>88</sup> Badoer, 96.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. Badoer, 96, 153, 178, 371, 656. Incidentally, the Venetian merchant Badoer describes them on one occasion as *banchieri* and then again as *banchari* or *bancharoti*. Apparently he was not clear himself on the nature and extent of their activities.

<sup>90</sup> Badoer, 646f.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 313.

bales of cloth, some of which bore his seal.<sup>92</sup> Alongside pawnbrokers and money changers we thus find a variety of late Byzantine bankers who had real banking businesses and engaged in modern banking activities. And much like their western models and senior partners, they combined money business with commerce, thus breaking free from traditional Byzantine limitations and restrictions and developing into real entrepreneurs of early Mediterranean capitalism.

These late Byzantine financial institutions undoubtedly did not attain the entrepreneurial stature and geographic range of the large Italian banks, and so far they have only been solidly attested in the large cities of Constantinople and Thessalonike. In smaller towns where there were no banks and probably no professional money changers either, merchants (local or transient) occasionally took their place and, before witnesses, exchanged large coins for small ones and vice versa.<sup>93</sup> Money changers are also attested among the camp followers of besieging armies,<sup>94</sup> and they were undoubtedly a presence at fairs. Pawn transactions and usury were found everywhere, for example in the small Thracian town in which the young Demetrios Kydones in 1346 witnessed the brutal actions a creditor took against a debtor.<sup>95</sup> The political decline of the empire and the constant sieges laid against its cities drove not only simple folk but even many aristocrats into the arms of the usurers, forcing them to borrow money at high and rising interest rates to support themselves,<sup>96</sup> and to use their property and mobile assets as a security and relinquish them if they were unable to meet the contractual repayments.<sup>97</sup> In addition to this consumption credit, however, money was also borrowed against security to purchase and lease houses and workshops,<sup>98</sup> to acquire and improve productive land,<sup>99</sup> to invest the borrowed money in speculative business deals,<sup>100</sup> and

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 647.

<sup>93</sup> One such case, which may have occurred in the city of Polystylon/Abdera, is documented in Schreiner, *Texte*, 131 (nos. 6, 26), commentary, 134, 410.

<sup>94</sup> *Canani De Constantinopoli narratio*, 464. Although this was a siege army of the Turkish sultan Murad outside the gates of the Byzantine capital, this does not rule out that at least some of the money changers accompanying it were Greeks.

<sup>95</sup> *Démétrius Cydonès, Correspondance*, ed. Loenertz, 1:30 (no. 5); *Demetrios Kydones, Briefe*, trans. F. Tinnefeld (Stuttgart, 1981), 1.1: (no. 15).

<sup>96</sup> On the development of interest in the late Byzantine period, cf. N. P. Matses, “Ο τόκος ἐν τῇ νομολογίᾳ τοῦ πατριαρχείου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως κατὰ τοὺς ἰδ’ καὶ ἑ’ αἰῶνας,” *ΕΕΒΣ* 38 (1971): 71–83. However, according to E. S. Papagianni, Ἡ νομολογία τῶν ἐκκλησιαστικῶν δικαστηρίων τῆς βυζαντινῆς καὶ μεταβυζαντινῆς περιόδου σέ θέματα περιουσιακοῦ δικαίου (Athens, 1992), 1:48, the patriarchal register contains only two texts from the years 1399 and 1400 with concrete indications of the interest demanded; in the first case it was 26.6%, in the second case, 15%.

<sup>97</sup> On corresponding problems during the first great siege of Constantinople at the end of the 14th century, see D. Bernicolas-Hatzopoulos, “The First Siege of Constantinople by the Ottomans (1394–1402) and Its Repercussions on the Civilian Population of the City,” *ByzSt* 10.1 (1983): 39–51. On the general picture, see K.-P. Matschke, “Geldgeschäfte, Handel und Gewerbe in spätbyzantinischen Rechenbüchern und in der spätbyzantinischen Wirklichkeit,” *Jahrbuch für Geschichte des Feudalismus* 3 (1980): 183ff.

<sup>98</sup> Cf. the business activities of Goudeles Tyrannos at the end of the 13th century in and around Smyrna, in *MM* 4:286.

<sup>99</sup> *MM* 1:400f.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 511.

in one case even to purchase raw materials and resources to carry on a workshop whose survival was threatened.<sup>101</sup> This means that late Byzantine society strove to put its remaining wealth also to productive use, to find new ways to live and survive, even if these efforts ultimately proved to be insufficient.<sup>102</sup>

*Crafts and Their Role in the Late Byzantine Cities*

A number of factors explain why the status of crafts in the late Byzantine cities was very unfavorable, with the living conditions of urban artisans highly uncertain and possibilities of development exceedingly limited: the attractive supply of western mass goods at most urban markets, competition from immigrant and naturalized artisans in the Latin quarters and colonies, and the fact that the countryside was at least partially supplied with the products of village craft industry and part-time peasant artisans. Still, at least the larger cities had all the necessary craftsmen to satisfy the basic needs for food and clothing: there were bakers, butchers, cooks, tailors, and cobblers. Their numbers were sometimes large but always manageable since they could essentially work only for the local market, their own city, and sometimes also for a circumscribed slice of the surrounding land. Moreover, baking, slaughtering, sowing, even spinning and weaving went on in many private households. There is also evidence in late Byzantine Constantinople and in some provincial cities of craftsmen such as smiths, joiners, coopers, ropemakers, and cartwrights, and scattered references to specialized trades such as horseshoe blacksmiths, boilermakers, weapons blacksmiths, and goldsmiths. However, we have no indications that such trades were clustered in specific cities.

We can detect a few larger groups of artisans or manual workers, especially but not only in Constantinople. To begin with there is the group of construction workers. Constantinople was the site of a lot of building activity in the first decades after its return to Byzantine control. The city walls, harbors, and gates were extensively repaired and rebuilt. Palaces, churches, and monasteries were built anew or restored and renovated. The new dynasty and the aristocratic clan associated with it spared no expense to restore the capital's representative Byzantine appearance.<sup>103</sup> Later the flow of funds for public construction was much less generous. Still, lucrative construction projects were awarded even after 1350. Work on the fortifications continued off and on up to the end of the empire; individual segments, such as the Golden Gate, were reinforced and expanded. The city's harbors, especially the harbor of Kontoskalion on the Sea of Marmara, were dredged at regular intervals and, if necessary, newly fortified.

On these and other occasions we hear of the capital's οἰκοδόμοι, τέκτονες, and λεπτοῦργοί, the masons and carpenters. Construction workers manned Constantinople's

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 372ff.

<sup>102</sup> On the international money business of aristocratic entrepreneurs in the late period and the depositing of large assets in Italian banks, see K.-P. Matschke, "Commerce, Trade, Markets, and Money, Thirteenth–Fifteenth Centuries," *EHB* 803–5.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. A.-M. Talbot, "The Restoration of Constantinople under Michael VIII," *DOP* 47 (1993): 243–61.



1. St. Phloros, a stonemason, and St. Hermolaos, a metalworker. Church of St. Peter in Kouvaras, Attica, fresco, 13th century (after N. Panselinou, “Άγιος Πέτρος Καλυβίων Κουβαρά ’Αττικής,” Δελτίον τῆς Χριστιανικῆς Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἐταιρείας, ser. 4, vol. 14 [1987–88])

walls as guards in 1328, in 1348 they and other artisans took up arms to fight against the Genoese of Pera,<sup>104</sup> and they appear repeatedly in patriarchal and notarial documents.<sup>105</sup> At the large state and private building projects they were usually supervised and directed by ἐπιστάται (“foremen”), who also paid them on orders from the person commissioning the project.<sup>106</sup> In general they were under the authority of the imperial παλατοφύλαξ,<sup>107</sup> who could use them for repair and construction projects at the city’s palaces.

A second larger group were the seamen, that is, all those who lived off the sea: the many boatmen who, with their boats and barges, served the daily traffic between Constantinople and Pera, and who maintained maritime links with the suburbs on the Thracian side of the Sea of Marmara and with the Turkish landing sites on the other shore also during times of political trouble, civil wars, and military confrontations with the Latins and Turks; the no less numerous fishermen who set up their fishing installations (ἐποχαί) at the shores of the city or close to it, or sailed the Sea of Marmara, the Bosphoros, and the entrance to the Black Sea in search of a good catch and full nets; finally, the workers who operated saltworks and supplied the government depots with their products, and who were probably not very numerous in the area around Constantinople. With some qualifications we could add to this group also the porters who kept the activities at the harbor running, loading and unloading ships and transporting wares from and to the storehouses. Native and foreign shipowners and captains preferred to find sailors for their trips across the sea in these circles, and imperial admirals recruited rowers for their war galleys and guard ships among these men.

These *stenites*,<sup>108</sup> seamen from the straits, continued to be a very restless group in the late Byzantine period, as well. There were constant conflicts with the Genoese colony of Pera over fishing grounds and the size of catches, and with Venetian shipowners over the transport of people and goods. Toward the end of the empire they showed clear sympathies for the Turks and were therefore watched and punished by the Byzantine authorities: Latin accounts tell us that in 1433, for example, Emperor John VIII had six hundred fishing huts at the shores below the city wall destroyed to prevent a coup against the capital and the imperial government by their occupants in league with the Turks, or to exact revenge for such a planned action.<sup>109</sup> The *mezas doux*<sup>110</sup> and possibly other naval officers had the formal right to draft them for service as rowers. The right to tax their catches was exercised by a τῆς ἀλιευτικῆς προστατῶν, who also oc-

<sup>104</sup> Kantakouzenos, 1:292 (I.56); *Nicephori Gregorae Byzantina historia*, ed. by L. Schopen, vols. 1–2; ed. I. Bekker, vol. 3 (Bonn, 1829–55), 1:419 (IX.6), 1:851 (XVII.3).

<sup>105</sup> MM 2:486f; G. Ferrari dalle Spade, “Registro Vaticano di atti bizantini di diritto privato,” *Studi bizantini* 4 (1935): 262, 265.

<sup>106</sup> H. Delehayé, “Constantini Acropolitae, hagiographi byzantini, Epistularum manipulus,” *AB* 51 (1933): 280.

<sup>107</sup> K. N. Sathas, *Μεσαιωνικὴ βιβλιοθήκη*, 7 vols. (Venice, 1872–94), 6:649.

<sup>108</sup> Term in J. Darrouzès, “Lettres de 1453,” *REB* 22 (1964): 89.

<sup>109</sup> Jorga, *Notes*, 1:559f; cf. K.-P. Matschke, “Situation, Organisation und Aktion der Fischer in Konstantinopel und Umgebung in der byzantinischen Spätzeit,” *Byzantinobulgarica* 6 (1980): 292.

<sup>110</sup> Talbot, *Correspondence*, 24; cf. Makris, *Studien*, 109.

cupied a high rank in the late Byzantine hierarchy of offices.<sup>111</sup> They had to pay landing fees (σκαλιατικόν)<sup>112</sup> and perhaps also crossing fees (διαβατικόν) to the *kommerkiarioi* and other imperial functionaries for their barges and ferries, which they rented out and perhaps used for regular traffic.

Finally, this large group in the late Byzantine capital also included rural folk, that is, city dwellers who engaged in agricultural work: dependent peasants and small landowners, gardeners (κηπουροί) and vintners (ἀμπελικοί, ἀμπελουργοί) or garden and vineyard workers, and residents of Constantinople who owned a garden or vineyard and worked it themselves or used day laborers who lived in the city and were hired for maintenance and harvest work on either side of the city walls. It is these people, in particular, who are described as σκαπανεῖς in Greek sources (that is, people who work with the hoe),<sup>113</sup> and who appear in the Latin sources as *fossores* (*vinearum*). The import of foreign wine by Italian merchants, of *vinum de Cotrono* (from Korone in the Peloponnese), de Turpia (from Turkey), and from other wine-growing regions (especially Malvasia from Crete) seriously affected production and market conditions for vintners, vineyard owners, and vineyard workers around Constantinople. So much so that Emperor John V sent a delegation to the Venetians in 1362 to tell them that the price for local wines no longer justified the expenses for vineyard workers; the emperor also instructed the delegates to ask for supportive measures from the Venetians to prevent the total disappearance of local wine.<sup>114</sup>

The negative impact of the commercial activities of the Latins was equaled or even surpassed by the impact of the military activities of the Turks in the region of the capital. The authorities responsible for the remaining part of the empire and its capital tried to protect themselves against the destruction of horticultural areas and the enslavement of vineyard workers by resettling people from the suburbs and the hinterland to Constantinople, and perhaps also by switching over to crops that were hardier and matured more quickly. When the Turks, after a brief interlude, penetrated once again into the capital's territory in the second decade of the fifteenth century, they found the villages and suburbs deserted—Emperor Manuel II had resettled their inhabitants to Constantinople.<sup>115</sup> The long-term consequence was surely a general strengthening of wage labor in agriculture, especially the use of seasonal workers for sowing and harvesting, and the organization of reaper columns (θεριστόδες)<sup>116</sup> who had to work in short spurts and could quickly take refuge behind city walls or on inaccessible mountaintops.

While it is more difficult to make out the numerical share of building workers in the

<sup>111</sup> *Démétrius Cydonès, Correspondance*, ed. Loenertz, 2:165f (no. 261). See a new interpretation by F. Tinnefeld, *Demetrios Kydones, Briefe* (Stuttgart, 1999), 3:71ff (no. 251).

<sup>112</sup> Thomas and Predelli, *Diplomatarium*, 1:167 (no. 80).

<sup>113</sup> Examples: *Planudis Epistulae*, ed. Leone, 156 (no. 99); Gregoras 1:256 (VII.8); 2:850 (XVII.3); Kantakouzenos, 2:176 (III.28).

<sup>114</sup> Thomas and Predelli, *Diplomatarium*, 2:84 (no. 49).

<sup>115</sup> Ducas, 127 (XIX.9).

<sup>116</sup> On the term and its meaning, see Schreiner, *Texte*, 257f (no. 54), and cf. 415.

overall population in Thessalonike, our sources for this city allow a more detailed insight into the internal structure of the trade. In 1421, three building experts or master builders (ἄνδρες οἰκοδόμοι) employed trained artisans (τεχνίται) as well as untrained laborers (ἐργάται) to improve a garden plot by renewing the well and the water pipes.<sup>117</sup> Between 1322 and 1327 we even know of a πρωτομαίστωρ τῶν οἰκοδόμων or τῶν δομητόρων named George Marmaras;<sup>118</sup> some scholars see him as the head of a guild, others as the leader of a team of masons. We can also make out an organization of seamen, led by the ἄρχων of the city quarter in which most of them lived,<sup>119</sup> and an organization of the saltwork workers in the form of an association (συντροφία) headed by a πρωταλικάριος.<sup>120</sup> These are indications that the population groups who made a living from the sea also played a role of some significance in the city and its immediate environs. The same document that mentions the three master builders and their workers also reports on a larger number of respected gardeners who had leased garden plots outside the city's western gate from one of the city's family of entrepreneurs. Vineyard laborers (ἀμπελῶνος ἐργάται[ς]) who worked with (two-pronged) hoes (δικέλλαι) and vats under the supervision of the owner of the vineyard are mentioned in a saint's life.<sup>121</sup>

Construction workers are also found in other Byzantine cities at this time: in Mesembria, for example, where various masons (*lathorii[s]*) built a kind of chimney (*charforium*) in the room of Count Amadeus of Savoy in 1366, and where a number of carpenters (*carpentarii[s]*) were active at the same time.<sup>122</sup> The building trade was particularly strongly represented also in Mistra.<sup>123</sup>

Some builders, seamen, and farmers needed very specialized knowledge and skills for their work. That was certainly true for the construction of windmills, which may have had a center in the Genoese colony of Pera/Galata, although some of the work there was presumably done by Byzantine Greeks or naturalized Venetian and Genoese subjects. Examples of the latter are the μυλοτέκτων Theodoros Sabalia/Savalia, who in 1436 acted as a witness to a contract for the sale of such a mill,<sup>124</sup> and the "magister molendinorum Manoli Milocaracti," who was hired in 1390 to repair a mill belonging to the commune of Pera. It was surely also true of shipbuilding, which declined in the late Byzantine period but was still being carried out by Greek-Byzantine experts such as the *magistro axie* Costantino/Konstantinos Arceni/Arsegni, who lived in the *burgo* of Agerri/Lagirio, since 1376 part of Pera. In 1390 he and his team were commissioned

<sup>117</sup> F. Dölger, *Aus den Schatzkammern des Heiligen Berges* (Munich, 1948), 102ff (no. 102).

<sup>118</sup> Source references listed in *PLP* 7:17102.

<sup>119</sup> Kantakouzenos, 2:575 (III.94).

<sup>120</sup> Oikonomides, *Actes de Dionysiou*, 95f (no. 14).

<sup>121</sup> D. G. Tsames, *Φιλοθέου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως τοῦ Κοκκίνου ἀγιολογικὰ ἔργα Α'*, Θεσσαλονικεῖς ἄγιοι (Thessalonike, 1985), 105.

<sup>122</sup> F. Bollati di Saint-Pierre, *Illustrazioni della spedizione in Oriente di Amadeo VI (Il Conte Verde)* (Turin, 1990), 92 (no. 352), 101 (no. 393).

<sup>123</sup> I. P. Medvedev, *Mistra* (Leningrad, 1973), 84f.

<sup>124</sup> H. Hunger, "Zwei byzantinische Urkunden der späten Palaiologenzeit aus der österreichischen Nationalbibliothek," *BZ* 48 (1955): 301 (no. 1); cf. E. Trapp, "Probleme der Prosopographie der Palaiologenzeit," *JÖB* 27 (1978): 194.

by the authorities in Pera to build a new galley.<sup>125</sup> A year earlier he had entered into a contract with the patron of the *cocha* Santa Maria, Antonio Grimaldi, in which he was described as *protomastrum dicte coche*,<sup>126</sup> a designation that could make him the builder as well as a crew member of this ship. Until its fall, however, Constantinople also had *constructores navium* who were working at the request of the Byzantine authorities.<sup>127</sup> Specialized knowledge was also needed to build stationary fishing installations (*epochai, dalyan*) and to plant and care for vineyards.

Teaching professions existed specifically in the building trade, with master builders working together with their apprentices (μαθητάδες)<sup>128</sup> and employees. Master masons and master carpenters appeared frequently as witnesses when houses changed owners, presumably because their expert opinion was solicited to determine the condition of the building and its value.<sup>129</sup> Most activities, however, did not call for any specialized knowledge or skills. The building trade was in large measure an auxiliary trade. Many city dwellers could catch fish and transport passengers and goods on barges, boats, and ferries in the waters close to the city, provided they had the necessary equipment. The same was true for most agricultural activities. The decline of monumental architecture as compared to functional military and private buildings, the shortage of state funds and material resources to construct and maintain larger fleets, and possibly also the abandonment of more complicated methods of fishing and the decline of vine growing in agriculture may have led to a further decline of qualified work in these areas. Many activities undoubtedly were or became part-time jobs: a poor priest worked as a mason,<sup>130</sup> some urban shop owners made wine and must, and many simple residents of coastal towns caught fish for their own consumption. In the late Byzantine period, too, the entire population of a city or the residents of a quarter or the harbor district could, if necessary, be drafted for larger construction projects, such as erecting and repairing city walls, cleaning the harbor basin, or fortifying the harbor installations. Occasionally even clerics and monks participated, or were asked to participate, in such community actions.<sup>131</sup>

Highly qualified artisans could count on only a small circle of customers for their sophisticated and expensive products, and to preserve that circle they sometimes chose

<sup>125</sup> Balard, *La Romanie génoise*, 1:271.

<sup>126</sup> G. G. Musso, *Navigazione e commercio genovese nei documenti dell'Archivio di Stato di Genova* (Rome, 1975), 49.

<sup>127</sup> N. Jorga, "Notes et extraits pour servir à l'histoire des croisades au XVe siècle (fin)," *ROL* 8 (1900–1901): 276. The manufacture of oars in *arcenagli domini Imperatoris* is attested by the expedition accounts of the Green Count: Bollati di Saint-Pierre, *Illustrazioni*, 72 (no. 262).

<sup>128</sup> H. Hunger and K. Vogel, *Ein byzantinisches Rechenbuch des 15. Jahrhunderts* (Vienna, 1963), 58f (no. 76).

<sup>129</sup> Cf. Ferrari dalle Spade, "Registro Vaticano," 263, 265. The *palatophylax* who supervised the urban construction workers was also used occasionally as a *taxator*. Against this background, it may be that the *protomagistros* Theotokes (MM 2:440f [no. 608]), who was charged with assessing the value of plots and buildings, may have been a master of the construction workers like Georgios Marmaras in Thessalonike.

<sup>130</sup> MM 2:488ff (no. 643).

<sup>131</sup> "Ἐγκόμιον εἰς τὸν αὐτοκράτορα Ἰωάννην τὸν Παλαιολόγον," ed. Sp. Lambros, in *Παλαιολογεία καὶ Πελοποννησιακά*, (Athens, 1912), 3:298.

to become even more highly specialized. Examples of such artisanal specialties are gold and silver casements for icons and gold embroidery for liturgical vestments,<sup>132</sup> which were made by goldsmiths and textile workers in Constantinople, Thessalonike, and Serres.<sup>133</sup> What is hard to find during this period, in contrast to the middle Byzantine period, is a specialized trade that had some local concentration and worked for a supra-local—at least regional—market or even for export. There are certain references to silk weaving in Mistra<sup>134</sup> and cloth making in Serres,<sup>135</sup> to very specific textile products from Thessalonike<sup>136</sup> and especially from Philadelphia. Moreover, in Thessalonike there are indications in the fourteenth century of a stronger orientation toward light and possibly cheaper utility textiles, and various textile workers belonged to the city's upper middle class. Still, even these two important cities did not develop into real textile cities during Byzantine times. The same was undoubtedly the case for leather-working in Constantinople. Although it must have had greater economic weight than other trades in the capital, and was also a popular profession to learn, so far there are hardly any indications for the export of its wares.<sup>137</sup>

Given this situation, one might ask about possible artisanal concentration in the countryside in villages and suburban settlements. However, textile production in the small town of Mayton/Madytos in the Dardanelles, which was still populated almost exclusively by Greeks as late as 1550, and where men and women from about 350 families made their living entirely by spinning and weaving,<sup>138</sup> was in all likelihood a post-Byzantine development. Urban production processes in the late Byzantine period maintained a very simple artisanal pattern; there was little diversity in the types of businesses that existed and their size was rather limited, with little need for complicated business organization. The only *ἐργαστήριον* explicitly described as large in the late Byzantine sources was a store and not a workshop.<sup>139</sup> Only once do we hear of a craftsman who worked with his colleagues (*ὁμοτέχνους*),<sup>140</sup> but we cannot determine how many there were or what their relationship to the craftsman was. Many artisans presumably worked alone; more than two assistants was probably the exception.

In fact, what we tend to see compared to earlier periods was not an expansion of

<sup>132</sup> Cf. E. Kislinger, "Gewerbe im späten Byzanz," in *Handwerk und Sachkultur im Spätmittelalter* (Vienna, 1988), 122f.

<sup>133</sup> *Planudis Epistolae*, ed. Leone, 164ff (no. 103); cf. H.-V. Beyer, "Die Chronologie der Briefe des Maximos Planudes an Alexios Dukas Philanthropenos und dessen Umgebung," *REB* 51 (1993): 130; M. Treu, *Theodori Pediasimi eiusque amicorum quae exstant* (Potsdam, 1899), 22. Tsames Φιλοθέου, 556.

<sup>134</sup> Medvedev, *Mistra*, 85f.

<sup>135</sup> Laiou, "Κοινωνικές δυνάμεις," 15f. On this, cf. also Krekić, *Dubrovnik*, 196 (no. 195).

<sup>136</sup> Matschke, "Tuchproduktion und Tuchproduzenten in Thessalonike und in anderen Städten und Regionen des späten Byzanz," *Βυζαντικά* 9 (1989): 69ff. A. Karpozilos, "Realia in Byzantine Epistolography," *BZ* 88.1 (1995): 79.

<sup>137</sup> It is, to say the least, interesting that a part of the *coria* (hides) that the Byzantine authorities confiscated from the Venetian Jews in 1320 "fuerunt exportata." Thomas and Predelli, *Diplomatarium*, 1:153.

<sup>138</sup> *Reise des französischen Gesandtschafts-Secretärs und Geographen Nikolaus von Nikola von Marseille nach Konstantinopel 1551*, trans. J. H. Jäck (Graz, 1831), 35.

<sup>139</sup> *MM* 2:440.

<sup>140</sup> Tsames, Φιλοθέου ἔργα, 556.

enterprises but a process that made them more individualized and minimal in size. Imperial central workshops and the kind of state-organized production that still existed under the Laskarid dynasty and the first Palaiologoi became rarer thereafter and eventually seem to have disappeared altogether. It is very likely that the imperial workshops for the manufacture of precious textiles were not brought back to Constantinople after 1261, for as late as 1290 the court was still procuring its clothes from Nicaea.<sup>141</sup> Although various weavers were working to supply the imperial demand around the middle of the fourteenth century, they were evidently no longer doing so in imperial workshops.<sup>142</sup> Special jewelers, too, no longer seem to have existed at the imperial court at this time, for the emperors had to place their orders—smaller now—with private workshops.<sup>143</sup> The production of weapons for imperial orders and paid for by state funds is still attested in the larger cities of the empire of Nicaea,<sup>144</sup> and Michael VIII also procured the necessary defensive equipment for the recaptured capital, specifically arrows and catapults, by providing weapons makers and builders with sufficient material and money.<sup>145</sup> His successors, however, had to make do with inspecting and collecting existing weapons when they equipped larger auxiliary units or sought to prepare the capital for a lengthy defense.<sup>146</sup> There are indications that refineries in which precious metals were purified and prepared for possible minting existed in late Byzantine Constantinople and Thessalonike,<sup>147</sup> and possibly also in the inland city of Serres, not far from the Serbian mining regions.<sup>148</sup> Although it appears that the state assigned the work to the persons running the refineries or employed them, these were probably no longer state-owned enterprises; instead, they were leased to private societies or transferred to groups of benefice holders. It is even possible that the minting of coins passed into the hands of private lessees after the middle of the fourteenth century.<sup>149</sup>

This move toward privatization was likely connected with a shrinkage of production capacity, since the purity of processed or minted metals became less important and the

<sup>141</sup> Cf. A. Cutler and P. Magdalino, "Some Precisions on the Lincoln College Typikon," *CahArch* 27 (1978): 191 n. 84.

<sup>142</sup> Cf. K.-P. Matschke, "Tuchproduktion," 81f.

<sup>143</sup> For example Kantakouzenos, 2:564 (III.92).

<sup>144</sup> *Theodori Scutariotae Additamenta ad Georgii Acropolitae historiam*, ed. A. Heisenberg (Leipzig, 1901), 1:285. Cf. the German translation by W. Blum, *Georgios Akropolites, Die Chronik* (Stuttgart, 1989), 199.

<sup>145</sup> Pachymeres, 1:364 (V.10).

<sup>146</sup> Gregoras, 1:205 (VI.10); 2:850 (XVII.3).

<sup>147</sup> See K.-P. Matschke, "Mining," *EHB* 120.

<sup>148</sup> Cf. I. Beldiceanu-Steinherr, *Recherches sur les actes des règnes des sultans Osman, Orkhan et Murad I* (Munich, 1967), 245 (no. 50). The author believes that the gold artisans mentioned in the year 1388 were not pure goldsmiths but people who worked in the refining of precious metals (p. 246). Since the city had fallen into Turkish hands only five years earlier, it is likely that these artisans were already working, and their houses were already standing in Byzantine times. In the middle of the 15th century, Serres was a center of trade in precious metals; cf. K.-P. Matschke, "Zum Anteil der Byzantiner an der Bergbauentwicklung und den Bergbauerträgen Südosteuropas im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert," *BZ* 84/85 (1991–92): 64 and n. 106.

<sup>149</sup> See Matschke, "Münzstätten," 197ff.

issues became smaller. The number of private citizens who brought precious metals to the refineries for purification or minting declined, which meant that the opportunities of private profit for the operators had to decline as well.

References to other production installations that might have served a larger circle of users, and could therefore have grown beyond the framework of small workshops, are virtually nonexistent. A *κυλισταρεῖον*<sup>150</sup> is attested around 1340 at the Gate of John the Baptist. Assuming this was not merely a depot for cloths but a cloth mangle similar to the “*volta per farli sopresar (pani)*” mentioned by Badoer a century later,<sup>151</sup> the main work presumably involved the smoothing and pressing of imported cloths, not the final processing of the products of local textile workers, as was customary in the central workshops of Italian cloth manufacturers at this time. Installations such as oil presses, grain-drying kilns, and grain mills also appear to have been on a modest scale, were operated by individuals, and worked for a small circle of users. One fact that argues against the existence of manufacturing enterprises in shipbuilding is that the small number of late Byzantine arsenals did not operate continuously and with the same level of quality; rather, craftsmen skilled in shipbuilding were only occasionally enlisted for modest fleet building programs. If funds flowed into urban production processes, it was probably only to maintain them at a given level, not to expand them to any significant extent. We know of a *συντροφία*, an association, between an investor and a smithy in the capital;<sup>152</sup> its upshot was that the artisan lost his workshop, not that he was enabled to expand its size and the number of workers. We also know of joint businesses of various *maestri de chalze* and tailors. However, these only involved the joint purchasing of raw materials and the sale of finished products, and possibly no more than parallel commercial activities;<sup>153</sup> there is nothing to indicate joint production activity.

Traces of the traditional guild or corporation system are undoubtedly still found in late Byzantine cities. In addition to the above-mentioned officers with supervisory functions among builders and seamen, that system included also an *ἔξαρχος τῶν μυρεψῶν* (“chief of the perfumers”) in Thessalonike<sup>154</sup> and two *πρωτομακελλάριοι* (“chiefs of the butchers”) in the same city and in Constantinople.<sup>155</sup> However, it is hardly possible to speak of a still intact and functioning guild system. It is even possible that in the late period the functionaries of the old system became associated with specific tasks<sup>156</sup> in circumscribed areas, with smaller crews and associations, which we can discern more or less clearly among builders and seamen. But while the guild system in

<sup>150</sup> *Lavra*, 3:24 (no. 123); cf. Matschke, “Tuchproduktion,” 63f.

<sup>151</sup> Badoer, 142, 176.

<sup>152</sup> MM 2:326ff.

<sup>153</sup> Badoer, 27, 154, 458, 726.

<sup>154</sup> Dölger, *Aus den Schatzkammern*, 303 (no. 111).

<sup>155</sup> Kugeas, “Notizbuch,” 145f; Badoer, 414.

<sup>156</sup> Around 1450, Korone and Modon had the *oficio* of a “*protomaestro de bollar el corame*,” to which urban master craftsmen were selected and appointed by the city authorities. “*Statuta Coroni et Modoni*,” ed. K. Sathas, in *Documents inédits relatifs à l’histoire de la Grèce au moyen-âge*, 9 vols. (Paris-Venice, 1880–90), 4:184. Is it possible that late Byzantine chief masters were chosen in a similar manner for such tasks?

the late medieval cities in the West was undermined, reshaped, and displaced by early capitalist forms of production, and thereby replaced by something positive, there is little sign of a comparable development in late Byzantine cities. While old elements slowly petered out, new ones did not quite get off the ground, at least in the area of production. This situation had a profound influence on the history of the late Byzantine city, for it tied the city more strongly to Byzantine traditions than to western innovations.

*Principal Elements of the Late Byzantine Urban Economy*

Artisanal and commercial production was thus the sore point of the late Byzantine urban economy, in spite of the fact that the initial situation in the empire of Nicaea was not all that bad, and that the first Palaiologan emperor, Michael VIII, seems to have made a considerable effort to strengthen the recaptured capital in material terms by resettling artisans from Asia Minor, thereby giving Constantinople greater importance. However, the eviction of the Latin rulers from Constantinople did not mean that the Latin economic power in the Byzantine Empire was suppressed. In fact, it initiated a qualitatively new phase of western economic presence. As a result, the situation of the Byzantine urban economy deteriorated noticeably in the subsequent period; in particular, the sphere in which late Byzantine trades could operate was strongly curtailed. The various political activities in the early Palaiologan period, during the civil wars, and in the course of the conflicts between the Venetians and the Genoese were also driven by the efforts of individual cities and various urban groups to gain more breathing and living space in their own world. Yet most of these efforts were unsuccessful: some saw no alternative but to join the other, the Latin, world with its possibilities and opportunities. Not only did qualified craftsmen from the Byzantine cities move to the quarters and colonial territories of Venice and Genoa, but, already at the end of the thirteenth century, Byzantine *magistri ingenierii* were involved in building bridges in central Italy,<sup>157</sup> and in the fourteenth century *peliparii* (“furriers”) from Constantinople were working in Dubrovnik and Genoa.<sup>158</sup> In the fifteenth century, shipbuilding experts and seasoned captains from the Byzantine capital and the Latin territories of the Romania held key positions in the Venetian arsenal and at the French royal court.<sup>159</sup> In 1470 King Louis settled Greek weavers in the city of Tours.<sup>160</sup> As early as 1445, two makers of gold thread from Constantinople received permission to practice their trade in London. There was thus no lack of artisanal skill and technical knowledge in the late Byzantine period, but conditions for putting it to use were quite unfavorable in the late Byzantine cities, and they continued to deteriorate.<sup>161</sup>

<sup>157</sup> E. Müntz, “Les artistes byzantins dans l’Europe latine du Ve au XVe siècle,” *RArtChr* 5th ser., 4 (1893): 187.

<sup>158</sup> Krekić, *Dubrovnik*, 217 (no. 328); C. Otten-Froux, “Deux consuls des grecs à Gênes à la fin du 14e siècle,” *REB* 50 (1992): 248.

<sup>159</sup> J. Harris, “Bessarion on Shipbuilding: A Re-interpretation,” *BSI* 55.2 (1994): 296ff.

<sup>160</sup> Müntz, “Artistes byzantins,” 190.

<sup>161</sup> Harris, “Bessarion,” 302f.

Turkish expansion, too, brought at best a short-term, partial, and temporary improvement for the commercial urban economy. Turkish interest in Byzantine goods was only a concomitant to Turkish interest in the Byzantine cities themselves. Although urban producers lost their rural competitors when the cities were cut off from their hinterland, that did not do much to strengthen the position of the urban economy. Faced with the choice between two evils, some urban economic elements and groups opted for the Turks: the fishermen and boatmen of Constantinople are only one example. The battle over the political and economic legacy of Byzantium was not decided, however, by the late Byzantine cities and their inhabitants who engaged in agriculture and trade. Although they played a part in the struggle for the fate of the Romania, in the end they were not so much participants as spectators.