



The Centre for Advanced Study Sofia (CAS) is an independent non-profit institution with strong international and multidisciplinary profile set up for the promotion of freedom of research, scholarly excellence and academic cooperation in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

www.cas.bg

Roumen Avramov
Aleksandar Fotić
Elias Kolovos
Phokion P. Kotzageorgis
Dimitrios Kalpakis
Styliani N. Lepida
Preston Perluss
Gheorghe Lazăr
Konstantinos Giakoumis
Lidia Cotovanu
Andreas Bouroutis
Brian Heffernan
Antoine Rouillet
Michalis N. Michael
Daniela Kalkandjieva
Isabelle Depret
Isabelle Jonveaux



The book aims at a readership of both economists and historians. Beyond the well-known Weberian thesis concerning the role of Protestantism in the development of capitalism, monastic economies are studied to assess their impact on the religious patterns of economic behavior. Those issues are discussed in the frame of key economic concepts such as rationality, state intervention, networking, agency, and governance. The book includes essays concerning Byzantine, Ottoman and modern South-Eastern Europe, and early modern and modern Western Europe. Survival and continuity of the monastic wealth is considered as an example of successful handling of real estate transactions, flows of funds, and contacts with financial institutions. Moreover, the book focuses on the economic impact of the privileged relations of monasticism with the secular powers. Finally, the question is raised how the monastic economy (still) matters in the contemporary world.

MONASTIC ECONOMY ACROSS TIME Wealth Management, Patterns, and Trends

MONASTIC ECONOMY ACROSS TIME

WEALTH MANAGEMENT,
PATTERNS, AND TRENDS

EDITED BY

ROUMEN AVRAMOV

ALEKSANDAR FOTIĆ

ELIAS KOLOVOS

PHOKION P. KOTZAGEORGIS

Centre for Advanced Study Sofia



MONASTIC ECONOMY ACROSS TIME

WEALTH MANAGEMENT, PATTERNS, AND TRENDS

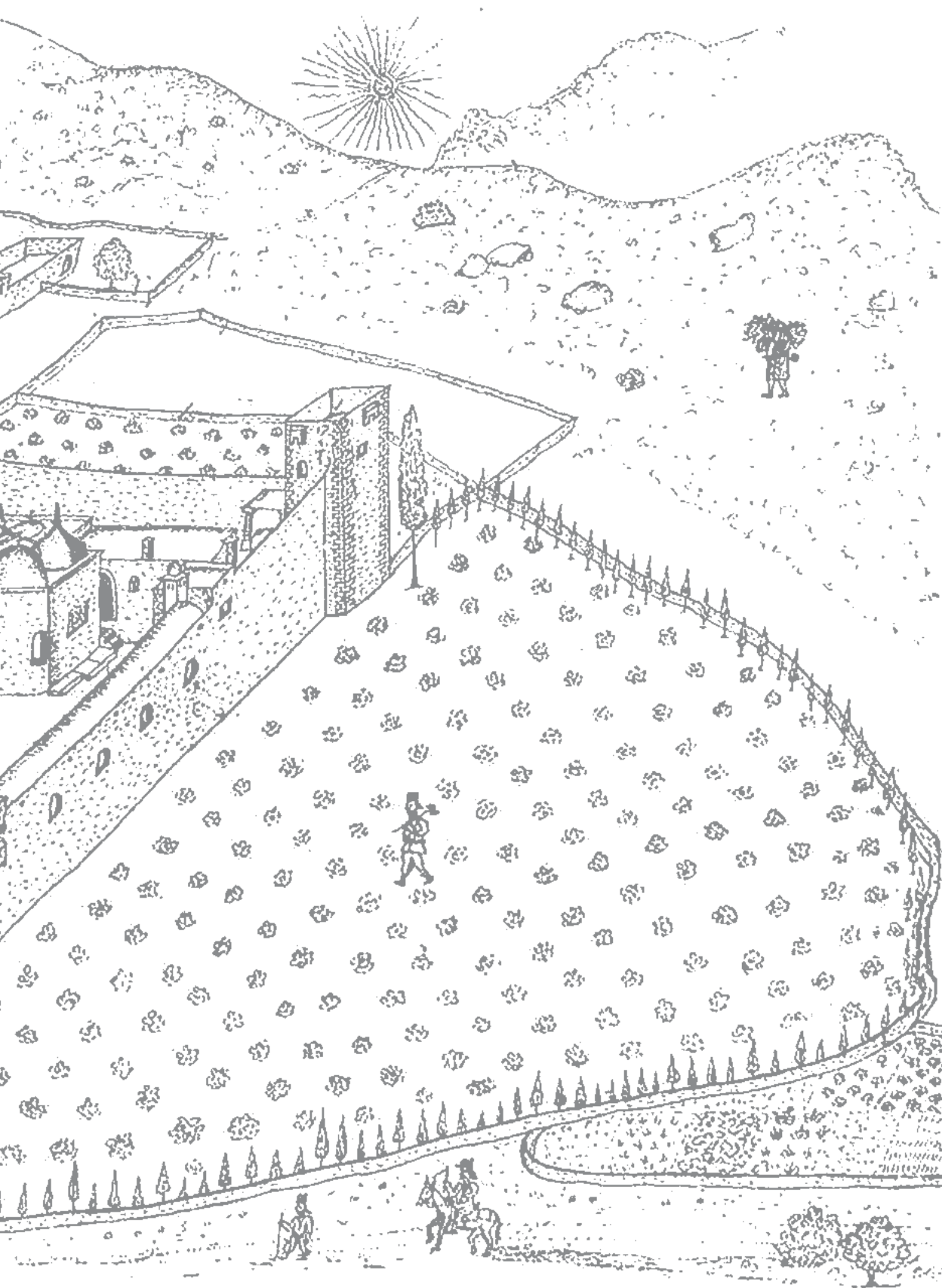
EDITED BY

ROUMEN AVRAMOV, ALEKSANDAR FOTIĆ,

ELIAS KOLOVOS, PHOKION P. KOTZAGEORGIS



CENTRE
FOR
ADVANCED
STUDY
SOFIA



MONASTIC ECONOMY ACROSS TIME

WEALTH MANAGEMENT,
PATTERNS, AND TRENDS

Edited by

ROUMEN AVRAMOV

ALEKSANDAR FOTIĆ

ELIAS KOLOVOS

PHOKION P. KOTZAGEORGIS

**Centre for Advanced Study Sofia
2021**

On the cover: *Zographou monastery, Mount Athos* (Wikipedia, Georgid, 2005)
and *Recollects Convent, Antwerp* (J. Le Roy – J. Neefs, Amsterdam 1678).

The drawings in the book are from the second visit of Vasily Grigorovich-Barsky
to the Holy Mountain Athos (1744).

- © Roumen Avramov, Aleksandar Fotić, Elias Kolovos, Phokion P. Kotzageorgis, *editors and authors*, 2021
- © Dimitrios Kalpakis, Styliani N. Lepida, Preston Perluss, Gheorghe Lazăr, Konstantinos Giakoumis, Lidia Cotovanu, Andreas Bouroutis, Brian Heffernan, Antoine Rouillet, Michalis N. Michael, Daniela Kalkandjieva, Isabelle Depret, Isabelle Jonveaux, *authors*, 2021
- © Vesselin Pramatarov, *graphic design*, 2021
- © Centre for Advanced Study Sofia, 2021

ISBN 978-619-91841-1-0

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Does Monastic Economy Matter?	9
<i>Roumen Avramov, Aleksandar Fotić, Elias Kolovos, Phokion P. Kotzageorgis</i>	

SECTION I **WEALTH MANAGEMENT: REAL ESTATE**

CHAPTER 1	Beyond the Borders: the Vital Space of Byzantine Athos	27
	<i>A GEOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW OF THE ATHONITE ESTATES UP TO THE OTTOMAN CONQUEST</i>	
	<i>Dimitrios Kalpakis</i>	
CHAPTER 2	Transactional Activity of Kykkos Monastery (Cyprus) in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries	43
	<i>REAL ESTATE CONTRACTS</i>	
	<i>Styliani N. Lepida</i>	
CHAPTER 3	Urban Catholic Monasteries and Urban Growth in Eighteenth-Century European Cities	55
	<i>Preston Perluss</i>	

SECTION II **FLOW OF FUNDS AND GOVERNANCE**

CHAPTER 4	How to Run a Big Monastic Çiftlik: the Case of Hilandar's Bulgar Metochion in Karviya (Kalamaria), Sixteenth–Seventeenth Centuries	83
	<i>Aleksandar Fotić</i>	
CHAPTER 5	Crisis and Survival of the Athonite Monasteries during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries	98
	<i>PRELIMINARY FINDINGS AND THOUGHTS</i>	
	<i>Phokion P. Kotzageorgis</i>	

CHAPTER 6	Between Piety and Economics <i>NUCET MONASTERY (WALLACHIA) AND ITS REGISTER OF REVENUE AND EXPENSES (1731–1739)</i> <i>Gheorghe Lazăr</i>	112
CHAPTER 7	Monastic Financial Management in the Provinces of the Patriarchate of Constantinople (1867–1873) <i>THE CASE OF THE METROPOLIS OF DRYINOUPOLIS AND GJIROKASTRA</i> <i>Konstantinos Giakoumis</i>	130
SECTION III DEALING WITH FINANCE		
CHAPTER 8	Orthodox Monasteries as Banks <i>A COMPARISON WITH CATHOLIC MOUNTS OF PIETY</i> <i>Lidia Cotovanu</i>	155
CHAPTER 9	Assets, Interest and National Preferences <i>THE ATHONITE MONASTERIES AND THE GREEK BANKS IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY</i> <i>Andreas Bouroutis</i>	181
CHAPTER 10	Nuns' Funds <i>THE 1874 AND 1925 ACCOUNTS OF THE CARMEL OF 'S-HERTOGENBOSCH, THE NETHERLANDS</i> <i>Brian Heffernan</i>	197
SECTION IV VIS-À-VIS THE SECULAR POWER		
CHAPTER 11	Monasteries, Economy, and Politics in the Orthodox World from Medieval to Modern Times <i>Elias Kolovos</i>	217
CHAPTER 12	The Economics of Patronage in Western Catholic Nunneries (Sixteenth-Eighteenth Century) <i>Antoine Rouillet</i>	229

CHAPTER 13	The Church of Cyprus and the Transition from Ottoman Rule to British Modernity <i>CHURCH PROPERTY IN ITS POLITICAL CONTEXT</i> <i>Michalis N. Michael</i>	244
CHAPTER 14	The Monastic Economy of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church Between the Two World Wars <i>Daniela Kalkandjieva</i>	261
SECTION V	CONTEMPORARY MONASTICISM	
CHAPTER 15	Female Orthodox Monasticism, Ecology, and Productivist Capitalism <i>THE CASES OF THE MONASTERIES OF ORMYLIA (GREECE) AND SOLAN (FRANCE), LATE TWENTIETH - EARLY TWENTY FIRST CENTURY</i> <i>Isabelle Depret</i>	281
CHAPTER 16	Does Monastic Economy Still Matter? <i>THE ECONOMY OF CATHOLIC MONASTERIES AND THE EXPECTATIONS OF SOCIETY</i> <i>Isabelle Jonveaux</i>	297
AUTHORS		311

INTRODUCTION

Does Monastic Economy Matter?

ROUMEN AVRAMOV, ALEKSANDAR FOTIĆ, ELIAS KOLOVOS, PHOKION P. KOTZAGEORGIS

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The monastic economy as part of the economics of religion has been a matter of lasting interest for both economists and historians (Iannacone 1998). The impressive amount of descriptive literature accumulated during more than a century sheds light on the economic activities carried out in monasteries, which first arose in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages.¹ But the contributions in the field have had a much wider impact, as they have helped to test a variety of theoretical hypotheses concerning fundamental aspects of economic behaviour/s in the *longue durée*. The discussion of Max Weber's theory about the role of Protestantism in the gestation of capitalism is probably the best-known example (Weber 1904 and 1905). Recent research has shown the incidence of the subject on – often unexpected – contemporary economic problems.

The economics of medieval monasticism in the West was centred on the abbeys organized according to the Benedictine principles. The time frame of this *classical* period is closed by the Protestant Reformation (Becker, Pfaff and Rubin 2016). Eastern Christian monasticism, on the contrary, has remained within rigid rules and avoided substantial doctrinal reforms. The geopolitical setting in both parts of Europe was quite dissimilar. If the abbeys in the West existed in realms pertaining to the Christian world, this was not the case for the Orthodox monasteries in the East. While they were located in Christian empires and kingdoms until the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries (Byzantium, Russia, Bulgaria, Serbia, the Danubian Principalities), from the Ottoman conquest up to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, monasteries in Southeastern Europe were situated in a polity

1 When it comes to the West, the volume looks occasionally at religious orders and congregations beyond monasticism in the strict sense.

where the state religion was Islam. Research has shown, however, that the monasteries, like the Orthodox Church in general, survived, and sometimes even thrived, under Muslim rule. Among the outstanding centres of monastic life in this region were the still-functioning monastic commonwealth on Mount Athos, the rock monasteries of Meteora (Greece, Thessaly), the monasteries of Kykkos (Cyprus), Rila and Bachkovo (originally “Petritsoni monastery”) in Bulgaria, Dečani and Mileševa (Serbia) or those in the Ottoman vassal principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia (modern-day Romania).

The economy of Western and Eastern monasticism and its influence on general economic behaviour has rarely (if at all) been the subject of systematic comparative study (Kolovos 2011; Van Dijck, De Maeyer, Tyssens, and Koppen 2013). The conventional view holds that Southeastern European economies have been historically characterized by a lower degree of economic rationality, less influence of methodological (economic) individualism, a greater presence of the state in economic affairs, and economic backwardness (Buss 1995; Djankov, Nikolova and Zilinsky 2016; Makrides 2019). Could these peculiarities and other important features be ascribed to legacies stemming from monastic life, and if so, in what ways, and are some of these traits still important in today’s economic cultures? Alternatively, did the monastic institutions generate tangible positive economic impulses in the region? The book provides and discusses evidence related to these questions. In order to enhance comparison, it brings evidence from both the East and the West, with special attention to the former: the East has been less researched and a monastic revival is currently underway there.

Rationality

Since Max Weber’s seminal works, the role of the Protestant ethic in the dissemination of rational capitalist values and practices has been a constant focus of researchers. In fact, behind the walls of the medieval monastery some aspects even preceded the Reformation (Becker, Pfaff, and Rubin 2016). Weber himself observed that a major contribution of the Reformation was the infiltration of ascetic work principles into society after the closing of the monastic houses. They had attained higher organizational, managerial, productive, and technological standards than leading segments of the pre-Reformation secular world (Kieser 1987; Silber 1993).

Byzantine and post-Byzantine monasteries in the East were also deeply involved in the economy, mostly as landowners, and they showed a marked tendency to rationalize their landholdings (Laiou and Morrisson 2007, 173–75). They offered economic

stability, and even expanded during both the Byzantine and the Ottoman centuries (Smyrlis 2011). The heaviest blow to the already impoverished Christian monasteries in the European part of the Ottoman Empire was the so-called *Confiscation Affair* (1568–1571) under Sultan Selim II (Fotić 1994; Alexander 1997; Kermeli 2000). Ottoman authorities decided to confiscate monasteries and their property and then resell them to their previous owners, at least if these had the necessary funds. An argument from Islamic Law was used as a pretext to obtain important additional funds for the imperial treasury. Lacking the large sums needed to buy their property back, almost all monasteries were compelled to take out loans and they struggled for decades to pay back the debts. Smaller and poorer monasteries fared worst and not a few of them were abandoned. However, after this crisis the monasteries reached a delicate compromise with the Islamic power, which facilitated their survival and eventual development. Thus, while in the West, a few decades before, the dissolution of the English monasteries under King Henry VIII (1536–41), the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation had started new processes which contributed to the rise of capitalism, in the East a favourable continuity prevailed.

Other factors, in turn, may have delayed the development of rational patterns in Orthodox monasteries and of the capitalist ethic at large, if we are to keep the Weberian analysis in the discussion. Certain doctrinal peculiarities probably played a role, such as, for instance, the belief of the Eastern Christian Church that salvation is not arduous and requires no more than sincere penance or a single good deed even at the end of a person's life. Neither hard work, nor active involvement in secular affairs are necessary. Another important force has perhaps been the blending of Orthodoxy with nationalism in the context of the Ottoman Empire's confessional and ethnic politics. The Orthodox Church (and consequently its monasteries) was deeply involved in the formation of Greek, Serbian and Bulgarian national identity, which occurred in a context of violent conflict after Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria acceded to statehood between 1830 and 1878. The institutional actors in this "ecclesiastical nationalism" were the Greek-dominated Patriarchate of Constantinople, the Peć Patriarchate (Serbian Orthodox Church) and the local priests and bishops in ethnic Bulgarian parishes and their lay representatives. These struggles permeated the routine functions of the monasteries with political and national debates, diverting the monastic houses from strictly economic *rationality*. Finally, until the early nineteenth century, Orthodox monasteries relied for their sustainability largely on donations from their flock and from pilgrims (Laiou 2011). This cultivated the dynamic of a *gift economy* (Mauss 1923–1924), or a *moral economy* (Thompson 1971), not that of market behaviour (Anastassiadis 2011). It was only when incomes from this volatile source declined that monetary revenues from market-oriented

economic activities started to play a growing role, with the concomitant need for more rational asset and financial management (Radkova 1974a, 1974b).

The State

The Western medieval religious houses including monasteries operated in a spiritually coherent domain under the authority of the papacy. Although the Reformation fragmented this space in theological and political terms, Christianity remained the exclusive religion in this part of Europe. The church and the state were essentially rivals in temporal matters. At a later stage, the Enlightenment triggered the trend of secularization, which was closely associated with long-term economic growth and modernization.

By contrast, since the early fifteenth century, a growing part of the Orthodox world was under the Ottoman Empire, where the Eastern Christian Church and its monasteries were more than just ecclesiastical institutions. They acted as mediators between the power of the sultan and his Christian subjects, so called “infidels”, who lived under legally defined discrimination, ensuring a relatively tolerant coexistence of different ethnic communities and religious denominations (Gara 2017). This position cultivated a specific culture of relations with the state which rested on mutual favours and on the exertion of subtle influence over different aspects of economic behaviour up to the present days.

Under the Ottomans, for instance, the Orthodox ecclesiastical authorities were entrusted by the state with public, administrative, and political tasks in their local confessional communities. This position was premised upon mutual loyalty, which is best exemplified in the Orthodox clergy’s function of collecting taxes for the state (Zachariadou 1996; Konortas 1998; Papademetriou 2015). This sophisticated system implied combining political opportunism with the design of tax avoidance schemes (distant prototypes of current offshore instruments). The history of the Orthodox monastic economy in the Ottoman Empire constitutes a rewarding field for the study of fiscal exemptions (Fotić 2000; Kotzageorgis 2002).

Property rights were at the core of the relations between the monasteries and the state. Following the Ottoman conquest, Orthodox ecclesiastical assets were gradually integrated, albeit in a *grey zone*, into the legal and administrative framework of Muslim religious charitable endowments (*wakfs*), with the corresponding protection and tax relief. This legal symbiosis between the status of Islam and Orthodox religious entities provided the latter with solid guarantees for inalienable land

ownership (Hristemova 2003; Roudometof and Michael 2010; Kolovos 2016). At the same time, acquisitions through donations often camouflaged rental constructions (allowing the owner to reduce the tax burden) or purchases (Fotić 2005).

The Orthodox Church of Cyprus is a salient case for another period. The near century of British rule on the island (1878–1960) entailed a true cultural clash, confronting the extensive economic privileges of the Church (inherited from the Ottoman period) with the aggressive modernizing rationality of the British administration (Roudometof and Michael 2009). The core problems in the strained relations between the two parties related to property rights on the church's assets and to tax privileges. The protracted conflict had a strong impact on Cypriot society by transforming the local Orthodox Church into an *ethnarchy*, that is, into the leader of the national(ist) aspirations of the Christian population of the island.

A last example is the recent economic crisis in Greece which has also revealed legacies of past economic behaviour proper to the Orthodox Church (namely in the monasteries). Loose fiscal discipline might be, at least partly, linked to the long tradition of tax loopholes granted to those religious institutions. Recently the problem has acquired macroeconomic and political significance and tax exemptions for the church have had to be reconsidered in the context of the bailout of the country. Moreover, the church and the monasteries in Cyprus and Greece continue to be active players in the real estate and financial markets. The consequences of this situation are ambiguous. On the one hand, the ecclesiastical institutions benefit from (and contribute to) the market environment. On the other, they have introduced behavioural standards that are more or less at odds with market constraints.

The interactions of the monasteries with the secular power in the East passed through troubled times after the birth of new nation states throughout the nineteenth century and during the violent twentieth century. Due to ideological, political, or financial circumstances, governments proceeded to secularize or otherwise expropriate of monastic assets. Such policies were carried out in Romania (1863), Greece (after 1923), communist Bulgaria, Romania and Yugoslavia (in 1944–53) and elsewhere. Pre-revolutionary decisions and the wholesale post-1917 confiscations in Russia severely affected the dependencies of the Athonite monasteries located there. These acts had a devastating effect on their economy and eventually forced them to restructure. Inversely, the restitution claims after the fall of the communist regimes in Southeastern Europe put to the fore the deficient and opaque management of monastic estates, as well as the new role of the Orthodox Church in society and in the economy.

Monasteries in the West have been subject to similar assaults. The dissolution of the monasteries in England (Heldring, Robinson and Vollmer 2015); the successive waves of expulsions of the Jesuits since the end of the sixteenth century; the secularization of the assets of religious orders during the French Revolution and under the 1905 Law on the separation of church and state in France are among the most telling examples. All these cases help to understand the legal and financial dimensions of the widespread nationalizations during the twentieth century and, inversely, of the post-communist economics of restitution.

Networks and Markets

From Late Antiquity onwards, monasteries functioned as associations that mediated between individuals and the state, including peasant communities and guilds. In a seminal paper, Peter Brown (1971) has demonstrated that this intermediary role of the monks was key to their success in Late Antiquity. Moreover, monks and monasteries participated in the medieval *moral economy* (Thompson 1971): they were present to help their neighbours in case of need, whereas the state was not.

Ottoman and Greek monastic archives for the Ottoman centuries are full of documents recording protests against monasteries, mainly through trespassing into monastic lands and pastures, which were not enclosed, or their dependencies. On the other hand, however, it can be argued that the very existence of these monastic lands in fact functioned as a reserve for the peasant communities in case of need. Moreover, the monasteries, with their *symbolic capital* (Bourdieu 1994), were generally very careful in the management of this vis-à-vis their constituencies, that is, the peasant communities and the guilds of the cities. In many cases there were tensions, but often relations between monks and lay people were very symbiotic. During epidemics, for instance, lay people expected divine help by asking the monks to send them holy relics. Whole villages promised annual deliveries of wheat to monasteries in exchange for regular visits of the holy relics to their parish (Laiou 2011).

As early as the Byzantine era (Smyrlis 2006), and even more so during the Ottoman period (Bur 1972; Fotić 2000; Kotzageorgis 2002), Orthodox monasteries turned into centres of burgeoning economic activity and became a driving force of the secular markets. Throughout the nineteenth century, the monastic houses already behaved in an environment in which the market largely dominated the economy. They had a strong impact as landowners and managers of increasingly capitalistic estates. The wealthiest monasteries were innovators in land tenancy, the labour market,

organizational models, agricultural practices or in technologies. Finally, they were important players in the developing financial markets as lenders, borrowers and depositors. Like in the medieval Catholic houses (Ekelund, Herbert, and Tollison 1989), usury seems to have had a positive influence on financial transactions in the economy. Monasteries functioned as pre-modern banks, places for the secure deposit of cash and precious objects, and lenders (like the Islamic *waqfs*) of cash money against interest to individuals and communities. Monasteries in the Balkans designed novel procedures to avoid bankruptcy by placing houses in difficulty under the protection of lay dignitaries or by transforming them into dependencies of a more prosperous monastery (Kalkandjieva 2016). Their multifaceted economic undertakings, on the other hand, generated competition with the local bourgeoisie, which tried to introduce secular control over the assets and resources governed by the clergy. In Southeastern Europe during the second half of the nineteenth century, this rivalry was tainted by strong inter-ethnic tensions between Bulgarians and Greeks, while both parties tried to secure political patronage by the Ottoman authorities. As a whole, the comparative approach to Western and Orthodox religious houses sheds light on the asynchronous maturing and varying depth of market behavioural patterns in the two European regions.

Agency

Catholic orders and medieval monasteries in the West were encrusted on the complex political, organizational, and ecclesiastical structure of the papacy. They operated as multinational bureaucracies and economic actors. Among other things, this raised agency problems, which were solved in original ways (Rost et al. 2008; Frey and Rothlin 2015). Medieval monasteries have been presented as local-level, downstream franchises of the church which benefited from their intermediate position of successive monopoly and adopted profit-maximizing behaviour (Davidson 1995). In a broader perspective, the medieval church's economic model has been depicted as a vertically integrated rent-seeking monopoly (Ekelund, Herbert, and Tollison 1989).

When the organization of the church allows for the accumulation and transfer of excessive wealth from its members to those in control, the church is supposed ultimately to fail. The intents to mitigate such breakdowns induced changes in ecclesiastical doctrines and institutional structures, the Protestant Reformation being possibly the largest church failure and subsequent recovery by means of modifications in theology (Allen 1995, 103). In this context, a key issue is why Orthodoxy never faced a reformist movement, even if the venality of its priests and the transfer of

wealth were as common as they were among the Catholic clergy. Why were the Orthodox authorities not successfully challenged by doctrinal competitors, being displaced only by secular actors, and this less effectively and at a much later time? How were the inherent agency problems embedded in the functioning of intricate networks operating across vast territories addressed? Considered in a comparative perspective, these questions are related in one or another way to the pervasive economic underdevelopment of Southeastern Europe.

The agency problem in this region surfaced on numerous occasions. It was connected for instance with the Ottoman fiscal system, where taxation was partly conceded to the local bishops and ultimately to the Patriarchate in Constantinople. Those different levels shaped the vested and contradictory interests of the dignitaries. On the other hand, the monastic dependencies (Gk. *metochia*) were located in different areas of the Empire or in other Orthodox states like Russia, and the management of the ensuing dense web required new abilities and financial methods. Among the most prominent figures in this system were the traveller monks (Gk. *taxidiotes*) who heard the faithful's confessions and collected funds and donations for the monasteries, thus weaving a social tissue and organizing the financial flows between the monastic houses, the dependencies and the estates of the donors (Merdzimekis 2003; Fotić 2010). The activities of the *taxidiotes* and of the managers of the *metochia* necessitated constant control, which fostered the implementation of more rational principles in the handling of the monastic economy.

Governance

The operations of the medieval Catholic Church have been compared to a contemporary multidivisional (M-form) firm (Ekelund et al. 1996). This similarity is equally valid for the medieval Orthodox monasteries, which built a realm akin in some respects to that of today's global corporations. Due to physical circumstances and without any connection with Western monasticism, such a system of governance and administration was put in place on Mount Athos. The *headquarters* of the monastic *firm* were located on the Holy Mountain, and in order to organize the necessary food chain, it incorporated the *metochia* (dependencies) outside the peninsula, with which it had, at least nominally, direct connections. These "franchise enterprises" became more and more important and gained autonomy in their region, while the control of the monastery became looser. Initially the dependencies were managed by monks, but from the eighteenth century on, management was entrusted to clerics or to lay people in return for an annual rent to the monastery (Kotzageorgis 2002). Thus, due to historical reasons and circumstances rather than

theoretical concepts, the Orthodox monasteries developed a large-scale *economy of the metochia*. During the medieval and the early modern period, this pattern was adopted by other major houses as well (particularly on Patmos island and on the Meteora rocks in Thessaly).

In contrast with lay landowners, monasteries managed a *symbolic capital*, which emphasized continuity over immediate profit. Investing in continuity may in retrospect have been the more successful economic strategy. We must take into account also that big monasteries were collective establishments of many monks, including, during an age of insecurity (fourteenth-fifteenth centuries), Balkan aristocrats who found a refuge for themselves and for their properties there. At a time when individuals and households (aristocratic or not) were struggling for survival, the important monasteries were by default *limited liability companies* with multiple *shareholders*, able to launch different initiatives, acting under the extremely efficient brand name of Religion.

Monastic business cycles, that is, alternating periods of growth and decline can be identified either through the fluctuating institutional *mortality rate* of monasteries or by distinct phases in the history of particular houses. The ebb and flow is closely related to the way the monasteries were ruled. Studies of the governance of Benedictine monasteries in the *longue durée* show that about a quarter of the abbey's closures were due to agency problems (Rost et al. 2008). Such longitudinal historical data is missing for Southeastern Europe, where case studies are more suitable. The well-preserved annals (*codices*) of the monasteries, which include records of their revenues, expenditure, and pilgrims' visits are a precious source in this respect.

In a broader sense, changing fortunes could be associated with *monastic reform cycles*, that is, with the recurrent loosening and tightening of governance rules in parallel with the general spiritual and material decay and renewal of monastic life. Nevertheless, there is evidence too that the prosperity of any given monastery may have depended on the business skills of the abbot/*hegumen* and/or of the elders of the community. These were occasionally able to revive their establishment in otherwise hard times.

A specific feature of the Orthodox monasteries is the existence of two distinct forms of governance of the monastic life. The *idiorrhythmic* (in which the monks retained private property) and *coenobitic* (in which only collective property was permitted) models had their own specific rules, propensity to innovate, and capacity to irradiate economic impulses outside their respective communities. The two types were

exposed to a different extent to the market environment and ultimately produced different patterns of economic behaviour. They existed simultaneously in different regions or, sequentially, during the lifetime of one institution. (Currently all the monasteries on Mount Athos are *coenobitic* with no possibility for reversal). A comparative outlook on their economic performance highlights the relative appeal and efficiency of collectivistic or individualistic management ideas, values and principles.

* * *

This set of questions and hypotheses are addressed or tested in the sections and chapters included in this book.

Section I (*Wealth Management: Real Estate*) examines how monasteries created and expanded their property over time, thus becoming significant landowners in the East and the West of Europe, in both the urban milieu and in the countryside. Mapping of the Athonite monasteries' real estate from the tenth to the fifteenth centuries gives a clear quantitative and qualitative picture of the web and the nature of their economic activities in a historical perspective. Another chapter explores eighteenth-century French monasteries, which owned lands adjacent to cities, purchased properties in these cities, built impressive dwellings there, and gradually made rental income their most important source of revenue. Moreover, the growing involvement of the monasteries in the economic life of early modern society meant they increasingly became party to real estate transactions and/or disputes. Evidence from the island of Cyprus, studied in a separate chapter, similarly illustrates this trend.

Section II (*Flow of Funds and Governance*) scrutinize mechanisms implemented by the monastic authorities to preserve and enlarge their properties. Examples of monasteries or their dependent estates (*metochia*) from sixteenth- to nineteenth-century Greece and Southern Albania under Ottoman rule (which shared a similar socio-economic status) show how production and financial operations enabled the Orthodox monasteries to survive without a Christian state and without protection from Christian wealthy elites. The situation in Wallachia, examined in a separate chapter, was quite different as it had an autonomous status in the Ottoman Empire. The detailed analysis of monastic revenues and expenses makes it possible to compare models of economic behaviour based on different uses of arable land, human resources, and tools; of sales and purchases of immovable property; of banking activities, and strategies to overcome financial crises through the contracting of loans and pledges of estates as security.

Section III (*Dealing with Finance*) addresses interactions between the monasteries and the existing financial infrastructure. These two parties pursued their own pecuniary interests, thus fostering capitalist rationality across time. The monastic dependencies of Greek houses in Wallachia between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries are studied in a special chapter as proto-banks, which emulated the pre-modern *mounts of piety* familiar to Catholic religious life. Comparison of the economics of the mounts of piety and of the Eastern monasteries allows better understanding of the banking logic of monastic activity and the role of monastic *metochia* in the transfer of capital. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, monasteries in the Orthodox East and in the Catholic West operated in a more sophisticated financial system. As is shown in a chapter on the Greek case, banks were attracted by opportunities related to the liquid holdings of the monasteries, while the latter sought support from a banking intermediary in order to secure their assets. In the same vein, evidence from convents in the Netherlands demonstrates that such establishments were well integrated in the financial circuits through investments in bonds and other debt instruments.

Section IV (*Vis-à-vis the Secular Power*) investigates the *political economy* of monasteries across time. In the West as well as in the East, monasteries sought political protection for their economic activities, in the case of the Orthodox monasteries under Ottoman rule for more than half a millennium, even from Islamic polities like the Ottoman Empire. In the case of Cyprus, the British colonial administration, after taking over the island from the Ottoman Empire, had to deal with the privileges of the Orthodox Church and with monasteries and their political role. A chapter is devoted to the patronage politics vis-à-vis Catholic female mendicant convents in early modern France, Spain, and Mexico. Finally, the Bulgarian monasteries in the interwar years are examined in the light of their relations with the state and the church.

Section V (*Contemporary Monasticism*) touches upon dimensions of the monastic economy in the contemporary world and discusses different models implemented by Catholic monasteries. By entering the secular economy in a more assertive way and by aiming to counter the decline of institutional religion and of its social role, they contribute to the diffusion of behavioural patterns akin to modern concepts like sustainable development. In a broader sense, these models are considered as a source of inspiration for alternatives to the productivist and environmentally unsustainable economy. The trend is examined in a comparative perspective for institutions operating in Western (French) and Eastern (Greek) economic contexts. Special attention is paid to strategies that try to integrate the monastic activities into the setting of present-day economic life.

* * *

At the root of this book is the fruitful cooperation between the *Centre for Advanced Study Sofia* (CAS) and the *Centre for Governance and Culture in Europe* (CGCE) at the *School of Humanities and Social Sciences in the University of St. Gallen*. These two institutions established a *Research network dedicated to the history of the monastic economy*, which succeeded in enhancing contacts between scholars and assisting mobility, and hence in fostering intellectual debate in the field. During the term of the initiative (2016–2019), the network coordinated the organization of several workshops (with nearly sixty presentations by over thirty academics from eleven countries) and guest lectures, and it granted microfunding on a competitive basis (for eleven individual projects from six countries).

This book crowns an inspiring scholarly undertaking. In doing so, it also looks forward, by formulating hypotheses, asking questions, and mapping new domains for promising future explorations.

We wish to express our sincere gratitude to Dimiter Dimov (CAS) who secured the flawless organization of the numerous network's activities. Special thanks are also due to Brian Heffernan for his meticulous editing of the volume in English.

References

- Alexander (Alexandropoulos), John Christos 1997. "The Lord Giveth and the Lord Taketh Away: Athos and the Confiscation Affair of 1568–1569." In *Mount Athos in the Fourteenth–Sixteenth Centuries*, edited by Kriton Chryssochoidis, 154–69. Athens: The National Hellenic Research Foundation, Institute for Byzantine Research.
- Allen, Douglas W. 1995. "Order in the Church: A Property Rights Approach." *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, 27 (1): 97–117.
- Anastassiadis, Tassos. 2011. "(Αν)ίερη γη: Ηθική και πολιτική οικονομία των ορθόδοξων μοναστηριών στο σύγχρονο ελληνικό κράτος" [Un(holy) Land: Moral and Political Economy of the Orthodox Monasteries in the Modern Greek State]. In: *Μοναστήρια, οικονομία και πολιτική από τους μεσαιωνικούς στους νεώτερους χρόνους* [Monasteries, Economy and Politics from Medieval to Modern Times], edited by Elias Kolovos, 253–85. Herakleio: Crete University Press.
- Becker, Sascha O., Steven Pfaff, and Jared Rubin. 2016. "Causes and Consequences of the Protestant Reformation." *The Warwick Economics Research Paper Series* 1105, University of Warwick, Department of Economics.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1994. *Raisons pratiques*, Paris: Seuil.

- Brown, Peter. 1971. "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity." *The Journal of Roman Studies* 61: 80–101.
- Brown, Peter. 1989. *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Bur, Marta. 1972. "Kam istoriata na stopanstvoto i stroitelnata deinost na Rilska manastir 1833–1848" [On the History of the Estate and the Building activities of the Rila Monastery]. *Izvestia na instituta za historia na BAN* 22: 227–61.
- Buss, Andréas. 1995. "The Individual in the Eastern Orthodox Tradition." *Archives de sciences sociales des religions* 91: 41–65.
- Davidson, Audrey B. 1995. "The Medieval Monastery as Franchise Monopolist." *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, 27 (1): 119–28.
- Djankov, Simeon, Elena Nikolova and Jan Zilinsky. 2016. "The Happiness Gap in Eastern Europe." *Journal of Comparative Economics* 44 (1): 108–24.
- Ekelund Jr., Robert B., Robert D. Tollison, Gary M. Anderson, Robert F. Hébert, Audrey B. Davidson. 1996. *The Sacred Trust: The Medieval Church as an Economic Firm*, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ekelund, R. B. J., Herbert, R. F., & Tollison, R. D. 1989. "An Economic Model of the Medieval Church: Usury as a Form of Rent Seeking." *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization*, 5 (2): 307–31.
- Fotić, Aleksandar. 2010. "Athonite Travelling Monks and the Ottoman Authorities (Sixteenth–Eighteenth Centuries)." In: *Perspectives on Ottoman Studies. Papers from the Eighteenth Symposium of the International Committee of Pre-Ottoman and Ottoman Studies (CIEPO) at the University of Zagreb 2008*, edited by E. Caušević, N. Moacanin, V. Kursar, 157–65. Berlin: LIT Verlag.
- Fotić, Aleksandar. 2000. *Sveta Gora i Hilandar u Osmanskom carstvu (XV–XVII vek)* [Mount Athos and Hilandar in the Ottoman Empire (Fifteenth – Seventeenth Centuries)]. Belgrade: Balkanološki institut SANU, Manastir Hilandar, Sveti arhijerejski sinod Srpske pravoslavne crkve.
- Fotić, Aleksandar. 1994. "The Official Explanations for the Confiscation and Sale of Monasteries (Churches) and their Estates at the Time of Selim II." *Turcica* 26 (1994): 33–54.
- Fotić, Aleksandar. 2005. "Concealed Donation or a Sale: The Acquisition of Monastic Property (Fifteenth – Seventeenth Centuries)." In *XIV. Türk Tarih Kongresi (Ankara, 9–13 Eylül 2002). Kongreye Sunulan Bildiriler*, II. Cilt – I. Kısım, 721–28. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi.
- Frey, Bruno S. and Stephan Rothlin. 2015. "Catholic Orders as Efficient Institutions." CREMA Working Papers Series 2015–12, Center for Research in Economics, Management, and the Arts (CREMA). <http://www.crema-research.ch/papers/2015–12.pdf>
- Gara, Eleni. 2017. "Conceptualizing Inter-religious Relations in the Ottoman Empire: The Early Modern Centuries." *Acta Poloniae Historica* 116: 57–92.
- Heldring, Leander, James A. Robinson and Sebastian Vollmer. 2015. "Monks, Gents and Industrialists: The Long-Run Impact of the Dissolution of the English Monasteries." NBER Working Papers no. 21450 (August). <https://www.nber.org/papers/w21450.pdf>
- Hristemova, Mina. 2003. "Bachkovskiat manastir prez 16 vek spored osmanski opisni registri" [The Bachkova Monastery According to Ottoman Records]. In: *Mejdunarodna nauchna*

- konferentzia „Manastirskata kultura na Balkanite“. *Godishnik na Sofiiskia Universitet „Sv. Kliment Ohridski“* 93 (12): 215–28.
- Iannaconne, Laurence R. 1998. “Introduction to the Economics of Religion.” *Journal of Economic Literature* 36: 1465–96.
- Kalkandjieva, Daniela. 2016. “Monasticism in Bulgaria.” In *Monasticism in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Republics*, edited by I. A. Murzahu, 19–41. New York: Routledge.
- Kermeli, Evgenia. 2000. “The Confiscation and Repossession of the Monastic Properties in Mount Athos and Patmos Monasteries, 1568–1570.” *Bulgarian Historical Review* 28 (3–4): 39–53.
- Kieser, Alfred. 1987. “From Asceticism to Administration of Wealth. Medieval Monasteries and the Pitfalls of Rationalization.” *Organization Studies* 8 (2): 103–23.
- Kolovos, Elias, ed. 2011. *Μοναστήρια, οικονομία και πολιτική από τους μεσαιωνικούς στους νεώτερους χρόνους* [Monasteries, Economy and Politics from Medieval to Modern Times]. Herakleio: Crete University Press.
- Kolovos, Elias. 2015. “Monasteries in the Rural Societies of the Greek Lands under the Ottomans: A Historiographical Appraisal.” *Ottoman Rural Societies and Economies*, edited by Elias Kolovos, 165–71. Rethymno: Crete University Press.
- Kolovos, Elias. 2016. “Christian *Vakıfs* of Monasteries in the Ottoman Greek Lands from the Fourteenth to Eighteenth Centuries.” In *Les fondations pieuses waqfs chez les chrétiens et les juifs du Moyen Âge à nos jours*, edited by Sabine Mohasseb Saliba, 103–27. Paris: Geuthner.
- Konortas, Paraskevas. 1998. *Οθωμανικές θεωρήσεις για το οικουμενικό πατριαρχείο, 17ος-1923* [Ottoman Views on the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Seventeenth Century-1923], Athens: Alexandraia.
- Kotzageorgis, Phokion. 2002. *Η αθωνική Μονή Αγίου Παύλου κατά την οθωμανική περίοδο* [The Athonite Monastery of Saint Paul during the Ottoman Period]. Thessaloniki: University Studio Press.
- Laiou, Angeliki E. and Cécile Morrisson. 2007. *The Byzantine Economy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Laiou, Sophia. 2011. “Σχέσεις μοναχών και χριστιανών λαϊκών κατά την οθωμανική περίοδο (15ος-αρχές 19ου αι.)” [Relations between Monks and Christian Laymen during the Ottoman Centuries]. In: *Μοναστήρια, οικονομία και πολιτική από τους μεσαιωνικούς στους νεώτερους χρόνους* [Monasteries, Economy and Politics from Medieval to Modern Times], edited by Elias Kolovos, 207–23. Herakleio: Crete University Press.
- Makrides, Vasilios N. 2019. “Orthodox Christianity and Economic Development: A Critical Overview.” *Archives de sciences sociales des religions* 185 : 23–43.
- Mausse, Marcel. 1923–1924. “Essai sur le don. Forme et raison de l'échange dans les sociétés archaïques.” *L'Année Sociologique*, nouvelle série, I : 30–186.
- Merdzimekis, Nikos. 2003. *Gradskite metosi na Svetogorskis manastir „Sv. Pavel“ v Plovdiv prez 18–19 vek* [The Urban *Metochi* of the Athonite Monastery „St. Paul“ in Plovdiv during the Eighteenth-Nineteenth centuries]. In: *Mejdunarodna nauchna konferentzia „Manastirskata kultura na Balkanite“*. *Godishnik na Sofiiskia Universitet „Sv. Kliment Ohridski“* 93 (12): 161–68.

- Papademetriou, Tom. 2015. *Render unto the Sultan: Power, Authority, and the Greek Orthodox Church in the Early Ottoman Centuries*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Radkova, R. 1974a. "Rilskiat manastir i tzarkovno-natzionalnata borba" [The Rila Monastery and the Ecclesiastical-National Struggle]. In: *V pamet na akademik Mihail Dimitrov. Izsledvania varhu Balgarskoto Vazrajdanie*, 233–46. Sofia: Izdatelstvo na BAN.
- Radkova, R. 1974b. "Kam vazrojdenskata istoria na Kalugеровskia manastir „Sv. Nikola“" [On the History of the Kalugerove Monastery „St. Nikola“]. In: *V chest na akademik Dimitar Kosev*, 133–41. Sofia, Izdatelstvo na BAN.
- Rost, Katja, Emil Inauen, Margit Osterloh and Bruno S. Frey. 2008. "The Corporate Governance of Benedictine Abbeys: What Can Stock Corporations Learn Form Monasteries?" Institute for Empirical Research in Economics, University of Zurich, Working Paper Series No 374. <https://www.zora.uzh.ch/id/eprint/52328/1/iewwp374.pdf>
- Roudometof, Victor, and Michalis N. Michael. 2009. "Redéfinition des frontières Église-État à Chypre après 1878. Perspective historique sur l'Église orthodoxe chypriote." *Social Compass* 57 (1): 35–48
- Roudometof, Victor, and Michalis N. Michael. 2010. "Economic Functions of Monasticism in Cyprus: The Case of the Kykkos Monastery." *Religions* 1 (1): 54–77.
- Silber, Ilana F. 1993. "Monasticism and the 'Protestant Ethic': Asceticism, Rationality and Wealth in the Medieval West." *The British Journal of Sociology* 44 (1): 103–23.
- Smyrliis, Kostis. 2006. *La fortune des grands monastères byzantins (fin du Xe milieu du XIVe siècle)*. Paris: Centre d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance.
- Smyrliis, Kostis. 2011. "Τα μοναστήρια στο ύστερο Βυζάντιο: Οικονομικός ρόλος και σχέσεις με το κράτος (13ος-15ος αι.) [Monasteries in Late Byzantium: Economic Role and Relations to the State (Thirteenth-Fifteenth Centuries)]." In: *Μοναστήρια, οικονομία και πολιτική από τους μεσαιωνικούς στους νεώτερους χρόνους* (Monasteries, Economy and Politics from Medieval to Modern Times), edited by Elias Kolovos, 53–68. Herakleio: Crete University Press.
- Thompson, Edward P. 1971. "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century." *Past & Present* 50: 76–136.
- Van Dijck, Maarten, Jan De Maeyer, Jeffrey Tyssens and Jimmy Koppen (eds). 2013. *The Economics of Providence: Management, Finance and Patrimony of Religious Orders and Congregations in Europe, 1773-ca. 1930*, Leuven: Leuven University Press.
- Weber, Max. 1904. "Die protestantische Ethik und der "Geist" des Kapitalismus." *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* 20 (1): 1–54.
- Weber, Max. 1905. "Die protestantische Ethik und der "Geist" des Kapitalismus, II. Die Berufsidee des asketischen Protestantismus." *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* 21 (1): 1–110.
- Zachariadou, Elizabeth A. 1996. *Δέκα τουρκικά έγγραφα για την Μεγάλη Εκκλησία (1483–1567)* [Ten Turkish Documents Concerning the Great Church (1483–1567).] Athens: The National Hellenic Research Foundation, Institute for Byzantine Research.

Section I

WEALTH MANAGEMENT: REAL ESTATE



Beyond the Borders: the Vital Space of Byzantine Athos

A GEOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW OF THE ATHONITE ESTATES
UP TO THE OTTOMAN CONQUEST

DIMITRIOS KALPAKIS

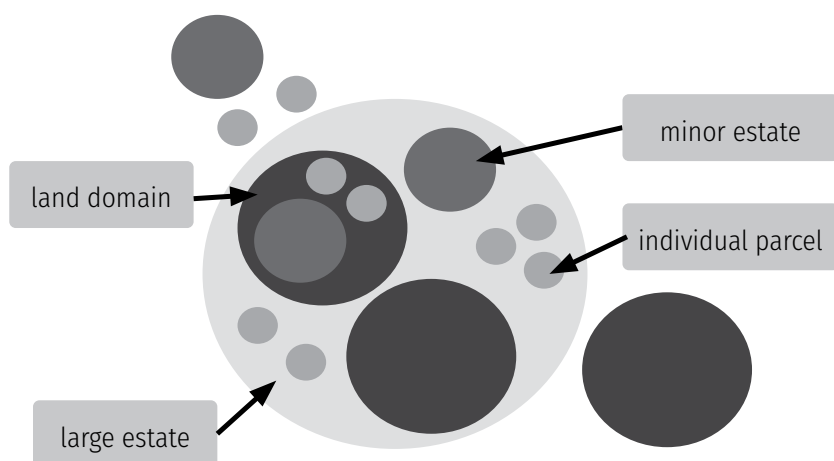
Introduction

The estates of the Athonite monasteries, seen as a whole, can be considered a crucial phenomenon for the history of Athos, yet at the same time it is quite a complex phenomenon. It was not only the economic aspect that made these estates so important but also their expansion throughout the Orthodox world. In geographical terms, the phenomenon reached its peak after the Ottoman conquest. However, the Byzantine era was the period when its foundations were laid, thus also delimiting the vital space of Athos. There is no doubt that the estates formed the main network of interaction between Athos and the rest of the world. Going beyond its initial economic nature, this phenomenon subsequently became more complicated, as it promoted various aspects, both social, spiritual, and cultural.

The international literature that deals with this topic is extraordinarily rich. However, the interpretation of the phenomenon as a whole needs a macroscopic view that can join all elements together into a bigger picture.

The Estates: A Definition

Defining an estate is somewhat of a puzzle. The concept is ambiguous in the sources themselves, where the term *metochion* (Gk. *μετόχιον*) seems to imply various economic activities, though not clearly so. In general, the term and its definition are fuzzy even in the sources themselves, perhaps due to the variety of estate types, as well as of their special features (ways of acquisition, functions, terms and conditions and so on), especially during the Byzantine era (**Graph 1**).



Graph 1: Concepts of “metochion” according to the sources

In an attempt to simplify matters, this chapter adopts a specific definition of an estate: a spatial unit that functions as an expansion of a monastery’s vital space, outside the limits of Athos. For the current chapter, which is part of a wider study, this definition involves the minimum possible territory, consisting of disparate minor, individual parts with common spatial and other characteristics. The evolution of the term into *metochion*, more frequent in later sources, was due mostly to other functions and management needs beyond just land cultivation.

The Geography of Athos

The peculiar physical geography of Athos, which is a mountainous and rough place, with only a few natural harbours, made the peninsula an ideal place for hermits (**Map 1**). However, the official foundation of the Athonite community by Tzimiskis in the tenth century made Athos popular throughout the Orthodox world, attracting more and more monks. The development of the initial humble buildings into monasteries and the construction of new ones in what was a limited territory made the need for space urgent.

The vital space of these institutions suddenly seemed tragically limited. This can fully explain the frequent arguments between monasteries that are documented in

the sources and that caused constant spatial changes, until the major monasteries came to prevail, thus stabilizing that whole process.



Map 1: Mount Athos: Monasteries and Sketes

However, even when things had settled again, it was undeniable that the vital space of the “new” Athos was indeed limited. The first move outwards focused mainly on the area just outside the Athonite borderline; the Athonites were given places there that belonged mostly to earlier monasteries (which were then in decline). But soon the entire region of Halkidiki (except perhaps its mountainous hinterland) became a physical extension of Athos, as it covered the nutritional needs of its fast-increasing population.

From the Need for Vital Space to the Large Estates

The fact that the monasteries were great landowners themselves appears to be an oxymoron. However, the monastic ideal of *poverty* (in contradiction to *property*) refers to individuals, not to the institutions themselves. In other words, a monastery

had to have the means to cover the vital needs of its monks; moreover, it required the means to ensure its uninterrupted existence in the long term, relieving the monks of concern for their vital needs, so as to be free to concentrate on their spiritual duties (Kalpakis 2020, vol. 1, 125).

Therefore, founders endowed their monastery with some property, mostly estates. Thus, the monastery became a landowner, and needed to develop management capabilities. The estates either expanded or shrunk, depending on the skills of the managers, allowing them to interact – within a dense economic network – with individuals, local communities, and the state.

The first Athonite estates were founded right outside the borders of the peninsula, in the wider region of Ierissos and Eastern Halkidiki. Of course, this served specific needs, as the proximity allowed direct management and proper exploitation, while the danger of loss was restricted.

A very important factor in this expansion were great donations, mostly by the state, although donations by various members of the local or central aristocracy must not be forgotten. As for the state, it was common practice to donate deserted lands which had previously belonged to monasteries that had fallen into decline; another option was to donate lands that were located on the border, especially during the troubled late Byzantine period; finally, the state also gave monasteries uncultivated or lower-quality public land (Kalpakis 2015, 368). In each of these cases, the state benefited from the transaction, first from the taxation of the lands, which found its way into the state treasury; second because the intensive cultivation became a factor promoting development of the Byzantine countryside. Furthermore, the state retained the right to confiscate part of these lands under certain conditions. It is interesting that even in very troubled periods, when the lands produced no income for the state, the latter retained control over them through periodical official surveys (Oikonomides 2006, 219).

On the other hand, there were always private donations, the number of which exceeded donations by the state (Smyrlis 2011, 65), and the motivations could vary. In addition to the donor's religious motivations, it was also possible that an economic or even a political intention was involved. The favourable tax regime that the monasteries enjoyed lured many aristocrats, who decided to establish a monastery, transferring to the new foundation their share of the family property which the monastery then had to manage. Moreover, even in cases that such monasteries were not totally under aristocratic family control, the prestige of the founder was enough to gain advantage in the local competition for power. For their part, beyond

the perspective of offering local economic stimulus and growth, monasteries could guarantee a general culture of legality, obedience to the state and social stability in the countryside; moreover, they gradually became centres of the provincial economy, and of defence and social conscience (Kalpakis 2020, vol. 1: 166–7).

Estates: Nature and Evolution

A number of smaller land parcels situated closer to the monastic territories provided the monasteries with fresh food (mostly vegetables and fruit), while the so-called *autourgia* were considered to be a serious investment. They were reserved for perennial crops, which, beyond the initial investment capital, did not demand any further care (at least, not as much as other crops), and were thus very profitable. The main crops of this category were olives and vines. In addition to these minor parcels, monasteries acquired larger estates in more distant areas (**Graph 2**).

Usual Types of Estates		
urban	rural	
Monastery	Village	Olive grove
Church	Monastery	Vineyard
Chapel	Church	Salt pit
Workshop	Chapel	Fishery
Inn	Farmhouse	Mill
House	Warehouse	Oil Press
Tavern	Tower	Winery
Garden	Field	Workshop
Land parcel	Pasture	Testiery
	Forest	Silkworm installation

Graph 2: Usual types of estates

After acquisition, an estate could develop in many ways; it could remain simply as a single piece of land for grazing (pasture), for the cultivation of basic foodstuffs or for logging. Furthermore, it could be used for long-term cultivation or – even better – it could be upgraded through technical works (wells and channels, drainage networks, roads, bridges and so on). Furthermore, an estate could include smaller units for the processing of agricultural products (wine or olive presses, mills and so on). In this way, much value could be added to the products, thus providing the

monastery with high-quality produce and – more importantly – introducing and supporting commercial activities and providing services to third parties.

On the other hand, there were also urban estates (either donated or bought), which, in addition to serving as residences for the monks or for tenants, could be turned into workshops for small-scale *industrial* products.¹

A factor of great importance for the rural estates were the *paroikoi*. They were actually the peasants of the nearby villages and hamlets, linked in various ways to the specific estates, although the link was quite different from the bonds that existed in the Western medieval world.² It was a critical factor in land productivity (and therefore in value) that there were enough *paroikoi* and they could be granted to an estate only through an imperial order. Generally, there were no large estates without a great number of *paroikoi*; yet during demographic crises emergency measures were taken by the state, such as population transfer, either by force or by incentive.³

The rural estates were primarily oriented towards realizing autarky, at least initially, focusing mainly on the production of basic foodstuffs. On the other hand, the processing of products became a critical point in the whole chain, not only to ensure better preservation of the products in question but also to create added value; oil, wine and cereals had always been products in high demand. The commercialization and distribution of the surplus was a critical factor, not only for the economy but also for many other aspects of society and life in general. In addition to selling these products at local and provincial markets, or at various fairs throughout the countryside, the larger Athonite monasteries had been granted the privilege to sell even their produce in the central markets, transporting it in their own commercial ships (Smyrlis 2011, 55).

More importantly, however, these monasteries gradually developed a new mentality, as they began to realize their power within Byzantine society as core actors in the economy, due to their possession of the means of production and of technical expertise. The circulation of their surplus goods led to further development of the

1 The vast category of urban estates could include, of course, numerous churches, chapels or even small (usually pre-existing) monasteries, which came into the possession of the Athonite monasteries in many ways.

2 This system has been called *quasi feudal* by researchers. The legal status of these peasants was peculiar, as they were in fact bound to the land, not to the landowner; yet that dependency was mostly expressed in economic terms (taxation and obligatory work for a specific number of days per year). See Laiou 2006, 532; Kazhdan 1993, 89.

3 The case of the island of Lemnos is very characteristic: in the period after the Ottomans occupied Thessaloniki but before they took Lemnos, a massive transfer of *paroikoi* took place from Macedonia to the island, following incentives provided by the Athonite monasteries. See also: Smyrlis 2012, 49.

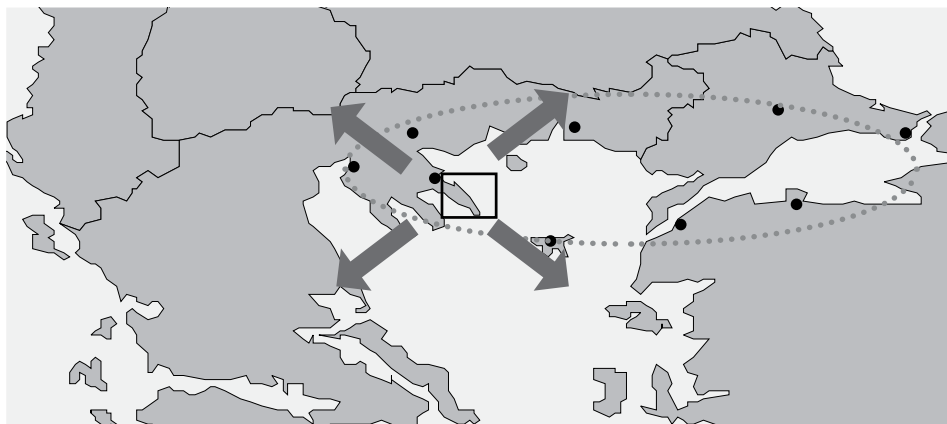
networks and to the monetization of the economy, which, in turn, favoured other economic activities, such as investment and lending.

It is remarkable that the history of these estates began even before the official establishment of the Athonite state. Their evolution over time shows a clearly increasing trend: the total of 57 estates (according to our method of counting)⁴ in the tenth century had nearly doubled in the eleventh century (110), although the number of monasteries involved had also increased (from 3 to 8). Over the next two centuries, although the number of monasteries that owned estates remained almost the same, the number of estates almost tripled, reaching a total of 306 in the thirteenth century. But the peak of this phenomenon fell after the fourteenth century, with 783 documented estates, involving all Athonite monasteries. The fifteenth century shows a slight increase of this total, though this period is considered to be a period of stagnation, if not recession. The reason is that certain monasteries had been favoured through political circumstance, mostly by being granted estates in Serbia by members of the local aristocracy, thus increasing the total numbers of estates. At the same time, other monasteries had entered a period of slight decline.

The spatial evolution of the whole phenomenon is also of great interest (**Map 2**). What we could call a *typical* Athonite vital space had largely been formed already in the tenth century. It was an area consisting of the territories immediately outside Athos and the neighbouring regions, all of them highly productive and in the vicinity of Athos; the whole peninsula of Halkidiki, west to Thessaloniki and towards the east as far as the Strymon valley, and to the islands of Lemnos and Sporades to the south. This area expanded in *circles* over time, mostly towards the northwest or northeast, depending on the historical circumstances. A typical example is the period of massive donations of Serbian territories in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, which significantly extended the vital space of Athos to the northwest. Otherwise, the space remained almost unchanged, with random modifications towards Central Macedonia to the west and Constantinople to the east. One exception is an early acquisition in the Wallachian territory, a forerunner of the post-Byzantine Athonite estates in the area (especially after the confiscations by Selim II, 1568/69).

4

A specific methodology has been developed for the project, for each stage of the research, based on a series of necessary conditions, especially regarding the cataloguing of the estates and their features. See Kalpakis (2020, vol. 1, 21–42 and 153–67).



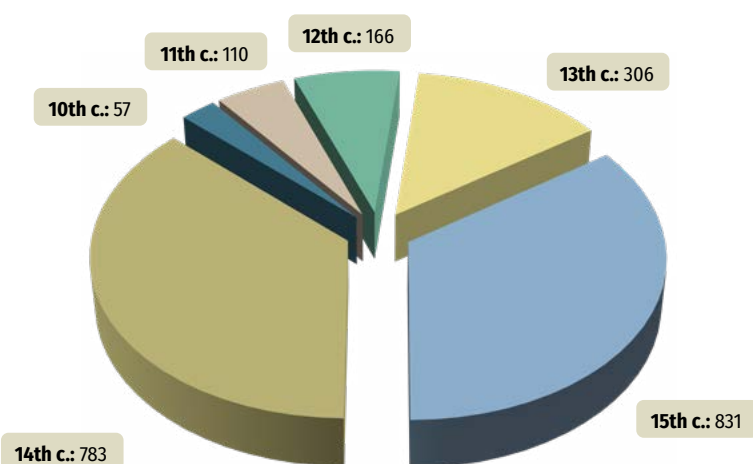
Map 2: *Expansion trends and main spots in the Late Byzantine period*

On the whole, the spatio-temporal and qualitative valuation of the Athonite estates shows that after the initial delimitation of the typical Athonite space, there was constant expansion (**Graph 3**). During periods of political stability, when the networks were fully accessible, this whole area was considered an extension of the territories of the capital. The connection with the Byzantine capital is more obvious if we take a more careful look at the direction of the economic activities, especially in the later period (Kalpakis 2020, vol. 1, 346–48; Smyrlis 2015, 117; Laiou 2011, 29).

Of course, the Athonite estates subsequently expanded to a wider area, far beyond the first circle, towards Serbia and Wallachia (to the north). However, many differentiations – even contrasts – are in evidence among these various regions. It is obvious that the acquisition of estates in distant areas during the Byzantine period was a random process in most cases, as no patterns can be distinguished;⁵ in other cases, even when it resulted from planning, it proved unprofitable or caused management difficulties, so that the estates acquired did not evolve normally. On the contrary, in areas where the estates stopped being productive, they either went into decline or had to be put to new functions whenever possible (for instance as a basis for fundraising journeys and so on), thus acquiring viability in a different sense.⁶

5 It was not wise, in economic terms, to obtain a distant piece of land where no control, management, or even survey was possible.

6 This is true for the post-Byzantine phase of the phenomenon, when the estates in Wallachia and Moldavia mostly served the purposes of raising revenue, which was used for instance for large-scale renovation and construction projects in the monasteries themselves.



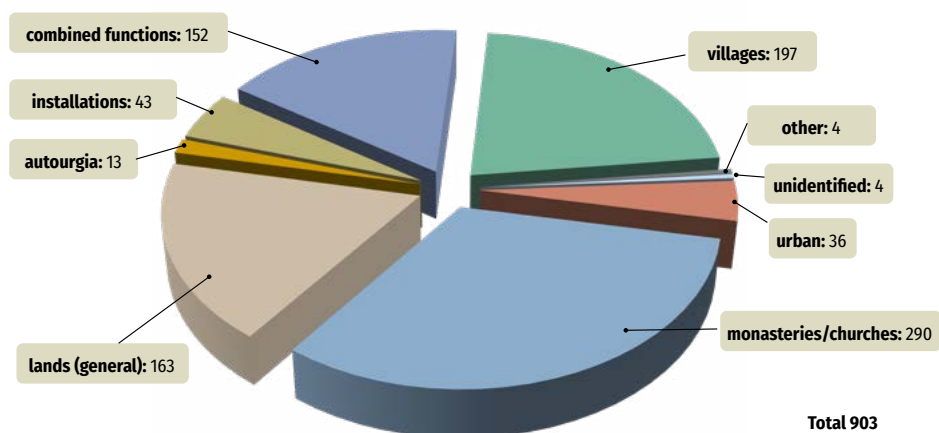
Graph 3: Temporal evolution of the Athonite estates in the Byzantine period

When we look at the types of estates (which corresponded to their main functions) that existed, the traditional estates (minor monasteries, churches, arable lands, entire villages and types of mixed use) were clearly more numerous than the rest (urban estates, *autourgia*, installations for the processing of products). However, despite this numeric prevalence, a more careful look reveals a hidden dynamic in the second group, especially towards the end of the Byzantine era; not the absolute numbers but the percentages imply a slight trend towards fresh economic models. The estates that belonged more to the secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy, with facilities for the processing of products and commercial activities or the provision of services to third parties, introduced a new chapter in the history of the monastic economy (Graph 4).⁷

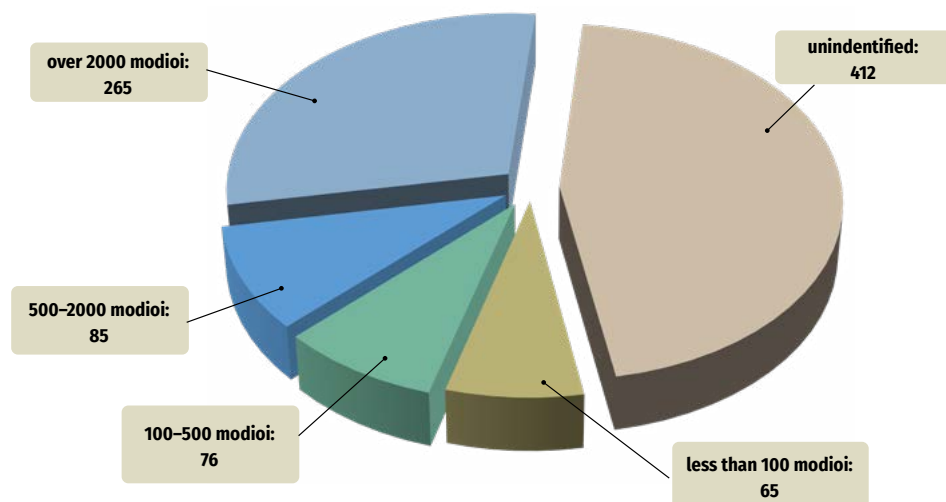
The types of estates that existed corresponded to contemporary economic perceptions and patterns, with an emphasis on primary production, while a change began to become visible mainly in the fifteenth century, with a slight rise in the number

7

Urban estates, suitable mostly for residences, shops and workshops, served the secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy, by processing raw products (mills, textile mills, bakeries etc.) or by trading products or even providing services. *Autourgia*, on the other hand, which were somehow involved in the commerce of added-value products, soon became familiar with such practices (though the *autourgia* did not conduct large-scale commercial activities themselves). A typical example (albeit from outside the Athonite world) was the Ganos' wine trade, which even reached the far European north. (See Kalpakis 2020, vol. 1, 184; also Mango 2009, 3, 5).



Graph 4: Athonite estates per type



Graph 5: Athonite estates per size

of estates involved in the secondary and tertiary economy.⁸ An important factor, of course, was the presence of religious buildings (churches and chapels), which

⁸ This shift in economic trends was mainly due to the political changes of the fifteenth century and the massive territorial reduction. However, a major change in the economy was already in progress, involving the role of foreign merchants throughout the empire, who in many cases manipulated the production (primary or secondary) of an entire region, with their stations established across the main networks. (See Kalpakis 2020, vol. 1.)

created hubs throughout the countryside, thus providing the potential for future development.⁹

An issue related to the distinction between different types of estate is that of their size, which leads to further classifications on the basis of their functions. For instance, large estates that encompassed entire villages contributed to the monasteries' economy mostly in money (it seems that this kind of ownership was to do more with taxation rights than with actual land cultivation), whereas if they consisted only of arable land, they provided the monasteries with foodstuffs, the surplus of which could be commercialized, through barter or sale. On the other hand, the minor estates, mostly focused on different forms of cultivation (vineyards, olive groves, orchards and so on). They supplied the monasteries with produce when they were situated in the vicinity. Otherwise, they often engaged in the processing of agricultural products or sold produce directly at nearby markets, thus, creating bonds and relationships with the local communities (Kalpakis 2020, vol. 1: 255; Mango 2009, 3, 5).

Though the documents provide no information for nearly half of the estates, it is clear that the large estates were in the majority (**Graph 5**). Of course, one factor that added to the total were the massive donations of entire villages in Serbia after the fourteenth century; however, even without these, most of the estates belonged to the two higher classes (500 to 2,000 and more than 2,000 *modioi*, respectively).¹⁰

In addition to the *circles* around the Athonite peninsula, which represent a gradual expansion, it is possible to distinguish three other zones in which estates were situated: (a) a zone nearby, for direct exploitation, and the supply of foodstuff; (b) a mid-distance zone for both direct and indirect exploitation, and monetized income; and (c) a long-distance zone for indirect management to ensure the influx of money, as well as bases for fundraising campaigns. In the last zone, some estates gradually became important religious, spiritual and social centres in the areas where they were located during the post-Byzantine period (**Map 3**).

9 In some cases, such buildings in the countryside turned into residential hubs, evolving into hamlets and villages (Kalpakis 2020, vol. 1, 371).

10 An entire village is calculated along with its vital space, which, especially in that period, was estimated as a *circle* with a radius of 2 km, which comes to nearly 1,250 hectares. See Kalpakis 2020, 1: 372n248.



Map 3: Number of Athonite estates by regions

There appear to have been common patterns to the way these estates were acquired and expanded. A typical example are the estates of Great Lavra and Dionysiou monasteries on the island of Lemnos: a donation by an individual was the beginning; usually this consisted of land parcels and some agricultural installations. Then, after a nucleus had been established, a state donation followed, including *paroikoi* of course, thus forming an actual estate, which, in turn, was enriched with further acquisitions in the vicinity, mostly via private donations, endowments or even purchases (Haldon 1986, 173).

In some cases, the expansion of Athonite estates was greater during periods of crisis, which widened the gap between the rich and the poor. A large number of peasants had to sell their properties in order to survive, and the only party that could buy were usually the monasteries. Moreover, during such periods, the state made massive land donations to monasteries (who were in fact carrying out effective large-scale cultivation). Those donations in most cases included the transfer of *paroikoi*, as a measure to ensure that the lands would be restored to productive status. Furthermore, they were responsible for demographic growth in the countryside, which in turn benefited the defence and prosperity of local society in general.

At a regional level, the major estates became nodal points in the countryside, with an important role in local economic, social and religious life. Especially those estates which – either due to wise management or good fortune – had a long history became core factors of stability and safety, in constant interaction with the local communities. This is clearly reflected in demography; in particular during periods of extended crisis, the economic stability which these major estates guaranteed (in comparison to other places), resulted in local welfare, while the most prosperous attracted new peasants from abandoned lands. The peasants seemed to value the stability that these estates brought to their region, even though they were subjected to the will of their masters. It is remarkable that, though the conditions that minor secular landowners offered were much better for the peasants, the latter generally preferred the larger landowners – especially the monasteries – as these could guarantee stability in legal and economic relations, given that they were a factor of stability and continuity themselves (Laiou 2006, 509; Kalpakis 2020, vol. 1: 136, 146; Kotzageorgis 2011, 172, 174).

An Overview

The Athonite estates can only be seen as a single and complex phenomenon, with many interacting factors and various perspectives. And though this phenomenon had an abiding core, it was constantly evolving in response to historical circumstances.

The aim of the larger study (Kalpakis 2020) of which the current chapter is a part was to map the expansion of the Athonite monasteries' estates during the Byzantine era. The sum of these forms what we could call the Athonite vital space. Despite the macroscopic view of the study (which is necessary to monitor the estates as a whole), the phenomenon can be effectively depicted on maps. Moreover, the

restrictions of the sources notwithstanding, this expansion can be satisfactorily presented as points on a timeline.

The Athonite vital space evolved in zones (quasi-circles) around the peninsula, with a clear trend towards the north. During the post-Byzantine era, given the specific historical conditions that then prevailed, this space was modified, expanding to the northeast, mostly towards the Danubian principalities, but also to the remaining regions of the Greek mainland and Asia Minor, then under the unified Ottoman state.

The core vital space of Athos was a result of careful consideration, with economic and geographical factors taken into account (productivity, proximity, access, security and so on), and this continued to be the case throughout this period. All expansions and modifications were usually short-term and imposed by specific conditions and expediencies. Of course, donations were a main factor in the expansion, thus making it sometimes look random.¹¹

All the estates had a clear economic background, especially given that they existed in the context of a pre-industrial society. In other words, they were mainly agricultural units aimed at the production of foodstuffs in such quantities as to ensure the monasteries' survival, but also to create a surplus for exchange or trading. However, beyond this main type of estate, many other types could be found, such as those which included installations for processing produce or even providing services of an economic nature to the local communities. In addition to this, an older feudal model (focused on simply extracting revenue from an estate) also survived, in the practice of donating villages and entire regions to monasteries (a practice followed by many princes and officials in Serbia).

The patterns of management of the estates had a common background as well. With the exception of some regions with non-productive estates (this could be the case for many reasons: distance, lack of management skills, historical circumstances and so on), estates were organized in ways that looked like what the later use of the term *metochia* implies: estates covering an extended region, including a clearly defined and organized management centre. The typology of these centres seems to have followed specific management, defence and transportation needs. Especially in the Late Byzantine era, a period of general insecurity, these estates acquired a clearly

11 In general, the acquisition of properties was subject to careful planning (even for donations). However, random donations took place too, usually due to the prestige of a monastery. In such cases, a monastery would never reject a donation, even if it was in some distant (i.e. a village in Serbia) or random place beyond its areas of interest.

defensive form, protecting not only the estate itself but also the nearby population, which usually depended on the estate. In many cases, some of the largest estates evolved into residential nucleuses, which in turn later became villages named after the patron saint of the church of the original estate.

Monastic landownership and management affected the Byzantine countryside in many ways, including ways that transcended the economy. Dominating the local economy, the Athonite estates became centres of spiritual and social life, benefiting the local society. As nodes on the main transportation networks, they functioned as unifying factors for the politically fragmented countryside, and guaranteed a decent level of security and economic viability.

References

- Haldon John. 1986. "Limnos, Monastic Holdings and the Byzantine State: ca. 1261–1453." In: *Continuity and Change in Late Byzantine and Early Ottoman Society (Papers given at a Symposium at Dumbarton Oaks in May 1982)*, edited by Anthony Bryer and Heath Lowry, 161–88. Birmingham (UK) – Washington (USA): The Univ. of Birmingham – Dumbarton Oaks.
- Kalpakis, Dimitrios. 2015. "Για μια μακροσκοπική εξέταση του φαινομένου των μετοχίων: Μεθοδολογικές Προσεγγίσεις" [The Monastic Dependencies (metochia) at a Small Scale: Methodological Approaches]. In: *Η εξακτίνωση του Αγίου Όρους στον Ορθόδοξο Κόσμο: τα Μετόχια, Πρακτικά Συνεδρίου* [Mount Athos. Spreading the Light in the Orthodox word: The Metochia. Conference Proceedings], 365–73. Thessaloniki: Mount Athos Center.
- Kalpakis, Dimitrios. 2018. "Church and Productive Space from Late Byzantium to the Ottoman Reality: the Case-Study of Athonic Estates." *Historicogeographica* 16–17: 123–37.
- Kalpakis, Dimitrios. 2020. "The Geography of the Athonic Estates during the Byzantine era" [In Greek]. PhD thesis, 3 vols., University of Ioannina.
- Kazhdan, A. 1993. "State, Feudal, and Private Economy in Byzantium." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 47: 83–100.
- Kotzageorgis, Phokion. 2011. "Τα μοναστήρια ως τοπικές οθωμανικές ελίτ [Monasteries as Ottoman Local Elites]." In: *Μοναστήρια, οικονομία και πολιτική από τους μεσαιωνικούς στους νεώτερους χρόνους* [Monasteries, Economy and Politics from Medieval to Modern Times], edited by Elias Kolovos, 163–90. Herakleio: Crete University Press.
- Laiou, Angeliki E. 2006. "Η αγροτική οικονομία (13ος – 15ος αιώνας)" [The Agrarian Economy (thirteenth-fifteenth centuries)]. In: *Οικονομική Ιστορία του Βυζαντίου* [The Economic History of Byzantium], edited by Angeliki Laiou, Vol. I, 495–574. Athens: MIET.
- Laiou, Angeliki E. 2011. "Introversion and Extroversion, Autarky and Trade: Urban and Rural Economy in Thrace during the Byzantine period." In: *Byzantine Thrace. Evidence and Remains*, Proceedings of the 4th International Symposium on Thracian Studies

- (=Byzantinische Forschungen – Internationale Zeitschrift für Byzantinistik 30), 11–40. Amsterdam: Verlag Adolf M. Hakkert
- Mango, Marlia Mundell. 2009. “Byzantine Trade: Local, Regional, Interregional and International.” In *Byzantine Trade, fourth – twelfth Centuries: The Archaeology of Local, Regional and International Exchange, Papers of the Thirty Eighth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, St John’s College, University of Oxford, March 2004*, edited by M. M. Mango, 3–14.
- Ostrogorsky, G. 1981. *Ιστορία του βυζαντινού κράτους* [History of the Byzantine State] 3 vols. Athens: Ιστορικές εκδόσεις Στ. Βασιλόπουλος.
- Oikonomides, Nikos. 2006. “Η κρατική οικονομία των προνομίων” [The Role of the Byzantine State in the Economy]. In: *Οικονομική Ιστορία του Βυζαντίου* [History of the Byzantine State], edited by Angeliki Laiou, Vol. III, 211–52. Athens: MIET.
- Papachryssanthou, Dionysia. 1992. *Ο Αθωνικός μοναχισμός. Αρχές και Οργάνωση*, [Athonite Monasticism. Origins and Organization]. Athens: MIET.
- Smyrlis, Kostis. 2011. “Τα μοναστήρια στο ύστερο Βυζάντιο: Οικονομικός ρόλος και σχέσεις με το κράτος (13ος-15ος αι.) [Monasteries in Late Byzantium: Economic Role and Relations to the State (Thirteenth-Fifteenth Centuries).” In: *Μοναστήρια, οικονομία και πολιτική από τους μεσαιωνικούς στους νεώτερους χρόνους* [Monasteries, Economy and Politics from Medieval to Modern Times], edited by Elias Kolovos, 53–68. Herakleio: Crete University Press.
- Smyrlis, Kostis. 2012. “Mount Athos in the Fifteenth Century: Crisis and the Beginning of Recovery.” In: *Το Άγιον Όρος στον 15ο και 16ο αιώνα, Πρακτικά ΣΤ’ Διεθνούς Επιστημονικού Συνεδρίου Αγιορειτικής Εστίας* [Mount Athos in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries, Conference Proceedings], 33–57. Thessaloniki: Mount Athos Center.
- Smyrlis, Kostis. 2015. “Settlement and Environment in Halkidiki, Ninth to Fifteenth Century AD.” In: *Mines, Olives and Monasteries. Aspects of Halkidiki’s Environmental History*, edited by Basil C. Gounaris, 109–21. Thessaloniki: Epikentro & Pharos.

Transactional Activity of Kykkos Monastery (Cyprus) in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

REAL ESTATE CONTRACTS

STYLIANI N. LEPIDA

Immediately after the conquest of the island of Cyprus by the Ottomans in 1571, the churches and the monasteries of the island came into the hands of the Ottoman state. The Ottomans actually applied the law established just a few years earlier, in the context of Suleiman the Magnificent's effort to reorganize the political, social and economic institutions of the Empire, by integrating Islamic law and sultanic political ideology into a single legal system for the sultan's benefit. As part of this effort, the Ottomans had to decide which policy to follow to achieve the integration of the newly conquered non-Muslims into their administrative system, without contradicting the Islamic law. According to the legal framework designed by the Great Ottoman Jurist (*Şeyhülislam*) Ebussuud Efendi during the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent, the Ottoman conquest of any place should be accompanied by the confiscation of monastic and church properties, and by subsequently giving clerics, monks, and laypersons the right to recover them (by purchase) from the Ottoman state. This measure applied in various parts of the Empire, and especially in its European part, since 1567 and during the following decade, including the island of Cyprus (Hackett 1991, 194–95; Cobham 1908, 160; Archimandrite Kyprianos (1788) 1902, 455; Philippou 1975, 16, 32–3). Aleksandar Fotić (1994, 39–49) has interpreted this measure as an attempt by Ottoman jurisprudence to deal with fundamental issues relating to the land ownership regime, arguing that the adoption of this measure had economic and political motives.

The Cypriot Archimandrite Kyprianos ([1788] 1902, 458), stated that about 15–20 years after the conquest of Cyprus and the confiscation by the Ottoman administration of all the monasteries and churches, the Christian Orthodox of the island had managed to recover most of the monasteries by purchase. In this vein, towards the end of the sixteenth century, an attempt was made to recover the properties that had belonged mainly to the monasteries, one of which, perhaps the most prominent

in Cyprus, was Kykkos monastery. The bishops, who in many cases had been appointed by the Ottoman central administration as the executors for the sale of the monasteries and churches in Cyprus, played a functional role in the process of recovering the monasteries. At the same time, the bishops, in their role as executors, were being controlled by the central administration through authorized commissioners (Hill 1952, 23–25; İnalçık 1969, 123–24). At this point, we should note that monasteries in general were not involved in tax farming, nor was this the case in Cyprus. Monasteries' participation in tax farming was not for profit, which the case of Kykkos monastery also confirms (Kotzageorgis 2011, 183–84).

It appears from a document of 1588 that the sale of Kykkos monastery on behalf of the Ottoman state was undertaken by Christodoulos, an executor of the monasteries of the district (*kaza*) of Lefka and Pendaya, possibly assisted by other monks. The price of the sale of Kykkos monastery amounted to 120,000 *akçes*, and this sum was deposited in the Public Treasury. There was also an additional amount of 7,000 *akçes*, which was paid as interest. A commissioner named Mustafa Çavuş was later sent by the central Ottoman administration to check whether the executor who had undertaken the sale of the monastery had acted according to the law and whether he had deposited the amount generated by the sale in the public treasury. The abbot/*hegoumen* of Kykkos declared that Christodoulos had sold the monastery to him for the sum of 120,000 *akçes*, and that he had received all the “sacred titles” and “sealed certificates”. This was confirmed by all contracting parties in the Ottoman sharia court (Theocharides 1993, 22–25).

Real estate purchase

For the monasteries in the Empire (Kolovos 2012, 113–24; Fotić 2009, 57–73; Kotzageorgis 2010, 122–24) and on the island of Cyprus, including the monastery of Kykkos, as well as for the Christian Orthodox of the island, the sixteenth century was characterized mainly by the effort on behalf of Christian monks and laypersons to recover the monastic and ecclesiastical properties, especially the buildings of the monasteries and the churches. Ever since Cyprus was conquered by the Ottomans in 1571, the *hegoumen* of Kykkos monastery, Gregorios (d. 1589), in addition to furthering the monastery's recovery, also carried out other financial transactions, almost exclusively purchases of real estate, mainly vineyards, gardens and mills. He thus ensured that the monastery would represent a benevolent religious institution, a *Christian waqf* (Kolovos 2016, 103–16), and that part of the monastery's revenue would be used for charitable purposes (Theocharides 1993: 22–25). During the seventeenth century, a continuous effort was made to maintain and even to expand

this property. The participation of Kykkos monastery through its representatives in real estate acquisitions was a frequent phenomenon in Ottoman Sharia court documents and occurred throughout the seventeenth century.

According to a document of 1606, some artillery soldiers of the Paphos fortress sold the right to possess running water and uncultivated fields to Jeremiah, the *ephoros* of Kykkos monastery, for the sum of 52 gold coins (Theocharides 1993, 50–51). In another Sharia court document, of 1642, Kuzlu Mehmed Bey sold his property, consisting of a storehouse for must and a few vineyards, to Nikiphoros, *hegoumen* of the monastery of Kykkos, for the sum of 32,000 *akçes* (Theocharides 1993, 118–19). The size of the purchases, of course, varied. Sometimes there were large purchases that included land and buildings, and, sometimes, smaller ones, as in the case found in a 1699 document, according to which the *hegoumen* purchased 17 olive trees for the sum of 1,000 *akçes* from a non-Muslim woman (Theocharides 1993: 306–7).

It is worth noting that the real estate of Kykkos monastery was not only expanded through purchases, but also through donations (Roudometof and Michael 2010, 61–63). Although it is not clear how the term *Christian donation* should be interpreted, not how it operated within the Ottoman-Islamic legal framework, both before and after the confiscation of monastic and ecclesiastical real estate (Alexandropoulos 2011), it has been shown through case studies of other monasteries that donations represented a significant and relatively steady income for Orthodox monasteries, as Elias Kolovos (2011, 247–48) has aptly observed. Documents relating to donations to Kykkos monastery during the seventeenth century indicate that these were made not only by laypeople but also by monks and priests. Such donations usually consisted of houses, shops, land and other real estate assets. The donated assets were handed over either to the *hegoumen* or to his representatives.

Cases of donations are frequently recorded in seventeenth-century sharia court documents, such as in a 1631 document according to which a number of non-Muslims donated a small monastery dedicated to the Holy Apostles, together with houses, vineyards and arable fields to Kykkos monastery (Theocharides 1993, 98–99). In 1691, a Christian subject (*reaya*) donated an orchard of one *dönüm* (ca. 1,000 m²) with fruit-bearing trees, and other trees as well, to the monastery of Kykkos, another orchard of the same size in another area, a house with a courtyard, four apricot and mulberry trees, an olive tree and three pomegranate trees, as well as eight mulberry trees and four fig trees in another place (Theocharides 1993, 242–43). In 1693, a Christian donated his shop to Kykkos monastery as long as he was alive (Theocharides 1993, 256–57). To summarize the types of real estate purchased by the monastery, especially during the seventeenth century, it can be said

that they mainly consisted of arable land, orchards and trees, houses, vines and running water.

Real estate sales

Along with the purchases, the monastery was also frequently involved in the sale of real estate. Kykkos monastery seems to have sold property for different reasons and for different purposes. We find voluntary sales in order to meet the needs of the monastery and its visitors, sales of the properties of monks who had died heirless, as well as sales for the repayment of debts. Nor can we rule out that properties were sold for profit, but this was not typically the objective of monastic institutions and cannot be confirmed by the sources that have been studied so far.

The types of properties sold by the monastery of Kykkos as recorded in the documents include farmland, vacant land, trees, watermills and running water, vines, houses, and animals. For example, in 1585, the *hegoumen* and three monks of Kykkos monastery sold a water mill with empty land (4 *kafiz*¹ in size), two apricot trees, running water and a stone building to a non-Muslim for 4,000 *akçes* (Theocharides 1993, 12–13).

As we mentioned earlier, the buyers of the property of the monastery were of a diverse social background; moreover, they were not always individuals, but could also be groups. In 1616, eight non-Muslims cooperatively bought real estate assets belonging to the monastery of Kykkos and its dependent monasteries from the authorities, including mills, vineyards, orchards, olive trees and fig trees as well as animals (Theocharides 1993, 74–75). The buyers were priests of Nicosia and they bought the property for the sum of 80,000 *akçes* (Theocharides 1993, 78–79).

Apart from selling property, the representatives of the monastery were also involved in rental transactions. For example, in 1623, Loukas, a monk of Kykkos monastery, rented out a mule to two Muslims. When the agreed period expired and the monk asked for his mule back, the renters claimed that they had given it to the cavalry officer (*sipahi*) of the area, who had lost it. The monk then claimed the recovery of his property through the Ottoman court (Theocharides 1993, 92–93).

1 Kafiz was a measure of capacity of about 250 pounds or a measure of surface of about 200 feet. In this case it is a dry measure (measure of capacity).

Any transfer of the right of usufruct was accompanied by the payment of the relevant fee (*resm-i tapu*), from which monastic foundations, of course, were not exempt. The amount of the tax depended on several parameters and varied on a case-by-case basis. In 1614, Kykkos monastery bought the right to own a house, a wine tank, two cultivated fields, twenty olive trees and one vineyard from a non-Muslim for 6,000 *akçes*. For the purchase, the monastery paid 160 *akçes* in title-deed fees (*resm-i tapu*) (Theocharides 1993, 68–69). In 1617, the monastery sold the right to plant fields of 400 *dönüms* to non-Muslims, who paid the amount of 5,000 *akçes* in fees (Theocharides 1993, 82–83). Any type of transaction, for sale or purchase, was subject to the supervision of the competent cavalry officer (*sipahi*) if the properties were within his revenues (*timar*). The *sipahi* validated the process and authorized the transaction through a concession document (*marifetname*) (Theocharides 1993, 98–99, 122–23).

Both sales and purchases as economic activities are directly related to the issue of the monastery's financial power, and this raises the question whether, and if so, to what extent the monasteries were members of the local Ottoman elites. In his attempt to answer this crucial question, Kotzageorgis (2011, 179–80) deals with an important aspect of the issue, which he characterizes as an *inherent problem* in any study that aims to reveal the true extent of a monastery's financial power. It is difficult, or even impossible, to record the real extent of monastic property due to the existence of parallel personal economic activities that the monks engaged in as individuals alongside the activities of the monastic community as such, and thus the existence of two parallel economic routes, which were accepted and recognized by Ottoman law.

Inheritance issues in relation to immovable property

The transactional relations of the monasteries, especially in the countryside, were mainly concerned with the issue of landed property. It is well known that ever since the beginning of the Ottoman period (fourteenth century), monasteries were financially active within a particular tax system and legal framework, which exempted monks from some types of taxation, giving them the right to hold landed property (Zachariadou 1969; Kolovos 2011, 239).

As has been found in case studies of other monasteries (typically of the monasteries of Mount Athos), monks were able not only to own property but also to transfer it to their heirs after their death (Kolovos 2011, 246). The monastery of Kykkos and its monks could transfer the right of usufruct they had over their property to their legitimate heirs, such as their offspring, or to other monks. The documents contain cases in which monks had a spouse or children as heirs. One such case is found in

a document of 1616, in which a woman named Mandalo Gregoriou appeared as the legitimate heir of the deceased *hegoumen* of Kykkos monastery, Gregorios, claiming that she was his “true daughter” and consequently his exclusive heir (Theocharides 1993, 80–81). In 1606, a nun called Antonia donated half of Sindis monastery to Kykkos. Sindis monastery had become her property after the death of its abbot, who was her husband. The other half of the Sindis monastery had been donated earlier by the *hegoumen* himself as long as he lived (Theocharides 1993, 52–53).

If a monk had no heirs, his properties remained without title upon his death and were confiscated, becoming available for sale. For example, in 1617 some *sipahis* granted a number of non-Muslims the right to cultivate fields previously held by Gregorios, *hegoumen* of St. George’s monastery. This monk did not have any male offspring, so his fields were sold to others (Theocharides 1993, 82–83).

The possessions of *hegoumens* sometimes passed to their successors. A document of 1696 shows that a Muslim gave Meletios, the *hegoumen* of Kykkos monastery, the right to cultivate arable fields. The right to some of the fields was acquired through succession from the previous *hegoumen*, while for the rest of the fields were bought by the owners (Theocharides 1993, 278–79).

Prices

The transactions of Kykkos monastery also make it possible to study issues of monetary value, cost and price scales. At the end of the sixteenth century, in 1587, a Muslim sold a mill with a cultivated field, containing four *kafiz* of seed, two apricot trees and running water to Gregorios, *hegoumen* of Kykkos monastery, for the price of 4,000 *akçes* (Theocharides 1993, 18–19). A century later, at the end of the seventeenth century (1699), Kykkos monastery bought an orchard of fruit-bearing and other trees, as well as running water, for the same amount (Theocharides 1993, 302–3). In the 1630s, a house of four rooms with a courtyard and trees was sold for the amount of 1,000 *akçes* (Theocharides 1993, 96–97), a two-storey house of twelve rooms for the amount of 2,400 *akçes* (Theocharides 1993, 104–5), while towards the end of the century (1693) a house with courtyards and trees was sold for the amount of ten *kuruşes* (Theocharides 1993, 260–61).

The amounts that appear in the documents sometimes show noticeable divergences regarding the items sold or purchased, which may be related to the market value and the needs of the season, the period of time, or the particularities of each transaction, and even the economic crisis of the late sixteenth century that affected

prices (Barkan 1975, 17–27; İnalçık 1980, 283–337; Pamuk 2000, 128). For example, in 1630 two mares were sold for 800 *akçes* (Theocharides 1993, 96–97). A few years earlier, a monk had sold non-Muslim subjects a small monastery, which also included four houses and one harbour, as well as three cultivated fields containing only three *kiles*² of seed, for an amount of 300 *akçes* (Theocharides 1993, 98–99).

Transactors

Regarding the profile of those who transacted real estate with Kykkos monastery, it seems that the entire social spectrum of an Ottoman province was represented. Thus, the transactions with the monastery involved Muslims and non-Muslims, men and women, laypeople or clerics, ordinary subjects (*reaya*) or officials at various levels of the Ottoman administration.

The transactional relations between monks and laypeople were close, and included a variety of categories (Laiou 2011, 172–75). However, if we attempt to categorize the monastery's relations with the island's subjects in the light of real estate transactions, we see that in its contacts with Muslims, mostly officials (*sipahis*), Kykkos monastery seems quite often to have appeared in the role of buyer. In its contacts with non-Muslim Cypriots, the monastery often appeared as the recipient of donations and gifts, as well as the vendor, as seen from the examples examined above.

Case studies of other monasteries have shown that belief and religion played a key role in the case of the Christian Orthodox monasteries, to a certain extent defining their transactional relations (Kotzageorgis 2011, 172–75), which in the case of Kykkos monastery were also characterized by a pattern, as cases of disputes were often not recorded. By contrast, disputes mostly occurred with Muslim ordinary subjects, with whom the monastery dealt just as often.

Disputes and irregularities

In addition to the profile of the counterparties (lenders, debtors, and donors), the category of each transaction and the way it was performed as well as the monastery's economic behaviour played a key role in the way monks were treated by those with whom they did business, whether ordinary subjects or officials. There

2 *Kile* or *keyl* was a measure of capacity of about 36 ½ kg.

were cases of complaints and/or lawsuits against the representatives of the monastery for maladministration or irregularity, but also vice versa, involving both Muslims and non-Muslims, and they were mainly related to land encroachment, inheritance issues, and so on. It is not easy to distinguish a clear dividing line between Muslims and non-Muslims in relation to the transactions of Kykkos monastery. The documents show that it was equally common for the monastery to contact Muslims and non-Muslims when it came to issues concerning real estate management (Kotzageorgis 2011, 173–74).

However, we cannot claim that the same applies to the case of local Ottoman officials. As it appears from other monastic archives as well, transactional relations between monasteries and local officials (usually *sipahis* or tax collectors) could also be described as conflictual. This is also confirmed by the case study of Kykkos monastery. The causes of the disputes in which Orthodox monasteries were involved from time to time have been traced to crucial facts, such as the expansion of the monasteries' property and the privileged position that the monasteries had in dealing with the Ottoman central authority (Laiou 2012, 212–13). As confirmed by the case of Kykkos monastery, the most frequently disputed issue between Ottoman officials and monasteries was the tax regime to which the monks were subject. Several aspects of the issue of monastic taxation and property, such as tax exemption or the right to inherit from deceased monks, were often an issue of controversy between monks and officials; moreover, they could easily become the cause of undue pressure.

In the case of Kykkos monastery, as in the cases of other monasteries in the Ottoman Empire, it appears that monks were accustomed to turn to the central government in order to protect their interests and to secure their position against the arbitrariness of local officials or even ordinary subjects on land or taxation issues (Jennings 1993, 150–55). They usually enjoyed the sultan's protection (Kotzageorgis 2011, 172–73). This was not unexpected or unjustified support on behalf of the central government, since the demands of the monks could be assessed as *rational* under the Ottoman legal system. Moreover, monasteries did not constitute a threat to the central administration, since they had absolutely no jurisdiction at the institutional level. They could not exert direct pressure over administrative matters. On the contrary, their role in the organization of the rural economy and society, mostly through paying taxes, could in no way be characterized as prejudicial to the interests of the central and provincial administration (Kolovos 2011, 187–90).

The nature and manner of the transactions and the economic behaviour of the monastery determined largely – or at least played a role in, the way the monastery

was treated by the other parties in the transaction, either ordinary taxpayers or officials. There were sometimes complaints against its representatives for maladministration or irregularities, and vice versa. According to a 1616 document, the Ottoman governor of Cyprus ordered the judges (*kadis*) of the *kazas* where Kykkos monastery held landed property to prohibit *sipahis*, Janissaries, *azebans* and other soldiers from intervening in property management rights. This order was given due to the fact that some *sipahis* demanded a title deed fee (*tapu*) whenever the monks or the abbot sold some of the monastery's properties in order to pay debts. The monks complained to the governor and secured from him that, by his order, on the basis of a *fetva* (an Islamic juridical opinion document), and title deeds in their possession, they could sell the monastery's property whenever they wished and at whatever price they wished, without any intervention (Theocharides 1993, 76–77).

Conclusion

In conclusion, if we attempt to make a general observation, we must say that in the sixteenth century, the main concern of both laypeople and monks was the recovery of the confiscated monasteries and churches, while in the seventeenth century their attention turned to the expansion of their properties. Between the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, Kykkos monastery was rather active in real estate transactions. Indeed, some of the *hegoumens* who served the monastery at that time were quite active in effecting transactions of landed property, such as: abbot Gregorios, who served at the end of the sixteenth century; Jeremiah and Lucas II, in the early seventeenth century; Nikephoros I in the middle of the seventeenth century; and Meletios at the end of the seventeenth century (Stavrides 2006, 9–74).

The Ottoman law and land ownership system that applied during the late sixteenth and throughout the seventeenth century, combined with the system of provincial administration implemented on the island of Cyprus, formed a context which Kykkos monastery sought, and managed, to work to its advantage, over and above mere survival. However, in order to assess properly the extent of these transactions and the economic importance of the property of the monastery, we should take into account not only the temporal and historical circumstances, but also the socio-economic status of the monastery itself. In this regard, we are dealing with a relatively fluid period, not only for the history of the monastery, but also for the history of the island of Cyprus itself, since the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century marked the monastery's attempt to recover its confiscated property and signalled the transition of the island's administration to its post-conquest period.

It is interesting to note that in the archival material studied in the context of this chapter no documents were located that relate to or indicate lending or borrowing, as recorded in other monasteries in Greece or in the Balkans (Kotzageorgis 2011, 173–74; Laiou 2011, 213–17). Moreover, there is no evidence that would allow us to assume that the monastery was active in profitable trade.

The case study of Kykkos monastery confirms the observation that the economic activity of the monasteries in the sixteenth and throughout the seventeenth century focused on land. Land ownership was the most important and common asset for the monks at a collective and individual level. Agricultural cultivation and production were the main sources of revenue for the monastery (Kotzageorgis 2011, 183–84; Kolovos 2011, 239). Focusing on land-based property, the monastery's trade relations extended to a broad social spectrum and covered almost all strata of the Cypriot society. Kykkos monastery defended its interests whenever they were threatened, claiming legitimacy, reacting when their legal rights were violated, and ultimately acting as a private legal entity.

References

- Alexandropoulos, Ioannis. 2011. “Χριστιανικές προσηλώσεις και ισλαμικά αφιερώματα: Οι γκρίζες ζώνες της ορθόδοξης μοναστηριακής ιδιοκτησίας” [Christian Donations and Muslim Waqfs: The “Grey Areas” of Orthodox Monasteries’ Landholding]. In: *Μοναστήρια, οικονομία και πολιτική από τους μεσαιωνικούς στους νεώτερους χρόνους* [Monasteries, Economy and Politics from Medieval to Modern Times], edited by Elias Kolovos, 225–33. Herakleio: Crete University Press.
- Archimandrite Kyprianos. (1788) 1902. *Ιστορία χρονολογική της νήσου Κύπρου* [Chronological History of Cyprus]. Nicosia: Evagoras.
- Barkan, Ömer Lutfi. 1975. “The Price Revolution of the Sixteenth Century: A Turning Point in the Economic History of the Near East”. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 6/1: 17–27.
- Cobham, C. D. 1908. *Excerpta Cypria: Materials for a History of Cyprus*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fotić, Aleksandar. 1994. “The Official Explanations for the Confiscation and Sale of Monasteries (Churches) and their Estates at the Time of Selim II.” *Turcica* 26 (1994): 33–54.
- Fotić A. 2009. “Kassandra in the Ottoman Documents from Hilandar Monastery (Mount Athos) in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries”. *Balkanica* 40: 57–73.
- Hackett, J. 1901. *A History of the Orthodox Church of Cyprus*, London: Methuen & Co.
- Hill, G. 1952. *A History of Cyprus*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- İnalçık, Halil. 1969. "Ottoman Policy and Administration in Cyprus after the Conquest". In: *The Ottoman Empire: Conquest, Organization and Economy*, Pt. VIII. London: Variorum Collected Studies Series.
- İnalçık, Halil. 1980. "Military and Fiscal Transformation in the Ottoman Empire 1600–1700". *Archivum Ottomanicum*, 6: 283–337.
- Jennings, Ronald C. 1993. *Christians and Muslims in Ottoman Cyprus and the Mediterranean World, 1571–1640*. New York: New York University Press.
- Kolovos, Elias. 2011. "Ορθόδοξα μοναστήρια και δερβίςικοι τεκέδες: Προς μια συγκριτική προσέγγιση του οικονομικού και πολιτικού τους ρόλου στην οθωμανική κοινωνία" [Orthodox Monasteries and Dervish Tekkes: Towards a Comparative Approach to their Economic and Political Role in Ottoman Society]. In: *Μοναστήρια, οικονομία και πολιτική από τους μεσαιωνικούς στους νεώτερους χρόνους* [Monasteries, Economy and Politics from Medieval to Modern Times], edited by Elias Kolovos, 235–51. Herakleio: Crete University Press.
- Kolovos, Elias. 2012. "Κατάληψη του χώρου και μοναστηριακή γαιοκτησία στην οθωμανική Χαλκιδική (15ος-16ος αι.) [Settlement Patterns and Monastic Landholding in Ottoman Halkidiki (Fifteenth-Sixteenth Centuries)]." In: *Το Άγιον Όρος στον 15ο και 16ο αιώνα. Πρακτικά Συνεδρίου* [Mount Athos in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries. Conference Proceedings], 107–25. Thessaloniki: Mount Athos Center.
- Kolovos, Elias. 2016. "Christian *Vakıfs* on Monasteries in the Ottoman Greek Lands from the Fourteenth to Eighteenth Centuries". In *Les fondations pieuses (waqfs) chez les chrétiens et les juifs du Moyen Âge à nos jours*, edited by Sabine Mohasseb Saliba, 103–27. Paris: Geuthner.
- Kotzageorgis, Phokion. 2010. Τα Αγιορείτικα Μετόχια στη Λήμνο [The Athonite *Metochia* on the island of Lemnos]. In: *Λήμνος: Εκκλησιαστική Κληρονομιά* (Lemnos: Church Heritage), edited by G. Konstantelis. Athens.
- Kotzageorgis, Phokion. 2011. "Τα μοναστήρια ως οθωμανικές τοπικές ελίτ" [Monasteries as Ottoman Local Elites]. In: *Μοναστήρια, οικονομία και πολιτική από τους μεσαιωνικούς στους νεώτερους χρόνους* (Monasteries, Economy and Politics from Medieval to Modern Times), edited by Elias Kolovos: 163–90. Herakleio: Crete University Press.
- Laiou, Sophia. 2011. "Σχέσεις μοναχών και χριστιανών λαϊκών κατά την οθωμανική περίοδο (15ος-αρχές 19ου αι.) [Relations between Monks and Christian Laymen during the Ottoman Centuries]." In: *Μοναστήρια, οικονομία και πολιτική από τους μεσαιωνικούς στους νεώτερους χρόνους* [Monasteries, Economy and Politics from Medieval to Modern Times], edited by Elias Kolovos, 207–23. Herakleio: Crete University Press.
- Pamuk, Ş. 2000. *A Monetary History of the Ottoman Empire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Philippou, L. 1975. *Η Εκκλησία Κύπρου επί Τουρκοκρατίας* [The Church of Cyprus under Turkish Rule], edited by A. K. Phylaktou. Nicosia.
- Roudometof, Victor and Michael Michalis N. 2010. "Economic Functions of Monasticism in Cyprus: The Case of the Kykkos Monastery". *Religions* 10: 54–77.
- Stavrides, Theocharis. 2006. "Οι ηγούμενοι της Ιεράς Μονής Κύκκου: Προσωπογραφική μελέτη" (The Hegoumens of the Holy Monastery of Kykkos: Prosopographical Study). *Επετηρίδα Κέντρου Μελετών Ιεράς Μονής Κύκκου* 7: 9–74.

- Theocharides, Ioannis. 1993. *Οθωμανικά Έγγραφα 1572–1839* [Ottoman Documents 1572–1839], vol.1. Archives of the Holy Monastery of Kykkos I. Nicosia: Kykkos Monastery Research Centre.
- Zachariadou, Elizabeth A. 1969. “Early Ottoman Documents of the Prodromos Monastery (Serres)”. *Südost-Forschungen* 28: 1–12.

Urban Catholic Monasteries and Urban Growth in Eighteenth-Century European Cities

PRESTON PERLUSS¹

In preindustrial and proto-industrial Europe prior to the seismic shock of 1789 – for the French Revolution does mark a turning point in European ecclesiastic history and signals a profound breach in long-term trends – monastic orders held sway over extensive landed wealth. Monasteries formed a persistent class of institutions or organizational structures (on local, regional, and global levels) whose presence in many cases extended over a millennium.²

There were three major waves of Roman Catholic monastic expansion in the second millennium involving first Benedictine development through Cluniac and Cistercian expansion; a second wave led to mendicant expansion while a third wave followed the Protestant Reformation, this third wave is often termed “post-Tridentine” as it took place largely after the major conciliar decrees promulgated during the Council of Trent. However incongruous it might seem given the Enlightenment’s anti-clericalism, the eighteenth century saw Christian monasticism reach a pinnacle in its early modern wealth, if not intellectual prestige.

Preindustrial economic wealth was largely based on agriculture. However, wealth concentrated in the hands of merchants whose trade networks and banking activities led to their dominant role in distribution. The merchant nexus was an urban phenomenon. Economic growth clearly resulted from concentration and control over ever widening commercial networks whether from foreign or domestic sources. It is widely recognized today that merchants developed complex outsourcing drawing on domestic industry as well ever-increasing movements of rare products

1 This essay largely draws upon my previous research published in Perluss (2012) and Perluss (2013). Herein I have essentially sought to extend my comparisons with other towns and thus frame my conclusions within a broader context. Should these arguments inspire further research, my work will have proven its worth.

2 Consider the case of Cuzo’s female convents studied by Burns 1999.

from both the Western and Eastern hemispheres. As mercantile activities were organized from urban bases, those actors who held control of urban space would be able to draw upon accumulated urban wealth. This fact underlies the weight of monastic urban ownership in eighteenth-century European cities even those outside the European metropolis, in Latin America for example.

As cities grew in economic power, the concomitant increase in economic weight of monasteries within cities where Roman Catholicism prevailed merits equal consideration. Since the eighteenth century, the world's urban population as a percentage of total population had grown and this trend needs to be placed in a perspective of monastic (or more generally mortmain³) ownership in cities, both European and non-European (Hubert 1999).

The issue surrounding monastic urban wealth and more generally monastic urban presence, has been the object of considerably greater research for the medieval period than for the modern era, and particular attention has been placed on the rise of mendicant houses in urban environments since Jacques Le Goff published his research in 1968 (a comprehensive overview in Picard 1994). Le Goff's research has spawned a deluge of studies whose most recent comparative perspectives are found in the works of Catarina Marado (2018) for Portugal and Marta Cuadrado Sanchez (1996) for Spain. Similarly, Jens Rohrkasten (2004) has studied London's mendicant houses (see also Liroso 2009/10; Caffiero 2008).

Derek Beales (2003) has estimated that there were some 25,000 men's and some 10,000 women's houses in Europe in 1750. He reckons the total European Roman Catholic monastic population at 350,000 individuals, both men and women. In France, we have a figure drawn up from the census conducted under the auspices of the *Commission des réguliers*, dating from 1768, where the total number of professed monks was estimated at 20,144 (Lecestre 1902). Obviously, this latter figure needs to be handled with care, since it corresponds to a very narrow time interval.

These statistics do not distinguish between urban monasteries and rural houses: research on urban monasteries in modern times (that is from the sixteenth century onwards) has been considerably less detailed than for earlier periods. For the

3 Mortmain ownership means ownership by an *immortal* institution. At a time before the idea of *corporations* as legal persons had become prevalent mortmain institutions were either religious organizations or guilds. Many landowners, and even the crown, feared that unbridled extension of mortmain holding was lock up land and lock out individual ownership. This issue exceeds the scope of our present concerns.

eighteenth century, until recently, little interest has been shown for detailed analyses of monastic urban presence.

Most of the material concerning France, except for Dominique Dinet's (1999) research (and he did not restrict his scope to merely urban monasteries), is found in broader studies of specific cities. This paucity of knowledge is all the more surprising given that urban monasteries founded centuries prior to the modern rise of industrial power became key landowners. This specific perspective orients my present analysis. Those monasteries gained power due not merely to claims on agricultural produce but equally to their urban landed possessions. It might well have been such ostensible dominance that fostered growing hostility on the part of the populace which contributed to their expropriation amid the French Revolution. My choice of the term *ostensible* underscores the urban presence of monasteries.

Monasteries as economic agents, produced, traded, begged, and received donations. They also enjoyed credit and thus they could borrow. Borrowing entail risks, indebtedness may beget bankruptcy, and this tragic eventuality was not unknown to those sacred institutions. The monastic orders, it should be borne in mind, were also networks which through missionary activities participated in the spread, complexity and exploitation of both New World and Old World. Those networks could lead to inter-order monastic financing, where monastic houses with excess funds could lend to those with investment opportunities (Perluss 2012). In all fairness, a considerable number of impecunious or impoverished monasteries did exist, particularly Capuchin houses.⁴

The expanding weight of urban real estate on the balance sheets of urban monasteries influenced the economic behaviour of these institutions. The process reflected the growth and extension of cities.

Urban ecclesial institutions—whether diocesan, collegial, canonical, hospitals or monasteries—were drawn to the extraction of urban rents. In many cases, from the early twelfth century and onwards, demands for land led to seigniorial concessions in the form of perpetual leaseholds (*les acensements* in French). This fact consequently gave rise to church institutions which became major urban feudal landlords. Antique institutions often exercised their right to make “perpetual

4 Landi 2015 argues that 25% of all Italian monasteries in the seventeenth century essentially had no income but lived off alms. This might well be the case for the Capuchins. In contradistinction to Derek Beales, Landi does not dwell on the well-endowed monasteries in his article but has dealt with them in his other studies, notably Landi (2013) and Landi (2004).

concessions” in order to attract inhabitants who would improve vast swaths of land, which at the time, had little value undeveloped.

Another form of landed wealth lay in full ownership of property. The monasteries and other institutions exercised “complete” ownership over varied urban properties and accordingly were positioned to leverage them during periods of strong demand from urban habitation. Such demand was observed in times of intense urban growth as was characteristic for instance of the eighteenth-century port towns. Here we see a diametrically opposite situation whereby the land had greatly appreciated in value; hence the owners could (and were under great pressure to) improve their holdings and rent them.

It is this latter situation which underlies my research and reflections. In the early modern period, the foothold and growth of Roman Catholic monasteries in urban settings advanced and retreated through the rise of contrary religious forces, notably the varied forms of Protestantism.⁵ In those territories where Roman Catholicism prevailed, a powerful wave of monastic creations drew strength from the Council of Trent. Generically, the term post-*Tridentine* applies to the Baroque foundations which swept across France and Habsbourg territories and profoundly remodeled Rome itself. This latter movement was largely urban. Alain Lottin (1984) used the term *conventual invasion* to dramatically convey this monastic renewal in an urban context.

Herein, I raise several key questions: what wealth did the urban monasteries enjoy during the eighteenth century and what forms did it espouse? More generally we need to know whether monastic fortunes increased during the eighteenth century. Did overall economic growth and inflation diminish or enrich monasteries? Did urban sources play a role in monastic wealth? Finally, underlying these various questions, a fundamental concern lurks: did ancient régime monasteries adopt capitalist strategies during the Enlightenment? My argument would be to see monasteries as seeking to maintain their existence and find opportunities to secure long-term guaranteed income sources under shifting economic conditions.

Although religious orders implicitly believed their institutions were eternal, monasteries were destroyed through wars or by heresy. Others fell afoul due to mismanagement and extensive indebtedness. The only way in which many of them could

5

For an overview of recent scholarship and an argument that expropriation was not due to financial motives see Bernard (1995).

have settled their debts would have been to sell off their Parisian real estates.⁶ Both secular and lay powers also suppressed various orders in the course of history. Religious houses and monastic orders aimed to perpetuate their moral presence through guaranteeing the survival of their members and the organization to which they belonged. This question of survival underlies the economic aspect of monastic existence.

In what follows, I shall endeavour to provide a very general overview of the men's regular communities within Paris during the eighteenth century. I shall concentrate on the elements guiding their spatial distribution and discuss how these monasteries influenced urban development. Afterwards I will rapidly present the urban monastic presence in Lyon and Bordeaux. I conclude by returning to the question of financial resources and investment strategies.

Growth in Urban Monastic Presence

In 1789, on the eve of the French Revolution's monastic suppressions, Paris possessed 45 men's religious communities (in the broadest sense of the term), 77 women's convents, 52 parish churches, 14 chapters and 43 secular colleges. Various institutions, some quite venerable and richly endowed, had met their quietus during the century prior to the French Revolution. Thus, the foregoing inventory must bear a caveat and qualification as to the exact number of Parisian men's monastic houses that existed at the beginning of the eighteenth century when there were fifty-two men's regular houses within the city's limits or immediately outside.

Moreover, it should be borne in mind that the geographic limits of Paris have extended outwards over the centuries, thus certain institutions not *formally* urban became such as the town enveloped its *faubourgs* or suburbs. In 1789, two communities – the Minimes in the Vincennes Woods and the Third order Franciscan fathers in Belleville – were clearly not in Paris yet today they obviously would be. In restricting our attention to merely men's communities, seven were suppressed during the course of the eighteenth century (3 Jesuit communities, the Celestines, the regular canons of the Holy Cross, the Grandmontins and the Antonin hospitaliers). The regular canons of the priory of Saint-Catherine were transferred to the ci-devant Jesuit church and monastery. The Capuchins also left their cloister in the

6

French National Archives, H5 4055 Theatins: Journal of receipts and expenses 1 January 1761 to 31 December 1771; H5 4057 Théatins: account books 1729–1735; S 4354 Theatins: holdings and income, 1790.

faubourg Saint-Jacques and moved to the Chaussée D'Antin in 1783. These displacements allowed land to be freed and entailed urban development projects.

As regards spatial occupancy, calculations for the Left Bank, which I have studied in detail, show that men's convents occupied some 6% of the town's area fixed at 2700 square hectares (limits defined by the barrier of the Royal General Farms). The foregoing statistic, however, does not provide a clear idea to the surface or, more generally, the kindred mortmain institutions such as colleges, hospitals, chapters, and parish churches. Many of them owned other lots outside their cloister. A precise account of these holdings is necessary to truly appreciate monastic urban presence.

Four overarching factors have moulded Parisian monastic geography: the presence of agricultural land (Saint-Germain-des-Prés located in a flood plain, Saint-Martin-des-Champs located near the Seine's ancient course, Saint-Geneviève-du-Mont's fields, Saint-Victor's terre d'Aletz); the town walls' defensive line, the growth of the built environment and, specifically, a key to the Left Bank, the growth in the University of Paris. To these elements should be added the presence of open fields surrounding the roads leading to town at the beginning of the Catholic Reform's monastic renewal in the early seventeenth century. Both the Chartreux and the Regular Canons of Holy Trinity, although not Merovingian foundations, also received major suburban farmland as gifts concurrent to their installation or shortly thereafter.

From the thirteenth century onwards, the various religious orders sought to create colleges in the region surrounding rue Saint-Jacques. The monastic colleges, largely representing the mendicant orders at the onset, had to occupy an urban space. As the urban tissue had already grown in density and the burgage plots—long narrow land strips usually with a building on the front and a lane providing access in back—had taken form, their only endowments were usually the buildings for the initial establishment. Little by little, the mendicant colleges, and more generally all the colleges, had to purchase neighbouring plots in order to extend their *lebensraum*. Often, these colleges found land at the limits of the build environment near the city's bastion, built under the reign of Philippe Auguste.

A final wave of foundations attending the Catholic Reformation and the post-Tridentine resurgence arose from the needs to combat Protestantism and to kindle renewed ardor in Catholic souls. These communities confronted a largely developed central town and perforce had to seek lands at the edges of the build zone. Here we might apply the ideas set forth by Jeremy Whitehand as regards fringe belt development: since the period prior to 1600 coincided with religious strife and saw a lull in

building campaigns, while once peace returned demand for vacant land began to rise.⁷ The post-Tridentine monasteries and convents settled in the fringe belt outside Paris where open space was available (Stendhal once spoke of *rue de Cherche Midi*, where numerous religious houses had taken root, as being “au diable”, that is, in the sticks).

Fringe belts are urban territories where institutions requiring extensive land were built, at the outskirts of the densely constructed environment. These regions were then enveloped when construction activity becomes feverish and land use requires free lots. The fringe belt occupants, hospitals, factories, and in our case, monasteries, were finally subject to pressure to develop their holdings when urban population and land prices rose. Maurice Halbwachs (1920) implicitly refers to the growth of Paris as encroaching on both open space, and also fringe belt institutions, since the attempts to limit the built environment by the crown authority systematically came to grief and construction would continue beyond those “limits to construction” imposed by the French monarchy. For monasteries were authorized to build, indeed perforce, outside these limits.

The regular colleges were the first monastic institutions to seek sites as near as possible to the urban environment: the previous monastic houses had largely remained outside the city walls, although Sainte-Geneviève du Mont was enclosed by Philippe August’s immurement. The imperious need to acquire land within the university’s precincts led to exchanges and reoccupations of terrains. In 1584, the Grandmontines obtained the college of Mignon, founded by the Mignon family in 1353 through the transferal of their monastery in the Vincennes woods to the Minimes. This is the only example of a secular college being converted into a monastic one.

Another formal constraint which influenced monastic site distribution was the papal bull *Quia plerumque* (proclaimed on June 28, 1268). It imposed a minimum distance equal to some 500 meters in modern measurement separating mendicant monasteries. In large part, this injunction was respected in Paris (Le Goff 1970, 932).

The Catholic Reform or Counter Reform (little matters the term exact) gave rise to a bevy of new religious orders and a wave of 26 new men’s settlements beset Paris during the first half of the seventeenth century. There were even more women’s

7

The idea of a *fringe belt* was introduced by Conzen (2004). On later formulations of the idea, cf. Whitehand (1967, 223); Whitehand and Morton (2003, 819).

communities founded. In limiting our purview to the men's communities, the Right Bank attracted more of them (14) than did the Left Bank (11) with the Barnabite's taking control of the priory of Saint Eloi on the Ile de la Cité. This disequilibrium is linked to the greater demographic weight of the Right Bank, which harboured 80% of the Parisian population. Various projects, of which the Place des Vosges, attracted the Capuchins and the Minimes. The Louvre also became an anchorage zone for the Dominicans, Feuillants, Capuchins and Oratorians. Another point of high concentration was found around rue Saint-Antoine, south of the Place des Vosges, near Saint-Paul church, founded by the Jesuits as their professed house.

On the Left Bank as on the Right, the post-Tridentine monasteries and convents were largely constrained to build on undeveloped terrains since the difficulties linked to acquiring built land raised insuperable barriers as regards cost and availability. Most of the seventeenth century foundations were financed by gifts from lofty benefactors. The Theatins for instance bought their initial land through a gift provided by the Cardinal Jules Mazarin. The property was part of a subdivision of land which had belonged to Marguerite de Valois, first wife of Henry IV. It had been parcelled by Louis Barbier and the Theatins had to purchase individual plots to extend their domain. Similar purchases of mostly undeveloped plots characterized the initial acquisitions and further extensions. The Theatins bought both empty lots and townhouses.

Fringe Belts, Urban Growth and Rental Properties in Paris

A corollary of monastic urban settlements was the presence of rental properties whose pertinence for the town's history is manifold. The fundamental importance of monasteries in urban development lies in their control of space. As feudal landlords the monasteries accorded burgage tenures (*acensements*) to tenants who then would invest in urban construction, while as land-owners monasteries purchased surrounding plots and subdivided their holdings in order to rent dwellings.

Key to understanding monastic urban land use is the fact that the medieval establishments maintained enormous cloisters which had been engulfed through urban growth. Similarly, the post-Tridentine monasteries located in the fringe belts were also engulfed by urban growth and sought to avail themselves of rising real estate

prices.⁸ Jean-Barnard Marquette observed in his study of ecclesiastical power in urban space in southwestern France that out of 50 medieval monasteries, only two were built within city walls. 45 of these convents belonged to mendicant orders and these houses usually received major landed endowments, averaging two ha. They formed a mendicant “crown” exemplified in Agen, Bayonne or Bergerac, outside the ramparts. However, starting in 1581, the post-Tridentine communities which began to invest the cities usually took possession of land outside the town walls. In some cases, where there remained vacant land within the ramparts (as in Agen), the second wave of monastic settlement could occupy lots *intra muros* (Marquette 1999).

In Paris, monasteries developed rental parks either immediately adjacent to the cloisters or located at some distance from the monastery. However, there were also isolated dwellings dispersed throughout the city as well. In overwhelming number of cases, however, the lion’s share of rental income resulted from nearby or adjacent lands.

Among these rental clusters, we can distinguish four main types: aristocratic *hôtels* (palazzi) with a low-density occupancy, extensive land use requiring a vast lot; merchant ensembles with buildings located on highly frequented streets; *popular* or *working-class* parks having buildings with much lower heights and surface areas. Finally, there were apartment buildings constructed within the previously cloistered space. These successive construction and development projects had major consequences for monastic finance and investment.

In 1746, on the basis of a royal inventory, out of a total 23,103 residential buildings and shops within Paris, 3140 houses and 103 boutiques belonged to mortmain owners.⁹ Accepting these figures means that we have the startling mortmain-owned buildings’ share of some 13.6% at mid-eighteenth century.

On average, the Parisian men’s communities were nearly 50% wealthier than their provincial counterparts. In 1789, Parisian men’s regular communities had a gross income of 2,762,176 livres tournois (l.t.) and a net income of approximately 1,500,000 l.t.¹⁰ These regular houses owned over 500 buildings whose rents entered into their

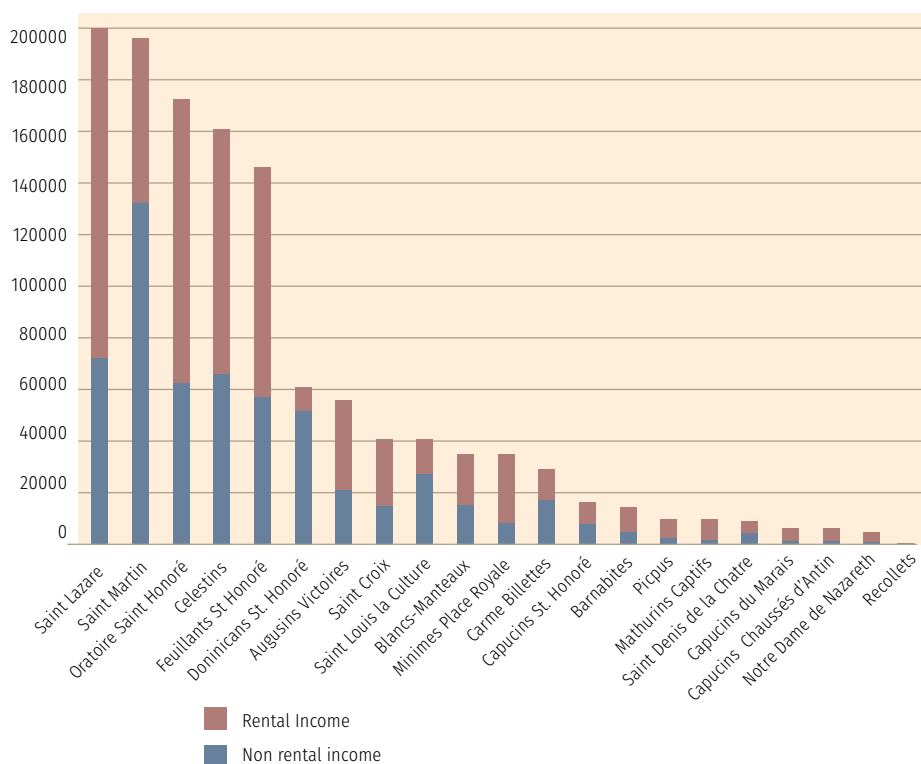
8 Conzen (2004) defines *fringe belts* as “a belt-like zone originating from the temporarily stationary or very slowly advancing fringe of a town and composed of a characteristic mixture of land-use units initially seeking peripheral location.”

9 French National Archives, Q1*1099 56: *État des maisons boutiques et échoppes dans la ville de Paris appartenant à la mainmorte jusqu’à la fin du mois d’août 1749.*

10 French National Archives F19 863.

total urban income which accounted for 48% of their total gross revenue. Not all of this urban income, however, arose from rental properties, some was in the form of *lods-et-ventes*, that is a seigneurial due paid upon real-estate transactions. Normally when a building located within a lord's domain was sold, a percentage of the sale price would be paid to the lord.

The share of the rental income for each religious regular community on the Right Bank was as follows (**Graph 1**):

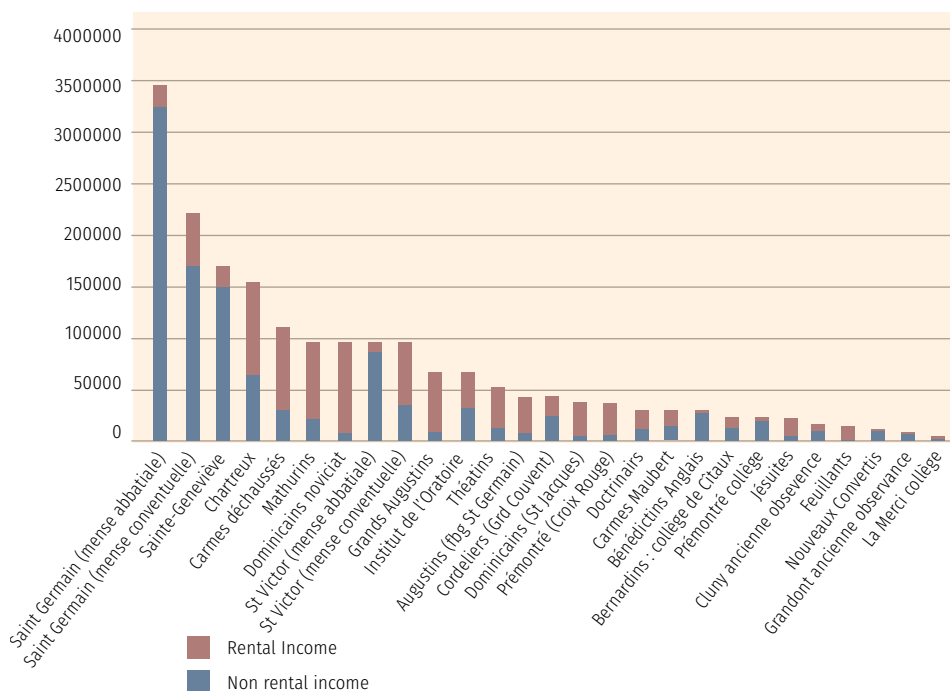


Graph 1: Right Bank Rental Income (In Livres Tournois)

Source: Perluss (2013, 54)

For the communities located on the Left Bank of the Seine a similar graph provides the telling fact that a majority depended heavily on urban based incomes. More importantly, even those richly endowed in rural estates (understandably considered

as the most substantial source of income in a *protoindustrial economy*) possessed significant revenue from urban rental properties (**Graph 2**).



Graph 2: Left Bank Rental Income (In Livres Tournois)

Source: Perluss (2013, 55).

For example, if consider the eminent Benedictine abbey Saint-Germain-des-Prés, we observe that in 1789 its total income was divided into two parts: the conventual *mensa* and the abbatial *mensa*. The former belonged to the Maurist monks, while the later redounded to the Crown since no abbot had be named for several years. Within the diocese of Paris, the monks enjoyed an income of 149,492 l.t. out of a total of some 222,788 l.t. Even if the lion's share arose from rural sources (some 72%), the rental incomes in Paris were far from negligible: 62,047 l.t. per year. Moreover, these revenues were largely the result of rental properties built within the monastic enclosure starting from 1698.

This case seemingly contradicts my emphasis on urban rental properties' importance within the total income earned by ecclesiastic institutions, but

Saint-Germain-des-Prés is quite telling for it reveals the growing attraction that urban landed improvement held in the eyes of rational investors. The Benedictine monks (Maurists, to be precise, so-called after the reform of Saint Maur) had no financial motive per se to undertake extensive construction projects within their monastic precincts. Yet they did so, using the proceeds from the sale of their seignury of Montecelin near Versailles (purchased by Dr Mareschal, Louis XIV's surgeon) to build a large apartment building.¹¹

Certainly, the aforesaid project, as well as others undertaken by numerous Parisian regular communities, arose from population pressure and the besetting need to convert unused or underused sacrosanct terrains into viable social spaces. Examples abound: the Carthusian fathers in the Luxembourg gardens edified several luxurious townhouses on the edge of the priory; the Congregation of the Mission, which occupied the ancient priory of Saint Lazare, equally invested in aristocratic mansions (*les hôtels aristocratiques*) on the rue du Faubourg Saint-Laurent. The venerable priory of Saint-Martin-des-Champs also undertook a vast construction campaign in the 1760s to build a marketplace and four major apartment dwellings. This list is far from exhaustive. The examples underscore the massive projects characteristic of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries undertaken largely to improve relatively large swaths of land which had formerly lay outside the use of town dwellers. Whether the monasteries sought to extend their urban clientele, as argued Françoise Le Houx (1958), or, as I would suggest, they felt the need to assuage the smouldering discontent of a populace yearning for *lebenraum*, thus new habitable spaces arose within the cityscape. The priory of Saint-Martin-des-Champs started the construction of four apartment buildings around a central square as well as a marketplace on marshland inside the cloister. On March 25, 1765, the priory's monastic community obtained royal authorization to borrow 400,000 l.t. to finance their project.¹²

Notwithstanding the aforementioned construction projects, it should be borne in mind that other urban rental properties belonged to the monasteries. Their various types merit a rapid description. The typology herein proposed is strictly for heuristic use, it should not be taken as a hard-and-fast categorization. We can distinguish four fundamental types of rental properties owned by urban communities.

11 French National Archives, Minutier Central, étude XCI, 637, le 30 juillet 1716. The monastery had received the seignury of Montecelin from the king François I.

12 French National Archives, Minutier Central, étude CXV/781.

First, dispersed dwellings, often bequeathed by devout owners. These most often concern buildings located randomly in town. The college of the Grand Carmes owned a single dwelling on the Right Bank, rue de Temple and also three houses located in the Left Bank's faubourg Saint Marcel. The Carmes Billettes on the Right Bank owned six dwellings adjacent to their cloister but also a major aristocratic hôtel situated at the "Barrière de Grenelle" on the Left Bank, as well a smaller building nearby by the *hôtel*, both far removed from their monastery in the Marais.

The second type of rental property consisted in buildings located either adjacent to or in the immediate proximity of the monastery. These structures, invariably with gardens or spacious courtyards, could be immediately adjoining the cloister's walls, affixed to the church, or situated on land once included within the monastery's surrounding estate. This type of rental property gives rise to *rental clusters*, that is, groups of dwellings built essentially to accrue rents from tenants. The dwelling could be noble hotels, as in the case of the discalced Carmelites, the Novitiate of the Dominicans in the Faubourg Saint Germain, the Carthusian monastery of the Luxembourg Gardens, or buildings belonging to the Feuillants, whether adjoining their noviciat rue d'Enfer or their Maison profès, on rue Saint-Honoré. Often the aristocratic structures possessed extensive gardens and courtyards with stables. As such, these habitats were most often found in the zones occupied by post-Tridentine communities which obtained land at the outskirts of the built environment in the first half, or even the first decades, of the seventeenth century.

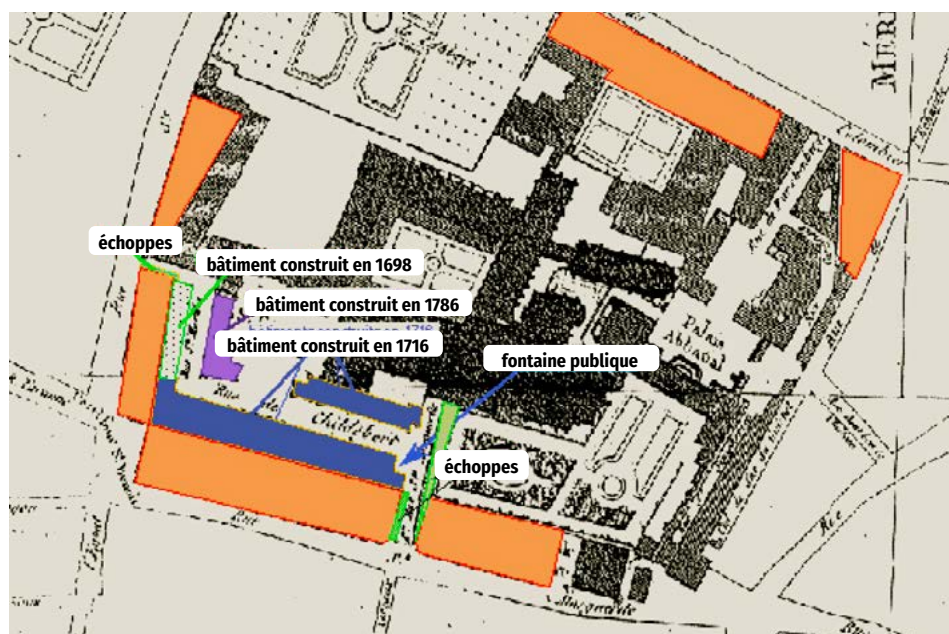
The third type concerns the "attached buildings" or "agglomerated dwellings". Medieval foundations, usually located at the periphery of the town, near the walls, possessed smaller surrounding plots and thus did not have noble tenants. The Austin friars possessed 32 houses surrounding their monastery. The Grands Carmes also had a series of 11 buildings literally abutting their monastery – in one case part of the structure was incorporated into the monastery itself! However, it should be noticed, that the urban dynamics would lead to reconstruction of certain "agglomerated buildings", or those even separated from the main cloister's block. The Dominican college on the rue Saint-Jacques owned a number of buildings both adjoining the college and also further down the street near the Sorbonne. Several were rebuilt during the eighteenth century. The monastery itself fell into disrepair and the church was forbidden from any use by police order just prior to the Revolution.

A fourth type of construction merits special attention: the interior apartment complex. Both Saint-Germain-des-Prés and Saint-Martin-des-Champs undertook major projects within their very cloisters. They built a specific, and unique, rental structure consisting of apartment buildings with ground floor shops. These were not

medieval-style superimposed dwellings with one family occupying the building composed of double rooms on each floor, but apartments rented floor by floor and containing an enfilade of rooms.

Obviously, a given monastery might own buildings belonging to various coexisting categories as in the case of the Reformed Augustinians of the Province of Bourges, which occupied a block of land originally donated by the Queen Marguerite of Valois.

Finally, a curious form of habitat was the presence of interior rentals, that is, either rooms, apartments or even entire buildings let to outsiders whether lay or ecclesiastic. This rental arrangement was more akin to furnished apartments (the term *locations meublées* is often used). However, the practice did not serve as a major source of income and most clearly arose from various social and political obligations. The Austin Friars are a case in point since their monastery harboured the headquarters of the Royal Order of the Saint Esprit, the bureau of the French Clergy's General Assembly, and also had rooms periodically rented out to auctioneers.



Map 1: Rental buildings constructed within the cloistered space of Saint-Germain-des-Pré. Purple and Blue areas correspond to the rental buildings within the cloister constructed in 1698, 1716 and 1786. Orange buildings are plots that were transferred through medieval ascertainment. Map background from (Verniquet 1795).

These specific construction projects involved large-scale investments. They are revelatory not only for the amount of resources the venerable abbeys could call into play (often complex loans) but equally by the fact that rental pressures, the strident demand for dwelling space, forced the monasteries to open the inner sanctuaries and let the secular universe spill in. Obviously, those financially apt and creditworthy communities could draw considerable advantage from such rental income.

What is more noteworthy is how the *fringe belt* vision might be applied in explanation. The dominant abbeys and priories were all situated outside the first ramparts, except for Sainte-Geneviève-du-Mont that was just barely included in the early thirteenth century wall. Thus, the necessity for extensive land use forced monasteries to seek emplacements in fringe zones, that is, the unbuilt land immediately adjacent to the town's built environment. As the city grew and its tissue densified, the monastic landholding was engulfed by habitats. The zones surrounding the cloister "left fallow" underwent demand pressure. The communities availed themselves of increased yields from improving their lands, often by borrowing against their projects' projected returns.

Monastic urban rental property investment and construction raise a variety of issues. First, we insist on the fact that these properties remained in the hands of the communities. Although emphyteutic concession and even seigniorial forms of tenure occurred, these were rare in the modern period. The standard means of improving urban land involved subdividing a terrain into lots (*lotir* in French) and selling the subdivision to investors who formally promise to build. This method enjoyed widespread popularity but clearly left the sellers at a disadvantage of losing control over their land. Obviously, a purely capitalistic strategy would have no complaint with such sales. Yet monasteries sought long-term yields, not immediate gains to be used to obtain future gains *ad infinitum*. Thus, the monastic preference for rental properties from which the income could be indexed to the rise in prices; obviously, the rent could only be readjusted at the end of a lease. Leases were usually granted for 9 years although they could be as short as three years. Subdivided property could be improved and then let out. Hence, many of the described rental properties fit into this paradigm. Equally possible would be the acquisition through purchase or donation of pre-existing dwellings.

The two previously mentioned interior projects cannot be considered as subdivisions (*lotissements*) in the strict sense, since the plot structure of the cloister did not provide a clear insight into the habitat's density any more than a modern high apartment complex's plot structure provides ample insight into the land value. Apartment-type rental constructions rise above the ground and are rented

horizontally rather than vertically.¹³ Here, clearly, the dwelling (*la bâtisse*) bears the plot's essential value, it is, truly, in Conzen's terms a "plot dominant" if the term "plot" itself might be adequately applied. Clearly, the examples provided are exceptional since the space at each convent's disposal greatly exceeded the norm. Saint-Germain-des-Prés and Saint-Martin-des-Champs each had extensive surface, the Maurists possessed 34,000 square meters. The priory de Saint-Martin-des-Champs' cloister contained as much surface as did the Maurists'.

The use of space depends on how much can be organized and what constructions can there be ordained. Space, power, and social occupancy all conspire to configure the built environment. Financially, only the most powerful communities could risk undertaking massive investments such as those shown above. These projects were largely underwritten through sale of rural properties owned by the two communities or at least guaranteed by the income from rural possessions. Although, it should be emphasized, the investments thus incurred proved profitable.

Not all communities could afford the costs and indebtedness necessary to finance such vast endeavors. As a further precondition, extensive landholdings were also necessary. The communities which undertook projects were those initially located outside the walled city (in the *faubourgs*), and ineluctable urban growth led to their envelopment with the built environment. Pressures arose, particularly during periods of economic boom, to develop the enclosed land. However, some communities transferred terrains and even parts of their monasteries through ninety-nine year emphyteutic leases, such as the Feuillant *noviciat* on the *rue D'enfer*, which had transferred parts of the monastery to aristocratic occupants in consideration for the maintenance and improvements these leaseholders would ensure.¹⁴ These were normally used by communities unwilling to incur heavy debts for dwellings or terrains which could often not be let for shorter periods (the Discalced Carmelites in the Faubourg Saint-Germain could grant life-time leases; the Theatines did the same). This intermediate form of lease involved a heavy payout from the lessee and the payment was used to finance improvements on the property.

13 See the detailed arguments for the transition from vertical lodging (the medieval paradigm) to the modern habitat where a horizontal space dominates, in Cabestan (1997). This idea is fully developed in Cabestan (2004).

14 French National Archives, S 4164, déclaration 1790.

Urban Monastic Presence and Urban Development outside Paris

Having thus categorized the various rental structures in Paris, the question arises as to whether similar practices occurred in other French towns. More appropriately, the question is to know how frequent such practices were, and to what extent did other towns have their habitable space controlled by regular communities.

To provide a preliminary answer to the question, we need to call upon the inventories of nationalized church properties. These inventories were created prior to the sale of church domains. In certain cases, the communities remitted to the National Assembly (*la Constituante*) detailed declarations of their income and expenses in 1790. However, not all did abide by the Constituante's injunctions and some declarations appeared to have been destroyed. Our inquiry is abetted by prior scholars' labors: for several French *départements*, eminent historians at the beginning of the twentieth century conducted painstaking archival compilations of documents resulting from the nationalization of church properties. They are termed "*les biens nationaux de première origine*" as opposed to those of "*deuxième origine*" which were seized from émigrés having fled.

What characterizes the monastic urban wealth for communities elsewhere in France?

As an initial object for study, consider the situation in Lyon in 1790 with a population of some 170,000 inhabitants (Charl  y 1906, 53). There were 9 canonical chapters (Saint-Croix, Saint-Etienne, Saint Jean, Saint-Paul, Saint-Just, Saint-Nizier, Ainay, Notre Dame de la Plati  re and Fourvi  re), 3 abbeys (Saint Pierre, La D  serte, Chazeaux), one priory (Saint-Beno  t), and three secular houses of priests (one Oratorian, one for the Mission of Saint Joseph and one for the Lazarists). There were equally two colleges and two seminaries (Saint-Ir  n  e and Saint-Charles).

Fifteen men's regular communities existed in Lyon, one of which, the C  lestins, had been secularized in 1779. Out of them, seven had more than half their income from urban rental properties. The number of buildings owned by the masculine communities exceeded 102 (excluding those owned by the Celestines whose properties were not listed as the order had been suppressed in the 1770s). The total annual urban rental income for the above said communities reached 206,329 l.t. out of a global income of 419,326 l.t., equal to 49%. This figure takes into account a portion of cloister rentals and, in several cases, the church seat rental agreements (often leased to collectors [*fermiers des chaises*]). The two colleges also had 14 rental buildings in Lyon. The two seminars owned 17 buildings.

Lyon possessed sixteen women's communities as well. Five among them earned the majority of their income from rental properties, however three others earned nearly half their revenue from urban real estate. Several amounts of urban income appear exaggerated. All told, out of a total declared annual income of 356,049 l.t., the convents earned 129,736 l.t. from urban rental properties, just slightly over 36%. A total of 56 rental buildings belonged to Lyon's women's communities. Interestingly, their gross revenue equalled 84% that of the men's. This near equality marks a clear distinction from Paris where the women's communities' revenue was 73% that of the men's, and where the women's convents' urban income reached 45% of their total (Perluss 2012).

Until recently, detailed research into monastic urban landholdings in Bordeaux has been lacking. However, various studies have referred to such. For instance, Marcel Marion's comparative research on the sale of *biens nationaux* in the departments of the Gironde and the Cher, and the collection of documents edited by him and his colleagues (Marion 1908; Marion, Benzacar and Caudrillier 1911). The data on the *biens nationaux* concerns the period 1789–1790.

Marion noted that a significant part of the town was occupied by religious institutions which owned nearly 400 buildings inside the city. The number of urban rental properties owned by the Bordeaux men's monasteries totaled some 135 dwellings. As a means of comparison, the chapter Saint-André of Bordeaux possessed 90 buildings. The information on monastic revenues for the town lacks a unified series of documents. Thus, the following tables appear lacunary. The paucity of data can be partially remedied by information from prior years. For the period 1730–1760, Eric Suire (1993) has calculated the rental income represented 48.5% of women's monastic income while only 28% for the men's communities. Aude Loriaud insists that the monastic rental properties were oriented toward commercial units, that is, shops and boutiques whose upkeep was less onerous than maintaining larger dwellings¹⁵.

Naturally, the question arises as to how these communities obtained their rental holdings – through donation, acquisition, construction and improvement of the initial endowments, or a mixture of all the preceding methods? Did these communities undergo a shift in resources from rural properties and the seigneurial rights associated thereto in favor of urban resources? In Paris, we have startling examples of regular houses selling their rural seigneuries in order to finance urban real estate

15

The most recent research on Bordeaux's monasteries is currently being conducted by Aude Loriaud for her dissertation. See Loriaud 2019.

projects, as did both Saint-Germain-des-Prés and Saint-Martin-des-Champs. Joseph Benzacar in his preface to the collection of documents concerning the sale of les *biens nationaux du département de la Gironde*, insists on the relatively feeble values of monastic real estate. Their land holdings were clearly not aristocratic manors. Yet this absence of grandiose holdings does not infirm their potential domination over a wide swath of urban society.

Pierre Regaldo-Saint-Blancard has drawn up a remarkable plan for medieval Bordeaux which clearly displays the fringe installation of the various religious establishments during the Middle Ages. We can observe that lands granted or purchased by the respective monasteries gave rise to subdivisions while some land remained cultivated as well. Little by little the fields would give way to houses and the built environment would hem in and finally smother the arable.



Map 3: Monastic Presence in Bordeaux during the fifteenth Century. Map created by Pierre Régaldo-Saint Blancard (Jean-Courret, E. and S. Lavaud. 1999, vol. II, 115).

Conclusion

Among the features surrounding monastic urban presence, one major aspect must be emphasized: the monastic urban domain was linked to urban growth and development. As I posited in earlier work, the extension of the built environment engulfed what had been rural or semi-rural fringe-belt establishments (Perluss 2012). The question then is in what manner should the sacred territory be linked to profane needs. We have seen that numerous monasteries converted cloistered land into rental property. Other land was sold. Some land remained within the sacred precincts reserved for holy usage. The growth of cities, the rise of metropolitan expanses, the pre-industrial sprawl, all overwhelmed, through outward growth, the previously distant sites reserved for monastic use. The mendicant orders, most linked to urban proselytism, frequently laid their foundations near the towns' walls. However, the friars could settle outside the town walls just as did the latter seventeenth century post-Tridentine foundations which most often would find space outside the medieval ramparts, in open areas.

While French urban monasteries did not rely exclusively on urban sources of income, many urban communities had a significant, if not a predominant, share of their income from urban rentals. The factors underlying the distribution of monasteries, the successive surges in urban growth and the compelling need to satisfy bourgeois demand for lodging and workspace all conspired to enhance the monastic rental presence in pre-industrial cities.

Why did the urban income come to weigh so heavily in many monastic balance sheets? To fully grasp this fact, we need to keep in mind economic cycles wherein there was a shift in investment from agriculture to bonds (*rentes*) and to real estate. If we restrict our attention to a very limited sample of Parisian Left Bank men's religious houses, a careful examination of their financial situation in 1790 reveals that few houses lived off from their rural properties. Only five establishments had predominantly rural income: the Benedictines of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, the Regular Canons of the Congregation de France (in the royal abbey of Saint-Geneviève), the English Benedictines, the Premonstrant college, and for half their receipts the Chartreux. The regular colleges extracted most of their income from urban rents. The major observation, however, concerns the preponderance of urban rental income among the Post Tridentine monastic institutions. Beyond a high percentage of rental income (over 50% of their total receipts) the monasteries founded during the Counter Reform enjoyed nearly three times higher average rents than those of the colleges.

Over the centuries, income sources slowly evolved from rural farms, either directly worked by monks or leased to farmers, to other forms of investment. Most of the institutions founded after the thirteenth century did not receive large grants of arable land. Some acquired or received farms belonging to other monasteries.¹⁶ Nonetheless, urban rental income ineluctably rose in comparison to rural sources. Income no longer flowed from purely agricultural sources or from financial endowments in the form of perpetual annuities (*les rentes perpetuelles*), the latter often granted in consideration of perpetual masses. The main reason for this shift in sources arose from the slow devaluation in real terms of “founded masses”, i.e., masses that were guaranteed through some perpetual income source. Those masses, founded a century or centuries earlier, suffered from a slow erosion in real value through inflation: the payments no longer covered the costs of celebration. Individual donations received in the church collection boxes or paid for a specific service diminished over the century. Thus, while costs rose, pious receipts did not. As the overall number of monks dropped during the century, also to compensate for rising prices, monasteries called upon stipendless priests to perform low masses. A further problem was that often perpetual masses were guaranteed by royal bonds (*rentes constituées*) that suffered from partial bankruptcies. Hence, enormous pressure was placed on the communities to reduce the overall number of masses and find sources of income less perilous than bonds whose yield clearly declined from the combined banes of inflation and the monarchy’s financial instability.

The cyclic nature of economic activity became apparent when, from 1710 onwards, Parisian rents started to rise. Against the other investments, real-estate yields appealed to the monasteries. To improve and develop land, the regular communities borrowed against future rental returns. The main lenders were, not surprisingly, wealthy merchants, other religious communities, and even other churchmen. Large sums were borrowed, and many monasteries amassed huge debts. To survive, they had to become shrewd financiers and those which did not hone their skills would grow ever more impoverished. Major real-estate projects required major financing. Few communities had sufficient wealth to draw upon. Even the wealthiest monasteries, such as Saint-Germain-des-Prés or Saint-Martin-des-Champs, which could sell off parts of their assets, borrowed. In these conditions, the communities had to either borrow or negotiate staggered payments to their general contractors. The patrimony thus entered into a new cycle of private financing.

16 On the Right Bank, the Carmelites termed “Billettes” possessed farms outside Paris that they obtained from their predecessors, purchased in 1631 from the Hospitaliers of the order of Notre Dame of Charity. Likewise, the Blancs Manteaux and the Feuillants main monastery on rue Saint Honoré also had rural income from farms.

A momentous shift occurred at the beginning of the eighteenth century when religious houses became large-scale borrowers of funds. The debts incurred were largely used to improve rental property within Paris. An overwhelming majority of Parisian regular orders lived largely on revenues from their rental buildings. The overall value of these properties probably exceeded 100 million l. t. in 1790. For all intents and purposes, a variety of monasteries had begun to function as real estate investment companies. However, the similarity can only be extended so far, since none used their borrowings to purchase further property during the course of the eighteenth century.¹⁷

The point I wish to make, as regards urban development, is that despite the rise in grain prices during the eighteenth century and the concomitant rise in the cost of living (at a minimum of 60%) the urban monasteries largely oriented their investment strategies towards urban real estate improvement.¹⁸ Much work has been conducted for medieval urban development, but substantial additional research needs to be pursued in the study of urban monastic real-estate development for the modern period. Parisian monasteries issued bonds to finance their investments. We need to learn more as to what financial policies were adopted by other monasteries to undertake major construction projects. Paris is certainly not unique. Clearly, the monastic economy was dominated by landed domains whose fruits were a source of wealth. Nonetheless, Parisian abbey's landed wealth was largely leased out to farmers who paid cash and not kind. The slow movement towards urban population concentration (at a time when it hovered around 15% of the total population), would clearly weigh on those who owned extensive urban lands, while requiring the need to borrow at a time when banking did not finance such activities. In a sense, monasteries became their own finance companies, issuing debt to cover investment. At least for the shrewdest among them.

One is fully entitled to ask whether the phenomena observed in Paris were more widespread throughout France, Catholic Europe, and outside Roman Catholicism. If the fringe belts result from urban growth, and urban development devolves to private initiative then it would seem reasonable to expect similar operations elsewhere. Obviously, the state and other political instances could influence the path such development takes. However, mortmain institutions whose existence did not depend on the individual lives of their members, and which did seek immediate gain through sale but rather stable long-term returns, were likely candidates for

17 A detailed study of these financial operations can be found in Perluss (2012).

18 For France, the well-known statistics result from Ernest Labrousse's research: he ascertained a 60% rise in prices between 1726 and 1789, while wages stagnated (Labrousse 1970, 396 and following).

such form of investment undertakings. Formally, the monastic institutions as endowments created for prayer and worship of the deceased held the requisite features and basked in an esteem that enabled them to undertake such projects at a time when no mortal investors so dared. Obviously, other mortmain institutions ventured into rental constructions, but early modern monasteries alone set out on so brazen a path.

Does monastic finance matter? Clearly it did. Herein we have seen that monastic institutions adopted new strategies within shifting economic conditions. They reacted to changes in conjuncture, i.e., urban growth, and expanded demand for dwelling space. Again, we must qualify our claims, not all monasteries were urban, but as of the seventeenth century urban environments were where monasteries were founded. Not all urban monasteries leaped at the occasion to improve land, but many did. How many? That remains the task before us. Research into urban monastic landed wealth beckons for further inquiry. Afterwards we will be able to judge monastic urban economic power and grasp the extent that today's cities bear the imprint not only of past cathedrals, but of mortmain investment and financial perspicacity.

References

- Beales, Derek. 2003. *Prosperity and Plunder: European Catholic monasteries in the Age of Revolution, 1650–1815*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bernard, G. W. 1995. "The Dissolution of the Monasteries." *The Historical Journal* 38/2, 275–305.
- Burns, Kathryn. 1999. *Colonial Habits: Couvents and Spiritual Economy of Cuzco*, Peru, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Cabestan, Jean-François. 1997. "La naissance de l'immeuble d'appartements à Paris sous le règne de Louis XV." In *Paris, Capitale des Arts sous Louis XV*, 162–93. Bordeaux: William Blake & Co.
- Cabestan, Jean-François. 2004. *La conquête du plain-pied*. Paris: Picard.
- Caffiero, Marina. 2008. "Il sistema dei monasteri femminili nella Roma barocca. Insediamenti territoriali, distribuzione per ordini religiosi, vecchie e nuove fondazioni." *Dimensioni e problemi della ricerca storica* 2: 69–102.
- Charl  y, S  bastien 1906. *Documents relatifs    la Vente des Biens Nationaux*, Lyon: Imprimerie Schneider.
- Conzen, M. R. G., 2004. *Thinking about Urban Form: Papers on Urban Morphology*, edited by Michael P. Conzen, Bern: Peter Lang.
- Cuadrado Sanchez, Marta. 1996. "Un Nuevo marco socioespacial: emplazamiento de los conventos mendicantes en el plano urbano", *Espiritualidad, franciscanismo: VI Semana de Estudios Medievales*, 100–9. N  jera: Logro   Instituto de Estudios Riojanos.

- Dinet, Dominique. 1999. *Religion et Société: les réguliers et la vie régionale dans les diocèses d'Auxerre, Langres et Dijon*, Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne.
- Dumolin, Maurice. 1929–31. «L'Hôtel de la Reine Marguerite.» *Études de Topographie Parisienne*, 3 vols. Paris.
- Dussaux, Marie-Pierre. 1991. "Les déclarations de revenus des communautés religieuses féminines du diocèse de Bordeaux (1730–1760)." Université de Bordeaux III.
- Halbwachs, Maurice. 1920. "Les plans d'extension et d'aménagement de Paris avant le XIXe siècle." *Paris: La vie urbaine* : 3–28.
- Hubert, Étienne, 1999. "Propriété ecclésiastique et croissance urbaine (à propos de l'Italie centro-septentrionale, XIIe-début du XIVe siècle)." In *Gli spazi economici della Chiesa nell'Occidente mediterraneo (secoli XII-metà XIV)*. *Atti del XVI convegno internazionale di studi (Pistoia, 1997)*, 125–55. Pistoia: Centro italiano di studi di storia e d'arte.
- Jean-Courret, E. and S. Lavaud. 1999. *Atlas Historique de Bordeaux*, Bordeaux: Editions Ausone.
- Labrousse, Ernest 1970. "Les bons prix agricoles du XVIIIe siècle." In *Histoire économique et sociale de la France*, edited by Fernand Braudel and Ernest Labrousse, Vol. II, 367–416. Paris: Presses Universitaires de la France.
- Landi, Fiorenzo, ed. 2004. *Confische e Sviluppo Capitlistico*. Milan: FrancoAngeli.
- Landi, Fiorenzo. 2013. *Il tesoro dei regolari: l'inchiesta sur conventi d'Italie del 1650*, Bologna: CLUEB.
- Landi, Fiorenzo. 2015. "Argent and autoconsommation: les crises des réguliers à l'époque préindustrielle." *Hereditas Monasteriorum* 7: 29–43.
- Le Goff, Jacques. 1970. "Couvents mendiants et urbanization." *Annales ESC* 25/4: 924–965.
- Le Houx, Françoise. 1958. "La cour du monastère de Saint-Germain-des-Prés dans les premières années du XVIIIe siècle." *Mémoires de la Fédération des sociétés de Paris et de l'Île de France* 9: 89–104.
- Lecestre, Léon. 1902. *Abbayes Prieurés et Couvents d'hommes en France – list générale d'après les papiers de la Commission en 1768*, Paris: Picard.
- Liroi, Alissia. 2009/10. "I monasteri femminili a Roma nell'età della Controriforma: insediamenti urbani e reti di potere (secc. XVI-XVII)," PhD Thesis, University of Rome La Spaienza.
- Loriaud, Aude. 2019. "De vastes propriétés au cœur des villes: le patrimoine urbain des communautés régulières à Bordeaux au milieu du XVIIIe siècle." *Histoire, économie & société* 38/2: 23–46.
- Lottin, Alain. 1984. *Lille, citadelle de la Contre-Réforme (1598–1568)*. Lille: Westhoek.
- Marado, Catarina Almeida. 2018. *Arquitetura mendicante e cidade medieval: a formação e os impactos dos sistemas urbanísticos conventuais em Portugal (séc. XIII-XV)*. Coimbra University Press.
- Marion, Marcel, Joseph Benzacar, Gustaaf Caudrillier. 1911. *Documents relatifs à la vente des biens nationaux, département de la Gironde*. Bordeaux: Imprimerie Cadoret.
- Marion, Marcel. 1908. *La vente des biens nationaux pendant la Révolution avec étude spéciale des ventes dans les départements de la Gironde et du Cher*. Paris: Honoré Champion.

- Marquette, Jean-Bernard. 1999. "Pouvoir ecclésiastique et espace urbain." In *Des hommes et des pouvoirs dans la villes XIVème-XXème siècle*, edited by Josette Pontet, 21–30. Talence: Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux.
- Perlus, Preston 2012. "From Alms to Investments: Monastic Credit Structures in Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Paris." *Religione e istituzioni religiose nell economia europea: 1000–1800, Atti della Settimana di studi del Centro Datini*, 307–27. Florence: Firenze University Press.
- Perluss, Preston. 2013. "Monastic Landed Wealth in Eighteenth Century Paris: Principal Traits and Major Issues." In *The Economics of Providence: Management, Finances and Patrimony of Religious Orders and Congregations in Europe, 1773 – ca. 1930*, edited by Maarten Van Dijck, Jan De Maeyer, Jeffrey Tyssens, and Jimmy Koppen, 51–74. Leuven: Leuven University Press.
- Picard, Jean-Charles. 1994. "L'espace religieux dans la ville médiévale (VIIIe – XIIIe siècle). Rapport introductif." In *Archéologie des villes dans le Nord-Ouest de l'Europe (VIIe-XIIIe siècle) Actes du IVe Congrès International d'Archéologie Médiévale (Douai, 26, 27, 28 septembre 1991)*, 115–24. Caen: Société d'Archéologie Médiévale.
- Röhrkasten, Jens. 2004. *The mendicant houses of medieval London: 1221–1539*. Munique: Lit Verlag.
- Suire, Éric. 1993. "Les finances des religieux bordelais. Les biens et revenus des communautés masculines du diocèse de Bordeaux, d'après les enquêtes fiscales de 1730 et 1760." Université de Bordeaux III.
- Verniquet. 1795. *Atlas du plan général de la ville de Paris*. Paris.
- Whitehand, J. W. R. 1967. "Fringe Belts: A Neglected Aspect of Urban Geography." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 41: 223–33.
- Whitehand, J. W. R. and N. J. Morton. 2003. "Fringe Belts and the Recycling of Urban Land: an Academic Concept and Planning Practice." *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design* 30: 819–39.

Section II

FLOW OF FUNDS AND GOVERNANCE



How to Run a Big Monastic *Çiftlik*: the Case of Hilandar's *Bulgar Metochion* in Karviya (Kalamaria), Sixteenth-Seventeenth Centuries

ALEKSANDAR FOTIĆ

During the period of Ottoman rule in the Balkans the term *çiftlik* did not have a single unchanging denotation. It encompassed various modes of agricultural land ownership and tenure. Many questions concerning changes in the meaning of this term over the centuries have not yet been answered by historians. The goal of this chapter is to shed some light on the managing of large landholdings in the Balkans at the time of Ottoman rule by examining the case of a *metochion* of the Athonite monastery of Hilandar.

The earlier and Balkan-wide understanding of what a *çiftlik* was, was based mostly on nineteenth-century sources, many of them of local, non-Ottoman origin. A *çiftlik* was understood as being a very large estate and often, though without legal grounds, as private property, where peasants who had lost their land laboured under extremely difficult conditions (McGowan 1981, 121–70; Tričković 1970). More than a decade ago, Sophia Laiou posed key questions concerning the monasteries' *çiftliks* in the early centuries of Ottoman rule: about their legal status, size, composition, modes of exploitation, etc (Laiou 2007). Her research, centred on western Thessaly, as well as the contributions made by Elias Kolovos and Phokion Kotzageorgis, will be supplemented here by our own insights into the operation of Hilandar's *çiftlik* in Kalamaria.

As is well known, the term *çiftlik* was frequently used in Ottoman times instead of the Byzantine term “*metochion*” to refer to a large landed estate, either contiguous or fragmented. One of the major questions to be answered is: what type of *metochion*, and how big a *metochion* would have been designated as a *çiftlik*? It should be kept in mind throughout that the boundaries and composition of a *metochion*/*çiftlik* could change over time by the purchase or sale of fields, pastures or vineyards, that a *metochion*/*çiftlik* could be pledged as a security or leased out, that the land could lay idle for various periods of time, etc.

In the fourteenth century, Hilandar had large *metochia* in the villages of Kritziana and Koumoutzoulou. Both villages were in close proximity to the village boundaries of Karviya, but there is no evidence suggesting any link between them and the subsequent sixteenth-century Karviya *çiftlik*. Yet a possible link should not be ruled out. Much the same goes for the fourteenth-century *metochion* in the now non-existent village of Lignon. There is also a vague piece of information in the well-known Serbian annals of a much later date to the effect that Mara Branković's pleas to the Sultan Murat for some land "near Thessaloniki in favour of the monastery's *çiftlik*" were granted. However, there is no contemporary evidence for any link between her generous, and for the most part well-documented, activity as a *ktetor* and the Kalamarian coast (Lefort 1982, 83–4, 87–8, 93; Stojanović 1927, 228; Živojinović 1998, 214; Fotić 2000a; Popović 2010).

The village of Karviya, present-day Nea Silata, is situated a few kilometres inland northeast of Nea Kallikrateia. In the mid-thirteenth century it was a *metochion* of the Great Lavra. In the early fifteenth century the Great Lavra was forced to relinquish half of it to the fisc (Lefort 1982, 77–80; Lemerle et al. 1982, 92–3, 99–105).¹

Recent research has shown that the Athonite monasteries in the Halkidiki, despite considerable losses after the Ottoman conquests, managed to keep and even expand much of their landed estates. The monastic *metochia* were a very important economic factor in the demographic revival of the area during the transition from Byzantine to Ottoman rule (Kolovos and Kotzageorgis 2015; Kolovos 2012).

The existence of a large *metochion* of Hilandar's within the village boundaries of Karviya is reliably attested only from October 1593 onwards. Had it existed in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, it would certainly have been included in the group of Hilandar's largest *metochia* which were granted the privilege of paying their taxes in a lump sum in 1481 (Fotić 2012, 134–35; Boškov 1982, 138–40, 152–53). There is no surviving document which indicates how Hilandar acquired such a large estate. We only know of two fields the monastery purchased before October 1593. One of these, of unknown size, was purchased from the monastery of Xenophontos in 1586; the other was bought from *subaşı* Ahmed, son of Ali, for a mere 500 *akçes* in 1591.² The two fields were obviously not large enough to form a 60-*çift* estate. Besides, they might have been part of the *metochion* in the neighbouring village

1 The name of the village in the Byzantine period was not always spelled in the same way (Karvea, Karveos, Karvaioi). This village should not be confused with the village of a similar name (Karvea) in Kassandra (Lefort 1982, 77; Lemerle et al. 1982, 128–29).

2 Hilandar Monastery Archive, Turcica (HMAT), 12/12/32, 12/12/27, 1/99.

of Üç Ev (Neochorion, Yeni Köy), which had by then already been purchased from Xenophontos. This old *metochion* of Xenophontos, sometimes called “*Çali metochion*”, was held by the monks of Hilandar from 1584 to about 1640, when it was mentioned in Hilandar’s Ottoman documents for the last time (Fotić 2008, 198–207).

Since continuity with Hilandar’s pre-Ottoman possessions cannot be established, the question that arises is when Hilandar acquired the *metochion* in Karviya. The estate in Kalamaria is mentioned neither in the imperial survey register nor in the *vakıfname* dating from the time of the confiscation and redemption of the monasteries and their landholdings in 1569.³ Had it been in Hilandar’s possession at the time, it would certainly have been redeemed, given that it was the largest and the most important *metochion* of the monastery. We may conclude that the *çiftlik* was purchased between 1569 and 1593.

The *metochion* in Karviya was designated in various ways in documents. It was usually referred to as the “*Metochion* of /the monastery of/ Hilandar” (*H/K/Filandar /manastırınıñ/ metohi*), and only a few times as the *çiftlik* within the village boundaries of Karviya.⁴ It was recorded only once as “New Hilandar” (*Hilandar-i cedid*) and “New *metochion*” (*Yeñi metoh*), in 1611 and 1634 respectively, probably to distinguish it from the “Old *metochion*” in Üç Ev.⁵ It was also the *metochion* identified with the name of its broader surroundings: “*Kalokampo metochion*” (*Kalokanbo metohi*), as recorded in 1627 and 1643.⁶ From 1633 on, in addition to these names, it was increasingly recorded in documents as the “Bulgar *metochion*” (*Bulgar metohi*). From 1668 through to 1920, this was practically the only way it was referred to. Hilandar was a distinctly Serbian monastery at the time, and remained so until deep into the eighteenth century, even though there were always among its monks some who came from the hinterland of Mount Athos and from the Bulgarian regions. It was only in 1920 that the *metochion* officially began to be called the “Serbian *metochion*” (*Metochion Servikon*), and even “St Nicholas’ *metochion*”, after a small church dedicated to this saint.⁷ What followed was the nationalization of a portion of the Athonite monasteries’ possessions to accommodate large numbers of Greeks resettled in the process of population exchange agreed between Greece and Turkey.

3 T. C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı, Osmanlı Arşivi, Tahrir Defterleri 723, 1053; HMAT, 12/37/57, 6/8, 6/10, 6/11, 6/12, 11/5. On the Confiscation Affair and Athonite monasteries, see Alexander 1997 and Fotić 1997.

4 HMAT, 12/12/52, 12/12/44, 12/12/8, 12/12/42, 12/12/62, 12/12/39, 12/12/59, 12/12/16, 12/12/58, 2/182a, 2/187.

5 HMAT, 12/12/45, 12/12/41.

6 A handwritten note made in 1627 in the printed *Octoechos of the Fifth Tone* (1574) about the *hegoumenos* Ilarion having the book “repaired” and giving it to the *Kalokapbo metochion* (Medaković 1978, 283); HMAT, 2/178a.

7 HMAT, 12/12/9, 2/178, 8/92, 2/183, 12/12/57, 2/191, 2/192; Lefort 1982, map 10; Bellier et al. 1986, 192; Krüger 1984, 329; Fotić 2000b, 334.

This ushered in a different era in the history of the Athonite monasteries' landholdings, in contemporary times and within the Greek state, which goes beyond the scope of this chapter.

Until the establishment of the *sancak* of Thessaloniki (between 1530 and 1536), Karviya, as well as the whole of the *vilayet* of Kalamaria, formed part of the *sancak* of Paşa (Edirne). There is no doubt that Karviya was included in the *nahiye* of Kalamaria at the time the latter was established, and it remained in the same *nahiye* until the eighteenth century. It was under the judicial and administrative jurisdiction of the *kadı* of Thessaloniki and his subordinate, the *naib* of Kalamaria.⁸

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the village of Karviya bordered on the sea in the south, on the village of Üç Ev (Yeñi Köy) and the village (*metochion*) of Agios Paulos (Avramitai) in the west, and probably on the village of Külahlı in the northwest. It is reliably known that Yürük groups, clans, or tribes (*cema'at*) were living within its boundaries. Yürüks were nomads from Anatolia settled in Kalamaria in the previous century. These communities are identified in the sources as inhabiting the villages of Düberlü and Dervişli, as well as members of other *cema'ats* (Kener Ali, Satı Nasuh, El-hacc Umanlı), who held crop fields. There was also a Roma community (Çingene *cema'atı*) in the close vicinity. The neighbouring settlement of Gena did not have the status of a village at the time, at least not around 1610, but was referred to as a "place" (*mevzi*) within the boundaries of Karviya. The coastal plain within the boundaries of Karviya formed part of a wide tract of arable land known as Kalokampo which stretched to the east as far as the village of Katakali.⁹ This is the reason why Hilandar's *metochion* was sometimes called by that name. Apart from Hilandar's *çiftlik*, there was also a *çiftlik* of the Kalamarian monastery of St Anastasia within the boundaries of Karviya. Besides the already mentioned *metochion* of the Athonite monastery of St Paul, the *çiftliks* of the Great Lavra and Iviron (Karaman *çiftliği*) also bordered on, or perhaps even crossed over into, the Karviya village area.¹⁰

8 Documents from the Archive of Hilandar confirm these jurisdictions for the period of 1578–1688 (HMAT, 1/66, 12/12/27, 12/12/15, 12/12/50, 12/12/1, 12/12/48, 12/12/30, 12/12/3 etc.).

9 HMAT, 1/66, 12/12/2, 12/12/29, 12/12/34, 12/12/31, 12/12/48, 12/12/30, 12/12/47, 12/12/25, 12/12/46, 12/12/8, 12/12/9, 12/12/42, 12/12/16, 12/12/58, 8/52, 2/178, 2/178a; Fotić 2000b, 334. On the *metochion* of the monastery of St Paul in the village of Avramiti and its boundaries, see Kotzageorgis 2002, 69–96. On Yürüks, see Boškov 1986; Kotzageorgis 2015. The village of Gena does not exist any more. This is the last known mention of the toponym, see Lefort 1982, 66–8). On Kalokampo (earlier Diavolokampo), see Lefort 1979; Lefort 1982, 57–8.

10 HMAT, 1/66, 12/12/32, 12/12/8, 12/12/35, 12/12/9, 2/183, 12/12/57. On the monastery of St Anastasia and its *metochia* see Lefort 1982, 88, 152–153, maps 2, 10, 13. Among listed property in the *vakıfname* of Great Lavra from 1569, there is a *çiftlik* in Agia Marina, east of Karviya (Vasdravelles 1972, 289). The *çiftlik* of Iviron is probably the Holy Trinity estate, part of the *metochion* in Kato Volvos (*Vorvos*) (Lefort 1979, 478, 485; Lefort 1982, 166–67).

At the time of the 1478/9 census, the village of Karviya had only five households and the income derived from it was enjoyed by the *timar* holder Mehmed. Later, in 1510/11, the sultan gave permission to Hadım Yakub Pasha to endow the village for the upkeep of his mosque in Thessaloniki. Yakub Pasha was a high official of Bayezid II. He administered the *sancak* of Bosnia, the *beylerbeyilik* of Rumili and, finally, in 1497, was appointed a vizier. His mosque was not newly built but was a converted Christian church. The question is whether the income from Karviya was the only source of funds for the upkeep of the mosque? Documents make no mention of any other village, but there is a reference in a (single) *kadı's hüccet*: “within the boundaries of the village of Karviya, one of the endowed villages of the late Yakub Pasha”. Sometime around 1530/1, Karviya had already been a thriving *vakıf* village with 168 households (of which 157 Christian), which generated an income of 19,550 *akçes* (Lefort 1982, 77–8; Demetriades 1986, 47 (the name of the village was recorded as Karvouno); Fotić 2000b, 335).¹¹

At the time, the monks of Hilandar were establishing their large *metochion*, that is between 1569 and 1593, Karviya was a *vakıf* village and it seems that it remained so throughout the period of Ottoman rule (certainly until 1814). The function of the “master of the land” over the whole village, and therefore over the *metochion* of Hilandar, was exercised by the *vakıf* administration, which was almost without exception represented by the *mütevelli* (endowment trustee). It was he who gave approval to the monks of Hilandar to purchase land, who certified title deeds and collected dues and taxes. As far as can be seen from the documents kept in Hilandar, the office of the *mütevelli* was held by: Halil (1578), Ali Bey (1609–30), Mehmed (1633), Ali Çelebi (1634–47), İbrahim Bey (1637), Mehmed (1641 and 1649), and Ahmed Çelebi, son of Yusuf (1591 and 1594). Sometimes title deeds were issued by the *subaşı* of the *vakıf*: Hasan (1586) and Mustafa (1591 and 1594), and in one case we find the signature of an Ahmed Çauş (1619).¹²

Official documents referred to Hilandar's estate in Karviya as a *metochion* or a *çiftlik*. As recorded in a *hududname* (a document about the boundaries of an estate) of 1593, it was 60 *çifts* in area. Calculated according to the classical formula with one *çift* equalling 60–150 *dönüms*, that would be somewhere between 3,600 and 9,000 *dönüms*, or between 331 and 827 hectares.¹³ On the reasonable assumption that the *metochion* also included pastures and non-productive land, it might have been even

11 In Demetriades 1986, 47, the name of the village was recorded as Karvouno.

12 HMAT, 1/66, 12/12/27, 1/99, 12/12/52, 12/12/1, 12/1248, 12/12/36, 12/12/30, 12/12/3, 12/12/38, 112/12/47, 2/12/46, 12/12/4, 12/12/7, 12/12/5, 12/12/8, 12/12/43, 12/12/35, 12/12/9, 12/12/42, 12/12/62, 12/12/39, 12/12/59, 12/12/58, 2/187, 12/12/54.

13 One *dönüm* was approximately 919.3m².

larger at the time.¹⁴ Apart from crop fields, in 1593 the estate included 27 *dönüms* of vineyards. However, not much later, in 1607, the imperial survey records show only seven *dönüms* of vineyards. In the late nineteenth century the Serbian Archbishop Michael recorded that the *metochion* in Kalamaria was 7,000 *plugs* in surface area, which was equal to 20,000 *dönüms*. In the early twentieth century, according to Sava Hilandarac, the estate was leased out at an annual rent of 600 *mericas*, that is 30,000 *okkas* (38,460 kg, as 1 *okka* was 1.28 kg), of wheat and 500 *mericas*, that is 17,500 *okkas* (22,435 kg), of barley; and according to Metodije Milovanović, for 25,000 *okkas* (32,050 kg) of wheat and 10,000 *okkas* (12,820 kg) of barley.¹⁵

The *huduname* of 1593 describes the *metochion*'s boundaries with precision:

The old tower (*Eski hisar*) which is near the shore, on the other side the *çiftlik* of St Anastasia's, on the other side the Karviya brook, then runs along the shore to the Karaman well, then the boundary of Iviron, whence it runs to the main road to Thessaloniki, then descends to the *çiftlik* of the Lavra, where we set up a boundary stone with two marks: one is of the Iviron monastery, the other of the Lavra (there follows a redundant addition: and the Karaman *çiftlik* which is Iviron's). Thence it runs eastwards and uphill straight to the white stones. Then it reaches the Yürük boundary, where we also set up a boundary stone, (then) proceeds to Franks' cemetery (*Frenk mezarlığı*) which is beneath the Yürük *mahalles* and reaches the road to Karviya from the direction of Galaça,¹⁶ where we also set up a stone. This is a white stone with marks. We placed charcoal under the stone. There are three marks on the stone: the first is of the monastery of Hilandar, the second is Karviya's, and the third is St Anastasia's. It then descends to the Karviya brook and reaches the old fort, the place whence we started. We set up a long black stone there, too, and placed two marks on it: the first is of the monastery of Hilandar, the second of the monastery of St Anastasia. We placed lime under the stone (Fotić 2000b, 338).

The estate described above probably included the two fields purchased in 1586 and 1591, respectively. In 1594 the monastery expanded its *metochion* with another seven fields worth 2,650 *akçes*. The community obviously believed that further

14 E.g. Hilandar's *metochion* in Zdravikion was recorded as a three-*çift* estate. In that case its surface area cannot have exceeded 450 *dönüms*, but a *hüccet* of 1492 is clear that the estate in Zdravikion was much larger, about 700 *dönüms* (Fotić 2019).

15 HMAT, 12/12/8, 12/12/62, 12/12/39, 6/13, 12/12/32; Mihail 1886, 35; Sava Hilandarac 1997, 81; Milovanović 1908, 38; Fotić 2000b, 335–36.

16 Galaça, today Galatista, is a few kilometres southeast of Karviya (Lefort 1982, 64–5).

investment in land was worthwhile and purchased another eleven fields at one fell swoop in January 1609 alone. Regrettably, we have no information about their size or value. Furthermore, Hilandar bought land between Yazici's well and the sea, and paid the title deed tax of 3,000 *akçes* to the *mütevelli*. It would seem from the description of the boundaries of the fields purchased that the community was systematically rounding off a larger piece of arable land near the sea. That piece of land was crossed by a stream, which no doubt was advantageous for the purpose of water supply. Even though it was not required for title deeds to be certified by the court, the elders of the community took the trouble of having their transaction of January 1609 entered into the court records of the *kadı* of Thessaloniki. They could request certification themselves, but for some reason they authorized a Thessaloniki Jew, Menahem Meraç, to act on their behalf. Among their next acquisitions we must mention two fields purchased for 3,000 *akçes* in 1630.¹⁷ In October 1630, *mütevelli* Ali drew up a new *sınırname* (*hududname*) at the request of the monks residing on the *metochion*. A month later, the monks took the document to the *kadı* of Thessaloniki in order for him to issue a valid *hüccet*. The *metochion*'s new boundaries had been marked with boundary stones. It was determined on that occasion that there was no idle land within its boundaries and that no claim to any of it had been made by others. The new boundaries were quite different from the previous ones:

Starting from the eastern side, near the sea, it abuts the field of Hacı Süleyman, then it abuts the field of Abdülbakı son of Hacı Armağan of the Menteşeli *cema'at*, then abuts the field of Nuh Derviş of the Sati Nasuh *cema'at*, then abuts the field of Ferhad Dede, also of the Menteşeli *cema'at*, then runs to the Thessaloniki road, then runs along the said road to the boundary stone by the source of the brook, then runs along the brook to the water buffalo trail, then (abuts) the field of aşçı Mustafa (here follows a repetition probably due to a scribal error: then runs to the boundary stone by the source of the stream), then runs to the field of Kurd Beşe which is on the other side of the brook, then runs to the fields of *subaşı* Mehmed, son of Ali Bali, then runs to the old damaged road, then runs along the road to the field of Müsli Çelebi son of Hacı Mustafa, then runs to the field of Durmuş *Voyvoda*, then runs to the field of Hacı Ali son of Hacı Uman, then runs to another field of the said Müsli Çelebi, then runs to the fishermen's road, then runs along the road to the field of the monks (of the monastery) of St Anastasia, then runs to

17 HMAT, 12/12/27, 1/99, 12/12/52, 12/12/1, 12/12/48, 12/12/36, 12/12/30, 12/12/3, 12/12/38, 12/12/46, 12/12/45, 12/12/4, 12/12/43; Fotić 2000b, 338.

another field of Müsli Çelebi which is at the beginning of the road, then runs to another field of Kurd Beşe, then runs to the field of Hacı İbrahim, son of Hacı Hüsein, then runs to the field of Hacı Mehmed son of Murat, and then reaches the sea on the western side (Fotić 2000b, 340).

The monks of Hilandar kept purchasing land until 1641. As far as fields are concerned, the most important purchase was the 1636 one, when at least seven fields of a total surface area of 62 *muzurs* (measured in seed to be sown) were bought for 8,320 *akçes*. Apart from fields, in 1634 the monks bought a large sheep pasture for 4,300 *akçes*. They probably came into possession of another pasture for sheep and goats of 200 *dönüms* of scrubland (*puṛnarlık*) and 200 *dönüms* of meadows. There is no title deed for these 400 *dönüms* among the surviving Hilandar documents, but there is a 1633 title deed of a Musa Bey. A possible explanation for why the monks kept the latter document is that they bought this land from him at some later point and he handed all related documents over to them. The same goes for the sheep pasture bought in 1578 by a certain Şüeyb son of Dada (?), and İbrahim son of Yusuf of the Düberlu *cema'at*.¹⁸

Most of the purchased land bordered on Hilandar's *metochion* or lay in its immediate vicinity. The value of the land purchased after 1593 far exceeded 25,170 *akçes*. The figure does not include eleven fields because their price is unknown. At any rate, the newly purchased land was several hundred *dönüms* in surface area.

The staple crop was wheat. In the course of the eighteenth century the monks residing on the *metochion* paid a tenth part of the oat, rye, millet, vetch, beans and chickpea crops. According to a *hüccet* of 1716, they had six complete sets of tillage equipment (*altı 'aded çift ile alatı*) and a system of watering canals (*subaşı arkları*). The monks could not possibly have worked the large area of arable land all by themselves. They received the help of their "men", servants (*hizmetkarlar*), hired hands (*ter-oğlanlar*) or *çiftçis*, as they were called in documents.¹⁹

As regards livestock, they had oxen, water buffalos (*su sığır*) and sheep or goats (Fotić 2000b, 340).

18 HMAT, 12/12/62, 12/12/40, 12/12/39, 12/12/42, 12/12/9, 1/66. For the list of all estates within the Karviya village boundaries acquired between 1586 and 1641, with all information on their *sinırs*, areas and prices, see Fotić 2000b, 341–42. The standard *mouzourion* (*modios*) of grain equalled 12.8 kg, but it varied from 12.5 to 17 kg in Byzantium and the surrounding regions (Schilbach 1970, 96, 188). According to some non-official data, the *Thessaloniki muzur* of grain may have been about 19.24 kg in Ottoman times before the nineteenth century, see Fotić 2008, 203.

19 HMAT, 12/12/44, 12/12/59, 2/157, 2/182a, 2/218, 3/243, 12/12/11, 12/12/10, 12/12/24; Fotić 2000b, 340.

In 1593 the core of the *metochion* consisted of a *çardak* (wooden structure, tower) above the gate, two guest rooms (*müsafir odası*), a well, two stables, one for water buffalos and the other for oxen, two hay sheds, a six-window barn, two ovens, eight barrels and two *korita* (tubs, treading vats).²⁰ Since Hilandar's *çiftlik*s in Üç Ev and Karviya were registered as a single *çiftlik* in the "vicinity of the village of Üç Ev and the village of Karviya" in a copy of the entry from the 1598 imperial survey register, the *çardak* mentioned therein may have been the one in Karviya, unless there was another *çardak* on the *metochion* in the village of Üç Ev (*Çali metochion*). The same copy makes mention of a church. If it was not a church on the *Çali metochion*, this may be the earliest reference to the church of St Nicholas on the *metochion* in Karviya.²¹

In 1621 the monks built a new structure on the Kalamarian "*metochion* named Hilandar" (Karviya or Üç Ev?). *Hegoumenos* Ilarion and *oikonomos* (manager of the *metochion*) Viktor managed to obtain permission for the enlargement, basing their request on the lack of room for guests because all the available space was occupied by men and servants. Two rooms (*oda*) in the Bulgar *metochion* – perhaps those mentioned back in 1593 – had fallen into disrepair over time. Some walls had already collapsed and some were about to. The porch was also quite dilapidated (*ayazlık, tahtapuş*). Repairs were much needed but could not be undertaken without permission. At the request of the monk Makarije, the *naib* of Kalamaria gave permission in November 1668, though, of course, with the usual restriction that the earlier size was not to be exceeded. A much later *hüccet*, of 1757, also concerning repairs, provides precise information about the size of one of the hay sheds (*saman-hane*): it was 50 ells (*zira'*) in length by 32 ells in width, which is about 32.5 by 20.8 metres, and it was supported by 24 load-bearing columns (Fotić 2000b, 343).

At some point the monks had to take out a big loan. A certain *nazır*, probably the *nazır* of the *vakıf* (administrator), granted them one, but they had to pledge the *metochion* in Karviya as a security (*emanet tarikile verdükleri*). It is not known for how long the pledge lasted. The *nazır* relieved them of the pledge in August 1649, which means that the community cleared its debt at that time. The *nazır*'s agent handed them the *metochion*, 200 *muzurs* of wheat set aside for the payment of taxes (*kesim*), and all of the grain and equipment found on the premises. The monks were only obligated to reimburse him 59 *guruşes* he had spent on construction work and some other improvements on the *metochion* (Fotić 2000b, 343).

20 HMAT, 12/12/32. The Slavic word *korito* was adopted in Ottoman Turkish quite early, and was used to denote a tub for pressing grapes. It occurs in the *Kanunname* of Süleyman the Magnificent (Hadžibegić 1950, 340).

21 HMAT, 12/12/5, 6/13. Probably the first mention of the church of St Nicholas on the Kalamarian *metochion* was made in a note dated as late as 1717 (Fotić 2000b, 343).

The Hilandar monks residing on the Bulgar *metochion* were obliged to keep watch service. Their duty was to set up a round-the-clock watch on the coast of Kalamaria and to report any suspicious ships. Their exercise of this duty probably meant that they were exempted from paying some extraordinary taxes to the state.²²

The acquisition of the *çiftlik* in Karviya took place after the sale of monastic possessions in 1568/9, and the usual tax system was therefore applied: the tithe, *salaria*, *resm-i dönüm*, *resm-i otlak* and all other prescribed taxes. Even though it was not one of the redeemed estates, like all other estates it enjoyed the old privilege that after the death of a monk no one was allowed to charge the rest of the monks the title deed tax or take away the fields from them or transfer their title to these fields to anyone else. The *hüccet* of 1649 mentions the annual lump payment (*kesim*) in kind of 200 *muzurs* (3,848.4 kg) of wheat. The annual *resm-i dönüm* levied on vineyards in 1638 was 16 *akçes*.²³

Misunderstanding between the monks of Hilandar and the “master of the land” represented by the *mütevelli* of the *vakıf* were apparently rare. They went to court only twice, in both cases because of an attempt to extract more from them than was due. In the autumn of 1638 the *zabıt* (officer) of the *vakıf* tried to triple the prescribed *resm-i dönüm* on their vineyards. Instead of the 16 *akçes* per *dönüm* prescribed by the imperial survey register, he demanded as much as 50 *akçes*. The monks went straight to the *kadı* of Thessaloniki, who sent a *mürasele* (*kadı*’s order) to the *naib* of Kalamaria to put a stop to the *zabıt*’s wilful behaviour. The other dispute took place in the summer of 1659. The monks Petron, from the Bulgar *metochion*, and Panayotis, from the neighbouring *metochion* of St Anastasia’s, appeared together before the *kadı* of Thessaloniki. Both stated in the name of their respective communities that they had already handed the Sharia tithe of grain to the *vakıf*, but the *mütevelli*, Ahmed Çelebi son of Yusuf, had not been content. Not only had he charged them each 20 *guruşes* as a harvest tax (*harmaniye*) but he had also demanded a further five *guruşes* for the scribe, the *nazır* and the *subaşı* each. When they refused to pay, he had forbidden them to harvest the fields, and the crops were decaying. The monks substantiated their case with the *fetva* of the *müfti* of Thessaloniki. Based on the *fetva*, the *kadı* forbade the *mütevelli* to take money for the harvest (*harman akçesi*). The *mütevelli*, however, was not willing to give up so easily. Despite the *fetva* and the *kadı*’s writ, he continued to commit extortion. The monks were forced to seek protection from the sultan himself. They returned in April 1660 with a *ferman*

22 HMAT, 8/92, 2/187.

23 HMAT, 12/12/15, 2/182a, 2/174.

strictly forbidding the *mütevelli* to engage in mistreatment and unlawful practices (Fotić 2000b, 344).

The monks had disputes of a different nature with local villagers. In September 1594 they bought seven fields, as evidenced by the certified *tezkire* (receipt) of the *subaşı* Mustafa. But the previous holders, both Christian and Muslim peasants, refused to let them enter into possession of the fields. The dispute went on for ten long years and was eventually brought before the Imperial *Divan*. In June 1604, the *kadı* of Thessaloniki was ordered from Istanbul to look into the matter carefully and to prevent obstruction if it could be established that the law was on the side of the monks (Fotić 2000b, 344). What remains unknown are the reasons for the dispute. Perhaps the monks failed to pay for the fields in full, or perhaps the peasants did not want to sell them in the first place and an arrangement between the monks and the “master of the land” presented them with a *fait accompli*.

In the summer of 1631, an inhabitant of Karviya, Mustafa, son of Mustafa Çauş, showed up on the *metochion* and for some reason made threats to the monks and their labourers. Whether the monks ultimately pressed charges is unknown, but Mustafa’s brother Musa Bey had to give personal guarantees that Mustafa would appear before the court (Fotić 2000b, 344).

Local villagers deliberately grazed their sheep and goats on the *metochion*, thereby causing considerable damage to the crops. In early April 1634 a complaint about such behaviour lodged by the monks came before the Porte. The order that came in response was very clear. The *kadı* of Thessaloniki was to look into the matter carefully and, if it was established that the specified place had never been used as grazing land for the village livestock before, such use was also forbidden in the future. If, however, the place had always served as grazing land, then it could be used for those purposes from then on, but without causing damage to the crops and fields, and only if the villagers possessed the imperial writ permitting them to do this. If they did not have such a writ, they were forbidden from grazing their livestock once the fields were sown (Fotić 2000b, 344).

Most Muslims in the neighbouring areas belonged to Yürük *cema’ats*. Many of the troubles that befell the *metochion* and its residents were caused by them. The most ferocious example was a raid by eight bandits on 13 May 1643, which left a few monks wounded, one of them fatally. An investigation into the raid was opened and a trial was held (Fotić 2000b, 166–168, 345).

Monks were also tried on a number of occasions. After a shipwreck in 1621 they gathered some of the cargo washed up on the shore of the *metochion*. But the surviving owners appealed to the authorities, and the monks restored everything they had taken. In 1640, the monk Mihailo hit and killed the horse of Rizvan, son of Veli, of the Düberli *cema'at*. A trial was held, and the monk compensated the owner with 1,800 *akçes*. In 1668 the monks were even accused of murder, probably because bodies were found within the boundaries of the *metochion*, but the charges were soon dropped because it was established that the crime had been committed by Yürük bandits (Fotić 2000b, 180, 345).

There were also trials of monks accused of slander, and those in which monks themselves were the victims of slander. During the reign of Murat IV (1623–1640), a strict ban on planting, growing and smoking tobacco began to be enforced. Moreover, all coffeehouses were shut down. It was believed that tobacco and coffeehouses encouraged idleness and sloth, and that they were a hotbed of intrigue and shady dealings. In 1643, the imperial envoy Hasan, who came bearing the *ferman* to enforce the ban in the *kaza* of Thessaloniki, caught two Yürüks, probably in the vicinity of the *metochion*, and had them hanged for smoking. This upset their relatives and they began to threaten the monks, accusing them of having reported the men. The monks sought and were given protection from the Porte. The *kadı* of Thessaloniki was ordered to look into their complaint and put a stop to the harassment. Another case took place during the long Cretan War (1645–1669), when growing tension and distrust of the Christian subjects escalated into open intolerance and humiliation. The monks of Hilandar were among those accused of helping the Christian forces. In the summer of 1665 Süleyman Bey from Thessaloniki accused them of having handed two of his men over to Venetian warships. However, the monks were acquitted due to lack of evidence.²⁴

The Bulgar *metochion* in Karviya did not date from Byzantine times. But it was located in an area where a *metochion* known in the fourteenth century may have been situated. It is possible that sometime between 1569 and 1593 the monks, having come into some money and being aware of the history of the *metochion*, decided to purchase land on that same location. The Bulgar *metochion* was the largest and most important of all Hilandar's estates for several centuries. One of the difficulties in researching this *metochion* is the fact that it cannot always be clearly distinguished in some documents from the nearby *metochion* in Üç Ev. Coping with major and minor crises, the monks of Hilandar managed to remain in possession of the

24 HMAT, 8/89, 2/192. The documents do not specify which *metochion* in Kalamaria they refer to, the Bulgar *metochion* in Karviya or the Çali *metochion* in Üç Ev. On the ban on using tobacco and opening coffee shops, see Matkovski 1969, 48–93.

Bulgar *metochion* throughout the period of Ottoman rule. The size and diverse use of arable land, tillage practices, human resources, types of tools, modes of overcoming financial crises through taking out loans and pledging land as security, the sale and purchase of larger or smaller plots of land... All these topics suggest that a large *metochion*/*çiftlik* was like a living entity undergoing change throughout centuries, expanding and shrinking, and that such a large estate was very difficult to hold and manage, requiring outside help, labour force and economic expertise and skills.

References

Unpublished Primary Sources

HMAT: Hilandar Monastery Archive, Turcica.

T. C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı, Osmanlı Arşivi, Tahrir Defterleri 723.

Secondary Literature

Alexander (Alexandropoulos), John Christos. 1997. "The Lord Giveth and the Lord Taketh Away: Athos and the Confiscation Affair of 1568–1569." In *Mount Athos in the Fourteenth–Sixteenth Centuries*, edited by Kriton Chryssochoidis, 154–69. Athens: The National Hellenic Research Foundation, Institute for Byzantine Research.

Bellier, Paul et al. 1986. *Paysages de Macédoine, leurs caractères, leur évolution à travers les documents et les récits des voyageurs*, présenté par Jacques Lefort. Paris: De Boccard.

Boškov, Vančo. 1982. "Dokumenti Bajazita II u Hilandar (Sveta Gora)." (The Documents of Bayezit II in Hilandar [Mount Athos]). *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju* 31: 131–54.

Boškov, Vančo. 1986. "Jurucite i svetogorske manastiri." (The Yürüks and Mount Athos Monasteries). In *Etnogeneza na Jurucite i nivnoto naseluvanje na Balkanot. Materijali od Trkaleznata masa održana vo Skopje na 17 i 18 noemvri 1983*, 57–67. Skopje: MANU.

Demetriades, Vassilis. 1986. "Ottoman Chalkidiki: an Area in Transition". In *Continuity and Change in Late Byzantine and Early Ottoman Society. Papers given at a Symposium at Dumbarton Oaks in May 1982*, edited by Anthony Bryer and Heath Lowry. 39–50. Birmingham (England) – Washington (USA): The University of Birmingham – Dumbarton Oaks.

Fotić, Aleksandar. 1997. "Sveta Gora u doba Selima II" [Mount Athos in the Time of Selim II]. *Hilandarski zbornik* 9: 143–62.

Fotić, Aleksandar. 2000a. "Despina Mara Branković and Chilandar: Between the Desired and the Possible." In: *Osam vekova Hilandara. Istorija, duhovni život, književnost, umetnost i arhitektura*, [Eight Centuries of Hilandar. History, Spiritual Life, Books, Art and Architecture], edited by Vojislav Korać, 93–100. Beograd: SANU.

- Fotić, Aleksandar. 2000b. *Sveta Gora i Hilandar u Osmanskom carstvu (XV-XVII vek)*. (Mount Athos and Hilandar in the Ottoman Empire (Fifteenth – Seventeenth Centuries). Belgrade: Balkanološki institut SANU, Manastir Hilandar, Sveti arhijerejski sinod Srpske pravoslavne crkve.
- Fotić, Aleksandar. 2008. “Xenophontos in the Ottoman Documents of Chilandar (16th– 17th Centuries).” *Hilandarski zbornik* 12: 197–213.
- Fotić, Aleksandar. 2010. “Kassandra in the Ottoman Documents from Hilandar Monastery (Mount Athos), 16th–17th Centuries”. *Balkanica* 40: 57–73.
- Fotić, Aleksandar. 2012. “Hilandar’s Response to Crisis and New Challenges in 15th and 16th Centuries”. In *To Αγιον Όρος στον 15ο και 16ο αιώνα. Πρακτικά Συνεδρίου* [Mount Athos in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries. Cofnference Proceedings], 129–38. Thessaloniki: Mount Athos Center, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the Institute for Byzantine Research / National Hellenic Research Foundation (Athens).
- Fotić, Aleksandar. 2019. “Coping with Extortion on a Local Level: The Case of Hilandar’s *Metochion* in Zdravikion (Draviskos, Strymon Region) in the Sixteenth Century.” *Balkanica* 50: 73–83.
- Hadžibegić, Hamid. 1950. „Kanun-nama sultana Sulejmana Zakonodavca iz prvih godina njegove vlade (*Kanunname* of Süleyman the Lawgiver from the First Years of his Rule)“. *Glasnik Zemaljskog muzeja u Sarajevu*, nova serija 4–5: 295–381.
- Kolovos, Elias. 2005. “Negotiating for State Protection: *Çiftlik*-Holding by the Athonite Monasteries (Xeropotamou Monastery, Fifteenth–Sixteenth Centuries).” In *Frontiers of Ottoman Studies: State, Province, and the West*, II, edited by Colin Imber, Keiko Kiyotaki and Rhoads Murphy, 197–209. London, New York: I. B. Tauris.
- Kolovos, Elias. 2012. “Κατάληψη του χώρου και μοναστηριακή γαιοκτησία στην οθωμανική Χαλκιδική (15ος-16ος αι.) (Settlement Patterns and Monastic Landholding in Ottoman Halkidiki (Fifteenth-Sixteenth centuries)).” In *To Αγιον Όρος στον 15ο και 16ο αιώνα. Πρακτικά Συνεδρίου* [Mount Athos in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries. Conference Proceedings]. Published by Mount Athos Center, 107–25. Thessaloniki: Mount Athos Center, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the Institute for Byzantine Research / National Hellenic Research Foundation (Athens).
- Kolovos, Elias, and Phokion Kotzageorgis. 2015. “Halkidiki in the Early Modern Period: Towards an Environmental History.” In *Mines, Olives and Monasteries. Aspects of Halkidiki’s Enviromental History*, edited by Basil Gounaris, 123–61. Thessaloniki: Epikentro Publishers and Pharos books.
- Kotzageorgis, Phokion. 2002. *Η αθωνική Μονή Αγίου Παύλου κατά την οθωμανική περίοδο* [The Athonite Monastery of Saint Paul during the Ottoman Period]. Thessaloniki: University Studio Press.
- Kotzageorgis, Phokion. 2015. “Nomads (Yürüks) and Environment in Early Modern Halkidiki.” *Balkan Studies* 50: 95–118.
- Krüger, Eberhard. 1984. *Die Siedlungsnamen Griechisch-Makedoniens nach amtlichen Verzeichnissen und Kartenwerken*. Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag.
- Laiou, Sophia. 2007. “Some Considerations Regarding *Çiftlik* Formation in the Western Thessaly, Sixteenth – Nineteenth Centuries”. In: *The Ottoman Empire, the Balkans, the Greek Lands: toward a Social and Economic History. Studies in Honor of John C.*

- Alexander*, edited by Elias Kolovos, Phokion Kotzageorgis, Sophia Laiou and Marinos Sariyannis. 255–77, Istanbul: The Isis Press.
- Lefort, Jacques. 1979. “De Bolbos à la plaine du Diable.” *Travaux et Mémoires* 7: 465–89.
- Lefort, Jacques. 1982. *Villages de Macédoine. Notices historiques et topographiques sur la Macédoine orientale au Moyen Age. 1. La Chalcidique occidentale*. Paris : De Boccard.
- Lemerle, Paul et al. 1982. *Actes de Lavra, IV. Études historiques, Actes serbes, Compléments et Index* (Archives de l’Athos XI). Paris : P. Lethelieux.
- Matkovski, Aleksandar. 1969. “Auftreten und Ausbreitung des Tabaks auf der Balkanhalbinsel.” *Südost-Forschungen* 28: 48–93.
- McGowan, Bruce. 1981. *Economic Life in Ottoman Europe : Taxation, Trade, and the Struggle for Land, 1600–1800*. New York – Paris : Cambridge University Press – Éditions de la Maison des Sciences de l’Homme.
- Medaković, Dejan. 1978. „Stare štampane knjige manastira Hilandara (Old Printed Books of Hilandar Monastery).“ In Dimitrije Bogdanović, *Katalog ćirilskih rukopisa manastira Hilandara*, I, 277–88. Beograd: SANU, Narodna biblioteka SR Srbije.
- Mihail, ae. mitropolit srpski. 1886. *Sveta Gora Atonska* (Holy Mount Athos), Novi Sad: A. Pajević.
- Milovanović, iguman Metodije S. 1908. *Život u srpskoj carskoj lavri Hilendaru na Svetoj Gori* (The Life in Serbian Imperial Laura Hilandar on Mount Athos), II, Beograd: Štamparija K. Gregorića i Druga.
- Popović, Mihailo. 2010. *Mara Branković: eine Frau zwischen dem christlichen und dem islamischen Kulturkreis im 15. Jahrhundert*. Mainz: Rutzen.
- Sava Hilandarac (Slavibor Breuer). 1997. *Istorija manastira Hilandara. Uspomena na sedamstogodišnjicu osnivanja* [History of the Hilandar Monastery. In the Memory of the 700-Year anniversary of the Foundation], edited by Tomislav Jovanović, Beograd: Narodna biblioteka Srbije (manuscript written in 1898).
- Schilbach, Erich. 1970. *Byzantinische Metrologie*. Munich: C. H. Beck.
- Stojanović, Ljubomir. 1927. *Stari srpski rodoslovi i letopisi* [Old Serbian Genealogies and Annals]. Beograd – Sr. Karlovci: SKA.
- Tričković, Radmila. 1970. “Čitlučenje u Beogradskom pašaluku u XVIII veku” [Creating Çiftliks in the Belgrade Pashalik]. *Zbornik Filozofskog fakulteta* 11 (1): 525–49.
- Vasdravelles, I. K. 1972. “Δύο ανέκδοτα τουρκικά έγγραφα προερχόμενα εκ των Μονών του Αγίου Όρους, Λαύρας και Βατοπεδίου.” [Two Unpublished Turkish Documents from the Athonite Monasteries of Lavra and Vatopedi]. *Μακεδονικά* 12: 285–95.
- Živojinović, Mirjana. 1998. *Istorija Hilandara I: Od osnivanja manastira 1198. do 1335. godine* [History of Hilandar, I. From the Foundation of the Monastery 1198 to 1335]. Beograd: Prosveta.

Crisis and Survival of the Athonite Monasteries during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS AND THOUGHTS

PHOKION P. KOTZAGEORGIS

The Athonite primary and secondary sources constantly refer, as a historiographical *leitmotiv*, to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as a period of over-indebtedness and of general economic distress for the Athonite monasteries (Lavriotis 1963, 218–239; Mamalakis 1971, 284–296; Vlachos (1903) 2005, 92–93; Dorotheos (1986), 82–90). The reason for this terrible situation, according to the relevant literature, was the exorbitant taxation imposed on the monks by the Ottoman state. In order to afford or even to ameliorate these unbearable burdens, the Athonites – the historiography continues – dispersed throughout the Ottoman territories, especially in the eighteenth century, and even outside them, travelling to collect alms (*ziteia*) (Aggelomati-Tsougkaraki 2007). With the revenue of these travels, the monks intended to cover part of their huge debts both to the Ottoman state and to individual creditors. In addition to these travels, the Athonites from the late sixteenth century and especially during the seventeenth century turned to the rulers of the Danubian principalities (Wallachia and Moldavia) to receive donations in cash or real estate properties in those areas, which were tax-free. This policy, which coincided with a positive attitude from the part of the Romanian rulers, was the second pole of the monasteries' endeavour to tackle this long-lasting economic crisis.¹

At the same time, several monasteries increased their real estate properties. The increase did not involve lands in the *metochia* (subordinated farms, succursal) that had been founded in previous centuries or even during the Byzantine period, but rather the acquisition of new lands, some in remote areas.² In view of this, the re-

1 The most concise work on the relations between Mount Athos and Danubian principalities, although it is quite old, is still Năsturel 1986.

2 See for example the case of Saint Paul's monastery and its *metochia*, which were acquired during the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century in Thrace, Arta, Athens and Western Anatolia, in: Kotzageorgis 2002, 155–172.

search question I am dealing with is whether these two concurrent situations were contradictory. In other words, is it contradictory that on the one hand, the monasteries were borrowing money and appeared to be indebted, and on the other they were purchasing real estate properties? Irrespective of the answer to this question, the chapter will also ask how the phenomenon can be explained.³

To thoroughly develop this research question, I have adopted conventional time limits for my research. Like other scholars before me, I also consider that the confiscation of the monasteries on Mount Athos by Sultan Selim II in 1568/9 as well as the Ottoman Empire's monetary crisis in 1584/5 constitute an undeniable *terminus post quem* for a period of economic distress for Mount Athos. Therefore, the last quarter of the sixteenth century was the starting point for my time limit for my research. Mainly due to the archival material accessible to me, I set the *terminus ante quem* at 1800,⁴ recognizing however, that the same characteristics which can be observed in the previous centuries more or less continued for at least the first twenty years of the nineteenth century.

For a period of more than two centuries (from the last quarter of the sixteenth century up until 1800), I formed a database of cases with documents that refer to property acquisitions or losses. In the latter case, loans were also included in the sample as they can be considered a symptom of the difficult financial situation of the period and were directly related to the fate of real estate properties.

The cases collected and studied can in no way be considered a complete *corpus* of sources. However, I believe that they do reflect the realities of the monasteries, they record trends and, furthermore, they provide the necessary tools for interpreting the economic history of Mount Athos in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is noteworthy that of the 443 cases in my sample, only five refer to the period before the last quarter of sixteenth century, all five of which were in fact

3 My main sources for this research are the published Greek documents of the Athonite monasteries that came out of the National Hellenic Research Foundation in *regestes* form, the Ottoman documents of Xeropotamou monastery, and the Greek and Ottoman documents of the monastery of Saint Paul. See: Kotzageorgis 2008; Archive of the Monastery of St. Paul, Ottoman Archive (AMSP); Nikolopoulos and Oikonomides 1966; Oikonomides 1979; Melissakis 2008; Chrysoschoidis and Gounaridis 1985; Kolovos 2000; Gounaridis 1993; Pardos 1998; Giannakopoulos 2001; Anastasiadis 2002; Pavlikianov 2015; Pavlikianov 2008; Pavlikianov 2014. Moreover, the following publications have been used in the database: Vamvakas 1985; Pavlikianov 2005. In addition, I have used a sample of some 200 Ottoman documents from various Athonite monasteries (Lavra, Vatopedi, Dionysiou, Pantokrator, Simonopetra) regarding their *metochia* on Limnos island.

4 Both the *regestes* of the Greek documents, published by the National Hellenic Research Foundation in Athens, and those of the Ottoman documents of Elias Kolovos' PhD dissertation stop at the year 1800.

land acquisitions.⁵ In view of this, I argue that the time span of the economic crisis extended to these two and a half centuries, that is, 1580–1820.

According to the sample, the monasteries mainly acquired scattered land or organized *metochia* in three ways: purchase, bequest, and donation. In 149 cases of purchase, the monasteries acquired some type of immovable property (fields, vineyards, houses, pastures, and so on) from individual Christians or from village communities. In some cases, reference is made to the cause of the particular transaction. Payment of the poll tax by the sellers was one such cause sometimes mentioned in the documents. For example, in 1600, the inhabitants of the village of Ormylia sold a field to the monks of Karakallou for 240 *akçes* “for the *haraç*” (*δια το χαράτζι*), and the next year the same people sold a vineyard to the monks of Docheiariou for 1,400 *akçes*.⁶ Often the sellers and the properties that were being sold were located close to where the purchasing monastery had a *metochion*, such as the mass purchases of fields by Xeropotamou monastery in Ormylia in 1592, or Saint Paul’s monastery in Sarti in 1745 and 1746 (Kolovos 2000, 154–56 [nos. 182–85]; AMSP, Σ/13 and Σ/10.). However, there are a few cases where the properties were situated far from the *metochia*, such as the pasture in the village of Libanova in Çitroz (today Aiginio in Pieria county, Northern Greece), which was bought by Dionysiou monastery in 1636, or the house that was bought by Karakallou monastery in Bayındır in Anatolia (Turkey) in 1764 (Nikolopoulos and Oikonomides 1966, 301 [no. 122]; Chryssochoidis-Gounaridis, 48 [no. 52]).

Bequests were the second way in which monasteries acquired landholdings, accounting for 122 cases in my sample. Christians made the bequests, mostly individually, and several of the documents refer to the terms of the bequests, allowing the researcher to form an idea of the objectives for which this kind of transaction was carried out. Some of the most frequent reasons for a bequest were the registration of names for commemoration in the monasteries’ liturgical books (*πρόθεσις*, *παρρησία*), the salvation of the donor’s soul, to ensure that the donor would be supported by the monastery until his/her death, or his entry into the monastic community as a monk. In 1682, a peasant called Stoikos bequeathed fields in the village of Pinakaria to Xeropotamou monastery in order to have his name included in the liturgy. Vassilis Bafos bequeathed his field to the same monastery for the memorial and registration of his parents, his wife, and himself at the *prothesis*. In 1777,

5 Concerning the Vatopedi documents: Pavlikianov 2008, 142–45, 161–2, 163–4, and 166 (nos 5, 6, 20, 23 and 25).
 6 Chryssochoidis and Gounaridis 1985, 31–32 (no. 23). Oikonomides 1979, 243 (no. 122). The interesting thing is that all relevant cases came from the first half of the seventeenth century. Conversely, the monks of Xeropotamou sold a field on Naxos island in 1673 to a Christian for the payment of the tax *avariz* of the monastery (Gounaridis 1993, 55–56 [no. 46]).

Dimitrios Kyriakos Chalkiadoudis bequeathed fields at Humnikon in Serres, as well as money, to Saint Paul's monastery, because he wanted to become a monk in the monastery (Gounaridis 1993, 58 and 49 [nos 48 and 38]; Kotzageorgis 2008, 154 [no. 120]). The bequeathed properties were dispersed across a wider area than those purchased, because the bequests were often the results of the monks' alms-collecting travels (*ziteia*). For example, Dionysiou monastery received the bequest of houses, vineyards and *çiftlik* from Christians on remote Bozcaada Island in 1695, while Esphigmenou monastery received the *metochion* of Christ the Saviour on Büyükada Island in 1782, and Stavronikita monastery received the small monastic cell (*κάθισμα*) of Agia Anna on Kea Island in 1628 (Nikolopoulos and Oikonomides 1966, 274 [no. 45]; Melissakis 2008, 72–74 [no. 32]; Giannakopoulos 2001, 79–80 [no. 23]). However, it must be asked whether these possessions remained in the hands of the monks for long, especially following the donor's death. Finally, regarding property donations, there are only two cases in my sample of lands in remote areas, on the islands of Santorini and Naxos (Nikolopoulos and Oikonomides 1966, 299 [no. 117]; Gounaridis 1993, 44 [no. 33]).

Apart from the above cases of property acquisitions by the monasteries, there were four cases of monasteries receiving immovable property from the Ottoman state after paying the transaction fee. This land was “without an owner” (*αδέσποτο*) and therefore, according to Ottoman law, had to be granted to someone to exploit it. The relevant cases refer to properties in Sarti (Halkidiki peninsula) that Saint Paul's monastery received from the Ottoman state (AMSP, nos Σ/26, Kp/7, Σ/4 [all from 1591] and Σ/7 [from 1766]). In another case, a metropolitan gave a small monastery (*μονύδριον*) in Halkidiki to another monastery because the property was deserted and vacant.⁷

In the large category of real estate losses, the situation was complex. Obviously, monastic archives contain no documents that certify the loss of a monastic property, since such documents would have been in the possession of the buyer. This is the reason why cases of monasteries selling properties to other monasteries or individuals are rare in the sample.⁸ Whatever the situation was, the category of real

7 Gounaridis 1993, 23 (no. 8 of 1577): concerning an abandoned small monastery (*μονύδριον*) of the Archangel Michael, which the Metropolitan of Thessaloniki, Ioasaph had given to the Xeropotamou monastery.

8 The following are four clear cases: (a) in 1583, the monks of Zographou monastery sold a part of their *metochion* in Kalamaria to the monastery of Saint Anastassia (Pavlikianov 2014, 495–96 [no. 72]); (b) in 1606 the monks of Saint Paul's monastery sold a pasture for water buffaloes in Kriaritsi (Sithonia peninsula) to the monastery of Saint Anastassia (AMSP, Kp/4); (c) in 1615, the monks of Saint Paul's monastery again sold fields, which belonged to their *metochion* of Pyrgos in Kassandra, to the inhabitants of the village of Athytos (AMSP, IIK/8); and (d) in 1662 the monks of Vatopedi monastery sold a house in Thessaloniki to a Christian woman of the city (Pavlikianov 2008, 205 [no. 59]).

estate losses combines the cases of loans, pledges, and mortgages together, because the former generally accompanied the latter two. Moreover, all these cases, even those that did not concern loss of possession, contribute to the discussion on the economic difficulty of the monasteries, as they are the most important evidence of this difficulty. There are 123 such cases, of which the situation in Limnos is characteristic. All of the documents referring to loans, mortgages and/or pledges date from the seventeenth century.

Of these, 74 relate to loans, 72 of which had monasteries as debtors. The creditors included not only Muslims, but also Christians and Jews. In the archive of Saint Paul's monastery, for example, there are 43 surviving credit contracts (*ομολογίες*) in Greek that the monastery concluded with Muslims in the area of their *metochion* in Kalamaria (Western Halkidiki) between 1756 and 1761. The same monastery in 1581 borrowed money from two Jews. Finally, there are ten cases in which Esphigmenou monastery concluded loans with various Christians, ordinary laypersons, as well as with Phanariots (Christian notables in Istanbul), between 1776 and 1790.⁹ In some cases, the loan was followed by the mortgaging of the monastery's *metochion*. Thus, the monks of Saint Paul's mortgaged their *metochion* in Kalamaria (Western Halkidiki) to Muslims in 1604 and 1605, while the monks of Xeropotamou mortgaged their *metochion* in Ierissos (Eastern Halkidiki) before 1636 and in Longos (Sithonia) peninsula in 1647. In one case, a *metochion* of Chilandar in Ierissos was mortgaged to the Christian peasants of the village (AMSP, nos K/48 and K/68; Kolovos 2000, no. 294 and 315; Anastassiadis 2002, 65 [no. 44]). Loan amounts ranged from twenty-five to a few thousand *guruşes*, while the average was around 1,000. The lowest amount was recorded in 1645 in the mortgage loan of Xeropotamou to a Muslim with a pledge of its *metochion*, while the largest amount of 22,000 *guruşes* involved the inhabitants of Ravenikeia (today Megali Panagia village, in Halkidiki) and Vatopedi monastery in 1620 (Kolovos 2000, 244 [no. 313]; Pavlikianov 2008, 192–93 [no. 50]).¹⁰ The category of loans also included cases in which monks lent their own money either to their own monastery or to another, such as the elder Zosimas Lavriotis, who lent an amount to Xeropotamou monastery in 1684 to pay for its monetary contribution (*συνδοσία*) to the Holy Community of Athos (Gounaridis 1993, 60 [no. 51]). In the cases where the reason for the loan contract was mentioned, the most common seems to have been repayment of other loans or the payment of taxes. Saint Paul's monastery, for example, borrowed 8,000 *akçes* from a Muslim in 1605 to

9 See Kotzageorgis 2008, 101–04, 105–29 (nos 47–50, 52–72, 74–77, 80, 82–87 and 89–96); AMSP, K/50 and no. 58 file 2; Melissakis 2008, 64, 67–8, 71–2, 81–82, 83–4, 99, 104–5 (nos 26, 28, 31, 37, 38a–β, 40a–β, 49, 54). Phanariot (mainly women) creditors were: *archon baharnikos* Tselempis Hourmouzakis, *hatmanessa kokkona* Kassandra Ramadani, *archontissa kokkona* Smaragda spouse of Tselempi Grigoraskou Gounari and *domna* Tarsia.

10 The second amount might also have been a reference to *akçes*.

repay its debt to Hüseyin's *vakıf*. In 1792, Pantokrator monastery borrowed money from the Governor of Lemnos Castle (*dizdar ağa*) to repay the monastery's debt to the Admiral of the Ottoman fleet (Kapudan Pasha) (AMSP, file 2 no. 46; Pardos 1998, 183–4 [no. 100]). The interest rate varied between 10%–15%, a common rate for the period (e.g. Melissakis 2008, 64 and 67–8 [nos 26 and 28]).

In sixteen cases, there is reference to land mortgaging, without always stating that the transaction was followed by a cash loan. In four of these cases the recipients of the mortgage were Athonite monks, who received it from Christian villagers who had mortgaged their lands (Nikolopoulos and Oikonomidis 1966, [no. 39, Gomatou]; Pavlikianov 2008, 192–3 [no. 50, Ravenikeia], 210–1 [no. 65, Chorouda]; Gounaridis 1993, 157 [no. 188, Ormylia]). In the rest of the cases, the entire *metochion*, or on rare occasions part of it (usually pastures), was usually under mortgage, while the mortgage period ranged from one to five years. The aforementioned cases include the mortgage of the *metochion* of Saint Paul in Kalamaria to a Muslim in 1694, and that of Vatopedi monastery on Lemnos to a Christian in 1692 (AMSP, no. K/70; Pavlikianov 2008, 211–2 [no. 66]). In half of the cases, mortgaging was the result of the monks' debt (e.g. AMSP, nos K/48, K/68, II/6, Σ/24 and K/70).

In the category of leasing, most of the cases (fourteen out of eighteen) concerned monastic lands given to third parties – mainly Christians, in rare cases Muslims or other monasteries – for a certain period of time. The three exceptions were Chilandar monastery, which rented communal land from the inhabitants of Sykia village (pastures in Toroni and Paleochora) and of Gomatou village (pasture) all in Halkidiki (Anastassiadis 2002, 92–3 [no. 72β of 1764], 113–14 [no. 99 of 1769], and 266–67 [no. 277 of 1797]). Renting was widely practiced in the eighteenth century, suggesting that the monasteries were unable to cultivate and exploit their lands due to lack of resources, human or otherwise.¹¹ Thus, it was reasonable for the monasteries to proceed to lease out their estate properties. However, both cases in which villagers leased land from monasteries, and in which lands were rented from one monastery to another show that the practice of renting was widespread, but it did not necessarily mean that the monasteries had lost possession of the leased property.

As is to be expected, in the cases of sale and therefore loss of *metochia* or other real estate properties, the relevant documents were transferred into the buyer's hands and are no longer in the monastic archives. Thus, documents for such transactions

11 It is not a coincidence that of the eighteen cases of leasing, fifteen were from the eighteenth century. The exceptions referred to leasing to Muslims. See: Gounaridis 1993, 31 (no. 16 of 1607); in fact, this refers to a concealed loan under mortgage (AMSP, K/51 [of 1610]; Kolovos 2000, 243 [no. 311 of 1643/4]).

from this period have not survived. Even when documents refer to a real estate sale, a careful look at the sources will reveal details that give a different picture and lead to a different conclusion. In 1776, the monks of Pantokrator monastery received a donation of the *metochion* in Ormylia from the inhabitants of the village. The document states that in 1747, the monks had sold their *metochion* to a Christian and thirty years later his heirs proceeded to bequeath it to the monastery. The editor's note underlines that the Ottoman documents of the monastery give a different picture. According to these, the villagers involved had transgressed upon the monastery's fields and demolished the building of the *metochion* in 1775, and as a result they had to be prosecuted for their deeds. A patriarchal letter (*επιτίμιον*) of 1781 provided the solution for the case by assigning the *metochion* to the monks (Pardos 1998, 173–4 and 178–80 [nos 90 and 95]). This case shows that it is not sufficient to characterize a transaction as a sale or lease on the basis of one document only or of the official terminology used in it. Comparison between Greek and Ottoman sources can lead to more convincing conclusions.

Another document gives a new dimension to the term “sale”. For instance, in 1641 the monks of Dionysiou monastery recorded the items, movable and immovable, of their *metochion* in Orphani (in the area of Serres), which they had sold to the Muslim Haci for 1,500 *guruşes* (piasters). A written note (*ενθύμησις*), dated from the same year and referring to the same *metochion*, states that all properties, movables and immovables, were given as “amaneti” (pledge or mortgage) to Haci Mustafa Agha for 1,500 *guruşes* (Nikolopoulos and Oikonomides 1966, 302 (nos 124 and 125)). The combination of the information provided by the two sources proves, in my view, that the verb “sell” was used by the monks to mean “pledge”, and that this was therefore the terminology of post-Byzantine documents. In any case, the word “sale” should not be taken in its literal meaning, as this could lead to erroneous conclusions about the loss of properties. On the contrary, the verb “to sell”, as other examples show, frequently means “letting” and not “selling”.¹² It is noteworthy that Aleksandar Fotić (2005), on the basis of his research of Ottoman documents, has proved that a “sale” could also be a concealed bequest, thus giving the word “sale” a vaguer meaning.

To interpret the policy of the monasteries and their financial situation, we should take into account the general trends in the Ottoman world during the period in question. The systematic involvement of members of Ottoman society with credit

12

See: Anastasiadis 2002, 113–4 (no. 99): the villagers of Sykia leased (*πωλήσαμε*) a pasture to the monks of Chilandar; no. 277: the villagers of Gomatou leased (*επουλήσαμε*) a pasture to the monks of Chilandar.

activity was widespread. Almost everyone was borrowing and lending money, irrespective of religion and social status. The socio-economic situation and status of a debtor was not inferior to that of a creditor. The Ottoman state's ever-growing demand for cash led to the expansion of the tax-farming system (*iltizam*) to all the sectors of economic life, and it created a new generation of Ottoman subjects who were active in tax-farming and hence in money lending.¹³

On the other hand, because of the absence of banks or other kinds of state or secular credit institutions in the Ottoman Empire, the role of lending cash at interest on a systematic basis was mainly played by high-ranking officials or pious foundations (*vakıfs*), both Muslim and Christian, because they had enough money due to their privileged position in the socio-economic life of the empire. Within this framework the monasteries functioned as *banks* for Christians from as early as the fifteenth century onwards, when wealthy Christians in the Balkans kept their valuables in the monasteries for safekeeping or rented a cell to live there.¹⁴ According to a recent study, the Athonites provided credit for their benefit, earning a profit from the difference in interest rates. That is, they lent at a higher interest rate than they borrowed, and they profited from the interest rate difference, thus resembling a modern bank (Papazakas 2014).

In a period of general economic crisis for the empire, such as the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the fulfilment of tax obligations was a major issue for Christians and Muslims alike. In order to cope with their tax obligations, taxpayers would resort to borrowing money, by mortgaging whatever they had in their possession. Athonite monasteries were privileged players in the cash and land market for at least two reasons. The first was that the Athonite monasteries had existed uninterruptedly for centuries. This fact allowed them to receive as donations or, more commonly, as bequests various real estate properties from Christians who did not know what to do with their properties because of a lack of heirs. We should not forget that the monasteries during the Ottoman period, when religiosity and piety played a central role in the everyday lives of people, were the main administrators of the religion and were therefore the recipients of various donations from Christian society. The stability that the monasteries showed over the centuries was based in the collective subconscious of ordinary Christians upon the rationale that by bequeathing or selling their immovable properties to the monasteries, these lands were secured within the framework of the Christian community. Thus,

13 For a general view on the period and related topics see: Faroqhi 1994, 531–75. McGowan 1994, 713–17.
 14 See for example: Zachariadou 1994.

Christians were enabled to work on these properties or earn part of their income on more privileged terms than would be the case if they had mortgaged their properties to a Muslim creditor. In other words, their property would not have been completely lost to them. In compensation for this act, in religious terms, they could save their souls.

The second reason was land possession. To possess land was a constant element of monastic investment policy over the centuries. In the difficult circumstances of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries land was a key tool for transactions, capable of counterbalancing cash deficiencies for monasteries and thus of helping them cope with over-indebtedness. In this way, monasteries played a key role in the cash market. They could, for example, borrow or pay money to buy real estate, while, simultaneously, they provided loans, which yielded them through rent (as concealed interest) by mortgaging their many *metochia* (or part of them) to their creditors. In rather simplified terms, it could be argued that the monasteries were creditors to Christians and debtors to Muslims. They received free land through bequests from Christians, which they mortgaged, thus delaying payment of their debts in cash to Muslim creditors. This scheme is intended only to show the general situation as an aid to understanding the rationale of the functioning of the monasteries; it does not do full justice to reality, which was more complicated. For example, there were cases in which monks had mortgaged their *metochia* to Muslims for long periods. In 1607, Saint Paul's monastery mortgaged its *metochion* in Provlaka (Halkidiki) to a Muslim for forty years without losing it (AMSP, II/6). However, the monastic oral and literary tradition has it that the economic situation in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries resulted in the loss of *metochia*.¹⁵ Apart from the fact that this tradition has to be confirmed for each case of every monastery before it can be accepted, the general picture of the main Athonite *metochia* shows that the *metochia* did not ultimately disappear, despite all the difficult situations they had to face.

It follows that it is reasonable to assume that the preservation even of distant *metochia* and other real estate properties was a vital policy for the monasteries. Continuous mortgages and/or leasing ensured satisfactory cash flow for the monasteries. On the other hand, even long-lasting land leases were often a concealed mortgage against a loan.¹⁶ However, even in this case the monasteries did not lose their lands. They simply repaid the loan through the rent.

15 See for example the *metochia* of Saint Paul's monastery on Limnos and Serres: Vlachos (1903) 2005, 273. The former, however, had been sold as early as the end of the sixteenth century (Kotzageorgis 2002, 129–130).

16 For instance see Gounaridis 1993, 31 (no. 16) for the *metochion* of Xeropotamou monastery in Provlaka (Eastern Halkidiki).

Complaints about monasteries' huge debts that can be found in the monastic documents for alms travels (*απανταχούσεις*) or in other sources addressed to foreign rulers for financial support were not untenable and perhaps not excessive, although the rhetoric usually was an integral part of this kind of texts.¹⁷ Over-indebtedness, like heavy taxation, was a reality for all Ottoman subjects, at least during these two centuries. It should be borne in mind regarding over-indebtedness that the central treasury of the monastery was heavily indebted, but that the monks were not necessarily indebted themselves. The *idiorrhhythmic* system that prevailed in Mount Athos had given individual monks the opportunity to accumulate remarkable fortunes with which they occasionally fed the monastery's central treasury through donations or loans. Alternatively, individual monks paid for some of the purchases of the monastery.¹⁸

On the other hand, acquisitions of real estate properties were mainly made through bequests, which were inexpensive for the monastery, but required capital for the preservation of the property. The cases are numerous and varied as regards the specific terms. In order to understand the conceptual range within which such a legal act should be situated, I will mention an example: in 1740, the inhabitants of the village of Kazaviti on the island of Thassos donated the *metochion* of Agia Kyriaki to Esphigmenou monastery, with the obligation for the monks to pay the village community an annual rent of 1,800 *akçes* (Melissakis 2008, 53–56 [nos 17–18]). On the other hand, the low price of some of the purchases made by the monasteries gives rise to the suspicion that they were fictitious, for example to conceal a loan. This may be the explanation for cases such as the purchase of a field for just 140 *akçes* in the early seventeenth century – when prices normally amounted to a few thousand *akçes* in a particularly inflationary period – or the purchase of a field worth only two *guruşes* in the second half of the eighteenth century, when prices ran into the dozens of *guruşes* (e.g.: Gounaridis 1993, 37 [no. 23 of 1624]; Kolovos 2000, 363–64 [no. 472 of 1774]).

Purchases were often not extended over time, but they were sometimes concentrated in the same year for the same monastery and the same place. For example, Xeropotamou monastery made four purchases in 1592 in Ormylia, and Dionysiou monastery made six in 1621/2 (Kolovos 2000, 154–56 [nos 182–85]; Nikolopoulos and Oikonomides 1966, 270–1, 297–99 [nos 33, 112, 113a, 114–15]). In the first case,

17 For some examples see: Giannakopoulos 2001, 119 and 135–6 (nos 60 and 74). Kotzageorgis 2008, 142–3 (no. 109). Pavlikianov 2015, 141–2, 144–47, and 158–68 (nos 17, 19, 23–25).

18 I deal with the exceptional case of one such monk, and with the functional framework of this phenomenon in my forthcoming study "Becoming rich in a monastery: the case of Anthimos Komninos (end of eighteenth-beginning of nineteenth century)".

the purchase price was particularly low (about 100 *akçes* per 1,000 m²) compared to previous and subsequent transactions (the average price was about 1,000–2,000 *akçe* per 1,000 m²), which means the purchase may have been to conceal something else. The second case involved a massive appeal by the villagers to a monastery (Dionysiou), due to their inability to find money for the payment of the poll tax. In other cases, there are massive purchases for the same monastery in the same place within a very limited time span, like Saint Paul's monastery's ten purchases in the village of Humnikon in the Serres region between 1772–1788, through which the monastery's *metochion* in the region was founded.¹⁹ The same phenomenon can be observed in dedications as well. The thirteen dedications to Xeropotamou monastery in 1741 in Galatista (Central Halkidiki) are the most numerous in our sample within one single year (Gounaridis 1993, 79–86 [nos 78–90]). The phenomenon of mass dedications can be explained by the presence of a sacred relic of the monastery in the area (in this specific case a relic of the Holy Cross, as the documents state), which obliged the Christian inhabitants to dedicate a real estate property to the monastery for the sake of the relic.

In conclusion, it can be said that the ideal situation to adequately answer the question whether the difficult economic situation is inconsistent with the image of land acquisitions mentioned in the Athonite sources for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries would be to study the balance sheets of the monasteries. But this type of document does not exist for the period studied here. Neither can the surviving monastic codices, especially from the eighteenth century, help us to answer these questions, due to their non-systematic way of recording entries. Each monastery underwent phases of development (even at that period) and recession, which were reflected in its economic situation. Debts did not prevent monasteries, or anyone else in the Ottoman Empire, from proceeding with acquisitions of real estate property. Moreover, a monastery was not a physical person, but had a long history and thus a more privileged radius of action in the economic domain. However, my sample cannot answer with full documentary evidence the initial question of this chapter, as it does not permit the reconstruction of stories of real estate properties. It is necessary to analyse “case studies” of the financial situation of the monasteries so as to draw safer conclusions about the mechanisms that each of these had to follow to survive in the midst of a crisis. Every case study, however, must be placed in the general context of the monastery. For example, the Limnos case is a typical one for the time of crisis: all the monasteries, except three, which had *metochia* from

19 AMSP, A/9, A/11, A/32, A/36–39, A/41, A/43, IIK/9. Four other bequests were added to these cases during the same time span (A/33–4, A/40, A/42, Kotzageorgis 2008, 154 [no. 120]).

the beginning of the Ottoman domination, progressively lost them due to economic difficulties. However, the most interesting thing in the Limnos case is the different economic policies that each monastery conducted, which explains why one monastery sold its *metochion* on the island, while another retained it. The stereotype of the big/wealthy and small/poor monastery does not answer this question, since one big monastery (Lavra) retained its *metochion*, while another big monastery (Vatopedi) lost it, and vice versa for the poor ones (for example Simonopetra retained its *metochion*, while Saint Paul not). Maybe the view of the Athonite monasteries as a modern *multidivisional firm* (Ekelund et al. 1996, 20–25) can help us to understand the complicated activities of the Athonites, especially in a period of crisis.

Nevertheless, some preliminary results can be drawn from the above analysis for further research: (a) buying estate properties and borrowing money was not a rare or contradictory phenomenon in the Ottoman Empire; (b) the term “sale” in the Greek and Ottoman sources had a vague meaning, which sometimes includes the notions of lease and bequest; (c) longevity and land possession were the two reasons why the Athonite monasteries had an advantageous position on the money market of the Ottoman Empire; (d) the Athonites knew all the juridical tools provided by the Ottoman and ecclesiastical legal systems for protecting their real estate properties; (e) the individual funds of monks played a crucial role in the survival of the monastery; and (f) thorough analysis of the legal systems on which the land transactions were based is indispensable for a full understanding of the economic policy of the monasteries. However, we need more documentation to understand the exact ways in which monasteries managed to survive, and serial data to quantify and estimate the whole procedure.

References

Unpublished Primary Sources

AMSP: Archive of the Monastery of St. Paul, Ottoman Archive.

Secondary Literature

Aggelomati-Tsougkaraki, Eleni. 2007. “Το φαινόμενο της ζητείας κατά τη μεταβυζαντινή περίοδο” [The Phaenomenon of *Ziteia* during the Post-Byzantine Period]. *Ιόνιος Λόγος* 1: 247–93.

- Anastassiadis, Vassilis I. 2002. *Αρχείο της Ι.Μ. Χιλανδαρίου. Επιτομές μεταβυζαντινών εγγράφων* [Archive of the Holy Monastery Chilandar. Regestes of the Post-Byzantine Documents]. Athens: National Hellenic Research Foundation.
- Chryssochoidis Kriton, and Paris Gounaridis. 1985. “Ιερά Μονή Καρακάλλου. Κατάλογος του αρχείου” [Holy Monastery of Karakallou. Catalogue of the Archive]. *Αθωνικά Σύμμεικτα* 1: 7–104.
- Dorotheos monk. 1986. *Το Άγιο Όρος* [Mount Athos]. Vol. I, Katerini: Tertios.
- Ekelund Jr., Robert B., Robert D. Tollison, Gary M. Anderson, Robert F. Hébert, Audrey B. Davidson. 1996. *The Sacred Trust: The Medieval Church as an Economic Firm*, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Faroghi, Suraiya. 1994. “Crisis and Change, 1590–1699”, in *A Social and Economic History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300–1914*, edited by Halil İnalcık with Donald Quataert, 411–636. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fotić, Aleksandar. 2005. “Concealed Donation or a Sale: The Acquisition of Christian Monastic Property in Ottoman Empire (Fifteenth – Seventeenth Centuries)”, in *XIV. Türk Tarih Kongresi (Ankara, 9–13 Eylül 2002). Kongreye Sunulan Bildiriler*, II. Cilt – I. Kısım, 721–28. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu.
- Giannakopoulos, Antonis. 2001. *Αρχείο της Ι.Μ. Σταυρονικήτα. Επιτομές εγγράφων, 1533–1800* [Archive of the Holy Monastery Stavronikita. Regestes of Documents, 1533–1800]. Athens: National Hellenic Research Foundation.
- Gounaridis, Paris. 1993. *Αρχείο της Ι.Μ. Ξηροποτάμου. Επιτομές μεταβυζαντινών εγγράφων* [Archive of the Holy Monastery Xeropotamou. Regestes of the Post-Byzantine Documents]. Athens: National Hellenic Research Foundation.
- Kolovos, Elias. 2000. “Χωρικοί και μοναχοί στην οθωμανική Χαλκιδική, 15ος-16ος αιώνες” [Peasants and Monks in the Ottoman Halkidiki, Fifteenth-Sixteenth Centuries], vol. 3: “Τα οθωμανικά έγγραφα του αρχείου της Ιεράς Μονής Ξηροποτάμου. Επιτομές 1439–1800” [The Ottoman Documents of the Archive of the Holy Monastery of Xeropotamou]. PhD thesis, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.
- Kotzageorgis, Phokion. 2002. *Η αθωνική μονή Αγίου Παύλου κατά την οθωμανική περίοδο* [The Athonite Monastery of Saint Paul during the Ottoman Period]. Thessaloniki: Studio University Press.
- Kotzageorgis, Phokion. 2008. *Αρχείο της Ι.Μ. Αγίου Παύλου. Επιτομές εγγράφων, 1010–1800* [Archive of Holy Monastery Saint Paul. Regestes of documents, 1010–1800]. Athens: National Hellenic Research Foundation.
- Lavriotis, G. Alexandros. 1963. “Το Άγιον Όρος μετά την οθωμανικήν κατάκτησιν” [Mount Athos after the Ottoman Conquest]. *Επετηρίς Εταιρείας Βυζαντινών Σπουδών* 32: 113–261.
- Mamalakis, Ioannis P. 1971. *Το Άγιον Όρος (Αθως) δια μέσου των αιώνων* [Mount Athos During the Centuries]. Thessaloniki: Etaireia Makedonikon Spoudon.
- McGowan, Bruce. 1994. “The Age of the Ayans, 1699–1812”, in *A Social and Economic History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300–1914*, edited by Halil İnalcık with Donald Quataert, 637–758: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Melissakis, Zissis. 2008. *Αρχείο της Ι.Μ. Εσφιγμένου. Επιτομές μεταβυζαντινών εγγράφων* [Archive of the Holy Monastery Esphigmenou. Regestes of the Post-Byzantine documents]. Athens: National Hellenic Research Foundation.

- Năsturel, Petre Ș. 1986. *Le Mont Athos et les Roumains. Recherches sur leurs relations du milieu du XIVe siècle à 1654*, Rome : Pont. Institutum Studiorum Orientalium.
- Nikolopoulos Panagiotis, and Nikolaos Oikonomides. 1966. “Ἱερά Μονή Διονυσίου. Κατάλογος του αρχείου” [Holy Monastery of Dionysiou. Catalogue of the Archive]. *Σύμμεικτα* 1: 257–327.
- Oikonomides, Nikolaos. 1979. “Ἱερά Μονή Δοχειαρίου. Κατάλογος του αρχείου” [Holy Monastery of Docheiariou. Catalogue of the Archive]. *Σύμμεικτα* 3: 197–263.
- Papazakas, Alexandros. 2014. “Ἡ πιστοληπτική και πιστωτική δραστηριότητα της αθωνικής Μονῆς Παντοκράτορος κατά την Οθωμανική περίοδο (1750–1821)” [The Borrowing and Lending Activity of the Athonite Monastery of Pantokrator During the Ottoman Period [1750–1821]]. *Τα Ιστορικά* 60: 190–205.
- Pardos, Antonis. 1998. *Αρχεῖο της Ἱ.Μ. Παντοκράτορος. Επιτομές εγγράφων, 1039–1801. Μέρος Α΄* [Archive of the Holy Monastery Pantokratoros. Regestes of Documents, 1039–1801. Part I]. Athens: National Hellenic Research Foundation.
- Pavlikianov, Cyril. 2005. *Istoriya na Bălgarskija svetogorski manastir Zograf ot 980 do 1804 g.* [History of the Bulgarian Athonite Monastery Zograf from 980 to 1804]. Sofia: “St. Kliment Ohridski” University Press.
- Pavlikianov, Cyril. 2008. *The Athonite Monastery of Vatopedi from 1462 to 1707. The Archive Evidence*. Sofia: “St. Kliment Ohridski” University Press.
- Pavlikianov, Cyril. 2014. *The Mediaeval Greek and Bulgarian Documents of the Athonite Monastery of Zographou (980–1600)*. Sofia: “St. Kliment Ohridski” University Press.
- Pavlikianov, Cyril. 2015. *The Byzantine Documents of the Athonite Monastery of Karakallou and Selected Acts from the Ottoman Period (1294–1835)*. Sofia: “St. Kliment Ohridski” University Press.
- Vamvakas, Dimitrios. 1985. “Ἱερά Μονή Σίμωνος Πέτρας. Κατάλογος του αρχείου” [Holy Monastery of Simonos Petras. Catalogue of the archive]. *Αθωνικά Σύμμεικτα* 1: 105–53.
- Vlachos, Kosmas. (1903) 2005. *Η χερσόνησος του Αγίου Όρους Ἀθῶ και αἱ ἐν αὐτῇ μοναὶ και οἱ μοναχοὶ πάλαι τε και νυν* [The Peninsula of Mount Athos, the Monasteries on it and the Monks Then and Now]. Reprinted. Thessaloniki: Agioretitiki Estia.
- Zachariadou, Elisabeth A. 1994. “The Worrisome Wealth of the Čelnik Radić”, in *Studies in Ottoman History in Honour of Professor V.L. Ménage*, edited by Colin Heywood and Colin Imber, 383–397. Istanbul: The Isis Press.

Between Piety and Economics

NUCET MONASTERY (WALLACHIA) AND ITS REGISTER
OF REVENUE AND EXPENSES (1731–1739)¹

GHEORGHE LAZĂR

Given its enduring spiritual and political-ideological roles in Western Europe as well as in the areas where the doctrinal influence of the former Byzantine Empire was dominant, the church was a highly successful institution in the medieval and early modern periods. It accumulated vast wealth,² which allowed it to become a major powerholder in the societies and on the political arena of those periods. This was generally the case also in the two extra-Carpathian Romanian states of the old regime, Wallachia (Rom. *Țara Românească*) and Moldavia. In these areas, the church and the high-ranking boyars became the top players as owners of landed property. Some of the available data show that in 1863, when church property was secularized, this institution controlled around a quarter of the acreage of the two north-Danubian states (Giurescu 1959, 149–57).

Despite this well-known socio-economic reality, our information on the church's management of these important resources remains lacunary, although we do have a few studies which approached the topic both in its general outline (Columbeanu 1974; Sava 2012), and in detail (Lazăr 2012; Teleman 2017, 75–108). This lack of information is the result of a number of factors, such as deficiencies in record-keeping, the destruction over time of important sections of the relevant archives, as well as the often rudimentary techniques employed in estate management. However, I managed to present some data on the administration and management of trade at one such monastic establishment in Wallachia: the monastery of Râmnicu Sărat, founded by the ruling Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu (r. 1688–1714) and his uncle, the high-ranking boyar (*mare spătar*) Mihai Cantacuzino (Lazăr 2019). Further

1 Research for this chapter was funded through CNCS, code PN-III-P4-ID-PCE-2016-0557. I wish to thank Angela Jianu for the English translation of the text.

2 From the rich literature on the topic, we will cite only a few relevant titles: Roch 1989, 505–27; Toneatto 2012; Kaplan 1993, 209–23; Smyrlis 2006 (with a comprehensive bibliography on Byzantium). For a sociological approach to the topic, see Jonveaux 2011.

research is needed to complement that single case study and deepen our understanding of the complex ways in which monasteries managed their vast assets. The present chapter aims to contribute to the growth of this body of data by focusing on yet another Wallachian monastic community, the monastery at Nucet, in today's Dâmbovița County. It is to be hoped that the accumulation of case studies will shed light on wider practices and patterns of economic management.

Like the earlier case study, our present analysis of the asset management strategies at Nucet monastery is based on the economic data detailed in ms. 377, today in Romania's National Archives in Bucharest, an extremely important source for the theme under study here. Covering the period from 1731/1732 to 1739/1740,³ this archival repository contains important information on the material goods and spiritual patrimony, as well as on the revenue and expenses of 60 monasteries in Wallachia. It is noteworthy that, because all the registers were compiled using the same template,⁴ the manuscript has a consistent format, which has led some scholars to conclude that it was produced on the initiative of Prince Constantin Mavrocordat⁵ (r. September–October 1730; 1731–1732, and 1735–1741). The ruling prince may have been inspired by similar measures initiated by the Austrian authorities in Oltenia (Little Wallachia) when this province of Wallachia was under Habsburg control (1718–1739) (Columbeanu 1974, 14).⁶

Returning to the specific topic of the present study, the “book of accounts” kept by the abbot of Nucet monastery is to be found between fols. 188r and 204r of the aforementioned manuscript 377 and covers the period from 1731 to 1739. Using the same approach as previously for the monastery at Râmnicu Sărat, the economic data recorded in the ledger will be our starting point as we attempt to identify wider trends and patterns in the economic life of Wallachian monasteries in the first half of the eighteenth century. The first section outlines the history of the monastery's foundation reconstructed from the very few data we possess. This is followed

3 In fact, the time intervals differ from one monastery to another: the only monastic establishment for which we have data covering the entire 11-year period is Cotroceni monastery (Bucharest), built between 1679 and 1682 as the foundation of Prince Șerban Cantacuzino (1678–1688). For further details, see Columbeanu 1974, 13–14, and below.

4 Each ledger includes the following headings: a summary of the foundation and donation documents of the monastery; an inventory of church items and of domestic utensils; records of the immovable assets owned by the monastery (e.g., lands, vineyards, mills, pastures); the number of Roma slaves and of serfs who laboured on the lands; the number of cattle and the amount of various produce; the monastery's annual revenue and expenses for the periods covered by the registers. For further details and a discussion of the importance of the manuscript as a historical source, see Columbeanu 1974, 13–14; Columbeanu 1962, 111.

5 An argument supporting this claim is the fact that during his second reign in Moldavia (September 1741–July 1743), Constantin Mavrocordat ordered such registers to be compiled for monasteries in this principality: Columbeanu 1974, 14; Bogdan 1915, 217–19.

6 The fundamental study of the Austrian administration of Oltenia is Papacostea 1998.

by a general, chronological presentation of the ratio of revenue to expenses at the establishment. In the third, and last, section we analyse the main categories of income, as well as the key expenses across the nine-year period on the basis of the rather fragmentary and arid information recorded in the ledger.

Nucet Monastery and its Founders: a Short Historical Overview

The data available to date show that Nucet monastery was founded and dedicated to its patron, Saint George, by Gherghina, a local official (Rom. *Pârcălab*), and his wife, Neaga. They are depicted on the west-facing wall of the church, in period dress and holding a miniature model of their foundation. Although we do not have much information on *pârcălab* Gherghina, we know enough to be able to say that he was one of the pre-eminent political figures of the period: one of his sisters became the wife of the ruling Prince (Rom. *Voievode*) Vlad the Monk (r. 1482–1495) and the mother of the future ruling Prince Radu the Great (r. 1495–1507). His role as *pârcălab* (commander) of the fortress at Poenari, one of the country's key defence positions, is also an emblem of his high status (Stoicescu 1971, 21). In addition, and probably owing to his position, *pârcălab* Gherghina had close links to Serbian political and religious circles, of which very little is known. However, only such privileged connections, and possibly also kinship, could explain the presence of the names of Gherghina and his wife on a commemoration list (Rom. *Pomelnice*) at the Serbian Monastery of Pčinja (Špinja) or his involvement alongside his grandson, Prince Radu cel Mare (r. 1495–1507), in the foundation of a church in the village of Lopoșnya in 1501 (Balș 1911, 194–99; Turdeanu 1939, 189–91).

The period's documentary sources indicate that the monastery at Nucet was the recipient of donations from Wallachian ruling princes as early as the early sixteenth century (DRH.B 1972, 22–24, no. 9; 26–31, no. 11; 281–83, no. 143; 175, no. 174; 390–91, no. 201; 391–92, no. 202). It was dedicated as a *metochion* (dependent monastery) to the monastery of Dousikou (Trikala, Greece) a long time after the death of its founder, most probably in the second decade of the seventeenth century, during one of Radu Mihnea's reigns in Wallachia (Iorga 1914, 14–15). A recently published document issued by the chancellery of Matei Basarab (r. 1632–1654), dated 17 May 1640 and today in the Dousikou monastery archives, confirms this assumption and offers further interesting details. The dedication, the document reads, was done with the full assent of the “founders [...] all those of the same blood as the *pârcălab* Gherghina” (Rom. *a celor ce s-au aflat atunci din același sânge al Gherghinii pârcălab*), namely the *vornic* Ivașco <Băleanu> and the *clucer* Buzinca. The document also stipulated the terms of the donation and the obligations on both sides. One further detail

is important in the context of Prince Matei Basarab's "monastic reform", whereby he attempted to stop the unlawful dedications ("through bribery") of the country's monasteries to "those on the Holy Mountain and elsewhere" (Barbu, Lazăr, and Olar 2012, 9–54): he decided to reconfirm the dedication only after a thorough process during which the founders' descendants (Rom. *ce se numeau ctitorii acesteia, adică pe fiii ctitorilor ce s-au zis mai sus*) (DRH.B 2013, 452–56, no. 361) were questioned and requested to testify. From this moment on, life at Nucet monastery settled into the customary patterns of monastic activity in the country: it was granted new privileges, or had older ones confirmed by the ruling princes,⁷ received private donations,⁸ purchased or exchanged lands and Roma slave families, or went to court over such transactions, etc (Potra 1972, 358–59, no. 532; 526–27, no. 701). However, the monastery was not spared the turbulences caused by tragic events such as "uprisings and earthquakes" (Rom. *de vremi de rezmirițe și cutremure*), but also by mismanagement. Such moments of "weakness" occurred for example in the mid-eighteenth century, when the church had to be rebuilt with a gift of money from "three Greek merchants whose names have since fallen into oblivion" (Rom. *trei neguțători greci ale căror nume nu se în minte*), as well as in the nineteenth century, as recorded on a votive inscription placed by the Archimandrite Gherasie in 1849 (Iorga 1908, 99–100; Oproiu 2004, 141–42). The monastery managed to rise above all these crises and continue on its mission to the present day, as its founders would undoubtedly have wished.

The Revenue and Expenses of a Monastery: a General Analysis

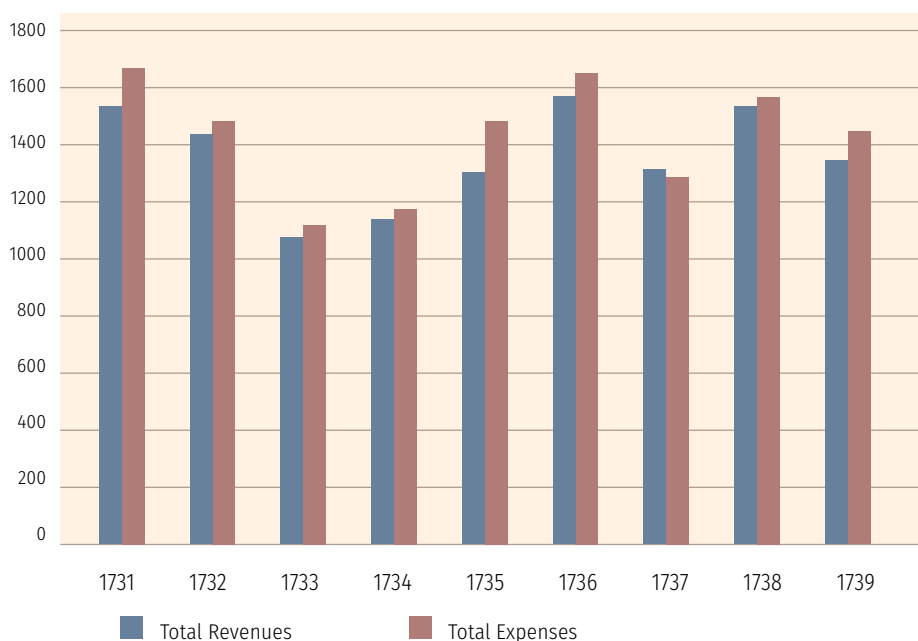
Turning now to the total revenue of Nucet monastery over the nine-year period, the data in the ledger show that it fluctuated dramatically from one year to the next. The "peak" was reached in 1736, with total revenue of 1,618 *thalers*, followed

7 For example, the princely decrees of 10 October 1649, 24 April 1690, 9 August 1731, 28 April 1732, 4 February 1740, 20 October 1753, 19 August 1793, confirmed several of the monastery's fiscal privileges: a tithe on the vineyards on the hillside of Nucet, Topoloveni and Târgoviște; an allocation of 100 salt rocks from the mines at Telega (*Ocna Telega*); the right to employ several tax-exempt men for work around the monastery (*poslușanie*), etc. (DRH.B 2002, 216–17 (no. 233); Potra 1972, 455–56 (no. 634); Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale (ANIC), fonds Sului, no. 22/12; fonds M-rea Nucet, XVII/63; M-rea Nucet, I/2 bis; M-rea Nucet, XX/91; M-rea Nucet, XX/106).

8 See, for example, the case of the *logofăt* Vladislav who, upon his death, bequeathed to the monastery several families of Roma slaves and one third of his entire wealth, a donation endorsed by Ioanichie, the Patriarch of Alexandria (DRH.B 1998, 332–33 (no. 292)). See also the document dated 18 December 1646 (DRH.B 2003, 400–401, no. 365). Cf. the document dated 5 February 1692 whereby the boyar family Băleanu dedicated the monastery of Panaghia, their family foundation, to the establishment at Nucet. This was done, the document read, "in memory of our late parents and forefathers" (*pomana răposăților părinților și strămoșilor noștri*) and because Panaghia had fallen into a state of "great decline and want" (*scădere și lipsă*) following the "hardships and harm caused in this land by the heathen" (*pentru multele greotăți și nevoi ce au căzut pre pământul acesta de către păgâni*) (Potra 1972, 465–66, no. 645). The donation was confirmed a few months later by Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu (Potra 1972, 467–68, no. 648) and by Gherasim, Patriarch of Alexandria (ANIC, M-rea Nucet, X/14; XXIV/4).

closely by 1731 with 1,584 *thalers* and 1738 with 1,568 *thalers*. The lowest figures recorded were for the interval from 1733 to 1735, as well as for the year 1739.

On closer inspection of the same data, it would appear that, beyond the negative context of the Russo-Austrian-Ottoman military conflict of 1736–1739, the key – and possibly decisive – impact on the monastery's income was the drop in revenue from the sale of alcoholic beverages. To give just one example, in 1733 and 1739 the income realized from this activity was around 670 *thalers*, which amounts to only 53 per cent of the value of sales for 1731; in 1734, that revenue was 841 *thalers*, representing 67 per cent of sales for the same year, 1731.



Graph. 1: Revenues and expenses of the Nucet Monastery: chronological evolution

The *general expenses* category in Nucet monastery's ledger generally follows similar patterns. Unsurprisingly, the highest values for revenue were recorded for 1731 (1,694 *thalers*), 1736 (1,683 *thalers*) and 1738 (1,590 *thalers*), with the lowest values recorded for the years 1733 and 1734. We will return to this later, in our more detailed analysis of the monastery's specific incomes and expenses. For the time being, it is worth noting that at Nucet, unlike at Râmnicu Sărat, expenses exceeded

revenues every year: at the close of the nine-year period, the monastery was in deficit of 513 *thalers*, approximately 4% of its revenues.⁹ (**Graph 1**)

However, the ledger also specifies on its last page (fol. 204r) that the losses were entirely recouped (*‘s-au prisosit și acești bani ce scriu mai sus*) by the abbot, who used his personal savings to trade and improve the monastery’s finances (*negustorie din cheverniseala lui cu venitul mănăstirii*). The sums thus recouped were used for new buildings and repairs in the precinct of the monastic establishment (*‘s-au făcut dresuri împrejurul mănăstirii*).

The Main Ledger Entries for Revenue and Expenses: a Detailed Analysis

Beyond such general observations on Nucet monastery’s income and expenses, the data in the ledger allow us to reconstruct, even if only in an incomplete manner, the complex picture of the monastery’s *main categories of revenue and expenses*. As we have argued elsewhere (Lazăr 2019), despite the incompleteness, such an approach is not without its merits: ms. 377 is one of the few extant “books of accounts” which help us understand the patterns of monasteries’ contribution to the economy of the period.

1. With respect to the first category, the monastery’s *income*, it is worth reiterating at the start of our analysis that we have grouped these into four sub-groups in terms of importance: (a) revenue from the sale of alcoholic beverages; (b) from the trade in cattle and animal produce; (c) from bee-keeping (honey and beeswax), and (d) from the leasing of landed property (estates, mountains, etc.) and from the establishment’s rights – granted via princely privileges – of levying taxes.¹⁰

The data in the ledger show clearly that the main revenue of Nucet monastery came from the *trade in alcoholic beverages*, especially the sale of wine and to a lesser extent, of *raki*. It is worth reminding in this context that landowners, a category which included monasteries, enjoyed widespread monopoly rights on the trade in alcohol on the lands in their possession. Generally speaking, this type of trade was conducted in inns, taverns or retail outlets either on the estates or in market towns.

9 Cotroceni monastery was in a similar situation, with the only difference that the gap between these two entries was much smaller: here, the deficit represented only c. 0.26 per cent of the total revenues. For further details, see Lazăr 2012, 256.

10 The ledger lists a few such decrees, which the monastery had been awarded by ruling princes of Wallachia, the earliest one being the aforementioned document dated 1501 (fols. 190r-192v).

This is amply demonstrated by the examples of Cotroceni monastery (in Bucharest) (Lazăr 2012, 201, 239–40), as well as of the monastic establishment at Râmnicu Sărat (Lazăr 2019, 138–41), to mention only two of the more important. The list of immovable assets as recorded in the ledger (fol. 192v) does not mention buildings such as inns or shops, but we can assume that the monastery owned such outlets both on its lands and in Bucharest, where significant amounts of its produce, including wine and spirits, were for sale. As an example, a list of expenses of 1732 detailed the sum of 15 *thalers* allocated to the building of a cellar in Bucharest (fol. 197r), sums for repairs in 1735 to shops the monastery owned in this city, one of the country's major trade centres (fol. 199v), and in 1733 the sum of 30 *thalers* was spent on the building of a tavern “in the Roma neighbourhood [...] with a stable and other buildings” (*la țișărie [...] cu grajduri și cu alte case*) (fol. 198r).¹¹

A comparative analysis of the ledger data shows that the most significant revenue from this trade was obtained in 1731, peaking at slightly above 1,200 *thalers* that year before slumping gradually over the next six years. The lowest level was reached in 1733, when the income was only 671 *thalers*, representing only 53 per cent of the value recorded for 1731. In 1738, when the trade in alcohol came to 1,100 *thalers*, the situation seemed to improve, but the trend could not be maintained: in the next year – the last in the interval for which we have available data – the revenue dropped dramatically to under 700 *thalers*. As mentioned above – and as shown in the graphs below – this patchy pattern had an impact on the monastery's income: over the nine-year period, c. 8,500 *thalers* came from the sale of alcohol, a figure which illustrates the weight of this commercial activity in the overall picture of Nucet monastery's revenue (68 per cent). We may conclude, therefore, that Nucet monastery was one of those monastic establishments – similar to the aforementioned ones at Cotroceni and Râmnicu Sărat – where the retail of alcohol was a major source of revenue.¹² However, we still need to look more closely at the entire body of data in ms. 377 in order to get a more nuanced comparative picture of economic activities in monastic communities. We would need to look at information on, for example, the geographic location of the monasteries, the size of their lands, especially of the surfaces allocated to vineyards, the distance from

11 A synthesis on Gypsy slavery in the Romanian principalities is to be found in: Achim, 2004, 27–85; Chapter II: The Gypsies in the Romanian lands during the Middle Ages. Slavery.

12 For further insights into these economic patterns, it is worth mentioning that Colțea monastery (Bucharest), earned 5,449 *thalers* from the same type of trade: this represented approximately 21 per cent from a total revenue of 25,232 *thalers* over an eighth-year interval. The monastery at Mărgineni (Prahova County) realized 22,570 *thalers* (out of a total revenue of 43,116 *thalers*, representing 52 per cent over a ten-year interval). For these and further details, see Columbeanu 1974, 146–47.

commercial routes, etc. – all essential aspects with great economic impact which we have highlighted elsewhere (Lazăr 2019).

To conclude our discussion of grape-growing and wine production at Nucet monastery, it is worth noting that the resulting alcoholic beverages were not commercialized in their entirety: some of the produce was reserved for the establishment's own consumption, for entertaining visitors, for liturgical purposes, etc. As an example, in the first year of the interval considered here, 1731, out of the 36,800 litres of wine produced only 26,800 litres were commercialised – representing 63 per cent of the entire production. The remaining 6,000 litres were earmarked for “domestic” consumption, and 4,000 litres were listed in the ledger as *losses*, under the heading “waste and dregs” (*scădereă i drojdiile*). The pattern is generally repeated annually: the proportion of commercialized wine ranged between 63 per cent (in 1731 and 1733) and 73 per cent of the entire production (in 1736). Mention must also be made of the production of spirits. According to the ledger data, this was on a smaller scale: the highest amounts were recorded for 1731 and 1736 (4,500 litres annually). As the retail price of distilled spirits was higher than that of wine, this sector of the monastery's activity was entirely destined for trade.

The *trade in cattle* (pigs, sheep, and horses) and in *animal produce* (cheese, butter and wool) was the second most important source of revenue for Nucet monastery. Specialist studies have confirmed that the same pattern is to be found in other monastic establishments, as well as on large landed estates (Constantinescu 1996, 95–96, 103–4). At Nucet, the revenue from these activities rose steadily in the first seven years of the interval considered here (1731–1737), followed by a rather abrupt slump in 1738, and recovery in 1739. The most significant gains were recorded for the years 1736–1739 – excepting 1738 – a period which overlaps with the conflict between the great regional powers and which, in our view, largely contributed to this economic trend.

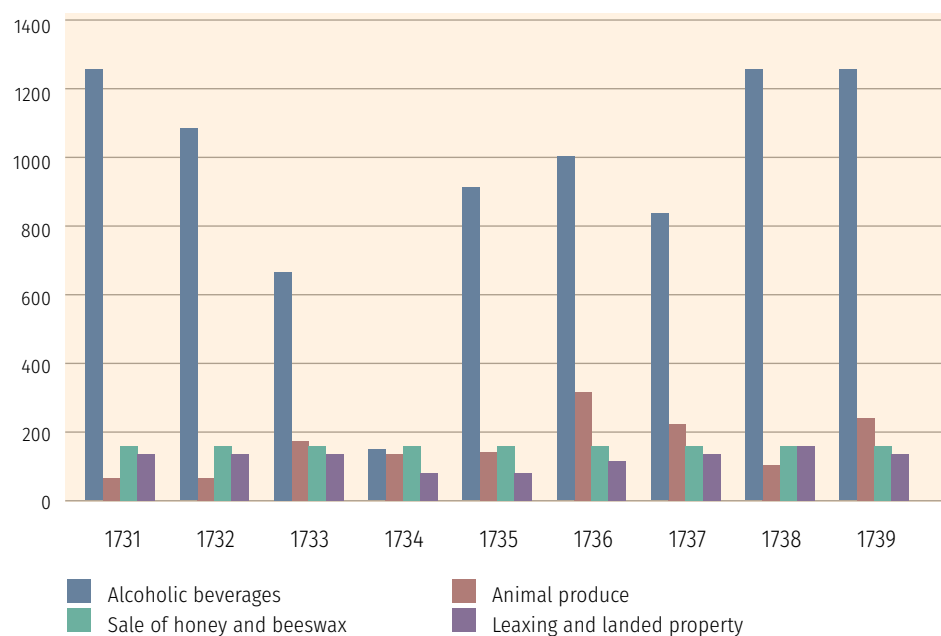
It is noteworthy that the “peak” of financial benefit was reached in 1736, when 60 sheep, 50 pigs, 4 cattle and one horse were sold. For that year the monastery's ledger recorded a revenue of 319 *thalers* (fol. 201v), which represents a growth of c. 450 per cent compared to the year 1731, when the revenue had been only 70 *thalers*. In total, over the nine years for which the aforementioned ledger offers information, there was a profit of 1,476 *thalers* from this trade, i.e. approximately 12 per cent of the monastery's total revenue. As we discussed in connection with the monastery at Râmnicu Sărat, and despite the shortage of information, we may presume that only a part of the monastery's livestock was destined for sale: the rest was kept for reproduction and for animal products to be sold or used in the community for feeding the labourers on the estate, etc.

With profits of 1,381 *thalers* – close to those obtained from the trade in cattle – *bee-keeping and the sale of honey and beeswax* were also a major source of income for Nucet. The data suggest two distinct periods for the trends in this trade: one of relatively constant growth in the first six year of the interval (1731–1736), “peaking” in 1736 with a revenue of 160 *thalers*, followed by the less uniform period from 1737 to 1739, during which revenues declined. Undoubtedly, this was due to the impact of military conflict between the Russian, Habsburg and Ottoman empires, which unfolded largely on the territories of the Romanian Principalities, but also of the plague epidemic which afflicted the country in that period.

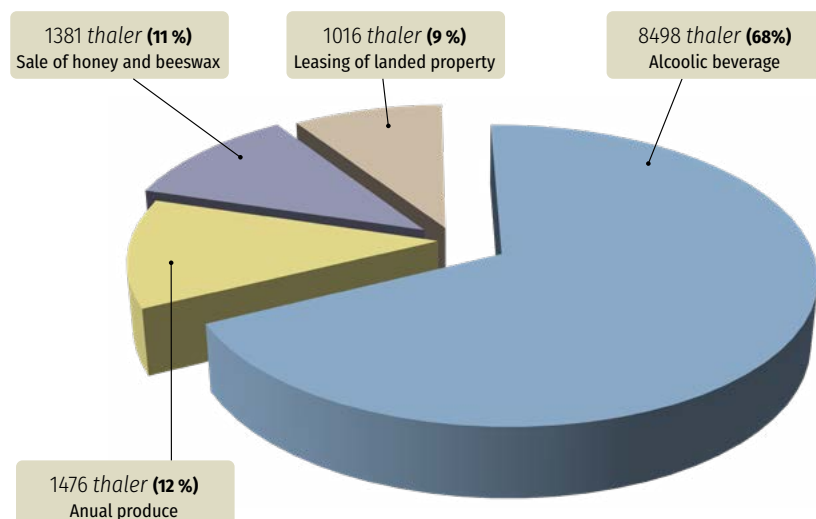
Leasing out landed property (fields, mountains, forests), *the commercialization of agricultural produce* (maize, hay), as well as the princely awards of *tax collection rights* were other means for the monastery to increase its revenue. Like the other types of revenue, incomes under this heading also fluctuated from one year to the next. Several factors could have contributed to these fluctuations: the monastery’s inability to fully exploit its land resources, the rudimentary nature of farming tools and techniques, the destruction brought by the Russo-Austrian-Ottoman military conflict, etc. (**Graph 2 a-b**).

2. Despite their fragmentary and arid character, the financial data offered by the Nucet register are nevertheless useful in terms of our approach: they yield satisfactory information on *the main categories of expenses* and their weight in the economic life of the monastery. The data show – and similar patterns have been noted for other such establishments (Columbeanu 1974, 167–68; Lazăr 2012, 267; Lazăr 2019, 145–52) – that the most onerous financial effort for the monastery was the *payment of dues/taxes* into the princely coffers and the country’s treasury. These dues amounted to 4,314 *thalers*, that is, c. 33.5 per cent of total expenses. This is hardly surprising, given on the one hand, the country’s demographic deficit and widespread tax evasion and, on the other, the increasing financial requirements of the Phanariot rulers who not only had to “purchase” their thrones, but also had to pay important taxes into the Porte’s treasury and send gifts of money to its corrupt civil servants.

A closer look at the ledger data also reveals that the levels of these expenses varied considerably over the nine-year period. The upward values of the first two years – 566 and 675 *thaler* respectively – were followed by a period of regression in 1733 and 1734, only for the upward trend to resume in the 1734–1738 interval. These developments, and especially those of the latter part of the time span considered here, are undoubtedly to be explained in the light of the aforementioned great power entanglements in the region, when, alongside the routine dues such as taxes per head of livestock or the annual tribute to the Ottoman Porte (*văcărit*, *oierit*, *haraci*, etc.),



Graph 2.a: Main revenues of the Nucet Monastery: chronological evolution



Graph 2.b: Share of the main categories of income

Nucet monastery was required – like all the other taxpayers – to contribute to the financial effort meant to ensure the food allocations (*zaharea*) of military troops engaged in conflict on the country's territory. Thus, the ledger lists 350 *thalers* paid towards the *zaharea* in 1736, 334 *thalers* in 1737, and a smaller sum, 218 *thalers* in the following year, 1738. It is also worth noting that that highest level of taxes at Nucet monastery was recorded for the year 1736, with 709 *thalers* paid into the princely treasury; the lowest tax payment, only 54 *thalers*, was recorded for 1739. Most probably, this is due to the fact that by late 1738, with the outcome of the military conflict already predictable, Prince Constantin Mavrocordat initiated a series of fiscal relief measures. To this end, in April 1739 a delegation of high-ranking boyars led by the Bishop of Buzău was sent to Edirne in April 1739 to petition the Grand Vizier for a reduction of the country's fiscal obligations towards the Porte (Papacostea 2009, 287).

In second position under expenses at Nucet – unlike the situation at Râmnicu Sărat, although in terms of value the contributions were similar in both establishments – were *sums of money sent to support the monastery of Dousikou*, an obligation entailed by its status as *metochion*. The data in the ledger show that the *lavra* at Dousikou received fairly substantial sums of money from Nucet each year, ranging from 146 *thalers* (1733) to 372 *thalers* (1738). In total, over the nine-year period, the monastery of Dousikou received a financial contribution of 1,834 *thalers* from its *metochion*, that is, approximately 14.25 per cent of expenses at Nucet. In addition, more modest sums (of only 65 *thalers*) were given to monks from the Nucet community who travelled to Dousikou and brought back the relics of Saint Vissarion, thought to help against epidemics, especially the plague, which ravaged the country in that period. For example, the ledger shows that such “expeditions” took place in 1731, 1733, and 1738, years Wallachia was affected by more or less extensive hotbeds of the plague.¹³ We know, for example, that in the second half of 1738, when, according to contemporary sources, the plague epidemic peaked,¹⁴ among the measures taken by the state authorities to combat the outbreak of this merciless disease were nationwide processions in which the saint's relics were carried and displayed to the population: the efficiency of these ceremonials is debatable (Cazacu 2003, 121).

It is perhaps not irrelevant in this context to point out that, after such “visitations” of Saint Vissarion's relics, as a gesture of gratitude for the support in “healing” the nation, the ruling prince issued decrees whereby donations – usually in money

13 For further details, see Cernovodeanu and Binder 1993, 148–79.

14 Hardest hit by the epidemic was the country's capital, Bucharest, where, according to contemporary sources, c. 10,000 people died in the second half of the year 1738 (Cernovodeanu and Binder 1993, 149).

– were made to the monastic community at Dousikou. Over the period under consideration here, such donations by decree were made by the Princes Constantin Mavrocordat (14 March 1732) (Iorga 1914, 878–80), Grigore Ghica (14 July 1733), and Mihai Racoviță (18 February 1742),¹⁵ to mention just a few examples.

The next important heading under expenses comprised: the *wages* of staff – priests, coachmen, servants, and the so-called “footboys” (*feciori*) – employed at the Nucet establishment; the sums of money paid to obtain tax exemptions for these personnel; the cost of *purchases such as clothing and footwear*, as well as of various domestic tools. In this category, too, the values fluctuated from one year to the next: the highest was recorded for 1731 (375 *thalers*) and included 43 *thalers* for the clothing of the Roma slaves and servants, and 20 *thalers* to purchase leather used in manufacturing footwear. The sum also comprised the wages (*simbrii*) of “priests, monks, and footboys” (*preoșilor i a călugărilor și a feciorilor*) (50 *thalers*) and expenses incurred in obtaining total or partial tax exemption for some of the servants (*pecețile feciorilor și ale vizitiilor*). Among the expenses recorded for this year we have also included – as the only entry of this type – the sum of 244 *thalers* to pay an outstanding debt of the former abbot (fols 195v-196r). Also included here are expenses which, apart from the picturesque period detail, illustrate the insecurity of that time in the country’s history: the money spent by the monastery in 1737 to purchase liturgical vestments (*odăjdii*) to replace those “plundered by the Turks” (*le-au luat turcii*) and for the pay of “three Turks” hired as guards at the establishment (fol. 202r).

Another major entry under expenses was the budget allocated to the *maintenance of the monastery’s buildings* – either those in the precinct of the monastery or the various outbuildings –, to the *purchasing of building materials* and the *pay of the master builders*, as well as the *acquisition of new immovable assets*. The lowest level of such expenses was recorded for 1737–58 *thalers* only – contrasting sharply with the 420 *thalers* spent in 1739. In the nine-year interval a total of c. 1,500 *thalers* was spent on maintenance and construction. The data entered with great precision into the ledger show that significant amounts of building materials – bricks, limestone, wood, clapboard – were purchased in 1731, 1732, 1735 (fols 195v, 197r, 200r), to be used for repairs to the church itself and to some of the buildings in the precinct, as well as to some of the retail outlets the monastery owned in Bucharest (fol. 200r). The construction in 1733 of a tavern “in the Roma neighbourhood [...] with its own stable and other buildings” (*la țiğănie [...] cu grajdu și cu alte case*), of two water mills – one with four, the other with six wheels – (in 1736 and 1739), the

15 ANIC, fonds M-rea Nucet, XX/70, XX/79.

construction of buildings “up the hill” (*la deal*) (in 1738) and on the estate at Bodești (in 1739), as well as land surveying work on two landed estates in 1735 also entailed significant expenses for the monastery at Nucet (fols 198r, 200r, 201r, 203r-v).

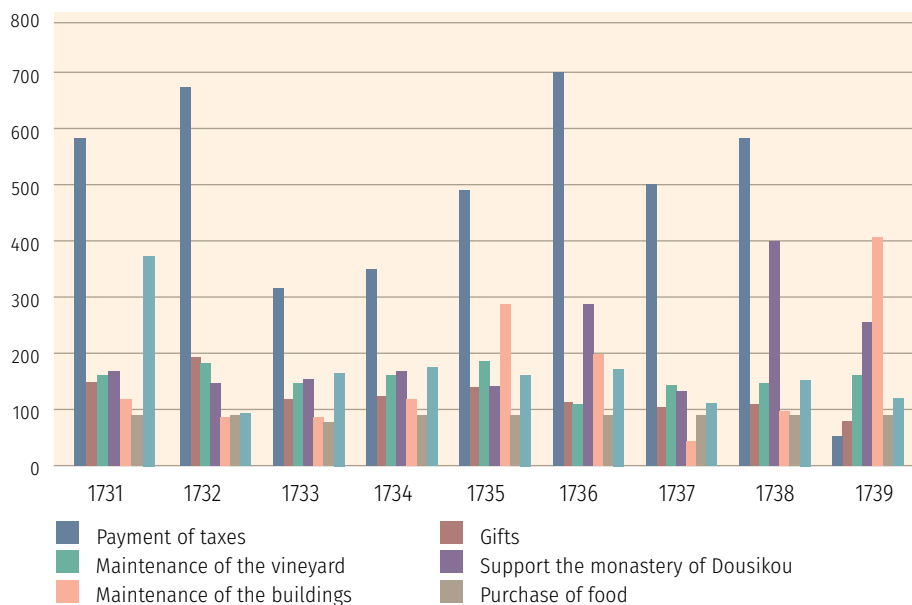
It is surprising to note – especially by comparison with the aforementioned monastic establishment at Râmnicu Sărat – the less prominent position of the sums spent by the monastery at Nucet on the maintenance and commercialization of the c. 15.5 hectares of vineyards: these represented only 11 per cent of the total expenses. However, there is an explanation for this ostensibly paradoxical situation, which might otherwise cause us to doubt the accuracy of the entries: it must be remembered that, alongside the direct exploitation of its lands, the monastery also obtained important amounts of wine from the taxes it collected on this product, by virtue of princely privileges it had been granted historically. For example, out of the 36,800 litres of wine produced in 1731, almost half was obtained in this way – a pattern which was by and large replicated across the time interval under study here.

Fairly significant sums were spent by the community at Nucet and by its representatives on *gifts* to the country’s ruling prince and to high-ranking dignitaries (*pocloanele domnești i la cele boierești*), especially at Christmas and Easter,¹⁶ when, according to tradition, the monastery’s abbot had to attend the princely court. Regrettably, the data in the ledger are quite vague and brief: they give us the annual value of these “offerings”, 1,247 *thalers*, ranging between 85 *thalers* in 1739 and 195 *thalers* in 1732, but no details on the nature of these gifts, which differentiates the records at Nucet from those of the monastic establishment at Râmnicu Sărat (Lazăr 2019, 149–50).

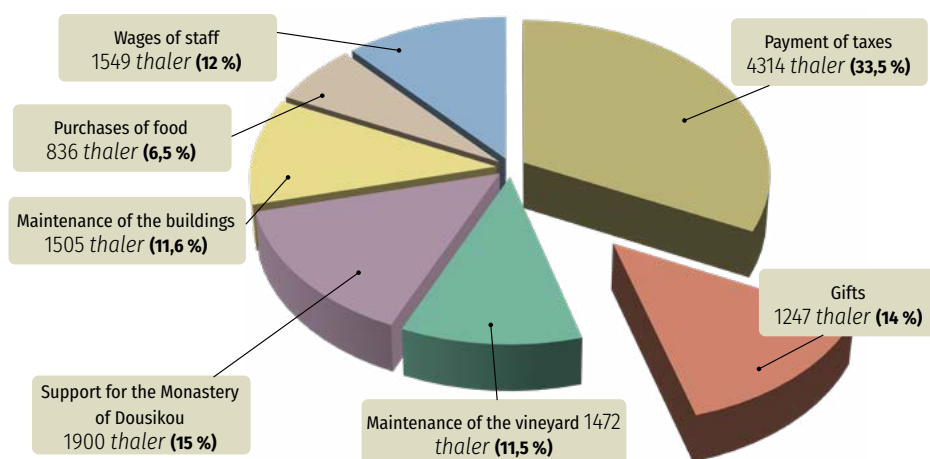
The data are equally scant under the heading of expenses for the purchase of food, both for the daily consumption of the monks and other members of the community (*mâncarea casei peste an*), and for the celebration of the monastery’s patron saint (*hramul*) on Saint George’s Day (23 April). In purely quantitative terms, the data show that the sums spent on alimentary needs did not exceed 100 *thalers* annually: by the end of our nine-year interval, the records show 830 *thalers* spent on food, that is less than 7 per cent of the monastery’s total expenses. Undoubtedly, this sum must have represented a small percentage of the real countervalue of the products consumed: presumably, the ledger only listed the cost of those foods which were not produced locally on the monastery’s own lands or those that had to be imported from outside the country’s borders. The entry on fol. 202r of the

16 Similar patterns have been noted at the monastery of Râmnicu Sărat (Lazăr 2019, 149–50).

register, according to which 60 *thalers* were spent in 1737 on the “monastery’s food” (*mâncarea mănăstirii*), only mentions specifically rice, black pepper “and sundries”, which seems to confirm our hypothesis (**Graph 3 a-b**).



Graph 3.a: Main categories of expenses: chronological evolution



Graph 3.b: Share of the main categories of expenses

Conclusions

At the end of our short outline, we will attempt a few conclusions, by no means definitive, also drawing on comparisons with the patterns noted for the economic activities at the monastery of Râmnicu Sărat. Again, one must underline the exceptional value of ms. 377 for the study of economic life in Wallachia in the first half of the eighteenth century. More specifically, the data it yields give us a greater insight into the economic contribution of monastic communities in their capacity as landowners. Complemented by similar data from the monasteries at Cotroceni and Râmnicu Sărat, the information we have presented here amply demonstrates this. Undoubtedly, the publication of the entire manuscript and a more comprehensive analysis of its data are needed before we can gain a better understanding of socio-economic realities in old-regime Wallachia.

Our analysis suggests that both monasteries, at Nucet and at Râmnicu Sărat, realized their main revenue from the sale of alcoholic beverages, livestock, and animal produce. This finding confirms views already expressed in the Romanian historical literature (Columbeanu 1974, 175–91).

Looking at expenses, there is also similarity between the two monasteries with regard to the relatively great weight of taxes paid to the state treasury, which was an indicator of the fiscal pressure which characterized the entire Phanariot period in the Romanian Principalities (1711/1716–1821) and which, paradoxically, led to the adoption of fiscal reform. However, there were also differences between the two establishments. First, Nucet monastery had to send important annual sums of money in its capacity as *metochion* of the Greek *lavra* at Dousikou. Secondly, comparing the production of alcohol as recorded in the ledgers, Nucet spent much less on the maintenance and exploitation of its acres of vineyards. The explanation for this lies in the different acreages allocated for viticulture, as well as in the different “sources” for alcohol production in the two establishments. Thus, despite the rather economical nature of the data offered by ms. 377 under this entry, they entitle us to conclude that, whereas at Râmnicu Sărat the entire alcohol production came from its large estate (100 hectares), at Nucet, with a more modest acreage of 15.5 hectares, the alcoholic beverages produced on its own land were supplemented by amounts collected from other vine-growers by virtue of privileges granted historically by the country’s ruling princes.

Finally, we must reiterate our comments on the scarcity and aridity of the financial data in the ledger, which would require further comparison with other sources to enable a more comprehensive picture to be drawn. Yet, the data are sufficient to

offer some indication not only of the growth of a money economy in eighteenth-century Romania, but also of the contribution of monastic establishments to this economy. Further research is needed into these processes, which are essential for a more detailed understanding of the complex, inter-locking socio-economic and political developments of the Romanian early modern period.

References

Unpublished Primary Sources

ANIC: Bucharest, Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale [The National Archives of Romania], fonds M-rea Nucet.

Published Primary Sources

Bogdan, I. 1915. "Semile mănăstirilor de țară din Moldova pe anul 1742 [The Registers of Country Monasteries in Moldavia for the Year 1742]". *Buletinul Comisiunii Istorice a României* I: 217–79.

DRH.B 1972 = *Documenta Romaniae Historica*, series B, *Țara Românească*, vol. 2 (1501–1525), edited by Ștefan Ștefănescu and Olimpia Diaconescu. Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române.

DRH.B 1998 = *Documenta Romaniae Historica*, series B, *Țara Românească*, vol. 30 (1645), edited by Violeta Barbu, Marieta Chiper, and Gheorghe Lazăr. Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române.

DRH.B 2002 = *Documenta Romaniae Historica*, series B, *Țara Românească*, vol. 34 (1649), edited by Violeta Barbu, Gheorghe Lazăr, and Oana Rizescu. Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române.

DRH.B 2003 = *Documenta Romaniae Historica*, series B, *Țara Românească*, vol. 31 (1646), edited by Violeta Barbu, Constanța Ghițulescu, Andreea Iancu, Gheorghe Lazăr, and Oana Rizescu. Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române.

DRH.B 2013 = *Documenta Romaniae Historica*, series B, *Țara Românească*, vol. 27 (1639–1640), edited by Violeta Barbu, Gheorghe Lazăr, Constanța Vintilă-Ghițulescu, Oana-Mădălina Popescu, and Ovidiu Olar. Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române.

Iorga, N. 1908. *Studii și documente cu privire la istoria românilor* [Studies and Documents on the History of the Romanians], vol. 15. Bucharest: Editura Minerva.

Oproiu, Mihai. 2004. *Inscripții și însemnări din județul Dâmbovița* [Votive Inscriptions and Written Records from Dâmbovița County], vol. 3. Târgoviște: Editura Transversal.

Potra, George. 1972. *Tezaurul documentar al județului Dâmbovița (1418–1800)* [Archival Documents from Dâmbovița Country]. Târgoviște: Muzeul Județean Dâmbovița.

Secondary Literature

- Achim, Viorel. 2004. *The Roma in Romanian History*, Budapest and New York: CEU Press, 2004.
- Balș G. 1911. "O biserică a lui Radu cel Mare în Serbia [A Church Foundation of Radu the Great in Serbia]." *Buletinul Comisiunii Monumentelor Istorice* 4: 194–99.
- Barbu, Violeta, Gheorghe Lazăr, and Ovidiu Olar. 2012. "Reforma monastică a domnului Matei Basarab [The Monastic Reform of Voivode Matei Basarab]." *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie* 30: 9–54.
- Cazacu, Matei. 2003. *Minuni, vedenii și vise premonitorii în trecutul românesc* [Miracles, Visions, and Premonitory Dreams in Romanian History]. Bucharest: Sigma.
- Cernovodeanu, Paul and, Paul Binder. 1993. *Cavalerii Apocalipsului* [The Knights of the Apocalypse]. Bucharest: Silex.
- Columbeanu, Sergiu. 1962. "Date privitoare la economia agrară din Țara Românească în prima jumătate a secolului al XVIII-lea [Data on Wallachia's Agrarian Economy in the First Half of the Eighteenth Century]." *Studii. Revistă de istorie* 15 (1): 111–34.
- Columbeanu, Sergiu. 1974. *Grandes exploitations domaniales en Valachie au XVIIIe siècle*. Bucharest : Editura Academiei Române.
- Constantinescu, N. N., ed. 1996. *L'Histoire de l'économie roumaine : de l'origine jusqu'à la deuxième guerre mondiale*. Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române.
- Giurescu, Constantin C. 1959. "Suprafața moșiilor mănăstirești secularizate la 1863 [The Acreage of Monastery-Owned Lands Secularized in 1863]." *Studii. Revistă de Istorie* 12 (2): 149–57.
- Iorga N. 1914. "Fundațiuni religioase ale domnilor români în Orient [Religious Foundations of Romanian Voivodes in the East]." *Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice* (series II) 36: 863–80.
- Jonveaux, Isabelle. 2011, *Le monastère au travail : le royaume de Dieu au défi de l'économie*. Paris : Bayard.
- Kaplan, Michel. 1993. "Les moines et leurs biens fonciers à Byzance du VIIIe au Xe siècle : acquisition, conservation et mise en valeur". *Revue Bénédictine* 103 (1–2): 209–23.
- Lazăr, Gheorghe. 2019. "Despre averile mănăstirești din Țara Românească (secolul al XVIII-lea). Cazul mănăstirii de la Râmnicu Sărat [On the Monastic Wealth in Wallachia (Eighteenth Century): the Case of the Râmnicu Sărat Monastery]." In *Orașul și Biserica. Patrimoniu, oameni, activități (secolele XV-XIX)* [The Town and the Church: Heritage, People, Activities (Fifteenth-Nineteenth Centuries)], edited by Rădvan Laurențiu, 129–81. Iași: Editura Universității "Alexandru Ioan Cuza".
- Lazăr, Mariana. 2012. "Spre folosul acestei sfinte case". *Constituirea și evoluția domeniului mănăstirii Cotroceni (secolele XVII–XIX)* ["To the Great Benefit of this Holy House": the Wealth of Cotroceni Monastery and its Development, Seventeenth-Nineteenth Centuries]. Brăila: Istros.
- Papacostea, Șerban. 1998. *Oltenia sub stăpânirea austriacă. 1718–1739* [Oltenia (Little Wallachia) under Habsburg Rule, 1718–1739]. 2nd ed. Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică.

- Papacostea, Șerban. 2009. *Studii de istorie românească: economie și societate (secolele XIII–XVIII)* [Studies in Romanian History: Economy and Society, Thirteenth–Eighteenth Centuries]. Brăila: Istros.
- Roch, Jean-Louis. 1989. “Le jeu de l’aumône au Moyen Âge”. *Annales ESC* 44 (3) : 505–27.
- Sava, Igor. 2012. *Domeniul mănăstiresc în Țara Moldovei în a doua jumătate a secolului al XIV-lea–secolul al XVI-lea* [Monastery-Owned Lands in Moldavia in the Second Half of the Fourteenth Century and the Fifteenth Century]. Chișinău: Pontos.
- Smyrlis, Kostis. 2006. *La fortune des grands monastères byzantins (fin du Xe – milieu du XIVe siècle)*. Paris : Association des Amis du Centre d’histoire et civilisation de Byzance.
- Stoicescu, Nicolae. 1971. *Dicționar al marilor dregători din Țara Românească și Moldova. Sec. XIV–XVII* [A Dictionary of High-Ranking Dignitaries in Wallachia and Moldavia, Fourteenth–Seventeenth Centuries]. Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică Română.
- Teleman, Florența. 2017. “Constituirea domeniului mănăstirii Sfânta Troiță (Radu Vodă) din București: între practica devoțională și strategie administrativă [The Domain of the Monastery of the Holy Trinity (Radu Vodă) in Bucharest: Between Devotional Practices and Management Strategies].” *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie* 35: 75–108.
- Toneatto, Valentina. 2012. *Les banquiers du Seigneur : Évêques et moines face à la richesse (Ive–début IXe siècle)*. Rennes : Presses Universitaires de Rennes.
- Turdeanu, Emil. 1939. “Din vechile schimburi culturale dintre români și Jugoslavi [Cultural Exchanges Between Romanians and South Slavs in Early Times].” *Cercetări Literare* 3: 141–211.

Monastic Financial Management in the Provinces of the Patriarchate of Constantinople (1867–1873)

THE CASE OF THE METROPOLIS OF DRYINOUPOLIS AND GJIROKASTRA

KONSTANTINOS GIAKOURIS¹

After a series of debates over the ownership of the churches of St Athanasios at Dhërmi, Himarrë region, South Albania (2013 & 2015) and of the Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple in Përmet, South Albania (2013), the Albanian government decided to knock down the former (2015) and temporarily confiscate the latter (Giakoumis 2019, 13), on account of disputes over their ownership between the Orthodox Church of Albania, private individuals and the state. More than a century ago some monasteries of the Dropull region, Gjirokastra, South Albania faced similar problems, with their monastic lands being claimed by powerful *beys* of the region (Giakoumis 2002/1, 333 and 370, n. 140), or with the monastic crop shares being detained by the farmers who cultivated them on the pretext of communal ownership (Giakoumis 2002/1, 333 and 370, n. 142). Monastic assets in the region were organized according to the legal and administrative provisions of religious charitable endowments (*wakfs*), which enjoyed protection and privileged tax relief (Kolovos 2016; Roudometof & Michael 2010). This status on occasion compelled the acquisition of landed assets (or the usufruct thereof) through fictitious desertion of lands by their previous farmers and their subsequent acquisition by the local monastery, which invited them back to cultivate the same lands (Giakoumis 2002/1, 332–3), or through concealed donations as sales (Fotić 2005; Giakoumis 2002/1, 409–13, 424–6). Such practices, however, often created such a sense of communal ownership of monastic assets and church properties overall as to compel notables or priests to treat monasteries as commodities that could even be sold, purchased, or otherwise

1 The research presented in this chapter has been supported by the *Research network dedicated to the history of the monastic economy*, hosted by the Centre for Advanced Study Sofia and the Center for Governance and Culture in Europe (GCE) at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of St. Gallen under the project: “Does Monastic Economy Matter? Religious Patterns of Economic Behaviour”. I benefitted a great deal from remarks by Dr Brian Heffernan and Dr Christopher Lockwood, who also helped me refine a number of points in this chapter.

operated to their own benefit (Giakoumis 2002/1, 370, n. 143; Giakoumis 2020, 137–147). In 1830, for instance, the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople ordered the notables of the village of Pogdoriani to return the money they had received from the sale of Sosinou monastery and to retake possession of the monastery (CPC vol. 16, 327); while in 1840 a certain Kyrkos Hadji was excommunicated because he had sold the landed assets of Nokova monastery (Gjirokastra region) registered in his name, as if they were his own private property (CPC vol. 20, 48).

Such tax evasion tactics – precursor to contemporary loose tax and fiscal discipline in the Balkans – were practiced at the risk of loss of monastic assets, and they promoted an economic behavioural pattern which, together with other such practices, led Kalkandjieva (2010, 83) to claim that the Orthodox Church and its hierarchy were agents of “economic backwardness”. Yet, as I shall demonstrate, combining external discipline and internal behavioural incentives, the Orthodox Church and its hierarchy also exercised rational control mechanisms, policies and practices to avoid default and abuses, as well as to guarantee the financial well-being of their monastic institutions. And in doing so, they harnessed financial practices in the region which were later to become quite widespread in the so-called capitalist world. In this chapter I shall present three case studies that show that the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople and its local agent, the Metropolis of Dryinoupolis and Gjirokastra, developed efficient corporate governance mechanisms for their monastic institutions, of the sort that have also been observed in the Roman Catholic West (Rost et al. 2010). In spite of their successes or failures, these corporate governance mechanisms more often than not succeeded in moderating uncontrolled freedom of action by abbots or powerful private individuals operating as monastic wardens.

The cases were selected with the intention to illustrate how monasteries, as entities that were financially healthy, challenging, or problematic, managed their assets and were audited during this process. With this in mind, I chose three monasteries, one from each of these categories, that is, entities that were financially healthy, challenging and problematic. It should be noted here that in the Orthodox East, especially during the time of the Ottoman Empire, a monastery could also function as a parish church if there was no other church in the locality. This enabled monasteries to remain active even without a monastic community. In such cases, a monastery would have been inhabited by its servants, if any, with or without a resident priest or warden and would be administered by a priest, a warden, or a committee. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, when parish churches were built in villages, monasteries without monastic communities were administered by a monastic committee and often fell into disuse.

The primary source material used was a register which recorded the assets of monasteries under the jurisdiction of the Metropolis of Dryinoupolis and Gjirokastra, their management, the annual balance sheet of every monastery, and managerial accounting conclusions based on a comparison of the balance sheets of the fiscal years of 1867–1873. The manuscript, which once belonged to the Metropolis, is currently kept at the Central Archives of the State, Tirana (AQSH F. 139, D. 4) and contains a wealth of information. Each monastery has a separate entry in the manuscript usually organized according to the following structural units: **1.** Brief history of the monastery, often copied from older manuscripts, on occasion extending back to the early nineteenth or even the beginning of the eighteenth century. **2.** A detailed register of all landed assets and movable property of the monastery. **3.** Annual balance sheets in the form of tables of monastic revenues and expenses generated by these and other assets covering, with the most auditable detail, the calendar years of 1867–1873. On the basis of the codex's data, the Monastery of the Holy Taxiarchs at Dervişan, Dropull was selected as an example of sound financial management. The Monastery of the Annunciation at Vanistër, Dropull was selected as an example of a challenging entity undergoing reorganization and consolidation processes, and the Monastery of the Prophet Elias at Jorgucat, Dropull, that of a problematic financial entity.

This data was compiled in the course of an 1873 audit by the Metropolis of Dryinoupolis and Gjirokastra, which, as the manuscript indirectly mentions (f. 3^r), was conducted five years after the previous similar audit in 1868. Though surprisingly systematic and detailed, such audits and records were not novel procedures used by the monasteries and their supervizing authorities to generate an annual profit and avoid default. Throughout the course of developments which eventually led to the First Constitutional Era of 1876, popular outcries against what was perceived as inefficient management of monastic finances put pressure on the Patriarchate of Constantinople to take the situation in hand. In response, among other measures, the Patriarchate from at least 1888 onwards established a regular committee that was responsible for monastic and ecclesiastical issues. This committee was also responsible for the implementation of specific measures, and for securing monastic lands (Giakoumis 2002/1, 451; cf. “Έχομεν Πόρους;” and “Εκκλησιαστικά” 10.08.1888).

Even this committee was the continuation of a pattern that can be observed since the end of the eighteenth century to curtail some of the ecclesiastical authority of clergymen and transfer it to laypersons. In order to prevent laypersons and monastic clergy from contracting unnecessary loans, Patriarch Constantios I decided in 1831 to extend to the monasteries the practice of dividing official seals into four. This measure was introduced following the initiative of Patriarch Samuel Chantzeris (first

Patriarchal prelate: 1763–1768), who had visited the Grand Vizier in 1763 and managed to abolish what was viewed as Patriarchal absolutism. In this way Constantios managed to have a new sultanic decree (*firman*) issued that required the division of the patriarchal seal into four parts, each to be held by a Metropolitan. Accordingly, the patriarchal monasteries were directed in 1831 to divide their seals into four parts, one of which was to be kept by the abbot and the rest by three of the most eminent officials of the region. This action authenticated the official involvement of the laity in the administration of these monasteries (Giakoumis 2002/1, 451). Under various forms and names such management committees continued their work until the beginning of the twentieth century (Giakoumis 2002/1, 451, 485, n. 459).

The Patriarchate also employed other means to prevent the loss of monastic revenue, such as the obligatory detailed registration and compilation of an analytical inventory of monastic estates and the compulsory submission of annual accounts by each monastery (Giakoumis 2002/2, 748–52). At least since 1831, if not earlier, the Patriarchate ordered patriarchal monasteries, such as the Monastery of Spelaio at Saraqinishtë, Lunxhëri region, South Albania, to prepare detailed registers of the monastic properties. These requirements were periodically repeated to keep the registers up to date (Giakoumis 2002/2, 717–25). They were occasionally created and updated by the local bishop or metropolitan, who was charged by the Patriarchate with conducting the audits (Giakoumis 2002/2, 748–52). At the same time, the Patriarchate enjoined the prelates in its provinces to compile similar registers for the parochial monasteries in their provinces. That was the purpose of Patriarch Germanos IV's letter of 1844, which instructed Metropolitan Nikodemos of Dryinoupolis and Gjirokastra to register and update the properties of all parochial and patriarchal monasteries in his province (Giakoumis 2002/2, 702–5). Additionally, the Patriarchate and its monastic committee oversaw the accounts which all patriarchal monasteries were asked to dispatch every year (“Εκκλησιαστικά,” 4190; “Ἐχομεν Πόρους;”). The following section gives a sense of the kinds of financial situation and documents the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople and its monastic committee would have seen.

A Financially Sound Monastic Entity

The Monastery of the Holy Taxiarchs at Dervican, Dropull (Petridis 1871, 30; Aravantinos 1984, 150–151; Evangelidis 1919, 107; Lambridis 1971, 68; Kalyvopoulos & Kalyvopoulos 1975, 142; Papadopoulos 1978, 9, 11, 17, 20, 70; Oikonomou 1990, 152) is situated at the top of the village of Dervican, Dropull, at an altitude of 251 metres and a distance of circa 1.5 kilometres from the village (700 metres in aerial

distance), or some 45 minutes' walk. The sole monastic building that remains intact to date is the catholicon (that is, the main church) of the monastery, as the monastery has been without a monastic community since the late 1960s. It belongs to the so-called Athonite architectural type with a cross-in-square with an apse and two lateral conches, and is adorned with frescoes. The catholicon dates to the eighteenth century and its paintings to the later part of the same century (first phase) with extended overpainting, and a second phase around the middle of the nineteenth century (Giakoumis G. 1994, 48–9; Thomo 1998, 239). A number of inscriptions dating mostly to the 1860s (Popa 1998, 274, 276, 278 and 279, Inscriptions No. 718, 727, 740 and 743) indicate the monastery's financial strength at the time.

Indeed, as the register mentions (AQSH F. 139, D. 4, f. 2^r-10^v), a combination of diversified economic activities and prudent financial management generated a number of annual uses with profit (**Graph 1**). Although the monastery did not appear to be particularly rich in landed assets compared to other monasteries, its holdings amounting to a total of 13.7 hectares of land (2.8 hectares of which with, and 10.9 hectares without title deeds, *ibid.* f. 2^{r-v}), scattered across small plots within larger land parcels, and its diversified income streams are indicative of complementarities that made full use of the potential revenue resources of the local economy. Thus, the monastery generated revenue from such economic activities as agriculture and farming, as well as from donations for spiritual services, forestry activities (like the sale of timber and grass), renting out its land, and credit. At the same time, as I shall demonstrate in respect of a case of crisis management described further below, the monastery kept firm control of its expenses for the purpose of maintaining financial stability (**Table 2**).

Table 1: *Dervişan Monastery's Income Streams (in kuruşes), 1868–1873.*

INCOME STREAM	1868	1869	1870	1871	1872	1873
Crop cultivation	3659 (37%)	5198.2 (42%)	3834 (34%)	6359 (43%)	0 (0%)	667 (5%)
Cattle breeding	3378 (34%)	2822 (23%)	4638 (41%)	5318 (36%)	9451 (81.8%)	8487 (69%)
Services	1011 (10%)	2530 (20%)	1939.2 (17%)	2735 (18%)	1723 (15%)	1765 (14%)
Forestry	804 (8%)	984 (8%)	850 (8%)	536 (4%)	345 (3%)	830 (7%)
Leases	1167.2 (12%)	462 (4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	475 (4%)
Credit Lent	0 (0%)	362 (3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	30 (0.2%)	0 (0%)
TOTAL	10,019.20	12,358.20	11,261.20	14,948	11,549	12,226

Table 2: Dervican Monastery's Expenditure (in kuruşes), 1868–1873.

EXPENDITURE	1868	1869	1870	1871	1872	1873
Debt	1663.2 (21.1%)	405 (3.7%)	166 (1.6%)	724 (6%)	115 (0.7%)	0 (0%)
Basic commodities	3020 (38.2%)	3974 (37%)	3860 (38.2%)	4909 (38%)	3598 (21.8%)	3399 (30.7%)
Payroll of shepherds, etc.	670 (8.5%)	830 (7.7%)	1210 (12%)	815 (6%)	1115 (6.8%)	1220 (11%)
Payroll of monastery's farmers	0 (0%)	1400 (13%)	340 (3.4%)	0 (0%)	600 (3.7%)	650 (6%)
Payroll of monastery's warden and servants	1025 (13%)	0 (0%)	1200 (12%)	1275 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Labour costs for the vineyard	85 (1%)	280 (2.6%)	84 (1%)	76 (1%)	92 (0.6%)	35.3 (0%)
Taxes	482 (6%)	958 (9%)	0 (0%)	1231 (10%)	2502 (15%)	3245 (29%)
Pastureland lease	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	600 (3.6%)	750 (7%)
Ecclesiastical and social contributions	147 (2%)	0 (0%)	35 (0.4%)	45 (0%)	155 (0.9%)	45 (0.4%)
Repairs	657 (8%)	107 (1%)	1914 (19%)	2309 (18%)	2369 (14.4%)	1470 (13.3%)
Tool supplies	0 (0%)	800 (7%)	347 (3.4%)	1197 (9%)	0 (0%)	196 (1.8%)
Metropolitan's liturgical expenses	145 (2%)	55 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	55 (0.5%)
Agricultural investments	0 (0%)	148 (1%)	937 (9%)	300 (2%)	773 (4.7%)	0 (0%)
Animal farming investments	0 (0%)	1788 (17%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4580 (27.8%)	0 (0%)
TOTAL	7894.20	10745	10093	12881	16499	11065

The sound financial management of the monastery is evident not only from the fact that revenues and expenses were controlled so that financial stability could be guaranteed, but also from how the monastery's abbot handled the 1872 crop failure (**Table 1**). In that year, as the manuscript informs us, "there (was) no sale of cereals on account of crop failure" (AQSH F. 139, D. 4, f. 8^v). Processed manuscript data indicate that from 1868 to 1872 the monastery generated 34% to 44% of its total revenues from the sale of cereals. The loss of almost half of monastic revenue at

once must have come as a shock to the monastery, especially considering its effect combined with its aftershock in the course of the following year (1873), when crop sales accounted for only 5.46% of the total yearly monastic income, possibly on account of poor-quality seeds from the previous, failed crop.

To address the situation, most likely foreseeing the forthcoming 1872 crop failure, Abbot/*hegoumen* Makarios of Dervican monastery appears to have undertaken urgent measures even the year before. This included both containing costs and investing in other economic activities that could make up for the financial loss of 1872 (**Graph 1**). He minimized monastic expenses in basic commodities both in 1872 and 1873 (**Table 2**), thereby compensating almost one third of the lost income. In addition, he eliminated tool supplies in 1872, thus making up for almost another one third of the loss, keeping any losses to a minimum for the following year. He also appears to have either dismissed the monastery's servants or transferred them to work as shepherds or farmers for the monastery (**Table 2**). Simultaneously, he invested in cattle raising and farming by purchasing corn seeds and 122 sheep, in enhancing monastic human resources by employing shepherds and farmers for the monastery to generate a return on investment (ROI) (AQSH F. 139, D. 4, f. 9^r) and in leasing summer pasturelands to address the increased needs of grassland due to the growing flocks of the monastery. The return on investment was immediate, as monastic revenues from cattle breeding in 1872 were almost double those in 1871 or the years before that (**Table 1**) and this trend also continued thereafter. As a result, and despite the 1872 losses, a year later Dervican monastery was once again in good shape (**Graph 1**).

Yet, the monastery's financial stability was not achieved through institutionalized financial decision-making systems and mechanisms – at least not entirely. Rather, it was the personal achievement of the abbot. A note on f. 3^r of the manuscript clearly states that the monastery was almost deserted on account of inefficient management by a warden until 1846, when Panos Margaritis, who would later be ordained as archimandrite and receive the name of Makarios was appointed as a monastic warden. He managed to reorganize and consolidate the monastery as a financial entity, which reached financial stability in 1858, when he was transferred to Dryano monastery. In 1868, Makarios was recalled to Dervican monastery, as it encountered adversity due to financial mismanagement. This is confirmed by the decreasing annual debt payments paid by the monastery as of 1868 (**Table 2**), which were entirely repaid by 1873. It was precisely Makarios' name that was mentioned in two inscriptions at the monastery, one of which was once painted above the entrance door of the catholicon's naos (the inner chamber of the church), next to his own portrait, which regrettably no longer exists (Popa 1998, 274, Inscription No. 718 and 279, Inscription No. 743).

At the end of this report (AQSH F. 139, D. 4, f. 10^r), the auditor recorded the average income and expenditure of the monastery and concluded that it was sustainable as the monastery “should generate a surplus of 2,735 (*kuruşes*)”. Yet, when assessing the risks, the auditor clarified that

the (yearly) budget fluctuation depends partly on the fertility of the land, and partly on the piety of the Christians, and, in general, on the diligence of the abbot, especially in matters pertaining to his *epitrachelion* (that is, priestly matters of a spiritual nature) and donations (such as bequests to the monastery in the form of landed assets).

The integrity of the abbot seemed to be of paramount importance, because, as Islamic law did not recognize legal entities, monastic properties, including donations, were registered in his name. Given that the danger of losing monastic property was not out of the question, the entry for Dervişan monastery in the manuscript concludes with Abbot Makarios’ statement that the landed property registered in his name were the monastery’s properties and not his own, abdicating any personal right to property or inheritance (AQSH F. 139, D. 4, f. 10^v).

In this section I have presented a case of how a financially sound monastic entity was managed, emphasizing the role of the abbot and external financial control mechanisms in the well-being of Dervişan monastery. In the following section, I will switch focus to a case of a financially challenging monastic entity.

A Financially Challenging Monastic Entity

The Monastery of the Annunciation of Virgin Mary at Vanistër, Dropull (Zotos 1878, 83; Aravantinos 1984, 151; Evangelidis 1919, 107; Kalyvopoulos & Kalyvopoulos 1975, 142; Oikonomou 1990, 152; Giakoumis 1994, 42–3; Giakoumis & Giakoumis 1994, 81–5; Giakoumis 2002/1, 79–80, 141–50, 210–24, 334–38) is located at half-an-hour’s distance above the village, on the bosky slope of Platovouni Mountain (Alb. Mali i Gjerë, the Wide Mountain). It was built on a plot appropriately arranged with two embankments, which extended the buildable surface of the site. From the outside, the monastery resembles a small castle. The church has a nave, a narthex and gallery (*khayiat*), and is of the domed cross-in-square type with two lateral conches. An inscription on a tile at the apse of the catholicon bearing the date 1581/2 indicates the date of its construction (Popa 1998, 222, Inscription No. 527). Other inscriptions date the mural fresco paintings of the naos to 1617 (Giakoumis 2002/1, 210–1) and the narthex to 1758 (Giakoumis 2002/1, 211–2). The sole edifice of the

monastery that remains intact, although it is in need of consolidation, is the monastery's catholicon, since most of the other buildings consolidated and restored during communism have collapsed. Although the monastery was functional in the period under consideration (1868–1873), the absence of any large-scale building or repair activity of a magnitude that would normally be recorded in inscriptions is in itself an indirect indication that the monastery was struggling financially at the time.

The data from the register indicate that the economy of Vanistër monastery was also diversified (**Table 3**), with the primary sources of income being crop cultivation, cattle raising, donations from pilgrims for the sacraments commemorating their names, and forestry products such as timber for torches and saddles, as well as sumac leaves, forested lands sold or rented out. Comparative analysis of revenue streams between this monastery and Dervican indicates similar complementarity, although Dervican monastery clearly had a larger volume of transactions (**Table 5**). However, the monastery at Vanistër endeavoured to diversify its income by taking advantage of its geographical position and proximity to the city of Delvina to offer caravan services to interested clients and by engaging in the crafts industry. Yet, neither of these activities ever generated more than 3% of the monastery's total revenue (**Table 3**). To a great extent (20%–44%, cf. **Table 5**) its economy depended on the yield of its 8.9 hectares of landed assets (AQSH F. 139, D. 4, f. 11^r), as well as any revenue raised through cattle farming. At the time of registration (1873), the monastery numbered 64 sterile and milk-bearing goats, 112 sterile and milk-bearing sheep, two plough oxen, 19 cows and calves, both small and large, as well as 2 pack mules (*op. cit.* f. 11^v), which generated 28 to 49 percent of the monastery's income.

In spite of the diversified character of the economy of Vanistër monastery, the monastery struggled to break even (**Graph 2**). In fact, as **Table 6** indicates, on average, between 1867 and 1873, the Monastery of the Annunciation at Vanistër spent more than it generated. High expenditure was partly due to the extraordinary legal fees expended to avoid the loss of the monastery's mountain, which was claimed by two *beys* from Gjirokastra, Ali Bey and Xhelal Kaskalari, as well as money spent to buy the mountain back from them, as the monastery seems to have lost the case. Hence, unlike the breakdown suffered by Dervican monastery, the Annunciation Monastery in Vanistër spent more money than it received not because of any particular natural or other disaster, but on account of imprudent financial management of the monastery. This imprudent financial management resulted in a loss for two different financial years (1867–68 and 1871–72). As **Graph 2** shows, the extraordinary legal expenses did not result in an annual expenditure larger than what was typical (cf. **Table 4**). Moreover, the rates of expenditure of Vanistër monastery are comparable to those of Dervican monastery overall, except regarding what was classified as payroll, which

took up 29 to 57 percent of the monastery's expenditure. This stands in stark contrast with the more limited 9 to 29 percent in Dervican monastery (**Table 5**).

Table 3: *Vanistër Monastery's Income Streams (In kuruşes), 1868–1873.*

REVENUE	1867–8	1868–9	1869–70	1870–1	1871–2	1872–3
Crop cultivation	2762.20 (35%)	3465.00 (33%)	1787.20 (20%)	3156.00 (44.2%)	2769.20 (33%)	632.30 (44%)
Animal farming	2155.20 (28%)	2890.30 (28%)	4541.30 (51%)	2195.10 (30.8%)	2488.00 (30%)	715.00 (49%)
Services	1475.20 (19%)	1212.00 (12%)	765.00 (9%)	804.00 (11.3%)	1193.00 (14%)	99.00 (7%)
Forestry	887.20 (11%)	674.30 (6%)	437.30 (5%)	18.00 (0.3%)	190.00 (2%)	0 (0%)
Leasing/rental revenue	523.00 (7%)	1916.00 (18%)	1205.20 (14%)	885.20 (12.4%)	1602.00 (19%)	0 (0%)
Crafts	0 (0%)	160 (1.5%)	25 (0.2%)	75 (1%)	147 (2%)	0 (0%)
Fares for monastery's pack animals	0 (0%)	150 (1.5%)	80 (0.8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
TOTAL	7802.80	10157.60	8736.00	7058.30	8242.20	1446.30

Vanistër monastery appeared to be overspending on payroll. As it had no monastic community, the monastery employed a priest at an annual salary of 1200 *kuruşes*, an old female servant at 250 *kuruşes*, a cook at 800 *kuruşes*, a shepherd for the sheep at 400 *kuruşes*, a shepherd for the goats, the cows, and calves at 450 *kuruşes*, and a servant who looked after and worked the monastery's mules, at an annual salary of 250 *kuruşes* (AQSH F. 139, D. 4, f. 12^v). It is uncertain whether the maintenance of two pack mules by the monastery was cost-effective. It seems hard to rationally explain why the monastery maintained a cook with an annual salary at two thirds of the salary of the priest and, at the same time, maintained the old female servant. But impersonal corporate thinking is not applicable to monastic financial entities, whose mission also included a public welfare component, against which it enjoyed tax breaks. Such inexplicable expenses were not encountered in the case of Dervican monastery, where there was at least one resident monk who was also the abbot. Therefore, it seems plausible to suggest that imprudent financial management of the payroll expenses of Vanistër monastery was central to this monastery's

difficulty in maintaining financial stability. Yet, as the managerial accounting sheet at the end of the document indicates, the monastery appeared to have had the potential to be financially sustainable and independent if expenses had been prudently contained, as Dervişan monastery's crisis management in 1872 shows.

The section above dealt with a challenging monastic financial entity, the Monastery of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary at Vanistër. I have suggested that, in spite of macro-managerial financial audits that closely monitored the financial management of the monastery, the absence of an efficient financial micro-manager, like the abbot of the Dervişan monastery, to prudently administer the monastery's financial affairs on a daily basis was an important cause of this monastery's struggle to balance revenues with expenses.

A Financially Problematic Monastic Entity

The Monastery of the Prophet Elias at Jorgucat, Dropull (Aravantinos 1984, 151–152; Evangelidis 1919, 107; Poulitsas 1928, 61–63; Giovannis 1928; Baras 1966, 237, 300; Oikonomou 1990, 152; Giakoumis 1994, 34–5; Giakoumis & Giakoumis 1994, 74–7) is located some two kilometres in a straight line from the highest point of the village, the real distance being significantly longer, taking about an hour's walk to reach the site's mountain plateau at an altitude of 327 metres above sea level. The monastery is currently in a ruinous state, its catholicon and the cistern attached to it to the west being the only things to remind visitors of the monastery's past grandeur. Indeed, the monastery was founded before 1583/4, the year in which the fresco decoration of its naos was completed, as we learn from an inscription (Popa 1998, 223, Inscription No. 530; cf. Giakoumis 2002/1, 2008). In its present form the catholicon is a single-aisled, barrel-vaulted church of the so-called Athonite type with lateral conches. It consists of a nave, narthex, exonarthex and a cistern. Its space encloses a single, undivided area (Thomo 1998, 106–8; Giakoumis 2002/1, 127–34).

The monastery was established and endowed by generous donations from Moldavia during the rule of Alexandru Mircea and his sons Mihnea Turcitul and Radu Mihnea (Cotovanu 2009, 229–37). Such donations correspond not only with the foundation of the monastery, but also with the establishment and painting of the catholicon and the paintings of its narthex (1616/4, Popa 1998, 226–7, Inscription No. 540). Even during the period under consideration, the monastery owned huge, yet fragmented plots of land (89.2 ha; cf. AQSH. F. 139, D. 4, f. 25^{r-v}), more than ten times the size of the lands of Vanistër monastery (cf. **Graph 3**). In spite of these huge and diversified

Table 4: *Vanistër Monastery's Expenditure (in kuruşes), 1868–1873.*

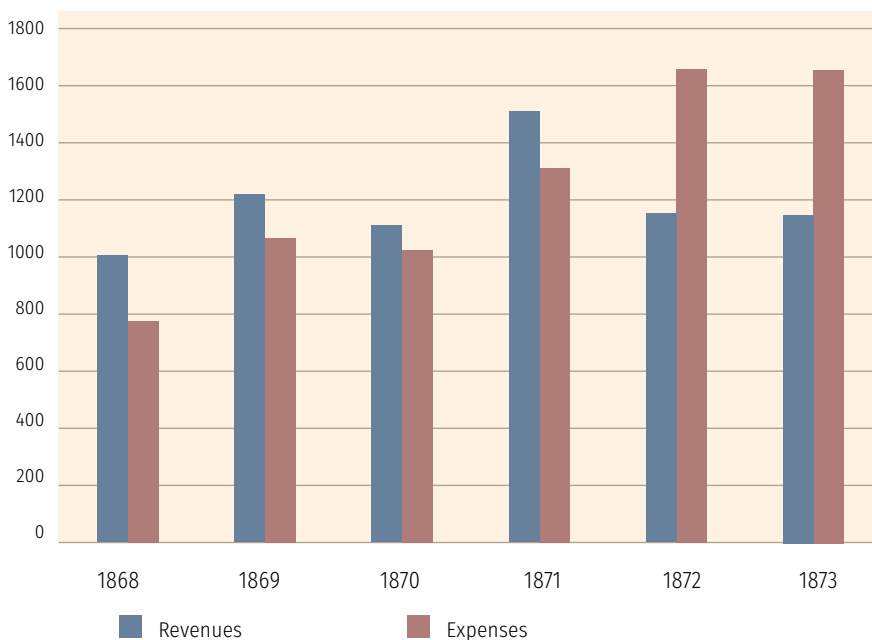
EXPENDITURE	1867–8	1868–9	1869–70	1870–1	1871–2	1872–3
Commodities	1768.10 (17.2%)	2402.80 (27%)	2134.60 (25%)	1717.10 (25%)	2140.40 (25%)	314.00 (43%)
Payroll	3002.20 (29.2%)	2910.00 (32%)	2773.00 (33%)	3411.20 (49%)	2476.00 (29%)	423.00 (57%)
Taxes (state and church)	645.00 (6.3%)	733.00 (8%)	679.30 (8%)	932.00 (14%)	800.00 (10%)	0 (0%)
Repairs	375.00 (4%)	676.00 (7%)	83.00 (1%)	264.20 (4%)	60.00 (1%)	0 (0%)
Investments	4159.00 (40%)	1775.00 (20%)	2702.10 (32%)	573.10 (8%)	1478.00 (18%)	0 (0%)
Legal experts' fees	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1358.00 (16%)	0 (0%)
Debt	337.10 (3.3%)	551.00 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Rental payments	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	102.00 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Subscriptions	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	105 (1%)	0 (0%)
TOTAL	10286.40	9047.80	8474.00	6897.60	8417.40	737.00

Table 5: *Revenue & Expenditures Shares of Dervîçan & Vanistër Monasteries, 1867–1873*

Revenue shares				Expenditure shares			
Dervîçan Monastery	Crop cultivation	34–42%	20–44%	Dervîçan Monastery	Commodities	22–38%	17–43%
	Cattle raising	23–41%	28–49%		Payroll	9–29%	29–57%
	Services	10–20%	9–19%		Taxes	10–30%	6–14%
	Forestry	3–8%	0–11%		Investments	0–33%	8–40%

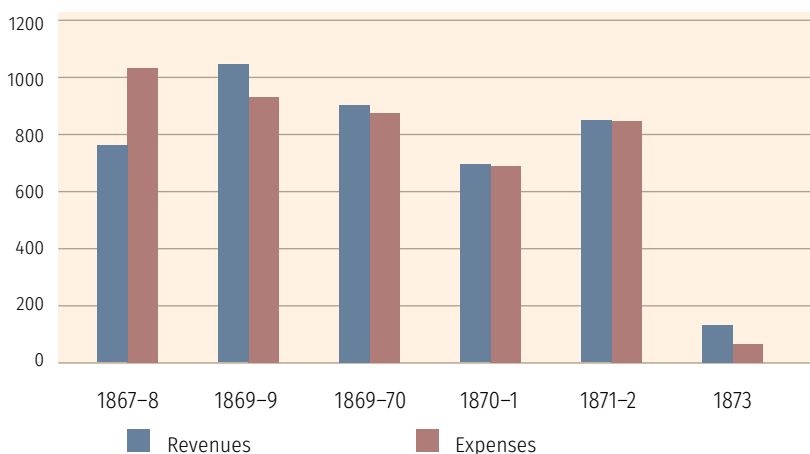
Table 6: Average Income & Expenditure (in kuruşes) of Dervişan & Vanistër Monasteries, 1867–1873

	Dervişan Monastery	Vanistër Monastery
Revenues	12060	7240
Expenditure	11530	7310

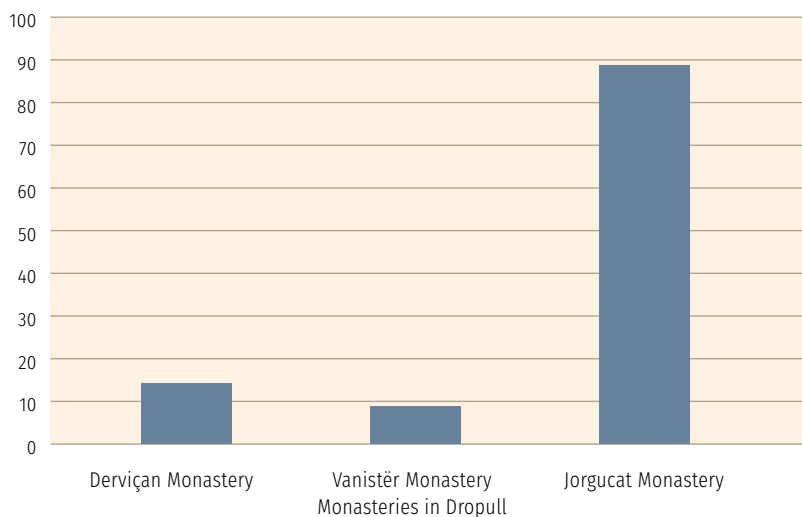
**Graph 1:** Comparative Table of Revenues and Expenses of Dervişan monastery (in kuruşes), 1868–1873

landed assets, the monastery was bankrupt by 1867. The eloquent report of the auditor for 1873 is revealing (AQSH. F. 139, D. 4, f. 22^r):

Of this holy monastery no codices are to be found, nor registers of neat (financial) records, nor ancient land registers; all is a total mess, a true maze. Debt on top of debts, plundering, usurpations; this is what one finds in this monastery until 1865, when the most despicable and speculative ten-year lease; yet, it also is a useful lesson for the future.



Ggaph 2: *Revenues and Expenses of Vanisrër monastery (In kurus), 1868–1873 (Financial Reporting Years)*



Ggaph 3: *Size of Monastic Landed Assets (In ha.)*

The auditor then proceeded to describe how the *beys* of Gjirokastra eventually usurped the lands of the monastery. They apparently did so based on “various documents of the monastery which we managed to collect in our hands since our coming for the purpose of defending the monastic lands” as well as “some notes” made by “the still living centenarian Abbot Kallinikos” (AQSH. F. 139, D. 4, f. 22^r). According

to these notes, the usurpation of the monastic lands was a gradual process that extended over two generations. It was initiated in the first decades of the nineteenth century by the generation of the fathers of the *beys* who were eventually reported to have expropriated the monastic lands. By the time of the registration, the process of expropriation had already been completed. The auditor also reported that the expropriation of the monastic lands occurred with the complicity of the inhabitants of Jorgucat, according to “the most ancient Ottoman documents (that is, title deeds) dealing with the site of Jorgucat” (AQSH. F. 139, D. 4, f. 22^r). As a consequence, by 1865 the abbot/*hegoumen* had been evicted from the monastery on charges of debt default and the administration was assigned to a three-member committee, which managed the immovable properties of the monastery until the end of 1867. The committee sold the remaining immovable property and what animals were found to generate funds for the needs of the monastery “leaving debts behind them, which, as they were excluded from the account of the lease, they had supposedly taken it upon themselves to repay on their own. While the monastery has rented all its properties, it also has a debt of almost eight thousand *kuruşes*, which is constantly on the rise on account of interests” (AQSH. F. 139, D. 4, f. 23^r).

The auditor made it clear that the renting out of the monastic property was speculative. In support of his claim, he mentioned that the ten-year lease of land, mills, vineyards, etc. of Prophet Elias Monastery at Jorgucat was struck at the rate of 69,000 *kuruşes*, while “the considerably lesser-quality land and vineyards of Dryano Monastery were leased for five years at the rate of 47,000 *kuruşes*” (AQSH. F. 139, D. 4, f. 23^r). The income generated from this lease that expired in 1875 was so low, as not to suffice even for basic maintenance works: “the famous buildings of the monastery collapsed and continue collapsing, whose restitution, as well as the restitution of the other lands, will necessitate great expenses” (op. cit.). The rather undetailed managerial balance sheet (**Table 6**) concludes that the monastic committee of wardens should repay a difference of 1,664 *kuruşes* to the monastery. Yet, the commission “under the pretext that this surplus was spent on various other unnamed needs of the monastery did not give a single para (a denomination of the *kuruş*) [...] At the end of the third year, the committee imploded, after selling the last horn-bearing animal, thereby leaving nothing else to spend” (AQSH. F. 139, D. 4, f. 23^v – 24^r). This part of the report closes with a list of debts of the monastery, amounting to 69,055 *kuruşes*, for which it was decided to enter into a ten-year lease.

At the end of the entry the auditor attempted to forecast the monastery’s potential income after the end of the lease and he closed the report on a more positive tone. He concluded that “if, after the lease, an appropriate and active abbot is appointed [...], the monastery’s income could rise upwards of 25,000 *kuruşes*; yet the

monastery needs large-scale repair” (AQSH. F. 139, D. 4, f. 26^v). From the overall spirit of the report, it appears that the state of financial collapse of the Monastery of the Prophet Elias at Jorgucat was due to the combination of poor monastic leadership, fraudulent and speculative decisions by the villagers appointed as wardens of the monastery. These factors enticed local *beys* to raise claims and, eventually, expropriate the lands of the monastery for themselves.

Monastic Finances from a Mesoscopic Perspective

The data analysis conducted above indicates that for a variety of reasons the monasteries in the region engaged in diversified economic activities. This was not only dictated by the need for self-sufficiency. As centuries-old financial entities, monasteries had learned that the risks involved in concentrating exclusively on one economic activity or another were large and that diversification was necessary. A good example of how complementary economic activities contributed to financial resilience in times of crisis is the way in which Dervişan monastery managed to overcome the local crop failure that struck its agricultural output in 1872 and 1873.

Revenue Sources

Although crop cultivation appeared to be the most productive economic endeavour, it could not be the only activity on account of the geomorphology of the terrain and the size of the holdings. First, as the findings corroborate in conjunction with land registers from other monasteries, the monasteries did indeed have landed assets of considerable size, yet they were not big landowners. Their holdings consisted of small plots within larger plots, most likely due to numerous donations from the faithful, as well as some of their lands purchased from big *çiflik* holders from Gjirokastra. Monastic lands were fragmented and located in different parcels of mixed fertility, so that the monasteries had no other opportunity than to rent out their lesser plots to some big land owner who cultivated bigger plots within the same parcels, as monasteries were unable to consolidate their scattered plots and develop economies of scale in them. The second reason why monastic economies could never have relied exclusively on crop cultivation is that, even with modern fertilizer-assisted agriculture and proper irrigation and drainage, the quality of some of the monastic lands was simply not appropriate for cost-effective crops.

Hence, crop cultivation could not by itself sustain either the villages or their monasteries. Yet, as it provided a steady annual income, monasteries were obliged to invest in good-quality seeds on an annual basis.

Table 6: Reconstructive and Approximated Balance Sheet of Jorgucat Monastery (in kuruses), 1865–1867
The Wardens of the Prophet Elias ThemelisTzangos, Spyros Giovannis and Anastasios Charisi

INCOME								EXPENSES							
	Sale of Horned Animals	From Mountain	Contri-butions	Wool	Grains	Timber	Total	Labour Costs	Commo-dities	Debt	Payroll	Horse-Shoeing & Shoes	Sheep Tax	Meadow Tax	Total
1865	2554	1022	147	444	0	0	4167	489	609	332	2040	198	238	309	4215
1866	5100	866	0	0	796	2654	9416	92	2023	5585	1353	117	320	213	9703
1867	2955	0	0	0	196	0	3151	90	383	0	624	55	0	0	1152
Total	10609	1888	147	444	992	2654	16734	671	3015	5917	4017	370	558	522	15070
														Profit	1664

Animal farming was the second most important income source of the monasteries. In the register of movable properties of the monasteries, we learn that the animals involved were sheep and goats, cows and plough oxen, as well as pack animals used for the transportation of produce. Shepherds were appointed to herd the animals, while plough oxen were either rented out to farmers or operated by farmers paid and employed directly by the monastery. Vanistër monastery experimented with using its pack animals for caravan services, yet the activity did not appear to be sustainable in the long run. Pig breeding appears in the sole case of some 62 piglets of Vanistër monastery (AQSH. F. 139, D. 4, 24^v), but this was apparently a one-off operation, indicating that there was no know-how, that it was not cost-effective, or that it was simply a donation that was liquidated, without the monastery being willing to begin pig breeding as a sustained activity. Managerial budget forecasting notes report that animal breeding provided a considerable and sustainable source of income only if the weather and circumstances did not cause animal mortality.

Contrary to the claims of state propaganda during Albania's communist regime, revenue generated from spiritual services and donations was only one-third of that received from crop cultivation and animal farming. Such contributions largely depended on the spiritual qualities of the abbot. The fact that Dervican monastery, which had a monk/abbot, performed better in this regard than Vanistër monastery, which had only a priest who might not even have been a permanent resident at the monastery, corroborates the auditor's observation that income from such services depended largely on the qualities of the abbot as a spiritual leader of the monastery. The huge income generated by the Monastery of the Prophet Elias at Jorgucat from its dependency in Iași was not typical for Dropull monasteries.

The proximity of the monasteries to forests they owned provided opportunities for additional revenue from forestry activities. The rugged character of the forests on Mali i Gjerë Mountain, where all three monasteries discussed here are located, could not furnish much more than what the monasteries already generated.

The absence of monastic communities and sufficient know-how on how monasteries could generate income, appears to be the reason why the monasteries under consideration were unable to generate a greater return from lucrative economic investments. The lack of investment in craftsmanship by Vanistër monastery indicated a missed opportunity, like for instance the sale of sumac leaves, in the cultivation and optimization of which the monastery does not seem to have made any serious investment. Many modern monasteries generate income from the cultivation and sale of biological products including honey, medicinal plants, and related by-products, activities in which the Dropull monasteries did not systematically engage.

The nature of the revenue sources did not guarantee a steady income throughout the year. We must therefore assume that, although some of the needs of the monastery could have been met through barter transactions, at periods of low liquidity, a system of accounts payable or small credit must have been in place. This could in part justify the loan repayments recorded in monastic balance sheets. Such liquidity issues seem to have been more frequent at times when taxes needed to be paid.

Expenses

Commodities and payroll appear to have been the major expenditure lines of the monasteries analysed in this study. As I have shown above, payroll outlay was necessary to sustain the monastery's shepherds and farmers, while, in the absence of a numerous monastic community to serve pilgrims, servants had to be appointed for this purpose. Hence, a portion of the expenses for commodities must have been spent on the treatment of pilgrims, who provided a fair portion of the monastery's income.

I have grouped various expenses under the key word of *commodities*. As the register shows, monasteries spent money on supplies of coffee and sugar, wine and *raki*, a traditional local spirit, olive oil (as only Jorgucat monastery had olive trees at locations outside the Dropull region), shoeing, saddles, ropes and halters for their pack animals, salt, torches, soap, metal utility tools, incense, oil lamps and so on. As **Table 5** indicates, commodities and payroll expenses were the most significant outlay for the monasteries studied here.

Taxation varied at different periods between 6 and 30 percent (**Table 5**), yet it was overall rather low. Taxes to the state at the time primarily included the meadow tax and the tax on mutton, while monasteries also paid taxes to local prelates and church funds, especially when such prelates visited the monastery to officiate at its feast day celebration. More often than not, taxation did not exceed 10%, indicating that the state acknowledged the importance of the social role of the monasteries' core mission. In their turn, monasteries made sure they did not default on this mission. The Monastery of the Taxiarchs at Dervican, for example, provided shelter to three old women, one cripple and two Ottoman guards of the village (AQSH. F. 139, D. 4, 10^v). Vanistër monastery, in its turn, maintained an elderly female servant (AQSH. F. 139, D. 4, 12^v). Though Jorgucat monastery, due to its financial hardship, does not appear to have engaged in similar works of charity, the extensive charitable work of neighbouring Dryano monastery and Pepel monastery indicates that charity was the rule rather than the exception in the monastic world.

Monastic Financial Management

As I have demonstrated in the previous section, the role of a monastery's abbot or warden in the financial stability of a monastery was quite important. In Dervişan monastery, for example, loans seem to have been managed better after 1868 when a new abbot was installed in the monastery, indicating ineffective financial administration before this year. All monasteries appear to have lacked proper title deeds for some of their properties – an issue that should have been addressed by their managers – and as a consequence, the monasteries of Vanistër and Jorgucat lost significant plots of land. This land was expropriated by big *çiflik* landowners from the ranks of the *beys* of Gjirokastra and the neighbouring village of Lazarat.

The instrumental role of the abbot is recognized by the author of the source register, who must also have been the auditor charged with checking the abbot's/warden's freedom of action. Quoting statements by the abbots/*hegoumens* of the Monastery of the Dormition of the Virgin or of Dryano monastery, Zervat, Dropull, the auditor, records that “the conflicts and unnecessary legal action between Gabriel and my predecessor (that is, two abbots of the monastery) resulted in spending all the revenue of the monastery, to the extent that after the 25-year-long abbacy of the late Gabriel, who enjoyed generous income from Moldavia, not a single mite was found when he died in 1857 [...]” (AQSH. F. 139, D. 4, 34^r). Yet we should also bear in mind that a good spiritual father who was successful as abbot of a monastery may not necessarily have been an efficient financial manager and vice versa.

One is inclined to conclude, however, that basic financial literacy was on the whole not uncommon in the monasteries under consideration. The annual balance sheets reveal a rather formal economy that also operated on the basis of accounts payable and receivable. Abbots or wardens kept records of their transactions and these records were checked every now and then by auditors sent by the local Metropolis.

Monastic Finances from a Macroscopic Perspective: Then and Now

Land acquisition by way of donations, or concealed donations as sales, contributed to the development of a sense of communal ownership related to monastic properties. This may be an alternative explanation for the corrupt lease of Jorgucat monastery's lands. Such practices of the expropriation of church properties on the basis of a sense of communal ownership persists to this day, especially in cases where

church authorities were unsuccessful in securing monastic land title deeds, a problem that is commonly encountered today on account of a variety of reasons.

As I have demonstrated, the Patriarchate and the local Metropolis seem to have brought significant financial literacy to their management of resources. These resources were mobilized in an attempt to exercise checks and balances upon uncontrolled or even unscrupulous freedom of action of abbots or wardens, as well as to craft financial plans on the basis of managerial accounting data and financial forecasting techniques. Yet, as I have demonstrated elsewhere (Giakoumis 1998), these techniques were also not always clear and free of speculation. Corporate governance auditing mechanisms were employed effectively, as source documents indicate. And managerial decisions were also made, including the toughest, that is, that of replacing an abbot, who was the equivalent of a company's CEO.

Last but not least, the Orthodox Church and its representatives in the period under consideration (1867–1873) appear to have been rational agents well-acquainted with the financial management policies and practices that are common in the modern-day corporate world in open market-based economies. At the same time, monasteries do not appear to have neglected their spiritual mission, which explains for instance why certain expenses such as maintaining elderly servants were retained, even though they meant incurring a financial loss. In spite of such decisions that are irrational in capitalist terms, the rationality of other decisions and activities such as short-cycle investments and the allocation, reallocation and auditing of services and duties indicate that the Orthodox Church contributed to the introduction of a capitalist culture in the region.

References

Unpublished Primary Sources

AQSH F. 139, D. 4, "Register of the Metropolis of Dryinoupolis and Gjirokastra on Monastic Finances", unpublished manuscript codex kept at the General Directorate of Archives, Central Archive of the State, Tirana, Albania.

CPC: Codex of Patriarchal Correspondence.

Secondary Literature

- Aravantinos, Panagiotis. 1984. *Περιγραφή της Ηπείρου* [Description of Epirus], vol. 3. Ioannina: Hetaireia Hepeirotikon Meleton.
- Baras, Vasileios. 1966. *Το Δέλβινο της Βορείου Ηπείρου και οι Γειτονικές του Περιοχές Αργυροκάστρου, Χειμάρρας, Πωγωνίου, Φιλιατών, Παραμυθιάς κλπ.* [Delvine of the Northern Epirus and its Adjacent Regions of Gjirokastrë, Himara, Pogoni, Filiates, Paramythia etc.]. Athens: n.p.
- Cotovanu, Lidia. 2009. “La Diocèse de Dryinoupolis et Ses Bienfaiteurs de Valachie et de Moldavie. Solidarités de Famille et Traits Identitaires Multiples (XVIe-XVIIe Siècles).” In *Contribuții Privitoare la Historia Relațiilor dintre Țările Române și Bisericele Răsăritene în Secolele XIV-XIX*, edited by Petronel Zahariuc, 219–360. Iași: Editura Universității Ioan Cuza.
- Evangelidis, Dimitrios. 1919. *Η Βόρειος Ηπειρος* [The Northern Epirus]. Athens: Syllogos pros Diadosin Ophelimon Vivlion.
- Fotić, Aleksandar. 2005. “Concealed Donation or a Sale: The Acquisition of Monastic Property (Fifteenth-Seventeenth Centuries).” In *XIV. Türk Tarih Kongresi (Ankara, 9–13 Eylül 2002). Kongreye Sunulan Bildiriler, II. Cilt – I. Kısım*, 721–28. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi.
- Giakoumis, Georgios. 1994. *Μνημεία Ορθοδοξίας στην Αλβανία* [Orthodox Monuments in Albania]. Athens: Doukas School.
- Giakoumis, Georgios, and Konstantinos Giakoumis. 1994. *Μνημεία Ορθοδοξίας στη Βόρειο Ήπειρο* [Orthodox Monuments in Northern Epirus]. Ioannina: Idryma Voreioepitorikon Meleton.
- Giakoumis, Konstantinos. 1998. “Η Οικονομική Κατάσταση των Ηπειρωτικών Μοναστηριών κατά τα τέλη του 19ου αιώνα: Η περίπτωση της Ι.Μ. Σπηλαιού Λιούντζης” [The Economic Situation of the Epirote Monasteries at the End of the Nineteenth Century: The Case of the Holy Monastery of Spelaio in Lunxhëri]. *Ηπειρωτικό Ημερολόγιο* 19: 303–320.
- Giakoumis, Konstantinos. 2002. *The Monasteries of Jorgucat and Vanishtë in Dropull and of Spelaio in Lunxhëri as Monuments and Institutions During the Ottoman Period in Albania (Sixteenth-Nineteenth Centuries)*. 2 vols, Ph.D. dissertation. University of Birmingham. <https://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?uin=uk.bl.ethos.390688>.
- Giakoumis, Konstantinos. 2019. “The Policy of Non-Discrimination and the Protection of Minority Cultural Heritage in Albania.” *International Journal of Cultural Policy*. doi: 10.1080/10286632.2019.1567722.
- Giakoumis, Konstantinos. 2020. *Ο εκκλησιαστικός κώδικας Δρυϊνουπόλεως και Αργυροκάστρου (1760–1858)* [The Ecclesiastical Codex of Dryinopolis and Gjirokastrë [1760–1858]. Tirana: University College LOGOS.
- Giovannis, Georgios. 1928. *Ιστορική Περίληψις της Ιεράς Μονής Προφήτου Ηλιού Γεωργουσταίου, μετά ιστορικών Γεγονότων της Κοινότητος Ταύτης και Συνοπτική Σημείωσις των Ενεργειών και Αποφάσεων προς Ανέγερσιν της Ευπρεπούς Κεντρικής Εκκλησίας Γεωργουσταίου* [Historical Summary of the Holy Monastery of Prophetis Elias of Jorgucat Together with the Historical Events of this Community and an Abridged Note of the Acts and Decisions for the Building of the Seemly Central Church of Jorgucat]. Ioannina: Ionia.
- Kalkandjieva, Daniela. 2010. “The Bulgarian Orthodox Church and the ‘Ethic of Capitalism’.” *Social Compass*, 57 (1): 83–99.

- Kalyvopoulos, Georgios and Christos Kalyvopoulos. 1975. *Μπουλιάρατι – Δερόπολη Βορείου Ηπείρου. Ιστορία – Λαϊκός Πολιτισμός* [Bularat-Dropull of Northern Epirus. History – Folklore]. Athens: Syllogos Vouliaratinon en Ameriki “O Hagios Athanasios”.
- Kamaroulis, Dimitris. 1996. *Τα Μοναστήρια της Ηπείρου* [The Monasteries of Epirus]. Vol. 2. Athens: Bastas-Plessas.
- Kolovos, Elias. 2016. ‘Christian *Vakıfs* of Monasteries in the Ottoman Greek Lands from the Fourteenth to Eighteenth Centuries’, in *Les fondations pieuses waqfs chez les chrétiens et les juifs du Moyen Âge à nos jours*, edited by S. Mohasseb Saliba, 103–27. Paris: Geuthner.
- Lambridis, Ioannis. 1971. *Ηπειρωτικά Αγαθοεργήματα. Περί των εν Ηπείρῳ Αγαθοεργημάτων* [Epirotic charities. Concerning the charities of Epirus]. Vol. 1. Ioannina: Hetaireia Hepeirotikon Meleton.
- N.A. (12.01.1874), “Εκκλησιαστικά” [Church News]. *Ανατολικός Αστήρ*, No. 1149, 4190.
- N.A. (16.01.1875), “Έχουμεν Πόρους;” [Do we have money? *Ανατολικός Αστήρ*, No. 1253, 4603–4604.
- N.A. (10.08.1888), “Εκκλησιαστικά” [Church News. *Ανατολικός Αστήρ*, No. 45, 357.
- Oikonomou, Photios. 1990. *Ορθοδοξία και Ελληνισμός στη Βόρειο Ήπειρο* [Orthodoxy and Hellenism in Northern Epirus]. Athens: Eleutheri Skepsis.
- Papadopoulos, Georgios. 1978. *Η Δερβητσάνη της Κάτω Δροπόλεως Αργυροκάστρου* [Dervician of Dropull i Poshtem of Gjirokastër]. Athens: n.p.
- Petridis, Athanasios. 1871. “Χρονικόν Δρυοπίδος” [Chronicon of Dryopis]. *Νεοελληνικά Ανάλεκτα του Φιλολογικού Συλλόγου Παρνασσός* 1 (B.1): 3–64.
- Popa, Theofan. 1998. *Mbishkrime të Kishave në Shqipëri* [Church Inscriptions in Albania], edited by Nestor Nepravishta and Kostandin Gjakumis. Tirana: Akademia e Shkencave – Instituti i Historisë.
- Poulitsas, Panagiotis. 1928. “Επιγραφαί και Ενθυμήσεις εκ της Βορείου Ηπείρου” [Inscriptions and Memories from Northern Epirus]. *Επετηρίς Εταιρείας Βυζαντινών Σπουδών* 5: 53–99.
- Rost, Katja, Emil Inauen, Margit Osterloh, and Bruno S. Frey. 2010. “The Corporate Governance of Benedictine Abbeys: What Can Stock Corporations Learn from Monasteries?” *Journal of Management History*, 16 (1): 90–115.
- Roudometov, Victor N. and Michalis N. Michael. 2010. “Economic Functions of Monasticism in Cyprus: The Case of the Kykkos Monastery.” *Religions*, 1 (1): 54–77.
- Thomo, Pirro. 1998. *Kishat pasbizantine në Shqipërinë e Jugut* [Post-Byzantine Churches in Southern Albania]. Tirana: OACA.
- Zotos, Vasileios Molossos. 1878. *Δρομολόγιον της Ελληνικής Χερσονήσου. Ηπειρωτικά Μελέται* [Itinerary of the Greek Peninsula: Epirotic Studies]. Vol. 4 (I). Athens: Ethnikon Typographeion.



Section III

DEALING WITH FINANCE

Orthodox Monasteries as Banks

A COMPARISON WITH CATHOLIC MOUNTS OF PIETY

LIDIA COTOVANU¹

In the introduction to his latest study on wealth, the fall of Rome, and the establishment of Christianity in Western Europe, Peter Brown (2012, xv) justifies his decision to leave aside the Eastern areas of the Roman Empire, arguing that the Western areas were amply covered by the rich documentary material left by Latin authors and well-served by the “healthy state of late Roman studies.” He also mentions his “confidence that there are and will be many other scholars capable of doing justice to the equally fascinating theme of the relation between church, wealth, and society in the eastern provinces of the empire.” In fact, the state of research on the interactions between religion and economy in the world of Greek Orthodox Christianity² lags behind the growing scholarly interest in the theme in the case of the Western world.³

This chapter aims to take some initial steps towards a much-needed comparative perspective on the Orthodox East and the Catholic West in terms of the relationship between religion and economy in the Middle Ages and early modern period. At first sight, there is nothing to suggest any similarities between the Orthodox monasteries and the Catholic mounts of piety, which, as financial institutions founded by the followers of Saint Francis of Assisi, were proper public banks offering interest-based loans to the poor. And yet, as we shall see, the mounts of piety were modelled on the Western monastic tradition, which, in its institutional and theological-economic structures derived from the Eastern monastic tradition (Lawrence 2015; Toneatto

- 1 The research for this chapter was conducted within the ‘Network Pontica Magna’ programmes of New Europe College in Bucharest (2015–2016) and has been supported by the *Research network devoted to the history of the monastic economy*, hosted by the Centre for Advanced Study Sofia and the Center for Governance and Culture in Europe (GCE) at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of St. Gallen under the project: “Does Monastic Economy Matter? Religious Patterns of Economic Behaviour” (2017–2018).
- 2 On the interactions of religion and economy, church and wealth in Byzantium, the work of Angeliki Laiou remains fundamental. See Laiou 2002 and 2013. For monastic economic management in the Ottoman period, see Kolovos 2011.
- 3 The reader can find bibliographies on this topic in the older and more recent studies of Todeschini 2008 and 2017; Simonnot 2005; Bériou and Chiffolleau 2009; Lenoble 2013; Brown 2012 and 2015.

2012, 209–374). As an institution, the mounts of piety in fact remoulded a range of common features of Eastern and Western monasticism into a different structure, which drew on Franciscan economic theory. We shall return to these features later. It was this initial observation that prompted what appears to be a legitimate comparative exercise aiming to prove that, in their structures and functions, monasteries obeyed a logic proper to banking, generating long-term profits. The mounts were not created *ex nihilo*, either in terms of ideological justifications for their charitable mission and their ensuing social utility, or purely in banking terms, and not even as bodies which merged charitable objectives and banking practices into one single structure. In my opinion, church institutions, and in particular monasteries, were conceived from the first centuries of Christianity onwards as Christian banks, a role which was ‘recycled’ in the fifteenth century on new theological-economic foundations by the Franciscan inventors of the mounts of piety.

The association between monasteries and banks has been noted by other scholars. Angeliki Laiou, for example, has addressed one important economic role of major Byzantine monasteries as ‘deposit banks’, where wealthy parishioners kept their valuables and even their money. This is not a far-fetched association: monasteries even offered pawnbroking services to private individuals – and, less frequently, interest-based loans, which were prohibited by canon law (Laiou and Morrisson 2011, 113; Laiou 2013). However, as we shall discuss later, such activities were minor and conducted on the margins of the economy of salvation which was *de facto* and *de jure* the basis of the monastic accumulation of capital. Valentina Toneatto has noted the use of the term *banker* (*trapezita*) in patristic homilies and in the codes of monastic rules. The term referred variously to the poor as recipients of alms and intercessors between the almsgivers and God, to the faithful who had to give credit to the sermons of their priests, and to monks as administrators of their own personal goods and of the temporal assets of their community (Tonneato 2012, 178, 184, and 228–33). In all such cases, the Fathers of the church used the central figure of the banker-moneylender for comparison. Toneatto does not cite any patristic reference to banks as public institutions for the simple reason that they did not exist in Late Antiquity. In contrast, private banks that lent money on interest and engaged in monetary transactions were common (Bogaert 1997; Lerouxel 2016) and the Church Fathers often referred, in rhetorical terms, to the moneylender-banker figures who ran them.

Toneatto’s study has been similarly invaluable to me in another respect: the author compiled and analysed a detailed repertoire of the “theological-economic” lexicon employed by the Greek and Latin Church Fathers and by the Western monastic *Rules* between the fourth and ninth centuries. She shows the ways in which the

new Christian world was configured, envisaged, and how it subsequently worked in practice by discursively linking the mundane world and the afterlife in economic terms. It was in terms of the market economy⁴ that the Fathers explained to the faithful the place of wealth and poverty, the meaning of Christ's sacrifice, and the roles of bishops and monks, of salvation, of the gift, and so on in the Christian community. They interpreted in economic terms the relationship of humankind to God, the life of monks in coenobitic monasteries, and their links with the outside world, which maintained these establishments with donations and bequests for over 1500 years. The present study focuses on this religious-economic nexus, which generated vast accumulations of monastic assets over that period.

I started from the observation of V. Toneatto (2012, 178) and G. Todeschini (2008), who noted that the economic thinking of the Fathers was reinterpreted by the Franciscan friars in a novel economic context and led to the creation of the mounts of piety as public, urban banks. I venture that monasteries functioned as banks suited to the agrarian world and, as such, focused mainly on deposits of landed property, for which they charged interest, which was both spiritual and charitable, as a contribution to the common good of all Christians. For centuries, depositors of land and other immovable assets secured prayers for salvation, financial support for funeral plots and welfare assistance for the marginalized whom the Christian community had sent to these establishments to be cared for. A comparison between the mounts and the monasteries will support my hypothesis. As further evidence in my analysis, I will discuss the practice of dedicating Wallachian and Moldavian monastic establishments as *metochia* (subordinate monasteries) to the major Greek suffragan monasteries of the Eastern Patriarchate, a practice which emerged in the mid sixteenth century.⁵ The *metochia* were not unlike 'bank subsidiaries' which facilitated the transfer to Greek monasteries of the surplus of assets earmarked for rituals ensuring the 'welfare of the soul' in Wallachia and Moldavia.

4 *Economy* is understood here "non pas comme désignant un domaine théorique défini selon une mesure moderne et régi par ses règles particulières telles que les lois du marché contemporain, mais comme un ensemble de comportements et d'actions humaines aussi variés que possibles touchant aux échanges matériels et comprenant l'acquisition, la production, la gestion et l'utilisation des biens, sur une échelle qui va de la recherche de la simple subsistance à la volonté d'obtenir des gains et de thésauriser des richesses" (Toneatto 2012, 16, n5).

5 The case of the Romanian monasteries is evoked here by virtue of the Byzantine institutional inheritance in the Romanian Principalities (Georgescu 1980; and *infra*). Except for the sole Wallachian metochion of the Serbian Chilandar Monastery on Mount Athos, all other Romanian metochia were granted to monasteries which depended on the Eastern Patriarchates and were administered by Greek (in the jurisdictional and cultural sense) monks.

The Mounts of Piety as Banks

According to historians of the mounts of piety (*Banchi pubblici*; Fornasari 1993; Muzarelli 2001; Avallone 2001; Avallone 2007), an institution ‘invented’ by the Franciscan friars in fifteenth-century Italy, the main innovation in this venture was to bring together the *poor* and the *bank*.⁶ To achieve and justify this association of categories which would appear incompatible – with the rich being normally catered for by the banks, while the poor were left in the care of the church – the promoters of the project engaged in much reflection on the ideological underpinnings of such a plan. Initially, the mounts were allowed to be established on condition that they would offer interest-free loans only. However, as soon as the first institutions of this type opened,⁷ it became quite clear that donations, as start-up capital, and the resale of credit for which repayments had lapsed were hardly enough to ensure the uninterrupted activities of the mounts. From quite an early stage, those who managed the mounts decided to start charging interest on loans; these interest rates were, admittedly, lower than those charged either by Christian merchants or by ‘foreigners’, more specifically Jews. Credit at low interest rates was justified as a safeguard against the *risks* incurred by the mounts in preventing the insolvent from descending into poverty and thus helping them retain their place in the community of economically active Christians.⁸

Below the threshold of aid to the poor – who were not all able to repay the loans and retrieve the goods they had pawned –, the loans offered by the mounts of piety were in fact still part of an economy of charitable donation. At the same time, a risk-free loan is a feature of the market economy and presupposes a profit.⁹ In this way, for the first time, a distinction was made between, on the one hand, *credit* as practiced in an institutional and legal context with the aim of supporting the integrity of the Christian social body and maintain public order, and, on the other,

6 The real novelty of the enterprise was to involve a class of poor, which differed from the groups traditionally helped by the church: see below for further details. This was linked to another new concept, that of productive charity, of giving support to the poor so that they could carry on as active members of a common market and make their contribution to the general good of the city (Todeschini 2008).

7 At the end of the fifteenth century, Italy had around 80 mounts of piety (Halay 1994, 11).

8 According to Franciscan doctrine, the destitute had no use for social organization around the market as a common good based on trust and reciprocity, and were, therefore, excluded from the city’s economic and juridical structures. However, the Franciscans also believed that the city community could intervene with the creation of charitable institutions (Todeschini 2008, 213–15, 219–20, 243–44, 274; Todeschini 2015).

9 The use of this type of credit, which was indispensable to European merchants and entrepreneurs, was to be endorsed in Western Christendom under the impact of the Reformation. Turgot was its main theorist in the eighteenth century (Turgot 2014).

usury, an informal economic practice geared towards personal profit making.¹⁰ The concept of *charitable credit* made its way into economic practice: in 1515, Pope Leo X authorized the mounts to charge a modest interest, in order, on the one hand, to continue their activities, and, on the other, to offer financial assistance to the poor and help protect them against Jewish moneylenders (Montanari 1999; Todeschini 2008, 210–31; Todeschini 2019).

To sum up, the mount of piety was a bank with a start-up capital built from donations from wealthy believers, businesspersons keen to secure the salvation of their souls as well as a public visibility and a public role (Todeschini 2008, 244–45). It was a charitable bank operating on several levels. On the one hand, it offered low interest-rate loans to faithful who found it difficult to meet the costs of their daily needs and to those who struggled to start or re-start a small business. These were the ‘redeemable’ poor, who could afford to pawn something: the aim was to keep these individuals connected to the economic life of the city and help them spend in a productive manner. On the other hand, the mount’s surplus revenue was expected to subsidize poor relief services to those who had nothing, in other words to the indigent. Thus, the mounts combined the twin activities of civic charity, which gradually became its key role, and social care (Menning 1993; Todeschini 2008, 244–53, 268–69).

Jean-Pierre Gutton (1994) uses the metaphor of a transplant to describe the mount of piety as an institution which fused the aims of a *gift economy* and a *market economy* on the margins of the traditional Christian system of welfare. In fact, the *inventors* of the mounts based their new institution on Christian values which were still valid in their time: the final outcome was a fusion between church values and the market economy within a legal and morally sustainable framework.¹¹ The metaphor of the grafting of banking roles onto charitable activities helped me acquire a better understanding of the ‘body’ onto which the fifteenth-century Franciscan friars grafted this role. Fundamentally, this body – which corresponded to the traditional Christian system of welfare and salvation – was structured along the lines of a financial banking logic in the East as well as in the West. Let us now turn to the ways in which the Church Fathers reconciled the riches of the Roman elites with the Christian injunctions to poverty, by bringing into play *salvation*, *philanthropy*,

10 According to canon and civil law, usury was practiced by individuals ‘with little or no social power’, whereas credit, involving pawnbroking and periodical sales of land, was characteristic of ecclesiastical entities, landowners and entrepreneurs, and was based on good reputation, trust and social utility (Todeschini 2008, 25, 166–86; Todeschini 2017).

11 On the ways in which the Franciscans related to money and, more generally, to the exchange market, see Chiffolleau 1987; Todeschini 2008, *passim*, and 266–67; Lenoble 2013.

charity, gift, accumulation of wealth, and maintenance of public order through poor relief.

Monasteries between Poverty and Wealth

At the heart of the Christian welfare system stand the figures of Christ, of the able-bodied, ‘fit-for-work’ fishermen hoping for eternal salvation, and of the poor with no possessions, the indigent, who were associated with Christ because He had chosen poverty and self-sacrifice out of love for humankind.¹² In this equation, all healthy, fit-for-work fishermen had to sacrifice a part of their worldly goods to offer thanks to the Redeemer and pay for their sins. Sacrifice, in the shape of almsgiving, was a way for donors to give indirectly to the divine recipient, through their donations to the poor, to those who could not survive independently,¹³ and who were the true incarnation of the Son of God on earth. Philanthropy, the love of humankind, was thus translated into the practical act of charity. The recipients of charity were expected to pray for the soul of their benefactors and mediate between them and God. The poor were thus elevated to the status of necessary ‘evil’, useful for the salvation of the fit members of the community, while, from the perspective of the donors, the accumulation of riches was encouraged to ensure that there would be enough material resources to assist the poor. The more the faithful gave, the better chances they had of going to the Kingdom of Heaven, and the better guarantees there were for the necessary funds to support the poor. This concatenation of doctrines and practices had the double outcome of, on the one hand, reconciling the riches of the elites with the injunction of poverty in Holy Scripture, and, on the other, of giving the new religion a practical, social role, that of maintaining public order by offering assistance to the weak and marginalized.

It is difficult to say for the early Christian period how many active Christians distributed alms directly to the poor.¹⁴ What is certain is that it was the church, led by the Greek and Latin Fathers, which placed itself at the forefront of this major work

12 For social and economic poverty in early Byzantium see Patlagean 1977.

13 According to Toneatto 2012, 197, “à travers le langage de la pauvreté [...], la hiérarchie tend à définir le peuple des fidèles, identifiés dans son aspect caractéristique de groupe dépendant de l’aide de Dieu.” However, this interpretation is contradicted by the actual practices of poor relief as recorded in sources throughout the Christian period, as well as by the profile of charitable institutions, which functioned in bishoprics and monastic communities. These data indicate clearly that the ‘goods of the poor’ managed by monks were destined for the use of persons deprived of physical or financial autonomy, i.e., of those who remained outside the ‘labour market’ and on the margins of the community of the faithful (orphans, deprived widows, lepers, invalids, the homeless, etc.).

14 As Brown (2001, 19–26) argued, the two types of charity – direct and indirect – coexisted during the early Christian centuries. See also Caseau 2017.

of social assistance and of the mission to spread the principle of philanthropy at work through charity in the *oecumene*. This was the time when bishops, once they were authorized by the secular power to accumulate material assets on behalf of the church, took on roles as major builders of welfare institutions such as hospitals, homes for the elderly and orphans, leproseries, hostels for homeless foreigners, and so on. Usually, these institutions were adjacent to the monasteries which, as legal entities, had the personnel and the material resources needed to maintain the newly created system (Konstantelos 1986; Miller 1997; Miller 2003). Canon and imperial law both established that the erection of religious buildings and of institutions of social assistance had to be authorized by a bishop. The inalienability of church property was also enshrined in law under the Emperor Justinian. By the late sixth century, poor relief was recognized as an activity of public utility and was entrusted to the church, a decision which reinforced the authority of the higher clergy in the Christian community, while also giving it a privileged fiscal status (Chaudenet 1958, 297–304; Booramara 1975; Jobert 1977, 85–92; Brown 2001; Delmaire, Mommsen and Rouge 2005; Konidaris 2003, 215–23; Toneatto 2012, 183–207).

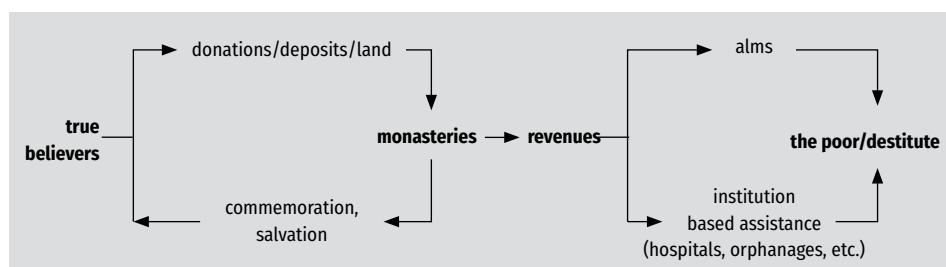
At liturgical level, the transfer of almsgiving from lay donors to the church (which retained the monopoly over poor relief for centuries) was conceptualized by associating the donation with the ritual of the Eucharist officiated by a priest: it was argued that the donors sacrificed a part of their wealth for the poor – and through the poor, for Christ the Saviour. This exchange was mediated by the priest as the only one who could perform the mystery of the transformation of worldly goods (no longer donated directly to the needy, but to the church) into spiritual goods to be taken into account in the afterlife (Magnani 2008). In this process, the church acquired the role of mediator between the more active, prosperous Christians and God on the one hand, and between the community of these healthier, fit-for-work Christians and the poor, on the other. It was the church that now had the task of re-distributing the alms to the poor from the donations made by Christians seeking salvation. As a consequence of this shift, it is difficult to know whether ordinary people actually knew that, by giving to the church, they were in fact giving to the poor. Conversely, powerful people, well-versed in tradition and law, knew perfectly well that by founding religious institutions or by donating a part of their wealth to the church, they became patrons of bodies that practiced charity and, in their turn, supported other institutions of public utility.¹⁵ Quite often the founders (*ktitors*) requested in the statutes (*typika*) of their foundations that the revenue surplus of the

15 For the role of laypersons in the foundation of institutions of poor relief in the early Byzantine period, see Aubineau 1975; Lemerle 1977; Miller 1997.

establishment be donated to the needy, or left this decision to the discretion of the father superior (Smyrlis 2006, 238–39, 240).

Monasteries – founded on the principle of *voluntary poverty* – thus became involved from an early stage on with the work of assistance to the *involuntary poor*. Authorized to accumulate assets and to subsidize poor relief institutions and the entire system of alms redistribution, they became places for the *deposit of donated patrimonial assets*: their annual profit (that is, what remained after covering their own expenses) was meant to cover the costs of donors’ commemorations as well as expenses for charitable activities.¹⁶ In this capacity, around the eleventh–twelfth centuries, monasteries became major landowners in the East as well as in the West.¹⁷

To sum up, in the largely agrarian Christian communities, monasteries functioned as banks where people could “deposit” lands and other immovable assets (through donation) in exchange for spiritual “interest”, that is, prayers for the commemoration of their soul (either in perpetuity or for limited periods) and, thereby, a better chance of salvation. This exchange was conceptualized in terms of a transfer of worldly goods to the afterlife in the form of salvation and eternal life. The transaction therefore resulted for the donors in a “profit” to be gained in the spiritual realm, added to the symbolic profit of enhanced social utility and visibility. The monasteries for their part obtained a *real estate capital* gain, to be used mainly for the maintenance of the buildings, for the distribution of alms and the financial support of institutions of poor relief.



By and large, the mounts of piety did not depart much from the gift economy and from charity. As already mentioned, their start-up capital consisted of gifts from

16 For the conceptualization of the accumulation of riches and their ‘good’ use by the church, see especially Kaplan 1976; Ekelund et al. 1996; Simonnot 2005; Rébillard and Sotinel 2008; Smyrlis 2006; Toneatto 2012; Brown 2012 and 2015.

17 Smyrlis 2006, with the relevant bibliography for the Byzantine case.

wealthy Christians in search of salvation, visibility and public utility, gifts which were no longer landed property, but money or, at most, urban immovable assets. This was the first step that the Franciscan order took towards *de facto* adaptation of the church's charitable roles to the growth of trade and the emergence of the money market, which resulted in increasing migration of the rural poor towards the rapidly evolving urban spaces of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. What changed was the nature of the goods invested in the quest for salvation rather than the system of circulation of material goods, private charitable services, and public welfare services. The mounts of piety remained linked to the gift economy and to charity, that is, to the accumulation of assets justified in terms of the doctrine of redemption and of the hoped-for salvation of individuals and communities.

From Landed Capital to Finance Capital

Let us now turn to the strategies of management of capital: landed, in the case of monasteries, financial in the case of the mounts of piety. In the first category, I will refer specifically to Eastern monasteries, which diversified their economic activities in the late Byzantine period in order to adapt to the growth of the money economy.

The Christian system for the management of salvation and of assistance to the destitute was based on the exploitation of land. That meant that the "capital" acquired through donations – from founders (*ktitors*), emperors, other members of the flock, and tonsured monks – had to be invested for long-term profitability. The revenue thus generated was used to sustain the life of the monastic communities, as well as ensure their uninterrupted activity in the realms of private interest (prayers for the salvation of the donors' souls) as well as of public utility. As imperial treasuries and public property reserves were depleted after the Latin conquest of Constantinople, the major Byzantine monastic establishments sought closer ties to the market economy. Some had already been commercializing the produce of their lands on the local markets. In the new context of the eleventh–fourteenth centuries, as studies have shown, the great Byzantine monastic complexes expanded their commercial activities, adding banking practices typical of the new money economy. Studies in the economic history of the Byzantine monasteries (Zivojinović 1991; Kaplan 1992, 282–310; Laiou 1999 and 2002; Pitsakis 2002; Oikonomides 2004; Saint-Guillain 2004; Smyrlis 2006, 184–244) which remained active in the Ottoman period (Liata 1987; Fotić 2000; Kotzageorgis 2002; Kolovos 2011) have identified a wide range of economic and financial activities, such as farming, animal husbandry, trade in farming produce, purchase of lands and urban property, colonization of deserted land and foundation of new villages, provision of private assistance services in exchange for

immovable properties, investment in landed estate and in construction, purchase and resale of farming produce for profit, management of inns and shops in cities, rental of urban property, insurance on sales and purchases, rental of safe storage space, pawnbroking, and (rarely) moneylending at interest.

This was a significantly expanded array of economic and financial activities, which Orthodox (as well as Catholic) monasteries added to their official role as repositories of donated lands, administrators of the economy of salvation and social assistance. The revenue from these activities by far exceeded the financial requirements of their maintenance and of their work for the public good. The profit they gained was often reinvested in real estate or trade or capitalized as liquidities or precious commodities.¹⁸

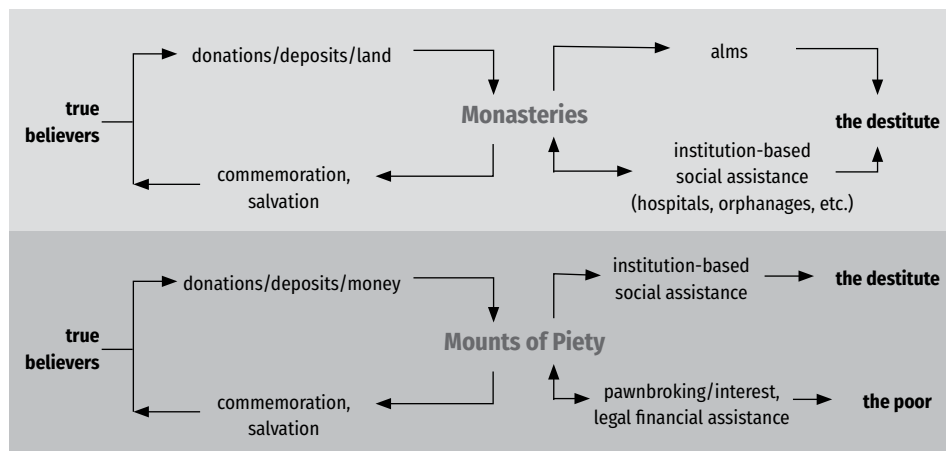
Such activities offered the Catholic mounts of piety a chance to avoid illegal interest-based loans, which were associated within the Christian community with the figure of the ‘foreign Other’, and a chance to become firmly embedded in the money economy which made an explosive entry in Italian urban milieux of the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries. Pawnbroking, which had been a secondary activity in the traditional work of the monasteries, now became the main activity in the new institutions. Initially, the founders of the mounts of piety used the argument of the centuries-old ban on interest-based moneylending, but they ended up practicing it themselves under cover of performing a public service. Restrictions on loans at interest originated in the disparity in economic status between the parties engaged in these transactions. The poor who resorted to a loan at interest were in a dangerous position because they were not economically and contractually equal to the creditor: therefore, the ban on interest was supposed to safeguard the destitute against dependency and decline into dire poverty (Ege 2014). The Franciscan friars therefore created the mounts specifically to offer the poor small loans, which were proportional to their low credit status. In the early days, no interest was charged on these loans, but gradually a small interest rate was introduced, given the increasing number of city-dwellers with cashflow difficulties.

The founders of the mounts of piety thus reinterpreted the traditional monastic model and adapted it subtly to a new world of emerging money economy, urbanization and increasing migration of the poor towards the cities. The mounts therefore continued to perform the charitable roles of monasteries, but they did so through

18

Kostis Smyrlis (2006, 133) has shown, however, that as a rule, commodities acquired through donation remained the basis of monastic wealth.

money transactions¹⁹ and in order to offer support to poor urbanites. In this way, *charity* became *financial assistance*. The main outcome of this shift was to expand the markets with an influx of consumers and small producers with low incomes. The mounts were a huge, overnight success.²⁰



Returning to the Orthodox monasteries, in the context of Ottoman domination, which was firmly established by the mid-fifteenth century, they continued to manage the landed property they had acquired through donations/deposits on the basis of the theory that the faithful could thus seek salvation, but informally supplemented these with trade and financial services. Remarkably, monasteries were able to keep their landed property, and with it, their public roles, because Ottoman law regarded them as charitable institutions (*wakf*).²¹ It is difficult to assess to what extent they lived up to their secular role as purveyors of assistance to the poor (sources are mostly silent, but not entirely absent).²² Undoubtedly, charitable institutions were rare in the Orthodox world, and this, in my view, left a vacuum to be filled by the ‘euergetism’ of rich laypersons, which radiated throughout the seventeenth century from the Greek-Orthodox diaspora (Alexander and Laiou 2014; Cotovanu 2021). Nevertheless, in the Western areas of the empire and on the islands conquered by the sultan, monasteries continued to behave like major economic agents: it remains to be seen who the beneficiaries were.

19 I have left aside the *Monti frumentari*, which lent grain to farmers in a similar way to loans of money. For these, see Avallone 2014 and Checchi 2015.

20 With the authorization of the Venetian authorities, the institution found its way to Venice’s Greek Orthodox dominions in the Levant (Papadia-Lala 2007; Desyllas 2006).

21 *Encyclopedia of Islam*, sv; Alexander and Laiou 2014.

22 Stavropoulos 1984, 53–6, 58, 59, 60, 61; Karamanolakis 2007, 18.

Nevertheless, in a predominantly agrarian world and a stateless Greek-Orthodox society, the material cornerstone of monastic wealth – the monasteries' capital – continued to be landed property acquired via donations well into the nineteenth century. Under Ottoman rule, it would appear that the major suffragan monasteries of the Eastern Patriarchate took a pragmatic approach and chose to adapt to the new circumstances rather than engage in philosophical debate about the juridical status of their economic-financial activities and change their old habits: alongside locally-sourced capital, they developed a vast network of *metochia* in the autonomous Romanian provinces of Wallachia and Moldavia. In the light of our observations on the interest-based 'banking' activities which underpinned the accumulation of capital by monasteries, the roles of these *metochia* become clearer.

The Romanian *Metochia* as "Subsidiaries" of the Greek Monasteries

Starting in the late Byzantine period, lay founders (*ktitors*) became less directly involved in the management of private monasteries, which ultimately gained autonomy in the administration of their affairs.²³ It was precisely in this period that the *metochia* emerged as institutions which managed and supervised monastic estates located at some distance from the motherhouse.²⁴ Until that period, lay founders had been taking part directly in the management of their foundations or had appointed their own trusted administrators to run these institutions as *charistikè*.²⁵ After this period, the trend was for monasteries to exercise this management role themselves. The founders simply retained their patronage prerogatives, which meant that they supervised the activities of the monks and had the right to bequeath the site or donate it to the bishop (Thomas 1988, 253–62). They also had the right to entrust the administration of their foundations to autonomous monasteries (*autodespota*): these were bigger, richer, and more enduring establishments. The foundation thus dedicated to another became a *metochion* and was subordinated to the controlling monastery. It was through this strategy that the great monasteries located in remote or inaccessible areas, such as the monasteries of Mount Athos and of Mount Sinai, acquired vast networks of dependent *metochia* in mainland Greece, on the islands of the Aegean and even in Constantinople itself.²⁶

23 Attempts had been made for a long time to limit the interference of laypersons in the administration of monastic assets, but due to pressure from these private individuals as well as under the impact of economic crises, such interference lasted well into the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries (Thomas 1988).

24 The emergence of the *metochia* in the Byzantine world and the dissemination of the institution in the South-Slavic and Romanian regions have not attracted the attention of scholars so far.

25 *Charistikè*: leased to private individuals for a limited term (Varnalidis 1985).

26 To date, we do not have a complete list of these monastic subsidiaries. See Smyrlis 2006, 116–24, 127–32, 157–60; and the Proceedings of the 9th International Conference of Mount Athos Center.

According to an entrenched view in contemporary historiography, faced with the Ottoman peril, the Orthodox Patriarchates generally sought a safe haven and subsidies at the princely courts of Wallachia and Moldavia. I am arguing that this stereotype should be revised, and I will try to offer a more nuanced view of the reasons for the presence of Greek clergy in the Romanian Principalities in the Ottoman period. Although the two provinces had retained their political, administrative and judiciary autonomy vis-à-vis the Porte, they were still controlled by the sultan, and this dependence made their princely power vulnerable and dependent on the influence networks of elites in Constantinople and Rumelia (See Păun 2003, 91–103, 303–496). This political dependence placed the Principalities firmly within the Ottoman economic system and reinforced their ecclesiastical dependence on the Patriarchate of Constantinople.²⁷ It should not be forgotten that, under pressure from the Porte, trade in the two provinces was oriented towards supplying the markets of Constantinople with low-priced goods, which greatly benefited the Christian merchants trading on the Wallachian and Moldavian markets (Lazăr 2006; Murgescu 2012). The Danube was hardly a border, given that trade was free on both banks. As I have demonstrated elsewhere, the Greek higher clergy joined their wealthy or recently enriched faithful north of the Danube (Cotovanu 2015). Ottoman control over the Principalities, which was established by the mid-sixteenth century,²⁸ led to an economic migration from Rumelia to the north. It was in this context that the Greek Patriarchates and the major monasteries under their jurisdiction looked to expand their economic interests northwards. This was effected through a growing network of Wallachian and Moldavian *metochia* dedicated to the Greek monasteries, and administered with the cooperation and complicity of local residents who had migrated, largely from Epirus, Thessaly and Macedonia (Cotovanu 2014). The connection between migration and the acquisition of *metochia* in the Principalities is also reflected in the urban concentration of the two parallel developments (Cotovanu 2018). The Greek Patriarchates and the great monasteries under their jurisdiction tended to settle next to the markets, where the monks could conveniently trade the produce of their vast landed estates.²⁹ Between 1568 and 1714, there were around 130 *metochia* of Greek monasteries in the Principalities. They operated more or less like *deposit-taking subsidiaries* for patrimonial commodities within the framework of the same banking system used by the controlling monasteries. The Greek clergy

27 The Churches of Wallachia and Moldavia were canonically subordinated to the Patriarchate of Constantinople; this status was confirmed by the sultan in 1476 and renewed in 1477, 1483 and 1525 (Zachariadou 1996, 160–2, 174–9; Kotzageorgis 2020, 26).

28 From 1538 (Moldavia) and 1541 (Wallachia), the ruling princes of the two provinces were regularly appointed directly by the sultan from a large pool of aspiring competitors who resided in Constantinople.

29 This was an old practice, recorded for Byzantium as early as the eleventh century (Ferjancić 1980; Giros 2003; Giros 2006; Smyrlis 2006, 223–25, 226–27).

identified and used highly inventive methods to adapt to the political and economic constraints of the modern era, while preserving the “good” old habits of the charitable gift economy. The patrimonial structure of monastic establishments in the Romanian Principalities was no different from that of Greek monasteries. The convents had a start-up capital largely made up of the initial donations from the establishment’s founder or founders. Further donations augmented this start-up capital and ensured the long-term sustainability of the grantee. This shows that the basis for the patrimony of Romanian monasteries, including that of the *metochia* dedicated to the Eastern Holy Places, continued to be the donated lands, the attached labour power, and acquired urban immovable assets. A monastery’s prosperity largely depended on the efficient management of its start-up capital. Long-term prosperity and survival in their turn ensured the renown of the establishment, its spiritual impact in society and hence, further donations. Donations continued to be, as they were in Byzantium, the main source of growth of the real estate capital, and some of these establishments were better than others at attracting the benevolence of their flock.

In the case of the Romanian monasteries dedicated to the Holy Places, the managing Greek monks had one further reason to try to invest their capital wisely and ensure the continuing productivity of the *metochia*. They did not have ownership of these establishments, only managerial roles. In this capacity, the donation documents stipulated that, in exchange for their managerial activities, the Greek monks were entitled, on behalf of their own monasteries, to the surplus revenue of the *metochia*, that is, what was left after the maintenance costs of the *metochia* had been met. It was a highly lucrative strategy of capturing a part of the annual profit gained by the *metochia*. Hence the endeavours of Greek monks to increase the yield of their lands and the revenue from their urban properties, as well as to develop a range of economic management tools which mirrored similar activities in Byzantium.³⁰

From all these economic activities, the Greek monks managed not only to draw the income due annually to their ‘mother’ monastery, but also to obtain a surplus which they invested, thereby ‘making money work’. The most widespread practice was to offer pawnbroking loans, which allowed the monks to increase the real estate assets of their monastic establishments. There is much evidence for this practice throughout the seventeenth century, especially for *metochia* in urban locations.³¹

30 As an example, see the case of Cotroceni monastery in Bucharest (Lazăr 2012). See also the contribution by G. Lazăr to the present volume.

31 *Documenta Romaniae Historica*, A, vol. 19, no 51, 69–70 (5 April 1626); *Documenta Romaniae Historica*, B, vol. 23, no 96, 175–77 (7 May 1630); *Documente – Iași*, vol. 1, no 229, 307–8 (28 March 1633), no 434, 493–94 (23 August 1657); *Documente – Iași*, vol. 2, no 585, 520–21 (31 May 1683), no 631, 555–56 (1686, May 23).

However, pawnbroking remained a marginal activity compared to purchases of land and urban property; investment in land remained the main source of economic (and political) power until the early nineteenth century.³²

Let us now return to the profit made by the faithful who invested a part of their assets in the Romanian monasteries dedicated as *metochia* to the Holy Places, starting with their *ktitors*. Like their counterparts in Byzantium and after Byzantium, they were looking for commemorative prayers for the salvation of their souls in the afterlife. The interest was spiritual in nature, and redeemable in the afterlife. There was, however, a specific aspect to the expectations of founders of *metochia*: they were not only looking for salvation, they were “buying” commemorative prayers in their adoptive countries (Wallachia and Moldavia), as well as in monasteries in their native countries or in establishments of great symbolic value to the community of Rômioi/Greeks as a whole.³³ “Εκεί και εδώ” (that is, in the country, at the great monastery, and here, at the *metochion*), they wrote in their dedication documents. It was the route of choice towards commemoration and salvation, and it required appropriate resources. Therefore, the migrants and their descendants founded their own monasteries in the Romanian Principalities and then dedicated them as *metochia* to holy sites in Rumelia and Mount Athos, or to the Patriarchates of Jerusalem and Alexandria. It was an ingenious way of ensuring from a great distance that prayers would be said for them in their native regions. Those among the faithful who could not afford the expense obtained the same spiritual services through the *metochia* founded by their compatriots.³⁴

But what about *worldly interest*, due to the marginalized in the community by monasteries endowed by the wealthier faithful? We do not know whether, prior to the second half of the eighteenth century, when the state attempted to gain control over poor relief (Livadă-Cadeschi 2013), the *metochia* made any contribution to assisting the local poor. A late princely decree, dated September 1798, explained that since their inception in remote periods, monasteries were endowed by their *ktitors* for their own survival, but also to perform humanitarian services, notably poor relief: such services were supposed to ensure the remembrance of donors in perpetuity as well as the country’s *political unity* through the consolidation of the community of subjects.³⁵ The text added with respect to the monasteries dedicated to the Holy Places, that their founders had taken that decision to “strengthen the usefulness of

32 This is a general characteristic of Wallachian and Moldavian society; the example of the merchant class, which invested their revenue in land, illustrates this aspect (Lazăr 2008).

33 The collective term *Ρωμιοί* corresponds with *Greci* (*Greeks*) in the Romanian language.

34 For a detailed study of the topic with examples, see Cotovanu 2016.

35 Urechia 1894, 377; see the discussion in Livadă-Cadeschi 2013, 39.

what they had built to gain remembrance in the holy places in the back of beyond” (Urechia 1894, 377). We have already seen that this second motivation of the founders, that of ensuring commemorative prayers in the Greek monasteries of their native regions, is amply recorded in seventeenth-century documents. The charter also gives information on another category of interest that *ktitors* gained on their investment: “strengthening the usefulness of what they had built” means extending that usefulness towards the Greek lands and the sites of the monasteries which controlled the Wallachian and Moldavian *metochia*. The *ktitors* thus used the *metochia* which they had founded to transfer part of their riches – more specifically the annual surplus of the dedicated establishments – to their original communities, understood either in the “narrow” sense of region or in the broader sense of the “nation” as a whole. Thus, founding a religious site in Wallachia or Moldavia, endowing it with a part of their wealth, and then dedicating it as a *metochion* to a Greek monastery, earned the founders a double interest: they were commemorated by their original communities “in the back of beyond”, while also providing for the welfare of those communities.³⁶ The surplus revenue of the *metochia* was thus transferred to the Greek monasteries and, through them, to the poor of their communities. Gifts from other members of the flock further contributed to the charitable and patriotic work of the *nouveau riche* donors.

In purely financial terms, what we refer to here as *interest* was the annual revenue surplus of the *metochia* and was drawn on deposits of patrimonial assets or on simple donations made to the *metochia*. The *ktitors* and donors directed the amount of this interest towards the maintenance in perpetuity of the Greek monastic institutions and the funding of their humanitarian services in the community. This means that these funds ultimately contributed to the welfare of the “nation of Romaioi” (γένος των Ρωμαίων). This strategy, conceived by the higher Greek Orthodox clergy and their rich followers in the Romanian Principalities, where land remained the source of economic and political capital, shows clearly that the *metochia* functioned as banking subsidiaries which offered long-distance spiritual and charitable services. The ultimate beneficiaries were the Greek motherhouses, whose centuries-old role was to commemorate the donors and perform public utility services, including social welfare.

36

The *metochia* did not receive grants solely from migrants and their descendants. The reputation enjoyed by some of the Greek managing monasteries, notably those on Mount Athos, was such that even rich locals in the Principalities sought to be commemorated in these holy places through donations to the *metochia*.

From Monasteries to (Real) Banks and from Land to Money

The ultimate argument in support of our last observation comes from the example of the wealthy Orthodox merchants, originally from the Levant and mainland Greece, who became members of the Greek community of Venice in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.³⁷ What specifically distinguished them from their compatriots in Wallachia and Moldavia was that, by virtue of their residence in an Italian commercial city, they built their fortune in the context of the money economy.

Like their compatriots, who were still dependent on their lands in the Principalities, the members of the Venetian Greek community sought to be commemorated not only in the church of St. George in their adoptive city, but also in the churches and monasteries of their native regions. They pursued the twin aims of making themselves useful to the Venetian Orthodox ecclesiastical institutions, charitable bodies and their compatriots in the city,³⁸ as well as to their native communities and the *nazione graeca* as a whole. For them, the questions were: (a) how to mobilize their pecuniary fortune to “buy” commemoration in their native regions and contribute to the welfare of the *nation of Romaioi*; and (b) how to secure commemoration in perpetuity and sustainability for their charitable work.

In response to their dilemmas, the wealthiest members of the community adapted themselves to the resources offered by their Venetian environment: they resorted to the services of the Zecca public bank, of the mounts of piety, and of *altro luogo sicuro* in the city. They used these places to deposit the revenue from their trade and entrusted the annual interest to the executors of their wills, who had the duty to pay for commemorative prayers in the religious establishments of the Venetian Greek community, in churches of their native regions and dioceses, or in other symbolic sites of Orthodox Christianity.³⁹ On the other hand, interest drawn on their Venetian deposits allowed them to accomplish important charitable work that benefitted their native communities: almsgiving to the underprivileged, subsidies to impoverished parents, financial support for the marriage of girls from poor families, the redemption of compatriots taken prisoners by the “infidels”, foundation of schools and educational grants for poor children, the construction of hospitals and bridges, and so on (Mertzios 1936; Cotovanu, 2021). Such activities reflected an ethos of *community euergetism* which, as documents show, was already being practiced in the late sixteenth century. This trend reached its peak in the following century

37 See the sumptuous album dedicated to “Venice of the Greeks” (Maltezou 1998).

38 For the organization of the community and its system of alms distribution, see Grenet 2016.

39 See the testaments published by Mertzios 1936.

and endured until the nineteenth century, when the rich members of the Greek Orthodox diaspora and of the Romanian Principalities started subscribing to *national euergetism*, by financing the infrastructure of the nascent Greek nation state.

The members of the Greek community in Venice found in the Italian public banks, including the mounts of piety, means for bypassing and competing with the Orthodox Church in its charitable work. Not only did they deposit their money in banks rather than in monasteries (which remained the proprietors of landed assets), but they often picked executors from among their compatriots in Venice or in their regions of origin. These executors were entrusted with the mission of managing the interest drawn on the Venetian deposits and of investing it according to the instructions of the depositors (Cotovanu 2021).

It is noteworthy that some of the richest boyars of Wallachia and Moldavia, who had acquired the habit of investing part of their revenue in commercial activities, resorted to both systems in the execution of their last wills and testaments. They bequeathed their landed estates to monasteries founded in the Principalities but deposited their financial capital at the Zecca in Venice in order to use the annual interest to offer assistance to the poor in an institutional framework (Luca 2007, 316–33). The school planned by Moldavia's high-ranking dignitary (*vameş*) Liondaris Ghionma in Constantinople (ultimately founded in Ioannina, his native city⁴⁰) and the hospital founded by the high-ranking boyar (*spătar*) Mihai Cantacuzino beside Colţea monastery in Bucharest (Cotovanu and Lazăr 2016, 50 sq.) in the early eighteenth century, are both examples of this type of enterprise.

Documentary sources indicate that the initiative to adapt the model of the Italian public bank to the structures of the Orthodox ecclesiastical institutions was successful. For example, Gheorghe, Wallachia's master of the equerry (*comis*), deposited a vast sum of money at the Patriarchate of Jerusalem so that the annual interest could subsidize the study of Greek and Arabic by the poorer children of the Eastern Orthodox world. The executors appointed to oversee this operation were compatriots of the donor, fur traders in Constantinople who were members of the *Metochion* of St. Sepulchre in the Ottoman capital. In fact, the money was deposited at the *metochion* itself, and the interest was to be sent to Jerusalem (Hurmuzaki 1915, 372–76). This is the only example of this kind for which we have evidence for the early eighteenth century.

40 Istituto Ellenico di Venezia, Archivio Antico, busta 19, fasc. 245 (*Testamento 16 Luglio 1642 di Leondari Giolma da Gianina fatto à Jassi, Donazione Mano Giolma quondam Pano da Gianina, 5 Nov. 1676*), doc. 1.; Cotovanu 2021, with an older bibliography.

Conclusion

As they revised the economic thinking of the Church Fathers and the *Rules* of cenobitic monasticism – itself originating in the Eastern monastic tradition of voluntary poverty and sharing –, the Franciscan friars contributed to the reconfiguration and adaptation of old Christian doctrines and traditions to a new environment of urban growth and an emerging money economy in Catholic Western Europe. The institutional outcome of their economic theories was the mount of piety, a public bank specializing in charitable financial operations, including legal micro-credit, destined to support the economically deprived and enable them to remain active members of the market. To sum up briefly, after the fifteenth century, pawnbroking, which until then had been a marginal financial activity for the monasteries, became one of the main activities of the mounts and a pillar of the cohesion of the Christian community around a common market economy (the usurer, associated with the figure of the Jew, was excluded).

In the meantime, the Byzantine Empire was struggling. Monasteries found themselves increasingly deprived of the material patronage of the emperor and of the secular elites; in exchange for that loss, they gained in autonomy as far as the management of their patrimony was concerned. They remained dependent on their lands, which they had acquired over the centuries through donations and which remained their principal economic resource. In order to safeguard and efficiently exploit this valuable resource, the monks became involved in a wide range of economic and financial activities in addition to their main occupation: the lucrative farming of their landed estates.

A comparison of the economic activities of the mounts of piety and of the monasteries has allowed us to better understand the banking logic of monastic activity, even when they remained mainly embedded in an agrarian economy. By combining a salvation economy, an agrarian economy, and a market economy, monasteries fashioned themselves as institutions where the active, working members of the Christian community could deposit their immovable assets. In exchange for these deposits, they could expect to draw a double interest: one was of a spiritual nature and consisted of prayers for the eternal salvation of their souls; the other was of a material nature, in the shape of alms and of institutionally-backed assistance to the poor and, through them, to the entire Christian community. In order to accomplish these tasks, monks had to watch over the efficient management and growth of the landed capital they had accumulated through donations, in doing so ensuring the sustainability and prosperity of their establishments. They were aware that the growth of the spiritual capital of their establishments led to their enhanced

“credibility” as institutions working for the public good. During the Ottoman period, as stable Orthodox institutions, monasteries were enlisted by the new political authority, which assimilated them to their own public utility bodies, called *wakfs*.

During the Ottoman period, the Greek Orthodox ecclesiastical and secular elites found fresh inspiration in the old banking-style structures of the monasteries and expanded the networks of *metochia* as subsidiaries of the great Greek monasteries as far as remote Wallachia and Moldavia. With support from those among the faithful who had built fortunes and were fully integrated into the politico-administrative structures of the Romanian Lands, the Greek higher clergy created an ingenious mechanism for collecting the surplus of Wallachian and Moldavian wealth earmarked for the salvation of souls and the support of the poor.

The role of monastic *metochia* as institutional channels for the transfer of landed capital from the Principalities to the Greek motherhouses, and from there to the Greek Patriarchates is amply confirmed by the recourse that members of the Venetian Greek community had to the Zecca public bank and to the mounts of piety and other secure places in the city. The research we have conducted for the present study has revealed the encounter between rich Greek Orthodox merchants – new patrons of the Orthodox Church and its competitors in poor relief – and the Italian public banks, including the mounts of piety. What they found in these institutions – which were analogous to the Romanian *metochia* – was a channel for the transfer of their pecuniary fortunes for the benefit of the “nation of Rômaioi”, a charitable act which also ensured their commemoration in perpetuity at religious sites in their own homeland.

By using the services of Italian banks, the Greek *euergetes* of Venice broke the ancient monopoly of the church over social assistance and limited its role to that of manager in an economy of salvation. Contact with the Italian cities, with new forms of money-based wealth and with the public banks, marked the beginnings of a major shift for the Greek Orthodox community: a new elite was born, one that became detached from landed interests and sought to take over the role of community leader from the church. Members of this new elite were the precursors of the great bankers and entrepreneurs of the nineteenth-century Greek diaspora, who invested their wealth in the construction of the nascent Greek nation state.

References

- Alexander, John and Sophia Laiou. 2014. "Health and Philanthropy among the Ottoman Orthodox Population, Eighteenth to Early Nineteenth Century." *Turkish Historical Review* 5: 1–15.
- Aubineau, Michel. 1975. "Zôticos de Constantinople, nourricier des pauvres et serviteur des lépreux." *Analecta Bollandiana* 93: 67–108.
- Avallone, Paola, ed. 2001. *Il "povero" va in Banca: I Monti di Pietà negli antichi Stati italiani (secc. XV–XVIII)*, Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane.
- Avallone, Paola, ed. 2007. *Prestare ai poveri: il credito su pegno e i Monti di Pietà in area mediterranea (secoli XV–XIX)*, Rome: Consiglio nazionale delle ricerche.
- Avallone, Paola. 2014. *Alle origini del credito agrario: I monti frumentari nel regno di Napoli e le riforme di fine '700*. Naples: Centre National de Recherches.
- Banchi pubblici, banchi privati e Monti di Pietà nell'Europa pre-industriale: Amministrazione, tecniche operative e ruoli economici. Atti del Convegno, Genova, 1-6 ottobre 1990, Genova: Nella sede della Società Ligure di storia patria, 1991.
- Bériou, Nicole and Jacques Chiffolleau, eds. 2009. *Économie et religion : L'expérience des ordres mendiants (XIIIe–XVe siècles)*, Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon.
- Bogaert, Raymond. 1997. "La banque en Égypte byzantine." *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 116: 85–140.
- Boojamara, John L. 1975. "Christian Philanthropy: A Study of Iustinian's Welfare Policy and the Church." *Byzantina* 7: 347–73.
- Brown, Peter. 2001. *Poverty and Leadership in the Later Roman Empire*. Hanover: Brandeis University Press.
- Brown, Peter. 2012. *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350–550 AD*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Brown, Peter. 2015. *The Ransom of the Soul: Afterlife and Wealth in Early Western Christianity*. Harvard: Harvard University Press.
- Caseau, Béatrice. 2017. "L'exercice de la charité à Byzance d'après les sceaux et les tessères (Ve–XIIe siècle)." In: *Travaux et Mémoires. Mélanges Jean-Claude Cheynet*, edited by Béatrice Caseau, Vivien Prigent and Alessio Sopracasa 21/1: 31–52.
- Chabot, Isabelle and Massimo Fornasari. 1997. *L'economia della carità: Le doti del Monte di Pietà di Bologna (secc. XVI–XX)*. Bologna: Il Mulino.
- Chaudenet, Jean. 1958. *L'Église dans l'Empire romain (IVe–Ve siècles)*. Paris: Sirey.
- Checcoli, Ippolita, ed. 2015. *I Monti frumentari e le forme di credito non monetarie tra Medioevo ed età contemporanea*. Bologna: Il Mulino.
- Chiffolleau, Jacques. 1987. "Usus pauper ? Les franciscains, la règle et l'argent en Avignon (vers 1360 – vers 1430)." In *Horizons marins, itinéraires spirituels (Ve–XVIIIe siècles). Mélanges en l'honneur de Michel Mollat*, edited by Jean-Claude Hocquet and André Vauchez, vol. 1, 135–49. Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne.
- Chircă, Haralambie, ed. 1969. *Documenta Romaniae Historica, A: Moldova*, vol. 19 (1626–1628). Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste Romania.

- Cotovanu, Lidia. 2014. "L'émigration sud-danubienne vers la Valachie et la Moldavie et sa géographie (XVe–XVIIe siècles) : La potentialité heuristique d'un sujet peu connu." *Cahiers balkaniques*, INALCO, Paris, 42. Accessed 21 May 2014. <http://ceb.revues.org/4772> (<http://www.openedition.org/8452>).
- Cotovanu, Lidia. 2015. "Aux débuts de la dédicace des lieux de culte "roumains" envers le Mont-Athos (seconde moitié du XVIe siècle) : entreprise publique ou privée ?" In: *9th International Scientific Conference "Mount Athos: Spreading the Light to the Orthodox World: the Metochia."* Conference Proceedings, Thessaloniki, 21-23 Nov. 2014, 191–215. Thessaloniki. Mount Athos Center
- Cotovanu, Lidia. 2016. "Qu'on prie pour moi là-bas et ici". Donation religieuse et patriotisme local dans l'Orient orthodoxe (XVIe–XVIIe siècles)." In: *Histoire, mémoire et devotion : Regards croisés sur la construction des identités dans le monde orthodoxe aux époques byzantine et post-byzantine*, edited by Radu G. Păun, 207-55. Seyssel: La Pomme d'or.
- Cotovanu, Lidia. 2018. "Migrants, villes, monastères, commerce : La concentration urbaine des lieux de culte roumains dédiés aux Lieux Saints de l'Orthodoxie (XVIe–XVIIe siècles)", paper presented at the *Colloque "Does Monastic Economy Matter ? Religious Patterns of Economic Behaviour (Workshop II)"*. Centre for Advanced Study Sofia (CAS), 10-11 November 2018.
- Cotovanu, Lidia. 2021. "Des monastères aux banques et de la terre à l'argent : De la place des laïcs dans le système d'assistance sociale orthodoxe (XVIe–XVIIe siècles)." In: Ariane Boltanski, Marie-Lucie Copete (éd.), *L'Église des laïcs. Le sacré en partage (XVIe–XXe siècles)*, Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, Collection de la Casa de Velázquez.
- Cotovanu, Lidia and Gheorghe Lazăr. 2016. "Un marchand banquier au service du prince Constantin Brâncovenau (1688-1714): l'Épirote Nica Papa saraf." *Θησαυρίσματα* 46: 31–68.
- Delmaire, Roland, Theodore Mommsen and Jean Rouge, eds. 2005. *Les lois religieuses des empereurs romains de Constantin à Théodose II*, vol. 1, *Code Théodosien XVI*. Paris: Le Cerf.
- Desyllas, Christos Th. 2006. *Η Τράπεζα των φτωχών: Το Monte de Pietà της Κέρκυρας (1630-1864)* [A Bank for the Poor: the Mounts of Piety of Corfou (1630-1864)], Athens: Pireus Bank Group Cultural Foundation.
- Documente privitoare la istoria oraşului Iaşi*, vol. 1, *Acte interne (1408-1660)* [Documents for the History of the Town of Iaşi, vol. 1, Internal documents (1408-1660)]. Ioan Caproşu and Petronel Zahariuc, eds. 1999. Iaşi: Dosoftei.
- Documente privitoare la istoria oraşului Iaşi*, vol. 2, *Acte interne (1661-1690)* (Documents for the History of the Town of Iaşi, vol. 2, Internal documents (1661-1690)]. Ioan Caproşu, ed. 2000. Iaşi: Dosoftei.
- Documenta Romaniae Historica, A: Moldova*, vol. 19 (1626-1628). Haralambie Chircă, ed. 1969. Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste Romania.
- Documenta Romaniae Historica, B: Ţara Românească*, vol. 23 (1630-1632). Damaschin Mioc, ed. 1969. Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste Romania.
- Ege, Ragip. 2014. "La question de l'interdiction de l'intérêt dans l'histoire européenne : un essai d'analyse institutionnelle." *Revue économique*, 65/2: 391–417.
- Ekelund Jr., Robert B., Robert D. Tollison, Gary M. Anderson, Robert F. Hébert, Audrey B. Davidson. 1996. *The Sacred Trust: The Medieval Church as an Economic Firm*, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Encyclopedia of Islam*, new edition, vol. 9, 2013, edited by Peri J. Bearman et al. Leiden: Brill.
- Ferjancić, Bozidar. 1980. "Posedi vizantijskih provincijskih manastira u gradovima" [Urban Properties of Provincial Byzantine monasteries], *Zbornik Radova Vizantoloshkog Instituta*, 19: 216–28.
- Fornasari, Massimo. 1993. *Il "thesoro" della città: Il Monte di Petà e l'economia bolognese nei secoli XV e XVI*. Bologna: Il Mulino.
- Fotić, Aleksandar. 2000. *Sveta Gora i Hilandar u Osmanskom carstvu (XV-XVII vek)* [Mount Athos and Hilandar in the Ottoman Empire (Fifteenth – Seventeenth Centuries)]. Belgrade: Balkanološki institut SANU, Manastir Hilandar, Sveti arhijerejski sinod Srpske pravoslavne crkve.
- Georgescu, Valentin. 1980. *Bizantul si instituțiile românești până la mijlocul secolului al XVIII-lea* [Byzance and Romanian Institutions until the Middle of the Eighteenth Century]. Bucarest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste Romania.
- Giros, Christophe. 2003. "Présence athonite à Thessalonique, XIIIe–XVe s." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 57: 265–78.
- Giros, Christophe. 2006. "Constantinople et les grands monastères provinciaux sous les premiers Paléologues", In: *Actes du 36e Congrès de la Société des historiens médiévistes de l'enseignement supérieur public "Les villes capitales au Moyen Âge", Istanbul 2005*. 227–42. Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne.
- Grenet, Matthieu. 2016. *La fabrique Communautaire : Les Grecs à Venise, Livourne et Marseille, v. 1770–1840*. Rome: École française de Rome.
- Gutton, Jean-Pierre. 1994. "Une greffe qui prend mal : les Monts-de-Piété." In idem, *Guide du chercheur en histoire de la protection sociale*, vol. 1, *Fin du Moyen Âge – 1789*, 81–85. Paris: Association pour l'étude de l'histoire de la Sécurité Sociale.
- Halay, Thierry. 1994. *Le Mont-de-Piété des origines à nos jours*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Hurmuzaki, Eudoxiu de. 1915. *Documente grecești privitoare la Istoria Românilor publicate după originale, copiile Academiei Române și tipărituri* [Documents for the History of the Romanians Based on Originals and Copies from the Romanian Academy, and on Published Sources], vol. 14/1, edited by Nicolae Iorga. Bucharest: Librăriile Socec, C. Sfetea (si) P. Suru.
- Kaplan, Michel. 1976. *Les propriétés de la couronne et de l'Église dans l'Empire byzantine*. Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne.
- Kaplan, Michel. 1992. *Les hommes et la terre à Byzance du VIe au XIe siècle : Propriété et exploitation du sol*. Paris: Éditions de la Sorbonne.
- Karamanolakis, Vangélis. 2007. "Από τα μοναστήρια στο φρενοκομείο. Η αντιμετώπιση των τρελών στο ελληνικό βασίλειο τον 19ο αιώνα" [From Monasteries to Psychiatric Hospitals: the Treatment of the Mentally Ill Under the Greek Kingdom of the Nineteenth Century]. *Αρχαιολογία & Τέχνες* 104: 18–24.
- Kolovos, Elias, ed. 2011. *Μοναστήρια, οικονομία και πολιτική από τους μεσαιωνικούς στους νεώτερους χρόνους* [Monasteries, Economy and Politics from Medieval to Modern Times]. Herakleio: Crete University Press.
- Konidaris, Ioannis. 2003. *Νομική θεώρηση των μοναστηριακών τυπικών* [A Juridical Analysis of the Monastic typika]. 2nd ed. Athens: Sakkoulas.

- Konstantelos, Dimitrios I. 1986. *Βυζαντινή φιλανθρωπία και κοινωνική πρόνοια* [Byzantine Philanthropy and Social Welfare]. Athens: Phos.
- Kotzageorgis, Phokion. 2002. *Η αθωνική Μονή Αγίου Παύλου κατά την οθωμανική περίοδο* [The Athonite Monastery of Saint Paul during the Ottoman Period]. Thessaloniki: University Studio Press.
- Kotzageorgis, Phokion. 2020. "The Newly Found Oldest Patriarchal Berat." *Turkish Historical Review* 11: 1–27.
- Jobert, Philippe. 1977. *La notion de donation : Convergences : 630-750*. Paris: Les Belles Lettres.
- Laiou, Angeliki. 1999. "Economic Activities of Vatopedi in the Fourteenth Century." In: *The Monastery of Vatopedi, History and Art*, 55-72. Athens: National Hellenic Research Foundation.
- Laiou, Angeliki, ed. 2002. *The Economic History of Byzantium from the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century*, vols. 1-3. Washington: Dumbarton Oaks.
- Laiou, Angeliki. 2013. "Nummus parit nummos: L'usurier, le juriste et le philosophe à Byzance." In: *Economic Thought and Economic Life in Byzantium*, edited by Cécile Morrisson, 583-604. London: Routledge.
- Laiou, Angeliki and Cécile Morrisson, eds. 2011. *Le monde byzantine*. Vol. III : *Byzance et ses voisins, 1204-1453*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Lawrence, Clifford H. 2015. *Medieval Monasticism: Forms of Religious Life in Western Europe in the Middle Ages*. 4th ed. London: Routledge.
- Lazăr, Mariana. 2012. "Spre folosul acestei sfinte case": *Constituirea și evoluția domeniului mănăstirii Cotroceni (secolele XVII–XIX)* ["For the Benefit of this House": the Foundation and Growth of the Estate of Cotroceni Monastery (Seventeenth-Nineteenth centuries)]. Brăila: Istros.
- Lazăr, Gheorge. 2006. *Les marchands en Valachie, XVIIe–XVIIIe siècles*. Bucharest: Institutul Cultural Român.
- Lazăr, Gheorge. 2008. "De la boutique à la terre": Les marchands "grecs" et leur stratégie d'insertion sociale (Valachie, XVIIe siècle)." *Studii și materiale de istorie medie* 26: 51–67.
- Lemerle, Paul. 1977. *Cinq études sur le XIe siècle byzantine*. Paris: Éditions du CNRS.
- Lenoble, Clément. 2013. *L'exercice de la pauvreté : Économie et religion chez les franciscains d'Avignon (XIIIe–XVe siècles)*. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes.
- Lerouxel, François. 2016. *Le marché du crédit dans le monde romain (Égypte et Campanie)*. Rome: École française de Rome.
- Liata, Eftychia D. 1987. *Η Σέριφος κατά την Τουρκοκρατία (17ος–19ος αι.). Συμβολή στη μελέτη των κοινωνικών και οικονομικών δομών και του κοινοτικού συστήματος* [The Island of Seriphos under Ottoman Rule (Seventeenth–Nineteenth Centuries)]. Athens: Emporiki Bank.
- Livadă-Cadeschi, Ligia. 2013. "Financial Social Care in the Romanian Principalities in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries." *Annals of the University of Bucharest/Political Science Series* 15/1: 37–50.

- Luca, Cristian. 2007. *Țările Române și Veneția în secolul al XVII-lea. Din relațiile politico-diplomatice, comerciale și culturale ale Țării Românești și ale Moldovei cu Serenissima* [The Romanian Principalities and Venice in the 17th Century. Political-diplomatic, Commercial and Cultural Relations of Wallachia and Moldova with Serenissima]. Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică.
- Magnani, Eliana. 2008. "Du don aux églises au don pour le salut de l'âme en Occident (IVe–XIe siècle): Le paradigme eucharistique." *Bulletin du centre d'études médiévales d'Auxerre, Hors-série n° 2*. Accessed 9 November 2017. doi: 10.4000/cem.9932
- Maltezou, Chrysa. 1998. *Η Βενετία των Ελλήνων* [Venice of the Greeks], Athens: Ephesos.
- Menning, Carol Bresnahan. 1993. *Charity and State in Late Renaissance Italy: The Monte di Pietà of Florence*. New York: NCROL.
- Mertzios, Konstantinos. 1936. "Το εν Βενετία Ηπειρωτικόν αρχεῖον" [The Archive of the Epirotes in Venice]. *Ηπειρωτικά Χρονικά* 11: 1–202.
- Miller, Timothy S. 1997. *The Birth of the Hospital in the Byzantine Empire*. Baltimore, London: The John Hopkins University Press.
- Miller, Timothy S. 2003. *The Orphans of Byzantium: Child Welfare in the Christian Empire*. Washington: The Catholic University of America Press.
- Montanari, Daniele., ed. 1999. *Monti di Pietà e presenza ebraica in Italia (secoli XV–XVIII)*. Rome: Bulzoni.
- Mount Athos Center. 2015. *Η εξακτίνωση του Αγίου Ορους στον Ορθόδοξο Κόσμο: τα Μετόχια, Πρακτικά Συνεδρίου* [Mount Athos. Spreading the Light in the Orthodox word: The Metochia. Conference Proceedings]. Thessaloniki: Mount Athos Center.
- Murgescu, Bogdan. 2012. *Țările române între Imperiul Otoman și Europa creștină* [Romanian Principalities between the Ottoman Empire and Christian Europe]. Iași: Polirom.
- Muzzarelli, Maria G. 2001. *Il denaro e la salvezza. L'invenzione del Monte di Pietà*. Bologna: Il Mulino.
- Muzzarelli, Maria G. 2007. "I Monti di Pietà fra tradizione e innovazione: una storia in cinque punti." In: *Prestare ai poveri: il credito su pegno e i Monti di Pietà in area mediterranea (secoli XV–XIX)*, edited by Paola Avallone, 31–42. Rome: Consiglio nazionale delle ricerche.
- Oikonomidis, Nikos. 2004. "The Monastery of Patmos and its Economic Functions (Eleventh–Twelfth Centuries)." In: idem, *Social and Economic Life in Byzantium*, edited by Elizabeth A. Zachariadou, 1–17. Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum.
- Papadia-Lala, Anastasia. 2007. "I Monti di Pietà nei territori Greci sotto il dominio Veneziano. Un approccio sociale e economico", in: *Prestare ai poveri: il credito su pegno e i Monti di Pietà in area mediterranea (secoli XV–XIX)*, edited by Paola Avallone, 245–58. Rome: Consiglio nazionale delle ricerche.
- Patlagean, Évelyne. 1977. *Pauvreté économique et pauvreté sociale à Byzance, IVe–VIIe siècles. Paris: Mouton*.
- Patlagean, Évelyne, 2007. *Un moyen âge grec : Byzance, IXe–Xve siècle*. Paris: Albin Michel.
- Păun, Radu. 2003. "Pouvoirs, offices et patronage dans la Principauté de Moldavie au XVIIIe siècle : L'aristocratie roumaine et la pénétration gréco-levantine." PhD thesis, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris.

- Pitsakis, Constantin. 2002. "Un cas particulier d'activité commerciale dans la Méditerranée byzantine : Les monastères armateurs." *Méditerranées* 32: 63–88.
- Rébillard, Éric. and Claire Sotinel, eds. 2008. *Économie et religion dans l'Antiquité tardive. Actes du Colloque de Bordeaux, 21-22 janvier 2005*. Turnhout: Brepols.
- Saint-Guillain, Guillaume. 2004. "L'Apocalypse et le sens des affaires : Les moines de Saint-Jean de Patmos, leurs activités économiques et leurs relations avec les Latins (XIIIe et XIVe siècles)." In : *Chemins d'outre-mer : Études sur la Méditerranée médiévale offertes à Michel Balard*, Vol. 2, 765–90. Paris: Éditions de la Sorbonne.
- Simonnot, Philippe. 2005. *Les Papes, l'Église et l'argent : Histoire économique du Christianisme des origines à nos jours*. Paris: Bayard.
- Smyrlis, Kostis. 2006. *La fortune des grands monastères byzantins (fin du Xe milieu du XIVe siècle)*. Paris : Centre d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance.
- Stavropoulos, Aristotelis. 1984. *Τα νοσοκομεία και η νοσηλευτική πολιτική της ελληνικής εθνότητας στην Κωνσταντινούπολη (1453-1838)* [The Hospitals and Medical Politics of Greek Community in Constantinople (1453-1838)]. Athens: Argyropoulos.
- Thomas, John Philip. 1988. *Private Religious Foundations in the Byzantine Empire*. Washington: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection.
- Todeschini, Giacomo. 2008. *Richesse franciscaine : De la pauvreté volontaire à la société de marché*. Paris: Verdier.
- Todeschini, Giacomo. 2015. *Au pays des sans-nom : Gens de mauvaise vie, personnes suspectes ou ordinaires du Moyen Âge à l'époque modern*. Translated by Nathalie Gailius. Paris: Verdier.
- Todeschini, Giacomo. 2017. *Le Marchand et le Temple : La société chrétienne et le cercle vertueux de la richesse du Moyen Âge à l'Europe Moderne*. Translated by Ida Giordano with Mathieu Anoux. Paris: Albin Michel.
- Todeschini, Giacomo. 2019. *Gli ebrei nell'Italia medievale*. 2nd ed. Milano: Carocci.
- Toneatto, Valentina. 2012. *Les Banquiers du Seigneur : Évêques et moines face à la richesse (Ive – début IXe siècle)*. Rennes : Presses Universitaires de Rennes.
- Turgot, Anne-Robert-Jacques. 2014. *Mémoire sur les prêtres d'argent*. Paris: Institut Coppet.
- Urechia, Vasile A. 1894. *Istoria Românilor* [A History of the Romanians]. Vol. 7. Bucharest.
- Varnalidis, Sotirios L. 1985. *Ο θεσμός της χαριστικής (δωρεάς) των μοναστηρίων εις τους Βυζαντινούς* [The Institution of the *Charistikè* [Donation] to the Byzantine Monasteries], Thessaloniki: Centre for Byzantine Research of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.
- Zachariadou, Elizabeth A. 1996. *Δέκα τουρκικά έγγραφα για την Μεγάλη Εκκλησία (1483-1567)* [Ten Turkish Documents on the History of the Great Church (1483-1567)]. Athens: National Hellenic Research Foundation.
- Zivojinović, Mirjana. 1991. "The Trade of Mount Athos Monasteries." *Zbornik Radova Vizantoloshkog Instituta* 29/30: 101–16.

Assets, Interest and National Preferences

THE ATHONITE MONASTERIES AND THE GREEK BANKS
IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

ANDREAS BOUROUTIS¹

As is well known, Max Weber highlighted the role of Protestantism in the gradual shaping of the capitalist system. By contrast, the Eastern Orthodox world was considered to have entered the new era with considerable delay. However, the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries witnessed great change also in Orthodox monastic communities, resulting in their gradual integration into the secular economic spectrum.

At around the same time (1904–05) that Weber started publishing the articles that would become his famous work *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Greek banks were embroiled in serious competition over the deposits of Mount Athos monasteries. For years this monastic centre had sought, in a capitalistic spirit, to secure its assets in a changing and fragile environment. This occurred along national lines since, despite the serious Russian influence, a preference for the Greek side was clearly evident. Despite the distance between Athens, the capital of Greece, and Mount Athos, during the nineteenth century the Athonite monasteries were clients of the National Bank of Greece in Athens. The establishment of a branch of the Bank of Mytilene in Thessaloniki at the beginning of the twentieth century and the opening of more Greek bank branches (Bank of the Orient, Bank of Athens) resulted in intense competition for the deposits of the monasteries. The information contained in the archives demonstrates that the monks possessed a good knowledge of finance and carefully monitored all aspects of the monasteries' investments. This chapter argues that the main aim of the Athonite monasteries was to achieve a level

1 The research presented in this chapter has been supported by the *Research network dedicated to the history of the monastic economy*, hosted by the Centre for Advanced Study Sofia and the Center for Governance and Culture in Europe (GCE) at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of St. Gallen under the project: "Does Monastic Economy Matter? Religious Patterns of Economic Behaviour".

of economic growth that would allow them to be self-sufficient, independent from state policies and constraints, and to prosper with a sustainable future.

The Capitalist Era

May our Almighty and Omnipresent Lord God grant every good, likeable, righteous and beneficial (outcome) to the Greek Nation and its King, and for your kind honesty, and the best for the common good benefit and for the clearly Greek banking institution of the highest reputation that you manage.

A monk appointed by Vatopedi monastery of Mount Athos (Agion Oros) addressed the governor of the National Bank of Greece (NBG), Markos Renieris, with these words on 15 May 1872 when requesting the bank to conduct a transaction for the monastery.² Founded in 1841, the NBG was among the first banks of the eastern Mediterranean and, for many years, the sole financial institution representing Greece's effort to build up the Greek economy; it also had many clients among Greek communities around the world. The letter addressed to the governor highlights the prestigious and privileged contact between the Athonite monasteries and the bank. This relationship dated to at least 1864, when the Thessaloniki-based commissioner of Mount Athos, Daniel Pantokratorinos, addressed the bank's founder and first governor, Georgios Stavrou, about some shares donated to the monastic community.³ Some years later, in 1866, the former abbot/*hegoumen* of Vatopedi, Iakovos Vatopedinos, exchanged correspondence about his personal deposits in the bank.⁴

Over the years, this continuous and stable economic relationship between the Athonite monasteries and the NBG would become so strong that it provides a clear indication of the national orientation of the monasteries. Amid Russia's growing presence, which was expressed through various initiatives, among them steady influence over the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople, the monasteries would remain closely affiliated to their Greek identity.⁵ On the other hand, their economic transactions, high interest-bearing time deposits, stocks, shares and bonds indicates that the Athonite monasteries were very familiar with the economic system. Although it had experienced a delay, the Eastern Orthodox monastic world had

2 HA/NBG, A1, S21, Y15, F30, Vatopedi monastery to the governor of NBG, Markos Renieris, Vatopedi, Mount Athos, 15 May 1872. The monastery wanted to convert some Austrian florins to drachmas.

3 HA/NBG, A1, S21, Y18, F21, Thessaloniki, 11 February 1864.

4 HA/NBG, A1, S21, Y18, F26, Vatopedi, Mount Athos, 4 October 1866.

5 Gerd 2014. With the exception of Panteleimonos (Russian), Zographou (Bulgarian) and Hilandar (Serbian), all other 17 monasteries favoured the Greek side.

definitely entered the era of capitalism. However, it should be pointed out that the research has not yielded any evidence for borrowing on the part of the Athonite monasteries during the period under examination. Since credit (interest, fees) is the main source of revenue for the banking sector and since the Mount Athos monasteries were not involved in financial activity of this sort, this is clear evidence that they were in fact self-sufficient. Although it cannot be ruled out, all references show that the monasteries' dealings with the banking sector were solely about deposits and investments, and also included minor transactions by the banks on behalf of the monasteries (for instance buying crops on the market of Thessaloniki).⁶

We might speculate on the reasons that pushed the Athonite monasteries to engage with the capitalist world. But this was not an isolated phenomenon in the Orthodox religious realm. In 1892, for instance, the NBG was in correspondence with the bishop of Crete about bonds belonging to Mount Sinai monastery in Egypt and with the Monastery of the Assumption at Dorida in Greece.⁷

However, in the nineteenth century, conducting business with the NBG was rather difficult for the Athonite monasteries since the bank was located in Athens, more than 500 kilometres from Thessaloniki, the closest urban centre. The situation was no different for the monasteries with accounts with Greek bankers in Galata in Constantinople. Twice a month, ships departed Mount Athos for Thessaloniki and the Ottoman capital. Therefore, in order to complete a transaction, the monastery had first to send a letter to the bank in Athens with its instructions. For instance, in 1884 Kastamonitou monastery asked the NBG to forward the half-yearly interest on its deposit to Ioannis Zographos, a Constantinople-based Greek banker, who would then send it to them.⁸ The same applied for Xeropotamou monastery, whose interest check was sent in August 1890 to the commissioner of Mount Athos in Thessaloniki, Neofytos Grigoriatis.⁹ The most common procedure was that after the initial exchange of correspondence between the monastery and NBG, the desired sum of money, usually the annual or half-yearly interest on a deposit, was sent as a money package to the Greek consulate in Thessaloniki. The consul then had to forward the package to the commissioner of Mount Athos in the city, who, in turn, sent it to the monastery in the peninsula. This could be accomplished either by an

6 In October 1904, the Bank of Mytilene in Thessaloniki purchased almost 31 tons of barley on behalf of Vatopedi monastery. Vatopedi Monastery Archive, Bank of Mytilene, invoice for the purchase of 24,620 *okas* of barley at a total cost of 15,211.50 *kuruşes*, Thessaloniki 2 November 1904.

7 HA/NBG, Bishop of Crete to NBG board, Herakleio, Crete, 10 July 1892. Varnakova monastery to the NBG, Dorida, 11 September 1892.

8 HA/NBG, AI, S21, Y15, F46, abbot of Kastamonitou monastery to NBG, Mount Athos, 3 February 1884.

9 HA/NBG, AI, S21, Y15, F57, General Commissioner of Mount Athos, Archimandrite Neofytos Gregoriates, to NBG, Thessaloniki 19 August 1890.

Athonite monk who happened to be in Thessaloniki or by a third party, usually an intermediary or a merchant stationed in Karyes, the capital of Mount Athos, who took a commission.

This complicated procedure could take more than a month to complete, not to mention the possible risks and dangers it involved. For instance, on 13 June 1884 the commissioners of Vatopedi asked the NBG to send the half-yearly interest of the monastery's deposit to them via Zographos, the Constantinopolitan banker.¹⁰ The letter acknowledging the receipt of the money package was dated 8 August, almost two months later. The same applied when the procedure went through the Greek consulate and the commissioner of Mount Athos in Thessaloniki. On 28 August 1891, Xeropotamou monastery acknowledged the receipt of funds related to an NBG share coupon it had requested on 10 June, more than two months previously.¹¹

In other cases, months could pass with no news about the transaction, leading to concern on the part of the monks. On 14 February 1891, Iakovos Vatopedinos wrote to the governor of the NBG to say he had received no response to a request dated 16 December 1890.¹²

The most convenient solution for the Athonite monasteries would have been to expand their economic connections with Thessaloniki, the city closest to the peninsula. However, until the end of the nineteenth century Thessaloniki did not have any Greek bank to which the monasteries could entrust their assets. Therefore, they faced two choices: to engage in the time-consuming and costly procedure described above or to cooperate with local banks. During this period, two major banks dominated the city's financial sector: the Bank of Salonica (*Banque de Salonique*), a local initiative established in 1890 by the well-known and respected Allatini family, with the involvement of foreign capital, and the Imperial Ottoman Bank. Established in 1856 in Constantinople as the *Banque Ottomane*, in 1863 it became the Imperial Ottoman Bank, mostly with British and French capital but with the minor participation of the Ottoman state. The bank expanded its operations to many cities of the Ottoman Empire and established a branch in Thessaloniki as early as 1863. Although direct references have not come to light, it is known that some of the

10 HA/NBG, A1, S21, Y15, F46, commissioners of Vatopedi monastery to NBG governor.

11 HA/NBG, A1, S21, Y15, F58, commissioners of Xeropotamou monastery to NBG directorate.

12 HA/NBG, Iakovos Vatopedinos to NBG governor, Pavlos Kalligas. The letter was received on 6 March 1891.

Athonite monasteries held deposits in the bank.¹³ One of the reasons for this development, besides the proximity of Mount Athos to Thessaloniki and the fact that the bank was highly reliable and renowned, was that it also had Greeks among its personnel.¹⁴ This facilitated communication with and trust in the bank.

Established in 1901 as the first bank with Greek capital in Thessaloniki, the Bank of Mytilene (*Banque de Mételin*) was a pioneer in terms of its representation of the Greek element. Almost immediately, that April, the bank informed Vatopedi that it had established a branch in the city,¹⁵ with Dimosthenis Anghelakis as manager, Konstantinos Anghelakis as deputy manager and Konstantinos Zisis as assistant manager. Anghelakis was a prominent figure in the Greek community in Thessaloniki and a well-known businessperson (Chekimoglou 2001, 127–128). The Bank of Mytilene and its main shareholder, Panos Kourtzis, a businessperson from Lesbos,¹⁶ then also part of the Ottoman Empire, encouraged its branches to engage in partnerships. Thus, in Constantinople they worked with well-known Greek bankers such as Georgios Zarifis.¹⁷ The Bank of Mytilene was founded in 1891 and quickly gained a reputation among the Greeks in the Ottoman Empire, although it never grew beyond a medium-size bank.

To mark the new era, Anghelakis, the branch manager and most probably a partner in the Thessaloniki branch, travelled to Mount Athos. The purpose of the trip was not only to confirm the cooperation of the bank with the Athonite monasteries but also to examine the possibility of establishing a branch in the heart of the peninsula, either in Karyes or in Dafni, its harbour. The latter had the advantage that a subsidiary of the Bank of Mytilene, the Aegean Steamship Company, already had an agency there (Kaitatzides 2009, 12–13). Two company ships, the *Chios* and *Crete*, served routes to Constantinople and Thessaloniki every two weeks.¹⁸

13 Ergani, K. Zisis to P. Kourzis (Mytilene), Thessaloniki, 9/17 July 1902. In his letter, Konstantinos Zisis, assistant manager of the Thessaloniki branch, referred to the strong possibility that Vatopedi would withdraw its deposit from the Imperial Ottoman Bank to their benefit. Information is given in a letter from Vatopedi monastery to NBG asking for some of their interest to be sent to the Imperial Ottoman Bank in Thessaloniki. HA/NBG, A1, S21, Y15, F49, Vatopedi monastery to NBG directorate, Vatopedi, 22 June 1885.

14 In the photographic album the bank issued for the year 1906, A. Nicolaides, Constantine Charissis, B. Philomathis, G. Nicolaides and I. Papadopoulos are reported as working in Thessaloniki's office, Agences d'Orient-Photographies du Personnel (P-X), 1906. <https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/3438>.

15 Vatopedi Monastery, Bank of Mytilene, Mytilene, April 1901.

16 Mytilene (Mételin in French) is the capital of the island of Lesbos.

17 In 1883 Panos Kourtzis established the Aegean Steamship Company and Zarifis participated with a 30% share. After the establishment of the Bank of Mytilene, the naval shipping company's shares were transferred to the bank's ownership. The Bank's 1904 balance sheet refers to the Aegean Steamship Company in its assets.

18 Ibid. p. 51. The *Chios* and *Crete* serviced the route from Volos to Constantinople through the ports of Thessaloniki and the Dardanelles. They reached Mount Athos and the port of Dafni every two weeks.

Upon his return from his twelve-day trip, Anghelakis submitted a detailed report to the general directorate of the Bank of Mytilene in Constantinople.¹⁹ He stated in this report that most of the monasteries, such as Iviron, Lavra, Koutloumousiou, Xiropotamou and the Russian ones, naming Agios Panteleimonos and the Sarai,²⁰ had deposits, bonds and assets in and numerous financial transactions with Greek banks in Athens, with banks in Russia, and with the Imperial Ottoman Bank branch in Thessaloniki. Because of the distance, they had to use third parties as intermediaries in their dealings with these, at great cost and risk. Moreover, he noted the dominant presence of the Russian monastery of Agios Panteleimonos. According to him, many of the monks of the monasteries, sketes, huts, and cells in Athos had entrusted their few cash possessions to the Russian monastery, at almost no interest. Upon their death, their deposits automatically became Russian property. For those Athonite monasteries that had *metochia* (land estates) or other kinds of properties in Russia, the situation was more or less the same. All currency received by Russia was in roubles and it had to be exchanged in the Russian monastery at their expense and at a high commission.

With all this in mind, Anghelakis tried to elicit the opinion of the abbots and the leading monks on the possible establishment of a bank branch in Karyes. The reactions were extremely positive although Anghelakis did not secure any concrete commitments. As has been noted, for decades the monasteries had entrusted their securities, bonds and bank deposits to the NBG in Athens, but dealing with the bank was slow and complicated.

However, despite the positive response to the possibility of the establishment of a branch in Mount Athos, it took some years for this plan to materialize, for a number of reasons. It is apparent from Anghelakis' correspondence with the directorate of the Bank of Mytilene and with Kourtzis that the two sides had completely different perceptions of the financial situation on Athos. Kourtzis did not have a clear picture of Athos and, influenced by a report he had received, referred to the "untold riches" of the monasteries, from which high earnings and profits could be expected. Anghelakis, who was much more realistic and aware of the situation, did not hesitate to clarify the situation.²¹ The "untold riches", according to Anghelakis, took the

19 Ergani, D. Anghelakis to the General Directorate of Bank of Mytilene, Thessaloniki, 18/31 October 1901. Anghelakis was formally answerable to the general directorate and the management board but in reality he reported to Kourtzis himself.

20 Anghelakis was referring to the Skete of Agios Andreas in Karyes, which was also known as Sarai because of the magnitude of its buildings. It never achieved official monastery status, although it continued after the Russian Revolution in 1917 as a Russian brotherhood with sharply declining inflow of new monks. After the death of the last Russian monk in 1971 and a period of inactivity, a new community of Greek monks settled in 1992.

21 Ergani, D. Anghelakis to the General Directorate of Bank of Mytilene, Thessaloniki, 18/31 October 1901.

form of objects of cultural and national worth, such as religious relics and symbols and were, therefore, not marketable. Kourtzis' idea of the legendary wealth of the Athonite monasteries derived from a report submitted in 1896 to Sir Edgar Vincent, general director of the Imperial Ottoman Bank, by a Greek Constantinopolitan named Aivazides, regarding the possibility of opening a branch in Karyes. Luckily for the monasteries, Vincent, a rather dark figure, and a rampant capitalist, was busy at that time speculating in South African mines, which eventually ended in catastrophe for thousands of investors in Constantinople and a loss of millions, but which enriched him to the tune of a few million pounds (Auchterlonie 2000, 63). It is unclear how Aivazides' report ended up in Kourtzis' hands.²² Anghelakis was quite bitter about Aivazides' estimations of annual net profits of 15,000 to 30,000 pounds sterling, averring that he was "daydreaming".

According to Anghelakis' knowledgeable estimations, a branch in Mount Athos would cost 250 to 300 Turkish liras (TL) annually.²³ In his second report to the directorate of the bank he provided more details, mentioning that an office in Karyes would cost around 25 to 30 TL to rent annually and would require at least three employees: a manager, who would also act as a teller, an accountant and a guard, who would also be a collector.²⁴ An annual turnover of 1,500 to 2,000 TL would be sufficient to cover the estimated annual operating costs of 250 TL. Confirming the hypothesis that Anghelakis was a partner in the Thessaloniki branch, he noted that the necessary cost should be split between him and the bank. Concluding his report, he highlighted the necessity of sealing an agreement for the future Mount Athos office with the agency of one of the well-known insurance companies, which would guarantee the assets of the monasteries. We should mention here that in years of uncertainty and lack of stability most of the banks cooperated with insurance companies to secure the assets of their clients, at least to a certain level. According to a letter from the Bank of Mytilene to Vatopedi, money delivered to Mount Athos was secured by an insurance company under certain restrictions and only for the naval route to the port of Dafni and no further.²⁵ It is well known that, up to the early twentieth century, the forests and mountainous terrain of Athos were a hideout for bandits and groups of insurgents, who did not respect the holy nature of the place

22 Ergani, Constantine Aivazides to Sir Edgar Vincent, Pera, March 1896. In addition to providing the estimated annual earnings for a possible opening of an Ottoman Bank branch in Karyes, Aivazides offered a detailed description of Athos, the monasteries and their wealth. Kourtzis made notes on the letter, wondering what kind of treasures those described in the report could be. It is very possible that Kourtzis' comments on the "untold wealth" of Mount Athos came from the above report, which was not based on any factual evidence.

23 Ergani, D. Anghelakis to the general directorate of Bank of Mytilene, *ibid*.

24 Ergani, D. Anghelakis to the general directorate of the Bank of Mytilene, Thessaloniki, 15 December 1901.

25 Vatopedi Monastery, Bank of Mytilene to the Vatopedi monastery, Thessaloniki, 12 July 1903.

nor the status of the monks. There were incidents of robbery and murder, which is why a group of armed guards (*serdarides*) was stationed in Karyes.

The plan to create a Bank of Mytilene office in Athos was put on hold until 1907 since Anghelakis ended his partnership with the bank sometime after the summer of 1902.²⁶ The correspondence shows that both sides (Anghelakis and the Bank of Mytilene and Kourtzis himself) no longer trusted each other even in June of that year.²⁷

This development did not harm the connections between the Bank of Mytilene and the Athonite monasteries; in fact, these intensified in the following years.²⁸ The Thessaloniki branch was used as an intermediary that handled particular transactions and acted on behalf of the monasteries for an agreed banking fee. The correspondence shows the existence of an excellent and professional relationship. According to the procedure that was followed, the bank informed the monastery by mail – the correspondence is available for Vatopedi – about a pending transaction, a bond coupon payment, for example. If the bank was not advised otherwise, it would seek instructions. In most cases, the monastery's deposit in the bank was credited unless it was cashed and either sent to the monastery, with the restrictions described above, or was given to a visiting monk or the appointed commissioner of Mount Athos in Thessaloniki. For its part, the monastery had to sign the receipt issued to acknowledge the transaction. In any case, the pre-existing bureaucracy would remain for as long as there was physical distance between the two sides. This also underlines the necessity of establishing a bank branch in Mount Athos.

As regards the wealth of the Athonite monasteries, apart from the bank deposits that yielded valuable income through interest, the monasteries were renowned for other assets (bonds and so on). Aivazides' letter to Vincent referred to these rumours and the "endless supply of gold" that was turned down by Anghelakis.²⁹ However, the latter in his letters was eager to elaborate on the assets and fortunes of the monasteries, referring to NBG stocks and lottery bonds, Bulgarian, Serbian and Russian securities, Egyptian Railways and City of Paris bonds, and so on.³⁰ However, research so far would suggest that these rumours were far from the truth,

26 After October 1902, neither Anghelakis nor his son wrote any of the correspondence between the Bank of Mytilene and Vatopedi monastery.

27 Ergani, D. Anghelakis to the Bank of Mytilene, Thessaloniki, 27 June 1902.

28 There is continuous correspondence between the Bank of Mytilene in Thessaloniki and Vatopedi monastery.

29 Ergani, Constantine Aivazides to Sir Edgar Vincent, *Ibid.* p. 3. Aivazides claimed that the wealth of Mount Athos could cover Greece's debt many times over. The country defaulted in 1893 after it could no longer service its foreign debt.

30 Ergani, D. Anghelakis to the general directorate of Bank of Mytilene, Thessaloniki, 18/31 October 1901.

which was that although many bonds and securities existed, their total value was insignificant and fell far short of what was described or expected. The depository of the Bank of Mytilene in January 1904 recorded registered bond coupons of the City of Odessa, of Bessarabia, of Russian loans, of the Greek state (1881) and of the NBG, all of which yielded an annual dividend of just 384.25 TL.³¹

Following the establishment of the Bank of Mytilene in Thessaloniki, considerable competition developed as more Greek banks opened in the city. The Greek economy and drachma had quickly recovered after the default of 1893 and the suspension of payments to foreign creditors, thanks to the International Finance Control and a series of important measures that followed, especially to control state spending and borrowing (Dertilis 2010, 652–56). On the other hand, Thessaloniki had become a robust booming market, a crossroads for trade and commerce, and the most important maritime and commercial hub of the Balkans. Jews and Greeks prospered, and since the former were outward looking and had already developed an intercommunal financial sector with small banking offices (*sarrafis*) and cooperated with the large banks (Bank of Salonica, Imperial Ottoman Bank) of the city, the latter turned their attention to the mother country, seeking Greek support. After all, the serious political dispute over the future status of the Macedonian territories required the Greek banks to strengthen the presence of the Greek element and boost Greek economic and political interests.

The Bank of Industrial Credit and the Bank of the Orient (*Banque d'Orient*) would be the first Greek banks to follow the Bank of Mytilene. The former would lose no time in informing the Athonite monasteries of the beginning of its Thessaloniki operations. However, it would be quickly absorbed by the Bank of Athens. As for the Bank of the Orient, a subsidiary of the NBG and several investors, the prospects were positive (Chekimoglou 2001, 129–130). With Cleon Hatzilazarou as general director, a leading Greek entrepreneur in Thessaloniki, the bank would quickly come to dominate the financial affairs of the Greek community and would contribute to growing banking competition. Moreover, the inter-Greek banking rivalry over the deposits of the Athonite monasteries was evident and, in some cases, would transgress moral lines.

31 Vatopedi Monastery, Bank of Mytilene depository, Thessaloniki, 31 January 1904. No information is provided concerning the dates and period of the bonds of the City of Odessa, of Bessarabia, and of the Russian loan apart from the dividend they gave. For instance, the Russian loan bond, one of the many issued during this period, annually yielded 6%.

The Bank of Mytilene continued its business with the Athonite community, although the cash flow of the Thessaloniki branch showed a considerable decline, most probably a result of the opening of other Greek banks. Similarly, there was an evident decline in transactions and correspondence with the Athonite monasteries, and more precisely with Vatopedi from July 1905 onwards. The Bank of Athens was also involved in the competition, although it did not have a branch in Thessaloniki. Some of the half-yearly interest payments on deposits of the Athonite monasteries in the Bank of Mytilene were sent to the Bank of Athens.³² The archives also reveal that the money for the purchase of the Souflar *çiftlik* in 1905, which would become an important *metochi* (monastic arable estate) of Vatopedi, came mainly from deposits in the Bank of Athens and Bank of Mytilene.³³

With the Athonite monasteries now clearly involved in extensive financial dealings, the Bank of the Orient resorted to all manner of methods to secure a leading role in their affairs. When the bank launched a public offer of 40,000 stock shares in April 1906, it immediately attracted investor attention in Thessaloniki. With the offer oversubscribed by 24,000 shares, the Athonite monasteries were the third biggest investor (with 5,700 shares), with the Amar Bank (21,145 shares) and Bank of Salonica (9,500 shares) being the top bidders.³⁴ Acknowledging the importance of monastic participation, a report sent to Athens stressed that the monasteries should be offered the highest possible number of registered shares since this would flatter the monks and be crucial for the bank's future dealings.³⁵ Moreover, in a case that raised ethical concerns, in October 1906 the Thessaloniki branch of the Bank of the Orient sent a confidential report to its Athens head office requesting it to exert pressure on the Greek government to decorate Anthimos Vatopaidinos, the abbot of Vatopedi.³⁶ A series of correspondence between the bank and the monastery ensued to this end, in which the former revealed its intention to honour this well-respected Athonite monk for his religious and national services. Furthermore, the report urged that the award be made in early January 1907 when a Vatopedi time deposit in the Bank of Mytilene was due to expire. The Bank of the Orient hoped that the timing would enable it to secure the investment. Since the Athonite deposits in the Bank of Mytilene were the bank's biggest liability, their possible withdrawal would risk the very existence of the Thessaloniki branch to the benefit of its competitor.

32 Vatopedi Monastery, Bank of Mytilene to Vatopedi monastery, Transactions, Thessaloniki, 13/30 July 1905.

33 Vatopedi Monastery, Souflar *metochi* purchase (detail account), no date. The vast amount of money came from the Bank of Athens with the Bank of Mytilene providing a smaller amount.

34 GSA-HAM/BOA, file 21, no. 136, Bank of the Orient to NBG, Thessaloniki, 11/28 April 1906.

35 The report mentioned that not all monasteries participated since some did not have enough time to call for a synod of their monks to decide on the matter.

36 GSA-HAM/BOA, file 21, no. 323–325. A brief CV of the respected monk was attached.

The Bank of the Orient had adopted its competitive strategy months before, when Demetrios Ginis, an employee of the Thessaloniki branch, went to Athos for a number of days and had numerous contacts with the commissioners and abbots of its monasteries. His trip was successful since he managed to attract a deposit from Vatopedi with an annual interest of 5%.³⁷ As its correspondence with the monasteries shows, the Bank of the Orient also exerted a great deal of pressure to become the representative for the monasteries' assets in Russia. As a letter to Iviron monastery noted, the bank claimed it would be able to collect the monastery's assets that had been caught up in Russia, highlighting that *Crédit Lyonnais* was its partner in that country.³⁸ Since 1873, the Athonite monasteries had encountered serious problems with their large land possessions in Bessarabia. Russia had confiscated most of their annual output, allowing them only two-fifths of the profits in an attempt to exert pressure on the Ecumenical Patriarchate as well as to exert influence in the peninsula (Gerd 2014, 64–65). In many cases, even the two-fifths sum was delayed on purpose. As the Bank of the Orient estimated that the Athonite monasteries, and specifically Iviron, were due large sums from Russia, it was necessary to bypass the “tricks”, as the report noted, of the Bank of Mytilene and gain the upper hand in Athonite affairs.³⁹

However, the Bank of Mytilene was not prepared to give up its economic ties with Mount Athos so easily. Given the fierce competition in Thessaloniki, on 22 May 1907 it announced the opening of an office in Karyes.⁴⁰ This was the first official opening of a financial institution on Athonite territory. Although there was some concern about reactions of the Ottoman authorities and the monastic community, the bank encountered no opposition and operated smoothly. One way or another, the banks used local merchants and store owners in Karyes, like Nikolaides and Demetriou, as intermediaries to conduct their transactions. It is estimated that more than 10,000 people, monks and lay people lived on Mount Athos at the beginning of the twentieth century. Now, instead of having to travel or use intermediaries at high rates of commission, they could enjoy official and reliable banking services. This development proves that Mount Athos, a reclusive religious cornerstone of Orthodoxy, could add a touch of the capitalist system and of the secular world to the monastic environment.

37 Ibid.

38 GSA-HAM/BOA, file 21, no. 225, Bank of the Orient to Iviron monastery, Thessaloniki, 29 September 1906. Also, no. 283, Bank of the Orient to Vatopedi monastery, Thessaloniki, 21 October 1906.

39 GSA-HAM/BOA, file 21, no. 323–325.

40 Ergani, Official announcement (in French) on the establishment of Bank of Mytilene branch in Mount Athos, Mytilene, 22 May 1907. The names and signatures of Demitrios Iliades, Christos Doukis, and Athanasios Meimarides are referenced.

Possibly concerned about the prospects of its activities, Bank of the Orient executives arranged a trip to Mount Athos in August 1907 for two of its Thessaloniki officials, Georgiades and Hatzilazarou. Confirming the intention of the trip, the two officials were supposed to be accompanied by the bishop of Thessaloniki.⁴¹ However, at the last minute, probably for other reasons or because the bishop did not want to become implicated in the rivalry between the banks, the latter cancelled his visit, with the two bankers deciding not to travel without him.⁴²

Disentangled from competition in Thessaloniki and as the sole financial institution on Mount Athos, the Bank of Mytilene's Karyes branch employed four officers and facilitated transactions for monasteries, monks and lay people.⁴³ However, despite the bank's presence in the heart of the monastic community, the Athonite monasteries continued to do business with other Greek banks such as the NBG, Bank of Athens and Bank of the Orient. The Athonite hierarchy did not want to be dependent on only one bank; they were careful to minimize risk by spreading their deposits over a number of banks.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the financial system, especially in the Ottoman Empire, was hit by many crises and bankruptcies, with thousands of investors losing their investments. The banking sector in Thessaloniki also encountered serious problems in 1906 and 1907 (Roupa and Chekimoglou 2004, 16–17). However, until the early twentieth century the Mount Athos monasteries enjoyed financial prosperity, not least because of their increasing, high-yield deposits.

Political and Economic Crises

An external development would shake the Athonite community a few years later, however. As already noted, the Bank of Mytilene engaged local entrepreneurs and bankers in joint schemes to advance its presence in the Levant. In an effort to increase its strength and position amid increasing competition in the banking sector, the bank decided to proceed with a share capital increase, with the admission

41 GSA-HAM/BOA, file 21, no. 469.

42 GSA-HAM/BOA, file 21, no. 470.

43 Ergani, Table of salaries of the Bank of Mytilene's branches. In Karyes, four employees were registered in October 1910: Nikolaos Anagnostou as manager, Doukis as teller, and Demitrios Papatheodorou and Ioannis Hatzis Thomas as bank assistants. A servant was also registered. The manager received a monthly salary of 15 TL and the teller 12 TL. Compared to the other branches of the bank, the salaries were equal to those of a mid-sized branch, bearing in mind also the remoteness of the peninsula from the secular world.

of Georgios Zervoudakis to its board.⁴⁴ Zervoudakis, a well-known and respected entrepreneur and banker, was a member of the Greek elite of Alexandria in Egypt. His involvement in the bank was designed to allow it to expand its services in the great Mediterranean port, and this eventually happened in April 1910.⁴⁵ Despite the desired intentions, Zervoudakis' company in Alexandria, which was involved in numerous business activities and initiatives with high turnover, suddenly went bankrupt in 1911, causing the immediate collapse of the Bank of Mytilene, leaving customers in a frenzy to secure their savings.⁴⁶ The bad news quickly spread, generating concern among the monastic community. A telegram sent to the Karyes branch by the head office in Constantinople announced that the bank, due to the serious economic crisis in Turkey and Egypt, had decided to temporarily suspend all operations.⁴⁷

It is likely that most of the Athonite monasteries, monks and lay people had various deposits in the Karyes branch.⁴⁸ The bank itself soon reopened under liquidation status, announcing that deposits were safe. However, the truth was different. Depositors were to receive their deposits back in instalments of 10% at certain intervals. Disenchanted, the Athonite monasteries tried to secure their savings by joining forces. For instance, Kastamonitou monastery authorized Vatopedi to collect its share of the money and the Bank of the Orient was to present the claims in Thessaloniki.⁴⁹ Almost a year after, in September 1912, the fifth instalment was still pending and in 1914 the seventh instalment had not been paid.⁵⁰ The surviving records are not clear on whether the total amount of the deposited savings was returned but it is highly unlikely due to the eruption of the First World War and the obvious insolvency of the bank.

Around the same time, developments in the political spectrum were cataclysmic, with Greece annexing Athos along with Thessaloniki and a great part of Macedonia in 1912, ending more than 450 years of Ottoman rule as a result of the Balkan Wars. Mount Athos would retain its autonomous status and self-governance but within Greece, a long-held dream, despite the efforts of Russia for internationalized status

44 Ergani, Report of the executive administration board of Bank of Mytilene, Constantinople, 8/25 October 1909. The report is signed by G. Zarifis.

45 Ergani, Official announcement for the establishment of the Bank of Mytilene branch in Alexandria in April 1910.

46 A photograph in a Smyrna newspaper shows desperate people in a crowd at the entrance of the closed bank.

47 Vatopedi Monastery, telegram from the board of Bank of Mytilene to Karyes office, Constantinople, 9/22 October 1911.

48 Vatopedi Monastery, Bank of Mytilene, Thessaloniki, 3/20 July 1912, list of Vatopedi monastery monks and lay people with deposits.

49 Vatopedi Monastery, Bank of Mytilene, Karyes, 9 February 1912.

50 Vatopedi Monastery, Bank of Mytilene, Constantinople, 3/16 September 1912.

under its leadership. The great political, economic and social changes that dramatically altered the country over a decade did not leave Mount Athos untouched, although its status and its religious predominance were never questioned. However, its economic ties with the secular world were shaken, with negative consequences for the autonomy of the monastic community.

In 1924 the Athonite monasteries suffered a great blow as their monastic possessions (*metochia*) in Halkidiki were confiscated by the Greek state in the latter's desperate effort to accommodate the hundreds of thousands of Christian refugees who had arrived after the Asia Minor catastrophe.⁵¹ The loss of the estates created serious problems, even threatening the existence of the monasteries, since it deprived them of their self-sufficiency and autonomy, a situation worsened by the considerable decline of their economic strength due to the dramatic changes in Greece. The world economic crisis in 1929 also struck Greece, which defaulted officially in 1932 after it was unable to repay the interest on its foreign loans (Clogg 1992, 109). Some of the monasteries became dependent on the Greek state for their existence. However, the establishment of a branch of the NBG in Karyes in 1930 proves that the peninsula still had some financial strength. Despite the considerable decrease in the number of monks living in Mount Athos and the decline in the economic activities of the monasteries, an August 1936 report by the inspector of the bank, Ioannis Melandinos, shows that the total value of time deposits at the Karyes branch was increasing.⁵²

Conclusion

In summary, we must acknowledge that from the late nineteenth century onwards, the monastic community of Mount Athos successfully engaged in financial activity and worked with certain banks in an effort to secure and increase their savings. This business was generally conducted with the Greek banks, confirming the Greek national orientation of the Athonite monasteries at a time when Russia was at the peak of its ambition to control the Orthodox Eastern world and clergy. The spread of monastic wealth in various ways (time deposits, bonds, shares) shows that the monasteries were financially literate and aware of the possibilities of capitalism.

51 Originally the monasteries' estates in Halkidiki were leased by the Greek state for 10 years. Then, the state issued bonds (*αγορευτικόν δάνειον*) for each monastery with 6% annual interest. After the Second World War, the repayments were reduced dramatically, leaving the Athonite monasteries dependent on the Greek state.

52 HA/NBG, A1, S29, Y13, F214, Inspection report of the Karyes branch of the NBG, Ioannis Melandinos, Athens, 22 August 1936. The Karyes branch operated during the Second World War and ceased operations in around 1953.

Moreover, using different banks, they took advantage of competition and succeeded in gaining higher interest rates, trying at the same time to reduce their exposure to risk, especially after the bankruptcy of the Bank of Mytilene. The monks managed to increase their interest rate from 2.5 percent with the Imperial Ottoman Bank at the beginning of the twentieth century to 5 percent with the Bank of the Orient, confirming their negotiating abilities and the growing competition in the local banking sector.⁵³ Amid an uncertain future and fast-paced political developments, the involvement of the Athonite monasteries in profitable banking activities was justified, and it stood to their favour in the 1920s when the confiscation of monastic estates stripped the Athonite monks of valuable resources.

References

Unpublished Primary Sources

Ergani: Historical Archive of the Aegean Ergani.

GSA-HAM: General State Archives, Historical Archives of Macedonia. BOA: Bank of the Orient Archive.

HA/NBG: Historical Archive of the National Bank of Greece.

Vatopedi Monastery Archive.

Secondary Literature

Auchterlonie, Paul. 2000. "A Turk of the West: Sir Edgar Vincent's Career in Egypt and the Ottoman Empire." *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 27 (1): 49–67.

Chekimoglou, Evangelos. 2001. "Ο ρόλος των ελληνικών τραπεζών στη Μακεδονία, 1905–1912" [The Role of the Greek Banks in Macedonia, 1905–1912]. *Θεσσαλονικέων Πόλις* 6: 123–40.

Clogg, Richard. 1992. *A Concise History of Greece*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dertilis, George B. 2010. *Ιστορία του ελληνικού κράτους, 1830–1920* [History of the Greek State, 1830–1920]. Athens: Estia.

Gerd, Lora. 2014. *Russian Policy in the Orthodox East: The Patriarchate of Constantinople (1878–1914)*. Berlin: De Gruyter.

53 GSA-HAM/BOA, file 21, no. 323–325.

- Kaitatzides, Michael. 2009. *Ατμοπλοία Αιγαίου Π.Μ. Κουρτζής & Σία, 1883–1911* [Aegean Steamship Company: P.M. Kourtzis and Co., 1883–1911]. Patras: To Donti.
- Roupa, Efrosini and Evangelos Chekimoglou. 2004. *Εισαγωγή στην επιχειρηματικότητα της Θεσσαλονίκης* [Introduction to the Entrepreneurship of Thessaloniki (1900–1940)]. Vol. 3. Thessaloniki: Cultural Society of Entrepreneurs of Northern Greece.

Nuns' Funds

THE 1874 AND 1925 ACCOUNTS OF THE CARMEL OF 'S-HERTOGENBOSCH,
THE NETHERLANDS

BRIAN HEFFERNAN¹

Catholic religious life flourished in the Netherlands during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as a result of many factors. One important precondition for this growth was financial, and yet this aspect has received little attention from historians. The architects of the rise of the religious life – founders and foundresses, priors and prioresses, provincials and general superiors – knew it all too well, and their biographies often look more like long-drawn-out fundraising campaigns than anything else. The ideological adversaries of the religious life also knew it, as the manifold political controversies in Western Europe and further afield about mortmain and the *milliard des congrégations* testify (Van Dijck and De Maeyer 2013).

There is much to be gained for historians in looking at the modern growth of religious institutes from a financial and economic perspective. Maarten Van Dijck and Jan De Maeyer (2013, 10) have argued that study of the management, funding, and building activities of Catholic religious institutes can yield significant new insights into the relationships that these institutes had with their environment. At a local level, ideological differences that were important nationally or internationally sometimes played out in unexpected ways, and frequently this was due to financial reasons. The Discalced Carmelite nuns who came to the town of Drachten in the northern Dutch province of Friesland to found a convent there in 1935 are a good example. They were expecting to meet sectarian resistance from the predominantly Calvinist citizenry, but in fact were greeted by local suppliers keen to offer their goods and services before competitors could do the same.²

1 An extended, slightly adapted Dutch-language version of this chapter was published in Willemsen 2019. I thank Marijn van Zon, Etienne Chéreau and Jim Heffernan for their help in interpreting the accounting data.

2 *Annals of 's-Hertogenbosch (1927–1948)* (AH), 191 (Erfgoedcentrum Nederlands Kloosterleven [Heritage Centre for Dutch Religious Life], Sint Agatha (ENK), Archives of the Carmel of 's-Hertogenbosch (ACH), 559).

My purpose in this chapter is to test this approach by looking at how nuns were funded: the costs and revenues of Catholic female contemplative life in its modern heyday in a Western European country. I will do this by presenting two micro-studies of the accounts of one specific convent for two sample years. The house in question is Saint Anne's convent of the Discalced Carmelite nuns on Clarastraat in 's-Hertogenbosch, the capital of the province of North Brabant in the Netherlands. This convent, which was founded in 1872 and closed in 1971, was the first female house of the *Ordo Carmelitarum Discalceatorum* in the Netherlands after the French Revolution. It became the mother house of three other monasteries in the Netherlands, and it was long one of the most prominent Carmels of the country.

I will look specifically at this convent in its start-up phase (1874) and at its peak (1925), a period of numerical and financial prosperity. The number of samples could easily be multiplied, all the more so as financial sources are often among the best preserved in the archives, but even these two years can offer a good picture of the situation for the Discalced Carmelites in their period of growth and flourishing.³ The accounts for 1874 are in the archives of the diocese of 's-Hertogenbosch; a circumstance due to the fact that Carmels were accountable to the local ordinary. The accounts for 1925 are in the convent's own archives, which are kept in the Heritage Centre for the Religious Life in the Netherlands (*Erfgoedcentrum Nederlands Kloosterleven*) in Sint Agatha. Additional information was sourced from these two archives and from the archives of other Dutch Carmels and dioceses.

The Discalced Carmelites of the Netherlands and the Carmel of 's-Hertogenbosch

When the Discalced Carmelites came from the Belgian town of Aalst to 's-Hertogenbosch in 1872 to found a new convent, they came in the conviction that they were restoring the work that had been undone by Calvinist heretics in the seventeenth century, who had suppressed the Carmel established there in 1624. The foundation of 1872 was the beginning of a new flourishing of Discalced Carmelites in the Netherlands. Saint Anne's convent itself founded new priories in 1920, 1931 and 1935. In addition to this *'s-Hertogenbosch line* there were two other families of Discalced Carmels in the Netherlands. One consisted of convents that had fled from Germany in 1875 due to the *Kulturkampf*. The other of houses that had come

3

The 1874 accounts are the oldest extant. The project upon which this contribution is based is investigating the accounts for every year ending on -0 and -5. This is why the second year examined here is 1925 not 1924 (50 years after 1874).

from France as a result of the anticlerical laws of 1901. From the early 1920s onwards, some of these other houses also founded new Carmels. The growing popularity of Therese of Lisieux (1873–1897) caused a modest but consequential influx of Dutch postulants. In total there were sixteen Discalced Carmelite convents in the Netherlands during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The Discalced Carmelites as an order emerged in the sixteenth century with the Spanish mystic Teresa of Ávila's (1515–1582) reform of the female Carmel. Contemplative prayer and strict enclosure were important features of the new institute, as was the rule that no convent must have more than twenty-one sisters. This rule was intended, among other things, to limit the number of mouths that had to be fed in the cloister. Life behind the grille, that is, without the possibility of ever leaving the convent, was much more expensive than the active religious life that experienced great expansion during the nineteenth century. The business model of these congregations was to fund their convents and their charitable activities from the revenue raised from paying recipients of their educational and health care services, as well as from donations and from small dowries (Van Heijst, Derks and Monteiro 2010). Barred from working outside the convent, enclosed nuns had to rely primarily on donations and on investment of their capital.

Every convent community consisted of choir nuns, who paid a substantial dowry and whose task it was to recite the divine office, and lay sisters, who paid no dowry and who carried out domestic tasks. Every Carmel also had an “extern house”, home to a small number of extern sisters who were responsible for provisioning the community and for receiving visitors. In some Carmels, these sisters were maid-servants without any religious status, but in 's-Hertogenbosch they were professed members of the lay Third Order of the Carmelites.⁴ It was not until the 1930s that Rome issued instructions that transformed extern sisters into more or less full members of the Carmelite Order.⁵

Every Carmel was autonomous, subject to the authority of the local ordinary. The prioress and her three “key-bearers” or councillors were responsible for the day-to-day running of the monastery, including its financial and economic aspects. The first key-bearer was the bursar in charge of the treasury; the prioress did not have private access to this. Moreover, the chapter of the convent had to be consulted before any large expenses were made, and the second and third key-bearers had to

4 For example *Reglement voor de buitenzusters der Orde van O.L. Vrouw van den Berg Karmel* [Rule for the Extern Sisters of the Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel] (s.l., s.a.), 5 (ENK, ACH, 484).

5 AH, 239 (ENK, ACH, 559).

carry out cash audits.⁶ No accountants were involved in compiling the two annual accounts that will be examined in this contribution; professionalization was a thing of the future. The community of 's-Hertogenbosch did, however, have access to financial and legal advice from the solicitors of one of its benefactors.⁷

The Financial State of the Carmel of 's-Hertogenbosch in 1874

The accounts for 1874 consist of a statement of income and expense; there is no balance-sheet. This means that we have information only about the income and expenditure of that year, not about the monastery's assets and liabilities. We are in the dark about such important aspects as the capital that the community owned, the total value of its dowries, the worth of the newly built monastery, the houses and the tenant farm it owned, and also about any outstanding debts.

Income

The first thing that strikes the observer is that the Carmel of 's-Hertogenbosch showed a budget surplus in 1874. This was by no means a given. Enclosed convents went bankrupt from time to time (Wynants 1998, 64). In the Netherlands, the Carmel of Egmond aan den Hoef came perilously close to bankruptcy in April 1940, and confiscation and public auction of the inventory to settle unpaid tax bills was only averted at the last minute.⁸ In fact, many Carmels at one point or another faced financial ruin, which they usually fended off through loans and a renewed fundraising campaign among their network of benefactors. Thus a nine-week novena to Saint Joseph produced both a cow and new funds for the Carmel of Nijmegen in 1934.⁹ Nevertheless, prioresses and councillors, not to mention bishops, were usually very much alive to the importance of balancing the budget to avoid the public – and Protestant – opprobrium that bankruptcy would entail. Ultimately, they mostly succeeded. When Carmels eventually did begin to close in the early 1970s, it was due to the ageing of the communities and generally not to financial difficulties.

6 *Coutumier du Carmel de Bois-le-Duc à l'usage de la Révérende Mère Prieure et des trois Soeurs Clavières* (s.l., s.a. (1914)), 39 (ENK, ACH, 9).

7 Batkin to Marie Julienne, 16 November 1891 (ENK, ACH, 3); Vandeput-Heirman to Marie Antoinette, 1 March 1900 (ENK, ACH, 198).

8 Maria Immaculata to Huibers, 20 April 1940 (Diocese of Haarlem-Amsterdam, Vogelenzang (DHA), Diocesan Archives (HADA), 233.1).

9 *Annals of Nijmegen* (1928–1938), 241 (ENK, Archives of the Carmel of Nijmegen, 1).

Table 1.: *Statement of income and expenses, Carmel of 's-Hertogenbosch, 1874. Based on the French original. "F" = Belgian francs, "f" = Dutch guilders.*

Source: *Annual account 1874 (Diocese of 's-Hertogenbosch, Diocesan Archives, 328, 5).*

Income		Expenses	
1 coupon share ¹⁰ Antwerp	F3.00	Chaplain's fee	f300.00
22 coupons share Bordeaux	F66.00	Meals, meat, rusk	f310.00
4 coupons Dutch credit	F31.70	Eggs	f74.30
1 coupon share Amiens	F4.00	Butter	f147.96
1 coupon share Austria	F19.20	Rice	f63.52
2 coupons shares Rotterdam	F12.68	Milk	f78.10
2 coupons bonds Lille-Valenciennes	F14.00	Bread	f272.79
2 coupons bonds Rothschild	F42.55	Potatoes	f59.14
8 coupons bonds Antwerp-Ghent	F240.00	Oil for the Blessed Sacrament	f13.19
Subtotal	F433.13	Rape oil	f2.15
=in Dutch guilders	f200.78	Cod and herring	f36.20
Rent houses	f1138.80	Soap	f15.54
Rent farm	f300.00	Charcoal	f18.75
Pensions of the professed religious	f1655.16	The poor	f5.72
Pension of the novice	f141.00	Postage stamps	f13.00
Collection/offertory box chapel	f79.45	Postage and transport	f30.50
Alms and extern house crafts	f534.18	1 flag	f6.95
Belgian donations for construction	f4855.37	1 blanket	f10.00
		Breviary hooks	f11.20
		Furniture and washbasins	f20.65
		Brushes/brooms	f14.28
Foundation of 7 cells	f3500.00	Property and personal tax	f271.35
Subtotal	f12203.96	Fire insurance premiums	f21.80
Total	f12404.74	13 copper strips for cells	f85.05
		Dowry postulant lay sister	f110.00
		Purchase of 4m ground beside garden	f104.00
		Repayment De Foere loan	f1067.70
		Small silver ciborium	f55.00
		111 kg rye	f15.70
		120 kg wheat	f23.25
		Minor expenses	f258.56
		Old account building material 1873	f4240.77
		Account building material 1874	f4597.62
		Total	f12355.65¹¹

¹⁰ It is actually a bond, not a share, but the French original has *lot*.

¹¹ The total is actually f12,354.74, but the statement has f12,355.65. This difference is perhaps due to the fact that part of the paper is missing at "Purchase of 4m ground" or to a miscalculation.

Closer inspection of the 1874 accounts reveals that the dividend on invested capital constituted only a very small part of the convent's income: just 1.6%. This is striking, because theoretically the revenue of the dowries which constituted the capital should have been any Carmel's main source of income. Correspondence from before the foundation confirms that each of the seven foundresses who were also choir nuns had indeed paid dowries upon entry in Aalst: seventy thousand Belgian francs in total.¹² The explanation is likely to be that the documents of title corresponding to the dowries had not yet been transferred to 's-Hertogenbosch so shortly after the foundation. A final settlement redistributing the assets of Aalst between the motherhouse and the new foundation was not signed until May 1875.¹³

It is not certain, however, that all of the foundresses-choir nuns were actually in possession of the full amount of their dowry at the time of the foundation. An overview of the dowries probably compiled in the 1890s shows for example that one of the foundresses, Sister Thérèse de Jésus (Maria Delahaye, 1854–1921) only received the first instalment of her dowry from her family in 1892, even though she had entered in Aalst in 1872.¹⁴ Apparently sisters were sometimes accepted on the promise of a future inheritance, even if no advance on this capital was available. The consequence was of course that the convent had to forego revenue in the interval. The details of the Aalst sisters show that the dowry required for entry in the Carmel as a choir nun was approximately ten thousand Belgian francs or 4,600 Dutch guilders. One choir nun who joined about fifteen years later, in 1886, paid five thousand guilders; we may assume that this was more or less the standard amount of the dowry for Carmelite choir nuns, and it was exponentially more than for many active congregations.¹⁵ The contemplative life was as yet predominantly an upper-class and upper-middle-class affair. Lay sisters, by contrast, paid no dowry at all or a very small one, like the postulant mentioned in the accounts, whose 110 guilders were returned to her when she left.

According to canon law, the dowry could not be spent during the lifetime of the sister in question, because she could claim the full amount back if she ever decided to leave. The Carmel did have the right of usufruct.¹⁶ This means that other funds were required to support a novice before she took her vows: an allowance or *trousseau* that could cover her living expenses. Perhaps the *pension de la novice* of 141

12 Aimé de la Sainte-Famille to Van Son, 30 May 1868 (ENK, ACH, 37).

13 Agreement between the Carmels of Aalst and 's-Hertogenbosch, 1 May 1875 (Friary of OCD Fathers, Ghent (FOCD)), Archives of the Carmel of Aalst (ACA), 14, E, 5a).

14 Notebook with overview of dowries (ENK, ACH, 372).

15 Acte de chapitre à conserver (ENK, ACH, 138). For the latter, see for instance (Eijt 1995, 132; Van Heijst, Derks and Monteiro 2010, 1097 note 136).

16 This rule was incorporated into the Code of Canon Law in 1917 as canon 549 (*Codex Iuris Canonici Pii X* 1918, 274).

guilders mentioned in the account is an example of such a trousseau. The *pensions* of the professed sisters also mentioned there were one of the convent's larger sources of income in 1874: almost 15%. These were allowances that wealthy sisters received from their families.¹⁷ They were one way in which the convent could already benefit somewhat from future inheritances. Loans also often came from relatives rather than from banks: the affluent West-Flemish De Foere family, whose loan was repaid in 1874, was related to one of the foundresses.¹⁸

The two largest sources of income in 1874 were of an incidental nature: the Belgian donations for the construction of the new monastery and the foundation of seven cells. The very foundation of a convent in 's-Hertogenbosch had been possible only because one of the sisters in Aalst had received a large inheritance; she was the daughter of a successful Walloon industrialist.¹⁹ The Carmel of 's-Hertogenbosch was fortunate, moreover, to have one very generous benefactor: the Belgian Catholic politician Florimond-Joseph de Brouchoven de Bergeyck (1839–1908) (Costa, 2010, 61). In addition to his constant largesse, the foundation of cells was another source of revenue. This involved putting a price on each individual cell that would be built in the new monastery, and sometimes on other rooms and on pieces of furniture. Benefactors who donated the amount in question could then claim the title of “founder”, and a copper plate bearing their name was affixed to the door of “their” cell, so that the sister who lived there would be ever mindful of her duty to earn merit for them through her prayers and mortifications.²⁰

Specific acts of piety were sometimes pledged to the founders in return for their benefactions: the grace that such spiritual acts merited in the eyes of God was then applied not to the sisters who had performed them, but to the benefactor instead. Thus the sisters undertook to offer up one communion a week for de Bergeyck's intentions in perpetuity. The accumulation of such commitments over the decades meant that by the 1950s there were very few regular acts of devotion or mortification left that had not already been pledged to some benefactor, often long dead. The prioress successfully petitioned the bishop in 1952 to convert historical

17 See for example the case of Mother Marie Louise des Anges (Émérence Van Houtryve, 1841–1906), notebook with overview of dowries (ENK, ACH, 372).

18 De Foere to Godschalk, 7 December 1888 (Diocese of 's-Hertogenbosch [DH], Diocesan Archives [HAD], 328, 6).

19 Annals of Aalst, 23 (FOCD, ACA, 5, “Histoire de la fondation”) and personal file of Joséphine de Sainte-Anne (FOCD, ACA, 2, “Relation des vertus”).

20 Annals of Echt (AE), 165, 177, 180 (ENK, Archives of the Carmel of Echt (ACE), 3); plate (ENK, Archives of the Carmel of Roermond, 328).

commitments into less onerous obligations so as to free up spiritual “space” that could then be pledged to new donors.²¹

Van Dijck and De Maeyer (2013, 23) have pointed out the importance for monasteries of cultivating a network of benefactors; that was one of the pillars of the *economics of providence* that characterized the financial and economic life of religious. Having benefactors was a crucial precondition for the growth of the Carmel in nineteenth-century Western societies: the contemplative life was not just a matter of the sisters and their relatives, but also of benefactors who were willing to invest. God’s providence worked through them, and the Carmels and their clerical allies were often very adept at building and maintaining such networks. In 1874, this was probably still the network of the Carmel of Aalst.²² One way of encouraging the munificence of benefactors was to show them the frugality of Carmelite life. Frugality was an important aspect of the religious life in its own right, not only spiritually, but also practically, because thrift reduced costs. But there was also PR value to this virtue. Whenever a new Carmel was founded, the days between the commissioning of the new building and the imposition of enclosure provided an important opportunity to show interested parties around the monastery, to demonstrate how frugally the sisters lived, and how necessary it was that their poverty should be alleviated. This is also what happened in ’s-Hertogenbosch in 1872.²³

The sisters had little to expect as yet from the local population: income from alms, collections and offertory boxes was very limited. New foundations needed time to become known (Costa 2010, 66). The renting out of a number of dwelling houses and of a farm situated on the grounds of the convent was another source of income. One final conclusion about income that can be drawn from this account is that the sisters had no gainful employment, apart from the extern house crafts – probably reliquaries – that were sold.²⁴ This would subsequently change, and Carmelites ultimately made liturgical vestments, operated as laundries for ecclesiastical clients, or manufactured altar breads.²⁵

21 Gemma a Matre Dei to Mutsaerts, 4 November 1952 (ENK, ACH, 64).

22 AH, 18 (Carmel of Arnhem [CA]).

23 AH, 7 (CA). See also Wynants 1988, 72.

24 AH, 65 (CA).

25 “Bijvoegsel tot de *Nederlandsche Staatscourant* van Donderdag 15 Januari 1914, no. 12.” [Appendix to the Dutch State Bulletin of Thursday 15 January 1914, no. 12] (ENK, Archives of the Carmel of Maastricht (ACM), 39); *Annals of Maastricht* (AM), 76 (ENK, ACM, 3); Leyten deed, 1 September 1902 (ENK, Archives of the Carmel of Bergen op Zoom (ACBZ), 19).

Expenditure

The expense that most attracts the observer's attention was the large outlay for construction. In her book on the Clarastraat convent, Denise de Costa has described the different phases of its construction, and it is evident from her description that 1874 was the year in which the south wing was built (Costa 2010, 60–1, 70–71, 76). The statement of income and expense clearly reflects this.

The entry for meat is intriguing, because the “Fast of the Order” stipulated that Carmelites should abstain from meat.²⁶ The meat purchased was probably intended for indisposed sisters, because they could be dispensed from this rule at doctor's orders. Many sisters regarded it as a personal defeat if “the fast was imposed upon them” – the ethos of the convent encouraged sisters to make it a point of pride to observe the rule in all its austerities as much as possible.²⁷ There were certain spiritual motives for this attitude, but of course it also helped to keep costs down.

Some foods that one might have expected to find in the accounts are not in fact listed, like vegetables, even though they were on the menu.²⁸ This omission is probably due to the fact that the sisters grew their own vegetables in their garden; another possibility is that they received them as gifts from supplier-benefactors. According to the annals, the community every week received a herring and a bucket of rice from a “poor greengrocer woman” from the city; and this without her husband knowing about it, but with her confessor's permission. This conspiracy between a lay woman, the sisters, and the confessor for the benefit of the convent also demonstrates that donations were forthcoming not only from the higher or middle classes.²⁹ The Carmel was a recipient rather than a giver of charity, as the rather meagre entry of five guilders and seventy-two cents for the poor testifies. The extern sisters probably did provide donations in kind to beggars who came to the door.

Like practically every newly founded Carmel, Saint Anne's convent in 1874 faced significant expenses for the construction of the new monastery, while its own capital was still very limited. Donations and loans from Belgium were crucial, as was frugality, but in the long run more extensive contacts with the new urban surroundings were indispensable to remain financially viable.

26 *Règle primitive et constitutions des religieuses de l'ordre de Notre-Dame du Mont-Carmel, selon la réformation de Sainte Thérèse pour les monastères de son ordre en France* (Poitiers 1898), 146–47 (ENK, ACBZ, 68).

27 Obituary of Marie de l'Incarnation, 4 April 1902 (ENK, ACH, 516). The example came from the Carmel of Dussen.

28 *Coutumier*, 41 (ENK, ACH, 490).

29 AH, 14 (CA).

Table 2.: Statement of income and expense for the Carmel of 's-Hertogenbosch, 1925. The names of individual sisters mentioned have been anonymized (In Dutch guilders).

Source: Annual account 1925 (Erfgoedcentrum Nederlands Kloosterleven, Sint Agatha, Archives of the Carmel of 's-Hertogenbosch, 239).

Income		Expenses	
Funds drawn for redemption		Funds purchased	
Municipal bond Lichtenvoorde	500.00	Bonds The Hague & Tilburg	1447.19
Municipal bond Almelo	500.00	Bonds Rotterdam & Child Protection Agency Tilburg	1434.46
Municipal bonds The Hague	2000.00	Bonds parish Vlaardingen	7009.52
Municipal bonds 's-Hertogenbosch	100.00	Bonds parish Utrecht	1464.98
Bond Gemeente-Crediet	100.00	Bs. par. Rotterdam & Vlaardingen	986.00
Bond Brothers of Venray	500.00	Bonds par. Soestdijk & Rotterdam	4483.11
Bonds parish Vlaardingen	6000.00	Bonds parishes Rotterdam & Tilburg	1488.06
Bond Haarlemsche Hypotheekbank	1.00000	Bonds parish Amsterdam	198.75
Bond Vaderlandsche Hypotheekbank	510.00	Subtotal	18512.07
Bond parish Rotterdam	500.00	Chaplain's fee	1440.00
Bond Bergen op Zoom	1012.45	Holy Masses	537.16
Bond Noord-Holland	2050.00	The poor and poor churches	720.24
Bond Middelburg	500.00	Tax	607.17
Bonds Groningen	2000.00	Milk, butter, cheese, eggs	1788.43
Bond Child Protection Agency Tilburg	1000.00	Water, beer, wine	555.87
Municipal bond Tilburg	500.00	Bread, flour, potatoes	1041.56
Subtotal	18772.45	Meat, fish	729.48½
Balance 1924	210½	Doctor, pharmacy	339.26
Interest on convent's bonds	5706.42	Fuel, gas, petroleum	531.54
Rent Brothers Torenstr. & Verhoeckx	323.50	Carpenter, painter etc. wages	2082.20
Rent houses	1404.80	Various expenses	1226.62½
Old age pension	540.00	Fire insurance, electricity	100.85
Donations	2302.50	Pension C & D	1384.31½
Novenas	633.85	Funerals E & F	322.55
Subtotal	10913.17½	Subtotal	13407.25½

Sisters' dowries		Sisters' dowries – funds purchased	
Municipal bond Arnhem	1000.00	Bond John of God's Hospital (The Hague)	5916.00
Bonds Groningen schools	1000.00	Bond The Hague	1000.00
Bond John of God's Hospital (TH)	1000.00	Bond St. Joseph's Institution, Beverwijk	907.52
Municipal bond Dordrecht	1000.00	Bond parish Utrecht	1465.56
Municipal bond Utrecht	1000.00	Subtotal	9289.08
Utrecht parish bond received		Extraordinary expenses	
Received from Sr. A	500.00	Returned to Sr. G: 15 bonds and f1,000.00	1000.00
Sr. B's dowry	5000.00	Returned to Sr. H	1900.00
Interest on bonds	3398.58	Received from and returned to Sr. I:	
Interests from various sisters	566.25	f6,000.00	_____
Subtotal	14464.83	Subtotal	2900.00
Total	44150.45½	Total	44108.40½

The Financial State of the Carmel of 's-Hertogenbosch in 1925

Again the accounts are a statement of income and expense, and there is no balance-sheet.

Income

The Carmel had at this point amassed a considerable capital, and the revenue this yielded was by far the most important source of income for the sisters. The “funds drawn for redemption” that paid out nearly nineteen thousand guilders in 1925 were bonds purchased by the convent in the past that had matured. As the expenditure side shows, almost the entire redeemed amount was immediately reinvested in new bonds.³⁰ The interest received on the Carmel's bond portfolio was more than five thousand guilders: nothing spectacular, but the community preferred safe investments. The sisters were not interested in underwriting risky company stock, but instead purchased bonds issued by civil municipalities and provinces, and by Catholic ecclesiastical institutions. The Belgian and French investments of 1874 had moreover been replaced by Dutch securities, demonstrating stronger integration into Dutch society. Prudence and risk avoidance were another characteristic of the “economics of providence” according to Van Dijck and De Maeyer (2013, 23), and

30 _____
Thanks to Marijn van Zon who explained this to me.

these accounts corroborate that, as stable economic conditions in the Netherlands meant that the risks in investing in such bonds were relatively small. The capital that was invested in this way had been formed by the accumulation of dowries that had accrued to the monastery upon the death of the sisters in question. Together with donations, this created a fund that could be made to yield fruit through investment.

Donations formed a relatively large entry on the revenue side: the sisters had over the last fifty years managed to build a network of benefactors in 's-Hertogenbosch. The chapel had become popular among local residents, reflecting the success of the devotional programme specifically designed to attract the faithful that the sisters offered in their chapel (Costa 2010, 70–1, 80). All this brought in revenue through collections (accounted for under “donations”), as well as publicity. Alerted to the presence of the sisters, people with intentions came to ask them for their prayers, for instance in the form of novenas, a practice that generated more than six hundred guilders in 1925.

There was another bond that tied the cloistered nuns of 's-Hertogenbosch to the surrounding society. They owned a piece of land situated just to the south of the monastery, which they let out to a farmer and his family. The tenant had agreed forty years previously to pay a rent of five hundred guilders per year, “in addition to sixty wheelbarrows of cow manure to be delivered to the Revd. Sisters’ garden.”³¹ In 1919, the Brothers of Tilburg, a religious teaching congregation, offered to purchase this land so that they could build a new monastery there (Janssen 2016, 6). The sisters agreed, but this meant ending the lease, and the sisters had to endure the wrath that all landlords encounter when they evict their tenants.³² As far as we know, the dispute was not brought before the courts but before the bishop, who decided that the sisters could sell once the lease expired, but also suggested that they offer their tenant decent indemnification.³³ In 1925, the farm no longer appeared in the accounts; instead the Brothers paid rent, probably for part of the terrain they had not yet purchased but were already using. The “houses” also generated rent. It is not certain that the sisters were good landlords: these houses were declared uninhabitable by the municipal authorities in 1956 and were demolished in 1960.³⁴

Like in 1874, it is not clear on the basis of this statement of income whether the sisters worked to meet their living expenses. This became a widespread custom only

31 Ackermans to Diepen, 29 March 1920 (DH, HDA, 328, 6).

32 See correspondence (DH, HDA, 328, 6).

33 Diepen to prioress, 3 March and 22 April 1920 (DH, HDA, 328, 6).

34 Prioress to Oomens, 2 November 1960 (ENK, ACH, 72).

in the 1950s, after the papal constitution *Sponsa Christi* (1950) instructed enclosed nuns to seek gainful employment.³⁵ This document brought about a significant change in the lives of many enclosed convents. Finding work that could be done behind the grille became a priority and convents began to adjust their daily routine and their recruitment policy accordingly. This increasing economic activity sometimes also led to questioning of the strict laws of enclosure (Marcélis 2012, 268–77; Van Dijck and De Maeyer 2013, 23). For the Dutch Carmels it meant that attempts were made to set up a federation which could facilitate mutual assistance.³⁶

The “old age pension” that brought in five hundred guilders was probably a pension paid out under the 1919 *Ouderdomswet* or Old Age Pension Act, which guaranteed pensions to certain categories of people of 65 years and older. Sisters of that age would have been eligible for a free pension, because for income tax purposes they were assessed for an annual income of less than twelve hundred guilders, one of the eligibility requirements (*Ouderdomsrente* 1919).

This time, the dowries are clearly present in the accounts. In fact there is a separate section of the statement of income and expense specifically for the dowries, to underline that the dowries of living sisters must not yet be regarded as part of the convent's possessions proper.³⁷ Like the Carmel's own funds, the dowries were invested in safe bonds, which generated interest of nearly three thousand four hundred guilders in 1925. Five previously purchased bonds had been drawn for redemption in 1925, freeing up five thousand guilders in total. And there were new dowries: those received from Sisters A and B.

Expenditure

As has been seen, almost the entire amount of bonds redeemed in 1925 was reinvested in the same year, and in the same type of bond.

As regards the other expenses, the chaplain's fee had clearly increased since 1874: it had gone up by 380% in fifty years' time. Moreover, he had the free use of the chaplain's house, which also belonged to the convent.³⁸ Chaplains, in other words,

35 Prioress to Mutsaerts, 23 June 1952 (ENK, ACH, 64).

36 “Notamina bij het Rapport over de Federatie-bijeenkomst der Carmelitessen 5–8 Nov. 1953” [Notes accompanying the Report on the Federation meeting of Carmelite Sisters, 5–8 November 1953] (DH, HDA, 328, 7).

37 Thanks to Marijn van Zon who pointed this out to me.

38 “Regten en verplichtingen van den WelEerw. Rector van 't gesticht der Zusters Carmelitessen te 's Bosch” [Rights and duties of the Rev. Chaplain of the institute of Carmelite Sisters in 's-Hertogenbosch], 4 December 1877 (DH, HDA, 328, 3); prioress to Mutsaerts, 4 February 1948 (DH, HDA, 328, 3).

were an expensive commodity, and several Carmels in the Netherlands therefore chose not to have a full-time chaplain, instead using the services of religious priests from monasteries in the vicinity, or even of parish clergy.³⁹ It was possibly to reduce costs that the chaplain of 's-Hertogenbosch was traditionally also the sisters' ordinary confessor; in other Carmels these two offices were usually separate.⁴⁰

One entry on the expenses side shows that the sisters paid for "Holy Masses", in the form of the stipend that priests received to say Mass for a particular intention. Usually the chaplain was asked to say Mass for these intentions, but the job could also be outsourced to other priests. The Carmel sometimes received donations in the form of a foundation: the benefactor would give the convent a large sum of money on condition that a set number of Masses would be celebrated annually for his or her intention, with the stipends paid out of the capital. Thus in 1928, the sisters received a foundation of a thousand guilders in bonds, with the stipulation that they would have to have fifteen Masses said yearly for twenty five years. In 1928 the bishop gave them permission to "send the Holy Masses (the intentions and corresponding stipends) to the Haaren major seminary".⁴¹ Masses were in effect a kind of currency. This kind of arrangement cost the sisters more than five hundred and thirty guilders in 1925, but on balance they were profitable.

The poor of 's-Hertogenbosch in 1925 met with greater generosity from the Carmel than in 1874; similarly, a number of "poor churches" were also in receipt of donations. Sometimes these gifts were in kind rather than in cash: it was said of Mother Marie-Joseph du Saint-Sacrement (Maria Smit, 1853–1933) upon her death in 1933 that throughout her life she had made church ornaments for poor churches.⁴² This passage in the annals also shows that the Carmelites did indeed work, but for charity rather than for money.

Life in the Carmel was still Spartan in 1925, because there was no running water, electricity, or heating in the cells, although fuel expenditure was up compared to 1874. Also, the account shows entries for gas, petroleum, and electricity, indicating that certain parts of the building were fitted with heating and light, possibly the extern house and the infirmary. Standards of frugality were subject to creeping inflation.

39 AE, 129, 161–62 (ENK, ACE, 3); Josefina, "Franse Karmelitessen" [French Carmelite Sisters], 205 (DH, HDA, 328, 2); AM, 25 and 28 (ENK, ACM, 3); Hopmans to Marguerite-Marie, 23 September 1901 (ENK, ACBZ, 127).

40 "Regten en verpligtingen" (DH, HDA, 328, 3).

41 Diepen to prioress, 7 June 1930 (ENK, ACH, 45).

42 AH, 168 (ENK, ACH, 559).

The pensions paid to Sisters C and D were for the cost of medical treatment outside the monastery. C was a choir nun who entered in 1911 but was diagnosed as mentally ill seven years later. She was sent to a psychiatric institution in 1918, where she remained until her death in 1954.⁴³ Once a sister had taken vows, she could not be dismissed for health reasons, and this is why C's pension recurred annually in the accounts. Much to the monastery's relief, her relatives were also prepared to contribute to the cost of care.⁴⁴ Sister D was similarly institutionalized, on account of her weak physical health. She was an extern sister, a tertiary, to whom the Carmel did not have the same canonical obligations as to choir or lay nuns.⁴⁵ However, the Carmel of 's-Hertogenbosch usually drew up a special contract with extern sisters stipulating that the convent would pay for medical care.⁴⁶

The expenses made in respect of the dowries show what happened when a sister decided to leave; a rare occurrence, although more common before profession. Sisters G and H both got their money back in 1925: they left before their profession.⁴⁷ Sister I left in the same year that she had entered, departing with her dowry of six thousand guilders. Her dowry was twenty percent higher than the five thousand normally demanded in 1874. Other sources confirm that six thousand guilders was the new requirement for entry into the Carmel of 's-Hertogenbosch, a thousand more than in other Carmels in the country, reflecting the prestige of this convent.⁴⁸ It was in any case a very large sum of money for the time.

As far as can be said in the absence of a balance-sheet, the Carmel of 's-Hertogenbosch was financially very healthy in 1925: between the dividend on the invested capital and dowries, the rental income from their properties, and the donations they received, the monastery was comfortable. The fact that the community had been able five years previously to transfer part of its capital and dowries to a new foundation and was able to do the same thing again six years later, offers further confirmation. The first half of the twentieth century was a period of expansion for the Discalced Carmelite nuns in the Netherlands, as it was for many other religious in the country.

43 Derived from database compiled by Liesbeth Cooijmans.

44 Notebook with overview of dowries (ENK, ACH, 372).

45 E-mail Liesbeth Cooijmans to author, 5 March 2019.

46 Notebook with overview of dowries (ENK, ACH, 372).

47 Derived from database compiled by Liesbeth Cooijmans.

48 Veronica to Oomens, 19 February 1958 (ENK, ACH, 70); Maria Immaculata to Huibers, 19 October 1938 (DHA, HADA, 233.1).

Conclusion: the Place of Contemplative Life in Dutch Society (1870s–1920s)

Van Dijck and De Maeyer (2013, 22–25) have characterized the economic practices of Catholic religious as the economics of providence, with frugality, trust in providence (all the greater if there was a strong network of benefactors), and the prudent management of resources as its main features. Our analysis of the accounts of the Carmel of 's-Hertogenbosch for 1874 and 1925 has identified these aspects in the history of the Discalced Carmelite nuns. The nuns lived off the return of their capital, and in the relatively stable Dutch economy this proved viable. This remained so even during the crisis of the 1930s, as the government retained the gold standard until 1936, avoiding inflation, though not recession. As has been seen, however, in the long run Carmels had to seek paid employment. The introduction in 1956 of state pensions for all Dutch residents aged 65 and older, in combination with increased life expectancy and a drop in vocations, effectively ended most financial worries for Carmelite communities.

We must now ask what these accounts can tell us about the place of the contemplative life in Dutch society in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Netherlands came late to industrialization, but by the 1870s its economy was beginning to develop, and it had liberalized its political structures in 1848. Economic and political modernization did not sound the death knell for contemplative religious life; quite the contrary, as monasteries and convents proliferated from the mid-nineteenth-century up to the 1960s. As the example of the Carmel of 's-Hertogenbosch demonstrates, these houses participated in various ways in the modern economy, mainly through investing their capital in public and private bonds, but also through such means as renting out property and, ultimately, productive labour.

But they could not survive without a network, to source new candidates with dowries and benefactors with donations: donors were crucial. This required close bonds that tied the cloister to the outside world. In many ways, the Carmelites were much more intimately connected to their surroundings than their grilles and veils suggested. In some respects, the willingness of the Belgian and Dutch Catholic middle classes to invest their capital in the contemplative life appears to be one of history's unexpected continuities, a hangover from the past, governed not by modern economic rationality but by premodern notions of securing personal salvation. But the flourishing of the religious life, and of contemplative life in particular, proves that personal salvation was also very much a contemporary concern, in defiance of the doctrines of secularization theory.

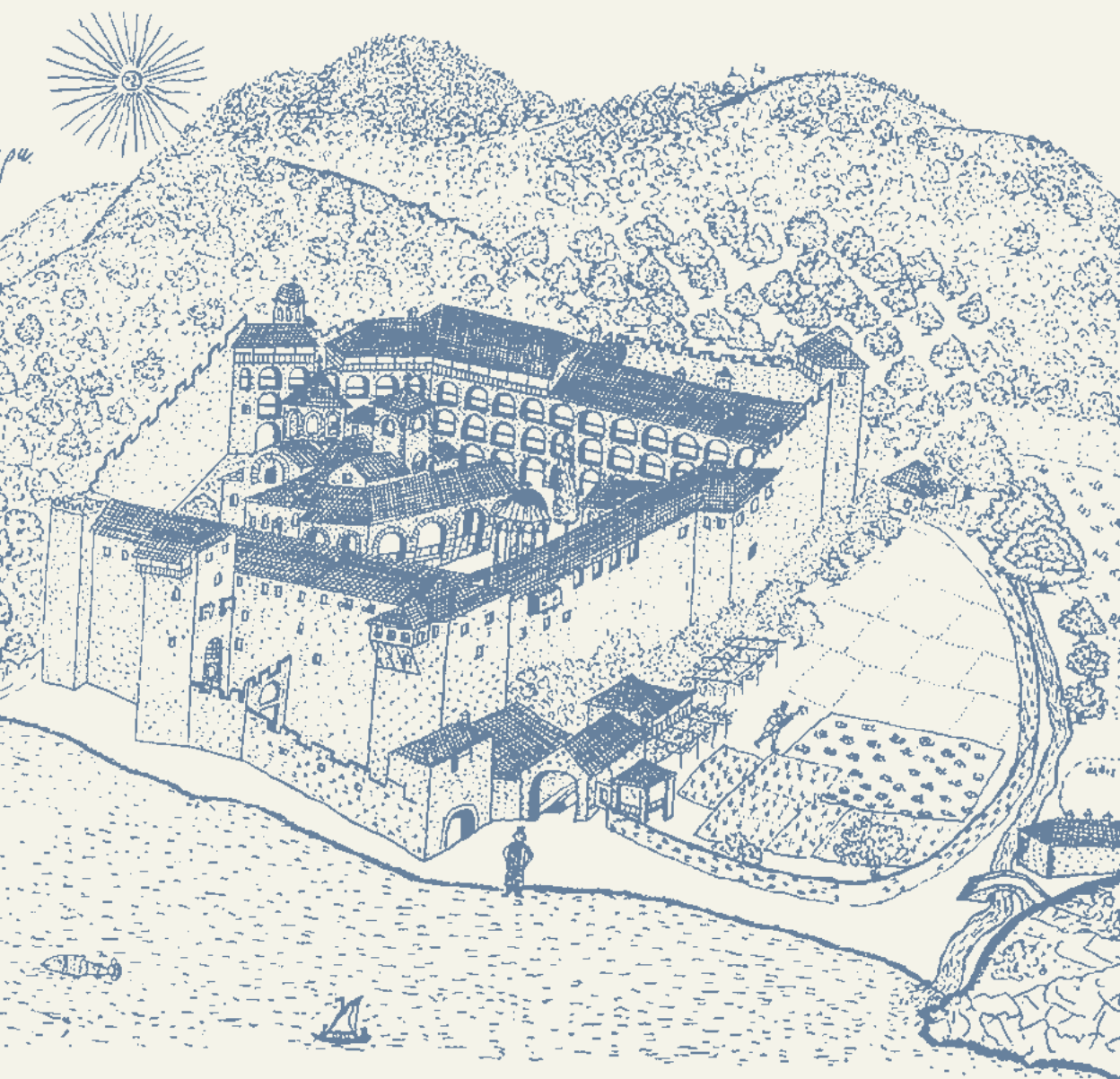
Yet there was also a specifically contemporary reason for Catholic citizens to invest in the contemplative life, one that reflects the new place that religion had come to occupy in modern Western European societies after the French Revolution. Churches were no longer either part of the establishment, as Catholicism had been in *ancien régime* France, or banned or obstructed by the state, as had been the case with Catholicism in the Dutch Republic. Instead, they were free and had to transform themselves into movements that relied upon the support of the “ordinary faithful”, who had to be mobilized to this end. Investment in the contemplative life can be seen as a way for Catholics of means to support this mobilization drive: contemplative nuns could, through their prayer and mortification, obtain divine favour for the advancement of the Catholic cause in a pluralist society dominated by liberals, Protestants, and liberal Protestants. Investing in cloistered nuns made sense both personally, politically, and culturally.

References

- Codex Iuris Canonici Pii X Pontificis Maximi iussu digestus Benedicti Papae XV auctoritate promulgatus*. 1918. Roma: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis.
- Costa, Denise de. 2010. *Wonen in een klooster. Clarissen, Theresiaantjes, gastarbeiders en kunstenaars* [Living in a Convent: Poor Clares, Teresian Carmelites, Migrant Workers and Artists]. Zwolle: de Jonge Hond.
- Eijt, José. 1995. *Religieuze vrouwen: bruid, moeder, zuster. Geschiedenis van twee Nederlandse zustercongregaties, 1820–1940* [Religious Women: Brides, Mothers, Sisters. History of Two Dutch Congregations of Sisters, 1820–1940]. Nijmegen and Hilversum: Verloren.
- Janssen, Toine. 2016. “De Fraters van Tilburg” [Brothers of Tilburg]. In *Bossche Encyclopedie* [Encyclopedia of ‘s-Hertogenbosch]. Accessed 9 March 2019. <http://www.bossche-encyclopedie.nl/publicaties/janssen,%20toine/de%20fraters%20van%20tilburg.pdf>.
- Marcélis, Anne-Dolorès. 2012. *Femmes cloîtrées des temps contemporains. Vies et histoires de carmélites et de clarisses en Namurois, 1837–2000*. Louvain-la-Neuve: UCL Presses universitaires de Louvain.
- Ouderdomsrente. *Propaganda-brochure voor de Vrijwillige Ouderdoms-Verzekering, zooals deze is geregeld in de Ouderdomswet* [Old Age Pension. Propaganda Brochure for the Voluntary Old Age Pension as Regulated by the Old Age Act. 1919. Accessed 5 March 2019. <http://leesmuseum.bibliotheekarnhem.nl/Books/mp-pdf-bestanden/LM02853.pdf>
- Van Dijck, Maarten, Jan De Maeyer. 2013. “The Economics of Providence: An Introduction to the Economic History of Orders and Congregations, 1773–1930”. In *The Economics of Providence: Management, Finance and Patrimony of Religious Orders and Congregations in Europe, 1773-ca. 1930*, edited by Maarten Van Dijck, Jan De Maeyer, Jeffrey Tyssens and Jimmy Koppens, 7–25. Leuven: Leuven University Press.

- Van Heijst, Annelies, Marjet Derks and Marit Monteiro. 2010. *Ex caritate: Kloosterleven, apostolaat en nieuwe spirit van actieve vrouwelijke religieuzen in Nederland in de 19e en 20e eeuw* [Ex Caritate: Religious Life, Apostolate and New Spirit of Active Women Religious in the Netherlands in the 19th and 20th Century]. Hilversum: Verloren.
- Willemsen, Marie-Antoinette, ed. 2019. *Werven en derven: De financiële grondslag van kloostergemeenschappen in de Lage Landen* [Profit and Loss: The Financial Foundation of Religious Communities in the Low Countries], 15–33. Hilversum: Verloren.
- Wynants, Paul. 1998. “De la restauration à la rénovation. Les religieuses contemplatives en Belgique (1801–1983)”. In *Filles du silence. Moniales en Belgique et Luxembourg, du Moyen-Âge à nos jours*, 59–113. Bastogne : Musée diocésain en Piconrue.

Section IV
VIS-À-VIS
THE SECULAR POWER



Monasteries, Economy, and Politics in the Orthodox World from Medieval to Modern Times

ELIAS KOLOVOS

From medieval to modern times, monastic institutions, especially in the Orthodox Christian world, have had an impressive historical continuity. Some of the monasteries on Mount Athos, for example, have had a continuous presence for over a millennium now. How can we explain this continuity? Is it purely due to the religiousness of the monks and the faithful across the ages? In the approach chosen here, this continuity also requires an explanation on the basis of continued relations of the monastic institutions with economic activity and political protection – although these relations *differed* over time within *different* historical circumstances (Kolovos 2011, ix-xviii). The present chapter focuses: (a) on monastic landholding across the ages, as the basis of economic stability in both medieval and modern times, even today; (b) on political protection of the monasteries in various states and societies, even Islamic ones, a case in point being the Orthodox monasteries under Ottoman rule; (c) lastly, I will make an effort to include the role of monastic networks, both religious, economic and political, in the analysis and discussion. Methodologically, I argue that if, as modern historians, we separate the patterns of monastic activities in their cultural, economic, and political aspects, we must keep in mind that – from the perspective of medieval and modern monks –, all these aspects were combined and practiced as a whole. This unity of behaviour may also have contributed, and continues to contribute even today, in our post-industrial age, to the survival, stability, and even success, in some cases, of the monastic institutions. After all, in the midst of economic crises, the world is always in search of stable institutions.

In the Beginning There Was the ... Land

The rich landscape of late antique ascetic monasticism already included centrally organized monasteries, like those of Pachomius in Upper Egypt, as functioning economic entities. In Asia Minor, Basil of Caesarea established the first urban

monastery after returning from his studies in Athens in 351. A little later, at the turn of the fifth century, the writings of Nilus of Ancyra advise that the proper economic basis of an urban monastery should be either the wealth of the founder or the patronage of affluent benefactors. Patronage of monasteries by rich officials and families, including emperors in some cases, became a pattern in the imperial capital of Constantinople, the centre of ecclesiastical and secular power in the Byzantine world. According to Samuel Rubenson (2008, 664), “in the sixth century, the funding of monasteries (such as St Catherine and Mar Saba by Justinian and Syrian monasteries by Theodora) contributed [...] to the wealth of the monasteries.” According to John A. McGuckin (2008, 618), “the profuse rhetoric of monastic texts (the predominant literature of the Byzantine world) continually stresses (monasticism’s) role apart, its eremitical withdrawal from the affairs of society. This should not blind the reader to the fundamentally important political and social functions monasticism played out within the Byzantine experience – not least after the tenth century when monasteries often became significant landowners.”

As far as the Byzantine economy is concerned, Angeliki Laiou and Cécile Morrisson (2007, 173–75) have argued that “collectively, it was the monasteries that were the largest landlord [...] (during the last centuries of Byzantium). The monastery of Lavra, the richest monastery of Mount Athos is a good example. In 1321, the monastery possessed 185,000 *modioi* (c. 18,500 hectares) of land in the *themes* (districts) of Thessalonike and Strymon and the island of Lemnos. Its annual fiscal revenues, consisting of the dues of the *paroikoi* (the dependent peasants) and various tax exemptions (which are not real revenues but, rather, savings on expenses), amounted to 4,000 gold coins. Its economic revenues would be in the order of magnitude of 4,300–4,900 gold coins.” (three quarter of a million dollars in today’s prices).

According to the same experts on the Byzantine economy, “large landlords showed a marked tendency not only to enlarge but also to rationalize their holdings. We know this especially of large ecclesiastical landlords, for whom the accumulation of property through donations, by the state or individuals large and small, and through purchase, or the gifts of people who entered a monastery, was easier. They sought to buy or acquire through donations lands that were contiguous to their existent holdings. The economic benefits are obvious, since transportation costs between various parts of the domain are minimized, and the costs of management are reduced. A prime example of such rationalization of property ownership is the monastery of Great Lavra, whose arable and vineyards increased considerably between 1300 and 1321, and which sought to acquire continuous parcels of land.”

Kostis Smyrlis (2006, 246 and 2011, 58) has studied the properties of the big Byzantine monasteries, concluding that the lion's share of the annual surpluses of those monasteries was systematically directed to the acquisition of landed properties. This is exactly the conclusion that emerges from the studies of the monastic archives under the Ottomans as well (Fotić 2000; Kolovos 2000; Kotzageorgis 2002). Thanks to the donations and the purchases of land, the monasteries increased the volume of their landed properties, unifying better manageable landed estates, commercializing a part of their agricultural surpluses, and making their institutions more powerful in the process. However, the emphasis of the monastic economic strategy on land acquisition may also have had negative effects on their productivity: capital invested in land acquisition could have been used instead for land improvement works. Moreover, the expansion of monastic lands occurred at the expense of other landowners and of the peasants themselves. However, the monasteries seem to have been willing to ignore these negative effects and continued to acquire more land: why?

I would argue that because the emphasis of their economic strategy was on control and continuity of their landed properties, the properties of secular landowners changed hands on a regular basis, due to inheritances or after confiscations by the state. The monasteries, on the other hand, were able to bypass inheritance rules and overcome confiscations with new acquisitions, even under the Ottomans, as was made evident during the Confiscation Affair under Selim II. Having secured their position in the economy, the monasteries should have achieved greater productivity than the lay landowners. This was especially evident during the last century of Byzantium, when, during the decades between the Serbian and the Ottoman conquest of Mount Athos (1345–1387), at a time when the Orthodox Christian aristocrats in the Balkans were losing their properties, the Athonite monks managed to preserve their properties and even expand them. Even after the Byzantine confiscation of 1371, and the Ottoman expansion at the expense of many of their properties afterwards, the Athonite monks survived quite well. During an Age of Insecurity (Ćurčić 1997), the Athonite monasteries, thanks to their relatively secure economic status, continued to exploit their estates to a certain degree, building fortifications and moving peasants from one estate to another. A “Safe and Holy Mountain” as Elisabeth Zachariadou (1996) has rightly described it. In this respect, the monasteries became factors of economic stability and continuity, laying the foundations for the renaissance of the monastic economies during the second half of the fifteenth century. In modern capitalist and post-capitalist economies, survival in the economy is still the key factor of profit: productivity and innovation are much praised, but they are no good if you do not survive in the game. The monasteries, at least some monasteries, stayed in the game during the Age of Insecurity, and profited

from it. Does this mean that the monks had developed an economic strategy of survival? In my opinion, this was not the case, but we have to take into account that in contrast with the lay landowners, the monasteries were institutions that managed a *symbolic capital*, emphasizing continuity over immediate profit. Thus, investing in continuity might have been an economic strategy that was in retrospect more successful: we must also take into account that the big monasteries were collective enterprises of many monks, including, during the Age of Insecurity, the Balkan aristocrats who had found refuge for themselves and their properties in the monasteries, undertaking a variety of economic initiatives. At a time when individuals and households, aristocratic or not, were struggling for survival, big monasteries were by default limited liability companies, with multiple shareholders who were able to launch different initiatives, which, moreover, acted under a very strong brand name: religion. Mount Athos CO Limited (Cf. Ekelund et al. 1996).

The Pharaoh's Protection

According to the Byzantine chronicler Pachymeres (quoted in Smyrlis 2011, 63 n.27), on 15 January 1303, the Emperor Andronicus II sent an order to all the monasteries of Constantinople to pray all night to prevent a great evil of unknown origin that was about to occur, according to the former Patriarch Athanasius, who had foreseen divine wrath. The episode illustrates the view of the emperors and Byzantine Christian society that the monks were able to protect society and the state; their prayers were thought to contribute also to victory in war. For the monks themselves, this mentality was the key to obtaining political protection. Even under the Ottoman sultans, the monks were eager to project this mentality upon the Muslim sultans themselves. According to a supposed imperial autograph (*hatt-ı şerif*) of Sultan Selim I, a document forged by the monks of the monastery of Xeropotamou in the first half of the eighteenth century, the sultan gratefully attributed his victory over his enemies and the conquest of Egypt to the intervention of the Forty Saints, described in the document as angel-like handsome young men, armed to the teeth.

O *Padişah*, God Almighty sends us as a favour to the realm of the family of Osman. By God's decree we gave you strength to rout your enemies. Therefore, it is now appropriate for your Imperial Majesty and Greatness to do us the following favour in return for the kindness we did to you: if some monks come tomorrow and ask your All-Embracing Grace for an imperial permit to repair the home where our relics repose, if you wish our friendship to endure, you must grant the aforementioned monks your permit to restore

our ruined home, after you have offered them the endowments which are appropriate to a generous and munificent Sultan.

We are the forty saints, supporters of the *Padişahs* of the family of Osman. In the past, we eased the passage of forty unarmed Ottomans from Anatolia to Rumelia, who then seized the Akbaş fortress just by throwing stones at it. In the present, we supported you in your great wars, we defeated your enemies, and this is how we offered you the realm of Egypt (Kolovos 2005/06).

In reality, the Ottoman sultans were not very eager to protect the Orthodox Christians, least of all the monasteries. After the consolidation of the Ottoman Empire during the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent, the Great Ottoman Jurist (*Şeyhülislam*) of Constantinople, Ebussuud Efendi, in the context of the Islamization of Ottoman law and of acute need for ready cash at the outset of Süleyman's son Selim II's reign, created a legal excuse for the confiscation of all ecclesiastical and monastic property throughout the empire.¹ As a contemporary short chronicle states, "in that year (1566) [...] Selim became (sultan) and destroyed and plundered the monasteries and took their livelihood. Alas, his rage and inhumanity" (Schreiner 1975, 540). According to a letter from Bishop Eugenius of the monastery of Saint Catherine (Mount Sinai) to the Habsburg Emperor Maximilian II of 20 March 1569 (quoted in Alexander 1997, 152–53), "all the (sources of) revenue of all the churches and monasteries in the entire empire, wherever they may be located, (having been) sold", the monks of Saint Catherine were compelled to mortgage their assets at great cost in order to buy back their properties for 5,000 gold coins. The survival of the Orthodox Church and monasticism under Islamic rule was seriously threatened. In contemporary England, the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII to fund his military campaigns was one of the most revolutionary events in English history. It is very interesting to note that in the case of the Ottoman Empire, a dissolution was avoided, at least in the case of many big monasteries, like those of Mount Athos. The Athonite monks repurchased their properties by contracting large debts and accepted the fiscal encumbrances on these. Afterwards, however, they issued an undisguised threat to the Ottoman state in fiscal-social terms, the terms it best understood: "unless they were guaranteed recognition of the *status quo ante* – the heretofore honoured imperial edicts and the security of their tenure, including *vaqf* status where allowable [...] they would sell their newly-acquired titles to pay off the debts incurred and then "close shop". The result, they pointed out, would be a considerable loss for the fisc" (Alexander 1997, 165).

1 For the Confiscation Affair see in detail Fotić 1994; Alexander 1997.

In the end, a delicate compromise was achieved, “through the boundless goodness of the Sovereign”, allowing the continuation of the *status quo ante* in a newly regularized form: their title to the properties that they actually occupied was reaffirmed. Thus, as the monastic communities eventually redeemed most, if not all, of their properties at great sacrifice (and acquired new ones along the way), they also gained the reaffirmation of their status under “the new law”.

Besides their spiritual role, the monasteries in England had a very considerable share in the economic life of the island. The forced dissolution of the monasteries by Henry Tudor (Bernard 2011) appreciably affected his poorer subjects: the closure of the monastic institutions left a real vacuum in the provision of aid for the poor (Slack 1988, 13). The monasteries were intermediary bodies, employing people to grow crops and breed animals, sustaining local markets, and, more generally, mediating between peasant communities and guilds on the one hand and the state on the other. In a way, it can be argued that dismantling these intermediaries in favour of the nobility and at the expense of the poor made the later rise of capitalism possible. Does this mean we should argue that, in retrospect, the compromise between the Orthodox monasteries and the Ottoman sultan after the Confiscation Affair prevented, or retarded the advent of capitalism in the East? At the same time, the Ottomans waited until the nineteenth century before trying to establish control over the Islamic pious foundations (Ar. *awqaf*), the other big landowner in the Islamic East, during the period of state centralization, which is known as the period of Ottoman reforms (*Tanzimat*).² In England, centralization of power and wealth already started in the sixteenth century, when, during the enclosure movement, land ceased to be commonly owned and was privatized (Thirsk 1967, 200–255). By contrast, elsewhere in Christian Europe, the papacy and the monasteries provided a counterweight to secular national monarchs and their vassals. The same can be argued for the Muslim and Christian institutions in the Ottoman Empire.

I am using this bold historical comparison to illustrate the importance of political protection for the survival and continuity of the monastic institutions. Even if we do not agree that the dissolution of the monasteries made capitalism possible, it is true that the monasteries in England did not survive the onslaught of the state. In the Ottoman Empire, thanks to the compromise of 1568/69, they survived, and many of these institutions survived up to today.

2 For the reassertion of Ottoman imperial control over *awqaf* administration under Sultan Mahmud II, see Barnes 1986.

A Network of Interwoven Chains

Let us now examine the role and function of the monastic networks. From late antiquity, monasteries functioned as bodies that mediated between individuals and the state, including peasant communities and guilds. Peter Brown, in his seminal paper on the “Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity” (1971), has shown that exactly this intermediary role of the monks was key to their success in late antiquity. Moreover, monks and monasteries also participated in the medieval *moral economy* of the crowd, to cite E. P. Thompson (1971): they were present to help their neighbours in case of need, when the state was not.

For the period of the Ottoman centuries, Ottoman and Greek monastic archives are full of documents showing social protest against monasteries, mainly through trespassing onto monastic lands and pastures of their *metochia* or dependencies. On the other hand, however, we can argue that the very existence of these monastic lands actually functioned as a reserve for the peasant communities in case of need. Monastic lands were not enclosed. At the same time, monasteries functioned as pre-modern “banks”, places for the secure depositing of cash and precious objects, which also lent cash to individuals and communities at interest, like the Islamic *waqfs* did. Moreover, the monasteries, with their “symbolic capital”, in Bourdieu’s terms, were generally very careful in managing this capital vis-à-vis their flock, that is, the peasant communities and the guilds of the cities. In many cases there were tensions. In other cases, however, relations between monks and laypersons were very symbiotic. During epidemics, for example, laypersons asked for divine help through the monks, asking the monasteries to send them holy relics. In some cases that have been studied whole villages promised annual deliveries of wheat to monasteries in exchange for regular visits of the holy relics to their village (Laiou, Sophia, 2011).

Monks themselves sometimes also took the initiative to make a tour of the holy relics to collect money for their monastery in different parts of the Ottoman Empire, and even beyond the Ottoman borders, in Western Europe and Russia: the so-called *zeteiai*. The monks went on these journeys bearing letters of reference from the *hegoumen* of the monastery, the local bishop, the patriarch, and the sultan himself. In the case of the Athonite monastery of Xeropotamou, which has already been mentioned before, the scholar monk Kaisareios Dapontes travelled through the Danubian Principalities, Constantinople and the Aegean between 1757 and 1765, carrying a big piece of the Holy Cross, as well as copies of a series of forged documents (*chrysobulls* of the Byzantine Emperors Theodosios II, Romanos Lekapenos and Andronikos II Paleologos, including the *hatt-ı şerif* of the Sultan Selim II quoted before). His aim was to collect funds to build a new *katholikon*, a new church for

the monastery, the one that still exists today, based on a design by Konstantinos, a renown Greek architect of the sultan in Constantinople.

This is how Kaisareios described his tour in verse:³

*Ο ταπεινός Kaisάριος αυτός
εκουβαλούσεν, ο σκευοφύλαξ Ανθιμος
αυτός επιστατούσεν.*

*The humble Kaisareios took onto his
shoulders the Holy Cross, and the monk
Anthimos followed across*

*Τόσοι Ξηροποταμιοί πατέρες
εβοούσαν, οι Τεσσαράκοντ' Άγιοι
όλοι εβοηθούσαν,*

*All the Xeropotamou fathers prayed
aloud, and the Forty Saints helped out*

*Ο πανσεβάσμιος Σταυρός αυτός
επενεργούσεν, ο πολυέλεος θεός
πλουσίως ελεούσεν.*

*The Holy Cross was full of energy, and
All-Embracing God showed mercy*

*Στοχάσου πόση συνδρομή, τι σύνοδος
μεγάλη, και ήτον πλιο να μη γενή Ναός
με τόσα κάλλη,*

*Think how much support, how many
people willingly helped, to make this
church so pretty*

*Η Πογδανία έδωκε με όλην την ψυχήν
της, η δε Βλαχία χάρισε μόλην την
δύναμίν της,*

*Moldavia gave with all her soul,
Wallachia donated as a whole,*

*Η Πόλις έβαλεν εδώ κι' αυτή τα χέρια
της, η Χίος έχει και αυτή μέσα τον
κουραμά της.*

*Constantinople helped all the way
along, and the island of Chios assisted
for very long*

*Η Σάμος πλήρωσε κι αυτή καλά το
μερτικόν της, και τα Ψαρά επρόσφερε
κατά τον δυνατόν της.*

*The island of Samos paid its share, and
the island of Psara offered there*

*Η Σκόπελος, η Εύριπος αντάμα
βοηθούσαν, με το κεφάλι πούχουσι, κι'
αυτά επροσκυνούσαν.*

*The island of Skopelos, and Negreponte
as well, helped all the way, and kneeled
before the Cross, o hey*

*Σέρραι και Σαλονίκη δε, Σμύρνη και
Μυτιλήνη, και άλλοι τόποι, τι θαρρείς,
δεν έδωκαν κ' εκείνοι;*

*The towns of Serres, and Salonica,
Smyrna and Mytilene, and other places,
what do you think, they didn't pay?*

3 Dapontes 1997, 184–85. English translation is mine.

This is a poetic description of a *trans-territorial* network of places, people, communities, across the Ottoman Empire, mobilized by the Xeropotamou monks to support their effort to build a new church in their monastery. These kinds of networks created ties among the Christian Orthodox of the Ottoman world and beyond, and strengthened the idea of a Christian Orthodox commonwealth, which shared cultural beliefs, social standing, and economic funds.

In the Age of Enlightenment, however, these monastic networks became the target of sharp criticism by the rising secular Balkan-Greek *bourgeoisie*. In the eyes of the anonymous author of a pamphlet promoting a radical “Hellenic Constitution” (*Ελληνική Νομαρχία*), the monks were thieves: “The majority of those bone-sellers originate from the Mount of Athos, which they call a “Holy Mountain” and where their monasteries are located. These monasteries have palaces and houses in every town, they call them *metochia*, and the travelling monks stay there. It is in these places where they count the stolen money (from the flock), to keep half of it for their personal gain and to send the other half to their monasteries” (Anonymous 1982, 171). “Demolish all the monasteries” (*κατεδάφισον όλα τα μοναστήρια*), that was the motto of the age of the radical Greek Enlightenment, bearing resemblance to the preaching of the Reformation two centuries ago.

In the context of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation in Christian Europe, a historical process which has been described as the Age of Confessionalization⁴ fostered an alternative ideal to that of the ascetic monk of the Orthodox East: that of the *Soldier of Christ*. *Christianus miles* did not live outside society, nor did he act as an arbiter, but he fought within society. Protestant preachers and members of the apostolic congregations like the Jesuits became the soldiers of Christian virtue and replaced the monks as mediators, *holy men*, in society’s search for the holy. In this vein, and especially after the French Revolution, which targeted the institution of the church as a whole, the western European states proceeded to confiscate monastic lands. In 1782, Joseph II in Austria established a church fund, consisting of the revenue of the confiscation of monastic lands. In 1834, Belgium and Portugal confiscated their monastic properties, no longer considered inalienable; Spain followed in 1836. The Greek state, established after the Greek Revolution under Bavarian administration, also started a process of confiscations in 1833; however, this was a process which was never completed systematically. Of the 600 monasteries in the new Greek territory, only 151 remained, however these were the most important

4

Reinhard 1977. For an attempt to expand the confessionalization theory to the Ottoman East as well, see Krstić 2011.

ones. It is interesting to note that, in the Greek case, the peasants were eager to support the monasteries and the monks, whom they saw as socially helpful, in the context of their moral economy, against the state. Research has shown that in the Greek state the monks and the monasteries were careful not to create conflicts with the local population: they also offered land, food, work, protection, as well as the opportunity of social mobility in a violent world, where states and local prelates were ready to take all they had from them (Anastassiadis 2011).

Between 1917 and 1927, monastic properties in Greece became the target of another series of reforms. In 1928, the monasteries of Mount Athos and their dependencies passed from the Ottoman Empire to the Greek state, retaining a special status which placed them outside the jurisdiction of the Orthodox Church of Greece. When Greece entered the European Union, this special status was reaffirmed. In our days, Mount Athos has been excluded from the value-added tax area, although it is part of the Schengen Area; however, a declaration attached to Greece's accession treaty to the Schengen Agreement stated that Mount Athos' special status should be respected. In 2003, a resolution of the European Parliament requested the lifting of the ban on women visitors, as this violated "the universally recognized principle of gender equality". This is not likely to be realized. At the same time, restoration and conservation works in the Athonite monasteries are co-funded by the European Union. Mount Athos has also been on the list of UNESCO's world heritage sites since 1988.

The Athonite monasteries can play an interesting role in the global economy and politics of our days. Including as they do Greek, Bulgarian, Serbian, and Russian monasteries, the monasteries of Mount Athos are at the same time *mnemonic intrusions* of the Byzantine and Ottoman past, and also heritage foci in the post-industrial world. After all, in the midst of economic crises, the world is always in search of stable institutions. In that sense, monastic economy, somehow, still matters.

References

- Alexander (Alexandropoulos), John Christos 1997. "The Lord Giveth and the Lord Taketh Away: Athos and the Confiscation Affair of 1568–1569." In *Mount Athos in the Fourteenth–Sixteenth Centuries*, edited by Kriton Chryssochoidis, 154–69. Athens: The National Hellenic Research Foundation, Institute for Byzantine Research.
- Anastassiadis, Tassos. 2011. "(Αν)ίερη γη: Ηθική και πολιτική οικονομία των ορθόδοξων μοναστηριών στο σύγχρονο ελληνικό κράτος [(Un)holy Land: Moral and Political Economy of the Orthodox Monasteries in the Modern Greek State]." In *Μοναστήρια, οικονομία και πολιτική από τους μεσαιωνικούς στους νεώτερους χρόνους* [Monasteries, Economy and Politics from Medieval to Modern Times], edited by Elias Kolovos, 253–85. Herakleio: Crete University Press.

- Anonymous. 1982. *Ελληνική Νομαρχία* [Hellenic Constitution], edited by Georgios Valetas. Athens: Aposperitis.
- Barnes, John Robert. 1986. *An Introduction to Religious Foundations in the Ottoman Empire*, Leiden: E.J. Brill.
- Bernard, G. W. 2011. "The Dissolution of the Monasteries", *History* 96, no. 4 (324): 390–409.
- Brown, Peter. 1971. "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity." *The Journal of Roman Studies* 61: 80–101.
- Ćurčić, Slobodan. 1997. "Architecture in the Age of Insecurity: An Introduction to Secular Architecture in the Balkans, 1300–1500." In *Secular Medieval Architecture in the Balkans, 1300–1500, and Its Preservation*, edited by Slobodan Ćurčić and Evangelia Hadjistryphonos, 19–51. Thessalonike: Aimos.
- Dapontes, Kaisarios. 1995. *Κήπος Χαρίτων* [Garden of Graces], edited by Giorgos Savvidis. Athens: Hermes.
- Ekelund Jr. R. B., R. D. Tollison, G. M. Anderson, R. F. Hébert, A. B. Davidson. 1996. *The Sacred Trust: The Medieval Church as an Economic Firm*, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fotić, Aleksandar. 1994. "The Official Explanations for the Confiscation and Sale of Monasteries (Churches) and their Estates at the Time of Selim II." *Turcica* 26 (1994): 33–54.
- Fotić, Aleksandar. 2000. *Sveta Gora i Hilandar u Osmanskom carstvu (XV–XVII vek)* [Mount Athos and Hilandar in the Ottoman Empire (Fifteenth – Seventeenth Centuries)]. Belgrade: Balkanološki institut SANU, Manastir Hilandar, Sveti arhijerejski sinod Srpske pravoslavne crkve.
- Kolovos, Elias. 2000. "Χωρικοί και μοναχοί στην οθωμανική Χαλκιδική (15ος–16ος αι.): Όψεις της οικονομικής και κοινωνικής ζωής στην ύπαιθρο και η μονή Ξηροποτάμου" [Peasants and Monks in the Ottoman Halkidikdi, Fifteenth–Sixteenth centuries], PhD dissertation, 3 vols, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. <https://www.didaktorika.gr>
- Kolovos, Elias. 2005/6. "The Saints in the Sultan's Dream." *Archivum Ottomanicum* 23: 205–18.
- Kolovos, Elias, ed. 2011. *Μοναστήρια, οικονομία και πολιτική από τους μεσαιωνικούς στους νεώτερους χρόνους* [Monasteries, Economy and Politics from Medieval to Modern Times]. Herakleio: Crete University Press.
- Kotzageorgis, Phokion. 2002. *Η αθωνική Μονή Αγίου Παύλου κατά την οθωμανική περίοδο* [The Athonite Monastery of Saint Paul during the Ottoman Period]. Thessaloniki: University Studio Press.
- Krstić, Tijana. 2011. *Contested Conversions to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.
- Laiou, Angeliki E. and Cecile Morrisson. 2007. *The Byzantine Economy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Laiou, Sophia. 2011. "Σχέσεις μοναχών και χριστιανών λαϊκών κατά την οθωμανική περίοδο (15ος–αρχές 19ου αι.) [Relations between Monks and Christian Laymen during the Ottoman Centuries]." In *Μοναστήρια, οικονομία και πολιτική από τους μεσαιωνικούς στους νεώτερους χρόνους* [Monasteries, Economy and Politics from Medieval to Modern Times], edited by Elias Kolovos, 207–23. Herakleio: Crete University Press.

- McGuckin, John A. 2008. "Monasticism and Monasteries". In: *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies*, edited by Elizabeth Jeffreys, John Haldon and Robin Cormack, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2008. doi 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199252466.013.0056
- Reinhard, W. 1977. "Genenreformation als Modernisierung? Prolegomena zu einer Theorie des konfessionellen Zeitalters." *Archiv für Reformationgeschichte*: 226–52.
- Rubenson, Samuel. 2008. "Asceticism and monasticism, I: Eastern". In: *Cambridge History of Christianity*, Vol. 2: *Constantine to c. 600*, edited by Augustine Casiday and Frederick W. Norris, 637–68. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schreiner, Peter. 1975. *Die Byzantinischen Kleinchroniken*. 1. Teil: *Einleitung und Text*, Wien: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften.
- Slack, Paul. 1988. *Poverty and Policy in Tudor and Stuart England*, London and New York: Longman.
- Smyrlis, Kostis. 2006. *La fortune des grands monastères byzantins (fin du Xe milieu du XIVe siècle)*. Paris: Centre d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance.
- Smyrlis, Kostis. 2011. "Τα μοναστήρια στο ύστερο Βυζάντιο: Οικονομικός ρόλος και σχέσεις με το κράτος (13ος-15ος αι.) [Monasteries in Late Byzantium: Economic Role and Relations to the State (Thirteenth-Fifteenth Centuries)]." In *Μοναστήρια, οικονομία και πολιτική από τους μεσαιωνικούς στους νεώτερους χρόνους* [Monasteries, Economy and Politics from Medieval to Modern Times], edited by Elias Kolovos, 53–68. Herakleio: Crete University Press.
- Thirsk, Joan, ed. 1967. *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*. Vol. IV: 1500–1640, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Thompson, E. P. 1971. "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century." *Past & Present* 50: 76–136.
- Zachariadou, Elizabeth A. 1996. "A 'Safe and Holy Mountain': Early Ottoman Athos." In *Mount Athos and Byzantine Monasticism: Papers from the Twenty-Eighth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Birmingham, March 1994*, edited by Anthony Bryer and Mary Cunningham, 127–32. Aldershot: Routledge.

The Economics of Patronage in Western Catholic Nunneries (Sixteenth-Eighteenth Century)

ANTOINE ROULLET

This chapter sheds light on the restrictive patronage bonds which shaped many early modern conventual economies in Catholic Western Europe. There are countless monographs on Catholic monasticism, but few overviews and conventual autonomy tends to be overestimated, maybe because of the predominance of accounting books among the sources (Landi 2006; Barrio Gozalo 1999; Van Dijck et al. 2013). The economic implications of patronage can help nuance this perspective and balance an anachronistic and correct the anachronistic and problematic idea of economic self-sufficiency. Even if economic and financial interests were at play, they were part of a moral economy that had very little in common with economic rationality and that did not dissociate economy, charity, devotion, politics and the necessity to maintain good relations with the community's surroundings. Nunneries were embedded within social and political settings, they were cruxes in a complex web of obligations, gift-giving transactions, and economic interests. Precariousness and loss of budgetary balance were a significant reality for some convents as they strove to uphold, embody, or improve dependency ties. This is obviously not true for all early modern convents but maintaining dependency ties was a necessity for some.

The study focuses on urban nunneries that possessed few properties, which were often under patronage. Its wide comparative scope embraces such distant places as Spain, France and Mexico, from the sixteenth to the late eighteenth century. It is a cliché to distinguish charity-dependent convents from those which relied on rents, trade, farming or lordship, such as medieval monasteries, Jesuit colleges (Martínez 1999; Alden 1996) or certain specific orders, such as the Camillians in Peru (Luna 2017). Some medievalists have even advocated a strong opposition between the stability of traditional monastic orders and the instability of mendicant economies (Mancinelli 2013; Bertrand and Chiffolleau 2004). This dichotomy is slightly contrived for the early modern era, since mendicant communities invested in urban real estates and on the loan market, and since the difference between

ancient monastic orders and mendicant convents is far from clear-cut, at least in major cities. Still, many had scarce possessions and never became big landowners. Their economy relied on donations, credit, and spiritual services, which does not imply that they had no agency or capacity to make their own economic choices. Monastic economies have long been ascribed a passive role and have been accused of paralysing economic development. This long-standing cliché, inherited from nineteenth-century liberal historiography, has been criticised for decades now. Patronage, on the contrary, does not confine nunneries to this conservative role.

Patronage?

Patronage was not a vague notion, but a legal status, codified by canon law. It drew on the existence of private churches in the Middle Ages (Catalán Martínez 2004; 2000) and organized the relationships between a church and its lay founder(s), even though it was never restricted to convents, since many parishes had patrons throughout the Catholic world, for instance in Argentina (Di Stefano 2013; Catalán Martínez 2000; Larrea Beobide 1995). Persons who founded or built a convent were recognized as patrons and rewarded with this title, with masses for their own salvation and that of their kin, along with more substantial rights, notably that of appointing candidates when a position fell vacant. The prerogatives of patronage go back to the twelfth-thirteenth centuries (Baurý 2012) and were routinized in the Tridentine world. They were increasingly recorded in notarised agreements but at the same time they varied from one place to another. Patronage was seemingly particularly strong within the Hispanic world, even though it has also been observed in France, Italy, and Bohemia (Atienza López 2008; Boltanski 2012; Ducreux 2016; Amores Martínez 2005; Cruz 2011; López Álvarez 2002; Hidalgo Ogáyar 2002; Lehfeldt 1999; Fink de Backer 2003; Greco 1986; Cruz Isidoro 2000; De Abol-Brasón y Álvarez Tamargo 1990; Díaz de Durana 1998). We have a faint image of the geography of patronage and the chronology of its spread, which is in fact likely to have slowed down in the eighteenth century. The flourishing of convents in early modern Catholic Europe can only be understood through this prism, as noble families used convents to strengthen their position and to secure their client networks. These patrons usually donated a building, capital, or sufficient annual income to maintain the community, and it was expected that they would keep providing money whenever it was needed. Patronage was hereditary but the descendants of the founding patron were often reluctant to keep honouring their ancestor's pledge. There was a gap between the ostentatious founding moment and the amount of donations in the long run. Some patrons were pursued in the courts because they ceased paying the promised endowment or sold the land that produced the allowance of the

community (A. Lehfeldt 2000). Since the deal between patrons and their convents was a moral contract as well as an economic transaction, convents could not simply stop praying for them. Most likely, they foresaw that their patrons or their offspring would fail them in the long run, and therefore endeavoured to diversify their income. The patrons' strong tendency to glide from protection to forgetfulness is key to these convents' economies, as they were torn between the necessity of protection and the desire to negotiate leeway to preserve their autonomy.

The Economics of Nunneries: A Very Brief Overview

The basics of the economy of female convents are well-known (Cerrato Mateos 2000; Burgo López 1987; Conde 2013; Rodríguez Duarte 1994; Dinot 1990; Lavrin 1966). The initial capital and allowance of the patron, if there was one, was theoretically counterbalanced by the nuns' dowries. Dowries were usually placed on the loan market in the hope of smoothing and stabilizing incomes in highly volatile and vulnerable economic circumstances, and of building an enduring economic position. Theoretically, complete financialization of convents' economies may well have helped reach the spiritual goal of complete separation from the world, the convent being dedicated to prayer, leaving the simple and regular economic management of the community to a lay *major-domo*. Nunneries did invest much on the loan market and eventually turned towards urban or rural properties when they had enough capital. Their choices were highly dependent on local situations. In Mexico, for instance, they switched their investments from rural to urban properties in the late seventeenth century (Lavrin 1975; 1966). In any case, the resort to loans could lead to property, as convents seized the possessions of their insolvent debtors. Convents have been compared to banks – especially, if not only, in the Americas (Perluss 2012; Burns 1999; Von Wobeser 1994; Lehfeldt 2005) – but they were highly dependent on their spiritual manpower, because, apart from dowries, nuns offered prayers in exchange for alms and usually had recourse to their own parents or relations to help the community economically and expand its devout network. The pressure of patronage eventually faded after a few decades thanks to the income generated by the dowries. Yet all their external investments on the loan market, in public debt, or in urban properties in the long run had diminishing returns, because of inflation, because debtors did not pay back, because it was not easy to exercise pressure on borrowers, and because the convents' resources were tied up in mortgages on private properties. As Margaret Chowning has pointed out, interest payment delinquency for instance is a key element to understanding the financial crisis that struck las Concepcionistas de San Miguel el Grande in Mexico in the 1770s (Chowning 2006: 193), one example among many in that period. The

revenue that could be raised through their prayers was also limited. Each convent had only one chaplain and could not multiply masses, even though every nun also traded prayers or mortifications for donations. Therefore, nunneries constantly had to adjust their economic model, switching from buying public debt to real estate or to welcoming lay residents into their community. E Catalán has shown how eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Basque convents turned to urban properties whose profitability ultimately decreased (Catalán Martínez 1999). In Spain, rents and *juros* – credit on public debts – largely passed into the hands of the clergy throughout the early modern age and also had diminishing returns (Marcos Martín 1999). This description is obviously too general. Yet this long-term trend must not lead us to underestimate the great capacity of nunneries to adapt to varying economic situations. The comparison of the accounting books of the Benedictines of Mount Calvary and of the Fille-Dieu in eighteenth-century Paris exemplifies two different economic strategies.¹ While the Benedictines invested in public debt, the Fille-Dieu gave priority to urban property. The Benedictines in Rue de Vaugirard also constantly adjusted their strategy. When they were confronted with the diminution of their traditional incomes, they chose to welcome lay pensioners. Between 1743/1744 and 1787, the share of their income that depended on public or private credit and rents fell from 51.8% to 37.8%, while pensions rose from 19.8% to 49%. The same trend is in evidence for the other convent of the Congregation, in the Marais. In any case, they were never freed from their need to solicit donors and attract new nuns. Male communities were not constrained by the same strict enclosure and found it easier to engage in trade and farming. Yet they also received donations, sung masses, preached, and even welcomed oblates, including the mendicant orders. The equilibrium of their economy was therefore less dependent on having to juggle donations, dowries and loans or urban rents.

Even in cases where there was no official patron, a major benefactor could easily obtain a strong grip on a community. In 1619, at a time of great necessity, the Discalced Carmelites of Seville agreed to welcome Juana de Mendoza, a widow and the former duchess of Béjar, in spite of the order's distrust of the nobility. Her rank and political weight – she knew and sponsored the general of the order – meant that she could not be refused. She brought 2,000 *ducados* as her dowry – the largest dowry the 45-year-old convent had ever been granted² – and 2,000 *ducados* of annual income, a huge sum for the nuns, who quickly repaid the debts they had contracted to build their church. The hold she promptly acquired over the community was

1 Archives Nationales (AN), Paris, H5 4139 to 4141 (Benedictines of Vaugirard Street), H5 4138 (Benedictines of the Marais) and H5 4137 (monastery of the Fille-Dieu).

2 Archivo de las Carmelitas Descalzas de Sevilla (ACDS), Libro de gastos y recibos, 1615–1638, s.f.

further strengthened by the masses she paid for. As early as 1624, just after Juana made her vows, she ordered the community to sing masses for her intentions: 26 masses were sung from April to September 1624, 60 from October to January, and 14 more in February. In 1628, she offered a stipend for 368 more.³ Juana nearly privatized the convent's prayer intentions while she was a nun there. This saturation of the convent's supply of prayers was only possible because the community depended on the manna she provided. It probably became more difficult to sing masses in addition to those she asked for, since the spiritual goods a convent could offer were limited. As soon as someone monopolized the spiritual supply, they were acting as a *de facto* patron. Apart from the case of Juana, the resort to spiritual expedients was a common solution for communities who sought complementary income. Some mendicant male convents built their economy upon the masses they sung. The book of masses of the Carmelite Fathers of La Puebla de los Angeles and Toluca in Mexico show that they pushed this logic to its limit, since they monetized their masses.⁴ They were able to say or sing up to 1,500 masses each month, which they used to pay for common goods. Moreover, they became used to singing masses in advance from one month to another, anticipating the donations and the demand they were to receive each month. That kind leverage was definitely not affordable for female communities.

The Choice of Dependency

For nunneries, dependency was never considered a worst-case scenario but was an equilibrium of sorts that helped maintain a bearable precariousness. It allowed convents to rank themselves within a hierarchized society built on dependency networks. Mendicant convents had to embody virtuous poverty. To their patrons, they offered opportunities for sumptuary and devout spending. Even though they sought a manageable balance between their income and their outgoings, a completely self-sufficient nunnery was a nonsense, if not heresy. In spite of the growing pressure to balance their budget and of the subsequent increasing inspections of their accounting books by bishops or male superiors, their dependency on outsiders was deliberate. Economic transfers from patrons to convents must be seen in that perspective. They were a delicate matter, because both real poverty and uncontrolled wealth were looked down upon as equally damageable to the contemplative life. The issue was less to decide whether convents should have a patron or not than

3 Ibid and Archivo histórico Nacional (AHN), sección Nobleza, Toledo, Casa de Osuna, caj. 313, exp. 107.

4 Archivo del Centro de Estudios de historia de Mexico (CEHM), Mexico City, fondo de la provincia de San Alberto, CCCLIII, rollo 1566.

to master the relationship they had with their benefactor(s), despite the rhetoric of submission they used. A diversity of sponsors was actively sought after, but always without challenging the patron's prominence.

However, many post-Tridentine female religious orders were tempted at an early stage by absolute poverty. Discalced Carmelites tried to rely exclusively on punctual charity. The idea was that founding the convent without any regular income appealed to Providence and avoided the bonds of patronage (Álvarez Vázquez 2000; Weber 1999; Egido López 1987). The writings of the foundress, Teresa of Avila, put in doubt the capacity of noble patrons to respect the nuns' liberties. The desire to live on dowries and small donations was an answer to the risks this implied. Yet most convents quickly gave up radical poverty, thanks to rising inflation and to the deterioration of the economic situation. While impoverished convents had no choice but to merge or call for the king's generosity (Pinedo Gómez 2017), most sought other sources of income, including patronage. For many nuns, poverty was also far too humiliating, even in mendicant orders, since they increasingly came from social elites. Some convents even forced recalcitrant nuns to beg in order to teach them humility. The idea of nuns begging for their living challenged the absolute reclusion that the Council of Trent had pursued, whereas the regular incomes of patronage vouched for the nuns' tranquillity. Some female communities sold pastries, devotional objects such as penitential instruments, beads, and rosaries, even though these transactions were always presented as charity. In some cases, and probably increasingly so in the eighteenth century, convents developed a small trading activity. In eighteenth-century Paris, nuns externalized the renting out of the benches in their churches. In Lima, they monopolized the selling of pastries, artificial flowers, and so on. Exceptionally and always for a short time, these revenues became the lion's share of some convents' income (Chowning 2006: 211), but they were usually kept to a minimum. The manufacturing of goods inside female convents was more a tool of mortification, given the nuns' social status, than an actual source of income (Castelao 2009). In any case, poverty, hunger, irregular income, but also trade, and time wasted in soliciting donations were obstacles to the contemplative life and called for a resort to the spiritual economy of loans or for the comfort of a wealthy and solvent patron. Teresa of Avila herself, who had been tempted to live in extreme poverty, recognized that economic insecurity was responsible for the degradation of spiritual life. In the 1570s, her Carmelites changed their economic model and chose to allow new convents on the condition that they were funded through an annual and perpetual income, even if this involved a patron. This decision was not a renunciation of poverty but was presented as a way to exert control over their state of poverty and secure a minimum income.

Stability and minimum standards of living were not the only advantages of patronage. Female convents' economies also rested on their capacity to collect interests from their borrowers. The protection of a powerful patron could ease the gathering of their revenue. The structures of early modern conventual economies were not fluid and even when a convent was theoretically wealthy, it was not simple to raise money promptly. Different incomes followed different circuits, were "earmarked" (Zelizer 1994) for different expenditures, often with different types of money – gold, silver, copper, all sorts of payments in kind. The Discalced Carmelites of Seville always changed their copper to silver when they could, keeping an eye on the varying exchange rate.⁵ A favourable patron, especially if he was a landowner, could offer several solutions to a wide range of specific economic issues, granting tax concessions or the free access to water or firewood.⁶ Since conventual economies were limited in the amount of money they could raise on their own, the resort to patronage allowed for better chances to pay for what accounting books labelled as "extraordinary" expenses. For instance, the building and renovation of conventual facilities in colonial Mexico was usually and almost exclusively paid for by outsiders (Rubial García 1998) and convents under patronage were clearly privileged in that regard. Donations of relics or holy images, facilities to reach the highest ecclesiastical authorities also stimulated those convents' economies. Some convents had "privileged altars" or images in the chapels of their church, which allowed the nuns to earn indulgences when they prayed before them. As these prayers were offered for their donors' souls, the very existence of these privileges attracted donations. In 1533, Pope Clement VII granted the count of Belalcázar, Francisco de Sotomayor y Zuñiga, the licence to carry, from Cologne, four heads of the 11,000 virgins, along with their indulgences, to four of his convents.⁷ In 1640, the French Benedictines of Mount Calvary asked their superiors to solicit indulgences for their patron saint's feast day,⁸ in order to prevent laypeople from turning to other communities. Spiritual attractiveness was crucial to their economy and in that regard, a patron was an asset, since he paid for a huge amount of masses or offered devotional objects which lured donors and pilgrims. It eased the monetization of spiritual goods.

Yet the nuns' reputation and capacity to attract new novices and donors depended on the preservation of their austere reputation and on their capacity to bypass overpowering patrons. Controlled poverty created value and, paradoxically, wealth, since it enhanced their prayers' alleged efficiency. Poor nuns' prayers were

5 Archivo de las Carmelitas Descalzas de Sevilla, Libro de Gatos y recibo, s.f.

6 Archivo General del Arzobispado de Sevilla, órdenes religiosos masculinos (AGAS, orm), caj. 5248, exp.26 y 27.

7 AGAS, orm, caj. 1^a, exp. 21.

8 Archives des Calvairiennes d'Angers, Angers, 3BNDC 4G1–2.

spiritually, and therefore economically, more productive and this reputation was critical to them, especially at a time of growing competition between religious orders. The state of necessity that convent's chronicles always complained about was also a means of enticing donors, maintain previous ties with powerful laypeople, and embody the humility the sisters were supposed to live.

Saving, Partnership, and Control: the Patron's Agenda

The financial arrangements of foundations are decisive to understand the returns patrons sought when they chose to invest in one community or another. It makes sense that patronage arose at a time of economic depression, as for aristocratic families who had to maintain a distinctive standard of living while their debts were growing, the act of founding female convents allowed them to save money. Convents made up for the growing cost of matrimony, all the more so as patrons often gave up their support after a while. The old Dominican community of Gibraleón in Andalusia was taken over by the duke of Béjar in 1588 while his lineage's debts were already skyrocketing. This refoundation was carried out through a rent of 500 *ducados* each year while a dowry in the high aristocracy cost between 40,000 and 100,000 *ducados* per daughter. The savings were considerable, as he had four daughters who had to be married who finally became nuns without paying a dowry.⁹

Apart from this brutal cost-cutting policy, the power patrons had over the convent varied significantly from one order to another and from one situation to another. Those who sought prestige and essentially wanted to publicize their rank in society were more interested in the founding moment than in a long-term partnership. The uncommon decision to endow a convent though the sole donation of a capital in cash usually meant that the founder would not take care of his community. The same Juana de Mendoza also founded a convent of Mercedarians just before she entered the Carmelite order, leaving 8,650 *ducados* in cash in her will and a set of recommendations suggesting that this foundation should follow its own path,¹⁰ even though she bestowed the patronage on her son. Cash allowed convents to be free. For instance, the liquidity of the donations that the Jesuits received helped them to build a more coherent and efficient patrimony than other religious orders (Martínez 1995). Annual allowances involved the opposite strategy: they left communities on a tight leash, as the patron could always suspend payments. Establishing a foundation

9 AHN, Toledo, Casa de Osuna, caj. 382, exp. 61.

10 AHN, Toledo, Casa de Osuna, caj. 3498, exp. 201.

with a regular income implied a stronger will to gain a hold over the convent. It can be argued that some foundations were underfunded in the hope of perpetuating a kind of dependence. Patrons could also monitor their convent's economy, as their daughters were regularly, if not always, elected prioress and therefore controlled the convent's expenditure, even though such powerful women did not always follow their lay family's interests. For obvious reasons, Franciscan nunneries had even less control over their own patrimony. In Extremadura, the count of Belalcázar had the patronage over five of the Franciscan convents that belonged to the earldom, and appointed the administrator of their estates, the *mayordomo*, a situation which was common if not systematic (Roullet 2018; Nieva Ocampo 2007). In any case, and even if they had no effective control, patrons, and notably landowners, benefited from their convent's economic policy. As convents were sometimes the only and the wealthiest ecclesiastical institution in the locality, the loans they granted favoured the economic development of their lord's estate, tied the population to the land, and secured the patrons' political networks. They were part of their landowner's economic and political agenda, and sometimes stored his assets, or even lent money to his kin.

In most cases, the bonds of patronage were flexible. The exclusivism displayed by some patronage agreements was only sustainable for the wealthiest families, and most patrons did not look unfavourably on the arrival of new donors. Rather than being an unbearable burden and a confrontation between patron and convent, patronage was an instrument to create, foster, and display solidarities and hierarchies within the elites. It allowed for a certain degree of independence and competition between donors and between convents, even when the hierarchy of donations threatened that of the donors. The patron of the Basilian monastery of Granada, founded in 1616, supplied 1,000 *ducados*, on the condition that the monks would raise the rest of the funds required to build a church.¹¹ He was therefore presented as the prominent benefactor in a larger list. Some apparently did found small communities in the hope of being associated with more powerful patrons without assuming the biggest part of the funding. The small Jesuit college of Trigueros in Andalusia was founded by a priest, Francisco de Palma, who gave a building and 150,000 *maravedis*, approximately 400 *ducados*.¹² He was able to obtain for the convent 160 *ducados* of annual income, guaranteed by a capital of 3,200 *ducados* from the countess of Niebla. Francisco de Palma assumed a kind of practical patronage, and his family was thus associated with a prestigious title and with the great house

11 AHN, Madrid, clero, libro 3516, *libro becerro del convento*.

12 AHN, Madrid, *Jesuitas*, caj. 553, exp. 34–46.

of Medina Sidonia, while the countess reserved for herself the largest of the chapels of the college. Moreover, Francisco de Palma planned for his patronage to be passed on to the house of Medina Sidonia when he died. In such cases, patronage seems to have been a way to negotiate a position within the network of the local aristocracy, and it was not necessary to assume the most substantial part of the funding.

The Sharing of Recruitment

In all nunneries, controlling recruitment was critical. There is a dynamic and a contradiction involved in this with regard to the composition of the convent. Foundations were intended for a defined number of nuns, but convents were well advised to break that limit, as new dowries were a step towards greater independence, and because they could always attempt to solicit their patron to raise the funding if it turned out to be insufficient because the convent had grown. In Gibrleón, the duke endeavoured to obtain the right to nominate and appoint every new nun in the convent without requiring these candidates to pay a dowry, depriving the convent of any future sources of income outside the patron's grip.¹³ He only managed to obtain the right to appoint two nuns, while the Dominican superiors accepted to limit the convent's population to ten nuns. The same family was more successful in other convents. In Hinojosa del Duque, the duke appointed 30 of the 50 nuns of his Franciscan nunnery, which he used to place his local clients' daughters.¹⁴ 13 had to enter the community without any dowry and the remaining 17 were granted an allowance and paid a modest dowry of 80 *ducados*.¹⁵ A century later, this had lost most of its value. Significantly, when the value of the income guaranteed by the patron's allowance decreased, for instance because of inflation, the first recourse of those communities was to try to recover control over recruitment (Atienza López 2008: 223). This power play around the control and the number of dowries could be subtle and flexible. It was never a one-way deal, with the patron imposing his will. In some cases, recruitment was not easy locally and the patron could source candidates from remote areas to help the community. Convents, novices, and patrons had various ways to adapt to a new situation. At least since the mid-eighteenth century, nearly two centuries after the convent's foundation, the proceedings to designate new nuns in Hinojosa del Duque were very flexible. The patron's candidates entered bringing half the dowry with them that regular nuns were usually expected to pay. The patron could share the paying of the dowry, make the convent pay for

13 AHN, Toledo, Casa de Osuna, caj. 233, exp. 105.

14 AHN, Toledo, Casa de Osuna, caj. 334, exp. 18.

15 AHN, Toledo, Casa de Osuna, caj. 3506, exp. 36.

the trousseau of new candidates, agree to pay a dowry but force the family to add an annual pension, create waiting lists of candidates in order to choose the most solvent ones, etc.¹⁶ This flexibility secured the power of the patron over his clients, limited its reach over the convent's economy, and probably facilitated recruitment.

The Temptation of Large Dowries

It was tempting to seek fewer but larger dowries. Most of the nuns' rules and constitutions stipulated that the choice of new candidates should not be driven by the desire to earn more money. Yet convents had a minimal standard for dowries, the amount of which depended on the social quality of its members. Thus aristocratic tutelage was a strong argument to attract noble women. As some convents had a very high social standing, they could not afford to accept nuns of low birth, even wealthy ones, whose presence might dissuade nobler and maybe wealthier candidates from entering as their company would have been unbearable for the nuns. It was worth the try, since the amount of dowries could vary considerably (Dinet 1990), from more than one to ten among the French Benedictines of Mount Calvary in eighteenth-century Paris. In 1748/49, they welcomed two daughters of the intendant of Guyenne, Monsieur de Tourny, who gave the huge sum of 16,000 *livres tournois*.¹⁷ By contrast, some aristocratic convents accepted merchants' daughters on the condition that they would bring enormous dowries in compensation, while noblewomen paid smaller dowries since they added their rank to the convent's prestige (Allaire 1986). This monetization of rank was an economic model in itself and was only thinkable if convents continued to receive aristocrats. Nunneries were already ranked communities, with nuns of different status, maybe slaves, and often servants or lay-sisters who were supposed to attend to the black-veiled elite, and in addition the hierarchy of dowries had a strong impact on these convents' economies. Female convents, depending on their constitutions and on the decisions they were allowed to make, either chose community of property or allowed each nun to retain the revenue that her own dowry produced. In the former case, large dowries theoretically benefited everyone. In the latter, the circulation of wealth was less fluid and some sisters could develop their own household within the convent, destabilizing power relations within the community. There were some cases where convents, especially in Mexico or Peru, were actually more like extensions

16 *Ibid.*

17 AN, Paris, H5 4139.

of different family economies and patrimonies than autonomous and coherent economic actors (Lavrin 2016).

These conventual economies were profoundly embedded within social ties and it makes no sense to study their income and expenditure without considering these bonds of dependency. Patronage is an ancient notion but it rose to popularity and became more formalized in Tridentine Catholic Europe, following a larger trend according to which early modern Catholic societies were shaped by vertical relations of power. This trend was especially strong in the first decades after each foundation, but it faded over the course of the eighteenth century. Reputation, fidelity, moral obligation, charitable and spiritual considerations are key notions to understanding convents' decisions to accept patronage and leverage to favour and secure conventual economies. There is no contradiction between this assertion and the increasing agency of nunneries or their capacity to constantly adjust to vulnerable economic situations. On the contrary, the resort to patronage allowed for a considerable range of possibilities and leeway, even though it implied a delicate sense of negotiation, so as to emphasize the patron's superiority without sacrificing the nuns' liberties. Some convents were completely captive to their patrons, and they sometimes welcomed that situation. A few nuns, living on their family's allowance, formed the community – composed of their patron's clients' daughters – and lived to pray exclusively for them, and potentially stimulate their estate's economy. Others, mostly because their patron had reneged on his commitments, had to diversify their donors but still depended on the skills required to maintain good relations with powerful families.

References

- A. Lehfelddt, Elizabeth. 2000. "Convents as Litigants: Dowry and Inheritance Disputes in Early-Modern Spain." *Journal of Social History* 33 (March): 645-64. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jsh.2000.0027>.
- Allaire, Micheline d'. 1986. *Les dots des religieuses au Canada français, 1639-1800: étude économique et sociale*. Hurtubise HMH.
- Álvarez Vázquez, José Antonio. 2000. "Trabajos, dineros y negocios: Teresa de Jesús y la economía del siglo XVI (1562-1582). Estructuras y procesos. Serie Religión. Madrid: Trotta.
- Amores Martínez, Francisco. 2005. "Las fundaciones y el patronato del Conde-Duque de Olivares." In *Fundadores, fundaciones, y espacios de vida conventual. Nuevas aportaciones al monacato femenino*, edited by María Isabel Viforcós Marinas and María Dolores Campos Sánchez-Bordona, 213-30. León: Universidad de León.

- Atienza López, Ángela. 2008. *Tiempos de conventos, una historia social de las fundaciones en la España moderna*. Madrid: Marcial Pons.
- Barrio Gozalo, Maximiliano. 1999. "La economía monástica en la Castilla interior durante le epoca moderna." In *Accumulation and Dissolution of Large Estates of the Regular Clergy in Early Modern Europe*, edited by Fiorenzo Landi, 47-67. Rimini: Guaraldi.
- Baury, Ghislain. 2012. "Les religieuses de Castille : patronage aristocratique et ordre cistercien, XIIe-XIIIe s." Rennes : Presses universitaires de Rennes.
- Bertrand, Paul, and Jacques Chiffolleau. 2004. *Commerce avec dame pauvreté : structures et fonctions des couvents mendiants à Liège (XIIIe-XIVe s.)*. Librairie Droz.
- Boltanski, Ariane. 2012. "Des fondations pieuses de nobles français dans la deuxième moitié du XVIe siècle. Défense de l'orthodoxie et territoire." In *Le salut par les armes : Noblesse et défense de l'orthodoxie, XIIIe-XVIIe siècle*, edited by Ariane Boltanski and Franck Mercier, 251-64. Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes.
- Burgo López, C. 1987. "La importancia de los ingresos dotales en la economía monástica femenina durante la edad moderna." *Jubilatio*, 1: 351-61. Santiago de Compostela.
- Burns, Katherine. 1999. *Colonial Habits: Convents and the Spiritual Economy of Cuzco*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Castelao, Ofelia Rey. 2009. "Las instituciones monásticas femeninas, ¿centros de producción?" *Manuscripts: Revista d'història moderna* 27: 59-76.
- Catalán Martínez, Elena. 1999. "La formación de la propiedad burguesa en una ciudad mercantil. Bilbao (1700-1850)." In *Accumulation and Dissolution of Large Estates of the Regular Clergy in Early Modern Europe*, edited by Fiorenzo Landi, 165-98. Rimini: Guaraldi.
- Catalán Martínez, Elena. 2000. *El precio del purgatorio. Los ingresos del clero vasco en la Edad moderna*. Bilbao: UPV.
- Catalán Martínez, Elena. 2004. "El derecho de patronato y el regimen benefical de la iglesia española en la Edad Moderna." *Hispania Sacra* 56 (112): 507-29.
- Cerrato Mateos, F. 2000. *Monasterios femeninos de Córdoba, patrimonios, rentas y gestión económica a finales del antiguo Régimen*. Córdoba.
- Chowning, Margaret. 2006. *Rebellious Nuns. The Troubled History of a Mexican Convent. 1752-1853*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Conde, Antónia Fialho. 2013. "La dote monástica en las comunidades religiosas femeninas de Évora en el periodo post-tridentino." *Investigaciones históricas: Época moderna y contemporánea*. <http://uvadoc.uva.es:80/handle/10324/17640>.
- Cruz, Fernando Isidoro. 2011. "El convento de Santo Domingo de Sanlúcar de Barrameda: patronazgo de los guzmanes, proceso constructivo y patrimonio artístico (1528-1605)." *Laboratorio de Arte: Revista del Departamento de Historia del Arte* 23: 79-106.
- Cruz Isidoro, Fernando. 2000. "La Casa ducal de Medina Sidonia y el convento de capuchinos de Sanlúcar de Barrameda: patronato y contrucción." *Laboratorio de Arte* 13: 79-101.
- De Abol-Brasón y Álvarez Tamargo, Manuel. 1990. "El Patronato de sangre de la Excm. Casa de Alba en el Real Monasterio de Santa Clara de Palencia." In *Actas del II Congreso de Historia de Palencia*, edited by María Valentina Calleja González, vol. 3, 363-78. Palencia.

- Di Stefano, Roberto. 2013. "Lay Patronage and the Development of Ecclesiastical Property in Spanish America: The Case of Buenos Aires, 1700–1900." *HAHR* 93 (1).
- Díaz de Durana, José Ramón. 1998. "Patronato, patronos, clérigos y parroquianos. Los derechos de patronazgo sobre monasterios e Iglesias como fuente de renta e instrumento de control y dominación sobre los Parientes Mayores guipuxcoanos (siglos XIV a XVI)." *Hispania Sacra* 50: 467–508.
- Dinet, Dominique. 1990. "Les dots de religion en France aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles." In *Les Eglises et l'argent*. Vol. 13. Paris : AHMUF.
- Ducreux, Marie-Elizabeth, ed. 2016. *Dévotion et légitimation : patronages sacrés dans l'Europe des Habsbourg*. Liège : Presses Universitaires de Liège.
- Egido López, Teófanés. 1987. "The Economic Concerns of Madre Teresa." *Carmelite Studies* 4: 156–62.
- Fink de Backer, Stephanie. 2003. "Constructing Convents in Sixteenth-Century Castile: Toledane Windows and Patterns of Patronage." In *Widowhood and Visual Culture in Early Modern Europe*, edited by Alison Levy, 177–94. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Greco, G. 1986. "I giuspatronali laicali nell'età moderna". In *Storia d'Italia. Annali 9. Chiesa e potere politico dal medioevo all'età contemporanea*, edited by G. Chittolini and G. Mitolli, 531–72. Torino: Einaudi.
- Hidalgo Ogáyar, J. 2002. *Los Mendoza y Alcalá de Henares: Su patronazgo durante los siglos XVI y XVII*. Alcalá de Henares.
- Landi, Fiorenzo. 2006. *Storia economica del clero in Europa. Secoli XV–XIX*. Roma: Carocci.
- Larrea Beobide, Angel. 1995. *El patronato de laicos en la Vizcaya del Antiguo Régimen*. Universidad de Deusto.
- Lavrin, Asunción. 1966. "The Role of the Nunneries in the Economy of New Spain in the Eighteenth Century." *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 46 (4): 371–93.
- Lavrin, Asunción. 1975. "El Convento de Santa Clara de Querétaro: la administración de sus propiedades en el siglo XVII." *Historia mexicana* 97: 76–117.
- Lavrin, Asunción. 2016. *Las esposas de Cristo: La vida conventual en la Nueva España*. Fondo de Cultura Económica.
- Lehfeldt, Elizabeth A. 1999. "Discipline, Vocation, and Patronage: Spanish Religious Women in a Tridentine Microclimate." *Sixteenth Century Journal* 30 (4): 1009–30.
- Lehfeldt, Elizabeth A. 2005. *Religious Women in Golden Age Spain: the Permeable Cloister*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- López Álvarez, Alejandro. 2002. "La extensión de una red de patronatos en los dominios de la Casa de Béjar, siglos XV–XVIII." In *Iglesia y religiosidad en España. Historia y Archivos*, vol. 3: 1625–48. Guadalajara.
- Luna, Pablo F. 2017. *El tránsito de la Buenamuerte por Lima*. Madrid Frankfurt am Main: Iberoamericana Editorial Vervuert.
- Mancinelli, Chiara. 2013. "Aproximación al Análisis Económico Del Convento Del Santo Espíritu Del Monte: Un Ejemplo de Los Estudios Sobre La Organización Económica de Conventos Mendicantes En El Marco Del Mediterráneo." *RiMe. Rivista Dell Istituto Di Storia Dell Europa Mediterranea* 10: 347–70.

- Marcos Martín, Alberto. 1999. "La actividad crediticia del clero regular castellano en la edad moderna." In *Accumulation and Dissolution of Large Estates of the Regular Clergy in Early Modern Europe*, edited by Fiorenzo Landi, 71-103. Rimini: Guaraldi.
- Martínez, Antonio Luis López. 1995. "Mecanismos de formación del patrimonio del clero regular en el Reino de Sevilla durante el Antiguo Régimen: criterios que presidieron la adquisición de sus propiedades." In *Andalucía Moderna: actas del II Congreso de Historia de Andalucía: Córdoba, 1991*. Vol. 7, 453-61, Córdoba.
- Perluss, Preston. 2013. "Monastic Landed-Wealth: Major Traits and Principal Issues." In *The Economics of Providence*, edited By Maarten Van Dijck, Jan de Maeyer, Jeffrey Tyssens, and Jimmy Koppen, 51-74. Leuven: Leuven University Press.
- Pinedo Gómez, Eugenia Ma. 2017. "Algunos apuntes sobre economía monástica femenina. Las peticiones de Merced (1598-1621)." *Hispania Sacra* 52 (105): 377.
- Rodríguez Duarte, María del Carmen. 1994. "Las dotaciones en los conventos de clarisas en el siglo XVIII: misas, limosnas, cappelanías en el monasterio de San Bernardino de las Palmas." *Archivo Iberoamericano* 215: 907-25.
- Rubial García, Antonio. 1998. "Monjas y mercaderes: comercio y construcciones conventuales en la ciudad de México durante el siglo XVII." *Colonial Latin American Review* 7 (4): 361-86.
- Roullet, Antoine. 2018. "Patronato y territorio señorial: los Sotomayor y los franciscanos, siglos XV-XVI". In *Salvación y dominación territorial en América y Europa (siglos XVI-XX)*, edited by A. Maldavsky and Roberto di Stefano. Ed UnLPam, online.
- Van Dijck, Maarten, Jan de Maeyer, Jeffrey Tyssens, and Jimmy Koppen. 2013. *The Economics of Providence: Management, Finances and Patrimony of Religious Orders and Congregations in Europe, 1773- c. 1930*. Leuven: Leuven University Press.
- Von Wobeser, Gisela. 1994. *El crédito eclesiástico en la Nueva España. Siglo XVIII*. Mexico: Universidad autónoma de México.
- Weber, Alison. 1999. "Teresa's Problematic Patrons." *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 29 (2).
- Zelizer, Viviana. 1994. *The Social Meaning of Money*. New York: Basic Books.

The Church of Cyprus and the Transition from Ottoman Rule to British Modernity

CHURCH PROPERTY IN ITS POLITICAL CONTEXT

MICHALIS N. MICHAEL

*[...] where the collection of the designated throne right is concerned,
it is my firm belief that the Government needs to recognize
the designated amount as debt for each person
and to collect this as it collects all other legal debts.
Doing so will allow us not to make use of ecclesiastical
debt collection for the throne tax and also
the people [...] will come to their senses
once they learn that it is the law.¹*

The Church of Cyprus in an Ottoman World: Political and Economic Power

Following the agreement made between Britain and the Ottoman Empire against the backdrop of the Congress of Berlin in June 1878, the Ottoman sultan rented the administration of Cyprus to Britain against an annual fee.² Although this agreement was presented as the product of discussions held during the Berlin Congress, it seems that the new realities brought about by Russian control of the Black Sea and fears of a Russian advance had settled the future of Cyprus and its transfer to Britain before the Congress (Richter 2006, 14). This transfer created a new situation for Cyprus and its historical evolution. It essentially implied the interruption of its Ottoman administration and its exposure to developments within the Ottoman Empire, the entry of Cyprus into the colonial world and, more importantly, changes to how the island was ruled. Significantly, the new administration's structures

1 Letter from the Bishop of Paphos Epiphánios to the Archbishop of Cyprus Sofronios, dated 30 January 1897. *Archive of the Late Archbishops of Cyprus*, Book 11, p. 289.

2 For the agreement between the Ottoman Empire and Britain, see Hill 1952, 400–15. See also Georghallides 1979 3–14. For the importance of Cyprus for Britain, see Lee 1931, 235–41.

derived from a Western type of modern state, which pushed Cyprus into a specific, colonized type of modernity (Anagnostopoulou 1999, 199). The most important difference compared to the Ottoman period in respect of the modern structures that the British imposed on the island was that the bishops of the Church of Cyprus were no longer treated as *natural* political leaders of the Orthodox community, and, in general, the church was no longer considered as an institution with political responsibilities.

At the same time, the social structures which had begun to emerge during the second half of the nineteenth century in Ottoman Cyprus would find a completely different expression in the British administrative framework. This is particularly interesting when it is borne in mind that the nineteenth century saw the transformation of the religious community into a national one, which forced the Orthodox churches to keep pace with emerging national identities (Roudometof 2010, 272). In Cyprus this new identity occurred with – and because of – the transfer of control from the Sublime Porte to the British colonial administration and the application of a Western type of modern governance. During the period of Ottoman rule in Cyprus, developing slowly over the course of the centuries, the two main facts in relation to the Church of Cyprus were: the political responsibility of the bishops, which gradually became part of the Ottoman framework of power and administration; and the consistent financial reinforcement of the ecclesiastical institutions through the opportunities offered by the Ottoman financial and – more importantly – land ownership systems.

More specifically, the following developments occurred during the Ottoman rule of Cyprus. Firstly, there was a gradual upgrade of the status of the bishops of Cyprus and their more active participation in administrative practices. Following the conquest of Cyprus in 1571, according to the available sources, the Ottoman sultan essentially proceeded to re-establish the Church of Cyprus. Before the Ottoman conquest, the church's prelates were deprived of their role. A general ruling issued by Pope Alexander IV in July 1260, called the *Constitutio Cypria* (*Bulla* or *Summa Alexandrina*), abolished the position of the head of the Church of Cyprus and restricted the jurisdictions of its bishops.³ As such, the re-establishment of the Orthodox Church of Cyprus became possible only after the Ottoman conquest. In accordance with the Sublime Porte's common practice, imperial documents (*berats*) were granted to the bishops of the Church of Cyprus, outlining their rights and responsibilities. In spite of the fact that the sultans during the early Ottoman

3 For the Church of Cyprus during Latin rule, see Papadopoulos 1995.

period appear to have dealt with the bishops mostly within an economic rather than a political framework (Papademetriou 2015, 103), the bishops were nevertheless incorporated into the administrative network of the empire, especially after the sixteenth century.

During the mid-seventeenth century, following initiatives by the Sublime Porte but also due to the emergence of local figures of power in the Ottoman periphery, the bishops of the Church of Cyprus began further to be incorporated into the administrative web of the island. The advent of these local authorities often resulted from many concurrent factors, such as the will of the sultans, local particularities that favoured this development and the need of the Ottoman governors, who held their positions for a short term, to rely on local intermediaries (Hourani 1968, 48). Thus, after 1660, the Church of Cyprus became involved in the tax-farming system (Ott. Turk. *iltizam*),⁴ something which contributed to making it a powerful organization. Nearly a century later, in 1754, following an initiative of the Sublime Porte, the bishops were upgraded and became *kocabaşıs* of the Orthodox people of the island for life. This development essentially marginalized, or weakened, laypersons, preventing them from rising to power. During the period of the Ottoman reforms of the nineteenth century (*Tanzimat*) and the efforts of the Sublime Porte to modernize the Ottoman state, and despite the fact that the bishops appeared to lose their personal political power, the church was established on an institutional level as part of the Ottoman administrative structure of the island. The institutional role of the church through its bishops was intense and substantive in all the new bodies of the administration. Modernity in its Ottoman version had to be imposed through the collaboration of laypersons and clerics in a new institutional framework, consisting of administrative councils (*meclis*) (Hanssen 2002, 56; Michael 2015). For Cyprus, the economic predominance of ecclesiastical institutions meant that laypersons who participated in these administrative bodies were part of the wider circle of the bishops and were not in a position to threaten their authority.

In this framework, there was a mutual relationship between the Ottoman understanding of the church and the latter's development as a secular-style, bureaucratic organization of government. As long as the Ottoman administration facilitated the interpretation that the bishops and the workings of the church were mechanisms of state power, the church was obliged to develop a bureaucracy and an

4 The tax-farming system gradually replaced the *timar* system. Most importantly, because of the tax-farming system, new capital owners emerged who would become the new political power figures in the Ottoman state (Karpát 1972, 251).

administrative structure. Similarly, as long as the church expanded this structure and bureaucracy, it was an indispensable aspect of the central administration and it increased the Ottoman state's need to give the church, as an ecclesiastical institution with a secular organization, greater authority, that is, state responsibilities. At the same time, the emergence of local powers within the communities essentially allowed these local actors to increase their power and, in some cases, to operate more autonomously (Inalcik 1980, 334). As Donald Quataert notes in his work, since the late seventeenth century, the central state had depended on provincial notables, especially for the provisioning of troops, while this relationship gave considerable bargaining power to local elites (Quataert 2005, 48). On the other hand, the presence of these local powers within the Ottoman periphery created a situation in which the Ottoman centre and the powers that held sway there were involved in constant negotiation to ensure the continued existence and effectiveness of the Ottoman state. These authorities have recently been called "partners of the Empire" (Yaycioğlu 2016) and were previously known as "local Ottomans" (Quataert 2005, 50); both designations, in my opinion, express their power and role in the Ottoman state after the mid-eighteenth century. If we focus once again on the Church of Cyprus, we may conclude that while the church became part of the state administration and developed a bureaucratic structure, its representatives' appetite for a more autonomous function – always within an Ottoman framework – continued to grow.

The second point in relation to the Church of Cyprus during the Ottoman period concerns the financial opportunities that the Ottoman framework offered, opportunities which turned many ecclesiastical institutions into financially powerful and commercial agents from the beginning of the nineteenth century onwards. During the Ottoman period, the archbishopric, the bishoprics, the monasteries and the parish churches developed financial and commercial activities that were either part of the Ottoman space and the Ottoman economy – production, disposal of agricultural surplus, financial activities – or were ecclesiastical practices that were not only included in the Ottoman logic of the religious community, but were part of the responsibilities of the Orthodox subjects towards their spiritual and political leader, the bishop. In such a framework, it seems that the Ottomanization of the church did not occur only through the political role of the bishops but was achieved on a larger scale through the functioning of the church in the context of the state.

As regards the involvement of the Orthodox church in financial activities during the Ottoman period, what is evident from the study of thousands of documents and registers of the ecclesiastical institutions is that ecclesiastical centres operated as fiscal entities in the Ottoman economic space. The Ottoman land ownership system, taxation mechanisms, agricultural production, distribution of products,

ecclesiastical taxation, the church's spiritual role and the flock were intertwined and coexisted in an economic system that reinforced the central treasury and the churches themselves. At the same time, all these activities allowed the treasuries of the ecclesiastical institutions to operate as lending centres by lending money to farmers at significant interest.⁵ Through its economic activities, the Church of Cyprus became an important agent of the capitalist system in the Ottoman Cypriot space in the nineteenth century, and especially during the second half of the century. Ecclesiastical institutions appear to have been the first to hire permanent personnel for their farming activities, while they accumulated capital – which was then invested in farming land, operating central markets in the cities and developing commercial activities.

An excellent example of the accumulation of assets, capital and continuous business activity during the nineteenth century is Kykkos monastery, which was financially the strongest monastery of the island and perhaps of the Orthodox world in general. Kykkos monastery's financial registers offer information on the large agricultural and stockbreeding units that it maintained all over the island with the aim to produce tradable products (Michael 2003, 88–105). The monastery also had goldsmiths as its permanent associates (Michael 2001, 79–80). It further controlled extensive estate holdings (Michael 2005, 118–19). It also exported agricultural products – mostly from the estates – and imported industrial products (Michael 2003, 63–72). An example of the documentation of the monastery's assets is Codex 51 in the monastery's archive, according to which, by the middle of the century, the monastery owned approximately 4,000 acres of land, 5,000 trees of various species, 108 estates and 16 mills of various types (Michael 2005, 124). Indicative of the amount of its assets at the end of the Ottoman era is a report included in a letter from the abbot of the monastery to the British authorities. According to this report, Kykkos monastery was at that point in possession of the following: 13 annexes,⁶ 10 churches, 15,148 acres of land, 8,797 olive trees, 429 acres of vines, 19 walnut trees, 171 almond trees, 57 fig trees, 1,128 cherry trees, 27 apricot trees, 11 watermills, 11 olive mills, 5 smaller mills and 72 shops.⁷ This letter does not document the monastery's numerous herds, which produced large quantities of animal products for commercial use. As Codex 51 and the monastery's archive reveal, the monastery owned approximately 20 annexes within Cyprus and more than 15 abroad during

5 See for example loans granted to Orthodox people and Muslims by Kykkos monastery in the early nineteenth century (Michael 2001, 114–15).

6 For the annexes in Istanbul, see Stavrides 2001, 133–41. For other Kykkos annexes, see Kokkinofas 1997.

7 For this letter, see Chrysostomos 1969, 103.

the nineteenth century, some of which operated for longer periods of time, while others were shorter-lived.⁸

The continuous cash flow developments in the economy, which appear to have become more intense after the mid-eighteenth century, the evolution of the Ottoman administrative structures, and the creation of a framework which allowed the accumulation of capital and the increasing accumulation of wealth by the owners of large capital prepared the way for the ecclesiastical institutions to become the leading capital owners and an important financial and economic factor on the island. Shortly after the arrival of the British, William Hepworth Dixon noted that the church was crucial to the island's economy in general. According to his remarks,

(The archbishop) held many weapons in his hands. First, as head of the Church, he was the chief owner of land in this island, and could therefore raise the rent on hundreds of farms at any moment and on any pretext. Second, as head of the Church, he was the biggest trader in the island, and could therefore raise the price of articles in the bazaars of every market-town. Third, as head of the Church, he was one of the chief exporters of wine, salt, and brandy, and could therefore easily derange the shipping trade and annoy the ports. [...] A man so armed for good and evil, might, if bent on worrying the civil power, drive half the people of this island to despair (Dixon 1879, 47–48).

In view of the development of commerce in Cyprus during the nineteenth century and of the type of products that were produced and exported, it was only natural that the church and the monasteries, which possessed a large portion of the cultivable land, would be involved in this profitable sector and that they would develop the necessary infrastructure. The Orthodox monasteries, as financial centres (landowners and owners of investment capital) and their annexes operated as production centres for agricultural and farming products which were used for commerce. The relationship between the monasteries and export commerce was so crucial for the monasteries that for Kykkos monastery, for example, it meant that the monastery needed to be present at the ports, form relationships with merchants and keep a watchful eye on the demand in Western countries for Cypriot products. There is also some speculation that Kykkos monastery owned a commercial ship.⁹

8 For the annexes and *çiftlik*s of Kykkos monastery in Cyprus, especially during the nineteenth century, see Michael 2005.

9 For such examples see Papadopoulos 2008, 189–92.

It is likely that the monastery owned part of this ship, which was a common practice during the era.

Apart from their commercial activities, which seem to have been the dominant activities of the ecclesiastical institutions of Cyprus during the nineteenth century, their funds were also reinforced by significant amounts of cash, as church taxes and other ecclesiastical levies became obligatory and were given legal status by the Ottoman state. More specifically, ecclesiastical taxation during the Ottoman period was divided into different categories; for example, *leitourgika* referred to payments made for various spiritual ceremonies, *kanonika* related to the immediate taxation of the lower clergy and the flock by the bishops, and *ziteiai* referred to a widely established practice of Christian alms collection in the Ottoman provinces. *Ziteiai* were conducted by almost all ecclesiastical institutions, such as archbishoprics, bishoprics, monasteries and smaller churches, and they were not confined to the narrow geographical boundaries of each ecclesiastical territory, but were conducted everywhere with the permission of the ecclesiastical authority of the region, or the foreign ruler if it was in a region outside the Ottoman well-protected domains (Aggelomati-Tsougaraki 2007, 254). Characteristic reports that demonstrate the obligatory nature of the *ziteiai* can be found in letters written by the Archbishop of Cyprus, Chrysanthos I (1767–1810), to various villagers in 1807 and 1808. In his first letter, the archbishop noted that payment of the remaining sum for the *ziteia* that some of the villagers owed was obligatory and he encouraged the Orthodox not to disregard it, as doing so could lead to punishment. In his letter to the farmers of these villages, he wrote:

Solemn priests and Christians of the following villages, we grant you paternal wishes for your wellbeing and inform you that the monk Leontios will be sent to collect your remaining *ziteia* as it has been documented by us; this should not be ignored as it will cause trouble for you and each of you must pay. September 28, 1807. For the village of Analiontas 18 *grosia* (*kuruş*), for the village of 160 Lithrodontas *grosia*, for the village of Mathiatis 25 *grosia*, for the village of Psomolofou 14:28 *grosia*, for the village of Capedes 50 *grosia*. (Total *grosia/kuruş*) 277:28.¹⁰

In a similar letter dated a year later, Archbishop Chrysanthos encouraged the Orthodox people other villages to pay their *ziteia* and warned that, if they did not,

10 Letter from Archbishop Chrysanthos dated 28 September 1807. Archive of the Late Archbishops of Cyprus, Book A, Part A, p. 60.

another person would be sent to collect the amounts, and this person could potentially collect a larger amount or punish the villagers:

Solemn priests and other Christians of the below villages we send you wishes. We send Father Leontios to collect the remaining *ziteia* in cash as written in the documents we prepared. Make sure to give to him, as it is the custom, what is necessary, because if you ignore it, we will employ another person to do it and he will take more, or we will employ a tax collector to convince you. August 26, 1808. For the village Pano Deutera *grosia* (*kuruş*) 18, for the village Agrokypia *grosia* 10, for the village Anayia *grosia* 10, for the village Analiontas *grosia* 10. Total *grosia* (*kuruş*) 48.¹¹

Challenges of the Colonial Era

Given the two points above in relation to the Church of Cyprus and the political and financial role of the bishops, as well as the long duration of Ottoman rule in Cyprus, it is particularly important to analyse the reaction of the bishops to the modifications caused by British colonial rule on the island. Shortly after their arrival in Cyprus in 1878, the British began to reorganize the administration of the island to reflect their colonial administrative model. This was based on a Western understanding of the state, and all existing structures and institutions were either to be abolished or reformed. For this reason, a local powerful administration was required which would have executive powers in the colony and would formulate its financial policies. For the British, at least for the first decades of the colonial period, the exercise of power on the island had to be secular and based upon modern procedures, that is, elections. Inevitably, this approach ended the power that had been bestowed upon the bishops during the Ottoman period.

The colonial authorities set up a powerful Executive Council, which included the High Commissioner, the Chief Secretary, the Treasurer and the King's Advocate. Apart from these British officials, three locals were appointed as members of the Council. A second important institution introduced by the British administration was the island's Legislative Council, which was established in September 1878. In its final form, the Legislative Council had eighteen members, six of whom were British officials appointed by the High Commissioner (official members). The other twelve

11 Letter from Archbishop Chrysanthos dated 26 August 1808. Archive of the Late Archbishops of Cyprus, Book A, Part A, p. 62.

members were elected by the people (six Muslims and six non-Muslims). These new realities strongly contrasted with the privileges – of political power – which the Ottoman administration had traditionally given to the bishops of the Church of Cyprus. From the outset of British rule, a huge ideological chasm opened up between the state and the church, between the new administration and the bishops (Michael 2015, 120). The basis for the bishops' understanding was their long-term, privileged position throughout the Ottoman period and their incorporation into the Ottoman administrative framework as an integral part of the functioning of the state. As long as the Ottoman administration considered them to be a part of the state mechanism, the bishops also saw themselves – and the ecclesiastical structure – as part of the ruling elite of the empire (Michael 2005, 65–67). Similarly, and especially in the Cypriot case, the gradual development of powerful local powers in the Ottoman provinces, who essentially operated as the rulers of their regions, seems to have been a process which favoured the Church of Cyprus. From the early nineteenth century, the bishops were the most powerful financial and political authority on the island, while the archbishop of Cyprus for long periods operated as a local autocrat.

The legal basis for the bishops' power was accepted and was unquestionable as it was based upon the relevant sultanic document (*berat*). This is why the bishops insisted on having their political privileges recognized by the British administration and on being granted a charter establishing their authority, a type of "British *berat*". As in the Ottoman period, the bishops requested political powers and asked to be legally recognized as the secular authority of their community by the reigning political authority of the state to which Cyprus now belonged, that is, the queen of the United Kingdom. The British, applying modern Western practices, refused to grant state support to the church. The British understanding of the administration of the island was modern and did not include the church or the bishops in their administrative framework. As Hepworth Dixon noted in 1878:

That state of things is past, and the unwritten compact of the (archbishop's) palace with the konak, at an end. In forming our new legislative council, we included none but laymen. Neither priest nor mollah has a seat on our new board. Church and mosque must go their ways. Henceforth, the power in Cyprus is a secular power (Dixon 1879, 165).

During the Ottoman period, the Cypriot higher clergy not only had political power, but ecclesiastical institutions also experienced unprecedented financial flourishing. From the mid-eighteenth century onwards the churches, and especially the monasteries, had managed to accumulate significant capital, which was used on

the one hand to pay off taxes to the Ottoman authorities – local and central – while on the other hand, mainly in the nineteenth century, it was used as a means to invest in such profitable activities as lending and the purchase of other assets. Two decades after the establishment of the British administration on the island, it was obvious that the political power of the bishops was either about to be abolished or reduced drastically. While this new framework was emerging, the bishops mobilized in an effort to restore a more *Ottoman* system, although the island was now ruled by Britain.

Thus, on 30 January 1897, two decades after the arrival of the British in Cyprus, in a particularly dramatic letter from the Bishop of Paphos, Epiphánios (1890–1899), to the Archbishop of Cyprus, Sofronios (1865–1900), Epiphánios underlined the seriousness of the situation with regard to the revenues of ecclesiastical institutions after the transfer of the administration of Cyprus to Britain. This letter essentially proves the connection between politics and the economy especially in relation to the church. The abolition of the obligatory nature of ecclesiastical taxes by the British administration after the transfer of the island – and therefore of the possibility to identify ecclesiastical institutions as state institutions – created a new situation for the church, which as the bishop of Paphos noted, was particularly dangerous, mainly on the level of the church's political influence. In his words, “[...] the Greek people of Cyprus are hurt materially and morally [...] by the British occupation and, what is more, no decisions made by the ecclesiastical authority are executed by the political power” (Zannetos 1911, 384).

Additionally, as noted in a report by the High Commissioner Robert Biddulph (1879–1886) to London, the bishops observed in memos sent to the British authorities that the new realities that had emerged on the island after the change of administration and the arrival of the British had significantly decreased the church's power. According to the High Commissioner's report: “[...] the bishops however said they wanted to give me their proposals in writing and added that the great liberty given to the people by the British occupation decreased the power and prestige of the Church.”¹² It should be noted, moreover, that only two decades after the transfer of the island's administration to Britain, the Cypriot population experienced unprecedented growth, around 27 %, while it had essentially doubled by 1921 (Demetriades 2001, 171). As such, from the beginning of the twentieth century onwards, all Cypriots under 25 years of age who had not personally known Ottoman rule were

12 Report from the High Commissioner Robert Biddulph to the Secretary of State for the Colonies Lord Kimberley, dated 28 November/9 December 1881 (Zannetos 1911, 289).

naturally particularly receptive to new ideas (Katsiaounis 1996, 175). They had not known the powerful political authority of the bishops and the obligatory payment of ecclesiastical taxes. This issue highlights the political importance of the church's economy, which should always be analysed as involving a two-way relationship between the economy and politics. It is important not to forget that in general, in the framework of the post-Ottoman colonial regions, property administration was always a political question (Rappas 2019, 642).

Shortly after the establishment of the British administration and the changes that it impelled, the *Ekklesiastikon Zitima* (Ecclesiastical Issue) came to the surface, highlighting the relationship between the British administration – as a state – and the Church of Cyprus, revolving around ecclesiastical property, management and the collection of ecclesiastical taxes. The British refusal to accept the privileged position of ecclesiastical institutions in respect of assets, taxation and land ownership made it clear from the first days of their arrival that ecclesiastical property was to be subjected to the relevant state laws without any privileged exemptions or treatment. In 1879, the British governor of Limassol, Falk Warren, in his letter to the High Commissioner noted: “The bishop of Citium has pestered me many times. He has decided not to pay the taxes for the monastery’s estates. I was forced to teach his Holiness that everyone should abide by the law and a big scandal was created” (Zannetos 1911, 101).

A further indication of the importance of the relationship between the state and the church in relation to the latter's financial activities and rights was contained in a note by the governor of Paphos, A. G. Woshop. In his letter to the Chief Secretary of the British administration in April 1879, he mentioned that, on the occasion of the payment by the villagers of the taxes to the Bishop of Paphos, what he characterized as a very serious issue had arisen. The court decided that the residents of that particular area would continue to pay these taxes, but that the amount would be reduced by nine-tenths. The British official mentioned that although the news had been received with joy by the villagers, the bishop was concerned at the decrease in his income. What is perhaps important here is the fact that, along with the reduction of the bishop's income, his prestige was also affected. The words of the British official are characteristic of the importance of this episode: “The Church might be capable of remaining intact after losing in such legal issues but it cannot remain intact by the poisoning of relations between the clergy and the villagers [...]” (Katsiaounis 1996, 126).

What this comment shows is that the Church of Cyprus relied greatly on the relationship between its clergy and flock during the Ottoman period. The bishop of

Paphos's comments in his letter to Archbishop Sofronios about the disobedience of the Orthodox people and the connection between the legal character of the taxes and the people's compliance are illuminating. Asking that the British give legal status to ecclesiastical income, Bishop Epiphanius noted in his letter:

[...] the means supporting our thrones and the administration of the Church are being massively reduced and we need to request that the means to maintain the thrones and the administration of the Church cease from being reduced on this scale, therefore we need to ask the Government for their power, as they have stripped the Church from its influence, to amend the situation before the people not only forget about their obligation to pay certain amounts to the Church, but also to obey and apply the Holy Rules.¹³

There were two British reforms that directly affected the Ecclesiastical Issue during the first period of the British administration in Cyprus: firstly, a reform of the payments by the island's Christians to the bishops of the church; and, secondly, a reform of the large land holdings owned by ecclesiastical institutions, which involved an attempt by the British administration to regulate ownership in a modern legal framework. The Church firstly strove to have its assets legally recognized and to make their flock's payments to the bishops obligatory. For the Church it was necessary that the state should recognize the status quo and its political authority over the Christian part of the population in law. As the bishop of Paphos mentioned in his letter to Archbishop Sofronios in 1897, the church had to ensure that the ecclesiastical taxes were made obligatory so as to avoid the financial ruin of the ecclesiastical institutions. He noted that:

[...] the "leitourgika" and "kanonika" that the villagers pay should be renamed with one term, "thronika" (rights of the throne), and it should be the right of every throne to collect a certain amount from every family and every person who has the right to vote for a bishop. [...] where the collection of this amount is concerned, I do not think we need to ask for anything, apart from a request that the Government recognizes this amount as each person's obligation and to collect it as it collects all state debts. If this were accepted we would be happy to make use of the ecclesiastical penalties for the collection of the "thronika" and, additionally, the villagers, who seem to be looking

13

Letter from the Bishop of Paphos Epiphanius to the Archbishop of Cyprus Sofronios, dated 30 January 1897. Archive of the Late Archbishops of Cyprus, Book 11, p. 289.

the other way because the Government does not force them to pay, will be brought to their right minds.¹⁴

If the British administration were to refuse to make the payments of the faithful to their bishops obligatory, the bishop of Paphos suggested obligatory collection by state administration officials after suits brought before the courts. The British administration, however, made it clear that the state could not, for any reason, legislate for ecclesiastical taxation, and the High Commissioner himself noted that the administration would not be involved with the collection of these taxes (Hill 1952, 574).

Losing Power, Adopting the Nation

In 1884 Archbishop Sofronios invited the bishops for a meeting in the archbishopric to discuss the subject and decide the church' course of action. The most important change in how the ecclesiastical leadership began to behave towards its flock is that it adopted a new, national character. At the same time, the "holy" ecclesiastical property of the Ottoman period began to be referred to as the "national" property, which needed to be protected from the British administration. It is characteristic that, in a circular letter addressed to their flock after this meeting in the archbishopric, the bishops considered the matter of the regulation of ecclesiastical property as "[...] of great importance, as we are about to understand, and you are as well, the circumstances under which our National Ecclesiastical Authority will continue to exist" (Zannetos 1911, 390). With the nationalization of its role, it seems that the leadership of the Church of Cyprus abandoned its original goal to restore the Ottoman status quo – and the inclusion of this system in the British state mechanism – and moved towards opposition to the British administration, not only as the spiritual leadership of the Orthodox, but as the national authority of the Greeks of Cyprus. Similarly, ecclesiastical property was introduced by the bishops as a national ideological framework. By the end of the nineteenth century, the bishops, through their rhetoric, succeeded in presenting ecclesiastical property as a national asset, while their opposition to the British authorities' policies regarding it or regarding ecclesiastical taxation was presented as defence of national rights.

In 1885, the British administration passed a law to regulate the assets of ecclesiastical institutions and especially their landholdings. The Titles and Registration

14 Archive of the Late Archbishops of Cyprus, Book 11, p. 289.

Act anticipated that any demands by an ecclesiastical institution for recognition of *ab antiquo* ownership of assets would have to be accompanied by proof from the Land Register (*Defterhane*) of Constantinople. As a result, following the Titles and Registration Act of 1885, the British administration successfully acquired important areas of land – including forests in the case of the monasteries – as the courts rejected any demand unsupported by proof of ownership. Forests and lands became state property under to the provisions of the Forest Delimitation Ordinance Law of 1881 and the decisions of the Delimitation Commission.

The reaction of the bishops to the British administration's law was immediate. In April 1885 a Regulation of the Church of Cyprus was issued which related to its internal administration and organization. The fourth section of this Regulation, which concerned the assets of ecclesiastical institutions, mentioned that their management was to be entrusted to committees in which laypersons participated, while the committees also ensured that the necessary checks were made. A year later, in April 1886, while the situation remained on hold, the Holy Synod of the Church of Cyprus in a memorandum addressed to the High Commissioner insisted that ecclesiastical property should not be included in the new law and should be considered as a "special case", as it had been during the Ottoman period. The matter remained unresolved until the end of the nineteenth century, as disagreement between the British administration and the courts on the one hand, and the church on the other was in evidence every time a case was opened for the divestiture of an asset that was believed to belong to an ecclesiastical institution.

* * *

What can be established from studying the first years of the British period in Cyprus is that the British administration, in its attempt to create a modern state apparatus, rejected and marginalized the political leadership of the church. On the other hand, the laypersons of the community, a community of which the bishops considered themselves to be its leaders, questioned the political dominance of the church, demanding participation in the management of the material property of the church. Therefore, the bishops had to seek new ways to maintain their political authority over their flock and innovative methods to exempt ecclesiastical property from the British administration's modern laws. In other words, when the bishops of the Church of Cyprus foresaw that their status quo as it had existed during the Ottoman period was not to be restored, they shifted their strategy to one that would help them regain political leadership of the community. Gradually, the bishops of Cyprus adopted part of the political discourse that some of the bourgeoisie had begun to

express, used this discourse as a basis for opposition to the British administration, while presenting themselves as the political leaders of the community. Since the main political discourse of the bourgeoisie at the end of the nineteenth century was nationalist, the Church of Cyprus nationalized itself in an effort to retain its political leadership within the British administrative framework. From this point onwards and until the end of the British period, the Church of Cyprus became the single national authority of the Greek Cypriots (Anagnostopoulou 1999, 198). At the same time, the bishops, in adopting the nationalist discourse of this period, imbued it with characteristics of religious faith and made this faith the criterion of national consciousness. Loyalty to the church – and the bishops – became equated with loyalty to the nation, which therefore came to include opposing the British administration as the absolute occupying authority.

References

- Aggelomati-Tsougaraki, Eleni. 2007. “Το φαινόμενο της ζητείας κατά την μεταβυζαντινή περίοδο” [The Issue of *Ziteia* during the Post-Byzantine Period]. *Ιόνιος Λόγος*, 1: 247–93.
- Anagnostopoulou, Sia. 1999. “Η Εκκλησία της Κύπρου και ο Εθναρχικός της ρόλος, 1878–1960” [The Church of Cyprus and Its Ethnarchic Role, 1878–1960]. *Σύγχρονα Θέματα*, 68–70.
- Chrysostomos Abbot of Kykkos. 1969. *Η Ιερά Βασιλική και Σταυροπηγιακή Μονή Κύκκου* [The Holy Royal and Stavropegic Monastery of Kykkos]. Nicosia: Kykkos Monastery.
- Demetriades, Evros I. 2001. “The Population of Cyprus during the British Rule, 1878–1960”. In: *Πρακτικά του Τρίτου Διεθνούς Κυπριολογικού Συνεδίου* [Proceedings of the Third International Cyprological Conference], edited by Ioannis P. Theoharides. Nicosia: Etaireia Kypriakon Spoudon.
- Dixon, Hepworth. 1879. *British Cyprus*. London: Elibron Classics.
- Faustmann, Hubert, and Nicos Peristianis, eds. 2006. *Britain in Cyprus: Colonialism and Post-Colonialism, 1878–2006*. Mannheim: Bibliopolis.
- Georghallides, George. 1979. *A Political and Administrative History of Cyprus, 1918–1926. With a Survey of the Foundations of British Rule*. Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre.
- Hanssen, Jens. 2002. “Practices of Integration – Center-Periphery Relations in the Ottoman Empire”. In: *The Empire in the City: Arab Provincial Capitals in the Late Ottoman Empire*, edited by Jens Hanssen, and Philipp S. Weber. Beirut: Ergon Verlag Würzburg.
- Hill, George. 1952. *A History of Cyprus*. Vol. 4. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hourani, Albert. 1968. “Ottoman Reforms and the Politics of Notables”. In *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East*, edited by R. L. Chambers and W. R. Polk. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- İnalçık, Halil. 1980. "Military and Fiscal Transformation in the Ottoman Empire, 1600–1700". *Archivum Ottomanicum* 6: 283–337.
- Karpat, Kemal H. 1972. "The Transformation of the Ottoman State, 1789–1910". *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 3: 243–81.
- Katsiaounis, Rolandos. 1996. *Labour, Society and Politics in Cyprus during the Second Half of the Ninetenth Century*. Nicosia: Cyprus Research Center.
- Kokkinoftas, Kostis. 1997. *Κυκκιώτικα Μελετήματα* [Studies on Kykkos]. Vol. 1. Nicosia: Kykkos Monastery Research Centre.
- Lee, Dwight E. 1931. "A Memorandum Concerning Cyprus". *Journal of Modern History* 3 (2): 235–41.
- Leustean, Lucian N., ed. *Eastern Orthodox Christianity and the Cold War*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Michael, Michalis N. 2001. *Ο Κώδικας 54 της Ιεράς Μονής Κύκκου και οι οικονομικές της δραστηριότητες, 1813–1819* [Codex no. 54 of the Holy Monastery of Kykkos and Its Economic Activities, 1813–1819]. Nicosia: Kykkos Monastery Research Centre.
- Michael, Michalis N. 2003. *Η Ιερά Μονή Κύκκου στο οθωμανικό οικονομικό πλαίσιο σύμφωνα με τον Κώδικα 56, 1844–1890* [The Holy Monastery of Kykkos in the Ottoman Economic Context according to Codex no. 56, 1844–1890]. Nicosia: Kykkos Monastery Research Centre.
- Michael, Michalis N. 2005a. *Η Εκκλησία της Κύπρου κατά την οθωμανική περίοδο: η σταδιακή συγκρότηση ενός θεσμού πολιτικής εξουσίας (1571–1878)* [The Church of Cyprus during the Ottoman Period: The Gradual Formation of an Institution of Political Power (1571–1878)]. Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre.
- Michael, Michalis N. 2005b. *Το τσιφλίκι της οθωμανικής περιόδου. Μοναστηριακά τσιφλίκια στους Κώδικες 49 (1813–1841) και 51 (1818–1881) της Ιεράς Μονής Κύκκου* [The Ottoman Çiftlik: Monasteries' Çiftliks in Codex no. 49 (1813–1841) and Codex no. 51 (1818–1881) of the Kykkos Monastery Archive]. Nicosia: Kykkos Monastery Research Centre.
- Michael, Michalis N. 2015. "From the Ottoman *Meclis-i İdare* to the British Legislative Council: Representative Administration between the Ottoman and the British Perception of Modernity". In *Ottoman Religious Communities, State and Colonialism in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century*, edited by Michalis N. Michael, Tassos Anastassiades, and Chantal Verdeil, 105–130. Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag.
- Papademetriou, Tom. 2015. *Render unto the Sultan: Power, Authority, and the Greek Orthodox Church in the Early Ottoman Centuries*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Papadopoulos, Theodoros. 1995. "Η Εκκλησία της Κύπρου κατά την περίοδο της Φραγκοκρατίας" [The Church of Cyprus during the Frankish Rule]. In *Ιστορία της Κύπρου* [History of Cyprus]. Vol. 4, Part I, edited by Theodoros Papadopoulos, 543–665. Nicosia: Archbishop Makarios Foundation.
- Papadopoulos, Theodoros. 2008. *Κώδιξ Μονής Κύκκου* [Codex of Kykkos Monastery]. Nicosia: Kykkos Monastery Research Centre.
- Quataert, Donald. 2005. *The Ottoman Empire, 1700–1922*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rappas, Alexis. 2019. "The Sultans Domain: British Cyprus' Role in the Redefinition of Property Regimes in the Post-Ottoman Levant". *International History Review* 41 (3): 624–49.

- Richter, Heinz A. 2006. "The Grand Game, the Balkans, the Congress of Berlin and Cyprus". In *Britain in Cyprus: Colonialism and Post-Colonialism, 1878–2006*, edited by Hubert Faustmann and Nicos Peristianis. Mannheim: Bibliopolis.
- Roudometof, Victor. 2010. "The Orthodox Church of Cyprus". In *Eastern Orthodox Christianity and the Cold War*, edited by Lucian N. Leustean. London: Routledge.
- Stavrides, Theoharis. 2001. *Οικουμενικό Πατριαρχείο και Κύπρος. Τα έγγραφα των ετών 1600–1878* [Ecumenical Patriarchate and Cyprus: The Documents for the Years 1600–1878]. Nicosia: Kykkos Monastery Research Centre.
- Yaycıoğlu, Ali. 2016. *Partners of the Empire: The Crisis of the Ottoman Order in the Age of Revolutions*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Zannetos, Filios. 1911. *Ιστορία της νήσου Κύπρου* [History of the Island of Cyprus]. Vol. 2. Larnaca: Philokalias.

The Monastic Economy of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church Between the Two World Wars

DANIELA KALKANDJEVA

The economic development of monasteries is one of the least known aspects of Eastern Orthodox Christianity (henceforth Orthodoxy). This situation is a result of the profile of most scholars who work in this field. Most often, they are theologians or church historians who lack sufficient knowledge of economics. Meanwhile, economists are not inclined to study Orthodox monasteries due to the association of the latter with a religious tradition labelled as ‘inhibiting economic development’ (Makrides 2019, 35). The proponents of this view tend to attribute the economic underdevelopment and belated modernization of traditionally Orthodox states to the dominance of this religious tradition over the local societies. This approach has recently been questioned by a set of studies that provide evidence of the complex interplay between Orthodoxy and economy in the modern age and that call for a more contextually-oriented approach to its analysis.¹

Another factor that usually impedes the systematic research of monastic economy stems from the limited access to the corresponding church archives. In this regard, however, the modern Bulgarian Orthodox Church is an exception. In the late 1950s, the Bulgarian communist regime forced the local Orthodox Church to transfer its historical documents to the newly established national system of archives (Mintsev 2006). In this way, researchers have been able to gain full access to church records from the later nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. Meanwhile, the other Orthodox churches have preserved control over their archives. Moreover, the access of foreign scholars to these sources is extremely difficult and often impossible.

1 The recent thematic issue of *Archives de sciences sociales des religions* (Makrides and Seraidari 2019) presents a series of analyses that challenge the sceptic view of the interplay between Orthodoxy and the economy.

The Bulgarian Monastic Economy (1870–1918)

The review of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church's archival documents points to four major periods in the modern development of the Bulgarian monastic economy. The first of these encompasses the time between 1870 and 1918. It coincides with the church's institutionalization and can be defined as a formative period. Established in 1870 by a decree from the sultan, the church faced a series of religious and secular challenges that had a negative effect on the development of its monastic economy. More specifically, neither the sultan's decree of 1870 that set up the modern Bulgarian Church as an autonomous exarchate of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, nor its statute of 1871 commented on the issue of monasteries. This lacuna raises questions about the legal and canonical grounds on which monasteries that used to belong to the Patriarchate were transferred to the new Exarchate. In this regard, it is necessary to point out that the former had two major types of monasteries: diocesan and stavropegic. The former were subject to the corresponding diocesan bishop, and the latter to the Patriarch of Constantinople.

The mechanisms used by the Bulgarian church administration to establish control over stavropegic monasteries that used to belong to the Church of Constantinople have not currently been sufficiently explored. And yet when the principality of Bulgaria was established (1878), the Bulgarian Church had three stavropegic monasteries: Rila, Troyan, and Preobrazhenski monasteries (Vargov 1920, 32). In the case of diocesan monasteries, it seems that their transfer was justified by the sultan's decree, as those monasteries that were subject to the Exarchate dioceses (art. 10) were placed under the jurisdiction of the corresponding Bulgarian diocesan hierarchs. Such a transfer also corresponds to Orthodox canons that subject diocesan monasteries to the local bishop.

In September 1872, however, a schism imposed by the Patriarchate of Constantinople upon the Bulgarian Exarchate cast doubt on whether the Orthodox monasteries actually belonged to the Exarchate due to its schismatic character. Under the new circumstances, the Bulgarian Church succeeded in resolving the problem with the active support of the laity. It seems that the Exarchate succeeded in preserving control over those monasteries which were situated in dioceses where Orthodox Bulgarians were more numerous than the other ethnic Orthodox communities. This move was possible thanks to the decisive role of laity in the supervision of the financial and economic affairs of Orthodox monasteries in the late Ottoman Empire. In this regard, it is necessary to point out that after the Crimean War (1853–1856), the Patriarchate of Constantinople adopted new regulations on monasteries (Mikhail 1902). Under these, the diocesan hierarchs were obliged to exercise control over

the financial and economic affairs of the local monasteries with the assistance of the so-called “mixed councils”, in which lay members outnumbered clerics. This lay dimension was additionally strengthened by the spread of a modern vision of the monastery as a public good, and correspondingly the property of monasteries had to be used in the interest of society. This attitude is reflected not only in the decisions of the Patriarchate of Constantinople (Mikhail 1902, 63) but also in the acts of Bulgarian communities that struggled for the establishment of a national church free of the Hellenizing influence of Constantinople, for instance by confiscating the properties of monasteries (*metochi*, lands, and so on) whose monks did not support this cause (Tzankov 1936, 29–30). Furthermore, the modern Bulgarian Church, established in 1870 as an autonomous exarchate of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, adopted the principle of joint episcopal and lay control over the economic activities of monasteries. More specifically, the Exarchate Statute (1871) set up mixed councils in the office of the Bulgarian exarch as well as at his metropolitans, which were in charge of the economic affairs of the new church (Mikhail 1902, 328–345).

The establishment of the principality of Bulgaria (1878) provoked some changes in this practice, but it affected only part of the Bulgarian Church’s dioceses – those that had been integrated into the new state territory. In particular, the Orthodox monasteries in independent Bulgaria experienced a series of changes in the way they functioned. In 1883, the Sofia-based Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church adapted the Exarchate Statute to the new political conditions. Its texts restricted the role of laypersons in the supervision of the church’s economic affairs. In 1895, another amendment of the same statute completely excluded laypersons from this sphere of church activity. As a result, the economic affairs of the Bulgaria-based monasteries came under the full control of their diocesan hierarchs. However, in the case of the Bulgarian dioceses that remained in the Ottoman provinces, the laity preserved its previous control over the local monasteries. This practice disappeared after the First World War, when these areas were divided between Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria and the dioceses in question were integrated into the local Orthodox churches.

In 1918, the principle of episcopal control over the monastic economy was extended unimpeded across all dioceses of the Bulgarian Church. During the Second World War, it also spread to the monasteries in the annexed territories of Vardar Macedonia, Aegean Thrace, and the region of Pirot and Niš. This second stage in the development of the Bulgarian monastic economy is the subject of a more detailed analysis below. Followed by a period of destruction of the Orthodox Church’s economy during the years of totalitarian atheist rule (1944–1989), the second stage is

of particular interest, because it can be used as a reference point by the Bulgarian Church's contemporary leadership during the present fourth stage in the development of Bulgarian monastic economy. This last stage started with the post-communist restitution of church properties, which created conditions for a revival of the economic functioning of Orthodox monasteries.

The Bulgarian Monastic Economy: Legal and Religious Background

This text explores the monastic economy in interwar Bulgaria from two perspectives: secular and religious. The former was determined by the national legislation (that is, constitutional and legal texts on the church's financial and economic affairs), while the latter takes into account the church's normative acts that dealt directly with the monastic economy (that is, specific paragraphs in the 1883 and 1895 versions of the Exarchate Statute, as well as the Holy Synod's regulations and decisions).

According to the Tarnovo Constitution (1879–1947), Orthodoxy was the dominant religion in Bulgaria (art. 37). Moreover, in the realm of religion, the state was subjected to the Holy Synod as a body representing the Bulgarian Orthodox Church's supreme spiritual authority (art. 39). The different interpretations of this second constitutional text provoked a series of tensions between the Bulgarian government and the Holy Synod from the very beginning. While state authorities approached the Bulgarian Church's economic activities as a material issue that needed to be placed under their control,² the Synod argued that these activities presented an inalienable part of the church's religious autonomy. As a rule, the hierarchs insisted that everything concerning revenue from the church's assets was entirely in the ecclesiastical domain. On these grounds, the Synod claimed exclusive rights over the management of the church's properties and finances. At the same time, this understanding of church autonomy respected the right of state authorities to audit those church expenditures which were sponsored by the state budget. In particular, the Synod was obliged to submit draft budgets for the required state subsidy and to report the expenses made to the Ministry of foreign and religious affairs (1895 Adapted Exarchate Statute, arts. 137 & 138). Still, no financial inspector had access to the synodal and diocesan financial documents without a certificate signed

2 The Bulgarian state made a series of attempts to audit the finances of the Holy Synod between 1908 and 1914, as well as in the early 1920s. (Vargov 1920, 544–45).

by the chairman of the Holy Synod or the corresponding metropolitan (Tanchev 1904, 103–5).

At the same time, during the first two decades after the establishment of the Principality of Bulgaria, monasteries remained at the periphery of the Holy Synod's attention. Neither the Exarchate Statute (1871) nor its 1883 version addressed this subject. In practice, the first texts on the organization of Orthodox monasteries, including the principles of their governance and economic activities, appeared in the 1895 version of the Exarchate Statute (chapter XI, arts. 91–99; chapter XII, arts. 156–59) (*Exarhiyski...* 1904). This act defined the categories of the stavropegic and the diocesan monasteries (arts. 92, 94, 98).³ The stavropegic monasteries, as well as the diocesan ones that had five or more monks, were administrated by an elected abbot (arts. 93, 96). If a community was less numerous, then the monks were joined to another monastic community by the decision of the corresponding diocesan hierarchy (art. 99).

Furthermore, the economic affairs of the stavropegic and diocesan monasteries were run by special monastic councils under the supervision of their abbots (art. 156 par. 6–11, 13–14; art. 157). If the community of a diocesan monastery had fewer than 5 monks or nuns, the local metropolitan entrusted its management to one of his clerics. According to the 1895 Exarchate Statute, the Synod and the metropolitan's offices (*metropolii* in Bulgarian) were the only eligible owners of the Orthodox monasteries in the country. At the same time, the ultimate control over the management of their assets belonged to the Synod. No metropolitan was allowed to start building a monastery without the Synod's blessing (art. 115 para 10). In 1897, an amendment to the 1895 text of the Exarchate Statute imposed a ban on the sale, exchange, and donation of any properties of the stavropegic and diocesan monasteries without the Synod's permission. The monasteries were also forbidden to borrow or provide loans without such authorization (art. 156 para 12). Meanwhile, the lack of transparency on the incomes of monasteries and their expenditures provoked conflicts between the Holy Synod and the state, especially when the latter experienced a severe shortage of finances after First World War.

3 The modern Bulgarian Orthodox Church uses the term “metropolitan” only for diocesan hierarchs, while the term “bishop” is used to signify non-diocesan hierarchs. Bishops also occupy different administrative positions in the church, serving as vicar bishops of elder metropolitans, secretaries of the Holy Synod, rectors of the ecclesiastical academies, and so on.

Wartime Effects on the Monastic Economy

The military endeavours of Bulgaria (1912–1913) required the optimization of public resources. This policy also had an effect on the local Orthodox Church. In 1914, the Holy Synod was compelled to present invoices for its expenditures and to submit annual financial reports to the national audit office.⁴ Several years later, Bulgaria's defeat in the First World War and the world economic crisis stimulated an extension of this practice across the Bulgarian Church's diocesan administration. In 1929, the metropolitans were obliged to report their diocesan expenditures to the corresponding provincial audit offices.⁵

In an attempt to meet the new challenges, the Holy Synod took measures to optimize the management of the church's properties. In 1913, it set up a special economic department which set out to transform the monastic economy into a major source of church income. A year later, the hierarchs also established the "Monastic Agriculture Fund" and adopted *Regulations on Monastic Agriculture*. All monasteries were henceforth obliged to observe identical standards in the management of their economy. In particular, they had to keep uniform inventories of their immovable assets, farm equipment, and livestock, as well as to record all incomes and expenditures, all rents and debts they had made in special accounting books. All products produced, sold, or bought had to be registered, while the revenue was to be deposited in bank accounts associated with the Monastic Agriculture Fund. At the same time, monasteries were allowed to use part of their profit for their immediate needs, while reinvesting the rest in their farms.⁶

Initially, the implementation of these measures was delayed by Bulgaria's involvement in the First World War. The subsequent defeat was accompanied by significant territorial losses, heavy reparations, and the influx of nearly 400,000 refugees (Bulgarians, but also Armenians and Russians) who found asylum in the country between 1913 and 1925 (Dineva 2019, 71; Stanev 1925, 137–148). To meet their needs, the Bulgarian National Assembly adopted the Refugee Settlement Act (1920) that envisioned the distribution of plots of uncultivated private and public lands. For this purpose, the government of Alexander Stamboliyski (1920–1923) decided to increase the State Land Fund, by envisioning the nationalization of many landed properties (Labour Land Property Act, 1921), including monastic lands.

4 Tsentralen Darzhaven Arhiv (Central State Archive – henceforth TsDA), fond (fund – henceforth (f.)) 791k, opis (inventory – henceforth (op.)) 1, arhivna edinitsa (archival unit – henceforth (a.e.)) 25. Proceedings of the Holy Synod (henceforth PHS) No. 21, 21 May 1914, §1. No. 21, 21 May 1914, §1.

5 TsDA, f. 791k, op. 1, a.e. 46. PHS No. 30, 25 April 1929, §1.

6 Ibid. a.e. 25, PHS No. 59, 4 November 1914, §4.

In an attempt to avoid confiscation, the Holy Synod asked the state to exempt the church's lands from the agrarian reform. The main argument of the Orthodox hierarchs was that the planned nationalization did not extend to the Muslim *wakfs*.⁷ When it became clear that the *wakfs* were protected by the Bulgarian-Turkish agreements of 1909 and 1913 (Evstatiev and Makariev 2010, 643), the Bulgarian Church's leaders concentrated their efforts on reducing the number of church lands subject to the Labour Land Property Act. They stressed the "sacred and immune" character of these assets. In this regard, the Holy Synod pointed out that the scale of ongoing nationalization would undermine the Bulgarian Church's capacity to fulfil its religious duties. It also protested against the Bolshevik manner of confiscation of church properties and condemned their expropriation as a violation of the church's economic autonomy.⁸ According to the Synod, if such acts were unavoidable, then the council of ministers had to negotiate their concrete parameters with the church's leadership and to issue special decrees for every individual case.⁹

Meanwhile, an account of the monastic land estates presented at one of the Synod's meetings in 1919 offers a very precise picture of their size and composition at that moment. According to this account, the monasteries had 13,700.4 hectares of forests, 11,100 of meadows, 2,742.6 of permanent crops, 2,253.9 of uncultivated pasture ground, 199.6 of vineyards, 37.5 of orchards, and 22.1 of kitchen gardens.¹⁰ Between 1921 and 1923, under Stamboliyski's agrarian reform, the Orthodox Church lost about 2,500 hectares of land. At the same time, state authorities nationalized more church lands than the Labour Land Property Act prescribed. As a result, some diocesan monasteries were left with less than the guaranteed 300 decare of arable land.¹¹ This problem was settled in the early 1930s, when a shift in the state's policy allowed the Orthodox Church to recover its lost agrarian assets via distribution of lands from the National Land Fund to parochial churches (Tzankov 1939, 169).

The Modernization of the Monastic Economy

Stamboliyski's land reform had an unexpected effect on the monastic economy. The nationalization of church lands inspired the Holy Synod not merely to oppose this policy but to develop a new approach to the monastic economy which was now regarded as a major source of income and a key factor for the Bulgarian Church's

7 TsDA, f. 791k, op.1, a.e. 33, PHS No. 21, 28 February 1921, §8.

8 TsDA, f. 791k, op.1, a.e. 33, PHS No. 26, 9 March 1921, §35.

9 Ibid. a.e. 36, PHS No. 4, 3 March 1923, §37; No. 7, 6 March 1923, §1.

10 Ibid. a.e. 30, PHS No. 59, 18 November 1919, §23.

11 Ibid. a.e. 50, PHS No. 1, 7 March 1933, §1.

progress and influence on society. The change was motivated by one of the clauses in the Labour Land Property Act, which prohibited the nationalization of modernized monastic farms. Therefore, the Orthodox hierarchs concentrated their efforts on the modernization of the monastic economy. The first step in this direction was the *Statute for the Cooperativization of Monastic Farms*.¹² Adopted on 21 April 1921, this act placed all monastic agrarian movable and immovable assets under the supervision of a newly created Monastery Agrarian Union, responsible for their effective management and the economic progress of monasteries (articles 1 and 2). Furthermore, this act introduced detailed rules about the registration of and reporting on how the revenue from these assets should be spent. According to these rules, every monastery was able to use 65% of the profit for its own needs, while depositing the remaining 35% in a special bank account of the Holy Synod. The accumulated amount had to be spent on charity (10%) and intensification of monastery agriculture (25%) (article 5). The main innovation was the emphasis on the professionalization of monastic agrarian activities. For the first time, the Synod prescribed the appointment of agronomists, foresters, and other professional staff and gave detailed instructions about their duties. The Monastic Farms Statute also required the elaboration of agricultural work plans by monasteries (article 21–25). Finally, it contained strict rules for bookkeeping and for recording the various economic and financial activities of the Monastery Agrarian Union and its branches (articles 32–70).¹³ In this way, the statute laid the grounds for the modernization of monastic agriculture in Bulgaria.

Over the following years, the Holy Synod sent experts to all monasteries to analyse their economic status and to propose plans for the intensification of their economies. The individual metropolitans also took an active part in this process. For example, Stefan of Sofia issued a special circular letter instructing his diocesan monasteries to focus on cattle-breeding as a sphere of activity that was required by the local geographical conditions and the market. He also pointed to poultry-farming as another appropriate direction of development for the local monasteries.¹⁴

To illustrate this new policy of the church, the following sections present the plan for the economic reorganization of St. George's convent in the village of Kremikovtsi,

12 TsDA, f. 791k, op.1, a.e. 33, PHS No. 26, 9 March 1921, §35.

13 Ibid. PHS No. 40, 21 April 1921, §47.

14 Sofiyski darzhaven i okrazhen arhiv (Sofia state and provincial archive – henceforth SGODA), f. 36k, op. 1, a.e. 52, p. 2.

near Sofia.¹⁵ It consists of two parts: an analysis of the monastery's economic state in 1925 and measures for its improvement and intensification in the next 5 years.

Table 1: *Plan for the Economic Reorganization of Kremikovtsi Convent*

Part I. Analysis of the Situation in 1925	Part 2. Plan for Future Development
1. General description, history and location	1. Directions and reference
2. Natural factors: climate, water, soil, diseases that affect the animals and the plants in the area, the most suitable crops and cereals	2. Intensive cultivation of agricultural land
3. Economic conditions (market, transport infrastructure, human/labour resources, credits taken, insurances)	3. Estimations of future cattle and other livestock
4. Size and location of the lands and their distribution by agrarian cultures (cereals, crops, meadows, lawns, forests, etc.)	4. Estimations of the manure and the types of manure that will be produced by the livestock and whether this will be enough to secure soil fertility
5. Property rights, duties, loans, debts	5. Wages
6. Buildings, their conditions, farmyard	6. Circulating capital necessary for the cultivation of the agrarian lands.
7. The state of the monastic farm and agriculture	7. The necessity of new capital
8. Livestock and deadstock	8. Balance sheet
9. Personnel and taxes	9. Management
10. Incomes and costs	10. Conclusions
11. Conclusions	

It seems to be a standard form followed by the experts appointed to examine the economic status of monasteries. In the case of St. George's monastery, the labour duties of nuns were connected with the convent's kitchen (that was also used by personnel), apiary, orchard, vegetable garden, and dairy farm. Meanwhile, work in the fields and the care of livestock were delegated to lay personnel, appointed by the monastery, and to hired seasonal workers. On this topic, the plan recommended that the nuns should stop paying themselves a salary from income from

15 SGODA, f. 36k, op. 1, a.e. 50, pp. 1–19.

the monastic farm and agriculture and take money only from donations. Their food had to be produced on their own farm, fields, and garden, except for a few products that needed to be bought on the market, such as salt.

The plan also proposed a reduction of the personnel and the appointment of a special manager for the monastic farm as well as two cowmen, one shepherd, one pig tender, one baker, and four farmhands. Concerning the seasonal workers, the recommendation was to avoid hiring cheap, handicapped, and weak-minded workers as they would cause more damage than profit. Furthermore, the plan discussed changes to the monastic farm and agriculture. It commented that the forthcoming opening of a railway station at Kremikovtsi would permit the monastery to transport its products faster to the Sofia market. In this regard, a special emphasis was placed on the growing market for dairy products, which had become the primary source of income for the local population.

A serious shortcoming was the lack of insurance for the monastery's properties. Another weakness stemmed from the custom of leasing most monastic land estates to sharecroppers, which was economically ineffective and damaging to the fertility of the soil. In this regard, the report advised the monastery to reclaim most of the lands it had rented out. No less harmful to its economic development was the old extensive (*dvupolna*) system of land cultivation, which had to be replaced with a modern one. For this purpose, the plan recommended intensification of the agrarian production of the monastery by growing industrial crops. It also envisioned resizing of the existing flocks and herds as well as the replacement of part of the old livestock with more productive breeds. In particular, the number of cows and horses had to be reduced, while sheep and poultry had to be increased. Besides, the older cows had to be replaced with breeds that produced more milk. In conclusion, the implementation of these measures was expected to double the income of the monastery in the next five years (1925–1930).¹⁶

Meanwhile, the Great Depression created serious obstacles for the Bulgarian Orthodox Church's attempts to modernize its monastic economy. In 1929, the crisis reached Bulgaria, and the Holy Synod changed its tactics by focusing on the three stavropegic monasteries in Rila, Troyan, and Bachkovo. It discontinued the employment of secretaries and treasurers that had been proposed by the monastery councils, and started appointing its own nominees to these positions. This new centralized model of governance was justified by the Synod's general responsibility for the

16 SGODA, f. 36k, op. 1, a.e., 50.

church's welfare.¹⁷ As a result, in the 1930s, the stavropegic monastic farms made significant economic progress (Tzankov 1939, 310–11). Their example inspired such diocesan monasteries as Preobrazhenski monastery that became famous for its vineyards, Krichimski – for its fruit orchards, and Asenovgradski – for its poultry farm, and so on.¹⁸

Spending Monastic Incomes

The revenues from monastic lands and farms were used by monasteries to cover the needs of their communities and to develop their farms. They also served as a major source for the policy-oriented funds created by the Bulgarian Orthodox Church between the two world wars. The most important of these was the *Fund for Religious Spiritual Formation, Church Charity, and Material Support for Clergy*. Established in 1919, 10% of the initial capital of this fund was raised from the incomes of the monastic timber industry, an additional 10% came from the rents on monastic properties and other 10% from the sales of monastery land. The rest of its capital came from the annual profit of the candle industry (8%), the revenue of diocesan monasteries and urban churches (5%), village church takings (3%), and so on.¹⁹ However, in 1921, the attempts of the Stamboliyski government to establish control over this and other church funds induced the Synod to invest the residuals of the fund in a *Fund for the Church's General Needs*.²⁰ This aimed to secure the church's normal functioning during the ongoing financial crisis and accelerating inflation.²¹

More specifically, it was used to support Orthodox spiritual formation and charity, to cover social costs linked with the salaries and pensions of the church officials in the synodal administration, to provide aid to priests and laypersons in need, to furnish the Bulgarian Church's administrative buildings and fund their repair, to sponsor the seminaries, to pay state and municipal taxes, and so on. Moreover, the Holy Synod established funds in the fields of charity, monastic economy, candle industry, and so on. In 1929, the Synod's funds amounted to 15,827,348 levs.²² This amount included:

17 TsDA, f. 791k, op.1, a.e. 46, PHS No. 55, 8 July 1929, §9.

18 TsDA, f. 791k, op.1, a.e. 53, PHS No. 91, 22 November 1934, §1.

19 Ibid. a.e. 30, PHS No. 67, 2 December 1919, § 25.

20 Ibid. a.e. 33, PHS No. 79, 4 October 1921, § 4.

21 Ibid. a.e. 45, Proceedings of the Episcopal Conference (*Arhierarchy'ski sabor*) No. 3, 5 June 1929.

22 In order to calibrate the following figures, it is important to know that the estimated Gross Domestic Product for Bulgaria in 1929 (Ivanov 2012) amounted to around 56 billion leva.

10,861,865 levs in the General Church Needs Fund,
4,436,414 levs in the Beeswax Supply Fund,
470,465 levs in the Higher Theological School Fund.
58,604 levs in the Monastic Farms Fund.²³

At the same time, by 1 April 1929, the church had over 111 million levs in bank deposits:

15,827,348 levs in the Holy Synod's funds
16,020,431 levs in the diocesan councils' funds
66,808,256 levs in the deposits of parochial boards
5,870,193 levs in the deposits of candle enterprises
5,637,633 levs in the deposits of the three stavropegial monasteries
1,000,537 levs in the deposits of diocesan monasteries.²⁴

The year 1929 marked a turning point in the church's financial autonomy. The move was related to the overall reorientation of Bulgaria's economic policy, which had to face the shock of the world crisis (Berov 1996; Avramov 2007). The state budgets adopted a markedly restrictive stance aimed at tightening financial discipline. Some of the 1929/30 budget law stipulations directly affected the church's interests. In particular, the law authorized the minister of foreign and religious affairs to approve not only the statutes and budgets of the synodal and diocesan funds but also those of the stavropegic monasteries and monastic schools, that is, church bodies that received no state subsidies.²⁵ According to the Orthodox hierarchs, this measure infringed article 39 of the Tarnovo Constitution. They pleaded that the Synod had priority over secular authorities whenever the Bulgarian Church's interests were at stake.²⁶ After a series of negotiations, a church-state agreement was reached, which respected the Synod's right to approve the budgets of the stavropegic monasteries and those church structures that were not subsidized from the state budget. In its turn, the Synod accepted the principles of civil accounting and the duty of the diocesan councils and monasteries to submit reports for their financial activities to the respective provincial audit offices.

During the 1930s, the church also started establishing policy-oriented funds at a diocesan level. Collecting their revenues mostly from diocesan assets, their major purpose was to assist the religious instruction of believers. In general, 50% of their capital came from the sale of church revenue stamps, 40% from the profit of

23 TsDA, f. 791k, op.1, a.e. 45. Proceedings of the Episcopal Conference (Arhiereyski sabor) No. 3, 5 June 1929.

24 Ibid.

25 TsDA, f. 791k, op.1, a.e. 46, PHS No. 1, 26 March 1929, §2.

26 Ibid. PHS, No. 40, 18 June 1929, §26.

the diocesan candle industries, and 10% from the income of diocesan monasteries.²⁷ On the eve of the Second World War, the Bulgarian Church's savings reached 370,156,356 leva, and the market price of its real assets was estimated at 778,436,447 leva (Tzankov 1939, 317). At the same time, the financial capital of Rila monastery was estimated at 39,417,003 leva, that is, almost as much as that of the Holy Synod (41,615,005 leva). The stavropegic monasteries of Bachkovo and Troyan also had considerable bank savings of 142,282 and 86,949 leva respectively. Finally, the capital of the Bulgarian Church's eleven metropolitan offices varied between 4 and 14 million leva (Tzankov 1939, 351). Bearing in mind the relatively small contribution of diocesan monasteries, we must conclude that the strength of the monastic economy in interwar Bulgaria was determined by and dependent on the three stavropegic monasteries. These religious institutions were also important for the Bulgarian Church's overall interwar economy and the church activities in the sphere of Orthodox spiritual formation and religious charity.

Gender Aspects of the Monastic Economy

One of the least studied aspects of the Orthodox monastic economy are its gender dimensions. The Bulgarian Orthodox Church's archives provide valuable information on this subject, but it has been discussed only occasionally. Researchers are traditionally inclined to pay more attention to male monasteries than to the female ones. The formers seem to have been richer despite the fact that during the 1878–1944 period nuns outnumbered monks. Furthermore, the two groups reveal different dynamics. Although both experienced decline in the first four decades after 1878, this process was slow but steady in the case of monks, while nuns succeeded in overcoming this downward trend between the two world wars.

Table 2: *Monastic Communities in Pre-communist Bulgaria (1878–1944).*

Source: (*Glavna Direkzia... 1947, 411*)

	Monks	Nuns
1890	184	346
1918	147	109
1924	143 (incl. novices)	153 (incl. novices)
1936	99	212

27 Ibid. a.e. 53, PHS No. 64, 12 September 1934, §3; No. 91, 22 November 1934, §1.

Generally neglected in Bulgarian historiography, the issue of female monasticism has begun to attract the interest of scholars over the last two decades (Dzhurova, Velinova, Patev and Polimirova 2002; Paskaleva 2003). Among other aspects of the life of Orthodox convents, these studies provide useful information about the female monastic economy. Early publications outlined some intriguing features which inspired the current author to conduct further archival research between 2016 and 2019. On the basis of this research, some conclusions can be drawn about the gender dimensions of the monastic economy.

In the case of female monasteries, it seems that before the First World War, the Holy Synod neglected their potential as economic units and providers of social services. This attitude is well illustrated in the correspondence exchanged between the Holy Synod and Aleksandrovska Hospital in Sofia in 1914. At that moment, the hospital suffered a shortage of personnel for the non-medical care of its patients. Thus, it asked the Orthodox Church to send nuns who could help with the distribution of food and discipline on the wards, and who could of course offer spiritual consolation to the sick, especially the dying. However, the Holy Synod refused to satisfy this request with the argument that such activities would distract nuns from their monastic vows.²⁸

The post-war economic difficulties provoked a shift in the position of the Bulgarian Church's leadership. Its attempts to prevent the nationalization of monastic landed properties through their modernization required increased manpower. Thus, the Holy Synod took special measures to revive monasticism; for instance, in 1921, it instructed priests to recruit novices among their parishioners.²⁹ In the same year, it also established the "White Cross" sisterhood at the monastery of Kurilo, which was designed to act as a female Orthodox order.³⁰ In particular, it had to prepare abbesses and female managers for the economic and social activities of convents. For this purpose, the White Cross organized a female seminary where future nuns as well as wives of priests were to receive training not only in religious subjects (for instance Holy Scripture, church singing, faith instruction, and so on) but also in practice-oriented topics (such as bookkeeping, agrarian management, medicine, and so on).³¹

28 TsDA, f. 791k, op. 1, a.e. 25, PHS No. 68, 25 November 1914, §51.

29 Ibid. a.e. 33, PHS No. 69, 18 July 1921, §24.

30 Ibid. a.e. 38, PHS No. 11, 21 February 1922, §15.

31 Ibid., a.e. 48, PHS No. 85, 26 June 1931, §11.

At the same time, the gender dimension of monasteries determined the scope of their economic and other activities. One of the innovations introduced after the First World War was the Synod's policy to involve nuns in social and charity projects. Their economic activities, however, rarely exceeded the traditional sphere of women's crafts, that is, they were often limited to sewing, knitting, weaving, and similar activities (Dzhurova et al 2002). There were some exceptions, however. The most impressive was the involvement of the nuns of the White Cross in the printing of church books and periodicals. Another peculiarity of the female monastic economy is linked with the products of the nun's labour. In general, these were not destined for the market, but for the church's specific needs, for instance they sewed ecclesiastical attire for sisters, monks, and priests, uniforms for the students in ecclesiastical seminaries, liturgical vestments, religious embroidery and so on.³² Nuns did not work in the monastery's fields but they hired lay workers to harvest the crops or to carry out other tasks. On some occasions, convents hired infantry or cavalry units stationed in the vicinity. They did not pay these in cash but in kind: the soldiers used part of the harvest as food for themselves and their horses.³³ Male monastic communities also used such practices, together with the employment of inmates for construction works on their premises.³⁴ The bigger monasteries (more than ten monks/nuns) also had permanent personnel such as shepherds, cowmen, pig tenders, draymen, and bakers who received monthly wages. Another custom adopted by male and female monasteries was participation in local agrarian co-operatives. This reduced some of their costs: they did not buy agrarian machines alone, but contributed to their purchase and then used them together with the other participants in the cooperative.³⁵

Concluding remarks

The overview presented here points out previously neglected dynamics in a specific area of religious life. From a broad historical perspective, it demonstrates the Bulgarian Church's ability to meet the challenges of the modern world. Especially impressive are the reforms in its monastic economy. Aimed to respond to the political, economic, and social changes in interwar Bulgaria, they provoked a shift in the attitude of the church's leadership to monasteries. Although they continued to serve as places of monastic seclusion and prayer, their communities received an

32 TsDA, f. 791k, op. 1, a.e. 25, PHS No. 78, 18 December 1914, §12.

33 SGODA, f. 36k, op. 1, a.e. 1, p. 53.

34 SGODA, f. 1097k, op. 1, a.e. 25, pp. 24–5; Ibid. a.e. 26, p. 56.

35 Ibid., a.e. 1, p. 73.

additional task: to transform their estates into effective economic enterprises. This modernization yielded real results. It increased the economic potential of Orthodox monasteries and turned them into a key financial lever for the church's policies, especially in the sphere of charity.

A no less intriguing aspect of the monastic economy is its gender dimension. The study of this subject reveals specialization of the male and female monastic communities in different economic activities. Similarly, their engagement with the Bulgarian Orthodox Church's goals, and their impact on the religious life of Bulgarian society differed.

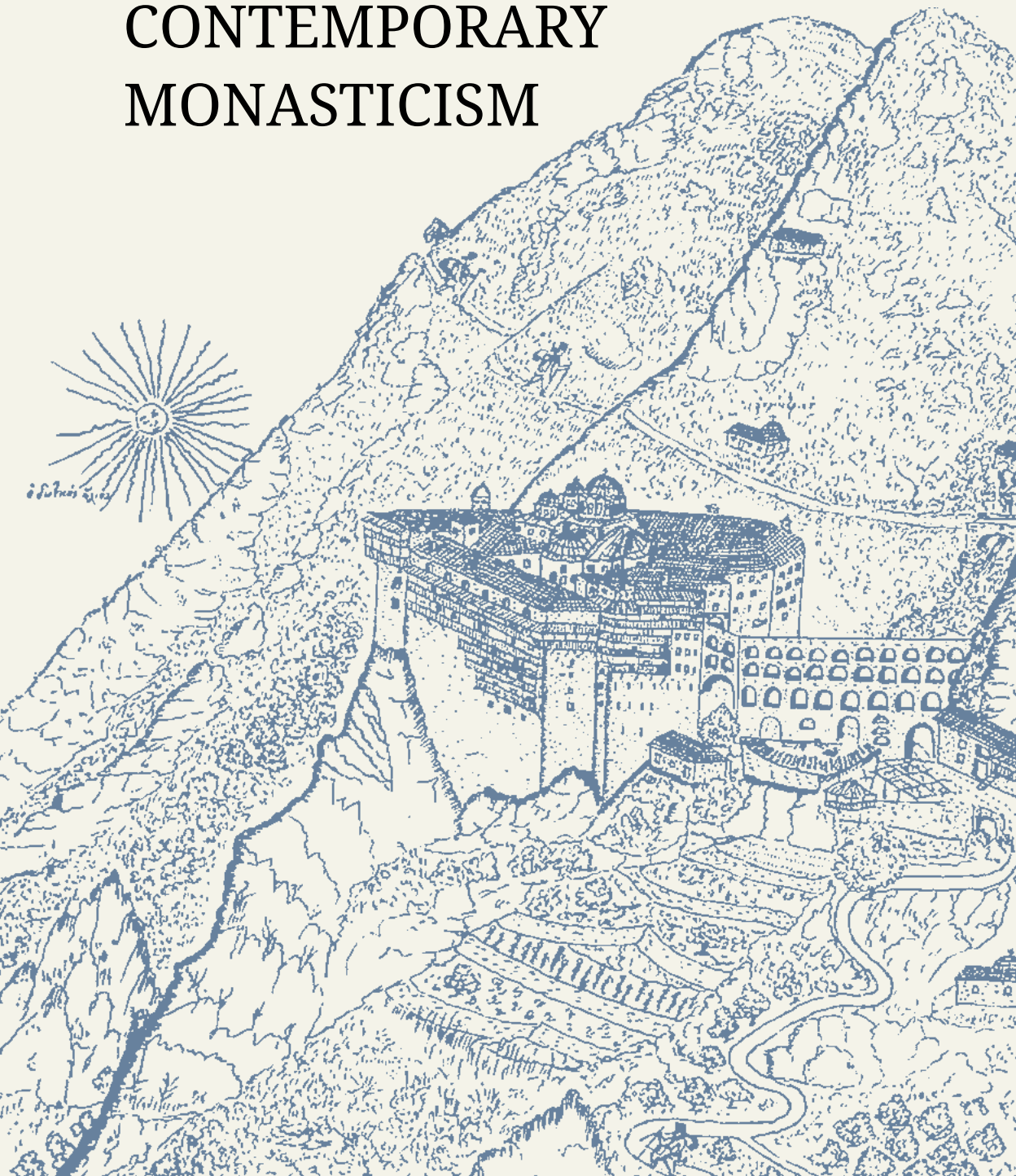
References

- Avramov, Roumen. 2007. *Komunalniat kapitalizam. Iz balgarskoto stopansko minalo. Tom I.* [Communal Capitalism. Reflections on the Bulgarian Economic Past. Vol. I]. Sofia: Balgarska nauka i kultura; Tsentar za liberalni strategii.
- Berov, Lyuben P. 1996. *Stopanska istoriya: ikonomicheskoto razvitiye na sveta ot drevnostta do nashi dni* [Economic history: The Economic Development of the World from the Antiquity to Nowadays]. 2nd ed. Sofia: Open Society.
- Dineva, Detelina. 2019. "Bulgarian migration in a historical perspective". In *East Central European Migrations during the Cold War: A Handbook*, edited by Anna Mazurkiewicz, 68–100. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Dzhurova, Aksinia, Vasya Velinova, Ivan Patev, Mariya Polimirova, M., eds. 2002. *Devicheskiiyat manastir "Pokrov presvyataya Bogoroditsi" v Samokov* [The Female Convent "Pokrov of the Holy Mother of God" in the Town of Samokov]. Sofia: SIBAL.
- Evstatiev, Simeon, and Plamen Makariev. 2010. "Islam and Religious Education in Bulgaria: Local Tradition vis-à-vis Global Change". In *Yearbook of Muslims in Europe*, Vol. 2, edited by N. S. Jorgen, 635–61. Leiden: Brill.
- Exarhiyski Ustav prisposoben v Knyazhestvoto* [Exarchate Statute Adapted for the Principality of Bulgaria]. 1904. Sofia: Darzhavna pechatnitsa.
- Glavna Direktsia na Statistikata [General Directorate of Statistics]. 1947. *Annuaire statistique de la République populaire de Bulgarie*. Sofia: Glavna Direktsia na Statistikata.
- Ivanov, Martin. 2012. *The Gross Domestic Product of Bulgaria 1870–1945*. Sofia: Ciela.
- Makrides, Vasilios N. 2019. "Orthodox Christianity and Economic Development". *Archives de sciences sociales des religions* 185: 23–35.
- Makrides, Vasilios, and Katerina Seraidari, eds. 2019. "Christianisme Orthodoxe et économie dans le sud-est européen contemporain." Special issue. *Archives de Sciences sociales des religions* 185.
- Mikhail (Semenov), Hieromonk. 1902. "Ustav Sv. Monastyrey pod Upravleniem Vselenskago Prestola (1864 g.)" [Statute of Monasteries under the Rule of the Ecumenical Throne

- (1864)]. In *Sobranie tserkovnykh ustavov Konstantinopol'skago patriarkhata, 1858–1899 gg.* [A Collection of Statutes of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, 1858–1899]. Kazan: Tipografiya Imperatorskago Universiteta.
- Mintsev, Dimitar. 2006. “Kam istoriyata na tsentraliziranoto arhivno delo v Bulgariya” [On the history of the Centralized Archival System in Bulgaria]. *Elektronna biblioteka po arhivistika i dokumentalistika* [Electronic library on archival and documentary studies]. http://electronic-library.org/articles/Article_0034.html.
- Paskaleva, Kostadinka. 2003. “Kam istoriyata na zhenskoto monashestvo v Bulgariya” [On the history of Female Monasticism in Bulgaria]. In: *Manastirskata kultura na Balkanite* [The Monastic Culture in the Balkans], edited by Aksinia Džurova, 275–297. *Godishnik na Sofiyskiya Universitet (Annuaire de L'Université de Sofia “St. Kliment Ohridski”)* 93 (12). Sofia : Centre de Recherches Slavo-Byzantines “Ivan Dujčev”.
- Stanev, Nikola. 1925. *Voyni za obedinenie* [Unification Wars]. Vol. 2 of *Nay-nova istoriya na Bulgariya, 1912–1920* [The Newest History of Bulgaria, 1912–1920]. Sofia: Pechatnitsa S. M. Staykov.
- Tanchev, Hristo. 1904. *Ekzarhiyski ustav s talkuvaniata i naredbite na Sv. Sinod, ministerstvata, varhovnia kasacionen sad* [The Exarchate Statute with Attached Definitions and Regulations, Issued by the Holy Synod, Ministries, the Supreme Court of Appeal]. Sofia: St. Atanasov.
- Tzankov, Stefan. 1936. “Novi Danni za Rilskiya monastir” [New Data on Rila monastery], *Godishnik na Sofiyskiya Universitet, Bogoslovski fakultet* [Yearbook of Sofia University, Faculty of Theology] 13.
- Tzankov, Stefan. 1939. “Balgarskata pravoslavna tsarkva ot Osvobozhdenieto do nashi dni” [The Bulgarian Orthodox Church from the Liberation to Nowadays], *Godishnik na Sofiyskiya universitet, Bogoslovski fakultet* (Yearbook of Sofia University, Faculty of Theology), 16: 1–373.
- Vargov, Hristo. 1920. *Konstitutsiyata na Balgarskata pravoslavna tsarkva (Istoriya i razvoy na Ekzarhiyskiya ustav)* [The Constitution of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church: History and Development of the Exarchate Statute]. Sofia: Darzhavna pechatnitsa.

Section V

CONTEMPORARY MONASTICISM



Female Orthodox Monasticism, Ecology, and Productivist Capitalism

THE CASES OF THE MONASTERIES OF ORMYLIA (GREECE)
AND SOLAN (FRANCE), LATE TWENTIETH - EARLY TWENTY FIRST CENTURY

ISABELLE DEPRET

Since the last decades of the twentieth century, the critique of neo-liberal policies and the emergence of environmental concerns has coincided with a renewed interest in the monastic model. Once perceived as a traditionalist outdated institution, without much relevance to contemporary times, the monastery tends, once again, to be considered as a source of inspiration for possible alternatives to *liberal productivist capitalism*.¹ This reassessment applies especially to Orthodox cenobitism,² whose organizational system and whose ascetic values seem to echo so well the more recent concept of *voluntary simplicity* advocated by some left-wing currents in ecology (Arnsperger 2016b; Charmetant 2015).

This chapter will look into this larger issue by focusing on the cases of two contemporary female Orthodox monasteries: the convents of the Annunciation in Ormylia (Northern Greece) and of the Mother of God's Protection in Solan (Southern France). Both convents are officially dependencies (*metochia*) of the Athonite Simonopetra monastery and both are regarded as models for nature protection and organic farming.³ Relying mainly on published documents, on interviews and field observations – and after stressing key notions and theses in the debate – I will examine the economic management of both monasteries. Special attention will be paid to the role of ecology.

1 For the advocates of this critical approach: Ellul 1973; Elgin 1981; De Bouver 2008; Samson 2004; Latouche 2011; Rabhi 2013.

2 *Cenobitism* refers to the communitarian monastic way of life, as distinct from *eremitism* (isolated life) or *idiorrhythmy* (semi-communitarian life), see Taft 1988.

3 “Το Μοναστήρι της Ορμυλίας” [The Ormylia monastery], *Πεμπτουσία*, 16 March 2013; “Le monastère de Solan, un bijou de biodiversité dans la tradition orthodoxe.” *La Croix*, 18 June 2013.

Monastic foundations are often perceived as fortresses, radically apart from the outside world and its values. The thread that runs through this article will be the opposite question: to what extent do monasteries reflect the society in which they are established?

Orthodox Christianity and Environmental Protection: A Contemporary Debate

If respect for or veneration of natural elements is rooted in various ancient religious traditions (Descola 2005), political concern for environmental protection refers to a very contemporary and more secularized context: a world transformed by a considerable increase in techniques, and industrial and chemical activities, as the growth in material production is perceived as a vector of progress and well-being (Arnsperger 2016a). Setting up environmental destruction/protection as a political and social issue, political ecology emerged in the 1970s (Wolf 1972; Frioux, Lemire 2012; Gorz, Bosquet 1978). Its representatives called on people to react quickly to restore a lost harmony between human beings and their environment as the very condition for the survival of humanity.⁴ Ecological thought encompasses a variety of currents.⁵ Some among the most radical directly correlate the destruction of the planet with the dynamics of capitalism, calling for a necessary revolution in ways of production and ways of living and thinking to face this urgent challenge (Gorz 1991; Löwy 2005 ; Klein 2018).

In an article published in 2014, the environmental activist Pierre Rabhi⁶ – who is close to eco-spiritualism (Rabhi 1983; Rabhi 2007) – deplored the curious “backwardness” of the main world religions on the issue of environmental destruction, nonetheless a burning topic which, he claims, involves “fundamental moral values”. For Pierre Rabhi, the Orthodox world nonetheless played a relatively “pioneering” role since the early 1990s.⁷

4 International Panel for Global Change (IPCC). “Special Report on Global Warming 1,5°C.” Incheon, Corea, 2018. <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>

5 “L’écologie est elle vraiment de gauche?” *Le Figaro*, 21 August 2014; “L’écologie n’est elle vraiment ni de gauche ni de droite?” *Mediapart*, 4 December 2017.

6 Pierre Rabhi, born in Algeria in 1938, is a farmer, lecturer, essayist and activist involved in alternative projects. He has become an icon for agro-ecology in France, revitalizing in the imagination of many the archetype of the ascetic, wise, inspired man. See Rabhi 2002. For controversies around Pierre Rabhi see Malet 2018.

7 *Le Temps*, 31 January 2014.

From the 1980s, efforts to link ecology and spirituality were promoted by the World Council of Churches.⁸ If the very first initiatives came mainly from Protestants, they quickly found an ally in the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople: in 1989, a day dedicated to the “Safeguarding of Creation” was established for the Christian Orthodox faithful under Patriarch Dimitrios; the latter’s direct successor after 1991, Bartholomew I, especially distinguished himself with respect to this cause, making the protection of the environment a major issue of his pastoral and ecclesiastical mandate.⁹

For Bartholomew I, addressing the European Parliament on 19 April 1994, “the ecological problem of our century’ requires ‘a radical revision of our cosmology” (Oikonomou and Belopopsky 1996) as “the Orthodox Church and theology strive [...] to offer their contribution to this problem through dialogue” (Ecumenical Patriarchate assisted by the World Wide Fund for Nature 1990; Gschwandtner 2010). He contended that the “natural environment” should not be approached as “private property” while indifference towards the “vitality of nature” constitutes “blasphemy against God” as well as a crime against humanity.¹⁰

The commitment of Patriarch Bartholomew, as well as theological writings since the beginning of the 1990s, have tended to stress that respect for the environment is close keeping with the conceptions and ethics of Eastern Orthodox Christianity: Orthodox spirituality – with its holistic approach to reality, refusing to separate materiality and spirituality or the human being from his or her environment – call for prudent and humble use of Creation, of all creation, as a “gift from God”.¹¹

The idea of close congruence between Christian and ecological values (Dufoing 2017), which is obvious at first sight, certainly needs to be nuanced. On the one hand, Christianity – like Judaism and Islam – has historically and culturally been imbued with an anthropocentric prism, which is quite explicit in *Genesis*, even if we take account of the pitfalls of translation and interpretation:

8 Established in 1948, the World Council of Churches brings (2018) together around 350 – mainly Protestant and Orthodox – churches and denominations.

9 Chrysavgis 2012; “Orthodox Leader Deepens Progressive Stance on Environment.” *The New York Times*, 3 December 2012.

10 Μήνυμα της Α.Θ. Παναγιότητος Οικουμενικού Πατριάρχου Βαρθολομαίου επί τη ημέρα προστασίας του περιβάλλοντος [Message from the Patriarch on the Day of Prayer for Environmental Protection]. 1 September 2012. <http://www.imra.gr/egkykliai-kai-omiliai-tis-athe-toy-oikoumenikoy-patriarchoy-kk-bartholomaioy/>

11 “Σεπτόν Πατριαχικόν Μήνυμα επί τη ημέρα προσευχής υπέρ της Προστασίας του φυσικού περιβάλλοντος 1–09–2019” [Message from the Patriarch on the Day of Prayer for the Protection of the Natural Environment]. 1 September 2019. <https://www.ec-patr.org/docdisplay.php?lang=gr&id=2852&tla=gr>. See also Chrysavgis and Foltz 2013.

Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals and over all the creatures that move along the ground” (*Holy Bible* 1973, Genesis 1.26).¹²

This is the case to such an extent that the American medieval historian Lynn White – in line with other authors – aroused heated controversy when he mentioned Judeo-Christian culture as being among the “roots of our ecological crisis” (White 1968).

Faith in the Holy Scriptures can in practice coexist with various behaviours with respect to the environment, all the more so as the sacred texts allow for plural interpretations, re-readings and selections (Bourg 1993; Descola 2005).

After the eighteenth century, the movements of Enlightenment, scientism, and secularization increased a process of desacralization of *nature*, conceived as a clearly separate entity from humankind and reduced to the status of an object to be studied, controlled and exploited (Ellul 1954). From a historical point of view, many societies imbued with a Christian culture have experienced the flourishing of a Promethean industrial productivist dynamic and have accepted – or even legitimized – that the relations between humankind and its *natural* environment would be mainly based upon domination.¹³

The case of France and Greece, two secularized countries where Christianity has had a strong historical influence, can illustrate this argument. A survey carried out in France in the early 1990s suggests that at that time only a small proportion of interviewed people (29%) (Champion 1995, 39) declared any interest or concern for the issue of environmental protection. More than two decades later, if we consider a ministerial survey published in 2018, the sensitivity of respondents to this topic had greatly increased.¹⁴ The trend seems to be similar in Greece, at least when it comes to declared opinions, in a country where political ecology remained largely inaudible until recently, only emerging in the national parliament in 2015 (Sarantis 2019).

12 See also Genesis 1.26: “God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground’.

13 “[...] and that, instead of this speculative philosophy that we teach in schools, we could find a practice [...] by which we could use them [...] and thus become masters and owners of nature” (Descartes [1637] 1824, vol. I, part 6).

14 French Ministry of Ecology and Transition, “Modes de vie et pratiques environnementales des Français.” *Thema*, Paris, April 2018.

According to the Greek Orthodox theologian Ioannis Zizioulas,¹⁵ in a book published in the 1990s, there are two categories of Orthodox Christians who view the commitment of the Orthodox Church to environmental issues with disfavour: on the one hand those for whom the environment refers to the secular material world and is therefore of secondary importance with regard to spiritual matters; on the other hand, those for whom the protection of the environment is essentially the business of technocrats or experts, possibly of the states (Zizioulas 1989, 1990; Zizioulas 2002). Zizioulas mentions the arguments invoked by some Orthodox Christians to support the idea that the ecological question should not concern ecclesiastical or religious institutions nor, perhaps, even individuals.

Finally, if religious values and rules influence behaviours, the latter are rarely simply their mechanical implementation (Champion 1995, 39–56; Weber (1904–1905) 1964). Other parameters or norms are also involved here – cultural, educational, economic, scientific, individual – especially in a secularized context.

If anthropocentrism, which has pervaded the various forms of monotheism, justifies a feeling of superiority and power on the part of humankind, these tendencies are strongly tempered – and theoretically suppressed – in monasticism, which is devoted to principles of poverty, frugality and humility.

Spirituality, Economy and Ecology in Two Contemporary Orthodox Female Monasteries

Having read books, articles and notes about both monasteries, having talked to lay-people, pilgrims, priests, monks and nuns, I spent a few days in each monastery in the spring and summer of 2019. Apart from the kind welcome I received in both monasteries, and from very interesting exchanges with a number of nuns, it was clear that allowing participation in certain activities of monastic life, and opening up to external researchers – especially when it came to issues of material organization, production, management, methods of farming – did not come easy to them, given the status of these religious monastic foundations. The Ormylia nuns who were in charge of relations with the visitors were devoted above all to welcoming and caring for the pilgrims/faithful, and they were rather reluctant to talk about material organization and economy; in Solan, the sisters were clearly more willing

15

Ioannis Zizioulas is one of the important Greek Orthodox theologians who has published on the ecological issue: Zizioulas 1992.

to talk to external visitors or researchers about the organization of the convent and about their productive activities.

The female monastery of the Annunciation was founded in 1974 between the villages of Ormylia and Vatopaidi, in a fertile plain around the Ormylia (Chavrias) river, in the green area of Halkidiki. From the 1960s onwards, this area in Greek Macedonia saw the rise of intensive chemical agriculture and subsequently mass tourism.

The founder and spiritual father of the Ormylia convent was Gerontas Aimilianos, *hegoumen* of Simonopetra monastery.¹⁶ Born Alexandros Vafeidis in Piraeus in 1934, Father Aimilianos was initially a monk of the archbishopric of Trikala, in Meteora (Thessaly), before emigrating to Mount Athos with some companions. In 1974, as *hegoumen*, he managed to buy a property – land and buildings – from the monastery of Vatopedi¹⁷ in order to settle a group of nuns there who originated, like him, from Thessaly. Strong family kinship has continued to connect the male community of Simonopetra and the female community of Ormylia: a number of Ormylia sisters have family members in Simonopetra, brothers, fathers, or uncles. Gerontas Aimilianos was *hegoumen* of Simonopetra from 1973 to 2000, when he settled permanently in the monastery of Ormylia for medical reasons (interviews with nuns, Ormylia, August 2018 and July 2019).

From a religious point of view, the Orthodox convent of Ormylia perfectly matched the predominant faith of the province, of Greek Macedonia, and of the nation in the last decades of the twentieth century, with positive economic implications: a large number of local faithful who were likely to provide services, support and donations, exemption from some taxes, especially property taxes,¹⁸ and above all deep integration in Athonite social and economic solidarity networks. For example, the sisters explained that every year some monks from Simonopetra would come to help them with the olive harvest; all the wood used in the monastery of Ormylia comes from Mount Athos, and liturgical or devotional objects and religious vestments made by the Ormylia sisters are sent to Athonite monasteries (interviews with nuns, Ormylia, August 2018 and July 2019; Papadopoulos and Smaragdis 1992). In the wake of the state debt crisis in 2010, Athonite income from estates or lands located outside Mount Athos was for the first time submitted to an income tax (20%),

16 “Εκοιμήθη ο Γέρων Αιμιλιανός Σιμωνοπετρίτης” [Father Aimilianos of Simonopetra passed away]. *Πεμπτουσία*, 9 May 2019.

17 Vatopedi monastery was a leading landowner in Halkidiki from Byzantine times up to 1923 (Kontogiorgis 1992; Kolovos and Kotzageorgis 2015).

18 “Φοροαπαλλαγές για τα ακίνητα του Αγίου Όρους” [Tax exemptions for the real estate of the Holy Mountain]. Newspaper *Εφημερίδα των Συντακτών*, 7 August 2017.

as were the declared bequests and donations offered to Athonite monasteries (at a rate of 0.5%).¹⁹ However, Athonite properties within and outside of Mount Athos have so far remained exempt from property tax, given their status as religious foundations and in reference to the “Athonite sacrifices” of the past – the seizures of large swathes of landed property imposed in the beginning of the 1920s immediately after the Greek military defeat in Asia Minor.²⁰

At the time of writing, in 2019, the convent, which was about 120 nuns, is the most important female monastery in Greece.²¹

In comparison, the monastery of Solan, north of the town of Uzès, established two decades later in 1992, only represents a small religious minority within a pluralist secular state where the Catholic Church was once influential (Levallois 2017). This was *a priori* a less favourable context: there were no public subsidies other than some tax cuts for donors (Bokdam-Tognetti 2016), and the Orthodox local institutions and worshippers could only offer limited support (interviews with nuns, Solan, June 2019). There was therefore, perhaps, a stronger need for openness to the outside world beyond the Orthodox networks in the strict sense. In 1992, the first little group of sisters managed to buy 60 hectares of land – including 20 hectares of arable land and 40 hectares of forest (Delahaye 2011, 37–91) – under the patronage of the French Father Placide Deseille and the Greek *hegoumen* Aimilianos of Simonopetra. Placide Deseille, initially a Benedictine Catholic monk who converted to Orthodoxy – which he considered the most *traditional* and *authentic* expression of Christianity²² – spent some time in Simonopetra. He was then commissioned by *hegoumen* Aimilianos to go and establish Simonopetra dependencies (*metochia*) in France, his native country. The aim was to plant the seeds of Athonite spirituality in a country viewed both as a Catholic bastion and as a “largely dechristianized” area (interviews with nuns, Solan, June 2019). Today, the French convent of Solan, with 17 nuns – from nine different nationalities – has remained a relatively small community, albeit with an important landed estate.

19 Hellenic Republic, Law 3842/2010; see also Papagiorgiou 2015.

20 Hellenic Republic, Law 4223/2013.

21 *Δίπτυχα της Εκκλησίας της Ελλάδας* [Diptych Yearbook of the Church of Greece]. 2018. Athens: Apostoliki Diakonia.

22 Placide Deseille, “Etapas d’un pèlerinage.” <https://www.pagesorthodoxes.net/foi-orthodoxe/temoignage-placide-deseille.htm>.

Production of the Monastic Estate

In 2019, both monasteries seemed to be well managed, each with an imposing, recently restored, enlarged or built monastic complex and a well-kept rural estate that yielded a regular surplus. Both monastic economies aim to achieve as much food and energy autonomy as possible, a goal largely realized in both cases; both mainly rely on the work of nuns and novices, assisted by lay workers and technicians. They do not rely primarily on rent. It must be noted that for the sisters, prayer, which they believe has a concrete impact on the course of events and history, is a productive activity (interviews with nuns, Solan, June 2019; Ormylia, July 2019).

Both convents rely on diversified Mediterranean cultures, with a large range of fruit trees, olive trees, a vegetable garden and an herb garden. Most of this production is self-consumed, part is processed by the nuns and part is sold.

The most notable specific feature of Ormylia is the cultivation of nearly nine thousand olive trees, which brings the monastery closer to agro-industrial monoculture in this respect than to the small family farming model. As for Solan, the specific feature seems to be viticulture – more than 10 hectares, with an appreciated (organic) wine production²³ – and forestry.²⁴ The nuns produce about 25,000 bottles of wine a year, alcoholic aperitifs, vinegars, jams, fruit paste, incense, flavoured salts and so on (interviews with nuns, July 2019; Delahaye 2011, 73–95).

If Solan's economy largely rests on agriculture, in Ormylia, the nuns' activities seem a bit more diversified, including especially henhouses, a flock of a 100 sheep and above all, many different handicrafts, mostly related to the Orthodox religion, which still constitutes a rather profitable market in Northern Greece: embroidery, weaving, sewing, the making of ecclesiastical garments, carpentry, wood work, wood engraving, icon painting, stone mosaics, design and so on. Some nuns' creations are true works of art (interviews with nuns and observations, Ormylia, August 2018 and July 2019).

Seen from the outside, with the eyes of the secularized layperson, choosing a life in a monastery can be perceived as a way of withdrawing – or escaping – from the secular world; or even as a choice – or the internalization of social injunctions – for

23 See the advertizing of these products on the website of the monastery site or on websites selling "Athonite" products: <https://www.ormyliamonastery.com/product-category/agroktima/elies-chalkidikis/>; <https://mountathos-eshop.com/en/product/extra-virgin-olive-oil-ormyia-500ml/>.

24 <https://monastere-de-solan.com/content/19-le-domaine>

self-confinement. Regarding the two female communities of Ormylia and Solan at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty first century, it might be asked, however, whether joining the monastery did not, on the contrary, represent a form of emancipation for these women – or at least for some of them – from the constraints of their previous social, cultural or economic environment. It might also be asked whether their participation in the spiritual, as well as material and productive life of the monastic community was not a way for these women to become rooted, within the framework of the community, in the territory, to participate in the local and regional economy, to be integrated – both from a social and economic point of view – in the local society, in a country. This seems in fact to be the case in Ormylia and Solan, where a significant number of sisters was not born in the state or the region where the monastery is established.

It must also be asked whether or not, in societies that have long been patriarchal – this is still the case in Greece and this was the case for a long time in France –, these female Orthodox monastic communities consolidate and legitimize these patriarchal values.

At first reading, this seems to be the case, as in the Orthodox tradition women theoretically cannot be priests or celebrate the liturgy or take charge of pastoral functions and hearing confession. Indeed, in the monastery of Ormylia, the women, while they are autonomous in their organization, are nevertheless under the patronage, protection and spiritual direction of male monks. Father Aimilianos, founder of the female community, spiritual father, counsellor and protective patron, spent the last years of his life in Ormylia, cared for and watched over by the sisters in his long illness. The liturgical functions of the female monastery are performed by male priests. In the 2010s, the *oikonomos* – the chief person responsible for the economic affairs of the Ormylia monastery – is the hieromonk Serapion, a monk of Simonopetra.²⁵ Would it not be appropriate therefore to speak of an *economy under patronage*?

However – and the phenomenon seems especially striking at Solan monastery – one wonders if the reputation acquired by the monastery in the area of Uzès does not symbolize the successful economic achievement of an autonomous and dynamic group of women – who took risks in adopting innovative practices and ideas at a

25 “Συνέντευξη του Ιερομονάχου Σεραπίωνα Σιμωνοπετρίτη” [Interview with Hieromonk Serapion of Simonopetra]. *Πεμπτουσία*, 29 September 2017.

time when the regional agricultural sector was mainly controlled by men and perceived as a male field of activity.

Do the nuns themselves describe their approach as being close to ecological principles or practices? To what extent does ecology play a concrete role in the activities, the management and economy of these monasteries?

Ecology and Monastic Image/Economy: Convergences and Specificities

To begin with agriculture practices, in the beginning of the twenty-first century, a number of differences can be noticed between Ormylia and Solan. The nuns of Solan chose to engage in agriculture and to effect a systematic conversion to organic farming: the sisters, who insist on their strong initial motivation – organic farming was part of a “spiritual project” (interviews, July 2019) – were also able to benefit from encounters, advice and help from secular specialists: agronomists, botanists, experts of the state directorate of agriculture and forests and so on. The latter helped the nuns to learn how to restore their domain and to convert it gradually into an area of organic agriculture and protected biodiversity (interviews with the nuns, Solan, May 2019; Delahaye 2011, 37–89). Among these experts, I mention especially the name of the experienced organic farmer Pierre Rabhi – whose cooperation with Solan was described by sisters as “decisive” – and the association *The Friends of Solan (Les Amis de Solan)*, presided over by Rabhi as a secular “war-rantor”. By organizing events, conferences and agricultural workshops related to ethics and environmental protection, all largely open to local residents and secular associative and scientific networks,²⁶ this association has since 1995 constituted a parallel channel through which exchanges, advice, services, support and donations could reach the convent, far beyond its religious hinterland. This association participated in the gradual (positive) visibility and promotion of Solan monastery in its regional secular environment (interviews in La Bastide d’Engras, Uzès, Avignon, Carpentras, June 2019).

The learning of organic farming is clearly highlighted by the monastery in its presentation of itself to visitors and the secular world. Thus, one page on the monastery’s website explains how the nuns systematically aimed to restore the monastery’s

26 <https://monastere-de-solan.com/content/14-presentation-de-l-association>;
<https://www.colibris-lemouvement.org/mouvement/espace-cotisants/evenements/archives-decouverte-lagroecologie-monastere-solan-gard-8-mai>

forest, with both spiritual references and contemporary agronomical or ecological concepts:

In 1996, the Sisters began work on the restoration of 40 hectares of woods and moors, so as to gradually transform an aging coppice into a gardened forest. The aim was to restore the Solan forest as a “Mother nutritive forest” (providing chestnuts and firewood), a protective forest (ensuring the protection of the soil and real biomass balance) and as a conservatory forest (several rare species of fauna and flora have been identified and the monastery lands are part of the Natura 2000 network).²⁷

In the monastery of Ormylia, the initial strong commitment to organic farming and the project of establishing the monastery as an “awareness raising centre” for the values of environmental protection, though promoted by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, supported by state and European funding in the 1990s, seem to have remained more incomplete. In 2019, rather than organic exploitation in the strict sense, the agricultural model in Ormylia monastery consists more precisely of a combination of traditional farming with some selective inputs from modern (conventional) agriculture. In the beginning of the 2000s, the Ormylia sisters were also engaged in the setting up and running of a “spiritual, social and medical assistance centre” as well as an “art diagnostic centre” – aimed at “developing methods for the study, preservation and promotion of cultural religious heritage” (interviews with nuns, Ormylia, August 2018, July 2019). Both centres were established following an important private property donation to the convent in the early 1980s. Located close to the convent but outside its walls, they were also supported by state and European subsidies.²⁸

However, the ambitious organic farming programme was never totally implemented, and it has been played down by the monastery for several years now as some sisters admitted, referring to the “impossibility to apply organic farming in an area that uses chemical products so massively”, given the numerous activities of the nuns. It was also suggested that there was “greater indifference to this aim from the monastery’s visitors and local farmers”.

These differences between Ormylia and Solan seem to be reflected to a certain extent in recent years in the motivations given by people who purchase monastic

27 <https://monastere-de-solan.com/content/19-le-domaine>.
28 <http://www.ormyliafoundation.gr/en/ormylia3.php>.

products, as these emerged through discussions (interviews in La Bastide d'Engras, in Uzès, in the Monastery of Solan, June 2019; discussions in the monastery of Ormylia, in the villages of Ormylia, Vatopaidi, Psakoudia and the town of Thessaloniki, August 2018 and July 2019).

In both cases, the sisters rely on modern communication tools and networks.²⁹ The monastery products that are for sale have their own label, which is perceived by customers as a pledge of quality. The sales take place in a small shop near the exit of the convent, in a number of local or town markets and shops, and in the Mount Athos Centre in Thessaloniki for Ormylia's products. While solidarity networks exist between Solan, Ormylia and Athonite monasteries regarding information or supply of monastic products, the filiation to Mount Athos is emphasized both in Ormylia and in Solan³⁰ as an additional guarantee of prestige, attesting the sanctity and the quality of the products.³¹

In Ormylia, customers who purchase monastic objects or products tend to describe motives of faith and religious solidarity, sometimes in addition to the high quality of the products, given the sacred status of their producers or the traditional and careful methods used to make them (interviews in the villages of Ormylia and Vatopedi; interviews in Thessaloniki, August 2018 and July 2019; see also Kotsi 2007).

In Solan, the reasons given by customers often refer to a diffuse *eco-spirituality* (Taylor 2010; Egger 2018) – associating concerns for the protection of the environment, for individual health and well-being with a quest for spirituality that is inclined to resacralize natural elements – or they refer to more secular ecological arguments, highlighting the “higher quality” of the products, which are seen as healthier, tastier or as having the “purest” components (interviews in Solan, in La Bastide d'Engras, Uzès, Avignon, Carpentras, Paris, June 2019).³² The packaging and a number of subliminal messages seem to have been influential in accomplishing this, playing on the imagination as “traditional” recipes, flavours, methods are invested with numerous positive virtues (“authenticity”, “pureness”, “taste”, “health”) that are especially coveted in Europe at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

29 <https://www.ormyliamonastery.com/>. On this more general issue see also Jonveaux (2010).

30 Solan is also a member of the “Foundation for the Monasteries of France” and especially as regards donations: <https://www.fondationdesmonasteres.org/>

31 <https://mountathos-eshop.com/product-brands/iera-moni-evaggelismoy-theotokoy//>; <https://www.monastiriaka.gr/ormylia-elaiolado-ieras-monis-eyaggelismou-theotokou-p-2620.html>; <https://www.ormyliamonastery.com/product-category/agroktima/likier>; <https://monastere-de-solan.com/15-les-produits>;

32 See also *l'Artisanat monastique*, Paris: <https://www.artisanatmonastique.com/boutique-paris-artisanat-monastique.htm>

Indeed, in France, monastic products are much sought after as delicatessen, gourmet, and higher-quality products, hence their relatively high prices. While the keen demand for hi-tech and new generation products does not seem to be weakening globally, in the agri-food field, massive industrial-chemical food tends to be perceived more and more as unhealthy and even dangerous, and products labelled *traditional* clearly have positive connotations. There is a market for them despite their higher prices.³³ These tendencies have an impact on the (re)configuration of monastic material activities and economies.

Concluding remarks

Monasteries are usually founded as counter-societies, whose residents have voluntary withdrawn from the way of life, the prevailing values, of “modern” secular societies (Goehring 1999; Werner 2004; Seguy 1971; Hervieu-Léger 2017; Jonveaux 2011). However, the cases examined tend to show how these convents also indirectly mirror the society in which they are embedded. This aspect appears especially if we consider the monasteries’ economic bases, activities, and priorities. The monastery of the Annunciation in Ormylia indirectly reflects Northern Greece at the turn of the twenty-first century: a more *traditional* society, more religious, organized around family and local communities and the church, with relatively weak state infrastructures. The success of Solan monastery also indirectly mirrors today’s French society: a more secularized and religiously pluralistic society, where various forms of eco-spiritualism as well as secular ecologist currents tend to flourish, along with aspirations for alternative ways of production and consumption.

Founded initially on spiritual values, bearers of an alternative socio-economic project, both female monasteries had to compromise on the rules and expectations of their secular environment in order to survive. From this perspective both Ormylia and Solan have successfully managed to survive and even to grow after the end of the twentieth century, adjusting, in their own way, but ultimately not without efficiency, to the rules of a broader economic framework, that of liberal capitalism. These two contemporary case studies seem to contradict the most radical sociologists of disenchantment, who, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, recorded or even predicted the constant decline of religion as *modernization* advanced (Comte [1830] 1989; Vincent 1995; Bellah 1970).

33

“Alimentaire : authenticité et pureté, des notions en vogue”, *LSA*, 5 July 2012. <https://www.lsa-conso.fr/alimentaire-l-authenticite-et-la-purete-des-notions-en-vogue> ; Bonnain-Dulon 2004.

References

- Arnsperger, Christian. 2016a. "Critique existentielle de la croissance économique." *Revue interdisciplinaire d'études juridiques* 77 : 73–97.
- Arnsperger, Christian. 2016b. "Plus vite vers l'auto-limitation ?" *Projet* 335: 179–206.
- Bellah, Robert. 1970. *Beyond Belief: Religion in a Post-Traditional World*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Bokdam-Tognetti, Emilie. 2016. "Le financement des cultes dans la jurisprudence du Conseil d'Etat." *Cahiers du Conseil constitutionnel* 53 : 33–52.
- Bonnain-Dulon, Rolande. 2004. "De l'authenticité des produits alimentaires." *Ruralia* 14. <http://journals.openedition.org/ruralia/969>.
- Bourg, Dominique. 1993. *Les sentiments de la nature*. Paris : Découverte.
- Champion, Françoise. 1995. "Religions, approches de la nature et écologies." *Archives de sciences sociales des religions* 90 : 39–56.
- Charmetant, Eric. 2015. "L'écologie profonde, une nouvelle spiritualité ?" *Projet* 347 (4): 25–33.
- Chryssavgis, John, ed. 2012. *On Earth as in Heaven: Ecological Vision and Initiatives of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew*, New York: Fordham University Press.
- Chryssavgis, John and Bruce Foltz, eds. 2013. *Toward an Ecology of Transfiguration: Orthodox Christian Perspectives on Environment, Nature and Creation*. New York: Fordham University Press.
- Comte, Auguste. (1830) 1989. *Cours de philosophie positive*. Paris : Nathan.
- De Bouver, Emeline. 2008. *Moins de biens, plus de liens*. Bruxelles : Couleur livres.
- Delahaye, Thierry. 2011. *Le monastère de Solan : une aventure agroécologique*. Arles : Actes sud.
- Descartes, René. (1637) 1824. *Discours de la méthode*. Paris : V. Levrault.
- Descola, Philippe. 2005. *Par-delà nature et culture*. Paris : Gallimard.
- Dufoing, Frédéric. 2017. *Vers une écologie religieuse*. Paris : Mediapaul.
- Ecumenical Patriarchate assisted by the World Wide Fund for Nature. 1990. *Orthodoxy and Ecological Crisis*, Helsinki: WWF.
- Egger, Michel Maxime. 2018. *Ecospiritualité : Réenchanter notre relation à la nature*. Genève: Jouvence.
- Elgin, Duane. 1981. *Voluntary Simplicity*. New York: Harper.
- Ellul, Jacques. 1954. *La technique : l'enjeu du siècle*. Paris : Armand Colin.
- Ellul, Jacques. 1973. *Les nouveaux possédés*. Paris : Mille et une nuits.
- Frioux, Stéphane and Vincent Lemire, eds. 2012. "L'invention politique de l'environnement." *Special issue. Vingtième siècle* 113.
- Goehring, James. 1999. *Ascetics, Society and the Desert*. Harrisburg: Trinity Press International.
- Gorz, André. 1991. *Capitalisme, socialisme, écologie*. Paris : Galilée.
- Gorz, André, and Alain Bosquet. 1978. *Ecologie et politique*. Paris : Poche.

- Gschwandtner, Crina. 2010. "Orthodox Ecological Theology. Bartholomew I and Orthodox Contributions to the Ecological Debate." *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 10 (2): 130–43.
- Hervieu-Léger, Danièle. 2017. *Le temps des moines*. Paris : Presses Universitaires de France.
- Holy Bible*. 1973. New International Version, Biblica.
- Jonveaux, Isabelle. 2010. "Internet au monastère. De nouvelles sociabilités pour des ascètes extramondains." *Universalités* 116 : 63–77.
- Jonveaux, Isabelle. 2011. *Le monastère au travail : Le Royaume de Dieu au défi de l'économie*. Paris: Bayard.
- Klein, Naomie. 2018. "Le capitalisme est la cause du dérèglement climatique." *Lemediapresse.fr*. 3 September 2018.
- Kolovos, Elias, and Phokion Kotzageorgis. 2015. "Halkidiki in the Early Modern Period: Towards an Environmental History." In *Mines, Olives and Monasteries. Aspects of Halkidiki's Environmental History*, edited by Basil Gounaris, 123–61. Thessaloniki: Epikentro Publishers and Pharos books.
- Kontogiorgis, Elisabeth. 1992. "Agricultural Refugee Settlement in Macedonia (1923–1930)." *Δελτίο Κέντρου Μικρασιατικών Σπουδών* 9: 47–59.
- Kotsi, Filareti. 2007. "Les souvenirs religieux du Mont Athos." *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 170 (5): 48–57.
- Latouche, Serge. 2011. *Vers une société d'abondance frugale*. Paris: Fayard.
- Levallois, Christophe. 2017. "L'orthodoxie en France." July 2017. <https://orthodoxie.com/histoire/>.
- Löwy, Michael, ed. 2005. *Ecologie et socialisme*. Paris: Syllepse.
- Malet, Jean-Baptiste. 2018. "Le système Rabhi." *Le Monde diplomatique*. August 2018, 22–23.
- Oikonomou, Dimitris, and Alexander Belopopsky, eds. 1996. *Orthodoxy and Ecology: Resource Book*. Bialystok: Syndesmos.
- Papadopoulos, Stelios, Andrea Smaragdīs and Takis Katsoulidis, eds. 1992. *Ormylia: The Holy Koinovio of Annunciation*. Athens: Interamerican.
- Papagiorgiou, Konstantinou. 2015. "Το μετοχιακό ζήτημα του Αγίου Όρους" [The issue of Mount Athos' Dependencies], 1 September 2015. <http://ikivotos.gr>.
- Rabhi, Pierre. 1983. *Du Sahara aux Cévennes ou la Reconquête du songe : Itinéraire d'un homme au service de la terre mère*. Lavilledieu : Candide.
- Rabhi, Pierre. 2007. *L'homme entre ciel et terre : Nature, écologie, spiritualité*. Paris : Jouvence.
- Rabhi, Pierre. 2013. *Vers la sobriété heureuse*. Paris : Poche.
- Samson, Guy. 2004. *Simplicité volontaire : Peut-on sauver la planète ?* Montréal : Qu'ébécór.
- Sarantis, Tassos. 2019. "Τα σαράντα χρόνια ενός πρασινού χλωμού κινήματος." [The Forty Years of a Pale Green Movement]. *Εφημερίδα των Συντακτών*. 9 July 2019.
- Seguy, Jean. 1971. "Monachisme et utopie." *Annales ESC* 26 (2) : 328–54.
- Taft, Robert. 1988. "Mount Athos. A Late Chapter in the History of Byzantine Rite." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 42: 179–94.

- Taylor, Raymond. 2010. *Dark Green Religion: Nature Spirituality and the Planetary Future*. San Francisco: University of California Press.
- Vincent, Jean-Marie. 1995. "Le désenchantement du monde : Max Weber et Walter Benjamin." *Revue européenne des sciences sociales* 33 (101): 95–106.
- Weber, Max. (1904–1905) 1964. *L'éthique protestante et l'esprit du capitalisme*. Paris: Plon.
- Werner, Yvonne, ed. 2004. *Nuns and Sisters in the Nordic Countries after the Reformation: A Female Counter Culture in Modern Society*. Uppsala: Swedish Institute of Mission Research.
- White, Lynn. 1968. "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis." In *Machina ex Deo: Essays in the Dynamism of Western Culture*, 75–94. Cambridge Mass.: The MIT Press.
- Wolf, Eric. 1972. "Ownership and Political Ecology." *Anthropological Quarterly* 45 (3): 201–5.
- Zizioulas, Ioannis. 1989, 1990. "Preserving God's Creation. Three Lectures on Theology and Ecology." *King's Theological Review* 1: 1–5; 1: 41–45.
- Zizioulas, Ioannis. 1992. *Η κτίση ως Ευχαριστία: Θεολογική προσέγγιση στο πρόβλημα της οικολογίας* [The Creation as Eucharist. Theological Approach to the Ecological Problem], Athènes: Akritas.
- Zizioulas, Ioannis. 2002. "Η Ορθοδοξία και το πρόβλημα της προστασίας του φυσικού περιβάλλοντος" [Orthodoxy and the Issue of the Protection of the Environment]. *Δαίμων της Οικολογίας* 18: 13–14; 19: 10–11; 20: 12–13.

Does Monastic Economy Still Matter?

THE ECONOMY OF CATHOLIC MONASTERIES
AND THE EXPECTATIONS OF SOCIETY

ISABELLE JONVEAUX

Religious virtuosity no longer seems to be a plausible reality in Western and Central Europe. Catholic monasteries, which according to Max Weber are centres of ascetic virtuosity, have ever fewer new members. As of 2019, for instance, the Benedictine Austrian Congregation had three novices for 14 male communities.¹ In this context, the question arises whether the economy of contemporary Catholic monasteries in Europe still matters? Does it play a role in contemporary society as it did in history, for instance in the Middle Age? Or is it just a subsistence economy for small and old communities?

The economy has always caused tensions in monastic life, as the first dream of monasteries was to leave the world, a kind of “fuga mundi”, so that monks and nuns could live on earth as if they were in the Kingdom of God (Séguy 2014). This meant that all dimensions of monastic life theoretically had to serve the unique divine goal. But as monks and nuns in fact still live on earth, they have to eat, and therefore to work or to make money. As Max Weber underlined: “In fact, the whole history of monasticism is in a certain sense, the history of a continual struggle with the problem of the secularizing influence of wealth” (Weber 2003, 174). The first challenge for the monastic economy is therefore to integrate itself into monastic life without spoiling the quality of monastic life. Therefore, the monastery must find a balance between the expectations of society or of the economic market and its own characteristics of monastic life or the needs of the monastic community. But we will see that some dimensions of the monastic economy can acquire a new plausibility in the present society, as they address contemporary concerns, such as product quality or sustainable development.

1 Direktorium 2019, Österreichische Benediktinerkongregation.

This chapter is principally based on field inquiries which I conducted in 32 monasteries in seven countries in Europe (France, Italy, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Czech Republic² and Poland³) between 2004 and 2019. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with monks, nuns and laypeople who have a responsibility in the monastic economy. The majority of the monasteries I studied belong to the Benedictine family, that means that they live according to the Rule of Benedict. The three main orders are the Benedictines, Trappists, and Cistercians. I also visited a Carmel and a convent of Poor Clares.

The Economy of Catholic Monasteries in Europe

When speaking about the monastic economy, we must first of all take into account that Catholic monasteries are not primarily entities of economic action oriented to financial performance. But monasteries nevertheless “engage in economic activities” and are, according to Max Weber, “regulatory groups ... whose norms regulate the economic behaviour of the participants and whose organs do not continuously direct economic activities through participation, concrete instructions or injunctions” (Weber 1978, 339–41). Because monks and nuns live together and live out all aspects of their life in the same place, monastic communities are confronted with the economic aspect of existence, even though they originally aimed to free themselves from earthly bonds and dedicate themselves totally to prayer and the service of God.

Models of monastic economy

If we compare the various forms of the economy of Catholic monasteries in Europe, we find very different models for their sources of income. I have identified five:

Direct work of monks or nuns with an internal economy of production. This is the case for a majority of monasteries in France for instance, where monastic communities have small (or not so small) production companies. Monks and nuns – and often laypeople – work in these activities, which mostly take place within the monastery. In this case, the revenue from the direct work done by the monks or nuns themselves is the first source of income. For the monasteries I studied (Jonveaux, 2011a: 135)

2 The field inquiries in Czech Republic were conducted with my colleague Dr. Barbora Spalová, for the project “Moral economy of the monasteries in Czech Republic and in Austria” financed by Aktion Österreich-Tschechien OeAD.

3 The field inquiry in Poland was conducted with my colleague Marcin Jewdokimow for the project “How do monks seek God today? Studies on transformations of monastic communities today as a way to apprehend relationship between religion and society”, financed by the National Research Centre in Poland.

this accounted for between 28% and 45% of total monastery income, or between 41 and 58% if we include income from the guest house. Another modality of this model of direct work done by the monks themselves, that is where this direct work constitutes the main source of revenue, involves not an internal economy of production, but pastoral ministry. For instance, 80% of the revenue of the Cistercian monastery of Jędrzejów in Poland comes from parishes and pastoral activities. In this sense, we can still speak about direct work done by the monks themselves, but in the form of pastoral activities.

An economy of external activities or an externalized economy. We find this for instance in Belgium, where monastic communities have entrusted laypeople with monastic firms or have sold the production process to a lay firm and receive royalties for the trade brand. For instance, in the Benedictine Abbey of Maredsous, royalties for beer and cheese represented 46% of the income in 2008 (Jonveaux, 2011a: 137). Sometimes monastic communities have also externalized the activities in the sense that they are taking place outside the walls of the monastery. In the Trappist Abbey of Westmalle in Belgium, for instance, monks externalized their brewery by retiring from production themselves, keeping only one monk on the executive board. Monks themselves work on a small farm, which does not really bring income to the community.

An economy of patrimony A good example is Austria, where the bulk of the revenue (for instance 90% for the Benedictine Abbey of Kremsmünster) comes from forestry and property holdings (Jonveaux, 2018). Monks work in parishes or in schools but not in the activities which bring in the biggest part of the revenue. In Kremsmünster, only one monk works in forestry as the manager of this business, but he is presently training a young lay woman to take over from him.

An economy of donation. In this model, monks work in activities which are not really profitable for the community (maybe because the work in question is not remunerated) and they essentially live from donations. This model can be found in new communities which are not yet financially autonomous, for instance in Asia or Africa, where Catholic monastic life has been developing especially since the 1960s and where a lot of monasteries are still financially dependent on the congregation or mother abbey. Katrin Langewiesche has noted that African monasteries “can survive only with the help of money from the North” (Langewiesche 2015, 140). It can also be found in communities that have a vow of poverty not only for the individual (which is the case for monks and nuns of the Benedictine family for instance) but also for the communities themselves, like the Poor Clares, who live according to a Franciscan spirituality. In the Poor Clares’ convent of Cormontreuil in France, 40% of the revenue comes from donations, and more than the half of the food that

the sisters eat also comes from gifts of food, products that are beyond their sell-by date that merchants prefer to give than throw away.

An economy of aging. This economic form is increasingly present in the monasteries of Western Europe, especially female monasteries; it means that the main source of revenue are the pensions of the old sisters or brothers. This form of economy is not stable for the future, as the communities in question lose part of their income when a nun or a monk dies (Jonveaux 2011, 155).

For the most part these differences have their origin in the religious and political history of the society in which the monastic community lives. An important factor is to know whether or not monastic communities have been able to retain their properties up to the present. For instance, French monasteries were subjected to two rounds of suppression during the Revolution and in the nineteenth century, which led to the loss of their patrimony and property holdings. Monastic life was re-founded at the end of the nineteenth century by priests who had a very romantic idea of monastic life in the Middle Ages. These different factors explain the form of the French monastic economy, which is centred on handwork and productive activities. On the contrary, in Austria, in the framework of the Enlightenment, the Emperor Joseph II, following the theories of the French economist Quesnay, enacted a law to eliminate all religious communities which had no “useful” activity for society (Schmitz 1960, 133). As a consequence, Austrian monasteries, but also monasteries which were in the Austria Empire at the time, as in Poland or the Czech Republic, opened schools and began to work in parishes, while they also received parishes from the state. Nevertheless, Austrian monasteries conserved their patrimony and properties, from which they obtain the biggest part of their revenue. In the Czech Republic, monasteries were also closed during communism, but since 2012 their properties are being returned to them, such as forest for instance. In Poland, monasteries were not closed during communism but their properties were nationalized. As a last example, we can take the case of Italy, where monasteries were subjected to one or two suppressions depending on their location, but their properties have since been returned to them. As we can see here, the structure of the monastic economy is strongly dependent on the political and social history of the country in which the monastery is situated.

Integration of the Economy into Monastic Life

As we have seen, the economy and monastic life are two realities which are confronted with each other as contradictions. We can therefore explore the strategies that monks and nuns are developing to get around this conflict. The most relevant question for monks and nuns today is to find an economic activity that can be

productive for the community but that can also be integrated into a coherent religious system. In this sense the monastery is an entirely religious institution that theoretically admits only those activities that can help to realize the religious purpose of the institution. That is why economic activities have to be justified by monks and nuns so as to keep the religious utopia intact. Justifications of work and the economy give rise to various strategies that can be briefly listed here.

A first one would be to deny the economy by creating alternative spaces for gifts and barter, but monks and nuns are aware that they cannot live solely on the basis of this alternative form of the economy. For instance, the prior of the Italian monastery of Farfa said that he tries to develop an *economia della gratuità*, a free economy, but he also acknowledged that the community could not live on that alone. The second is a process of externalization, which consists of withdrawing monks from economic activities and replacing them by laypeople, or of moving factories outside the enclosure. In some monasteries, like Camaldoli in Italian, the function of cellarer is exercised by a layperson, because monks think that it is difficult for a monk to be always aware of the latest economic fluctuations (Jonveaux 2011a, 181). A final strategy consists of giving religious significance to the economy itself, which in this case is no longer regarded as opposed to religious life. An obvious example are religious products like hosts or icons, often made by nuns, but these activities are becoming less and less profitable. Arts and crafts can also give rise to new redefinitions of work that can be freed from its economic dimension and be given a religious one as a continuation of divine work. Finally, ecology is also increasingly taking its place in the monastic economy to give sense to the monks' and nuns' activities as a way of showing respect for creation.

The Monastic Economy as a part of the Secular Economy?

Monasteries are characterized by enclosure, which, as Raymond Boudon says, “protects the utopian society against corruption from outside and against the threat of strangers” (Boudon and Bourricaud 1986, 78). The autarky sought by Saint Benedict in his Rule never really materialized in monastic history. On the contrary, monasteries developed international commercial networks during the Middle Ages.

A Process of Supply and Demand

According to Jean Séguy, monasteries can be defined as utopias of the Kingdom of God, already here on earth and at the same time yet to come. According to him, a utopia is “a complete ideological system aiming to transform radically the existing

global system implicitly or explicitly, by appealing to an imaginary vision of the world or by applying it in practice” (Séguy 2014, 288). Does this mean that the monastic economy is also a utopian economy? As we have seen, economic activities have as their goal to provide for the community. In other words, this means that monasteries have to find outlets, that is sell their products, and from the economic point of view, they can only sell products if they are meeting a certain demand.

Now the economic activities which can best be integrated into monastic life often indeed are activities which do not have great market potential, such as religious products like rosaries or icons, but also hosts, as the number of churchgoers has been declining over the last few decades. The necessity of finding new markets to provide for the subsistence of the community is therefore leading monks and nuns to make non-religious products which can create new opportunities to draw a new, larger and more diverse public into their monasteries. For instance, some communities are trying to offer products or services and facilities which correspond to a present demand. For instance, female monasteries in Germany and Austria have opened a wellness centre as their main activity (Jonveaux 2018). The female Cistercian Abbey of Marienkron in Austria, which was founded in 1955, opened a guesthouse offering Kneipp Therapy in 1969. This wellness centre became bigger, with different services and facilities on offer, such as fasting programmes, massage, a swimming pool and different kinds of therapy, and ultimately the new superior decided to build a wall between the monastery and the wellness centre to protect the life of the monastery; only three sisters continue to work in the wellness centre.

According to Danièle Hervieu-Léger (2017, 232), monasteries are confronted with what she calls the “fatal dilemma of each utopia”. This dilemma can also be observed in the economic sphere, where monastic communities are trying to find an activity which is profitable and can be integrated into monastic life and its values.

Cloistered Production and Commercial Networks

Some communities which have strict enclosure – often women’s communities – are especially confronted with the question of how to find outlets if they have no shop in the monastery or have no commercial networks. The network *Aide au Travail du Cloître* was founded in France in 1951 after the pope wrote an apostolic letter in which he recommended that nuns should find productive work that would allow them to provide in their needs. The association’s first goal was to help communities of nuns to buy production tools for their work, but it then developed a distribution network to help cloistered communities to sell their produce. There are actually

eight shops in big cities in France which sell monastic products, and especially products of female monasteries which have few contacts with the outside world.

Monastic products are rarely sold via the usual commercial networks. The classic channel for their commercialization is the monastic network itself, as monastic shops often sell products from other monasteries. Digitalization has also given the communities a new opportunity to sell their products more widely thanks to online sales. If we study the online presence of monasteries, we can observe a correlation between this online presence and the dynamic of the economic activities of a community. The monasteries in France which were the first to launch websites were already especially dynamic in their economy (Jonveaux 2013). For instance, the female Trappist Abbey of Chambarrand, which launched its website in 1997, already had a system of mail order for products from a wide range of monasteries named the *Panier de Chambarrand*. The Benedictine Abbey of Solesmes, which is famous for its CDs of Gregorian music, started its homepage in 1997. Nowadays, various specialized webpages are selling monastic products, including *La Boutique de Théophile* or *Le Comptoir des Abbayes*. Similarly, the network *Aide au Travail du Cloître* started a new website, *L'artisanat monastique*, to sell these products online. In this sense, the Internet allows monastic communities to expand their commercial networks without leaving the monastery.

Impact of the Monastic Economy on the Global Economy

To what extent does the monastic economy play a real role in the economy of the world? Is the monastic economic just a niche for people who are looking for alternative quality products?

It is very difficult to evaluate the impact of the monastic economy in the world for the present period as we do not have statistics about the share of monastic activities in the global economy of any country. But the role of monasteries on the labour market can be a good indicator. Most monasteries employ people for economic activities or domestic work for the communities. Communities often see their role as employer as a way of pursuing the social aim of providing work for people. Some monasteries employ up to as many as 200 people, like the Benedictine Abbey of Admont in Austria, or 170 like the Benedictine Abbey of Maredsous in Belgium. Communities also often have the goal of employing people who otherwise have difficulties in finding a job, for instance people with handicaps or social difficulties. For the prior of Farfa in Italy, this is a way to contribute to the “social economy of the area”.

It is more difficult to estimate the quantitative impact of the monastic economy in a country. One indicator for instance are the property holdings of monasteries. In Austria, the Abbey of Admont for example is the seventh biggest forest owner with 25,500 hectares, whereas the Abbey of Lilienfeld owns 11,000 hectares, and the Abbey of Klosterneuburg 8,000 hectares. Monasteries, together with aristocratic families, are the biggest private forest owners in Austria. With regard to the impact on the market in a country as a whole, we can observe the qualitative influence of monastic products on the market. In France for instance, monastic products are a benchmark for quality in the wine and cheese markets. The same can be observed for the beer market in Belgium, where Trappist beers are the benchmark for high quality (Jonveaux 2011b). The reputation associated with monastic production has prompted lay companies to use its image through designations (with religious names for instance) or illustrations (using a monk's face for example). In general, it can be observed that references to the monastic imaginary have a positive effect on the marketing of consumption products. "By displaying monks and members of the clergy [...], advertizing also plays on the almost nostalgic evocation of their past silhouettes, as well as the symbolic thread of the stereotypical values associated with their position in the collective imagination" (Fressinet-Dominjon 2000, 56). The use of their image by secular enterprises has led monastic communities to differentiate their products from these other products. That is why Trappist abbeys in Belgium developed an "Authentic Trappist Product" label to identify beer or cheese actually produced in a monastery. In France, monastic communities founded the brand "Monastic" to identify products which are produced by monks or nuns in a monastery. This brand originated in competition between the cheese made by a female monastery and that produced by a lay company under the name "Chaussée-aux-moines" (monks' road). Clients in the supermarket thought that this latter cheese was the monastic cheese because of the name and the face of a monk displayed on the packaging, but the name in fact derived from the street where the factory was located. Monastic communities therefore aim to identify actual monastic products and to differentiate these from other, similar products that are branded as such.

The integration of the monastic economy into the global economy can be also observed in the case of monastic products that are sold by big concerns, for instance supermarkets. This is the case for instance for Trappist beers like Westmalle, or French cheese. Conversely, there are also monastic products which are sold under the brand of a supermarket, like sweet herbs and teas from the Benedictine monastery of Gut Aich in Austria, which are sold as Spar products. Spar supermarkets, in cooperation with the monastery, developed a product line named "Wie früher" (like before) to commercialize the herbs cultivated by the monks of Gut Aich. The

presentation of the products states that the “Benedictine monks have cultivated medicinal herbs for 1500 years”.⁴

Does monastic economy matter?

As we have seen, the monastic economy is not just a cloistered economy without any interaction with the outside world. On the contrary, the economy is often one of the most important vehicles of communication between the *world* and the monastery.

Towards a New Plausibility:

Monastic Products as Alternative Consumption

Monasteries at the beginning of the twenty-first century can find a new plausibility in secularized society thanks to their economic activities. The monastic economy does not have the possibility to invest for growth as monks and nuns try to keep a right balance between work and prayer. One solution for monastic communities is therefore to focus on quality. Monastic products are often presented as traditional, natural, and quality products. Claims are sometimes made that they are prepared according to recipes dating from the Middle Ages, even though this is not always true, as an Italian monk told me once (Jonveaux 2011a, 523). In a context in which confidence in consumer products is undermined due to scandals involving the mode of production, consumers are looking for reliable products. The organic label can offer a possible solution for this: « Le bio est (alors) conçu comme une réponse possible (bien que non pleinement satisfaisante) dans un contexte d’incertitude sanitaire: le produit bio est potentiellement un produit sûr » (Lamine 2008, 121).

Monastic products combine different dimensions such as tradition, naturalness, quality and sometimes also their organic quality. In addition, monastic products benefit from consumer confidence in their producers, who, as monks or nuns, have a special charisma. As Lucien Karpik has underlined in respect of quality products, “confidence is rooted in a symbolic system linking knowledge with belief” (Karpik 2007, 91). In the present context, monastic products can therefore meet the demand for alternative consumer products with greater confidence in the manner of production and guaranteed quality.

4 Spar Markets, Austria. Accessed 24 June 2020. <https://www.spar.at/content/dam/sparatwebsite/eigenmarken/lebensmittel/spar-wie-fr%C3%BCher/Gut-Aich-Rezeptfolder-SPAR-wie-frueher.pdf>.

Monasteries as Models for Society?

In the context of a crisis of capitalism and the environment, society has discovered a new interest in monasteries which propose alternative forms of economy and management, but also a commitment to ecological purposes.

Monasteries that live according to the rule of Saint Benedict try to develop an “economy of stability” (Spalovà and Jonveaux 2018), which corresponds to their vow of stability (*stabilitas loci*) and the idea, contained in the rule, of a certain autarky, that is to find in or near the monastery all they need for their subsistence. According to Denis Edwards, this is a specifically Benedictine approach to the relationship with nature, which is a kind of “cultivating and caring for creation” (Edwards 2006, 25). “In this tradition, love for God’s creation takes the form of responsible farming and preservation of the land. It also involves the love of learning and the conserving of a previous cultural heritage” (Edwards 2006, 25). This long-term perspective on the economy in monastic life is therefore not specific to contemporary preoccupations, but it can nowadays be interpreted as a sustainable economy, even if monks or nuns often say that they do not like to use this term. They prefer to speak, for instance, of respect for creation, as this allows them to introduce the spiritual dimension. A monk from Kremsmünster in Austria told me in an interview (April 2017): “We speak a lot about protection of nature and environment, but for us, it deals with the larger concept of responsibility for the Creation.” A young monk of the Cistercian monastery of Heiligenkreuz in Austria explained: “So we have to give our forest to the next generation of monks. The monastery has existed for nearly 900 years and it should have the possibility to exist also another 900 years, more than 900 years”.

Often monasteries were also pioneers for sustainable economy and organic agriculture in their region. For instance, in France, the Benedictine nuns of Kergonan in the 1970s developed the first organic agriculture of the region, and the Abbey of La Pierre-qui-Vie in Burgundy started the first organic agriculture in 1969. The process of methanization in the French Trappist Abbey of Tamié, which produces gas using the whey of the cheese production, was also an innovation in the region. The abbey subsequently received a visit of a minister and many journalists.

In this sense, monasteries can become models for alternative and sustainable forms of economy. Thus, a forest worker near the Cistercian Abbey of Vyšší Brod in the Czech Republic said in an interview that he considers monks to be the best forest owners, because they are able to plan over a very long period of time, more than 100 years, what is needed for forest management. The prior of this abbey confirmed that they “are working for eternity” and he added “I want to preserve the tradition

of a long-term economy.” This long-term perspective also makes innovations possible in the monastic economy, combined with the fact that the highest year-end profit is not the first goal of this economy (Jonveaux, 2019, 108–9).

Some monks are aware of their role of models for society when it comes to sustainable development, and of the expectations of society in this area. The friar forester of the Abbey of Heiligenkreuz in Austria says (April 2017):

I think our economy is a part of the monastery, part of the Church and I think we have to be better in this case than others. We have to take a position of leadership. Yes, of a good example. When you talk about sustainability – I don’t use the word, I don’t like to use it, because I think it is a very “nobody knows what it is”. So I think it is better to use other words, more detailed. But when you use sustainability, you can speak about three sectors – the economic, the ecological and the social part. And I think in these three parts we should provide a good example in our country, to other firms and companies.

In this sense, monasteries are also taking into account the expectations of society concerning their activities and the image they present to society. For instance, during a field inquiry I conducted in France in a Benedictine abbey in 2004, the cellarer told me that they planned to become energy self-sufficient, but the question was which source of energy to use. Nuclear energy was the simplest method, according to him, but there was “a problem of communication” as society would not understand that an abbey would use nuclear energy. The Abbey of Maredsous was confronted with the same problem, as monks sold foie gras in their shop, whereas animal rights activists expected them not to do this, as they are monks and foie gras is considered to be a form of animal abuse.

Tendencies in the Monastic Economy for the Next Decades

We cannot talk about the monastic economy in Europe without asking what tendencies can be discerned for this economy for the coming decades, as the shrinking and ageing of the communities naturally have an impact on economic activities. The first consequence of the ageing of the communities, for instance when half of the community is over 70, as is the case for all women’s communities affiliated with the Austrian Benedictine Congregation, is the dynamic of economic activities by the limitation of labour force. This can lead to the employment of more laypeople, which also raises the question of the integration of lay employees in the physical space of the monastery. A second consequence of ageing is that income from pensions will rise as a share of total income. Pensions are a good form of revenue for

the daily subsistence of the community, but they do not ensure stability for the future of the economy, as we have seen. This also makes it difficult to maintain the buildings which have become too large for the size of the community. Some monastic communities decide not to stay in their historic buildings. For instance, the Poor Clares of Cormontreuil in France decided in 2000 to build a new small monastery and to sell the historic building, because the cost of renovation was too high and the size of the building no longer corresponded to the size of the community.

Another tendency in the monastic economy, which is not related to the ageing of the communities, concerns pastoral activities in countries where monasteries are active in this sphere, such as in Austria, Poland or the Czech Republic. In these countries, I was able to observe the will – especially among younger generations of monks – to return to economic activities in the monastery, for instance in the form of manual work. For instance, in Austria, a 28-year-old Benedictine told me that he does not want to become a priest, although he studied theology. He explains (February 2015):

I decided not to become a priest. [...] They are for me two different vocations. All of us should have the monastic vocation and take care of it. For me, prayer of the hours is important, this structuration of the day. Priesthood is a vocation which is related to parish ministry, what I do not wish for myself.

He also decided to find manual work and started the new activity of making honey and liqueur in the monastery, which is currently very successful. Many monks, especially of the new generation, do not want to become parish priests, as they want to live in the community and not in a parish.

This situation can also be observed in the Cistercian monastery of Vyšší Brod in the Czech Republic, where the prior explained that he wants to return to the origin of Cistercian monasticism, which for him means not do pastoral work. His plan is to start a brewery once again as soon as the old factory they received back from the State in 2014 is renovated. In Poland, in the Cistercian monastery of Jędrzejów, where parishes and pastoral activities are the main source of revenue, my colleague Marcin Jewdokimow and I were able to observe a conflict in the representations of monastic life between the old and the new generation. The new generation questions the link between the identity as a monk and the identity as a priest. The cellarer affirmed: “It is bad that pastoral care takes a lot of time, where a monk should devote this time to God in the monastery, right? As a pace of prayer and contemplation”. The community plans to start a new farm in the monastery and to develop more activities that are not of a pastoral nature. But the issue remains that

the diocese, just as in Austria, does not have priests to replace the monks and does not want to take the parishes back. This situation will have to be monitored over the next twenty years in order to know whether there really will be a shift from pastoral work to manual or productive work in these countries.

Conclusion

Finally, does the economy of contemporary Catholic monasteries matter? First of all, it is important to underline that there is not one monastic economy, but there are different forms of monastic economy according to the social and political history of each country. As we have shown, not all monastic communities have a productive economy. Also, it is difficult to make a quantitative estimation of the impact of the productive monastic economy, where it does exist, on the global economy. But the monastic economy does have a qualitative influence, first on different markets of consumer products, but also as a model for alternative consumption and ecological commitment. There are monastic values which have inspired monasteries to develop these forms of economic activity, but they can be interpreted by secular society as an alternative economy and as sustainable development. They have found a direct echo in society by addressing contemporary concerns.

Although monasteries are losing their plausibility as places of ascetic life consecrated to God in secularized society, they can find a new plausibility through their economic activities. Exploring monasteries from the economic point of view reveals therefore that monasteries still play a role in contemporary society. This provides a new perspective on consecrated religious life in present society. The economy indeed represents a vehicle of communication between the world and the monastery.

When studying the impact of the monastic economy in society or on the economy of the world, we must end by mentioning the fact that Catholic monasteries in some countries still play a real role of economic and social development for the whole region in which they are situated. This is the case in different countries in Africa for instance (Jonveaux 2019; Langewiesche 2015), where monasteries often become a driving force for development by using new agricultural methods, introducing new species (for instance in Keur Moussa, Senegal), improving living condition of their neighbours or employees (water, electricity...), and so on. In this sense, it would be interesting to seek out answers to the question whether the monastic economy still matters in developing countries.

References

- Boudon, Raymond, François Bourricaud. 1986. *Dictionnaire critique de sociologie*, Paris : Presses Universitaires de France.
- Edwards, Denis. 2006. *Ecology at the Heart of the Faith*. New York: Orbis Books.
- Fressinet-Dominjon, Jacqueline. 2000. "L'image du religieux dans la publicité." In *Médias et religions en miroir*, edited by Pierre Bréchon and Jean-Paul Willaime. Paris : Presses Universitaires de France.
- Hervieu-Léger, Danièle. 2017. *Le temps des moines*. Paris : Presses Universitaires de France.
- Jonveaux, Isabelle. 2011a. *Le monastère au travail. Le royaume de Dieu au défi de l'économie*. Paris: Bayard.
- Jonveaux, Isabelle. 2011b. "Bière belge et image monastique." *Ethnologie française* 41 : 117–30.
- Jonveaux, Isabelle. 2013. *Dieu en ligne. Expériences et pratiques religieuses sur Internet*. Paris : Bayard.
- Jonveaux, Isabelle. 2018. *Mönch sein heute. Eine Soziologie des Mönchtums in Österreich im europäischen Dialog*. Würzburg: Echter.
- Jonveaux, Isabelle. 2019a. "Klosterwirtschaft als Modell alternativer Wirtschaft für die Gesellschaft?" In *Unternehmen und Klöster. Wirtschaft und monastisches Leben im interdisziplinären Dialog*, edited by Birgit Feldbauer-Durstmüller, Tanja Wolf, Maximilian Neulinger, 97–111. Wiesbaden: Springer Gabler.
- Jonveaux, Isabelle. 2019b. "Future of Catholic Monasteries on New Monastic Continents: The Case of Africa." *Religions* 10(9). doi: <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel10090513>
- Karpik, Lucien. 2007. *L'Économie des singularités*. Paris : Gallimard.
- Lamine, Claire. 2008. *Les Intermittents du bio*. Paris : Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme.
- Langewiesche, Katrin. 2015. "Transnational Monasteries: The Economic Performance of Cloistered Women." *Social Compass* 62: 132–46.
- Schmitz, Philippe. 1960. *Geschichte des Benediktinerordens*. Vol. 4. Einsiedeln.
- Séguy, Jean. 2014. "A Sociology of Imagined Societies: Monasticism and Utopia". In *Sociology and Monasticism, between Innovation and Tradition*. Annual Review of the Sociology of Religion, edited by Isabelle Jonveaux, Enzo Pace and Stefania Palmisano, 71–86. Leiden: Brill.
- Spalová, Barbora, Isabelle Jonveaux. 2018. *The Economy of Stability in Catholic Nonasteries in Czech Republic and Austria*. In *The Changing face of Catholicism*. Annual Review of the Sociology of Religion, edited by Solange Lefebvre, Alfonso Pérez-Agote, 269–296. Leiden: Brill.
- Weber, Max. 2003. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. New York: Penguin.
- Weber, Max, 1978. *Economy and Society. An Outline of Interpretative Sociology*, edited by G. Roth and C. Wittich. University of California Press, Berkeley.

AUTHORS

Roumen Avramov is an economist with numerous publications in the fields of economic history, monetary economics, and the history of economic ideas. He has served as a member of the Board of governors of the Bulgarian National Bank (1997–2002), and from 2013 until his retirement (2020) was Permanent Fellow at the Centre for Advanced Study Sofia (CAS) where he organized the *Research Network dedicated to the history of the monastic economy*. His interest in the monastic economy was provoked by several journeys to Mount Athos, an experience he summarizes in the essay “The Holy Mountain – Personal Fragments”, published in: *Encounters on the Holy Mountain. Stories from Mount Athos* (edited by Peter Howorth and Christopher Thomas). Brepols: 2020.

Andreas Bouroutis is a Historian/Political Scientist – Economist. His Ph.D. thesis was published in 2018 under the title “*The Bourgeoisie and the European Schools in Thessaloniki (1888–1943): cultural and social breakthrough on a city of a late Empire*”. He is a lecturer at the Department of Political Sciences at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the scientific leader of the research programme “Postwar transformations of Thessaloniki and the fate of the Jewish assets”. His research interests include multicultural societies (Mediterranean port cities), transnational aspects, state transformation and imperialism (Balkans – Europe), and Jewish communities in Greece and the Balkans.

Lidia Cotovanu holds a Ph.D. in history from École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris (2014). She is a Senior Researcher at the “Nicolae Iorga” Institute of History of the Romanian Academy (Bucharest). Her research focuses on the migration flows in South-East Europe during the fourteenth – seventeenth centuries; the dependencies of the Eastern Orthodox Patriarchates in the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia (1565–1714); the jurisdiction of the Eastern Patriarchates over the Romanian Principalities; the post-Byzantine Orthodox devotional practices and evergetism; the “citizenships” in Medieval and Modern South-East Europe; the social and bureaucratic practices of personal and collective identification in the Danubian Principalities and, more generally, in South-Eastern Europe.

Isabelle Depret graduated in History, in Social and Political Sciences (Sciences Po Paris), and holds a Ph.D. in history. She has been a scientific member of the French School of Athens (EFA). Currently, she is Assistant Professor at the French-Speaking Department of Political Sciences, University of Marmara (Istanbul), and researcher at the Free University of Brussels (ULB). Her interests are in the relations between religion

and politics; history of political thought; historiography and memorial issues in Greece and in modern-time South Eastern European societies. Among her most recent publications is: “Religion, biens spirituels et patrimoine matériel. Les soubassements économiques d’une mise en héritage des monastères de l’Athos (Grèce), fin 20ème-début 21e siècles”, *Archives des sciences sociales des religions*, 183 (2019).

Aleksandar Fotić has been Professor at Belgrade University, Faculty of Philosophy, Department of History, Chair of Modern History (2000–2017). His areas of interest include the history of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans and the status of the Christian population and the Christian churches in the Ottoman Empire. Among his major publications are: (Ed.) *Privatni život na tlu srpskih zemalja u osvit modernog doba* [*Private Life in Serbian Lands at the Dawn of Modern Era*], Belgrade: 2005; *Sveta Gora i Hilandar u Osmanskom carstvu XV–XVII vek* [*Mount Athos and Hilandar in the Ottoman Empire (Fifteenth – Seventeenth centuries)*], Belgrade: 2000; “The Official Explanations for the Confiscation and Sale of Monasteries (Churches) and Their Estates at the Time of Selim II”, *Turcica* XXVI (1994) 33–54.

Konstantinos Giakoumis is Associate Professor of History, Arts and their Methods at the Department of Pedagogy and Psychology, as well as Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Linguistic Communication at LOGOS University College, Tirana, Albania. A doctoral degree holder in Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek Studies from the University of Birmingham, UK, he has conducted long expeditions throughout the Balkans researching various topics of cultural, religious, social and economic history from medieval to early modern times. His publications include contributions to the understanding of monastic finances, the internal organization and credit-lending operations of Ottoman guilds. In his latest book he publishes the ecclesiastical codex of the Diocese and then Metropolis of Gjirokastra (eighteenth and nineteenth century).

Brian Heffernan holds an M.A. in history from Leiden University, a B.A. in theology from Tilburg University, and a Ph.D. in history from Maynooth University. He is the author of books on Catholic priests and the Irish War of Independence and on the Dutch Augustinian Friars, and is currently completing a history of the Discalced Carmelite Sisters in the Netherlands. He is a researcher at KU Leuven (Belgium), where he is writing a biography of Edward Schillebeeckx together with Stephan van Erp.

Isabelle Jonveaux is a sociologist of religion and teaches at the University of Graz, Austria. She is affiliated to the Centre d’Études en Sciences Sociales du Religieux (CéSor, EHESS/Paris). Her Ph.D. thesis was on monastic economy in Europe at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris and the University of Trento, Italy (2009) and since then has been working on contemporary monastic life. She has conducted field

enquiries in monasteries in Europe, Africa and South America. Isabelle Jonveaux has published on different aspects of the sociology of monastic life: asceticism, the use of the internet, future of monasticism, acculturation, etc. Her publications include *Le monastère au travail* (Bayard, 2011), and *Moines, corps et âme* (Le Cerf, 2018). With Stefania Palmisano, she edited *Monasticism in Modern Times* (Routledge 2017).

Daniela Kalkandjieva is an independent Bulgarian researcher who explores the history of Orthodox churches and the societal and political aspects of their activities. She received her Ph.D. in 2004 from the Central European University in Budapest. Her more recent publications include “Orthodox Churches in the Post-Communist Countries and the Separation between Religion and the State” in: J. H. Bhuiyan and D. Jensen (eds.), *Law and Religion in the Liberal State* (Hart Publishing, 2020) and “The Bulgarian Orthodox Church: Authoring New Visions About the Orthodox Church’s Role in Contemporary Bulgarian Society” in: S. P. Ramet (ed.), *Orthodox Churches and Politics in Southeastern Europe: Nationalism, Conservativism, and Intolerance* (Palgrave 2019).

Dimitrios Kalpakis chairs the Department for the Management of Historical Documents and Archives of Greek Ports (Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Insular Policy). He has been an Archaeologist at the Hellenic Ministry of Culture, and member of the Scientific Committee of Nicopolis, Archaeological Museum of Ioannina (Ioannina Ephorate of Antiquities). He is currently member of the boards of the journal *Historicogeographica*, and of the Institute for Greek-Far Eastern Studies, as well as member of the Greek Committee of Byzantine Studies. D. Kalpakis holds a Ph.D. in historical geography (Byzantine studies). His main research/publication fields are historical geography, cartography, monumental topography, museum studies, and cultural documentation & management.

Elias Kolovos is Associate Professor in Ottoman History and director of the M.A. in Ottoman History at the Department of History and Archaeology of the University of Crete. He has written, edited, and coedited ten books and over 50 papers in Greek and international publications and journals, including Elias Kolovos, *Across the Aegean: Islands, Monasteries and Rural Societies in the Ottoman Greek Lands*, The Isis Press, Istanbul 2018, and Elias Kolovos (ed.), *Monasteries, Economy, and Politics from Medieval to Modern Times* [in Greek], Crete University Press, Herakleio 2011.

Phokion Kotzageorgis is Associate Professor of Ottoman History at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. He is the author of six books in Greek and of several articles in Greek and English. Since the defense of his Ph.D., he is interested in the economy of the monasteries in Mount Athos as an integral part of the Ottoman economy. His publications include: *The Athonite monastery of Saint Paul during the Ottoman period (late*

fourteenth century – 1830), Thessaloniki 2002 [in Greek]. He recently published a book on *Early Ottoman Town. Seven cases from the Southern Balkans*, Athens 2019 [in Greek]. He is currently working on the Meteora monasteries during the Ottoman period as a parallel case with those of Mount Athos.

Michalis N. Michael is Associate Professor of Ottoman History at the Department of Turkish and Middle Eastern Studies in the University of Cyprus. His research interests include the Ottoman modernity, the history of Cyprus during the Ottoman and colonial period, the Church of Cyprus during the Ottoman period, and the post-Ottoman historiography in Cyprus. He is the author of the books: *The Church of Cyprus during the Ottoman period: The Gradual Formation of an Institution of Political Power* (2005), *Revolts as a Field of Power Negotiation. Ottoman Cyprus, 1804–1841* (2016) and the co-editor of books on Ottoman Cyprus. He has published articles in *Archivum Ottomanicum*, *Chronos*, *Social Compass*, *Religions*, *Thetis*, *Historica*, *Turkish Historical Review*, *International Review of Turkish Studies*, *Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi*, *The Cyprus Review*.

Styliani Lepida graduated from the Department of History and Archaeology of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki majoring in History. She continued her postgraduate studies at the same university at the Department of Modern and Contemporary History and graduated with a master's degree from the program on Balkan and Turkish History, with specialization in Turkish History (M.A. / 2011). She conducted her doctoral research in the field of Ottoman History at the Department of Turkish and Middle Eastern Studies of the University of Cyprus, where she obtained a Ph.D. degree in 2019.

Gheorghe Lazăr is a Senior Research Fellow at the “Nicolae Iorga” Institute of History of the Romanian Academy (Bucharest), co-editor (with Violeta Barbu) and coordinator of the collection of mediaeval documents *Documenta Romaniae Historica*, B. Wallachia published by the Romanian Academy (10 volumes, 1998–2016). His doctoral dissertation in history from Laval-Québec University (2005) was published in 2006 as *Naissance et ascension d'une catégorie sociale. Les marchands en Valachie (XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles)* (Romanian Academy Award 2008). He has published edited documents of social, economic, and family history (in Romanian): *Testimony for posterity: the testament of the merchant Ioan Băluță from Craiova* (2010); *Documents on the Wallachian merchants, vol. 1 (1656–1688), vol. 2 (1689–1714)* (2013, 2014); *Registers of Wallachian merchants, Eighteenth -Nineteenth centuries* (2016).

Antoine Roulet is a member of the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), affiliated to the Centre de Recherches Historiques (UMR 8558 CNRS/EHESS) and to the Groupe d'études ibériques (GEI/CRH). His investigations are dedicated to the

history of devotional practices, to the economic and social history of conventual life and of the elites in the Hispanic and American worlds during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. He has authored several articles concerning monastic patronage and feminine spirituality, especially regarding penance (*Corps et pénitence, les carmélites déchaussées 1560–1640*, Madrid, Casa de Velázquez, 2015). His most recent publication is: *L'argent des fidèles*, dossier of *Archives des Sciences sociales des religions* (2020).

Preston Perluss has been a tenured associate professor at University of Grenoble's Graduate Business Institute (Grenoble IAE) since 2004. He is a member of the Rhône-Alps Laboratory for Historical Research (LARHRA-UMR) which groups historians in Lyon and Grenoble and holds a Ph.D. from the University of Paris IV-Sorbonne (2003). His research interests concern Early Modern monastic asset management, urban morphology and urban social microhistory. His recent publications include: "L'emprise urbaine des communautés religieuses. Une problématique de longue durée", *Histoire, économie & société*, 2019/2; "La mise en valeur urbaine des gens de mainmorte", *Transformations des villes et du territoire, 1750–1950, Actes du colloque de l'IPRAUS*, Ecole d'architecture Paris-Belleville. Book-Storming: Paris, 2018. (forthcoming).

MONASTIC ECONOMY ACROSS TIME
WEALTH MANAGEMENT, PATTERNS, AND TRENDS

Edited by

Roumen Avramov, Aleksandar Fotić, Elias Kolovos, Phokion P. Kotzageorgis

Printed in Bulgaria



Digital Print Express



Centre for Advanced Study Sofia