

THE MEDIEVAL TOWN IN BULGARIA, THIRTEENTH TO FOURTEENTH CENTURY

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In Memory of my Father

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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School
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My study attempts to reevaluate the reigning historiographical concepts of pre-modern models of economic development in Southeastern Europe. It is a cross-national and cross-regional survey attempting to include the Byzantine/Bulgarian economic model in the ongoing debate about the transition from feudalism to capitalism. Through an examination of urban social structure, economy, and population growth, I demonstrate that the late medieval town in the Balkans well beyond the end of the fourteenth century followed the main trends of economic growth that are typically represented by the Italian city-states and formed thus part of a common socio-economic environment with the rest of the European Mediterranean.

In my study, the town in late medieval Bulgaria is conceptualized as an *explanandum*, not as an *explanans*, as part of the social and economic environment rather than some distinctive entity. Therefore, the rural environment is an essential component for understanding urban socio-economic development. The town and its hinterland are conceptualized as two elements of the same structure rather than two opposing and separate entities. The survey is also cross-disciplinary. It integrates written sources with archaeological data: urban and rural settlement morphology, household structuring, pottery, as well as coin production and circulation.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

By analyzing the Byzantine socio-economic model from the viewpoint of urban development in late medieval Bulgaria, this dissertation claims that the Byzantine World did not remain detached from wider European socio-economic trends of the late middle ages. The towns in Bulgaria, just like their Byzantine and Dalmatian counterparts followed the main trends of economic growth and social changes that are typically represented by the Italian city-states and formed thus part of an inseparable socio-economic environment with the rest of the European Mediterranean. Therefore, this study claims that the debate about the late medieval Bulgarian town belongs to the broader discourse of the European urban development.

In recent years, the historiographical debate about the avenues of economic growth and capitalism and the role of towns in this process in European West has reached the interdisciplinary level of combining anthropology, ecology, social geography, and psychology together with the application of modern and post-modern market theories. However, the scholars working on late Byzantium remain locked within the “Weberian” opposition between the generative and consummative type of town. What is at stake is not the “real” Max Weber, who conceptualized towns as arenas in which the struggle for power and resources go far beyond the limits of the urban perimeter. Rather, it engages a caricature of Weber, built upon the Marxist drive of finding a uniform explanatory model of socio-economic development that presents the towns as exemplars of an autonomous urban reality. Indirectly, it is also Richard Tawney’s view of Weber that manifests Western European exceptionalism as a result of its superior receptiveness to the virtues of capitalism.¹

¹¹ Richard Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co, 1926)

This dissertation, in keeping with the ‘real’ Weber, endeavors to read *The City* not as a separate unit, but as a chapter of *Economy and Society*.² Weberian categories, such as *consumer city* and *producer city*, function in the present study to identify a particular historical function of the city *in relation* to the question of power in society, not to produce a general theory about the city.

While Marx held that individuals are determined by their class-consciousness founded in the material realities of their life, Weber viewed the whole society as a social category, sharing a common set of values and ideas that transcends the class or economic status. Therefore, while in Marx (or in the Braudelian interpretation of Marx) the city is a generic agent of progress and a city-country distinction has a definite class-economic character, Weber displays it as a part of the entire socio-cultural environment.

The distortion of the Weberian thesis, however, combined with the enticement of Edward Gibbon to ascribe the liquidation of the Byzantine World to its “backward” economy and “decadent” culture, constitute one of the main reasons for the theoretical challenges of economic history of Byzantium and Eastern Balkans.³ Since the time of the Enlightenment, the Byzantine Empire was viewed as a decayed fragment of the Roman Empire, static in time, stagnant in technology, culturally conservative, and ruled by perfidious and tyrannical regimes. The Byzantine legacy even today is perceived as a main reason for certain blockages for developing normal civil institutions in the Balkans, hence the interchangeable values of “Byzantinism” and

² M. Weber, *Economy and Society: an outline of interpretative sociology* (New York: Bedminster Press, 1968)

³ The term “Eastern Balkans” (or its equivalents, such as “Byzantinized Balkans” or “Orthodox Balkans” that may substitute it further in this study) is comprehended here as a subdivision of *Byzantine Commonwealth*, a term coined by Dmitry Obolensky that most precisely defines the basic characteristics of the Byzantine World: an international community, which was bounded by the creed of Orthodox Christianity, accepted the principles of Romano-Byzantine law, and held that the cultural standards of Byzantine Empire were universally valid models. In geographic terms it comprises the present day territories of Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia, Serbia, Albania, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Southeastern Romania, and the European part of Turkey

“balkanization”.⁴ From Gibbon through Fallmerayer and from Burckhardt to Jenkins, Longworth, and even Mango, notions of Byzantium and the Byzantine legacy have always been a standard for measuring the deviation from “normal” development and have always served the expediency of politico-cultural doctrines and strategies. Not surprisingly, the notion of Byzantinism was pushed as far as to claim that the Ottoman Empire’s failure to modernize must be blamed on the Byzantine decadent social system inherited by the Ottomans.⁵

This reductionist approach to Byzantium and the Byzantine legacy, applying analytical categories from Western historical reality, resulted in the construction of a certain Gibbon-Tawney “logic” of historical processes. Since the Byzantine World was culturally deprived from progressing towards modernity, then, Byzantine Studies should be considered as a field of exotic peripheral studies, sometimes grudgingly included in the appendix of European history and preserved only for local Eastern European consumption and for a small group of Western eccentric scholars. Surprisingly, this is still the prevailing attitude toward Byzantium, the Byzantine legacy and, consequently, toward the importance of Byzantine Studies.

All this is not to say that Byzantine studies lack erudite scholars to lead the field, but that the lack of a critical mass of scholars involved in Byzantine studies in general, and Byzantine economic history in particular, has resulted in retarded and limited discourse and, quite naturally, in theoretical stagnation. To the best of my knowledge, no serious study exists examining the urban economy of late Byzantium and the Eastern Balkans outside the box of historical materialism. Little wonder, then, that David Nicholson’s map of European towns circa 1300, for instance, marks only three towns in the Balkan Peninsula, two of which are Constantinople and

⁴ Philip Longworth, *The Making of Eastern Europe, from Prehistory to Post-Communism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992).

⁵ George Young, *Nationalism and War in the Near East* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1915).p.40.

Thessalonike.⁶ At the same time, when examining the same historical period the Bulgarian historian Nikolai Todorov identifies 400 towns in Byzantium and the Balkan countries.⁷

On the other hand, local East European Byzantinists came under the grip of theoretical impediments imposed by Marxist class-determinism that reigned over the Soviet, Bulgarian, and Yugoslav historiography. Unfortunately historical materialism, the manifestation of Marxism-Leninism in historiography, does not facilitate discourse; rather, it just imposes imperatives for total mobilization for a class struggle. While the consumption and demand of food supply of the big cities were considered by most economic historians in the West as encouraging the growth of the regional economy, the cities in late Byzantium and Bulgaria were still viewed by native Marxists as “parasites.”⁸ Franklin Mendels’ *proto-industrialization*,⁹ when detected by Marxist historians, was therefore regarded as an indication of underdevelopment and “not complete division of labor between the town and country.”¹⁰ Considering any attempt for new interpretations of the development of Byzantine and Bulgarian economy as a political challenge to Marxism in general, up to the end of the Cold War the advocates of historical materialism remained distant from the neo-Marxist, Foucauldian, structuralist, and postmodernist thinking

⁶ David Nicholson, *The Urban Europe 1100-1700* (New York: Palgrave, 2003).

⁷ Nikolai Todorov, *Society, City and Industry in the Balkans, 15th 19th centuries* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 1998), p.28.

⁸ Daniel Waley, *The Italian City-Republics* (London, New York: Longman Group, 1988) pp 69-88.; L. Maksimović, *Grad u Vizantii* [Byzantine town] (Belgrade: Plato, 2003).

⁹ Proto-industrialization, conceptualized by Mendels as “industrialization before industrialization,” has been defined as development of the rural regions in which a large part of the population lived entirely or to a considerable extent from industrial mass production for inter-regional and international markets. See for details Franklin Mendels, “Proto-Industrialization: the First Phase of Industrialization Process?” *Journal of Economic History* Vol. 32 (1972) pp. 241-61.

¹⁰ Str. Lishev, *Bulgarskiat Srednovekoven Grad* [Bulgarian Medieval Town] (Sofia: BAN, 1970); B.T. Gorianov, *Pozdevizantiiskii Feodalism* [Late Byzantine Feudalism] (Moscow: AN SSSR, 1962); Al. Burmov, “Feodalismat v Srednovekovna Bulgaria” *Istoricheski Pregled* Vol 2 (1946/47), pp.151-171. A. Kazhdan *Derevnia i Gorod v Vizantii, IX- X vv.* [Village and town in Byzantium, 9th-10th centuries] (Moscow: AN SSSR 1960).

that have swept across the field of Urban Studies in recent decades. Regrettably, almost two decades after the collapse of the bipolar world order, the theoretical gap left by the discredited historical materialism has still remained unbridged for Bulgarian as well as for former Soviet and former Yugoslav Byzantinists.

For generations of “orthodox” Marxist historians the question of economic growth in the concluding centuries of Byzantine civilization was grounded in the idea of a late development of feudalism. For advocates of historical materialism, as shown in *Chapter 1* of the present study, the combination of economic growth and political polycentrism in the Eastern Balkans was simply impossible, despite the sporadic signals of single monographs and archaeological investigations for revising this concept. The town and country have been perceived, in accordance to Marxist theory, as two antagonistic worlds, not as two elements of the same structure. Therefore, while economic historians of the West agree that the most basic characteristic of a town is *heterogeneity*, the Byzantine socio-economic model, an integral part of which are the Bulgarian lands, has been drawn up to the end of the twentieth century in terms of Marx’s *politeconomy*, an incomplected division of labor between town and country, and class struggle. If there was any debate within the framework of historical materialism, it was the fruitless debate about the degree of feudalization of the Byzantine Empire that mechanically imported socio-property relations of western experience, such as “serfdom” and “feudal immunity,” into Byzantine society.

Inspired by a tide of change in Byzantine Studies, best detectable in the synthetic collection of studies of *The Economic History of Byzantium*,¹¹ the following study, by offering a new understanding of the Byzantine socio-economic model, has as its goal the desire to eliminate

¹¹ *The Economic History of Byzantium: from the Seventh through the Fifteenth Centuries*. Ed in chief A. Laiou (Washington, D. C: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2002).

the ideological impediments of historical materialism and conceptual constraints of the Gibbon-Tawney “logic” that form the notion of the Byzantine World as a deviation from normality.

By integrating written records with archaeological data, this dissertation demonstrates that the late medieval Bulgarian town, just like its Byzantine, Dalmatian, and Italian counterparts was far from being a mere center of consumption and an epitome of socio-economic decline. It was neither “predominantly agricultural,” as the proponents of the historical materialism claimed, nor it was a “capitalist island surrounded by the feudal sea,” according to a Braudelian understanding of urbanity. It was a minimized and intensified copy of its surrounding institutional and socio-economic order—a spatial concentration of the faculties of its larger system. It was a concentration of landowners and wealthy people, but also of clerics, merchants and artisans, *paroikoi*¹² and wage laborers, individual and collective foreign dwellers, and mere vagrants. It was center of trade activities and non-agricultural production and if there was any difference with its Western European counterparts it was rather of degree than of kind.

However, while the collapse of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe discredited and stultified historical materialism, the Marxist analytical category “division of labor” still imposes constraints on the understanding of the role of towns in social development. The main argument of this dissertation is, therefore, directed against the dead ends of the Western dualistic approach to historical economy, which is based on the Marxist assumption that the fundament of socio-economic progress - the division of labor - was objectified by the separation of town and country, therefore considering the town as main agent for social change. On the contrary, in the

¹² Byzantine term (literally - those, who lived beside the house) designating both *peasants economically dependent* upon a tax-exemption holder, and *peasants*, in general.

present dissertation the town is treated, as Philip Abrams puts it, “as an *explanandum*, not as an *explanans*,” as part of the social and economic environment rather than some distinctive entity.¹³

The socio-economic relationships concentrated spatially within towns are thus examined “in relation to the system in which they occur and *not as exemplars of an autonomous urban reality*.”¹⁴ Therefore, special attention is directed throughout *Chapter 2* to the socio-economic relationships in the country, which together with towns formed an organic social system. The impressive scale of non-agricultural, market-oriented activities in the country, as further demonstrated by the archaeological evidence, unambiguously supports Abrams’ thesis and disputes the validity of the Marxian category “division of labor.”

The failure of most Western historians to utilize the rich archeological data collected by Balkan researchers has resulted in the long-standing assumption that Byzantine agriculture was underdeveloped. However, as *Chapter 2* demonstrates, neither the agrarian tools nor the agrarian productivity of the Byzantine World differed from those of Western Europe.

The scarcity of written sources is perhaps the most important barrier for the development of Byzantine economic history. It is an axiomatic truth that the smaller the amount of source materials for a certain culture, the greater the proliferation of clichés and myths, reductionism and simplifications. On the other hand, the surviving sources from the monastic libraries, mainly at Mount Athos, the Ottoman archives, and Western travelogues, provide a large enough corpus of sources to reveal various aspects of late Byzantine agriculture and legal practices. However, because there is nothing comparable for the urban economy and society, the tendency has been to view Byzantium in exclusively agrarian terms.

¹³ Philip Abrams, “Towns and Economic Growth: Some Theories and Problems,” in P. Abrams and E. A. Wrigley, eds., *Towns in Societies: Essays in Economic History and Historical Sociology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), pp. 9-33; S. R. Epstein, *Freedom and Growth* (London, New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 6-10.

¹⁴ Philip Abrams, “Towns and Economic Growth” p.30

The dearth of sources is also the main obstacle to applying modern economic models in explaining the late Byzantine economy. The attempt of Cécile Morrisson to apply *Fisher's Equation*¹⁵ to explaining the character of Byzantine *nomisma* debasement in the eleventh century is a well-known example.¹⁶ Two out of the four variables of *Fisher's Equation*, velocity of money circulation and the number of transactions, cannot be found in our sources, which turns its application into a somewhat informed guess.¹⁷ Indeed, this is not a problem only for Byzantine economic history, but also for the entire field of European medieval economy. Yet Byzantine economic historiography is more affected by the lack of adequate sources. For example, there is no surviving Byzantine source comparable to the *Florentine Catasto of 1427* that provides data for taxes, property, and household structures in Florence and the surrounding territory.

Unfortunately, sources for the late medieval Bulgarian town are even scarcer. If the reference sources for the political history of Second Bulgarian Empire are enough for constructing certain general frame, written sources concerning late medieval Bulgarian urban life are almost non-existent. This makes the task of examining the Bulgarian town tantalizing. The information for Bulgarian urbanism has to be gathered piecemeal from dispersed and isolated texts, both documentary and narrative. Without the help of archaeology it is doomed to turn any conclusion simply into a speculative assumption. To write a history of urban economy on the basis of Bulgarian written sources alone is thus an impossible venture. The comparative analysis

¹⁵ Fisher's Equation estimates the relationship between nominal and real interest rates under inflation. In economics, this equation is used to predict nominal and real interest rate behavior.

¹⁶ Cécile Morrisson, "La Dévaluation de la Monnaie Byzantine au XI^e siècle: Essai d'Interprétation." *Travaux et Mémoires* 6 (1976): pp. 6–48.

¹⁷ For a critique of Morrisson's approach see M. Hendy, *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy, c.300–1450*. (Cambridge - New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985).pp. 3-6; 233-237 and Alan Harvey, *Economic Expansion of the Byzantine Empire, 900-1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).p.89.

of written and archaeological sources is, therefore, not only the preferred, but also the only possible approach to late medieval Bulgarian urbanism.

It is well recognized in historiography that the initiative of the Byzantine state became crucial for the economic change that started in the eleventh-twelfth centuries. The introduction and spread of the *pronoia* system of privileges led to more efficient modes of production in agriculture and to a liberalization of the state economy. Given that privilege-holders now were paying less tax and still less in cash, the state ceased to be the most important motive power behind the circulation of money. This, in turn, resulted in the infusion of more money, distributed among more people, and, accordingly, in an accelerated money circulation that signaled the growth of market importance.

The far-reaching implications of this process for urban development in Byzantium and in the Bulgarian lands that in 1185 seceded and formed a separate political unit are demonstrated in *Chapter 3* by analyzing the spatial representation of the socio-economic relations within the urban arenas.

Towards the end of the twelfth century, the increase of agricultural productivity resulted in intensification of trade activities, growth of the market centers and thus to a spontaneous transformation of the towns. Many of the settlements located within the provincial fortresses, especially the administrative and ecclesiastic centers, expanded outside their defensive walls and formed adjacent suburbia. This change of the urban structural tissue reflected the change of the basic functions of towns from administrative and ecclesiastic centers with solely defensive function into productive and trade centers with more definite urban way of life. The state administration of Byzantium (and later of the newly restored Bulgarian state) did not interfere with the organic growth of provincial urban centers. The use of space as well as the regulation of

urban life, in general, was left to the self-regulatory balance of power between the formal and informal provincial authorities.

Although distinctive in its appearance, the medieval town in Bulgaria did not display any unique social order different from that of its environment. Qualitatively, its social structure consisted of the same elements as those present in the countryside, albeit in intensified and concentrated proportions: landowners and merchants, tax-privilege holders and *paroikoi*, artisans and agriculturists, monasteries and churches, wealthy dynatoi,¹⁸ and a large number of people belonging to the middle (*mezoi*) and lower classes (*mikroi*). It was a community headed by a clerical leader (bishop) and/or by a political ruler (*kephale*), appointed by the central power, and dominated by a small group of aristocratic families. The social structure of the late medieval Bulgarian town, as examined throughout *Chapter 3*, did not differ from that of the Italian and Dalmatian cities either in terms of concentration of landowners and wealthy people or in terms of predominance of artisanship over the agricultural activities.

The shift of the function of the towns, manifested through the change of their physical appearance, led to additional expansion of the urban centers, attracting now significant numbers of the population from the country, and to the primary concerns of the *Chapter 4*: the shift from a land-based, state-commanded economy to a public economy of exchange; the formation of a regional trade network; and of the creation of a local merchant class, concentrated in urban centers and unrelated to agriculture and state offices. Two main avenues of approach are undertaken throughout the *Chapter 4* for the fulfillment of this task: an analysis of the driving forces behind Balkan policy-making and an examination of the coin production and circulation in Bulgaria.

¹⁸ Formally and informally powerful people.

The analysis of the paradigm of regional Balkan politics in the course of thirteenth and fourteenth century offers a revaluation of another long reigning assumption in Byzantine historiography – that the Byzantine socio-economic model did not perpetuate the interest and involvement of its political leadership in market activities.

Quite the opposite, *Chapter 4* proves that the eleventh century aristocratic maxima, articulated by Kekaumenos, “to live off one’s own,” had disappeared by the opening of the fourteenth century. The study of the motivation behind regional policy-making discloses not only the complete dominance of the ambition of political leadership to capture trade centers for the purpose of extending their control over merchants and over routes of inland and maritime trade in regional policymaking, but also the personal participation of political authority at the highest level in market activities. The local markets of goods, land, capital, and labor started to manifest their integrational role in the economy. Byzantium, Bulgaria and the Balkan inlands, in general, become thus part of the much broader open economy that marked the end of the medieval period.

Second, the analysis of coin production and circulation throughout the observed period demonstrates that the involvement of Bulgaria in the intercontinental trade that was run and dominated by the Italian maritime city-states was a natural realization of the aggregated surplus in agriculture at the local level, in the context of a highly monetized and market-oriented regional economy. In its turn, the participation in international trade gave further impetus to domestic economic growth. The examination of monetary volume and turnover in thirteenth-to-fourteenth century Bulgaria reveals that the domination of copper coins of small denomination, the means of exchange for petty local trade, was gradually giving way to the silver coins that were more suitable for long-distance trade.

The shift from a state-commanded, land-based economy to a public economy of exchange and the growth of a local social group of trade actors had its culmination towards the end of the fourteenth century. It is manifested through the participation of the local merchants in money production that complemented the state's inadequate supply of a means of exchange in order to safeguard their business interests by reducing the scale of barter. The economic power of this social group matched and even exceeded the resources of the state.

The process of decreasing the role of state in economy, however, had its negative implications. It constantly weakened the state, which had now difficulty in maintaining its traditional centralism, not only in Bulgaria, but also in the entire Balkan region. It was unable to impose its will on those to whom, of its own free will or by coercion, it granted privileges or a status of semi-independence. By means of a solely fiscal instrument, privileges became a factor for economic polycentrism that finally resulted in the dissolution of the state. Towards the end of the fourteenth century, therefore, the political map of the Balkans, just like that of Germany, became a patchwork of numerous independent and semi-independent political units. Yet, as this study ultimately calls for, it is important to distinguish between the economy on the ground, as it was, and that of an organized political unit. Quite apart from the political collapse of the Byzantine World at the end of the fourteenth and in the course of the fifteenth centuries, its towns continued the trend of economic growth that started from the end of the twelfth century onward.

CHAPTER 2

ECONOMIC HISTORIOGRAPHY OF LATE MEDIEVAL BALKANS. PROBLEMS AND TENDENCIES

Byzantine Economy in the light of Historical Materialism

The debate about “feudalism and feudalization” of the Byzantine Empire became a central issue for Byzantinists after 1945. It started with the attempt of George Ostrogorsky to establish a clear basis for comparison between Byzantium and the West and to surmount the reigning Western perception of Byzantine social development as unalterable and stagnant.¹ Published first in 1940, in German, Ostrogorsky’s *History of the Byzantine State* would remain authoritative text for decades. The drive of Ostrogorsky to adjust Byzantium to the Western typology and terminology had roots stemming from the nineteenth century debate regarding the Byzantine legacy and affected the methodological approach of generations of Soviet, Balkan and Western Byzantinists. The understanding of the Byzantine legacy in Imperial Russia expressed by the idea of the “Third Rome” went far beyond the perimeter of politics since the beginning of the era of Herzen, Chernishevskii and Dobroliubov. However, out of its apocalyptic context it had little political realization. The notion of Byzantine “responsibility” for Russian autocracy, serfdom, and backwardness shared by the Western-oriented Russian *intelligentsia* reflected the Western European liberal negativism regarding Byzantium and its legacy, culminating in the writings of Jacob Fallmerayer and Jacob Burckhardt. The former depicted Byzantinism as the polar opposite of the German *Volksgeist*, the latter, as an antithesis to the spirit of Renaissance.² Later it became part of the propagandistic armament of the Bolsheviks and their enthusiasm for “breaking the fetters of the past.” One can imagine the perspectives opened by the Stalinist

¹ George Ostrogorsky, *The History of The Byzantine State* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1968)

² J. Ph. Fallmerayer, “Rom und Byzanz” in *Europa zwischen Rom und Byzanz* (Bozen: Athesia, 1990); J. Burckhardt, *The Age of Constantine the Great*, tr. M. Hadas (New York: Pantheon Books, 1949)

regime for the scholars interested in Byzantium, the demiurge of such “retrograde” Russian institutions as Orthodoxy and Absolutism. The reign of *Proletcult* (Proletarian Culture) after the October Revolution resulted the elimination in 1928 of the main journal of Byzantine studies, *Vizantiiskii Vremennik*. Writing Byzantine studies in Stalinist Russia became a lonely and risky endeavor, especially during the 1930s. *Cosmopolitanism*, a term narrowly linked with Byzantium and Byzantinism and considered as treason to the Proletarian Revolution, could easily be transferred from the object (Byzantium) to the subject (historian). In a political conjuncture in which history was understood as part of the political propaganda, it could cost the career, or even the life of a scholar. History was constructed conveniently and in service to Marxism-Leninism: Barbaric invaders at the end of Antiquity were considered the progress-bearers, who destroyed slavery in “decaying” Roman Empire. “Continuity” became a forbidden term, fabricated by the “bourgeois” historians. Although *Vizantiiskii Vremennik* reappeared in 1947 and “continuity” was re-introduced in the late 1960s into the vocabulary of Soviet scholars, Byzantine Studies remained an intolerant field, strictly supervised by the regime, always suspicious of any expression of nostalgia for the pre-Revolutionary past. Thus, the development of the Soviet Byzantine Studies would always remain in the realm of inevitability claimed by the Marxist theory. More importantly, Soviet Byzantinists would affect thoroughly the development of the Byzantine Studies within the Soviet satellites, especially Bulgaria.

This does not mean, however, that Marxism-Leninism and its manifestation in historiography, historical materialism, turned all efforts of the Soviet Byzantinists into smoke. Although their general conclusions were doomed to be always in concordance with the historical materialistic concept of feudalism, their investigations, translation and interpretation of the source material would remain very useful for further researches. G. G. Litavrin’s analysis, for

instance, of the survived tax register of the town of Lampsakos in the beginning of the thirteenth century reveals a small provincial town of approximately 1000 dwellers that had seven water mills, leather, textile, ceramic and boat building industry.³ Understandably, Litavrin was reluctant to generalize about urban development, but his survey provides an open avenue for synthesis: the so-displayed characteristics of Lampsakos are similar, for instance, to those of many small provincial towns in Germany at the time.

Unlike Litavrin, Anthony Bryer, who has nothing to do with historical materialism, gives a strikingly different perspective of Lampsakos. Having referred to the same document examined by Litavrin, Bryer presents Lampsakos as a predominantly agricultural town with 163 taxpayers, 113 of which were involved in agriculture.⁴ Unlike Litavrin, Bryer is free to generalize: “The Byzantine city is a concept that hardly survives the seventh century.”⁵ Bryer and Litavrin look at Lampsakos as if through the opposite ends of the same telescope. However, few years later, in his survey on *Trebizond's Matzouka Valey*, Bryer softened his previously biased concept of Byzantine urbanism. He already detected distinctive urban economic development in Trebizond, the town's self-governance and even a late medieval Byzantine bourgeoisie.⁶

Unfortunately, Litavrin's synthesis, as demonstrated in “Bulgaria and Byzantium in XI-XII centuries” is not only helpless but also harmful. In his attempt to stress the importance of class struggle for socio-economic development, he presented the reestablishment of the Second

³ G.G. Litavrin, “Provincialnyi Vizantiiski Gorod na Rubeje XII-XIII vekov” [The provincial Byzantine town on the border of the 12th-13th centuries] in *Vizantiiskii Vremennik*. Vol. 37. (1976). pp.19-20, 25.

⁴ Anthony Bryer, “The Late Byzantine Monastery in Town and Countryside” in Derek Baker, ed. *The Church in Town and Countryside*. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1979).p. 221.

⁵ Ibid. p.221.

⁶ Anthony Bryer, “Continuity and Change in Trebizond's Matzouka/ Maçuka Valey” in *Continuity and Change in Late Byzantine and Early Ottoman society* (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and collection, 1986).pp. 51-91; 261-281.

Bulgarian Empire (1185-1393) as a result of the anti-feudal (anti-Byzantine) class struggle, a concept that catalized the blending of the traditional nation-based Bulgarian historiographical discourse with the new, class-deterministic theory.⁷

It should be noted here that the studies of the Soviet Byzantinists were not pioneering works, but continued the work of pre-Revolutionary Russian Byzantinists concerned with the nature of the Byzantine state and its economic development: V. Vasilevskii, F. Uspenskii, P. Jakovenko, B. Panchenko and P. Bezobrazov. However, in general, the typical manner of research during the formative period of the Byzantine studies (1870-1917) was translation of primary texts from Greek, without any definite fervor for synthesizing and linking the politics to economy. Yet, L. Petit's monastic *typika*, the translations of S. Pétridès, A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, V. Benešević and A. Dmitrievsky, published through the Russian Archaeological Institute in Constantinople or *Vizantiiskii Vremennik*, still remain the best current editions of original Byzantine documents and basic texts for research the Byzantine economic history.

This first generation of Russian Byzantinists explained the peculiarities of Byzantine economic development "through the state protectionist policy on the smallholders in the context of flourishing towns."⁸ For the first time a serious effort for explaining the peculiarities of Byzantine economic development was attempted. The zeal of the Russian Byzantinists was matched in the West largely by German historians. The translations and editions of Byzantine texts by Fr. Miklosich and J. Müller, Ph. Meyer, A. Heisenberg and W. Nissen, just like those of

⁷ G. G. Litavrin, *Bolgaria i Vizantia v XI-XII vv.* [Bulgaria and Byzantium, 11th- 12th centuries] (Moscow, 1960); "Krestianstvo Zapadnoi i Iugozapadnoi Bolgarii, XI-XII vv." [Peasantry in West and Southwest Bulgaria, 11th-12th centuries] in *Zbornik Instituta Slavianoovedenii AN S.S.S.R.* Vol. 14. (1956).

⁸ A. Kazhdan, *Derevnia i Gorod v Vizantii, IX- X vv.* [Village and town in Byzantium, 9th-10th centuries] (Moscow: AN SSSR, 1960).p 12.

their Russian counterparts, are still indispensable sources for researches in Byzantine history today.

For Sjuzumov, Gorianov and other Soviet Byzantinists and their followers, feudalism originated in free peasant communities and was firmly established in the tenth-eleventh centuries.⁹ From this time onward, the social development of Byzantium was determined by the class struggle of gradually enserfed peasantry and marginalized elements against their “oppressors.” The Ottoman conquest, accordingly, was conceptualized as a failure of the central powers in the Eastern Balkans to employ the economic and human resources of the towns, which, due to “belated” feudalism, did not succeed to develop autonomous political structures. In sum, the concept of historical materialists for the nature of state and direction of social development of Byzantium is embodied in the title of M. Siuziumov’s article “Bor’ba za Puti Razvitia Feodal’nyih Otnoshenia v Vuzantii” (Struggle for direction of development of feudal relations in Byzantium).¹⁰

Siuziumov stressed the importance of the growth of the commercial and artisanal activities, linking this question to the extension of feudal social relations. Focused mainly on urban development between the seventh and the eleventh centuries, Siuziumov denied the link between economic decline and depopulation of the urban centers in Byzantium in seventh century and rejected any similarity regarding the guild organizations between Byzantium and Western Europe. Loyal to the strict and punctual Marxist axiom of the dependence of the

⁹ B. T. Gorianov, *Pozdnevizantiiskii Feudalism* [The Late Byzantine Feudalism] (Moscow: AN SSSR., 1962)

¹⁰ M. Siuziumov, “Bor’ba za Puti Razvitia Feodal’nyih Otnoshenia v Vuzantii” [Struggle for direction of development of feudal relations in Byzantium] in M. Siuziumov, *Vizantiiskie Etiudy* (Ekaterinburg: Izdatel’sstvo Uralskogo Universiteta, 2002).pp. 305-326.

political “superstructure” upon the economic “base” he linked too closely the “economic decline” in eleventh century to the “political crisis of Manzikert.”¹¹

According to Boris Gorianov, whose field of specialization was the late Byzantine feudalism and town, the economy of Byzantium in the concluding centuries shrank in agriculture, trade and urban industry. In his earlier works, he claimed that the peculiarities of Byzantine feudalism were expressed through the continuity of the urban industry and trade throughout the entire Byzantine history.¹² To the best of my knowledge, he never came back to this idea. He detected a decline in the Byzantine urban industry and trade, but he admitted certain progress in development of some crafts and monetization of economy. This partial progress, however, did not lead to an emergence of pre-capitalistic relations in industry: craft guilds and trade organizations. Quite naturally, according to him, the political expression of this decline resulted in the Ottoman conquest of the Byzantine Empire.¹³

Alexander Kazhdan is a special case among Soviet Byzantinists. Because of his personal struggle with historical materialism resulting in his departure from both Soviet historical theory and the Soviet Union (1978), it is difficult to summarize his conceptualizing of Byzantine economy. However, in his Soviet period he brought a new general view on the progressing of Byzantine feudalism.¹⁴ He represented the seventh century as a critical period for the development of medieval society, one of profound economic decline, accelerated by the

¹¹ M. Siuziumov, *Kniga Eparcha* [Book of the Eparch] (Sverdlovsk: Izdatl'stvo Gosudarstvenyi Uchebno Pedagogicheskii Instituta, 1949); idem “Rol' Gorodov-Emporiev v Istorii Vizantii” [The role of emporia in Byzantine history] *Viz. Vremennik* Vol. 13, (1958); “Ekonomika Prigorodov Vizantiiskih Krupnykh Gorodov” [The suburban economy of the Byzantine big cities] *Viz. Vremennik* Vol. 11 (1956).

¹² B. T. Gorianov, “Vozstanie Zilotov v Vizantii 1342-1349,” *Izvestia Akademii Nauk SSSR*. Vol. 3. (1947), p. 93.

¹³ B. T. Gorianov, *Pozdnevizantiiskii Feudalism* [Late Byzantine feudalism] (Moscow: AN S. S. S. R., 1962)

¹⁴ Alexander Kazhdan, *Derevnja i Gorod v Vizantii, IX-X vv* [Village and Town in Byzantium, 9th -10th centuries] (Moscow: AN S. S. S. R., 1960)

contraction of towns, with a subsequent revival in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Kazhdan used a wide range of literary sources to counter the view that the Comnenian period was a time of steady decline. Instead, he argued that the twelfth century was a period of prosperity of both urban and agricultural economy. Constantinople lost its monopoly in the production of luxury goods and especially silk and there appeared to be an economic shift away from Constantinople to the provinces, although the capital still retained the control of production of luxury goods.¹⁵ This process, according to Kazhdan, did not bring up a new type of town economy or ideology. Cautious attitudes to the market prevailed and, in contrast to the West, provincial towns failed to develop their own bourgeois identity. Instead, they were dominated by local magnates and administrators. Kazhdan's treatment of "feudalization" of Byzantine society produces confusing signals. His combination of economic growth and increased tendency towards bigger dependence of the peasants demonstrates the complete theoretical perplexity of his transitional period of departure from historical materialism. Although his views remained within the frame of theoretical Marxism, he completely abandoned historical materialism. It is hard to believe, however, that his statement after his departure from the Soviet Union that "the growth of the towns of the Byzantine World, starting from the twelfth century on, was not in conflict with the feudal system,"¹⁶ was not influenced by the outgoing debate in the West about the role of the towns in socio-economic development. It seems that Kazhdan opposed the theory of M. M. Postan and Maurice Dobb concerning the medieval towns as "non-feudal islands in a feudal sea" or "outposts of capitalism" that pulled up behind them the social changes and economic advance," and accommodated the idea, more clearly expressed by Philip Abrams, that the towns

¹⁵ A. Kazhdan, *People in Power in Byzantium. An Introduction to Modern Byzantine Studies* (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks, 1982); idem, *Change in Byzantine Culture and Literature of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*. (Berkeley: UC Press, 1985).

¹⁶ A. Kazhdan, *Change in Byzantine Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1985).p.17.

are actually concentrated and intensified reflections of their larger socio-economic environment.¹⁷ As for the agricultural socio-property relations, he had never reviewed his previous concepts expressed in *Derevnja i Gorod v Vizantii* and *Agrarnyie Otnoshenia v Vizantii*.¹⁸ Kazhdan remained silent about the shift in the economic structure of the Byzantine society, illustrated by Paul Lemerle and, later, by Gilbert Dagron, Jack Lefort, Anegiliki Laiou and Nicholas Oikonomides.¹⁹ The shift in the management of rural economy substituted one manager, the state, with another, the large-estate owner, with evidently better results. For the agricultural economy in general it brought out bigger surplus that fueled trade and industry. On the other hand, the protection from the secondary taxes (*exkoussia*) of a privileged estate, (corvée and other services to the state), presumably covered also its *paroikoi*, who in fact did manage to use it to escape some of the extraordinary fiscal obligations. This enabled the landowner who held an *exkoussia* to offer better tax conditions to his tenants, and he could, thus, attract to his estate the workforce he wanted and accelerate the economic growth. Unfortunately, at this early moment of his scholarly development Kazhdan still maintained the view of defining *paroikoi* as *practically bound to the land* despite his avoidance of direct usage of Western medieval terminology.

¹⁷ M. M. Postan, *The Medieval Economy and Society* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1975).p.212; Maurice Dobb, *Studies of the Development of Capitalism* (London: Routledge, 1946); Philip Abrams, "Towns and Economic Growth: Some Theories and Problems," in Ph. Abrams and E. A. Wrigley, eds., *Towns in Societies: Essays in Economic History and Historical Sociology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978),pp. 9-33

¹⁸ A. Kazhdan, *Derevnja i Gorod v Vizantii, IX-X vv*; idem, *Agrarnyie Otnoshenia v Vizantii XIII-XIV vv*, [Agricultural relations in Byzantium 13th-14th centuries] (Moscow: A.N. SSSR, 1952).

¹⁹ Jacques Lefort, "The Rural Economy, Seventh-Twelfth Centuries;" A. Laiou, "The Agrarian Economy, Thirteenth- Fifteenth Century. N. Oikonomides, "The Role of the Byzantine State in Economy;" G. Dagron, "The Urban Economy, Seventh-Twelfth centuries" in *The Economic History of Byzantium: from the seventh trough the fifteenth centuries*. Ed in chief A. Laiou (Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington, D. C, 2002).

The intra-historical materialistic discourse about characteristics of the late Byzantine/ Balkan town was centered predominantly on two problems. The first was the fruitless attempt to create some Marxist instrumental town typology, by which, according to V. Hrochova, the Byzantine/ Balkan town could be “scientifically explored.”²⁰ Almost every author’s introduction to studies concerning Byzantine/Balkan town reveals an attempt for typologizing, usually employing only geographic or demographic criteria.

The other main problem attracting scholars’ attention was the town’s guild as an indication of socio-political emancipation of the urban population. The hypothesis that guilds existed (although in some modified form) in the late Byzantine/Balkan economies was discussed mostly within the circle of the Soviet scholars grouped around the University of Sverdlovsk and the journal *Antichnaja Drevnost i Srednie Veka*. For the Western Byzantinists the question of whether the guild existed in late medieval Byzantium was never raised. The main proponent of guild existence was V. Smetanin, who based his claim on two weak pieces of evidence: Georgii Akropolit’s mention of “producing for payments,” and the letters of Demetrius Kydones, who refers to some discontent of the artisanal wage laborers in Constantinople in 1372 that created disorder in the city.²¹ His opponents in the debate were I. Medvedev and V. Zavrazhin, who criticized Smetanin’s thesis.²² Unfortunately, the debate focused on the political unit called Byzantine Empire, and the evidence of guild manufactures in neighboring Bulgaria and Serbia, with their probable analogues in the Byzantine legal system was ignored. The strongest evidence

²⁰ Vera Hrochová, *Bizantska Mestá ve 13-15 století* (Prague: Universita Karlova, 1967), p. 9.

²¹ Smetanin. V. A, “Osobenosti Gorodskogo Remesla v Vizantii XIII-XIV vekov i Vozstanie naemnyh Rabochih v Constantinipole” [Peculiarities of Byzantine urban craft production and the rebellion of the wage laborers in Constantinople] in *Srednevekovi Gorod* (Saratov; Izdatelstvo Saratovskii Universitet, 1981)

²² V. Zavrazhin, “ K Voprosu o Pozdnevizantiiskoi Manifakture [About the question of late Byzantine manufacture] in *Srednevekovi Gorod* (Saratov; Saratov: Izdatelstvo Saratovskii Universitet, 1981); I. Medvedev, K Tak Nazyvaemaja Vizantiiskaia Manifaktura [About the so-called Byzantine manufacture] in Ibid.

is contained in the *Law for the Mining of Stefan Lazarevich* and in its Bulgarian copy.²³ Some additional evidence was brought up for Bulgaria by St. Lishev, V Giuzelev and S. Georgieva about the organizational forms of the production of sgraffito pottery, iron making, building industry and trade.²⁴ Moreover, the existence of guilds is indisputably attested in the Ottoman period. The main information about the guilds, their organizational structures, prices and practices is contained in the registers of the shariat courts and the Ottoman *kanunname* from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.²⁵ Being aware of the degree and extent to which the Ottomans borrowed and applied Byzantine legal practices, the existence of fur-tailor and shoemaker guilds in Sofia in 1520, cloth-maker guilds in Plovdiv in 1570, or iron makers in Samokov in 1572 could hardly be explained as Ottoman innovations. In other words, the sources unequivocally reveal a historiographical problem, according to which the guild manufactures in Byzantium ceased to exist after the liquidation of the Byzantine government of Constantinople in 1204 and disappeared for almost three centuries. In the late fifteenth century, they emerged again in the economic context of the Ottoman Empire.

The lack of a politically active guild manufacture, however, was not an exclusively Byzantine phenomenon. Quite similar was the role and behavior of the guild manufactures in Castile's urban social structure, where political rights were granted to urban dwellers according

²³ *Zakon o Rudnicima Despota Stefan Lazarevicha*, [Mining Law of Stefan Lazarević] ed. by N. Radojčić (Belgrade: Naučno Delo, 1962).

²⁴ V. Gjuzelev, "Novi Dokumenti za Turgoviata na Srednovekovna Bulgaria" [New documents for the trade of medieval Bulgaria] in *Srednovekovna Bulgaria v Svetlinata na Novi Izvori* (Sofia: Narodna Prosveta, 1986); S. Georgieva, "Za Keramichното Proizvodstvo v Srednovekoven Preslav" [The ceramic production in medieval Preslav] in *Istoricheski Pregled* Vol.6 (1953) pp. 6-18; Strashimir Lishev, *Bulgarskiat Srednovekoven Grad* [The medieval Bulgarian town] (Sofia: BAN, 1970)

²⁵ Zdravko Pliakov, "Za Reglamentaciata na Gradskoto Zanaitski Proizvodstvo v Bulgarskite Zemi, XV-XVII vek," [Regulations of urban guild manufactures in Bulgaria, XV-XVII centuries] *Izvestia na Instituta po Istoria pri BAN* Vol. 21 (1970),pp. 87-148

to their obligations to the fisc, as tax-exemptions, privileged individuals but not as producers.²⁶

The Zealot Revolution in Thessalonike in 1342-49 also attained the attention of the historical materialists but its class struggle was conceptualized as part of the intra-feudal civil war in Byzantium between the economically empowered provincial aristocracy and central power in Constantinople, completely different in character from the Ciompi uprising in Florence.²⁷

The Development of Bulgarian Medieval Historiography and Archaeology

Bulgarian historiography in general was highly politicized well before the entering of the country into the Soviet orbit. From its beginning in the late nineteenth century historiography in Bulgaria was developed in concordance with the idea reigning among nationalist-liberal states in Europe that history is an active ideological, political, and cultural instrument in social life. Therefore, the periodization of Bulgarian historiography reflects the stages of political life in the country. The reigning irredentism in the pre- World War II period centered historical attention on the medieval period in an attempt to build strong national consciousness and self-esteem based on historical evidences.²⁸ Influenced by the German School, Bulgarian historiography followed the dominant positivist and romantic trends in constructing a general treatment of Bulgarian history, although some marginal Marxist, psychological, and racist views existed as well.

The change of political conjuncture after the World War II was, naturally, followed by the imposition of Marxist methodology in historiography, which brought about more intensive

²⁶ Pablo Sanchez Leon, "Castile, 1400-650" in *Town and Country in Europe, 1300-1800*, ed. by S. E. Epstein (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001).p. 287.

²⁷ Ihor Sevcenko, "The Zealot Revolution and the Supposed Genoese Colony in Thessalonica" in *Society and Intellectual Life in Late Byzantium. Essays by Ihor Ševčenko* (London: Variorum Reprints. 1981).

²⁸ V. Zlatarski *Istoria na Bulgarskata Durjava prez Srednite Vekove* in 3 Vol.[History of the Bulgarian State in the Middle Ages] (Sofia: Durzhavna Pechatnica, 1927 - 1940) ; Iv. Snegarov, *Istoria na Ohridskata Arhiepiskopia* [History of the Ohrid's Archbishopric] 3 Vols. (Sofia: Gutenberg, 1924- 1932); J. Ivanov, *Bulgarski Starini iz Makedonia* [Bulgarian Antiques in Macedonia] (Sofia: BAN, 1931) P. Mutaſchiev, *Istoria na Bulgarskia Narod*[History of Bulgarian people] in 2 Vols. (Sofia: BAN, 1940-43); N. Mushmov, *Monetite i Pechatite na Bulgarskite Tsare* [Coins and seals of the Bulgarian Tsars] (Sofia: Izdanie na NM., 1924).

researches on social and economic history, underestimated in the pre-World War II period. As in other Soviet satellites, the purity of historical materialistic dogma was controlled not only by the Bulgarian Communist censorship, but was also “brotherly supervised” through the “constructive critiques” of the Soviet Byzantinists. In his first scholar’s steps in exploring Byzantine “feudalism,” for instance, D. Angelov was rebuked by A. Kazhdan for the former’s “deviations” towards a certain idealization of Byzantine society, the lack of stress on the centrality of the class struggle and “inappropriate” associations between the concept of feudalism and the growth of urban economy.²⁹ That resulted in establishing a strict sense of self-censorship by Angelov in his scholar’s career, a sense, reproduced not only by the Bulgarian historians but also by the entire national intelligentsia.

The combination of the pre-Communist nationalist historiographical tradition with imposed class-based Marxist methodology resulted in producing confusing signals in the general treatment of late medieval Bulgarian history. The period of Byzantine rule in the Bulgarian territories (1018-1185), was conceptualized as opposition between two notions: Byzantine/feudal/reactionary and Bulgarian/ anti-feudal/progressive elements. Byzantine rule was, therefore, depicted as a “yoke,” whose rejection furthered class struggle against feudalism.³⁰ Litavrin’s concept of the “anti-feudal” character of Bulgarian uprising in 1185 was, respectively, adopted by the majority of the Bulgarian leading medievalists.³¹ The Bogomils’

²⁹ A. Kazhdan, *Agrarnye Otnoshenia v Vizantii, XII- XIV vv* [Agricultural relations in Byzantium, 13th -14th centuries] (Moscow: AN SSSR., 1952).p. 19

³⁰ P. Petrov, *Vazstanieo na Peter i Asen* [The uprising of Peter and Asen] (Sofia: Nauka i Izkustvo., 1970)

³¹ P. Petrov, “Vazstaniето na Ivalio, 1277-1280” [The uprising of Ivailo] *Godishnik na Sofiiskiat Universitet* vol.49 (1956).pp. 173-260; Al. Burmov, “Feodalismat v Srednovekovna Bulgaria” [Feudalism in Medieval Bulgaria] *Istoricheski Pregled* No2 (1945-46).pp.157-171; L. Ionchev, “Za Haractera na Manastirskoto Zemevladenie v Macedonia” [The character of the monasterial landowning in Macedonia] *Izvestia na Instituta po Istoria* No 22 (1972).pp 121-182. B. Primov, *Bugrit.: Kniga za Pop Bogomil i negovote posledovateli* [The Buogres: a book for priest Bogomil and his followers] (Sofia: OF, 1970).

heresy, despite its anti-state (hence anti-Bulgarian) character, was interpreted as progressive since it was directed against “feudalism” and Orthodoxy.³² The portraying of Bulgarian people as bearers of the progress against Byzantine feudalism was solidified additionally by the interpretation of the 1277-8 uprising in Bulgaria as “the first anti-feudal uprising in the world.”³³

The invention and usage of inflated qualifications as “first” and “earliest” by Bulgarian Marxist historiography was indispensable in constructing and validating socialist mythology. But the ultimate sanction for *the artifacts of glorification* was held by archaeology. Thus, if history became an important ideological weapon in the class struggle against capitalism, archaeology would be the ultimate arbiter providing the material artifacts to legitimate historiographical concepts. The nationalist character of pre-Communist cultural-history archaeology became easily integrated into the new class-centered demands of historical materialism. The main ideological clichés in medieval historiography were built, thus, around two major themes: the history of the anti- orthodox and anti-state (i.e. “progressive” and “anti-feudal”) sect of Bogomils and of the successful uprising of the swineherd (therefore “anti-feudal”) Ivajlo in 1277, both glorifying Bulgaria as a “cradle of progress” in contrast to the reactionist Byzantine Empire. The symbiosis between nationalism and historical materialism resulted, therefore, in constructing the general view that the existence of medieval Bulgarian state, as suggested by Litavrin’s lead in the subject, was as a response to the aggression of Byzantine feudalism and perfidy. The period of Byzantine rule in the Bulgarian lands (1018-1185), was considered, accordingly, as a period of economic decline and feudal oppression: an assertion, sanctioned by the “proper” analysis of

³² D. Angelov, *Bogomilstvoto v Bulgaria* [Bogomil’s movement in Bulgaria] (Sofia: BAN, 1969); B. Primov, *Bugrite, Kniga za Pop Bogomil i negovote posledovateli* [Buogres. A book for priest Bogomil and his followers] (Sofia: OF, 1970).

³³ P. Petrov, “Vyzstanieto na Ivalio, 1277-1280” [The uprising of Ivailo] *Godishnik na Sofiiskia Universitet* vol.49 (1956).pp. 173-260.

archaeological artifacts. S. Georgieva and R. Peeva, for instance, supported this ideological construction by analyzing the decline in quality of the bronze necklaces found together with coins of Manuel I (1143-1180) in the necropolis of medieval town of Lovetch.³⁴ To the same “correct” outcome came, M. Stancheva and L. Doncheva- Petkova, who analyzing the pottery and urban architecture of Sofia from the eleventh century, concluded that during the period of the “Byzantine yoke” the building activity and town’s population declined. Surprisingly, the authors did not take under consideration the pottery and architecture from the 1100s, but only that from the eleventh century.³⁵

The role of socialist archaeology as an ideological arbiter could be viewed, as well, in the priorities of the large-scale investigations: medieval capitals instead of regular provincial towns, citadels instead of suburbs. The exploration of the town’s hinterland was exclusively accidental work. Even the best-studied capital Turnovo lacked any adequate treatment of its physical boundaries, while its internal fortified part was fully investigated. The medieval rural settlements, often built on the top of the ancient towns, were neglected in order to reveal the more promising cultural lay of antiquity. Palinology was a method never applied by socialist archaeology; therefore, the ratio between agricultural and nonagricultural activity of towns’ population cannot be estimated.

However, Bulgarian archaeologists, as Bulgarian historians, did not constitute a homogenous group of scholars. Although in concordance with the official interpretation of Bulgarian feudalism as independently developed, G. Cankova-Petkova insisted upon the lack of

³⁴ Sonia Georgieva and Raina Peeva, “Srednovekoven Bulgarski Nekropol kraj Lovetch i Nakitite Namereni v Nego.” [Medieval Bulgarian necropolis near Lovetch and the adornments found there] *Izvestija na Arheologicheskia Institut* Vol. 20 (1955).pp. 511-556.

³⁵ Maria Stancheva, “Sofia au moyen âge à la lumière de nouvelles études archéologiques,” in *Byzantinobulgarica* No. 5 (1978).pp. 215; M. Stancheva and L. Doncheva – Petkova, “Sur la surface habitée de Sredec au XI-XIVes,” *Izvestia na Arheologicheskia Institut* Vol. 35 (1979).pp. 124-133.

judicial immunity in the legal practices of the Second Bulgarian Empire.³⁶ Her conclusion, however, was intended as a critique of the “feudal” theory of Ostrogorsky and in agreement with Kazhdan’s confusing concept of defining *paroikoi* as practically if not also legally, bound to the land.³⁷

Contrary to the official line of interpreting the period of Byzantine rule in the Bulgarian lands, St. Lishev, supported by written and numismatic data, was the first to demonstrate the significant growth of urban and agricultural economy in the Balkans at the time, suggesting that the Byzantine rule rather facilitated than deter the economic development in the territories under its governing.³⁸ A decade later, Lishev’s assumptions were proved by not a few monographs exploring the main Bulgarian urban centers in the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries that displayed a tendency of attracting considerable amount of rural populations. Fortresses turned into trading towns with expanding suburbs, market zones, and industry activities. Unfortunately, since the indications for urban economic growth in the context of political polycentrism could not get an adequate explanation by historical materialism, Lishev had to compromise with the official historiographical dogma by resorting to the Marx’s mystical division of labor between town and country. After presenting serious evidence for the change of the function of late medieval town, from an administrative and military fortress into a market and productive center, he concluded that the late medieval Bulgarian town remained somewhat underdeveloped because of “uncomplete division of labor between town and country.”

³⁶ G. Tsankova-Petkova, *Za Agrarnite Otnoshenia v Srednovekovna Bulgaria, XI-XIIIv* [Feudalism in Medieval Bulgaria, 11th -13th centuries] (Sofia: BAN, 1964).

³⁷ A. Kazhdan, *Agrarnye Otnoshenia v Vizantii, XII- XIV vv* [Agricultural relations in Byzantium, 13th -14th centuries; idem, *Derevnja i Gorodv Vizantii, IX-X vv* [Village and Town in Byzantium, 9th -10th centuries].

³⁸ Str. Lishev, *Bulgarskiat Srednovekoven Grad* [The medieval Bulgarian town] (Sofia, BAN, 1970).

Along with trusted authorities that provided the Party-line in archaeology, there were numerous regular archaeologists, mostly from provincial archaeological museums, that built a rich corpus of archaeological data. The critical mass of evidence resulted in the 1980s in numerous monographs on various towns and the emergence of numismatics as a separate discipline. Coinciding with the moral crisis of socialism that started in the late 1970s, this corpus of new archeological data contributed to altering the relations between history and politics as well. Historical materialism continued to be the only theoretical instrument; the culture-historical paradigm in archaeology remained untouched by processual and post-processual trends in Western archaeology. History, however, ceased to be “an assistant in the class struggle against capitalism.” Allegiance to the political doctrine became superficially manifested in lip service introductions after which the remainder of the works consisted most often of solid studies uncontaminated by ideological clichés. Unfortunately, this silent resistance to the Party demands “for being more politically engaged” did not facilitate the emergence and adoption of some new theoretical views. The reflex for ideological isolation drove archeology in late socialist Bulgaria towards a descriptive and atheoretical manner of work; e.g. the survey of M. Kharbova on development of urban planning and spatial morphology of the late medieval Bulgarian town or the multivolume collection of descriptive, almost travel-guide type articles on the same subject edited by V. Giuzelev.³⁹

Political isolation became so deeply rooted that even the collapse of Communism did not bring any substantial change. If the lifting of the ideological barriers and opening of the archives for the so-called “zones of silence” in historiography brought about an explosion of works

³⁹ M. Kharbova, *Ukrepeniat Bulgarski Srednovekoven Grad, XIII-XIV v* [The fortified Blgarian medieval town, 13th -14th centuries] (Sofia: Tekhnika, 1979); V. Giuzelev, ed, *Bulgarski Srednovekovni Gradove i Kreposti* [Bulgarian medieval towns and fortresses] (Varna: Georgi Bakalov, 1981)

reevaluating the concepts of historical materialism, archaeology would remain stagnant and isolated. Overwhelmed by a deep financial crisis and post-Communist social turmoil, archaeology in Bulgaria, besides some accidental piece-meal works (largely sponsored from abroad) ceased to carry out large-scale projects. Unfortunately, the financial hindrance for practical archaeology did not redirect the intellectual energy to new theoretical searches. Even today Bulgarian archeology remains in a deep theoretical vacuum and isolation from the main currents in the field.

Western Historiographical Approaches to Late Byzantine Economy

Ostrogorsky's concept of feudalism was an object of criticism not only by historical materialists but also by Western Byzantinists. His model was based on two institutions, to which he later devoted special studies: the *pronoia* and feudal immunity.⁴⁰ He regarded *pronoia* as the Byzantine equivalent of the Western fief and it was only with the widespread adoption of this institution by Alexis I Comnenus (1081-1118) that Byzantine society became fully feudalized. In Ostrogorsky's view, Byzantium survived the crisis of the seventh and eighth centuries owing to the greater importance of communities of independent peasants in this period and to the formation of a new category of military lands: peasants' farms with an obligation to provide soldiers for the state. By the tenth century the rise of the provincial feudals threatened the social balance achieved by the central power. According to him, the increasing subordination of the peasants by the large landowners undermined the strength of the central authority and, accordingly, much of Asia Minor was lost to the Seljuks in the eleventh century. Viewing feudalism as a negative process, Ostrogorsky assumed that independent peasants disappeared by

⁴⁰ G. Ostrogorsky *Pronjia. Prilog Istorii Feudalizma u Vizantii i Iujnoslavjanskim zemliama* [Pronia. Applying history of feudalism in Byzantium and Southern Slavic lands] (Belgrade: Posebna izdanja Srpska Akademija Nauka, 1951); idem "K Istorii Imuniteta v Vizantii [About history of immunity in Byzantium] *Viz. Vremennik*, Vol. 13. (1958). Pp.55-106.

the end of the eleventh century. They became dependants either of the state or of the large landowners.

Ostrogorsky's theory was seriously challenged by Paul Lemerle, whose arguments became a cornerstone for a new interpretation of the Byzantine legal and economic history.⁴¹ Lemerle, first questioned the similarities between *pronoia* and the fief and found them to be very superficial. According to him, many important features associated with the *pronoia*, such as vassalage and the oath of fealty, did not occur with the *pronoia*, which was a simple attribution of fiscal revenues and temporary ownership of the land in return for military service. The major objection to Ostrogorsky's interpretation was that the *pronoia* was a much more marginal phenomenon in Byzantium than the fief in Western Europe. The *pronoia* grant involved only fiscal revenues, not jurisdictional rights over *paroikoi* and although there is evidence for the existence of aristocratic retinues, the pyramidal effect of sub-infeudation was absent in Byzantium. Further, in his counter-argumentation Lemerle notices that the difference between state *paroikoi* and independent peasant is somehow blurred, an assertion that later was confirmed and developed by Jacques Lefort and Angeliki Laiou.⁴² However, regarding the eleventh century as a period of demographical decline after the first decades of economic expansion, Lemerle defined it as a transitional period of agricultural economy preparing the shift in the land management that gathered momentum during the course of twelfth century.

⁴¹ Paul Lemerle, *The Agrarian History of Byzantium from the Origins to the Twelfth Century: the sources and problems* (Galway, Ireland : Galway University Press, 1979); However, this book is not a new work but a new version of Lemerle's previous series of articles that appeared in *Review Historique* (1958) and *Cahiers de Civilization Médiévale* (1959).

⁴² Jacques Lefort, "The Rural Economy, Seventh–Twelfth Centuries." in *The Economic History of Byzantium: from the seventh through the fifteenth centuries*. Ed in chief A. Laiou (Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington, D. C, 2002).pp. 231-314; A. Laiou, "The Agrarian Economy, Thirteenth- Fifteenth Century" in *Ibid.* pp. 311-375.

The main problem with the concept of feudalism in Byzantium and the Eastern Balkans is the question of the peasant's property rights and their place in the system of large estate and state land management. Assuming bondage as a *per se* condition for the feudal surplus extraction, the advocates of feudalism and feudalization in Byzantium often simplified the source interpretation. The frequent evidence of *paroiki* not dwelling on the land given to them by their landlords was simply omitted or explained as exclusions, or ambiguous and unclear information. Evidence for individuals of various social rank and profession, who voluntarily chose to become paroikoi were explained as an evidence for exerted extraeconomic coercion not as an economically incentive recruit. The relation between the peasant and the state was long accepted as opposing the relation between the *pronoia* holder and peasant. Thus, the transmission of the fiscal responsibilities for collecting revenues, the basic character of *pronoia*, from the state to private individuals was treated as *feudalization* of Byzantine economy. It was a victory of the large landowners over the peasantry and the state power. Furthermore, the advocates of the late feudalization of the Byzantine World never realized that the Byzantine state treated equally the property rights of the state's and large estate's peasants. The confusion arises from the fact that no little part of the large estate peasants did not possessed enough or any land and were, therefore, compelled to rent in exchange for money or labor, a piece of land from the estate owner. Even more, while the *pronoia* was never granted with the right to be permanently transmitted to another individual, the rights of the peasant over the land, be they state's or *pronoia*'s peasants, to be sold, were never questioned. Not only that, but the state never abandoned its role of arbiter between the *pronoia* holder and its *paroikoi*, controlling the taxes and labor services of the latter not to exceed the prescribed amount. It is important to notice for the debate about Byzantine "feudalization" that another basic characteristic of the concept of feudalism, the corvée, along with the military

service, was allowed to be converted into cash payments from the middle of the eleventh century or, in other words, since the appearance of *pronoia*.

Quite naturally, not examining the essence of the landlord- *paroikoi* relation and since the system of tax privileges was adopted comparatively late in Byzantine economy as a widespread fiscal instrument (eleventh-twelfth centuries), the development of feudalism was explained as a late phenomenon that demonstrated the underdeveloped and stagnant character of the Byzantine economy in comparison with its Western counterparts.

The evidence for the underdevelopment of Byzantine economy was found also in the “insignificant scale” of the trade as part of the entire economy expressed through the dominant role of the foreign merchants in Byzantium and its neighboring Orthodox countries during the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries.

The beginning of the 1970’s marks the start of employing numismatics as an instrument for analyzing the trends of Byzantine economy that would change most of its misconceptions. The concurrence, in a relatively short period, of important changes in the structure of the Byzantine state, agriculture, and army with the drastic debasement of the Byzantine nomisma during the reign of Constantine IX Monomachos (1042-1055), followed by the catastrophe at Manzikert in 1071, made the eleventh-twelfth century central for the understanding of late Byzantine economy. Not a little contribution to the shift in the attention of Byzantinists towards eleventh-twelfth centuries was played by the existence of a rich corpus of sources, both primary and secondary, for the period. Therefore, M. Angold, who considered the coinage “the soundest guide to the Byzantine economy,” would exclaim that the debate about the character of

debasement of the Byzantine gold coin was the most important historiographical debate on the Byzantine economy during 1970-1980.⁴³

Philip Grierson was the first to attract scholarly attention to the importance of debasement in the eleventh century.⁴⁴ According to him, the ground for debasement was the unreasonable fiscal policy and extravagancy of Constantine IX. Unlike Grierson, Cecile Morrisson proposed another explanation: that debasement was caused not by a budget deficit caused by the policy of Constantine IX but as result of an increase in the volume of monetary transactions in the empire.⁴⁵ The causes that led to this increase were grounded in the significant extension of the Byzantine territory during the reign of the Macedonian dynasty and to the transformation of the military and fiscal organization, “and probably to a certain growth in production even though for certain reigns, such as those of Theodora or Isaac Comnenus, the immediate financial needs of the imperial finances were the determining factor.”⁴⁶ The main argument of Morrison was that economic growth at the time made debasement a “*devaluation of expansion*” rather than a “*devaluation of crisis*” and justified by the comparison with debasement of the silver penny in Western Europe and Iraqi dinar where the economies also experienced expansion at the time.⁴⁷

Although the economic growth, detected from the eleventh century onward, was admitted by the majority of the economic Byzantinists, M. Hendy, M. Angold and W. Treadgold

⁴³ M. Angold, *The Byzantine Empire, 1025- 1204* (London, New York: Longman, 1985) .pp. 9-10.

⁴⁴ P. Grierson, “The Debasement of the Bezant in the Eleventh Century.” *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* Vol.47 (1954).pp. 379–94.

⁴⁵ Cécile Morrisson, “La Dévaluation de la Monnaie Byzantine au XIe siècle: Essai d’Interprétation.” *Travaux et Memoires* 6 (1976): pp. 6–48.

⁴⁶ Cécile Morrisson, “La Dévaluation de la Monnaie Byzantine au XIe siècle: Essai d’Interprétation.” *Travaux et Memoires* 6 (1976): pp. 6–48.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

questioned “how consciously the imperial government was manipulating the currency as an instrument of economic policy.”⁴⁸

Michael Hendy, a major specialist in Byzantine coin production and circulation, was one of the first to openly claim that the economic history of Byzantine Empire lacked an adequate general treatment. According to Hendy, the general economic development of Byzantium between the ninth and thirteenth century, in all aspects of rural and urban economy, followed the trend of economic expansion visible in Western Europe.⁴⁹ On the other hand, he portrayed the Byzantine economy as *always* dominated by factors that can be termed non-economic.⁵⁰ Up to the radical monetary and administrative changes in the eleventh century, the Byzantine state acted as a primary agent in collecting the surplus in the form of taxes and redistributing it to the army and the civil administration, which on its turn, gave it back to the state as a payment for the offices that the state administrators hold (*rogai*). Trade in Byzantium was always very limited and the market had just a marginal significance. Thus, contrary to the idea that the privileges in trade granted to foreigners were crucial for drying off the Byzantine economy, Hendy offered a different interpretation. The foreigners’ advantage over the local merchants seems considerable when comparing the two merchant classes.⁵¹ However, compared to the economic weight granted to local *pronoia* holders, within the whole system of privileges, the concessions given to the foreign merchant by the Byzantine state seemed insignificant “not exceeding the figures of the tax exemptions of a half-a-dozen Byzantine magnates.”⁵²

⁴⁸ M. Angold, *The Byzantine Empire*, p.9

⁴⁹ M. Hendy, *The Economy, Fiscal Administration and Coinage of Byzantium*. (Northampton: Variorum Press, 1989), p.9.

⁵⁰ Hendy, *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy, c.300–1450*. (Cambridge - New York: Cambridge UP, 1985)

⁵¹ Hendy, *The Economy, Fiscal Administration and Coinage of Byzantium*. p. 26.

The cities are considered to have been centers of consumption rather than of production and the economy was marked by a very low degree of monetization. Money fulfilled only the needs of the state, being distributed in a non-economic manner. Accordingly, debasement in the eleventh century could not be regarded as a conscious manipulation motivated by reasons of economic expansion because of the lack of economic understanding by the rulers in Constantinople.

A clear example of the ambiguous signals of Hendy's "general treatment" of Byzantine economy is, for instance, his interpretation of the investment policy of the Bachkovo Monastery.⁵³ After achieving certain amount of money reserve (10 lb gold = 720 hyperpyra) the monastery authorities immediately invested it in purchasing of land.⁵⁴ Hendy disregards it as an evidence for existence of a land market and an agricultural entrepreneurship but treats it as a sample for market-aversion and a trend to self-subsistence. Unfortunately, Hendy fails to detect the tendency of increased involvement of the monasteries in nonagricultural market activities, the real-estate market in the towns or in some industry and trade activities, demonstrated later by the studies of M. Živojinović and M. Poliakovskaia.⁵⁵ Perhaps A. Bryer is right in his skepticism that no one has ever been able to make a theme out of "Orthodoxy and the rise of Capitalism,"⁵⁶

⁵² Hendy, *The Economy*, p. 26

⁵³ M. Hendy, "The Gornoslav Hoard, the Emperor Frederick I and the Monastery of Bachkovo" in *The Economy, Fiscal Administration and Coinage of Byzantium*. pp. 179-191.

⁵⁴ M. Hendy, *Studies* p. 568

⁵⁵ M. Živojinovic, "The Trade of Mount Athos Monasteries," *ZRVI* 29/30 (1991): 101–116; M. A. Poliakovskaia, "Monastyrskie Vladaenia v Fessalonike i ee Prigorodom" [Monastery possessions in Thessalonike and its suburbs] in idem *Vizantia, Vizantiicyi, Vizantinisti* [Byzantium, Byzantines, Byzantinists] (Ekatirzburg: Izdatel'stvo Uralskogo Universiteta, 2003) pp. 249-272.

⁵⁶ Anthony Bryer, "Continuity and Change in Trebizond's Matzouka/ Maçuka Valey" in *Continuity and Change in Late Byzantine and Early Ottoman society* (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and collection, 1986).p.277

but this is due largely to the ambiguity of the term capitalism, not to some restraints of the Orthodox monastic foundations from the market.

Michael Angold has a similar position to Hendy's interpretation of the general trends of Byzantine economy. Although he detects distinctive economic advance in all aspects of the Byzantine economy, he suspects that "Byzantine emperors were not interested in either economy or commerce."⁵⁷ This claim, shared initially by A. Laiou in her article about the *Byzantine economy in the Mediterranean trade system* was disproved with an appendix to the same article that she added during the time when the article was submitted for publishing. New sources became available that changed Laiou's view. In my opinion, however, not only were the Byzantine emperors involved and interested in trade, but also their example was followed by Bulgarian and Serbian rulers as it is discussed in Chapter IV. Furthermore, Angold's position regarding debasement in Byzantine monetary history, as an economic instrument, strangely changes. In 1975, in his authoritative study about the Nicaean Empire, analyzing the debasement of the gold coin by John III Dukas Vatatzes (1222-1254), he firmly concluded that devaluation of the hyperpyron was made despite the availability of state gold reserves and the growth of agricultural economy and trade. Not only "it was a solution to a lack of a ready cash," (deflation in the context of expanding market) but also "it may have ever been one of the conditions for agricultural economic expansion."⁵⁸ Interestingly, Angold denies similar interpretation for the debasement of the Byzantine gold coin in the eleventh century.⁵⁹

Based on Hendy's analysis and inspired by subtle understanding of Marxism, Alan Harvey attempted a new and quite eclectic approach to the Byzantine economy between 900 and 1200 by

⁵⁷ M. Angold, *The Byzantine Empire*, p.9

⁵⁸ M. Angold, *A Byzantine Government in Exile* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1975), p.119

⁵⁹ M. Angold, *Byzantine Empire* .p.9

offering the idea that the economic growth was not incompatible with the contraction of political power. Harvey claim that the political collapse at the end of the twelfth century was not the result of an economic decline, but quite the opposite: it came from increasing revenues that facilitated the political emancipation of the provincial aristocracy. The other goal of Harvey was to reinstate the authority of Marxism as universal explanatory instrument through broadening the concept of feudalism for explaining the economic development of both Byzantine and Western Europe. Instead of the fruitless attempts of the Soviet Byzantinists, who were desperately looking for signs of Western-type feudalism (the strict hierarchical system of fief, the feudal immunity and serfdom), Harvey placed the state within the role of a main surplus extractor. Theoretically, Harvey simply loosed the ties between the main categories in Marxist social construction, *base* and *superstructure*, allowing mutual primacy of both elements. Not always economy (base) affects superstructure (politics) but also the opposite. His definition of feudalism is also so dubious that it could be equally applicable for defining agricultural capitalism. The direct producers of land were exploited by the state or by the landowning aristocracy through applying some sort of compulsion.⁶⁰ His understanding of Byzantine agricultural economy is a combination of Dölger's gloomy notion of Byzantine agriculture, as a "society overwhelmingly consistent of peasants" with elements of R. Brenner's idea that peasants' production was targeted to self-subsistence and, without a pressure from the outside, they had little incentive to participate in the market. Due to his theoretical adherence to class-centered model, Harvey argued that the highly monetized Byzantine economy had very few means to coerce the peasant into the market. Peasants appeared on the market only to satisfy their minimal needs to obtain cash for fiscal obligations. Money circulation, for Harvey, was some extra-economic issue used

⁶⁰ A. Harvey, *Economic Expansion of the Byzantine Empire, 900-1200* (Cambridge, 1989).p.7

by the state only to make its necessary expenditure, which was predominantly military and administrative.⁶¹ Even the commutation of the corvée into cash was not considered economically stimulating. He referred only to three cases in which peasants dealt with cash until the twelfth century and understandably referred to them as exclusions that could only prove the rule.⁶² Harvey, however, is one of the few Byzantinists who devoted a chapter in his writings to the town-country relation. Towns, although suspected of a certain growth during the last two centuries of Byzantium, just like the rural economy were arenas of activity of landowners, who, due to their privileges, significantly outnumbered the merchant class and dominated the market. Thus, the development of the towns is depicted as a function of the rural economy, which besides making a greater supply of food for the towns, leads to an increase of the revenues of both the state and private landowners and consequently stimulated demand for industrial goods.

An indispensable key for understanding the Byzantine/Balkan socio-economic urban development and its similarities and differences with Western Europe is offered by the studies of Dalmatian coastal towns. The field has been led by Bariša Krekić, whose expertise on his native Dubrovnik remained authoritative for more than fifty years.⁶³ Krekić displayed Dubrovnik or, Ragusa, as a town having always paid tribute to its neighbors in the mainland and the dominant powers in the Adriatic Sea, in order to maintain the supply of goods. However, exactly this political vulnerability became the main source of city's wealth. The city's economic progress, according to Krekić, was due to its equal proximity (or its remoteness) and political balance

⁶¹ Harvey, *Economic Expansion*. p.80

⁶² Ibid.118

⁶³ Bariša Krekić, *Dubrovnik (Raguse) et le Levant au Moyen Age*, Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes (Paris: Mouton, 1961); idem, *Dubrovnik in the 14th & 15th Centuries: A City Between East and West*, (Norman, Oklahoma University Press, 1972); idem, *Dubrovnik, Italy and the Balkans in the Late Middle Ages*, (London Variorum Reprints, 1980); idem, *Urban Society of Eastern Europe in Premodern Times* (editor), (Berkeley-Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1987); idem, *Dubrovnik: A Mediterranean Urban Society 1300-1600*, (Aldershot: Variorum, 1997)

between the dominant powers at certain moments: Byzantine Empire and Venice, Hungary and the Balkan Slavic states and, later, the Ottomans and Austrians.

In terms of concentration of landowners and wealthy people, Dubrovnik, as Krekić demonstrated, displays a social structure quite analogous to that of Byzantine and Italian towns. Krekić called the city's social model "patrician democracy," in which the social hierarchy reflects the economic power of the aristocratic families.⁶⁴ It was a model that became an ideal for the Byzantine provincial nobility during the fourteenth-century civil strife. The aristocracy of Dubrovnik was presented not within the classical Western notion of aristocracy as a landowning hereditary group that monopolizes the links with the central power, but rather in Byzantine terms, as a function of the state, as city's executive officers, having characteristics not of a hereditary, but of a corporate group. This group had the ability to absorb new men and lacked the rigid and inaccessible Western structures of personal dependencies. The parallels with the Byzantine society go even further. The professional organizations of Physicians, Barbers and Pharmacists in Dubrovnik, portrayed as city-state officers whose professional activities were regulated and paid by the government, are quite reminiscent of the *Book of the Eparch*. The only difference in social terms, noticeable between Dubrovnik and fourteenth-century Thessalonike, for instance, was regarding the political governing of the towns. While the *Conislium Rogatorum*, or Senate of Dubrovnik that consisted of thirty to forty prominent patricians had the sovereignty to elect their own ruler, the Senate of Thessalonike had to accept as their governor an appointee of the emperor.

⁶⁴ Krekić, *Dubrovnik in the 14th and 15th centuries*. p.39.

Another specialist on the Dalmatian coastal towns, Ilija Sindik, focused on the coastal towns around Bay of Kotor.⁶⁵ Sindik provides secure evidence that by the time of their conquest by Stefan Nemanja, 1184-1186, the coastal cities of Bay of Kotor had already developed communal organization and they had been granted autonomy by the Byzantine Empire. Of all coastal towns of Nemanjić state, Kotor was the most privileged one, according to the surviving Kotor's *Statute* and its public notary registers, the main documents for the town.⁶⁶ According to Sindik, Kotor enjoyed greater autonomy under the Serbian rule than did Dubrovnik under the Venetian rule.⁶⁷ Kotor was exempted from land and custom taxes and had no obligation for providing military forces for the army of the Serbian king. Like Dubrovnik, Kotor had similar organs of government and principal officials.

The social structure of Kotor, as illustrated by the more recent analysis of city by Nevenka Bogoević-Glušćević, was similar to that of Dubrovnik's "patrician democracy": "a hundred interrelated nobles ruled over ten thousand people in the city and its hinterland."⁶⁸ The treatment of newcomers into the town invokes some parallels with the Byzantine practices. Even *paroikoi* would have obtained a civil status if they had had a real estate on town's territory or they had spent more than a half year within the town.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Ilija Sindik, *Komunalno uređenje Kotra od druge polovine XII do početka XV stoleća* [Municipal organization of Kotor from the second half of the 12th century to the opening of the 15th century] (Belgrade: Naučna knjiga, 1950); idem, "Odnos grada Budve Prema Vladarima iz Dinastie Nemanicha" [Relationship between the town of Bidva and the first rulers of the House of Nemanjić] *Istoriski Časopis* No 7 (1957). Pp 95-114.

⁶⁶ S. Mijušković, "Statuta et leges Civitatis Cathari" *Godišnjak Pomorskog Muzeja u Kotoru*, No. 1-2, (1954), pp.1-16.

⁶⁷ Sindik, *Komunalno uređenje Kotra*. Pp. 89-108

⁶⁸ Nevenka Bogoević-Glušćević, *Svojinski Odnosi u Kotoru u XIV vijeku* [Property relations in the fourteenth-century Kotor] (Nikšić: n. p., 1992), p. 31.

⁶⁹ Ibid. p. 58; For analogical case in Constantinople see pg. 90

Besides Kotor, Budva was the only other city given any degree of autonomy among the coastal towns of the Bay of Kotor. However, the town was obliged to pay land and custom taxes. It did not have juridicial autonomy and was obliged to supply the Serbian king, (later, emperor) with an armed squad of horsemen.⁷⁰ Uncomparable to Kotor, Budva, however, suggests a level of autonomy comparable to what is demonstrated by the Byzantine towns during and after the campaign of restoring the Byzantine government in Constantinople. Similar military obligation, for instance, is registered in *Pactum Adrianopolitanum* between the Venetian *podestà* of Constantinople and representatives of the city of Adrianople in the spring of 1206. According to the document, the Latin conquerors of Constantinople recognized the rights of the Adrianopolitan *archontes* and the autonomy of the city under its *capitaneus* Theodore Branas in exchange of military service for the 500 horsemen.⁷¹

While the urban studies of Dalmatian coastal towns epitomize the important and often neglected bridge between Western and Eastern European urban studies, the recently published *Economic History of Byzantium* finally offered the appropriate context for the Byzantine/Balkan urban studies. Its message was inspired by the Weberian idea that (the Byzantine) economy could not be understood out of its institutional and cultural context and therefore the reductionist approach, which conceptualizes Byzantium through the application of analytical categories derived from Western historical experience must be abandoned.

The Economic History of Byzantium represents the culmination of the Byzantine scholarly achievement, built on already significant corpus of sources and freed from conceptual

⁷⁰ Ilija Sindik, "Odnos grada Budve prema Vladarima iz Dinastie Nemanicha" [Relationship between the town of Budva and the first rulers of the House of Nemanjić] *Istoriski Časopis* No 7 (1957). Pp 95-114.

⁷¹ G. L. F. Tafel and G. M. Thomas, *Urkunden zur ältern Handels und Staatsgeschichte der Republik Venedig* Vol II. (Vienna: Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1856-1857), pp. 17-19.

and ideological constraints. This synthetic collection of general, thematic and case studies by leading Byzantinists became thus the most serious attempt for re-writing the Byzantine economic history that was long in coming and that, as in the present case, would inspire further researches in the field.

CHAPTER 3 THE COUNTRY

Macedonia, Moesia and Northern Thrace: Demographic and Landscape Characteristics.

In the present study, Moesia, Northern Thrace and Macedonia, comprising the territory under consideration, are comprehended broadly in their geographical understanding that comes after the Roman administrative division (fig.3-1). Moesia, subdivided during the reign of Dometian (85-86) into Upper and Lower Moesia was bounded by Danube River to the north and the Balkan and Shar Mountains to the south; Drina River to the west and Black Sea to the east. In the present study, however, under *Moesia* will be understood as the territory of the Roman *Lower Moesia* comprising the territory of the plain on the southern bank of Lower Danube (Danube Plain) and the transitional hilly zone between the plain and the Balkan Mountains that has been a nucleus of the Bulgarian state since the seventh century. Northern Thrace is a region enclosed between the Sredna Gora Mountains to the north and west; the Rhodopes, Sakar and Strandzha Mountains to the south and the Black Sea to the east. Historically, Northern Thrace was an arena of constant rivalry between Bulgaria and the Byzantine Empire and often changed its political adherence. Macedonia roughly comprises the territories between the Adriatic Sea to the west, Rila and Pirin Mountains to the east, the watershed of the Vardar, Struma and Drin Rivers to the north and Thessaly and Epirus, respectively, to the south and southwest. Being part of the Roman Empire since the second century B.C., the territory of Macedonia was conquered by the Bulgarians in the ninth century and became a cultural center of the First Bulgarian Empire. It fell again under the Byzantine rule in the eleventh to thirteenth centuries as well as did the entire Balkans. During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries Macedonia changed often its political affiliation. It had been ruled by Western European, Bulgarian, Byzantine and Serbian administrations until its conquest by the Ottomans at the end of the fourteenth century (fig.3-2).

Macedonia, Thrace and Moesia do not display any significant difference in their climates. The southern parts of Macedonia and Thrace are characterized by Mediterranean climate with hot and dry summers and mild winters, while their northern parts are placed into the transitional zone between the continental and Mediterranean climatic types with harsher but brief winters and hot and long summers. The seasons of intensive rainfalls in the three regions occur at the same time, during the spring and the fall.

The most fertile soils in the Balkans, known as *chernozems*, are located within the Danube Plain and formed in about one third of Moesian soil coverage. The rest of Moesia consisted of almost equally represented brown and lithosol soils. The Thracian Plane is dominated by the cinnamon and brown forest soils as well as the modified *chernozems*, known as chernozem-Mediterranean black soils, which is a zonal soil with a deep and rich humus horizon. In about 64 percent of the territories of Macedonia are covered by mountain shallow soils: lithosols, rankers and brown forest soils. The most fertile area of Macedonia consisting of alluvial soils is located along the valleys of lower Vardar and Struma Rivers and the bay of Thessalonike.

In the regions under consideration, as well as in the entire Balkans, the agricultural economy was characterized by polyculture and polyactivity. Wheat and barley were the main crops determining not only the self-sufficiency but also the dynamics of the market in the Balkans. However, several regions were specialized exclusively in grain cultivation and trade: the Danube Plain, especially its northeastern part that formed in the fourteenth century the despotate of Dobrudja, Aegean Macedonia, the Black Sea coastal inland south of the Balkan Mountains between Mesembria and the Tundzha Valey, and Southern Thrace between Adrianople and Constantinople. Besides wheat and barley, the land produced rye, millet, vetch

and oats. Legumes were widespread as part of the two-field system. Viticulture, the mulberry and olive trees played an important role in agricultural economy and were the best cash crops. Fruit trees were common for almost the entire region of the Balkans. Only the citrus and olive trees have restricted zone of vegetation around the coastlines of Marmara, Southern Adriatic and Aegean Sea. The gardens produced cabbage, leeks, carrots, garlic, onion, zucchini, melons and cucumbers. Alongside agriculture, the peasants were engaged in sericulture, pasture, fishing, and beekeeping. Besides the traditional spinning and weaving, often, as it will be demonstrated further, an additional craft was involved in the daily activities of the Balkan countryside.

The wide range of factors contributing to diversity in agriculture includes landscape, demographic developments, soil fertility, settlements' patterns, institutional context, regional customs and family relations. Although it is not a simple task either to differentiate the historical causes explaining the fluctuations of these indicators or to ascribe a rank ordering to their importance, historians have tended to grace the demographic factor with a primary role.

There is a general agreement among the Byzantinists that the overall increase of population that started in the eleventh century Byzantine Empire, in both its Anatolian and Balkan parts, continued steadily up to the middle of the fourteenth century, even though there were some restricted areas displaying reverse trends. Although it is crucially important to study the demographic development, the most important economic variable in pre-modern societies, this field of study has been barely an object of serious scholarly consideration. Most of leading Byzantinists restrained from estimation of the population figures in the late medieval Byzantium and Balkans due to the lack of reliable data. The scholars' tendency of avoiding the study of demographic movements in late medieval Balkans is one of the main blockages for an unbiased assessment of its agricultural production and economic development in general. The

demographic growth in the West brought in the tenth century the socio-economic and technological changes that George Duby called “the agricultural revolution.”¹ The population crisis, caused by the Black Death in the mid-fourteenth century, was considered by the economic historians as one of the main factors for eroding serfdom and, consequently, in contributing to the advance of capitalism.² Yet, lacking secure grounds, the majority of the Byzantinists accurately avoid the topic of the ratio of men to land in late Byzantium and, accordingly, to its Balkan provinces, but are in general agreement that unlike Western Europe, in the late medieval Balkans the availability of land had always exceeded the availability of labor force. Some attempts are not absent for estimating the demographic trends in the Balkans, however, but, largely the estimations, such as that of J.C. Russell and W. Treadgold, were based on unjustified assumptions for undefined territories.³ A. Laiou also attempted an estimation of population density of Macedonia, but her calculations were based on the misleadingly high figures of the most populated area of southern Macedonia inhabiting the biggest villages that could not be applied for the rest of Macedonia.⁴ In this respect, the demographic studies of Ö. L. Barkan and N. Todorov are quite contrasting, but, unfortunately, are not utilized by the economic historians dealing with late Byzantine and Balkan economy.⁵ Although their studies were directed to the

¹ Georges Duby, *Rural Economy and Country Life in the Medieval West* (London: Edward Arnold, 1968), pp. 44-48.

² M. M. Postan and John Hatcher, “Population and Class Relations in Feudal Society,” in T. H. Aston and C. H. E. Philpin, *The Brenner Debate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); David Friedman, *Florentine New Towns* (New York: MIT Press, 1988); Philip Scholfield, *Peasant and Community in Medieval England, 1200-1500* (New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2003); David Herlihy, *Cities and Society in Medieval Italy* (London: Variorum, 1980), p. 23.; Bas van Bavel and Jan Luiten van Zanden, “The Jump Start of the Holland Economy During the Late Medieval Crisis, 1350-1500.” *The Economic History Review* Vol. LVII, No 3 (2004), pp. 503–532.

³ J. C. Russell, *Late Ancient and Medieval Population* (Philadelphia, 1958), pp. 99, 148 ; W. T. Treadgold, *The Byzantine State Finances in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), pp. 54–55.

⁴ Angeliki Laiou, *Peasant Society in the Late Byzantine Empire* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1977), pp. 42-43.

⁵ Ö. L. Barkan, “Essai sur les données statistiques de recensement dans l’Empire Ottoman au XV-XVI siècles” [Essay on the statistics of the census registers of the Ottoman Empire in the 15th- 16th centuries] *Journal of the Economic and social History of the Orient* Vol 1. (1957); “Research on the Ottoman Fiscal Surveys.” *Studies in the Economic*

period of Ottoman rule in the Balkans that continued up to the nineteenth century, their earliest source, the Ottoman *cyzie* (poll tax collected from non-Muslims) register of 1489-93, offers a good basis for estimating the population trends in the fourteenth century. Having in mind that the population recovery from the Black Death did not occur before the late fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth centuries in most regions of Europe, it is safe to accept the population figures from the second half of the fifteenth century, if not as absolute at least as generally representative figures for the situation on the eve of demographic crisis of the mid-fourteenth century. It is important to note, however, that the fifteenth-century population figures, as provided by the Ottoman tax register of 1489-93, should be accepted very cautiously as representative for the mid-fourteenth century. They are applicable only to those Balkan regions, which were demographically unaffected by the Ottoman conquest - Eastern and Central Macedonia. Both Macedonian subregions could serve as demographic models for comparing the population movements within the neighboring regions. Therefore, in addition to the Ottoman tax register of 1489-93, the fifteenth and sixteenth-centuries regional tax registers for the regions (sancaks)⁶ of *Nicopol*, *Vidin* and *Kiustendil*, overlapping with the existing pre-Ottoman political units, will be used in the present chapter as main sources for analyzing the population trends in fourteenth-century Moesia and Macedonia.⁷

History of the Middle East from the Rise of Islam to the Present Day (London, 1970); Nikolai Todorov, "Za Demografskoto Sustojanie na Balkanskiat Poluostrvo prez Xv-XVI vek" [The demographic situation of the Balkan peninsula during 15th-16th centuries] *Godishnik na Sofiiskiat Universitet* Vol.2 (1959-1960); *Society, The City and Industry in the Balkans, 15th – 19th centuries* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 1998).

⁶ An administrative unit within the Ottoman Empire with a relatively constant territory representing as well a military unit. The extension of the rights of the military chiefs, who used to assume administrative charges found its expression in the adoption of the power symbol, the flag (sancak) as a name of a territorial unit.

⁷ Dušana Bojanić- Lukać and Vera Mutafchieva, *Vidin and Vidinski Sancak, XV-XVI vek* [Vidin and Vidin sancak, 15th-16th centuries] (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1975); Hristo Matanov, *Vyznikvane i Oblik na Kiustendilski Sandjak, XV- XVI vek* [Kiustendil sancak. Genesis and Outlook] (Sofia: IF-94, 2004); Rumen Kovachev, *Nikopolskiat Sancak prez Poslednata Chetvart na XV vek* [The Nicopol sancak during the last quarter of the 15th century] (Sofia: National Library Press, 1997)

The representativeness of the Ottoman census data is confirmed by the demographic records of the village of Radolibos (Radolivo, Radilofo) as examined by F. Dölger, Svoronos, J. Leffort and H. Lowry⁸ and by the general demographic trends in Western Europe in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁹

It is not surprising that no survey of the late medieval history of Macedonia could avoid a discussion of Radolibos. The village has detailed written documentation, preserved in the archives of the monastery Iveron, at Month Athos, revealing its socio-economic and demographic expansion from the late eleventh to the late fifteenth centuries. The documents reveal that the number of inhabitants along with their fields grew steadily until reaching a peak of 1060 inhabitants on the eve of the civil strife in Byzantium, in 1341. The Ottoman *cyzye* registers from 1465 and 1478 show that the population of Radolibos still did not attain its pre-plague level, but contracted to 606 inhabitants in 1465 and only 631 in 1478.¹⁰

Several factors suggest that the demographic change exemplified by Radolibos, was a general trend, not only for Macedonia but also for the Balkans as a whole. The growth of Radolibos that ceased on the eve of the Black Death is confirmed by the growing number of

⁸ The case of Radolibos was in the focus of historiographical research since 1948 when F. Dölger, published his *Aus den Schatzkammern des Heiligen Berges* (Munich, 1948) It has been an object of research of S. Vryonis Jr, "The Will of a Provincial Magnate Eusthathios Voilas" *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* Vol. 11 (1957), pp 263-277; G. Ostrogorski, "Radolivo" *Sbornik Radova Vizantoloshkog Instituta Beograd* Vol. 7 (1961).pp.67-70 ; G. Tsankova-Petkova, "Feodlanaia Renta v Bolgarskyh Zemliakh pod Vizantiiskim Vladichestvom" *Vizantiiskii Vremennik* Vol. XIX (1961).pp.10-12.; J. Lefort, "Population and Landscape in Eastern Macedonia during the Middle Ages: The case of Radolibos" in A. Bryer and H. Lowry eds., *Continuity and Change in Late Byzantine and Early Ottoman Society* (Birmingham – Washington, D.C: University of Birmingham, 1986)., pp. 11-23; Heath Lowry, "Changes in Fifteenth Century Ottoman Peasant Taxation: The case of Radilofo," in *Ibid.* pp 23-37.

⁹ J. C. Russell, *British Medieval Population* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1948); W. Abel, *Die Wüstungen des ausgehenden Mittelalters* (Jena: G. Fisher, 1943).pp. 24-30; M. M. Postan, "Some Economic Evidence of Declining Population in the Later Middle Ages" *The Economic History Review*, New Series Vol.2 No3 (1950).pp. 221-246.

¹⁰ Heath Lowry, "Changes in Fifteenth Century Ottoman Peasant Taxation: The case of Radilofo" in A. Bryer and H. Lowry eds., *Continuity and Change in Late Byzantine and Early Ottoman Society* (Birmingham – Washington, D.C.: Birmingham University, 1986)pp. 23-37.

newly founded villages in Eastern Chalkidike, as surveyed by Jacques Lefort¹¹ and the number of households per village, as demonstrated by A. Laiou's survey of the villages of the Xenophon, Iveron and Zographou Monasteries: Stomion, Psalidofourna-Neakitou, Kato Volvos, Melintziani Gomatou and Ierisos.¹² Furthermore, the population growth is displayed through the continuous large-scale land reclamation as displayed by the charters of the Serbian rulers to the ecclesiastic foundations in Western and Northern Macedonia: the monasteries of Konchani, Hilandar, and of *St. George* (near Skopje), as well as to the bishopric of Prizren.¹³ The same pattern of demographic growth appears in Asia Minor, where following the fall of Constantinople in 1204, the population increased because of the refugees from the areas occupied by the Latins and because of the large body of Cumans that settled in the Meander Valley and in Phrygia.¹⁴

In contrast, the territory of Northern Thrace, between Philipopolis and Adrianople, a territory of traditional rivalry between Bulgaria and Byzantium, shows a steady depopulation trend starting from the Bulgarian uprising of 1185 to the climax of the Byzantine civil war of 1341-1347. The Catalan and Mongol raids, the subsequent Black Death and the Turkish incursions left deserted the most fertile lands of the Balkans.

The Ottoman *cizye* registers for Macedonia, and, especially, for the Kiustendil *sancak*, between 1490 and 1518/31, display striking differences in total numbers and coefficient of population density, when compared to either Northern Thrace or the Danube Plain, (Moesia).

The Kistendil *sancak* was located in Northeastern Macedonia and comprised the territory of the

¹¹ Jacques Lefort. *Villages de Mace'doine*. Vol. 1, *La Chalcidique occidentale*. (Paris: Diffusion de Boccard, 1982); J.Lefort, Rural Economy and Social Relations in Countryside Dumbarton Oaks Papers Vol. 47. (1993), pp.101-113; J. Lefort, "Population and Landscape in Eastern Macedonia during the Middle Ages: The case of Radolibos".

¹² A. Laiou, *Peasant Society in the Late Byzantine Empire* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1977)

¹³ Stoyan Novaković, *Zakonski spomenici Srpskih Država Sredn'ega Veka* [Legal documents of the Serbian state during the Middle Ages] (Belgrade: Državnoj štampariji, 1912)

¹⁴ Michael Angold, *Byzantine Government in Exile*, pp.103-105.

former despotate of Constantine and Ivan Dragaš. The despotate of Dragaš emerged after the battle of Chernomen in 1371 from the ruins of the Principality of Vulkašin and Ugleša. In the summer of 1395, after Constantine Dragaš died at Rovine fighting on the Ottoman side against the Walachian princes, his principality fell under the Ottoman rule. According to an already established tradition, the new Ottoman district was named after its former ruler *Kiusten- d'-illi* (The land of Constantine).

At the opening of the third quarter of the fourteenth century, the Bulgarian Empire was already divided in three mutually related, but autonomous, units. The heir of Ivan (John) Alexander (1331-71), Ivan (John) Shishman (1371-1395) continued to rule in Turnovo over the largest and most urbanized zone of central Moesia, the region of Sofia (Sredec, Serdica) and the zones in Northern Thrace, around Plovdiv (Philipopolis), Yambol (Diampol) and Nesebar (Mesembria), a territory known from the fourteenth-century sources as *Zagora*.¹⁵ The western part of Moesia, which had initially been given as an appanage to the princes of the ruling dynasty in Turnovo, became after 1371 an independent principality, centered in Vidin (Bdin). The eastern part of Moesia, comprising the Northeastern Moesian plateau, the lands along the Black Sea coast and between Danube delta and the Eastern Balkan Mountains, formed the despotate of Dobrudja. The Ottomans renamed the newly conquered Bulgarian territories according to the sequence of their acquisition. The region of Sofia fell first under the Ottoman rule and became the *Sancak of Sofia*. The Vidin Principality became the *Sancak of Vidin*, while the Despotate of Dobrudja was registered in the Ottoman documents as the *sancak of Silistra*. The central territory of Bulgarian Empire, with the old capital Turnovo, became the *Sancak of Nicopol*. All of these

¹⁵ See the map in fig. 2-2.

territories, together with the lands along Maritza and Tundja valleys in Northern Thrace (part of the Ottoman *Pasha Sancak*), belonged to medieval Bulgaria.

The area of the *Kiustendil sancak* was approximately 20,000 sq/km, while that of *Nicopol* and of *Vidin sancaks* was 36, 000 sq/km and 11, 000 sq/km, respectively.¹⁶ The *cizye* register of 1490-91 gives a total number of 43, 441 non-Muslim households for the Kiustendil, 18, 208 for the Nicopol and 10,639 for the Vidin *sancaks*.¹⁷

Undoubtedly, to these figures should be added the number of unrecorded non-Muslim households, as well as the number of eventual Muslim colonists. In frontier *sancaks* such as Vidin and Nicopol, a significant percent of the Christian population, known as *voynuks*, performed border duties in exchange for full tax exemption. Voynuks were, therefore, not mentioned in tax registers. In addition to the *voynuks*, there were also *derbencis* (about 1000 families in the entire Rumelia) that acted as guardians of mountain passes, bridges and other strategic locations and, *dogancis* (hunting hawk breeders in the service of the Sultan). However, for the sake of clarity, we can assume equal proportions of Muslim colonists and privileged groups of Christians, which went unrecorded by *cizye* registers, as well as widow families and bachelors. The population density of the Kiustendil *sancak* may, therefore, have been approximated at 11 per sq/ km, with 2.5 and 5.5 inhabitants for Nicopol and Vidin *sancaks*,

¹⁶ Hr. Matanov, *Vyznikvane i Oblik na Kiustendilski Sandjak, XV- XVI vek* [Kiustendil sancak. Genesis and Outlook] (Sofia: IF-94, 2004) pp. 111-115.

¹⁷ Matanov, *Vyznikvane i Oblik*.p. 112; R. Kovachev, *Nikopolskiat Sancak prex Poslednata Chetvart na XV vek* [Nikopol sancak during the last quarter of the 15th century] (Sofia: National Library Press, 1997).p. 91; Dušanka Bojanić- Lukać and Vera Mutafchieva, *Vidin and Vidinski Sandzak, XV-XVI vek* [Vidin and Vidin sancak, 15th -16th centuries] (Sofia: Nauka i Izkustvo, 1975).p.29.

respectively. The population density for the former Dobrudja Despotate (the Silistra *sancak*) shows the striking result of 1.5 per sq/km.¹⁸

The figure of 11 people per sq/km in Kiustendil *sancak* is relatively close to an estimate of 9 per sq/km given by V. Panayiotopoulos for the population density in Peloponnesus in 1530.¹⁹ In his attempt for estimating the entire population under the Ottoman rule in the Balkans at the end of the fifteenth century, N. Todorov gives the same approximation, 9-10 per sq/km.²⁰ Indeed, a demographic trend delineated by the case of Radolibos, between 1341 and 1478, is not quite secure ground for defining the population movement of an entire region. The variations of the Black Death tolls from settlement to settlement are additionally complicated by the variable of intra-regional migration caused by the interaction of multiple factors, from political and economic insecurity, to natural disasters and epidemics. However, assuming that the region of the Kiustendil *sancak* was not an exception to the general trend delineated by the population movement in Europe and that the region remained demographically unaffected by the Ottoman conquest, than, in general, the amount of population of Kiustendil *sancak* and, respectively, its density population coefficient must have been in the fifteenth century close to its mid-fourteenth century figures. If so, then the population density of the Balkans was, undoubtedly, one of the lowest in Europe. Not even the most populated areas of Macedonia can approach the lowest level of population density (16 per sq/km) in Eastern England in the midst of the demographic crisis of

¹⁸ N. Todorov, *Society City and Industry in the Balkans, 15th – 19th centuries* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 1998), p.30

¹⁹ V. Panayiotopoulos, *Plithismos kai oikismoi tis Peloponnesou, 13-18 aionas* [Population and settlements in the Peloponnesus] (Athens, 1985), pp. 118 and 170. His estimations are cited and accepted by A. Laiou, “The Human Recourses” in *The Economic History of Byzantium, from the Seventh to the Fifteenth Centuries* (Washington D.C. : Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2005), p.50 and N. Todorov, *Society, The City and Industry in the Balkans, 15th – 19th centuries* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 1998), p. 155.

²⁰ N. Todorov, *Society City and Industry in the Balkans, 15th – 19th centuries* .p. 29.

1380.²¹ Compared with the highest estimations for Tuscany in 1250 (50 per sq/km) and Netherlands on the eve of the Black Death (75 per sq/km), the lands of the Eastern Balkans look almost deserted.²² But how can the striking divergences between the Kiustendil *sancak* and the Nicopol and Vidin *sancaks* be explained? Were they the result of catastrophic (external) or of some economic (internal) factors?

At the first glance, it might seem that the demographic disproportion between Macedonia and Moesia was a consequence of the widespread of estates in the Macedonian countryside. The impression comes from the surviving *praktika* depicting the Macedonian countryside as made up of an almost unbroken network of estates that had replaced the former complex of village communities. Because of uneven documentation, this notion for a long time determined scholarly views of the trend of Byzantine socio-economic development towards greater feudalization, supposedly contrary to that of increasing social and economic freedom in Western Europe. Relying on existent documents and assuming the undisputed role of the estates for offering better economic conditions in rural economy, it is not hard to arrive at the conclusion that the disproportions of population between Macedonia and Thrace and Moesia are due to some higher degree of development of the estate network. Yet, it is important to note that the majority of the surviving *praktika* concern the property of monasteries or of foundations that later became monastic and most of them have been preserved in the archives of the monasteries of Mount Athos. Only a very small number of *praktika* refer to layman possession and these have only survived because such possessions were later incorporated to monastic estates. For the petty peasant landholdings, which were in direct relation to the fisc, there is no information at all. The

²¹ Philip Scholfield, *Peasant and Community in Medieval England, 1200-1500* (New York: Palgrave-Macmilan, 2003),p.58.

²² David Herlihy, *Cities and Society in Medieval Italy* (London: Variorum, 1980).p.23.; Bas van Bavel and Jan Luiten van Zanden, "The Jump Start of the Holland Economy During the Late Medieval Crisis, 1350-1500. " *Economic History Review* Vol. LVII, No 3 (2004), pp. 503–532.

predominance of the monastic documentation within the entire corpus of sources is rooted in the fact that the church was the only institution accepted by the Ottomans as a representative of the conquered Christian population. This was the legal basis for preserving the ecclesiastic possessions, although severely reduced by the new masters. However, since the Ottomans recognized only the Patriarchate of Constantinople as a legitimate Christian institution, all other churches in the Balkans not only lost any legal basis for land possession, but were also physically exterminated. As a result, despite the well developed network of monastic foundations in the Second Bulgarian Empire, there is not a single monasterial building or archive that survived the Ottoman invasion.

Unfortunately, the Ottoman *timar* registers (*tahrir defters*) from the second half of the fifteenth century that could be used as representative for the mid-fourteenth century situation, are not very helpful for estimating the ratio between peasants paying taxes to their estate lords and those paying directly to the fisc. Although, there are no signs that the Byzantine agricultural structures suffered any major change under the early Ottoman rule or that the village-estate dichotomy ceased to be the economic determinant in agriculture, it is well known that *pronoia* as well as its Ottoman analog, *timar*, could be of different size and held by different number of holders. For instance, two villages could compose a *timar/pronoia* held by eleven holders.²³ The Ottoman *tahrir defters* were not intended to list all the taxes that the peasants paid, but only those that provided the revenues of the *timar* holders. They had no record of the villages belonging to the estates of the Islamic religious institutions (*vakif*) or of the higher Ottoman administration (*hass*), and no mention of villages, paying taxes directly to the fisc. In addition, wherever figures for the taxes collected by the Sultan's *hass* existed, they were in combination with taxes

²³ Dušanka Bojanić- Lukać and Vera Mutaľchieva, *Vidin and Vidinski Sancak* pp.23-24.

collected from various sources such as commerce taxes, harbor taxes and other miscellaneous taxes. The surviving sources are, thus, unfortunately, irrelevant for comparing the regional economic structures of Macedonia and Moesia.

It is important to note, that the first significant power dared to oppose the Ottoman invasion of the Balkans in open battle was the Principality of Vulkašin and Ugleša Murniavčević comprising at the time all of Macedonia. This fact, indeed, suggests the probability that Macedonia had economic and human resources that Bulgaria and Byzantium lacked. However, although enticing, this assumption is not supported by the existing sources.

The Byzantine rebound culminating in the recapture of Constantinople led to the reoccupation of Macedonia from the Bulgarian Empire that was weakened by the Mongol incursions and internal problems. In the early fourteenth century, Macedonia became again an arena of military confrontations. The Catalan incursions of 1308-9 were followed by Serbian expansion, which, by exploiting the civil strife in Byzantium (1341-47), succeeded in bringing entire Macedonia under its sway. It is important to note, however, that the Serbian conquest of Macedonia was accompanied by an eager policy of repopulation of abandoned settlements and by rebuilding the economic structures in agriculture through granting numerous villages to monastic and lay estates. After the partitioning of the Serbian state that followed the premature death of Tsar Stefan Dušan in 1255, this policy was continued by the local despots and magnates. Soon after the battle of Chernomen in 1371, Macedonian principalities came into the pincers of the North Thracian and South Thracian Ottoman forces. Ivan and Constantine Dragaš in Velbuzhd (Kiustendil) and Marco in Prilep, former vassals of Vulkašin and Ugleša, became Ottoman vassals. Loyal to their principles, the Ottomans spared their lands from plundering and levied only tributary duties. Constantine and Marco appeared as Ottoman allies in battles against

Christian forces and, as such, they perished at Rovine in 1395. In the summer of 1395, without any social cataclysms, their political domains became part of the Ottoman administrative system. A large part of their military units, accustomed to serve in the Ottoman ranks, went over to direct Ottoman service. The transitional period of changing the political power is marked by a lack of apocalyptic tone in sources from the lands of Marco and Dragaš. The Ottomans are mentioned with loyalty and respect instead of the usual qualifications employed by the Christian writers as evil forerunners of the end of the world.²⁴

Unlike Macedonia, Northern Thrace and Eastern Moesia were regularly devastated by the Mongols, who in 1341, according to Nicephorus Gregoras, took 300,000 captives.²⁵ Although the obvious exaggeration of Gregoras (this figure exceeds two times the entire population of Moesia in the late fifteenth century), his testimony is suggestive for the kind and scale of losses that the region suffered. While the Ottoman conquest of the lands of Constantine and Marco obtained the characteristic of gradual annexation, Moesia remained an arena of resistance against the Ottomans until the 1450s. The Ottoman attack of 1388 on Ivan Shishman's realm had as a main goal to plunder and destroy its human and economic resources, as indicated by the Chronicle of Archbishop Vasile of Braşov.²⁶ The author reports an influx of Bulgarians into Transylvania for 1390, no doubt as a consequence of the famine that followed the Ottomans devastation. The subsequent abortive crusades of Sigismund in 1396 and Vladislav III Jagiello in

²⁴ Two marginal notes from Macedonia are quite indicative for those two tendencies. The loyal tone dominates in a marginal note from the Monastery Zarze near Prilep (King Marco's land). The apocalyptic tone was a characteristic of a marginal note from the Monastery Slepce near Bitola (the devastated lands of Andrei Gropa). For details see L. Stoianović, *Stari Srpski Zapisi and Natpisi*, [Old Serbian records and inscriptions] (Belgrade – Sremski Karlovci: Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti, 1902-1926).p.63.

²⁵ Nicephorus Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, ed. by L. Schopen, Vol. 1-3 (Bonnae: Impensis Ed. Weberi, 1825-1855); also in also in *Grucki Izvori za Bulgarskata Istorija* (GIBI) [Greek Sources for Bulgarian History] Vol. 7 ed. by M. Voinov, Str. Lishev V. Tupkova-Zaimova. (Sofia: BAN, 1968).

²⁶ Plamen Pavlov, Ivan Lazarov and Ivan Tiutiundzhiev, *Dokumenti za Politicheskata Istorija na Bulgaria, XII-XIV vek* [Documents for the political history of Bulgaria, 12th – 14th centuries] (Veliko Turnovo: Asta, 1993) p. 128.

1444, the frequent incursions of the Walachian ruler Mircea the Old, as well as and the uprising of the Bulgarian princes Constantine and Fruzin (1408-13), caused more damage to the demographic structure of Moesia. In the aftermath of the Varna crusade, a Burgundian fleet, supported by the Walachian Prince Vlad Țepeș, entered the lower Danube. With their withdrawal, 12,000 left the Bulgarian lands from the region between Nicopol and Silistra and settled in Walachia.²⁷

The continuing warfare and anarchy of the first half of the fifteenth century caused heavy population losses in the Danubian Plane. The register of *timars* in the *sancak* of Vidin (1454) describes 421 villages, 377 of which consisted of up to 20 households, while the average of households per village was of 30- 40 households.²⁸ The picture, delineated by the *timar* register of the Vidin *sancak*, of 55 villages consisted of only 3 households and 59 of no more than 5 households, reveals the scale of devastation in the region.²⁹ The comparison with the *sancak* Kiustendil is striking: There more than 60 percent of 1508 villages consisted of more than 30 households. In addition, villages with more than 100 households constituted 5 percent (75) of the total number of villages.

The demographic losses that Moesia suffered, therefore, turn any attempt for estimating its population in the mid-fourteenth century into a guess. The death tolls of the Black Death were seriously overshadowed by those of the Ottoman invasion and the following mass emigration. The incomplete character of the fifteenth century Ottoman census documents, which left

²⁷ Jean de Wavren, *La campagne des croisades sur le Danube, 1445* ed. N. Iorga (Paris: J. Gamber, 1927); Also in Plamen Pavlov, Ivan Lazarov and Ivan Tiutiundzhiev, *Dokumenti za Politicheskata Istoria na Bulgaria, XII- XIVvek* [Documents for the political history of Bulgaria, 12th – 14th centuries] (Veliko Turnovo: Asta, 1993).pp 137-140. Also in Bistra Zvetkova, *Frenski Putepisi za Balkanite XV- XVI vek* [French travel notes for the Balkans 15th – 16th centuries] (Sofia, 1975).pp. 75- 80.

²⁸ Dušanka Bojanić-Lukać and Vera Mutafchieva, *Vidin and Vidinski Sandzak*, p.30.

²⁹ Ibid.

significant proportions of the populations out, additionally obstructs calculation. However, if using an average population density of 9-10 per sq-km for the region of Moesia, especially for the *sancak* of Nicopol, the result of 288,000 would exceed more than twice the approximations made by using late fifteenth century Ottoman census documents.

There is no evidence that the higher population density of Macedonia in the late fifteenth century was result of different institutional contexts pre-dating the Ottoman conquest.

Macedonia, as part of the Serbian state, and Moesia, as part of Bulgaria, had similar institutions, as did the rest of the Eastern Balkans. The *sancak* of Sofia, formerly part of the Bulgarian Empire, displays coefficient of population density that is closer to the neighboring Kiustendil *sancak* than to Moesia. According to the *cyzie* register of 1490, the *sancak* of Sofia had 19, 226 non-Muslim households for a territory of 12, 000 sq/km, which gives 8 people per sq/km. This is not too far from the estimated population density of the Balkans proposed by Todorov. Further examination of the data from the *cyzie* register of 1490 shows that the *sancaks* with the lowest population density form a belt stretching from the southeastern Bulgarian territories in Thrace, through the border of Danube and coinciding with the front of the Ottoman advance: Silistra (1.5 per sq/km), Nicopol (2.5) ,Vidin (5) and, later, Smederevo (2.5), Bosnja (3.2) and Scodra (5). This belt wrapped a zone of much higher population density: the *sancaks* of Pasha (8 per sq/km), Sofia (8), Kiustendil (11), Vucitrin(23.5), Prizren (10), Ohrid(11), Janina(12), Trikala (9), Morea(7) and Euboea(6.5).³⁰

Two conclusions stem from the comparison of demographic situation in the Eastern Balkans that have to be kept in mind when assessing the late medieval Byzantine and Balkan economy. First, the population picture of the Eastern Balkans, one of the lowest in medieval

³⁰ N. Todorov, *Society, the City and Industry in the Balkans*. Table 3.

Europe, displays low availability of labor force for the existing land resources. Second, the demographic differences between Macedonia and the rest of the Eastern Balkans were not result of some structural distinctions, but were the product of external catastrophic factors, especially, the devastating Ottoman invasion.

Rural Settlements. Physical Characteristics

Since no adequate written sources exist for the late medieval rural settlements in the Eastern Balkans, especially those of Moesia and Northern Thrace, archaeology plays a major role in the study of their physical, social and economic structures. On the other hand, one has to keep in mind that, for reasons explained in the Chapter 2, rural archaeology, especially that concerning the period of Byzantine rule (1018-1185) and the Second Bulgarian Empire (1185-1393) has never been particularly favored by Bulgarian scholars. To the best of my knowledge, only three rural settlements of the Second Bulgarian Empire period have been so far the object of comparatively detailed archaeological research. Their examination will follow according to the chronological order of their foundation.

The medieval village near present-day Kovachevo was located on the *Via Militaris*, between the right bank of Maritsa River and the northern slopes of Rhodopes some 15 km to the west from Pazardzik and in about 13 km to the northeast from the medieval town of Batkun (fig.3-3). Judging from the coins found on the site, the excavator proposed the idea that the village was in existence for about 100 years, after which the site was abandoned.³¹ Among the ten copper coins found in Kovachevo, the earliest were struck for John II Comnenus (1118-43) and the latest, for Andronicus I Comnenus (1183-85). The excavations revealed 34 above-ground houses, 18 stables and 69 silos (fig.3-4).

³¹ P. Gatev, "Srednovekovno Selishte i Nekropol pri selo Kovachevo, Pazardzhishki okrug" [Medieval village and Necropolis at Kovachevo, region of Pazardzhik] *Razkopki i Prouchvania* Vol. 12 (1985) pp. 5- 155.

A good part of the adjacent cemetery was destroyed before excavations, mainly by construction works on the site.³² The remaining part produced 134 burials. The village was in existence from the late eleventh century to the late twelfth or early thirteenth century. The abandonment in the late 1100s coincides with the passage of the Third Crusade when, as it is well known, the neighboring town of Batkun was twice besieged by the crusaders.³³

The archaeological record reveals typically agrarian settlement: the amount of silos suggests that tilling the land was the main economic activity. Cattle and sheep breeding is betrayed by discovered parts of pitchforks, scythes (both used for making hay) and by tools for processing wool.³⁴ Household crafts and bee keeping complemented land tilling and husbandry, as indicated by the discovered spindle whorls and apiarian spatulas, while the Maritsa River occasionally supplied the villagers' diet with fish.³⁵ The village, as indicated by the finds of more than 100 pieces of slag, may have had its own smithy, most likely hosted in house No 19 of the excavation plan, where along with slag pieces a semi-processed iron piece (for making a hoe, perhaps) was found.³⁶

The pottery of the village was typical for the eleventh-twelfth centuries. All assemblages contained pots, the universal cookware at the time. Only a few sherds of sgraffito pottery have been found in the village, which suggests that at the end of the twelfth century such wares were still a luxury in the countryside.

³² P. Gatev, "Srednovekovno Selishte i Nekropol pri selo Kovachevo." p.5

³³ For the passage of the Third Crusade see S. Lishev, "Tretia Krustonosen Pohod i Bulgarite [The Third Crusade and the Bulgarians] *Izvestia na Instituta za Bulgarska Istoria* No7 (1957) pp. 205-240; "Historia Peregrinorum." Transl. and ed. by Str. Lishev and B. Primov in *Latinski Izvori za Bulgarskata Istoria (LIBI)* [Latin sources for the Bulgarian history] Vol. 3.(Sofia: BAN, 1965). p.241.

³⁴ P. Gatev, "Srednovekovno Selishte i Nekropol pri selo Kovachevo." pp. 101-102

³⁵ Ibid. p. 99

³⁶ Ibid. p.10

The organized abandonment of the settlement did not leave much of anything behind. However, certain information about daily practices and the quality of life could be obtained from the burials. The commonest pieces of jewelry were the glass (36) and bronze (31) bracelets, followed by bead necklaces and iron or bronze rings and earrings.³⁷ The grave goods and coin finds, although not numerous, suggest that peasants were engaged in monetary exchange on the market to secure the cash needed for their rents or taxes but, perhaps on a regular, although limited basis.

The best archaeological record of a late medieval village in Bulgaria came out of the salvage excavations instigated by the building of the Koprinka Dam near the present-day Kazanluk (fig.3-3). The excavation brought to light the massive architectural remains of ancient Sevtopolis, the capital of the Odrissian Kingdom of Seuthos I (5th century B.C.). An ancient site superposed by a medieval village was discovered. The archaeological team, led by Jordanka Changova, strove to remove and describe as soon as possible the medieval remains in order to get quickly to the much more promising and sensational finds of Odrissian town. As a result, the “monograph” of the medieval settlement is little more than a catalogue of finds with drawings and a plan of the site.³⁸ Regrettably, the poor quality of printing makes the enclosed photographs completely useless. Even the number of the features (40-43) is not given, but has to be derived from the site plan (fig.3-5). Nevertheless, despite the lack of any conceptualization and attempt at interpretation (or perhaps, because of that), the record of Sevtopolis’ excavation and, especially, the numismatic analysis provided by Vl. Penchev offers, a good opportunity for interpretation.

³⁷ P. Gatev, “Srednovekovno Selishte.” pp. 105- 147

³⁸ J. Changova, *Srednovekovnoto Selishte nad Sevtopolis XI-XIV vek* [The medieval settlement above Sevtopolis, 11th- 14th centuries] (Sofia: BAN, 1972)

Another late medieval rural settlement with comparatively detailed archaeological records was discovered in 1972-4 during road construction in the Turnovo region and was further investigated by Jordan Aleksiev.³⁹ The site is located 12 km to the north from Turnovo on the eastern edge of the present-day village of Hotnitsa (fig.3-3). The site is divided by a small creek into an eastern and a western part. The eastern part bears the signs of occupation from Late Antiquity to the tenth century with a definite interruption between the sixth and the eighth centuries.⁴⁰ This part of the archaeological site reveals a settlement consisting of sunken-floored buildings and a small church. The ceramic assemblage displays a striking continuation of late antique practices: an ancient kiln produced remains of ninth- and tenth-century pottery. After being abandoned, the site was reoccupied in the late twelfth century, but this time to the west from the small creek. The village at this location remained until the Ottoman onslaught of Turnovo in 1393, when the site was abandoned again. A portion of the western half of the late medieval village is superposed by the contemporary buildings of present-day Hotnitsa. The late medieval village consisted of 35 above-ground houses, 8 kilns, 6 granary pits and a small cemetery (fig. 3-6).⁴¹ The organized abandonment of the village left behind fewer artifacts than in Kovachevo. Metal artifacts include just one sickle, scissors, several knives, while household crafts are signaled by spindle whorls and a few needles for leather sewing.⁴² In the largest house

³⁹ Jordan Aleksiev, "Srednovekovno Selishte krai Hotnitsa"[Medieval settlement near Hotnitsa] in *Veliko Turnovo, Iubileen Sbornik*. Ed. J. Andreev, K. Totev, and K. Dochev. (Sofia: Abagar, 2005),pp. 34 -89

⁴⁰ B. Sultov, "Novotkrit Keramichen Centar of Rimskata I Starobulgarskata Epoha" [Newly discovered ceramic Roman and Protobulgarian center] *Arheologia*, Vol 11 (1969).pp. 12-24.

⁴¹ Only three of the kilns are completely excavated by Aleksiev. The other five, although clearly detected, are only indicated on the plan.

⁴² Aleksiev, "Srednovekovno Selishte krai Hotnitsa.p.60

in the village, a small hoard of 25 copper coins struck for Ivan Shishman (1371-1396) gives the terminus a quo for the abandonment of the late medieval village.⁴³

While the last phase of occupation on the site at Hotnitsa coincided with the Second Bulgarian Empire (1185-1393), the medieval settlement on the top of Sevtopolis' ruins must have been in use from the eleventh to mid-fourteenth century. The last coins discovered at the site were struck for Andronicus III (1328-1341), which suggest that the village was abandoned in the circumstances of growing anarchy in the region caused by the Byzantine civil war of 1341-47 and the incursions of the Bulgarian ruler Ivan Alexander. The rich catalogue of finds, as well as the 800 coins, suggests that, unlike Hotnitsa, the medieval village on the top of Sevtopolis was abandoned in panic caused by some urgent circumstances: the village was destroyed by fire, in which a female found her death.⁴⁴ The body was found within the boundaries of one of the clay-plastered dwelling floors turned by fire into grey-black spots, delineating the size and location of the burned dwellings.

The three villages display settlement and house structures similar not only to each other, but also to those in late medieval Serbia, in the sites of Kostolać, Gamzigrad and Hadjiska Vodenica.⁴⁵ Hotnitsa, Kovachevo and the village on the top of Sevtopolis were settled on an open space and on highly fertile alluvial lands. All of them were unfortified and were composed mostly of single-room houses (fig. 3-7). In the case of Sevtopolis, spolia from the ruins of the ancient settlement were used for building stone walls, to which the fireplace was attached (fig.3-8). In the other two cases, stones were not used at all. The floor area of the excavated houses

⁴³ Aleksiev, "Srednovekovno Selishte krai Hotnitsa. p. 38.

⁴⁴ Changova, *Srednovekovnoto Selishte nad Sevtopolis XI-XIV vek* pg. 24, quadrant O.6 of the site map.

⁴⁵ Gordana Miloshevich, *Stanovanje u srednjovekovnoj Srbiji*, [Housing in Medieval Serbia] (Belgrade: Arheoloski Institut, 1997).

varies between 9.5 and 20 square meters and corresponds to the needs of a nuclear family with four or five members. Two-room houses appear in isolated cases in Hotnitsa and Kovachevo, while the village on the top of Sevtopolis produced two such cases.

Each house had an area of approximately 50 square meters. Since the larger roof area of the two-room house necessitates stronger supporting construction, it is quite likely that its outer walls were made of wood instead of the usual wattle-and-daub construction. This is further supported by the nails discovered in Kovachevo and Sevtopolis, as well as by the elaborate carpenter tools from Sevtopolis: adzes, chisels, woodcutters, augers, borers, axes and planes.⁴⁶ The houses in the three villages were ground-level dwellings as suggested by the stones spread around the contours of the clay-plastered floors. Such stones were used to press the covering of the roof, rush, or straw, laid above a thick humus layer, where they fell after the crumbling of the house constructions. The walls of most houses were built in wattle and daub within a wooden frame that supported the roof construction. The total width of the wattle-and-daub construction was approximately 15-18 cm.

The seemingly hasty abandoning of the village on the top of Sevtopolis is responsible for the rich artifact inventory left behind, the analysis of which demonstrates the dominant agricultural character of the village economy. The plowshares found on the site indicate that the type of plow to which they belonged was more elaborate than the “sole-ard” type known from the graffiti from Pliska and the illustrations in the *Tetraevangelia of Ivan Alexander* (1331-71) (fig. 3-9).⁴⁷

The shares found in Sevtopolis correspond to a type common in the Eastern Balkans (17 cm, long, 8-9 cm wide). Their asymmetrical shape was designed to turn the soil aside, which was

⁴⁶ Changova, *Srednovekovnoto Selishte nad Sevtopolis XI-XIV vek*. pp. 98-99

⁴⁷ Ekaterina Dimitrova, *The Gospels of Tsar Ivan Alexander* (London: British Library, 1994), p. 54, fig. 56.

enforced by a wooden moldboard. Vertically, though at certain angle, to the plow was attached a coulter to cut the soil horizontally (fig. 3-9 and 3-10).

The size of the coulters found in Sevtopolis varies between 31 and 38 cm. They all have tempered edges, 9 - 10 cm. long. The size and shape of the plow implements found in Sevtopolis are in sharp opposition with the reigning historiographical myth of the Byzantine/Balkan plow as a device that barely scratched the ground and, was therefore, unable to produce any significant yields.⁴⁸ Rather, the plow type found in Sevtopolis was perfectly suitable for the Balkan regional climatic and soil characteristics. Unlike the much more humid Western Europe, the Balkan's hot and dry summers, its soil's mineral characteristics and water holding capacity, necessitate shallower tilling in order to preserve the soil's water content, accumulated during the winter and spring precipitations. Unsurprisingly, the depth of modern soil tilling in Bulgaria is not different than that of its medieval period: 10 -15 cm. Quite the opposite, the increasing of soil productivity in Western Europe necessitates eliminating of the soil's excessive water content through deeper tillage. Therefore, the widespread application of the heavy plow in Western Europe, in contrast to the Balkans, should be explained not by some "more dynamic social and economic processes" in the West, as some historians suggest, but simply by the regional climatic and soil differences.

Further, the suitability and productivity of the plow type used in medieval Balkans is well demonstrated through the calculations of yields per unit of seed (yield ratio) made by Angeliki Laiou.⁴⁹ Based on monastic *praktika*, Laiou advances an average yield ratio for Thrace,

⁴⁸ See A. Bryer, "Agricultural means of production" in *The Economic History of Byzantium from Seventh to Fifteenth Century*, ed. by Angeliki Laiou. Vol. 1. (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collections, 2002).pp.101-113

⁴⁹ A. Laiou, "The Agrarian Economy, 13th -15th centuries" in *The Economic History of Byzantium from Seventh to Fifteenth Century*, pp. 346-7

Macedonia and Thessaly of 1:4 for the land of second quality and of 1:5,6 for the land of first quality. This is comparable to the estimates for the agricultural productivity of Winchester, Merton College and Grantchester in England, in the period from thirteenth to fifteenth centuries.⁵⁰

The plowshares and coulter found in the village on the top of Sevtopolis are not unique. Similar plowshares and coulters are uncovered within the archeological sites of Preslav, Ovech, Shumen, Pliska, Pernik, Varna, the villages of Chelopech (region of Sofia), Glufizhevo, (region of Sliven) and Dolno Levski, (region of Pazardzhik).⁵¹ It should be mentioned, however, that such shares, as found in the village on the top of Sevtopolis, were known ever since the ninth and the tenth century.⁵²

Cowbells and cattle bones, found on the site of Sevtopolis show that land tilling was accompanied by cattle breeding. The majority of animal bones, found on the site were of pigs, the main source of meat in the medieval diet. Bee keeping and fishing were supplementary occupations of the inhabitants, the former proved by the found apiarian spatulas, the latter assumed by the location of the village on the bank of Tundzha River.

Along with the agricultural activities, Hotnitsa and the village on the top of Sevtopolis display an impressive scale of household crafts. The inhabitants of the thirty-five houses Hotnitsa, located in a traditionally ceramic producing site, possessed only six silos but eight kilns for making earthenware and sgraffito pottery. Having in mind that one of these kilns needed the

⁵⁰ B. H. Slicher van Bath, *The Agrarian History of Western Europe, 500-1850* (London: Edward Arnold, 1963), p.176.

⁵¹ Jordanka Changova, "Srednovekovni Orudia na Truda v Bulgaria" [Medieval tools in Bulgaria] *Izvestia na Arheologicheski Institut* Vol.25 (1961), pp.19-55.

⁵² Joachim Henning, *Südosteuropa Zwischen Antike und Mittelalter* [Southeastern Europe between Antiquity and Middle Ages] (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1987). P.66. Table 8;

constant labor of at least two persons to produce even earthenware and perhaps more for sgraffito pottery, it is safe to assume that pottery-making was the main economic activity of the villagers of Hotnitsa. The comparison between Kovachevo having 69 silos and Hotnitsa is striking. The remains of the ceramic production bear the signs of standardization and market-oriented production. The pottery-makers from Hotnitsa strove to imitate the tones, graphics and the shape of sgraffito pottery made in Turnovo. Hotnitsa, was, undoubtedly, a pottery production center in the hinterland of the capital. (fig. 3-11).

The production of glazed pottery had already been known in most parts of the Roman Empire, but became widely spread in the Eastern Mediterranean from the ninth century onward. In Bulgaria, the beginning of glazed pottery making was in close relation with the rise of the First Bulgarian Empire in the late ninth century and the increasing demand of the Bulgarian noble class for luxury goods as part of their efforts to imitate the ways of life of the Byzantine elite in Constantinople. The production of fine Preslav white ware, therefore, hardly had any economic significance. It was limited within the space of the Bulgarian capital and served mostly the ceremonial needs of the Bulgarian court. With the conquest of Bulgaria by the Byzantines the production of the fine white ware ceased.

What made the glazed pottery production directed towards the wealthier social class was its costly manufacturing in comparison with the regular earthenware. Unlike the regular pottery, glazed ceramics needs double firing and, accordingly, a double amount of labor and energy consumption, namely for firing the ceramic body of the vessel and then for applying and firing the lead oxide glaze. In addition, more sophisticated equipment and skilled labor were required for the process. The thin glassy layer, formed after the firing, seals the porous clay and makes the vessel suitable for containing liquids. In addition, the glaze adds more aesthetical appearance to

the vessel. The lead glaze may be additionally colored by other metallic oxidants, usually copper to produce a green color, or iron for a yellow-brown tone. The sgraffito-making is a technique of decorating pottery, which includes similar steps. The first step is to cover the vessel with a white or pale rose engobe. When it dries, the desired motifs and ornaments are engraved in the engobe and the vessel is fired. Finally, an outer slip is made of transparent or colored glaze and the vessel is once again fired in the kiln. Unlike the first firing, which requires a temperature of 400-500° C, the firing of the glaze implies raising the temperature to 800° C.

The archaeological investigations reveal that in the twelfth century the glazed pottery production in Bulgaria started again and within the course of thirteenth and fourteenth century it became a widespread activity.⁵³ It became part not only of the urban production, as demonstrated by the growth of producing centers in Preslav, Turnovo, Cherven, Sofia and Varna, but also of life in the countryside. This boom of sgraffito pottery making in Bulgaria thus raises the question of what caused this phenomenon. Was it a result of an expanding market, stemming from the increasing consumer demand or of some lower production cost that made this pottery accessible to wider social strata?

The solution, however, is offered by the case of the village on the top of Sevtopolis. Unlike Hotnitsa, it lacks evidence of sgraffito pottery production. The small kiln, discovered by the excavations, produced only earthenware and spindle whorls, according to the sherds found around it.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, there was significant amount of glazed pottery sherds (144 specimens,

⁵³ S. Georgieva, "Keramikata ot Dvoreca v Turnovo" [Ceramics from palace of Turnovo] in *Tzarevgrad Turnov Vol.2* (Sofia: BAN, 1974).pp.12-205; M. Stancheva, "Srednovekovna Sgraffito Keramikata ot Sofia" [Medieval sgraffito ceramics from Sofia] in *Serdika* Vol. I (Sofia: BAN, 1964), pp.169-193; J. Changova, "Kum Prouchvaneto na Sgraffito Keramikata v Bulgaria" [About studying of sgraffito ceramics in Bulgaria] *Arheologia* No.1. (1962).pp. 25-33; D. Dimitrov, "Rabotilnica za Trapezna Keramikata vuv Varna" [Workshop for tableware in Varna] *Izvestia na Varnenskoto Arheologicheskoto Drujestvo* No 11 (1960) pp.111-128.

⁵⁴ Changova, *Srednovekovnoto Selishte nad Sevtopolis XI-XIV vek*. pp. 73-74

fine painted, or sgraffito) in the ceramic assemblage, which high quality, (defined by the leading archaeologist, J. Changova, as Byzantine) indicates a quite large perimeter of the villagers' market activities. (fig. 3-12).

Although it is hard to estimate to what degree the changes of the type and appearance of tableware are related to the changes of dining habits, several outcomes are signaled by the widespread of glazed pottery. First, the widespread use of glaze indicates liquid food that could not be eaten by hands. Second, the fact that the most sherds of sgraffito and painted pottery findings came from plates implies that the large bowl, which everyone shared at the table, was now replaced by a individual plate. Finally, the more aesthetical appearance of glazed pottery suggests that dining had by now become more than just food consumption. Showing off by means of glazed pottery implies that peasants' existence went beyond the line of securing food: it became a center of spectacle, ceremonial and communicative. It became a sign of civility and affordable splendor, the trademark of a middle class.

The signs of the bettering the peasants' life are not limited to the changes in tableware. The village on the top of the ancient Sevtopolis had five smelting furnaces and three smithies, whose production, as witnessed by the significant amount of slag found around the furnaces, went well beyond the needs of the villagers.⁵⁵ Obviously, not a small part of the iron made was meant for sale on the market. The closest market place of the village might be sought in Krun some 8 km to the east, which was the center of an appanage, held by Eltemir, brother of the Bulgarian Emperor George I Terter (1280-1292). A key fortress, guarding the pass through the Balkan Mountains from Adrianople to Turnovo and perhaps, a regional distributive center, Krun might well have facilitated the market activities of its neighboring villagers. Furthermore, in

⁵⁵ Changova, *Srednovekovnoto Selishte nad Sevtopolis XI-XIV vek* pp. 74-85

support of the sgraffito indications of peasants' commercial activities and along with the well-developed metallurgy comes the evidence of jewelry making, as identified according to the bronze and iron bracelets, found together with jewel-making tools (fig.3-13).⁵⁶

Rings and earrings were also among the accessories of the inhabitants of the village (fig.3-14). It is important to note the character of the jewels found in the village. The metal ones were made of cheap material, bronze or iron and of rudimentary decoration, obviously designed and targeted to low class consumers. Perhaps, the commonest artifact in the village, as well as elsewhere in the territory of medieval Balkans, was the colored glass bracelet (fig.3-14). The archaeological record of the medieval village on the top of Sevtopolis mentions 271 specimens of various colors and shapes.⁵⁷

The absence of archaeological signs of glass production in the village leaves us with the possibility that the bracelets were acquired from the outside, through trade. The type of metal jewelry found in Sevtopolis as well as the colored glass bracelets along with the significant amount of single coins of small denominations suggest the existence of one or more markets that served not only the need for obtaining cash for paying the land taxes or the demand of luxury goods, but also, to facilitate the appearance of the costly glazed pottery production at the tables of both peasants and townsmen, a market, in which, among the bigger actors, petty producers interacted with petty buyers.

The comparison of the three villages delineates a trend towards bigger market involvement of the countryside in the course of thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. This trend is well attested by the coin finds, which in the case of the village on the top of Sevtopolis amount to

⁵⁶ Changova. , *Srednovekovnoto Selishte nad Sevtopolis* .pp.107-110.

⁵⁷ Ibid. pp. 122-123.

800 specimens. A comparison of the coin finds in the villages of Kovachevo and Sevtopolis suggests that both villages followed the same rates of monetization up to the end of the twelfth century, when Kovachevo ceased to exist. Due to the organized abandonment of the village of Hotnitsa, its 25 hoarded coins are unrepresentative for the fluctuations of its economic activity.

Table 3-1. Coin circulation in Kovachevo and the village on the top of ancient Sevtopolis

villages	Up to 1143	1143-1204	1204-1230	1230-1261	1261-1341	1341-1393
Kovachevo*	3	6	-	-	-	-
Sevtopolis ⁵⁸	5	18	660	135	17	-

*One of the coins of Kovachevo is undated, due to its complete attrition

The most productive period of the village on the top of Sevtopolis appeared to have been the first half of the thirteenth century, when the region of the village enjoyed relative peace and prosperity. During the time of expansion of the Byzantine Empire that followed the recovery of Constantinople, the village was on the border between Bulgaria and Byzantium, a situation that lasted until the Ottoman conquest. This has to be the reason for the obvious economic decline of Sevtopolis, as suggested by the decreasing coin circulation after 1261. While the village of Kovachevo displays an economic profile that is typical for the pre-thirteenth century rural economy, that of Sevtopolis demonstrates the shift that started from the end of the twelfth and the opening of the thirteenth century towards increased marketization of the rural production. More money and more people with money were the permissive causes for greater demand and market expansion.

Dialectics of Village and Estate

The capacity of the Byzantine state to intervene in the smallest niche of economy, function of its tributary nature and patrimonial ideology, was well adopted and continued in the

⁵⁸ Vl. Penchev, "Moneti ot Srednovekovnoto Selishte nad Sevtopolis" [Coins from the settlement on the top of Sevtopolis] in *Sevtopolis Vol.2 Antichni i Srednovekovni Moneti* ed. by D. Dimitrov (Sofia: BAN, 1984),pp. 137-159

restored Bulgarian state. The legacy of the Byzantine rule in the Eastern Balkans, formed a region in which the uniform social, economic and cultural structures remained unaffected by political cataclysms. The Ottoman conquest, indeed, changed fundamentally the social and cultural structures in the region. However, the economic organization in agriculture kept its Byzantine legal foundation until the seventeenth century.

At the basis of the Byzantine codification concerning the agricultural production were two main notions: the notion of linking the land with manpower and the notion of commuting the duty services into money. The Byzantine subjects without land, *eleutheroi* (free), as well as land without labor force, *kliasma* (fragment), were not a source of revenues and, thus, a permanent concern of the state authorities.

In Byzantium, as well as in Bulgaria and Serbia, the modes of production in agriculture were arranged around two poles, generally called estate and village, although the imprecise and frequently ambiguous nature of those terms. The most widespread form of an estate was *pronoia*, normally assumed as a grant of revenues to an individual previously owed to the state. It appears to have been of two kinds: the grant of a *zeugelateon* and concession of a *ktema*. The former was essentially a grant of a demesne block of land; the latter was a grant of state revenues and rights owed by certain services. Quite often the sources reveal *pronoia* of a combined type. Although not always specifying the type of *pronoia*, the sources often witness a *pronoia* over a river, monastery or a sea- *pronoia*.⁵⁹ The holders of *pronoia* represented a wide social spectrum: They ranged from the members of the emperors family to people from the lowest ranks of society.

The Byzantine notion of village was always more than a sum of landholdings clustered together. It was perceived as a social organism, a commune, which administered its hinterland,

⁵⁹ A. Kazhdan, *Agrarnyie Otnoshenia v Vizantii, XIII- XIV vv* [Agrarian relations in Byzantium, 13th -14th centuries] (Moscow: AN SSSR, 1952).pp.202-224.

marked by boundary stones and described by the fiscal delineations of property (*perioirismo*). Some part of its land, mostly pastures and forests, was owned collectively by the villagers; some were periodically redistributed for usage among the members of the village commune while others could be alienated by the collective owner as was the case of selling 104 *modiai* vineyards by the villagers of Pinson to some citizens of Thessalonike in the beginning of the fourteenth century.⁶⁰ By arranging the communal rights between two villages, *The Farmer's Law* and, respectively, its Bulgarian copy from the ninth century, made the village a legal entity *de jure* and *de facto*.⁶¹ Recognized by the law as collectively responsible tax unit, the village commune had also the right to sell or acquire property. The village of Staro Zelino, for instance, owned a mill, which together with its other properties, rights and obligations was granted by King Millutin (1282-1321) to the Monastery of Htetovo.⁶²

The late medieval village community had heterogeneous social and professional structure. It coincided with the *parish community*, which was organized around the community church. *The Law for Judging the People*, the oldest Bulgarian legal code from the ninth century, explicitly enacted that every individual had to belong to a particular parish.⁶³ The leadership of the village community was composed of the most respectable individuals. Due to its high adaptability to the economic and political environment, Byzantine, Serbian, Bulgarian or Ottoman, the terms denoting the leader of the village community greatly varied from region to region and from period to period. The vast nomenclature of the village leadership includes terms

⁶⁰ *Actas de Lavra Vol III*, ed by Paul Lemerle, A. Guillou, N. Svoronos and Denise Papachryssanthou. (Paris, 1979). No 109, lines 945; 952-3; Genoveva Tsankova-Petkova, *Agrarnite Otnoshenia v Srednovekovna Bulgaria* [Agricultural relations in medieval Bulgaria] (Sofia: BAN, 1964).p. 72-4.

⁶¹ "Zemedelski Zakon" [Farmer's Law], Article 7 in *Grucki Izvori za Bulgarskata Istoria* [Greek sources for the Bulgarian history] Vol.6 . eds. M. Voinov, V. Tupkova-Zaimova, L. Ionchev. (Sofia: BAN, 1965).p.212.

⁶² St. Novaković, *Zakonski Spomenici*. p. 659.

⁶³ Venelin Ganev, *Zakon Sudenje Liudem* [Law for Judging People] (Sofia: BAN, 1959).pp.14-23.

like Kmet, Knjez, Ban, Kehaja, Muhtar, Primikjur etc. Often, the village communities were managed by its priest. The priest, according to tradition, was elected by the flocks among the heirs of the previous priest. Usually, the priest was elected for a life term, but if it was necessary, he could be dismissed by the decision of the community.⁶⁴ The overlapping of the parish community with the village territorial community naturally distinguishes the priest of the parish as a leader, whose functions went far beyond the religious sphere. The priest acted as a notary, a practice widespread in Western Europe as well, and as a main responsible figure for collecting taxes from his herd. Often, the priest acted as a representative figure of the community before the court and other administrative authorities. Thus, in 1366, priests from Emona and Nesebar were appointed for collecting the reparation imposed on the communities there by Amadeus VI of Savoy during his incursions on the Black Sea coast.⁶⁵ It seems that on the top of the other responsibilities, priests were often charged with organizing the communal police functions. The accountant of Amadeus, Antonio Barberrius reports that a certain Kondro, priest from Sozopol, was fined 100 florins for the misdemeanors of his people in neighboring Emona, where *he guarded* the mentioned village.⁶⁶

The Byzantine expansion over the entire Balkans in the beginning of the eleventh century placed the village in the center of significant social and economic transformations resulting in a complete dominance of the estate in agricultural economy. For fiscal purposes the peasantry was divided in different categories, according to the means of production at their

⁶⁴ D. Polivjannii, *Srednovekovniat Bulgarski Grad*, XIII-XIVv; [The medieval Bulgarian Town] Sofia: Nauka i Izkustvo, 1989). p. 127

⁶⁵ L.V.Gorina, "Materialyi Dnevnik Antoniusa Barberius po Istorii Bolgarii i Vizantiiv XIV v." [Materials provided by the accounting book of Antonius Barberius to the history of Bulgaria and Byzantium], in *Byzantinobulgarica* Vol. 4, (1973).pp. 232; 234.

⁶⁶ Ibid.p.234

disposal. The *zeugaratoi* was a tax unit of a peasant household possessing land, which size roughly corresponded to the amount of land that could be cultivated by a pair of oxen. Since the amount of cultivated land depended not only on the amount of draft animals but also on the quality of land, the size of a tax land unit varied greatly between 40 and 160 *modiai*. The second group, *voidatoi*, was a tax unit with land twice less than that of *zeugaratoi*, which could be cultivated by a single ox. *Aktemones* or *pezos* were those, who had no oxen, and which amount of land was four times less than the amount possessed by the *zeugaratoi*. The fisc also recognized people who were not housed and had neither land, nor oxen. This group, called *eleutheroi* (free), because they were free of obligations to the fisc or to a landlord, consisted the main category peasants, from which the *paroikoi* of an estate were recruited.

The members of the village community had the right of preemption, the first right to buy land sold by their neighbors and other villagers.⁶⁷ In addition, as a commune and a fiscal unit, the village managed the land that had fallen into escheat and would eventually be reattributed to a villager in order to meet the taxes due to the fisc. The village had also distinctive judicial self-regulation over its intra-communal disputes and petty crimes. The claims and disputes of land were proceeded in a local court composed by members of the community, as it was precisely the case of the village of Manteon in 1280 and 1235, mentioned in the acts of the monastery of Leimvotissa.⁶⁸ In the middle of the thirteenth century the village of Panaretos near Smyrna formed a part of the *pronoia* of Irene Vranaina. A dispute involving two of her peasants

⁶⁷ *Zemedelski Zakon* [Farmer's Law], Articles 3-5.

⁶⁸ Kazhdan, *Agrarnyie Otnoshenia v Vizantii, XIII- XIV vv*, p.89.

was brought before her to be settled. She sent the case to the village court for judgment. The guilty party was threatened with a fine payable not to her but to the state.⁶⁹

When a dispute exceeded the prerogatives of the communal jurisprudence, as in the cases involving individuals not belonging to the village commune the process was to be brought before the local judge, residing in the administrative center, to which the village belonged. Such a case is described in the letters of Michael Psellus.⁷⁰ Psellus, an estate holder, set up a claim against certain Patricius, a *paroikos* of him, before the regional judge to prevent the intended departure of Patricius from his estate. The court decided that not only Patricius was free to leave, but also had Psellus to pay off the improvements made by Patricius.⁷¹

Even after a village had been granted by an imperial chrysobull to a certain landlord “for eternal times,” it preserved its communal rights. The right of a village to receive settlers on its territory is demonstrated in the case of the village Chostiani (Chostiana, Hvostene), the region of Muglen, southwestern Macedonia. In 1086, it was granted as hereditary to the *strategos* Leon Kephalas for his military victories against the Franks of Boemund. After listing the tax exemptions of the village, the document asserts: “this chrysobull had to be used for the relief of the villagers neither to abandon the village nor to receive other settlers if they want to keep their privileges.”⁷² In the eyes of the fisc the village did not cease to exist as a collective unit even after it was divided between different large estate holders. The monasteries of Iveron, Xeropotamou, Xenophon, Zographou, Hilandar and Larva all held lands and *paroikoi* in the

⁶⁹ M. Angold, *A Byzantine Government in Exile, 1204-1261* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1975). p. 127.; A. Kazhdan in *Agrarnye Otnoshenia v Vizantii, XIII-XIVvv.*, p. 98.

⁷⁰ Ja. N. Liubarskii, *Mihail Psell: Lichost i Tvorchestvo* [Michael Psellus: Personality and Creativity] (Moscow: AN SSSR, 1978).p. 102.

⁷¹ Ibid.p.102

⁷² G.Tsankova-Petkova, *Agrarnite Otnoshenia v Srednovekovna Bulgaria*, pp.36-37; 84-87

village of Ierissos. However, the fiscal delineations of property in the neighboring villages Develikeia, Kato Daimonon and Proavlox mention clearly “the rights of the men of Ierissos.”⁷³ The Vatopedi (Lavra) Charter of Bulgarian Emperor John II Asen (1218-1241) regarding the concession of the village of Semalto to the monastery denotes clearly that the village is granted “with all its inhabitants, *rights*, properties and revenues.”⁷⁴ The same is suggested by the grants made by Serbian King Milutin concerning the concessions of the villages Staro Zelino and Radobuzda to the monasteries of Htetovo and Traskavec in Macedonia.⁷⁵ Even deserted villages were granted with their common lands and rights preserved for the future settlers. That was precisely the case of granting the villages of Zurce, Pitic, Kuckovene, Techovo, Lepce and many others, by the Serbian kings, Milutin and Dušan, to various monasteries in Macedonia.⁷⁶

Whether on an estate’s or state’s land, the communal organization preserved its administrative and fiscal self-governing that outlived the Christian states in the Balkans. Under the Ottoman rule the communal organization of the village, as well as of the town, still remained the main social unit.⁷⁷ The *Farmer’s Law*, ascribes to the village community the right to exploit the deserted lands of their members. This right was well adopted by the Ottoman codification until the end of the seventeenth century. In 1550, the delegation of the village Kremikovci led by their priest appeared before the shariat’s court in Sofia in an attempt to avoid the compensation

⁷³ Laiou, *Peasant Society in the Late Byzantine Empire* (Princeton, Princeton UP: 1977). p.52.

⁷⁴ Laskaris, *Vatopedskata Gramota na Tsar Ivan Asen II* [Vatopedi Charter of John II Asen] (Sofia: Dŭzhavna pechatnitsa, 1930).pp. 63- 65.

⁷⁵ Novaković, *Zakonski sponenici*. pp. 670, 659, 672.

⁷⁶ St. Novaković, *Selo*. (Belgrade: Srpska književna zadruga, 1965).p. 144.

⁷⁷ Elena Grozdanova, *Bulgarskata Selska Obshtina XV – XVIII v.* [Bulgarian village community XV – XVIII cc.] (Sofia, BAN, 1979).

of the taxes of a certain peasant, who fled the village without buying off his share of taxes.⁷⁸ The delegation pleaded on behalf of the village community before the judge for permission to sell the house of the refugee in order to cover the missing sum in the total of the collective tax.⁷⁹ Almost hundred years later, in 1635, the records of the court of Bitola registered similar case. By the approval of the community of village of Popoljani, a vineyard of their fellow, who fled the village without buying off the tax to the state, was sold to another inhabitant of the village, in order to cover the taxes due to the state. The cost of the vineyard was fixed to equal the tax due by the runaway peasant.⁸⁰

The preserving of village's communal rights indicates that the grant of a village (or part of it) to a certain landlord, lay or ecclesiastic, was a grant of *the right to exploit* the physical and human resources of that village, not of possessing it. A transfer of the right of the tributary state to collect revenues to an individual could have a temporary character as it was in the case of *pronoia*, or it could be hereditary ("for eternal times"), in which case an imperial chrysobull would be enacted. In both cases, however, it does not mean that the villagers who were granted were losing their hereditary rights or became legally bound to the land. Nor that the act of granting was irreversible. The supreme right of *dominium eminens*, of possession of the entire land by the state, personified by the emperor, remained unimpaired as it was before the grant. As it is well known, the properties granted by an imperial chrysobull could be also expropriated by the emperor. Isaac I Comnenus (1057-9) was particularly notorious for this practice.⁸¹

Accordingly, the practice of expropriating properties previously given by a *chrysobull* was

⁷⁸ Grozdanova, *Bulgarskata Selska Obshtina* XV – XVIII v. p. 90.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid. p. 91.

⁸¹ Michael Ataliata. *Historia*. Ed. I Bekker. Bonn: Ed. Weber, 1853; also in *Grucki Izvori za Bulgarskata Istoria* [Greek sources for the Bulgarian history] Vol. 6, (Sofia: BAN, 1965). pp 109-197.

common in Bulgaria and Serbia. In his Charter for the monastery of St. George the Fast near Skopje, King Millutin mentioned the transfer of the properties of his officer Verihna, who was accused of treason, to the monastery.⁸² In fact, *dominium eminens* constituted the legal basis of the state to intervene and control the relations between the *paroikoi* and their landlord. Therefore, the state collected the fines for violating the privileges granted to an estate even if the trespasser was a *paroikos* of the selfsame estate. The eventual trespasser of the rights of the monastery St. George The Fast, thus, had to pay six hyperpyra not to the monastery but to its granter and supreme owner, in this case the Bulgarian state.⁸³

The inhabitants of granted villagers preserved their individual hereditary rights over their properties. The charter granted to the St. Nicholas' monastery (Mrach Charter) by the Bulgarian Emperor John Alexander in 1347 banned the sale of property of the monasterial *paroikoi* outside the estate: "neither a *paroikos* to give a dowry out of the estate (of the monastery) nor to sell a cornfield or vineyard out of it."⁸⁴ However, as the codification of the Serbian Tsar Dušan clarifies it, this limitation should not be taken literally.⁸⁵ What the Charter demanded was that the outside purchaser of property of a *paroikos* should assume the latter's fiscal responsibilities to the estate owner. This does not mean that the purchaser became dependent to the estate owner otherwise than he had to pay the equivalent of the rent (*morte*) and due labor services owed by the previous owner. The new, substituted rent was called *epithelia*.⁸⁶

⁸² Novaković, *Zakonski spomenici*.p.613.

⁸³ Ivan Dujcev, *Iz Starata Bulgarska Knizhnina* [Old Bulgarian literature] Vol. 2. (Sofia: Hemus, 1944).p.62

⁸⁴ For the full text of the Mrach Charter see Jordan Ivanov, *Bulgarski starini iz Makedonia* [Bulgarian historical monuments in Macedonia], (Sofia: BAN, 1931).pp.43-47.

⁸⁵ St. Novaković, *Zakonnik Stefana Dušana Tzara Srpskog 1349 i 1354*. [Codification of Stefan Dušan, Tzar of the Serbs of 1349 and 1354]. (Belgrade: Državnoj štampariji, 1898), Article 174.

⁸⁶ Angold, *A Byzantine Government in Exile, 1204-1261*. p.137

Although neither the *paroikos*, a head of tenure, could avoid his obligations to the landlord, nor could his heir, the rest of the peasant's family was not tied to the land. This assertion is verified by the census documents of the fourteenth century where many families of *paroikoi* disappeared from one census to the next: even if the household's records continued over time most of the children of the original household cannot be found on the record.⁸⁷ Another affirmation comes from the chrysobull of Nicephorus Votaneiates of 1079 that added to the grant of Lavra, previously given by Constantinos X Doukas, another one hundred *paroikoi*.⁸⁸ The fact that the chrysobull explicitly points out that the new *paroikoi* should be recruited from the original families means that these descendants do not automatically became *paroikoi*. In the eyes of the fisc the obligations of the *paroikoi* to their landlord were purely economic and not personal. In granting to a landlord entire or part of a village or just a few *paroikoi*, the emperor transferred to the landlord the state tax (*telos*), which the *paroikoi* owned on their landed property and their animals and the labor services due to the state for maintaining its infrastructure or for military and administrative purposes. However, there is no evidence that the personal status of the *paroikos*, his condition as a free man and Roman citizen was affected by this economic status. Nothing prevented the *paroikos*, a head of a tenure, not to live on the land, cultivated by him. The *paroikoi* of the bishop of Muglen tilled the land of the monastery of Lavra.⁸⁹ The monks of Zographou monastery had the permission for exempting their *paroikoi* from additional tax (*sitarkia*) when working on different lands.⁹⁰ Three *paroikoi* of the

⁸⁷ Laiou, *Peasant Society in the Late Byzantine Empire*, p.151

⁸⁸ P. Lemerle, *The Agrarian History of Byzantium* (Galway: Galway University Press, 1979).p.246.

⁸⁹ Kazhdan, *Agrarnyie Otnoshenia v Vizantii, XIII- XIV vv.*p.114.

⁹⁰ *Actes de Zougraphou*. ed. by Ed. Regel, E. Kurtz and B. Korablev in *Vizantiiskii Vremennik* Vol.13 St. Petersburg, 1907. pp 1-190. Cited in D. Angelov, and Peter Tivcev, *Izvori za istoriata na Vizantija* [Sources for the Byzantine history] (Sofia: Nauka i Izkustvo, 1974).p. 147

monastery Leimvotissa, who had lands in the village Vari (Bares) were living at the same time in the town of Smyrna.⁹¹ A certain *parioikos*, called Serb, listed, according to the praktika of Hilandar, as living in the village Nisia had a vineyard in the village of Handack.⁹² In 1316, in Radolibos, 29 out of 255 households were possession of *paroikoi*, who paid taxes there but lived somewhere else.⁹³ The list of samples is long and there is no need to enumerate all of them in order to arrive to the conclusion that only in economic terms the *paroikos* could be regarded dependant.

Except for being objects of concession by the state to a landlord the peasants had the option to settle on an estate land of their choice. This option, however, was not limited only to peasants. In 1242, the head of a local important family Maximos Planites gave the monastery of Leimvotissa the family estate. In return to the sought protection from the monastery his mother and brother had to pay a rent (*morte*) of a 1,5 hyperpyra.⁹⁴

The choice for settling on estate land was determined by the estimation of the eventual benefits that the estate holder, granted with privileges of tax exemptions (*excussia*), would provide for its *paroikoi*. First, on an estate land the *paroikoi* acquired a patron who would support them in their quarrels with neighboring villages and the encroachment of the powerful landowners. In 1235, the inhabitants of the village Potamou near Smyrna, *paroikoi* of *pronoia* holder Sergyros were represented by him in the court in their dispute with Leimvotissa monastery. A similar case is described by Michael Psellus. The villagers of Atzkome approached

⁹¹ Kazhdan, *Agrarnyie Otnoshenia*. p.114

⁹² Ibid. p.114.

⁹³ J. Lefort "The Population and Landscape in Eastern Macedonia: the Case of Radolibos" in *Continuity and Change in Late Byzantine and Early Ottoman Society* p. 14.

⁹⁴ Angold, *A Byzantine Government in Exile*,. p.133

him, asking him to become their patron. In return they agreed to provide him with agricultural services.⁹⁵ Second, the *paroikoi* of an estate obtained a manager who would supply the labor with necessary means of production that peasant often missed: draft animals, sowing seed, agricultural inventory and, of course, land. According to the grant of the right to settle on monastic lands twelve *paroikoi*, given by the chrysobull of Alexis I Comnenus, the monastery of Patmos recruited twelve *eleutheroi*, settled them on its lands and made of them *zeugaratoi*. Finally and most importantly, the settling on estate land was motivated by the desire to avoid the increasing burden of supplementary taxes and corvée, which from the second half of the eleventh century onward not only well exceeded the basic land tax but also became an unpredictable and, thus, an unmanageable problem. Under the patronage of *excussia*, the *paroikoi* founded safer living conditions. Two documents from 974 and 975, issued by an official, Theodore Kladone, referred to villagers in Macedonia who had sought refuge on lay or ecclesiastical estates to avoid their fiscal obligations.⁹⁶ The process of looking for protection and avoiding the state tax continued in the later Middle Ages. The charter of King Milutin for the monastery of *St. George* near Skopje of 1300, for example, had quite appealing conditions for recruiting settlers on the monasterial land: “anybody who loves the Church and voluntarily became its *paroikos* would be exempted from all due taxes to the state in exchange for three days labor per year for the monastery.”⁹⁷ Little wonder, then that *paroikoi* of the monastery became not only regular peasants but also *pronoia* holders. Such were the cases with Manota and Hranča, who took advantage of the offer and together with their *pronoiai* became “monastery soldiers.”⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Liubimskii, *Mihail Psell*, p.108

⁹⁶ *Actes de Lavra*, ed. P. Lemerle, A. Guillou, N. Svoronos, and D. Papachryssanthou, Archives de l’Athos, 4 vols. (Paris: P. Lethielleux, 1970–82) Cited by J. Lefort “Agrarian Economy sixth to twelfth centuries” p. 239.

⁹⁷ St. Novakovic, *Zakonski Sponemici*. p. 619

⁹⁸ Novakovic, *Zakonski Sponemici*, p.619

The reverse situation is frequently witnessed by the documents as well. If the conditions of labor offered by the landlord were depriving, the *paroikoi* would find their way out of the estate. By 1244, for instance, the *paroikoi* on the Lemviotissa monastery abandoned their holdings in seeking refuge in neighboring towns and villages. In the years after the recovery of Constantinople they began to withhold rent and labor services to the monastery.⁹⁹ The estate owner did not attempt to get back its *paroikoi*: they started to pay *telos* to the state.

Through its fiscal and judicial officials, the state always retained the right to determine and control in smallest details the obligations of the *paroikoi* to their landlord estimated in money. Yet, there was a niche in the relations between the *paroikoi* and their patron, which was out of the scope of state regulations and which constituted the main base for both economic growth in agriculture and economic dependence of the *paroikoi* on their landlord.

The majority of the grants of land, either under certain conditions, such as *pronoia*, or “for eternal times” estates, usually consisted of two parts. The first was the right to collect the whole or part of the land tax, previously due to the state by the *paroikoi*, according to the means of production on their disposal. The second part consisted of secondary taxes and rights (e.g., on fishing, collecting woods, labor services previously due to the state etc.), but above all, of land, on which, the whole tax or part of it was exempted. However, there were estates, small *pronoia* holdings, which were not exempted for paying the land tax, but had only the *excussia* of paying the supplementary taxes and corvée, exemption, which was also transmitted to their *paroikoi*.

The *paroikoi* of the village, granted to an estate, paid to their lord rent (*morte*) in which their previous land tax due to the state (*telos*) was transformed. In addition, as part of the *morte*

⁹⁹ Angold, *A Byzantine Government in Exile*, p.133.

they furnished with corvée labor the domanial land of the estate, or paid its money equivalent. The *morte* and its corvée part depended on the means of production possessed by the peasants: draft animals and land. Anything above the labor services ascribed to the estate by the grant of privileges was a matter of bargaining between the *paroikoi* and their lord and since it affected the efficiency of agricultural production of the domanial land it deserves special attention.

In the case when an estate was granted full exemption from land tax, the estate holder could withdraw from direct cultivating of the domanial land and by delegating the management to his stewards to collect only the land tax conceded by the state of his *paroikoi* and the incomes of the lease of his land paid by his *paroikoi* or by some third party. Although it was a possibility in theory, it was a rare case in the thirteenth – fourteenth century's estate organization of production. In reality, the revenue extracted by direct cultivating of the domanial land exceeded many times the incomes of tax exemptions. As is demonstrated by the approximations of A. Laiou regarding the revenues of the monastery of Lavra, if only the land of the monastery in the *theme* Thessalonike (1/3 of all its possessions) was cultivated, presumably, only by sharecropping, (giving in about 1/3 of the total production to the landowner), it would give a revenue exceeding 8 times the total of the full tax exemptions that monastery was granted.¹⁰⁰ Actually, this ratio should be much higher since a significant part of the land (between 24-29%) was cultivated by corvée labor, which would leave the entire revenue to the landlord. In fact, an estate was organized by a combination of various modes of production. Part of its domanial land, unsuitable for cultivation, such as forests and water resources, yielded incomes that supplemented the *morte* of its *paroikoi* on their land and animals. Another part of the estate's domanial land was cultivated by corvée labor, previously due to the state. How significant were

¹⁰⁰ Laiou, "Agrarian Economy, Thirteenth- Fifteenth Centuries" in *The Economic History of Byzantium, from the Seventh to the Fifteenth Centuries*, p. 335

the secondary taxes, part of which was corvée labor, is apparent by its money equivalent as mentioned by the Latin *praktikon* of Lampsakos and that of some lands near Retina, Macedonia. While the basic land tax for *zeugaratoi*, in Lampsakos was 10 hyperpyra, and the equivalent of corvée was estimated as 4 hyperpyra, the basic tax for the lands near Retina was specified between 4 and 8 hyperpyra (depending on the quality of the land) and the corvée replacement was calculated as 4 hyperpyra, almost doubling the basic tax.¹⁰¹ The cash replacements for Lampsakos were based on 48 labor days, an amount close to the maximum of 52 labor days reported by the sources. The practice of cash replacement of the corvée had been imposed since the widespread of *pronoia* as a model for repayment by the state military service. As it is well known, the military duties of *pronoia* holders could be bought out by the money equivalent of 4-5 *nomismata*. In the eyes of the fisc, therefore, the “value” of all special taxation and corvées could be assessed at about 4–5 *nomismata* per year. In fact, that was the value of the corvées of the villagers of Lampsakos in 1219.

However, the rest and, according to the surviving *praktika*, the largest part of the estate’s land was leased either into fixed cash rent or into a sharecropping arrangements, which revolved in about 1/3 to 1/2 of the production to the landlord.¹⁰²

Both models of tenancy, sharecropping and cash rent, have their positive and negative impacts on economic growth and their comparison was object of intensive scholarly interest. While some scholars view the sharecropping as hampering the economic advance, since it discourages the investments, and thus the maximization of the profits, others consider it a good equilibrium for long-term agricultural efficiency because of its risk-sharing element. It seems that where the

¹⁰¹ Laiou, “Agrarian Economy, Thirteenth- Fifteenth Centuries.”

¹⁰² While 1/3 was the average production due to the landowner for cereals, ½ was the usual rent for vineyards and orchards. See for details A. Laiou, “Agrarian Economy, Thirteenth- Fifteenth Centuries.”

labor force was abundant there was no hesitation to use wage laborers in the field. “Did you withhold a payment to a *misthios*?” was a question from the Orthodox confessional practices in the fourteenth-century Bulgaria, suggesting widespread usage of wage labor.¹⁰³ At the same time, undoubtedly, the usage of a wage laborer should be more typical for the urban economic landscape, where wage labor would find more consistent employment, rather than in the seasonal service in agriculture. The costly supervising of hired labor in agriculture was also a factor for geographical adherence of the wage labor to the urban landscape. As for the cash rent, it combined the worst features of both, sharecropping and wage laboring and it was dully acknowledged by the Byzantine intellectuals at the time as “unfair.”¹⁰⁴ The stand of the latest economic theories regarding the cash rent is not much different. It is considered to have hampered the economic advance since its risk-aversion affected only the landlord and discouraged further investment.

Organization of Production

Although there were no legal limitations about who could enter into sharecropping arrangements, and given the permanent shortage of labor, the most probable leaseholders of a certain estate were its own *paroikoi*. The organization of production of a peasant household, either on state land or in an estate was marked by polyculture and polyactivity. The *paroikoi* possessions were composed by land, animals and artisanal activity. The land consisted of hereditary plots and/or hired fields among which the majority was arable land producing grain. A small piece of land, usually located around the house was designated as a garden, which supplemented the diet of the household with legumes, vegetables and fruits. The documents

¹⁰³ A. Almazov, *Tainaja Izpoved v Pravoslavnoi Tzerkvi* [The Secret Confession in the Orthodox Church] Vol 3. (Odessa: Tipografii shtaba odesskago voennago okruga, 1894).p.92

¹⁰⁴ Gemistos Plethon’s letter to the Emperor Manuel II Palaeologos. See details in C. M. Woodhouse, *George Gemistos Plethon, The Last of the Hellenes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986).pp. 92-107

denote that between 74 and 96 % of the peasants possessed vineyards, mostly for self-consumption, but there are frequent indications of *paroikoi* possessing 20 and more *modiai* vineyards, the production of which was definitely market oriented.¹⁰⁵ Viticulture was one of the best cash crops: The price of the land of a vineyard was much higher than that of the arable, despite that vineyards did not need equipment like oxen. Yet, a newly-planted vineyard needs substantial labor inputs for 2-3 years before it starts giving any returns. Besides draft animals, the peasants had flocks of sheep and goats, which sometimes were of considerable size. In 1300, the villagers of Gomatou possessed approximately 1200 sheep 770 of which were owned by only four families of *paroikoi*.¹⁰⁶ The great variation in the number of sheep owned by peasant households, as well as the existence of some large flocks, suggests that this was an activity whose products were also commercialized. Sometimes a *paroikos* could even possess a mill, as did some *paroikos*, Krits, from the village of Akrotirios.¹⁰⁷ The practice of building a mill by *paroikoi* had to be a common endeavor, since most of the charters issued by the Serbian monarchs to the monasteries in North and West Macedonia banned especially this initiative within the limits of the monastic estates.¹⁰⁸

Although, there is little evidence in the written sources about rural artisanal activity, the archaeological finds for the growing scale of craft production in the country is undisputable. As it was demonstrated above, in the cases of Hotnitsa and the village located on the top of the

¹⁰⁵ Laiou, *Peasant Society*.p.172-174; Idem, “The Agrarian Economy Thirteenth – Fifteenth Centuries” p. 364; n.234.

¹⁰⁶ Laiou, *Peasant Society* p. 174.

¹⁰⁷ *Actes de Chilander*, ed. L. Petit and V. Korablev, Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1975. Phototype copy of the edition in *Vizantiiskij Vremennik*, Vol. 17, (Saint Petersburg, 1911) article No 124 of 1327.

¹⁰⁸ The Charter of the Church of St. Nicholas at Kozle by Stefan Dušan and The Charter of the Holy Archangels Monastery at Prizren by Stefan Dušan in St. Novakovic, *Zakonski Spomenici*. pp. 692; 703.

ancient Sevtopolis, market-oriented craft production was of an impressive level. It might look hazardous to drag conclusions for the entire region of Eastern Balkans only by examining two or three villages. However, the trend of growth of the rural industry that became quite noticeable towards the opening of the thirteenth century is confirmed as well by the examination of peasants' surnames denoting crafts in Macedonia by Jacques Lefort.¹⁰⁹ His analysis of monasterial *praktika* suggests that rural crafts were still poorly developed in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Among 32 *paroikoi* in the Hierissos, region of Chalkidike, in the late tenth century, only two names indicated crafts (mason and blacksmith), and none have been found at Drobrobikeia, among 24 peasants, at the beginning of the eleventh century.¹¹⁰ By the beginning of the twelfth century, a list of 122 *paroikoi* at Radolibos included five craftsmen (carpenters, potters, a barrel maker, and the widow of a blacksmith); four could be found at Dobrobikeia (potter, miller, mason, marble worker), one at Bolbos (cobbler), but none in the five other villages and hamlets owned by Iveron.¹¹¹ Lefort concludes that until the beginning of the twelfth century, no more than 4% of peasants possessed artisan surnames. However, according to him, "significant change occurred in Macedonia during the twelfth century and the first half of the thirteenth when 8% to 10% of peasants bore the names of trades."¹¹² The appearance of social group of rural craftsmen is witnessed as well by the Mrach Charter of John Alexander of 1342, where they are mentioned separately from the other groups of peasants.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ J. Lefort, "The Rural Economy Seventh -Twelfth Centuries" in *The Economic History of Byzantium*.p.309

¹¹⁰ Ibid. pp. 309-310

¹¹¹ Ibid. p.310

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Iv. Dujcev, *Stara Bulgarska Knizhnina*, p. 130-134

Indeed, the diffusion of artisanal activities among the rural population could be interpreted differently: It may be a sign of growing peasants' poverty combined with increasing dependence on the landlord as a result of decreasing land availability and the encroachment of the peasant property by the estate. Yet, although a favorite interpretation for generations of historical materialists, if anywhere, that cannot be the case of the village on the top of Sevtopolis. Its location in a border zone in a very scarcely populated region eliminates the options of land shortage or intensive landlord's pressure upon the peasants. Although its unfavorable location and distance from the main trade roads, the village seems quite well involved in trade, according to its imported Byzantine sgraffito pottery and glass bracelets. Therefore, it is safe to conclude that the growing involvement of the village in artisanal activities is an indication of an increasing market orientation of the rural production, a trend usually attributed to expanding pre-modern economies.

The organization of production of large estates, mainly monastic, was not composed only of different types of agricultural production, but also, as the surviving documents specify, of large-scale involvement in processing and trading the agricultural products. Given that the Latin occupation after 1204 and the period of the first Palaiologan emperors do not seem to have introduced any great changes in the rules of landownership, it is likely that the large estates economically outweighed the small *pronoia* holdings during the course of the thirteenth century. The large estates of Macedonia produced grain, wine, olive oil and products of animal husbandry. They possessed mills and workshops for iron and pottery production and collected rents not only from the arable land leased to their *paroikoi*, but also from their urban real estates. The monasterial foundations with their vast land possessions were not only producers and traders but they also played an essential role for structuring economic micro-regions. By their regular

fairs turning into permanent market places they established the regional trade infrastructure between the town and country. The large estate's role in land management, thus, became determinant in the course of thirteenth and fourteenth centuries: they provided better economic and, often, political security than the state. Their competent staff, the propensity to invest and improve with the aim of maximizing the profits and, above all, their flexible structure, responding to the market's demands made the estate a real bearer of economic advance in agriculture. The example of Radolibos, is the best support for this assertion. The documents reveal that Radolibos was a small community of landowners and an estate of Simbatios Pakourianos, which in 1098 consisted of 13 households paying *telos* in about 9 nomisma.¹¹⁴ After the death of Simbatius' wife, Kali, the estate was bequeathed to the monastery of Iveron. In 1316 the village of Radolibos, located entirely on the monasterial estate land, already consisted of 255 households, who paid *telos* of 520 hyperpyra, 320 of which were collected by Iveron and 200, by the fisc.¹¹⁵

The positive effects of transmitting the right of exploiting the land and human resources from the state to an individual or collective estate holder became quite noticeable towards the second half of the twelfth century. Since land in the Balkans always exceeded the availability of labor, the main economic problem of the region was how to make the labor most effective. However, the efficiency of agriculture labor depended entirely on the possession of draft animals and supplementary equipment, the lack of which turned the manpower into a useless social burden. Therefore, the idea of delegating the right of extracting surplus by the tributary state to the estate holders was the best solution to turn the human potential (*eleutheroi*) into an effective

¹¹⁴ G. Tsankova-Petkova, *Za Agrarnite Otnoshenia v Srednovekovna Bulgaria*, p.43.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.p.44

manpower (*zeugeratoi* or *boidatoi*). From this economic construction any party was beneficial. The fisc, although sharing its rights and incomes with a private party, (estate) gained more from the taxing of the turned into *zeugeratoi* previously nontaxable *eleutheroi*. The estate gained the privilege of reduced tax, land and manpower for production. The peasants gained more effective protection, economic security and means of production. Therefore, the advantages of the estate management were well acknowledged by the state authorities and often the initiative for granting villages to the monasteries came from the central power. The process of delegating economic functions to monastic institutions was, however, not a monopoly of the political rulers. It was well paralleled by the private sector as well. The private religious foundations were the best possible insurance against various misfortunes: social, political, legal and fiscal, which threatened the integrity of a household. The foundation and endowment of a family monastery, or church, was a sound economic investment, capable of bringing material, as well as spiritual benefits to the founder and his heirs. The social role of monastic institutions, thus, went well beyond their religious, ideological and educational functions. Due to the collective character of ownership and lack of political aspirations they became the best economic instrument of the central power. It even seems that they started to play some modified bank role in agriculture: to turn the abandoned (excessive and economically ineffective) lands into profitable enterprises and to store the financial reserves of the central power, which could be used according to the political expediency. The strive of Serbian Tsar Dušan to grant villages to the monasteries in Macedonia, thus, reached such a magnitude that it obtained the characteristics of colonizing campaign. The central power provided not only the legal basis for recruiting peasants on monastic lands, but also it institutionalized and financed the process of recruit. In 1337, a special missionary was charged by Dušan with the recruitment of peasants for the abandoned village of

Yastrebec, granted to the monastery of St. Demetrius at Kočani.¹¹⁶ In 1348, the villages of Brest, Suho Gurlo, Leskovica, Vitce and Drenok were inhabited by peasants by order of Dušan, before they were granted to the monastery of Hilandar.¹¹⁷ The same policy, although at smaller scale due to its earlier time is ascribed to the Bulgarian Emperor John II Asen by *Boril's Synodicon*.¹¹⁸

The Serbian expansion starting in the second quarter of the fourteenth century towards the Aegean seacoast was accompanied by granting villages to the monasteries in Northern and Western Macedonia as well as of the Athonite Monasteries, especially Hilandar and Panteleimon. The survey of St. Novakovic on Macedonian villages estimates the number of the villages granted, or confirmed of being granted by the Serbian monarchs to monasteries at the beginning of the expansion in about 35 villages in Northern and Western Macedonia.¹¹⁹ By the eve of the Ottoman conquest of Macedonia (1393-5) the number of the villages exceeded 200.¹²⁰

The expansion of the agricultural economy was signaled as well by the growth of local trade. The surviving documents record systematic attempts of the large estates to acquire possessions as close as possible to the regional markets and, thus, to reduce the transportation costs. The eleventh century aristocratic maxima, articulated by Kekaumenos, “to live off one’s own,” was not the dominant one during the thirteenth- fourteenth centuries. The great landowners massively directed their production to the market. The end of the thirteenth and the opening of the fourteenth century were marked by significant interest in obtaining urban

¹¹⁶ Novaković, *Zakonski Spomenici*. pp. 662-663

¹¹⁷ T. Taranovski, *Istorija Srpskog Prava u Nemanjičkoj državi* [History of Serbian jurisprudence in the state of Nemanici] Vol.2. (Belgrade: Službeni list SRJ, 1996). p.39

¹¹⁸ Also known as *The Synodicon of Bulgarian Church*. See M. G. Popruzenko, “Synodik Tsarja Borila” [Boril’s Synodicon] *Bulgarski Starini* No 8 (1928) pp. 83-84.

¹¹⁹ Novaković, *Selo*. pp. 116-126

¹²⁰ Ibid.

properties and land in the vicinity of the cities. Especially active in this endeavor were, of course, the monastic foundations, the biggest landowners. The large estates, both, monastic and lay, possessed workshops and groceries, bakeries and wine shops, water and windmills, which were rented out or directly exploited by their owners. Almost all of the documented monasteries possessed properties in and near the cities. Especially desirable were the properties in the big towns. In Thessalonike, no less than 17 monasteries possessed properties.¹²¹ The monastery of St. George possessed in Skopje several houses, two palaces and a warehouse for grain.¹²² Hilandar owned 18 shops and groceries in Serres, 15 in Nicopolis, 20 in Sofia, and 30 in Thessalonike.¹²³ Stefan Dušan granted a metallurgical and blacksmith complex of Trilision to the monastery of Lavra.¹²⁴ In Thessalonike, the monastery of Xenophon had five grocery stores and three large houses, which, in 1419, had been turned by their tenant into a huge and prosperous wine shop.¹²⁵ The concentration of 500 *modiai* vineyards owned by Vatopedi in the vicinity of Serres suggests that the suburban lands, planted with olive groves, vineyards and orchards were very profitable and desirable investments.¹²⁶ Once their presence at the local markets was stabilized, the large estates made the next step into the inter-regional and international markets. In 1356, the monks of Vatopedi obtained the right to possess a ship by which they transported

¹²¹ L. Bréhier, *Les Institutions de l'Empire Byzantin: Le Monde Byzantin* (Paris: Éditions Albin Michel , 1948),p.574

¹²² Novaković, *Zakonski Spomenici* pp. 611; 613

¹²³ A. Solovjev and V. Moshin, *Grčke Povelie Srpskih Vladara* [Greek novels of the Serbian rulers] (Belgrade: Krestić, 1936),p.116-123.

¹²⁴ T. Florinskii, *Afonskie Aktyi* [Athonite Acts] (Saint Petersburg: V.S. Balashev, 1880).pp. 98-100

¹²⁵ Laiou, "The Agrarian Economy Thirteenth – Fifteenth Centuries" .p.352

¹²⁶ A. Solovjev and V. Moshin, *Grčke Povelie Srpskih Vladara*.p.142

their products on the market in Constantinople.¹²⁷ Similarly, the monastery of John Chrysostom of Patmos Island owned four ships for commercial purposes.¹²⁸

Further evidence for the growing sector of commerce is provided by the monastic documents suggesting proliferation of the local fairs, organized by the monasteries in the first half of the fourteenth century. Combining market activities and religious festivities celebrating the patron saints, the monastic foundations used these occasions to raise revenues from the market dealings and levied commercial taxes and stall fees. The development of fairs' network in the Balkans seems to resemble the two waves of fair expansion in Western Europe - during the ninth and then over the course of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.¹²⁹ The first wave could be placed within the context of spread of Christianity among the Bulgarians during the ninth century and the following proliferation of monastic foundations, eager to emulate the Byzantine monastic practices such as the prominent *panegyreis* (fair) of St. Demetrius in Thessalonike. However, the early fairs emphasized on the religious component and hardly had any economic significance. The reasons for the second wave of growing the number of fairs in the beginning of the eleventh century should be sought in the Byzantine expansion over the Balkans and their integration into the Byzantine economic system. The economic significance of the fairs at this time scarcely exceeded their role as a source of obtaining cash by the peasants for paying their taxes. However, the country fairs did not wane within the course of growth of the urban markets during the

¹²⁷ Regel, W., E. Kurtz and B. Korablev, "Actes de Philothée", *Vizantiiskij Vremennik*, No 20 (1913), appendix 1.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ For the development of the fairs in the Western Europe see St. Epstein, "Regional Fairs, Institutional Innovation and Economic Growth in Late Medieval Europe." *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol 47, no 3 (Aug. 1994). 459-482

thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but witnessed a parallel expansion, a phenomenon analogous to that in Western Europe.¹³⁰

Being part of the long lasting debate in the West about the avenues of transition from feudalism to capitalism the fairs attracted significant scholarly attention. Yet, this is not the case with the Byzantine historiography. Although their importance was recognized by not a few Byzantinists, the study of fairs and their economic significance still awaits its adequate treatment. The theme of the market's role in economic development has been always foreign to the proponents of the historical materialism.¹³¹ The Western Marxist historians, focused on the class-deterministic approach to economic development, view the feudal economic institutions, such as the markets and fairs, primarily as a means to redistribute wealth, rather than economy-shaping institutions. Unlike the free urban markets, the country fairs were only an extension of the seigniorial control in trade, a manipulative by the feudal class interest instrument, extracting additional surplus from the peasants and facilitating the supply of peasants with cash, only to be gained back as a tax payment. This view, however, is part of a broader thesis emphasizing the crucial importance of class relations and class struggle to socio-economic development most powerfully represented by Robert Brenner.¹³² He linked the emergence of capitalist relations in agriculture with weak property rights of the peasants, a stipulation necessary for the emergence

¹³⁰ St, Epstein, "Regional Fairs, Institutional Innovation and Economic Growth.."

¹³¹ C. Lishev, *Za Stokovoto Proizvodstvo yuv Feodalna Bulgaria* [About industrial production in feudal Bulgaria] (Sofia: BAN, 1957).pp. 88-112; A. P. Kazhdan, "Rezenzia Vurhu Knigata na S. Lishev, *Za Stokovoto Proizvodstvo na Feodalna Bulgaria*" [Review of S. Lishev, About industrial production in feudal Bulgaria] in *Srednye Veka* Vol 13(1958).p. 128.; L. Gorina, "Voprosy Socialno-Ekonomicheskogo Razvitiia Vtorogo Bolgarskogo Tzarstva v Sovremennoi Bolgarskoi Istoriografii" [Questions about the socio-economic development of the Second Bulgarian Empire in contemporary Bulgarian literature] in *Slavjanska Istoriografia* (1961).p. 104

¹³² Robert Brenner, "Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in pre-Industrial Europe."; and "The Agrarian Roots of European Capitalism." in Ashton T.H. and C.H.E. Philpin. *The Brenner debate*. (Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 1976).; R. Brenner, "Property Relations and the Growth of Agricultural Productivity in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe." In *Economic development and agricultural productivity* ed. By Bhadury, Armit and Rune Skarstein.(Lyne, Norway: Edward Elgar Publishers, 1997).

of large estates. Claiming that this English model of large estates with the three-tiered hierarchical system of lords, tenants, and wage laborers was the only provider of a path for higher productivity and market orientation, Brenner doubted the ability of peasants to involve in market economy autonomously and proposed that they need to be pushed, that is, coerced, through asymmetrical power relations into the markets. As one may expect, Brenner's views were adopted by some leading Byzantinists and became dominant during the 1970s-1980s. Both M. Angold and A. Harvey regarded the scale of peasant involvement in market as peripheral to the dominant self-subsistence in agriculture.¹³³ This understanding, however, was seriously questioned by the latest works of Claus- Peter Matchke, Cécile Morrisson and Ageliki Laiou.¹³⁴ Yet, while the role of the estate for facilitating economic advance is now undisputable, peasants' market activities still need further research. Since the surviving sources, as one could expect, elucidate only the peasant activity for selling property, the level and character of their market activities might be provided only by archaeological evidence.

To the degree to which the *wage labor* in Brenner's model (large estates with three-tiered hierarchical system with weak peasants' property rights in the context of lack of bondage to the land,) is not taken literally, but in a modified and often complex form (sharecropping, rent, lease or the combination of these) Brenner's thesis has certain validity in Byzantine agriculture. On the one hand, as it was proven within the wide historiographical debate which Brenner's thesis stirred, it is quite impossible to find an ideal case in the hybrid nature of agriculture where peasants did not supplement their wage labor with other activities. On the other hand, it might

¹³³ Angold, *Byzantine Government in Exile*, pp. 130-137; Harvey, *Economic Expansion of the Byzantine Empire*, p.118.

¹³⁴ Klaus –Peter Matchke, "Commerce, Trade Markets and Money: Thirteenth- Fifteenth Centuries". in *The Economic History of Byzantium, from the Seventh to the Fifteenth Centuries* p. 781.; A. Laiou, "Exchange and Trade, Seventh – Twelfth Centuries." in *Ibid* p.754-756.; Cécile Morrisson, " Byzantine Money: Its Production and Circulation" in *Ibid*, pp.909-966.

seem that the economic importance of the *corvée* in the Byzantine model makes the parallel with English model questionable at first glance. In fact, the *corvée* in the Byzantine model lacks the characteristics of the Western labor services that turn the economic dependence on a landlord into personal dependence and bondage to the land. It was convertible in money and thus, should be regarded only as a modified tax. Indeed, that was exactly how the *corvée* was regarded by the Byzantines at the time: as a “servile and onerous form of taxation.”¹³⁵ What Brenner’s model claims, is that the roots of capitalism should be sought precisely in the combination of weak property rights of the peasants in the context of lack of bondage to the land for the emergence of labor market, supplying both the rural and urban economy. However, the failure of the class-centered explanations of Brenner to recognize the equal importance of pre-capitalist institutional constellations for creating and coordinating the markets are quite palpable in the case of the Byzantine model. In addition, his assumptions about the inefficiency of peasant farming because of its lack of capital inputs, engendered by the self-subsistent mentality, seem to be the weakest point of his theory. Labor markets, and even more so, tenancy i.e. lease hold-markets were at least as important for subjection of peasants to economic competition as the weak property rights. If the peasants lacked capital input they would provide labor input, which were crucial for industrial crops such as flax, silkworm breeding, olive trees growing, viticulture, dairying, horticulture. Such assets, as well as mills, pastures, brick and pottery kilns, iron making furnaces and saltpans were called by the Byzantines *autourgia*, that is, properties that, after their establishment produced on their own, without further input, except labor. It is not surprising that viticulture in the Balkans had economic importance equal to that of the cereals. The relationship between peasant’s arable land and vineyards embodies, in fact, the continuum between self-

¹³⁵ Gemistos Plethon’s letter to the Emperor Manuel II Palaeologos in C. M. Woodhouse, *George Gemistos Plethon*, pp. 92-107

sufficiency and the marketing of agricultural products. Although not tolerated by Islam, in 1540, the wine production yielded 30 % of the total revenues of the fisc in the *nahya*¹³⁶ of Turnovo.¹³⁷ It seems quite unlikely that this ratio was established after the imposition of the Ottoman power.

The Byzantine model, thus, combined features of both coercing the peasants through class-based asymmetrical power relations towards the market and pulling them into trade by economically efficient institutions: highly monetized tax system and price incentives of temporary markets, such as fairs. The transformation of peasant subsistence, therefore, into market involvement could be considered as result of the state intervenism. It led to polyactivity as entering in tenancies and land leases markets and searching for incomes outside the agriculture, which, eventually, turned into a specialization and commercialization of the production as in the cases of Hotnitsa and the village on the top of Sevtopolis. The expanding commerce in the country led in turn to additional growth of the fairs, a development similar to that in the Latin West. It is important to note, however, that while it was one of the main peasant demands in the revolt of 1381 in England to gain free access to the urban markets, such restraints did not exist in the Byzantine socio-economic model.¹³⁸ The weak indications by the written sources about trading peasants should not be taken as an evidence of weak involvement of the peasants in the market. Trading peasants are denoted in the Latin possessions of Romania as well as by the treaty between despot Ivanko (Dobrudja despotate) and the community of Genoa in 1387.¹³⁹ Peasants' involvement in rapidly growing commerce of wheat are also well attested in

¹³⁶ Ottoman regional-administrative unit, subdivision of *sancak*, responding to the Byzantine *katepanikon*.

¹³⁷ Str. Dimitrov, ed. *Istoria na Veliko Turnovo* [History of Veliko Turnovo] Vol. II (Veliko Turnovo: Abagar, 2000), p.33.

¹³⁸ C. Oman, *The Great Revolt of 1381* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906), p.64

¹³⁹ David Jacoby, "The Venetian Presence in the Latin Empire of Constantinople (1204–1261): The Challenge of Feudalism and the Byzantine Inheritance," *Jahrbuch für Österreichische Byzantinistik* Vol 43 (1993): p.179 n. 124;

Bosnia.¹⁴⁰ However, the main argument of peasants' market activities is provided by archaeology: More money and more people with money signal the unarguable advance of the late medieval rural economy in the Balkans. In many respects this advance was based on the complementarity between the village, which provided the bulk of the production, and the estate, which ensured the better management. The main role, however, in this model of economic development was exercised by the state, the creator and regulator of the relations between the peasants and estate holders. The consequences of this tri-partite system are the saturation of the rural environment to the limits of its technical capacity for expansion, the proliferation of the estate and the following transformation of its production from self-subsistent to market oriented and the drive of the peasant, deficient in proper farming equipment for searching for additional incomes outside agriculture: in artisanal production and specialization, and in commuting between the village and the regional market center. Once the non-agricultural activities of the peasant secured his self-subsistence, it was only a matter of time for him to become a permanent townsman.

Vasil Giuzelev, "Dogovor na Ivanko Terter s Genoa ot Mart 23, 1387"[Treaty of Ivanko Terter with Genoa of March 23, 1387] in his *Ocherki vurhu Istoriata na Bulgarskiat Severoiztok i Chernomoriето, XII-XV v* (Sofia: Borina, 1995).pp. 126-139

¹⁴⁰ Bogumil Hrabak, "Izvoz žitarica iz Bosne i Hercegovine u Primorje od kraja XIII do pooetka XVII veka" [Grain export from Bosnia and Herzegovina to Primorje: the end of 13th – the opening of 17th centuries] in *Godišnjak Društva Istoričara Bosne i Hercegovine* No 14 (1963), pp.121-203.



Figure 3-1. Old Roman Provinces in the Balkans and Asia Minor



Figure 3-2. Fourteenth-century Northeastern Balkans.

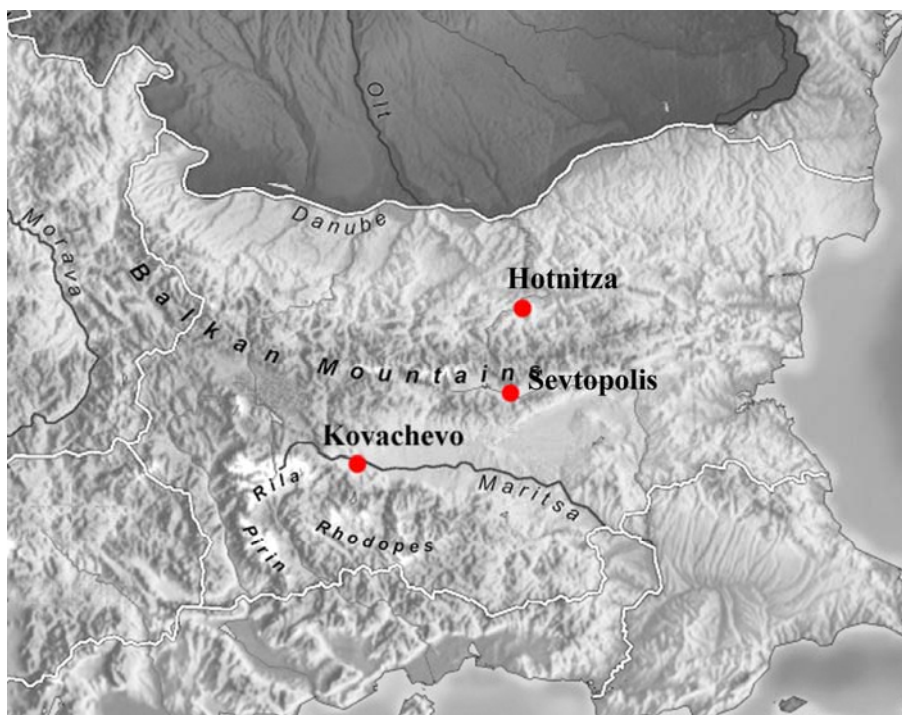


Figure 3-3. Geographical location of the archaeological sites under consideration

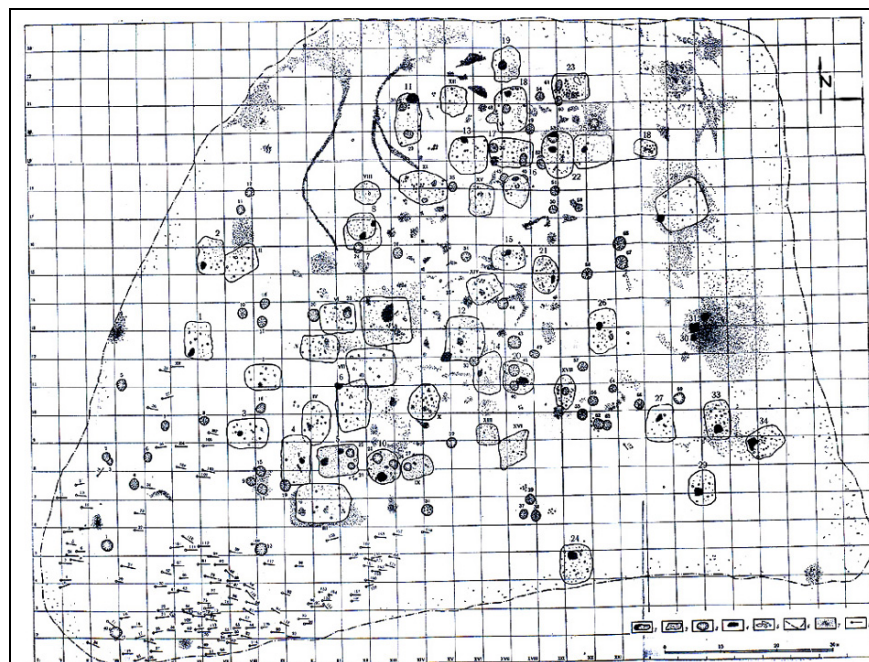


Figure 3-4. Kovachevo- Plan of investigations [Reprinted with permission from Peio Gatev, "Srednovekovno Selishte i Nekropol pri selo Kovachevo, Pazardzhishki okrug" *Razkopki i Prouchvania* Vol.12 (1985) Appendix, fig.1]

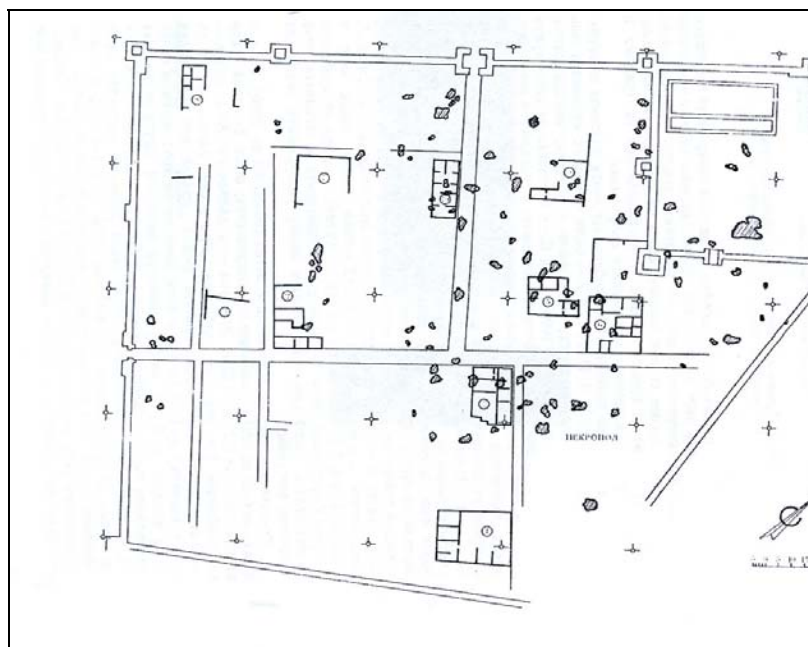


Figure 3-5. Investigational plan of the medieval village on the top of the ruins of ancient Sevtopolis [Reprinted with permission from J. Changova, *Srednovekovnoto Selishte nad Sevtopolis XI-XIV vek*, p.21, fig.8]

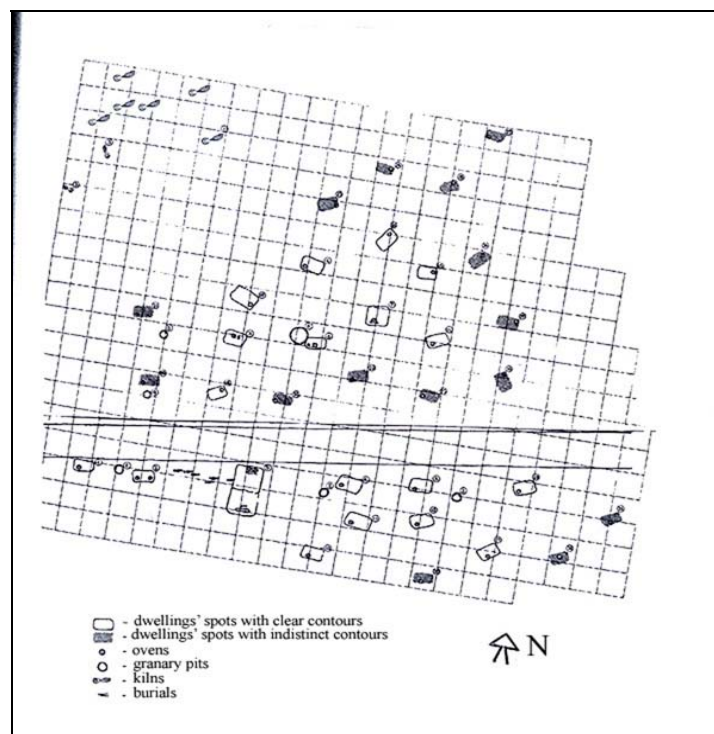


Figure 3-6. Hotnitsa. Excavation plan [Adapted from J. Aleksiev, "Srednovekovno Selishte krai Hotnitsa" in *Veliko Turnovo, Iubileen Sbornik*, p.75, fig.2]

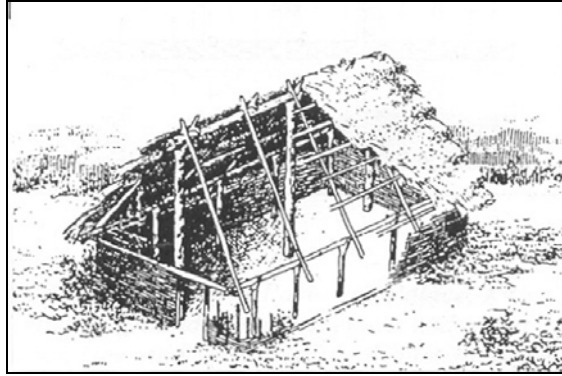


Figure 3-7. Single-room above-ground house [Reprinted with permission of Gordana Miloshevich, *Stanovanje u srednjovekovnoj Srbiji*, p.72]

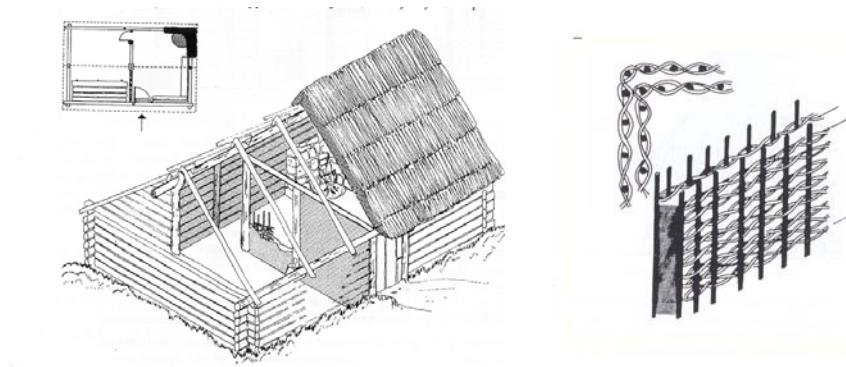


Figure 3-8. Two-room house. Wood, stone and wattle-and-daub construction. ([Reprinted with permission of Gordana Miloshevich, *Stanovanje u srednjovekovnoj Srbiji*, p.72]

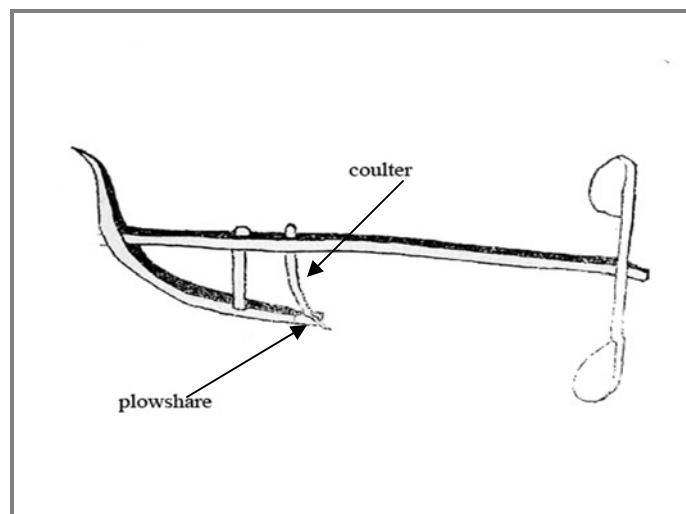


Figure 3-9. Type of plow with coulter and plowshare [Adapted from Changova, "Srednovekovni Orudja na Truda v Bulgaria" *Izvestia na Arheologicheskia Institut* Vol.XXV (1961).p.23]



Figure 3-10. Plowshares and coulter from the medieval village on the top of Sevtopolis [Courtesy of Muzeum of Kazanlak]

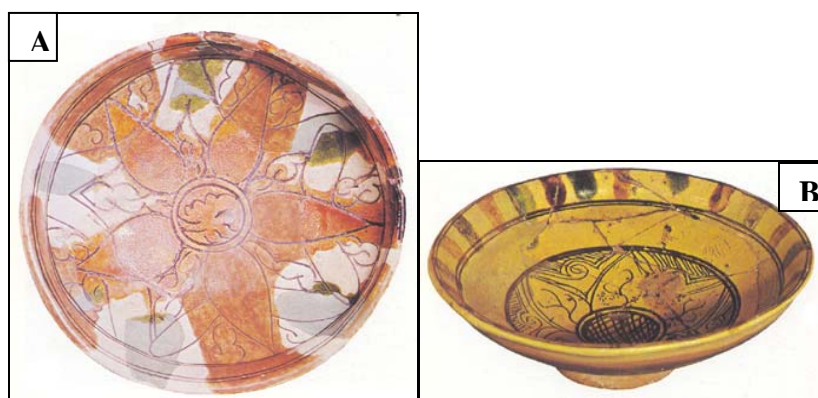


Figure 3-11. Painted sgraffito pottery from A) Hotnitsa and B) Turnovo. [Courtesy of the Archaeological Museum of V. Turnovo]

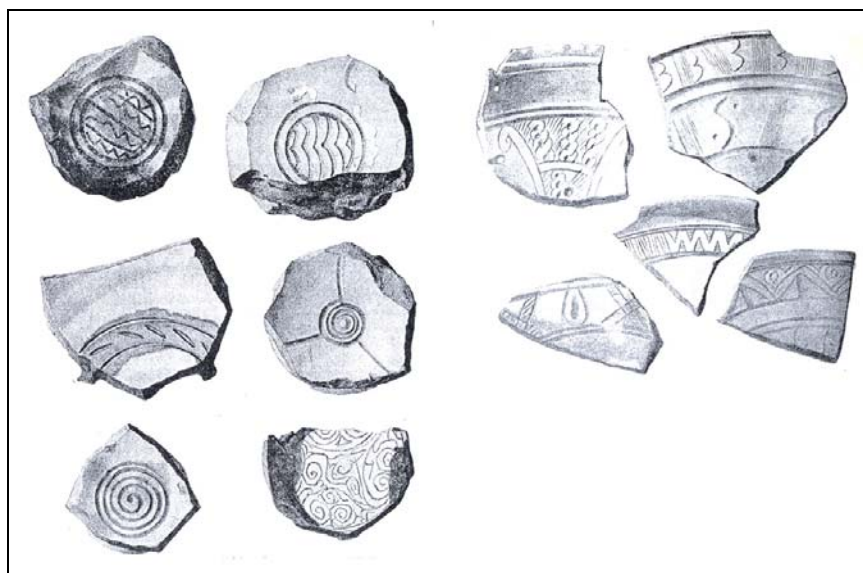


Figure 3-12. Sgraffito pottery from the village on the top of Sevtopolis [Reprinted with permission from J. Changova, *Srednovekovnoto Selishte nad Sevtopolis XI-XIV vek*, pp. 65; 68, figs.52; 54]

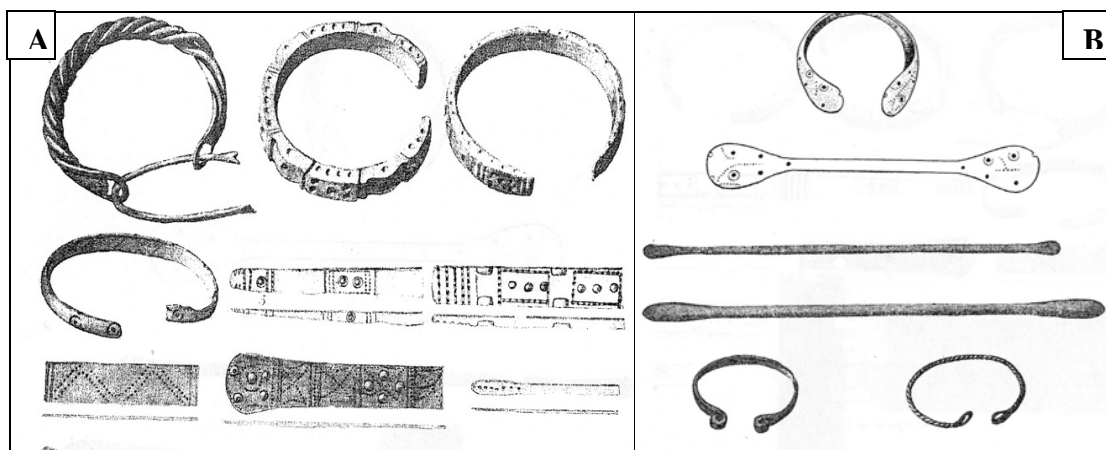


Figure 3-13 Bracelets from the village on the top of Sevtopolis. A) Bronze. B) Iron. [Reprinted with permission from J. Changova, *Srednovekovno Selishte nad Sevtopolis XI-XIV vek*, pp.107;108, figs.87;89]

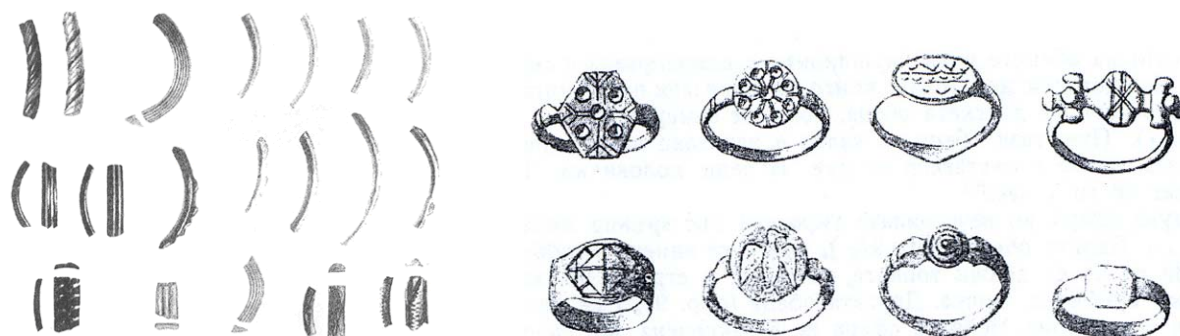


Figure 3-14. Rings and glass bracelets from the village on the top of Sevtopolis [Reprinted with permission from J. Changova, *Srednovekovno Selishte nad Sevtopolis XI-XIV vek*, pp.110;123, figs.90; 98]

CHAPTER 4 THE URBAN ARENAS

Alas! The unfortunate empire was in great poverty; where the archontes were rich and the emperor was a pauper.

— Anonymous Greek Chronicle of the Turkish Sultans, 16th century.

Toward (Not) Defining Town

The ancient Greeks used the word *polis* with no fewer than eleven general meanings ranging from “citadel” and “state” to “community” and “legal embodiment of public law”.¹ The first signs of overlapping the meanings of “a settlement below a citadel” and “a state” are denoted in *Odyssey*. After Hesiod (end of the 8th - the beginning of the 7th century B.C.), however, the designating of a particular *polis* as a state was transformed from particular to general: polis became synonymous of state. From the use of *polis* denoting “a settlement below a citadel” evolved its further use indicating the inhabitants of such a settlement. Another step led to the inhabiting of the notion of *polis* with the meaning of “assembly.” Therefore, the history of the meaning of the term *polis* may be summed up in two phases. The first phase ranges from the initial meaning of the term polis as “naturally strong site, citadel” to the meaning of “state.” The semantic changes thereafter occurred within the conceptual field of “state and politics.” Behind each shift in meaning lies the perception of the Greeks of some semantic relationship between two notions. Thus, initially, “the citadel” specified in their mind a category of settlements. At the time of the Stoics this category of settlements specified already a category of societies: the use of term *polis* was extended to its settlers, their popular assembly and the notion of their public life.

¹ M. B. Sakellariou, *The Polis-State. Definition and Origin.* (Athens: Research Centre for Greek and Roman Antiquity, 1989).pp. 208-213; G. Glotz, *La cité grecque* (Paris: Le Renaissance Du Livre, 1928) pp. 108-109; W. Gawantka, *Die Sogenannte Polis* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GmbH, 1985) pp. 190-193.

According to the Stoics, the *polis* was an organization of people dwelling together and ruled by a common law.²

For Aristotle, as for Plato before him, the *polis* arose out of the incapacity of the two prior forms of human association, the household and the larger kinship group to satisfy all the legitimate needs of their members.³ Self-sufficiency, *autarky*, was the objective and a properly constituted *polis* should be able to attain that goal, in order to avoid the lack of essential natural resources, for which the foreign trade was admissible. However, Plato's and Aristotle's idea of *autarky* took city and hinterland, town and country, together as a unit, not as distinct variables in competition or conflict: even those farmers, who lived outside of the town, were integrally *in* the *polis*. For Strabo, writing in the beginning of the Christian era, the urbanization was a process that would settle down the newly conquered barbarians "to agriculture and, therefore, to the urban life."⁴

However, neither Strabo, nor anybody after him defined adequately any autonomous social or economic urban factor that makes a town *town*. Most of the modern social and historical scholars defined the town either according to its functions or to its size of population. Yet none of those approaches could point out any distinctive urban factor, which would not disintegrate under a close analysis.

The followers of Marx's political economy and, especially, the zealots of historical materialism took it for granted that the fundament of socio-economic progress, the division of labor, was objectified by the separation of town and country, neglecting the fact that despite

² J. Von Arnim, *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* (New Haven: Yale Press, 1986).pp. 528; 1130

³ Aristotle, *Politics*. Ed. by David Keyt (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1999); Plato, *The Republic* transl. by Benjamin Jowett (New York: The Modern Library, 1941).

⁴ Kathryn Lomas, "Introduction" in *Urban Society in Roman Italy* (New York: St.Martin's Press, 1995).p.5.

Marx's promise to give a close analysis to the *labor separation*, as a theoretical instrument for analyzing socio-economic changes, he, in fact, had never dared to do it.⁵ The dualistic approach to historical economy, dividing the town from its country was continued by H. Pirenne, M. Postan, M. Dobb and not a small group of their followers, for whom the medieval towns were "non-feudal islands in a feudal sea" or "outposts of capitalism" that pulled up behind them the social changes and economic advance.⁶ Yet the later historiography proved both theses wrong. The medieval towns were neither isolated socio-economic entities nor they were the only social agents of progress. Braudel entered the same theoretical trap by attempting to treat the town by itself, as an isolated entity from its environment (or, in fact, since towns cannot exist independently of other towns, as a network of entities), in which "all towns have the same characteristics."⁷ Failing to find the common urban factor, which would define the town, finally, he gave up, concluding rather with an aphorism than with a definition: a town is "whatever the society, economy and politics allow it to be."⁸

In an attempt to avoid the dead ends of dualistic approach to historical economy, the present study adopts the views, most clearly expressed by P. Abrams and S. Epstein, in which the medieval town was not an isolated social and economic order but a spatial concentration and intensification of the social and economic relations that were part of a far larger system, generally called, despite the ambiguity of the term, feudalism.⁹ The medieval town in the

⁵ K. Marx, *Capital* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1970).p. 352

⁶ H. Pirenne, *Medieval Cities: Their Origins and Revival of Trade* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1925); M. M. Postan, *The Medieval Economy and Society* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1975); Maurice Dobb, *Studies of the Development of Capitalism* (London: Routledge, 1946).

⁷ F. Braudel, *Capitalism and Material Life, 1400-1800* (London: Harper and Row, 1973).pp. 373

⁸ Ibid. pp. 439-40

⁹ Philip Abrams, "Towns and Economic Growth: Some Theories and Problems," in Ph. Abrams and E. A. Wrigley, eds., *Towns in Societies: Essays in Economic History and Historical Sociology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University

Byzantine World and in Bulgaria, in particular, was not an exclusion. It was a physical locus where the social institutions: political, economic, judicial and cultural were concentrated. Indeed, it is quite tempting to ascribe the little physical distinction between “urban” and “rural” in the Byzantine World to the “underdeveloped process of labor separation between town and country,” but the mirage of “labor division,” never became a consistent criterion for the separation of town from its country and thus, for defining any distinctive and autonomous urban factor. As it is well known, heterogeneous, agricultural and non-agricultural economic activities coexisted within both medieval towns and villages and if there was certain dominance of the non-agricultural activities within the towns, it would be a matter of degree and not of kind. For the intrusion of urban capital into the countryside had begun simultaneously with the emergence of capitalist relations. There was not a town in Europe, whose money did not spill out on to the neighboring land and examples for that come from Paris and Augsburg,¹⁰ Antwerp and Florence,¹¹ Novgorod,¹² Thessalonike¹³ and Dubrovnik.¹⁴ Towns and cities, thus, have never been distinguished from other forms of settlement in a nonarbitrary way. Even if there really is some urban distinctiveness, it can only be signified locally and demonstrated comparatively, by recourse to nonurban evidence.

Press, 1978), pp. 9-33; S. R. Epstein, *Freedom and Growth* (London, New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 6-10; S.R. Epstein, “Cities, Regions and The Late Medieval Crisis: Sicily and Tuscany Compared,” *Past and Present*, No 130 (Feb., 1991), pp. 3-50.

¹⁰ Fernand Braudel, *The Wheels of Commerce: Civilization and Capitalism 15th-18th Century*. 2 Vols. (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), pp. 249-250

¹¹ David Friedman, *Florentine New Towns* (New York: MIT Press, 1988)

¹² Nevra Necipolglu, “Archontes of Thessalonike” in *Symposium of late Byzantine Thessalonike* (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2004)

¹³ *Symposium of late Byzantine Thessalonike* ed. by Alice-Mary Talbot and Jean-Michel-Spieser (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2004)

¹⁴ Barisa Krekić, *Dubrovnik in the 14th and 15th Centuries :a city between East and West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972)

Both Philipopolis and the late medieval village on the top of the ancient Sevtopolis, examined in the previous chapter, for instance, had their defensive fortifications and both display differences of a scale. Both were productive centers, more agricultural in the latter and less agricultural in the former, and both displayed monetized economy, (undoubtedly, of different degree), signifying market orientation of their production. There were no qualitative differences between the inhabitants of the village and those of the town in terms of their social or legal status either. The social elite, and their wealth, indeed, was concentrated within Philipopolis, but that is, again, a difference of a scale: it does not mean that the country was void of powerful and wealthy figures. Nevertheless, it was Philipopolis, which was considered by its contemporaries a *polis*,¹⁵ undoubtedly, because of its institutional importance, lay and ecclesiastic, that grew out of the concentration of population there. Exactly this concentration of population formed the critical mass, which transformed its quantitative differences with the country into cultural and political qualitative distinctions: its own political and economic rationale, its specific language and culture. It was the leadership of the community of Philipopolis, as well as those of the other towns in Thrace and Macedonia, which after the sack of Constantinople by the Latins in 1204 articulated clearly their emancipation through auctioning their political allegiance in exchange for communal tax privileges from the Latin, Bulgarian and later, Byzantine sovereigns. It was Philipopolis, which was viewed by its mid- twelfth century bishop, Michael Italicus, as a place where “the nine muses and the three graces live.”¹⁶ As any other town of the Byzantine Empire, Philipopolis adopted the structural and functional model, exemplified by Constantinople and just

¹⁵ Nicetas Choniates, *Historia*, English trans. by Harry J. Magoulias as *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates*. (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1984) ,p. 345). Hereafter, all references to Choniates’ *Historia* will be to this particular edition; Arnoldi Lubecensis Chronicon in MGH. SS., XXI p.172; Gisleberti Chronicon in MGH. SS., XXI, p.566.; R. Browning, "Unpublished Correspondence between Michael Italicus, Archbishop of Philipopolis and Theodore Prodromos," *Byzantinobulgarica*, No 1 (1962), pp. 279-97

¹⁶ R. Browning, "Unpublished Correspondence between Michael Italicus, Archbishop of Philipopolis and Theodore Prodromos," *Byzantinobulgarica*, No 1 (1962), pp. 279-97.

like the Byzantine capital, it was not a distinctive from its country, social order, but rather a concentrated and intensified reflection of it - a microcosm, a minimized model of the universe, as interpreted by the Byzantine theologo-political ideal.

Semantics of Byzantino-Slavic Settlement Terminology

After the crisis of the seventh century, the Byzantine *polis* lost its ancient semantics of *state* and *public life* and the implication of certain institutional and economic autonomy. Synonyms such as *kastron* and *phrourion* evolved from this point forward stressing the exclusively defensive aspect of the towns that contracted within fortified enclosures and withdrew into the safety of naturally protected locations. The towns' appearance impoverished and the urban way of life and social institutions such as city councils, baths, stadiums, and hippodromes came to an end. The rules of urban life were abandoned, as demonstrated by the *intra muros* burials, and the urban public space was re-structured by privatization and rapid redistribution of the urban public property. Instead, the town limited its functions to ensuring the security of its residents and the surrounding rural population. The former Byzantine towns in the territories that came into the sway of the newly formed Bulgarian state, such as Serdica, Dorostorum or Bononia, continued to show some signs of habitation but they lost their former social, economic and cultural function. Many of the former *curial* functions were continued by the offices of the bishops and their vicars and the communal life was reduced, thus, to a mere function of the Church.

The Byzantine settlement's terminological intricacy reflected the dynamics of urban development in a long term: The crisis of the seventh-eighth centuries resulting in contracting of the urban population and in identification of the former urban zones with their now solely defensive functions and the following reverse trend, the transformation of the fortified ecclesiastic and administrative centers into urban zones. In the *Alexiad*, for instance, due perhaps

to the different earlier sources used for her work, Anna Comnena refers to Tzouroulon, a fortified town in Thrace, sometimes as *polichnion*, (small town) in one passage, *kome*, (village), in another, and finally as *polis*.¹⁷ Tzouroulon, in fact, was an episcopal and small administrative center in the eight- ninth centuries, which, perhaps, as many other towns during and after the crisis of seventh-eighth century, contracted to a fortress hosting the ecclesiastic and administrative offices ruling over the town's hinterland.¹⁸ With the revival of towns in the Balkans, which started in the ninth century, but obtained more noticeable features towards the second half of the twelfth century, the complexity of settlement terminology also grew. The late medieval sources often termed even settlements with considerable size and importance such as Janina, Serres, Monemvasia or Smyrna, as both *kastron* and *polis*.¹⁹ The reasons for that ranged so widely, from rhetorical methods and personal attitudes to thematic emphases of the texts and landscape peculiarities of the described settlement that any attempt for delineating a general trend of the settlement terminology within the sources is ill fated. However, a closer scrutiny of any particular case supported by archeological evidence reveals that the changes of settlement

¹⁷ Anna Comnena, "Alexiad" Ed. Diether Roderich Reinsch. (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2001); in *Grucki Izvori za Bulgarskata Istorija* (GIBI) [Greek Sources for the Bulgarian History] Vol. 8 ed. by M. Voinov, L. Jonchev, V. Tupkova-Zaimova. (Sofia: BAN, 1972), pp. 73; 81; 123

¹⁸ Ihor Sevcenko, "Inscription Commemorating Sisinnios, 'Curator' of Tzouroulon (A.D. 813)," *Byzantion* No 35 (1965), pp. 564–74.

¹⁹ For Janina see - Miklosich – Müller, *Acta et diplomata graeca medii aevi sacra et profana*. Vols 1-6 (Vienna: Scientia Verlag, 1860-1892), Vol. 5, pp. 80-84; For Serres see - *Actes de Kutlumis*, ed. Paul Lemerle, (Paris, 1946). No 8; *Actes de Chilander*, ed. L. Petit and V. Korabiev, Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1975. Phototype copy of the Addenda of *Vizantiiskij Vremennik*, Vol. 17 and 19, (1911-12); for Monemvasia see - Miklosich – Müller, *Acta et diplomata*, Vol. 5, pp. 165; 170; For Smyrna see H. Ahrweiler, "L'histoire et la géographie de la région de Smyrne entre les deux occupations turques (1081-1317)" in, *Centre de recherche d'histoire et civilisation byzantines. Travaux et mémoires* Vol. 1. (Paris, 1955), pp. 31-36. Also, see the extensive bibliography provided by L. Maksimović *The Byzantine Provincial Administration under Palaiologoi* (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1988). pp. 249-253.

terminology seem surprisingly accurate. The same is valid, as well, for Slavic settlement terminology translated or calqued from Greek.²⁰

The Greek term *kastron* denoting a citadel was reflected by the Slavic term тврѣ (tvurd), which signifies, both a faculty of an object that is *stony hard* and *unbreakable* and an object itself: a safe place, a shelter, a fortress. Having a common root with “state:” (тврѣ – тврѣаве; tvurd – tvurdjave/ state/), *tvurd*, in fact, rehabilitates the ancient synonymy of “citadel” and “state” and at the same time it implies the symbiotic act of ruling and dwelling, which in fact is the Stoics’ synthesis for a *polis*. Thus, quite interestingly, the Slavic settlement terminology reestablishes the notion of *polis* and state as not distinctive, but identical social orders of a different scale. The Slavic analog of the Greek term *polis*, *grad*, also bore the connotation of both *a citadel*, of something *built in stone* (*grad*; from *graditi* (to build by means of masonry) and of *a protected yard* (*gradina* /garden) or fenced locus. The semantic relation between town and state was represented not only linguistically but also spatially: any town (*grad*, *polis*) had its ruling and defensive center (*kastron*, *tvurd*) hosting physically the state/town’s administration and epitomizing, thus, the prime faculties of the state, order and defense.

Often, in the late medieval Slavic and Byzantine sources the citadel is presented by the term *koula*, a term, which while of Turko-Arabic origin (meaning, again, both citadel and town), is first attested in Kekaumenos’ eleventh century *Strategikon*.²¹ In Anna Comnena’s *Alexiad*,

²⁰ This language is variously termed as Old Church Slavonic, Old Slavic, or Old Bulgarian. To put it simply, it was the Slavic language, into which the Bible was translated in the 9th century Bulgaria.

²¹ Kekaumenos, “Strategikon,” in *Sovety i rasskazy Kekavmena* ed. G. Litavrin (Moscow: AN SSSR, 1972).pp. 37;43

koula is also attested and the term is calqued later by the Slavic vernacular.²² A settlement that expanded outside the fortifications was named приградъ (*prigrad* – i.e. attached to *grad*, or *suburb*), often used interchangeably in the sources with both Hungarian term *varoš* transmitted in the late fourteenth century through Serbian and by the Byzantine *emporion* calqued as *yamboria*. Traces of the latter are detectable in the name of today's city of Yambol.

It might seem at the first glance that the semantic transfusion of the terms *grad*, *tvurd*, *koula*, *state*, *ruling* and *dwelling* with all their nuances, evident even in the contemporary Serbo-Croatian language, are result of the complexity of Greek-Slavic acculturation manifested in the lexical borrowings. A more careful analysis, however, reveals that the shift of the meaning in settlement terminology in most of cases reflected, in fact, nothing but the change of their reification.

The term *kastron* was never applied to the two first cities of the Byzantine Empire, Constantinople and Thessalonike: they were always referred as *poleis* or *megalopoleis*. Their inhabitants, respectively, were named by the sources exclusively as *politai*, while other towns' residents not rarely were designated also as *kastrinoi* (residents of a fortress). The last term, however, throws some light on the physical characteristics of the towns in the Byzantine Empire in their transitional period from fortresses with solely defensive functions, containing only lay and ecclesiastic administrative offices to residential and productive centers, quartered now at their enclosures. Some Byzantinists, mainly historical materialists, argue that *kastrinoi* is a term

²² Charalmbos Bakirtzis, "The Urban Community and Size of Late Byzantine Thessalonike" in Alice-Marie Talbot ed. *Symposium on Late Byzantine Thessalonike* (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2004).p.28; N. Ovcharov, *Perperikon i Okolnite Tvurdini prez Srednovekovieto* [Perperikon and its hinterland during the Middle Ages] (Sofia: Tangra, 2003).pp. 16-17.

denoting specifically the feudal landowners' class (*pronoia* holders) centered within a fortress,²³ others considered *kastrinos* any person living within a fortress regarding their social or fiscal status.²⁴ Both claims, as we will see further through the light of archaeological evidence, had their grounds, valid, however, for different phases of urban development.

Stenimachos, a typically provincial town near Bachkovo Monastery and center of *ketepanikon* Stenimachos-Tsepena grew out of a small road-guarding *kastron* Petric, established in the eleventh century.²⁵ The chronicler of the Third Crusade called it either *castellum* (small fortress) or *oppidum* (fortified town).²⁶ Geoffroi de Villehardouin refers to it as castle (*chastiaux* Stanimac)²⁷ while Nicetas Choniates describes it as *phrourion* (small stronghold).²⁸ At the concluding decades of the thirteen century, the site is called by Ephraim *polichnion* (small town).²⁹ In the mid- fourteenth century, it was considered *polis* according to John Cantacuzene and градъ (*grad*), according to the Bulgarian inscriptions discovered on the site.³⁰

²³ G. G. Litavrin, *Bolgaria i Vizantia v XI-XII vv.* [Bulgaria and Byzantium, 11th- 12th centuries] (Moscow: AN SSSR, 1960), pp. 129-131; Peter Tivčev, "Sur les cités Byzantines aux XI-XII siècles," *ByzantinoBulgarica*, Vol.1. (1962) p. 174.

²⁴ L. Maksimović, *The Byzantine Provincial Administration under Palaiologoi* (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1988), p. 251.

²⁵ V. A. Arutiunova-Fidanyan, *Typik Gregoria Pakuriani* [Typicon Gregory Pakourianos] (Erevan: n.p. 1978), pp. 1; 10; 13.

²⁶ *Historia Peregrinorum*, ed. by A. Chroust, "Quelen zur Geschichte des Kreuzzuges Kaiser Friederich I" in *Monumenta Germaniae historica. Scriptores.* (MGH SS); also in *Latinski Izvori za Bulgarskata Istoria* (LIBI) [Latin sources for Bulgarian history] Vol.3. ed. by M.Voinov, Iv. Dujcev, Str. Lishev (Sofia: BAN, 1965), pp. 221-244.

²⁷ *Hronikata na Geoffroi de Villehardouin. Zavladvavaneto na Tzarigrad* [The chronicle of Geoffroi de Villehardouin, The conquest of Constantinople] ed. and transl. by V. Nikoleav (Sofia: n.p. 1947). p. 254 art.346.

²⁸ *Nicetae Choniatae Historia*, p. 286.

²⁹ Ephraim, *Chronographia* ed. I. Bekker (Bonn: Ed. Weber, 1840). Vers. 8510.

³⁰ *Ioannes Cantacuzene imperatoris historiarum libri* Vol.1-3. ed. L. Schopen (Bonn: Ed. Weber, 1828-1832). Vol. 1. pp. 135; 177.; D. Tzonchev and St. Stoilov, *Asenova Krepost* [Asen fortress] (Plovdiv: Narodna biblioteka Iv. Vazov, 1960), pp. 5-24

Archeological investigations of Stenimachos reveal that the changes of terminology applied to the site quite correctly reflected the physical changes of the settlement through time. With the introduction and spread of the *pronoia* system, the small fortress, Petric, designed as a guardian of the access to the Bachkovo Monastery became a residential space of the local *pronoia* holders, charged with guarding the fortress and, consequently, the monastery. During the second half of the twelfth century, according to the archeological analysis, the fortress was renovated and expanded, as well as the number of its *kastronoi*, now including certain craftsmen and their families, charged with auxiliary functions for the needs of the fortress and its garrison.³¹ The so-formed settlement nuclei, during the thirteenth and fourteenth century, continued to attract population, which after exhausting the limited space of the fortress, expanded outside its walls, occupying, thus, the entire slope at the foot of the fortress. Due to the peculiarities of the terrain, the so-formed suburbium was not structured right next to the fortifications, but 300-400 meters to the northwest, on a territory suitable for dwelling. A similar spatial situation, with a certain distance between the fortress and its suburbia is evident also in Melnik, Pergamon, Krun, Prosek and elsewhere.

A case similar to Stenimachos is Serres. In Nicetas Choniates' *History*, the fortress is named as *akros* (citadel at the top of the hill).³² A hundred and fifty years later, in the mid-fourteenth century, John Cantacuzene described the *acropolis* of a "great and marvelous *polis*."³³ Choniates' description of Serres is neither arbitrary, nor inaccurate. For Corinth, he clearly distinguished the parts of the town according to their functions: an *emporion* with its two harbors

³¹ Tzonchev and St. Stoilov, *Asenova Krepost* pp. 41;45.

³² *Nicetae Choniatae Historia*, p. 257

³³ Ioannes Cantacuzene Vol. II, p. 329 and Vol. III, p. 55.

and a *kastron*.³⁴ The fact that two to three decades after him George Akropolites refers to Serres as *kome* (village) suggests that at the time of Choniates Serres was, indeed, nothing more than a citadel, but now an adjoined settlement appeared at its foot.³⁵ Towards the middle of the thirteenth century, Serres is identified by Nicephorus Gregoras already as a *polichnion*.³⁶ The terminological nuances in the sources between the opening of the thirteenth and mid-fourteenth centuries, therefore, were not products of some semantic confusion, but noticeably resembled the gradual physical transformation of Serres from a fortified nuclei attracting a *kome* at its foot, into “a great and marvelous *polis*.”

The risk of interpreting the changes of settlement terminology without resorting to archeological evidence is exemplified by the case of Prosek. At the opening of the thirteenth century the author of *The Life of St. Sava*, Theodosius, refers to the citadel of Prosek as to *grad*.³⁷ Nicephorus Gregoras called Prosek *polichnion* during the first half of the fourteenth century.³⁸ John Cantacuzene, several decades after Gregoras, refers to Prosek as *kastron*.³⁹ Yet, the different terms applied to Prosek are due not to its decline, as it could be easily assumed, but to its specific location. The town and its fortress were located on two different hills, *Markov Grad* and *Strezov Grad*, that raise up almost vertically at 220 meters and separated by the Chelovecka River at its confluence with the Vardar River (fig.4-1). Because of its exclusive strategic

³⁴ *Nicetae Choniatae Historia*, pp. 43-45

³⁵ George Acropolites, *Historia*, ed. A. Heisenberg, *Georgii Acropolitae Opera*, Vol. 1- 2. (Lipsiae: In aedibus B.G. Teubneri, 1903), p. 74

³⁶ Nicephorus Gregoras, *Byzantina historia* Vol. 1-3 ed. L. Schopen (Bonn: Weber, 1829-1855) Vol. 1, p. 288.

³⁷ Theodosius, *The Life of St. Sava* in J. Ivanov, *Bulgarski Starini iz Macedonia* [Bulgarian monuments in Macedonia] (Sofia: BAN, 1970).pp. 476-477.

³⁸ Nicephorus Gregoras, *Byzantina historia*, Vol. 1, p.155.

³⁹ Ioannes Cantacuzene, Vol. 1, pp. 288-290.

position, controlling the road from Pannonia and Belgrade through the heart of Macedonia towards the bay of Thessalonike, the site had been inhabited since pre-historical times. During the Roman Empire the settlement was located on a terrace on the right bank of the Vardar, but the barbarian invasions of the fourth to sixth centuries moved it on a more protected location, around *Markov Grad* located on the left bank of the Vardar.

The site was abandoned during the crisis of the seventh century and was reoccupied again in the late ninth century. At the opening of the eleventh century, Prosek became a parochial center within the diocese of Moglen, according to the chrysobull of Basil II of 1019.⁴⁰ At the beginning of thirteenth century, Prosek was the center of a Bulgarian appanage, which, after the death of Kaloyan in 1207, seceded from Bulgaria.⁴¹ The ruler of the new semi-independent principality, sebastocrator Strež, located its palace on the higher and more inaccessible of the two hills, which was named after him, *Strežov Grad*. Since, as Choniates explicitly mentions that on the hill of Strež there was no water,⁴² the settlement remained on the more suitable for dwelling *Markov Grad*. Although both parts, the residential area in *Markov Grad* and the fortress on *Strežov Grad* were part of the same structure, their locations and fortifications disguised them as two separated sites. Since the military campaign of Cantacuzene was interested with the fortress, not with the settlement, accordingly, the settlement was not mentioned in his chronicle. Finally, in opposition to decline suggested by the written sources comes the archeological evidence, pointing out to a quite even distribution of the coin material from twelfth to fourteenth century.⁴³

⁴⁰ J. Ivanov, "Charters of Basil II Bulgaroctonus (Bulgaroslayer)" in his *Bulgarski Starini iz Macedonia* [Bulgarian monuments in Macedonia] (Sofia: BAN, 1970), pp. 550-562.

⁴¹ *Nicetae Choniatae Historia*, p.277

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ I. Mukulčik *Srednovekovni Gradovi i Tvurdini vo Makedonia* [Medieval towns and fortresses in Macedonia] (Skopje: Makedonska akademija na naukite i umetnostite, 1996), pp. 230-237.

The terminological complexity that characterized all the aspects of late Byzantine history was, accordingly, well expressed in the relation between the town and its hinterland. With many of the Byzantine provinces lost and deurbanized during the crisis of the seventh-eighth centuries, Constantinople became a concentration and symbol of the imperial wealth and power, and of the empire itself. The Late Roman provinces were replaced by four large districts, known as *themata*. Soldiers of a particular theme army were settled in that province and expected to meet most of their expenses out of the revenue from their property granted by the emperor. By the middle of the ninth century, *thema* meant both, administrative-military district and military unit. The general of a *thema*, a *strategos*, also acted as a supervisory authority over fiscal and judicial officials. With the economic revival of the empire that started with the end of the iconoclastic controversy, the number and size of the military units increased as did the administrative units. The *strategoi* were relieved of many of their civil duties as judges were appointed in every province. Furthermore, the practice of redeeming military service in cash blurred the military meaning of the *thema*. By the end of Manuel I's reign, the Byzantine *thema*, a word that now meant simply a province, had no more military implications.⁴⁴ This gave rise to a lack of precision in Byzantine administrative terminology and from this period onward terms such as *katepanikon*, *chora*, *topos*, *ge* and *eparchia* entered the lexicology to denote administrative units. The claim of Hélène Ahrweiler that at the beginning of the thirteenth century the Byzantine *thema* became simply a fiscal unit comprising a town with its district, quite undefined geographically, could be corrected only in terms of time.⁴⁵ It seems that the term *thema* ceased to

⁴⁴ Leo VI's *Tactica*, repeating the formulation in the *Strategikon* of Maurice, describes each army corps, *thema*, as consisting of three *tourmai*, each under a *tourmarches*; each *tourma* was then divided into three *drouggoi*, and each *drouggos* into a number of *banda* or *tagmata*.

⁴⁵ H. Ahrweiler, *Etudes sur le Structures Administratives et Sociales de Byzance* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1971), pp. 86-87

exist before the restoration of the Bulgarian state since it cannot be found either in Bulgarian or in Serbian administrative terminology, massively borrowing from the Byzantines. Instead, the calques of *chora* = χωρα; *ge* = γη (land); *eparchia* = ἐπαρχία (region); *topos* = τόπος (place) are interchangeably used in the Bulgarian and Serbian sources. The Byzantine perplexity in administrative terminology was, accordingly, duly transmitted into Bulgarian and Serbian administrative systems. Unfortunately, neither the Byzantine nor the Bulgarian and Serbian sources allow precise understanding of the principles governing the organization and work of the administrative terms. According to Michael Angold, for instance, whose proposal is based mostly on Ahrweiler's survey, the chief administrative and fiscal division of a *thema* during the time of late Comneni was the *katepanikon*, which replaced the older subdivision of *diocese*.⁴⁶ Further, Angold regards that *thema* at the time of the Nicaean Empire was often disguised under the term *chora*.⁴⁷ *Katepanikon*, on its turn, was also divided into *chorai*, coinciding with the ecclesiastical divisions known as *enotai* (parishes).⁴⁸ Angold, as earlier O. Tafrali and E. Stein, was a captive of the idea to regard *katepanikon* as part of some strict three-tiered hierarchical scheme *thema* – *katepanikon* – *chora/topodesia/periuchi*,⁴⁹ where *katepanikon* was the heir of the former sub-theme administrative units, *bandon* and *tourma*.⁵⁰ Paul Lemerle even arrived at the conclusion that the late Byzantine administrative terminological perplexity was due to some

⁴⁶ M. Angold, *A Byzantine Government in Exile*, p.243.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Both terms *topodesta* and *periuchi* denote a territory in a wide sense of the word without having any technically administrative meaning. Both terms could designate the area of a whole village, villages, several estates, part of a village or part of a town.

⁵⁰ O. Tafrali, *Thessalonike au XIV siècle* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1913).p.57; E. Stein, *Untersuchungen zur spätbyzantinischen Verfassungs und Wirtschaftsgeschichte, Mitteilungen zur Osman. Geschichte II* (Reprinted Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1962).p.22

collapse of the Byzantine state machine.⁵¹ However, there is no support in the sources for either Lemerle's opinions or for the idea of three-tiered administrative hierarchy. The lack of precision in administrative terms was due to the interchangeability of the terms, stemming from the administrative and economic changes, in which the geographical concepts were not strictly differentiated from the administrative and territorial titles. Because the basic information was the name of the place or the territory, which was clear enough for the contemporaries, there was no need for the medieval authors to define it more precisely. For it is well known that the richly documented *katepanikon* of Smyrna was often designated in the thirteenth century as *chora*. The same is valid for the *katepanikia* of Strymon, Zichna, and Zabaltia in the 1420's, Popolia in the 1430's and Kassandria in the 1440's. In addition, the *katepanikon* of Kassandria as well as these of Kalamaria, Jerissos and Ermelia were often described by the sources as *periochi* and *topodesia* at the same time.⁵² The conclusions of Ahrweiler and Maksimović sound quite plausible, considering the late Byzantine administrative unit consisting of a town ruling over its adjacent territory, no matter of how precise term for its designation was: *thema*, *katepanikon*, *eparchia*, *periochi*, *topodesia* or *chora*. Just like Michael VIII Palaeologos, who in one of his charters of 1277 opposed Constantinople (*polis*) to the province (*chora*) without any other explanations, the *Dubrovnik Charter* of Ivan II Asen given to the merchants of Ragusa used the term *chora*, as a general term for a province, for a territory, which is not urban.⁵³

⁵¹ P. Lemerle, *Philippe et la Macédoine orientale à l'époque chrétienne et byzantine* (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1945), p. 222.

⁵² See the extensive supporting documents provided by L. Maksimovic *The Byzantine Provincial Administration* p. 72.

⁵³ G. A. Ilinskii, *Gramoty Bolgarskih Tsarei* [Charters of Bulgarian emperors] (Moscow: Sinodal'naia tipografiia, 1911), pp. 13-14

However, what the precise name of the administrative units was matters little for the present study. What is far more important is the relationship between town and country implied by the surviving charters of the late medieval Byzantine, Bulgarian or Serbian rulers: the notion of clear and intentional distinction between the elements of the administrative units, the towns and their applied territories. In the *Dubrovnik Charter*, the merchants of Dubrovnik (Ragusa) were granted free access for trading “in all the *chorai* and in all the *towns* of my empire.”⁵⁴ Literally the same expression is used in the *Virgina Charter* of Constantine Asen (1257-1277) and in the *Mrach Charter* of Ivan Alexander (1331-1371).⁵⁵ The *Dubrovnik Charter* is usually accepted as the main document witnessing the number and names of the administrative subdivisions of the Second Bulgarian Empire, which, like the late Byzantine Empire, was structured in a way that endowed its cities with priority in every respect. Thus, as the document reveals, the administrative units of Bulgaria are named after their administrative centers, *Preslav’s chora*, *Bdin’s chora*, *Skopjean chora* etc. It is not surprising that in most cases the administrative centers of the provinces coincided with the episcopal ones. The same situation could be observed in Serbia, whose regional units were named after their bishop’s centers: Ras, Srem (ancient Sirmium), Braničevo and Prizren.⁵⁶ During the fourteenth century, the notion of country, *chora*, in the tutelage of Bulgarian appanage holders, is already taken by its center, the town, a shift undoubtedly signaling the increasing importance of the towns: “Ana, despina of Krun,” “Michael, ruler of Bdin,” “Balik, ruler of Karvuna.”⁵⁷

⁵⁴ G. A. Ilinskii, *Gramoty Bolgarskih Tsarei* pp. 13-14

⁵⁵ Ibid. pp 18; 25.

⁵⁶ Sima Ćirković, *The Serbs* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004). p30

⁵⁷ A. Burmov, “Kum Istoriata na Krunskata Oblast” [About the history of Krun’s appanage] in Idem, *Selected Writings* Vol. 1 (Sofia: BAN, 1968).pp. 217; Ivan Bozhilov, *Familiata na Asenevci: Genealogia i Prosopografia* [Asen family : Genealogy and prosopography] (Sofia: BAN, 1985).p.119; V. Giuzelev, *Ochertsii vurhu Istoriata na*

Unlike the ancient perception of *polis*, according to which the actual intramural urban space was organically connected to its hinterland, the late medieval documents suggest certain notion of opposition between the town and its governed territory. The towns in late medieval Bulgaria were perceived and presented through the sources as centers of their provinces, as their symbol and, most importantly, as their antithesis. The peasants, who lived outside the town, now were not integrally *in the polis*. They had to build their adjacent temporary settlements to the fortified nuclei in order to participate more regularly in the urban market and social activities. Gradually, as these temporary adjacent settlements became more and more permanent parts of their fortified nuclei, their inhabitants became permanent townsmen.

Town's (re) Formation in Medieval Bulgaria

As it is well known, the territory north of the Balkan Mountains and south of Danube River was de facto deurbanized before it became a core territory of the First Bulgarian Empire, at the end of the seventh century. The hiatus of urban life is indisputably confirmed by archaeological finds: thousands of sixth-century coins found in the territory of the Danube Plain and only a few from the seventh to ninth centuries.⁵⁸ With the exception of the capital Pliska and, later, Preslav, only few remains of the early Byzantine-late Roman fortresses were re-used by the Bulgars, mostly as strongholds guarding the borders and passes through the Balkan Mountain, while the inland urban sites of antiquity remained largely deserted. The first indications of re-occupation of the former urban sites in Bulgarian territory came from the archaeological evidence of coin circulation towards the end of the ninth and the opening of the tenth centuries in Dorostorum, as well as in the capitals Pliska and later, Preslav - a trend similar

Bulgarskiat Severoiztok i Chernomoriето, XII-XV v [Essays about the history of Bulgarian Northeast and Black Sea region] (Sofia: Borina, 1995).p.101.

⁵⁸ Strashimir Lishev, *Bulgarskiat Srednovekoven Grad* [The medieval Bulgarian town] (Sofia, BAN, 1970).p.13-14.

to that of Corinth and Athens, although on a much smaller scale.⁵⁹ In the course of the tenth century, signs of habitation came from the inland towns of Moesia, Macedonia and Thrace. Pottery, coins and written sources, where available, suggest reanimation of the occupancy in Serdica, Lovetch, Verroia (Stara Zagora), Pernik, Turnovo, Bdin, Philipopolis, Ohrid, Skopje, Bitola, Voden, Muglen and some others. Undoubtedly, the Christianization of Bulgaria in 865 and the following reestablishment of the former episcopal centers played crucial role to accelerate this process. Nevertheless, the signs of reanimation of the former urban centers should not be understood as a revival of some urban way of life. The new-old episcopal centers, although attracting more people to the former urban sites, continued to function as nothing more than command centers of the military and ecclesiastic structures of the state in the context of an economy based on natural exchange. The capitals, Pliska and, later Preslav, were the only exclusions. Quite large, indeed, they both were fortified residences of the ruling elite and had only marginal economic functions serving the needs of this elite. The economy of the First Bulgarian Empire was marked by self-subsistence, reciprocity, and natural exchange or administered trade. Money, mainly gold, was an instrument of state's international trade/politics and diplomacy, but not of regular market activities.⁶⁰

Becoming part of the political space of the Byzantine Empire, Bulgarian territories also joined its more advanced money economy. In about two decades after the conquest of Bulgaria by Basil II in 1018, the taxes in the former Bulgarian territories were collected already in cash and how foreign was money for everyday life in Bulgaria was signified by the serious resistance

⁵⁹ For Dorostorum, Pliska, Preslav, Corinth and Athens see Ernest Oberländer-Târnoveanu, "Monnaies Byzantines des VII-X siècles Découvertes a Silistra et le Probleme du Commencement de l'Économie Monétaire dans le Premier Royaume Bulgare." *Dobrudja* No 12 (1995).pp. 137- 171. For Serdica and Bdin see J. Ivanov, *Bulgarski starini iz Makedonia* [Bulgarian historical monuments in Macedonia], (Sofia: BAN, 1931).pp. 550-553; 557.

⁶⁰ Ioannes- Scylitzes – Georgius Cedrenus. "Historia." in *Grucki Izvori za Bulgarskata Istoria* (GIBI) [Greek Sources for the Bulgarian History] Vol 6. ed. by M. Voinov, Iv. Dujcev and V. Tupkova-Zaimova, (Sofia: BAN, 1965). pp 198-340.

of the population there manifested through the uprising of Peter Delian in 1040.⁶¹ In the course of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the increased money circulation, inspired by the Byzantine monetary tax system, the steady demographic growth, and the consequent increase of cultivated land under the better management of *pronoia* system led to higher agricultural production and to a general leveling of the economy parameters between the different regions of the Balkans under the Byzantine rule. The chronicles of William of Tyr and of Ansbert throw some light on the increased role of the market between the First and Third Crusades in Serdica.⁶² In 1096, Alexius I Comnenus, supplied the army of Walter the Penniless with cash and allowed them to obtain food “in just price” from the market in Serdica, delegating, thus, to the crusaders the state right of *synone*, one of the heaviest obligation on the producer to sell his product to the state at a fixed price.⁶³ Given the level of economy of the Bulgarian lands, the compulsory sales of food and animals to the state, combined with producers’ need to obtain cash in order to pay their taxes, played a formative role in Bulgaria for establishing market relations. In 1189, however, the chronicle of Ansbert reveals a little bit different situation. There was an agreement between Isaac II Angelus and Frederick Barbarossa, charging the Byzantines with organizing markets for supplying the crusaders and the right of *synone* was again delegated to the crusaders.⁶⁴ This time however, the market in Serdica was destroyed out of the conflict erupting around the prices. The crusaders did not like the prices, by which the locals, obviously, resisted the *synone*, and started

⁶¹ Ioannes Scylitzes, *Synopsis historiarum*, ed. I. Thurn (Berlin–New York: De Gruyter 1973), p. 412.

⁶² *Willelmi Tyrensis Archiepiscopi Chronicon*, ed. R. B. C. Huygens. (Turnholt: Brepols, 1986), p. 49; Ansbert, “Historia de expeditione Frederici imperatoris,” in *Latinski Izvori za Bulgarskata Istoria* (LIBI) Vol.3 (Sofia: BAN, 1965), pp. 245-296.

⁶³ D. Angelov, “Prinos kum Pozemlenite Otnoshenia vuv Vizantia” [About the land property relations in Byzantium] *Godishnik na Sofiiskiat Universitet* No2 (1952), p.43.

⁶⁴ See details for the treaty between Byzantium and Frederick Barbarossa in Str. Lishev, “Tretia Krustonosen Pohod i Bulgarite” [The Third Crusade and Bulgarians] *Izvestia na Instituta po Istoria* (1957), pp. 205-240.

to plunder. While the compulsory character of *synone* was crucial for the emergence of sporadic proto-markets with special functions in the eleventh century (obtaining cash for taxes, for instance), it was already incompatible with the established regular market activities during the next century. The increased market orientation of production was one of the most important factors for reanimating the urban life that manifested itself towards the end of the twelfth century.

More evidence for urban growth during the twelfth century comes from Philipopolis. According to the first hand information, provided by the crusaders Arnold of Lübeck and Gizlebert in 1189, Philipopolis had an impressive size. Although the entire army of Frederick Barbarossa was billeted in the town, abandoned by the local population, half of the town was still empty (*vix alterne domus inhabitate sunt*).⁶⁵ However, much more important information is offered by another chronicle for the Third Crusade, according to which, the local Paulician colony, dwelling in the suburbia of Philipopolis, immediately retook the market vacuum after the flight of the town's population and organized an abundant market supplying the knights with everything they needed (*mercatum abundantissimum in omnibus*).⁶⁶ The market, obviously, was no longer a place where the producer was sporadically pushed by the necessity to obtain cash for his taxes, but a locus of daily activities and a source for maximization of the available surplus.

The increased role of urban economy towards the end of the twelfth century is signaled, as well, by the new agreement between Alexius III Angelus and the Venetian Republic in 1199,

⁶⁵ Arnoldi Lubecensis Chronicon in MGH. SS., XXI p.172; Gisleberti Chronicon in MGH. SS., XXI, p.566. It is not clear, however, what part of the 20, 000 knights, as reported by Gizlebert, stayed in the abandoned Philipopolis, nor the manner of their billeting. It has not to be forgotten, however, that any knight had his own retinue of servants.

⁶⁶ Annales Colonienses maximi, MGH SS, XVII, p. 798.; Ansbert, "Historia de expeditione Frederici imperatoris, " in *Latinski Izvori za Bulgarskata Istoria* (LIBI) Vol.3 (Sofia: BAN, 1965).pp. 245-296.

where the previous privileges of Venetians were confirmed and extended to the inland towns of Macedonia: Ohrid, Prilep, Kostur, Muglen, Larissa, Skopje, Strumitsa and Naissus.⁶⁷

An additional factor, however, should not be neglected for the acceleration of urban growth, especially for the smaller towns in Thrace and Paristrion: the side effects of the administrative reforms undertaken by Manuel I Comnenus. The reason for restructuring the Byzantine administrative system under the reign of the Comneni was rooted in the imperial reaction to the threat of Pechenegs, Normans and Seljuk Turks in the eleventh century, realized in the context of decreasing gold reserves. The response of Alexius I, John II and, especially, Manuel I, therefore, to change the long-standing and fruitless strategy of defense-in-depth into a new, more aggressive policy through activating the frontier zones for expansion was without alternative.⁶⁸ However, the strengthening of the border zones in the context of sharp deficit of gold reserves could be achieved only through the widespread of *pronoia* system - by granting privileges to the local *archontes*, often of non- Greek, “barbarian, “ (as Nicetas Choniates complains) origin, in order to secure their loyalty and to direct their ambitions towards external expansion and not to benefit from assaults on imperial lands.⁶⁹ This, in turn, changed the character of *pronoia* from an award for exceptional merits into a basic economic instrument for imperial defense. As a consequence of the spreading out of the *pronoia* system, much smaller number of people now remained under the direct taxation of the fisc, which, thus made most of its apparatus dysfunctional and redundant.

Another feature of the Byzantine economic model contributed indirectly to the formation and growth of towns. The replacement of an obligation in kind by one in cash, a phenomenon

⁶⁷ N. P. Sokolov, *Obrazovanie Venecianskoi Kolonialnoi Imperii* [Establishment of the Venetian colonial empire] (Saratov: Izdatel'stvo Saratovskogo universiteta, 1963).p.284.

⁶⁸ John Haldon, *Warfare, State and Society in the Byzantine World* (London: UCL Press, 1999). p.65

⁶⁹ *Nicetae Choniatae Historia*, pp. 208-9.

known from antiquity, in *pronoia* system resulted not only in buying out the peasants' corvée duties, but also of the military service of *pronoia* holders. Not only was this practice not restricted by the state, but in the course of the eleventh and twelfth centuries it was especially encouraged in the areas far from the frontiers. The obtained cash was used for hiring mercenaries, who proved to be much more efficient soldiers. The army of the Comneni, therefore, underwent even more profound reforms, although, it continued to be dominated by the pattern set during the eleventh century - the existence of a single imperial field army, with additional mercenary divisions involved on specific fronts for specific campaigns. While the thematic forces, or rather their elite elements, continued to play an important role, the lead in military campaigns was now taken by centrally controlled mercenaries, as demonstrated by the establishment of great number of their *banda* in the provinces under their own command. In the 1160's, Manuel I granted for example four *kastra* in Paristrion to exile Rus' princes.⁷⁰ This was obviously sufficient to deter the steppe nomads from further incursions. In the second half of the twelfth century, Eustathius of Thessalonica characterized the Paristrion frontier as a peaceful region "where the Scythian bow does not function, and his ropes are kept unused."⁷¹ The fruits of the so-established expansionistic policy were most detectable in the eastern front. In the process of re-establishing the imperial power in Asia Minor, key strongholds were to be garrisoned to serve as bases for the expansion of imperial authority. From here, imperial forces were to push into marginal or enemy-occupied lands to seize key centers, which were in turn to be garrisoned and to become the strongholds for further moves outward. This was a slow and incremental process, but it was successful as far as substantial lost areas were recovered in the

⁷⁰ *Hypatian Chronicle* in Kazhdan and Epstein, *Change in the Byzantine culture XI-XII centuries* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1985). Appendix No 42.

⁷¹ *Eustathii Metropolitae Thessalonicensis Opuscula* ed by T .L .F. Tafel (Frankfurt am Main, repr. Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1964), p. 200.

period from the death of Alexios I in 1118 to the 1160s. A second stage involved the establishment of new *themata*, such as Thrakesion and Mylasa and Melanoudion by John II and Neokastra by Manuel I. The large number of small fortresses covering the major routes and dotting the country in both Asia Minor and the Balkans confirms that building activity in a significant scale was launched during the reign of Manuel I Comnenus. The old fortresses were renovated and new ones were established and garrisoned with militias from the local rural population. This population in return received land and fiscal privileges, a fact which played a formidable role in concentrating population around the provincial fortresses.⁷²

The adoption of the system of privileges reduced in scope and substantially simplified the range of the state economy and its apparatus. It had been scattered into the provinces, each of which now had its own local administration, its own revenue, and its own expenditure.⁷³ On the other hand, the system of privileges led to partial demonetization of the state economy, given that there was now no obligation on the holders of privileges to pay tax, and still less to pay it in cash. In this way, large sums of money were liberated from the state economy and remained in possession of private hands and provincial authorities, who were concentrated in the regional administrative centers. Manuel I's military elitism along with his policy of building up the empire's population resulted in a significant influx of immigrants, most of whom were prisoners of war, who, as Eustathius of Thessalonike asserts, "contributed to our cities as inhabitants."⁷⁴ Not a small group of foreign *pronoia* soldiers, as witnessed by both Eustathius and Choniates,

⁷² P. Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel Komnenos 1143-1180* (Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 1993), pp. 132-136; 171-180; John Haldon, *Warfare, State and Society in the Byzantine World*, p.97

⁷³ See for details N. Oikonomides, "The role of the Byzantine State in Economy" in *The Economic History of Byzantium*, pp. 1026-1030.

⁷⁴ *Eustathii Metropolitae Thessalonicensis Opiscula* ed by T .L .F. Tafel, p.200

also merged into the low-class aristocracy in the provincial towns of the Empire.⁷⁵ Although there is no direct evidence for the process of concentration of *pronoia* holders in the provincial fortresses, it could be analogically derived from the early Ottoman practice of garrisoning the newly seized fortresses, well inherited from the Byzantines. According to the Ottoman *timar* registers (*tahrir defters*), not a small group of *timar* holders had the obligation of guarding the fortress, a duty that in fact made the place of service their permanent residence.⁷⁶ In Byzantium, like in Italy and Dalmatia, thus, the medieval town took shape as a community headed by a bishop and dominated by a small group of aristocratic families increasingly involved in a private enterprise.⁷⁷ How powerful those urban provincial elites became was demonstrated in *Paristrion* in 1185 when the grievances of the local *archontes* Peter and Asen led to a massive revolt resulting in the restoration of the Bulgarian state. The rebellion started in Turnovo, as Choniates reports, but the Bulgarian revolt, as well as the secession of the Serbs and the Cilician Armenians from the imperial rule, started as local and aristocratic uprisings before they became national and popular and had much in common with the revolt of Theodore Mangaphas in Philadelphia. Its first target became the old Bulgarian capital and largest town in *Paristrion*, Preslav. Another town, Lovech, played crucial role in the clash between the troops of Peter and Asen and the Byzantines.⁷⁸ It seems that Bdin also joined the political formation of Peter and Asen. Its bishop was brought to Turnovo and compelled to consecrate a certain deacon Basil, a person, perhaps very close to the leaders of the revolt, as an archbishop of Turnovo and of the newly restored

⁷⁵ Eustathii Metropolitae Thessalonicensis Opiscula ed by T .L .F. Tafel, p.200; Choniates, *Historia*.p. 204.

⁷⁶ Hr. Matanov, *Vyznikvane i Oblik na Kiustendilski Sandjak*,; R. Kovachev, *Nikopolskiat Sandjak prex Poslednata Chetvart na XV vek* ; Dušanka Bojanić- Lukać and Vera Mutafchieva, *Vidin and Vidinski Sandzak, XV-XVI vek*

⁷⁷ N. Oikonomides, *Hommes d'affairs grecs et latins a Cosntantinople, XIIIe- XV siècles* (Montreal-Paris : Institut d'études médiévales Albert-le-Grand, 1979).

⁷⁸ Choniates, *Historia*.p. 219

Bulgarian state.⁷⁹ However, the culmination of the demonstration of power of the urban provincial elites came in the aftermath of the fall of Constantinople, when the Greek urban elites in Thrace and Macedonia auctioned their political allegiance in exchange for communal tax privileges from the Latin, Bulgarian and later, Byzantine sovereigns.

No less impact on the growth of towns in the Byzantine World had the structural changes of the financial services, which underwent serious simplification as well.⁸⁰ In the provinces, the prerogatives of the omnipresent Byzantine tax collector (*praktor*) were sharply reduced by the number of holders of privileges who might live in his area and by the commanders (*kephalai*) of the towns, who were now entitled to collect their fees directly from the taxpayers.⁸¹ The obligation of *sitarkesis* or *sitarchia of towns* (a tax evolved from *synone*), the supplying of fortified settlements with foodstuffs at a fixed price witnessed by the ninth-century sources, had been converted into a regular payment in cash by the eleventh-twelfth centuries. This money, most of which remained in the hands of the provincial authorities, was available now for buying supplies from the local producers for satisfying the needs of food and equipment. More importantly, the conversion of the military duties into cash affected the compulsory recruitment of artisans with an auxiliary role in the army. While this did not significantly affect the army dispositions supplied centrally with necessary equipment and services by the fisc, the local fortresses fell in sharp deficit of artisanal services, which now were to be obtained by ready cash. Thus, at the local level, the demonetization of state economy resulted in promotion of the pattern

⁷⁹ “Pismo ot Dimitar Homatian , Arhiepiskop na Ohrid do Vasiliy Pediadit, mitropolit na Korfu” [A Letter of Demetrius Chomatianos, Archbishop of Ohrid, to the metropolitan of Korfu, Basil Pediaditis] ed. and transl. by Peter Nikov, “Prinos kum Istoricheskoto Izvoroznanie na Bulgaria i kum Istoriata na Bulgarskata Tsurkva” [A contribution to the Bulgarian historical sources and to the history of Bulgarian Church] *Spisanie na BAN* vol.XX issue 11(1921). pp. 20-47.

⁸⁰ N.Oikonomides, “The role of the State” p.1029.

⁸¹ Konstantinos N. Sathas, *Mesaionike Bibliotheke*, (MB) 7 vols. (Venice-Pari: Typois tou Chronou, 1872–94), Vol. 6, pp. 627–28.

of demand of goods and labor, which, combined with the incentives offered by the local centers, security, and judicial services, became the main elements of the gravitational force attracting rural population around the fortified nuclei and reshaping the settlement's landscape. It might be safe to say, therefore, that the rise of towns manifested towards the end of the twelfth century was attributable to both, economic growth in agriculture and administrative reforms undertaken by Manuel I Comnenus.

Urban Morphology

In his accounting book of 1366, Antonio Barberius, the accountant of Amadeus VI, Count of Savoy, distinguished clearly the fortress of Mesembria (*Castrum Mesembrie*) from the suburbs of Mesembria (*Villa Mesembrie*), but perceived both as an organic and coherent entity called the city of Mesembria (*Civitas Mesembrie*).⁸² The same pattern of distribution of urban space is confirmed by the archaeological evidence elsewhere in the late Byzantine Empire. The Byzantine fortresses, enforced, renovated and multiplied by new ones during the first half of the twelfth century, were located at strategic and inaccessible spots and their position, appearance, and internal structure were dictated by their basic function - defense. While Preslav, Dorostorum, Shumen, Ohrid, Skopje, Prespa and many other towns of the First Bulgarian Empire continued to flourish throughout the Late Middle Ages, the old capital, Pliska, destroyed during the assaults Svetoslav and Ioannes Tzimiskes in 969-972, contracted to an insignificant rural settlement, which towards the mid-eleventh century ceased to exist. Its large territory (56 ha) and open location required defense resources, which the former pagan center did not have. (fig.4-2).

The great majority of the fortified sites in the territory of the Bulgarian state, which was restored, in 1185, were, of course, not episcopal or administrative centers, but strategic

⁸² L. Gorina, "Materialyi Dnevnik Antona Barberi po Istorii Bolgarii i Vizantii" [Materials of the book of A. Barberius for the history of Bulgaria and Byzantium] in *Byzantinobulgarica* No 4 (1973). pp. 229-251.

fortifications guarding the main roads and mountain passes. They displayed the characteristics of nothing more than a fortified farmstead, within the enclosures of which, as Choniates described the fortress of Prosek, “flocks of sheep and herds of cattle were put to graze.” (fig.4-3)⁸³ Others, such as Sobri, Zletovo, Markova Sushica and Zheleznec (Siderokastron) in Macedonia, Tsepena in Rhodopes Mountain and Novo Burdo in Serbia, extended their road-guarding functions over the mines, exploited in the region. (fig.4-4).

However, the prolonged period of peace and demographic growth, combined with economic progress in agriculture and trade and the formidable role of Manuel I’s administrative reforms was well reflected in the towns’ appearance. The corroboration between archaeological and written sources at this point is unquestionable. Towards the second half of the twelfth century many of the settlements located within the provincial fortresses expanded outside their defensive walls. The change of the urban structural tissue reflected the change of the basic function and nature of the town from defensive strongholds and seats of state and ecclesiastic authority into centers of production and trade with a more definitively urban way of life. North from the Balkan Mountain, new urban centers arose along with the expansion of the old ones.

Turnovo, the center of rebellion of Peter and Asen and capital of the Second Bulgarian Empire, was situated on two neighboring hills, Tsarevets (13 ha) and Trapezitsa (12 ha), divided by the meanders of the Yantra River. Intensively inhabited in Late Antiquity, then abandoned, the site was reoccupied towards the end of the eighth century as part of the internal fortress system of the First Bulgarian Empire. The archeological discoveries of large complexes for producing sgraffito, earthenware, and building ceramics as well as for iron making in the suburbia between the fortresses of Tsarevets (fig. 4-6) and Trapezitsa, suggest that towards the

⁸³ *Nicetae Choniatae Historia*, p.277.

middle of the twelfth century the urban tissue of Turnovo already expanded beyond its fortifications (fig. 4-5).⁸⁴

The industrial activities on a large scale, within and outside the citadels indicate that the choice of Turnovo as a center of the rebellion was not accidental, but based on the town's economic and human potential, accumulated through the peaceful period that followed the final defeat of the Pechenegs. At its heyday in the mid- fourteenth century, Turnovo comprised a territory no smaller than 80 ha, expanding over the neighboring hills, Devin Grad and Sveta Gora and the area between them and accommodating in about 12, 000 -15, 000 townsmen.⁸⁵

Mesembria was another town that gained momentum during the twelfth century. The growth in agriculture and, accordingly, the trade importance of Mesembria, was certainly reflected by the growth of its inhabited area: the early-Byzantine town, situated on a strategic peninsula of 10 ha spread over the adjacent continental coast (fig. 4-7). At the opening of the twelfth century, the population growth of the town was confirmed by the promotion of a Mesembrian bishop into a metropolitan.⁸⁶ The prosperity of the town was reflected by the Christian relics collected there - the relics of St. Theodore Stratelates, St. Bartholomew, and St. Sixtus.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Konstantinos N. Sathas, *Mesaionike Bibliotheke*, (MB) 7 vols. (Venice-Pari: Typois tou Chronou, 1872–94), Vol. 6). pp. 93-115. A.Popov, "Manastiryt Velika Lavra v Pismenite Iztochnici, Nauchnata Literatura i Arheologicheskite Prouchvania," [Great Lavra Monastery according to the written sources, scientific literature and archaeological investigations] in *Ibid.* pp. 129-143.

⁸⁵ According to the estimations of Atanas Popov, "Za Socialno-ikonomicheskiat Oblik na Turnovograd prez XII-XIV vek," [About the socio-economic appearance of Turnovo, 12th -14th centuries] in P. Petrov. ed. *Srednovekovniat Bulgarski Grad* (Sofia: n.p., 1980).pp. 152- 165.

⁸⁶ V. Giuzelev, "Die mittelalterliche Stadt Mesembria" *Bulgarian Historical Review* No 1(1977) pp. 50-59.

⁸⁷ V. Giuzelev, "Novi Danni za Istoriata na Bulgaria i na grad Nesebar" [New data for the history of Bulgaria and of the town of Nesebar] *Vekove* Vol. 3 (1972).pp. 10-16.

The relatively scarce coin evidence from Mesembria, as demonstrated by the Template 1, however, should not be mistaken as a sign for town's economic insignificance.⁸⁸ The inadequacy of the coin material is due to the hostility of the salty soils there to copper and bronze coins. In addition, it should be noted that unlike the medieval sites of Turnovo, Preslav, Cherven, Shumen, and others, the ceaseless occupation of the site of medieval Mesembria has been a serious obstacle for providing systematic archaeological investigations. Therefore, the majority of the single coins have been accidentally discovered during the construction works in the "new town" located outside the peninsula. Only few coins came from some conservation works on the architectural remains within the walls. Fortunately, the economic potential of Mesembria is well documented in contrast to the other Bulgarian medieval towns. The large contributions of 17, 000 hyperpyra paid by the Mesembrian townsmen to Amadeus of Savoy in 1366, along with the archeological evidence of the splendid Mesembrian churches give clear indication of the wealth accumulated in Mesembria.⁸⁹ It should be remembered that, in 1339, the commune of Dubrovnik found it difficult to repay the debt of 20, 000 hyperpyra, which it owed for the grain, purchased from some merchants from Genoa and Romania.⁹⁰ The growing Mesembrian trade with Genoa and Venice gained such an importance that it may be safely said that in the fourteenth century, the control over Mesembria and its hinterland shaped the Byzantine-Bulgarian relations.

It should be noted, however, that not always did the growth of a town stem from its initial administrative or ecclesiastic significance. A comparative analysis between written and archaeological sources reveals quite the opposite situation in the cases of Melnik, Cherven, and

⁸⁸ See Template 1 in the Appendix

⁸⁹ L. Gorina, "Materialyi Dnevnik Antona Barberi po Istorii Bolgarii i Vizantii" [Materials of the book of A. Barberius for the history of Bulgaria and Byzantium] in *Byzantinobulgarica* No 4 (1973). pp. 229-251.

⁹⁰ A. Laiou, "The Byzantine Economy in the Mediterranean Trade-System: Thirteenth - Fifteenth centuries" *DOP*, No 34/35 (1980/81) pp. 177-222

Provat-Ovech, where the establishment of episcopal seats followed the growth of town's population and economic magnitude. At the opening of the thirteenth century, Melnik's growing economic importance became the main reason for becoming a capital of the appanage of Alexius Slav, a nephew of the founders of the Asen Dynasty, Asen, Peter, and Kaloyan. Slav moved his residence into Melnik from Tzepena, a small upland stronghold controlling the local silver mines and the road from Philipopolis through the Rhodopes Mountain to the Valley of the Strymon, Macedonia, and Thessalonike. The analysis of the written sources, offered by I. Dujcev, indisputably defines the establishment of the episcopal seat in Melnik after the restoration of the Byzantine Empire in 1261 by Michael III Palaeologos.⁹¹ However, a brief analysis of the coin material found during the archaeological investigations in Melnik in 1971-79, denotes that the most prosperous period of the town was between 1200 and 1260.⁹² Out of the 533 coins dated from the period 3rd century B.C. – end of the 14th century A.D., 521 are from the period 1200-1430's, while the period of 1200-1260's is represented by 411 coins, 321 of which are single coins and 90 of two hoards.⁹³ All the coins are of small denominations. No silver or gold coins are found, a fact that delineates economic activities on a regular, daily basis, in which wide social strata of the town were involved.

Similar to Melnik's development are the cases of Cherven and Provat-Ovech. The last amendment to the *Synodicon of the Bulgarian Church* was made during the reign of the last Bulgarian ruler, Ivan Shishman, and for the lands of the Danubian Plaine it mentioned 14 patriarchs of Turnovo, 12 bishops of Preslav, 6 of Dorostorum, 5 of Lovetch, 3 of Cherven and 2

⁹¹ Ivan Dujcev, *Bulgarsko Srednovekovie*. pp. 385- 6.

⁹² Vl. Penchev, "Moneti" [Coins] in *Melnik, Gradat v Podnojieto na Slavovata Krepost* [Melnik, the town at the foot of the Slav's fortress] ed. by Violeta Nesheva (Sofia: BAN, 1989) pp. 209- 230. See also Template 1 in the Appendix.

⁹³ Ibid.

of Provat-Ovetch.⁹⁴ In addition, the *Synodicon* ranked the bishops according to their dignity, based on the size of their sees or flocks, most of which, undoubtedly, were concentrated in their residential towns. The first among the bishops was the Patriarch, residing in the capital Turnovo, followed by the bishop of Preslav, the former capital and the next town in order of importance. The next was the bishop of Dorostorum, the oldest episcopate north of the Balkan Mountains, followed by the bishops of Lovetch, Cherven and Provat-Ovech. The reason for different numbers of bishops is based, most likely, on the different time of establishment of their sees before the last amendment of the *Synodicon*. A cross reference with *The Life of St. Theodosius* reveals that the second bishop of Provat-Ovech, Lazarus, attended the Church Council of Turnovo in 1359's.⁹⁵ Therefore, the establishment of the Provat-Ovetch episcopacy could be dated no earlier than 1320-1330. The episcopacy of Cherven, accordingly, could be dated not much earlier than that of Provat- Ovech, while in the case of Lovetch the correspondence between Pope Innocent III and Kaloyan attributed the establishment of the episcopacy there at the opening of the thirteenth century.⁹⁶ However, in both towns, Cherven and Provat-Ovetch, the coin material reveals that the economic expansion anticipated the establishment of the episcopal sees there.⁹⁷ Unfortunately, since there are still no available systematized coin data for Lovetch, nothing could be concluded for that town (fig. 4-8)

⁹⁴ Also known as *Boril's Synodicon*. It is dated February 11, 1211, and was amended over the following two centuries to include the reestablishment of the Bulgarian Patriarchate under Tsar Ivan II Asen (1235 A.D.), as well as a list of kings and queens, patriarchs and bishops from Boris and Maria down to Ivan Shishman (1393); See for details M.G. Popruzenko, "Synodik Tsarja Borila" [Boril's Synodicon] *Bulgarski Starini* No 8 (1928) pp. 83-84.

⁹⁵ V. Zlatarski, "Jitieto na Sv. Teodosia" [Life of St. Theodosius] in *Sbornik na NU* Vol XX (1904).pp.25-26.

⁹⁶ Iv. Dujcev, "Prepiskata na papa Inokentii III s Bulgarite" [The correspondence of Pope Innocent III with Bulgarians] *Godishnik na Sofiiska Universitet – IFF*. Vol. XXXVIII, (1942-3). pp.22- 24.

⁹⁷ See Template 1, in Appendix

The systematic archaeological investigations on the citadel of Cherven confirmed the late establishment of the bishopric there. The three biggest churches of Cherven (with an average size of 200 sq. m.), were built in the first half of the fourteenth century on the most representative spots of the town.⁹⁸ According to the coin and pottery material, Cherven, initially centered within the fortress in the first decades of the thirteenth century, started spreading westward over the entire terrace (18 ha) and, later, when the space on the terrace was exhausted, it stretched out over the terrain east of the citadel and around the river.⁹⁹ The inhabited area and building density define Cherven as one of the biggest and most important urban centers in late medieval Bulgaria. Having in mind that the population of Tsarevets (13 ha.) is estimated at no less than 3,000 and that both citadels of Cherven and Tsarevets display the same building density, it would be safe to estimate the population on the 20-ha plateau at Cherven at about 4,000 (fig. 4-9) .¹⁰⁰

Ovetch or, as the Byzantines called it, Provat, is mentioned very rarely in the surviving Byzantine sources, once by G. Akropolites, denoting the town as part of the appanage of Peter, Asen's brother,¹⁰¹ and again in the poem of Manuel Phill, glorifying the campaign of the Byzantine general Michael Glabas Tarchaniotes against the rebels of Ivailo in 1279-80.¹⁰² Ovetch also appears on the 1459 map of Fra Mauro, where the town is presented as a significant

⁹⁸ Violeta Dimova, *Srednovekovniat Cherven* [The medieval Cherven] (Sofia, BAN, 1985).pp. 103-116.

⁹⁹ For the size of the plateau see Peter Vulev, "Geologo-Geografski Pregled na Raiona na Cherven" [Geological and geographical examination of the region of Cherven] in V. Dimova, *Srednovekovniat Cherven*, p.8

¹⁰⁰ In 1985, 80% of the area of Tsarevets was completely uncovered. It displayed 480 dwelling houses. For details see A. Popov, "Za Socialno-Ikonomicheskiat Oblik na Turnvograd prez XII- XIV vek," [About the socio-economic features of Turnovo, 12th -14th centuries] in P. Petrov, ed. *Srednovekovniat Bulgarski Grad*.pp. 152- 165.

¹⁰¹ George Acropolites, *Historia*, ed. A. Heisenberg, *Georgii Acropolitae Opera*, Vol.1- 2. (Lipsiae: In aedibus B.G. Teubneri , 1903), Vol.1, pp. 72-3; also in *Grucki Izvori za Bulgarskata Istorija* (GIBI) Vol VIII. p.154.

¹⁰² H. Loparev, "Vizantiiskii Poet Manuel Phill. K Istorii Bolgarii v XIII-XIV veke" [The Byzantine poet Manuel Phill. About the history of Bulgaria in 13th -14th centuries] *SPb*, 1891.p. 52

stronghold.¹⁰³ The site of medieval Ovetch was sporadically surveyed, but no systematic investigations were provided there yet. Although scarce, the coin material from Ovetch's citadel still gives an idea of the town's development. Ovetch, like Preslav, was sacked by Michael Glabas during his campaign against the "peasant tsar" Ivailo in 1279-80 and all of their inhabitants were resettled in the town of Aetos, on the southern slope of the Balkan Mountains.¹⁰⁴ While Preslav never regained its previous prosperity and slowly declined, Ovetch, due to its strategic location, on the middle of the road between Turnovo and the port of Varna, flourished again. Together with Shumen, Karvuna, Kaliakra and Varna, the town formed a urban network, whose fast development in the mid-fourteenth century was greatly influenced by the growing trade with Venetians and Genoese merchants, which became the economic backbone of the despotate of Dobrudja.

Bdin, a center of an appanage of the Shishman branch of the Asen dynasty in the last quarter of the fourteenth century, acquired such an economic importance that the town even rivaled the political supremacy of Turnovo. Localized on the southern bank of the Danube River, Bdin became the main trade center of northwestern Bulgarian lands, producing significant amount of grain, fur, wax, and iron. The silver mines, the tariffs from the goods coming from Walachia, Dubrovnik, and Hungary, the import of salt, which was in high demand in western Bulgaria, were the sources that secured the political aspirations of its ruler, Ivan Sracimir, to proclaim himself an emperor and to separate the territory of his appanage from Turnovo. So confident felt Ivan Sracimir in his contest with Turnovo that he even detached the bishopric of

¹⁰³ T. Casparini- Leporace, *Mappamondo di Fra Mauro* (Venice: Istituto poligrafico dello stato, 1956).pl. XXXV, p.48. No 348.

¹⁰⁴ H. Loparev, "Vizantiiskii Poet Manuel Phill." .p. 52

Bdin from the Patriarchate in Turnovo and placed it under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

The rise of the Macedonian towns reflected by the change of their appearance and growth of their size is also well documented archaeologically. In his survey of 82 late medieval fortified sites on the territory of present-day Republic of Macedonia, Ivan Mikulčik provides evidence of 42 *fortresses* attracting suburbs with civilian population.¹⁰⁵ In most cases, indeed, the sites did not go beyond the phase of rudimentary proto-urban development and their size and appearance suggest predominantly agricultural characteristics, such as the settlement on the top of ancient Sevtopolis, mentioned in the previous chapter. Along with fortresses guarding roads and passes, dozens of small protecting *phrouria* were built adjacent to the mines that were thriving in the regions of Porechie, Zheleznec, Debrica, Kozhuh, Osogovo, and elsewhere. However, the Ottoman tax registers of the mid-fifteenth century recorded quite a few towns in Macedonia with an amount of population between 4,000 and 5,000: Prilep, Ohrid, Skopje, Serres, Kostur and Strumica.¹⁰⁶ Not surprisingly, those are the same towns that the treaty between Alexius III Angelus and the Venetians mentioned in 1199, while confirming and expanding the trade privileges for Venice.¹⁰⁷ The same population size is recorded in the Ottoman tax registers of 1519 (when, most likely, the demographic situation in Macedonia reached its pre-Black Death level) for the towns of Melnik, Novo Brdo, and Kratovo.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ I. Mikulčik *Srednovekovni Gradovi i Tvurdini vo Makedonia* [Medieval towns and fortresses in Macedonia] (Skopje: Makedonska akademija na naukite i umetnostite, 1996).

¹⁰⁶ N. Todorov, *The Balkan City 1400-1900*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1983), p.64

¹⁰⁷ Mikulčik's survey is limited to fortresses in the Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia Larissa and Naissus, mentioned by the treaty of 1199, are in modern Greece and Serbia, respectively.

¹⁰⁸ Hristo Matanov, *Vyznikvane i Oblik na Kiustendilski Sandjak*. Appendix, Template 1.

Unfortunately, the lack of enough written sources, combined with wide range of reasons impeding systematic archaeological investigations, limits the attempts to uncover solid and detailed evidence for the rise of towns along Danube River, such as Bdin, Riahovo, Nicopol, and Dorostorum, or for those of the Moesian inland such as Lovech, Pleven, and Vratitsa, or even for the towns south from the Balkan Mountains, such as Philipopolis, Krun, Kopsis, Serdica, and Vereya. While some information could be compiled for Bdin from dispersed and isolated texts, mainly because of its political role in the late 1300s, or for Philipopolis and Serdica, mainly because of Crusade chroniclers and Ottoman tax records, the significance of Nicopol and Dorostorum, for instance, could be assessed only speculatively. After the conquest of Bulgaria both towns became Ottoman administrative centers of vast territorial units. Nicopol was the last residence of the Bulgarian tsar Ivan Shishman after the fall of Turnovo, while Dorostorum, besides being an old episcopal center and Bulgarian provincial mint, became part of the tutelage of the Walachian Princes, calling themselves “autocrats of Drister (Dorostorum)”.¹⁰⁹ Yet the existing data for numerous smaller towns, such as Svurlic, Urvich, Chernomen, Batkun, Ustra, Krichim, Koznik, Tvarditsa, Dublin, Venchan, Zagrad, Constantia, and many others are quite disheartening for the researcher, not allowing even tentative assumptions. However, although the subsequent superimposed habitation in most of the main medieval towns in Bulgaria hampers the archaeological research, the medieval urban sites that have not been inhabited at a later date (especially Cherven, Preslav, Shumen, Lovetch, Pernik, Melnik, and above all Turnovo), produced impressive results, quite promising for reconstructing the urban social fabric and development in medieval Bulgaria. On the archaeological record of these sites, however, is based the following attempt at drawing a general picture of the late medieval town in Bulgaria.

¹⁰⁹ *Documenta Romaniae historica, seria B. Târa Româneasca* Vol. 1 (1257-1500) (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1966).pp. 63; 70; 73;75;80;90.

Patterns of Fortified Nuclei

Generally, the walls that surrounded the towns are the most accessible elements of the urban tissue to a researcher and quite informative for the urban plan. As part of the defense system, they strictly matched the characteristics of the terrain and followed the edge of the terrace on which a fortress was usually built. Their width and height greatly varied depending on the accessibility of a particular site. On the most vulnerable spots their width was often between 2.5 – 3 m, in order to bear a construction of 10-12 m in height, and integrated towers of different shape for enforcing the defense. All the restored fortresses built during the time of the First Bulgarian Empire or during the Byzantine occupation used the foundations and material of earlier fortifications dating from the late Roman or early Byzantine times. The construction technique remained, however, largely unchanged: *opus emplectum*, a type of masonry, whose the external and internal facades were made of hewn stone blocks, bound by mortar, and pebbles set in the middle. The entire construction of the wall was reinforced with embedded scaffolds assembled in a frame, which also served for leveling the stone's rows (fig. 4-10).

The crown of the wall, as it is preserved in the square tower of the western wall of Cherven, was originally made of crenels and merlons, built to protect the sentry-posts (fig.4-11).¹¹⁰

Although the existing rule for defending fortresses, as mentioned by Kekaumenos, that houses should never abut on the walls, the regulation, according to the archaeological evidence, has been rarely enforced.¹¹¹ The constantly growing population within the limited walled space resulted in an extreme building density, which left little room for following the classical rule.

¹¹⁰ Violeta Dimova, *Srednovekovniat Cherven*, p.58

¹¹¹ Kekaumenos, *Strategicon*, ed. G. Litavrin (Moscow: AN SSSR, 1972).

Therefore, the overflowing urban tissue as displayed by the archaeological discoveries in Shumen, Turnovo, and Cherven, was additionally walled. In Shumen, fortifications for the suburbs were extended twice during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, an indication not only of population growth, but also of growing economic potential. It is well known that the building and maintaining of a fortress was an obligation of the inhabitants of the fortified settlements, (*kastroktisia* in Greek; *gradozidane* in Bulgarian). However, since the fortifying of the suburbs must be out of military concern and, thus, presumably, left to the sphere of town's communal self-regulation, it is quite possible that it was a process sanctioned by the central power, but financed and executed by the town's administration. Support for this claim is provided by the manner of constructing the suburb fortifications in the cases of Shumen, Cherven, Turnovo, as well as of Pergamon.¹¹² They do not compare to the quality of the fortress's fortifications. Their size and quality of masonry, often bound with adobe, suggest that they were designed against petty warfare and banditism rather than as an extension of the fortress' defense strategy against serious attack involving siege machines. In Shumen, at the first stage of walling the suburb a barrier-wall paralleling the southern walls of the fortress was erected comprising, thus, the smaller and lower terrace at the foot of the fortress. (fig.4-12)

The space between the two walls was never entirely closed; instead, a new wall was erected 300 meters south from the second barrier. Again, the space marked by the two walls was not entirely closed either from the east or from the west.¹¹³ Unfortunately, systematic investigations on the suburbs of Shumen have not yet been carried out, but only a field survey detecting that after the exhausting the southern slope of the hill, the suburb of Shumen spread

¹¹² Klaus Rheidt, "The Urban Economy of Pergamon" in *The Economic History of Byzantium* pp.623-629.

¹¹³ Vera Antonova, *Shumen and Shumenskata Krepost* [Shumen and Shumen's fortress] (Shumen: Antos, 1995).pp. 116-118. The wall was identified during the initial field survey in the suburb of Shumen. However, a systematic archeological examination of the suburb has not yet been carried out.

over the hill's northern and western slopes. The archaeological evidence reveals similar manner of partial walling the suburbs in the cases of Turnovo, Cherven, Ohrid, Pergamon, and elsewhere. In all the cases, the suburb's fortifications functioned rather as checkpoints controlling and regulating the access to the suburbs and their markets than as some strategically military structures.

Although there is no direct correlation between the settlements' physical appearance and their function, the sites with the largest fortified areas tended to be centers of greater administrative and ecclesiastic importance, which in the course of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries also meant economic significance, visually illustrated by the size of the adjacent suburbs. Turnovo, with a fortified area of 23 ha, was the leading administrative and economic center of Bulgaria, with an inhabited area of more than 80 ha. Cherven had a fortress comprising 2.4 ha and developed suburbs of more than 20 ha. To the area of Shumen's fortress of 3 ha, a suburb was added, which was more than three times the size of the fortress. The fortified area of Lovech was 2.8 ha, with a suburb of 10 ha.¹¹⁴ The area of the suburbs of Kaliakra and Mesembria is not known, but they must have being proportional to their fortified sites of 13 and 10 ha, respectively. In Macedonia, the same relation between the size of fortresses and their suburbs has been found. The largest *kastra*, such as Ohrid, Prilep, Skopje, Serres and Strumitsa, developed the largest suburbs.¹¹⁵

On the opposite end of the spectrum were the myriad of small provincial fortresses with solely defensive functions, guarding roads and mountain passes and offering shelter for the rural population. Although they also attracted population in a scale proportional to their fortified size,

¹¹⁴ Rough estimations, according to the surface survey on the terrain around the fortress. No detailed investigations on the suburbs have been performed there. For details see J. Changova, *Lovetch* (Sofia: Voenno Izdatelstvo, 2006)

¹¹⁵ Ivan Mikulčik, *Srednovekovni Gradovi i Tvurdini vo Makedonia* .pp. 132-134

they obtained a qualitatively distinctive appearance from that of the large administrative and ecclesiastic centers. Their intramural space did not lose its military function. It remained uninhabited by civilians, with only a few military buildings and cisterns. As demonstrated by 42 fortresses from the Central Tundzha Valley ¹¹⁶ surveyed by Atanas Popov, the adjacent settlements were not the result of overflowing intramural tissue but of an adjoining village seeking the closeness of the fortress's protection.¹¹⁷ In addition, the uninhabited fortress's space and the distance between the fortifications and the neighboring villages, which in certain cases, such as the village at the top of the ancient Sevtopolis and the villages of Tuzha and Vetren, is as long as 1-3 km, implies a lack of organic cohesion between them.¹¹⁸ The few guards that such a type of fortress usually had, recruited among the local villagers, hardly induced the regular economic interaction between the fortress and its country, that could become a gravitational force for a town formation. Their interaction was intensified only in time of facing some crisis, political or natural, but usually they lived separate lives, as suggested by the local churches, which, as detected in the cases of Chilechito (0.5 ha), Hisaria (0.8 ha) and Kaleto (0.4 ha), were built within the neighboring villages, but outside the fortifications.¹¹⁹ Finally, the distinction between urban and rural fortresses is signified by the title of their governing officials. While an urban administrative center was under the governing of a *kephale*, whose authority stretched over

¹¹⁶ Region in Central Bulgaria, enclosed between the Balkan Mountain from the north and Sredna Gora Mountain from the south

¹¹⁷ Atanas Popov, *Krepostni i Ukrepitelni Suorazhenia v Krunskata Srednovekovna Oblast* [Fortresses and fortifications in the region of medieval Krun] (Sofia: BAN, 1982).

¹¹⁸ A. Popov, *Kreposti i Ukrepitelni Suorazhenia*, pp. 49-50; 74-83; J. Changova, *Srednovekovното Selishte nad Sevtopolis XI-XIV vek* [The medieval settlement on the top of Sevtopolis, 11th- 14th centuries] (Sofia: BAN, 1972), pp. 5-7.

¹¹⁹ A. Popov, *Kreposti i Ukrepitelni Suorazhenia*. pp. 35-37; 47-49; 49; 61-66; Hisaria /local toponym/ a fortress located 0.5km NE from the modern village of Nikolaevo; Kaleto /local toponym /– a fortress 2 km N from the village of Vetren; Chilechito /local toponym/ – a fortress near the modern village of Enina.

the adjacent hinterland, a small rural fortress was managed only by a *kastrophylox*, a military commander in charge with the command of the fortress' garrison and maintenance of fortifications.¹²⁰

Typical for a settlement adjacent to a small fortress is the village on top of the ancient Sevtopolis, whose predominant agricultural function marks its fortress as “rural.” However, sometimes the appearance of the small “rural” fortresses could be misleading for the type of their adjacent settlement. In the late thirteenth – early fourteenth century, some of the “rural” fortresses in the mining districts changed their appearance and function along with the growth of the mining activity, and obtained certain proto-urban characteristics. Their interior space became first a storeroom for the dugout ore and necessary equipment and then gradually turned into a residential and trade place.

The best-preserved example of such a “rural” fortress that grew into a small town, a center of mining, is that of Sobri on the Shar Mountain in Macedonia.¹²¹ Yet in the cases of the mining centers of Zletovo and, later, Kratovo, their fortresses did not change their purely military outlook of their intramural spaces despite the significant growth of their adjacent settlements, denoted by the written sources. An explanation could be found in the fast growth of such centers due to the discovery of rich deposits of silver-lead ore in their vicinity. With the exhausting of the ore deposits, however, the significance of those proto-urban centers declined, giving way to some new mining centers.

The provincial monastic foundations also played important formative role for the emergence of settlements adjacent to their fortifications. The monasteries were, usually, either

¹²⁰ L. Maksimović *The Byzantine Provincial Administration*, pp. 175-6.

¹²¹ Ivan Mikulčik, *Srednovekovni Gradovi i Tvurdini vo Makedonia*. pp. 330-333. See fig. 4.

fortified or had one or more closely located fortresses for their protection. When fortified, as in the case of St. John the Forerunner Monastery in Kurdzhali, (South Bulgaria) their fortifications did not differ from that of a regular fortress, with solid walls enforced with towers of different shape (fig. 4-13).¹²²

Sometimes, as at Rila Monastery, the defense was organized within a centrally located tower (fig. 4-14). Unlike Serbia, however, where the settlements adjacent to the monastic fortifications, such as those of Gračanica, Studenica, Žiča, and Mileševa, quickly manifested certain socio-economic proto-urban features, the settlements that evolved around the monasteries in Bulgaria never displayed a socio-economic potential that would allow them to grow beyond their rural limitations. An explanation of this phenomenon can be found in the dominant role of the state and its provincial administration for the town formation in Bulgaria that in its turn stems from the longer institutional tradition and closer following of the Byzantine social and cultural model in Bulgaria in comparison with Serbia. A good example, in that sense, is the settlement pattern that emerged around the rich Bachkovo Monastery. Although ever since the eleventh century the monastery had been endowed with surrounding fortresses and villages to secure military protection and a labor force, the late medieval town of Stenimachos merged with the administrative fortress of Petric, the co-center of the theme Stenimachos-Tzepina, established during the Nicaean re-conquest of Thrace, but not with the rich monastery, which was only 5 km away. The monastery, however, developed its own adjacent village (Bachkovo), clearly distinguished from Stenimachos in appearance, size, and dominant agricultural activities.¹²³

¹²² N. Ovcharov and D. Hadzhieva, “Srednovekoviat manastir v Kurdzhali, centar na episkopiata Ahridos (XI-XIV v)” [The medieval monastery in Kurdzhali, center of the bishopric Ahridos (11th-14th centuries)] in *Razkopki i Prouchvania* (Sofia: BAN, 1992), pp. 234- 43.

¹²³ D. Tzonchev and St. Stoilov, *Asenova Krepost* , pp. 7-8; 21; 42

The last line of fortress' defense was built around an internal citadel or a tower, usually located on the highest site within the rampart. Samples of internal citadels come from almost every fortress, regardless of their significance, location, and purpose. Built in the eve and aftermath of the crisis of the seventh century, the internal citadels were the result of an attempt for optimization of the fortress's efficiency in the context of constantly decreasing human resources. Massively constructed and enforced with towers, their small size (1000-5000 square meters) and strategic position enabled the entire fortress to be controlled effectively with a minimum number of soldiers. With the re-establishment of the fortresses as administrative centers during the high middle ages, these internal citadels became the main residences of the fortress' commanders and, later, if the fortress evolved into a town's nucleus, of the town's administration. Not rarely was the presence of internal citadels and towers, especially in the late middle ages, interpreted by the theoretically confused Bulgarian post-communist archaeology as analogs of the Western seigniorial castles.¹²⁴ Understanding feudalism as political separatism, which is the landmark of the Balkan political history of thirteenth-fourteenth centuries, the advocates of Balkan seigniorial castles accepted the dotting of the rural landscape with towers and citadels with internal line of defense as signs of "progressing feudalization" and as a trend similar to the Western European *incastellamento*.

However, despite the physical similarities with the Western castles, the internal citadels of the Byzantine Empire had different structures and functions. First, contrary to their Western counterparts, their emergence stemmed from purely military considerations as a concentration of the fortress' defense faculties and not as a *fortified private estate*, as it was the Western

¹²⁴ N. Ovcharov, *Perpericon i Okolnite Tverdini prez Srednovekovieto* [Perpericon and the surrounding fortresses during the Middle Ages] (Sofia: Tnagra, 2003).pp. 11-21; Iv. Djambov, "Zamakut v Srednovekovna Bulgaria. Tradicii i Vliania" [The castle in medieval Bulgaria. Traditions and influences] *Arheologia* Vol. 3. (1992).pp. 10-19

seigniorial castle. Second, they were not designed as inheritable private residencies and they were not part of the rural *pronoia* holder – paroikos dichotomy. Quite the contrary, in the Byzantine World the fortresses had never lost their public origin, purpose, and function. They were public military-administrative centers, ruled by an appointed commander. They constituted the central power and collective residencies of the provincial *pronoia* holders. Some of them, indeed, ended as private residencies, especially after the second half of the thirteenth century, even though it came about through an act of usurpation and political separatism. This, however, did not make these citadels “castles,” in the Western seigniorial sense, but palaces (*oikoi*) in a Constantinopolitan sense- hearts of new capitals and of new political bodies. The citadel of Ras or Markovi Kuli in the fortress of Prilep, thus, functioned essentially the same as did the palace of Bulgarian emperors in Turnovo, that of Bdin’s Principality, in Bdin, or the emperor’s palace in Constantinople. All of them displayed differences only in scale.

The *incastellamento* phenomenon that started in Northern Italy and spread all over the European Mediterranean and, later, over most of western Europe, was result of a private enterprise and had more to do with internal class structure in the West than with defense against external invasions.¹²⁵ Although the castles in the West emerged for defense against invaders such as the Saracens, Vikings, and Magyars, their more significant development appears to be occurring in the period after these threats had passed their peak. It was in the succeeding period, in the later tenth and the eleventh centuries, when the castles saturated the landscape there during a time of little disturbance in the West. The fortified village, or *castelnaux*, as Benoit Cursente called them in Gascony, was a type of village, subordinated to a castle and surrounded by a

¹²⁵ Pierre Toubert, *Les structures du Latium médiéval*. Vol.1 (Rome: École française de Rome, 1973).pp. 87; 338; 374-412.

defensive structure, which may be a wall, a moat, and embankment or just a moat.¹²⁶ Hardly designed for a heavy siege, the *castelnaux* still offered protection from bandits and small-scale violence. In addition, the liberties associated with these settlements enabled the local lay and ecclesiastic lords to gather peasants there. The final result of *incastellamento* was a society dominated by seigniorial lordship exercised from a network of castles that reshaped the landscape. By the end of the twelfth century, the *castrum* had become the dominant form of rural settlement in Western Europe.

Like Western Europe, by the end of the twelfth century the landscape of the Eastern Balkans was saturated with rural fortifications: watchtowers, barrier walls and fortresses. Only on the mountain slopes that fenced the Central Tundzha Valley (also known as Kazanluk Hollow, an area of 800 sq. km. in Central Bulgaria, secluded between the Balkan Mountain Range from the north and Sredna Gora Mountain from the south; Strazhata Pass from the east and Tvarditsa Pass from the east) were there more than 42 fortifications.¹²⁷ However, despite the similarity in the physical appearance of the rural landscape and the exceptional, but still existing samples of private fortress building in the surviving Byzantine documents, closer scrutiny reveals that the private initiative for building *kastra* was permitted extremely rarely, usually in the face of some serious military threat, when the imperial court was prone to employ any possible resources. However, even then it displays attitudes and priorities, which contrast fundamentally with those in the West.

The typicon of Bachkovo Monastery of 1083 records the will of its founder, Gregory Pakourianos, in which, among twelve villages and twelve separate estates bequeathed to

¹²⁶ Benoit Cursente, *Les castelnaux de la Gascogne medievale* (Bordeaux: Federation de historique di Sud- Ouest, 1980).

¹²⁷ Atanas Popov, *Krepostni i Ukrepitelni Suorazhenia*

Bachkovo Monastery, are mentioned six *kastra*.¹²⁸ The document also mentions the imperial chrysobull granting fiscal immunity for the improvements made by Pakourianos, specifically mentioning “building of *kastra*.”¹²⁹ However, though privately built, the fortresses were designed for public usage. Two were for the community of Stenimachos and the others for protection of the monastery and its subordinated villages. The charters for granting *kastra* by Michael VII and Alexius I explicitly mentioned that the granted *kastra* were not inheritable and they remained in some sense imperial possessions even after their concession.¹³⁰ In the majority of cases, as it was in that of *kastron* of Pantelion on the island of Leros, given to the monastery of St. John the Theologian, a small neighboring fortresses or a tower (donjon) was given or their building was permitted to the monastic foundations for their own protection.¹³¹ This, however, did not change the public character of either their building or of their function. Everywhere the documents witness to the building and maintaining of *kastra* (*kastroktisia* in Byzantium, *gradozidane* in Bulgaria and Serbia) as a public obligation, imposed by the state for public purposes. Even in the mid-fourteenth century, on the eve of the massive Ottoman advance, when John V was only too glad to enlist private enterprise in the maintenance of the provincial fortifications, both monasteries and lay landowners went through the formality of seeking imperial permission before building towers for their protection.¹³² A *kastron*, held as a private

¹²⁸ L. Petit, “Typicon Grégoire Pakourianos pour le monastère de Pétritzos / Bachkovo/ en Bulgarie.” *Vizantiiskii Vremennik* Vol 11. (1940) Appendix No 1; V. A. Arutiunova-Fidanyan, *Typik Gregoria Pakuriani* [Typicon Gregory Pakourianos] (Erevan: n.p. 1978);

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ N. Oikonomides, “The Donation of Castles in the Last Quarter of the Eleventh Century.” in *Polychronion, Festschrift Franz Dolger zum 75 Geburtstag* (1966).pp. 413-417.

¹³¹ N. Oikonomides, “The Donation of Castles “

¹³² Actes de Lavra, Vol. III, ed by Paul Lemerle, A. Guillou, N. Svoronos, Denise Papachryssanthou. nos.127 and 141: “Chrysobull of John V for the Monastery of the Anargyroi at Constantinople” ed. by E. Lappa-Zizica in *Zbornik Radovi Vizantolojckog Instituta* No.18 (1978).pp. 160-1.

inheritable possession, a fortified *oikos* (household), especially in Palaeologean era, always signals an independent political body. As it was demonstrated above, the semantics of *kastron* in Slavic (*tvrd*), was narrowly related to the notion of state (*tvurdzhave*). The same, although in a more complex way, is valid for the meaning of *oikos*, a term of central importance for understanding the Byzantine social model, often overshadowing the significance of *class*. *Oikos* (household) was not confined to the “private sphere” as it was in the West and in its theological and social dimensions were the two sides of the same coin. The entire world, the *Oikumene* (the inhabitable earth), was conceptualized by the Byzantines as God’s household, with the emperor, as God’s lieutenant and caretaker until the Second Coming of Christ. This theological concept became a matrix for the Byzantine social model, quite noticeable, however, in its spatial representation. The Great Palace of the emperors in Constantinople was a cluster of *oikoi*, upon which the entire public administration was centered and, thus, became not only a spatial metaphor of the entire empire but also a functional and architectural model for the *oikoi* of the provincial ecclesiastic and lay officials.

The same model was followed by the Bulgarian rulers in Turnovo in constructing theologo-political ideal and its spatial representation. Designated according to their tutelage as “lords of Bulgarian and Greek kingdoms,” Bulgarian Tsars also appropriated the role of the Byzantine emperor as “Guardian of the Orthodoxy,” “Father and Protector of the world,” and “New Constantine.”¹³³ The tendency of appropriating the Byzantine universalism that started with the fall of Constantinople in 1204 is well manifested in the words of Ivan II Asen inscribed in the Turnovian church of the Holy Forty Martyrs, according to which the Greeks and the

¹³³ Iv. Dujcev, *Iz Starata Bulgarska Knizhnina* Vol. II pp. 128; 130; 134; Hr. Kodov, “The Psalter of Kuklen Monastery (Pesnivets)” in *Opis na Slavjanskite Rukopisi v Bibliotekata na Bulgarian Academy of Sciences* [Annotated inventory of the Slavic scriptures at the library of Bulgarian Academy of Sciences] (Sofia: BAN, 1969), p.14; Hr. Kolarov, “Titulatura i Polnomochia Vladetelskoi Vlasti v Srednevekovoi Bolgarii” [Tutelage and authority of the central power in medieval Bulgaria] *Etudes Balkaniques* No 3 (1978) pp. 96-101

Franks “submitted to my power because they had no other emperor than me.”¹³⁴ What may seem quite propagandistic construction is, actually, the real state of affairs as acknowledged by the Greek archbishop of Ohrid, Demetrios Chomatenos: “The power of the empire moved almost entirely westward, in Zagora (Bulgaria) and, was natural to recognize her hegemony and her right to hold bishops in her churches because there was no hope for restoration of the Roman Empire.”¹³⁵ The cultural importance of Turnovo culminated in the fourteenth century – by attaining now, similarly to Constantinople, the name Tsarigrad – Turnov,¹³⁶ the Bulgarian capital, claimed fame of a town equal to that of Rome and Constantinople.¹³⁷

The adoption of Byzantine theologo-political ideal found its spatial representation in Bulgaria not only in the imitation of structure and function of the Great Palace of the Byzantine emperors, but also in the construction of the urban space and in Bulgarian architecture in general. Designed as a polygon of buildings with massive external facades dominated by five towers, the palace of the Bulgarian rulers had at the center of its internal court two (the great and small) throne chambers attached to the western line of buildings, which faced the court church named after, and treasuring the relics of, the patron of the city, St. Petka (Paraskeva) of Epivat.¹³⁸ The palace had two entrances: one ceremonial, located on the northern wall, and another, from the south leading to the auxiliary buildings- the stables, kitchen, winery etc. A cluster of

¹³⁴ Iv. Dujcev, *Iz Starata Bulgarska Knijnina*.p. 97

¹³⁵ J.B. Pitra, “*Analecta sacra et classica Spicilegio Solesmensi parata. Iuris ecclesiastici Graecorum Selecta paralipomena*, VI vol. 6. (Paris and Rome,1891; repr. Farn-borough: Gregg Press, 1966). Col. 95

¹³⁶ *Tsarigrad* is the Slavic sobriquet for Constantinople. From Tsar (Emperor) and Grad (City).

¹³⁷ As in the old Russian poem “Zadonshtina” in M. N. Tihomirov, “Istoricheskie Svjazyi Ruskogo Naroda s Iujnyimi Slavjanami s Drevneishih Vremen do Poloviny XVII veka” *Slavjanskii Sbornik* (1947),pp.125-201.

¹³⁸ V. Nesheva, *Bogospasniat Tsarev Grad Turnov* [The Blessed Tsar’s town of Turnovo] (Sofia: Alea, 2000),pp 88- 95.

administrative buildings formed the eastern line of buildings, while the chambers of the royal family were placed behind the throne hall (fig. 4-15).

The principle of Justinian Law of unity and harmony between the earthly and heavenly realms, though divided, according to the same law, is clearly substantiated in Turnovo by the spatial relation between the patriarchal and the emperor's palaces. They were physically separated, but, at the same, time sharing the same space (fig.4-16). Not surprisingly, the patriarchal palace and its central church were not located on the neighboring Tsarevets hill of Trapezitsa, but next to and dominating over the emperor's palace, denoting, thus, that the source of the earthly law is the blessing by the heavenly kingdom (fig. 4-17). The hosting of both the ruler's and patriarchal palaces on the hill of Tsarevets resembles as well the textual structure of the *Nomocanons*, where the laws of the empire (nomos) were matched by and compared to the laws of the church (canons) within the same body of text and not in separate books. Undoubtedly, this theologically substantiated space construction of Turnovo is the ultimate manifestation of the triumph of the Byzantine cultural model in Bulgaria. Analogically, the space model of Turnovo, as it will be shown further, was patterned over the provincial administrative centers (figs. 4-17; 4-18; 4-19).

Urban Public Space

In most of the uncovered medieval urban sites, the variable width and sudden ending of the towns' streets, suggest the notion rather of a labyrinth than of some town planning (fig. 4-26). Exclusions, however, are not missing. The town of Sobri in Macedonia, for instance, displays a remarkably good arrangement of the urban tissue within its fortifications with a grid of streets running at almost right angles to each other.¹³⁹ Similar to that of Sobri was the planning

¹³⁹ See fig. 4-4; For details see Ivan Mikulčik, *Srednovekovni Gradovi i Tvurdini vo Makedonia..* pp. 330-333.

of Cherven , where the main street stretched out along the entire fortress connecting the eastern and western gates and continuing through the suburb on the plateau, up to its westmost end. (fig. 4-19).

The two subsidiary streets running along the walls and their connections with the main street, together with the multitude of blind alleys among them form the frame of the street's network in the fortress of Cherven. While the main streets were built at the time when the fortress had purely military functions, the network of short and blind alleys were created obviously during the time of urbanization of the fortress, after the opening of the thirteenth century. The street network of Lovech displays similar characteristics, while that of Shumen is more chaotic. Following the topographic peculiarities, the streets of Tsarevets were situated as a series of concentric lines following the isohypses and connected by arterial alleys and stairs that radiated from the top of the hill, hosting the emperor's and patriarchal palaces (fig.4-20).

Some of those descending alleys were leading directly to the three gates, two of which were small, walking passages, specifically designed for communications with the neighboring suburbia. While the streets of Tsarevets were cobbled, those in Shumen, Cherven, and Lovech were indented within the rock platform.

The colorful vignettes of Constantinopolitan daily life, as provided by Choniates and Tzetzes, in which the urban streets were of central commercial significance, could be attributed, undoubtedly, to any other large urban centers of the Byzantine World.¹⁴⁰ Within the fortresses of Turnovo, as well as of Shumen, Cherven, and Lovech, the main streets, which were also the widest communicative arteries, were used as market streets, as suggested by the findings from their surrounding buildings (fig. 4-21).

¹⁴⁰ *Nicetae Choniatae Historia*. pp.57-8; 119-20; John Tsetzes, *Letters* ed. P.A. M. Leone (Leipzig: Teubner , 1972),pp.31-34

It seems that this was also the morphology of any urban quarter, as examined by the partial archaeological investigations in the “New Town” suburb, at the foot of the Tsarevets Hill and not only of its fortified center.¹⁴¹ The basic tax-unit known from the written sources, the parish community, is best expressed spatially in Turnovo, which town’s structure was subdivided into small quarters of 30-40 homes, grouped around a church and following the characteristics of the terrain. Their administrative differentiation is suggested by their cemeteries, some of which numbered more than 100 burials, placed around the community churches.¹⁴² Within 80% of the uncovered territory of Tsarevets’ fortress, 480 houses are discovered, grouped around 11 parochial churches that functioned along with another 12 monasterial, patriarchal, or private churches.¹⁴³ There are no indications of any principle determining such spatial organization other than opportunism. The churches and their surrounding communities emerged simultaneously. In front of each of the parochial churches as well as of the emperor’s palace and patriarchal church, Holy Ascension, public squares were formed, some of which, perhaps, functioned as open marketplaces.¹⁴⁴ The town’s subdivision into parochial communities is well documented also in Melnik, where the records of early Ottoman *cyzie* registers are confirmed by the archeological research. At the end of the fifteenth century the suburbia of Melnik had 11 quarters, grouped

¹⁴¹ Atanas Popov, “Za Socialno-ikonomicheskiat Oblik na Turnovograd prez XII- XIV vek, “[About the socio-economic features of Turnovo, 12th -14th centuries] in P. Petrov, ed. *Srednovekovniat Bulgarski Grad* (Sofia: n.p., 1980).pp. 152- 165; Y. Nikolova, “Turnovgrad v Svetlinata na Novite Prouchvania” [Turnovo within the light of the newest discoveries] in Ibid. pp. 145-151.

¹⁴² As of the church No 18, located near the western wall, where 118 burials are discovered. For details see Y.Nikolova, “Gradoustroistvo i Arhitektura” [Town planning and Architecture] in *Istoria na Veliko Turnovo* in 3 Vols. Vol.1 ed. by D. Kosev, (Sofia:OF, 1986).pp. 231-282; R. Ancheva, “Ulicata kato Element na Gradskata Struktura prez XIII- XIV vek” [The street as an element of the urban structure, 13th-14th centuries] in *Iubileen Sbornik Srednovekovno Turnovo* (V. Turnovo: Abagar, 2005).p.121.

¹⁴³ Y.Nikolova, “Gradoustroistvo i Arhitektura,” pp.232; 246-247

¹⁴⁴ K. Dochev, “Turnovo, Sixth-Fourteenth Centuries” in *The Economic History of Byzantium*, p.677; V. Kiselkov, *Mitropolit Grigori Tsamblak* [Metropolitan Gregory Tsamblak] (Sofia: n.p., 1946).p.51

around their religious centers, churches and mosques (former churches in the pre-Ottoman period).¹⁴⁵

The town quarters of Turnovian suburbia occupied the alluvial terraces and the four promontories formed by the meanders of the Yantra River: Tsarevets, Trapezitsa, Momina Krepost, and Sveta Gora (fig. 4-19). It seems that the walled suburbium between Tsarevets and Trapezitsa, the New Town, as the author of the *Life of St. Sava* calls it, gained status equal to Tsarevets in terms of social and economic importance. It became a densely populated area with centers for the production of iron, brick, and pottery hosting the most prominent monasteries and churches, in which were located the tombs of the Asenids and many of the relics made Turnovo famous.¹⁴⁶ Outside the New Town, east from Tsarevets, the suburbium of Momina Krepost Hill (Devingrad) was located; another unnamed quarter stretched out north of the hill of Trapezitsa.

As Demetrius Chomatianus, Archbishop of Ohrid informs us, parts of the urban space specially designated for occupation by foreigners were often present in large Byzantine cities.¹⁴⁷ Turnovo was no exception. The location of the well-documented Jewish Quarter in Turnovo can be identified according to the local toponymy, on the territory enclosed between Trapezitsa from the north and Yantra River from the south. Indicative of the size and importance of the Jewish community in Turnovo is the fact, mentioned in the *Life of St. Theodosius*, that a Christianized

¹⁴⁵ Hr. Matanov, *Vyznikvane i Oblik na Kiustendilski Sandjak*, p.72; B. Tsvetkov, *Selishnata Mreja v Dolinata na Sredna Struma prez Srednovekovieto, IX- XVII v* [Settlement network in the valley of middle Strymon during the middle ages, 9th-17th century], (Sofia, 2002); V. Nesheva, "Kvartal Chatala" [Chatala Quarter] in *Melnik, Gradyt v Podnojiето na Slavovata Krepost* [Melnik, the town at the foot of Slav's fortress] (Sofia: B. Tsvetkov, 1989).pp. 40-54.

¹⁴⁶ Dometian, *Jivot Svetoga Symeona i Svetoga Save* [Life of St. Symeon and St. Sava] ed.by B. Daničić (Belgrade: Državnoj štampariji, 1965).p.303.

¹⁴⁷ J. Pitra, *Analecta sacra et classica specilegio solesmensi parata*, Vol. VI: *Juris ecclesiastici graecorum selecta paralipomena*. (Paris and Rome, 1891, repr. Farnborough: Gregg Press, 1966) columns, 661-664.

Jewish woman from Turnovo became a Bulgarian empress, wife of Ivan Alexander.¹⁴⁸ Southeast from Tsarevets, on a terrace enclosed by the meander of Yantra River, was located the quarter of the Latins, most likely Italians, called Franks in the local idiom.¹⁴⁹ Unfortunately, neither the Jewish Quarter nor the Frankish Quarter has been thoroughly studied. Latin colonies also existed in Philipopolis, where, next to the existing Armenian community, a Latin Quarter was formed during the passing of the Second Crusade (1147-1149);¹⁵⁰ in Varna where Venetians and, later Genoese settled;¹⁵¹ and in Bdin, where a colony of Ragusan merchants was established.¹⁵² Besides Turnovo, Jewish quarters existed in Bdin, Pleven, Mesembria, and Varna.¹⁵³ Armenian colonies, besides Philipopolis, flourished in Sofia, Nicopol, and Bdin.¹⁵⁴

Although the fourteenth-century lawyer from Thessalonike, Constantine Harmenopoulos, specifically mentioned in his compendium of civil and criminal laws that pottery production kilns, *garum*¹⁵⁵ facilities and dye shops had to be built at a certain distance from any resident area, there are no spatial signs in the urban tissue of Turnovo that industrial activities were

¹⁴⁸ V. Kiselkov, *Jitieto na Sv. Teodosii Turnovski* [Life of St. Theodosius of Turnovo] (Sofia: Bozhinovi, 1926) pp. 19-22.

¹⁴⁹ V. Kiselkov, *Mitropolit Grigori Tsamblak* .p.50

¹⁵⁰ Odonis de Deogilo, "Liber de via Sancti Sepulchri" in *Latinski Izvori za Bulgarskata Istoria* [Latin sources for the Bulgarian history] Vol.3. ed. by M. Voinov, Iv. Dujcev; Str. Lishev and B. Primov (Sofia: BAN, 1965).p.122.

¹⁵¹ "The Treaty of Ivanko, despot of Dobrudja with Genoa" in Iv. Dujcev, *Iz Starata Bulgarska Knijnina* [Old Bulgarian literature] Vol. II, pp. 137-138.

¹⁵² *Codex diplomaticus Hungariae ecclesiasticus ac civilis, studio et opera*, ed. by Hg. V. G. Fejer, Vol. II (Budae: n.p., 1829).pp. 309-311.

¹⁵³ E. Eskenazi, "Kum Vuprosa za za Istoriata na Evreite na Balkanite VII – XIV v." [About the history of the Jews in the Balkans, 7th -14th centuries] in *Godishnik na evreiskite kulturno-prosvetni dryujestva*, 1967, No 1; 52-55; Y. Trifonov, *Istoria na Grada Pleven do Osvoboditelnata Voina* [History of Pleven up to the Liberation War] (Sofia: Saglasie, 1933).pp. 32-34

¹⁵⁴ S. V. Ovnanian, *Armiano-Bolgarskie Istoricheskie Svazy* [Armenian-Bulgarian historical relations] (Erevan: AN ASSR, 1968).pp. 34-40; Hr. Matabov, "Pavlikianskoto Dvijenie v Bulgarskite Zemi" [Paulician movement in Bulgarian lands] in *Studentski Prouchvania* Vol.1 (1975).pp.140-143.

¹⁵⁵ Garum - souse condiment, derived from fish that have been allowed to ferment.

concentrated within special zones.¹⁵⁶ On the contrary, kilns for pottery, glass, bricks, and tiles, as well as furnaces for iron and non-ferrous metal smelting, existed next door to shrines and palaces in the New Town and on the Tsarevets Hill.¹⁵⁷ It seems that in Cherven, nevertheless, some regulation existed. Despite the wide range of crafts practiced within the fort, as demonstrated by the archaeological evidence, no kiln or furnace was discovered there. Furthermore, the signs of concentrated furnaces, located on the same plateau, but outside the fortress, suggest that residential quarters were formed on the basis of professional organization.¹⁵⁸ However, Shumen displays characteristics similar to those of Turnovo: furnaces and kilns are part of the residential area of the fortress.¹⁵⁹ This fact confirms the lack of uniformity in town regulation, which in turn implies that it was a matter of self-regulation by the local town's administration.

Within the area of Turnovo, 50 churches functioning between the late twelfth and the late fourteenth centuries have been discovered so far- all of them bearing the characteristics of the late Byzantine Orthodox churches: splendid external and internal decorations but modest and intimate size.(fig. 4-22).

¹⁵⁶ Constantine Harmenopoulos, *Excerpts from Manuale legum*; ed. by G. E. Heimbach, *Manuale legum sive Hexabiblos*, Book II, 4, 13-23 (Leipzig: T.O. Weigel, 1851).

¹⁵⁷ Mirko Robov, "Proizvodstveni Kompleksi za Bitova i Storitelna Keramika," [Complexes for production of earthenware, sgraffito and building ceramics] in *Iubileen Sbornik Srednovekovno Turnovo* (V. Turnovo: Abagar, 2005). pp. 93-115

¹⁵⁸ G. Georgiev, "Arheologicheski Danni za Jeliazodobivaneto v Severoiztochna Bulgaria prez Srednite Vekove" [Archaeological data for iron making in Northeastern Bulgaria during the middle ages] *Priroda*, No 5 (1955).pp. 65-73

¹⁵⁹ V. Antonova, *Shumen and Shumenskata Krepost*.pp. 84-103

The moderate size of late medieval churches in the Balkans, however, has sometimes been interpreted as a sign of economic recession.¹⁶⁰ Yet the reasons for the modest size of the Orthodox churches and urban monasteries or the lack of urban monuments in general is quite well explainable by the absence of planning and shortages of urban space in the extremely densely populated late medieval towns in the Balkans (fig. 4-23).

It should be stressed, however, that, above all, the modest size of the Orthodox churches is a result of the centrality of *oikos* as a metaphor patterned over the entire Byzantine society and of Orthodox cultural tradition of individualism, privacy, and humility in religious sphere.

Although both Byzantine and Western European monastic practices were built on the guides of St. Basil, by the opening of the thirteenth century the different institutional context and historical development in the European East and West resulted in noticeable differences in monastic life. While in Western Europe the adherents to the strict Benedictine Rule, the Order of Cistercians and the monks of the Abbey of Cluny and its constellation of dependencies, exemplified the rigid anti-individualistic rules of Western cenobitic monastic life, the salient features of the Orthodox monastic practice were choice, rivalry, in austerity, and individualism. The primacy of the state and Roman law, brought by Leo VI (886-912) into conformity with the Christian canon, additionally stimulated Orthodox monastic individualism that became also a model for the public religious practices. As a result, the variety of monastic practices that coexisted- lavriote, eremitic and cenobitic, the lack of monastic orders that made the monastic vocation relatively open matter, the process of massively delegating economic functions to the monastic foundations, and, last but not least, the wide public access to doctrinal issues, a result of

¹⁶⁰ See for instance Machiel Kiel, "Urban Development in Bulgaria in the Turkish Period" *The International Journal of Turkish Studies* Vol. 4 (1989).pp. 79-158, who advocates the idea of an Ottoman conquest bringing peace and stability to a region torn apart by local wars and economic decline.

adopting Slavic vernacular as a literate language, broke the line isolating monasticism from the public world and fostered the deinstitutionalization and privatization of the religious practices, bringing them, thus, under the public control, with little if any intervention of the central power. Individual households, even those of modest means, enjoyed a remarkable degree of personal control and choice regarding religious practices.

Quite illuminating the status of the Orthodox Church within the society is the passage of the tenth-or-eleventh-century *Life of St. Nikon*, where Nikon Metanoeite was dealing with the plague that swept the town of Sparta.¹⁶¹ Asked for help by the desperate population of the town, Nikon solved the problem in consonance with the traditional methods at the time: expelling the Jews from the town, tearing down the slaughterhouse near the church of St. Epiphanius, and building a church at the place where the local *archontes* played a polo-like ballgame called *tzounganion*.¹⁶² None of Nikon's suggestions was met with resistance by the local townsmen except the appropriation of their playground for building a church. Nikon, however, succeeded in realization of his plan, not by the support of the local imperial or ecclesiastic institutions, but by looking for public consensus through manipulating the public opinion, through "miracles," through insistence, through appeals for repentance, and through threats for divine anger.¹⁶³ Yet, the competition for appropriating the public space, which besides *tzounganion* was also used as a marketplace, ended with a compromise: the church and the ball game co-existed at the same spot.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹ Denis Sullivan, "The Versions of *Vita Nikonis*" *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* No 32 (1978).pp. 157-173.

¹⁶² Ibid. p. 112

¹⁶³ Ibid .pp. 118-124

¹⁶⁴ Ibid. pp. 134-140

On the one hand, the public control of religious practices opened the door of religious pluralism and tolerance. At the time when Jews were expelled from England (1290) and France (1306 and, finally in 1394/5), the universality of Orthodoxy in the Balkans was presumed and for the most part heterodoxy was ignored by the state administrations of Byzantium and Bulgaria. It was no accident that Jewish and Latin communities flourished in the larger Balkan towns. The weak institutionalization of Orthodoxy was demonstrated by the Council of Turnovo in 1355, which was its astonishing in dealing with a wide range of religious teachings and heresies in Bulgaria. These included the Bogomils, the Adamites, the Paulicians, the anti-Hesychastic faction of Barlaam and certain “Judaizing practitioners;” and the soft treatment of their leaders by the officials – branded and expelled from Bulgaria – unlike the traditions of the Western Inquisition.¹⁶⁵

On the other hand, the public control over religious practices led to wide involvement of private parties founding monastic institutions. Using tax privileges, easily granted by central power to ecclesiastic foundations, the private founders of monastic institutions turned them into business ventures. The foundation and endowment of a family monastery, or church, became, thus, a sound economic enterprise, a “social security” investment against various misfortunes, which threatened the integrity of a household, and which were capable of bringing material, as well as spiritual benefits to the founder and his heirs. Therefore, private churches, chapels and monasteries were some of the most preferable ways of investment. Within the limited and expensive urban properties, the smaller the size, the more effective was the investment. Since the social structure in the late medieval Balkans, due to the lack of legal recognition of nobility, was not characterized by strict class differentiation. Usually, the founded urban churches, although

¹⁶⁵ V. Kiselkov, *Jitieto na Sv. Teodosii Turnovski*, pp. 18-19.

private, individual or collective possessions, were attended by the entire neighboring community. The economic aspect of religious privatization was, of course, absent in the model of religious practices, adopted by the lower classes. Yet private access to religion was preferable: households that were too modest to have a separate building or room for a chapel would still have an iconostasis for private veneration.

An important part of the public space was the water supply of the fortresses and their adjacent settlements. Water for the inhabitants of the urban suburbia was available usually through open wells or from the neighboring river, while for the fortresses, as demonstrated in Tsarevets, as well as in Cherven, Shumen, and Lovech, it was provided by combination of rainwater cisterns and fortified wells, attached to the towns' walls and reaching to the neighboring rivers.(fig. 4-24). An open drainage system of canals and ditches was in use in all the examined fortresses (fig. 4-25).

The discovery of a bathhouse in Turnovo, located in the enclosed suburb between the fortresses of Tsarevets and Trapezitza, near the monastery of Holy Forty Martyrs, confirms the continuation of the ancient tradition of public health in the late medieval Balkans.¹⁶⁶ However, its location within the center of the “New Town” unequivocally signals its business purpose: The “New Town” was not an administrative center necessitating special regime of access, but a market and productive center, offering at the same time to the traveling merchants and pilgrims the attractions of some of the most valuable Christian relics of Turnovo and the security of its walls (fig. 4-26).

¹⁶⁶ Kekaumenos, *Strategicon*, in *Sovety i rasskazy Kekavmena* ed. G. Litavrin (Moscow: AN SSSR, 1972).pp. 28-30; Ch. Bouras, “Aspects of Byzantine City” in *The Economic History of Byzantium, from the Seventh to the Fifteenth Centuries* ed. by A. Laiou (Washington D.C. : Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2005).pp. 525-526

The bathhouse in Turnovo was similar to those in Corinth, Servia, Thessalonike, Ioannina, and elsewhere in the Balkans that thrived during the late middle ages.¹⁶⁷ The Turnovo bath had an area of 375 sq. meters and functioned, according to the coin and pottery finds, between the second half of the thirteenth and the late fifteenth century. The building, obviously serving the needs of the regular townsmen in Turnovo, had a utilitarian character, built in stones and bricks but lacking any external or internal decoration.¹⁶⁸ According to the archeological analysis of the bathhouse plan, the main entrance was on its southern side, while on the opposite end was located the *prae-furnium* of the hypocaust system (fig. 4-27).

The floor and the walls of the hypocaust system were covered with hydro-isolative layer of bricks and lime covered by marble slabs. The internal face of the walls was also plastered with thick thermo-isolative coat consisting of broken bricks and lime. Within the two niches of the room of *prae-furnium* remains of flues were found that ventilated the bathhouse. The water was brought down through ceramic pipes coming from the Yantra River running a few meters westward from the bathhouse.

Urban Private Dwellings

The best archaeologically examined medieval sites of Turnovo, Lovech, Cherven, and Shumen display a great variety of urban dwelling types, according to their building materials and techniques, shapes, and functions. Built in utilitarian manner, the structure of the late medieval urban house was defined by reasons of economy, ease, and limits of space. The relatively small

¹⁶⁷ Y. Nikolova, “Gradoustroistvo i Arhitektura” [Town planning and Architecture] in *Istoria na Veliko Turnovo* ed. by D. Kosev, Vol. I (Sofia: OF, 1986).pp. 269-271.

¹⁶⁸ Jordan Aleksiev, “Shishmanovata Banja v Veliko Turnovo” [Shishman’s Bathhouse] in *Mezhdunarodna Fondacia Sv. Panteleimon*, (V. Turnovo: Sv. Panteleymon, 1993), pp 59-65.

area size delineated by the remains of dwellings (15-25 sq. m.)¹⁶⁹ and their solid foundations of 60-90 cm in width indicate a two-story structure.¹⁷⁰ In general, the first floor was built of hewn stones, aggregated by masonry of either lime-and-sand or of clay, while the second floor was built entirely in wood or mud bricks, re-inforced by wooden beams, as suggested by finds of spikes with a length of 5-18 cm.¹⁷¹ The remains of the house foundations are not very helpful for defining what was the dominant type of houses' second floor. Most likely, it was the ramshackle wattle-and-daub or mudbrick construction, although some stone second floors of wealthier houses also existed (fig.4- 28). In certain cases, the internal face of the first floor walls was plastered either with clay or with a lime-and-sand mixture. However, while the lime-sand and clay masonries were equally distributed in Tsarevets, Turnovo, in Shumen, Lovech, and Cherven, the dominant masonry was clay.

Usually the urban houses were of a ground-level type. Nevertheless, when built on abrupt slopes they acquired a semi-dugout appearance with an above the ground façade and walls indented in the slope of the hill. It should be noticed, however, that even when situated on a flat terrace certain houses possessed an underground basement below their first floor.¹⁷² Due to the extent of systematic studies in Turnovo, the widest range of house types has been examined there.

¹⁶⁹ This size average refers to the houses in Turnovo and Lovech. The majority of the houses in Cherven and a significant number of those in Shumen had much larger first floor areas.

¹⁷⁰ Violeta Dimova, *Srednovekovniat Cherven*, pp. 125-127; see also J. Changova, *Lovetch*, pp.80-87; Vera Antonova, *Shumen and Shumenskata Krepost*.pp. 56-69; Yanka Nikolova, "Zhilishteto v Turnovo prez XII- XIV vek" [The house in Turnovo, 12th – 14th centuries] in *Tsarstvashtia grad Turnov* (Sofia: Nauka i Izkustvo, 1985).pp. 64- 74.

¹⁷¹ Nikolova, "Zhilishteto v Turnovo prez XII- XIV vek"

¹⁷² See for instance dwelling "B" in J. Changova, *Lovetch*, p.83.

Three semi-dugout houses on the slope of the Momina Krepost Hill, grouped around a small church, were designated as part of a whole quarter, situated outside the fortified suburbia.¹⁷³ Built against the slope, the semi-dugout dwellings had one floor and one room and, were constructed by wattle-and daub, set upon a low-rise foundation of stones. The skeleton of the construction was made of beams, as indicated by discovered holes where the beams nested.¹⁷⁴ In their construction and appearance, the houses of Momina Krepost Hill did not differ from their counterparts in Hotnitsa and the village on the top of Sevtopolis, which was examined in the previous chapter. The entire quarter of Momina Krepost Hill, therefore, would have had a rather rural appearance in sharp contrast to the quarters in Tsarevets and the territory enclosed between Tsarevets and Trapezitsa. The archeological investigations on the Momina Krepost Hill reveal a mixture of agricultural activities and artisanship, signaled by the findings of agricultural tools, iron slag, kilns, and sgraffito pottery as well as by silos and ovens, often located outside the houses. The market orientation of these activities is signaled by coin finds, concentrated around the discovered houses and a church. More than 200 coins of small denominations, which are dated from the late twelfth through the end of the fourteenth centuries (fig. 4-29).¹⁷⁵

Regrettably, since there are no systematic archaeological investigations at the unwallled suburbia of Turnovo, the dominant dwelling type within the medieval urban zones cannot be identified securely. However, the accessible remains of dwellings within the fortified nuclei of the late medieval urban sites in Bulgaria indicate that the mass urban dwelling consisted of two

¹⁷³ Y. Nikolova, "Srednovekoven Kvartal na Hulma Momina Krepost v Veliko Turnovo," [Medieval quarter on the hill of Momina Krepost in Veliko Turnovo] *Arheologia* No 1 (1963).pp. 34-41.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Konstantin Dochev, "Monetite ot Hulma Momina Krepost" [The coins from Momina Krepost hill] in *Izvestia na Istoricheski Muzei Veliko Turnovo* No 9 (1994).pp.125-132

rooms, each of which was located on a different floor, had a rectangular plan and combined the functions of a dwelling and workshop.

This pattern, however, had its variations too. While in Shumen and Turnovo the number of examined houses with one room on the first floor equals that of the houses with two and more rooms, in Cherven the houses with one room in their first floor constitute 92 percent of the investigated houses.¹⁷⁶ In Lovech, the houses with one room on their first floor are only 20 percent of the total, but due to the small number of dwellings investigated there (15) the sample is not even representative of the space within the walls (fig. 4-30).¹⁷⁷ Another difference between the houses of the mentioned urban centers is noticeable in the size of their inhabitable areas. While the samples from Turnovo, Shumen, and Lovech give an average size of 15-20 sq. m for their first floor, the houses in Cherven had an impressive average size of 41 sq. m.¹⁷⁸

Functionally, there was no difference between the various mass dwellings of the medieval towns under examination here. While their first floor could be used as both workshop and dwelling space, as denoted by the discoveries of ovens constructed of earth, stone, or bricks and of working utensils, the second floor was clearly defined as an exclusively private residential space. The urban houses usually contained one oven, although objects with two ovens, or an oven and an open hearth, most likely related to the artisanal activities of their inhabitants, have also been registered.¹⁷⁹ On the first floor the houses usually had silos, whose size varied, according to the number of family members and their economic resources. Because of the

¹⁷⁶ Y. Nikolova "Zhilishteto v Turnovo prez XII- XIV vek" in *Tsarstvashtia grad Turnov*, pp. 64- 74; V. Antonova, *Shumen and Shumenskata Krepost* pp. 55-69; V. Dimova, *Srednovekovniat Cherven*. pp. 125-128

¹⁷⁷ J. Changova, *Lovetch* pp. 83-87

¹⁷⁸ Calculations are based on data contained in V. Dimova, *Srednovekovniat Cherven*. pp. 125-128

¹⁷⁹ Y. Nikolova, "Zhilishteto v Turnovo prez XII- XIV vek."

extreme density of houses, with very little (0.7-1.5 m), if any, space between them, no silos or ovens were located outside the dwellings. Therefore, it is safe to conclude that the majority of the houses within the late medieval urban centers in Bulgaria did not have courtyards.¹⁸⁰

In short, there was a wide range of urban house types, from sunken-floored houses on the Momina Krepost Hill to wealthy dwellings with two and more rooms of polygonal plans (suggesting loggia at front of the second store), as well as two-store houses built entirely in stone. A typically wealthy urban dwelling was uncovered and studied in Tsarevets. The so-called *Boyar's House* was located on the descending northward ridge of the hill, on the same line as the emperor's and patriarchal palaces.¹⁸¹ The house had an L - shaped plan, built in two stories, where the first one was constructed by stones, aggregated by lime mortar and comprising an area of 137 sq. meters almost equally divided into three rooms.(fig. 4-31).

The second floor was built of wood and perhaps had the same space distribution as the first one. On the second floor, along the entire façade, was a wooden terrace, connected autonomously with the ground level by wooden stairs. The entrance was framed by two columns, according to the uncovered marble stand bases. At a right angle to the residential building was an auxiliary building, which shared a wall with the yard fence and was built in wood. At the southwestern corner of the yard with an area size of 635 sq. meters was located a small chapel that functioned, perhaps, as a private church. The location of the house, spatially separated from the rest of the civil buildings, its large fenced courtyard, and its size, which is most impressive for Tsarevets, suggest the high social status of its owner. However, whether this high social

¹⁸⁰ The only private dwelling with a courtyard discovered within the urban fortifications is the *Boyar's House* of Tsarevets, described further in the text.

¹⁸¹ Y. Nikolova, "Zhilishteto v Turnovo," For the location of the house see fig. 17

status was result of certain administrative position, economic activities, or both cannot be established on the basis of the archaeological evidence.¹⁸²

The best-known example of a wealthy urban dwelling is located within the suburbia of late medieval Melnik.¹⁸³ According to the manner of masonry and ceramic decoration of the façade, the house, also known as the *Boyar's House*, was built during the thirteenth century, when Melnik became capital of Alexius Slav's despotate (fig. 4-32).

The last building phase was dated to the early 1700s, but the house was in use until the late nineteenth century. Since the house was repeatedly modified, the initial external appearance and internal space-distribution can be reconstructed on the basis of the signs and traces remaining on its walls. The façade displayed an external decoration consisting of horizontal and radial rows of bricks, placed among the stones that underlined the windows' and gate's arches (fig. 4-33).

The house had a trapezoid-shape plan with an impressive appearance of an area of almost 350 sq. m. and height of 8 m, according to its surviving walls. On the northeastern end of the house and upward on the hill's slope was built a square defense tower with an area of 60 sq. m rising above the house. There was a direct passage from the living floor of the house to the tower, which was blocked during the later reconstructions. Another entrance to the tower was located outside the house, very close to its main entrance. Both the house and tower had walls wide 1.2 m at their bases, which narrowed upward to 0.9 m. The masonry of lime and hewn stones was enforced by embedded scaffolds, not unlike to those of fortress ramparts. The house

¹⁸² Y. Nikolova, "Zhilishteto v Turnovo prez XII- XIV vek."

¹⁸³ V. Nesheva, "Kvartal Chatala" [Chatala Quarter] in *Melnik, Gradyt v Podnojiето na Slavovata Krepost* [Melnik, the town at the foot of Slav's fortress] (Sofia: BAN, 1989).pp. 40-54; The outgoing archaeological debate regarding the later reconstructions of the house and, especially, the initial and later purpose of its tower are skipped from this summary.

had two stories. The first one was indented into the inclined terrain and had a height of 4 m, thus matching the slope angle. The second floor was the living area of the house, in which central place was devoted to a lounge. The lounge, around which four rooms were situated, was connected to the ground floor through internal stairs. The house had a 3 m. wide balcony built on its western façade, which was not connected to the ground as it was the case of the *Boyar's House in Tsarevets*. The central entrance of the house was placed on its eastern side, close to the corner between the house and the tower, and was designed to lead directly to the living floor from the slope of the inclined terrain. It was an arch-like gate, wide 1.7 m., built on its eastern side. Another entrance was located beneath the balcony on the western side and connected the ground floor with the street. According to the archaeological analysis, the house had only one, quite large fireplace (wide 2.1 m. at the floor level) abutting on the northwestern wall of the house, in the dining room, which perhaps served also as a living room during the winter. A well-built wastewater system connected the kitchen through ceramic pipes with a septic tank, built under the restroom on the western end of the ground floor. From there the ceramic pipes drove the wastewater to the gully of the Rozhen River. About 6 m. to the north from the main entrance was discovered a well supplying the house with water. Much like the *Boyar's House in Tsarevets*, the house in Melnik had a courtyard, enclosing an area on the northern side of the house including the well.

Some 14-15 meters to the south from the house, was a church, whose size of about 80 sq. meters suggests that it was used not only as a private church of the house but also as a community church.¹⁸⁴ Farther to the east and north, more remains of buildings have been found,

¹⁸⁴ V. Nesheva, "Kvartal Chatala".pp. 54-67

which, unfortunately, are too fractured to allow any interpretation, except to indicate the limits of the *Chatala Quarter* parish community (fig.4-34)

There are clear indications that the *Boyar's House in Melnik* was by no means unique, as a typically wealthy dwelling, examples of which have also been found elsewhere in the Balkans. The ground floors of large houses (re)built during the nineteenth century, such as the *Manolov House*, *Kremenliev House* and *Potashov House* in Melnik, show a type of masonry identical to that of the Boyar's house and the fortress of Slav, on the plateau above the town.¹⁸⁵ In addition, in the quarter of St. Marina, in Melnik, were uncovered the remains of two houses with similar masonry and decoration and with numerous remains of sgraffito pottery.¹⁸⁶ The buildings had similar ground-floor sizes and were independently supplied with water. The first building had an aqueduct, the second one had an internal well. Around both houses, the slag and tools finds indicate the existence of iron and copper-making workshops. Buildings similar to the *Boyar's House in Melnik* are known from Mistra. The family houses of the Laskaris, the Krevatas and the Frangopoulos (fig.4-35)¹⁸⁷ – and from Stari Bar,¹⁸⁸ Dubrovnik¹⁸⁹ as well as Turnovo (fig 4-36).¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁵ Ibid. p. 53

¹⁸⁶ Ibid

¹⁸⁷ I. P. Medvedev, *Mistra. Ocherk Istorii i Kulturyi Pozdnevizantiiskogo Goroda* [Mistra. Essay on the history and cultura of the late Byzantien town] (Leningrad: Nauka, 1973).p.163

¹⁸⁸ D. Bošković, *Stari Bar* (Belgrade: Savezni institut za zaštitu spomenika culture, 1962).p.347

¹⁸⁹ M. Vasić, *Arhitectura i Sculptura u Dalmatii* (Belgrade: Izdavačka knjizarnica Gece Kona , 1922).p. 23-29.

¹⁹⁰ Three stone houses at the foot of Trapezitsa, from which, unfortunately, due to an earthquake at the beginning of the twentieth century, remained only few poor photos (fig. 35) For more details about these houses see K. Miatev, *Arhitekturata v Srednovekovna Bulgaria* [Architecture of medieval Bulgaria] (Sofia: BAN, 1965).p.141; A. Protich, “Arbanashkata Kushta” [Arbanasi house] *Godishnik na Narodnia Muzei Sofia*, No 3 (1922).p.55, fig. 37; L. Zaharieva, “Srednovekovni Boliarski Jilishta of Vtorata Bulgarska Durjava [Medieval boyar's houses from the Second Bulgarian Empire] in *Izsledvania vurhu arhitekturata na bulgarskoto srednovekovie* (Sofia: BAN, 1982) pp. 205-6

Urban Social and Institutional Topography

The late medieval town in Bulgaria, as well as in Byzantium, just like its Western European counterparts, does not display any distinctive social order from its environment. Its social structure consisted of the same elements as that of the country, though in different proportions. There are landowners and merchants, *pronoia* holders and *paroikoi*, artisans and peasants, monasteries and churches, wealthy *dynatoi* and a large number of people belonging to the middle (*mezoi*) and lower classes (*mikroi*). It was a community headed by a clerical leader, (bishop) and/or by political ruler (*kephale*), appointed by the central power, and dominated by a small group of aristocratic families. Although the power was concentrated in few aristocratic hands, there are no signs within urban social arena of any spatial separation between social classes in terms of the zones of the city in which they lived. Palaces and luxurious houses, which must certainly have belonged to powerful people and represented major financial investments, were built next to common houses and workshops.

The social structure of the late medieval Bulgarian town did not differ much from that of the Italian and Dalmatian cities in terms of concentration of landowners and wealthy people. While during the second half of the thirteenth century Tuscan towns witnessed the rise to power of the corporation of *Popolo* (the corporation of largely middle-class artisans and merchants), as the fourteenth century progressed the urban patrician households, as demonstrated by Florentine *Catasto* of 1427, re-asserted their dominance. At the time of the *Catasto*, more than half of the rents collected in Tuscany, most of which represented returns from agricultural holdings, were concentrated in the city of Florence.¹⁹¹ Dubrovnik (Ragusa), during the same period was

¹⁹¹ David Herlihy, "Distribution of Wealth in a Renaissance Community: Florence, 1427" in Philip Abrams and E. A. Wrigley, eds., *Towns in Societies: Essays in Economic History and Historical Sociology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), pp. 131-157.

dominated by the same “patrician democracy,” in which aristocratic hierarchy reflected the economic power of noble families.¹⁹² The only difference in social terms, noticeable between Dubrovnik and fourteenth century Thessalonike was that regarding the political leadership of both towns. While the patrician council of Dubrovnik had the sovereignty to elect its own ruler, the patrician council of Thessalonike had to accept as their ruler the appointee of the emperor.¹⁹³

Finally, and perhaps quite surprisingly for the advocates of “the agricultural character of the late Bulgarian and Byzantine town,” the archaeological data from the fortresses of Turnovo (Tzarevets), Cherven, Lovech, and Shumen display predominance of artisanship over the agricultural activities. In general, the agricultural finds of plowshares and sickles are far less in comparison with the other artisan tools. In Tsarevets, within 480 private dwellings were discovered only 11 plowshares and 22 sickles.¹⁹⁴ In Cherven, plowshares were not discovered at all, while the sickles are only two.¹⁹⁵ In Lovetch, only two plowshares and one sickle were found.¹⁹⁶ Given the history of all four towns, the archaeological finds from Shumen, perhaps, are the most instructive for the urban material life due to the abrupt break of the life within the fortress at the time of the Ottoman conquest, while the other three towns endured, more or less, an organized abandonment of their fortresses. Unlike the other three towns, Shumen was not an episcopal, i.e. significant administrative center and could be taken as a typically provincial town

¹⁹² B. Krekić, *Dubrovnik in the 14th and 15th centuries. A city between East and West* (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), p. 39.

¹⁹³ Nevra Necipoglu, “The Aristocracy in Late Byzantine Thessalonike: A Case Study of the City’s Archontes” in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers No 57. Symposium on Late Byzantine Thessalonike* (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2004), pp. 134-151.

¹⁹⁴ According to the inventory books of *Archaeological Museum of Veliko Turnovo* and *Archaeological Institute with Museum, Sofia – V. Turnovo division*.

¹⁹⁵ V. Dimova, *Srednovekovniat Cherven*, pp 64-6; Y. Nikolova, “Zhilishteto v Turnovo prez XII- XIV vek.” pp. 208-211

¹⁹⁶ J. Changova, *Lovetch*, p. 133

with population of 1,500-2,000. Within the 123 examined buildings of the fortress archaeologists found 9 plowshares and 18 sickles, and no less than 9 furnaces and 6 kilns have so far have been identified within the fortress.¹⁹⁷ Moreover, Shumen produced 41 quern-stones and 81 hutch-spatulas¹⁹⁸ all of which are a strong argument against the idea of an “agricultural town.” An overwhelming majority of households in Shumen, in which bread was prepared every day, did not produce grain. The number of household utensils found in Shumen also bespeak the non-agricultural character of the town: 919 knives, 50 flints and 35 scissors.¹⁹⁹

Horizontal Social Structures

The primacy of the state in Byzantium and Bulgaria had formative capacity for shaping their social structure. Unlike European West, where the departure from antiquity was carried out in the context of weak or often absent central power and resulted in strong social vertical ties, exemplified most clearly through the hierarchy of dependency existing between lord and vassal, the societies of the Byzantine World were constructed by a horizontal network of social relations, in the center of which stayed the household (*oikos*) of a nuclear family.²⁰⁰ A good sample of East-West social differences is offered by Kazhdan’s comparison between the monastic orders in the West and the monastic alliances in Orthodox society, as manifested by the monastic republic of the Athonite monasteries. While the monastic orders replicated the strict,

¹⁹⁷ V. Antonova, *Shumen and Shumenskata Krepost*. pp. 84-85; 102-103

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ The use of term *Orthodox* here is not arbitrarily, but designates the social difference between Byzantine- type and Western- type societies concentrated and intensified in the different theological interpretation of the hierarchical structure of the Holy Trinity. While the interpretation of Rome denotes Holy Trinity as a vertical order, (*Filioque*), the Orthodox interpretation of the Nicene creed rejects any notion of vertical structure. According to the Orthodox theologians, both Son and Holy Spirit originate from the Father; The Roman interpretation considers Holy Spirit as a faculty of the Son and only indirectly connected to the Father. For details see A. Kazhdan and G. Constable, *People and Power in Byzantium* (Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1982), pp. 26; 29-30; 93-95

military type of subordination, the monastic institutions in Athonite republic consisted of units independent of and often competing with each other.²⁰¹

The *oikos* in the Byzantine World became a fundamental metaphor for the relationship between God and humankind, between the emperor and his subjects and between emperor and the other rulers, between the lord and *par-oikoi* (literary - those who lived beside the house) established on his estate, and between spiritual fathers and mothers and monastic brothers and sisters. The terminology of *oikos* denoting its harmonious family relations was extended and patterned over the vocabulary of the fiscal administration, diplomacy, and socio-property relations. *Sympatheia* (sympathy) was a term for a type of tax exoneration; *pronoia* (providential care) denoted the parental care of the emperor for his people, through a gift given under certain conditions. *Philia* (love) was a term used not only as designating friendship but also for an alliance between states.²⁰² The only legitimate sovereign/ father of the Christian world, the emperor in Constantinople, headed a hierarchy of the international ruler's family in which the English King was only his friend, the Bulgarian one his son, the Russian his nephew and Charlemagne grudgingly granted the position of a brother.²⁰³

The *oikos* has a central analytical importance for understanding the structure of social tissue not only of Byzantium, but also of Bulgaria. The pronounced difference between the Greek nuclear family and the Slavic extended and many-linear family, based on the demographic calculations of A. Laiou for the fourteenth century Macedonia, is overestimated.²⁰⁴ In both

²⁰¹ A. Kazhdan and G. Constable, *People and Power in Byzantium*, p.33-34

²⁰² Kazhdan and Constable, *People and Power*. p. 28

²⁰³ Ioanis Karaianopolus, *Politicheskata teoria na Vizantia* [Political theory of Byzantium] (Sofia, Clement Ohridski University Press. 1992).pp. 16-27.

²⁰⁴ A. Kazhdan and G. Constable, *People and Power in Byzantium* p. 33; A. Laiou, *Peasant Society in the Late Byzantine Empire* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1977).pp. 80-81.

compared groups, the families from the *thema* of Thessalonike, considered (arbitrarily) “Greeks” and those from the *thema* of Strymon, considered (arbitrarily, again) “Slavic,” the dominant model is that of the nuclear family. The slight prevalence of 10-12 percent of the “*Slavic*” *laterally extended families* over the “*Greek*” *laterally extended families* cannot be a proof for qualitatively different family structures. Indeed, Kazhdan’s proposal might be valid for the early medieval era of the First Bulgarian Kingdom, when the clan was the dominant social form, for both proto-Bulgarians and Slavs. However, after the Christianization and the subsequent adoption of Byzantine theological and political ideals in Bulgaria (9th -10th centuries) and, especially, after almost two centuries of direct imposition of the Byzantine socio-economic model there, (11th -12th centuries) the differences between Bulgarians and Greeks were only in terms of language, ethnic awareness, and politics. The identical inheritance practices, defined by identical legal codifications in Bulgaria and in Byzantium and, finally, the size and distribution of the house living space, as demonstrated above both in town and country, are secure proofs that the dominant family type in Bulgaria was the nuclear family. Therefore, it is safe to assume the same central importance of the household metaphor for both Bulgarian and Byzantine social structures.

Summarising the twelfth-century Western European impressions and beliefs expressed by Walter Map, M. Angold is surely right in his statement that “what set the Byzantine emperor apart from Western monarchs was his access to ready cash.”²⁰⁵ The effective use of cadastral records made the taxation in Byzantium a powerful instrument of control over provincial society that distinguished it from its counterparts in the West. Beyond that, however, there was little control over the provincial society - it was left to its own devices. This social construction

²⁰⁵ M. Angold, “Book Review of Leonora Neville. *Authority in Byzantine Provincial Society, 950–1100.*” *The American historical review*. 110, no. 2, (2005): p. 535.

resulted in a significant gap between the theologically constructed, metaphysical, and incomprehensible central authority and its subjects, which was compensated by developing of pervasive network of horizontal relationships, forming associations and hierarchies between the *oikoi*: village and town communities, monastic institutions, heretical sects, confraternities, professional organizations, friendships and spiritual kinships. However, just like the faculties of the larger social structure, those associations lacked vertical structures beyond the household (or quasi-household) relationships. In certain aspects, the centrality of *oikos* metaphor fostered the individualism and atomization of Orthodox societies, (although, certainly not in the degree implied by Kazhdan), especially perceivable in privatization of religious practices. On the other hand, however, the dominance of the horizontal inter-*oikos* ties over vertical class relations resulted in an easy integration between the public and the private, in which, often, women acted as household heads, either because they were widows or because their husbands were absent. The resulting gender integration, however, was neither limited to equal inheritance rights nor to people of higher social status. The spectrum of gender integration ranged from the female members of the *Confraternity of Thebes*,²⁰⁶ (a town's male club of *mezoï*), to samples of formidable aristocratic ladies that held together their family and guided their fortunes and made the Byzantine society so prominent for its gender tolerance.²⁰⁷

Leonora Neville, on the basis of the etymological meaning of *paroikoi*, (“those, who lived beside the house”) proposed that the relation between a holder of tax privileges (*pronoia*) and *paroikoi* was a relationship between two houses, not between two classes.²⁰⁸ It is well

²⁰⁶ John W. Nesbitt and J. Wiitta, “A confraternity of the Comnenian era” *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* No 68 (1975),pp. 360-384.

²⁰⁷ Steven Runciman, “Women in Byzantine Aristocratic Society” in *Byzantine Aristocracy IX to XIII Centuries* ed. by M. Angold (Oxford, B.A.R 1984),pp. 10-22.

²⁰⁸ L. Neville, *Authority on Byzantine Provincial Society, 950-1100* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004),p.77.

known nowadays that the labor force fiscally subordinated to a *pronoia* was not an individual, a *paroikos*, but an entire *oikos*, the basic tax-paying unit, whose taxes and corvée amount were defined by the state according to its immovable and movable property. The dependency of a household was clearly fiscal and not individual: the basic tax-paying unit, *oikos* was only fiscally obliged to the *pronoia*. Its head, the *oikodespotes* was free to live wherever he wanted as long as the fiscal obligations of the *oikoi* were met. The rest of the family members were free of obligations both fiscally and individually.

The existence of *pronoia-paroikoi* relations in the town is hardly a surprise for Byzantine economic historians. Its interpretation by Marxist historians, however, as a sign of a predominantly agricultural character of the late Byzantine city demonstrates weak explanatory power. It renders the existence of *paroikoi* in the town to the underdeveloped process of labor separation and, thus, to an agricultural predominance to urban economy or to the lack of urbanity at all. The charter of Stefan Dušan to the monastery of St. Gabriel of Lesnovo lists the names of 50 heads of households from the town of Štip with their properties granted to the monastery as *paroikoi*.²⁰⁹ The charter of Dušan to the Chilandar monastery of 1348, mentions a certain Bale the Armenian from the town of Strumica, who was granted to the monastery.²¹⁰ Another town resident, George Luker from Serres, with his home and possessions was granted by a charter to the monastery of St. Panteleimon.²¹¹ Although the charters do not specify the profession of the granted *paroikoi*, six of the surnames, mentioned in the charter of St. Gabriel monastery suggest

²⁰⁹ Stoyan Novaković, *Zakonski spomenici Srpskih Drjava Sredn'ega Veka* [Legal documents of the Serbian state during the Middle Ages] (Belgrade: Državnoj štampariji, 1912),p.678

²¹⁰ Stoyan Novaković, *Zakonski spomenici*. p. 404

²¹¹ Ibid. p. 508

that these were craftsmen.²¹² Similarly, other samples implying that *pronoia* – *paroikoi* relations were not limited to agriculture are well known from the sources. However, Marxist historians, by examining the relation between *pronoia* and *paroikoi* in its limited class context of its substitutes, *dynatoi*- *village community*, attempt nothing less than to adjust the Byzantine socio-economic model to the aristocracy- peasantry class relation of Western feudal society.²¹³ This outcome is hardly surprising given that *pronoia-paroikoi* relations outside agriculture are beyond the analytical reach of the *labor division* category. Instead, the flexibility of *oikos* metaphor offers much better understanding not only for Byzantine urban socio-property relations, but also for town-country relations in the Byzantine Empire and in Bulgaria, as well as for the ongoing debate of town-country relations in general.

The analytical importance of the *oikos* metaphor, however, has been already proven in Byzantine historiography.²¹⁴ Further, Leonora Neville explained the *centrality* of the *oikos* category as surpassing the centrality of class and its substitute categories, estate and village community, for understanding the social structure of the Byzantine Empire.²¹⁵ Yet, as Paul Magdalino warns, the importance of horizontal stratification of *oikos* should be taken into

²¹² Ibid. p. 392

²¹³ G. Tsankova-Petkova, *Za Agrarnite Otnoshenia v Srednovekovna Bulgaria* [About the agrarian relations in medieval Bulgaria] (Sofia: BAN, 1964); C. Lishev, *Za Stokovoto Proizvodstvo vuv Feodalna Bulgaria* [About industrial production in feudal Bulgaria] (Sofia: BAN, 1957),pp. 88-112; A.P.Kazhdan, “Recenzia Vurhu Knigata na S. Lishev, *Za Stokovoto Proizvodstvo na Feodalna Bulgaria*” [Book review of S. Lishev, “About industrial production in feudal Bulgaria”] in *Srednye Veka* Vol 13(1958).p. 128.; L.Gorina, “Voprosy Socialno-Ekonomicheskogo Razvitiia Vtorogo Bolgarskogo Tzarstva v Sovremennoi Bolgarskoi Isotriografii”[Questions about the socio-economic development of the Second Bulgarian Empire in contemporary Bulgarian literature] in *Slavjanska Istorigrafia* (1961).p. 104; B.T. Gorianov, *Pozdnevizantiiskii Feudalism* [The Late Byzantine Feudalism] (Moscow: AN SSSR, 1962); M. Siuziumov: “Bor’ba za Puti Razvitiia Feodal’nyih Otnoshenia v Vuzantii” [Struggle for development of feudalism in Byzantium] in Idem, *Vizantiiskie Etiudyi* (Ekaterinburg: Izdatel’stvo Uralskogo Universiteta , 2002),pp.305-326

²¹⁴ A. Kazhdan and G. Constable, *People and Power in Byzantium*; P.Magdalino, *The Byzantine Aristocratic Oikos* in *The Byzantine Aristocracy, IX to XIII Centuries* ed. by M. Angold (Oxford: B.A.R., 1984),pp.92-111;

²¹⁵ L. Neville, *Authority on Byzantine Provincial Society, 950-1100* (Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2004),pp. 67-71.

consideration very carefully and always extrapolated on the background of class-relations, even for the Byzantine World, vigorously resisting any social classification.

There was neither nobility within the Byzantine Empire, nor some other social class besides the slaves that had legal definition of its status. The only existing classification of people was regarding their movable and unmovable properties: real estate, land, and draft animals. The notion of aristocracy in Byzantine texts, therefore, was not connected to high birth, but rather to a position of trust in imperial service, a notion quite close to the modern understanding of meritocracy. What could be considered *aristocracy*, therefore, in Byzantium, as well as in Bulgaria, was a group of people, who, in one form or another, was paid by the government, either through the system of imperial salaries or through its modified version, the system of privileges, (*pronoia* system). The social composition of aristocracy was extremely heterogeneous, given that *pronoia* was an economic award and not a promotion of the social status of the grantee. The holders of *pronoia* represented a wide social spectrum, ranging from members of the imperial family and foreign mercenaries, to people from the lowest ranks of society.²¹⁶ *Pronoia* holders often acted as *paroikoi* of monasteries or tenants of wealthier landowners. Quite often local peasants were entrusted with state strategic tasks, (as those recruited by Manuel I for guarding provincial fortresses and mountain passes) in exchange for tax exemptions, which, in fact, made them, *pronoia* holders, i.e. aristocracy.²¹⁷ At the first glance, the Byzantine aristocracy fits into the classical Western notion of aristocracy as a landowning hereditary group that monopolizes the links with the central power. Quite contrary to the Western model, however, the Byzantine aristocracy was a function of the state, its executive officers, and had the

²¹⁶ Jacques Lefort, "The Rural Economy, Seventh to Twelfth Centuries" pg. 237; P. Lemerle, *The Agrarian History of Byzantium* (Galway: Galway University Press, 1979).p.143

²¹⁷ See footnote 63 above and footnote 98 of Chapter II.

characteristics not of a hereditary, but of a corporate group, which had the ability to absorb new men and lacked the rigid and inaccessible structures of personal dependencies in existence in the West. On the other hand, however, this loose vertical structure seems to create a certain blockage for the proper function of the social institutions. Michael Choniates was appalled by the lack of order in the assembling of the *archontes* of Khalkis on the island of Euboea: “One sees Celts, Germans and Italians assembling in an orderly fashion and debating with a sense of decorum, but as for the Byzantines, they get infuriated at the slightest pretext and reduce any meeting called for the common good into shambles.”²¹⁸

Byzantine sources normally designate the aristocracy by such interchangeable usage of the terms, as *archontes* (rulers) and *dynatoi* (powerful). The semantic difference between *de jure* and *de facto* exercising of power by *archontes* and *dynatoi* was certainly obliterated in theory by the chrysobull of Romanos Lakapenos of 922, in which the *dynatos* was presented in terms of the capacity to exercise influence upon others and in practice by the sale of life-tenured administrative posts and titles of honor.²¹⁹ However, by introducing the order of *sebastoi* (Augusti), in which the command positions were reserved for the members of the ruling dynasty, the political style of the Comnenians changed the political ideal from meritocracy into an aristocracy bond by blood ties, clearly reflected through the growing use and abuse of aristocratic surnames. It also practically monopolized the central and provincial governorships. Below them came the second rank of bureaucracy, to which the old aristocratic families found themselves restricted. Accordingly, the Comnenian administrative model became the model in

²¹⁸ Michael Choniates, *Michael Akominatou tou Choniatou ta Sôzômena* ed. By Sp. Lambros Vol.1 (Athens: n.p., 1979),p. 183

²¹⁹ N. Oikonomides, “The role of the Byzantine State in Economy” in *The Economic History of Byzantium, from the Seventh to the Fifteenth Centuries* (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2005),pp. 1026-1030.

Bulgaria too, where the road to highest administrative posts went exclusively through blood or marital relationships with the ruling Asen dynasty, which, thus, secured its power during the entire period of the Second Bulgarian Empire.²²⁰

The Comnenian political model, the fall of Constantinople in 1204, and the decreasing authority of the central power that followed, on one hand, catalyzed the traditional distinction between public and private aspects of imperial power and, on the other hand, fostered the sense of family independence of *dynatoi*. The Byzantine aristocrat in the post-Comnenian period, thus, was a public figure valuing his privacy above all. Accordingly, this dual, self-centered and state-centered social orientation of *dynatoi* determined the ambivalent role of urban communities, dominated by *dynatoi* to act as both intermediary for and counterbalance to the state. Although the domination of one or the other inclination was greatly depending on the dynamics of intra- and inter-*oikos* configurations, it would be quite misleading if the urban communal life have to be examined outside its class dimensions.

Vertical Social Structures

Aside from the strictly military and fiscal tasks, imperial authority had little interest in regulating provincial society, thus, leaving it fluid and with considerable autonomy to manage its daily life. Byzantine emperors did uphold the Justinianic ideal of imperial building through their role in fortifying the towns, but they paid little attention to civil amenities. Aside from fortifications, civil projects such as bridges or monastic foundations were undertaken through the initiative of individual households for their own benefit. Imperial administration did not interfere with the organic growth of medieval town fabric either and the use of space in towns as well as

²²⁰ For the genealogy of Asen dynasty see I. Bojilov, *Familiata na Asenevci*, 1186-1460 [Asen's Family, 1186-1460] (Sofia: BAN, 1985).

the regulation of urban life in general seems to have been left to the balance of power between the formal and informal provincial authorities.

As an appointee of the central power and as resemblance of the solitary emperor's authority, a governor of a town (*kephale*) was a fairly remote and alien figure, isolated spatially from the rest of the town within the enclosures of the internal citadel and, socially, due to being an outsider and the short term of his mandate preventing him from establishing close ties with the local elite. Despite the authority he represented, his duties were confined to maintaining law and order and ensuring tax collections while his power was constantly eroded by the concentration of tax privileged individuals within the town and by the expansion of communal tax privileges.

There is no common agreement among the Byzantinists regarding another provincial office, the *kastrophylax*. The appearance of this office in both Byzantium and Bulgaria after 1204 compelled Michael Angold to consider his functions as limitations of *kephale* authority by sharing his responsibilities, signaling, thus, the growing towns' autonomy.²²¹ On the other hand, L. Maksimović saw the *kastrophylax* as a mere assistant of the *kephale*. In the administrative centers, the functions of *kastrophylax* were concentrated on guarding the fortress, while in the small rural fortresses, lacking administrative significance and large population, the figure of *kastrophylax* was the main authority.²²²

Besides with *kastrophylax*, the *kephale* shared his authority with an urban senate (*synkletos*) composed of various numbers of people from the higher ranks of the military,

²²¹ M. Angold, "Archons and Dynasts: Local aristocrats and the cities of the later Byzantine Empire" in *The Byzantine Aristocracy, IX to XIII Centuries*, ed. by M. Angold. pp. 236-254

²²² L. Maksimović *The Byzantine Provincial Administration* pp. 175-6.

administrative, and ecclesiastic *dynatoi*.²²³ Documents recording urban senates, except those of Constantinople and Thessalonike, however, are extremely rare, but not non-existent. The senate of Edessa, like that of Thessalonike, had 12 members.²²⁴ Some information about the urban senate concerns the Byzantine, and later Serbian town of Serres, as well as the Bulgarian capital, Turnovo.²²⁵ But can this pattern be extrapolated to the other towns? Unfortunately, the available data from the sources are inconclusive. Most likely, the senate was an informal urban organism, consisting of members vested with the local military, fiscal, and ecclesiastic authority, which exercised some coordinative and advisory function to the *kephale*, but was not the town's representative and legal body. This is confirmed also by the lack of administrative public buildings other than those of the town's governorship. The senate was a nexus of official and informal local authorities and it embodied the communal tax and self-governing privileges, which, as will be discussed further, were obtained only by the larger towns in the course of thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Therefore, it is hard to believe that the smaller provincial towns, which did not enjoy special treatment by the fisc and, in which the local authority was concentrated in fewer hands, would have needed such a coordinative body.

In addition to the town's senate, there was an urban assembly (*ecclesia*), which consisted of all residents, but definitely dominated by the local *archontes* and *dynatoi*. Like the senate, the *ecclesia* was not an organ of governing, authorized with legislative initiative, but an assembly summoned under some critical occasions in the life of the city. All presented at the assembly

²²³ L. Maksimović, *The Byzantine Provincial Administration*, pp. 255-271; Costas P. Kyrris, "The Byzantine Urban Class between 1204 – 1341" in *Liber Memorialis Antonia Era – Studii presentati alla Comissione Internazionale Assemblée di Stato* (Cagliari, 1961), pp. 21-31

²²⁴ Costas P. Kyrris, "The Byzantine Urban Class," p. 22.

²²⁵ G. Ostrogorsky, *Sabrana Dela* Vol. 1-6 [Collected works] (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1969-70), p. 545; A. E. Vakalopoulos, *Istoria tos Makedonia, 1354-1833* (Thessalonike:n.p., 1969), p. 19. For the *synkletos* of Turnovo see S. Bobchev, *Istoria na Starobulgarskoto Pravo* [History of old Bulgarian legal codes and practices] (Sofia, 1908, reprinted Sofia: Albatros, 1998), pp. 337-340.

could speak and vote freely but it is unlikely that its role was anything more than advisory, except during time of social upheaval when the lower classes of the population exercised greater influence. The institutional urban structure and administrative terminology in Bulgarian towns was a mirror of their Byzantine counterparts. Disappointed, perhaps, by the constant rivalries for the Bulgarian crown, after the death of Ivan II Asen, the people's assembly of Melnik decided in 1246 to hand over the town to the advancing army of John III Ducas Vatatzes, in exchange for an imperial *chrysobull* confirming their demands, most likely, tax privileges.²²⁶ It seems that what Antonio Barberius envisioned in his accountant book under the *communitas of Mesembria* and *communitas of Emona* were, in fact, local people's assemblies, responsible for paying the heavy reparations imposed by Amadeus VI, Count of Savoy.²²⁷ In 1355, the people's assembly of Turnovo met with exaltation the emissaries of Cantacuzene seeking military alliance against the rising Ottoman threat.²²⁸ Yet the agreement reached between Ivan Alexander and John Cantacuzene, under the pressure of the citizens of Turnovo, was never put into practice.

The inter-*oikoi* ties affected the communal life both formally by the intimidating power of the *dynatos* over the *mezoï* and *mikroï* in the people's assembly and, informally, as Gregoras tells us, "in their town homes where they talked until late at night on political matters" enacting and forming plots, plans, policies, and conspiracies.²²⁹ "All those who excelled in political power and glory and directed the imperial affairs," as Gregoras describes the *dynatoi*, were the

²²⁶ George Acropolites, *Historia*, ed. A. Heisenberg, *Georgii Acropolitae Opera*, Vol.1 and 2. (Lipsiae: In aedibus B.G. Teubneri, 1903), pp.22; 72-76; also in *Grucki Izvori za Bulgarskata Istorija* (GIBI) [Greek Sources for the Bulgarian History] Vol. 8 ed. by M. Voinov, L. Jonchev, V. Tupkova-Zaimova. (Sofia: BAN, 1972). pp. 172-3; Fr. Dölger, *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des Oströmischen Reiches von 565-1453* Vol.1-4 (Munich – Berlin: Oldenbourg, 1924-65). Vol. III, p.21 No 1789.

²²⁷ L. Gorina, "Materialyi Dnevnik Antona Barberi po Istorii Bolgarii i Vizantii" [Materials of the book of A. Barberius for the history of Bulgaria and Byzantium] in *Byzantinobulgarica* No 4 (1973). pp. 229-251.

²²⁸ V. Zlatarski, "Jitieto na Sv. Teodosia" [Life of St. Theodosius] in *Sbornik na NU* Vol XX (1904).pp. 25-26.

²²⁹ Nicephorus Gregoras, XII, ch. 13: II, p.619

political class, through whose hands, according to Eustathius of Thessalonike, “all public affairs passed, as well as private, for it is their own self-interest, which normally makes them take care for the common good. Thousands frequent them at all hours over all manner of business: marriages, commerce, and every conceivable kind of transaction.”²³⁰

The traditional alienation of the central power from the daily life of the provincial towns, determined by the limitation of the power of *kephale* within the sphere of law and taxes left most of the regular activities in the hands of the local town patriciate, which thus became more or less a permanent political class. From this political class emerged the *dynasts*, studied by M. Angold.²³¹ They were informal leaders of the *dynatoi*, capable of dominating and handling internal political and economic rivalries, but also of protecting the town’s economic interests from the encroachments of outsiders, most often in the person of governmental officials.²³² Because of his informal authority, the *dynast*’s activities were rarely recorded in Byzantine sources. Kekaumenos mentions, certain Noah, the *dynast* of the Thessalian port of Demetrias.²³³ The port of Raidestos, on the Marmara seacoast, was in the hands of a *dynast* from the powerful Vatatzes family.²³⁴ At the end of the fourteenth century, Paul Mamonas was a second-generation *dynast* in Monemvasia.²³⁵ As for Bulgaria, certain indications in the sources suggest that the role of the *dynast* was played by the *ban*. The term (a Slavic calque from Hungarian) is absent from

²³⁰ Eustathii Metropolitae Thessalonicensis, *Opiscula* ed by T .L .F. Tafel (Frankfurt am Main, repr. Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1964).p.92

²³¹ M. Angold, “Archons and Dynasts: Local aristocrats and the cities of the later Byzantine Empire” in *The Byzantine Aristocracy, IX to XIII Centuries*, ed by M. Angold, pp. 236-254

²³² Angold, “Archonts and Dynasts.”

²³³ Kekaumenos, “Strategicon,” in *Sovety i rasskazy Kekavmena* ed. G. Litavrin (Moscow: AN SSSR, 1972).p.34

²³⁴ Ioannes Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historiarum*, ed I. Thurn (Berlin-New York: De Gruyter, 1973).p.343

²³⁵ Georgios Sphrantzes, *Memorii, 1401-1477*, ed. V. Grecu (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România , 1966).pp. 6;198.

the official administrative terminology of the Second Bulgarian Empire, but its appearance in the sources seems to indicate the informal and spontaneous leadership of urban militias resisting the Ottoman invaders, as in the case of *ban* Yanuka of Sofia and *ban* Velio of Tzepena.²³⁶ Yet the information about the emergence and the social role of the *ban* available in our sources is not sufficient for describing in more detailed manner its attributions.

The appearance of the *dynast*, however, should not be mistaken for some challenge to imperial sovereignty. Instead, dynasts acted as members of an informal network of power underlying the administrative system and guaranteeing that no one of the rival inter-town *oikoi* constellations would rise to prominence. Although lacking legal basis, in times of political chaos the power of the *dynasts* became the gravitating force around which communal life was organized against invaders. In the post-Comnenian period of disintegration of the central power into series of imperial agents competing for the provincial revenues, many of the towns were practically ruled by their *dynasts* and/or bishops.²³⁷ Quite illuminating for the status of the *dynast* within the urban political structure is the text of *Pactum Adrianopolitanum* between the Venetian *podestà* of Constantinople and representatives of the city of Adrianople in the spring of 1206.²³⁸ According to the document, the Latin conquerors recognized the rights of the Adrianopolitan *archontes* and the autonomy of the city under its *capitaneus* Theodore Branas in exchange of military service for the 500 horsemen. Although is not quite clear, what Byzantine title was

²³⁶ Husein, *Beday ul-veka 'i* [Astonishing events] ed. by A. S. Tveritinovoi Vol. 1 (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo vostochnoi literature, 1961).p. 76; Seaddedin, *Chronica dell'origine e progresse della casa ottomana* (Vienna: Appresso M. Riccio, 1649).p. 124; St. Shishkov, *Bulgaromohamedani* [Bulgarian Muslims] (Plovdiv: Turgovska pechatnitsa, 1936).p.66;

²³⁷ J. Hoffman, *Rudimente von Territorialstaaten im byzantinischen Reich, 1071-1210* (Munich: Institut für Byzantinistik und Neugriechische Philologie der Universität, 1974),pp. 47-60; 90-96; J. Herrin, "Realities of Byzantine Provincial Government: Hellas and Peloponnesos, 1180-1205." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Vol. 29. (1975), pp. 253-284.

²³⁸ G. L. F. Tafel and G. M. Thomas, *Urkunden zur ältern Handels und Staatsgeschichte der Republik Venedig* Vol II. (Vienna: Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1856-1857), pp. 17-19

translated as *capitaneus*, the clearly informal character of Branas' authority suggests that he might have been a *dynast*. It should be kept in mind, however, that Branas' power was limited by his fellow *archontes* of Adrianopol, who were his equals in the negotiations with the Latins. Branas was accompanied by Michael Kostomoires, a representative of the *archontes*, whom the document calls "the noble inhabitants of the land."²³⁹ *Pactum Adrianopolitanum* also opens the question of whether the Latins imposed western notions on Byzantine society or if they simply confirmed already existing conditions. Some light on the problem is shed by the cross-reference between Choniates' *History* and the chronicle of Geoffrey de Villehardouin.²⁴⁰ Both authors reveal that negotiations between the Latins and the towns of Adrianople, as well of Didymoteichon, were the result of long political maneuvering of the Byzantine notables of the Thracian towns between the new Latin masters of Constantinople and the Bulgarian ruler Kaloyan (1197-1207). Choniates reports that after the fall of Constantinople, the *dynatoi* of Thracian towns, whom both the Boniface of Montferrat and Baldwin of Flanders had rejected, decided to offer their services to Kaloyan. What were the terms on which Kaloyan accepted such services is not at all clear, but they were presumably not much different from those presented in the *Pactum Adrianopolitanum*: confirming the rights of the urban patriciate in exchange for military support. The course of the events in the spring of 1205 reveals that among the Thracian towns siding with Kaloyan were Vyzie, Tzouroulos and Arkadiopolis.²⁴¹ Encouraged by the cooperation of the Thracian towns, which made no little contribution to his defeat of the Latins at Adrianople in May 1205, Kaloyan then moved towards the towns of the region of Thessalonike

²³⁹ Ibid, pp. 17-19

²⁴⁰ Geoffroi de Villehardouin. *La Conquête de Constantinople*. ed. and transl. in Bulgarian Vs. Nikolaev, (Sofia: n.p. 1947); *Nicetae Choniatae Historia*.p.335

²⁴¹ *Nicetae Choniatae Historia*, p. 336;

in order “to persuade them” to follow the example of their Thracian counterparts.²⁴² Choniates’ evidence suggests, therefore, that relations between the central power and provincial urban communities, as concretized by *Pactum Adrianopolitanum*, were not based on some new, western norms imported by the Latins, but were part of relatively long political tradition, jealously defended by the Byzantine urban political class. Support for this claim comes also from the coastal towns of Bay of Kotor, Kotor and Budva, which, according to their best investigator, Ilija Sindik, by the time of their incorporation into the state of Stefan Nemanja, 1184-6, already enjoyed tax privileges and autonomy, granted by the Byzantine emperor.²⁴³

Yet the power of the Adrianopolitan political class led by the local *dynast*, capable of organizing the impressive military force of 500 horsemen, was limited by the community consensus of all inhabitants of the town. Although the popular assemblies emphasized the restricted political role of the *demos*, undoubtedly they played an important part, especially in times of crisis, in the formation of concrete political decisions and ideologies, as manifested most clearly by the Zealots’ regime in Thessalonike. There are other examples of the dominant role of the lower classes during times of political turmoil. Thus, after the flight of the Latin knights from Philipopolis in the summer of 1205, the inhabitants of the town installed Alexios Aspietes as their leader (most likely *dynast*) to organize the defense of the town against the advancing forces of Kaloyan.²⁴⁴ In 1341, the people assembly of Adrianople, dominated and manipulated by the *archontes*, recognized the imperial dignity of John Cantacuzene. During the following night, however, the counter-reaction of the urban commoners mistreated by the *dynatoi* led by some

²⁴² Ibid,p.338

²⁴³ Ilija Sindik, “Odnos grada Budve Prema Vladarima iz Dinastie Nemanicha” [Relationship between the town of Budva and the first rulers of the House of Nemanjić] *Istoriski Chasopis* No 7 (1957) Pp 95-114.

²⁴⁴ *Nicetae Choniatae Historia*,p. 345

“laborer” Branos drove the *dynatoi* out of town. Sweeping local *archontes* out of town or life was the leitmotif of the movement of the Zealots in Thessalonike in 1342. Another example of forcible repudiation of the urban patriciate by commoners is that of Venchan, a small town of northeastern Bulgaria, whose inhabitants took up arms against the decision of the local political elite to hand over the town to the Ottomans.²⁴⁵ Similarly in Varna, when noticing the advancing troops under Ali Pasha, the notables in town were ready to arrest their ruler, Ivanko, and to turn over the power to the Turks in exchange for the security of their lives and properties. However, with the help of the commoners, Ivanko eliminated the traitors and saved the city.²⁴⁶ All of above leads to the conclusion that the authority to regulate social behavior in the provincial towns was particularly fluid, informal, and subject to capacity of physical power, wealth, and *community consensus* and not vested in some legally recognized aristocratic social status.

However, soon the informal *archontic* power and community consensus obtained legal recognition. It is not clear whether the privileges claimed by the Thracian townsmen in the political maneuvering between Kaloyan and the Latins were just customary rights or privileges, legally ratified by former imperial chrysobulls. However, it seems that the imperial chrysobulls, which were granted to significant numbers of towns in the 1250s was the price demanded for their return to Byzantine authority after 1261. Thus, the special rights and privileges of Thessalonians, which the Latins confirmed in 1205-6, were confirmed one more time by John III Vatatzes in 1246.²⁴⁷ The situation was similar in all towns of Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece,

²⁴⁵ Husein, *Beday ul-veka 'i* pp. 189-191.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ George Acropolites, *Historia*, ed. A. Heisenberg, *Georgii Acropolitae Opera*, Vol.1- 2. (Lipsiae: In aedibus B.G. Teubneri, 1903), Vol. 1, pp. 78; 80., also in *Grucki Izvori za Bulgarskata Istorija* (GIBI) [Greek Sources for the Bulgarian History] Vol. 8 ed. by M. Voinov, L. Ionchev, V. Tupkova-Zaimova. (Sofia: BAN, 1972), pp. 173-175.

which joined the Nicaean realm.²⁴⁸ Later, in 1262, Monemvasia received a chrysobull, exempting its inhabitants from land taxes and *kommerkion* (market taxes). The privileges of Monemvasia were then confirmed and expanded further by successive Byzantine emperors and despots of Morea.²⁴⁹ The content and sphere of privileges granted to towns is well illustrated in the case of Athens, where the emperor's representative- the *praetor* - did not even have the right to collect taxes or exercise ordinary jurisdiction.²⁵⁰ However, the most detailed town charter, the chrysobull granted to Ioanina (Janina) by Andronicus II in 1319, reveals a spectrum of rights and privileges that very few towns of Western Europe enjoyed at that time.²⁵¹ The initial charter granted to the town of Kruje (Kroia) did not survive, but the town's privileges are known from the Golden Bull of Alfonso V of Aragón, issued in 1457, which confirmed the privileges granted before by Andronicus III and Stefan Dušan.²⁵² With the increasing importance of towns, the practice of reasserting and expanding previously existing privileges and rights by rival sovereigns seems to have become a traditional policy in the late medieval Balkans.

Unfortunately, there are no surviving Bulgarian documents recording privileges and rights of urban communities. Some indications in the Bulgarian copy of the *Mining Law of Novo Brdo* and the *Rila Charter* of Ivan Shishman, point to the legal recognition of communal ownership and as such suggest the existence of urban communities as legal subjects. However,

²⁴⁸ F. Dölger, *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des Oströmischen Reiches von 565-1453* Vol.1-4 (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1924-65).Nrs 1788, 1789, 1852.

²⁴⁹ Miklosich – Müller, *Acta et diplomata graeca medii aevi sacra et profana*. Vols 1-6 (Vienna: Scientia Verlag, 1860-1892). Vol V. pp. 154-55.

²⁵⁰ G.Stadt Müller, *Michael Choniates, Metropolit von Athen (c.1138-c.1222)* (Vatican City: Pont. Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1934).p.162

²⁵¹ L. Maksimović *The Byzantine Provincial Administration under Palaiologoi* (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1988).pp. 258-259.

²⁵² A. Solovjev and V. Moshin, *Grčke Povelie Srpskih Vladara*, p. 41.

there is nothing like the Byzantine imperial chrysobulls granting communal tax privileges or Article 137 of the Stefan Dušan's law code, stating that "every town has its own chrysobull for the enfranchisements and duties of its inhabitants".²⁵³ However, the efforts of Kaloyan to include the rich Thracian towns in his realm, the following incorporation of these towns in the Second Bulgarian Empire by Ivan II Asen, and the drive of the rulers in Turnovo towards the towns of Thrace and Black Sea coast that shaped their policy in the course of the fourteenth century suggest that the silence of the sources is not sufficient proof for the lack of town privileges in Bulgaria. If, at the time of Kaloyan, the Thracian and Macedonian towns had to "be persuaded" to accept him as a supreme ruler, most likely, that was the *modus operandi* for other neighboring towns. Presumably, as part of the Byzantine cultural model, Bulgaria, just like Serbia, had adopted the Byzantine model of relations between the central power and its provincial towns.

There are very few Byzantine documents revealing the sources of *archontic* wealth as a basis for their political power. Despite the incompatibility established by law between high-ranking office status and involvement in business,²⁵⁴ in the course of and after the twelfth century the massive purchase of dignities by wealthy individuals without corresponding obligation to discharge administrative functions signals the gradual involvement of the aristocracy in commerce. *Archontic* revenues are illustrated by the description of the properties of Goudeles Tyrannos, an *archon* of Nymphaion, Asia Minor. It is not known what kind of compensation Tyrannos received for his imperial service in the town, but a cross-reference with the salaries paid by the Venetian government to the notables of Thessalonike in 1425 suggests

²⁵³ St. Novaković, *Zakonnik Stefana Dusana Tzara Srpskog 1349 i 1354*. Article 137

²⁵⁴ *Basilika*, [Basilics] ed. by I.D. Zepos (Athens: ek tou typographeiou tēs palingenesias Ioānn. Angelopoulou, 1896-1900), 6.1.123.

that the main income of *dynatoi* came from outside their administrative engagements.²⁵⁵ In 1294, Tyrannos possessed agricultural estates outside the city and a considerable amount of house property within the city, some of which he mortgaged for 420 hyperpyra.²⁵⁶ He also owned a share of perfumery, four workshops selling cloth and a tower containing a bakery that was bringing him the amount of 200 hyperpyra.²⁵⁷ Similar is the distribution of income for the *archontes* in Thessalonike at the end of the fourteenth century. Most of them, in addition to land revenues and office salaries, were engaged in banking and trade.²⁵⁸

The information that could be put together from various sources regarding the economic activities of the Bulgarian aristocracy suggests that the political separatism of the Dobrudjan despotate and of the Bdin Principality was in fact a function of specialization of these regions in producing particular goods and of the regionalization of their trade with specific international partners. The political separatism of the Dobrudjan despotate rose in parallel to the growth of money circulation within its towns, as demonstrated by the finds in Karvuna and Provat-Ovech, a fact, undoubtedly, rooted in the increasing involvement of the local *archontes* in grain trade with the Italian city-states.²⁵⁹ It seems that the wealth they derived from their business activities was substantial enough to challenge the supremacy of Turnovo. The development of the Bdin Principality can be explained in similar terms. The political aspirations of its ruler, Ivan-

²⁵⁵ Nevra Necipoğlu, "The Aristocracy in Late Byzantine Thessalonike: A Case Study of the City's Archontes," in Alice-Marry Talbot ed. *Symposium on Late Byzantine Thessalonike* (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2004).pp. 133-151

²⁵⁶ Miklosich – Müller, *Acta et diplomata graeca medii aevi sacra et profana*. Vols 1-6 (Vienna: Scientia Verlag, 1860-1892). Vol. VI., pp. 285-7.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Nevra Necipoğlu, "The Aristocracy in Late Byzantine Thessalonike"

²⁵⁹ "The Treaty of Ivanko, despot of Dobrudja with Genoa" in Iv. Dujcev, *Iz Starata Bulgarska Knijnina* [Old Bulgarian literature] Vol. II, pp. 137-138; for the money circulation in Karvuna and Ovech see also Template 1.

Sracimir, stemmed from a significant amount of grain, fur, wax, and iron, produced in the country, and from the trade activities of Bdin's townsmen with Walachia, Dubrovnik, and Hungary.²⁶⁰ The regular business involvement of the Bulgarian aristocracy is signaled by the personal involvement of the Bulgarian emperor Ivan Alexander in trade with Dubrovnik. In 1362, through his middleman Petrucio de Barletto, the Bulgarian emperor exported a certain amount of grain to Dubrovnik, part of the profit for the sale of which he reinvested in buying 425 kg. of wax.²⁶¹ The purchase of wax by the ruler of a country famous for its export of wax reveals the purely business venture of Ivan Alexander. At the same time, as Francesco Pegolotti asserts, the wax from Zagora (*cera Zagora*, i.e. Bulgaria) had the highest quality and price on the international market. Ivan Alexander must have taken advantage from the price difference of one ducat per pound, presenting the wax of Dubrovnik (*cera Raougia*) as wax of Bulgaria (*cera Zagora*).²⁶² Similarly astute was the governor of Mesembria, Kaloyan, who was engaged in trade with grain. In 1361, the *kephale* of Mesembria, a town famous for exporting grain, purchased in Chilia 157 *modioi* of wheat (about 38, 600 kg), which had to be transported with the assistance of a certain Genoese, named Antonio de Finalle "either to Mesembria or to Sozopolis or Agathopolis," most likely, for re-export.²⁶³ No surprise that five years later, the

²⁶⁰ Str. Lishev, *Bulgarskiat Srednovekoven Grad*, pp. 131-136.

²⁶¹ Libri Reformationum, III, Monumenta Ragusina (Zagreb Sumptibus Academiae Scientiarum et Artium, 1895), pp. 156-157.

²⁶² Francesco Balducci Pegolotti, *La pratica della mercatura* ed. Allan Evans. (Cambridge, Mass.: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1936) p. 293.

²⁶³ G. Pistarino, *Notai genovesi in Oltremare: Atti rogati a Chilia da Antonio di Ponzo`, 1360-61* (Genoa: Istituto internazionale di studi liguri, 1971) pp. 62-3.

personal reparations of 2000 hyperpyra imposed by Amadeus VI on the same Kaloyan were paid by the latter in wheat.²⁶⁴

When to these examples of involvement of the upper class in business activities are added cases revealing the entrepreneurship of the Byzantine emperor John V,²⁶⁵ the question about the social motivations for economic initiative in the Balkans is largely solved: Turnovo, Constantinople, Thessalonike, and Dubrovnik display the same social and economic model, differing only in its political aspect.

Among *archontes* there were also members of the middle class professions of notaries, money-changers, and trade-agents, some of them, most likely, connected with guild-like associations. The data for Bulgarian trade agents are scanty but not absent. A certain Nikola Dosev arrived in 1340 in Dubrovnik, who was said to be a merchant from Bulgaria.²⁶⁶ In 1348, the arrival of another Bulgarian merchant, Cvetan Draganov, was registered.²⁶⁷ A certain Jacob from Mesembria resided permanently in Constantinople, where he was involved in trade.²⁶⁸ A colony of thirteen merchants from Mesembria, Sozopolis, and Varna was registered on the island of Chios at the beginning of the fourteenth century, later joined by a group of Jewish merchants also from Bulgaria.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁴ L. Gorina, "Materialyi Dnevnik Antona Barberi po Istorii Bolgarii i Vizantii" [Materials of the book of A. Barberius for the history of Bulgaria and Byzantium] in *Byzantinobulgarica* No 4 (1973) pp. 229-251.

²⁶⁵ A. Laiou, "Byzantine Economy in Mediterranean Trade System" in A. Laiou, *Gender, Society and Economic Life in Byzantium* (Norfolk: Variorum, 1992) pp.177-222.

²⁶⁶ I. Sakazov, "Stopanskite Vruzki na Bulgaria s Chujbina prez XIVvek," [The economic international relations of Bulgaria during the 14th century] *Godishnik na Sofiiskia Universitet* Vol. 30, issue No. 7 (1935) pp. 1-100.

²⁶⁷ I. Sakazov, "Stopanskite Vruzki na Bulgaria s Chujbina prez XIVvek"

²⁶⁸ Ibid

²⁶⁹ Ibid

Quite instructive for the economic power and accumulation of capital among this class are Ottoman documents witnessing the investment of substantial amounts of money for buying off the right of collecting the imperial taxes on rice in Thrace in 1455.²⁷⁰ Individuals from Philipopolis and Adrianople, both Christians and Jews, appear as investing in the purchase of the imperial taxes at the impressive price of 2-3 million *akçes*, an amount likely to have been accumulated during the pre-Ottoman period.²⁷¹

Although rarely, pieces of information witnessing the value of transactions in trade could be found. Such is the case of Theodore Katharos, a trade-agent of the Thessalonian archon John Rhosotas, who attempted to recover his losses of 3, 875 ducats, which he had invested in a single transaction.²⁷² Another source reveals that Kataharos' impressive scale of entrepreneurship was not an isolated case. In 1400, John Goudelis invested 2,600 hyperpyra in a trading venture in Aegean.²⁷³ The economic dominance of the urban political class in late Byzantine and Bulgarian town shows striking parallels with the "patrician democracy" of Dubrovnik, where the aristocratic hierarchy reflected the economic power of the noble families.²⁷⁴ In Mesembria, the reparations imposed by Amadeus VI in 1366 on the town's population clearly reveal the same social structure. While the entire *communitas of Mesembria* was taxed at 17, 000 hyperpyra, personal reparations of about 50 to 100 hyperpyra were imposed on certain dignitaries, according

²⁷⁰ Vera Mutafchieva, "Otkupuvaneto na Durjavnite Prihodi v Osmanskata Imperia prez XV-XVII vek i Ravitieto na Parichnite Otnoshenia" [Buying off the imperial revenues in the Ottoman Empire, Fifteenth to Seventeenth centuries and the development of the money circulation] *Istoricheski Pregled*, No 1 (1960).pp. 40-52

²⁷¹ Vera Mutafchieva, "Otkupuvaneto na Durjavnite Prihodi."

²⁷² N. Necipoğlu, "The Aristocracy in Late Byzantine Thessalonike." pp. 133-151.

²⁷³ A. Laiou, "The Byzantine Economy in the Mediterranean Trade-System: Thirteenth - Fifteenth centuries" *DOP*, No 34/35 (1980/81) pp. 177-222, Addendum.

²⁷⁴ The phrase "patrician democracy" is that of B. Krekić, *Dubrovnik in the 14th and 15th centuries. A city between East and West* (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), p.39

to their economic potential. The governor of the town, Kaloyan, was “honored” with a special collection of 2,000 hyperpyra.²⁷⁵

The governmental salaries of the lower class of *dynatoi* did not differ much from the income of the urban artisans, wage laborers, technicians, and petty shop owners, with whom they formed the class of *mezoï*, the nascent middle class of the bourgeoisie.²⁷⁶ Undoubtedly, agriculture, especially viticulture, was an important supplemental source of income for the *mezoï*. This was true presumably more for the *dynatoi*, given that the majority of *pronoia* consisted of land, less for the group of manual laborers and petty merchants. Further, although the undoubted concentration of wealth in a few noble hands, as attested by the written sources, the total dominance of coins of small denominations within the finds of the late twelfth – to the late fourteenth century suggest that the majority of the market transactions were the everyday purchases passing through the hands of the *mezoï* and *mikroï*.

The long list of various professions that could be composed from the sources and the archaeological finds, suggesting high specialization of labor and standardization of production, raises the question of the social organization of industrial production – the role and development of the guilds in the Byzantine Empire (and, eventually, in its Balkan neighbors) that still poses a serious challenge to economic historians.²⁷⁷ The sources for the subject are scanty, if not

²⁷⁵ L. Gorina, “Materialyi Dnevnik Antona Barberi po Istorii Bolgarii i Vizantii” [Materials of the book of A. Barberius for the history of Bulgaria and Byzantium] in *Byzantinobulgarica* No 4 (1973). pp. 229-251.

²⁷⁶ C. Morrisson, “Prices and Wages in Byzantine World,” in *The Economic History of Byzantium, from the Seventh to the Fifteenth Centuries* (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2005).pp.866-7.; N. Necipoğlu, “The Aristocracy in Late Byzantine Thessalonike.” pp. 133-151

²⁷⁷ For the attempts of enlisting the professions found in the sources see the generalizations of B. Tsvetkova, *Prouchvane na Gradskoto Stopanstvo, XV-XVI vek* [Study on urban economy, 15th -16th centuries] (Sofia: Nauka i Izkustvo, 1971),p. 89; N. Oikonomides. *Hommes d'affaires grecs et latins a Constantinople*. (Paris: Institut d'études médiévales Albert-le-Grand. 1979) pp. 94-107; V. A. Smetanin, *Vyzantiiskoe Obshtestvo XIII-XV vekov po Dannyi Epistolografii* [Byzantine society of 13th -15th centuries according to the epistolary sources] (Sverdlovsk, Izdatelstvo Sverdlovskogo Instituta, 1987),pp. 76-100.

nonexistent. The main source for the structural organization of the professions in the Byzantine Empire is the *Book of the Eparch*, issued at the beginning of the tenth century, and codifying the earlier existing practices in Constantinople.²⁷⁸ The purpose of this lawcode was to restrain the growth of manufacturing and trade activities outside the guild system in those economic sectors that were considered vital for the fisc. Moreover, the regulation of commercial activities was directed against the emergence of monopolistic market structures and the subsequent concentration of economic power in a few hands. The existence of guilds in Byzantium until the late twelfth century is beyond any doubt.²⁷⁹ However, their existence beyond the twelfth century is a quite controversial issue that still has to be clarified. Most scholars maintain that the guilds, as understood by the *Book of the Eparch*, had practically disappeared, given that the rules and regulations for the organization of manufacture leave no trace in the Byzantine narrative sources of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.²⁸⁰ Others acknowledge certain traces within the sources of guild-like organizational forms in particular sectors of production that do not fit the guild model, but rather that of temporary unions of petty producers.²⁸¹ Finally, others argue that guilds continued to exist after the twelfth century, but as unofficial bodies, in the sense that their chiefs were not appointed anymore by the government, but still represented their organization

²⁷⁸ M. J. Siuziumov, *Vizantiiskaia kniga Eparkha: Vstupitel'naia Stat'ia, Perevod, Kommentarii* [Byzantine Book of the Prefect: Introduction, translation, comments] (Moscow; AN SSSR, 1962).

²⁷⁹ See the extensive list of references as cited in G. C. Maniatis, "The Domain of Private Guilds in Byzantine Economy, Tenth to Fifteenth Centuries," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Vol. 55. (2001), pp. 339-369, ff. 91.

²⁸⁰ P. Charanis, "On the social structure and Economic Organisation of the Byzantine Empire in the Thirteenth Century and Later," *Bizantinoslavica*, Vol. 12 (1951), p. 151; I. P. Medvedev, "The Problem of so-called Byzantine Manufacture," *Byzantiaca* No. 9 (1989), p. 174; V. N. Zavrzhin, "K Voprosy o Pozdnevizantiiskoi Manifakture," in *Srednevekovnyi Gorod* (Saratov: Izdatelstvo Saratovskii Universitet, 1981), pp. 136-7; E. Frances, "Isceznovenie korporacij v Vizantii," [Disappearing of guilds in Byzantium] *Vizantiiskii Vremennik*, No. 30 (1969), pp. 38-47;

²⁸¹ Klaus-Peter Matschke, *Die Schlacht bei Ankara und das Schicksal von Byzanz* (Weimar: Böhlau, 1981), pp. 156-7; G. C. Maniatis, "The Domain of Private Guilds in Byzantine Economy, Tenth to Fifteenth Centuries," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Vol. 55. (2001), pp. 339-369.

before the officials.²⁸² The main reason for disagreement among historians is the different meaning of *guild*. The scholars accepting the Byzantine legal understanding of guilds or corporations, (as manifested in the *Book of the Eparch*) as forms of association that brought individuals practicing certain professions together in *entities, legally recognized and controlled by the state*, quite reasonably deny the existence of guilds beyond twelfth century. Others, who see guilds as organizations that primarily were intended to regulate and define industrial manufacture and commercial exchange, and whose relations with the state authorities played only secondary role, maintain the continuing existence of guilds. It should not be forgotten, however, that the role of the Byzantine state in economy was not a constant. During and after the twelfth century both decentralization and privatization must be taken into account. Quite surely, this decentralization, manifested by free trade and market competition, affected fundamentally the state-guild relations. However, the most influential market actors, the foreign individual and organized merchants, as well as the powerful Byzantine *archontes*, who increasingly involved themselves in business activities with the Latins, became practically independent from the control of the state. Thus, the prevention of the emergence of monopolistic market structures and subsequent concentration of economic power, consciously or not, was left to the market self-regulation and was not anymore concern of the state. Hence, there existed of a significant part of privileged market actors, who were not controlled by the state, and who stultified the control of the remaining portion of the market. Accordingly, the state's guilds supervisory apparatus became dysfunctional and, thus, in turn contributed to the erosion and subsequent break between the state and guild that culminated in 1204 and its aftermath. No

²⁸² N. Oikonomides. *Hommes d'affaires grecs et latins a Constantinople*, pp. 94-107; P. Horden, "The Confraternities in Byzantium," in *Voluntary Religion* ed. W. J. Sheils and D. Wood (Oxford, Blakwell, 1986), pp. 33-34; M. Angold, "The Shaping of the Medieval Byzantine 'City,'" *Byzantinische Forschungen* No. 10 (1985), pp. 31-34.

traces exist of guilds beyond the twelfth century, but no evidence exists either that professional organizations disappeared altogether after that. What, most likely, happened, was that guilds, as state institutions, known from the *Book of the Eparch*, merely obtained an entirely voluntary organizational form, unrestricted by the state control. Whether this should be termed *guild* or *association*, is a matter of pure semantics. Much more important, however, is that the new type of guild played a far more decisive socio-political role than the state guild of the *Book of the Eparch*, for it participated in the administration of towns through its own representatives, thus more effectively protecting its participants' interests. Suffice it to point the example of Zealots in Thessalonike.

The explanation offered above for the lack of sources referring to guilds after ca 1200 is substantiated by the subsequent reinstatement of guilds under the Ottoman economic etatism. The early Ottoman period is very rich in regulative acts concerning the state-guild relations, especially in the sphere of mining. There are no less than seven regulative codifications of mining for the period 1390-1638, all sanctioned by the Ottoman power.²⁸³ The earliest of them, concerning the regulations of mining in Kratovo, was issued by Bayezid II just a few months after the battle on the Kosovo Pole in 1389, when the mines of Kratovo fell into Ottoman hands. Another mining law, *Zakon za Rudniku Novo Brdo* [Mining Law in Novo Brdo] was issued in 1412 by the Serbian ruler Stefan Lazarević and, according to its Bulgarian copy of Chiprovci in

²⁸³ N. Beldiceanu, *Les actes des premiers sultans conservés dans les manuscrits turcs de la bibliothèque nationale à Paris, Vol. II, Règlements miniers 1390-1512* (Paris: Mouton, 1964), pp. 243-268; *Zakon o Rudnicima Despota Stefan Lazarevicha*, [Mining Law of Stefan Lazarevic] ed. by N. Radojicic (Belgrade, 1962); F. Spaho, "Turski Rudarski Zakoni" [Turkish mining laws] *Glasnik Zemaljskog Muzeja u Bosni i Hercegovini* Vol. 25 (1913), pp. 147-9, Vol. 26 (1914), pp. 151-162; R. Anhegger, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Bergbaues im osmanischen Reich* Vol. II (Istanbul, 1943-1945), pp. 239-270; Irene Beldiceanu-Steinherr and N. Beldiceanu, "Un règlement minier ottoman du règne de Süleyman le Législateur," *Südostforschungen* Vol. 21 (1962), pp. 149-167.

1638, was ratified by the Ottoman jurisprudence.²⁸⁴ Quite surely, both legal texts do not signal the emergence of mining professional organizations. Their appearance in the Balkans was brought by the Saxon miners in the second quarter of the thirteenth century and, wherever they set their communities, the model of the Saxons shaped local social and technical organization of mining. However, the emergence of both codes at almost the same time points to a shift in the relation between the state and professional organizations, demonstrated through the implementation of supervisory state officials for the mining organizations. The evidence that the stipulations of the mining codes were operative also for the Western Bulgarian lands comes out of the identical organizational structures of mining, demonstrated by two documents. First, there is the dual usage of Bulgarian words together with their Serbian variants in the *Law of Novo Brdo*, the seventeenth century Bulgarian copy of the code of Stefan Lazarević. Finally, there are the Saxon mining terms, preserved in the toponymy of the regions of Velbujd, Kratovo, Samokov, Sofia, Vratza and Chiprovci.²⁸⁵

The association of miners in the *Law of Novo Brdo* is called *drouzhina* (association, union), delineating, thus, quite clearly its loose structure. The same term is used in the *Treaty of Michael Asen with Dubrovnik of 1253*, where it denotes the trade organization of the Bulgarian merchants in the city of Dubrovnik.²⁸⁶ The structure of the group of miners was a voluntary association of *gvarks* (from the German work *Gewerk*), who possessed shares from the ore deposits, discovered by a *houtman* (from German *Hauptmann*).²⁸⁷ The head of a *drouzhina* was

²⁸⁴ *Zakon o Rudnicima Despota Stefan Lazarevicha*, [Mining Law of Stefan Lazarevic] ed. by Radojčić (Belgrade: Naučno Delo, 1962).

²⁸⁵ Str. Lishev, *Bulgarskiat Srednovekoven Grad*, pp.73-5.

²⁸⁶ I. Dujcev, *Iz Starata Bulgarska Knijnina* [Old Bulgarian literature] Vol. II, p.50.

²⁸⁷ *Zakon o Rudnicima Despota Stefan Lazarevicha*, pp.41-2.

the *uorbarar*, a term known also from the mining regulative documents of Bohemia,²⁸⁸ who functioned as an arbiter of the professional disputes among *gvarks*. Along with the *gvarks*, the mining regulations mentioned wage laborers, who were hired by the *gvarks* for heavy-labor operations. There is, however, no master- journeyman- apprentice structure. Entering a corporation (*drouzhina*) of miners was a matter of approval from other members, while leaving it and starting a new shaft, after paying the common expenses, was an unrestricted personal choice.²⁸⁹ Expelling a *gvark* from the corporation was also matter of consensus.²⁹⁰ There were no internal regulations aiming at ensuring uniformity and no restrictions on the quantity or quality of inputs and the number of workers that could be employed or on the amount and type of equipment that could be installed.

However, in the course of the fifteenth century, the Ottoman mining regulations display a clear trend of gradual increase of the number of state officials acting as supervisors of the mining process, while the *ourbarar*'s and *houtman*'s roles were reduced to a mere assistance of the functions of the state officials a *kâtib* (secretary), dealing with the daily expenses of the mine, and a *yasaqquly*, the state official supervising the application of a particular regional, or imperial mining code and exercising certain police functions.²⁹¹ Both *kâtib* and *yasaqquly* were subjects to the authority of the local *kadi* (judge) and *sancakbei*, the local administrator. Along with the *kâtib* and the *yasaqquly* functioned the *emin* and the *amil*, the officials supervising the tax collection, who were also subordinated of the *kadi*.²⁹² In the mining code of 1536, issued by

²⁸⁸ N. Beldiceanu, *Les actes des premiers sultans*, p. 105

²⁸⁹ *Zakon o Rudnicima Despota Stefan Lazarevicha*, , p. 42, Article 18

²⁹⁰ Ibid. p.44, Article 26.

²⁹¹ N. Beldiceanu, *Les actes des premiers sultans*, p.234; 255

²⁹² Ibid,p.200; 205; F. Spaho, "Turski Rudarski Zakoni" [Turkish mining laws] *Glasnik Zemaljskog Muzeja u Bosni i Harcegovini* Vol. 25 (1913), pp. 147-9, Vol. 26 (1914),pp. 151-162

Suleiman the Magnificent, the professional organization of miners lost its self-regulatory status and was placed under the direct command of the local *kadi*, who now had the authority over the entire process of mining, refining, and selling the acquired silver. He also assessed the taxes apportioned to the miners and the salaries of the state officials involved in their supervision.²⁹³

The development of the relations between the state and mining professional organizations, from the end of the fourteenth to the opening of the seventeenth centuries, thus witnessed some fundamental changes. The *Mining Law of Novo Brdo* of 1412 depicts a corporation of miners that played a decisive socio-political role in the local town's affairs. It had its own court and 12 representatives in the town's government and acquired the right of fair prices of bread and meat and of the services of tailors, shoemakers, and smiths, as well as of the commodities necessary for their production- hides and leather for their clothes and equipment and tallow for lighting.²⁹⁴ The mining corporation, as characterized by the mining code of 1536 by Suleiman the Magnificent, is a very different organization. It has lost its social importance and its autonomy and became a mere sum of state employees. Both outcomes were the result of the change of the state role in economy, and not of changing socio-economic relations shaping the model and function of professional organizations.

The changes in state-guild relations, demonstrated in the sphere of mining are observable elsewhere. During the time of "liberal" economy in the pre-Ottoman period, the professional organizations existing in the Byzantine Empire were left outside the ever-decreasing economic scope of the state and the source references about them, respectively, were marginal and vague. Nicholas Oikonomides has demonstrated that such professional organizations existed for

²⁹³ F. Spaho, "Turski Rudarski Zakoni" [Turkish mining laws], p. 178.

²⁹⁴ *Zakon o Rudnicima Despota Stefan Lazarevicha*, Articles 9-17.

notaries, perfumers, butchers, sailors, construction workers, and salt makers in Constantinople and Thessalonike.²⁹⁵ By privileging the miners with fixed prices for bread, meat, hides, and tallow, as well as for the services of tailors, smiths, and shoemakers, the *Mining Law of Novo Brdo* indirectly refers to the existence of other manageable professional communities, which did not enjoy such privileges.²⁹⁶ Similarly, the reference of A. Barberius to the existence of a group of bakers to whom Amadeus VI ordered the baking of a great quantity of ship's biscuits in Mesembria, points to the same phenomenon.²⁹⁷

The vague traces of professional organizations within the thirteenth-fourteenth century's sources suddenly make it possible for an Ottoman *kanunname* from the end of the fifteenth century to promulgate explicitly detailed regulations for the professional organizations in Constantinople and some other large cities.²⁹⁸ Besides the fixed prices and qualities of the craft's final products, the law stipulates the supervision of professional organizations by the local *kadi*. A few decades later, in 1524 – 1550, there was already an abundance of Ottoman normative documents regulating the professional organizations in Bursa, the fur-dressers, curriers, and shoemakers in Sofia, the tailors and grocers in Philipopolis and the iron makers in Samokov.²⁹⁹ It is quite improbable that these guilds were invented by the Ottomans, whose policy, as it is well

²⁹⁵ N. Oikonomides. *Hommes d'affaires grecs et latins a Constantinople*. pp. 94-107

²⁹⁶ *Zakon o Rudnicima*, Articles 9-17.

²⁹⁷ L. V. Gorina, "Goroda Bolgarskogo Prichernomoria v seredine XIV veka po Dnevniku Antona Barberi" [Bulgarian Black Sea towns in the middle of the 14th century, according to A. Barberius] in *Sbornik Istochniki i istoriografija slavianskogo srednevekovie* (1967), p.67

²⁹⁸ Ö. L. Barkan, "XV Asrin sonunda bazı büyük şehirlerde eşya ve yiyecek fiyatlarının tesbit ve teftişi hususlarını tanzim eden Kanunlar," [Laws regulating the fixing and inspecting particulars of prices for goods and food in some large cities at the end of the fifteenth century] in *Tarih fesiakalari*, (Istanbul, 1941) pp. 321-340.

²⁹⁹ Herman Thorning, "Fütüvvetname-i-kebir" in Idem, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis des islamischen Vereinswesens auf Grund von Bast Madad et-Taufiq* (Berlin: Mayer & Müller, 1913) pp 225-230; G. Gulubov, "Osmanoturški Izvori za Istoriata na Sofia. Sudebni Documenti of XVI v" [Ottoman sources for the history of Sofia. Legal records of XVI century] *Serdica* No. 3-4 (1942) p.88; Ahmet Refik, *Türk idaresinde Bulgaristan* (Istanbul: Devlet matbaası, 1930), p.16-17.

known, was to leave, more or less, intact the administrative and economic machinery left behind by the Byzantines. It seems permissible then to deduce the adoption and preservation by the Muslim rulers of the forms of public control of the crafts employed in the Byzantine administration, at least in dealing with non-Muslim artisans, and perhaps, even its extension to the Muslims themselves.

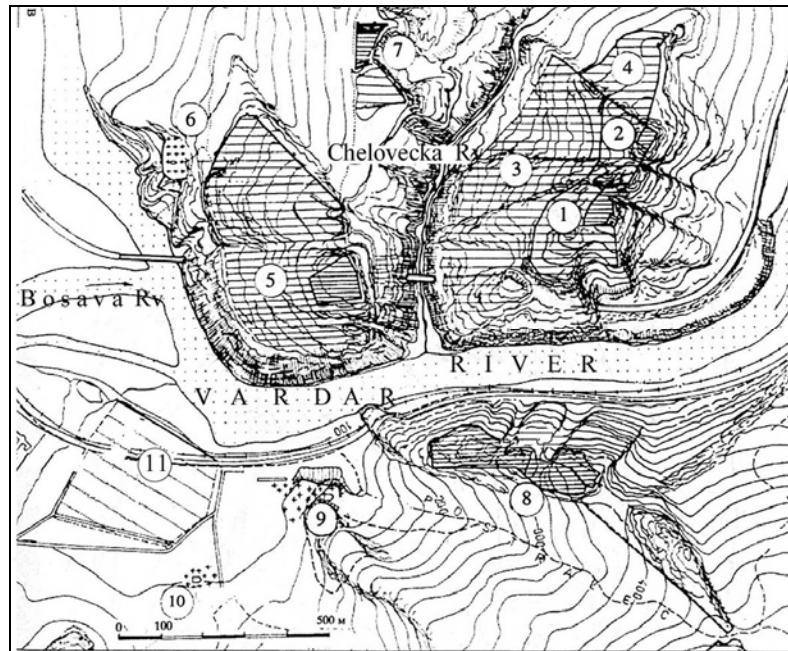


Figure 4-1. Plan of the citadel of Strzov Grad [adapted from the plan of Iv. Mikulčik *Srednovekovni Gradovi i Tvurdini vo Makedonia*, p.231] 3-4= Open space of Strzov Grad. 5= Fortified inhabited area (Markov Grad). 6= Unfortified inhabited area. 7= "Koula," Small citadel. 8= Another small citadel. 9-10= Churches with cemeteries. 11= Ancient settlement.

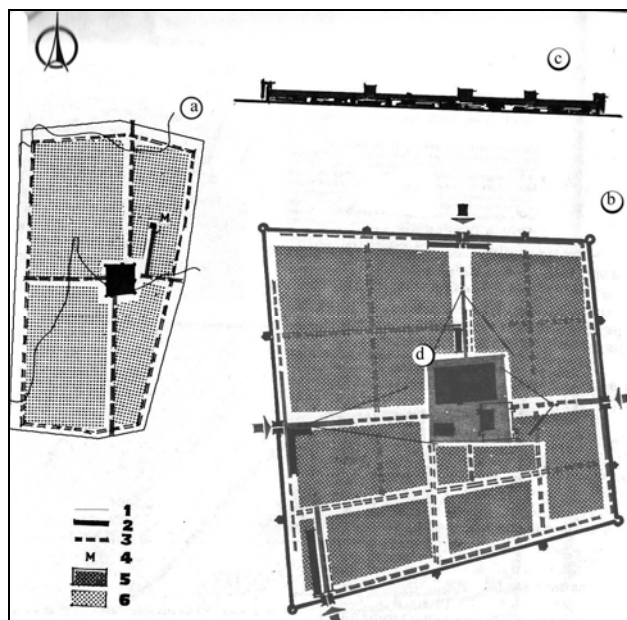


Figure 4-2. Pliska [adapted from the plan of M. Harbova, *Ukrepeniat Bulgarski Srednovekoven Grad*, p.52, fig.14] a) Plan of the town. b) Fortified nuclei. c) Profile of the town. d) Ruler's residential center. 1= Moat. 2= Stone-walls with towers. 3= Street network. 4= Monastery. 5= Fortified nuclei. 6= Residential area.

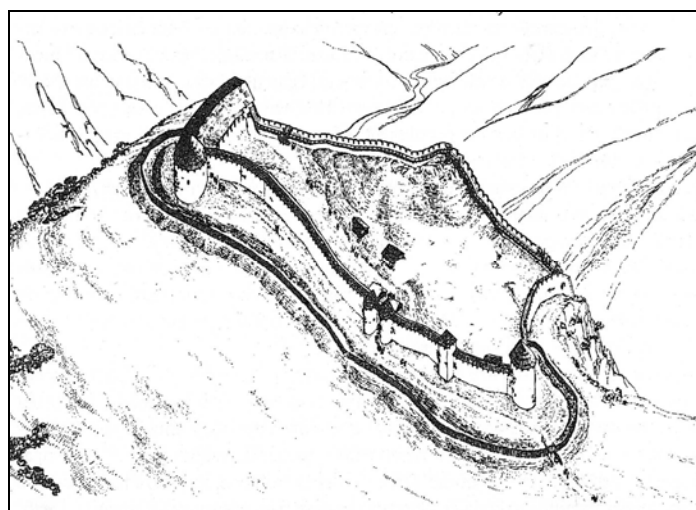


Figure 4-3. Raš, reconstruction [Reprinted with permission from N. Ovcharov and D. Kodjamanova, *Peprerikon i Okolnite Tvurdini preSrednovekovieto* (Sofia: Tangra, 2003). p. 102].

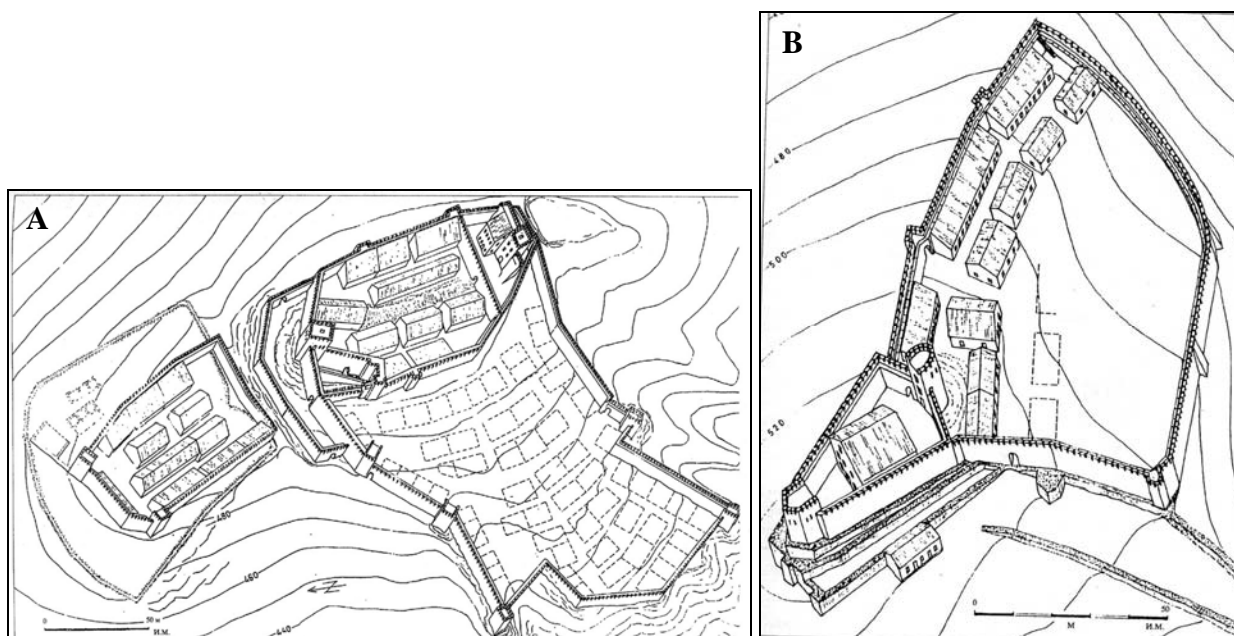


Figure 4-4. Towns' design. (A) Sobri. (B) Markova Sushica. [Reprinted with permission from Iv. Mikulčik, *Srednovekovni Gradovi i Tvurdini vo Makedonia*, pp.293; 331].

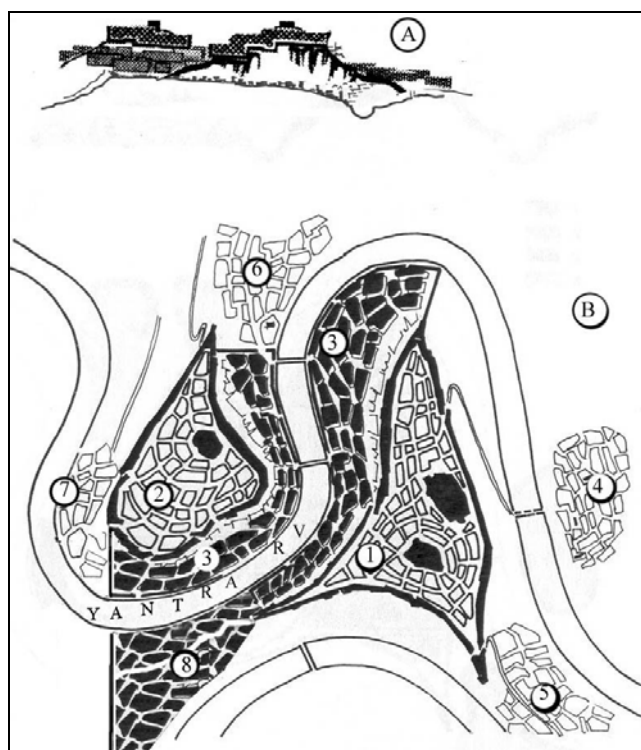


Figure 4-5. Late Medieval Turnovo [adapted from the plan of M. Harbova, *Ukrepeniat Bulgarski Srednovekoven Grad* p.123, fig 50]. A) Profile of the city. B) Urban space distribution. 1= The fortress of Tsarevets. 2= The fortress of Trapezitsa. 3= The "New Town – the main, fortified suburb between Trapezitsa and Tsarevets." 4= Devin Grad

(unfortified quarter on the slope of Momina Krepost Hill). 5= “Frankish” (Latin) quarter (unfortified). 6= Quarter, north of Trapezitsa (unfortified). 7= Jewish quarter (unfortified). 8= Extension of the “New Town” in the late fourteenth century (fortified).



Figure 4-6. Tsarevets. The main gate system and patriarchal church of Holy Ascendance at the top of the hill.

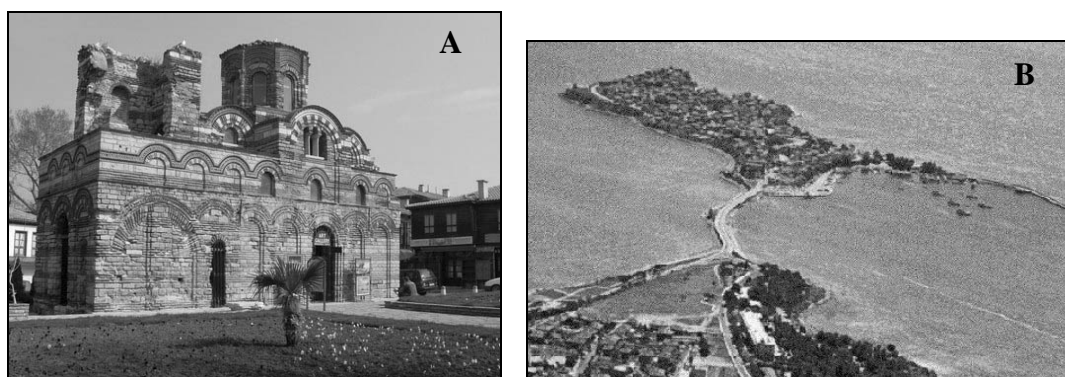


Figure 4-7. Mesembria. A) The Church of Christ Pantokrator. B) Aerial view of the town.
[Courtesy of Municipality of Nesebar]

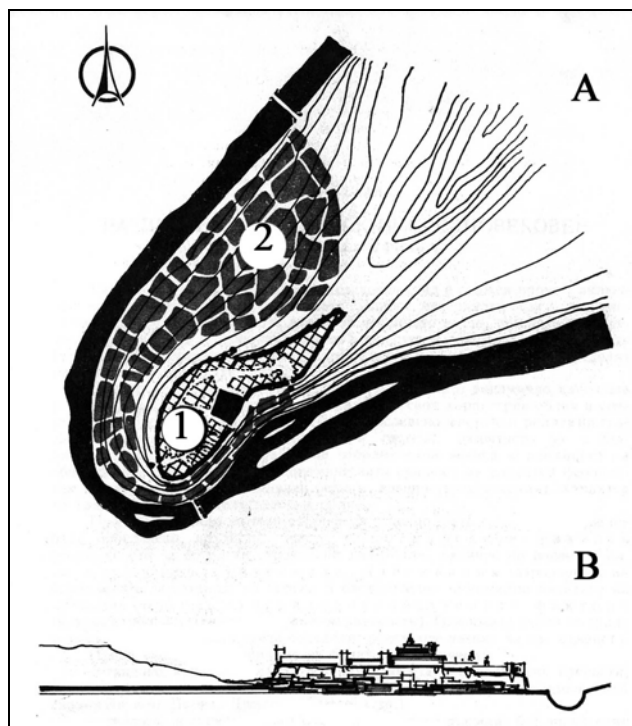


Figure 4-8. Lovech [adapted from the plan of M. Harbova, *Ukrepeniat Bulgarski Srednovekoven Grad* p.115, fig.46] A) Distribution of the urban space. 1= Fortress. 2= Suburbia. B) Profile of the terrain.

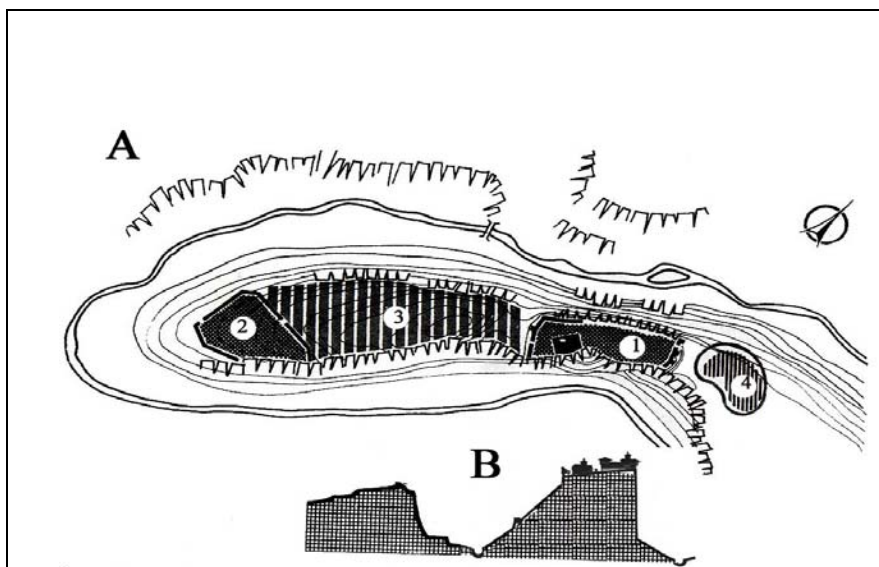


Figure 4-9. Cherven [Adapted from the plan of K. Skorpil, S. Georgieva and M. Harbova, *Ukrepeniat Bulgarski Srednovekoven Grad* p.96, fig.37]. A) Distribution of the urban space. 1= fortress of Cherven. 2= eastern fortified zone of the plateau. 3= fortified suburb (on the plateau). 4= Unfortified suburb (below the plateau). B) Profile of the terrain.

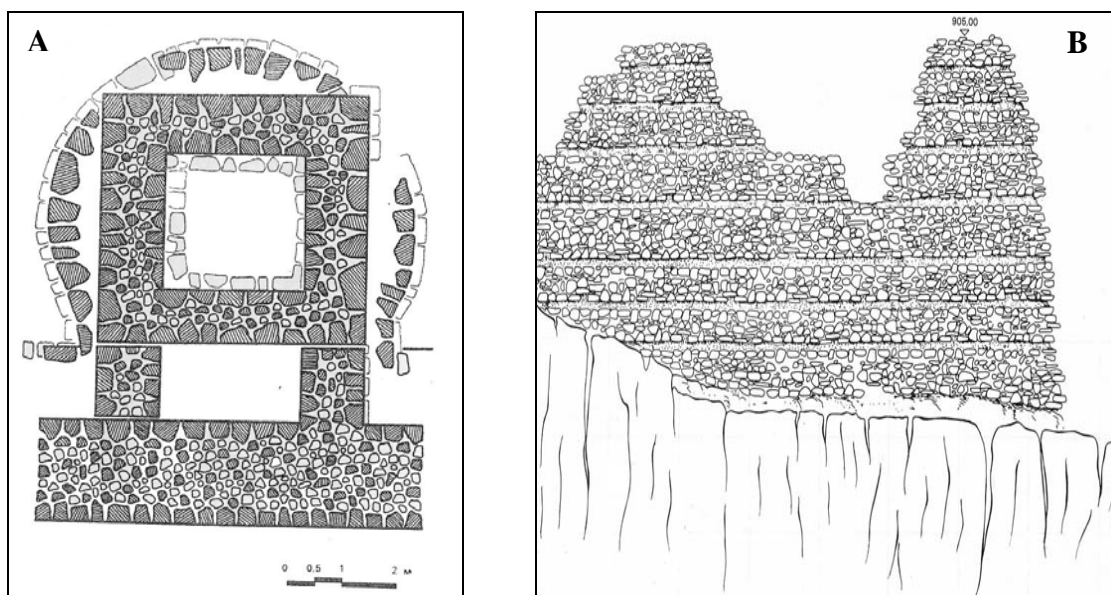


Figure 4-10. Fortress' masonry. A) *Opus emplectum*, tower in Kaliakra's citadel. B) External view of a wall, enforced by scaffolds in Kaliakra. [Reprinted with permission from G. Djingov, A. Balkanska and M. Josifova, *Kaliakra* Vol. 1. (Sofia: BAN, 1998), pp. 26; 83].

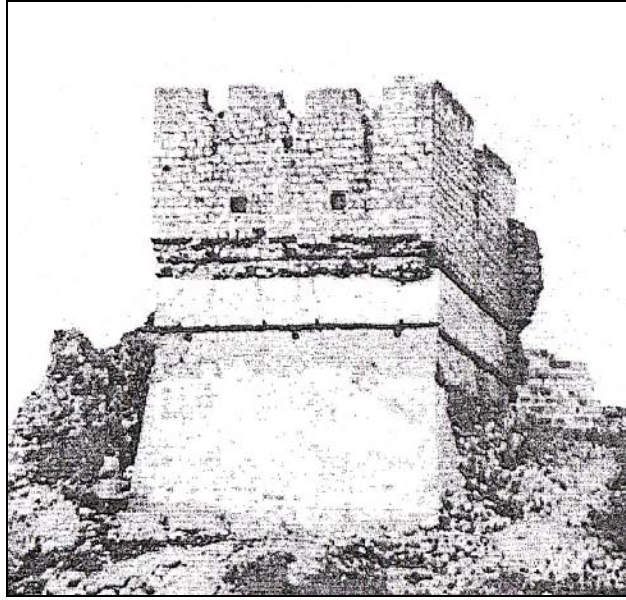


Figure 4-11. Cherven. The main tower at the western entrance of the town [Courtesy of Archaeological Museum of Veliko Turnovo]



Figure 4-12. The fortress of Shumen and its first suburban fortification [Courtesy of Archaeological Museum of Veliko Turnovo].

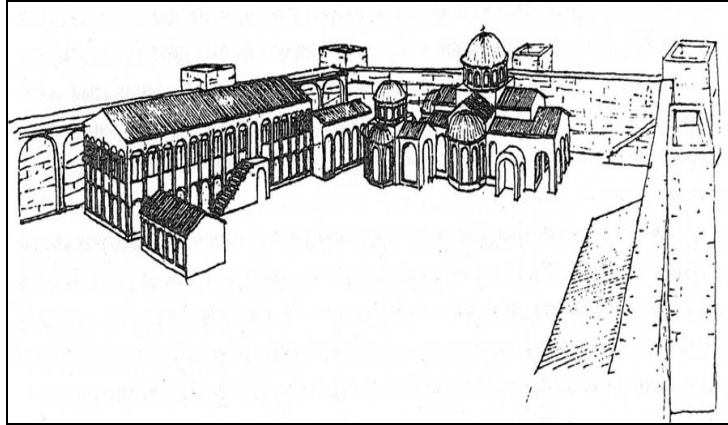


Figure 4-13. Monastery of St. John the Forerunner (Ioannes Prodrome) [Reprinted with permission from N. Ovcharov and D. Kodjamanova, *Peprerikon i Okolnite Tvurdini preSrednovekovieto* (Sofia: Tangra, 2003). p. 42]

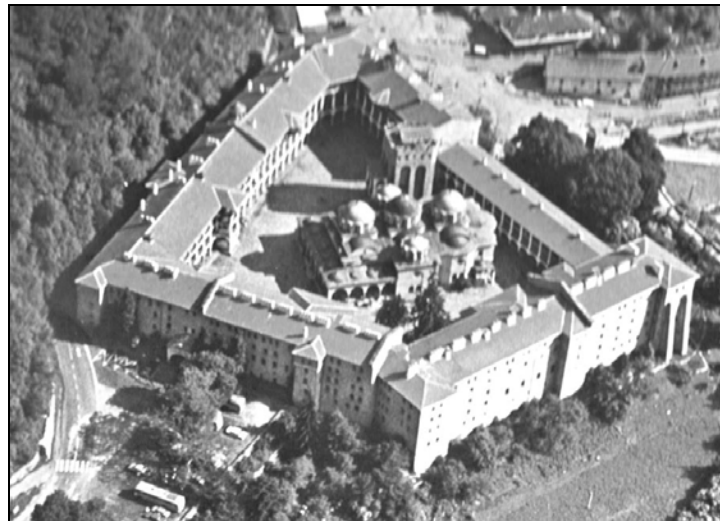


Figure 4-14. Rila Monastery with its defense tower in the center [Courtesy Archaeological Museum V. Turnovo]

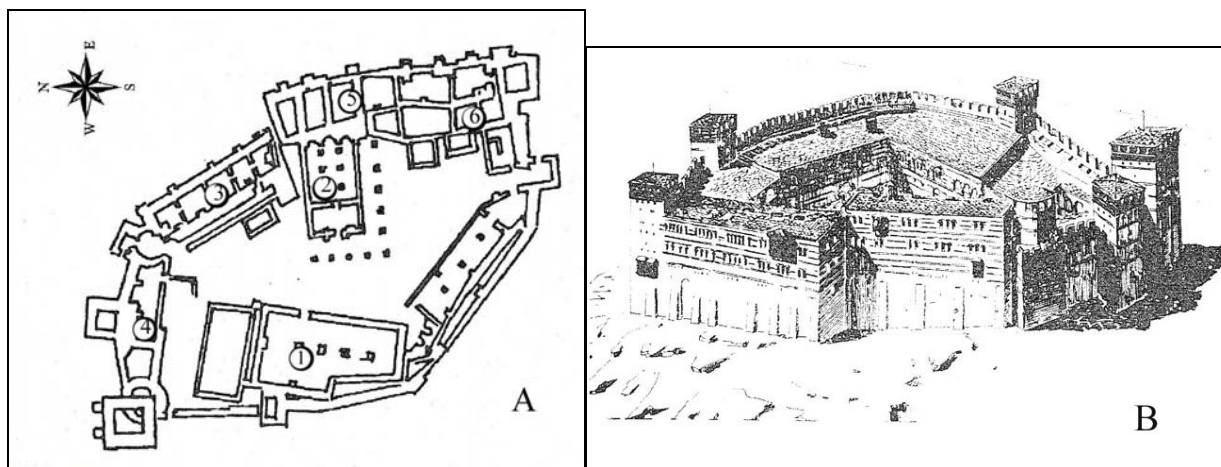


Figure 4-15. Emperor's palace in Tsarevets, Turnovo, A) Plan. B) Reconstruction [Reprinted with permission from B. Kuzupov and Y. Nikolova, "Gradoustrojstvo i Arhitektura" in *Istoria na Veliko Turnovo* Vol.1. p. 259] 1= the great throne chamber. 2= the church of St. Petka. 3= administrative building. 4= military section. 5= living area. 6= auxiliary buildings.

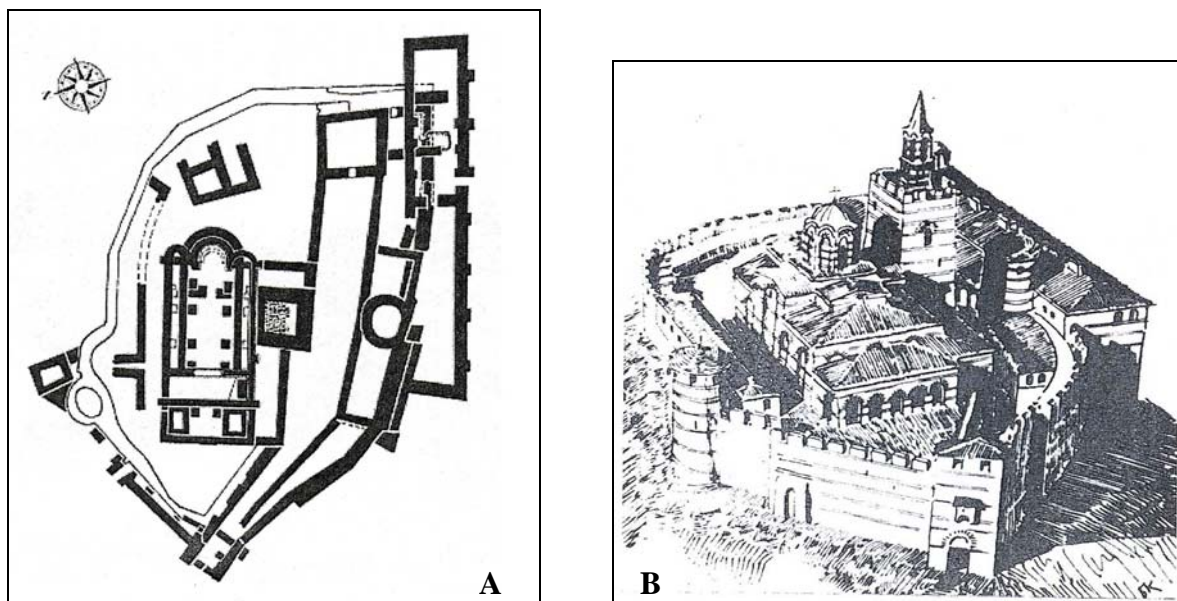


Figure 4-16. Patriarchal Palace in Tsarevets, Turnovo, with the church of Holy Ascension. A) Plan and B) Reconstruction. [Reprinted with permission from B. Kuzupov and Y. Nikolova, "Gradoustrojstvo i Arhitektura" in *Istoria na Veliko Turnovo* Vol.1. p. 259].

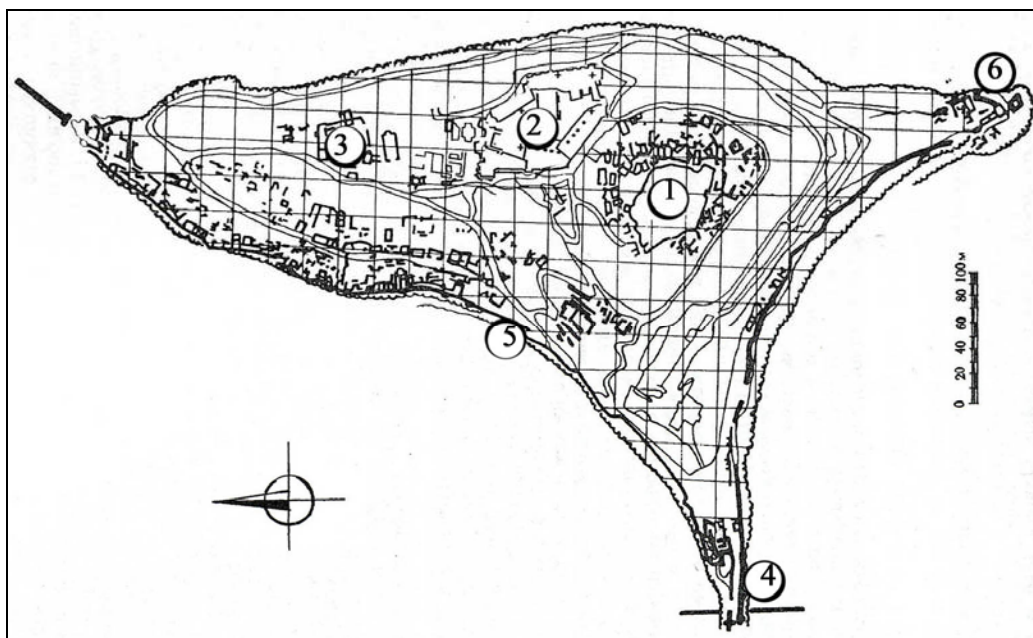


Figure 4-17. Turnovo, the fortress on the hill of Tsarevets. [Adapted from the investigational plan of Archaeological Museum of Veliko Turnovo on Tsarevets. Courtesy of Archaeological Museum of Veliko Turnovo] 1= Patriarchal palace with the church St. Ascension. 2= Emperor's palace. 3= *Boyar's House* – noble house lining with the emperor and patriarchal palaces. 4= The main gate of Tsarevets. 5= Gate, leading to the “New town,” the suburb between Trapezitsa and Tsarevets. 6= Gate, leading to the “Frank's Quarter.”

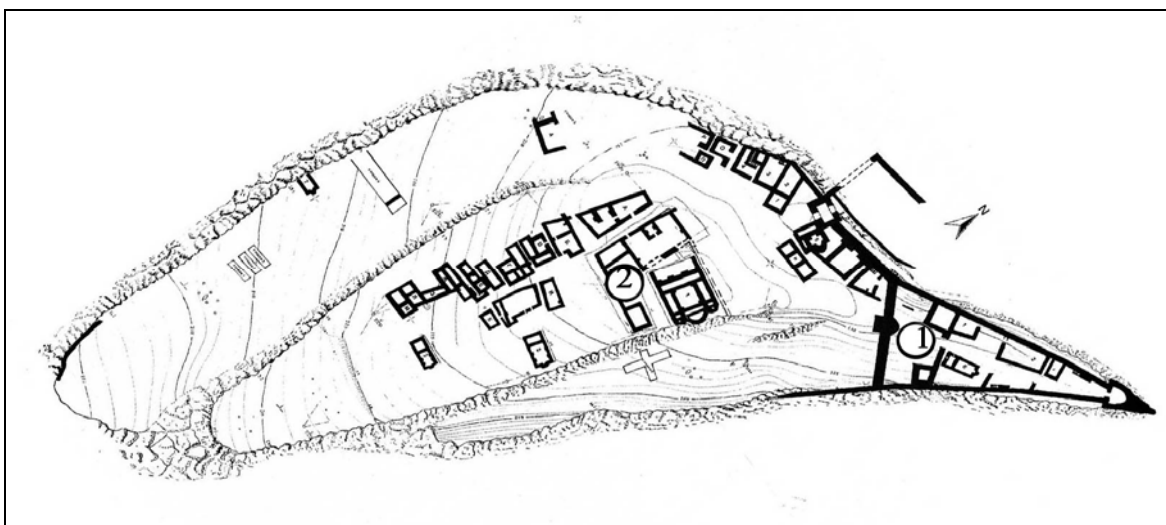


Figure 4-18. Fortress of Lovech [Adapted from J. Changova, *Lovetch*, p.50.fig. 35] 1= The citadel - governor's residence. 2= The episcopacy.

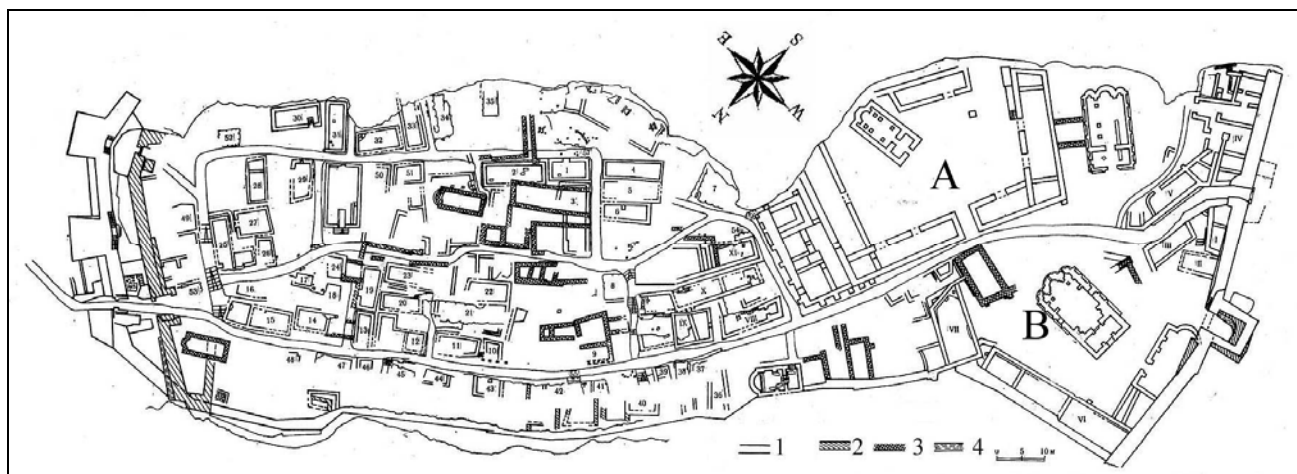


Figure 4-19. Fortress of Cherven. Plan [Adapted from V. Dimova, *Srednovekovniat Cherven* (Sofia, BAN, 1985), Apendix] A) The citadel, governor's residence. B) The episcopacy with the episcopal church. 1= Buildings from the first half of the fourteenth century. 2= late Roman - early Byzantine building period. 3= Buildings from the last quarter of the fourteenth century. 4= Buildings 11th -12th century.

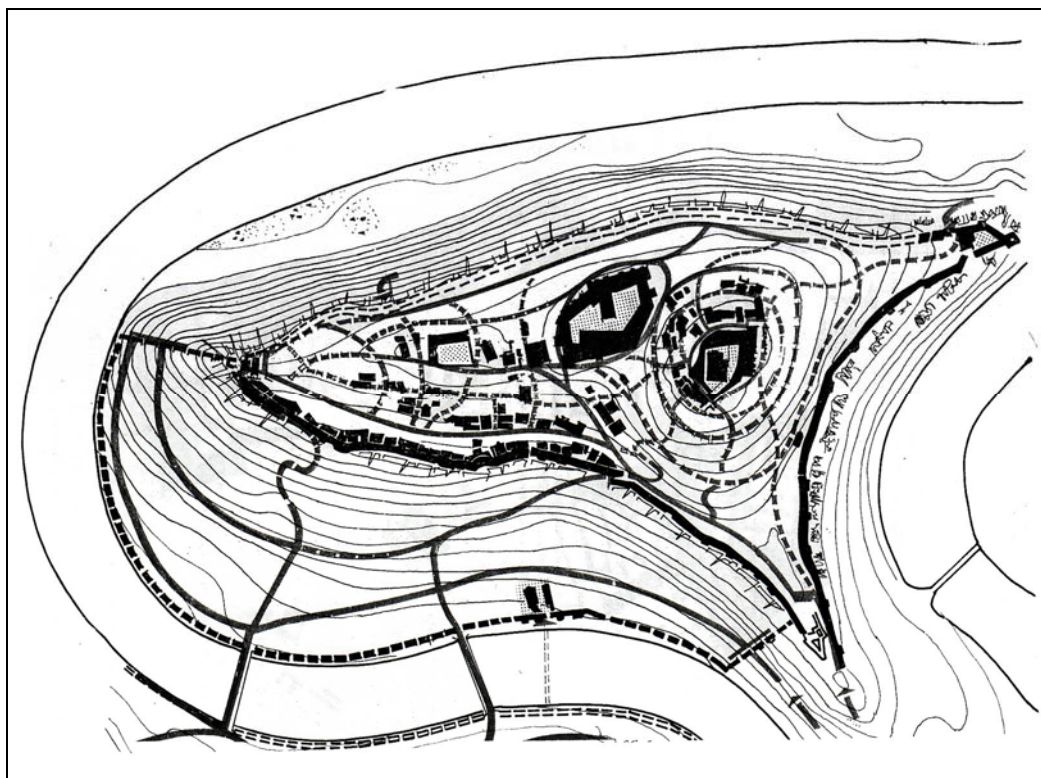


Figure4-20. Street network of Tsarevets and of part of the New Town. [Reprinted with permission from M. Harbova, *Ukrepeniat Bulgarski Srednovekoven Grad*, p.126. fig 52]

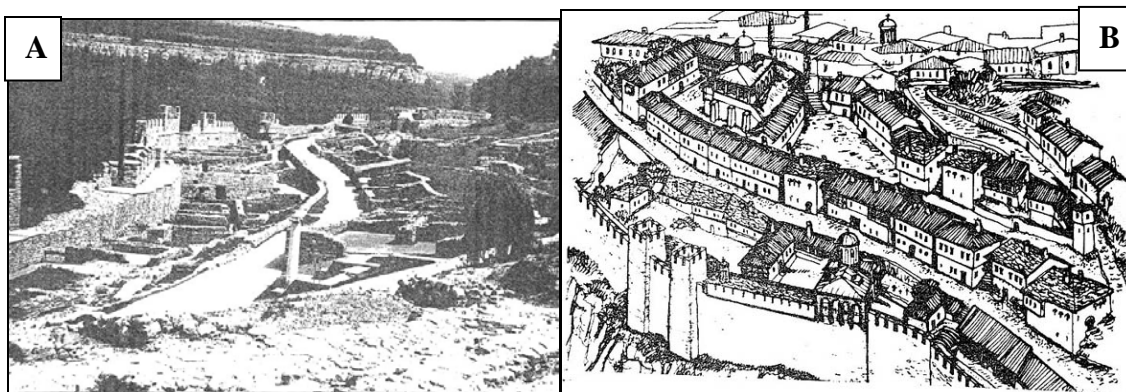


Figure 4-21. Western Main Street of Tsarevets. A) General view. B) Graphic reconstruction. [Reprinted with permission from I. Lefterov and Y. Nikolova, “Gradoustrojstvo i Arhitektura” in *Istoria na Veliko Turnovo* Vol.1. p. 259].

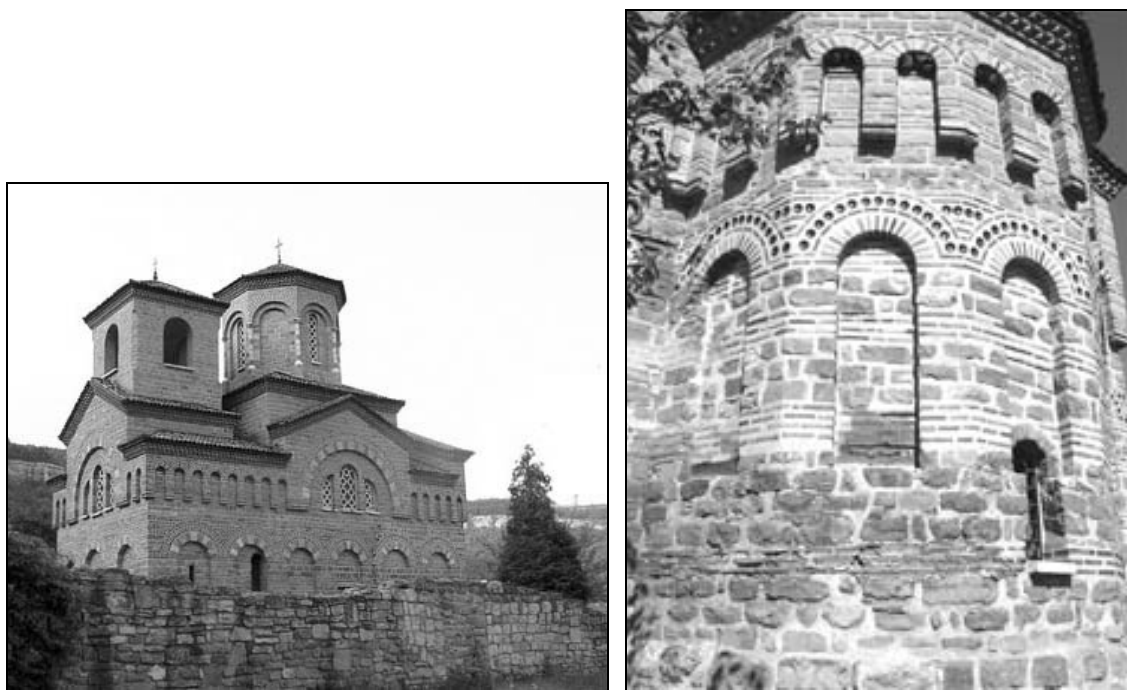


Figure 4-22. Church of St. Demetrius in Turnovo, located in the “New Town.”

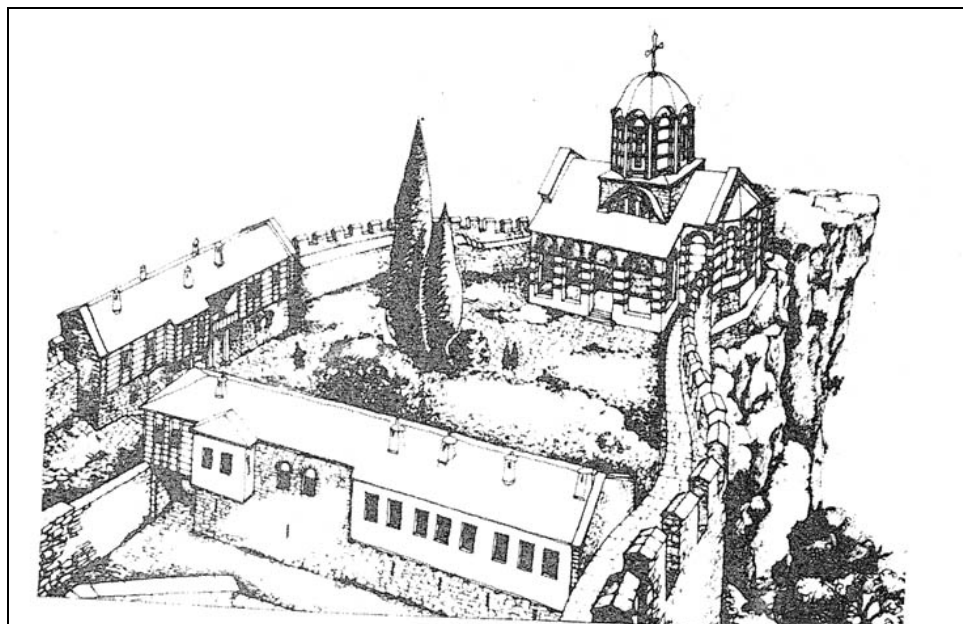


Figure 4-23. Urban monastery, located on the northernmost point of Tsarevets - graphic reconstruction [Reprinted with permission from T. Teofilov and Y. Nikolova, “Gradoustrojstvo i Arhitektura” in *Istoria na Veliko Turnovo* Vol.1. p. 262]

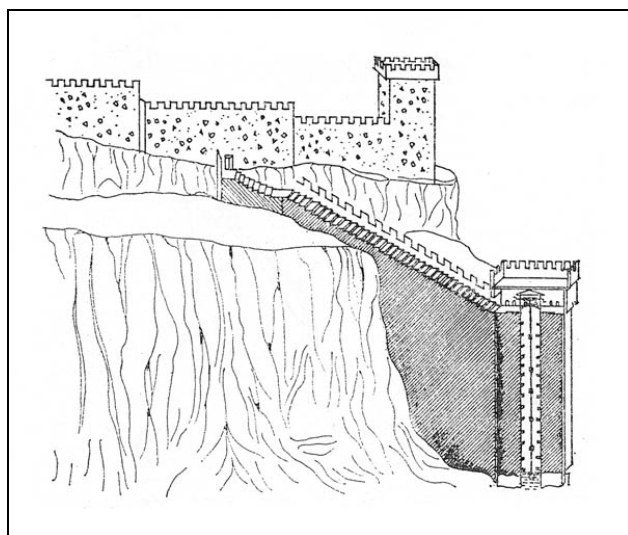


Figure 4-24. Fortified well at the southeastern angle of Tsarevets [Reprinted with permission from Y. Nikolova, “Gradoustrojstvo i Arhitektura” in *Istoria na Veliko Turnovo* Vol.1. p. 262].



Figure 4-25. Draining ditch in the fortress of Lovech [Courtesy of Archaeological Museum Veliko Turnovo]

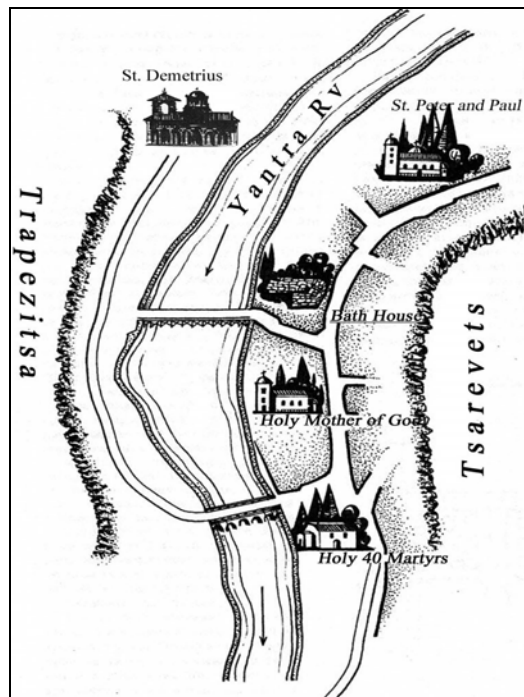


Figure 4-26. Location of the Bath House within the “New Town” in Turnovo [Adapted from J. Aleksiev, “Shishmanovata Banja v Veliko Turnovo” in *Mezhdunarodna fondacia Sv. Panteleimon*, (1993) p. 60, fig.2]

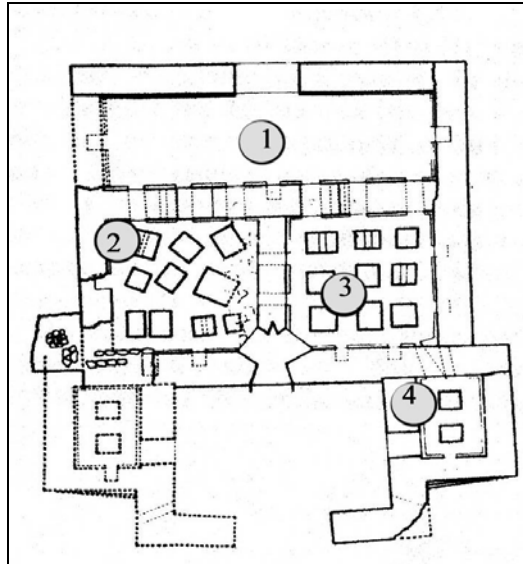


Figure 4-27. Plan of the Bath House. [Adapted from J. Aleksiev, "Shishmanovata Banja v Veliko Turnovo" in *Mezhdunarodna fondacia Sv. Panteleimon*, (1993), p. 61. fig.3] 1= Preafurnium. 2= Tepidarium. 3= Caldarium. 4= Laconicum.

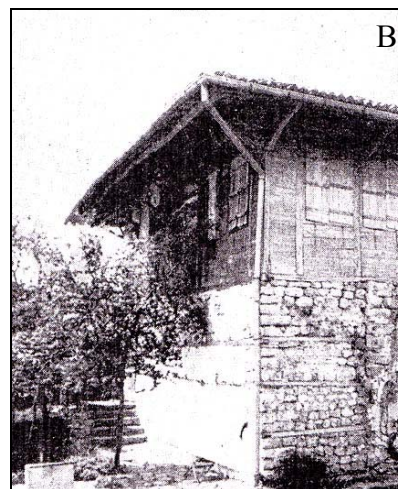


Figure 4-28. Urban houses from Turnovo. A) Stone second store. B) Ramshackle second floor [Reprinted with permission from L. Zaharieva, "Srednovekovni Boliarski Jilishta of Vtorata Bulgarska Durjava" in *Izsledvania vurhu arhitekturata na bulgarskoto srednovekovie* (Sofia: BAN, 1982).pp. 208; 214.]

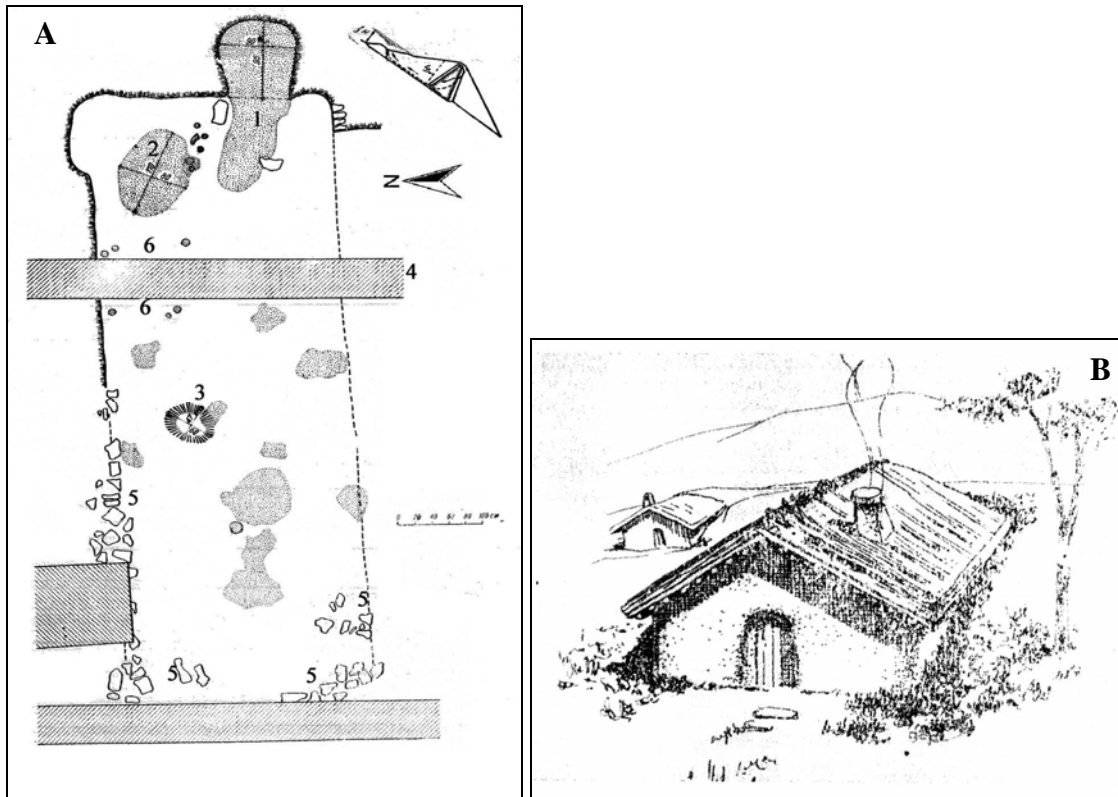


Figure 4-29. Semi-dugout house from Momina Krepost Hill. A) Plan. B) Reconstruction.
 [Reprinted with permission from Y. Nikolova, "Srednovekoven Kvartal na Hulma Momina Krepost v Veliko Turnovo," *Arheologia* No 1 (1963).pp. 35; 39. Plan: 1 and 2= ovens and/or open hearth. 3= granary pit. 4=foundations of a modern building. 5= stones, used in the construction. 6= holes nesting the wooden construction.

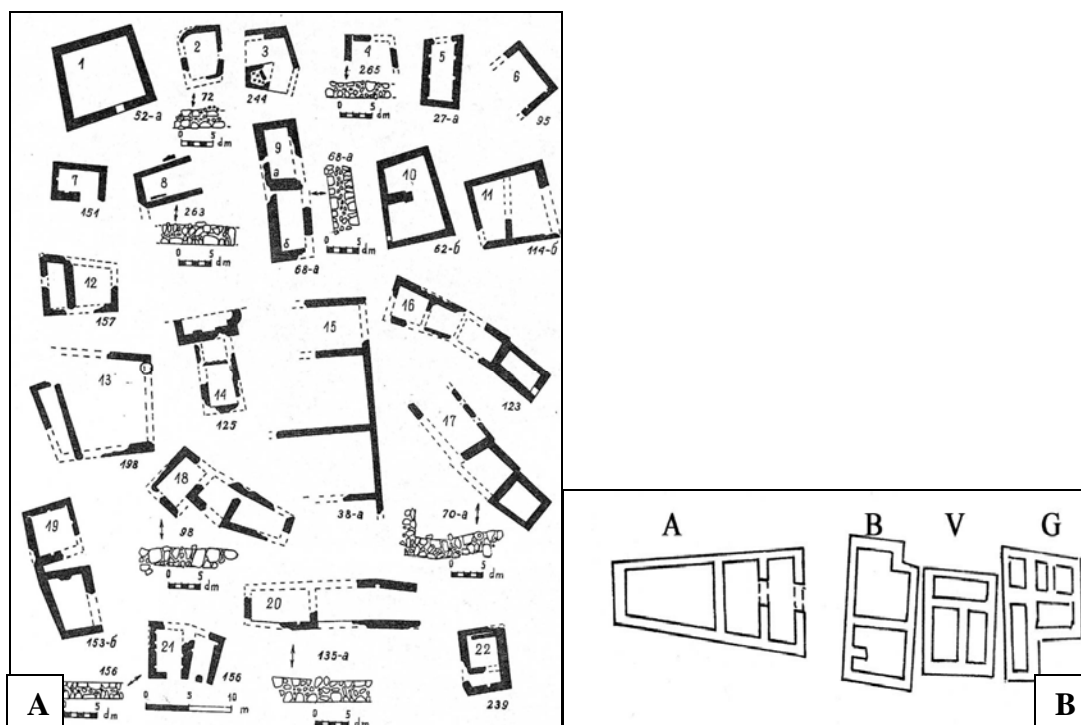


Figure 4-30. House-plans. A) One -, two-, and multiple-room from Shumen. [Reprinted with permission from V. Antonova, *Shumen and Shumenskata Krepost*.p.63] B) Multiple room house-plans from Lovech [reprinted with permission from J. Changova, *Lovetch*, p.84]

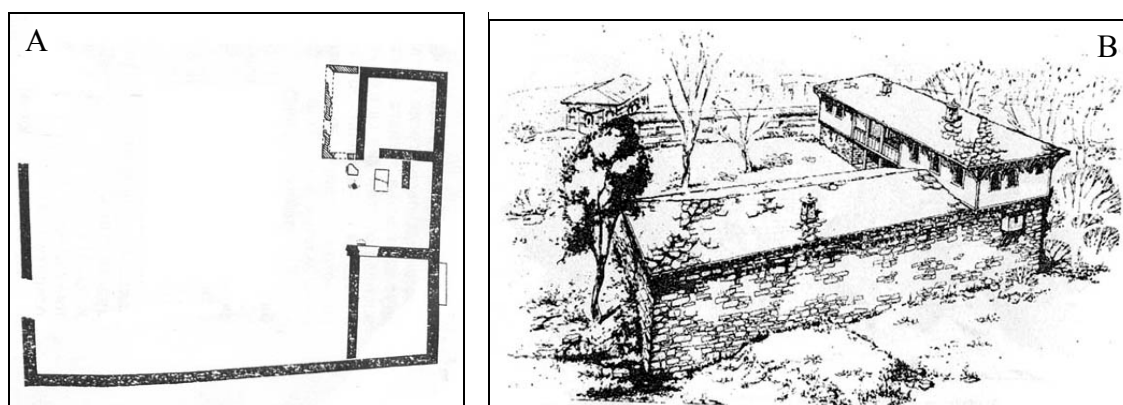


Figure 4-31. "Boyar's House from Tsarevets." A) Plan. B) Reconstruction. [Reprinted with permission from Y. Nikolova, "Zhilishteto v Turnovo prez XII- XIV vek" in *Tsarstvashtia grad Turnov* (Sofia: Nauka i Izkustvo, 1985).pp. 71;73].

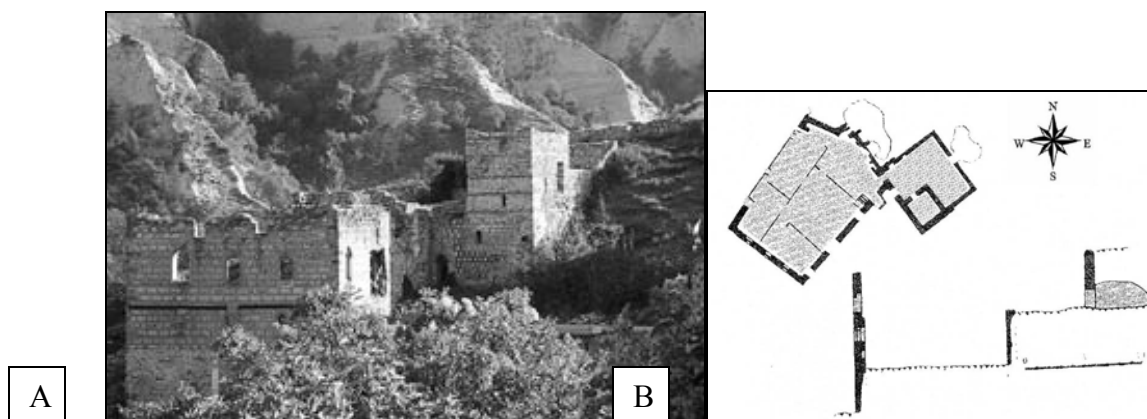


Figure 4-32. "Boyar's House" in Melnik. A) General view. B) Plan of the house [adapted from the plan of V. Nesheva, "Kvartal Chatala" in *Melnik, Gradyt v Podnojiето na Slavovata Krepost*, p.42]

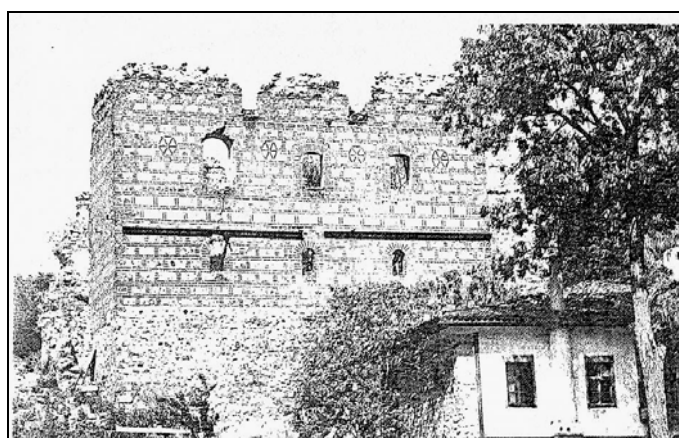


Figure 4-33. Boyar's House in Melnik. Decoration on the facade [Reprinted with permission from V. Nesheva, "Kvartal Chatala" in *Melnik, Gradyt v Podnojiето na Slavovata Krepost*, p.112]

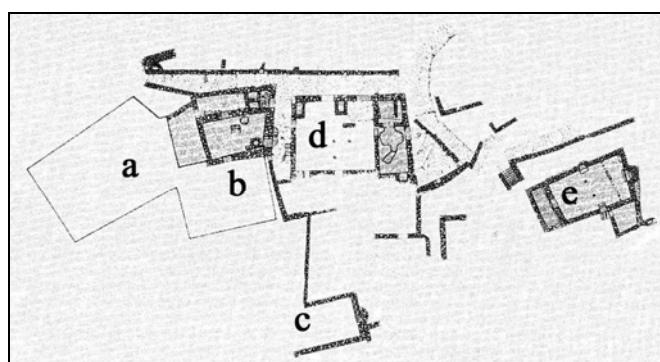


Figure 4-34. Plan of the Boyar's House (a & b), its adjacent church (c) and their neighboring dwellings (d & e).[Adapted from the plan of V. Nesheva, "Kvartal Chatala,"p.54]

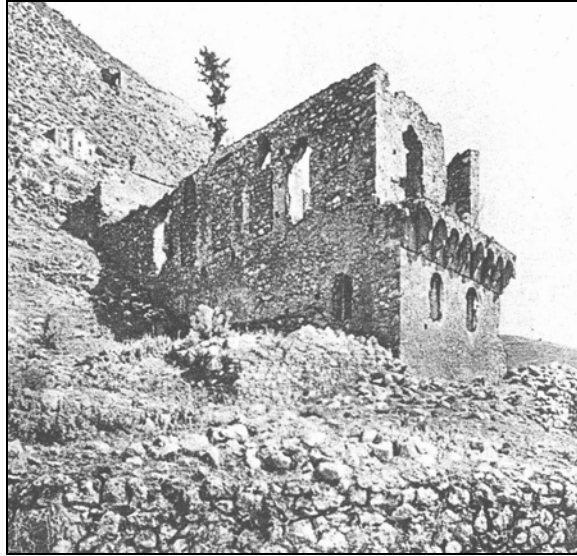


Figure 4-35. Private dwelling in Mistra [Reprinted with permission from I. Medvedev, *Mistra. Ocherk Istorii i Kulturyi Pozdnevizantiiskogo Goroda*.p.163]



Figure 4-36. Wealthy (boyar's) house in Turnovo [Reprinted with permission from L. Zaharieva, "Srednovekovni Boliarski Jilishta of Vtorata Bulgarska Durjava" in *Izsledvania vurhu arhitekturata na bulgarskoto srednovekovie* (Sofia: BAN, 1982).p.207.

CHAPTER 5

REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

The opening of the thirteenth century found the Eastern Mediterranean as an already formed economic unit, within which goods circulated according to specific patterns. The area consisted of Greece, Constantinople, the Black Sea region and its adjacent inland, Asia Minor, Crete, and the Ionian and Aegean islands. Alexandria, Syria, Cyprus, and Cilicia also formed part of this unit. This region became important to the West for both its exports and imports. As an exporter of food (grain, honey, wine, and olive oil) and raw materials (cotton, linen, leather, silk, wax, alum, and lead), the Eastern Mediterranean was of great importance to some specific parts of Europe, mainly to the Italian city-states. The primary import was cloth of all kinds, mostly from Lombardy and Flanders. The Eastern Mediterranean also played another role in international trade. This was a transit area, through the outlets of cities such as Constantinople and Pera, Tana and Caffa, Candia and Alexandria luxury products of the Far East made their way to Europe. Towards the end of the fourteenth century, the Eastern Mediterranean displayed an impressive economic unity at a time of great political fragmentation.

In the course of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the Eastern Mediterranean obtained the features of a regional market unit. It was characterized by the mechanism of supply and demand that resulted in uniform price formation. It was marked also by the establishment and development of trade coordinating and naval facilitating institutions such as lodges and councils,¹ which, through navigation charts, trader's manuals and currency rates of conversion provided the merchants with information for their business activities.² This information network,

¹ As for instance the Venetian *Officium de navigantibus* and Genoese *Consilium super factis navigandi et Maris Maioris*.

² The most famous manual is Francesco Balducci Pegolotti, *La pratica della mercatura* ed. Allan Evans. (Cambridge, Mass.: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1936)

as the set of documents of Florentine merchant Francesco Datini from the late fourteenth century shows, helped the merchants and their agents to maximize their profits through an adequate manipulation of the market conditions.³ Last but not least, the region was marked by circulation of widely accepted and convertible currency, which, as exemplified in the case of Bulgaria, (discussed below) radically increased its volume in the course of the observed period.

The study of the range and directions of Italian maritime trade in the Black Sea region, already well asserted in the historiography, demonstrates that networks of Venetian, Genoese, and later Florentine traders ran and dominated this market. Italian merchants controlled the sea-lanes and communications with their ships and with their colonies in the most important ports. They created and ran the information mechanisms and their needs dictated the price formation and currency transactions.

However, since the political development as part of social *superstructure* is directly dependent on the *economic basis*, as announced by Marx, the combination of political polycentrism (decline) and economic growth in the Eastern Balkans was simply beyond the explanatory reach of Marxist theory. Thus, Bulgarian medievalists, due to theoretical impediments and lack of sufficient sources, mechanically employed the reigning opinion among the Byzantinists, considering Italian trade privileges, extracted from the Byzantine government, as a chief factor for undermining the growth (or even substituting the existence) of a local merchant class. The involvement and domination of the Italian merchants in the Black Sea regional trade was considered, therefore, as an evidence of the economical and political decline of the Byzantine socio-economic model. Additionally, this complements quite conveniently the thesis of “underdevelopment” and of “not complete division of labor between the town and

³ J. Heers, “Il commercio nel Mediterraneo alla fine del secolo XIV e nei primi anni del XV” *Archivio Storico Italiano* No 113 (1955), pp. 157-209.

country.” Not recognizing the shift in emphasis of domestic economy - from a land-based state-commanded economy to a public economy of exchange, best illustrated by the increasing economic role of the towns as an arena of nonagricultural production, the reigning historical materialism explained the engagement of Bulgaria in the global political and economic configurations as a political course, which met only the narrow class interests of the political-administrative elite and which only weakened the national integrity and deepened separatist tendencies - metastases of the “late feudalization.”⁴

The participation in international trade gave further impetus to the domestic economic growth. Undoubtedly, the safeguarding of the economic interests of the Italian maritime city-states influenced intensely regional politics and the market initiative of the political class in both Byzantium and Bulgaria in the course of the fourteenth century. However, the international trade run by the Italians did not engender either the market-oriented economy or the emergence of a native merchant class. What becomes apparent from the following analysis is that the entrance of Bulgarian lands into international trade to be a natural realization of the long local process of transformation of the land-based economy into an economy of exchange that started towards the end of the twelfth century. Well before the entrance of the Black Sea Region into the transcontinental trade system, the dominance of market in economy already shaped the regional politics. To such a degree the political struggles in the Balkans, especially between Byzantium and Bulgaria, were motivated by the desire of their leadership to capture trade centers for the purpose of extending their control over merchants and over routes of inland and maritime trade that it may safely be said that trade became a chief factor in regional policymaking.

⁴ See for instance Al. Burmov, “Istoria na Bulgaria po Vremeto na Shishmanovci” [History of Bulgaria during the epoch of the Shishmans] *Godishnik na Sofiiska Universitet*, Sofia No-1-2 (1947),pp. 1-27; N.S. Derzhavin, *Istoria Bolgarii* Vol.1-3 (Moscow: AN SSSR, 1947).

What is only vaguely detectable through the sources, but is clearly denoted by the archaeological coin evidence, is that Italian trade activity in the Balkan regional economies did not undermine the growth of the local merchant class either. Quite the opposite, it promoted and complemented the development of a market-oriented economy. It gave further impetus to the development of regional network of market centers and to the growth of an unrelated to agriculture and the state offices native merchant class, recognized and protected by the local authority. What this chapter demonstrates is that the great river of the international maritime trade that flew towards Italy and Western Europe was fed in the regional trade outposts by the network of local tributaries, run by local traders. So powerful became this social class that towards the end of the fourteenth century it matched and even exceeded the resources of the state. Not surprisingly, the urban centers where this merchant class was concentrated outlived their state.

Trade and Politics in Late Medieval Bulgaria

The commercial overtones in the political struggles in the Balkans that dominated the fourteenth century regional politics had their antecedents as early as 894, when a “trade war” between Byzantine Empire and Bulgaria triggered the imperial ambitions of Symeon (893-927) and Bulgarian political hegemony in the southeastern Europe. The peace of the eleventh and twelfth centuries brought by the Byzantine rule spread over the entire Balkans contributed to the gradual economic and demographic growth, which, towards the second half of the twelfth century, resulted in a change of the towns’ function and nature from defensive strongholds and seats of state and ecclesiastic authority into centers of production and trade with a more definitively urban way of life. The prospects of wealth that arose from the new productive and trade function of the towns became a gravitational force, not only for the common population, but also for the local powerful figures competing for the provincial revenues.

The death of Kaloyan in 1207 fueled the centrifugal political forces in Bulgaria. Alexius Slav, a holder of an appanage centered at the Rhodopes Mountains' stronghold of Tsepena and nephew of Asen, Peter and Kaloyan, refused to pledge allegiance to the new ruler Boril and seceded his lands from the ruler in Turnovo. Shortly after that, in 1208, he secured his independence by marrying the daughter of the Latin Emperor, Henry of Flanders.⁵ Maneuvering between Turnovo, Constantinople, and the rising despotate of Epirus, Alexius soon extended his lands and moved his capital from the small upland stronghold of Tsepena, controlling the mountain route between the Upper Thracian Plain and the Valley of Strymon, to Melnik, a local distributive trade center, located at the crossroads of much more important trade routes. One came from Thessalonike and headed northward, through Velbuzhd, Niš, and Belgrade to Hungary and Central Europe; the other, parallel to the old *Via Egnatia*, connected Constantinople and the Aegean Sea coast to Dubrovnik and Kotor through Strumitsa, Prosek, Skopje, and Prizren. The surviving documents are not very instructive for the Slav's motives for transferring his residence. It is certain, however, that the hinterland of Melnik was not favorable to any large-scale agricultural development. Nor did Melnik offer the high level of security of Tsepena. The poor sand soils of Melnik's hinterland are suitable only for vineyards, for which, indeed, the region of Melnik was most famous. Yet, this cannot account for Alexius Slav's choice of a new capital. Some light on the problem, however, is shed by the analysis of coins, discovered in the town, according to which the time of moving the Slav's residency coincided with the period marked with the most radical increase of money circulation in the medieval development of Melnik. The reason for this radical increase, undoubtedly, should be sought in the rise of the town as an inland trade center for the goods coming from Thessalonike, resulting

⁵ Henri de Vallenciennes, *Historie de l'empereur Henri de Constantinople* (Paris : Paul Geuthner, 1948), pp. 52-55.

in a distinctive accumulation of wealth in the town.⁶ Confirmation for the trade transactions between Melnik and Thessalonike is hard to document in the written sources, although examples are not missing. In 1270's, Carentano Zane, a Venetian consul in Thessalonike, was regularly selling textile in Melnik through his trade agent.⁷ The most secure evidence for the growth of commerce in Melnik and its ties with Thessalonikean market comes from the quantitative analysis of the coin finds in Melnik, 1185-1261, according to which the overwhelming majority of the money circulating in the town were the product of the Thessalonikean mint.⁸ The flux of money and goods coming from Thessalonike, through the commercial exchange, is quite evident also in the accumulation of wealth in the town illustrated by the large-scale establishment of ecclesiastic foundations at that time in Melnik⁹ and of wealthy urban dwellings in its suburbs, exemplified by the *Boyar's House* and its analogs in the quarter of St. Marina.¹⁰ The continuous prosperity of the town in the course of the thirteenth century was recognized officially through the elevation of Melnik into the rank of bishopric around 1261 and into a metropolitan center towards the end of that same century.

Parallel to the Slav's acquisition of Melnik, the same process could be observed in Prosek, a town located westward from Melnik and controlling both the inland route paralleling *Via Egnatia* and the route going northward from Thessalonike, along the Vardar Valley, towards

⁶ See Template I

⁷ David Jacoby, "Foreigners and the Urban Economy in Thessalonike ca-1150- ca 1450." Symposium on Late Byzantine Thessalonike, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* No 57 (2004), pp. 85-132.

⁸ VI. Penchev, "Moneti" [Coins] in *Melnik, Gradat v Podnojiето na Slavovata Krepost* [Melnik, the town at the foot of Slav's fortress] ed. by Violeta Nesheva (Sofia: BAN, 1989) pp. 209- 230.

⁹ Most of the Melnik's churches as well as the monastery of the Holy Mother of God, (for which establishment and granting with tax exemptions, a charter issued by Alexius Slav survived), are dated to the first half of the thirteenth century.

¹⁰ See previous chapter.

Skopje, Belgrade, and Hungary. In the years following Kaloyan's death, another nephew of Asen, Peter and Kaloyan, a man named Strez, established an independent political unit, centered on Prosek. Again, as in the case of Melnik, the time of Strez' independence thoroughly coincides, as demonstrated by the coin evidence, with the peak in coin circulation in Prosek.¹¹

The competition of provincial powerful figures for securing their revenues through establishing control on trade routes and market centers is quite detectable during the first half of the thirteenth century, but it still was not the dominant tone in regional politics. It was sporadic in character, limited in scope and it displayed secondary to other factors concern, such as dynastic issues and personal rivalries, mixed with certain ethnic awareness. Yet with the progress of the century, commercial nuances became more and more distinctive in Bulgarian foreign policy. In 1253, a military and trade treaty was concluded between the Bulgarian emperor Michael II Asen (1246-1256) and the Prince of Dubrovnik, Georgius Marselius, and 26 members of the City Council.¹² The treaty was concluded in the spirit of already established friendly commercial relations between the two sides, manifested in the *Dubrovnik Charter of Ivan II Asen*.¹³ However, the treaty of 1253 has two essentially new features. For the first time we notice the concern of the Bulgarian central power for the rights and privileges of a national merchant class and also for the first time we learn about trade and politics being closely interrelated. The document has two parts, military and commercial, both directed against the Serbian King Stefan I Uroš. Besides the mutual declarations for protecting merchant's property, both sides agreed on re-distributing the gains of any campaign against Serbia. In case of military success, thus, the

¹¹ I. Mukulčik *Srednovekovni Gradovi i Tvurdini vo Makedonia* [Medieval towns and fortresses in Macedonia] (Skopje: Makedonska akademija na naukite i umetnostite, 1996), pp. 230-237

¹² G. A. Ilinskii, *Gramoty Bolgarskih Tsarei* [Charters of the Bulgarian emperors] (Moscow: Sinodal'naia tipografii, 1911).pp. 155-159.

¹³ Ibid.pp. 13-14.

city of Dubrovnik claimed only its previously owned lands, now occupied by Uroš, and lavishly conceded the rest of Serbian lands to the Bulgarians. In addition, the Ragusans assumed an obligation to donate half of their profits derived from the salt trade within the Serbian lands to the Bulgarian emperor. Finally, after repeating the privileges of the Ragusan merchants granted by Ivan II Asen, the treaty pronounced equivalent rights for the Bulgarian merchants in the city of Dubrovnik.

Immediately, after the signing the document, it was set into action. The Bulgarian army entered deeply in the Serbian lands, reaching Belo Pole on the Lim River.¹⁴ As suggested by the reaction of Radoslav (1249-1255), Prince of Zahumlje, the Bulgarian-Ragusan coalition seems to have had some success- in the next year, Radoslav threw off the suzerainty of Hungary and joined the Bulgarian-Ragusan coalition.¹⁵ Due to the Bulgarian internal turmoil that started after the death of Michael II Asen, the military alliance between Bulgaria and Dubrovnik appeared to be short-lived and fruitless. However, their commercial ties remained narrow and mutually beneficial in the course of the next century. The Ragusans continued to play an important role in the fourteenth century Bulgarian trade, when their colonies of merchants were established in Turnovo and Bdin and Bulgarian merchants, and even Bulgarian rulers themselves, became actors on the Ragusan market.¹⁶

More unambiguous influence of trade on Bulgarian politics, however, is evident after the reestablishment of the Byzantine power in Constantinople in 1261, which reintroduced the strong traditional Byzantine interest in the Black Sea coastal towns. In order to secure the grain supply

¹⁴ V. Zlatarski, "Iuzhna Bulgaria sled Smartta na Tsar Ivan Asen II i Reginskia Mir" [Southern Bulgaria after Ivan II Asen and Peace of Regina] *Godishnik na Narodnata Biblioteka v Plovdiv* (1927).pp. 327-341.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ *Libri Reformationum, III, Monumenta Ragusina* (Zagreb: Sumptibus Academiae Scientiarum et Artium, 1895).pp. 156-157.

of the capital, the first concern of the Palaiologean government became to gain control over the trade outposts in the western littoral of the Black Sea, then still under Bulgarian rule. The conflict that arose over the control of the southwestern Black Sea coast and its main trade centers Mesembria, Agathopolis, and Sozopolis, became thus a key factor for regulating the Bulgarian-Byzantine relations until the very end of the Bulgarian state. So important was the region around Mesembria for the Bulgarian tsars that it displaced to a certain degree the traditional focus on Macedonia as a territory of natural expansion, a policy, the tradition of which could be traced as far back as the reign of Krum (802-814). To a certain extent, it signals also that the ethnic awareness that dominated Bulgarian politics during and after the wars for restoration of Bulgarian state, 1185-1205, ceased to be a source for a rational policymaking. Instead, the policymaking became deeply commercially motivated. It shifted its focus towards the Black Sea towns, dominated by Greeks.

In the spring of 1263, a Byzantine army led by Michael Glabas Tarchaniotes advanced towards Mesembria, where a pretender for the Bulgarian throne, Mitso Asen, was besieged by the legitimate Bulgarian Tsar, Constantine Asen. After capturing the towns of Agathopolis, Sozopolis, Debelt, Rusokastron, and Anchialos, Tarchaniotes received the power over Mesembria from Mitso Asen, who, in exchange, was granted a governorship in Asia Minor.¹⁷

As it seems from the following development, Constantine Asen did not accept the loss of Mesembria and the other Black Sea towns. In the early 1265, he tried to restore the status quo by using the authority of his nominal overlords, the Mongols.¹⁸ He joined the punitive action of

¹⁷ H. Loparev, "Vizantiiskii Poet Manuel Phill. K Istorii Bolgarii v XIII-XIV veke" [The Byzantine poet Manuel Phill. About the history of Bulgaria in 13th-14th centuries] *SPb*, 1891.p. 52-55; Georgius Pavhymeres, *De Michaele et Andronico Palaeologis* ed. Immanuel Bekker, *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*, (Bonn: Ed, Weber, 1835),p.350.

¹⁸ At this time, Bulgaria was nominally under the dominion of the Mongols

Berke Khan for freeing the Seljuk Sultan Izzedin, kept as a hostage by the Byzantines. However, although the Mongols' action did not bring direct results to Constantine, his demonstrative willingness to join and help the Mongols in their anti-Byzantine campaign alarmed the Byzantines and revitalized his ambitions. In response to the threat posed by the Bulgarian-Mongol alliance, Michael VIII launched a diplomatic gambit to alienate the Bulgarians and the Mongols from each other. In order to calm the grievances of the Bulgarian ruler, in 1268, Michael VIII offered his niece, Maria to the recently widowed Constantine, with the disputed Black Sea towns as a dowry. However, soon the changes of the geopolitical configurations made the return of the Black Sea towns unnecessary. The Genoese merchants, concerned with safeguarding their commerce in the northern Black Sea littoral, already convinced the emperor to alter his policy towards the Golden Horde. The new course of Byzantine-Golden Horde relations was already set in motion and, in 1273, it was cemented by the marriage of Nogai, controlling the Western portion of the Golden Horde's territories, with an illegitimate daughter of Michael VIII.¹⁹ Having secured the Mongols' friendship, there was no need anymore to return the Black Sea towns to the Bulgarians. From 1273 onward, the regular Mongol raids drained out the strengths of Bulgaria, which, busy with her own surviving, diverted her focus from the Black Sea coastal towns.

Disappointed, Constantine tried to neutralize the Byzantine diplomatic campaign by securing the help of Charles I of Anjou, the arch-enemy of the newly restored Byzantine Empire.²⁰ Yet the pressure of the Mongols became much more efficient than anything else. In the following years, the Mongols' raids devastated the Bulgarian lands, destabilized the power of

¹⁹ Janet Martin, *Medieval Russia*, (Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 1995) pp. 144

²⁰ V. Zlatarski, *Istoria na Bulgarskata Durjava prez Srednite Vekove* in 3 Vol.[History of the Bulgarian State in the Middle Ages] (Sofia: Durzhavna Pечатnica ,1927- 1940), Vol.3. pp.529-537.

Constantine Asen and provoked the rebellion of Ivaylo, who, in 1277, liquidated the legitimate ruler. The Anti-Byzantine union of French, Bulgarians, Serbs, and Venetians, grouped around Charles I of Anjou collapsed after the revolt of the Sicilian Vespers, which seceded Sicily from the kingdom of Charles and severely shortened his resources. The Black Sea towns remained Byzantine until the turn of the century.

The control over the western Black Sea littoral continued to shape Bulgarian-Byzantine relations in the course of the fourteenth century. One of the first steps of the new Bulgarian emperor, Theodore Svetoslav (1300-1321), was directed towards the Black Sea towns, which, due to the Byzantine engagement with the Catalans of Roger de Flor, were annexed easily with the agreement of their citizens to the Bulgarian realm in the early summer of 1304. Aware of the growing importance of the western Black Sea littoral for the supply of Constantinople in the context of the Ottoman advance into Asia Minor, both Byzantines and Bulgarians continued to launch several campaigns, each changing the power over the region in the following two years. However, the Byzantine-Bulgarian conflict ended with a peace treaty in 1307, which recognized the Bulgarian suzerainty over the mentioned area after some economic pressure enforced by Svetoslav. In the winter of 1306-7, due to the Italian-Mongol conflict that blocked the grain export from Caffa and Tana, Constantinople fell in a dire need for grain. Only after the Byzantines agreed to Svetoslav's political demands did he allow grain to be shipped from Mesembria and Anchialos to Constantinople.²¹ Soon after the securing of the Black Sea towns and the access of Bulgarian grain to the Constantinopolitan market, Svetoslav introduced in Bulgaria the silver coinage, more appropriate for the purpose of long distance trade in the Mediterranean trade system.

²¹ A. Laiou, "The provisioning of Constantinople during the winter 1306-7." *Byzantion* No 37 (1967), pp. 91-113

For the rest of the fourteenth century these towns continued to alternate between Bulgarian and Byzantine suzerainty. After the death of Svetoslav's successor George II Terter in 1322, the towns of the southwestern Black Sea littoral threw off Bulgarian rule and joined the empire of Andronicus II Palaeologos. The Bulgarian-Byzantine treaty of 1324 divided these towns between both sides. The Bulgarians received Mesembria, Anchialos, Aetos, Diampolis, and Rusokastron; and, under the Byzantine power – Sozopolis, Agathopolis, and Vukelon. This division was confirmed in the treaty of 1328, but after the Bulgarian defeat by the Serbs in 1330, again, all of the mentioned towns came back under the Byzantine rule. Again, the towns of the Black Sea littoral fell under Bulgarian suzerainty in 1332. In 1366, they were separated from Bulgaria by Amadeus VI of Savoy and turned over to the Byzantines, who ruled them until the fall of the empire.

The intensified presence of Genoese and Venetian merchants in the Black Sea, marked by constant efforts to safeguard their own economic power, internationalized the Bulgarian-Byzantine rivalry over the western Black Sea littoral. The collapse of the crusading states shortly after the restoration of Byzantine power in Constantinople made the Black Sea region a chief connecting link between the western and eastern ends of the intercontinental trading network of Venice and Genoa. The Genoese trade privileges secured by the treaty of Nymphaion soon resulted in their complete dominance in the Black Sea region, at least during the reign of the first two Palaiologoi. The Venetians, having become *personae non gratae* in Constantinople and in the Straits after 1261, tried to find a path to recover their supremacy in the East, through alliances with various western pretenders to the Byzantine throne - with Charles I of Anjou, in 1281, and with Charles of Valois, in 1306. Although Venetian trade in the Black Sea was

restored after the treaty of 1302, the Genoese hegemony in the Black Sea maritime trade remained undisputed, at least until the 1320's.

Unsurprisingly, the Genoese closer ties with Byzantium foreordained Venice as a natural Bulgarian ally in the existing bipolar power structure. However, the pressure of Bulgarian administration on Genoese merchants in Bulgarian trade outposts in 1312-14, as registered by the surviving Genoese sources, was hardly motivated by the existing political configurations, but seems to be connected to the Byzantine embargo on Bulgarian grain exports to Constantinople. In March 1315, Bernabos de Monyardino was sent as a Genoese envoy to plead before Theodore Svetoslav in order to obtain compensations for the damages caused to Genoese merchants by "the emperor of Zagora and his subjects."²² The Bulgarian reply to the Genoese demands was protracted for more than a year and, finally, demonstratively ignored. The Genoese responded with a decree banning trade with Bulgaria.²³

In his efforts to evade the Byzantine grain-trade embargo, Theodore Svetoslav, most likely, resorted to the use of Genoese privileged status as the only possible way for securing the appearance of the Bulgarian grain in the most convenient and profitable regional market, Constantinople. Therefore, the source of Bulgarian-Genoese tension should be sought, eventually, in the eventual frictions that arose around the role of the Genoese as middlemen for the sale of Bulgarian grain in Constantinople. The following reduction of the total Genoese ban of trade with Bulgaria (Zagora) in the next year, to the level of official Byzantine demands,

²² V. Giuzelev, "Tri Reshenia na Genuezkia Savet za Hazaria ot 22 mart, 1316" [Three decrees of the Genoese Council for Gazaria (Khazaria) of March 22, 1316] in his *Ocherki varhu Istoriata na Bulgarskiat Severoiztok i Chernomorieto XII- XV v* [Essays on history of Bulgarian Northeast and Black Sea coast, 12th -15th centuries] (Sofia: Borina, 1995) pp. 103-108

²³ Ibid.

affecting only the sale of the Bulgarian grain in Constantinople,²⁴ and the silence of the sources for continuing abuses of Genoese merchants in Bulgaria after 1316, indicate that the solution to the problem satisfying both Bulgarian and Genoese sides had been achieved.²⁵

Under the demands of Byzantine government, the same measure towards Bulgarian grain export in Constantinople was applied by the Venetians, which, alarmed by the Ottoman threat in Asia Minor and Aegean Archipelago, radically changed their stand towards Byzantium. The turn in the Venetian-Byzantine relations immediately affected Bulgarian relations with Venice. In 1320, the Venetian *bailo* in Constantinople reported to the Senate of Venice that the Venetian merchants have been ordered by the emperor not to sell grain from Mesembria and Anchialos in Constantinople.²⁶ The instant impact of this ban on Bulgarian-Venetian relations is not attainable through the existing sources, perhaps because the control over the southwestern Black Sea towns shifted too often between Bulgaria and Byzantium in the following decade. However, more frequent Venetian complaints started coming from Bulgaria in the 1340's, when the Black Sea towns came again under Bulgarian rule. In 1343, two noble Venetians, Niccoló Pisani²⁷ and Lorenzo Foskarini, suffered a significant loss of goods (estimated at 1000 and 4000 hyperpyra,

²⁴ The explicit mentioning in Genoese *Consilium gubernatorum* decree of February 14, 1317, that grain from Bulgaria could be sold anywhere else besides Constantinople in L. T. Belgrano, "Prima serie di documenti riguardanti la colonia di Pera," *Atti della Società ligura di storia patria* Vol.XIII (1884) pp. 116-123 ; also in V. Giuzelev, "Tri Reshenia na Genuezkia Savet za Hazaria ot 22 mart, 1316"

²⁵ V. Giuzelev, *Ocherki varhu Istoriata na Bulgarskiat Severoiztok i Chernomoriето*. Appendix

²⁶ G. M. Thomas and R. Predeli, *Diplomatarium Veneto-levantinum sive acta diplomata res venetas, graecas atque levantis illustrantia* Vol Ia. (1300-1350) (Venice, 1880), p. 165 ; V. Gjuzelev, "Venecia i Genua v Politicheskata i Stopanska Istoria na Bulgarskoto Chernomorie, prez XIV- sredata na XV vek v Svetlinata na Novi Izvori" [Venice and Genoa in the political and economic history of Bulgarian Black Sea coast, 14th - mid-15th centuries in the light of new documents] in *Srednovekovna Bulgaria v Svetlinata na Novi Izvori* (Sofia, 1986).pp. 156-242.

²⁷ Niccolo Pisani was the Venetian military commander in the Venetian-Genoese War of 1350-52

respectively), confiscated at the orders of the Bulgarian emperor Ivan Alexander.²⁸ Another case was registered in the same year of 1343, involving the Venetian noble Orsato Bonisena and others suffering certain losses from the administration of Ivan Alexander.²⁹ The multiple Venetian claims for compensations, just like those of Genoese of 1315-17, were merely disregarded. However, the Venetian response differed from that of the Genoese. An internal compensatory tax of 0.5% was levied on the goods of the merchants who *claimed* to be Venetians and who were coming from Bulgaria for reimbursing the merchants suffering losses there.³⁰

The Genoese scenario of 1314-16 was applied again, this time upon the Venetians. By upsetting the business interests of important Venetian figures in Bulgaria, a certain mitigation of the Venetian position regarding some vital Bulgarian problems was intended. This had to do with supposedly, the presence of the Bulgarian grain at Constantinopolitan market. It seems that this scenario worked well again and the problem was solved in a way satisfactory for both sides. In 1362, a Venetian notarial act in Constantinople registered a certain Manol, born in Constantinople and a former *protovestiarius* of the Bulgarian emperor, who, as a merchant delivering wheat in Constantinople from Mesembria, presented himself as a Venetian instead of Greek or Bulgarian.³¹ Even though such cases are extremely rarely recorded, there is a good reason to believe that the granting of Venetian or Genoese status was far more frequent than it was reflected in the surviving documentation. Granting of Venetian status to foreigners was a

²⁸ Archivio di Stato di Venezia – Senato, Delliberazioni miste XXI record 49; Also as Bulgaro-Venecianski Dokumenti [Bulgarian-Venetian documents] in *Hristomatia po Istoria na Bulgaria* [Chrestomathy of Bulgarian history] ed by V. Giuzelev and P. Petrov Vol. II (Sofia: Nauka i Izkustvo, 1978), pp 243-44.

²⁹ *Hristomatia po Istoria na Bulgaria*, pp 243-44.

³⁰ Archivio di Stato di Venezia – Senato, Delliberazioni miste XXI record 49.

³¹ G. M. Thomas and R. Predelli, *Diplomatarium Veneto-levantinum sive acta diplomata res venetas, graecas atque levantis illustrantia* Vol Ia. (1300-1350) (Venice: Sumptibus societatis, 1880) p. 84

device widely employed by Venetian politics in the eastern Mediterranean at that time.³² Various Byzantine emperors, Andronicus II, John VI, John V complained bitterly about the widespread practice of granting Venetian or Genoese status.³³ It should be noticed also that according to the Venetian response to Bulgarian abuses – the levy of 0.5% tax on all merchants coming from Bulgarian Black Sea coast and *claiming* Venetian status – it often was simply a matter of some money arrangement.

Yet although the widespread practice of granting privileged Venetian or Genoese trade status, as it is witnessed by the notary records of Antonio di Ponzò from Chilia in 1360-61, there was a considerable number of petty merchants, from Mesembria, Sozopolis, Adrianople, Mavrokastro(n), and elsewhere that ran their business without resorting to privileged status.³⁴ Some of them made exchange contracts with Italians, either for borrowing money or for hiring a ship. An artisan from Trebizond made a contract with a Genoese from Pera with profit estimated at 22.3 hyperpyra. A Greek monk from the monastery of St. Atanasia was a ship owner, who borrowed money from two Italians to prepare his vessel for sail.³⁵ Similar is the case of a certain Kaloyan from Mesembria (associated by most historians with the governor of Mesembria at the same time), who purchased in Chilia 157 *modioi* of wheat (in about 38, 600 kg), which needed to be transported through the Genoese ship-owner Antonio de Finalle “either to Mesembria or to Sozopolis or Agathopolis.”³⁶ Others operated business by establishing *synthrophiai*

³² See the detailed analysis about this practice in D. Jacoby, "The Byzantine Outsider in Trade (c. 900-c. 1350)," in D. Smythe, *Strangers to Themselves* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 135-37.

³³ G. M. Thomas and R. Predelli, *Diplomatarium Veneto-levantinum sive acta diplomata res venetas, graecas atque levantis illustrantia* Vol II. (1351-1454) (Venice: Sumptibus societatis, 1880-89) No 49.

³⁴ G. Pistarino, *Notai genovesi in Oltremare. Atti rogati a Chilia da Antonio di Ponzó* (1360-61) (Bordighera: Istituto internazionale di studi liguri, 1971), nos. 72,80,86; A. Laiou, “Byzantine Economy in Mediterranean Trade System” in A. Laiou, *Gender, Society and Economic Life in Byzantium* (Norfolk: Variorum, 1992).pp. 177-222.

³⁵ A. Laiou, “Byzantine Economy in Mediterranean Trade System.”

³⁶ G. Pistarino, *Notai genovesi in Oltremare: Atti rogati a Chilia da Antonio di Ponzó*, 1360–61, pp. 62-3.

(shareholding organizations) with or without Italian participation. Although the surviving documents, especially those concerning merchants from the Bulgarian lands, are too few to permit some precise estimation of the role of the local merchants in the Eastern Mediterranean trade, the general picture is quite distinct. The great river of the international maritime trade that flew towards Italy and Western Europe was fed in the regional trade outposts by the tributaries, run by local traders and controlled by local powers. These tributaries, in turn, were fed by the network of small streams of inland trade, carried out by petty local traders or by the local producers themselves. The records of this local stream network, understandably, are extremely rare but not nonexistent. The accounting book of the Genoese military commander of December 1351 registered, for instance, some of these small-scale trade activities with the local population of Mesembria, Emona, and Varna, which at this point were able, perhaps, to bypass the usual middleman - transactions of a cask of wine; of 5.5 *modioi* of wheat; of 69 *modioi* of wheat; of 45 *modioi* of barley.³⁷

The separatist local forces unequivocally followed the direction of these inland streams of trade and were vitally interested in controlling the influx points with the current of international trade. Thus, the economic potential of the market of Chilia and its growing importance for regional and international trade became irresistible lure to the political ambitions of despot Dobrotitza.³⁸ The quantity of wheat delivered in Genoa from Licostomo(Chilia) from 1358 to

³⁷ V. Giuzelev, "Iz Smetkovodnata Kniga na Genoezkata Voenna Sluzhba za 1351-52" [Excerpts from the accounting book of Genoese Military commanding, 1351-52] in his *Ocherki varhu Istoriata na Bulgarskiat Severoiztok i Chernomoriето XII- XV v* [Essays on history of the Bulgarian Northeast and Black Sea coast, 12th -15th centuries] (Sofia: Borina, 1995). Appendix No 4.

³⁸After him was named the *Despotate of Dobrudja*, a semi-independent political unit that arose in 1360's from the appanage given by the Bulgarian emperor to Terter's dynasty.

1360 increased, respectively, from 12, 098 mini (992, 036 kg) to 15, 901 mini (1, 303, 882 kg).³⁹

The export of wheat in the notarial records of Antonio di Ponzò in Chilia, from August to October 1360 alone was in the amount of 20, 000 mini (1, 640, 000 kg).⁴⁰ In 1361, Dobrotitza, whose foreign policy was in accordance with his suzerain in Turnovo, seized Chilia from the Genoese. Where the impressive grain surplus of Chilia's hinterland was redirected is not clear from the sources. However, during the period of war between Genoa and Despotate of Dobrudja, 1361-1387, no Genoese export from the western Black Sea littoral is recorded.

The curious cases, mentioned above, in which grain from one region of intensive production and trade, Chilia, is transported to another of the same specialization, the Black Sea coast of Thrace, could be explained, of course, by either Turkish raids in Thrace or, more likely, by some regional price differences resulting in alluring options for re-export. Undoubtedly, the presence in Chilia of merchants from centers renowned for grain production and trade denotes also the complete integration of local entrepreneurs in the Italian financial and commercial system. But above all, however, this fact signals the formation of a professional entrepreneurship of a modest size, a middle merchant class, not connected to the state, which had only weak ties to local agriculture and landholding and whose drive for maximizing the profits went well outside their immediate area. As it seems from the surviving Ottoman documents, this class not only survived the demise of the local Balkan states, but also it continued to play an active role in the regional economy, at least in the first decades of the Ottoman rule in the Balkans. In 1455, at the end of an anarchy period that lasted more than fifty years, individuals from Philipopolis and Adrianople, of Christian and Jewish origin, invested in buying off the Ottoman imperial taxes on

³⁹ V. Gjuzelev, "Du commerce génois dans les terres bulgares durant le XIVe siècle," *Bulgarian Historical Review* (1979), pp. 36-58.

⁴⁰ G. Pistarino, *Notai genovesi in Oltremare*, pp. 62-3.

rice in Thrace with the impressive sums of 2-3 million *akçes*.⁴¹ Similarly, in 1476, some twenty years after the fall of Constantinople, a group of Greeks merchants returned in the city to compete for the right of collecting the Ottoman taxes.⁴² It is beyond any doubt, that the accumulation of such wealth started in the pre-Ottoman period as a result of business activities, such as mentioned above.

Unambiguously, the struggle for controlling the local trade outposts was the dominant tone in the Balkans politics, radicalized by the imminent Ottoman threat. The Mongol-Italian conflict of 1344-7 compelled the Venetians to safeguard their economic interest in the western Black Sea coastal towns. In 1346-7, they concluded a treaty with Bulgaria regulating trade, custom-tariffs, and the protection of individual and collective Venetian rights in Bulgaria.⁴³ The import taxes payable by the Venetians in the ports ruled by Ivan Alexander, according to the treaty, were established at 3% and a Venetian consul, located in Varna, was recognized as autonomous authority governing the community of Venetians in Bulgaria with their own courts, residential quarters, and churches.⁴⁴ However, there is no sign of any privileged status of the Venetian traders established by the treaty of 1346-7. The lack of some Genoese hostile response towards the Venetian-Bulgarian treaty also suggests that the established tariffs were analogical to the tariffs imposed on any other traders. Accordingly, in the following Genoese-Venetian war of

⁴¹ Vera Mutafchieva, "Otkupuvaneto na Durjavnite Prihodi v Osmanskata Imperia prez XV-XVII vek i Ravitiето na Parichnite Otnoshenia" [Buying off the imperial revenues in the Ottoman Empire, Fifteenth to Seventeenth centuries and the development of the money circulation] *Istoricheski Pregled*, No 1 (1960).pp. 40-52

⁴² A. Laiou, "Byzantine Economy in Mediterranean Trade System." Addendum.

⁴³ V. Giuzelev, "Kletva i Dogovor na Gospodin Alexander, Tzar na Zagora ili Bulgaria s Venecianskata Sinioria ot 1346 ili Skliuchen prez 1347" [Oath and Treaty of Sir Alexander, Emperor of Zagora or Bulgaria with the Venetian Signoria of 1346 and concluded ion 1347] in *Srednovekovna Bulgaria v Svetlinata na Novi Izvori* [Medieval Bulgaria in the light of new sources] (Sofia: Narodna Prosveta, 1981),pp. 156-182.

⁴⁴ V. Giuzelev, "Kletva i Dogovor na Gospodin Alexander, Tzar na Zagora ili Bulgaria s Venecianskata Sinioria ot 1346 ili Skliuchen prez 1347."

1351-55 and its Byzantine- Genoese prelude in 1348-9, Bulgaria took clearly a neutral position, attempting to maintain good relations with all the parties involved in the conflict. In May 1351, a mutual agreement was achieved between Ivan Alexander and John Cantacuzene directed against Ottoman advance. In November 1351, Genoese admiral Paganino Doria sent a mission to the southwestern Black Sea coastal towns for securing the food supply for the Genoese navy and the friendship of the Bulgarian court.⁴⁵ It seems that Genoese-Bulgarian negotiations were successful. An interesting note in the accounting book of Genoese military commander from December 1351 reveals that a Genoese consul, who had to assist the supply of food for the navy, already resided in Mesembria at the time.⁴⁶ In March 1352, another Genoese envoy with gifts for the Bulgarian emperor was sent to Turnovo. In October 1352, the Venetian admiral Marino Faliero handed to Ivan Alexander in the Danubian trade post of Nicopol a letter from Andrea Dandolo reminding of Bulgarian obligations assumed by the Bulgarian-Venetian treaty of 1346-7.⁴⁷

Political developments of the western Black Sea littoral became even more complicated in 1360's, with the rise of the political and economic role of the family appanage of the Tarters, the Despotate of Dobrudja (Dobrudzha).⁴⁸ In 1340 Dobrotitsa, (after whom the Despotate of Dobrudja was named), together with his brother Theodore, were actively engaged in the Byzantine civil war, siding with Anna of Savoy, while their senior brother Balik held the town of

⁴⁵ V. Giuzelev, "Iz Smetkovodnata Kniga na Genoezkata Voenna Sluzhba za 1351-52" [Excerpts from the accounting book of Genoese Military commanding, 1351-52] in his *Ocherki varhu Istoriata na Bulgarskiat Severoiztok i Chernomoriето XII- XV v* [Essays on history of the Bulgarian Northeast and Black Sea coast, 12th -15th centuries] (Sofia: Borina, 1995). Appendix No 4.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Vittorio Lazarini, "Marino Faliero avanti il dogiado" *Nuovo archivio veneto*, V (1893), pp. 95-197

⁴⁸ For the emergence of Dobrudja Despotate see V. Giuzelev, *Ocherki varhu Istoriata na Bulgarskiat Severoiztok i Chernomoriето XII- XV v*. pp. 9-86.

Karvuna as an appanage from the Bulgarian emperor.⁴⁹ The engagement of Dobrotitsa in the Byzantine turmoil brought him into martial relations with Constantinople that fed his ambitions for independence. In 1359-60, after a series of military failures, Dobrotitsa came to terms with the new emperor Cantacuzene, left Thrace, and assumed the power in Karvuna from his deceased brother. Immediately, he entered a long period of war with Genoa over the control of the Bulgarian towns in the Danube Delta. In 1366, Dobrotitsa was involved in the complex military-diplomatic stalemate engendered by the annexation of the Bdin appanage by Hungary, the blockade of John V Palaeologos in Bdin, and the following seizure of the Bulgarian southern Black Sea towns by Amadeus VI of Savoy. The conflict started in 1364 as an open war between Bulgaria and Byzantium, again over the control of the Black Sea towns of Mesembria and Anchialos. Dobrotitsa's intercession in this political gambit resulted in the integration (perhaps, conceded by Ivan Alexander) of the important town of Varna into his Despotate.

The war between Dobrotitsa and Genoa continued until 1387, when the Genoese diplomacy adopted a more flexible line for safeguarding Genoese economic interests through settling the conflicts with the Despotate of Dobrudja, the Golden Horde, and the Ottomans. On the other hand, Dobrotitsa's death in 1385 already opened the way for a peace and the treaty was concluded in May 1387 with his successor Ivanko. The structure of the treaty is similar to that of the Bulgarian-Venetian pact of 1346-7. Both sides agreed to mutual guaranteeing the lives and properties of the subjects of the other party, custom tariffs were arranged as low as 1%, and a Genoese consul governing the community of the Genoese on the territory of the Dobrudja

⁴⁹ John Cantacuzene, *Eximperatoris historiarum libri quattuor* Vol. 1-3 ed. by L. Schopen (Bonnae: Ed. Weber, 1828-1832) Vol. II, p.584-5.

Despotate was established in Varna.⁵⁰ All of these confirmed the Genoese special status in Dobrudja to have separate courts, churches and places of residence and, last but not least, separate measures and weights. A special clause in the treaty denoted that exports of grain “in times of hunger” would be a matter of special permission by Ivanko.⁵¹ However, two points - the lack of reciprocal clauses for the traders, subjects of Ivanko; and the lowest possible tariffs established by the treaty – suggest that Ivanko did not have much room for maneuvering, but wanted to achieve peace with the Genoese as soon as possible, perhaps, in order to use them as an intermediary for deflecting the Ottoman threat. To some degree, he succeeded. The final Ottoman blow to the Dobrudja Despotate was postponed by about a decade, until the battle of Nicopol, in 1396. On the other hand, the provisioning of the local ruler’s veto for exporting grain denotes certain equality of the both parties. It seems that this clause was relevant rather to the analogical restrictions imposed by the Byzantine emperor in Constantinople on the Venetian and Genoese export of grain in times of crisis than to the critical situation arising from the Ottoman advance.⁵² It marks one of the last attempts of a local political power to function as a regulator of the market, an intrinsic feature not only of the Byzantine social model but also of the pre-capitalist economy in general.

After the loss of the Black Sea coastal towns in the late 1360’s, the power in Turnovo sank in economic crisis and became an easy prey to the Ottoman offensive. Shortly after the death of Ivan Alexander in 1371, and the tributary dependence imposed by the Ottomans on his

⁵⁰ V. Giuzelev, *Ocherki varhu Istoriata na Bulgarskiat Severoiztok i Chernomoriето XII- XV v.* Appendix 5. It is not known, however, what happened with the earlier Venetian consul in Varna, authorized by the Bulgarian-Venetian treaty of 1346-7. Most likely, his residence was moved to the capital Turnovo.

⁵¹ V. Giuzelev, *Ocherki varhu Istoriata.* Appendix 5

⁵² For the similar restrictions on grain export in times of crisis see A. Laiou, “Byzantine Economy in Mediterranean Trade System” in A. Laiou, *Gender, Society and Economic Life in Byzantium* (Norfolk: Variorum, 1992).pp. 177-222.

successor, Ivan Shishman, the holder of the western Bulgarian appanage of Bdin, Sratsimir severed his ties to Turnovo and declared himself an emperor. Unfortunately, the insufficient archaeological attention on the towns of the Bdin Principality obstructs some clear understanding of the international trade links of this region. However, some idea of the economic resources of Sratsimir's appanage emerges from the 1308 anonymous description of Bdin and its region, according to which, the land was rich in silver, iron, silk, wax, and salt.⁵³ Obviously, this was the main range of commodities for Bdin's commercial activities with Dubrovnik, Hungary, Serbia, and the Walachian principalities that formed the economic backbone of Sratsimir's political independence. In 1381, the secession attained its complete character. The Bdin bishopric switched its allegiance from the Patriarch of Turnovo to the Patriarch of Constantinople. Similarly, in the east, the Dobrudja Despotate also articulated its complete independence from Turnovo, manifested by its peace treaty with Genoa in 1387. Although coins issued by Ivan Shishman and found in Shumen, Provat-Ovetch, and Varna indicate that the link of Turnovian Bulgaria with the Black Sea coast was not completely blocked, the loss of revenues from tariffs and port taxes and, above all, the loss of direct access to the international market, combined with the high tribute now paid to the Ottomans, seriously reduced the Bulgarian revenues. In this, as well as in the eventual taxes imposed by the Despotate of Dobrudja and by the Despotate of Zagora,⁵⁴ should be sought the reasons for the rise of Nicopol on the Danube as a main trade outpost of Turnovian Bulgaria and last residence of the Bulgarian ruler. Quite naively, Bulgarian historians for a long time considered the secession of the Bdin appanage with its silver mines as a chief cause for the debasement of the silver coinage and the obvious

⁵³ *Descriptio Europae Orientalis*, ed. by O. Gorka (Krakow: Sumptibus Academiae Litterarum, 1916), pp. 37-38;

⁵⁴ After the capture of Mesembria and Anchialos in 1366 by Amadeus VI of Savoy, they were returned to John V Palaeologos. On his turn, John V formed an appanage "Zagora," at the region around Mesembria and gave it to his son Michael Palaeologos.

economic crisis in Bulgaria.⁵⁵ Yet, as it seems, it was the loss of the Black Sea coastal towns through which Bulgaria participated in the international Mediterranean market and from where the main flux of silver was coming. Right after the loss of Mesembria and Anchialos in the crisis of 1366-69, the Mongols - the usual mercenary corpus employed in the Bulgarian army, which terrified the Ottoman invaders and built up Ivan Alexander's confidence - disappeared from the battlefields in Thrace. They would appear again, however, towards the very end of the century, this time as Ottomans' allies. The crisis had its precise expression in the radical debasement of the Bulgarian silver coinage after 1371, as much as four times less than the silver coins of 1332-71.⁵⁶ Unsurprisingly, after the fall of Turnovo in 1393 to the Ottomans, the last residence of the Bulgarian ruler became the Danube trade post of Nicopol. Accordingly, in order to cut off the flux of goods and money from and to Nicopol, the Ottomans strategically directed their offensive along the line of Shumen-Dorostorum (Dristar; Silistra). Thus, both the inland and river routes from Nicopol towards the Black Sea coast were blocked. No long after that, in 1396, Turnovian Bulgaria came to an end.

What emerges clearly from the outline above is that the drive for controlling trade activities, market institutions, and infrastructure by the local powers progressively became the dominant attitude in thirteenth to fourteenth century's Balkan politics. Far more importantly, this outcome signals the existence of a group of trade actors, of a merchant class, recognized and protected by the local authority, which actively interacted with the foreign traders and ran the local network of everyday market activities. However, the complete decoding of commercial overtones in Bulgarian foreign policy necessitates an estimation of the range and scope of these

⁵⁵ See for instance V. Penchev and J. Yurukova, *Bulgarsiki Srednovekovni Moneti i Pechati* [Bulgarian medieval coins and seals] (Sofia: Bulgarski Hudozhnik, 1990), p.164

⁵⁶ K. Dochev, *Bulgarski srednovekovni moneti, XIII-XV v.* [Bulgarian medieval coins, XIII-XV centuries] (V. Turnovo: Tsentreks, 2003), pp. 102-116

domestic commercial activities, best assessable through the analysis of the trends in monetary circulation. Undoubtedly, in its turn, the emergence, development and scale of the monetized commercial sector would reveal correspondingly the emergence and development of trade entrepreneurship.

Coin Production and Circulation

Undoubtedly, any economy has certain segments that escape the mechanisms of the market. Whether that segment is 90 percent or 60 percent is not so important, since it is simply a matter of degree. What qualifies the very nature of a certain economy as market oriented or not is whether the larger part of its volume is commercialized, i.e., ruled by the mechanism of supply and demand. On its turn, the commercialization of production, both agricultural and non-agricultural, and the resulting from it drive for maximizing the profits and economic specialization, required “urban” resources⁵⁷ - capital, information, civil institutions, and above all, marketing networks to expand. Certainly, since the degree of commercialization of a pre-industrial economy is always higher than the degree of its monetization, the evaluation of the latter through the trends of coin production and circulation, analyzed further, is one of the most secure indications of the scale and development of the commercial sector, market network, and, consequently, since all of these are concentrated and intensified faculties in the urban centers, for the general trend of urban development in late medieval Bulgaria.

It should be noted here that “urbanization” in its late medieval Byzantine/Bulgarian variant is not the institutionalization of surplus extracting by urban community from its environment by extraeconomic means, as exemplified by the Tuscan towns that stiffened the

⁵⁷ i.e. resources concentrated in the urban zones.

economy of their country.⁵⁸ Rather, because of the more loose and fluctuating social structure of the Byzantine and Bulgarian societies, it was the outcome of a spontaneous and self-regulating process of functional specialization and concentration of institutions.

It should be reminded also that the numerous attempts to estimate the monetized portion of the commercial exchange in the Byzantine Empire ended with assumptions rather than secure or convincing conclusions. By collecting and commenting on numerous transactions, Nicolas Oikonomides and Helen Saradi, for instance, arrived at totally opposed conclusions about the scale of monetization in Byzantium. After analyzing forty examples of monetary exchange - payments, wages, gifts or acts of charity, loans - drawn from saints' lives of the eighth to eleventh centuries, Oikonomides simply arrived at the conclusion that the middle Byzantine economy was monetized "to a high degree."⁵⁹ To the entirely opposite conclusion arrived Saradi in her analysis of about twenty archival documents from the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries that deal with transactions settled partly or wholly in kind.⁶⁰ Recently, the more convincing approaches and more reliable sources, employed by Cécil   Morrisson and Angeliki Laiou, resulted in the conclusion that the national product monetization ratio of the Byzantine economy towards the middle of the twelfth century was about 46%.⁶¹ Unfortunately, the lack of *any* source allowing comparison of the prices and wages between Bulgaria and Byzantium obstructs a similar approximation for the Bulgarian economy. Whether the conclusion for the monetization

⁵⁸ S.R. Epstein, "Town and country: economy and institutions in late medieval Italy" *Economic History Review* Vol.46, issue 3 (1993) pp. 453-477

⁵⁹ N. Oikonomides, "Se poio batmo itan exrimatismeni i mezobyzantini oikonomia" *Rodonia: timi ston M. I. Manusaka* (1993) ,pp. 363- 370.

⁶⁰ H. Saradi, "Evidence of Barter Economy in the Documents of Private Transactions," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* Vol. 88(1995),pp. 405–18

⁶¹ A. Laiou, "The Byzantine Economy: An Overview"; C. Morrisson, "Byzantine Money: Its Production and Circulation" in *The Economic History of Byzantium: from the seventh trough the fifteenth centuries*. Ed in Chief A. Laiou (Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington, D. C, 2002), pp. 1145-1164; 909-966.

ratio of the Byzantine economy could be taken as a starting point for the further economic development in Bulgaria or whether, due to the comparatively later introduction of money in the Bulgarian lands, this level was attained much later is not clear at this point. Indeed, the Bulgarian lands were part of the Byzantine economy for more than 150 years, during which the monetization of this region supposedly was harmonized with the existing level of monetization in Byzantium. But it is also true that in the course of the Byzantine rule, the Bulgarian lands remained somehow marginal and rather a buffer zone than some core Byzantine territory not only in political, but also in economic terms. Therefore, the only available approach revealing whether the Bulgarian economy in the course of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries could be articulated as market oriented or not is through the analysis of the trends in the volume and nature of the monetary production and circulation and to the related commercial sector and local merchant class.

The following analysis is based on the data generated from the previous surveys and catalogues provided by generations of Bulgarian and Western numismatists such as Ivan Jordanov, Nicola Mushmov, Todor Gerasimov, Konstantin Dochev, Vladimir Penchev, Philip Grierson, David Metcalf, Michael Hendy, and Cécil   Morrisson.

The finds of coins of the Second Bulgarian Empire are grouped into two main periods. The first comprises the period from the reestablishment of the Bulgarian state in 1185 to the introduction of a regular Bulgarian coin system by Constantine Tich-Asen, (1257-1277) with two sub-periods divided by the capture of Constantinople by the Fourth Crusade in 1204. Starting from the introduction of Bulgarian national coin system in 1257, the second period continues up to the end of the fourteenth century, when Bulgaria fell under the rule of the Ottomans.

Money Circulation, 1082-1185

The general picture of monetary development in the Bulgarian lands after its final conquest by Basil II in 1018 is illustrated by hoards and single coin finds on the territory of present-day Bulgaria.⁶² The conclusion coming from the collected data is in accordance with the reigning opinion in historiography that with the exception of central Greece, in the lower Danubae region, and some important strongholds in Bulgaria, the monetization of the Balkans progressed only slowly in the course of the eleventh and the first half of the twelfth centuries. It was hindered in the 1030s and 1080s by troubles and incursions, which explains why the anonymous *folles* of class A and B before 1034 are the best represented in the region.⁶³ The single coin finds of the pre-1185 period indicate fairly slow rate of monetization of the economic activities within the urban areas. It is a picture compatible with that of the rural areas, exemplified by the village of Kovachevo and that on the top of the ancient Sevtopolis.⁶⁴ The number of coins found in the territory of present - day Bulgaria consists exclusively of *billon aspron trachea* (a copper-alloy coin of 95-98 percent copper and 5-2 percent silver) and *tetarteron* (100 percent copper coin). The only hyperpyron dated of the period was found in the former Bulgarian capital, Preslav.⁶⁵ Besides Preslav, strategic strongholds, such as Shumen and Vereya (Stara Zagora) as well as important trade posts, such as Isaccea, Mesembria and Karvuna, which had a direct sea connection to Constantinople, display a certain scale of monetization in the pre-1185 period. However, in most of the inland Balkan strongholds, such as

⁶² See Table A-1 in the Appendix.

⁶³ Cécile Morrisson, "Byzantine Money: Its Production and Circulation" in *The Economic History of Byzantium: from the seventh through the fifteenth centuries*. Ed in Chief A. Laiou (Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington, D. C, 2002), pp. 909-966.; Iv. Jordanov, *Moneti i Monetno obryshtenie v Bulgaria 1082-1261* [Coins and coin circulation in Bulgaria 1082-1261] (Sofia: Nauka i Izkustvo, 1984), pp. 103-111

⁶⁴ See Chapter 3, p. 83 ff

⁶⁵ Iv. Jordanov, *Moneti i Monetno obryshtenie v Bulgaria 1082*-pp. 105-107.

Turnovo, Cherven, Kaliakra, and Melnik, coin circulation was nonexistent in the period.

Unsurprisingly, the documentary and architectural evidence for the reign of Manuel Comnenus, as a period of noticeable economic take off is unequivocally supported by the coin data. It is marked by the beginning of coin circulation in Turnovo, Melnik and Provat-Ovetch and by the radical increase of the coin finds in Preslav, Mesembria, Vereya and Karvuna. The reverse trend, noticeable in Isaccea and enforced by the discovery of four hoards there (Isaccea I-IV), as well as by a hoard in Vereya (I) could be explained through analysis of the coin finds in Preslav and Vereya, where exactly the coins of the first billon emission (1143-50) of Manuel I are missing, an indication of the scale and direction of the Cumans' invasion in 1148.⁶⁶ Apparently, Preslav and Vereya quickly recovered for, in few years the increase of coin circulation there achieved impressive acceleration.

The hoards of the period 1082-1185 are rather rare for such a long period with not a few political crises. They are grouped in two main regions, the lower Danube and the region of Philipopolis-Vereya and denote the disturbances caused by Pechenegs in the 1080's - 1090's and by Cumans in 1148-50. The massive gold hoard of Kalipetrovo (4 kg, of which only 36 pieces are present) was concealed due perhaps to the Pechenegs' threat around 1090 and given that gold was the principal monetary imperial instrument, most likely, it was connected with the center of the Byzantine administration located in Dorostorum.⁶⁷ The distribution of the hoards around important Byzantine administrative/military centers suggests that the majority, if not all of the eleventh century hoarded money could be classified as saving hoards, accumulated over a long

⁶⁶ Iv. Jordanov, *Moneti i Monetno obryshenie v Bulgaria 1082-1261*. pp. 105-107

⁶⁷ Only 36 coins of these 4 kg were catalogued. See for details O. Iliescu, "Premières apparitions au Bas-Danube de la monnaie reformée d'Alexis I Comnène" *Etudes Byzantines et post-byzantines* Vol. 1 (1979), pp. 12-13

period. The only exclusion is perhaps Plovdiv I, which composition of billon coins, all issued by Alexius I Comnenus, indicates rather an emergency.

Money Circulation, 1185-1203

The hoards with latest coins struck between 1185-1203 resulted from the wars between Bulgarians and Byzantines and from the insecurity brought in the region by the Third Crusade. Examining this fact, D. Metcalf related the intensive hoarding of the period clearly with the soldiers' payments, not with any abrupt increasing of the market activities in the region.⁶⁸ In support of this claim, comes the fact that the hoards of 1185-1187 were predominantly distributed north from the Balkan Mountains where the most crucial battles took place. In 1187-1195, when the theater of war was transferred in Thrace, the region, accordingly, became a main field of hoarding. In support to the Metcalf's thesis comes also the composition of the hoards. They consist predominantly of reduced-value *aspron trachea* (billon), known as an expediency or austerity coinage of less than the usual intrinsic value, which the Byzantine government used for paying its soldiers. It was a period of quick devaluation of the billon, which finally turned into a 100 percent copper coin. The hoards containing gold are already 17% of all hoard finds, just two of them entirely composed of gold coins, and four consisting of billon and gold coins. All of them seem to have been related to a high administrative/military or ecclesiastic authority. The *electrum* hoard of Zlatarica on the northern side of the Balkan Mountain is, most likely, related to the withdrawal of Isaac II Angel in 1190 from his campaign against the leaders of Bulgarian revolt, Asen and Peter. The biggest gold hoard of Gornoslav, as examined by Michael Hendy, was the annual budget of the Bachkovo Monastery buried under the threat by the

⁶⁸ D. M. Metcalf, *Coinage in the Balkans, 820-1355* (Chicago: Argonaut, 1966), pp. 116-126.

crusaders of Frederick I Barbarossa (1152-1190) in 1189.⁶⁹ The appearance of mixed, (billon and electrum) hoards, as found in Turnovo, Bania, Novo Selo, and Gorno Slivovo, composed of coins collected in a somewhat short period indicates rather emergency than saving character, perhaps, related to the withdrawal of Byzantine authority from the Thracian garrisons under the threat of the Third Crusade. Given that the hoards of both periods had, presumably, the same origin - of services related to the state or of large estates' budgets - the increase of their total number as well as the presence of hoards of higher value in 1185-1203 marks rather a beginning of a certain wealth redistribution under the impact of political instability than some drastic increases of coin circulation. Support for this claim comes also from the single coin evidence, revealing certain but not drastic increase in coin circulation in Turnovo, Preslav, and Karvuna, as well as a renewal of coin circulation in Cherven and Ovetch. The hoards north of the Balkan Mountain slowly gave way before single coin finds, which dominate in the urban centers of Turnovo and Preslav. In Thrace, due to the continuing warfare, the reverse trend prevailed.

Money Production and Circulation, 1204-1256

The fall of Constantinople to the Latins in 1204 brought an end to the regular flow of money to Bulgaria. Instead, in order to surmount the effects of a monetary deficit, a mass production of *scyphata* (concave) copper coins in tens of millions of specimens was initiated by the Latin and Bulgarian authorities, all of which imitated the billon coins of the Byzantine monetary system.⁷⁰ Only in the territory of Bulgaria, there are more than 180, 000.⁷¹ The

⁶⁹ M. F. Hendy, "The Gornoslav Hoard, the Emperor Frederick I, and the Monastery of Bachkovo," in C.N.L. Brooke, B. H. I. H. Stewart, J. G. Pollard and T. R. Volk (eds.) *Studies in Numismatic Method Presented to Philip Grierson* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983), pp. 179 – 91.

⁷⁰ D. M. Metcalf, *Coinage in the Balkans, 820-1355* (Chicago: Argonaut, 1966), pp. 116-126; M. Hendy, *Coinage and money in the Byzantine Empire, 1081-1261*, (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks Studies, 1969); Iv. Jordanov, *Moneti i Monetno obryshtenie v Bulgaria 1082-1261*, pp. 59-66; K. Dochev, *Bulgarski srednovekovni moneti, XIII-XV v.*, pp. 20-23

provenance of these coins triggered a historiographical debate in the 1950s, which is now considered solved due mainly to the efforts of Michael Hendy. According to his classification, met with general acceptance by both Byzantinists and Bulgarian numismatists, the imitative coins of the first half of the thirteenth century can be grouped into two main categories, Bulgarian and Latin, depending on their origin, iconography and date – each one of them further subdivided into several classes.⁷² The *Bulgarian copies* are the earlier ones and consist of three types of imitation of the billon, most typical for the Comnenian monetary system: class A - copies of the fourth billon issue of Manuel I Comnenus (1143-80); class B – copies of the billon emission of Isaac II Angelus (1185—95; 1203-4) and class C – copies of the billon emission of Alexius III Angelus (1195-1203). The average weight of the Bulgarian copies is about 2.3-2.8 gr., with a clear tendency towards lighter and smaller coins during the first two decades of the thirteenth century. Their striking right after the emergence of carefully truncated original coins struck by Alexius III Angelus, dated around the end of 1203, is suggested by the same careful manner of truncating visible in some of them: fact signaling the drastic monetary deficit in the region. They differ from the later Latin imitations in being very close to the general idea of their prototypes, but they display details of the pendilia, collarpiece or loros that do not fit into the strict pattern of imperial coin iconography. Their inscriptions and patterns are sketchily rendered, their flans are often smaller than those of the originals and their striking is carelessly made. In addition, the coins consist of pure copper and their weight is significantly reduced from that of the billon of Comneni and Angeli (3.8- 4.3 g.). In single coin finds, it is not always easy to make a distinction between Byzantine originals and Bulgarian imitations, but when coins are found in

⁷¹ The situation in the late 1980s. K. Dochev, *Bulgarski srednovekovni moneti, XIII-XV v.* p.20.

⁷² M. Hendy, *Coinage and money in the Byzantine Empire, 1081-1261*

hoards, the difference is easily noticeable. The Bulgarian origin of this category of imitative coins is proved by topographic and quantitative analyses of the discovered hoards. Out of 80 hoards containing the coin types mentioned above, 56 are found on the territory of modern Bulgaria, 16 are from the territory of Southern Macedonia (modern Greece), and 4 from Northern Dobrudja (modern Romania). While the hoards from today's Bulgaria contain all three classes of coins, those from Greek Macedonia and the Struma Valley have very small proportions of class C, and no coins of class B.⁷³ The juxtaposition of the topographic data with the political developments in the region allows for more precise dating of their issuing: class A, between 1200 and 1207; class B, 1206-1209; and class C - between 1206 and 1218.⁷⁴

The second category of imitative coins is known (again, according to M. Hendy's classification) as *Latin imitations* and has been dated between 1208 and 1240.⁷⁵ The subdivision of this group contains more than 25 classes, with iconographic patterns combining elements of the twelfth century Byzantine monetary iconography, as well as some entirely new elements (which, in fact, renders the term "imitative" inappropriate). There is no need for the purpose of this study to repeat the already established exhaustive categorization of the Latin imitative coins that was set up by the fundamental work of M. Hendy and complemented by many other Western and Bulgarian numismatists.⁷⁶ Of little importance is also the exact location of the eventual mints issuing some of the Latin and most of the Bulgarian imitations. Whether

⁷³ Iv. Jordanov, *Moneti i Monetno obryshtenie v Bulgaria 1082-1261*, pp. 60-61

⁷⁴ Iv. Jordanov, "Bulgarskoto Imitativno Monetosechene ot Nachaloto na XIII vek" [Bulgarian imitative coinage from the beginning of the XIII century] *Numizmatika* No 3 (1978), pp. 3-18

⁷⁵ Iv. Jordanov, *Moneti i Monetno obryshtenie v Bulgaria 1082-1261*, pp. 61-65. This dating, based on the detailed analysis of the hoards from Bulgaria containing Latin imitations, is much more convincing than those of M. Hendy, D. M. Metcalf and C. Morrisson.

⁷⁶ D. M. Metcalf, "ByzantinoBulgarica: the Second Bulgarian Empire and the problem of "Bulgarian imitative trachea before and after 1204," *Numismatic Circular*, vol. 81 (1973), pp. 418—421;

Bulgarian imitative coins were produced in Adrianople or Philipopolis is of little significance. What is for sure is that the mint in question was located somewhere in Thrace and was acquired during the wars of Kaloyan against the Latin Empire. As for the typology of the Latin imitations, suffice it to say that it consists of two sub-types, according to the place of their minting, Constantinople and Thessalonike. The two sub-types divide according to size: large module coins (dm 17-25 mm; average weight 1.5- 2 g) and small module coins (average weight 0.5- 1.5 g; average weight 0.5- 1.2 g.).

Analyzing the similar iconography of different modules of the Latin imitations, C. Morrisson articulated the idea that the small and large modules are, actually, fractions of the large modules.⁷⁷ The same outcome is suggested also by the quantitative analysis of the hoards containing Latin imitations from Southern Macedonia and Struma Valley.⁷⁸ The presence in them of coins of both large and small modules of the same class implies that they were minted simultaneously or, in other words, that they were, indeed, fractions of the same monetary system that operated in a common area of coin circulation.

At a quick glance, it seems that contrary to that conclusion comes the appearance of fractioned copper coins by the 1230s and culminating in the 1240s and 1250s to the degree displayed by the hoard of Dolna Kabda (Northeastern Bulgaria). It consists of 2800 copper coins of 94 different monetary types, issued by all coin producers in the Balkans from 1143 to 1258.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ C. Morrisson, "Book review of "Coinage and money in the Byzantine Empire, 1081-1261," by M. Hendy." *Numismatic Chronicle* No 11 (1971), pp. 356-66; Cécile Morrisson, "Byzantine Money: Its Production and Circulation" in *The Economic History of Byzantium*, pp. 909-966; Iv. Jordanov, "Bulgarskoto Imitativno Monetosechene ot Nachaloto na XIII vek" [Bulgarian imitative coinage from the beginning of the XIII century] *Numizmatika* No 3 (1978), pp. 3-18; V. Penchev and J. Yurukova, *Bulgarsiki Srednovekovni Moneti i Pechati* [Bulgarian medieval coins and seals] ; K. Dochev, *Bulgarski srednovekovni moneti, XIII-XV v.* [Bulgarian medieval coins, XIII-XV centuries]

⁷⁸ Iv. Jordanov, *Moneti i Monetno obryshtenie v Bulgaria 1082-1261*, pp. 63-65.

⁷⁹ Iv. Jordanov, "Une trouvaille collective de monnaies du Moyenage (XIII siècle) près di village du Dolna Kadba, district of Targoviste ," *BizantinoBulgarica* Vol. 6 (1980), pp. 173-213.

All of the coins in the hoard, regardless of their initial diameter are broken into 4, 6, 8 or more parts. Similarly, this phenomenon appears in the majority of the hoards in Bulgaria, buried in 1330's-1350's and containing copper coins with different modules. Morrisson's proposition is contradicted by the fact that if the imitative coins of different modules were fractions of the same system, then there would have been no need for leveling the weight and size of the larger coins to the size of the smaller ones by means of fractioning. The most plausible explanation reconciling the idea of C. Morrisson with the existence of fractioned coins is the dynamic character of the monetary policy, fluctuating according to its economic and political considerations. In fact, as it seems, the initial idea of closely following the subdivisions of the Byzantine monetary system was abandoned because of serious concerns for the rising cost of producing large module coins. Towards the end of the twelfth century, the compulsory exchange value vested in the billon by monarchic regalia was, undoubtedly, much higher than their intrinsic value as metal.⁸⁰ This comes from the much higher ratio of productive cost-intrinsic value in minting coins of small denominations in comparison with minting, for instance, gold coins, and it was not a unique feature of the Byzantine monetary system, but had its analogues in the monetary systems of Western Europe as well. In 1347, the cost of minting florins, for instance, was 1% of the coin's value, while the cost of minting the smallest copper denominations was 37% of their value.⁸¹ Since the value of the smallest coin denominations was rather an abstract, compulsory rate, vested by political authority after the initial consolidation of the political power the Latins in Constantinople, there was no practical need of minting large

⁸⁰ See the treaty of Isaac II Angelus with the crusaders of the Third Crusade in February 24, 1190 according to which one hyperpyron was exchanged for 120 stamena, "either old or new." in Str. Lishev, *Za Pronikvaneto na Parite v Feodalna Bulgaria* [About money introduction in feudal Bulgaria] (Sofia: BAN, 1958), pp. 145-146.

⁸¹ Thomas J. Sargent and Francois Velde, *The Big Problems of Small Changes* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2001), pp. 51-52.

module coins. Little wonder, then, that given the difficulties of the Latins in Constantinople, who, as reported by Choniates, “in their want for money” resorted to melting down statues for securing material for their “worthless copper coins,”⁸² towards the end of 1220’s they started a massive production of small module coins. This trend is also noticeable in the money production of the other political actors in the region. Soon after small module coins were issued by the Latins, the mints of both the Nicaean Empire and the Despotate of Epirus also struck series of small module copper coins. In response to the flux of small module coins, the political authorities in Bulgaria, (perhaps losing the urban center where the eventual mint was located) resorted to cutting the coins with large modules to the level of weight of the small coins in circulation in an attempt to prevent the drain out of their large module coins. According to the archaeological evidence, the coexistence of both large and small coins in the regional commercial exchange became quite beneficial for the producers of small module coins, as exemplified by the minting practices in Thessalonike at the time of Manuel Ducas Comnenus (1230-1237). Initially, the fiscal authorities of the Empire of Thessalonike started to melt down Bulgarian truncated coins. But it seems that so regular and massive became the flux of truncated coins in Thessalonike that instead of melting them, they started merely to counterstrike the fractions of the broken Bulgarian coins and added them to the series of their small module coins. Significant amounts of those counterstruck fractions of coins came back and spread over the Bulgarian territories reaching its northernmost regions.⁸³ The evidence of hoarded and single

⁸² N. Choniates, *Historia* pp. 357-358

⁸³ See for instance the quantitative analysis of the hoards Preslav VI, Silistra II, Nisovo, Ustovo as well as the single coins from Turnovo, Preslav and the village on the top of Sevtopolis in Iv. Jordanov, *Moneti i Monetno obryshtenie v Bulgaria 1082-1261*, pp. 122-226; For the hoard from Vidin see Vl. Penchev, “Kolektivna Nahodka s Medni (Bilonovi) Skifati, XIII-XIV vek ot Vidin” [Hoard of copper (billon) scyphati 13th-14th centuries from Vidin] *Numizmatika i Epigrafika* No 3 (2003), pp. 130-159; For the hoard of Petrich see Vl. Penchev, *Kolektivna Nahodka ot Medni (Bilonovi) Skifati, ot Purvata Polovina na XIII vek Namereni krai Petrich* [Hoard of copper (billon) scyphati from the first half of the 13th century, found near Petrich] (Sofia: Agato, 2003).

coins from Petrich, Vidin, Silistra, Preslav, Turnovo, Melnik, and elsewhere of Thessalonikan coins, counterstruck on truncated fractions of Bulgarian large module imitative coins is very informative for the intensity of money turnover at the first half of the thirteenth century and, accordingly, for the parameters of regional trade. The massive presence of Thessalonikan coins in Bulgaria during the second quarter of the thirteenth century, second only to that of Bulgarian and Latin imitative coins, unambiguously defines the economic importance of Thessalonike for the Bulgarian inland trade and its connection to the international Mediterranean trade system.⁸⁴

The intensive trade connections between Turnovo and Thessalonike, demonstrated by the spread of Thessalonikan regular and counterstruck money in Bulgaria, helps to clarify also the reasoning of the massive imitative coinage undertaken by the Bulgarians and Latins. It sets the arguments of D. M. Metcalf defining the imitative coinage as “military money of expedience not necessarily indicating an increase of coin circulation”⁸⁵ at variance with the archaeological evidence. Metcalf’s proposition would have some grounds if supported by an adequate number of hoards, composed of a single type of coins or at least of coins produced by a single political subject Byzantium, the Latin Empire, or Bulgaria. To be sure, there are some hoards of original Byzantine money buried before the start of Bulgarian imitations, although not as many as claimed by Metcalf.⁸⁶ More than 90 percent of the hoards containing Latin imitations (buried

⁸⁴ See for instance the single coin finds in Turnovo, according to K. Dochev, “Tŭrnovo, Sixth-Fourteenth centuries” *The Economic History of Byzantium*, pp 673-678. See also the single coin finds in Preslav according to Zh. Zhekova, “Za Priemstvenostta mejdu Preslav i Shumen po Numizmatichni Danni” [About the succession between Preslav and Shumen according to the numismatic data] in *Tradicii i Priemstvenost v Bulgaria i na Balkanite prez srednite vekove* (V. Turnovo: University of Veliko Turnovo, 2003) pp. 220-229.

⁸⁵ D. M. Metcalf, “ByzantinoBulgarica: the Second Bulgarian Empire and the problem of “Bulgarian imitative trachea before and after 1204,” *Numismatic Circular*, vol. 81 (1973), pp. 418—421.

⁸⁶ In support of his claim Metcalf cites as “half- and –half hoards” (composed of 50% full billon and 50 % devalued billon) hoards containing predominantly Latin and Bulgarian imitations, such as Kazanluk 1195, Toulovo 1208; Kiustendil 1208, which is, in fact, true, but highly misleading regarding the “saving” and “military” character of these hoards.

after 1206-8) are mixed with Bulgarian imitations or coins of the Nicaean and Thessalonikan empires, or, more often, with all of them.⁸⁷ Among the other hoards are counted the homogenous gold hoards (such as the electrum hoard of Zlatarica) and a few billon hoards, which, except the hoard of Strazhitsa (35 kg) contain rather small numbers of coins (e.g. Turnovo I with 53 coins and Turnovo VIII with 9; Preslav III with 22 and Prelav V with 7; Vereya III with 13).⁸⁸ All of these types of hoards suggest, indeed, the presence of money, unused in commercial exchange either due to some emergency or, as D. M. Metcalf argues, buried by soldiers as savings simply because there was nothing this money could buy.⁸⁹ The logic of the latter, however, is thoroughly invalidated not only by the sharp increase of the urban coin circulation, as demonstrated by the urban single coin evidence, but also by the monetary turnover in the country, exemplified by the coin finds of the village on the top of Sevtopolis and the cemetery discovered near today's village of Yantra.⁹⁰

Undoubtedly, part of the causes that led to the start of the imitative coinage in Bulgaria was tied to the necessity of paying the soldiers of the newly formed Bulgarian army, but as it seems, this was not the main use of the imitative coinage.⁹¹ The dominance of hoards with

⁸⁷ See the detailed description of the hoards in Iv. Jordanov, *Moneti i Monetno obryshenie v Bulgaria 1082-126*, pp. 135-227.

⁸⁸ See Table A-2 *Hoard 1185-1203* in the Appendix.

⁸⁹ D. Metcalf, "Coinage and Coin finds Associated with a Military Presence in the Medieval Balkans" in *Kovanje and kovnice antičkog i srednevekovnog novca* ed. by Vladimir Kondić (Belgrade: Narodni Muzej. 1976), pp 89-97.

⁹⁰ See the data collected for the village on the top of Sevtopolis in the Chapter II; For the necropoleis near Yantra the period of 1204-1256 is presented by 43 copper coins , while the entire period of the 11th – the end of the 12th century is presented by 3 *folles* for. For details, see Iv. Bachvarov, *Yantrenski Nekropoli* [Yantra's necropolis], (V. Turnovo: Vital, 1993) p. 64

⁹¹ Metcalf's assumption that the imitative coinage was necessitated to pay Asen's Cuman allies faces two counterarguments. The first is that Bulgarian imitative coinage according to the coin material so-far known is initiated as early as 1203-4, when the secession of Bulgaria was already admitted by the Byzantines and the main battles had been already fought. Second, it is unlikely that the Cumans were paid in a piecemeal basis with (copper) petty cash, and not in bulk money (gold) as an autonomous military unit.

highly assorted content, the intensity of the commercial exchange exemplified by the velocity of money turnover between Bulgarian provinces and Thessalonike and, last but not least, the radical increase of the money circulation in the urban and rural areas suggest that no matter its immediate reason, the imitative coinage was the necessary medium of exchange that catalyzed local and regional trade.

This explanation, however, sheds some light also on the question why the regional powers, Bulgaria and the Latin Empire did not mint money officially, in the names of their rulers. It seems that despite the political fragmentation of the former Byzantine Empire, the lack of desire on the part of the new political actors for changing its monetary system has its salient commercial considerations, directed towards preserving the economic integration of the region. The imitative coins produced by Latins and Bulgarians were considered by their contemporaries as merely filling the gaps of the old Byzantine monetary system, the function of which was crucial for securing their political aspirations. Therefore, none of the local powers dared to alter a well working and highly trusted monetary system, in which the main value of its petty coins, i.e. their ratio of exchange to the golden nominal, was vested by the public consensus upon its compulsory market rate, not by their intrinsic metal value. In 1203, Kaloyan (1197-1207) was crowned and formally granted by Pope Innocent III the right of minting in his own name. Baldwin of Flanders had this right before he was elected a Latin Emperor. However, neither Kaloyan nor Baldwin and, later, Henry, issued money in their names and dared to impede the commercial exchange and tax collection by exercising their monarchic regalia. Kaloyan's asking for and receiving the right of minting by Innocent III signals rather an attempt for propagating and legitimizing his political ambitions than some real intentions for changing the reigning monetary system. This might have been an especially delicate subject at the time of building the

Bulgarian – Greek anti-Latin coalition with the provincial Byzantine townsmen, which might still have had the bitter taste left by the effects of debasement of the nomisma in the eleventh century. An eventual issuing of gold or copper coins in the names of the Bulgarian or of the Latin emperors would only set the notion of insecurity in commercial exchange, unleashing endless monetary speculations and would alienate the Greek urban population, which any and all of the mentioned rulers strove to incorporate. However, since neither the Latins nor Kaloyan had the necessary political environment for issuing money in their names, the best line for making trustworthy their power was to continue to issue coins imitating the old trustworthy Byzantine money.

With the ascendance of Ivan II Asen on Bulgarian throne in 1218 and the following political stabilization came along the increased interest in international trade manifested by the commercial treaties with Dubrovnik in 1230's and in 1253, discussed above. Bulgarian political hegemony in the Balkans in 1230's created now an adequate political basis for issuing money officially, in the name of Ivan II Asen, who, laconically summarized the situation in his inscription in the church of Holy Forty Martyrs in Turnovo: "Because the Greeks and Franks had no other emperor than me."⁹² The coin was designed not as real means of exchange, however, but rather as a propagandistic instrument for his ambitions of building a Bulgarian-Byzantine Empire. The commemorative and propagandistic character of Bulgarian nomisma is evident in its higher (18 carats) content of gold than those issued by John III Ducas Vatatzes (16-17 carats) and in its limited emission. Ivan II Asen's copper coins had the same purpose. Both types of coins have a distinctly Byzantine iconography with a definite influence of the Thessalonikean mint, where they, most likely, were struck, in commemoration of the 1230 Bulgarian victory

⁹² Iv. Dujcev, *Iz Starata Bulgarska Knijnina* [Old Bulgarian literature] Vol. II.p.97

over the despot of Epirus, Theodore Comnenus. Obviously, the issuing of gold and copper coins in the name of Ivan II Asen was not a break with the Byzantine monetary system, but again, its continuation. Although this monetary system, as most of the monetary systems at the time, consisted of eclectic elements. The Latin and Bulgarian imitative coins, the gold nomismata of Nicaea, Bulgaria and Thessalonike, the silver coins of Thessalonike and the copper coins of all of these - it was still the old Byzantine system based on the Roman pound (327g.).

The general picture derived from the quantitative analysis of the collected data shows that during the period 1204-1257 the general number of the hoards increased drastically in comparison to the previous periods. While for the period 1081-1185 there are only 7 hoards known from Bulgaria, for the subsequent two decades (1185-1203) the number of hoards increased more than five times. This trend accelerated even further for the period 1204-1257 and the number of hoards reached 109 within fifty years, which is thirty times more than the pre-1185 period. This drastic augmentation of hoarded money immediately poses the question of the nature of this phenomenon. Was the remarkable boost in hoarding in 1204-56 only a proportional reflection of the increase in political insecurity of the region or it was an indication also for the shift from land-based, state-commanded economy to a public economy of exchange, where more people operated with more money?

Indeed, the period of 1204-1257, especially its first and last decades, was marked by almost constant warfare and internal conflicts, to a degree incomparable to the Comnenian era. In fact, only the period of Ivan II Asen's reign (1218-1241) was marked by a general political stability. Ascending the throne in 1197, Kaloyan continued even more rigorously the aggressive policy of Asen against Byzantium, redirected towards the Latins after 1204. His successor, Boril, (1207-1218), attempted to continue the political line of his predecessor, but suffered losses in all

of his attempts against the Latins, the Hungarians, and the Serbs. The collected monetary data reveals complete concordance with the political development witnessed by the written sources. The period of permanent warfare between the fall of Constantinople in 1204 and the ascendance of Ivan II Asen in 1218 is marked by more than a half of the concealed hoards in the period 1204-1256. The hoards of this sub-period are quite evenly divided by the three main regions of Bulgaria: Thrace, Moesia, and Macedonia. While the intensive hoarding in Thrace and Macedonia clearly reflects the ongoing combat there, the hoarding in Moesia, a region undisturbed by military operations at the time, is tied, most likely, to the political change in Turnovo in 1207, when Boril, suspected as a main organizer of the plot against Kaloyan, married his widow and acquired the throne. The localization and the composition of the hoards in Northern Bulgaria, therefore, must be associated with the persecutions launched against the supporters of the legal heirs of the crown, the sons of Asen, who fled the country. The eventual domestic disturbances are confirmed mainly by the location of the hoards in this region. About half of them were buried within the walls of the main administrative centers - Turnovo, Preslav, Dorostorum (Druster, Silistra) and Lovech.⁹³

One way to explain the dramatic increase in hoarding is to examine the single coin data from urban areas, under the assumption that the increase in hoarding was a function of the increased market activities and not just of political insecurity.⁹⁴ Within all urban centers where coinage was found in sufficient quantity, the increase of hoarding is paralleled by relevant increase of the single coins circulation. In Preslav there are 1106 single coins, but only 3 hoards

⁹³ See the detailed description of the hoards in Iv. Jordanov, *Moneti i Monetno obryshtenie v Bulgaria 1082-1261*, pp. 135-22. Also, in Zdr. Pliakov, "Monetnite Nahodki ot XIII-XIV vek kato Izvor za Vunshnoturgovskite Vryzki na Srednovekovna Bulgaria" [The coin finds of 13th -14th centuries as a source for the international trade links of medieval Bulgaria] *Istoricheski Pregled* No.3-4 (2002), pp.3-74.

⁹⁴ See Table A-6 *Urban Coin Finds* in the Appendix

with 249 coins. In Turnovo, there is more hoarded money than single finds, but only because of an extraordinarily large hoard of 4265 billion coins (Turnovo VIII), which was discovered in the vicinity of the town and may be related to the change of political power in 1207.⁹⁵ The case of Vereya, burned by the Latins in 1208 and yet displaying an increase of nearly three times more single finds in comparison to the previous period, supports the general notion that the drastic increase of hoarded money resulted from the availability of more cash in more hands.⁹⁶ The same is noticeable in Melnik, denoting its growing importance in the inland trade, which compelled Alexius Slav to move his residence there in the early 1200s and to become the economic basis for the elevation of Melnik into an episcopal center few decades later. As mentioned above, the evidence for abrupt increase of monetary circulation is not restricted to the urban zones. As demonstrated by the coin evidence from the village on the top of the ancient Sevtopolis, it affected also the countryside.⁹⁷ A similar rise of money circulation in the country is demonstrated by the coin finds from the late medieval cemetery near the modern village of Yantra, in the district of Veliko Turnovo. Three eleventh-to-twelve century Byzantine coins have been found there in addition to 43 coins dated to the first half of the thirteenth century.⁹⁸

A new era of political instability began with the death of Ivan II Asen after 1241. The distribution of the hoards, now concentrated in the Northern Bulgaria, clearly indicates the contraction of Bulgarian territory south of the Balkan Mountains and the effects of the Mongol incursions that continued long after 1241 and well into the late thirteenth century. During the subsequent period (1241-57), the number of gold coins found in hoards increased dramatically.

⁹⁵ Iv. Jordanov, *Moneti i Monetno obryshenie v Bulgaria 1082-1261*, p.148.

⁹⁶ See Table A-6 *Urban Coin Finds* in the Appendix

⁹⁷ See Chapter 3, p. 83 ff

⁹⁸ Iv. Bachvarov, *Yantrenski Nekropoli* [Yantra's necropolis], (V. Turnovo: Vital, 1993) p. 64

While no gold appears in the early thirteenth century, more than half of the hoards now are mixed with or entirely made up of gold coins. The average content of 10-13 gold coins in most hoards (excluding those of Tvurdica (236), Pirgovo (76), Shumen (51), and Lovetch (27)), suggests a certain circulatory character of gold nominal. This is further substantiated by the presence of Nicaean hyperpyra, all struck by John III Ducas-Vatatzes (1222-1254), especially those of his fourth and latest emission – a fact revealing that they were not accumulated over a long time, but were, very likely, part of the current circulation. Of course, it is possible that some of the hoards were collected later than the observed period, but this probability is not very high given that the most frequent hyperpyra of Theodore II Lascaris (1254-58) and, especially, of Michael VIII Palaeologos (1259-82) do not appear in hoards until the end of the thirteenth century. Last but not least, the circulatory character of gold nominal is suggested also by the fact that almost half of the hoards containing gold are mixed with copper.

The support for the proposition about the circulatory character of gold nominal, however, is not restricted to the hoard evidence. The urban coin data also shows a general increase of gold in circulation. The picture of the twelfth century gold circulation, composed of a single hyperpyron of John II Comnenus (1118-1143) found in Preslav and two electrum coins of Isaac II Angel (1185-1195) from Turnovo is now changed into 10 hyperpyra from Turnovo, 3 from Preslav, 6 from Shumen, and 3 from Cherven.⁹⁹ Silver coins also appeared for the first time in urban centers of Bulgaria: 9 are known from Preslav, 3 from Turnovo, 1 from Shumen. The regular appearance in circulation of gold could be, certainly, linked to the mass practice of

⁹⁹ Iv. Jordanov, *Moneti i Monetno obryshtenie v Bulgaria 1082-1261*, p.113; Iv. Jordanov, "Harakter na Monetnoto Tsirkulacia v Srednovekovnite Bulgarski Stolic, Preslav i Turnovo" [Characteristics of the coin circulation in the medieval Bulgarian capitals Preslav and Turnovo] in P. Petrov, ed. *Srednovekovniat Bulgarski Grad* (Sofia: n.p., 1980), pp. 229-239; Zh. Zhekova, "Za Priemstvenostta mejdu Preslav i Shumen po Numizmaticzni Danni" [About the succession between Preslav and Shumen according to the numismatic data] in *Tradicii i Priemstvenost v Bulgaria i na Balkanite prez srednite vekove* (V. Turnovo, University of Veliko Turnovo, 2003) pp. 220-229; V. Dimova, *Srednovekovniat Cherven* [The medieval Cherven] (Sofia: BAN, 1985) pp. 273-286.

fractioning the billon coins, reaching the extremes, beyond which the coins' fractions became merely inoperative for both commercial transactions and tax purposes. This assumption is thoroughly supported by the character of the monetary turnover. After the introduction of Bulgarian "national" billon coinage in 1257, gold disappeared from both hoard and single coin finds.

Money Production and Circulation, 1257 – 1400

The reign of Constantine Tich-Asen (1257-1277) marks a turning point in the history of Bulgarian coinage. The growing concern with obviously uncontrolled fractioning of coins is registered clearly by the fact that immediately after his crowning, the new Bulgarian Emperor issued an official, large module of copper coin in large quantities. The newly elected ruler, a noble from Skopje, appeared on his first coins emission as "Constantine." The name "Asen," was added only in 1258, when he married Irene, the daughter of the Nicaean Emperor, Theodore II Lascaris and the granddaughter of Ivan II Asen, which gave him the reason for such an epithet.¹⁰⁰

It is of little surprise that the monetary reform in Bulgaria coincided in time with the money reorganization undertaken by Theodore II Lascaris, who had stopped the minting of small module coins a few years before Constantine Tich.¹⁰¹ However, Lascaris was aware that such a reform would be successful only if it was applied elsewhere in the commercially interlocked territories of the Eastern Balkans. Therefore, the monetary reform in Bulgaria might be seen as

¹⁰⁰ Georgius Acropolita, *Opera* ed. by A. Heisenberg. Vol. 1-2 (Lipsae: In aedibus B.G. Teubneri , 1903) , pp. 153-153

¹⁰¹ Cécile Morrisson, "Byzantine Money: Its Production and Circulation" in *The Economic History of Byzantium: from the seventh through the fifteenth centuries*. Ed in Chief A. Laiou (Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington, D. C, 2002), pp. 909-966; Vl. Penchev, Kolektivna Nahodka s Medni (Bilonovi) Skifati, XIII-XIV vek ot Vidin [Hoard of copper (billon) scyphati 13th-14th centuries from Vidin] *Numizmatika i Epigrafika* No 3 (2003),pp. 130-159.

part of the matrimonial alliance between Lascaris and Constantine shortly after the latter's ascension to power.

Constantine struck six emissions of copper coins, the volume of which was estimated as more than ten million.¹⁰² Their weight of 2.5-3.5 g and size of 23-27 mm, between those of the smaller Nicaean tetartera (~2.2 g; 15-18 mm) and the larger Nicaean stamena (~4.3 g; ~35 mm) seem to point to the efforts of the Bulgarian government to create trustworthy money that could be used in commercial transactions, but at the same time be cheaply produced. The design of Constantine Asen's coins noticeably differs from the rough-made Latin and Bulgarian imitative coins. The coins of Constantine Asen have aesthetically designed and carefully engraved legends, combining new Bulgarian with traditional Byzantine symbols. They remained the basic medium of exchange for more than thirty years and circulated together with the copper coins struck by Georgi I Terter (1282-1292). The introduction of large official emissions of copper, however, was not directed towards replacing the Byzantine monetary system. Instead, Constantine Asen's goal was to replace its inoperative details with more functional parts. Striking gold remained, apparently, an exclusive prerogative of the Nicaean emperors.

In parallel Constantine's coins, the late 1260s also witnessed the appearance of copper coins, struck by the despot Jacob Svetoslav and by Mico Asen. Being both pretenders for the Bulgarian throne, their coins were issued mainly for political reasons. The coins of Mico Asen and Svetoslav had rough and awkward iconographies, showing a complete misunderstanding of the legend's symbolism and, as suggested by the limited number of specimens, such coins must

¹⁰² K. Dochev, *Bulgarski srednovekovni moneti, XIII-XV v.* [Bulgarian medieval coins, XIII-XV centuries] (V. Turnovo: Tsentreks, 2003), p. 44.

have been struck in some extemporaneous provincial mint, with hardly any economic significance, at all.¹⁰³

The picture of monetary circulation for the second half of the thirteenth century is very different from that of the first half of the century. Despite much turmoil between 1277 and 1300, which culminated in the ascension of a Mongol warlord to the Bulgarian throne, the general number of hoards is much smaller than that of the previous period. Only 22 hoards, 13 of which are from the site of Riakhovec alone, have been associated with the combination of Mongols depredations, foreign invasions of almost all Bulgarian neighbors, internal strife (the rebellion of Ivaylo, 1377-1379), and the increasing separatism.¹⁰⁴ The coin evidence from towns confirms the picture. While the disappearance of gold and silver from circulation in towns could be explained in terms of the introduction of the large billon coins of higher value, the general decline in the total number of coins in circulation may be associated only with the political crisis that deteriorated the network of commercial exchange. The situation during the last quarter of the thirteenth century is best illustrated by the monetary finds in Riakhovec, a small fortress, located in about 20 km northward of Turnovo. Riakhovec produced 13 hoards with 770 early thirteenth century but only 3 coins of the second half of the century – 2 struck by Constantine Asen and 1 by Michael VIII Palaeologos.¹⁰⁵

The last quarter of the thirteenth century was also a period of hardship for Preslav. The campaign of Michael Glabas Tarchaniotes against Ivaylo in 1279 not only sacked and burned the towns of Ovetch and Preslav, but also moved their inhabitants on the southern slope of the

¹⁰³ K. Dochev, *Bulgarski srednovekovni moneti, XIII-XV v.* p.44

¹⁰⁴ See Table A-4 *Hoards 1241-1257* in the Appendix

¹⁰⁵ Iv. Bachvarov, *Moneti ot Riakhovec* [Coins from Riakhovec] (Veliko Turnovo – Gorna Oriahovica: Museums of Turnovo and Gorna Oriahovica, 1994), pp. 115-135

Balkan Mountains.¹⁰⁶ While the location of Ovetch on the main road between Turnovo and Varna soon resulted in town's reanimation, Preslav never revived. Although it continued to be an administrative and ecclesiastic center, its economic functions were transferred now into its former guardian fortress, Shumen. Unsurprisingly, the deteriorating situation of Northern Bulgaria affected also the economic activities in other regions of the Balkans, as demonstrated by single finds from Melnik, Vereya, and the village on the top of Sevtopolis.

The political developments of the last quarter of the thirteenth century may thus explain the interruption of drastic increase of coin circulation visible ever since the late twelfth century and culminating in 1218- 1240. It seems that the political crisis of 1277-1300 was very different from that of the early 1200s. While the political insecurity of 1185-1218 was characterized by a mere change of political authority over towns and their hinterland, which had left the agriculture and commercial infrastructure largely intact, the systematic devastation of the country accompanying the late thirteenth-century crisis resulted in an apparent contraction of market activities.

The ascension of Theodore Svetoslav (1300- 1321) put an end to the political crisis and the ensuing economic recession. The new ruler made long distance trade a main priority, which led to the introduction of silver coinage as more appropriate medium of exchange. The immediate reason for the introduction of silver in Bulgaria is, most likely, the quick devaluation of silver on the international markets.¹⁰⁷ The Venetian *al pezzo* system of minting, in which the weight and purity of each coin were individually controlled, prevented quick response to price fluctuations of silver on the international markets. Thus, the price of silver in Venice remained

¹⁰⁶ H. Loparev, "Vizantiiskii Poet Manuel Phill. K Istorii Bolgarii v XIII-XIV veke" [The Byzantine poet Manuel Phill. About the history of Bulgaria in 13th -14th centuries] *SPb*, 1891.p. 52

¹⁰⁷ St. Avdev, *Monetnata systema v Srednovekovna Bulgaria* [Monetary system of medieval Bulgaria] (Sofia: Besike, 2005), p.153

the same while outside Venice silver dropped well below it. In Byzantium, however, the traditional method of striking was *al marco*, a method in which a variable number of coins were struck from a fixed amount or quantity of precious metal. This resulted in great variations in both weight and size between the individual coins, but, on the other hand, the *al marco* method allowed for a more adequate adaptation to the price fluctuations of the precious metals. Thus, the fluctuations in the international price of silver and the difference in monetary practices caused an increased demand of silver outside Venice, especially in the Eastern Mediterranean. Silver was now bought abroad and exchanged for gold in Venice at a very profitable rate. That gold was then exchanged for cheaper silver (or its commodity equivalence) outside Venice.

In Byzantium, the increased Venetian demand for silver in exchange for gold led to the striking of the silver *basilika*, a factor that must have compelled Svetoslav to follow suit. Moreover, Svetoslav already secured his access to the international trade routes by the incorporating into Bulgaria the region of Mesembria and Anchialos, the so-called “granary of Constantinople.”

Venetian coins stopped circulating in Bulgaria at the time of Pietro Granedigo (1289-1311), when the ratio between *ducat* and *grosso* was 1:18 in Venice and 1:24 in Byzantium (as well as Bulgaria). Venetian coins reappeared again during the rule of Francesco Dandolo (1329-1339), when the ratio in Venice was adjusted to the market price of 1:24.¹⁰⁸ According to the qualitative analysis of Svetoslav’s silver coins, his coinage was struck in three series, with a gradual increase in the total number of specimens and a concomitant decrease in weight, following the fluctuations of the price of silver and gold.¹⁰⁹ Like the Byzantine *basilikon*, the

¹⁰⁸ St. Avdev, *Monetnata sistema v Srednovekovna Bulgaria*, p. 153

¹⁰⁹ V. Penchev and J. Yurukova, *Bulgarsiki Srednovekobni Moneti i Pechati*, pp. 99-108.

Bulgarian silver coin was flat and even had the same fineness (94%). It was, however, a little heavier than the *half-basilikon* (1,6g), but of almost the same size as the *basilikon* (20-21 mm).

The silver coinage came to dominate the circulation during the reign of Svetoslav's successor, Michael Shishman (1323-1330), who struck five types of silver and four types of copper. However, the hightime of the Bulgarian silver coinage came with the reign of Ivan Alexander (1331-1371), who issued two silver and five copper series in tens of millions of specimens, which dominated the market up to the end of the century.

The increase of coin circulation, as demonstrated by the urban single finds, denotes a indicates growth of market activities at the local level in the Bulgarian Northeast. Even Preslav, which had been reduced to insignificance by the devastating campaign of Michael Glabas Tarchaniotes of 1279 displays noticeable signs of economic progress, especially after the political stabilization brought by the reign of Ivan Alexander (1332- 1371). It seems that the growing political separatism of the Dobrudja Despotate from Turnovo did not affect the economic integrity of the region. The immobilized coin type of "Ivan Alexander with Michael Asen," which had been struck in the early years of Ivan Shishman's reign was the dominant coin in circulation in the Despotate's centers Karvuna and Kaliakra.¹¹⁰

The main feature of the urban monetary turnover, after the third decade of the fourteenth century, is the great diversity of single coins. In turn, this fact suggests an intensive money circulation between local regional centers. One third of all coin finds from Karvuna is made up of coins of Ivan Alexander's (11 specimens), the rest of it is 21 coins struck by no less than 12

¹¹⁰ D. M. Metcalf, "Some comments on the metrology of coins of Ivan Alexander and of Ivan Sratsimir" *Studii și Cercetări de Numismatică* (1975), pp. 127-138; K. Dochev, "Niakolko Belezhki varhu Srebarnoto Monetosechene na Ivan Alexander Mihail Asen" [Few notices about the silver coinage of Ivan Alexander with Michael Asen] *Nimizmatica* No.2 (1983), pp. 5-15; M. Dimitrov, "Monetite ot Dionisopolis – Karvuna," [The coins of Dionisopolis – Karvuna] *Dobrudja* Vol 12 (1995).pp. 173-179.; V. Parushev, " Srednovekovni moneti ot Kaliakra," [Medieval coins from Kaliakra] *Izvestia na Naroden Muzej Varna* Vol. 26. (1990). pp. 141-147.

coin producers. The picture of money circulation in Ovetch, Turnovo, and Shumen is similar. It is heavily dominated by the coins of Ivan Alexander and it displays a great variety of the coin types. It represents 13 additional coin producers from the second half of the fourteenth century - Byzantium, Venice, the Despotate of John II Orsini, Serbia, Walachia, Hungary, Moldavia, the Golden Horde, and its successors, the Duchy of Athens and the Principality of Achaia, the Ottomans, and, of course, the Bulgarian rulers of Bdin and Dobrudja.

The situation in Thrace, however, as demonstrated by the coin circulation in Vereya and the village on top of the ancient Sevtopolis is quite different. The Catalan and Mongol raids, the following Black Death and, finally, the Turkish incursions turned the Upper Thracian Plain, as demonstrated by the fifteenth century Ottoman *cizye* registers, into a desolate region. There are no indications in the written sources, however, that the same was true for Melnik. Perhaps, the town was affected by the Catalan raids in the region at the opening of the fourteenth century, but in the course of the following years, its incorporation into the semi-independent political formation of the *protosevast* Hreljo and then into the Serbian empire of Dušan did not leave any signs of destruction in the town. Therefore, the explanation of lack of coin finds in Melnik after the reign Andronicus II (1282-1328) is matter of further research.

The analysis of the coin circulation in fourteenth century Bulgaria, reveals a steady trend of gradual monetization, in which trade played obviously an important role. Hoards are now made up mainly of silver, the preferable medium of exchange in long-distance trade. Its increasing presence in hoards chronologically and topographically follows the Ottoman advance, whose catastrophic impact virtually closed the avenues of long-distance inland trade. The dominance of silver in hoards signals a certain division of the commercial sector into two levels: a local, one, in which the coins of small denomination (copper) dominated the everyday

activities, and a regional or international, one, dominated by silver. The majority of mixed, silver, and copper hoards, marking a possible link between regional and local trade, came from the large urban centers of Turnovo, Vidin, and Silistra. Mixed hoards of gold and copper coins of the period are few (only two) for a period of almost a century, and their small size indicates a combination of family savings and money in circulation. The group of hoards of gold is dominated by small-size hoards of various coin types, an indication of long-term accumulation, a practice concomitant with the higher sector of middle class.

More than 95 percent of all hoards of silver contain coins, struck by more than two rulers. The leadership among this group is held by Venice, whose coins are among 24 out of 60 hoards (40 percent). This is even more impressive when compared to the lack of any Venetian coins from the thirteenth-century finds. The impressive portion of Venetian coins in the turnover of the fourteenth-century Bulgarian money raises the question of the role of the Venetian merchants played in the inland Bulgarian trade, and, respectively, about the existence of a local merchant class. This remarkable amount of Venetian money suggests that even the interregional trade was dominated by the ubiquitous Italian merchants. However, some light on the phenomenon is shed by the research of D. M. Metcalf, on the thirteenth-century widespread Venetian imitations in the southern Balkans in the thirteenth century.¹¹¹ After the signaling article of D. M. Metcalf, a number of Bulgarian and Serbian numismatists have reconsidered a significant number of Venetian *grossi* found in hoards from the regions of Velbuzhd (Kjustendil), Macedonia, Serdica (Sofia), Bdin (Vidin), and the Rhodopean region of Tsepena (Velingrad) as local imitations.¹¹²

¹¹¹ D. M. Metcalf, "Echoes of the name of Lorenzo Tiepolo: imitations of Venetian grossi in the Balkans" *Numismatic Chronicle* VII series Vol. XII (1972), pp. 183-191

¹¹² Metcalf, "Echoes of the name of Lorenzo Tiepolo"; St. Dimtriević, "Ostave koje sadrže srpski srednovekovni novca is perioda do 1371" [Hoards of Serbian medieval coins up to 1371] *Spomenik* No. 1 (Srpska Akademija Nauka i Umetnosti, 1981), pp. 12 ff; A. Jovanović, "Ostava Srednovekovnog Novca iz Tetovo" [A hoard of medieval money from Tetovo] *Numizmatičar* No. 3 (1980), pp. 169-180; St. Avdev, "Imitacii na Vencianski Groshove ot

The same was confirmed for the Venetian coins found in hoards in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in Ohrid, Bitola, Prilep, Titov Veles, and Štip.¹¹³ Imitations of Venetian *grossi* appeared in large numbers in hoards from the territory of Dobrudja Despotate and elsewhere, but also in single finds from Turnovo, Shumen, Preslav and Karvuna.¹¹⁴ Most hoards containing Venetian imitative coins were found in the countryside (Tishevica I and II, the hoards found around Sofia and along the upper Struma Valley as well as those from Dobrudja), others in sparsely inhabited regions, such as the Rhodopes Mountains (Kamenica, Tsruncha III, Krichim, Bachkovo and others), hardly any centers of interregional or international trade. This, however, suggests that the Venetian imitatives were used for local purposes with little if any presence of Venetian merchants in the Balkan inland trade. Quite certainly, the mass appearance of imitative Venetian *grossi* in the Balkan coin circulation was facilitated by the growth of political separatism during the second half of the fourteenth century. Since there was no sufficient flux of real Venetian *grossi*, the Venetian imitatives took the role of “international” currency (especially after the collapse of Dušan’s empire), which the weak political control over the currency and the inadequate monetary policy of the local powers made indispensable. Little wonder, then, that the mass appearance of Venetian imitatives comes from Macedonia, the region with most intense political fragmentation, and from the peripheral zones of Bdin Principality (Tishevica I and II)

Bulgaria” [Imitations of Venetian grosses from Bulgaria] *Numismatica* Vol 1 (1982), pp. 19-26; Vl. Penchev, “Kolektivna Nahodka s Srebarni Bulgarski Imitacionni Moneti ot XIV vek” [Hoard of silver Bulgarian imitative coins from 14th century] *Minalo* Vol. 1 (2000), pp. 40-42.

¹¹³ Katerina Hristovska, “A contribution to the Fourteenth-Century Venetian Imitative Coinage Foud on the Territory of Republic of Macedonia” *Macedonian Numismatic Journal* No2 (1996), pp. 139-167.

¹¹⁴ Vl. Penchev and J. Yurukova, *Bulgarsiki Srednovekobni Moneti i Pechati* [Bulgarian medieval coins and seals] (Sofia: Bulgarski Hudozhnik, 1990), pp. 195-199. . Dochev, *Moneti i Parichno Obrushtenie v Turnovo, XII–XIV v.* [Coins and money turnover in Turnovo] (Turnovo: Vital, 1992), pp. 181-183; Zh. Zhekova, “Za Priemstvenostta mejdu Preslav i Shumen po Numizmatichni Dannii” [About the succession between Preslav and Shumen according to the numismatic data] in *Tradicii i Priemstvenost v Bulgaria i na Balkanite prez srednite vekove* (V. Turnovo, University of Veliko Turnovo, 2003) pp. 220-229; V.Parushev, “ Srednovekovni moneti ot Kaliakra,” [Medieval coins from Kaliakra] *Izvestia na Naroden Muzej Varna* Vol. 26. (1990).pp. 141-147

and Turnovian Bulgaria (Rhodopes region). To a certain degree, the hoards containing Venetian imitative *grossi* delineate also the routes of intra-regional trade from the inland provinces towards the trade outposts of Thessalonike and the Black Sea coastal towns and from the mining regions of Tsepena, in the Rhodopes Mountains; of Vratza, and of Samokov – along the Valley of Struma towards the Bay of Thessalonike. The hoards containing Venetian imitations from Macedonia, such as Dobrishte, Kichevo, Tetovo, Gostivar, Gradsko, and Ohrid suggest a variation of this route going from Sofia via the larger Macedonian towns and arriving perhaps at the western coast of Epirus.¹¹⁵

A consequence of the regional political fragmentation, the mass circulation of Venetian imitative money in Bulgaria provides evidence for the existence of a local merchant class, unrelated to landowning and agriculture. Since it was easy to test the fineness of gold coins via touchstones the ducat would have maintained its value beyond the areas of Venetian political and economic dominance. Nevertheless, so far there are no discoveries of ducats on the territory of late medieval Bulgaria, fact suggesting the limited presence of Venetian merchants there. On the other hand, silver coins, the alternative monetary instrument of the long-distance trade, were harder to test for fineness, so they were usually only accepted by people who trusted their alloy, i.e. the authority of their producers. Therefore, the lower intrinsic value of the imitative *grossi* (fineness, weight) than the Venetian originals and their high compulsory market rate, vested in them by the authority of Venetian economic power, made the imitative *grosso* much more

¹¹⁵ R. Marić, “Stobi -1937” *Studie iz Srpske Numizmatike* No. 20 (Belgrade: Naučna knjiga 1956), pp. 130-131; St. Dimtriević, “Ostave koje sadrže srpski srednovekovni novca is perioda do 1371” [Hoards of Serbian medieval coins up to 1371] *Spomenik* No. 1 (Srpska Akademija Nauka i Umetnosti, 1981), pp. 12 ff; A. Jovanović, “Ostava Srednovekovnog Novca iz Tetovo” [A hoard of medieval money from Tetovo] *Numizmatičar* No. 3 (1980), pp. 169-180; V.Bitrakova-Grozdanova, “Prilog kon Ohrdiskata Kovnica ot XIV vek” [Contribution to Ohrid’s minting in 14th century] *Istorja* No.1 (1971), pp. 201-205; T. Gerasimov, “Novi Moneti na Tsar Michael Asen” [New coins of emperor Michael Asen] *Izvestia dn Bulgarskoto Arheologichesko Druzhestvo* No 16-18 (1940), p.84; D. M. Metcalf, “Echoes of the name of Lorenzo Tiepolo: imitations of Venetian grossi in the Balkans” *Numismatic Chronicle* VII series Vol. XII (1972), pp. 183-191

preferable means of exchange and, accordingly, much more widespread than its original counterpart.

Having in mind the necessary high level of organization for producing imitative Venetian *grossi*, this production, undoubtedly, must have been closely related to and strictly controlled by the political authority, a fact manifesting in turn the political control over the domestic commercial forces and increased aristocratic entrepreneurship. Most likely, given Ivan Alexander's personal involvement in trade, as demonstrated above, the main dealers of the Venetian imitations were his or his family's personal trade agents. In support for this claim comes the existence of several hoards of substantial amount of silver, dominated by Venetians imitations, which could be hardly related to a regular trade activity.¹¹⁶ In support of this claim comes the ring-seal found within the hoard of Kozarsko.¹¹⁷ It was engraved with a double-head eagle, a widespread sign of political authority in the late medieval Balkans suggesting ties with the court in Turnovo.

However, it should be kept in mind that in the course of the fourteenth century, especially during the reign of Ivan Alexander (1332-1371), the so-called system of free coinage was established and flourished. It was a system characterized by striking of coins from metal and by the order of private persons under the control of the state authorities. This widespread use of a free-coinage system is unambiguously manifested, as it will be seen further, by the presence of a significant portion of privately ordered copper money among the urban coin circulation. Therefore, besides for the trade agents of the monarch, the imitative Venetian coins must have been available for any professional merchant, who could bring the necessary metal and pay the

¹¹⁶ Such as Tishevica I and II, Ruse, Vukovo, Dobrishte, Kamenica (Template A-5 in the Appendix)

¹¹⁷ J. Yurukova, " Monetni Nahodki Otrkiti v Bulgaria prez 1979" [Coin finds discovered in Bulgaria in 1979] *Arheologia* No1-2 (1981), pp. 126-130

productive costs and taxes. This assumption is supported by the scale of the spread of the imitative Venetian coins on the territory of Bulgaria and their intensive concentration in mountain regions, whose toponymy suggests intensive mining.¹¹⁸ It is supported as well by the dominance of hoards with moderate amount of coins, hardly in possession or in disposition of persons related to the court in Turnovo or to its outgrowths governing the appanages granted by the Bulgarian emperor.¹¹⁹

Another sign of private entrepreneurship comes from the hoard of Vukovo, where a ring with an inscription, KE BOHΘE TON ΦOΠOYNT (Lord, help the bearer) was found.¹²⁰ Indeed, the inscription is insufficient to define precisely the origin of the ring bearer. Yet, compared to the ring seal of Kozarsko, it suggests rather an ordinary and private character than an official sign of power.

Regrettably, what exact percent the imitation *grossi* are out of the total number Venetian silver coins cannot be determined, but the general impression is of a very high ratio, of perhaps 80-90%. Unfortunately, during the significant time gap between the appearance of Metcalf's discoveries in 1972 (and the adoption of his thesis by the Bulgarian numismatists in 1980's) and the first numismatic records of hoards containing (allegedly) Venetian coins of the 1890's, not a few of these hoards were scattered or merely lost. However, secure data for hoards containing Venetian imitations exist for Tishevica I and II; Kozarsko; Rakitovo; Silistra VI, Tsruncha III; Ruse, Kichevo; Igraliste, Dobrishte; Krupnik; Kniazhevo; Vukovo; Granica; Kostandovo;

¹¹⁸ Such as the hoards discovered in the region near Tsepeneva. For the evidence of the local toponymy see St. Avdev, *Monetnata sistema v Srednovekovna Bulgaria* [Monetary system of medieval Bulgaria] (Sofia: Besike, 2005), p.158

¹¹⁹ See Template A-5

¹²⁰ N. Mushmov, "Kolektivni Nahodki na Moneti prez 1925-1926" [Hoards found in 1925-1926] *Izvestia na Bulgarskiat Arheologicheski Institut* Vol. 4 (IBAI) (1926-1927), pp. 321-326

Rhodope; Krichim; Bachkovo; Kamenica; Drenovec; Vodica II; Vitinia; Vladaya and German III - practically more than 90 % of the hoards containing Venetian money.¹²¹ The available sample of 653 silver coins of the large silver hoard *Tishevica I* yields 6 original Venetian *grossi* and 236 Bulgarian imitations (36%).¹²² In *Tishevica II* there are no Venetian original coins, but 396 Bulgarian imitations out of the total of 932 silver coins (42%). A certain impression of the ratio between the official and imitative Venetian coins circulating in Bulgaria comes also from the urban coin evidence, which ranges between 8/5 (62.5%, Turnovo) and 7/7 (100 %, Shumen).¹²³

The political fragmentation and the free coinage system, however, facilitated the imitation not only of the Venetian *grossi*. Similarly, imitative silver coins of the Serbian king Stephen Dragutin were issued in the mints of Bdin, as well as imitations of the former governor of the appanage of Bdin, Michael Shishman (1323-1330), in the first years of Ivan Alexander's reign. The latter phenomenon could be explained as a reaction of the pro-Serbian Bdin's nobility against the new ruler, Ivan Alexander, who dethroned the Serbian protégé and son of Michael

¹²¹ D. M. Metcalf, "Echoes of the name of Lorenzo Tiepolo: imitations of Venetian *grossi* in the Balkans" *Numismatic Chronicle* VII series Vol. XII (1972), pp. 183-191; N. A. Mushmov, "Kolektivni Nahodki na Moneti prez..." [Hoards found in...] *Izvestia dn Bulgarskoto Arheologicheskoto Druzhestvo (IBAD)* (1919), p. 116; *Ibid* (1924), p. 243; *Ibid* (1926/7), p. 321; *Ibid* (1927), p. 321; T. Gerasimov, "Kolektivni Nahodki na Moneti prez..." [Hoards found in...] *IBAD* (1935), p. 486; *Ibid* (1938), p. 316; in *Izvestia na Bulgarskiat Arheologicheskii Institut (IBAI)* (1939), p. 454; *Ibid* (1941) p. 342; *Ibid* (1946), p. 238; *Ibid*, (1952), p. 402; *Ibid* (1956), p. 363; *Ibid* (1963), p. 262-3; Vl. Penchev "Kolektivna Nahodka ot Tishevica" [A hoard from Tishevica] *Numismatica*, Vol. 2-3 (1983), pp. 20-27; Vl. Penchev, "Kolektivna Nahodka s Srebarni Bulgarski Imitacionni Moneti ot XIV vek" [Hoard of silver Bulgarian imitative coins from 14th century] *Minalo* Vol. 1 (2000), pp. 40-42; Iv. Sotirov, "Srebarni Monetni Sakrovishta ot Vrachansko" [Silver hoards from the region of Vratsa] *Yearbook of Nov Bulgarski Universitet* Vol. 4 (2001), pp. 375-417. J. Yurukova, "Monetnite Nahodki Otkriti v Bulgaria" [Coin finds in Bulgaria] *Arheologia* Vol. 4 (1979), p. 64; *Arheologia* Vol. 1-2 (1981), p. 129; St. Avdev, "Imitacii na Venecianski Groshove ot Bulgaria" [Imitations of Venetian grosses from Bulgaria] *Numismatica* Vol 1 (1982), pp. 19-26.

¹²² Vl. Penchev, Kolektivna Monetna Nahodka (XIV vek) ot selo Tishevica, Vrachanski okrag [A hoard from Tishevica, (14th century) district Vratsa] *Numizmatika* no. 2 (1983), pp. 20-27; Iv. Sotirov, "Numizmatichen Etiud kum Istoriata na Avtonomnoto Vidinsko Kniazhestvo ot kraia na XIII vek do 30-te godini na XIV vek" [Numismatic study for the history of the autonomous Vidin Principality ca 1300 – 1330's] *Annuary of the Institute of Archaeology with Museum* Vol. I (2001), pp. 288-332

¹²³ K. Dochev, *Moneti i Parichno Obrushtenie v Turnovo, XII–XIV v.* pp. 181-183; Zh. Zhekova, "Za Priemstvenostta mejdu Preslav i Shumen po Numizmatichni Danni" [About the succession between Preslav and Shumen according to the numismatic data] in *Tradicii i Priemstvenost v Bulgaria i na Balkanite prez srednite vekove* pp. 220-229

Shishman, Ivan Stephen.¹²⁴ In Turnovo, during the reign of Ivan Shishman, were massively imitated the silver and copper coins of his brother and ruler of Bdin Principality, Ivan Sratsimir, fact signaling the intensive trade contacts between these two political units, despite the hostility of their rulers.¹²⁵

Along with the imitations of the silver coins needed for long distance trade, it seems that after 1371, in most of the larger urban centers such as Turnovo, Cherven, Lovech, Nicopol, Bdin and Varna were intensively produced, as well, imitations of the existing copper coin types for the needs of everyday market activities. One of the most widespread imitative coin types was a copy of John II Orsini's copper coin.¹²⁶ Whether there was any link, however, between the Venetian and Epiroan imitations delineating some narrower commercial ties between Bulgaria and the Despotate of Epirus is not clear and it has to be left to the further archaeological research. However, it is highly unlikely that an imitation of copper coin was intended for the purposes of long distance trade at the time of a three-metal monetary system. Most likely, along with the other copper imitations, it was produced for the needs of the local market, which, as it seems, was in a permanent deficit of money of small denominations. In fact, in most cases, especially for the copper coins, the term "imitations" is not correct in the context of free coinage system. It should be called rather private coinage, which design was restricted by the state authorities not to copy the signs of the coins of the currently ruled monarch, but nothing beyond that. Hence, there is an appearance of coins or rather of tokens with an "iconography" of meaningless signs of crosses, dots and stars, to which category belongs as well the "John II Orsini" imitative type. Its

¹²⁴ Vl. Penchev and J. Yurukova, *Bulgarsiki Srednovekovni Moneti i Pechati*, pp. 195-199

¹²⁵ Ibid. pp. 204-205

¹²⁶ Ibid.

“iconography” consisted of encircled cross, surrounded by pseudo letters, often single-side struck, and sometimes having instead only several dots.¹²⁷

What was the scale attained by private coinage towards the last quarter of the fourteenth century? There are 550 single copper coin finds from Turnovo, all struck in the name of Ivan Alexander, billon and copper coins in the name of Ivan Shishman are 710, and 430 “imitative” or, rather, privately ordered copper coins.¹²⁸ To eliminate the notion of some extraordinary character of the coin turnover in Turnovo, a similar presence of imitative coins is noticeable in the rural monetary turnover, as exemplified by the late medieval cemeteries near the village of Yantra. The imitative coins, 1331-1400, are 68 out of the total of 150 pieces.¹²⁹ In Shumen, the number of imitative copper coins (38) even exceeds the number of those issued by Ivan Shishman (36).¹³⁰ The hoard evidence reveals the same massive presence of privately ordered copper coins. The large hoards of Silistra V (~10 kg., buried around 1388) and of Vidin III, (3000 pieces, buried around 1355-1364), unfortunately, not completely examined, consist exclusively of copper imitations.¹³¹

These eloquent samples of the massive presence of privately ordered money among the coin circulation at the conclusion of the century are, of course, insufficient for estimating the precise level of monetization of the late medieval Bulgarian economy, as it is, however, all of the above. But the broad picture produced by this evidence is quite clear: a vigorous economy in

¹²⁷ VI. Penchev and J. Yurukova, *Bulgarsiki Srednovekobni Moneti i Pechati*, pp.204-205

¹²⁸ K. Dochev, *Bulgarski srednovekovni moneti, XIII-XV v.*, p.144.

¹²⁹ Iv. Bachvarov, *Yantrenski Nekropoli* [Yantra’s necropolis], (V. Turnovo: Vital, 1993) p. 64

¹³⁰ Zh. Zhekova, “Za Priemstvenostta mejdu Preslav i Shumen po Numizmatichni Danni” [About the succession between Preslav and Shumen according to the numismatic data] in *Tradicii i Priemstvenost v Bulgaria i na Balkanite prez srednite vekove* (V. Turnovo, University of Veliko Turnovo, 2003) pp. 220-229

¹³¹ VI. Penchev and J. Yurukova, *Bulgarsiki Srednovekobni Moneti i Pechati*, pp.203-204

constant hunger for ready cash, in which the private initiative at even local, petty-trade level matched, and perhaps, often exceeded the resources of the state. This does not mean, of course, that the presence of private money in monetary circulation signals some complete monetization of economy, but it delineates a definite trend in that direction, quite dominant towards the end of the fourteenth century. Since the money supply was insufficient, inelastic, and unevenly distributed, barter continued to play a role in economic relations, but a role already marginal and, as it seems, progressively reduced by the self-regulatory market mechanisms of demand and supply. This process of reducing the economic scale of barter was contingent on two factors. First, this was the disparity between the commercialized gross domestic product and its monetized portion, leading to invariably higher commodity prices in barter transactions than in their money equivalents.¹³² This, in turn, resulted in a certain common consensus about the necessity of privately ordered money lowering barter prices. Second, it was the existence of a social group, which, in order to safeguard its economic interests, eroded by the existence of barter, took the initiative for securing an adequate supply of medium of exchange: the professional middleman.

¹³² Exemplified, for instance, in the Italian trade practices in the Eastern Mediterranean, for which surviving parallel price lists confirm the assumption. For details see E. Ashtor, "Pagamento in contanti e baratto nel commercio italiano d'oltremare, secoli XIV–XVI," in *Economia naturale, economia monetaria*, ed. R. Romano and U. Tucci, *Storia d'Italia, Annali 6* (Turin: Einaudi, 1983), pp. 363–96.



Figure 5-1. Road network



Figure 5-2. Area of circulation of Bulgarian silver coins, 1300-1331.

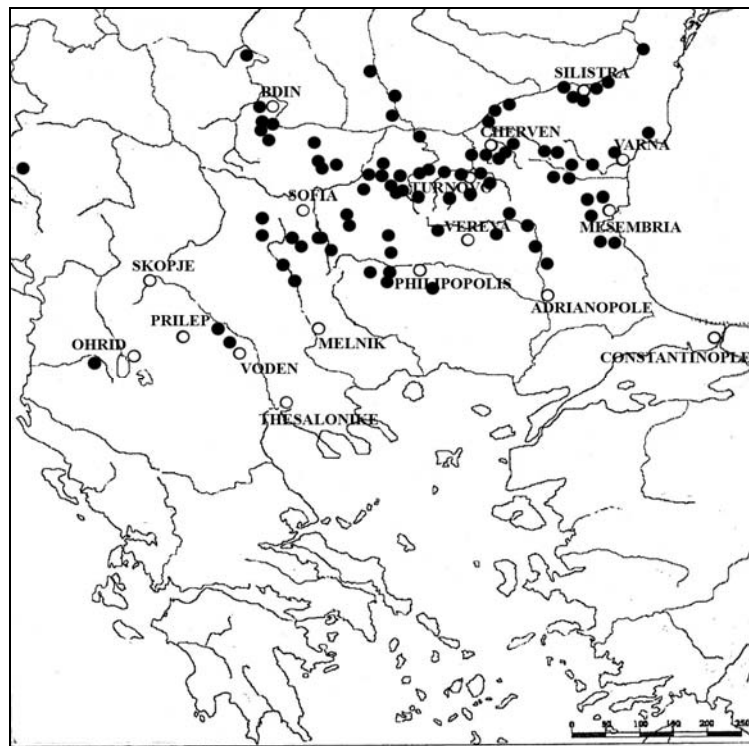


Figure 5-3. Area of circulation of Bulgarian silver coins 1331-1400.



Figure 5-4. Most popular type of silver coin, “Ivan Alexander with his son Michael Asen”
[Courtesy of the Museum of V. Turnovo].

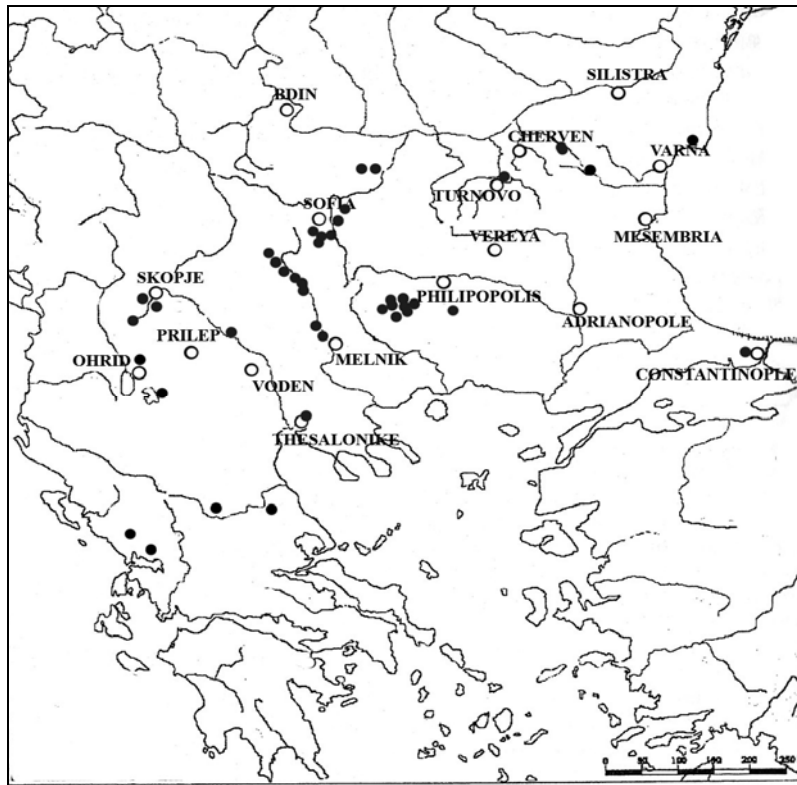


Figure 5-5. Area of circulation of Venetian imitatives.



Figure 5-6. Venetian grossi and their imitations. A) Bulgarian imitation of a Venetian grosso, type L. Tiepolo; B) Original Venetian grosso of D. Dandolo.[Courtesy of the Museum of V. Turnovo]



Figure 5-7. Bulgarian imitation of the copper coin of John II Orsini.[Courtesy of the Museum of V. Turnovo]

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

In Byzantium, as well as in Bulgaria and Serbia, the modes of production in agriculture were arranged around two poles, generally called estate and village. The most widespread form of an estate was *pronoia*, normally assumed as a grant by the central power to an individual of revenues, previously owed to the state. Its widespread in the twelfth century came as result of the imperial reaction to the threat of Pechenegs, Normans and Seljuk Turks in the eleventh century, realized in the context of decreasing gold reserves. The response of the Comneni - Alexius I, John II and, especially, Manuel I - to change the long-standing and fruitless strategy of defense-in-depth into a new, more aggressive policy through activating the frontier zones for expansion was without alternative. However, the new strategy of strengthening the border zones in the context of sharp deficit of gold reserves could be achieved only through the widespread of *pronoia* system - by granting privileges to the local *archontes*, often of non- Greek origin, in order to secure their loyalty and to direct their ambitions towards external expansion and not to benefit from assaults on imperial lands. This, in turn, changed the character of *pronoia* from an award given for exceptional merits into a basic economic instrument for imperial defense. As a consequence, the ubiquitous adoption of the system of privileges reduced in scope and substantially simplified the range of the state economy and its apparatus. It had been scattered into the provinces, each of which now had its own local administration, its own revenue, and its own expenditure. Much smaller number of people now remained under the direct taxation of the fisc, which thus made most of its apparatus dysfunctional and redundant. On the other hand, the system of privileges led to partial demonetization of the state economy, given that there was now no obligation on the holders of privileges to pay tax, and still less to pay it in cash. In this way,

large sums of money were liberated from the state economy and remained in possession of private hands and provincial authorities.

The role of the state became thus crucial for the economic changes in agriculture that started in the eleventh-twelfth centuries. Since the privilege holders were paying less tax and still less in cash, privileges resulted in improvement the infusion of cash into the market oriented production and accelerated money circulation. Thus, the state ceased to be the most important motive power behind the circulation of money as it had been by then.

The structural changes in Byzantine agriculture evoked by the introduction and widespread of *pronoia* system affected not only the presence of ready cash in private hands but also the efficiency of the organization of agricultural production. Since the land in the Balkans always exceeded the availability of labor, the main economic problem of the region was how to make the labor most effective. However, the efficiency of agriculture labor depended entirely on the possession of draft animals and supplementary equipment, the lack of which turned the manpower into a useless social burden. Therefore, the idea of delegating the right of extracting surplus by the tributary state to the estate holders was the best solution to turn the state burden of landless and, accordingly, nontaxable subjects (*eleutheroi*) into an effective manpower (*zeugeratoi or boidatoi*). From this economic construction, any party was beneficial. The fisc, although sharing its rights and incomes with a private party, (the estate) gained more from the taxing of the turned into *zeugeratoi* previously nontaxable *eleutheroi*. The estate gained the privilege of reduced tax, land and work force for production. The peasants (*paroikoi*), whose taxes were now transferred to the estate holder, gained more effective protection, economic security and means of production.

The large estates produced grain, wine, olive oil and products of animal husbandry. They possessed mills and workshops for iron and pottery production and collected rents not only from the arable land leased to their *paroikoi*, but also from their urban real estates. However, the monasterial foundations with their vast land possessions were not only producers and traders but they also played an essential role for structuring economic micro-regions. By their regular fairs they established the regional trade infrastructure between the town and country. The large estate's role in land management, thus, became dominant in agriculture in the course of thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. They provided better economic and, often, political security than the state. Their competent staff, the propensity to invest and improve with the aim of maximizing the profits and, above all, their flexible structure, responding to the market's demands made the estate a real bearer of economic advance in agriculture.

The advantages of the estate management were well recognized by the state authorities and often the initiative for granting of number of *paroikoi* or even whole villages to the monastic foundations came from the central power. The process of delegating economic functions to the monastic institutions was, however, not a monopoly of the political rulers. It was well paralleled by individuals as well. The private religious foundations were the best possible insurance against various misfortunes: social, political legal and fiscal, which threatened the integrity of a household. The foundation and endowment of a family monastery, or church, was a sound economic investment, capable of bringing material, as well as spiritual benefits to the founder and his heirs. The social role of monastic institutions, thus, went well beyond their religious, ideological and educational functions. Due to the collective character of ownership and lack of political aspirations, they became the best economic instrument of the central power. It even seems that they started to play somewhat modified-bank role in agriculture: to turn the

abandoned (excessive and economically ineffective) lands into profitable enterprises and to storage the financial reserves of the central power, which could be used according to the political expediency. In addition, the organization of production in the large estates was not composed only of different types of agricultural production, but also of large-scale involvement in processing and trading the agricultural products.

Towards the opening of the thirteenth century, this structural change caused noticeable growth of agricultural production that on its turn led to a growth of the rural industry, as registered by analyses of monastic *praktika* and of the charters of Bulgarian emperors. The trend of growth of the rural industry, however, is much better articulated through the archeological evidence. In the cases of Hotnitsa and of the medieval village located on the top of the ancient Sevtopolis, the market oriented craft production within the country, as demonstrated above, was of an impressive scale.

The expansion of the agricultural economy was signaled as well by the growth of local trade. The surviving documents record systematic attempts of the large estates to acquire possessions as close as possible to the regional market centers and, thus, to reduce the transportation costs. The eleventh century aristocratic maxima, articulated by Kekaumenos, “to live off one’s own,” was not the dominant one during the thirteenth- fourteenth centuries. The great landowners now massively directed their production to the market. The end of the thirteenth and the opening of the fourteenth century were marked by significant interest in obtaining urban properties and land in the vicinities of the cities. Especially active in this endeavor were, of course, the monastic foundations, the biggest landowners. The large estates, both, monastic and lay, possessed workshops and groceries, bakeries and wine shops, water and

windmills, which were rented out or directly exploited by their owners. Almost all of the documented monasteries possessed properties in and near the cities.

Further evidence for the growing sector of commerce is provided by the monastic documents suggesting proliferation of the local fairs, organized by the monasteries in the first half of the fourteenth century. Combining market activities and religious festivities celebrating the patron saints, the monastic foundations used these occasions to raise revenues from the market dealings and levied commercial taxes and stall fees. The development of fairs' network in the Balkans seems to resemble the two waves of fair expansion in Western Europe - during the ninth and then over the course of the eleventh and twelfth centuries

The Byzantine model that was completely adopted in Bulgaria, thus, combined features of both coercing the peasants through class-based asymmetrical power relations towards the market and pulling them into trade by economically efficient institutions: highly monetized tax system and price incentives of temporary and permanent markets. The transformation of peasant subsistence, therefore, into market involvement could be considered as result of the state intervenism. It led to economic polyactivity as entering in tenancies and land leases markets and searching for incomes outside the agriculture, which, eventually, turned into a specialization and commercialization of the production as in the cases of sgraffito production in Hotnitsa and the iron-making in village on the top of Sevtopolis.

The expanding commerce in the country led in turn to additional growth of the importance of fairs and urban market centers, a development similar to that in the West. It is important to note, however, that while it was one of the main peasant demands in the revolt of 1381 in England to gain free access to the urban markets, such restrains are not registered in the Byzantine socio-economic model. Because of the scarcity of written sources for the Byzantine

World in general and because majority of the surviving *praktika* concern the property of monasteries or of foundations that later became monastic, the petty peasant landholdings as well as the scale of economic activities of their owners could be assessed only archaeologically. Therefore, the evidence provided by archaeological investigations in Hotnitsa and the village on the top of Sevtopolis is crucial for understanding the economic changes that the country went through during the course of thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The signs of bettering the peasants' life, as demonstrated by the changes in tableware, were complemented by the scale of metallurgy, sgraffito pottery and jewelry production that went well beyond the needs of the villagers, apparently, produced for market realization. Last but not least, the impressive amount of ready cash, as exemplified by the coin finds in the village on the top of Sevtopolis, in Hotnitsa, Riakhovec and the late medieval cemeteries near the village of Yantra, indicating more money and more people with money, demonstrate the market orientation of agricultural production and rural craftsmanship. In many respects, this economic advance was based on the complementarity between the village, which provided the bulk of the production, and the estate, which ensured the better management. The main role, however, in this model of economic development was exercised by the state, the creator and regulator of the relations between the peasants and estate holders. The consequences of this tri-partite system are the saturation of the rural environment to the limits of its technical capacity for expansion, the proliferation of the estate and the following transformation of its production from self-subsistent to market oriented and the drive of the peasant, deficient in proper farming equipment for searching additional incomes outside agriculture: in artisanal production and specialization, and in commuting between the village and the regional market center. The unarguable development of economy in the country in Byzantium during the eleventh-twelfth centuries was not unique, however, but it

was part of the economic upheaval in the rest of Europe. It was further sped up with the progress of long distance trade in the Mediterranean world in the course of thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

The formative role of Alexius I's, John II's and especially of Manuel I's administrative reforms and the economic progress in agriculture and trade brought by them resulted in a prolonged period of peace and demographic growth that was well reflected by the towns' appearance. Towards the second half of the twelfth century, many of the settlements located within the provincial fortresses, especially the administrative and ecclesiastic centers, expanded outside their defensive walls and formed suburbia. Certainly, this change of the urban structural tissue reflected the change of the basic function and nature of the town - from defensive strongholds and seats of state and ecclesiastic authority into centers of production and trade with a more definitively urban way of life.

Another feature of the Byzantine economic model contributed indirectly to the formation and growth of towns. The replacement of an obligation in kind by one in cash, a phenomenon known from antiquity, in *pronoia* system resulted not only in buying out the peasants' corvée duties, but also of the military service of *pronoia* holders. Not only was this practice not restricted by the state, but in the course of the eleventh and twelfth centuries it was especially encouraged in the areas far from the frontiers. The obtained cash was used for hiring mercenaries, who proved to be much more efficient soldiers.

Manuel I Comnenus expansionistic policy based on the widespread of *pronoia* resulted in massive building of new and renovating the old strongholds that were to be garrisoned to serve as bases for the expansion of imperial authority. The fortresses were garrisoned with *pronoia* holders and militias from the local population, which in return received land and fiscal

privileges, a fact which played a formidable role in concentrating population around the provincial fortresses. The obligation of guarding the fortress, in fact, made the place of service for numbers of *pronoia* holders their permanent residence.

No less impact on the growth of towns in the Byzantine World had the structural changes of the financial services, which underwent serious simplification as well. In the provinces, the prerogatives of the omnipresent Byzantine tax collector (*praktor*) were sharply reduced by the number of holders of privileges who might live in his area and by the commanders (*kephalai*) of the towns, who were now entitled to collect their fees directly from the taxpayers. The obligation of *sitarkesis* or *sitarchia of towns* (a tax evolved from the *synone*), the supplying of fortified settlements with foodstuffs at a fixed price witnessed by the ninth-century sources, had been converted into a regular payment in cash by the eleventh-twelfth centuries. This money, most of which remained in the hands of the provincial authorities, was available now for buying supplies from the local producers for satisfying the needs of food and equipment. More importantly, the conversion of the military duties into cash affected the compulsory recruitment of artisans with an auxiliary role in the army. While this did not significantly affect the army dispositions supplied centrally with necessary equipment and services by the fisc, the local fortresses fell in sharp deficit of artisanal services, which now were to be obtained by ready cash. Thus, at the local level, the demonetization of state economy resulted in promotion of the pattern of demand of goods and labor, which, combined with the incentives offered by the local centers, security, and judicial services, became the main elements of the gravitational force attracting rural population around the fortified nuclei and reshaping the settlement's landscape. It might be safe to say, therefore, that the rise of towns manifested towards the end of the twelfth century was

attributable to both, economic growth in agriculture and administrative reforms undertaken by Manuel I Comnenus.

In Byzantium, like in Italy and Dalmatia, thus, the medieval town took shape as a community headed by a bishop and dominated by a small group of privileged families (*pronoia* holders) increasingly involved in a private enterprise. How powerful those urban provincial elites became was demonstrated in *Paristrion* in 1185 when the grievances of the local *archontes* Peter and Asen led to a massive revolt resulting in the restoration of the Bulgarian state. The Bulgarian revolt, as well as the secession of the Serbs and the Cilician Armenians from the imperial rule, was therefore a clear manifestation of the new balance of powers between the political center and its provincial periphery – a consequence of the widespread use of the *pronoia* system that dragged behind demonetization of state economy.

Although there is no direct correlation between the settlements' physical appearance and their function, the sites with the largest fortified areas tended to be centers of greater administrative and ecclesiastic importance, which in the course of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries also meant economic significance, visually illustrated by the size of their adjacent suburbs. Turnovo, with a fortified area of 23 ha, became the leading administrative and economic center of the restored Bulgarian state, with an inhabited area of more than 80 ha. Cherven had a fortress comprising 2.4 ha and developed suburbs of more than 20 ha. To the area of Shumen's fortress of 3 ha, a suburb was added, which was more than three times the size of the fortress. The fortified area of Lovech was 2.8 ha, with a suburb of 10 ha.

On the opposite end of the spectrum were the myriad of small provincial fortresses with solely defensive functions, guarding roads and mountain passes and offering shelter for the rural population. Although they also attracted population in their vicinities, in a scale proportional to

their fortified size, they obtained a qualitatively distinctive appearance from that of the large administrative and ecclesiastic centers. Their intramural space did not lose its military function. It remained uninhabited by civilians, with only a few military buildings and cisterns. The few guards that such type of fortress usually had, recruited among the local villagers, hardly induced some regular social or economic interaction, between the fortress and its country. Their interaction was intensified only in time of facing some crisis, political or natural, but usually they lived separate lives, as suggested by the archaeological evidence. The settlements near a rural fortress remained distant to their defensive center not only socially, but also physically. Often, the distance between a fortress and its gravitating villages was of 3 to 5 and even more kilometers. But even in the extraordinary cases, when a village was located closer to its defensive center, their social life, as exemplified by the churches always built outside the rampart, remained separated. The distinction between urban and rural fortresses is signified also by the title of their governing officials. While an urban administrative center was under the governing of a *kephale*, whose authority stretched over the adjacent hinterland, a small rural fortress was managed only by a *kastrophylax*, a military commander in charge with the command of the fortress's garrison and maintenance of fortifications.

The late medieval town in Bulgaria, as its Byzantine counterparts, consisted of two parts, fortified nucleus and suburbia that were perceived and that functioned as an organic and coherent entity. The last line of fortress' defense was built around an internal citadel or a tower, usually located on the highest site within the rampart. With the re-establishment of the fortresses as administrative centers after the crisis of the seventh century, these internal citadels became the main residences of the fortress' commanders and, later, if the fortress evolved into a town's nucleus, of the town's administration.

The appropriation of the Byzantine universalism, its theological-political ideal, cultural model and social norms in Bulgaria was well expressed by the construction of urban space. The principle of unity and harmony between the earthly and heavenly realms, though divided, is clearly substantiated in Turnovo and patterned over the provincial administrative centers. The spatial domination of the patriarchal church and palace over the emperor's palace denoted that the ultimate source of the earthly law is the blessing by the heavenly kingdom.

The constantly growing population within the limited walled space during the second half of the twelfth century resulted in an extreme building density. Therefore, in most of the uncovered medieval urban sites, the variable width and sudden ending of the towns' streets, suggest the notion rather of a labyrinth than of some town planning. As suggested by the archeological evidence the main streets, which were also the widest communicative arteries, were used as market streets. The basic urban tax-unit, known from the written sources, the parish community, is best expressed spatially in Turnovo, whose structure was subdivided into small quarters of 30-40 homes, grouped around a church and following the characteristics of the terrain. There are no indications of any principle modeling such spatial organization other than opportunism: the churches and their surrounding communities emerged simultaneously. In front of each of the parochial churches, either within or outside the rampart, as well as of the governor's residential palace and of towns' metropolitan church, public squares were formed, some of which, perhaps, functioned as open marketplaces. Much like its Byzantine counterparts, the late medieval town in Bulgaria had special zones within its structure, assigned for occupation by foreigners. Latin, Armenian and Jewish colonies were formed in number of Bulgarian towns: Turnovo, Varna, Bdin, Pleven, Mesembria and Philipopolis.

Although distinctive in its appearance, the medieval town in Bulgaria did not display any unique social order different from that of its environment. Its social structure consisted of the same elements like that of the country, though in different proportions: landowners and merchants, *pronoia* holders and *paroikoi*, artisans and peasants, monasteries and churches, wealthy *dynatoi* and a large number of people belonging to the middle (*mezoï*) and lower classes (*mikroi*). It was a community headed by a clerical leader, (bishop) and/or by political ruler (*kephale*), appointed by the central power, and dominated by a small group of aristocratic families. The social structure of the late medieval Bulgarian town, thus, did not differ from that of the Italian and Dalmatian cities in terms of concentration of landowners and wealthy people. Finally, and perhaps quite surprisingly for the advocates of “the agricultural character of the late Bulgarian and Byzantine town,” the archaeological data from the fortresses of Turnovo (Tzarevets), Cherven, Lovech and Shumen display predominance of artisanship over the agricultural activities.

Although the power in the urban communities was concentrated in few aristocratic hands, there are no signs of any spatial separation between social classes in terms of the zones of the city in which they lived. Palaces and luxurious houses, exemplified in the present study by the *Boyar House in Melnik* and the *Boyar House in Tsarevetz*, which must certainly have belonged to powerful people and represented major financial investments, were built next to houses of modest means and workshops. It should be noticed, however, that the notion of aristocracy in Byzantine texts, or *archontes*, as they were called, was not connected with high birth but rather with a position of trust in imperial service: a notion quite close to the modern understanding of meritocracy. What could be considered *aristocracy*, therefore, in Byzantium, as well as in Bulgaria, was a group of people, who, in one form or another, was paid by the government,

either through the system of imperial salaries or through its modified version, the (*pronoia*) system of privileges. Although the Byzantine aristocracy seems to fit into the classical Western notion of aristocracy as a landowning hereditary group that monopolizes the links with the central power, contrary to the Western model, however, the Byzantine aristocracy was merely a function of the state that practically monopolized the central and provincial governorships. It was composed by state executive officers and had the characteristics not of a hereditary, but of a corporate group, which had the ability to absorb new men and lacked the rigid and inaccessible structures of personal dependencies in existence in the West.

Among *archontes* there were also members of the middle class professions of notaries, money-changers and trade-agents, some of them, most likely, connected with guild-like associations. The governmental salaries of the lower class of *archontes* did not differ much from the income of the urban artisans, wage laborers, technicians and petty shop owners, with whom they formed the class of *mezoi*, the nascent middle class of the bourgeoisie. The long list of various professions that could be composed from the sources and the archaeological finds, suggesting high specialization of labor and standardization of production, raises the question of the social organization of industrial production – the role and development of the guilds in the Byzantine Empire and in its Balkan neighbors that still poses a serious challenge to economic historians. The guild manufactures in Byzantium disappeared from the sources after the liquidation of the Byzantine government of Constantinople in 1204 for almost three centuries. In the late fifteenth century, they emerged again in the economic context of the Ottoman Empire. However, if no traces of guilds exist beyond the twelfth century, there is also no evidence that professional organizations disappeared altogether after this time. What, most likely, happened, was that guilds, as state institutions, known from the *Book of the Eparch*, merely obtained an

entirely voluntary organizational form, unrestricted by the state control and therefore unregistered in the written sources. The new type of guild played a far more decisive socio-political role than the state controlled guild of the *Book of the Eparch*, for it participated in the administration of towns through its own representatives, thus more effectively protecting its participants' interests. The changes in state-guild relations, demonstrated above in the sphere of mining are observable elsewhere. Nicholas Oikonomides has demonstrated that such professional organizations existed for notaries, perfumers, butchers, sailors, construction workers and salt makers in Constantinople and Thessalonike. The vague traces of professional organizations within the thirteenth-fourteenth century's sources suddenly give a way to an Ottoman *kanunname* from the end of the fifteenth century promulgating explicitly detailed regulations for the professional organizations in Constantinople and some other large cities. A few decades later, in 1524 – 1550 there was already abundance of Ottoman normative documents regulating the professional organizations in Bursa, the fur-dressers, curriers and shoemakers in Sofia, the tailors and grocers in Philipopolis and iron makers in Samokov. Given that Ottoman policy, as it is well known, was to preserve the administrative and economic machinery left behind by the Byzantines, it seems quite possible then to deduce the adoption and preservation by the Muslim rulers of the forms of public control of the crafts employed in the Byzantine administration.

From the analysis of economic growth and urban development, as well as from the reevaluating the importance of trade for modeling late medieval Bulgarian foreign policy it becomes apparent that the entrance of Bulgarian lands into the orbit of transcontinental trade, run by the Italian maritime city-states, to be a natural realization of the accumulated surplus at a local

level. In its turn, the participation in the international trade gave further impetus on the domestic economic growth.

To such an extent the political struggles in the Balkans and, especially between Byzantium and Bulgaria, were motivated by the desire of their leadership to capture trade centers for the purpose of extending their control over merchants and over routes of inland and maritime trade that it may safely be said that trade became a chief factor in regional policymaking. What emerges from analyzing the surviving documents and, especially, from archaeological coin evidence is that the safeguarding of the economic interests of the Italian tradesmen influenced intensely the course of regional politics and the market initiative of the political class in both Byzantium and Bulgaria. It promoted, complemented, and intensified the emergence and development not only of a market-oriented economy, but also of a native merchant class, recognized and protected by the local authority and unrelated to the state offices, which actively interacted with the foreign traders and ran the local network of everyday market activities.

The general picture derived from the quantitative analysis of the collected coin data shows that towards the end of the twelfth century and, especially, after the fall of Constantinople in 1204, the general number of the hoards, found in Bulgaria, increased drastically in comparison with the previous periods. While for the period 1081-1185 there are only 7 hoards known from Bulgaria, for the subsequent two decades (1185-1203) the number of hoards increased more than five times. This trend accelerated even further for the period 1204-1257 and the number of hoards reached 109 within fifty years, which is thirty times more than the pre-1185 period. This drastic augmentation of hoarded money immediately poses the question of the nature of this phenomenon: Was the remarkable boost in hoarding in 1204-56 only a proportional reflection of the increase in political insecurity of the region or it was an indication also for the shift from

land-based, state-commanded economy to a public economy of exchange, where more people operated with more money?

Whether this drastic augmentation of hoarded money was only a proportional reflection of the escalating political insecurity of the region or it was as well an indication for the shift from land-based, state-commanded economy to a public economy of exchange, where more people operated with more money, is explained through examining the single coin data from the urban areas. However, the single coin finds within all urban centers, where coinage was found in efficient quantity, reveals that the increase of hoarding is paralleled by relevant increase of the single coin circulation. Therefore, it is safe to be said that the increase in hoarding was a function of the increased market activities and not just of political insecurity.

The long distance trade that towards the opening of the fourteenth century became main priority of Bulgarian foreign policy was complemented by introduction of silver coinage in Bulgaria that in the following years will dominate the money circulation. The analysis of the coin circulation in fourteenth century Bulgaria, reveals a steady trend of gradual monetization, in which trade played an obviously an important role. Hoards are now made up mainly of silver, the preferable medium of exchange in long-distance trade. Its increasing presence in hoards chronologically and topographically follows the Ottoman advance, whose catastrophic impact virtually closed the avenues of long-distance inland trade. The dominance of silver in hoards signals a certain division of the commercial sector into two levels: a local, in which the coins of small denomination (copper) dominated the everyday activities; and regional or international, dominated by silver. The majority of mixed, silver and copper hoards, marking a possible link between regional and local trade came from large urban centers, Turnovo, Vidin and Silistra. Mixed hoards of gold and copper coins of the period are few (only two) for a period of almost a

century, and their small size indicates a combination of family savings and money in circulation. The group of hoards of gold is dominated by small-size hoards of various coin types an indication of long-term accumulation, a practice concomitant with the higher sector of middle class.

In the course of the fourteenth century, especially during the reign of Ivan Alexander (1332-1371), the system of free coinage was established and flourished. It was a system characterized by striking of coins from metal and by the order of private persons under the control of the state authorities. As a consequence of the regional political fragmentation and the existing system of free coinage, mass circulation of Venetian imitative silver *grossi* in Bulgaria is discovered towards the third decade of the fourteenth century. Similarly, imitative silver coins of the Serbian king Stephen Dragutin were issued in the mints of Bdin, as well as imitations of the former governor of the appanage of Bdin, Michael Shishman (1323-1330) in the first years of Ivan Alexander's reign. Along with the imitations of the silver coins, needed for the long distance trade, it seems that after 1371, in most of the larger urban centers, such as Turnovo, Cherven, Lovech, Nicopol, Bdin, Varna, imitations of the existing copper coin types were intensively produced, as well, for the needs of the local market, which, as it seems, was in a permanent deficit of money of small denominations. In fact, in most cases, especially for the copper coins, the term "imitations" is not correct in the context of free coinage system. It should be called rather private coinage, the design of which was restricted by the state authorities of copying the symbols of the coins of the current monarch, but no more than that. The broad picture produced by the scale of this practice that will continue well after the demise of Bulgarian state is quite clear: a vigorous trade economy in constant hunger for ready cash, in which the private initiative at even local, petty-trade level matched, and perhaps, often exceeded

the resources of the state. The massive use of imitative coins, thus, provides an evidence for the reduction of the role of barter, for the scale of commercialization of production, for the institutionalization of market, and, last but not least, for the existence of a local merchant class, unrelated to landowning and agriculture that was concentrated in the urban centers.

The Bulgarian town of the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries, as demonstrated above, was far from being a mere center of consumption and an epitome of socio-economic decline as earlier historians regarded it. Quite the opposite, it was a thriving part of an economic model that was productive, well articulated and shared many aspects of the Western European economic models. In the mid-fourteenth century, a conjunction of factors that had nothing to do with economic productivity: the plague that struck all of Europe, the Ottoman expansion, and the subsequent restructuring of the trade of the eastern Mediterranean that together with the end of the *Pax Mongolica* reduced the economic importance of Constantinople, the Black Sea littoral and the Balkans in general, ultimately led to the demise of the medieval Byzantine World.

APPENDIX TEMPLATES

Table A-1. Hoards 1082-1185

Denomination	HOARD	amount	PERIOD	HOARD	amount	PERIOD	HOARD	amount	PERIOD
billon	Vetren	12	1088-1092	Isaccea I - IV	565	1148-1150	Plovdiv	21	1092-1095
	Suedinenie	20	118-1143						
tetarteron	Vereya	21	1143-1180						
hyperpyron	Kalipetrovo	(4 kg) 36	1092-1095	Suedinenie	5	1118-1143			

Table A-2. Hoards 1185-1203

Denomination	PLACE	amount	PERIOD	PLACE	amount	PERIOD	PLACE	amount	PERIOD
Billon 14 hoards	Turnovo, I	53	1185-1187	Dobri Djal	150	1185-1187	Draganovo I	752	1185-1187
	Enchevci	1230	1185-1187	Zlatarica	467	1185-1187	Belica	101	1185-1187
	Brjastovo	507	1185-1187	Iskra	54	1185-1187	Kamenno	17	1185-1187
	Krushare	320	1185-1187	Radnevo	19	1185-1187	Shipka	17	1185-1187
Billon 17 hoards	Jagoda	308	1185-1187	Novo Selo	144	1185-1190	Tsruncha I	1248	1185-1203
	Petrich	200	1185-1203	Dorkovo	28	1185-1206	Tsruncha II	923	1185-1203
	Preslav I	38	1190-1195	Smjadovo I	1048	1190-1195	Vurbica	906	1200-1204
	Draganovec	4000	1200-1204	Isaccea V	784	1200-1204	Shumen I	93	1200-1204
	Batkun	2120	1185-1190	G.Nikolaev	786	1185-1190	Enina	169	1185-1190
	Tiurkmen	128	1185-1190	Vereya II	699	1185-1190	Babek	760	1195-1200
	Ovcharci	3272	1195-1200	Plovdiv II	94	1195-1200	Veroja III	16	1195-1200
	Turnovo II	166	1195-1200	G.Slivovo	150	1195-1200	Osikovo	10	1190 -1203
Hyperpyron Electrum	Banja	80	1185-1190	Hubavene					
	Gornoslav	786	1185-1190	Novo Selo	18	1185-1190			
	Zlatarica	400	1185-1190	Banja	36	1185-1190	Turnovo II	8	1195-1200
	G.Slivovo	9	1195-1200						

Table A-3. Hoards 1204-1218

Denom.	PLACE	amount	PERIOD	PLACE	amount	PERIOD	PLACE	amount	PERIOD
Billon	Moesia			Thrace			Macedonia		
	Aksakovo	37	1206-1208	Asenovgrad	180	1210-1212	Aiani	34	1210-1212
	Asenovci	158	1210-1212	Beli Izvor	112	1208-1209	Brestovo	991	"
	Baniska	137	"	Bjaga	463	1218-1220	Brjastovo	1621	"
	Vodica I	22	"	G. Chochoven	300	1208-1218	Vereia	70	"
	Turnovo III	648	1206	Gurkovo	15	"	Gradevo I	104	1206
	Turnovo IV	13	1206	Kazanluk II		"	Gradevo II	351	1210-1212
	Turnovo V	19	1208	Dorkovo	29	1204-1207	Babek	1400	1185-1203
	Turnovo VI	9	1208-1209	Korten I	147	1208-1218	Drama	2863	"
	Turnovo VIII	4265	1210	Korten II	1568	"	Dubrava	477	"
	Turnovo IX	53	1210-1212	Kosten	95	"	Episkopi	59	1206-1207
	Kunino I, II	455	1208-1209	Lukovo	974	"	Jelesnica	378	1210-1212
	Kartal I, II	74	"	Maglizh	1196	"	Kolhikon	93	"
	Lovech	230	"	Pazardjik	214	1208-1209	Kochani I-IV	733	"
	Preslav II	246	"	Pirdop	62	1204-1206	Kiustendil	566	"
	Silistra I, II	2527	1204-1206	Vereya IV	1944	1212-1218	Kiustendilsko	371	"
	Strajica	35 kg	1206-1208	Vereya V	2600	1210-1212	Levkokhori	990	"
	Tulcha	22	1208-1210	Tvurdica I	259	1208-1209	Logodash	301	"
	Ch. Brjag	1362	1210-1212	Tulovo	674	"	Makedonia I-IV	785	"
	Chilnov	1166	1207-1218	Ustra I	1485	"	Neopolis	35	"
	Lom I	3633	1203-1218	Cruncha I, II	2117	"	Pokrovnik	488	"
	Smochan	930	1204-1206	Cherkovo	~500	1208	Thessalonike	50	"
	Polsko Kosovo	175	1210-1212	Muglizh II	6923	1212-1218	Halkidika	305	"
	Lukovit	4460	1210-1218	Krun I	60	1204-1209	Tishanovo	525	"
	Lom II	1689	1210-1218	Sovoliano	426	1204-1210	Koyno	497	1206-1207
	Draganovo II	1278	1207-1210	Dolna Varpishta	99	1206-1208	Struma Valley	471	1206-1210
	Levski (PL)	11	"						

Table A-4. Hoards 1241-1257

Denomination	PLACE	amount	PERIOD	PLACE	amount	PERIOD	PLACE	amount	PERIOD
Hyperpyron	Varna	14	1241-1257	Vulchi Trun	8	1241-1257	Lovech III	27	1241-1257
	Pirgovo	76	"	Ravna	5	"	Shumen II	51	"
14 hoards	Pisarci	10	"	Preslav IV	3	"	Preslav III	4	"
	Tvurdica II	230	"	Krastilci	10	"	Smjadovo II	11	"
	Ruen	5	"	Krichim	8	"	Bansko	8	"
	Voevodovo	471	"	Gorsko Kosovo	50 kg	"	Seres	130	"
Billon	Pisarci	300	"	Preslav III	34	"	Vulchi Trun	67	"
	Preslav IV	48	"	Ravna	56	"	Varna	78	"
26 hoards	Ruen	23	"	Aleksandrovo	125	"	Vardun	2020	"
	G.Orjahovica	143	"	Vurbovka	30	"	Dolna Kabda	2800	"
Total 34	Ivanča	10	"	Issacea	800	"	Preslav V, VI	57	"
	Krasen	698	"	Lovech II	5663	"	Nisovo I	330	"
	Svishtov	300	"	Ustovo	20	"	Mogilica	26	"
	Tri Vodici	900	"	Ustra II	154	"	Levski (K)	2.5 kg	"
	Maglizh	6923	"						

Table A-5. Hoards 1257-1400

Denomination	PLACE	amount	PERIOD	PLACE	amount	PERIOD	PLACE	amount	PERIOD
	Vidin V	1213	1390-1400	Silistra VI	5	1383-1400	Turnovo X	54	1393
Billon	Vidin II	40	1270-1280	Melnik I	66	1258-1282	Uglen	1kg	1330-1370
(Bulgarian;	Vidin III	3000	1300-1350	Melnik II	24	1258-1282	German I	13	1330-1370
Byzantine;	Vurbica	906	1330-1370	Petrich	1042	1258-1260	Vidin I	23	1340-1400
Serbian;	Draganovo III	9 kg	1370-1390	Cherven I	496	1383-1393	Osikovo	24	1340-1400
Romanian;	Narechen	1309	1370-1390	Cherven II	32	1380-1393	Vidin IV	40	1370-1400
Venetian;	Levski	1365	1258-1282	Malomir	591	1440-1445	Dorkovo	3 kg	1258-1290
Westen	Chuprene	1213	1258-1290	Tuzha	36	1330-1370	Cherencha	14	1258-1300
European)	Vardun I	2020	1259-1290	Chomakovci	11	1258-1290	Popovsko	8	1380-1390
44 hoards	Silistra IV	30	1393-1402	Rjahovec I - XIII	771	1258-1280	Silistra V	10 kg	1380-1400
	Melnik III	520	1330-1400	Slatina (Rom)	1021	1390-1400	Sofiisko	35	1400-1440
	Rhodope *	126	1360-1380	German III *	46	1370-1400	Kichevo *	506	1365-1371
Silver:	Vidin V	32	1370-1400	Kniazhevo *	31	1370-1400	Kiustendil *	14	1258-1300
(Bulgarian,	Mesembria	104	1390-1400	Krichim *	52	1370-1400	Drenovec *	78	1370-1390
Byzantine	Kozlovec *	36	1300-1360	Bachkovo *	238	1370-1400	Vratza	804	1380-1400
Serbian	Podgore *	58	1380-1420	Cherven III	43	1380-1393	Vardun II *	70	1390-1420
Venetian	Ruse *	1580	~ 1444	Silistra III	40	1350-1400	Tsruncha III *	21	1270-1300
Romanian	Kurdjali *	28	1330-1370	Turnovo X	1	1370-1400	Vladaia *	20	1390-1430
Western	Studena	22	1370-1400	Tishevica I *	652	1330-1350	Varbica	30	1300-1340
European)	Turnovo XI	10	1370-1400	Rakitovo *	40	1330-1370	Turnovo XIII	9	1350-1370
	Saranci	8	1350-1370	Elhovo	8	1360-1370	Vidincko	25	1370-1400
	Rusensko	15	1370-1400	Florentin	875	1390-1420	Samokov	9	1258-1300

Table A-5 Continued.

Denomination	PLACE	amount	PERIOD	PLACE	amount	PERIOD	PLACE	amount	PERIOD
60 hoards	Luka	130	1450 - 1460	Aleksandrovo	13	1333-1389	Dubene	80	1330-1340
	Pchelino	9	1370-1400	Vresovo	48	1350-1380	Yambol	10	1350-1380
	Rjahovec XII	1	1258-1300	Archar	309	1370-1400	Kjustendilsko *	176	1370-1380
	Varnensko	106	1400-1410	Silistra VI *	7	1383-1400	Tulcea (Rom)	21 kg	1355-1360
	Turnovo XII	6	1393	Tishevica II *	932	1330-1340	Vukovo *	400	1370-1380
	Granica *	39	1350-1371	Kostandovo *	30	1295	Igralishte *	100	1365-1371
	Kozarsko *	377	1365-1371	Vidin I	1	1340-1400	Krupnik *	25	1365-1371
	Dobrishte *	800	1365-1371	Kamenica *	300	1300-1330	Vodica II *	8	1383-1390
	Vitinia *	51	1370-1400	Sofiisko *	137	1395-1400	Dryanovec *		
	Prilep *	186	1360-1371					78	1383-1393
	Draganovo III	2 kg	1330-1370	Opaka	13	1330-1383	Markovcha	~ 100	1380-1390
	Bjala Cherkva	115	1330-1383	Mizek	26	1330-1370	Plovdiv III	~ 80	1355-1360
	Smjadovo	19	1330-1383	Aleksandrovo	3	1333-1389	Dubene	3	1330-1340
Hyperpyron	Tuzha	2	1330-1370	Varnensko	5	1330-1370	Svishtov	4	1258-1300
	Velichkovo	3	1330-1370	Popovsko	10	1380-1390	Eremija	10	1330-1370
	Pomorie	21	1340-1400	Gramatikovo	3	1330-1370	Sarafovo	30	1370-1390
	Bjala	8	1330-1380	Karlovo	6	1283-1300	Dragijevo	11	1325-1330
	Tulcea (Rom)	195	1355-1360	Lom	5	1330-1390	Nisovo II	300	1380-1393
				German II	2	1283-1300	German I	8	1258-1280
26 hoards									

Table A-6. Urban coin finds

PERIOD	Antiquity – 641	641 – 800	800 --976	976 --1028	1028 --1081	1081 --1143	1143 -- 1185	1185-- 1204	1204 -- 1256	1257 -- 1300	1300 -- 1331	1331 -- 1393
TOWN ¹												
PRESLAV Single coins	15	2	249	174	141	15	52	148	1106	72	16	32
TURNOVO Single coins	260						173	255	3650	694	1008	1796
HOARDS						2	154	226	5004	7	28	1299
SHUMEN Single coins	157 (9) AU	1	12	4	21	1	12	3	94	12	51	382
CHERVEN Single coins	9		1		7			3	25	3	10	60
HOARDS									3 AU			32 AE 43 AR 496 AR
MELNIK HOARDS									66 AE 24 AE			520 AE
Single coins	7		1				1	1	321	68	17	---

¹ Monetary data are compiled: For Turnovo, K. Dochev, "Tŭrnovo, Sixth-Fourteenth centuries" *The Economic History of Byzantium: from the seventh through the fifteenth centuries*. (Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington, D. C, 2002), pp 673-678; for Preslav and Shumen from Zh. Zhekova, "Za Priemstvenostta meĵdu Preslav i Shumen po Numizmatichni Danni" [About the succession between Preslav and Shumen according to the numismatic data] in *Tradicii i Priemstvenost v Bulgaria i na Balkanite prez srednite vekove* (V. Turnovo, 2003) pp. 220-229; For Cherven: V. Dimova, *Srednovekovniat Cherven* [The medieval Cherven] (Sofia: BAN Press, 1985) pp. 273-286; For Mesembria: E. Teoklieva- Stoicheva, *Medieval Coins from Mesembria 5th- 14th Centuries* (Sofia: Agato, 1994).; For Karvuna: M. Dimitrov, "Monetite ot Dionisopolis – Karvuna," [The coins of Dionisopolis – Karvuna] *Dobrudĵa* Vol 12 (1995).pp. 173-179.; For Kaliakra: V.Parushev, "Srednovekovni moneti ot Kaliakra," [Medieval coins from Kaliakra] *Izvestia na Naroden Muzej Varna* Vol. 26. (1990).pp. 141-147; For Ovetch: L. Lazarov, *Danni za Monetnata Cirkulacia na Provadiiskata Krepost* (Po danni na Dalgopolskia Muzei) [Data for the coin circulation of the fortress of Provat (According to data collected in the museum of Dalgo Pole)] (V. Turnovo: Vital, 2001), pp. 101-140. For Vereya: M. Minkova, "Monetnta Cirkulacia II-XIII v na Teritoriata na Augusta Trajana- Beroe -Vereya- Boruj." [Coin circulation 2nd-13th centuries on the territory of Augusta Trajana – Beroe – Vereya – Boruj] *Numizmatika, Sfargistika i Epigrafika* Vol. 2 (2005),pp 79-101.

Table A-6 Continued.

PERIOD	Antiquity – 641	641 – 800	800 --976	976 --1028	1028 --1081	1081 --1143	1143 -- 1185	1185-- 1204	1204 -- 1256	1257 -- 1300	1300 -- 1331	1331 -- 1393
TOWN²												
VEREYA	>1000	2	—	18	45	23	93	8	21	2	—	68?
Single coins												
OVETCH	—	1		1	2		1	2	39	11	14	55
Single coins												
MESEMBRIA	30	15	21	22	17	1	9	7	30	9	3	75
Single coins												
HOARDS		46AU			18AE			20+ 74+	104			102 AR
KALIAKRA			1		8				1	2	18	35
The citadel												
Single coins												
KARVUNA	73	1	8	1	59	5	19	73	35	3	7	32
Single coins												

² Monetary data are compiled: For Turnovo, K. Dochev, “Tŭrnovo, Sixth-Fourteenth centuries” *The Economic History of Byzantium: from the seventh through the fifteenth centuries*. (Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington, D. C, 2002), pp 673-678; for Preslav and Shumen from Zh. Zhekova, “Za Priemstvenostta mejdu Preslav i Shumen po Numizmatichni Danni” [About the succession between Preslav and Shumen according to the numismatic data] in *Tradicii i Priemstvenost v Bulgaria i na Balkanite prez srednite vekove* (V. Turnovo, 2003) pp. 220-229; For Cherven: V. Dimova, *Srednovekovniat Cherven* [The medieval Cherven] (Sofia: BAN Press, 1985) pp. 273-286; For Mesembria: E. Teoklieva- Stoicheva, *Medieval Coins from Mesembria 5th- 14th Centuries* (Sofia: Agato, 1994).; For Karvuna: M. Dimitrov, “Monetite ot Dionisopolis – Karvuna,” [The coins of Dionisopolis – Karvuna] *Dobrudja* Vol 12 (1995).pp. 173-179.; For Kaliakra: V.Parushev, “Srednovekovni moneti ot Kaliakra,” [Medieval coins from Kaliakra] *Izvestia na Naroden Muzej Varna* Vol. 26. (1990).pp. 141-147; For Ovetch: L. Lazarov, *Danni za Monetnata Cirkulacia na Provadiiskata Krepost* (Po danni na Dalgopolskia Muzei) [Data for the coin circulation of the fortress of Provat (According to data collected in the museum of Dalgo Pole)] (V. Turnovo, 2001), pp. 101-140. For Vereya: M. Minkova, “Monetnta Cirkulacia II-XIII v na Teritoriata na Augusta Trajana- Beroe -Vereya- Boruj.” [Coin circulation 2nd-13th centuries on th eteorotry of Augusta Trajana – Beroe – Vereya – Boruj] *Numizmatika, Sfargistika i Epigrafika* Vol. 2 (2005).pp 79-101.

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