

stresses the modernity not only of the economic and political vision of the empire; but above all of its religious message. There are lengthy descriptions of the native rites, and all of these are characterized as dark, superstitious, irrational and bloody. The poet deliberately places these beside examples of Christian prayer and liturgy, which are pictured as enlightened and modern. In the end this religious motif becomes the dominant one in the Roman argument for empire. Christianity is seen as the ultimate reason for the imperial *oikoumene* with its economic, legal and political structures. It is the embodiment of reason and revelation and of enlightened humanitarianism. In light of this, the imperial poet tells his audience, standing outside the *oikoumene*, insisting upon freedom from Roman rule makes little sense.⁴⁰

In sum, what we have found in analyzing the information provided by Corippus is that Justinian and his generals employed a coherent strategy in Africa, supported by cogent arguments for Roman rule. In part, both strategy and justification were similar to imperial policy elsewhere and even in earlier times. However, these were carefully adapted to the complex political and economic situation in Africa and took into account as well special geographical, climatological, and social factors peculiar to that land.

Fordham University

DIONYSIOS BERNICOLAS-HATZOPOULOS (Toronto, Canada)

*THE FIRST SIEGE OF CONSTANTINOPLE BY THE OTTOMANS (1394-1402)
AND ITS REPERCUSSIONS ON THE
CIVILIAN POPULATION OF THE CITY*

The end of the fourteenth and the first years of the fifteenth century were marked by the first major Ottoman effort to capture Constantinople. For nearly a decade the Byzantine capital sustained a very severe siege. The city's civilian population was devastated by famine and outbursts of the plague, and as a consequence a great part of the population fled Constantinople.

A detailed study of the events between 1394 and 1402 shows that the Ottomans used in their assault upon Constantinople their proven method of blockading the enemy city for a long period of time, thus causing its surrender. The method had been successfully tried on Greek cities in Asia Minor. The Byzantine capital, however, escaped the same fate because of the Mongol intervention and the subsequent Ottoman defeat at Ankara in July, 1402.

During the siege Constantinople sustained a number of violent Turkish attacks, especially those of the summer and fall of 1395 and that which followed the Christian disaster at Nikopolis in September, 1396, and lasted until the early spring of the next year.¹ The arrival in the latter half of 1399 of the French expeditionary corps led by Marshal Boucicaut brought temporary relief. In fact, the combined operations outside the capital of the Byzantines and their French allies are the only engagements which ended in victory due to the absence of the bulk of the Ottoman army that was away on military operations elsewhere.

The Byzantine inability to break the long siege produced isolation and increased hardships. Contacts with the West were maintained thanks to the fleets of the Italian maritime republics. Western help, however, was limited, and did nothing more than sustain life in the city, especially after the crushing defeat of the Christian army at Nikopolis. But the Byzantine government was unable to defend itself against the Ottoman onslaught, mainly because of serious political mistakes committed in the past which tied the survival of Constantinople to the assistance of its Western allies.

Even before the beginning of the war, the grain situation in Romania was

40. For native rites, see *ibid.*, 3.81-105, 6.147-165; for Roman ceremony, *ibid.*, 8.321-369.

1. On Ottoman tactics, see H. Inalcik, "Ottoman Methods of Conquest," *Studia Islamica*, 2 (1954), 103-29.

precarious and Constantinople felt the consequences. A number of factors explain this condition. Bayezid I (1389-1402) conquered in 1390 the Emirates of Aydin and Mentese, areas of significant grain production, and forbade all grain exports.² Also in 1391, the Mongols of Tamerlane invaded the area of Tana, another major grain producing and exporting region, and destroyed everything in their wake (they even occupied Tana itself in 1395).³ Moreover, the presence of Turkish armed bands outside the walls of Constantinople before 1394 prevented agricultural activity in the vicinity of the city.⁴ Therefore, although the *eupoioi* were spared, the lack of provisions directly affected the lower classes of Constantinopolitan society. In 1392 the merchants of Pera faced the possibility that ships carrying grain from the Crimea might arrive empty, while some time later the Bulgarian plains were devastated as a result of the war between Sigismund of Hungary and the Ottomans.⁵ The food situation became critical in late summer and early fall of 1394 when the Turks imposed a military-economic blockade upon the Byzantine capital. Some relief came during the first two years of the siege. Two limited shipments of grain arrived from Venice: 1,500 modii during the fall of 1394 and between 7,000 and 8,000 Venetian staria (1,750 to 2,000 modii) toward the end of 1395. The quantity of grain in the first shipment was less than twenty-two metric tons (21,978 kilograms), while in the second, the quantity was hardly over twenty-nine metric tons (29,304 kilograms).⁶ These amounts were so small that they could not substantially improve the food situation in Constantinople.

The food situation became much more precarious during the major Turkish attack of the winter of 1396-97. However, the arrival of a relief fleet in the spring of 1397, appears to have improved living conditions. Indeed, foodstuffs brought in from Trebizond, Caffa, and Amastris, eased pressures within the city.⁷ But this respite was short-lived, for, during the summer of that year,

2. Doukas, *Historia byzantina*, ed. I. Bekker, CSHB (Bonn: impensis E. Weberi, 1834), XII. 11-13: p. 47; E. Zachariadou, "Prix et marchés des céréales en Roumanie (1343-1405)," *Nuova Rivista Storica*, 61, fasc. 3-5 (1977), 298.

3. W. Heyd, *Histoire du commerce du Levant au moyen-âge*, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1885-86; rpt. Amsterdam: O. Harrassowitz, 1967), II, 373-77.

4. R. Loenertz, *Démétrius Cydonès, correspondance*, 2 vols., Studi e Testi, 208 (Vaticana: Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 1956-60), II, 1tr. 442.

5. P. Massa, "Alcune lettere mercantili toscane da colonia genovesi alla fine dell' 300," *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria*, nuova serie XI, p. 356, I, II.

6. F. Thiriet, ed., *Régestes des délibérations du Sénat de Venise concernant la Roumanie* (Paris: Mouton, 1958-), I, 868/23 December 1394; 829/9 December 1395. On modii and staria, see E. Schilbach, *Byzantinische Metrologische Quellen* (München-Düsseldorf: Brücken-Verlag, 1970), p. 104.

7. J. Bogdan, "Ein Beitrag zur Bulgarischen und Serbischen Geschichtschreibung," *Archiv für slavische Philologie*, 13 (1891), 542; Bulgarische Chronik von 1296-1413, Latin version by V. Jagić; J. W. Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus, 1391-1425: A Study in*

the food problem became once again so acute that, according to Manuel Calecas who at times lived in Constantinople and also in Pera, thousands of people hard pressed by famine fled the city.⁸ In a letter of 1 July 1397, addressed to Charles VI of France, Manuel II confirms this information.⁹ The staple food of a great number of Constantinopolitans, it seems, consisted of the produce of the city gardens: e.g., the cabbage sold in the markets.¹⁰ Doukas also speaks of the lack of *ἀλλων ἀναγκαίων τροφῶν*;¹¹ meat and fish undoubtedly were most scarce. Because of the presence of Turkish vessels in the waters near the capital, fishing had become a dangerous operation. A similar situation prevailed in the fall of 1398. Available sources mention again the pressures brought upon the population as a result of famine, and the exodus of a large number of people from the city.¹²

During the period between the accession to the throne of John VII (December 1399) and the battle of Ankara (28 July 1402), we lack specific information concerning food shipments to the besieged city. However, this does not mean that grain had disappeared. In fact, John VII himself was involved in scandal concerning a small quantity of grain, of unknown origin. In May, 1403, during the interrogation of witnesses in Pera, concerning the administration of the colony by the "Massarii," whose functions had expired, evidence was presented that they had received from John VII a quantity of wine, as well as seven modii of grain. In the same transaction, the emperor, his "Factor" Leon-taris and the "Massarii" Hector Fieschi and Ottobone Giustiniano, had gained *diversis modis* eleven thousand hyperpera.¹³ Although we do not have any further details, the character of this transaction resembles what is known today as a "black market." Also, Doukas says that before the end of 1399 one modios had reached in Constantinople the price of twenty hyperpera;¹⁴ by

Late Byzantine Statesmanship (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1969), pp. 140-41. On the attribution of this source to a contemporary Greek author, see D. Nastase, "Une chronique byzantine perdue et sa version slavoroumaine," *Cyrrilomethodianum*, 4 (1977), 100-71.

8. R. Loenertz, *Correspondance de Manuel Calecas*, Studi e Testi, 152 (Vaticana: Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 1950), Itr. 17, pp. 189-90.

9. "Chronique du Religieux de Saint Denis, contenant le règne de Charles VI de 1380 à 1422," pub. in Latin and trans. in French by L. F. Bellaguet, in *Collection des documents inédits sur l'histoire de la France* (Paris, 1840), pp. 558-63.

10. Loenertz, *Calecas*, Itr. 16, pp. 188-89.

11. Doukas, XIV. 16: p. 55.

12. Loenertz, *Calecas*, Itr. 47, p. 233; Itr. 48, pp. 234-37.

13. N. Iorga, "Notes et extraits pour servir à l'histoire des croisades au XIV^e siècle," "registres de comptes des colonies génoises de Caffa, Péra et de Famagouste," "Documents politiques. Analyses et extraits," *ROL*, 4 (1896, rpt. 1964), 90-91.

14. Doukas, XIV. 13: p. 55; Zachariadou, p. 306.

February-March, 1401,¹⁵ the price in the besieged city had reached new heights and eight mouzouria cost now ten hyperpera, which translated into 23.6 hyperpera per modios.¹⁶ This price corresponds to the one contained in a document drawn up in Crete, in September, 1401, in which it is mentioned that, one modios *frumenti valebat aspros centum* in Caffa, while in Romania the price had reached twenty-four hyperpera per modios.¹⁷ Thus, between 1399 and 1401 the price had increased by almost four hyperpera per modios. The impoverished population, unable to afford such a price, was forced to abandon the city in order to escape death by famine.

Meanwhile, during the blockade, the urban landscape of Constantinople, already marked by vineyards and gardens, saw the addition of some wheat-fields belonging either to monasteries or members of aristocratic families.¹⁸ The decrease in supply and increase in prices were due first to the blockade and second to the international situation.¹⁹

Officials responsible for the defense of Constantinople tried to control the mass exodus of the inhabitants and especially those who were needed for the defense of the city. Manuel II prevented the departure of his *οἰκεῖος* Manuel Palaeologus Raoul, who, unable to sustain any longer the difficulties caused by the situation in the capital, decided to leave the city during 1399, taking along his wife who was still a minor. He sold a field which he owned in the city with the intention of taking the money with him. However, the emperor intervened because he wanted to keep his *οἰκεῖος* in the city, and ordered the money from the sale to be handed over to Raoul's father-in-law. The latter was instructed to provide the couple with a monthly amount sufficient to satisfy their needs. Thus, Manuel Palaeologus Raoul remained in the besieged capital.²⁰

The same policies were enforced by the authorities after the departure of Manuel II for the west in December, 1399. Indeed shortly after his departure

15. F. Miklosich and J. Müller, *Acta et Diplomata Graeca Medii Aevi sacra et profana*, 6 vols. (Athina: X. I. Σπάρκος, 1860-90), II, (631) 473-74; (635) 481-83. For the chronology of the acts, see J. Darrouzès, *Le registre synodal du patriarchat byzantin au XIV^e siècle, étude paléographique et diplomatique* (Paris: Institute français d'études byzantines, 1971).

16. For the calculation of prices, I follow Zachariadou, pp. 301-02.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 302-06.

18. Miklosich-Müller, II, (649) 497-99; (654) 506-09; (537) 329-33; H. Delehay, "Deux typica byzantins de l'époque des Paléologues," *Mémoires de l'Académie Royale de Belgique*, Classe des Lettres, 2^eme série, vol. 13, no. 4 (Bruxelles, 1921), p. 104, between 1394 and 1398.

19. Miklosich-Müller, II (638), 485; Zachariadou, pp. 299, 306, who shows that in September-October, 1402, after the battle at Ankara, the situation changed: prices became reasonable again and one modios cost seven to eight hyperpera.

20. Miklosich-Müller, II (528), 304.

conditions became so difficult that, according to the *Livre des Faits* of Marshal Boucicaut, people left the city by night, lowered themselves from the walls by ropes, and surrendered afterwards to the Turks. John of Chateaufort, one of Boucicaut's lieutenants left behind with a small force in order to assist the defenders, realized that the mass exodus had to be checked if any able-bodied men were to remain within the city. Thus, Chateaufort organized a series of sorties into the surrounding area, and managed to return to the city carrying at times food supplies and at other times good prisoners who were exchanged for food and money. On the other hand, the Venitian and Genoese galleys left behind after the departure of the allied fleet in December, 1399, acted similarly: they attacked isolated Turkish vessels, which were sailing in the vicinity of the city. This sort of military activity lasted until the eve of the battle of Ankara "et ainsi la garda l'espace de trois ans contre la puissance des Turcs."²¹ However, the tactic did not improve the food situation. Chateaufort's men also suffered famine together with the urban population.²² During the years of 1399 to 1402 the city lost a steady stream of inhabitants: many crossed over to the Turkish lines, others attempted to escape by sea only to be made prisoners when they reached the Straits.²³ The latter, using various types of boats, hoped that if they were able to cross the Dardanelles they could take refuge on one of the Christian possessions in the Aegean.²⁴ The former simply *ἡτομονόουν* to the Turks without apparently having to suffer any particular ill treatment.²⁵

That the exodus of the Constantinopolitan population clearly constituted a grave danger for the defense of the city is reflected in the *Récit inédit sur le siège de Constantinople par les Turcs (1394-1402)*. According to this source the Turks deemed it unnecessary to attack the city, because they were aware that it would eventually pass into their hands. Indeed, they hoped that famine and misery would arrange everything.²⁶

The patriarchal acts which predate the battle of Ankara list the names of people who had left the city for the above reasons or were preparing to leave

21. "Le Livre des Faits du Mareschal de Boucicaut," in *Collection des mémoires relatifs à l'histoire de France*, by C. B. Petitot, 130 vols. in 131 (Paris: Foucault, 1819-29), vol. VI, XXXV, 497-98; Barker, p. 207.

22. Barker, p. 207.

23. P. Gautier, "Un Récit inédit sur le siège de Constantinople par les Turcs (1394-1402)," *Revue des études byzantines*, 23 (1965), 106, 23-24.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 106, 24-26. The prisoners will be set free after the signing of the treaty of 1403, between the son of Bayezid I, Suleyman, and the Christians—including John VII. See *Diplomatarium Veneto-Levanticum, sive Acta et Diplomata, res Venetas, Graecas atque Levantis illustrantia a. 1351-1454*, ed. G. M. Thomas, 5 vols. (Venezia, 1880-99), II, 290-92, no. 159.

25. Gautier, p. 106, 18-37.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 106, 26-30.

it shortly.²⁷ Among them we find a certain Mavrommatis, a landlord. He abandoned a field about Kynigos and his neighbor, the *οικεῖος* of the emperor, Maic Palaeologus Iagaris, had sown wheat in that field and had even built a wall around it in order to protect it from thieves who were frequenting the area.²⁸

In 1400, the sons of the late priest Pepagomenos wanted to mortgage their estate—one house and the Church of Saint Theodore of Vlachopoulos—in order to raise a loan. Afterwards, *πιεζόμενοι ὑπὸ τῆς τοῦ καιροῦ ἐνδείας*, they wanted to leave the city and return when and if the situation improved.²⁹ Also before July, 1401, a priest named Gavras, hard pressed by misery, made the decision to leave.³⁰ But a case of mass desertion of a whole urban region is mentioned in a patriarchal act in July, 1402.³¹ John Melidonis, *ἀπὸ τῶν πολιτῶν ἄρχων*, had acquired with patriarchal approval the *κτηροεῖα* of the Church of Saint John the Theologian.³² In order to undertake the necessary repairs, Melidonis obtained permission to farm an abandoned plot belonging to the church which was located near the Hippodrome. To do so, he had to demolish some porticoes belonging to the church which were previously rented to civilians. But in 1402 the tenants, forced by the *καιροῦ ἀνωμαλία*, not only had left their dwellings, they left the city too. One or two people still lived there and Melidonis obtained the patriarchal permission to pay a legal indemnity to those tenants remaining and proceed with their eviction. This is a clear example of mass desertion of a neighborhood by people with low incomes whose situation was difficult. They were among the first to leave the besieged city.

Another case involved the sale of sacred objects by the monks of the urban monastery of Kosmidion. The patriarch made them sign a declaration according to which they promised never again to engage in this sort of activity.³³ The *Acta* does not reveal the reasons which caused the monks to sell sacred objects. However, considering that they received a very lenient reprimand

27. K. P. Matschke, *Fortschritt und Reaktion in Byzanz im 14. Jahrhundert: Konstantinople in der Bürgerkriegsperiode von 1341 bis 1354* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1971), pp. 75-76.

28. Miklosich-Müller, II (649), 497. On the neighborhood and Gate of Kynigos, see R. Janin, *Constantinople byzantine. Développement urbain et répertoire topographique*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Inst. français d'études byzantines, 1964), p. 288.

29. Miklosich-Müller, II, (610) 443.

30. *Ibid.*, II (658), 514.

31. *Ibid.*, II (648), 495-96.

32. On this Church, see R. Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin. Le siège de Constantinople et le patriarcat oecuménique*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Inst. français d'études byzantines, 1969-), III, 264-67.

33. Miklosich-Müller, II (657), 512-13. On this monastery, see Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique*, III, 287-89.

from the patriarch, most probably they were provoked by the economic hardships of the times.

Careful reading of the patriarchal acts presents a clear picture of the economic plight of the inhabitants of Constantinople. Almost every person was struck by *ἀνωμαλία πραγμάτων*. Individual members of aristocratic families, related to the great houses of the empire, suffered as much as the common people. Among those struck by *καιροῦ ἀνωμαλία καὶ ἐνδεια* were members of the families of the Palaeologi,³⁴ Gavras,³⁵ Raoul,³⁶ Vranas,³⁷ and Philanthropinos.³⁸ To survive a large number of *οἰκεῖοι* spent their wives' dowries and either sold or mortgaged their houses or lands within the city. Some examples are:

In December, 1399, a patriarchal tribunal intervened in favor of Maria Hagiopetritissa, the wife of John Gavras who had been sued by his creditors. Because of her husband's debts, her dowry had been completely wiped out. She, therefore, demanded and obtained from the court the right to be given priority over her husband's creditors, in order to recover her dowry, which according to the marriage contract, was calculated to be 702 hyperpera. Through this argument she succeeded in saving her husband from serving his prison sentence.³⁹

In February, 1400, because of the financial stresses, the *οἰκεῖοι* of the emperor, Michael Raoul, Gabriel Palaeologus, and the adolescent John Palaeologus, petitioned the patriarchal court for authorization to proceed with the sale of the estate (*δοσιήτεια*) that they had inherited and which, left unattended, would collapse. With monies from the sale they intended, first, to repay their creditors and, then, to use the remainder for their subsistence.⁴⁰

In April, 1400, Manuel Papyllas, whose daughter was married to Alexios Palaeologus, lodged a complaint against his son-in-law with the patriarchal court. Forced by poverty and the abnormal situation, Alexios spent his wife's dowry which amounted to 1,000 hyperpera. Papyllas asked for its restitution. The court accepted the father's claim and ruled that part of the Palaeologus's estate—equal to the claimed amount of his wife's dowry—ought to be ceded to her.⁴¹

34. Miklosich-Müller, II (565), 375-77; (569), 382-84; (678), 557-58; (554), 355-58.

35. *Ibid.*, II (523), 299-300.

36. *Ibid.*, II (528), 304-12.

37. *Ibid.*, II (592), 420-21.

38. *Ibid.*, II (646), 492-94.

39. *Ibid.*, II (523), 299-300; N. Matsis, *Τὸ οἰκογενειακὸν δίκαιον κατὰ τὴν νομολογίαν τοῦ Πατριαρχείου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως τῶν ἐτῶν 1315-1401* (Athina, 1962), p. 105.

40. Miklosich-Müller, II (554), 355-58.

41. *Ibid.*, II (565), 375-77; Matsis, pp. 91-92, 107.

In 1401, the *oikeios* of the emperor, Manuel Vouzenos, having sold or mortgaged everything he possessed, found himself in complete poverty and asked the patriarch for permission to sell his wife's house for 275 hyperpera to the businessman Argyropoulos. Taking into consideration the interests of the young wife, the patriarch agreed but, in order to help the couple, he decided that the house had to be sold in auction (*εις τό κἀντος*), hoping that a bidder would offer more than the 275 hyperpera offered by Argyropoulos. When the bid closed, no superior offer had been made; furthermore, Argyropoulos changed his mind and withdrew his offer. Sometime later, another buyer was found who gave the same amount which had been offered earlier by Argyropoulos. The new buyer was Thomas Kalokyris, *ἀπό τῶν πολιτικῶν ἀρχόντων*.⁴²

In November, 1401, Michael Palaeologus, whose wife was a minor, overpowered by famine and debts, asked the patriarch to allow him to sell his own vine in the city.⁴³ The demand was granted under certain conditions and some days later, Gabriel Palaeologus, the brother of Michael and also *oikeios* of the emperor, purchased the vine in order to prevent any outsider from buying it. However, having no money himself, he asked the patriarch to allow him to use his wife's jewels in order to raise a loan.⁴⁴

Thus, members of the aristocracy residing within the besieged city suffered side by side with the commoners. The widespread misery neutralized at least partly the economic privileges of this class.⁴⁵ Others, like the monk Methodius, "because of the misery and the lack of things," could not pay to the Church of Saint Euphemia his annual rent of three hyperpera for the use of a small garden plot. He received a favorable opinion from the empress, the wife of John VII, who earlier had granted him an interview and interceded with the patriarch to lower the rent to one hyperpera per year.⁴⁶ Also, because of the *ἀνωμαλία πραγμάτων*, the merchant Constantine Perdicaris could not repay to his old associate, Thomas Kalokyris, a debt of 500 Hyperpera.⁴⁷

The general misery also affected men like Manuel Chrysobergis, a baker by trade. He had nothing to eat, was unable to pay his debts and had to sell his possessions in order to survive.⁴⁸ The wine merchant Stylianos Chalkeopoulos had been unable for six years to pay his creditors; he owed them 300 hyper-

42. Miklosich-Müller, II (646), 492-94; Matsis, pp. 92, 102, n. 2.

43. Miklosich-Müller, II (678), 557-58; Matsis, pp. 91-92, 114.

44. Miklosich-Müller, II (679), 559; Matsis, pp. 124-25.

45. B. Ferjančić, *Поседи припадника рода Палеолога* (Possessions de la famille des Paléologues), *Зборник радова византолошког института*, 17 (1976), 164 (French résumé).

46. Miklosich-Müller, II (560), 370. For this Church, see Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique*, III, 120-24.

47. Miklosich-Müller, II (562), 372-74; Matsis, p. 112.

48. Miklosich-Müller, II (609), 441-42.

pera.⁴⁹ The two sons of the priest Pepagomenos, crushed by misery caused by the "difficult times," decided to mortgage their possessions, pay their debts and then leave the city.⁵⁰ Living in complete misery, suffering from the cold and having nothing to eat, the son of the late Exotrochos wanted to sell the house he had inherited from his father. No information is given on the size of the house and its condition. However, despite the selling price of 250 hyperpera fixed by the patriarchal agent Michael Palaiophylax who took under consideration *τόν καιρόν καί τὰ πράγματα*, no prospective buyer appeared.⁵¹ On the other hand, Constantine Pegonitis tried to escape his misery by investing unsuccessfully so in business all that was left of his money. Moreover, Pegonitis, to the despair of his mother, began demolishing his paternal house, most probably, in order to sell the timber.⁵²

Those possessing property on the Propontide Islands had serious problems. In fact, they could not look after their lands because of the menacing presence of Turkish vessels sailing in the area. Thus, we have the case of a certain Nicholas, owner of vineyards on the isle of Prinkipos, who had been captured by the Turks. His wife Irene reached an agreement with a certain Pachoumas, a wine merchant, who could secure the release of her husband. According to their agreement, Pachoumas conceded to pay for the still undelivered wine. In turn, Irene was to use the monies for her husband's release from the Turks.⁵³

For others, however, contrary to what was happening to the majority of the population, their situation was far from disastrous. They knew how to profit from it. We have already encountered the references to the black market activities of John VII and his associates. The sources give us information about others who lent money, bought commercial establishments, houses or land, and were even able to leave the city to conduct commercial activities elsewhere.

It should be pointed out, however, that not all sailings from Constantinople's ports were successful, even those of armed vessels. For example, the merchant Constantine Angelos was taken prisoner by the Turks while travelling from Constantinople to Chios when the armed vessel on which he was a passenger was captured, probably at the large of Gallipoli. He had missed an earlier vessel and had to wait one month before boarding the next ship bound for Chios. Through his misfortune, he was captured by the Turks.⁵⁴ Moreover, it is evident that contacts between the Byzantine capital and other regional commercial centers were few and irregular, because of the Turkish naval presence.

49. *Ibid.*, II (617), 452-54.

50. *Ibid.*, II (610), 443-44.

51. *Ibid.*, II (613), 447-48.

52. *Ibid.*, II (571), 386-87.

53. *Ibid.*, II (604), 433-34.

54. *Ibid.*, II (680), 560-61.

One may suggest that the impoverishment of a very large part of the Constantinopolitan population, without class distinction, caused the enrichment of another whose numerical composition remains unknown. Thus, during the years of the blockade, we have a concentration of capital in the hands of those who were able to profit from the widespread misery.⁵⁵ Moreover, it seems that some creditors preferred to transfer outside the capital moveable securities as jewelry. They preferred the hazards of sea travel to the uncertainties of Constantinople. We are informed from a patriarchal act, dated December, 1401, that a creditor, probably a Genoese, brought to Chios some jewels given to him in Constantinople in order to secure a loan.⁵⁶ Chios, then a Genoese colony, could offer the security of their naval power.

The members of the Constantinopolitan aristocracy profitted most from the plight of the urban population. They include the *οικεῖοι*, *πολιτικοὶ ἄρχοντες*, senators, *ἀποκρισιῶριοι*, and *κτῆτορες* of monasteries bearing the names of the great families of the capital. Thus, the *οικεῖος* Nicholas Sophianos,⁵⁷ in his capacity as *κτῆτωρ* of the urban monastery of Saint Mamas,⁵⁸ bought the field sold by Manuel Raoul Palaeologus for 800 hyperpera.⁵⁹ He also bought a perfume shop, located near the gate of Kynigos, for 200 hyperpera;⁶⁰ he is, perhaps, the same person who lent 100 hyperpera to a cloth maker named Koumousis. Sophianos received his money back in 1399-1400 after Koumousis' death. In the *Acta* he is called Sophianos.⁶¹

The *ἀπό τῶν πολιτικῶν ἀρχόντων* Thomas Kalokyris was also involved in business; he too lent money with interest. He entered into a short-lived partnership with Constantine Perdicaris, aiming at the exploitation of the *πεταραρικὸν ἐργαστήριον* of his associate.⁶² He lent 300 hyperpera at an interest rate of 15 percent to a certain Panopoulos, who had mortgaged his house; he was also involved in the real estate business and bought the houses of famine stricken owners.⁶³ Another, Andreas Argyropoulos who was *οικεῖος* and *ἀπὸ τῆς πολιτείας ἄρχων*, bought real estate and was involved in the fur trade in Valachia.⁶⁴

55. Matschke, p. 75.

56. Miklosich-Müller, II (685), 565-66.

57. Often mentioned in the *Acta*. See N. Oikonomides, *Hommes d'affaires Grecs et à Constantinople (XIII^e-XV^e siècles)*, Conférence Albert-le-Grand, Montreal-Paris 1979, p. 121, n. 264.

58. On this monastery, see Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique*, III, 314-19; and *idem*, *Constantinople byzantine*, p. 274.

59. Miklosich-Müller, II (528), 304-12; Matschke, p. 86.

60. Miklosich-Müller, II (566), 377-79; Matschke, p. 86.

61. Miklosich-Müller, II (566), 377-79; Matschke, p. 64.

62. Miklosich-Müller, II (536), 326-28. We ignore the function of this workshop. See Oikonomides, p. 103, n. 215.

63. Miklosich-Müller, II (568), 380-82; (646) 492-94; Matschke, pp. 88, 89.

64. Miklosich-Müller, II (564), 374-75; (646), 492-94; Matschke, pp. 88, 89.

By far, however, the most important figure in business activity was the *οικεῖος* and *ἄρχων* George Goudelis, known to have formed a partnership with Manuel Koresis during the blockade. The latter, following the terms of the agreement, went on a business trip to Sinope and Amisos, on the Anatolian coast of the Black Sea, which however failed because of the presence of Mongols in the area. Goudelis must have been an old man at the time of the Constantinopolitan siege, although earlier he had held important positions in the State administration. He is mentioned in 1382 as an ambassador and negotiator for John V during the talks with the Genoese. Four years later Demetrius Cydonis calls him *μεσάζων*. Goudelis is also mentioned in a Genoese document dated 1 February 1390, as an imperial agent together with Nicholas Notaras during talks with the Genoese of Pera. He had a sister, kyra Anna Assanina Palaeologina, who is designated in the *Acta* as *θεῖα* of the emperor. Moreover, Goudelis' sons, John and Philip, were also involved in commercial activities.⁶⁵

On the other hand, the great ladies of Constantinopolitan society are also included in the group of aristocratic merchants. However, as in the following case, commercial spirit went hand in hand with financial stress. Theodora Palaeologina had come to an agreement with Theodora Trychadaina to share expenses for the support of their married children who were still minor. According to the agreement, the children would spend alternate years with Palaeologina and Trychadaina. But even so, things were difficult for the two women. Therefore, with Trychadaina's consent, Theodora Palaeologina pawned the children's jewels and secured a loan of 300 hyperpera. The amount was then given to John Goudelis, who was leaving on a business trip to the Aegean in order to be invested. The trip was uneventful and successful. The two women received their profit and promptly began to quarrel. Palaeologina demanded the money because, she said, this was the year when the children were living with her, and she would have to cover her expenses. The patriarchal court, which ruled on the case, decided in favor of Palaeologina, because "profits ought to go where the fiscal burden lay." Damages, however, ought to be shared by the two women.⁶⁶

Lack of wood was another serious problem caused by the blockade. The urban residents had always used wood unsparingly. Obtained from the forests near the capital, it was used as lumber for the building industry and the city's shipyards, and as firewood for bakeries, cooking and heating.⁶⁷ The blockade

65. Miklosich-Müller, II (675), 546-50; (581), 400-01; Matschke, pp. 86-88; Oikonomides, pp. 64, 68.

66. Miklosich-Müller, II (656), 511-12.

67. "Ἐγκώμιον εἰς τὸ μέγα βασιλεῖα κύρ Μανουήλ τὸν Παλαιολόγον καὶ εὐσεβέστατον αὐτοκράτορα τὸν κραταῦν καὶ ἄγων ἡμῶν αὐθέντην καὶ βασιλέα κύρ Ἰωάννην τὸν Παλαιολόγον," in S. P. Lampros, *Παλαιολόγεια καὶ Πελοποννησιακά*, 4 vols. in 2 (Athinai: Ἐπιτροπὴ ἑκδόσεως τῶν καταλογίων Σπ. Λάμπρου, 1912-30), III, 145, 18-23.

One may suggest that the impoverishment of a very large part of the Constantinopolitan population, without class distinction, caused the enrichment of another whose numerical composition remains unknown. Thus, during the years of the blockade, we have a concentration of capital in the hands of those who were able to profit from the widespread misery.⁵⁵ Moreover, it seems that some creditors preferred to transfer outside the capital moveable securities as jewelry. They preferred the hazards of sea travel to the uncertainties of Constantinople. We are informed from a patriarchal act, dated December, 1401, that a creditor, probably a Genoese, brought to Chios some jewels given to him in Constantinople in order to secure a loan.⁵⁶ Chios, then a Genoese colony, could offer the security of their naval power.

The members of the Constantinopolitan aristocracy profitted most from the plight of the urban population. They include the *οικεῖοι*, *πολιτικοί* ἄρχοντες, senators, *ἀποκρισιάρηοι*, and *κτήτορες* of monasteries bearing the names of the great families of the capital. Thus, the *οικεῖος* Nicholas Sophianos,⁵⁷ in his capacity as *κτήτωρ* of the urban monastery of Saint Mamas,⁵⁸ bought the field sold by Manuel Raoul Palaeologus for 800 hyperpera.⁵⁹ He also bought a perfume shop, located near the gate of Kynigos, for 200 hyperpera;⁶⁰ he is, perhaps, the same person who lent 100 hyperpera to a cloth maker named Koumousis. Sophianos received his money back in 1399-1400 after Koumousis' death. In the *Acta* he is called Sophianos.⁶¹

The *ἀπό τῶν πολιτικῶν ἀρχόντων* Thomas Kalokyris was also involved in business; he too lent money with interest. He entered into a short-lived partnership with Constantine Perdicaris, aiming at the exploitation of the *πεταραρκόν ἐργαστήριον* of his associate.⁶² He lent 300 hyperpera at an interest rate of 15 percent to a certain Panopoulos, who had mortgaged his house; he was also involved in the real estate business and bought the houses of famine stricken owners.⁶³ Another, Andreas Argyropoulos who was *οικεῖος* and *ἀπό τῆς πολιτείας* ἄρχων, bought real estate and was involved in the fur trade in Valachia.⁶⁴

55. Matschke, p. 75.

56. Miklosich-Müller, II (685), 565-66.

57. Often mentioned in the *Acta*. See N. Oikonomides, *Hommes d'affaires Grecs et à Constantinople (XIII^e-XV^e siècles)*, Conférence Albert-le-Grand, Montreal-Paris 1979, p. 121, n. 264.

58. On this monastery, see Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique*, III, 314-19; and *idem*, *Constantinople byzantine*, p. 274.

59. Miklosich-Müller, II (528), 304-12; Matschke, p. 86.

60. Miklosich-Müller, II (566), 377-79; Matschke, p. 86.

61. Miklosich-Müller, II (566), 377-79; Matschke, p. 64.

62. Miklosich-Müller, II (536), 326-28. We ignore the function of this workshop. See Oikonomides, p. 103, n. 215.

63. Miklosich-Müller, II (568), 380-82; (646) 492-94; Matschke, pp. 88, 89.

64. Miklosich-Müller, II (564), 374-75; (646), 492-94; Matschke, pp. 88, 89.

By far, however, the most important figure in business activity was the *οικεῖος* and *ἄρχων* George Goudelis, known to have formed a partnership with Manuel Koresis during the blockade. The latter, following the terms of the agreement, went on a business trip to Sinope and Amisoss, on the Anatolian coast of the Black Sea, which however failed because of the presence of Mongols in the area. Goudelis must have been an old man at the time of the Constantinopolitan siege, although earlier he had held important positions in the State administration. He is mentioned in 1382 as an ambassador and negotiator for John V during the talks with the Genoese. Four years later Demetrius Cydonis calls him *μεσάζων*. Goudelis is also mentioned in a Genoese document dated 1 February 1390, as an imperial agent together with Nicholas Notaras during talks with the Genoese of Pera. He had a sister, kyra Anna Assanina Palaeologina, who is designated in the *Acta* as *θεῖα* of the emperor. Moreover, Goudelis' sons, John and Philip, were also involved in commercial activities.⁶⁵

On the other hand, the great ladies of Constantinopolitan society are also included in the group of aristocratic merchants. However, as in the following case, commercial spirit went hand in hand with financial stress. Theodora Palaeologina had come to an agreement with Theodora Trychadaina to share expenses for the support of their married children who were still minor. According to the agreement, the children would spend alternate years with Palaeologina and Trychadaina. But even so, things were difficult for the two women. Therefore, with Trychadaina's consent, Theodora Palaeologina pawned the children's jewels and secured a loan of 300 hyperpera. The amount was then given to John Goudelis, who was leaving on a business trip to the Aegean in order to be invested. The trip was uneventful and successful. The two women received their profit and promptly began to quarrel. Palaeologina demanded the money because, she said, this was the year when the children were living with her, and she would have to cover her expenses. The patriarchal court, which ruled on the case, decided in favor of Palaeologina, because "profits ought to go where the fiscal burden lay." Damages, however, ought to be shared by the two women.⁶⁶

Lack of wood was another serious problem caused by the blockade. The urban residents had always used wood unsparingly. Obtained from the forests near the capital, it was used as lumber for the building industry and the city's shipyards, and as firewood for bakeries, cooking and heating.⁶⁷ The blockade

65. Miklosich-Müller, II (675), 546-50; (581), 400-01; Matschke, pp. 86-88; Oikonomides, pp. 64, 68.

66. Miklosich-Müller, II (656), 511-12.

67. "Ἐγκώμιον εἰς τὸ μέγα βασιλεῖα κυρ Μανουήλ τὸν Παλαιολόγον καὶ εὐσεβέστατον αὐτοκράτορα τὸν κραταῖον καὶ ἁγίων ἡμῶν ἀνθέντην καὶ βασιλεῖα κυρ Ἰωάννην τὸν Παλαιολόγον," in S. P. Lampros, *Παλαιολόγεια καὶ Πελοποννησιακά*, 4 vols. in 2 (Athina: Ἐπιτροπὴ ἑκδόσεως τῶν καταλοίπων Σπ. Λάμπρου, 1912-30), III, 145, 18-23.

cut off access to this energy source and, consequently, some of the residents began to demolish an unknown number of large houses, whose roof and ceiling beams could be used for more practical purposes.⁶⁸ Perhaps, this is what Constantine Pegonitis wanted to do when he began demolishing his paternal home over his mother's objections. Acting on her desperate plea, the patriarchal court intervened and put an end to the demolition in May, 1400.⁶⁹ One may also suppose that the same goal was behind the purchase for 160 hyperpera by the priest Michael Sgouropoulos of the estate (ὁσπήτια) of the impoverished sons of Lambadinos. As soon as he took possession he began the demolition, perhaps, first to sell the wood and second to exploit the rent of the plot.⁷⁰

During the siege, the population of the Byzantine capital suffered also from plague outbreaks, which were now a regular part of the general misery. The very high mortality which marked its debut in the 1340s was followed by a long period during which the plague became endemic. The pattern was broken from time to time by violent outbursts which were as murderous as the great epidemic of the 1340s.⁷¹

For Constantinople, we learn from the sources that in 1391 a major epidemic confronted the population, already suffering from lack of food and the continuous presence of the Turks outside the city.⁷² It continued for another year causing great suffering.⁷³ The plague is again mentioned in the sources for 1397-98, when it was brought by sailors to Genoa, Venice and all the maritime cities of Romania.⁷⁴ While famine exhausted the population, the miserable sanitary conditions of the besieged capital were a prime breeding ground for the pestilence. In the streets of Constantinople one could see the dead, victims of the epidemic.⁷⁵

When the blockade was finally lifted in the early summer of 1402, the Byzantine capital lay exhausted. The numerous sufferings caused by the prolonged siege shattered the Constantinopolitan feeling of security and it became soon clear that the city survived because of the Mongol intervention. Until

68. Doukas, XIII. 14-17: p. 50.

69. Miklosich-Müller, II (571), 386-87.

70. *Ibid.*, II (554), 355-58.

71. P. Ziegler, *The Black Death* (London: Collins, 1969), p. 25.

72. Loenertz, *Cydonès*, II, ltr. 431, p. 386.

73. Massa, p. 356, I, II.

74. G. Stella, "Annales Gennenses," *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, ed. L. A. Muratori, 25 vols. in 28 (Milano: ex typographia Societatis palatine, 1723-51), XVII, col. 1155; P. Schreiner, *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken*, CFHB 12/1 (Wien: Verlag der Österr. Akad. d. Wiss., 1975-), I, 619, 89.5.

75. "Θρήνος περί Ταμωρλάγγου," in *Carmina Graeca Medii Aevi*, ed. G. Wagner (Leipzig, 1874), pp. 29, 37.

1453, the city remained on a war footing, lacking substantial hinterland and enclosing behind its walls an impoverished and scared population.

Until the new grave hostilities against the Turks in 1422, the two-decade interval was broken only by a violent and brief clash with Musha. After his death, Mehmet I (1413-21) pursued policies of peace and reconciliation, giving the Byzantine state a period of tranquility. Despite this pause, it was too late for the state to escape its ultimate fate. The events of 1394-1402 demonstrate its weaknesses and, most of all, its dependence on the West, not only for military and financial support, but also for food supplies. The urban population was terrorized to such a point by the siege and its consequences, especially the famine and the belief that the capital could no longer provide protection, that during the later conflicts with the Turks repeatedly the populace fled the city in panic. The security identified with the Constantinople of old was destroyed by the tragedy of 1394-1402.

Moreover, the lessons learned by the Byzantines and the Turks from this siege were not forgotten and were employed during the subsequent attacks. Thus, as soon as hostilities were renewed, the Turks pressed on with massive attacks. What occurred thereafter were short-lived military operations both on land and sea, characterized by violent clashes. The Byzantines, having bitterly experienced the misery and fear associated with the siege, tried to avoid prolonged military operations around their capital and the establishment of a blockade by disrupting enemy plans. To this end, they employed both diplomacy, supporting suitable pretenders to the Ottoman throne, and violent military action against the attackers. This tactic, having worked well in 1411 against the politically unstable Musha, was barely successful in 1422 during the conflict with Murad II (1421-51), and failed completely in 1453.

The Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies